

The Fifth Corps

Would mobilizing civilians rescue the weak army?



Analytical
report





جسور للدراسات
JUSOOR for STUDIES

"Jusoor for Studies" Center is an independent institution specialized in disseminating information, conducting studies and research concerned with political, social, economic, and legal affairs in the Middle East with a special focus on Syrian affairs. Jusoor extends bridges for authorities and decisions makers in different state specializations and development sectors. Jusoor aims to help them to make balanced decisions regarding issues in the region by providing them with data and detailed realistic scientific reports.

All Rights Reserved
Jusoor for Studies
2016 ©

TURKEY - GAZIANTEP
info@jusoor.co
www.jusoor.co

Index

Introduction.....	3
Formation of The Fifth corps.....	4
Calling and promoting for the corps	5
Causes of formation	6
Who supported the formation of the corps?	7
No.1: letter of Lattakia province to the public authorities in the city.	8
Supplement 2: letter of the Ministry of Endowments to imams and mosque preachers in Damascus countryside.....	9
Supplement 3: text messages (SMS) to promote the corps	10

Introduction

Eight days after the first Russian air strike in Syria, the formation of the fourth corps- storming) was announced, and formed by the elite forces of army which good at guerrilla warfare skills and street fighting.

its operations were limited later in western countryside of Homs and Hama towards the plain of al-Ghab.

Next months of formation the corps, the role of it became greater than the role of national defense militias which was founded in 2012 under supervision of Iran, to be similar in its structure and mechanism of work to the popular mobilization militias that was founded in Iraq under Iranian supervision.

It Believed That Gen. Husain Hamdani who was killed near Aleppo in October 2015, was supervised the formation of national defense militia¹.

Formation of the fourth corps- storming helped to unify the military leadership of forces in the middle area, which increased the effectiveness of air operations carried out by Russia, the ground forces became more disciplined under the commands of the military institution, especially that the Russian intervention was after the exhaustion of this institution and the threats on its organizational structure.

After 14 months of forming the forth corps, the fifth corps was established, which was different in term of the shape, and its tasks were unknown, to expand the corps of Syrian army and raise several questions, which this report tries to answer.

¹ National defense militia threatened by Russian efforts to solve it and replacing it by the the fourth corps. "Syrian Net, 1-12-2015, <https://goo.gl/AD8u1z>

Formation of The Fifth corps

The general command of Syrian regime's army announced a videotaped statement on November 22nd, 2016 to declare the formation of the fifth corps, to work alongside with the rest of " armed forces formations and allied forces to restore security and stability to the entire Syrian territory.

The statement called all civilians who wish to participate in completion the final victory over terrorism to review the centers of receptions in the provinces".

The statement identified the conditions to join the corps, which are to be:

- 1- a volunteer
- 2- male
- 3- completed 18 years old.
- 4- Noncommittal to the military serve or fugitive from the service.
- 5- in a good health

The statement also added the ability to accept those who served the military from all ranks) officers, assistant officers and individuals) who want to work with the state under a renewable contract for a year according to the wish of the volunteer (the approval of its work is required).

The workers of the state (in addition to their salaries of from the corps) will have all rights and benefits that they receive in their work places such as (salary, bounces, promotions, incentives, etc.)

The statement identified the centers to receive those who joined the corps in the leadership of southern area in Damascus, the tenth division in Qatana, the leadership center in Homs and Hama, the college of administration affairs in Mesyaf, the leadership of north area in Aleppo, the leadership of the fifth division in Deraa and the leadership of the fifteenth division in Swaydaa.

The corps will take into account the scientific and military certificates for who will join, where the corps will receive doctors, engineers and journalist who will classified according to their specialties, and the service

will be under a contract for a year and will renew with approval of the both parties.

It believed that the corps will include finally about 120-150 thousand members, and will divided into two military division or more.

Calling and promoting for the corps

The declaration of forming the corps was followed by launching an organized media campaign which aimed to urge citizens to join the corps, and the religious, tribal and social events were mobilized in this campaign clearly.

The ministry of endowments sent a letter for imams of mosques urging them to incite the worshipers to join the corps (see supplement No.2).

Official meetings were organized in all areas dominated by the regime to clarify the mechanisms of joining the corps, and to incite the events to encourage the citizens to join.

It was noted in all meetings that cleric men were attended such as Muslims, Druze and Christian².

Also, the companies of cellular communications sent messages to encourage their agents to join the corps (see supplement No, 3)

The activities of the promoting campaign provided legal and material temptations for those who want to join, such as:

- Settlement the situations of deserters of reserve service.
- Settlement the situations of the deserters of the military service
- Settlement the situations of state's employees who deserters from their works

2 In the presence of an official, civil and religious events. meetings about the joining mechanisms to the fifth corps- storming in a number of provinces, SANA news agency, 15/12/2016: <https://goo.gl/arPtPO>

-Accepted salaries (starting from 200\$ per month)

the state's employees will get their salaries, and their financial and functional privileges as well as the salary of the corps.

Causes of formation

Adding a fifth corps to the army after a year of adding the fourth corps is a notable action, and we can summarize the causes of formation as following:

- 1- Exhaustion and weakness of all Syrian army's division, due to the large human losses in the battle which they fought so far, the defections and escaping from military service, in addition to the large corruption in army.
- 2- An attempt to control the military institution of the Syrian regime in medium and long term, where the formation of militias which follow the Syrian regime, and bringing foreign militias caused chaos in the structure of the military institution, especially after the large abuses carried out by the (elite officers) who are leading the semi-independent militias which effect the cohesion of the military institution, which is one of the most important pillars for the Syrian regime.
- 3- Provide the legal arrangement to integrate the militias that have been formed outside the military to prevent targeting these militias in any next political solution, and will be as a part of army which will re-structure.
- 4- To allow organizational and legal integration of opposition factions which accept the political settlement within the institution of army, where these factions will have the same considerations of the national defense militias and the other supported militias.
- 5- An attempt to end the case of chaos which resulted from the militias over the past years, especially after the absence of need for them, which called to established them since 2011.

