

Headlines:

- **British Aid Workers in Syria Made Stateless**
- **Syria's East Ghouta Sinks into Abyss**
- **Russia's Putin al-Assad**

Details:

British Aid Workers in Syria Made Stateless

British aid workers in Syria are being stripped of their citizenship by the UK government. At least two aid workers based in northern Syria have been deprived of British citizenship on the grounds that they "present a risk to the national security of the United Kingdom", according to recent letters sent to their families by the British Home Secretary Amber Rudd. In another case, a volunteer who has delivered aid into Syria and worked on charity-funded projects there was "assessed to have been involved in terrorism-related activity" and "Islamist extremist activities". All three say they have never fought in Syria and none have been charged with any offence in the UK relating to their activities in the country. All three have demonstrable track records as aid workers and have liaised with numerous recognised charities and humanitarian organisations from the UK and elsewhere over the course of Syria's war to facilitate the flow of supplies into rebel-held areas, as well as helping to run facilities for internally displaced Syrians. One of those targeted told Middle East Eye that the letter sent to his family said that he was assessed to be "aligned with an al-Qaeda-aligned group". "I am an aid worker. Everything I do is transparent. They believe I am affiliated with al-Qaeda which is ridiculous," he said. "We risk our lives every day to help people and they call us terrorists."

Syria's East Ghouta Sinks into Abyss

The rebel-held enclave of East Ghouta in Syria is facing a critical humanitarian crisis, the UN and local activists say, as government bombing and siege tactics kill dozens of civilians and bring many more to the brink of starvation. Over the weekend, the area was hit by further air strikes, including a purported chemical weapons attack, which killed at least 19 people. According to the Syrian American Medical Society, who have doctors working in the area, it received patients "suffering from constricted pupils, coughing, vomiting, and bradypnea" - or abnormally slow breathing. The Syrian army's bombing campaign has left entire families buried under rubble. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said at least 80 civilians including 14 children, had been killed since Tuesday, while hundreds had been injured. "Obviously, the de-escalation deal in Ghouta isn't going too well," said Aron Lund, a fellow with the Century Foundation. He added that rebels had "little chance" of surviving the assault. Considering its location, eastern Ghouta is "too close to the capital" for the government to leave it alone.

Russia's Putin al-Assad

Russian President Vladimir Putin hosted Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad to talk about the need to move from military operations to the search for a political solution to Syria's conflict, the Kremlin said on Tuesday 20 November. Russia is trying to build on the Geneva conference around a peace deal for Syria, over two years after Moscow began a military intervention that turned the tide for Bashar al-Assad. Putin said he would follow up his meeting late on Monday with Assad by talking soon to international leaders with influence over the conflict, among them US President Donald Trump, the Saudi king, and the leaders of Iran and Turkey. Underscoring the importance of the Russian military in propping up Assad's rule, Putin presented the Syrian leader to a gathering of his top military command, who were also assembled at his Sochi residence. "On behalf of the entire Syrian people, I express my gratitude for what you have done," Assad told the roomful of Russian military officers. "We will not forget it." If there was any doubt all the regional and international players were not on the same page, the fact they all agree Al-Assad should remain in power and have done little to change this fact.