

The 'Aleppo Hospital' Smokescreen: Covering up Al Qaeda Massacres in Syria, Once Again

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In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

Over April-May dozens of people were murdered across Aleppo as civilian areas and major hospitals were bombed by the NATO-backed 'rebel' groups.

They were even [filmed firing their 'hell cannons' and saying "throw it on the civilians"](#)

Meanwhile, western media ran fantasy stories about the besieged city.

If you believed the western corporate media you might think that the Syrian Government, for some unknown reason, has been bombing its own hospitals, and had killed Aleppo's only paediatric surgeon. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Aleppo faces a large operation by the Syrian Army, after the liberation of Palmyra on 28 March, to reclaim those sections of the city held by Islamist fighters since 2012. Almost half Aleppo's population has been displaced because of the fighting, but there are still about 1.8 million residents.

The withdrawal of the Saudi-backed 'High Negotiations Committee' from the Geneva peace talks on 21 April was followed the very next day by a pre-emptive counter-offensive. Many hundreds of rockets were fired into government-held areas by a coalition led by the internationally banned terrorist organisation Jabhat al Nusra.

These attacks came mostly from 'hell cannons', which shoot large gas canisters filled with explosives and at times chemicals. They caused havoc, killing and wounding many people in the streets, residential areas, schools and hospitals. The Syrian Army responded by shelling the al Nusra hideouts.

Aleppo Doctor Dr Nabil Antaki (<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article44597.htm>) estimates that 1.5 million live in the government controlled western parts of the city, with another 300,000 in the Islamist controlled mostly eastern areas. Dr Antaki complains bitterly that the western media "only talk about loss of life in east of Aleppo which is entirely controlled by al Nusra. The three quarters of Aleppo under Syrian Government control, where numerous paediatricians are practising are of no consequence".



He was referring to the string of NATO-Islamist bomb attacks on major state hospitals including Ibn Rushd, al Dabbit and al Razi. Many dozens of people were killed and injured. Those attacks were filmed by Syrian and Russian people on the ground, but very little of this

reached the western media.

Photo caption: Aleppo Medical Association doctors stand with Syrian soldiers, demanding an end to the western mis-information about Aleppo attacks.

Dr Antaki wasn't the only Aleppo doctor who was upset. The Aleppo Medical Association, on its Facebook page denounced the western propaganda campaign (https://www.facebook.com/Aleppodoctors.org/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1174868069211596).

Twenty doctors in front of the heavily damaged al Dabbit Hospital declared their support for the Syrian Army. Their signs – in English, Italian and German as well as Arabic – read: 'Syrian Arab Army represents me', 'Long live Syria, long live Aleppo', 'Terrorists are killing our children', 'Armed opposition is destroying our civilisation', 'No for armed opposition'.

Yet the story of Russian or Syrian air attacks on the 'al Quds hospital' gained prominence in the western media. Stories were fuelled with information from the French group Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF, Doctors without Borders) and the US Government funded group the 'White Helmets' (who you can see celebrating their 'revolution' with Jabhat al Nusra here:

https://www.facebook.com/electronicresistanceteam/videos/1172411149468354/?hc_location=ufi). CCTV showed people leaving this 'hospital' before an explosion.

The building is in the southern al-Sukkari district, which has been a stronghold of Jabhat al Nusra for some years. Many Aleppans had never heard of 'al Quds hospital'. Dr Antaki says: 'This hospital did not exist before the war. It must have been installed in a building after the war began". MSF reports seem to confirm this.



This facility was not a state run or registered facility. Nevertheless, MSF representatives Pablo Marco and Muskilda Zancada claimed: "Al Quds hospital has been functional for more than 4 years so it was basically impossible that this information was not known ... the facts are pointing to this being a deliberate attack" (<http://dissidentvoice.org/2016/05/about-bias-and-propaganda-on-syria>).

Photo caption: NATO-GCC backed terrorists in Aleppo load their weapon of choice, a 'hell cannon'

Indeed, MSF-backed medical facilities in Syria have almost exclusively been in al Nusra held areas, such as Douma, north east of Damascus. Often they provide money but not doctors.

