

Video: Syrian Tiger Forces Advance to Encircle Khan Shaykhun

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Government forces are rapidly advancing in southern Idlib inflicting large casualties to radical militant groups.

During the weekend, the Syrian Arab Army (SAA), the Tiger Forces and their allies have liberated the villages of Khirbat Abidin, Hursh al-Tawilah, Mughr Hunta, the farms of Nijm, Nisr and al-Safar, and the Nar Hill. According to pro-government sources, at least 7 units of military equipment and 2 dozens of militants were eliminated in recent clashes.

In own turn, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and its allies carried out several counter-attacks involving suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices in Madayah and northwest of Khan Shaykhun. Despite some tactical successes, they were not able to turn the tide of the battle and stop the SAA advance.

Government forces are currently aiming to cut off the M5 highway and encircle the town of Khan Shaykhun and other militant positions to the south of it.



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On August 17, members of the Turkish-backed National Syrian Army (NSA) shelled positions of the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) at the town of Tell Rifaat and the nearby villages of Zyuan, Nyrabia and Tell Madiq in northern Aleppo. According to pro-YPG sources, the shelling also targeted a positions of the Russian Military Police near Tell Rifaat. No casualties among Russian personnel were reported.

The NSA shelling started in response to an attack by YPG-linked Kurdish rebels in the Afrin Region. The rebels' attack resulted in the deaths of 5 Turkish-backed militants. Tell Rifaat and its surroundings are under the joint control of the YPG and the SAA. YPG-linked cells use this area as a safe heaven to carry out attacks on Turkey-led forces in northern Aleppo thus provoking Turkish responses and increasing tensions between Damascus and Ankara.

Russian forces are establishing several positions in the southern Deir Ezzor countryside, pro-opposition media reported on August 16 citing local sources. The reports claimed that Russian units are working to establish new positions in the town of al-Jalaa.

Located less than 30km away from the border with Iraq, al-Jalaa is one of the largest towns in the western part of the Middle Euphrates River Valley. A highway leading to al-Qa'im border crossing passes through the town.

The deployment of Russian forces in al-Jalaa could be related to the near opening of the Syrian-Iraqi border as well as the ongoing security operations against the remaining ISIS cells in the region.

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