

The Battle For The Houla Massacre The Video Evidence Explained

a report of Citizen's Investigation
Into War Crimes In Libya
June, 2014

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Into War Crimes In Libya (CIWCL)

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Into War Crimes In Libya

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Introduction

This document started out as a belated follow-up to the report I assembled in May, 2013: [Official Truth, Real Truth, and Impunity for the Syrian Houla Massacre](#) of May, 2012. The [summary article](#) at globalresearch.ca has been the #2 or #3 result in a Google Search for the last year - relevant to public awareness, but still not widely understood. The main idea was to finally offer a better relation of the case, which is largely visual, for a rebel conquest of the town preceding the massacre, which I and my research associates find to be the clearest evidence to suspect Islamist rebels, not the Syrian government and allied forces, that committed this historically hideous crime.

Since two years and over 100,000 additional people have passed since it occurred, a refresher on the Houla Massacre is in order. It happened in the town of Taldou, in the al-Houla area of northwest Homs province. A reported 108 civilians, mainly from three targeted families and including around 50 children, were executed in their homes during the afternoon and evening of May 25.

At the time, it was considered the most appalling massacre yet. The Syrian government was widely blamed, with little sign of reasonable doubt. By this prevailing narrative, the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) first shelled the town with artillery, chasing out rebel forces. Army units supported the irregular "Shabiha" militias, scraped together from the Alawite villages around Taldou, who then moved on a few homes and brutally murdered all the inhabitants. It was a sectarian killing, we heard - the victims were all Sunni Muslims. The "world community" moved onto more of a war footing against Syria's "Alawite-led" government, expelling diplomats and promising greater support to the insurgents faced with genocide.

The Dispute

But that story was given to us by rebel fighters and rebel-provided alleged witnesses, largely miracle survivors with serious credibility problems (see essay #3 in the 2013 report). And these are countered by numerous witnesses blaming insurgent forces for the massacre. By this sidelined narrative, the targets were Sunnis who still supported the government, and former Sunnis who had recently converted to Shi'ism.

The assailants gained access, the non-rebel witnesses say, by launching an unprecedented military assault on Taldou's five security posts, overrunning four or perhaps all five of them in the hours just before the killings began. Dozens of defending soldiers and some rebel attackers were also killed, they say, in this battle for Taldou.

The UN's special mission in Syria (UNSMIS) chief Robert Mood noted this two-stories problem, having heard from both witness sets when he visited. He considered it unresolved and said it warranted further investigation to see which was more truthful. Instead, a decision was made by other investigators at the UN to ignore the UNSMIS report (see essay #6), and do their own probe by speaking to only one side and minimizing the other (essay #5). In this way, they could hardly avoid blaming the government forces and allied Shabiha.

The discrepancy between versions is not as wide as most would presume – The U.N.'s Commission of Inquiry (CoI) had to acknowledge at least two of the five posts were apparently overrun in a rebel attack of the 25th that might've been "premeditated."

Those blaming rebels say it was twice this many, four of the five, that were overrun. The disagreement is over the southern posts along Main Street, nearest the massacre sites - the ones that matter most regarding that.

A Closer Look

This does not try to convey the body of ACLOS research on the Houla massacre, which was extra-collaborative - only the military-security aspect, which is obviously crucial. Who was in control of Taldou in the second half of May 25 is obviously crucial. The alleged government massacre happened so easily because they really shelled Taldou that day, chasing away the rebel forces who might have challenged them otherwise. In contrast, the alleged rebel massacre could only happen if they overran the town's defenses.

Whoever won the battle that day was best placed to claim the prize of carrying out the unprecedented bloodbath sure to be blamed on the Syrian government – hence the Battle for the Houla Massacre.

This is an amateur work, ultimately, not by military or security experts. The initial work was done by the members of the research wiki A Closer Look On Syria (ACLOS) on a page at ACLOS (and its talk page, and a bit on some other pages) page [Houla, May 25: Who Was in Control?](#) and its more jumbled [Discussion page](#) - originally summarized in the 7th essay, "The Houla Massacre and the Battle of Taldou: the Digital Witnesses Have Their Say." The bulk of that essay's information, but stripped down in extra text, and built up with explanations behind these findings and especially the more valuable supporting graphics.

The findings of the ACLOS study supports the version where rebels won and chased away the security forces. While little is proven with total certainty, repeated scenes throughout the day line up with this story and clash with the accepted version, which rebels first presented all these videos as supporting.

Even if it were proven that all four relevant posts fell, this doesn't prove rebels did the massacre - but it presents us with this problem: whoever came by to do the massacre that evening would have the new rebel security force to deal with - these did not stop the massacre- they either did it themselves or failed to stop it - and their story is that they ran away from Taldou entirely, which seems to be totally false. Why offer false stories? Embarrassed that even after taking over they still couldn't stop a band of Shabiha? That they clearly benefitted from the propaganda fallout against the blamed "regime"?

What Next?

this subject still needs a more professional investigation, one that's rigorous, impartial and courageous enough to maintain that, and empowered with the best and most direct evidence. But even this work by amateurs, put up for review more than a year ago and still un-challenged - is enough to reasonably force a change of awareness - there's a credible case here that the rebel conquest of the Taldou just prior to the massacre - right there in the public video record, for anyone who cares to look and read the evidence carefully.

The implications are deeply troubling – the reactions of May 26 up to now, to this and perhaps other alleged "Assad regime crimes" may have punished the victims while rewarding and encouraging the actual criminals.

The CIWCL ... however long it's been ignored so far, this kind of illustrated, un-challenged, widely-understood, high-likelihood ... should not remain swept under the "world community's" rug forever.

We put it, again, to the public.

Adam Larson
- May 27, 2014

Methodology/Notes:

The study behind these findings is based on publicly available video evidence, varying in precision but maintaining accuracy. We've made some mistakes along the way, but it's hoped we've caught and corrected of these by now. A primary purpose of this document is to make the claims and supporting work more understandable, in the interest of soliciting peer review and seeking any corrections that are warranted. So far, we've had little by way of refutation or confirmation – just a lot of views of [one summarized end result](#).

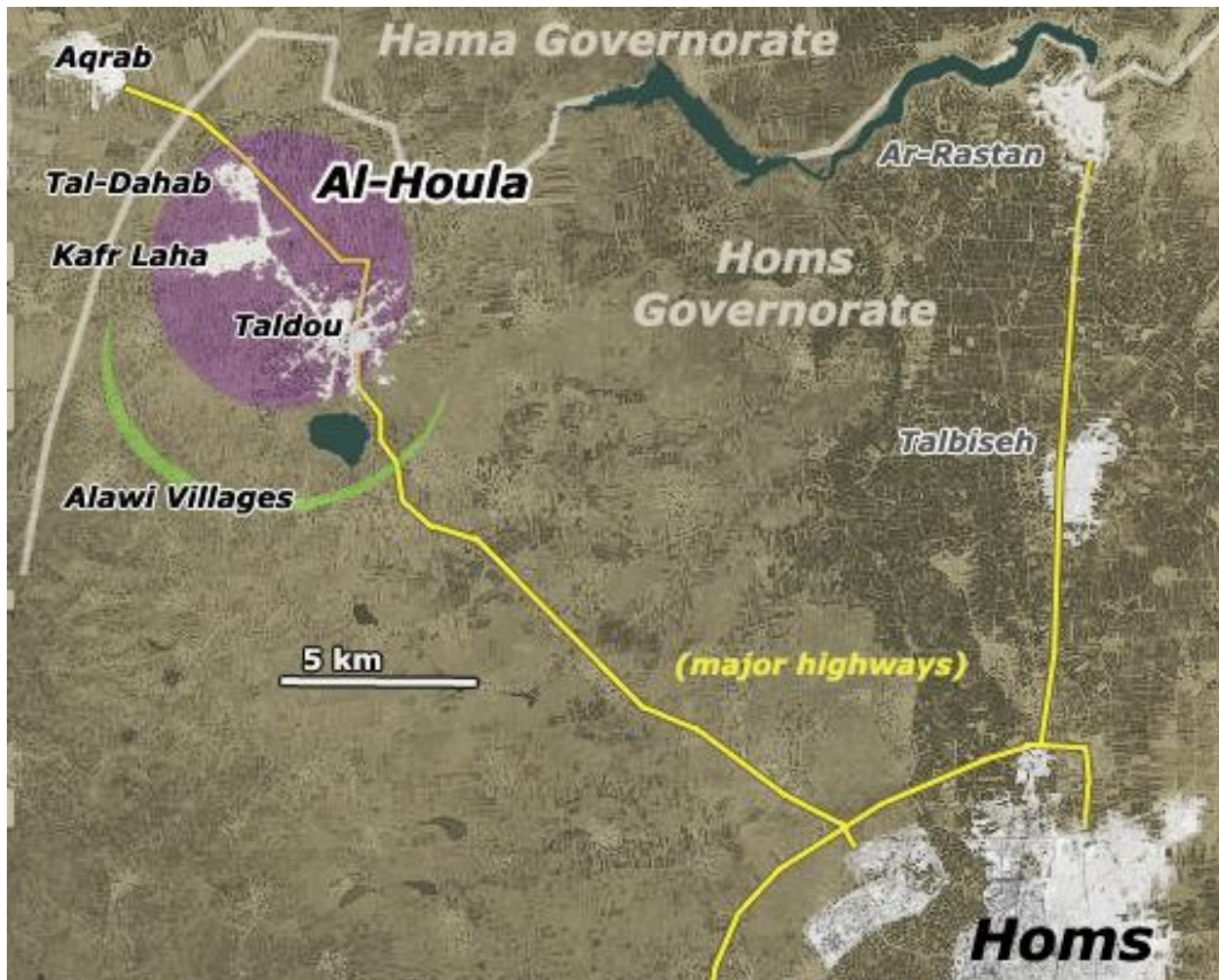
Here an 8th "H" category added for the important video evidence of the following days, which offers further supports for a general rebel conquest on the 25th. - 14 video exhibits ? in eight time-space groups, A-G, some with sub-parts, citing reports and a total of 19 directly analyzed videos (see p. 7) – most show military actions of the day, the others indirect effects of it)

