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COI QUERY

Country of Origin

SYRIA

Title

Major human rights, security, and humanitarian developments

Reference period

1 August to 31 October 2022

Topics

1. Territorial control
2. Security situation
3. Targeting of individuals by armed actors
4. Economic and humanitarian situation

Date of completion

8 November 2022

Query Code

Q36-2022

Contributing EU+ COI units

N/A

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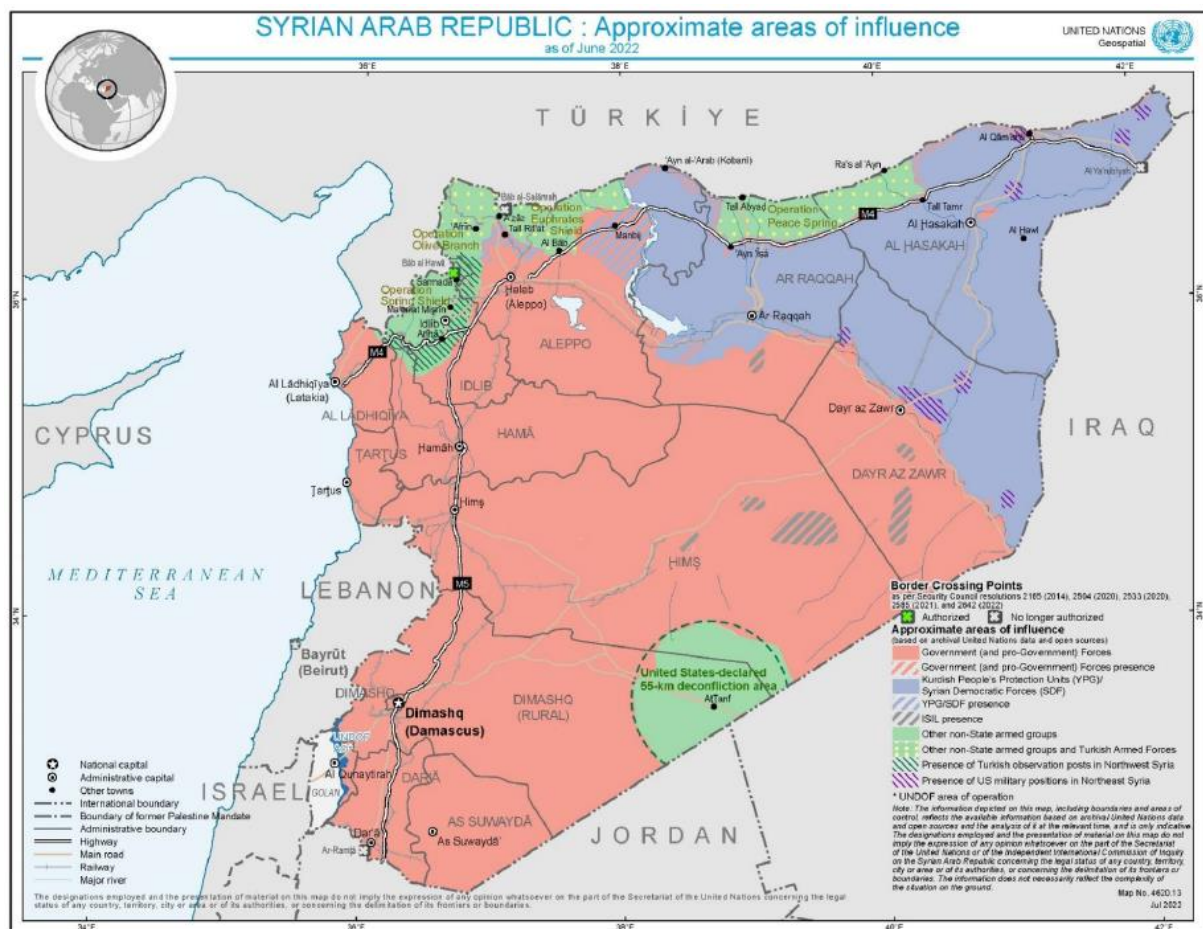
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COI QUERY RESPONSE – Syria

Major human rights, security, and humanitarian developments

1. Territorial control



Map 1: Syrian Arab Republic: Approximate areas of influence as of June 2022, © UN Geospatial¹

No significant changes to territorial control were reported during the reference period. A UN map depicting approximative areas of influence in Syria as of June 2022 (see Map 1) provides the same assessment regarding territorial control in Syria as it did in December 2021.²

¹ UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic: Approximate areas of influence as of June 2022, [url](#), p. 21

² UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic: Approximate areas of influence as of December 2021, January 2022, [url](#)

For a detailed description of territorial control in Syria see section 1.4 of the [EUAA COI report: Syria Security situation report \(September 2022\)](#)

2. Security situation

During August and September 2022, hostilities continued, particularly in north-west, north-east, and southern Syria. According to the UN Security Council, during this period ‘Northern rural Aleppo, Raqqah and Hasakah Governorates continued to see sustained tensions including airstrikes, limited clashes, shelling and rocket fire across front lines’. Strikes targeting civilian areas were reported in A’zaz, Al Bab, Afrin and other areas in northern rural Aleppo.³

Attacks with improvised explosive devices (IEDs), targeted killings, kidnappings and limited clashes were reported in August and September 2022 in Dar’a, Quneitra and Sweida governorates.⁴

Following GoS’ demands that former opposition fighters would be expelled from Tafas, Dar’a governorate, clashes ensued between local fighters and GoS forces and a blockade of the city was enforced by GoS between 27 July and 13 August. The clashes led to the displacement⁵ of around 2 500 persons from Tafas to other nearby areas in August.⁶ On 13 August the blockade was lifted after an agreement was reached between GoS and local representatives from Tafas to expel the wanted individuals.⁷ Additionally, in September 2022 limited raids by GoS forces and clashes with local forces were reported in the city of Jassim, Dar’a governorate.⁸

In October 2022, in the north-west, clashes between Syrian National Army (SNA)-affiliated groups Third Legion on the one hand and Hamza Division and Suleiman Shah Brigade on the other,⁹ led to dozens of fatalities¹⁰ and prompted HTS to launch an armed operation against the

³ UN Security Council, Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020), 2533 (2020), 2585 (2021) and 2642 (2022), S/2022/775, 19 October 2022, [url](#), para. 3

⁴ UN Security Council, Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020), 2533 (2020), 2585 (2021) and 2642 (2022), S/2022/775, 19 October 2022, [url](#), para. 6

⁵ NPA, Town In Syria’s Daraa Witnesses Bombardment, Displacement, 10 August 2022, [url](#)

⁶ UN Security Council, Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020), 2533 (2020), 2585 (2021) and 2642 (2022), S/2022/775, 19 October 2022, [url](#), para. 6

⁷ Carter Center (The), Quarterly Review of Syrian Political and Military Dynamics July-September 2022, 7 November 2022, [url](#), p. 13

⁸ Carter Center (The), Quarterly Review of Syrian Political and Military Dynamics July-September 2022, 7 November 2022, [url](#), p. 13

⁹ Al Monitor, Syrian jihadist group HTS, armed groups agree to uneasy truce, 23 October 2022, [url](#); Ajajoub, O., HTS, Turkey, and the future of Syria’s north, MEI, 26 October 2022, [url](#)

¹⁰ International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch, October 2022, [url](#)

Third Legion by HTS in northern Aleppo governorate.¹¹ The intervention led to HTS temporarily seizing control of the Afrin region. This move was followed by demonstrations in several towns and villages against HTS' takeover of Afrin and deployment of Turkish forces in the area to stop the fighting between rival factions.¹² The fighting between SNA factions and HTS reportedly led to the killing of 58 individuals, mostly militants.¹³ By the end of October, HTS was reported to have largely withdrawn from Afrin,¹⁴ although some sources noted that elements of HTS were still active in the governance of the city.¹⁵

On 13 October 2022, an IED attack targeting an army bus killed 18 pro-GoS soldiers¹⁶ and wounded another 27¹⁷ in Damascus city. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.¹⁸

Israeli airstrikes on GoS facilities, including on the airports of Aleppo and Damascus were reported in September and October 2022.¹⁹

During the reference period, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) attacks, including against civilians, were reported in Deir Ez-Zor, Hasaka,²⁰ eastern rural Homs and Hama governorates.²¹ According to Counter Extremism Project analyst Gregory Waters, ISIL carried out at least 32 confirmed attacks in the months of August, September and October 2022, which took place in Raqqqa, Aleppo, Homs, Hama and Deir Ez Zor governorates. The attacks led to at least 27 pro-GoS soldiers and three civilians killed, and 28 soldiers wounded.²² In October 2022, a GoS and Russian-led operation against ISIL cells in Dar'a governorate led according to Russian claims to the killing of at least 20 alleged ISIL fighters in the city of

¹¹ Syrian Observer (The), Recap: HTS and Opposition Agreement in Northern Syria Following Turkish Intervention, 21 October 2022, [url](#)

