

Video: Complex and Unstable Geopolitics in Syria. Further Escalation in Southern Idlib

By [South Front](#)

Global Research, November 19, 2019

[South Front](#) 18 November 2019

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Military and WMD](#), [US NATO](#)

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Over the past days, southern Idlib, southern Raqqah, northwestern al-Hasakah remained the main points of tensions in Syria.

On November 16, the Syrian Army repelled an attack by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and its allies on the hill of Khaznah in southeastern Idlib. According to pro-government sources, at least 7 militants were killed in the clashes.

The Syrian Army, backed up by the Russian Aerospace Forces, liberated the Khaznah hill and the village of Luwaybidah on November 14 in an attempt to expand a buffer zone between militants' positions and nearby civilian areas. Despite this, attacks in the area continued. If government forces want to remove the threat of shelling by militants to nearby villages, they will have to push deeper into southern Idlib.

On November 17, the Russian Aerospace Forces delivered a series of strikes on positions of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham near Maarzita and Misherfah eliminating several strong points.

On November 15, the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces retook the villages of Bir Tmah and Sa'dah from Turkey's Syrian National Army. On November 15 and 16 clashes were also ongoing north of Tell Tamir.



[Watch the video here.](#)

On November 17, a Russian military convoy deployed in the Tell Tamir area. According to reports, the Russians will establish an observation post in the area as a part of the local de-escalation deal. Under the same deal, SDF units will reportedly withdraw from the town and Turkish-backed militants will abandon several villages north of Tell Tamir.

In the period from November 14 to November 15, Israel, the United States, Germany, Italy and Greece participated in the Blue Flag 2019 military drill at the Uvda Air Force base north of Israel's Eilat. According to the Israeli Defense Forces, the drill involved 70 aircraft, including F-35I, and approximately 1,000 personnel.

The storyline guiding the exercise was based on two fictional neighboring countries, one blue and the other red. The scenarios included large aircraft formations, including fighter jets, remotely piloted aerial vehicles, transport aircraft and helicopters. The blue force's mission was protecting Israel's skies and overcoming the red's air power and air defenses.

Several pro-Israeli media outlets and military experts reported that the Red's Patriot surface-to-air missile systems simulated Russia's S-300 and S-400 air defense systems, which were successfully overcome during the exercise.

The success demonstrated by US-made Patriot missiles in Saudi Arabia, where they defended a half of Saudi oil production from Houthi strikes, is widely-known on the international level. So, there are no reasons to doubt the result of the drill.

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