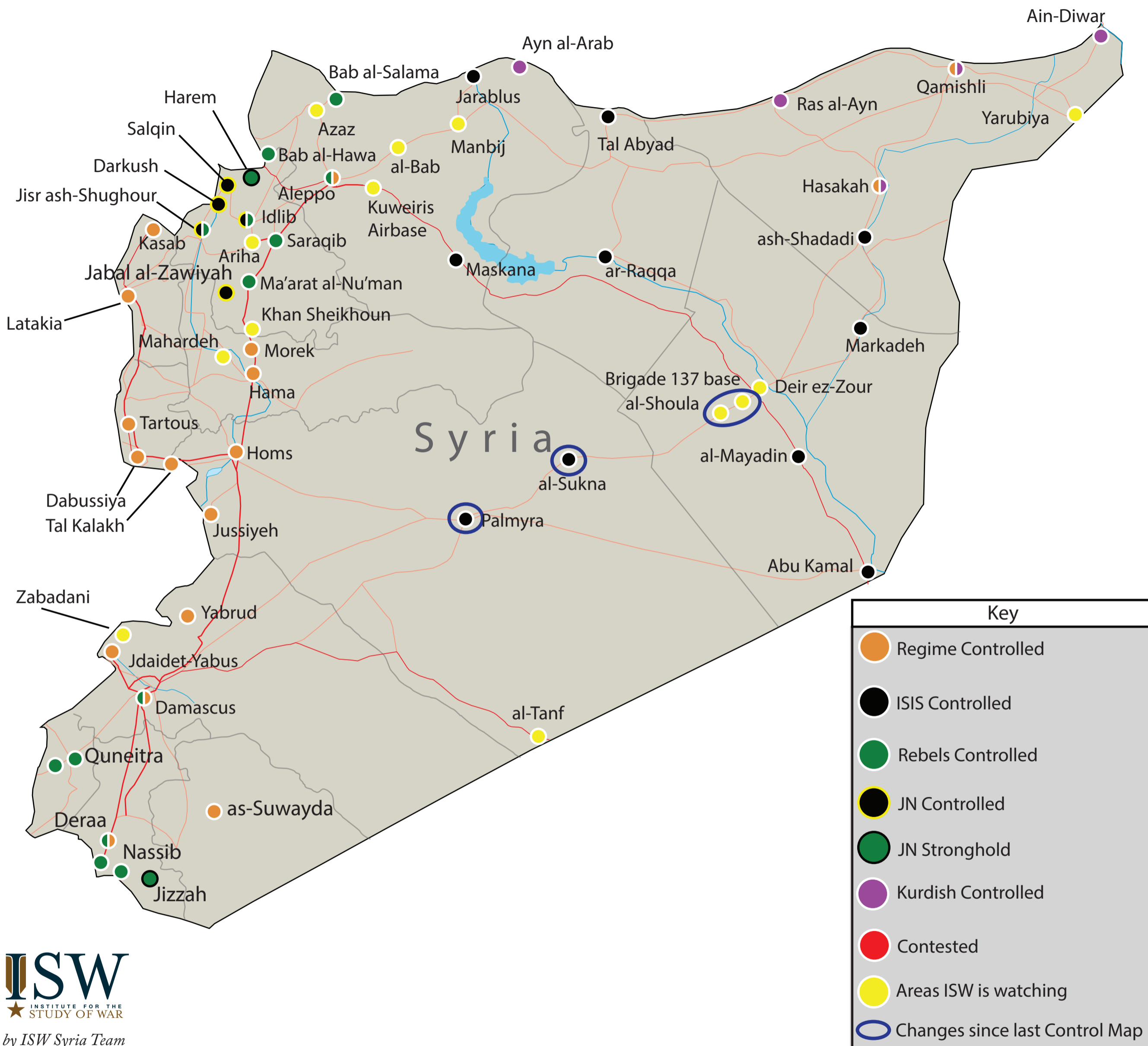


Control of Urban Terrain in Syria: May 20, 2015



by ISW Syria Team

ISIS seized the regime-held town of al-Sukna west of Deir ez-Zour City on May 14, severing the regime's ground line of communication from Palmyra in the central Homs Desert to Deir ez-Zour City and effectively isolating remaining regime positions in western Deir ez-Zour. ISIS forces then seized the regime stronghold of Palmyra on May 20 after regime forces reportedly executed a full withdrawal from the city, prison, and military airbase. ISIS is in full control of the city and appears to be in control of the Palmyra military airbase and prison, although regime forces are likely to regroup and launch a counter-offensive in the near term. ISW is placing a watch on the town of al-Shoula and the Brigade 137 military base west of Deir ez-Zour City, which are likely upcoming targets as ISIS consolidates its control in eastern Syria. ISIS's advances in the Homs Desert will allow ISIS to stage for future attacks into the Syrian central corridor, which could create opportunities for other anti-Assad forces to advance on additional fronts. A redeployment of regime forces from the Central Corridor to retake Palmyra could produce similar effects.