

Video: Idlib Militants Use Battle Tanks to Kill Each Other Under Turkish Nose

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ISIS announced a new series of attacks against the Syrian Army in the Homs-Deir Ezzor desert. According to the terrorist group's news agency Amaq, ISIS cells ambushed an army unit near the town of al-Sukhna killing 2 soldiers, injuring a third one and capturing a vehicle. This attack became the second successful ISIS raid in the desert area in less than a week. The previous one took place south of al-Mayadin and resulted in the killing of 8 Syrian troops.

On June 25 and June 26, the Syrian Air Force and the Russian Aerospace Forces conducted intense airstrikes on the detected ISIS hideouts south of the Palmyra-Deir Ezzor highway. According to pro-government sources, at least one weapon depot and 2 vehicles were eliminated. The precise number of ISIS casualties remains unclear.

The pro-Turkish coalition of militant groups, the National Front for Liberation, repelled an imaginary attack of Russian special forces in southern Idlib. According to militants, they killed 2 Russian personnel and 2 Syrian soldiers in intense fighting in the village of Benin on June 25. The only problem with this version is that neither the Syrian Army nor Russian forces conducted offensive operations in the area, according to local sources.

[https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_26_06_20\(eng\)re.mp4](https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_26_06_20(eng)re.mp4)

Clashes between Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and militants from the Fa Ithbatu coalition continue in the countryside of Idlib. The sides briefly reached a tactical ceasefire on June 25 and even removed checkpoints between Idlib city mostly controlled by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and the town of Jisr al-Shughur, which is the Fa Ithbatu rear base.

Nonetheless, as of June 26 the fighting once again resumed after Hayat Tahrir al-Sham attacked positions of Horas al-Din and Ansar al-Din near the villages of Yacubiyeh and al-Janoudiyah. Intense fighting was also ongoing near Arab Said. Local sources claim that both sides are now using battle tanks.

According to supporters of Fa Ithbatu, the al-Qaeda-linked coalition captured 2 battle tanks belonging to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and damaged another one. Hayat Tahrir al-Sham says it's ready to accept a ceasefire only if Horas al-Din, Ansar al-Din and other members of Fa Ithbatu remove checkpoints that they have established near Idlib city over the past few days.

Control over the movement of goods and people in the Idlib countryside is one of the pillars of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham influence and allows it to collect various fees and fines there.

So, the group sees any presence of other forces on key roads in Greater idlib as a threat to its interests. Currently, the main opposition to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham is located in Jisr al-Shughur.

The main point of contradiction between Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and other al-Qaeda-linked groups is that Fa Ithbatu wants its own share of the revenue, which can be collected by exploiting the militant-held part of Greater Idlib. This sets the conditions for further confrontation until a new balance of power within the militant-held area is found.

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