

# Iran Update



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**Information Cutoff: 2:00 PM ET**

**The Lebanese Council of Ministers agreed on August 7 to the objectives of US Envoy Thomas Barrack’s proposal to disarm Hezbollah.**[1] The proposal’s objectives include a phased plan to completely disarm Hezbollah by December 31, 2025, and to ensure an Israeli withdrawal from its five permanent positions in southern Lebanon.[2] The objectives also include the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to key border areas, the commencement of indirect Israel-Hezbollah talks to facilitate prisoner exchanges, and the permanent demarcation of Lebanon’s borders with Israel and Syria.[3] The Lebanese Council of Ministers did not agree on all details included in the proposal, but it did agree to the overall objectives.[4] The United States submitted the proposal to the Lebanese government on June 19.[5] The United States and the Lebanese government have negotiated the details of this agreement over the past six weeks, but had not previously reached an agreement.[6] Hezbollah has not released any official statements on the Lebanese government’s agreement on the US proposal. Three unspecified political sources told Reuters on August 7 that Hezbollah and its allies symbolically withdrew from the cabinet session during discussions on the US proposal.[7]

## The United States' Phased Plan to Disarm Hezbollah

As approved by the Lebanese Cabinet on August 7, 2025

Timeline	Actions
Phase 1: Within 15 Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Lebanese government will issue a decree that commits the government to fully disarm Hezbollah by December 31, 2025</li><li>• Israel will cease ground, air, and sea military operations in Lebanon</li></ul>
Phase 2: Within 60 Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Israel will begin to withdraw from its five permanent positions in southern Lebanon</li><li>• Israel will release Lebanese prisoners in coordination with the International Committee of the Red Cross</li><li>• Lebanon will begin to disarm Hezbollah, according to a Lebanese government-approved and detailed plan that will include Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) deployments and specify disarmament targets</li></ul>
Phase 3: Within 90 Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Israel will withdraw from the final two of its five permanent positions in southern Lebanon</li><li>• Lebanon will secure funding for reconstruction</li></ul>
Phase 4: Within 120 Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The United States, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, France, and other unspecified countries will organize an economic conference to support the Lebanese economy and to implement US President Donald Trump's vision of a "prosperous and viable" Lebanon</li></ul>



Note: This information is based on open-source reports.

**Iranian officials and Axis-affiliated media recently reported that Hezbollah has begun to reconstitute its command structure, but it is very unlikely that Hezbollah could rebuild its units to the level of proficiency the units had before the war. Hezbollah also faces several significant challenges that will complicate its ability to reconstitute.** Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on August 6 that Hezbollah is restructuring itself and appointing new commanders.[8] Axis-affiliated media echoed this statement. Araghchi added that Iran will continue to support the group.[9] Araghchi noted that Hezbollah will remain a “dominant force” that Iran will continue to support.[10] Axis-affiliated media claimed that Hezbollah has not exhibited any internal disarray and has continued its political and regional “presence.”[11] Hezbollah Secretary

General Naim Qassem also noted on August 5 that Hezbollah still has fighters who are ready to make “the harshest sacrifices” if needed.[12]

**These statements ignore that Hezbollah units reconstituted from the remaining Hezbollah cadres will be less effective than their predecessor units due to a lack of experienced commanders.** The IDF has killed nearly all of the top Hezbollah commanders and inflicted a 45 percent casualty rate on Hezbollah.[13] The casualty rates in units in southern Lebanon may be higher because the IDF focused much of its campaign there. A representative of Hezbollah’s Association of the Wounded noted on August 6 that none of the individuals injured in the pager attack against Hezbollah devices have recovered.[14] Over 3,000 individuals were injured in the attack, many of whom were presumably Hezbollah officials and fighters.[15] The extremely high casualty rate, combined with the deaths of top commanders, means that Hezbollah will have a much less experienced command cadre around which it will need to build units composed mostly of green, inexperienced fighters. These units will be far less effective than the experienced, veteran units led by 40-year veterans of Hezbollah prior to the war.

