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Quarterly Review of Syrian Political and Military Dynamics April-June 2022

Acknowledgments

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SYRIA SUMMARY

This quarter, the threat of a new Turkish military offensive led to increased conflict in northern Syria. In addition, intense clashes between Turkish-backed armed opposition groups in Aleppo Governorate provided the opportunity for Hayat Tahrir al-Sham to enter Turkish-held Syria temporarily. Within the Government of Syria (GoS) controlled territory, there was an increase in assassinations and clashes between GoS armed forces and local armed groups in southern Syria. Increased violence and conflict threaten to exacerbate the already dire humanitarian situation.

- Civilians continue to be impacted by the high volume of unexploded ordnance in Syria. A deadly incident killed up to 10 civilians returning from a wheat harvest and another injured three children collecting plants.
- During the second quarter of 2022, the count of conflict events significantly increased compared to the previous three months. Contrary to speculations, Russian presence in Syria continues to be strong even throughout the Ukraine war. However, this has led to a breakdown in diplomatic negotiations over Syria.
- Turkey threatened to launch a new offensive against the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, increasing tensions and clashes between the two factions. As of this writing, the threat of a new invasion remains probable.
- While conflict continued to escalate in northern Syria, a significant increase in assassinations in Dara'a Governorate targeting officials and soldiers with the GoS armed forces indicates worrying signs of deterioration in the South.
- The GoS armed forces undertook military efforts to quash an opposing As-Sweida military and political group.
- Conflict events involving ISIS also decreased this quarter over the last, although the terror group did not publicly claim many of the events they likely initiated.

Conflict Events in Syria (Q1 2022 vs Q2 2022)			
Region	2022 Q2	2022 Q1	Change (%)
Northwest	1132	934	+ 198 (+21.2%)
Aleppo Governorate	691	420	+ 271 (+64.5%)
Idlib Governorate	296	357	- 61 (-17.1 %)
Hama Governorate	110	132	- 22 (-16.7 %)
Lattakia Governorate	35	24	+ 11 (+45.8%)
Tartous Governorate	0	1	- 1 (-100 %)
South & Central	352	285	+ 67 (+23.5%)
Homs Governorate	68	41	+ 27 (+65.9 %)
Rural Damascus Governorate	57	50	+ 7 (+14%)
Damascus	5	5	0 (0%)
Quneitra Governorate	11	4	+ 7 (+175%)
Dara'a Governorate	194	140	+54 (+38.6%)
As-Sweida Governorate	17	45	- 28 (-62%)
Northeast	980	891	+ 89 (+9.9%)
Al-Hassakah Governorate	375	335	+ 40 (+11.9%)
Ar-Raqqa Governorate	397	304	+ 93 (+30.6%)
Deir-ez-Zor Governorate	208	252	- 44 (-17.5%)
Syria Overall	2464	2110	+ 354 (+16.8%)

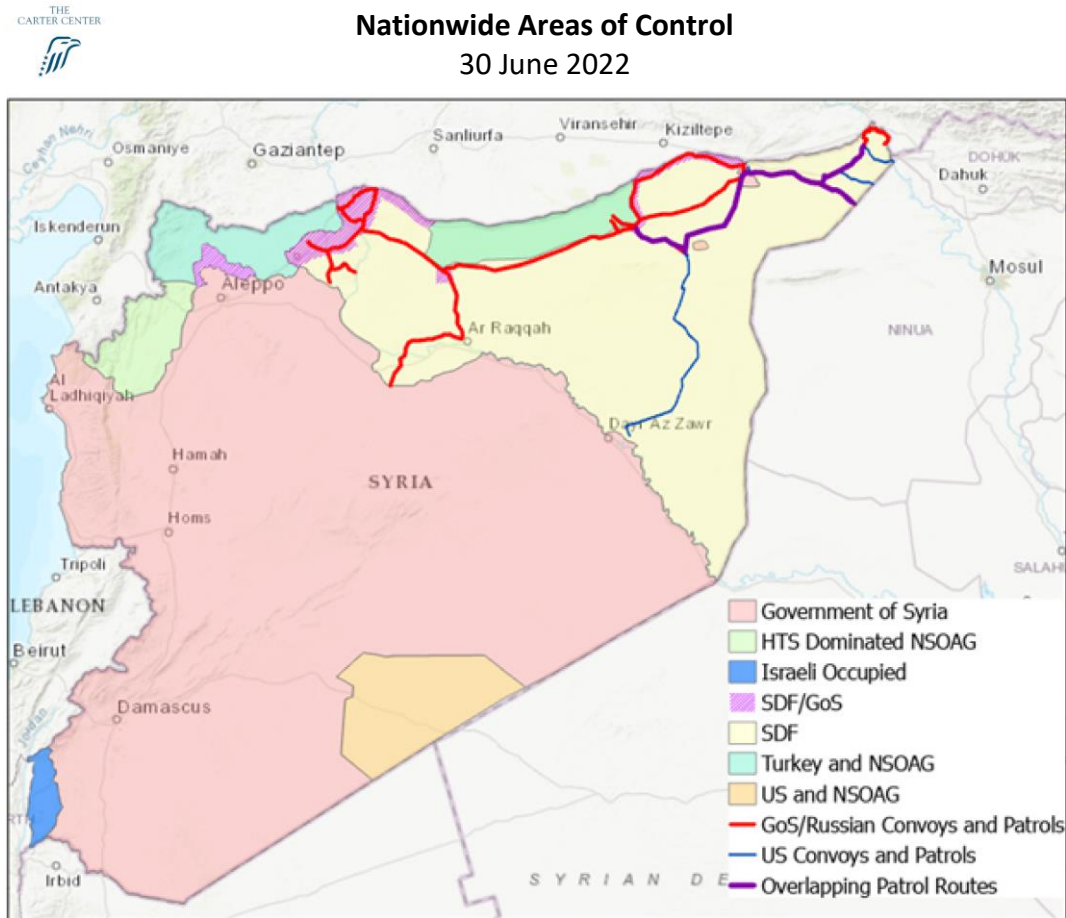


Figure 1: Dominant actors’ area of control and influence in Syria as of 30 June 2022. NSOAG stands for Non-state Organized Armed Groups. Also, please see footnote 1 on page 3.¹

