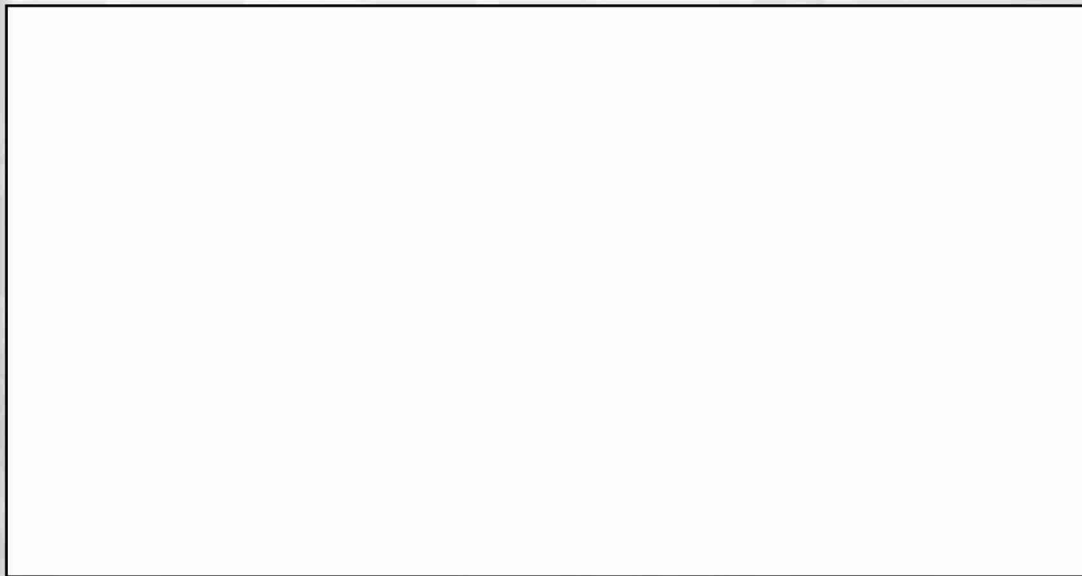


Syria



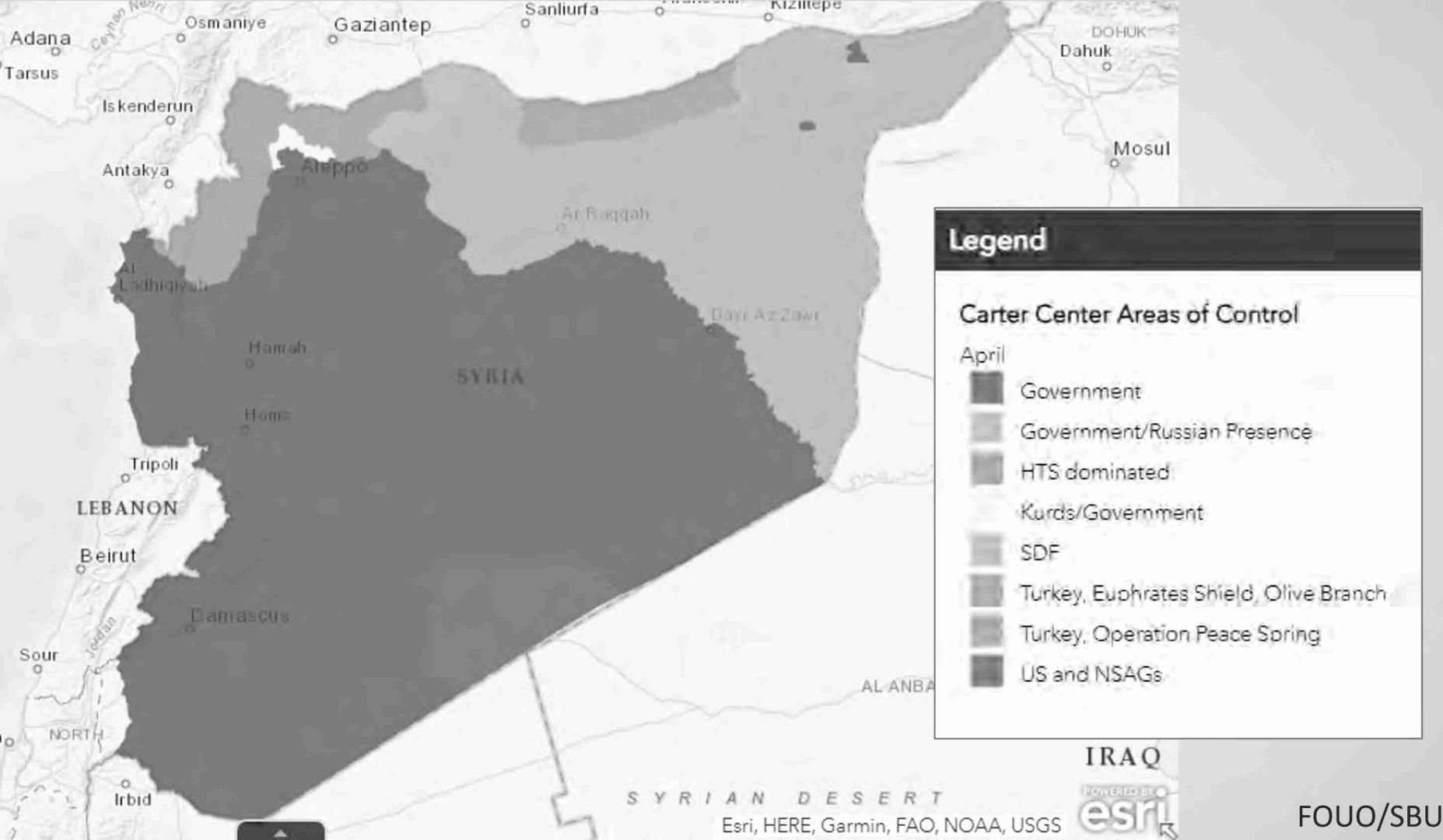
Let's Practice!



