

Syria: Aleppo Doctor Demolishes Imperialist Propaganda and Media Warmongering

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The following is the transcript of an interview given to [Be Curious TV](#) by Dr Nabil Antaki, a doctor based in the Syrian government held western sectors of Aleppo. In this interview, given during his recent trip to France, Dr Antaki once more observes that Western media has been misleading and obscurantist in their reporting of events in Syria. Dr Antaki reinforces that President Assad's popularity has increased rather than waned since the US NATO war against Syria began five years ago and he deconstructs much of the propaganda upon which the US and NATO base their interventionist, neo-colonialist policies. Translation [from French] of interview by Vanessa Beeley.

Dr Antaki's previous interview with Arret Sur Info was also translated by Vanessa Beeley and published here at 21st Century Wire: [Aleppo Doctor Attacks Western Media for Bias, Censorship and Lies](#)

Lausanne 23rd May 2016

BeCuriousTV "Welcome Nabil Antaki. Please would you let us know what is happening in Aleppo and Syria. You are briefly in Europe. You are Syrian, born in Syria and residing in Aleppo. You are a doctor at the St Louis hospital in western Aleppo, the area under "regime control". People living in the west who are not aware of what is happening in Syria might ask which is worse, the Syrian regime violence or that of the terrorists or the "rebels". This antagonism is reflected at the heart of our media where on one side we find those who affirm that Bashar al Assad's "regime" is terrorising his own people and on the other side are those who claim that Assad's forces are defending their people against armed Jihadists"

Dr Antaki: "Firstly I would like to clarify..you have mentioned several times, Assad's "regime" and Assad's "army and its a confusion that we dont appreciate in Syria..when we read in all the media about Bashar's airforce, Bashar's army. In fact, it is the Syrian army, the army of the State of Syria and when you mentioned that I live in western Aleppo which is under "regime" control, no, it is under the control of the Syrian state. Our people are not afraid of the Syrian army because it is an army that defends all of Syria against armed terrorists who have invaded Syria in order to establish their Islamic state. Therefore we should never say at all that the Syrian people are afraid of the Syrian army because it is not a "regime" army as described by the media, people are, in reality very grateful for the presence of the Syrian army.

Let me give you an example. A few months ago the Syrian army launched an offensive to

bring some relief to Aleppo which has been surrounded or besieged [by terrorists] for the last 3 years. According to the western media the Syrian army was imposing a siege upon the Syrian people in Aleppo when in fact the opposite was true and the Syrian army was trying to break the three year terrorist siege of Aleppo. Therefore, no, the people are not afraid of the Syrian army, they are afraid of the terrorists.



BCT: "So just to be clear, the western media is not reporting accurately what you are living through in Aleppo?"

NA: "Exactly. Western media only reports on events in eastern Aleppo. Since 2012, Aleppo has been cut in two. Three hundred thousand people live in the zones controlled by the terrorists in the east but the remaining three quarters of Aleppo inhabitants, around 1.5 million people, live in western areas controlled by the Syrian state. So, when we hear from the western media about what is happening in Aleppo they focus only on the eastern areas.

When we issue a cry for help for Aleppo, it is transformed into a cry only for eastern Aleppo. When the media announced that the last pediatrician in Aleppo had been killed, it is not true because in western Aleppo we have around 100 pediatricians. Perhaps its the last pediatrician killed on the other side, I have no idea, I have no information, but what I do know is that the inhabitants of the eastern sector living under terrorist control are Aleppans like us but chance dictated that they were living in areas invaded by terrorists.

BCT: "They didnt flee the area..?"

NA: "From the beginning over half a million people fled towards western Aleppo because they were afraid of the terrorists but there are some people who were afraid to leave, perhaps without the means to leave, afraid to lose what they had amassed during their entire life, their little apartment, their TV. They thought that if they left they might lose it all, so they decided to stay not for any ideological reasons but because materially they preferred to stay where they were.

BCT: "You have just been describing eastern Aleppo to us which is under terrorist control. Please would you differentiate for us between terrorist and "rebel".

