

Syria on the Brink of Recovery as Qatar and Turkey Change Their Policies. Steven Sahounie

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*The Emir of Qatar, **Tamim al Thani**, recently said that he supports the street protests in Idlib, **Syria where people are protesting the dictatorial rule of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) terrorist group.***

This marks a monumental change in policy for Qatar, and maybe the first step toward restoring diplomatic ties with Syria.

Beginning in 2011, and the Obama administration's US-NATO war on Syria for regime change, Qatar has been a close and loyal ally to the US, and was used as a financial backer of the various terrorist groups brought into Turkey, and trucked across the border to Idlib.

Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber bin Mohammed bin Thani Al Thani, former Prime Minister of Qatar, and foreign minister until 2013, gave an interview in which he [admitted Qatar provided the money](#) to bankroll the terrorists in Syria as they attacked the Syrian people and state. He made it clear that the cash delivered was sanctioned, and administered by the US in Turkey. Qatar was not working alone, but under a strictly controlled partnership with the US government.

In 2017, President Trump shut down the [CIA operation Timber Sycamore](#) which ran the failed project to overthrow the Syrian government.

Qatar is now turning their back on the terrorists who occupy Idlib. Mohamed al-Julani is the leader of HTS. He is Syrian, raised in Saudi Arabia, fought with Al Qaeda in Iraq against the US, aligned with ISIS founder Baghdadi, came to Syria from Iraq to develop Jibhat al-Nusra, the Al Qaeda branch in Syria.

Once Jibhat al-Nusra became an outlawed terrorist group, Julani switched the name to HTS in order to preserve his support from Washington, DC. Even though the US has a \$10 million bounty on his head issued by the US Treasury Department, he is safe and secure in Idlib, where American journalists have visited him for interviews, in which he has sported a suit and tie, wishing to present himself as a western-leaning terrorist that the US can count on.

When the Syrian Arab Army and the Russian military would fire a bullet towards the terrorists in Idlib, the US would denounce it as an attack on innocent civilians. This kept Julani safe and secure, and in charge of humanitarian aid coming across the border from Turkey. The aid was from the UN and various international charities. While the 3 million people living in Idlib are not all terrorists, all the [aid passes through the hands of Julani and his henchmen](#). If you bow down to Julani, you get your share of rations, but if you have complained, you are denied. Those who are cut off from the aid can buy their supplies from Julani at his Hamra Shopping Mall, which he built in Idlib, where he sells all the surplus aid sent to Idlib.

The civilians in Idlib have taken to the streets [protesting the rule of HTS](#). Many people have been arrested by HTS, some tortured, and others killed. The people are demanding that Julani leave.

They are asking for freedom and a fair administration. The various aid agencies have complained that [HTS will not allow any free programs for women, such as learning employable skills](#). Women there are not allowed to seek employment, except in places which are only female. HTS rules with a strict form of Islamic law, which they interpret to their benefit.

Saudi Arabia and Syria have established full normal relations, with an exchange of ambassadors. At the Arab League Summit in May in Bahrain, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, **Mohamed bin Salman (MBS)** met personally with Syrian **President Bashar al-Assad**. They also met at the previous Arab League Summit in Saudi Arabia.

MBS recently announced a humanitarian grant to the UN to repair 17 hospitals in Syria which had been damaged in the 7.8 earthquake which killed 10 thousand in Syria.

MBS also sent spare parts for the Syrian Air commercial planes, which had suffered under US sanctions and were prevented from maintaining their safety by Washington. Recently, the very first planes of Syrians began flying to Saudi Arabia for the first time in 12 years, to perform the Haj pilgrimage.

On May 30, the leader of Iraq said he hopes to announce a Turkey-Syria normalization soon. Turkey, like Qatar, had been supporting the various terrorist groups in Syria in cooperation with the US.

Turkey also has made a turn-around in their position, and has been looking for a way to exit Idlib and the other areas it occupies in Syria, in preparation of a re-set with Damascus.

The relationship between the US and Ankara has remained tense after the US partnered with the Syrian Defense Forces (SDF). Turkey considers the SDF as a branch of the PKK, the outlawed international terrorists group who has killed 30,000 people over three decades, while wanting to establish a Kurdish State.

The SDF are planning to have elections on June 11 in an effort to gain western support for a Kurdish State. Erdogan has stated Turkey will never allow this to happen.

If the SDF were to lay down their arms, they could repair their relationship with Damascus, and at the same time Turkey could then withdraw their occupation forces from Syria. With Turkey out of Syria, their normalization process could begin.

When the SDF have repaired their broken relationship with Damascus, and the Turkish threat no longer exists, **then the US military can withdraw their 900 occupation force from Syria.**

Recently, General Mazloum, the leader of the SDF, said that the problems between the Kurds and Damascus are internal problems, and cautioned against any foreign interference, especially from Turkey.

The situation is changing rapidly in Syria. The economy is collapsed, with the inflation rate over 100% in the last year due to crippling US sanctions. Because the US military is occupying the largest oil and gas field in Syria, this prevents the production of electricity for the national grid, and Syrian are living with three hours of electricity per day.

US sanctions prevent some of the most vital medicines from being imported, as western medical companies are fearful of running afoul of the US sanctions, and has produced a culture of over-compliance, which deprives Syrian citizens' life-saving medicines and medical supplies.

The battlefields have been silent for years, and the silence grew into a status-quo, where the American and Turkish foreign policy prevented a resolution to the conflict that has destroyed lives and prompted the largest human migration in recent history as Syrians have sought work abroad.

Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar all played significant roles assigned to them by the US State Department under the Obama administration. There is a light at the end of the tunnel with the reversal of policies toward Syria, and Qatar and Turkey are set to play major roles in the recovery process in Syria. These reversals are also significant as they mark a change in the relationship between the US and several regional countries. This is part of the 'New Middle East' that Washington called for, but the role the US played has left them the loser.

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