

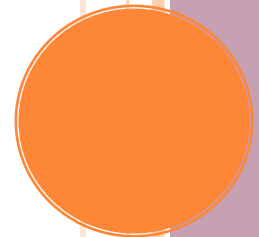


ANALYSIS

Overview of the armed groups operating in Syria

Statistics and More e.U.

2/6/2017



OVERVIEW OF THE ARMED GROUPS OPERATING IN SYRIA

Foreword

The Syrian civil war took a new dynamic in 2016. Russia intervened in support of the Syrian Arab Army from the end of 2015, ISIS' expansion has been stopped and is being progressively repelled, Turkey involved in the field in the north of the country and the city of Aleppo has been taken over by the pro-regime forces. While a settlement of the conflict has been difficult to conceive so far, the current Russian-Turkish initiative and the opening of more concrete negotiations between the Assad regime and selected *moderate* armed factions offer new perspectives that have been unequalled so far.

The extent, the diversity and heterogeneity of the rebellion, as well as the complexity of the field remains, however, serious issues that have to be addressed. The state institutions are still far from being able to recover the sovereignty on Syria's whole territory. And even if the conflict settles and that huge assistance is provided to support state-(re-) building, remote areas can serve, and will be used as a strategic depth for withdrawal basis by illegal armed and mafia groups. Even though international assistance is massively channelled to rebuild Syria, the weakness of the state to enforce order and the rule of law is foreseeable and various parts of the country will remain uncontrolled. In this perspective, the tremendous number of individuals involved in armed groups and the variety of weapons and war equipment has to be considered.

It will not be simple to transform the war into peace and bring national reconciliation. Things have gone very far in terms of damages inflicted to a society and the context is not favourable in this regard. Years of war and the lasting penetration of radical ideologies have destructured the different components of the society, whose an important share has only known the war for most of his life. Besides, demographic indicators are particularly worrying: 4.9 million Syrians have tried to find refuge abroad, 6.3 million are internally displaced 400.000 died because of the conflict¹, life expectancy at birth dropped from 69.7 in 2010 to 48.4 in 2015 for males, as well as from 72 to 65 for females respectively. Also, crude birth rate dropped from 0.0388 in 2010 to 0.0248 in 2015². Economically speaking, we can mention that the GDP contracted of about 57% from 2010 to 2015³. The cases of Iraq (a country neighbouring by the way the least controlled part of Syria) but also of Libya, Afghanistan or even Somalia can serve to forecast some part of Syria's future.

In line with the abovementioned assertion, an overview of the situation on the ground and of the stakeholders implied in the hostilities is provided in this paper. This analysis ambitions to avoid simplistic concepts such as the *moderate* and *radical rebels* when it is about the opposition. Actually, the huge number of armed groups and fighters can instead be classified according to the stance they hold with regard to Mr. Al-Assad's regime. Indeed, we observe

¹ HUDSON J., "U.N. Envoy Revises Syria Death Toll to 400,000", *Foreign Policy*, 22 April 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/22/u-n-envoy-revises-syria-death-toll-to-400000/>, accessed on 1st February 2017.

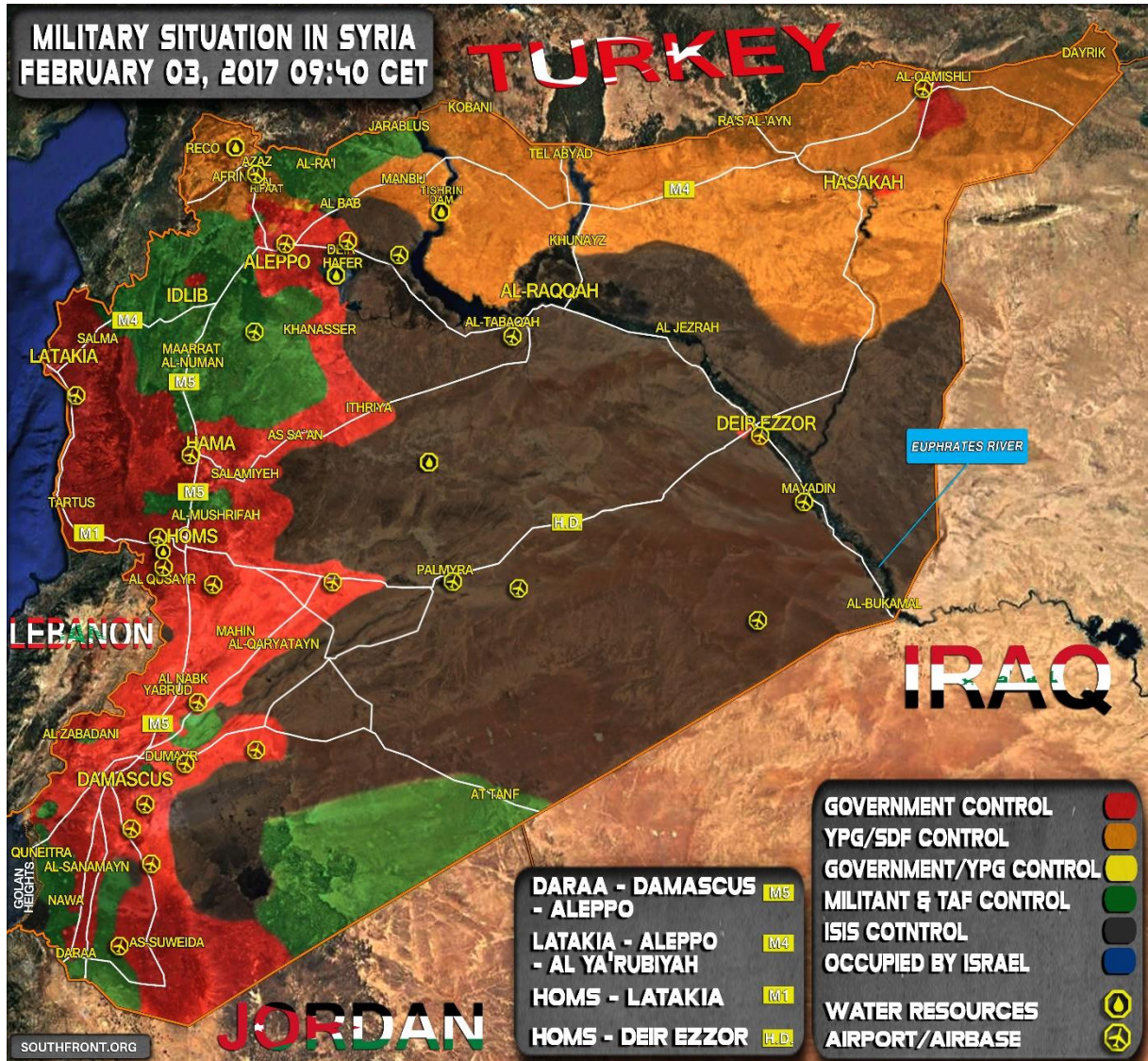
² *Forced Dispersion. A Demographic Report on Human Status in Syria*, Syrian Center for Policy Research, December 2016, pp 64-65 and p 54.

³ GOBAT J. & KOSTIAL K., *Syria's Conflict Economy*, Washington DC: IFM, WP/16/123, June 2016, p 10.

Overview of the armed groups operating in Syria

that 90% of the armed groups that are operating outside the pro-regime coalition seek the replacement of Mr. Al-Assad's government, although he was re-elected in 2014. The paper therefore considers an armed opposition as a non-homogenous ensemble.

