



WEEKLY CONFLICT SUMMARY | 1 - 7 JULY 2019

WHOLE OF SYRIA SUMMARY

- **NORTHWEST** | For the fourth consecutive week, frontlines between Government of Syria (GoS) forces and Hayyat Tahrir Ash-Sham (HTS)-dominated groups remained static in the Idleb enclave. In Tal Rifaat, there was an increase in conflict between the People’s Protection Units (YPG) and Turkish backed forces.
- **SOUTH & CENTRAL** | In addition to low-level attacks against government-aligned personnel in the central and southern areas of the country, a suicide attack was recorded in As Sweida City.
- **NORTHEAST** | Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) continued security operations along the Euphrates River Valley and in Hasakah Governorate. Five explosive attacks against the SDF were recorded in this reporting period. Agricultural fires were also recorded in the week.

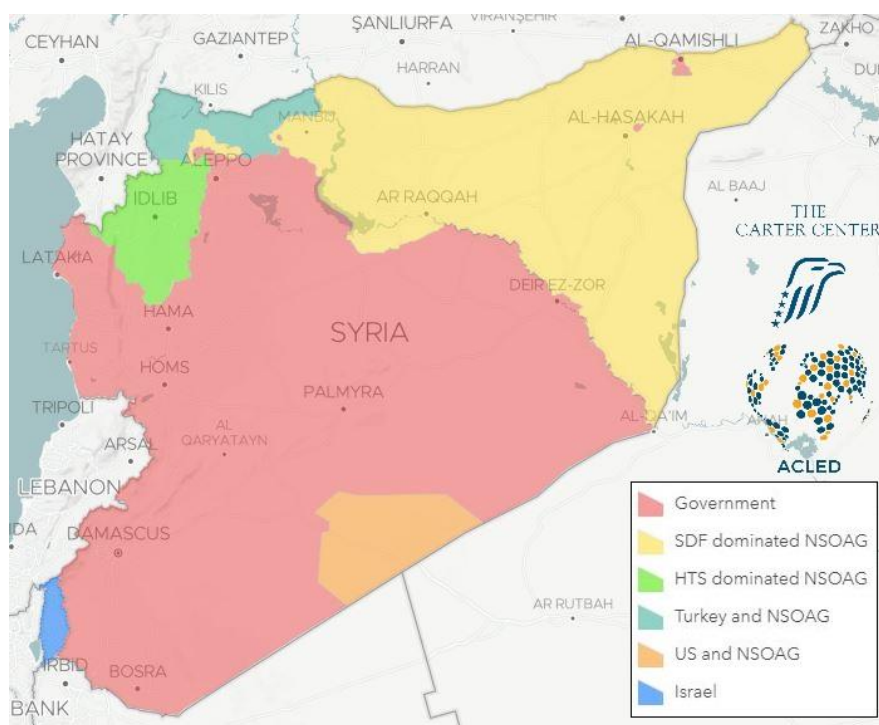


Figure 1: Dominant Actors' Area of Control and Influence in Syria as of 7 July 2019. NSOAG stands for Non-state Organized Armed Groups. For more explanation on our mapping, please see the footnote on page 2.

NORTHWEST SYRIA

Frontlines between Hayyat Tahrir ash Sham (HTS)-dominated Idlib and GOS forces remained static for the fourth consecutive week. HTS and other groups continued to hold the Tal Mallah area, while government forces focused efforts on areas north of Huwayz and east of Kafr Nabuda (Figure 2).

