

## **Syria Conflict Update**

June 1 - July 10, 2018

Countrywide Developments June 1-30

## Quantitative Updates

The month of June began with relatively low levels of conflict throughout Syria. With opposition forces having been cleared earlier from Eastern Ghouta, Eastern Qalamoun, and northern Homs, much of the remaining violence was concentrated along opposition-government front lines in northern Hama and Idleb governorates. Additionally, low levels of infighting continued between rival opposition factions in the Idleb governorate.

By mid-June, however, Syrian government forces, aided by Russian air power began an offensive in southwestern Syria. Beginning in the second half of June, reported conflict levels per week jumped five times higher than what had been seen in recent memory, with air strikes and artillery shelling targeting nearly every community within 5km of any government-opposition frontlines.

Governorate	May 29 - June 4	June 5-11	June 12-18	June 19-25	June 26-30
Aleppo	4.00	4.43	3.43	3.29	4.20
Damascus	0.29	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.00
Daraa	4.57				

## Territorial Changes

With the swiftly moving offensive in southern Syria, government forces have continued to make significant gains against opposition forces. The swift progress made in June has only accelerated into the beginning of July (see maps below). The territories taken by government forces have largely been taken by Russian intermediaries. These deals call for the handover of heavy weapons, the integration of willing opposition fighters, and provisions for the evacuation to Idlib of those unwilling to reconcile.

In addition to territorial changes in southern Syria, both government and Kurdish forces have continued to shrink.

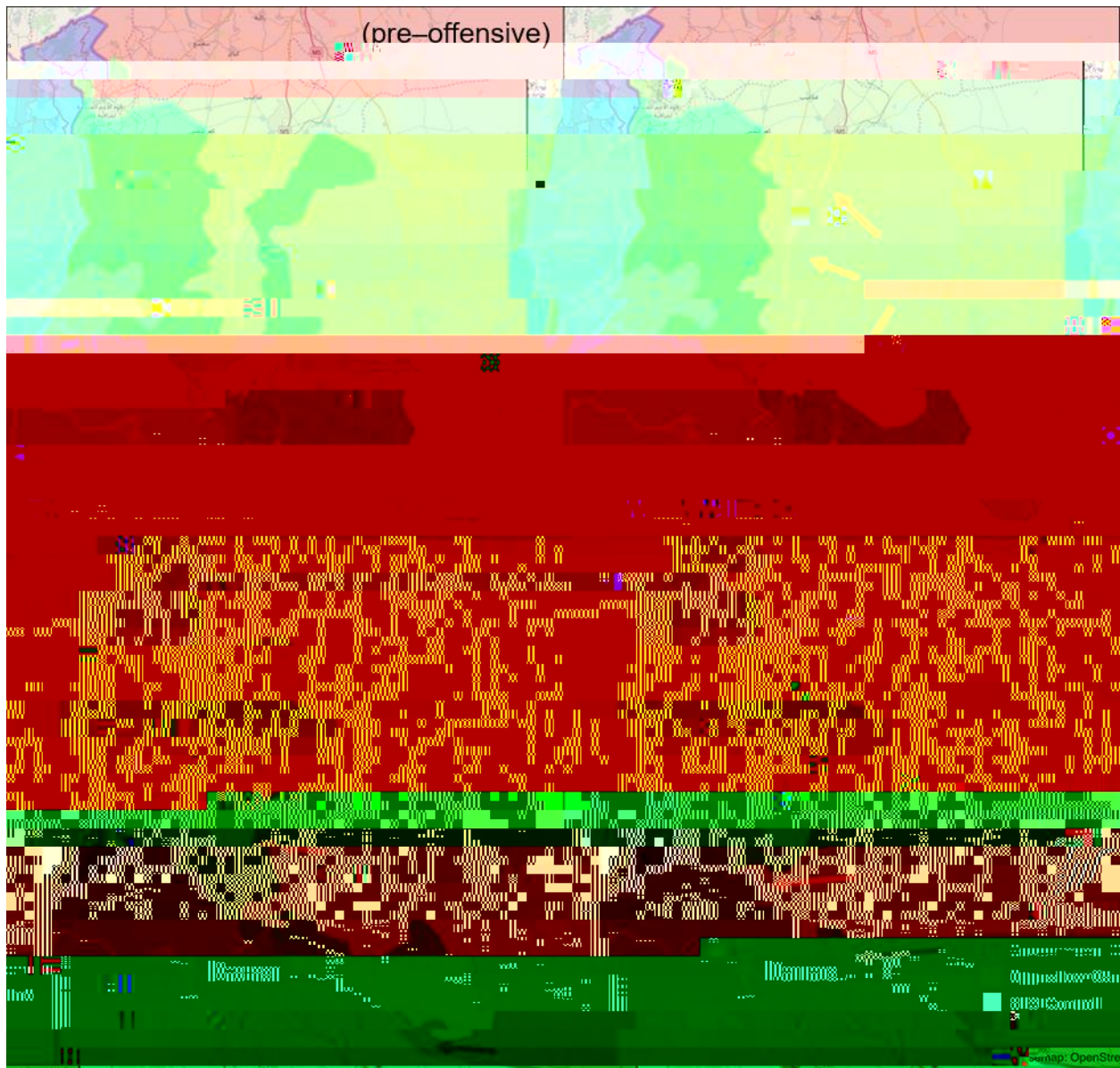


Figure 3: Areas of control changes in southern Syria from June 20 through July 10, 2018.

