

- A new armed opposition coalition was formed. A US drone strike killed two Hurras al-Din (HD) leaders. Due to the weak Syrian pound, opposition and Turkish-held areas of northwest Syria switched to the Turkish Lira. There were increased clashes in Hama Governorate between Government of Syria (GoS) armed forces and GoS-backed militias on one side and armed opposition groups and ISIS on the other side. Turkey continued to build new military outposts in Idlib Governorate.
- Protests against GoS continued across southern Syria. Reconciled opposition fighters defected from the GoS4<sup>th</sup> Division in Rural Damascus Governorate. GoS armed forces clashed with US-backed armed opposition groups in the AI-Tanf area of Rural Damascus Governorate.
- The Kurdish-run Autonomous Administration lifted its COVID-19 curfew. Protests erupted throughout Deir-ez-Zor and Al-Hassakah Governorates. Anti-ISIS operations continued in the region. Turkish armed forces and Turkish-backed opposition groups arrested individuals associated with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in Ar-Raqqa Governorate.

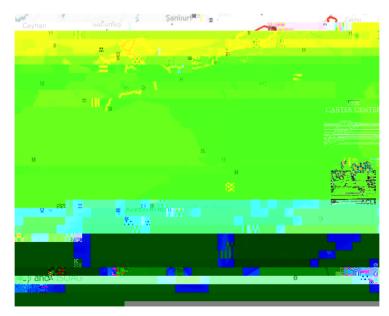


Figure 1: Dominant actors' area of control and influence in Syria as of 14 June 2020. NSOAG stands for Non-state Organized Armed Groups. Also, please see the footnote on page 2.

Al-Thawra (MAT) armed group, which repelled the attack. MAT had previously clashed with GoSarmed forces in February 2020.<sup>25</sup>

On 11 June, President Bashar Assad fired Prime Minister Imad Khamis and appointed the Minister of water resources, Hussein Arnous, as interim replacement. This change comes amidst protests and deteriorating economic conditions across the country.<sup>26</sup>

On 14 June, the Kurdish-run Autonomous Administration relaxed some of its COVID-19 measures, lifting the curfew for all areas under its control, but maintaining the closure of most border crossings. <sup>27</sup> The Autonomous Administration previously relaxed some of its COVID-19 related measures on 18 May.

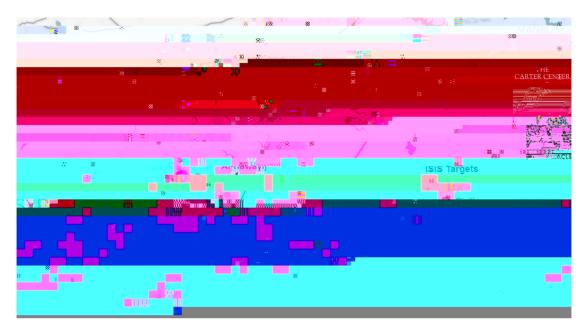
Demonstrations against the predominantly Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and deteriorating economic conditions took place in SDF-controlled areas in Deir-ez-Zor and Al-Hassakah Governorates. On 8 June, protesters in Shadadah and Markada in Al-Hassakah Governorate protested against worsening economic conditions. The same day, protests were recorded across Deir-ez-Zor Governorate against the deteriorating economic conditions and allegations of corruption within the SDF.<sup>28</sup> The SDF dispersed protests and arrested demonstrators in Sur, Deir-ez-Zor Governorate. On 9 June, additional protests were reported in Al-Hawayji, Kasra, Al-Shabkhah, Thiban, and other towns across Deir-ez-Zor Governorate.<sup>29</sup> In Shadadah, Al-Hassakah Governorate, protesters blocked roads in the city.

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GoS armed forces and GoS-backed militias continued to fight ISIS during the reporting period. On 10 June, GoS armed forces and the GoS National Defense Forces (NDF) announced a new campaign against ISIS in the Euphrates River region in Deir-ez-Zor and Al-Hassakah Governorates. Additional NDF troops were deployed to reinforce the GoS presence in the Badia desert where ISIS has been active.<sup>32</sup> On 11 June, ISIS released videos of its fighters executing GoS soldiers.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> <u>https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/391634</u> 26

The release of these videos coincided with ISIS clashes in Hama Governorate (see northwest Syria). On 13 June, ISIS fighters ambushed a GoS-backed Quds Brigade convoy in the eastern countryside of Deir-ez-Zor Governorate.<sup>34</sup> In recent months, the number of ISIS attacks has increased (see figure 4).



*Figure 4: ISIS attacks in northeast Syria between 1 January 2020 to 13 June 2020. The largest bubble equals 7 conflict events. Data from ACLED and The Carter Center.* 

Turkish-backed armed opposition groups conducted a series of arrests throughout Ar-Raqqa Governorate targeting alleged SDF-affiliated individuals. On 9 June, the Turkish-backed opposition Levant Front arrested 35 people in Ein Al-Arus and Badi in the countryside of Ar-Raqqa Governorate. The Levant Front alleged that the arrested individuals were spies for the SDF. On 13 June, Turkishbacked armed opposition groups in Operation Peace Spring areas arrested the head of the Al-Hanadi tribe in Tell Abiad. The tribal leader was part of a group facilitating with local tribes.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> <u>https://nedaa-sy.com/news/20846</u>