

Weekly Conflict Summary
November 30-December 6, 2017

During the reporting period, Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF, a Kurdish-led coalition supported by the US) and pro-
-Sham (HTS, formerly Al-

. Disagreements between

Fights against ISIS

Advances on the eastern holdings of ISIS are still divided by the Euphrates River, with each anti-ISIS force advancing on their respective bank of the river. The SDF advanced along the northern/eastern bank of the Euphrates, taking an airport and Abu Hamam. Pro-government forces advanced to connect their two fronts southeast of Abu Hamam, besieging a large chunk of remaining ISIS-held territory.



Figure 2 - Situation in eastern Syria by December 6

The US-led coalition, which backs the SDF in northern Syria, announced on December 1 that it would be withdrawing more than 400 US Marines who were fighting ISIS following the fall of the group's de facto capital, Raqqa. The Coalition has said that this is a sign of progress, and that it will continue adjusting its military presence in Syria. The US additionally promised to re-evaluate its aid to the predominantly Kurdish SDF following complaints from Turkey.

Against the wishes of both the Syrian and Turkish governments, the PYD, a northern Syrian party associated with the SDF, held local elections on December 1 in areas they control. Kurdish forces were not invited to attend the UN-led Geneva peace talks that started earlier this week and Kurdish leaders have said they are being careful to not provoke the international community.

Developments in Idleb

HTS and ISIS frontlines in eastern Hama have remained largely the same although ISIS has managed to advance slightly on the westernmost fronts. HTS forces intercepted an ISIS sleeper cell moving to join ISIS forces in eastern Hama from the Idlib countryside.

Clashes between HTS, opposition, and pro-government forces continued throughout the assessment period in northern and northeastern Hama with heavy fighting near the Rahjan frontline. HTS recaptured the town of Rahjan on December 3.

An HTS counter-offensive launched on November 29 reversed many of the gains made by pro-government forces late in the previous assessment period along the Khanasser-Rashidiya frontline in southern Aleppo. HTS forces made early gains in their counter-offensive and recaptured and held Ramla, Rashidiya, and several other towns on the Khanasser front as well as in more southern frontiers.

On November 30, positions held by the Islamic Party of Turkestan were targeted by unidentified aircraft in

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