



Map of the Turkish presence in Syria

جسور للدراسات
JUSOOR FOR STUDIES



By: Bashir Nasrollah
Research assistant at Jusoor Center for Studies

Analytical Maps

October 2022



We are an independent research institution and a think tank specialized in information management, preparation of political, economic, and social studies and research. We are also interested in activities, events, and training to create mutual influence between officials, decision makers and all circles of influence and opinion at the local, regional and international levels. We also target all state specializations and development sectors related to the Syrian issue, to help reaching the goals and strategies through data, ideas and recommendations in a professional, realistic and accurate manner.



Preamble:

Türkiye laid the basic pillars of its military influence in Syrian territory, after carrying out the Euphrates Shield military operation jointly with the Syrian opposition factions against ISIS in August 2016.

Following the signing of the memorandum of de-escalation in 2017, the area that contains Turkish military points and bases expanded to include western Aleppo and some areas of Idlib and Hama countryside, with 129 bases and points by late 2022.

Türkiye's military involvement in the Syrian file clearly reflects that Ankara wants to take on the counterterrorism burdens on its direct borders. Over time, this has been turned into a guarantee, through which the Turkish army maintains its role as a guarantor in any Syrian political solution.

First: the map of military influence

Turkish forces are deploying in the governorates of al-Hasakah, Raqqa, Aleppo, Idlib, Latakia and Hama in interconnected points extending from the border strip towards the lines of contact between the areas under the control of the opposition and those controlled by the Syrian regime and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

The Turkish forces deployed in northern Syria have two main tasks: First, observation, which is, maintaining the ceasefire and preventing the opposition factions from being dragged into confrontations.

Second: Defensive; by forming a wall in the face of any attempts by the SDF and the regime to advance forward.

By the end of 2020, Türkiye withdrew 14 military points from the Idlib region whose missions were limited to observation under the de-escalation memorandum (2017); which meant no combat missions and lacked any supply lines or logistical support.

Türkiye started establishing combat points since the second half of 2018. It also continued to strengthen its positions, which indicates that Ankara was getting ready for a medium or long-term stay in Syria. Accordingly, it is noted that:

- The spread of many bases and points is concentrated in strategic locations, i.e. within strategic hills, such as al-Nabi Ayoub hill, south of Idlib, Jabal Sheikh Aqil in al-Bab, and Mount Bursaya in Azaz. Moreover, Türkiye started planning to expand these points and establish new bases in strategic areas such as the summit of Jabal al-Arba'een, south of Idlib.
- The Turkish forces are deploying within the military bases and points at full strength, whether battalions or brigades.



- Providing strategic military bases with various types of weapons that allow them to engage in defensive and offensive actions, like armored vehicles, air defense systems, and drone launch platforms, and equipping them with helipads for helicopters.
- Providing the necessary logistical needs for military bases and points, such as catering, clothing, and medical services and technical workshops to maintain the vehicles.

Politically, Türkiye, on several occasions during September and October 2022, confirmed that the withdrawal of Turkish forces from Syria is in the interest of the terrorist organizations; and it will not be advantageous to the Syrians or the Syrian regime forces.

Although Ankara affirmed in 2022 its desire to improve the level of relations with the regime, the Turkish government wanted the deployment of Turkish forces on Syrian territory to be a non-negotiable issue. In other words, Türkiye 's military presence should be based on a modified or new security agreement between the two sides.

It seems that Türkiye does not consider the opposition factions and the regime forces to be reliable sides on their own willing and capable to combat terrorist organizations, including the PKK. As such, Ankara is determined to stay and directly participate in such tasks or lead them by itself.

The deployment and intervention of Turkish forces in northern Syria, mandated by the Turkish Parliament since October 2, 2014 has been under a renewable mandate. This issue is not in dispute between the Turkish government and the Turkish opposition; because it is connected to combating terrorist organizations and addressing threats to the country's national security.

