



2.2.3. Security trends

Following almost daily hostilities during the civil war, Idlib started to experience a ‘period of calm’⁵⁴³ and relative stability as of March 2025.⁵⁴⁴ Nevertheless, during the reference period of this report, armed clashes erupted between Firqat al-Ghuraba and forces of the Syrian Transitional Government on 21 and 22 October 2025.⁵⁴⁵ On 23 October, Uzbek foreign fighters arrived in support of Firqat al-Ghuraba,⁵⁴⁶ resulting in a ‘multi-faction battle’.⁵⁴⁷ A ceasefire was negotiated between the militants and government forces,⁵⁴⁸ which reportedly allowed Mol forces to enter the camp.⁵⁴⁹ Other confrontations involving Uzbek militants occurred at the beginning of May 2026.⁵⁵⁰ Syrian authorities arrested 16 Uzbek fighters in Idlib⁵⁵¹ after a raid on a robbery suspect’s home⁵⁵² triggered an armed stand-off at a Criminal Security headquarters. ⁵⁵³ According to sources, the integration of foreign fighters into the new Syrian security forces ‘entails risks,’⁵⁵⁴ and there are growing tensions regarding loyalties and autonomy.⁵⁵⁵

Idlib city as well as Idlib countryside experienced an escalation of ISIL operations in late 2025.⁵⁵⁶ On 1 December 2025, the Mol reported of two operations in the north of the governorate and in the west of Idlib city which targeted cells affiliated with ISIL.⁵⁵⁷ On 16 December, Syrian forces dismantled another ISIL cell, which was associated with a series of attacks targeting security and military patrols in northwestern Syria⁵⁵⁸ since November 2025.⁵⁵⁹ Furthermore, many of the roughly 6 000 foreigners with links to ISIL who were previously held in al-Hol camp reportedly travelled to Idlib and Aleppo after control of the camp was taken over by the Syrian government from SDF forces in January 2026, sparking security concerns.⁵⁶⁰ In March 2026, two ISIL attacks were reported in Idlib.⁵⁶¹

After several years in the role of a ‘protective power’ for the Idlib governorate – preventing Assad’s forces from retaking the area from the HTS –⁵⁶² Türkiye’s focus shifted away from Idlib, which had come to hold less strategic significance, towards northern Aleppo and the Kurdish conflict.⁵⁶³

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