

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

•
Figure 1: Dominant actors' area of control and i

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

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

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

¹ Figure 1, the Carter Center’s areas of control map, depicts areas of the dominant actors’ control and influence. While “control” is difficult to determine in a complex, dynamic conflict, territorial control is defined as an entity having power over use of force as well as civil/administrative functions in an area. Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah maintain a presence in Syrian government-controlled territory. Non-state organized armed groups (NSOAG), including the Kurdish-dominated SDF and Turkish-backed opposition groups operate in areas not under GoS control. The area along the junction of the Syrian border with Iraq and Jordan is a 55km de-confliction zone, established by the US-led coalition that also includes a number of aligned local armed groups.

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

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

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

