WEEKLY CONFLICT SUMMARY | 22 – 28 APRIL 2019

WHOLE OF SYRIA SUMMARY

x NORTHWEST | Elevated levels of conflict impacted the Hayyat Tahrir ash
Sham (HTS) dominated Idleb enclave, including an increase in airstrike
activity with 26 strikes recorded. An agreement between HTS and Suqor
ash Sham saw the former expand its governance north of Maraat al Numan
town.

x SOUTH & CENTRAL | For a second consecutive week, explosive device

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claimed the attack and, in an online statement, said that it targeted a government
intelligence officer. The group also claimed one of the two IED attacks last week in
Damascus.
On 24 April a previously unknown group - Ahrar Bilada Kanakar (Freemen of the
Kanaker Area) – released an online statement calling for the government and
Russia to abide by the terms of a 2017 “reconciliation” agreement in the area,
particularly concerning detentions, or face the consequences.
In the last six months, at least six new groups have formed and claimed attacks in
government dominated areas in central and southern Syria: The Popular
Resistance, The Southern Companies, Qasioun Companies, Special Task
Companies, Mohassim Revolutionary Brigades, and the Freemen of the Kanakar
Area.
In Daraa, attacks against Syrian government-aligned officials or former opposition
fighters continued. Six attacks were recorded in the governorate, including two
against former opposition-aligned Mutaaz Billah Army commanders in Tafas and
Mzeireb towns.
In central areas, government re-enforcements were sent to the Sokhneh area on
25 April in response to recent ISIS activity. This included a contingent of Hezbollah
fighters according to some reports. However, on 27 April, ISIS ambushed a
government patrol to the east of Sokhneh town, resulting in cTv/0 0 1 3o1i1
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while in Darnaj, Tayyana, Al Sabkhah and Basira, similar events against SDF forces
were also recorded. IED activity against SDF patrols also occurred in Thiban town,
and Raqqa City, where two explosive devices detonated in the Amin area of the
city on 26 April. As reported previously, these areas have increasingly witnessed
such attacks.
There was an increase in recorded protests along the Euphrates Valley this week,
with 12 demonstrations across Basira (3), Shiheil, Al Hessan (2), Mweileh, Daman,
Jneineh, Kasra and Mhemideh towns against SDF arrests, the lack of basic services,
high prices of goods, and the perceived unfair distribution of oil. Prior to this
week, only eight protests had been reported against the SDF in 2019.
In a development for the humanitarian situation in northeast Syria, the Yazidi
Supreme Spiritual Council issued a statement this week allowing unaccompanied
women, as well as children born out of rape, would be allowed to return to their
place of origin in Iraq. The move will apply to thousands of people currently in
various IDP camps in Hasakeh province and could further alleviate some of the
pressures on the SDF after last month’s agreement to return thousands of Iraqi
nationals to Iraq.