

Syria Update

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

Cross-Line Convoy Sets up Debate on Early Recovery and Cross-Border Quid Pro Quo

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Watad Petroleum Prices Oil in USD, Abandoning the Turbulent Turkish Lira

The adaptation provides stability for Watad but will exacerbate Idlib's cost-of-living crisis. Pg 6

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Ministry of Education To Bar Unvaccinated Visitors from Its Institutions

The Syrian Government's Ministry of Education will ban unvaccinated visitors from entering its institutions starting January 2022. Pg 8

A WFP convoy enters Idlib from Aleppo. The cross-line convoy is only the second since the passage of UN Resolution 2585, which will expire in July 2022. The convoy is likely to kick off discussion of access to all of northwest Syria and whether donor governments will support early recovery and cross-line access to shore up aid delivery from Turkey. Image courtesy of Syria Post.



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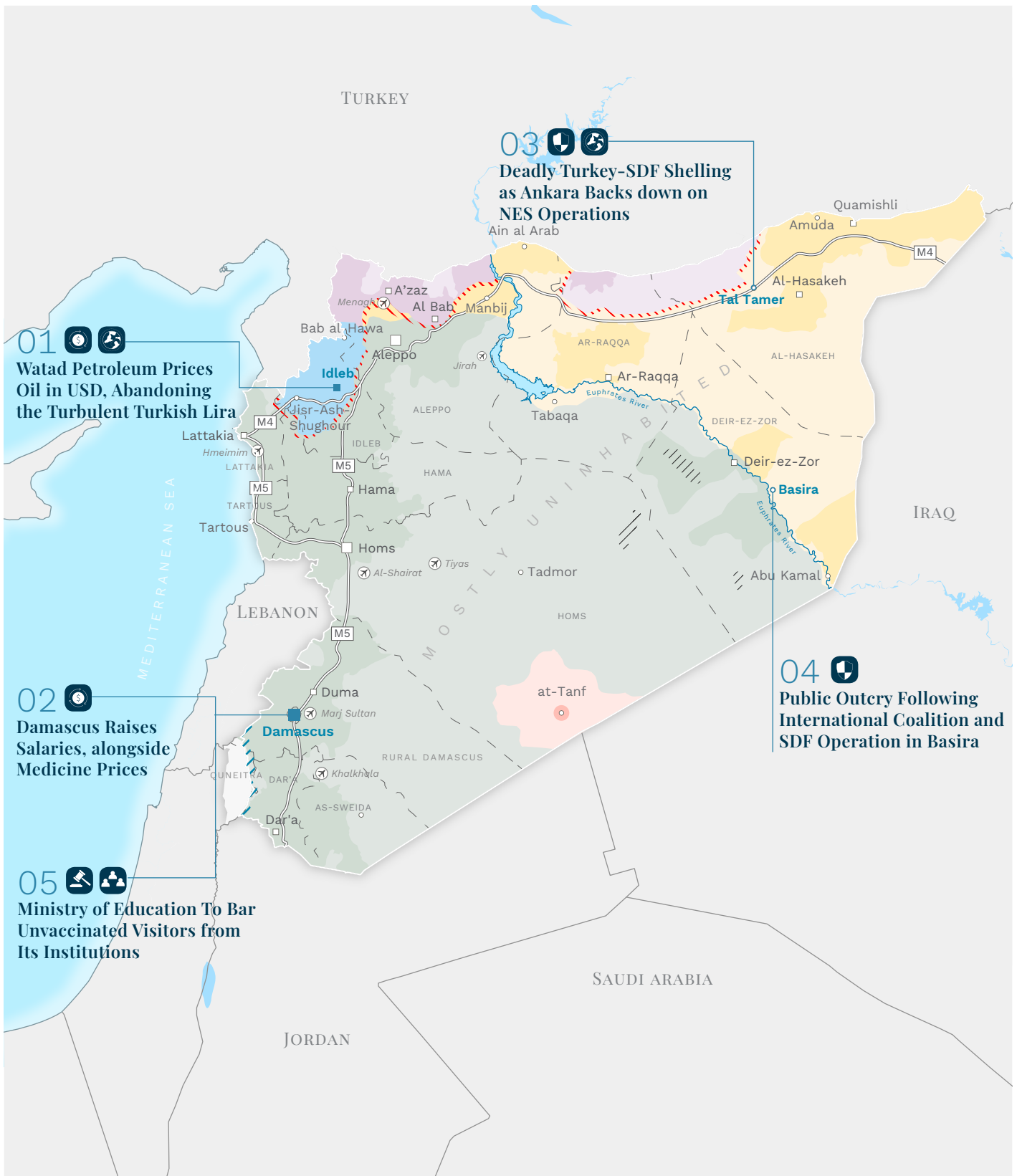
WEEKLY SYRIA UPDATE DIGEST

