





Figure 1 - Map of frontlines in northern Syria by January 4, 2017

To the east of the Euphrates, the SDF's Euphrates Wrath (EW) offensive enjoyed more gains this week against ISIS in the countryside of Raqqa. SDF forces now enjoy full control of the Western Euphrates from the Turkish border to the Tabqa dam, which is now within sight of advancing EW forces. ISIS retaliated with several suicide attacks, killing dozens of EW fighters, though not halting the advance.

Conclusions:

Despite the ceasefire, conflict remained high throughout the week. Political cooperation in advance of the Astana conference is positive, but almost certainly this will collapse if all belligerents do not demonstrate their commitment to the process by halting offensive operations. The renewed conflict in Wadi Barada has, once again, disproportionately impacted civilians by disrupting water supplies. All parties involved must work to ensure adherence to the ceasefire or risk yet another return to full-scale violence.