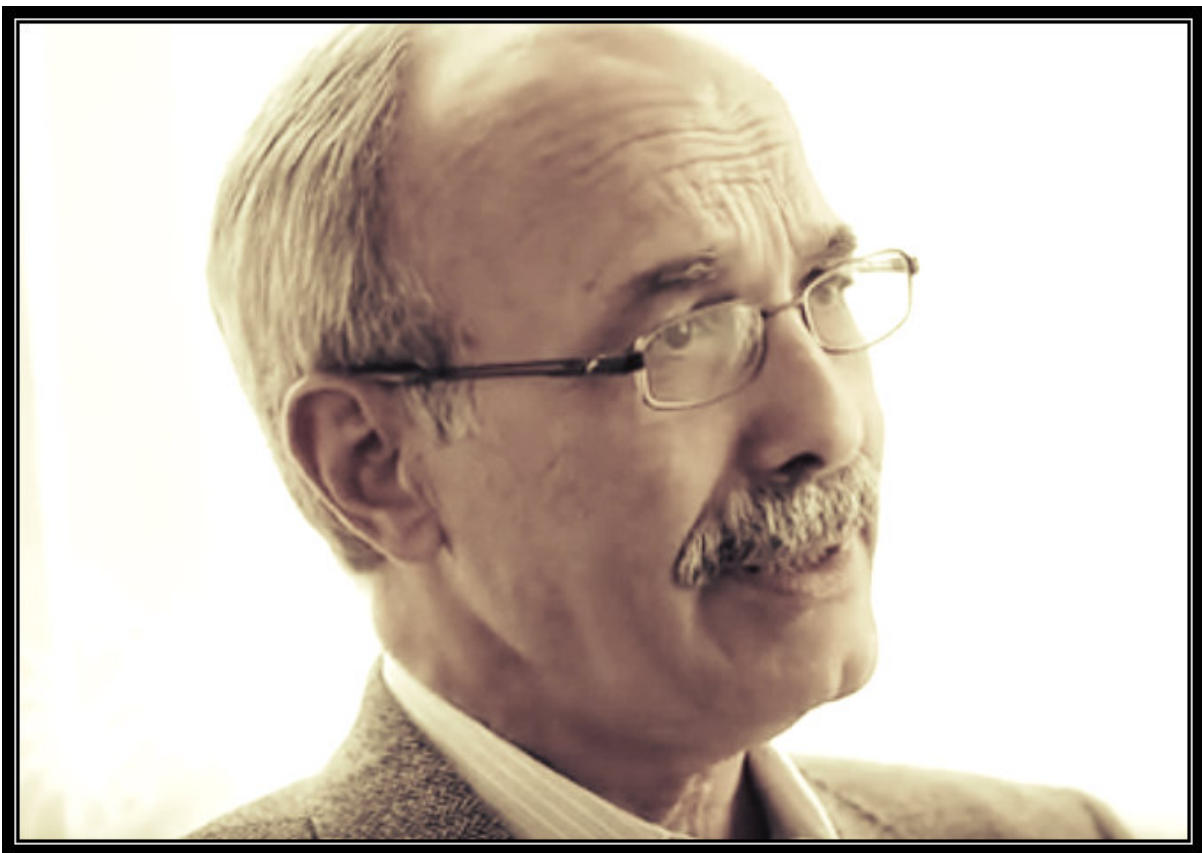
NA: "At the beginning of the war in Syria there were multiple groups among which there

were a very small percentage of democratic opposition to the Syrian “regime” but the majority were terrorist groups intent upon establishing an Islamic state. Over time these democratic groups were absorbed into the terrorist groups and currently these terrorist groups represent more than 95% of the hundred or so armed opposition groups on the ground in Syria.

Therefore the Free Syrian Army and the opposition who are not terrorists but are nevertheless armed represent no more than 5% of the armed groups, the rest are all terrorists.

The principal terrorist groups are DAESH [ISIS] and Al Nusra. These two groups have been added to the “terrorist” list by the United States and Russia so everyone has the right to target them with air-strikes. However there are other groups which emanate from Al Nusra, an Al Qaeda affiliate, which are not yet considered to be terrorists. Among these are three principal groups, Jaish al Islam [Army of Islam], Ahrar al Sham [Free of Damascus] and Jaish al Fatah [Army of Conquest/Liberation]. These three groups were created by Al Nusra to escape being put on the terrorist list but nevertheless have their origins in Al Nusra which is Al Qaeda in Syria.

So when these three groups are added to the terrorist list which will enable them to be neutralised, there will remain only those armed groups that are not terrorists with whom we could negotiate and achieve a political compromise.”



BCT: “What about the refugees? The 12 million migrants seeking refuge.”

NA: “Half the Syrian population is displaced. There are 23 million people in Syria and 12 million people have been driven from their homes. 3.5 million are refugees outside Syria in neighbouring countries like Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. There are 8 million internally

displaced people who have not left Syria but have been forced to leave their homes. This is a very serious situation and these people need assistance just as much as those who have left Syria.

The United Nations agencies focus only on the people living in the camps external to Syria. All these people are not fleeing the actions of the Assad “regime” or Assad’s army as described in the media. These people are fleeing neither Assad’s government nor the Syrian army, nor the hypothetical actions of either of these groups. These people are either fleeing from combat zones or they are fleeing misery. The majority of the Syrian people are now living below the poverty line.