The following is a brief synopsis of the *In-Depth Analysis* section:

ON 9 December, a UN convoy reached Idlib from Government of Syria-held Aleppo Governorate. The convoy is the second of its type, and it casts attention on the fast-approaching milestone in aid delivery in Syria: the six-month mark of the current cross-border authorisation, UN Security Council Resolution 2585. Although the authorisation is generally not seen as being in serious jeopardy until July 2022, Russia is expected to put up a fight in January. In so doing, it is likely to spark discussion over its expected demand for renewal: greater investment in early recovery activities in Syria. While donors have often dismissed an early recovery phase as an unacceptable political concession to Moscow and a risk vis-à-vis Damascus, their calculations concerning the implementation risks of early recovery are often mistaken. Early recovery programming may offer greater flexibility, heightened conditionality, and more control over the impact of aid projects on the ground. Such activities are not without risk, however, and donors must begin thinking about early recovery now, particularly if political winds shift and a greater emphasis on early recovery programming becomes the only way of retaining access to Idlib.

The following is a brief synopsis of the *Whole-of-Syria Review*:

- 01 On 12 December, Watad Petroleum Company shifted its fuel prices from Turkish lira to US dollars, amid a leap in the cost of fuel. While likely a short-term measure to provide stability for Watad stakeholders, abandoning the Turkish lira is a necessity due to currency volatility in Turkey, and Syrians in all areas will feel the consequences.
- 02 On 15 December, President Bashar al-Assad issued a decree increasing salaries for both civilian and military public-sector workers by 30 percent. The benefits to workers of this increase are likely to be short lived, however, as general price inflation erodes the real terms value of their salaries.
- 03 On 13 December, Turkish forces shelled rural Tal Tamer, in the northwest countryside of Al-Hasakeh, two days after two SDF combatants were killed by shelling. Despite the tit-for-tat attacks and continued shelling along the Turkey-Syria border, Ankara's posture in recent weeks suggests that it has backed down — at least for the time being — from previous threats of renewed assault on SDF-held territory in northeast Syria.
- 04 On 13 December, the International Coalition along with the SDF conducted a raid on the city of Basira in Deir-ez-Zor's eastern countryside, resulting in the deaths of four men and the detention of several others with alleged links to the IS. While the scope of the International Coalition's involvement in the fight against the IS has been elevated, there is little to suggest that it will affect the frequency of IS hit-and-run operations in the near future.
- 05 The Government of Syria's Minister of Education announced a decision that prevents unvaccinated visitors — excluding students and employees — from entering the ministry's institutions. The decision aims to increase the number of vaccinated people, but barriers to vaccine access are high in Syria, and the spread of a worrying new variant may create further difficulties for Syria's little-vaccinated population.



Population Density

- Major city (750,000+)
- City (100,000+)
- Town (25,000+)

- - Governorate
- ✈ Military airbase

100 km

Territorial Control

LOW POPULATION DENSITY

- Government of Syria
- Syrian Democratic Forces
- Syrian National Army
- US-Backed Opposition Groups
- Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham
- ▨ Islamic State presence
- ▨ Contested area
- ▨ UN Disengagement Observer Force

Type Of Incident

- Humanitarian Issues
- Social
- Regional Intervention
- Security
- Economy
- Governance

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

On 9 December, a UN convoy delivered 12,000 food baskets to warehouses in Sarmada, on the Turkish-Syrian border in opposition-held Idlib Governorate. The convoy, which departed Government of Syria-held Aleppo, marks the second time at-scale aid delivery has occurred across frontlines in northwest Syria since the renewal of UN Security Council Resolution 2585 (see: [Syria Update 12 July 2021](#)). That resolution allowed for continuing UN cross-border access to Idlib from Turkey. It has also set up a series of fights. Moscow will contest its renewal, and the impending battle over access to rebel-held territories is mirrored by discord among local actors in northwest Syria, whose legitimacy is challenged by coordination with the Government of Syria over aid delivery. The biggest uncertainty, however, concerns early recovery activities. A fight over cross-border access in January is likely to prompt Moscow to make more vocal demands for Western governments to carry out early recovery programming in Syria. Such a push would come up against hard realities, however. Political positioning in foreign capitals, donors' own aid preferences, and implementers' insistence on time-honed modalities all add to the limited progress on the early recovery file to date, leaving the Syria crisis response on shaky ground as 2021 comes to an end.

