

Syria Update

26 July 2021 | Vol. 4 | No. 29

Weekly Political, Economic, and Security Outlook

Inside >>

Dar'a Siege Ends as New Settlement Gives Damascus Upper Hand

Government forces relaxed some terms, but still achieved their main objectives

Pg 4

Chinese Foreign Minister Visits Damascus, A Wartime First

The visit has dredged up old debates but reveals little about Chinese interests in Syria

Pg 4

Deir-ez-Zor Civil Council Bans Former Employees from NGOs Jobs for 6 Months

As internal brain drain increases, the Autonomous Administration restricts employee freedoms

Pg 5

Idleb bombardment Intensifies, But No Step Change Is in Sight

Bombardment of Idleb has increased in intensity following the elections

Pg 5

Al-Assad's Victory Lap Continues Following Inauguration Ceremony

The tone-deaf publicity tour is likely to provoke anger, but there is little Syrians can do about it

Pg 6

Israeli Missile Strikes on Aleppo and Homs

Israel once again demonstrates its willingness and capacity to target Iranian positions outside southern Syria

Pg 7

In As-Sweida, Clashes Break Out as a New Political Front Is Launched

In Al-Shahba, and establishing a new political party in As-Sweida Governorate

Pg 7

Syrian National Army Launches a Security Campaign in Al Bab City, Arresting Dozens

Dozens of wanted criminals, IS fighters, and PKK members detained

Pg 8

Autonomous Administration Calls for UN Political Recognition

> Page 2



The Autonomous Administration has launched a public campaign calling for formal UN recognition of the region's autonomous status. Image courtesy of Al Mada.

On 18 July, Elham Ahmad, the president of the Syrian Democratic Council executive committee, **called for** “official political recognition and inclusion [of the Autonomous Administration] in all dialogue regarding the country’s future.” Ahmad and the **Autonomous Administration have called for** the United Nations to recognise the **political body as a** standalone entity — albeit as part of territorial Syria, a position the region’s leadership has long endorsed without explicitly defining. Activists have seized on the demand, using it as a launch pad in a wide-reaching **social media** campaign under the hashtag #Status4NorthAndEastSyria. They contend that over the past nine years, the polity and its predecessors **have earned acknowledgment**, and that the international community should no longer **sideline** northeast Syria. The recognition bid is a Hail Mary. It faces a number of hurdles, not least of which is the lack of a clear mechanism for international recognition of autonomy claims, but it has already generated shows of support from key international donors.

International relations, domestic implications

On its face, the appeal aims to bring the Autonomous Administration into the UN-sponsored political process to wind down the conflict in Syria. Currently, this process is embodied in the Constitutional Committee, which is seen as a partial fulfillment of UN Security Council Resolution 2254 (see: **Syria Constitutional Committee: Preliminary Background Note**). As it is currently structured, however, the process excludes the

Autonomous Administration, thereby marginalising the nearly 2.6 million people who live under its rule in northeast Syria. Nonetheless, the Constitutional Committee is moribund, and there is no clear pathway to restructure it to meaningfully incorporate the Autonomous Administration.

Given uncertainty over the feasibility of UN recognition, the campaign may be an attempt by the Autonomous Administration to generate greater political and financial support from international donors. An agenda to promote stability in northeast Syria — home to the majority of the country’s wheat and oil — is viewed in many Western capitals as a regional political priority and a necessity for maintaining pressure on Damascus and preventing an Islamic State (IS) resurgence. Key international actors have indeed boosted the Autonomous Administration since the recognition demand was made. Following the announcement, French President Emmanuel Macron **hosted** a delegation from northeast Syria in Paris. Moreover, on 18 July, the chair of the U.S. Committee on International Religious Freedom **formally recommended** that the U.S. Secretary of State recognise the Autonomous Administration “as a legitimate, local government.” Whether other states will follow — and lend commensurate material aid — is yet to be determined.

