



Government Forces and the Fighting Shiite Militias Breach Aleppo Agreement Multiple Times

Report contents

I. Introduction

II. Details

III. People under Siege are still Waiting a Safe Exit

IV. Recommendations

V. Attachments

Acknowledgment

I. Introduction

With the support of the Russian aerial arsenal, government forces and the pro-government foreign militias managed to take over 95% of Aleppo's eastern neighborhoods which forced the residents of these areas to flee and displace. However, there are approximately 50,000 civilians trapped in Al Zebdiya, Al Sukkari, Al Mash-had, Al Ansari, and Tal Al Zarazeir neighborhoods which are under the control of armed opposition factions as well as parts of Saif Al Dawla, Salah Al Din, and Al Amiriya neighborhoods. We recorded a relentless and systematic bombardment using missiles, shells, and barrel bombs against these neighborhoods which resulted in the killing of a great number of victims.

Tuesday 13 December 2016 approximately at 18:00, the Russian regime, in coordination with the Turkish regime, announced [a ceasefire agreement](#) inside the neighborhoods of Aleppo city that are under the control of armed opposition factions. The agreement stated that civilians, wounded, and gunmen will be evacuated via Al Ramousa crossing to Uqdat Al Raqqa area and then to the western suburbs of Aleppo at 5:00 AM on Wednesday 14 December.

Approximately at 9:00 AM on Wednesday, we recorded the first breach by the Syrian regime forces and the pro-government militias where the besieged neighborhoods were targeted with shells and missiles, and the bombing lasted until midnight. It was agreed that the evacuation operation will commence at Thursday morning 15 December.

This report focuses on the main breaches that occurred during the evacuation of civilians which were perpetrated by the Syrian regime and the pro-government militias On Tuesday 15 December and Friday 16 December. As of this writing, the evacuation process has been discontinued due to these violations.





The Iranian regime, through its Shiite militias (Lebanese, Iraqi, Iranian, Afghani, and Chechen) in Syria, managed to halt the execution of the agreement as it was being carried out which was a cold slap to the authority of the Russian state, who is supposedly an ally to the Iranian regime. This shows that Russia, even though it has the final say, is not alone, which seriously questions the mechanisms that would insure the execution of a complete political process when a simple evacuation, compared to a comprehensive settlement process, has been impeded in this blatant manner.

We have spoken to eyewitnesses, survivors, and local media activists. We have also reviewed the pictures we received and verified their authenticity. These pictures show the convoys' preparation to evacuate civilians, and pictures of wounded who were killed by the Syrian regime forces who opened fire on ambulances. We have copies of all the videos and pictures included in this report.

Fadel Abdul Ghani, chairman of SNHR, says:

“What happened proves that the foreign militias that came to Syria, which were brought by the Syrian and Iranian regime on one hand and by Al Qaeda on the other hand even though there are hardly any differences between the two, are one of the greatest risks that can compromise any peace agreement, truce, or political settlements. Both of these militias are extremist, fundamentalist, globalized, cross-borders militias. However, we never see any political condemnation that addresses the role of the extremist Shiite militias in impeding the agreement and causing tens of crimes compared to the scenario that would have been, had Al Qaeda played the same role.”

II. Details

The agreement to evacuate civilians resulted in the transport of 11,400 individuals including about 350 wounded with the convoys that left Aleppo neighborhoods. However, there are about 40,000 people trapped there. The evacuation processes involved a number of incidents of attack and breaches by the Syrian regime forces and the pro-government militias. This report highlights two incidents.

First incident:

Thursday 15 December 2016 at approximately 10:00 AM, the Syrian regime and the foreign pro-government militias stationed in Al Amiriya area opened fire targeting ambulances that headed the convoys. The shooting lasted for an hour, and injured five individuals. Among the injured were one wounded civilian, one civil defense member, and an ambulance driver. The shooting halted the evacuation process until 13:00 before the convoy headed for Al Rashideen neighborhood, which is under the control of armed opposition factions, passing through areas under the control of the Syrian regime forces.





We have also recorded that fixed-wing government/Russian forces warplanes (Investigations are still ongoing to determine the perpetrator party precisely) fired a number of missiles targeting Uqdat Al Raqqa area that is located near Al Rashideen neighborhood -The convoy's point of arrival- just before the convoy arrived there.

Second incident:

Friday 16 November 2016, Syrian regime forces and pro-government militias stationed in Al Dahiya area, which oversees the route of the convoy, stopped and detained 750 individuals before they arrive at Uqdat Al Raqqa area where a Syrian regime tank stopped the convoy and Red Crescent members were threatened which forced them to leave. The members of the aforementioned checkpoint forced the detainees to lay on the ground and take off their clothes as they were humiliated and degraded. Also, the checkpoint looted their money, personal belongings, and papers before shooting some of them which resulted in the killing of three individuals including one armed opposition gunman according to what we were told by some of the survivors. Additionally, two women were abducted and taken to unknown location as of this writing.

