

'White Helmets': New Breed of Mercenaries and Propagandists, Disguised as 'Humanitarians' in Syria

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"The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses."- Malcolm X

After four and half years of relentless propaganda being flung around western mainstream media by propagandists, NGOs and Empire serving mouthpieces, one wonders how this stream of effluent still manages to stick to the consciences of the public it serves to deceive.



MEET THE WHITE HELMETS: Propaganda image designed to reinforce Washington's policy of 'regime change' in Syria.

Yesterday, a Facebook post caught our attention. A Palestinian person based in Gaza posted two photos of child victims in Syria. The photos were accompanied by the caption, **“The massacres of Assad regime in Syria #Douma”**. The subsequent barrage of comments consisting of the usual plethora of outpouring against Syrian President Bashar al Assad and the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) provoked us to investigate further.

What we discovered was a highly organised, western-centric propaganda ring...

We discovered that both photos were taken by photographer **Khaled Khatib**, and were of “reported” Syrian Air Force ‘barrel bomb’ attacks, allegedly on unclassified areas of Aleppo. Bearing in mind, most of Khaled’s photos on Google appear to be of the immediate aftermath of such an attack, and one wonders why he does not specify the specific area and exact time, offering a verified claim of the attack being from barrel bombs, rather than the rather non committal “[reported](#)” tag.

Further investigation revealed that in reality, Khaled Khatib works for and with the **‘White Helmets’** and his photos are used extensively by the well known EU-backed and UK-based, one man propaganda band, the [Syrian Observatory for Human Rights](#). The SOHR is actually Mr Rami Abdul Rahman, who runs this propaganda feed from his house in Coventry, UK, and who bases the majority of his information on Skype calls to Syria.

This information, however, is unilaterally used by the Axis of Interventionism [US, Europe in particular] to justify their proxy invasion of a sovereign nation and their clumsy, murderous 4 and half year-long attempt at the “regime change” of Syria’s elected government, engendering, in the process, the widespread loss of civilian life in Syria at the hands of their proxy armies. More than any other single information source, the SOHR’s propaganda dispatches are used to justify western policy of arming and supporting the multi-headed insurgency in Syria.

Thanks [Eva Bartlett](#) for the photo below:

White said that a more robust system would involve combining radar data, signal intelligence (intercepted communications) and on-the-ground observers.

But the Syria Campaign quoted Khaled Khatib an Aleppo member of the Syrian Civil Defence, or White Helmets as they are known, stating any form of early warning information would be useful.

“If we could only get warning that the planes were coming, we could warn families, tell people to run from the markets, get the children out of the schools, let the medical centers know so that they can take cover.” Khatib said. “Every airport in the world has this technology - it is common, it is civilian. Why can’t they share it with us?”

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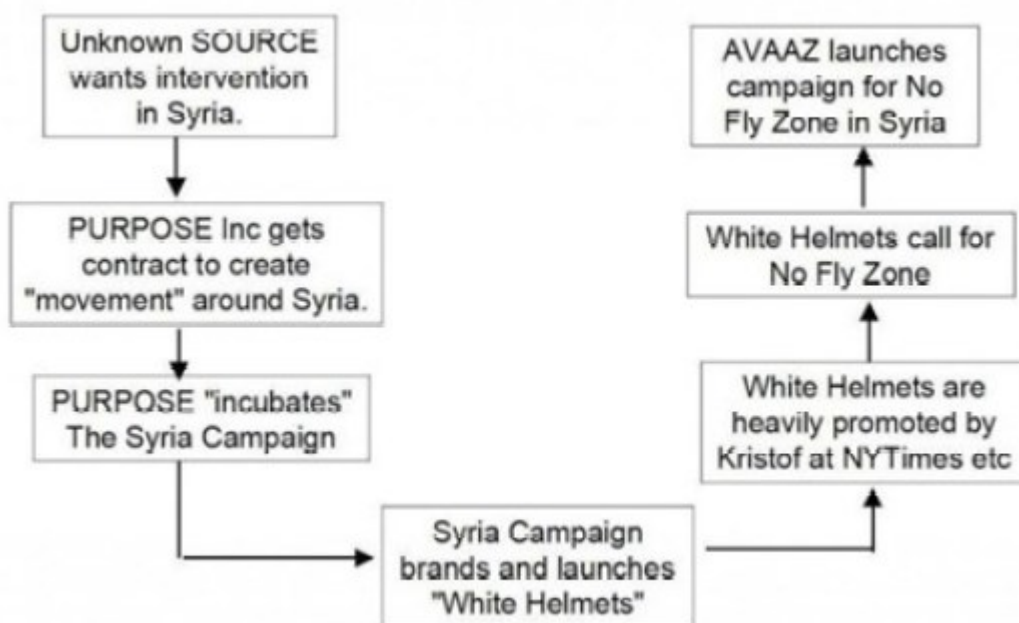


