

Idlib Earthquake Aid Hijacked by Terrorists

By [Steven Sahiounie](#)

Global Research, February 27, 2023

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

All Global Research articles can be read in 51 languages by activating the **Translate Website** button below the author's name (desktop version)

To receive Global Research's Daily Newsletter (selected articles), [click here](#).

Follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) and subscribe to our [Telegram Channel](#). Feel free to repost and share widely Global Research articles.

Idlib, Syria was devastated by a 7.8 earthquake on February 6. The leaks coming out of Idlib are from those working with the international aid groups in Idlib. Whistleblowers are exposing [Mohammed Al-Julani](#) and his terrorist organization [Hayat Tahrir al-Sham \(HTS\)](#).

The UN aid trucks were full and arrived at the al-Bab border crossing from Turkey into Syria with supplies for the survivors of the massive earthquake which is being called the disaster of the century. [HTS refused entry to the trucks](#) because they wanted a \$1,000 bounty for each truck.

The UN reported their team is in Idlib assessing the needs of the people. The UN is well aware of the whistleblowers in Idlib who work for the aid agencies, and are reporting the fraud and misdistribution of humanitarian aid by Al-Julani, HTS, and his Salvation Government.

Aid agencies inside Idlib are CARE International, Danish Refugee Council, Global Communities - Syria, HI - Humanity & Inclusion, The Mentor Initiative, Sham Humanitarian, People in Need, Norwegian Refugee Council, HIHFAD, Dozana, Solidarités International, World Vision, Welt Hunger Life, Christian Aid, Syrian Relief & Development, Tamdeen Youth Foundation, Asylum Access, Rahma Worldwide, ATAA, SAMS, BINAA, International Rescue Committee, SEMA, Action for Humanity, Takaful Al Sham, CAFOD, Abs Development Organization for Woman & Child, Search for Common Ground, Save the Children, Action Aid, Relief International, Oxfam, War Child, Act Alliance, Mercy Corps.

In June 2022, [Al-Monitor](#) reported that HTS, and the Salvation Government in Idlib, were in full control of the humanitarian aid being provided to displaced persons in Idlib and parts of the northern countryside of Aleppo.

The international aid agencies were being restricted in their work by HTS which demands the aid be dispersed according to HTS discretion. HTS stormed into the aid offices and warehouses and arrested some employees to intimidate the aid agencies into subservience to HTS command.

Human rights activists have long complained that HTS steals aid, prevents the distribution of aid fairly, and extorts money from the agencies to continue their work in Idlib and the areas HTS controls. The extortion is the basis for hard currency for HTS and their prime source of income.

First-hand testimony came from a [former HTS policeman](#) who had been held in prison by HTS for smoking cigarettes. He has since left Idlib and talked with Al-Monitor anonymously.

He said, “HTS uses several methods to control the NGOs’ work and get a share of the projects they [NGOs] implement for the displaced. First, it forces NGOs to pay a sum of money in hard currency on a monthly basis in return for them to pursue their relief work in HTS-held areas. The movement also deducts up to 10% of the relief aid offered by these NGOs.”

He explained that HTS distributes the aid first to its fighters, their families, and employees of HTS.

“When NGOs provide educational or health projects, they are forced to include some civilians or people who are ideologically loyal to HTS with the aim to improve its [HTS’] image before the community and present it as the authority that has the best interest of the residents at heart, seeking to provide job opportunities for them,” the man explained.

He was paid \$100 a month and provided with food and ration supplies for himself and his family.

Over the years, several aid organizations stopped their work in Idlib because of the HTS extortion and control. The Karam Foundation located in Reyhanli, Turkey had stopped their work in Idlib due to HTS interference and charity fraud.

“[HTS requested us to pay \\$20,000](#) to continue with our relief work in Idlib. It also imposed the names of people affiliated with it to be part of the organization’s educational and health projects, by sending their resumes, which we considered a violation of our privacy,” reported a former employee at the aid agency Subul al-Salam told Al-Monitor on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal.

He said, “In mid-2019, our organization decided to stop abiding by these conditions, which prompted HTS to break into our warehouses in the towns of Ahsem, Ariha, and Jabal al-Zawiya in Idlib, seizing all contents and arresting several employees before releasing them later. This prompted the organization to halt its activities altogether.”