¹ Figure 1 depicts areas of the dominant actors’ control and influence. While “control” is a relative term in a complex, dynamic conflict, territorial control is defined as an entity having power over use of force as well as civil/administrative functions in an area. Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah maintain a presence in Syrian government-controlled territory. Non-state organized armed groups (NSOAG), including the Kurdish-dominated SDF and Turkish-backed opposition groups operate in areas not under GoS control. The area along the junction of the Syrian border with Iraq and Jordan is a 55km de-confliction zone, established by the U.S.-led coalition that also includes a number of aligned local armed groups. Patrols are also depicted in the map to show the presence of actors that may have influence in an area. This is particularly relevant as U.S. and Russian forces regularly patrol towns and routes in the northeast. While they do not control local administration or local forces, there is an assumption of a high degree of coordination with local de facto authorities. Data collected is by the publicly available project [ACLED](#).

Territorial Holdings in Syria by Faction 1 July 2022

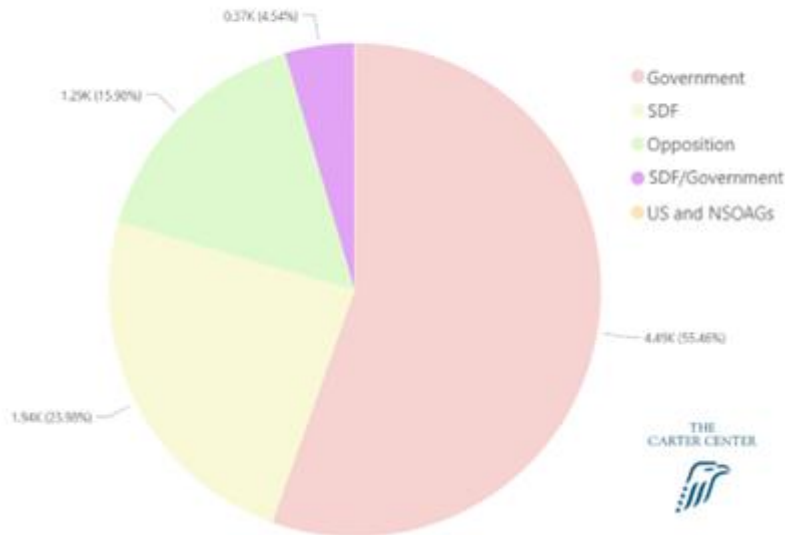


Figure 2: Breakdown of territorial holdings by party as of 1 July 2022. Note: US and NSOAGs control .037% of Syrian territory, represented as a slight sliver in the graph according to The Carter Center's [Areas of Control Point Data](#).

Political Developments

The Shadow of the Russian-Ukrainian War on Syria

There is little evidence thus far that Russian involvement in Ukraine has had tangible impacts in Syria. Early reports anticipated Russian military withdrawal in Syria following the war in Ukraine, with additional stipulations about Syrian troop deployment to Russia to join the war effort.² The impacts of Russian troop withdrawal have been debated as Russia potentially turns its focus away from defending Assad and the Government of Syria (GoS).³

Contrary to speculation, Russian presence in Syria continues to be strong even throughout the Ukraine war.⁴ In fact, Russia has been trying to prove its enduring military presence in Syria by conducting military campaigns against both U.S.-led International Coalition forces, and ISIS.⁵ Reports have also shown that Russia has increased its presence in Syria's northeast region in response to Turkey's threatened offensive on SDF/GoS-controlled territory.⁶

² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/18/syrians-join-russian-ranks-in-ukraine-as-putin-calls-in-assads-debt>

³ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/syria-turkey-military-operation-russia-troops-withdrew-ukraine>

⁴ <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/06/russia-remains-committed-syrias-assad-despite-ukraine-war-pentagon-says>

⁵ <https://syrianobserver.com/news/76253/targeting-u-s-led-forces-in-al-tanf-russias-proof-of-existence.html>

⁶ <https://globalnews.ca/video/8903755/russian-syrian-air-forces-hold-air-strike-simulation-drills-ahead-of-talks-with-turkey>

Alongside military action, Russian leadership continues to vocalize its support for the GoS as sovereign over the whole of its territory despite external threats, in reference to Turkish threats and regular Israeli airstrikes.⁷

Through talks for a possible agreement, GoS and Russian officials have increased cooperation in the commercial, cultural, social, and technical spheres to promote exchange between the two countries.⁸ Russia also appears to be increasing its economic activity in Syria, specifically following Iran’s move to exploit presumed Russian preoccupation with Ukraine.⁹ This includes Ukrainian claims that Russia is transporting stolen Ukrainian wheat to Syria.¹⁰ Finally, the GoS signaled its strengthened diplomatic partnership with Russia by becoming the first country to formally recognize the separatist territories of Donetsk and Luhansk in Ukraine as independent of Kyiv.¹¹ Despite speculation that the Ukrainian war would result in a Russian withdrawal from Syria, cooperation between Syria and Russia remains as strong as ever.

