

## Kin Killing: When And Why Governments Target Family Members

### Description

by Emil Souleimanov, David S. Siroky and Peter Krause

Sometimes, when it comes to civil war and insurgencies, it's all in the family. Consider the example of Bashar al-Assad, in Syria. Assad [appointed](#) family members to prominent military positions to ensure institutional loyalty, while nearly [one-quarter](#) of the Western foreign fighters battling against him had a relative fighting in the civil war. Familial bonds play an important role in these types of conflicts: they can enhance the cohesion and resolve of fighting units and the communities from which they emerge. But such bonds can also be a liability, providing crucial pressure points for counterinsurgency efforts.

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