March 2016

Jennifer Cafarella and Genevieve Casagrande

MIDDLE EAST SECURITY REPORT 29

SYRIAN ARMED OPPOSITION POWERBROKERS

ISW
INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF WAR

Cover: A rebel fighter of the Southern Front of the Free Syrian Army gestures while standing with his fellow fighter near their weapons at the front line in the north-west countryside of Deraa March 3, 2015. Syrian government forces have taken control of villages in southern Syria, state media said on Saturday, part of a campaign they started this month against insurgents posing one of the biggest remaining threats to Damascus. Picture taken March 3, 2015. REUTERS/Stringer

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

©2016 by the Institute for the Study of War.

Published in 2016 in the United States of America by the Institute for the Study of War.

1400 16th Street NW, Suite 515 | Washington, DC 20036

www.understandingwar.org

Jennifer Cafarella and Genevieve Casagrande

MIDDLE EAST SECURITY REPORT 29

SYRIAN ARMED OPPOSITION POWERBROKERS

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jennifer Cafarella is the Evans Hanson Fellow at the Institute for the Study of War where she focuses on the Syrian Civil War and opposition groups. Her research focuses particularly on the al Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al Nusra and their military capabilities, modes of governance, and long-term strategic vision. She is the author of *Likely Courses of Action in the Syrian Civil War: June–December 2015*, and *Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria: An Islamic Emirate for al-Qaeda*. Ms. Cafarella is a graduate of the Hertog War Studies Program and has dealt extensively with the media acting as a resource for NPR's "All Things Considered," Voice of America, the BBC, *The New York Times*, CNN, Time, *USA Today*, and others. Ms. Cafarella received her B.A. from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

Genevieve Casagrande is a Research Analyst at the Institute for the Study of War where she focuses on opposition groups and the Russian air campaign in Syria. Her latest research focuses particularly on the Salafi Jihadist group Ahrar al Sham, their relationship to al Qaeda s Syrian affiliate Jabhat al Nusra and their role in military and political opposition structures. Ms. Casagrande authors ISW's regular Russia airstrikes maps and also produced the "Syria 90-Day Forecast: The Assad Regime and Allies in Northern Syria." She has dealt extensively with the media as a resource for *The Washington Post*, Fox News, and *The Daily Beast*. Ms. Casagrande received her B.A. from the University of Florida as well as a Middle Eastern Studies Certificate from the American University in Dubai as a Clinton Scholar.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our sincere thanks to Dr. Kimberly Kagan and Dr. Frederick Kagan for their invaluable mentorship and brilliant analytical insight that guide all our reports and research work here at ISW. We also thank Dina Shahrokhi for her constant support and guidance, as well as John Lawrence for helping us bring this publication to fruition. A very special thank you to Gianmarco Vitale for his research support on this project and the rest of the ISW Syria Team for their efforts. Finally, a big thank you to Caitlin Forrest for her graphics help and the entire ISW operations team, without whom this report would not have been possible.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) is a non-partisan, non-profit, public policy research organization. ISW advances an informed understanding of military affairs through reliable research,trusted analysis, and innovative education. ISW is committed to improving the nation's ability to execute military operations and respond to emerging threats in order to achieve U.S. strategic objectives.

ABOUT OUR TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS

ISW believes superior strategic insight derives from a fusion of traditional social science research and innovative technological methods. ISW recognizes that the analyst of the future must be able to process a wide variety of information, ranging from personal interviews and historical artifacts to high volume structured data. ISW thanks its technology partners, Palantir Technologies and Praescient Analytics, for their support in this innovative endeavor. In particular, their technology and implementation assistance has supported creating many ISW maps and graphics.

Praescient Analytics is a Veteran Owned Small Business based in Alexandria, Virginia. Our aim is to revolutionize how the world understands information by empowering our customers with the latest analytic tools and methodologies. Currently, Praescient provides several critical services to our government and commercial clients: training, embedded analysis, platform integration, and product customization.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....**6**
METHODOLOGY.....**9**

SYRIAN ARMED OPPOSITION POWER BROKERS
CROSS-FRONT POWERBROKERS
(HASI) Harakat Ahrar al Sham al Islamiya.....14
Faylaq al Sham.....16

ALEPPO
Al Fawj al Awl.....17
Jaysh al Mujahideen.....18
Al Jabhat al Shamiya.....19

DAMASCUS
Jaysh al Islam.....22
Faylaq al Rahman.....25
Ajnad al Sham (al Etihad al Islami li Ajnad al Sham).....27

DERA A/QUNEITRA
Al Jaysh al Awal.....28
Tahalaf Suqour al Janoub.....30
Usoud al Harb.....32

SYRIAN ARMED OPPOSITION GROUPS WITH POWERBROKER POTENTIAL
ALEPPO
Firqat al Sultan Murad.....34
Harakat Nour al Din al Zenki.....35

IDLIB/LATAKIA
Jaysh al Nasr.....37
Al Hizb al Islami al Turkistani.....38
Firqat 13.....39

HOMS
Harakat Tahrir Homs.....40

DAMASCUS
Jabhat al Asala Wal Tanmiya.....41
Al Jaysh al Souri al Jadeed.....42
Aliwya Ahmed Abdou.....43

DERAA/QUNEITRA
Al Faylaq al Awl.....44
Alwiya Seif al Sham.....45
Harakat al Muthanna al Islamiya.....46

NOTES.....**47**

INTRODUCTION

International negotiations to reach a political settlement in Syria have resumed, although serious challenges remain to reaching a political settlement. The talks follow two weeks of a "cessation of hostilities" in which the Russian air campaign in Syria decreased notably, though it did not entirely cease.[i] Putin announced that he would withdraw some airframes from Syria on March 15, incentivizing both Assad and the opposition to engage in Geneva.[ii] Major opposition demands such as the removal of Syrian President Bashar al Assad from office have not been met, however, and Syrian regime officials have not conceded that there should be an immediate release of political prisoners.[iii] Reaching a political deal in Geneva under these conditions will therefore be difficult. The conditions in which the Geneva negotiations are taking place still strongly favor the regime, indicating that a transitional government, if formed, likely will fail to reconcile most Sunni armed actors with the government. The result could actually increase the jihadist threat while miring the U.S. and regional states in political turmoil in Damascus.

The opposition delegation attending the negotiations in Geneva does not actually speak for most of the armed opposition groups with power inside Syria. As such, it cannot enforce its own decisions. The HNC agreed to attend the current round of talks only after "[consulting] the armed factions," demonstrating that it seeks the advice and requires the cooperation of powerful armed opposition groups.[iv] The HNC does include numerous armed factions, including the powerful Damascus-based group Jaysh al Islam, but many other powerful armed factions were not present at the meeting in Riyadh that created the HNC. The apparent consent of non-HNC armed groups to the HNC's attendance at the talks is an important step, but it does not necessarily indicate that the groups will abide by a HNC decision if it compromises on certain issues such as regime change. Powerbrokers within the opposition will ultimately determine whether fighting resumes. The risk of an ongoing insurgency against Assad or a transitional government is high, and irreconcilable groups such as al Qaeda's Syrian affiliate Jabhat al Nusra have the intent and capability to spoil any deal, both in the short and long term.

Jabhat al Nusra is poised to capitalize on further Sunni alienation in Syria, increasing the threat it poses to the American homeland. Jabhat al Nusra is a strong and capable battlefield force, whose contributions to the war against the Assad regime have allowed it to build a complex network of relationships with Syrian armed groups. It uses this prestige to isolate and eliminate, when possible, groups that receive American support or refuse to tolerate its own ideology.[v] It openly opposes the negotiations and has accused the opposition delegation of treason.[vi] It is capable of spoiling a political agreement through spectacular attacks or other forms of escalation, and likely will do so. ISIS is also capable of acting as a spoiler, and likely will seek to exploit Sunni alienation to cement its control over populations in eastern Syria.

Creating a partner from Syria's armed opposition will be difficult, however. This opposition remains diverse and fractious in the sixth year of the war. Opposition groups frequently merge and disassociate, producing a dynamic churn that makes understanding the opposition challenging and developing policies to support the opposition difficult. The opposition is highly unlikely to cohere into a stable, unified structure in the near future without significant outside support and leadership. Ongoing meetings between major armed factions in Turkey to create a unified opposition body show some promise, but failures to do so in the past indicate that we should be hesitant to trust newly declared structures, which are often penetrated by Jabhat al Nusra and similar elements.[vii] Developing a strategy to defeat Salafi Jihadi groups in Syria will almost certainly continue to face the challenge that no one armed actor speaks for even a plurality of the Syrian Sunni population that opposes the Assad regime. Nevertheless, there are identifiable powerful groups that shape general trends within the armed opposition and play leading roles in military operations and governance. Some of these groups offer the U.S. an opportunity to build an indigenous Sunni partner to defeat ISIS and al Qaeda in Syria, but only if the U.S. applies leadership, works smartly, and allocates sufficient resources.

Groups affiliated with the moderate Free Syrian Army are still active on the battlefield, and some are even powerbrokers with the ability to define military success or failure on the battlefield, as this report will demonstrate. These groups are natural American allies and offer opportunities to counter both ISIS and al Qaeda in the near term. Their presence is now bifurcated, however, between northern and southern Syria. In the south, moderates are strong and have tried to build more effective coordination mechanisms.[viii] In the north, however, moderates largely play an auxiliary role to more powerful groups. Northern Syria hosts key terrain including Aleppo, Syria's largest city, and is a valuable source of leverage that jihadist groups seek to capture. Alone, the moderates are an insufficient ally, even if the U.S. could unite them. The U.S. therefore must consider the remainder of the armed groups on the battlefield in order to develop a plan to leverage local forces in a reinvigorated campaign to destroy both ISIS and al Qaeda in Syria.

This report assesses the most powerful Syrian armed opposition groups on the battlefield as of March 16, 2016 and details key aspects of each group, including the group's leadership and perspective on Jabhat al-Nusra, that will need to inform American strategies in Syria. The armed groups examined in this report include groups that currently receive American support, groups that are potential American allies, and groups allied to al Qaeda in Syria that stand to gain additional power in the next year. This report updates part of the assessment of the armed opposition that ISW released in October 2015, titled "Syrian Opposition Guide,"[ix] which detailed all prominent armed opposition groups in Syria at the time. The report also lays the foundation for an upcoming report that outlines the requirements to produce a Sunni partner in Syria as a component of any course of action to destroy ISIS and al Qaeda in Syria.

i. Genevieve Casagrande, "Russian airstrikes in Syria: February 27-March 7, 2016," Institute for the Study of War, March 10, 2016, http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/03/russian-airstrikes-in-syria-february-27.html.

ii. Neil MacFarquhar and Anne Barnard, "First Russian jets leave Syria after Putin's withdrawal order," New York Times, March 15, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/16/world/europe/russia-syria.html.

iii. For an assessment of the opposition's political demands, see: Genevieve Casagrande with Jennifer Cafarella, "The Syrian Opposition's Political Demands," Institute for the Study of War, December 29, 2015, http://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syrian-opposition%E2%80%99s-political-demands.

iv. Tom Miles, "Syrian opposition says truce breaches may preclude peace talks," Reuters, March 7, 2016, http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-mideast-crisis-syria-hijab-idUKKCN0W91JU.

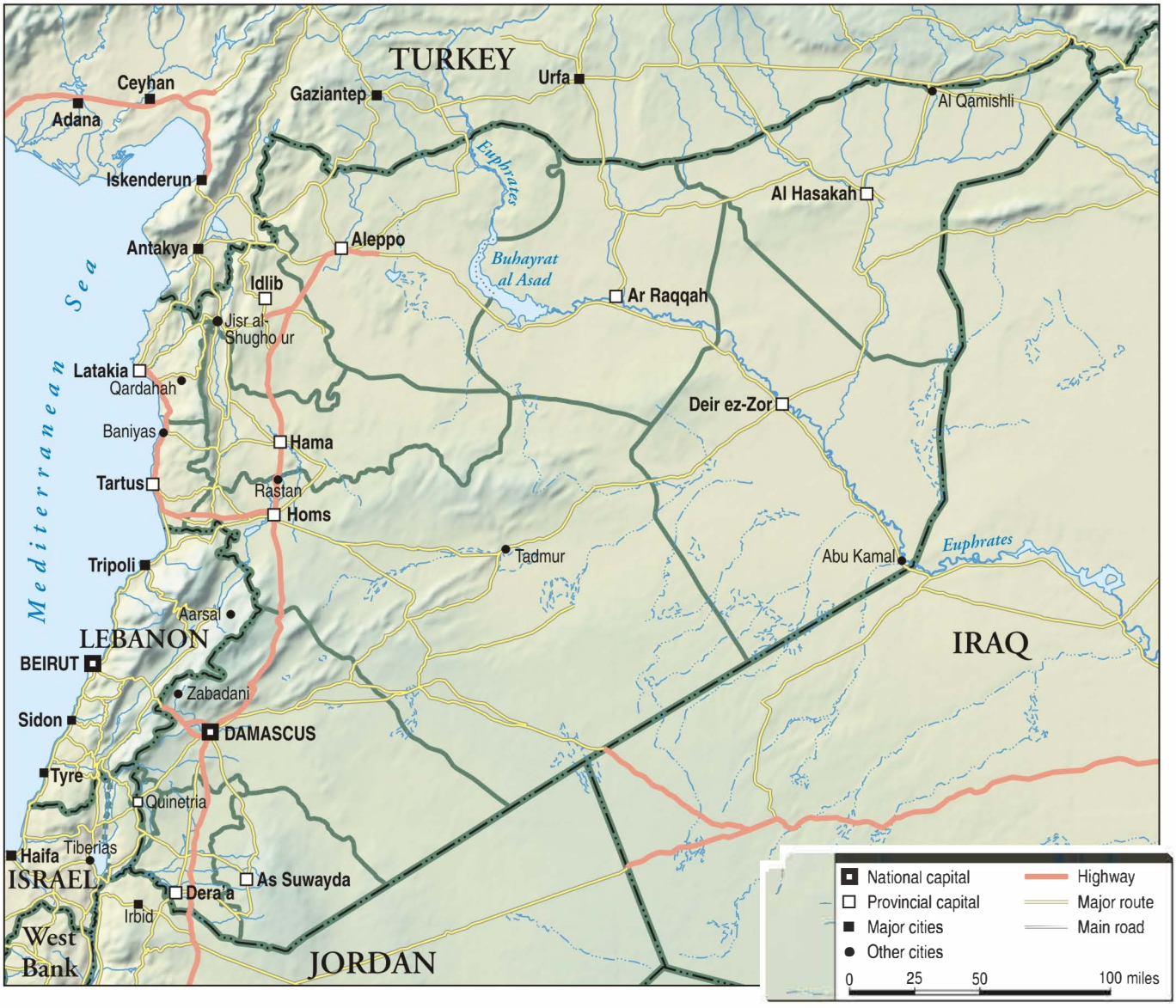
v. Jennifer Cafarella, Harleen Gambhir, and Katherine Zimmerman, "U.S. Grand Strategy: Destroying ISIS and al Qaeda, Report Three. Jabhat al Nusra and ISIS: Sources of Strength," Institute for the Study of War and American Enterprise Institute, February 2016, http://www.understandingwar.org/report/jabhat-al-nusra-and-isis-sources-strength.

vi. "Al Nusra Front leader condemns Saudi's Syria Talks," al Jazeera, December 13, 2015, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/12/al-nusra-front-leader-condemns-saudi-syria-talks-151212210441946.html.

vii. ["Gathering in Turkey to unite Syrian opposition factions"], al Jazeera, March 15, 2016, http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2016/3/15/%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D8%A8%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D9%81%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B6%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9.

viii. Jennifer Cafarella, "Rebels Launch New Offensive in Southern Syria," Institute for the Study of War, July 2, 2015, http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2015/07/rebels-launch-new-offensive-in-southern.html.

ix. Jennifer Cafarella and Genevieve Casagrande, "Syrian Opposition Guide," Institute for the Study of War, October 7, 2015, http://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/syrian-opposition-guide.



SYRIA LOCATOR MAP

Methodology

Identifying Powerbrokers

This chart indicates assessed armed opposition powerbrokers and groups that could become powerbrokers upon the receipt of sufficient outside support.

Powerbroker: A group that defines the success of military operations against either the Assad regime or ISIS, is strategically located, and/or plays a leading role in governance.

Potential Powerbroker: A group that could achieve significant battlefield effects against Jabhat al Nusra and/or ISIS in western Syria upon receipt of increased outside support, including securing direct military gains and cohering other smaller brigades into new coalitions.

Defining ideological "tiers" of armed opposition groups

Tier	Description	Definition
Tier 1	Transnational Salafi Jihadi Groups	ISIS, al Qaeda, and foreign fighter groups connected to home countries that pursue a global caliphate
Tier 2	Syrian Salafi Jihadists	Groups that pursue the establishment of a theocracy in Syria
Tier 3	Political Islamists	Groups that desire a Sharia-based constitution but do not demand that Sharia courts form the basis of governance in a post-Assad Syrian state
Tier 4	Moderate Secularists	Groups that desire a secular post-Assad Syrian state

Assessing the opposition's perspectives on challenging Jabhat al Nusra in Syria

Most Syrian opposition groups cooperate closely with Syrian al Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al Nusra out of military necessity; these groups would in many cases succumb to the Syrian regime or ISIS without Jabhat al Nusra's support. Many Syrian opposition groups also collaborate with Jabhat al Nusra on governance, providing a vehicle for Jabhat al Nusra's agenda to transform Syrian society. Syrian opposition groups are therefore generally both unable and unwilling to challenge Jabhat al Nusra in Syria in the near term. Jabhat al Nusra is playing an increasingly prominent role in northwestern Syria, however. Its greater role is generating local tensions amidst the ongoing Geneva process to reach a negotiated settlement, which influences the perspective of some groups.

