



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on August 7, 2012

Ex-Syrian Prime Minister Joins Western-backed “Holy” War

Former Syrian “Prime Minister” Riad Hijab has reportedly defected to the opposition, dealing what analysts said was a symbolic blow to the regime of dictator Bashar al-Assad in its ongoing battle against Western-backed rebels and Islamist forces. The dictatorship disputed those allegations, however, claiming that the ex-premier had actually been fired.



Initial media reports of Hijab’s defection were citing unnamed “opposition activists” who also, apparently inaccurately, claimed that three other government ministers had already fled the country as well. Later, a man claiming to be a spokesman for the former prime minister, whose whereabouts are currently unknown, appeared on Al Jazeera to read a statement supposedly on Hijab’s behalf.

“I have defected from the terrorist, murderous regime and am joining the holy revolution,” [read](#) Hijab’s supposed statement cited by spokesman Mohammed el-Etri, adding that the former official’s family members were also in safe locations. El-Etri also claimed that the defection had been in the works for months in conjunction with the rebel “Free Syrian Army” (FSA).

“I announce that I am from today a soldier in this blessed revolution,” the statement read.

Like much of the often-contradictory information emerging from Syria, the allegations could not be independently verified. They may very well be true. But Al Jazeera — created and financed by the Sunni-Islamic dictatorship ruling over Qatar, which is also arming and funding the Syrian rebels — has been [caught](#) broadcasting bogus, staged, or exaggerated pro-“regime change” reports on multiple occasions over the last year.

The Shia-dominated socialist Syrian regime [told](#) state-run propaganda outlets that Hijab, a Sunni and former “Agriculture Minister” who became “Prime Minister” in June as Assad was instituting reforms to placate the opposition, had been dismissed from his post. It did not elaborate on the reasons for the alleged dismissal, which could not be independently confirmed either.

“We haven’t heard anything from the former Prime Minister and he didn’t appear on TV nor said anything,” the regime’s so-called “Information Minister,” Omran al-Zoubi, [told](#) the state-run Syrian news agency. A supposed “anonymous” Jordanian source told Reuters and the Associated Press that the Syrian regime had sacked Hijab after his defection.

The dictatorship promptly replaced Hijab with a deputy prime minister named Omar Ghalawanji, according to press reports. Charged with leading an interim, caretaker government, Ghalawanji



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reportedly met with his “cabinet” in an emergency meeting Monday, with another urgent session expected Tuesday. The new premier claimed all ministers attended despite reports of other ministerial defections.

Despite the media circus surrounding the latest development, the “Prime Minister” post in the Syrian regime actually holds little power. The job has mostly been filled with Sunni Muslims, who represent a majority of the nation’s population despite the secular dictatorship being dominated by members of the Shia-oriented Alawite minority. But while Hijab was not a member of Assad’s “inner circle,” analysts and regime opponents said the departure was a symbolic blow at the very least.

The U.S. government, which has been [supporting](#) opposition forces since long before violence and civil war broke out, seized the opportunity to slam the Syrian dictatorship. According to the Obama administration, Hijab’s departure shows that the end may be near for the current regime — especially considering the president’s recent [secret order purporting to authorize more covert support](#) for insurgents.

“That the titular head of the Syrian government has rejected the ongoing slaughter being carried out at Assad’s direction only reinforces that the Assad regime is crumbling from within,” claimed White House Press Secretary Jay Carney in a briefing with reporters. “If he cannot maintain cohesion within his own inner circle, it reflects on his inability to maintain any following among the Syrian people that isn’t brought about at the point of a gun.”

Several other officials in the regime have defected in recent months including the ambassador to Iraq and more than a few military leaders. The Defense Minister and two top “security” officials, meanwhile, were [killed in a bomb attack](#) last month in the heart of Damascus. An Islamic terror group and the FSA both claimed credit for the killings.

According to some analysts, the recent blows dealt to the Assad regime indicate that at least a few senior Syrian officials are beginning to lose confidence in the despot’s ability to maintain power. Indeed, amid a broad international onslaught that includes Western governments, wealthy Sunni dictatorships, the government of Turkey, and [Islamist terror groups such as al Qaeda](#), Assad is facing a very deadly enemy despite his tenuous support from the Russian government.

The mass influx of jihadists and al Qaeda terrorists has made the Western-backed FSA particularly well-suited to take on the once-mighty Assad regime. But in a stunning — analysts [called it Orwellian](#) — seeming reversal of long-standing official policy, top members of the internationalist establishment have applauded the extreme Islamist elements and their murderous efficacy in waging war against the elite’s latest target.

“The Syrian rebels would be immeasurably weaker today without al-Qaeda in their ranks,” [wrote](#) Ed Husain, a senior fellow for Middle Eastern Studies with the world-government-promoting Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). “Al-Qaeda fighters, however, may help improve morale. The influx of jihadis brings discipline, religious fervor, battle experience from Iraq, funding from Sunni sympathizers in the Gulf, and most importantly, deadly results. In short, the FSA needs al-Qaeda now.”

Of course, the CFR, along with the Bilderberg group, Goldman Sachs, George Soros, and other global power brokers, have long been intimately tied to the rebel uprising in Syria. In fact, the Muslim Brotherhood-dominated Syrian National Council (SNC), the most widely accepted anti-Assad umbrella group, has [extensive and well-documented links to that cabal](#).

The fact that the very same self-styled “elite” that insisted on a global terror war to eliminate al-Qaeda



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is now openly acknowledging its alliance with the notorious terror group in Syria, however, has barely been mentioned in the establishment press. But as *The New American* consistently reported during President Obama's unconstitutional war on Libya, [the situation there was similar](#), with the U.S. government allied with its former nemesis to bring down Libyan strongman Moammar Gadhafi.

While Western power brokers celebrate, however, reports indicate that the latest round of intervention could again come back to haunt Americans. In a piece entitled "[Syria's rebels have a new villain: the United States](#)," the *Christian Science Monitor* reported that many of the Western-backed rebels are not exactly pro-American.

"We see America the same as the Russians and Assad," a man dubbed "Mohamed" was quoted as saying in the report. Despite overwhelming and well-documented support from the U.S. government dating back at least several years, another rebel showed the *Monitor's* reporter a text message: "[The] America government would not help us and they will pay heavy price for this."

Christians and other minorities, who were protected by the secular Assad regime amid vicious persecution throughout most of the region, are reportedly being slaughtered by rebel forces in what analysts have called "[ethnic cleansing](#)" — a [similar phenomenon](#) has been underway recently in Egypt, Iraq, Libya, and other countries where the U.S. government intervened. And as the conflict rages on, the massacres are expected to continue.

Estimates from the UN and other sources indicate that thousands have died on both sides of the conflict, with both the regime and the rebels accused of wanton savagery, war crimes, and torture. Tens of thousands have already fled from Syria to neighboring Lebanon and Turkey, too. And while what some experts consider to be a proxy war grows increasingly vicious, innocent civilians will, as always, continue to pay the price.

Photo of Riad Hijab under a portrait of Bashar Assad: AP Images

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