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WEEKLY CONFLICT SUMMARY | 31 May - 6 June 2021

SYRIA SUMMARY

- The predominantly Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) cracks down on anti-conscription protests in Manbij, Aleppo Governorate.
- The Government of Syria (GoS) offers to defer military service for people wanted in southern Syria.
- ISIS assassinates a prominent religious leader in Deir-ez-Zor city.

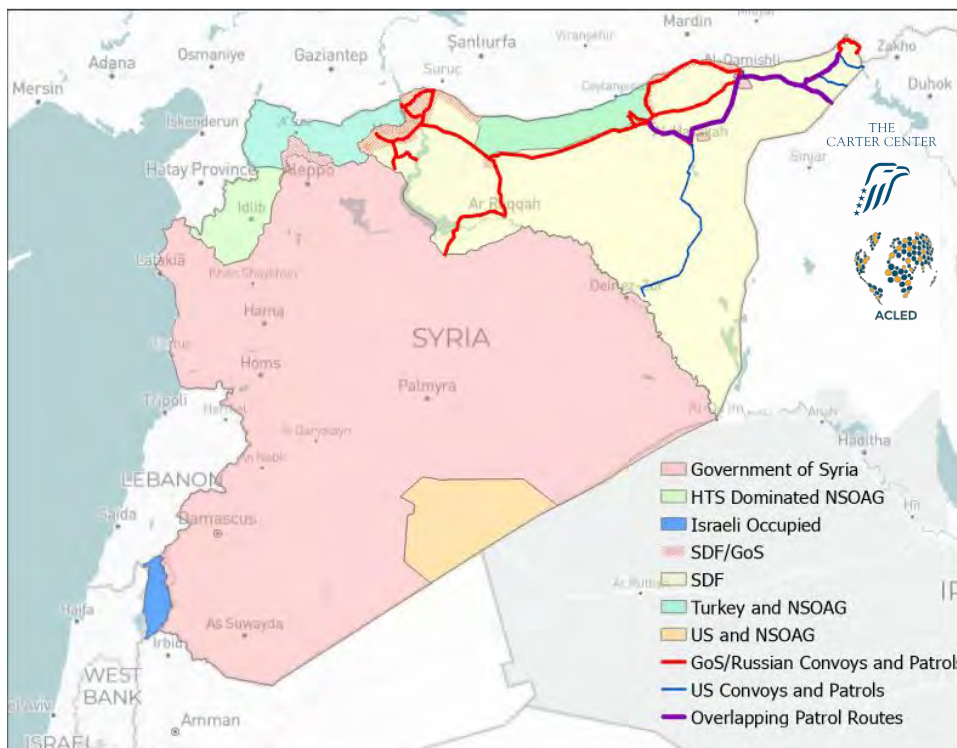


Figure 1: Dominant actors' area of control and influence in Syria as of 6 June 2021.-NSOAG stands for Non-state Organized Armed Groups. Also, please see footnote 1.

