

"Operation Deterring Aggression"

From the First Moment
to the Liberation of Damascus

Prepared by a Team of Researchers



**“Operation Deterring Aggression”:
From the First Moment to the
Liberation of Damascus**

Omran Center for Strategic Studies

Is an independent research institution seeking to a leading role in the scientific and intellectual building of both state and society, not only in Syria but in the entire region. The center aspires to become a reference for informing policies and devising strategies.

Omran Center was established in November 2013 as an institution that seeks to be a main reference and a supporting entity to the Syrian cause in the areas of politics, development, economics and local governance. The center publishes studies and papers that complement the work of other institutions interested in the future of Syria and support the decision-making process, while interacting through specialized platforms to achieve informational and analytical integration and draw a map of the scene on the ground.

The center's outputs depend on analyzing reality and its complex dimensions in a manner that results in deconstructing problematic issues and determining needs and aspirations, which enables us to inform and plan policies for different actors and decision makers.

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Introduction

Over the twelve days spanning 27 November to 8 December 2024, Syria lived through one of the most consequential turning points in its modern history — a moment that marked the collapse of a long-entrenched system of authoritarianism and the beginning of Syrians reclaiming their dignity and their natural right to a free and just state. These days were an exceptional chapter, combining deliberate planning, rapid and disciplined advances, and remarkably low human cost. It was as if fate had finally granted Syrians a rare window of hope after many years of suffering.

During this historic moment, the Omran Center team worked tirelessly — in both Arabic and English, and around the clock — to document and analyze every military and political development, offering a precise and responsible narrative for future generations. The team distributed roles carefully and elevated the research effort to match the magnitude of the national event. The daily briefs became a reference for observers and decision-makers alike, and a source of pride in a team that rose to meet a pivotal national duty.

The twelve days of liberation were not merely a series of successful military operations; they were the restoration of the Syrian people's fundamental dignity and a clear declaration that Syrians — in all their diversity — are capable of reclaiming their rights and rightful place. These days expressed the determination of Syrians to break free from fear, to regain control of their public life, and to rebuild a homeland in which human dignity is valued above all else, and where the relationship between state and society is redefined on the principles of justice, transparency, and participation.

The greatest achievement of this phase lies in reopening the path toward a state for all Syrians — a state not defined by political loyalty or imposed identities, but by a civic framework that makes every individual an integral part of the future. In this light, Syria's rich social fabric is a national asset and a source of strength.

The new Syria is a home spacious enough for all: Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, Syriacs, Assyrians, Armenians, Circassians, Arnaout, Chaldeans, and all religious, sectarian, and social communities.

A state that recognizes the languages of its people, their traditions, and their cultural specificities. A state that lays the foundation for a new social contract grounded in genuine societal dialogue and shared living — not exclusion, discrimination, or coerced identities. It does not magnify select issues nor reduce Syria’s identity to any single component; rather, it builds a national identity on equal citizenship, protecting and embracing everyone.

This phase is not merely the end of authoritarian rule; it is the beginning of a long process of rebuilding trust among Syrians, healing a society fractured by years of conflict, and establishing state institutions capable of accommodating diversity and responding to the aspirations of all citizens. It is also a historic opportunity for Syria to return to its natural environment: a state that poses no threat to its neighbors, but instead acts as a partner in development and a bridge connecting the region — an essential component of a new, more balanced and stable regional order.

Documenting these thirteen days — twelve days of operations and one day of reactions — is both a national and historical responsibility. It is not a mere chronicle of battles, but a testament to the birth of a new Syria, whose initial contours are beginning to emerge today, rooted in the will of a people reclaiming their rightful place among nations with confidence and legitimacy.

This introduction is not simply a preface to a report; it is a statement of beginning: the beginning of a time in which national identity is shaped collectively, the state is restored to its rightful stature, and Syria — with all its communities — is rebuilt as a just, inclusive, capable, and forward-looking country.

Dr. Ammar Kahf
Executive Director

Day One Briefing – Operation “Deterring Aggression”

27 November 2024

I. Sequence of Events

- On the morning of Tuesday, **27 November 2024**, the **Joint Operations Room of “Fath Halab”** announced the launch of a large-scale offensive against Assad regime positions in western rural Aleppo. The participating factions included **Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the Joint Force, the al-Jabha al-Shamiyya (Sham Front), Jaysh al-‘Izza, Suqour al-Shamal, Ansar al-Tawhid, and the Turkistan Islamic Party.**

The attack relied on **locally-manufactured armored vehicles and advanced individual equipment**, opening two main axes:

- From **Dar‘at ‘Izza** toward **Qubtan al-Jabal**,
- And from **al-Atarib** toward **Regiment 46** (*al-Fawj 46*).
- Intense **artillery shelling** enabled the factions to strike multiple strategic points.
- Two **VBIEDs** (vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices) were used by two **suicide operatives** to breach the strong defensive fortifications around Regiment 46. Within a few hours, the attacking forces achieved rapid territorial gains, seizing an estimated **140 km²**.

Several sources reported that the operations rooms also targeted **the Officers’ Club, the Military Academy in Aleppo, the Central Region Command**, using **suicide drones**.

Regime forces responded by shelling the attacking armed formations and several safe civilian areas—**Dar‘at ‘Izza, al-Atarib, Ariha, Binnish, and Idlib city**—resulting in a limited number of casualties thanks to precautionary measures taken by the local population.

- The regime attempted to strike the “**al-Fath al-Mubeen**” **Operations Command Center** near the **Bab al-Hawa** border crossing, specifically in **Jabal Babsqa**, causing injuries among displaced civilians in nearby camps. However, these strikes did not alter the balance of power on the ground. The regime’s **air force**—already degraded—conducted a limited number of sorties targeting the outskirts of **Dar‘at ‘Izza**, **al-Atarib**, **Qubtan al-Jabal**, and newly-captured positions.
- Russian involvement was also **below anticipated levels**; Russian aviation carried out **no more than 15 limited airstrikes** across scattered locations within the operation zone.
- Estimates indicate the **Operations Room** fielded approximately **20,000 fighters**, primarily drawn from **HTS’s military brigades**, supplemented by around **1,500 fighters** from **al-Jabha al-Shamiyya**, elements of the **Joint Force**, and other factions.

This represents the **first major unified military action** bringing together a broad array of formations to achieve a significant battlefield breakthrough in the history of the Syrian revolution.

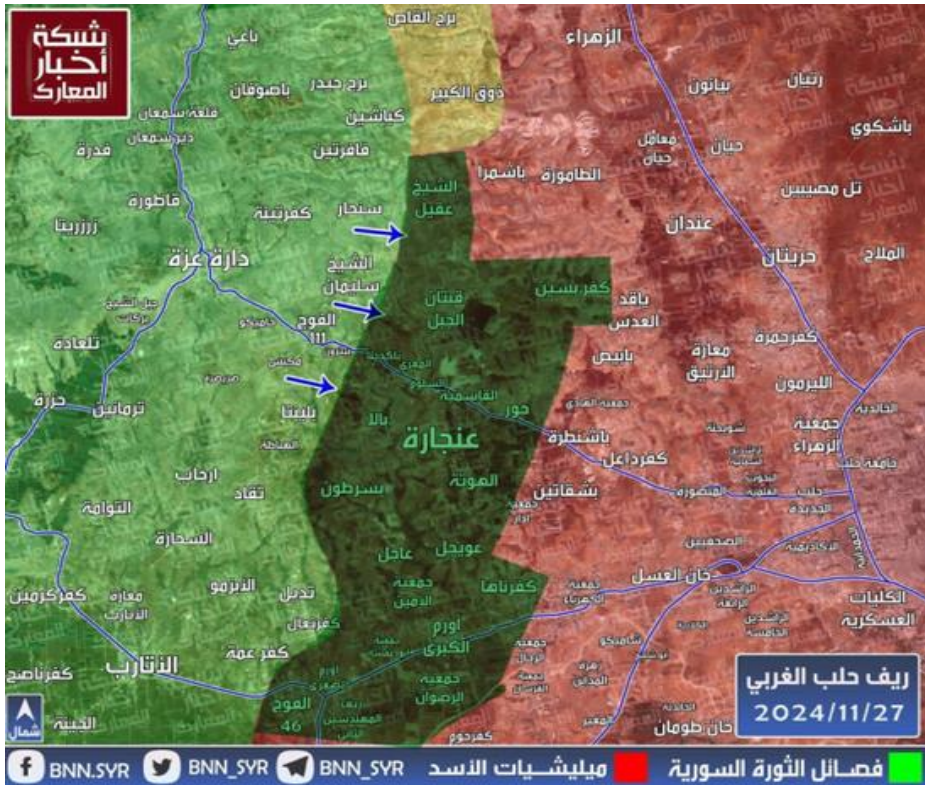
- On the humanitarian front, frontline-adjacent areas experienced **intense displacement movements**—including from **al-Atarib**, **Dar‘at ‘Izza**, **Sarmīn**, **Afes**, **al-Nayrab**, **Ma‘arat al-Na‘san**, **al-Abzamu**, and **al-Sahara**—toward safer zones farther west such as **Sarmada**, **Idlib**, **Hazano**, **Harem**, **Salqin**, and **Kafr Takharim**.

II. Changes in the Territorial Map

The attacking factions achieved broad control over multiple areas and strategic points, most notably:

- **Dar‘at ‘Izza Axis:** *Sheikh Aqil*, *Balah*, *Qubtan al-Jabal*, *Hayr Darkal*, *al-Qasimiya*, *Kafr Bissin*, *Hawr*, *al-Ma‘arri Association*, *al-Sallum*, *Anjara*, *Basratun*, *‘Aajel*, *‘Awijel*.

- **al-Atarib Axis:** *al-Houta, al-Sa'adiya Association, Regiment 46, Urum al-Sughra, Urum al-Kubra, Engineers' Second Housing (Reef al-Muhandisin al-Thani), Arnaz, Kafr Naya*, in addition to establishing fire control over the Aleppo–Damascus highway.



Map No. (1)

III. Human and Material Losses

A. Opposition Forces

- Estimates indicate the opposition sustained limited losses. Regime forces destroyed a Ra'd-type armored vehicle, and the attacking forces reported **approximately 37 fighters killed**.

B. Regime Forces

- Regime forces incurred **heavy losses** in personnel and equipment—killed, wounded, and captured. Initial estimates point to **at least 50 regime troops** killed, wounded, or taken prisoner.
- Captured equipment included:
 - **5 tanks.**
 - **4 BMP infantry fighting vehicles.**
 - **1 x 57mm artillery gun.**
 - **4 mortars.**
 - A **Kornet missile storage depot** in the village of al-Houta.
 - Additionally, a **regime helicopter** was destroyed at **Nayrab Airbase.**

IV. Preliminary Analysis

The operation relied on exploiting clear vulnerabilities within the regime’s defensive architecture, selecting the **softest and least rugged axes**, characterized by relatively open terrain. The rapid advance demonstrates **organizational and tactical superiority** on the part of **HTS and participating factions**, leveraging:

- Fast-moving **armored and mechanized vehicles**,
- **Precision anti-armor systems**,
- **Heavy machine guns**,
- **Advanced individual gear.**

These factors provided the attacking forces with a **qualitative advantage** over regime units.

In contrast, the clashes revealed the **fragility of the regime’s force structure**, which suffered from:

- Poor **coordination** and **operational cohesion**,
- Heavy reliance on **poorly trained, low-morale reservists**,

- A visible state of **confusion and fear**, as reflected in the footage of captured personnel.

Furthermore, the **withdrawal of Iranian-backed militias** and a number of **Hezbollah fighters** toward deeper, safer rear areas intensified frustration and demoralization among regime troops, who were left to confront the offensive with minimal support.

Day Two Briefing – Operation “Deterring Aggression”

28 November 2024

I. Overview

Northwestern Syria witnessed a significant military escalation on the second day of *Operation “Deterring Aggression”*, launched by the **al-Fath al-Mubeen Operations Room**. Operations expanded across key strategic axes in **southern and eastern Idlib**, in addition to advanced frontlines in **western and southwestern rural Aleppo**, signaling potential battlefield shifts that may redefine the territorial control map in the region.

II. Sequence of Events

- **Assault on Saraqib (M4 Corridor):** Forces of the al-Fath al-Mubeen operations room launched a large-scale ground attack on the critical transportation hub **Saraqib**, situated on the **M4 international highway**. The attacking forces achieved **limited gains** on the northern and eastern outskirts. Clashes continued inside the town’s internal neighborhoods without achieving full control.

However, opposition forces consolidated gains in **Joubas, Dadikh, and Kafr Batikh**, located south of Saraqib—areas of high strategic value for shaping control dynamics in southern Idlib.

- **Aleppo Front – Multi-Axis Advances:** Military operations on the Aleppo front expanded along numerous axes.
 - In the **western sector**, attacking forces gained control over **Ya‘qed al-‘Adas, Bishantra, the Electricity Association, and Kafr Da‘il**.
 - In the **southwestern sector**, significant advances were recorded in **Kafr Jum, the First Engineers’ Housing (Reef al-Muhandisin al-Awwal), Khan al-‘Asal, al-Rihal and al-Fursan Associations**, reaching up to the **Administrative Affairs College**.
 - Most notably, they seized **Kafr Halab**, a highly strategic area expected to contain extensive weapons and ammunition depots.

