

Map of airports in Syria



جسور للدراسات
JUSOOR FOR STUDIES

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Analytical Maps

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Introduction:

In Syria, there are 55 airports, most of which are military airbases. These airports are of great importance because they are symbols of sovereignty and are critically used. They are used as bases for the air forces, one of the most important factors of military supremacy, which has a major role in extending control and influence during combat operations in Syria. Moreover, they have turned into major bases for various types of combat, as fortified command posts, with a strong structure, and large areas and facilities. They are also located in protected areas with a wide and open outer perimeter suitable for monitoring and defensive purposes.

Jusoor Center for Studies, therefore publishes this analytical map entitled: **Map of Airports in Syria**, which covers the various types of civil and military airports and others for special operations, such as agricultural and paragliding purposes. The covered airports have been classified according to their types and functions as an airport or as merely a military base without landing and taking off operations.

These airports are drawn on the map within the areas of control of local actors who, during the previous years, fought major battles to control the various airports. When the map of control became stable two years ago, most of these airports turned into major bases for external forces supporting local actors, especially Russia and the US-led international coalition, who use the airports as military bases for warplanes and as control and command bases for their forces operating in Syria. Then it could be noted that Iran is greatly interested in the main civilian airports of Damascus and Aleppo to use them in civil and military transportation. Also, Iran largely focuses on most of the airports in regime-controlled areas as major military bases for the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), operating within Syria.

This map comes to depict for researchers, experts and observers, investigating the Syrian issue the distribution of airports within the areas of control and influence. It is vital to study the infrastructure that affects the readiness of these airports as air bases, then the various interests achieved by the forces controlling these airports, their plans to expand and develop them, and their strategic objectives.

First, the research methodology

The database adopted by the Jusoor Center for Studies has been used for the posts and bases of foreign forces in Syria, given that most of the airports are bases for the international alliance, for Russia or for Iran, and to a lesser extent for Turkey, which relies on Turkish airports within its borders close to its areas of operations.

The exact locations of the airports are accurately determined through satellite imagery. After that, the points been plotted on the map within the areas of control and influence of local actors. Through field surveys and direct communication with closed sources, the database was filled in by specifying the type of airport, and the controlling party, for each local and international actors.

Bearing in mind that the map distinguishes with the term “active” airports used for landing and taking off aircraft of all kinds from those used as military bases without being used for civil or military aviation operations, or neglected airports without any use, such as some agricultural airports.

This map covers the whole airports in Syria, regardless of differences in size, importance, number of runways, and infrastructure in each one.

It is sufficient to specify the type of airport, its readiness and the nature of use.

The map monitors the airports in Syria in their current state in early April 2022, keeping in mind that there would be always percentage errors. The map is sufficient to specify the type of airport, its readiness and the nature of use.

Second: The distribution of airports according to their types among the governorates

It is noted in the map that there are very few civilian airports in Syria; There is only Damascus International Airport, Aleppo International Airport, and Qamishli Airport, which is used for civil and military aviation operations. There was supposed to be a fourth airport within the list of the civilian airports: Bassel al-Assad International Airport in Latakia, but since 2011 it has gradually turned into a military airport used by the regime forces. Later, when the Russian forces intervened in Syria in 2015, it became a Russian air base known as "Hmeimim airbase".

Although Damascus International Airport is classified as a civilian airport, it is often used extensively for military purposes by Iranian forces, such as transporting fighters, commanders, weapons and ammunition on civilian cargo planes.

