

Despite Al-Nusra Breaches, Syria and Russia Working to Open M5 Highway

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The Syrian state, through its specialized service directorates, has begun the work of opening the M5 international highway which connects Aleppo to Lattakia, in preparation for the implementation of the Russian-Turkish agreement recently concluded by Presidents Putin and Erdogan in Moscow.

On Tuesday, specialized workers began to remove the barriers that were blocking the road from the Syrian state's regions of Lattakia governorate on the Syrian coast, and repair and rehabilitation works for the international highway were carried out within sections controlled by the Syrian state forces.

Government sources have indicated that the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) is now fully committed to the ceasefire outlined in the agreement, noting that removing the barriers from the road demonstrates the commitment of the Syrian state to the prescribed terms, despite all the violations committed by terrorist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham aka "HTS" (former known as al-Nusra Front, aka al-Qaeda in Syria) and its allied factions since the activation of the new agreement midnight last Thursday.

In the same context, the number of breaches committed by HTS reached to about 40 from Thursday to Tuesday morning, with Latakia governorate received the largest share of these breaches as a result of the drones launched by the HTS and allied militants targeting the Russian military base at Hmeimim, followed by incursions in Aleppo and Idlib governorates.

It is noteworthy that HTS had announced, in an official statement issued a few days ago, its rejection of the "Moscow Agreement" and its refusal to abide by it as it did in previous agreements, especially that the agreement included an affirmation of fighting designated terrorist organizations listed by the UN Security Council.

It should also be noted that one of the most prominent provisions of the Russian-Turkish agreement is the issue of opening the international highway that links the cities of Aleppo and Latakia, provided that the safe buffer zones from the militant-controlled areas through which the road passes by is 6 kilometers to the north and 6 kilometers to the south. This necessarily means the withdrawal of the armed factions from several important cities, namely Areha and Jisr al-Shughour, but still no signs of implementation appear to have been recorded.

Until militant groups begin to recede from those positions which threaten the stability of the M5 highway, then further violent clashes can be expected. <https://21stcenturywire.com/2020/03/11/despite-al-nusra-breaches-syria-and-russia-working-to-open-m5-highway/>