

Syria Situation Report: May 7 - 13, 2016

1 May 7: Turkish Special Operations Forces conduct operation in Northern Syria. Turkey reportedly deployed fifteen to twenty Special Operations Forces into Northern Aleppo Province on a “reconnaissance mission” to identify the locations of IS rocket launchers. Turkey and the U.S. later conducted cross-border airstrikes and artillery shelling that killed over fifty IS fighters. At least twenty-one civilians have been killed by repeated IS rocket attacks on the town of Kilis in Southern Turkey in recent weeks.

2 May 11: Clashes resume after expiration of truce in Aleppo City. A temporary ceasefire ended in Aleppo City, sparking a new round of clashes and airstrikes in the city.

Pro-regime forces later attempted to seize the opposition-held Handarat District north of Aleppo City on May 12 in a likely attempt to complete the encirclement of Aleppo. The U.S. and Russia brokered the ceasefire on May 5.

3 May 7: Iran announces major combat losses in Southern Aleppo Province. An Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps official stated that thirteen IRGC “military advisors” were killed and another twenty-one injured during clashes in Khan Touman south of Aleppo City.

Syrian Al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra and allied groups in the Jaysh al-Fatah Operations Room seized Khan Touman on May 6. Pro-regime forces have mounted multiple unsuccessful attempts to retake the town.

4 May 9: Revolt ends in the Hama Central Prison. A prominent tribal leader reportedly negotiated a final agreement to secure the release of up to 800 political detainees with amnesty over the next four months in exchange for the return of the Hama Central Prison to government control.

Hundreds of inmates seized the facility and several guards on May 2 after officials announced the transfer of five prisoners to the notorious Sednaya Military Prison outside Damascus.

5 May 11: Russia confirms death of ninth soldier in Syria. The Russian Ministry of Defense stated that a soldier died of wounds sustained by opposition shelling at an undisclosed location in Homs Province. The soldier reportedly had been escorting a convoy of vehicles from the Russian Center for Reconciliation tasked with enforcing a nationwide ‘cessation of hostilities’. The incident marks the ninth death acknowledged by Russia in Syria.

6 May 6 - 12: Islamic State advances in Homs Province against pro-regime forces.

IS advanced into the Maher Gas Field in Eastern Homs Province on May 6 after seizing the nearby Sha’er Gas Field on May 5. IS also seized an abandoned artillery battalion and two checkpoints near the T4 (Tiyas) Airbase on May 10 following clashes with pro-regime forces. IS claimed to down a regime helicopter during the fighting.

7 May 9: Russia establishes new base in Palmyra. Local activists stated that Russia established a new military base in Palmyra in Eastern Homs Province.

A reporter confirmed that a tent installation guarded by air defense systems and armored vehicles had been established “in the last month” to support a de-mining mission by the Russian Armed Forces that began on March 31.

