



Armed Conflict

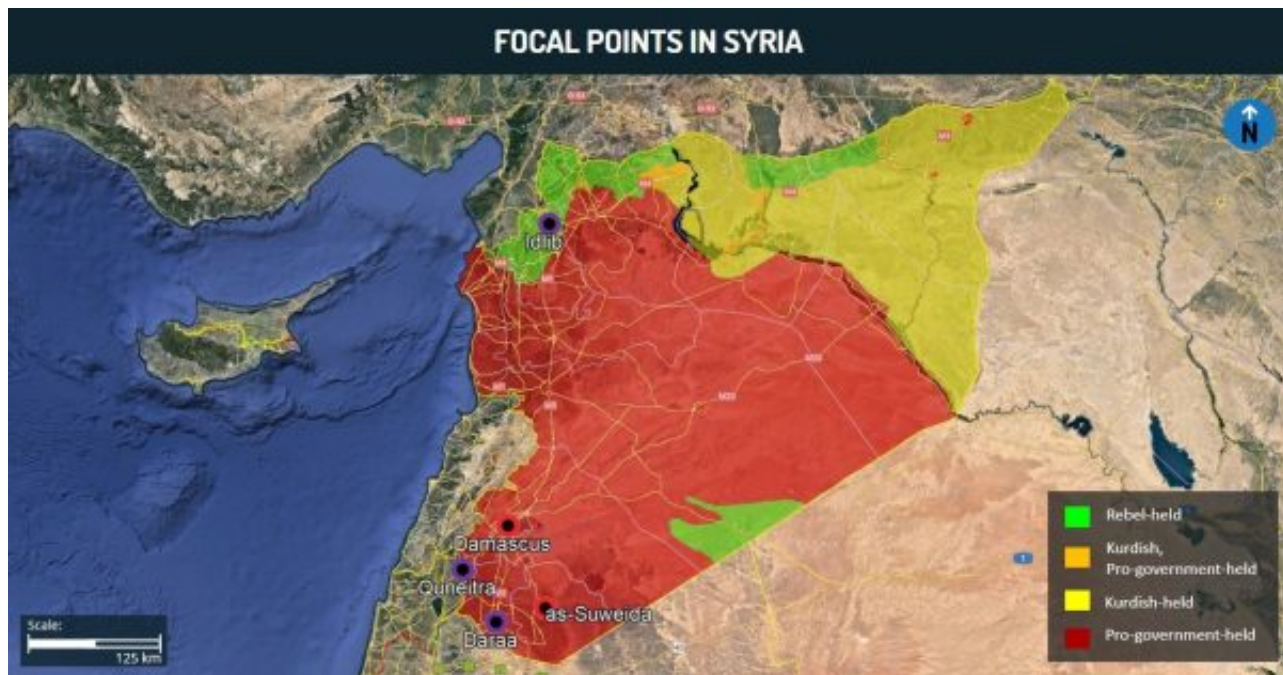
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OCT
15:00 UTC

Syria SITUATION UPDATE: 14 killed, two wounded in IED attack targeting military bus along President Hafez al-Assad Bridge in Damascus on October 20; shows security gaps in capital

Executive Summary:

- On October 14, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) arrested an Ansar Abu Baker al-Siddiq Squadron operative in Idlib, for offenses that include IED detonations. The group is the most significant movement attacking Turkish military convoys in the province. The arrest thus indicates a growing desire by HTS to clamp down on groups that target Turkish interests and this will likely increase tensions between such jihadist groups and HTS over the coming weeks.
- On October 17, The UN Special Envoy for Syria announced that the parties to the Syrian Constitutional Committee agreed on beginning to draft a new constitution. It is likely that the Syrian government decided to project compliance in order to bolster its currently growing international standing. However, the process will unlikely lead to meaningful steps pertaining to constitutional and governance reform by the government.
- On October 20, two IEDs attached to a military bus detonated in central Damascus, killing 14 individuals. The attack highlights the presence of a militant network within Damascus, that is capable of both gathering intelligence on government forces' procedures as well as using powerful IEDs.
- Overall, pro-Syrian government forces will seek to bolster security protocols in and around Damascus over the coming days and weeks. Additional militant attacks in central Damascus over the coming weeks cannot be ruled out.



Please be advised:

Across the country, the following incidents have been reported:

Damascus

Map #	Date	Location	Brief Description
1	October 20	President Hafez al-Assad Bridge	Syria's national news agency reported that two IEDs attached to a military bus detonated while it was passing over the President Hafez al-Assad Bridge during the early morning hours of October 20. The IEDs were reportedly attached to the bus prior to its travel. Security forces reportedly dismantled a third IED that had fallen off the bus. 14 people were killed and two others were wounded in the attack.



Daraa Province

Map #	Date	Location	Brief Description
2	October 16	Jeezah	Pro-government forces entered the town after dozens of residents refused to hand over their weapons as part of a reconciliation process.
3, 4, 5	October 17	Khirbet Ghazaleh, Western Ghariyah, Eastern Ghariyah	Reconciliation processes between pro-government forces and local residents reportedly began in the three towns.
6, 7, 8	October 18	Elmah, Hirak, Surah	