Syria: A sad majority in the rebel ranks

The staggering numbers of foreign mercenaries from across the Globe fighting the Assad regime is not a media hoax today – it's the sad truth. The mercenaries are pushing the original Syrian “freedom fighters” aside by gaining influence persistently at all the levels of decision making processes of the Syrian opposition. Today Syria has become a major attraction for most any “dog of war” there is. We witnessed a similar situation in Iraq and Afghanistan but this time around the figures are different.

All through the two years of the Syrian conflict the number of Syrians fighting to topple Assad have considerably surpassed the number of Arabs and other non-Syrian Muslims, which were sponsored by Saudi Arabia and Qatar. But this summer the flow of mercenaries in Syria has doubled, therefore the “newborn freedom fighters” started to gain influence in Syria through the branches of “Al-Qaeda” like Jabhat al-Nusra or ISIS. They used that influence to get a hold over the northern regions of the country.

The Islamist field commanders have tested themselves in the new capacity of the mayors and governors of the northern cities and regions which gave them a tremendous amount of influence over the locally deployed rebels. Their ranks are composed of the former Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, Kuwait, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates citizens along with the former militants from Chechnya, Dagestan and the Pakistani Taliban. For instance the Syrian regular forces have recently discovered that one of the militants neutralized by them was a renowned Moroccan field commander that had done time in Guantanamo prison.

According to the latest researches, the estimated number of foreign citizens that came to Syria looking for nothing else but war in the last two years is estimated to be around six to ten thousand people which surpassed the numbers of mercenaries that were fighting the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan. One of the major cases of the jihadist invasions of Iraq took place in 2006-2007, when a total of 600 potential suicide bombers crossed the Iraqi border. “There’s a lot more foreigners than we ever saw in Iraq, and there’s going to be a lot more,” Fishman Fishman the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point and now a fellow at the New America Foundation said of the situation in Syria. “They control territory, they’ve established governance...and you see these foreigners playing more dynamic roles. They’re getting trained and leading people and illustrating a level of ability we didn’t see in Iraq.”

The clashes between the Free Syrian Army supporters and the foreign mercenaries are getting more violent in Syria on a daily basis, since the latter once want nothing more than creating an Islamic state in Syria once “the Assad regime is gone”. One of the most intense firefights took place in the city of Azaz near the Turkish border. Out of the blue the city was flooded with the Sharia law supporters and it’s only due to the ceasefire agreement between the Chechen field commander and his Kuwaiti counterpart that the violence stopped. Another Syrian city – Rakka saw the clashes between the jihadists led by a Libyan field commander and the FSA members, the latter were forced to abandon the town as the things went from bad to worse for them. One of the Rakka highways that leads to Turkey was closed by the representatives of “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant” that were originated from Saudi Arabia, Libya and Tunisia. Those “representatives” were reported to detain the Syrian civilians and search their cars at their will.
The “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant” militants that represent one of the most rapidly growing Al-Qaeda branches are known well across Syria for their assaults on different cities, changing crosses on the black flags in the Christian temples, doing pretty much they want. And despite the fact that “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant is relatively young as a group, it's doing its best to prepare the country for a jihadist transformation.

Now Saudi Arabia and Turkey have a tough choice to make since they don't want to support radical Islamists in Syria that are quickly coming to power but at the same time they're not ready to turn their back on the idea of toppling the Syria’s president – Bashar Assad. The last thing the Untied States along with Israel did want to see was the green Sharia flag waving over Damascus. But the Pandora box has been already been opened.

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