

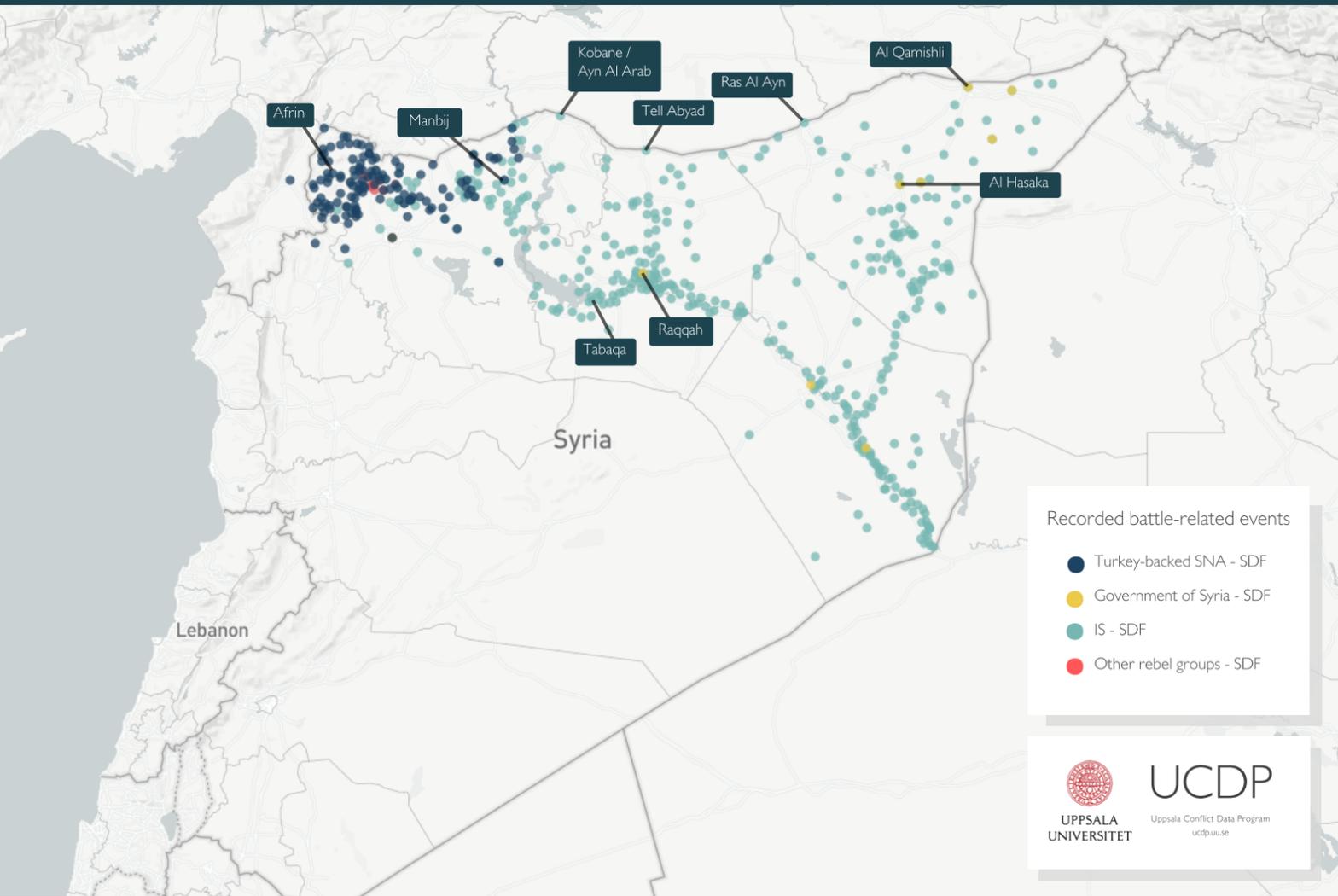


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UCDP Bulletin

OLD ENEMIES, NEW BATTLEFIELD

Conflict between the Government of Turkey and the Syrian Democratic Forces (October 2015 - September 2019)



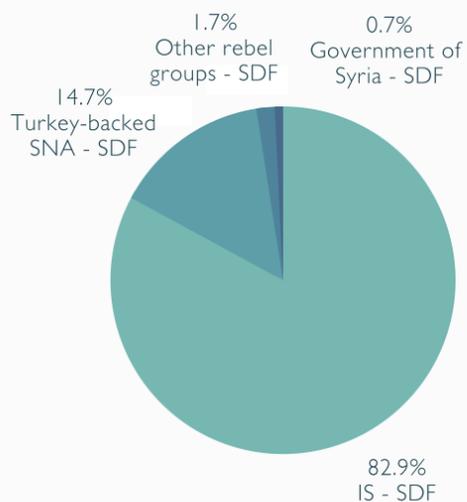
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Please note that this data has not been published yet. There might be minor changes before the release of the dataset.

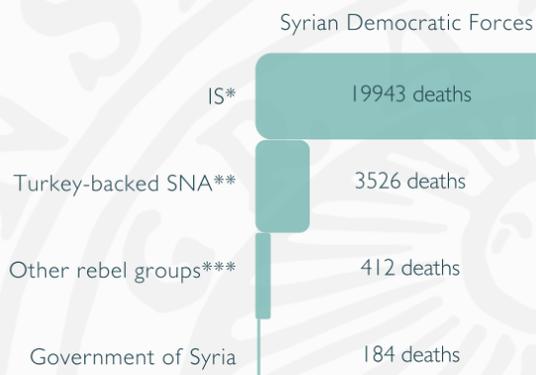
On 23 March 2019, Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) took control over IS's last stronghold in eastern Syria. By that date, SDF managed to control most of IS-held territories in that region. While this marked a big win for the group, it came with a price. The developments increased Turkey's concerns, particularly as it sees YPG -the main component of the SDF- as an offshoot of the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), an armed group that has fought an intrastate armed conflict against the Government of Turkey since the 1980s.

In early 2018, Turkey initiated Operation Olive Branch to capture Afrin in northwestern Syria and by October 2019, with the launch of Operation Peace Spring, Turkey had proven to be a significant threat against the SDF. According to UCDP data, the conflict between the Turkey-backed SNA (previously Hawar Kilis Operation Room) and SDF caused over three thousand battle-related deaths from October 2015 -when the SDF was formed- to September 2019. With the latest operation against the group, the SDF turned to the Russia-supported Syrian government for help. Although the Government of Syria does not see SDF as a legitimate actor and the two parties disagree on several crucial issues, they have retained a relatively calm relationship throughout the Syrian civil war. That allowed both actors to keep an open line of communications, mostly through Russia, which made it possible for them to quickly negotiate and reach an agreement.

Percentages of all SDF-involved battle-related deaths by its opponent



SDF-involved battle-related deaths



* IS-SDF fatalities include deaths caused by the international coalition supporting SDF.
** Previously coded as Hawar Kilis Operation Room by UCDP.
*** Other rebel groups: Ahrar al-Sham, Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, Fatah Halab.



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The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) is the world's main provider of data on organized violence and the oldest ongoing data collection project for civil war, with a history of almost 40 years. Its definition of armed conflict has become the global standard of how conflicts are systematically defined and studied.

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