

WEEKLY CONFLICT SUMMARY | 29 JULY – 4 AUGUST 2019

WHOLE OF SYRIA SUMMARY

- NORTHWEST | Government of Syria (GoS) forces advanced in the Tal Mallah area of the Hayyat Tahrir Ash Sham (HTS)-dominated Idleb enclave this week, just prior to Syrian and Russian officials announcing a ceasefire on 2 August. An increase in conflict activity was recorded in the Tal Rifaat area between Turkish forces and aligned groups on the one side and the) on the other.
- SOUTH & CENTRAL | Low-level attacks against GoS-aligned personnel and former opposition members continued in Daraa Governorate.
- NORTHEAST | Elevated levels of improvised explosive device (IED) activity continued in the northeast with at least seven incidents recorded. Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)/ Global Coalition arrest operations against Daesh continued this week. Also, further Turkish shelling impacted two areas of northeastern Syria.



Figure 1: Dominant Actors' Area of Control and Influence in Syria as of 4 August 2019. NSOAG stands for Non-state Organized Armed Groups. For more explanation on our mapping, please see the footnote on page 2.

NORTHWEST SYRIA

This week, government forces recaptured

agreement.² While the announcement did not state the duration of the ceasefire, some pro-government <u>sources</u> have stated that it will continue until 16 August.

Government forces also continued to target the HTS/ Turkistan Islamic Party hilltop stronghold of Kabani in Latakia governorate, launching at least five attempts to recapture the position. The attacks were supported by <u>airstrikes</u>, throughout the week. However, no changes in territory were recorded.

Despite a drop in various opposition groups and HTS bombardments on government areas, low-levels of attacks continued. Several events were recorded after the ceasefire was implemented on 2 August, including pro-opposition sources <u>reporting</u> a weaponized drone being shot down over northern Hama on 4 August by GoS/ Russian forces. Pro-government sources <u>reported</u> mortar shelling on Aleppo City on 3 August (Figure 3).

Further east, a spike in conflict was detected in the Tal Rifaat area,³ north of Aleppo City. Pro-opposition <u>sources</u> recorded six Turkish and allied group bombardments on Kurdish People Protection Units (YPG) positions in Akibah, Burj Qas, Harbel (x2), Kalotyah, Maranaz, Shiekh Issa, Sorhane, and Tal Rifaat. Frontline clashes between the sides were also recorded on the Maranaz front (x3), Shiekh Issa, and the Hazwan front. Also, the YPG reportedly carried out two attacks behind Turkish backed Euphrates Shield group frontlines in the <u>Kalfr Kalbin</u> and <u>Ablah</u> areas (Figure 3).

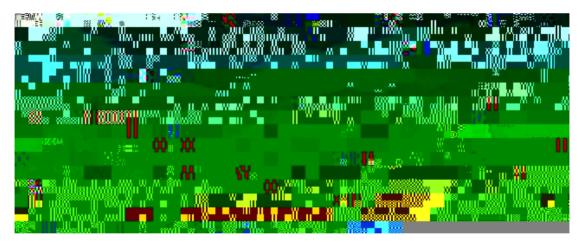


Figure 3: Location map of areas that saw conflict this week in the Tal Rifaat Pocket.

While periodic upticks in conflict are common for the area (as previously reported <u>here</u>), YPG attacks behind frontlines are less common, with only seven previous recorded cases in the past 12 months.

² Namely, that groups should withdraw their military forces and heavy and medium weapons 20km from frontlines and cease shelling government areas.

³ The Tal Rifaat area is under joint control of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and GoS forces since late 2016. Russian forces had also conducted joint patrols with Turkish troops in the area since 14 February 2019, and with SDF forces between 26 March 2019 and 10 April 2019.

SOUTH AND CENTRAL SYRIA

In southern Syria, ongoing low-level attacks against government-aligned personnel, former opposition armed group members, and civilians continued. Three attacks were recorded, including one against a former opposition group commander, now government 4th division member, in <u>Tal Shihab</u>, a Baath party member in <u>Jein</u>, and GoS soldiers on the <u>Tassil Edwan Road</u>. As previously reported, 249 incidents of small arms fire, improvised explosive device attacks, and kidnapping have been recorded since government forces recaptured the region in August 2018. Such activity has increased in southern Syria in 2019 (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Attacks against government aligned personnel, former opposition group members and civilians in southern Syria between August 2018

A concentration of this activity has occurred in just six locations; Raqqa City (22), Hassakeh City (17), Shadadah (11), Shihiel (9), Taqba (9), and Basira (8). This represents nearly 50%