(b)(7)(E)

10 Years of the Syrian Conflict

- The conflict in Syria has caused **one of the largest humanitarian crises** since World War II, with extensive deaths, displacement, and destruction along with multidimensional health effects.
- The Syrian Network for Human Rights' (SNHR) statistics for 2020: 1882 **arbitrary arrests** and 1734 violent **civilian deaths** including 326 children and 157 torture deaths.



Government	Opposition
Syrian military/intel/police	Kurdish groups (primarily YPG/PYD)*
International support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russia • Iran (Quds Forces, IRGC) • Hezbollah** 	Salafist opposition groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISIS/DAESH** • Jabhat al Nusra (AQ)** • Ahrar al Sham
Foreign fighters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro-Iranian fighters from LE, IZ, Afghanistan • Iraqi militias (AAH, Badr) 	General Opposition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local militias • “FSA” • Some religious minority communities (Christian “Suturo”, Yazidi fighters, etc)
Pro-regime militias: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shabiha / “Popular Committees” • Regional Shi’a Islamist fighters supported by Iran • National Defense Forces (NDF) • Baath Battalions • Jerusalem Brigade • The Syrian Resistance • Syrian Social Nationalist Party • Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command** 	International Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saudi Arabia • Qatar • Turkey • Jordan • Other Sunni states in the Middle East • U.S. • Britain • France
Some religious minority communities	Foreign fighters (many rebel groups have gained support from individuals from outside of Syria, largest among them Tunisia, Jordan, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Saudi Arabia, Kosovo, Turkmenistan, Albania)
Some Sunni Arab tribes	Large portions of Sunni population

										
Homeland Shield Brigade Syrian	5th Storming Corps Syrian	Mountain Brigade Syrian	Sea Commandos Regiment Syrian	Badia Commandos Regiment Syrian	Qalamoun Shield Forces Syrian	Mountain Brigade Syrian	A'arin Saraya Syrian	Military Security Shield Forces Syrian	National Shield Syrian	Eastern Lions Syrian
										
Public Support & Security Forces Syrian	Arab National Guards Syrian	Homeland Fortress Forces Syrian	Anger Forces Syrian	Syrian Resistance Syrian	Saladin al Ayoubi Brigade Syrian	National Defence Forces Syrian	Coastal Shield Brigade Syrian	Desert Hawks Syrian	Syria Protection Office Syrian	Jablowi Battalion Syrian
										
Imam Mehdi Army Syrian	Salah al-Asi Forces Syrian	Hussein Lions Brigade Syrian	Homeland Shield Forces Syrian	Scorpion Brigade Syrian	Syrian Jazeera Shield Syrian	Tribal Fighters Forces Syrian	Al-Mahdi Thunder Legion Syrian	Imam Zayn Al Abideen Brigade Syrian	Scouts of Imam Mehdi Syrian	Sword of the Mehdi Brigade Syrian
										
