

## Quarterly Review of Syrian Political and Military Dynamics April-June 2022

### Acknowledgments

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Alongside military action, Russian leadership continues to vocalize its support for the GoS as sovereign over the whole of its territory despite external threats, in reference to Turkish threats and regular Israeli airstrikes.<sup>7</sup>

Through talks for a possible agreement, GoS and Russian officials have increased cooperation in the commercial, cultural, social, and technical spheres to promote exchange between the two countries.<sup>8</sup>



of a new resolution. This new proposal also mandates a briefing on the system's implementation every two months and demands that a report on Syria's humanitarian needs be submitted to the UN Secretary-General by 10 December 2022.<sup>26</sup>

## Military Dynamics

### Conflict Between the Government of Syria and the Armed Opposition



Figure 3: Conflict between GoS armed forces and armed opposition groups in northwest Syria from April to June 2022. The largest bubble represents 41 conflict events. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.

In the second quarter of 2022, there were 434 conflict events recorded between GoS armed forces and their allies against armed opposition groups, down from 602 events in the previous quarter. Conflict events this quarter included 348 shelling events, 26 aerial bombardments, and 59 clashes. There were 142 events in April, a slight spike to 169 events in May, and a decrease to 123 events in June.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220711-agreement-at-un-to-extend-cross-border-syria-aid-diplomats>





split from the Levant Front.<sup>36</sup> On 24 May, Ahrar al-Sham joined the Thaeroun Front, the rival to the Levant Front-dominated Third Corps.<sup>37</sup>

Between 18-19 June 2022, Ahrar al-Sham fighters clashed with Levant Front fighters in Aleppo Governorate after the latter confiscated the former's headquarters.<sup>38</sup> In the ensuing clashes, Ahrar al-Sham took over several major checkpoints in the Al-Bab region of Aleppo Governorate,<sup>39</sup> progressing towards Afrin. HTS reportedly backed Ahrar al-Sham's efforts and even sent fighters to provide support in Turkish-controlled territory.<sup>40</sup> This brought HTS fighters within just a few kilometers of Afrin city.<sup>41</sup> Negotiations and Turkish pressure eventually caused HTS and Ahrar al-Sham to withdraw from the captured SNA checkpoints and for HTS to leave Turkish-held territory.<sup>42</sup> Despite continuing organizational changes within the SNA, the main drivers of division and conflict among the various factions yet persist. Indeed, this most recent episode demonstrates SNA weakness, making the coalition susceptible to outside interference by rivals.

*The Carter Center released a report on the developments within the Syrian National Army and the drivers of infighting, which can be viewed in StoryMaps or [PDF](#) form.*

## SDF-Turkey Clashes

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<sup>36</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/5n865v9f>

<sup>37</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/5n8t4m59>

<sup>38</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/2p8dx9rm>

*Figure 4: Conflict between Turkish armed forces and Turkish-backed armed opposition groups on one side and the SDF on the other between April and June 2022. The largest bubble represents 42 conflict events. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.*

From 1 April to 30 June 2022, ACLED recorded 355 conflict events between various Kurdish armed groups and Turkish armed forces or Turkish-backed opposition groups. This marks a 52% increase in this type of conflict compared to the first quarter of 2022. Conflict events consisted of shelling, aerial bombardment, and clashes, with 104 in April, 170 in May, and 81 in June. 297 of these events (84%) were shelling or aerial bombardment initiated by Turkish armed forces or Turkish-backed opposition groups against the Kurdish-backed forces, nearly double the count of similar events last quarter.

Turkey has vowed since May 2022 that it will begin a new offensive in Northern Syria against SDF-controlled territory on the Turkish border<sup>43</sup>. This rhetoric has been accompanied by increased conflict events between Turkey and its allies against the SDF. The buildup of Turkish forces in the Aleppo countryside<sup>44</sup> and along the Syrian border accords with this rhetoric as well. However, as of 4 July 2022, Turkey has indicated a hesitancy to continue





## The Battle Against ISIS

*Figure 6*

## Unexploded Ordnance in Syria

*Figure 7: Detonations of old landmines and unexploded ordnance in Syria since April-June 2022. The largest bubble represents three detonation events. Data from The Carter Center and ACLED.*

Unexploded ordnance (UXO) remains an increasingly important issue in Syria. The impact of UXO and landmines continues to impact the day-

