

Country/entity	Syria
Region	Middle East and North Africa
Agreement name	Unnamed [Statement on Ceasefire between Ahrar al-Sham (AAS) and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in Bab al-Hawa]
Date	21 Jul 2017
Agreement status	Unilateral document
Interim arrangement	Yes

Agreement/conflict level Intrastate/local conflict

Syrian Conflicts (1948 -) (1976 - 2005) (2011 -)

The agreements relate to three different conflict contexts. Israel-Syria and Syria-Lebanon. The Syrian-Israeli conflict was a key factor for the Syrian intervention during the Lebanese Civil War, with Syrian-backed Palestinian Liberation Army units intervened in 1976 against the Palestinian/Leftist militias. Following a massacre at Tel al-Zaatar that year, Syria was forced to accept a ceasefire at a meeting of the Arab League. However, the Arab League also mandated an Arab Deterrence Force, consisting of mostly Syrian soldiers with token contributions from other Arab League states, thus further legitimizing the Syrian presence in Lebanon. During a second bout of fighting that began in 1989, caused by the formation of rival Lebanese regimes in East and West Beirut, the Syrian-backed regime won and in 1991 the 'Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination' was signed to legalize the Syrian occupation as a means to ensure the security of Syria. Syrian forces were forced to withdraw in 2005 following possible involvement in the assassination of Lebanon's President Hariri.

Syria-internal. In 2011, domestic upheaval following a wave of protests across the Arab World soon led to violent repression of protestors by Syrian government troops. The violence progressed steadily and by July 2011 the Free Syrian Army (FSA) was formed consisting of defected military units and new recruits. The FSA and rebel umbrella group known as the Syrian National Council represented the first attempt at coordinating rebel factions in late 2011. However, a steady influx of foreign fighters and increased sectarianism radicalised opposition groups, which relied on foreign funding. The nature of the conflict changed drastically in late 2013 as infighting among the opposition groups increased. One of the more significant developments was the split between the al-Qaeda outfits the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, ISIS), and Jabhat al-Nusra in early 2014 in addition to the intensified targeting of other rebel factions by ISIS fighters in particular, including the Kurdish Peshmerga, the FSA and other jihadist outfits. Since the summer of 2014, the conflict was further internationalized when ISIS announced the formation of an Islamic state eroding the state line between Iraq and Syria and also in mid-2015 when Russian forces intervened on behalf of the Bashar al-Assad government in Damascus.

Close
Syrian Conflicts (1948 -) (1976 - 2005) (2011 -)

Stage	Ceasefire/related
Conflict nature	Inter-group
Peace process	Syrian Local Agreements
Parties	Movement of Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya; Harikat Tahrir al-Sham (Muhammad Abu Zaid);

Third parties

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Description

Statement issued by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham as part of a choreography of statements negotiating a ceasefire between HTS and Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya in Idlib, Syria. Choreography appears to begin around the 15 July 2017 regarding a checkpoint at al-Alawin. This particular statement is related to the Initiative to Stop the Ongoing Fighting between HTS and Ahrar al-Sham, issued on 19 July 2017.

Agreement document

[SY_170721_Statement on Ceasefire between Ahrar al-Sham Hayat Tahrir al-Sham_EN.pdf \(opens in new tab\)](#) | [Download PDF](#)

Agreement document (original language)

[SY_170721_Statement on Ceasefire between Ahrar al-Sham Hayat Tahrir al-Sham_AR.pdf \(opens in new tab\)](#)

Local agreement properties**Process type**

Informal but persistent process

Rationale

-> Local issues only; no external support mechanism; culture of signing There is no formally established mechanism to support the negotiation between Salafi armed groups. Moreover, this agreement cannot be linked to the national peace process. Indeed, both groups have a Salafist ideology; they oppose the rule of Bashar al-Assad in Syria and reject the idea of a national negotiation to solve the conflict. Yet, it seems that both signing parties choose to solve daily pragmatic issues related to their armed struggle through agreements. Although one cannot speak of a “culture” of signing peace agreements, the parties are involved (in a non-proactive and non-conscious way) in a persistent practice of signing local agreements.

Is there a documented link to a national peace process?

No

Link to national process: articulated rationale

No link to the national peace process in Syria is mentioned in the agreement, neither it can be inferred from further research. First, the agreement does not involve local governance actors; and the signing parties themselves are not official state representative. Second, all parties to the agreement reject the national peace process, as it would maintain Bashar al-Assad and the Syrian government in power. Yet, the agreement is related to multiple local level processes in Idlib governorate in July 2017.

Name of Locale

Bab al-Hawi

Nature of Locale

Smaller

GPS Lat/Long (DD)

36.230907, 36.692617

Participant type

Local armed group

Mediator, facilitator or similar Mediator or similar referred to or similar

Mediator (references) The initiative of the mediation was launched by three clerics: Sheikh Abu Mohammed al-Sadiq, Sheikh Abdul Razzaq al-Mahdi, and Sheikh Abu Hamza al-Masri.

Type of mediator/facilitator/similar Domestic religious organisation/leader or other elder

Local issues

Ritual/prayer and process (including use of scripture) Page 1, In the name of Allah, the beneficent, the merciful

Grievance List The agreement addresses the grievances of local armed groups that fought for the control of Idlib governorate. Although the agreement does not refer to specific causes of the conflict, it lists several provisions to address local grievances.

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It was agreed between the brothers from the Movement of Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya and Harikat Tahrir al-Sham on a ceasefire, the release of detainees by both parties, the departure of factions from the Bab al-Hawi crossing and its transferal to civilian administration.

Cattle rustling/ banditry No specific mention.

Social cover No specific mention.
