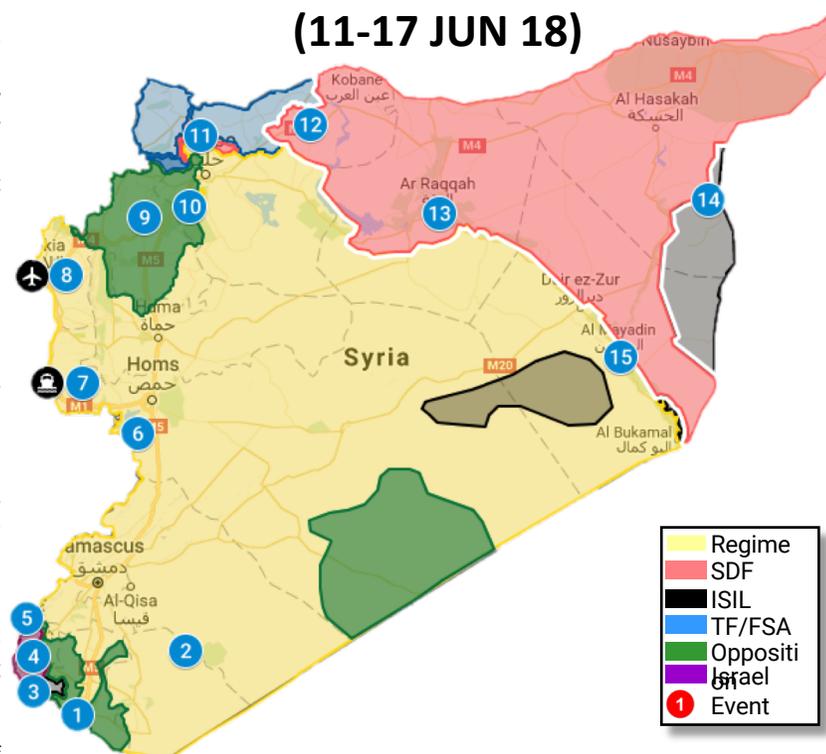


# SYRIA CRISIS WATCH

(11-17 JUN 18)



|  |            |
|--|------------|
|  | Regime     |
|  | SDF        |
|  | ISIL       |
|  | TF/FSA     |
|  | Opposition |
|  | Israel     |
|  | Event      |



**Assessment:**

- Russian efforts to help Assad consolidate state power on its territories gained momentum. Russia's negotiation attempts in northern Aleppo with Turkey and in southern Syria with Israel increase the tension with Iran and its proxy Hezbollah.
- Turkey is progressively consolidating its gains in Northern Syria with the final joint takeover of control in Tall Rifa'at.
- Turkish negotiations with US over Manbij has also gained more substance. Following the general political agreement last week, the meetings in Stuttgart will direct efforts to reach on a mutually agreed implementation plan.

**1. Russia warns the US against using 'tough measures' against Syrian government forces.** 15 Jun 2018. The American military should not use "tough measures" against the Syrian Army. Russia will analyze the situation in the de-escalation zones in the south-west of the country and draw appropriate conclusions, RBC news agency reports, quoting the Deputy Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Russian Federation Council, Vladimir Jabarov. According to Jabarov, the use of "tough measures" against the Syrian military by the U.S. "is absolutely unacceptable". (UAWire) <https://goo.gl/2gxvwm>

**2. Syrian Air Force to Carry Out Airstrikes against Daesh Positions in al-Qara.** 16 Jun 2018. Warplanes of the Syrian Air Force have carried out airstrikes on Daesh positions in the area of al-Qar'a in north-eastern al-Suwayda. Government forces have been carrying out a military operation against ISIS in the area since early June. However, they have achieved only a limited success so far. (AMN) <https://bit.ly/2HWcQtg>

**3. Syrian army boosts air defenses near Golan frontier: pro-Assad commander.** 08 Jun 2018. Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah will remain in Syria as long as Syrian President Bashar al-Assad wants it there, the group's leader said on Friday, defying renewed U.S. and Israeli pressure to force Tehran and its allies to quit the country. (The New York Times) <https://nyti.ms/2JrcVL4>

**4. The Art of the (Russian-Israeli) Deal.** 15 Jun 2018. On June 1, Russian Ambassador to the United Nations Vasily Nebenzya told the press that he "believes" that his country and Israel reached an agreement regarding "certain disengagement in the southwest of Syria." Other sources reported that the agreement will include the withdrawal of Iranian and Iranian-backed forces from the Syria-Israeli border in return for implicit Israeli acceptance of the Syrian forces' redeployment there. (Atlantic Council) <https://goo.gl/JgfPjS>

