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ENVELOPE

HEADER

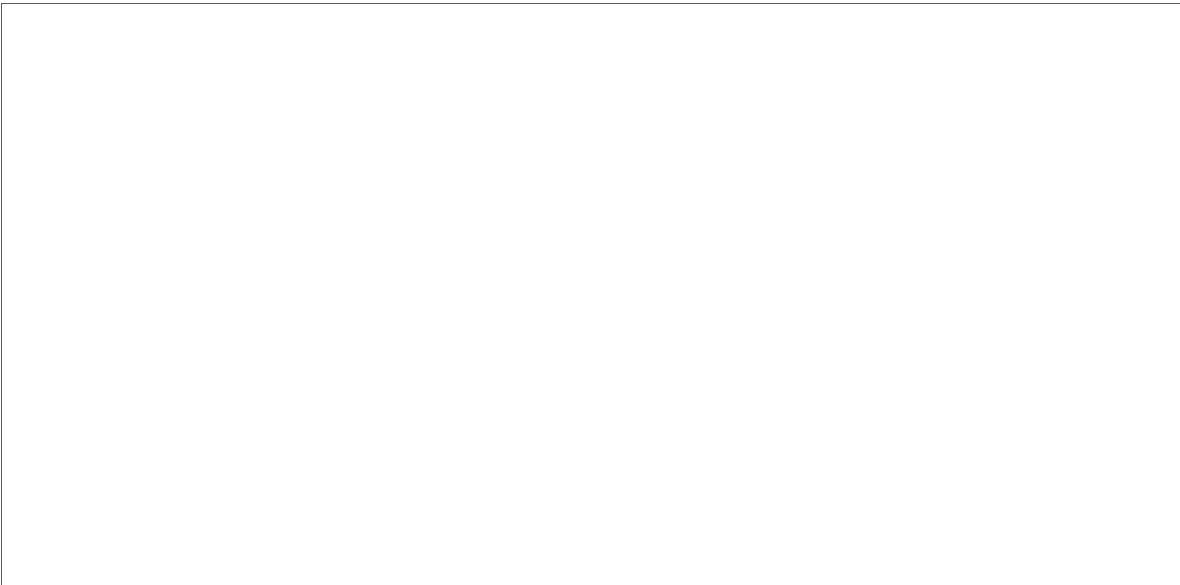
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SECTION 1 OF 3

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WARNING: TOPIC: ~~FOUO~~, LEADER, MEDIA, MILITARY, TERRORISM

SERIAL: GMP20121219137003

/***** THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE *****/

BODY

COUNTRY: FRANCE, GERMANY, SYRIA, UNITED STATES, LEBANON,
IRAN

SUBJ: (U//~~FOUO~~) MEDIA COORDINATOR KHALID ABU-SALAH INTERVIEWS
NBC'S FREED REPORTER RICHARD ENGEL

REF: 1. AHRAR AL-SHAM BRIGADES CLAIM FREEING NBC'S ENGEL,
JOURNALISTS HELD IN IDLIB GMP20121218836001 FACEBOOK
ARABIC, ENGLISH 0000 GMT 18 DEC 12 (U//~~FOUO~~)

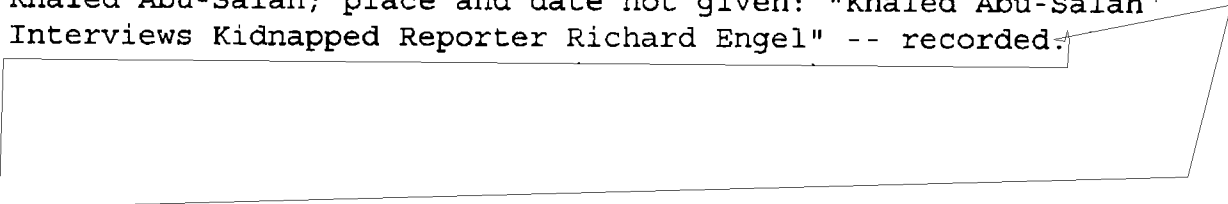
SOURCE: FACEBOOK IN ARABIC, ENGLISH 19 DEC 12 (U//~~FOUO~~)

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TEXT:

(U//~~FOUO~~) Interview with NBC News reporter Richard Engel by Khaled Abu-Salah; place and date not given: "Khaled Abu-Salah Interviews Kidnapped Reporter Richard Engel" -- recorded.



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Internet

OSC Translated Text

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(Attachment not included: GMP20121219137003003.gif)
Images of Media Coordinator Khalid Abu-Salah's Interview With NBC's Freed Reporter Richard Engel

Abu-Salah The foreign journalists have many ordeals with the Syrian revolution. The ordeal of the US-born Sunday Times journalist Marie Colvin and the French photographer Remi Ochlik, who sacrificed their lives to disclose the truth in Syria, was not the last. Today, we have a new one. It is the ordeal of the bright journalist Richard Engel, NBC News channel's reporter that came to Syria more than once. In his last visit to Syria, he was kidnapped by a group of Shabbihah thugs, reference to pro-Al-Asad regime militia. Today, he speaks to the Syrian people and to the whole world about the revolutionaries of Syria and how he was saved and freed. Please, go ahead.

Engel Peace be upon you. Today is the first day I see the sunlight. We have been in Syria since six days ago. I did not see the sunlight for six days. Yes, it was roughly six days. We came in across Bab al-Hawa Border Crossing. We ran into an ambush manned by 15 armed Shabbihah after roughly 10 or 15 km. We knew that they were lying in ambush for us because there was a truck under the trees with its doors opened. The armed men came along, made us get off our car, had us get in the truck that was under the trees, closed the doors of the truck, and took us to a farm. Among us was a young revolutionary, whom they executed after we

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had arrived at the farm. I heard them saying "liquidate him." And they did. There was a person that was looking for gasoline. I think they wanted to set him on fire. However, they did not have gasoline. So, they liquidated him.