The chart that follows places groups in different categories based on analyst assessments of whether and in what circumstances they would challenge Jabhat al Nusra in Syria.

Perspective on Challenging Nusra	Definition	Indicators
Willing to Challenge	Groups that already constrain Jabhat al Nusra's behavior in Syria and/or are motivated to do so in the near term in the absence of increased outside support	Groups motivated by fear, ideology, or ambition and include, for example: ● Likely targets of Jabhat al Nusra aggression in the near term ● Groups that openly denounce Jabhat al Nusra's objectives in Syria ● Groups that currently act to contain Jabhat al Nusra's influence
Requires Incentive (Null)	Pragmatic groups that require increased support or other enabling assistance in order to be willing to challenge Jabhat al Nusra	This category is a general descriptor for the relationship of armed opposition groups and Jabhat al Nusra, from which specific groups may depart. This report assumes that groups fall into this category unless they meet indicators for the other categories. Generally, this category includes groups that have a different desired end state from Jabhat al Nusra in Syria but are unlikely to risk antagonizing the group in the near term. They include, for example: ● Political Islamist groups ● Groups that intervene to de-escalate following aggression by Jabhat al Nusra against moderates
Requires Coercion	Groups that are ideologically aligned with Jabhat al Nusra's interim objectives in Syria or that are known to collocate with Jabhat al Nusra in Syria	Groups that share interim objectives with Jabhat al Nusra in Syria such as the desired form of governance and that are unlikely to act against Jabhat al Nusra in the near term. These groups include, for example: ● Close ideological allies of Jabhat al Nusra ● Groups that regard Jabhat al Nusra fighters as a core component of the Syrian revolution against Bashar al Assad
Irreconcilable	Groups that desire the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate and will reject any Western support or involvement in Syria, to include negotiated settlement of the Syrian Civil War	Groups that will fight alongside Jabhat al Nusra and resist a negotiated settlement in Syria. These include, for example, groups that: ● Oppose Syria as a nation-state ● Desire the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate that confronts the West. ● Are linked to the global al Qaeda network ● Consist mainly of foreign fighters

Defining "Challenging" Jabhat al Nusra in Syria

This assessment characterizes "challenging" Jabhat al Nusra as performing any of the following actions:

Non-lethal

- Withdrawing from structures currently linked to Jabhat al Nusra
- Refusing to accept the involvement of Jabhat al Nusra or other irreconcilable groups in new military, governance, or administrative structures
- Interrupting Jabhat al Nusra's freedom of movement by blocking Jabhat al Nusra at checkpoints
- Restricting the delivery of resources to only supply structures free of Jabhat al Nusra involvement

Lethal

- Defending moderate opposition groups from attacks by Jabhat al Nusra
- Providing targeting information to the U.S. and its allies
- Forcibly removing Jabhat al Nusra from terrain
- Seizing infrastructure controlled by Jabhat al Nusra

Syrian Armed Opposition Power Brokers

Province	Powerbrokers		Potential Powerbrokers		Other noteworthy groups	
	Group	Tier	Group	Tier	Group	Tier
Aleppo						
	Ahrar al Sham	2	Jabhat al Nusra	1	Firqa 13*	4
	Al Jabhat Al Shamiya*	3	Harakat Nour al Din al Zenki**	3	Firqa 16*	4
	Faylaq al Sham*	3	Firqat al Sultan Murad*		Al Firqat al Shamaliya*	4
	Al Fawj al Awl*	3			Suqour al Jebel*	4
	Jaysh al Mujahideen**	3			Jaysh al Izza*	4
					Al Firqat al Wasta*	4
					People's Protection Units (YPG)~	n/a
					New Syrian Forces~	4
					Fajr al Sham al Islamiya	1
					Imarat al Qawqaz fi al Sham	1
Idlib/Latakia						
	Jabhat al Nusra	1	Faylaq al Sham*	3	Al Firqat al Shamaliya*	4
	Ahrar al Sham	2	Jaysh al Islam	2	Al Firqat al Awla al Sahliya*	4
			Jaysh al Nasr*	4	Jaysh al Izza*	4
			Firqa 13*	4	Suqour al Jebel (Jaysh al Nasr)*	4
			Al Hizb al Islami al Turkistani	1	Jund al Aqsa	1
					Ajnad Kavkaq	1
Hama						
	Jabhat al Nusra	1	Jaysh al Nasr*	4	Jaysh al Izza*	4
	Ahrar al Sham	2			Jaysh al Nasr*	4
					Al Firqat al Shamaliya*	4
Homs						
	Jabhat al Nusra	1	Jaysh al Islam	2		
	Ahrar al Sham	2	Harakat Tahrir Homs	3		

*Received TOW missiles in February 2016
**Previous TOW missile recipient
~Anti-ISIS Coalition partner

Tiers

Tier 1	Transnational Salafi Jihadist
Tier 2	Syrian Salafi Jihadist
Tier 3	Political Islamist
Tier 4	Moderate Secularist

Province	Powerbrokers		Potential Powerbrokers		Other noteworthy groups	
	Group	Tier	Group	Tier	Group	Tier
Damascus						
Eastern Ghouta						
	Jaysh al Islam	2				
	Faylaq al Rahman	3				
Western Ghouta						
	Jabhat al Nusra	1	Seif al Sham**	4		
	Ahrar al Sham	2				
	Ajnad al Sham	3				
Qalamoun						
	Jaysh al Islam	2	Jabhat al Asala wal Tanmiya~	3	Al Firqat al Thaniya Masha*	4
	Faylaq al Rahman	3	Aliwya Ahmed Abdou**	3		
Quneitra						
	Jabhat al Nusra	1	Jaysh al Islam	2		
	Ahrar al Sham	2	Ajnad al Sham	3		
			Harakat al Muthanna al Islamiya	2		
Dera'a						
	Al Jaysh al Awl**	4	Al Faylaq al Awl	4	Liwa al Mujahidi al Houran*	4
	Tahalaf Suqour al Janoub**	4	Seif al Sham**	4	Liwa Mu'taz Billah (Usoud a Harb)*	4
	Usoud al Harb**	4		1	Firqa 24 Masha*	4
					Liwa al Muhajireen wal Ansar*	4
					Al Jaysh al Souri al Jadeed (Jabhat al Asala wal Tanmiya)~	4
					Jaysh Ahrar al Asha'er~	4
					Harakat al Muthanna al Islamiya	2
Raqqa and Hasaka						
	People's Protection Units (YPG)~	n/a				
					Syrian Arab Coalition~	4
Deir ez Zour						
			Al Jaysh al Souri al Jadeed (Jabhat al Asala wal Tanmiya)~	4		

*Received TOW missiles in February 2016
**Previous TOW missile recipient
~Anti-ISIS Coalition partner

Tiers
Tier 1 Transnational Salafi Jihadist
Tier 2 Syrian Salafi Jihadist
Tier 3 Political Islamist
Tier 4 Moderate Secularist

CROSS-FRONT POWERBROKERS

Harakat Ahrar al Sham al Islamiya (HASI)

Ahrar al Sham is the largest opposition faction in Syria. It operates in all opposition-held terrain from Aleppo on the Turkish border to the southern province of Dera'a, bordering Jordan.

Leadership:

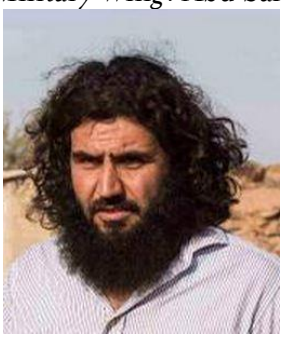
General Leader: Muhannad al Masri (AKA "Abu Yahya al Hamawi")[1]

- Arrested by Syrian government in 2005; released from Sednaya prison in 2011[2]

Deputy of Political Affairs: Ahmed Issa al Sheikh (AKA "Abu Issa")[3]

- Former leader of Suqour al Sham
- Arrested by Syrian government in 2004; released from Sednaya Prison in 2011[4]

Head of Ahrar al Sham's Military Wing: Abu Saleh Tahan



		Head of Shari'a Office: Hashim al Sheikh (AKA "Abu Jaber")[5] • Former Ahrar al Sham General Leader[6] • Recruited for al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) • Arrested by Syrian government in 2005; Released in 2011[7] • Also an Ahrar al Sham military commander in Aleppo[8]
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* 15,000[9] *Composition:* Primarily Syrian, with some foreign fighters[10] *Notable resources:* Border crossings,[11] tanks, IEDs, LAW anti-tank missiles,[12] Konkurs anti-tank missiles[13]
Powerbroker in:		Aleppo, Idlib/Latakia, Hama, Homs, Western Ghouta, Quneitra,
Potential Powerbroker in:		n/a
Ideology:		Salafist jihadist[14] • Desired end state: Theocracy, or Islamic State[15] [A]
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS[16]
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Irreconcilable[B]
Involvement in Geneva Process:		Not directly represented by the High Negotiations Committee (HNC) but expresses tentative support for the HNC's involvement in the political process so long as it achieves the objectives of the Syrian revolution[17]
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Turkey, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia[18]

[A] Ahrar al Sham defines this future theocracy as a government that is exclusively based on Islamic law, with freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom to form political parties "as decided by Sharia."

[B] ISW assesses that it is possible to split Ahrar al Sham, and that some components of the organization are reconcilable. The top leadership that currently controls the group and directs its activities is irreconcilable, however. This document therefore treats the group as irreconcilable with the caveat that there may be a reconcilable fragment. This will be explored in upcoming ISW reports.

Faylaq al Sham

Faylaq al Sham is a coalition of nineteen brigades active across a majority of western Syria.[19] The group increasingly occupies leadership roles in major opposition coalitions.

Leadership:		*General Leader:* Mundhir Saras[20] *Military Commander of Aleppo:* Major Yasser Abdul Rahim • Former Leader of Fatah Halab Operations Room (Largely defunct)[21]
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* 5,000 fighters (2014)[22] *Composition:* Syrian *Notable resources*: Tanks[23], BMPs[24], 9M133 Kornet anti-tank missiles[25], MILANs anti-tank missiles[26], TOW anti-tank missiles (periodic)[27]
Powerbroker in:		Aleppo
Potential Powerbroker in:		Idlib/Latakia
Ideology:		Political Islamist[28]
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS[29]
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Willing to challenge[30]
Participation in Geneva Negotiations:		Not represented by the High Negotiations Committee (HNC). Supports the HNC but maintains that demands must be met[31]
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Turkey, Qatar, and Muslim Brotherhood[32]

ALEPPO

Al Fawj al Awl

Al Fawj al Awl is a small but powerful Aleppo-based group that is active on almost every major front line in Aleppo Province. It is a splinter from the powerful Islamist group in Aleppo Liwa al Tawhid, and has high levels of local support and legitimacy in the northern Aleppo countryside.

Leadership:		*General Leader:* Khaled Kengo[33] (No photo available) *General Leader:*[34] Amer Hamouda *Military Commander:* Abu Assad • Tunnel bomb expert[35]
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* 1,500 fighters[36] *Composition:* Syrian *Notable resources*: Tunnel bombs[37]
Powerbroker in:		Aleppo
Potential Powerbroker in:		n/a
Ideology:		Political Islamist[38]
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS[39]
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Requires incentive[40]
Involvement in Geneva Process:		Not represented by the High Negotiations Committee (HNC). Supports the HNC but maintains that demands must be met[41]
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Turkish Military Operations Command Center (MOC)[42]

Jaysh al Mujahideen

Jaysh al Mujahideen leads both military operations and local governance efforts alongside other Islamist leaning factions in Aleppo Province. It was formed in early 2014 in order to fight ISIS in Aleppo and remained a prominent anti-ISIS actor in the province.

Leadership:		*General Leader:* LTC Muhammad Jumaa Bakour (AKA "Abu Bakr")[43] *Military Commander*: Youssef Zawa'a[44]
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* 5,000 fighters (2015)[45] *Composition:* Syrian *Notable resources*: TOW anti-tank missiles (periodic)[46], tanks[47]
Powerbroker in:		Aleppo
Potential Powerbroker in:		n/a
Ideology:		Political Islamist[48] [C]
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS[49]
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Requires incentive[50]
Participation in Geneva Negotiations:		Represented by the High Negotiations Committee[51]
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Turkish MOC[52]

[C] Jaysh al Mujahideen desires a post-Assad Syrian state with guarantee to protect the rights of minorities in the "Syrian social fabric."

Al Jabhat al Shamiya

Al Jabhat al Shamiya is the newest incarnation of one of Aleppo's oldest Free Syrian Army affiliates, Liwa al Tawhid. Remnants of Liwa al Tawhid formed Al Jabhat Al Shamiya in a merger with other Aleppo-based groups in late 2014 after which Al Fawj Al Awl split from Liwa al Tawhid. Al Jabhat al Shamiya leads both military and governance efforts in Aleppo Province. The components of Al Jabhat al Shamiya are unclear, but the group originally included Ahrar al Sham, Jaysh al Mujahideen, and Nour al Din al Zenki. Al Jabhat al Shamiya has since splintered, but remains active in the province.

Leadership:		*General Leader of Jabhat al Shamiya*: Mohammed Ali al Harkoush "Abu Amr"[53] • Former Military Chief, appointed after the resignation of Abdul Aziz Salameh[54] • Ahrar al Sham Commander *Deputy Commander:* Hossam Abu Yassin[55] (No photo available)

		Military Commander: Capt. Ali Shakardi[56] • Leader of Kita'ib al Thuwar al Sham[57] *President of the Sharia Council of Al Jabhat al Shamiya:* Sheikh Mohammed al Khatib[58] *Unknown Role:* LTC Muhammad Jumaa Bakour (AKA "Abu Bakr")[59] • General Leader of Jaysh al Mujahideen
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* 7,000 (reported)[60] *Composition:* Incorporates secular, Christian, Kurdish, and jihadist units[61]

		Notable resources: Tanks[62], TOW anti-tank missiles (periodic)[63], Tunnel bombs[64]
Powerbroker in:		Aleppo
Potential Powerbroker in:		n/a
Ideology:		Political Islamist[65]
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS[66]
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Requires incentive[67]
Involvement in Geneva Process:		Not represented by the High Negotiations Committee (HNC). Tentatively supports the HNC but maintains that demands must be met.[68]
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Turkey and Qatar[69]

DAMASCUS

Jaysh al Islam

Jaysh al Islam is the second largest Salafi Jihadist opposition faction in Syria and maintains local affiliates across seven of Syria's western Provinces. Jaysh al Islam is most prominent in Damascus where it leads joint military and governance structures. It leads the High Negotiations Committee's delegation to Geneva.

Leadership:		*General Leader:* Essam al Boydhani (AKA Abu Hummam)[70]

Deceased General Leader: Zahran Alloush[71]

- Released from Sendaya prison in 2011[72]

Deputy Commander: Sheikh Abu Qusai[73]

Deputy Commander: Abu Mahmoud al Zabiq[74]

(No Photo Available)

Sharia Head: Sheikh Samir Bin Ali Ka'kah (AKA Abu Abdul Rahman)[75]

Chief of Staff: Abu Maarouf[76]

		Political Chief: Mohammad Alloush • Chief Negotiator for the High Negotiations Committee[77]
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Group size:* Between 17,000-30,000 fighters[78] *Composition:* Syrian *Notable Resources:* Tunnels,[79] tunnel bombs[80], tanks[81], 9M113 Konkurs anti-tank missile[82]
Powerbroker in:		Eastern Ghouta (Damascus), Qalamoun (Damascus)
Potential Powerbroker in:		Quneitra, Homs, Idlib/Latakia
Ideology:		Salafist Jihadist [83]
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS[84]
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Willing to challenge[85]
Involvement in Geneva Process:		Political chief is chief negotiator for the High Negotiations Committee[86]
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Saudi Arabia[87]

Faylaq al Rahman

Faylaq al Rahman is one of the oldest standing opposition factions in Damascus and maintains high levels of local legitimacy and support. It grew considerably stronger in early 2016 following a merger with Ajnad al Sham in Eastern Ghouta.

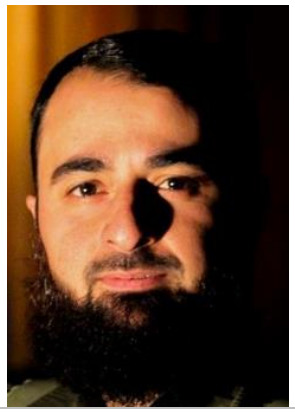
Leadership:		*General Leader:* Abdul Nasr Shamir[88]

Public Relations Officer: Sheikh Abu Nayem Yacoub[89]

The following Ajnad al Sham leadership likely now plays a leadership in Faylaq al Rahman after the merger in Eastern Ghouta in February 2016.

General Leader: Abu Muhammad al Fateh[90]

- Trained at al Azhar



		Sharia Official: Abu Khalid al Bashish[91]
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Group size:* Unknown *Composition:* Syrian *Notable Resources:* Tanks, TOW anti-tank missiles (periodic),[92] tunnel bombs,[93] Engineering Unit which places and dismantles IEDs[94]
Powerbroker in:		Qalamoun (Damascus)
Potential Powerbroker in:		n/a
Ideology:		Political Islamist[95] [D]
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS[96]
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Requires incentive
Involvement in Geneva process:		Not represented by the High Negotiations Committee (HNC). Tentatively supports the HNC, but maintains that demands must be met[97]
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Jordanian MOC[98]

[D] Faylaq al Rahman includes Habib al Mustafa, a "Sufi-leaning" element.