The post-war units will have the added challenge of needing to replenish their weapons arsenal under many more constraints than Hezbollah experienced before the war, as well. Israel destroyed much of its heavy weapons and short-range missile stockpile during and after the war.[16] The fall of Syria and the crackdown by the Lebanese government on weapons and money smuggling through Lebanese airports and border crossings will make any Iranian effort to resupply Hezbollah relatively slow and inefficient.[17] Hezbollah could attempt smuggling efforts through Lebanese ports, as it has already set conditions to do so. An unspecified Western official told Saudi media in April 2025 that Hezbollah had begun to reassert its control over the port through a network of collaborators, including dock workers and customs agents.[18] The official noted that Iran has relied on the maritime route to support Hezbollah after the closure of smuggling routes via Syria.[19] Lebanese officials denied these claims and stated that Lebanese authorities had implemented “serious” security measures at the port.[20] Maritime smuggling through the ports will be relatively more challenging than the land border crossings that were controlled by the pro-Hezbollah Assad regime on the Syrian side before 2024.

Hezbollah’s continued weakness is exemplified by increasingly confident Lebanese authorities and United Nations forces in Lebanon, which have not previously challenged Hezbollah at scale. Lebanese authorities have taken steps to curb Hezbollah smuggling. Lebanese airport authorities fired several Hezbollah-affiliated employees at the Beirut Rafic Hariri International Airport in May 2025 and began to inspect all planes and passengers that arrive at the airport.[21] Iran has tried to use the Beirut airport to smuggle funds to Hezbollah since the loss of its weapons smuggling routes through Syria due to the fall of the Assad regime.[22] The LAF has shut down several known smuggling routes and increased its presence along the Lebanon-Syria border to curb Hezbollah-linked smuggling in recent months.[23] The LAF and UN are reinforcing the counter-smuggling effort with relatively more significant operations in southern Lebanon as well. The LAF announced in May 2025 that it had dismantled over 500 Hezbollah military positions and weapons depots in southern Lebanon.[24] United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) forces have also taken previously rare steps to degrade Hezbollah infrastructure in southern Lebanon, such as by dismantling a likely

Hezbollah tunnel network and several weapons caches in southern Lebanon on August 7.[25] These efforts will need to be sustained to be successful, however.

**Iranian media outlet Nour News proposed on August 7 that the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) will likely increase its focus on domestic security, while still prioritizing foreign policy.[26]** Nour News, which is affiliated with Supreme Leader adviser Ali Shamkhani, concluded that newly appointed SNSC Secretary Ali Larijani would also “speak more to the public,” compared to his predecessor, Ali Akbar Ahmadian.[27] This follows Nour News’ July 29 and August 6 recommendations that the SNSC form a “Strategic Command Center” and adopt a more comprehensive security approach to counter emerging “hybrid threats.”[28] These “hybrid threats” include misinformation and disinformation campaigns targeting the Iranian public and the “collapse of public trust.”[29] The Nour News proposals align with President Masoud Pezeshkian’s call for Larijani to “prioritize emerging threats” and take a “people-based approach” to national security.[30] The SNSC has subsidiary councils that address internal security.[31] The increased focus of the SNSC on domestic security likely reflects regime concerns about regime destabilization in the wake of the 12-day Israel-Iran War. Pragmatic voices on the SNSC, such as Pezeshkian and Larijani, favor public engagement over tighter security measures to bolster national security. Larijani’s appointment signals the SNSC’s shift toward addressing emerging threats that impact trust between the government and the people through public engagement rather than purely security-focused measures, which represents a rebalancing almost certainly directed by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

**Khamenei officially replaced Ahmadian with Larijani as his representative on the SNSC on August 6.[32]** The SNSC Secretary has historically been one of two Supreme Leader representatives on the SNSC.

