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ISIS Seizes Two More Towns on Syria-Turkey Border

By Jason Ditz

August 13, 2014

ISIS continues to amass gains across Syria today, capturing two key towns along the Syria-Turkey border in Aleppo Province today, along with several nearby villages, from rival rebel factions.

The towns were Aklarin and Tarkmanbareh, important crossings that had previously belonged to the rival Islamic Front. 31 fighters from the Islamic Front and its allies were killed, along with 8 ISIS fighters, in the clashes.

The towns are northeast of the Syrian city of Aleppo, and ISIS is expected to continue to push westward along the border, with Azaz and Marea the next Islamic Front holdings in the area.

Though the US has been arming some members of the Islamic Front and couching them as “moderates,” many in the group’s leadership are openly affiliated with al-Qaeda, and consider Ayman al-Zawahiri their ideological leader. ISIS, a former al-Qaeda affiliate itself, now operates independently after being disavowed as “too brutal” for al-Qaeda.

NATO has promised to intervene militarily to defend the Turkish side of the border, though so far ISIS has been content to use Turkey simply as a source for weapons and fighters, as Turkey has been openly backing the rebellion.