Ajnad al Sham (al Etihad al Islami li Ajnad al Sham)

Ajnad al Sham was one of the first major armed opposition groups in Damascus[99] and maintains affiliates across Damascus and southern Syria. The group split in half in early 2016 when its Eastern Ghouta wing merged with Faylaq al Rahman. The group nonetheless remains active in Western Ghouta, Dera'a, and northern Syria.[100]

Leadership:		Unknown
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Group size:* 15,000 (2014)[101] *Composition:* Syrian *Notable Resources:* Tanks
Powerbroker in:		Western Ghouta (Damascus)
Potential Powerbroker in:		Quneitra
Ideology:		Political Islamist[102]
Perspectives on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS[103]
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Requires incentive
Involvement in Geneva process:		Not represented by the High Negotiations Committee (HNC). Tentatively supports the HNC, but maintains that demands must be met[104]
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Muslim Brotherhood[105]

DERA A/QUNEITRA

Al Jaysh al Awl

Al Jaysh al Awl is active across the entirety of Dera'a and Quneitra Provinces, but is concentrated in Quneitra Province and the northwestern countryside of Dera'a.[106] Al Jaysh al Awl is a leading member of the loosely connected Southern Front coalition and has a prominent role in the Southern Front Joint Command.

Leadership:		*General Leader:* Colonel Saber Safir[107] • Leader of Armament Office of the Southern Front Joint Command[108] *Deputy Leader:* Abu Osama al Joulani[109] • General Coordinator of the Southern Front's Joint Command[110]
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* 10,000 fighters (2015)[111] *Composition:* Syrian *Notable Resources*: TOW anti-tank missiles(periodic)[112], tanks[113]
Powerbroker in:		Dera'a

Potential Powerbroker in:		n/a
Ideology:		Moderate Secularist[114] [E]
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Willing to challenge[115]
Involvement in Geneva Process:		Represented by the High Negotiations Committee, but maintains that demands must be met [116]
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Jordanian MOC[117]

[E] Al Jaysh al Awl desires a post-Assad Syrian state that leaves the Syrian state institutions largely intact.

Tahalaf Suqour al Janoub

Tahalaf Suqour al Janoub is an alliance of four prominent groups active across Dera'a Province. It is concentrated in Dera'a City and areas near the Syrian-Jordanian border. The alliance has strong tribal ties and is a member of the Southern Front coalition, but is notably absent from the Southern Front Joint Command's leadership structure.

Leadership:		It is unclear whether Tahalaf Suqour al Janoub has a leadership distinct from the leadership of the component groups. Below are the leaders of the most prominent groups within Tahalaf Suqour al Janoub. *Political Leader of Jaysh al Yarmouk:* Bashar al Zoubi[118] • Likely the overall leader of Tahalf Suqour al Janoub[119] *Military Commander of Jaysh al Yarmouk:* Suleiman Sharif[120]

		Leader of Firqat Fallujah Houran: Anas Zeim[121] *Leader of Firqat 18 Athar:* Colonel Mohammad Khalid al Dahani[122]
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* 7,000 (estimate) [123] *Composition:* Syrian *Notable Resources*: Tanks,[124] TOW anti-tank missiles (periodic)[125]
Powerbroker in:		Dera'a
Potential Powerbroker in:		n/a
Ideology:		Moderate Secularist[126]
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Willing to challenge[127]
Involvement in Geneva Process:		Supports the HNC, but maintains that demands must be met [128]
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Jordanian MOC,[129] Saudi Arabia[130]

Usoud al Harb

Usoud al Harb is an alliance of four groups in southern Syria. It is one of the most successful military alliances within the loosely connected Southern Front coalition. It contributes to most opposition military operations in Southern Syria and is active in the Southern Front Joint Command.

Leadership:		It is unclear whether Usoud al Harb has a leadership distinct from the leadership of the component groups. Below are the leaders of the most prominent Usoud al Harb groups. *Leader of Liwa Mu'taz Billah:* Col. Khaled al Nablusi • Head of the Operations Office of the Southern Front Joint Command[131] *Leader of Liwa Shabab al Sunna:* Ahmad al Awdeh[132] • Head of the Logistics Office of the Southern Front Joint Command[133]
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* Unknown[134] *Composition:* Syrian *Notable Resources*: TOW anti-tank missiles (periodic)[135]
Powerbroker in:		Dera'a
Potential powerbroker in:		n/a
Ideology:		Moderate Secularist[136]

Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Willing to challenge[137]
Involvement in Geneva Process:		Unknown
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Jordanian MOC[138]

Groups with Powerbroker Potential

ALEPPO

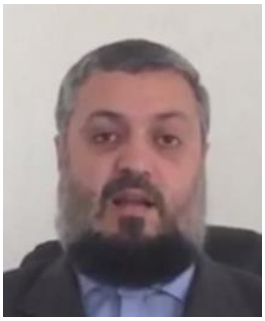
Firqat al Sultan Murad

Firqat al Sultan Murad is an Aleppo-based Turkmen group that is increasingly prominent on the battlefield. It merged with three other Aleppo-based groups in the northern Aleppo countryside in early 2016.

Leadership:		*General Leader:* Yousef Saleh[139] (no photo available) *Military Commander:* Col. Ahmed Uthman[140]
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* Unknown *Composition:* Primarily Turkmen *Notable Resources*: TOW anti-tank missiles (periodic)[141]
Powerbroker in:		n/a
Potential Powerbroker in:		Aleppo
Ideology:		Unknown[142]
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS[143]
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Requires incentive[144]
Willingness to negotiate with regime:		Supports the High Negotiations Committee but maintains that demands must be met[145]
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Turkish MOC[146]

Harakat Nour al Din al Zenki

Harakat Nour al Din al Zenki is a powerful independent faction in Aleppo whose participation is often a requirement for success in the opposition's military operations. The group was previously a powerbroker in Aleppo, but has been sidelined by Jabhat al Nusra.

Leadership:		*General Leader:* Captain Muhammed Said Masri[147] *Military Commander:* Abu Bashir[148] *Political Leader:* Mohammad Mahmoud al Sai'd[149] 
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* Unknown *Composition:* Syrian *Notable Resources*: TOW anti-tank missiles (periodic)[150]
Powerbroker in:		n/a
Potential Powerbroker in:		Aleppo

Ideology:		Political Islamist[151]
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS[152]
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Requires incentive[153]
Involvement in Geneva Process:		Not represented by the High Negotiations Committee (HNC). Supports the HNC but maintains that demands must be met[154]
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Turkish MOC,[155] Qatar[156]

IDLIB/LATAKIA

Jaysh al Nasr

Jaysh al Nasr is the most prominent Free Syrian Army affiliated opposition coalition in Hama and Idlib provinces. Its components include a number of longstanding U.S.-backed TOW anti-tank missile recipients, which play an important role in anti-regime operations throughout northern Syria.

Leadership:		*General Leader:* Maj. Mohammad Mansour[157] *Military Commander:* Maj. Zahir al Sheikh[158]
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* Unknown *Composition:* Syrian *Notable Resources*: TOW anti-tank missiles (periodic)[159]
Powerbroker in:		n/a
Potential Powerbroker in:		Hama, Idlib/Latakia
Ideology:		Unknown
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS[160]
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Willing to challenge[161]
Involvement in Geneva Process:		Supports the High Negotiations Committee but maintains that demands must be met[162]
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Turkish MOC[163]

Al Hizb al Islami al Turkistani

Al Hizb al Islami al Turkistani, based in Central Asia, is active in Syria where it is a close ally of Jabhat al Nusra. It is active across most front lines in Idlib and Latakia Provinces. It has played a large role in military operations since early 2015, when it participated in the seizure of Idlib City from pro-regime forces.[164]

Leadership:		*Deceased Military Commander:* Abu Rida al Turkestani[165]
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* Unknown *Composition:* Primarily Uighur[166] *Notable Resources*: SVEST, SVBIED, and Tanks[167]
Powerbroker in:		n/a
Potential Powerbroker in:		Idlib/Latakia
Ideology:		Transnational Salafi Jihadist
Perspective on ISIS:		Unknown
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Irreconcilable[168]
Involvement in Geneva Process:		n/a
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Unknown

Firqa 13

Firqa 13 is a coalition of thirteen Free Syrian Army-affiliated brigades with TOW anti-tank missiles. The group plays an important role in opposition operations against pro-regime forces in northwestern Syria.

Leadership:		*General Leader:* LTC Ahmed al Sa'oud[169] *Deputy Head/Chief of Staff:* Faris al Buyush[170]
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* 1,800-2,000 (2014)[171] *Composition:* Syrian *Notable Resources*: TOW anti-tank missiles (periodic)[172]
Powerbroker in:		n/a
Potential Powerbroker in:		Idlib/Latakia
Ideology:		Moderate Secularist[173]
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS[174]
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Willing to challenge[175]
Involvement in Geneva Negotiations:		Not represented by the High Negotiations Committee (HNC). Supports the HNC but maintains that demands must be met [176]
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Turkish MOC and Qatar[177]

HOMS

Harakat Tahrir Homs

Harakat Tahrir Homs is one of the most prominent armed factions in Homs and is active in governance in the province. It includes longstanding Syrian army defectors in its leadership and maintains significant local support and legitimacy. It also has an organizational hierarchy that makes it an effective force.

Leadership:		*Military Commander:* Major General Ali Mohammad Ayoub[178]
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* Unknown number of fighters but highly organized structure with 21 component brigades[179] *Composition:* Syrian *Notable Resources:* n/a
Powerbroker in:		n/a
Potential Powerbroker in:		Homs
Ideology:		Political Islamist[180]
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS[181]
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Requires incentive[182]
Involvement in Geneva Process:		Not directly represented by the High Negotiations Committee but support its demands[183]
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Unknown

DAMASCUS

Jabhat al Asala wal Tanmiya

Jabhat al Asala wal Tanmiya is an umbrella organization for many local affiliates spread across western Syria and with historical presence in eastern Deir ez-Zour Province. Some of its affiliates are prominent anti-ISIS actors in Damascus Province, with early indicators of growing anti-ISIS activity in Deir ez-Zour Province.

Leadership:		*Overall Leader:* Khaled al Hammad[184] • Salafi preacher *Military Commander*: Iyad Shamsi[185] (No Photo Available)
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* 2,400 (2014)[186] *Composition*: Syrian *Notable Resources:* n/a
Powerbroker in:		n/a
Potential Powerbroker in:		Qalamoun (Damascus), Deir ez Zour[187]
Ideology:		Syrian Salafi Jihadist[188]
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS[189]
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Requires incentive[190]
Involvement in Geneva Process:		Represented by the High Negotiations Committee[191]
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Unknown

Al Jaysh al Souri al Jadeed

Notable Component Group of Jabhat al Asala wal Tanmiya

Al Jaysh al Souri al Jadeed emerged in late 2015 with apparent American support. It is a very small organization drawn from members of Jabhat al Asala wal Tanmiya.[192] It currently conducts limited tactical operations against ISIS in southeastern Syria but its leaders state their intent to disrupt ISIS in urban terrain in Deir ez Zour Province.

Leadership:		*Military Commander:* Col Muhannad al Talla • Former leader of the Free Syrian Army Deir ez Zour Military Council[193]
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* Dozens[194] *Composition*: Syrian *Notable Resources: n/a*
Powerbroker in:		n/a
Potential Powerbroker in:		Deir ez Zour[195]
Ideology:		Moderate secularist[196]
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS[197]
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Unknown
Involvement in Geneva Process:		Unknown
Unconfirmed outside funding:		U.S. support[198]

Aliwya Ahmed Abdou

Aliwya Ahmed Abdou is a Free Syrian Army-affiliated coalition of at least ten groups active in the Qalamoun region of the Damascus countryside. It maintains ties to the loosely connected Southern Front coalition and is active in the Southern Front Joint Command.

Leadership:		*General Leader:* Bakkour al Salim[199] • Former leader of the Free Syrian Army Damascus Military Council[200] • Current Qalamoun delegate to the Southern Front Joint Command[201]
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* Unknown *Composition:* Syrian *Notable Resources*: TOW anti-tank missiles (periodic)[202]
Powerbroker in:		n/a
Potential Powerbroker in:		Qalamoun (Damascus)
Ideology:		Unknown
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS[203]
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Requires incentive
Involvement in Geneva Process:		Unknown
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Jordanian MOC[204]

DERA A/QUNEITRA

Al Faylaq al Awl

Al Faylaq al Awl is one of the largest groups in the loosely connected Southern Front coalition and is led by many of the original defectors from the Syrian Arab Army in Dera'a and Damascus.[205]

Leadership:		*General Leader:* Ziyad Al Hariri[206] *Deputy Commander:* Ibrahim Gurani[207]
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* Unknown *Composition:* Syrian *Notable Resources*: Tanks[208], TOW anti-tank missiles (periodic)[209]
Powerbroker in:		n/a
Potential powerbroker in:		Dera'a
Ideology:		Moderate secularist[210]
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Willing to challenge[211]
Involvement in Geneva Process:		Not represented by the High Negotiations Committee (HNC). Supports the HNC but maintains that demands must be met[212]
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Jordanian MOC[213]

Alwiya Seif al Sham

The Alwiya Seif al Sham is active on almost every front line across southern Syria. The group maintains ties to the loosely connected Southern Front and is active in the Southern Front Joint Command.

Leadership:		*General Leader:* Abu Salah Al Shami[214] • Current head of the Office of Organization and Management for the Southern Front Joint Command [215] *Military Commander:* Major Khalil Al Zawari'a[216]
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* 5,000 fighters (claimed)[217] *Composition:* Syrian *Notable Resources*: Tanks,[218] TOW anti-tank missiles (periodic)[219]
Powerbroker in:		n/a
Potential powerbroker in:		Dera'a
Ideology:		Political Islamist[220] [F]
Perspective on ISIS:		Anti-ISIS
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Willing to challenge[221]
Involvement in Geneva Process		Not represented by the High Negotiations Committee.
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Jordanian MOC[222]

[F] Seif al Sham desires a post-Assad "democratic Syria" governed by Islamic principles.

Harakat al Muthanna al Islamiya

Harakat al Muthanna al Islamiya is a Syrian Salafi Jihadist group in southern Syria that operates closely with Jabhat al Nusra.

Leadership:		Unknown
Group size, composition, and resources:		*Size:* 600-1,500[223] *Composition:* Syrian *Notable Resources:* n/a
Powerbroker in:		n/a
Potential Powerbroker in:		Quneitra
Ideology:		Syrian Salafi Jihadist[224]
Perspective on ISIS:		Sympathetic[225]
Perspective on Jabhat al Nusra:		Irreconcilable[226]
Involvement in Geneva Process:		Against[227]
Unconfirmed outside funding:		Unknown

NOTES

[1] Aron Lund, "Abu Yahia al Hamawi, Ahrar al Sham's New Leader," Syria Comment, September 12, 2015, http://www.joshualandis.com/blog/abu-yahia-al-hamawi-ahrar-al-shams-new-leader/

[2] Lund, "Abu Yahia al Hamawi, Ahrar al Sham's New Leader"; @ahmadasee1, Twitter post, September 12, 2015, 12:45 PM, https://twitter.com/ahmadasee1/status/642786034879741952

[3] Aron Lund, "Islamist Mergers in Syria: Ahrar al Sham Swallows Suqour al Sham," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 23, 2015, http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=59471

[4] "In pictures: Former Saidnaya prisoners turned rebel," The National, January 21, 2014; http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/in-pictures-former-saidnaya-prisoners-turned-rebels; Rasha Abi Haidar, "Who pulls the strings of the Islamic Front's Shura Council?" Al Akhbar, January 17, 2014, http://english.al-akhbar.com/node/18276.

[5] @Charles_Lister, Twitter Post, November 18, 2015, 3:22 A.M., https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/666939528628871168.

[6] Enab Baladi, "Ahrar al-Sham Rebel Group Elects New Leader," The Syrian Observer, September 14, 2015, http://syrianobserver.com/EN/News/29815/Ahrar_Sham_Rebel_Group_Elects_New_Leader.

[7] "[Sheikh Hashim]," al Jazeera, September 10, 2014, http://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/icons/2014/9/10/%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%B4%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%AE.

[8] Jennifer Cafarella, "Update on the Situation in Aleppo," Institute for the Study of War, February 16, 2016, http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/02/update-on-situation-in-aleppo.html; Alex MacDonald, "Aleppo rebels unite under former Ahrar al Sham commander," Middle East Eye, February 16, 2016, http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/aleppo-rebels-united-under-former-ahrar-al-sham-commander-1930344528.

[9] As estimated by Charles Lister in July 2015. Charles Lister, "Syrian Islamists reach out to the U.S., but serious issues remain," Brookings, July 14, 2015, http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2015/07/14-syrian-islamists-us-issues-lister.

[10] Al Muhajirun, a social media outlet that advertises the role of foreign fighters within the Syrian armed opposition, released a video titled "Turning Point," which features some of Ahrar al Sham's foreign fighters. Aaron Y. Zelin, "New video message from al Muhajirun: The Turning Point," Jihadology, July 16, 2015, http://jihadology.net/2015/07/16/new-video-message-from-al-muhajirun-the-turning-point/ .

[11] "Ahrara-sham establishes a civilian border administration," Syria Direct, April 22, 2015 http://syriadirect.org/news/ahrar-a-sham-establishes-civilian-border-administration.

[12] ["Ahrar al-Sham targets Baath party barracks in Hama and Deaths"], el Dorar, October 27, 2014, http://eldorar.com/node/62314 .

