

Hunger is a Weapon of War: Syria Under US Coalition Blockade and Scorched Earth Policy

By [Vanessa Beeley](#)

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In a world dominated by American exceptionalism and neo-colonialism, hunger has become a weapon of war. "The use of starvation of the civilian population as a method of warfare is prohibited" under [international humanitarian law](#) yet the U.S. regularly reduces entire nations to dangerous levels of food insecurity in order to subjugate them.

Food, next to life itself, has become our greatest common denominator. Its availability, quality, price, its reflection of the culture it feeds and its moral and religious significance make it quite literally history's staff of life.' Today, in the never-ending worldwide struggle to determine who will control its production, quality and accessibility, food is no longer viewed first and foremost as a sustainer of life. Rather, to those who seek to command our food supply it has become instead a major source of corporate cash flow, economic leverage, a form of currency, a tool of international politics, an instrument of power, **a weapon!**" – A.V. Krebs, "[The Corporate Reapers: The Book of Agribusiness](#)"

The U.S. Coalition's hybrid war strategy on Syria under the cover of COVID-19 is so vast and interconnected that a single article could never give it the breadth it deserves. In this article, I will demonstrate that the U.S. and its allies are deliberately seeking to plunge Syria into a state of blockade, food insecurity, and aggravated poverty. Infuriated by a failed military campaign to remove the Syrian leadership and government, the U.S. Coalition is now turning the economic screws on a nation that has endured a 10-year brutal war of attrition waged by extremist mercenaries power-multiplied by the U.S. supremacist alliance.

Criminal Caesar Law

On June 17, 2020, [the Caesar Act](#) went into effect. According to [Morgan Ortagus](#), U.S. State Department Spokesperson, the law is a sustained campaign of sanctions targeting the Syrian government.

Today, we begin a sustained campaign of sanctions against the Assad regime under the Caesar Act. The individuals and entities targeted today have played a key role in obstructing a peaceful, political solution to the conflict."

The law targets 39 officials or entities associated with the Syrian government. First Lady, Asma Al Assad is [identified](#) as a "war profiteer" and her financial dealings will be restricted alongside other members of her family, even those not living in Syria. Journalist Eva Bartlett, who has spent time in Syria and has consistently challenged dominant, U.S. narratives,

[recently wrote](#) movingly, for *MintPress News* about the initiatives set up by the First Lady to heal her war-battered country contrary to the Caesar Law interpretation of her role.

Dr. Bouthaina Shaaban, political and media advisor to President Bashar Al Assad, has [spoken extensively](#) on the Caesar Act and the economic war on Syria. Dr. Shaaban says that the Caesar Act is a concerted attack against Syria's allies and that pressure will be brought to bear upon those who have steadfastly supported Syria in its campaign to rid itself of the terrorist occupation financed and equipped by the "regime change" alliance led by the U.S. Dr. Shaaban's full statement can be heard [here](#)

Rime Allaf, a [Syrian analyst](#) deeply embedded in the Western institutions that continue to drive the political campaign to criminalize the Syrian government, [confirmed](#) Dr. Shaaban's opinion of such multi-spectrum-war strategies. "Any company, any government, any entity around the world is going to be sanctioned if they deal with the Syrian regime elite who the State Department believes are responsible for committing these atrocities," she wrote.

The U.S. has already [threatened the United Arab Emirates](#) (UAE) with coercive measures should it dare "violate the Caesar Law." The UAE recently began working to *normalize* relations with the Syrian government as the military victory against terrorist factions the UAE once supported becomes a reality.



Banksy-style graffiti on a wall on the outskirts of Damascus, Syria. Photo | local source

The Caesar Act is intended to derail Syria's post-war reconstruction efforts. Several Emirati companies have [visited Damascus](#) in recent months and have indicated an interest in collaborating with the Syrian government to rebuild specific areas of the country. Immediately prior to the launch of the Caesar Act, the Syrian parliament approved "oil exploration contracts signed with Mercury LLC and Velada LLC," both Russian companies with a focus on Damascus and Northeast Syria, which is currently occupied by U.S. Coalition forces and allied militants, predominantly the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

Effectively, the Caesar Act and all preceding economic sanctions are designed to prevent the necessary restoration and maintenance of essential infrastructure and basic services that provide stability, food, water, electricity, fuel, income, and medical care to the Syrian people.