Al Quds Brigade Syrian Palestinian	Al Baath Battalions Palestinian	Intifada Conquest Palestinian	Palestinian Liberation Army Palestinian	Liberation and Return Saraya Palestinian	Palestinian Popular Struggle Front Palestinian	Vanguard for the Popular Liberation War Palestinian	Al Jaleel Palestinian Forces Palestinian	Hezbollah Lebanese	Saraya al Ghalboun Lebanese	Harakat al Saabrine Lebanese
										
Tawhid Saraya Lebanese	Motherland Shield Lebanese	Tornado Eagles Syrian-Lebanese	Imam al Baqer Brigade Syrian-Lebanese	Rasali Youth Brigade Iraqi	Al Nujba Movement Iraqi	Brigade of Victorious Great Lions Iraqi	Al Zahra Saraya Iraqi	Awaiting the Mehdi Appearance Battalions Iraqi	Faithful Promise Corps Iraqi	Hezbollah al Iraqi Iraqi
										
Asaib Ahal al Haq Iraqi	Al-Abdal Iraqi Movement Iraqi	Saraya al Salam Iraqi	Saraya al Jihad Iraqi	Promised Day Brigade Iraqi	Hasan al Mujtaba Brigade Iraqi	Popular Defence Saraya Iraqi	Khorasan Saraya Iraqi	Truthful Brigade Iraqi	Dhu al Fuqar Brigade Iraqi	Bader Corps Iraqi
										
313 Force Iraqi	Imam Hussein Brigade Iraqi	Abu al Fadl al Abbas Brigade Iraqi	Imam Mehdi Army Iraqi	Master of Martyrs Battalion Iraqi	Hezbollah Battalions Iraqi	Amar bin Yasser Brigade Iraqi	Al Hamad Brigade Iraqi	Loyal Supporters of Allah Movement Iraqi	Imam Ali Brigade Iraqi	Al Quds Force Iranian
										
Mukhtar Al Thaqfi Brigade Iranian	Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps Iranian	Iranian 65th Brigade "Green Helmets Unit" Iranian	Basij Forces Iranian	Nakhsa Forces Iranian	313 Brigade Iranian	Hezbollah Afghanistan Afghani	Fatamiyoun Brigade Afghani	Zeinabioun Brigade Pakistani	Saraya al Mukhtar Bahraini	Ansar Allah Yemeni

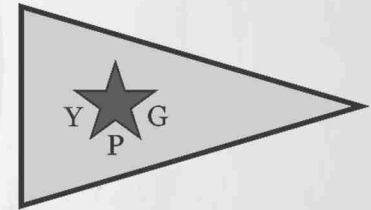
January 2018

Government
-Affiliated
Armed
Groups

Militia Groups Fighting for the Assad Regime in Syria

Armed Opposition

- **“Free Syria Army” (FSA):** essentially a brand, refers to affiliated localized brigades.
- **YPG** – the “People’s Protection Units” (Yekiti Partî Gel), Kurdish armed wing of the PYD (Kurdish Democratic Union Party)
- **Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)** – a formerly U.S. supported alliance of Syrian Arab and Kurdish groups, including the YPG
 - Trying not to be sectarian.



Armed Alliances

- **National Liberation Front (NLF):** Formed in May 2018 of FSA factions supported by Turkey. Also Salafist groups including Ahrar al-Sham.
- **Syrian National Army (SNA):** Umbrella of anti-regime Turkish supported groups under the formal supervision of the so-called Syrian Interim Government's Ministry of Defense. (Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army)
- **Southern Front:** a conglomeration of over 50 armed groups operating in Southern Syria, many are localized FSA type brigades and militias (coordination)

Salafist Opposition

- **Hayat Tahrir Ash-Sham (HTS)** (formerly Jabhat Fateh Al-Sham, formerly known as Jabhat Al Nusra, aka Al-Nusra Front) – Al-Qaeda Affiliate.
- **Islamic State in Iraq and Levant/Sham (ISIL or ISIS and now IS)**: also known as Dawla (State) or Da'esh (Arabic Acronym)
- **Ahrar al-Sham Movement**: Hardline “Islamists” all across Syria, stronghold in Idlib. Composed mostly of Syrians, rather than foreign fighters. Split in Nov. 2020 – one wing FSA-linked, the other HTS-linked.
- **Jaysh al Islam**: Salafi group based in Eastern Ghouta