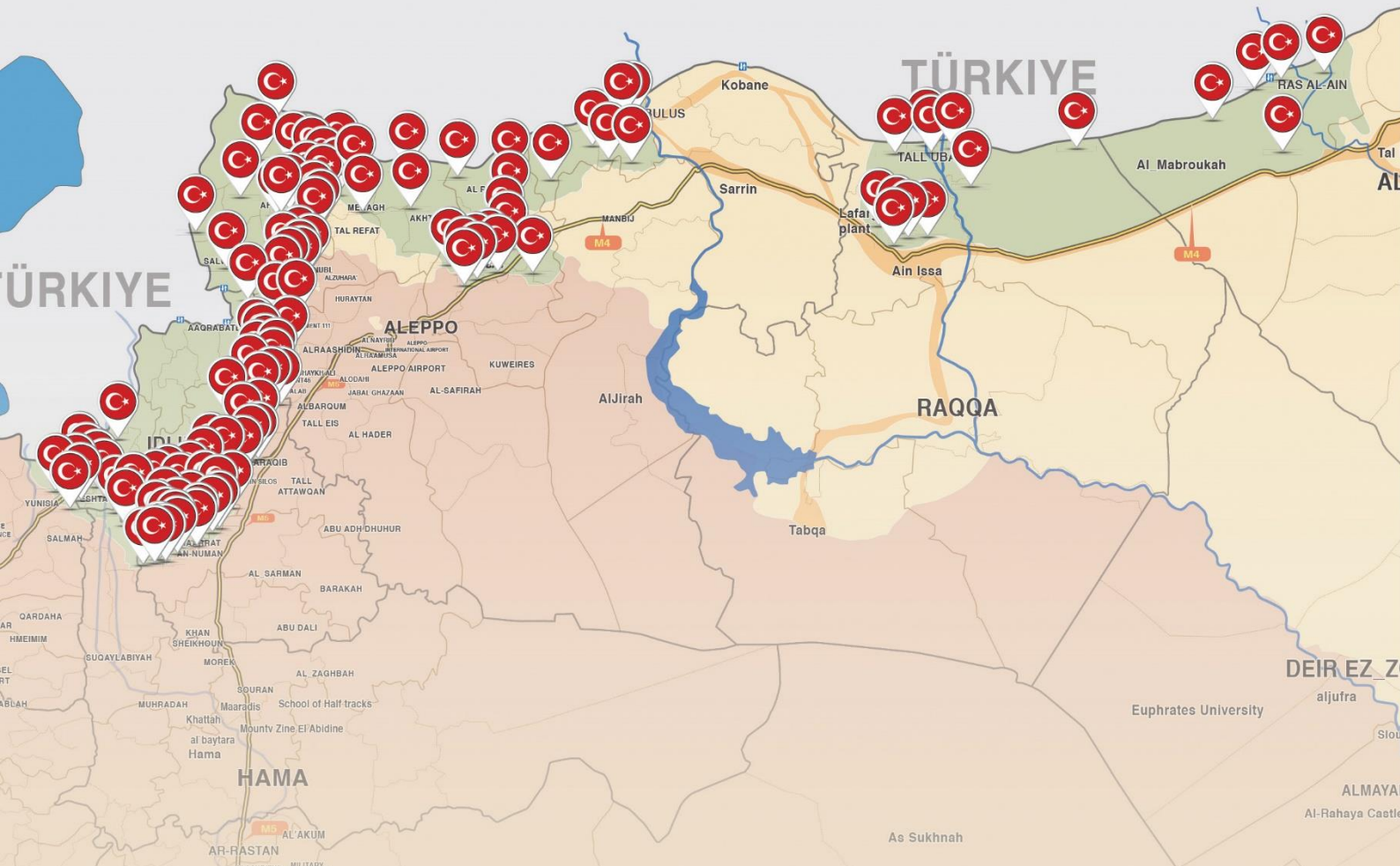
Therefore, it is not expected that there will be fundamental changes in the tasks of the Turkish forces on Syrian territory, regardless of the change that may occur in the political scene inside Türkiye after 2023 elections, as strategic decisions in this regard are taken at the level of the National Security Council, in which all Turkish institutions participate.