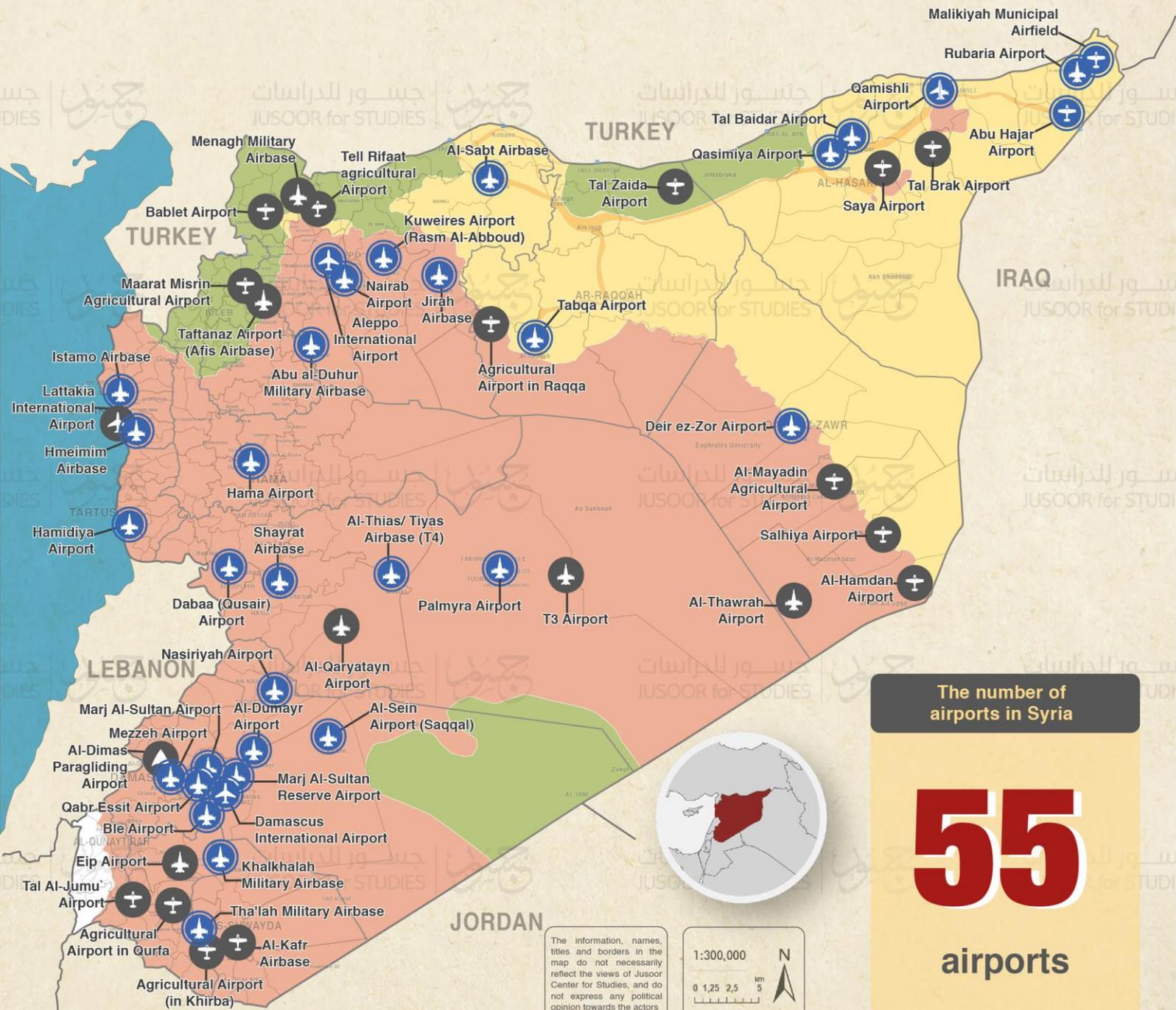
While the military airports are concentrated in Damascus and its countryside (Rif Dimashq Governorate), there are just few ones in the other governorates like Homs and Aleppo. They are distributed in close geographical proximity in the rest of the governorates, with the exception of Quneitra governorate, where there are no airports over there. The governorate of Daraa is an exception despite it has an old and ineffective helicopter airfield as well as two ineffective agricultural airports, it does not have any airport at the moment.

In addition, Tartus has only one airport, which has been developed by the Russian forces to protect the port of Tartus, which the Russians control over. Tartus airport that is called "Al-Hamidiyah Airport" is an airport for helicopters only.

It is noted that most of the agricultural airports in Syria are ineffective as agricultural airports, Khirba and al-Kafr airbases in Suwayda governorate, agricultural airport in Raqqa governorate, Maarat Misrin agricultural airport in Idlib governorate, and Tal Rifaat agricultural airport in Aleppo governorate. They are all ineffective and their runways are not used. On the other hand, Al-Malikiyah Agricultural Airport and Abu Hajar Agricultural Airport in Al-Hasakah Governorate are used by US forces as military air bases. Also, the runways of Al-Hamdan Agricultural Airport and Al-Mayadin Agricultural Airport in Deir ez-Zor Governorate are used by Russian and Iranian forces for military purposes in very few cases.