[13] ["Ahrar al-Sham: blowing up the gathering of sectarian militias in Khan Tuman area in Aleppo with a Konkurs rocket"] YouTube video, posted by "Islamic Front", February 20, 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4C7PZ29J9Q

[14] ISW assesses that Ahrar al Sham is a Syrian Salafi Jihadist group under current leadership. The authors recognize the internal differences within the organization, but assess that the ideology of its leadership will continue to shape the organization without a major change of circumstances in Syria. Ahrar al Sham outwardly identifies with major figures within the global jihadist movement and includes their messages in its propaganda, including Mullah Omar, Abdullah Azzam, Hassan al Banna, Ali al Tantawi, Sayyid Qutb, Khattab, and Ahmad Yassin. For example, a promotional video of an Ahrar al Sham training camp uploaded to YouTube on May 8, 2015 quoted Abdullah Azzam. @islamic_front, Twitter post, July 31, 2015, 11:51 PM, https://twitter.com/islamic_front/status/627371085818896384; @islamic_front, Twitter Post, May 08, 2015, 3:31 AM, https://twitter.com/islamic_front/status/596623371049172993 ; Sam Heller, "Ahrar al-Sham's Revisionist Jihadism," War on the Rocks, September 30, 2015, http://warontherocks.com/2015/09/ahrar-al-shams-revisionist-jihadism/.

[15] According to Ahrar al Sham's website, translated by al Jazeera, and statements by Ahrar al Sham founder Hassan Abboud. Malak Chabkoun, "Syrian Revolution's Paths After Attacks on Ahrar al Sham," Al Jazeera Center for Studies, September 14, 2014, http://studies.aljazeera.net/ResourceGallery/media/Documents/2014/9/14/20149148437157 34Syrian-Revolutions.pdf ; "We already announced we wish to establish an Islamic state in Syria", "Talk to al Jazeera – Hassan Abboud: 'We will fight for our rights'" Youtube video, posted by Al Jazeera English, December 21, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1DKwu_gbSCE&feature=youtu.be&t=4m5s ; ["Hassan Aboud, a series on armed opposition figures"] Video, posted by Al Jazeera, July 11, 2013, http://www.aljazeera.net/programs/today-interview/2013/6/11/%D8%AD%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D9%88%D8%AF-%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%B1%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B2-

%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B6%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%A9-%D8%AC1.

[16] Thomas Jocelyn, "Officials from al-Nusrah Front, Ahrar al Sham vow to continue fight against Islamic State," The Long War Journal, July 20, 2015, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/07/officials-from-al-nusrah-front-ahrar-al-sham-vow-to-continue-fight-against-islamic-state.php.

[17] Ahrar al Sham participated in Riyadh Conference in December 2015, but later withdrew. Zaid al Mahmoud, ["Ahrar al-Sham rejected pressure on High Negotiations Committee,"] All4Syria, January 26, 2016, http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/288442; @islamic_front, Twitter Post, December 10, 2015, 6:24 AM, https://twitter.com/islamic_front/status/674957775454212096.

[18] Desmond Butler, "APNewsBreak: Turkey, Saudi in pact to help anti-Assad rebels," Associated Press, May 7, 2015, http://bigstory.ap.org/article/97e2ec0b591c4a43a319ff2fd895dc4e/apnewsbreak-turkey-saudi-pact-help-anti-assad-rebels; "Mapping Militant Organizations: Ahrar al Sham," Stanford University, November 5, 2014, https://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523 .

[19] Raphael Lefevre and Ali el Yassir, "The Sham Legion: Syria's Moderate Islamists," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 15, 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=55344.

[20] Lefevre and el Yassir, "The Sham Legion: Syria's Moderate Islamists."

[21] ["Syrian Free Channel to meet with the military commander of Fatah Halab Operations Room"], YouTube video, posted by "Al-Souria Free Media Channel Abu Baraa", May 7, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SuOZfyLzty0; Hakim al Masri, ["Major Yasser abd al-Rahim for "Kulna Sharika'": military operations launched against Kurdish units in Sheikh Maqsood in Aleppo"], All4Syria, October 02, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/256254

[22] ["Military Report about the Sham Legion"], TahrirSy, April 21, 2014, https://web.archive.org/web/20140717164448/http://tahrirsouri.com/2014/04/21/%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D8%B3%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D9%85%D9%81%D8%B5%D9%84-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%85/; Nicholas A. Heras, "Militant Leadership Monitor Volume 6 Issue 6," Jamestown Foundation, March 30, 2015.

[23] "The Sham Legion-The Legion's tanks target the Assad Forces in Morek-Hama", YouTube video, posted by Faylaq al Sham English, May 10, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8yZfqhedpA .

[24]Faylaq al Sham has demonstrated its use of BMP infantry fighting vehicles in videos uploaded to YouTube beginning 01 JUL 2014. "Sham Legion- The BMB Vehicle Storms the Assad Checkpoints", YouTube video, posted by Faylaq al Sham English, July 1, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xaenr3_Y3zA.

[25] ["Jaysh al-Fatah || Sham Legion || Wonderful and distinctive, the destruction of a truck on a bridge in the Ghab Plain after being targeted by a Kornett Missile"], YouTube video, posted by ["Sham Legion"], October 19, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmoPDXuBgcI

[26] ["Liwa al-Muhajireen wa al-Ansar targeting a tank battalion with MILAN and nearby clashes"] YouTube Video, posted by "Liwa al-Muhajireen wa al-Ansar, July 17, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSTU7fecDI8&feature=youtu.be

[27] ["Fatah Halab || Faylaq al-Sham || destruction of a 23-mm position in the town of al-Zahra in the northern Aleppo countryside"] Youtube video, posted by ["Sham Legion – Aleppo Sector"], February 09, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwHGpMyuDZs

[28] Faylaq al Sham was a signatory to the "Five Principles of the Syrian Revolution," a document outlining common principals for a settlement to the Syrian Civil War that was signed by 20 armed opposition factions and numerous other anti-regime elements including moderate judicial bodies, political bodies, and civil society groups. This initiative was led by the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood through the Syrian Islamic Council, a body of Sharia jurists connected to the Muslim Brotherhood. @charles_lister, Twitter Post, September 18, 2015, 8:37 AM, https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/644897927832424448/photo/1.

[29] @homs_l_m, Twitter Post, November 15, 2015, 2:28 AM, https://twitter.com/homs_l_m/status/665838711972741120 ; ["Statement on the recent attacks in Paris"], ["Council of Aleppo Rebels"] Facebook Page, November 14, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/1585671778327911/photos/a.1586033154958440.1073741828.1585671778327911/1728733490688405/?type=3.

[30] Faylaq al Sham withdrew from the Jabhat al Nusra- and Ahrar al Sham-led Jaysh al Fatah in Idlib Province, though it did so in order to refocus on the Aleppo fight where it cooperates with Jabhat al Nusra. The withdrawal nevertheless demonstrates the group's independence. http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-rebels-idUSKBN0UH08Q20160103?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews

[31] @Charles_Lister, Twitter Post, January 31, 2016, 8:17 A.M., https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/693830356479275008 .

[32] The Faylaq al Sham formation was supported by the Muslim Brotherhood-linked Commission for the Protection of Civilians, which maintains an active "fundraising network" for the Syrian armed opposition. Aron Lund, "The Revolutionary Command Council: Rebel Unity in Syria?", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 1, 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=57350; Raphael Lefevre and Ali el Yassir, "The Sham Legion: Syria's Moderate Islamists," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 15, 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=55344.

[33] Khaled Kengo was reportedly appointed as general leader of the First Regiment by a foreign power. @TheFirstRegimen, Twitter Post, December 7, 2015, 9:04 A.M., https://twitter.com/TheFirstRegimen/status/673910893676249088.

[34] Amer Hamouda was reportedly removed from power on "foreign orders," likely indicating Turkey's increased involvement with the group. His removal was denied and later condemned by an alternate First Regiment Twitter account that was previously associated with Liwa al Tawhid. His current ties to the group remain unclear, although an alleged statement of condemnation from First Regiment leadership suggest he maintains some local support from within the group and may still play a leadership role. @TheFirstRegimen, Twitter post, October 15, 2015, 1:38 P.M., https://twitter.com/TheFirstRegimen/status/654758193986338817; @TheFirstRegimen, Twitter Post, December 7, 2015, 9:04 A.M., https://twitter.com/TheFirstRegimen/status/673910893676249088; @TheFirstRegimen, Twitter Post, October 23, 2015, 8:32 A.M., https://twitter.com/TheFirstRegimen/status/657580464434257921.

[35] ["Video..Revolutionary Brigades Announce Structuring of a New Force under the Name 'First Regiment of Aleppo'"], El Dorar, March 5, 2015, http://eldorar.com/node/71020; Martin Chulov, "Aleppo's most wanted man - the rebel leader behind tunnel bombs," *The Guardian,* May 20, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/20/aleppos-most-wanted-man-rebel-leader-tunnel-bombs.

[36] @alfaoj_alaooal, Twitter post, August 23, 2015, 4:46 AM, https://twitter.com/alfaoj_alaooal/status/635417844478517248.

[37] ["Blowing Up the Orphanage Building that Assad's Gangs Were Concentrated In"], YouTube video, posted by "Al Fawj al Awl," August 24, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jIFxr6iPZB0.

[38] Al Fawj al Awl was a signatory to the "Five Principles of the Syrian Revolution," a document outlining common principals for a settlement to the Syrian Civil War that was signed by 20 armed opposition factions and numerous other anti-regime elements including moderate judicial bodies, political bodies, and civil society groups. This initiative was led by the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood through the Syrian Islamic Council, a body of Sharia jurists connected to the Muslim Brotherhood @charles_lister, Twitter Post, September 18, 2015, 8:37 AM, https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/644897927832424448/photo/1.

[39] Al Fawj al Awl highlighted its rejection of ISIS in its formation statement on March 3, 2015. It currently fights against ISIS in Norhtern Aleppo. ["The First Regiment || Announcement of the Restructuring of the First Regiment in Aleppo City and the Countryside"], YouTube video, posted by "Al Fawj al Awl," March 4, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4ldMwmHOOc;; @alfaoj_alaooal, Twitter post, May 24, 2015, 8:26 AM, https://twitter.com/alfaoj_alaooal/status/602495981721092096; @alfaoj_alaooal, Twitter post, August 8, 2015, 9:48 AM, https://twitter.com/alfaoj_alaooal/status/630058019808747520; @alfaoj_alaooal, Twitter post, July 31, 2015, 4:09 AM, https://twitter.com/alfaoj_alaooal/status/627073533097713664.

[40] Al Fawj al Awl participated in a joint military operations room with Jabhat al Nusra (named Ansar Shari'a) in mid-2015 and later agreed to leadership by Ahrar al Sham in February 2016. @AnsarSh_halab, Twitter Post, July 02, 2016, https://twitter.com/AnsarSh_halab/status/616628318973075456; Thomas Joscelyn, "Aleppo-based rebel groups unite behind Ahrar al Sham's former top leader," The Long War Journal, February 20, 2016, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/02/zleppo-based-rebel-groups-unite-behind-ahrar-al-sham-former-top-leader.php.

[41] @charles_lister, Twitter Post, January 31, 2016, 8:17 AM https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/693830356479275008 .

[42] Al Fawj al Awl was established on March 3, 2015 in an apparent splinter from the major Islamist group the Tawhid brigade. The reason for the splinter is unclear, but rumors of involvement from the Turkish Military Operations Command Center (MOC) could indicate that the group's formation constitutes an effort by regional actors to develop a new ground partner in northern Syria. Al Fawj al Awl demonstrated its receipt of TOW anti-tank missiles in videos uploaded to YouTube beginning on October 8, 2015, further indicating its connection to the MOC. ["The first regiment || The destruction of a bulldozer belonging to the forces of Assad's anti-missile shields 'Tao' in the eastern Hama"], YouTube video, posted by "The first regiment", October 8, 2015, ["The First Regiment || Announcement of the Restructuring of the First Regiment in Aleppo City and the Countryside"], YouTube video, posted by "Al Fawj al Awl," March 4, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4ldMwmHOOc; Sohaib Enjrainy, ["The Levantine Front Dissolves Itself: The Muslim Brotherhood and Turkey are Losing a Round of Military Leadership in Aleppo"], al Akhbar, April 18, 2015, http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/230796; Sohaib Enjrainy, ["Unity Brigade in a New

Look…The First Regiment in Aleppo a Formation or a Split?"], al Akhbar, March 7, 2015, http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/227741; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y97zlAudsNo.

[43] Aron Lund, "The Mujahideen Army of Aleppo," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 8, 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=55275.

[44] ["Leader in Jaysh al Mujahideen to 'We are all partners:' ISIS hindered Fatah Halab"], All4Syria, September 2, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/246469.

[45] Jaysh al Mujahideen is made up of over a dozen hyper local groups in Aleppo and claimed to consist of 5,000 men in June 2014. ["Jaysh al-Mujahideen commander: International conditions prevent the unifications of rebels"] Al Jazeera, February 6, 2014, http://www.aljazeera.net/programs/pages/7bb46a43-27cc-4d8d-8f95-39b7c70dc1b0

[46] "Syria – Jaysh al Mujahideen BGM-71 TOW strike on SAA bulldozer, southern countryside of Aleppo 12/12," YouTube video, posted by "Sircliffe", December 12, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aI3RyFeF9Ro

[47] ["Jaysh Al-Mujahideen// Al-Mujahideen deploy to the Battle in Um-Al Qura village"], YouTube video, posted by ["Jaysh Al-Mujahideen"], June 20, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hHgtlzlkuAE.

[48] Jaysh al Mujahideen was a signatory to the "Five Principles of the Syrian Revolution," a document outlining common principals for a settlement to the Syrian Civil War that was signed by 20 armed opposition factions and numerous other anti-regime elements including moderate judicial bodies, political bodies, and civil society groups. This initiative was led by the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood through the Syrian Islamic Council, a body of Sharia jurists connected to the Muslim Brotherhood. According to the group's charter released on May 4, 2014, the group desires to strengthen security institutions in rebel-held areas and create a unified judicial institution in order to address grievances. @charles_lister, Twitter Post, September 18, 2015, 8:37 A.M., https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/644897927832424448/photo/1; "Jeish al Mujahideen Charter- Comment and Translation," Goha's Nail, May 5, 2014, https://gohasnail.wordpress.com/2014/05/05/jeish-al-mujahideen-charter-comment-and-translation/ ; Jaysh al Mujahideen Charter, ["Jaysh al-Mujahideen"] Facebook Post, May 4, 2014, 7:21 AM, https://www.facebook.com/mujahdeen.army/posts/628131607280307?stream_ref=10 Available upon request from authors; Statement of withdrawal from Nour al Din al Zenki ["Jaysh al-Mujahideen"] Facebook Post, May 04, 2014, https://www.facebook.com/mujahdeen.army/photos/a.625664640860337.1073741828.583294765097325/628196167273851/?type=1&stream_ref=10. Additional sourcing available upon request from authors.

[49] @homs_l_m, Twitter Post, November 15, 2015, 2:28 AM, https://twitter.com/homs_l_m/status/665838711972741120 ; ["Statement on the recent attacks in Paris"], ["Council of Aleppo Rebels"] Facebook Page, November 14, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/1585671778327911/photos/a.1586033154958440.1073741828.1585671778327911/1728733490688405/?type=3; Sayeed Jawdit, ["'Jaysh al Mujahideen' al-Walid declares war on 'ISIS'"], All4Syria, January 3, 2014, http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/122686.

[50] Jaysh al Mujahideen intervenes when Jabhat al Nusra escalates against moderates. Mohamed Iqbal Balu, ["Jabhat al-Nusra in breach of the armistice with new series of assaults"], All4Syria, May 02, 2015, http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/191785 .

[51] Mohammad Bakkour was reported to have attended the Riyadh Opposition Conference in December 2015. Bakkour maintained support of the HNC throughout its meetings with UN Special Envoy Steffan de Mistura in late January 2016. @BBakr70, Twitter Post, January 30, 2016, 1:45 PM, https://twitter.com/BBakr70/status/693550596570419200; @BBakr70, Twitter Post, January 30, 2016, 12:23 PM, https:// twitter.com/BBakr70/status/693529885629927428; @eldorar1, Twitter Post, December 11, 2015, 9:10 A.M., https://twitter.com/eldorar1/status/675362127557894144.

[52] Jaysh al Mujahideen demonstrated its receipt of TOW anti-tank missiles in videos uploaded to YouTube, likely indicating connection to the MOC. [" Jaysh al-Mujahideen : destruction of a bulldozer by a TOW Missile in the southern Aleppo countryside on the hill Al-Qurasi"] Youtube video, posted by ["I am the mingled revolutionary and freedom only"], October 27, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-1alj0Xsr0

[53] Hana Shaheen, ["Levantine Front accepted the resignation of its leader and appointed the general "Al-Harkoush" as his successor"] All4Syria, July 18, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/224672.

[54] @Charles_Lister, Twitter Post, June 18, 2015, 7:24 A.M., https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/611540095804411904.

[55] @shamfront11, Twitter Post, February 15, 2016, 5:51 A.M., https://twitter.com/shamfront11/status/699229659603582976.

[56] @shamfront11, Twitter Post, February 15, 2016, 5:53 A.M., https://twitter.com/shamfront11/status/699229943843196928.

[57] Kita'ib Thuwar al Sham merged with Al Jabhat al Shamiya in January 2016. Shakardi was appointed Military Commander shortly thereafter in February. Thuwar al Sham was initially formed as a splinter faction from Al Jabhat al Shamiya in April 2015. ["Al Jabhat al Shamiya appoints Capt. Ali Shakardi officially to military leadership"], Micro

Syria, February 15, 2016, http://microsyria.com/2016/02/15/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D9%83%D9%84%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A8-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%83%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%8A/; Sayeed Jawdit, ["Thuwar al-Sham Brigades and Levant Front announce their full merger"], All4Syria, January 27, 2016, http://all4syria.info/Archive/288783; ["New Formation in the name of Kita'ib Thuwar al Sham in Aleppo"], April 7, 2015, Sham News Network, April 07, 2015 http://www.shaam.org/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9/%D8%AA%D8%B4%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%AC%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%85-%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%A8-%D8%AB%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AD%D9%84%D8%A8.html.

