

# Syrian Army Kicks Off Large-Scale Security Operation against ISIS in Homs Desert

By [South Front](#)

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*Fierce clashes between the Syrian Army and ISIS terrorists erupted near the villages of al-Sukhnah and Wadi al-Waer in the province of Homs on April 9 evening.*

According to pro-government sources, the army and local militias backed up by the Russian Aerospace Forces kicked off a wide-scale security operation to crack down on the terrorists hiding in the desert area. Its goal is to put an end to the recently observed increase of actions of the terrorist group against pro-government forces on the western bank of the Euphrates.

Supporters of the so-called 'moderate Syrian opposition' immediately claimed that government forces suffered heavy casualties in this operation. They insist that over 20 soldiers were killed. Pro-government sources claim that up to 30 ISIS members were neutralized.

In the coming days, Syrian troops will likely continue developing their anti-ISIS operation along the Sukhna-Deir Ezzor road and in the southern countryside of Mayadeen. ISIS cells infiltrating the government-controlled area from the eastern bank of the Euphrates in eastern Syria and the border area in western Iraq have become a serious security threat recently.

Meanwhile, ISIS announced that it had conducted 29 attacks on government forces across Iraq during the past week. The terrorist group claims that 66 government fighters were killed or injured. These claims remain unconfirmed. After the collapse of ISIS' self-proclaimed Caliphate in the Middle East, ISIS-affiliated media outlets become used to spreading fake news and dramatically overestimating supposed 'successes' of the terrorist group.

The Turkish Army established a new observation post near the village of Jannet Elqora in Syria's southwestern Idlib. This village is located in a close proximity to the M4 highway, which links the port city of Lattakia with the country's industrial hub, Aleppo city. Last week, the Turkish military established three similar posts in the towns of Baksariya, al-Z'ainiyah and Furaykah in southwest Idlib.

According to open data, the Turkish military currently has up to 60 'observation posts' across the region of Greater Idlib. Ankara claims that all these positions were established and heavy military equipment were deployed to them in order to put an end to the terrorist threat in the region and observe the ceasefire. However, so far, the only real goal achieve

by Turkey has been the increase of security for al-Qaeda terrorists operating in the region.

The US State Department welcomed a new OPCW report accusing the Syrian military of using chemical weapons. According to the new accusations, Syria conducted 3 chemical attacks in the province of Hama in March 2017. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo also accused Iran and Russia of conducting a 'disinformation campaign' in order to 'hide' the usage of chemical weapons by Syrian forces.

The Syrian Foreign Ministry said the OPCW report "is misleading and contains falsified and fabricated conclusions", while Russia's permanent mission to the watchdog described the document as "not trustworthy."

Since the very start of the conflict, the chemical weapon issue has been deeply polarized and the OPCW's conclusions on the topic have repeatedly faced a strong criticism from independent experts. Furthermore, recent leaks from the OPCW investigation on the Douma incident demonstrated that the organization is intentionally hiding facts, doctoring investigation results and drawing preplanned conclusions in order to push forward the mainstream agenda designed to demonize the Assad government.

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