

New Syrian Administration Appoints Uyghur Fighters to Military Leadership

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By Uyghur Times Staff

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Uyghur militant Abdulaziz Dawood Khudaberdi, also known as Zahid, and the commander of the Turkistan Islamic Party’s (TIP) forces in Syria, has been appointed as a brigadier-general, according to a TIP statement. The announcement was also confirmed by a Syrian military source.

The TIP statement, published on its website, also revealed that two other Uyghur fighters, Mawlan Tursun Abdussamad and Abdulsalam Yasin Ahmad, were promoted to the rank of colonel. The statement congratulated the appointees and the Uyghur community on this development.

The sources said that out of a total of almost 50 military roles announced by the Defense Ministry on Sunday, at least six had gone to foreigners.[Ahmed al-Sharaa \(https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/abu-mohammed-al-golani-former-al-qaeda-chief-who-is-syrias-leading-rebel-2024-12-05/\)](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/abu-mohammed-al-golani-former-al-qaeda-chief-who-is-syrias-leading-rebel-2024-12-05/), the HTS-leader-turned de facto ruler of Syria, has purged dozens of foreign jihadi fighters as part of a campaign to Syrianise and moderate his group. In [remarks broadcast \(https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/syrias-de-facto-leader-says-holding-elections-could-take-up-four-years-2024-12-29/\)](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/syrias-de-facto-leader-says-holding-elections-could-take-up-four-years-2024-12-29/) on Sunday, Sharaa said the new Syria “cannot be run by the mentality of groups and militias”.The Defence Ministry on Sunday announced 49 appointments to the army that included leaders of key Syrian armed factions.

While the names were included in Sunday’s Defence Ministry announcement, the nationalities of the appointees were not specified.

The Turkistan Islamic Party, believed to have hundreds of fighters in Syria, has long declared its goal of establishing an Islamic State in parts of China and Central Asia, regions with significant Uyghur populations.

Meanwhile, rights groups accuse Beijing of committing genocide and widespread human rights abuses against Uyghurs, including the use of forced labor in internment camps. Beijing denies these accusations, claiming its actions are part of counter-terrorism efforts.

“The East Turkestan Islamic Movement is a terrorist organization listed by the UN Security Council,” [said Mao Ning \(https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-835508\)](https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-835508), a spokesperson for China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at a press conference on Tuesday. Using China’s term for TIP, she added, “The international community should fully recognize the violent nature of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement and resolutely crack down on it.”

China has labeled TIP a terrorist group and has accused it of plotting attacks on Chinese interests abroad. Beijing claims TIP poses a grave threat to China’s security and has emphasized that countering the group is a “core concern” of its counter-terrorism strategy.

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On social media, while approaching the news with caution, many Uyghurs have expressed optimism, viewing it as a potential step toward fostering renewed hope in their ongoing struggle for freedom.

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