

## UNDERSTANDING SYRIAN CRISIS: KEY BACKGROUND RESOURCES AS AT OCTOBER 2020



This summary sheet is produced by TorqAid – [www.torqaid.com](http://www.torqaid.com) for people wanting to better understand the Syrian humanitarian crisis. It is regularly updated and can be accessed from the TorqAid website on <http://www.torqaid.com/understanding-syria>

### Key Websites

The BBC<sup>1</sup> and Aljazeera<sup>2</sup> both provide a generalised overview of the political situation across the Middle East in general, together with specific reports on Syria. ACAPS, focuses in on an in-depth study of Syria, and particularly the humanitarian situation. Both Relief Web and the Humanitarian Response provide comprehensive summaries of what the key UN agencies and international NGOs are doing, in support of national bodies, to try and provide humanitarian assistance to the affected population. The UNDP/UNHCR-supported Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) provides detailed reports of support for Syrian refugees in neighbouring Middle Eastern countries<sup>3</sup>.

- ACAPS - <https://www.acaps.org/country/syria/crisis/conflict>
- ReliefWeb - [www.reliefweb.int/country/syr](http://www.reliefweb.int/country/syr)
- Humanitarian Response - [www.humanitarianresponse.info/operations/whole-of-syria](http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/operations/whole-of-syria)
- Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) – [www.3RPsyriacrisis.org](http://www.3RPsyriacrisis.org)

### Key Facts and Figures for Syria<sup>4</sup>

- Population 17.00 million
- Population displaced, approximately 13 million, of whom:
  - ✓ 6.8 million have crossed into neighbouring countries as refugees.
  - ✓ 6.2 million remain within Syria as Internally Displaced People (IDPs)
- 11.7 million people in need of assistance within Syria

### Overall Humanitarian Context in Syria

#### *Background Context*

The three BBC documents below provide an overview of political developments within Syria, particularly since 2011, when initial peaceful demonstrations against the Syrian regime, morphed, first into a civil war scenario, and then into a larger and more wide-ranging, proxy conflict.

#### Useful Publications

BBC. (2018). *Seven years of war explained* - <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-middle-east-43337411>

BBC. (2019). *Why is there War in Syria?* - <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35806229>

BBC. (2019). *Syria Timeline 1918-2018* - <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14703995>

<sup>1</sup> See [https://www.bbc.com/news/world/middle\\_east](https://www.bbc.com/news/world/middle_east)

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.aljazeera.com/topics/regions/middleeast.html>

<sup>3</sup> Particularly Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq & Egypt

<sup>4</sup> These taken from the ACAPS site ACAPS - <https://www.acaps.org/country/syria/crisis/conflict>

### *Current Humanitarian Situation*

The ACAPS, ReliefWeb, Humanitarian Response and 3RP websites on page one, together describe both the humanitarian situation within Syria, as well as that for Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries. Since 2011, of the 6.8 million Syrians who have fled as refugees since 2011, over 1 million are now settled in Europe, and approximately 5.5 million are receiving support in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Egypt through the 3 Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) program. Of the remaining approximately 17 million people remaining within Syria, 6.2 million of these are Internally Displaced People (IDPs), and a total of 11.7 million people within the country still require humanitarian assistance.

Over 400,000 people<sup>5</sup> have died as a result of conflict in Syria since 2011. Since late 2015, the Syrian Arab Army has gained control of much of the country, other than the north west Idlib Province<sup>6</sup>, and the north east<sup>7</sup>. The maps at Appendix B indicate the changing areas of control over the period 2015-2018, with the maps at Appendix A, illustrating the evolving situation in the north-west and north of the country from 2019 until the present date. Fighting has diminished substantially since early March 2020 however, when a fragile ceasefire across Idlib Province was signed between Russia and Turkey, primarily to counter the threat of the Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic. Humanitarian needs across the country remain exceptionally high however, these now exacerbated by decreased purchasing power<sup>8</sup> for vulnerable families.

