

Country/entity Syria

Region Middle East and North Africa

Agreement name Agreement between Tahrir al-Sham and the Syrian Liberation Front to de-escalate military presence in the towns of Hama and Idlib provinces

Date 28 Feb 2018

Agreement status Multiparty signed/agreed

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 -)

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Stage Ceasefire/related

Conflict nature Inter-group

Peace process Syrian Local Agreements

Parties From Hay ' at Tahrīr al-Shām Abu Mahood Khatab [signature]
From Jabhat Tahrīr Suria Abu al-Yaman Turk [signature]

Third parties Guarantor Major Jamil al-Salih [signature]

Description Five-point agreement providing for the neutralization of fighting between Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and Jabhat Tahrir Suriyya. It is restricted to those engaged in fighting and provides that Hayat Tahrir al-Sham cannot open HQs in the mentioned areas or interfere in the affairs of the city. In return, Jabhat Tahrir Suriyya will not attack HTS HQ from factions that have stayed away from fighting.

Agreement document [SY_180228_Agreement between Tahrir al-Sham and the Syrian Liberation Front to de-escalate military presence in the towns of Hama and Idlib provinces.pdf \(opens in new tab\) | Download PDF](#)

Agreement document (original language) [SY_180228_Agreement between Tahrir al-Sham and the Syrian Liberation Front to de-escalate military presence in the towns of Hama and Idlib provinces.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 No formally established mechanism supported the negotiation between the signing parties. 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 (especially Hayat Tahrir al-Sham) 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. The agreement is related to multiple local level processes in Idlib and Hama governorates in early 2018. A very similar agreement was signed between the two same parties the day before in nearby Sheikh Mustafa.

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. Finally, the agreement should be understood in the context of an “intra-religious insurgent groups” conflict where several factions that all oppose Bashar al-Assad engaged in fighting and took some distance from their initial raison d’être in the context of the Syrian civil war.

Name of Locale Sheikh Mustafa, Kafr Sijnah, Al-Rakaya, Madaaya, Al-Amariah, Muwaqah, Kifrin, Haysh, Tathaya, Khan Sheikhoun, Mork, Kafzita, and Al-Tamanah

Nature of Locale Region

GPS Lat/Long (DD) 35.449763, 36.588550

Participant type Local armed group

Mediator, facilitator or similar Mediator or similar referred to

Mediator (references) The agreement was signed with the guarantee of a military leader affiliated with the Free Syrian Army.

Type of mediator/facilitator/similar Local armed group

Local issues

Ritual/prayer and process (including use of scripture) Page 1, In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

Grievance List The agreement addresses the consequences and grievances that arose from a series of clashes between the signing parties in Hama and Idlib governorates.

Cattle rustling/ banditry No specific mention.

Social cover No specific mention.