General Licensing

Though Washington continues to reaffirm its commitment to maintaining sanctions against the GoS, the U.S. Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) issued Syria General License No. 22 (GL 22) on 12 May 2022 to support limited foreign investment in the non-GoS controlled territories in the country.¹² GL 22 was issued as a part of the Biden administration’s agenda to promote economic stabilization in Syrian areas previously controlled by ISIS.¹³ As such, GL 22 authorizes certain activities in particular sectors of Syria’s economy that are otherwise banned under sanctions regulations in regions of Syria not controlled by the GoS. Specifically, it authorizes transactions “ordinarily incident and necessary” to activities in sectors such as agriculture, information and telecommunications, construction, finance, clean energy, transportation, and health services.¹⁴ GL 22 does not, however, remove or change any sanctions on the GoS or remove prohibitions on dealings with GoS actors sanctioned by the Caesar Act.¹⁵

⁷ <https://syrianobserver.com/news/75992/syria-rejects-turkish-regimes-pretexs-for-aggression.html>

⁸ <https://syrianobserver.com/news/75986/syria-and-russia-discuss-cooperation-in-various-fields.html>

⁹ <https://syrianobserver.com/news/75799/fearing-iranian-expansion-russia-increases-economic-activity-in-syria.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/russia-ukraine-latest-news-2022-05-10/card/russia-flagged-ships-transport-stolen-grain-to-syria-ukraine-says-XldruHiMyqmJMUYskuRU>

¹¹ <https://www.foxnews.com/world/syria-recognize-donetsk-luhansk-republics-ukraine-support-russia-war>

¹² <https://www.ipost.com/breaking-news/article-706592>

¹³ <https://sanctionsnews.bakermckenzie.com/ofac-issues-new-syria-related-general-license-and-new-and-amended-faqs/>

¹⁴ <https://sanctionsnews.bakermckenzie.com/ofac-issues-new-syria-related-general-license-and-new-and-amended-faqs/>

¹⁵ <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/financial-sanctions/recent-actions/20220512>,
<https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/financial-sanctions/faqs/1042>

Cross-Border Mechanism

The United Nations established the cross-border mechanism (CBM) in Syria in 2014 to deliver UN-funded humanitarian aid to opposition-controlled areas of the country. The CBM initially included four aid crossings, but Russia has since vetoed the number of possible aid crossings to just one: Bab al-Hawa on the northwest border with Turkey.¹⁶ Russia's primary concerns with the CBM are about undermining Syria's sovereignty and the diversion of aid by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (a US-designated terrorist organization operating primarily in Idlib Governorate).¹⁷ Russia and the GoS instead support cross-line transfers (from the government to opposition-controlled territory) and see sanctions as the main factor preventing the effective distribution of humanitarian aid in Syria.¹⁸ The U.S. and Europe continue to support the CBM strongly and are otherwise skeptical about the Syrian government's instrumentalization and rerouting of aid.¹⁹ They have further pledged to exempt humanitarian deliveries from sanctions and continue their efforts to remove unanticipated barriers faced by the humanitarian compliance community.²⁰

So far, the CBM has been critical for supporting the lives of 4.5 million people who live in northwestern Syria, including approximately 2.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs).²¹ Just in the last year, more than 4,600 aid trucks crossed the Turkey-Syria border, assisting 2.4 million Syrians.²² U.N. Security Council Resolution 2585 successfully extended the CBM in Syria for one year in July 2021, contingent on the UN Secretary-General releasing a "substantive report" on aid delivery after six months.²³ Before the CBM expired on 10 July 2022, however, the UN struggled to achieve consensus. On 8 July 2022, Russia vetoed a UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution that would have extended the mechanism by a year, and Western nations subsequently rejected Moscow's counter-resolution, which called for a six-month extension.²⁴ The UNSC ultimately agreed to the final proposal by Ireland and Norway to extend the CBM by six months, the length of time argued for by Russia.²⁵ This agreement has the option for renewal in January 2023 for another six months, subject to the adoption

¹⁶ <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/recasting-syrias-cross-border-aid-debate>

¹⁷ <https://www.csis.org/programs/transnational-threats-project/past-projects/terrorism-backgrounders/hayat-tahrir-al-sham>

¹⁸ https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/conflict_resolution/syria-conflict/the-july-2021-expiration-of-syrias-cross-border-humanitarian-aid-mechanism-potential-solutions.pdf

¹⁹ https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/conflict_resolution/syria-conflict/the-july-2021-expiration-of-syrias-cross-border-humanitarian-aid-mechanism-potential-solutions.pdf

²⁰ https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/conflict_resolution/syria-conflict/the-july-2021-expiration-of-syrias-cross-border-humanitarian-aid-mechanism-potential-solutions.pdf

²¹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/7/7/syrians-call-for-aid-crossing-to-remain-open-ahead-of-key-un-vote>

²² <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/a-day-of-reckoning-for-syrias-suffering-millions>

²³ <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/recasting-syrias-cross-border-aid-debate>

²⁴ <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220711-agreement-at-un-to-extend-cross-border-syria-aid-diplomats>

²⁵ <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220711-agreement-at-un-to-extend-cross-border-syria-aid-diplomats>

of a new resolution. This new proposal also mandates a briefing on the system’s implementation every two months and demands that a report on Syria’s humanitarian needs be submitted to the UN Secretary-General by 10 December 2022.²⁶

