

Video: Did US-Led Coalition Air Power Strike ISIS Chemical Weapons Depot Near Deir Ezzor?

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The Syrian Arab Army (SAA) and the National Defense Forces (NDF) continued their attempts to retake the town of Souran from Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and its allies in northern Hama. The SAA and the NDF had regrouped and deployed artillery units and military equipment for this operation. An intense clashes are ongoing in the area.

Reports appear that some HTS allies failed to absorb the pressure from government forces and decided to withdraw from the area. If confirmed, this will likely lead to collapse of the militants' defenses in the area soon.

ISIS has carried out a number of light counter-attacks against the SAA and the NDF in the countryside of Palmyra. According to the ISIS-linked news agency Amaq, terrorists had killed some 14 pro-government fighters and a BMP infantry fighting vehicle.

Meanwhile, government forces continued their operation aimed to capture the strategic Palmyra-Al-Seen highway. The SAA targeted ISIS points in Al-Mahseh, Al-Suane villages and in Al-Qariaten dam area

According to opposition sources the Syrian Air Force have carried out multiple air strikes targeting US-backed FSA group "Assud Al-Sharqiah" forces in the Syrian Desert to stop their attack aimed to break the siege on Jaish Al-Islam in East Qalamun.

Pro-Turkish social media activists have been spreading rumors that the predominantly Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) are going to hand over Tal Rifa'at, Mennagh and their surroundings to the Turkish-backed coalition of militant groups, known as the Free Syrian Army in northern Aleppo. According to the statements, this would be a result of some secret deal. However, so far, it just looks as a part of the ongoing Turkish media campaign over the Syrian conflict launched following the alleged chemical attack in Idlib. Since then, the Turkish leadership have repeatedly called for use of force and other measures against the Syrian government. The recent reports are likely aimed at fueling tensions between the SDF and the SAA in the province of Aleppo.

The SDF has announced the start of the fourth phase of its operation to capture the ISIS-held city of Raqqah. It's main goal is to seize the northern countryside of the city. The SDF said that this effort will be supported by the US-coalition and called on civilians in the villages north of Raqqah to cooperate with them.

At the same time, ISIS terrorists are still in control of the important town of Tabqah and a

part of the Tabqah dam west of Raqqah. The US-backed force is still struggling to capture these points from ISIS. According to pro-ISIS sources, some 28 SDF fighters were killed in the recent military developments in the area.

On April 11, the US-led coalition's fighter jet hit a group of SDF fighters south to Tabqah killing 18 of them. The two sides allegedly launched a "joint investigation" to avoid similar incidents in the future.

On April 13, the Syrian Defense Ministry said in a statement that **the US-led coalition's airpower targeted headquarters and chemical weapons depot belonging to the ISIS terrorist group in the village of Hatla** near the city of Deir Ezzor on April 12. According to the statement, a toxic cloud appeared as a result of the airstrike, **inflicting major casualties ("hundreds deaths") among civilians in the area. The Syrian Defense Ministry said that the incident confirmed the ability of various terrorist groups to obtain, to transport, to keep and to use chemical weapons.** It also added that it does not possess any kind of chemical weapons and does not use them and warned that terrorists could use chemical weapons again in order to blame government forces.

Following the Syrian Defense Ministry statement, **Col John L. Dorrian**, spokesman for the US-led coalition, said that it is not true. The Russian Defense Ministry also said that it "does not have information, confirming the reports on deaths of people and nature of destructions, caused by the bombing, carried out by aircraft of the international coalition near Deir Ezzor."

Separately, reports appeared in social media that some ISIS warehouse was in fire in Hatla in the evening of April 12. However, no visual confirmation has been provided so far.

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