

Syria Monthly Report



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Overview

Ongoing

Bread shortages continue in government-held areas, as a lack of imports from Russia, poor harvest and competition with the Autonomous Administration reduce supply. Bread and wheat allocations have been reduced across the governorates, with locals protesting the measures.

12 May

The US State Department announced that sanctions on investments in northeast Syria would be dropped. The move is linked to US support of the Syrian Democratic Forces in their fight against ISIS – sanctions on Damascus remain, as does US commitment against normalising relations with the Assad government and its affiliations.

15 May

Oil shipments from Iran to Syria resumed, as government-held areas continue to struggle with fuel shortages. The resumption follows improved relations between the two countries, and a meeting in Iran between the two presidents and the Iranian supreme leader.

16 May

A UN aid convoy from Damascus travelled through the Tromba–Saraqib crossing, into WFP warehouses in northern Idlib. This is the fourth cross-line aid convoy, mandated as part of the Security Council Resolution 2585 (2021). The controversial aid deliveries currently account for only 0.36% of aid into Idlib; the rest travels through the Bab

al-Hawa crossing from Turkey, highlighting the need to maintain cross-border aid.

21 May

Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced plans for a military offensive into northern Syria. The Turkish president aims to combat members of the Peoples' Protection Units (YPG), in his eyes 'terrorists' linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party. This is not the first time Erdogan has threatened military action in the northwest; the US has cautioned the president against causing further instability in the region.



Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced plans for an operation into northern Syria, against the People's Protection Units (YPG) which he maintains are terrorists linked to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party. The US, who fought with the YPG in battles against ISIS, has cautioned against military action, to avoid further instability in the region.

Summary



In this May edition of the HAT monthly report, we introduce an economic overview that covers the different exchange rates used across the country and a line-graph tracking the fluctuations in the exchange rates over the past two years. Additionally, a graph showing the affordability of basic food items over a quarter across the different zones of control has also been added to the section.



Speculation over a Turkish operation targeting Kurdish-controlled areas in northern Syria increased over the past week, with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announcing that an operation on northern Syria may happen ‘suddenly’, without providing any timeframes for such an event. Rumors about the mobilization of Turkish troops to cities bordering Syria also surfaced as the spokesperson for the US State Department, Ned Price, stated that an incident of that sort would undermine regional stability.



The news of a potential Turkish operation comes weeks after the US State Department announced that foreign investments would be allowed in specific parts of northeast Syria, in Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, and al-Hasakeh, drawing criticism from both Turkey and the Syrian government, as US sanctions on Damascus remain. Additional funds are expected to be allocated to the Syrian Democratic Forces as part of the continued campaign against ISIS in the northeast.



Following President Assad’s visit to Iran on 8 May, it was announced that Iranian oil shipments are set to resume as the two countries discussed ways to increase their financial and economic cooperation. This comes as sizable increases in the prices of fuel derivatives were recorded in government-held areas, amid the continued depreciation of the Syrian pound and the decreased supply for fuel and oil derivatives as an effect of the Russian–Ukrainian conflict, which has also caused significant decreases in the availability of subsidized bread in the country.

Economic indicators

	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022
SYP/USD official exchange rate	2,500	2,800	2,800
SYP/USD parallel market rate	3,878.30 (5.6%)	3,911.90 (0.9%)	3,962.20 (1.3%)
TRY/USD official rate	14.60 (6.6%)	14.70 (0.7%)	15.60 (6%)

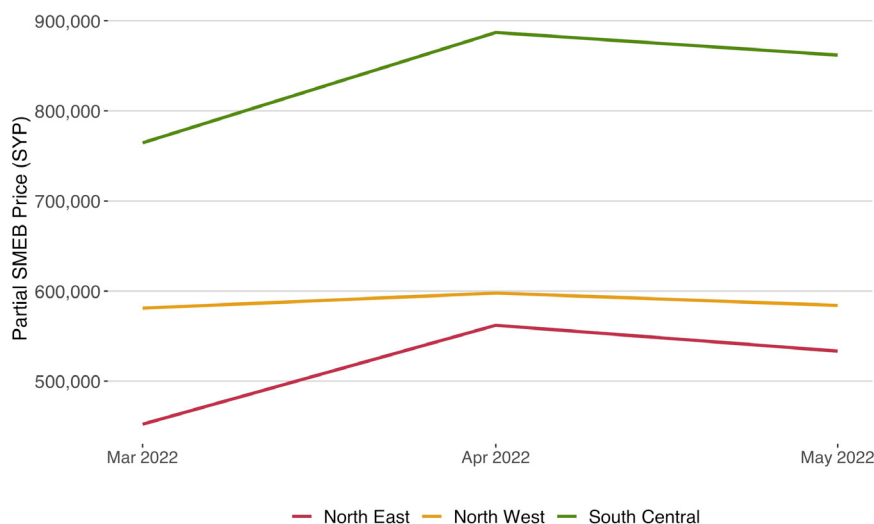
Economic indicator 1.