The *White Helmets* are equally suspect. This is a quote from Rick Sterling’s excellent article on the [“Highly Effective Manipulators”](#):

“**White Helmets** is the newly minted name for ‘Syrian Civil Defence.’ Despite the name, Syria Civil Defence was not created by Syrians nor does it serve Syria. Rather it was [created by the UK and USA](#) in 2013. Civilians from rebel controlled territory were paid to go to Turkey to receive some training in rescue operations. The program was managed by James Le Mesurier, a former British soldier and private contractor whose company is [based in Dubai.](#)”

“The trainees are said to be ‘nonpartisan’ but only work in rebel-controlled areas of Idlib (now controlled by Nusra/Al Qaeda) and Aleppo. There are widely divergent claims regarding the number of people trained by the White Helmets and the number of people rescued. The numbers are probably highly exaggerated especially since rebel-controlled territories have few civilians. A doctor who recently served in a rebel-controlled area of Aleppo described it as a ghost town. The White Helmets work primarily with the rebel group Jabat al Nusra (Al Qaeda in Syria). Video of the recent alleged chlorine gas attacks starts with the White Helmet logo and continues with the logo of Nusra. In reality, White Helmets is a small rescue team for Nusra/Al Qaeda.”

“But White Helmets primary function is propaganda. White Helmets demonizes the Assad government and encourages direct foreign intervention. A White Helmet leader wrote a recent [Washington Post editorial](#). White Helmets are also very active on social media with presence on Twitter, Facebook etc. According to their website, to contact White Helmets email *The Syria Campaign* which undermines the relationship.”



This illustration from Rick Sterling’s article demonstrates clearly the role of White Helmets in justifying the No Fly Zone

Now let's have a look at Mr. Khaled Khatib and his role in this propaganda chain. He appears to be exclusively embedded in Aleppo. I have been unable to locate any photos by him that are not from this region [on [google search](#)]. The majority of his photos are taken between January and June 2014. Now bearing in mind the mounting evidence of the civilian casualties and fatalities as a result of the “rebel” [hell cannon](#), mortars, and snipers in Aleppo, it should

be surprising that not one of his images records the devastation and bloodshed caused by these wildly inaccurate and lethal weapons employed by the so called opposition cells positioned all over [Aleppo](#).

Instead every photo and every statement from this propagandist focuses only on the Syrian Government's "reported" use of the legendary barrel bombs. "[There is great danger for civilians](#) from the Syrian army, the militias who are fighting with them, and ISIS," said Khaled Khatib, a photographer with the Aleppo branch of the Syrian Civil Defence, a volunteer rescue organization. "But the weapon that kills the most Syrians — by 90 percent — is the barrel."

We have demonstrated that the White Helmets are an integral part of the propaganda vanguard that ensures obscurantism of fact and propagation of Human Rights fiction that elicits the well-intentioned and self righteous response from a very cleverly duped public. A priority for these NGOs is to keep pushing the '**No Fly Zone**' scenario which has already been seen to have disastrous implications for innocent civilians in Libya, for example.

