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MONTHLY CONFLICT SUMMARY | November 2021

SYRIA SUMMARY

- Attacks against former opposition fighters and Government of Syria (GoS) soldiers by unidentified armed actors continued in Dara'a Governorate.
- The Druze-led Counter-Terrorism Force clashed with GoS-backed National Defense Forces in As-Sweida Governorate.
- GoS began a new settlement process – allowing former opposition and wanted individuals to defer military conscription – for the areas under its control in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate.

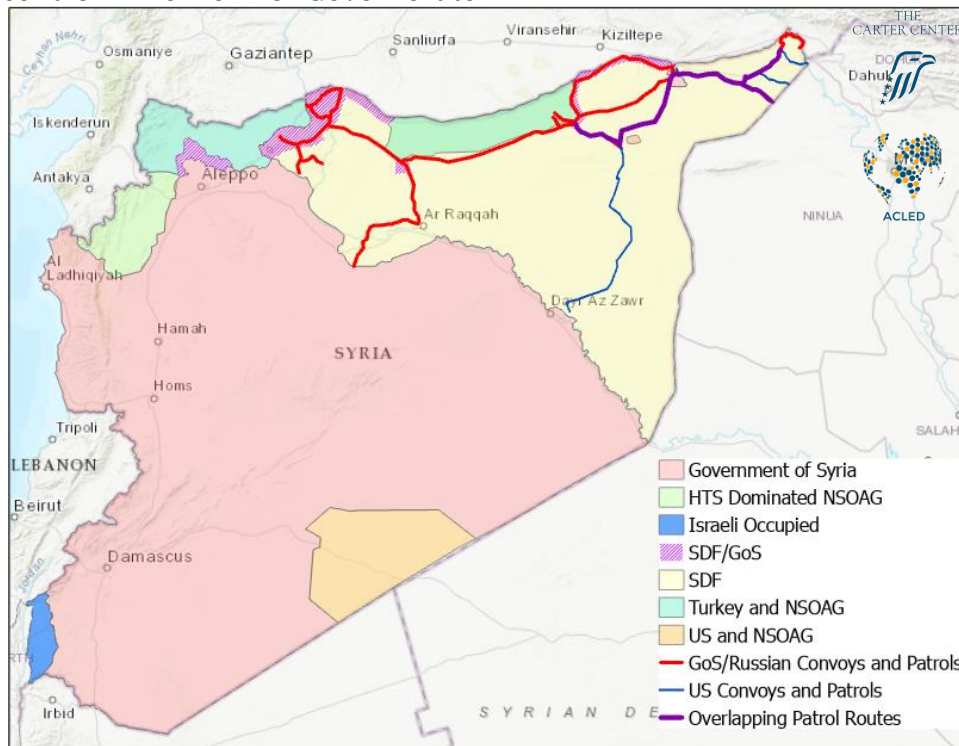


Figure 1: Dominant actors' area of control and influence in Syria as of 30 November 2021.-NSOAG stands for Non-state Organized Armed Groups. Also, please see footnote 1.