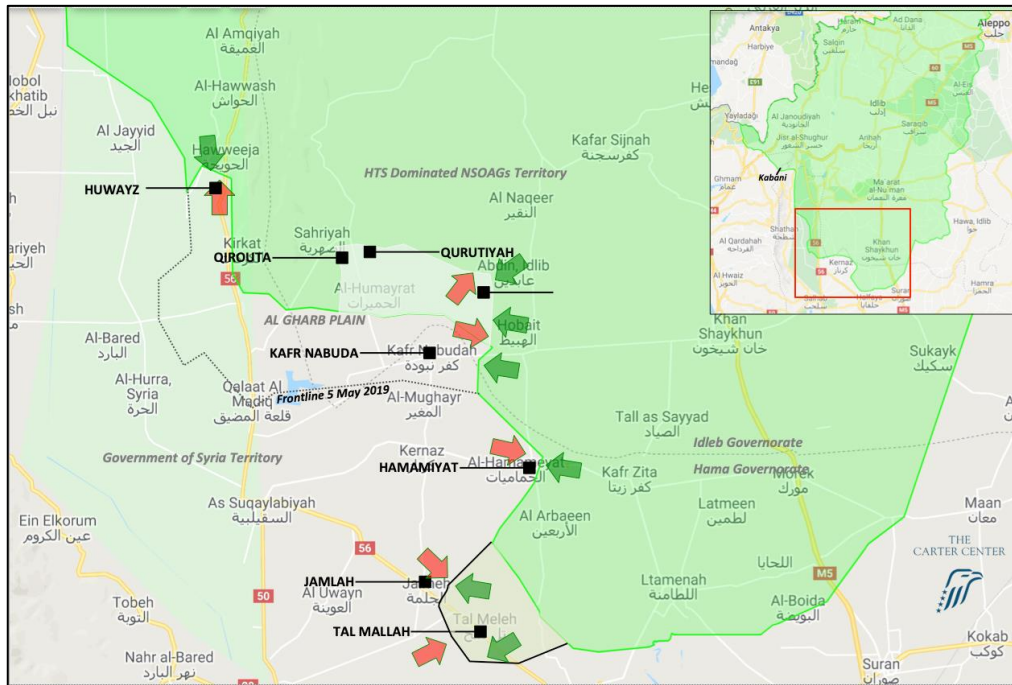
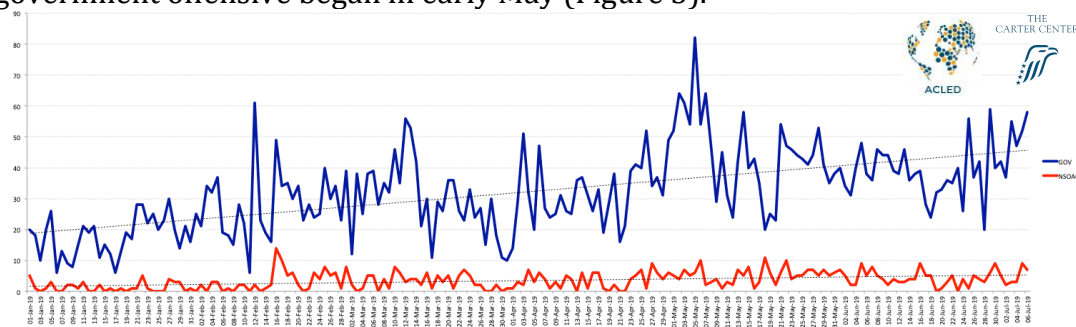


Figure 2: Current Frontlines in the northwest of Syria as of 7 July 2019.

Elevated levels of aerial and ground bombardments continued to target the HTS dominated enclave, with at least 320 incidents this week including Kabani, where fighting [resumed](#) after a two week hiatus. The total number of conflict events recorded in the Idlib de-escalation zone has reached similar levels to when the government offensive began in early May (Figure 3).



¹ Figure 1 denotes dominant actors' control and influence. Russia, Iran, Hezbollah and Iraqi militias maintain a presence in Syrian government-dominated territory. Non-state organized armed groups (NSOAG), including the Kurdish dominated, US backed SDF and a variety of other groups operate in areas not under Syrian government control. The NSOAG labeled area along the border with Iraq and Jordan is a 55km de-confliction zone, established by the US-led coalition that also includes a number of aligned local armed groups. Data collected is by the publicly available project ACLED.

Figure 3: Government and NSOAG (including HTS) Conflict Activity in northwest Syria 2019.

Outside of the Idleb pocket, HTS and other groups targeted with rocket bombardments at least 17 GOS-controlled areas in northern Hama,² and an additional [five](#) areas in Latakia Governorate.³ On 6 July, the Muhradah Power Station in Northern Hama was shelled.

Attacks also occurred behind frontlines, including one carried out by Turkish-backed National Liberation Front (NLF) in Tal Abu As'ad in Latakia Governorate that resulted in at least 10 government casualties, according to pro-government [sources](#). On 3 July, Huras al Din attacked fortified government locations in the Gharb plan, the second such attack by the group in as many weeks.

Inside the Idleb enclave, IED activity continued against HTS, including one event in Termanin town that targeted an HTS-aligned Salvation Government administrative officer (Figure 4). In response to the attack, HTS launched security operations in the northwest, including raiding a site in Kherbet Eljuz village and arresting 4 Islamic Freedom Party members. HTS also [claimed](#) to have disrupted a bomb-making factory in Sarmin town.