Official and parallel market exchange rates, SYP/USD and TRY/USD, Mar–May 2022



Economic indicator 2.

SYP/USD and TRY/USD, June 2020–July 2022

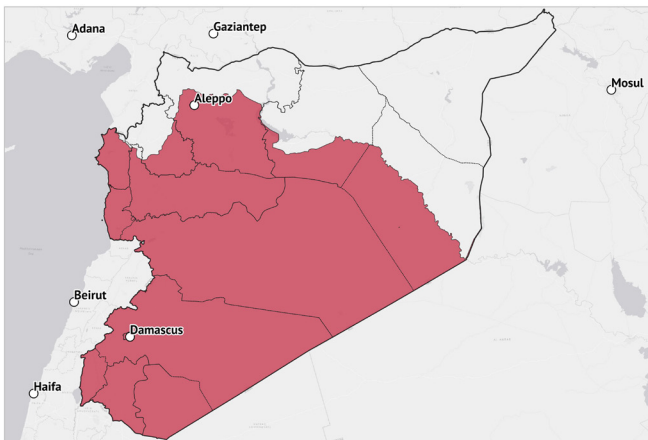


Economic indicator 3.

Change in partial SMEB price by zone of control, Mar–May 2022

HAT's partial SMEB price monitoring tool is in part built on Sphere recommendations of a 2100kcal daily diet per person. Items covered in the assessment include basic food items such as bread, rice, bulghur, lentils, oil, sugar, meats, vegetables, and fruits.

South & central



Syrian government announces resumption of oil shipments

Iranian oil shipments to Syria are set to resume amid an acute fuel crisis in Syrian government areas. Hussein Arnous, the Syrian prime minister, [announced](#) at the opening of Syria's first renewable energy investment conference on 15 May stating that "oil shipments will begin arriving in Syria very soon since the necessary measures for the establishment of the new credit line have been completed."

The announced credit line, whose amount has yet to be divulged, comes as a [form](#) of facilitation between Iranian and Syrian banks, allowing the former to pay for the requested essential items and products, particularly oil and its derivatives, after which the Syrian government will pay back the amount after the items are sold in the Syrian market. Additionally, it gives traders flexibility in purchasing products and paying later in US dollars.

Credit line issued following Assad's visit to Tehran

The credit line's announcement came one week after Bashar al-Assad's visit to Tehran on 8 May; the second since the start of the Syrian conflict. The Syrian president reportedly met with Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei alongside the president, Ebrahim Raisi, on 8 May. In his meeting with Khamenei, Assad [discussed](#) bilateral relations, the



Syrian President Bashar al-Assad meets with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in Tehran (Source: [SANA](#))

Russian-Ukrainian conflict, its consequences on Syrian government areas, and Russia's preoccupation with it. Khamenei later mentioned the need for both countries to further deepen their relationship.

Fuel shortages in government-held areas since March

Government-held areas have suffered from acute fuel shortages since March as supply lines started to dwindle. Following the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the Syrian government has been finding it increasingly difficult to import oil from abroad, particularly with Russian economic assistance being [scaled back](#). Additionally, local sources reported that oil supply coming in from Autonomous Administration areas, [reportedly](#) amounting to 10,000 barrels per day, was temporarily halted in early April, furthering the shortage's severity. The consequent reduction in fuel availability resulted in an increase in the black market price of diesel, petrol, and gas canisters.

Increased prices and reduced subsidies

The crisis has prompted the government to reduce governorate allocations, increase official prices, and reduce fuel subsidies. Local sources stated that fuel allocations for governorates have been significantly reduced. For example, the government reduced the number of gas stations it supplies from twenty-two in March to seven in May, limiting it to station owners with close government ties. Addition-

ally, the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Protection [increased](#) the price of unsubsidized petrol and industrial diesel on 17 May up to 40% due to the increase in global fuel prices.

