

# Israel Moves to Cover-up its Alliance with Al Qaeda in Syria

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*Sedqi al-Maqet, a Syrian activist who lives in the Israeli-occupied part of Syria known as the Golan Heights was interned after a dawn raid on his home by Israeli secret police at the end of February. Until quite recently, the Israeli media was absolutely banned from mentioning his case at all, even from referring or linking to foreign press reports on the issue.*

Al-Maqet is a Syrian Druze from Majdal Shams known for his media activism and support of the Bashar al-Assad regime. He had published information online (including via [his Facebook account](#)) about contacts he said he had witnessed between Israeli armed forces in the Golan and what he termed terrorists active in the Syrian-controlled sector of the Golan.

As I have noted in this column before, [Israeli military spokespeople have now admitted](#) to what the reports of UN peace-keeping forces in the Golan [have been implying for some time](#): Israel has an active alliance with the Nusra Front, al-Qaeda's official affiliate in Syria.

Although al-Qaeda as a movement has a history of making hostile statements against Israel (and statements of an anti-Semitic nature) it has never been involved in much in the way of military confrontations against the Zionist state. Al-Qaeda has historically had two main focuses: US military and civilian targets, and military and civilian targets within Arab states (often specialising in brutal sectarian attacks against those it considers false Muslims).

Since the Nusra Front took over a key checkpoint in the Golan in the summer, it has not gone unnoticed by Arabs that Nusra has completely avoided attacking Israeli military targets in the region. The Qunaitra crossing stands between the Israeli-occupied and the Syrian-controlled sectors of the Golan – Nusra has held it since August.

UN peacekeepers have observed regular contacts between Nusra forces in the area and the Israeli troops stationed on the other side of the ceasefire line (Israel has illegally occupied part of the Golan since 1967). They also observed cargo of an unknown nature passing between the two sides from the Israelis.

More recently, when [an army spokesperson talking to the Wall Street Journal](#) confirmed Israel's aid to al-Qaeda, it was shown that it also took the form of treating Nusra fighters in Israeli field hospitals near the ceasefire line and then sending them back to fight against the government of Syria. (Some defenders of Israel have claimed this is no different from how it supposedly treats any enemy fighter in its hospitals. But there is a crucial difference: fighters from Hamas or Hizballah captured by Israel would be sent straight to jail after hospital discharge.)

Now, thanks to the extreme risks al-Maqet took, we know a little more about this secret Israeli war in Syria. Its tactical alliance with al-Qaeda in Syria has been exposed, and the Shabak, Israel' secret police force, is none too happy about it.

Al-Maqet [posted a video online](#), which was later aired on Syrian TV, containing his commentary to camera on what he said he had seen in the Golan: a meeting taking place between the Israeli occupation forces and the terrorists, as he put it.

Although the Israeli media was at first banned by military decree from covering the story, the Hebrew-literate American blogger Richard Silverstein has covered the story in detail. He was the [first journalist to report al-Maqet's arrest](#). It was likely in part thanks to his work that the [gag order was partly lifted](#) (it did little to stop the story getting out onto the internet in any case).

Silverstein has seen a copy of part of the indictment against al-Maqet. Although some of the charges remain secret, most of the ones we know of relate to posting comments and videos to Facebook and YouTube. As Silverstein put it in a [detailed summary of the case](#) for *Middle East Eye* this week: "Al-Maket may be the first individual accused of spying through social media. Along with a description of the content of the posts, the clerks in the Shabak or prosecutor's office have taken the trouble to compile the number of Likes, Shares and YouTube clicks his posts obtained."

Al-Maqet was detained without access to a lawyer for ten days, and the military court eventually ruled that he must use a lawyer with a high-level security clearance (in other words he has to use a former Israeli military officer as a lawyer ... as his defender in a military court).

The amount of trouble that Israel's Deep State is going to in order to shut this man up is deeply emblematic of the state's fundamentally anti-democratic nature. It also shows that, the more press coverage there is of Israel's alliance with al-Qaeda in Syria (it has been pretty much ignored by mainstream media to date) the more Israel is sensitive to the facts being exposed.

After all, by aiding al-Qaeda in Syria, Israel is by providing material support to a group that it itself defines as a terrorist organization, as do the US and British governments.

Scouring Hebrew media, [Silverstein also found](#) last year that Israel established "a Camp Ashraf-style Syrian rebel encampment just inside Israeli[-occupied] territory" in the Golan Heights. Israeli media have even filmed the camp, as video on Silverstein's blog shows. (Camp Ashraf was the former base of the MEK, an Iraq-based group that was backed by the US and Israel and used as a [proxy force in a terrorist war against Iran](#)).

With ISIS, the so-called "Islamic State," [currently battling it out for control of Yarmouk](#), the Palestinian refugee camp in Damascus, this issue has become even more important. The Nusra Front has reportedly put aside some of its differences with ISIS, and allied with the group in Yarmouk, allowing it to take over much of the camp.

[Israel. Nusra. ISIS. The capture of Yarmouk](#). The alliances in the war in Syria grow ever more strange and complicated.

The internment of al-Maqet likely shows that Israel is beginning to get a little worried that the reality of its alliance with al-Qaeda in Syria may eventually start to break through to

mainstream media in the west. So far, the media has shown little interest in the story, but that is not guaranteed to hold true.

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