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THE FOUNDATION
FOR THE STUDY
OF DEMOCRACY



THE WHITE HELMETS: FACT-CHECKING BY EYEWITNESSES AND FORMER VOLUNTEERS

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PART I

THE WHITE HELMETS: NEITHER NEUTRAL NOR VOLUNTEERS

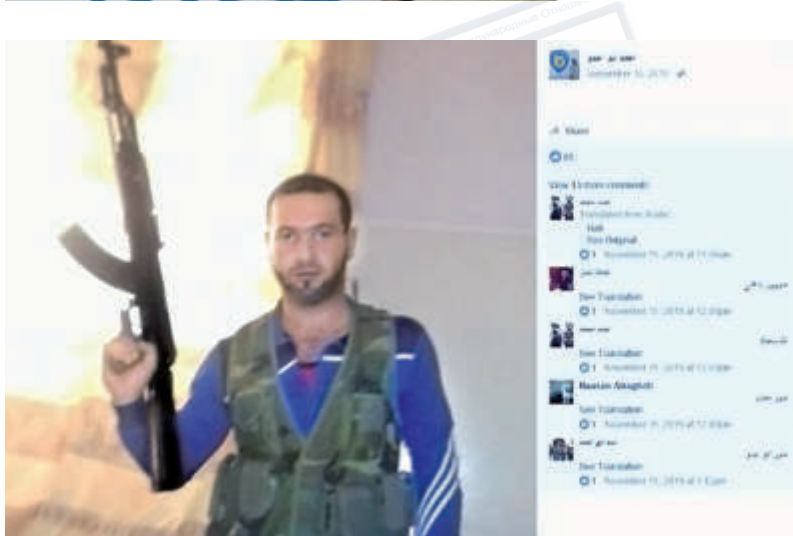
The Oscar-winning film *The White Helmets* begins with the following words: *“In areas out of regime control, those who remain rely on a group of volunteers dedicated to saving anyone in need.”* Fact-checking based on more than 100 interviews showed that the White Helmets were by no means a “group of volunteers.”

The Foundation for the Study of Democracy interviewed more than 40 White Helmets, 20 former members of armed groups, as well as residents from areas where the organisation used to operate. Most of the White Helmets were neither volunteers nor activists working without compensation, but permanent employees entitled to monthly pay, as well as regular rations of humanitarian aid, including food.

Witnesses shared their personal experience, indicating that in a number of cases instead of volunteering they were forced to join the organisation as an alternative to being imprisoned by armed groups or being sent into combat. Former employees of the White Helmets also said that most of the few activists who worked for free left after they had been forced to take part in staged shooting sessions.

The White Helmets centres were completely at odds with the decision-making approaches and the setting up of NGOs, instead creating a para-military structure with group commanders and

heads of district, city and regional branches with a developed system of secrecy and security and a strict hierarchy that covered all employees. Most of the commanders of the White Helmets centres and the majority of their employees kept their true identities secret and went by their nicknames or call signs. Former members told us that commanders would often threaten them with weapons and even promised to kill those who refused to execute the tasks they were assigned, such as going to the frontline to evacuate fighters. Witness accounts mention the fact that the White Helmets underwent combat training supervised by al-Nusra, a terrorist group. Employees of the White Helmets communicated with armed groups or terrorist organisations that protected them, using coded messages, which is also something more commonly seen among military units. It was not uncommon for the White Helmets centres to be outfitted like military facilities or buildings occupied by terrorists in order to prepare their defence: openings were created in partition walls in order to enable people to move around without being noticed, and tunnels linked these centres to the quarters of illegal armed groups. Former members of the White Helmets said that whenever they failed to execute orders or diverged from the ideological or religious preferences of the unit's leaders they could be handed over to a sharia court to face severe punishment up to the death penalty, arrested, imprisoned or fined. One of the victims said that he was thrown into jail for refusing to work with the White Helmets, and was beaten there in the presence of the centre's head. Another employee of the White Helmets left on a mission without orders from the command to rescue civilians, including his own father,



A significant part of the White Helmets made no secret of their affiliation with or sympathy toward terrorist or illegal armed groups, openly admired suicide bombers, and supported the killing and torture of Syrian soldiers. Above is a screenshot of Ahmed Abu Abdo, a White Helmets employee who openly posted on Facebook photos of himself holding weapons.

after a shelling incident. The centre's command threatened him with physical punishment for leaving without direct orders, and later slapped him with a big fine.

Former employees of the White Helmets said that quite a few people working at their centres continued to fight for various illegal armed groups or terrorist organisations. For the majority of other White Helmets, working for the organisation had nothing to do with serving their communities: it was the only way they could avoid starvation for themselves and their families. In addition to this, working for the organisation offered a certain level of protection by armed groups that defended the White Helmets. Terrorist and armed groups would usually let cars and people with the White Helmets passes through without stopping or checking them. In most cases, the same armed groups ran background checks on new members. For example, one witness said that he tried to get a job at one of the branches of the White Helmets but was told that he needed a reference from the sharia council of Jabhat al-Nusra, an al-Qaeda affiliate. Through this procedure, employees of the White Helmets were granted the status of trusted agents that ensured additional protection from other fighters.

According to witness accounts, the White Helmets benefited from lavish funding amid an otherwise dire economic situation in Syria, and just a few illegal armed groups and terrorist organisations received more. Witnesses also claimed that the organisation had deep pockets and could afford to pay high salaries to its members in cash. In a number of cases, these sums were comparable or even greater than what armed fighters received for combat engagement.



The White Helmets had a para-military structure, strict subordination and personnel management policies. Identification badges from the Anadan centre prove that almost all its employees, including officers, received only basic training, which probably meant no training at all. Only a few had a preliminary level of training. Above are examples of identification badges of the White Helmets members (from top left): Bilal Haj Ateeq (Anadan centre, position: firefighter, level of training: basic); Abdul Fattah Hayek (Anadan centre, position: rescuer, level of training: basic); Hamza Korg (Anadan centre, position: rescuer, level of training: basic), Ali Hayek (Anadan centre, position: officer, level of training: basic), Mahmoud Kogak (Alkita centre, position: commander of the Eastern and Northern units, level of training: preliminary), and Mohammed Ateeq (Anadan centre, position: officer, level of training: basic).



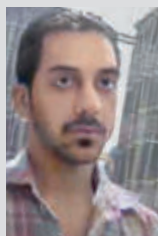
It was not uncommon for the White Helmets centres to be outfitted like military facilities or buildings occupied by terrorists in order to prepare their defence. For example, openings were created in partition walls and tunnels linked these centres to the quarters of illegal armed groups. The above photo shows an opening in a partition wall of a kindergarten used by the White Helmets as their centre in Douma. Openings of this kind enabled people to move around without being noticed.

Multiple witness accounts unambiguously prove that the White Helmets had at their disposal unprecedented financial resources and equipment, sometimes confiscated from lawful owners, and operated only on territories controlled by illegal armed groups or terrorist organisations, while the Syrian population lived in distress. In fact, the White Helmets seized hundreds of buildings for their centres and employees, taking private homes, shops, schools, fire stations, clinics, hospitals, etc. By the same token, the White Helmets took thousands of vehicles, including private cars,

construction equipment, ambulances, fire engines, etc. They also received ambulances from their sponsors, although in far smaller numbers than they got from elsewhere. The White Helmets also relied heavily on their ability to control a considerable part of the humanitarian aid coming from international organisations and the Syrian government. According to witnesses, humanitarian aid was used as in-kind compensation for employees first of all, after which it was given to families of fighters, while civilians would be the last to receive anything that remained of it.

According to former members of the White Helmets, militants and ordinary people from the regions where the White Helmets operated, the organisation did not use volunteers but only had employees who received monthly wages. Some were forced to work for the White Helmets, while others joined the group to feed their families. For example, Ramadan Kurdi, a fireman from Aleppo, says he was thrown into prison for refusing to work for the White Helmets and the centre's chief watched him get beaten up. Kurdi says that Mohamed Bashir Berim, a member of the White Helmets, told him that he was watched by other members of the organisation and that he was thrown into prison for behaviour that went against the religious beliefs of the White Helmets chiefs. Kurdi says that the White Helmets chiefs often held the group's members at gunpoint and threatened to kill them if they refused to carry out orders. Some members shot civilians without hesitation. For example, Yasir al-Mohamed says that members of the White Helmets shot him in the leg when they tried to take away the body of Yasser's father, who was killed by militants.

Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib, an opposition journalist who cooperated with the White Helmets, says there were no volunteers in the organisation and notes how much money and what food parcels the members of the White Helmets received regularly. Mohamed Baha Al-Shihadi, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo, confirms that everyone was paid and that there were no volunteers in the White Helmets. White Helmets employee, Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka, and Aleppo resident Aiman al-Haj Omar confirmed the reason why many people joined the White Helmets: most of them needed to feed their families or wanted to be paid or to receive humanitarian aid. This is what Hatem Uyn from the internal security of Jaysh al-Islam in Douma said: “The White Helmets paid more than Jaysh al-Islam. So many people left the group to join the White Helmets, for example, Abu Ahmed al-Kaka.”



Muhamed Bashir Berim, 23, Aleppo

I worked at a textile plant when the militants seized eastern Aleppo. The plants stopped working and so I had little choice, just as everyone else. A field commander from Jabhat al-Nusra said we must join them. I refused, and they threw me in prison, where I was humiliated, beaten up and starved. You can still see the signs of beating on my body. They gave me 15 days to choose between joining al-Nusra or the White Helmets. The third option was death. I have an old father, an ailing mother and two younger brothers, so I decided to join them. They let me out. My family was starving. After I joined the White Helmets, I received a box with humanitarian aid and \$100 every month. The aid included sugar, vegetable oil, buckwheat or other groats and lentils, everything we needed to survive. It was what



Above: Nur al-Farhan, aged 12, a pupil at the Gaza school in Aleppo told Maxim Grigoriev, Director of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy, how the White Helmets entered her school: “They got everybody out of the school and said that there would no longer be any lessons.”

Below: Mohamed Azbad, Daya Rajig, Nur al-Farhan, Raghad Azbad, Asma Sawan and Nour Sawan, pupils at the Gaza school in Aleppo whom the White Helmets ordered to leave the school where they set up their headquarters.



Many White Helmets members openly admitted that they also fought in illegal armed groups and posted photos of themselves holding weapons.

my family needed. Most people at my centre opted to work for the White Helmets rather than to fight on the ground.

My White Helmets centre was located near the Bab al-Nayrab roundabout, in the small shops they seized from the locals, forcing the shops' doors and changing the locks. These were former commercial shops, including a food store. The White Helmets centre had several fire engines. I drove these vehicles to bring water to the fighters and their commanders. Later I drove ambulances. The boss was a man with the codename Abu al-Sheih, who issued instructions before our missions. He never disclosed his real name. He is from the Aleppo Province. He never talked about himself or his family. He mistrusted and mistreated me, threatening me with his gun. Abu al-Sheih was from Jabhat al-Nusra and had two assignments: manage our White Helmets centre and take part in fighting. He sometimes was away for 15 or 20 days. The only thing that interested him was money. The others never told us their real names either. The drivers were known as Abu Ahmad, Abu Hussein, Aby Yasir, Abu al-Bara and Abu al-Mutassim. Abu al-Sheih said he would kill us for refusing to drive to the frontline to bring back the fighters who had been wounded in battles against the Syrian army. We said we couldn't do this because we were afraid. He threatened us with weapons.

Nearly all employees of the White Helmets say that they received a monthly wage, which was hypocritically described as “appreciation.”



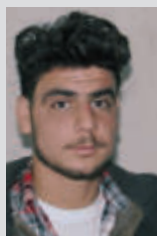
Muhammad Musa Abu Salem, 31, a leader at the White Helmets centre

I spent three years working for the White Helmets. There were 24 members, together with me, at our centre. They called us ‘volunteers.’ The \$150 we received was not wages but ‘appreciation.’ All of us, including me, had weapons for self-defence.

Al-Hasan Faruk as-Subha, 48, head of the White Helmets centre in Daraa



I had been working for the White Helmets for three years. I received \$175 every month. We never referred to this money as wages; it was ‘assistance.’ None of the White Helmets employees worked for free. Everyone had a GoPro camera. We posted the photographs we took on Facebook on the Daraa page of the Syria Civil Defence website. When the Syrian army reentered the Daraa Province, we refused to leave. White Helmets chief Saleh ordered us to destroy all the equipment, to burn it in a huge bonfire, but we refused. We left it for the people.



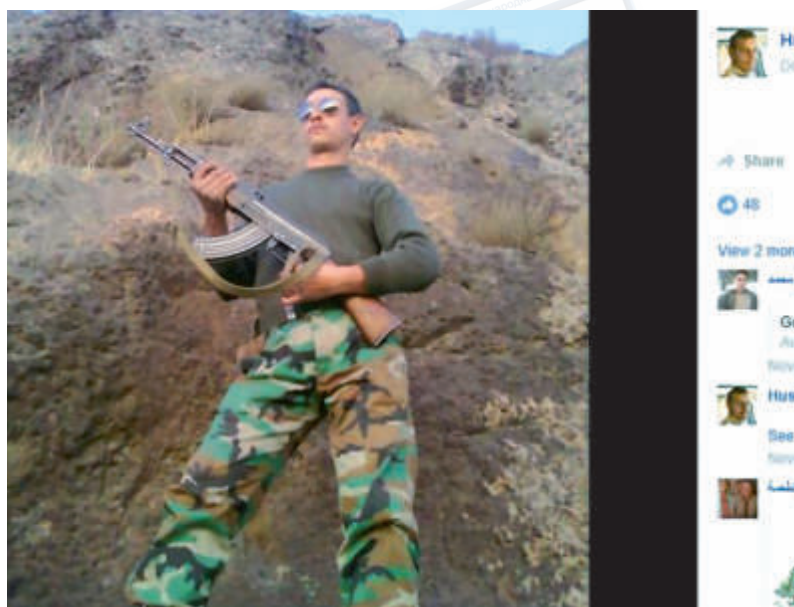
Muhammad Adham Abdulmalik, 19, a White Helmets employee in Douma

When our money ran out, my father and I joined the White Helmets because they paid a salary. I had been working as a paramedic on an ambulance for two years, and my father worked in security of the firefighting unit. Nobody worked for free; everyone received wages. I worked at White Helmets centre No. 250. Our boss carried a gun.

Muhammad Kasim Hasan, 30, a White Helmets employee



I was in the armed group Shabab al Sunna. Then I moved to the White Helmets. We had good ties with the armed group that was fighting in our district. They supported the White Helmets, helping us and blocking the roads. We radioed them for help. There were no volunteers at the centre; everyone received wages.



A screenshot of the profile of White Helmets employee Huseen Abohameed, who used to post photos of himself holding guns on Facebook.

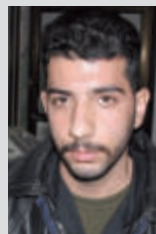


Muhammad Badjudj, 40, a White Helmets employee in Daraa

I spent four years working for the White Helmets. I worked at the centre that was deployed in a school for Palestinian refugees in Tariq al-Assad. We were paid \$150 every month plus another \$20 or a food package, and a bonus of \$100 every three months.

Mahmud Buweidani, 22, a White Helmets employee in Douma

I joined the White Helmets in 2015. I was jobless, and so I jumped at their offer when I saw the announcement. My centre was led by Mohamed al-Kaka, and one of the White Helmets centre in Douma was headed by Mohamed Masarwi. The centre's head, security guards and several others had weapons. We received \$50 but signed for \$150. The bosses' associates were paid more. Nobody worked for free.



Ramadan Kurdi, 52, firefighter in Aleppo

One day, three men with laptops and portable radio transmitters drove up to the building. They said they were going to take possession of the building for the White Helmets. I said we were government employees and I had a 25-year service record. Two days later, two vehicles carrying militants from the Abu Omar group arrived. They took me to the school that they used as a prison, and then I was ordered to come to the chief's office for interrogation; there I saw the head of the White Helmets centre. They wanted to make me work for them. Other people present at the interrogation included Abdullhamid Sabha and Bibars Mashaal, who



invariably carried with him a journal with the inscription Abu Omar's Battalions. They accused me of being loyal to the Syrian authorities. I said I was a fireman, regardless of my political affiliation. They said: "We are the new authorities, and you'll work with us." I refused, and they hit me. Later investigator Abu Ahmed said they tore people's heads and arms off. They beat and humiliated me. Three days later, investigator Abu Ahmed summoned me. He told me to "go and bring the money," saying he would keep my ID card. I went home, sold my wife's gold bracelet, gave them the money, got my ID card back and at night left for Latakia.



Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib, 31, opposition journalist who worked with the White Helmets

The White Helmets had no volunteers whatsoever. Earlier their members were paid up to \$300, but later their pay was cut to \$150; however, their monthly food parcels worth up to \$80 and \$150 in bonuses added up to about \$240–300 per person a month. I myself took part in checking if these people received money or not. I worked on the ground and checked how much they were paid and where the funds came from. I witnessed receipt of this money.



Mohamed Bahar al-Shihadi ibn Fronzi, 23, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo

All employees received money — there were no activists who worked without pay. The White Helmets centre was located in the Al Saad Wedding Hall close to the Al Haidariyah roundabout. The centre had 25 people working in it and three fire engines, of which two red vehicles they took from the state-owned fire station and the white vehicle they received from sponsors. Employees of the White Helmets centre worked in three shifts:



Many White Helmets employees openly admitted that they also fought in illegal armed groups and posted photos of themselves holding weapons.

one day on, two days off. The centre specialised in fighting fires and had a parking space for fire engines. Abdullah Naolo, as he was called — he led the White Helmets in Aleppo — regularly visited us to discuss action plans with Mohammed Ibrahim. Abdullah Naolo always instructed us to work well in order to continue to receive funding. That is precisely what he kept saying.

Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo

The majority of White Helmets employees worked to provide for their families. Volunteers usually left the centre, however, some of them had stayed and started to work for money. There were five of them, and they knew about the staged videos; nevertheless, they stayed with us and started to receive wages.



Mohamed Darwish, 35, a White Helmets employee in Saqba

Our White Helmets centre in Saqba employed 25–30 people. Most of us received wages, but we had to allocate \$20 each to some employees who had status as volunteers.



Aiman al-Haj Omar ibn Ibrahim, 27, tailor

People mostly joined the White Helmets for money and to receive humanitarian aid. It was very difficult to survive in the eastern areas.

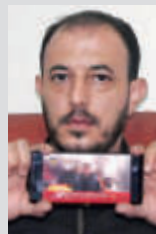


Abdulkarim Said Ahmad, 23, a White Helmets employee in Kafr Batna

I started cooperating with the White Helmets in 2015. Back then I lived in Zebedin, Eastern Ghouta, and was out of a job. My friends helped me to get employed with them.

Mohamed Saber, 33, a White Helmets employee in Saqba

I spent six years working for the White Helmets. I joined them because my family needed money. We were paid \$50 each, but we signed receipts for \$150. I worked at their auto repair shop in the city of Saqba where White Helmets centre No. 400 was located. I repaired vehicles; all White Helmets-owned ambulances in Eastern Ghouta were repaired at our shop.



Nur al-Din Kamal Yahya, 32, a White Helmets employee

First, I worked at the White Helmets auto repair shop, then I was an ambulance driver and later a fire engine driver at the White Helmets centre in Saqba. We were in such a bad state financially when we moved from Al-Mleha that I had to work for the White Helmets; they needed auto mechanics.

Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka, 44, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo

I was a White Helmets employee for 18 months. My neighbour Musab Jendia, who was already working with them, helped me to get a job at their centre. My neighbour was a rescue worker at the White Helmets centre at Bab al-Neir-ab. I learned from him that we would be given humanitarian aid. I started working as a driver. In the beginning, they paid me 5,000 Syrian pounds a week and gave me a box with humanitarian aid. Later this amount was increased after we started to fill up water tanks for militant groups and their leaders. Overall, we received \$100.





Mohamed Bahar al-Shihadi ibn Fronzi, 23, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo

Mohammed Ibrahim, the head of the White Helmets centre in our area, suggested that I take up a job at the centre. Everything was very expensive for me to buy, so my strained circumstances forced me to join them to be able to provide for my family. If I had had a job and decent pay, I would have never thought of working with them. Mohammed Ibrahim offered me work as a cleaner at the centre for five or six hours a day and a wage of 1,500 to 3,000 liras.



Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib, 31, opposition journalist who worked with the White Helmets

People who joined the White Helmets were mostly driven by the desire to earn money to provide for themselves and their families. Admittedly, there were volunteers, but the majority of employees had selfish ends as they were after money.

Mohammed Hajouh bin Abdul Razzaq, 41, small business owner

People took up jobs with the White Helmets to make money.

The White Helmets structure is modelled on a military unit with its rigorous system of orders that all employees must obey and also a secrecy system.

Aleppo resident Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed provides an example of White Helmets employees attending military courses that were overseen by the al-Nusra terrorist organisation and included physical training, shooting and schooling in explosives.

Just like with military units, radio communication between groups was enciphered while the coding systems regularly changed.

1. The Human Imperative of saving lives and rescue comes first:

The right to receive humanitarian assistance, and to offer it, is a fundamental humanitarian principle, which should be enjoyed by civilian Syrians. In our capacity as individual members and volunteers in the SCD, we strongly recognize our obligation to provide humanitarian assistance to our people. Hence the need for unimpeded access to affected populations is of fundamental importance in exercising that responsibility. Our motive is saving the maximum number of civilian lives.

2. Search and rescue response is given to civilians regardless of the race of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of human need alone.

Civilian and human life is as precious in one part of a country as another. Thus, in implementing this approach, we recognise the crucial role played by women in war and disaster-prone communities in the world, and will ensure that this role is supported, not diminished, by our search and rescue operations that we carry out in response to the fighting in Syria.

3. Search and rescue missions will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint

We will not tie the promise, delivery or distribution of assistance to the embracing or acceptance of a particular political or religious creed because our work comes from our values and principles.

4. We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of any political party or agendas, which are not compatible with the missions of search and rescue of civilians from our people.

We will never knowingly – or through negligence – allow ourselves, or our volunteers, to be used to gather information of a political, military or economically sensitive nature for bodies or entities that may serve purposes other than those which are strictly humanitarian, and for the purposes of saving civilian lives.

We, in the SCD, are ready to receive assistance and expertise, in order to carry out search and rescue operations, for purposes of professionalism and institutional exchange of knowledge and expertise.

We value and promote the voluntary giving of labour and finances by institutions, organizations and concerned individuals to support our work and recognise the independence of action promoted by such voluntary motivation. In order to protect our independence, we will seek to avoid dependence upon a single funding source.

Photo: Pages from the White Helmets Code of Conduct, which, among other things, says that the organisation “will not tie the promise, delivery or distribution of assistance to the embracing or acceptance of a particular political or religious creed.” In reality, the White Helmets, as a rule, refused to provide any aid to those who did not support their opposition to the Syrian Government. They also often refused to help relatives of Syrian public employees.

If employees started evacuation without receiving an order, to say nothing of their disregard for orders, they were punished. White Helmets employee Abdulmunam Faiz al-Alush says that they were ordered to “go to post 27,” and former internal security service officer with the Jaysh al-Islam group says that the codes were changed every two months. According to Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed from Aleppo, White Helmets employees received military training at a special camp run by Jabhat al-Nusra, a branch of the terrorist organisation al-Qaeda.

Citing his own experience, Mahmud al-Haj Omar says that the White Helmets burned and robbed his home because he had fled to an area controlled by the Syrian Government.



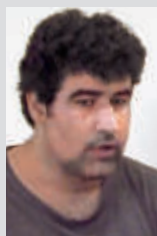
Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed, 41, small business owner in Aleppo

All centre heads who were appointed to this position took a special Turkey-led training course in the town of Al’atarib, Idlib Province. Raed Saleh was in charge of it. We had special training and combat training. A few years ago I attended a graduation ceremony at such a course in Al’atarib. I was taken along by the head of the Om Alkarameel centre. But the White Helmets employees also underwent military training in the area of the grain depot outside the town of Saraqib. They were proud to take this training and told me about it when they were buying goods. It was a closed training course. The grain depot was controlled by al-Nusra at that time. They spent a month there, and they had enhanced physical training courses, rope climbing and a firing range. Darwish Ibrahim specialised in electronic circuit boards and took a corresponding course. He was a White Helmets employee and al-Nusra fighter. He said they studied land mine laying. But after completing the course, he became responsible for electronics at three centres, namely, Tal Aldaman, Om Alkarameel

and Alsamiria. The course organisers asked who had served in the army as an engineer or a mine picker. Darwish took a mine picker course. Those who passed this course were White Helmets employees, but took it at an al-Nusra camp.

Yasir al-Mohamed, 44, Aleppo

In Aleppo, militants put strong pressure on my father, because my brothers serve in the government army. I came to pick up my parents from Aleppo and take them to Homs. The militants killed my father in front of me. Yasser Abdullah Almushrif shot him. The White Helmets came to pick up his body. One of them shot me in the leg. We never saw my father's body again. My mother is sure that they take bodies away to remove organs.



Abdulmunam Faiz al-Alush, 24, a White Helmets employee

I worked from 9 am to 9 am the next day, and then had time off for several days. Sometimes we stayed put for 24 hours, sometimes we went out only once a day. Amir Abu Muhammad, the coordinator of various armed groups, issued instructions over the radio. He told us: "Go to post 27." The militants were already waiting for us there. We knew that a particular post represented a particular neighbourhood. It's just like the military use encrypted messages.

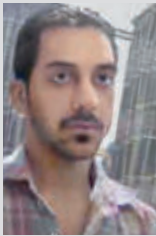
In the film *The White Helmets*, an employee of the organisation says: "We usually go out for a day and come back at night." But an employee of the organisation named Abdulmunam Faiz al-Alush refutes his words: "Sometimes, we stayed put for 24 hours, sometimes we went out only once a day." Given the evidence that fortifying the militants' combat positions and supplying them with water, as well as staging

and filming events, were a significant and regular part of the organisation's activities, the number of actual trips was in fact even lower.

Hatem Uyn, 31, former internal security officer at Jaysh al-Islam



Jaysh al-Islam and the White Helmets used encrypted language to denote areas of the city and places. For example, there were about 80 locations with numbers in Douma. The encryption changed every two months. It was developed by the deputy head of internal security at Jaysh al-Islam, whose name was Omar Aldirani Abu Qusay.



Mohamed Bashir Berim, 23, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo

Once, a shell hit the street where my dad's shop was. I went there on my own and took him to Albayan hospital, which worked with the White Helmets. The doctors refused to help him because he was not a militant, and he died from heavy bleeding. I received threats for leaving without orders, and they took away half of my monthly salary.

Mahmud al-Haj Omar, 33, native of Aleppo, Sakhur District, tailor

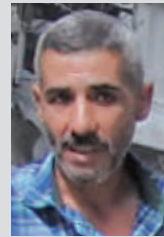


Just because I fled to areas that were controlled by the Syrian government, the White Helmets robbed and burned down my house. A group of White Helmets employees, including Mohammed Kamel Al Saleh, Nizar Al Haj and Ahmed Ben Youssef, set it on fire. They burned down my house in the Hanano District.

In the Oscar-winning film *The White Helmets*, the head of the organisation centre in Aleppo, Abu Omar, says, “We — the White Helmets — are the first to arrive after a bombing.” This statement does not stand up to scrutiny. Witnesses claim that militant groups often were the first to arrive at the scene and did not allow the neighbours to help the victims before the White Helmets arrived and the filming began. In some cases, the White Helmets just filmed the scene and did not provide any assistance to the victims. The White Helmets were almost always escorted by the militants.

Abdul Razak Na’asan bin Mohammed, 45, Aleppo

Yes, I saw it myself as the militants provided security at the scene of an incident and did not allow civilians to approach the scene. These were different groups, mostly Ahrar al-Sham, Fastaqim Kama ‘Umirt and Aljabhat Alshaamiya. The White Helmets also came along with the militants.



Nihad Damerji ibn Mohamed, 57, construction worker in Aleppo

In our district, there were militants from Ahrar al-Sham headquartered in the Alrami cafe. They were led by Sheikh Farouk, Nour al-Din al-Zanki, and the headquarters in Tal Al-Zarzir were headed by Abdul Rahman Turki. At the Althawra school, there were militants who turned the Fatima Mosque into a field hospital and a sharia court. The White Helmets had a command post in Jaba Alqiba. It was a large post with over 100 people. They had meetings at the Alshuhada school. Militants surrounded the scene of the incident, pushed aside civilians and allowed only the White Helmets in.

Ahmad Zaino Mohamed, 43, blacksmith in Sukkari District, Aleppo

During shelling, my father was out in the street. He died. It was in the Tal Al-Zarzir neighbourhood 150 metres away from the mosque. The White Helmets arrived only to take pictures of the dead. They didn't help the wounded. Seven people were wounded and later died. I had a run-in with the White Helmets and broke their camera. The entire neighbourhood stood up against them when they saw it happen. The White Helmets left, even though they were escorted by Nour al-Din al-Zanki.



Mohammed Nasser Azbad

I was in my house when I heard a loud explosion and my building collapsed. After this, the White Helmets arrived. I saw the locals pull me out from under the rubble of the building, while the White Helmets just filmed it on camera and left without offering any help.



Ali Mohamed al-Mardini, 28, former Jaysh al-Islam member in Damascus

Jaysh al-Islam was in charge of the White Helmets' security. We defended their centres and the premises in which they worked. They were escorted by a special guard unit from Jaysh al-Islam. It was part of the 27th battalion, which was responsible for the security of high-ranking Jaysh al-Islam officers. This battalion provided escort patrols that came to the White Helmets centre to escort them to their job sites. We maintained constant contact over the radio.





Radwan Hoseira ibn Husein, 39, construction worker

The White Helmets, when they helped civilians, walked around with the militants, and drove around together as well. Once I saw White Helmets who were not Syrians. They had a translator and were armed. It was in the Sukkari District where they sell food and clothes. They had long hair and wore headbands and spoke English. My friend who sells mobile phones saw four Frenchmen wearing the White Helmets uniform.

Feisal al-Bakur ibn Mohamed Hadi, 46, TV repairman in Aleppo

I don't think highly of the White Helmets. Their employees were more interested in robbing people than saving them. There were always militants next to the White Helmets.



Mohammed Nasser Zaher bin Mahmoud, 46, a tobacco factory worker

In the district where I live, the White Helmets drove around in the company of the militants.

Mohammed Hajouh bin Abdul Razzaq, 41, small business owner

I have a store across from the Gaza Al Samedia school in the Hulluk District. There's a four-floor building across from my store. It was hit by a shell, killing nine or 11 people. The White Helmets arrived at the scene with an ambulance and an excavator. The White Helmets came to the site of the explosion with the militants. Anywhere from eight to 10 White Helmets employees and 30–35 militants.



PART II

WHITE HELMETS CENTRES — UNITS OF TERRORIST ORGANISATIONS AND ILLEGAL ARMED GROUPS

British journalist John Cantlie was abducted by militants of the terrorist organisation ISIS in 2012. Later on, he became known as the author of a number of films and an article in the Dabiq magazine, in which he acted on the side of the terrorist organisation. He released the film “Inside Aleppo” on February 8, 2015. In one of the film’s on-site episodes, he describes a recent air strike. While he is speaking, active employees of the White Helmets can be seen in the background and he remarks that the “*Islamic State fire brigade*” is on the scene. In other words, they are the fire fighters of the terrorist organisation.

Other such cases, similar to the one involving John Cantlie and ISIS, where terrorist groups considered the White Helmets their units or partner structures were the norm rather than the exception.

Former militants and Syrian eye-witnesses have given detailed descriptions of facts that lead to an unequivocal conclusion about the character of the relations between the White Helmets centres, and the illegal armed groups and terrorist organisations that controlled the territories in which these centres were located. Below, we will cite extensive evidence illustrating the fact that the White Helmets centres did not simply obey the terrorist and

illegal armed groups in all aspects of their activities but actually constituted their units, permanently providing engineering support for the combat positions of the militants, as well as their food and medical support. In some cases, they even conducted site reconnaissance of the Syrian Army positions and delivered weapons across the border.

For example, White Helmets employee Nur al-Din Kamal Yahya said his centre was subordinate to Feilak al-Rahman, while a neighbouring centre in Harasta to Fajr al-Ummah, and the centre in Arbin to Jabhat al-Nusra. Former employee of the Jaysh al-Islam internal security service Hatem Uyn confirmed that the White Helmets operating on the territory controlled by Jaysh al-Islam were fully subordinate to them. He said written orders from their leaders were delivered to the White Helmets centre, fully controlling the membership of the centre. Attorney from Douma Mohamed al-Naasan also confirmed that Jaysh al-Islam was in full control of the activities of the White Helmets in the city.

Hatem Uyn, 31, former internal security officer at Jaysh al-Islam

I was a member of Jaysh al-Islam for four years. I was an employee of their internal security service. I delivered the instructions of the heads of this service to the White Helmets and Jaysh al-Islam. I was a liaison between Jaysh al-Islam and the White Helmets. We sent an order to the White Helmets to move to a certain point, or, if Jaysh al-Islam was planning to attack the Syrian Army or other armed units in Ghouta, we would





The photo depicts frames from the propaganda film “Inside Aleppo” by the terrorist organisation ISIS, and featuring British journalist John Cantlie. Describing a recent air attack, Cantlie calls the White Helmets employees working in the area the “Islamic State fire brigade.”

issue an order for them to get ready for this. For example, Jaysh al-Islam seized a mountain across from Dahiyat al-Assad, and I sent an order to the White Helmets to prepare their vehicles and come to the mountain because there was going to be a very big war in a couple of days. Often these orders involved arranging a certain number of vehicles and moving to a specific place. For example, I forwarded an order from Jaysh al-Islam to the White Helmets to send all vehicles and bulldozers to the front. A clash with Feilak al-Rahman was beginning. On another occasion, White Helmets centres were ordered to submit lists of all employees to the internal security service of Jaysh al-Islam. If the internal security service had any questions about an employee, they were immediately dismissed from the White Helmets.

When there was insufficient time, I sent instructions over the telephone. If there was enough time, I delivered an official paper with Jaysh al-Islam's letterhead and with the signature of the head of the Jaysh al-Islam internal security service in Eastern Ghouta Bashir Sheih al-Deya Abu Abdulla, who gave me such papers personally. Usually, I handed these orders to Mohamed Masarwi Abu Salyam — head of the White Helmets centre and he passed them to the leadership of the other centres throughout Eastern Ghouta. Mohamed Masarwi was also an emir in Jaysh al-Islam. The White Helmets were fully subordinate to Jaysh al-Islam on the territories under its control.



Nur al-Din Kamal Yahya, 32, a White Helmets employee

The centre had up to 35 employees, two ambulances, one vehicle for evacuation and five other cars. The centre was headed Mohamed Bashar al-Hafi who had three deputies: his brother Muayad al-Hafi, a man nicknamed Abu Yasir

and Nur al-Din Dally. Other employees worked under assumed names, for example, Mohamed Abu Sabed and Abdulhami Abas.

Feilak al-Rahman's security unit, to which we were subordinate, was located about 100 metres from our centre. In other places, like Douma, the White Helmets obeyed Jaysh al-Islam. The civil defence in Harasta is under the control of Fajr al-Ummah and received its orders from Jabhat al-Nusra in the Arbin district.

Mohamed al-Naasan, 49, attorney in Douma

I've been here, in Douma since 2012. This is why I know everything and have seen everything. The activities of the White Helmets in the city of Douma are totally under the control of Jaysh al-Islam, which introduces its members into this organisation. They used the White Helmets as a sponsor of Jaysh al-Islam. Everyone could see that the White Helmets were Jaysh al-Islam militants. Therefore, all the leaders or heads of the White Helmets engaged in the same activities as Jaysh al-Islam. In addition, Jaysh al-Islam knew how much money Britain or other countries sent to the White Helmets. They knew the amounts and controlled these funds. Jaysh al-Islam sent me to prison because I opposed them. We have always been against detentions and prisons. Sheih Adnan was with us. I was threatened. Once they even sent a message saying: 'He'd better be silent or we'll cut out his tongue.' Later on, Doctor Danian, who was with me, was killed, as was Mohamed Fleitani. Shortly after, I was imprisoned because of my views. I was kept behind bars for three months. I was interrogated and beaten up.



The White Helmets were not always subordinate to the armed groups that controlled the regions where they were located. Quite often, the heads of the White Helmets centres occupied privileged



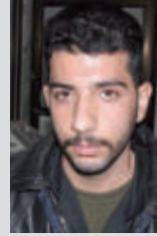
The photo depicts a frame from the film *The White Helmets* in which one of their employees admits that he was a member of an illegal armed group.

positions in armed groups. This was the case with Mohamed Masarwi, the head of the centre in Eastern Gouta, who was simultaneously an emir of Jaysh al-Islam. Many employees of the White Helmets were at the same time militants of illegal armed groups, and some centres were formed exclusively from members of terrorist groups. In most cases, they did not conceal their membership of illegal armed groups.

Thus, in the famous film *The White Helmets* Mohammed Farah says that before joining the White Helmets, he was a member of an armed unit and fought in the opposition for three months. However, the film fails to mention that the militants went to work in the White Helmets centres located on the territory controlled by their former armed group and that they stayed in contact with it.

Mahmud Buweidani, 22, a White Helmets employee in Douma

Militants called us over the radio. We were called in the event of a fire or they came to collect us. Militants sent a vehicle with guards and accompanied us to the fire location. Jaysh al-Islam accompanied us as well.



Muhammad Adham Abdulmalik, 19, a White Helmets employee in Douma

One day Mohamed Kaka came to us and said there was an invitation from Jaysh al-Islam to visit its headquarters. We were in charge of White Helmets centre No. 250. Mohamed Masarwi was in the headquarters along with Head of Jaysh al-Islam Abu Kusai Al-Deirani. We had breakfast together and then Masarwi made some remarks, saying that we serve Jaysh al-Islam and are subordinate to it.

Nuuman Buweidani, 35, a White Helmets employee

I spent four years working for the White Helmets. At the time, the centre was headed by Mohamed Kaka. We were promised \$150 a month in pay but only received \$50. Relatives or friends of the centre's head received more. We didn't get anything else but had to sign for another \$40 and \$100 every three months. We had two excavators, three ambulances, three fire engines and one trawl from Al-Sham Humanitarian Foundation, which was linked to Jaysh al-Islam.

