

## Video: Syrian Army Suffers Casualties in Daraa. Militants Attack Russian-Turkish Patrol

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*The security situation has been escalating in southern Syria. Over the past 24 hours, at least 3 pro-government fighters and a civilian have been killed in attacks by gunmen in al-Musayfrah and Saida-al-Taebah. The attacks followed the March 14 and March 13 protests that erupted in the town of Tafas and in the southern part of Daraa's city center, Daraa al-Balad.*

A portion of the locals previously affiliated with militant groups defeated in southern Syria was protesting against the recent deployment of the Syrian Army reinforcements to the province. The attempts of the Syrian Army and security forces to restore law and order find no understanding among supporters of radicals.

At the same time, the very same group of persons does not see anything wrong in the recent series of assassinations and attacks on Syrian troops and security personnel. At least 14 people have been reportedly killed in these attacks since the start of May. In these conditions, Syrian forces have no other option, but to launch a series of combing operations to track and neutralize terrorists that still hide in the province.

Fresh videos from the province demonstrate the increased presence of Syrian troops in the villages of Ibttā, Khirbet Ghazaleh and the city of Daraa. The deployed reinforcements included T-72 battle tanks and other heavy military equipment.

On May 14, a strike by an unidentified unmanned combat aerial vehicle destroyed a vehicle and injured 4 fighters of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham near the town of Sarmin in southern Idlib. The strike took place just a few hours after a joint Russian-Turkish patrol on the M4 highway, between the towns of Saraqib and Arihah.

This was the 11th joint patrol conducted by the sides in the framework of the March de-escalation agreement and the third extended patrol since the removal of a camp of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham supporters from the north of Nayrab. The patrol was faced by a new round of protests by Idlib radicals but they did not try to block or attack it.

Contrary to this, the previous such patrol, held on May 12, was marked by a military incident involving Hayat Tahrir al-Sham supporters. An improvised explosive device detonated just near a patrol when it reached the roundabout at the eastern entrance to Arihah.

The attack did not cause casualties and both the Turkish and Russian sides successfully

ignored it in their reports on the joint patrolling. However, the May 14 events demonstrated that the attack did not go unanswered.

A series of mysterious drone strikes in Greater Idlib started in early April and since then led to the killing of over a dozen fighters and field commanders. Maher Kojak, the most prominent TOW missile operator, that reportedly participated in about 150 TOW strikes, was among the eliminated militants.

Opposition sources often claim that the strikes were carried by Iran or Russia. However, the targeting pattern and the timing of strikes indicate that Ankara may have been slowly eliminating the segment of its proxies that do not like its rapprochement with Moscow and try to sabotage the Russian-Turkish de-escalation agreement.

The US-led coalition and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) continue their series of anti-ISIS raids on the eastern bank of the Euphrates. According to the SDF, two ISIS members blew themselves up during the recent raid in eastern Deir Ezzor. Despite all these efforts, ISIS cells remain very active in the area, especially near the US-controlled Omar oil fields.

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