

Anti-regime “rebels” accused of massacre in northern Syria

Niall Green
25 June 2012

“Rebel” fighters allegedly carried out a massacre in the village of Daret Azzeh, close to the Syrian border with Turkey. The killings are the latest in a series of atrocities attributed to opposition fighters engaged in the protracted conflict with the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

Anti-Assad forces, including the main armed opposition group, the Free Syrian Army (FSA), control the area around Daret Azzeh. There have been reports of heavy fighting in the area, which is in the vicinity of the city of Aleppo, over the past two weeks.

Video footage released Friday, apparently by individuals close to the opposition, shows around a dozen bloodied bodies strewn around the village, some piled on top of each other, others dumped in a shallow grave. At least two of the corpses wear military-style uniforms. The unidentified narrator of the video claims that the victims were members of the *shabiha*, a pro-government militia.

The Syrian state news agency, SANA, said that opposition fighters had kidnapped and then killed at least 25 men in the village. SANA also reported that several of the bodies had been mutilated, a possible sign that the victims had been tortured before their execution. Dozens of other people from the area reportedly went missing around the time of the massacre, and their whereabouts remain unknown.

The British-based pro-opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights recorded that at least 26 people were killed in the Daret Azzeh massacre and confirmed that many people were still missing from the village.

The opposition militias in Syria are mainly made up of defectors from the Syrian armed forces and Islamists from neighboring Arab countries. They are financed and armed by foreign powers, including Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and based in Jordan and Turkey.

Behind these regional proxies stands the United States, which is actively fanning the flames of sectarian civil war in Syria in order to depose the Assad regime and replace it with one entirely subordinate to Washington’s plans to isolate Iran and dominate the entire oil-rich region.

The reported atrocity in Daret Azzeh is just the latest in a string of brutal attacks attributed to the US-backed opposition. FSA and other Islamist fighters routinely carry out kidnappings, torture, and executions against captured Syrian army troops and members of religious minorities that have traditionally been offered a degree of protection by the Assad regime, such as Christians and Alawites.

One former member of an FSA “burial brigade”—i.e., death squad—interviewed by *Spiegel Online* earlier this year reported that it was common practice for the opposition to torture and slit the throats of Syrian conscript soldiers and local civilians who support the government.

Last month, leading German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* reported that the massacre of over 100 people in the Syrian town of Houla, initially and without substantiation attributed by Washington and its allies to pro-Assad forces, was in fact carried out by the FSA. Local eyewitnesses, including people within the opposition, reported that the mass slaying in Houla targeted Alawite and Shiite families.

Such atrocities by the “rebels” are of no concern to the Obama administration. Rather, Washington is playing the leading role in stoking the sectarian conflict. The *New York Times* reported this week that the Central Intelligence Agency is coordinating the supply of arms, largely provided by the pro-US Gulf sheikdoms, to opposition fighters from bases inside Turkey.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact