

Mainstream Media Create #Fakenews Storm As Rebel Aleppo Vanishes

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

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I have not ever experienced a #fakenews onslaught as today. Every mainstream media and agency seems to have lost all inhibitions and is reporting any rumor claim regarding the liberation of east-Aleppo as fact.

Consider this BBC headline and opener:

[Aleppo battle: UN says 82 civilians shot on the spot](#)

Syrian pro-government forces have been entering homes in eastern Aleppo and killing those inside, including women and children, the UN says. The UN's human rights office said it had reliable evidence that in four areas 82 civilians were shot on sight.

1. A UN human rights office does not exist. What the BBC means is the [Office of the U.N. High Commissioner of Human Rights](#) (OHCHR). That commissioner is the Jordanian Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, a Hashemite educated in the UK and U.S. and a relative of the Jordanian dictator king. That is relevant to note as Jordan is heavily involved in supporting the "rebels" against the Syrian government.
2. The office has not "said" that "82 civilians were shot" or other such gruesome stuff. It said that there were "sources" that have "reports" that such happened. From [its press statement today](#):

Multiple sources have reports that tens of civilians were shot dead yesterday in al-Ahrar Square in al-Kallaseh neighbourhood, and also in Bustan al-Qasr, by Government forces and their allies, including allegedly the Iraqi al-Nujabaa armed group.

The OHCHR claiming that "multiple sources have reports" of XYZ, without revealing neither the "sources" nor the provenance of the alleged "reports" of XYZ, certainly does not translate into "The UN said XYZ happened."

I find it irresponsible that the OHCHR even mentions such unverified stuff in its press conferences. But it is even more irresponsible that the BBC then uses a "UN says ..." headline and intro about such rumors especially without any further qualification in the rest of its "reporting".

There is also [this recent report](#) that cats were killed in Aleppo.

#BREAKING – Activists: All residents and guests of last cat shelter in Aleppo killed in Hezbollah gas attack.



The spokesman of the OHCHR has [been notified](#) of the above report. We are now awaiting the BBC headline: “UN says Hezbollah gassed last cats in Aleppo”.

The BBC is not the only #fakenews outlet in this. Indeed it seems that news agencies seek “safety in the pack” by all reporting the same nonsense through each and every channel.

- Reuters – [Aleppo could fall ‘at any moment’, U.N. reports civilians killed](#)
- AFP – [Syria forces kill at least 82 Aleppo civilians in recent days: UN](#)
- AP – [UN agency says dozens of children trapped in building under fire in Syria’s Aleppo](#)

Again – the UN only says that it knows of such reports. It does not verify or vouches for these. Still the usual “humanitarian” influence operations, [like Amnesty International](#), then join in on the “UN Says ...” falsehoods. Thousands of news outlets and websites copy from the fake agency reports and “humanitarian” outlets and try to [sensationalize their take](#) even further. Its a total disinformation mess.

But there are also the wonders of Aleppo.

Real inhabitants and reporters in Aleppo say that any internet connection there is slow and unstable. But those “activists” under intense artillery fire in the east seem to have gigabits of reliable bandwidth available. It’s a miracle. Pictures and videos in tweets like [this one](#) come “out of Aleppo” each and every minute.



Girl running to survive and All her family have been killed
It's not in Hollywood
This real in syria
[#Save_Aleppo](#)



Of course such gigabits could be put to better use than for grabbing screenshots of old music videos, but nobody is perfect, especially when under heavy artillery fire.



The news agencies and mainstream media take all the “activist” tweets, WhatsUp talks, video uploads and livestreaming by Periscope as the truth without even knowing where those come from. Those “activists” could sit anywhere in the world and there is no way for reporters to verify their location.

The security of all these [information operations](#) (pdf) have me concerned. When those “last activists in Aleppo” tweet that the Syrian army is moving in towards them do they mean that Assad’s tanks rumble onto [Vauxhall Cross](#)?

But as long as everyone repeats the lying “reports from the ground” of said “activists” no one can be held responsible. “We all honestly erred,” is the usual and well accepted apology.

We should try, wherever we can, to hold those news people to higher standards.

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