If it gains traction, the recognition bid may also give the Autonomous Administration leverage against Western states that have been slow to repatriate IS-linked nationals who are marooned in northeast Syria. Tens of thousands of former IS fighters and their families remain in the custody of the

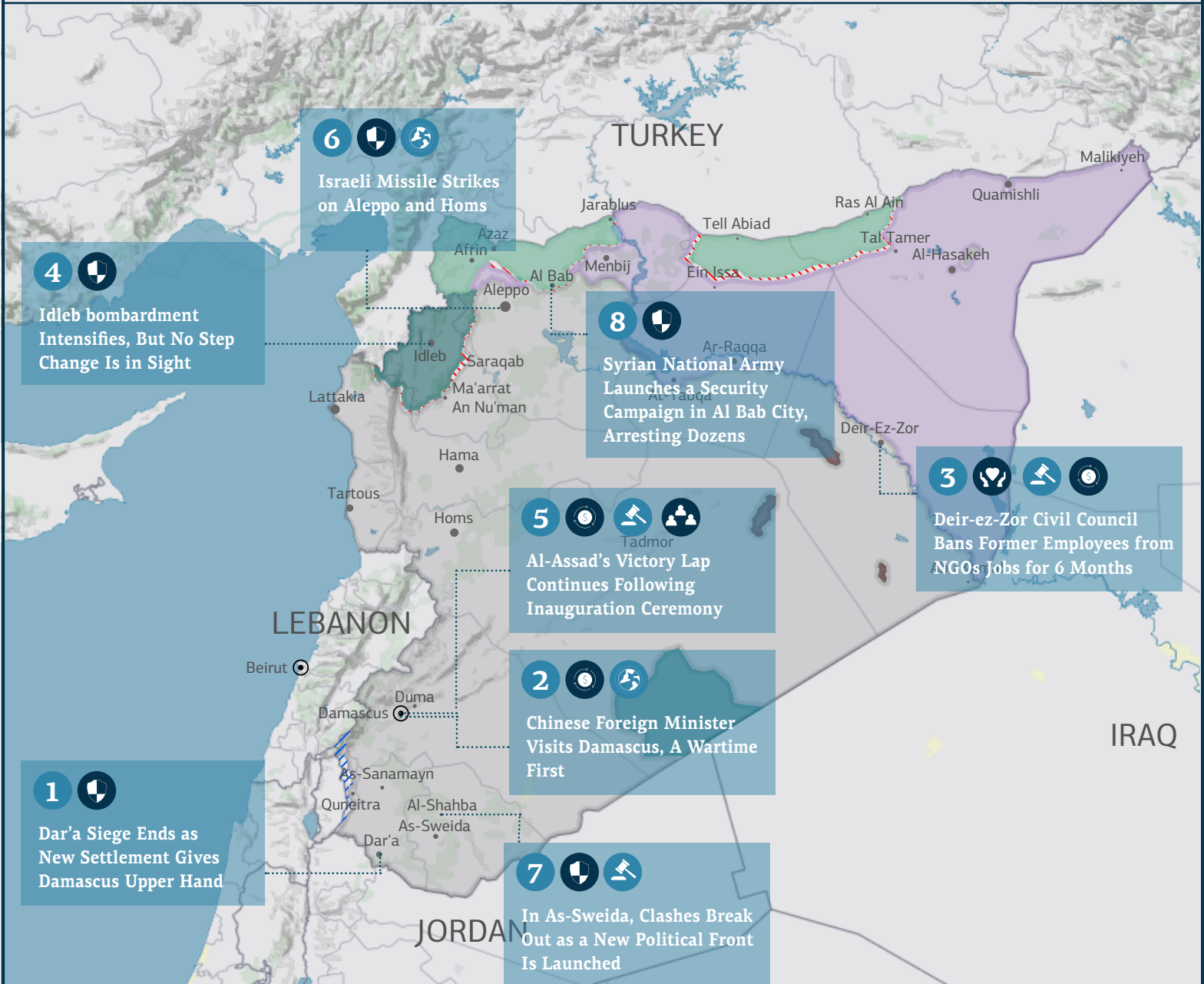
Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The Autonomous Administration has frequently appealed to foreign states to repatriate their citizens and legal residents who are trapped in squalid camps and prisons in northeast Syria. To date, the appeals have generated little action (see: **Syria Update 12 October 2020**). While some states have claimed that security conditions inhibit repatriation, others have pointed to diplomatic formalities. They contend that a lack of official relations with the Autonomous Administration impedes official dialogue over the detainees and camp residents. International recognition of the kind the Autonomous Administration is now courting would make such claims harder to sustain.