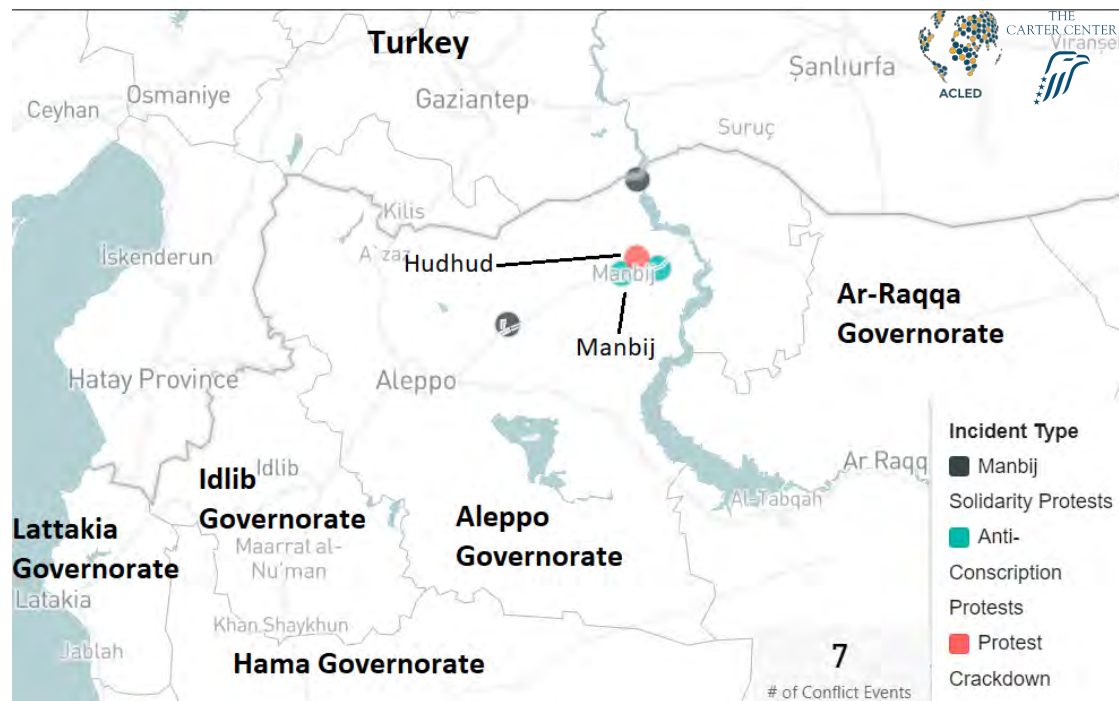
NORTHWEST SYRIA¹

Figure 2: Anti-conscription protests and related events in Manbij, Aleppo Governorate between 31 May – 6 June. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.

Conscription in Northwest Syria

In 2019, the Kurdish Autonomous Administration (KAA) issued a controversial conscription law for territories under its control.² In February, the Syrian Network For Human Rights claimed that the conscription of teachers deprived half a million students of a proper education.³ People in the region argue that the forcible recruitment and arrests by SDF have disrupted economic life.⁴ In late May, the SDF escalated its recruitment effort.⁵

31 May

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 US-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 US 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](https://acled.org/).

² <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2021/02/conscription-by-sdf-agonizing-raqq-a-residents/>

³ <https://sn4hr.org/blog/2021/02/19/55948/>

⁴ <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2021/02/syria-conscription-sdf-is-army-volunteer.html?emailaddress=hariprasad%40gwu.edu#>

⁵ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/9e0fb533d9fc43fbbd91a88c38b1e133>

Protest demonstrations against the SDF's forced conscription campaign were held in Manbij, Aleppo Governorate,⁶ after which the Manbij Civil Council imposed a 48-hour curfew in the area.⁷

1 June

Despite the curfew, protests continued in Hudhud, Aleppo Governorate. Kurdish security forces opened fire on the protesters, killing four.⁸ KAA accused the Government of Syria (GoS) armed forces of open fire at the SDF.⁹ On 3 June, the Manbij Civil Administration extended the curfew.¹⁰

2 June

Following negotiations between the SDF, the local civil council, and tribal leaders, the Manbij Military Council suspended the military conscription.¹¹¹²¹³

5 June

The KAA announced the suspension of military conscription for all territories under its control.¹⁴ The same day, the Manbij civil administration ended its curfew in Manbij.¹⁵

SOUTH & CENTRAL SYRIA



Figure 3: New and proposed settlement deals in south and central Syria between 31 May – 6 June 2021. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.

⁶ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/485333>

⁷ <https://npasyria.com/en/60197/>

⁸ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/485697>

⁹ <https://npasyria.com/en/60250/>

¹⁰ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/486070>

¹¹ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/485887>

¹² <https://npasyria.com/en/60306/>

¹³ <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/story/24654-Military-conscription-suspended-after-protests-and-riots-in-Syria>

¹⁴ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/486556>

¹⁵ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/486420>

GoS offer to settle disputes in Southern Syria

The military draft has been an ongoing concern for people within GoS-controlled territory. This also has been an important issue for former opposition fighters in southern Syria. In the 2021 presidential election, GoS administrators and Baathist party members faced multiple threats in southern Syria, particularly Dara'a and Quneitra Governorates.

