

Uyghur fighters in Syria vow to come for China next

From the [Telegraph](#)

A Uyghur militant group that helped to topple Bashar-al Assad has vowed to take the fight to China.

The Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP) threatened Beijing in a video released on Dec 8, the day the Syrian regime collapsed, showing its fighters holding machine guns and wearing military fatigues.



The Turkistan Islamic Party have been training in Syria

“Now here in Syria, in all the cities here, we fight for Allah, and we will continue to do this in our Urumchi, Aqsu and Kashgar in the future,” said one masked man, listing cities in China’s Xinjiang region, from where the Uyghurs hail. “We will chase the Chinese infidels away. We have fought in Homs, in Idlib and we will continue the fight in East

Turkistan. Allah has given us a victory here. May he also grant us a victory in our own land.”

The TIP has been based in Syria for more than a decade, with its members fleeing to the Middle East to escape China’s severe oppression of the Uyghurs, a largely Muslim minority group. Its fighters joined Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the Islamist group that led the rebel offensive, in a thrust out of the north-west of Syria.

In recent days TIP has engaged in an unusual publicity blitz, showcasing its leader Abu Muhammed alongside his battalions.

“So many groups allied against us. Russia came, Iran came, Hezbollah came – with strong weapons and all kinds of soldiers,” said one man in the Dec 8 video. “But each time, Allah as our witness, we did not retreat. With the help of Allah, we have fought our way here. We did not once show weakness or fear; we were never afraid.”

TIP has stayed in Syria during 13 years of civil war and appears to have retained an independent identity despite ties to other factions.

The group, established some time in the 1990s with a previous presence in Afghanistan and Pakistan, has continually highlighted its priority as Uyghur independence, describing a goal to “liberate the Muslims of East Turkistan from the Chinese occupation”.

On Dec 6, as the Syrian rebel offensive pushed onward, TIP’s emir, Abd Haq al-Turkistani, released a statement stressing the group’s plans to attack China in the future.

“While the Muslims are celebrating these victories in every place, the Muslims of oppressed East Turkistan remain far removed from the news of them as they live under a filthy oppressive, disbelieving occupation that suppresses them by every means possible,” he said. “Through God’s support, the

Chinese disbelievers will soon taste the same torment that the disbelievers in al-Sham have tasted, if God wills.”

The group has posted pictures on social media of blood splattering the face of Xi Jinping, the Chinese president.

There is a chance that a more hardline faction could splinter off, but for now, TIP propaganda indicates the group is grateful for their gracious host in Syria.

In one video from Dec 10, a masked fighter addressed a congregation at what the group says was a mosque in Latakia. “The Chinese government drove us out of our country, oppressed us, killed us and imprisoned us,” he said. “We left our country and came here ... we have seen from you all the goodness for the past 10 years. We are the mujahideen of East Turkistan.”