The U.S.-led occupation of Syria's oil fields is meant to prevent access to that oil for the Syrian people and to provide revenue for the U.S. Coalition's proxy forces. The reality is that the U.S. and its allies are intent upon blockading, besieging and suffocating the Syrian people in a final bid to turn the nation against its government.

Where military measures have failed, economic pressure will now be increased with devastating consequences for a population that has already endured the horrifying effects of war and sectarian violence for 10 long years.

Researcher Rick Sterling's carried out a thorough [investigation](#) into the fraud that was the Caesar Report and wrote a follow-up article detailing the [U.S. legislative power grab](#) through the Caesar Act that may be turned against any individual or entity perceived to be violating U.S. full-spectrum dominance with regards to Syria. An important point is made in Sterling's article:

The exception to punishing sanctions are 1) Idlib province in the North West, controlled by Al Qaeda extremists and Turkish invading forces and 2) north east Syria controlled by U.S. troops and the proxy separatists known as the “Syrian Democratic Forces”. The U.S. has designated \$50 million to support “humanitarian aid” to these areas. Other U.S. allies will pump in hundreds of millions more in aid and “investments”. U.S. dollars and Turkish lira are being pumped into these areas in another tactic to undermine the Syrian currency and sovereignty.”

Resource theft and the war on wheat

Just before the Caesar Act went into effect, the Syrian permanent representative to the UN, Dr. Bashar Al Jaafari, launched a stinging attack on the U.S.’ coercive measures that remorselessly target the Syrian people. Jaafari referred to the [burning of trucks](#) containing aid from the UN World Food Programme, set on fire by sectarian factions in Lebanon before they could reach Syria.

He describes the “[symptoms of political schizophrenia](#)” demonstrated by the West.

When the United States daily steals 200.000 barrels of oil from the Syrian oil fields, 400.000 tons of cotton, 5.000.000 sheep and sets fire to thousands of hectares of wheat fields, and deliberately weakens the value of the Syrian pound, and when it imposes coercive economic measures aiming to choke the Syrian people and occupying parts of the Syrian lands, and when the U.S. representative expresses her concern over the deteriorating situation of the Syrian citizen’s living conditions the logical question will be : are not these acts the symptoms of political schizophrenia? Does that not indicate an acute disease?”

[Section 401](#) of the Caesar Act outlines the conditions for the lifting of sanctions against Syria. The final demand is “accountability for “perpetrators of war crimes in Syria and justice for victims of war crimes.” I have deliberately omitted the reference to the Syrian government. Why? The U.S. Coalition-aligned complex of media and UN agencies focus primarily upon the criminalization of the Syrian “regime” with scant regard for the war crimes being committed by the U.S. and the various terrorist or extremist groups indirectly and directly under their command. Yet there is surely a case for holding the U.S. Government accountable for war crimes and to demand justice for the victims of this protracted psychological war against the Syrian people, those who are rarely if ever mentioned in western media reports.

America’s scorched earth policy in Syria

The essence of food security for any country, but particularly during a grueling and destructive 10-year war, is in locally produced and controlled food sources. A very important element of the war against Syria has been the occupation, destruction, and theft of resources.

In May 2020, the U.S. forces in northeast Syria [dropped thermal balloons](#) from Apache helicopters over agricultural lands south of Hasaka which ignited serious crop fires that burned extensive areas of wheat and barley. Local sources reported that American helicopters also buzzed farmhouses and villages, terrorizing local populations.



On May 24, sources in the Hasaka countryside reported that [Turkish militias](#) had torched wheat and barley fields in the Tal Tamr and Abo Raseen areas. An estimated 2,000 hectares were devastated by these fires. While ostensibly Turkey's agenda in Syria is separate from that of the U.S., Turkey is still a NATO member state and therefore it cannot be ruled out that the U.S. and Turkey were collaborating to deprive Syrians of their livelihoods, infrastructure, and food sources while enabling mercenary militias to benefit from the black market trade of resources, with Turkey as one of the main trading routes and receiving hubs.