- Source Video selection: Here ... We locate videos said to show seemingly relevant military events of May 25 - the disputed attack that enabled whoever's massacre. We verify these in different ways as needed, mostly during the next steps.
- Set the map: from UN-supplied graphics combine - UN report Jun 27, [pdf, last page](#) - with a few corroborating sources - we use Google Maps and historic imagery in Google Earth, labels on Wikimapia.
- Place videos on the map: geolocation - how each scene was placed on the map is not explained in detail - this would be far too tedious. basic geo-location with some advanced insights - matching video features to usually one obvious match in town with its own relation to the security posts and other points of interest. The curious could dig out our various explanations on the associated ACLOS pages, or the spot selected could be checked - (add with each Gmaps link - spots indicated on the map)
- video timing - especially with location and exact directions set, a visual readings of solar angles (azimuth, altitude) from a located video - the shadow correctly traced on the map essentially gives a time - when entered with the right parameters in as we used the NOAA solar calculator - estimated, usually to within 10 minutes either way. Fairly little of this comes into play - most videos are filmed at sunset, when exact time is hard enough to set we usually didn't bother.
(One revision to the original essay ... somehow the first round of analysis missed daylight savings time completely - down the line, the times here are shifted up one hour (plus one other minor adjustment))
- Consideration with Other Evidence: With analyzed actions at set times and locations, the video evidence becomes sort of a record that can be compare to what alleged witnesses on each side had said about the events of the day. ACLOS findings: those blaming the rebels for the massacre describe the events preceding much more accurately than the other side does.

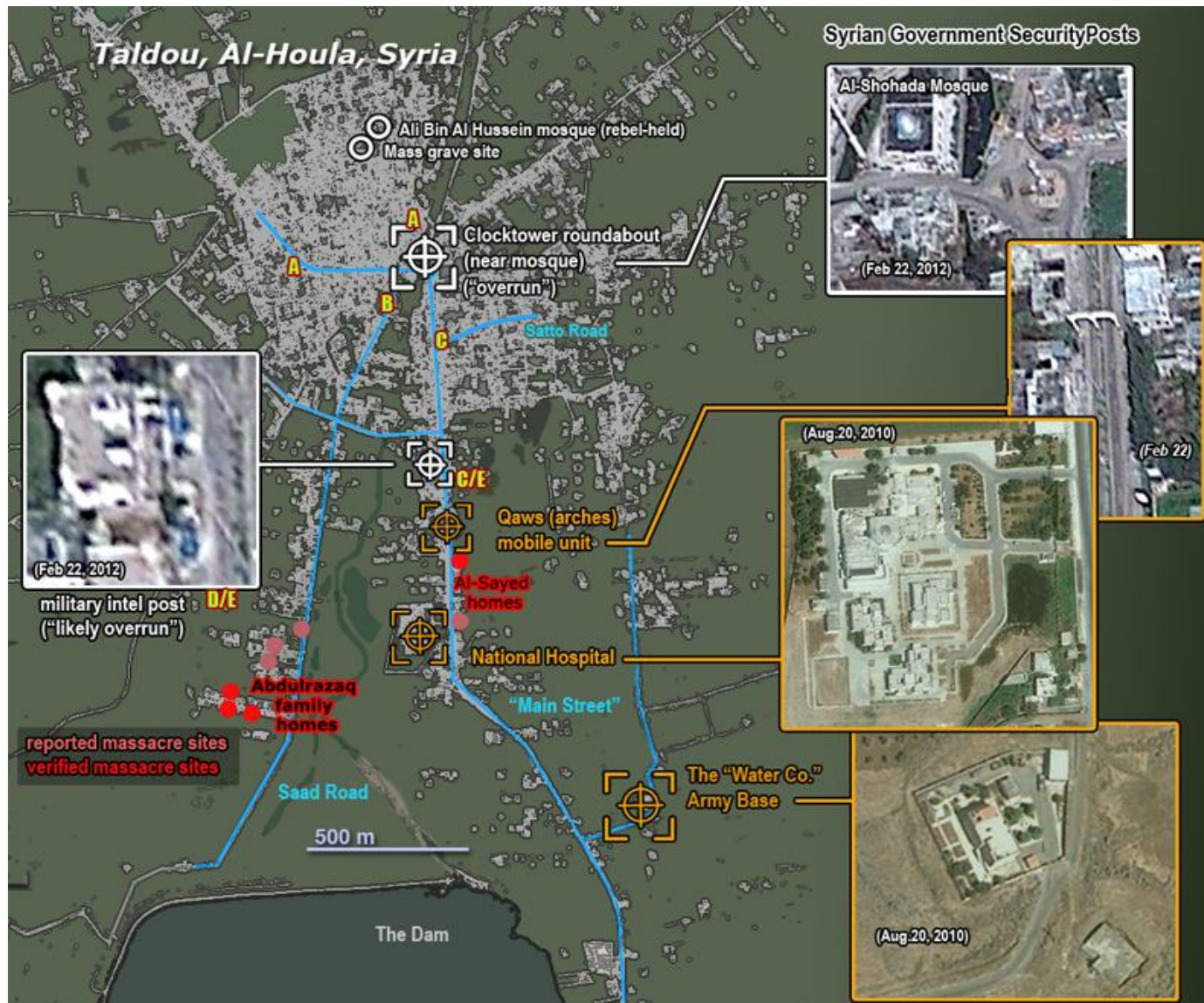
Reference:

- Taldou City center coordinates: Lat 34.876585 Long 36.5257078
- Time: Syria time Zone: GMT +3. Daylight Savings Time in effect May 25. (Original 2013 report failed to account for this and gave times consistently an hour early)
- Sunset, May 25: 8:38 PM local time (given by NOAA solar calculator) with actual 0° elevation at 8:36:25, with an azimuth of 296.47°.
- Wind direction: light breeze to the N-NE, as we've seen from the drift of various smoke plumes. Palmyra airport (OSPR) is the closest [available at Weather Underground](#) – May 25 direction not given, but wind speed 5 mph average, 9 max (the day before was windier - 8 av. 13 max).

al-Houla area map



security scene graphic



- White targets = UN acknowledged as overrun. From the June "oral update" - "anti-Government armed groups, including the FSA present in Taldou, fired upon the security forces checkpoints, probably overrunning one or two of them." (34) "The Col determined that the clocktower checkpoint was overrun at some point" (50) MIHQ is labeled as "likely overrun by anti-Gov't forces" on the map, p. 21 (but not in the text).
- Orange targets = the others. Aside from the "Water Company," these are contested; rebels may have also bypassed the Qaws and overrun the Hospital.
- "Verified massacre sites" here means ACLOS visual from videos - these are homes with blood in them, shown as crime scenes, that we've seen and can place.

Table of Cited Videos

All are from Youtube – listing format:

[VNo.] - title – “trans. f. Arabic” – url/link – duration – published on/by – √ still up May/June 2014

[V1] 2012-5-25 الحولة احد الناشطين يصف ما يحدث والقصف مستمر - “Hula Ahaddalnashtin describes what is happening and constant bombardment” - 5:33 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXg3Sg9vfo> - May 25, 2012 by Monther Hrfosh. - √

[V2] 25/5/2012 الحولة قصف بالذبابات على منازل المدنيين - “Hula tank shelling on civilian homes” - May 25, 2012 by Abu Usama Al Houla - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LyNmikt8Y> - √

[V3] 2012/5/25 الحولة قصف بالذبابات على منازل المدنيين ج 2 - “Hula tank shelling on civilian homes part 2” - v=WBGFn4cCq3g - √

[V4] عناصر كتبية العرياض بن سارية تشتبك مع عصابات الأسد (Elements battalion Arabad Ben force clashing with gangs Assad) - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xovR6GZOauM> - 0:13 - June 23, 2012 by كتبية العرياض بن سارية - (Arabad bin Valid brigade) - √

[V5] إصابة أحد عناصر كتبية العرياض بن سارية في معركة تحرير حاجز دوار الحرية في الحولة - “One of the elements of a battalion injury Arabad bin in force in the battle to liberate barrier roundabout freedom in the Hula” - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqXscOnCUh8> - 4:51 Published June 23 by كتبية العرياض بن سارية

[V6] إصابة أحد عناصر كتبية العرياض بن سارية في معركة تحرير حاجز دوار الحرية في الحولة تلدو - “Wounding one of the elements of battalion Arabad Ben force in the battle to liberate barrier Freedom Square in Hula Tldo” - 2:26 (repeated) - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqXscOnCUh8> - June 23 - √

[V7] Saad RPG Syriian Army Shelling Al-Houla [Extremely Graphic] - 4:42

[v8] [18]

[v9] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUIZzFNfo9w>

[V10] 5-25 الحولة قصف عنيف على المدينة 5-25 - “Hula heavy shelling of the city 5-25” - - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1glza3WG6mo> - Published May 29, 2012 by Monther Hrfosh

[V11] الحولة تشتبك مع عصابات الأسد - “Battalion Arabad Ben valid in the Hula clashing with gangs of Assad” - 1:03 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83YDxAI_yq4 - published June 23 by كتبية العرياض بن سارية - (Arabad bin Valid brigade) - √

[V12] [19]

[V13] [21] 2012-5-25 الحولة استهداف المشفى.mp4

- 1:41 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCzr-VV5XpA> - Published May 29, 2012 by Monther Hrfosh - verified June 1, 2014

[V14] [V15] 2012-5-25 الحولة استهداف المشفى.mp4 - “Houla targeting the hospital” - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCzr-VV5XpA> - Published on May 29, 2012 by Monther Hrfosh - √

[24] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1glza3WG6mo> ??

