

# Syria's Jihadists Dismay the Opposition

By: **Ziad Haydar** Translated from **As-Safir (Lebanon)**.

[اقرأ المقال الأصلي باللغة العربية](#)

According to a Syrian opposition member living abroad, **Jabhat al-Nusra**, which yesterday **pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda's** Egyptian leader, Ayman al-Zawahri, will be targeted by the revolution once the latter attains its goal of toppling the regime.

## About This Article

Summary :

As the Syrian war rages on, opposition groups cannot ignore the growing influence of jihadist groups, which could pose serious challenges in the post-Assad period, writes Ziad Haydar.

Publisher: **As-Safir (Lebanon)**

Original Title:

Syria Jihadists Between Embarrassing and Supporting the Opposition

Author: Ziad Haydar

First Published: April 11, 2013

Posted on: April 12 2013

Translated by: Kamal Fayad

Categories : Security  Syria  Lebanon

with secularism being absent in most these areas.

Yet, this hypothetical future clash does not give the opposition's two main factions — the Syrian National Council (SNC) and the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces — the right to ignore Jabhat al-Nusra's organized and effective fighting force, as demonstrated in the ongoing battles it is engaged in against the Syrian army and security forces throughout the country.

Truth be told, the media and news networks have all covered armed clashes between fighters from both camps (opposition forces and Jabhat al-Nusra) in the countryside of Aleppo, especially along the border crossings, as well as in rural Idlib, Deir Ezzor, and Raqa. Websites have also relayed many stories about the apprehension and torture of peaceful activists by Jabhat al-Nusra fighters in Aleppo and elsewhere, as a result of altercations resulting from the raising of Jabhat al-Nusra's black flag, or criticizing its military or civilian conduct.

But the equality that armed opposition groups claim to enjoy in relation to the Jabhat al-Nusra is belied by facts on the ground. All of the field tours take by media outlets in areas under the opposition's control have clearly shown that the black flag flies the highest, and that the established local councils are all run by Islamist magistrates and Committees for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice,

Jabhat al-Nusra is not only considered the best-organized among opposition factions, but also the most effective. Its espoused **concept of jihad** against others emanates from a deep religious belief, guided by what it considers to be the manifest destiny of establishing the Supreme Islamic State. Toward that end, everything is permissible, from the use of suicide bombers and women, to blowing up cars in civilian areas, all the way to the treating of civilians as fodder in the conflict.

Jabhat al-Nusra is ashamed of nothing, for everything is allowed in its quest for the divine goal. This comes in contrast to the opposition, whose representatives wear expensive suits and regularly meet with leaders of the West to promote their ultimate objective of conducting “democratic elections in an atmosphere of constitutional freedom.”

Such talk falls on deaf ears among members of Jabhat al-Nusra, which makes good use of the high numbers of foreign adventurers and those seeking jihadist avenues that lead them to heaven.

The opposition, in the form of the SNC, had a chance to distance itself from Jabhat al-Nusra, following the latter's classification as a "terrorist organization" by the United States. Meanwhile, the Muslim Brotherhood defended the group, labeling the US decision as hasty, while SNC head Georges Sabra decried the decision taken against "our brothers in arms." For his part, the leader of the National Coalition, [Moaz al-Khatib](#), did the same. He reiterated yesterday [April 10], however, that "al-Qaeda's doctrine does not suit us."

This is just the tip of the iceberg. Diplomats report that representatives of the opposition tell them that "Jabhat al-Nusra fighters will leave to conduct jihad elsewhere once the revolution ends, or else we will fight them." The latter option seems to be the most likely, since the goal of the war has now become the establishment of "The Islamic State of the Levant," as al-Zawahri demanded two days ago [April 9].

This then is a new reality that representatives of the opposition should tackle without delay. This is the same reality that Haytham Manna of the National Coordination Committee for Democratic Change (NCC) warned against ignoring during the Marrakech conference a few months ago. He pointed out that the war against the Syrian army might become one against al-Qaeda, which could change the current balance of power and render moot and deluded all reassurances given to minorities and moderates.

Is there still hope? Syrian websites yesterday [quoted Khatib](#) as accusing American companies of racial bias against Syrian job-seekers, pointing out that such actions required "a legal response." According to the same source, Khatib went even further to ask attorney Haitham al-Mallah, who is currently in the United States, to sue the American government for "incitement toward ethnic and racial intolerance." The opposition's estimation of its importance, whether on the battlefield or the courthouse, requires true reassessment.

[Read original article](#)



[Obama's Lesson in Zionism](#)



[Israeli Apology Pushes Hamas Away From Turkey](#)



['Irish Sam' Joins Fight in Syria](#)



[Hamas' Relationship with Qatar Widens Rift With West Bank](#)

Recommended by



