

## Video: Daraa's Month-long Saga Comes to an End

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*The Syrian Arab Army (SAA) has besieged a part of Daraa city known as “Daraa al-Balad” since late June.*

*Syrian authorities have been pressuring former rebels in Daraa al-Balad to accept a new reconciliation agreement with more demands.*

Damascus wants the former rebels to hand over their personal arms and wanted personnel as well as to allow search operations and the establishment of four permanent military posts inside Daraa al-Balad.

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The new demands are meant to improve security in Daraa city and its outskirts. The SAA made a large deployment to exert more pressure, however, this is more a show of force than any actual threat of an operation.

Initially, the former rebels refused to give any concessions and conclude a new agreement.

According to the Horan Free League and other pro-opposition sources, Russia asked the former rebels in Daraa al-Balad, to hand over 200 pieces of personal arms on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. On June 25, warplanes of the Russian Aerospace Forces made a “warning pass” over Daraa.

Despite this, former rebels, represented by the Daraa al-Balad Committee, rejected the Russian request. Some said that their arms are meant for self-defense, while others claimed that carrying arms is just a part of their traditions.

That is when the SAA siege on the part of the city began.

The SAA move provoked former rebels in the northern Daraa countryside to attack a number of positions and checkpoints of the Syrian military and intelligence inside and around the town of Nawa. No losses were reported as a result of the attacks.

Ultimately, however, on July 25<sup>th</sup>, a new agreement was reached.

Under the agreement, the SAA will lift its siege on Daraa al-Balad which was imposed in mid-June. All roads leading to the area will be opened by July 28<sup>th</sup>

Furthermore, the army will establish three permanent military positions inside Daraa al-Balad.

On the other side, the former rebels will hand over a part of their personnel arms. Around 100 gunmen will also join the reconciliation process.

Leading up to July 28<sup>th</sup>, when the siege is to be lifted, SAA deployed a major reinforcement to Daraa. On July 25, several units of the SAA, including the elite units of the 4th Division, were also deployed in the governorate's center.

Their deployment is reportedly aimed at helping secure the region and implement the new agreement in Daraa al-Balad.

*Security does need improvement, as many of the former rebels refuse to fight against ISIS, and sometimes Russia is putting pressure on them withholding salaries it was paying for that specific purpose. As such extremism might be brewing.*

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