Gearing up for a fight on the East River

By some accounts, cross-border access hangs in the balance as early as January 2022. According to [Resolution 2585](#), the Secretary General must brief the UN on the progress of early recovery action, as well as "overall trends in United Nations cross-line operations," with an explicit focus on the minutiae of delivery mechanisms, beneficiaries, and partners for cross-border programming. There is disagreement over whether further Security Council approval is needed to retain access after the initial six months of the 12-month authorisation. Most observers expect that Resolution 2585 will continue for a full year, whatever the findings of the Secretary General's report and irrespective of Moscow's resistance. Western governments, including key donors to the Syria crisis response, subscribe to this view. Russia is all but alone among world powers in contending that the second six-month phase is contingent on the Secretary General's report and, implicitly, Moscow's say-so.

A fight over the cross-border resolution in January is likely, however. Even if Moscow cannot torpedo the authorisation, resistance now would foreshadow an unavoidable fight at the time of the resolution's scheduled sunset in July 2022. Russia views the cross-border mechanism as a violation of Syrian sovereignty. It demands increased cross-line activity, ostensibly as a substitute. Implicitly, however, heightened cross-line activity is also a means of restoring the Government of Syria's authority over aid delivery in the country, irrespective of territorial control, allowing Damascus to influence which types of aid reach which populations. For this reason, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the Islamist group that governs Idlib, has faced heavy criticism over convoys from Government-held areas. The group's detractors argue that the cross-line mechanism will foster greater cooperation with Damascus, a slippery slope that may ultimately make cross-border delivery obsolete and leave Idlib's residents reliant on Government of Syria largesse.

Experience suggests that cross-line aid is not a substitute for cross-border access, and not only for reasons of political manipulation. Consisting of 14 trucks, the carrying capacity of the 9 December convoy pales in comparison to that of the 880 trucks that entered Idlib from Turkey in November. That it is only the second such convoy since a pair of missions dispatched in late August accentuates the chasm between the wide scope of the cross-border mechanism and the limited bandwidth of the cross-line system (see: [Syria Update 6 September 2021](#)). Damascus hopes for another cross-line delivery by year's end to demonstrate that the system works, but that will be cold comfort. Intermittent deliveries such as these will do little to blunt the needs of the chronically underserved, IDP-heavy population of northwest Syria. Reports that aid material delivered cross-line remain in warehouses only heighten the impression that politicking, not people's needs, are steering aid provision.

“ *Even if Moscow cannot torpedo the authorisation, resistance now would foreshadow an unavoidable fight at the time of the resolution's scheduled sunset in July 2022.*

Doing early recovery without crossing any (red) lines?

Thus, the aid community views cross-line access skeptically. However, if Moscow is unsuccessful in increasing cross-line access, it is likely to advocate more stridently for its other chief priority: early recovery programming. Many donor governments fear that entering an early recovery phase will open the floodgates to piecemeal reconstruction and, ultimately, normalisation with the Government of Syria. Their fears are based on reasonable justifications. Moscow and Damascus do hope to steer programming carried out under an early recovery framework to buoy their interests. Yet this is true of all types of aid. The Government of Syria has long grasped that aid implementation is among the only dynamos of its battered economy. It naturally seeks to facilitate this, and benefit where it can.