Figure 1. Territorial control by stakeholders on the ground



Source: www.southfront.org (February 2017)

Structure of the armed opposition

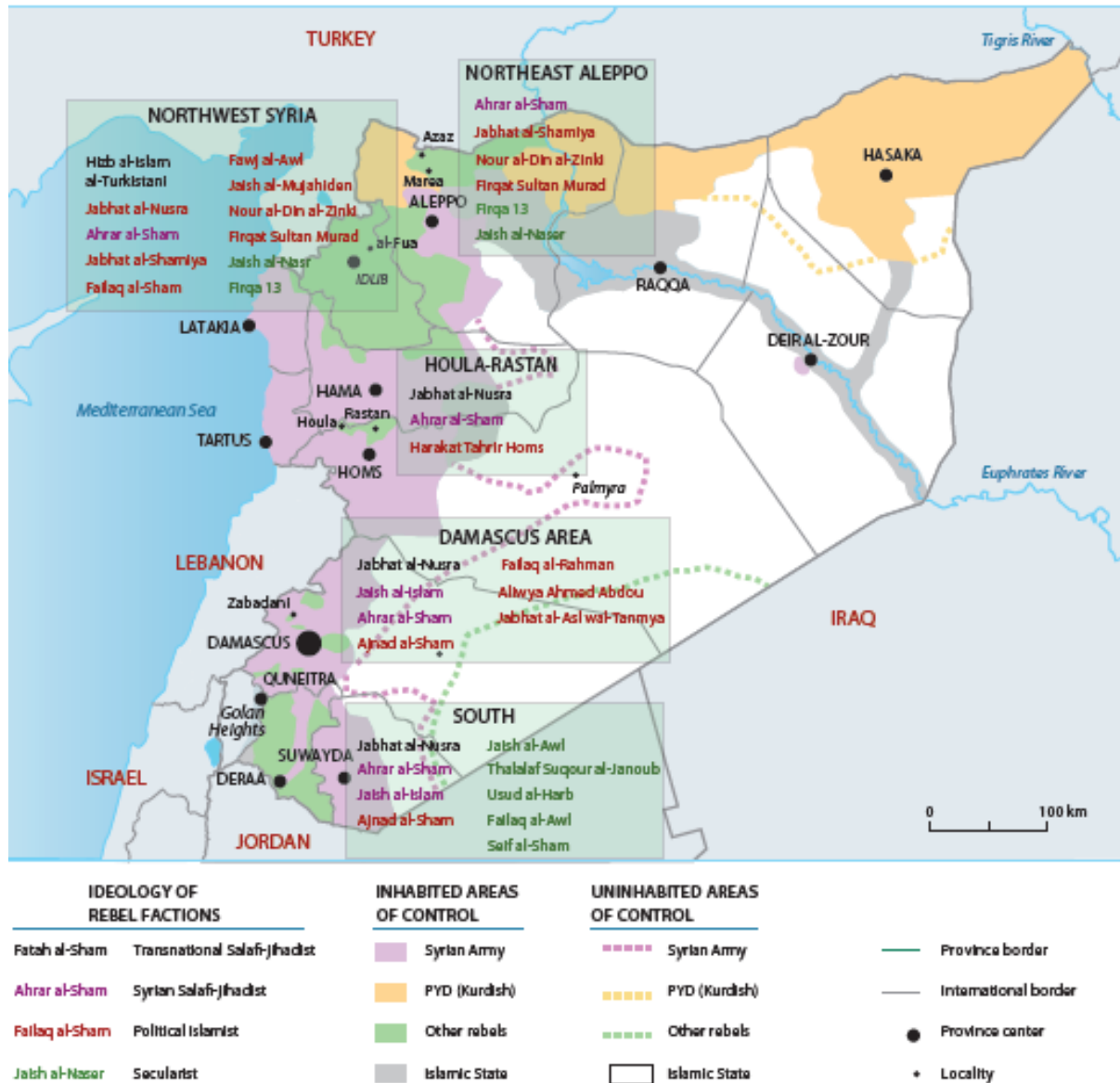
Besides unifying characteristics of looking for the toppling of Mr. Assad's government and to be predominantly Sunni⁴, the armed opposition is particularly fragmented, armed groups being divided according to their ideology and their objectives. This implies the creation of alliances that frequently change according to the situation on the field, according to short or

⁴ BAAS S., *Syria's Armed Opposition. A spotlight on the "Moderates"*, Geneva: Small Arms Survey, January 2016, p 5.

Overview of the armed groups operating in Syria

long term objectives, to the availability of funds and resources, to the requirements of the international sponsors, etc.

Figure 2. Areas of the Syrian territory controlled by the warring parties



Source: F. Balanche & M. Kalbach, based on data from the Institute for the Study of War (November 2016)⁵

Due to the diversity and the constant changes of the situation and of the alliances, it is very difficult to estimate the numbers of fighters in the opposition. The armed opposition to the legal regime is estimated between 140.000 and 210.000 fighters. The Institute for the Study of

⁵ CAFARELLA J. & CASAGRANDE G., *Syrian armed opposition powerbrokers*, Washington DC: Institute for the Study of War, Middle-East Security Report, n° 29, March 2016.

War⁶ and Fabrice Balanche⁷ estimate the main *powerbrokers* and *potential powerbrokers* as two categories representing 23 armed groups and 90.000 fighters. They consider a third category of 26 factions composed of few hundred fighters each and a fourth category of hundreds of small groups composed of few dozen fighters each, that together represent 10.000 to 60.000 fighters. For their part, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have about 30.000-50.000 fighters⁸, Jabhat Fateh al Sham (ex Jabhat al-Nusra) have about 10.000 fighters⁹ and ISIS have about 20.000 fighters in Syria and in Iraq according to the CIA¹⁰.

Below is a representation of the shares of the different trends among the militants that fight the regime. The fighters are classified in one or another category according to the ideology of the armed group they belong to.

⁶ Idem.

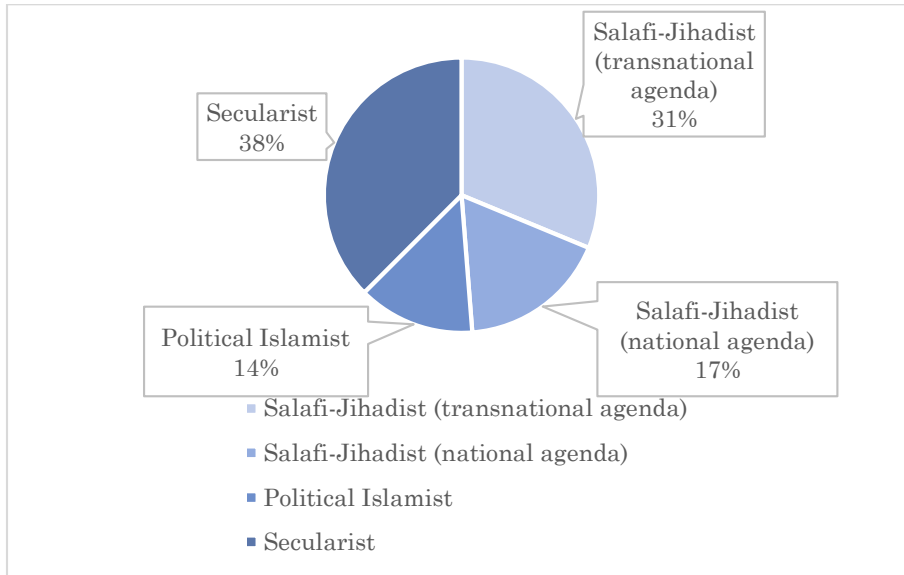
⁷ BALANCHE F., *Status of the Syrian Rebellion: Numbers, Ideologies, and Prospects*, Washington DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Watch 2727, 22 November 2016, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/status-of-the-syrian-rebellion-numbers-ideologies-and-prospects>, accessed on 31 January 2017.

⁸ FRIEDLAND E., Fact Sheet, Who's who in the Syrian Civil War, The Clarion Project, p 13. BALANCHE F., *Status of the Syrian Rebellion: Numbers, Ideologies, and Prospects*, Washington DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Watch 2727, 22 November 2016, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/status-of-the-syrian-rebellion-numbers-ideologies-and-prospects>, accessed on 31 January 2017.

⁹ LISTER Ch., *Profiling Jabhat al-Nusra*, Washington DC: Brookings institution, Analysis Paper, n° 24, July 2016, p 40. *Jabhat al-Nusra Cheat Sheet*, The Syria Institute, September 2015, <http://syriainstitute.org/cheat-sheets/>, accessed on 29 January 2017.

