

1. What exactly was the relationship between Jabhat al Nusra and Al Qaeda before and how has it fundamentally changed?

JN was an official branch of AQ. We reported to their central command. We worked within their framework. We adhered to their policies. However, we did enjoy a significant autonomy, and our scope was purely local.

How has that changed? With the formation of JFS (Jabhat Fath Alsham), now we're a completely independent entity. We don't report to anyone or receive directives from any external entity.

If dissolving external organisational affiliations will remove the obstacles on the path of unity, then it must be done.

2. Many will argue that this is simply an effort to prevent the US from teaming up with Russia to target JN. How would you respond to that?

Absolutely not. This has been part of a long road map towards unity of the different groups on the ground; negotiations have been ongoing for years. This leaked document about the American/Russian agreement has only been out for a couple of weeks.

3. Will you still espouse Sharia law as the form of governance in Post-war Syria after the split with AQ? And if not what is the type of government you will push for?

The belief that Islam should govern the affairs of the Muslims is NOT an exclusive idea of any group. This is the core belief, the common belief of the ordinary Muslim. What you have to understand is that Muslims, if given the freedom, will choose to be governed by their faith. It's that simple. This idea of imposing a western, liberal democracy on a Muslim nation stems from an arrogant, imperialistic mentality. We are proud of our faith, and we aren't going to hide it.

4. Does Jabhat al Nusra have any intention of launching attacks outside of Syria?

When we were part of Al-Qaeda, as our 5 year track-record shows, our core policy was to focus all our efforts on the Syrian issue. That was our policy before; it is our policy today; we do not intend to change that policy.

However, I think you should pose a similar question to Hezbollah, Iran, Russia or these militias from Afghanistan. Why are they carrying out attacks in lands foreign to them?

5. What assurances can the international community be given that this move has any real significance?

I would like to stress that we are not seeking to give assurances to anyone except the Syrian people. They are our main priority.

Does the recent formation of JFS have real significance? 100%. Like I said, it is a chance for a real merger to occur. The Syrian people have been constantly asking for a merger, and anyone that knows Syria understands that a true unification will be a huge game changer. When we stand in

solidarity, Al-Assad won't a stand a chance.