

# Last Major ISIS Stronghold in Syria Liberated

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*At peak strength, ISIS controlled up to 70% of Syrian territory, according to Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu.*

*Its remnants are now confined to smaller areas, especially near Damascus and southwestern Daara.*

US-supported ISIS was mostly defeated by Syrian and allied forces, greatly aided by Russian airpower since September 2015, the war's turning point after its forces got involved.

On Wednesday, government and allied forces (including Iraqi troops) liberated Albukamal, the last ISIS stronghold in Syria, located in the Euphrates valley bordering Iraq, Syrian forces allowed to operate cross-border to accomplish the objective.

Days earlier, Russia's Defense Ministry said ISIS now controls less than 5% of Syrian territory. Nearly all of Deir Ezzor Governorate is liberated, ISIS pockets remaining in western province areas..

Thousands of its fighters remain in Syria, many along the Iraqi border, their supply lines cut or considerably comprised.

Most will likely continue fighting to the death. Eliminating them entirely remains to be accomplished, a goal likely to be slow-going.

With its numbers reduced and strength greatly weakened, its goal of establishing a caliphate in Syria and Iraq was defeated.

It remains a threat with thousands of remaining fighters. It'll take time to eliminate them altogether, a battle being slowly won despite Washington and its rogue allies supporting the scourge, along with other regional terrorist groups.

Liberating Syria from US-supported terrorists is being won in multiple ongoing battles, steady progress made.

On Tuesday, chief of Russia's General Staff Gen. Valery Gerasimov said over the past two years,

"(m)ore than 1,000 inhabited communities have been liberated, over 54,000 members of illegal armed units killed, including more than 2,800 natives of Russia and 1,400 from former Soviet republics."

They had about 1,500 tanks and armored vehicles, along with hundreds of other heavy weapons.

"There was no shortage of ammunition and material, which were constantly replenished from abroad," he stressed.

"Their commanders were trained in special camps under the watchful eye of Western instructors and military advisers from some countries of the Middle East, Western Europe and America. In some cases, special forces officers from these countries led illegal armed units."

Areas they controlled had "well thought out fire systems, concrete structures, a ramified system of artificial obstacles and underground communications."

"During the two years of our armed forces' participation in the fighting, it was possible not only to turn the tide of the hostilities in favor of government troops but also rout big militant groups in the most important areas, liberate the key cities and recapture major communication lines."

Russia's vital invention turned near-certain defeat into triumph, hopefully one day when all remaining US-supported terrorists are eliminated from the country, along with America's hostile presence.

Separately, US forces illegally occupying southern Syrian territory continue blocking humanitarian aid to internally displaced refugees in dire need, Russia's reconciliation center saying:

"During (a) video conference, the Russian party raised the issue of the US activities aimed to prevent delivery of humanitarian aid through the 55-km zone."

"The parties also discussed issues of delivering humanitarian aid to al-Rukban camp and providing security to humanitarian convoys of international humanitarian organizations."

A memorandum signed last May in Astana obligated signatories to allow safe, unimpeded humanitarian aid where needed.

Washington ignored it, continuing to block deliveries, Syrians suffering and dying from war, related violence, untreated diseases and extreme deprivation.

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