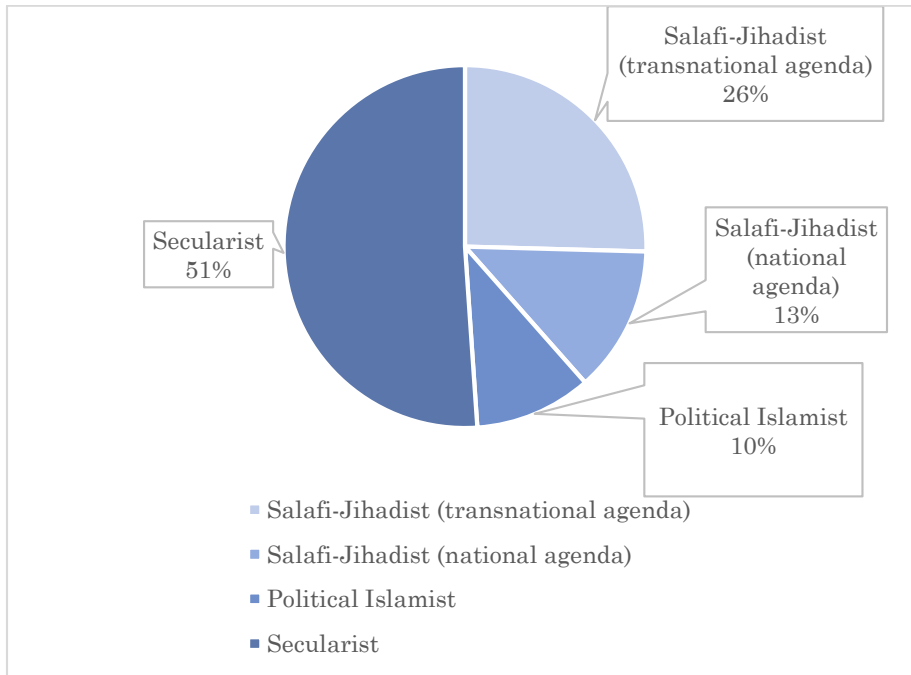
¹⁰ LANDAY J. & ZENGERLE P., CIA director: There are more ISIS fighters now than Al Qaeda had at its peak, Business Insider/Reuters, 16 June 2016, <http://www.businessinsider.com/cia-director-there-are-more-isis-fighters-now-than-al-qaeda-had-at-its-peak-2016-6>, accessed on 1st February 2017.

Figure 3. Minimum estimate percentage of fighters in the insurgency by ideology



Source: Statistics and More (February 2017). Chart is based on data from F. Balanche and the Institute for the Study of War, and on additional data considering that the SDF belongs to the secularist trend, that Jabhat al-Nusra and ISIS belong to the transnational Salafi-Jihadi trend.

Figure 4. Maximum estimate percentage of fighters in the insurgency by ideology



Source: Statistics and More (February 2017). Chart is based on data from F. Balanche and the Institute for the Study of War, and on additional data considering that the SDF belongs to the secularist trend, that Jabhat al-Nusra and ISIS belong to the transnational Salafi-Jihadi trend.

The Center on Religion and Geopolitics offered an additional view of the structure of the opposition by breaking it down according to the ideology pursued by the armed groups. The

center analysed 48 groups, however we can assume that there are much more of these in total¹¹.

Table 1. Division of opposition armed groups by ideology

Salafi-Jihadi	Islamist	Ambiguous	Kurdish Nationalists	Protection Groups
Ahrar al-Sham	19 th Division	18 th March Division	Jabhat al-Akrad	Al-Sananid Forces
Ajnad Kawkaz	Asala wal – Tanmiya	Dawn of Freedom Brigades	YPG	Al-Shaitat
Ajnad Sham Islamic Union	Durou al-Thawra	Division 13	YPJ	Seljuk Brigade
Ansar al-Sham	Faylaq al-Rahman	Fursan al-Haqq		Syriac Military Council
Fastaqim Kama Umirta	First Coastal Division	Jaysh al-Nasr		Syrian Turkmen Brigades
Harakat Nour al-Din Zenki	Imam Bukhari Jamaat	Liwa Tuwwar al-Raqqa		
ISIS	Jaysh al-Sunna	Martyrs of Syria Brigades		
Jabhat ak-Nusra	Liwa al-Tawhid	New Syria Forces		
Jaysh al-Islam	Liwa Muhajirin wal-Ansar	Northern Storm Brigades		
Kaysh al-Jihad	Martyrs of Islam Brigade	Northern Sun Battalion		
Jund al-Aqsa	Faylaq al-Sham	Revolutionary Army		
Khorasan Group	Tajamu al-Ezza	Yarmouk Army		
Kurdish Islamic Front				
Liwa al-Haqq				
Liwa al Umma				
Turkestan Islamic Party				

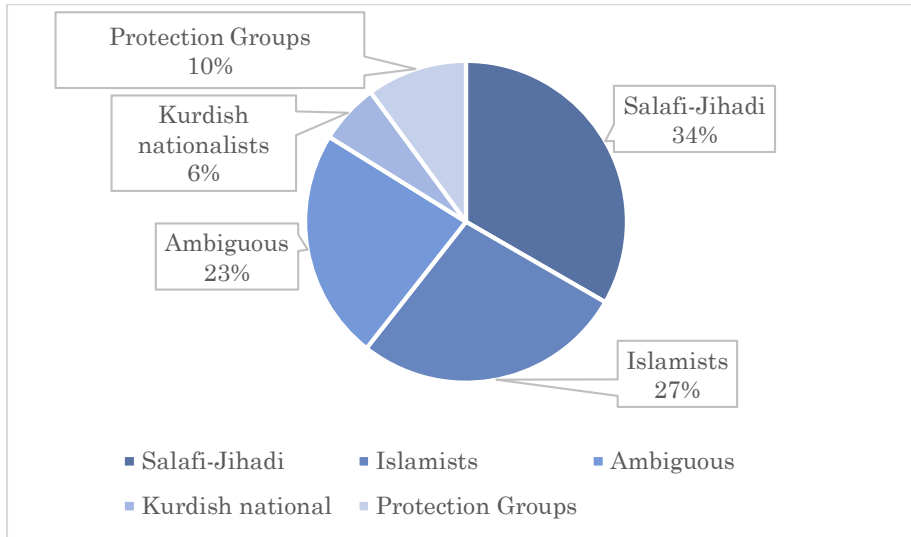
Source: Center on Religion and Geopolitics (December 2015).

NB: “Protection Groups represent tribal, ethnic and religious militias trying to protect a community and unable to lead any offensives.

According to this classification, we can get an overview of the share they represent in the so-called opposition.

¹¹ Indeed, for the sole *Free Syrian Army* coalition, the Brookings Institution counted 80 small armed groups in September 2016: LISTER Charles, *The Free Syrian Army: A decentralized insurgent brand*, Washington DC: Brookings Institution, N° 26, November 2016, p 34.

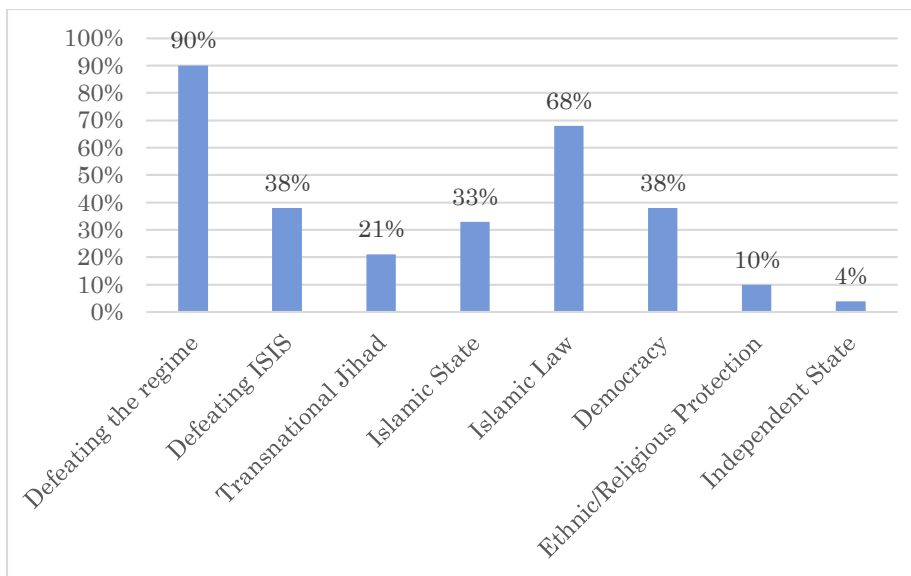
Figure 5. Percentage of rebel groups by ideology.



