

# Senator John McCain, Foreign Relations “Adviser” to Al Qaeda Death Squads in Syria

By [Julie Lévesque](#)

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In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

*While the mainstream media admonishes John McCain for playing a poker game on his iPhone during the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations hearings on Syria last Wednesday, no one seems to have noticed that the Republican Senator has, for several years, been supporting and mingling with Al Qaeda commanders in the field in blatant violation of international law as well as in breach of US anti-terrorism legislation.*

In April 2011, Senator John McCain described the Al Qaeda affiliated rebels in Libya as follows:

*“I have met with these brave fighters, and they are not Al-Qaeda. To the contrary: They are Libyan patriots who want to liberate their nation. We should help them do it.”*  
– [Senator John McCain in Benghazi, Libya April 22, 2011.](#)

One of the rebels’ leading figures was Abdel Hakim Belhaj (picture below), a member of the defunct Libyan Islamic Fighting Group LIFG), a terrorist organization on both the UN Security Council and the US State Department lists.



In September 2012, McCain met once more with the Al Qaeda linked Libyan fighters in Benghazi, Libya. (See picture below)

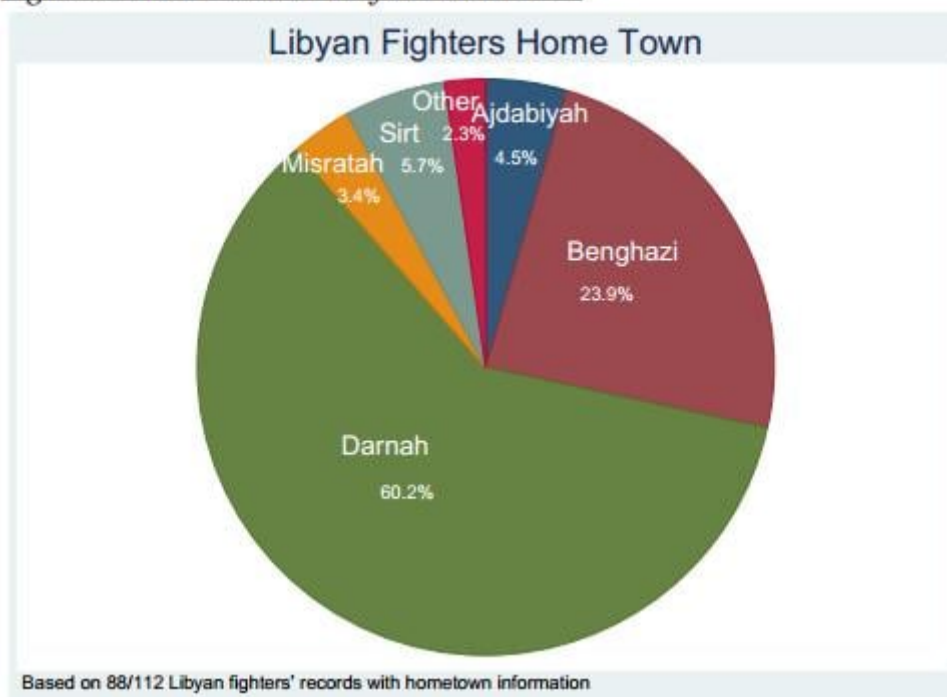


His claim that the “brave fighters” in Libya were not Al Qaeda is in overt contradiction with an authoritative 2007 US Military Academy document entitled, *Al Qaeda’s foreign fighters in Iraq*, indicating that Benghazi was a hotbed of Islamic militancy:

#### “Libyan Hometowns

The vast majority of Libyan fighters that included their hometown in the Sinjar Records resided in the country’s Northeast, particularly the coastal cities of Darnah 60.2% (53) and Benghazi 23.9% (21).

Figure 6: Most Common Libyan Hometowns



Both Darnah and Benghazi have long been associated with Islamic militancy in Libya, in particular for an uprising by Islamist organizations in the mid-1990s. The Libyan government blamed the uprising on “infiltrators from the Sudan and Egypt” and one group—the Libyan Fighting Group (jama’ah al-libiyah al-muqatilah)—claimed to have Afghan veterans in its ranks.<sup>14</sup> The Libyan uprisings became extraordinarily violent.” (Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, [Al Qaeda’s foreign fighters in Iraq](#), US Military Academy, p.11-12, December 2007).

