

# Book Review: ‘Dear World’: A Syrian Girl’s Story of War and Plea for Peace’ by Bana Alabed

PR for Regime Change in Syria

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

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

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

*The book ‘**Dear World: A Syrian Girl’s Story of War and Plea for Peace**’ was published in October 2017. It is purportedly written by a Syrian girl, **Bana Alabed**, with the help of her mother and an editor. The book is being prominently promoted in the US and UK and is anticipated to be a big seller this coming Holiday Season.*

## Background

Bana Alabed is an 8-year-old Syrian girl who rose to fame in 2016 when a Twitter account was set up in her name and she started tweeting in fluent English from east Aleppo as it was under bombardment by Syrian and Russian forces trying to dislodge insurgents.

[The first tweet](#) in Bana’s name appeared on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2016. It simply read, ‘I need peace’. The Twitter account soon had tens of thousands of followers, among them J. K. Rowling, the author of ‘Harry Potter’. It was later observed in a [video](#) that 7-year-old Bana knew very little English and was being prompted or told what to say.

## Bana and Anne Frank?

The book begins with a quote from ‘The Diary of Anne Frank’, thus inferring that there are parallels between Bana and the famous Dutch Jewish girl who was forced to hide from the Nazis in the Second World War. If Bana is meant to represent Anne, then presumably the Syrian and Russian governments are meant to represent the Nazis. This is misleading. Several brave Dutch people hid the young Anne and her family from the Nazis. In Syria, Islamist militants, such as those in east Aleppo have targeted Syrians simply because [they belonged to minorities](#). Australian anthropologist **Dr. Fiona Hill** described how her adoptive Syrian brother, a Sunni, risked his life [to rescue three Alawi families from the Free Syrian Army](#) and ‘inevitable summary murder’ at their hands.

## Bana and Malala?

“Dear World” is published by Simon & Schuster, part of the CBS media empire. It was edited or perhaps ghost written by senior editor **Christine Pride** who sees Bana Alabed “as a heroine reminiscent of Pakistan’s **Malala Yousafzai**”. This is misleading to the point of being bizarre. Before a Taliban gunman shot her, Malala wrote [a blog detailing life under Taliban rule](#). Bana may be a brave and good child, but ‘Dear World’ does not take a stand against extremist forces. On the contrary, Bana’s father was active with the extremist

[insurgents](#).

Jabhat al-Nusra, a group linked to both the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, was the strongest of the militia groups in east Aleppo at the time Bana was sending her tweets. Former Australian soldier **Mathew Stewart**'s story points to these links. Soon after the start of the war in Afghanistan, Stewart joined the Taliban, and then in 2015 he worked [‘as a trainer with Jabhat al-Nusra, al-Qaida’s proxy militia in Syria’](#).

Those who tweet and write in Bana Alabed’s name seem unconcerned about the enforcement of harsh punishments by Jabhat al-Nusra, such as [the execution of women](#). Nor are they concerned about the group’s violence or terror tactics, which are detailed on the [Australian National Security webpage](#).

Ironically, although peace is a word used liberally in ‘Dear World’, one tweet since deleted from Bana’s Twitter account read,

[Dear world, it’s better to start 3rd world war instead of letting Russia & Assad commit #HolocaustAleppo](#)

The book portrays the young narrator and her mother as courageous and compassionate. According to this narrative the only militants in east Aleppo were the FSA and they were good guys fighting against the evil Syrian government forces. This is public relations propaganda, very far from the reality which American journalists James Foley and Stephen Sotloff [documented](#) before being assassinated.

### **A Western, not Syrian, Readership**

‘Dear World’ is not directed at readers in Syria who are aware of the war’s complex nature and “rebel” reality. Most Syrians grieve the loss of loved ones in the war, want women to maintain freedoms and minorities to be able to worship without fear. Most Syrians do not want their country to be partitioned and made a haven for extremists. The book is written for a western audience, conditioned by the simplistic mainstream media narrative of ‘heroic revolutionaries’ fighting the brutal ‘dictator Assad’.

In January 2017, Bana implored **Donald Trump** to stop the bombs in Syria and ‘save the children’. But in April 2017, Bana expressed support for Donald Trump’s airstrikes on a Syrian airfield after it was claimed the ‘regime’ had dropped a bomb containing sarin. There were no calls for a thorough impartial investigation, just a call to bomb. [Four children were killed](#) in the U.S. airstrikes. It seems clear there is political manipulation guiding the social media messages of a photogenic sweet girl.

### **Jesus, King, Gandhi ... and the FSA?**

‘Dear World’ champions **Jesus, Martin Luther King Jr, and Gandhi**, while extolling fighters in the ‘Free Syrian Army’. To the extent that it exists at all, the FSA is made up armed groups that fly the ‘opposition flag’ rather than al-Qaeda or ISIS ones. This allows them to receive weapons and supplies from western governments even as they [defect](#) and turn over these weapons to Syria’s version of Al Qaeda, Jabhat al Nusra.