[58] Amer Youssef, ["'Muslims are not criminals:' Al Shamiya's message to the Islamic State"], Al Jazeera, December 9, 2015, http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2015/12/9/-%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%84%D8%A7-%D9%85%D8%AC%D8%B1%D9%85%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9.

[59] Muhammad Bakour was appointed Military Chief of Al Jabhat al Shamiya when the group was first created in December 2014. The group formally dissolved its coordinating body in April 2015, but continued to maintain military cooperation. It remains unclear if Bakour continues to play a role within Al Jabhat al Shamiya in order to support coordination between factions. Aron Lund, "The Levant Front: Can Aleppo's Rebels Unite?" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 26, 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=57605 ; Hakem al-Masri, ["News of the dismantlement of Al Jabhat al Shamiya in Aleppo"], All4Syria, April 17, 2015, http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/207737.

[60] Manhal Bareesh, ["Kita'ib Thuwar al Sham merge with Levant Front and constitute the largest force in Aleppo with the strength of 7,000 fighters"], Al Quds al Arabi, January 30, 2016, http://www.alquds.co.uk/?p=474194.

[61] Elizabeth O'Bagy, "The Free Syrian Army," Institute for the Study of War, March 24, 2013, http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/The-Free-Syrian-Army-24MAR.pdf.

[62] ["Targeting Islamic State places of concentration in Telalin village and Mudajen Dabeq with tank and morter shells"], YouTube video, posted by sham front, August 30, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgmqUtU5bHw

[63] ["Targeting 14.5 mm gun on the front of Nubl and al Zahra with a TOW missile"] YouTube video, posted by "Levantine Front", January 26, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4iz5b5Je5w

[64] "Al Jabhi al Shameyyi detonates a tunnel in Old Aleppo," Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, December 30, 2014, http://syriahr.com/en/2014/12/al-jabha-al-shameyyi-detonates-a-tunnel-in-old-aleppo

[65] Al Jabhat al Shamiya was a signatory to the "Five Principles of the Syrian Revolution," a document outlining common principals for a settlement to the Syrian Civil War that was signed by 20 armed opposition factions and numerous other anti-regime elements including moderate judicial bodies, political bodies, and civil society groups. This initiative was led by the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood through the Syrian Islamic Council, a body of Sharia jurists connected to the Muslim Brotherhood. Al Jabhat al Shamiya also plays a leading role in Islamic governance in Aleppo Province and is a leading member of the tier 3-dominant Shari'a Court of Aleppo and its Countryside. @charles_lister, Twitter Post, September 18, 2015, 8:37 AM, https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/644897927832424448/photo/1

[66] Al Jabhat al Shamiya released a mock execution video styled after ISIS propaganda on December 9, 2015, in which fighters staged an execution of ISIS fighters and walked away from the detainees, asserting "Muslims are not criminals" and demanding that ISIS repent for its violent actions. Tom Wyke and Jay Akbar, "'This is not our policy. We are not evil': Syrian rebels force ISIS fighters to their knees… then SPARE them to prove 'Muslims are not evil,'" Daily Mail, December 8, 2015, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/ news/article-3350691/Muslims-not-criminals-Syrianrebel-force-ISIS-fighters-knees-let-live-dramatic-mockexecution-video.html; @homs_l_m, Twitter Post, November 15, 2015, 2:28 AM, https://twitter.com/homs_l_m/status/665838711972741120 ; ["Statement on the recent attacks in Paris"], ["Council of Aleppo Rebels"] Facebook Page, November 14, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/1585671778327911/photos/a.1586033154958440.1073741828.1585671778327911/1728733490688405/?type=3.

[67] Al Jabhat al Shamiya intervenes when Jabhat al Nusra escalates against moderates. Hiba Mohammed, ["Jabhat al-Nusra waged an armed attack on the headquarters of Harakat Hazem in Aleppo province"] All4Syria, January 29, 2015, http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/190529; ["Jabhat al-Shamiya demanded Harakat Hazem and Jabhat al-

Nusra stop fighting and sent forces to resolve the dispute,"] Zaman al Wasl, January 30, 2015, https://www.zamanalwsl.net/news/57588.html. ["Harakat Hazem declares it resolves itself and joins the Levantine Front"] Shaam News Network, January 30, 2015, http://www.shaam.org/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9/%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9-%D8%AD%D8%B2%D9%85-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%86-%D8%AD%D9%84-%D9%86%D9%81%D8%B3%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%88-%D8%A5%D9%86%D8%B6%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9.html

[68] @shamfront11, Twitter Post, January 13, 2015, 10:26 A.M., https://twitter.com/shamfront11/status/687339864509952000.

[69] Aron Lund, "The Levant Front: Can Aleppo's Rebels Unite?" Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, December 26, 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=57605.

[70] ["Abu Hummam al-Boydhani Leader of Jaysh al Islam, successor to Alloush"], Al Jazeera, December 25, 2015, http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2015/12/25/%D9%85%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%B2%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B4-%D9%88%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A8%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%BA%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D9%88%D8%B7%D8%A9.

[71] Anne Barnard, "Powerful Syrian Rebel Leader Reported Killed in Airstrike, *New York Times*, December 25, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/26/world/middleeast/zahran-alloush-syria-rebel-leader-reported-killed.html?_r=0.

[72] In pictures: Former Saidnaya prisoners turned rebel," The National, January 21, 2014; http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/in-pictures-former-saidnaya-prisoners-turned-rebels

[73] ["Words of the Deputy Commander of Jaysh al-Islam Abu Qusay congratulating the mujahideen and the Umma for the arrive of Eid al-Fitr"], Jaysh al Islam Official Website, July 18, 2015, https://www.jaishalislam.com/subject/277; ["Announcement from the leadership council of Jaysh al Islam about the martyrdom of leader Sheikh Mohammad Zahran bin Abdullah Alloush"], Jaysh al Islam Official Website, December 25, 2015, https://www.jaishalislam.com/video/show/19/192/; additional sources available from authors upon request.

[74] ["Abu Hummam al-Boydhani Leader of Jaysh al Islam, successor to Alloush"], Al Jazeera, December 25, 2015, http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2015/12/25/%D9%85%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%B2%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B4-%D9%88%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A8%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%BA%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D9%88%D8%B7%D8%A9.

[75] Sheikh Abu Abdul Rahman Ka'akah is the President of Jaysh al Islam's General Sharia Commission. Bara' Abdul Rahman, ["Sharia Head of 'Jaysh al Islam' to 'We are all partners:' We are going after ISIS in all regions of Eastern Ghouta"], All4Syria, February 7, 2014, http://all4syria.info/Archive/155044; ["General Sharia Commission"], Facebook Post, February 15, 2016, https://www.facebook.com/shar3ieh.org/photos/a.149592726397828O.1073741828.148885602135207I/1741574959413508/?type=3&theater ; Additional sourcing available from authors upon request.

[76] Source available from authors upon request.

[77] "Syria Conflict: Islamist rebel named opposition chief negotiator," BBC, January 20, 2016, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35364114.

[78] Jaysh al Islam maintains local affiliates in Dera'a, Quneitra, Homs, Idlib, Aleppo, and Latakia, although the majority of its fighters are concentrated in Damascus Province. Shelly Kittleson, "Syrian opposition defends eastern Ghouta situation," al Monitor, May 28, 2015,www.al-monitor.com:pulse:originals:2015:05:syria-jaish-al-islam-ghouta-bombing-alloush-islamist.html ; Roy Gutman and Mousab Alhamdee, "Islamist rebel leader walks back rhetoric in first interview with U.S. media", McClatchy DC, May 20, 2015, http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/world/middle-east/article24784780.html

[79] Mohamad Khair Alhamwi, "Starving Syrians use underground route to escape besieged town," Syria Deeply, January 15, 2016, http://www.syriadeeply.org/articles/2016/01/9247/underground-route-besieged-ghouta/.

[80] Amjad Tinawi, ["Rahman Corps in the eastern Ghouta blow up the building including Regime troops"] All4Syria, May 10, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/212175

[81] Jaysh al Islam seized a regime-held army storage base northeast of Damascus City, seizing an unspecified number of tanks. Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, Facebook Post, May 04, 2016, 2:11 PM, https://www.facebook.com/syriahroe/posts/523076074467402?stream_ref=10

[82] ["Witness: the destruction of the third armored BMP trying to transport the wounded 15-10-2015"] Video, posted by Jaysh al Islam, October 15, 2015, https://www.jaishalislam.com/video/show/9/146/

[83] Jaysh al Islam uses religious governance as an instrument of power in opposition-held Syria. Jaysh al Islam plays a leading role in governance in Damascus and likely seeks to shape the law implemented by Shari'a court judiciary structures according to its own Salafist interpretation. Jaysh al Islam maintains its own local Shari'a structures in the capital, which include Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice office, an indicator of Salafi Jihadist ideology. Abu Hasan Al Andalusi, ["The 'Sharia Authority' in Eastern Ghouta is a Sharia authority for 'civilians and the military.'"], All4Syria, March 15, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/199693; @islamic_front, Twitter post, April 17, 2015, 3:39PM, https://twitter.com/islamic_front/status/589196501471076353; ["'Zayn al-Abidin' General Judge for Eastern Ghouta"], Zaman al Wasl, September 21, 2015, https://www.zamanalwsl.net/news/64394.html .

[84] The group fights against ISIS in Damascus and the surrounding countryside, including arresting alleged ISIS groups and ISIS sympathizers. On May 10, 2015, it signed a statement pledging to clear Eastern Ghouta of all ISIS militants. Abu Abdullah Al Hourani ["Faylaq Al Rahman launches attacks on factions in Ghouta after failure to pledge to Islamic State"] Zaman Al Wasl, January 29, 2015, https://www.zamanalwsl.net/news/57548.html ; ["Eastern Ghouta Unified Command and Jabhat al Nusra joint operation in search of Islamic State cells claims the lives of two young men"] Zaman Al Wasl, February 24, 2015 https://zamanalwsl.net/news/58406.html ; ["Unified Military Command in Eastern Ghouta emphasizes its continued pursuit of Islamic State remnants"] SNN, May 10, 2015 http://www.shaam.org/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B3%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D9%88%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%A4%D9%83%D8%AF-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%82%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%84%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9.html

[85] Jaysh al Islam still participates in negotiations despite pressure from Jabhat al Nusra not to. ["Jaysh al-Islam commander commenting on the withdrawal from the High Negotiations Committee: 'we will not sing out of tune'"] Zaman al Wasl, December 30, 2015, https://zamanalwsl.net/news/67438.html; Lisa Barrington, "Syrian govt. not serious about political solution" rebel leader," Reuters, February 05, 2016, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-rebels-idUSKCN0VE2MO?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews.

[86] Jaysh al Islam originally agreed to participate in negotiations under the leadership of now deceased Zahran Alloush. The current participation in Geneva is a departure from past Jaysh al Islam behavior and follows an attempt by Zahran Alloush to moderate his image and that of Jaysh al Islam. It is unclear whether Jaysh al Islam will return to past behaviors if the negotiations break down. Jaysh al Islam has executed civilians in the past for cutting deals with the regime on local levels. Lisa Barrington, " Syria govt. not serious about political solution: rebel leader," Reuters, February 05, 2015 http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-rebels-idUSKCN0VE2MO?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews ; Bara Abdul Rahman, ["Reconciliation in Eastern Ghouta…a crime punishable by the judiciary"] All4Syria, October 31, 2014. http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/176064 ; Abu Hasan al Andulusi, ["A new campaign of executions affect 'the spoiled" in Eastern Ghouta"] All4Syria, march 14, 2015 http://all4syria.info/Archive/199479 . al Andulusi, ["A new campaign of executions affect 'the spoiled" in Eastern Ghouta"].

[87] Ian Black, "Syria Crisis: Saudi Arabia to spend millions to train new rebel force," The Guardian, November 07, 2013, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/07/syria-crisis-saudi-arabia-spend-millions-new-rebel-force

[88] ["Ghouta… Russians tried to assassinate the leader of Rahman Corps before Alloush, three spies have contributed to the regime's progress in al-Marj"], Zaman al Wasl, December 26, 2015, https://zamanalwsl.net/news/67323.html.

[89] ["Leader of Rahman Corps and a number of his associates injured after suicide attack targeted their meeting in Ghouta"], Zaman al Wasl, May 8, 2015, https://zamanalwsl.net/news/60523.html; Nicholas A. Heras, "Militant Leadership Monitor, Volume 6, Issue 6," Jamestown Foundation, June 30, 2015.

[90] Abu Mohammad al Fateh appears to continue to play a leadership role in Eastern Ghouta following the merger. ["Al Fateh rather than Zahran Alloush in the Leadership of Eastern Ghouta"] Zaman Al Wasl, June 1, 2015, http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/219315 ; Aron Lund, "Ajnad Al-Sham Islamic Union," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 4, 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=54750 ; ["Word of Abu

Mohammad al Fateh on the merger of Ajnad al Sham and Rahman Corps"], YouTube video, posted by ["Abu Mohmmad al Fateh"], February 22, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dS-FNrG9D28.

[91] Walid al-Ashqar, ["Dismantled an explosive device that was attached to the car of a judge in Eastern Ghouta"], All4Syria, July 28, 2015, http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/236434; ["Promo that explains the process of removing the explosive device which tried to assassinate Sheikh Khaled Abu Bashish"], YouTube video, posted by Etihad al Islamiya li-Ajnad al Sham, July 29, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXqVhxOOXW8.

[92] ["TOW" anti-armor in Diyafa, Rahman Corps"] All4Syria, July 05, 2014, http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/155578

[93] Amjad Tinawi, ["Rahman Corps in the eastern Ghouta blow up the building including Regime troops"]

[94] The engineering unit was part of Ajnad al Sham before it merged with Jaysh al Islam in Eastern Ghotua. Walid al Ashqar, ["Dismantling an explosive device affixed to a judge's car in Eastern Ghouta"], All4Syria, July 28, 2015, http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/236434; Shaam News Network, ["Dozens of dead and wounded from regime after Assad prepared them to break into Harasta"], Shaam News Network, April 19, 2015, http://www.shaam.org/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9/%D8%B9%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84%D9%89-%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%89-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B5%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AF-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%B6%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%87%D9%85-%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7.html ; ["Promo explains the process of removing the explosive device, which tried to assassinate Sheikh Khaled abu Albeshbesh,"] Youtube Video, posted by "Ajnad al Sham Islamic Union", July 29, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXqVhxOOXW8

[95] Faylaq al Rahman was a signatory to the "Five Principles of the Syrian Revolution," a document outlining common principals for a settlement to the Syrian Civil War that was signed by 20 armed opposition factions and numerous other anti-regime elements including moderate judicial bodies, political bodies, and civil society groups. This initiative was led by the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood through the Syrian Islamic Council, a body of Sharia jurists connected to the Muslim Brotherhood. @charles_lister, Twitter post, September 18, 2015, 8:37 AM https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/644897927832424448/photo/1;
Michael Weiss, "The Southern Front Part 1," Now Lebanon, August 15, 2013, https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/commentaryanalysis/the-southern-front

[96] Faylaq al Rahman fights against ISIS in Damascus and the surrounding countryside, including arresting alleged ISIS groups and ISIS sympathizers. On May 10, 2015 it signed a statement pledging to clear Eastern Ghouta of all ISIS militants. Abu Abdullah Al Hourani ["Faylaq Al Rahman launches attacks on factions in Ghouta after failure to pledge to Islamic State"] Zaman Al Wasl, January 29, 2015, https://www.zamanalwsl.net/news/57548.html ; ["Eastern Ghouta Unified Command and Jabhat al Nusra joint operation in search of Islamic State cells claims the lives of two young men"] Zaman Al Wasl, February 24, 2015 https://zamanalwsl.net/news/58406.html ; ["Unified Military Command in Eastern Ghouta emphasizes its continued pursuit of Islamic State remnants"] SNN, May 10, 2015 http://www.shaam.org/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B3%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D9%88%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%A4%D9%83%D8%AF-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%82%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%84%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9.html

[97] @shamfront11, Twitter Post, January 13, 2016, 10:26 A.M., https://twitter.com/shamfront11/status/687339864509952000.

[98] A local Faylaq al Rahman affiliate received TOW anti-Tank missiles in July 2014, appearing to indicate covert support from the MOC in Amman, Jordan. ["Saif Al-Sham Brigades: Targeting a tank with TOW missiles in Quneitra Governate"], YouTube video, posted by Muhannd resh, July 5, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f37k04JR6rk; ["TOW anti Tank missiles in the hands of Faylaq Al Rahman,"] All4Syria, July 5, 2014 http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/155578.

[99] Aron Lund, "The Ajnad al-Sham Islamic Union", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 04, 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=54750

[100] Ajnad al Sham stated that the following sectors will remain active in its statement announcing the merger with Faylaq al Rahman in Eastern Ghotua: Daraya, Muadamiya, Western Ghouta, Khan al Sheikh, Kiswa, Dera'a, Harmoun (Quneitra), and northern sector. Walid al Ashqar, ["Islamic Union in Eastern Ghouta announces full integration into the Rahman Corps"]. All4Syria, February 19, 2016, http://all4syria.info/Archive/293390.

