

Video: Islamic State Still Has 20,000 Fighters in Syria and Iraq

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The Syrian Arab Army (SAA) and its allies entered the Sukhna gas field located in less than 2km from the strategic ISIS-held town at the Palmyra-Deir Ezzor road. Heavy clashes are reportedly now ongoing in the gas field area. If government troops secure it, their next step will be to enter the town of Sukhna itself.

In the province of Raqqah, the SAA Tiger Forces and tribal forces liberated the Wadi 'Ubayd oil-field and further advanced in the direction of the so-called Bishri Triangle in order to get control over this important logistical site. Clashes near Subkah and Ghanim Ali are ongoing.

In Raqqah city, the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have made a significant progress against ISIS in Nazlat Shehadeh district and captured Al-Mustafa Mosque that had been used as a defense point by ISIS. ISIS claimed that up to 10 SDF members died in clashes and a VBIED attack. However, the terrorist group has lost about 50% of the city to the SDF.

On Thursday, spokesman for the US-led coalition Col. Ryan Dillon revealed the current numbers of ISIS fighters in Syria and Iraq.

According to Pentagon, about 20,000 ISIS fighters still control several areas in the two countries.

Col. Dillon said that between 5,000 and 10,000 fighters are now in the middle Euphrates Valley area running from Deir Ezzor to the Iraq-Syria border region. He also revealed that the number of remaining ISIS fighters in Raqqah is less than 2000.

ISIS reportedly has 1,000 fighters in Tal Afar, 1,000 fighters in Hawija, and 1,000 fighters in Qaim area on the Syrian-Iraqi border.

Col. Dillon added that several ISIS commanders were killed over the past months, including Abu Sulayman al-Iraqi, senior propaganda official, Bassam al-Jayfus, ISIS terror attack funds, Ibrahim al-Ansari, ISIS propaganda official, Abu Ali al-Janubi, senior media director, Abu-Sayf al-'Isawi, ISIS media emir, Abu-Khattab al-Rawi, another ISIS media emir, and Rayaan Meshal, head and founder of the ISIS-linked Amaq News Agency.

Col. Dillon added that the coalition stopped supporting Shuhada al-Qaryatayn Brigade. Col. Dillon said the group patrolled areas outside of the de-escalation zone and engaged in activities not related to fighting ISIS without the permission of the US-led coalition

leadership. He added that the coalition only supports forces committed to fighting ISIS.

On July 23, Shuhada al-Qaryatayn Brigade announced that it had cut off its relationship with the coalition because it had demanded to stop attacks against the SAA. Shuhada al-Qaryatayn Brigade was one of the largest US-backed groups deployed the At Tanf base at the Syrian-Iraqi border.

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