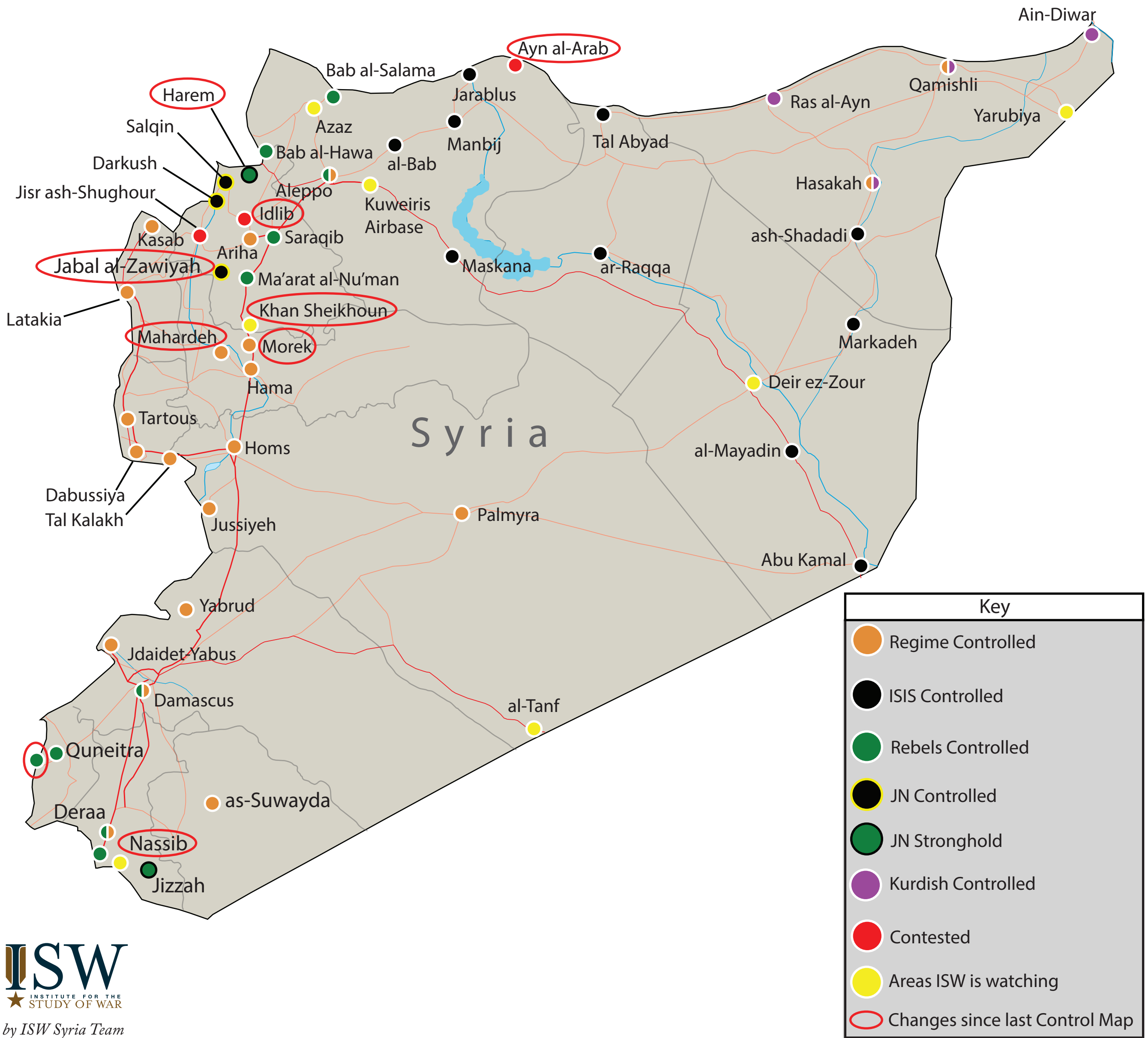


# Control of Terrain in Syria: October 30, 2014



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On August 28, JN and rebel forces seized control of the Golan Heights border crossing with Israel in Quneitra province. The seizure of the crossing was a significant rebel gain contributing to an ongoing successful campaign against regime forces in Quneitra. In early September, regime forces reversed rebel gains in northwest Hama, re-securing control of Merhada and effectively neutralizing a rebel offensive against critical regime supply lines in the area. On October 23, regime forces seized the town of Morek, strategically located on the M5 highway north of Hama. Together these two advances are a critical victory for the regime, allowing it to secure its critical supply routes from the coast. In response, JN and rebel forces launched an attack on the regime-held city of Idlib on October 27, likely seeking to deter or postpone a follow-on regime offensive against Khan Shaykhoun north of Morek. The stretch of the M5 highway north of Morek is a critical rebel center of gravity, and is essential for the rebels' continued ability to maintain the disruption of the regime's preferred supply line to Aleppo. In addition, beginning on October 27, JN seized eight villages from the FSA-affiliated Syrian Revolutionaries Front (SRF) in the Jabal al-Zawiya region in southern Idlib, allegedly to protect a local SRF affiliate that had defected to Harakat Ahrar al-Sham. JN also forced the SRF to abandon its positions within Ma'arat al-Nu'man, taking a more overt role within the city. This represents a further territorial consolidation by JN in Idlib Province at the expense of moderate rebel forces and increases the strength of JN's new center of gravity in northwestern Syria. Finally, on October 27 the FSA-affiliated Southern Front in Dera'a Province declared its intent to liberate the Nasib border crossing with Jordan from regime forces. If successful, the seizure of the Nasib crossing would finalize the rebel acquisition of all three of Syria's southern border crossings