

Syria Situation Report: May 28 - June 10, 2016

1 June 8: IS loosens grip on Northern Aleppo Province: IS withdrew from at least six towns in Northern Aleppo Province, lifting a siege on the opposition strongholds of Azaz and Mare'a that began on May 27. Opposition groups in Mare'a united under the leadership of Liwa al-Mutasem – a Free Syrian Army (FSA)-affiliated faction that received two airdrops of ammunition and light weapons from the U.S. on June 3 and June 6.

2 May 30: Syrian Kurds exploit pressure on Northern Aleppo Province: Opposition groups in Northern Aleppo Province agreed to cede control of the town of Sheikh Issa to the Syrian Kurdish YPG and allied opposition groups in exchange for the safe passage of up to 2,000 civilians fleeing Mare'a amidst an ongoing IS offensive.

3 May 30: Dual suicide bombing targets opposition headquarters in Idlib Province: Two unidentified militants detonated SVESTs in a headquarters of Kata'ib al-Farouq in Binnish in Idlib Province, killing at least five opposition fighters and wounding at least fifteen others. Activists attributed the blasts to IS.

4 June 2: Jaysh al-Fatah claims removal of headquarters from Idlib City: The Jaysh al-Fatah Operations Room – a coalition containing Syrian Al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra, Salafi-Jihadist group Ahrar al-Sham, and other groups – claimed to remove all of its military headquarters from Idlib City after suspected Russian airstrikes killed at least twenty-three civilians in the city on May 30.

5 June 3 – 9: Jaysh al-Fatah advances in Southern Aleppo Province: The Jaysh al-Fatah Operations Room – a coalition containing Syrian Al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra, Salafi-Jihadist group Ahrar al-Sham, and other groups – seized the Khan Touman Munitions Storage Base and four other villages south of Aleppo City following clashes with pro-regime forces that involved at least three SVBIED detonations.

6 May 31 – June 10: Syrian Democratic Forces encircle Manbij: The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) completely isolated the key IS-held transit hub of Manbij in Eastern Aleppo Province as part of a U.S.-backed offensive that began on May 31. The ongoing operation involves roughly 3,000 fighters, 85% of which are reportedly local Sunni Arabs. Turkey refused to provide support to the operation but stated that the U.S. had given guarantees that the Syrian Kurdish YPG will withdraw east of the Euphrates River after the operation.

7 May 31: U.S. Department of Defense announces first casualty in Syria: IS wounded a U.S. Special Operations Forces soldier with “indirect” fire in Northern A-Raqqa Province, marking the first publicly-acknowledged casualty among the U.S. personnel operating inside Syria.

8 June 2 – 10: Pro-regime forces enter A-Raqqa Province: The Syrian Arab Army and allied paramilitary groups entered A-Raqqa Province, seizing several positions along the desert highway and advancing within twenty miles of Tabaqa west of A-Raqqa City. The offensive comes amidst ongoing operations against IS in Manbij and Northern A-Raqqa Province by the Syrian Democratic Forces.