Black market price of fuel items in south Damascus

Item	March 4 (SYP)	May 23 (SYP)	% change
Black market diesel	3500	5500	57%
Black market petrol	3000	5500	83%
Black market gas	120,000	12,5000	4%

Price increase in the price of unsubsidized petrol and industrial diesel.

Petrol	Old Un-subsidized price (SYP per liter)	New un-subsidized price (SYP per liter)	% change
90 Octane	2500	3500	40%
95 Octane	3000	4000	33%
Industrial diesel	1700	2500	47%

On 5 April, the Syrian government reduced the frequency with which private vehicle, public vehicle, and motorbike owners receive their subsidized fuel, effectively reducing their rations up to 30%. However, local sources stated that the reduction is higher as citizens are receiving their SMS message four days late.

Change in fuel ration distribution schedule and approximate rations distributed per month.

Vehicle type	Old schedule (number of days between rations)	Old amount (liters per month)
Private vehicle	7	100
Public vehicle	4	175
Motorbike	7	16

Vehicle type	New schedule (number of days between rations)	New amount (liters per month)	% change in monthly rations
Private vehicle	10	75	-25%
Public vehicle	6	125	-29%
Mortorbike	10	12	-25%

Government response to crisis

The government's response to the recent fuel crisis involved attempts to secure more sources of supply. The government has been finding it increasingly difficult to purchase oil and other essential items given its economic and financial difficulties coupled with its low foreign currency reserves. This has resulted in long intervals between oil shipments to the country.

Indeed, on 28 April Arnous [stated](#) that "the government is sparing no effort to provide oil derivatives and fill its storage...despite the ongoing sanctions," and has confirmed the arrival of an oil shipment consisting of 1,000,000 barrels to the Banyas port.

Arnous reportedly [added](#) that the country had not received an oil shipment in the past 46 days. Two days later, Syrian Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Bassam Tohmeh, [stated](#) the fuel crisis has begun to subside with the arrival of crude oil shipments, adding that the end of the crisis is dependent on the arrival of oil shipments to Syr-

ia which the government is working on securing. Tohmeh also stated that an additional 620,000 litres of petrol will be distributed which will gradually reduce queuing. Moreover, Tohmeh anticipated that the fuel crisis would be fully resolved in the coming weeks with the arrival of new oil shipments to the Banyas and Homs refineries, potentially hinting at the credit line's activation.

In addition to securing oil shipments and additional supply sources, local sources reported on increased activity by the Ministry of Domestic Trade patrols in government-held areas. On 9 March, the Ministry of Domestic Trade [announced](#) that any gas station which sells its fuel allocations on the black market will be closed for three months for their first violation and will have their license revoked after the second. Local sources reported that patrols have reportedly been cracking down on stations on various charges such as selling reserve fuel,¹ selling fuel on the black market, and tampering with the rations. The majority of those targeted by the patrols ended up closed for three months with others being fined up to SYP 71 million (\$17,997). Indeed, the patrols have reportedly closed more than 10 stations across government-held areas in May alone. However, while the increased scrutiny by the ministry's patrols is officially to crack down on black market trading and safeguarding allocations, it is suspected that their increased activity is to intentionally close stations to limit consumption.

Credit line sufficient to end crisis?

The new credit line, considered to be the fourth, was preceded by three which were issued from 2013 until 2019 totalling \$5 billion. However, local sources reported that the new line differs from its predecessors since the money granted by Iran should be paid back with interest, making it more costly for the government. Syrian government areas have been suffering from a chronic fuel crisis that gradually began to [intensify](#) since September 2020 initially resulting in long queues in front of

gas stations, reduced allocations and subsidies, and delays in subsidy deliveries. The government dealt with excessive queuing through introducing new rationing and distribution mechanisms, however, the supply problem persisted resulting in the crisis intensifying with every drop in supply. Given that the details of the credit line are still obfuscated, it remains unclear whether it will be sufficient to resolve the government's fuel shortage. Moreover, even if the credit line is sufficient, the supply chain's stability is not guaranteed considering that oil shipment interceptions continue; a Russian-flagged oil tanker, called *Pegas*, carrying 115,000 tonnes of Iranian oil was [intercepted](#) by the Greek coast guard on 19 April while en route Marmara in Turkey and its contents were later confiscated and transferred to the US government. The incident highlights that interception and confiscation [continues](#) to be a valid threat for Iranian oil shipments as the US and its allies enforce sanctions.

