



Map of foreign forces' points in Syria - mid 2022



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Analytical Maps

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Introduction:

Until the middle of 2022, the number of military sites for foreign forces in Syria reached 753. Such a figure is the biggest not only since the establishment of the foreign military presence in the country in April 2013, but also in the country's modern history. This reflects the continuous increase in the volume of external influence in the Syrian issue at the expense of the internal influence of all local actors.

Foreign forces include; Iranian and Russian troops, which support the Syrian regime; Turkish forces, supporting the opposition factions; the US-led international coalition against ISIS, which supports the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF); in addition to the Israeli intervention, which is limited to air strikes without a military presence on the ground.

The Jusoor Center for Studies, in cooperation with the "InformaGENE" platform for data analysis, has released a new version of the map of control and influence in Syria, which is an updated version of the one that was issued in early 2022, based on monitoring the changes that occurred during the last period.

In the current version, it is noted that the map of foreign forces' sites in Syria has an increase in the number of military bases and points for all foreign powers, except for Türkiye and the International Coalition's, because both of them preserved the number and locations of their points and bases. Mainly, the Russian presence has not seen that big increase, while the Iranian presence has had the lion's share of the increase in the number of sites and spread area during the first half of 2022.

Until the end of the first half of 2022, the number of military, security and foreign operational bases in Syria reached 160, and the number of military, security, logistical and outposts/ observation points reached 593.

The largest number of military sites for foreign forces in Syria is spread in Aleppo governorate, with up to 176 sites. Damascus Countryside comes next with 100 sites, then Idlib with 86 sites, 74 ones in Deir Ezzor governorate, Homs 66, Hama 52, al-Hasakah 41, Daraa 38, Raqqa 32, Lattakia 31 , Quneitra 23 , As-Suwayda 21 , Damascus 10 , and in Tartous there are 3 sites.



Methodology:

Enumerating and classifying all the points of the foreign military forces in Syria is a very difficult and complicated process, when it comes to the available data about such sites due to secrecy that often surrounds most of the military and security points and bases. This is to be added to the regular and continuous operational movements of some of these points. Therefore, such an interactive documentation and presentation mechanism has been adopted, which includes successive updates to the original database, as well as the attached interactive report.

The enumerating process was limited to fixed and stable military, security and logistical sites; that is, it did not include the mobile points, barriers and checkpoints that some forces use during their military action, especially the Iranian militias, which use this form of sites to a large extent in control and mobility operations.

The military sites of the foreign forces in Syria are classified as points and locations; according to the size of the armament and the geographical area for each, without this being necessarily compatible or proportional to the official international standards.

Accordingly, there are 6 kinds of military sites for the various foreign powers existing in Syria, which are operational, military, and security bases, in addition to military , logistics, and observation points.

The military base is equipped with military and operational hardware, whether for defense or offensive missions, with the presence of special military units for logistical support when necessary. However, when the size of the military site is small in terms of personnel numbers or the types of weapons existing within, it is referred to conventionally in this study as a military point.

As for the term of the operational base, it is a military one equipped with a command headquarters to manage and plan military operations at the level of forces and armament, in addition to the possibility of providing tactical and logistical support, including coordination tasks between different types of military forces.

The security forces' base is a military point that performs specific tasks at the level of security support related to the nature of the tasks entrusted to it. It also can work alone or with the support and backing of the military points or bases located in the area of operations.



As for the security points, they are often of a special nature and are entrusted with certain tasks that may include raids, arrests and investigations. It can also include protecting some strategic sites such as oil and gas fields and transmission lines or the locations of VIPs through the deployment of networks of barriers and security guard points for this purpose.

While the logistics point is considered to be of a military nature, it is often responsible for providing non-combat support. It also provides different points and bases with various needs and supplies; where such points could be depots for arming and ammunition, in addition to providing support related to military training or production. Moreover, such points can provide logistics and maintenance and repair services for military equipment. Contrary to that however, there are points that provide medical care services, which host medical teams, ambulances and medical intervention equipment. Usually, such points are locating in places close to lines with a high probability of clashing.

As for the outposts/ observation points; They can be considered as advanced centers for carrying out reconnaissance activities that are spread in areas close to contact lines or along supply and transportation routes. These points work to collect and monitor various military and security information. In some cases, these points, whether independent or attached to military bases and points, count and report violations too.

The security and military points on the map could easily be classified according to these criteria and definitions if all the points of security forces were within the regular armies' units and factions. However, due to the significant overlap, especially in sub-state organizations, the term “points” was adopted for all types of security and military forces, including the big and main military bases.