[V16] [26] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DI36vZcu7ms>

[V17 Ch4] Exclusive eyewitness account from the Syrian town of Houla – 4:13 -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQqICzMD3b8> - Published on May 30, 2012 by Channel4News.

[V18] 2012-5-31 الحولة-دوار الحرية بعد انسحاب عصابات الأسد - “Hula - dizziness of freedom after the withdrawal of gangs Assad” - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsV2su7sWp0> - 4:26 (2:13 repeated) - Published on Jun 1, 2012 by Monther Hrfosh - √

[V19] 2012-6-1 الحولة تدمير أحد المنازل من القصف - “Hula destruction of one of the houses of the bombing” - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-2SmkxUOvM> - 1:37 (0”38 repeated) - Published

on Jun 1, 2012 by Monther Hrfosh – ✓

[V20] Houla Syria-Houla Killing.mov – 4:01 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1QOKoDkds4>
- Published May 27, 2012 by UNSMIS - ✓

[V21] عناصر كتيبة العرياض بن سارية والفرحة التي تسودهم بعد تحرير حاجز مفرزة الأمن العسكري في الحولة "Elements of the battalion Arabad Ben valid and joy that after the liberation of Tsudhm barrier detachment of military security in the Hula" – 2:31 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFR-mQZMhsg> –
Published on Jun 23, 2012 by كتيبة العرياض بن سارية (Arabad bin Valid brigade) - ✓

[V22] what really happened in syria,houla.flv - 1:33 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRkmTkP-bMw> - Published on May 28, 2012 by غرباء كردستان - ✓

[V23] 9-14 الحولة تقرير القسم الثاني للمجزرة تم عرضه عالجزيرة Aaldzerh" - 32:53 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1vZQx8jQzY> - published Sept. 16, 2012 by جلال سليمان - ✓

[V22] Channel 4 (other?)

[V24] 2752012 الحولة إجلاء العائلات المحاصرة بوجود المراقبين "Around him to evacuate the families besieged the presence of observers" - 4:02 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5FEDTzvii8> -
Published on May 27, 2012 by Suliman Hu. - ✓

Preface: How the Battle for the Houla Massacre Started

For a report will essentially prove a rebel assault on Taldou May 25 that rebels deny, it's worth considering what violence, if any, they have claimed credit for. The opposition record so far is rather lacking in acknowledgment; the rebel-supplied alleged survivors tend to make no mention of it.

The rebel fighters who would be involved do acknowledge it, but downplayed in at least three different ways, listed below. These combine planned Friday protests, pious prayers, some sort of rebel fighting, and decisive government shelling, followed by a massacre. But the ways these are arranged is inconsistent; at least two of these narratives must be incorrect. It's more than likely, of course, that they all are.

* **Protest, then shelling, then fights:** Christof Reuter of Der Spiegel heard "after Friday prayers" rebels held their usual protest marches. "But then, in the early afternoon, army forces began heavily bombarding the village from several surrounding bases. FSA units launched counter-attacks on a number of army checkpoints." Then the government got the upper hand again, and did the massacre. ¹

* **Protest, then fight, then shelling:** The Daily Mail's reporters heard "There had been a protest earlier in the day which led to an exchange of fire at an army checkpoint at Taldou on the outskirts of Houla. Later there was shelling" by regime forces, which made the men run away or hide, and the regime forces did the massacre. ²

* **Fight, then shelling with no protest:** Martin Chulov heard "members of the Free Syria Army attacked a checkpoint earlier in the day" and then "around mid-morning" performed noon prayers. A protest was planned for after that "but the placards were never used," as the shelling started at 1:15. "According to several accounts, the Shabiha and regime troops [had] rallied after [the rebel attack]." Rebels took their placards and left the scene, as the regime forces remained on the offensive, and did the massacre. ³

¹Christoph Reuter and Abd al-Kadher Adhun for DER SPIEGEL, "[Searching for the Truth Behind the Houla Massacre](#)", published July 23, 2012, [video interviews](#)

²[As the world dithers over Syria, shocking evidence of an entire family massacred by Assad thugs: Father finds his wife and five children among the victims of the Houla atrocity](#) By Nabila Ramdani and Ian Gallagher. The Daily Mail, June 9, 2012.

³[The Houla massacre: reconstructing the events of 25 May](#). Martin Chulov, the Guardian, June 1, 2012.

A: Early Movement / Attacking The Clock Tower Post

One astute alleged witness - dubbed "Arifah" by ACLOS - says she gleaned information by listening in on rebel communications with a radio scanner, with details filled in later. [10] This is a little fishy-sounding in itself, but entirely possible and best tested against how it describes events. As translated, Arifah said "the groups attacked checkpoints in the area simultaneously at around 1:30." A mortar was fired, and then they "opened heavy fire on the checkpoint," in what the chatter suggested was a distraction (she said it was attacked again and actually conquered later on, around 7 PM).

The post isn't clearly stated, but another witness dubbed "the rebel defector," who says he was part of the attack (although not that part), says it was the clock tower post that was hit first, as a distraction. [1] He said:

"Gunmen showed up near the Clock Roundabout, while a large group headed down the road to al-Sad area [Saad Road?] which is known as Tripoli road, with the first group beginning to shoot their guns in the air to keep the checkpoint at the roundabout busy and give the impression that they intend to attack it." He had that attack starting "after noon prayers," when a rebel unit gathered "in the northern district of the village, which is located beyond the checkpoint, next to the place with the clock." [2]

Exhibit A.1

An activist video shows rebel fighters with many Kalashnikov rifles and at least one loaded RPG launchers run around alleys, firing a bit down a street, and otherwise seeming to be preparing more than fighting. From the short shadows, the time is near solar noon, 1:30 PM +/- 15 minutes. Perhaps two dozen lightly-armed men are shown in different groups, seeming cheerful and exuberant. The location is most likely in the center of town or further north, but the spot is not set. [V1]



With no map placement, there is no graphic for this scene. Here's a still (cropped from 0:39 in V1), apparently facing north, with the seen RPG and two AK-47s.

Exhibit A.2

Perhaps close by, we can see several explosive attacks on houses filmed in the west-center of town at about 1:40-1:50 PM. (left A on the security scene map). The stationary cameraman was seemingly expecting the hits at the spot he was filming, just northwest of the roundabout and the mosque. It's not clear what the targets are, what they're being hit with, and who's firing (although one gunner might be on the roof of the building this activist filmed from – possible shell casings are seen falling (at 0:02 and 0:07). It's branded as government shelling which, while possible, is far from clear given the following points of evidence. [V2] [V3]

Two videos, filmed from the same location (indicated below - lower left corner). The unique red-and-black awning lining up with the water tower was key - the other lines - stubby minaret, main minaret, bend in the ring road, power pole, fell into place from there.



The time is just about solar noon; most, but not all, west-facing walls are lit up, with a slight difference between the two videos. The azimuth can be fairly given as a range, greater than 178, less than 199 degrees, more likely closer to the upper end (as most faces at different angles are lit). A good center is $192.64^\circ = 1:44 \text{ PM} \pm 4 \text{ or } 5 \text{ min}$.

fThe iring seems to the north, from around city center. No security forces we know of exist in the north, but they do at the center. If so, this could be:

- 1) rebels firing on sec we don't knowledgeable
- 2) on someone they don't likelihood
- 3) randomly to make the regime look bad
- 4) by the army randomly to terrorize the people/make themselves look bad
- 5) by the army against positions it took fire from

Exhibit A.3

“The rebel defector” said:

“Gunmen showed up near the Clock Roundabout, while a large group headed down the road to al-Sad area [Saad Road?] which is known as Tripoli road, with the first group beginning to shoot their guns in the air to keep the checkpoint at the roundabout busy and give the impression that they intend to attack it.” [13]

Three videos ([V4]-[V6]) show just such an attack, with a few men taking turns firing automatic rifle around the corner. They’re in a certain spot - an alley between buildings, near what’s called al-Nouri bridge over the al-Assi River (upper A on the map - [here on Google maps](#) - and in the graphic below) This corner is 110 meters NNW of the detachment, and they’re firing south right along that line.



V5 shows an exuberant amateur having fun with firing, recoil, and jumping back in the alley for cover - the others seem to be laughing and enjoying themselves. In V6 The same bearded hero seen shooting in V4 readies for more. With many rounds prepared and held by an attendant (see inset image), he's almost instantly hit by return fire, a bullet clear through the abdomen, and he's carried away, possibly to die. [V6]

The shadows, read approximately, suggest a time of 2:25, +/- 15 minutes, or about an hour after the roundabout attack started. [1] [V4 5 6] This is a revision from the previous time in the original essay that had it an hour earlier,

DST oversight. That was just as Arifah had the attack beginning, making it a strong point in favor of her story. That any video of that wasn't shared is also consistent. Her time was wrong, this attack stretched for an hour or more, or resumed in that time, - but the basic actions and time remarkably consistent.

Azimuth decision graphic (a later assembly). Clockwise from left: alley location and firing direction, shooter location near the X, the scene with corner and shadow illustration, app. azimuth range and thus time-frame from this shadow. Mapping out shadow ratios against a model building corner (lower right), suggest a broad solar azimuth range of 212 deg to 232 degrees (or somewhere in the blue wedge set by diff app shadow readings). 212 degrees at 2:06 PM - 232 at 2:40 PM - mid-point 2:24 (+/- 15 min) - about an hour after the start of this operation.



B - RPG Firing Near City Center

Exhibit B.1

One of the more famous activist videos, cited widely in support of government shelling (still at left), contains a powerful and little-noted contradictory clue. Filmed on north Saad Road, just southwest of the mosque at city center (roughly the B on the map), it's said to show rebel men laboring "to rescue the women, children and elderly men who were trapped in their homes, some of which were being splintered by artillery and tank shells" that were "crashing down." [16]



But there's just one nearby blast and billow of smoke that, aside from the dead men laying nearby, makes the video so dramatic. A boy runs in front of the camera as if scared, and curious if he's being filmed. A man in robes runs by too.

