

Briefing (#8): 04/12/2024

Briefing on Military Operations in Syria

Military operations in northwest Syria entered their eighth day, with "**Operation Deterrence of Aggression**" and "**Operation Dawn of Freedom**" forces making incremental gains. Simultaneously, Russian and Syrian airstrikes have intensified, targeting opposition-controlled areas and resulting in significant human and material losses.

I. Sequence of Events

1. Hama Front

Fierce clashes continued on the **Jabal Zain al-Abidin–Qamhana axis** without decisive advances. However, "**Operation Deterrence of Aggression**" forces successfully captured key locations, including:

- **Khatab and its military base.**
- **Al-Majdal, Sheikh Hilal, Tal Bijou, and Mhardeh Bridge.**
- Eastern villages near Hama, including the **87th Brigade position, Sikaf Camp, and Al-Rasif.**

These developments have placed additional pressure on Assad regime forces to defend critical strongholds.

2. Aleppo Front

"**Operation Dawn of Freedom**" forces gained control of the **Babiri Water Station** on the **Jarrah Military Airport axis** and secured additional areas in southern and eastern Aleppo countryside. Their efforts included:

- Sweeping operations to eliminate remaining regime forces.
- Enhanced security measures in Aleppo city, such as checkpoints and activating the **Shahba Police Department.**

The "**Syrian Salvation Government**" announced a settlement program for Assad regime defectors in Aleppo and Idlib, issuing protection cards to ensure their safety. Public services saw significant improvements:

- Salaries disbursed to **University of Aleppo employees.**
- Bakeries reactivated to distribute **234,000 bread bundles daily.**
- Food, gas, and supplies brought in from Idlib and Aleppo countryside.

3. Airstrike Escalation

Russian warplanes and Assad regime forces have intensified airstrikes on opposition-controlled areas. Targeted locations include:

- Towns and villages such as **Maardis** and **Suran** in Hama.
- Areas in **Idlib Province**, including **Korin village** and the western outskirts of **Idlib city**.
- Regime artillery shelled **Qastoun village** in **Al-Ghab Plain**, injuring four civilians.

4. Mobilization

Assad regime forces are intensifying their efforts to recruit local fighters, targeting not only those required for mandatory or reserve military service but also individuals not subject to military service obligations.

5. Northeast Syria

The **SDF** launched a recruitment campaign in **Hasakah** to prepare for potential military scenarios.

II. Losses of the Parties

1. "Operation Deterrence of Aggression"

- Destroyed multiple regime tanks and killed over **200 regime officers** during battles on the **Zain al-Abidin** and **Qamhana fronts**.
- Captured five Iranian militia fighters in **Ma'ar Shuhour**.
- Gained near-total control of Aleppo and Idlib, including strategic locations:
 - Five airports: **Kuwaires, Nayrab, Menagh, Abu al-Duhur, and Aleppo International**.
 - Two research centers and the **Defense Factories**, along with a large arsenal.
 - The advanced Russian radar system **48Y6-K1 Podlet**, integral to the **S-300** and **S-400 defense systems**.

2. White Helmet Response

Civil defense teams responded to over **275 attacks** in the past week. Key statistics include:

- Approximately **100 civilians killed** and **360 injured**
- Tens of thousands displaced from cities and towns in **Idlib, Aleppo, and Hama**
- Russian airstrikes rendered most hospitals in **Idlib inoperable**

III. International and Regional Stances

1. UN Security Council

An emergency session highlighted calls for de-escalation and political solutions:

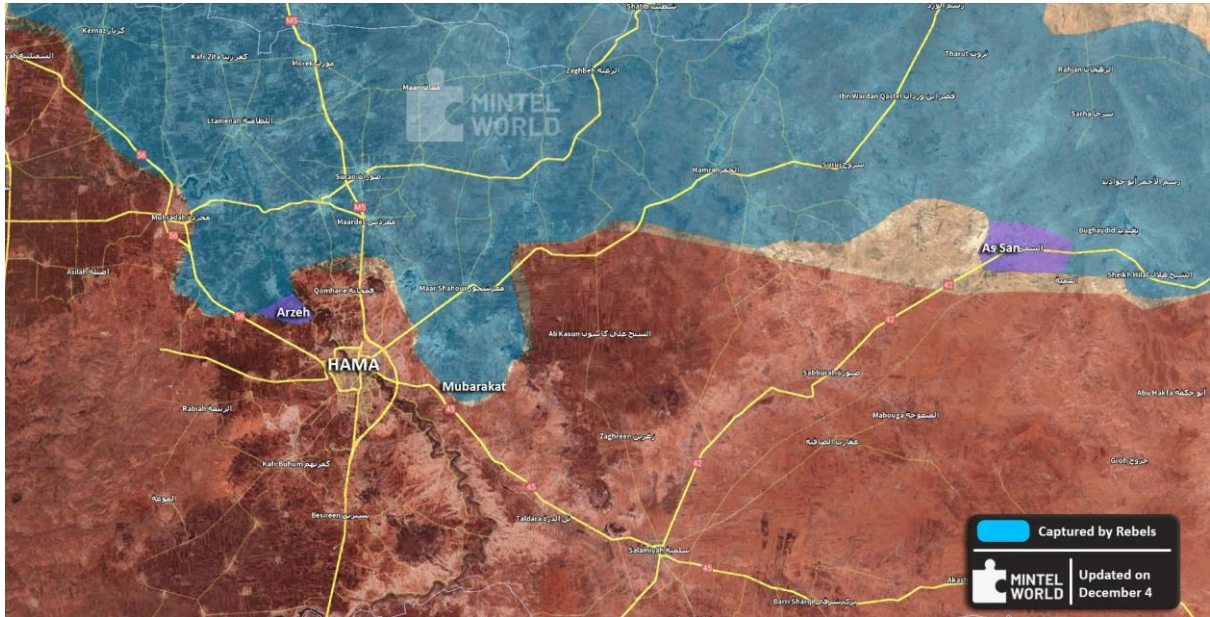
- **Raed Saleh** of the **White Helmets** raised concerns about potential chemical weapons use
- **UN envoy Pedersen** urged inclusive negotiations
- Russia and Turkey emphasized coordination through the **Astana Process**
- The US stressed civilian protection, while the Assad regime blamed Turkey and Israel
- **Iran** sought an urgent guarantor meeting.
- Turkey pressed for negotiations with the opposition, while Washington maintained accountability for the Assad regime's actions.

IV. Local Stances

- **Hadi al-Bahra** (National Coalition): Met with the French envoy to discuss military operations' humanitarian and political implications.
- **Suwayda Political Committee**: Called for local security force activation, judicial independence, and reduced regime interference.
- **General Revolutionary Assembly in Aleppo**: Condemned **SDF violations** and urged international intervention.
- **Syrian National Movement**: Advocated Aleppo's reconstruction under the **Syrian Salvation Government**.
- **Kurdish National Council**: Opposed demographic changes.
- **Arab Socialist Union Democratic Party**: Supported **UN Resolution 2254** for a political solution.

V. Preliminary Analysis

The **Hama front** remains a pivotal battleground. The Assad regime is under immense pressure from the "**Operation Deterrence of Aggression**" forces, which continue advancing on eastern Hama and the **Khatab front**. If these gains are consolidated, it may lead to the collapse of regime defenses, with potential repercussions for **Homs** and other critical areas.



Map (1): Hama, December 4, 2024, 7:00 PM Syria Time (Sources: Mintel World)