It is clear that the deployment of Turkish forces is linked to political and military developments on the Syrian territory; therefore the Turkish state will work to maintain this deployment until a sustainable solution to the Syrian file is reached. Such a solution should be resulting in an elected central government in Damascus that represents the segments of society, in addition to restructuring the army institution, on condition that both the central government and the army establishment maintain good relations with the Turkish side. This is to ensure Ankara's influence on the behavior of the Syrian future government, eliminate security threats on the Turkish border with Syria, and provide the possibility of facilitating the return of refugees.

Map of the Turkish presence in Syria

The military influence

October – 2022

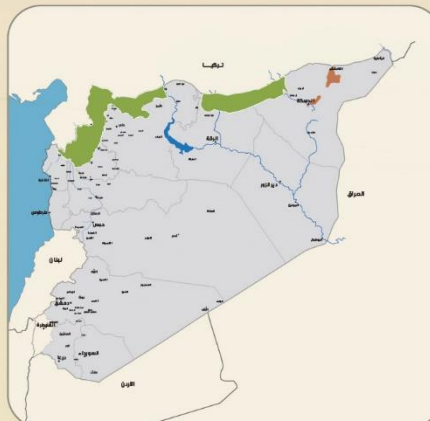


Map Keys

-  Syrian Opposition-Held Areas
-  Syrian Regime-Held Areas
-  SDF-Held Areas
-  Turkish military and security points

The number of Turkish military and security points is

129 points



1:300,000



0 1,25 2,5 5 km

The information, names, titles and borders in the map do not necessarily reflect the views of Jusoor Center for Studies, and do not express any political opinion towards the actors



Second: Maps of civil influence

With the Turkish military interference in Syria in 2017, Turkish engineers began identifying and marking houses and buildings that need reconstructing. They were so picky in putting marks in houses and buildings. This was read in the context of Türkiye's desire to let its companies get into Syria to contribute to the reconstruction of these areas. However, none of that took place. Those who actually carried out the maintenance works and reconstructions are the Syrian contractors, even if the building materials came from Türkiye.

Roads and other services such as electricity and water seemed very bad. Although the Turkish army had a great interest in paving and securing these roads to avoid attacks and enforce security in the region, matters did not actually go well. Jarablus was the only region provided with electricity, because it was a center for operations. Furthermore, this city was highly relied upon to be significantly reconstructed in terms of the infrastructure with the support of Türkiye. However, all this has not happened yet; instead, the transformations in the city took place just as a response to the ongoing population growth.

The service sectors, such as education, medication, and providing aid witnessed a great deal of organization by Türkiye. However, this may be due to the Turkish fear of any negative effects resulting from the work of humanitarian organizations in the region. Ankara has actually rejected many micro-projects by organizations that want to work in the northern areas of Aleppo. To justify that, Türkiye has always said that it is unwilling to see micro-organizations operate with virtually no effect. Such a policy, however, seemed to have been triggered by selectivity, by which Ankara could pick up certain organizations over others. As for the educational sector, the school curricula were organized with Turkish being one of the languages there. And this is a noticeable shift in education policies in these regions.

Trade in northern Syria in general witnessed great activity in favor of Turkish goods, which became the number one product in the market. The average value of commercial activity trading during the last five years amounted to more than one billion US dollars. Moreover, industrial and production sectors allowed some Turkish companies to have a share in the local market. The size of these companies, however, was not as large as those operating in Türkiye. The most prominent of these companies are the ones that provided electricity and the Internet services, as pre-paid commodities.



In addition to that, the new companies that provide such services depend on the already existing infrastructure with limited maintenance works to some already worn out networks. Generally speaking, there were no fundamental transformations in these sectors by Turkish companies.

