

White Helmets Founder Was Allegedly Assassinated, Turkish Report

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*Speculation is rife in the local Turkish media that the founder of the White Helmets, **James Le Mesurier**, might have been running away from someone before he fell or was pushed to his death in a case that was initially ruled as a suicide.*

Reputed Turkish newspaper [Daily Sabah reported](#) [1] on Tuesday:

“The biggest question is why Le Mesurier committed suicide from a height of 7 meters and after walking for 10 meters on a lean-to roof. A possible answer is he was running away from someone who broke into his house and tried to leap on the roof of a building across the street.”

James Le Mesurier was found dead on November 11 in suspicious circumstances after falling off a two-story apartment building in downtown Istanbul. He was alleged to have committed suicide by jumping off the second floor of the building, though the latest findings cast aspersions over the suicide theory, as the circumstances of the inexplicable death indicate likely homicide.

The report further states:

“Security camera footage from the last hours of Le Mesurier as he was shopping, the first photos from the scene and contradicting statements of his wife Emma Winberg may change the course of the investigation.

“Winberg said she looked for her husband inside the house and saw his lifeless body when she looked out of the window. Police are investigating now how she was able to wake up about half an hour after she took a sleeping pill and why she stacked a large amount of money inside the house into bags immediately after Le Mesurier’s body was found.”

Despite his “humanitarian credentials,” the founder of the White Helmets, James Le Mesurier, was a shady character, alleged to be a covert British MI6 operative by Russia’s foreign ministry spokesperson **Maria Zakharova** days before his death.

Before taking up the task of training Syrian volunteers for search and rescue operations in 2013, Le Mesurier was a British army veteran and a private security contractor from 2008 to 2012 [working for Good Harbor](#) [2], run by **Richard Clarke**, the former Bush administration counter-terrorism czar.

Much like **Erik Prince** of the Blackwater fame, Le Mesurier’s work included training several

thousand mercenaries for the United Arab Emirates (UAE) oil and gas field protection force, and designing security infrastructure for the police state of Abu Dhabi – a job description that helped him recruit Syrian volunteers from refugee camps in Turkey willing to do dirty “humanitarian work” in enclaves carved out by militant factions in Syria’s war zones.

In this line of work, one is likely to make powerful enemies, including intelligence agencies and militant groups. He could have been killed by anyone of them. In particular, the White Helmets operate in al-Nusra Front’s territory in Syria’s northwestern Idlib province and are known to take orders from the terrorist outfit.

The assassination of James Le Mesurier should be viewed in the backdrop of the killing of the Islamic State’s chief **Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi** on October 27 in a US special-ops raid. It’s important to note in the news coverage of the killing of al-Baghdadi that although the mainstream media was trumpeting for the last several years that the Islamic State’s fugitive leader was hiding somewhere on the Iraq-Syria border in the east, he was found hiding in the northwestern Idlib governorate, under the control of Turkey’s militant proxies and al-Nusra Front, and was killed in a special-ops raid five kilometers from the Turkish border.

The reason why the mainstream media scrupulously avoided mentioning Idlib as al-Baghdadi’s most likely hideout in Syria was to cover up the collusion between the militant proxies of Turkey and the jihadists of al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State. Unsurprisingly, the White Helmets area of operations is also Idlib governorate in Syria where they are permitted to conduct purported “search and rescue operations” and “humanitarian work” under the tutelage of al-Qaeda’s Syrian affiliate.

In fact, the corporate media takes the issue of Islamic jihadists “commingling” with Turkey-backed “moderate rebels” in Idlib so seriously – which could give the Syrian government the pretext to mount an offensive in northwest Syria – that the New York Times cooked up an [exclusive report](#) [3], on October 30, a couple of days after the special-ops night raid, that the Islamic State paid money to al-Nusra Front for hosting al-Baghdadi in Idlib.

The morning after the special-ops night raid, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights [reported](#) [4] on October 27 that a squadron of eight helicopters accompanied by warplanes belonging to the international coalition had attacked positions of Hurras al-Din, an al-Qaeda-affiliated group, in Idlib province where the Islamic State chief was believed to be hiding.

Despite detailing the operational minutiae of the special-ops raid, the mainstream news coverage of the raid deliberately elided over the crucial piece of information that the compound in Barisha village five kilometers from Turkish border where al-Baghdadi was killed belonged to Hurras al-Din, an elusive terrorist outfit which has previously been targeted several times in the US airstrikes.

