

Video: Infighting Among Idlib Al Qaeda Radicals Resumes with Renewed Energy

By [South Front](#)

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Late on June 23, the Israeli Air Force conducted airstrikes on alleged Iranian-linked targets near al-Sukhna and Kabajab in central Syria and near Tel Al-Sahn in the countryside of as-Suwayda in southern Syria. A second wave of Israeli strikes early on June 24 targeted Salamyieh and al-Sabboura in the province of Hama. Syrian state media denied that the strikes hit Iranian targets saying that 2 soldiers were killed, 4 others injured and some material damage was caused by the attack. As was expected the airstrikes took place just a few days after Hezbollah-affiliated media had released a video with threats to strike targets inside Israel in the event of an escalation.

Since June 23 intense fighting has been ongoing in the countryside of Idlib and the southern part of the province between Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (formerly the Syrian branch of al-Qaeda) and the recently formed coalition of al-Qaeda-linked groups, Fa Ithbatu.

The Idlib central prison area, the village of Arab Said, and the towns of Barisha, Sarmada and Ariha were the main focal points of the confrontation. According to pro-militant sources, the fighting broke out as a result of recent tensions caused by the arrests of some members of Fa Ithbatu by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham security forces. From demands to release its members, Fa Ithbatu forces moved to a direct confrontation with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. However, as of the morning of June 24th, they had not yet achieved any major successes in these efforts.

[https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_24_06_20\(eng\)re.mp4](https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/IMR_24_06_20(eng)re.mp4)

Simultaneously, tensions grew between Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and another al-Qaeda-linked group, the Turkistan Islamic Party, in the town of Jisr al-Shughur. Turkistan Islamic Party members reportedly surrounded a local HQ of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham.

Fa Ithbatu and the Turkistan Islamic Party are apparently very unhappy with the recent actions of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, which had indirectly supported the implementation of the Turkish-Russian de-escalation agreement on southern Idlib and pressured other al-Qaeda-linked groups in the area to gain more support from Turkey.

While the close cooperation with Turkey allows Hayat Tahrir al-Sham to increase its military and financial capabilities, the implementation of the de-escalation deal poses a direct threat to interests of smaller radical groups such the ones from Fa Ithbatu. Thus, there is a clear conflict of interest that may yet turn into a full-scale military confrontation.

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