

Weekly Conflict Summary
September 15-21, 2016

The September 9 cessation of hostilities began quickly unraveling last week, less than a week after its implementation. The deal came under serious strain following two airstrikes in opposite corners of Syria, sparking a rapid re-escalation of conflict. Despite being declared over by most parties to the conflict, talks continue between the US and Russia in hopes of preventing a return to full scale conflict.

As has been the case for most of 2016, the majority of conflict throughout Syria remains focused in and around Aleppo city. Though the implementation of the cessation of hostilities briefly saw a sharp reduction in the number of reported aerial bombardments, at the time of this writing, all sources indicate that the frequency of air raids have returned to pre-cessation levels.

First, on September 17, international coalition airstrikes hit Syrian government soldiers in Deir Ez-Zor on the frontlines with ISIS. Russian personnel were able to contact the American control center after the strikes started to ask them to stop, but much damage had already been done. (t) (h) 11(e Am) 00 1 80n07 692 reW*nBTF1 11.04Tf1 C

were reported to have been hit. The strikes destroyed over half of the aid trucks and reportedly killed 21 aid workers, including the local director of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, Omar Barakat. The convoy had
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The opposition offensive, Operation Euphrates Shield (OES), saw no new gains against ISIS forces in the area, and small territorial losses near ar-Rai'i near A'zaz, Aleppo. On September 16, US special forces and some opposition counterparts were expelled from Ar-Rai'i by opposition forces who protested their presence in the area. Though they returned soon after, the incident is indicative of high tensions surrounding the presence of US special forces in the area.

More families have left IDP camps near A'zaz to migrate eastwards towards Jarabulus on the Turkish border. Turkey is currently sending a significant amount of aid to the territory OES forces have taken in the past few weeks. Other families are also moving towards Menbij, which is held by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

In Idleb, the White Helmets HQ in Tamanaah was struck with a vacuum missile on September 15, putting it out of service. The White Helmets HQ in Kafr Takharim also closed after airstrikes on September 21.

Conflict has heated up around Abtaa and Da'el in Daraa, primarily in the form of airstrikes and barrel bombs on the cities. Up to 20% of the current population of Da'el has fled the city for the western countryside. They are not receiving any type of food aid in their new location. Another significant population has fled the eastern part of Da'el and is seeking refuge in the west of the city.

The Jordanian border crossing is still closed and continues to impact Syrians who require immediate medical attention. Medical resupply is also limited by this border closing.

On September 18th, government forces targeted the field clinic in Jabata Al Khashab which is the only medical facility serving the population in the northern Quneitra countryside.

An opposition surrender in besieged al-Wa'er has been negotiated, but evacuations have been delayed.

Conclusions:

The current ceasefire may not be salvageable at the moment, but all attempts should be made to ensure that the humanitarian provisions of the agreement are adhered to. The humanitarian toll of the ongoing conflict remains high, and in