

Open Letter to Doctors without Borders (MSF) about Bias and Propaganda on Syria

By [Rick Sterling](#)

Global Research, May 05, 2016

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#), [Media Disinformation](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

Dear MSF International President Dr. Joanne Liu,

Your organization is well regarded and influential. I appreciate that many good people work for and support MSF/Doctors Without Borders. However I need to inquire about your independence and the consequences of your work in Syria. I believe an objective look will reveal that while you are helping in some areas, you are causing harm in others.

Following are questions on this important issue:

1. As you know, Aleppo is a large city with the government forces holding western Aleppo while other parts of the city are dominated by armed opposition groups, primarily Nusra/Al Qaeda. About 1.5 to 2 million people live in the government areas with about 200 to 250 thousand in the areas controlled by armed opposition. So 80 - 90 % of the population is in government controlled areas. This is rarely mentioned but seems important. Given this fact, is it true that you provide aid and support only to the opposition held areas?

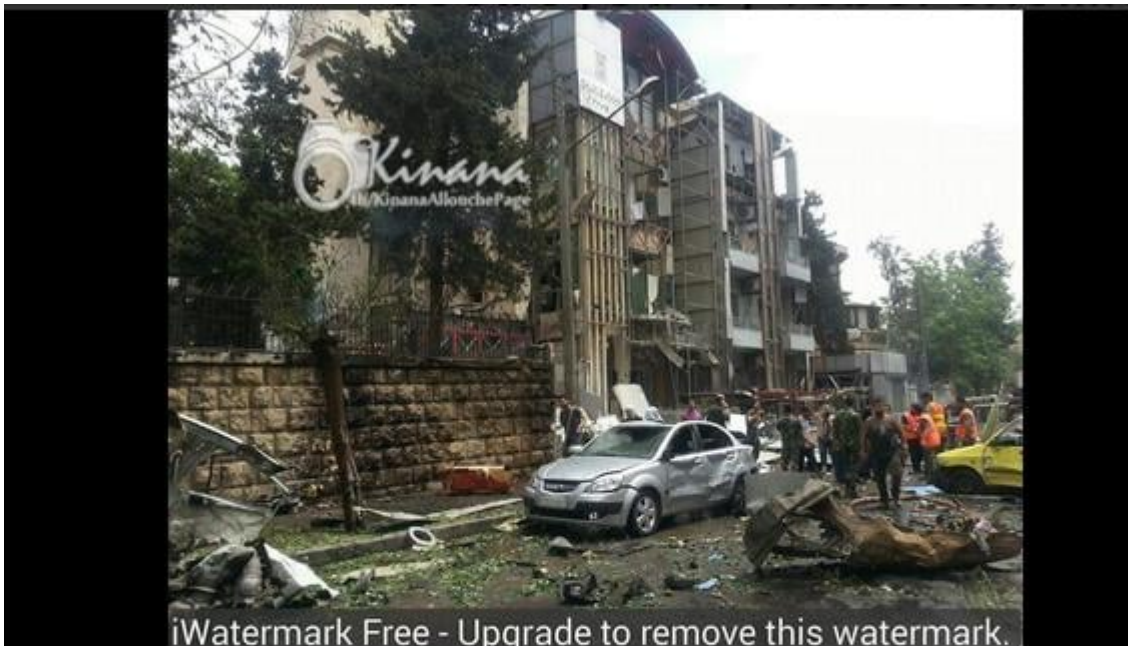
2. On April 21 the Western and Gulf backed "High Negotiations Committee" announced they were quitting the Geneva negotiations. The next day, hundreds of mortars and bombs started being launched into western Aleppo from the zones controlled by Nusra and other terrorist groups. These bombs are powerful, wounding and killing indiscriminately. Syrian journalist Edward Dark noted that western media and groups such as MSF were silent on this even though hospitals were being hit, dozens of children and civilians killed. On twitter he [reported](#) day by day

* West Aleppo is simply being obliterated by rebel shelling. A city of 2 million people is being butchered.