MAP OF AIRPORTS IN SYRIA

April, 2022



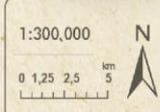
The number of airports in Syria

55

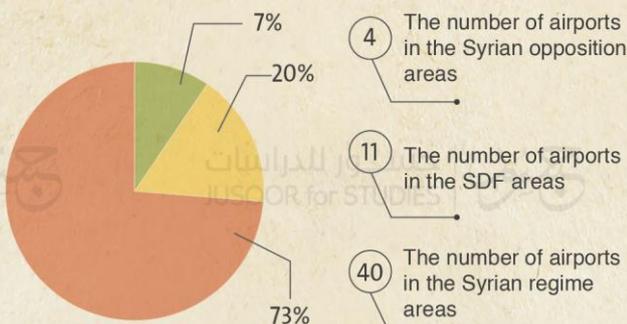
airports



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Distribution of airports by areas of control



The map keys

- SDF-held areas
- Syrian regime-held areas
- Syrian opposition forces-held areas
- ✈ Operational airport
- ✈ Non-functional airport
- ✈ Military airport
- ✈ Civilian airport
- ▲ Paragliding airport
- ✈ Agricultural airport
- ✈ Military & Civilian airport

Third: Table of Airports sorted by governorates

• In Damascus and its countryside (Rif Dimashq Governorate)

| | Airports' name | Locally held by: | Utilization | Readiness as an airport |
|----|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Damascus International Airport | Syrian regime | Civilian | Functional |
| 2 | Al-Sein Airport (Saqqal) | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 3 | Al-Dumayr Airport | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 4 | Mezzeh Airport | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 5 | Nasiriyah Airport | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 6 | Ble Airport | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 7 | Qabr Essit Airport | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 8 | Marj Al-Sultan Airport | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 9 | Marj Al-Sultan Reserve Airport | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 10 | Al-Dimas Paragliding Airport | Syrian regime | Paragliding | Non-functional |

• In Aleppo

| | Airports' name | Locally held by: | Utilization | Readiness as an airport |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Aleppo International Airport | Syrian regime | Civilian | Functional |
| 2 | Nairab Airport | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 3 | Jirah Airbase | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 4 | Kuweires Airport (Rasm Al-Abboud) | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 5 | Al-Sabt Airport | SDF | Military | Functional |
| 6 | Menagh Airbase | SDF | Military | Non-functional |
| 7 | Tell Rifaat agricultural Airport | SDF | Agricultural | Non-functional |
| 8 | Bablet Airport | Syrian Opposition | Agricultural | Non-functional |

• In Al-Hasakah

| | Airports' name | Locally held by: | Utilization | Readiness as an airport |
|---|--------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Qamishli Airport | Syrian regime | Civilian/ Military | Functional |
| 2 | Robariye Airport | SDF | Military | Functional |
| 3 | Tell Beydar Airport | SDF | Military | Functional |
| 4 | Al Qasimia Airport | SDF | Military | Functional |
| 5 | Al-Malikiyah Municipal Airport | SDF | Agricultural | Functional |
| 6 | Abu Hajar Airport | SDF | Agricultural | Functional |

| | | | | |
|---|------------------|-----|--------------|----------------|
| 7 | Safaya Airport | SDF | Agricultural | Non-functional |
| 8 | Tal Brak Airport | SDF | Agricultural | Non-functional |

- In Homs

| | Airports' name | Locally held by: | Utilization | Readiness as an airport |
|---|------------------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Dabaa (Qusair) Airport | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 2 | Al-Thias/ Tiyas Airbase (T4) | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 3 | Shayrat Airbase | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 4 | Palmyra Airport | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 5 | T3 Airbase | Syrian regime | Military | Non-functional |
| 6 | Al-Qaryatayn Airport | Syrian regime | Military | Non-functional |