There is some debate as to whether clinics or hospitals run to service banned terrorist organisations have protection under international humanitarian law. Certainly US law does not allow it. A few years back the US jailed US doctor Rafiq Sabir for 25 years after it emerged he had been 'on call' to treat al Qaeda fighters in Saudi Arabia (<http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-2nd-circuit/1554703.html>).

Registered hospitals certainly do have such protection, and it is a crime to attack them. However this protection disappears when the facility becomes militarised. 'Civilian objects are protected against attack, unless and for such time as they are military objectives' (https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule10).



Nevertheless, all three air forces that claim to be bombing terrorist groups in Syria – Russia, Syria and the USA – denied involvement in the ‘al Quds hospital’ incident. The US has engaged in bombing some areas around Aleppo (<https://www.rt.com/news/332109-russian-jets-isis-warlords>), but is not known to have carried out attacks on Jabhat al Nusra. That group is well embedded with the proxy armies Washington likes to call ‘moderate rebels’.

Photo caption: ‘al Quds hospital’: not quite a pile of rubble, nor a designated hospital

There were other serious discrepancies in the ‘al Quds hospital’ story. Pablo Marco for MSF told CNN and PBS that “there were two barrel bombs that fell close to the hospital ... then the third barrel bomb fell in the entrance”. Barrel bombs are dropped by helicopters. Yet the MSF press release spoke of an “airstrike ... [which] brought down the building ... leaving a pile of rubble”. Reports of the death toll ranged from 14 to 50.

However that building is not a pile of rubble. As Rick Sterling pointed out in his 7 May ‘Open letter to MSF’ (<https://off-guardian.org/2016/05/07/open-letter-to-msf-about-bias-and-propaganda-on-syria/>), photos show that the facility is still standing and it appears to be a heavily sand-bagged residential building, “a medical clinic in the ground floor of an unmarked and largely abandoned apartment building” ().

Even more damaging for the MSF story is the report that Russian satellite imagery shows the damaged building was in much the same state back on 15 October last year. If this is correct, the MSF-backed ‘al Quds hospital’, apparently a field clinic for al Nusra fighters and their families, suffered no attack on 27 April.

The scale of coverage of the ‘al Quds hospital’ story obscured the ugly fact that several much larger, real public hospitals in Aleppo were actually being bombed by the al Qaeda groups. The former story covered up these poorly reported massacres. It is not that there was no western coverage of the real hospital attacks, the coverage was just removed to the very margins of western headlines.



Photo: Russian satellite imagery shows ‘al Quds hospital’ in the al Sukkari district had the same damage back in October 2015

Take the devastating bombing of al Razi hospital, which Al Alam reported as killing 4 and wounding 38 (<http://en.alalam.ir/news/1812988>), in days of ‘rebel’ shelling which left 57 dead and 150 injured. The Wall Street Journal mentioned western Aleppo casualties and al Razi in an article which led by blaming Russia for the alleged ‘airstrike’ on ‘al Quds hospital’. The WSJ spent the next 28 paragraphs on that incident. Buried at paragraph 30 was this reference, from an anti-Syrian source: “shells had [also] hit the Al-Razi Hospital, a facility in a government-held neighbourhood where many wounded were being treated”

(<http://www.wsj.com/articles/syria-hospital-hit-in-airstrike-blamed-on-russia-1461841686>).

The bombing of al Dabbit hospital did make it into the UK Independent. This hospital was said to be in ‘regime controlled Aleppo’; apparently it pains them to say ‘Syrian

government'. The report opened: "At least 19 civilians have been killed at a hospital and other parts of government-controlled Aleppo in shelling attributed to Islamist rebels"

(<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syrian-civil-war-hospital-in-regime-controlled-aleppo-partly-destroyed-by-rebel-shelling-as-more-a7011546.html>). The Syrian news agency SANA reported on 3 May that the death toll from the bombing of al Dabbit hospital had risen to 16 dead and 68 injured (<http://sana.sy/en/?p=76237>).