**James Foley**, the American journalist beheaded by ISIS, interviewed an FSA commander in

east Aleppo who [‘promised Aleppo would burn’](#). In this commander’s opinion, ‘the people of Aleppo were only concerned about their barbecues’ and deserved punishment for not supporting the armed ‘revolution’.

‘Dear World’ distorts the truth, abusing the trust of its readers. The book is a weapon in the covert and overt efforts of Syria’s enemies to effect ‘regime change’ by any means. Despite the narrator’s plea for peace, the book’s depiction of the ‘regime’ as the personification of evil could lead a generation of young readers in the West to uncritically support war against Syria and its people for years to come.

As a beautifully packaged children’s book that includes the endorsement of the author of ‘Harry Potter’, ‘Dear World’ could conceivably encourage some impressionable readers to take up arms against a government. Some young readers may believe Syria is an uncivilized wasteland and a battlefield that even they could potentially enter one day, flying a flag, trying to be a hero, killing locals who don’t support the ‘revolution’. For an attractive looking children’s book, ‘Dear World’ is a potentially dangerous package.

### **British PR Firm Created ‘Bana’, the Brand**

Could there be any significance in the fact that the PR firm, [The Blair Partnership](#), which handles J. K. Rowling’s publicity also handles Bana’s? The Blair Partnership has transformed ‘Bana’ from a little girl into a brand that represents opposition to the Syrian government and, in effect, support for British foreign policy.

### **Lies and Omissions in War**

Though J .K. Rowling endorses ‘Dear World’, it can be assumed that **Peter Ford**, the former UK ambassador to Syria would not. According to him the [British Foreign Office has lied about the war](#) and “it was not the case” that the opposition was dominated “by so-called moderates”.

Apart from mentioning the kidnapping of two of Bana’s uncles, the book hardly refers to the well-documented violence of the Islamist factions operating in east Aleppo at the time Bana was supposedly there. Nor is there mention in ‘Dear World’ of the civilians killed in west Aleppo when insurgents fired rockets into residential areas or detonated [car bombs](#). In October 2016, the mother of 20-year-old [Mireille Hindoyan](#) recounted how a ‘rebel’ missile had killed Mireille and her 12-year-old brother. They had been standing in the street waiting for their mother to finish her shopping. Mireille’s body was dismembered. An online search indicates that the BBC, ABC and the American PBS did not present this story. They surely would have if this had happened in a western country: it was an act of terror, the victims were young and innocent, and Mireille was a local swimming star. Like most of the mainstream western media, those behind the Bana phenomenon seem to have no regard for the victims of ‘rebels’.

Likewise, [the beheading of a young boy](#) in July 2016 by an Islamist group in east Aleppo that received funding from the United States is not referred to in ‘Dear World’.

### **Investigating Claims**

‘Dear World’ presents a long list of claims against the ‘regime’. They include the bombing of schools and hospitals, the random shooting of civilians from a helicopter, and the dropping of cluster bombs, phosphorous, and chlorine on people in east Aleppo.

However, these claims almost invariably originated from media outlets and ‘activists’ linked to the ‘rebels’. The unverified claims have been promoted by western media and some prominent Non-Governmental Organizations while refutations have been ignored. Detailed examinations in [case](#) after [case](#) have shown the accusations to be exaggerated if not false. It seems this book is actually written by an adult with a political motive.

### **Bana and Turkish President Erdogan**

In December 2016, the extremists controlling east Aleppo were finally forced out of the city. Most surviving civilians rushed into the government controlled west Aleppo and described their “liberation” from the terrorists who had dominated east Aleppo since 2012. In an agreement with the Syrian government, remaining extremists and their families were taken from Aleppo to Idlib province while some others, including Bana and her family, went to Turkey.

Even US **Vice President Biden** admitted that [Turkey supported](#) violent extremists including Al Qaeda (al-Nusra) in Syria. Turkey’s pivotal role and complicity in the violence was confirmed in a [video](#) produced by American Lebanese journalist Serena Shim, who died for her work.

Thus it is ironic and a measure of the distortions that Bana told President Erdogan at a meeting in the presidential palace, “Thank you for supporting the children of Aleppo and helping us to get out from war. I love you.”

This is not to suggest that Bana Alabed does not deserve our sympathy. She does, especially since it appears that nefarious forces, which stretch from Syria to Turkey to Britain, are exploiting her. With consummate cynicism, they are using her cute face and demeanor to promote a vicious invasion and war.

Bana Alabed’s ‘Dear World’ is a book that tugs on the heartstrings as it misleads readers. It is actually propaganda for “regime change” in a small sweet package.

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