**Khamenei also appointed Ahmadian and Shamkhani on August 6 as his representatives to the new Defense Council, which the SNSC established on August 3 to address emerging national security threats.[33]** Shamkhani, who is also a pragmatic hardliner, notably called on the regime to resolve “disputes” with the Iranian people through a “process of understanding,” during an interview on June 29.[34]

## Composition of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) and Defense Council

SNSC		Defense Council	
			
President Masoud Pezeshkian	Minister of Intelligence Esmail Khatib	President Masoud Pezeshkian	Minister of Intelligence Esmail Khatib
			
AFGS Chief Abdol Rahim Mousavi	Minister of Foreign Affairs Abbas Araghchi	AFGS Chief Abdol Rahim Mousavi	Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters Commander Ali Abdollahi Ali Abadi
			
IRGC Commander Mohammad Pak Pour	Minister of Interior Eskander Momeni	IRGC Commander Mohammad Pak Pour	Artesh Commander Amir Hatami
			
Speaker of the Parliament Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf	Supreme Leader Representative - SNSC Secretary Ali Larijani	Speaker of the Parliament Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf	Supreme Leader Representative Ali Akbar Ahmadian
			
Judiciary Chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei	Supreme Leader Representative Saeed Jalili	Judiciary Chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei	Supreme Leader Representative Ali Shamkhani
			
Artesh Commander Amir Hatami			



Nour News attributed Larijani’s appointment to the SNSC as well as the SNSC’s formation of the Defense Council in its August 7 op-ed to the “current security conditions,” including “the possibility of a renewed enemy [Israeli or US] attack” on Iran.[35] Iranian officials have continued to express their concern about the potential for future conflicts with Israel and the United States. Iranian Artesh Commander Major General Amir Hatami warned on August 3, for example, that “[Iran] should not underestimate the enemy and consider its threats over.”[36] Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Intelligence chief Brigadier General Majid Khademi also declared on August 7 that “the war has not ended” and that Iran is just “in a state of temporary pause.”[37] Khademi asserted that the West is continuing to try to stoke internal instability in Iran.[38]

**Nour News suggested in its August 7 op-ed that pragmatic hardliner Larijani may bring the SNSC closer to Iran's Foreign Affairs Ministry to coordinate on nuclear negotiations with the United States and Europe, which "cannot be ruled out."**[39] Nour News referenced Larijani's past engagement in nuclear negotiations with the West during his first term as SNSC secretary between 2005 and 2007.[40] Larijani separately defended Iran's agreement to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with the United States against hardliner criticism while serving as parliament speaker in 2015.[41] More recently, Larijani reportedly tried to contact Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei during the Israel-Iran War to advocate for "opening talks" with the United States.[42] Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi separately expressed his optimism about working with Larijani, noting his "deep and realistic insight into both domestic and foreign policy," in an interview on August 6.[43] Araghchi added that Iran's diplomats are "fully prepared to engage in coordinated cooperation" with Larijani.[44]

**Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah is attempting to use the Shia Coordination Framework as a vehicle to sideline the Sudani administration ahead of the November 2025 Iraqi parliamentary elections.** The Shia Coordination Framework is a loose coalition of Shia political parties, some of which Iran backs. Kataib Hezbollah announced on August 6 that Kataib Hezbollah Secretary General Abu Hussein al Hamidawi urged unidentified Shia Coordination Framework leaders during a meeting on August 2 to "block" Sudani's decisions ahead of the upcoming elections after recent unspecified decisions by Sudani have "contradicted the fundamental positions," presumably of the framework.[45] "Fundamental positions" may refer to policy issues such as efforts to remove US forces from Iraq, which was a policy issue that Kataib Hezbollah Spokesperson Abu Ali al Askari mentioned in a statement on August 4.[46] Hamidawi also called for the creation of a specialized Shia Coordination Framework committee to investigate events surrounding clashes between Kataib Hezbollah members and Iraqi Federal Police officers in Dora, Baghdad, on July 27 that killed one civilian and a Federal Police officer.[47] Hamidawi's request to use a Shia Coordination Framework committee appears to undermine Sudani's previous order for the formation of a high-level committee to investigate the clashes using standard Iraqi judicial mechanisms.[48] Kataib Hezbollah and other Iranian-backed Iraqi actors have tried to distance themselves from the incident in Dora, which occurred amid policy discussions over restricting arms to the Iraqi state and dissolving the Iranian-backed Popular Mobilization Forces.[49]

