

## Video: Militants Push Syrian Army Back in Southern Idlib

By [South Front](#)

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*On December 11, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham's Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Army and the special forces unit, known as the "Red Bands", attacked and captured the area of al-Katibat al-Mahjura in southeastern Idlib. Units of the Syrian Army deployed there were caught off-guard and withdrew after a few hours of clashes.*

Al-Katibat al-Mahjura [the abandoned base in Arabic] is a former base of the Syrian Air Defense Forces. It overlooks the village of Umm al-Tinah controlled by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. When the army captured the base last week, pro-government sources speculated that it may use it to advance further into southern Idlib. However, another week of inactivity allowed militants to regroup and take this facility back.

It's interesting to note that militants' advance took place amid another round of the Astana format talks, which are designed to find a political solution of the conflict. Nonetheless, as long as al-Qaeda-style groups operate in Idlib, this will not be possible.

[https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR\\_12\\_12\\_2019.mp4](https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_12_12_2019.mp4)

A unit of the Syrian Army in northwestern Hama shot down on December 11 an armed unmanned aerial vehicle launched from the militant-held area. The UAV was armed with several small-diameter munitions and appeared to be of the same type that had been repeatedly used to attack the Russian Hmeimim airbase on the Syrian coast. The renewed UAV attacks are another sign of the growing escalation in the region.

Meanwhile, the situation in northeastern Syria appears to be stabilizing. The Syrian Army and the Russian Military Police reopened the M4 highway in northeastern Syria after the withdrawal of Turkish-backed militants from the Shirlak silos near Ayn Issa. According to state media, the army completed its deployment south of the highway, between the town of Tell Tamr in northern al-Hasakah and the town of al-Truazyah in northern Raqqa.

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