

Video: Syria's De-Escalation "Security Zones". To be Followed by Large Scale Operation against ISIS-Daesh

By [South Front](#)

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Iran, Turkey and Russia have signed a memorandum on the creation of four security zones in Syria during another round of the peace talks in Astana on May 4. According to the document, security zones were proposed in the province of Idlib, in the area north of the city of Homs, in Eastern Ghouta near Damascus and in southern Syria.

"Guarantors within five days after signing the memorandum will create a working group at the level of authorized representatives to determine the boundaries of disarmament, areas of tension and security areas, as well as to address technical issues related to the implementation of the memorandum," the text of the document reads.

All technical issues, including borders of the zones, should be solved until May 22. The next round of the Astana peace talks will take place in mid-July when the trilateral group will report about the process of the reconciliation.

If the initiative achieves at least partly success, this will likely mean that in May or June the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) and its allied forces, backed up by Russia and Iran, will launch a large operation against ISIS in central Syria, aiming to reach the key city of Deir Ezzor besieged by ISIS. However, these will be possible only if the situation near Damascus, Daraa and Homs will be calm.

The SAA, led by the 105th Brigade of the Republican Guard, stormed the remaining militant defense lines in the southeastern part of the Qaboun district in eastern Damascus and captured a number of buildings from Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and the Al-Rahman Corps.

Reports appeared that dozens of members of HTS and the Al-Rahman Corps fled the Al-Qaboun district and arrived the Eastern Ghouta through underground tunnels. They will help their counterparts in the ongoing fight against Jaish al-Islam in Eastern Ghouta. If confirmed, this move will weaken further militant defenses in Qaboun and will lead to more gains by pro-government forces.

There are also reports that Qaboun militants and government representatives are now negotiating on a possible withdrawal agreement from the area. This is another move that could lead to a full liberation of the area.

In Eastern Ghouta, the Al-Rahman Corps and HTS launched an attack against Jaish al-Islam in the town of Arbeen. The Al-Rahman Corps and the HTS seized a major part of the town after a fierce battle with Jaish al-Islam members. The fighting is ongoing.

On May 4, a number of media activists and media outlets reported that ISIS withdrew from the town of Tabqah and the nearby Tabqah dam in the province of Raqqah and the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) got full control over these sites. These reports appeared to be untrue. The SDF press center officially denied them in a statement at its website and said that clashes continued in northern Tabqah and near the dam. On May 5, clashes continued in the same area.

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