

# *U.S. Secretary of State in Saudi Arabia to Discuss Mutual Cooperation*

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Jeddah, May 16 (RHC)-- U.S. secretary of State John Kerry has met with King Salman of Saudi Arabia to discuss the Syrian conflict, before heading to Vienna for broader international talks. The two reportedly discussed mutual cooperation and the latest developments in the Middle East, including the U.S.-Russia mediated ceasefire in Syria which has been undermined by militants in some areas, local media reported.

Washington and Moscow agreed earlier this month on extending a "cessation of hostilities" they had brokered in February to Aleppo, which has been divided between government forces in the west and foreign-backed militants in the east since 2012.

However, reports on Thursday suggested that militants from two major Syrian militant groups, namely al-Nusra Front and Ahrar al-Sham, carried out a massive dawn raid on Zara, south of Hama, looted homes, killed children, women and elderly and abducted a number of people.

Earlier, before his arrival in Saudi Arabia, Kerry said that in his meetings with the king and the Saudi interior and defense ministers he would try "to make sure that we can get this cessation better footed and better observed and implemented throughout the country."

In an obvious contradiction of Washington's statements, the United States, Saudi Arabia and a number of their military allies, along with Persian Gulf monarchies and Turkey, support and arm terrorist groups fighting Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

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