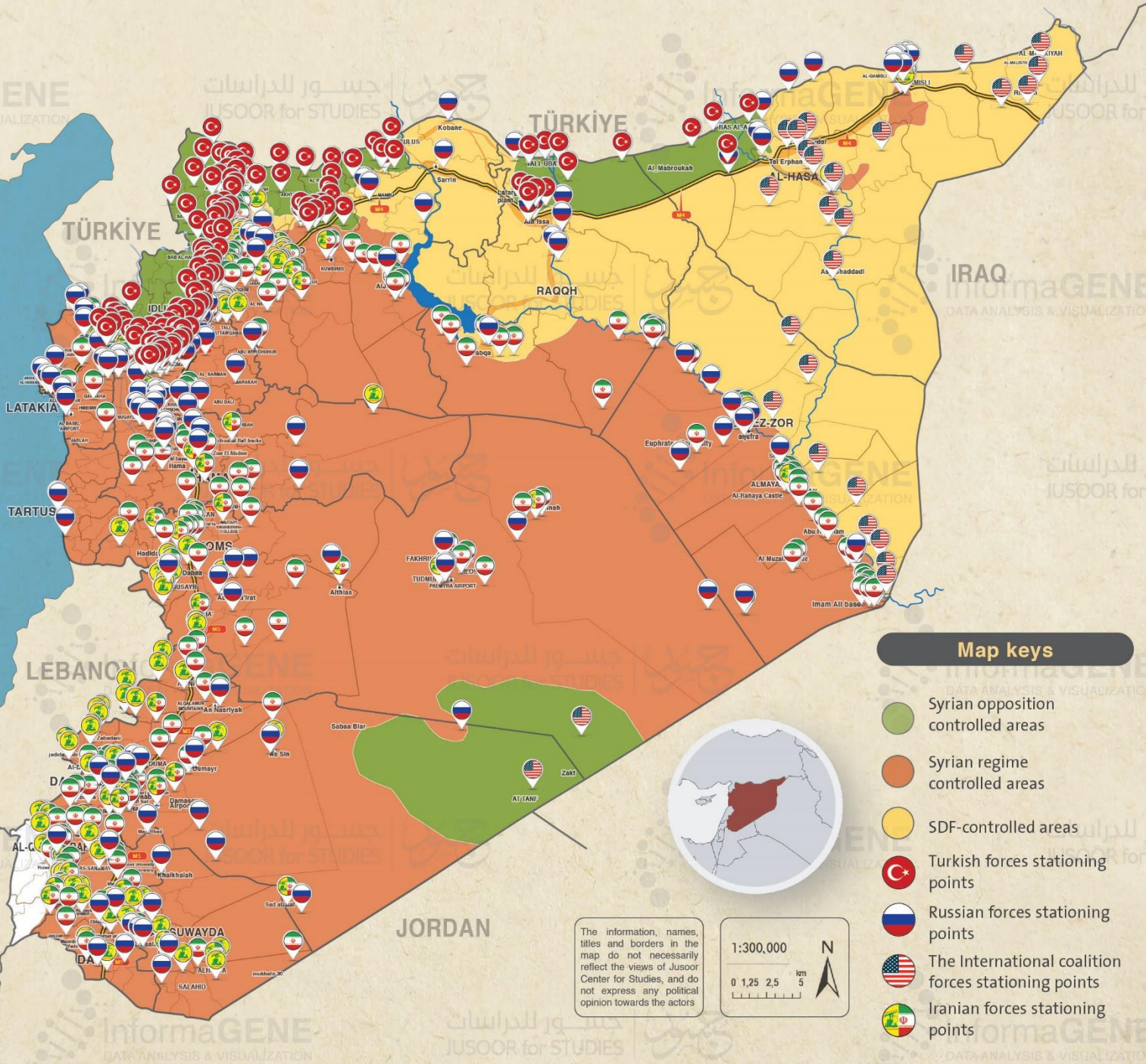
This map refers to the points where foreign powers have full authority, command and funding sources. Consequently, it does not include the presence of experts, technicians or military personnel (leaders or fighters) within the barriers and barracks of the various local forces or within the institutions of self-governing and civil administration. Furthermore, the locations on the map do not include the foreign forces presence which have less than a military, security or logistics point. As such, security barriers, transit patrols, escorts and protection are not included in the map neither

The study also shows the Iranian presence in Syria within one map and then detailing the Iranian- affiliated forces, from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, which is a multinational force led by the Quds Force, to the independent Lebanese Hezbollah, which is politically and economically linked to some extent with Iran's project in the region and Syria.



Moreover, this map did not include the local forces allied to the foreign forces. For instance, the regime's Fourth Division is not mentioned in the map of the Iranian points in Syria; despite the complete alignment that brought the two sides together and the wide-scale penetration by the Iranian forces to this Division. The latter is still organizationally and administratively independent, unlike the local groups established by external forces and managed organizationally and financially such as the Al-Baqir Brigade, which was considered part of the Iranian forces on the map.

