

THE FIGHT FOR CONTROL WITHIN THE SYRIAN OPPOSITION

A comprehensive timeline of the clashes and cooperation of opposition powerbrokers in the Syrian Civil War between July 2014 and December 2016

- assassination
- clash
- merger
- defection
- ceasefire
- creation of a group
- cooperation

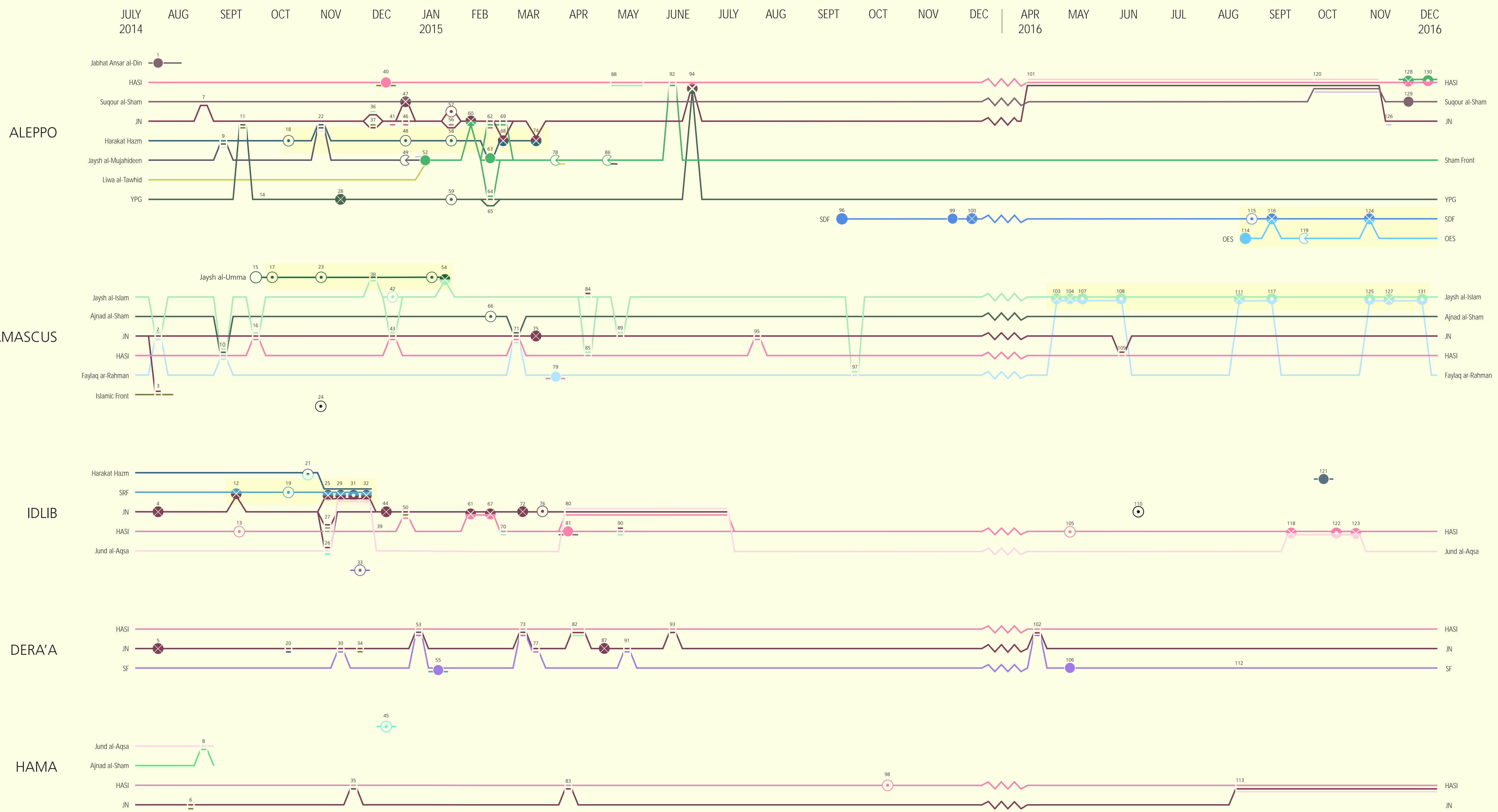
HARD-LINE ISLAMISTS



MODERATES



U.S. BACKED MODERATES



Events compiled by Author from Institute for the Study of War Syria Updates and Syria Situation Reports between July 2014 and December 2016

1. Jaysh al-Mujahidin wal-Ansar, Katibat al Khadra, Harakat Sham al-Islam, and Sajral-Sham merged into Jabhat Ansar al-Din.
