



2.9.2. Territorial control and main armed actors

Territorial control in Deir Ez-Zor governorate changed during the reporting period. As of November 2025, the northern and north-eastern parts of Deir Ez-Zor governorate, which border Raqqa governorate to the west and Hasaka governorate to the north and north-east, were mapped by ISW and CTP as being under the control of the SDF. The area around the Euphrates River, which runs through the middle of the governorate from the western border with Raqqa to the south-eastern border with neighbouring Iraq, was mapped as being under the control of the transitional government. Another strip of land, stretching from Deir Ez-Zor city in the centre of the governorate to its western border with Homs, was also mapped as being under the transitional government's control.⁹³⁹ Three small areas along the Euphrates, including in Al-Mayadin, As Salhiyah and Abu Kamal, were marked as having pro-Assad remnants in spring 2025.⁹⁴⁰ The remaining areas of the governorate located in the desert zone in the south and the west of the governorate were mapped as 'Lost Regime Territory'.⁹⁴¹ By mid-February 2026, the Syrian Transitional Government had secured the governorate's former SDF territories, leaving no pro-Assad pockets behind.⁹⁴² The 66th and 86th Divisions of the Syrian army were the principal formations present in Deir Ez-Zor governorate.⁹⁴³ A part of the 86th Division, the former Liberation and Construction Movement (LCM), controlled the frontlines with the SDF in the governorate.⁹⁴⁴

On 17 January 2026, pro-government forces, including tribal militias launched an offensive against remaining SDF checkpoints and positions in the governorate.⁹⁴⁵ Arab tribes officially withdrew their support for the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES) and recognised the transitional government in Damascus, with important tribes⁹⁴⁶ in the governorate defecting from SDF,⁹⁴⁷ and switching sides.⁹⁴⁸ Following the loss of Deir Ez-Zor, analysts reportedly viewed the YPG/YPJ as the only remaining core components of the SDF.⁹⁴⁹ On 18 January 2026, the SDF agreed to the administrative and military handover of Deir Ez-Zor to the transitional government and the integration of former SDF military and security personnel into the transitional government's ministries. By 20 January 2026, Deir Ez-Zor was considered essentially secured by pro-government forces.⁹⁵⁰ DAANES governance in Deir Ez-Zor had relied on an alliance with local Arab tribes, whose cooperation with the Kurds was driven less by political conviction than by opportunistic motives. After the Assad regime collapsed, the basis for this alliance had disappeared.⁹⁵¹

Deir Ez-Zor governorate remained a main theatre of ISIL operations⁹⁵² and counterterrorism efforts⁹⁵³ during the reporting period.

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