Military Dynamics

Conflict Between the Government of Syria and the Armed Opposition

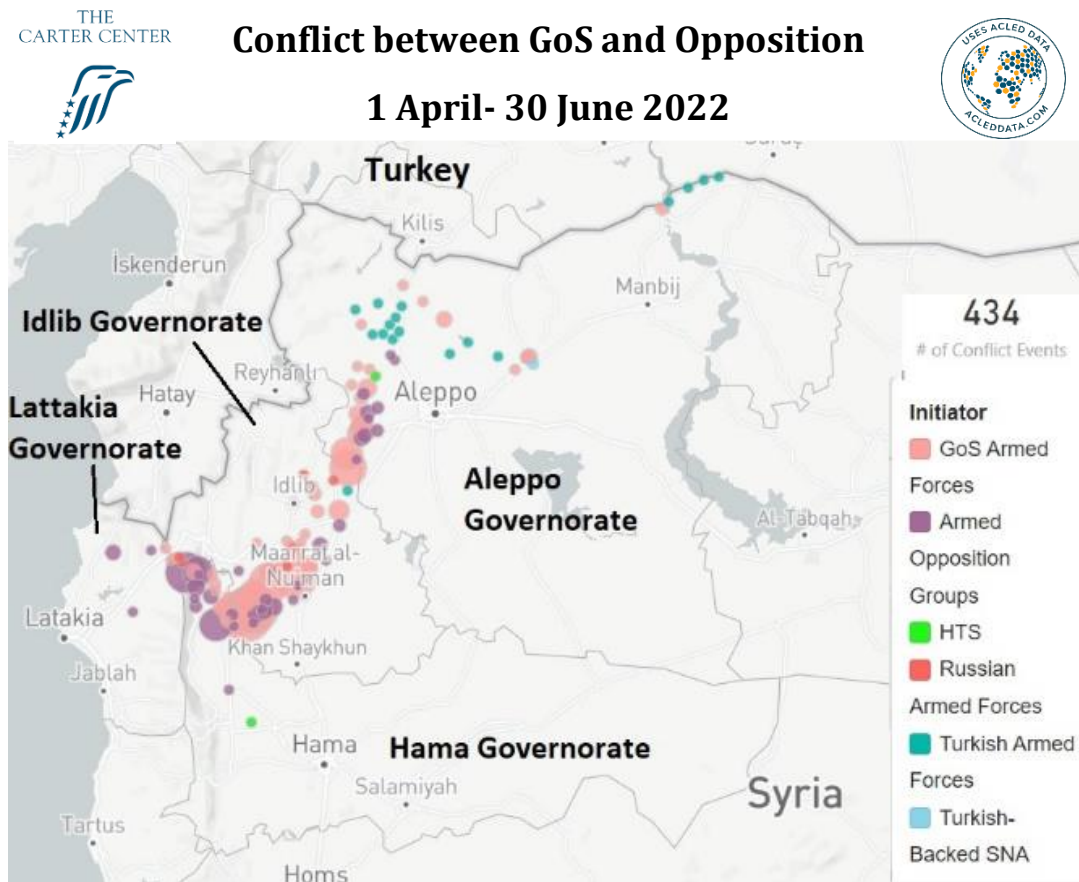


Figure 3: Conflict between GoS armed forces and armed opposition groups in northwest Syria from April to June 2022. The largest bubble represents 41 conflict events. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.

In the second quarter of 2022, there were 434 conflict events recorded between GoS armed forces and their allies against armed opposition groups, down from 602 events in the previous quarter. Conflict events this quarter included 348 shelling events, 26 aerial bombardments, and 59 clashes. There were 142 events in April, a slight spike to 169 events in May, and a decrease to 123 events in June.

²⁶ <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220711-agreement-at-un-to-extend-cross-border-syria-aid-diplomats>

Around 73% of the related conflict events recorded by [ACLED](#) this quarter were initiated by the GoS armed forces, a decline from 90% of events last quarter. Meanwhile, Russian armed forces only used aerial bombardments, restricting their 25 attacks to April and May, with none in June. Around 15% of events this quarter were initiated by armed opposition groups excluding Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which initiated only six conflict events against the GoS this quarter.

Infighting and Conflict Within Opposition-Controlled Territory

The Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) saw a sharp increase in incidents of infighting this quarter, with 51 incidents compared with 11 in the previous quarter. The increase in reported violence coincided with divisions and fractures within the SNA, which saw the de-facto end of the Azm Operations Room. Instead, Azm has split into the Thaeroun Front for Liberation, Third Corps, and Liberation and Construction Movement (LCM).²⁷ Some movements, like the LCM, stated that they never formally declared loyalty to Azm.²⁸ Clashes and disputes over criminal activity or influence remained common among SNA factions.²⁹ This quarter, one main driver of infighting has been the Levant Front's influence, one of the largest Turkish-backed groups that some rivals claim it is pursuing a hegemonic project in the SNA.³⁰ A rivalry between the Levant Front and Ahrar al-Sham, a prominent Turkish-backed group based in Idlib Governorate, has led to further political and military conflict this quarter as well.