¹² Syrian Observer (The), Recap: HTS and Opposition Agreement in Northern Syria Following Turkish Intervention, 21 October 2022, [url](#)

¹³ NPA, HTS Withdraws From Syria's Afrin But Keeps Security Forces, 18 October 2022, [url](#)

¹⁴ MEE, Syria: Turkey to reorganise rebel groups as HTS withdraws from Afrin, 25 October 2022, [url](#)

¹⁵ Syria Direct, Is Hayat Tahrir al-Sham withdrawing from the Aleppo countryside, or staying in the shadows?, 22 October 2022, [url](#); NPA, HTS Withdraws From Syria's Afrin But Keeps Security Forces, 18 October 2022, [url](#)

¹⁶ BBC News, Syrian soldiers killed in army bus bombing near Damascus, 13 October 2022, [url](#); International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch, October 2022, [url](#)

¹⁷ Al Jazeera, Military bus blast in Syria kills 18 soldiers: State media, 13 October 2022, [url](#)

¹⁸ BBC News, Syrian soldiers killed in army bus bombing near Damascus, 13 October 2022, [url](#); International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch, October 2022, [url](#)

¹⁹ International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch, September 2022, [url](#); International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch, October 2022, [url](#)

²⁰ International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch, September 2022, [url](#)

²¹ UN Security Council, Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020), 2533 (2020), 2585 (2021) and 2642 (2022), S/2022/775, 19 October 2022, [url](#), para. 5

²² Waters, G., ISIS Redux: The Central Syria Insurgency in August 2022, Counter Extremism Project, 6 September 2022, [url](#); Waters, G., ISIS Redux: The Central Syria Insurgency in September 2022, Counter Extremism Project, 4 October 2022, [url](#); Waters, G., ISIS Redux: The Central Syria Insurgency in October 2022, Counter Extremism Project, 4 November 2022, [url](#)

Jassim. Local sources mentioned however that the operation left 10 persons, including two leaders dead.²³

Conflict data

According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) dataset²⁴, between 1 August 2022 and 31 October 2022 there were 3 069 security incidents recorded in Syria: 602 were coded as battles, 2 046 as explosions/remote violence, and 421 as violence against civilians.²⁵ The average of 1 023 security incidents/month recorded by ACLED between 1 August 2022 and 31 October 2022 is significantly higher than the one recorded for the first seven months of 2022 (1 January 2022 to 31 July 2022), which stood at 764 security incidents/month.²⁶

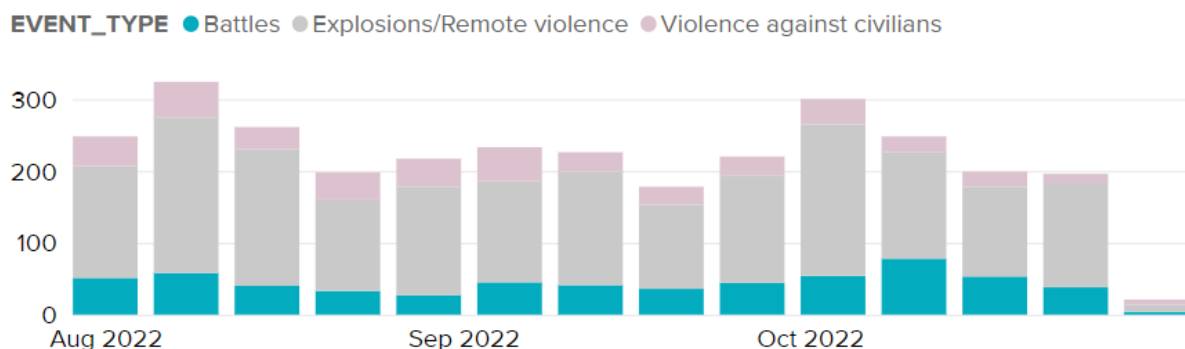


Figure 1. Evolution of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians between 1 August 2022 and 31 October 2022, based on ACLED data²⁷

Most security incidents were recorded by ACLED in Aleppo (995), Idlib (681) and Hasaka (387) governorates. The lowest security incidents figures were recorded in Tartous (3), Damascus (7) and Quneitra (9) governorates (see Figure 2).

