

## Video: Internal Tensions Do Not Stop Militants from Provocations in Southern Idlib

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*Late on June 30, fighting resumed near the villages of Kansafrah, Al-Ruwayha and Bayanin in southern Idlib between the Syrian Army and Turkish-backed militants. Intense artillery shelling also targeted positions of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham across the Jabal Al-Zawiyah area. Pro-militant sources claimed that the Syrian Army and the National Defense Forces tried to advance there, but were forced to retreat after several hours of clashes. In their own turn, pro-government sources say that the fighting in southern Idlib came as a result of a provocation by militants. Nonetheless, by the morning of July 1 the situation on the frontline had stabilized.*

During the past week, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and its counterparts from Fa Ithbatu, also an al-Qaeda-linked coalition of militant groups, were too busy with infighting and accusing each other of undermining the values of the so-called Syrian revolution. So, they were not able to concentrate any significant strike force able to deliver real damage to the Syrian Army in southern Idlib.

The security situation remains complicated in the province of Daraa. Tensions there are a result of the conflict between the army and some of the former militants, who had reconciled with the Damascus government and formally joined the 5th Assault Corps. As a result, at least 5 soldiers were recently killed in the countryside of the provincial capital and the army withdrew from the village of Kahil Jizah. Local fighters seized all the checkpoints surrounding the village and removed pro-government banners from the area.

[https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR\\_01\\_07\\_2020\\_ENG.mp4](https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_01_07_2020_ENG.mp4)

The situation in Daraa province showcases the existing difficulties in the ongoing reconciliation process in southern Syria. Some former members of militant groups still remain committed to their radical ideology and hard-core anti-government views. At the same time, they continue to demand protection and resources for their areas in the framework of the reconciliation. Actions like those in Kahil Jizah undermine the peace process and set conditions for a new round of violence.

In northeastern Syria, forces of Turkish-backed militant groups shelled positions of the Syrian Democratic Forces near Kashal Ubayd, northwest of Ayn Issa. However, no casualties were reported there. In a separate development, SDF security forces closed the perimeter of the prison for ISIS members in al-Hasakah city. Local sources speculate that several ISIS members may have fled there. These reports remain unconfirmed.

Russia has opted to quit the United Nations system of humanitarian deconfliction in Syria because some of the system's facilities were used by terrorists, Permanent Representative

to the United Nations Vasily Nebenzya said on June 29 at a meeting of the UN Security Council.

“Our own investigations have repeatedly shown that some of the objects [listed using the mechanism] were used as headquarters of terrorists, therefore they should not have been given humanitarian status,” he noted adding that “Russia will continue to fulfill its obligations under international humanitarian law.”

We suggest that from now on the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs settle the issue of deconfliction directly with the Syrian authorities. It would be right,” Nebenzya added.

It should be noted that during the active phase of the conflict, mainstream media and Western diplomats repeatedly accused the Russian Aerospace Forces of intentionally bombing civilian and humanitarian targets. Russian and Syrian sources say that these supposed humanitarian facilities were in fact a part of the military infrastructure of the terrorist groups.

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