However, arguments concerning the Syrian Government's weaponisation of aid have prevented an honest assessment of the shortcomings of current aid sector modalities in Syria and the potential benefits of early recovery. The most notable misapprehension surrounds the limitations of humanitarian delivery itself. According to its [bedrock principles](#), humanitarian activity must — by definition — be carried out impartially and apolitically. Aid actors have long been locked in a protracted humanitarian response which lacks the safeguards that many donors now demand for implementation in high-risk environments, especially Government of Syria areas. Pursued cautiously, early recovery programming may actually increase donors' control and reduce the risks within aid activities in Syria. For instance, moving beyond a purely humanitarian framework will allow for conditionality — a provision that is off-limits for humanitarian action. Additionally, far from ushering in normalisation in Syria, a carefully considered approach to early recovery could allow donors to insist on greater adherence to political red lines. Any such change would by necessity be accompanied by more sensitive monitoring and evaluation. There is, naturally, a heightened risk that projects may be suspended due to violations, yet any such suspension would demonstrate not that donors are passive observers, but rather that they remain in control of the impacts of their support in Syria.

Donor governments facing this dilemma have no easy answers. There is an undeniable asymmetry in the quid pro quo

that has already been negotiated between the US and Russia concerning cross-border access and early recovery action. As the crisis response has seen year after year, cross-border access can be halted by its critics in search of concessions. Commitments to fund early recovery programming are harder to reverse. Donor governments could circumvent the quid pro quo altogether by standing up a cross-border alternative. So far, no such plan has reached critical mass. As such, it is already past time for the crisis response to begin strategizing over such concerns. Although Russia may not demand progress on early recovery programming in January, it is almost certain to do so in July. Cross-border access may hang in the balance.

WHOLE OF SYRIA REVIEW



01 IDLEB

Watad Petroleum Prices Oil in USD, Abandoning the Turbulent Turkish Lira

On 12 December, Watad Petroleum Company, which has a monopoly over the import, processing, and pricing of fuel in Salvation Government-controlled areas of northwest Syria, [published](#) its prices in US dollars and announced it would no longer price in Turkish lira. These new prices represented an approximately 23 percent increase in the cost of fuel, a figure likely to increase further amid the lira's continuing [deterioration](#). The Turkish lira has been in use in northwest Syria since June 2020, when local authorities abandoned the Syrian pound amid its collapsing value (see [Cash crash: Syria's economic collapse and the fragmentation of the state](#)). The lack of dollars in circulation in the local economy means that consumers will continue to purchase in lira, with [reports](#) of new screens being installed at service stations to show updated exchange rates. The collapsing value of the Turkish lira, further depreciating as the Turkish Central Bank cuts [interest rates](#), is aggravating the economic crisis in Idleb, where widespread poverty and declining purchasing power has led to protests, undermining the popular acceptance of HTS (see: [Syria Update: 6 December 2021](#)).

While likely a short-term measure to provide stability for Watad stakeholders, continued volatility in the Turkish economy may see fuel prices calculated according to fluctuating dollar values for the foreseeable future, to the detriment of consumers whose already meagre incomes are fixed in slumping Turkish lira.

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Abandoning the Turkish lira is a major political shift and sends a signal to Ankara that its influence over Idleb, and HTS, has limits. Nevertheless, the main drivers of the move are likely economic, and the impact of the underlying crisis may stretch beyond northwest Syria. While likely a short-term measure to provide stability for Watad stakeholders, continued volatility in the Turkish economy may see fuel

prices calculated according to fluctuating dollar values for the foreseeable future, to the detriment of consumers whose already meagre incomes are fixed in slumping Turkish lira. Despite the growing pressures for broader dollarisation in the wider Idleb economy, a lack of dollars in circulation will prove difficult to surmount. Idleb's economic isolation means the only viable alternative is the Syrian pound, a return to which is unpalatable for HTS and strongly opposed by Turkey. Even if the Turkish lira stabilises, increased prices are likely to endure as merchants and producers hedge against future uncertainty.

Turkey is a source of remittances and goods for all of Syria, and the shrinking economic power of those in Turkey will negatively affect Syrians in all regions. The most pronounced impact will be in the northwest, however. Given the central role of fuel in any economy, the cost increase resulting from the shift to dollar pricing is likely to have knock-on effects across all sectors and further exacerbate the dire living conditions of the majority of Idleb's residents. Though any significant challenge to the authority of HTS and its leader, Abu Mohammad al-Jolani, is unlikely in the short term, their inability to provide economic stability and basic needs to the population will further fuel grievances that could develop into opposition and factionalism. With no real control over the value of the currency, and limited means to alleviate the effects of its deterioration, al-Jolani will be hoping as much as anyone that Ankara's "[unorthodox](#)" monetary policy will bear fruit.



