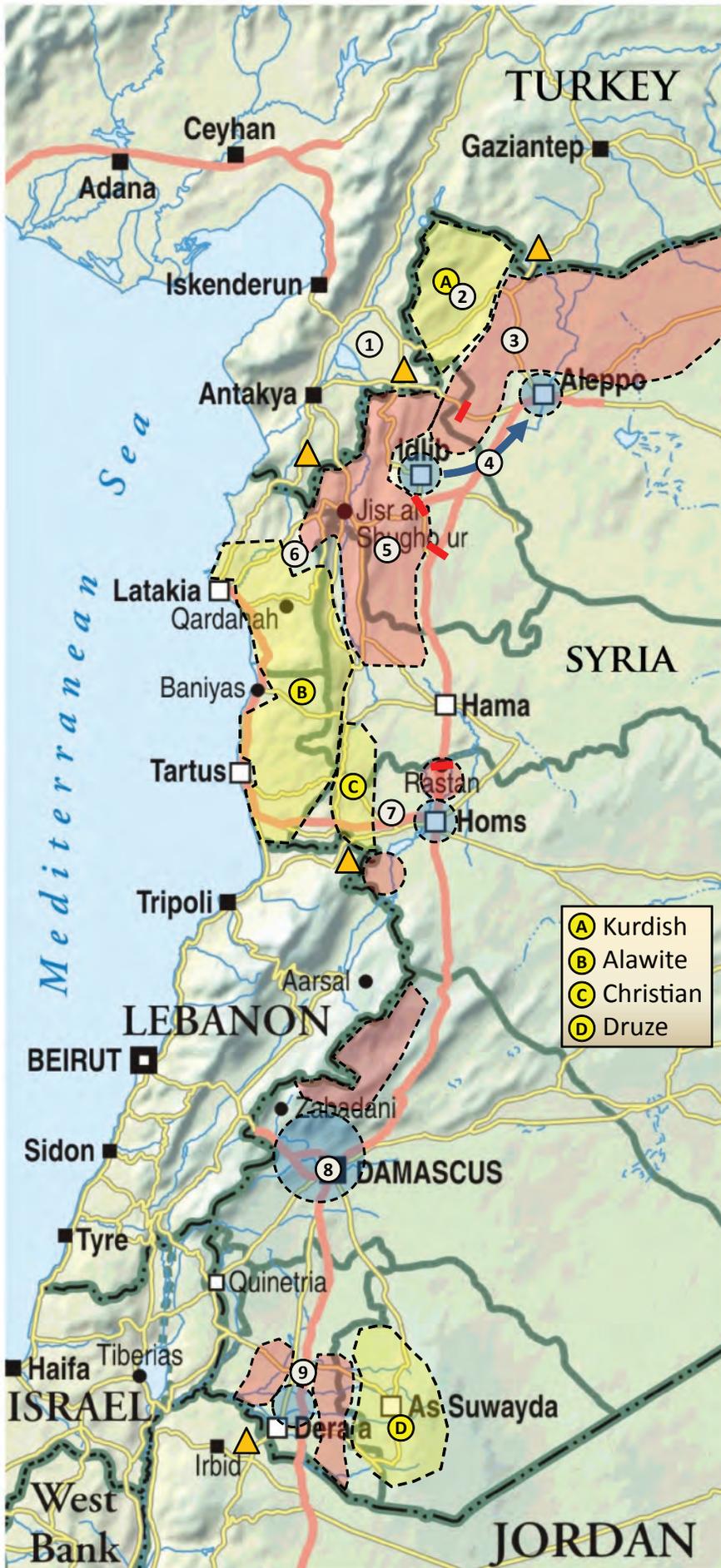


# Syria's Maturing Insurgency

as of August 1st, 2012



- 1 Refugee camps in Turkey's southern Antakya and Gaziantep provinces house tens of thousands of refugees and serve as headquarters for the umbrella rebel organization known as the Free Syrian Army.
- 2 In July 2012, Syrian Kurdish groups announced that they had taken control of a number of towns along Syria's border with Turkey. The Kurds have been a late-comer to the revolution, and it remains to be seen how they will interact with the Sunni opposition; Turkey has reacted strongly to this development.
- 3 In June 2012, the Assad regime consolidated its Aleppo-based forces for an offensive to retake the northern Aleppo countryside. The operation was largely successful, but by July the regime lost its grip on Aleppo city, forcing them to return to the city to try to oust rebel forces there.
- 4 As the Assad regime prepared for an early August 2012 Aleppo offensive, a large portion of the security forces stationed in Idlib province reinforced Aleppo, leaving only a skeleton crew of isolated outposts that quickly came under pressure from Idlib-based rebel groups.
- 5 Idlib province's mountainous Jebel al-Zawiya region has been a center of rebel activity since the Fall of 2011. Rebels here have repeatedly demonstrated the ability to organize on a large scale, travel long distances, and mount effective offensive operations.
- 6 Fighting spread to Latakia's mountainous Haffeh district, where rebels battled security forces throughout June. The insurgency's proximity to the coastal Alawite stronghold, threatens the regime close to home.
- 7 The Assad regime has maintained control of Homs city since seizing it in May 2012, but rebel strongholds remain to the city's north (Rastan) and southwest (al-Qusayr). Rebels in these towns have defended against regime incursions, and suffer frequent artillery bombardment.
- 8 In July 2012, the Damascus insurgency struck a double-blow to the regime, assassinating 4 top security officials and seizing sections of downtown Damascus. While the regime was able to regain control of the capital in a week, this surprise offensive ended the regime's chances of using its reserves of elite troops elsewhere in the country.
- 9 In southern Deraa province, the rebels have only mounted guerrilla raids and ambushes, but maintain freedom of movement throughout this rural plateau.