In the long term, the Autonomous Administration will likely remain reliant on external support to consolidate and expand its position inside Syria. For years, the polity has been isolated due to its middle-measure approach to navigate the highly polarised conflict. As a result, it has had mercurial relations with both the Syrian opposition and the Government of Syria. The recognition bid may therefore reflect a strategy to capitalise on external support to gain the upper hand against both. Given northeast Syria’s many vulnerabilities — halfhearted military support from Russia, the threat of Turkish-backed military operations, the possibility of Arab revolt, the return of IS, and the difficulties of wartime governance — the region’s antagonists have myriad ways of striking back. 🌐

Syria Update

“ Neither side won a complete victory in the latest contest over Dar’a al-Balad, yet in the long term, the former opposition fighters who resisted Damascus will have lost. ”

See: Point No. 1 Below



Community Size

Greater than 1,000,000 Less than 1,000

Humanitarian Issues	Social	Security	Regional Intervention	Economy	Governance

- Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)
- Islamic State (IS)
- Turkish-backed Opposition Groups
- Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs)
- Government of Syria (GoS)




Dar'a Siege Ends as New Settlement Gives Damascus Upper Hand

DAR'A AL-BALAD

On 24 July, local sources indicated that the Central Negotiations Committee and the Government of Syria Security Committee agreed to terms to end the month-long partial siege of Dar'a city (see: [Syria Update 5 July 2021](#)). They agreed to terms including the opening of roads, the surrender of approximately 70 personal weapons, the settlement of status for wanted persons in Dar'a al-Balad, and the establishment of three military checkpoints to be managed jointly by Military Security and former armed opposition fighters.

Under pressure in southern Syrian

Neither side won a complete victory in the latest contest over Dar'a al-Balad, yet in the long term, the former opposition fighters who resisted Damascus will have lost. In the immediate term, the population of Dar'a al-Balad does not walk away empty-handed, of course. The agreement brings relief from the month-long partial siege and allows the community to hand over 70 weapons rather than the 200 demanded by Damascus, which had been described as a "red line." Joint management of military checkpoints will allow the former opposition fighters to extract revenues, coordinate the smuggling networks that pervade the region,

and maintain some degree of control over local security. Yet, these are tactical considerations. Strategically, the Government of Syria will likely emerge as the victor in the fullness of time. The agreement gives Government forces a firmer foothold at the expense of the former rebel enclave, and it demonstrates the efficacy of the Government's main approach to pacify restive areas: military escalation. Similar outcomes can be expected in other unstable areas of southern Syria, where long-term stability is unlikely, except on the Government of Syria's terms. Moreover, the episode also called international commitments into question. The Central Negotiations Committee persistently called on Russia to enforce the 2018 southern Syria reconciliation agreement, to no avail. Instead, Moscow wielded the threat of Iranian attacks to apply additional leverage on the community. 



Chinese Foreign Minister Visits Damascus, A Wartime First


DAMASCUS, SYRIA

On 17 July the Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, visited Damascus in the first visit to Syria by a Chinese foreign minister since 2011. Yi sat for a series of high-profile meetings with Syrian officials including President al-Assad and Foreign Minister Faysal Al-Miqdad. The visit coincided

with al-Assad's inauguration, providing opportunities for photos and a reiteration of the strategic alliance between the two countries. The visit **concluded** with the signing of several agreements with the Planning and International Cooperation Commission of Syria, and a ceremony to recognise China's humanitarian contributions to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent.

Deciphering China's Syria strategy

The visit has added fuel to intensifying debates, particularly in the U.S., concerning China's role in post-conflict Syria and China's interest in cashing in on Syrian reconstruction. Such **debate** is reminiscent of discussions around Syria's reconstruction, which reached a fever pitch following a string of major Government of Syria military conquests in south and central Syria in 2018. Although analysts and the international crisis response spend considerable time assessing potential reconstruction in Syria, little has yet transpired. The case of China's involvement in Syria is, to date, similar. While memorandums of understanding, contract bids from Chinese companies, and one-off aid deliveries have been part and parcel of China's Syria policy over the last two years, China has yet to break ground on large-scale projects in Syria. One reason for Beijing's limited role in Syria is the decline in the profitability of Syrian markets amid the current economic crisis. China is the **second-largest exporter** to Syria, after Turkey; however, Syrian imports of Chinese goods **declined** by over one-third in 2020. More important yet is the intense internal focus on Syria, which increases the political risk of engaging there. It remains unclear

whether the visit served merely as a photo opportunity, or as the first step in China scaling up its investments in Syria. 