**5. Putin, Netanyahu discuss situation near Syria-Israel border.** 16 Jun 2018. The Kremlin says President Vladimir Putin and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have discussed "the situation in Syria in the context of joint efforts to ensure security around the Syrian-Israeli border" on a Friday call. The conversation follows up on the two leaders' talks in Moscow and the Israeli defense minister's visit to Russia last month. (Fox News) <https://goo.gl/jLBTnQ>

**6. Opinion: Russian-Iranian Dispute, Preparation for Settlement in Syria.** 13 Jun 2018. As Russia attempts to reach a final settlement in Syria, some contradictions appeared in the Iranian priorities. Russian experts considered that the aim of these movements was to send messages to the regime and Iran that Moscow is serious in its suggestion of the necessity of offering clear compensations by the regime and Iran to launch the settlement. (Al-Awsat) <https://goo.gl/R3MP1x>

**7. U.S. charges Russians with violating sanctions by sending jet fuel to Syria.** 14 Jun 2018. The United States has charged five Russians and three Syrians with breaking U.S. sanctions by sending jet fuel to Syria and with money laundering by making money transfers through the U.S. financial system to pay for the fuel deliveries. (Reuters) <https://goo.gl/fG6ait>

**8. Russia Accuses U.S. of Staging Another Chemical Attack in Syria.** 11 Jun 2018. The Russian military has warned that the United States is helping Syrian rebels stage a chemical weapons attack against civilians, which it claims will be used as cover to carry out airstrikes against government targets. The Russian military has a history of issuing pre-emptive statements accusing anti-government forces of laying the groundwork for so-called "false flag" operations to invite U.S. airstrikes. (The Moscow Times) <https://goo.gl/m28BUV>

**9. 2.5 million more people may flock to Turkey from Syria's Idlib: UN.** 12 Jun 2018. The U.N. humanitarian agency's top official for Syria, Panos Moutmtzis, has expressed concerns about recent airstrikes in rebel-held Idlib province, warning that "we may have not seen the worst of the crisis" in Syria even after seven years of war. He added that "with this escalation, with this deterioration, we worry about seeing really two and a half million people becoming displaced more and more toward the border of Turkey if this is to continue". (Hurriyet Daily News) <https://goo.gl/kJK4Sy>

**10. The southern sector of Aleppo countryside witnesses tension in the vicinity of the Turkish observation point between Hayyat Tahrir al-Sham and Al-Sham Corps.** 16 Jun 2018. A state of tension occurred between Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and Al-Sham Corps near the Turkish observation point in Al-Eis area in the southern sector of Aleppo countryside. This happened against backdrop of an attempt by HTS to restore points in the vicinity of the Turkish observation point after they withdrew earlier, leaving control to Al-Sham Corps. (The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights) <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=95520>

**11. Turkish-Russian Negotiations Continue on the Forces to be Stationed in Tall Rifa'at.** 16 Jun 2018. Turkish – Russian negotiations to be carried out by local parties in the northern countryside of Aleppo, about Tall Rifa'at and the areas where Iranian forces reside have resumed. Discussions are taking place to get the Iranians out of the area along with the regime forces, and for the entry of a Russian – Turkish joint force, and preventing the entry of any faction of the Syrian rebel and Islamic factions. (The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights) <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=95495>

**12. U.S. and Turkish military representatives meet at U.S. European Command.** 14 Jun 2018. In accordance with Manbij Roadmap and Manbij Security Principles, a series of meetings were held by Turkish and U.S. military representatives at U.S. European Command in Stuttgart, June 12-13. The U.S. and Turkish military officials who participated in the discussions agreed on a proposed Manbij implementation plan that will be recommended to senior U.S. and Turkish leadership for further discussions. (EUCOM) <https://goo.gl/upmWYT>

**13. Trump administration releases funding for Syria's 'White Helmets'.** 14 Jun 2018. The United States will release some \$6.6 million in previously frozen funding for a humanitarian aid group in Syria. (The Hill) <https://goo.gl/ixhXNq>

**14. Syrian Democratic Forces Continue its Advance towards Dashisha.** 17 Jun 2018. The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) continued its advance towards the town of Dashisha near the Syrian-Iraqi border, according to the Hawar News Agency (ANHA). Earlier, the SDF had captured the village of Tell al-Jabir, 4km to the west of Dashisha after heavy clashes with Daesh fighters, who withdrew towards the border town after failing to repel US-backed forces attack. (South Front) <https://bit.ly/2M05Kq3>

**15. Daesh Prepare for Newer Attacks against regime and its allies.** 16 Jun 2018. "Daesh" organization in the west of the Euphrates River, will carry out new offensives against the regime forces and their allies of Iranian forces, within the deserts of Deir Ezzor and Homs, where the organization seeks to exhaust the regime, distract it and inflict the greatest number of casualties. (SOHR) <http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=95509>