

TIMELINE OF THE SYRIAN WAR

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MARCH 2011

A group of teenagers write “It’s your turn, doctor” on a wall in Der’a and within days the teenagers were taken into custody and thousands took to the streets to demand they be freed. 100 protesters were killed.

JULY 2011

Protests have grown to other cities in Syria and the first defections amongst Syrian military officers to the Free Syrian Army to oppose Bashar al Assad take place.

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi sends operatives to Syria in order to recruit fighters for a group that would become ISIS.

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JULY 2012

Opposition forces capture eastern Aleppo and becomes their de facto capital.

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SPRING 2013

A coalition between ISIS and Al-Qaeda’s Syrian affiliate, Al Nusra Front, capture Raqqa.

AUGUST 2013

The Syrian government uses chemical weapons in East Ghouta.

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SUMMER 2014

ISIS continues to rampage across Syria defeating government forces and other opposition groups. al-Baghdadi moves to Syria and announces the establishment of a caliphate across both Syria and Iraq with himself as leader.

SEPTEMBER 2014

ISIS fighters besiege Kobani near the Turkish border. U.S. policy shifts towards focusing on defeating ISIS. U.S. and coalition partners begin launching strikes against ISIS fighters. The U.S. also continue to pressure the Assad regime to compromise and let another government body take its place.

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EARLY 2015

Kurdish and U.S. military collaboration sees the defeat of ISIS in Kobani.

MARCH 2015

Al Nusra and its allies capture Idlib.

MAY 2015

ISIS captures Palmyra in central Syria and with the capture of Idlib in March.

SUMMER 2015

Russia begins to mobilize forces into the country at its airbase in Latakia Province.



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SEPTEMBER 2015

Russia begins conducting airstrikes from its airbase. The Kremlin claims they are against ISIS, but reports show that the majority of the strikes were hitting Western and Turkish-backed groups in northern Syria.

SEPTEMBER 2015

Vladimir Putin and Barack Obama meet at the UN General Assembly which kickstarted negotiations that led to a Memorandum of Understanding to “deconflict” the air operations over Syria between the two countries

OCTOBER 2015

U.S. announces it will deploy Special Ops Forces to northern Syria to assist forces fighting ISIS.

NOVEMBER 2015

Turkey shoots down a Russian Su-24, ameliorating tensions between Turkey and Russia.

DECEMBER 2015

UN Security Council passes Resolution 2254 to halt hostile actions against the resolution’s signatories, provide humanitarian assistance, and talks on political transition. Al Nusra and ISIS, as terrorist groups, are not involved in this process and still remain targets of U.S., Russia, and allies.

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FEBRUARY 2016

Nationwide ceasefire, concocted by U.S. and Russia, takes effect.

MARCH 2016

Syrian government forces with the help of Russian airpower drive ISIS out of Palmyra.

AUGUST 2016

Syrian Democratic Forces liberated Manbij from ISIS in northern Syria which kickstarted a year and half long campaign with help from the U.S. that resulted in the north and east of Syria being liberated from ISIS.

FALL 2016

Russian and Assad-aligned forces attack eastern Aleppo, cutting off supply routes and humanitarian assistance as provided for by the UN’s Resolution 2254. Indiscriminate bombing takes place against both military and civilian targets.

SDF and the U.S. begin the operation to capture ISIS “capital” Raqqa.



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DECEMBER 2016

Russia and Assad capture Aleppo. ISIS regains Palmyra.

U.S. pulls out of plan to share intel with Russia and the Syrian peace process at the UN breaks down.

JANUARY 2017

Russia initiates the Astana Process in Kazakhstan to bring out about peace in Syria. In attendance are Russia, Assad, Iran, and Turkey.

MARCH 2017

Syrian government forces recapture Palmyra from ISIS.

APRIL 2017

Assad uses chemical weapons again in Idlib Province in the town of Khan Sheikhoun, killing 89 and injuring 500+. Russia's promise to have secured Syria's chemical weapons stock is proven to be illegitimate.

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MAY-SUMMER 2017

U.S. increases its assistance towards SDF, including providing weaponry.

Rebels abandon Homs after government forces had been sieging it for months. They travel to Idlib province to join other rebel forces in the rebel stronghold area

Russian and Assad forces attempt to clear central Syria of ISIS and capture the town of Dayr-Az-Zawr, which had been under ISIS control since 2014.

SDF gains ground in liberating Raqqa from ISIS.

US and Russian forces closely encroach on each other and both sides agree to a deconfliction channel for both air and ground forces.

SEPTEMBER 2017

Government forces capture Dayr-Az-Zawr

OCTOBER 2017

Raqqa falls to SDF.

Russian and Assad forces capture Mayadin in the lower Euphrates River Valley.

END OF 2017

U.S. and Russian forces fight ISIS forces down the Euphrates River, pushing them back even further. Deconfliction channels between the two are especially active in both the air and on the ground.



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FEBRUARY 2018

Assad forces attack SDF and U.S. Special Forces advisors, who are positioned east of the Euphrates, near the town Khasham. The U.S. call Russian HQ in the country to tell them to stop the attack, but the Russians deny knowledge of it. The U.S. retaliates and kill over 100 people, including Russian mercenaries.

SPRING 2018

Assad and Russian forces capture Ghouta, near Damascus.

SUMMER 2018

Der'a falls to Assad forces.

SEPTEMBER 2018

Russia agrees to terms with Turkey on a de-escalation agreement for Idlib, the last rebel stronghold, to forestall an attack from Assad forces and to set up Russian and Turkish observation posts around Idlib's borders.

A Syrian air defense battery shoots down a Russian military aircraft accidentally, killing 15, after mistaking it for an Israeli aircraft after Israel had attacked Iranian forces in Syria. In response, Russia delivers the Assad regime S-300 air defense systems.

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OCTOBER 2019

U.S. President Donald Trump announces he is withdrawing forces from northern Syria, which opens the way for a Turkish attack on the SDF. Secy. of Defense James Mattis and Special Envoy for the Counter-ISIL Coalition Brett McGurk resign in response.

General Mazloum Abdi, the leader of the SDF, announces he will allow Assad and Russian forces into SDF-controlled area to counter the Turkish forces.

DECEMBER 2019

Ignoring de-escalation agreements in Idlib, Russian and Assad warplanes begin a bombing campaign in the province. This campaign continued into 2020 and caused many civilians to flee to Turkey.

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FEBRUARY 2020

Assad forces conduct an airstrike on a Turkish military post on the border of Idlib, killing 33 Turkish soldiers. Turkey responds by killing over 300 Assad fighters, destroying over 20 tanks, and downing government aircraft.

MARCH 2020

President Erdogan and President Putin meet in Moscow and agree to another de-escalation agreement in Idlib.

