

Bayraq Quwat al-Fahad: Interview

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The primarily Druze province of Suwayda' contains a number of factions that are responsible for internal security. The main ideological division is between loyalists to the Syrian government (that is, politically supportive of it) and a 'third-way' trend. The 'third-way' trend is not against the Syrian state but affirms that fighting should be strictly defensive in nature and limited to defending the province (i.e. Jabal al-Arab/Jabal al-Druze) against external attacks. For this reason it opposes conscription into the Syrian armed forces, arguing that service should be a matter of choice.

The main figure of the 'third-way' trend was Sheikh Waheed al-Bal'ous (Abu Fahad), who was assassinated in 2015. He was the founder of the Rijal al-Karama Movement that still exists today. There are however other factions that profess their support for him and his legacy but are independent of the Rijal al-Karama Movement. One of those factions is Bayraq Quwat al-Fahad.

To learn more about Bayraq Quwat al-Fahad, I conducted an interview with the group's media on 14 October 2019 CE. The interview is slightly edited and condensed for clarity. Any parenthetical insertions in square brackets are my own.



Q: When was Bayraq Quwat al-Fahad formed?

A: Bayraq Quwat al-Fahad was formed from the beginning of the events that occurred in Syria and it was announced officially two years ago.

Q: And the Bayraq is currently affiliated to an official side like Harakat Rijal al-Karama?

A: No.

Q: So independent currently.

A: Yes this is so, and we are still preserving the principles of our people and preserving the dignity of our people.

Q: In which villages do you operate currently?

A: In 8 villages approximately. And within the city.

Q: Has the Bayraq participated in any battles?

A: Sure. In the battle of 25 July: this was the most important battle at the time of the expulsion of Da'esh [Islamic State] from the eastern flank. And it participated in the Tha'ala battle and in all the events that occurred in the Mountain [Jabal al-Arab/Jabal al-Druze]. And any attack on the Mountain that occurs, we are present. And we have offered martyrs.

Q: How do you assess the security situation in Suwayda' today?

A: The security situation: some brigands still remain, causing a problem every so often.

Q: Can we say the security situation has improved recently?

A: Yes of course. It has improved. As for the situation in general, there is still terror or fear from anything in the form of danger to the province,

Q: What are the reasons for the improvement in your opinion?

A: The improvement is due to the factions present, which have been able to spread security, of course with the participation and awareness of people in the province.

Q: But some of the people say that the multiplicity of factions is a problem. What do you think of this talk?

A: There are factions that have no presence or work except in talk and they are the factions that are fragmenting.

Q: How is the services and economic situation in Suwayda' currently in your opinion?

A: Intolerable: very bad.