The Shia Coordination Framework groups are now in increasing competition with one another ahead of the November 2025 Iraqi parliamentary elections, which will make it more difficult for Kataib Hezbollah to build a political coalition to sideline Sudani. Kataib Hezbollah's attempts to obstruct Sudani's influence follow an August 6 Iraqi media report that some Iranian-backed Iraqi militias are "almost at odds with the Shia Coordination Framework." [50] CTP-ISW assessed on August 6 that this report likely refers to the disillusionment of some Iranian-backed Iraqi militias towards elements of the Shia Coordination Framework, such as Sudani.[51] The Shia Coordination Framework currently plans to run across multiple lists in the upcoming elections, which likely reflects divisions amongst the coalition.[52]

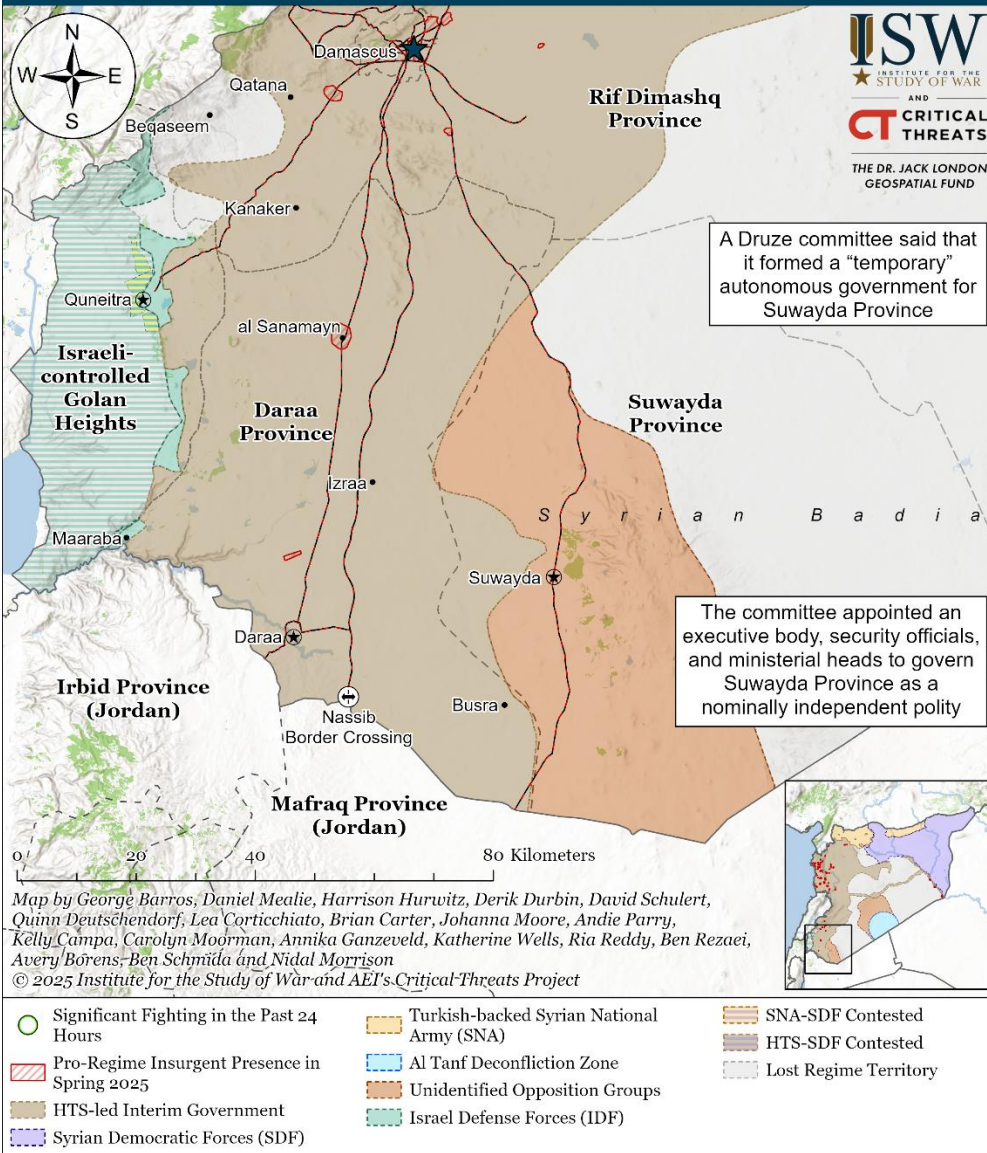
**Druze rhetoric and actions that are hostile to the Syrian government demonstrate the deep barriers to reconciliation and lack of trust between the transitional government and the Druze community.** A committee formed by prominent Druze Sheikh Hikmat al Hijri