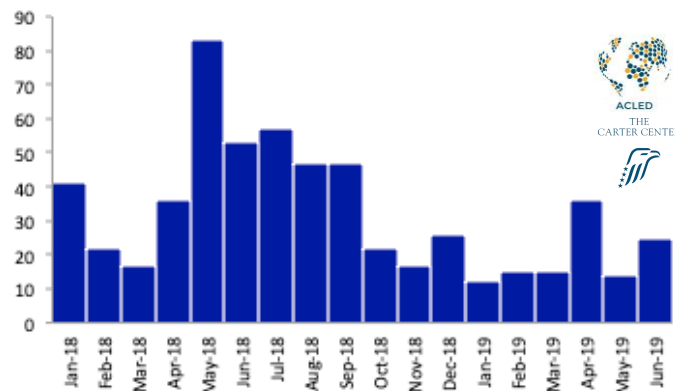


Figure 4: Improvised Explosive Device (IED) Activity in Northwest Syria 2018 – 2019

In Tal Rifat area,⁴ an increase in conflict was recorded this week. On 2 and 6 July, at least 10 bombardments between the People’s Protection Units (YPG) and Turkish backed groups / Turkish military forces were recorded targeting Maraanaaz (x2), Al Malikeyyeh (x2), Mare’ (x2), Azaz, Kafr Khasher, Tal Rifaat, and Tanab towns. Such activity has occurred periodically following the withdrawal of

² Al Aziziyeh (x3), Al Sirmaniyah (1), Ar Rasif (x3), The Artillery College in Jebal Sanman (x1), As Suqaylabiyah (1), Braideej (x2), Fawru (x2), Hama (1), Hamamiyah (x2), Huwaiyz (x2), Kafr Nabuda (x2), Karnaz (x3), Kirkat (1), Lattakia (1), Qabr Fadda (1), Shiekh Hadid (1) and Tal Salhab (1).

³ Sandran, Qinsibba, al-Areym, al-Haruka and Safsara towns.

⁴ The Tal Rifaat area is under joint control of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and GOS forces since late 2016. Russian forces had also conducted joint patrols with Turkish troops in the area since 14 February 2019, and with SDF forces between 26 March 2019 and 10 April 2019.

Russian Troops from the pocket in late April (Figure 5).

