

Report on Ruqa Province

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Cairo, Egypt, March 4, 2013 – Today Ruqa province announces its independence, conveying to all Syrian cities under Assad tyranny that having faith will certainly lead to the road of freedom. Just last year Assad performed Eid prayers in Ruqa in an attempt to lower Syrian morale and hope; today, despite Assad's efforts and tyranny, Syrian rebel forces have prevailed.

The province of Ruqa has witnessed complete control of the area by the Ahrar Alsham and Jubhat Alnusra Battalions. The battalions took control of the city center "President's Circle;" which is surrounded by several security and intelligence branches and is considered to be a strategic location that operates many security and intelligence offices.

The rebel fighters and civilians of the area succeeded to topple the largest statue of the dictator Hafez Assad that was located at a strategic military and security branch for the regime and key point for the Baath party. The rebels took over the branch, as well as the Passport and Immigration offices and "Hagana" Camp. Additionally, after clashes between the rebels and Assad forces, the rebels managed to take control of the Aerial Intelligence Branch within the city and the Battalions announced the capture of Brigadier "Khale al-Halabi" and also gained the defection of 40 Syrian Army soldiers.

These events led to violent and unprecedented retaliation from the Assad regime, as the Ruqa became a safe haven for displaced people from neighboring towns and villages. Assad forces launched three air strikes targeting the entire city, which led to the martyrdom and injury of many civilians (a death and injury count is not yet complete). The mosques in the regions warned civilians of the air strikes and asked people to remain in their homes and near safe areas in order to avoid injuries.

Yesterday, the Ahrar Alsham Battalions put into motion their plan entitled "Gharit AlJabbar," where they targeted military checkpoints and sensitive security locations for the regime; these sensitive, strategic areas that are key points to controlling the entire province. The Battalions managed to take control of Ruqa's Central Prison and free all the prisoners, the day before yesterday. They also surround the 17th Division of the Assad army.

Sources inside have confirmed that The Battalions have succeeded in: controlling the western police station and the Sufyan checkpoint (yesterday), the Mafraq neighborhood and the Agricultural Bank of Ruqa, located at the "Brazili" Roundabout.