

ALEPPO BURNS AS THE WORLD WATCHES

News:

The Syrian army has said that it captured two districts of the rebel-held eastern part of Aleppo city in two days, as government air raids continued to target opposition-held parts of the country. Earlier this month, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces intensified their push for control over eastern Aleppo. The city, which was once Syria's largest, has been divided between government and opposition control since 2012.

Aleppo, which was Syria's biggest city before the start of a civil war that has killed hundreds of thousands of people, is divided between the government-held west and rebel-held east, where UN officials say at least 250,000 people remain under siege.

Rebels face one of their gravest moments of the war after pro-government forces routed fighters over the past few days from more than a third of the territory they controlled in the city. Civilians in rebel-held eastern Aleppo are expressing desperation over their survival as fighting between the government and the opposition carves deeper into their half of the city.

The Red Cross (ICRC), operating on the ground, said at least 20,000 civilians have fled their homes in the past 72 hours, with some making it to shelters in the regime-held western half of the city. Others, it said, are retreating into other neighbourhoods in the east.

Syrian rebels in besieged east Aleppo have agreed to a plan for aid deliveries and medical evacuations, according to UN officials, but the global body is awaiting a "green light" from Russia and the Syrian government before it can begin life-saving operations.

Comment:

The battle for Aleppo has exposed many aspects of the complex Syrian situation for what it really is. Most obviously, the West remains quiet despite their supposed support for the rebels. Rebel officials told Reuters that the outgoing U.S. administration was paying little attention to Syria. Assad and his allies were trying to exploit the current circumstances, while the West did nothing.

However, criticism has also been levelled at Turkey, which has aided the rebels during previous attacks, but has been noticeably absent during latest developments, scaling back their armies and provision of weapons. Instead Erdogan has spoken with Putin at least twice over the past week, agreeing to try to resolve the humanitarian crisis in Aleppo and "coordinate efforts against international terrorism", officials in his office have said.

The world has abandoned the people of Aleppo to their fate, and as result consented to the murderous Syrian regimes bloodbath. How many more people must die before the forces of the Muslim world unite to defeat Assad and his allies? The lip service of Muslim leaders means nothing when there is no one to protect the people, and when they make deals with the enemy behind closed doors, and seek to preserve their own national interests, as Turkey does. The Muslims of Aleppo have Allah (swt) with them and He will never allow them to be defeated. ﴿وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ﴾ **“And Allah will surely support those who support Him. Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might.”** [Al-Haj: 40] But those in positions of power and means around the world will be accounted for watching their brothers and sisters be murdered simply for wanting an end to their persecution.

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
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