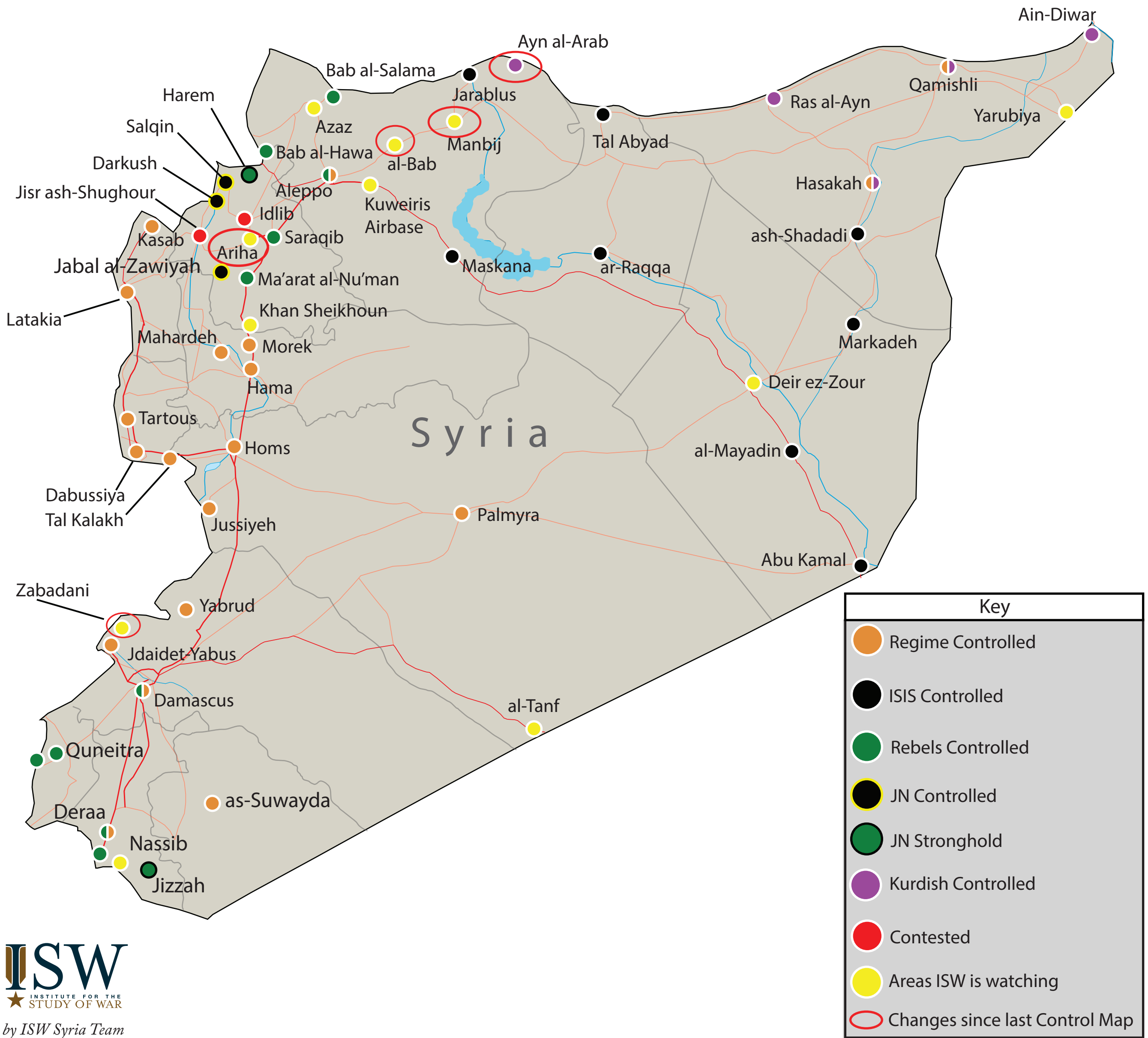


# Control of Terrain in Syria: February 9, 2015



YPG forces have taken Ayn al-Arab/Kobani from ISIS and swept outward to clear the surrounding countryside. The YPG continues to pursue ISIS as part of the “Euphrates Volcano Operations Room,” along with three Aleppo-based rebel groups. These groups claim to have seized over 100 villages from ISIS control. YPG and rebel forces seized the Qarah Qawzaq bridge on February 7 and appear to be mobilizing for an offensive against Manbij. ISIS forces are reportedly conducting “tactical withdrawals” from al-Bab, amidst rumors of ISIS attempts to hand over its bases to the Aleppo Salafi Jihadist coalition Jabhat Ansar al-Din. ISW is placing watches on both Manbij and al-Bab as ISIS forces regroup and the Euphrates Volcano Operations Room continues to advance.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah forces have mobilized in the vicinity of the besieged JN and rebel enclave of Zabadani, northwest of Damascus city near the Lebanese border, amidst an increased regime barrel bomb campaign against the town. ISW is placing a watch on Zabadani and its countryside as the situation continues to escalate following recent rebel attacks on pro-regime forces in the area.

Finally, ISW is placing a watch on the regime stronghold of Ariha, south of Idlib city, after JN and rebel forces announced a battle to take the area on January 29 and made initial advances. A rebel seizure of Ariha would cut off the regime’s supply line from Latakia, effectively abesieging Idlib city.