

The Weaponization of Western “Aid” for Syria

Tony Cartaluci 11 April 2014

The UN and the United States have laid blame squarely on the Syrian government for blocking international aid convoys from reaching victims of Syria’s ongoing conflict. The BBC in its article, [“Syria crisis: UN says no aid improvement despite vote,”](#) claimed:

The UN has said that there has been no humanitarian improvement for millions of Syrians since the Security Council passed a resolution last month to increase aid deliveries.

UN humanitarian chief Valerie Amos said that much of the blame lay with President Bashar al-Assad’s government. She accused it of an arbitrary and unjustified refusal to grant aid convoys access to remoter areas. Baroness Amos said violence, including sexual violence, continued to increase. The Syrian government has yet to respond to her allegations but has consistently argued that it is doing its utmost to get food and medical supplies to people in less accessible areas. In February, the Security Council called on all parties to allow aid to cross conflict lines and borders.

However, what the UN and the US have both failed to mention is the disingenuous intentions, means, and methods behind these so-called “aid convoys” attempting to reach “people in less accessible areas.” These would be areas held by foreign-backed militants, including members of [the US State Department designated terrorist organization](#), Jabhat Al Nusra – Al Qaeda’s Syrian franchise and guilty of some of the worst atrocities carried out during the conflict real or imagined on either side.

To see how “arbitrary and unjustified” the Syrian government’s refusals are to grant access to remote areas controlled by terrorists by Western “aid convoys,” one must consider emerging evidence regarding the nature of these so-called convoys and the general practice of the West sending relief into a conflict of their own design.

Aid as “Trojan Horses”

It was in [confirmed leaked e-mails](#) exposed by the Syrian Electronic Army that first established the use of Western “aid” ships to ferry militants to and from battlefields in both Libya and Syria. American contractor Matthew Van Dyke, while speaking to Western journalists, [admitted that he was preparing to take a “free” aid ship](#) from Libya to Turkey where militants have been staging, receiving cash and arms, and being transported to the Syrian border by NATO for 3 years now. Van Dyke and his company – being armed militants – traveling by way of aid ships should [\(and has\)](#) raise serious concern among the international community regarding the abuse of what are supposed to be humanitarian missions.

Other stories like Alakhbar English’s [“Qatar Red Crescent Funds Syrian Rebel Arms,”](#) also raises alarm regarding so-called “aid” flowing into Syria specifically to help those fighting the government.

The article reports:

Sources in the investigation team said that Mahmoud confessed to receiving around \$2.2 million from Khaled Diab, a Qatar Red Crescent official. He was then to hand the money over to a

Lebanese cleric identified as O.O., born in 1983 and affiliated with Muslims Without Borders, in the Bekaa village of Bar Elias.

“Through the cleric, Mahmoud was able to acquire 30 RPG launchers for \$900,000 and 300 shells for \$300,000, which were then transferred to Syria by a smuggler known as Anwar or his nom de guerre Abu Salah.” The smuggler then handed over the weapons to the Syrian national known as Abu Abdullah in the Damascus countryside.

Mahmoud also bought 100 Kalashnikovs and an ammunitions cache for \$40,000 from the Ain al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp in southern Lebanon. The source added that Mahmoud entered the refugee camp with the Syrian national Mohammad Abdullah, known as Abu Hamza, under the guise of distributing humanitarian aid to refugees from Syria.

Both [Russia’s Pravda](#) and [Iran’s Press TV](#) carried similar stories involving Turkish ambulances being used to smuggle weapons into Syria. And while many will question the veracity of these claims considering both Russia and Iran’s relationship with Syria, together with Van Dyke’s leaked e-mails and more recent stories emanating from Western sources, it appears that systematic abuse of humanitarian aid destined for Syria is indeed a reality.

Most recently, the UK’s official Charity Commission warned in a post titled, [“Syria and aid convoys – regulatory alert,”](#) that:

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, is issuing this alert to charities as regulatory advice under section 15(2) of the Charities Act 2011 – it is particularly relevant for trustees of charities and charitable appeals which are organising or participating in humanitarian aid convoys to assist those affected by the Syria Crisis (“the Crisis”).

Recent media coverage has reported that a suspected British suicide bomber in Syria had travelled there as part of a humanitarian convoy. The Commission has and continues to be alert to the potential abuse of humanitarian aid efforts through facilitating travel for individuals for other purposes particularly to conflict zones where terrorist groups are known to operate or exert control.

There is a risk that charitable aid convoys to Syria may be abused for non-charitable purposes and facilitating travel for British foreign fighters. This is of serious regulatory concern to the Commission and impacts on public trust and confidence in those charities responding to the Crisis and the charitable sector more generally.

Trustees of charities and charitable appeals providing humanitarian support need to carefully consider whether organising and/or participating in a convoy is really the most effective way to deliver aid to those in need.

Despite the candor of the Charity Commission – otherwise nonexistent across the rest of the UK’s political landscape – the Western media has chosen to remain silent on an issue that the Commission itself recognizes as a threat to both public trust and confidence. Russia’s RT would go on to cover the Commission’s well-warranted concerns in a video short titled, [“Trojan Horses: Aid convoys help young Islamist fighters go to Syrian warzone.”](#)

It appears that both the Syrian government and the UK’s Charity Commission are in agreement regarding whether “organising and/or participating in a convoy is really the most effective way to deliver aid to those in need,” – particularly convoys originating in nations that have created and are intentionally perpetuating the crisis in Syria in the first place.