But immediately after that blast, with stabilization and enhancements, we can see no visible damage, but a strange (to some) sight - one man alone falling down a moment after the blast, as the camera first pans that way. (just off-frame in the above still) Another man in green robes standing just behind him seemingly covers his ears due to noise, but remains unharmed and standing. The man who falls seems to lose white headscarf in the process, but he stands right back up unharmed. The Jihadist was apparently the victim of recoil; he walks straight towards the camera, holding his RPG launcher loosely at his right side. [V7]

rising after the tumble



The “shelling” perpetrator is essentially ignored by the activists loading four bodies (all adult males in civilian clothes, perhaps his victims) into a van. The cameraman seems more interested, and almost gets a good view of his face, before ducking into a doorway, apparently to avoid that. The man walks south, and then two more similar explosions are heard - to the south - before he seemingly disappears in a puff of exhaust smoke (probably down a side alley). Four rocket blasts at least from one guy, and that is among the best available raw video of the “Army shelling” of Taldou on the 25th. It's our exhibit B.1.

This chaotic but useful 4:42 video is rather unique, and has been widely cited already by government supporting Syrians as showing an armed opposition attack in the midst of the Houla Massacre. [cite] Rather than “shells crashing down” on this rebel-held area, they were flying sideways out of it. What the CIWCL/ACLOS analysis adds is the enhanced, stabilized view (see Analysis video (with music, explanations, etc.) [Houla Massacre, Saad Street Incident, pt. 1: the shelling perpetrator](#)) and the placement and thence timing of the scene.

The location of this incident is at the B on the map (p. 7), or the X at right. The solar azimuth near the video's beginning has read twice at building shadows across the street. One reading was 286° which means 7:18 PM. The other was $284.5^\circ = 7:07$ PM. The lower reading seems slightly better, so the best estimate is **7:11 PM +/- 5 minutes**.

This is the only clearly relevant video that the CIWCL has located in the broad gap between 2:30 and 8:30. The “6-hour blank spot” with this one known exception, is its own exhibit F in this report. It's also about when Arifah said the Clocktower post was finally overrun (after being bypassed under cover of attack earlier in the day). This would allow free movement from the rebel north right down Saad road. This is also roughly when everyone agrees the Shabiha” massacre was wrapping up further south down the street. Bodies would soon be recovered from the Abdulrazaq family homes.

Therefore, another interesting detail is how the van with bodies, from the direction it parks, apparently came from the north. The hatchback popped, the van is loaded with the four dead men (including one with a dramatic, mostly-destroyed head). License plates aren't seen, but it's black, with black panels in the back instead of side windows. Once loaded, hurriedly, it drives off, first south. From there, it's not clear if it continues straight or make the first turn to the west.



At any rate these bodies were seen in an area of free rebel access near city center, driven south towards the massacre sites – and their bodies mixed with those – the driving was about 7:12. These are all seen in a clinic/morgue and again in a display of Abdulrazaq family members after dark. One of these appears alive but playing dead at first (his eyes are open a slit and then close), later shown with entrails laid on top of his tucked-in shirts, and again intact but portrayed as dead, laying among the massacre victims. This side-mystery is too odd to ignore, but not important enough to get hung up on. For the curious, the disturbing visuals are in a follow-up video: [Houla Massacre Saad Street Incident pt2](#)

C - Main St. Fighting and MIHQ

Exhibit C.1



"The rebel defector" describes a unit attacking from Satto Road which, by the spot he points to on the map, connects to Main Street from the east, south of city center (it's included in the map on page ____). One video from "the battle to liberate freedom circle" shows a group firing guns and rockets west from a barricade on the indicated road minutes before sunset. They run towards Main Street and stop at the corner.

from that position (northern C on the map), they staged an attack. One of the rebels, covered by automatic gunfire, runs out and **fires a rocket propelled grenade south**, towards the post at Military Intel HQ (MIHQ) and/or the Qaws, then

returns cheering a successful hit. [V8]

Exhibit C.2

Another video of May 25, perhaps as early as 6:45 PM but once again near sunset, is filmed from a great distance to the northwest. It looks southeast clear across Taldou, to the giant water tower by the elevated "water company" post. In between, huge plumes of smoke rise from the south span of main street, very near or at MIHQ. [V9] Since no one contests that that post was overrun and torched, the discovery is not earth-shattering, but gives us a rough no-later-than time stamp.

This panorama, stitched from several frames, shows its overall view with key visual features marked on the panorama with colored lines and some objects circled at the visible base. The larger ovals show spots where distance buildings line up. The red rectangle should contain the smoke origin.



The extra-big graphic on the next page traces out these colored lines, with the circled objects circled where they are on each line. This isn't exact, but close: the near-parallel lines represent one view that has everything lining up this way. Where these lines converge, very far off this frame and clearly outside Taldou itself, should be near the spot it was actually filmed from. The apparent source of smoke - boxed in red between the purple and pink lines - shares a line with, or is, Military Intel HQ - boxed in red on the map, between the same lines. (the extra red and yellow lines are from another ACLOS member's previous effort)

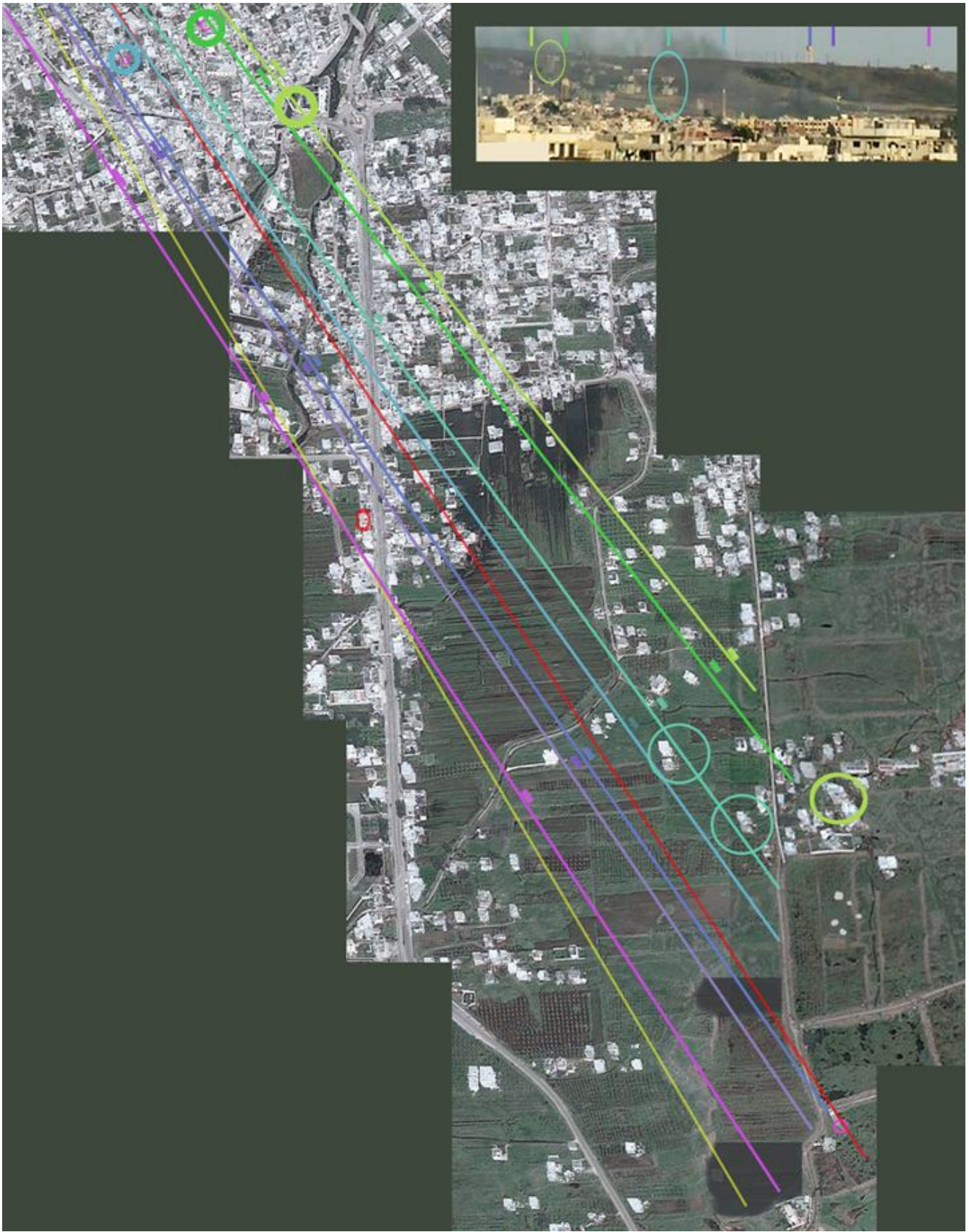
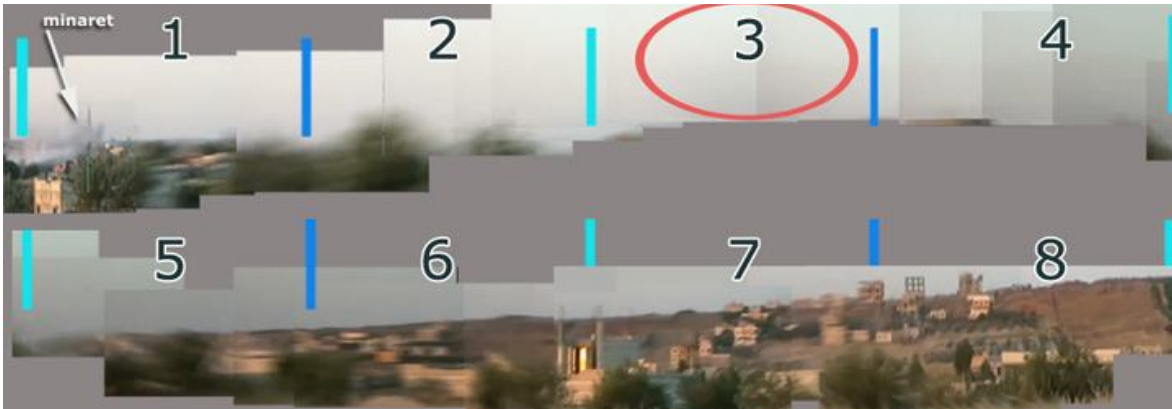


Exhibit C.3

Video [V10] “targeting the hospital” was filmed from position D/E on the overview map (p. 7) It starts out looking north at smoke from city center, near the roundabout post and central mosque. It then pans clockwise across much of Taldou, in a useful way. Below is another frame-to-frame panorama, split into 8 equal zones, with some loss of continuity in the middle as skyline anchors disappear in zones 3 and 4. Here, he was panning up for some reason - there's smoke in that span, perhaps from a spot he'd rather not show us burning. [V10]



Zone 1: city center - smoke. - Zone 3: smoke. - Zone 8: faint smoke

The graphic at right tries to extend all these lines into a real field-of-view. The corner inset shows the near span. The gold line there indicates the tall window nearby reflecting direct sunlight. That's visible on the panorama above, but actually on the adjacent light blue line. So the correlation isn't perfect all the way across, but about that close.

