

Avaaz Call for a “No-Fly Zone” in Syria: “Human Rights Advocates” Once Again Beating the Drums of War

By [Interventions Watch](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#), [US NATO](#)

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Avaaz [describe](#) themselves as a ‘global web movement to bring people-powered politics to decision-making everywhere’, and are fairly well known within human rights and development circles.

They had previously used their reach and status to [drum up support](#) for a ‘no-fly zone’ over Libya (a call which was ultimately realised, to [disasterous](#) effect), and this isn’t the [first time](#) they’ve called for a ‘no-fly zone’ over Syria either.

Their work within Syria itself has [attracted controversy](#), with the Jillian C. York accusing them of being ‘naive’, among other things (lacking transparency, taking credit for work they haven’t carried out, potentially endangering lives, etc).

They’ve now reiterated their call for a ‘no-fly zone’ over Syria, in response to alleged chlorine gas attacks carried out by Syrian regime forces.

I just want to quickly outline why I think their call is misguided at best.

From their appeal:

‘The US, Turkey, UK, France and others are right now seriously considering a safe zone in Northern Syria. Advisers close to President Obama support it, but he is worried he won’t have public support. That’s where we come in.

Let’s tell him we don’t want a world that just watches as a dictator drops chemical weapons on families in the night. We want action’.

https://secure.avaaz.org/en/syria_safe_zone_loc_fb_tg_ctrl/?svAouab

(Emphasis mine)

What is this if it’s not an open admission that – at least in this case – Avaaz see their role as helping to drum up public support for U.S. foreign policy?

And will they be publicising the fact that U.S. led bombing has [already](#) caused at least 100+ civilian deaths in Syria? Will these deadly raids, which themselves have shattered far too many ‘little bodies’, be prohibited under the ‘no-fly zone’ as well?

Realistically of course, they won't be. Because it's the people who have caused these deaths that are being entrusted with enforcing the 'no-fly zone' by Avaaz.

And that enforcement will almost certainly require a significant *escalation* in airstrikes, with all the risks to civilians on the ground that this entails.

General Carter Ham, the head of AFRICOM when the 'no-fly zone' over Libya was being enforced, has said for example:

'We should make no bones about it. It first entails killing a lot of people and destroying the Syrian air defenses and those people who are manning those systems. And then it entails destroying the Syrian air force, preferably on the ground, in the air if necessary. This is a violent combat action that results in lots of casualties and increased risk to our own personnel'.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/face-the-nation-transcripts-september-28-2014-blinken-kaine-flournoy/>

While Philip Breedlove, the senior General within NATO, has said:

' I know it sounds stark, but what I always tell people when they talk to me about a no-fly zone is . . . it's basically to start a war with that country because you are going to have to go in and kinetically take out their air defense capability'.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/breedlove-no-fly-zone-over-syria-would-constitute-act-of-war-1.223788>

Indeed, the U.S. themselves have [openly](#) said that 'rules meant to temper the civilian death toll from unmanned U.S. drones won't apply in the fight against terrorists in Iraq and Syria', which doesn't exactly inspire confidence in their ability or willingness to avoid civilian casualties.

Nor does their history of committing, facilitating and supporting almost continuous mass murder and repression around the globe for the last 70 years.

Which is why I for one won't be joining Avaaz's campaign to drum up public support for more predatory U.S. led mass murder disguised as 'humanitarianism' a 'no-fly zone' in Syria.

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