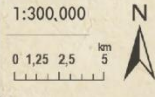
MAP OF FOREIGN FORCES' POINTS IN SYRIA mid-2022



Map keys

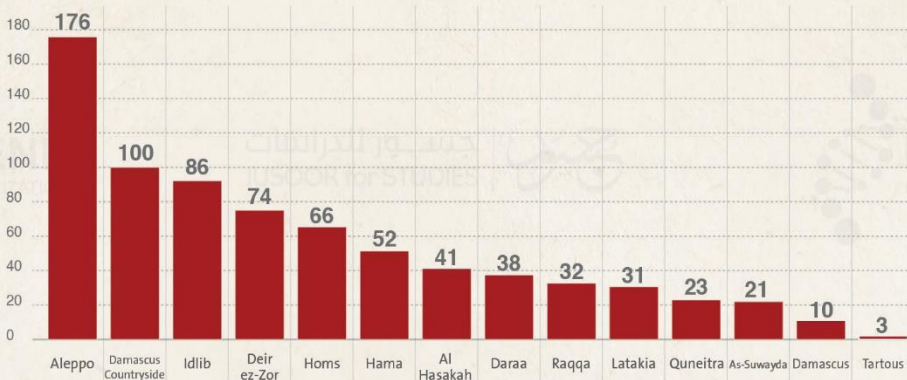
- Syrian opposition controlled areas
- Syrian regime controlled areas
- SDF-controlled areas
- Turkish forces stationing points
- Russian forces stationing points
- The International coalition forces stationing points
- Iranian forces stationing points

The information, names, titles and borders in the map do not necessarily reflect the views of Jusoor Center for Studies, and do not express any political opinion towards the actors



The distribution of foreign forces' points in Syria

The number of foreign forces' points in Syria



753
Points



First, The International Coalition:

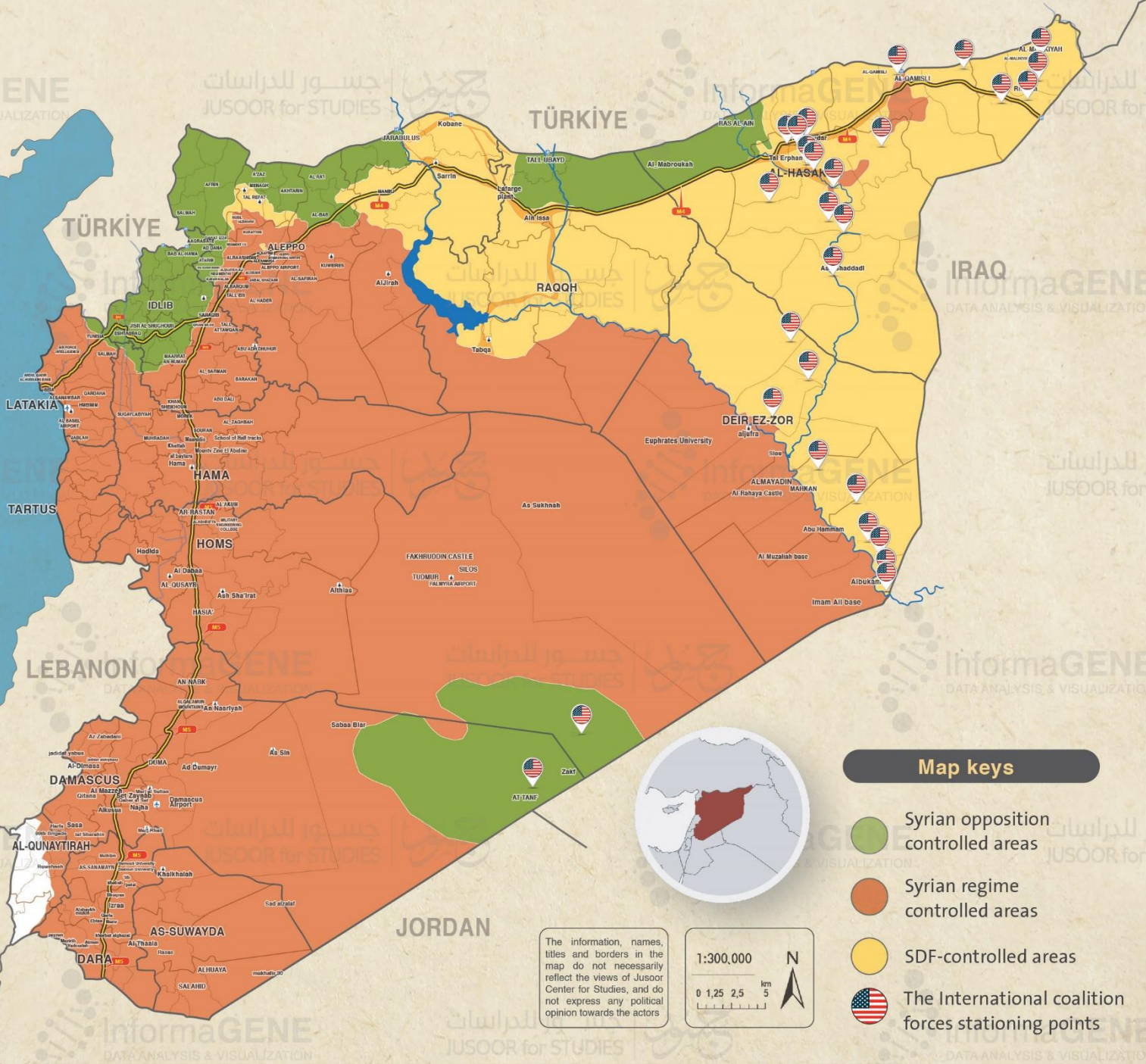
For more than two and a half years and since its withdrawal from its bases in the governorates of Aleppo and Raqqa in October, 2019; the forces of the US-led international coalition against ISIS maintained the number and areas of deployment of their military sites in Syria, which amounted to 28 military ones. These sites are either military, operational and security bases, or observation and reconnaissance points, in addition to other logistics and security points, spread in 3 governorates as follows: 17 in al-Hasakah, 9 in Deir ez-Zor, and two in Homs.

