

Federal Foreign Office to support Syrian White Helmets with seven million euros

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23.09.2016 - Press release 

A Federal Foreign Office Spokesperson issued the following statement today (23 September) on the alternative Nobel Prize awarded to the Syrian White Helmets: The White Helmets share the Right Livelihood Award, first presented in 1980, with Egyptian women's rights activist Mozn Hassan and the organisation Nazra for Feminist Studies, as well as with human rights activist Svetlana Gannushkina and the Turkish newspaper "Cumhuriyet".

Every day, the White Helmets display impressive commitment in their work to provide vital aid for people in Syria's opposition-held territories. They recover the dead and wounded, provide the injured with medical care, fight fires and operate a warning and detection system for air strikes. In so doing, they risk their lives; these civilian and unarmed aid workers are often required to perform practically superhuman feats.

Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier met representatives of the White Helmets for talks on the situation in Syria on the fringes of the ~~UN~~ (United Nations) General Assembly shortly before the announcement of the "alternative Nobel Prize" winners. At their meeting, he expressed his great respect for their courageous and dangerous work. The Federal Foreign Office is supporting the White Helmets and has recently increased its financial contribution by two million euros to a total of seven million euros for this year.

The approximately 3000 volunteers who now make up the White Helmets play – wherever possible – a significant role in efforts to alleviate the suffering of the people and to make the lives of the civilian population in Syria a little more bearable. They are held in high regard by the population, and tens of thousands of people owe their lives to them. The White Helmets stand for the Syrian people's unbroken longing for a future of peace and security.

Background information:

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