

War Criminal Tony Blair Wins Save The Children's "Global Legacy" Award

By [Interventions Watch](#)

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAQ REPORT](#)

As reported in the [November 20 issue of the Independent](#):

"Tony Blair was last night recognised for his humanitarian work at a glamorous gala to raise funds for a global children's charity – in front of guests including Lassie the dog. The controversial former Prime Minister received the Global Legacy Award at the Save the Children Illumination Gala 2014, which was held at The Plaza in New York City."

And this isn't some sick, satirical joke. The man who was to a huge extent responsible for killing, injuring, displacing and immiserating several hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children (among his many other crimes and misdemeanours) has been recognised 'for his humanitarian work' by one the 'Western' world's foremost child welfare NGOs.

And me saying that he 'is to huge extent responsible for the killing, injuring, displacement and immiseration of several hundreds of thousands of children in Iraq' is not just rhetoric.

To that end, it's worth looking in a bit more depth at the scale of the catastrophe inflicted on Iraq's children by the war that Tony Blair launched and continues to defend.

In March 2013, the charity War Child released a report entitled 'Mission Unaccomplished'. This report documented how:

- '51% of 12-17 year olds do not attend secondary school'
- 'One in four children has stunted physical and intellectual development due to under-nutrition'.
- 'In 2011 a survey found up to 1 million children have lost one or both parents in the conflict'.
- 'In 2010, 7 years after the conflict began, it was estimated that over a quarter of Iraqi children, or 3 million, suffered varying degrees of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder'.
- 'Between December 2012 and April 2013, 'An estimated 692 children and young people have been killed' in conflict related violence, and more 'than 1,976 children and young people have been injured'. These figures are almost certainly underestimates'.

http://cdn.warchild.org.uk/sites/default/files/Mission_Unaccomplished_%20Iraq_1_May_2013.pdf

The report also points out that the numbers presented above 'come to life when you realise the pain, trauma and suffering behind them. Every number in the statistics above has a

story to tell and a life attached to it'.

Going back further, the Iraqi Red Crescent had [documented](#) in 2008 how 'children under 12 made up 58.7 percent of' Internally Displaced Persons in the country.

The U.N. had [documented](#) how only 40% of Iraqi children had access to clean drinking water due to the effects of the war, and how they in general lacked 'access to the most basic services and manifest a wide range of psychological symptoms from the violence in their everyday lives'.

While in 2003, The Guardian reported on how:

British and American forces were accused yesterday of breaking international rules of war after admitting that they were using cluster bombs against targets in Iraq.

The report went to explain how:

Alex Renton, overseeing Oxfam's aid work from Jordan, said the cluster shells could cause "unnecessary harm". **The UN children's fund, Unicef, expressed concern that Iraqi children might confuse the yellow food packets being handed out by American forces with the bomblets, which had identical colouring.**

<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2003/apr/04/uk.iraq1>

That Tony Blair's policies helped to inflict immense and ongoing hardship on the children of Iraq is beyond question. While he may not have personally been firing the cannons and dropping the bombs, as one of the architects of the aggression against Iraq he is ultimately responsible for the 'accumulated evil of the whole', as per the Nuremberg judgements.

What, then, could possibly explain Save The Children's decision to give a man who is widely reviled as an amoral war criminal, and rightly so, such an award?

Personally, I think one reason could be that their Chief Executive is a fellow named Justin Forsyth. According to his biography on the Save The Children website, Forsyth was in 2004:

. . . recruited to Number 10 by Tony Blair where he led efforts on poverty and climate change . . . He was to stay on under Gordon Brown, becoming his Strategic Communications and Campaigns Director.

<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/about-us/people/executive-directors>

So Forsyth was actually an underling of Tony Blair (and then Gordon Brown) at precisely the time they were ravaging Iraq.

I'd hazard that he shares broadly the same pro-Establishment values and ideological assumptions as Blair, and has taken those pro-Establishment values and assumptions with him to Save The Children. And when you think of just how rotten the British Establishment is, that can't be a good thing.

This isn't the first time that Save The Children have demonstrated that they are unhealthily close to the British and U.S. Establishments, either.

In 2013, for example, they [appointed](#) Samantha Cameron, the partner of British Prime Minister David Cameron, as their ambassador to Syria.

It's worth remembering that David Cameron's government were (and still are) [arming](#) and [training](#) elements within the rebel opposition, and thus constituted one side in the conflict, at the very time Samantha Cameron was appointed.

And as a little thought experiment, what might the reaction have been had they instead appointed Lyudmila Putin, the partner of Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, as their ambassador to Syria? I very much doubt that it would have gone almost totally unremarked upon, as Samantha Cameron's appointment did.

To take another example, The Guardian had reported in 2003 on how Save The Children had been:

ordered to end criticism of military action in Iraq by its powerful US wing to avoid jeopardising financial support from Washington and corporate donors

And then how:

Senior figures at Save the Children US . . . demanded the withdrawal of the criticism and an effective veto on any future statements blaming the invasion for the plight of Iraqi civilians suffering malnourishment and shortages of medical supplies.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2003/nov/28/charities.usnews>

An affair which surely needs no further commentary.

I've often thought that the bigger and more established humanitarian and human rights NGOs don't come in for anywhere near as much scrutiny from the liberal-left as they should. They kop an awful lot of criticism from the right, but it seems to me that for a section of the liberal-left, their research carries an air of unimpeachable neutrality and unquestionable moral probity.

And i'm not saying they don't do some good work. But at the very least, their output helps to shape popular attitudes towards matters of war, peace and governance in general, and should be engaged with more critically for that reason.

I've also often thought that an analytical model similar to - if distinct from in some important respects - the one Noam Chomsky and Ed Herman applied to corporate media performance might be useful in assessing NGO performance. What role, if any, does funding, ideology, sourcing, management/ownership and flak play in shaping their output?

For a start, it might help to explain why former officials of the U.S. and U.K. government keep on [ending up in positions of power](#) in these organisations.

It would take a bigger brain than mine to undertake such a project - although activists like Keane Bhatt are [doing great work](#) in this area - but last night's utter travesty shows why it would be useful.

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