According to estimates, 130,000 hectares of wheat and 180,000 hectares of barley have been destroyed by these fires to date.

A map produced by researcher and former Syrian Arab Army soldier, Ibrahim Mohammad, based in Aleppo, pinpoints areas that are being affected by the crop infernos. During a recent trip to the southeast, specifically to the villages east of Sweida city that were [savagely attacked](#) by U.S.-protected ISIS terrorists on the July 25, 2018 - [I was told of fires](#) mysteriously ignited to the West of Sweida destroying food crops there. The reemergence of extremist militia forces to the West of Daraa and in the south, including Nusra Front and ISIS, may point to the culprits responsible for the fires.



Map showing all the crop-fires raging intermittently across Syria. Credit | Ibrahim Mohammad

Another important and related element of this multi-spectrum war against Syria is the potential [British intelligence role](#) in training and equipping these armed groups that are now resurfacing and carrying out regular assassinations of government employees or [targeting Syrian Arab Army](#) vehicles with IEDs, kidnapping and running familiar subversive operations against the Syrian government and loyalists. A clandestine intelligence war is being ignited south of Damascus which forms part of the US Coalition hybrid war strategy designed to destabilise Syria without the need for all-out war. It is these same armed groups that are suspected, by local sources, to be responsible for the crop fires in the south of the country.

A pattern emerging is of a deliberate scorched earth policy being waged by the U.S. Coalition and its assets on the ground across the country. At the same time, Turkey is reported to be [forcing Syrian farmers](#) to sell their wheat to Turkey in exchange for Turkish currency and U.S.-backed Kurdish contras have [restricted the sale of wheat](#) to Damascus and are stockpiling reserves in areas they control, which account for an estimated 70 percent of total Syrian wheat production.

Anger among local farmers over the restrictions and hijacking of their livelihoods has grown. On June 30, civilians [were filmed](#) blocking trucks that were transporting stolen wheat into Turkey.

On June 14, 2020, Turkish-backed militant groups [set fire to large areas](#) planted with wheat and barley on the outskirts of Ras Al Ain and in the suburbs of Abou Rasseine in the north and northwest of Hasaka. The villages of Macharfa and Om Kheir, under occupation by Turkey-backed militants, had their crops devastated by these fires. Civilian homes were burned to the ground by the rampaging fires.

An elderly [Assyrian](#) man, Issac Esho Nissan, was one of the [victims](#) of the flames that raged in the Hasaka agricultural region. His hands and face were badly burned by the fire but he still valiantly fought the blaze in an attempt to prevent the ravaging of more crops by occupying forces. As elsewhere in Syria throughout this 10-year war, Syrian civilians have been forced to protect their meager resources against overwhelming and disproportionate force. According to the [Syrian Arab News Agency](#) (SANA) at least two civilians have perished in the fires. The economic devastation and psychological pressure brought to bear upon an already war-ravaged population are hard to quantify and even harder to imagine.

The SDF is not the benevolent force in the region that they are often portrayed to be in the western media, which, along with the U.S. Coalition has attempted to mold them into a “democratic” alternative *autonomy* to Damascus. They have played an important role in furthering the U.S. Coalition’s plan to balkanize Syria and they are pivotal to U.S. and Israeli plans to occupy the Syrian territory east of the Euphrates, the nation’s *bread and oil* basket.

On June 27, SDF groups [took over the building](#) of the regional Syrian Grain Corporation administration center and occupied it by force. They now also occupy the General Electricity Company in Hasaka and employees have been forcibly removed from the premises. The SDF has effectively flip-flopped between Damascus and the U.S., now reaffirming allegiance to the renewed U.S. occupation of the territory managed by the SDF.

To date, the SDF is still [occupying buildings](#) in Hasaka. According to local sources, they have increased their military presence in the complex in order to prevent the return of government employees and the restoration of services to civilians. The SDF is also [preventing](#) the delivery of flour to the Al-Baath bakery in Qamishli City which is the main provider of bread to civilians in the area.

