

Syria Situation Report: July 22 - July 29, 2016

1 July 27: Jabhat a-Nusra reportedly withdraws from fight against IS affiliate in Southern Syria. Activists stated that Syrian Al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat a-Nusra withdrew the bulk of its fighters from frontlines against IS-affiliate Jaish Khalid bin al-Waleed in Daraa Province over the past two weeks. Sources in the opposition stated that Jabhat a-Nusra may intend to redeploy its forces against the regime.

2 July 27: Commander of Iranian Basij inspects Golan Heights border. Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) - Basij Commander Gen. Mohammed Reza Naqdi reportedly conducted a tour of pro-regime positions in Quneitra Province along the Golan Heights border. The reports did not provide an exact date of the visit. The Golan Heights border is a known area of operations for senior commanders from the IRGC and Hezbollah.

3 July 25: Opposition group claims VBIED in Damascus. A VBIED detonated in the heavily-secured Kafar Souseh District of Damascus, killing at least two individuals. The blast was claimed by a little-known opposition group called the 'Damascus League for Special Operations.' Activist sources reported that the blast targeted a local headquarters for Iranian-backed militia fighters.

4 July 28: Regime announces three-month amnesty deal. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad authorized a three-month-long amnesty deal for any opposition fighters that surrender to pro-regime forces and lay down their weapons. The decree came on the same day that pro-regime forces completed the full encirclement of Aleppo City.

5 July 28: Jabhat a-Nusra announces split with Al-Qaeda. Syrian Al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat a-Nusra head Abu Muhammad al-Jolani issued a video statement announcing the cancellation of its operations and the formation of a new group called 'Jabhat Fatah a-Sham' with "no affiliation to any external entity." Jolani stated that the measure would advance the unification of the jihad in Syria and "expose the deceptions of...the U.S. and Russia" in Syria.

6 July 28: Pro-regime forces complete encirclement of Aleppo City. Pro-regime forces seized the Bani Zayd District in Northern Aleppo City following clashes with opposition forces, completing the full encirclement of the city. Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu announced the start of a "large-scale humanitarian operation" in conjunction with the regime, noting that three humanitarian corridors will be opened for fleeing civilians while a fourth corridor will be opened for opposition fighters to evacuate with their weapons. The UN called for the implementation of a weekly forty-eight-hour ceasefire for the delivery of aid.

