



## Is South Syria a Terrorist Threat to Israel? The Islamic Resistance Front in Syria, a Test Case

September 1, 2025

### Overview

- During the Syrian Civil War, which broke out in 2011, the area of south Syria became an arena for the activity of Salafi-jihadist terrorist organizations in addition to Hezbollah and the Iranian Qods Force, which sought to establish another front against Israel based on local operatives and Shi'ite militias.
- The fall of the Assad regime in December 2024 led to the removal of most of the Iranian-backed elements from the Syrian Golan area and to the takeover of south Syria by the rebel forces and the IDF, but new groups began to appear in the area seeking to attack IDF forces stationed in the Syrian Golan and to push them back beyond the border. As a result, the IDF increased its activity to find weapons in south Syria, carried out targeted killings and detained terrorist operatives in the area, some of them belonging to the Qods Force and Hamas.
- At the beginning of 2025, an organization calling itself the Islamic Resistance Front in Syria – Men of Heroism began publishing statements attacking the Israeli presence in Syrian territory and issuing claims of responsibility for military actions targeting IDF forces in south Syria. Despite doubts about its existence and actual support on the ground, the Resistance Front claimed it was organized and structured, cooperating and allied with other groups whose declared goal was to expel the "occupiers" from Syrian soil.
- The Resistance Front also claimed it did not depend on other organizations and was not subordinate to other states, but declared its affiliation with the "resistance axis"<sup>1</sup> and complete support for Iran, Hezbollah and the Palestinian terrorist organizations.
- **In ITIC assessment, the Resistance Front may be an attempt by Iran and Hezbollah to reactivate the network they constructed under the Assad regime to attack IDF forces operating in south Syria or inside Israel, and thereby provoke an Israeli military response against the security forces of the al-Shara regime, which would further destabilize Syria. However, despite its prominent presence on social media and the abundance of**

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<sup>1</sup> Iran, Hezbollah, Palestinian organizations, the Houthis in Yemen and the Shi'ite militias in Iraq.

**statements issued in its name, there is still no conclusive evidence that the Resistance Front in fact exists or that it possesses significant military capabilities. Its claims of cooperation and alliances with other organizations in Syria have also not yet materialized.**

## South Syria as an Arena for Anti-Israel Terrorism

► During the Syrian Civil War, the area of south Syria, which was the focal point of the outbreak of the uprising against the Bashar al-Assad regime in the city of Daraa in 2011, became a center for various terrorist elements, both those supporting the regime and those opposing it, among them Salafi-jihadist organizations, especially ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra.<sup>2</sup>

► In 2013, President al-Assad declared the Golan Heights an area open for "popular resistance against Israel," apparently in an attempt to divert the Syrian population's attention toward the "external threat." Hezbollah, with Iranian assistance, established a network to attack Israel from the Golan Heights. The attacks were led by Jihad Mughniyeh, son of Hezbollah's former military commander Imad Mughniyeh, and Samir Kuntar,<sup>3</sup> who had been released from an Israeli prison in 2008. The network carried out several shooting and rocket attacks, killing an Arab-Israeli teenager and injuring two IDF fighters. Mughniyeh and Kuntar were eliminated in strikes during 2013 (Ynet, August 18, 2015, and December 20, 2015; IDF spokesperson, March 13, 2019).<sup>4</sup>

► After the Assad regime had reestablished its control over south Syria in 2018, Hezbollah began rebuilding its extensive terrorist infrastructure, called the Golan File, commanded by Ali Musa Daqduq. The objective of the Hezbollah network, which numbered dozens of local operatives and was based on Hezbollah's existing facilities in south Syria, was to allow the organization to open another front against Israel in the Golan Heights.<sup>5</sup> Golan File activity was identified during the war between Israel and Hezbollah which broke out on October 8, 2023, and as a result IDF forces increased targeted operations against the pro-Iranian militias (IDF

<sup>2</sup> For further information, see the ITIC report, "[Spotlight on Global Jihad, December 10-16, 2014](#)).

<sup>3</sup> Samir Kuntar was a Lebanese Druze member of the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF). In 1979, at the age of 16, he led an attack in Israel's northern coastal city of Nahariya, killing an Israeli policeman, a father and his two daughters. He was convicted of murder and terrorism, and sentenced to life imprisonment.

<sup>4</sup> For further information, see the ITIC report, "[News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, January 14-20, 2015](#).)

<sup>5</sup> For further information, see the March 2019 ITIC report, [Ali Mussa Daqduq \(Abu Hussein Sajed\): portrait of the commander of Hezbollah's military network in the Syrian Golan Heights \("the Golan Portfolio"\)](#).

spokesperson, October 22, 2024). In November 2024, it was reported that Ali Musa Daqduq, who was also deputy commander of the organization's elite Radwan Unit, was killed in an Israeli airstrike in the al-Sayyidah Zaynab area in southern Damascus (al-Hadath, November 10, 2024).

