

## Video: Eva Bartlett on Syria, Israeli violence in Gaza

Exclusive interview for GRTV.

By [Eva Bartlett](#) and [Michael Welch](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)  
Theme: [Media Disinformation](#), [Terrorism](#),  
[US NATO War Agenda](#)

*Award-winning Canadian journalist Eva Bartlett has visited Syria eight times since April 2014, her most recent visit occurring in late April and May of 2018, following the alleged chemical weapons attacks by Syrian forces against civilians in Douma, and reprisals by US, UK, and French military forces.*

*In this exclusive interview for GRTV, Eva Bartlett speaks with host Michael Welch about what she observed while in the country.*

*In this feature interview Eva Bartlett talks about residents in Douma who refute the accusations of chemical weapons attacks there, she talks about the kidnapping of civilians and the hoarding of food by terrorist factions, Western governments' reprisals in April which affected cancer care facilities, and the toll of sanctions imposed on the country.*

*Eva also recounts her experiences in Gaza and Israel's most recent attacks on protesters at the Israel-Gaza border wall.*

More of Eva's journalistic work can be found at

<https://ingaza.wordpress.com/>

Videography by Paul S Graham – <https://www.youtube.com/user/redriverpete/videos>

*Please take note that Eva Bartlett will be speaking at Imperialism on Trial, a series of speaking events being held in four cities in the United Kingdom (July 2018). For details see below at foot of article.*

Partial transcript – Eva Bartlett interview: July 2, 2018

Eva Bartlett: I returned to Syria in April 2018. Now as you're aware, in early April, corporate media told the world via the White Helmets, otherwise known as the rescuers of Al Qaeda and other terrorists in Syria, these sources told the world that the Syrian Army had again allegedly used a chemical, a toxic chemical in Douma, Eastern Ghoutta. And, um, unfortunately I wasn't able to arrive in Syria shortly after because I do have to go through the visa process which takes about a month to get a visa granted. So I did arrive in late April and um very quickly, one of my first thoughts was to go to Douma.

So prior to my having gone to Douma, we already had reporters like Vanessa Beeley, we have Robert Fisk of the British Independent who is by no means an ally of Assad in Syria because he's very open about his scathing opinion of the Syrian government, but

nonetheless, what Fisk reported in The Independent is basically what Vanessa Beeley heard what Pearson Sharp of ONE American News heard, what I heard, what other independents who've gone to Douma have heard and that is that no one in Douma was aware of any sort of chemicals being deployed or used that day.

Medical staff in the medical unit in the make-shift hospital in Douma – the underground hospital medical staff told me no, there were no signs whatsoever of patients having been – what's the word I'm looking for – subjected to a chemical. None of the usual signs. And in fact, what they did show, what they did exhibit, was signs of normal bombing of – having been living underground to avoid the worst effects of the bombing – so, some sort of asphyxiation or suffocation and they were treated thus and then released to go back home. And the man I spoke to, Marwan Jabar, he specifically said no one that came to that hospital died. And he also said, when I asked him, were any of the medical staff that were treating these alleged patients, these alleged victims, did they show any signs pertaining to a chemical agent. He said no, and we were not wearing what you should be wearing were you treating chemical victims. We were not wearing protective gear. They were just wearing the simple hospital garments and face-masks perhaps.

So it's clear that thus far we hadn't had any evidence to support this latest accusation that the Syrian Army is (using) a chemical agent in Douma when almost all of Eastern Ghoutta had been liberated. Of course it defies common sense to think that they would have used a chemical agent. But then I walked around the streets of Douma, and I spoke to civilians, and the things that I was interested in hearing from them were: Was there a chemical attack? Did they suffer from a chemical attack? And they all said no. I mean I spoke to...I was there for over an hour walking around talking with civilians. And I only had with me a translator. I went by taxi along with the translator and a driver. So there's no...you can't accuse these people of having been intimidated or coerced into saying whatever they said.

And you can find on my Youtube and on my facebook a number of videos of these people, and I've got a lot more to upload, of these people saying no there was no attack. But also I asked them, well, what was life like under what our media said were "rebels." And they said, in Douma it was primarily Jaish-Al-Islam. And they said life was hell. They were being starved not by the Syrian government but by Jaish-Al-Islam, that had control not only of all the food in the region, but also the fields because Douma is an agricultural area. That's something you would think, well if you've got fields why are you starving, if the Syrian government is not sending food in? You still have fields.

