

White Helmets are Saving Civilian Lives; Their Testimony Will Indict Criminals

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On behalf of the Syrian people, the Syrian Coalition pays tribute to the volunteers of the Syrian Civil Defense Corps (also known as the White Helmets) as it reaffirms that their efforts will always be highly appreciated by the Syrian people and all the supporters of what is right, freedom and humanity all over the world.

In these extremely difficult circumstances, and amid seas of blood and destruction, the White Helmets have been an excellent model of the true Syrians as they dedicated their lives to rescuing the victims of bombing, destruction and displacement. They have been drawing support from an absolute determination and undying devotion to their duty.

Under barrages of bombs, missiles, and barrel bombs, and amongst the rubble and destruction caused by the Russian and Assad regime jets, the cooperation and patience being shown by the White Helmets have saved the lives of tens of thousands of civilians. They are also helping provide basic services to hundreds of thousands of displaced people and needy households fleeing bombardment by the Assad regime and its allied terrorist militias.

The viscous smear campaigns against the White Helmets will only bring shame and disgrace to those who are seeking to discredit this aid group. They are just an extension of the repeated targeting of the White Helmets volunteers with rockets and barrel bombs. The Syrian Civil Defense has lost 251 volunteers since it was established, most of whom were killed in double-tap airstrikes by the Assad regime and Russian aircraft which target the same area twice in order to kill the first responders.

The Russian Foreign Ministry's recent slander on the White Helmets has revealed a deep desire to take revenge on the rescue group. It has revealed how Russia sees this organization as a real threat to the criminals and their supporters, especially with regard to the legal aspect. Since its inception, the White Helmets has documented a long series of crimes against the Syrian people, taking photographs, preparing reports, keeping audio and video recordings, taking testimonies of survivors and civilians on the targeted areas. This material represents evidence capable of proving the responsibility of the Assad regime and Russia for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and violations of international law.

Hundreds of civil defense volunteers continued to carry out their duty during the fierce onslaught of the Assad regime and Russia on Dara'a and Quneitra provinces. They worked to help the displaced people and provided them with aid and health care without thinking about the dreadful fate they may face if the Assad regime captures those areas in their entirety.

Around 3,750 volunteers are still working with the Syrian civil defense. Hundreds of them are facing a grim fate as they are still denied safe exit from Syria's south, which requires intervention by the United Nations.

During negotiations in the south, Russia and the Assad regime refused to allow the Civil Defense volunteers to be transferred to Idlib province and continued to prevent those who remained from leaving safely.

The White Helmets will remain a symbol of selfless devotion and humanity. Their efforts and heroism will continue to be a source of pride and appreciation. As they have a great role in saving and caring for civilians, their testimony will serve as compelling evidence condemning criminals and their backers.

May our wounded recover, our detainees be free, and our fallen heroes rest in peace. Long live Syria and the Syrian people, free and with honor.