►The Qods Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards also operated Shi'ite militias in south Syria, which initially helped Assad regime forces regain control of the area and later enabled Iran to gain a foothold near the Israeli border. Reportedly, between 2018 and 2021 the number of pro-Iranian militia military positions in south Syria increased from 40 to 88, and pro-Iranian militias were present in Divisions 1, 5, 7, 9, and 10 of the Syrian army in the south of the country, as well as in Brigade 90 installations along the Israeli front. Militias active in south Syria included Liwa' 313, the Fatemiyoun and Zaynabiyoun Brigades of Afghan and Pakistani fighters, the Abu al-Fadl al-Abbas Brigade, and the Palestinian Sunni Liwa' al-Quds militia.<sup>6</sup>

►On November 27, 2024, armed organizations opposing the Assad regime, led by the jihadi-Islamist Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham [the successor of Jabhat al-Nusra], attacked Syrian army forces and their allies in northwestern Syria. Afterwards, Turkish-sponsored organizations attacked in the Aleppo area, and another coalition of rebel organizations took control of south Syria. On December 8, 2024, the rebels completed the takeover of Damascus and toppled President Bashar al-Assad's regime. In his place, the leader of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, Ahmad al-Sharaa (Abu Muhammad al-Julani), seized power.<sup>7</sup>

►On December 7, 2024, armed operatives attacked a UN outpost in the village of Khadr in the Syrian Golan. The IDF assisted the UN force to repel the attack, and in consequence the IDF reinforced its forces in the Golan Heights border area and entered the buffer zone established under the 1974 ceasefire agreement. The IDF also took control of the Syrian Hermon area (IDF spokesperson, December 2–9, 2024).

►In the following months, IDF forces continued operating in the buffer zone in the Golan Heights and south Syria to prevent terrorist attacks on Israeli territory. The forces carried out raids and airstrikes, targeting facilities and weapons depots which had served the Syrian army

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<sup>6</sup> For further information, see the July 2018 ITIC report, [Hezbollah and Iran-handled Shi'ite militias are integrated into the Syrian army in its campaign to take control of south Syria](#) and the March 2023 ITIC report, "The Pro-Iranian Militias in Syria."

<sup>7</sup> For further information, see the December 2024 ITIC report, [The Power Groups in Syria after the Fall of the Assad Regime](#).

under the Assad regime, searched for weapons, carried out targeted killings and detained persons suspected of terrorist activity:<sup>8</sup>

- ◆ On June 8, 2025, a Hamas terrorist operative was killed in an airstrike in Mazra'at Bayt Jinn in south Syria.
- ◆ On June 12, IDF forces carried out an operation in the town of Bayt Jinn in south Syria, detaining several terrorist Hamas operatives who were promoting terrorist activity against Israeli civilians and IDF forces in Syria, and confiscating weapons.
- ◆ On the night of July 1, IDF forces detained four terrorist operatives acting under Iranian direction in south Syria and suspected of planning to attack IDF forces stationed in the buffer zone in the Golan Heights. The forces also confiscated weapons, including several firearms and grenades. According to reports, the four suspects, all Syrian citizens, three of them members of one family, operated in two villages in the Quneitra area, about eight kilometers (five miles) from the Israeli border.
- ◆ On the night of July 6, IDF forces operating in the Tel Qudna area of south Syria detained operatives of a terrorist cell reportedly preparing to attack Israel from Syrian territory in the service of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' Qods Force. Syrian media reported that six people, including two children, were detained in an Israeli raid in the village of Suwaysa and on the outskirts of the town of Naba' al-Sakhr in the central rural area of al-Quneitra.
- ◆ On July 3, Qassem Salah al-Husseini, a Lebanese terrorist operative working for the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' Qods Force, was killed in an airstrike in the village of Sil in Lebanon. The IDF spokesperson reported that al-Husseini had been promoting terrorist activity against Israeli civilians and IDF forces on the northern front and was a significant figure in smuggling weapons from Iran through Syria to various points in the northern sector and in Judea and Samaria for terrorist attacks, for which he maintained ties with Syrian and Lebanese arms merchants.
- ◆ On July 11, Muhammad Shaaib, a Lebanese terrorist operative active on the northern front to attack under Qods Force direction, was killed in a strike in the al-Numairiyah area in Lebanon. According to reports, he had been engaged in smuggling weapons into

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<sup>8</sup> For further information, see the weekly ITIC reports on Hezbollah, Lebanese and Palestinian terrorism, as well as the Spotlight on Syria reports.

Israeli territory for terrorist activity and in establishing terrorist networks and facilities in Lebanon.