- The forces also gained control over large sections of **Anadan**, north of Aleppo.

In parallel, regime media claimed the arrival of major reinforcements led by **Brigadier General Suhail al-Hassan**, asserting that they had retaken several areas including **Khan al-‘Asal** and parts of eastern rural Idlib. These claims **could not be independently verified**.

- **Southern Axis – Cutting the M5:** On the southern front, attacking forces secured **al-Zirbah** and **al-Barqoum**, effectively **cutting the Aleppo–Damascus highway (M5)**—a critical corridor for military transport and logistics.

III. Casualties and Losses

- **Airstrikes and Civilian Losses:** Russian airpower, jointly with the regime’s air force, intensified aerial operations targeting both military positions and civilian areas, especially **Dar‘at ‘Izza** and **al-Atarib**. These strikes resulted in **20 deaths**, the majority civilians in markets and residential zones, in addition to several injuries.
- **Regime Losses:** The day’s operations inflicted **major equipment and personnel losses** on regime forces. According to the Syrian Observatory, total fatalities from both sides reached **120**.
- The operations command announced that by the end of day two they had **liberated 32 areas** and inflicted heavy tactical losses, including:
 - Destruction of **3 rocket launchers** and **1 tank**,
 - Neutralization of **over 100 regime personnel**,
 - **Shahin Brigades** destroyed **two helicopters** at **al-Tairb Airbase**,
 - Capture of **27 tanks**, **6 BMP armored vehicles**, **3 mortars**,
 - **5 x 23mm heavy machine guns**,
 - **6 ZIL military trucks**,
 - **A Kornet missile depot**.

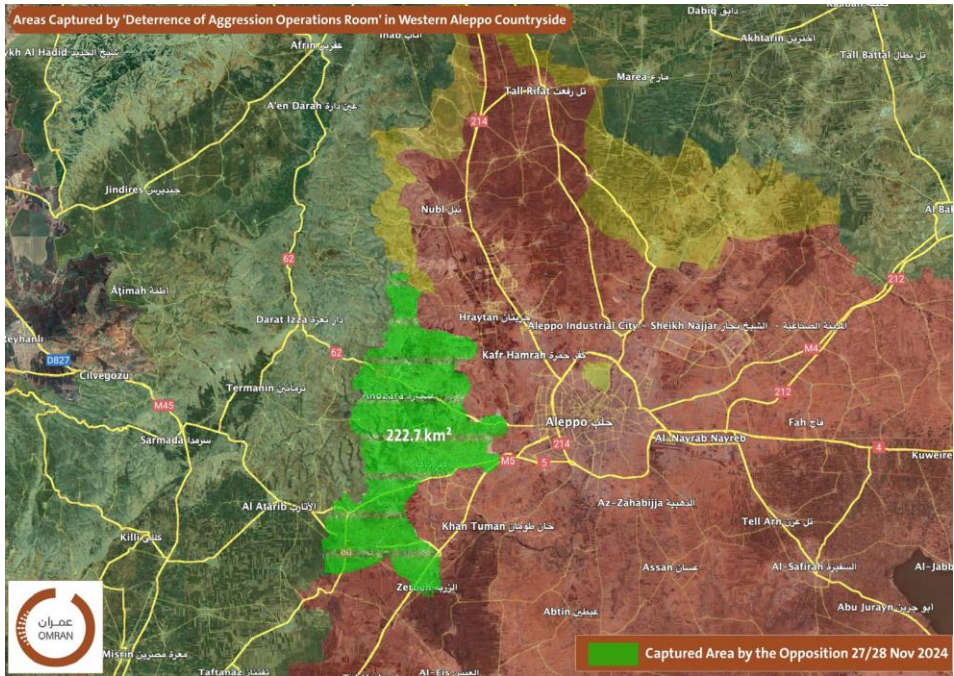
- The Iranian **Daneshjoo News Agency** confirmed the death of **Brigadier General Keyumars Bor-Hashmi**, the commander of Iranian military advisors in Syria, killed in an opposition attack.
- Video documentation showed the capture of an estimated **45 regime soldiers**, including **three officers**, alongside seizures of tanks, diverse weapons and ammunition, and several armored and military vehicles.
- Opposition forces also suffered significant casualties, with estimates indicating **nearly 100 fighters killed**.

IV. Preliminary Analysis

- The large-scale offensive across the Idlib and Aleppo axes reflects a **qualitative shift** in the operational strategy of the **al-Fath al-Mubeen** coalition, aiming to **disrupt regime logistical infrastructure** by severing supply lines along the **Aleppo–Damascus (M5) highway**.
- The relatively weak Russian air response further illustrates the **fragility of regime battlefield control** in the face of coordinated, multi-axis attacks.

The heavy human losses and contradictory announcements from both sides demonstrate the **information-warfare environment** surrounding the operations, with each party attempting to amplify its achievements.

- The escalation appears to be laying the groundwork for a **new phase in the conflict**, with potential military and political implications—especially if additional fronts such as **Tal Rifaat** and **al-Bab** are opened by the **Syrian National Army (SNA)**.
- The arrival of attacking forces at the **western outskirts of Aleppo city**, at distances **as close as 2 km**, suggests an attempt to tighten the noose around the city from multiple directions.
- Securing **Aleppo** would constitute a **major strategic and political breakthrough** for the attacking factions.



Map No. (2)

Day Three Briefing – Operation “Deterring Aggression”

29 November 2024

I. Overview

As part of the ongoing military escalation in northwestern Syria, forces of the “Deterring Aggression” Operations Room achieved major battlefield breakthroughs on the Aleppo and Idlib fronts. They penetrated Assad regime defensive lines and seized critical areas—including the heart of Aleppo city. These gains caused the collapse of regime defenses in several key districts, producing a fluid battlefield environment with multiple open-ended possibilities across the three main axes.

II. Sequence of Events

- **Western Aleppo Front:** On the third consecutive day of military operations, “Deterring Aggression” forces achieved additional significant advances after consolidating the gains of the previous day.

On the city’s **western front**, the forces fully secured **all of western Aleppo’s countryside**, including **al-Mansoura** and the **Scientific Research Center**, as well as **al-Rashidin al-Shamali (Northern Rashidin District)**. The breakthrough came after **two VBIED (suicide vehicle) detonations** breached major regime fortifications. The forces also made **limited gains** on the **northern front** in **Ma‘arat al-Artik** and **Anadan**.

- **Southern Aleppo Front:** On Aleppo’s southern axis, the forces achieved strategically significant expansion of control, securing **Khalasah, Khan Touman, Zitan, al-Barqoum, Tell Barnah, al-‘Eis and its hilltop position, and Tell Hadya**.

This advance opens the possibility of **linking the Aleppo fronts with the Saraqib axis**, thereby increasing pressure on regime military installations across the region.

- **Entry into Aleppo City:** Breaking through regime defensive lines in western and southern Aleppo enabled the attacking forces to **enter the western neighborhoods of the city**, beginning with **New Aleppo (Halab al-Jadida)**. This breach led to a **total collapse** among regime units deployed in the area, prompting chaotic withdrawal and abandonment of defensive positions. The attacking forces capitalized on this collapse, advancing deep into the city and securing **most of its neighborhoods**, reaching **Saadallah al-Jabiri Square** in central Aleppo. This rapid advance reflects the high tempo and offensive momentum of the attacking forces, increasing the pressure on the regime amid rapidly evolving developments.
- **Eastern and Southern Idlib Countryside:** Despite difficult battles, the forces succeeded in fully capturing **Saraqib**, following two days of intense combat.

They also made further gains toward its eastern countryside, specifically **Sheikh Mansour**, potentially preparing an approach toward **Abu al-Duhur Military Airbase**, located approximately **20 km** away.

- Simultaneously, the forces consolidated their gains in **Dadikh** and **Joubas**, advancing southward toward **Ma'arrat Dibsah, Khan al-Subul, and Kafr Batikh**, reinforcing the likelihood of reaching **Ma'arrat al-Numan**. The road toward expanding operations deeper into southern Idlib now appears open.
- **Airstrikes:**
Russian warplanes conducted multiple airstrikes targeting **Idlib city, al-Dana, Benin, Mare', Dar'at 'Izza**, and various newly-liberated or frontline areas, resulting in a number of civilian deaths and injuries.

III. Casualties and Material Losses

- **Regime Forces:** The day's operations inflicted severe losses on regime units.

According to the attacking forces’ Operations Directorate, they seized large quantities of heavy weapons and equipment, including:

- Anti-armor missiles,
- **12 x 122mm artillery pieces,**
- **20 BMP infantry fighting vehicles,**
- **31 tanks,**
- **2 Gvozdika self-propelled howitzers,**
- **3 x 130mm artillery pieces,**
- Large quantities of small arms.

These captures reflect the dramatic deterioration in the regime’s ability to maintain its defensive positions and provide the attacking forces with additional resources to sustain high-tempo operations and widen their area of control.

- **Human Losses:** No independent entity could provide verified casualty figures. However, preliminary reports indicate that regime forces and allied militias suffered **hundreds of casualties**, particularly in the fighting inside Aleppo’s neighborhoods.
- **Prisoners of War:** The attacking forces announced the capture of dozens of regime combatants as they entered Aleppo with hundreds of assault troops executing large-scale operations.

A notable development was the **surrender of approximately 300 soldiers**, who withdrew from the western front and regrouped near **Hayy al-Idha’a (the Radio District)** in central Aleppo, where they were captured without significant resistance.

This mass surrender underscores the severe collapse in regime ranks and their inability to reorganize defensive lines or hold positions—accelerating the attacking forces’ advance inside the city.

- **Losses Among Attacking Forces:** Estimates indicate that the attacking forces also suffered **dozens of fatalities** and a large number of wounded. The injured were evacuated to field hospitals and interior-area medical centers, including **Bab al-Hawa Hospital, Idlib Hospital, al-Kinana Hospital in Dar‘at ‘Izza**, and hospitals in **al-Dana**.

These losses highlight the high human cost borne by the attacking forces given the intensity of the battles and the aggressive multi-front tactics they are employing.

IV. Preliminary Analysis

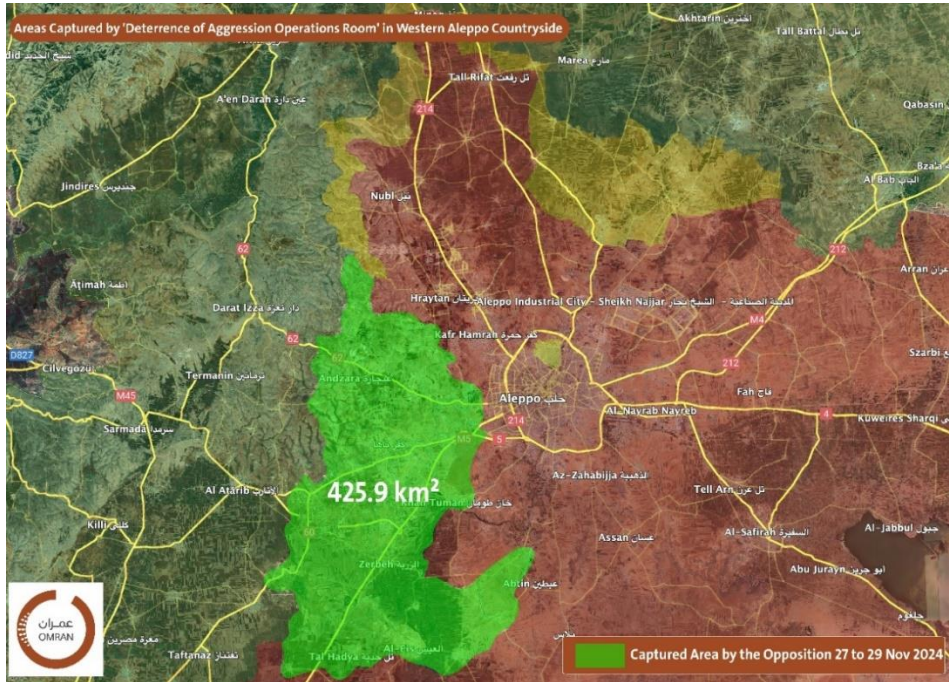
- After breaching regime defensive lines and effectively bypassing the de-escalation agreements, “Deterring Aggression” forces transitioned into **full offensive operations**, capitalizing on the regime’s defensive collapse across the three major axes.
- The battles demonstrate the regime’s **loss of manpower and technical capacity**, compounded by limited Russian air support and the exhaustion of Iranian-backed militias.

This constitutes a **structural vulnerability** that “Deterring Aggression” forces are exploiting to expand their areas of control—strengthening their position in any future negotiation framework.

