

Obama's "moderate rebels" behead 12-year-old in Syria

By Bill Van Auken
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A horrific **video** circulated on social media records an incident in the Syrian city of Aleppo in which so-called "rebels" of the Nour al-Dine Zinki Islamist militia cut off the head of a young boy they had captured on Tuesday. The executioner is seen holding the boy down on the bed of a pickup truck, sawing away at his neck with a small, dull knife and then holding the severed head in the air in triumph after the deed is done.

The episode sums up the whole filthy operation mounted by the Obama administration in the attempt to bring about regime-change in Syria. Those who carried out this savage killing either are, or at least were until recently, armed by and on the payroll of the US Central Intelligence Agency.

The murdered child, identified as Abdullah Issa, was just 12 years old. His captors claimed that he was a fighter with Liwa al-Quds (Al Quds Brigade), a Palestinian militia fighting on the side of the Syrian government.

Liwa al-Quds, however, issued a report saying that he was not one of their fighters but rather the child of a poor refugee family, who was taken hostage in the Handarat Palestinian refugee camp in northern Aleppo. The boy, who appears dazed, had apparently been taken while receiving medical treatment, as an intravenous drip attached to his arm is visible in the video.

In the video, one of the child's tormentors can be heard shouting, "We'll leave no one in Handarat!" This is apparently a threat by the militia to "ethnically cleanse" the camp of its Palestinian population. Liwa al-Quds described the grisly execution of the child as "cheap and despicable revenge" by the jihadists for losing a battle for control of the area.

In a statement, Nour al-Dine al-Zinki's leadership

formally condemned the barbaric murder of the child, while claiming it represented "individual errors that represent neither our typical practices nor our general policies."

The video itself, however, shows a number of the group's fighters cheering on the beheading and recording the tormenting of the boy and his execution on their cell phones.

Moreover, the incident comes just two weeks after Amnesty International, the London-based human rights group, issued a report titled "Armed opposition groups committing war crimes in Aleppo city." In addition to Al Qaeda's Syrian affiliate, the al-Nusra Front, and three other Islamist militias, the report accuses Nour al-Dine Zinki (named first in the report) of having "carried out a chilling wave of abductions, torture and summary killings" in Aleppo and elsewhere in northern Syria. It further charges the US and its regional allies with arming and supporting these groups, which operate with impunity.

The Obama administration's response to this atrocity has been ambivalent at best. Asked whether the execution of the child "would affect assistance" to the group responsible, State Department spokesman Mark Toner responded that "if we can prove that this was indeed what happened and this group was involved in it, I think it would certainly give us pause."

Pressed as to what consequences it would have in terms of US support, Toner sidestepped the question: "I can't say what that consequence will be, but it will certainly give us, as I said, serious pause."

According to a December 2014 report by the McClatchy news organization, Nour al-Dine Zinki was one of the only CIA-backed groups not to be cut off as the al-Nusra Front began making serious gains, either absorbing these militias or seizing their weapons.

According to McClatchy, the CIA was paying the salaries of the Nour al-Dine Zinki fighters at the rate of \$150 a month. The militia was also the recipient of US TOW anti-tank missiles manufactured by the Raytheon Company, in addition to so-called “non-lethal” supplies.

The savage murder of young Abdullah Issa is a grim exposure of the real character of the forces described by the Obama administration as the “moderate opposition”—and by its pseudo-left apologists as Syrian “revolutionaries.”

Like Al Qaeda before them, they are a Frankenstein’s monster created by US and Western imperialism and unleashed upon the people of Syria and the broader region to achieve definite strategic aims by means of regime-change.

Responsibility for the torture and beheading of a Palestinian child, along with the killing of hundreds of thousands of Syrians and the driving of millions more from their homes, lies with the Obama White House, the CIA, the Pentagon and the State Department, whose chief officials, from the American president on down, are war criminals who must be held accountable.

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