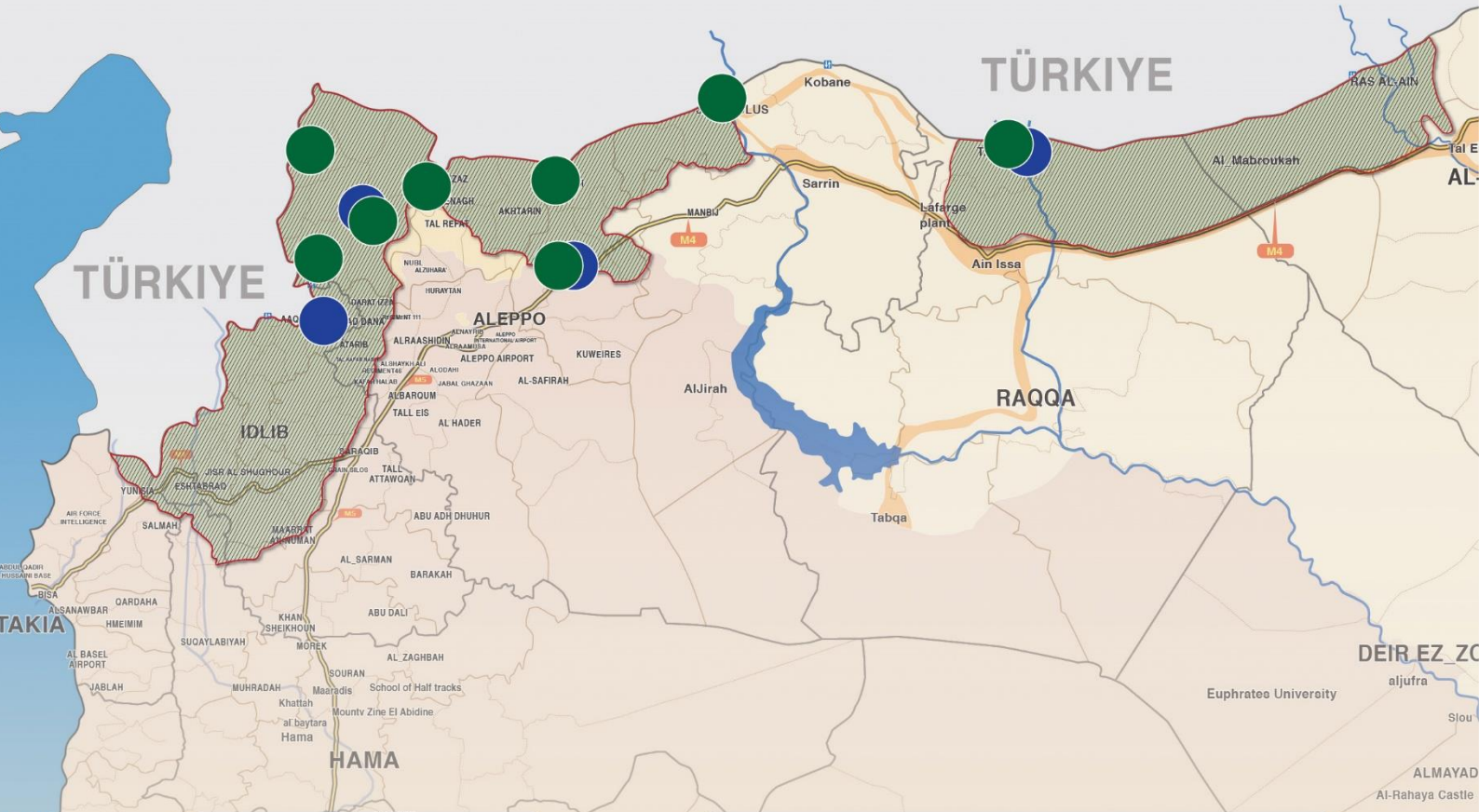
Turkish municipalities adjacent to the Syrian regions supported the agricultural sector, especially whose products were allowed into Türkiye, as olives and main grain crops.

As a result, Turkish investments in northern Syria cannot be considered so far as large or medium-size ones. Rather, they are simple and small ones. Trade with an average of more than one billion dollars was on top.

