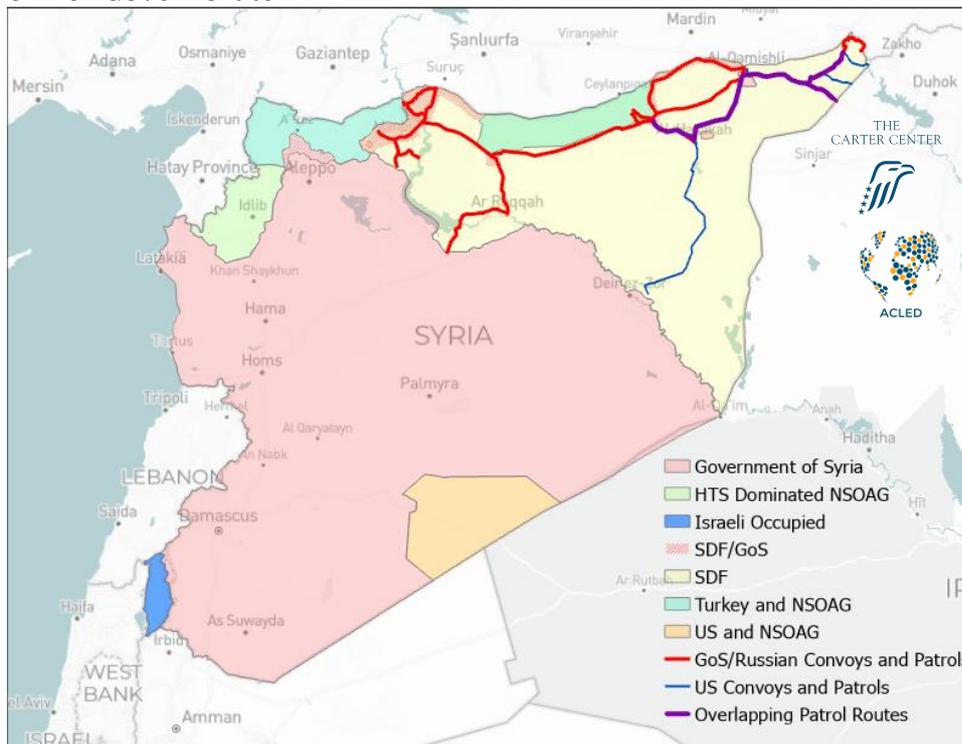




WEEKLY CONFLICT SUMMARY | 3 -9 May 2021

SYRIA SUMMARY

- Israel launched airstrikes against Iranian-backed militias in Lattakia and Hama Governorates.
- Tensions escalated following kidnappings between armed groups in Dara'a and As-Sweida Governorates.
- The predominantly Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and U.S. armed forces launched a new anti-ISIS security campaign in northern Deir-ez-Zor Governorate.



• *Figure 1: Dominant actors' area of control and influence in Syria as of 9 May 2021.-NSOAG stands for Non-state Organized Armed Groups. Also, please see footnote 1.*

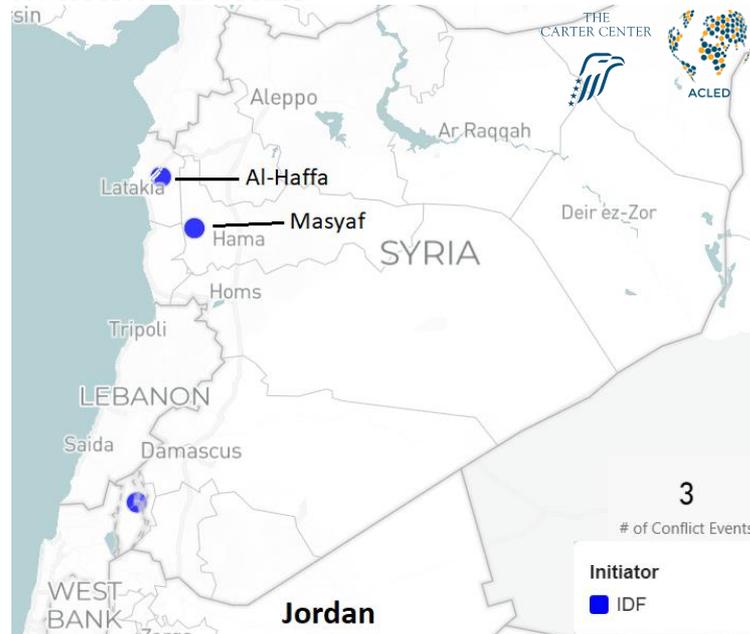
NORTHWEST SYRIA¹

Figure 2: Israeli airstrikes in Syria between 3-9 May 2021. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.

