

Video: Idlib Is Burning. New Proxy War in Deir Ezzor

By [South Front](#)

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The series of unfortunate events involving the US-led coalition, Turkey and Turkish proxies continues in Syria's Greater Idlib.

Late on August 19 and early on August 20, the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) shelled positions of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham near Haranabush and al-Sheikh Bahr in southern Idlib with what pro-opposition sources called “long-range rockets”. Despite multiple claims in pro-opposition media about fierce SAA strikes, no casualties were reported. The SAA likely used BM-27 Uragan or BM-30 Smerch heavy rocket launchers. The BM-27 has a range of 37 km, while the more advanced BM-30 can hit targets up to 90 km away.

On the same day, unidentified gunmen destroyed communication towers used by the Turkistan Islamic Party near the town of Ras Elhisn, which is located right on Turkey's border. The Turkistan Islamic Party, which as well as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham has an al-Qaeda-like ideology, is an internationally-recognized terrorist group mostly consisting of Uyghur militants. The group has a strong presence in northern Lattakia, western and southern Idlib and is one of the main allies of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. The terrorist group's main stronghold is Jisr al-Shughur.

https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_20_08_20.mp4

Over the previous few days, the Russian Aerospace Forces conducted a series of airstrikes on positions of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham across Greater Idlib punishing the group for the recent IED attack on the joint Turkish-Russian patrol on the M4 highway. Meanwhile, two US combat drones crashed in the region as a result of a mysterious incident that pro-US sources described as a midair collision.

If the situation in Idlib further deteriorates with such speed, the Turkish attempts to stabilize it by deploying additional troops and equipment there will appear to be not enough to keep Turkish al-Qaeda friends under control in the area.

A Syrian pro-government group known as the Popular Resistance in the Eastern Region (PR-ER) has claimed responsibility for the recent rocket attack on U.S. troops in Deir Ezzor. Three unguided rockets landed in the vicinity of the CONICO gas plant, where U.S. forces are deployed, late in the hours of August 18. The U.S. military confirmed the incident without reporting any losses.

The PR-ER said in a statement that the rocket strike was in response to an earlier attack by U.S. forces at a Syrian Arab Army checkpoint near the village of Tal al-Dhahab in the northern al-Hasakah countryside. The U.S. attack left a Syrian service member, Malik Muhammad al-Muhaimid, dead and injured at least two others.

The PR-ER first surfaced over 2 years ago declaring the aim of fighting the US occupation of northeastern Syria. Since then, it has claimed responsibility for several attacks on US forces. However, the group's activity remained relatively low recently. The intensification of its actions may be linked with the growing tensions between the Syrians and US forces in the region.

Meanwhile, Turkish proxies also entered the game on the banks of the Euphrates. On August 18, the pro-Turkish armed group "Gathering of Rebels in the Land of Deir Ezzor" released a statement threatening Syrian, Russian, Iranian and Kurdish forces in the province with attacks.

It also claimed responsibility for the IED blast that killed a Russian major-general near Deir Ezzor city. The group self-identifies as a unit of the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA). This was, however, denied by the SNA. Pro-Turkish sources claim that this armed group was created by the Kurds to discredit the Syrian patriots on Turkish paychecks. It's as if there is something that can be done to discredit pro-Turkish groups more than what they have done by themselves.

Deir Ezzor province seems to be becoming a center for the new proxy battle for the Syrian energy resources.

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