

Father Dave Visits Syria. “The Syrian People are Being Treated as Cannon Fodder”

By [Global Research News](#)

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<http://www.fatherdave.org/blog/>

Hi Fighter,

I left Syria yesterday and, quite frankly, the days spent there were amongst the most intense and meaningful of my life! I sensed as I crossed the border into Lebanon that I had left some of my heart behind in Damascus!

I'm afraid I was a right pain to those I sat next to on the flight to Abu Dhabi, and to staff and companions in subsequent airport lounges, as I can't stop talking about what I saw and what I learned. I'm conscious that I could prattle on endlessly in this missive too if I'm not careful, so I thought that today I would share with you only four encounters with Syrians that I met - two men and two women - and leave the rest for another time.



The woman in black

Our hosts - the *Mussalaha* organising committee - encountered a fair degree of difficulty in obtaining the 16 visas needed for our team. When we finally crossed the border into Syria there was a great degree of jubilation, and this only increased when we arrived at the *Dama Rose* hotel to be greeted by a team of well-dressed delegates.

The *Dama Rose* is a five-star hotel, and even though we were in the middle of a war-zone, it was hard to escape feeling like members of some royal family - we were treated with such warmth and appreciation! The reality started to sink in though when I was grabbed by a

middle-aged woman in the foyer, dressed in black, who started to tell me about her 12-year-old son, Mohamed, who had recently been killed.

She was speaking in Arabic but had an interpreter in her other hand who was trying to keep up with the woman's pain and passion. She said that the rebel soldiers had put a bomb in his pocket and that he was blown apart (she gestured grotesquely). *"And why did they kill him?"* she cried. *"Because we are Shi'ite"*.

She pulled out a crumpled photo of the boy from her pocket and kissed it repeatedly. I borrowed the photo briefly and kissed Mohamed too.

The Woman from Mount Qasioun



I shared dinner with a very articulate woman who lived on the slopes of Mount Qasioun, which is within jogging distance of the centre of town.

Mount Qasioun is the mountain that was bombed last week by Israeli jets. This woman told me that she had been thrown out of her bed by the force of the explosions!

The Israelis claimed they were targetting a convoy of weapons bound for Hezbollah, and the US President excused the attack accordingly. This woman though told me that three very precise targets had been hit:

1. The barracks of *'Brigade 14'* - Bashar Al-Assad's elite *'royal guard'*
2. The ammunition dump
3. The military research centre

This would suggest that the attack had nothing to do with Hezbollah, though sources in Lebanon have said that seven Hezbollah personnel had been killed in the attack. Either way though, this was a direct attack by Israel on Syria and not on Hezbollah, and it has the potential to lead to World War III.

This is the third Israeli assault on Syrian soil. The plan seems to be to continue to provoke Syria with small murderous acts until Israel gets a response. That response is not likely to come from Syria (whose resources are completely tied up with its internal struggle) but from Iran (whom many believe are really in control of Syria now). Once this happens, the Israelis

will have the excuse they need to launch an attack on Iranian nuclear facilities.

It seems that the US has not given Israel permission to attack Iran. If Iran attacks Israel though Netanyahu won't need permission. He'll then be able to drag the US into the conflict as it escalates into a regional war. One can only imagine the consequences!



The Sheikh with one ear

We met a Sheikh with only one ear in our visit to the hospital in Damascus.

This man had been abducted by rebel troops, tortured, beaten with rods, had his ear cut off, and was eventually shot in the throat and left for dead. Somehow he survived, but now he is unable to leave the grounds of the hospital as he knows that there are people on the outside waiting to kill him.

How did this man become so hated? He said that the rebel fighters had asked him to bless their troops. He refused.



The Mufti

I had the enormous privilege of meeting, on our last day in Syria, the Grand Mufti.

I don't normally get excited about meeting big-name people, and indeed we met many during our stay, including the Prime Minister of Syria, but no one made an impression on me like the Mufti! Indeed, I don't think anyone has ever made such a strong first impression on me!

I'm still not sure how to articulate the experience, but the man simply exuded gentleness! Both his words, his manner and his touch embodied the sort of love that, as a Christian, I aspire to.

He spoke about how his son had been killed. His son, he said, was not remotely political. He was a university student, absorbed in his studies. Even so, he was targeted and shot. He then shared how he and his wife had determined not to hold the *'blood-guilt'* of their son against his killer. Instead they had committed themselves to forgiveness and reconciliation!

I can't tell you how shocked I was when, after hearing this, I was singled out (along with only two others from our group) to receive a special gift from the Mufti! When he reached out for me I instinctively took his hand and kissed it. This is not proper protocol, of course, as it is a sign of submission - inappropriate for a cleric from another religion. I felt him begin to pull his hand away, but then he relaxed, and then he embraced me and kissed me on both cheeks and held me close for quite some time. It was an extraordinary moment.

I know that many people will shake their head and think me an idiot for my behavior. Some will even think me a traitor to my faith! All I can say is that I was struck by the Spirit of Christ in this man, and I will treasure his gift till the day I die!



Pray for Syria

I must wind up my Syrian story for today though there is so much more I want to share with you. I haven't even mentioned the joy of working alongside *Mairead Maguire* - a true woman of God - and my dear Mother, *Agnes Miriam of Homs*.

There are a few other snippets strewn across the web if you want to hear a bit more:

- I've created a reasonably comprehensive photo album of the trip on the [Fighting Fathers member site \(here\)](#).
- I did a blog post on day one of the trip on the same [member site \(here\)](#). I'd intended to do one per day but ...
- I uploaded pics and video of our trip to the Palestinian and Syrian refugee camp on the Lebanese/Syrian border to [israelandpalestine.org \(here\)](#)
- My friend and team-mate, Paul Larudee, gave an excellent write-up of his experience of Damascus on the [Free Palestine Movement website \(here\)](#).



You can expect more Syrian stories to trickle down from me over the coming weeks and months, as I have no intention of relaxing my efforts at peacemaking and, indeed, I am hoping that you will join me in this work.

The needs are so deep and the stakes are so high! If Syrian society falls apart, the overflow of refugees will almost certainly take Lebanon down too, and if World War III starts as a result of the collapse, nobody on this planet will be safe.

Moreover, the people of Syria deserve better than what they are receiving from the International community. They are being treated as cannon-fodder in a global battle where the '*great*' powers are vying for strategic control of their region. Let's plead with our governments to get their grubby hands off Syria and let the Syrian people determine their own future, through dialogue rather than violence.

I read today that the US ambassador to Syria, Robert Ford, had met with rebel leaders this week, promising more weapons to fuel the conflict and saying:

"Let me be very clear. The US position has not changed. Approximately two years ago, we announced that Bashar al-Assad had lost his legitimacy, and that he had to resign. We still say that Bashar al-Assad must resign, he must resign. And the Syrians must create a new transitional government that excludes him and his inner circle." (from [Altnet.org](#))

Here is a man who not only tells the Syrian people what sort of government they *must* have,

but who is also happy to help spread death and terror across the country until Syrians come into line and do what he tells them to do! God save us all from this sort of '*humanitarian intervention*'!

I'll climb down from my virtual pulpit now and see you next week. ❌

Until then I remain ...

Your brother in the Good Fight,

Dave

www.fatherdave.org

www.fighting-fathers.com

www.zerocostwebsite.net

www.israelandpalestine.org

www.how2changetheworld.com

P.S. And as I'm apt to remind you, if you'd like to support our work, the best way is to become a financial member at fighting-fathers.com. It only costs you \$10/month but it makes all the difference at this end!



Father Dave with Mairead Maguire in Beirut - my hero!

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