Source: Center on Religion and Geopolitics (December 2015).

Eventually, the chart below represent the objectives pursued by the armed groups of the opposition in the fight against the regime coalition.

Figure 6. Objectives that the armed groups pursue



Source: Center on Religion and Geopolitics (December 2015).

Widen alliances

This shows that dividing the armed groups between *moderates* and *extremist* is irrelevant. Western countries are trying to vet the moderate ones to be supported and to defend their policy with a label *moderate* but that actually does not correspond to the reality of the field. In addition to what was analysed previously, armed groups punctually gather in alliances to achieve a short term objective, regardless of the ideology they belong to, or that they claim to

belong to. It is for example notorious that many armed groups considered *moderate* and backed by western countries cooperated together with Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (from Al Qaeda's network). The alliances may stand as long as the factions find their purpose.

Table 2. Objectives and the alliances

Alliance	Groups	Objectives
Jaysh al Fatah	Ahrar al-Sham, Ajnad Sham Islamic Union, Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, Jund al Aqsa, Liwa al-Haqq, Imam Bukhari Jamaat, Jaysh al-Sunna, Sham Legion	Defeating the regime, defeating ISIS, establishment an Islamic State in Syria
Syrian Democratic Forces	Liwa Thuwwar al-Raqqa, Northern Sun Battalion, Revolutionary Army, Jabhat al-Akrad, YPG, YPJ, Al-Sananid Force, Seljuk Brigade, Syriac Military Council	Defeating ISIS, democracy
Mujahideen Shura Council	Ahrar al-Sham, Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, Jaish al-Sham, Asala wal-Tanmiya, Liwa Muhajirin wal-Ansar	Defeating ISIS
Mujahideen Army	Fastaqim Kama Umirta, 19th Division	Defeating the regime, defeating ISIS
Southern Front	Liwa Muhajirin wal-Ansar, Martyrs of Islam Brigade, 18th March Division, Yarmouk Army	Defeating the regime, defeating ISIS, democracy, pluralism
Syrian evolutionary Command Council	Ahrar al-Sham, Ajnad Sham Islamic Union, Harakat Nour al-Din al-Zenki, Jaish al-Islam, Liwa al-Tawhid, Sham Legion	Defeating the regime
Euphrates Volcano	Liwa Thuwwar al-Raqqa, Revolutionary Army, YPG, YPJ	Defeating ISIS
Islamic Front	Ahrar al-Sham, Ansar al-Sham, Jaysh al Islam, Liwa al haqq, Liwa al-Haqq, Liwa al-Tawhid	Defeating the regime, establishment of an Islamic State in Syria

Source: Center on Religion and Geopolitics (December 2015).

Main wider alliances

*Syrian Islamic Front*¹²

This alliance was formed in December 2012 and dissolved in November 2013. It was created by Ahrar al-Sham in order to unify Syrian Islamists and build a parallel government that would implement the Sharia law. Although the *Syrian Islamic Front* was not part of the Free

¹² Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

Syrian Arm, it coordinated with armed groups affiliated to the *Free Syrian Army* and operating under its Supreme Military Command. Arhar al-Sham dissolved the Syrian Islamic Front in order to create another enlarged alliance called the *Islamic Front*.

*Islamic Front*¹³

The Islamic Front was an umbrella coalition formed by seven of the main opposition armed groups in November 2013: Ahrar al-Sham, Jaysh al-Islam, Ansar al-Sham, Tawhid Brigade, Liwa al-Haqq, the Kurdish Islamic Front and Suqor al-Sham. Its objective was to topple the regime of Mr. Al-Assad and to establish an Islamic government. The Islamic Front has been the largest alliance of opposition armed groups since the onset of the conflict, gathering 40.000 to 70.000 fighters at its peak. The alliance drifted apart because of disagreements between the lead groups Ahrar al-Sham and Jaysh al-Islam in mid-2014. Some battalions of this alliance later gathered to build on the Levantine Front.

*Jaysh al-Fatah*¹⁴

It is an enlarged umbrella organisation that was formed in March 2015 to take the control the province of Idlib, which it achieved in March 2015. This alliance gathers Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, Ahrar al-Sham and several smaller armed groups such as Jund al-Aqsa or Jaysh al-Sunna. The success of the Idlib offensive brought it financial support from Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The coalition was still active during the offensive of the pro-regime forces on the city of Aleppo in late 2016.

*Hayat Tahrir al-Sham*¹⁵

Enlarged alliance created in January 2017 to resume military operations against the regime in the light of peace talks headed by the international community between the regime and opposition groups. Hayat Tahrir al-Sham was created from a merger of Jabhat Fateh al-Sham and 16 other groups including the Nour Al-Din Al-Zinki group, Jabhat Ansar Al-Din, the Army of the Sunnah and the Liwa Al-Haq armed faction. The fall of East Aleppo and the peace talks in Astana reorganised the rebel opposition. The alliance equally attracted thousands of fighters who recently defected from Free Syrian Army affiliated groups because of their engagement in the peace process with the regime. Hayat Tharir al-Sham would control about 80% of the province of Idlib today¹⁶.

Syrian Democratic Forces

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) is the alliance of Kurdish and Arab forces formed in October 2015 and designed by the US to receive the bulk of its military support in Syria, which include weapons and training from embedded US Special Operation Forces¹⁷. The SDF was

¹³ Idem.

¹⁴ Idem.

¹⁵ New rebel alliance vows war against Syria regime, "Middle-East Monitor", 10 February 2017, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170210-new-rebel-alliance-vows-war-against-syria-regime/>, accessed on 11 February 2017.

¹⁶ BALANCHE F., *Assad's Chemical Attack Signals an Imminent Idlib Offensive*, Washington: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 14 April 2017, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/assads-chemical-attack-signals-an-imminent-idlib-offensive#.WPEx8YoonI.twitter>, accessed on 19 April 2017.

¹⁷ *People's Protection Units (YPG)*, The Syria Institute, September 2015, <http://syriainstitute.org/cheat-sheets/>, accessed on 29 January 2017.

designed to fight ISIS in the north and the west of Syria with the military support of the USA, which also provides it with training, weapons and equipment. The YPG is the main group of this coalition, that equally gathers a group called the Syrian Arab coalition¹⁸, another one called Jaysh al-Sanadeed¹⁹, the Syriac Military Council²⁰, the Kurdish Women's Protection Units (YPJ)²¹ as well as other groups again.

Free Syrian Army

The FSA has never been a single structure with an organized command and unified procurement, intelligence, logistics and sustainment capabilities²². This had been the goal in the early period of the uprising in the goal to overthrow Mr. Assad's regime but whereas the initiative worked for a while, the dynamic changed quickly. At the onset of the crisis, a number of military defectors willing to provide a unified leadership to the uprising succeeded to secure generous amount of resources and military aid from some Western governments, notably through claiming a secularist ideology²³. This contributed to the early successes of the FSA against the regime forces. That equally contributed to attract new factions that were looking for some support – whether they were pursuing secularists and democratic goals or not. The progressive ascendance of Islamist and radical factions on the field came along with a progressive competition over influence on the rebellion between the donors. This competition over influence between FSA donors has progressively resulted in a lack of coordination and disorder in the support they were providing. As for the factions on the ground, an increasing difficulty to secure resources and the need to sustain themselves through other means resulted in a dispersion of the forces²⁴. Today, we can assume that the FSA is still used as a label by various armed groups to obtain support, resources and raise funds. For the Brookings Institution, the FSA is from now on considered as an umbrella organisation for 80 armed groups according four criteria: 1) those 'vetted' by the CIA; 2) those receiving assistance via the Turkey-based MOM or Jordan-based MOC; 3) those opposed to and actively combating the Assad regime; 4) those consistently identifying with the FSA brand²⁵.