announced the formation of a “temporary” autonomous government for Suwayda Province on August 6.[53] Judges on the “Supreme Legal Committee” within the new “autonomous government” appointed an executive body, security officials, and ministerial heads to govern Suwayda instead of the Damascus-based transitional government.[54] A member of the Syrian Ministry of Justice said that the judiciary would investigate the committee judges for “engaging in political works” that conflict with Syrian national interests.[55] Two Assad-era brigadier generals, formerly responsible for coastal Syria and accused of committing war crimes, command the new Suwaydawi government’s internal security forces.[56] A militia spokesperson unaligned with Hijri said on August 6 that the only way to “make proper amends and regain trust” would be to execute Syrian President Ahmed al Shara and Suwayda General Security Service (GSS) leader Ahmed al Dalati in Suwayda for crimes against the Druze.[57] The Liwa al Jabal spokesperson also said that there was “no longer space for dialogue or discussion” with the transitional government.[58] Such strong rhetoric from Druze militias that previously collaborated with the transitional government demonstrates the level of distrust that has grown since intercommunal violence erupted in Suwayda Province in mid-July.[59] This rhetoric makes it unsurprising that the Druze have begun to implement alternative governance structures while refusing to collaborate with the transitional government. This new autonomous government and the strong rhetoric from Druze militias reduce the likelihood that the July 18 ceasefire between the transitional government and Druze militias will progress to its third phase. The third phase calls for activating state-run institutions, gradually deploying government forces to Suwayda Province, and integrating Suwaydawi institutions into the Syrian state.[60]