In October 2020, a leadership dispute emerged within Ahrar al-Sham. Hassan Soufan, Ahrar al-Sham's former leader, and his followers led an internal uprising with HTS's support against the then-incumbent leader, the SNA-supported Jaber Ali-Pasha.³¹ Ahrar al-Sham reportedly was going to merge with the Levant Front, potentially challenging HTS's power in Idlib Governorate.³² Due to the leadership struggle, only the eastern sector of Ahrar al-Sham merged with the Levant Front in July 2021.³³ The leadership struggle halted this full integration process, leading to wider fissures between Ahrar al-Sham and the Levant Front that would fester.³⁴ On 1 April 2022, an attempt by the Levant Front to remove an Ahrar al-Sham (Eastern Sector) leader from the Third Corps led to deadly clashes in Al-Bab, Aleppo Governorate.³⁵ After the fighting, fighters from the Eastern Sector of Ahrar al-Sham formally

²⁷ <https://tinyurl.com/4ut5p6yu>

²⁸ <https://www.mei.edu/publications/syrias-eastern-factions-unite-liberation-and-construction-movement-conversation>

²⁹ <https://tinyurl.com/3tevwufn>

³⁰ <https://www.mei.edu/publications/syrias-eastern-factions-unite-liberation-and-construction-movement-conversation>

³¹ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/990499fd41e2440e916e59a305ad0870>

³² <https://tinyurl.com/mwth98h7>

³³ <https://tinyurl.com/bde9en5t>

³⁴ <https://tinyurl.com/5n865v9f>

³⁵ <https://tinyurl.com/4zd3swr8>, https://orient-news.net/ar/news_show/196543

split from the Levant Front.³⁶ On 24 May, Ahrar al-Sham joined the Thaeroun Front, the rival to the Levant Front-dominated Third Corps.³⁷

Between 18-19 June 2022, Ahrar al-Sham fighters clashed with Levant Front fighters in Aleppo Governorate after the latter confiscated the former's headquarters.³⁸ In the ensuing clashes, Ahrar al-Sham took over several major checkpoints in the Al-Bab region of Aleppo Governorate,³⁹ progressing towards Afrin. HTS reportedly backed Ahrar al-Sham's efforts and even sent fighters to provide support in Turkish-controlled territory.⁴⁰ This brought HTS fighters within just a few kilometers of Afrin city.⁴¹ Negotiations and Turkish pressure eventually caused HTS and Ahrar al-Sham to withdraw from the captured SNA checkpoints and for HTS to leave Turkish-held territory.⁴² Despite continuing organizational changes within the SNA, the main drivers of division and conflict among the various factions yet persist. Indeed, this most recent episode demonstrates SNA weakness, making the coalition susceptible to outside interference by rivals.

The Carter Center released a report on the developments within the Syrian National Army and the drivers of infighting, which can be viewed in StoryMaps or [PDF](#) form.

SDF-Turkey Clashes

³⁶ <https://tinyurl.com/5n865v9f>

³⁷ <https://tinyurl.com/5n8t4m59>

³⁸ <https://tinyurl.com/2p8dx9rm>

³⁹ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/582578>

⁴⁰ <https://tinyurl.com/yvav67ke>

⁴¹ <https://tinyurl.com/yckr6n97>

⁴² https://akmckeeper.substack.com/p/this-week-in-northern-syria?utm_source=twitter&sd=pf



Conflict Between SDF and Turkey

1 April- 30 June 30 2022

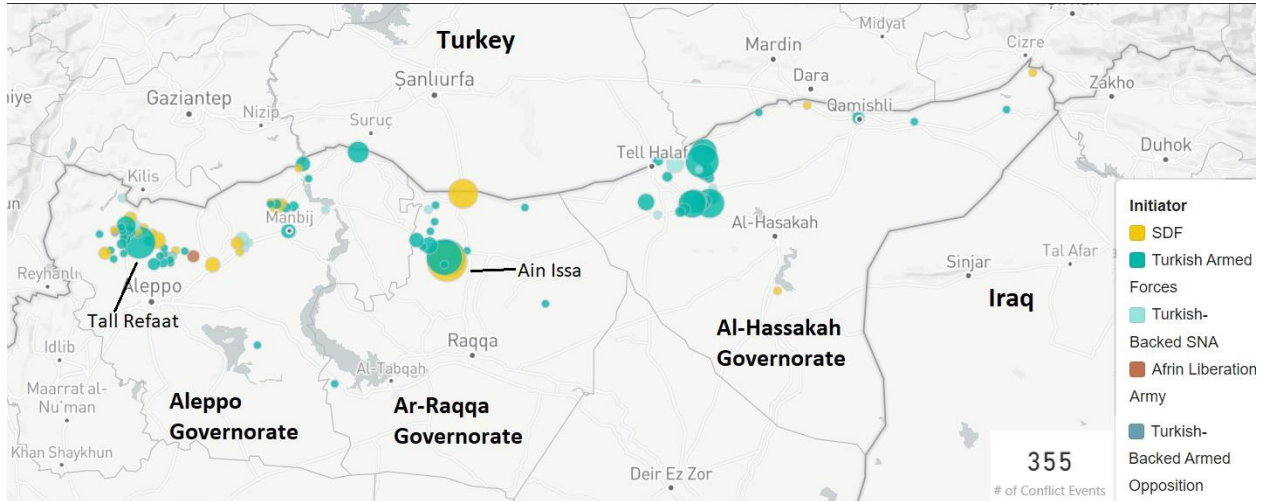


Figure 4: Conflict between Turkish armed forces and Turkish-backed armed opposition groups on one side and the SDF on the other between April and June 2022. The largest bubble represents 42 conflict events. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.

From 1 April to 30 June 2022, ACLED recorded 355 conflict events between various Kurdish armed groups and Turkish armed forces or Turkish-backed opposition groups. This marks a 52% increase in this type of conflict compared to the first quarter of 2022. Conflict events consisted of shelling, aerial bombardment, and clashes, with 104 in April, 170 in May, and 81 in June. 297 of these events (84%) were shelling or aerial bombardment initiated by Turkish armed forces or Turkish-backed opposition groups against the Kurdish-backed forces, nearly double the count of similar events last quarter.

