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Syria Situation Report March 22 - April 19, 2021

By Eva Kahan and Jonathan Tishman

Key Takeaway: ISIS faces pressure along multiple fronts as it begins its annual Ramadan surge of attacks in Syria. Al-Qaeda affiliate Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (HTS) mounted counter-ISIS operations targeting leadership cells in Idlib, likely in order to both depress ISIS's attack capability and performatively distance HTS from other "hardline" Salafi-jihadi organizations. The British Royal Air Force and the Russian military similarly conducted precision operations, possibly intended to target high-value ISIS leadership, in eastern Syria. The US-partnered Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), meanwhile, secured camps and detention centers housing former ISIS affiliates in order to prevent ISIS from staging a prison break during the coming month. ISIS's Ramadan campaign will likely continue to feature large-scale but disparate attacks on oil and gas facilities in the Central Syrian Desert and attacks targeting civil society leaders, exploiting existing Arab-Kurdish divisions, in SDF-held northeast Syria.

Click the image below to expand.

Syria Situation Report: March 22 - April 19, 2021

[illegible]

Pro-Regime
 Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)
 Core SDF-Held Kurdish Terrain

ISIS Support Zones
 SDF-Dominated, Regime Presence
 U.S. and Partner Forces

HTS-Dominated, Turkish Presence
 Turkey-Opposition
 Former Opposition Terrain (Reconciled)

Key Takeaway: ISIS forces are pressing forward multiple fronts as it begins its annual Ramadan surge of attacks in Syria. Al-Qaeda affiliate Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) mounted operations targeting leadership cells in Idlib, likely in order to help deprecate ISIS's al-Qaeda credibility and pre-emptively distance HTS from other "hardline" *salafi-jihadi* organizations. The British Royal Air Force and the Russian military similarly conducted precision operations, possibly intended to target high-value ISIS leadership, in eastern Syria. The US-partnered Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), meanwhile, secured camps and detention centers housing former ISIS affiliates in order to prevent ISIS from staging a prison break during the coming month. The Russian-led campaign will likely continue to feature large-scale but discrete attacks on oil and gas facilities in the Central and Eastern regions, as well as targeted strikes on military and civilian infrastructure in the West.

The SAA 5th Corps previously announced, in August 2020, Russian officers arrived on April 10 to discuss the potential for a cease-fire in the area. It is about 15 miles southeast of Ma'adin, a key SAA base in the northwestern Deir Ezzor province. The SAA 5th Corps is planning to expand the range of the base in the Central Syrian Desert, where the SAA has been conducting operations against Islamic State (IS) forces and other extremist groups.

[illegible]

military and Syrian Democratic
to confusion over unannounced
near Tel Rifa'a. Russian forces combined
media speculation that the Russians
are. Exploiting the confusion, Turkish
movement of its positions along the line
of the area. Fearing a possible Turkish
in Tel Rifa'a and Aleppo City in previous
unintended their positions in Tel Rifa'a, a
partial withdrawal of Russian forces and
Turkey's eagerness to exploit any such shift.

Abdhal presents three possibilities
Military Council. Abdhal presented the
received endorsement from pro-republican
separate military and political councils
a sole military council with members of
council (which broken into three parts
officers. This proposal stands in stark
Talef Agreement, that would leave us
Damascus, and Aleppo cities.

Specials establish an operations room for oil and wheat, circumvent the UN embargo, and coordinate joint naval operations with allies. The UN's maritime interdiction operations by Western navies seek to enforce sanctions docked in Tartus in April 2011. The UN's aim bolster Assad's legitimacy and the UN's aim to stabilize the Syrian war.

radicated ground and air assault elements, leader of the Russian Reconnaissance and Special Forces Center, said. "The 15th and 16th ISIV militants and destroyed 24 trucks. The Russian kill count is very likely to be much higher," he said. "The Russian marks an increase likely intended to show the world that they are serious about the fight against IS." ISIV claimed to have killed two Russian soldiers in a battle in the town of al-Bab in cooperation in al-Bab in al-Bab on April 11. The Russian military said it had killed 100 ISIV fighters in one Russian assault, the operation was conducted by the 25th Division "Tiger Forces," and ISIV's purpose is to "destroy the ISIV's claim to be a legitimate force. If ISIV's claim is true, it would mean that ISIV is a legitimate force in the counter-ISIV fight in Syria, and ISIV operations over the road top two

✈ Israeli Strike
✈ US Strike



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