[101] It is unclear how many Ajnad al Sham fighters were in Eastern Ghouta at the time of the merger with Faylaq al Rahman, but Ajnad al Sham is possibly half the reported size after the merger. Aron Lund, "The Ajnad al-Sham Islamic Union," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 4, 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=54750 ; ["'Jaysh Al-Islam' graduation of a new batch of new Mujahideen under the leadership of 'Zahran Alloush' 2015-4-30"], YouTube video, posted by ["Free Syria"], April 30, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cnVZllh1r3Q; Ibrahim Hamaidi, ["Istanbol: Efforts to unify Syrian 'Islamic rifle'], All4Syria, May 5, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/210518.

[102] Ajnad al Sham was a signatory to the "Five Principles of the Syrian Revolution," a document outlining common principals for a settlement to the Syrian Civil War that was signed by 20 armed opposition factions and numerous other anti-regime elements including moderate judicial bodies, political bodies, and civil society groups. This initiative was led by the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood through the Syrian Islamic Council, a body of Sharia jurists connected to the Muslim Brotherhood. @charles_lister, Twitter Post, September 18, 2015, 8:37 AM, https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/644897927832424448/photo/1

[103] Ajnad al Sham fights against ISIS in Damascus and the surrounding countryside, including arresting alleged ISIS groups and ISIS sympathizers. On May 10, 2015, it signed a statement pledging to clear Eastern Ghouta of all ISIS militants. Abu Abdullah Al Hourani ["Faylaq Al-Rahman launches attacks on factions in Ghouta after failure to pledge to Islamic State"] Zaman Al Wasl, January 29, 2015, https://www.zamanalwsl.net/news/57548.html ; ["Eastern Ghouta Unified Command and Jabhat al Nusra joint operation in search of Islamic State cells claims the lives of two young men"] Zaman Al Wasl, February 24, 2015 https://zamanalwsl.net/news/58406.html ; ["Unified Military Command in Eastern Ghouta emphasizes its continued pursuit of Islamic State remnants"] SNN, May 10, 2015 http://www.shaam.org/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B3%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D9%88%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%A4%D9%83%D8%AF-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%82%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%84%D9%88%D9%84-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9.html

[104] @shamfront11, Twitter Post, January 13, 2016, 10:26 A.M., https://twitter.com/shamfront11/status/687339864509952000.

[105] Hassan Hassan, "In Syria, the Brotherhood's influence is on the decline," The National, April 01, 2014, http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/comment/in-syria-the-brotherhoods-influence-is-on-the-decline#full#ixzz2xeUkT9VC

[106] This assessment is based primarily from Twitter and YouTube data.

[107] Saber Safir is one of the original regime defectors from Dera'a City. ["12:00am News bulletin for all field events in Syria 1-1-2015"] SNN, January 2, 2015 http://www.shaam.org/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9/%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A9-12-%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A1%D9%8B-%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AB-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7-1-1-2015.htmls

[108] Cafarella, Jennifer, "Rebels Launch New Offensive in Southern Syria." Institute for the Study of War, July 2, 2015, http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2015/07/rebels-launch-new-offensive-in-southern.html; Nicholas A. Heras, "Militant Leadership Monitor Volume 6 Issue 2," Jamestown Foundation, February 28, 2015.

[109] Abu Osama al Joulani often conducts interviews representing both Al Jaysh al Awl and the Southern Front. ["Soon-Syrian Media Organization: Exclusive interview with Abu Osama Al Joulani Deputy Commander of the First Army"] YouTube video, posted by SMO SYRIA2015, April 11, 2015 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQZAtXldPns .

[110] Cafarella, Jennifer, "Rebels Launch New Offensive in Southern Syria." Institute for the Study of War, July 2, 2015, http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2015/07/rebels-launch-new-offensive-in-southern.html.

[111] The most powerful components of Al Jaysh al Awl include Firqat al Hamza, Jabhat Thuwar Souri al Mintaqa al Janoubiya, and Al Fawj al Awl Mudfa'iya. [" First Army unites military factions in Dera'a"], Al Arabiya, January 2, 2015 http://www.alarabiya.net/ar/arab-and-world/syria/2015/01/02/%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%88%D9%84-%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%AD%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B3%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B9%D8%A7-.html.

[112] ["First Army, witness the destruction and burning of a tank with a TOW missile in the battle to liberate the city of Deraa, Southern Storm"] Youtube video, posted by "Abou El Magd Joulani – Saraya based", June 25, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCD6_Gcb9LY

[113] ["First Army Dera'a: Targeting Assad's forces strongholds with T72 tanks within the battle to liberate Jadiyya"] YouTube video, posted by SMO Syria, April 8, 2015 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JuoZKDOHAyc.

[114] In an interview with Middle East Eye, Safir states that Al Jaysh al Awl avoids 'all labels, be they religious or tribal.' The formation of Al Jaysh al Awl was a "nationalist project." The group was established to "remove the injustice of the regime," but not to replace the Syrian government. The mission of Al Jaysh al Awl is to "militarily provide for the civil institution" and protect civilians, according to an interview with Al Jaysh al Awl's leader Saber Safir. Alisa Rezneck, "Syria's Southern rebels seek backing in the shadow of Islamic State," Middle East Eye, February 20, 2015, http://www.middleeasteye.net/in-depth/features/forgotten-syrian-southern-rebels-toil-backing-under-shadow-islamic-state.

[115] Al Jaysh al Awl participated in an anti-Jabhat al Nusra statement in early 2015, in which Southern Front groups renounced military cooperation or ideological affiliation with Jabhat al Nusra. The deputy leader of First Army, Abu Osama al Joulani, has also actively argued for containing Jabhat al Nusra in the past. @RabiaAlsharif, Twitter Post, April 13, 2015, 8:52 AM, https://twitter.com/RabiaAlsharif/status/587644426781982720 ; ["Southern Front factions announce refusal to cooperate or "any thought" of potential cooperation with Jabhat al-Nusra"] Shaam News Network, March 13, 2015, http://www.shaam.org/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9/%D9%81%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D9%88%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%86-%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D9%88-%D8%A3%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%83%D8%B1-%D8%AA%D9%83%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%8A.html. @charles_lister, Twitter Post, June 22, 2015, 12:27 AM, https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/612884605155328000/photo/1; @charles_lister, Twitter Post, June 21, 2015, 11:59 PM, https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/612877550004641792/photo/1; @charles_lister, Tiwtter Post, June 21, 2015, 12:15 PM, https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/612700372444934144; ["Al-Janoubia' distancing itself from Fatah al-Janoub, perceiving it as a foreign force"] Zaman al-Wasl, July 22, 2015, https://zamanalwsl.net/news/61905.html; Suha Maayeh and Phil Sands, "Syria's southern rebels draw up new game plan," The National, November 25, 2014, http://www.thenational.ae/world/middle-east/syrias-southern-rebels-draw-up-new-game-plan#full.

[116] Al Jaysh al Awl is a prominent member of the Southern Front. As such, this assessment is largely based upon the Southern Front statements regarding its support for the HNC in addition to Al Jaysh al Awl General Deputy's attendance at the Riyadh Conference in December 2015. Sam Heller, "A Ceasefire is beginning in Syria – Except where it won't," VICE News, February 26, 2016, https://news.vice.com/article/a-ceasefire-is-beginning-in-syria-except-where-it-wont ; @south_front_sy, Twitter Post, December 10, 2015, 8:48 AM, https://twitter.com/south_front_sy/status/674994045186371584; @south_front_sy, Twitter Post, February 23, 2016, 8:47 AM, https://twitter.com/south_front_sy/status/702173059881574400.

[117] The First Army demonstrated its receipt of TOW anti-tank missiles in videos uploaded to YouTube, likely indicating connection to the MOC. ["First Army targeting tank with TOW missile during the battle to liberate Jadiya"] YouTube video, posted by ["First Army"], April 08, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-utrQXkT0o
[118] ["Jaysh al Yarmouk choses Suleiman Sharif as new leader and successor of Bashar Zoubi"], All4Syria, October 13, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/259862.
[119] Bashar al Zoubi was the speaker in the formation video for Tahalaf Suqour al Janoub and the coalition's announcement of operations to seize the Nasib border crossing, the only other video that the coalition released that featured leaders from all four of the coalition's component groups. This prominent role likely indicates that he is the overall leader of Tahalaf Suqour al Janoub. ["Statement Announcing Tahaluf Suqour al-Janoub in the eastern region and of Dera'a Province"], YouTube video, posted by SMO Syria, December 25, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JF7Z2-UZ1Oo; ["Tahaluf Suqour al-Janoub #Dera'a: Announcing the beginning of the battle of "Ya Tharat al-Mutaqelin" to liberate Nasib border crossing"] , YouTube video, posted by SMO Syria, April 1, 2015 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5UNFK4ODOI.
[120] ["Jaysh al Yarmouk choses Suleiman Sharif as new leader and successor of Bashar Zoubi"], All4Syria, October 13, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/259862.
[121] ["Commander of Firqat Fallujah Houran to All4Syria: the loss of our leaders increases our strength and resolve"], All4Syria, September 14, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/250951.
[122] ["Statement to re-commission Colonel Mohammad Khalid al Dahani Abu al Mundhir as leader of March 18 Division"], YouTube video, posted by ["March 18 Division Dera'a cradle of the revolution"], January 5, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZJZCXa2c5o&feature=youtu.be.
[123] The four components of Tahaluf Suqour al Janoub are Jaysh al Yarmouk, Firqa Fallujah Houran, Liwa Asoud al Sunnah, and Firqat 18 Athar. Tahalaf Suqour al Janoub's component Jaysh al Yarmouk claimed to consist of 3,000-5,000 fighters in August 2013. Michael Weiss, "The Southern Front Part 1," Now Lebanon, August 15, 2013, https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/commentaryanalysis/the-southern-front.
[124] ["Tahaluf Suqour al Janoub-Jaysh al Yarmouk-The most Beautiful shot destroying regime forces at the crossing"], YouTube video, posted by ["Abu Al-Yazid Al-Nasibi"], April 1, 2015 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aky02Hrm9gE.
[125] Tahalaf Suqour al Janoub component group Liwa Ussoud al Sunna has demonstrated the use of TOW missiles. [Liwa Ussoud al Sunna – "targeting vehicle inside brigade 82 with TOW missile"], Youtube video, posted by "Buraq Houran," December 12, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9cJ7LH8H6Y.
[126] Tahalaf Suqour al Janoub is a prominent member of the Southern Front. As such, this assessment is largely based upon the Southern Front founding statement and subsequent Southern Front statements on desired Syrian endstate. "The Free Syrian Army--Southern Front Statement No. 4: Transitional Phase," Revolutionary Forces of Syria Media Office, October 12, 2014, https://rfsmediaoffice.com/en/2014/12/15/6424/#.VljcXecby94; Najam Salam, ["49 Factions in the Free Syrian Army Form the Southern Front"], All4Syria, February 13, 2014, http://all4syria.info/Archive/130995.
[127] The groups leading faction, Jaysh al Yarmouk participated in a meeting in January 2016 in which the MOC ordered them to adopt a counter-Jabhat al Nusra stance. While it hasn't yet acted against Jabhat al Nusra in southern Syria, Jaysh al Yarmouk later participated in an operation against Harakat al Muthanna alongside Jaysh Ahrar al Asha'er. Finally, Jaysh al Yarmouk was a member of the Dar al Adel courthouse that voted to implement the Unified Arab Code despite Jabhat al Nusra's protestations, prompting Jabhat al Nusra to withdraw. Jaysh al Yarmouk also participated in anti-Jabhat al Nusra statement in early 2015 in which Southern Front groups renounced military cooperation or ideological affiliation with Jabhat al Nusra. Copy of Yarmouk statement available from authors on request. ["Southern Front factions announce refusal to cooperate or "any thought" of potential cooperation with Jabhat al-Nusra"] Shaam News Network, March 13, 2015, http://www.shaam.org/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9/%D9%81%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D9%88%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%86-%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D9%88-%D8%A3%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%83%D8%B1-%D8%AA%D9%83%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%8A.html; Albin Szakola, "Daraa rebels ordered to stop fighting Syria regime: report:" NOW. January 20, 2016, https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/NewsReports/566514-daraa-rebels-ordered-to-stop-fighting-syria-regime-report; Misra al-Za'abi, [" Yacoub Amar: I demand the trial of the leaders of Harakat al-Muthanna al-Islamiya"] All4Syria, January 17, 2016, http://all4syria.info/Archive/286638; Dar al Adel fi Houran, Facebook Post, December 25, 2014,

https://www.facebook.com/3dl.horan/photos/a.155430815480357 4.1073741827.155428122147293 4/1569777433256646/?type=1&permPage=1; @AlJanob_JN, Twitter Post, November 01, 2015, 8:01 AM, https://twitter.com/AlJanob_JN/status/660849224377069572, Copy available upon request from authors.

[128] Bashar Zoubi has historically been willing to participate at the negotiating table. He attended Geneva II in January 2014. Nonetheless, component groups of Tahalaf Suqour al Janoub signed a statement listing a set of demands that the HNC must not compromise. @south_front_sy, Twitter Post, February 23, 2016, 8:47 AM, https://twitter.com/south_front_sy/status/702173059881574400 ; Joshua Landis, "Saudis and CIA agree to Arm Syrian "Moderates" with Advanced Weapons," Syria Comment, February 15 2015, http://www.joshualandis.com/blog/saudis-cia-agree-arm-syrian-moderates-andvanced-anti-aircraft-anti-tank-weapons/; ["Apologized to 'mana' .. document of the sons of houran to their representatives in the Riyadh conference"], Zaman al Wasl, December 8, 2015, https://zamanalwsl.net/news/66788.html.

[129] Three of Tahalf Suqour al-Janoub's component brigades receive TOW-missiles, indicating its likely connections to the Jordanian MOC. Albin Szakola, "Daraa rebels ordered to stop fighting Syria regime: report," NOW. January 20, 2016 https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/NewsReports/566514-daraa-rebels-ordered-to-stop-fighting-syria-regime-report.

[130] Jaysh al Yarmouk has historically been funded by Saudi Arabia. Its component Fallujah Houran Division, although it does not receive TOW-missiles, was responsible for the delivery of multiple convoys of UAE Red Crescent aid into Dera'a Province. [" A Word from the Revolutionary Commander for Fallujah Brigade with the entry of Red Crescent convoy to the town of Al-Na'ema in Dera'a 2014-8-17"], YouTube video, posted by SMO Syria, August 17, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9rGntVpuIE ; ["Dera'a: Crescent convoy procession in the village of Houran under the protection of the FSA- Fallujah Houran Brigade"], Suleiman al-Khalidi, "Syrian Al-Qaeda reach the foothills of Israeli-held Golan," Reuters, May 22, 2014, http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/22/us-syria-south-insight-idUSBREA4L03Z20140522.

[131] Cafarella, Jennifer, "Rebels Launch New Offensive in Southern Syria." Institute for the Study of War, July 2, 2015, http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2015/07/rebels-launch-new-offensive-in-southern.html.

[132] Badi'a Abu Halawa, ["Free Syrian Army…The Southern Front and the challenges of Subordination"], All4Syria, August 27, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/245446.

[133] Cafarella, Jennifer, "Rebels Launch New Offensive in Southern Syria." Institute for the Study of War, July 2, 2015, http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2015/07/rebels-launch-new-offensive-in-southern.html.

[134] The components of Usoud al Harb are Liwa al Omari, Liwa Mu'taz Billah, Liwa Shabbab al Sunna, and Liwa Tawhid Kata'ib Houran. ["Free Syrian Army Factions in Dera'a Form 'Usoud al Harb' operations room in the eastern countryside,"], YouTube, posted by RFS Media Office, December 27, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPvP1kpif9E.

[135] The Usoud al Harb component groups have all demonstrated the use of TOW missiles. [Tawhid Kata'ib Houran "targeting T57 tank with Tow missile in Jadia brigade 2015 21 3"] YouTube video, posted by "Information Office of the Town of Katiba", December 4, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUiru2gFPVU; ["Omari Brigades_targeting a tank inside brigade 12 in Azra' area with guided missile"], YouTube video, posted by "Abu Siraj al Lajat," April 26, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJMhuekHgAI&feature=youtu.be; [Liwa Shabab al Sunna | "targeting regime vehicle in the western region with TOW missile"], YouTube video, posted by ["Busra al Sham media team"], September 11, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DsE471ObwrQ; [Liwa Mu'taz Billah "targeting regime area on the Atman front with TOW missile"], YouTube video, posted by ["media news foundation"], December 8, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yaVoAZEsBQ.

[136] The formation of Usoud al Harb was intended to be "a first step towards the unification of all military action." The group is a prominent member of the Southern Front. As such, the assessment of Usoud al Harb's ideology is largely based upon the Southern Front founding statement and subsequent Southern Front statements on a desired Syrian endstate. In Usoud al Harb's formation statement, Colonel Nablusi states that the operations room was formed "in accordance with … the building of a free unified Syria for all Syrians." ["Usoud al-harb Operations Room Formation Statement"], YouTube Video, posted by ["Farqat Shabab Al-Sunna"], December 27, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XuQR_dcvlOs. "The Free Syrian Army--Southern Front Statement No. 4: Transitional Phase," Revolutionary Forces of Syria Media Office, October 12, 2014, https://rfsmediaoffice.com/en/2014/12/15/6424/#.VljcXecby94; Najam Salam, ["49 Factions in the Free Syrian Army Form the Southern Front"], All4Syria, February 13, 2014, http://all4syria.info/Archive/130995.