Deir-ez-Zor Civil Council Bans Former Employees from NGOs Jobs for 6 Months

DEIR-EZ-ZOR GOVERNORATE

On 11 July, the Deir-ez-Zor Civil Council issued a circular banning NGOs operating in Deir-ez-Zor District from hiring former employees for at least six months after their resignation or dismissal. According to media sources, the decision came as a result of increased resignations by Autonomous Administration employees seeking jobs at local and international NGOs in northeast Syria.

Stemming ‘internal brain drain’

The move is a response to conditions that are depriving local governance structures of skilled workers. The most important factor is monetary. NGO workers in northeast Syria are reportedly paid between 700 and 1,000 USD, while the monthly salaries paid by Autonomous Administration institutions seldom if ever top 120 USD. In addition, employment with the Autonomous Administration — and the Deir-ez-Zor Civil Council in particular — has become increasingly dangerous. Over the last few months, the

Deir-ez-Zor Civil Council has been a major target of attacks by IS-linked actors. The council’s poor reputation among locals in the Governorate has been exploited by IS in order to increase its own popularity (see: [Northeast Syria Social Tensions and Stability Monitoring: April Update](#)).

Local labour market dynamics are an issue of primary concern for international humanitarian and development actors, and it affects not only governance entities, but also local civil society initiatives and the private sector. The collapse of most economic sectors in Syria following the outbreak of the conflict has created dependency on donors and NGOs to cover basic needs and provide employment opportunities. In many communities, NGOs have become both the chief employer and primary service provider. Therefore, limiting locals’ access to NGO job opportunities could have a dramatic impact on the livelihoods of many families, including the distant relations of aid workers, who often support extended families.

Donors, stakeholders, and local actors are faced with the difficult choice of prioritising the interests of NGOs filling critical short-term needs or local governance actors building long-term capacity. Ways of offsetting the public sector’s loss of human capital include: a) locally imposed restrictions on humanitarian agencies’ employment and salary policies; b) NGOs agreeing on a code of conduct pledging to refrain from any practices that could have a long-term negative impact on the struggling public sector in communities where they operate; c) donors and NGOs devoting energy

and resources to growing the capacity and financial resources of local governance structures.

However, the reality on the ground in Deir-ez-Zor may hinder the development of a mechanism to align governance and humanitarian actors. The Deir-ez-Zor Civil Council is widely seen as corrupt and unrepresentative, posing a reputational risk to donors looking to support it financially and technically. In addition, employment at local NGOs in northeast Syria is partly shaped by favouritism and the intervention of local authorities based on political affiliation and ethnicity. According to local sources, the SDF has the ability to block the hiring of certain individuals under the pretext of security concerns. 




Idleb bombardment Intensifies, But No Step Change Is in Sight

IDLEB

On 15 July, media sources reported that eight civilians were killed and five injured when the Government of Syria and its allies shelled areas in southern Idleb’s de-escalation zone. It was also reported that surface-to-surface missiles struck Foah, killing five people; Ablin, 38.6 kilometres south of Foah, killing three; and Sarja in southeastern Idleb, killing six and injuring three members of the Syrian Civil Defence (aka White Helmets).

Turning up the heat

Although the Government of Syria continues its lethal bombardment of outlying areas of Idleb, including Jabal al-Zawiya, there are no definitive indicators that the Government and its allies are gearing up for another major military operation in the region. Instead, an uneasy status quo persists. Despite the ceasefire that has held, in very loose terms, since March 2020 (see: [Syria Update 9 March 2020](#)), the Government of Syria and its allies have continued **to shell and and carry out airstrikes** in Idleb and its surroundings, particularly since the May presidential election. A major military operation cannot be ruled out, particularly in Jabal al-Zawiya, where opposition presence south of the M4 highway continues to aggravate the Government. For the foreseeable future, deadly shelling is likely to continue throughout much of southern Idleb. 



Al-Assad's Victory Lap Continues Following Inauguration Ceremony

DAMASCUS


On 17 July, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was fêted in a tightly stage-managed inauguration ceremony, following his re-election in late May (see: [Syria Update 31 May 2021](#)). In his inauguration **speech**, al-Assad presented his regime as

... the election, like the post-election campaign, signals to the Syrian people and the outside world that al-Assad does not intend to step aside, no matter the consequences.