On July 2, Israeli forces patrolling the Golan Heights in southern Syria set fire to crops in Sehita, Quneitra (previously occupied by U.S.-backed militants and the White Helmets). Israeli soldiers then fired live ammunition on farmers and civilians who went to battle the flames.

Turkey, the U.S., and Israel form a monstrous triad of marauding forces who have entered Syrian territory in violation of international law and are in the process of asset-stripping on an industrial scale without a single ounce of outrage from the international community, who claim to defend the rights of Syrian citizens. How are these rights defended when their entire infrastructure is being reduced to bare bones by the military vulturism of the “humanitarian” hypocrites? Syria has multiple American knees on its neck, but still, we see no worldwide protests against the slow suffocation that Syrians are being forced to bear.

The mythical US troop withdrawal

While Trump had announced the prospect of the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Syrian territory in [October 2019](#), the U.S. has, contrary to that announcement, steadily [increased its military footprint](#) in the north and northeast under cover of COVID-19. Convoys of [military vehicles](#) and equipment have been steadily pouring into the oil-rich region since borders were closed globally to allegedly prevent the spread of the virus. U.S. troop movement is apparently not restricted by social distancing and quarantine regulations.

On July 1, 2020, U.S. forces established a new military and airbase in [Al Yarubiya, Hasaka](#). Reports from the area by SANA indicated that U.S. troops and the SDF are collaborating to

secure wheat supplies, reinforcing the base with concrete blocks, and posting SDF guards to protect the perimeters of the camp and the wheat silos.

While reoccupying previously evacuated illegal military bases and imposing new ones upon Syrian territory, the U.S. and the SDF continue their theft of Syrian oil. Simultaneously the US Coalition [media](#) and UN “humanitarian” [agencies](#) are actively peddling the global Covid-19 “pandemic” narrative in Syria and supporting the push for a crippling *lockdown* in this already besieged nation. The U.S. “exceptional” and predatory neocolonial campaign continues unhindered by concerns about the spread of the virus to troops on the ground intent on looting a country of all it needs to survive.

On [July 1](#), a convoy of U.S.-commissioned oil-tankers with a U.S. military escort drove through Syria and into Iraq via the “illegal” Semalka crossing in Al Malikiyah city in northeast Hasaka. These convoys are draining Syria of its life-blood. It is summer now and electricity outages caused by a lack of fuel to run generators are not as long or as disruptive, but come the winter, when rural areas could be reduced to one hour of electricity per day, this resource plundering will have a devastating effect upon the Syrian people.

The Trump administration is blatant about the exploitation of Syrian oil to provide revenue for their separatist poster boys in the SDF. In a [recent statement](#), Marine Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie, head of US Central Command (CENTCOM) said:

Additionally, we’re there to assist the SDF in the maintenance of the [oil facilities](#) for their use to help them **generate income**, which could be used for a variety of things, **some of which** would be to continue operations against ISIS,” (emphasis added)

The SDF is conducting similar looting campaigns in the northeast under the supervision of the U.S. Coalition. [Entire railway tracks](#), running between Deir Ezzor and Hasaka are being dismantled and the looted iron is being traded across the border by what are effectively criminal racketeers. Nothing is left intact, railway stations that have weathered decades of history are stripped bare and all the metal is reportedly transferred to Turkey where it is melted down and transformed into new railway tracks to be sold outside of Syria.

There have also been [reports](#) of the U.S. installing Patriot air defense systems in northeast Syria. While this has not been categorically confirmed, sources inside Syria believe that it is a provocative move by the U.S. neoconservative lobby and the Pentagon, the prospect of which is very possible, especially when the considerable amount of territory actually being reoccupied by the U.S. military is factored in.

Deliberate and inhumane environmental warfare

Another byproduct of U.S. occupation is the [pollution](#) and contamination of water sources and agricultural lands. The SDF, who benefit most from the illegal oil revenue, appears to have neglected the maintenance of the dilapidated pipelines. Crude oil and waste products, many of which are carcinogenic, are seeping into rivers and streams. Inevitably when these rivers overflow onto agricultural land bordering their banks, the toxic waste is transferred to the crops.