Main armed groups

ISIS

- **General information:** The *Islamic State in Iraq and in Syria*, also called *Islamic State (IS)* or *Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)* is a transnational terrorist network composed of multiple recruiting and financing cells across the world.

¹⁸ BLANCHARD C., HUMUD C. & NIKITIN M., *op cit.*, p 40.

¹⁹ Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

²⁰ FRIEDLAND E., Fact Sheet, Who's who in the Syrian Civil War, The Clarion Project, p 13.

²¹ BARFI B., *Ascent of the PYD and the SDF*, Washington DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Research Notes, n° 32, April 2016.

²² BLANCHARD C., HUMUD C. & NIKITIN M. B., *Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and US Response*, January 2017, Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, p 39.

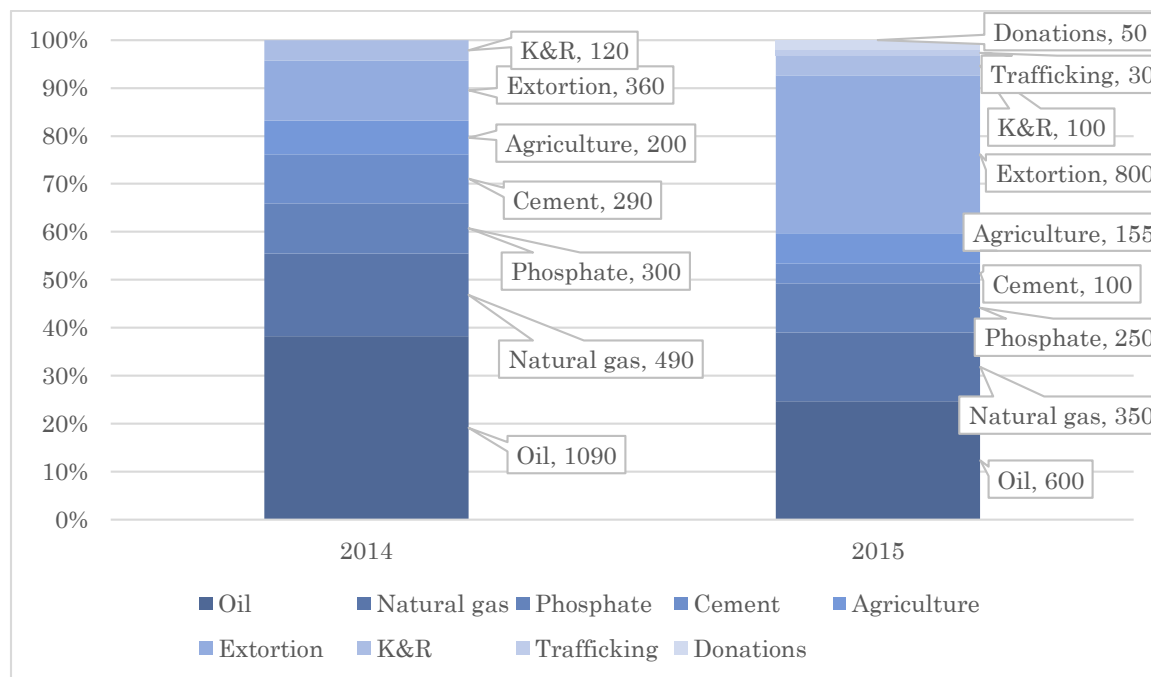
²³ FRIEDLAND E., Fact Sheet, Who's who in the Syrian Civil War, The Clarion Project, p 12.

²⁴ BAAS S., *op. cit.*, p 3.

²⁵ LISTER Charles, *The Free Syrian Army: A decentralized insurgent brand*, Washington DC: Brookings Institution, N° 26, November 2016, p 34

- **Ideology:** Salafi-Jihadi/Takfiri²⁶.
- **Objectives:** Ruling an Islamic Caliphate in the Greater Levant based upon a strict interpretation of the Sharia law.
- **Group size:** About 20.000²⁷.
- **Financial resources:** The group is believed to receive private funding from donors in the Gulf, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and sustains itself through a comprehensive war economy including trade of oil and gas, agriculture, people, antiques, perception of taxes from the territories they control. Total revenue was estimated around \$ 2.9 billion in 2014 and \$ 2.435 billion in 2015.

Figure 7. ISIS sources of revenue (in \$ million)



Source: Center for the Analysis of Terrorism (May 2016).

Note: K&R = "Kidnapping & Ransom"

- **Military resources:** Small and light weapons (AK 47, AK 74, M16, German Heckler & Koch G36-type rifles, Bushmaster XI5-E2S semi-automatic rifle, SKS rifle, Dragunov SVD semi-automatic sniper rifle, etc.), machine guns (PKM, Chinese Type 80 PK/PKM, Hungarian KGK, Russian RPK, German Reinmetall MG3, etc.), handguns (German Walther P99, Browning Hi-Power 9x19mm, Glock G19, HS Produkt HS2000, Beretta 92FS, etc.), anti-materiel rifles (Iranian Sayyad-2 Am50, Chinese M99 rifle, etc.), small arms ammunition, anti-tank weapons (guided and unguided – RPG-7, PG-7V, OG-7V, M60, M79, SPG-9, 9M17M Skorpion-M, 9M14, HJ-8, etc.), mortars/artillery guns (M198, Chinese Type 559-1, Soviet D-30, M-30, etc.), man-portable air defence systems (Russian SA-7, US MANPADS, Chinese FN-6, etc.), armoured fighting vehicles (Russian T54, T55 and T62, Chinese T69-II, USA M1A1M, Russian BMP-1, MT-LB, US M113A2, etc.), improvised weapons and ammunition

²⁶ Takfirism is the practice by which a Muslim pronounces another Muslim an apostate because of being considered insufficiently religious and sanctions him violently. Takfirism is considered as 'doctrinal deviation' by mainstream Muslims and Islamist groups.

²⁷ LANDAY J. & ZENGERLE P., *op cit*.

- (IEDs, culvert bombs, rocket assisted munitions, etc.), banned weapons (Chinese ZP39A, IEDs containing poison-coated metal balls, mustard agent, etc.),...²⁸
- **Localization:** Control of most of the Euphrates river (from Qaim to Aleppo), Deir Ez-Zor, Ar Raqqa (proclaimed capital city of the Caliphate), Palmyra and in oil- and gas-rich desert regions (see map displayed above).

Jabhat Fatah al-Sham

- **General information:** Jabhat Fatah al-Sham is the Syrian branch of the transnational terrorist network Al Qaeda. Previously known as Jabhat al-Nusra, the group changed its name in July 2016 and claimed to cut its ties with Al Qaeda. This is especially a marketing event that is part of a strategy aimed at better blending into the armed opposition and keeping ties with the armed groups on the ground at a moment where international stakeholders seek even more to distinguish the armed groups between the extremist ones and the moderate ones. Indeed, Jabhat Fatah al-Sham regularly operates alongside other armed groups, including some that may receive US support²⁹. The command structure remains the same, though, composed of ancient Al Qaeda operatives³⁰ and still headed by Abu Muhammad al Jalawani.
- **Ideology:** Salafi-Jihadi.
- **Objective:** Topple Mr. Al-Assad's regime and settle a durable presence in the country in order to achieve the longer-term goal of establishing an Islamic Caliphate based upon a strict interpretation of the Islamic sharia.
- **Group size:** 10.000³¹.
- **Financial resources:** Heavily reliant on external donations and funding from traditional Al Qaeda facilitation networks, especially private individuals from the Gulf countries and Turkey³². Spoils of war, looting, smuggling, asset seizure, taxation, ransom from kidnapping generate additional resources³³.
- **Military resources:** Tanks, infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs), armoured personnel carriers (APCs), self-propelled artillery, self-propelled anti-aircraft guns, unarmoured vehicles (civilian and military) that are equipped with machine guns, recoilless rifles, improvised unguided rocket launchers, ATGMs or anti-aircraft guns, bulldozers, artillery/mortars, various small arms, anti-aircraft guns/HMGs, anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs), etc.³⁴.
- **Localization:** Headquarters in Idlib, presence in Idlib Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Rural Damascus and Dara'a provinces³⁵.

