

UN Security Council Extends Aid Runs for Al Qaeda in Idlib

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In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

“Al-Qaeda terrorists operating in the north of Syria and oppressing millions of Syrians can now breathe comfortably after the United Nations Security Council extended their supply routes from their regional sponsor NATO member state Turkey for an additional Six months within its Resolution 2504.” ~ [Syria News](#)

In October 2014, [Serena Shim](#), a US citizen and a Press TV reporter was killed in a mysterious car accident in Turkey on the border with Kobane, northern Syria. Shim had received death threats from Turkish intelligence after she had reported ISIS fighters entering Syria from Turkey inside World Food Programme trucks. The same trucks were also delivering arms and equipment to the terrorist groups inside Syria.

My experience in Syria - when entering the armed group (dominated by Nusra Front, Al Qaeda) occupied areas of Syria after liberation by the Syrian Arab Army - I found that all humanitarian aid delivered by the UN or their outreach agencies had been stockpiled by the armed groups and distributed to the fighters from within these groups. Very few civilians would receive the aid, unless they were prepared to pay extortionate prices to the terrorist/extremist groups.

When East Aleppo was liberated in December 2016, more than 5000 tonnes of UN aid were recovered from the different districts and collected together into one warehouse. Civilians testified to being starved, deprived of medical care and forced to pay very high prices in a war economy, for the most basic necessities.

Effectively “aid” went almost exclusively to the armed groups that reigned eastern Aleppo for almost five years, converted hospitals into military and detention centers and committed a multitude of war crimes against the Syrian civilians under their occupation. The “aid” became a major part of a mafia economy benefiting only the armed groups.

Dr Nabil Antaki, a gastroenterologist who remained in Aleppo during the last nine years, wrote a report in December 2016, detailing his experience of visiting the previously Nusra-front occupied areas of East Aleppo. This was his comment regarding the stockpiling of UN and other western aid agency supplies:

“I had the opportunity to visit the basement of Ibn Rushed public hospital in West Aleppo guided by the director of Aleppo Health Direction. In this basement, very large, 1000 square meter, they put some of the medicine and equipment found in clinics and hospitals of the neighborhood controlled by the terrorists. See photos. These demonstrate clearly that there was no shortage of medicine as they proclaimed, via their godfathers, asking for a humanitarian

truce.”

I witnessed the same in other areas of Syria – Eastern Ghouta, Damascus, Daraa, Madaya, Zabadani etc. Award winning journalist, Eva Bartlett, [described](#) the same phenomenon when she visited Madaya where the western media, anti-Syrian government hyperbole, reached defeaning levels.

Now we have Idlib and the continued use of “humanitarian aid” as a weapon against the Syrian people and the Syrian government. Idlib is known to be entirely occupied by groups dominated by Nusra Front or Hayat Tahrir as Sham, one of their many rebrands.

From speaking to refugees from Idlib and to Syrian civilians still living in Idlib but travelling to northern Hama or other government-secured areas for work or trade – I have heard a very [familiar story](#), the terrorists take delivery of the UN “aid”, it is stockpiled and sold at extortionate rates to the needy civilians, most can’t afford to buy it.

A recent [interview](#) I did with a refugee from Yacoubieh in Idlib, now living in Latakia, forced out of her home by the armed groups – I was told that the terrorist groups and the White Helmets receive the aid, they store it and distribute first among the fighters – civilians are secondary, if they are lucky they will receive one box of essential items that is supposed to last one month.

” According to Aline, the White Helmets were working with and for the terrorist groups. Aid received from outside was distributed first to the armed groups before meagre supplies were handed out to civilians. Aline did not see the White Helmets performing “humanitarian” activities, they were focused on further looting and the destruction of historic buildings, including the churches. “ ~ [US increases funding to White Helmets who are persecuting Syrian Christians in Idlib](#)

When the Shia Muslim villages of Kafarya and Foua were under siege in Idlib (by Ahrar al Sham and Nusra Front), the UN was noticeably lax in providing aid for the besieged and starving civilians – to the extent where the civilians [wrote a letter](#) to the UN complaining that deliveries were scarce, never contained what was most needed and that most food was perished or unusable when taking into account living conditions.

The Dutch government recently [withdrew funding](#) from the White Helmet organisation which is one of the distribution partners for the UN in Idlib. The reason given, after an in-depth investigation, was that there were no guarantees that aid and financing was not going directly to the armed groups, the majority of which are designated terrorist groups.

BBC Panorama also [highlighted](#) the diversion of British aid intended for the terrorist-linked Free Syrian Police (Idlib) to terrorist groups. This report was only aired after I had written an [in depth investigation](#) into the UK Foreign Office indirect financing of terrorist groups occupying East Aleppo prior to liberation in December 2016.

The question must be asked, what verification mechanisms are in place to ensure that aid reaches those most in need in Syria, in particular in Idlib? Can the UN guarantee that armed groups are not profiting from the delivery of aid and equipment in an area overrun by Al Qaeda which makes all manner of monitoring extremely dangerous. The UN relies hugely on

compromised and terrorist-linked NGOs, such as the White Helmets, to monitor and distribute aid.

With the ongoing Syrian/Russian military campaign in Idlib which will liberate the final province still held by Nusra Front-led armed groups, despite the recent ceasefire - the need for cross border aid will diminish dramatically with the Syrian government and Russia providing for the Syrian people as they do in more than 85% of Syria. The UN should be respecting the sovereignty of a state that has done its utmost to maintain the supply of essential services to its people despite a 9 year war and crippling economic terrorism imposed by the US Coalition, a familiar mobster bully-boy tactic designed to collectively punish the Syrian people for their resistance against the imperialist agenda in their country.

Former UK Ambassador to Syria, Peter Ford, sent me this statement in response to the latest UN restoration of aid for Al Qaeda in Idlib:

“The draft resolution blocked by Russia and China completely ignores the advances the Syrian government has made in restoring its control and thus ability to deliver or channel humanitarian aid itself. Similarly the Western media totally distorts the issue. The Washington Post, for example, quotes US talking points to the effect that aid cannot reach areas like Raqqqa and Deir Ez Zor. This is absolutely false. The Syrian government can without a shadow of doubt deliver aid to these areas, now under government control.

The same talking points refer to Al Rukban on the borders with Jordan and Iraq, which the US controls and which it could supply with aid at any time it chooses from its bases in Iraq.

Russia is willing to agree to a six month extension and a channelling of aid through two Turkish-controlled crossings. If the situation is as dire as claimed why is this solution not acceptable?

The UN and Western powers are oblivious to the fact that once aid crosses into Idlib it falls under the control of jihadi groups, notably the internationally prescribed Hayat Tahrir Ash Sham, who exploit it to siphon off profits for themselves and fund their operations aimed at preventing normalisation.

Those expecting the Syrian government and its supporters to acquiesce indefinitely in this abusive situation are hallucinating. If they sincerely wish for an end to humanitarian suffering in Northern Syria they will stop doing everything in their power to try to halt the advances being made by Syrian government forces and lift punitive sanctions which are compounding the suffering of ordinary Syrians throughout the country.

Those who wail only about suffering when it takes place in jihadi-controlled areas, while openly aiming to crush the Syrian economy until the people rise up against the government, need to be called out for the cynical hypocrites they are. “

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