

Victory of Assad Regime in Eastern Ghouta - The need for a New Discourse of Solidarity

It's a Major Defeat for Those Fighting Racism and Capitalist Authoritarianism Globally

Tuesday 13 March 2018, by [AFARY Frieda](#) (Date first published: 25 February 2018).

Those who oppose both the Assad regime and the Jihadists and all the imperialist powers, need to focus on a glaring fact: Support for Assad and Putin has become a rallying cry for Western white supremacist, Islamophobic and anti-Semitic organizations and parties. We need to show that opposing the Assad regime's war on the Syrian masses is absolutely necessary for fighting the growth of white supremacy in the U.S. and other Western countries. Indeed it is necessary for challenging the growth of capitalist authoritarianism around the world. Assad's Syria could be our future.

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There is no lack of evidence about the barbarity of the Assad regime. Supported by Putin's Russia and the Iranian regime, it is currently massacring 400,000 innocent civilians in Eastern Ghouta, a suburb of Damascus which it has kept under siege since April 2013 and subjected to chemical warfare as well. The intensified daily bombing and shelling of Eastern Ghouta which started in November 2017 and has led to hundreds of deaths of innocent civilians in just the past few days, is part of the Assad regime's systematic destruction of the Syrian revolution since 2011. Ghouta has also suffered from the practices of a reactionary Salafist movement, Jaysh al-Islam, which has repressed and killed democratic activists.

While the U.S. and European powers such as France shed crocodile tears over Ghouta, by now it should be clear that neither the U.S., not any of the Western powers ever genuinely supported the Syrian revolution or wanted the overthrow of the Assad regime. At most, they wanted the regime without the person of Assad because they considered the regime necessary for imposing "stability" in the region. Even in April 2017 when the Trump administration carried out a missile strike against a Syrian government airbase where a chemical attack was launched, its aim was to show the U.S.'s imperial might.

None of these powers could ever have any genuine concern for the Syrian masses who rose up against an authoritarian and butcher regime. The capitalist and imperialist foundation of these powers would not allow them to do so.

Need for a New Discourse of Solidarity

Those who oppose both the Assad regime and the Jihadists and all the imperialist powers, need to focus on a glaring fact: The authoritarianism that we see in the Assad regime, Putin's Russia and the

Iranian regime is increasingly growing in Western countries as well. Assadism and Putinism might be the face of the future of the Western liberal democracies. Indeed, support for Assad and Putin has become a rallying cry for Western white supremacist, Islamophobic and anti-Semitic organizations and parties from the U.S. alt-right to the Italian far-right Forza Nuova, all of whom are becoming more and more mainstream.

Facing up to this fact, can also help us find a pathway forward in our solidarity work: We need to show that opposing the Assad regime's war on the Syrian masses is absolutely necessary for fighting the growth of white supremacy in the U.S. and other Western countries. Indeed it is necessary for challenging the growth of capitalist authoritarianism around the world. Assad's Syria could be our future.

The current evidence about the relationship between the Assad regime and the U.S. and European far-right, reveals that Assadist totalitarianism has become an "inspiration" for various parties representing the more openly authoritarian and racist direction of capitalism. [1]

Thus the need to oppose the Assad regime's bombing of Eastern Ghouta and Idlib is not only a concern for people in the Middle East but should also be a concern for anti-racist activists around the world. Allowing Assad and his allies to continue their massacres in the name of "fighting terror" will greatly strengthen those who want to repeat that scenario in the U.S. and Europe and elsewhere. It will have consequences for Black Lives Matter, Latinos, all people of color, Muslims and Jews.

Supporting Kurds Requires Opposing Assad, Erdogan & All Imperialist Powers

Closer to Eastern Ghouta, the current victory of the Assad regime will have direct and horrible consequences for the Kurds in Afrin and Rojava. Since the Summer of 2012, the Democratic Union Party (PYD), which leads the autonomous region of Rojava in Northern Syria, has claimed that while it does not support the Assad regime, it has chosen to not engage in aggression against it in order to advance its own political project. The collaboration of the Syrian anti-Assad opposition with Turkey and their support for Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan have also convinced the PYD that its course vis-a-vis the Assad regime has been correct.

Since January 20 however, when the authoritarian government of Erdogan intensified its ongoing war on the Kurds and attacked the Afrin canton with support from Russia, and by using Syrian Arab fighters from the anti-Assad Free Syrian Army and the Islamic fundamentalist forces, the PYD leadership has openly asked the Assad regime to come to its aid. On February 22, following a meeting between Saban Hamo, a leader of the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) and Russian and Syrian government officials, and with the backing of Iran, Syrian regime militias swept into Afrin. [2]

How could a butcher regime which is currently engaged in decimating the people of Eastern Ghouta and has been responsible, for the past seven years, for the murder of half a million mostly innocent civilians, be called upon to "save" the Kurdish masses? This is also a regime with extreme Arab nationalist and racist policies toward the Kurds, some of whom were not even recognized as Syrian citizens until 2011.