Turkey has vowed since May 2022 that it will begin a new offensive in Northern Syria against SDF-controlled territory on the Turkish border⁴³. This rhetoric has been accompanied by increased conflict events between Turkey and its allies against the SDF. The buildup of Turkish forces in the Aleppo countryside⁴⁴ and along the Syrian border accords with this rhetoric as well. However, as of 4 July 2022, Turkey has indicated a hesitancy to continue with the planned offensive due to consistent opposition from Russia, which controls the airspace of northern Syria and supports a buildup of GoS troops there⁴⁵.

⁴³ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/24/erdogan-new-military-operation-syria-soon>

⁴⁴ <https://www.syriaahr.com/en/258481/>

⁴⁵ <https://syrianobserver.com/news/76383/turkey-shelves-syria-offensive-after-russian-objection.html>

Attacks against Former Opposition Fighters and GoS Armed Forces in Dara’a Governorate

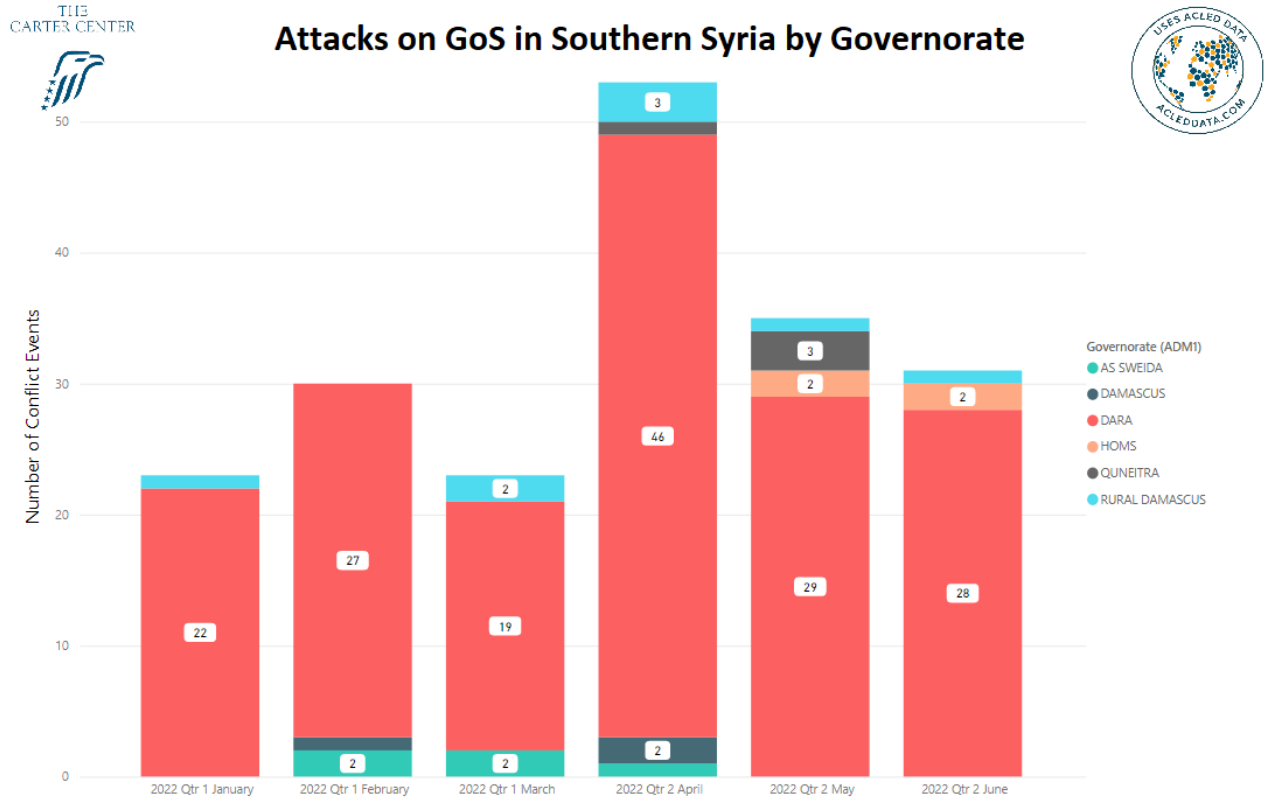


Figure 5: Attacks against former opposition fighters and GoS armed forces in southern Syria between January -June 2022. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.

In 2018, the GoS armed forces and its allies launched Operation Basalt, which ended with the GoS reconquering Dara’a Governorate and the rest of southern Syria. As part of the operation, GoS and Russia allowed some opposition fighters and groups to be spared from violence, allowing their surrender and deferring their military conscription in exchange for turning over their heavy weapons. As a result, thousands of fighters formerly associated with the armed opposition were allowed to remain active, albeit theoretically accepting GoS rule over the governorate. However, tensions between the former opposition and GoS armed forces persist, leading to a wide range of assassinations by unidentified actors. Although the perpetrators are unknown, GoS officials and the former opposition representatives blame each other for the attacks. During the reporting period, there was a sharp increase of unidentified attackers targeting former opposition fighters and GoS soldiers in southern Syria in at least 119 incidents. One hundred three attacks (86%) took place in Dara’a Governorate. In the past, this has led to prolonged violence and sieges of cities by GoS armed forces, particularly in Dara’a Governorate.