Well the reason they were starving is the same that we were hearing in Madaya, in Aleppo, in al-Waer, in Homs. The same thing – that the terrorists had control over the food sources, and only those who could afford to buy the food were able to eat normally.

And then I also went to other areas of Eastern Ghoutta like Saqba and Kafr Batna, and in Saqba it was Faylaq al-Rahman who was predominantly in power there, there were other terrorists there but Faylaq al-Rahman had the strong-hold there. And also notable in Saqba, literally just a couple of hundred metres down the lane from a Faylaq headquarters, a terrorist headquarters, just a couple of hundred metres down the lane was the White Helmets centre in that region – in Saqba. And so they were embedded with terrorists, clearly.

And when I talked with civilians in Saqba, in Kafr Batna, and in Douma, I asked about the White Helmets, and the civilians' relationship to the White Helmets. And I either heard, "We

don't know. We weren't allowed to be near them. We never saw them." Or they just clearly stated "Well, we saw them with terrorist groups." Or one guy even said, "well, you know, we'd see them one day wearing a a terrorist uniform, the next day wearing a white helmet," essentially saying they were working hand in hand.

But then in Horjilleh for displaced people just southeast of Damascus where I also went by taxi, I spoke with a number of people there, and one man was very articulate, and unfortunately I haven't gotten his interview up yet, it will require a lot of subtitling. And I've been very careful to carefully have what he told me and what I understood in Arabic to be ... translated very accurately, because I do believe accuracy is important. But essentially what he said was that he believed the White Helmets were staging many videos because he said he saw them staging videos, staging explosions to then blame the Syrian Army or the Russians. And he also said the White Helmets when they went out somewhere, terrorists would open the streets for them.

So, a number of civilians, just in East Ghoutta alone, not to mention of course Aleppo and other areas have said quite clearly the White Helmets are working with terrorist groups, and indeed include terrorist members. And I did go back to Aleppo, this time with an interest to see the resumption of life in areas that had been hard hit. And I think one of the most moving moments of my brief visit to Aleppo was being at the citadel, which I hadn't seen before - well, that's not true. I had seen it in November of 2016 from a distance, being hushed back and being told by the Syrian Army who I and other journalists were with "step back or you could be sniped." And so this was an area that was off limits for years in the old city of Aleppo to civilians. And when I went there in, I think it was early May it was, it was teaming with life! And normal people doing normal activities that they could not have done under the rule of what our media keeps insisting are "moderates" but which were really Al Qaeda, Nour al-Din al-Zenki and oher terrorist elements.

Global Research: Could you talk a little bit more about...I did see one of the places you visited was the tunnels, and you know, I think it would be very important for our listeners to help get them a sense of what some of the civilians in that area had to contend with. So talk a little bit more about those tunnels that were dug.

EB: So, I don't know when the tunnels were dug. There are theories that they were dug, at least some of them, some of the larger ones, were dug prior to 2011, prior to events breaking out - the war on Syria breaking out - but I can't corroborate that. I mean it's certainly plausible. And there are theories that foreign companies that were working in Syria, perhaps Lafarge, a French company, but again I can't corroborate that, might have had a role in digging these expensive tunnels.

What is known, thanks to Syrian journalists, who are on the ground in Eastern Ghoutta when people started - when it wasn't all liberated and when Syrian civilians started to run from terrorist areas in Eastern Ghoutta, these civilians gave testimonies to Syrian journalists. And some of them wee saying their loved ones had been kidnapped by terrorists and were being used as forced labour - slave labour - in digging these tunnels.

And there are other civilians who had been kidnapped from other areas of Syria including Adra, the industrial area outside of Damascus, and relatives of theirs say - believe that they were being used as slave labour in the tunnels. So that's a very important element, and um, I hope that there'll be more on that. It's a very sad and disturbing element.

But the tunnel I saw underneath the make-shift hospital in Douma was extensive. It was very well reinforced. And to my eye, because I'm not a surveyor, I'm not a builder, I didn't pick up on the nuances. But when I posted my videos online, people were saying, "that is some serious quality craftsmanship. It wasn't done by random people who don't know how to dig a tunnel." This is done with professional help.

