

# New York Times FAIL: ‘McCain No Connections To ISIS?!?’

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## **GR Associate Editor’s note**

*The author mentions a picture in which we see John McCain with Free Syrian Army Commander Salim Idriss and a man who looks like Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (behind McCain). Although the identity of the man remains to be confirmed, John McCain’s links to terrorists in Syria are very real, as the author demonstrates.*

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“Conspiracy Theory!!!” cried the New York Times in its [recent attempt](#) to defend John McCain against revelations that show the Senator from Arizona providing material support to terrorism. The NY Times was called into action to “debunk” the evidence that McCain had met with terrorists, cannibals, and ISIS militants in Syria after the photographs of those meetings began circulating in the alternative media and more mainstream figures began to pick up on and run with them over the last few months.

From the New York Times, Rick Gladstone writes,

Senator [John McCain](#) was one of the earliest advocates of American military action against the [Islamic State in Iraq and Syria](#) . So it has been vexing for Mr. McCain to be battling persistent — and false — Internet rumors that he not only helped invent the group but also knows its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the self-proclaimed caliph of the Muslim world and America’s latest Public Enemy No. 1.

The rumors are based partly on images of a Syrian fighter who resembles Mr. Baghdadi, seen in photographs with Mr. McCain — some originally posted on Twitter by the senator — during his visit in May 2013 to northern [Syria](#) . He met members of the Free Syrian Army, an insurgent group that opposes ISIS and that President Obama, in a speech Wednesday on his new strategy for battling ISIS, has vowed to strengthen.

Nurtured by conspiracy blogposts, social media and photo-altering tricks, the false rumors of Mr. McCain’s relationship with ISIS have taken on a life of their own.

While the NY Times denies the photographs showing John McCain and Baghdadi together, it freely admits that McCain met with the Free Syrian Army, itself a terrorist organization responsible for indiscriminate killings, imposition of sharia law, murders, rapes, cannibalism and more.

Although Gladstone and the NY Times attempt to portray the FSA as moderate rebels, the writer and the publication should remember one of its own articles from as far back as April, 2013, written by Ben Hubbard. Hubbard wrote,

In Syria's largest city, Aleppo, rebels aligned with Al Qaeda control the power plant, run the bakeries and head a court that applies Islamic law. Elsewhere, they have seized government oil fields, put employees back to work and now profit from the crude they produce.

Across Syria, rebel-held areas are dotted with Islamic courts staffed by lawyers and clerics, and by fighting brigades led by extremists. Even the Supreme Military Council, the umbrella rebel organization whose formation the West had hoped would sideline radical groups, is stocked with commanders who want to infuse Islamic law into a future Syrian government.

**Nowhere in rebel-controlled Syria is there a secular fighting force to speak of.** [emphasis added]



Even one of the FSA commanders, Bassel Idriss, recently admitted to openly collaborating with ISIS and al-Nusra, revealing yet another example of the fact that the “moderate rebels” are not moderate at all.

[In an interview with the Daily Star of Lebanon](#) , Idriss stated “We are collaborating with the Islamic State and the Nusra Front by attacking the Syrian Army’s gatherings in . . . Qalamoun . . . . Let’s face it: The Nusra Front is the biggest power present right now in Qalamoun and we as FSA would collaborate on any mission they launch as long as it coincides with our values.”

Idriss also admitted that many FSA fighters had pledged allegiance to ISIS. He said, “[ISIS] wanted to enhance its presence in the Western Qalamoun area. After the fall of Yabroud and the FSA’s retreat into the hills [around Arsal], many units pledged allegiance [to ISIS]”.

Abu Fidaa, a retired Syrian Army Colonel who is now a part of the Revolutionary Council in the Qalamoun, corroborated Idriss’ statements by saying that “A very large number of FSA members [in Arsal] have joined ISIS and Nusra. In the end, people want to eat, they want to live, and the Islamic State has everything.”

Not only the FSA, but also the Syrian Revolutionary Front has also openly admitted to working with Nusra and al-Qaeda. The leader of the SRF, Jamaal Maarouf [admitted that his brigades](#) coordinate with Nusra and al-Qaeda regularly.

Salem Idriss, one of the men seen in the photograph with John McCain, is the commander of the FSA, the “opposition group” touted as a “moderate rebels.” In reality, of course, the FSA is nothing of the sort. As Daniel Wagner wrote for the Huffington Post in December, 2012,

In the outskirts of Aleppo, the FSA has implemented a Sharia law enforcement police force that is a replica of the Wahhabi police in Saudi Arabia — forcing ordinary citizens to abide by the Sharia code. This is being done in a secular country which has never known Sharia Law. This type of action is currently also being implemented in northern Mali, where the West has officially declared its opposition to the al-Qaeda government that took control earlier this year. If what is happening near Aleppo is representative of what may happen if the FSA assumes control of Syria, the country may become an Islamic state. Is that really what the U.S. and other Western countries are intending to tacitly support?

[...]

Indeed, the FSA has also been targeting the infrastructure of the country. One of the main power plants in Damascus was knocked out for three days last week, impacting 40 percent of the city’s residents. Do ‘freedom fighters’ typically attack critical infrastructure that impacts ordinary citizens on a mass scale? The FSA long ago stopped targeting solely government and military targets.