The smoke should be somewhere along the lines indicated - I didn't try setting where, just putting the gray ovals in an even arc on their lines. The likely origins, considering all the other evidence presented here, should be clear enough – the red Xs mark the minaret and the security posts in question.

Note: General wind direction was to the **north-northeast**, elongating the circled areas and area of expected drift, as partly shown - but backwards (shown here in error as N-NW). Also, zone 8 has no smoke here, but it's marked anyway – see exhibit E.2.

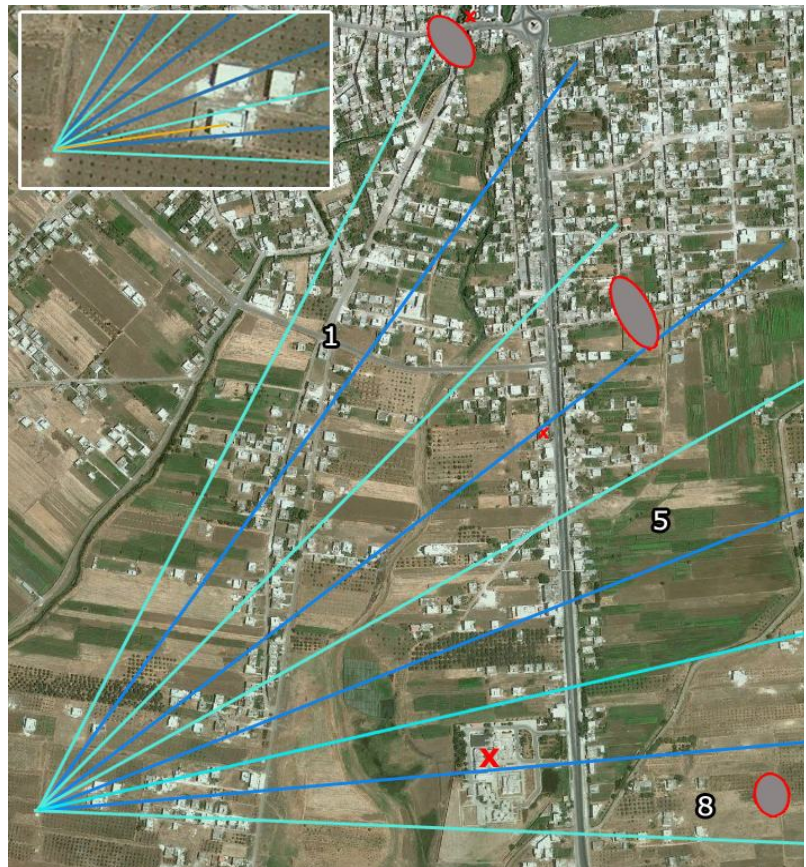


Exhibit C.4

Defenses were overcome again, and the way was opened further south (C/E on the map), where more fighting right at sunset was seen just below the MIHQ. The Arabic title of [V11] Google-translates “Battalion Arabad Ben valid in the Hula clashing with gangs of Assad.” A small group (at least four men with rifles) can be seen firing around the corner, aiming south towards the Qaws. Tracers in the semi-dark suggest return fire - a building right across the street starts belching smoke. At this, and at each salvo of outgoing fire, the narrator exclaims Allahu Akbar. [V11]



There is a date ambiguity with this video, shared with some others but sharper than most. It was only uploaded June 26, and not dated or described as being on any particular day. However, it was uploaded with other videos of the brigade in late June that are clearly linked to the “battle for freedom circle” (Videos [V4] – [V6] for instance) which clearly means the May 25 battle when the roundabout was taken. All that activity consistent with the day's events, plus smoke clouds to the south that seems to be from the hospital (see See Exhibit E.3), strongly suggests all this this footage is from May 25, since there was no reported violence of these days LCC daily reports [LCC] all Homs deaths, a few a day, in districts of Homs city, Rastan, Talbiseh, not Houla – clashes likewise make even less mention of Homs

D - Firing on the "Water Company"?

Twice, it seems, and again near sunset, we can see a presumed rebel militant firing an RPG towards the "Water company" army base that was the backbone of Taldou's defenses. Continued attacks suggest this elevated position at least remained government-held at that time. Syrian official sources seem to have it holding out through the night and later helping reclaim Main Street. [22] However, they say it was incapable of an offensive for a time, pinned down by a rebel attack. The video record fails to prove that, but is entirely consistent with it.

Exhibit D.1

Another sunset video (timed at 7:31 +/- 3 minutes) is shot nearer (D/E on the map), and shows pretty clearly a rocket-propelled grande being fired towards the Army base. [V13?]

From a middling distance, seems to pan around until he finds a truck with wire canopy frame parked on the road. He zooms in on that, with a man standing in the back of it, perhaps facing the camera with right arm raised. Off to the near side and a few meters back, just then, a clear flash can be seen (in the red arc), followed by a light-gray smoke trail



marking a line to the south – towards the base about 300 meters distant. After nearly four seconds, a boom and an echo (?) are finally heard. The narrator, claiming this is "heavy shelling of the city" declares Allahu Akbar, with the meaning unclear. [V13]

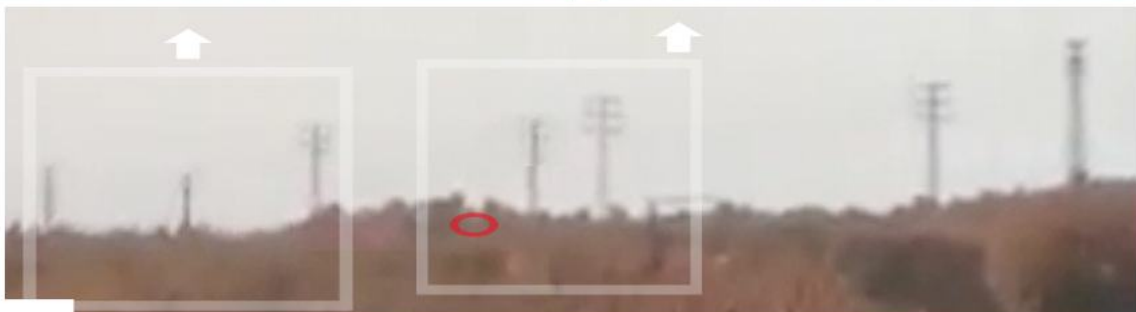
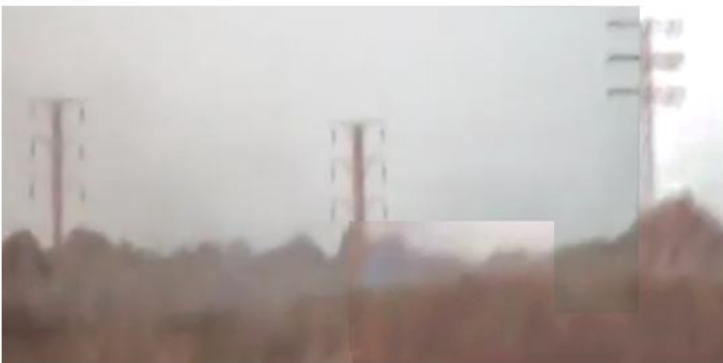


Exhibit D.2

The long-distance video cited in exhibit C.2 - filmed a bit earlier than the above - shows at 0:43 a very bright flash and puff of smoke on the hillside a ways north of the base, consistent with an RPG launch. [V12] As with the other, the exhaust says which way the wind is drifting, but not

which way the explosives flew.

As seen at right, from this northern angle the flash lines up with the base of the water tower – closer to the base than the later visible firing – no sound audible at this distance - this narrator also says Allahu Akbar upon the flash – as well as at just about everything.



Both spots marked on the map below, rotated. Note: the satellite image of the base shows a sort of wall on its north side, that must be the foreground observation structure seen on most videos.

As seen May 27, the visible (northwest) faces of obs. Post and buildings show no damage or smoke-stains (lower right frame – [V?] 2:41. From this, it's not clear if the Water Company base was ever even hit, but neither any clear sign of fire from it.



What we do see is free firing as close as 200 meters, rebels would likely tell us, by forward forces from the base, at

unknown targets down in the south of Taldou. But considering the dangers of going out that particular day, it seems more likely the other way around. Where they're firing isn't clear, but these are most likely opposition forces. If they didn't ever overtake the hilltop base, they at least operated quite close to it, in their wide-ranging confidence.

Exhibit E: Burning The Hospital?

Witness “Arifah” heard that in the mid-afternoon (3-4 PM), rebels took over some check-point, then set fire to it, along with “the nearby hospital.” Syrian official sources and at least one other witness agree the National Hospital was burned by rebels. By then, all sources agree the hospital was used as an army post – video shows sandbagged positions adequate for snipers across its roofs, for example. Syrian official sources claim such deployments are to protect the hospitals from “terrorist” attacks, like in May 25 in Taldou.