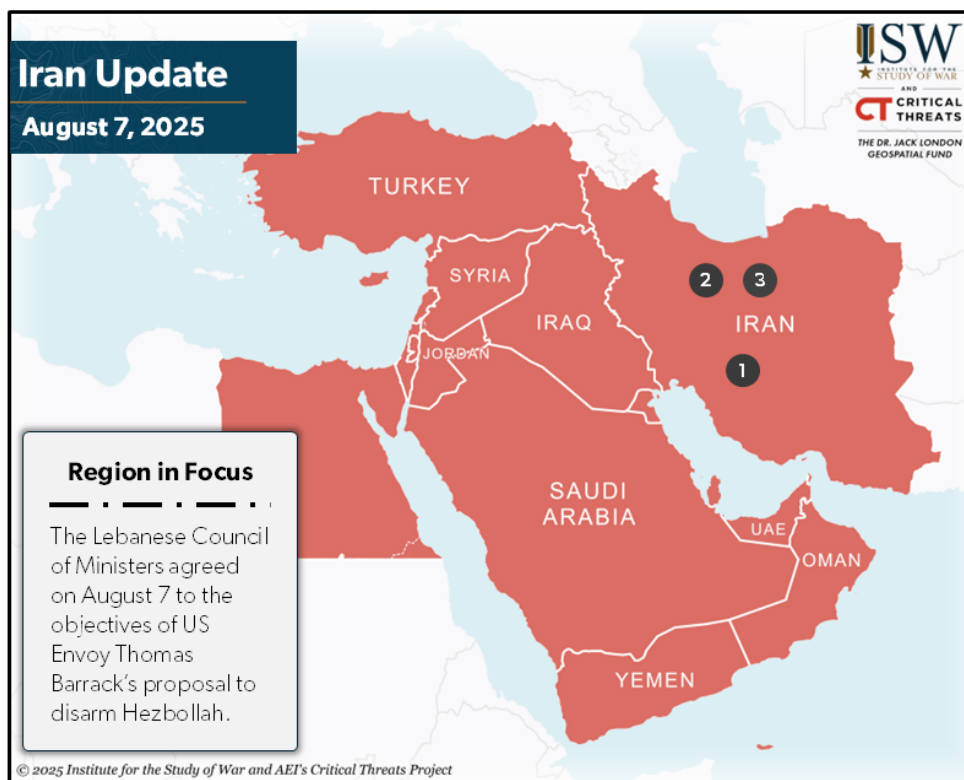


# Assessed Control of Terrain in Southwestern Syria

August 7, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST







- 1 **IRAN.** Iranian media outlet Nour News proposed on August 7 that the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) will likely increase its focus on domestic security, while still prioritizing foreign policy.
- 2 **IRAN.** Nour News also attributed Larjani's appointment to the SNSC as well as the SNSC's formation of the Defense Council to the "current security conditions," including "the possibility of a renewed enemy [Israeli or US] attack" on Iran.
- 3 **IRAN.** Nour News also suggested in its August 7 op-ed that pragmatic hardliner Larjani may bring the SNSC closer to Iran's Foreign Affairs Ministry to coordinate on nuclear negotiations with the United States and Europe, which "cannot be ruled out."

## **Key Takeaways**

- **Hezbollah Disarmament:** The Lebanese Council of Ministers agreed on August 7 to the objectives of US Envoy Thomas Barrack's proposal to disarm Hezbollah.
- **Hezbollah Reconstitution:** Iranian officials and Axis-affiliated media recently reported that Hezbollah has begun to reconstitute its command structure, but it is very unlikely that Hezbollah could rebuild its units to the level of proficiency the units had before the war. Hezbollah also faces several significant challenges that will complicate its ability to reconstitute.

- **Iranian National Security Appointments:** Iranian media outlet Nour News proposed on August 7 that the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) will likely increase its focus on domestic security, while still prioritizing foreign policy. Nour News also attributed Larijani's appointment to the SNSC, as well as the SNSC's formation of the Defense Council, to the "current security conditions," including "the possibility of a renewed enemy [Israeli or US] attack" on Iran.
- **Iraqi Militia Political Maneuverings:** Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah is attempting to use the Shia Coordination Framework as a vehicle to sideline the Sudani administration ahead of the November 2025 Iraqi parliamentary elections. The Shia Coordination Framework groups are now in increasing competition with one another ahead of the November 2025 Iraqi parliamentary elections, which will make it more difficult for Kataib Hezbollah to build a political coalition to sideline Sudani.
- **Druze-Syrian Government Relations:** Druze rhetoric and actions that are hostile to the Syrian government demonstrate the deep barriers to reconciliation and lack of trust between the transitional government and the Druze community. A committee formed by prominent Druze Sheikh Hikmat al Hijri announced the formation of a "temporary" autonomous government for Suwayda Province on August 6.

