



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on May 15, 2013

Syrian Rebel Leader Filmed Eating Soldier's Body Organs

[Video](#) of a rebel commander in Syria eating the body organs of a soldier loyal to the Bashar al-Assad regime has sparked a global outcry, with human rights groups calling for an immediate end to the savagery and impunity. Western analysts are also once again debating the wisdom of U.S. and European support for the [Islamist opposition](#), backing that has included financing since before the ["revolution"](#) began, [arms shipments](#), [training](#), and [much more](#).



[The footage in question](#) had been circulating online and in news rooms for at least a week, but experts and reporters were unsure of its authenticity. Now, less than two weeks after the Obama administration [announced that it may start overtly arming rebel forces in Syria](#), the video has been confirmed as authentic. In fact, the cannibalistic militant leader has [reportedly](#) even boasted of the crime in interviews with Western media outlets.

The [horrific 30-second clip](#) shows "Independent Omar al-Farouk Brigade" chief Khalid al-Hamad, who apparently fights under the pseudonym Abu Sakkar and has been [implicated in other atrocities](#), standing over the dead body of a pro-regime fighter as other rebels celebrate. After cutting out an organ — apparently a lung mistaken for the heart or liver — the commander holds it up and speaks toward the camera.

"I swear to God, soldiers of Bashar, you dogs — we will eat your heart and livers! Takbir! God is Great!" al-Hamad says in the video, according to translations in media reports. "Oh my heroes of Baba Amr, you slaughter the Alawites [members of a Shia Muslim denomination to which dictator Assad belongs] and take their hearts out to eat them!" The Sunni rebel then appears to take a bite out of the organ.

After the footage went "viral" on the Internet, spreading like wildfire through social media, *Time* magazine [reported](#) that it had interviewed the Independent Omar al-Farouk Brigade commander responsible for what analysts have described as ritualistic cannibalism. Speaking to the American publication via Skype, al-Hamad reportedly said that despite the furor, he had no regrets over his decision to eat his enemy's organs and put the video online.

In fact, the rebel leader attempted to justify the barbarity, claiming that his men had found evidence of abuses against women on the dead soldier's cellphone. Al-Hamad also said that one of the purposes of filming the savagery was to intimidate pro-regime forces — something he claimed Assad's fighters do as well — into avoiding the swath of territory his Islamist brigade currently controls.

As if one film was not enough, the cannibal commander claimed to have video of other atrocities too. "Hopefully we will slaughter all of them [Alawites]," Al-Hamad, a Sunni Muslim, was quoted as saying. "I have another video clip that I will send to them. In the clip, I am sawing another shabiha [pro-government militiaman] with a saw. The saw we use to cut trees. I sawed him into small pieces and large ones."



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Human rights groups promptly condemned the video and those responsible for it, calling for accountability and action to prevent future barbarity. New York-based Human Rights Watch, for example, called on the Western establishment-backed Syrian National Coalition and rebel Free Syrian Army to take “all possible steps to hold those responsible for war crimes accountable and prevent such abuses by anyone under their command.”

In a [statement](#) released Monday, the human rights group also urged “any party with the power to do so” to do everything possible to keep weapons from reaching the brigade led by al-Hamad — a tough proposition considering the deluge of arms flooding into Syria with support from Obama, Sunni Arab despots, European powers, and others. The group, which said al-Hamad’s brigade was also implicated in shelling innocent Lebanese civilians, called on the United Nations and its so-called “International Criminal Court” to take action as well.

“One important way to stop Syria’s daily horrors, from beheadings to mutilations to executions, is to strip all sides from their sense of impunity,” said HRW’s Middle East Deputy Director Nadim Houry. “It is not enough for Syria’s opposition to condemn such behavior or blame it on violence by the government. The opposition forces need to act firmly to stop such abuses.”

Following the wave of global outrage and new questions surrounding foreign governments’ controversial support for the Islamist opposition, Western-backed Syrian rebel leaders condemned cannibalism and promised not to tolerate it. The “Supreme Military Council,” which claims to oversee most of the rebel fighters, released a poster calling for al-Hamad to be brought in “dead or alive.”

Meanwhile, the foreign-based “Syrian Opposition Coalition” also released a [statement](#) blasting the savage acts. The controversial umbrella group for rebel factions, which includes strong Muslim Brotherhood influence but is officially recognized as the “legitimate” government of Syria by numerous Western and Arab powers, said cannibalism is against its values.

“Such an act contradicts the morals of the Syrian people as well as the values and principles of the Free Syrian Army. The FSA has been [fighting] and continues to fight for the dignity of every Syrian striving for freedom,” the Western- and Arab dictator-backed coalition said. “The FSA is a national army above all, formed to defend civilians and deliver the Syrian people from the mentality of revenge and crime. It completely rejects the ill-treatment of the wounded and the disfigurement of the dead.”

Rebel commander and apparent cannibal Al-Hamad, however, attacked critics in organizations such as the UN and HRW. He said forces loyal to the secular Syrian despot have posted “a million” videos of themselves “stabbing and raping,” adding that the UN ought to tell pro-regime fighters not to commit abuses instead.

Indeed, widespread and savage human rights violations have been reported on both sides, and there is little doubt that rebels and regime forces have been engaged in brutal crimes — an estimated 70,000 people have reportedly been killed in the conflict so far. However, on more than a few occasions, as *The New American* has documented extensively, barbaric atrocities perpetrated by rebel forces have [been blamed on the Assad dictatorship, with the truth only revealed days or weeks later](#).

Al-Hamad also suggested in his interview with *Time* that the regime’s brutality had driven him to commit such abuses. “You are not seeing what we are seeing, and you are not living what we are living,” he was quoted as saying. “Where are my brothers, my friends, the girls of my neighborhood who were raped? May God bless them all.”

Some analysts say the filmed act was more than just an isolated act of a desperate madman



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commanding a rebel brigade. Theodore Shoebat, who exposes what he and his Islamist terrorist-turned Christian father say is the “true” nature of Islam, [reported](#) that the incident was yet another recent example of “Islamic ritual cannibalism” amid the so-called Arab Spring. He compared al-Hamad’s horrific organ eating to pagan Maya rituals.

“Our predictions of cannibalism on the rise are becoming more and more true,” Shoebat wrote in his analysis of the latest event, also citing similar examples in Egypt and an incident involving rebel Free Syrian Army forces [allegedly barbecuing a decapitated soldier’s head recently](#). “This is the Syrian revolution. Any questions?”

Analysts and human rights advocates commenting on the latest revelations said they show that the Syrian war has descended into outright savagery — no rules, no decency, and no humanity. On one side are rebels, foreign jihadists, Western powers, the Obama administration, [al-Qaeda](#), ruthless Sunni Arab tyrants, and powerful establishment organizations. On the other: the brutal Assad dictatorship, the Russian government, the Iranian regime, and other foreign powers. Stuck in the crosshairs, meanwhile, are millions of innocent civilians who end up paying the price.

Photo of Syrian soldiers: AP Images

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