Hardly mentioned in the western media was the bombing of the large Ibn Rushd hospital, but the Russian TV channel ANNA filmed the actual bombing and Latin American media ran that video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afEd5HBb-ik>).

The attacks on Aleppo were extensive, well beyond hospitals. Vicar of Aleppo Mons. Georges Abou Khazen said "we have been under continuous bombardment over the past few days in Aleppo with civilian deaths, injuries and destruction". He pointed his finger at the front backed by the West, along with Turkey and Saudi Arabia, saying that "These bombings ... are from the front of the so-called 'moderates' and ... in reality [they] are no different from other jihadists [Islamic State (IS) and the Nusra Front]" (<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Vicar-of-Aleppo:-moderate-front-no-better-than-jihadists,-bombing-civilians-and-not-seeking-peace-36685.html>).

I wrote back in January 2014 (<http://www.globalresearch.ca/syrias-hospitals-targeted-by-nato-backed-armed-groups/5363563>) that the al Qaeda groups' attacks on Syria's health system were far more systematic than any one incident could explain.

In just the first three years of this war, before ISIS came to Syria, the NATO and Gulf monarchy-backed armed groups had systematically attacked more than two thirds of Syria's public hospitals, and had murdered, kidnapped or injured more than 300 health workers.

When an Australian delegation met Syria's then Health Minister Dr Sa'ad al Nayef on 22 December 2013 he told us that foreign backed terrorists had just detonated two truck bombs, completely destroying Aleppo's al Kindi hospital, one of the biggest anti-cancer centres in the Middle East. All health workers inside were killed in the blast. Dr Malek Ali, Syria's then Minister for Higher Education added that Al-Kindi was a functioning educational hospital co-managed by his ministry. You can see one of the suicide truck bomb attacks here, proudly cheered on in the Jabhat al Nusra video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQ4kPiKiQb4>

In an Orwellian revision of events the BBC (21 December 2013) reported the destruction of Al-Kindi with the headline: "Syria rebels take back strategic hospital in Aleppo". The introduction claimed the "massive suicide lorry bomb" had managed "to seize back a strategic ruined hospital occupied by Assad loyalists." Al-Kindi was said to have been "a disused building" and "according to an unconfirmed report, 35 rebels died in the attack".

In fact, these 'rebels' were a coalition of Free Syrian Army and Jabhat al Nusra, while the 'Assad loyalists' were the staff and security guards of a large public hospital.

Dr al Nayef told us that, since March 2011, 67 of the country's 94 national hospitals had been attacked and damaged, with 41 out of service. 174 health workers had been killed, 127 wounded and 33 kidnapped. Further, 1921 primary health centres had been damaged,

and 678 were out of service. 421 ambulances had been lost or were out of service, and 197 support vehicles had been damaged, with 169 out of service.

The scale of destruction of health facilities, combined with attacks on pharmaceutical factories, schools, universities and civilians shows the armed groups have been intent on destroying a functioning state, with no interest in trying to win public support.

The Health Minister showed us a video of the FSA (Farouk Brigade) blowing up Homs National Hospital in April 2012, another of damage to Al- Salamiyeh National Hospital (in Hama) after an attack in January 2013 and a third of the damage to Al Zahrway Hospital (in Damascus) after yet another terrorist attack in May 2013.

He also gave us details of the 26 November 2013 terrorist attack on Deir-Ateya Hospital in Rural Damascus, where 11 medical staff (2 Anesthesiologists, 3 Resident doctors, 4 Nurses and 2 Drivers) were stabbed to death.

The al Qaeda attacks are often accompanied by skilled social media campaigns, assisted by western created agencies such as the White Helmets. In her article titled 'The storm of lies surrounding Syria's humanitarian crisis: Aleppo Is Burning campaign calls for Syria no-fly zone', [investigative journalists Vanessa Beeley has compiled some of those campaigns in the 'Aleppo Hospital' smokescreen.](#)

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