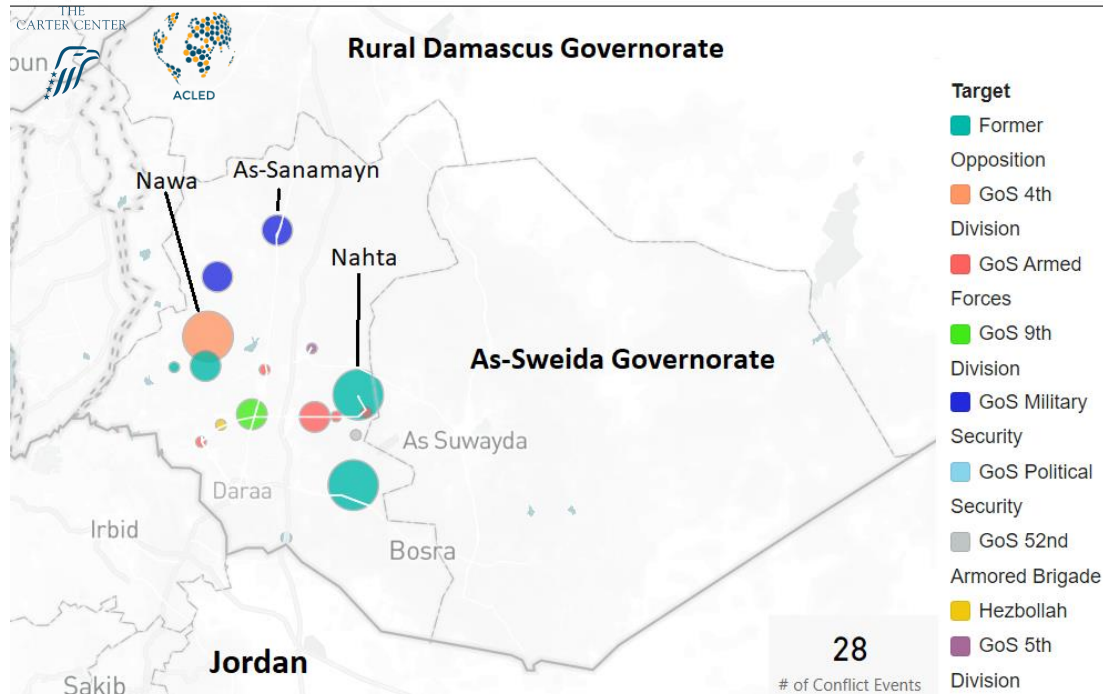
SOUTH & CENTRAL SYRIA¹

Figure 2: Attacks against former opposition fighters and GoS armed forces in Dara'a Governorate in 1-30 November 2021. Largest bubble represents 3 conflict events. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.

Attacks against Former Opposition Fighters and GoS Armed Forces in Dara'a Governorate

After the 2018 takeover of Dara'a and Quneitra Governorates by the Government of Syria (GoS), former opposition commanders gained prominence by exploiting old rivalries within GoS factions and leading influential political and military groups. The existence of these rival armed groups have caused tensions with GoS soldiers and officials. Attacks against former opposition and GoS figures by unidentified armed actors are common in Dara'a Governorate. Both sides blame the other for the attacks. Occasionally, this has escalated into sieges and conflict between the former opposition and GoS armed forces. Following the July-September siege of Dara'a al-Balad,² GoS armed forces spearheaded new settlement agreements in an effort to marginalize former opposition figures and assert the authority of GoS armed forces.³ These settlement deals typically require

¹ Figure 1 depicts areas of the dominant actors' control and influence. While "control" is a relative term in a complex, dynamic conflict, territorial control is defined as an entity having power over use of force as well as civil/administrative functions in an area. Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah maintain a presence in Syrian government-controlled territory. Non-state organized armed groups (NSOAG), including the Kurdish-dominated SDF and Turkish-backed opposition groups operate in areas not under GoS control. The area along the junction of the Syrian border with Iraq and Jordan is a 55km de-confliction zone, established by the U.S.-led coalition that also includes a number of aligned local armed groups. Patrols are also depicted in the map to show the presence of actors that may have influence in an area. This is particularly relevant as U.S. and Russian forces regularly patrol towns and routes in the northeast. While they do not control local administration or local forces, there is an assumption of a high degree of coordination with local de facto authorities. Data collected is by the publicly available project [ACLED](#).

² <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/77e354b12e6f47f6b81ae7692ec45c26>, <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/9001a6b8a5254bdc9d32db642add3511>

³ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/757f4c040ee5484593ecaa264ac7d59a>

former opposition fighters and wanted individuals to register with the GoS security forces, defer military conscription, and turnover their weapons to authorities. However, attacks against former opposition fighters and GoS soldiers continue.

7 November

Unidentified fighters killed 5 GoS soldiers, including 3 GoS officers, in 4 separate attacks across Dara'a Governorate. This involved attacks against 2 GoS lieutenants near Izra, a GoS conscript near Dael, a soldier in Al-Maliha al-Sharqiya, and a third lieutenant between Izra'-Sheikh Miskin.⁴

8 November

An unidentified armed group killed a former opposition fighter near As-Sanamayn, northern Dara'a Governorate. The same day, unidentified fighters killed a GoS Military Security official near Um Walad.⁵

14 November

An improvised explosive device (IED) planted by an unidentified armed group killed 3 GoS Air Force Intelligence officers near Naima, eastern Dara'a Governorate.⁶

24 November

GoS Air Force Intelligence clashed with Bedouin tribes near Nahta, eastern Dara'a Governorate.⁷ A major anti-settlement former opposition leader was reportedly killed after the clashes.⁸

29 November

An IED killed 3 GoS soldiers near Nawa, western Dara'a Governorate.⁹ In retaliation, GoS armed forces shelled the city of Nawa. The shelling reportedly killed 2 civilians in the city.¹⁰ In addition to the shelling, GoS armed forces also arrested 16 farmers on the outskirts of the city.¹¹