Given that this deployment of the international coalition forces in eastern Syria constitutes an obstacle that hinders the spread of Russia and Iran; their recent withdrawal opened the way for Russia to reach the region and establish points and bases after reaching an understanding with the SDF. During the first half of 2022, Russia continued to increase the scope of this deployment and expand the movement of its forces in most areas of SDF control in the eastern provinces, i.e. Deir ez-Zor, Raqqa and al-Hasakah, in coordination of course with the international coalition forces, which continued during 2021 to strengthen the bases of their points of presence through military and logistical supply convoys that regularly arrive by land and air.

It is also noted that the international coalition forces used their base, from which they withdrew in the Lafarge plant as a temporary operational point that they use intermittently to assemble their forces for conducting airdrops outside the SDF-controlled areas west of the Euphrates. The most important of which was the operation that targeted ISIS leader Abdullah Qardash.

MAP OF THE INTERNATIONAL COALITION FORCES' POINTS IN SYRIA

mid-2022



Map keys

- Syrian opposition controlled areas
- Syrian regime controlled areas
- SDF-controlled areas
- The International coalition forces stationing points



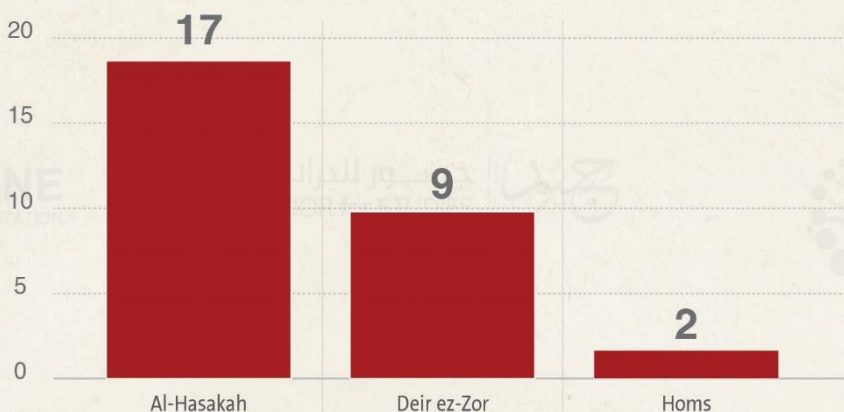
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1:300,000

0 1,25 2,5 5 km

Distribution of the international coalition points in Syria

The number of foreign forces' points in Syria



28
Points



Second, Russia:

