



WEEKLY CONFLICT SUMMARY | 17 – 23 JUNE 2019

WHOLE OF SYRIA SUMMARY

- **NORTHWEST** | Frontlines between government of Syria (GOS) forces and Hayyat Tahrir Ash-Sham (HTS)-dominated groups remained static this week. Five underwater oil pipelines were attacked near Baniyas. Civilians were arrested in the Turkish-dominated Afrin district.
- **SOUTH & CENTRAL** | Low-level attacks against government-aligned personnel in the central and southern areas of the country continued this week. Elsewhere, two civil disturbances were reported in As Sweida City and in Daraa City.
- **NORTHEAST** | Despite ongoing joint US coalition/Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) security operations in northeast this week, seven attacks against military forces along the Euphrates River Valley were recorded.

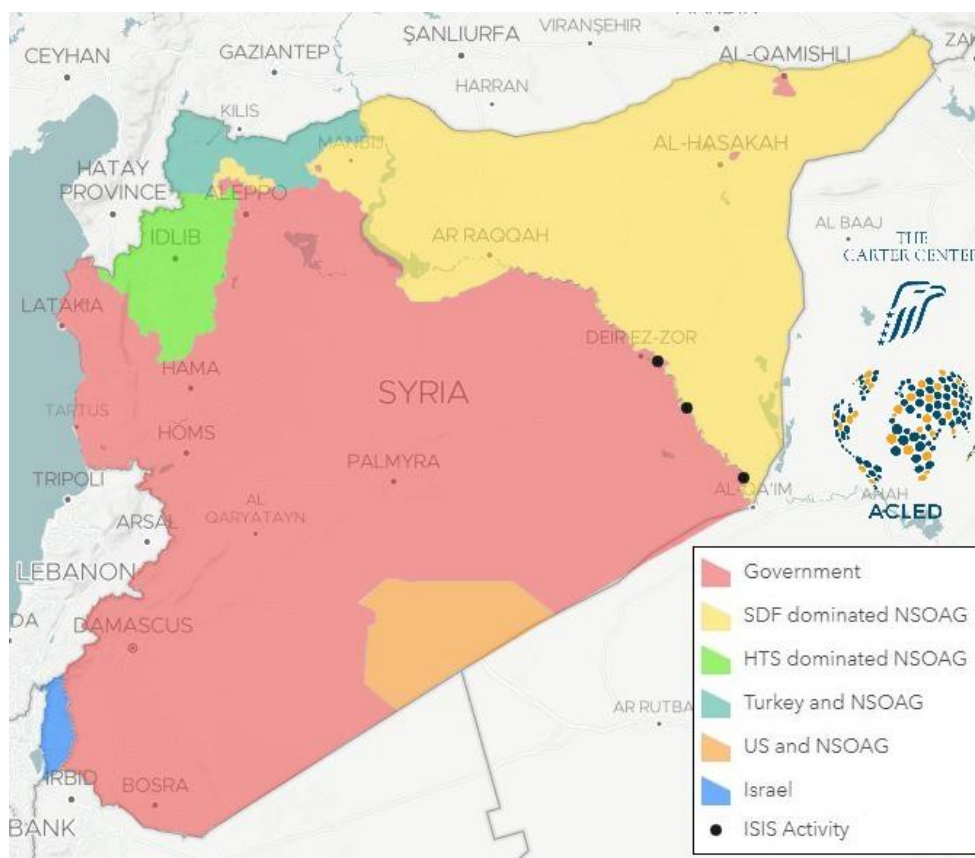


Figure 1: Dominant Actors' Area of Control and Influence in Syria as of 16 June 2019. NSOAG stands for Non-state Organized Armed Groups. For more explanation on our mapping, please see the footnote on page 2.

## NORTHWEST SYRIA

No changes in territory occurred in the southwest corner of the HTS-dominated Idlib pocket this week, despite heavy aerial and ground bombardments, with at least 188 events recorded this week, as well as further GOS troop movements of [Tiger Forces](#) to Kafr Nabuda. Frontline fighting remained concentrated around Huwayz, Qasabiyeh, Qurutiyah, Qirouta, Kafr Nabuda, Hamamiyat, Jamlah and Tel Mallah areas (Figure 2).