02 ALL OF SYRIA (DAMASCUS)

Damascus Raises Salaries, alongside Medicine Prices

On 15 December, President Bashar al-Assad [issued](#) Legislative Decree No. 29 (2021), increasing salaries for both civilian and military public-sector workers by 30 percent, as well as increasing the general minimum wage for the private sector by the same percentage, to 92,970 Syrian pounds per month. This salary increase comes relatively shortly after the previous increase announced in July (see [Syria Update: July 19, 2021](#)), which was only the sixth such increase since the beginning of the conflict. Given the relative stability of the Syrian pound since July, the new minimum wages mark an increase of around 20 percent in salaries when converted to US dollars, though still well below the equivalent

salary in 2016. In addition to salary increases, the “family compensation” paid to state employees, based on their having a spouse and their number of children, was also increased.

Giving With One Hand, Taking Away With the Other

The state is Syria’s largest employer, and it sets the standard for salaries across the country, including for the aid sector. The benefits to workers of this increase are likely to be short lived, however, as general price inflation erodes the real value of their salaries. Indeed, the salary increases are likely to increase inflationary pressures themselves, as there are few signs of economic growth or wider availability of goods throughout the country, with shortages of basic supplies, such as bread and fuel, the norm. Subsidised fuel allocations are capped at 50 litres per month per family, insufficient for an average household’s needs, with black market rates more than eight times higher than the subsidised price.

Absent increased direct revenues to the state, and with no appetite to print money given its destabilising effects on the value of the currency, the Government of Syria will likely have no option but to further decrease subsidies in order to pay for its increased salary expenditures. Indeed, one day after the announcement of the salary increase, the head of the Syrian Pharmacists Syndicate announced an increase in the price of medicines, also by 30 percent. The Government of Syria has few tools available to tackle the long-term economic crisis and stagnation gripping the country, and the widespread poverty it has precipitated. Short-term measures, such as these salary increases, give the impression that the Government is doing something, with no guarantees that it will not end up doing more harm than good.

Scale	Minimum Wage	
	SYP	USD
PhD	112,116	31.58
Master’s	107,690	30.34
Diploma	104,745	29.51
University	103,838	29.25
Technical College	100,523	28.32
High School	98,339	27.70
General High School	95,346	26.86
Category IV	93,630	26.37



03 TAL TAMER; AL-HASAKEH

Deadly Turkey–SDF Shelling as Ankara Backs down on NES Operations

On 13 December, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that Turkish forces had shelled rural Tal Tamer, in the northwest countryside of Al-Hasakeh. The attack targeted the villages of Tal Karabit, Umm al-Kaif, and Tel Goma’a in Tal Tamer’s northwest countryside, damaging the electricity network that feeds the town’s electricity station. The SDF responded by shelling the Peace Spring area in the Al-Hasakeh countryside. The Turkish attack followed on the heels of a 10 December shelling of SDF checkpoints in Al-Dadara village (near Tal Tamer) which reportedly killed two SDF combatants and injured others. The repeated shelling is continuing to drive civilian displacement from frontline regions.

All bark and no bite — at least for now

Despite the tit-for-tat attacks and continued shelling along the Turkey–Syria border, Ankara’s posture in recent weeks suggests that it has backed down — at least for the time being — from previous threats of renewed assault on SDF-held territory in northeast Syria (see: [Syria Update 19 October 2021](#)). Despite what amounted to an ultimatum by Turkey, senior Turkish officials have reportedly stated that the threatened major military operations will not be launched any time soon. To undertake such operations, Ankara effectively requires a green light (or absence of a hard ‘no’) from the US and Russia. Some surmise that Turkish ambitions of launching a military operation in the area adjacent to the Peace Spring and Euphrates Shield areas was stymied by US pressure. It is also true that the Turkish government has been beset by a domestic situation characterised by the unprecedented depreciation of the Turkish lira. Whatever the case, Turkish shelling on SDF locations is likely to continue so long as Turkey perceives threats to its national security along its southern border. Drone attacks are also likely, targeting specific SDF-affiliated individuals. From a humanitarian point

Turkish shelling on SDF locations is likely to continue so long as Turkey perceives threats to its national security along its southern border.

of view, the shelling has forced residents of villages in the Tal Tamer area to flee their homes and evacuate frontline areas. If these attacks escalate, or a wide-scale operation takes place, the military action will take its toll on civilians in the area, creating a displacement wave and requiring an urgent humanitarian response.