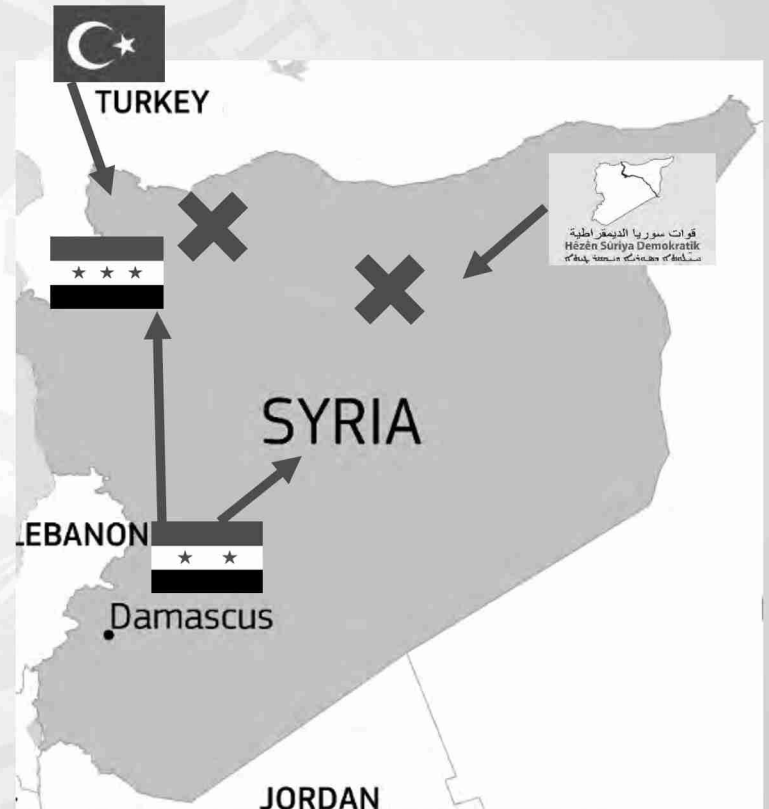


Checkpoints



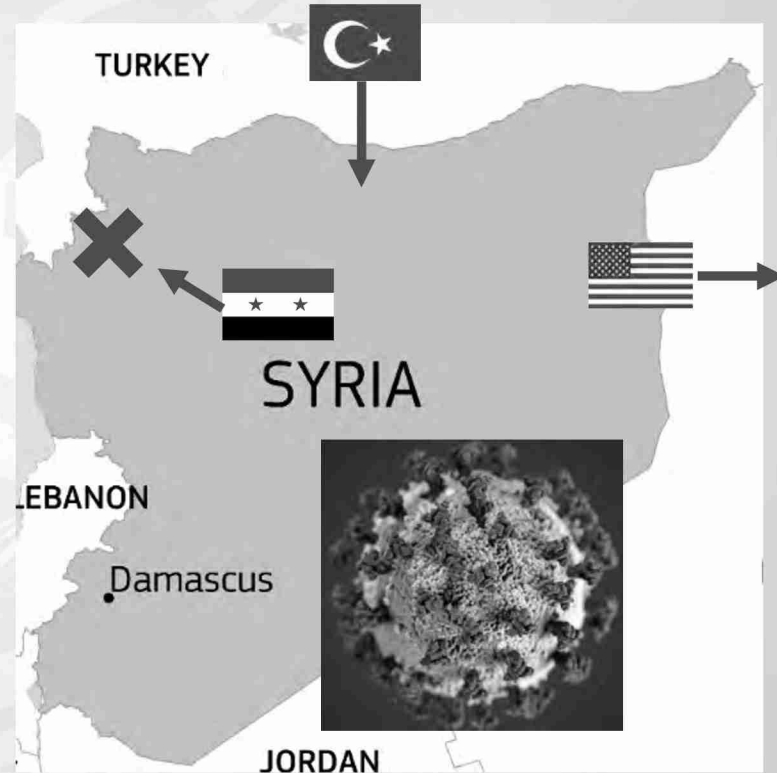
Overview in Syria

- 2016: Gov't retakes Aleppo
- 2017:
 - SDF takes Raqqa from IS
 - Gov't & SDF scramble for territory
- 2018:
 - Gov't retakes most of urban Mediterranean corridor;
 - Opposition concentrated in Idlib;
 - Turkish-backed forces take Afrin



Overview in Syria

- **2019:**
 - U.S. withdraws
 - Baghdadi killed
- **2020:**
 - Turkey seizes more territory
 - Gov't re-takes more of Idlib
 - State remains broken
 - COVID



Recent Developments in Syria

- **2018:** ISIL mostly defeated; SDF & government forces race to take back territory;
- **March 2018:** Turkey seizes Kurdish enclave of 'Afrin and parts of Aleppo Governorate;
- **April-August 2018:** Syrian government takes back Eastern Ghouta, Dar'a, and Quneitra
- **July 2018:** ISIL kills hundreds in Druze-majority Swaida Governorate
- **2018-2019:** HTS consolidates control in Idlib, while government forces advance. Turkey, Russia, and Iran agree to de-escalation zones and observation points. Israel continues attacks on Hizballah and Iranian targets.



