

Syria Situation Report: April 27 - May 6, 2016

1 April 27: Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) parade bodies of slain opposition fighters in Afrin Canton. The Syrian Kurdish YPG and allied opposition groups held a parade displaying the bodies of 40 to 50 opposition fighters killed during a failed attack against SDF positions in Northern Aleppo Province on April 26. The U.S. State Department “strongly” condemned that display, noting that the U.S. has not provided support to the Afrin Canton. A SDF spokesperson later stressed that the incident “cannot represent our principles”.

2 May 5: U.S. and Russia broker truce in Aleppo City. The U.S. and Russia brokered a deal to extend a temporary “regime of silence” to Aleppo City starting at 12:01 AM on May 5. The Syrian Arab Army later stated that the truce will last 48 hours. The agreement follows 10 days of violence in Aleppo City that killed at least 250 people and damaged at least 5 hospitals. Forty-two prominent opposition groups previously released a statement on May 1 rejecting any attempts by the U.S. and Russia to broker “regional truces” and warning that “any attack against any liberated area” will be considered a nationwide violation.

3 May 5 - 6: Jabhat a-Nusra and allied hardline groups advance south of Aleppo City. Syrian Al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat a-Nusra and several allied Islamist factions seized the strategic town of Khan Tuman from pro-regime forces following clashes that included an SVBIED. The attack follows the announced reformation of the powerful Jaysh al-Fatah Operations Room on May 1. Jaysh al-Fatah - a coalition of Jabhata-Nusra, Salafi-Jihadist group Ahrar a-Sham, and five other ultraconservative factions - seized most of Idlib Province from pro-regime forces in 2015.

4 May 4: Hardline groups prohibit tobacco in western Aleppo Province. Syrian Al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat a-Nusra, prominent Salafi-Jihadist group Ahrar a-Sham, and Islamist group Faylaq a-Sham announced a ban on the distribution and sale of tobacco products in the western countryside of Aleppo Province effective May 7. The ruling highlights the slow implementation of hardline Islamic governance in parts of Northwestern Syria ruled by Jabhat a-Nusra and allied factions.

5 May 5: Suspected airstrike targets refugee camp in Northern Syria. An unidentified warplane struck the Kamouna Refugee Camp near Sarmada in Idlib Province, killing at least 28 civilians and injuring at least 50 others. Other sources claimed that the attack may have been a surface-to-surface missile.