04 BASIRA, DEIR-EZ-ZOR GOVERNORATE

Public Outcry Following International Coalition and SDF Operation in Basira

On 13 December, the International Coalition conducted a helicopter-borne raid in conjunction with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in Basira, in the eastern Deir-ez-Zor countryside. In the clashes that ensued, four local men were killed, and an unknown number of individuals with alleged links to the Islamic State (IS) were detained. SOHR has reported that two locals were “executed... by firing squad” after attempting to flee from security forces. The operations came three days after unknown gunmen attacked the base of the SDF’s First Brigade in Basira, and seven days after unknown gunmen reportedly stormed local administrative offices and threatened civil servants. However, the flare-up in Basira has generated a public outcry, prompting local actors to block main roads in the city with burning tyres in response to the International Coalition’s raid.

While the scope of the International Coalition’s involvement in the fight against the IS has apparently ticked up, albeit slightly, there is little to suggest that it will change the nature and frequency of IS hit-and-run operations in the near future.

Small steps, but in a worrying direction

The clashes in Basira are a worrying sign of instability in a community that has long been in the sights of aid actors. Although important operational security risks are apparent for implementation in the community, these incidents do not constitute a step change in post-IS activity in Basira or eastern Syria more generally, although indicators in the

region should give pause. On 9 December, the International Coalition and the SDF carried out joint military exercises to curb IS activities that have escalated in recent weeks. In November, the IS claimed responsibility for 17 operations in northeast Syria, including assassinations, IED attacks, ambushes, and the burning of an oil well. While the scope of the International Coalition’s involvement in the fight against the IS has apparently ticked up, albeit slightly, there is little to suggest that it will change the nature and frequency of IS hit-and-run operations in the near future. Since its territorial defeat in March 2019, the IS has been mainly active in the Badia region and northeast Syria. Through guerrilla warfare tactics, IS operations largely target the Syrian Arab Army, the SDF, and Arab civilians who work with the Autonomous Administration. While the SDF insists that its operations target only IS cells, some in affected communities believe that the predominantly Kurdish SDF unfairly targets Arabs writ large (see: Northeast Syria Social Tensions and Stability Monitoring Pilot Project May 2021). Events such as the protests against the security operations have been fuelled by social and political grievances. If these go unnoticed, civilians will be more hostile to local authorities and more sympathetic to radicalism, and it may open the door for the Syrian Government as it casts about for local supporters (see: Tribal Tribulations: Tribal Mapping and State Actor Influence in Northeastern Syria).



05 DAMASCUS

Ministry of Education To Bar Unvaccinated Visitors from Its Institutions

On 4 December, the Government of Syria Minister of Education announced that unvaccinated visitors will be barred entry to Ministry of Education institutions starting mid-January 2022. This move comes alongside other efforts to vaccinate Syrians, and teaching staff in particular. In September 2021, the Ministry of Health launched a vaccination campaign targeting 394,031 people over 18 years old through 199 health facilities and mobile teams across Government-controlled areas. As part of the campaign, the Government selected a number of health facilities to vaccinate 127,000 teachers in preparation for the current school year. Such efforts to control the COVID-19 pandemic are necessary due to low vaccination rates in Syria, driven by hesitancy, limited access, and indifference. The

total number of vaccinated people in areas under the control of the Syrian Government is 448,399, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), and only 271,276 have taken two doses of a vaccine — leaving Syria with an overall vaccination rate estimated by the WHO as being a mere 2.4 percent.

“*With high rates of disinformation and a sense of indifference which Damascus has only heightened through its muddled pandemic response, Syrians should brace for a difficult winter ahead, COVID-wise.*”

Increasing barriers, not access

Although the Government has framed the mandate as a step to boost vaccination rates and protect educational institutions, its impact is in doubt, as the order does not apply to teaching staff and students. More broadly, Syrians continue to face barriers to vaccine access. Country-wide monitoring by the UN and implementing partners has found that 88 percent of Syrians are concerned about the vaccine’s side-effects. Among Syrians, 73 percent doubt the vaccine’s effectiveness, a concern that will only grow as news of the fast-spreading omicron variant creeps closer to Syria. Should early data concerning vaccine efficacy against the new variant be borne out, attempts to advocate vaccination will require more responsive, targeted communications strategies. With high rates of disinformation and a sense of indifference which Damascus has only heightened through its muddled pandemic response, Syrians should brace for a difficult winter ahead, COVID-wise (see: [Syrian Public Health after COVID-19: Entry Points and Lessons Learned from the Pandemic Response](#)). If the worst fears of public health advocates are realised, Syria’s health systems may be severely tested in coming weeks and months.

