

Propaganda Alert: The Times Sinks to new Depths: “Assad’s snipers target unborn babies in wombs”

By [Cem Ertür](#)

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

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

[War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

Despite a worldwide awakening on the scale of the longstanding propaganda against the Syrian government, the British media is still peddling monstrous lies to the public, casually placing the blame on the government of Bashar al Assad.



Assad's snipers target unborn babies in wombs

Gunmen aim at women's stomachs in shooting game for cigarettes

Lucy Bannerman

Pregnant women in Syria are being picked off by snipers in a sickening war game in which their unborn babies appear to be used for target practice, according to a British surgeon.

David Nott, who has just spent five weeks volunteering in a Syrian hospital, said that he and his despairing colleagues started to notice a disturbing pattern among the women and children who were being shot as they ran the daily gauntlet across a divided zone to buy food and supplies in a major city.

"One day it would be shots to the groin. The next, it would only be the left chest. The day after, we would see no chest wounds: they were all neck [wounds]," he said in an interview with *The Times*. "From the first patients that came in in the morning, you could almost tell what you would see for the rest of the day. It was a game. We heard the snipers were winning packets of cigarettes for hitting the correct number of targets."

He said local rumours suggested that the snipers were mercenaries from China and Azerbaijan, working for the Assad regime. This cannot be verified.

Mr Nott has been volunteering as an emergency surgeon in war zones in countries such as Bosnia, Libya, Chad, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo for the past 20 years. However, he said that Syria was the only place in which he had witnessed civilians, and in particular pregnant women, being targeted.

On one day, more than half a dozen pregnant women were caught in sniper fire. On another day, two consecutive patients were heavily pregnant women. Both survived but their babies were dead on arrival.

In one case, a baby had a bullet in its brain. "The women were all shot through the uterus, so that must have



A bullet in a full-term foetus's skull. Such attacks were a hell beyond hell, David Nott said

been where they were aiming for. I can't even begin to tell you how awful it was. Usually, civilians are caught in the crossfire. This is the first time I've ever seen anything like this. This was deliberate. It was hell beyond hell."

Speaking between operations at his day job as a vascular surgeon at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, Mr Nott estimated that up to 90 per cent of the people he treated were civilians. "I saw very few fighters." The surgeon, who also works at the Royal Marsden and St Mary's Hospital, London, spends at least a month a year volunteering in a conflict zone.

In 2008 he famously performed the successful amputation of a boy's arm and shoulder in the jungle in the Democratic Republic of Congo, following instructions via text message. He examined the body of Tim Hetherington, the photographer killed in Libya in 2011. Tony Blair is a former patient.

This was Mr Nott's second visit to Syria. He returned to Britain last week from his stint at a Syrian hospital, the location of which cannot be disclosed for security reasons, with grim reports of medical facilities at the point of collapse. Even the most basic supplies have evaporated. He often found himself operating without adequate protection, such as a mask or gown.

The few doctors who remain must work in secret, using pseudonyms, for fear of retribution against their families, he said. He knew an anaesthetist, whose two brothers had been arrested. The families of others had been threatened.

"I sat with one of the senior doctors the other day. He could barely lift his head up. He said he knew he was suffering from depression, but felt he could not leave his people behind. It was despairing, pitiful and sad." More than
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excerpt from: **Assad's snipers target unborn babies in wombs**

Syria snipers kill unborn babies in game for cigarettes

by Lucy Bannerman, *The Times*, 19 October 2013

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From the archives:

excerpt from: [Doctors to warn that Syria’s healthcare system is at ‘breaking point’](#)

by Haroon Siddique, *The Guardian*, 16 September 2013

A group of 55 doctors and medical professionals, including three Nobel Prize winners, will warn this week that Syria’s healthcare system is “at breaking point” because of attacks on hospitals, staff being attacked, imprisoned or fleeing the country, and humanitarian organisations being denied access to patients.

[In an open letter to the *Lancet*](#), to be published on Friday, they say that large parts of Syria are completely cut off from any form of medical assistance. The signatories, who span five continents, cite figures suggesting 469 health workers are currently imprisoned and about 15,000 doctors have fled the country. In Syria’s largest city, Aleppo, there are just 36 physicians, compared to 5,000 before the civil war began, they say.

“We are appalled by the lack of access to healthcare for affected civilians, and by the deliberate targeting of medical facilities and personnel,” the letter says.

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