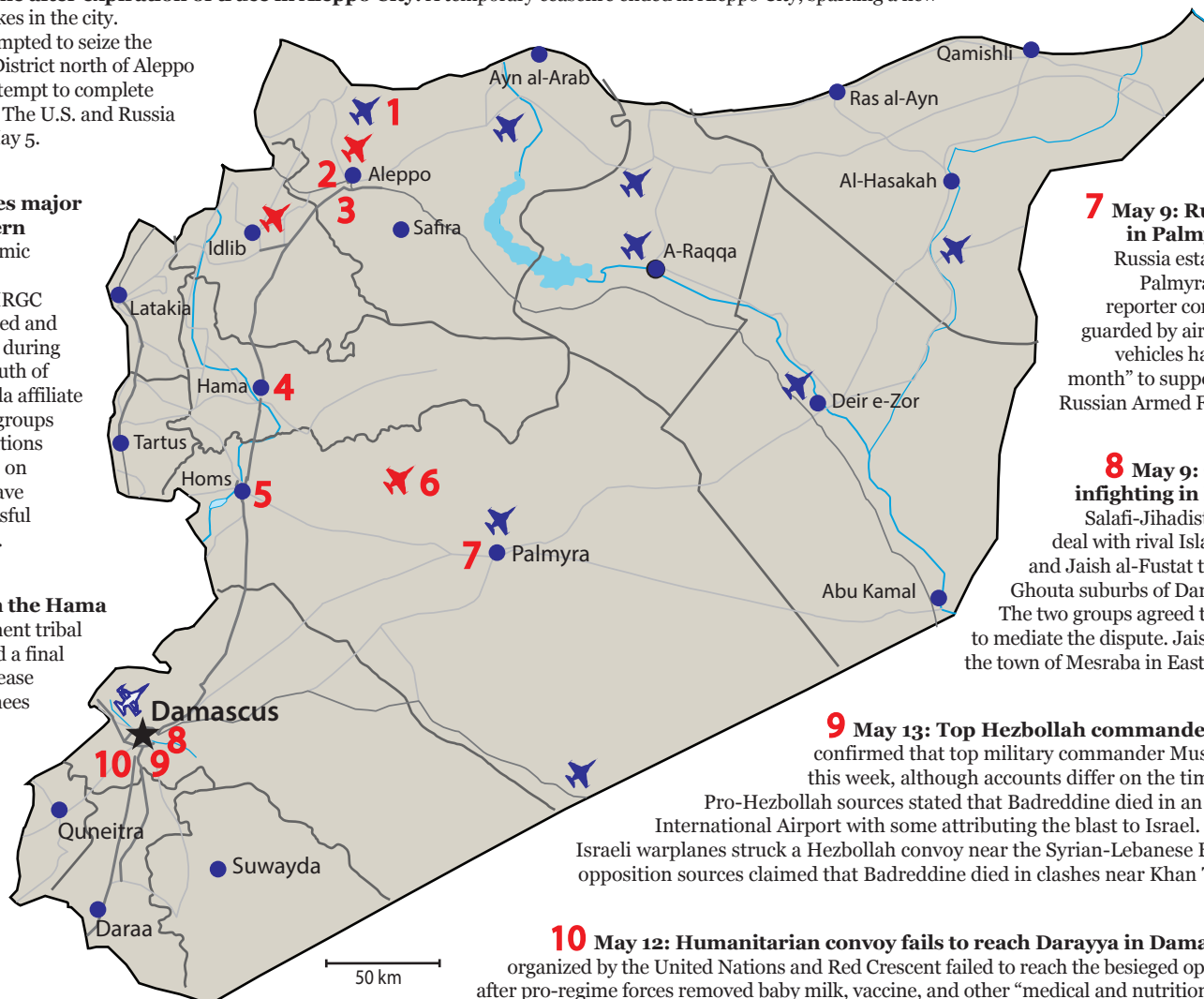
8 May 9: Ceasefire halts opposition infighting in Eastern Ghouta. Prominent Salafi-Jihadist group Jaish al-Islam signed a deal with rival Islamist groups Failaq a-Rahman and Jaish al-Fustat to end infighting in the Eastern Ghouta suburbs of Damascus that began on April 28.

The two groups agreed to form a council of six arbiters to mediate the dispute. Jaish al-Islam also withdrew from the town of Mesraba in Eastern Ghouta as part of the deal.

9 May 13: Top Hezbollah commander killed in Syria. Hezbollah confirmed that top military commander Mustafa Badreddine died in Syria this week, although accounts differ on the timing and location of his death.

Pro-Hezbollah sources stated that Badreddine died in an explosion near the Damascus International Airport with some attributing the blast to Israel. Previous reports claimed that Israeli warplanes struck a Hezbollah convoy near the Syrian-Lebanese Border on May 11. Meanwhile, opposition sources claimed that Badreddine died in clashes near Khan Touman south of Aleppo City.

10 May 12: Humanitarian convoy fails to reach Darayya in Damascus. A humanitarian convoy organized by the United Nations and Red Crescent failed to reach the besieged opposition-held town of Darayya after pro-regime forces removed baby milk, vaccine, and other “medical and nutritional supplies” from the vehicles. The estimated 4,000 to 8,000 remaining residents of Darayya have been besieged since November 2012.



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

