



## Muslims Rulers Sell Aleppo to the Dogs

Many across world continue to digest what took place in Aleppo and the slaughter that was beamed across the world. Just a year and a half ago the al-Assad regime had lost most of the country. IHS Jane's Information Group confirmed in August 2015 that the al-Assad regime controlled a mere 17% of Syrian territory, whilst the rebels had seized 83% of the country. The fall of Aleppo has reversed much of this and on closer examination the people of Syria were abandoned by everyone at their most critical hour.

America, the world's superpower, left the people of Aleppo to fend for themselves under the onslaught of the regime. The US has throughout the uprising condemned what was taking place, called for talks but did absolutely nothing practically as the people of Aleppo were being slaughtered. This strategy has been a constant position of the US throughout the uprising – condemn, but do nothing. A US-vetted rebel commander highlighted: *"We are very frustrated. The United States refuses to provide weapons we need, and yet it still thinks it can tell us what to do. They promise support and then watch us drown. America will have no influence if our comrades are forced [to retreat to] Idlib."* Embarrassed by this, US officials then said the Obama administration may lift a long-held ban by allowing Qatar and Saudi Arabia to arm rebels with man-portable missiles. This all came after the slaughter had taken place.

The regional nations who for long stated they supported the rebel groups against the regime in Damascus abandoned them at their most critical moment. Turkey worked with and built up a number of groups in the Aleppo province. But as Aleppo was being encircled, Turkey's response was limited to shelling areas the YPG had captured in north Syria. What weakened the rebel front in Aleppo immensely was Turkey's military intervention — known as Operation Euphrates Shield. The operation saw Turkish military officials shift rebel groups from Aleppo to Afrin in North Syria. By mobilising Syrian rebels who originally fought in Aleppo, such as the Nouredine al-Zinki Brigade, this weakened the rebellion in Aleppo and thus facilitated the advance of the al-Assad forces. Saudi Arabia and Qatar are now only interested in UN efforts in Syria and refuse to arm rebel groups in Aleppo who they armed previously. Despite the regional nations possessing the capability to deal a fatal blow to al-Assad, the people of Aleppo were been abandoned by the regional nations.

The Muslim rulers abandoning the Ummah in Aleppo allowed Bashar al-Assad scorched earth strategy of siege warfare to succeed. With help from Russian airstrikes and Iranian revolutionary guards backed up with militia fighters, the indiscriminate slaughter of Aleppo was allowed to take place. The siege resulted in the cutting off supplies, food, medicine, fuel and weapons. Russian airstrikes sent tens of thousands of civilians fleeing targeted areas and destroyed entire neighborhoods. The pro-Assad forces indiscriminately used barrel bombs dropped from helicopters, even using chemical weapons on some occasions, killing thousands of people and purposefully targeting civilians, including hospitals and schools. In November 2016 all hospitals in eastern Aleppo were out of action as a result. The indiscriminate slaughter of the people of East Aleppo is how al-Assad has regained the city.

It has taken half a decade for Bashar al-Assad to achieve his most crucial victory. His victory in Aleppo was achieved through slaughtering the people and bombing the town to dust, in reality is not a real victory. This is because it has exposed he cannot convince the people of his rule and even his use of war tactics took him so long. The rebels formed at most 10,000 troops and despite all the might of Russia and Iran it took so long for the forces of Al-Assad to gain victory, even in certain death many continued fighting against al-Assad forces. It remains to be seen if this is the beginning of the end, but what it shows is the people of Sham are like mountains and cannot be removed easily.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by  
Adnan Khan**