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France training rebels to fight Syria

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A Turkish newspaper has unveiled that French military forces are training armed Syrian rebels to fight the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

According to *Milliyet*, as cited by IRNA, France has sent its military training forces to Turkey and Lebanon to coach the so-called Free Syrian Army -- a group of defectors operating out of Turkey and Lebanon -- in an effort to wage war against Syria's military.

The report added that the French, British, and Turkish authorities “have reached an agreement to send arms into Syria.”

The Turkish daily said that the three have informed the US about training and arming the Syrian opposition.

According to *Milliyet*, a group of armed rebels are currently stationed in Turkey's Hatay Province near the border with Syria.

The report comes as an earlier report had revealed that the British and French intelligence agencies have reportedly tasked their agents with contacting Syrian dissidents based in the northern Lebanese town of Tripoli in order to help fuel unrest in Syria.

Reports also said that French intelligence agents have been sent to northern Lebanon and Turkey to build the first contingents of the Free Syrian Army out of the deserters who have fled Syria.

Syria has been experiencing unrest since mid-March, with demonstrations being held both against and in support of President Assad.

Damascus says the unrest has been largely incited by elements that are well-paid and armed by foreign powers. Hundreds of people, including members of the security forces, have been killed in the turmoil.

The opposition and Western countries accuse Syrian security forces of being behind the killings in the country, but the government blames what it describes as outlaws, saboteurs and armed terrorist groups for the deadly violence, stressing that the unrest is being orchestrated from abroad.