* Carnage and devastation as 'moderate rebel' bombs fall on west Aleppo like rain

* Terrorist rebel bombs are still falling like rain on west Aleppo. 15 people murdered at a mosque in Bab Faraj after Friday prayers

* This is the hospital where my son was born. Dabeet Hospital in W.Aleppo completely destroyed by rebel shelling.



Edward Dark @edwardedark · 9h

This hospital is where my son was born. Dabeet Hospital in w Aleppo completely destroyed by rebel shelling #Syria

Has MSF denounced these killings and attacks on hospitals in western Aleppo?

3. The unconcern about indiscriminate attacks and killing in government held areas of Aleppo has also been denounced by Syrian-Canadian physician Dr. Nabil Antaki. He has recently [written](#),

With regards to recent events in Aleppo, I state very clearly that the mainstream media are lying by omission... All of us here in Aleppo are disgusted by their lack of impartiality and objectivity. They only talk about the loss of life in east of Aleppo which is entirely controlled by Al Nusra.... These are their 'moderate rebels' ...This same media remains silent on the daily losses and suffering endured in the Western areas of Aleppo living under the rain of mortar fire from these terrorist factions. This media never mentions the continuous bombardment and the carnage we have witnessed in western Aleppo where every single sector has been targeted. On a daily basis we see dozens of people murdered..... For three days now, these media outlets have been accusing the "Assad regime" of bombing an MSF hospital to the east of Aleppo and of killing the last pediatrician in the city. This demonstrates that, for these media, the only priority is this pocket of the city where terrorists are embedded. The three quarters of Aleppo under Syrian government control, where numerous pediatricians are practicing, is of no consequence.

Dear Dr. Liu – Will you meet with Dr. Antaki? Perhaps he could give you a tour and confirm to you what he says. He is a well known and respected doctor in Aleppo and fellow Canadian citizen.

4. There are many discrepancies in reports about the April 27 attack on Al Quds

Hospital. MSF Middle East Operations Manager Pablo Marco, [interviewed](#) the next day on CNN and PBS Newshour, said “there were two barrel bombs that fell close to the hospital then the third barrel bomb fell in the entrance of the hospital”. Barrel bombs are only delivered by helicopters. In contrast, your [press release](#) the same day says “the hospital was destroyed by at least one airstrike which directly hit the building, reducing it to rubble.” A [CBC report](#) continued this version, claiming “An MSF-supported hospital in the northern Syria city of Aleppo is now a pile of rubble. Airstrikes brought down the building on Wednesday.” The hospital photograph indicates it is not a “pile of rubble” and it’s unclear where the damage is. The sandbag reinforcement and damaged car in front indicate it might have been a battle scene but the rest is unclear. Which story is correct and accurate?

The number of fatalities has varied from initial death counts of 14 to later reports of over 50. How are these numbers verified?

5. MSF representatives Pablo Marco and Muskilda Zancada suggest it was a deliberate and intentional attack on the hospital. In an [interview](#) Ms. Zancada says “Al Quds Hospital has been functional for more than 4 years so it was basically impossible that this information was not known... The facts are pointing to this being a deliberate attack.” In contrast with Ms. Zancada’s assertions, most Aleppans have never heard of “Al Quds Hospital”. The “hospital” did not exist before the conflict and the photo shows an unidentified apartment building. Is it accurate to call this facility a “hospital”? Mr. Marco [claimed](#) that MSF supported personnel visited the hospital every other week so there must be many reports, documents and photos confirming whether it was a 34 bed hospital. Otherwise, it seems fair to say this was actually a medical clinic in the ground floor of an unmarked and largely abandoned apartment building.

6. Can Mr. Marco or Ms. Zancada please identify the damage inflicted by the airstrike (or barrel bomb) at Al Quds Hospital on April 27? The Russian Ministry of Defense has [released](#) a photograph indicating the building had similar damage in October 2015.