The Syrian regime might negotiate a deal with the Erdogan government and Russia, and gain full and official control of the Rojava region and hence temporarily stop the Turkish ground and aerial attacks on Afrin. However, the PYD's deal with the Assad regime will only exchange one brutal assault with another. What called itself the autonomous region of Rojava can no longer continue under these conditions.

Two years ago, when the Alliance of Syrian and Iranian Socialists was formed, its founding statement of principles stated the following: “While we insist on upholding a principled position of support for the Kurdish national liberation movement and its struggle for self-determination in Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Iran, we think it is also necessary to challenge many of those on the left who separate the struggle for self-determination of the Kurdish people in Syria from the dynamics of the Syrian revolution. It was the 2011 Syrian revolution that made it possible for the autonomous cantons in Rojava to come into existence. Without a Syrian revolution there can be no democratic Rojava. . . . The liberation and emancipation of the Kurdish people is linked to the liberation and emancipation of the people of the region.”

This statement is more true than ever. The victory of the Assad regime and its allies in Eastern Ghouta is a major defeat not only for the Syrian Arab revolutionaries but also for the Kurds, all other ethnicities in Syria, and all those fighting racism and capitalist authoritarianism around the world.

Frieda Afary

February 24, 2018

Comments

Rohini Hensman

Rohini Hensman on February 25, 2018 at 7:03 am

Unfortunately, some liberals and left-wingers join the fascists in their support of the Assad regime. This is indefensible, and evidence of their failure to understand, as this article argues, that support of the far right in one country (namely Syria) strengthens it throughout the world.

Louis

Louis on February 25, 2018 at 6:41 pm

Thanks Frieda for your article! I was wondering if you could please clarify a few points..

You said that the attacks on Ghouta by the regime “has led to hundreds of deaths of innocent civilians in just the past few days... part of the Assad regime’s systematic destruction of the Syrian revolution since 2011”.. Could you explain to me the reason that the regime is attacking Ghouta? Do you agree that they are a result of the attacks on Damascus? You acknowledged the Jaysh al-Islam presence in Ghouta.. Do you think that they are responsible for the attacks on Damascus?

Could you also please elaborate on what you mean by this “Allowing Assad and his allies to continue their massacres in the name of “fighting terror” will greatly strengthen those who want to repeat that scenario in the U.S. and Europe and elsewhere. It will have consequences for Black Lives Matter, Latinos, all people of color, Muslims and Jews”.. Are you comparing these groups to certain groups in Ghouta?

Thanks

Behzad Behzadian

Behzad Behzadian on February 26, 2018 at 3:58 pm

I do not agree with using the Islamophobia. Muslimphobia is the correct term. Islam is an ideology and everybody should be free to criticize it. Discrimination against Muslim is wrong but not criticizing Islam. I think the author fall into the same trap that Regressive left set aside in order to support Islamists.

Frieda Afary

Frieda Afary on February 27, 2018 at 1:56 am

To Behzad: Thanks for your comment and suggestion. I do not support Islamic fundamentalists or any other religious fundamentalists.

To Louis: The Assad regime and Russia and Iran are using the presence of some Salafist forces in Eastern Ghouta as an excuse to massacre the 400,000 Syrian civilians there. The number and power of the Salafist forces there is very small in comparison to the might of the Assad regime, Russia, Iran combined. The Assad regime is destroying Ghouta because it wants to destroy all those who supported the Syrian revolution and believed in social justice and democracy.

When I said that “allowing Assad and his allies to continue their massacres in the name of ‘fighting terror’ will greatly strengthen those who want to repeat that scenario in the U.S. and Europe and elsewhere,” I meant that it would strengthen the forces of white supremacy and authoritarianism. I was not drawing a comparison between groups fighting racism in the U.S., and Salafist groups in Syria.

P.S.

* Feb 25, 2018:

<https://www.allianceofmesocialists.org/victory-assad-regime-ghouta-major-defeat-fighting-racism-capitalist-authoritarianism-globally/>

Footnotes

[1] <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/italian-fascists-adore-syria-bashar-al-assad-180125115153121.html>

[2] <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/22/world/middleeast/syria-afrin-kurds-ypg.html?rref=collection%2Fissuecollection%2Ftodays-new-york-times>