- In Deir ez-Zor

| | Airports' name | Locally held by: | Utilization | Readiness as an airport |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Deir Ez-Zor Airport | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 2 | Al-Thawrah Airport | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 3 | Al-Mayadin Agricultural Airport | Syrian regime | Agricultural | Functional |
| 4 | Al Hamdan Airport | Syrian regime | Agricultural | Functional |
| 5 | Salhiya Airport | Syrian regime | Agricultural | Non-functional |

- As-Suwayda

| | Airports' name | Locally held by: | Utilization | Readiness as an airport |
|---|----------------------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Khalkhalah Military Airbase | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 2 | Tha'lah Military Airbase | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 3 | Al-Kafr Military Airport | Syrian regime | Agricultural | Functional |
| 4 | Agricultural Airport (in Khirba) | Syrian regime | Agricultural | Non-functional |

- In Latakia

| | Airports' name | Locally held by: | Utilization | Readiness as an airport |
|---|---|------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Hmeimim Airbase | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 2 | Istamo Airbase | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 3 | Latakia International Airport (Bassel Al-Assad) | Syrian regime | Civilian | Non-functional |

- In Raqqa

| | Airports' name | Locally held by: | Utilization | Readiness as an airport |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Tabqa Airport | SDF | Military | Functional |
| 2 | Agricultural Airport in Raqqa | Syrian regime | Agricultural | Non-functional |
| 3 | Tal Zaida Airport | Syrian Opposition | Agricultural | Non-functional |

- In Idlib

| | Airports' name | Locally held by: | Utilization | Readiness as an airport |
|---|------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Abu al-Duhur Military Airbase | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |
| 2 | Taftanaz Airport (Afis Airbase) | Syrian Opposition | Military | Non-functional |
| 3 | Maarat Misrin Agricultural Airport | Syrian Opposition | Agricultural | Non-functional |

- In Daraa

| | Airports' name | Locally held by: | Utilization | Readiness as an airport |
|---|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Eip Airport | Syrian regime | Military | Non-functional |
| 2 | Tal Al-Jamou Airport | Syrian regime | Agricultural | Non-functional |
| 3 | Agricultural Airport in Qurfa | Syrian regime | Agricultural | Non-functional |

- In Hama

| | Airports' name | Locally held by: | Utilization | Readiness as an airport |
|---|----------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Hama Airport | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |

- In Tartous

| | Airports' name | Locally held by: | Utilization | Readiness as an airport |
|---|------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Hamidiya Airport | Syrian regime | Military | Functional |

Fourth: Foreign forces' control over the airports in Syria

There are only 13 airports in Syria where there are no US, Turkish, Russian or Iranian foreign forces within:

- Bassel Al-Assad International Airport, which is a non-functional civilian airport in Lattakia governorate, Al-Qaryatayn military airport in Homs Governorate, the Agricultural airport in Raqqa Governorate, the agricultural airport in Khirba and Al-Kafr airport in As-Suwayda Governorate, Tal Al-Jumu` agricultural airport in Daraa Governorate, all of which are non-functional airports and controlled by the regime forces as military bases.
- Menagh Military Airbase in Aleppo Governorate, Tell Rifaat Agricultural Airport in Aleppo Governorate, Safaya Agricultural Airport and Tal Barak Agricultural Airport in Al-Hasakah, which are non-functional airports and are controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) as military bases.
- Maarat Misrin Airport in Idlib, Bablet Airport in Afrin of Aleppo, and Tal Zaida Airport in Raqqa, which are agricultural airports that are non-functional. They are controlled by opposition forces as military bases.
- The rest of the 42 airports in Syria are controlled by external forces, whether as airports or as military bases, as follows:

1. The International Coalition:

The US-led International Coalition forces control 6 airports in Syria: Al-Malikiyah Municipal Airfield and Abu Hajar Airport, which are two agricultural airports in Al-Hasakah Governorate, and Rubaria Military Airport in Al-Hasakah Governorate. These three airports are controlled by the International Coalition forces without any presence of SDF inside them. The fourth airport is controlled by both the SDF and the Coalition forces, which is Al-Sabt military airport in Aleppo governorate, as well as the fifth and sixth airports, which are Al-Qasimiyah Military Airport and Tal Baidar Military Airport, both of which are in Al-Hasakah Governorate, and both the SDF and the Coalition forces control them.