Jaysh al-Islam told the head of the centre where to go, contacting him via the radio. Jaysh al-Islam accompanied us to the locations where we helped



the wounded. They always provided us with a vehicle and four armed militants as guards. A few years ago we were summoned by the heads of the White Helmets: Mohamed Masarwi, Abu al-Selma and Mohamed Kaka — they represented Jaysh al-Islam. The meeting took place in the Alkafah command post. Jaysh al-Islam also had its prison there. At the meeting, there were 80 employees of the White Helmets and 20 members of Jaysh al-Islam. Mohamed Masarwi spoke about the successful performance of the centre thanks to Jaysh al-Islam.

Fares Mayasa, 37, former member of an illegal armed group

My elder brother worked with the militants of the Liva Shuhada Douma. I transported ammunition, terrorists, wounded and also dead. I also carried products and provided uniforms for militants.



The leaders of the centres were armed with pistols. Even drivers were armed but were prohibited from showing their weapons. Many people who work in the White Helmets were militants. In every village, this organisation occupied schools and turned them into its centres. Studies were discontinued.

Muhammad Shahada Allush, 54, former member of an armed group

The headquarters of the White Helmets were not far from al-Harra. Jordan supplied them with products, machineguns, pistols, submachine guns, outfits and civilian clothes. Several groups of the White Helmets wanted to seize a property in the town of al-Harra but the local people ousted them and they left for Jasim. Since the local people were afraid of these groups, they drove them out of Jasim as well, and they had to move first to Quneitra and later on, to Idlib or Jordan.

The testimony of an opposition journalist, Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib, is indicative because he directly states that “after Eastern Ghouta was divided into sectors, the groups began to put their members into the White Helmets in each sector. Each of the White Helmets centres was subordinate to the group that controlled the territory. Faylaq Alrahmun controlled the central sector; Jaysh al-Islam, the northern sector. Both groups’ leaders served in the White Helmets.”

No less eloquent are the facts presented by Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed from Aleppo, who talks about how he tried to get a job with the White Helmets branch in Tal Aldaman, but was told it would only be possible after obtaining a recommendation from the Sharia Committee of the Jabhat al-Nusra terrorist organisation, a branch of al-Qaeda. Abdulmunam Faiz al-Alush says that in Al-Rastan, in Talbiseh, in Al-Ghantu, in Al-Zaafaraniyah, White Helmets were recruited from militants. Fireman Ramadan Kurdi says that in his town, the leaders of the White Helmets centres were militants from the Abu Amara Battalions group, and recalls that White Helmets centre chief Bebars Meshal, a fighter from the same unit, was present during his interrogation in the militants’ prison.



Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib, 31, opposition journalist who worked with White Helmets

After Eastern Ghouta was divided into sectors, the groups began to put their members into the White Helmets in each sector. Each of the White Helmets

centres was subordinate to the group that controlled the territory. Faylaq Alrahmun was in charge in the central sector; Jaysh al-Islam, in the northern sector. Both groups' leaders served in the White Helmets. I know Abu Sayah, who was one of the leaders in the Faylaq Alrahmun in al-Shifunya, I know Abu Omar al-Rihan from the White Helmets centre in Al Rayhan. Mohamed Katado was in Harasta, while Bashar al-Hafi represented Jabhat al-Nusra. Approximately 100–150 White Helmets employees in Eastern Ghouta were simultaneously members of various Jaysh al-Islam groups in Douma in the northern sector, or Faylaq Alrahmun in the central sector, Ahrar al-Sham, and the Fajr al-Ummah Brigade in Harasta, and a few from Jabhat al-Nusra. In fact, they were subordinate to Jaysh al-Islam groups, Faylaq Alrahmun, or Harakat Ahrar al-Sham, but people were told that they were White Helmets. I know a lot of people who were both White Helmets employees and militants.



Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed, 41, small business owner in Aleppo

Almost all the people who served in the White Helmets were al-Nusra militants or had connections with them. I personally tried to get a job with this organisation, but I was told that if I was not a fighter and had never served with al-Nusra, they could not give me a job. Everyone who came to the White Helmets had a document certified by the Sharia Committee of al-Nusra. Members of the White Helmets and militants frequently visited my shop, and one of the customers was a White Helmets centre chief. His name was Abdu Moti Turki al-Ubeidi and he headed a branch in Tal Aldaman, and was also an emir at al-Nusra. I had a low income, so I asked him to get me a job with the White Helmets. Abdu Moti told me to provide documents, and after a certain time a resolution came stating that they had refused me.

The documents had to include a recommendation of the al-Nusra Sharia Committee. I contacted Abdu Moti's boss, whose name was Munir Mustafa, and who headed the headquarters in that place, and I filed documents with the headquarters for the western province of Aleppo. I spoke with him in person. To get a recommendation from the al-Nusra Sharia Committee, you had to be a fighter. Omar Salmo from Ahrar al-Sham was in charge of the White Helmets throughout the province. And anyone who approached him with an al-Nusra recommendation could get a job immediately. Without one, it was impossible.



Abdulmunam Faiz al-Alush, 24

In Al-Rastan, Talbiseh and Al-Ghantu, the White Helmets centres were housed in schools. The education process was discontinued. I heard from Mohamed al-Hurani, Mahmud al-Hurani and others there that in Al-Rastan, Talbiseh, Al-Ghantu, and Al-Zaafaraniyah, White Helmets were recruited from among militants.

Ramadan Kurdi, 52, firefighter in Aleppo

When they took me to the school where their prison was, and I was called in for questioning, the chief of the White Helmets centre was present. He always walked around with a magazine that said Abu Amara Battalions, and his name was Bebars Meshal. The branch chiefs and leaders of the White Helmets are militants from the Abu Amara Battalions.

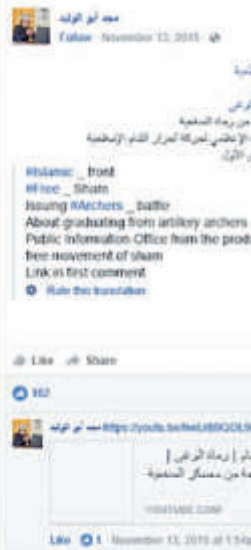


The Abu Amara Battalions are known for orchestrating terrorist acts—the killing of Syrian state officials in areas under the control of the Syrian government.

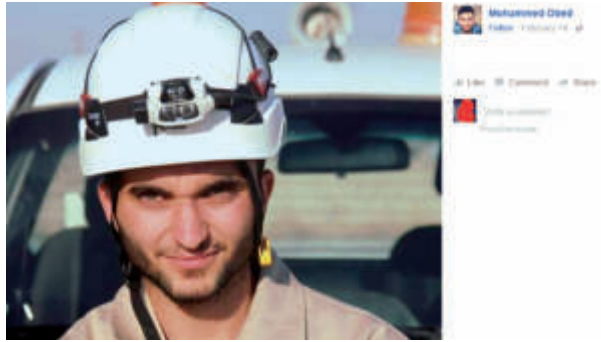


The photo shows a member of the White Helmets holding a gun. As a rule, such instances were never shown on the videos posted by the White Helmets on the internet and sent to the international media, but as witnesses like Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed and many others testify, this practice was quite common.

Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed from Aleppo says White Helmets employees Mohammed Ali Karim al-Omar and Ahmed Mohamed Ali Humesh fought on the side of ISIS, under the command of his great-uncle Husein Mohamed Nur Humesh nicknamed Abu Muawiyah of Sharia, who was an emir of ISIS. White Helmets employee Said Ibrahim al-Masri testifies that Hasan al-Huseini and Alya al-Din al-Hafi, who served in his White Helmets centre in Saqba, were from Jabhat al-Nusra, and Ahmed al-Kaka from Jaysh al-Islam, and one of the White Helmets leaders in Eastern Ghouta, Yasin Dogmush, gave out weapons to employees. Husein



Screenshot of White Helmets officer Abu Walid’s page on Facebook where he posted propaganda photos for the illegal group Ahrar al-Sham Brigade.



Screenshot of White Helmets employee Mohamed Obaid's page on Facebook where he posted propaganda photos for the illegal group Ahrar al-Sham Brigade.

Talal Hajiko, an employee of the White Helmets headquarters for Eastern Douma who oversaw all the organisation's branches in the area, says there were Jabhat al-Nusra representatives in the administration. White Helmets employee in Saqba Mohamed Saber, White Helmets employee in Douma Ahmed Buweidani, White Helmets employee Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka from Aleppo, as well as civilians Abdul Karim Said Ahmed, Mohamed al-Mustafa ibn Hassun, Mahmud al-Haj Omar and others named specific employees of the organisation who were militants and carried weapons. Adnan Isa ibn Abdulatif talks about White Helmets employee Amar Sheikh Farhodi who was also a sniper in the Al-Kaka Mosque and Zakaria Mustafa confirms what he says about the man, also telling how he was beaten up by White Helmets employees and de facto fighters.



Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed, 41, small business owner in Aleppo

Many White Helmet employees were involved in hostilities when the situation became aggravated. Some of them took part in assaults. For example, Mohamed Ali Karim al-Omar was a rescue worker, but he took part in hostilities whenever necessary. Ahmed Mohamed Ali Humesh participated in combat operations. They were involved in hostilities between the Al-Hadher and Khanaser communities. They took off their White Helmet uniforms and donned their own gear. Husein Mohamed Nur Humesh nicknamed Abu Muaviyah Sharia was an ISIS emir. After a conflict flared up between Ahrar al-Sham and al-Nusra in this district, the above-mentioned White Helmets members moved towards the eastern sector of Aleppo province and joined

ISIS. Al-Nusra had a plan to block Aleppo in cooperation with ISIS. To achieve this, they wanted to block the “road of life.” Al-Nusra advanced from the southern sector of Aleppo province, and ISIS, from the eastern sector. Al-Nusra managed to score certain victories and to overrun several positions. As a result, Abu Muaviyah received support from ISIS, namely, ten militants from the Turkistan Islamic Party. There was a conflict with al-Nusra during the distribution of trophies. As a result, he left the governorate’s southern sector and, with a group of Turkistan militants, joined ISIS in its eastern sector.

The above-mentioned Mohamed Ali Karim al-Omar and Ahmed Mohamed Ali Humesh worked with the White Helmets. They are cousins of Husein Mohamed Nur Humesh. Abu Muaviyah from ISIS sought help from his cousins in various assaults, especially when there were plans to block the “road of life” to Aleppo (in the direction of Khanaser). Some White Helmet members carried weapons, including pistols and assault rifles. They were escorted by al-Nusra militants. While shelling was being carried out in any area, al-Nusra surrounded it and allowed White Helmets members to operate there alone.



Said Ibrahim al-Masri, 27, a White Helmets employee

This organisation had its centre in my home city of Saqba, and they posted an announcement that they were hiring drivers. The centre was located in a separate three-storey residential building between Saqba and Hammuriyah. The building had shops on the ground floor. The White Helmets occupied it. We had 27 employees, and Mohamed Bashar al-Hafi from Al-Mleha was one of the centre’s chiefs. Hasan al-Huseini and Muayad al-Hafi worked with him. The centre had four ambulances, two fire engines, a bulldozer



The pages of White Helmets members are brimming with photos of weapon-toting people, including themselves, their militant-relatives or images from the propaganda materials of terrorist groups or illegal paramilitary units. Photo: A screenshot of White Helmets employee Mustafa Ali's Facebook page, where he posted these photos.



Screenshot of White Helmets member Khaled Mustafa’s page on Facebook where he posted the propaganda materials of a Jabhat al-Nusra/al-Qaeda division in Syria and Lebanon.

and a small excavator. They paid me \$150 per month, with senior staff receiving \$500–\$600. We were paid \$40 as a substitute for food rations. Among the members of our White Helmets centre was Hasan al-Huseini from Jabhat al-Nusra. Alya al-Din al-Hafi was also from Jabhat al-Nusra. Ahmed al-Kaka was a member of Jaysh al-Islam. There were some other people. Director Abdulbasat Hajirati was a 100 percent radical Islamist. Some of the staff at our centre had their own weapons, including Kalashnikov (AK) assault rifles and pistols. Yasin Dogmush, one of the White Helmets leaders in Eastern Ghouta, issued weapons to several employees. He bought weapons from representatives of paramilitary units and sold them to others.

Husein Talal Hajiko, 18, an employee of the White Helmets headquarters in Eastern Douma

I was one of their service personnel in their directorate for Eastern and Western Ghouta, in Masraba city. I received \$150. The White Helmets division employed a director, an information security chief and managers for the logistics support bureau, the technical support bureau and the financial bureau.



Abdulbasat Hajirati was our director, Mahmud Adam headed the information department; Mansur Abu al-Heir, Hisham Abud and Nizar Abbas worked with him. Chiefs of centres in Eastern Ghouta contacted our headquarters. Hasan al-Huseini headed the logistics support bureau, and Wisam Zabadani worked for the operations department of our White Helmets headquarters. Both of them were affiliated with Jabhat al-Nusra. Ahmed al-Kaka, director of the White Helmets centre in Douma, commanded a Jaysh al-Islam paramilitary unit. People who worked for us were Islamists.



Seif al-Din Hubiya, Douma

Earlier, chief of the White Helmets centre Mohamed Masarwi was a Jaysh al-Islam militant and later he became a White Helmets executive. The White Helmets have always helped Jaysh al-Islam. For example, Jaysh al-Islam received support while fighting against Feilak al-Rahman.

Mohamed Saber, 33, a White Helmets employee in Saqba

Abu Ahmad, who worked with me for the White Helmets, was a Jaysh al-Islam member. Mohamed Masarwi was a militant, too, and he had weapons. Ratib, the chief of a centre with a kindergarten, also carried weapons.



Ahmed Buweidani, 24, a White Helmets employee in Douma

Centre chief Ratib Abdi had weapons, and others carried pistols.

Militants escorted us around the city.

Two or three Jaysh al-Islam members rode in our car.

Abdulkarim Said Ahmad, 23, a White Helmets employee in Kafr Batna

I recall Alya al-Din al-Hafi, a White Helmets employee who worked for Jabhat al-Nusra, and who was a militant. He had weapons, including a pistol and an assault rifle, and he was on duty at our positions.





Screenshot of a page of White Helmets employee Fahat Abu Walid who expressed admiration for Muhammad Zahran Allush, leader of the Jaysh al-Islam coalition of illegal paramilitary units.



Screenshot of a page of White Helmets employee Nader Abu Muhammad who expressed admiration for Muhammad Zahran Allush, leader of the Jaysh al-Islam coalition of illegal paramilitary units; propaganda materials of the Harakat Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya paramilitary group.

Mohamed al-Mustafa ibn Hassun, 48, salesman in Aleppo

The son of Abu Alya, the sheikh of a mosque in Sakhur district, was seen riding in a White Helmets car. On another occasion, he was seen in a pickup lorry with militants. This is one and the same man. One day he would work for the White Helmets, the other for the militants.



Mahmud al-Haj Omar, 33, native of Aleppo, Sakhur district, tailor

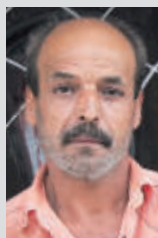
Sometimes I saw Nizar Al Haj and Mohammed Kamel Al Saleh dressed in Syrian Civil Defence uniforms; sometimes they carried weapons. Mohammed Kamel Al Saleh was a famous commander in the Hanano district. He had a red pickup lorry, and he always carried weapons while driving it. I lived in my parents' private home in Sakhur district near the Hairat mosque. Mohammed Kamel Al Saleh also lived in a private house not far from my home (50 metres).

Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka, 44, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo

We cooperated effectively with the militants of Mahmud Afash from the Ahrar Syria group. Some of our White Helmets employees were also militants.

For example, Abudrakhman Afar Turkavi and Lyuei Mashhadi were militants. When they had two to three days' leisure time, they would go to the front and fight there. They told me about this and suggested that I also take part, but I refused. In addition, they offered us \$100 per month for taking part in hostilities. Of course, the head of our White Helmets centre knew about this.





Adnan Isa ibn Abdulatif

Dr Ahmed al-Hatib owned a private outpatient clinic in Douar Nafoura in Sakhur district. The White Helmets seized this outpatient clinic when militants showed up there.

I remember the so-called Omar Sheikhu and his brothers Salekh and Husein were among them. These people worked for White Helmets, also acting as snipers near the Abu al-Kaka mosque.

Zakaria Mustafa, 42, salesman

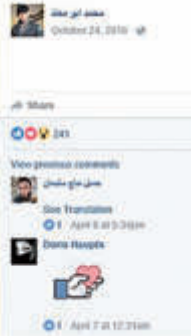
Omar Sheihu Farhodi too was a sniper at the Abu al-Kaka mosque. I saw this with my own eyes.

He openly toted a rifle on Broad Street in our Sakhur district. Everyone in our district knows about this and has seen this with their own eyes. He also arrested me and held me at Seif Mahmud school (where their centre was located) for a week.

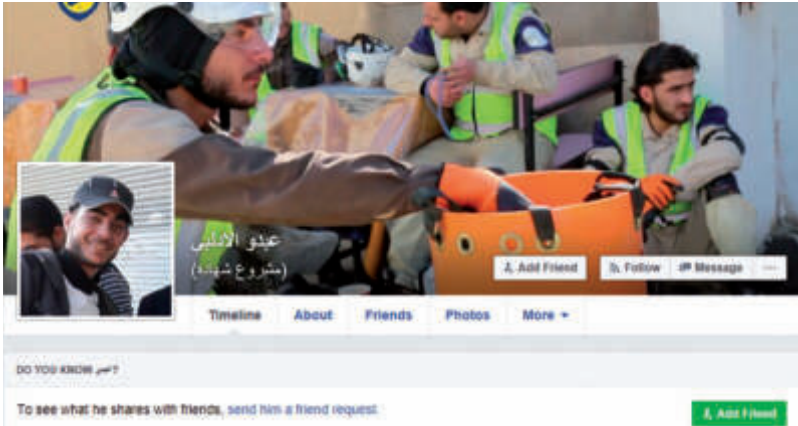
Some local people supporting militants worked for the White Helmets. They also arrested us because they knew that we lived on a street where most people supported the government. People from the Shobak family in the Kafr Naya community were also employed by the White Helmets. They worked for the White Helmets and served with Ahrar al-Sham units.

They controlled a checkpoint in the Bustan al-Qasr district, the only such facility between the militants and the government forces. I found this out when members of the Shobak family arrested me there. They detained me, took me to a basement and started questioning me. I recognised one of them, a White Helmets employee and my brother's neighbour. He was the one who beat me up.





Screenshot of White Helmets member Mohammed Abu Moaz's social media page. Mohammed Abu Moaz expressed his admiration of Zahran Alloush, the leader of the Jaysh al-Islam coalition of illegal armed groups.



Screenshot of White Helmets member from Idlib Abdo Al-Adelby's Facebook page, where he posted images of the Ahrar al-Sham illegal armed group's propaganda materials.

A significant part of the White Helmets employees did not hide their affiliation with and sympathy for terrorists and illegal armed groups.

A brief overview of their social media profiles confirms this fact. For example, White Helmets employees Abu Walid, Mohamed Obaid, Mustafa Ali, Khaled Mustafa, Mohammed Abu Moaz and Abdo Al-Adelby openly published images of propaganda materials of the Jabhat al-Nusra armed group, a branch of al-Qaeda in Syria and Lebanon, Ahrar al-Sham, the Jaysh al-Islam coalition of armed groups and others on their Facebook pages.