Recent Developments in Syria

- **Oct 2019:** U.S. withdraws armed support for Syrian Kurdish forces; Kurdish led SDF turns to regime; Turkey invades border areas between the Euphrates and Khabur in “Operation Peace Spring”
- **Oct 2019:** ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi killed in Idlib in a U.S. raid; successor Amir Muhammad Sa’id Abdal-Rahman al-Mawla
- **March 2020:** Turkish & Turkish-backed militias clash with government forces in Idlib in ongoing fight for control of the governorate. Ceasefire agreement reached.
- **June 2020:** Collapsing economy prompts protests in Swaida in southern Syria.



Recent Developments in Syria

- **July 2020:** Syria holds parliamentary elections. Ba'th Party wins 70% of seats, as it had before the constitutional guarantee of 70% of seats for the party was lifted.
- **October 2020:** Economic crash leads Syria to reduce bread subsidies, spiking malnutrition.
- **December 2020:** Clashes in 'Ain 'Issa between YPG & Turkish-backed militias, as Russia sends more police to the area.
- **January—May 2021:** Attacks in Idlib, Aleppo, and other areas continue. Israeli and Russian air strikes continue.
- **May 2021:** Syria to hold presidential elections.



IS Threat Continues

- After losing its last stronghold in Baghouz, the Islamic State [in Iraq and Syria] changed its strategy and reorganized its ranks, relying on **ambushes and guerilla warfare** to eliminate its opponents and reassert control in vulnerable areas.
- December 2020—Islamic State continues to pose **threat in Syrian desert**.
- February 2021—ISIL brutality returning to Syrian towns. ISIL has launched **more than 100 attacks in north-eastern Syria over the last month alone** and is terrorizing many towns and villages at night. The violence is concentrated in the largely desert province of **Deir al-Zour**.

Amnesty for deserters and draft dodgers

- On Tuesday 9 **Oct 2018**, The Syrian government announced an amnesty for men who deserted the army or avoided military service
- Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said the amnesty **covered all punishments** for desertion inside or outside Syria
- Men inside Syria will have **four months to take advantage** of the amnesty while those outside will have six months
- While the amnesty covers desertion, it **does not cover fighting against the government** or joining the rebels, who are regarded by the Syrian government as terrorists.
- 400,000 men who had received the amnesty for their standard military service have been **called for emergency military service**. Approximately half of all amnesties were issued simultaneously with emergency service orders

Landmines and ERW in Syria

- The UN in 2019 estimated that **10.2 million people** were living in areas affected by explosive hazards, that 1 in 2 people in Syria are at risk from the threat of explosive hazards, and that 20 % of victims of explosive hazard accidents reported were children.
- **Worldwide** the number of casualties from cluster munitions almost **doubled** from 2018 to 2019 because of their increased use in Syria.
- The area of most concern for landmines and unexploded ordnance is **Al-Raqqa** province. Although the so-called Islamic State has been pushed from the area, it left behind a large number of unexploded ordnance and landmines throughout all the regions that they controlled and Al-Raqqa is the epicenter of this crisis.

Syrians in Libya & Nagorno-Karabakh

- In 2020, Syrians have been traveling as foreign fighters to engage in conflicts in Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh.
- Many of these fighters have a relationship with the Turkish Government or the Russian Government.
- The lack of economic opportunities in Syria is one of the forces that has driven this new development.

‘No Clean Hands’ Report

- A 25-page report (in Sept. 2020) from the UN Syrian Commission of Inquiry has found that, despite a reduction in largescale hostilities since a ceasefire in March, **nearly every fighting force in Syria continues to commit “horrific” human rights violations.**
- This has included an increase in patterns of targeted abuse, such as assassinations, sexual and gender-based violence, and looting or appropriation of private property. **Civilian suffering** has also remained a constant feature of the crisis.