Israeli Airstrikes

Israel regularly conducts airstrikes across Syria against Iranian and Government of Syria (GoS) targets, but rarely comments on its attacks.²³ In 2021, the pace of Israeli airstrikes has increased, particularly in cities near the Syria-Iraq border and Deir-ez-Zor Governorate.

5 May

Israel launched airstrikes against Iranian-backed militia facilities in Al-Haffa, Latakia Governorate and Masyaf, western Hama Governorate.⁴⁵ Pro-GoS news reports claimed that the airstrikes hit a plastics factory, killing a civilian.⁶

6 May

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 US-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 US 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](#).

² Iranian-backed militias refers to armed groups that are supported by Iran, like Hezbollah, and include militias from Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan, or Pakistan.

³ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/432892>

⁴ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/479990>

⁵ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/syria-israel-air-strikes-deadly-assad-region-latakia>

⁶ <https://npasyria.com/en/58891/>

An Israeli helicopter reportedly launched missiles against multiple GoS armed forces sites in Quneitra Governorate.⁷ News reports did not provide more detailed location of the strikes.⁸

SOUTH & CENTRAL SYRIA

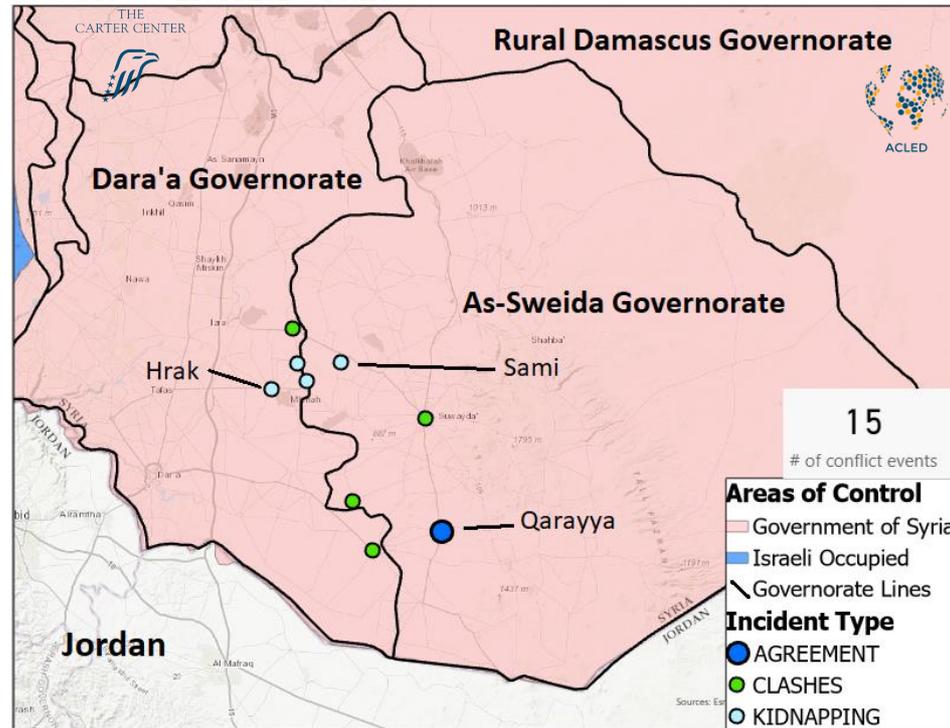


Figure 3: Kidnapping and related conflict events between Dara'a and As-Sweida Governorates since 1 January 2020. Largest bubble represents 6 conflict events. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.