A goat in oil-drenched areas of north-east Syria. Photo via Al Monitor.

Recent [reports](#) highlight the increase in cancer cases in these areas. The primitive refineries are breeding disease, birth defects, meningitis, skin conditions, and severe respiratory sickness. The birth defects include hypothyroidism at birth, thalassemia, hemophilia. All these horrifying effects on the Syrian population are concentrated in the areas around the oil-wells under control of the U.S. Coalition and their various proxies.



Sheep grazing oil in north-east Syria. Photo via Al Monitor.

Trees are dying, many of the green spaces are reportedly shrinking due to the air and soil pollution that is ignored by the occupying forces intent only upon the short-term revenue, not the long term preservation of the environment. Needless to say, this environmental disaster will not make it onto the agenda at any of the international meetings to discuss the “humanitarian” crisis in Syria. Creating waves over the mismanagement of occupied resources by a U.S.-sponsored occupier is apparently not an option. The chronic contamination of the vast network of rivers and streams that cover much of the northeast will ensure the toxicity of crops and livestock for decades to come. Plunder without conscience, the shameful hallmark of U.S. neocolonialism.



It must also be noted that the U.S. has admitted to the use of [depleted uranium](#) in northeast Syria which is likely also contributing to the toxic waste which is already having a devastating effect upon the Syrian population. This use of WMDs in an illegal interventionist war against the people of Syria is, of course, never mentioned by the U.S.-appointed arbiters of *war crimes* in Syria whose focus is on the alleged “chemical attacks” that have been hugely discredited [by experts](#) from within the OPCW who have exposed the organization to be corrupt and compromised - in particular with regards to the incident in Douma, eastern Damascus in April 2018.

The legacy of depleted uranium radioactive waste and its subsequent, horrifying mutilation of the human form is not something the U.S. is a stranger to. The [level of contamination](#) in Iraq after the U.S. allied aggression at various times in their history is still frighteningly high, and the transferral of irradiated scrap metal, often by dealers who are children, is ensuring the spread of the toxic waste. Recovery from U.S. invasion, occupation, and devastation of all resources either by obliteration, theft, or pollution are slow and painful, leaving entire generations suffering from the debilitating consequences while the U.S. walks free, a war criminal at large.

Hydro hegemony and water theft

In addition to the aforementioned “maximum pressure” measures, water is also being weaponized in order to collectively punish the Syrian people for withstanding 10 years of war without abandoning their support for their government, army and their allies.



Map showing the Euphrates river that dissects much of the region with its source in Turkey

Recently, local Syrian media and activists have been reporting the “shocking” reduction in water levels of the Euphrates river, the largest in Syria. From the city of Jarablus to the Tishreen Dam, Syrians are witnessing a substantial decrease in the water levels which threaten drought conditions if it continues. This is due to Turkey, a NATO member state, closing two dams that release water into Syria, located in Turkish territory, including the giant Elisu Dam.

As part of an [agreement](#) signed in 1987, Turkey committed to pumping a minimum of 500 cubic meters per second, yet that rate has now fallen to 150 cubic meters per second, agonizingly reduced for the people of the region and the whole of Syria. In Damascus, we are already feeling the effects as electricity outages have increased because of greater downtimes in running the hydroelectric power stations.

Over the years Turkey has periodically [violated](#) this agreement but water hegemony is now a savage instrument of war for the neo-Ottoman would-be emperor Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Drinking water is restricted in the north and northeast and agricultural production is at risk from drought-like conditions.

The administration of Tishreen Dam, the second-largest hydroelectric station in Syria, has warned of devastating consequences for the economy of the local communities if Turkey continues to reduce water levels. Food insecurity and drought threaten to decimate the population. The Euphrates and Tishreen hydroelectric stations have had to reduce their shifts from 18 to 10 hours starting in mid-June. As already mentioned, this will have a knock-on effect upon the remainder of Syrian territory. [Amateur video](#) filmed by a member of the local community shows the result of Turkey cutting the water supply to an area in northeastern Syria.

