



## Campaign for North Syria September 2012

The ongoing campaign for Aleppo has taken place not only in the city's neighborhoods, but also throughout Aleppo and Idlib province, as regime and opposition forces maneuver for control of critical lines of supply.

1) By the end of August 2012, rebels gained control of the section of highway between Maarat al-Numan and Saraqib, forcing the regime to use the coastal highway to reinforce and resupply its forces in Aleppo city. This circuitous route goes through the village of Ariha, and Jebal al-Zawiya based rebels fought regime forces for control of the chokepoint town throughout late August and early September.

2) As the regime has brought more forces into Aleppo city to regain control of the commercial hub, rebels have increased pressure on outlying bases, overrunning some and forcing the regime to abandon others. In June, rebels overran outposts in Jebal al-Zawiya and Daret Izza.

3) By August, rebels had seized the military base in Maarat al Numan, and the regime withdrew from positions in Bab Hawa and al-Bab.

4) When the regime increased its reliance on air power, rebels responded by mounting major attacks against helicopter bases and airfields in Taftanaz and Abu Duhur, and succeeded in partially overrunning the latter, destroying a number of aircraft on the runway.

5) Some regime outposts have become isolated, forced to rely on air re-supply alone. At Minakh air base near Azaz, regime forces shell surrounding villages but don't have enough strength to leave the base, while rebels mount repeated attempts to take over the base. At the southern end of Jebal al-Zawiya, regime outposts in Qalat al Madiq and Kafr Zeita have withstood rebel assaults but are similarly isolated.

6) The Assad regime withdrew from the majority-Kurdish areas along the Turkish border at the end of July, amidst reports that the security forces were handing over control of local security to the Democratic Union Party (PYD), the Syrian branch of the terrorist-designated Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). This move both freed up forces needed elsewhere, and complicated Turkish involvement in Syria. All indications are that the Syrian Kurds in these areas have established basic security and self-governance, but it remains to be seen what role the PKK will play in these areas. It also remains to be seen how Kurdish militias will interact with Sunni Arab rebel groups.