Kidnappings in As-Sweida Governorate

Kidnappings remain a challenge in As-Sweida Governorate. Occasionally, these kidnappings cause major clashes between armed groups. On March 2020⁹ and September 2020,¹⁰ armed groups in Dara'a Governorate clashed with militias from As-Sweida Governorate after Dara'a citizens were kidnapped. Locals have accused GoS security branches of turning a blind eye to the armed groups committing the kidnappings, and even supporting them.¹¹

8 May

A Dara'a-based armed group abducted a resident of Sami, As-Sweida Governorate.¹² Following accusations that the kidnappers were from Nahta and Al-Hrak in eastern Dara'a Governorate, the local militia in Sami retaliated by abducting construction workers and residents from Nahta, Hrak, and Eastern

⁷ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/480217>

⁸ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-said-to-carry-out-airstrikes-in-syria-for-second-straight-night/>

⁹ https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/conflict_resolution/syria-conflict/weekly-conflict-summary-23to29-march2020.pdf,
https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/conflict_resolution/syria-conflict/weekly-conflict-summary-30Marchto5April2020.pdf

¹⁰ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/9e2dc77e9ab446d8b62343e518315d8f>

¹¹ <https://tinyurl.com/y5axsz52>

¹² <https://suwayda24.com/?p=16872>

Maliha,¹³ eastern Dara'a Governorate.¹⁴ Hostage exchange discussions between the armed groups are underway.¹⁵

NORTHEAST SYRIA

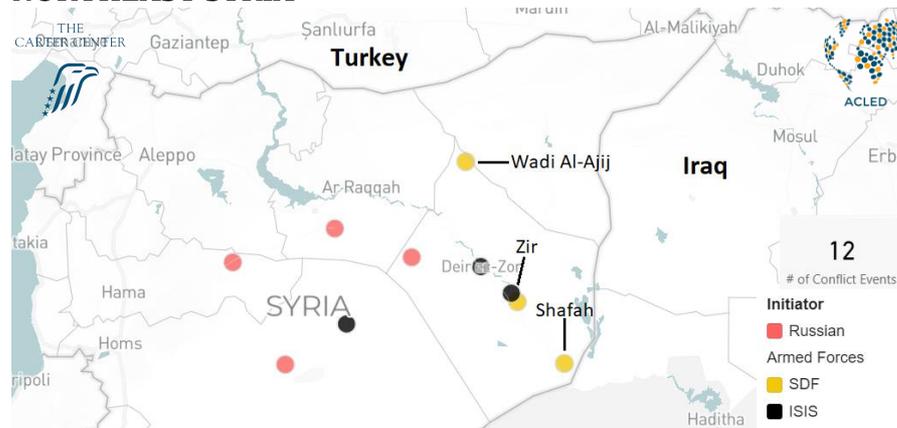


Figure 4: Conflict events involving ISIS between 3-9 May 2021. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.

The Battle Against ISIS

Since January 2021, there has been a sharp escalation of ISIS attacks,¹⁶ particularly in the Badia desert region of central and northeast Syria. ISIS has launched high-casualty attacks against the GoS armed forces and its allies. Multiple operations against ISIS have had limited success. At times, operations by the predominantly Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have exacerbated tensions between the Kurdish Autonomous Administration (KAA) and Arab tribes in northeast Syria.

3 May

The SDF-affiliated Asayish (Internal Security Forces) arrested an ISIS cell leader in Shafah, Deir-ez-Zor Governorate.¹⁷

7 May

The SDF and U.S. armed forces arrested 4 ISIS fighters in Zir, eastern Deir-ez-Zor Governorate.¹⁸

9 May

The SDF and U.S. armed forces launched a new security campaign against ISIS cells in Wadi al-Ajij, northern Deir-ez-Zor Governorate.¹⁹ The security campaign is expected to last four days.²⁰

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

¹³ <https://www.horanfree.com/?p=8899>

¹⁴ <https://suwayda24.com/?p=16872>

¹⁵ <https://suwayda24.com/?p=16872>

¹⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-55887870>

¹⁷ <https://tinyurl.com/2ua9e38a>

¹⁸ <https://npasyria.com/en/59071/>

¹⁹ <https://npasyria.com/en/59147/>

²⁰ <https://halabtodaytv.net/archives/187927>

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