



Spotlight on Syria

April 2 –9, 2025

Overview¹

- ▶ Shots were fired at IDF forces operating in the Daraa Governorate in southern Syria. The forces returned fire, reportedly killing nine people and wounding more than twenty. Thousands of residents chanted anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic slogans during the funerals of those killed.
- ▶ IDF forces continued targeted raids in the buffer zone on the Golan Heights and destroyed weapons, and military capabilities were destroyed at two important Syrian Air Force bases.
- ▶ Turkey continues to strengthen its presence in Syria, reaching an agreement for establishing Turkish bases in Syria, including at the T4 and al-Menagh airbases.

The IDF in Syria

Exchange of fire in southern Syria

- ▶ On the night of April 2, 2025, IDF forces operated near the town of Tasil in the Daraa Governorate in southern Syria, seizing weapons and destroying terrorist facilities. During the operation shots were fired at the forces, who returned fire from the ground and air, killing several armed men. No IDF casualties were reported (IDF spokesperson, April 3, 2025).
- ▶ Nine armed men were reported killed and 23 were wounded in Israeli attacks on the al-Jabiliya forest and Tel al-Jomoua area, between Nawa and Tasil in the western rural Daraa region. Loudspeakers in the area's mosques called for jihad against Israel (Syria TV and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, April 3, 2025). Thousands of people participated in the funerals in Nawa, chanting anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic slogans, including "Khaybar, Khaybar, ya Yahud"² (Syria TV, April 2025).
- ▶ The Islamic Resistance Front in Syria confirmed that its operatives had participated in the clashes with IDF forces on the Nawa–Tasil road in the Daraa Governorate and claimed they had also downed an Israeli UAV (Islamic Resistance Front in Syria Telegram channel, April 3, 2025).

¹ Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

² A reminder of the massacre of the Jews carried out, according to Islamic tradition, in Khaybar, Saudi Arabia, in the year 628 CE, a symbol of their defeat.

The organization issued a propaganda video with the Hebrew caption, "You have no place in Syria, blood for blood, prepare for what's coming," which allegedly shows Syrian fighters ready for combat (Islamic Resistance Front in Syria Telegram channel, April 7, 2025).

► According to "a local tribal source," the IDF operation was related to the deployment of Syria's Public Security Directorate forces near the al-Jabiliya dam, but also accused Israel of attempting to take control of water sources in southern Syria. One of the Syrians who clashed with the IDF said the confrontation involved armed groups which refused to disarm and integrate into the new Ministry of Defense, but admitted that the lack of coordination among them led to the high number of casualties (al-Akhbar, April 4, 2025).



The funeral held in Nawa (Daraa Governorate Telegram channel, April 3, 2025)

► UN peacekeeping soldiers (UNDOF) patrolled the area where the incident occurred, reportedly "to verify the circumstances of the [alleged] escalation by Israel and to document violations against civilians and their property in order to submit official reports to relevant UN bodies" (al-Sham, April 8, 2025).



UN forces patrolling the area of the incident in al-Jabiliya (Syrian administration in Daraa Governorate Telegram channel, April 8, 2025)

Other operations

► IDF forces operated at other sites in the Syrian Golan Heights, including a Syrian post which previously served as the headquarters of one of the former regime's units. Tanks, APCs and heavy artillery were located and destroyed, and mortars and dozens of rockets were seized (IDF spokesperson, April 5, 2025).



A Syrian army tank and weapons seized by IDF forces (IDF spokesperson, April 5, 2025)

► During the week, according to reports, the IDF continued targeted operations in the buffer zone of the Golan Heights and beyond. Activity by Israeli forces was reported in Ruwayhina, the village of al-Sindiya and Tel al-Safir in the Quneitra Governorate, artillery fire was reported near the government building in Quneitra, and the IDF reportedly detained a man in village of Kuwayya, confiscating his sheep (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, April 2–9, 2025).

Aerial attacks

► The IDF carried out an aerial attack on military capabilities remaining at the Hama airbase and the T4 airbase in Palmyra and military facilities remaining in the Damascus area (IDF spokesperson, April 2, 2025). "Syrian sources" reported that Israel attacked weapons and ammunition warehouses as well as military aircraft at the Hama airport, rendering it inoperative. Also reportedly attacked were vehicles around the airport and military positions along the Masyaf–Hama road (al-Mayadeen Telegram channel, April 2, 2025). According to reports, the attack in the Damascus area targeted the Scientific Studies and Research Center in the Barzeh neighborhood (SANA Telegram channel, April 2, 2025).



Destruction at the Hama air force base (Sham News Agency, April 3, 2025)

► On April 3, 2025, an Israeli aerial attack was reported in the al-Kiswah area on the outskirts of Damascus. It reportedly targeted facilities of the Syrian army's 95th Brigade and caused extensive damage (Syria TV, April 3, 2025). The IDF did not issue a statement regarding attacks in the Damascus area.

Establishing the New Regime

Security

► Representatives of the Syrian government met several times with representatives of civilian society and armed groups in southern Syria, particularly in the Quneitra and Daraa Governorates. The meetings were held amid tensions between the local residents and the central government over the new constitution and government, IDF activity in southern Syria and the existence of armed groups which have not yet integrated into the new Syrian security forces (Syrian media, April 2–9, 2025).

► According to reports, in the assessment of representatives of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) who visited Syria in March 2025, about one hundred chemical weapons sites from the Assad regime remain. The organization noted that some of the sites were probably hidden in caves or other locations, making detection by satellite difficult. The report stated that the Assad regime only declared 27 such sites (New York Times, April 6, 2025).

Turkey's Involvement in Syria

► "Turkish sources" reported that the governments of Syria and Turkey had agreed to establish Turkish bases in Syria, including at the T4 and Menagh airbases. Reportedly, there is already a Turkish military presence at the Menagh base, and preparations are being made at the T4 base for the arrival of Turkish forces (al-Araby al-Jadeed, April 4, 2025).

► "Sources" also reported that Turkey examined at least three airbases in Syria, the T4, Palmyra, and the main airport in Hama province, as possible deployment sites for its forces under a joint defense agreement with Syria. It was further reported that Turkish army teams carried out an assessment of the condition of the runways and facilities at the bases. The recent Israeli airstrikes targeted the same bases visited by the Turkish teams, despite Turkish efforts with Washington to claim that Turkey's increased military presence in Syria was not intended to threaten Israel (Reuters, April 4, 2025).

► IDF strikes on Syrian airbases where Turkey intends to deploy its forces led Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan to claim that his country did not seek a confrontation with Israel in Syria and warned that Israel's actions in Syria were paving the way for regional instability. He added that if the new Syrian administration wanted to reach certain understandings with Israel, it was entirely its own decision (Reuters, April 4, 2025).