- Despite the sweeping advances, the situation remains open to multiple scenarios—dependent on:
 - the evolving military realities on the ground,
 - the nature and scale of the Russian response, and
 - the regime’s ability to reconstitute forces for a counteroffensive.
- The developments clearly indicate a **transition to a new phase** made possible by:
 - the enhanced operational capabilities developed by the “Deterring Aggression” room during the period of relative ceasefire, and

- the **structural weakness** of the regime’s military institution— particularly manpower shortages, declining combat cohesion, reduced Iranian militia involvement, minimal Hezbollah presence, and near absence of Russian air cover due to its commitments in Ukraine.

These military shifts coincide with a period of **regional upheaval and strategic realignment**, amplifying their impact.



Map No. (3) Shows the distribution of territorial control as of 29 November 2024, up to 23:00 PM Syria Time

Day Four Briefing – Operation “Deterring Aggression”

30 November 2024

I. Overview

The Syrian battlefield is witnessing rapid and complex developments. Forces of **Operation “Deterring Aggression”** achieved extensive strategic breakthroughs across multiple fronts, securing key areas—particularly in **Aleppo** and **Idlib**. Simultaneously, Russian and Syrian regime airstrikes escalated in an attempt to halt the advance, reflecting mounting disarray within regime ranks. These military shifts may have profound implications for the future of Syria and its political system.

II. Sequence of Events

- **Aleppo Front:** On the fourth day of continuous operations, “Deterring Aggression” forces achieved major strategic penetrations in **northern Aleppo countryside**, capturing **Anadan, Haritan, Hayan, and Bayanoun**. They subsequently entered **Nubl** and **al-Zahraa** after most of the local population evacuated via the **Khanasser route**.
- In parallel, **Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)** attempted to fill the vacuum left by regime withdrawals from critical positions, including:
 - **Kuweires Airbase,**
 - **Aleppo International Airport,**
 - **Sheikh Najjar industrial zone,**
 - Northern and eastern neighborhoods such as **al-Haidariya, Masakin Hanano,** and **al-Siryen.**
- However, “Deterring Aggression” forces succeeded in retaking **Aleppo International Airport**, fully securing it and forcing SDF units to withdraw.

As a result, the new **control map inside Aleppo** stabilized between the two sides.

- **Eastern and Southern Idlib / Northern Hama Front:** A major and unexpected battlefield development unfolded across eastern and southern Idlib.

“Deterring Aggression” forces secured **all remaining regime-held areas** in Idlib’s countryside, including:

- **Abu al-Duhur Airbase, Sinjar, Jarjanaz, Talmenes, and Ma‘arrat al-Numan.**
- The rapid advance continued almost **without resistance** toward **northern Hama countryside**, where the forces seized key areas and approached the outskirts of **Hama city**.
- Multiple sources reported:
 - Evacuation of **government offices** in Hama from official documents,
 - Clearing of the **university housing complex**,
 - Large-scale regime withdrawals toward **al-Rastan** in Homs countryside.
- These steps reflect profound **regime disarray** amid the fast-paced offensive.
Additional reports indicated **regime regrouping** efforts around **Qamhana, Jabal Zayn al-Abidin**, and approaches to **Hama city**.
- **“Dawn of Freedom” Operations Room – Northern Aleppo (SNA):** The **Fajr al-Hurriya (Dawn of Freedom) Operations Room**, affiliated with the **Syrian National Army (SNA)**, announced the launch of its first operations in northern Aleppo, starting from the **al-Bab axis**.

- The forces broke the first defensive line in **Tadef**, advancing southward and securing **15 villages**, including **al-Tafri'a al-Kabira** and **Fikha al-Saghira**.
- However, **no progress** was achieved on the **Tal Rifaat** front despite intensive artillery preparation.
- **Airstrikes:** Russian and regime aircraft conducted a series of intense airstrikes targeting “Deterring Aggression” positions in **southern Idlib** and **northern Hama** in an attempt to slow the advance. Most notably, airstrikes targeted both civilian and military gatherings inside **Aleppo**, including a retaliatory strike at the city’s entrance that resulted in a **massacre** killing around **30 people** and injuring dozens. Additional strikes hit **al-Marja neighborhood** and areas near the **governorate building**, causing widespread destruction and some casualties.

III. Casualties and Losses

- **Regime Forces:** “Deterring Aggression” forces acquired **vast quantities of military equipment**, including tanks, heavy weapons, and ammunition depots—so substantial that they were difficult to catalog. Large amounts of equipment were also abandoned intact by withdrawing regime forces, markedly enhancing the attackers’ operational capability.

Regime forces suffered:

- **Hundreds of deaths,**
- **Dozens more injured,**
- Large-scale desertions and withdrawals toward **Hama** and **Homs**.

The attacking forces also sustained **dozens of fatalities** and numerous wounded during the wide-ranging operations.

- **SNA “Dawn of Freedom” Room:** Despite limited gains on the al-Bab axis, the operations room achieved **qualitative successes**, capturing:
 - A number of regime personnel and officers,
 - **Two tanks,**
 - **Two Shilka vehicles,**
 - **One BMP vehicle,**
 - A variety of artillery pieces (57mm, 23mm, 14.5mm).

IV. Preliminary Analysis

- The recent military operations in Syria produced a major shock domestically and internationally, representing a **qualitative turning point** in the history of the Syrian conflict.

The rapid and unexpected battlefield developments could yield powerful aftershocks affecting Syria’s future. With growing momentum on the ground, the trajectory now depends on the Assad regime’s ability to absorb the shock amid evident internal disruptions in **Homs** and **Hama**.

- **Homs** represents a **central strategic node**, and its fall to “Deterring Aggression” forces would have direct implications for the regime’s survival in **Damascus**. This could open the door to profound changes in the structure of the Syrian state, its political system, and the reconfiguration of power institutions.
- The attacking forces now face a major challenge: managing the vast territories they have seized.
- The biggest risk lies in the ability to establish an **effective governance system** capable of accommodating diverse communities and political orientations and ensuring long-term stability. This includes providing **safe return pathways** for the hundreds of thousands of displaced

residents. Achieving this requires complex political and administrative solutions within a highly challenging local environment.

- The **international position** remains a decisive factor in shaping the direction of ongoing developments.

Day Five Briefing – Operation “Deterring Aggression”

01 December 2024

Northwest Syria continues to witness significant developments on the fifth day of Operation “Deterring Aggression” which targets areas controlled by the Assad regime forces and supporting militias, and the second day of Operation “Dawn of Freedom” which targets areas controlled by “People's Defense Units” (YPG). Both operations achieved strategic gains today and resulted in the seizure of vast stockpiles of weapons and military equipment.

Forces of Operation “Deterring Aggression” managed to secure critical areas in eastern Aleppo countryside, further isolating the city from the regime's military supply lines. Meanwhile, Operation “Dawn of Freedom” forces, in high coordination with the Syrian National Army (SNA), made substantial advances on the Tedef and Tel Rifaat fronts, capturing Kuweires Airport, Menagh Airport, and Tel Rifaat city along with its surroundings.

I. Sequence of Events

- **Aleppo Front**

The forces of the operation “Deterring Aggression” extended their control over the remaining areas of eastern Aleppo countryside, including As-Safira, Mount Azan, Deir Hafer, and Sabkhat al-Jabboul. This advance brought them closer to key strategic points such as the Defense Factories, the Scientific Research Center, Al-Jarrah Airbase, and the outskirts of Maskanah.

This progress also resulted in the cutting of the Khanaser Road, a critical alternative route linking Aleppo to Assad regime-controlled areas in Hama countryside. Consequently, Aleppo has become nearly completely isolated from the regime's military supply lines. The forces successfully encircled

the remaining military outposts of Assad regime forces, leaving them trapped in scattered pockets.

A significant qualitative advance was achieved with the capture of the Military Academy on the southern outskirts of Aleppo. This location had been besieged for several days before forces fully secured control.

These achievements represent a strategic milestone, bolstering the ability of “Operation Deterring Aggression” forces to reshape the military landscape in the region, consolidate current gains, and potentially pave the way for new offensive operations.

- **Tadef and Tel Rifaat Fronts**

On the second day of "Operation Dawn of Freedom," the operations room achieved full control over Kuweires Military Airbase, continuing their advance toward the eastern neighborhoods of Aleppo city. This progress led to a junction between SNA and those of the “Deterring Aggression” operations room, showcasing an unprecedented level of coordination and operational harmony among the active factions.

In Tel Rifaat, “Dawn of Freedom” forces managed to break through the frontlines by midday. They subsequently established control over the city, Menagh Military Airbase, and the surrounding villages. This accomplishment secured the Gaziantep-Aleppo international highway, reopening it fully without disruption.

- **Hama Front**

On the Hama front, regime forces, supported by local auxiliary units, attempted to reposition and regroup after retreating to fortified defensive positions at Zain al-Abidin and Qamhana, adjacent to Hama city. In an effort to claim symbolic victories, the regime announced the recapture of several villages in northern Hama countryside, including Suran and Taybat al-Imam. However, these areas were not actual strongholds of Operation “Deterring Aggression” forces.

Meanwhile, Operation “Deterring Aggression” forces made limited advances in the northwestern countryside of Hama, maintaining consistent pressure on the regime, which is increasingly facing collapses within its ranks. These setbacks coincided with a visit by the regime’s Chief of Staff to frontline positions in Qamhana and nearby areas, aimed at boosting the morale of its fighters and stabilizing defensive lines.

On the tactical level, Operation “Deterring Aggression” forces conducted precision drone strikes targeting regime troop concentrations, resulting in significant hits. Notably, one operation targeted a warplane at Hama Military Airport, forcing the evacuation of a helicopter from the airbase. This indicates escalating field tensions and highlights the growing effectiveness of opposition forces’ offensive capabilities.

II. Losses of the Parties

- **Amid Rapid Developments and Escalating Battles**

In the midst of rapid developments and intense battles, no official or unofficial entity has been able to provide accurate statistics on the number of casualties among the warring parties. However, field data clearly indicates that regime forces have suffered the heaviest losses.

Regime forces faced relentless pursuits in encircled areas such as As-Safira, Mount Azan, and other strategic locations in the eastern Aleppo countryside. Estimates suggest dozens of fatalities among their ranks, with hundreds of personnel reportedly captured.

On the other hand, YPG forces have also incurred significant losses, particularly in Tel Rifaat and surrounding areas, including Menagh Airbase. Operation “Dawn of Freedom” forces captured dozens of YPG fighters, in addition to inflicting fatalities within their ranks.

Meanwhile, Operation “Deterring Aggression” forces have sustained minimal losses. This is attributed to the nature of their military operations, which primarily focused on targeting encircled regime forces, enabling

them to achieve significant field advances while maintaining minimal human casualties.

- **Material Gains**

On the material front, both “Deterring Aggression” and “Dawn of Freedom” achieved significant military gains. These included the capture of massive stockpiles of weapons, ammunition, and military vehicles. Additionally, they seized a number of warplanes, helicopters, and drones, as well as advanced radar systems, electronic warfare equipment, and various types of missiles.

These acquisitions were a result of the strategic nature of the military sites they captured—locations of high strategic importance due to their advanced military equipment. The Assad forces were unable to evacuate these resources before their retreat, adding to the opposition’s significant material advantage.

III. Preliminary Analysis

- **Strategic Shift in the Battlefield**

The near-total control achieved by the attacking forces over Aleppo Province and full control over Idlib Province throughout the operations represents a pivotal shift in the course of the battle. This advancement significantly strengthens the opposition's ability to maintain its military gains while placing regime forces in a defensive position, necessitating a comprehensive strategic reassessment on their part.

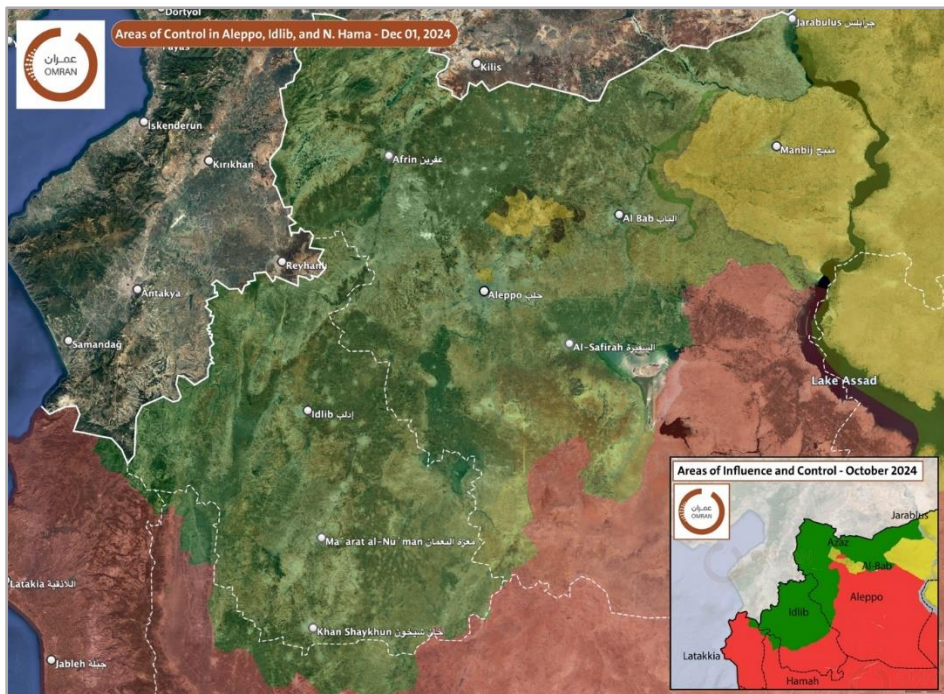
- **Recent Regime Military Movements**

The recent military maneuvers by regime forces aim to mitigate losses by repositioning into fortified defensive locations. However, despite these adjustments, the precision drone strikes carried out by Operation “Deterring Aggression” forces have posed a severe threat to regime troop concentrations.