Map of Turkish influence in Syria

Civil and service influence

October – 2022

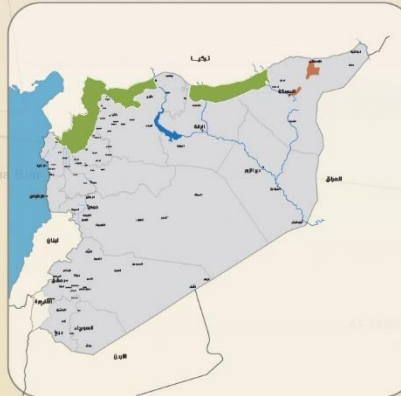


Map Keys

- Syrian Opposition-Held Areas
- Syrian Regime-Held Areas
- SDF-Held Areas
- Government service companies
- Private companies
- Areas covered by Turkish telecom companies

The number of Turkish civil service points in Syria is

14 locations



Energy companies

4

PTT offices

8

Communication companies

2

1:300,000

0 1,25 2,5 5 km

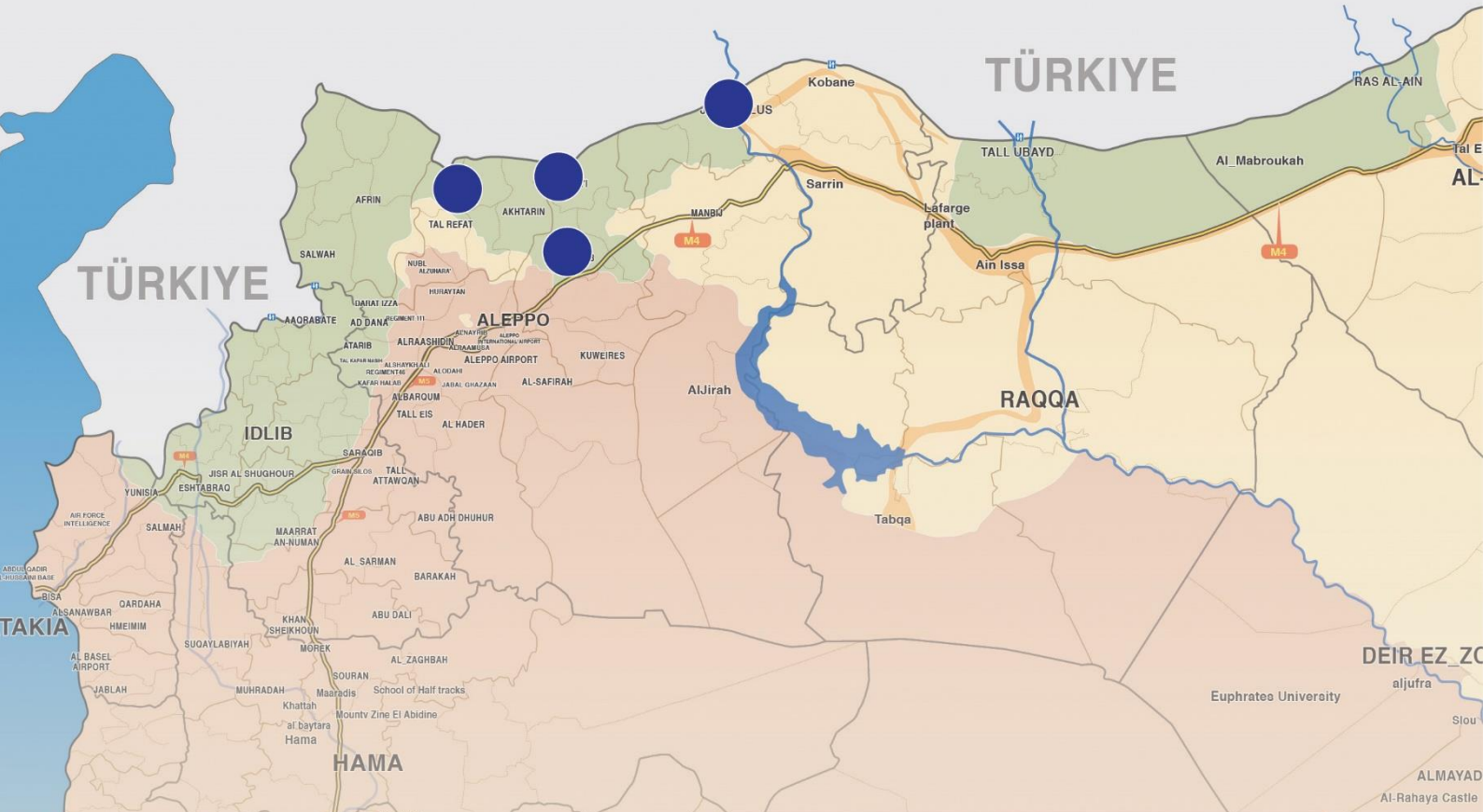


The information, names, titles and borders in the map do not necessarily reflect the views of Jusoor Center for Studies, and do not express any political opinion towards the actors

Map of Turkish influence in Syria

Economic influence

October – 2022

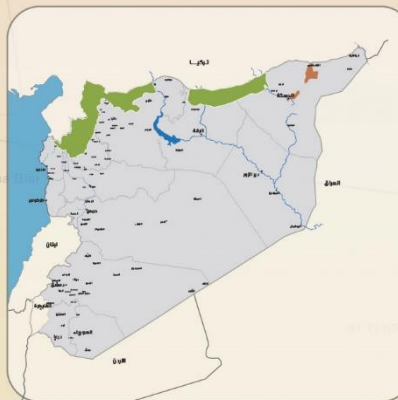


Map Keys

- Syrian Opposition-Held Areas
- Syrian Regime-Held Areas
- SDF-Held Areas
- Points of Turkish industrial cities in Syria