[137] Two groups within the Usoud al Harb participated in a meeting in January 2016 in which the Jordanian MOC ordered them to adopt a counter-Jabhat al Nusra stance. Liwa Muataz Billah was a member of the Dar al Adel courthouse that voted to implement the Unified Arab Code despite Jabhat al Nusra's protestations, prompting Jabhat al Nusra to withdraw. Albin Szakola, "Daraa rebels ordered to stop fighting Syria regime: report," NOW. January 20, 2016 https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/NewsReports/566514-daraa-rebels-ordered-to-stop-fighting-syria-regime-report; @AlJanob_JN, Twitter Post, November 01, 2015, 8:01 AM,

https://twitter.com/AlJanob_JN/status/660849224377069572; Dar al Adel fi Houran, Facebook Post, December 25, 2014, https://www.facebook.com/3dl.horan/photos/a.155430815480357 4.1073741827.155428122147293 4/1569777433256646/?type=1&permPage=1.

[138] Usoud al Harb demonstrated its receipt of TOW anti-tank missiles in videos uploaded to YouTube, likely indicating connection to the Jordanian MOC. Two groups within Usoud al Harb participated in a meeting in January 2016 in which the Jordanian MOC ordered them to adopt a counter-Jabhat al Nusra stance. ["Usoud al-Harb Operations Room unified Horan Brigades, targeting with TOW missile in the Battle Southern Storm 23 7 2015"] YouTube video, posted by "Information Office of the Town of Katiba", July 23, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R32WnAAlAQg; Albin Szakola, "Daraa rebels ordered to stop fighting Syria regime: report," NOW. January 20, 2016 https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/NewsReports/566514-daraa-rebels-ordered-to-stop-fighting-syria-regime-report.

[139] Muhanned Shahada, ["Pending, Sultan Murad Brigade Commander: Safe Area Holding Aleppo residents"], Orient News, August 13, 2015, http://www.orient-news.net/?page=news_show&id=89751&%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89_%D8%B0%D9%85%D8%A9_%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%AF_%D9%84%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%A1_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%86_%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AF:%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B7%D9%82%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A2%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A9_%D8%AA%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%84_%D8%A8%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%89_%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86.

[140] Sam Heller, "The battle for Aleppo shows that US strategy in Syria is in tatters," VICE News, 2/16/2016, https://news.vice.com/article/the-battle-for-aleppo-shows-that-us-strategy-in-syria-is-in-tatters; ["Danger of Islamic State threatening the Opposition's situation in Northern Aleppo Countryside"] ALSOURIA, August 25, 2015, https://www.alsouria.net/content/%D8%AE%D8%B7%D8%B1-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9-%D9%8A%D9%87%D8%AF%D8%AF-%D9%88%D8%B6%D8%B9-%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B6%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%81-%D8%AD%D9%84%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A.

[141] ["Liwa al-Sultan Murad: destruction of Fozdicka vehicle on the Handarat front near al-Melleh farm with TOW anti-armor missiles"] YouTube video, posted by ["Liwa al-Sultan Murad"], September 17, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lYEH9ZB2sHA.

[142] Al Firqat al Sultan Murad has exhibited signs of a moderate secularist ideology but its actual political stance is unclear. In one instance, Al Firqat al Sultan Murad agreed to five broad 'Principles of the Syrian Revolution' during a meeting in Istanbul in September 2015. The principles include the overthrow of Syrian President Bashar al Assad and core members of his regime; the dismantlement of regime security services; the departure of all foreign forces from Syria; the preservation of the unity and national identity of Syria; and the rejection of any sectarian-based power-sharing agreement. @Charles_Lister, Twitter post, September 18, 2015, 9:02 AM, https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/644904432266813440/photo/1.

[143] Al Firqat al Sultan Murad affirmed its commitment to fighting ISIS when it absorbed additional brigades in December 2015. Said Jawdat, ["Armed brigades Announce the formation of the Sultan Murad Division and Liwa al Fatah join Harakat Ahrar al-Sham"] All4Syria, December 09, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/276485; ["Statement on the recent attacks in Paris"], ["Council of Aleppo Rebels"] Facebook Page, November 14, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/158567177832791 1/photos/a.158603315495844 0.1073741828.158567177832791 1/172873349068840 5/?type=3.

[144] Al Firqat al Sultan Murad agreed to leadership by Ahrar al Sham in Aleppo. Thomas Joscelyn, "Aleppo-based rebel groups unite behind Ahrar al Sham's former top leader," The Long War Journal, February 20, 2016, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/02/zleppo-based-rebel-groups-unite-behind-ahrar-al-sham-former-top-leader.php; Jennifer Cafarella, "Update on the Situation in Aleppo," Institute for the Study of War, February 16, 2016, http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2016/02/update-on-situation-in-aleppo.html.

[145] @charles_lister, Twitter Post, January 31, 2016, 8:17 AM, https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/693830356479275008

[146] Al Firqat al Sultan Murad demonstrated its receipt of TOW anti-tank missiles in videos uploaded to YouTube, likely indicating connection to the Turkish MOC. Local sources claim that the group has received training in Turkey as well. ["Liwa Sultan murad destroyed the regime forces' 23 mm cannon with an anti-tank TOW missle system on the Zahra front in the northern countryside of Aleppo"] YouTube video, posted by "Liwa Sultan Murad", February 03, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjukWZw6b0A; Hakem al Masri, ["Liwa al-Sultan Murad receives Al-Nusra in northern Aleppo"], All4Syria, August 11, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/240722.

[147] Harakat Nour al Din al Zenki's Shura Council elected Muhammed Said Masri as Harakat Nour Al Din Al Zenki's General Leader, replacing Ali Sai'dou on September 17, 2015 because of his "administrative abilities and military experience." Masri was chosen from outside the original ranks of Nour al Din al Zenki. He was formerly the leader of Al Zahir Baybars, which merged with Nour Al Din Al Zenki on September 16, 2015. ["Appointment of Captain 'Muhammed al Masri' as Leader of Harakat Nour Al Din Al-Zenki"], All4Syria, Sepember 19, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/252587.
[148] Al Atharibi, ["Harakat Nour al-Din al-Zenki Military Commander: ISIS works to prevent the establishment of a safe area"] All4Syria, August 28, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/245443.
[149] ["Appointment of Captain 'Muhammed al-Masri' as Leader of Harakat Nour Al-Din Al-Zenki"], All4Syria, Sepember 19, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/252587.
[150] ["Fatah Halab || Harakat Nour Al-Din Al-Zenki || Damaging a 57 Cannon on the New Aleppo Front with TOW Missiles"], Youtube video, posted by "Harakat Nour al-Din al-Zenki," July 25, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eY90O-BrobU.
[151] Nour al Din al Zenki was a signatory to the "Five Principles of the Syrian Revolution," a document outlining common principals for a settlement to the Syrian Civil War that was signed by 20 armed opposition factions and numerous other anti-regime elements including moderate judicial bodies, political bodies, and civil society groups. This initiative was led by the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood through the Syrian Islamic Council, a body of Sharia jurists connected to the Muslim Brotherhood. The group has since exhibited some signs of increasingly hardline ideology, but possibly due only to mounting Jabhat al Nusra pressure. Nour al Din al Zenki's advocacy office advertised hanging banners quoting prominent Salafi Jihadi figures in early 2016. @charles_lister, Twitter Post, September 18, 2015, 8:37 AM, https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/644897927832424448/photo/1. @NDZankiMotion, Twitter Post, January 28, 2016, 12:50 PM, https://twitter.com/NDZankiMotion/status/692812005485473796.
[152] ["Statement on the recent attacks in Paris"], ["Council of Aleppo Rebels"] Facebook Page, November 14, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/158567177832791l/photos/a.158603315495844O.1073741828.158567177832791l/172873349068840 5/?type=3; @homs_l_m, Twitter Post, November 15, 2015, 2:28 AM, https://twitter.com/homs_l_m/status/665838711972741120.
[153] Nour al Din al Zenki handed over its checkpoints to Jabhat al Nusra after coming under considerable pressure from the group and even issued a formal apology to Jabhat al Nusra after clashing with it. The group later agreed to Ahrar al Sham leadership in Aleppo. ["Al Nusra and al Zenki in Aleppo"] Zaman al Wasl, October 06, 2015, https://www.zamanalwsl.net/news/64774.html; @charles_lister, Twitter Post, October 06, 2015, 1:29 PM, https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/651494505896669184; ["Zenki apologies to Jabhat al Nusra for its part of the allegations"], All4Syria, October 14, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/260062; Thomas Joscelyn, "Aleppo-based rebel groups unite under Ahrar al Sham's former top leader," The Long War Journal, February 20, 2016, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/02/zleppo-based-rebel-groups-unite-behind-ahrar-al-sham-former-top-leader.php
[154] @charles_lister, Twitter Post, January 31, 2016, 8:17 AM, https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/693830356479275008
[155] Nour al Din al Zenki demonstrated its receipt of TOW anti-tank missiles in videos uploaded to YouTube beginning on July 11, 2014, likely indicating connection to the MOC. ["Harakat Nour Al-Din Al-Zenki// Destruction of T72 tank with Tow missiles on the Sana'iyya city Front in Sheikh Nujar"] YouTube video, posted by ["Harakt Nour Al-Din Al-Zenki'], Jul 11, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8R76TLDZWE.
[156] Thomas Joscelyn, "Aleppo-based rebel groups unite under Ahrar al-Sham's former top leader," The Long War Journal, February 20, 2016, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/02/zleppo-based-rebel-groups-unite-behind-ahrar-al-sham-former-top-leader.php
[157] [Suqour al Ghab "Choses new leader after the assassination of Jamil Ra'adun"], All4Syria, August 27, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/245438; @AlnasarArmy, Twitter Post, February 13, 2016, 3:14 A.M., https://twitter.com/AlnasarArmy/status/698465211162951682.
[158] @AlnasarArmy, Twitter Post, March 7, 2016, 4:58 A.M. https://twitter.com/AlnasarArmy/status/706826285134249984.
[159] ["Jaysh al-Nasr II Destruction of a Regime Kornet missile system position with a Tow Missile on the al-Ghab Plain in Western Hama Province"] Youtube video, posted by "Jaysh al-Nasr", February 08, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uuAHPk6hcjU
[160] ["Statement on the recent attacks in Paris"], ["Council of Aleppo Rebels"] Facebook Page, November 14, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/158567177832791l/photos/a.158603315495844O.1073741828.158567177832791l/172873349068840 5/?type=3; @homs_l_m, Twitter Post, November 15, 2015, 2;28 AM, https://twitter.com/homs_l_m/status/665838711972741120
[161] As a TOW anti-tank missile recipient, the group is vulnerable to attack by Jabhat al Nusra, an indicator of willingness to challenge Jabhat al Nusra. ["Jaysh al-Nasr II Destruction of a Regime Kornet missile system position

with a Tow Missile on the al-Ghab Plain in Western Hama Province"] YouTube video, posted by "Jaysh al-Nasr", February 08, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uuAHPk6hcjU

[162] @charles_lister, Twitter Post, January 31, 2016, 8:17 AM, https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/693830356479275008

[163] Jaysh al Nasr has demonstrated its use of TOW anti-tank missiles, likely indicating the group's ties to the Turkish MOC. ["2016-2-10 Jaysh al-Nasr || Destruction of a car loaded with ammunition and regime elements with a TOW missile on the al-Mugheer front"], YouTube video, posted by "Jaysh al-Nasr", February 10, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffOMeQiV528.

[164] Caleb Weiss, "Turkistan Islamic Party had significant role in recent Idlib offensive," The Long War Journal, April 30, 2015, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/04/turkistan-islamic-party-had-significant-role-recent-idlib-offensive.php.

[165] "A commander in the Turkistan Islamic Party killed in the clashes around the national hospital in Jeser al-Shagour," Syrian Observatory for Human Rights Website, May 26, 2015, http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=18489.

[166] "Central and South Asian Groups in Syria, Part 1," the Line of Steel," May 13, 2015, http://thelineofsteel.weebly.com/analysis/central-and-south-asian-groups-in-syria-part-i; "Turkistan Islamic Party Fighters Killed in Syria," The Line of Steel, July 19, 2015, http://thelineofsteel.weebly.com/news/turkestan-islamic-party-fighters-killed-in-syria; Bill Roggio and Caleb Weiss, "Uzbek Group in Syria Trains Children for Jihad," Long War Journal, December 29, 2015, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/12/uzbek-group-in-syria-trains-children-for-jihad.php.

[167] Caleb Weiss, "Turkistan Islamic Party had significant role in recent Idlib offensive," The Long War Journal, April 30, 2015, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/04/turkistan-islamic-party-had-significant-role-recent-idlib-offensive.php; ["Jaysh al-Fatah begins a battle for control over barracks of Fu'ah with seven martyrdom operations"] Shaam News Network, September 18, 2015, http://www.shaam.org/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9/%D8%A8%D8%B3%D8%A8%D8%B9-%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B4%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%8A%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%A3-%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%AA%D8%AD-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%AB%D9%83%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%88%D8%B9%D8%A9.html

[168] Jabhat al Nusra considers Al Hizb al Islami al Turkistani a close ally and has featured them in publications discussing the role in Syria of foreign fighter groups with global ambitions. "Anti-IS fighters in Syria release second issue of English magazine 'Al-Risalah'" Site Intel group, October 25, 2015, https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Jihadist-News/anti-is-fighters-in-syria-release-second-issue-of-english-magazine-al-risalah.html ; Caleb Weiss, "Turkistan Islamic Party had significant role in recent Idlib offensive," The Long War Journal, April 30, 2015, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/04/turkistan-islamic-party-had-significant-role-recent-idlib-offensive.php.

[169] Al Sa'oud was a colonel with the 17th Reserve Division's 137th Mechanized Brigade in Deir ez-Zor before defecting in March 2012. ["Formation Statement for Division 13 in Idlib Governorate"], YouTube video, posted by ["Katibat Ansar al-Haq"], June 17, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEWrJGzPm6I; John Beck, "Syria rebel recounts his time in ISIL jail," Al-Jazeera, March 10, 2014, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/03/syria-rebel-recounts-his-time-an-isil-jail-201439111113109123.htm; Nicohlas A. Heras, "Militant Leadership Monitor Volume 5, Issue 11," the Jamestown Foundation, November 30, 2014.

[170] Leader of Firqa 13 component brigade Liwa Fursan al Haq. ["Formation Statement for Division 13 in Idlib Governate"], YouTube video, posted by ["Katibat Ansar al-Haq"], June 17, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEWrJGzPm6I.

[171] Firqa 13 "has at least 1,800 men – 'ready to fight anywhere, at any time' - split into 10 companies and another 200 in support roles," according to information reported by Al Jazeera in March 2014. John Beck, "Syria rebel recounts his time in ISIL jail," Al-Jazeera, March 10, 2014, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/03/syria-rebel-recounts-his-time-an-isil-jail-201439111113109123.html.

[172] Firqa 13 commander Al Sa'oud admitted to receiving TOW missiles in an interview with Tharir Souri published May 20, 2014, a claim that is corroborated by additional open source reporting as well as videos uploaded to YouTube. Scott Lucas, "Syria: The 9 Insurgent groups with US-made TOW anti-tank missiles," EA Worldview, May 9, 2014, http://eaworldview.com/2014/05/syria-9-insurgent-groups-us-made-tow-anti-tank-missiles/; Scott Lucas, "Syria Interview: the Commander who received US Made TOW anti-tank missiles," EA Worldview, May 20, 2014, http://eaworldview.com/2014/05/syria-interview-commander-received-us-made-tow-anti-tank-missiles/.

