

Alternate names: National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces **Symbol:**
Syrian Coalition (SC, or the Coalition)
Etilaf (*Arabic for "Coalition"*)

Website: www.etilaf.org/



The Syrian Coalition is the primary coordinating body for political opposition to the Assad regime. The Coalition aims to bring together and represent democratic Syrian opposition movements that want the end of the Assad regime. Internal dissent driven by rivalries between patron states such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar has [plagued the Coalition](#) since its inception. The resulting instability and infighting has undermined the Coalition's credibility and effectiveness. The Coalition is headquartered in Istanbul, Turkey, and maintains representative offices in Egypt, France, Germany, Qatar, Turkey, the U.K., the U.S., Lebanon, Norway, Belgium, and at the UN. A number of Gulf and European countries [recognize](#) the Coalition as the legitimate representation of the Syrian people.

The Coalition's main body consists of a 121-seat [Parliamentary Assembly](#), of which 114 seats are currently filled. Under its bylaws women must fill 15% of these seats, although at the time of writing there were only 5 women serving. Various opposition movements such as the Supreme Military Council and the Local Coordinating Councils are each allotted a set number of seats in the Assembly. The main decision-making authority within the Coalition falls to an elected 24-member Political Committee that includes five leadership positions: President, 3 Vice Presidents, and Secretary-General. The current President of the Coalition, [Khaled Khoja](#), began a one-year term in January 2015. Many of the Coalition representatives have long been active in Syria's pro-democracy movement and were exiled from Syria for years prior to the start of the conflict.

The Coalition has established a number of important bodies within the Syrian opposition, including the [Assistant Coordination Unit \(ACU\)](#), which works with Local Councils and international donors to distribute aid to areas of Syria in need, as well as the [Interim Government](#), a [beleaguered](#) government-in-exile with hopes to one day replace Assad. While the Coalition coordinates with these bodies, it does not control them and they have independent funding streams. Similarly, the Coalition maintains a relationship with components of the armed opposition but it does not control or fund any of the armed groups. The Coalition is in ongoing talks with moderate military commanders to bring more formality to these relationships in the future.

The Syrian opposition has gone through several iterations since the start of the conflict, but the current Coalition has maintained primacy since it was formed in Doha in November 2012. It subsumed several earlier political opposition groups, including the Syrian National Coalition (SNC), under its umbrella and they continue to exist as political blocs within the wider Coalition. A handful of additional political opposition groups continue to exist alongside the Coalition, although they are smaller, less inclusive, and have not achieved the same level of international recognition. The primary two – the [National Coordination Body for Democratic Change](#) and [Building the Syrian State](#) – are sometimes referred to as the "internal opposition," because they have been generally tolerated by the Assad regime and continue to be based in Damascus.

The Syrian Coalition participated in the 2014 Geneva II conference as the official opposition representation. The Coalition has presented a vision for the future of Syria in line with the 2012 [Geneva Communiqué](#) that calls for a political transition to democratic governance in Syria. The Coalition rejects any role for Assad and his inner circle in the future Syrian government or in the transition process. This has been a sticking point for Assad's backers, particularly Russia, and failure to agree on this condition has undermined the initiation of a new round of Geneva peace talks. Russia has stated that it wants negotiations to proceed with the ["healthy part of the opposition,"](#) meaning only the internal opposition tolerated by Assad.

Growing international concern about the spread of ISIS appears to be softening the Western stance towards Assad and Russia. This raises the specter that the U.S. in particular could drop demands for Assad to relinquish power in order to placate Russia. Such a move would entail decreased support for the Coalition, and leave its future in question.