## The Islamic Resistance Front in Syria – Men of Heroism

### The Organization and Its Vision

► On December 17, 2024, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party<sup>9</sup> called for the establishment of a Syrian front to stand against the "invasion of enemy forces" and to "liberate the occupied territories." On January 9, 2025, a Syrian organization called the Southern Liberation Front announced its founding and demanded Israel withdraw its forces from Syrian territory within 48 hours. The organization called on the Syrian people to join its ranks to repel the Israeli "aggression" against Syria and claimed it possessed military-grade weapons left over from the previous regime. On January 11, 2025, the organization announced that it had changed its name to the Islamic Resistance Front in Syria – Men of Heroism.<sup>10</sup>



**The announcement of the founding of the Islamic Resistance Front in Syria (Resistance Front Telegram channel, January 11, 2025)**

► From its earliest days, the Resistance Front stated that its main objective was to force the IDF to withdraw from south Syria, overthrow the new regime of President Ahmad al-Sharaa and expel Turkish forces from the country, using violence if they did not withdraw voluntarily. The Front exploited Israeli activity in Syrian territory and internal developments in Syria to

<sup>9</sup> The Syrian Social Nationalist Party was founded in the 1930s by the Lebanese Antoun Saadeh under the influence of fascist right-wing circles in Europe, and it took root in Lebanon and Syria. The party, active in both Lebanon and Syria, has a secular-nationalist ideology which does not recognize the state borders based on the Sykes–Picot Agreement and views the Syrian (a native of “Greater Syria”) as belonging to a superior Syrian race. The organization’s emblem is an inverted swastika, and its pro-fascist activists give the Nazi salute. For further information, see the August 2024 ITIC report, [The Organizations Assisting Hezbollah in Combat Against Israel](#).

<sup>10</sup> For further information, see the January 2025 ITIC report, [Spotlight on Syria \(Following the Toppling of the Syrian Regime\) January 8–15, 2025](#).

strengthen the narrative of the need to act against the "Zionist enemy," claiming the new regime in Damascus was weak:

◆ On January 17, 2025, the Front announced that in light of the new Syrian regime's inability to expel the Israeli forces which had "occupied" south Syria, it was calling on all Syrians to help defeat the "aggression." It also stated that since Israel had been given an ultimatum to withdraw from Syria and had not done so, it was declaring the start of "military actions" against it. The Front claimed it had no connection to any state, party, or movement, and that it was a "popular" movement which had decided to "resist the Zionist occupation" in Syria (Resistance Front Telegram channel, January 17, 2025).

◆ In a statement issued jointly with the Syrian Popular Resistance and the Coastal Defense Forces, two organizations opposing the new Syrian regime and operating mainly on the Syrian coast and in the Latakia region in the north, they called on the Syrian people to stand with them against "infidel terrorist organizations and the various forces that have occupied Syria," a reference apparently directed at the new regime and its allies and at the Israeli and Turkish forces operating in Syria (Resistance Front Telegram channel, February 19, 2025).

◆ On February 26, 2025, a recorded announcement was issued in the name of the Front's General Command, which claimed that due to the escalation of IDF activity in south Syria and by order of the organization's general commander, all cells and combat units in south Syria were operating "to strike the enemy's strongholds everywhere on Syrian soil," and that the organization was in a state of "general mobilization." It added that "there will be revenge for every drop of blood spilled, every house destroyed and every family expelled." The next day, the Front announced that it was assembling cells and military battalions in south Syria in preparation for operations against the IDF (Resistance Front Telegram channel, February 26–27, 2025).

◆ On March 3, 2025, the anonymous commander of the Resistance Front issued its first statement to market the organization's activity to the Syrian people. The "commander" called the Resistance Front a "legitimate response" to the "attempts at division, displacement, arrest and ongoing systematic killings currently taking place in Syria." He added that "the Front arose from representatives of the Syrian people to confront every attempt to undermine the security of the state in the absence of the Syrian Arab Army and the political and social forces which ruled Syria." He claimed the organization's

objective was also to block a "coordinated Zionist-Turkish-American displacement plan" which had been "supported by Arab states to partition Syria after the fall of the Assad regime." He said the Assad regime had been the backbone of global "resistance" and liberation movements since 1970, and its end marked the collapse of an important force opposing foreign intervention (Resistance Front Telegram channel, March 3, 2025).

◆ Given the reports of secret talks between Israel and Syria in May 2025, the Resistance Front strongly condemned any negotiation, open or secret, conducted between a "government claiming legitimacy" and the "oppressive Israeli occupation entity." It said such negotiations were not a path to liberation but a "shameful surrender" carried out under pressure and in the shadow of "occupation," adding that "Palestine" and the Golan Heights were Arab-Islamic lands, therefore not one inch of them could be conceded, and agreements written "under the enemy's aircraft" had no value. Negotiations with Israel were an illusion and that the only way to restore the land was through weapons, sacrifice and unity of ranks, since that was the only language the "enemy" understood (Resistance Front Telegram channel, May 11, 2025).

◆ In response to clashes between the Druze and the Syrian regime forces in al-Suwayda during July 2025, the Resistance Front accused "foreign hands" of involvement, led by the "Zionist project that seeks to tear apart the unity between the land and the people." It further claimed that "the real enemy of the Syrian people is the Zionist project and its allies, not the residents of the mountain [the Druze], the tribes or any national component" (Resistance Front Telegram channel, July 15, 2025).

