

Syrian Army Prepares for Escalation in Golan Heights

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On September 21, an EW unit of the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) intercepted and took control of a large quadcopter-style unmanned aerial vehicle over the town of Erneh, near the contact line between the SAA and the Israeli-occupied part of the Golan Heights.

According to local sources, the UAV was likely operated by Israel. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) used similar UAVs in its attack on a Hezbollah media center in Lebanon's Beirut on August 25. In own turn, Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee, a spokesman for the Israeli military, claimed that the UAV was not belonging to the IDF. Lt. Col. Adraee said that the UAV may have been "Iranian".

Following the incident, the SAA has reinforced its positions near the Golan Heights.

The situation is escalating in the southern part of the Idlib de-escalation zone, where militants have resumed their attacks on government positions.

On September 21, the SAA shot down an armed UAV supposedly launched by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham near the Jubb Ramlah helicopter base in Homs province. Meanwhile, militants shelled SAA positions near Qalat Shalaf in northern Lattakia. The escalation followed reports that Hayat Tahrir al-Sham has deployed fresh reinforcements, including infantry units and battle tanks to the area.

In the period from September 20 to September 22, the SAA carried out a series of operations against ISIS cells in southern Raqqah. According to pro-government sources, especially heavy clashes erupted southwest of Rusafa. At least 5 ISIS members were killed and their vehicle was destroyed there. The rest of ISIS members was forced to withdraw towards the Homs desert.

The increase of ISIS activity in southern Raqqah is an alarming signal showing that the terrorist threat remains one of the key factors influencing the situation in Syria.

On September 22, a military camp of the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) in Iraq's province of al-Anbar was targeted by a unknown warplane, according to local sources. The targeted camp was reportedly belonging to the PMU's 13th Brigade, commonly known as the al-Tufuf Brigade.

As always, the attack was attributed to Israel. Nonetheless, there is still no evidence to confirm with a high degree confidence that the recent series of attacks on PMU positions in Iraq and near the Syrian-Iraqi border was indeed carried out by Israel.

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