There are two complementary UN assistance programs which support Syrians both within their national homeland, and also as refugees regionally. These are:

- The Syrian Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). This has a budget of USD 3.30 billion, and is designed to support 9 million of the 11 million Syrians in need. It has three main priorities:
  - ✓ Saving Lives
  - ✓ Enhancing Protection
  - ✓ Increasing Resilience and Access to Services.
- The Syrian Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP), led by UNHCR and UNDP, which focuses on support for 5.5 million Syrian refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. This has an annual budget of USD 5.4 billion. Its four main pillars are:
  - ✓ Protecting People
  - ✓ Pursuing Durable Solutions
  - ✓ Supporting Dignified Lives
  - ✓ Enhancing National and Local Priorities

### **Key Publications**

UNDP/UNHCR. (2020). Syria Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP) website & key documents and reports. Retrieved from [www.3RPSyriacrisis.org](http://www.3RPSyriacrisis.org)

UNOCHA. (2019). *Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Plan Overview, Jan-Dec 2019*. <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/whole-of-syria/document/syrian-arab-republic-2019-humanitarian-response-plan-january>

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<sup>5</sup> See Human Rights Watch (HRW) <https://www.hrw.org/middle-east/n-africa/syria>

<sup>6</sup> Which is occupied by a mixture of Syrian rebels, Jihadist forces, and Turkish backed combatants

<sup>7</sup> Which is still largely controlled by Kurdish forces

<sup>8</sup> Largely as a result of high inflation and currency depreciation

**Further Information**

For further information about Syria, and particularly humanitarian consultancy work or training associated with this, please contact Chris Piper, the TorqAid Director. Note that the Syrian situation is used as a Complex Emergency case study in Module 4 of the accredited, online Participatory Disaster Risk Management (PDRM) program –

[www.torqaid.com/online-pdrm-program](http://www.torqaid.com/online-pdrm-program)

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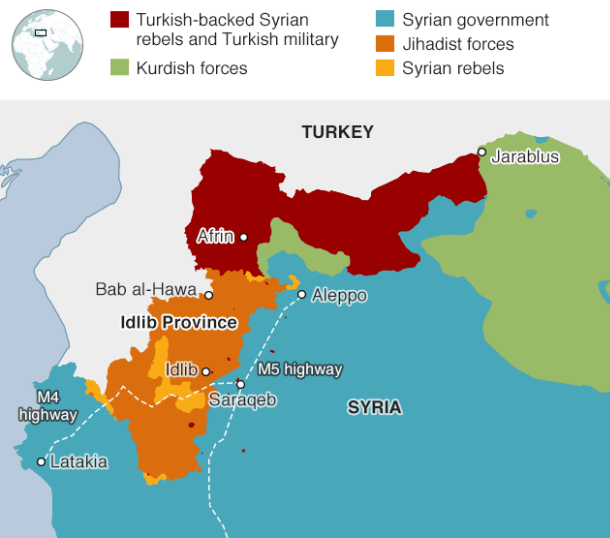
[www.torqaid.com](http://www.torqaid.com)

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## Appendix A: SYRIA AREAS OF CONTROL MAPS, OCT 2019 & FEB 2020