The targeted attacks on military aircraft at Hama Airbase highlight the increasing effectiveness of these offensive operations, while the regime’s diminishing ability to counter such strikes leaves it in a precarious position. This vulnerability is further exacerbated by the uncertainty surrounding regional and international stances, adding to the regime's challenges in addressing the evolving battlefield dynamics.

- **Regime's Stance Amid Intense Military Pressure**

Despite significant military pressures, the regime remains steadfast in its pursuit of a military resolution to regain control over Syrian territory, refusing to back down regardless of the cost. The regime relies heavily on its domestic support base, Iranian militias, and Russian backing. However, Russia now faces a genuine predicament due to the growing challenges of adapting to the evolving battlefield realities, further complicating its ability to provide effective support to the regime.



Map (4): Northwest Syria, December 1, 2024, 23:00 PM Syria Time

Day Six Briefing – Operation “Deterring Aggression”

02 December 2024

As Syria witnesses a rapidly escalating military confrontation, significant developments on the Hama and Aleppo are taking place. Especially, the Hama front which has become a focal point of the conflict due to its strategic importance, and which Assad regime forces and their allies strive to maintain their defensive positions. Nonetheless, Operation “Deterring Aggression” continues to achieve notable advances in several key areas, threatening the collapse of these defenses.

Meanwhile, Russian and Syrian air forces continue targeting vital infrastructure and civilian areas in an attempt to weaken the military capacities of the attacking forces. This escalation reflects a complex military reality where field objectives intersect with humanitarian and political ramifications, placing the Syrian conflict at a pivotal juncture that could shift the balance of power.

I. Sequence of Events

- **Aleppo Front**

Both Operation “**Deterring Aggression**” and “**Operation Dawn of Freedom**” have successfully cleared the remaining Assad regime pockets in **Aleppo Province**. This resulted in full control over critical military areas, including the **Defense Factories**, the **Scientific Research Center**, and the **Infantry College** located north of Aleppo. These advances have rendered the province completely free of any direct military presence by regime forces.

- **Hama Front**

Today marks the sixth day of continuous military operations, with significant developments making it a focal point due to its critical role in maintaining the cohesion of Assad regime forces and their defenses. Despite attempts by the regime and local allied forces to stabilize the area,

Operation “Deterring Aggression” have sought to regain control of towns and cities such as **Karnaz, Suran, Taybat al-Imam**, and the villages north of **Hama city**, as well as areas in the **Al-Ghab Plain**, including **Al-Huwayz, Al-Sharia, and Bab al-Taqa**.

These efforts, however, face the looming threat of a complete collapse of the regime’s final defensive lines in the region. The ongoing advances could pave the way for a direct path toward **Hama city center**. Securing **Hama Province** might also set the stage for expanded military operations southward into the **northern Homs countryside**, adding further pressure to Assad regime defenses. Based on these dynamics, the battle on this front appears poised to become a pivotal turning point in the broader conflict.

- **Instability in Aleppo**

Despite these field achievements, **Aleppo city** remains in a state of instability due to several factors, including the deterioration and irregularity of public services, the presence of remnants of fleeing Assad regime forces who pose an ongoing security threat, and the continued presence of **YPG** in some neighborhoods, such as **Sheikh Maqsoud** and **Ashrafiyeh**. All these factors contribute to the complexity of the security situation. Stability in Aleppo largely depends on the developments of military operations on the **southern front**.

- **Airstrike Escalation**

Russian and Syrian warplanes have intensified their aerial operations, primarily targeting vital infrastructure, medical facilities, and densely populated residential areas. These airstrikes included **Idlib city** and several neighborhoods in **Aleppo**, such as **Baghdad Station** in the city center, resulting in dozens of civilian casualties, both killed and injured.

The airstrikes also rendered several hospitals and health centers inoperable, most notably the **University Hospital in Idlib**, exacerbating the suffering of civilian populations and further crippling the medical sector’s ability to manage the growing number of injuries. This escalation reflects the regime and its allies’ strategy of employing tactics aimed at

undermining infrastructure and essential services in areas beyond their control.

- **Cross-Border Operations**

Some reports indicate that **International Coalition forces** have carried out repeated airstrikes targeting groups affiliated with the **Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)** as they crossed the Iraqi border into Syria. The reports suggest that these groups were transporting medium-sized weapons to provide combat support to Assad regime forces on the frontlines.

In a related development, **Iraqi authorities** confirmed strengthening border control measures with Syria to prevent any security breaches that could impact Iraq's internal stability. Meanwhile, **Reuters**, citing sources close to **Lebanese Hezbollah**, reported that the group has no plans to send additional forces to support the Assad regime at this time. This reflects Hezbollah's current inability to engage in costly battles and military confrontations, highlighting its weakened capabilities.

II. Losses of the Parties

- **Unclear Losses and Strategic Gains in the Conflict**

Accurate statistics on the conflict's losses and gains remain unclear amid conflicting reports. “**Operation Detering Aggression**” captured over **150 regime soldiers** in eastern Aleppo and seized strategic stockpiles, including at the **Defense Factories**. “**Operation Dawn of Freedom**” secured major assets in northern Aleppo, capturing tanks, vehicles, and weapons depots, notably at the **Infantry College**.

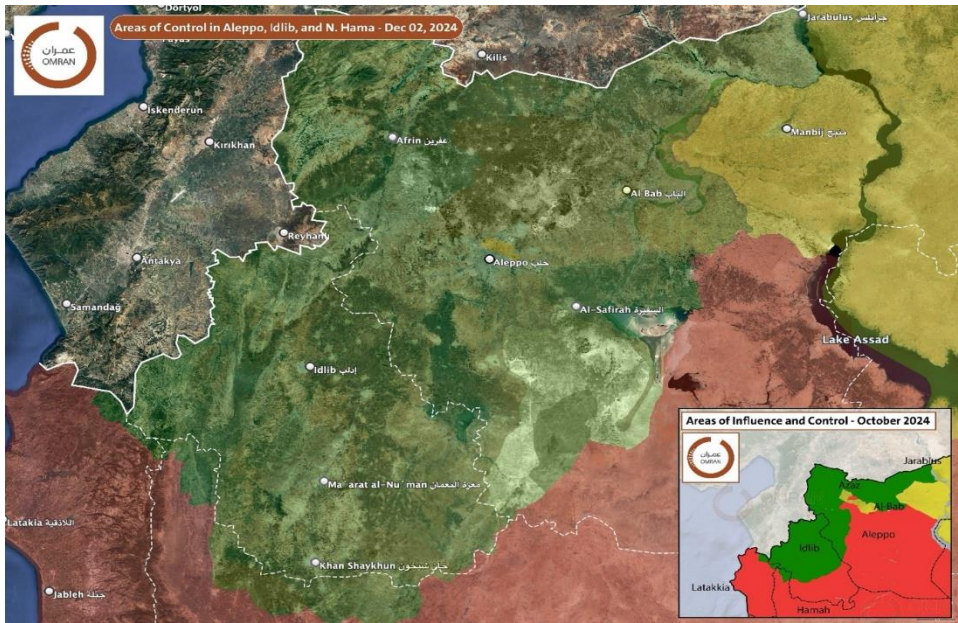
Regime sources claimed **1,300 fatalities** among opposition forces, but initial estimates suggest regime losses far exceed those of the attackers, given the large number of captured personnel and seized equipment.

- **Targeted Strikes**

As part of its announcement on the outcomes of its intensive military operations, “Operation Deterring Aggression” reported direct hits on gatherings of Assad regime forces and their allies in Qamhana, Masyaf, and Mount Zain al-Abidin. The strikes targeted a meeting that included officers from the Republican Guard and several military leaders, resulting in casualties among their ranks. Pro-regime media pages mourned the deaths of several of those targeted, including the brother of the Minister of Defense and Colonel Mahmoud Khidr al-Mahmoud.

III. Preliminary Analysis

- The elimination of regime force pockets in **Aleppo Province** and the concentration of full efforts on the **Hama front** could significantly contribute to breaking the regime's last defensive lines. If the attacking forces manage to penetrate these fronts, it could push the Assad regime into a state of "clinical death," leading to substantial unrest in its stronghold areas along the **coast** and in **Damascus**, severing the vital connection between the capital and coastal regions.
- The noticeable increase in intensive airstrikes by warplanes, **targeting infrastructure, vital facilities, and residential areas**, serves as a significant pressure tool. This escalation aims to hinder the advancing forces in Hama and prevent them from reaching the city while applying greater pressure on military personnel through retaliatory actions against civilians.
- The factions operating under the “**Dawn of Freedom**” and “**Operation Deterring Aggression**” operations rooms have maintained a high level of coordination and organization, bolstered by strategic field successes. These victories have strengthened their unity, enabling them to focus on shared objectives against Assad regime forces and allies while enhancing their capacity to achieve further military and political gains.



Map (5): Northwest Syria, December 2, 2024, 23:00 PM Syria Time

Day Seven Briefing – Operation “Deterring Aggression”

03 December 2024

Amid intense international political efforts aimed at de-escalation, the seventh day of military operations was marked by growing prospects of expanding the control of the two operations rooms at the expense of regime forces. The regime has initiated partial withdrawals from certain areas on the Hama front to bolster defenses at other critical points.

I. Sequence of Events

- **Hama Front**

The Operation “Deterring Aggression” operations room successfully breached the initial defensive lines, achieving significant territorial advances. The battles resulted in securing key areas, including **Suran**, **Qal'at al-Madiq**, **Taybat al-Imam**, **Maardis**, **Marioud**, **Tell al-Nasiriya**, **Ma'ar Shuhour**, and the **Mechanized School**, while **Halfaya** has become a forward confrontation line.

Meanwhile, **Khatib** and its military base have turned into the center of fierce clashes and a back-and-forth struggle between the two sides, reflecting the strategic importance of this area as a pivotal point in the battles. Additionally, several villages and towns east of **Hama**, including **al-Rahjan**, **Sarha al-Shamaliyah**, and **Sarha al-Janoubiyah**, have also come under opposition control.

These gains exert significant pressure on Assad's forces, threatening further collapses within their ranks.

- **Aleppo Front**

The **Defense Factories** near **As-Safira**, along with their vast stockpiles of ammunition and equipment of various types, have been brought under control. Meanwhile, “**Operation Dawn of Freedom**” forces completed their takeover of the remaining **YPG pockets** in northern Aleppo

countryside, securing several villages, including **Miskan, Herdetnin, Maarset al-Khan, Zitan, As-Safariya, and Tal Jabin.**

In a related development, signs of a dispute have emerged between "**Operation Dawn of Freedom**" and "**Operation Detering Aggression**" regarding the distribution of influence in areas recaptured from regime forces, particularly over **Sheikh Najjar city** and the **thermal power station.**

- **Airstrike Escalation**

The airstrikes carried out by regime and Russian forces were concentrated on the battlefronts in **northern Hama countryside** and the supply routes leading to these fronts in **Idlib countryside.** Among the targeted locations were **Jabal Shahshabo, the Al-Ankawi axis, and the towns of Halfaya, Khan Shaykhun, Deir Sunbul, Mork, and Taybat al-Imam.** While no party has been able to assess the results of these airstrikes, they have not impacted the course of the battles.

- **Northeast Syria**

In **northeastern Syria,** fierce clashes continued between **SDF forces** and regime forces along with allied militias in the **Deir ez-Zor Province,** particularly in the villages and towns of **Tabiya, Hatla, Khasham, Marrat, Mazlum, Husseiniya, and Al-Salihiya.** **SDF forces** capitalized on recent regime withdrawals from some of these areas to make advances in their favor.

Meanwhile, despite mounting pressure, the **SDF** remains determined to maintain its presence in the **Deir Hafir** area east of Aleppo, rejecting a proposal from "**Operation Detering Aggression**" to evacuate the area and move east of the Euphrates.

II. Losses of the Parties

- **Havey Loses to the Syrian Regime**

The “Operation Deterring Aggression” operations room announced the capture of several regime deserters, including five officers, during a security operation in the town of Deir Hassan in northern Idlib.

Additionally, the operations room reported direct hits on regime forces and their allies' gatherings on the Qamhana front and launched drone strikes targeting jamming systems on Mount Zain al-Abidin north of Hama. Approximately 50 regime soldiers were killed in one engagement on the battlefronts of Hama countryside.

The operations room also confirmed the destruction of a Zil military vehicle at the Sabahi Roundabout at Hama's entrance, killing 10 regime personnel, and the destruction of a BMP armored vehicle at the Mechanized School in Hama countryside, a strategic point. Precision strikes were carried out on other regime gatherings in Ma'ar Shuhour, and a military convoy was targeted in Kafr'aa, north of Hama.