In 2011, McCain was calling on his country to arm the Al Qaeda affiliated rebels in Benghazi:

*McCain called on all nations, especially the U.S., to recognize the National Transitional Council in Benghazi. He said some of the Gadhafi regime’s frozen assets should be redirected to the rebels and the U.S. should facilitate the delivery of weapons to rebel fighters. He clarified that by facilitate he meant not directly arming the rebels, but ensuring that they receive weapons as the U.S. did in the 1980s with the mujahideen battling the Russians in Afghanistan.*

*Such a call raises alarm bells in some circles. Critics recall that some of those fighters Washington helped arm and train in Afghanistan later joined al-Qaida. McCain dismissed questions about who the rebel leaders are, saying their histories are clear and none of them has any record of supporting radical Islam. (Peter Kenyon, [McCain On Libyan Rebels: ‘They Are My Heroes’](#), NPR, April 22, 2011)*

According to a September 2012 Land Destroyer report:

The men McCain was defending were Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) militants, terrorists linked directly with Al Qaeda according to [West Point reports \(.pdf\)](#), and listed to this day by the [US State Department](#), the [UK Home Office \(.pdf\)](#), and [the UN](#) as a “foreign terrorist organization.” McCain was not only rhetorically supporting listed terrorists, but calling for material support including weapons, funds, training, and air support in direct violation of [USC § 2339A & 2339B](#), “providing material support or resources to designated foreign terrorist organizations.” Tony Cartalucci, [US-Backed](#)

[Terrorists Murder US' Own Ambassador in Libya](#), Land Destroyer Report, September 2012)

Since the outbreak of the insurgency in Syria, John McCain has been actively involved in meetings with rebel commanders. The Republican Senator met with armed groups in Syria in May 2013 and posed in a controversial “photo op” with leading Al Qaeda commanders. McCain described this encounter on his twitter as an:

*“...Important visit with brave fighters in [#Syria](#) who are risking their lives for freedom and need our help” ([twitter.com/SenJohnMcCain/...](#)) (John McCain (@SenJohnMcCain) [May 28, 2013](#))*



Hawkish US Senator John McCain (C) poses with infamous kidnapper in Syria, Mohamed Nour (seen with his hand on his chest and holding a camera)

The Washington Post reported at the time:

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) has pushed back on a report claiming that the Syrian rebels he was photographed with last weekend were involved in kidnapping Lebanese Shiite pilgrims a year ago, saying none of the men identified themselves by the names used in the article.

The Beirut Daily Star [reported Thursday](#) that according to family members of the kidnapped pilgrims and one released captive, two of the men in pictures taken with McCain are Anwar Ibrahim and Mohammad Nour. [see image above]

The senator traveled to Syria last weekend to meet with rebels fighting in the civil war against President Bashar al-Assad, becoming the highest-ranking U.S. official to visit the country since the conflict started. He has called on the Obama administration to provide weapons to the rebels. (Rachel Weiner, [McCain responds to Syria photo accusations](#), Washington Post, May 30, 2013)

In late August Washington Free Beacon reported that Benghazi and Darnah, the Libyan home towns of Islamic militancy mentioned in the West Point Study cited above, was a training ground for jihadists fighting in Syria:

U.S. intelligence agencies earlier this month uncovered new evidence that al Qaeda-linked terrorists in Benghazi are training foreign jihadists to fight with Syria’s Islamist rebels, according to U.S. officials.

Ansar al-Sharia, the al Qaeda-affiliated militia that U.S. officials say orchestrated the Sept. 11 attacks on the U.S. diplomatic compound and a CIA facility in Benghazi, is running several training camps for jihadists in Benghazi and nearby Darnah, another port city further east, said officials who discussed some details of the camps on condition of anonymity.

The officials said the terror training camps have been in operation since at least May and are part of a network that funnels foreign fighters to Syrian rebel groups, including

the Al-Nusra Front, the most organized of the Islamist rebel groups fighting the Bashar al-Assad regime in Damascus.