2. Fayaq ar-Rahman, Jaysh al-Islam and JN cooperated against the regime. JN launched suicide attack. Jaysh al-Islam launched a follow up offensive to block regime supply lines to the Damascus International Airport.
3. JN and the Islamic Front gained in Deir Attiyah against Hezbollah.
4. JN attacked the bases of FSA linked groups, including Darkoush, Izmarin, Salqin, and Harem.
5. JN attacked the bases of the al-Haramayn Brigade and Omar al-Mokhtar Battalion.
6. JN and Islamic Front captured the town of al-Shahya.
7. JN and Suqour al-Sham lost Akhtarin, Dabiq to ISIS, allowing ISIS to connect east Aleppo.
8. Jund al-Aqsa and Ajnad al-Sham captured the town of Khattab and a nearby regime weapons depot.
9. Harakat Hazm, Jaysh al-Mujahideen, Nour al-Din al-Zenki Movement announced "Nahrwan al-Sham" to fight ISIS in Aleppo.
10. Announced a unified military command for Eastern Ghouta, led by Jaysh al-Islam
11. Islamic Front, YPG, and JN clashed with ISIS.
12. Clashes occurred between JN and local part of SRF in Hasfarjah. After a plea by SRF leader Jamal Ma'arouf for Sharia Court Mediation, JN agreed to a truce.
13. September 9, 2014, explosion at HASI Shura Council meeting killed HASI leader Hassan Aboud and at least 20 senior members including the group's military commander Abu Talha.
14. September 10, YPG announced Euphrates Volcano Operations Room to fight ISIS
15. Jaysh al-Umma was created.
16. JN, Jaysh al-Islam, and HASI announced Operation "Piercing Meteor" to break siege on Southern Damascus.
17. Two assassination attempts of Jaysh al-Umma commanders occurred, one was successful.
18. October 1, 2014, an assassination attempt targeted Harakat Hazm leader Amr Moussa.
19. October 1, 2014, VBIED targeted SRF headquarter, killing seven.
20. October 2, SRF and JN captured Tel al-Hara during a rebel offensive that included the use of U.S. TOW missiles.
21. VBIED detonation targeted the joint headquarters of Harakat al-Hazm and Division 13, killing 8.
22. JN, Harakat Hazm, Islamic Front, Jaysh al-Mujahidin, Jabhat Ansar al-Din, and Harakat Nour al-Din al-Zenki signed local truce to focus efforts on fighting regime.
23. Attempted assassination of Jaysh al-Umma commander Abu Subhi Tahli, killing son and one of his companions.
24. Assassination of fighters of Jaysh al-Ababil.
25. Clashes occur between SRF and JN, after SRF tried to detain JN fighters accused of looting and attacking civilians, per Sharia court order. JN forced SRF out of several village. Harakat Hazm established checkpoints to separate JN and SRF, but JN and Harakat Hazm have clashed at these checkpoints as a result.
26. JN, Jund al-Aqsa, Hamza Division, and Suqour al-Ghab launched four suicide operations against regime checkpoints.
27. JN, Sham Legion, and HASI formed an Islamic body issued regulations for media activities, banning filming of airstrikes for security purposes.
28. FSA left Aleppo after disputes with YPG over access to US weapons and equipment.
29. JN and Jund al-Aqsa captured an additional 8 villages, including SRF stronghold of Deir Sunbul and the Harakat Hazm stronghold of Khan Sibel, after surrender of local forces. Dozens of SRF fighters defected to JN and Jund al-Aqsa. SRF commander Jamal Maarouf fled to Turkey.
30. JN and the Southern Front announced the battle of "Edkholo Alayhem al-Bab" to repel the regime.
31. November 1, 2014, a joint statement of JN and Jund al-Aqsa declared ceasefire after Sharia court arbitration and prisoner exchange.
32. JN and Jund al-Aqsa cancelled mediation with SRF, arrested SRF fighters from a brigade, continuing consolidation of control.
33. IED detonated in Fursan al-Haq headquarters, unknown gunmen assassinated rebel commander of Fursan al-Haq.
34. JN, Islamic Front, and miscellaneous FSA announced offensives to sever regime supply line into Dera'a City, and placed regime military base Brigade 82 under siege.