80% of Aleppo’s population are dependent upon NGO food parcels. People are impoverished. They have exhausted their savings, those who had work lost it, those who had an asset, a workshop or a factory, a shop, have lost everything. People are destitute, they are fleeing this misery or they are fleeing the combat zones. They are also considering their children, they endured 2, 3, even 4 years but the war has continued into 5 years and they want to assure their children of a future so they take the decision to uproot and to seek a future somewhere else, to start a new life.

BCT: “How do you and the Syrian people feel about the sanctions and economic embargoes imposed by western governments since the beginning of the war?”

NA: “We are disgusted by these sanctions because these sanctions and these embargoes have not been implemented against the Syrian government but against the Syrian people, all the Syrian people. For example, me personally, as person x, living in Syria, does not have the right to conduct the smallest transaction. If I wanted to send \$ 1000 to my children, I am unable to do so. I can neither import or export anything. This is crippling. I am a doctor, I wanted to replace one part of a piece of medical equipment. Normally this would take one week, it took a year and a half to get hold of the part because we couldn’t import it from Japan as it was a multi-national company.

So these sanctions penalise the Syrian people and at a certain moment the EU lifted the sanctions but only for the people living in the terrorist controlled zones. Those people living in areas under the control of the Syrian state could do nothing. Contrary to their claims, this does not penalise the “regime”, it punishes the Syrian people.



BCT: *"You are a Christian. A middle east Christian. If someone were to question your objectivity what would be your response?"*

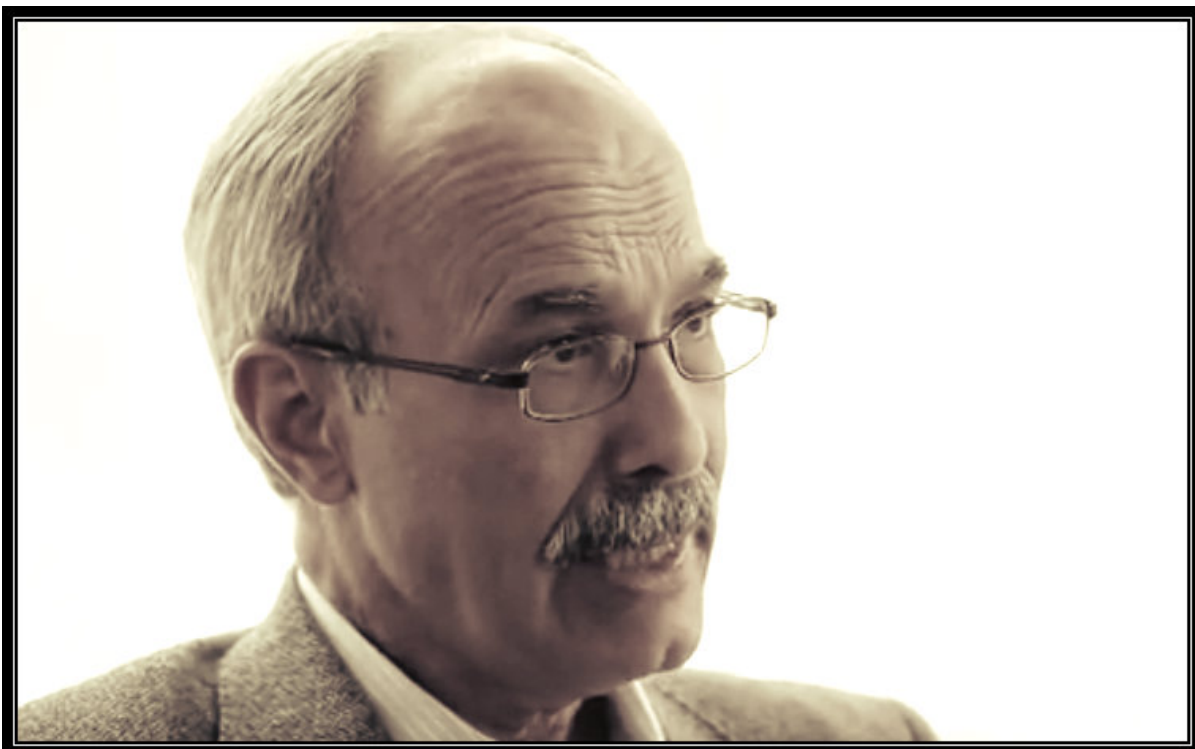
NA: *"I dont speak to you as Nabil Antaki the Christian, I speak as Nabil Antaki the Syrian who has witnessed his country being attacked and destroyed. It is not about being Christian or Muslim, Syria is an ethnic and religious mosaic. There are eleven different Christian churches and as many different Muslim sects, its not about the Syrian government protecting the minorities and that is why we support the Syrian government. No, the government is secular, it protects everyone, whether a minority or a majority, everyone is respected inside Syria. It is a secular "regime". Unlike the Islamic state that absolutely does not respect the minorities.*

If the Christians are pro-government or pro the Syrian state it is because from the beginning they have supported a secular state as opposed to an Islamic state.

