

U.S.-backed rebels target IS "capital" Raqqa

A U.S.-backed alliance of Syrian forces has launched an operation to retake Raqqa, de facto capital of Islamic State, opening another front against the jihadi group as Iraqi troops battle to reclaim Mosul



SYRIA DEMOCRATIC FORCES (SDF)
Alliance of Kurdish and ethnic Arab militia dominated by **Kurdish Popular Protection Units (YPG)** – key ally on ground in Syria for U.S.-led coalition against IS

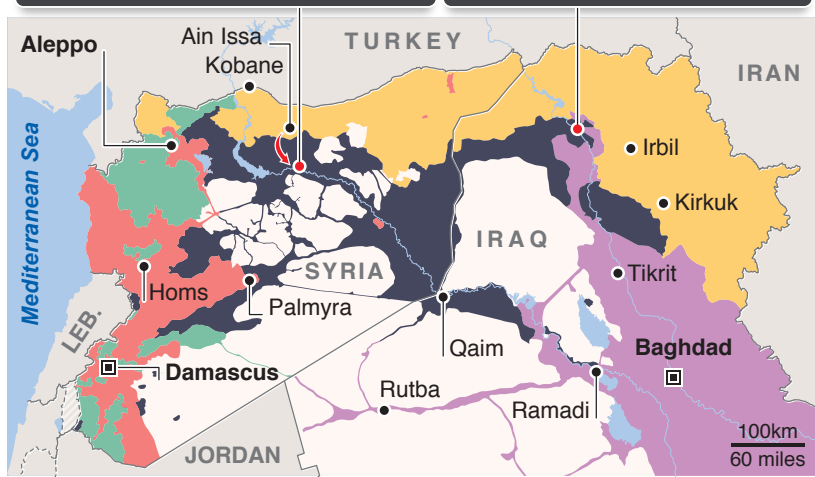
Up to 25,000 fighters of SDF's 30,000-strong force estimated to come from YPG



Turkey: Considers YPG to be terror organisation and says it will not accept role for Kurds in liberation of Raqqa

Raqqa: Offensive could stop IS fighters retreating from Iraq to Syria as Mosul operation progresses

Mosul: Iraqi troops facing fierce resistance in densely populated districts of city



Areas of control as of Nov 7, 2016

■ Syrian regime and allies

■ Iraqi government

■ So-called Islamic State (Daesh)

■ Kurdish-led forces

■ Other Syrian rebel groups