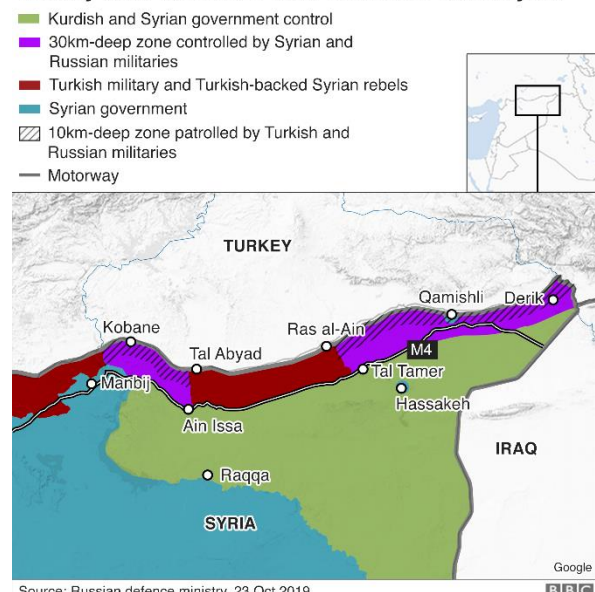
### Idlib province



Source: Jane's Conflict Monitor, 24 Feb 2020

BBC

### Turkey and Russia's deal on north-east Syria



Source: Russian defence ministry, 23 Oct 2019

BBC

### Oct 2019



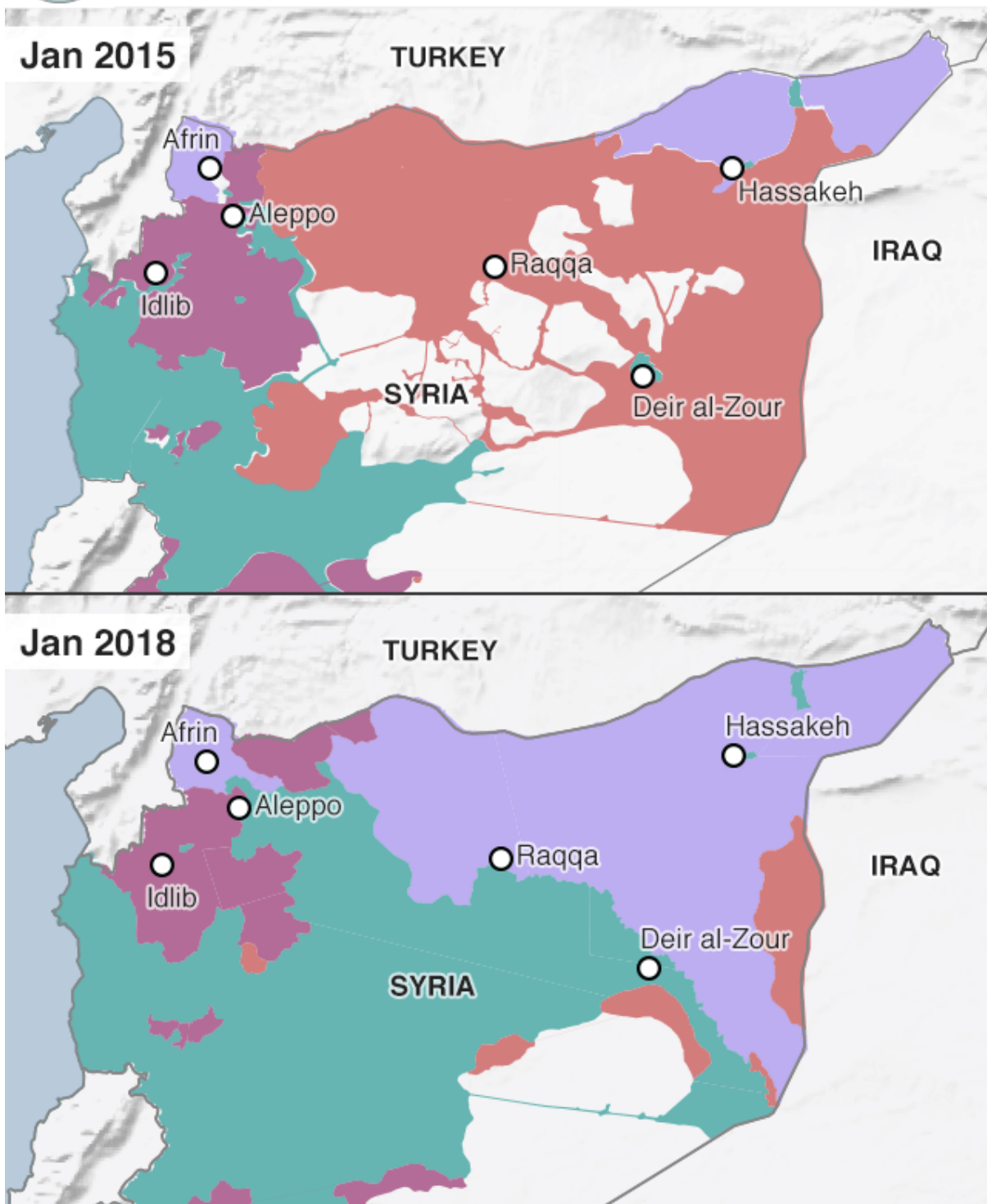
Source: Conflict Monitor by IHS Markit, Reach, 07 October 2019

BBC

## Appendix B: SYRIA AREAS OF CONTROL MAPS, JAN 2015 & JAN 2018



- Syrian Kurdish forces
- Islamic State group
- Syrian government
- Syrian rebel forces



Source: IHS Conflict Monitor

BBC