◆ After Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said he was committed to the vision of a "Greater Israel," the organization accused him of wanting to "swallow land and honor and target the heart of the nation from Palestine to Syria, from Egypt to Lebanon and Jordan, in an attempt to draw a colonial map with the blood of our people." It further stated that Netanyahu's declarations, called those of a "war criminal," were not a slip of the tongue but "a declaration of war on our entire nation and an arrogant message that the Zionist entity will not cease to expand unless it crashes into the wall of steadfastness and resistance." It added that any silence on Israel's "crimes" was a stab in the back of "Palestine," Syria and the region, paving the way toward [an attack on] the capital cities. The Front stressed that the "Greater Israel" project would only be stopped by the "bodies of the resistance fighters" and called on all forces in the Islamic nation to move "from

verbal condemnation to resistance actions" (Resistance Front Telegram channel, August 14, 2025).

◆After the death of a local resident in the village of Tranja in northern Quneitra province was reported, the Resistance Front claimed the continuing Israeli infiltrations into south Syria were made possible by the unwillingness and inaction of the "de facto government" [of President Ahmad al-Sharaa], which, it claimed, was "abandoning its national duty and focusing on preserving a fragile rule while persecuting and silencing free, loyal voices, even to the point of open coordination with the enemy." The Front said "resistance" would remain the only way to restore rights and defend the land, "far from the illusions of compromise and false rule" (Resistance Front Telegram channel, August 26, 2025).

◆Talal Hassan, who represented himself as the organization's deputy commander, said that Israeli Defense Minister Katz's statement that IDF forces would maintain a presence on Mount Hermon and in the buffer zone in south Syria was a "desperate attempt to present a false picture and conceal the weakness of the Israeli army." He called Israel's claims of "guarding the borders" a "lie," adding that the presence of the "Zionist occupation" in Syrian territory was temporary and fated to end. Hassan claimed that "resistance"<sup>11</sup> had repeatedly proven itself a central factor in thwarting Israel's plans and promised that the coming days would bring "harsh blows to every Israeli soldier and every territory controlled by Israel." He said "the occupation will end in a much more painful way than you expect" (Resistance Front Telegram channel, August 26, 2025).

### Anti-Israel Activity

►During the months of its activity, the Front published claims of responsibility for attacks on IDF forces in south Syria and even on Israeli territory:<sup>12</sup>

◆On January 31, 2025, it claimed to have carried out an "improvised showcase" operation against a "hostile Zionist force" in the village of Tranja in the Quneitra area, wounding several Israeli soldiers and damaging a military vehicle (Resistance Front Telegram channel, January 31, 2025). The IDF spokesperson confirmed that shots were fired at the area of IDF activity in the buffer zone in Syrian territory on the Golan Heights; there were no casualties (IDF spokesperson, January 31, 2025).

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<sup>11</sup> Anti-Israeli terrorism and violence

<sup>12</sup> See the Appendix for the claims of responsibility.



◆ On March 25, 2025, IDF forces attacked armed operatives who had shot at them on the outskirts of the village of Koayiah in south Syria (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, March 25, 2025). The Resistance Front claimed that its fighters had fought with the "Zionist occupation" in the village and that four of them had been killed (Resistance Front Telegram channel, March 25, 2025).

◆ The Front claimed that its fighters had clashed with IDF forces in Daraa province (Resistance Front Telegram channel, April 3, 2025). The IDF spokesperson confirmed that gunmen shot at the forces operating near the town of Tasil, and that IDF forces returned their fire, killing a number of them. There were no casualties among IDF forces (IDF spokesperson, April 3, 2025).

◆ On June 3, 2025, two rockets were fired at Israel from Syrian territory and fell in open areas (IDF spokesperson, June 3, 2025). Muhammad Mualdi, who represented himself as head of the Resistance Front's political bureau, and Abu al-Qasim, who represented himself as the organization's spokesperson, claimed that the Resistance Front was responsible for the attacks (al-Mayadeen and the Resistance Front Telegram channel, June 4, 2025).

► In addition to claims of attacking Israel, the Resistance Front used propaganda with threats to attack IDF forces in Syrian territory and inside Israeli territory. A significant part of the propaganda appeared in Hebrew to "frighten the Israeli public." One was a video in Hebrew entitled, "We are prepared, the date approaches." It said, "Bombing, destruction, destruction of infrastructure, killing and displacement, that's what you did," then showing a photo of a missile on a launcher with the caption, "Now look at this beautiful thing, it is only a small part of what we have. We are prepared." The video also claimed that the Resistance Front had several missiles which could reach deep inside Israel, namely the Golan 1 with a range of 600 km (about 370 miles); the Golan 2 with a range of 880 km (about 550 miles); the October with a range of 300 km (about 185 miles); and the Bas with a range of 180 km (about 110 miles) (Resistance Front Telegram channel, June 29, 2025).



From the video "We are prepared, the date approaches"  
(Resistance Front Telegram channel, July 29, 2025)



انتظرونا قريباً!  
في موكبنا... בקרוב נגיע



Right: An Israeli tank in the crosshairs (Resistance Front Telegram channel, January 12, 2025).  
Center: A threat against Prime Minister Netanyahu (Resistance Front Telegram channel, February 16, 2025). Left: Threat of an imminent attack on Israel (Resistance Front Telegram channel, July 17, 2025)

► There were also announcements of Resistance Front operatives who were killed in actions against the IDF or in Israeli strikes. On March 17, 2025, the IDF attacked military targets in south Syria, including headquarters and military sites with weapons and military equipment of the previous Syrian regime, which, according to the IDF, the current regime in Syria was trying to put back into service (IDF spokesperson, March 17, 2025). The Front stated an Israeli attack on one of its sites killed one "fighter" and wounded two others. The Front said it would not remain silent and would respond in an "appropriate" manner (Resistance Front Telegram channel, March 17, 2025). On July 6, 2025, the Front announced the death of Muhammad Badran, its deputy commander, a former Syrian army officer. His death was reportedly the result of

previous injury sustained during clashes with the "Zionist occupation" in the town of Nawa in the rural Daraa area in south Syria (Islamic Resistance Front Telegram channel, July 6, 2025).