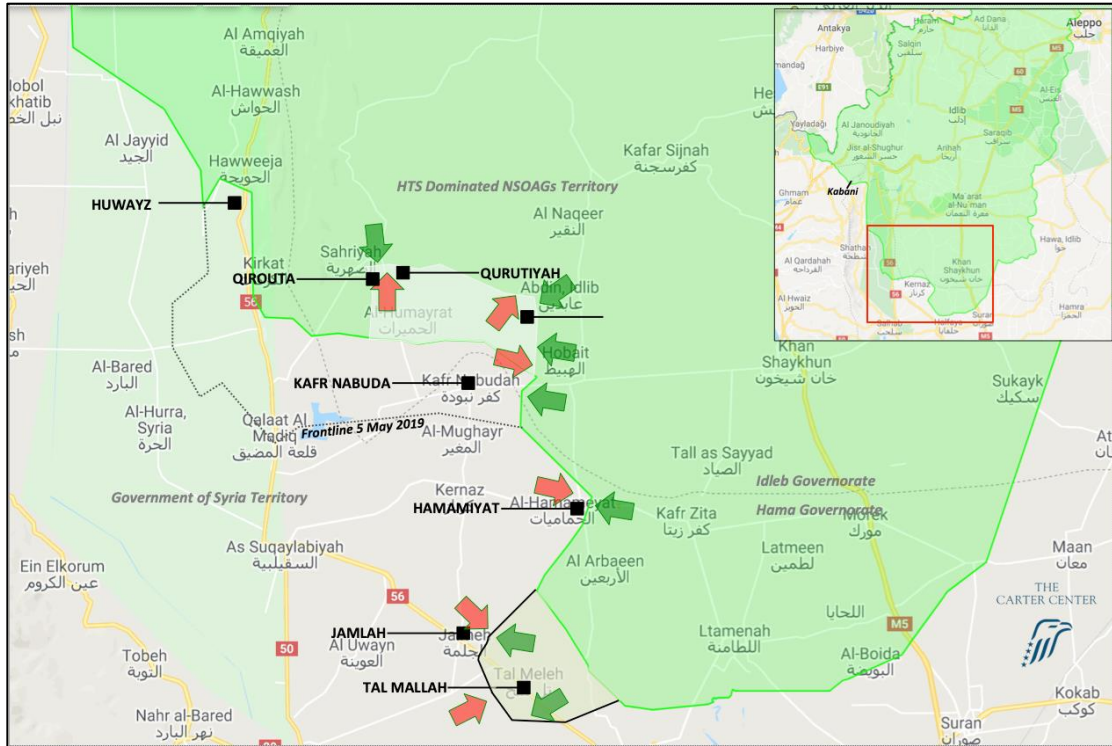


Figure 2: Current Frontlines in the northwest of Syria as of 23 June 2019.

HTS, Jaish al Izza, and other groups aligned with the Al Fatah Al Mubeen Operations Room bombarded GOS-held areas. At least 16 GRAD rocket, artillery or improvised rocket bombardments occurred against GOS-held areas near Hama Airbase Janabrah, Kafr Nabuda, Tal Salhab, Jerniyeh, Hmeirat, Suqaylabiyah, Muhradah, Shiekh Hadid, Karamah, and in Binyamin town (west of Aleppo City).

Weaponized drones were also used to target GOS-dominated areas around the Idlib enclave, including [one](#) outfitted with 10 bomblets that crash-landed in Latakia governorate. This was the first case of a drone with so many armaments being recorded in the northwest.

The high levels of conflict continued to affect civilians and the humanitarian

<sup>1</sup> 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.

situation in the northwest (Figure 3). This week, the head of UN Humanitarian Affairs [condemned](#) the violence that has displaced an estimated 330,000 civilians and left 250,000 children out of school.

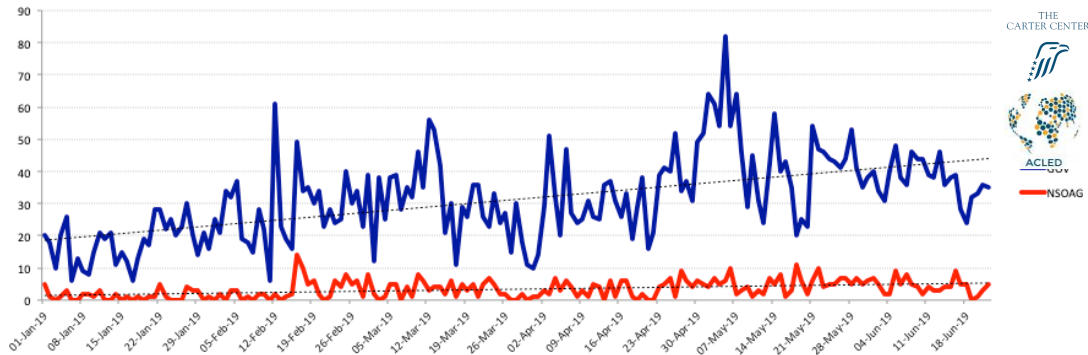


Figure 3: Government and NSOAG Conflict Activity in northwest Syria May to June 2019.

Elsewhere, pro-government media [reported](#) that five underwater oil pipelines off the coast of Latakia governorate near Baniyas town were found sabotaged on 23 June. It was not clear who the perpetrators were behind the attacks, but some [sources](#) suggest explosives had been used.

Turkish-backed local opposition forces<sup>2</sup> conducted further arrest operations in the Afrin District of Aleppo governorate. Seven operations were recorded in Kafr Zayt, Upper and Lower Kafardali, Talafeh, Kazeh, Ain Dara, Kawkabah, and in Qarmatlaq village, where one woman was told to pay \$3000 to a local group to avoid arrest.

