

US drops \$10M terrorism bounty offered for capture of Syrian rebel leader who ousted Assad

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — The Biden administration said Friday it has decided not to pursue a \$10 million reward it had offered for the capture of a Syrian rebel leader whose forces led the ouster of President Bashar Assad earlier this month.

The announcement followed a meeting in Damascus between the leader of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS, Ahmad al-Sharaa, who was once aligned with al-Qaida, and the top U.S. diplomat for the Middle East, Barbara Leaf, who led the first U.S. diplomatic delegation into Syria since Assad's ouster.

HTS remains designated a foreign terrorist organization, and Leaf would not say if sanctions stemming from that designation would be eased. But, she told reporters that al-Sharaa had committed to renouncing terrorism and as a result the U.S. would no longer offer the reward.

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