**The announcement of Badran's death (Islamic Resistance Front Telegram channel, July 7, 2025)**

## Internal Structure and Ties to Other Organizations

► On March 27, 2025, the Resistance Front confirmed the establishment of organized mechanisms. "A source in the central media office of the Resistance Front" said that the organization operated political, social, media and military offices and had a legal office operating outside Syria which was expected to file an official lawsuit against Israel at the International Criminal Court in The Hague (*al-Nahar*, March 27, 2025).

► On May 5, 2025, the Resistance Front convened a secret "Alliance and Covenant" conference in Damascus with the participation of about 200 people, including field commanders, thinkers, politicians and representatives of "resistance factions"<sup>13</sup> and movements. Among the goals of the conference were formulating a comprehensive charter to lay the foundations for "the next stage in the struggle," declaring a general mobilization in Syria and beyond, unifying the "resistance forces" under a single leadership, and moving from "reactive to proactive resistance to the occupation's actions." Reportedly, the organization was working to expand activity cells in major cities, especially Damascus, to carry out special missions (Islamic Resistance Front Telegram channel, May 5–10, 2025).

► Abu-Jihad Ridha, the Resistance Front's general commander, said in an interview that the conference had been held in response to the exceptional circumstances in Syria. He claimed Syria was about to "erupt" because of its government's arbitrary actions, competition between the "occupation forces" over what remained of Syria's territory, factionalism and sectarianism, and an attempt to drag Syria into a civil war. He said the confrontation with President Ahmed al-Sharaa was "political and legal only," while "elements close to the Resistance Front"

<sup>13</sup> Terrorist organizations.

claimed that the organization's leadership viewed al-Sharaa as trying to prevent the partition of Syria, which was what kept the organization from initiating a military confrontation against him (*al-Nahar*, May 12, 2025).

► On July 8, 2025, the Front reported that the leadership had decided to establish a general command, dissolve the current political council, and give Dr. Tareq Hammad, the head of the political bureau, the task of establishing a new council. That was necessary because of the need to unify political, operational and communications efforts to make them more efficient and organized (Islamic Resistance Front, July 8, 2025).

► According to the organization's publications, the Resistance Front's leadership includes the following figures (Resistance Front Telegram channel, May 5–6, 2025, and July 7, 2025):<sup>14</sup>

◆ General commander: Abu-Jihad Ridha al-Hussein (also called Ridha Hussein). According to reports, Ridha's identity is unknown, but he was allegedly discharged from the Syrian army about 25 years ago with a junior military rank and was active in several Palestinian and Lebanese organizations, but left them in 2021 after formulating a different political and military vision (*al-Nahar*, May 12, 2025).



#### **Abu-Jihad Ridha (Resistance Front Telegram channel, August 2, 2025)**

- ◆ Deputy general commander: Mundhir Wannus.
- ◆ Chief of staff: Ahmed Jadallah.
- ◆ Head of the political bureau: Dr. Tareq Hammad.
- ◆ Head of the security-intelligence bureau: Abu-Mujahid.
- ◆ Head of the recruitment and organization department: Hisham Abu-Shaib.
- ◆ Head of the media and public relations department: Dr. Abbas al-Ahmad.
- ◆ Military spokesperson: Abu al-Qasim.

<sup>14</sup> The actual identity of most of the figures has not been verified.



**Abu al-Qasim (Resistance Front Telegram channel, June 8, 2025)**

- ◆ Head of the women's department: Batul Badr.
  - ◆ Head of the economy and consulting department: Dr. Jubran Salem.
  - ◆ Head of the planning department: Ali al-Ashkar.
  - ◆ Head of the diaspora unit (active in Russia): Malak al-Zahir.
- The organization also has four main command centers under the command of three senior commanders:
- ◆ South Syria: headed by Najhal Abu-al-Abbas.
  - ◆ The coastal areas and central Syria: headed by Mundhir Wanus.
  - ◆ Deir ez-Zor province: headed by Abu-Jawad.
- Since its founding, the Resistance Front has concluded alliances with several organizations (al-Nahar, May 12, 2025):
- ◆ Coastal Defense Forces, led by Miqdad Fathiha and focuses on the coastal area. Reportedly, the alliance has encountered certain difficulties in recent months.
  - ◆ Shadow Forces of the Spirit of Resistance, led by Dr. Abd al-Hamid al-Shamali and focused on east Syria. This alliance is unverified.
  - ◆ Lions' Den Battalions, led by Hisham Abu-Shaib and focuses on south Syria. According to the organization's statement of July 8, 2025, Abu-Shaib took on the role of head of the recruitment and organization department in the Resistance Front.
  - ◆ Syrian Popular Resistance, led by Mundhir Wannus (also appointed to a senior role in the Resistance Front). Ties between the organizations apparently began following its participation in the conference held in May 2025.
  - ◆ National Front for the Liberation of the Golan, active in south Syria. A joint operations room with the Resistance Front was announced on July 30, 2025, to deal with "the main challenges facing the state," given "an escalation of Zionist threats against south Syria."

