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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY



DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

**Middle East-North Africa: Situation Update as of 29 January 2012**

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29 January 2012

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**Syria:** Arab League Secretary General ElAraby yesterday said that the League was temporarily suspending its monitoring mission as a result of the deteriorating security conditions in Syria. The League said the monitors will remain in the country, but will consider withdrawing them completely in early February

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- ElAraby confirmed that the decision was taken after consultations with Arab foreign ministers and after “the Syrian Government chose the option of escalation, which increased the number of victims,”
- Syria was surprised and regretted the suspension given the League’s recent one-month extension of the mission

The Syrian regime is launching security operations against opposition strongholds in the wake of the League’s suspension of its observer mission.

- Activists reported heavy gunfire and shelling in several areas around Syria today, including the town of Rankus, where 15 homes were reportedly shelled

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- Today activists claimed that Syrian security forces killed at least five civilians fighting in the Damascus suburbs  
an ambush of security forces resulted in the death of seven troops near Damascus yesterday morning

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[Redacted] a Syrian military colonel and 300 soldiers defected to the Free Syrian Army in Rif Damascus.

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This report was prepared by the CIA Middle East Task Force. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Task Force [Redacted] (U)

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Violence continues to influence security forces' resupply efforts.

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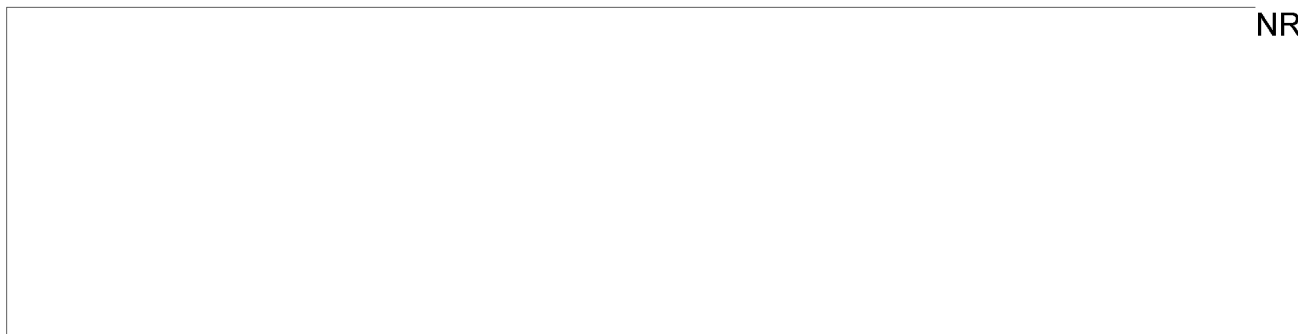
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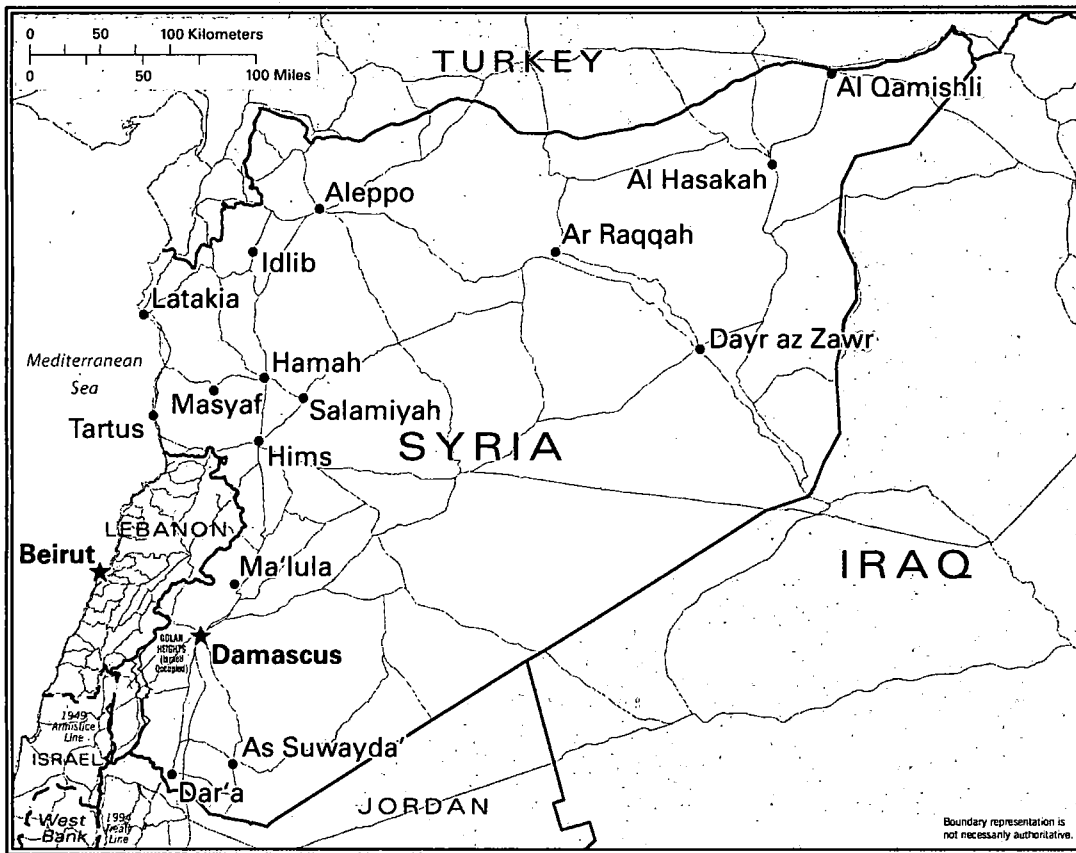
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**North Africa and Middle East Situation Report (U)**



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