Bread shortages continue

Local sources reported that the subsidized bread shortages in government-held areas continues to intensify. Public bakeries continue to see their allocations reduced and have seen their production capacity significantly reduced to 20%. Moreover, some bakeries have closed outright due to the complete absence of government allocations. For example, public bakeries in Babella and Yalda townships reportedly closed down mid-May resulting in queuing in front of the Beit Sahm public bakery. Moreover, Sahnayya bakery in Rural Damascus, which closed down last month, was reopened after renovations were reportedly completed. However, its reopening coincided with the closure of the neighboring Darayya bakery due to the absence of allocations, leaving the long queues to continue. Additionally, government reserve bakeries, which produce bread for both the Syrian military and citizens, have had their production capacity reduced as well. Reserve bakeries which usually receive sig-

¹ Gas stations usually store 15% of their allocations, referred to as reserve fuel, which is only given to Syrian military and security personnel on missions, who present special security cards or papers to receive them.

nificant allocations and operate for all 24 hours of the day are now only able to operate up to 16 hours.

Government and Administration compete for local wheat

The Syrian government continues to struggle in supplying enough wheat to alleviate the shortages. The Syrian government and Autonomous Administration are competing for this year's harvest. The Syrian government [set](#) its wheat purchasing price on 14 May to 2,000 SYP per kg in safe areas and 2,100 in unsafe areas, potentially referring to Autonomous Administration areas. The Autonomous Administration later outbid the government on 22 May, [setting](#) its wheat purchasing price at 2,200 SYP per kg and announcing that it will start receiving the crops starting 25 May in Deir-ez-Zor, Tabqa, and Ar-Raqqa. In addition to providing a higher price, the Administration [threatened](#) to revoke the farming licenses for farmers in Tabqa who fail to sell their wheat to its collection center in Tabqa city, adding that the produce should be sold to them "for the public good due to the weather conditions which the area is experiencing and to preserve food security."

Insufficient local wheat production

In addition to competing with the Autonomous Administration, local wheat production in government areas seemingly suffered due to the adverse weather conditions. Media sources [reported](#) that 80,000 hectares of rainfed wheat in Dar'a governorate, which the government had planned to harvest, were ruined due to insufficient rainfall. This has forced rainfed wheat farmers to rent out their lands to animal herders to reduce their losses; renting a mechanized plough and purchasing seeds for one dunam of rainfed land alone cost 85,000 SYP. Additionally, rainfed wheat farmers have complained of insufficient agricultural diesel and delayed deliveries. The government has provided farmers with 5 liters of agricultural diesel per dunam,² while oper-

ating a pump for one hour requires 6 liters, forcing them to buy at the black market price of 4,800 SYP per liter. Additionally, the government has failed to deliver the subsidized diesel on time, resulting in the opportune time for irrigation to pass.

Government purchasing stolen wheat?

The government may be resorting to highly unorthodox methods to secure wheat. The Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs [stated](#) on 11 May that Russia has forcibly seized 500,000 tonnes of wheat from Ukrainian farmers which were being stolen and hauled onto ships departing from Sevastopol and sold. Media sources [reported](#) the next day that the *Matros Pozynich*, a Russian ship, carrying 30,000 tonnes of stolen wheat, docked in Lattakia after being denied docking in Alexandria and Beirut ports after receiving information from the Ukrainian government about the ship's stolen contents. Noting the severe shortage of wheat and the Syrian government's close ties with Russia, it is possible that the former purchased the shipment.

In addition to the possible procurement of stolen wheat, the Syrian government has continued its search for more wheat sources. Syrian Minister of Agriculture, Hassan Qatana, visited Belgrade on 22 May and [signed](#) a memorandum of understanding for agricultural cooperation with his Serbian counterpart. Additionally, the Serbian government reportedly expressed the country's readiness to provide Syria with wheat.