The establishment of the operations room was reportedly intended to unify "the sincere efforts of all resistance factions"<sup>15</sup> within Syria by establishing a joint military operations room covering the entire Syrian geography, with the aim of confronting "the enemy" by all possible means (Resistance Front Telegram channel, July 30, 2025).

◆ Popular Front for the Liberation of the Sanjak of Iskenderun [Alexandria], an organization which supports the deposed regime of Bashar al-Assad and operates in northwestern Syria. A joint front was announced on August 4, 2025, whose goal was to liberate Syria and eradicate at the root "occupation, terrorism and treason" (Resistance Front Telegram channel, August 4, 2025).

► The Resistance Front also announced the establishment of an organization called Saraya al-Awfiya' (Battalions of the Loyal), uniting Sunnis who served in the Syrian army under the Assad regime. They include Sunni military personnel "loyal to the homeland and the people" from Aleppo, Hama and Homs, who banded together under the leadership of Abu Haidar al-Hashimi and under the flag of the Islamic Resistance Front in Syria. The new organization will work to liberate all of Syria from the grip of the "Turkish and Zionist occupation" (Resistance Front Telegram channel, August 12, 2025).

► According to the organization's statements and publications in the Arab media, joining the Resistance Front involves consultations and meetings, defining duties and rights, and ensuring adherence to the leadership hierarchy. Reportedly, although the organization had a decentralized leadership which grants its cells, spread across different areas, a certain degree of autonomy, the freedom remains within an agreed-upon framework and is subject to instructions, with the central command determining the areas in which independent decision-making on the ground is permitted during certain periods.

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<sup>15</sup> Terrorist organizations.



## The Organization's Involvement the "Resistance Axis"

► Since its founding, the Resistance Front has denied that it is subordinate to any state, organization or other entity, or that it receives funding from any external source, including Iran. However, the marked similarity between the Resistance Front's emblem and Hezbollah's logo indicates a possible direct connection between the organizations.



**Right: Logo of the Islamic Resistance Front in Syria (Resistance Front Telegram channel, March 18, 2025). Left: Hezbollah flag (Telegram channel of SIMIA, Hezbollah's social media monitoring unit, November 24, 2024)**

► However, according to the Resistance Front, "there is no alternative" to its presence in the "resistance axis," and that as long as Syria is an integral part of the axis, the organization will support and assist it in any future confrontation (Resistance Front Telegram channel, February 10, 2025). That was reflected in the Resistance Front's statements of support for the main components of the "axis," headed by Iran, Hezbollah, and the Palestinian organizations:

◆ On January 31, 2025, after Hamas officially confirmed the deaths of Muhammad Deif, commander of its military wing, and other Izz al-Din Brigades leaders, the Resistance Front sent its condolences to the Palestinian people in general and to Hamas and all Palestinian terrorist organizations in particular. The Front also praised former Hamas leader Yahya al-Sinwar, who was killed in September 2024, noting that operation al-Aqsa Flood [the October 7, 2023 Hamas terrorist attack and massacre] was a turning point in the confrontation with the "occupation." The announcement also stated that the blood of the leaders killed in "Palestine" had reached Lebanon, where it sacrificed "the most precious thing for the resisting peoples around the world," Hezbollah secretary-general Hassan Nasrallah. The announcement noted that the Resistance Front was "the continuation of the path to Jerusalem and an integral part of the armed resistance to the Zionist occupation," and it believed in the Palestinian cause and in its "right to freedom and independence" (Resistance Front Telegram channel, January 31, 2025).

◆According to an announcement published by the Resistance Front on the anniversary of "the blessed Iranian Islamic Revolution," they see themselves "as children of this revolution because it is a call to truth against falsehood and tyranny." They also pledged before Allah and before Iran's leader, Ali Khamenei, that they would continue along the path of Karbala: sacrifice, redemption and martyrdom against injustice, oppression, and corruption. The announcement said, "We will remain, as Syria has been, the most important part of the resistance axis until the liberation of all the lands that were seized; we will raise the banner of Islam and support the oppressed" (Resistance Front Telegram channel, February 10, 2025).

◆According to an announcement issued for the funeral of Hassan Nasrallah, "a day of immense sorrow is approaching," which would symbolize "the end of days with tears and the alienation of separation, the wails of the squares, the groans of the checkpoints, and the inspiration to the fire of resistance to the occupation." It continued, "this loss will turn into steadfastness on the battlefield and a commitment to continue the path of Islamic resistance to liberate our land and our honor" (Resistance Front Telegram channel, February 22, 2025).



