

Syria Situation Report: August 25 - September 1, 2016

1 August 26: Jaysh al-Islam Calls for Consolidation in Eastern Ghouta: Salafi-Jihadist group Jaysh al-Islam issued a statement expressing conditional support for the formation of a Unified Military Operations Room in the Eastern Ghouta Suburbs of Damascus as proposed by rival Islamist group Faylaq a-Rahman. The statement called for Faylaq a-Rahman to transfer heavy weapons to fronts held by Jaysh al-Islam and intensify its own operations against the regime in order to relieve pressure on the besieged opposition-held pocket following a series of gains by pro-regime forces in recent weeks.

2 August 25 - 27: Opposition Forces Evacuate Darayya in Western Ghouta: Opposition forces evacuated the opposition-held town of Darayya following the conclusion of a surrender deal on August 25. The deal granted safe passage to Idlib Province for roughly 700 opposition fighters and their families, while up to 4,000 civilians were resettled in shelters near Damascus. Darayya had been besieged by pro-regime forces since 2012. The regime sent a delegation to the neighboring opposition-held town of Moadamiyeh on August 31 and presented a three-day ultimatum for a deal to evacuate opposition fighters from the town.

3 August 26 - 31: Opposition Enters Negotiations with Regime in Al-Wa'er District of Homs City: Activists stated that the regime and opposition forces entered negotiations for a "final deal" to evacuate the besieged opposition-held Al-Wa'er District of Homs City. The talks come amidst a temporary ceasefire after regime warplanes targeted the district with several days of airstrikes following months of relative calm. Opposition groups based in Homs Province later released a statement rejecting the proposed deal.

4 August 29 - September 1: Opposition Launches Offensive in Northern Hama Province: Salafi-Jihadist group Jund al-Aqsa and Free Syrian Army (FSA)-affiliated groups Jaysh a-Nasr and Jaysh al-Izza seized the key towns of Halfaya, Taybat al-Imam, Sawran, and Ma'ardas in Northern Hama Province after launching a major offensive against pro-regime forces in the region. Jund al-Aqsa detonated at least one SVBIED during the clashes. The advances bring opposition forces within six miles of Hama City.

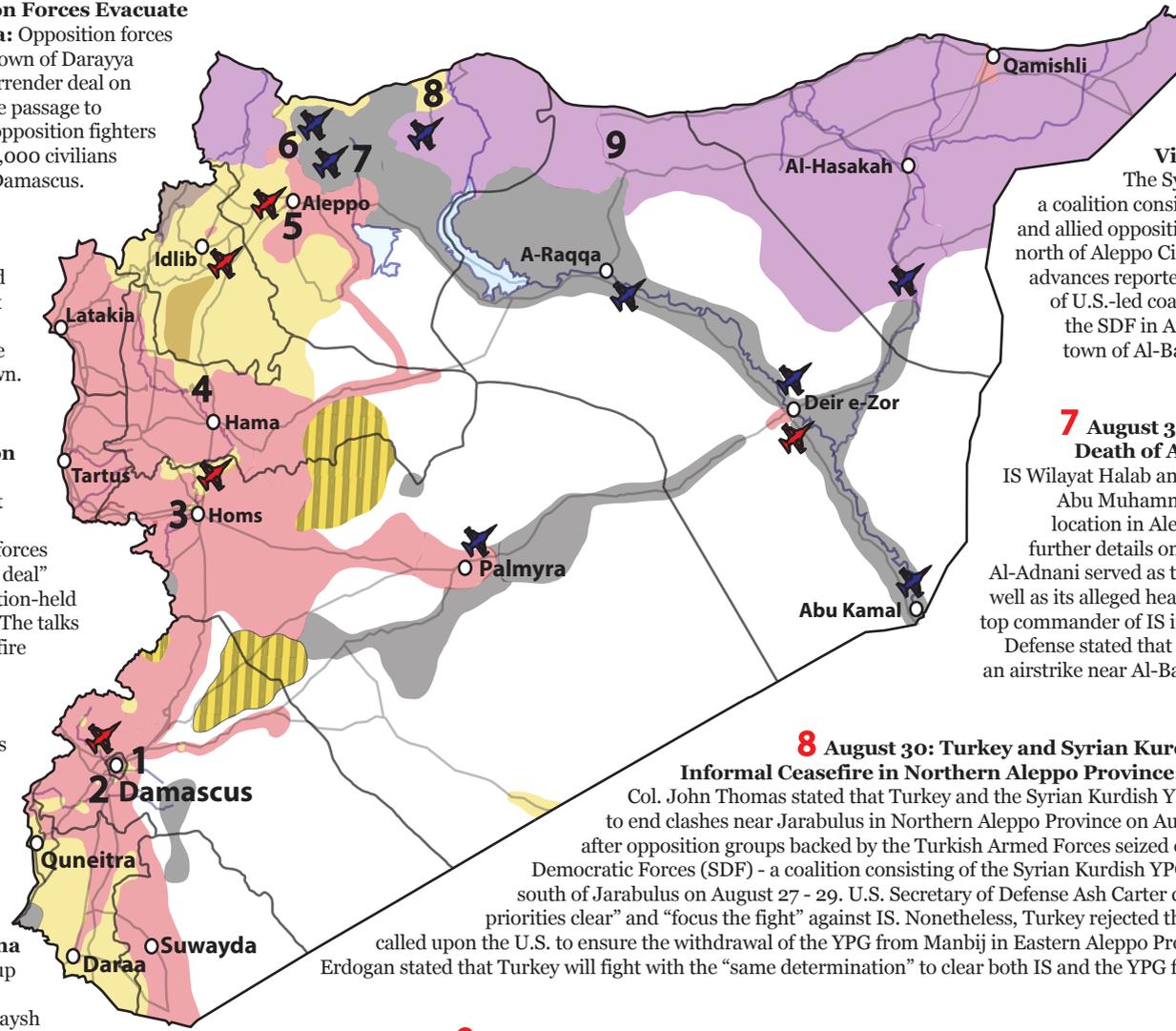
5 August 27: Eight Major Opposition Groups Express Reservations Regarding Proposed 48-Hour Ceasefires in Aleppo City: Salafi-Jihadist group Ahrar a-Sham and seven other major opposition groups issued a statement expressing reservations regarding a UN proposal for weekly forty-eight-hour humanitarian ceasefires in Aleppo City. The statement rejected the proposed use of the regime-held Castello Road as the sole route for delivering aid into the city, calling for the UN to conduct deliveries in parallel through the Ramouseh District recently seized by opposition forces. UN Special Envoy to Syria Staffan de Mistura stated that initial deliveries could only be conducted via the Castello Road for "logistical and operational reasons."