the embodiment of patriotism and the homeland, drawing clear lines between “betrayal and opposition, terrorism and revolution, treason and patriotism.” Al-Assad **blamed** some of Syria’s economic woes on sanctions, stating: “Sanctions haven’t prevented us from securing our basic needs but they have created some choke points.” Al-Assad placed blame for Syria’s sputtering economy on the investments frozen in Lebanon’s financial institutions, which he estimated at between \$40 and \$60 billion. He also stated that though they might not yet be palpable, structural economic reforms are already underway. The event served as a springboard for the President’s contentious victory lap of Syria. On July 18, al-Assad and his family visited Al-Midan neighbourhood, south of Damascus city, which was briefly home to opposition factions in 2012 before a heavy Government crackdown. On July 20, al-Assad participated in Eid al-Adha prayers in the Khalid bin al-Walid Mosque in Homs city, which was partially destroyed when Government forces captured the city from the opposition in 2015.

“There will be reform, but you won’t see it”

Al-Assad’s re-election was **dismissed** by Western observers as “neither free nor fair,” yet the exercise in managed democracy never sought to win the West’s

approbation. Instead, the election, like the post-election campaign, signals to the Syrian people and the outside world that al-Assad does not intend to step aside, no matter the consequences. Al-Assad’s supposed reforms will not be enough to revitalise the economy. Syrians’ reality today is anything but victorious. Long queues at bakeries and fuel stations, rising prices, dwindling purchasing power, and 400 percent currency depreciation since October 2019 contrast starkly with the image of Syria al-Assad painted in his speech. The pound’s tenuous stabilisation at around 3,200 SYP/USD is unlikely to hold in the long term, unless the Government can secure considerable funds to rehabilitate destroyed infrastructure and take serious actions to curb the domination of cronies. Rather than serious reforms, however, Syrians have received bizarre **publicity stunts**, including a mosque visit that opens old wounds in a sensitive area and a shawarma shop outing. On the trip to the popular shawarma shop in Al-Midan neighbourhood, the Assad family purchased five sandwiches. At roughly 3,000 SYP apiece, shawarma are now out of reach for most in the country. With 90 percent of the population living in poverty, such a meal — once street food for the common man — is now a luxury for most Syrians (see: [Syria Update 19 July 2021](#)). 



Israeli Missile Strikes on Aleppo and Homs

ALEPPO, HOMS

On July 19, Israeli reportedly carried out airstrikes on As-Safira in southern Aleppo, targeting facilities and weapon caches reputedly used by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. According to some reports, the Syrian air defence system downed most of the missiles — a rare occurrence, if accurate. No casualties were reported. Relatedly, on 22 July, it was reported that the Syrian air defence had again intercepted most of the Israeli missiles targeting Hezbollah military posts in Homs. According to the news sources, the strikes were launched by Israeli jets in Lebanese airspace — as is commonplace.

Different location, same MO

If correct, reports that air defense systems in Syria downed many of the incoming missiles would signal a rare instance in which air defenses in Syria prevented such strikes. Also notable is the location of the incidents. In general, Israeli airstrikes target Iranian positions in southern Syria, and seldom do they single out targets in Aleppo and Homs. As such, they are a reminder to aid implementers and donors devising long-term projects. They must not become complacent or hew to the mistaken belief that Israel's targets are limited to southern Syria, near the Israeli border. The latest incident shows that Israeli

forces are capable of targeting locations virtually anywhere in Syria, including in remote Deir-ez-Zor. As long as actors linked to Iranian military influence remain in Syria, Israel will continue to use these forces as a pretext for its attacks in the country. 🌐



In As-Sweida, Clashes Break Out as a New Political Front Is Launched

AL-SHAHBA, AS-SWEIDA GOVERNORATE

On 18 July, local media sources reported clashes between local residents and armed gangs in Al-Shahba city in northern As-Sweida Governorate. The clashes were provoked by the killing of three civilians by an armed gang from Al-Shahba, leading the city's most prominent families to carry out a campaign to eradicate the gang's presence. Raids on gang headquarters turned up weapons and large quantities of narcotics, including Captagon. Some members were found to possess security cards from the Syrian intelligence services.

Stepping into the vacuum

In As-Sweida, the compounding effects of the political vacuum,

the divide between Governmental forces and the community, and the economic crisis create space for the criminal entities and armed groups that continue to threaten stability in the region. Although tribal and religious cohesion in As-Sweida have succeeded at preventing the region from slipping into major direct involvement in the wider conflict, these factors have not prevented more localised disputes from escalating into violent clashes. The expansive reach of smuggling and narcotics networks is but one consequence of Syria's breakdown and the rise of criminal enterprise.

