

# Press Release

07/06/2016

## UK-based Syrian Groups Appalled at BBC Newsnight's Shameful Coverage of the Situation in Aleppo

A group of ten UK-based Syrian organisations are outraged over BBC Newsnight's shameful [coverage](#) of the situation in Aleppo which it aired on 24 May (minutes 23-28).

These Syrian groups initially attempted to convey their concerns through a joint [letter](#) dated 26 May to the Newsnight team, which was not met with any response although such a response was requested.

Following Newsnight's unresponsiveness, these groups escalated the issue into a formal complaint on 2 June which has been unsatisfactorily dealt with.

Ironically, two of the on-the-ground activists interviewed in this piece were put in touch with Newsnight through Rethink Rebuild Society (one of the signatory organisations). These activists also had strong misgiving on the news piece and submitted a [letter](#) as such.

The issues brought forth by the Syrian groups, detailed in the attached letter which was sent to the Newsnight team, can be summarised as follows:

1. Viewers are told in the beginning of the clip that 'people of Aleppo are preparing themselves for siege', although they are not told who will be besieging conducting this siege. Instead, given the context of the introduction, it seems as though it is 'insurgent fighters', and not Assad, which are besieging the city.
2. Viewers are not told who these 'insurgent fighters' are. Are they Daesh? Al-Nusra? Free Syrian army? (
3. The piece mentions that the Syrian ceasefire has come under 'renewed threat' because of the actions of Daesh and al-Nusra, without mentioning the Assad regime which has done the most to undermine the ceasefire.
4. The notion that Aleppo was 'once a major stronghold of terrorists' has been flatly rejected by activists both inside and outside of Syria. Daesh's control within Aleppo has only ever been confined to certain parts of the city. The city is now largely under the control of moderate opposition forces.
5. The voice of the moderate opposition is lost in this piece. Rather, it seems that there are only two factions in Aleppo, namely the Assad regime and Daesh/al-Nusra.

We are seeking a formal apology from BBC Newsnight regarding its misleading piece on Aleppo.

**ENDS**

For further information and press enquiries, please contact 07769704656, or email: [advocacy@rrsoc.org](mailto:advocacy@rrsoc.org)