²³ Enab Baladi, Russia claims killing 20 IS fighters in Daraa; What is the truth behind?, 18 October 2022, [url](#)

²⁴ EUAA used only the following type of ACLED coded security events in the analysis: battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians. For more information on ACLED data and how it is used by the EUAA, see [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security situation \(September 2022\)](#)

²⁵ EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2022 to 28 October 2022, as of 4 November 2022, [url](#)

²⁶ EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 January 2022 to 28 October 2022, as of 4 November 2022, [url](#)

²⁷ EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2022 to 28 October 2022, as of 4 November 2022, [url](#)

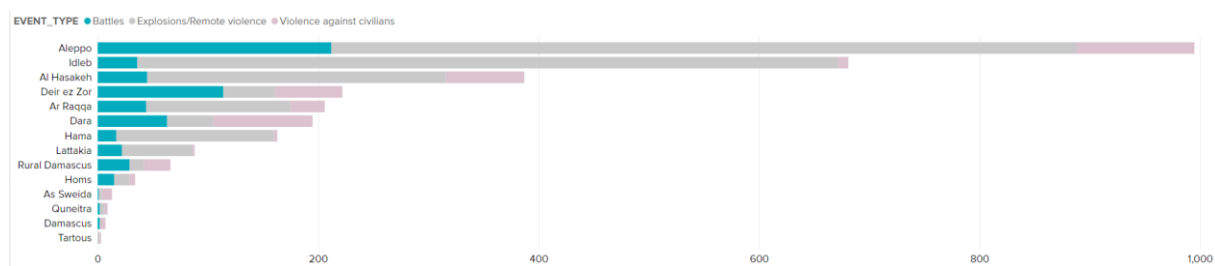


Figure 2. Number of security events coded battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians between 1 August 2022 and 31 October 2022. Breakdown by governorate based on ACLED data²⁸

According to the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), for the period 1 August to 31 October 2022, there were 225 civilian fatalities recorded in Syria. Most civilian fatalities recorded by SNHR during this period occurred in Aleppo governorate (66), followed by Dar'a (41) and Deir Ez-Zor (32) governorates (see Figure 3).

Civilian fatalities by governorate	August 2022 ²⁹	September 2022 ³⁰	October 2022 ³¹
Damascus	-	-	-
Rural Damascus	3	-	1
Idlib	11	16	-
Deir Ez-Zor	7	14	11
Aleppo	34	12	20

²⁸ EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, data covering 1 August 2022 to 28 October 2022, as of 4 November 2022, [url](#)

²⁹ SNHR, 91 Civilians, Including 28 Children, Two Women, and Seven Victims Who Died Due to Torture, Including One Child, Were Documented Killed in Syria in August 2022, 1 September 2022, [url](#), p. 10

³⁰ SNHR, 74 Civilians, Including 21 Children, Three Women, and Seven Victims Who Died Due to Torture. Were Documented Killed in Syria in September 2022, 1 October 2022, [url](#), p. 11

³¹ SNHR, 60 Civilians, Including 10 Children, Five Women, and Five Victims Who Died due to Torture, Were Documented Killed in Syria, in October 2022, 1 November 2022, [url](#), p. 10

Civilian fatalities by governorate	August 2022 ²⁹	September 2022 ³⁰	October 2022 ³¹
Dar'a	16	11	14
Hama	1	4	4
Homs	3	5	4
Hasaka	11	5	2
Raqqa	1	2	2
Quneitra	-	-	-
Sweida	4	2	1
Latakia	-	3	1
Tartous	-	-	-
Total	91	74	60

Figure 3. Civilian fatalities in between August and October 2022. Monthly breakdown based on SNHR data³²

For the months of August and September 2022, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded at least 92 civilians killed and 80 injured

³² SNHR, 91 Civilians, Including 28 Children, Two Women, and Seven Victims Who Died Due to Torture, Including One Child, Were Documented Killed in Syria in August 2022, 1 September 2022, [url](#), p. 10; SNHR, 74 Civilians, Including 21 Children, Three Women, and Seven Victims Who Died Due to Torture. Were Documented Killed in Syria in September 2022, 1 October 2022, [url](#), p. 11; SNHR, 60 Civilians, Including 10 Children, Five Women, and Five Victims Who Died due to Torture, Were Documented Killed in Syria, in October 2022, 1 November 2022, [url](#), p. 10

in Syria as a result of hostilities, without specifying the governorates where these casualties were documented.³³

Between July and September 2022, the Carter Center recorded 58 persons (civilians or others) killed by landmines and unexploded ordnances (UXO) in Syria.³⁴

3. Targeting of individuals by armed actors

According to the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (UNCOI), during the first six months of 2022 around 150 people, including individuals who underwent ‘reconciliation’, were arrested by GoS in Dar’a governorate. During the same reference period, UNCOI documented over 100 persons killed in Dar’a governorate following targeted attacks on former opposition and pro-GoS fighters by unidentified perpetrators.³⁵