6 August 30: Syrian Democratic Forces Seize Villages North of Aleppo City: The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) - a coalition consisting of the Syrian Kurdish YPG and allied opposition groups - seized three villages north of Aleppo City following clashes with IS. The advances reportedly occurred with the assistance of U.S.-led coalition airstrikes. The gains move the SDF in Afrin Canton closer to the IS-held town of Al-Bab in Northern Aleppo Province.

7 August 30: Islamic State Announces Death of Abu Muhammad Al-Adnani: IS Wilayat Halab announced the death of top leader Abu Muhammad al-Adnani at an undisclosed location in Aleppo Province without providing further details on the circumstances of his death. Al-Adnani served as the official spokesperson of IS as well as its alleged head of external operations and the top commander of IS in Syria. The U.S. Department of Defense stated that Al-Adnani had been targeted by an airstrike near Al-Bab in Northern Aleppo Province.

8 August 30: Turkey and Syrian Kurdish YPG Reportedly Reach Informal Ceasefire in Northern Aleppo Province: U.S. CENTCOM Spokesperson Col. John Thomas stated that Turkey and the Syrian Kurdish YPG reached a "loose agreement" to end clashes near Jarabulus in Northern Aleppo Province on August 30. The alleged deal comes after opposition groups backed by the Turkish Armed Forces seized over twenty villages from Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) - a coalition consisting of the Syrian Kurdish YPG and allied opposition groups - south of Jarabulus on August 27 - 29. U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter called on both sides to "keep our priorities clear" and "focus the fight" against IS. Nonetheless, Turkey rejected the existence of any ceasefire and called upon the U.S. to ensure the withdrawal of the YPG from Manbij in Eastern Aleppo Province. Turkish President Recep Erdogan stated that Turkey will fight with the "same determination" to clear both IS and the YPG from the Syrian-Turkish Border.

9 August 25: Sunni Arab Tribes Form Anti-YPG Group in Northern A-Raqqa Province: Unidentified militants announced the formation of Sarayya al-Qadsiya in Northern A-Raqqa Province, vowing to target the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) in response to its "arrests and deportations" of local civilians. The statement stressed that any component of the group could be a target, warning civilians to avoid its headquarters and gatherings.



Areas of Control*

- Pro-Regime Forces
- The Islamic State
- Kurdish Forces
- Jabhat Fatah a-Sham
*formerly Jabhat al-Nusra
- Opposition Forces
- Mixed Control

Airstrikes

- ✈ Pro-Regime
- ✈ U.S. / Coalition

*Control of Terrain accurate as of 30 AUG 2016



©2016 by the Institute for the Study of War