## **Iran**

**The United States sanctioned 18 entities and individuals on August 7 for their involvement in Iranian efforts to circumvent sanctions and generate revenue for the regime.**[61] The sanctioned entities include the RUNC Exchange System Company, which has developed Iran's bank messaging system. The sanctions target banks created by the Central Bank of Iran to evade existing sanctions, such as the Cyrus Offshore Bank. The sanctions also target the Pasargad Arian Information and Communication Technology Company (FANAP), which is owned by a major Iranian financial institution that was sanctioned on October 8, 2020.[62] FANAP has strong links to the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security.[63]

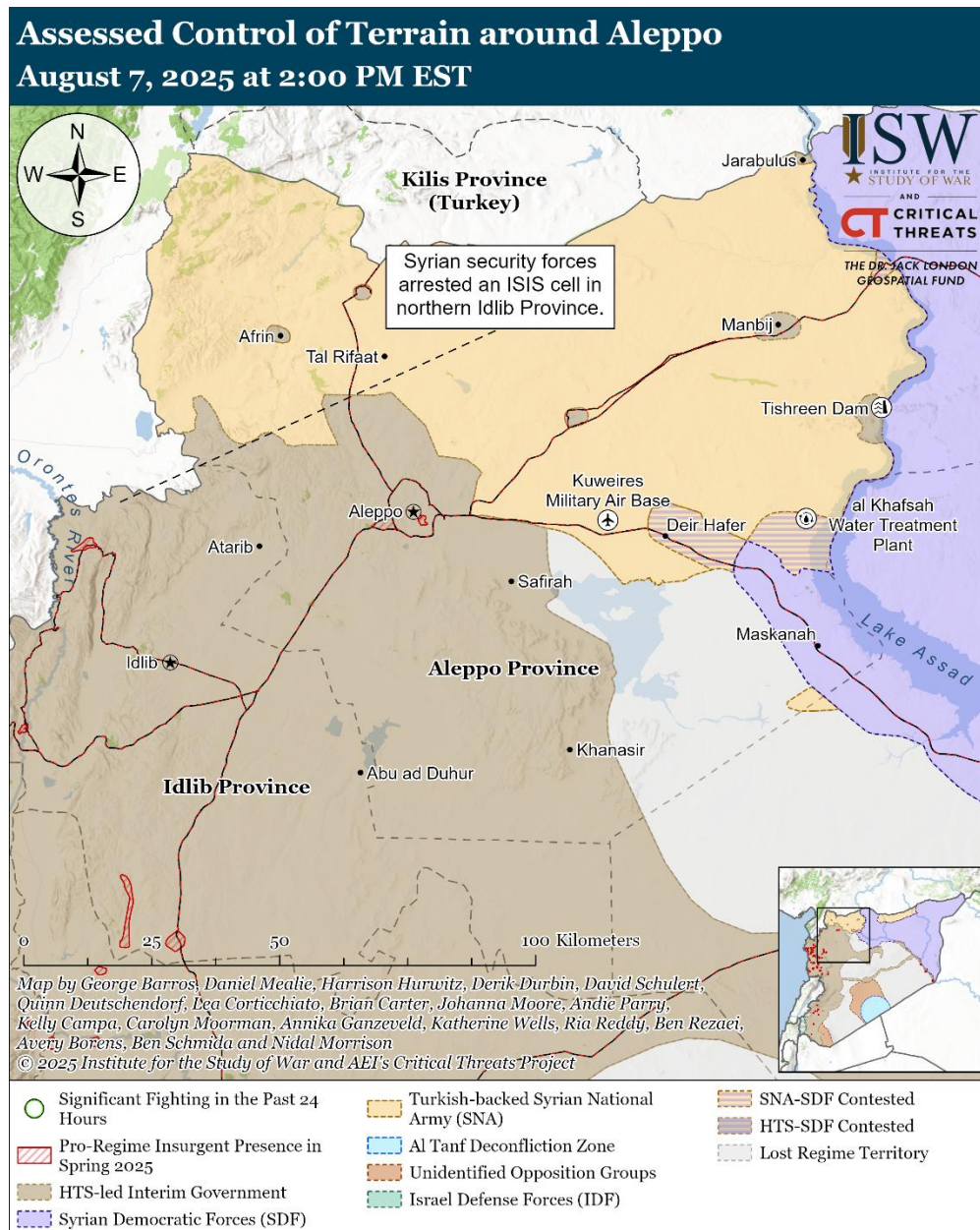
## **Iraq**

*See the topline section.*

## **Syria**

**The Syrian Ministry of Interior (MoI) arrested a large Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) cell in northern Idlib Province on August 7.** The Syrian MoI arrested nine ISIS members during a raid in the town of Harem, Idlib Province, on August 7 near the Syria-Turkey border.[64] The MoI seized the ISIS cell's cache, which included suicide vests, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), anti-materiel rifles, explosive materials, and grenades.[65] The MoI stated that the cell was responsible for targeting and killing five Iraqi nationals in three prior attacks in the towns of Salqin, Azmarin, and Kaftin in Idlib Province.[66] This included the assassination of a former Iraqi Hayat Tahrir al Sham (HTS) commander in Azmarin on June 7.[67] The arrests in Idlib province come after the Islamic State criticized the Syrian government for assisting a US counter-ISIS ground operation in al Bab, Aleppo Province, that targeted an ISIS official on July 25.[68] The most

recent arrests in northern Idlib Province are the eleventh counter-ISIS operation the transitional government has publicly conducted since the fall of Assad in December 2024.[69] The United States shared intelligence with HTS before the fall of the Assad regime to target ISIS and other al Qaeda-linked Salafi-Jihadi militant groups.[70]



