

Syria: Islamist Rebels Abduct 12 Nuns from Orthodox Monastery in Maaloula

By [Global Research News](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

Global Research, December 02, 2013

[AsiaNews.it](#)

Damascus (AsiaNews) – Islamist rebels have kidnapped a group of nuns from the Greek Orthodox monastery of St Thecla (Mar Taqla) in Maaloula (north of Damascus). Mgr Mario Zenari, the Vatican nuncio in Damascus, confirmed the information after speaking with the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate. Through the Vatican diplomat, the latter “calls on all Catholics to pray for the women religious.”

“Armed men burst in the monastery of St Thecla in Maaloula this afternoon. From there, they forcibly took 12 women religious,” Mgr Zenari said, citing a statement from Patriarchate. The group of Islamist rebels has apparently taken them to Yabrud, some 80 km north of the capital. Neither the nuncio nor the church Greek Orthodox Church know reason behind the kidnapping.

Islamist Rebels from the [Free Syrian Army \(FSA\) had invaded the small town on 5 September](#) after driving out regime troops with the support of al-Qaeda-linked al-Nusra Brigades. After taking control of the city, they went on a rampage against Christian buildings, killing three young Catholic men.

More than 3,000 people, the town’s entire Christian population, fled their homes seeking refuge in Bab Touma, the Christian quarter of Damascus. Some found shelter with relatives in Lebanon or in local Greek-Catholic convents.

Only Muslims were left in town, plus 40 nuns at the St Thecla Monastery who stayed to help care for dozens of orphaned children.

As of yesterday, Maaloula became again the scene of heavy fighting between the army and Syrian rebels, including many members of the extremist Jabat-al-Nusra militia.

Clashes are concentrated mostly in the upper, oldest part of the town, where the St Thecla Greek-Orthodox and the Sts Sergius and Bacchus Greek-Catholic monasteries are located.

From there, the rebels have launched repeated attacks against army positions in the lower part of town.

Fighting is intensifying, sources told *AsiaNews*. “The army is trying to regain control over the villages north of Damascus. For this purpose, it has launched a major offensive against the rebels, who are trying to hold government forces back through a scorched earth policy in the areas under their control.”

The original source of this article is AsiaNews.it
Copyright © Global Research News, AsiaNews.it, 2013

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

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Global Research
News](#)

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