The officials said the jihadist training is a clear indication that Ansar al-Sharia continues to conduct terrorist activities and is linked to jihadists in both Syria and North Africa. (Bill Gertz, [U.S.: Al Qaeda-linked group behind Benghazi attack trains jihadists for Syrian rebel groups](#), August 28, 2013)

#### John McCain Supports Terrorism

In requesting weapons for the Libyan and Syrian rebels which clearly have ties to terrorist organisations, Senator John McCain is supporting terrorism.

The United States Code is unequivocal: “providing material support to terrorists” is a crime:

#### 18 USC § 2339A – Providing material support to terrorists

(a) Offense.— Whoever provides material support or resources or conceals or disguises the nature, location, source, or ownership of material support or resources, knowing or intending that they are to be used in preparation for, or in carrying out, a violation of [numerous sections of this and other titles], or in preparation for, or in carrying out, the concealment of an escape from the commission of any such violation, or attempts or conspires to do such an act, shall be fined under this title, imprisoned not more than 15 years, or both, and, if the death of any person results, shall be imprisoned for any term of years or for life [...]

(1) the term “material support or resources” means any property, tangible or intangible, or service, including currency or monetary instruments or financial securities, financial services, lodging, training, expert advice or assistance, safehouses, false documentation or identification, communications equipment, facilities, weapons, lethal substances, explosives, personnel (1 or more individuals who may be or include oneself), and transportation, except medicine or religious materials;

[...]

(3) the term “expert advice or assistance” means advice or assistance derived from scientific, technical or other specialized knowledge. [18 USC § 2339A – Providing material support to terrorists](#)

Senator McCain met with terrorists in Libya and Syria, has called for his country to provide weapons to terrorist groups in Libya and Syria and should therefore be prosecuted for the assistance he provided them with. There is ample evidence that the armed groups supported by John McCain have committed horrible terrorist acts, which resulted in deaths.

Here is what McCain’s heroes have done in Libya:





(Pictures from [Massacre of Black people by « democratic rebels » – Investig'Action had met the victims.](#), Investig'Action August 29, 2011)

According to witnesses, McCain's Syrian "heroes", have, among other atrocities, been blamed for the [Houla massacre in 2012](#).



Last May, they were also blamed by UN investigators [for chemical weapons attacks](#) in Syria and lately they filmed themselves executing children (see [What Happened to the "Global War on Terrorism"? The U.S. is "Fighting for Al Qaeda" in Syria.](#) By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#), September 05, 2013)

Is it "politically correct" for a US Senator to mingle with leaders of a terrorist organization, while at the same time paying lip service to the "Global War on Terrorism"?

While this may be "business as usual" for the US Secretary of State, American servicemen and women are now "refusing to fight" [see image below] a war in favor of terrorism under the emblem of the "Global War on Terrorism".

Channeling money and weapons to Al Qaeda in Syria is now carried out "in the open", via the US State Department and the Pentagon rather than in the context of a covert CIA operation. ([Ibid](#))



Those who refuse to fight "Obama's War in support of al Qaeda" are America's heroes.

In contrast, *John McCain's "heroes" are known to be or have links to terrorist organisations designated by the US State Department as Foreign Terrorist Organizations, such as the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) and Al-Nusra now fighting against the government of Bashar Al Assad in Syria.*

*These actions are far more scandalous than slacking on the job playing poker on a cell phone. Yet, this is what makes the news: focus on what is irrelevant and trivial while excluding the "forbidden truth" on the criminal nature of US foreign policy.*

*Senator John McCain is a criminal who provided support to terrorist groups. He belongs in jail, not in the US Senate. And certainly not in the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations which has granted Obama the "Green Light" to bomb Syria.*

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Julie Lévesque is a journalist and researcher with the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), Montreal. She was among the first independent journalists to visit Haiti in the wake of the January 2010 earthquake. In 2011, she was on board "The Spirit of Rachel Corrie", the only humanitarian vessel which penetrated Gaza territorial waters before being shot at by the Israeli Navy.

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