

Lebanese Hostages in Syria

By As'ad AbuKhalil - Fri, 2012-06-08

The story did not matter. It did not get much coverage in the Western press – if at all. Western press has daily section about developments in Syria, but the story that innocent Lebanese pilgrims were kidnapped by Free Syrian Army (FSA) thugs did not warrant a story.

No correspondent was assigned to the story (except in some Lebanese media). Western human rights organizations have been silent about the matter. If the innocent hostages had been kidnapped by the Syrian regime, the UN Security Council would have met in an emergency session.

Only in Lebanon do you read coverage of the families (who are angry and have been restrained by Amal and Hezbollah). The hostages happened to be Shia, and the agenda of the Free Syrian Army intended to drag Hezbollah into the conflict in Syria.

The sectarian propaganda of the Syrian exile opposition (echoing Israeli-Saudi-US agenda in the region) tried for months to fabricate and invent stories about Hezbollah fighters in Syria. When the story did not pan out and when no evidence was ever presented, and when the kidnapping of Iranian civilians was justified on the silly pretext that they were Iranian Revolutionary Guards (the captors were embarrassed when they discovered that some of their Iranian victims were Sunni Kurds), another operation was planned.

The kidnapping was well-planned. The buses included Shia from the southern suburbs. Their track was under surveillance and regional intelligence services (probably Turkish, if not more) were involved.

The Free Syrian Army is developing a good amount of experience in kidnapping (of course they have kidnapped and killed various Syrians), but they are still clumsy. The captors clearly identified themselves as Free Syrian Army when they kidnapped the pilgrims perhaps forgetting that the women were going to be released.

The women who made it to Lebanon had no doubts about the identity of the captors. It was more embarrassing when some of the women identified a familiar Syrian opposition activist (made famous by daily propaganda promos on Al Jazeera) as one of the captors. Lebanese TV stations rushed their correspondents and they located him and interviewed him. His denials only confirmed what the women said.

The Syrian people exploded in an uprising more than a year ago. They had more than one reason to rebel and to overthrow the repressive regime under which they live and suffer. But the agenda of the counter-revolution at the regional level would not let things get out of hand (as they did to a degree in Egypt). The Arab uprisings had to be contained and managed (like in Yemen and Bahrain and Libya).

The cause of the Syrian people was then stolen by a group of exile groups run by the Syrian

Muslim Brotherhood, which is, in turn, run by Qatar and Saudi Arabia (some of the branches of the Muslim Brotherhood are run by Saudi Arabia – like in Lebanon and Syria – and others are run by Qatar – like in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt).

The hostages are languishing in unknown locations (probably in Turkey under the protection of the Turkish intelligence service, which runs the Free Syrian Army). The FSA's gangs are now mimicking the very methods of the regime that they want to overthrow.

The Syrian people are now caught in the crossfire between regional and international combatants while their cause has been reduced to exploitation by states that never harbored any love for the them.