

Video: Golan Heights Escalation and New Drama in Idlib

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Early on May 1, several missiles launched from the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights hit positions of the Syrian Army near Tell Ahmar and Quneitra city. The strike reportedly led to no casualties among Syrian personnel, but destroyed several pieces of military equipment.

This was the second Israeli strike on Syria in less than a week. On April 27, Israeli airstrikes hit the countryside of Damascus, including the al-Mazzeah Airport. Pro-Israeli sources claim that underground facilities of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps were the target.

Meanwhile, a new drama is developing in the militant-held part of Greater Idlib. After briefly clashing with the Turkish Army near Nayrab, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham found themselves in the center of a new scandal.

https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_01_05_2020_ENG_AE.mp4

On April 30, the group's fighters were confronted by supporters of other radical groups in the town of Maaret Elnaasan in western Aleppo. According to pro-opposition sources, the main reason of tensions is the decision of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham to open a crossing for commercial purposes to the government-held area. This initiative faced resistance among militant groups directly controlled by Turkey. The Turkish Army even tried to block a road towards Maaret Elnaasan. However, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham militants were able to suppress the protest and the crossing was opened. The further protests that continued on May 1 forced Hayat Tahrir al-Sham to close the crossing.

Earlier in April, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham tried to open a similar commercial crossing near Saraqib, but this attempt was also blocked by Turkish-led forces.

Representatives of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham claim that the opening of such crossings is vital to contain the developing economic crisis in the militant-held area. According to them, a large part of goods produced within the militant-held area, first of all food, is being sold in the government-controlled territory.

Various fees on commercial activities and contraband traffic are among key sources of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham budget, which has been facing difficulties amid the shirking funding from its foreign sponsors. On the other hand, the ability to fill own budget from independent sources of income allows the terrorist group to remain to a large degree independent from direct Turkish support. Thus, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham is capable of remaining a relatively independent player and the most powerful militant group in the entire Greater Idlib.

At least 4 Syrian soldiers were killed and several others were injured in an ISIS attack on the army convoy near the T3 pumping station in the province of Homs. The terrorists used an improvised explosive device to strike the bus moving within the convoy and then shelled it with machine guns.

The attack likely came in response to the intensified security efforts of the army in the Homs-Deir Ezzor desert. Just recently, government troops eliminated several ISIS militants and captured 2 vehicles belonging to the terrorist group.

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