

Russian and Iranian Military Operations in Support of Syrian Government Forces, Retreat of ISIS and Al-Nusra

Syria-Iraq Battlespace

By [South Front](#)

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The Syrian Arab Army (SAA) in coordination with Hezbollah, the National Defense Forces (NDF) and several Iraqi and Iranian paramilitary units captured the village of Talaylat after a fierce battle with al-Nusra militants supported by Ahrar Al-Sham, Harakat Nouriddeen Al-Zinki, and Liwaa Suqour Al-Sham.

The militants pushed from this sector are retreating towards the Aleppo province border with Idlib. During the battles in southern Aleppo the SAA killed Mohammad Hamdoush. He was the lead field commander of Liwaa Al-Mughrabi (Moroccan Brigades), which is the Al-Nusra branch comprised of only Moroccan combatants.

The Syrian government is marshaling its forces in the city of Hama to repel the terrorists' advances. Since the Syrian forces lost momentum the terrorists launched a counteroffensive and seized territory in the northern part of the province, including the important town of Morek.

The events in Hama province could show the limits to Russian and Iranian military support. It's clear that the Russian and Iranian efforts could be not enough to comprehensively turn the tide in the government's favor fast. Russia is providing air, intelligence and coordination support and materiel, but it is not providing what the Syrian government also needs: dependable manpower.

So, this will be apparently used by their opponents given how dim the prospects are for negotiating a settlement to the conflict. Meanwhile, mainstream media and think tanks will argue that Russia and Iran have found themselves involved in a difficult war without a clear end in sight to weaken the diplomatic positions of the alternative anti-ISIS coalition.

Indeed, it is little surprise that one month of the Russian military operations in Syria isn't enough to change the situation at the battlefield crucially. Nonetheless, the Syrian forces supported by Russian warplanes have been gaining momentum since the early October. The Syrian government will definitely strengthen its military and negotiating capacity while the Russian operation is continuing.

Furthermore, the Russian activity in Syria has pushed the US to start real anti-ISIS activity in Syria and Iraq. De-facto, the planned US-backed offensive on Raqqa is a result of the

Russian presence in the region. Thus, it's wrong to estimate the influence of the Russian military operation ignoring the ongoing developments conducted by its existence.

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