III. International and Regional Stances

- **Turkey:** Highlighted the need to preserve Syria's territorial integrity and urged Assad to negotiate. Erdoğan stressed the impact on Turkish national security, while FM Fidan warned of risks of a new civil war.
- **Iran:** Pushed to revive the Astana Process with Turkey, Russia, and Qatar, reaffirming support for Assad but expressing concern over escalation and external interference, blaming Turkey for falling into an "Israeli-American conspiracy."
- **United States:** Denied involvement in current operations, emphasizing de-escalation and a return to the political process while safeguarding its interests in the region.
- **European Union:** Called for a solution based on **UN Resolution 2254**, condemned Russian airstrikes, and urged civilian protection.

- **France:** Reaffirmed its firm stance against Assad, emphasizing the opposition's role as a viable alternative. French media framed **HTS** as a "moderate force" focusing on minorities and civil governance.
- **Ukraine:** Blamed Moscow and Tehran for Syria's worsening security and humanitarian crisis.

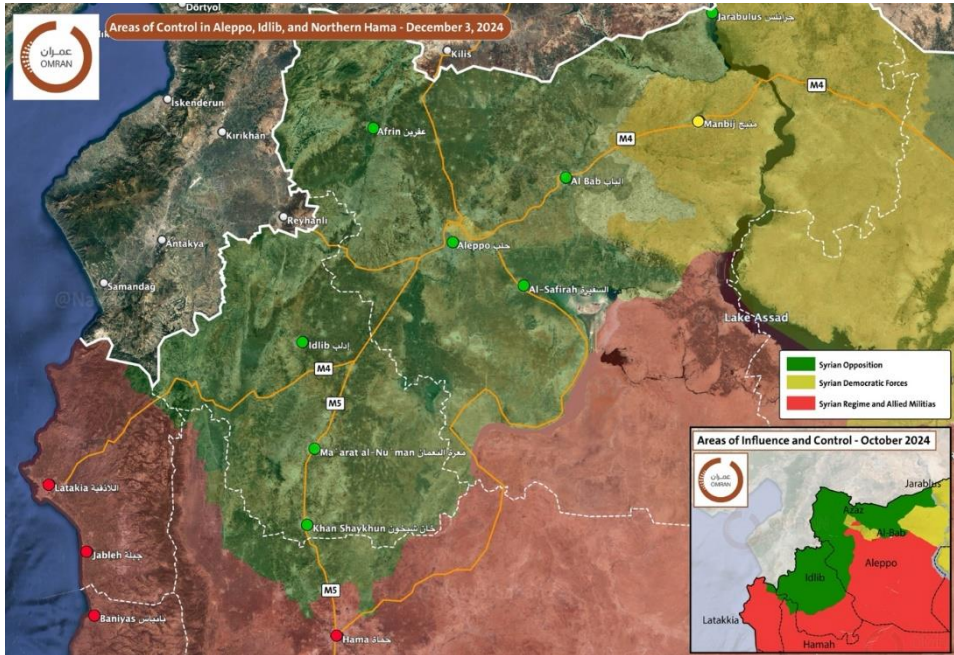
IV. International and Regional Stances

- **Hadi al-Bahra:** Emphasized halting aggression and resuming a UN-supervised political process, starting with a transitional governing body in Aleppo.
- **Riyad Hijab:** Blamed the regime for obstructing peace and called for implementing UN Resolution 2254 to ensure Syrian unity and freedom.
- **Idlib's Political Affairs Administration:** Assured the Kurdish community in Aleppo of their safety and rights to prevent tensions.
- **Association of Syrian Parties:** Supported military operations and urged unity among Syrians to achieve stability and rebuild liberated areas.
- **Syrian Revolutionary Youth League:** Called for unity against Assad, viewing territorial gains as steps toward Syria's full liberation.

V. Preliminary Analysis

- **Hama front** is a critical battleground, with “**Operation Detering Aggression**” forces breaching regime defenses in **Suran, Qal'at al-Madiq, and Taybat al-Imam**, positioning them to take **Hama Province** and expand operations toward **northern Homs**. This progress pressures the regime's military and political stability amid **Turkey's push for Assad's removal** and **Iran's efforts to revive the Astana Process**.

- Syria remains polarized among local, regional, and international actors, with field battles continuing to shape the conflict's outcome.



Map (6): Northwest Syria, December 3, 2024, 21:00 PM Syria Time

Day Eight Briefing – Operation “Deterring Aggression”

04 December 2024

Military operations in northwest Syria entered their eighth day, with **“Operation Deterring Aggression”** and **“Operation Dawn of Freedom”** forces making incremental gains. Simultaneously, Russian and Syrian airstrikes have intensified, targeting opposition-controlled areas and resulting in significant human and material losses.

I. Sequence of Events

- **Hama Front**

Fierce clashes continued on the **Jabal Zain al-Abidin–Qamhana** axis without decisive advances. However, **“Operation Deterring Aggression”** forces successfully captured key locations, including:

- **Khatab and its military base.**
- **Al-Majdal, Sheikh Hilal, Tal Bijou, and Mhardeh Bridge.**
- Eastern villages near Hama, including the **87th Brigade position, Sikaf Camp, and Al-Rasif.**

These developments have placed additional pressure on Assad regime forces to defend critical strongholds.

- **Aleppo Front**

“Operation Dawn of Freedom” forces gained control of the **Babiri Water Station** on the **Jarrah Military Airport** axis and secured additional areas in southern and eastern Aleppo countryside. Their efforts included:

- Sweeping operations to eliminate remaining regime forces.
- Enhanced security measures in Aleppo city, such as checkpoints and activating the **Shahba Police Department.**

The "**Syrian Salvation Government**" announced a settlement program for Assad regime defectors in Aleppo and Idlib, issuing protection cards to ensure their safety. Public services saw significant improvements:

- Salaries disbursed to **University of Aleppo employees**.
- Bakeries reactivated to distribute **234,000 bread bundles daily**.
- Food, gas, and supplies brought in from Idlib and Aleppo countryside.
- **Airstrike Escalation**

Russian warplanes and Assad regime forces have intensified airstrikes on opposition-controlled areas. Targeted locations include:

- Towns and villages such as **Maardis** and **Suran** in Hama.
- Areas in **Idlib Province**, including **Korin village** and the western outskirts of **Idlib city**.
- Regime artillery shelled **Qastoun village** in **Al-Ghab Plain**, injuring four civilians.
- **Mobilization**

Assad regime forces are intensifying their efforts to recruit local fighters, targeting not only those required for mandatory or reserve military service but also individuals not subject to military service obligations.

- **Northeast Syria**

The **SDF** launched a recruitment campaign in **Hasakah** to prepare for potential military scenarios.

II. Losses of the Parties

- **“Operation Deterring Aggression”**
 - Destroyed multiple regime tanks and killed over **200 regime officers** during battles on the **Zain al-Abidin** and **Qamhana fronts**.
 - Captured five Iranian militia fighters in **Ma'ar Shuhour**.

- Gained near-total control of Aleppo and Idlib, including strategic locations:
 - o Five airports: **Kuwaites, Nayrab, Menagh, Abu al-Duhur, and Aleppo International.**
 - o Two research centers and the **Defense Factories**, along with a large arsenal.
 - o The advanced Russian radar system **48Y6-K1 Podlet**, integral to the **S-300** and **S-400 defense systems.**
- **White Helmet Response**

Civil defense teams responded to over **275 attacks** in the past week. Key statistics include:

- Approximately **100 civilians killed** and **360 injured**
- Tens of thousands displaced from cities and towns in **Idlib, Aleppo, and Hama**
- Russian airstrikes rendered most hospitals in **Idlib inoperable**

III. International and Regional Stances

- **UN Security Council**

An emergency session highlighted calls for de-escalation and political solutions:

- **Raed Saleh** of the **White Helmets** raised concerns about potential chemical weapons use
- **UN envoy Pedersen** urged inclusive negotiations
- Russia and Turkey emphasized coordination through the **Astana Process**
- The US stressed civilian protection, while the Assad regime blamed Turkey and Israel
- **Iran** sought an urgent guarantor meeting.

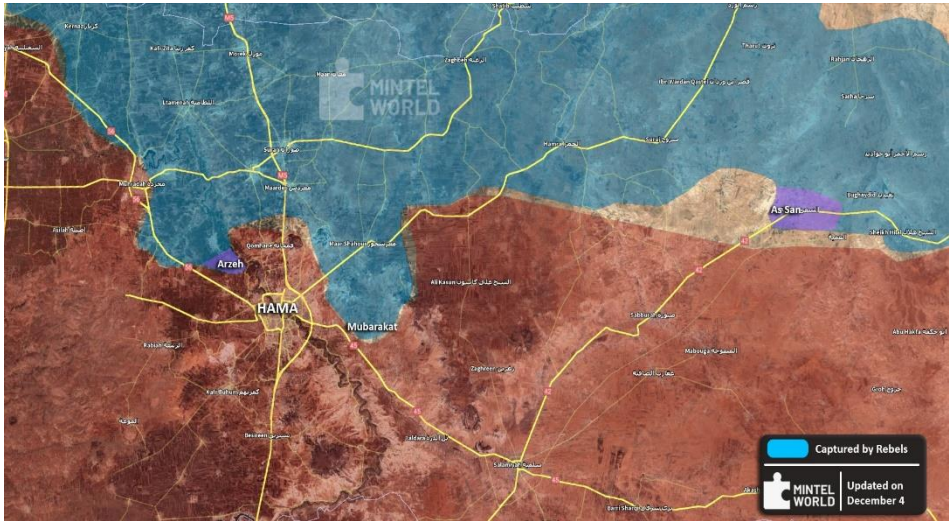
- Turkey pressed for negotiations with the opposition, while Washington maintained accountability for the Assad regime’s actions.

IV. Local Stances

- **Hadi al-Bahra** (National Coalition): Met with the French envoy to discuss military operations’ humanitarian and political implications.
- **Suwayda Political Committee**: Called for local security force activation, judicial independence, and reduced regime interference.
- **General Revolutionary Assembly in Aleppo**: Condemned **SDF violations** and urged international intervention.
- **Syrian National Movement**: Advocated Aleppo's reconstruction under the **Syrian Salvation Government**.
- **Kurdish National Council**: Opposed demographic changes.
- **Arab Socialist Union Democratic Party**: Supported **UN Resolution 2254** for a political solution.

V. Preliminary Analysis

The **Hama front** remains a pivotal battleground. The Assad regime is under immense pressure from the “**Operation Deterring Aggression**” forces, which continue advancing on eastern Hama and the **Khatab front**. If these gains are consolidated, it may lead to the collapse of regime defenses, with potential repercussions for **Homs** and other critical areas.



Map (7): Hama, December 4, 2024, 7:00 PM Syria Time (Sources: Mintel World)

Day Nine Briefing – Operation “Deterring Aggression”

05 December 2024

On the ninth day of Operation “**Deterring Aggression**”, and in a highly significant strategic development, defensive lines on the **Hama front** were successfully breached resulting in the capture of Hama city after intense clashes with regime forces. Meanwhile, the **SDF** is striving to consolidate its gains in **eastern Aleppo**, securing several towns and villages and advancing to within **8 kilometers** of **Kuwaites Military Airport**.

I. Sequence of Events

- **Hama Front:** Intense clashes near **Jabal Zain al-Abidin** and **Qamhana** forced regime withdrawals, allowing “**Operation Deterring Aggression**” forces to advance into eastern Hama neighborhoods, including the **Veterinary College**, **Al-Arba'in**, **Al-Qusour**, and the **Hama Central Prison**. On the northwestern front, after securing **Khatab**, forces advanced to **Al-Shiha**, **Khirbat Subin**, **Kafr al-Toun**, and the **Hama Military Airport**, prompting the regime to evacuate its remaining warplanes to **Shayrat Airport** in Homs. Full control of Hama was later declared.
- **Airstrikes:** Joint **Russian-Syrian airstrikes** targeted key points, including **Jabal Zain al-Abidin**, **Khatab**, and urban areas like **Jisr al-Mizrab**, **Al-Sinaa**, and **Al-Arba'in** neighborhoods, causing civilian casualties.
- **Aleppo Front:** The **SDF** secured new positions in **eastern Aleppo**, reaching **Khafsa** and clashing with “**Dawn of Freedom**” forces, which failed to halt the advance.
- **Homs:** Regime forces launched a large-scale recruitment campaign, including individuals not subject to mandatory military service, to bolster their ranks for the Hama front.

II. Losses and Humanitarian Impact

- **Military Losses:** “**Operation Deterring Aggression**” downed two regime helicopters and disabled another, released **3,000 detainees** from **Hama Central Prison**, and dismantled the **Special Forces** led by Suheil al-Hassan, and 25th Division.
- **Airstrike Damage:** Regime airstrikes destroyed **Jisr al-Mizrab**, damaged the **Veterinary College**, and caused civilian casualties.
- **Civil Defense and Reports:** The **Syrian Network for Human Rights** attributed **105 civilian deaths**, including **33 children** and **13 women**, to the regime, while **White Helmets** documented unidentified bodies across several provinces.
- **Local Developments in Aleppo:** Bakeries resumed full production capacity, supported by fuel supplies from the "Salvation Government", while defected regime officers and soldiers arrived at reconciliation centers to surrender weapons and receive temporary non-harassment cards. additionally, the **WHITE HELMETS** launch a campaign named "Hope for Returnees", to clear war remnants and shrapnel to enable displaced civilians to return.

