

Syria Update: September 12-19, 2014

1 September 14-18 – The regime counteroffensive to secure its northwestern supply line leading out of Hama city advanced past Tal Maleh, 30km north-west of the city.



2 September 15-18 – Clashes erupted between Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) and a local component of the U.S.-backed Syrian Revolutionaries Front (SRF) in the town of Hasfarjah in Idlib Province. After a plea by SRF leader Jamal Ma'arouf for Shari'a Court mediation, JN agreed to a truce on September 18.



3 September 15 – YPG fighters, with air support from the Syrian regime, seized an estimated 14 small villages from ISIS near Tal Hamis, southeast of Hasakah city near the Iraqi border. This is part of an offensive launched on September 13 during which YPG forces allegedly executed civilians. The YPG denied the allegations and claimed ISIS fighters used the civilians as human shields.



4 September 15 – An explosion reportedly destroyed a section of the Siyasya Bridge in the northeast outskirts of Deir ez-Zour city. The bridge was under ISIS control and served as the only supply route into the city due to a blockade by the regime on the city's remaining outskirts. Regime forces are likely behind the explosion, which is believed to have been caused by a surface-to-surface missile.



5 September 16 – JN announced the start of Operation Piercing Meteor in the Damascus neighborhood of Midan alongside

Jaysh al-Islam and Ahrar al-Sham with the objective of breaking the regime siege on southern Damascus. The operation is ongoing and JN outlined three regime checkpoints near Midan as targets. This comes amid rebel gains in al-Dukhaniya, in the Eastern Ghouta region, including the killing of a regime air force intelligence branch chief for Damascus.



6 September 16 – Regime and allied YPG forces took full control over the Gweiran neighborhood on the southern outskirts of Hasakah city, after mediation by tribal leaders. Local gunmen, rumored to be associated with ISIS, had regularly contested the neighborhood since the beginning of August.

7 September 16-19 – ISIS seized over 20 villages from the YPG near the city of Ayn al-Arab, in northern Aleppo province near the Turkish border. The YPG appealed for support from other armed groups in the region, including the PKK, and a YPG spokesman called on the international community to "move to halt this barbaric assault by ISIS." The ISIS assault on Ayn al-Arab is likely in retaliation for the YPG's participation in the rebel-led Euphrates Volcano Joint Operations Room, which was declared on September 10 to fight ISIS.