Most unclaimed attacks targeted officials and soldiers associated with various GoS armed groups. The intensity and geographic breadth of attacks suggest that tensions are not merely between GoS armed forces and the former opposition but also between intragroup rivals.⁴⁶ At the time of writing, the sharp increase in targeted violence has not yet resulted in new sieges. However, this has done little to quell tensions between the various armed factions in Dara'a Governorate. On 4 May 2022, the Russian-backed 8th Brigade raided a militia associated with the GoS Air Force Intelligence in Sidon, Syria.⁴⁷ The 8th Brigade had accused the local militia of assassinations on behalf of GoS Air Force Intelligence. If trends continue, significant escalation is likely, to the detriment of civilians' livelihoods and safety.

Confrontations in As-Sweida

Since its formation in July 2021, the Liwa Party and its armed faction, "The Counter-Terrorism Force" (CTF), have regularly confronted GoS armed forces, especially the GoS-backed National Defense Forces (NDF). This has often led to standoffs and clashes between the two groups, particularly in Al-Raha and Al-Harisa in As-Sweida Governorate.⁴⁸ The CTF also reportedly formed an alliance with the U.S.-backed Maghawir al-Thawra and the Global Coalition Against ISIS in nearby Al-Tanf, Homs Governorate, even turning over a Hezbollah-connected drug dealer to MAT and U.S. armed forces.⁴⁹

On 8 June, GoS armed forces cracked down on the CTF and the Liwa Party. GoS Military Security, along with local pro-GoS militias and Iranian-backed groups, besieged Khazema, As-Sweida Governorate. The leader of the CTF, Samer Al-Hakim, was found killed the next day.⁵⁰ The battle, along with subsequent clashes and arrests, effectively weakened the CTF and the Liwa Party, possibly ending its role in As-Sweida Governorate. There were reports that some CTF fighters fled to Al-Tanf following the attack.⁵¹ For the time being, it seems that the GoS has effectively wiped out one of the few opposition groups in As-Sweida Governorate. However, this does little to address the greater issues of political dissatisfaction and crime within the governorate.

⁴⁶ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/584599>

⁴⁷ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/571098>

⁴⁸ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/524535>

⁴⁹ <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2022/07/wait-for-the-next-iran-warns-as-suwayda-residents-as-next-can-exceed-reprisals/>

⁵⁰ <https://suwayda24.com/?p=19355>, <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/580045>

⁵¹ <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2022/07/wait-for-the-next-iran-warns-as-suwayda-residents-as-next-can-exceed-reprisals/>

The Battle Against ISIS

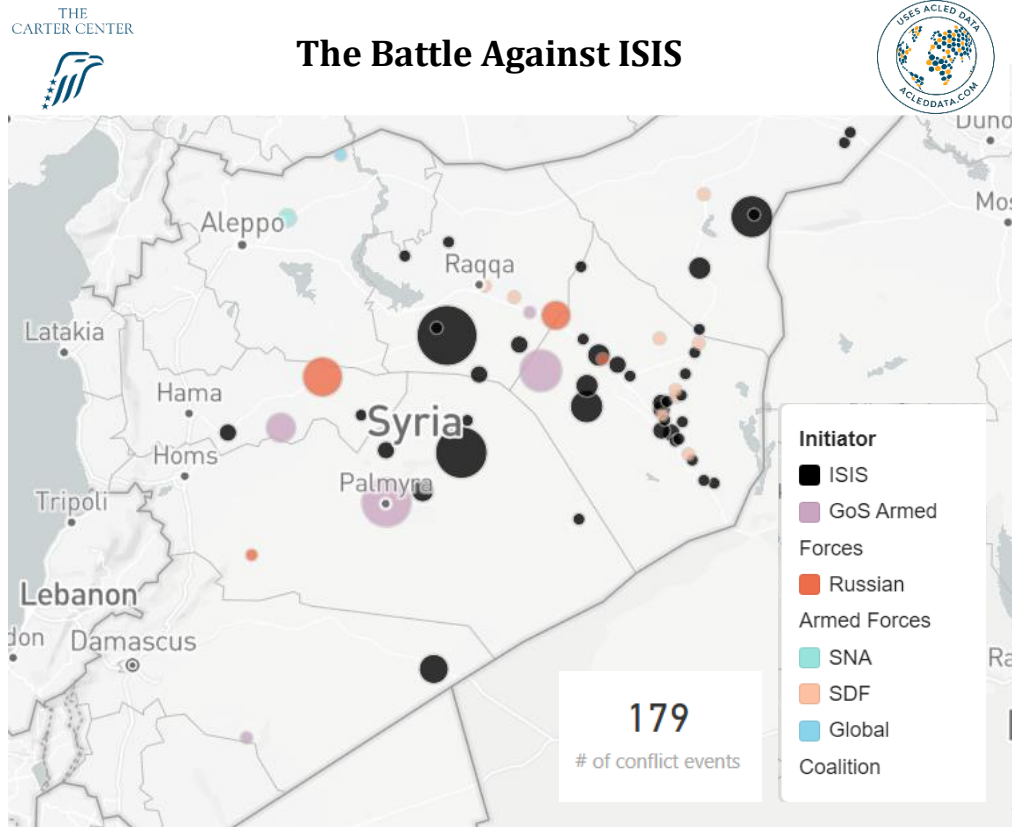


Figure 6: Incidents involving ISIS between April-June 2022. The largest bubble represents 33 conflict events. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.

During the second quarter of 2022, there was a reduction in conflict events involving the Islamic State, as recorded by ACLED. There were 179 ISIS-related events compared to 185 in the last quarter. Many of the conflict events occurred in Deir-uz-Zor Governorate, which has been a difficult region for both the SDF and the GoS to secure. However, conflicting reports have made verification of ISIS activity difficult.