Who supported the formation of the corps?

There are two parties competing in control the political and military institutions of the regime, which are Russia and Iran.

The estimations indicate that both countries are in a situation of silent conflict, and they are trying to expand their influence to ensure larger share in any next political solution.

The Syrian military institution certainly cannot announce any new formation without approval of one or both countries which are monitoring all main field actions in Syria.

observers are likely that the fifth corps has Russian affiliation, for these considerations:

- Statements of the Russian officials about the possibility of integrate factions of opposition, especially in the areas of settlement, within the army's institution.
- The Russian declaration about the Russian intention to provide training and logistic services for the new corps, while there were not any similar Iranian declaration or even interactive political statements.
- The Russian will to end the arrangements of the political solution before the new un president starting his role, and this desire was very clear through the agreement of ceasefire with Turkey at the end of December 2016, when Tehran did not show any actual support for the agreement and did not commit any previous agreement for ceasefire.

If Russia was the supporter for forming the corps, the main target from formation will be the " national defense forces) which are under supervision of Iran, and the corps will make balance within the military institution between both parties " Iran and Russia" and will prevent Tehran to impose its vision in on this institution.

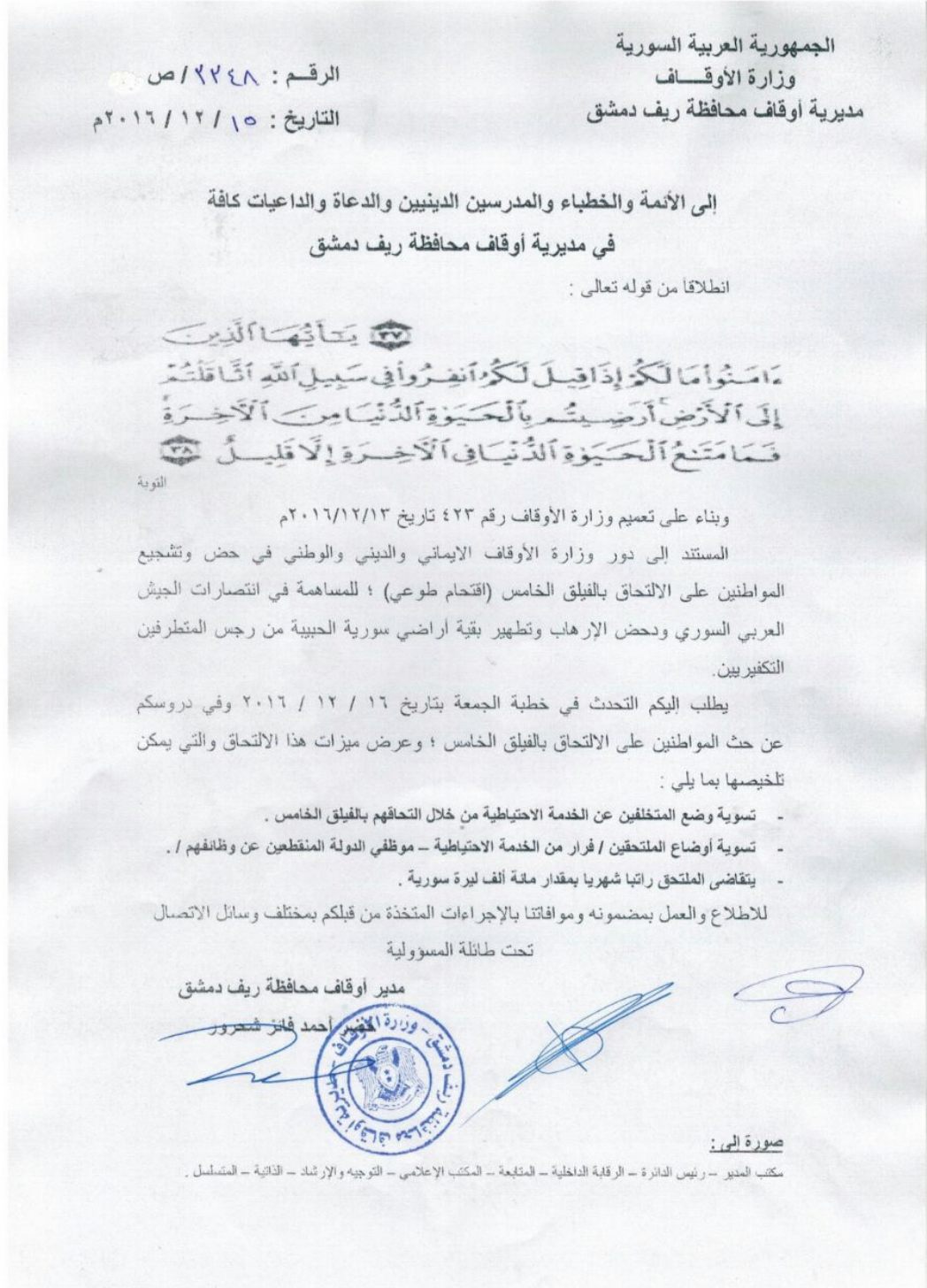
However, it is too early to judge the (political affiliation) of the corps before complete formation and assign actual tasks for it, which can be seen over the next few months.

Supplementaries

No.1: letter of Lattakia province to the public authorities in the city.



Supplement 2: letter of the Ministry of Endowments to imams and mosque preachers in Damascus countryside



Supplement 3: text messages (SMS) to promote the corps