Close links between the White Helmets and terrorist organisations were not a secret to US officials. For example, on April 18, 2016, White Helmets leader Raed Saleh was denied entry into the US at an airport in Washington and his visa was revoked. In his comments about the incident, Department of State spokesperson Mark Toner admitted that the White Helmets leader was suspected of connections with extremist groups and posed a threat to national security of the United States.

“Any individual in any group suspected of ties or relations with extremist groups or that we had believed to be a security threat to the United States, we would act accordingly.”

The New York Times wrote the following with regards to the incident: “It was unclear whether Mr. Saleh’s name might have shown up on a database, fed by a variety of intelligence and security agencies and intended to guard against the prospect of terrorism suspects slipping into the country.”

The facts provided by eyewitnesses were verified by a survey conducted in late 2018 among 500 residents of Aleppo from the areas



Photo: Department of State spokesperson Mark Toner, in his answer to the question about the reasons why the White Helmets leader Raed Saleh's visa was cancelled and he was not admitted into the United States, basically admits that the White Helmets leader Raed Saleh is suspected of ties with extremist groups and poses a threat to the US security.

that had been controlled by terrorist and illegal armed groups until their liberation. The survey was conducted by the Foundation for the Study of Democracy together with volunteers of youth organisations in Aleppo on October 6, 2018, in the neighbourhoods earlier occupied by terrorist and illegal armed groups and where the White Helmets operated.

The age and gender composition of the Syrian population was used for sample calculation. The survey was conducted as street interviews of 500 respondents. The respondents were asked to describe both positive and negative aspects of the White Helmets' operation in Aleppo.

The second most common statement by Aleppo residents about the White Helmets was that the organisation was connected with illegal armed groups and terrorist organisations. For example, Aleppo residents expressed the following opinions: “cooperated with the militants,” “provided assistance only to the militants,” “helped the militants,” “were alongside the militants,” “had ties to the armed groups,” “helped the terrorists,” “assisted the terrorists in taking over the area,” “the White Helmets is a terrorist organisation,” etc.

These findings unmistakably indicate that a significant part of the Aleppo residents from the territory earlier controlled by terrorist and illegal armed groups was convinced that the White Helmets had close connection with them.

Syrian witnesses from among former members of the illegal armed groups who worked with the White Helmets estimate that over 50 percent of the White Helmets' budget was spent on funding





Photo: Volunteers of youth organisations interview 500 residents of Aleppo for the Foundation for the Study of Democracy that conducted a public opinion poll in the city areas earlier controlled by terrorist and illegal armed groups and where the White Helmets operated.

terrorist groups while former representatives of the terrorist groups confirm continuous financial transactions between them and the White Helmets.

Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib, an opposition journalist who worked with the organisation, describes in details how terrorist groups were financed from the White Helmets budget and stresses that senior officials of the latter were very well aware of it.

Former member of the Jaysh al-Islam group Bashar Kuteifani said that every week he personally conducted financial transactions between Jaysh al-Islam and the White Helmets.



Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib, opposition journalist who worked with the White Helmets

Overall, it can be stated that some 60 to 65 percent of the money allocated for the White Helmets was spent on financing illegal armed groups. This money was intended as a monthly salary for the employees who were in fact militants, or to cover technical expenses such as diesel fuel for the White Helmets. The armed groups bought it at 50 cents per litre and sold it to the White Helmets for \$8.

Each group specialised in a specific sector. For example, Jabhat al-Nusra supplied electrical appliances, Fajr al-Umma Brigade in Harasta supplied diesel fuel; Jaysh al-Islam specialised in supplying other necessities. This is how the militants managed to obtain millions of litres at 50 cents each and sold the fuel to the White Helmets for \$8 per litre.

If we needed tyres for vehicles they would sell them to the White Helmets for \$300 to \$400 while a tyre cost only \$50 in Damascus; Jaysh al-Islam

would earn the margin. A large amount of the money allocated for the White Helmets was spent on financing the armed groups under specific projects. For example, it was spent on reinforcing and fortifying the militants' defence positions before a Syrian army offensive. The White Helmets was allocated almost \$800,000 on digging a flooded ditch to stop the Syrian Arab Army offensive. The groups had their representatives in the White Helmets centres.

These groups needed money to pay their subordinates. They would assess the amount required for the centre's operation and take the remaining funds. The centres operated under their control. The money allocated for a water pump in Harasta (\$65,000) was taken by

Fajr al-Umma Brigade to finance the battle to liberate its mechanised command. Both the senior officials and sponsors of the White Helmets were aware of that. Nobody even tried to hide it.

Bashar Kuteifani, former Jaysh al-Islam member

I was with Jaysh al-Islam for four years and was in charge of exchanging money. We bought dollars at a rate lower than the rate at which we sold them. Nuuman al-Ajwa got that job for me. He was responsible for financial matters in Jaysh al-Islam that controlled the White Helmets here.

There was a man called Tariq Dogmush in the White Helmets centre; he would come to us to resolve financial matters.

Then he was replaced by Mohamed Bagdadi. After Mohamed Bagdadi it was Mohamed Masarwi Abu Salyam. I worked with each of them on the order from Nuuman al-Ajwa. We met about once a week.



White Helmets members from various cities and former fighters shared detailed information and indicated specific locations where

the organisation provided engineering support to terrorist and illegal armed groups on a regular basis in order to strengthen their battlefield positions. These included: White Helmets Suleiman Mohamed Darwish and Mohamed Saber in the city of Saqba; Omran Makia and Ahmed Buweidani in Douma; Abdulkarim Said Ahmad in Kafr Batna; Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka and Mohamed Bahar al-Shihadi ibn Fronzi in Aleppo and others, who took part in strengthening Jabhat al-Nusra's positions. They erected earth ramparts for Jaysh al-Islam, an al-Qaeda affiliate, in Mesraba, strengthened positions in Hawsh as Salihyah, Otaya, Al Rayhan and al-Shifunya, and helped fighters from the Faylaq al-Rahman group organise their positions in Beit Sawa, Jisreen and Aftaris, dug a 30 km moat, four metres wide, from Beit Naim to Maida, and dug tunnels for Jaysh al-Islam in Douma. Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed confirmed that he saw with his own eyes bulldozers labelled with the organisation's emblems from White Helmets' centres in Um al-Karamel, Tall Al-Daman and Sumairiya erecting a rampart more than 15 km long between Tall Al Hatabat and Um al-Karamel.

Similarly, White Helmets centres were in charge of ensuring water supply for terrorist and illegal armed groups. Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka, a White Helmets employee from Aleppo, provided concrete addresses where fighters were located, saying that together with other employees of the organisation he used to load water into vehicles at the water tower and deliver it to the deployment areas of fighters and the homes of their commanders.

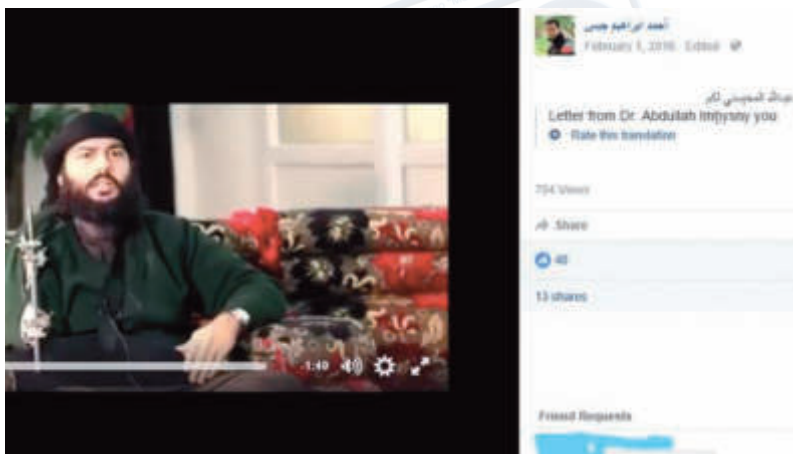


Screenshot of a White Helmets member, Faisal Ruslan, who posted on Facebook photos of propaganda materials glorifying suicide bombers and content from Jabhat Fateh al-Sham terrorist group, a rebranded version of al-Qaeda.

The White Helmets engaged in this kind of activity on a regular basis and did nothing to conceal their actions. For example, Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed pointed out that “White Helmets’ staff had this notion of serving shifts on the operating sites of fighters.” Another White Helmet, Ahmed Buweidani, said: “We erected earth ramparts, dug trenches and transported fighters, as well as weapons and munitions for the fighters.” Multiple evidence of this kind proves without any ambiguity that the White Helmets were widely and routinely involved in providing engineering support for terrorist and illegal armed groups. They used bulldozers provided by the United States through USAID for strengthening the positions of terrorist and illegal armed groups. It is important to note that they did not seek to conceal in any way activities related to providing engineering support to the terrorist and illegal armed groups or delivering supplies to them. For example, an opposition journalist, Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib, said: “I saw with my own eyes vehicles with White Helmets logos on them help fortify the positions held by fighters. You can ask any civilian, since everyone saw them at work. The White Helmets helped armed groups open roads, while blocking them and building earth ramparts to hinder the advance of the Syrian army.”

Saif al-Din Hubiya, a doctor from Douma

The White Helmets and Jaysh al-Islam fighters helped each other in everything they did. For example, Jaysh al-Islam provided security for the White Helmets’ centre, and placed its missiles there, and when Jaysh



Screenshot of a Facebook account belonging to Ahmed Ibrahim, a White Helmets member, who used social media to openly promote Abdullah al-Muhaysini, a well-known terrorist recruiter linked to al-Qaeda who was involved in establishing ties between ISIS, al-Nusra Front and Ahrar al-Sham, and called for killing Alawites. He was designated on a sanctions list by the US Department of State for raising funds for terrorists in Syria.

al-Islam had to fight the Syrian army or Faylaq al-Rahman, the White Helmets helped them providing bulldozers, fire engines and ambulances. They provided any kind of assistance they could.

Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed, 41, small business owner in Aleppo

The White Helmets handled all matters related to food and water supply to the fighters on the frontlines.

**Ahmed Buweidani, 24, Ahmed Buweidani, 24,
a White Helmets employee in Douma**

In our centre in Douma we had 35 people, three minibuses, an equipped ambulance, two bulldozers and two garbage removal trucks. We erected earth ramparts, dug trenches, transported fighters, as well as weapons and munitions for them. For example, we dug trenches in Mesraba and al-Shifunya, built an earth rampart there and transported fighters.



**Suleiman Mohamed Darwish, 35, a White Helmets
employee in Saqba**

I joined the White Helmets through a man named Yasin Dogmush al-Bashir. We are both from Al-Mleha. I was in charge of vehicles at the Saqba centre. It was located in a three-storey residential building in the Al-Jozy neighbourhood. At the helm of the centre stood Mohammed Abdulkarim al-Hafi, who had a staff of 30–35 people.

We had two minibuses that were used as ambulances. We also had two fire engines and a bulldozer. The Faylaq al-Rahman group used this building as a workshop for making mortar shells before giving it to the White

Helmets. Faylaq al-Rahman used our bulldozer for fortifying its positions in Beit Sawa, Jisreen and Aftaris.



Saif al-Din Hubiya, a doctor from Douma

The White Helmets and Jaysh al-Islam fighters helped each other in everything they did. For example, Jaysh al-Islam provided security for the White Helmets centre, and placed its missiles there, and when Jaysh al-Islam had to fight the Syrian army or Faylaq al-Rahman, the White Helmets helped with bulldozers, fire engines and ambulances.

They provided any kind of assistance they could. When Jaysh al-Islam fought against Faylaq al-Rahman, the White Helmets helped build earth ramparts with bulldozers in Mesraba. This rampart stretched from Mesraba to Madyara.

Mohamed Saber, 33, a White Helmets employee in Saqba

The White Helmets centre No. 400 was located in a building commanded by Bashar al-Hafi from Al-Mleha. There were two fire engines, a minibus, one bulldozer and 20 to 25 people in the centre. The centre No. 200 was located in a kindergarten, and the White Helmets centre in Al Rayhan was located in a clinic. All cars we had were used to transport Jaysh al-Islam fighters to the frontline whenever there was combat action there. If a vehicle broke down, it was always said that it was damaged by the Syrian army and needed repairs. We used our bulldozer to strengthen the positions of fighters and to build earth ramparts. The White Helmets also helped dig tunnels. We helped fighters strengthen their positions in Hawsh as Salihyah, Otaya, Al Rayhan, al-Shifunya and Mesraba.



Omran Makia, 21, a White Helmets employee in Douma



The White Helmets helped transport fighters and fortify their positions using bulldozers and other equipment. We dug trenches around Douma, near al-Shifunya and Mesraba. When Jaysh al-Islam fought against someone, they would be accompanied by the White Helmets who were on standby in case there were any wounded. We also delivered food to the families of fighters.



Mohamed Abu Aisha, 22, a former Jaysh al-Islam member

I was a Jaysh al-Islam member for four years. Jaysh al-Islam worked with the White Helmets. If we needed any help, we called them, and they helped us with heavy equipment, bulldozers.

For example, they performed earthworks and dug trenches in Al Rayhan. There were all kinds of earth ramparts. They could be 50, 100, 200 or 300 metres long, and 2 metres high.

Said Ibrahim al-Masri, 27, a White Helmets employee



Fifty metres from the White Helmets centre, there was the Faylaq al-Rahman battalion. The centre helped by providing equipment for digging tunnels, and also helped Jabhat al-Nusra and Jaysh al-Islam dig tunnels between al-Shifunya and our centre, or the frontline.

Our branch provided a bulldozer and diesel fuel so that their vehicles could take their people to the combat line.



Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib, 31, opposition journalist who worked with the White Helmets

The White Helmets equipped an opposition stronghold against the Syrian Army. The main barrier used was a water-filled moat, four metres wide and 30–35 kilometres long, stretching from Beit Naim to Maida.

It was constructed by the White Helmets. With my own eyes, I saw the equipment, bearing the logos of the White Helmets, being used to fortify the militants' positions, both bulldozers and personnel.

You can ask any other civilian — everyone saw them at work. I personally witnessed the White Helmets' vehicles blocking the main roads before the Syrian Army offensive and how defensive earth ramparts were built in Al-Marj, Otaya and other districts.

When Jaysh al-Islam and other groups planned to assault the Syrian Army in Harasta, where an armoured vehicles command was deployed, the White Helmets helped those groups by opening the roads.

They blocked the roads to prevent the offensive of the Syrian army, erected earth ramparts. They organised several positions for illegal armed groups in Al Mohammediyah.

The White Helmets dug tunnels in the Douma area. Diesel fuel and other material resources were provided by the White Helmets. They were also engaged in building all the tunnels in Eastern Ghouta, there were about 150 of them.

Abdul Karim Said Ahmed, 23, a White Helmets employee in Kafr Batna

I worked as a photographer in the White Helmets centre No.215 in Kafr Batna. The leaders there were Bahjat Dogmush and Yasin Dogmush. Yassin Dogmush is a co-founder of the White Helmets. A four-storey residential



building was used to accommodate the centre. We had 35 employees, three ambulances, two fire engines, two bulldozers and two cranes. We helped militants to organise positions in Al Mohammediyah. We erected defensive earth ramparts and also dug tunnels.

We delivered diesel fuel to the Ahrar al-Sham fighters. We delivered it in evacuation vehicles which had a special tank installed.

Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed, 41, small business owner

The White Helmets had on-station duty, i.e., they went on duty with the militants. They were responsible for food and water deliveries to the frontline. I saw for myself the White Helmets equipment being used to fortify combat positions for the militants.

The equipment from the Um Al-Karameel, Tall Al-Daman and Al-Sumairiya centres was used in building positions in Jabal al-Huss, where they erected a rampart over 15 kilometres long. The rampart stretched from Tall Al Hatabat to Um Al-Karamel. I live in that area. We could see everything. We saw the work being carried out. The rampart is still there.



Ali Mohamed al-Mardini, 28, former Jaysh al-Islam member

The White Helmets helped us with defensive barrier works on the fronts where Jaysh al-Islam fought. I witnessed it myself. They helped us with defences in Al Rayhan, al-Shifunya, Tall Kurdi, Hawash Al Fara, Hawash al-Dawahra, Adra, and in Karm al-Rasas in Douma.

Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka, 44, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo



We filled tanks with water from a water tower and carried it to the militants' positions and their leaders' homes. I drove a special fire engine. We transported water to the leaders' private residences in Bab al-Nairab, Bab al-Hadid and Al-Maadi. We also brought water to Hael Shallami, the leader in the northern regions. I also got an order from so-called Bibars Mashaala, the head of the White Helmets centre in Bab al-Nairab, to deliver water to fill the tanks on the roof of the main communications centre of the illegal armed groups in Aleppo.



Mohamed Bahar al-Shihadi ibn Fronzi, 23, a White Helmets employee

The militants always had the White Helmets' support in fortification fieldworks and in the supply of drinking water for the personnel in our fire engines. Inside the centre, 10–15 people remained on duty while the others went on missions, carrying out fortification works and organising positions. They often went out at night and worked for three to four hours, coming back very dirty. They frequently had to fill sandbags and carry them to the battlefield positions.

Former White Helmets members and local residents in the areas controlled by terrorists and illegal armed groups report how the organisation gave priority to the militants and their families when distributing humanitarian aid and food. Since the militants were usually fed by their families, the food given to them was sort of supply programme. Numerous eyewitness reports confirm that

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Emergency responders clear rubble with Syria Regional Program-provided heavy machinery following a regime attack in Maaret Nauman, Idlib, in November 2024.

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Photo: A bulldozer provided to the White Helmets under the USAID programme. Former members of the terrorist and illegal armed groups say that bulldozers were used to fortify their positions. White Helmets personnel, too, confirm that they regularly used bulldozers and similar equipment to reinforce the militants' positions.

in fact the White Helmets was an entity that systematically provided food to members of the terrorist and illegal armed groups. Meanwhile, they deliberately refused to help those whose relatives were loyal to the Syrian government. Besides, the White Helmets also provided material help to the families of militants who had been killed.



Ali Fuad Abu Kayaz, 24, a former member of the Free Syrian Army illegal armed group

The White Helmets who came from Jordan gave a lot of assistance to Jabhat al-Nusra. They supported it whereas others got no support at all. Other White Helmets members

worked with the Free Syrian Army. We needed equipment but they would not give it for free, we gave them fuel in exchange. The equipment was used to fortify positions, in particular, to erect a defensive earth rampart along the road.



Kamal Kakush, 41, a White Helmets employee in Douma

I worked with the White Helmets as a fire engine driver and excavator operator. There were no other jobs. Each month, I was paid a 50-dollar salary. Jaysh al-Islam asked our centre for equipment to fortify a position around the headquarters. I dug trenches. A few years ago we were ordered to take the excavator to Point 66. It was during a ceasefire, however, we were visited by journalists who started filming a propaganda video about alleged bombing by the Syrian army.

Ratim Akrad, 26, a former member of the Free Syrian Army

The White Helmets carried pistols and assault rifles. The nearest White Helmets centre was in Labha school. Schoolchildren were forbidden to attend classes because the school served as a storage facility for the equipment.



The centre had ties with Jabhat al-Nusra and Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham who demanded equipment supply.