²⁸ Taking Stock: The arming of Islamic State, Amnesty International, December 2015, pp 9-18.

²⁹ BLANCHARD C., HUMUD C. & NIKITIN M. B., *Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and US Response*, January 2017, Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, p 39.

³⁰ LISTER Ch., *op cit.*, p 31-32. *Jabhat al-Nusra Cheat Sheet*, The Syria Institute, September 2015, <http://syriainstitute.org/cheat-sheets/>, accessed on 29 January 2017.

³¹ LISTER Ch., *op cit.*, p 40. *Jabhat al-Nusra Cheat Sheet*, The Syria Institute, September 2015, <http://syriainstitute.org/cheat-sheets/>, accessed on 29 January 2017.

³² LISTER Ch. *Op cit.*, p 31-32.

³³ TRIEBERT Ch. & KOMAR R., "Jabhat Fateh al-Sham's income and resources", *Hate Speech International*, 15 August 2016, <https://www.hate-speech.org/jabhat-fateh-al-shams-income-and-resources-an-open-source-investigation/>, accessed on 2 February 2017.

³⁴ Idem.

³⁵ Idem.

Ahrar al-Sham

- **General information:** One of the largest and powerful armed groups. This group has been allied with Jabhat Fatah al-Sham and has been designated as terrorist organisation by the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Iran, and Russia, but not by the USA³⁶, neither by the UN nor the EU³⁷. Its command structure is composed of a number of former Al Qaeda members³⁸ and coordinated attacks with Jabhat Fatah al-Sham by notably creating the Jaysh al-Fatah umbrella³⁹.
- **Ideology:** Salafi-Jihadism and Political Islamism, with a more nationalist agenda, not pursuing any global objective⁴⁰. Refusal to engage in the political process⁴¹.
- **Objective:** Establishment of a theocracy or an Islamic State in Syria⁴².
- **Group size:** 15.000⁴³ or 20.000⁴⁴.
- **Financial resources:** The group earns most of its money by taxing the trucks that cross the Bab al-Hawa border with Turkey, however it also receives funding from Islamist networks from the Persian Gulf that are linked with the Qatari government. Salafi fundraiser Sheikh Hajjaj al-Ajami became one of the group's key donors in 2012. Qatar itself begun funding Ahrar al-Sham in 2014, as well as Saudi Arabia and Turkey in order to support the Jaysh al-Fatah umbrella group in 2015. These countries also provided weapons and equipment⁴⁵. These allegations have not been confirmed by the concerned governments.
- **Notable military resources:** Border crossings, Tanks, TOW, IEDs, LAW anti-tank missiles, Konkurs anti-tank missiles⁴⁶.
- **Localization:** Especially in the northern provinces. Primarily in Idlib, but also in Aleppo, Hama, Raqqa, Al-Hasakah, Latakia, Deir al-Zour, and Dera'a⁴⁷.

Jaysh al-Islam

- **General information:** Jaysh al-Islam is an armed coalition of 50 Damascus-based groups that remains one of the best armed organisations in Syria. They govern the

³⁶ REUMERT, A. N., "Who's who on the Syrian Battlefield?", *The Century Foundation*, 29 August 2016, <https://tcf.org/content/facts/whos-syrian-battlefield/>, accessed on 31 January 2017.

³⁷ Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

³⁸ LISTER Ch., *op cit.*, p 26.

³⁹ Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

⁴⁰ Idem.

⁴¹ BALANCHE F, *Will Astana Displace Geneva in the Syrian Peace Process?* Washington DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Watch, n°2754, 20 January 2017, p 2.

⁴² CAFARELLA J. & CASAGRANDE G., *Syrian armed opposition powerbrokers*, Washington DC: Institute for the Study of War, March 2016, p 15.

⁴³ Idem.

⁴⁴ Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

⁴⁵ Idem.

⁴⁶ CAFARELLA J. & CASAGRANDE G., *op ct.*, p 15.

⁴⁷ Idem.

areas they control in accordance with their interpretation of the Islamic Law⁴⁸. The group is opposed to ISIS and Jabhat Fatah al-Sham and accept negotiations with the legal regime of Mr. Al-Assad⁴⁹. They are still renowned for using war methods infringing the basic rules of IHL, like using human shields or chemical weapons⁵⁰. Jaysh al Islam is part of the leadership of the Syrian High Negotiation Committee (HNC) that represents the Syrian opposition in the UN-brokered talks with the Syrian government in Geneva⁵¹.

- **Ideology:** Salafi Jihadist, with a nationalist, not a globalist, agenda⁵².
- **Objective:** Replace the Syrian regime with a government based on the Sharia law⁵³.
- **Group Size:** 12.000-30.000⁵⁴.
- **Financial resources:** funding and organizational support from Saudi Arabia since its inception in 2013, funding and organizational support from Qatar and from Turkey currently (unconfirmed)⁵⁵.
- **Notable military resources:** Tunnels, tunnel bombs, tanks, 9MII3, *Konkurs* anti-tank missiles⁵⁶, chemical weapons, two fighter jets⁵⁷.
- **Localization:** It is mostly prominent in Damascus where it holds the eastern areas of the capital, the stronghold known as Douma⁵⁸ and Al-Ghouta⁵⁹, however it also keeps affiliates across seven of Syria's western provinces⁶⁰, like Dera'a, Hama, Idlib, Quneitra⁶¹.

Ansar al-Sham

- **General information:** Ansar al-Sham is a coalition group of 11 battalions active since 2012. Ansar al-Sham is not considered as a terrorist organisation by the USA, the UN

⁴⁸ BLANCHARD C., HUMUD C. & NIKITIN M. B., *op cit.*, p 39.

⁴⁹ Idem.

⁵⁰ Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

⁵¹ REUMERT, A. N., "Who's who on the Syrian Battlefield?", *The Century Foundation*, 29 August 2016, <https://tcf.org/content/facts/whos-syrian-battlefield/>, accessed on 31 January 2017.

⁵² CAFARELLA J. & CASAGRANDE G., *op ct.*, p 23.

⁵³ Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

⁵⁴ CAFARELLA J. & CASAGRANDE G., *op ct.*, p 15. LAKE Eli. "Syria's 'Army of Islam' Says It Wants No War With Israel." Bloomberg, 29 September 2016, <https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2016-09-29/syria-s-army-of-islam-says-it-wants-no-war-with-israel>, accessed on 3 January 2017.

⁵⁵ Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017. CAFARELLA J. & CASAGRANDE G., *op ct.*, p 24.

⁵⁶ CAFARELLA J. & CASAGRANDE G., *Syrian armed opposition powerbrokers*, Washington DC: Institute for the Study of War, March 2016, p 24.

⁵⁷ Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

⁵⁸ REUMERT, *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ BLANCHARD C., HUMUD C. & NIKITIN M. B., *Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and US Response*, January 2017, Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, p 39.

⁶⁰ CAFARELLA J. & CASAGRANDE G., *op cit.*, p 22.

⁶¹ Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

or the EU⁶², though the issue has been considered⁶³. The groups does not target ISIS and avoids confrontation with it because there are many social ties between the members of these two organisations⁶⁴. Also, their participation and respect of previously declared ceasefire is unclear⁶⁵.

- **Ideology:** Sunni-Salafi⁶⁶.
- **Objective:** Toppling the regime of Mr. Assad and establish a Sunni Islamic State⁶⁷.
- **Group size:** 2.500⁶⁸
- **Financial resources:** Financial support from Saudi Arabia and from the Free Syrian Army (unconfirmed)⁶⁹.
- **Notable military resources:** Unknown.
- **Localization:** Northern Latakia⁷⁰

Faylaq al Sham⁷¹

- **General Information:** Faylaq al Sham is a coalition of nineteen brigades active across a majority of western Syria. The group increasingly occupies leadership roles in major opposition coalitions.
- **Ideology:** Political Islamists⁷².
- **Objective:** Establishment of a sharia-based Constitution, however not especially wanting that Sharia courts from the basis of governance in a post Assad Syrian state⁷³.
- **Group Size:** 5.000
- **Financial resources:** Funding from Turkey, Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood (unconfirmed)⁷⁴.
- **Notable military resources:** Tanks, BMPs, 9M133 anti-missiles tanks, MILAN anti-tank missiles, TOW anti-tank missiles.