ISIS has largely refrained from claiming responsibility for its attacks. Gregory Waters, an expert on ISIS’s presence in Syria, has noted that ISIS activity in the Badia desert region of Syria remains surprisingly low despite the lack of any new GoS offensive.⁵² This is in comparison to nearby Iraq, where there was a significant increase in ISIS-related activity and claimed attacks. In June, ISIS activity remained relatively low, despite carrying out more sophisticated attacks on GoS and allied patrols and convoys.⁵³ This suggests that ISIS continues to rebuild itself while trying to keep a relatively low profile to avoid retaliation.

⁵² <https://www.counterextremism.com/blog/isis-redux-central-syria-insurgency-may-2022>

⁵³ <https://www.counterextremism.com/blog/isis-redux-central-syria-insurgency-june-2022>

Unexploded Ordnance in Syria



Unexploded Ordnance Detonation in Syria, April 2022-June 2022

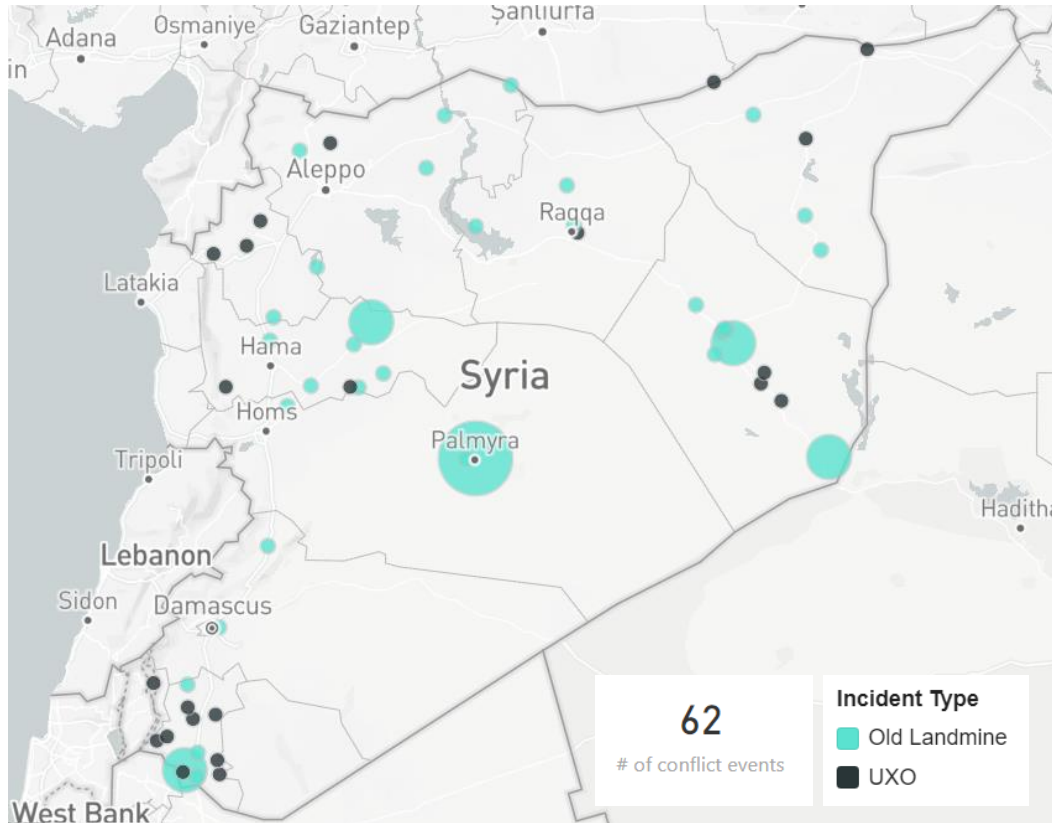


Figure 7: Detonations of old landmines and unexploded ordnance in Syria since April-June 2022. The largest bubble represents three detonation events. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.

Unexploded ordnance (UXO) remains an increasingly important issue in Syria. The impact of UXO and landmines continues to impact the day-to-day lives of civilians. This quarter, 62 reported incidents of civilians or others being killed by leftover landmines and other UXO.⁵⁴ On 11 June, a landmine killed ten workers and injured another 28 returning from a wheat harvest near Deir al-Adas, Dara’a Governorate.⁵⁵ Another deadly incident was reported on 15 June, when a landmine injured three children collecting plants near Jarabulus, Aleppo

⁵⁴ <https://tinyurl.com/37u99jep>

⁵⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/united-nations-country-team-syria-statement-landmine-explosion-daraa-enar>, <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/580703>, <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/580608>

Governorate.⁵⁶ The UN has estimated that half of all Syrians live in UXO-contaminated areas,⁵⁷ which has significant implications for humanitarian relief and civilian safety.

The Carter Center released a report mapping unexploded ordnance in Syria between December 2012 – May 2021, which can be viewed in [StoryMaps](#) here or in [PDF](#) form here.

Conclusion

Conflict dynamics in the second quarter of 2022 demonstrate the fragility of the Syrian state. Conflict in northern Syria has vastly escalated and could worsen should Turkey launch a new military operation. This coincides with a deteriorating security situation in southern Syria, particularly in Dara'a Governorate. So far, the Russia-Ukrainian war has largely not impacted military dynamics in Syria. However, the deterioration of diplomacy could prevent effective conflict resolution, making an already dire humanitarian situation worse.

For earlier conflict summaries, please click [here](#). For an interactive map of historical areas of control in Syria, please click [here](#).

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⁵⁶ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/581558>

⁵⁷ <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/united-nations-country-team-syria-statement-landmine-explosion-daraa-enar>