III. International and Regional Stances

- **Türkiye:** Emphasized monitoring developments in Aleppo and coordinating efforts to prevent **PKK** exploitation of instability.
- **Italy:** Expressed concern over the potential collapse of the migration agreement and urged protection for Italian nationals in Syria.
- **U.S.:** Reports surfaced of earlier offers to Assad to sever ties with Iran, now less likely amid current developments.
- **Iran:** Announced an **Astana meeting** with Turkey and Russia in Doha, excluding Qatar from direct participation.

- **Iraq:** Authorized military action on its borders with Syria, mobilizing forces to counter instability.
- **Western and Advocacy Responses:** The **British Foreign Ministry** called for Assad’s engagement in a political process, while Syrian Christian organizations in the U.S. supported efforts to end Assad's rule and protect civilians.

IV. Local Stances

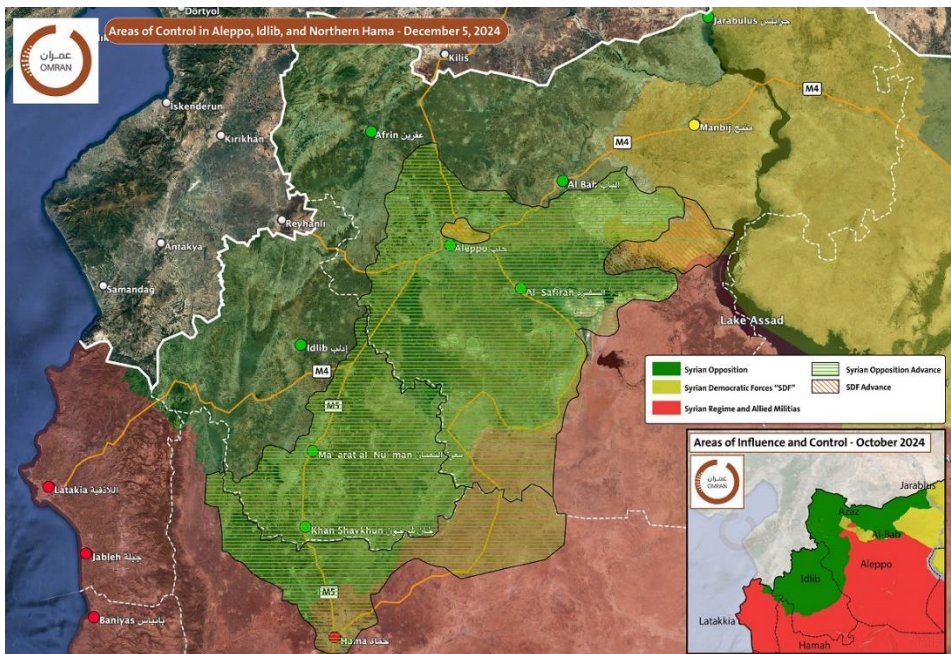
- **HTS Leadership:** Abu Mohammad al-Jolani urged Iraq to stay neutral and avoid escalating the conflict through the Popular Mobilization Forces.
- **Political Engagements:** Syrian opposition leaders met with EU envoys and issued statements urging unity and inclusivity, targeting diverse sectarian groups to foster broader participation in post-Assad Syria.
- **Protests in Homs:** Condemnations emerged against the regime's forced recruitment, calling for international action to halt the conscription of civilians.

V. Preliminary Analysis

- The continued collapse of regime forces is highly anticipated, with opposition forces nearing an open path toward **Homs**. The cities of **Talbiseh** and **Rastan**, known for their support of the revolution and their strategic location along the international highway, are expected to facilitate the opposition's advance. This alignment not only strengthens the logistical pathway but also significantly undermines the regime's ability to maintain control of the region.
- This development increases the likelihood of escalation on other fronts such as **Homs**, **Daraa**, and **As-Suwayda**, challenging the Assad regime. It may also spark internal rebellions and waves of military defections, further diminishing the regime and its allies' hopes of

reclaiming lost territories. In this context, this shift holds critical importance in reshaping the Syrian landscape.

- The approach of “**Operation Detering Aggression**” forces to villages with diverse affiliations—often strongholds of Assad’s support—poses a major challenge to the operation’s management. However, the balance in military and political messaging, along with the conduct exhibited in **Aleppo** and other liberated areas, reflects a well-structured strategy based on inclusivity of all sects and affiliations. This approach aims to ensure the participation of all components in building a **post-Assad Syria**, fostering national coexistence and future political stability.



Map (8): Hama, December 5, 2024, 06:00 PM Syria Time (Sources: Omran Center)

Day Ten Briefing – Operation “Deterring Aggression”

06 December 2024

On its tenth day, “**Operation Deterring Aggression**” continues to achieve rapid battlefield victories in the as new fronts ignite in **Homs** and south, in **Daraa** and **Suwyeda**, placing unprecedented pressure on the Assad regime. Such developments dramatically increase the likelihood of the collapse of the current Assad regime amidst high-level coordination among opposition factions across Syrian territories. The escalating political and military crisis is also reflected in growing international calls for a comprehensive political solution to achieve lasting stability in Syria.

I. Sequence of Events

- **Hama:** The “**Operation Deterring Aggression**” neutralized **Salamiyah** (of majority *Ismaili*) in eastern Hama and **Muhradah** (of majority Christian religion) in north Hama through an agreement with local dignitaries.
- **Homs:** “Operation Deterring Aggression” forces secured **Rastan**, **Talbiseh**, and nearby villages in northern Homs countryside, reaching **Al-Dar al-Kabira** near Homs city without resistance. Displacement of Assad regime supporters followed. Strategically located and important **Rastan Bridge** was heavily damaged by Russian and Assad airstrikes attempting to slow their advance.
- **Daraa:** Local factions captured the **52nd Mechanized Brigade**, the regime’s second-largest, after intense clashes north of **Nawa**. They facilitated mass defections, particularly in **Al-Lajat**, and took control of **Busra al-Sham** and the **Nassib Border Crossing**, raising revolutionary flags across Daraa.
- **Damascus:** Regime forces reinforced positions near **Al-Assad Suburb Bridge** in **Harasta**. Gunfire and explosions were reported

near the **Presidential Palace** and **General Staff Headquarters**, while state media claimed air defenses intercepted drone attacks.

- **Syrian Coast:** The regime intensified coastal recruitment and called for reactivating militias. **Rami Makhlouf**, Basha Assad's cousin, urged his sect to take up arms, highlighting sectarian exploitation.
- **Airstrikes:** Russian-Syrian forces intensified airstrikes on **Rastan**, **Talbiseh**, and **Khan Sheikhoun**, causing civilian casualties and injuries, accompanied by heavy artillery shelling on Homs countryside.
- **Governance:** Aleppo saw stability after reactivating institutions, except in **SDF-held neighborhoods**. Temporary protection status cards were issued to former regime forces, and former police in Hama were called to resume duties. Public celebrations greeted advancing forces in **Salamiyah**, **Talbiseh**, and **Rastan**.

II. Losses and Humanitarian Impact

- The operation room reported the killing of approximately **75 regime officers** over the past four days. However, casualties have significantly decreased as clashes subsided, with many regime forces opting to flee in various directions rather than face advancing forces.
- Opposition factions in Daraa seized a substantial cache of weapons, including **six tanks**, a **missile defense base**, and **three border outposts** in the Al-Shayah area. Among the captured equipment was a **machine gun** near Daraa's city center.
- Defection requests from regime forces have surged, coordinated with "Operation Deterring Aggression" The overwhelming number of applications has exceeded the capacity of designated communication lines to process them effectively.

III. International and Regional Stances

- **Türkiye:** Emphasized monitoring developments in Aleppo and coordinating efforts to prevent **PKK** exploitation of instability.
- The Kremlin stated it has no plans to rescue Assad due to his army's inability to hold positions.
- The Arab League postponed its emergency meeting on Syria.
- The U.S. denied supporting the SDF's attacks on Assad forces and urged de-escalation, emphasizing a political solution under UN resolutions.
- Turkey's President Erdogan noted Assad refused dialogue, while the opposition advances toward Damascus after taking Homs.
- Iran reaffirmed support for Assad and announced a trilateral meeting with Turkey and Russia in Qatar on December 7.
- The Russian Embassy advised citizens to leave Syria due to escalating tensions.
- Lebanon and Jordan closed border crossings with Syria as conflict intensifies in Daraa.
- Germany engaged Alawite leaders, who expressed openness to coexistence, while the UN Secretary-General called for renewed political talks and civilian protection.

IV. Local Stances

- **HTS Leader on CNN:** Ahmed al-Sharaa (Abu Mohammad al-Jolani), leader of "Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham" (HTS), stated in a CNN interview that the armed Syrian opposition aims to overthrow Bashar al-Assad's regime and establish a government elected by the people. He emphasized that HTS has restructured to move away from previous ideologies, advocating for peaceful coexistence among various sects.

He described HTS as a means to achieve political change in Syria, not an end in itself.

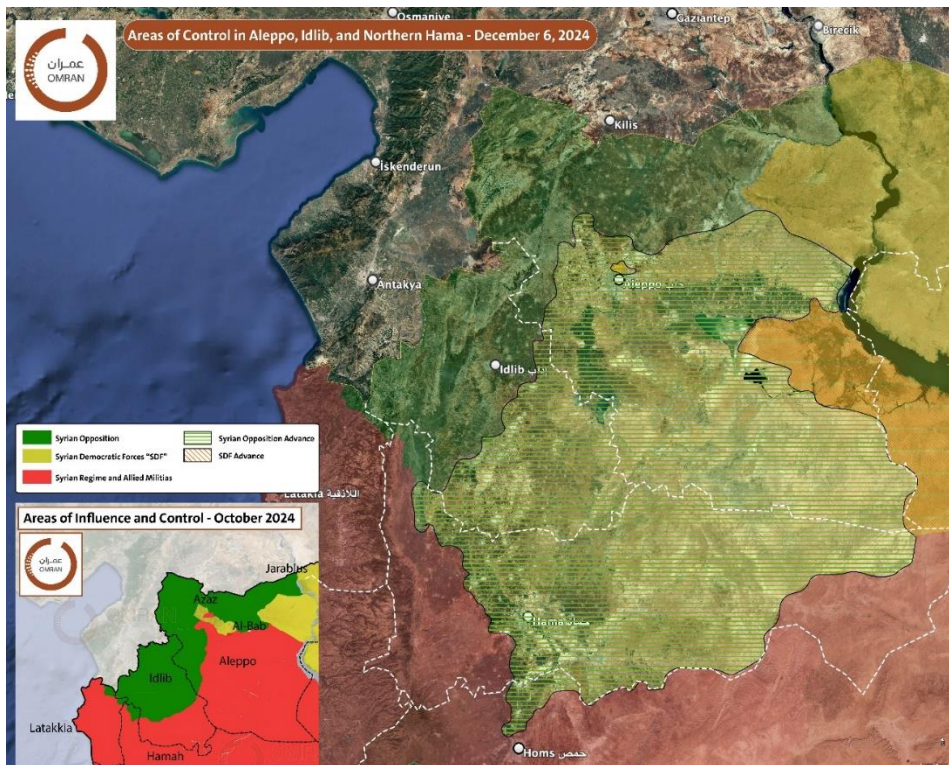
- **National Initiative in Masyaf:** A statement from the National Initiative in Masyaf stressed the importance of prioritizing reason, ensuring civilian safety, and cooperating with local entities to manage the region's affairs. It called on residents to form community committees to bypass regime authority and urged the international community to pressure the regime to implement UN Resolution 2254 for a peaceful political transition.
- **Political Statement in Homs:** The General Political Commission of Homs issued a statement urging residents to distance themselves from regime forces and remain neutral or support opposition forces until the city is secured. It also called for the preservation of public institutions to ensure their continued service to residents.
- **Formation of "Southern Operations Room":** A coalition of factions in southern Syria announced the establishment of the "Southern Operations Room," declaring their focus on Damascus. The group committed to securing and stabilizing southern borders.
- SDF leader Mazloum Abdi highlighted efforts to protect civilians, open humanitarian corridors, and coordinate to deter Turkish attacks.

V. Preliminary Analysis

- **The Advance in Homs:** The progress of “Operation Deterring Aggression” in Homs marks a new pivotal moment following the capture of Hama. Securing Homs would pave the way toward Damascus and divide regime-controlled areas between Damascus, the coast, and the western countryside of Homs and Hama. The regime may plan to draw opposition fighters toward Damascus to target and weaken them, while maintaining control over areas in the Homs desert after withdrawing from Deir ez-Zor in favor of the SDF. However, increasing political, military, and local pressures resulting from the loss of three provinces in just a few days, along with economic

repercussions such as food and medicine shortages in remaining regime territories, indicate the likelihood of the regime's collapse under these mounting challenges.