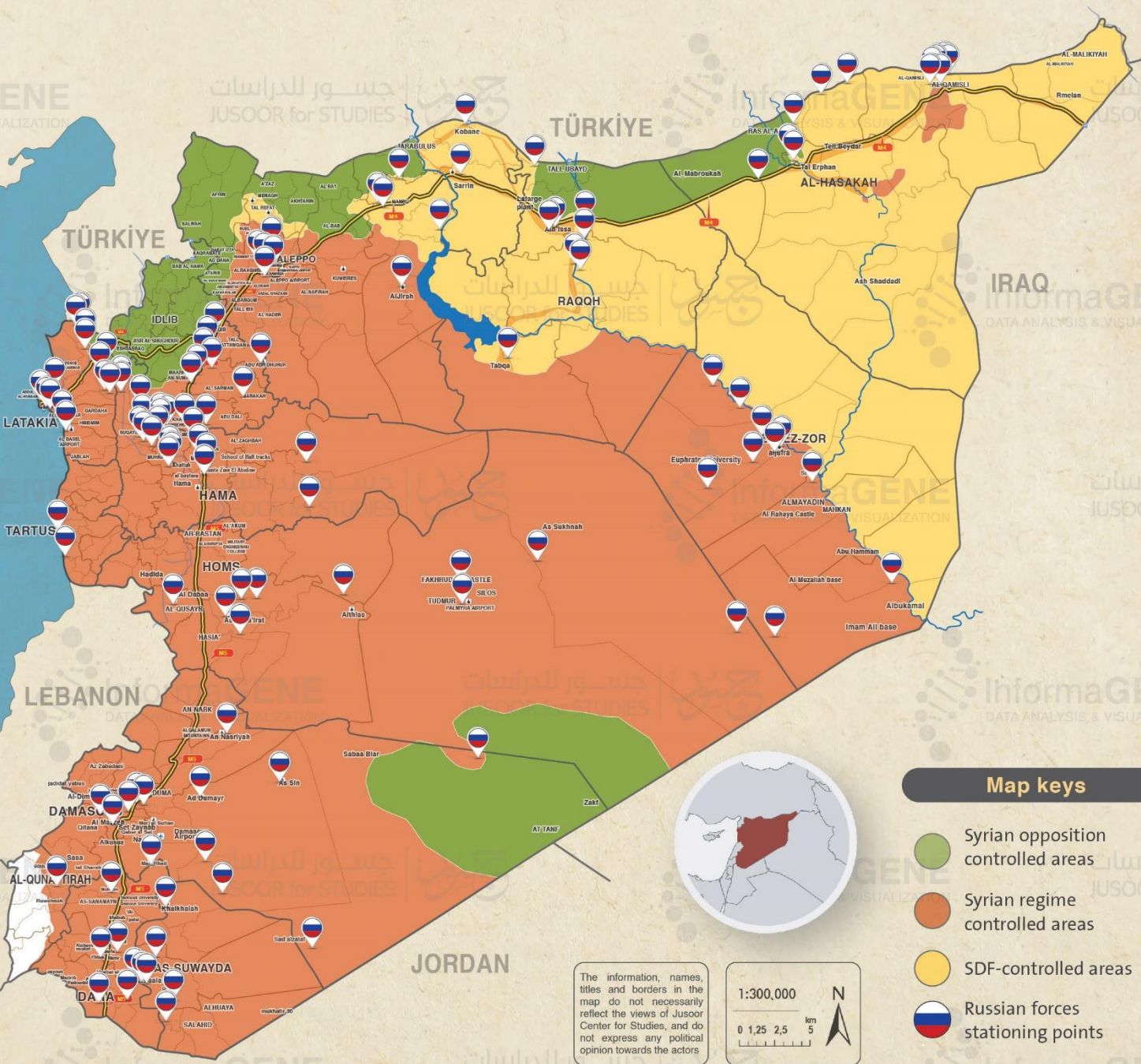
In total, Russia has 132 military sites in Syria, distributed between military, operational, and security bases, observation points, reconnaissance and other logistical and security sites. They are spread across all governorates as follows: 25 in Hama, 14 in al-Hasakah, 14 in Latakia, 12 in Aleppo, 11 in Deir ez-Zor, 11 in Idlib, 9 in Homs, 9 in As-Suwayda, 8 in Raqqa, 7 in Damascus Countryside, 5 in Daraa, 4 in Damascus, two sites in Tartous, and one in Quneitra.

It is noted that, during the first half of 2022, the Russian forces withdrew from a number of their main sites in central Syria, such as Hama Military Airport, Neirab Airport in Aleppo Governorate, and Mahin Warehouses in Homs Governorate. On the other hand, Moscow established other military outposts that are smaller in terms of size and armaments. In general, such a repositioning process may be related to the conflict in Ukraine and Russia's announcement of a change in the tasks of its forces. As a result, Russia has recently been concentrating on ensuring stability and security at the expense of combat operations, according to what was stated by the Russian Foreign Minister at the end of May 2022.

Russia's military presence in Syria is a guarantee of achieving its strategic goals in light of the intense competition with Iran, Türkiye and the United States. However, the military deployment does not seem sufficient to secure Russia's interests and ease its fears, unless such a presence gives tangible political fruits.

MAP OF RUSSIAN POINTS IN SYRIA

mid-2022



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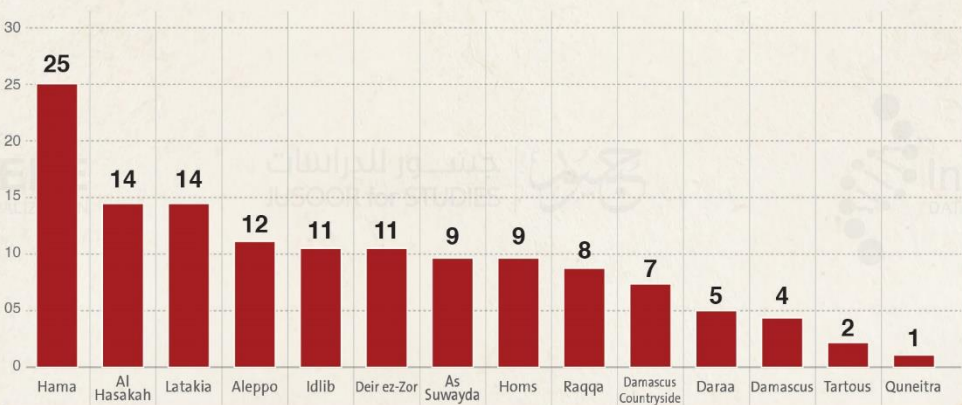
1:300,000