Muhannad Hilial Zatima, 43, a White Helmets employee in Sakhna

I was a Free Syrian Army fighter, then I joined the White Helmets, following in the footsteps of other fighters. The lists of those willing to work in the organisation were sent to Jordan where they were endorsed.

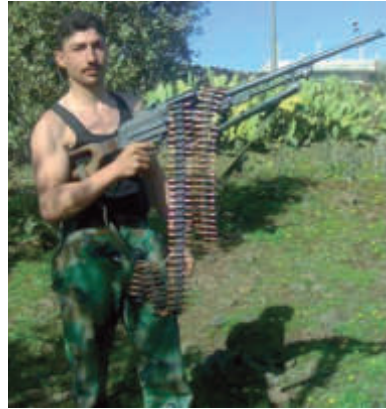


Photo: A White Helmets member who was also a militant in an illegal armed group and openly posted photos with guns.

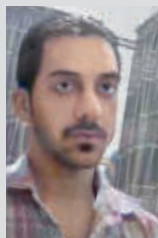
The White Helmets paid higher wages than the Free Syrian Army. We had to go to the frontline. We got commands to help the Free Syrian Army from abroad.

The White Helmets were building earth ramparts for the Free Syrian Army throughout the whole province.

Obviously, the White Helmets lied when they claimed that the distribution of aid was not linked to the acceptance or approval of certain political views.

Mohamed Bashir Berim of the White Helmets said that they delivered humanitarian aid according to a list they received, giving details of militants and their families. Aleppo resident Ahmad Al-Haj Omar says that he personally saw the White Helmets giving food aid to militants' families while denying it to other civilians. Mohammed Nasser Zaher bin Mahmoud also reports that the militants' families

had an absolute priority when food aid was distributed, other civilians were given an insignificant amount of aid while those who were well-disposed towards the Syrian government were given none. This is corroborated by Zakaria Mustafa from Aleppo. Said Ibrahim al Masri of the White Helmets also confirms that the White Helmets provided material assistance to the families of the militants who had been killed.



Mohamed Bashir Berim, 23, a White Helmets employee

We gave humanitarian aid first and foremost to the militants and their families. We used to get the cargo and then delivered the aid according to a list. With the White Helmets logo, the militants would let us go anywhere.

Ahmad Al-Haj Omar, 40, former mobile phone shop owner

I used to live in Aleppo's Sakhur district. I never saw them distribute humanitarian aid to civilians but I saw them deliver it to militants' families. Everyone in our area knew where the militants and their families lived.

I personally saw how the White Helmets work — they rendered help to militants and their families while neglecting other civilians.



Ahmed Buweidani, 24, a White Helmets employee in Douma

Our centre distributed humanitarian aid to Jaysh al-Islam fighters' families. We even had their relatives come to us saying, for example, "My son was on the frontline, he is fighting there," and we gave them food.



Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka, 44, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo

Humanitarian aid was normally given to the population only for the purpose of making videos. I once saw 25 boxes given away. We carried out such activities and they were filmed to create an image of the White Helmets as a charitable organisation. This was the idea of Omar Salmo, the White Helmets director in Aleppo. He often came to our centre.

Mohammad Kheir Daqneesh, Omran Daqneesh's father, Aleppo

I lived in Aleppo from 2012 until its liberation. Neither I nor my children ever got any help from the White Helmets during that time. We got neither humanitarian aid nor medical assistance. I met this organisation's members only during an accident involving my child, when a building collapsed.



Radwan Hoseira ibn Husein, 39, construction worker

The White Helmets were giving aid to their ilk while we were starving. On a rare occasion, they would arrive in a lorry and give away boxes of food while filming it. But they primarily gave it to militants' families.

Said Ibrahim al-Masri, 27, a White Helmets employee

We helped families of the militants who had been killed, giving them \$500 every three months. The funds were coming from Great Britain.

Khalid Farah, a member of the organisation, says in the Oscar-winning film *The White Helmets*, “Whenever I’m on a rescue, I try as hard as possible to save every person under the rubble[...]. I consider

them all to be my family.” Syrian witnesses prove this statement is a lie. In reality, the White Helmets only helped the injured if they shared their ideology opposing the Syrian government. Often, the organisation’s personnel would restrict themselves to filming, then depart without helping the victims. Thus, Mohamed Said Hourri ben Mohamed Barakat from Aleppo reports that after a strike on civilians by Jabhat al-Nusra, the White Helmets arrived but “did not help anyone, did not save anybody, they took gold and money from the people,” while Zakaria Mustafa from Aleppo says that “the organisation never gave humanitarian aid to the residents living in their neighbourhood because their views on the Syrian government differed from those accepted by the White Helmets which prescribed standing up to the official authorities.”

Zakaria Mustafa, 42, salesman

A shell hit my cousin Mustafa Hasan’s house in Sheikh Khader district. The house collapsed, and ten minutes afterwards the White Helmets arrived. After they came to the site and learnt that his son was in the Syrian army, they refused to help him and went away. Most of the residents in our street were accused of being loyal to the authorities, and such people were never given humanitarian aid. It was Omar Sheikhu’s prerogative. He was with the White Helmets and also a sniper at the Al Ala’a al-Hadrami mosque.



Mohammed Nasser Zaher bin Mahmoud, 46, a tobacco factory worker

I saw how the White Helmets carried out their humanitarian work: they would gather people together, hand out 10–15 humanitarian aid packages,



Photo: Khalid Farah of the White Helmets says in the eponymous film, “Whenever I’m on a rescue, I try as hard as possible to save every person under the rubble[...]. I consider them all to be my family.” Numerous eyewitness reports prove his statement is a lie—in many cases the White Helmets members only made videos without saving people.



make a video and leave. I saw them hand out food in the “triangle” in the neighbourhood of Hulluk. The food was usually given to militants’ children, their family members, they made staged videos as if the food was being given to civilians, and after that they would leave. Ordinary people were given very little, a lot was given to the White Helmets collaborators and families of the militants. Nothing was given to those who supported the official authorities. The White Helmets were given lists to determine who would be given aid and who wouldn’t. Ordinary residents were sometimes given a low-cost package with rice, buckwheat, lentils, cereals, whereas militants’ families were handed out boxes which also contained jam, butter, sunflower oil, various tinned foods. The boxes had a red cross

on them. When the militants were totally encircled, ordinary people were not given anything at all, only the militants were provided with food. And when the government troops entered the district they found warehouses full of various foods while the people were suffering.

The real behaviour of the White Helmets is in total contrast to the civil defence volunteers' code of conduct as depicted in the Western media: "We will not tie the promise, delivery or distribution of assistance to the embracing or acceptance of a particular political or religious creed because our work comes from our values and principles." In the film devoted to the organisation, Mahmoud Alloush "Abu Omar," head of the White Helmets centre in the Ansari district of Aleppo, says: "Any human being, no matter who they are or which side they're on, if they need our help... it's our duty to save them." Evidence from former White Helmets and from victims in different areas of Syria give rise to the unequivocal conclusion that the White Helmets violated these principles regularly and systematically, while the statement of their centre's leader is a blatant lie. Recall that the centre was located in a girls' school seized by the White Helmets who then prohibited the girls and their teachers from continuing lessons, suggesting that they should receive only religious education, in mosques. The facts also confirm the falsehood of the statements that the White Helmets were acting "neutrally and impartially."

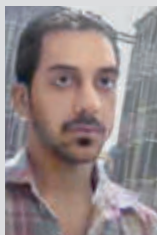
Numerous witnesses from among the former White Helmets and Syrian civilians also report that terrorist groups and illegal armed units were given priority treatment when the White Helmets conducted evacuations. In addition, the hospitals cooperating with



Top photo: A still from the Oscar-winning documentary *The White Helmets* featuring the White Helmets centre in Ansari district, Aleppo.

Lower photo: A still from a BBC video featuring the White Helmets centre in Ansari district, Aleppo. It is easy to spot the armed guards near the building but they were not filmed by the creators of the Oscar-winning documentary.

the White Helmets often refused to treat civilians because they worked exclusively for rendering medical services to the militants. For example, Mohamed Bashir Berim of the White Helmets said that when his father was wounded during shelling, he took him to a hospital cooperating with the White Helmets and his father was refused treatment on the grounds that he was not a militant. Aleppo resident Zakaria Mustafa reported that the White Helmets personnel refused to help a victim because his son served in the Syrian army. Former Jaysh al-Islam member Ali Mohamed al-Mardini said that “during the battle of Douma, there was an exchange of fire. The White Helmets abandoned civilians who were in the city and went to assist the militants.” Another witness, Aiman al-Haj Omar ibn Ibrahim, testifies that “under fire the White Helmets would rush to save the militants and were not in a hurry to help civilians. I saw this when my neighbourhood was being shelled.” In fact, the White Helmets centres provided primary medical assistance on a regular basis to the various illegal armed units and terrorist groups.



Mohamed Bashir Berim, 23, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo

A shell hit the street where my dad’s shop was. I went there on my own and took him to Albayan Hospital, which worked with the White Helmets. The doctors refused to help him, because he was not a militant, and he died from heavy bleeding. When a Jabhat al-Nusra member was injured in a motorcycle accident, I was tasked to take him to Albayan Hospital in Alshalah district. I had to wait for him to be treated, and then to take

him home. Once, I was tasked to evacuate wounded militants after the Syrian army attacked their headquarters. We took them to a clinic in the Hanano district.

Said Ibrahim al-Masri, 27, a White Helmets employee in Saqba

We mostly helped militants, especially during a clash between Faylaq Alrahmun and Jaysh al-Islam. First, we took the militants, and then returned for the civilians.



Ali Mohamed al-Mardini, 28, former Jaysh al-Islam member

White Helmets have always participated in evacuating the wounded and the dead from the battlefield, even during infighting between the militants. The militants were their priority. During the battle of Douma, the militants were shelling each other, so they abandoned wounded civilians who came under fire in the town, and went to rescue the militants. In the most recent skirmish for the tank automotive command, the White Helmets' post 200 was located in Harasta. There were wounded civilians in town, but the White Helmets left them and went to the frontline for wounded militants. The civilians had to use pushchairs to transport their wounded.

Ahmed al-Haj Omar, native of Aleppo, 40, former mobile phone shop owner

I started working with the White Helmets in June 2016. I was introduced to them by Mohammed Hialal, who was already working for them. He was an ambulance driver.



I worked as an assistant driver and evacuated people from field hospitals to Turkey using Syrian Civil Defence vehicles. Our escort included people such as Abu Omar, Abu Hanifa and Abu Mu'tasim. They accompanied us during the evacuation of wounded militants to Turkey and paid us money. These are all code names. I made eight such trips. Usually, we took one man and one escort. Occasionally, we had two people to evacuate. There always was a helper to assist me. The White Helmets always gave priority to the militants. Occasionally, they would evacuate civilians as well. However, their focus was on militants, not civilians. I was paid \$200 dollars per trip, and once, when we transported one of the main militants, who was in serious condition, they paid me \$400. I don't know what his real name was. His code name was El Sheikh. Most often, we picked them up at the field hospital in the Sakhur district and Albayan Hospital in the al-Shaar district.



Mohammed Hajouh bin Abdul Razzaq, 41, small business owner

First, Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, Halabi and Alhut arrived in our Hulluk district followed by the White Helmets. Their headquarters were located in the al-Shaar district. They acted as first responders in our area during shelling. They looked like rescue workers to the public, but their efforts were primarily focused on rescuing militants.

Aiman al-Haj Omar ibn Ibrahim, 27, tailor

No one trusts the White Helmets. Everyone knew their main goal was to provide for the militants. Whenever the area was shelled, they rescued the militants, and never were in a hurry to help the civilians. I saw this during shelling in my district.



Abdul Razak Na'asan bin Mohammed, 45

Rescue operations and medical help were always provided to the militants first.



Ahmed Buweidani, 24, a White Helmets employee centre in Douma

When Jaysh al-Islam militants participated in hostilities, they were ordered to take off their military uniforms so that they look like civilians when they were getting medical help. They were filmed. Even when the militants wore military

uniform, they immediately changed clothes when we came. One of our men always carried around a camera. It is not a secret that the White Helmets centres were almost always located in close proximity to the headquarters of the terrorist and illegal armed groups. In a number of cases, they were located in a building right next door. For example, Mohamed Rajih and Mohammed al-Mustafa bin Hassoun from Aleppo say the White Helmets centre was located on the other side of the wall of the premises that housed al-Qaeda's offshoot Jabhat al-Nusra in a building which they used as a prison. Another centre of that organisation was located close to Mohammed Saif Mahmoud school, where militants were stationed. In the town of Douma, special tunnels several hundred metres long were dug between the White Helmets centres and the militants' headquarters so that they could quietly move between them.

Mohamed al-Mustafa ibn Hassun, 48, salesman in Aleppo

There were Al-Tawhid Brigade, Nour al-Din al-Zanki, Ahrar al-Sham, Jabhat al-Nusra and others in our district of Aleppo. I lived in the Sakhur district, next to the Mohamed Saif Mahmoud school which housed the White Helmets headquarters. Other centres were located in the Mustafa



Badawi school and the local Red Crescent outpatient centre. The Mohamed Saif Mahmoud school sits next to the Al-Mutanabi Park on the way to Hanano, and Mustafa Badawi school is located next to the Red Crescent outpatient centre and the Khalid ibn al-Walid mosque. The militants were stationed right next to them. For example, there was a base of the so-called Ali Hisham near Mohamed Saif Mahmoud school. He was an Al-Tawhid Brigade commander and then moved to Nour al-Din al-Zanki. The Wafa Al Arabi school was used by illegal armed groups to store medical supplies and ammunition.



Mohamed Rajih ibn Hasan, 49, muezzin at the Al-Tuabin Mosque, Tell Sahur District in Aleppo

School books were stored across from the White Helmets centre on the other side the schoolyard wall which was used by al-Nusra as a mortar pit to shell our city, and shells fell on our neighbourhoods. The militants burned the books, and turned the storage site into a prison where people were beaten up. The White Helmets were aware of this and provided assistance to al-Nusra. It is well known that the White Helmets enjoyed full freedom of operation and movement in the areas controlled by terrorist and illegal armed groups. Vehicles marked as White Helmets were never stopped for searches, and its employees had special papers giving them the right of free passage.

Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka, 44, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo

Our vehicle had the White Helmets sign. I had a pass which said “Free Syrian Civil Defence,” so the militants never stopped us. This pass allowed us to move freely across Aleppo. If we drove a car, nobody stopped us. If we were on foot and without uniform, then we had to present a pass.



The White Helmets centres were used to provide partial financing of the terrorist organisations and illegal armed groups which provided the full range of engineering, food and even some medical support. However, the White Helmets did more in the interest of the armed groups. Syrian witnesses provided a detailed account of how the White Helmets helped hunt down Jaysh al-Islam's enemies in Eastern Ghouta, organised beatings and escort Syrian army prisoners to prison, took part in organising executions of the civilians, used threats to recruit agents to gather intelligence on Syrian troops for the benefit of terrorist groups and paramilitary units, detained and transferred to the armed groups people who allegedly passed information about the location of the militants' sites and headquarters, after which these people were killed, and organised the supply of medical supplies, weapons and ammunition across the border using vehicles with their emblem.

For example, former member of Jaysh al-Islam Ali Mohamed al-Mardini says the White Helmets provided their minibus and uniforms to Abu Safian — his real name is Saadu Al-Ghazzawi — and his militants to allow them to carry out, unhindered, operations to hunt down and kill Jaysh al-Islam's enemies in Eastern Ghouta.

Omar al-Alush ibn Mohamed says it was the White Helmets who found the man who had allegedly provided information about where militants' facilities and control centres were located and handed him over to the illegal armed group Ahrar al-Sham who shot and killed him. Mahmud al-Haj Omar from Aleppo



Left: The White Helmets centre in the city of Douma. The Jaysh al-Islam headquarters is located to the right of it across from the wall. Right: A doctor from the city of Douma, Seif al-Din Hubiya, shows to Director of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy Maxim Grigoriev an entrance to the underground tunnel at the White Helmets centre, which leads to the nearest Jaysh al-Islam headquarters. The tunnel for the White Helmets was dug by hostages, who were then shot to death by the Jaysh al-Islam militants.



Left: The White Helmets headquarters in the city of Douma and the Jaysh al-Islam headquarters. Right: a view of the White Helmets headquarters from the courtyard of Jaysh al-Islam headquarters.

provides the details of how White Helmets employees, Nizar al-Haj and Ahmed ibn Yusef, intimidated him into taking photos of the Syrian troops' roadblocks and later, after he carried out, on their instructions, several reconnaissance operations and fled to the area controlled by the government forces, took revenge on him by burning his home. Ahmed al-Haj Omar says he was instructed by the White Helmets to carry weapons and ammunition across the border. An opposition journalist who worked with the White Helmets, Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib, says he saw armed groups hand over Syrian Army soldiers they had captured to the White Helmets, who beat and took them to the Baton prison. Obviously, by carrying out these activities, the White Helmets, in reality, drew no distinction between themselves and the terrorists or illegal armed groups, and their statements about their organisation's impartiality were false.



Ali Mohamed al-Mardini, 28, former Jaysh al-Islam member

I joined Jaysh al-Islam. We were based in Douma, in the Al-Daria neighbourhood. The Jaysh al-Islam security unit led by Abu Safian — his real name is Saadu Al-Ghazzawi — maintained very close relations with the White Helmets' information service. Saadu Al-Ghazzawi was responsible for the battalion that was involved in killing the enemies of Jaysh al-Islam in Eastern Ghouta. When he received orders to take out some of the militants from al-Nusra or Feilak al-Rahman, he and his men would put the White Helmets uniform on and use a White Helmets minibus. People at the organisation knew about this quite well.



Left: Director of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy Maxim Grigoriev coming out of an underground tunnel connecting the White Helmets headquarters and the nearby headquarters of Jaysh al-Islam militants. Right: Jaysh al-Islam militants' headquarters.

Ahmed al-Haj Omar, 40, native of Aleppo, former mobile phone shop owner

I assisted drivers working for the White Helmets, who used Syrian Civil Defence vehicles to evacuate people from field hospitals to Turkey. Militants were given priority. We used these vehicles to bring back weapons and ammunition from Turkey. We drove via the Bab al-Salyma border crossing. The vehicles were loaded in Turkey on the outskirts of the city of Azaz.



Mahmud al-Haj Omar, 33, native of Aleppo, Sakhur district, tailor

Nizar al-Haj and Ahmed ibn Yusef, who worked for the White Helmets, visited me and asked me to go to the area in Aleppo that was controlled by the government troops and take photos of the army's roadblocks.



They said I was a neutral person, had done nothing useful for them — was not carrying weapons and was not fighting with them — and it was time I did something for their benefit...

Militants Mohamed Kamal al-Saleh and Yaser al-Saleh from Liwa al-Tawhid also put pressure on me to get me to agree. I was aware of the consequences, should I refuse. There were incidents when they drove people out of their homes, forced themselves upon the women and daughters and the like. I provided information to Ahmed ibn Yusef and Nizar al-Haj. Nizar al-Haj was the higher up of the two. They, in turn, passed this information to sheikhs and group leaders. I received \$50 when I did my first job, which was to find out how many people were at a roadblock and identify the location of roadblocks in the city. My second job was the same and I was also paid \$50, and my third job was the same and again I was paid \$50. The fourth time, instead of payment, I was given a nice smartphone with good features. They paid me \$200 for the photos of roadblocks. But I gave them fake photos and together with my family I fled to the area controlled by the Syrian government.

