

“The Most damning Video on Syria” is a Fake

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The publicly-owned British TV Channel 4 recently broadcasted an “exclusive” video the speaker claims as “one of the most damning videos coming from Syria”, “evidence of the criminal conspiracy of the regime”. The film, “Syrian doctors ‘torturing’ patients” (<http://www.channel4.com/news/exclusive-syrian-doctors-torturing-patients>), allegedly proves that “doctors torture civilian victims of the violence” in the Homs military hospital where “because of government order, every civilian injured during the demonstration is taken.”

The video - “which we cannot be independently verify” the speaker says- is an example of the methodology used by the Anglo-Saxon media). It was allegedly filmed in secret by an employee of the hospital who risked his life to testify to the world how the hospital— which belongs to the Ministry of Defense— has become “a torture chamber”.

The video shows no images of tortures, therefore is less terrible than the images coming from Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib (American prisons).

But, most of all, the video, is a fake, a montage.

Not only because torture is usually carried out in hidden places and not in hospitals - be it military ones - which are open to the public and can easily be visited.

Images out of focus show a row four unnamed men (the “civilians injured in demonstrations”) on beds with white sheets. Their heads and eyes are wrapped in white bandage as if they had been injured; but the speaker speaks of “blindfolded”: why were they blindfolded? And why were they not identified? Why were their names not given? And where are they now?

If they had been released, why not to interview them?

And if they were not released, are they still in danger?

Their ankles are shackled in “rusty chains”, as the speaker underlines (why are they also rusty? It’s worth asking).

On the small table, on view are tools “for the torture” (“electric wire”, “rubber tube”). The most shocking image is that of the bare chest of one of the men which shows marks from a whip. But these marks could have been painted on his back. They do resemble the marks of a recent tortures. Interesting: among the men we can see another person who is out of focus in the video: doesn’t he see that his colleague is making a video?

Channel 4 interviews a forensic doctor (who works for the International Criminal Court) who confirms that the alleged injuries on the chest are the result of flexible materials, like the rubber tube shown, and states that to torture people who are already injured is the ultimate desecration of human rights. (<http://www.debretts.com/people/biographies/browse/p/10568/Derrick+John.aspx>)

The author of the video is then interviewed. His face and body hidden. He is interviewed “in a safe place”, using the same low-resolution videocamera.

Where is he? The man is shown near a medicine chest and medical tools. Is the author of video suggesting that he is still in the hospital?

The man describes horrible atrocities, Nazi-style: a doctor who put alcohol on the pubic parts of a 15 years old boy, and then sets him on fire. Doctors are operating with no anesthesia. Doctors are torturing even those in intensive care... Also he says that the few “decent doctors” who insist on treating the injured, face persecution.

The video goes on to say that because of the fear of being tortured, many injured peace protestors are not going to hospitals and are therefore treated in makeshift structures without proper equipment (but they show the images of the makeshift hospital in another video in Homs; it is a hospital that is used to treat injured fighters).

One wonders: “cui prodest?. Is it a good idea to torture people in a hospital for a government that is already under harsh pressure from the so-called international community?

Let us remember that in October, Syrian doctors were accused in an Amnesty International Report, Health Crisis: Syrian Government Targets the Wounded and Health Workers, of mistreating patients if they were from the opposition. But this report was made solely from interviews with opposition members using so-called Youtube “evidence” and was fiercely slammed and refuted by Syrian doctors. (<http://uprootedpalestinians.blogspot.com/2011/10/confusing-syria-with-libya-fact.html>).

What is even more interesting is that this “most damning video” few hours after it was broadcast received the endorsement of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights Navi Pillai.

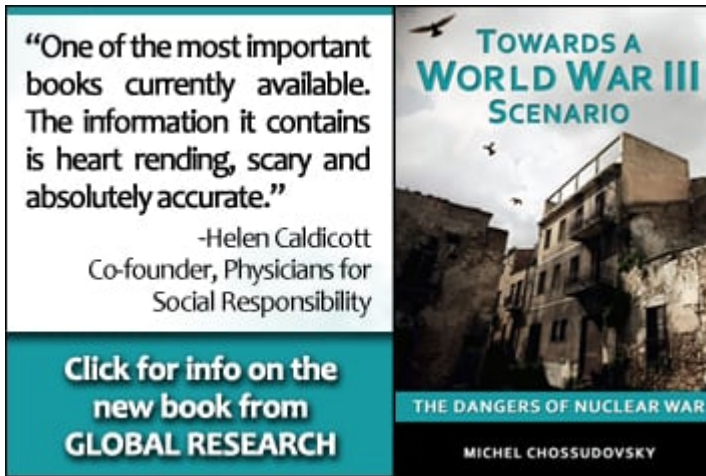
With a press release sent “urbi et orbi” the Office stated with further verification that: “the pictures shown on Channel 4 last night are truly shocking, and unfortunately very much in accordance with evidence collected by the Human Rights Council-mandated Fact-Finding Mission and Commission of Inquiry on Syria ”.

The press release quotes its reports that...are based on interviews with opponents and deserters, always outside of Syria as stated by the reports themselves.

(http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/countries/SY/Syria_Report_2011-08-17.pdf;
http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/SY/A.HRC.S-17.2.Add.1_en.pdf;
http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session19/A-HRC-19-69_en.pdf)

Navi Pillai’s High Commission on Human Rights Office states that there is also a problem in Bahrein:

“Torture was documented in the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry report (also known as the Bassiouni report). The Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan Mendez, was due to visit Bahrain this week, but his visit has been postponed. He issued a statement about this. However, it is important to note that the scale of torture in Syria is of another order”.



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