⁶² Idem.

⁶³ MILES T. & IRISH J., *Syrian terrorist list produces 163 names and no agreement*, Reuters, 17 February 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-terrorist-idUSKCN0VQ25E>, accessed on 4 February 2016.

⁶⁴ HUSSEIN T., *The Ansar al-Sham Battalions*, Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for Democracy, 24 March 2014, <http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/55066?lang=en>, accessed on 4 February 2017.

⁶⁵ Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

⁶⁶ ZELIN A., *The Syrian Islamic Front: A New Extremist Force*, Washington DC: The Washington Institute for Near East, Policy Watch, n° 2031, 4 February 2013, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-syrian-islamic-front-a-new-extremist-force>, accessed on 4 February 2013.

⁶⁷ Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

⁶⁸ HUSSEIN T., *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

⁷⁰ Idem

⁷¹ CAFARELLA J. & CASAGRANDE G, *op cit.*, p 16.

⁷² Idem.

⁷³ CAFARELLA J. & CASAGRANDE G, *op cit.*, p 9.

⁷⁴ LUND A., *The revolutionary Command Council: Rebel Unity in Syria?*, Washington DC: Carnegie Middle East Center, 1st December 2014, <http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/57350?lang=en>, accessed on 4 February 2017.

- **Localization:** Especially in Idlib and Latakia. Has also been active in Hama and Homs⁷⁵.

Faylaq al Rahman

- **General Information:** Faylaq al Rahman is an armed coalition of at least seven armed groups⁷⁶ opposed to the regime of Mr. Al Assad and to ISIS that was founded in 2013⁷⁷. It became since then the second most prominent is now a rival of Jaysh al-Islam.
- **Ideology:** Political Islamists.
- **Objective:** Establishment of a sharia-based Constitution, however not especially wanting that Sharia courts from the basis of governance in a post Assad Syrian state⁷⁸.
- **Group size:** Between 2.000⁷⁹ and 7.000⁸⁰.
- **Financial resources:** Jordanian MOC (unconfirmed)⁸¹.
- **Notable military resources:** Tanks, Shilka & BMPs, Vehicles, guns, anti-armour missiles, heavy and medium machine guns⁸², engineering units that places and dismantles IEDs, tunnel bombs, TOW anti-tank missiles⁸³
- **Localization:** Damascus and its countryside (Eastern Ghouta & eastern al-Qalamoun)⁸⁴.

YPG

- **General Information:** The People's Protection Units (YPG) is the military branch of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD). The Syrian YPG and the PYD are an offshoot of the Turkish Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) which is considered as a terrorist organisation by the USA, the UN, the EU, Turkey and many other countries.

⁷⁵ LEFEVRE R. & YASSIR A., *The Sham Legion : Syria's Moderate Islamist*, Washington DC: Carnegie Middle East Center, 15 April 2014, <http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/55344?lang=en>, accessed on 4 February 2017.

⁷⁶ *Rahman Legion*, Revolutionary Forces of Syria Media Office, 23 July 2015, https://rfsmediaoffice.com/en/2015/07/23/al-rahman-legion#.WJWlFn_z7zH, accessed on 4 February 2017.

⁷⁷ Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

⁷⁸ CAFARELLA J. & CASAGRANDE G, *Ibid*.

⁷⁹ LISTER Charles, "Yes, there are 70.000 moderate opposition fighters in Syria. Here's what we know about them", *Spectator*, 27 November 2015, <http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2015/11/yes-there-are-70000-moderate-opposition-fighters-in-syria-heres-what-we-know-about-them/>, accessed on 4 February 2015.

⁸⁰ *Al-Rahman Legion*, Revolutionary Forces of Syria Media Office, 23 July 2015, https://rfsmediaoffice.com/en/2015/07/23/al-rahman-legion#.WJWlFn_z7zH, accessed on 4 February 2017.

⁸¹ CAFARELLA J. & CASAGRANDE G, *op cit.*, p 26.

⁸² *Al-Rahman Legion*, Revolutionary Forces of Syria Media Office, 23 July 2015, https://rfsmediaoffice.com/en/2015/07/23/al-rahman-legion#.WJWlFn_z7zH, accessed on 4 February 2017.

⁸³ CAFARELLA J. & CASAGRANDE G, *op cit.*, p 26.

⁸⁴ *Al-Rahman Legion*, Revolutionary Forces of Syria Media Office, 23 July 2015, https://rfsmediaoffice.com/en/2015/07/23/al-rahman-legion#.WJWlFn_z7zH, accessed on 4 February 2015.

- **Ideology**: Secular and democratic⁸⁵.
- **Objective**: Fighting the regime of Mr. Al-Assad, the Islamists and the terrorist groups, as well as establishing a Kurdish federate state in Syria (that they call *Rojava* in Kurdish)⁸⁶.
- **Group size**: 30.000-50.000⁸⁷.
- **Financial resources**: Support in training, equipment, weapons, funding and military support from the USA.
- **Notable military resources**: Small arms, anti-tank weaponry, mortars, armoured vehicles, etc.
- **Localization**: Northern Syria, all along the border with Turkey. They currently control almost all the bordering region excepted the triangle of land between Azaz, al-Bab and Jarablus (see map above). They are trying to take the control of this region in order to control the entire bordering regions in the North and to achieve the first step of their objective.

Structure of the pro-regime coalition

According to F. Balanche, the Syrian Arab Army would be composed of 125.000 soldiers and is supported by about 150.000 militias members, including around 50.000 foreign fighters.⁸⁸ According to him, most of the Syrian fighters are concerned with the defense of territories and communications lines, and about 25% of them are able to launch offensives, only⁸⁹.

Main armed groups

National Defense Forces

- **General Information**: Umbrella paramilitary organization composed of various militias that coordinates with the Syrian Arab Army. It was established in 2012-2013 by state organs like the Ba'ath party. The Ba'ath Brigades, the militia of the Ba'ath party, form the core power base of the NDF, with an estimated 10.000 fighters⁹⁰.
- **Ideology**: Shia, Alawi, Sunni, Communists, Baathists, Christians⁹¹.
- **Objective**: Providing support to the Syrian Arab Army and maintaining the regime of Mr. Al Assad.
- **Group size**: 60.000 – 100.000⁹².
- **Financial resources**: Syrian Ba'ath party or private accounts of regime supporters⁹³, Iran and Hezbollah (unconfirmed)⁹⁴.

⁸⁵ BAAS S., *Syria's Armed Opposition. A spotlight on the "Moderates"*, Geneva: Small Arms Survey, January 2016, p 10.

⁸⁶ Idem.

⁸⁷ *People's Protection Units (YPG)*, The Syria Institute, September 2015, <http://syriainstitute.org/cheat-sheets/>, accessed on 29 January 2017.

⁸⁸ BALANCHE F., *op cit.*, p 2.

⁸⁹ Idem.

⁹⁰ FRIEDLAND E., *op cit.*, p 6.

⁹¹ FRIEDLAND E., Fact Sheet, Who's who in the Syrian Civil War, The Clarion Project, p 6.

⁹² *The Syrian conflict: A systems conflict analysis*, Ras Al Khaimah: Ark Group DMCC, February 2016, p 18.

⁹³ Idem.

⁹⁴ *National Defense Forces*, The Syria Institute, December 2015, <http://syriainstitute.org/cheat-sheets/>, accessed on 29 January 2017.

- **Notable military resources:** Training and organisation by Hezbollah and Iranian Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as well as support of leftist Palestinian groups⁹⁵, weapons and equipment from Syrian state organs⁹⁶
- **Localization:** Loyalist neighbourhoods, patrol areas, checkpoints, frontlines (especially in Alawite areas).