Note that the Code of Conduct released by the White Helmets in 2014 contains the following statement: “We will never knowingly — or through negligence — allow ourselves, or our volunteers, to be used to gather information of a political, military or economically sensitive nature for bodies or entities that may serve purposes other than those which are strictly humanitarian and related to saving civilian lives.” Like the majority of other principles they have declared, their professed commitment not to allow the organisation to be used to gather information was a lie and had nothing to do with how the White Helmets were actually operating.

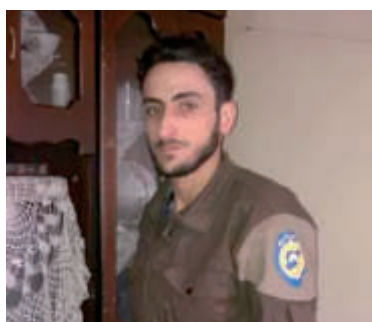


Above: The White Helmets website and the organisation’s motto: “We act neutrally, impartially and for all Syrians.” The numerous testimonies provided above prove that this statement is a lie.

Below: A video posted on the internet in which White Helmets employees pose atop dead Syrian Army soldiers.

Based on these principles, the White Helmets organisation declared that it was neutral and impartial, was not affiliated with any group and served all Syrian people regardless of what side they took in the conflict. The organisation's motto is posted on the White Helmets website <http://syriacivildefense.org/>: "We act neutrally, impartially and for all Syrians." The About Us section of the website contains the following statement: "We do not pledge allegiance to any political party or group." The above information proves that the principles declared by the White Helmets were false, as the organisation's centres in fact reported to terrorist and illegal armed groups, who regularly carried out engineering work at their combat positions, supplied militants with food, provided basic medical treatment if needed and in some cases carried out reconnaissance of Syrian troops' positions and oversaw the delivery of weapons across the border. These activities were carried out almost openly and people living in the areas controlled by terrorist groups, as well as a wider audience were well aware of them.

For example, speaking on March 16, 2017, Abu Jaber, the leader of the terrorist coalition Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, whose main driving force is Jabhat al-Nusra, a branch of the terrorist organisation al-Qaeda in Syria and Lebanon, openly said, referring to the White Helmets: "A message of thanks and gratitude to the hidden soldiers of our revolution. On top of the list are the parents of the martyrs and the men of the White Helmets." There is no doubt Abu Jaber is connected to al-Qaeda, as in 2003 through 2005 the man fought on the side of al-Qaeda in Iraq.



Many White Helmets employees did not conceal that they were militants from illegal armed groups and openly posted photos of themselves with weapons on Facebook.



Screenshot from an appeal by the leader of the terrorist coalition Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, whose main driving force is Jabhat al-Nusra, a branch of the terrorist organisation al-Qaeda in Syria and Lebanon. Abu Jaber, who back in 2003 fought on the side of al-Qaeda in Iraq, openly calls the White Helmets employees “the hidden soldiers of our revolution”.



A document forwarded by the security division of the illegal armed group Jabhat al-Islamia to the White Helmets begins with the words “To our brothers from civil defence” and contains a direct request for equipment to be supplied “to support military operations”.

Journalists have access to documents proving that the White Helmets maintain ties with terrorist and illegal armed groups. For example, a document forwarded by the security division of the illegal armed group Jabhat al-Islamia to the White Helmets contains a direct request: “To provide assistance to the holder of this paper and provide him with a tractor and related equipment to support military operations.” The document begins with the following address by Jabhat al-Islamia: “To our brothers from civil defence.”

There is another significant document: a complaint by the head of a White Helmets centre to “the governor of the free province of Aleppo” also proves that the White Helmets’ equipment and



A complaint by the head of a White Helmets centre about “regiment commander Khaled Haj, who goes by the name Khaled Hanano, from Ahrar al-Sham”, who was provided “a bulldozer with a driver to build a dirt wall on the front for protection against likely encirclement by government troops”. The reason the complaint was lodged was not the White Helmets’ involvement in hostilities but a failure to return the bulldozer and the driver.

employees were used, to a great extent, to fortify the combat positions of terrorist and illegal armed groups. The complaint says that “regiment commander Khaled Haj, who goes by the name Khaled Hanano, from Ahrar al-Sham” was provided with a bulldozer and driver to build a dirt wall on the front for protection against likely encirclement by government troops, because dirt walls could delay the government troops’ advance at least by two hours.” The head of the White Helmets centre writes that regiment commander Khaled Haj kept “the bulldozer and driver Mohamed Waleed Mardoum for a whole month”. As can be seen from this document, the White

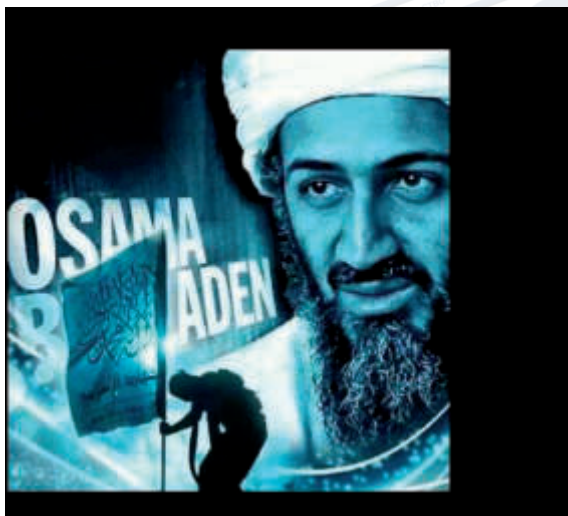


Photo: A considerable part of White Helmets personnel did not conceal their affiliation with or sympathies for terrorist groups and illegal paramilitary units. A White Helmets employee with a Facebook profile called Torch of Baybars expresses his admiration for the terrorist Osama bin Laden.

Helmets centres took part in providing their equipment and employees for military purposes.

Numerous witnesses among former members of illegal armed groups, as well as the above photos and documents, prove that terrorist and armed groups cooperated with White Helmets centres as they would with their own units or partners.



PART III

FAKE NEWS AND STAGED IMAGES

Numerous White Helmets employees, participants and witnesses of fake-news footage give a detailed account of how it was done. White Helmets employees say that special units and groups were set up to produce fake news, staging Syrian shelling or bombings. For example, Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka of the White Helmets says that the White Helmets in Aleppo had a special group that went to the filming location in advance to prepare the site — they brought the dead and wounded from hospitals, lit tyres and rubbish, quadcopter drones were used for filming. Abdul Karim Said Ahmed of the White Helmets in Kafr Batna also reports that the White Helmets had a special crew of 20 people for making such videos. White Helmets member Suleiman Mohamed Darwish says that the Eastern Ghouta White Helmets headquarters requested that such fake information be provided every other day, and they had a special information office in their centre for making fake materials headed by Abdulkarim al-Hafi, a Jabhat al-Nusra militant. An employee at the Eastern Ghouta White Helmets headquarters Husein Talal Hajiko testifies that in his presence the head of the information bureau of the Eastern Ghouta White Helmets headquarters instructed children and persuaded them to blame the Syrian government, promising

them a good meal. Omar al-Mustafa claims that video clips shot by the White Helmets were routinely edited, and the centres' employees sent it to some centre to have sound added in after the events.

Both Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka and Suleiman Mohamed Darwish, as well as many other White Helmets, say that they were not only constantly assigned to stage fake events and paid remuneration for that, but that the White Helmets in fact had a system in which all the employees and centre leaders depended financially on staging fake events. For example, "if there was no shelling, they would be no diesel fuel for their vehicles and they would not be allowed to use them; and so they would stage it." The White Helmets leaders did not conceal from their employees that the organisation's funding directly depended on such work. White Helmets employee Mohamed Bahar al-Shihadi recalls one of the organisation's leaders visiting their centre. He openly said that they should continue this work because "it is good to keep the funding coming in." Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo, says that staging attacks "was made to attract more sponsors and get more support from them."

It should be noted that there was no mention of moral principles or other appropriate motivation for volunteers; it all came down to getting funding. The objective of advertising their activities was a bigger priority for the White Helmets than actually helping victims. Eye witnesses have given detailed accounts of many cases when the White Helmets focused on filming first and only rendered assistance to victims later, and also about cases when they departed without providing any help at all. Zakaria Mustafa, for example, says: "The White Helmets arrived and started filming. I came and

saw that instead of providing help they were filming ... I began to drive them away... I was arrested by militant fighter Hassan Jader. I was severely beaten and detained for four or five hours.” Likewise, Mohamed al-Mustafa ibn Hassun recalls that “when a house in Aleppo collapsed on the slope of Kassar near the fountain, they came but never helped anyone,” and concludes that “the main priority is to film staged footage. The main priority is to get money and make videos.”

The White Helmets regularly presented the Syrian Army’s shelling of headquarters and other sites of terrorist and illegal armed groups as the shelling of civilians. Former Jeysh al-Islam member Ali Mohamed al-Mardini says that the Syrian army struck Jeysh al-Islam headquarters but the White Helmets “presented it as if the Syrian army assaulted a peaceful town... the headquarters were in the basement. The building was destroyed while the basement survived. And the White Helmets said there were women and children among the rubble of that building.”

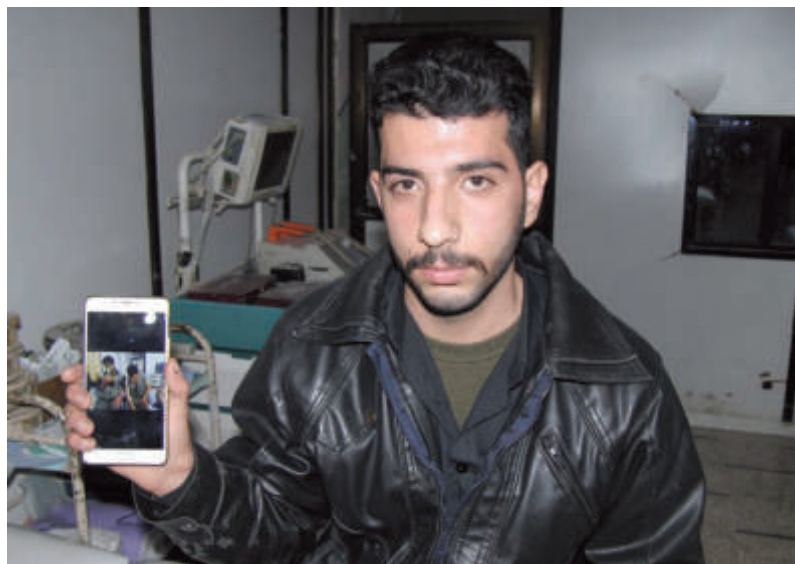
It has become standard for photographers and journalists with Western media outlets to completely fabricate materials on the situation in Syria. In 2014, CNN gave German journalist Claas Relotius the Journalist of the Year award. In his articles in Der Spiegel and other outlets he made charges against the Syrian government. For example, in the article “King’s children” he wrote: “Bomb after bomb was falling on Aleppo but he was reluctant to leave it. Alin and Ahmed say that their father stood up against al-Assad who encircled half of the city. Some claimed that a regime soldier shot him in the head from behind.” In 2018 Der Spiegel admitted that



A photo from the article “War in Syria: Photographer Recalls Suspected Chlorine Attack” in Time magazine (<http://time.com/syriaeastern-ghouta-suspected-chlorine-attack/>). This fake evidence was presented by Mohammed Badra of the European Pressphoto Agency, who was named 2016 Photographer of the Year by Time magazine. The article with fake evidence was edited by Andrew Katz, deputy director of photography at Time.

journalist Claas Relotius invented characters and content in at least 14 of the 60 published articles. Der Spiegel subsequently said they are ready to pursue charges against the journalist for faking an article to raise funds allegedly for the refugee children described in “King’s children.” He transferred the donations to his personal account.

Similar fake materials were also published in Time. In 2016 photographer Mohammed Badra of the European Pressphoto Agency was named Time Photographer of the Year. He published fake



Mahmud Buweidani of the White Helmets holds the photo of himself published in Time and explains: “We staged a chlorine attack by the Syrian army but there was no gas in reality. I was told to sit down and put on an oxygen mask. The oxygen tank was not actually on.”

photos about events in Syria. He wrote in the article “War in Syria: Photographer recalls suspected chlorine attack” that he personally witnessed “White Helmets volunteers who suffered from the gas as they helped the people.”

The photo published by Time features Mahmud Buweidani of the White Helmets in Douma. At the very same location he told us that the whole thing was staged from beginning to end. He said: “Once the leader of ISIS’s Shifunya unit called us and asked us to provide emergency help to a family trapped under the rubble. The family lived near an ISIS command post and the area was considered

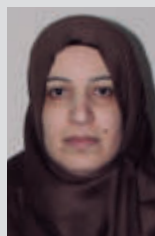
a frontline. We went there and found the family — a man and a woman with four children. The youngest child had difficulty breathing because of the dust in his nose, mouth and eyes. We took the family to the Douma hospital and presented the matter as if the Syrian army had used chlorine. There had been no gas in fact, just dust. After we arrived at the hospital, the child died and we filmed a story about his poisoning from chlorine. We filmed the boy being given a breathing mask but the oxygen tank was not on. I was told to sit down and put on an oxygen mask just to get the right shot. In the end the boy was wrapped in a white cloth and they said that he died of a chemical agent. I was in Shifunya and I deny that chemical weapons were used there. Nevertheless, the White Helmets claimed chlorine had been used. They poured water on me and said that I was a victim. Video of it was recorded by Bassam Al Rayes, Ahmed Aldinafi, Yasser Al-Fawal and some Jeysh al-Islam journalists. In 2016, the White Helmets staged a bombing by the Syrian army on the top floor of a destroyed building. In reality, the ceasefire was in effect at that time and there were no strikes. The centre's bosses, myself and some others acted in this show. We grabbed ropes and were pulling down a column shouting that the Syrian army had attacked and destroyed a medical centre during the 'silence regime.' Three people were taking photos and recording video, they were protected by about 20 armed militants.”

Numerous participants of staged shoots organised by the White Helmets have given detailed accounts of how they depicted the dead and wounded. Terrorists and militants were often wounded during clashes with each other and with the Syrian army, and the

White Helmets used them to portray civilians in their footage. The organisation's employees make little secret of the fact that for this they received extra money from their sponsors. Former members of illegal armed groups and civilians speak in detail of how the White Helmets used the mines brought by them and destroyed buildings to prepare the set for staged shoots and then, together with Western journalists, filmed fake scenes of chemical weapons being used, allegedly by the Syrian army.

Rihab Ali Mansur, 36, housewife

A man came up to me and asked me if I wanted to be in a film. They asked me to play a woman who had died in a chemical attack. They brought me to a flat, gave me white prayer clothes, told me to lie down on the floor, smear my mouth with toothpaste and pretend to have died in a chemical attack. After the filming, Fares Muhammad Mayasa gave me a ride together with another woman who had also acted in the same film. In the evening, he paid me 5,000 Syrian pounds.



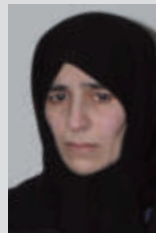
Yazan at-Tarazi, 12, schoolboy

When I lived in Douma, Abu Fares Mayasa, a man who shared the flat with us, asked me and my friends: "Would you like to take a walk around the town?" The five of us went for a ride with him. We were brought to some medical centre where the White Helmets were. They put on helmets with Civil Defence written on the back. Doctors covered us with white blankets and told us to close our eyes, filming us as if they were shooting an actual film. I was paid 200 Syrian pounds.

Later, Abu Fares approached my mother and said to her: “We are making a film, and you can participate and earn some money. Your children can also appear in the film, but they need to wear ragged clothes. However, our mother dressed us in new clothes, and when we arrived at the shooting location, they told us: “That’s not what we need.” And we were not hired for the shoot.

Vafika Hubbia, 54, housewife

I lived in Douma with my children. Once, I was approached by Muhamed al-Zukani who said that he needed my help for half an hour. At first, I refused to help him, but then I agreed. When I stepped outside, I saw Abu Fares Mayasa. They drove me to the town of Zamalka. There they brought me to some house, gave me a white blanket, I lay down on a staircase and pretended to have died in a gas attack. In a day or two, I got paid 3,000 for my work.



Kamal al-Kaderi, 48, leader of the White Helmets in eastern Daraa

A journalist at each White Helmets centre received 150 dollars. They had to send all the photos to Idlib when leaving town. The commanding officers in Idlib said that the work we did had to be photographed or filmed, otherwise we would not get paid.



Muhammad Adham Abdulmalik, 19, a White Helmets employee in Douma

We always took the military clothes off the wounded militants, so that on film they would like civilians killed by gunfire. Once we rendered aid to



four militants in military clothes. Jeysh al-Islam said that we had to take off their uniform, in order to film them as wounded civilians.

Once, we entered a ruined building with tools to smash concrete. Bassam Ar-Rais, our photographer, took pictures of our work which was presented as the results of artillery attacks of the Syrian army, although there had been no gunfire because it all happened during a ceasefire. The goal was to show that the Syrian army fires on houses. Later, these pictures were shown to the sponsors, so that they would finance us.

Ratim Akrad, 26, a former member of the Free Syrian Army

We often saw them detonate mines and then film it. If there was just an ordinary fire, they also went to film it at once. The main thing for them was to tape anything: if there was no videotape, there was no money from abroad. One such episode happened in Daraa al-Balad near a post office. I went outside to buy some bread and saw the White Helmets lay mines which they then exploded and started filming. They had brought anti-personnel mines in their own cars.

Ashik Aliua, 49, household appliances salesman in Daraa

A mine hit a neighbouring house. When the building collapsed, we went there at once to give a hand. When we came there, we saw employees of the White Helmets. Only one woman had been wounded in this house. The next day we saw a report by the White Helmets about that incident on the internet. They said that seven families lived in that house, and that there were six wounded and two dead. We asked them: “Why do you write that?” They replied that they were paid for it. There was a centre of the White Helmets in a garage next to an Arza prison. They

exploded two mines in there and filmed a story about it. All the equipment at the centre had been destroyed. They did all of that to receive financial support.

Fares Mayasa, 37, former member of an illegal armed group



I worked with a France 24 journalist. At first, he stayed at my place, then asked me to be his driver and drive him around town: he promised to pay me salary and refuel my car at the end of each day. In the morning, we used to take the road and drive around town. He worked with the White Helmets. Then he told me that he wanted to rent a basement to set up a film studio there. I rented a basement with an area of 250 square meters for him; at first it was only partially built. But the construction work was finished, and they set up seven offices there, one of which was for a journalist. The largest room was used as a studio. This office was used to film numerous interviews with militants. Later, he shot a news report about the events in the Eastern Ghouta and Syria. Every day, he arrived at the medical centre in Douma where he collected information on the dead and wounded, regardless of whether they were fighters or civilians. However, he always said that all of them were civilians. Once he asked me to bring as many children as possible to the Douma hospital. When I brought him eight children, there were already lots of other children there, about 50 of them, all under the age of ten. They lay on beds and were filmed as if they were wounded or dead. The White Helmets showed how they were helping children by administering medical aid. They presented it as a result of attacks by the Syrian army. Later, each child got paid 275 Syrian pounds. Once, I received a Viber message describing the production of a “chemical film.”

