

# Western spy agencies 'sharing intelligence' with Syrian rebels

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**Robert Mood**

Image credit: Deutsche Welle

A British newspaper has cited defense sources claiming that British and American intelligence agencies are passing vital information to Syrian rebels fighting to overthrow the country's government.

British tabloid *The Daily Star* quoted "a British defense source" who said that most of the raw intelligence on Syria is picked up by sophisticated British and American satellites monitoring Syrian communications. Once gathered and assessed by intelligence analysts in Washington and London, the information is passed on to operatives of the United States Central Intelligence Agency and Britain's MI6, who are allegedly operating on the ground in Syria. They in turn communicate actionable intelligence to rebel leaders in Syria, who are fighting the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. [According](#) to the British tabloid, information passed on to rebel leaders includes detailed satellite imagery of Syrian pro-government troop movements around the country, as well as the contents of intercepted communications between senior Syrian military commanders and their subordinates in the field. *The Star* quotes one unnamed British government source who claims that the satellites are so sophisticated that they allow British and American eavesdroppers to identify the individuals whose voices are heard in the intercepted communications, with the aid of advanced voice recognition systems. The intelligence has reportedly enabled rebel commanders to evacuate locations targeted by government forces, and may also have allowed the rebels to organize successful counterstrikes in response to offensives conducted by troops loyal to Damascus.

Washington-based publication *The Hill* [contacted](#) the CIA and the White House but their spokespersons refused to comment on what they called "an ongoing intelligence operation" in Syria. A spokesman from the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office would only tell

*The Star* that “all actions remain on the table”. In a related development, Syrian media reported yesterday that a Jordanian United Nations observer has accused the head of the United Nations Surveillance Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) of engaging in espionage. According to the [reports](#), which appeared in several pro-government Syrian newspapers, the unnamed Jordanian official said that General Robert Mood, of the Norwegian Army, appears to be “gathering critical coordinates” of Syrian government installations and has been “visiting military bases for his own purposes”. There has been no reaction from the UN or the Norwegian armed forces at the time of writing.

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