Lack of wheat unlikely to change in the short term

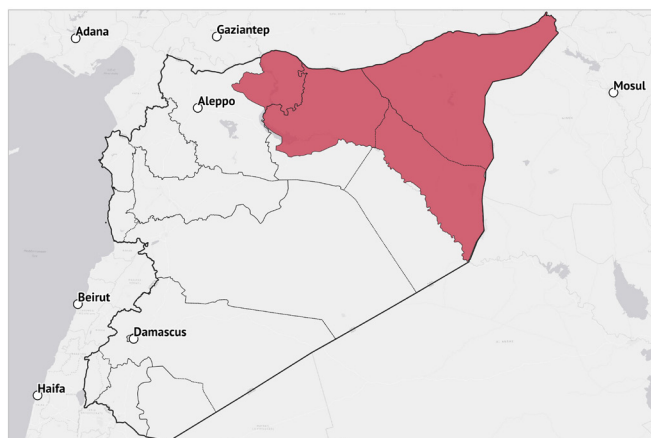
Bread shortages in government-held areas are primarily a supply problem. If no sufficient and steady supply of wheat is secured, then public bakeries will be unable to produce at full capacity and end the subsidized bread shortage. The difficulties facing the government in competing with the Autonomous Administration, which is both incentivizing and threatening farmers, for wheat purchases in the northeast and the dwindling production in its

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Two at the subsidized price of 580 SYP per liter and three at the unsubsidized price of 1700 SYP.

own areas points to low national wheat yield which the government is likely to acquire. This makes the government more dependent on imports. While the government is still attempting to secure additional wheat sources, its attempt to secure wheat shipments from Serbia may prove insufficient; Serbia usually produces 1.5 to 2.5 million tonnes of wheat, an amount that barely covers its domestic demand. Moreover, given its financial and economic difficulties, India's wheat export [ban](#) on 16 May drove global wheat prices up 6%, potentially making wheat shipments more expensive for the government. If the government continues to be unsuccessful in securing external wheat supply sources, it is likely that the bread crisis will continue.

Northeast



Turkish threats to launch a military operation in northern Syria

On 21 May, Recep Tayyip Erdogan [said](#), during his speech after a meeting of the Turkish government in Ankara, that there are new military operations that the Turkish army will launch soon in the areas of northern Syria controlled by Kurdish forces, to complete the establishment of safe areas at a depth of 30 kilometers on Syrian-Turkish border. The Turkish president explained that the operation will start as soon as the Turkish army is ready, and deci-

sive decisions will be taken on Thursday, 26 May, at the meeting of the Turkish National Security Council. Later, media sources reported that the Turkish National Security Council [stressed](#) that the military operations at the country's southern borders are a national necessity. The Council confirmed that Erdogan obtained a mandate from the Council to launch these operations outside the country's borders in northern Syria and Iraq.

The Turkish military did not announce the targeted areas of the military operations, but it is expected that it will target the areas of Tel Rifaat, Menbij, and Ayn al-Arab -Kobani, as Kobani separates the areas of Turkish control in the Euphrates Shield area and the Peace Spring area. If the Turkish army manages to take control over Kobani, then they will be able to link their areas of control on the borders, while the Kurdish forces in Menbij and Tal Rifaat and their surroundings have caused problems among the Turkish soldiers and the Syrian National Army (SNA) in the area. The proximity of these areas to the Turkish border is also a concern, being less than 20km away from Bab al-Salamah border crossing with Turkey – control over these areas is therefore a priority.

Since Erdogan's statements, activists have started circulating news about preparations for this operation, as some sources stated that the Turkish army had begun removing the border wall opposite Ayn al-Arab Kobani in preparation for the ground incursion and that the Russian forces had evacuated their military bases in the city. The SNA has also raised its military readiness in preparation for the start of the military operation. Recently, activists said that Turkish planes dropped leaflets in the town of Meng, north of Aleppo, urging the people to stay away from the military headquarters in the town.

The leaflet called for support: "the decision to cleanse the occupied areas of terrorists [PKK and PYD] is irreversible. Be a contributor with your national army in defeating terrorism." Other media sources also reported that SDF closed the entrances of Menbij to prevent any potential displacement

movement ahead of the expected military operations.

The US warned Turkey against launching any new military operation in northern Syria, stressing that such an escalation would endanger the lives of American soldiers deployed in the region. State Department spokesperson Ned Price [said](#) that the US is “extremely concerned” about this announcement and that America condemns any escalation, and supports maintaining the current ceasefire lines. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Saeed Khatibzadeh, [said](#) that Iran “opposes any kind of military operation and the use of force in the territories of other countries with the aim of settling disputes, considering that any attack will lead to more complexity and escalation.”

In response to these statements, Erdogan said that his country does not take permission from anyone to combat terrorism, and will do what is needed if the US fails to do its due diligence in this regard.