Dr. Al Jaafari has highlighted the [Turkish war-crimes](#) at the UN but without any outrage from the “international community” that a NATO member state is effectively [cutting off the water](#) supply to more than one million Syrian civilians. Al Jaafari did not hesitate to point out this hypocrisy during his address:

We are saddened that those who are self-appointed defenders of the right of Syrians to restore their daily security and stability - whether from Western States, OCHA or United Nations specialized agencies, have not said a word to condemn these inhumane practices.”

Certainly, it is evident that whether it is Turkey, Israel, or the U.S., water, food, and essential infrastructure, including health and humanitarian sectors, are now being targeted in an effort to further pressurize the blockaded, besieged Syrian people. Criminal operations among the various contra factions are exacerbating the situation on the ground and intensifying economic misery and deprivation.

ISIS airlifts and thermal balloons on Syrian land

I will cover the hypocrisy of UN agencies and western “aid” organizations in another part of this series but in connection with the resource hegemony discussed in this Part One, it is worth pointing out the double-speak deployed by such agencies when it comes to covering the “humanitarian” situation in Syria.

There has been a huge [outcry](#) over the apparent inaccessibility for foreign “aid” into northeast Syria due to Russia and China’s veto of a UN resolution to keep “aid” flowing into the U.S.-Turkish-SDF occupied region via the Al Yarubiah crossing that links northern Iraq to northeastern Syria.

It is no secret that aid that enters this region may be hijacked by Turkish or American-backed “boots on the ground,” but there is another element to this issue that should raise eyebrows. While the claim is that “aid” is not reaching these U.S.-controlled areas, the U.S. is allegedly [transporting ISIS fighters](#) from Syria across the border into Iraq. So the movement of troops during a “global pandemic” crisis is not restricted to the U.S. Army but also to the terrorist group which has been the pretext for the “war against terror” on Syrian soil.

While the U.S. can move client terrorist fighters around on Syrian territory and is quite happy to transport them into Iraq, the U.S. does not apply itself to providing genuine humanitarian aid to the Syrian people effectively under their control. The hue and cry at the UN and among aligned *human rights* groups like [Amnesty International](#) are based upon the usual deliberate obfuscation of reality on the ground.

How many of you actually thought about COVID-19 while reading about the U.S. military and economic strategy that has been ramped up against Syria while we are all focused on a virus that has brought the world to a standstill? For the U.S. alliance, business as usual, supporting terrorism, destroying the planet and bringing misery, poverty, and starvation to yet another nation in the name of “democracy” because the government does not comply with U.S.-dominated foreign policy.

The Syrian government’s defense of agricultural lands

The genuine resource crisis in the northeast is being used to further criminalize the Syrian government by the UN and aligned media in the West.

A recent article in the [Financial Times](#) sheds copious crocodile tears over the starvation of Syrian children without one mention of U.S. Coalition sanctions, resource theft, the fraudulent Caesar Act and the 10-year war waged by the U.S. alliance to remove the Syrian government in violation of any applicable version of international law. This lying-by-omission has been a regular tactic used by the war-mongering establishment media outlets when it comes to Syria. Nor does the article mention the measures being taken by the beleaguered Syrian government to combat the agricultural crisis.

The Syrian government has [increased](#) the purchase price of wheat from 225 Syrian pounds (SYP) to 400 SYP per kilogram in order to support the agricultural sector. The funding plan to combat the effects of the U.S. scorched earth policy with regards to wheat and barley crops amounts to 800 billion SYP per annum in “extraordinary” response to the looming crisis generated by hostile external forces.

Anyone who is being misled by western media into believing the Syrian state would *relish* the starvation or wholesale deprivation of its citizens should read this enlightening [essay](#) by a former research intern at the British Embassy, Damascus, Louis Allday. Allday describes the Syrian government, comprising a complex of national institutions, civil society organizations and charitable institutions, as responding proactively and rapidly to the drought that ravaged the country from 2006 until the start of the U.S. allied aggression in

2011.

How that drought may well have been orchestrated by Turkey in order to tenderize the population prior to the fabrication of the “Arab Spring” charade in Syria, is a subject for another article at a later date.