0 1,25 2,5 km

Map keys

- Syrian opposition controlled areas
- Syrian regime controlled areas
- SDF-controlled areas
- Russian forces stationing points

Distribution of Russian points in Syria



The number of Russian points in Syria

132
Points



Third, Türkiye:

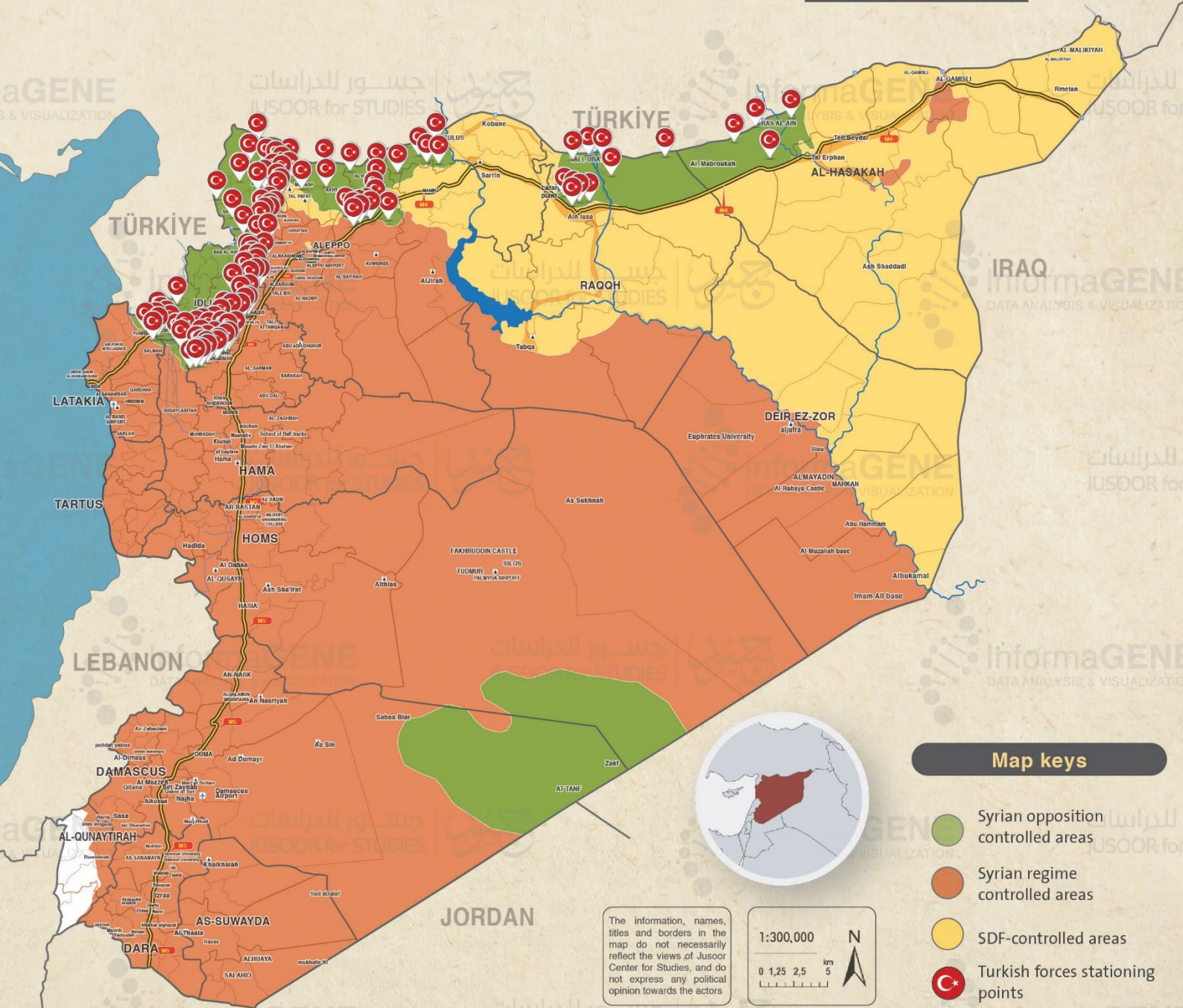
Adding only two military sites, Türkiye has also almost preserved the number and spread of their military sites in Syria, which amount to 124 ones, distributed between military, operational and security bases, outposts and reconnaissance points, and other logistical and security ones. These sites are spread across 6 governorates as follows: 57 in Aleppo, 50 in Idlib 10 in Raqqa, 4 in al-Hasakah, 2 in Lattakia, and one site in Hama.

It is noted that Türkiye continues to strengthen its military presence within the de-escalation zone in the northwest and the northeast regions of the country. In a reality as such, Turkish military points and bases have become lines of resistance or defense along the lines of contact with the forces of the Syrian regime.

