

# PRESS RELEASE

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## A statement regarding joining the fighting in Syria

*In the name of Allah, the Most Graceful, the Most Merciful*

For three difficult years, the Syrian people have been suffering under Assad's crackdown against their revolution for freedom and dignity. In a world that has been turning a blind eye to Syria, many enthusiastic young Muslims in the UK and other countries became convinced that the only way to help the people of Syria is by traveling to Syria to fight against Assad. As a result, dozens of young men have travelled to Syria and joined several armed groups there.

The UK Syrian community deeply appreciates the dedication shown by these young men in helping the Syrian people. However, we believe that their travel to fight in Syria does more harm than good due to several reasons including:

1. The Syrian armed opposition are not short of men. What they lack is weapons which are best supplied in an organised manner by governments rather than sporadically and randomly by individuals.
2. The political and military complexities of the Syrian situation are extremely difficult to understand for non-Syrians. As a result, many foreign fighters find themselves clashing with the Syrian people instead of helping them.
3. The same set of complexities means that many fighters going to Syria are recruited by armed groups whose allegiances are unclear. The Syrian people believe that some armed groups are connected to the Assad regime itself as they have killed more opposition activists than regime fighters. Fighting alongside these groups is more like committing a crime than helping the oppressed.
4. Since the early days of the revolution, Assad's regime has been claiming to be fighting against a group of foreign terrorists. Therefore, having a high number of non-Syrian fighters would support this allegation and thus strengthen Assad's political stance under the pretext of fighting against terrorism.
5. The media coverage of the issue of Britons fighting in Syria is putting off many people from donating to charities active in providing aid to the Syrian people.
6. People going to fight in Syria are facing increasing scrutiny and persecution upon their return even though they may have not been in touch with any of the groups classified by UK authorities as terrorist organizations.



Therefore, we appeal to the British Muslim youth to serve the interests of the Syrian people, as well as their own interests, by exerting every effort in support of the Syrian cause through the following channels:

- 1- Raising awareness amongst the British people of the Syrian crisis by explaining that what is happening there is a people's revolt for liberty from a dictatorial regime rather than a civil war. This can be done by contacting British media as well as personal and group efforts
- 2- Exerting pressure on British politicians to do more actions than words in helping the Syrian people
- 3- Donating money to help the Syrian people through the several UK-registered charities active in Syria, as well as organising collections through these charities
- 4- Finally and most importantly, praying and supplicating to Allah to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people through achieving their goals of freedom and dignity

The Syrians in the UK are truly grateful for the efforts of the British people from different backgrounds who are making up for their government's lack of action regarding the Syrian crisis. We express our willingness to help in the channels mentioned above.

May mercy be showered on all innocent victims and may justice be done for all those who have been wronged.

**ENDS**

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