Thereafter, they kept on moving us from a house to another. They terrified us every day. We had the feeling that every day was our last day. They prevented us from going to the toilet. They were torturing us psychologically. I did not go to the toilet for more than 30 hours. This was unusual. There was a guard in front of us. He was looking at me. I could not see him because I was blindfolded all the time, but I knew that he was there because he was smoking.

Abu-Salah How many journalists were there?

Engel We were six. He rambles on about the guards and the feeling he and the other journalists had then.

Abu-Salah What did the Shabbihah say to you? What were they saying?

Engel I think they wanted to swap prisoners.

Abu-Salah With whom?

Engel With the revolutionaries as they had four Iranian captives and two Lebanese from Amal Movement. We came to know that from the Shabbihah themselves.

Abu-Salah Did the Shabbihah tell you that?

Engel Yes. I pretended that I did not understand Arabic. I remained silent. All I said was "thank you" in addition to other simple words. But, I was listening.

Abu-Salah Did they torture or beat you?

Engel No, they did not. They only executed the armed revolutionary in front of us, but they did not hurt us. They were torturing us psychologically most of the time. For instance, the guard, who was in charge of us, came to the room where we were kept. We did not see him, but we could figure out his voice. He said: "Whom will I shoot dead today?" and "who will have my gift?" In the meantime, he held the gun to my face so that I know it was a gun. They forced us to choose one from among us to be killed.

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When we said we could not do that, one of them said: "I will

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select one myself." He selected my friend that was also a hostage. The guard told my friend that he would shoot him in the leg. He told him: "Give me your leg." My friend was made to raise his leg. He could not see anything. Finally, the guard fired the gun into the air a mock shooting.

Abu-Salah That is to say they were terrorizing you psychologically?

Engel Yes, they were. They kept on doing that every day. On the other hand, they sometimes were nice to us as they brought us tea, cigarettes, or another battery. Once, they made us all sit outside the room against the wall. Then, we heard them rolling out something plastic on the ground. I thought this was definitely our last moment. We were made to sit silently outside.

Abu-Salah Was that plastic for placing you on it and then wrapping you in it?

Engel Or probably in order that the blood falls on it. Many thoughts came to my mind as we were not seeing anything. Moreover, we were at night and the weather was cold. They made us line up against the wall. We heard someone reloading the gun. We remained in this state for half an hour. Everyone remained speechless. Their actions were like this until the last minute.

Abu-Salah What were they telling you?

Engel They were saying that Syria was theirs and was Bashar's Al-Asad. I heard them saying: "We fire cluster bombs as well as kill all your sons and wives so that they do not give birth to bastards like you." Their words were strange, sectarian, and bloody. In the end, we were saved. On the last day and immediately before I had come here, in an interruptive manner, he says: "I am still wearing the same clothes. Then he gets a rope out of his pocket and says: "I was roped with this." Then he goes on to say: On the last day, we moved out of the village toward another house as they kept on moving us from a house to another every day or even twice a day. We moved to many houses. When they were moving us at the last time, there was a temporary checkpoint belonging to the revolutionaries. Trying to remember the name of

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the revolutionaries, the interviewer reminds him by saying: "The Ahrar al-Sham." He says jokingly: How can I forget the ones that saved my life! He repeats the name jokingly then he goes on to say: We reached a road where there was a temporary checkpoint belonging to the revolutionaries, the Ahrar al-Sham Brigades. There was a firefight.

Abu-Salah Were they lying in ambush?

Engel Yes, they were and there was a firefight.

Abu-Salah How was the firefight? Was it random?

Engel No, it was precise.

Abu-Salah Did they know about your coming?

Engel The ambush was well-prepared. I will tell you. We were in the back of the truck. In front of us were two armed individuals. One of them was driving while the other was sitting on the right side. We were six hostages. Once we reached the temporary checkpoint, the two armed men captors shouted anxiously: "A checkpoint." The driver got off and started to open fire at the checkpoint. He was killed after firing one, two, or three bullets. He was shot precisely. The other armed man got off using the other door. He was killed immediately. Not even a single bullet was fired at the truck and the truck was not hurt. Then, we got out of the windows so that our friends, the revolutionaries, save our lives. I even had an interview with them after they freed us and I thanked them a lot. If they had not been there, I would not have been freed or I may have been killed. Then, they took us to the borders and I was let go a short while ago.

Abu-Salah What would you like to say to the Ahrar al-Sham Brigades and to all the revolutionaries on the ground?

Engel I would like to thank the Ahrar al-Sham. I have already thanked them. However, I would like to thank them from the bottom of my heart. They were well-mannered. As for the Syrian people, I would like to wish them peace. I hope that this crisis ends quickly.

Abu-Salah God willing. Of course, Richard Engel is one of the most prominent stars in the western media and he came to Syria more than once. The one that logs in to the YouTube website and searches for him and his stance on the Syrian cause, one will

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find that he is a fair journalist that has supported both the Syrian civilians and military men. On our part, we would like to say to him: "Praise be to God for your safety." We would also like to thank him and all his co-journalists that sacrifice their lives in order to disclose the truth in Syria. Thank you, Richard.

Engel Thank you very much.

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Description of Source: Facebook in English -- Social networking website allowing creation of profiles, uploading of photos and videos, and sending messages; URL: <http://www.facebook.com>

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