A script was prepared and later amended every day. We were told that the film would be seen all over the world. They would sell the film, and we would get all the money people would pay to watch it. We filmed it in a small neighbourhood, and we worked on it for seven or eight days. The length of the film was ten minutes.

The film is about a militant called Mudjahed who serves on the frontline. In the film, he is going home armed with an assault rifle. According to the script, Mudjahed's house has suffered a chemical attack. At home he meets an old man called Abu Saleh. The man tells him that everyone else is dead, all of them are gone. Then Mudjahed opens a door and sees his wife and his dead three-year-old child. He picks up the child, carries him to the doctor and weeps asking: "Why? Why?"

When filming, Fares Muhammad Mayasa ordered lots of children to be brought in. They started filming all the children as if they were dead. Later, he requested women be brought in for similar shoots. I was told that the work had been great, and the results were published on Facebook, presented as an artillery attack by the Syrian army.



Bashar Mustafa Abdulmalik, 57, security guard for the White Helmets in Douma

At first, I worked at the White Helmets centre No. 200, after that at centre No. 250. We dug a hole, placed vehicle wheels around it, set them on fire and placed two mines. After that, we called the firefighters, asked them to come to us, said that the Syrian army had bombed us and that there was some old man underground. It was near the Almalfush mosque, and there was a representative of Jeysh al-Islam.

One time, our fire engine caught on fire somehow. We were told not to put it out until Abu Salem came. When he came, he took pictures and video,

to present it as the result of bombing by the Syrian army. I was paid 50 dollars for my work, but a paper which I signed said it was 150. We were told that the other 100 dollars were for the diesel fuel and fuel oil.

Imad Muafa Al-Luka, 28, a White Helmets employee

I started working as a fire engine driver for the White Helmets. I remember a fire at a paint materials warehouse. Journalists arrived and started filming. They presented it as an artillery attack of the Syrian army. In fact, there was no attack, it was just a fire. Jeysh al-Islam closed all the roads leading there, and the White Helmets journalists Yaser Dumani and Bassam Ar-Rais did the filming.



In the areas seized by terrorists and illegal armed groups, clashes and shelling between different groups occurred quite often. It was typical for the White Helmets to claim that the shelling was in fact strikes by Syrian forces.

Both former White Helmets employees and residents of the affected districts provided a great deal of evidence confirming this.

For example, White Helmets employee in Aleppo Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka said that several employees in their centre remember at least ten such cases. Mohamed Said Hyri attested that in one specific case Jabhat al-Nusra opened fire at a group of people who tried to use the corridor to reach the government-controlled areas and the consequences of that attack were presented by the White Helmets as a strike by the Syrian army. Witnesses also gave a number of examples of situations when the White Helmets would arrive before the shelling or announce that there will be an attack and then arrived at the scene.

In some cases an attack would indeed happen, which may indicate that it was organised by the White Helmets.

For example, Omar al-Alush ibn Mohamed said that “all of our people saw that the White Helmets staged incidents. They would arrive and tell people that there would be an attack in an hour. Then they would go to the scene of the purported incident where they would leave their vehicles, guarded by militants and a cordon, and film.”

Abdul Razak Na’asan bin Mohammed spoke about what was happening in Aleppo: “I worked for Ahrar al-Sham for three months before the Syrian army arrived in the eastern districts of Aleppo. They worked with the White Helmets and would communicate by radio which areas were about to be attacked: “al-Salihin, al-Fardus...”

And those attacks would indeed happen some time later. They did it so that the White Helmets were able to work.”

The White Helmets would often exploit natural accidents to claim that they were the result of the Syrian army’s strikes.

For example, Mohammad Kheir Daqneesh, father of Omran Daqneesh, whose image went viral in the media, says that, despite his protests, the collapse of his home was presented by the White Helmets as a result of a Syrian army strike and he was subject to threats when he refused to confirm that.

White Helmets employee in Kafr Batna Abdulkarim Said Ahmad says that ordinary fires were constantly claimed to be the aftermath of strikes.

White Helmet employee in Eastern Douma Husein Talal Hajiko confirms this, recalling a fire at a wood storage facility between



At 2 min 11 sec of this White Helmets video, we see that the organisation's employee helps a woman with a baby down from a balcony.

Hamouriyah and Hazza that was caused by the short-circuiting of the electrical system and which the White Helmets passed off as the result of a Syrian army air strike. White Helmet employee Said Ibrahim al-Masri recalls a fire at a medication storage facility: "The fire was caused by faulty wiring. They said it was caused



At 2 min 56 sec the rescued woman appears again on the balcony next door and another White Helmet employee helps her down from the other balcony. Apparently, the scene with a woman and a baby was filmed twice and White Helmets accidentally included both clips in the video. White Helmet employee Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka, who was near the building at that moment, said that the filming was staged: “In the district of Tarik al-Bab, they imitated air and artillery strikes by the Syrian army at a five- or six-storey building with destroyed balconies... White Helmets used an extendible crane for evacuation as if the staircase inside the building was destroyed and they had to use special equipment — but inside the structures remained intact.”

by bombing. Another squad had an explosives plant. An explosion occurred there due to somebody's error and they said that it was the result of bombing by the Syrian army." Mohamed Saber, a White Helmets employee in Saqba, spoke about the organisation's video clip featuring a burning fire engine and a voiceover blaming the Syrian army. In fact, Saber says, "the fire engine caught fire and Mohamed Masarwi did not let anybody put out the fire so that they could take photos and claim that the Syrian army destroyed it." Saber also recalls that a collision of two ambulances and the resulting damage were passed off by the White Helmets as the result of a Syrian army attack.

Another typical propaganda method for the White Helmets was to organise so-called survival courses for civilians. The training would be filmed and later edited to be presented as actual events and results of the Syrian army's shelling.

For example, Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed spoke about the White Helmets "bringing kids from villages and filming them; a couple of days later the footage was shown on TV as an actual attack" while White Helmets member in Saqba Suleiman Mohamed Darwish recalls "a training event in Zamalka, in Hamouriyah, when the White Helmets said that it was for real. I was among the White Helmets employees who participated in the training. Two or three days later I saw it on TV and was really surprised. Turns out, there was a fire caused by shelling and people got injured."

Eyewitnesses also speak about the White Helmets having an organised system for staging incidents, and refer to numerous examples in which they personally participated or which they

saw with their own eyes. For example, White Helmets employee Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka describes details of the stagings that he was involved in: in Jisr al-Haj, Aleppo, in the al-Shaar district, the Al-Halwaniya neighbourhood and the Tarik al-Bab district. Zakaria Mustafa speaks about witnessing a staging in Aleppo, in the Sakhur district, at Duar Nafura: “They brought a large number of children, a lot of tyres and started burning the tyres. Fire engines that were nearby started putting out the fire as if after a big strike. They took away several people as if they were injured or dead.”

Radwan Hoseira ibn Husein witnessed another staging from his own balcony in Tell al-Zarazir, near the Tarek ibn Zeiad mosque: “They made it look like the Syrian government troops had just attacked the area. The White Helmets started to evacuate and rescue children and women from under a destroyed building. The building had no roof and it was them who knocked down one of the walls.” Omran Makia, a White Helmets employee in Douma, spoke about participating in a staged incident and described how “in Al-Garan they saw a woman with a child and asked her to give them the child for a couple minutes. They made it look like the child was injured and they were helping him while photographing all that.”

Simulations and staged shoots can be noticed in many reports by both the White Helmets and the journalists supporting them. For example, in many video reports by the White Helmets, we can see one or two rescuers surrounded by a large number of cameramen. It is obvious that these cameramen are not involved in the rescuing of the allegedly injured people. In another video by the White



Screenshots of a video report falsely claiming that Omran Daqneesh was saved by the White Helmets.

Helmets, we can see the same woman with a child being saved from one balcony by a rescuer and, minutes later, from another balcony by a different person.

White Helmets members said that staging chemical weapons attacks by the Syrian army was an important aspect of the organisation's activity. Heads of the White Helmets' centres did not hide from their employees that these operations benefited from separate funding, and sometimes those who took part in these staged incidents were paid. People from areas where chemical attacks were allegedly carried out provided detailed accounts of how these incidents were staged. For example, Omar Mustafa ibn Mohammed said that he saw with his own eyes how White Helmets simulated chemical weapons attacks: "They would bring in children, lay them on the floor and simulate a chemical attack, put on gas masks, push civilians aside and spray corpses with water. In fact, these were not corpses. These were children posing as chemical attack victims." Suleiman Mohamed Darwish, a White Helmet from Saqba, shared a story in which he arrived at the scene of a staged incident on an ambulance and saw a cylinder with "people from the White Helmets working on it, some wearing gas masks and others gauze bandages. We were told that the cylinder was dropped by a helicopter, but in this case it should have been dented, but it was not. The cylinder was intact." Mohamed Bahar al-Shihadi ibn Fronzi, another White Helmet, described how "staged footage was produced in the Sakhur district. Ten children were brought to a local hospital. They were placed on the floor and doused with water, and all of this was shot on camera as if they suffered in a chemical attack." A White Helmet from Douma, Ahmed Buweidani, said that he was present in Al-Hajariya where doctors concluded that people

suffered from food poisoning, while a member of the organisation “who had a camera said that it was a chemical attack.” Ahmad Zaino Mohamed from Aleppo said that he saw firsthand how the Sukkari incident was staged: it started with an alert from fighters of an upcoming chemical attack; the next day the White Helmets started “dousing water around the streets and washing them. They put people on the ground and started pouring water over them, but the fact of the matter is that chlorine was not used.” It was not uncommon for the White Helmets to announce imminent chemical attacks by the Syrian government and later stage them and produce footage. Nihad Damerji ibn Mohamed said that on the eve of the incident on Al-Wadi Street the White Helmets arrived and said that the Syrian government was going to carry out a chemical attack the next day. The next day “they released some kind of a liquid with a very strong smell that was not actual chlorine, since people were working without gloves or gas masks when they started shooting video and dousing people with water. Participants in the staged incident were paid 1,500 to 2,000 Syrian pounds.”

Abdul Razak Na’asan ibn Mohammed said that he personally witnessed how the White Helmets staged an incident in Al-Maadi district near a vegetable market. He remembers that “the White Helmets were on the scene without gas masks; they gathered people from around the block sprayed them with water and started shouting that this was a chemical attack by the regime.” Omar al-Alush ibn Mohamed also witnessed this staged incident.

How Omran Daqneesh, 5, Became a Symbol of Aleppo's Suffering



Omran Daqneesh, 5, was rescued after an airstrike in the Syrian city of Aleppo. Within hours, a photo of his dust- and blood-covered face captured the world's attention. This is the story behind the image. Aug. 18, 2016. — Mahassif Rastan/Aleppo Media Centre



The photo shows Omran Daqneesh, the boy from The New York Times article. During an interview with Maxim Grigoriev, Director of the Foundation for the Study of Democracy, Omran and his father explained what actually happened that day, refuting the lies spread by the White Helmets.

Mohammad Kheir Daqneesh, father of Omran Daqneesh



On that day, we were in our apartment when suddenly the building started to collapse. We were inside, so we did not know what had caused this. There were no planes in the air on that day. We did not hear anything, there were no planes, since otherwise we would have taken shelter. And nearby houses were not damaged. In five hours the building in front of ours collapsed. It was a high-rise building and it came down due to construction errors, the laws were not followed, since you could not get a permit to build anything higher than one floor in this area. My wife was in the kitchen at the time, she was making dinner. My son Omran and I had minor injuries after the building collapsed. Locals helped us, pulled us out of the rubble and put us into an ambulance.

It was only then that the White Helmets arrived and started filming with their cameras. They were filming and saying that Omran had terrible wounds. However, if he was injured so badly, they should have taken him to a hospital instead of filming him. It was not a serious injury but a small one, but the White Helmets said that it was bad, that he had suffered fragment wounds to this head and arm, and continued to shoot. Then they took Omran to a hospital, but all they did was put a bandage on his head. They wanted to continue shooting in the hospital, but I did not let them. This really got to them and they started shouting at me and were really rude. I had to go to another hospital with the boy to join my family where my daughter and her husband were.

They tried taking Omran abroad in order to leave him there and use him. I refused. After that White Helmets in charge of media came to us. A journalist who worked with them, Mussa Alima, offered \$10,000 for an interview in which we would say that our building suffered in an attack by the Syrian forces and the Russians. I refused. After that the White Helmets

started to threaten me. They threatened to kill me in order to prevent me from moving to the territory controlled by the Syrian government. They threatened to kidnap one of my children unless I agree to an interview and blame the Syrian government. Other fighters also started threatening us. These threats came from Mahmoud Raslan, who is an opposition journalist who works with the White Helmets, but also the head of the Ahrar Syria group. We also got a visit from a representative of Afrad Hamza, who asked for a photo and an interview. I turned down his request. We had visits from the Abu Amara and Mohamed al-Hati groups.



Mohamed Darwish, 35, a White Helmets employee in Saqba

We had a communications room in our centre that was specifically designed to produce fakes of this kind. It was headed by Abdulkarim Al Hafi, a Jabhat al-Nusra fighter.

I saw him holding arms. We knew that the information coming from him was fabricated. The White Helmets spread lies on quite a few occasions. They would announce online that a specific district was shelled, but nothing actually happened. We were at the centre and never heard of any shelling, and we never went to the site. Still, we could read in the news that the incident took place. The headquarters of the White Helmets for Eastern Ghouta requested a fake report every two days. Sometimes these shelling incidents had to be staged in order to get fuel. They could not use their cars without shelling incidents, so they just made them up.

Sometimes these fake reports came from abroad. In December 2016, Egypt's Interior Ministry issued the following statement:

“The Communications Centre of the Suez Canal General Office for Security, in coordination with the corresponding agencies of the Suez Canal Authority, detained:



The photo shows the Facebook page of Egypt’s Interior Ministry with an official statement on the detention of people for making staged videos. “The detained persons intended to produce a fake image of a girl by having her pose in white clothes stained with blood-coloured red paint. The girl holds what looks like bloody bandages and a toy also stained with red paint. The pictures were taken with a collapsed building in the background that was in fact slated for demolition. During interrogation, they said that the images were to be published on social media as coming from Aleppo, Syria.”

1. Sahar M. A. Born in 1972, resident of Port Said
2. Sayyar A. Born in 1994, resident of Port Said
3. Mohammed H. Born in 1994, resident of Port Said
4. Mustafa A. M. 25 years, resident of Port Said
5. Mustafa A. Photographer

Together with two children: Raghad A. A. (12 years) and Saif A. A. (8 years) — mother Sahar M. A.”

The detained persons intended to produce a fake image of a girl by having her pose in white clothes stained with blood-coloured red paint. The girl holds what looks like bloody bandages and a toy also stained with red paint. The pictures were taken with a collapsed building in the background that was in fact slated for demolition. During interrogation, they said that the images were to be published on social media as coming from Aleppo, Syria. The detained persons had one photo camera and six telephone sets with them, as well as a plastic box with a red substance that was used to imitate blood on the girl’s dress. The following measures were taken: those detained were sent to the Prosecutor’s Office. The photographer was detained for four days, and others released on bail. The 12-year-old girl was released to her mother, and the 8-year-old boy was sent to a foster caregiver with an obligation to provide good care.”

Husein Talal Hajiko, 18, an employee of the White Helmets headquarters in Eastern Douma

Once they staged this play: they brought a small explosive, just a noise-maker. So it went off where their car was standing, and they said the Syrian army

had hit the White Helmets. I saw it with my own eyes. I came to work, I looked around — people were gathering on the street, asking what was going on. They said the White Helmets were shooting a video. They placed the explosive, set it off, then a man came and lay down — supposedly wounded, screaming for help. We took him away, and we were told that the Syrian army had struck.



There was a timber warehouse between Hammuria and Hazza.

Once, an electrical fire broke out there. Fire trucks arrived and put out the fire, and then announced that Syrian aviation had struck that warehouse. I saw how the director and head of the White Helmets Information Bureau for Eastern Ghouta was preparing children. He instructed them to blame the Syrian government. They had a programme called “Birds of Peace.” He gathered the children in his office, gave them instructions, then drove them to the front, to the facilities. He promised them, “after we finish, we will go to a restaurant to eat,” and asked them to say that the Syrian army, the Syrian government, was imposing a blockade and launching strikes. The children were under 10.



Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed, 41, small business owner in Aleppo

Once after filming, the members of the White Helmets came to me and showed me a video. They said it wasn’t shot well, and the sound was not good, but they would edit the sound later. That is, they sent these videos without sound. The White Helmets wanted it this way, to be able to add the necessary sounds. This was shown to me by a media specialist in White Helmets in my area; his nickname was Abu Muaviyah, and his real name was Ahmed. He was a reporter for the White Helmets and had a Facebook page.

Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka, 44, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo



Often they simulated attacks by Syrian government forces on White Helmets positions or headquarters. Sometimes, the militants themselves carried out strikes killing White Helmets members. But the dead were buried with honours and their relatives were given money. In our White Helmets centre alone we had about 10 cases where militants accidentally hit residential buildings.



Mohamed Said Hyri, Aleppo, 45, a truck driver

I live in the Jub al-Quba area and I saw what happened at a distance of 100 metres from my house. People wanted to go through the corridor in the Tariq al-Bab district to the government-controlled territory. But Jabhat al-Nusra militants said they could not go and were to return to their neighbourhoods; they refused, and the militants fired on the crowd with mortars. At six in the morning we heard explosions. I ran to the scene with other local people. We saw many dead. It happened in the Jub al-Quba area, 100 metres from my house. The White Helmets arrived at the scene at seven o'clock. They did not help anyone, did not save anyone, but took gold and money from the people. When they arrived, they pushed us away, telling us to let them work. We saw one come up to a woman and pick up her cell phone. He then took her ring, tore out her earrings, and left. After that, the locals took the dead away in a small truck.

Abdulkarim Said Ahmad, 23, a White Helmets employee in Kafr Batna

I can tell you a story. They summoned us to extinguish a fire in a house. We asked the owner what caused the fire. He said an electrical contact had been



Screenshot from a White Helmets propaganda video in which a Jabhat al-Nusra strike that hit civilians in Jub al-Quba while trying to get through the humanitarian corridor was depicted as the strike of the Syrian army.

damaged, but when they edited news at the White Helmets headquarters they wrote the fire was the result of a bombing. In Eastern Ghouta, the White Helmets had a separate team for photography. There were 20 people in it with photo and video cameras.



Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed, 41, small business owner in Aleppo

The White Helmets did a training course for their personnel to show civilians how rescue and evacuation should be done. They brought children from nearby villages and filmed them, and then people saw these videos in a couple of days on television and in the media — supposedly as a real shelling, where this group rescued and evacuated people.



In the photo, Aleppo resident Mohamed Said Hyri exposes the White Helmets propaganda about the tragedy in Aleppo's Jub al-Quba: "I saw what happened at a distance of 100 metres from my house. People wanted to go through the corridor in the Tariq al-Bab district to the government-controlled territory. But Jabhat al-Nusra militants said they could not go and were to return to their neighbourhoods; they refused, and the militants fired on the crowd with mortars. The White Helmets people arrived at the scene at seven o'clock. They did not help anyone, did not save anyone, but took gold and money from the people. When they arrived, they pushed us away, telling us to let them work."