**Picture published by the organization ahead of Nasrallah's funeral  
(Resistance Front Telegram channel, February 22, 2025)**

◆The organization published an announcement attributed to the Iranian army, according to which "the Israeli enemy has bared its fangs and wants to defile the land of Islam, thinking that the land of Muhammad has become old and rotten, but that is impossible!" To the Syrian people, the announcement said that "even if there are disagreement and difference, Iran extends to you a hand of support... and is ready to stand together as a solid structure, for the enemy is one... so set aside the hatreds of the



past and prepare to meet the enemies of Allah" (Resistance Front Telegram channel, March 2, 2025).



**An Iranian logo attached to an Iranian message of support for the "resistance movements" in Syria (Resistance Front Telegram channel, March 2, 2025)**

◆After it was reported that the security forces of the Syrian regime had arrested senior leaders of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) branch in the country, the Resistance Front issued a harsh condemnation, saying that the arrest of the Palestinian leaders by "what is called the 'de facto government' is a dangerous precedent and no less loathsome than the crimes of the occupation itself." The announcement stated that the regime in Damascus had "aligned itself with the occupation's agenda and its arms, becoming an instrument to suppress free people and distort the spirit of resistance," and that its actions constituted a "declaration of war on Palestine" (Resistance Front Telegram channel, April 23, 2025).

◆A similar protest was voiced by the Resistance Front regarding the arrest of Talal Naji, the secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC), by Syrian authorities in Damascus, and the closure of the organization's offices in Syria. The group attacked the "terrorist" Ahmad al-Sharaa and his "gang of criminals," accusing them of treason and of collaborating with the "enemy" (Resistance Front Telegram channel, May 3, 2025).

◆Following the beginning of the Israel-Iran War (June 13, 2025), the Resistance Front said the "Zionist aggression" against Iran marked a new chapter in the war being waged against all who oppose the "Zionist-American project" in the region and warned that "the crime will not pass without a response." The Front extended its "deep condolences and sincere blessings" to the Iranian republic, its leadership and the Iranian people for the deaths of senior officials in the Revolutionary Guards, the Iranian army, and the

Iranian nuclear program. It added that Iran was now paying the price for its support of "Palestine," Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and Yemen, and that the free people of the Arab nation had to understand that what came after these events would not resemble what came before, and that the only choice left was between "resistance" which would change the situation or surrender which would strip the nation of both its dignity and its lands (Resistance Front Telegram channel, June 13, 2025).

◆ Abu-Jihad Ridha, the leader of the Resistance Front, said in a recorded statement that the organization's operatives were monitoring the "dangerous Zionist escalation," which was expressed in "daily strikes in Gaza and the West Bank; systematic assassinations in the hearts of capitals and the south [Lebanon]; the siege of Yemen, preventing the entry of ships and strikes against ports and airports; the direct attack on the Islamic Republic of Iran." He warned that "aggression" against Tehran, the Dahiye al-Janoubia in Beirut, the Gaza Strip, Sana'a or Baghdad was "aggression against us," but even though the organization's operatives were part of the "resistance axis," they made their own decisions. He added that "Syria is not an arena, but a front, and the blood of Syrians is not a price in the regional bazaar." He also warned that "every Zionist, whether on our land or outside it, is a target," and that every raid by Israeli forces would be met with readiness from the organization's operatives (Resistance Front Telegram channel, June 24, 2025).

### **Doubts about the Organization's Existence**

► Despite the Resistance Front's claims of responsibility for alleged attacks and its attempts to present itself as an active body, senior regime officials and media commentators expressed doubts about whether the organization actually existed, and in their assessment it was propaganda activity by opponents of the regime, most likely led by Iran:

◆ An article on the Daraa24 website argued that despite the organization's "belligerent rhetoric," no real evidence had been presented that the Front had a presence on the ground. It was further stated that the group's Telegram channel published only written propaganda statements, using terminology from the lexicon of the "resistance axis" and a logo similar to that of Hezbollah. According to the article, although the organization's Telegram channel tried to present a picture of activity, there was no sign of its presence, and it looked more like a propaganda project without any indication of an active "resistance" organization behind it. It also said that its calls to "rise up" were an attempt

to stir up the youth and inflame public opinion in south Syria (Telegram channel Daraa24, June 4, 2025).

◆Anwar al-Zoubi, governor of Daraa province, claimed that the two organizations that took responsibility for the rocket fire at Israel on June 3, 2025, the Islamic Resistance Front and the Shaheed Muhammad al-Deif Brigades, did not exist in Daraa province and it had not been proven that rockets or missiles had been launched at Israel. However, he admitted that there were cells and organizations in Daraa province connected to Iran, with operatives of Syrian origin among them (al-Ekhbariya, June 4, 2025).

◆Reportedly, some Syrians claimed it was an "expansion of the resistance axis led by Iran," an attempt to pave the way for the return of Iranian influence in Syria. Others said the organization was "a tool in the hands of the transitional government," intended to bypass the risks involved in entering into direct confrontation with Israel, while demonstrating force as a means of pressure. In response, sources in the Resistance Front denied such speculations and claimed that the organization was not affiliated with Iran and was not subordinate to the al-Sharaa government or to any state or foreign actor (*al-Nahar*, August 3, 2025).

