

Syria Update: June 25- August 7, 2014

1 July 26- August 2: ISIS intensified its siege of the Kuweiris Airbase east of Aleppo city concurrently with its attacks on regime bases in eastern Syria. ISIS also pushed as far south as the town of Khanaser, located on the Regime's alternate supply line into Aleppo city.



2 July 26: Regime forces retook control of the Shaer Gas Field in eastern Homs after ISIS fighters withdrew. ISIS seized heavy weaponry from the base before leaving and may have destroyed portions of the gas processing facilities.



3 August 3: Rebel groups in Eastern Ghouta including JN, Jaysh al-Islam, and the Rahman Corps succeeded in breaking the regime cordon around the Meleha suburb, following a JN suicide attack and a concerted rebel ground offensive. Jaysh al-Islam has since launched a follow-on offensive to block regime supply lines leading to the Damascus International Airport.



4 July 31-Aug 4: Clashes continued between rebels and regime forces backed by Hezbollah fighters in Qalamoun. Rebels made significant gains around the village of Flita, across from Arsal on the Syrian side of the Lebanese border. The Islamic Front claimed to have captured the al-Safa Hill, near al-Halboun in the southern Qalamoun region. Rebel forces also attacked Hezbollah checkpoints in the town of Deir Attiyah, north of Yabroud. The regime responded to rebel advances by ambushing rebel forces in al-Jubbah, southeast of Yabroud, amid heavy fighting between NDF and Hezbollah forces against JN and other rebel groups in the area.



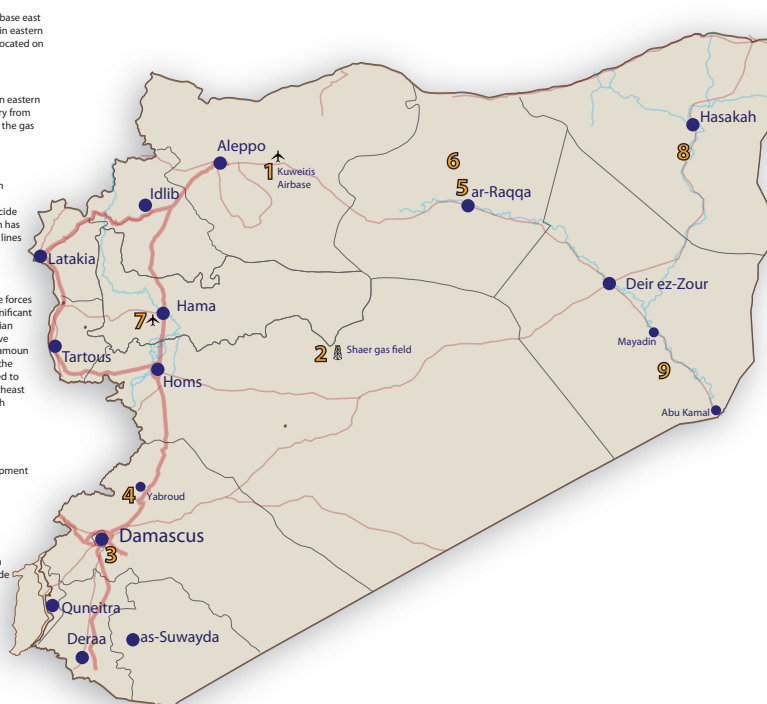
5 July 25: ISIS seized all of Raqqa's 17th Division Base, killing a reported 85 regime soldiers and seizing heavy military equipment including artillery pieces.



6 August 6-7: ISIS seized the regime's 93rd Brigade Base at Ayn Issa, north of Raqqa city. Before its ground offensive, ISIS detonated 3 SVBIEDs (Suicide Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device) at the base's main entrance. On August 7th ISIS released photographs of the weapons seized from brigade 93 which include numerous tanks, and BMPs.



Opposition Forces
 Pro-Regime Forces
 ISIS
 Anti-ISIS Tribal Activity



7 July 29-30: Rebels continued the Badr al-Sham Raid aimed at seizing the Hama military airport. Rebel groups including Jund al-Aqsa and Ajnad al-Sham captured the town of Khattab and a nearby regime weapons depot northwest of Hama city. Days later, JN and other rebel groups seized the villages of Arzeh and al-Shehya, west of Hama city, as well as a military checkpoint. The regime responded by redeploying troops on the Mork front in northern Hama in order to reinforce Hama city.



8 July 27: Regime forces abandoned their positions around the 121st regiment base south of al-Hasaka city, surrendering the base and the artillery stored there to ISIS. ISIS detonated an SVBIED at the southern entrance to al-Hasaka city, while clashing with YPG fighters in the area. The regime surrendered Kurdish-majority areas of Hasaka to administration by the PYD, amid reports that the YPG assumed total control over Jabal Kawkak and its military base East of Hasaka city. On 31 JUL, regime forces counterattacked against ISIS positions south of al-Hasaka city, reportedly pushing as far south as al-Shadadi. On 03 AUG, ISIS detonated an IED in Um Jaffar, south of Qamishli city, amid clashes with YPG in the area.



9 July 30: Tribal elements led by al-She'ta tribe in Deir ez-Zour province, concentrated in the area between Mayadin and Abu Kamal, temporarily wrested control of multiple villages from ISIS, killing dozens of fighters and destroying ISIS installations. On 04 AUG, ISIS warned civilians of an impending offensive in the disputed territory. On 07 AUG, ISIS published photos documenting the execution of suspected tribal elements, and has largely regained control over Deir ez-Zour province.



INSTITUTE FOR THE

 STUDY OF WAR

 Content: ISW Syria Team

 Graphics: Isabel Nassief

ISIS continued its multi-front offensive across northern Syria, seizing key regime positions in Raqqa and Hasaka and contesting regime-held areas of Aleppo and Hama. On July 25th, ISIS seized Raqqa's 17th Division base, forcing hundreds of regime troops to retreat to the Brigade 93 base, north of Raqqa city. Clashes ensued between the regime and ISIS fighters in areas around Brigade 93 until August 7th, when ISIS successfully seized the base and all of its weaponry. Regime forces were forced to retreat south to the Tabqa Airbase, one of the last remaining regime bases in northern Syria. Meanwhile, in Hasaka province, ISIS gained control of the 121st Regiment base just south of Hasaka city after regime forces abandoned their posts and retreated north. ISIS concurrently intensified its offensive aimed at seizing the Hama military airport, and heightened its siege of the Kuweiris military base, east of Aleppo city. ISIS's concerted effort to target airbases, a critical regime capability, indicates an escalation in ISIS's posture towards the Syrian regime.