

# Did An Israel Lobby Front Group Organize McCain's Trip To Syria?

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Global Research, June 07, 2013

[Information Clearing House](#) 5 June 2013

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In an attempt to dispel embarrassing reports that Senator John McCain's "[surprise](#)" trip to Syria featured a meeting with kidnappers — including Mohammad Nour of the Northern Storm rebel group — behind the 2012 abduction of 11 Lebanese religious pilgrims, The Daily Beast's [Josh Rogin](#) cited Mouaz Moustafa, the executive director of a little-known organization called The Syrian Emergency Task Force:

"Nobody self-identified as Nour, and none of the guys who were standing outside were in the meeting with McCain," said Mouaz Moustafa, executive director of the Syrian Emergency Task Force, an American nonprofit that helped organize the McCain trip. Moustafa is in the picture and was also inside McCain's meeting with the rebel commanders, along with Task Force political director Elizabeth O'Bagy.

Rogin's defense of McCain, of course, rests on the perceived independence of Moustafa's "NGO." The Syrian Emergency Task Force, however, appears to have close ties to one foreign government and its powerful American lobby. Not only is Mouaz Moustafa listed as one of the Washington Institute's "[experts](#)," he recently [addressed](#) the AIPAC-created think tank's annual Soref symposium on the theme of "Inside Syria: The Battle Against Assad's Regime."

Even more intriguingly, [one](#) of the web addresses for Moustafa's nonprofit is "syriantaskforce.torahacademybr.org." The "torahacademybr.org" URL belongs to the Torah Academy of Boca Raton, Florida whose academic goals notably include "inspiring a love and commitment to Eretz Yisroel."

Of course, none of this will come as any surprise to those familiar with John McCain's lifelong service to the Land of Israel, a commitment that has invariably been at the expense of U.S. interests.

**Update:** Asked by a social media friend for his thoughts on my piece, Moustafa [tweeted](#):

"utter BS I was born in a refugee camp denied entry to Palestinian territories by Israel even with American passport"

Perhaps his friends in the lobby can put in a good word for him.

After all, he helped organize their leading American asset's trip to Syria; he's a [contributor](#) to [WINEP's forum for Arab democrats](#); and for a dispossessed Palestinian

refugee bears remarkably few grudges. "The Jewish American community here has always supported humanitarian causes and has always stood by the right thing," he recently told the [Jewish Daily Forward](#), "and I hope they'll continue to do so."

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