

Islamists gaining ground in Syria conflict

The ongoing civil war in Syria is attracting a growing number of Islamists, with al-Qaeda and ultra-conservative Sunni Salafi fighters among the rebels seeking to overthrow the Assad regime

1 Suqour al-Sham

Brigade operates under secular **Free Syrian Army** (FSA) but advocates Islamist agenda. Active in Idlib and Aleppo provinces



2 Liwaa al-Umma

Mixture of Syrian and foreign fighters under command of FSA. Based in Maarat al-Numaan in Idlib province



3 Ahrar al-Sham: Loose collection of Islamist and Salafist units cooperating with FSA. Active across northern Syria



4 Jabhat al-Nusra: Syrian offshoot of al-Qaeda, branded terrorist organisation by United States. Active across Syria



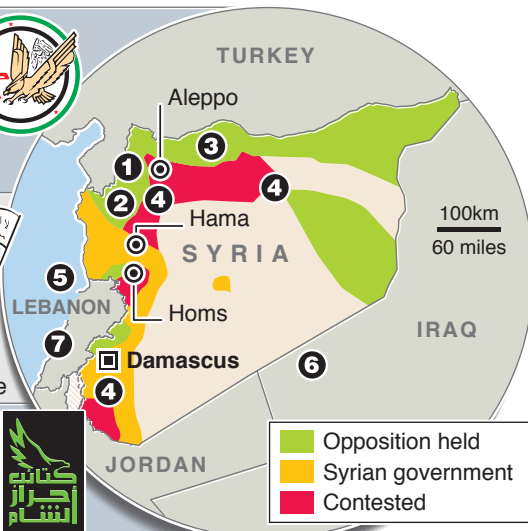
5 Fatah al-Islam: Al-Qaeda-linked Sunni fundamentalist terror group based in Lebanon and active across Middle East



6 Al-Qaeda in Iraq: Insurgent group increasing in strength in Iraq's western desert. Close ties to Jabhat al-Nusra



7 Abdullah Azzam Brigades: Offshoot of al-Qaeda based in Lebanon and Arabian Peninsula. Group has not claimed responsibility for any major attacks in Syria but is active in uprising



Jabhat al-Nusra is regarded as the most effective combat force amongst Syria's rebels and may account for a quarter of opposition fighters