Turning a blind eye to the causes of Syrian misery

At the end of June, “[donor nations](#)” from within the U.S. Coalition that has plunged Syria into the abyss of war and economic anguish for the last 10 years, pledged a total of \$ 7.7 billion to tackle the “deepening” humanitarian crisis in Syria. COVID-19 was cited as one of the factors compounding the misery of 17 million Syrians - [to date](#), Syria has had 372 confirmed cases, 14 deaths and 126 recoveries from the virus. The majority of cases have been found in Damascus or the surrounding countryside, many among those returning from abroad.

I have outlined the flaunting of global “lockdown” policies by the U.S. military and their affiliates on the ground in Syria so this pseudo protectionism towards the Syrian people over COVID-19 is exposed as the fraud it really is.

“EU Crisis Management Commissioner Janez Lenarcic [announced](#) the total at the end of a day-long online pledging conference organized by the EU and United Nations” - he said:

We have today expressed solidarity with the Syrian people, not only with words, but with concrete pledges of support that will make a difference for millions of people.”

I will be investigating the destination of the financial and material “aid” that enters areas of Syria not under the control of the internationally recognized Syrian government, at a later date. However for these nations to be genuinely in solidarity with the Syrian people they should be campaigning for America and allies to lift their knee from the neck of these people and to end sanctions, to banish the Caesar Law which is illegal and immoral and to end the support for terrorist and separatist factions inside the country.

Professor Michel Raimbaud, a former French diplomat, argues that the Western silent complicity with economic terrorism must come to an end. Raimbaud said:

Imposing sanctions on countries is more barbaric than military confrontation which is nearing an end - it is an illegal and immoral war. It is a stain on humanity. These sanctions must be lifted immediately and unconditionally.”

What we are seeing in Syria is the unfolding of the US/UK-led neo-colonialist blueprint that was previously used against Iraq. In 1991 the U.S. alliance [deliberately bombed](#) Iraq’s water purification and electricity infrastructure before imposing sanctions that prevented their restoration. Sanctions that are more accurately described as a military blockade, just as we are seeing now in Syria. In both 1991 and 2003, US allied [bombing campaigns](#) targeted animal feed stores, poultry farms, fertilizer warehouses, water pumping stations, irrigation systems, fuel depots and agricultural installations. These destructive tactics designed to undermine the survival mechanisms of the nation under attack are being replayed in Syria with similar cataclysmic consequences.

Late 2019, I had a meeting with the administration of the Ministry of Agriculture in Lattakia on the Syrian coast. During the meeting, I was informed that the US Coalition-sponsored occupying forces have decimated 30% of the Syrian livestock sectors, 60-70,000 beehives have been stolen and merchanted in Turkey. Villages they invaded were looted, agricultural equipment was either destroyed or sold in Turkey. Over 30% of Syrian forestry has been cut down and the wood sold to Turkey. Between 2012-2015, terrorist groups occupied protected zones in an area about 47km away from Lattakia – this led to extensive damage to land that had nurtured 260 rare plant species including 65 species of medicinal plants.

Around 650,000 hectares of Syrian land are planted with an estimated 90 million Olive trees. In Afrin (north-west of Aleppo) there are 18 million trees under control of the Al Qaeda-led militants. Aleppo has traditionally been the leading producer, followed by Idlib, Tartous, Homs, Lattakia and Hama. The average annual production is 150,000 tonnes of oil and 350,000 tonnes of olives. There are 800 distilleries across Syria with most of them clustered in the above mentioned provinces. Currently, about **half the productive areas** are under the control of Turkish proxy forces, dominated by Nusra Front (Al Qaeda in Syria). Turkish traders have made huge profits buying Olive oil at low prices, blending with Turkish oil and exporting to Europe at elevated prices.

US Coalition economic sanctions do not affect Syrian resources stolen by coalition members. Syrians who, themselves, might attempt to revive trade with Europe would be immediately punished and restricted by these unilateral economic shackles.

American barbarism and genocidal supremacism must be called to account. The rogue-state standards that the U.S. is setting for the world will threaten all Humanity now and in the future. Syrian lives matter because without this beleaguered nation setting us the example for resilience, resourcefulness and resistance against neo-colonialist hegemony, perpetual war will be the status quo for the foreseeable future.

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