**Syrian President Ahmed al Shara and Foreign Minister Asaad al Shaibani discussed recent clashes between the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the transitional government with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan in Damascus on August 7.[71]** A Turkish Foreign Ministry source told Reuters that Shara, Shaibani, and Fidan also discussed bilateral relations, Syria-Israel tensions, counter-terrorism cooperation, and Syrian reconstruction efforts.[72] The source also told Reuters that "talks are expected to assess Turkey's national security concerns stemming from northeast Syria[...] at a time when preserving Syria's territorial integrity and

unity is more important than ever.”[73] A Turkish Defense Ministry official told Reuters on August 7, prior to Fidan’s visit, that the SDF has failed to adhere to the March 10 framework agreement and that recent clashes between the SDF and transitional government forces damage Syria’s unity.[74] The Syrian transitional government and SDF signed an eight-point integration framework on March 10 but have yet to negotiate the framework’s exact terms.[75] The Turkish Defense Ministry official also said the SDF has become “empowered by clashes in Syria’s south” in reference to the recent intercommunal violence in Suwayda Province.[76] The Syrian Army and the SDF clashed south of Manbij, Aleppo Province, on August 2 after the SDF attempted to advance toward a Syrian army position.[77] The Syrian transitional government has previously condemned the SDF’s references to the violence in Suwayda Province as a justification for refusing to integrate into the Syrian state.[78] The SDF, Syrian transitional government, France, and the United States agreed to meet in Paris to negotiate the integration of the SDF into the Syrian Defense Ministry.[79] The date of the meeting has not yet been announced, however.[80]

### **Arabian Peninsula**

**Yemeni government-affiliated forces intercepted a shipment of drone components, radios, and other unspecified weapon parts to the Houthis on August 6.[81]** Government forces reported that the shipment was en route to Houthi-controlled Hudaydah Port from China.[82]

### **Palestinian Territories and Lebanon**

*See the topline section.*

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%D8%AC%D8%B1%D9%89-%D9%81%D9%8A-  
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