⁴ <https://www.horanfree.com/?p=10209>

⁵ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/524821>

⁶ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/526334>

⁷ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/527737>

⁸ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/527691>

⁹ <https://www.horanfree.com/?p=10343>

¹⁰ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/528801>

¹¹ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/529082>

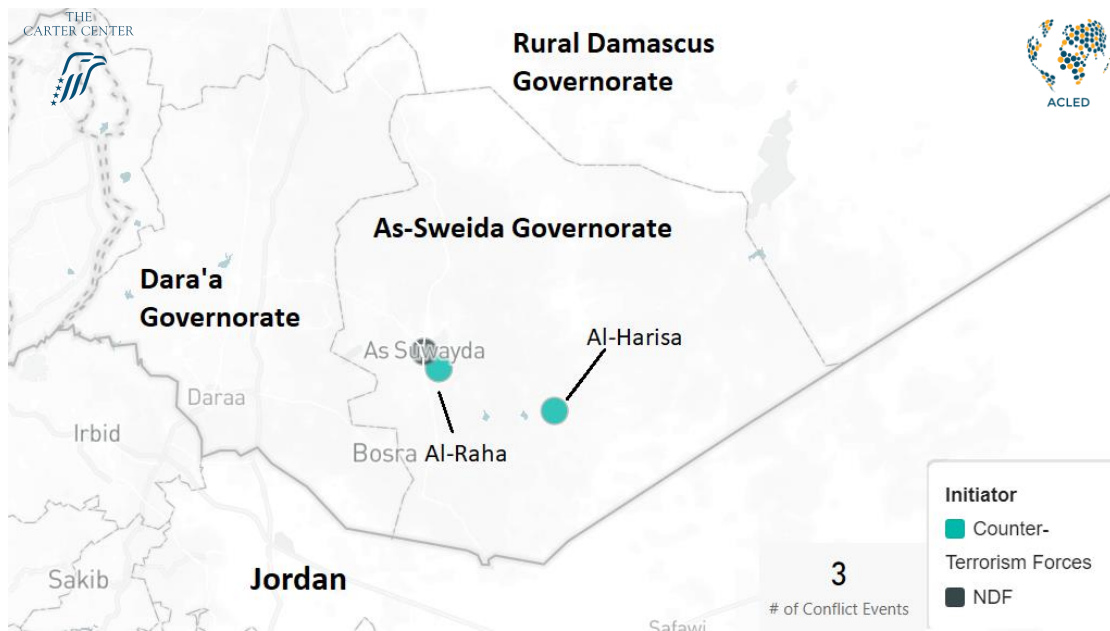


Figure 3: Clashes involving the GoS-backed National Defense Forces and Counter-Terrorism Forces in As-Sweida Governorate between 1-30 November 2021. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.

Clashes in As-Sweida Governorate

On 7 July, a new predominantly Druze political party was formed in As-Sweida Governorate. The party, known as the Syrian Al-Liwa party, seeks to promote the interests of Druze in the governorate.¹² The party has its own armed group, “The Counter-Terrorism Force” (CTF), formed to protect As-Sweida citizens against kidnapping gangs allegedly affiliated with the GoS or Iran.¹³ CTF has often confronted these alleged GoS-backed kidnapping gangs and other pro-GoS militias, which have led to standoffs.¹⁴

6 November

The GoS-backed National Defense Forces (NDF) clashed with the CTF in Al-Raha, eastern As-Sweida Governorate. Two CTF fighters were reportedly injured in the clashes.¹⁵ Al-Raha has been a site of frequent tension between the NDF and CTF.¹⁶

16 November

The CTF reportedly repelled an attack from a car carrying ISIS fighters near Al-Harisa, eastern As-Sweida Governorate. However, the CTF accused GoS armed forces of allowing the ISIS car through its checkpoints.¹⁷

22-23 November

On 22 November, non-CTF local militia fighters clashed with the NDF after the former were caught cutting trees near a GoS checkpoint outside of As-Sweida city.¹⁸ The next day, the NDF attempted to arrest some of the wounded fighters at

¹² <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/07/new-druze-political-party-military-faction-take-shape-suwayda>

¹³ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/494512>

¹⁴ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/9001a6b8a5254bdc9d32db642add3511>

¹⁵ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/524535>

¹⁶ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/9001a6b8a5254bdc9d32db642add3511>

¹⁷ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/526404>

¹⁸ <https://npasyria.com/en/68131/>

a hospital in As-Sweida city, angering families and local militias, which led to protests and further clashes.¹⁹ On the same day, in response to the arrests, the CTF published a video accusing the NDF of instigating the recent tensions.²⁰

