

Country/entity	Syria
Region	Middle East and North Africa
Agreement name	Idlib Agreement between Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the National Front for Liberation, and Jabhat Ansar al-Din
Date	24 Sep 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 -)

Stage	Ceasefire/related
Conflict nature	Inter-group
Peace process	Syrian Local Agreements
Parties	Representative of Hayat Tahrir Al Sham, Abu Saad [ILLEGIBLE] [Signed] Representative of the National Front for Liberation, Abu Al Nour Al Ghab [Signed] The Ansar Al Din Front, Sheikh Ramiz[Signed]

Third parties	-
Description	6 point agreement providing for a cessation of hostilities; the hand over of individuals guilty of killing at the checkpoint; the creation of a Shariah court, following the deterioration and death at a Sheikh Mustafa checkpoint.
Agreement document	SY_180924_Idlib Agreement_EN.pdf (opens in new tab) Download PDF
Agreement document (original language)	SY_180924_Idlib Agreement_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 (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 governorate in 2018.
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	al-Hbeit [Hobeit], Sheikh Mustafa
Nature of Locale	Region
GPS Lat/Long (DD)	35.440013, 36.548661

Participant type Local armed group

Mediator, facilitator or similar Mediator or similar referred to

Mediator (references) Jabhat Ansar al-Din

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, Most Gracious, Most Merciful
All praises be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and peace and blessings be upon our Prophet, Muhammad, and upon his family and all of his companions.

Grievance List Although the agreement does not refer to specific causes of the conflict, it lists six provisions to address local grievances.

Page 1, They agreed on the following:

1. Immediate cessation of all escalatory actions between the two sides
2. Handing over of all of the individuals who caused the incident of the killing of the brothers at the [ILLEGIBLE] Checkpoint of the National Front for Liberation to the Ansar Al Din Front
3. With regards to the incident at the Sheikh Mustafa Checkpoint: Handing over all of the individuals who fired shots, from both sides, to the Ansar Al Din Front because it is the guarantor and supervisor of the matter until these individuals can be referred to the Sharia committee that is formed by the two sides
4. Releasing the detainees that the National Front for Liberation has as soon as the brothers who caused the shooting incident are handed over
5. Both sides will provide all guarantees to the Sharia committee
6. Within 24 hours from today, the Sharia committee shall start operating

Cattle rustling/ banditry No specific mention.

Social cover Page 1, 2. Handing over of all of the individuals who caused the incident of the killing of the brothers at the [ILLEGIBLE] Checkpoint of the National Front for Liberation to the Ansar Al Din Front

Page 1, 3. With regards to the incident at the Sheikh Mustafa Checkpoint: Handing over all of the individuals who fired shots, from both sides, to the Ansar Al Din Front because it is the guarantor and supervisor of the matter until these individuals can be referred to the Sharia committee that is formed by the two sides
