

American Backed Syrian Rebel Group Has ‘Four or Five’ Syrians Left Fighting Against ISIS

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Testifying to the Senate Armed Services Committee today, Gen. Lloyd Austin, the head of Centcom, admitted that the pro-US Syrian rebel faction, dubbed the New Syrian Force (NSF) in most official contexts, is virtually gone now, with virtually everybody either killed or having fled.

What was initially envisioned as a force of tens of thousands of anti-ISIS fighters amounted to only 54 to start with, and Gen. Austin told Congress today that they are down to “four or five” fighters still active in the field. Needless to say, it’s not going well.



Austin went on to say that the next two classes of NSF fighters are still being trained, though that training too is falling behind schedule. The indications are that these classes aren’t much bigger, 100-120 fighters all told. The pared-back goal of 5,000 fighters is likely still years off.

The general went on to say that they are “reviewing” the program, though since the Pentagon has repeatedly talked up the NSF as the end-all, be-all plan for victory in Syria, and has harshly resisted efforts to change the process, which they’ve invested tens of millions of dollars into for tens of fighters.

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