Space exists in As-Sweida politically, too — how much is not entirely clear. On 7 July, a new political movement, the Syrian Brigade Party, announced its formation. The party's founder Malik Abu al-Khair, a Syrian dissident based in France, characterised the party as a secular political party that emerged in As-Sweida and intends to operate in all Syrian governorates. According to local sources, the party has not achieved significant popular acceptance. Earlier this year, local groups in As-Sweida were prevented from seizing the opportunity offered by the unique circumstances to form a military faction to be the nucleus of the self-governance project in the area (see: Syria Update 6 April 2021). Such efforts are likely to persist as long as the region remains on a semi-independent trajectory and local needs go unmet. 🌐

NGO workers in northeast Syria are reportedly paid between 700 and 1,000 USD, while the monthly salaries paid by Autonomous Administration institutions seldom if ever top 120 USD.




Syrian National Army Launches a Security Campaign in Al Bab City, Arresting Dozens

AL BAB, ALEPPO GOVERNORATE

On 19 July, [media sources](#) reported that the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA), in conjunction with the Military Police and the Civil Police, launched a security campaign in Al Bab city. The campaign, called “Falcon Claw 1,” targeted Islamic State (IS) cells, figures affiliated with the People’s Protection Units (YPG, the Syrian offshoot of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, aka PKK), Syrian Government affiliates, as well as smugglers and drug dealers. According to a [video](#) circulated on social media, the operation began on Monday at 4AM and lasted four hours. A commander of the operation told Syrian [media](#) that 35 individuals were arrested on various charges and would be transferred to court after preliminary investigations. A [Turkish journalist](#) claimed that approximately 50 suspects believed to be linked to IS and YPG/PKK were detained in the operation; however, the claim has not been corroborated. In the same vein, on 15 July SNA factions [announced](#) the formation of the “Azm” (lit. *determination*) Operations Room to counter organised crime in northern Aleppo, which resulted in the capture of around 40 suspects.

A major security measure, but still politicised

This and similar security operations launched by the National Army and affiliated security and police forces come ostensibly in response to frequent attacks in the Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch areas in the northern Aleppo countryside. Authorities often lay blame for the car bombs and assassinations that take place in the region at the feet of IS or YPG cells.

While security incidents linked to the groups in these areas may have similar modalities, that is where the similarities end. The SNA and Turkey often paint IS and YPG with the same brush and identify Kurdish partisans as the source of the violence in the Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch areas, but identifying exactly which actors are behind insecurity in the region is seldom easy, and that ambiguity is likely deliberate. The SNA describes the latest operation as directed against IS, YPG, and Syrian Government cells, in addition to smugglers and drug dealers, but Turkish sources mention only IS and YPG, and likely exaggerate the number of people arrested. Local sources confirmed the arrests took place, but stated they targeted a mixture of criminals, wanted individuals, and suspected IS/YPG members. 

>> Open Source Annex

The Open Source Annex highlights key media reports, research, and primary documents that are not examined in the Syria Update. For a continuously updated collection of such records, searchable by geography, theme, and conflict actor — and curated to meet the needs of decision-makers — please see COAR’s comprehensive online search platform [Alexandrina](#). Note: These records are solely the responsibility of their creators. COAR does not necessarily endorse — or confirm — the viewpoints expressed by these sources.

Will Turkey use Syrian mercenaries in Kabul?

What Does it Say: Reportedly, Turkey is planning to use Syrian mercenaries to guard the Kabul airport once the U.S. and NATO complete their withdrawal.

Reading Between the Lines: Syrian mercenaries are increasingly being deployed around the globe as they are relatively cheap to employ and are also battle-hardened from around 10 years of conflict.

Source: [Al-Monitor](#)

Language: [English](#)

Date: [12 July 2021](#)

Real estate owners in Raqqa relinquish their properties

What Does it Say: The report documents how property owners are being forced to give up their apartments during reconstruction efforts for much less than they are actually worth.

Reading Between the Lines: The case is evidence of the risks of secondary and tertiary harm that exists during reconstruction.

Source: [Enab Baladi](#)

Language: [Arabic](#)

Date: [11 July 2021](#)

Syria’s Assad says funds frozen in Lebanese banks biggest impediment to investment

What Does it Say: The Government of Syria has stated that the main reason for the lack of investment in Syria is due to large quantities of money being frozen in Lebanese banks.

