



## PA-X Local: Note on Local Peace Processes in the Syrian Conflict

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The PA-X Local database does not currently systematically label distinct local peace processes, but mostly groups these as ‘local processes’. This is because often the fragmented nature of these processes means that each one may reflect a distinct process, but sometimes in a context in which local agreement making was a ‘persistent practice’. As we did not have sufficient information, and it would not have facilitated searchers, and as many local processes overlap in complex ways, we have grouped these. However, where either time lapses, or very distinct in-country geographies meant that quite different sets of local processes were at play, we have made a distinction between groups of local process.

In Syria, where it would be possible and more accurate to group local processes, we have not done so within the database, but have written this note which indicates how we understand the different actor permutations to play out. We hope that the database facilitates better understanding of how local processes relate to each other or not, over time. We aim to add more accurate records in the future, to better reflect the diverse and disaggregated nature of local peace processes.

The Syrian conflict is highly fragmented and could be best described as a set of complex conflict systems that are nested at the local level. Identity and issue politics often blend to lay out a canvas of shifting alliances. Another peculiarity of this conflict is the absence of a peace process at the national level. Syrian peace talks are characterised by lack of consensus and the absence of key warring parties; it also fails to suggest an all-encompassing vision for the future of the country.

Taking those features into consideration, we suggest analysing the Syrian conflict in terms of sub-peace processes. We offer a division of peace processes based on the categorisation of the actors directly involved in the conflict and its resolution ([Table 1](#)). Besides armed groups, conflict de-escalation at the local level also includes ‘civilian actors’ – institutions and representatives – who often play a central role in brokering peace agreements. [Table 1](#) aims to represent the Syrian peace process(es) through the lens of the peace agreements included in the PA-X Local database and along with the definition of ‘peace agreement’ suggested in PA-X. It thus provides one of the many pictures of the Syrian conflict, a biased and incomplete one which is yet a useful tool to understand the different layers of conflict management in Syria.

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[Table 2](#) displays the most prominent actors – including alliances – that are most involved in the signature of local agreements in Syria. We recognise that this classification does not provide a fully accurate picture of the warring groups in Syria. For instance, some alliances bring together ‘other opposition actors’ and ‘religiously driven opposition actors’. Similarly, opposition actors which struggle is purely secular sometimes include religiously driven constituents. Finally, several key actors such as Turkey are not included in [Table 2](#); Ergodan’s stance has always been against Bashar al-Assad but it cannot be reduced to a religious opposition actor. It is important to remember that the purpose of this table is to facilitate the categorisation of peace sub-processes in the Syrian context.

PSRP is always eager to hear from PA-X users about how they utilise this resource in their work and how the database could be improved. We are particularly keen to hear if you have thoughts on our interpretation and division of Syrian peace processes, and encourage you to get in touch with our research team at [politicalsettlements@ed.ac.uk](mailto:politicalsettlements@ed.ac.uk).

As PA-X Local is a part of the PA-X Peace Agreements Database, please also see the full list of people who have contributed to the PA-X project to date: [www.peaceagreements.org/files/Acknowledgements%20-%20Copy%201.pdf](http://www.peaceagreements.org/files/Acknowledgements%20-%20Copy%201.pdf). PA-X Local is an output of the Political Settlements Research Programme (PSRP), from a project funded by UK Aid from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) for the benefit of developing countries. See more at [www.politicalsettlements.org](http://www.politicalsettlements.org). However, the views expressed and information contained in it are not necessarily those endorsed by DFID, which can accept no responsibility for such views or information or for any reliance placed on them.

**Table 1:** Classification of local peace processes in Syria

	<b>Syrian government-affiliated actors</b>	<b>Religiously driven opposition actors</b>	<b>Ethically driven opposition actors</b>	<b>Other Opposition Actors*</b>	<b>Civilian Actors</b>
<b>Syrian government-affiliated actors</b>		East Qalamoun Ceasefire (05/09/2017)		Ceasefire in Towns of Talbisa, Rastan and Al-Hula in Homs Countryside between Syrian Government and Free Syrian Army (31/07/2017)	Wadi Barada Agreement (06/01/2017)
<b>Religiously driven opposition actors</b>	Homs Ceasefire (07/12/2015)	Agreement between Jaysh al-Islam and Jabhat al-Nusra, Ghouta (19/07/2015)	Deed of Agreement between the People's Protection Unites and the Operations Room of Aleppo (19/12/2015)	Untitled Agreement between Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Northern Storm Brigade (19/09/2013)	Agreement between the Local and Shura Coucils and Jabat Tahrir al-Suriyyah, Tahrir al-Sham and Faylaq al-Sham regarding the village of Kfar Darian, Idlib (27/02/2018)
<b>Ethically driven opposition actors</b>	Qamishlo Agreement (24/04/2016)	Points of the Truce with the People's Protection Units (24/04/2014)		Field Agreement between the Free Syrian Army and People's Defence Units in the city of Ras al-Ain (18/02/2013)	
<b>Other Opposition Actors</b>	Damascus Truce I between Bayt Sahem and Babila (15/01/2014)	Agreement between Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and Free Idlib Army (09/06/2017)	Untitled Agreement between the people's Protection Units and Free Syrian Army Mara'a Operation Room, Afrin, Aleppo (03/12/2015)		Al-Bab Security Agreement (16/06/2017)

\* Actors whose struggle and goals are not based on their religious or ethnic identity.

**Table 2:** Classification of the main actors involved in the Syrian conflict and its resolution at the local level

<b>Syrian Government-affiliated Actors</b>	<b>Religiously Driven Opposition Actors</b>	<b>Ethnic Opposition Actors</b>	<b>Other Opposition Actors</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Badr Organisation</li> <li>. Hezbollah</li> <li>. Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps</li> <li>. National Defence Forces (NDF)</li> <li>. Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMU)</li> <li>. Quds Forces</li> <li>. Syrian Arab Republic</li> <li>. Syrian Armed Forces</li> <li>. Russia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Ahrar al-Sham (AAS)</li> <li>. Aleppo Liberation Operation Room / Fatah Halab</li> <li>. Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)</li> <li>. Islamic State (IS)</li> <li>. Jabhat al-Nusra / Jabhat Fatah al-Sham</li> <li>. Jabhat Ansar al-Din</li> <li>. Jaysh al-Islam</li> <li>. Jund al-Aqsa</li> <li>. Levant Front</li> <li>. Nour al-Din al-Zanki Movement</li> <li>. Suqur al-Sham Brigades</li> <li>. Syrian Liberation Front (SLF)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. People’s Defence Forces (HPG)</li> <li>. People’s Protection Unit (YPG)</li> <li>. Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Free Syrian Army (FSA)</li> <li>. FSA-affiliated al-Rahman Legion</li> <li>. Interim Government</li> <li>. National Front for Liberation (NLF)</li> <li>. Southern Front</li> <li>. Sultan Murad Division</li> <li>. Revolutionary Commando Army</li> </ul>