



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on December 17, 2013

Syrian Rebel Groups May Join Assad Regime Against Jihadists

With the armed conflict between Western-backed Islamists and the Bashar al-Assad regime still raging, recent reports suggest growing unease among some rebel groups and anti-Assad activists with the surge in influence and power of al-Qaeda-linked terrorists determined to enslave Syria under brutally enforced Islamic law, or sharia. The escalating fears have become so serious that some rebel leaders are reportedly considering joining forces with the Assad dictatorship to wage war on Islamic fundamentalists.



As *The New American* has been documenting almost from the start of the internationally fueled conflict, many of the Sunni jihadists seeking “regime change” have been [hard at work](#) exterminating minority groups — [Christians](#) and [Shia Muslims](#), for example — in a bid to turn Syria [into a hardcore Islamist emirate](#). Eventually, the goal is a broader Muslim caliphate. While few deny that the current regime in Damascus has a long history of brutality and tyranny, the Assad dictatorship has worked to protect the various minority groups in the nation from Sunni-led jihadist violence.

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With rebels gaining ground in some areas of Syria, though, ancient Christian communities and non-Sunni Muslims have been slaughtered — even women and children have not been spared. Meanwhile, many anti-regime activists have also increasingly turned against assorted jihadist rebel factions, including some of the most powerful forces in the conflict. Still, in recent years, news reports have focused on regime forces joining the rebels. Now, media accounts and activists suggest that the tide might be turning as former Assad opponents turn toward the regime in an effort to stop the bloody jihadist advance.

CNN, for example, [spoke](#) with several men who said they had joined the rebels, only to re-join the regime when presented with the opportunity. One of the men, 25-year-old Akram Samer Halabi, said he joined the Western establishment-backed “Free Syrian Army” in 2012 because they offered to pay him decently — presumably with taxpayer money coming from some combination of the Obama administration, European governments, assorted Sunni Arab dictators, and other foreign powers seeking “regime change.” Apparently he needed money for food.

When Halabi saw rebel fighters “carry out atrocities against civilians,” however, he decided to flee back to regime-controlled territory, CNN reported, adding that it could not independently verify the stories. Another man, Wael Fadel Ninn, said he had been kidnapped by rebels while selling vegetables and was coerced into the rebel “cause.” When he got the chance to run, though, he did, contacting the Syrian military and fleeing toward it with his weapons.

According to the regime’s military commander for a southern sector of Damascus, the capital city, more



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and more rebel fighters are defecting to the regime — either re-joining the regime after having switched sides, or defecting to it for the first time after becoming disillusioned with the opposition. “In the last months, the numbers became larger. We began with one person months ago and finished with dozens a week ago,” said the commander, identified as Abu Saleem by CNN, describing the amnesty procedure used to pardon formerly anti-regime fighters.

“We make a paper for them, where they must guarantee that they will not go back to the other side and we check them to see whether they were involved in any crimes,” Abu Saleem continued, adding that those involved in killing Syrian troops were not welcome. “Then we give them the paper for the authorities, and they are free to go. We do not detain them even for one minute.” Assad has repeatedly offered to pardon “all crimes” by opposition forces if they comply with his regime’s demands.

Time magazine also reported on the emerging trend in an article headlined, [“To Syria’s Revolutionaries, Assad Isn’t Looking So Bad After All.”](#) Noting that the supposed “revolution” had been “hijacked” by Islamists — as *The New American* has documented, it was largely fomented from abroad by foreign powers, too — the establishment publication tells the story of a female anti-regime protester. More recently, her outrage and activism has shifted, and she now speaks out about the jihadist rebels. The woman was eventually forced flee to Turkey to escape Islamic “justice” for the “crime” of wearing pants.

“She is not alone,” *Time* reported, citing experts and analysts, while noting that rebels have been kidnapping, torturing, and murdering those who oppose their vision of an Islamic dictatorship. “Hundreds of activists have watched in desperation as the revolution they launched to overthrow the repressive regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad threatens to deliver their country into the hands of equally oppressive Islamist radicals determined to turn Syria into an Islamic caliphate.”

Multiple Syrians who once fought against the regime are quoted in the piece saying that the jihadist rebels are as bad as — or even worse — than the barbaric Assad regime. With the country and the civilian population being destroyed amid the foreign-fueled carnage, one former anti-regime revolutionary now believes the best solution is for the dictatorship and the opposition to reach a peaceful solution at the upcoming January talks in Geneva. In essence, the two sides would agree to share coercive power over what remains of the already-terrorized civilian population. He also said arming the rebels was a bad idea, for obvious reasons.

In an extraordinarily bizarre twist, Western diplomats and intelligence officials quoted by the U.K. *Independent* newspaper [suggested](#) that negotiations next month could lead to an anti-extreme jihadist alliance of sorts between the Assad regime and less-extreme rebels groups. According to the paper, the possibility of a “second civil war” in Syria — this time with former rebels and the Assad regime fighting against other rebels — is looming larger after [Free Syrian Army](#) boss Salim Idris reportedly said he was prepared to join regime troops in the future. The supposed shared goal: Drive out al-Qaeda-linked extremists, who now control huge swaths of territory, natural resources, and bands of brutal Islamist fighters.

“General” Idris, however, who leads the dubious Western-backed rebel outfit [touted by the Obama administration as “moderate,”](#) was reportedly run out of Syria last week by a coalition of jihadists. The reports were later denied, with the FSA [claiming](#) the allegations were part of an effort to “weaken the morale of the fighters.” However, while the FSA itself is packed with Muslim Brotherhood operatives and other Islamists, fighting between it and even more-extreme jihadists continues to rage. Al-Qaeda affiliates and other Islamist groups have increasingly turned their guns on each other, too.



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While the alternative media was largely responsible for making known the domination of anti-Assad forces by foreign-backed jihadists, virtually all governments and establishment press outlets now acknowledge as much as well. The *Wall Street Journal* even [reported](#) this month that “Western officials now concede” that al-Qaeda-linked groups “are as great a danger in Syria as President Bashar al-Assad’s regime.” Instead of staying out of the affairs of other nations, the Obama administration [insisted](#) on flooding Syria with U.S. taxpayer funds and weapons — and even using military force to oust Assad, who would have probably been replaced with jihadist rulers had public and congressional reluctance not stopped deeper U.S. involvement in the war.

Now that the partly Obama-instigated carnage in Syria is becoming increasingly obvious to everyone, even the U.S. and U.K. governments have announced a suspension of aid to rebels in northern Syria. Much damage, however, has already been done, and will likely continue to intensify. Among the recent horrors reportedly perpetrated in the ghastly war by Obama administration-backed jihadist rebels was the [slaughtering](#) of almost 50 Christian civilians and attacks on 14 churches in the ancient Christian area of Sadad last month. Indeed, atrocities against minorities have become an everyday part of life in today’s Syria, along [with numerous other nations where the U.S. government has intervened](#).

Conservative estimates suggest that well over 100,000 Syrians have died in the war so far, with potentially millions of refugees fleeing to neighboring countries. According to the United Nations, which has been exploiting the crisis in Syria to [justify its power grabs](#) while at least one of its refugee camps served as a haven for jihadists, both sides in the conflict have perpetrated war crimes. With all factions in the war holding firm, however, it appears that absent a negotiated deal, the bloodshed will continue, regardless of how the alliances shift.

Photo of Syrian rebel fighters: AP Images

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