

## Video: Syria's Greater Idlib and Al Qaeda Affiliates

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*Greater Idlib is as volatile as ever, with the Syrian Arab Army, along with Russian support punishing every ceasefire violation of the al-Qaeda affiliates in the region.*

It is yet unknown if the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) will begin a larger military operation anytime soon, as one has been expected for a while.

On June 27th, the SAA shelled militants' positions in the northwestern region of Greater Idlib in response to recent ceasefire violations.

Reportedly targets were a number of towns and villages on the al-Zawiya Mountain in the southern Idlib countryside as well as in the al-Ghab Plains in the northern countryside of Hama.



The shelling led to human losses.

A militant, identified as Yusuf Firas Qassim, was killed in the town of Fatterah in the al-Zawiya Mountain area.

Later in the evening a response came - several rockets were fired from Greater Idlib at al-Qardahah, the hometown of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, in the southeastern countryside of Lattakia.

Only two rockets actually reached the town.

Both rockets landed in empty farmlands.

No casualties or material losses were reported.

The attack was likely carried out by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the al-Qaeda affiliated ruler of Idlib.

Earlier on the same day, Turkish forces carried out a combing operation along the militant-

held part of the M4 highway, which links Aleppo city, Syria's industrial hub, with the port city of Lattakia.

This is significant as Turkey is reportedly planning on improving the security of HTS and other factions that it backs in Greater Idlib by pushing towards Manbij and attempting to capture the town.

It is located northeast of Idlib and beyond Aleppo, which is under Syrian government control.

In the days leading up to these developments, on June 25, the SAA shelled three posts of the Turkish military in the northwestern region of Greater Idlib.

In the morning, the army shelled two Turkish posts in the northern outskirts of the government-held town of Saraqib in southern Idlib.

A gathering of Turkish military vehicles was hit.

A few hours later, the SAA artillery pounded a third Turkish post near the town of Qmenas, also in southern Idlib.

Neither attack resulted in any casualties.

In the last few days, Turkish-backed militants, led by the al-Qaeda-affiliated HTS, have stepped up their attacks.

Several government-held towns and villages around Greater Idlib were shelled by the militants.

The SAA has recently resumed its artillery strikes on Turkish forces in Greater Idlib in an attempt to pressure Ankara into implementing the ceasefire agreement.

It is highly unlikely, however, that Turkey will begin implementing it.

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