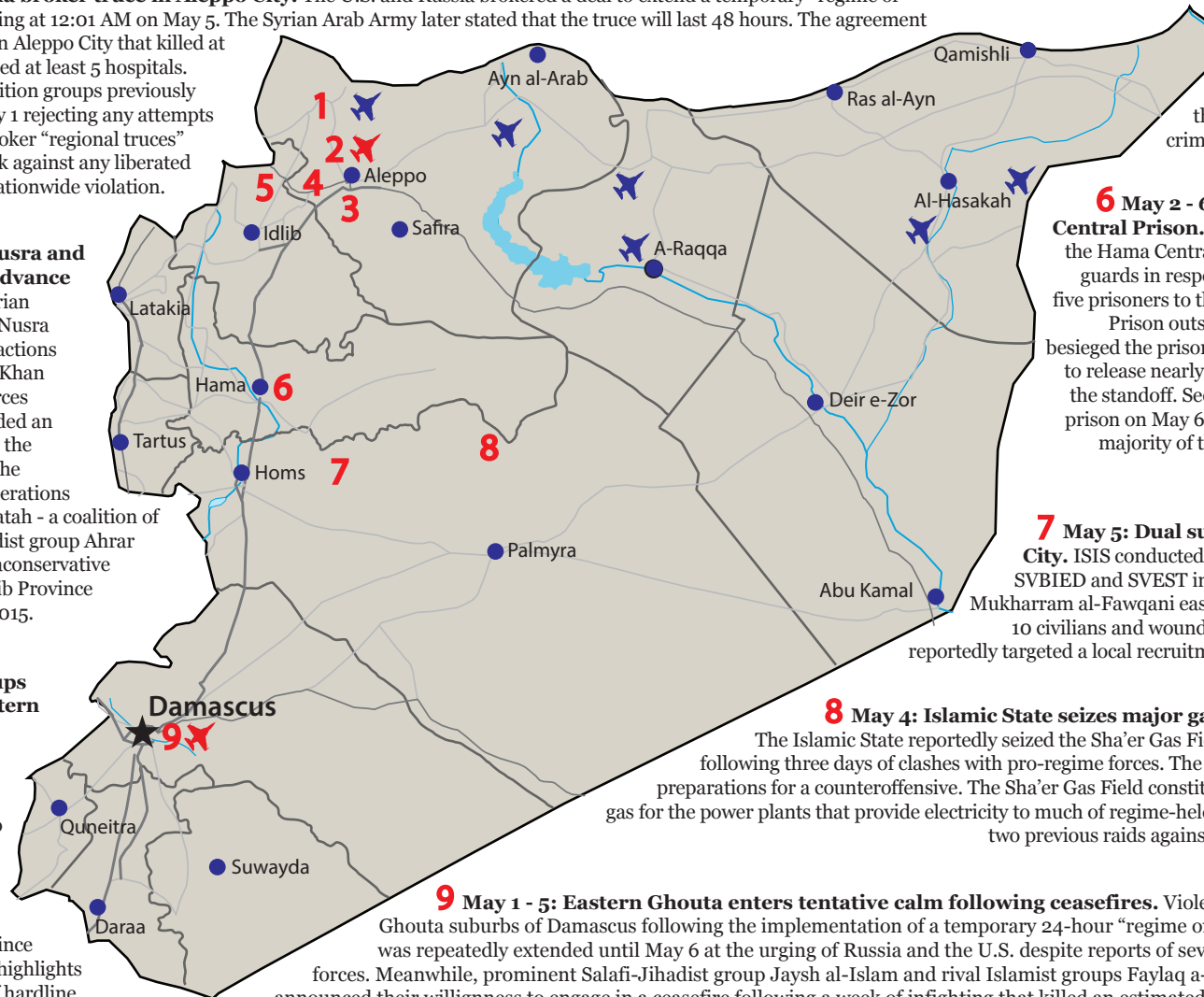
Local activists blamed the attack on either Russia or the regime. France and the UN called for a probe into the incident as a potential “war crime or crime against humanity”.

6 May 2 - 6: Inmates revolt in Hama Central Prison. Hundreds of prisoners seized the Hama Central Prison and captured several guards in response to a decision to transport five prisoners to the notorious Sednaya Military Prison outside Damascus. Security forces besieged the prison amidst ongoing negotiations to release nearly 500 prisoners in order to end the standoff. Security forces later stormed the prison on May 6. Local activists noted that the majority of the 1,400 detainees held in the prison are political prisoners.

7 May 5: Dual suicide attack east of Homs City. ISIS conducted a dual suicide attack using an SVBIED and SVEST in the Alawite-majority town of Mukharram al-Fawqani east of Homs City, killing at least 10 civilians and wounding over 40 others. The blasts reportedly targeted a local recruitment center and public square.

8 May 4: Islamic State seizes major gas field in Homs Province. The Islamic State reportedly seized the Sha'er Gas Field and its associated facilities following three days of clashes with pro-regime forces. The Sha'er Gas Field constitutes a major source of natural gas for the power plants that provide electricity to much of regime-held Western Syria. IS conducted two previous raids against the Sha'er Gas Field in 2014.

9 May 1 - 5: Eastern Ghouta enters tentative calm following ceasefires. Violence decreased in the Eastern Ghouta suburbs of Damascus following the implementation of a temporary 24-hour “regime of silence” on May 1. The truce was repeatedly extended until May 6 at the urging of Russia and the U.S. despite reports of several violations by pro-regime forces. Meanwhile, prominent Salafi-Jihadist group Jaysh al-Islam and rival Islamist groups Faylaq a-Rahman and Jaysh al-Fustat announced their willingness to engage in a ceasefire following a week of infighting that killed an estimated 100 people. The deal follows street protests by hundreds of residents calling for the groups to halt the bloodshed and return their focus to fighting the regime.



- Pro-Regime Forces
- The Islamic State
- Kurdish Forces
- Jabhat a-Nusra
- Opposition Forces
- ✈ Pro-Regime Airstrike
- ✈ Anti-IS Coalition