US to allow foreign investment in Syrian northeast

On 12 May, the US Treasury Department officially declared that foreign investments would now be allowed in northeast and opposition-controlled northwest Syria. Rumors of the decision had been circling for the past few months, as HAT had previously [reported](#). The [decision](#) is reportedly part of a plan by the Biden administration to support actors in the northeast in their fight against ISIS. Around \$110 million will be allocated to fighting ISIS and violent extremism in both Syria and Iraq.

The decision includes economic opportunity in the following sectors: agriculture, information and telecommunications, electricity infrastructure, construction, finance, clean energy, transportation, water and waste management, education, trade, manufacturing, and the health sector.

Areas included in the decision are as follows:

Governorate	District	District/Subdistrict excluded from decision
Aleppo	Menbij	Khafsah, Maskana
	Al Bab	Tadif, Dayr Hafir, Rasm Harmal Al Imam, Kuwayris Sharqi
	Ain Al Arab	
	A'zaz	Tall Rifaat, Nubl
	Jarablus	
Ar-Raqqa	Ar-Raqqa	Tal Abiad, Ath-Thawra district and sub-district
Deir-ez-Zor	Deir-ez-Zor	Deir-ez-Zor center, Tibni, Muhasan, Khasham
	Al Mayadin	Al Mayadin center, Asharah
	Al-Bukamal	Al-bukamal, Al Jala
Al-Hasakeh	Al-Hasakeh	Al-Hasakeh center, Al-Malikiyah, Al-Quamishli, Ras Al-Ain

In a [press](#) statement by State Department spokesperson Ned Price, it is stressed that this does not change US policy towards the Assad and his associates, whereby they continue to reject normalization with the Syrian government, and continue to support UN Security Council Resolution 2254.

Further, media [reports](#) have indicated that according to an unnamed US official, the waiver is also intended to be some sort of model, whereby “areas outside of Assad’s control can become a model for

stability in Syria and can make clear that if Assad is willing to engage in a meaningful political process and engage in reform, then there is an opportunity for economic recovery,”

The lifting of sanctions also occurred amid the Brussels conference where the US [pledged](#) \$808 million in humanitarian aid to the Syrian crisis.

Turkish reaction to the US’ decision has been critical. For one, Erdogan stated on 13 May that “[the] YPG is a terrorist organization, [the] YPG is what the PKK is. Therefore, it is not possible for us to accept this mistake by the United States.”

Also, Turkish foreign minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu [criticized](#) the choice of areas exempt from the Caesar Act, adding that Idleb and Afrin should be included in the waiver.

Early indicators show the decision could be beneficial to the local economy, particularly within the agriculture sector which in the northeast is a primary economic activity. Over the past year, food security including wheat production was severely affected in the region following droughts, decreased water levels, and ultimately, decreased agricultural productivity (not to mention the conflict in Ukraine, which has also had implications on [food security](#) in Syria as a whole). As such, the waivers including agriculture and other sectoral efforts could improve humanitarian conditions.

Local sources in targeted areas have expressed that locals have interpreted the decision positively. Many are excited about the possibilities of new economic opportunities and livelihood options entering their areas, with many even changing their minds about migration. Similarly, those with local businesses or business ideas were also excited about the possibility of growing their businesses, but are waiting on clearer laws and regulations stemming from the foreign investment decision.

US remains committed to partnership with SDF

A [tweet](#) by the US-backed International Coalition (IC) reinforced its stance on fighting ISIS in Syria via supporting the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), stating “we remain committed to [our] partnership with the SDF to ensure the lasting defeat of Daesh.”