The current President is very popular. I am actually not a fan of the President, I defend Syria not the President. But viewing it objectively we cannot deny his popularity and in my opinion, if tomorrow, we have free elections under international law, giving all Syrians the right to vote, even those in diaspora, we would see our President re-elected.

The west has not understood this fact. Assad's was popular at the beginning of the war against Syria, his support is even stronger now, not because he defends the minorities which is what the media would like you to believe but because he defends all Syrians. Christians are about 8% of the Syrian population so when they say Assad is popular because he defends the Christians and that is why the Christians support Assad, its a joke. If we are with him or against him, it has no effect upon his popularity. We have neither soldiers nor arms, we are 8%.

Assad is popular with all groups and sectors of our Syrian society so if we want this war to end we have to stop demanding that Assad steps down as one of the conditions, we have to negotiate with him, conduct free elections and work towards democracy.



BCT: *"Let me just come back to some of the points you made. You speak of Assad's huge popularity but was this the case in the beginning, in 2011?"*

NA: *"This is my point! When the troubles started, there were anti Bashar demonstrations, 10,000 or 15,000 people maximum. These demonstrations were televised and the figures were hugely exaggerated up to one or two hundred thousand. On the other hand, massive spontaneous demonstrations poured onto the streets in support of the Assad government, in Aleppo, in Damascus, all the big towns and cities. Over a million people supporting Bashar. Nobody filmed these demonstrations or perhaps I should say nobody televised them in the west. So, organic demonstrations of millions of people were ignored while the few thousand that marched against Bashar were blown out of all proportion and highly exaggerated.*

So there was a huge amount of bias, partisan reporting and partiality from the media from the beginning. Assad was always popular and this has not changed. He is perhaps even more popular now than in the last few years before the war. He had enormously liberalised both the political and the economic sectors so people were happy, even though they knew there were still things that needed improving.

Life was not perfect but nobody wanted war, they wanted reform. Even the most outspoken enemies of the government did not want war, and certainly not this war. They wanted reforms and they wanted democracy but nobody wanted to kill Syria to improve Syria.



BCT: *"We have two coalitions on the ground in Syria, according to you what is their efficacy?"*

NA: *"In my opinion the Western international coalition is not effective because you cannot combine two opposing sides. You have a coalition of the US and Europe with Turkey and the Gulf States and at the same time we know that Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia finance the Jihadists, finance Daesh, finance Al Nusra. On the one hand they want to fight against the terrorists, on the other they are helping them. That is completely abhorrent.*

Additionally, there are the Kurds in Syria who have also taken up arms against DAESH. The US has found its allies in the Kurds to fight against DAESH. However Turkey is completely against the arming of the Kurds so Turkey combats the Kurds. So, we have two countries

who are allied, the US and Turkey but one is allied with the Kurds and the other is against them so how can this ever work. There are too many contradictions within the Western coalition and that is why it has achieved nothing.

Before the Russian intervention, the coalition air-strikes were cosmetic strikes. They would carry out a hundred or so strikes in the desert and that was the extent of their campaign. They only became effective after Russia intervened.

From our perspective the Russian intervention was extremely beneficial and they have the full support of the Syrian people which contradicts the western narrative. The west accuses Russia of targeting not only the terrorist groups but also the "moderate rebels". Russia has been very succesful in bombing the Islamic State groups so the West is trying to slow their progress by claiming they are targeting the non terrorist groups and accusing Russia of aiding Bashar instead of targeting DAESH. Of course this is not true, when the West want to bomb its ok but when Russia wants to bomb, they dont do it right.

BCT: *"How do you think the Western media portray the reality on the ground in Syria?"*

NA: *"Western media is not objective. They are partisan, they are against the Syrian state. They are supporters of the terrorist-rebels, so the Syrian people is fed up with their portrayal of events in Syria. We dont ask that they are pro or anti "regime", we simply ask them to be objective.*

BCT: *"What might you like to say from a personal point of view?"*

NA: *"All that I want to say to the West is please be more objective, educate yourselves, dont accept disinformation, put pressure upon your governments because Syria is a country that desires its freedom, prosperity and democracy.*

The war has destroyed us, we have had enough, we want it to stop!

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