So that's important because with these tunnels, and some of them were large enough to drive cars through, terrorists could essentially stay underground. They could come above ground to fire from Eastern Ghoutta areas on to Damascus which they know, we know they've done, they've killed at least 11,000 civilians according to the head of forensics. I think it's actually more than that but at least 11,000 civilians. They would fire, you know, one of their mortars or missiles that they had created, because they had bomb factories, and I've seen bomb factories in Eastern Ghoutta and elsewhere, and then they would go underground. And when the Syrian Army would retaliate, unfortunately, they would be underground. So the brunt of - they would be underground but in areas embedded in civilian areas. So yes there were civilian casualties, and it's precisely because terrorists were nesting underground, and again hoarding food supplies, hoarding medical supplies. And these tunnels enabled them to prolong their presence there, as did keeping their hostages there. Because people did want to leave, but when they tried to leave, terrorists would shoot at them or imprison them.

GR: And of course there's also added to that background, there's that ongoing issue of sanctions, and how that's affecting the population as well.

EB: Absolutely! And people don't think about it. I mean, we know how awfully and terribly the sanctions affected Iraq. I believe half a million Iraqis including children, or maybe it was half a million children, died as a result of the sanctions. But in Syria, also it's affecting every aspect of life. That the economy is already shattered by years of this war on Syria. But the sanctions also shattering this economy and of course the medical sector.

Imagine you can't even get simple parts like Dr. Nabil Antaki told me in Aleppo in 2016. He's a gastro-enterologist, and he couldn't even get a simple part for his gastro-enterology work. And that's just one element of the health sector. Cancer patients can't get the necessary medications and food supplements for their treatment. And so these are ... our Western media and Western leadership say this is targeting the Syrian leadership, but we know these sanctions always target the Syrian civilians.

And in April, about a week after the West declared that the Syrian government had used a chemical agent in Douma, they, um, France, US, and UK went ahead and bombed Syria with 79 - I think it was - missiles. No, it was over 80 missiles - I'll have to check that number. But, huge number of missiles, and, um... you know it was over a hundred missiles and 79 of those targeted Barzeh in Damascus, that was the important thing. And the area that they targeted which the West claimed was involved in chemical weapons production was an area that was actually developing sanc...um, cancer treatment among other medical things and it was a research centre, and it was in the hub of Damascus. So by their logic, bombing there, those humanitarian bombs, had there actually been some chemical weapons agents, vast numbers of people would have been killed.

Featuring George Galloway (former UK member of Parliament), Peter Ford (former UK Ambassador to Syria and Bahrain), Eva Bartlett (investigative journalist), Professor Peter Kuznick (Co-Author with Oliver Stone, Untold History of the United States), Adam Garrie, (Director, Eurasia Future), Ken Livingstone (Former Mayor of London), Rev Andrew Ashdown (Doctoral Research Student in 'Christian-Muslim relations in Syria'), Catherine Shakdam (geopolitical analyst and writer) and more!

This series of events being held in four cities in the United Kingdom offers an alternative narrative on global politics and war, to that presented by the mainstream media.

Imperialism on Trial - July 2018

UK Tour Dates:

London - Tuesday July 10

Bloomsbury Baptist Church

235 Shaftesbury Ave.

7:00 PM - 10:00 PM BST [Doors open at 6:15]

Eva Barlett, Peter Kuznick, Peter Ford, Adam Garrie, Rev Andrew Ashdown

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/imperialism-on-trial-tickets-47772122705?aff=es2>

London - Wednesday July 11

Bloomsbury Baptist Church

235 Shaftesbury Ave.

7:00 PM - 10:00 PM BST [Doors open at 6:15]

Eva Bartlett, Peter Kuznick, Peter Ford, George Galloway, Adam Garrie

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/imperialism-on-trial-tickets-47281318697>

Birmingham - Thursday July 12

Quaker Meeting House

40 Bull Street

6:45 – 9:15 BST [Doors open at 6:15]

Eva Bartlett, Peter Kuznick, Ken Livingstone, Peter Ford, Catherine Shakdam

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/imperialism-on-trial-tickets-47282457102>

Liverpool – Sunday July 15

Liverpool Irish Centre

6 Boundary Lane

7:00-10:30PM BST [Doors open at 6:30]

Eva Bartlett, Peter Ford, Peter Kuznick, Dan Glazebrook, Gerry Maclochlainn.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/imperialism-on-trial-tickets-47282789095>

Manchester – Monday July 16

Manchester Irish Centre

1 Irish Town Way

7:00 – 10:30PM BST [Doors open at 6:30]

Eva Bartlett, Dan Glazebrook, Gerry Maclochlainn, Michael Pike, Rev Andrew Ashdown

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/imperialism-on-trial-tickets-47283231418>

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