Hezbollah

- **General information:** Hezbollah is a Lebanese militant group and political party created in 1982 to fight Israel. It is considered as a terrorist organisation by the USA, the EU, the UN, the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), but not by Lebanon. It is a very powerful actor in the political scene in Lebanon and plays an important role in the Lebanese society. In Syria, Hezbollah militarily supports the Syrian Arab Army and helps train the NDF.
- **Ideology:** Shiism, anti-Zionism, anti-imperialism.
- **Objectives:** Maintaining the regime of Mr. Al-Assad. Hezbollah fears a regime change that would be hostile in its regard, and to be then surrounded by two hostile states, (Israel and a non-Assad Syria). Hezbollah also seeks to protect the Shia community and maintain its clientele.
- **Group size:** 45.000, whom 5.000 – 8.000 operate in Syria⁹⁷.
- **Financial resources:** Hezbollah used to receive support from Iran, Syria and fundraising networks across the world, especially in the Arab peninsula, Europe, the Middle-East and the USA⁹⁸. Much of its funding were used to come from private donations and profits from illegal business⁹⁹. Hezbollah has, though, suffered financial difficulties recently due to the blocking of accounts of organizations and individuals affiliated with Hezbollah by the Lebanese Central Bank under American pressure following the US Hezbollah International Financing Protection Acts of 2014 and 2015¹⁰⁰. Since then, Iran provides Hezbollah with up to \$ 200 million and provides extensive military aid and support for its social institutions¹⁰¹.
- **Notable military resources:** Vast arsenal of relatively sophisticated weapons, including 100.000 rockets and missiles, anti-aircraft weapon systems, SA-17 Buk missile batteries¹⁰² and support from Syria and Iran.
- **Localization:** Hezbollah played a major role in battles close to the Lebanese-Syrian border where rebel presence and holding of key highways was hindering the access to

⁹⁵ Idem.

⁹⁶ *The Syrian conflict: A systems conflict analysis*, Ras Al Khaimah: Ark Group DMCC, February 2016, p 18.

⁹⁷POLLAK N., *The transformation by its involvement in Syria*, Washington DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Research Note, n° 35, 21 March 2016, p 4.

⁹⁸ *Country Reports on Terrorism 2009*, Washington US Office of the coordinator for Counterterrorism, August 2010, p 124.

⁹⁹ *Country Reports on Terrorism 2009*, Washington US Office of the coordinator for Counterterrorism, August 2010, p 255.

¹⁰⁰ *Nasrallah's Speech: Hezbollah's budget is entirely funded by Iran, including weapons and operatives' salaries. Analysis of significance and implications*, Hasharon: Meim Amit Intelligence and terrorism Information Center, 10 July 2016, p 2. <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/21033>, accessed on 4 February 2017.

¹⁰¹ Idem.

¹⁰² Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

the Alawi strongholds by the Syrian Arab Army. Its dominance presence is along the border, as well as in the Golan Heights, Damascus, Idlib¹⁰³ as well as in Aleppo, more recently¹⁰⁴.

Al Quds Forces

- **General information:** The Al Quds Force is one of the five branches of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), in charge of clandestine operations abroad¹⁰⁵. In Syria, they engaged in combat alongside the Syrian Arab Army, provides intelligence, and training to the pro-regime forces. It seems that the involvement of the Al-Quds Forces in the strategic decision-making has been growing at the middle and upper levels of the pro-regime forces since 2015¹⁰⁶. For the rest, little is known on these forces that remain quite secretive.
- **Ideology:** Shia
- **Objectives:** Maintaining the regime of Mr. Al-Assad in order to maintain Iran's interests in the projection of its geopolitical and geoeconomic influence meanwhile undermining US and Gulf Arab countries' in the Middle-East. The construction of a \$ 10 billion pipeline connecting Iran to the Mediterranean Sea is one of the prominent interests of Iran in this regard¹⁰⁷.
- **Groups size:** Al-Quds contingent is estimated up to 15.000 fighters but how many of these are in Syria is not known¹⁰⁸.
- **Financial resources:** Unknown.
- **Notable military resources:** Unknown.
- **Localization:** Alongside the pro-regime forces.

Iraqi and other Shia militias

Analyst estimate that 5.000 – 10.000 Iraqi Shiite fighters operate in Syria to support the regime in addition to an unknown number of Afghan, Pakistani and other Shia¹⁰⁹. The most prominent ones are the Badr brigades and the Harak al-Nujaba.

Badr brigades

¹⁰³ REUMERT, A. N., "Who's who on the Syrian Battlefield?", *The Century Foundation*, 29 August 2016, <https://tcf.org/content/facts/whos-syrian-battlefield/>, accessed on 31 January 2017.

¹⁰⁴ FADEL L., "Syrian Army, Hezbollah shift focus to southern Aleppo: map", Almadarnews, 24 December 2016, <https://www.almadarnews.com/article/syrian-army-hezbollah-shift-focus-southern-aleppo-map/>

¹⁰⁵ Keshavarz, A., *A review of Iran's revolutionary guards and Qods Force: Growing global presence, links to cartels and mounting sophistication*, Bethesda: Small Wars Journal, November 2016, p

¹⁰⁶ FRIEDLAND E., Fact Sheet, Who's who in the Syrian Civil War, The Clarion Project, p 6.

¹⁰⁷ *The Syrian conflict: A systems conflict analysis*, Ras Al Khaimah: Ark Group DMCC, February 2016, p 25.

¹⁰⁸ FRIEDLAND E., Fact Sheet, Who's who in the Syrian Civil War, The Clarion Project, p 6.

¹⁰⁹ BLANCHARD C., HUMUD C. & NIKITIN M.B., *op cit.*, p 38.

- **General Information:** Also known as the Badr Organization of Reconstruction and Development, this militant organization was formed in 1983 as the armed wing of the largest Shiite political party in Iraq: the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI)¹¹⁰.
- **Ideology:** Shia
- **Objectives:** Maintaining the regime of Mr. Al-Assad in order to maintain Iran's interests in the projection of its geopolitical and geoeconomic influence meanwhile undermining US and Gulf Arab countries' in the Middle-East. The construction of a \$ 10 billion pipeline connecting Iran to the Mediterranean Sea is one of the prominent interests of Iran in this regard¹¹¹.
- **Groups size:** 10.000¹¹², whom 1.500 operate in Syria¹¹³
- **Financial resources:** Financial support from the ISCI. Iran remains its main financier¹¹⁴.
- **Notable military resources:** Weapons, ammunition and military training from Iran¹¹⁵.
- **Localization:** Aleppo, Eastern Ghouta, as well as several small cities in the outskirts of Damascus¹¹⁶.

Harakat al-Nujaba

- **General Information:** Iraqi militant organism operating both in Iraq and in Syria founded in 2013 and that encompasses a diverse network of fighters and units¹¹⁷.
- **Ideology:** Shia.
- **Objectives:** Maintaining the regime of Mr. Al-Assad in order to maintain Iran's interests in the projection of its geopolitical and geoeconomic influence meanwhile undermining US and Gulf Arab countries' in the Middle-East. The construction of a \$ 10 billion pipeline connecting Iran to the Mediterranean Sea is one of the prominent interests of Iran in this regard¹¹⁸.
- **Groups size:** 10.000 fighters, but how many of these are in Syria is not known¹¹⁹.
- **Financial resources:** Unknown, however most of the resources come from Iran¹²⁰.

¹¹⁰ Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

¹¹¹ *The Syrian conflict: A systems conflict analysis*, Ras Al Khaimah: Ark Group DMCC, February 2016, p 25.

¹¹² Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

¹¹³ SMYTH Ph., *The Shiite Jihad in Syria and its Regional Effects*, Washington DC: the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, February 2015, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-shiite-jihad-in-syria-and-its-regional-effects>, accessed on 6 February 2017.

¹¹⁴ Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

¹¹⁵ Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

¹¹⁶ SMYTH Ph., *op cit*.

¹¹⁷ SMYTH Ph., *Ibid*.

¹¹⁸ *The Syrian conflict: A systems conflict analysis*, Ras Al Khaimah: Ark Group DMCC, February 2016, p 25.

¹¹⁹ Stanford University, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>, accessed on 3 February 2017.

¹²⁰ Idem.

Overview of the armed groups operating in Syria

- **Notable military resources:** Unknown, however most of the resources come from Iran¹²¹.
- **Localization:** Aleppo¹²².

¹²¹ Idem.

¹²² Idem.