35. HASI and JN formed joint operations room to defend Khan Shaykoun and liberate More from regime.
36. JN and Jaysh al-Islam captured 7 villages during an offensive targeting the al-Safira Defense Forces complex.
37. JN, IF, and FSA affiliates launched a three-pronged offensive on the besieged towns of Nubi and Zahra against the regime.
38. Jaysh al-Umma joined Eastern Ghouta Unified Military Command.
39. FSA-affiliates and HASI coordinated the defense of Ma'arrat al-Nu'man.
40. Two IF groups merged with HASI, reconstituting HASI after loss of leadership.
41. Jabhat Ansar al-Din and JN advanced against the regime.
42. Jaysh al-Islam commander was assassinated by car bomb.
43. JN, HASI, and Jaysh al-Islam cooperated to form a unified leadership council, a joint operations room, and a Sharia court.
44. JN captured 15 villages from FSA affiliates, executing some FSA fighters.
45. Gunmen assassinated rebel brigade associated with US TOW recipient Suqour al-Ghab.
46. JN and Ansar al-Din clashed with the regime, losing al-Mallah to the regime and Hezbollah.
47. Rebel group and JN attacked Suqour al-Sham, forcing Suqour al-Sham to withdraw.
48. A field commander for US TOW recipient Harakat Hazm was seriously injured after assassination attempt through car bomb.
49. 3 rebel brigades defected and formed independent entity from Jaysh al-Mujahideen.
50. HASI, JN, and the Islamic Front captured Wadi al-Deif and al-Hamidiyah military bases, and regime checkpoints. accomplished what a rebel siege had failed to do over the past two years. JN released video of fighters using the US TOW missiles it had captured from the SRF.
51. JN captured a Harakat Hazm headquarters after accusing Harakat Hazm of being a Western client group.
52. 5 major military factions formed joint military command "Sham Front" also known as Levant Front or Jabhat al-Shamiya, led by Liwa al-Tawhid commander Abdul-Aziz al-Salama, also general commander for IF in Aleppo province.
53. JN, HASI, and the Southern Front captured regime Brigade 82 base near Sheikh Mission after announcement of three new named operations.
54. On January 3, 2015, Jaysh al-Islam assassinated two Jaysh al-Umma leaders. Days later, Jaysh al-Islam captured dozens of Jaysh al-Umma positions, arrested group's leaders in an alleged "anti-corruption campaign", forced several hundred Jaysh al-Umma fighters to surrender.
55. January 2, SRF, Hamza Brigades, and First Artillery Regiment announced merger as the FSA "First Army", as part of the Southern Front.
56. JN and Ansar al-Din renewed offensive against Nebul and Zahra.
57. Two VBIEDS and one IED targeted JN checkpoint, killing thirteen.
58. IED killed Harakat Hazm commander.
59. A VBIED targeted YPG checkpoint, killing five.
60. JN and Sham Front clashed after arrest of Sham Front fighter at JN checkpoint.
61. HASI seized JN headquarters in the town of Shinan, arresting local JN emir and confiscating weapons.
62. JN, Ansar al-Din, and Sham Front destroyed the Air Force Intelligence Branch with a tunnel bomb.
63. Western-backed Harakat Hazm formally joined Sham Front coalition, to envelop Harakat Hazm under the protection of Sham Front from Jabhat al-Nusra.
64. YPG and Sham Front formed an alliance agreeing to unify judicial systems and coordinate security.
65. YPG and FSA affiliates in the Euphrates Volcano Operations Room captured Qara Qoqaz bridge from ISIS.
66. Ajnad al-Sham accused JN of assassinating two of its commanders.
67. JN fighters attacked HASI members trying to prevent JN checkpoint in Idlib countryside, killing an HASI Shari'a official and injuring others. JN and HASI agreed to dismantle check points and form a judicial commission to investigate.
68. JN captured a Harakat Hazm headquarters after accusing Harakat Hazm of being a western client group. JN attacked Harakat Hazm headquarters near Sheikh Ali, arresting two Hazm fighters.
69. JN and Sham Front lost villages to regime and counterattacked.
70. Jaysh al-Islam and HASI announced the "Battle to Free Fu'ah."
71. Joint operation between JN and Eastern Ghouta Unified Military Command targeted ISISmembers in Kafr Batna, arresting 25 and killing two.
72. JN captured the headquarters of the FSA-affiliated 7th Brigade.
73. JN, HASI, and Southern Front announced "The Battle of Unification of the Flag" to recapture villages from the regime.
