

Medical Evacuations in Syria, Deal between Syrian Government and the Terrorists

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In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

Featured image: Jan Egeland, Special Advisor to the UN Special Envoy for Syria. (Source: [Violaine Martin/ UN Geneva](#))

The [Syrian Red Crescent](#), a branch of the International Committee of the Red Cross, has confirmed that 29 critically ill persons were evacuated from East Ghouta, near Damascus, Syria on Friday. The 29 [evacuated](#) included 17 children, 6 women and 6 men. A crucial part of this deal included the release of [29 civilians](#) who had been kidnapped from Adra by The Army of Islam in December 2013.

The deal was between the Syrian government and the terrorists, with oversight by the Syrian Red Crescent.

The [Army of Islam](#), also known as Jaish Islam, is a Radical terrorist group which professes the Salafist ideology. It is supported by the Kingdom of [Saudi Arabia](#), and was headed by the Syrian terrorist [Zahran Alloush](#), who was killed in December 2015. The Army of Islam is the main fighting group in East Ghouta. The Army of Islam shares the same ideology as ISIS, however, the western media often labels them as [rebels](#).

The 29 civilians hostages released were part of a much larger group of [hostages](#) captured by The Army of Islam in a [massacre](#) at the industrial city of Adra, north of Damascus, in December 2013. The exact number of hostages being held for four years is unknown, but they include children, women, men, and some are family groups. These hostages were living in a workers compound, with families together in living facilities, while the adults worked in various industries, such as a cement factory. Some of the civilians were living and employed in the area in service jobs; such as shop keepers and bakers. Adra was a thriving community of workers and their families, not far from the Syrian capital.

The [Army of Islam](#), along with other armed terrorists of similar ideology, swept into Adra and went house to house slaughtering people, in some cases entire families. The massacre continued for two days, while the terrorists were singing [battle songs](#) about cleansing Syria from all Christians and non-Sunni Muslims. The attack and massacre was carried out for sectarian reasons against minorities. A Christian physician named [George](#) was beheaded. The [bakery workers](#) resisted having their equipment vandalized and were [baked alive](#) in their own ovens. The terrorists had captured so many hostages that they could not handle the numbers, and they [released](#) 5,000 persons initially, who were later rescued by the Syrian military. However, the terrorists took hostages which they have held now for 4 years.

[Zahran Alloush](#) became famous for taking some of those hostages and parading them around in [cages](#), reminiscent of circus cages, in December 2015, shortly before his [death](#). He also ordered women hostages to be driven around the area on a cage on the back of a truck. He and his group have used civilians as human shields for years, which is a war crime. According to [Human Rights Watch](#), the practice constitutes hostage-taking and an outrage against their personal dignity, which are both war crimes.

Zahran Alloush's brother [Mohamed](#) is the leader of the political arm of The Army of Islam and has participated in many of the UN sponsored Geneva meetings, as a formal representative of the Syrian opposition, in their negotiations for the purpose of bringing an end to the suffering in Syria.

The UN's humanitarian co-coordinator, [Jan Egeland](#) has criticized the deal made for the swap of 29 civilian hostages from Adra, in exchange for 29 ill civilians from inside East Ghouta, which is under the control of the terrorists who originally massacred and kidnapped the civilians in Adra. Mr. Egeland called the deal 'bad' when interviewed by the [BBC](#). He said the ill patients deserved medical treatment without being part of a swap. The families of the 29 hostages released after 4 years of torture, deprivation and suffering might not agree with Mr. Egeland's assessment. They might well ask, how could an international humanitarian official deem one child suffering an illness, but who belongs to the terrorist's community, as more deserving than a child who has suffered capture for 4 years? Suffering on both sides of the Syrian conflict has been felt for 7 years.

Western leaders, western officials and the western media have come under criticism for consistently highlighting the plight of the terrorists and their supporters, who are under threat from attacks by the Syrian government forces. However, the plight of the millions of Syrian civilians living in Damascus, and facing at times a [daily barrage of rockets](#) and missiles into residential neighborhoods, which originate from East Ghouta, is rarely focused on. Syrian military airstrikes against terrorist positions and enclaves are reported by the western media in detail, including amateur videos uploaded by the terrorists themselves and considered as 'news'. There has been an unbalanced story-line fed to the international audience: even though the terrorist groups in Syria would be hunted down and killed if they were in USA, UK, Europe, Canada or Australia, the media spins the story as if they are 'rebels' fighting for political change in Syria, with full support from the Syrian people. The UN's humanitarian co-coordinator, Jan Egeland would seem to be reinforcing this unbalanced view in his comparison of the two sides in the swap.

The Russian government has tried to convince the UN Security Council to designate The Army of Islam as a terrorist group; however, the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Ukraine have [refused](#) this designation. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister [Gennady Gatilov](#) said,

"We have called for this and submitted a relevant proposal to the sanctions committee, so that they [the groups] would be added to the list of terrorist organizations, but so far, our Western partners are not ready for this."

The conflict in Syria has entered into its last stage. Western leaders demanded a political settlement to the war, all the while supporting the militants on the ground. It would appear that a military solution will be the end of the war in Syria. The armed men supported by the US-NATO and Arab countries of Persian Gulf alliance have lost the war, and are in their final

days. All eyes are now on the next monumental meeting at [Sochi](#), and the opposition will try to negotiate their defeat.

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Steven Sahiounie began writing political analysis and commentary during the Syrian war, which began in March 2011. He has published several articles, and has been affiliated with numerous media. He has been interviewed by US, Canadian and German media.

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