

# Salafi Jihadists

## Who:

- Salafi jihadists see modernity as corrupt and seek to recreate the time of the Prophet Muhammad, believing war to be the only way of achieving this goal



## Overview:

- **Where:** Small geographical pockets, sometimes single neighborhoods of a city, throughout the country. Their members tend to be more rural than urban
- **How Many:** Approximately 10,000 to 20,000 Syrians and 1,000 to 3,000 foreigners

## Priorities:

- To end the Assad regime and to transform Syria into an orthodox Sunni Islamic state. Salafi jihadists often claim responsibility for car bombings and suicide attacks on combatants and non-combatants alike. They collaborate with the Free Syrian Army and moderate Islamist rebels, but do not share their vision of a democratic post-Assad Syria

## Support:

- Mainly transnational underground networks; they have no state sponsors, as they reject the legitimacy of all states, seeing religious states like the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as apostates

## Political Associations:

- There are rumors that many members are foreign veterans of conflicts in Libya, Iraq, and Afghanistan. They hold in high regard figures such as Ayman Al-Zuwahiri, acting leader of Al-Qaeda

## Criticisms:

- Salafi jihadists are condemned as terrorists by state actors in this conflict; non-state actors also criticize these groups for being intolerant of others' civil rights and for committing abuses of human rights in areas under their control