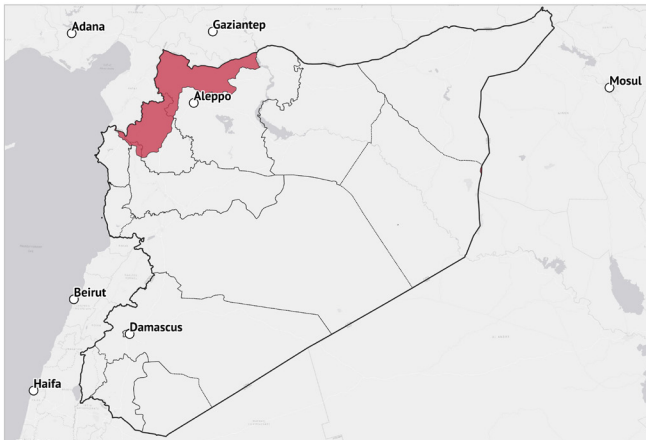
Indeed, the reporting period saw continued anti-ISIS operations and IC–SDF military cooperation. On 5 May, local sources reported that the SDF and its Internal Security Forces implemented strict security measures in eastern Deir-ez-Zor, where in Shiheil for example, they banned the movement of motorcycles for a few days. On 9 May, local sources reported that arrests were ongoing in Basira, and the day after, the SDF and IC carried out an aerial operation in Shiheil, reportedly targeting a house where IDPs from Al-Mayadin reside. Four individuals were arrested on suspicion of ISIS affiliation. Further, on 16 May, media [sources](#) reported that the SDF and IC captured an ISIS cell in Hajin in eastern Deir-ez-Zor, with weapons and ISIS affiliated-documents collected as well.

The cooperation between the US and the SDF and the continued anti-ISIS operations are a reminder of the group’s relevance to the US, which plays a significant part in the waiver decision in bringing stability to the region. Fighting ISIS and bringing economic stability to the northeast via the waiver are therefore considered to be the US’s long-term investment in the northeast.



Ned Price, US State Department spokesperson

Northwest



Fourth cross-line UN aid convoy enters Idleb

On 16 May, a convoy of UN aid entered from the Syrian government-controlled areas in the countryside of Aleppo, through the Tromba–Saraqib crossing, [heading](#) to the WFP warehouses in Sarmada, north of Idleb. This is the fourth convoy that has entered through the lines from government areas to northwest Syria within the framework of [UN Resolution 2585](#) that was approved in July 2021, which included cross-line aid delivery alongside cross-border aid through the Bab al-Hawa crossing, which is the only crossing left.

The convoy contains food items that will later be distributed by WFP partner organizations to civilians in northwest Syria. The entry of aid through internal crossings with the Syrian government angered activists, who considered its arrival in this way as a prelude to diverting the aid delivery from the Bab al-Hawa crossing with Turkey to government-controlled areas under Russian sponsorship. However, the Syrian Salvation Government and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham had previously justified that its entry is a condition within the agreement to renew the mechanism for bringing in international aid through Bab al-Hawa crossing last July.

The arrival of cross-line aid this time comes with Russian statements expressing their desire not to renew the mechanism for cross-border aid delivery next July, as [stated](#) by Russia's deputy UN ambassador, Dmitry Polyansky, on 20 May, that Russia sees no reason to continue humanitarian aid deliveries from Turkey to opposition-held north Syria, adding that supporters of cross-border aid deliveries "show no wish" to enable aid deliveries across conflict lines from Damascus which could be easily arranged, "which leaves us no reason to preserve the cross-border mechanism."

The Response Coordination Group (RCG) condemned the entry of cross-line aid, maintaining it cannot be a substitute for cross-border aid from the Bab al-Hawa border crossing with Turkey. The RCG issued a [comparison](#) between the aid coming across the border and that coming through the lines, as 57 (0.36%) relief trucks traveled through the lines, while 15,704 (99.64%) relief trucks traveled across the borders since the beginning of the decision. It was also mentioned that the aid received through the lines is food aid only, while those received across the border include 73% of food aid, 2.5% of medical aid, 12% of camp aid, and 5% of hygiene items, in addition to other items. The RCG stated that cross-border humanitarian aid prevents Russia from controlling the Syrian humanitarian situation and turning it into a negotiated political issue. It also prevents the Syrian government from controlling humanitarian aid and its delivery methods to the region, in addition to limiting the occurrence of economic collapse and the spread of famine in northwestern Syria. They also [warned](#) that if the Bab al-Hawa crossing is closed, this decision will deprive more than 2 million people of food aid and access to clean or potable water, and will also contribute to the interruption of bread subsidies in more than 650 camps and reduce the current number of active hospitals and medical points to less than half in the first phase and more than 80% will be closed in the second phase, in addition to a rise in unemployment rates during the first phase by 45% and the second phase by 27%.

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The Humanitarian Access Team (HAT) was established in Beirut in March 2015 in response to the collective challenges facing the remote humanitarian response in Syria. HAT's most important function is to collect and analyze disparate data and information. Since 2015, HAT analysis has provided a forward-looking template for international interventions in Syria, and facilitated an increasingly adaptive, integrated, and ultimately impactful international response to the conflict.

