

Syria Update: August 30-September 4, 2014

1 August 31 - September 4: After shooting down an Iranian drone on August 31, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) declared the Israeli border with Quneitra a "closed military zone" and deployed armored vehicles to the area on September 2. On September 4, IDF struck the regime's 90th Brigade Headquarters in Quneitra after mortars landed in Israeli territory in the Golan Heights. Three regime soldiers were reported killed.

2 August 30: ISIS created a social media account for "Wilayat al-Furat," which extends from Abu Kamal in eastern Syria to al-Qaim in western Iraq. This is the first time ISIS has announced a cross-border "Wilayat" – a term they use for the administrative units of their areas of governance.

3 September 4: Rebel groups including Jabhat al-Nusra (JN), al-Muthanna Islamic Movement, and FSA affiliated groups announced a new offensive in Quneitra province and seized the villages of Majduliya and Masharah, located southeast of Quneitra city.

4 September 2: JN made three demands as preconditions for releasing Fijian hostages at the Quneitra border crossing, according to a Fijian military commander who has been in contact with the group. The demands were that JN be removed from the UN terrorist list, that the UN pay compensation for three fighters killed in a shootout with UN peacekeepers, and that humanitarian aid be delivered to parts of Damascus.

5 September 1-3: Jaysh al-Islam detonated a tunnel bomb in the Damascus suburb of Jobar on September 1, allegedly destroying a pro-regime militia housing unit. In response, regime planes launched an intensive air raid campaign on Jobar, conducting more than 40 airstrikes between September 2 and 3.

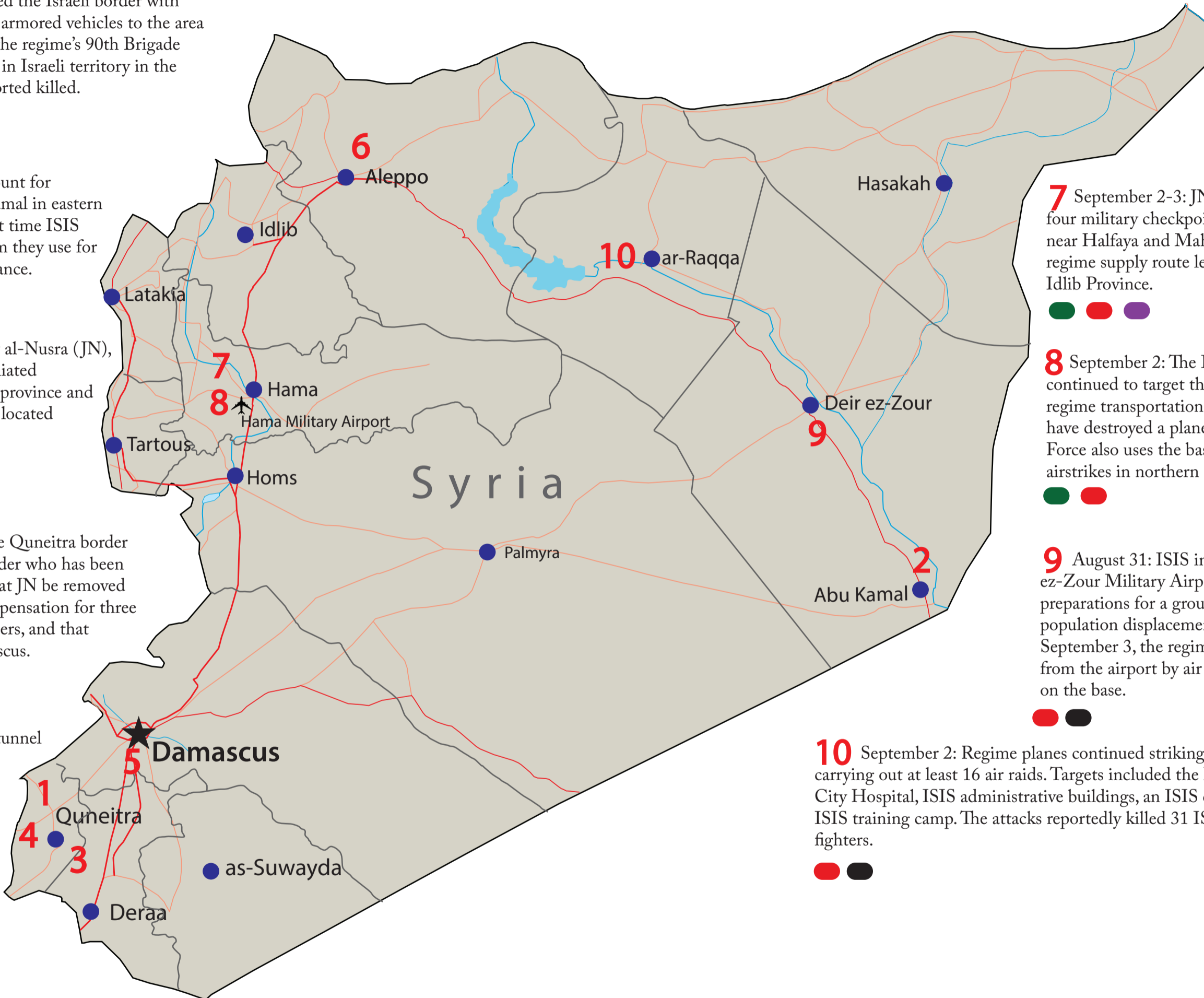
6 August 31: Rebels from the Islamic Front, Kurdish Front, Jabhat al-Nusra, and other groups clashed with ISIS fighters near the Shahba Dam in northern Aleppo province, amid ongoing rebel shelling of ISIS positions.

7 September 2-3: JN and Idlib-based rebels seized four military checkpoints just northwest of Hama city, near Halfaya and Maharda. The checkpoints lie near a regime supply route leading to the al-Ghab Plain and Idlib Province.

8 September 2: The Islamic Front and other rebels have continued to target the Hama Military Airport, a major regime transportation and resupply hub, and claimed to have destroyed a plane on the runway. The Syrian Air Force also uses the base to conduct the majority of its airstrikes in northern Syria.

9 August 31: ISIS increased shelling on the Deir ez-Zour Military Airport and continued with preparations for a ground raid, as evidenced by population displacement in villages near the airport. On September 3, the regime allegedly evacuated 400 officers from the airport by air in anticipation of an ISIS attack on the base.

10 September 2: Regime planes continued striking ISIS targets in Raqqa province, carrying out at least 16 air raids. Targets included the ISIS Islamic Police HQ, the Raqqa City Hospital, ISIS administrative buildings, an ISIS checkpoint west of Raqqa, and an ISIS training camp. The attacks reportedly killed 31 ISIS fighters.



- Opposition Forces
- Pro-Regime Forces
- ISIS
- JN
- Israeli Defense Forces



by Charlie Caris and the ISW Syria Team

Rebel groups including Jabhat al-Nusra have remained on the offensive after their August 27 seizure of the Quneitra border crossing by announcing a new battle southeast of Quneitra city on September 4. The regime has so far been unable to retake control over lost territory in Quneitra despite launching an offensive on September 2. Meanwhile, ISIS has continued preparations for a major assault on Deir ez-Zour Military Airport, reportedly causing nearly 400 regime soldiers to evacuate the base.