

## **Jihadi militants advance toward besieged Shia towns in Syria**

01/09/2015 11:23 by admin

**Damascus:** An array of Jaish al-Fateh jihadi groups advanced toward a besieged Shia town amid relentless shelling.

The Jaish al-Fateh, also known as the Conquer Army, captured parts of terrain south of the town of Foa, which has been besieged by the jihadi rebels for months in the countryside of the northwestern province of Idlib, Xinhua quoted pan-Arab al-Mayadeen TV as saying on Monday.

Meanwhile, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based watchdog group, said the jihadi groups advanced in the area of Sawaghiyeh on the southern outskirts of Foa.

Intense clashes are taking place in the surrounding of Foa and the nearby town of Kafraya, another Shia town, said the observatory, adding that the rebels fired hundreds of improvised rocket and mortar shells into the besieged towns and clashed with the local defense forces at their surroundings.

A total of nine defense forces of the towns, as well as a man and a woman, were killed by the rebel shelling.

The renewed attack on both Shia towns came just days after a truce and negotiations to bring the battles in those towns and the town of Zabadani west of Damascus collapsed.

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