The UN Col reported this military “occupation,” mention no attack on it, presume it was fully functional and remained in gov. hands (see cont. core cons...) This is important, since two massacre sites are across the street from it, the others taking their only possible defense from those presumed rooftop soldiers.

Exhibit E.1

Rebel sources never mention the hospital either way, aside from one activist, Monther Hrfosh, who posted a video of the hospital apparently burning, wanting to accuse the Army of shelling it. [V14] (but he put the title on the wrong video - [V15]) The time is not certain, but just before sunset, 8:30 +/- 8 minutes.

The hospital’s distinctive trees and outer wall are seen from across the fields, with a giant cloud of whitish smoke rising above (see inset). The bulk of it drifts north over the seconds with no more rising to join it. So it may be smoke from a single event, a few RPG firings or some other explosion, now dissipating. There are not, however, any other sounds suggesting an ongoing battle there.

Right side: Correlating hospital features:

Below: lines up the hospital and visible power poles with a panorama view clarifying the filming position.

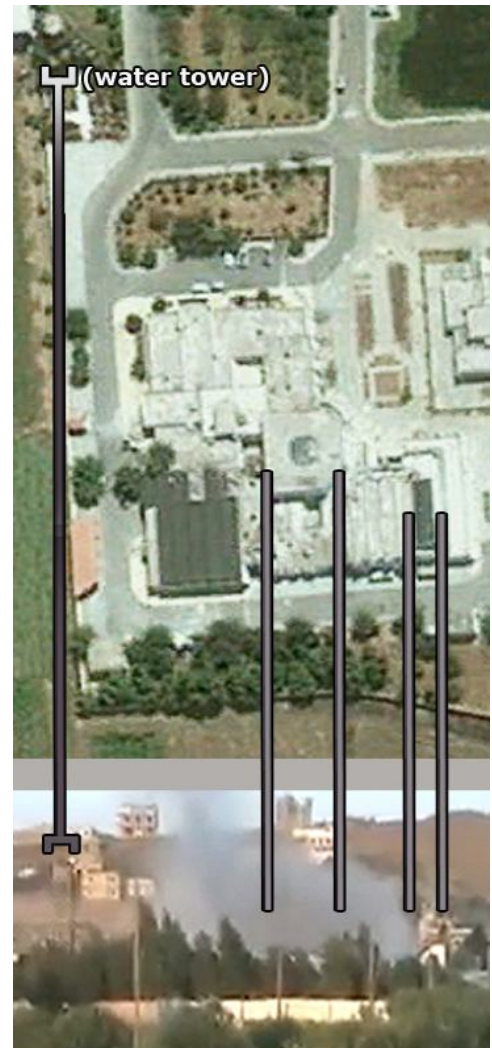


Exhibit E.2

A second video from the same activist, a bit north (still, around the D/E on the map) and perhaps earlier, might show faint white smoke - at 0:10 – on a line to be near the hospital (blocked by nearer buildings). [V10] See cropped still, slightly enhanced, next page. The circled area has a suggestion of white, north-drifting smoke.



The graphic at right shows the filming spot for E.2 – slightly different from the other - Both locations are very near the Abdulrazaq massacre sites, reported and verified, marked with red Xs at right. app. (the southern ones are the most blood-verified massacre sites – see ...) – less than an hour after the alleged Shabiha massacres there.

Considering that, obviously, this could be smoke from the house blocking the view – seemingly the onse straight ahead, reportedly a massacre site (unverified, but perhaps smoking here).

Exhibit E.3

Another videos show another type of smoke rising on different line of sight matching the hospital. This video (C/ E on the map) was already cited for C.4? - filmed just minutes before full sunset, [20] [V11] – seen at 0:40. Looking south-southwest, this smoke appears fairly dark and genuinely billowing.

Graphic below – field of view in 4 segments, extended radiating southeast - the green arc marks a large tree, and somewhat the drifting smoke plume, to the northeast, with an origin somewhere very near to on line #2.



The hospital being the largest and seemingly about the right distance. marked with a sort of red crescent (note: the hospital's trees are highlighted in the graphic for no good reason - those weren't burnt down – see p...) but the back/west half of the hospital is better indicated then the other half)

That this region of smoke is on two lines of sight both including the hospital, and so close in time, emphasizes the apparent location and sequence - This blacker smoke suggests that the possible attack has generated a real fire inside that building - apparently, the National Hospital started burning at about sunset, following at least one explosion. In context, it's fairly clear who's responsible - the people cheering direct hits in that direction.

Video date, June 26 – issue already addressed with exhibit C.4, page 20. - all of these seem to be of the same pivotal day

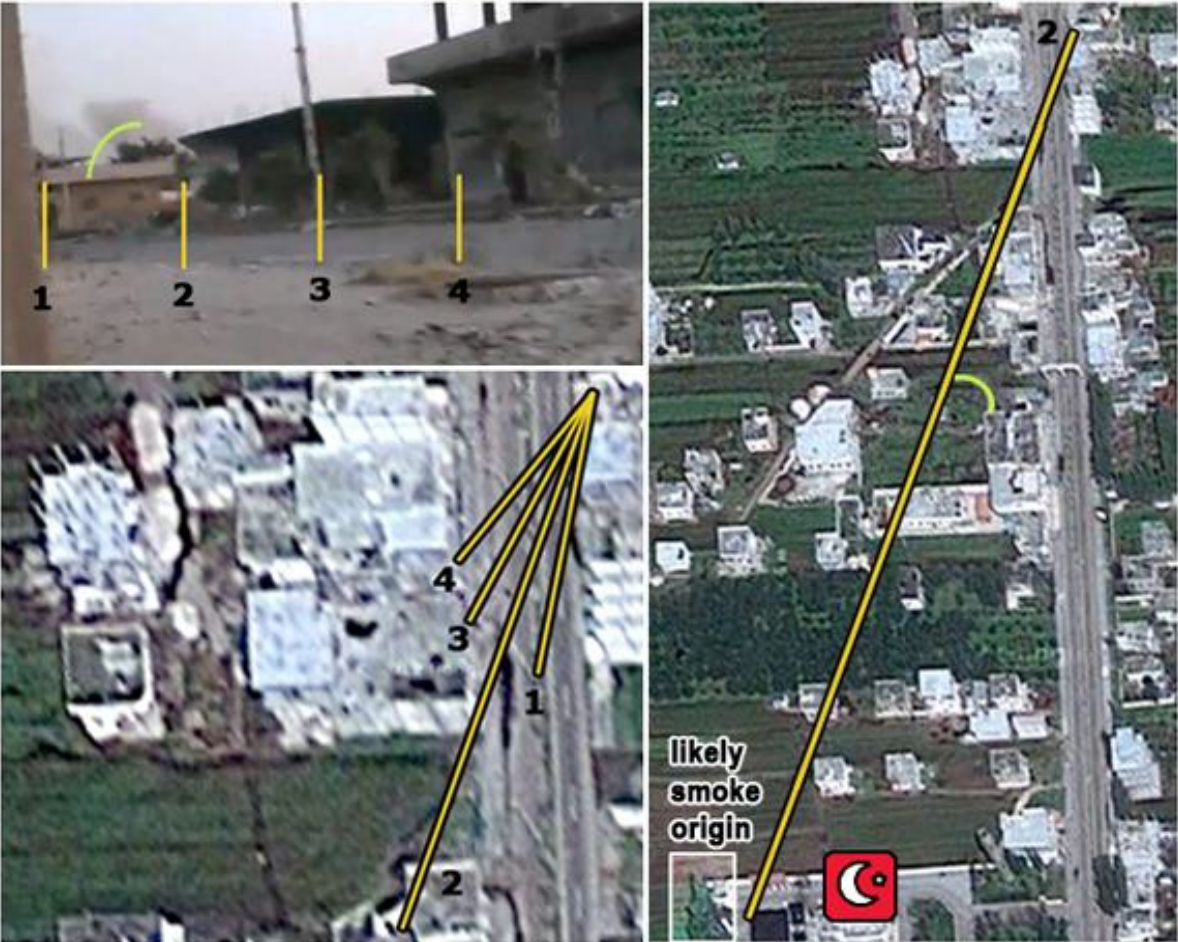


Exhibit F: The Six-Hour Blank Spot

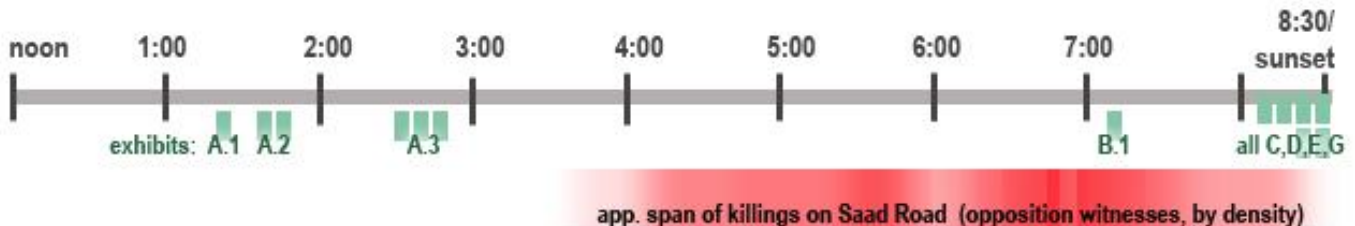
Some facets of the alleged rebel attack do not come through in these available videos. The use of mortars or truck-based heavy machine guns isn't shown. No security post is shown up-close. Neither is the capture or execution of any soldiers shown, nor obviously the reported rebel massacres themselves.