- **Escalating Pressures on Assad’s Regime:** The expansion of fronts and the rapid pace of field developments have significantly increased pressure on Assad's regime, making the fall of Damascus contingent on several scenarios, notably developments in the Daraa front or the 55-km base in al-Tanf. At the same time, enhanced coordination among opposition military factions amplifies pressure on the regime. Their ability to preserve state institutions from collapse could shift international stances, opening the door for broad political support and potentially leading to a fundamental change in the Syrian landscape.



Map (9): Hama, December 6, 2024, 08:00 PM Syria Time (Sources: Omran Center)

Day Eleven Briefing – Operation “Deterring Aggression”

07 December 2024

Syria's eleventh day of intensified military operations has brought unprecedented developments, with regime forces facing significant collapses across multiple fronts. Opposition forces are advancing toward Damascus, attempting to encircle the capital, raising the **potential for the Assad regime's fall**. These battlefield dynamics align with shifting international and regional strategies regarding the Syrian conflict.

I. Sequence of Events

- **Damascus:** Following significant withdrawals from various southern, western, and northern areas, the city has become fully encircled, allowing for the advance of opposition military factions. Reports have emerged of an initial incursion into the Kafr Sousa neighborhood.
- **Rural Damascus,** Assad regime forces withdrew toward the capital after evacuating their positions in the western countryside, including **Zakia, Kanaker, Sa'sa', and Jdeidet Artouz**. Additionally, they abandoned **Brigade 121, the 7th Division headquarters, and the Military Security Branch in Sa'sa'**, while opposition factions seized the strategic **Sheikh Hill**.
- Opposition forces in Rural Damascus announced the formation of the "**Fath Damascus Operations Room**", coordinating with the "**Deterring Aggression Operations Room**". Following a series of collapses, local forces in **Muadamiya** expelled regime troops and their security branches. Another uprising in the **Dhmeir area**—45 kilometers from Damascus—resulted in the withdrawal of regime forces from military sites, including the **Dhmeir Military Airport**. These developments were followed by withdrawals from several areas in Rural Damascus, including **Kiswah, Daraya, and Sahnaya**.

- **Homs, the “Deterring Aggression” forces** continued their advance toward **eastern Homs’s countryside** to secure entry into the city—now nearly deserted except for some intelligence personnel, Iranian militias, and Hezbollah members. The forces captured the **26th Division in Tir Maala** and an **artillery battalion north of Homs**, proceeding toward the city’s neighborhoods.

In response, **Russian and Syrian air forces** warplanes carried out intensive airstrikes using vacuum missiles and barrel bombs on Rastan and Talbiseh, resulting in casualties and material damage.

- The **Free Syrian Army** progressed in the **Al-Tanf, 55 Km area**, capturing **Jabal al-Ghurab** in the Syrian Desert, effectively cutting off Iraqi militias' access to Syria. According to field sources, **Assad regime forces** and their allied militias evacuated several strategic sites in the region, including **Al-Qaryatayn, Furqlus, Palmyra, Al-Sukhna**, and the **Al-Amur and Al-Kahla** mountains. Additionally, they abandoned the **Furqlus gas plant** and positions near the **T4 Military Airport**.
- The Assad regime started evacuating **Al-Sha’irat Airport** and other military bases in eastern Homs. These developments have brought the advancing forces within **20 kilometers** of **Al-Dumayr**, located north of Damascus.
- The provinces of **Daraa, Suwayda, and Quneitra** have completely fallen out of Assad regime control and its security apparatus. In Daraa, local factions took over city centers and major military brigades, including **Busra al-Harir, Nawa, Inkhil, Al-Sanamayn, Brigade 52, Brigade 12, and Division 9**. In Suwayda, the **Men of Dignity Movement** declared a general mobilization, expelled all regime forces and security agencies, and seized **Tha'ala Military Airport**. Meanwhile, in Quneitra, opposition factions captured government buildings and police headquarters, amid reports of Israeli military reinforcements in the **Golan Heights** in preparation for potential developments.

- **Northeastern Syria**, the SDF's **Deir ez-Zor Military Council** took control of Deir ez-Zor after the complete withdrawal of Assad regime forces. Local groups attacked Deir ez-Zor Prison, freeing detainees. In northeastern Aleppo, the "**Dawn of Freedom Operations Room**" launched the "**Liberation of Manbij**" operation, targeting SDF positions and urging civilians to avoid military sites. Simultaneously, Russian forces began withdrawing from key bases in the Manbij countryside.
- **Economically and locally**, Assad-controlled areas faced severe shortages of food and medicine, along with skyrocketing prices, amid a sharp collapse in the Syrian pound's value against the dollar. Exchange rates exceeded **35,000 SYP** per dollar in the north, **22,000 SYP** in the east, and **25,000 SYP** in Damascus.

II. Losses and Humanitarian Impact

- In southern Syria, opposition factions achieved significant progress by taking control of numerous military bases and outposts, seizing large quantities of equipment and ammunition, **including 25 tanks and BMP vehicles from Brigade 121 in Kanaker. Additionally, the "Free Syria Army" secured substantial arms and ammunition depots in eastern Homs.** In contrast, the Assad regime launched a wide-scale arrest campaign in the Marj area of Eastern Ghouta, targeting young men, including those exempt from military service, to conscript them into combat fronts.
- On the humanitarian front, the UN Secretary-General's spokesperson reported the displacement of at least 370,000 people from Syria to Lebanon since the start of "Operation Detering Aggression" with projections suggesting the number could rise to 1.5 million. Simultaneously, joint Russian-Syrian airstrikes on northern rural Homs resulted in dozens of casualties and extensive destruction of infrastructure, exacerbating the suffering of the local population.

III. International and Regional Stances

- Pedersen announced an agreement among Astana nations for direct negotiations aimed at achieving political transition and forming a transitional governing body.
- The **Qatari Prime MF Minister** warned of the escalating situation in Syria, potentially leading to civil war due to Assad's lack of serious engagement with his people.
- The foreign ministries of **Canada, the United States, Jordan, and Iraq** called on their citizens to leave Syria, with the U.S. advising emergency preparedness plans for those choosing to stay.
- The **UN mission in Syria** expressed readiness to retain essential staff to continue providing services, while non-essential personnel are expected to leave following the collapse of the Assad regime.
- The New York Times reported on **orders from Iran for evacuations from the Iranian embassy in Damascus and Revolutionary Guard bases to Tehran by air, and to Lebanon and Iraq by land**, using the Latakia port. The Fatemiyoun Brigade is reportedly being relocated to Damascus and Latakia, while embassy staff and senior Quds Force commanders are being moved to Iraq and Lebanon. The report highlighted U.S. officials' surprise at the Assad regime's weak control over Aleppo.
- Israel's Channel 14 announced **Israel's readiness for the potential fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime.**
- The **U.S. Secretary of State** discussed with his Turkish counterpart Fidan the necessity of reaching a political solution in Syria.
- Egyptian and Jordanian officials urged **Bashar al-Assad to leave Syria** and establish a government in exile.
- The Iraqi government declared no intention **to intervene militarily in Syria.**

- **The Iranian FM Minister** admitted uncertainty regarding the future of Bashar al-Assad.
- Reuters cited a Turkish Foreign Ministry source reporting that Fidan informed Blinken of the need for dialogue between the Assad government and the opposition.
- The White House emphasized the need for a serious and credible political process to end the war in Syria, blaming the Assad regime's refusal to engage politically and reliance on Russia and Iran for the current circumstances.
- **The Jordanian Interior Ministry** announced the closure of the Jaber border crossing with Syria, allowing only Jordanian nationals to return and suspending departures, with the Jordanian Armed Forces securing the border.

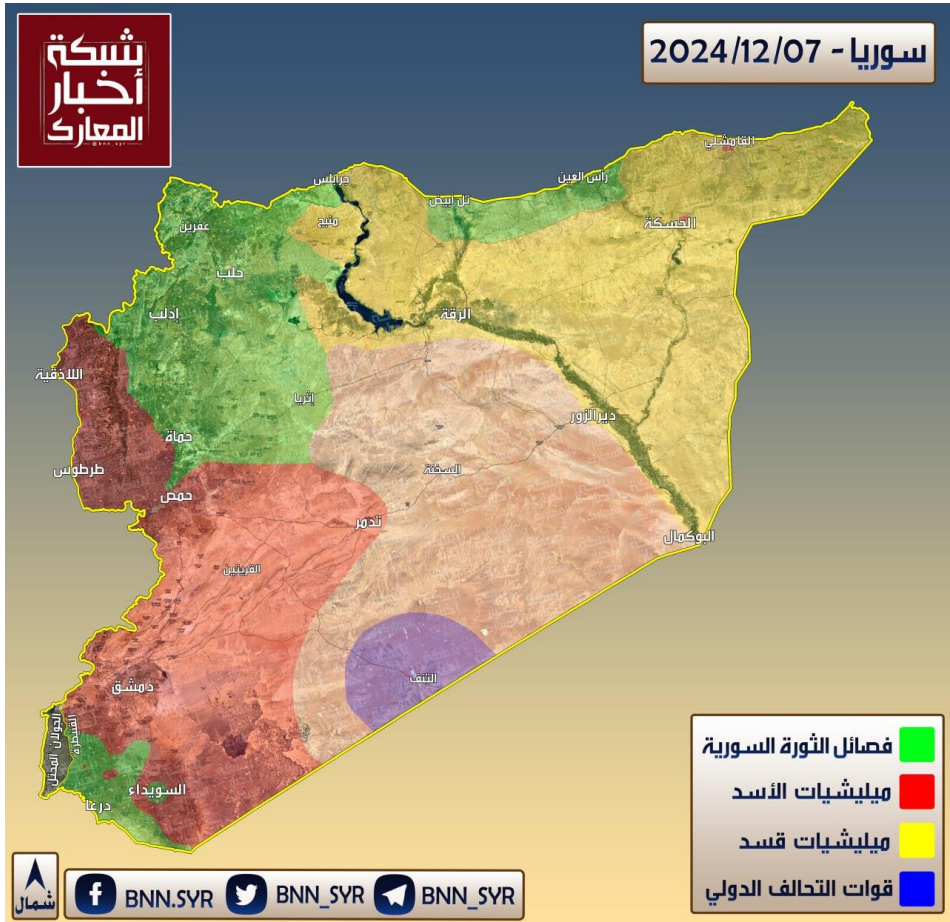
IV. Local Stances

- A statement issued by the "**Men of Dignity**" movement in **Suwayda** called on all residents of Jabal al-Arab, both military and civilian, to participate in protecting the region. The statement affirmed that Suwayda is an integral part of a free Syria, standing against terrorism, internal conflict, extremism, and tyranny.
- **The media center of the SDF issued a statement** regarding violent attacks on the military councils of Manbij and Al-Bab, carried out by "the Turkish army and its mercenaries" using drones and artillery targeting villages around Manbij. The statement confirmed the failure of the attacks and the killing of dozens of attackers.
- The President of the NCS held a meeting with the European Union's Acting Envoy to Syria, emphasizing the importance of a political solution, good governance, halting regime attacks, and maintaining humanitarian support.
- **The Vice President of the National Coalition** condemned the targeting of civilians and called on regime personnel to defect.

- The "**Syrian Salvation Government**" issued statements reassuring Chinese and Russian nationals and affirming good relations with the Lebanese people.
- Locally, a number of Afrin dignitaries called on the region's residents to safely return to their areas under leadership guarantees.

V. Preliminary Analysis

- The large-scale withdrawals of regime forces and allied militias highlight their confusion and weakness, coupled with a reliance on defending the capital as a last stronghold. **This strategy aims to prolong the conflict for a political deal ensuring a safe exit and future role for the regime leadership.** However, defections and withdrawals near and within Damascus undermine the viability of this approach, reflecting a growing sense of the futility of defending a **collapsing regime.**
- Meanwhile, the strong coordination among opposition factions has enabled significant military gains, revitalizing diplomatic discussions about forming a transitional governing body. **This shift from talks focused solely on normalization and humanitarian crises reflects the increasing likelihood of Assad's regime falling.** It presents a critical test for opposition forces to manage institutions, safeguard gains, and establish stability in a post-Assad Syria.



Map (10): Syria, December 7, 2024, 10:00 AM Syria Time

Day Twelve Briefing – Operation “Deterring Aggression”

08 December 2024

The Syrian people triumphed and succeeded in toppling Assad’s regime on the twelfth day of “Operation Deterring Aggression” corresponding to December 8, 2024. This victory came after opposition forces entered the capital, Damascus, leading to Assad’s escape and the withdrawal of his forces from all positions.

I. Sequence of Events

- **Homs:** Forces from “Operation Deterring Aggression” advanced into Homs city following intense clashes, particularly in the Malouk neighborhood near the city center. This was followed by an announcement from Assad regime forces declaring a complete evacuation of the city and retreat toward the Syrian coast, including the withdrawal from their barracks, security headquarters, and military units along the Homs-Damascus highway.
- **Damascus and its countryside:** witnessed a collapse in Assad regime forces, as most units received orders for a rapid withdrawal in the face of significant advances by opposition forces. The opposition's military operations rooms successfully facilitated the defection of 537 officers and soldiers from regime ranks, coinciding with demonstrations by local residents in various areas of Damascus and its countryside, aimed at removing military presence and symbols of regime control.