## Regional Developments

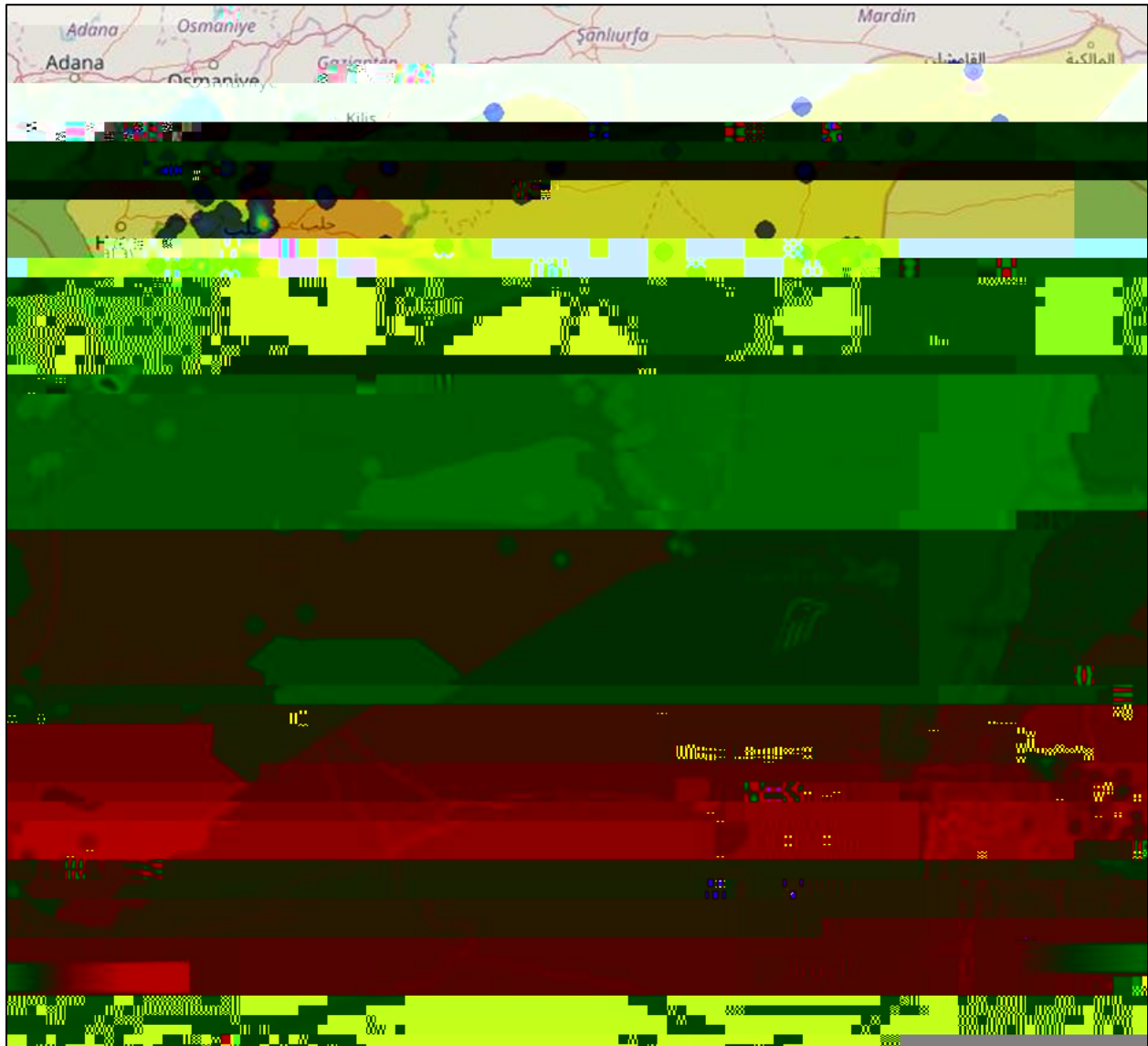


Figure 4: Heatmap of reported conflict events during June. Areas of control shown as of July 1, 2018. Event data via ACLED.

### South/Daraa

-June with a rapid increase in air and artillery strikes on most population centers in the area. For the first half of the month, as talk of an impending attack was growing louder, conflict events were largely concentrated in the northwestern portion of opposition control, as well as along opposition-ISIS frontlines and in Daraa city. When the offensive began, however, government forces focused their attention on the eastern branch of opposition-held territory, making substantial gains by the end of the month (see map below). The quick shift in focus from west to east could have been an attempt at misdirection, or a recognition of the high risk associated with conducting major military operations so close to the de-militarized zone in the Golan Heights.

*Figure 5: LEFT: Areas of control and distribution of reported conflict events from June 1-15. RIGHT: Areas of control as of July 1, 2018 overlaid with reported conflict events from June 16-30, 2018. Event data from ACLED.*

Fighting in southern Syria has resulted in the displacement of an estimated 270K people (according to UN OCHA). Most of those displaced have fled from the eastern branch of opposition control south to the

YPG leadership in a follow-up statement said its military advisers would vacate their posts, but would be prepared to intervene should the security of Menbij require it.

that it would oppose a Turkish military presence in Menbij. MMC representatives claimed they had not been fully informed of the mechanisms of the deal. Despite these statements, on June 18, Turkish military forces entered Menbij after local security forces decreased their patrols. By the end of June, Turkish forces were conducting patrols around