The deployment of Turkish forces constitutes a major obstacle to any attempt by Russia and Iran to deploy in opposition-controlled areas; especially when it makes it difficult for the regime's forces to make any progress towards the latter's areas without direct engagement with them. Noting that, during the first half of 2022, the Turkish forces continued to strengthen their bases and points of presence through military and logistical supply convoys that were arriving by land periodically to the north-east and west of Syria alike.

MAP OF TURKISH POINTS IN SYRIA

mid-2022



Map keys

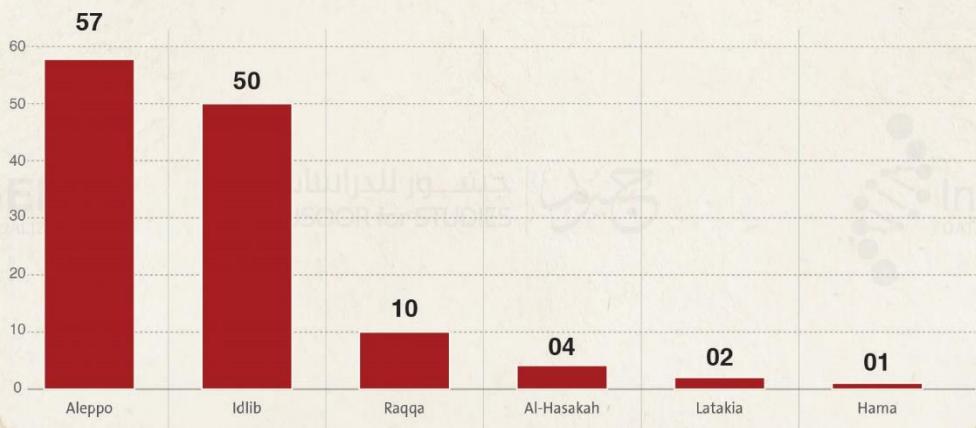
- Syrian opposition controlled areas
- Syrian regime controlled areas
- SDF-controlled areas
- Turkish forces stationing points



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Distribution of Turkish points in Syria



The number of Turkish points in Syria

124
points



Fourth, Iran:

Iran has 469 military sites in Syria, distributed between military, operational, and security bases, outposts, reconnaissance, logistical and security points, spread in 14 governorates as follows: 107 in Aleppo, 93 in Damascus Countryside, 55 in Homs, 54 in Deir ez-Zor, 33 in Daraa, 25 in Idlib, 22 in Quneitra, 26 in Hama, 14 in Raqqa, 15 in Lattakia, 12 in As-Suwayda, 6 in Damascus, 6 in al-Hasakah, and one site in Tartous.

It is clear that the Iranian forces and their affiliated militias, such as the Revolutionary Guards and Hezbollah, are the forces that have increased the number of their military positions in Syria. In addition to that, there have been significant changes in the distribution of their positions and their deployment strategy during the first half of 2022; especially as Tehran benefited from the Russian redeployment in some areas. The most obvious increase in the number of sites for these militias was in al-Hasakah Governorate, where the Lebanese Hezbollah militia established 5 new sites, most of which are active in recruitment and security operations.