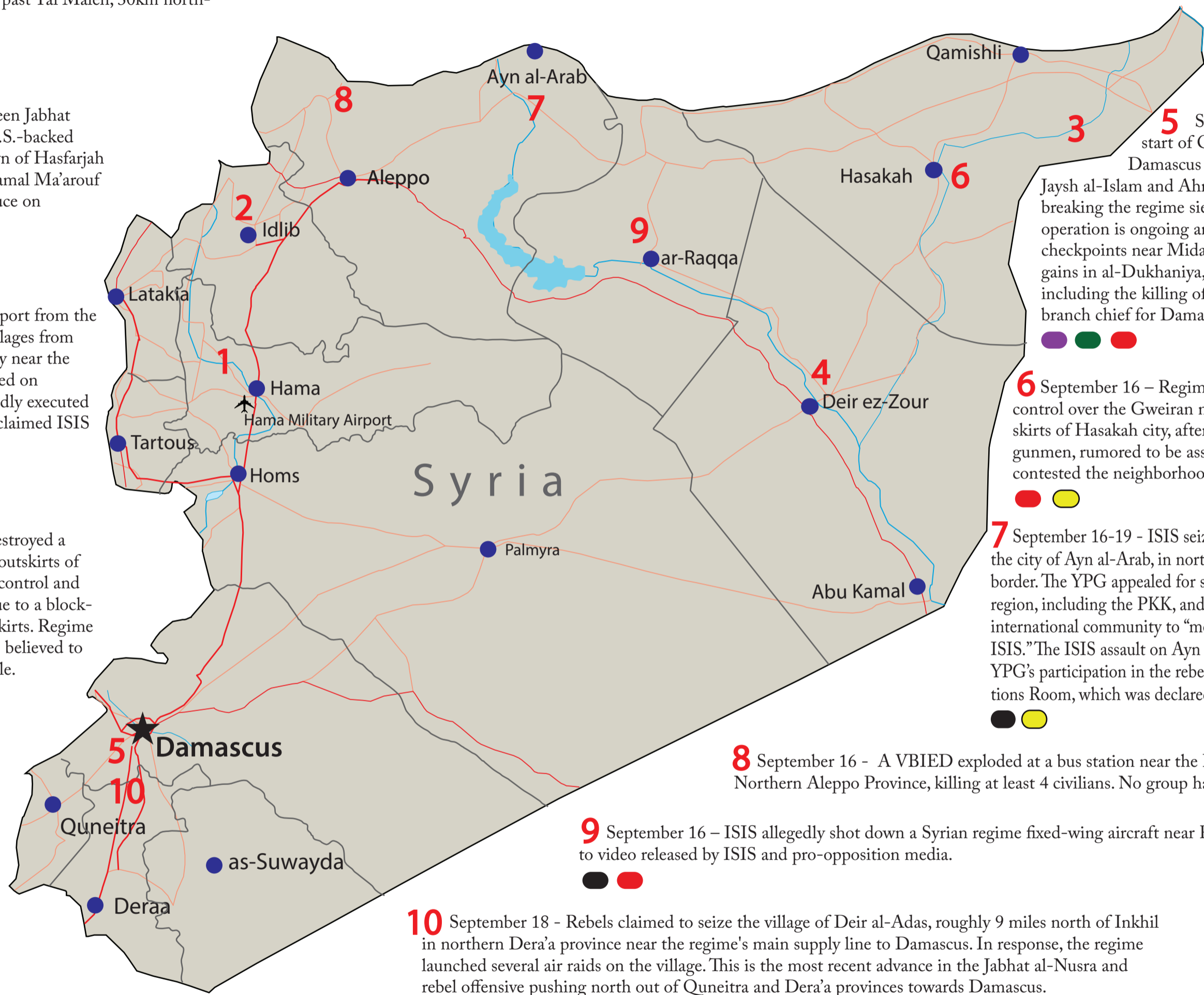
8 September 16 – A VBIED exploded at a bus station near the Bab al-Salama border crossing in Northern Aleppo Province, killing at least 4 civilians. No group has claimed responsibility.

9 September 16 – ISIS allegedly shot down a Syrian regime fixed-wing aircraft near Raqqa city, according to video released by ISIS and pro-opposition media.



10 September 18 – Rebels claimed to seize the village of Deir al-Adas, roughly 9 miles north of Inkhil in northern Dera'a province near the regime's main supply line to Damascus. In response, the regime launched several air raids on the village. This is the most recent advance in the Jabhat al-Nusra and rebel offensive pushing north out of Quneitra and Dera'a provinces towards Damascus.

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- Opposition Forces
- Pro-Regime Forces
- YPG
- ISIS
- Jabhat al-Nusra (JN)



by Charlie Caris and Jennifer Cafarella

Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) continues attempts to consolidate control in northern Syria, although its willingness to submit to Shari'a adjudication with other rebel factions in Idlib indicates this may not come at the expense of its relationships with rebel groups. JN and other rebel attempts to reopen the northern Hama front have so far been unsuccessful, with the regime now having erased rebels' initial progress. With rebels on the defensive in Hama, the regime may have the capacity to respond to the rebel offensive in southern Syria, which has progressed to within 25km of Western Ghouta in Damascus. Meanwhile, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives passed a Continuing Resolution to allow the Department of Defense to undertake a "train and equip" program for 5,000 vetted Syrian opposition fighters, but no additional funding is attached to the current bill. President Obama has signaled his intent to expand U.S. airstrikes into Syria in the coming days, but has requested to approve each strike individually.