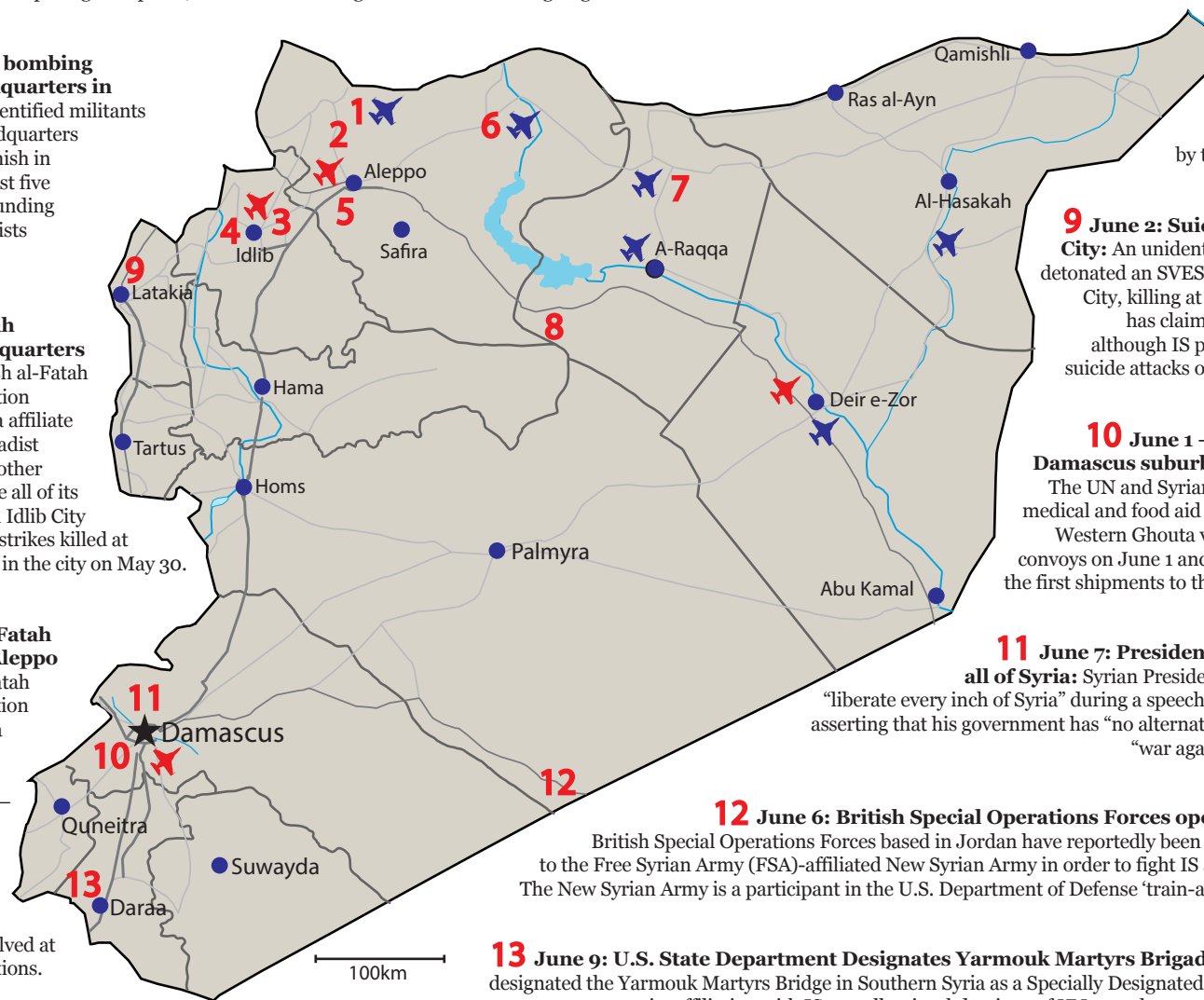
9 June 2: Suicide attack strikes Latakia City: An unidentified attacker on a motorcycle detonated an SVEST outside a mosque in Latakia City, killing at least three civilians. No group has claimed responsibility for the blast, although IS previously conducted a wave of suicide attacks on the Syrian Coast on May 23.

10 June 1 – 10: Aid reaches besieged Damascus suburb for first time since 2012: The UN and Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered medical and food aid to opposition-held Darayya in Western Ghouta via two separate humanitarian convoys on June 1 and June 10. The deliveries mark the first shipments to the town since November 2012.

11 June 7: President Assad vows to recapture all of Syria: Syrian President Bashar al-Assad pledged to “liberate every inch of Syria” during a speech before the Syrian Parliament, asserting that his government has “no alternative but to be victorious” in the “war against terrorism” in the country.

12 June 6: British Special Operations Forces operating in Southern Syria: British Special Operations Forces based in Jordan have reportedly been providing logistical assistance to the Free Syrian Army (FSA)-affiliated New Syrian Army in order to fight IS along the Syrian-Iraqi Border. The New Syrian Army is a participant in the U.S. Department of Defense ‘train-and-equip’ program against IS.

13 June 9: U.S. State Department Designates Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade: The U.S. State Department designated the Yarmouk Martyrs Bridge in Southern Syria as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist Entity, citing its affiliation with IS as well as its abductions of UN peacekeepers in the Golan Heights in 2013.



- Pro-Regime Forces
- The Islamic State
- Kurdish Forces
- Jabhat a-Nusra
- Opposition Forces
- ✈ Pro-Regime Airstrike
- ✈ Anti-IS Coalition