In fact, the whole relevant period from about 2:30-8:30 seems to be almost completely undocumented. At least from the wide portion ACLOS has studied, there is a general gap of about six hours after the few shared videos of the early afternoon (ex A). There is the Saad Street RPG video around 6:15 PM (ex B), but nothing else until minutes before sunset, when activists all across town were suddenly able to film again. For reference, the fighting started at 1-2 PM, all sides agree. The first bases fell around 3-4 PM, and the early massacres seem to have run from roughly 5-7 PM (others reportedly ran from 10/11 PM until 3/4 AM).

What could cause the activists filming of such a dramatic event to pause for six hours? They might say they all had to retreat, and all returned just before sunset. But it could also be an order from local rebel command to avoid filming the heart of their victory-studded battle that apparently did occur.

Timeline: <http://acloserlookonsyria.shoutwiki.com/wiki/Houla:Timeline>

videos are the green bars, app. Placement, and even number at the late end. Below, translucent red patches – opp. Reports of killings on south Saad Road – the core of the Houla Massacre. Where more reports line up, it gets more red. Broadly, anywhere between 4 and 8 PM – a four hour bloody spot begging an explanation – but this they didn't film.



Fighters passing north as early as 4:30 from the dam area, having already passed these sites, nearest the dam, were “among the first to be killed” ... (Daily Mail) UN Col first heard By most accounts the killings on Saad Road occurred between 16:00 and 18:00 hrs on 25 May. Page 8 But among those giving times, they tend to start with Shabiha arriving around 5:30, or 6, gunshots heard at 6:30, killings wrapping up by 7, starting at 7, ending by “early evening.” That whole span of varying pink in the graphic above is within the blank spot, climaxing closest to its apparent sudden end.

After sunset, no more useable videos of the rebel assault, which apparently ended anyway. The rest of the night consisted of scooping up the human toll, and putting it to work in the Jihad against Syria's government.

By the timeline they offer, the Al-Sayed homes on Main Street are totally off the timeline above, late at night, but the other side says all victims that they claimed were done by around 8 PM – see cont core cons, Sayed, page __ one house's worth was unclaimed by rebels – the other(s) unclear

G Celebration Video

A video of about two dozen armed rebels standing atop Taldou at sunset, pouring heavy smoke from at least two spots that are difficult to identify at this resolution. The fighters are smiling, raising their guns, and cheering “Allahu Akbar,” as if the devastation below were something good. [V16] [26] Filmed somewhere on the ridge near the “Water Company,”



This video is dated July 14, 2012, the attack given as a response to the Tremseh “massacre” two days earlier. But an ACLOS analysis finds this and other videos in the same batch show signs of the May 25 battle (like fighters from Rastan arriving from the northeast, also around sunset). [27]

Furthermore, there is no news of any actual violence in Al-Houla on July 13 or 14 (see above link), and it’s difficult to imagine a smoldering city going unreported as “regime” shelling, a rebel victory, or both. As with the late June videos (see exhibit C.4), checked for consistent violence add here ...

That and the consistent smoke drift to the north makes it all too likely this is a laundered video of May 25, when violence of course was reported. If so, they’re celebrating the destruction – and perhaps the massacre that rode in with it - as if it was their own job well done. [V16]

View over Taldou (composite)



H) - Aftermath

Whatever the front lines really were by the day and the days after – government held much of Main Street but clearly after pushing back against something that ...

Exhibit H.1

Clocktower Post and Baath HQ – A dispatch for Channel 4 from chief reporter Alex Thomson - apparently with UN monitors on May 30th, showed to drive north up Main Street from about the hospital (unseen) to the clock tower roundabout. At that point he describes it as "rebel-held Houla," after that, but apparently including it as well.

Thomson notes a "dead horse" in the road there, looking much more like a goat, actually, or related ungulate. [V17] The animal seems to have some kind of red fabric, a rug or something, tied to its back, a trail of blood where it was dragged out almost into traffic. This is visible on the right side of the stitched panorama at right.



At the bend just past the clock, "abandoned" armored vehicles, two blue, one camouflage, and a tank are seen, all left by the Army when they apparently lost this post. Note also the possible rough painting of a goat on the wall between the APCs. "We'll cut Assad's throat," the crowd of people chant on arrival somewhere near this spot. Something between a scapegoat, in the historic sense (with special roots [in ancient Syria](#), by the way), and an animal sacrifice, is suggested, with the goat representing "Assad" (the Syrian government).



By the U.N.'s Col was fairly clear in stating that it “determined that the clocktower checkpoint was overrun at some point.” (oral p. 10) They didn't go into detail, but the provided map also has it labeled “overrun,” at some point they don't know – Arifah says around 7:00 PM. After being bypassed earlier.

At left, a detail of some damage to the red.. building at the northwest corner - filmed May 31 [V18] A German-language map says this includes the home of family Abbara [??] This must refer to alleged witness “the rebel defector.” VDC lists two adult men of that name killed in Houla, that day, by shelling [VDC] Let's hope FSA fighter Ikrima Bakour was exaggerating when he told the BBC cited as

one Mohammad Abbara along with "his daughter Amina and her family of seven" "also killed in the massacre" [BBC]

But the exact locations are a bit confusing, - same map has here (translated) “Observation post on roof top, taken over by terrorists.” - the onetime rebel fighter told Syrian state TV

The house on the northern corner of the square belongs to the family Abbara. Further back, there is the building of the local department of the Baath Party. On the top of this building there was an observation post of the security forces, whose position was secured by sandbags. Farther north, about 50 meters behind the Baath building, there is the Al-Nouri-bridge.

On video (around 2:10) he points to three areas, in sequence south to north, outlined at right - last a bridge, – the same we saw attackers firing near in exhibit A.3. The narration seems out of synch, but the second spot must be Baath HQ, even though it says Abbara wife he points to it. about 50 meters south of the bridge.



That building, apparently – comparable size, just northeast of the mosque - survived the 25th but was destroyed a week later. Two videos uploaded June 1 by Monther Hrfosh show it first, on May 31 intact [V18] and the next day a fresher video shows it demolished explosive from the inside, chunks damaged surrounding buildings (see inset). The title says it's a house destroyed by Army shelling. [V19]

shows it on the map. And we know from some videos that it sits kind of high above the little river and overlooks the main part of town, so it's the right spot for an observation post.

Exhibit H.2 - Military Intelligence HQ

UN video, May 26 or 27 - UN decision

Satellite and location images agree the Military Intelligence headquarters on Main Street was "guarded" by two armored vehicles, originally blue in color. These seem to be immobile, their wheels sandbagged, and the gun turrets likely de-commissioned - they'd do no good in a fight, and likely served more as barricades to foil suicide bombers than anything else. Both are seen on the same UNSMIS video, 3:00-3:03 The northern one of these is seen in the graphic below (top) [V20] and later that summer as a prop for rebels celebrating the victory (bottom, composite view) [V21]



Behind the tank and the wall, we can make out in both images that the building too has been torched by the time of the UN video, and hit with bullets (three visible in both views, one chipping the corner) There seems little reason to think of this as anything but overrun - if the soldiers here couldn't defend their own normally secure base from rebel fire, how could they protect the town's citizens even outside those scarred walls? But the Col's phrasing "likely overrun by anti-Gov't forces" leaves it open enough some could presume likely not - therefore posts further south should have held as well.



Alex Thomson's earliest broadcast of, it seems, May 26 – filmed at this now re-claimed post – 0:44 a soldier is seen (right) crouching behind the southern armored vehicle there. Just down the street, rebel gunfire hit a soldier, carried away but leaving some blood on the sidewalk. [V21-22]

The Contested Core, Considered

So far ... peripheral ... The southern two contested posts - the mobile post at the Qaws (arches) and the National Hospital - lack visual support one way or the other. This fact helps allow the Col to make presumptions about them, which they do. Flanking the massacre homes that could be shielded ... if rebels had overrun these ...

Qaws as Front-Line

Just south of the clearly overrun MIHQ, the Qaws (or arches, the old city gate). There's no video proof of it being overrun, not that it would leave clear signs. As seen the day after, there are no wrecked vehicles left here like there were just up the street. It's bullet-scarred and damaged, with the central crest torn down - but not clear when (except the latter - done by September, 2011) ... The composite image below is from May 26 as the UNSMIS monitors arrived, showing the arches from the south side. Little conclusive can be said about that. [V20]

this is the UN report's "demarcated the new front line between the opposition and Government forces" after the overrun and "likely overrun" posts. Unlike MIHQ just 200 meters up the street, the mobile post held fast, despite the force that took that plus the next post up, and clearly by video swarmed all over firing south -



More than any other post, this one should be considered vulnerable to irrelevance. As the one mobile post, Unlike the immobile armored vehicles at MIHQ these had the option to simply flee if it became clear they couldn't hold their position. Precedent suggests that decision is pretty likely to be one they were faced with.

How the commission decided that they never did flee will be crucial to explaining this "front line" concept. (later?) expanded to "The front line between the opposition and Government forces was north of the checkpoint," at some arbitrary spot between there and MIHQ

The reasons they give are clearly inadequate; it seems they made an unfounded presumption that it held, illustrated this presumption in three ways, and took those together as corroborating the leap of faith. First, the Col announce that they "determined" that "the checkpoint at Al-Qaws remained in Government hands **at the end of the day** the incident occurred." (my emphasis) No doubt it was normally held, and apparently it was in their control at the end of the day (around midnight). Why "remained" is the best connecting word for these two points is not explained. They could be *still* in control at midnight, or *in control again* after an interruption.

Secondly, the report says "indeed, when UNSMIS arrived the next day ... Government soldiers were on duty at the checkpoint and in control of the crime scene" Even if this morning control was continuous since midnight, it too does nothing to illustrate the afternoon and evening situation.

Nowhere in the report is another reason given to presume continuity of control, except the third and probably true reason it had to be seen that way: "Al-Sayed house was adjacent to the National Hospital and lying south of Al-Qaws checkpoint ... the crime scene remained in Government-controlled territory the entire time."

Midnight Killings?