[173] Firqa 13 desires an "inclusive, civilian state" following the fall of the Assad regime. Scott Lucas, "Syria Interview: the Commander who received US Made TOW anti-tank missiles," EA Worldview, May 20, 2014, http://eaworldview.com/2014/05/syria-interview-commander-received-us-made-tow-anti-tank-missiles/.
[174] John Beck, "Syria rebel recounts his time in ISIL jail," Al Jazeera, March 10, 2014, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/03/syria-rebel-recounts-his-time-an-isil-jail-201439111113109123.htm. ["Statement on the recent attacks in Paris"], ["Council of Aleppo Rebels"] Facebook Page, November 14, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/158567177832791I/photos/a.158603315495844O.1073741828.158567177832791I/172873349068840 5/?type=3.
[175] As a TOW anti-tank missile recipient, the group is vulnerable to attack by Jabhat al Nusra, an indicator of willingness to challenge Jabhat al Nusra. The group has also signed critical statements about Jabhat al Nusra in the past. ["Nusra Denounces Aleppo Agreement… Free Syrian Army Factions Strongly Criticize"], All4Syria, July 19, 2014, http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/157924; Sam Dagher, "Al Qaeda Affiliate Attacks Western-backed Syria Rebels," Wall Street Journal, March 13, 2016, http://www.wsj.com/articles/al-qaeda-affiliate-attacks-western-backed-syria-rebels-1457890447.
[176] @charles_lister, Twitter Post, January 31, 2016, 8:17 AM, https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/693830356479275008
[177] The Firqa 13 demonstrated its use of TOW anti-tank missiles in videos posted to YouTube, likely indicating the group's ties to the Turkish MOC. Firqa 13 component brigade, Liwa Fursan al Haqq receives funding from Qatar. ["13th Division targets Russian with a Tow rocket launcher in the village of Aziziyah in the southern Aleppo countryside 22/11/2015"], YouTube video, posted by "Firqa 13", November 23, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHGqhRGdJ6s; ["13th Division destroy a BMP with a TOW missile on the Hardatin front in the northern Aleppo countryside,"] YouTube video, posted by "Firqa 13", February 02, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gW7G9xhjQgM; "Syria: The 9 Insurgent Groups with US-Made TOW Anti-Tank Missiles," EA Worldview, May 9, 2014, http://eaworldview.com/2014/05/syria-9-insurgent-groups-us-made-tow-anti-tank-missiles.
[178]["Meeting with leading dissident Ali Ayoub, military commander in Harakat Tahrir Homs"] YouTube video, posted by ["Channel Bridge of Space"], September 30, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnQZUt-iXyI.
[179] Harakat Tahrir Homs Charter, Harakat Tahrir Homs Webpage, http://homs-l-m.com/%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%86%D8%AD%D9%86/
[180] Harakat Tahrir Homs was a signatory to the "Five Principles of the Syrian Revolution," a document outlining common principals for a settlement to the Syrian Civil War that was signed by 20 armed opposition factions and numerous other anti-regime elements including moderate judicial bodies, political bodies, and civil society groups. This initiative was led by the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood through the Syrian Islamic Council, a body of Sharia jurists connected to the Muslim Brotherhood. ["The Five Principles of the Revolution"], Facebook Post, October 17, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/syrian5principles.
[181] ["Statement on the recent attacks in Paris"], ["Council of Aleppo Rebels"] Facebook Page, November 14, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/158567177832791I/photos/a.158603315495844O.1073741828.158567177832791I/172873349068840 5/?type=3; @homs_l_m, Twitter Post, November 15, 2015, 2;28 AM, https://twitter.com/homs_l_m/status/665838711972741120.
[182] Jabhat al Nusra struck a deal with Harakat Tahrir Homs when it moved into Rastan in late 2014. The group has been very vocal about Russian and regime violations of the cessation of hostilities, which likely indicates it is susceptible to Jabhat al Nusra's rhetoric surrounding the deal. Nonetheless, the group's mission statement includes "renouncing extremism." "Jabhat a-Nusra in Rastan: 'Like the Islamic State," Syria Direct, January 29, 2015 http://syriadirect.org/main/36-interviews/1820-jabhat-a-nusra-in-rastan-like-the-islamic-state; @homs_l_m, Twitter Post, March 03, 2016, 5:42 AM, https://twitter.com/homs_l_m/status/705387789773361152; @homs_l_m, Twitter Post, February 28, 2016, 5:39 AM, https://twitter.com/homs_l_m/status/703937478613442560; Harakat Tahrir Homs Webpage, http://homs-l-m.com/%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%86%D8%AD%D9%86/.
[183] ["A collective statement: military factions are talking about international pressure for the negotiating body to make concessions"] Zaman al Wasl, January 08, 2016, https://www.zamanalwsl.net/news/67671.html; ["The opposition and the United Nations is at stake"] Harakat Tahrir Homs, January 31, 2016,http://homs-l-m.com/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B6%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%83/ ; @homs_l_m, Twitter Post, December 14, 2015, 9:33 AM, https://twitter.com/homs_l_m/status/676454959999774720.
[184] Aron Lund, "The Levant Front: Can Aleppo's Rebels Unite?" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 26, 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=57605.

[185] Roy Gutman and Mousab Alhamdee, "Tense relations between U.S. and anti-Assad Syrian rebels," McClatchy DC, September 05, 2014, http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/world/article24772522.html.
[186] Roy Gutman and Mousab Alhamdee, "Tense relations between U.S. and anti-Assad Syrian rebels," McClatchy DC, September 05, 2014, http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/world/article24772522.html.
[187] Jabhat al Asala wal Tanmiya is a potential powerbroker in Deir ez-Zour via the New Syrian Army, which identifies objectives in Deir ez-Zour. Sam Heller, "Syria's Newest rebel Army has its sights on the Islamic State," Vice News, November 30, 2015, https://news.vice.com/article/syrias-newest-rebel-army-has-its-sights-on-the-islamic-state.
[188] Aron Lund, "Islamist groups Declare Opposition to National Coalition and US Strategy [updated]" Joshua Landis, September 24, 2013, http://www.joshualandis.com/blog/major-rebel-factions-drop-exiles-go-full-islamist; Aron Lund, "The Levant Front: Can Aleppo's Rebels Unite?" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 26, 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=57605.
[189] ["Statement on the recent attacks in Paris"], ["Council of Aleppo Rebels"] Facebook Page, November 14, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/158567177832791l/photos/a.158603315495844O.1073741828.158567177832791l/172873349068840 5/?type=3; Sam Heller, "Syria's Newest rebel Army has its sights on the Islamic State," Vice News, November 30, 2015, https://news.vice.com/article/syrias-newest-rebel-army-has-its-sights-on-the-islamic-state ; @homs_l_m, Twitter Post, November 15, 2015, 2:28 AM, https://twitter.com/homs_l_m/status/665838711972741120.
[190] Former component of the Jabhat al Nusra-led Mujahideen Shura Council in Deir ez Zour. ["The formation of the Mujaideen Shura Council - Deir ez-Zor"] YouTube video, posted by "Media Observer Foundation", May 25, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGrD9yzvHgM.
[191] Jabhat al Asala wal Tanmiya was present at the Riyadh Council that selected the HNC. Aron Lund, "Riyadh, Rumelian, and Damascus: All you need to know about the opposition conferences," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 09, 2015, http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=62239 ; @charles_lister, Twitter Post, January 31, 2016, 8:17 AM, https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/693830356479275008.
[192] ["A Statement about the New Syrian Army"], Justpaste.it, November 8, 2015, https://justpaste.it/SYNA2015.
[193] Naser al Qasam, ["What is the new Syrian Army and its foundation?"] All4Syria, November 11, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/268488; ["Lieutenant Colonel Muhind al-Tala', leader of the Military Council in Deir ez-Zor"] Youtube Video, posted by "Yahya Altallaa", September 28, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gz_X2hbObnE,
[194] Sam Heller, "Syria's Newest rebel Army has its sights on the Islamic State," Vice News, November 30, 2015, https://news.vice.com/article/syrias-newest-rebel-army-has-its-sights-on-the-islamic-state ; Naser al Qasam, ["What is the new Syrian Army and its foundation?"] All4Syria, November 11, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/268488
[195] New Syrian Army leaders state anti-ISIS objectives in Deir ez Zour Province. Sam Heller, "Syria's Newest rebel Army has its sights on the Islamic State," Vice News, November 30, 2015, https://news.vice.com/article/syrias-newest-rebel-army-has-its-sights-on-the-islamic-state.
[196] Based on statements by Talla. ["Interview with the Commander of the "New Army of Syria" with JFL Observatory"] JFL Observatory, March 6, 2016, http://jfldz.org/?p=2778.
[197] Sam Heller, "Syria's Newest rebel Army has its sights on the Islamic State," Vice News, November 30, 2015, https://news.vice.com/article/syrias-newest-rebel-army-has-its-sights-on-the-islamic-state; ["The new commander of the Syrian Army: Free Army Flag flutters on the al Tanaf border crossing with Iraq"] Revolutionary Forces of Syria Media Office, March 04, 2016, https://rfsmediaoffice.com/2016/03/05/28621/#.Vt3TaPkrKCg.
[198] The U.S. – led anti-ISIS coalition supported New Syrian Army forces in a raid against ISIS near Abu Kamal in Deir ez Zour on November 15, 2015. The group also appears to receive American weapons based on videos released by the group on YouTube. Roy Gutman and Zakaria Zakaria, "New U.S.-backed offensive in northern Syria advances on ISIS outposts," McClatchy DC, November 17, 2015, http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/world/article45269595.html; ["New Syrian Army begins its ground attack on border crossing,"] All4Syria, November 18, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/270636; "Department of Defense Press Briefing by Col. Warren via DVIDS from Baghdad, Iraq" DoD Press Operations, November 18, 2015, http://www.defense.gov/News/News-Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/630393/department-of-defense-press-briefing-by-col-warren-via-dvids-from-baghdad-iraq?source=GovDelivery; ["New Syrian Army"], All4Syria, Youtube, November 8, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A4HoxPEzOMk.
[199] Bakkour Salim is the Qalamoun delegate to the Southern Front Joint Command. ["ISIS Expands in Eastern Qalamoun and the Factions are Prepared"], All4Syria, May 5, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/210875; Cafarella, Jennifer, "Rebels Launch New Offensive in Southern Syria." Institute for the Study of War, July 2, 2015, http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2015/07/rebels-launch-new-offensive-in-southern.html.
[200] ["Major General Idriss Rejects his Dismissal and Confirms His Continuation in Office"], All4Syria, February 19, 2014, http://all4syria.info/Archive/132114.
[201] Cafarella, Jennifer, "Rebels Launch New Offensive in Southern Syria." Institute for the Study of War, July 2, 2015, http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2015/07/rebels-launch-new-offensive-in-southern.html.

[202] ["Special: Desctruction of 'Dashma' with TOW missiles and killing of those inside + ISIS Artillery 23 in Eastern Qalamoun"], YouTube video, posted by ["The Forces of the Martyr Ahmed Abdou Media Office"], September 4, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQ6ynLeNsAY.
[203] Alwiya Ahmed Abdou participated in the temporary seizure of the Tanf border crossing with Iraq alongside the New Syrian Army in March 2016. ["The new commander of the Syrian Army: Free Army Flag flutters on the al Tanaf border crossing with Iraq"] Revolutionary Forces of Syria Media Office, March 04, 2016, https://rfsmediaoffice.com/2016/03/05/28621/#.Vt3TaPkrKCg.
[204] Alwiya Ahmed Abdou demonstrated its use of TOW anti-tank missiles, likely indicating the group's ties to the Jordanian MOC. ["Special: Desctruction of 'Dashma' with TOW missiles and killing of those inside + ISIS Artillery 23 in Eastern Qalamoun"], YouTube video, posted by ["The Forces of the Martyr Ahmed Abdou Media Office"], September 4, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQ6ynLeNsAY.
[205] "New Approach in Southern Syria: Middle East Report N°163," International Crisis Group, September 2, 2015, http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iraq%20Syria%20Lebanon/Syria/163-new-approach-in-southern-syria.pdf.
[206] Badi'a Abu Halawa, ["Free Syrian Army…The Southern Front and the challenges of Subordination"], All4Syria, August 27, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/245446.
[207] ["Exclusive meeting with the deputy commander of the First Corps Ibrahim al Gurani from within the provincial council"], Daraa Provincial Council, February 28, 2015, http://www.daraa-sy.org/?p=617.
[208] Component groups of Al Faylaq al Awl have demonstrated the use of armor in videos uploaded to YouTube. ["First Corps: Dera'a: Statement of Captain Abu Shadi, commander of 21sth infantry division with the beginning of the battle of 'Charge of the Monotheists'"] YouTube video, posted by SMO Syria, January 24, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfQiKL9bgLg.
[209] Al Faylaq al Awl demonstrated its receipt of TOW anti-tank missiles in videos uploaded to YouTube. ["Dera'a Free Syrian Army destroys regime tank with TOW missiles on the Tel Mar'e front"], YouTube video, posted by RFS Media Office, February 19, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEBEEki8Uyw.
[210] Al Faylaq al Awl is a prominent member of the Southern Front. As such, this assessment is largely based upon the Southern Front founding statement and subsequent Southern Front statements on desired Syrian endstate. The authors have not documented statements by the group or its leaders that depart from the Southern Front's overall mission. "The Free Syrian Army--Southern Front Statement No. 4: Transitional Phase," Revolutionary Forces of Syria Media Office, October 12, 2014, https://rfsmediaoffice.com/en/2014/12/15/6424/ - .VljcXecby94; Najam Salam, ["49 Factions in the Free Syrian Army Form the Southern Front"], All4Syria, February 13, 2014, http://all4syria.info/Archive/130995.
[211] Faylaq al Awl participated in anti-Jabhat al Nusra statement in early 2015 in which Southern Front groups renounced military cooperation or ideological affiliation with Jabhat al Nusra. ["Southern Front factions announce refusal to cooperate or "any thought" of potential cooperation with Jabhat al Nusra"] Shaam News Network, March 13, 2015, http://www.shaam.org/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9/%D9%81%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D9%88%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%86-%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D9%88-%D8%A3%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%83%D8%B1-%D8%AA%D9%83%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%8A.html.
[212] ["Apologized to 'mana' .. document of the sons of houran to their representatives in the Riyadh conference"], Zaman al Wasl, December 8, 2015, https://zamanalwsl.net/news/66788.html.
[213] Al Faylaq al Awl has demonstrated its use of TOW anti-tank missiles, likely indicating the group's ties to the Jordanian MOC. ["First Corps: targeting a tank with a TOW missile on the Hamad hill during the Battle of Nour"] Youtube video, posted by "SMO Syria", November 10, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e6w3F30TZSg
[214] ["Seif al-Sham Brigades"] Al Sham Brigades Front-Free Syrian Army, http://fsasaif.com/about/; ["Leading the Southern Front Samer Habboush (to All4Syria): We will work with the Alawites to build a future Syria"], All4Syria, October 30, 2015, http://all4syria.info/Archive/265137.
[215] Cafarella, Jennifer, "Rebels Launch New Offensive in Southern Syria," Institute for the Study of War, July 2, 2015, http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2015/07/rebels-launch-new-offensive-in-southern.html.
[216] ["Seif al Sham Brigades"] Al Sham Brigades Front-Free Syrian Army, http://fsasaif.com/about/.
[217] ["Seif al Sham Brigades"] Al Sham Brigades Front-Free Syrian Army, http://fsasaif.com/about/.

[218] The Seif al Sham Brigades demonstrated its use of armor in videos uploaded to You Tube beginning on June 16, 2015. ["Special: Targeting gatherings of Regime and popular committee forces with tank shells"], YouTube video, posted by ["Seif al-Sham Brigades"] June 16, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhfoDHXyTBI.
[219]["Saif al-Sham Brigades: Destroying a tank with a TOW missile after a bombardment of the Rami site"] Youtube video, posted by "Saif al-Sham Brigades", February 26, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwaHpelNEXE. [Seif al-Sham Brigades: Targeting a tank with Tow Missiles in Quneitra Governate"], YouTube video, posted by Muannd resh, July 5, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f37k04JR6rk.
[220] Seif al-Sham General Leader, Abu Ammar Al Shami, expressed his support for implementing Islamic governance by spreading "true Islamic thought" while also advocating "a democratic Syria for all Syrians" in separate interviews with Orient News and All4Syria. Abu Khalil, ["Commander of Saif Al-Sham: Jabhat al Nusra advanced a lot and we are in agreement with them,"]; Youssef Abu Khalil, ["Letter from Abu Ammar Al-Shami, commander of the Seif al-Sham Brigades to the Alawite Sect's wise"], All4Syria, March 6, 2013, http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/73882.
[221] Seif Al Sham participated in an anti-Jabhat al Nusra statement in early 2015 in which groups in the Southern Front coalition renounced military cooperation or ideological affiliation with Jabhat al Nusra. The group also refused to cooperate with Jaysh al Fatah al Janoub, a Jabhat al Nusra-led coalition in Dera'a and Quneitra Provinces. @RabiaAlsharif, Twitter Post, April 13, 2015, 8:52 AM, https://twitter.com/RabiaAlsharif/status/587644426781982720; ["Southern Front factions announce refusal to cooperate or "any thought" of potential cooperation with Jabhat al-Nusra"] Shaam News Network, March 13, 2015, http://www.shaam.org/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1/%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9/%D9%81%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D9%88%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%86-%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B6-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B5%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D9%88-%D8%A3%D9%8A-%D9%81%D9%83%D8%B1-%D8%AA%D9%83%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%8A.html; @Charles_Lister, Twitter Post, June 22, 2015, 12:27 a.m., https://twitter.com/Charles_Lister/status/612884605155328000/photo/1.
[222] The Seif al Sham Brigades demonstrated its use of TOW anti-tank missiles, likely indicating the group's ties to the Jordanian MOC. ["Saif al-Sham Brigades: Destroying a tank with a TOW missile after a bombardment of the Rami site"] YouTube video, posted by "Saif al-Sham Brigades", February 26, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwaHpelNEXE.
[223] "Syria Direct: News update 3-13-15," Syria Direct, March 12, 2015, http://syriadirect.org/rss/1911-syria-direct-news-update-3-12-15 ; Osama al Koshak, "Mapping Southern Syria's Armed Opposition," Al Jazeera Center For Studies, October 13, 2015, http://studies.aljazeera.net/ResourceGallery/media/Documents/2015/10/13/201510139265233017 34Syria.pdf.
[224] Kirk H. Sowell, "Rebel Advance in Daraa Raises Jihadist Profile in Southern Syria," Syria Deeply, October 23, 2013, http://www.syriadeeply.org/op-eds/2013/10/1538/rebel-advance-daraa-raises-jihadist-profile-southern-syria; @abazeid89, Twitter Post, March 08, 2015, 3:27 PM, https://twitter.com/abazed89/status/574698068580368386/photo/1.
[225] Harakat Al Muthanna Al Islamiya released a statement in support of establishing a caliphate in early 2015, indicating its possible ideological support for ISIS despite its continued allegiance to Jabhat al Nusra. It also intervenes occasionally to deescalate clashes between Jabhat al Nusra and ISIS affiliated organizations in Dera'a and Quneitra provinces such as Jaysh al Jihad (now defunct) and Liwa Shuhada Al Yarmouk. @abazeid89, Twitter Post, March 08, 2015, 3:27 PM, https://twitter.com/abazed89/status/574698068580368386/photo/1; "New Approach in Southern Syria," International Crisis Group, September2, 2015, http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iraq%20Syria%20Lebanon/Syria/163-new-approach-in-southern-syria.pdf.
[226] The group's ideology makes it irreconcilable from the perspective of challenging Jabhat al Nusra because it shares the same objectives with Jabhat al Nusra.
[227]["News of Harakat al-Muthanna al-Islamiya"], Facebook Post, January 22, 2016, https://www.facebook.com/almothana05/photos/a.846532292093188.1073741828.837712369641847/993907107355705/?type=3.

1400 16TH STREET NW, SUITE 515 | WASHINGTON, DC 20036 | WWW.UNDERSTANDINGWAR.ORG | 202.293.5550