Although Hurras al-Din is generally assumed to be an al-Qaeda affiliate, it is in fact the regrouping of the Islamic State jihadists under a different name in northwestern Idlib governorate after the latter terrorist organization was routed from Mosul and Anbar in Iraq and Raqqa and Deir al-Zor in Syria and was hard pressed by the US-led coalition’s airstrikes in eastern Syria.

It’s worth noting that although the Idlib governorate in Syria’s northwest has firmly been under the control of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) led by al-Nusra Front since 2015, its territory was equally divided between Turkey-backed rebels and al-Nusra Front.

In a brazen offensive in January, however, al-Nusra Front's jihadists completely routed Turkey-backed militants, even though the latter were supported by a professionally trained and highly organized military of a NATO member, Turkey. And al-Nusra Front now reportedly controls more than 70% territory in the Idlib governorate.

The reason why al-Nusra Front was easily able to defeat Turkey-backed militants appears to be that the ranks of al-Nusra Front were swelled by highly motivated and battle-hardened jihadist deserters from the Islamic State after the fall of the latter's "caliphate" in Mosul in Iraq and Raqqa in Syria.

In all likelihood, some of the Islamic State's jihadists who joined the battle in Idlib in January were part of the same contingent of thousands of Islamic State militants that fled Raqqa in October 2017 under a [deal brokered](#) [5] by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

The merger of al-Nusra Front and Islamic State in Idlib doesn't come as a surprise, though, since the Islamic State and al-Nusra Front used to be a single organization before a split occurred between the two militant groups in April 2013 over a leadership dispute. In fact, al-Nusra Front's chief Abu Mohammad al-Jolani was reportedly [appointed](#) [6] the emir of al-Nusra Front by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the deceased "caliph" of the Islamic State, in January 2012.

Al-Jolani returned the favor by hosting the hunted leader of the Islamic State for months, if not years, in a safe house in al-Nusra's territory in Idlib, before he was betrayed by an informant within the ranks of the terrorist organization who leaked the information of the whereabouts of al-Baghdadi to the American intelligence, leading to the killing of the Islamic State chief in a special-ops raid on October 27.

Finally, regarding the death of the founder of the White Helmets, James Le Mesurier, in downtown Istanbul, it's worth pointing out that Turkey has been hosting 3.6 million Syrian refugees and myriad factions of Ankara-backed militant proxies.

It's quite easy for the jihadists of al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State to intermingle with Syrian refugees and militants in the Turkish refugee camps, and no town or city in Turkey, including the capital Ankara and the metropolis Istanbul where James Le Mesurier was murdered, is beyond the reach of Turkish-backed militant factions and Syrian jihadists, particularly the fearsome and well-connected al-Nusra Front that has patrons in the security agencies of Turkey and the Gulf States.

Plausibly, one of the members of the White Helmets operating in al-Nusra's territory in Syria's Idlib could have betrayed his patrons for the sake of getting a reward, and conveyed crucial piece of information regarding the whereabouts of al-Baghdadi to the founder of the White Helmets, Le Mesurier, who then transmitted it to the British and American intelligence leading to the October 27 special-ops raid killing al-Baghdadi.

Could the assassination of the founder of the White Helmets have been an act of revenge for betraying the slain chief of the Islamic State? What lends credence to the theory is the fact that according to local media reports, a turf war has begun in Idlib governorate after the killing of al-Baghdadi in the October 27 special-ops raid and several militant leaders of al-Nusra Front have been killed by jihadists affiliated with the Islamic State.

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Notes

[1] [British spy Le Mesurier was likely running away from someone before his death](#)

[2] [The most dangerous job in the world: Syria's Elite Rescue Force](#)

[3] [ISIS Leader Paid Rival for Protection but Was Betrayed by His Own](#)

[4] [Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi killed in US raid](#)

[5] [Ragga's dirty secret: the deal that let Islamic State jihadists escape Raqqa](#)

[6] [Al-Jolani was appointed as the emir of al-Nusra Front by al-Baghdadi](#)

Featured image: FILE - In this image taken from file video, showing James Le Mesurier, founder and director of Mayday Rescue, talks to the media during training exercises in southern Turkey, March 19, 2015. Turkey's state-run news agency report Monday Nov. 11, 2019, that a former British army officer who helped found the "White Helmets" volunteer organisation in Syria, has been found dead in Istanbul. (AP Photo, FILE)

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