## Appendix A: Claiming Responsibility for Attacks on Israel

►The following are announcements of responsibility by the Islamic Resistance Front in Syria for military activity against IDF forces and Israeli territory. Some of the claims were not verified by the IDF spokesperson or by the Syrian regime:

◆The organization claimed it had intercepted an Israeli UAV in the rural area of Quneitra. It added it was continuing "intelligence and reconnaissance operations" against Israeli forces, which it claimed had begun "colonizing Syrian national territory" and the recruiting "mercenaries" from among Syrians (Resistance Front Telegram channel, January 24, 2025).

◆On January 31, 2025, the organization claimed that one of its groups carried out a "showcase improvised" operation against a "hostile Zionist force" in the village of Tranja in the Quneitra area, wounding several Israeli soldiers and damaging a military vehicle. It was also said that "the resistance does not wait for orders, but moves in blood and anger," and that the "occupation" would not enjoy stability on "this pure land" (Resistance Front Telegram channel, January 31, 2025). The IDF spokesperson stated

that shots were fired at the area of IDF activity in the buffer zone in Syrian territory on the Golan Heights, for the first time since the beginning of Israeli activity in the area. IDF soldiers returned fire and there were no casualties (IDF spokesperson, January 31, 2025).

◆ On February 19, 2025, the organization announced its first fatalities following an exchange of fire with IDF forces. However, it was not stated when the exchange occurred and no information about this incident was published in other sources (Resistance Front Telegram channel, February 19, 2025).

◆ On March 7, 2025, the organization claimed responsibility for an attack on a force of the "Zionist forces" that had penetrated Tulul al-Humur in the rural Quneitra area. Allegedly there were losses among the Israeli forces and that the "resistance" fighters retreated under "the protection of Allah" (Resistance Front Telegram channel, March 7, 2025).

◆ On March 25, 2025, several armed terrorists shot at IDF forces in south Syria. The forces returned fire and the terrorists were attacked from the air (IDF spokesperson, March 25, 2025). According to the investigation, between five to eight gunmen had positioned themselves on the outskirts of the village of Koayiah and shot at IDF soldiers from a distance of about 300 meters. The soldiers returned fire with the assistance of mortar shells, tanks and an Israeli UAV, eliminating the gunmen (Ynet, March 26, 2025). The Resistance Front announced that four of its fighters were killed while fighting the "Zionist occupation" in the village of Koayiah in "occupied" south Syria. The organization called for resistance against the "occupier" and its uprooting from Syrian land (Resistance Front Telegram channel, March 25, 2025).

◆ On the night between April 2, 2025, IDF forces operated near the town of Tasil in Daraa province in south Syria. They confiscated weapons and destroyed terrorist facilities. Armed terrorists shot at IDF forces, who returned fire from the ground and air and eliminated several gunmen. There were no casualties among IDF forces (IDF spokesperson, April 3, 2025). The Resistance Front stated that its operatives participated in clashes with IDF forces on the Nawa–Tasil road in Daraa province and claimed they had intercepted an Israeli UAV (Resistance Front Telegram channel, April 3, 2025).

◆ On June 3, 2025, two rockets were fired at Israel from Syrian territory into Israel and fell in open areas (IDF spokesperson, June 3, 2025). A man named Muhammad Mualdi, represented as the head of the political bureau of the Resistance Front, and Abu al-

Qasim, represented as the organization's spokesperson, announced that the Resistance Front was responsible for the rocket fire. Muhammad Mualdi, identifying himself as head of the political bureau of the Resistance Front, said the rocket fire was a message to the "status quo government" which granted legitimacy to the "occupation." He added that the rocket fire was also intended to tell "enemy" that there was a free people in Syria, who were the majority standing firm in Syria and the Front represented them. He said "our message to the enemy is that we are on the ground and this is only the beginning, because we are preparing for the great campaign" (al-Mayadeen, June 4, 2025). Abu al-Qasim, represented as Resistance Front spokesperson, told the "Zionist enemy and its supporters, the Turks, Americans and others, sons of monkeys and pigs," that "we were never defeated. If governments wanted to normalize relations with you through direct talks or through mediators, then that is a group that lost its way. We will not waste words. Talking to you is a waste of time. We say to you clearly, you entered our land walking on your feet and you will be taken out of it as body parts, if your body parts are even found. Whoever goes against us is buried without shrouds. That is Allah's promise" (Resistance Front Telegram channel, June 4, 2025).

◆ On June 9, it was reported that on two consecutive nights, "resistance fighters" riding motorcycles shot at IDF forces stationed on the outskirts of the village of Ma'ariya in the western rural area of Daraa (Quds News Agency X account, June 9, 2025). Abu al-Qasim, represented as Resistance Front spokesperson, claimed responsibility for the gunfire and warned that they would not allow IDF forces to operate freely in south Syria. He threatened that "airstrikes, infiltrations, or assassinations will be answered with a direct response... with fire in the place where you least expect it" (Resistance Front Telegram channel, June 9, 2025).