In June 2022, HTS arrested several workers of the Al-Qalb al-Kabir (Big Heart) organization in Idlib on charges of corruption, [forcing them to pay \\$60,000](#) as a settlement before releasing the detained employees.

Al-Julani and his HTS have a particular hatred of any projects aimed at females. Any NGO or aid group, including the UN, must first submit a proposal for any project including females to be allowed.

[Mohammed al-Yunis](#), originally from Idlib and currently based in France, is a former employee of Subul al-Salam. He told Al-Monitor that HTS stopped several projects that aimed at supporting women, especially camp residents.

He noted that HTS has recently banned all projects concerned with supporting, empowering, and educating women, prosecuted several feminist activists in its area of control, and closed down centers providing training, psychological support, and counseling for women, notably in the city of al-Atareb in the western countryside of Aleppo.

Yet, the US State Department and the UN are complicit in keeping HTS in power and keeping the 3 million civilians held hostage to an armed Radical Islamic terrorist group.

In November 2017, the Salvation Government, headed by Al-Julani, formed the so-called Organizations Affairs Management Office, to control the humanitarian aid and development projects funded by foreign organizations in northern Syria, in addition to extorting levies on all relief projects and materials introduced by NGOs into the area.

On February 1, 2023, Julani opened the [Al Hamra shopping mall in Idlib](#), the equivalent of any mall located in a mid-sized city in the US. The mall was financed from the extorted funds the aid agencies have paid to HTS. Customers can ride the escalators even though most of Syria has just 30 minutes of electricity three times per day. The powerful gasoline generators are running day and night with fuel supplied from Turkey which buys the Syrian oil stolen by the US military who occupy the main Syrian oil wells in the northeast. This mall has all types of its merchandise on sale, among which is humanitarian aid which is overstocked and sold by Julani to civilians who are not on the list of those loyal to his terrorist group.

The UN and Secretary General Antonio Gutierrez are part of the aid fraud. For over a decade, the UN has been trucking in aid to the HTS terrorists and the unarmed civilians they hold as human shields. The group has always been in sole charge of what aid enters and who will be allowed to use it.

While the western media was showing videos of utter devastation and suffering following the recent earthquake, Al-Julani was controlling every movement of aid into Idlib, among the 3 million civilians qualifies for aid, and who are deprived.

The American journalist, [Bilal Abdul Kareem](#), was held in prison in Idlib for more than six months by Al-Julani for criticizing HTS. Kareem has worked for CNN and BBC reporting from Idlib. He reported that he had been tortured by HTS and that Tauqir Sharif, a British aid worker had been restrained in a tire and beaten while in HTS custody.

Al-Julani administers Idlib as a dictator, and his Salvation Government is following Islamic Law (Shariah) as the only civil criminal code. Thieves have their hands chopped off, prostitutes are stoned to death, and [homosexuals have their heads chopped off by the official judiciary under the hand of Julani](#).

The US government is firmly in support of the rights of the LGBTQ community worldwide, but not in Idlib.

The US State Department under Secretary Antony Blinken has planned for Julani to be installed in Damascus as leader of the proposed Islamic State of Syria. [Barbara Leaf](#), Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs traveled in September 2022 to the Middle East, but never visited Damascus. She and the US government she represents do not recognize Damascus as the government, but they do recognize Al-Julani and the Salvation Government, who they promote as the legitimate representatives of Syrians, even though

the area they exist in is a mere 1% of the territory of Syria.

The UN charter states that every member must fight Al Qaeda everywhere on earth. Idlib is under the control of Al-Julani, who began his terrorist career in Iraq under Al Qaeda, then aligned himself with Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS, who directed Al-Julani to go to Syria and establish a branch there.

The US under President Trump found and killed [al-Baghdadi, the ISIS leader, in Idlib](#) where he was protected by Al-Julani. [The US has a 10-million-dollar bounty on Al-Julani](#), and yet he is the man the US coordinates with to prohibit his capture or death by Russian and Syrian Arab Army attacks.

*

Note to readers: Please click the share buttons above. Follow us on Instagram and Twitter and subscribe to our Telegram Channel. Feel free to repost and share widely Global Research articles.

This article was originally published on [Mideast Discourse](#).

Steven Sahiounie is a two-time award-winning journalist. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

Featured image is from MD

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Steven Sahiounie](#), Global Research, 2023

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: **[Steven Sahiounie](#)**

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca