

# **“Terrorist groups in Syria receiving earthquake aid from the US and EU,” Interview with Kari Jaquesson**

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*The massive earthquake on February 6 devastated parts of the northwest of Syria, including the last remaining terrorist occupied area of Idlib. While Latakia and Aleppo were damaged more than Idlib, they are not receiving any aid from the US, EU or other US allied countries because they are under the central government of Damascus.*

The Syrian people have suffered 12 years of armed conflict, occupation of Al Qaeda and ISIS among other Radical Islamic terrorist groups, and now a 7.8 earthquake which is being called the disaster of the century.

Besides armed conflict, the Syria people have also been under the threat and deprivation of US and EU sanctions which have prevented humanitarian donations. Recently, the US Treasury issued a 180-day waiver of the sanctions for Syria for humanitarian aid, but it must be sent through an NGO and western banking system, which is not readily available now in Syria, so the waiver is a joke: but a very bad joke on the suffering Syrian people.

Steven Sahiounie of MidEastDiscourse interviewed Kari Jaquesson to get her expert insight into the European position on the Syrian situation.

Kari Jaquesson is a Norwegian health and fitness professional, with a political interest. She does research and writes for steigan.no, a Norwegian news outlet. For twenty years she was a presenter in many TV productions, but in the last ten years has been best known in Norway as a public debater. She visited Syria together with other media in 2017 and met public outrage as she presented the Syrians own perspective on the hostilities against the country. She has been back to Syria in 2018, and in 2019 organized a tour of several Syrian cities for a group of Norwegians.

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Steven Sahiounie (SS): Syria has been devastated by 7.8 magnitude earthquake on

February 6, with over 7,000 dead and hundreds of thousands homeless. The two hardest hit areas are Latakia and Aleppo; however, neither are receiving any aid from Europe because of political opposition to Syria. In your opinion, should the EU lift sanctions on Syria?

Kari Jaquesson (KJ): Let me first take the opportunity to express my deep-felt condolences to the Syrian people. The sanctions against Syria are criminal, immoral and completely indefensible. Of course they should lift the sanctions, but as we see, the MEPs, with a few exceptions, are either too weak to speak out about this, or they agree with them. My home country Norway is not a member of the EU, but has been part of this war of sanctions against Syria since the launch of them.

The EU claims the sanctions on Syria mostly target specific individuals and entities, but that's not true. On my three trips to Syria in 2017, 2018 and 2019 every person I met was personally affected by the sanctions.

The EU is led by some very strange characters. Joseph Borell, the High Representative for Foreign Policy of the EU, recently displayed his condescending perspective on the world when he said, "Europe is a garden. We have built a garden. Everything works. It is the best combination of political freedom, economic prosperity and social cohesion that the humankind has been able to build – the three things together. The rest of the world, is not exactly a garden. Most of the rest of the world is a jungle, and the jungle could invade the garden."

On the sanctions against Russia, he allegedly said, "EU sanctions are a slow-acting poison like the one made from arsenic. They take time to produce their effects, but they do and it is irreversible."

So he knows that sanctions hurt – that is the point of them.

SS: Recently, the Greek foreign minister said that they cannot help Syria because there is no government. In your opinion, should European countries recognize Damascus as the central government?

KJ: I have not heard about that. If this is the case, it is such an ignorant and abusive comment. Of course the Greek and other European countries not only should, but must recognize the elected Syrian president and parliament. But, what can you expect from a crowd that insisted that Juan Guaidó was president of Venezuela? In many ways, reality is not relevant to European politicians. We see it in so many domains. I was very disappointed when I saw the Norwegian King extend condolences to the Turkish people, addressed to H.E. Mr Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Türkiye, Presidential Palace, Ankara, but not one word to the people and leader of Syria.

After criticism, from me and probably others, some text was added on the web page of the Royal family, but no mention of Syrian president Bashar Assad, only "Condolences to the Syrian people". The king is not supposed to practice politics, so this is very serious.

SS: All of the western aid is going to Idlib alone, which is under the control of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, a Radical Islamic terrorist group which has fought alongside ISIS, and was formerly the Al Qaeda affiliate. In your opinion, should western democracies recognize a terrorist group as a legitimate government?

KJ: As far as I know, no country has actually recognized the terrorist groups occupying the Idlib region as a government, but they are showering them with money. From Norway billions have been channeled to the terrorists through so-called NGO's, from Norway especially The Norwegian People's Aid. They have "local" crews and when The Norwegian People's Aid were asked for justification of the all the money they have received, they responded to inquiry from the department of finance that they have "a gentlemen's agreement" with "local officials", and we know who they are. There was no accounting of the funds.

SS: Some of the humanitarian groups and the UN have called for separating politics from a humanitarian crisis. In your opinion, why does the EU continue to put politics before humanitarian needs?

KJ: Unfortunately, the EU, led by non-elected bureaucrats are mostly serving as the prolonged arm of Washington.

SS: Western mainstream media have been showing Idlib and the 'White Helmets' as the hardest hit area, but there are no official numbers of dead and injured because the authorities are terrorists. In your opinion, shouldn't the media be showing Latakia and Aleppo as the hardest hit areas?

KJ: The mainstream media is maintaining the "evil dictator"-narrative about Syria, and the larger part of the public will parrot "gassed his own people" and other types of media sound bites. The Western main stream media is not interested in producing situation descriptions rooted in reality, but one that upholds the narrative that prevents the public from understanding that Norway has been and is on the wrong side of the war against Syria. Journalists should report objective facts, but unfortunately, Western press is part of the soft-power tool box of the authorities. If they show "too much" of the plights of the people in Latakia and Aleppo the public might realize that the story they have been served for 12 years is untrue. The media war against Syria is still ongoing and only with pressure from the public will the sanctions and US occupation come to an end. Unfortunately, at the moment European citizens are neither informed nor have the stamina to engage in their countries wrong doings.

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