74. Harakat Hazm completely dissolved after JN captured the group's final remaining militarybase. Lack of rebel outcry showcased JN authority.
75. JN clashed with local rebels and civilians in Babilla and Beit Sahem after JN opened fire on civilians protesting JN presence.
76. Explosion targeted meeting of JN senior officials, killing JN General Military Commander Abu Human al-Shamli and possibly wounding JN leader Abu Mohammed al-Joulani. US coalition airstrikes targeted JN headquarters in Atmeh.
77. JN sent reinforcements to JN and Southern Front rebels in response to request by Southern Front.
78. Liwa al-Tawhid defected from Sham Front, funded by Turkey, created First Regiment.
79. Fayaq ar-Rahman absorbed local HASI affiliate to increase coordination, after Eastern Ghouta Unified Command prohibition (fears of new ISIS affiliates forming).
80. HASI, JN, and Jund al-Aqsa announced joint offensive to seize regime-held Idlib city. Coordinated through "Jaysh al-Fatah operations room." Jaysh al-Fatah successfully captured Idlib from the regime.
81. HASI absorbed Suqour al-Sham, formed a central force under the "Suqour al-Sham Battalions."
82. JN, HASI, Jaysh al-Islam, and Southern Front affiliates captured Busra al-Sham.
83. JN and HASI raided a regime air defense base and two cities.
84. JN stopped Jaysh al-Islam from sending reinforcements into Yarmouk Refugee Camp because of its association with Liwa Sham al-Rasoul who ousted JN from Beit Sahem in March 2015.
85. HASI and Jaysh al-Islam announced "The Victory for the People of the Camp to fight ISIS.
86. The Sham Front dissolved into constituent groups operating under own banners, agreeing to maintain cooperation. Follows defection from Liwa al-Tawhid in March to form a group called the First Regiment, possibly backed by Turkey.
87. JN arrested 2 fighters from Liwa Tahwid al-Janoub on charges of pledging allegiance to ISIS, sparking clashes.
88. HASI and Jaysh al-Islam and five others announced the joint operation room "Conquest of Aleppo" after dissolution of the Sham Front.
89. JN and Jaysh al-Islam lost Jabal al-Muhassa to ISIS, which cuts a strategic rebel supply group.
90. JN, HASI, and Jaysh al-Islam announced the formation of the "Battle of Victory" Operations Room, to target Isr al-Shughour.
91. Regime was gaining Busra al-Hajar, but reinforcements from the Southern Front and JN opposition groups forced the regime to retreat.
92. FSA-affiliated and Islamist rebel factions including the Sham Front and HASI conducted an operation which severed supply line connecting regime positions in western Aleppo with the Nayrab Airbase.
93. JN and HASI captured territory from Lisa Shuhada al-Yarmouk.
94. Labbayki Ya Ukhtah Operations Room members, including HASI and JN, clashed with YPG after accusing YPG of failing to abide by a previous agreement for free rebel transit. Clashes ended after YPG agreed to implement previous agreement.
95. JN and HASI captured 2 regime and Hezbollah positions to try to break the siege on Zabadani.
96. Formation of the SDF.
97. Jaysh al-Islam and Fayaq ar-Rahman made gains in joint offensive "God prevails Campaign" to take military suburb of Assad that was the source of bombardments of Douma.
98. Unknown assailants set up a fake checkpoint and assassinated 3 HASI commanders, including the group's second in command.
99. 15 Arab, FSA, and Kurdish Brigades joined the SDF.
100. Clashes occurred between US-Supported SDF and a collection of FSA-affiliated and Islamist rebels, because SDF attempted to expand its area of control while others like Fatah Halab attempted to preserve their supply routes.
101. Jaysh al-Fatah Operations room continued to have success; they captured Khan Touman from regime.
102. JN, HASI, and Southern Front continued clashes with IS alleged affiliates Liwa Shuhada al-Yarmouk and Harakat al-Muthanna.
103. Rivalry between Islamist rebel factions when Jaysh al-Islam raided the military headquarters of Fayaq ar-Rahman, reflecting mounting tensions between the two after the merger of Ajnad al-Sham with Fayaq ar-Rahman in Feb 2016. Fayaq ar-Rahman previously accused Jaysh al-Islam of assassination attempts.
104. Fighters from Fayaq ar-Rahman and Jaysh al-Fustat raided homes and headquarters affiliated with Jaysh al-Islam, sparking violent clashes that killed at least 13 individuals.