OPEN SOURCE ANNEX

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.

Clan in Manbij Protests the Autonomous Administration's New School Curriculum

What Does it Say? The Al-Busultan clan called for a strike in all schools across Manbij in response to a new curriculum that it claims butts up against its own religious values by comparing the Prophet Mohammed to ordinary people.

Reading Between the Lines:

Education is a particularly sensitive subject in northeast Syria, given the history of Ba'athist policies that suppressed Kurdish identities, and it is a flashpoint of conflict on cultural, religious, and ethnic grounds between the Kurdish-led Autonomous Administration and the Arab populations in the region. Such conflicts are likely to continue, and they are an outlet for deeper grievances.

Source: Syria TV
Language: Arabic
Date: 13 December 2021

Biden Administration Limits Itself to Symbolic Sanctions on Syria

What Does it Say? The piece argues that Biden administration sanctions in Syria — including recent listings for five Syrian military officers — do not go far enough to punish and deter those culpable for crimes in the conflict, including chemical weapons use.

Reading between the lines:

The Biden administration lacks clear objectives when it comes to the Syria file, yet its approach to sanctions has been fairly consistent: clarifications for humanitarian exemptions are likely to continue to be made even as measures targeting military figures and war financiers come into effect.

Source: Foundation for Defence of Democracies (FDD)
Language: English
Date: 13 December 2021

EASO Country Guidance: Syria common analysis and guidance note - November 2021

What Does it Say? The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has published an updated 'Country Guidance: Syria', representing the joint EU assessment of the international protection needs of applicants from Syria.

Reading between the lines:

This update reiterates that merely having left the country can have serious consequences for the individuals upon return, particularly for those who evaded or deserted military service, an issue that has been debated in member state country of origin reporting.

Source: The European Asylum Support Office (EASO)
Language: English
Date: 1 December 2021

Rockets Hit US Base in Syria's Deir Ez-Zor Countryside

What Does it Say? An American military base in eastern Syria was hit by rockets, while projectiles were launched at another. No party claimed responsibility for the attack.

Reading between the lines: Similar attacks have been carried out previously by militias backed by Iran, and they seldom cause significant damage. Many parts of Syria remain unstable hotbeds of violence for both locals and foreigners, and they are likely to go on as more substantive conflict aims remain out of reach for all parties to the conflict.

Source: Middle East Monitor
Language: English
Date: 14 December 2021

Syrian Minister of Petroleum: Arab gas pipeline that passes through Syria is ready to use

What Does it Say? The Syrian Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources stated that the Arab gas pipeline that passes through Syria is ready for use, pending a trade agreement between Lebanon and Egypt.

Reading between the lines: The Government of Syria is keen to see the deal proceed, as it looks to benefit from transit fees for the natural gas that passes through its territory — as well as a political boost from regional energy integration.

Source: LBC International
Language: English
Date: 14 December 2021

Truck accident killing one child and injuring two shows dangers of NE Syria camps for children

What Does it Say? The appeal details how two women and a 16-year-old girl were killed, and two other children injured, when a water truck crashed into their tent in al-Hol camp.

Reading between the lines: Al-Hol camp remains a dangerous place, especially for women and children, as civilians continue to be killed or injured in attacks or accidents. Donor governments must recognise that such risks will be mitigated only by accelerating efforts to evacuate the camp.

Source: Save the Children
Language: English
Date: 1 December 2021

Drug Trafficking Network Clashes With Regime Intelligence

What Does it Say? Anti-drug patrols clashed with members of a drug trafficking network during a raid on a warehouse on the outskirts of Yarmouk camp, south of Damascus.

Reading Between the Lines: Such clashes are rare, and unlikely to mark the beginning of a wider crackdown on narcotics networks in Syria, given the regime's role in facilitating and benefiting from the drug trade.

Source: The Syrian Observer
Language: English
Date: 13 December 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.

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