The opposition forces entered the capital, they stormed security branches and military barracks abandoned by regime forces, reaching central neighborhoods and vital locations, including the Presidential Palace, Damascus International Airport, and the state-run Radio and Television Authority in Ummayad Square. Subsequently, Bashar al-Assad's escape was announced.

- **Prisons and Releasing Detainees:** Attacking forces arriving from various areas in the Damascus countryside successfully stormed

Saydnaya Prison following an assault on the surrounding military garrison. The attack resulted in the garrison's withdrawal and the evacuation of the prison, allowing the attacking forces to release thousands of detainees. The Search operations for detainees are still ongoing due to the complex design of Saydnaya Prison and its hidden chambers.

Simultaneously, similar operations were carried out at other detention centers, including **Adra Prison**, the **Military Police Prison in Qaboun**, **Qatana Prison, Branch 248**, and **Palestine Branch**, in addition to the **Homs Central Prison** in the Al-Bayada neighborhood, the **Bouloona Prison** in Homs, and previously, the **As-Suwayda Central Prison**.

- **Aleppo countryside**, "Dawn of Freedom" forces successfully took control of **Manbij** and its surrounding villages following clashes with **SDF forces**, during which a significant number of SDF fighters were captured.
- **Quneitra**: Israeli forces advanced into the demilitarized zone in Syria for the first time since 1974, reaching Khan Arnabeh. Israel stated the move was for the security of Golan residents, with no intention to interfere in Syria's internal affairs.
- **Syrian Coast and Western Hama**: Protests erupted in Latakia, Tartus, and Baniyas, targeting regime symbols. Meanwhile, Operation "Deterring Aggression" forces captured strategic areas in Latakia's mountains, including Kinsabba and Shaf Castle, as well as Jureen Camp in Hama's al-Ghab Plain and the Kasab Border Crossing.

II. Post-Assad Developments:

- **Damascus Chaos**: The city of Damascus witnessed widespread chaos, including isolated incidents of looting and theft targeting public institutions and facilities. Upon the arrival of "Operation Deterring Aggression" forces and security units from northern Syria, a curfew

was announced from 4 PM until 5 AM the next day in an effort to restore order and prevent further escalation.

- **Interim Governance:** Former Syrian Prime Minister Ali Al-Jalali announced his intention to remain in Syria and expressed his full readiness to ensure a smooth transfer of power. Local sources reported that a unit from the "Military Operations Administration" has been assigned to secure his protection. It is expected that the previous government will continue managing affairs during the transitional period to stabilize the situation amid ongoing unrest.
- **Return of Syrians:** The Bab al-Hawa border crossing between Syria and Turkey saw dozens of Syrian nationals voluntarily returning to their homeland.
- **Call for Civil Servants:** All ministries of the former Syrian government and affiliated directorates called on employees to return to their offices to safeguard facilities and contribute to the rebuilding of a new Syria.

III. International and Regional Stances

- **Donald Trump** stated that Assad has fallen, Russia abandoned him due to its weakness in Ukraine and its poor economy, and that Iran has been weakened by Israeli strikes.
- The **Russian Foreign Ministry** confirmed its communication with all opposition factions, expressing support for initiating a comprehensive political process in accordance with UN Resolution 2254. It also assured that its military bases in Syria are on high alert and face no imminent threats.
- **Russian sources** revealed that ousted President Bashar al-Assad has left Syria, with conflicting reports about his whereabouts and fate.
- The **Turkish Foreign Minister** announced Turkey's readiness to assist Syria's new administration in overcoming economic and other challenges.

- **Germany's Foreign Ministry** urged Syrian parties to fulfill their responsibilities toward all Syrians, calling on the international community to help Syria escape the cycle of war and violence.
- **China** expressed hope for Syria to regain stability as soon as possible.
- The **UN envoy to Syria** called on Syrians to prioritize unity and respect international humanitarian law. The **UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs** urged Syrian parties to ensure the safe and voluntary return of displaced persons.
- A **Pentagon official** confirmed that US forces will maintain their presence in eastern Syria to ensure the continued defeat of ISIS.
- **Egypt's Foreign Ministry** called for launching an inclusive political process to establish a new phase of reconciliation and peace, restoring Syria's regional and international status.
- The **French President** praised the Syrian people's courage and resilience.
- The **European Commission on Foreign Policy** emphasized its priority of securing the region and pledged to work with European and Syrian partners, acknowledging the long and complex rebuilding process ahead.
- The **UK Deputy Prime Minister** stressed the need for a political solution in Syria in line with UN resolutions, emphasizing the importance of protecting civilians and infrastructure.
- **Israel's Prime Minister** described Assad's fall as a "momentous day in Middle Eastern history." Another Israeli official highlighted Israel's primary concern of preventing Iran from re-establishing its influence in Syria.
- **Iran's Foreign Ministry** reaffirmed its commitment to Syria's unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

- **Jordan’s King** expressed solidarity with Syrians and respect for their will and choices.
- Foreign Ministers of **Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq** issued a joint statement calling for an end to military operations in Syria to pave the way for a political process, emphasizing the need for continued consultations to achieve a political resolution.

IV. Local Stances

- **Ahmed Al-Sharaa**, leader of Syrian opposition operations, emphasized the importance of avoiding damage to government institutions and keeping them under the custody of the former Prime Minister for later handover. He also reaffirmed the commitment to continuing the path initiated in 2011.
- Residents of **Salhab** declared their full commitment to adhering to the policies and directives of the new government, demonstrating their dedication to collective efforts for the nation's benefit and strengthening national unity.
- The **Syrian National Coalition** congratulated the Syrian people on liberating Syria from Assad's regime after 14 years of struggle for freedom and dignity. They declared **December 8, 2024**, a national holiday in Syria to commemorate the triumph of justice, honoring the martyrs and oppressed.

V. Preliminary Analysis

- **The fall of the Assad regime has posed significant challenges for opposition**, particularly in their ability to establish a political model based on citizenship and meet key expectations, including reconstruction, transitional justice, and fostering civil peace.
- The disciplined management of military operations minimized losses during the regime's collapse and withdrawal from provinces, emphasizing the preservation of state institutions for a peaceful

transition. However, the chaos in Damascus highlights challenges in governance and the complexities of diverse political and military forces. International support is crucial for maintaining Syria's territorial unity and building a balanced political framework to achieve stability and prosperity.

Briefing on Developments in the Syrian Landscape After the Fall of the Assad Regime

09 December 2024

I. Overview

On Day 13 of *Operation “Deterring Aggression”*, Syria faced a wide range of security and political challenges. In Damascus, internal security has deteriorated due to widespread arms proliferation, coinciding with Israeli strikes targeting infrastructure and weapons depots.

Meanwhile, Russia has reduced its presence in parts of the country following partial withdrawals from several military bases.

Internationally, the United States and several Western countries expressed support for a peaceful transfer of power, while Russia described the coming phase as uncertain and ambiguous.

II. Developments in the Internal Landscape

- **Internal Security:** Damascus is witnessing instability driven by a breakdown in public order. Fires were reported in the **General Intelligence Directorate** building and the **Immigration and Passports Department**, while widespread possession and use of weapons continue across large segments of the population—including near-continuous celebratory gunfire.
- **Internal Security and Police units** affiliated with the *Military Operations Administration* are attempting to restore order by confiscating illegal weapons and recovering stolen property across the capital’s neighborhoods.
- In **Hama**, internal security forces and police have also deployed throughout the city center.
- **Israeli Strikes:** Israel conducted more than **100 airstrikes** across Syria, most of them in **Damascus**, targeting:

- Several military airports,
- Strategic weapons storage sites,
- Weapons-development laboratories near the **General Staff Headquarters**,
- Fourth Division and Republican Guard sites west of the capital,
- Locations in **Qarah** in rural Damascus.
- Additional strikes hit **Sweida**, **Nawa** (in Daraa), and several regime military garrisons in **Homs**.
- Israeli ground forces continued operating within the **buffer zone in Quneitra**.
- **Syrian Coast:** The *Military Operations Administration* consolidated full control over the **entire coastal strip**, announcing control over both **Tartus** and **Latakia** governorates.

It also stated it had **no intention of storming Russian military bases** in the area.

- **Eastern Syria:** Deir ez-Zor witnessed **security chaos** following shifts in control and the presence of remaining Iranian-backed cells. Several official institutions—including the **Civil Registry Department**—were burned or looted.
- In response, the **SDF** imposed a curfew in the city center. A peaceful demonstration opposing the SDF presence was met with lethal force, resulting in a **massacre** that killed civilians including women and children. Meanwhile, “**Dawn of Freedom Forces**” announced control over **Hawija village** in Raqqa countryside.
- **Russian Presence:** Sources confirmed the withdrawal of Russian armored vehicles from the **Radio Base in Ayn al-Arab (Kobani)** and **Sirrin** in eastern Aleppo, relocating toward **Qamishli**. Russian forces also withdrew from **Ayn Issa**, under SDF control.

- **Government Formation:** Ahmad al-Shar‘a, commander of *Operation “Deterring Aggression”*, met with:
 - Mohammed al-Jalali (former regime Prime Minister),
 - Mohammed al-Bashir (Prime Minister of the “Salvation Government”),to discuss forming a **new transitional government**.

The Ministry of Transport announced work to **reactivate Damascus and Aleppo International Airports** for domestic flights within days.

- **Economic Situation:** The Syrian pound experienced **notable improvement**, with the exchange rate dropping to below **20,000 SYP per USD**. Money-transfer companies issued instructions permitting the **delivery of remittances in U.S. dollars**.
- **Detention Facilities:** Attempts continue to access **secret underground chambers in Sednaya Prison**. The director of Civil Defense denied finding additional underground facilities—suggesting that many detainees had likely been executed earlier. Only a small number of prisoners from the exposed cell blocks have been released over recent days, despite expectations that Sednaya housed thousands of political prisoners and detainees.
- **Return of Displaced Persons:** Border crossings witnessed heavy congestion, with large numbers of Syrians returning from **Turkey and Lebanon**.
- The **Political Directorate** of the “Salvation Government” called on refugees abroad to return.

III. International and Regional Positions

- **Israel:** Defense Minister *Yoav Gallant / Katz* instructed the continuation of efforts to destroy strategic weapons across Syria to create “a security environment free of heavy strategic weapons and infrastructure threatening Israel.” He also spoke of the possibility of expanding ground incursions and stressed that Israel will prevent Hezbollah from rearming through Syria.
- **United States:** President Biden stated that recent developments present “a major opportunity for the Syrian people,” but come with risks and uncertainty.

The U.S. Secretary of State affirmed Washington’s support for a **peaceful transition to a responsible Syrian government** through an inclusive, Syrian-led process.

- **France:** Expressed support for political transition and signaled intention to send a diplomatic delegation to Damascus within days.
- **U.S.–Turkey Coordination:** The U.S. and Turkish Defense Ministers agreed to ensure that the situation in Syria does **not undermine efforts to defeat ISIS**.
- **United Kingdom:** Minister **Pat McFadden** stated that the UK may consider removing **Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham** from its terrorism list depending on developments.
- **Russia:** Called for a **closed UN Security Council meeting** to discuss Syria.

The Kremlin stated it is premature to determine the future of Russia’s military presence in Syria and that appropriate measures are being taken regarding Russian bases.

It described recent events as “a surprise to all, including Russia,” and emphasized the need for dialogue in the difficult phase ahead. It confirmed that granting asylum to Assad was a decision by President Putin, but no meeting between Putin and Assad has been scheduled.

- **European Union:** Urged all external actors to respect **Syria’s sovereignty and territorial integrity**.
- **Turkey:** The Turkish Foreign Minister reaffirmed Turkey’s commitment to **rebuilding Syria**.
- **Canada:** The Canadian Foreign Ministry reiterated Canada’s commitment to holding the Assad regime accountable at the **International Court of Justice**.

IV. Domestic Positions

- The **Political Affairs Administration** of the “Salvation Government” stated that its efforts aim to establish a new phase of **comprehensive social reconciliation**, address past injustices, promote mutual respect in international relations, build a **rule-of-law state**, develop vital sectors, generate employment, and encourage investment—all in preparation for the safe return of Syrians.
- The **Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR)** issued an appeal to families of detainees and the forcibly disappeared to contact the organization directly for verified information, warning against untrusted applications that spread misleading data.

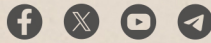
V. Preliminary Analysis

- The Syrian landscape faces **complex challenges** due to divergent agendas among international actors. Israel’s campaign to dismantle Syria’s military infrastructure raises concerns of a significantly weakened state unable to address external threats.
- Politically, the absence of an effective role for actors aligned with the Syrian revolution in managing the transition poses a **serious risk** to political stability. This undermines prospects for a **comprehensive and sustainable settlement** capable of rebuilding the state on foundations that ensure internal stability and strengthen regional balance.



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