These arrest activities build on the previous week's spike of incidents and brings the total number of events in 2019 to 58, nearly 30% (17) of which has occurred since 1 May.

## SOUTH AND CENTRAL SYRIA

Low-level activity against GOS and aligned personnel continued in southern Syria. In Daraa, five small arms attacks were recorded against an Airforce Intelligence checkpoint in Da'el, a local mayor in Nawa, a reconciliation and settlement committee in Hrak town, a 4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division vehicle on the Saham al Golan to Jlein road, and against Atman's Reconciliation Committee Chairman on the Yadudeh to Mzeireb Road.

An unidentified group also set fire to a 4<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division vehicle in Um Walid, while in As Sweida, a Syrian army major and a colonel were abducted on the Salkhad to As Sweida Highway on 17 June. This was the first abduction of its kind in the area on record.

Elsewhere in the south, two civil disturbances were recorded this week. On 17 June, a local Druze militia gathered outside a military intelligence branch in As Sweida City following the arrest of a local civil society activist. According to pro-GOS sources, a small arms fire exchange ensued before the group then [occupied](#)

<sup>2</sup> Hamza Division and the Sultan Suleiman Shah Brigades.

the building, taking 10 Intelligence personnel hostage. The situation was resolved a day later.

On 21 June, a small protest began at the Al Omari Mosque in Daraa City, calling for the release of prisoners detained by the government, as well as the [removal](#) of checkpoints staffed by the Syrian Army's 15 Division in the city. Protests are relatively rare in the city since its GOS takeover in mid 2018; with this only the sixth recorded protest in the city in 2019.

In central areas of the country, ongoing, low level ISIS activity against government forces continued. Two ambushes against government patrols were reported in the Tweinan and Kadeer areas, north of Sokhneh town, that resulted in at least 17 casualties. In Deir Ez Zor, pro-government [sources](#) also reported an attack against a joint National Defence Force (NDF)/Al Quds Brigade force near Mayadeen City, that resulted in 10 casualties.

As previously reported, ISIS activity in central and southern Syria has become common in 2019 (Figure 4). It has occurred despite several government clearance operations throughout the year. In addition, the government [announced](#) that a substantial ISIS weapons cache had been discovered east of Deir Ez Zor City this week.

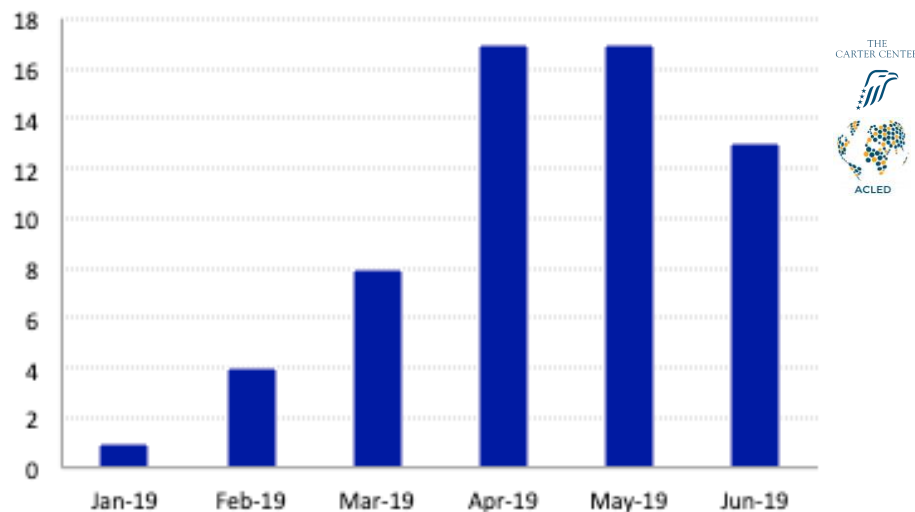


Figure 4: ISIS attacks against Government personnel in Homs, Deir Ez Zor and Raqqqa Governorates 2019.

## NORTHEAST SYRIA

Further joint US coalition/SDF security operations were recorded from the northeast this week. At least four operations were recorded in Shiheil, Mrat, and Bir Shuwayhan, where forces were inserted by helicopter during arrest operations against suspected ISIS members.

On 20 June, a joint SDF/US coalition raid in Sheheil devolved into prolonged armed clashes that also involved the use of coalition aerial assets. SDF forces also conducted an arrest operation in Namliye and Abu Nitel villages.

Despite the regular security operations along the Euphrates River Valley in 2019 (Figure 5), low level attacks against SDF and aligned personnel in the same area have continued. This week saw seven attacks against SDF forces in the Al Izba Oilfield, Shiheil (2 events), Thiban, Mhemideh, Khasham, and in Sabkhah.

Four landmine detonations were also recorded on the Road 16 area of Raqqa City, Basira and Shafa (2 events) resulting in at least six civilian casualties.

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