Khaled Khatib is quoted by the [Guardian](#) as being reserved on the 'No Fly Zone', but vehement in calls for a radar or "early warning" system that will ensure that "civilians" can flee areas that are about to be bombed by the Syrian Government forces. Lets just examine this statement, echoed by *The Syria Campaign* director, James Sadri: "If we could only get warning that the planes were coming, we could warn families, tell people to run from the markets, get the children out of the schools, let the medical centers know so that they can take cover," Khatib said. "Every airport in the world has this technology - it is common, it is civilian. Why can't they share it with us?"

Hmmm so, this makes an assumption, regularly echoed by the HRW brigades like Annie Sparrow and Ken Roth - who have become increasingly rabid in their barrel bomb narrative, that the Syrian Government is going to deliberately target civilian areas like hospitals and schools. This seems absurd when one takes into account that most families in Syria have family members in the Syrian forces combating foreign proxy armies made up of terrorists and mercenaries. To suggest that these forces would be turned against their own families is delusional if not downright criminal and inhumane. Therefore we must assume that the Syrian forces are quite rightly targeting embedded terrorist cells, cells that are nested within civilian areas. We know that [Aleppo](#) has shrunk to one fifth of its size thanks to the infiltration of many areas by these mercenary fighters. This infiltration has driven many civilians into safe pockets within Aleppo away from terrorist strongholds. The SAA is marooned on the Acropolis Hill in the strategic centre of the Old Citadel in Aleppo and is surrounded on all sides by "rebel" encampments.

With this information in mind, we must ask the question, who would benefit most from this early warning system - the civilians or the "rebels"?

I have created a collage of the most dramatic of Khaled Khatib's images, many of which are credited to AFP and Getty Images so we know they will be extensively used by the mainstream media to convey the "situation" in Syria. I will in no way detract from the very real suffering of the people of Syria caught up in a war not of their making and fuelled by Western arming, funding and logistic support for the "opposition" to the Government that is steadfastly resisting their interventionism.



MONTAGE: Khaled Khatib's images taken in Aleppo Jan - June 2014. All "reportedly" of 'barrel bomb' attacks.

However, I would ask anyone to view these photos with an impartial eye and to appreciate their importance as a propaganda tool. We know that Al Jazeera, for example has fabricated evidence before now and used artistic license to "create" images that pull on our heart strings. Even the BBC, the erstwhile reputed bastion of British media integrity has been caught out lying and deceiving on a terrifying scale when it comes to Syria. I leave it up to you, but here are some of Khaled's images (graphic).

The final point that I would like to make is that during my investigation I noticed one important fact. Even when a report is written about an ISIS atrocity, we often will see Khaled Khatib's photograph accompanying that report. I will give you an example. In March 2014, *The Daily Star* [Lebanon] reported on horrific mass executions carried out by ISIS throughout Syria, including Aleppo. [ISIL jihadists conduct 'mass executions' in Syria: UN probe](#). Despite this article describing the hideous killings and torture of civilians by ISIS, the caption on the accompanying photo by KK reads "The bodies of two children lie in the rubble of a residential building targeted by [yes you guessed it] barrel bombs launched by

“regime” forces.

My marketing background alerts me to this insidious form of subliminal “advertising” that will ensure that the public psyche absorbs the message of “regime” atrocities in preference to the information regarding ISIS depravity. A brief check on other mainstream media reports demonstrates that this is not an isolated case. Some may argue that the media outlets have simply made a “mistake,” I would refute that argument..once maybe, ten times, twenty times is no coincidence.



Tim Anderson explains “war porn”.

Author **Vanessa Beeley** is a contributor to 21WIRE, and since 2011, she has spent most of her time in the Middle East reporting on events there - as a photographer, writer, and peace activist, and a member of the Steering Committee of the Syria Solidarity Movement, and a volunteer with the Global Campaign to Return to Palestine. See more of her work at her blog [Will The Fall](#).

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