



## HAYAT TAHRIR AL SHAM : INTERNATIONAL RELATION

**NEWS :** Assad flees Damascus, say senior Army officers; Syrian rebels take capital

### WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) militants seized Damascus, ending Bashar al-Assad's 13-year rule and diminishing Russian and Iranian influence in Syria. The power shift raises concerns over HTS's Islamist governance and regional stability.

### HTS Seizes Damascus: A Turning Point in Syria's Civil War

#### 1. Key Developments

- **HTS Seizes Damascus:** Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) militants captured Syria's capital, toppling President Bashar al-Assad after 13 years of rule amidst a prolonged civil war.
- **Assad Flees to Moscow:** Reports confirm that President Assad and his family fled to Russia, marking the end of his regime.

#### 2. Implications of the Power Shift

##### Diminished Russian and Iranian Influence

- The fall of Assad signifies a major blow to Russia and Iran, who have been his primary allies throughout the conflict.
- Iran's embassy in Damascus was stormed by HTS militants, signaling a loss of diplomatic and strategic foothold.

##### Concerns Over Islamist Governance

- HTS, formerly affiliated with al-Qaeda, remains Syria's strongest militant group despite severing ties with al-Qaeda in 2016.
- International concerns mount over the potential for HTS's Islamist governance and its implications for regional stability.

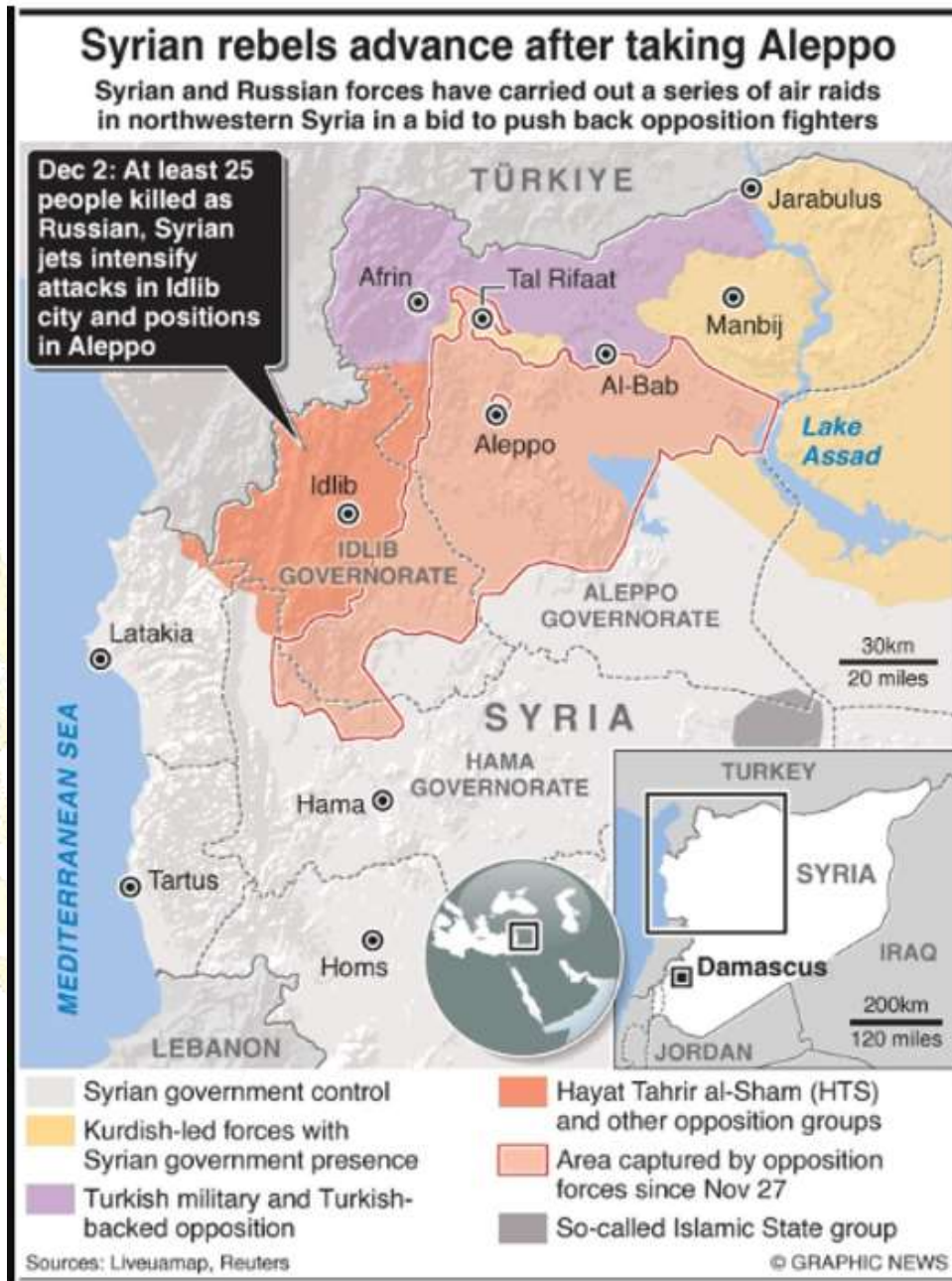
##### Regional and International Reactions

- Prime Minister Mohammad Ghazi al-Jalali called for **free elections** and initiated discussions with HTS leader Abu Mohammed al-Jolani to form a transitional government.
- The U.S. and regional powers have expressed alarm over HTS's attacks on Kurdish-led forces, who are U.S.-allied in northern Syria.



## 3. Strategic Cities in the Conflict

### Damascus:



- The historic capital, now under HTS control, symbolizes a decisive shift in the power dynamic of the war.

### Hama and Homs:

- Hama: The Syrian Army is continuing operations against militants in this city despite significant territorial losses.



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- Homs: Captured by HTS militants, marking a pivotal advance in the conflict.

## Deraa and Manbij:

- Deraa: In southern Syria, the Army is conducting operations against “terrorist groups” amidst militant advances.
- Manbij: HTS militants are targeting U.S.-allied Kurdish-led forces, raising regional security concerns.

## Aleppo and Saydnaya:

- Aleppo: The fall of Syria’s largest city to HTS underscores the group’s rapid military success.
- Saydnaya: The site of a notorious prison near Damascus where HTS freed detainees during their takeover.

## 4. Global Concerns

- The rapid rise of HTS and its control over significant Syrian territories raises fears about militant governance and destabilization of the region.
- HTS’s expansion threatens U.S. interests, Kurdish forces, and the fragile balance of power in the Middle East.

**Source:** <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/assad-flees-damascus-syria-rebels-take-capital/article68961285.ece>