

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and Turkish-backed armed opposition groups cracked down on rival armed groups in northwest Syria.
Protests in Northwest Syria denounced the forthcoming presidential election.
GoS armed forces and local militias clashed in southern Syria.
US armed forces bombarded Iranian-backed militias in Al-Bukamal, Deir-ez-Zor Governorate.

Figure 1: Dominant actors' area of control and i

Figure 2: Locations where Hayat Tahrir al-Sham arrested Hurras al-Din fighters since February 1, 2021. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) continued the domination of opposition-controlled territory in the northwest following the 23-26 June 2020 clashes with the “So Be Steadfast Operation Room”,² Idlib Governorate.³ In this effort, HTS is continuing attacks against defectors and armed groups perceived as undermining its authority, particularly the Al-Qaeda affiliate Hurras al-Din (HD). In February 2021, HTS increased its crackdown on HD and other rival groups.⁴

Turkish armed forces and Turkish-backed Syrian armed opposition groups have faced multiple attacks from unidentified armed groups and Kurdish militias. Since 1 January 2021, there has been an increase of conflict events within Turkish-held

¹ Figure 1, the Carter Center’s areas of control map, depicts areas of the dominant actors’ control and influence. While “control” is difficult to determine 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.

As-Sweida Governorate.¹⁴ Hezbollah fighters and GoS officials have been accused of profiting from the drug trade.¹⁵

GoS State Security arrested a former opposition leader in Ankhel, Dara'a Governorate. Supporters of the former opposition leader took dozens of GoS soldiers and police officers as hostages in Jasim.¹⁶ Following negotiations, both sides agreed to release their prisoners and hostages.¹⁷

The Central Committee of Dara'a, a group composed of former opposition fighters responsible for negotiating with Russia and the GoS about local governance grievances, concluded an agreement with Russian armed forces,¹⁸ conceding that Russian armed forces and GoS Military Security forces would patrol between Izra, Tafas, and Dara'a city.¹⁹ The agreement also