Reading Between the Lines: In reality, sanctions and wanton corruption are likely even more detrimental to investment inside Syria.

Source: [Reuters](#)

Language: [English](#)

Date: [17 July 2021](#)

>> Open Source Annex Continued

Cyprus speeds up the processing of new refugee applications; 93 percent of applicants are Syrians

What Does it Say: Cyprus, a top destination for asylum seekers, has been praised for expediting its processing speed of asylum applications in 2021 after receiving substantial support from the European Asylum Support Office (EASO).

Reading Between the Lines: Its proximity to Syria and — now — Lebanon, makes Cyprus an attractive destination for asylum seekers from the eastern Mediterranean.

Source: [Syria TV](#)
Language: [Arabic](#)
Date: [12 July 2021](#)

There have been over 300 cases of sexual assault in regime areas, most of them in the city of Aleppo

What Does it Say: 363 sexual assaults have been documented in six provinces in regime-controlled areas; the highest number were recorded in Aleppo.

Reading Between the Lines: There are likely many more cases of sexual assault that go unreported due to a variety of factors, including conflict conditions. This is a serious issue that will likely persist until — and long after — rule of law is restored and accountability is achieved.

Source: [Al Balad News](#)
Language: [Arabic](#)
Date: [12 July 2021](#)

Detailed report on real estate sales in Syria: More than 11,000 properties were sold with a combined value of 981 billion SYP through 28,275 lease contracts

What Does it Say: The Syrian Ministry of Finance has released a detailed report on the real estate industry in Syria in an attempt at transparency and to demonstrate the liquidity of the market.

Reading Between the Lines: This detailed report could very well be an attempt by the Government of Syria to draw attention away from almost all other sectors of the economy, which are essentially collapsing. Many Syrians who have lost their homes are unable to reclaim them, begging the question of who is buying property in Syria.

Source: [Business 2 Business](#)
Language: [Arabic](#)
Date: [15 July 2021](#)

An attempt to decipher the “code” of the oil agreement between the Autonomous Administration and the American “Delta” company (Part 1)

What Does it Say: Questions are still swirling around the nearly year-old deal between the Autonomous Administration and Delta Crescent Energy.

Reading Between the Lines: With a new administration in the U.S. the deal appears to be on hold.

Source: [Syria Untold](#)
Language: [Arabic](#)
Date: [12 July 2021](#)

Humanitarian corridor in Aleppo comes under shelling by Turkey-controlled armed units

What Does it Say: The report contends that a humanitarian corridor in the Aleppo Governorate came under shelling as different Turkish-backed groups clashed near Al-Bab

Reading Between the Lines: The Russian claim is all smoke and no fire, as the referenced crossing is not in operation, and its humanitarian credentials are dubious at best. Humanitarian corridors have seldom worked, and Russia’s advocacy for increased reliance on such corridors is a deliberate attempt to undermine the credibility of the opposition.

Source: [TASS Russian News Agency](#)
Language: [English](#)
Date: [20 July 2021](#)

Formality, Informality, and the Resilience of the Syrian Political Economy

What Does it Say: The article explores the eventuality of state collapse in Syria and posits that it should be avoided lest the political elite lose all pretence of formality.
Reading Between the Lines: A collapse of the Syrian hierarchical structure would likely cause the country to descend into an even worse abyss where clientelism reigns supreme and those who have power will lord it over those who do not.

Source: [Geneva Center for Security Policy](#)
Language: [English](#)
Date: [23 June 2021](#)

The Wartime and Post-Conflict Syria project (WPCS) is funded by the European Union and implemented through a partnership between the European University Institute (Middle East Directions Programme) and the Center for Operational Analysis and Research (COAR). WPCS will provide operational and strategic analysis to policymakers and programmers concerning prospects, challenges, trends, and policy options with respect to a mid-conflict and post-conflict Syria. WPCS also aims to stimulate new approaches and policy responses to the Syrian conflict through a regular dialogue between researchers, policymakers and donors, and implementers, as well as to build a new network of Syrian researchers who will contribute to research informing international policy and practice related to their country.

The content compiled and presented by COAR is by no means exhaustive and does not reflect COAR's formal position, political or otherwise, on the aforementioned topics. The information, assessments, and analysis provided by COAR are only to inform humanitarian and development programs and policy. While this publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union, its contents are the sole responsibility of COAR Global LTD, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

Contact:

syria-update@coar-global.org