The FSA is no stranger to atrocities. The FSA is the “moderate opposition” that was filmed forcing a young child to behead a Syrian soldier. It is also the “moderate opposition” that maintained [“burial brigades,”](#) a system of mass murder and mass executions against soldiers and those who support the Syrian government. The burial brigades were only [one small part](#) of a much wider campaign of terror and executions implemented by the Free Syrian Army.

Of course, the Free Syrian Army is merely the umbrella group of death squads carefully crafted to present a “moderate” face on what is, in reality, nothing more than savage terrorists. Thus, the FSA encompasses(d) a number of smaller “brigades” of al-Qaeda terrorists in order to cover up the true nature of its own ranks.

One such brigade was the Farouq brigade, to which Abu Sakkar was a member. Sakkar, also seen in photographs with John McCain, was the famous rebel videotaped [cutting the heart out of a Syrian soldier and biting into it](#) .

Yet, for all its noble attempts to protect McCain’s terrorist sympathies, the evidence the organization provides in his defense is incredibly weak. Note that the only thing the Times can produce in the way of evidence is a counter-claim that simply says the accusations are “internet rumours” and that the person in the picture with McCain simply looks like Baghdadi. The idea that he *is* Baghdadi is considered an impossibility.

The only other offering in the way of McCain's defense is a statement by his own Communications Director, Brian Rogers, who claims that the man in the picture was not Baghdadi but another individual associated with the Northern Storm Brigade, [ironically a terrorist organization](#) in its own right. Northern Storm was famous for kidnapping a group of religious pilgrims crossing through Syria in September, 2012.

Nevertheless, the [comparisons of the photographs](#) and the individuals in them lean toward the idea that the terrorist in the picture is Baghdadi. Regardless of who it was, the individual was a terrorist since McCain's defense is that it was a fighter/commander with Northern Storm.

The New York Times' Gladstone might also be surprised to learn that "the false rumors of Mr. McCain's relationship to ISIS" was confirmed by none other than John McCain himself. On the Sean Hannity Show, when responding to some tepid criticism by Rand Paul regarding the methods taken to support the death squads in Syria, [McCain stated](#) ,

Has Rand Paul ever been to Syria? Has he ever met with ISIS? Has he ever met with any of these people? No. No. We're gonna have a fight because it's patently false. This is the same Rand Paul that said we didn't want to have anything to do with anything by the way. I don't want to get in a fight with him at all. But it's not true. I know these people. I'm in contact with them all the time and he is not.

Earlier in the interview, after stating that he could personally show Obama places on the map to bomb in Syria to kill ISIS, he also stated that, in regards to the death squads, "I know these people intimately. We talk to them all the time."

McCain's also referred back to the tired line of Syrian death squads actually being peaceful protesters "fighting for freedom."

So McCain has met with at least three terrorists and terrorist organizations in Syria. But these groups are by no means the end of the trail of McCain's treachery or his connection to terrorism. After all, it must be remembered that McCain traveled to Libya during the assault against Ghaddafi in order to meet with terrorists in that country and promote the barbarism which they would ultimately bring. As Tony Cartalucci writes in his article, "[John McCain Claims Al-Qaeda Thugs Have 'Inspired The World](#) ,"

[He \[McCain\] had made an April visit to Benghazi](#), a city cited along with neighboring Darnah [by a 2007 West Point report](#) as the terror recruiting capitals of the world and the primary sources of foreign fighters that made their way to Iraq fighting and killing American troops. These fighters did so under the flag of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), listed to this day by the [US State Department as a "foreign terrorist organization."](#) Despite overwhelming evidence and [even admissions from Libyan rebels themselves](#) of having ties to, being members of, [or in Tripoli "council leader" Abdul Belhaj's case](#), a leader of this listed terrorist organization, [McCain would declare](#) he had "met with these brave fighters, and they are not Al-Qaeda. To the contrary: They are Libyan patriots who want to liberate their nation."

Despite McCain's reassuring words, the rebels over the next several months would increasingly reveal [their true nature to a horrified world](#) as they waged racist genocide against Libya's darker and black tribes, and conducted their

“liberation” against cities resisting them with indiscriminate heavy weapons, blockades designed to literally [starve the populations into submission](#) and horrific reprisals once cities fell. While the corporate media did its best to obfuscate these atrocities, when entire cities like Tawarga with its 10,000 residents began disappearing from the map, even the propagandists were forced to acknowledge the “liberators” were less than noble.



It should also be noted that McCain is extremely close to the [color revolution](#) apparatus organization, the [International Republican Institute](#) , a wing of the National Endowment for Democracy and USAID.[1] In fact, he is the current [Chairman of the IRI](#) .

As it currently stands, the fact that some people are more equal than others is clearly proven in the case of John McCain. While any other American would be immediately imprisoned and possibly tortured as a result of their connections to terrorism, John McCain is rewarded with the title of U.S. Senator and the false label of “war hero.”

While John McCain has proven his disloyalty to the United States time and time again - from his scuttling of Congressional inquiries [into the existence of American prisoners of war](#) in Vietnam to the support for obvious terrorists overseas, the mainstream media has consistently given him a pass on his treasonous behavior.

It is thus important for every American to know that not only is there no such thing as a moderate opposition in Syria but that John McCain is no American hero. If the Americans mentioned in the recent AP report can be investigated, tried, and convicted of providing support for terrorists operating abroad then surely John McCain has earned his day in court.

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