After nearly five hours of humiliation, degrading, and looting, the checkpoint members let the convoy continue after arresting a number of individuals. As of this writing, their fate is still unknown.

A number of pro-regime pages on social media posted [a picture showing](#) the residents being held. Some of the survivors assured that these pictures are authentic and they had experienced that.



III. People under Siege are still Waiting a Safe Exit

It seems to us that the convoy being stopped and the arrest of some of the individuals on the convoy by the Syrian regime's and the pro-government militias' checkpoint was based on intelligence about significant political and military activists that were with the convoy.

As of this writing, we haven't been able to count how many were detained or find out their fate. This incident made the rest of the people who are still trapped in Eastern Aleppo lose their confidence in the agreement as a whole. Although the Iranian regime was able to further its agenda at the expense of the Russian agreement and added the clause of evacuating Kafrayya and Al Fou'a residents, who are of a Shiite majority that support the Syrian regime based on sectarian reasons, this doesn't mean that the Shiite militias won't breach the agreement again as there are no deterrent stopping them.





This Shiite militias exploit the need of the residents in Eastern Aleppo who are suffering from cold and shortage of food and medical supplies. They might even reignite the battlefronts, raid these neighborhoods, and arrest everyone there.

There are local and medical civil society, relief, and medical organizations working and coordinating with each other to take in the people who were evacuated from the besieged neighborhoods of Aleppo to Al Rashideen neighborhood where the wounded are generally sent to hospitals in opposition-held areas while critical cases are being taken to Turkish hospitals. On the other side, these organizations have prepared shelters for the civilians who have no place to go in addition to securing food baskets and clothes for those civilians.

Most of the women and children who were evacuated from the sieged neighborhoods of Aleppo are in dire need of a long-term psychological support and care after the psychological trauma they experienced from seeing all the killing, blood, and starvation as a result of the continued bombing and siege. Nevertheless, there are no sufficient organization covering this very integral issue.

IV. Recommendations

Practically, the United Nations was late in taking any effective or serious steps and seemed like that it has no role in front of the residents of Eastern Aleppo, and the Syrian society in general. The Early Warning system was no use even though we said in [the last month's](#) report that the United Nations has to reveal and care for the IDPs in Aleppo as this is its responsibility and mission, and no one else can do this task. We here recommend again these demands. Pressure must be applied on the Syrian regime to reveal the fate of no less than 100,000 individuals who have fallen hostages in the regime's hands. In the entirety of the past 20 days, no one has been able to find out their fate, and the Syrian regime didn't reveal any lists or significant information.

The United Nations must talk about the criminal role that the fighting Shiite militias are playing, and a Resolution must be adopted by the Security Council that deem these militias extremist terrorist organizations like ISIS and Al Qaeda.

Every possible effort must be made to insure the security and safety of the forcibly-displaced and sieged people. Also, the evacuation operations must be monitored and the parties that violate the operation must be documented.

The friend states of the Syrian people must provide every assistance available as the Syrian people would not be able alone to take this immensely huge number of displaced people who are psychologically, socially, and economically affected.





V. Attachments

Picture showing some of the wounded who were shot after the Syrian regime forces and the pro-government militias opened fire on the evacuation convoy, 15 December 2016



Pictures showing the first evacuation convoy, 15 December 2016 – according to SANA news agency





Pictures showing the evacuation convoys arriving at western Aleppo suburbs,
15 December 2016



Picture showing a gathering of residents inside the sieged neighborhoods of Aleppo city waiting to be evacuated, 16 December 2016

Picture showing some of the besieged being evacuated, 16 December 2016



Pictures showing some of the IDPs from the besieged neighborhoods of Aleppo city at one of the camps that were built in western Aleppo suburbs, 16 December 2016





[Pictures](#) and [videos showing](#) some of the wounded trapped inside [Al Quds hospital](#) waiting to be evacuated, 16 December 2016

[Videos showing](#) the preparation of [the first evacuation](#) convoy which was set to transport the residents of Aleppo city to the western suburbs of Aleppo, 15 December 2016

[Video showing](#) fixed-wing government/Russian forces warplanes (Investigations are still ongoing to determine the perpetrator party precisely) bombing Uqdat Al Raqqa in western Aleppo suburbs, 15 December 2016 – Video by the activist Ahmad Primo

[Video showing](#) the convoy heading back to the sieged neighborhoods of Aleppo after it was detained by the Syrian regime forces and the pro-government militias, 16 December 2016

[Videos](#) of some accounts by survivors after the convoy was detained by [the Syrian regime](#) forces and the [pro-government militias](#), 16 December 2016.

Acknowledgment

Out most profound thanks for the local activists and residents who despite the harsh conditions they are experiencing took the effort to give information. We stand in solidarity with our besieged and displaced people and the detainees until justice is fulfilled and until their demands are accomplished.



Syrian Network For Human Rights
الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

