

Country/entity	Syria
Region	Middle East and North Africa
Agreement name	Initiative to Stop the Ongoing Fighting between Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and Harakat Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya (AAS)
Date	19 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	Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Sadiq Sheikh Abd al-Rizaq al-Mahdi Sheikh Abi Hamzah al-Masri

Third parties Tahrir al-Sham and Harakat Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya

Description 4 point proposal by three sheikhs to end fighting between Tahrir al-Sham and Harakat Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya. Calls for a ceasefire, the delegation of three individuals from each side, a meeting between the delegates. Hayat Tahrir al-Sham respond positively the same day (19.07.2019, see Initiative to Stop the Ongoing Fighting between HTS and Ahrar al-Sham), and then a agreement was announced via a statement on the 21.07.2019 (see Statement on Ceasefire between Ahrar al-Sham Hayat Tahrir al-Sham). This was broken and then renewed in an agreement on the 23.07.2019 (see Second Ceasefire between Ahrar al-Sham and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham).

Agreement document [SY_170719_Initiative to Stop the Ongoing Fighting between HTS and Ahrar al-Sham_EN.pdf \(opens in new tab\)](#) | [Download PDF](#)

Agreement document (original language) [SY_170719_Initiative to Stop the Ongoing Fighting between HTS and Ahrar 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. The agreement does not involve local governance actors and the signing parties themselves are not official state representative. Yet, the agreement is related to multiple local level processes in Idlib governorate in July 2017.

Name of Locale NA

Nature of Locale Region

GPS Lat/Long (DD) 35.743974, 36.700182

Participant type Domestic religious organisation/leader or other elder

Mediator, facilitator or similar Mediator or similar referred to

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

Page 1, He said the following: “No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah - then We are going to give him a great reward.” (114) [Surah al-Nisa’]

Page 1, In order to stem the blood of Muslims and spare loss in the midst of ongoing fighting, give priority to dialogue and resort to war, we call the conflict parties to the following:

Page 1, Allah is the Conciliator.

Grievance List The agreement addresses the grievances of two Salafi-jihadi groups that lost a number of men during clashes for the control of villages in Idlib governorate.

Cattle rustling/ banditry No specific mention.

Social cover No specific mention.