The midnight-morning span is *allegedly* crucial; The Col (oral update) decided after the Abdulrazaqs, “another 13–15 members of the Al-Sayed family were killed later, probably after dark, although the precise timing for either killing could not be determined by the Col.” (Page 7) They tend to credit reports with a combined range of too many hours, but all later than 11 PM.

presumed survivors Ali al-Sayed and Maryam al-Sayed (?) who claim to speak for the two stricken households both put the killings late – Maryam's home by the hospital around 11 PM, and Ali's by the Qaws as late as 4 am - just hours before the Monitors got there. But both witnesses are dubious, and Ali in particular is severely unreliable. (see...) The very fact that this apparent hand puppet of a witness was urged to place the killings after midnight suggests two things:

- 1) the army was back in charge by around midnight as the Col determined, so this time helps blame them
- 2) the actual massacre happened earlier, likely just after Sunset, during the hours that the Qaws was overrun and all points south were open.

Other possibilities clearly exist, but at any rate, these alleged details should not be seen as proving the illogical allegation that the soldiers went berserk that particular night, killed the people just down the street, then left the bodies there to blame “terrorists,” then facilitate the U.N. Handover of the bodies to the same “terrorists” hanging out with their *alleged* family members.

Al-Sayed Family Homes

The home everyone has on video with dead bodies inside – SANA attributes to Aref Mohammed al-Sayed - is between the two posts, but closer to the Qaws itself. At right, hole punched in the south wall of the Aref al-Sayed House from whoever the attackers were [V23] 9:50



Either way, the point holds that who held the Qaws is crucial. the Col determined that the location of the checkpoints ... made it likely that those manning the pro-Government checkpoints were aware. (oral update) What happens if no one is manning them is unexplained. They have an unsupported assumption that runs contrary to common sense, and suggests a strange conspiracy theory about soldiers re-grouping after the rebel offensive and finally using their control of the area to murder two families right next door, and just leaving all the evidence there for the UN to see.

If the rebels had access, why they would choose to leave these bodies, unlike the scooped-up Abdulrazaqs, is not certain, but ... perhaps to make it seem like an area they never could reach, because it was in government hands throughout ... maybe they also hoped to secure an ironic UN blessing for their massacre-cover story package in the morning, they "negotiated the handover of the bodies from the site."

The other known home is more between the posts but nearly “right across from the hospital – Muawiya al-Sayed – Oqba ... sort out, 2 or 3? Apparently unclear – Oqba reportedly died with ... his house shouldn't matter. It's retired colonel Muawiya al-Sayed where people were killed –

Also ... only one house full of victims is ever shown as the government revealed the evidence left behind – in al-Shumariyeh, they showed Alawite victims left behind, but in Taldou, only the one house – did rebels claim the victims from the other al-Sayed home, the one right by the hospital? In June and probably to this day, the second site was alleged, but unverified by the UN, despite its passing the site each time they came and went – not shared on anyone's videos we know of. A curious and interesting blank spot. Do we see the victims from there amongst the rebel displayed dead early on the 26? It can't be sure ...

National Hospital

As with the Qaws, there are no visuals to prove the hospital's status one way or another - Arifah said:

"...after taking over the checkpoint they stole the weapons and ammo which was in it and began distributing them among themselves, then immediately set fire to the checkpoint, nearby hospital and the woods behind it, completely burning down the trees."



Apparently she was wrong about the trees at least. The image at left is from May 27, as UN monitors were swamped with rebel-funneled locals with their stories. It looks different, but this must be the tall green trees behind it, the whole lot of outer wall, water tower, and the sloped structure – seen from the southeast across the fields. [V24]

But otherwise Arifah might be as right as she is on several other points. Dr. Bashar al-Jaafari, Syria's representative to the UN, said the "terrorists" burned the hospital in their

attack, and we've seen some smoke coming from that way - first like RPG exhaust (E.1 E.2), then like real fire (E.3) – two videos clearly on the 25th, the other posted a month later but most likely also from that day. And, of course, someone massacred a family right across the street that exact day.

The UN Col had decided the hospital was crucial to preventing massacres in both areas, but at first weren't sure it held. The June Oral update had said:

[I]t is unlikely that those positioned at the Water Company could have discerned between a farmer with a rake and a fighter carrying a gun, unless viewing through a sniper scope or similar. The same cannot be said for the National Hospital checkpoint which, if actively manned, could easily have made such a determination. ...

*While the National Hospital checkpoint is 500 meters away, the Col was **unable to determine whether that checkpoint remained actively manned** at the time of the crimes, and even if manned, whether it would have been in the position to stop a small group of armed persons from accessing the Abdulrazzak homes. The checkpoint was, however, manned by Government troops at the time the UN observers arrived the morning of 26 May 2012.*

Later, presence in the morning was taken as proof it held at all times before that. The shifting methodology between reports ...

Primarily presumed since the attack came from the north and the Qaws held – the massacre sites and hospital behind front lines, so clearly it all remained a government-held area

Reuter, Der Spiegel - But given that the houses were between two army checkpoints, it would have been almost impossible for rebels to move easily from house to house and shoot the residents without clashing with soldiers." The same report was aware "FSA

units launched counter-attacks on a number of army checkpoints” after the noon shelling. There was clashing, apparently sometime before the massacre. [CReut]

The non-rebel witnesses have different stories of what happened at the hospital – Jibril said overrun, patients and staff murdered, burned, and marked blankets taken to wrap bodies in [??] – the CIWCL cannot verify or rule out this version – all we can say is some part of it was burning around sunset

but the final report also offers this accidental support for the opposite:

The National Hospital had been occupied by the army for several months prior to the incidents. Although it was accessible by foot from both crime scenes, no one – whether injured or fleeing the crime scenes – sought refuge there. As far as the commission could determine, all injured and surviving family members [alleged, self-described -ed], as well as people from nearby houses, fled to opposition-controlled areas. Moreover, as mentioned in the commission’s previous report, it was anti-Government activists who arrived at the area first, took care of the deceased and assisted in treating the wounded and organized their burial. The commission saw no indication that pro-Government entities attempted to do the same, namely to secure the crime scenes or to recover the wounded and deceased after news of the events broke – at either site. (p 67)

They presume it was operational and calm, but ordered by the government not to help anyone, nor to help them retrieve bodies. By sheer choice they left rebels the only ones doing anything - Perhaps ... Rebels were at the crime scenes so soon after the killings because they were there already just before the killings. Perhaps ... Rebel-supplied alleged witnesses went back home with the rebels, while the dead went with them as far as the video camera and the mass grave - they did the hospital-snubbing. Perhaps ... No one still able to go where they wanted went there because it was on fire and under rebel control. Perhaps ... No police, army, or ambulances came to help - not out of regime callousness, but because they were incapacitated by the attack and the dangers it brought to just the areas needing help. That would conform to the available video evidence.

Abdulrazaq Family Homes



Even the Un's Col gives no good reason to think these massacre sites could be safe from any rebel attackers – once the central post was definitely overrun, or even bypassed (iboth, at different times) there was no further checkpoint along Saad road – only snipers at the hospital post or such could hold them back

Exhibit B free movement around 7:20 PM – about when overrun and an hour before sunset – a black van drove south to this spot, then continued south or perhaps west ... bodies thus scooped up were later mingled with Abdulrazaq victims (the big

arrays) in a home morgue after dark –

When stealing private moments with whole household stuffed with alleged coverts from the right faith – monitors shown homes filled with blood – truly horrific things happened here. [V25] (part 3 0:53) details, ACLOS: [Abdulrazaq Crime Scenes](#)

Col August: “In its oral update to the Human Rights Council, the commission determined that anti-Government armed groups, Government forces and *Shabbiha* could have had access to the two crime scenes: the first, the seven Abdulrazzak family homes on Saad Road (Tariq Al-

Sad) and the second, the two Al-Sayed family homes on Main Street (Al-Shar'i Al-Raisi), across from the National Hospital.

Not clear if hospital guards existed, or if they even could protect -

As covered, they decided the "new front line" on Main Street made it "highly unlikely that an anti-Government armed group would have had access to the Al-Sayed family house on the day of the killings." Even in August they could offer no such cover for these other homes – merely by extension, if the government must have killed the al-Sayeds, they presumably attacked the homes across the fields as well.

The Commission determined that while the anti-Government forces could access the Abdulrazzak crime scene despite the superior firing position of the Government, it would have been difficult (although not impossible) for them to access the Al-Sayed family site. Thus, while the Col could not rule out the possibility of anti-Government fighters being responsible for the killing, it was considered unlikely. Page 10

Conclusion:

In summary, we see in opposition videos actions that illustrate the alleged rebel attack on Taldou, almost as if it actually happened. The early afternoon attacks from the north are eerily consistent with the dismissed witness set's description. The sunset end is also a match with their "blatant lies," showing rebels firing on the last holdout posts, and smoke rising from the military intel HQ and the hospital, both of which they say were hit. And the missing six hours between these glimpsed periods is itself a clue, especially the synchronized-seeming resumption of shared videos in the minutes before sunset.

Conversely, opposition sources are less consistent with their own video record. The multifront offensive we can see becomes, in their accounts, a single passing skirmish at a checkpoint, either before or after a protest. After this victory-free fluke, the unhindered security forces unleashed their fiercest shelling yet, forcing the rebels to retreat and stay away. One of them told The Guardian "the places that were being hit were impossible to reach," especially by him and his fighters. [16]

Again for emphasis, they made no video of the Shabiha or army invaders, their tanks or buses, or any such thing, even from a safe distance. In short, the videos offer no support for what rebels say, and do show things they didn't say. The rebel story was of course successfully sold to the world at large, and this and all other contradictory evidence has been kept from interfering with the planned sale. Apparently, it's quite a seller's market for this particular type of bogus product.

Invert UN findings ... access for gov. defender risky, so massacres not prevented - on all other days before not marked by rebel conquest, no massacres happened - that the rebels were enabled to make more conquests as a result of this is perverse.

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