2. Turkey:

Due to the proximity of the Turkish border to the Syrian opposition areas, the Turkish Air Force does not use the only 4 airports in the opposition areas. However, the Turkish forces use Taftanaz Military Airport (Afis Air Base) as a military base and not as an airport. It is an airport for helicopters only and is located in Idlib Governorate.

3. Russia:

The Russian forces control many airports and are the forces that control air traffic and air defenses the most. The Russian forces use 24 airports in Syria, two of which are used by the Russians alone without any presence of the regime or Iran in them, namely the airbases of Hmeimim and Istamo, both of which are in Latakia Governorate, and the third is Latakia International Airport, which is already non-functional, which is controlled by the Russian and regime forces.

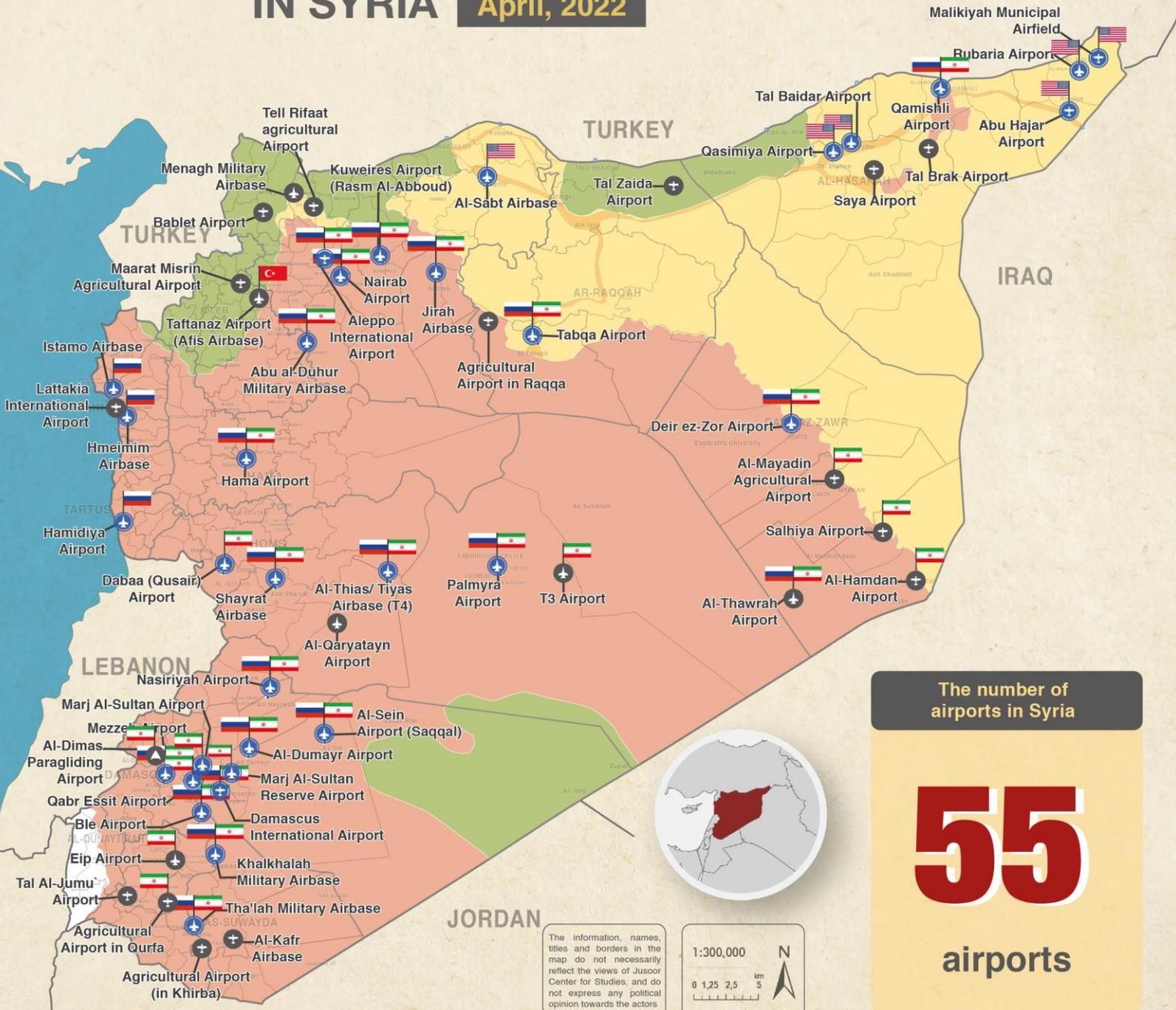
On the other hand, the Russian forces with the Iranian and the regime forces jointly control the rest of the airports: 6 airports in Damascus and its countryside (Rif Dimashq Governorate), 4 in Aleppo, 3 in Homs, 2 in Deir ez-Zor and As-Suwayda, and 1 in each of Hama, Al-Hasakah, Raqqa, Idlib and Tartus. In the airport of Tartus, however, there are Russian forces as well as the regime forces, with no presence to the Iranian forces.

4. Iran:

With the exception of Iran's use of civil aviation for military purposes, it does not use the Syrian airspace, but it is working to impose its control and influence within the airports of all kinds as strategic military bases. The Iranian forces are present in 31 airports, all of which it shares control with the regime forces, while it shares control 20 airports with the Russian forces; this provides them with protection from Israeli targeting at those airports.

THE MAP OF FOREIGN FORCES' CONTROL OVER THE AIRPORTS IN SYRIA

April, 2022

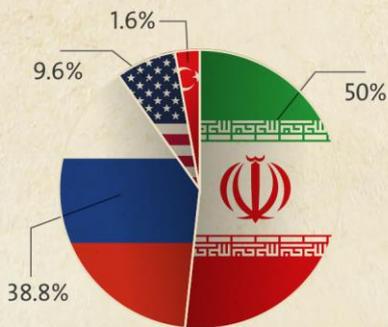


The number of airports in Syria

55

airports

The locations of the airports by the foreign forces' control



Iranian forces in **31** airports
 Russian forces in **24** airports
 US-Led International Coalition forces in **6** airports
 Turkish forces in **one** airport

The map keys

- SDF-held areas
- Syrian regime-held areas
- Syrian opposition forces-held areas
- Operational airport
- Non-functional airport
- Russian forces-held airports
- Iranian forces-held airports
- US-Led International Coalition forces-held airports
- Turkish forces-held airports

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1:300,000

0 1,25 2,5 5 km



Conclusion:

The objectives of controlling airports of all kinds are not limited to using them as bases for aircraft only. There has been continuous competition between local and consequently international actors to control the airports as multi-use military bases that are sufficiently fortified as command centers for forces that are widely distributed across the Syrian map.

Civilian airports, although few in Damascus, Aleppo, and al-Hasakah are vital and important centers that were at least in Damascus and Aleppo the subject of great competition between Russia and Iran; especially as each of them is seeking to expand commercial activity in the issues of reconstruction and the return of foreign traffic to and from Syria. This is added to that Iran is using civilian aircraft to fly military personnel, weapons and equipment to Syria, in addition to the security control that Iran achieved by controlling the local forces that run the airport, as it succeeded in that at Beirut International Airport before that.

On the other hand, the competition for control of military airports is related to the distribution of areas of influence and control on the Syrian map, according to understandings between external powers. For instance, the Russian forces continue to try to get the Iranian forces out of Palmyra's airports, and at the same time allow them to expand at Al-Jirah/Jarrah military airbase in eastern Aleppo. The Iranian forces are present at Hama Military Airport in coordination with the Russian forces there, while Iran does not control any airport on the Syrian coast.

The rest of the international actors, such as the International Coalition and Turkey, they do not care about airports, as Russia and Iran do; US forces maintain a limited qualitative presence in Syria and depend on the Coalition's bases in the region and not only in Syria, while Turkey has air bases and airports along its vast southern border with Syria.

The infrastructure of military or civilian airports in Syria is also considered weak as almost all the airports are affected because of the battles and bombing. The airports' infrastructure is weak because it also lacks financial capacity and possibilities to be rehabilitated, specifically after the "Caesar" law that targets aviation and its facilities before anything else.



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