The number of Turkish industrial sites in Syria is

4 sites



The industrial city in Al-Rai

The first industrial city in the city of Al-Bab

Azaz Industrial City

The industrial city in Jarabulus

1:300,000

0 1,25 2,5 5 km

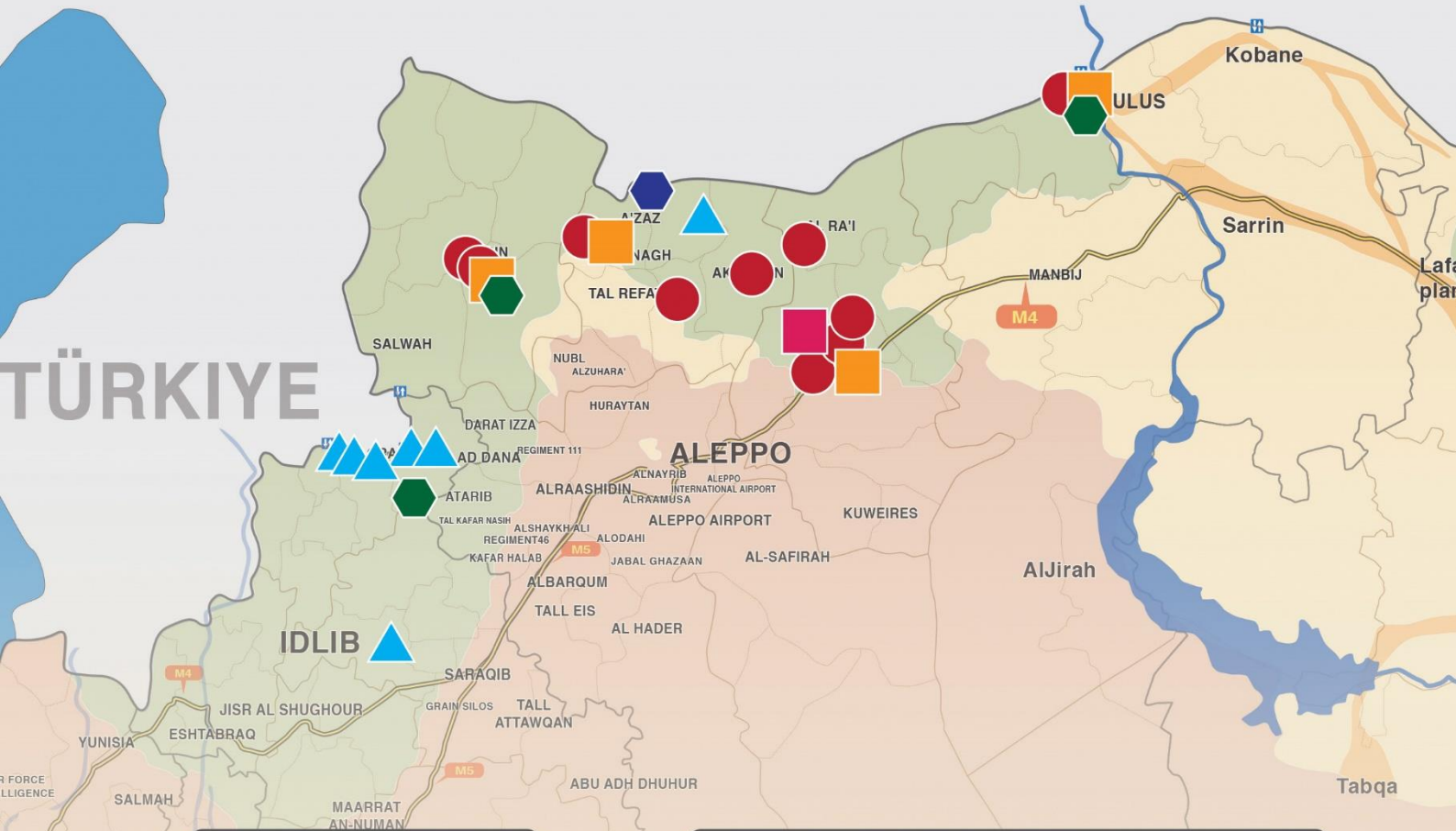


The information, names, titles and borders in the map do not necessarily reflect the views of Jusoor Center for Studies, and do not express any political opinion towards the actors

Map of the Turkish presence in Syria

Civil and humanitarian influence

October – 2022

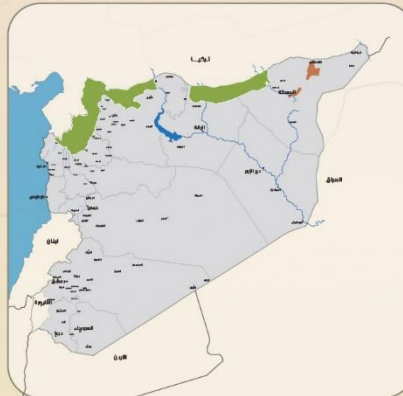


Map Keys

- Syrian Opposition-Held Areas
- Syrian Regime-Held Areas
- SDF-Held Areas
- ▲ Camp
- Government universities
- Schools
- Health care
- ⬡ Relief organization
- ⬡ Humanitarian center

The number of Turkish civil humanitarian points in Syria is

27 points



Camp

7

Government universities

4

Schools

1

Health care

11

Relief organization

3

Humanitarian center

1

1:300,000

0 1,25 2,5 5 km



The information, names, titles and borders in the map do not necessarily reflect the views of Jusoor Center for Studies, and do not express any political opinion towards the actors



Conclusion:

Syria is of great interest to Türkiye due to security considerations, given that the two countries have a long common border area on the one hand and because of economic considerations due to the Syrian geography being a link between Europe and the Arab market.

Based on the aforementioned, Türkiye will work on maintaining a strong presence in the Syrian file. What will shape this presence is the nature of current developments and affairs. Most probably, Türkiye will keep its military presence therein, until a political solution -with Turkish effective contribution- is reached. Türkiye will strive to achieve this, with a focus in the future on creating a strong economic influence and participation in the process of economic and service development in Syria. However, this economic and service influence will not be so clear and fundamental without the appropriate secure and legal environment.

جسور

جسور للدراسات
JUSOOR for STUDIES

📍 Mall of Istanbul-office Plaza
2nd Floor, Office#3-Başakşehir
İSTANBUL / TURKEY

☎ + 90 555 056 06 66

🐦 /jusoorstudies

f /jusoorstudies

📌 /jusoorstudies

✉ info@jusoor.co

🌐 www.jusoor.co