The West Has Created Syria's Catastrophe and is Using Aid as a Weapon

It was in Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Seymour Hersh's 2007 article, "[The Redirection: Is the Administration's new policy benefiting our enemies in the war on terrorism?](#)" that prophetically stated (emphasis added):

"To undermine Iran, which is predominantly Shiite, the Bush Administration has decided, in effect, to reconfigure its priorities in the Middle East. In Lebanon, the Administration has coöperated with Saudi Arabia's government, which is Sunni, in clandestine operations that are intended to weaken Hezbollah, the Shiite organization that is backed by Iran. The U.S. has also taken part in clandestine operations aimed at Iran and its ally Syria. A by-product of these activities has been the bolstering of Sunni extremist groups that espouse a militant vision of Islam and are hostile to America and sympathetic to Al Qaeda."

In 2011, these efforts aimed at arming and enabling sectarian militants to overthrow the Syrian government would begin in earnest. The corporate-funded think tanks that have engineered this geopolitical campaign have openly stated their desire [to "bleed" Syria with protracted violence](#). The United States has admittedly been arming militants along Syria's borders since at least 2012 according to the New York Times in their article, "[C.I.A. Said to Aid in Steering Arms to Syrian Opposition](#)."

Alleviating the suffering of the Syrian people was never the West's goal. Since at least as early as 2007, the goal was regime change, and even then, apparently at any cost considering their stated willingness to arm militants tied to Al Qaeda. The goal to this day remains regime change – and to that end, "humanitarian aid," in addition to being used as cover to smuggle in weapons and fighters, will also be used as a weapon against the Syrian government.

By applying sanctions to the Syrian government, the West has only succeeded in harming the Syrian people, leaving the government it was supposedly targeting relatively unscathed. This was demonstrated earlier in Iraq during the many years it was sanctioned, leaving both the military and the leadership strong and prepared for war while literally [half a million children died of disease or malnutrition](#).

The effect in Syria is similar. The LA Times appeared to revel in the effects of biting sanctions imposed upon the Syrian people. In its report, "[Sanctions against Syria hurting, Assad regime concedes](#)," it stated:

In an unusual acknowledgement of the pain inflicted by Western sanctions, Syria's oil minister said Wednesday that U.S. and European curbs on its oil trade have cost the regime \$4 billion and caused widespread shortages of cooking fuel and other essentials.

The concession by Oil Minister Sufian Allaw that "oppressive European and U.S. sanctions" were taking their toll surprised Middle East analysts. The government of embattled President Bashar Assad has sought to downplay the 15-month-old uprising as an annoyance provoked by outside forces.

The sanctions are designed specifically to reduce or eliminate the ability of the government to provide for its people. The "humanitarian aid," funneled through opposition groups and into opposition held territory is designed specifically to allow the opposition to provide for people purposefully reduced to desperation and dependence via devastating conflict and accompanying sanctions.

This is revealed in the West's own think tank policy papers and in editorial columns found across the Western media. In particular, in a Boston Herald's op-ed titled, "[Rubin: U.S. must arm rebels to save besieged Syrians](#)," it states (emphasis added):

During talks in Geneva in January and February, the regime let some food in, letting thousands of residents return. But as soon as the talks ended, Assad stopped the humanitarian aid convoys.

"I know the United States is one of the main donors," Zakaria told me, "but the aid is going to organizations that work under the regime, which gives him (Assad) more cards to force civilians or rebels to surrender. They should find a way to get the aid into besieged towns."

Qusai Zakarya is of course, [a public relations officer working directly for the so-called "Syrian opposition"](#) and his comments represent the basic principles of wresting control of a country away from an established political order and handing it over to another - [covered in depth by various US counterinsurgency manuals](#). The idea is clearly to use aid as a means of taking those "cards" mentioned by Zakarya from the Syrian government, and handing them to the opposition – not the immediate alleviation of human suffering, but the use of that pretext to further the geopolitical agenda of the West in Syria.

What's Next For Syrians?

Syria itself, its allies, and activists around the world must shine more light on the suffering the Syrian people are enduring through the intentional destruction of their economy. This destruction has been exacted through both the West's premeditated and intentionally perpetuated attempt to violently overthrow the Syrian government, and the sanctions they have imposed upon the Syrian people. They have done this to intentionally create a desperate, dependent population that they hope will submit to a new pro-Western client regime.

While the West has created a torrent of propaganda fronts to justify its ongoing, full spectrum assault on Syria, including economic warfare, Syria and its allies must counter this with truthful reports and media projects that will have a stronger appeal to an increasingly distrustful public that has grown weary of the West's extraterritorial adventures.

For independent activists and humanitarian aid workers worldwide, the West's abuse of aid to augment its foreign meddling should be a cause for great alarm. The UK's Charity Commission should not stand alone in its concern regarding the abuse of humanitarian aid. Such abuse does indeed stand to threaten the public's trust and confidence in all humanitarian endeavors. A distrustful public that has no confidence in the traditional brokers of humanitarian aid will search elsewhere to invest their time, energy, and income – leaving aid organizations in perpetual decline. Restoring that trust and confidence will require both the exposure of abuse, and steps taken to rectify it.

Approaching the Syrian government directly with aid, and providing oversight on the ground to assess efforts to distribute it would be a positive first step. Working with nations that have demonstrably shown a desire to end the conflict, rather than perpetuate or even expand it until their desired "political transitions" take place would also be necessary.

While many humanitarian aid groups feel "tied" to the West – as the West's designs unravel in Syria and irreversible decline begins, those "tied" to these special interests will be dragged with them. Sorting out the abuses of humanitarian aid destined for Syria is therefore not just a literal matter of survival for the Syrian people, but also an organizational matter of survival for the aid groups involved.

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http://journal-neo.org/2014/04/11/the-weaponization-of-western-aid-for-syria/?fb_action_ids=10200844434672748&fb_action_types=og.likes