7. As you know, Nusra/Al Qaeda is considered ‘terrorist’ by all parties including the US, French, and Canadian governments. Does the Al Quds Hospital primarily or significantly serve Al Qaeda and/or other terrorist fighters? If so, are your supporters aware they are assisting fighters who launched bombs attacking western Aleppo as shown [here](#) and previously destroyed the once prized Al Kindi Hospital with a huge truck bomb as shown [here](#)? I appreciate you have a commitment to the hippocratic oath but given the widespread medical needs, why are you prioritizing assistance to Nusra/Al Qaeda?

8. Many videos from Al Quds Hospital feature members of the “White Helmets”. Are you aware the White Helmets was established by the US and UK with initial training in Turkey by a UK military contractor? Are you aware the organization is not independent or neutral and has explicitly called for western intervention in Syria? The origins of the “White Helmets” is documented [here](#). There is an online petition denouncing this clever but cynical marketing campaign [here](#).

9. Can you please compare and contrast the videos showing attacks at MSF-supported Al Quds Hospital with videos showing attacks in western Aleppo? The videos from Al Quds Hospital are [here](#) and [here](#) with an animated one [here](#). The attacks in western Aleppo including an attack on Al Dabeet Hospital are [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). Do you see the difference between videos from armed opposition area vs. those from

western Aleppo? Some look authentic and some look possibly staged.

10. We know that many Western and Gulf countries are providing funds to help the armed opposition in Syria. For example in 2012 the Canadian government [said](#) *“the reason the \$2 million was being channeled through Canadian Relief for Syria instead of the UN or International Committee of the Red Cross was because it was intended for Syrian opposition groups and was not humanitarian aid.”* Is MSF directly or indirectly receiving grants or funds from the Canadian, French or US governments to serve Syrian opposition groups?

11. There has been a wave of media coverage of Al Quds Hospital and the death of Dr. Moaz (sometimes spelled Maaz). Some of the reports are clearly intended to tug at the heart and natural sympathy of people. Unfortunately propagandists can be effective in this area as they seek to manipulate public opinion. There are many examples with the Kuwaiti babies and incubators being one of the most famous [frauds](#) as it successfully won public support for Gulf War 1. Both Amnesty International and the International Red Crescent were (unwittingly) [part of the fraud](#). My point is this: Some of the Al Quds Hospital stories are questionable and may be fraudulent. For example the [letter](#) from a fellow physician acclaiming Dr Moaz was published by “The Syria Campaign” which is the [marketing creator](#) of the “White Helmets”. The letter is supposedly from a fellow doctor who might or might not be real. They use a false name yet claim he “manages the Children’s Hospital in Aleppo”. Another questionable piece of ‘evidence’ of the death of Dr. Moaz is the [video](#) supposedly taken just before the building was hit by missile or bomb. It’s curious that the building would be destroyed and the CCTV cameras (several of them) survive and be ready for editing. Is this real or is it just another example of the “moderate rebel’ social media [propaganda](#)?

12. Biased media coverage on Syria serves to demonize the Assad government and prolong the conflict. It has made it easier for foreign aggressors to continue funding the proxy armies such as Nusra/Al Qaeda. There is danger of vastly increased conflict and bloodshed if foreign governments or NATO intervene directly. In fact calls for greater aggression are increasing in the wake of publicity around the attack at Al Quds Hospital. Are you aware that the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia seemed to threaten an escalation of the conflict as he [said](#) “The world is not going to allow them to get away with this.”?

Dear Dr. Liu, we agree with your insistence that medical personnel and facilities should not be attacked. That is in keeping with the Geneva Conventions on War. There are other international laws, including laws against aggression and the right of self-defense. It is clear that the Syrian government is being attacked by proxy armies funded by a coalition of foreign governments in [violation of international law](#) and the UN Charter.

Will you investigate whether the criticisms expressed in this letter are accurate and take appropriate action? It seems that current MSF actions and statements on Syria are biased and effectively serving the coalition of governments waging war on Syria in violation of international law. The bias and propaganda sustain the conflict and threaten to make it even worse.

Best regards,

Rick Sterling

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