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Glossary

AOG	Armed Opposition Group
GoT	Government of Turkey
GoS	Government of Syria
GoR	Government of Russia
Gol	Government of Iran
IS	Islamic State
KSA	Kurdish Self-Administration
PYD	Democratic Union Party (Political wing of YPG and leading political party in Hasaka's 'Self-Administration')
YPG	Peoples Protection Unit
SDF	Syrian Democratic Force (mostly made up of and led by YPG forces, approximately 10% are from Arab tribes)
SDC	Syria Democratic Council (political wing of the SDF)
NLF	National Liberation Front (Arabic - Jabhat Tahrir Suriya. An alliance of 'moderate' AOGs, notably Ahrar Al-Sham)
HTS	Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (alliance of 'extreme' AOGs, notably Jabhat al-Nusra)

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Much of the text in this report is in *italic*. This is to illustrate that the contents are conjecture. Whilst the report reflects the current situation in northwest Syria, the analysis, views and opinions expressed are those of the author.

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2. Elsewhere in Syria (Map source <http://syriancivilwarmap.com>)

ASTANA 11

The eleventh Astana talks orchestrated by the governments of Turkey, Russia and Iran started on 28 Nov. Whilst the talks were to center on humanitarian issues, the main outcome was the GoS reinforcing its rejection of UN involvement in the development the country's constitution and that it would only accept amendments to the current constitution. This goes against the outcome of talks at the Sochi summit in Jan 2018. The GoS also argued for the lifting of sanctions. *Comment: The GoR has taken a lead in advancing the need for a new constitution and reportedly written a draft. It's unclear if Russia is part of this reversal by the GoS. As ever the Astana talks did not produce anything that would bring an end to the conflict in Syria.*

CHANGE IN UN SPECIAL ENVOY

At end of Nov the UN Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, stood down and was replaced by the Norwegian diplomat Geir Pedersen. *Comment: Staffan de Mistura was not popular with Syrian regime who accused him of siding with the opposition. In Oct 18 he accused the GoS of blocking efforts to draft a new constitution, which the UN see as key to ending the country's civil war.*

REMAINING POCKETS OF IS RESISTANCE

AS-SWEIDE – After several weeks of fighting, on 17 Nov GoS forces announced they had secured the Al-Safa hills, east As-Sweida governorate, causing IS to withdraw to the Al-Badia region, east Homs governorate. In Oct and early Nov the GoS negotiated the return of 27 Druze hostages held by IS. Reportedly, the deal included the release of 60 IS prisoners and the payment of a \$27 million ransom by the GoS. **SOUTHEAST DEIR-EZ-ZOR** – On both sides of the Euphrates the SDF and GoS forces are engaged in clashes with IS forces in the pocket. On 23 and 24 Nov, IS launched a heavy attack against SDF forces using poor weather to their advantage. After an initial IS success, the SDF regained lost ground with the arrival of reinforcements and resumption of airstrikes by the US-led coalition. Heavy casualties were reported on both sides.

- Syrian Government (Syrian Arab Army and allies)
- Islamic State
- Armed Opposition Groups (Ahrar al-Sham and other AOG)
- Armed Opposition Group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham
- SDF/YPG
- Turkish Army and AOGs
- Israel occupied Golan Heights
- Syrian Democratic Forces and Russia

RISISTANCE IN THE SOUTH

Oct and Nov 2018 saw an increase in attacks on GoS forces in the southern governorate of Daraa. More than 10 attacks resulted in over a dozen soldiers killed. *Comment: The attacks are attributed to remnants of AOGs and growing local anti-GoS sentiment.*

UN AID CONVOY REACHES RUKBAN IDP CAMP

Positioned close to the Syria-Jordan-Iraq borders, the 50,000 civilians of Rukban IDP camp had not received any major supplies for 11 months. On 3 Nov a UN convoy of 78 trucks delivered 10,475 food parcels and flour bags, clothes for 18,000 children, 10,075 hygiene kits and plastic sheets, and newborn baby kits for 1,200 children. Emergency vaccination was also conducted protecting 10,000 children against measles and polio.