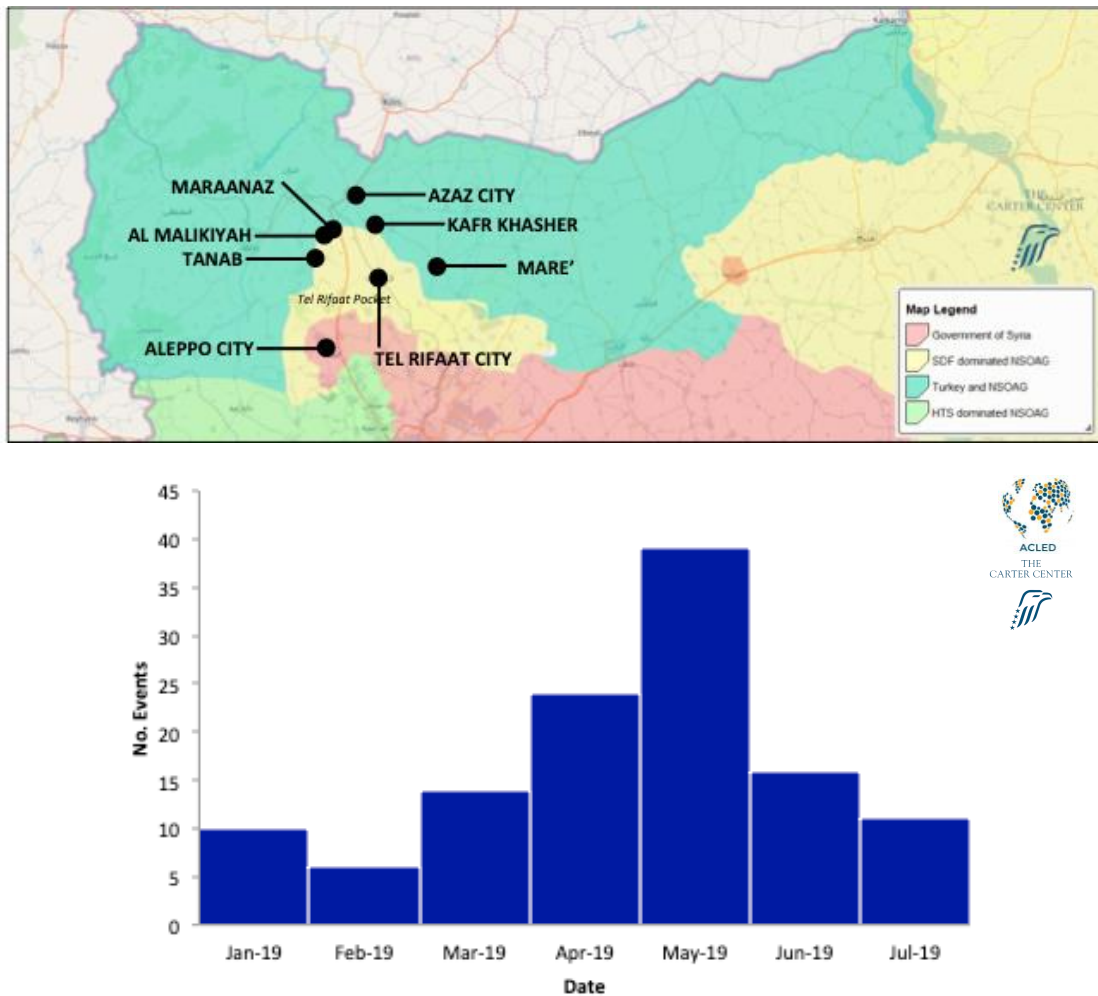


Figure 5: Conflict Levels in Tal Rifaat Pocket in 2019 & locations of this week's conflict

SOUTH AND CENTRAL SYRIA

A suicide bomber detonated himself in the Qanawat area of As Sweida City on 3 July. The ISIS-linked blast killed 5 civilians and wounded 13 others. The attack is the first suicide attack in the governorate in over a year, and if confirmed, would also be the first major ISIS activity in the area since the group conducted a series of coordinated attacks in late July 2018.

Such incidents are not common in the city, with the vast majority of recorded events in the previous year involving abductions (at least 5 events) and small arms fire (at least 8 events) rather than explosive activity, with only three incidents since 1 January 2018.

ISIS ambushed government patrols in central areas of the country twice this week. Both attacks occurred in the deserts between Tadmor and Sokhneh towns.

Elsewhere in the south, low-level attacks against government-aligned personnel

continued this week. Three attacks were recorded in Mzeireb, Daraa, and in Um Walid, where suspected Popular Resistance members opened fire at a government checkpoint. An IED attack against a Syrian military officer was also [reported](#) by pro-government sources on the road between Nawa and Tal Jumu'a. This incident brings the total number of attacks against government-aligned personnel in southern Syria since August 2018 to 155, or three attacks a week on average (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Attacks against government-aligned personnel in Daraa, Quneitra and As Sweida since August 2018.

NORTHEAST SYRIA

Security operations continued in communities along the Euphrates River Valley, as well as in Hasakah Governorate. Four operations were recorded in the vicinity of Jalaa town in Abu Hardoub, Al Izba, Muaayzilah, and Adaman villages, where at least 72 people were arrested on suspicion of having alleged links to ISIS.

Further north, SDF forces also conducted arrests in Shadadah town, Hasakeh City (x2), and in Attalah town, where, in conjunction with US-led Global Coalition against Daesh forces, they arrested two ISIS commanders. Iraqi military forces also [began](#) a military operation along the Syria/Iraq border this week.

Despite the ongoing security operations, low-level attacks against military actors continued to be recorded in the northeast. Four explosive events were recorded against SDF forces in Tabqa (east of Raqqa City), Jabiseh, and Abu Rasyan (southern Hassakeh Governorate).

In addition, a suicide vehicle-born IED detonated near an YPG site in Zarkan village on 2 July. Excluding Shuhada district, it was only the third recorded suicide attack in the north of Hassakah Governorate in 2019.

Northwest of Raqqa City, a mass grave was discovered on 3 July. The site contained

the remains of at least 200 people and follows a previous discovery of a mass grave in Shafa town on 30 May.

Three agricultural fires were also recorded in fields near Wasi'ahm Mweileh and Rabida villages in eastern Deir Ez Zor Governorate. Since May, these types of events have become increasingly common in the northeast, and are likely [due to](#) a variety of factors, such as arson, climate and poor emergency service provision. The events continue to raise long-term food security concerns for the northeast.