25 November

Due to the increased tensions in As-Sweida city, local armed groups and political factions met to discuss the recent standoff at the As-Sweida city hospital and warned GoS from taking further armed actions.²¹

NORTHEAST SYRIA

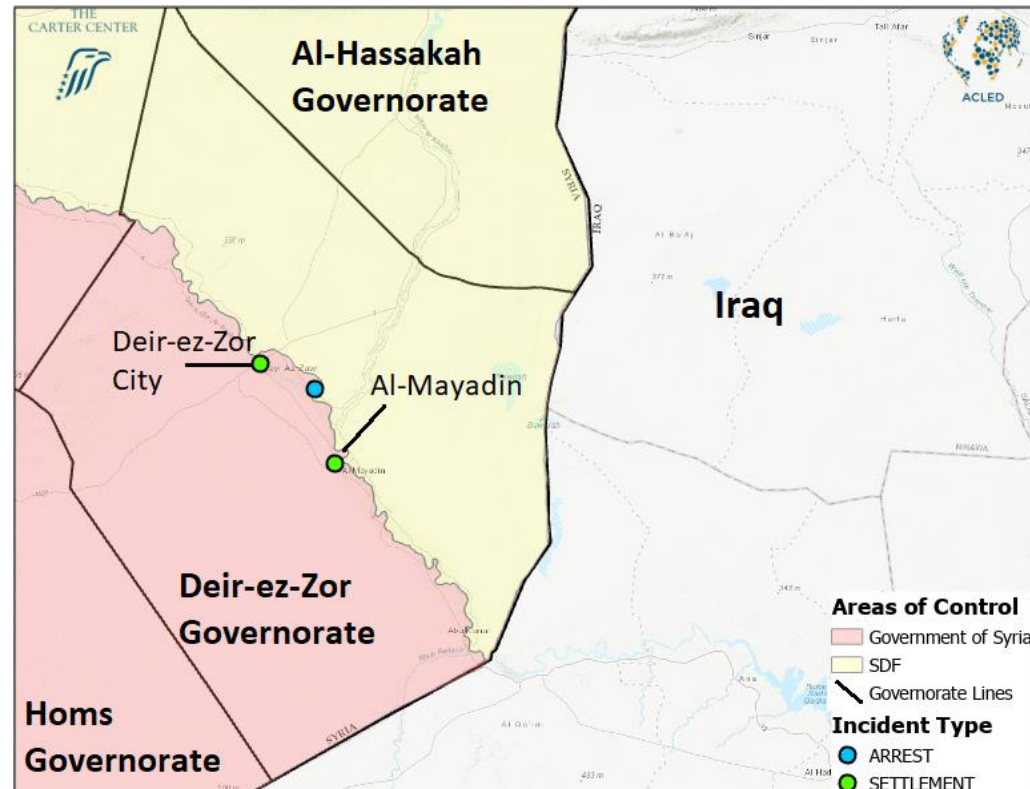


Figure 3: Reported settlements and arrests in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.

Settlements in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate

During the campaign to defeat ISIS, control of Deir-ez-Zor Governorate has been divided mostly along the Euphrates River. Tensions between GoS authorities and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) remain high, with reported clashes between the two occasionally occurring along the river. The GoS-controlled territory in the governorate maintains a strong Iranian presence, particularly in the cities near the Syria-Iraq border.

9 November

The Ba'ath Party in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate called for the start of a settlement process in the governorate.²² The call for a settlement process in Deir-ez-Zor

¹⁹ <https://suwayda24.com/?p=18108>, <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/527465>

²⁰ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/527504>

²¹ <https://npasyria.com/en/68304/>

²² <https://tinyurl.com/yurr7hb7>

Governorate was partially inspired by the recent October settlements in Dara'a Governorate.

14 November

The settlement process began in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate.²³ The same day, GoS armed forces arrested 4 men near Jdeidat Akidat, western Deir-ez-Zor Governorate.²⁴ The arrest occurred after the men had completed the settlement process.²⁵

17 November

The Autonomous Administration of Northeast Syria (AANES) condemned the settlement process in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate. AANES also warned, without explanation, that any employee found conducting a settlement with GoS would be fired and prevented from any future work with any AANES institution.²⁶

24 November

The Ba'ath Party began a process for settlements in Al-Mayadin city, Deir-ez-Zor Governorate.²⁷

For earlier conflict summaries, please click [here](#). For an interactive map of historical areas of control in Syria, please click [here](#).

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²³ <https://sana.sy/en/?p=254404>

²⁴ <https://tinyurl.com/ytp65sfw>

²⁵ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/525832>

²⁶ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/526820>

²⁷ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/527960>