

Video: Al-Qaeda Factions Create New Coalition in Idlib

By [South Front](#)

Global Research, June 16, 2020

[South Front](#) 15 June 2020

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Terrorism](#), [US NATO](#)

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Early on June 14, the Russian Aerospace Forces reportedly carried out airstrikes on positions of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham near the villages of al-Bara and Deir Sunbul in southern Idlib. Since the signing of the new de-escalation agreement with Turkey on March 5, the Russian military has halted active operations in Greater Idlib. Nonetheless, it continued isolated precise strikes on high value terrorist targets.

The June 14 airstrikes followed the creation of a new coalition by several al-Qaeda-linked groups operating in the region: Horas al-Din, Ansar al-Din, Ansar al-Islam, Liwa al-Muqatlin al-Ansar and Tansiqiyat al-Jihad. The coalition, dubbed “Fa Ithbatu”, is in fact an expanded variant of another al-Qaeda-linked coalition, Ghurfat Eamaliat wa-Harid al-Mu’minin. This very faction recently conducted a large attack on Syrian Army positions near Tanjarah and Fattirah killing several soldiers and destroying at least one BMP infantry fighting vehicle.

Therefore, despite the claims of pro-militant propaganda that militant groups are uniting their forces in order to fight back the possible aggression of the ‘bloody Assad regime’, the creation of Fa Ithbatu likely reveals preparations for more aggressive actions against government forces.

https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_15_06_2020_ENG.mp4

The Turkish leadership, which is also committed to pushing propaganda about the ‘evil Assad regime’, clearly understands the real situation on the ground. So, it has continued expanding the network of observation posts along the M4 highway in southern Idlib in an attempt to keep the situation under control. The most recent Turkish observation posts were created near the villages of Farkia, Bsanqul, Kafer Shalaya, Urum al-Jawz and Mareian. Nonetheless, even these extensive efforts did not allow Turkish forces to at least create the image of order in the so-called opposition-held area.

On June 13, fighting erupted between Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and a local armed group in the village of Salqin near the Turkish border. The conflict started after Hayat Tahrir al-Sham members assaulted a displaced civilian from Ma`arat al-Nu`man for setting a food stand near their shop. The fighting stopped only after Hayat Tahrir al-Sham deployed large reinforcements to the village. This was just the most recent incident in a long pattern of violence, which has been ongoing in the militant-held areas.

On June 14 and June 15, warplanes of the Syrian Air Force bombed ISIS hideouts near the town of Uqayribat in southeastern Hama. Last weekend, the Syrian Army, the National

Defense Forces and Liwa al-Quds launched an anti-ISIS operation in the very same area. The operation came in response to ISIS attacks near the town on June 11 and June 12. However, it is unlikely that limited security operations in the desert area, which are being conducted by government forces, will fully remove the ISIS threat from the region.

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