4 June

Following the presidential election, GoS offered to negotiate a new deal to settle the disputes over military conscription in Quneitra Governorate,¹⁶ allowing military draftees and other individuals wanted by the GoS to defer their military service.^{17 18 19}

5 June

GoS began a separate initiative to allow military draftees and wanted individuals to settle disputes in Kanaker, Rural Damascus Governorate. Local youth rejected the offer, arguing that the GoS had previously broken agreements to defer military service.²⁰

NORTHEAST SYRIA

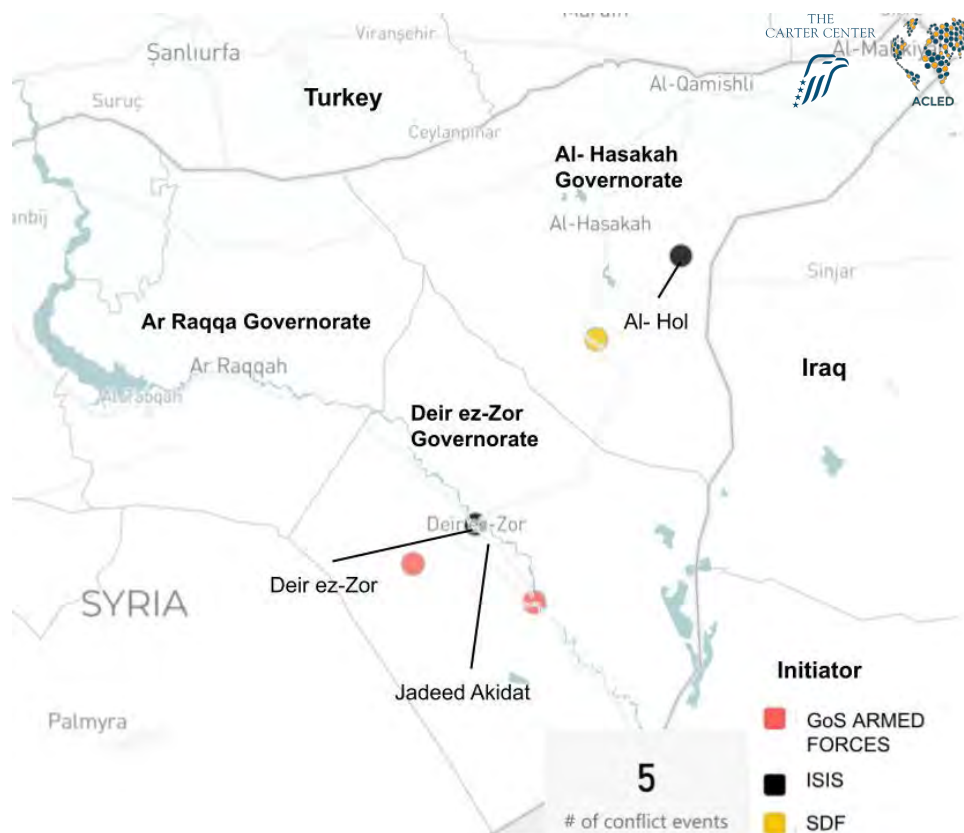


Figure 4: Conflict events involving ISIS in Northeast Syria between 31 May – 6 June 2021. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.

¹⁶ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/486171>

¹⁷ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/486171>

¹⁸ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/cbc5bd9ad70e460db4839ba5594c0a80>

¹⁹ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/486740>

²⁰ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/486740>

The Battle Against ISIS

ISIS continued to be active in the Badia desert region of central and northeast Syria. ISIS has launched high-casualty attacks against the GoS armed forces and its allies. Multiple operations against ISIS have had limited success. At times, SDF operations have exacerbated tensions between the KAA and Arab tribes in the region.

31 May

ISIS claimed responsibility for the killing of an imam in Deir-ez-Zor city due to the he imam's alleged association with the SDF.²¹

1 June

The SDF arrested an ISIS sleeper cell in Jadeed Akidat, eastern Deir-ez-Zor Governorate. The sleeper cell leaders reportedly confessed to kidnapping local residents for ransom payments.²²

June 5

The KAA repatriated a Dutch woman and three children from Al-Hol camp.²³ Thousands of foreign ISIS members and their families are held in the camp. Their countries of origin have refused to take them back.²⁴

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

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²¹ <https://www.enabbaladi.net/archives/485524>

²² <https://npasyria.com/en/60215/>

²³ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/5/dutch-woman-and-three-children-repatriated-from-syria-isil-camp>

²⁴ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/5/kurds-to-allow-is-linked-syria-families-to-quit-al-hol-camp>