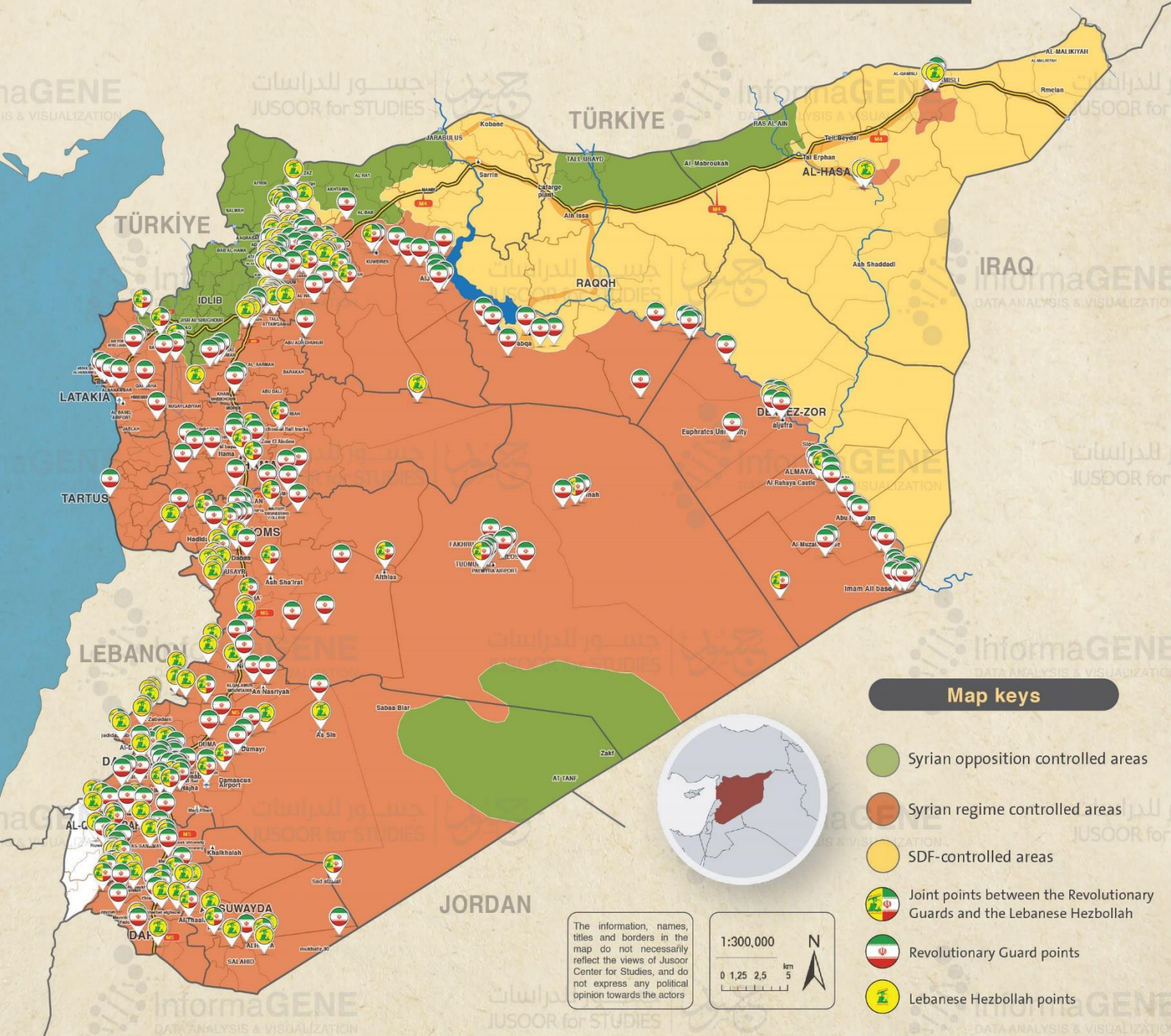
Furthermore, in Deir ez-Zor, Raqqa and the Syrian desert, the Iranian militias continued to follow the tactic they usually do in order to avoid the Israeli bombing that targets them. This tactic is based on evacuating a number of its large military bases and redeploying them within smaller points away from the cities and towns' centers to ensure greater camouflage and protection. Iran also resorted, at times, to secretly deploying its members within the positions of the Syrian regime forces.

Iran often hopes that its military deployment in Syria will ensure the protection of Hezbollah's military and logistical supply lines, in addition to make the costs involved in transferring military technology to its allies lesser. Iran also wants its military presence in Syria to be turned into a guarantee for the protection of its interests in the political and security institutions of Syria. Via such dynamics, Tehran hopes to optimize the use of the current tension that exists between international forces in Syria.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah's military deployment in Syria provides protection for the land supply routes linking Iran and Lebanon, and the formation of a security belt along the border strip between Lebanon and Syria that will serve as an alternative supply corridor for the Bekaa and Mount Lebanon areas, in addition to providing support for the policies of Iran and the Syrian regime.

MAP OF IRANIAN POINTS IN SYRIA

mid-2022



Map keys

- Syrian opposition controlled areas
- Syrian regime controlled areas
- SDF-controlled areas
- Joint points between the Revolutionary Guards and the Lebanese Hezbollah
- Revolutionary Guard points
- Lebanese Hezbollah points

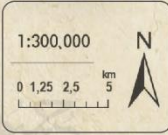
Distribution of Iranian points in Syria



The number of Iranian points in Syria

469
Points

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Conclusion:

The maps of foreign military sites in Syria illustrate the extent of foreign interference in the country and how much international interests are overlapping, which negatively affects the role of local actors. These maps also show the difficulty of reaching a solution or settlement of the 11-years long conflict, as there is no real international desire that results in a consensus that guarantees the interests and visions of these parties. Moreover, these maps help in conceptualizing the size of the role that each of the international parties involved in the conflict play and also the goals and objectives of this role or such an intervention. This can be fulfilled by drawing a map that reflects the military and security presence of each of these forces, especially since this presence is the basis and ground of any project or vision that any party adopts.

These maps confirm the continuous and increasing Russian and Iranian desire to expand and control more regions and areas throughout the Syrian geography as well as their steadfastly pursuing to enable the regime from recapturing control over these areas. on stability. At the same time, these maps and the detected changes show the broad outlines of the strategy of both the international coalition and the Turkish forces in the conflict, which is to maintain stability; at least for the time being, in a manner that does not negatively affect the counter-terrorism operations carried out by both sides. Another purpose aimed by the above-mentioned parties is ensuring that the regime's forces do not return to the areas where the forces of these two parties are deployed, by standing up to Russian and Iranian attempts to expand, whether through joint understandings and agreements with these two parties or through direct or indirect military deterrence through military and logistical support to local allies such as opposition factions or "SDF" to repel these attempts.

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