Reporting on the period between 1 January and 30 June 2022, UNCOI stated that nine men who defected or failed to comply with military service, were detained and subjected to torture and ill-treatment. Among the cases reported were also defectors who returned following an amnesty but were still arrested.³⁶

According to UNCOI, the GoS denied security clearances to former opposition members, those perceived as critical of the GoS, including their relatives, and to former residents of areas which were regarded as opposition strongholds such as Yarmouk camp and Daraya. Security clearances are a precondition for access to property and housing, including selling, inheriting, renting, or buying property.³⁷

On 7 October 2022, a social media activist and his pregnant wife were shot and killed in al Bab city³⁸ by members of the SNA affiliated group Hamza Division.³⁹ The activist had organised demonstrations against actions by Turkish affiliated armed group, including the seizure of property by SNA armed groups in the area.⁴⁰

³³ UNOCHA, Reena Ghelani, Director of Operations and Advocacy Division, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Remarks on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, 25 October 2022, [url](#); UN Security Council, Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020), 2533 (2020), 2585 (2021) and 2642 (2022), S/2022/775, 19 October 2022, [url](#), para 3

³⁴ Carter Center (The), Quarterly Review of Syrian Political and Military Dynamics July-September 2022, 7 November 2022, [url](#), p. 17

³⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic [A/HRC/51/45], 17 August 2022, [url](#), paras. 36-37

³⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic [A/HRC/51/45], 17 August 2022, [url](#), para. 19

³⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic [A/HRC/51/45], 17 August 2022, [url](#), paras. 28-29

³⁸ OHCHR, Escalation of hostilities in northern Syria, 22 October 2022, [url](#)

³⁹ ACLED, Regional Overview: Middle East 8-14 October 2022, 20 October 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁰ OHCHR, Escalation of hostilities in northern Syria, 22 October 2022, [url](#)

According to a Human Rights Watch report published in November 2022, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) destroyed or damaged at least 147 residential buildings in Hasaka city during an anti-ISIL operation carried out in January and February 2022. The events took place in the aftermath of ISIL's attack on al-Sina prison in which a number of detainees and ISIL fighters escaped. While SDF stated that damage to the buildings was caused by detonating ISIL-placed explosives in the buildings, residents interviewed by Human Rights Watch claimed that SDF had used bulldozers to demolish their houses, particularly in the East Ghweran and al-Zuhour neighborhoods of Hasaka city.⁴¹

4. Economic and humanitarian situation

Around 12 million people face acute food insecurity in Syria in 2022. In August 2022, the price of the standard food basket in Syria was 36 % higher than in February 2022 and 85 % higher than at the same time in 2021.⁴²

Water shortages were reported between August and October 2022 in Hasaka governorate where the Alouk water station did not provide service during this time. In Al Bab, Aleppo governorate, around 185 000 people were also affected by water shortages.⁴³

At the beginning of September 2022, a cholera outbreak was declared by the Ministry of Health of the Syrian Arab Republic. By the end of October 2022, over 20 000 cases were reported in all of Syria's 14 governorates, as well as 75 resulting in fatalities.⁴⁴ The majority of cases were recorded in Aleppo, Deir-Ez-Zor and Hasaka governorates.⁴⁵ By mid-October, 75 deaths were attributed to the cholera outbreak, most of them recorded in Aleppo and Deir-Ez-Zor governorates.⁴⁶ The cholera outbreak was attributed to drinking unsafe water from the Euphrates River and use of unsafe water sources which led to food contamination.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Human Rights Watch, Syria: Civilian Homes Demolished in Security Operation, 1 November 2022, [url](#)

⁴² WFP, Syria Situation Report #9, September 2022, [url](#), p. 1

⁴³ UNOCHA, Reena Ghelani, Director of Operations and Advocacy Division, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Remarks on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, 25 October 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁴ UNOCHA, WHO, Whole of Syria Cholera Outbreak Situation Report no.4, 23 October 2022, [url](#), p. 1

⁴⁵ UN Security Council, Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020), 2533 (2020), 2585 (2021) and 2642 (2022), S/2022/775, 19 October 2022, [url](#), para. 7; International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch, September 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁶ UNOCHA, WHO, Whole of Syria Cholera Outbreak Situation Report no.4, 23 October 2022, [url](#), p. 2

⁴⁷ UN Security Council, Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020), 2533 (2020), 2585 (2021) and 2642 (2022), S/2022/775, 19 October 2022, [url](#), para. 7; International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch, September 2022, [url](#)

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