

Video: Syrian Army's Large Scale Ground Operation in Greater Idlib

By [South Front](#)

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The Syrian Army has finalized military preparations and is awaiting orders to launch a large-scale ground operation in Greater Idlib, according to reports by Syrian media. The operation will allegedly be aimed at liberating the militant-held part of the M5 highway.

Together with the separation of terrorists from the so-called “moderate opposition”, the reopening of the highway is one of the key terms of the Idlib de-escalation agreement. Nonetheless, diplomatic efforts and peaceful measures did not achieve enough progress and Greater Idlib remained the hotbed of the terrorism in the country.

If the Syrian Army wants to reopen the M5 highway, it will need to liberate Maarat al-Numan and Saraqib, two of the biggest urban centers, in southern Idlib and several dozens of villages along the highway. Another obstacle is Turkish observation posts that were established in Greater Idlib in the framework of the de-escalation agreement. It was supposed that these observation posts would be used to observe the established ceasefire. However, Ankara also used them as a measure to limit the Syrian Army offensive into southern Idlib.

https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_19_12_2019.mp4

Reports on the new upcoming Syrian Army advance in southern Idlib came, when artillery units and warplanes of the Syrian military were carrying out intense airstrikes on militants' positions along the M5 highway.

If this advance does not start by some reason, the area of Idlib will continue remaining one of the main sources of the terrorist threat in Syria.

In the interview with Asharq al-Awsat released on December 17, the Commander-in-Chief of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) Mazloum Abdi said that the SDF should be a part of the Syrian national defense system. The SDF leader claimed that the SDF includes 80,000 fighters as well as 30,000 security personnel. He claimed that the SDF should remain in northeastern Syria and keep its command. Nonetheless, Abdi noted that the SDF could carry out its duty as a part of Syria's armed forces.

When the SDF leader was asked about a possible political agreement with Damascus, Abdi said that such an agreement would require “more time and longer talks.”

In October, the SDF and the Damascus government reached a breakthrough agreement that allowed the deployment of the Syrian Army in the SDF-held area. However, the Kurdish

group accepted the deal as a tactical measure only in order to rescue itself from the Turkish-led attack on the region. So, it still sees itself as a kind of powerbroker in the region despite the fact that it lost most of its influence after the US-led coalition had de-facto abandoned the group.

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