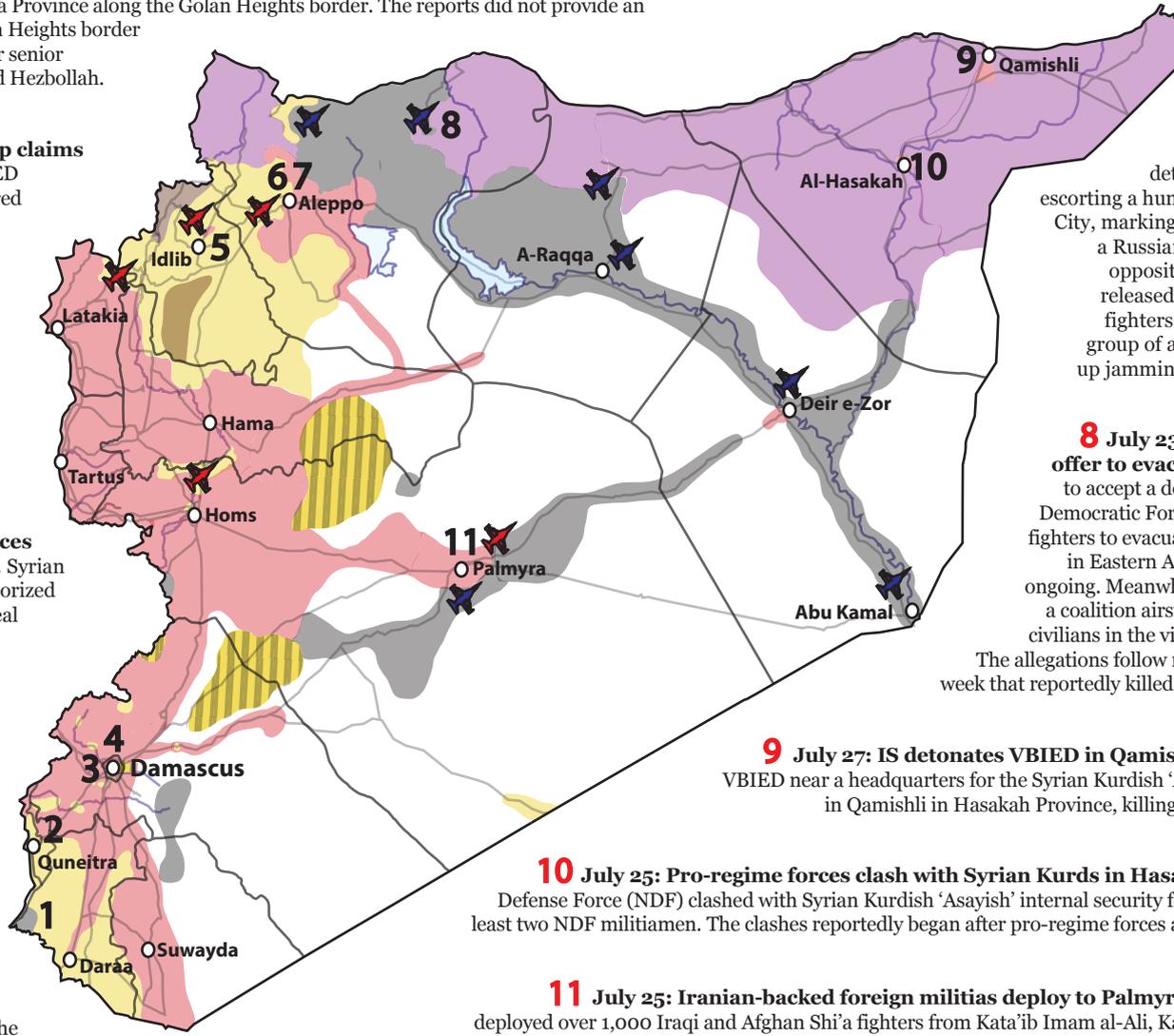
7 July 22: Russia acknowledges twelfth combat fatality in Syria. The Russian Ministry of Defense stated that a "self-detonating bomb" killed a soldier escorting a humanitarian convoy near Aleppo City, marking the twelfth confirmed death of a Russian serviceman in Syria. Islamist opposition group Faylaq a-Sham later released a video claiming to show their fighters firing an anti-tank missile at a group of alleged Russian soldiers setting up jamming equipment near Aleppo City.

8 July 23 - 28: Islamic State ignores offer to evacuate Manbij. IS took no steps to accept a deal from the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces granting safe passage for its fighters to evacuate the besieged town of Manbij in Eastern Aleppo Province. Clashes remain ongoing. Meanwhile, local activists reported that a coalition airstrike killed at least twenty-eight civilians in the village of Ghandour near Manbij. The allegations follow reports of a similar incident last week that reportedly killed at least seventy-seven civilians.

9 July 27: IS detonates VBIED in Qamishli. IS detonated a truck-borne VBIED near a headquarters for the Syrian Kurdish 'Asayish' internal security forces in Qamishli in Hasakah Province, killing at least forty-eight individuals.

10 July 25: Pro-regime forces clash with Syrian Kurds in Hasakah. Members of the National Defense Force (NDF) clashed with Syrian Kurdish 'Asayish' internal security forces in Hasakah City, killing at least two NDF militiamen. The clashes reportedly began after pro-regime forces attacked an Asayish checkpoint.

11 July 25: Iranian-backed foreign militias deploy to Palmyra. Pro-regime forces reportedly deployed over 1,000 Iraqi and Afghan Shi'a fighters from Kata'ib Imam al-Ali, Kata'ib Hezbollah, Liwa Abu Fadl al-Abbas, and Liwa al-Fatimiyoun to Palmyra in Eastern Homs Province. The deployments allegedly come in advance of an alleged offensive against IS that aims to reopen the ground line of communication between Damascus and Baghdad.



Areas of Control*

- Pro-Regime Forces
- Kurdish Forces
- The Islamic State
- Opposition Forces
- Jabhat a-Nusra
- Mixed Control

Airstrikes

- ✈ Pro-Regime
- ✈ U.S. / Coalition



*Control of Terrain accurate as of 01 JUL 2016