105. Assassinations targeted senior Ahrar a-Sham figures, killed high-ranking HASI commander Majeed Hussein a-Sadeq, commander Sa'ud al-Assaf.
106. 3 FSA-affiliated factions merged to form the "Division of Decisiveness."
107. Jaysh al-Islam and Fayaq ar-Rahman reach ceasefire to end infighting, agreed to form a council of six arbiters to mediate. Jaysh al-Islam also withdrew from the town of Mesraba as part of the deal.
108. Jaysh al-Islam and Fayaq ar-Rahman concluded ceasefire agreement, deal followed negotiations mediated by the HNC head Riyad Hjab in Qatar.
109. JN and HASI captured Dirkhabiya in operation "Roar of the Freedom to Break the Siege", reopening key supply routes to besieged opposition-held places in Western Ghouta.
110. Suicide bombing targeted opposition headquarters of Kata'ib al-Faruq, killing at least 5 opposition fighters and wounding at least 15 others.
111. Clashes occurred between Fayaq ar-Rahman and Jaysh al-Islam.
112. Covert MOC (U.S.-backed) demanded that SF refrain from launching an offensive against a regime-held town of Sheikh Miskeen, according to local activists. In return for deal, the MOC provided monthly salaries to opposition fighters.
113. Jund al-Aqsa-led operation, captured Ma'an and Tulaysiyah and 6 other villages from regime.
114. Turkey formed Operation Euphrates Shield, with the purpose of combatting ISIS while curbing the growth of the Kurdish YPG.
115. SDF formed "Jarabulus Military Council" warned Turkey of drastic consequences for their aggressive acts in Northern Aleppo Province. When the head of council was assassinated less than four hours after announcement, activists blamed Turkey.
116. August 27-29, OES clashed with SDF after OES seized over 20 villages from SDF.
117. Jaysh al-Islam expressed conditional support for formation of Unified Military Operations Room as proposed by rival Fayaq ar-Rahman, if Fayaq ar-Rahman transferred heavy weapons to fronts held by Jaysh al-Islam and intensified its own operations against the regime.
118. Clashes after Jund al-Aqsa allegedly kidnapped 2 HASI fighters. HASI released statement accusing Jund al-Aqsa of ties to ISIS.
119. Both Ahrar a-Sharqiya and Lisa Suqour al-Jabal withdrew from Operation Euphrates Shield.
120. Harakat Nour al-Din al-Zenki and Suqour al-Sham joined the Jaysh al-Fatah Operations Room.
121. Division 13, Northern Division, and Suqour al-Jabal merged under the name Free Idlib Army. All are FSA-affiliates that were also US backed TOW anti-tank missile recipients.
122. Jund al-Aqsa pledged allegiance on Oct 9 to Jabhat Fatah a-Sham to end clashes Oct 9. Jabhat Fatah a-Sham and HASI signed agreement Oct 10 to halt infighting, release prisoners on both sides, form a judicial council to mediate the dispute, and prohibit the reformation of Jund al-Aqsa in the future.
123. Continued clashes between HASI and Jund al-Aqsa reported in Idlib despite agreement, including SVBIED attack on HASI checkpoint.
124. Opposition groups backed by Turkey in OES clashed with SDF near Azaz and Tel Rifaat.
125. Jaysh al-Islam expressed willingness to form a joint military operations room after emergency meeting between senior leaders of the two. Fayaq ar-Rahman said it would remove all of its roadblocks.
126. Harakat Nour a-Din al-Zenki and Jabhat Fatah a-Sham clashed with Tagamu Fastaqim Kama Umirt after accusing the group of several alleged abuses, including assassination of a commander in another group.
127. Negotiations on a joint opposition operations room broke down on Oct 31 when Fayaq ar-Rahman prevented a delegation room Jaysh al-Islam to attend a meeting to discuss its creation.
128. Opposition infighting, HASI seized several checkpoints from the Sham Front, accused them of selling weapons to YPG. Agreed to formation of "reconciliation committee".
129. FSA affiliates announced merger with Harakat Nour al-Din al-Zenki.
130. HASI and the Sham Front formed Jaysh Halab a coordinating body to unite efforts to lift the pro-regime siege on opposition-held districts.
131. Fayaq ar-Rahman and Jaysh al-Islam reached a deal to end clashes that stipulated that the 2 groups must disassemble checkpoints. This blocked ground lines of communication between opposition held parts of Eastern Ghouta amidst gains by pro-regime forces.