

Weekly Conflict Summary
July 28-August 3, 2016

Pro-Government forces in Aleppo succeeded in fully encircling opposition-held portions of Aleppo city, capturing Bani Zeid, and a large portion of the Castello Road and Layramoun by July 28. After several failed attempts to recapture lost territory, opposition fighters have focused their attention on government-controlled portions of southwest Aleppo. Figure 1 (below) shows the degree to which conflict has impacted Aleppo city and the surrounding area. The high level of conflict in the southwest of the city highlights the two major opposition fronts: one in al-Hamadaniya neighborhood through the area known as the 1070 Apartments and one in Sheikh Sa'id through Ramousa and the Ramousa Artillery School. Much of the initial push into government-held territory was led by Ahrar al-Sham, though the offensive now boasts a large coalition of anti-government forces. Civilians of besieged East Aleppo also burned tires over the weekend (July 29-31) to obscure the vision of Russian and Syrian government war planes.

In the first two days of the opposition offensive to break the government siege on the city, a number of civilians from government-controlled areas of al-Hamadaniya fled their homes due to increased shelling by opposition forces and the proximity to new front lines near the 1070 Apartments. The Syrian government announced the opening of four humanitarian crossings leading exclusively to government-controlled areas of the city. This announcement came with a statement that pro-government forces had prepared temporary shelters to accommodate up to 3,000 of the new

serving residents but it does not receive emergency cases. The airstrike on the field hospital came one day after it received aid and supplies from the Syrian Arab Red Crescent.

The government of Jordan continues to prevent humanitarian access to thousands of displaced Syrians stranded in Hadalat and Rukban refugee camps along the Syria-Jordan border. Jordanian authorities at the Tal Shihab border crossing continue to block entry of severely injured persons to medical facilities in Jordan. Very serious medical cases are now being transferred to the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights for treatment.

The government offensive for Eastern Ghouta continued in Rural Damascus as the Syrian government pushed from the west and east into the opposition stronghold. This was coupled with consistent airstrikes on the towns of Douma, Darayya, and Khan al-Shih. In Darayya, government forces now control over half of the city, with fighting continuing daily.

Conclusion

This week saw a continuation of the high levels of conflict throughout Syria. Major frontline changes in Aleppo city have imperiled civilians throughout both sides of the city. Flows of IDPs from Aleppo and areas of Idleb indicate the very real human impact of the ongoing conflict and serve to further highlight the importance of seeking a lasting solution to the conflict. Attacks on hospitals and the closure of medical facilities throughout Syria has further exacerbated the already bleak conditions faced by Syrians.