In reality, it was a production that I saw with my own eyes. They called the locals to show them how they rescue people, and then used the footage for other purposes. In the center of Tell al-Daman, children were brought to school to show them a rescue operation, teach them what to do if government forces launch a chemical attack, and what to do when a building is destroyed, that is, “an emergency drill.” They put paint on people so that any onlookers would think it was a real attack. Burning tyres created the smoke effect. The White Helmets organised such events all the time.



Suleiman Mohammed Darvish, 35, a White Helmets employee in Saqba

There were training events in Zamalka, in Hammuria, but the White Helmets later said that it was all real. For example, in Zamalka they did advanced training courses for us. I was one of the students. After a lecture, we were told to practice. There was a building in which an explosion was supposed to have occurred; they burned tyres, and our vehicles had to reach it to help. The fire engines were to put out the fire. We removed the mock wounded and extinguished the fire. Two or three days later, I was surprised to see information that there was a fire caused by shelling, and that people were injured.

Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka, 44, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo

I worked as a driver at the White Helmets centre in Bab al-Nairab in Aleppo. We worked in shifts: 24 hours, then three days off. We came to work, checked the vehicles, loaded water, and waited for instructions.



Basically, we did work related to putting out fires, and also took part in filming staged videos. For example, I received an order on the radio to go to Jisr al-Haj. We were told that some people were killed there. We arrived and were surprised — there were destroyed cars around the place; the militants set fire to waste and brought dead bodies from the morgue and wounded people from the hospital to arrange the scene. There were other people who pretended to be corpses. All this was filmed; it was a dramatisation. It was recorded by a special White Helmets photographer, and our boss was at the forefront and he always wore a camera on his helmet for filming. The militants burned tyres and garbage, and our job was to extinguish the fire. The rescuers' role was to evacuate the wounded and injured in ambulances and take them to hospital.

In reality, these were productions. After the shoot ended, we were given the all-clear signal, and we returned to our base. It was right near the Jisr al-Haj bridge, from seven to ten minutes' drive. A couple of days later everyone who took part in the shoot received \$50 in compensation. A similar video was shot in the area of Al-Shaar, in the quarter of Al-Halwaniya, on a square with a roundabout. In fact, there were no civilians there. There were militants with families, and only them. Bebars Meshal always gave instructions not only to this branch's employees, but also to other branches, for example, the Ansari and Hanano branches. He did so to attract more sponsors and get more money from them.

The White Helmets had a group that traveled to the location in advance and prepared the scene. Usually they brought corpses, wounded people from hospitals, set tyres and rubbish on fire; they used a drone with a camera. Having received our boss's orders on the radio, we travelled to the place he indicated, and helped put out the fire. Sometimes we had to assist other employees who were involved in rescuing the victims.



White Helmets employee Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka exposes the organisation and talks about how he personally took part in the filming of a fake video, showing the place where they put dead bodies from the morgue to set the scene: “I received an order on the radio to go to Jisir al-Haj. There were destroyed vehicles around the place; the militants set fire to waste and brought dead bodies from the morgue and wounded people from the hospital to arrange the scene. All this was filmed; it was a dramatisation. A couple of days later everyone who took part in the shoot received \$50 in compensation.”

All of that was staged. To put on a show of a lot of rescuers working, we were instructed to use our fire engines’ sirens. This also created the appearance of a real attack. One day, after we finished filming and went back to the centre, some people came in and gave \$200 each to everyone who took part in the operation — I received compensation, too. Then a foreigner arrived in a jeep accompanied by bodyguards. He had red hair. He spoke English with someone they called Ismail Abdullah, who was an assistant to Bebars Meshal.



Screenshots from a White Helmets fake-news video distributed by the organisation about an alleged recent attack by Syrian forces on the Jisr al-Haj neighbourhood in Aleppo.

One of the White Helmets videos shows organisation employees supposedly assist in evacuating civilians. Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka, an employee of the White Helmets who saw what actually happened there, reveals the truth about how it was all staged by the White Helmets.



Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka, 44, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo

Often, during the filming of such staged videos, the only people on the street were militants, their children and families. I have participated in three major staged events.

In the Tarik al-Bab area, they simulated air strikes and artillery attacks by the Syrian army on a building which had five or six floors and destroyed balconies. What really happened was that homemade shells had exploded nearby. We were putting out the fire which had been started by a special White Helmets group that had arrived there in advance to prepare the filming location.

When I arrived, another fire truck was already putting out the fire. The truck was from the Hanano centre which was closer to the scene of the incident. We poured water from our truck into the truck that had already begun its work, and all of that was filmed. There were four cameramen and a lot of people filming on their mobile phones. Employees of the White Helmets used a telescopic crane to evacuate people, as if the staircase inside the building had been destroyed and they needed to use special equipment. In fact, everything inside the building was completely intact. They evacuated women and children. They brought black body bags and put living people inside. Then I saw that episode in the media, and there were loud sound effects, as if the building had sustained a heavy blow, and dozens of people had been wounded and killed.

Zakaria Mustafa, 42, a salesman in Aleppo

Once in Aleppo, in the Sakhur district, in Duar Nafura, I saw the White Helmets together with the leader of Harkat Nour ad-Din az-Zenki for our district Ali Hisham Farhudi and Omar Sheihu organise a staged incident. They gathered a lot of children, and lots of tyres which they started to set on fire. There were fire trucks standing nearby, and they started putting out the fire as though there had been a major attack, hauled away some people pretending that they were wounded, pretended that some people had been killed. It lasted for half an hour, and after that the children stood up and received their payment. It was all staged by the White Helmets together with Harkat Nour ad-Din az-Zenki. I stood by a tree and watched it: I work nearby, and I could see it with my own eyes.



Radwan Hoseira ibn Husein, 39, a construction worker

I live in the Tell al-Zarazir district, near the Tariq bin Ziyad mosque. The White Helmets were filming their staged scene nearby, I stood on a balcony and watched the whole thing. There was a building that had been destroyed long ago. The White Helmets brought cars, set up the cameras, brought about a dozen women and children. They were from another district. I didn't know those people — neither the women, nor the children. Later some people said that they were relatives of militants participating in the filming for money. I saw a plastic bucket with paint. They painted those people and filmed them. I saw it with my own eyes. There were about 15 members of the White Helmets, and they had seven vehicles: pickups, fire trucks, minivans and two ambulance cars. They pretended that the Syrian government had just shelled the district, and the White Helmets





Radwan Hoseira ibn Husein stands on the balcony of his own house and shows the wall which the White Helmets tore down while faking an artillery attack by the Syrian army: “The White Helmets were filming their staged scene nearby, I stood on a balcony and watched the whole thing. I saw a plastic bucket with paint. They painted those people and filmed them. They pretended that the Syrian government had just shelled the district, and the White Helmets were evacuating and saving children and women from under the destroyed building. The building had no roof, and they knocked down one of the walls themselves.”

were evacuating and saving children and women from under the destroyed building. The building had no roof, and they knocked down one of the walls themselves. They made it look as if the building had been destroyed and created a dust effect. Then they took women and children, pretending that they had brought them from underneath the rubble. Ambulances arrived and took them away. There were six cameramen: two of them on a balcony, and the other four around the building. It took about half an hour to film in total. The White Helmets were guarded by militants of Abdurahman Turki from Liwa al-Tawhid.



Zakaria Mustafa from Aleppo in the Sakhur district, Duar Nafura, where an incident was staged by the White Helmets and the illegal armed group Harkat Noor ad-Din az-Zenki: “They gathered numerous children, and lots of tyres which they started to set on fire. There were fire trucks standing nearby, and they started putting out the fire as though there had been a major attack, hauled away some people pretending that they were wounded, pretended that some people had been killed... and after that the children stood up and received their payment. I stood by a tree and watched it with my own eyes.”



Ali Mohammed al-Mardini, 28, former Jaysh al-Islam member in Damascus

In summer, the Syrian army attacked the headquarters of Jaysh al-Islam, but the White Helmets made it seem as if the Syrian army had attacked a populated area with no militants around. I saw it myself. It was in the town of Douma, behind the Local Council building, where there are only militants and no civilians, while they said that the area was populated by civilians. Representatives of the White Helmets arrived together with

media representatives. Representatives of Jaysh al-Islam came forward and started talking to the media, saying that it was a peaceful area attacked by the Syrian army. The target of the attack was a three-storey building, but the headquarters occupied the basement. The building was destroyed, but the basement wasn't. And the White Helmets said that there were women and children under the rubble.

Aiman al-Haj Omar ibn Ibrahim, 27, tailor

The command post of the White Helmets was near the Abu Bakr al-Sadi mosque. One time, when I was going to the tailor's shop where I work, militants blocked the road, and I saw civil defence vehicles and ambulances. I live in the Sakhur district, but I work in the Hanano district. They closed the road connecting these two districts. I was wondering why it happened.

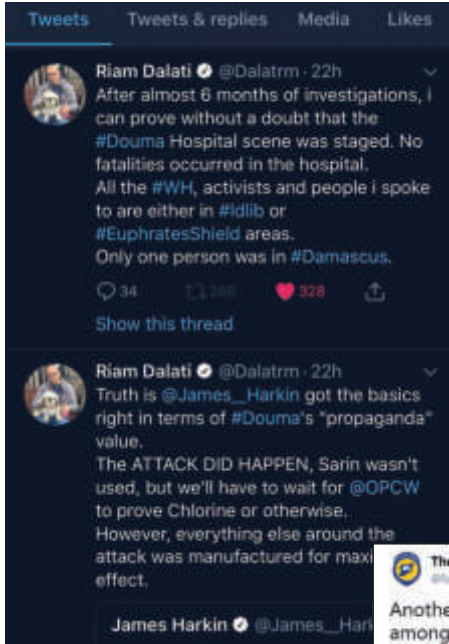


There were no air raids, no bombs fell, no explosions, and it was unclear why the road was blocked by three pickups full of militants armed with machine guns. There were three fire trucks and two ambulances of the White Helmets. The militants didn't let me pass. Later I asked one of them, Ahmed Mohammed Idris, an acquaintance of mine, about it. He replied that they were filming, and that I shouldn't be asking such questions.



Omar Bozo ibn Ali Marosh, 41, imam at the Al-Khansa Mosque, al-Mashhad district

The White Helmets staged incidents. They used various methods: they brought children, painted them red, used them for staged videos. The White Helmets lie, their goal is money. Their aims are inhumane.



On February 13, 2019, BBC Syria producer Riam Dalati tweeted: “After almost 6 months of investigations, I can prove without a doubt that the Douma Hospital scene was staged.” The White Helmets posted this production on Twitter captioned “Another video showing cases of suffocation among civilians, mostly children and women, following the chemical attack against the civilians in Douma city.”



Screenshots from the Mannequin Challenge video. In the video, the camera pans around motionless White Helmets employees who start moving at the end, while an alleged victim with traces of paint on his face starts making pained noises. The next photo shows the unharmed victim, who proved to be a militant from an illegal armed group, the Free Syrian Army. This is how many other videos which the White Helmets claimed were real were made.

The wide use of make-up by the White Helmets in staged videos was confirmed by their inappropriate Mannequin Challenge video, in which a group of people remain frozen for some time while a cameraman walks through filming them, and then the people start moving. This is obviously staged: the camera is moving between the motionless employees of the White Helmets and the person who is supposed to be injured, and after remaining frozen for some time they start moving, and the supposedly injured man starts crying out, and the White Helmets supposedly start helping him. Later, photos from this film set were published on the internet, where the supposedly injured man was perfectly fine.

Dr. Hasan, doctor at the hospital in Douma

On April 7, 2018, we received about 15 people with symptoms of asphyxiation. The people who brought them to us said they had suffered chemical poisoning. However, the medical examination showed no signs of chemical poisoning. We provided these people with basic medical care and sent them home.



Seif al-Din Hubiya, a doctor from the hospital in Douma, confirmed this statement: “I saw a family brought by the White Helmets saying that they were victims of a chemical attack. These people didn’t have any signs of chemical poisoning.”

Mohamed Saber, 33, a White Helmets employee in Saqba

In this video (shows video footage), the White Helmets say that the Syrian army has destroyed this vehicle. In fact, the fire truck caught fire, and the



The Permanent Missions of Russia and Syria to the OPCW organised a briefing for OPCW members on alleged chemical attack on Douma on April 7 where the alleged victims of the staged video exposed the organisers and told what happened in reality.

man in the video, called Mohamed Masarwi, did not let anyone put it out, so that he could take a picture and say that the Syrian army destroyed the truck. He did it to accuse the Syrian army of destroying the vehicle and get the money for a new one.



Nur al-Din Kamal Yahya, 32, a White Helmets employee

A lot of damage to ambulances and fire engines was done when they crashed into cars parked alongside roads or collided with oncoming traffic, and had to be repaired.



Photo: Footage from the White Helmets video showing alleged victims of chlorine poisoning after a Syrian army attack on Douma. Numerous witnesses, including doctors and actors posing as victims, confirm that there was no poisoning.



Photo: Dr. Hasan, who works at the hospital in Douma and was in the same room where the fake White Helmets video was filmed, describes what really happened. He confirms that the White Helmets put on the dramatisation: “ ... there were about 15 people with symptoms of asphyxiation, mainly children and women. After a medical examination, they were diagnosed with bronchial asthma. And those who brought these people to us said they had chemical poisoning. However, a medical examination revealed no signs of chemical poisoning.”

**Omran Makia, 21, a White Helmets employee
in Douma**



I was at the White Helmets centre. There I met our bosses, who said we had to go outside to have our photos taken against the background of an alleged artillery strike by the Syrian army.

We disembarked on Al-Garan Square, saw a woman with a child and asked her: “Will you please let us use your child for two minutes?” They took the child from his mother and gave him to me to take a photo.

They staged a scene of the child being wounded and receiving medical aid, took a photo of this scene and said that the child was wounded. There were many stories like this. Once, when I was an ambulance driver, White Helmets took a photo of a man with an amputated leg and said he had been wounded in shelling by the Syrian army.

White Helmets took photos of sick people, and there were many of them. People would ask: “Why? We haven’t been wounded, we’ve just had surgery.” The answer was they would be given money or food and they agreed. There were cases when they found several women who had given birth to stillborn children, brought them together, took photos of them and said that children were killed in strikes by the Syrian army or died from starvation because they lived under siege.

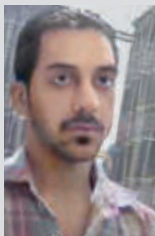
Khaled al-Farhan, a teacher from Aleppo



When there was shelling or a fire, the White Helmets went to the scene, filmed what was happening with a camera and went back. This was for show — they filmed a ladder being carried to the scene or how rescue equipment was being used, after which they drove away. I have never received humanitarian aid from them.



Screenshot from a fake-news video that the White Helmets distributed about fire engines that had caught fire in an alleged strike launched by Syrian forces. A voice in the video says “... you can see that the strike was launched on a civil defence group” while the caption below reads as follows: “Six people killed and many injured in shelling by the Syrian regime of the residential areas in the city of Douma.” Mohamed Saber, a White Helmets employee in Saqba, says this material, as well as many others by the White Helmets, was fabricated.



Mohamed Bashir Berim, 23, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo

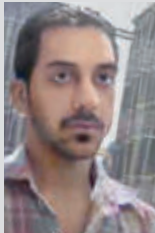
I myself took part in a staged video. One day Abu al-Sheikh sent for me to give me a task. When I came, I saw a woman and a child. We shot a video of this family that had allegedly been injured, so we got them into an ambulance that took them to the hospital. We made this video. After the filming was over the child got up and started to walk normally, as if nothing had happened.



Mohamed Saber, an employee of the White Helmets in Saqba and an eyewitness of the incident with fire trucks, exposes staged footage of the White Helmets: “In this video, the White Helmets say that the Syrian army has destroyed the vehicle. In fact, the fire truck caught fire, and the man called Mohamed Masarwi, who is not in the video, did not let anyone put it out, so that he could take a picture and say that the Syrian army destroyed the vehicle. He did it to accuse the Syrian army of destroying the vehicle and to get money for a new one.”



A staged photo of Omran Makia, a White Helmets employee in Douma, holding a child that he supposedly rescued after being wounded in shelling by the Syrian army. The photo was distributed by the White Helmets.



Mohamed Bashir Berim, 23, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo

One day staged videos were being made in the Tariq al-Bab district. Our job was to stop 50 metres away from the Issam al-Nader school and wait. They filmed not far from this school. They were shooting a child on the fourth floor shouting that a shell had hit his flat, as well as White Helmets evacuating the child and getting him into my ambulance. In reality, the building was hit by gas cylinders that militants fired at the Syrian army's positions and several gas cylinders failed to reach the target and, instead, hit this and some other buildings. After they contacted us on the walkie-talkie, my assistant and I drove up to the building and evacuated the child from the fourth floor using a crane. My assistant got out of the vehicle to open the ambulance door and we took the child to a hospital. A spray bottle was



Omran Makia, a White Helmets employee in Douma, admits the truth about the White Helmets' materials and tells the story of his personal involvement in staging incidents: "I was at the White Helmets centre. Our bosses came and said we had to go outside and take photos of ourselves against the background of an alleged artillery strike by the Syrian army. We disembarked on Al-Garan Square, saw a woman with a child and asked her: "Will you please let us use your child for two minutes?" They staged a scene of the child being wounded and receiving medical aid, took a photo of this scene and said that the child was wounded. There were many stories like this."

used to imitate blood. Several White Helmets photographers were taking photographs and opposition TV channels were filming. Five digital cameras were used. There was a woman — approximately 35 years of age — and a child covered in dust and paint from top to toe. They left the hospital five minutes after the shoot was over.



Mohamed Rajih ibn Hasan, 49, muezzin at the Al-Tuabin Mosque, Tell Sahur District in Aleppo

I saw White Helmets stage shelling attacks with my own eyes. This happened around the time of the Eid al-Adha holiday. They brought almost all the children from the Sakhur district together to stage this performance. They smeared their faces with tomato sauce to imitate blood. Some of them were put into bags as if they were dead.

They promised that each child would receive \$100. However, this amount was only given to children from the family of Sheikh Mustafa Al Bataihi, while others were given less. Children in the street told everyone that they were given only 250 liras each and only ten of them received \$100 each. Sheikh Mustafa Al Bataihi left with terrorists for Idlib during the evacuation from the eastern districts of Aleppo.

In another incident, militants captured Mustafa Iga al-Kala, who wanted to bring in medicine. They captured him and blew up his home while White Helmets were taking photos of it. This happened in the Sakhur district.

Omar Bozo ibn Ali Marosh, 41, imam at the Al-Khansa Mosque, al-Mashhad district

Once, a gas cylinder dropped on the square in the al-Mashhad district. Locals gathered to see what had happened, if there were injured people and how they could help them and found out that men from the Fastaqim Kama 'Umirt group had encircled the site where the projectile landed and did not allow civilians to help injured people until White Helmets arrived. I came running with people to help victims. I managed to rescue an injured girl. When White Helmets arrived at the scene they started shouting: "Who said



you could rescue people?” They took away the girl who had been rescued and a photographer started taking photos of her, shouting Allah Akbar. Militants would always cordon off the district and would not allow anyone to come to the rescue of injured people until the arrival of White Helmets. I ask myself the question — why do they take cameras with them if they come to save people’s lives?

Mahmud al-Mohamed, 45, small business owner

The 16th Division of the Free Syrian Army under the command of Hoyani, the Sultan Murad brigade and the Sultan Mohamed al-Fatih brigade were for some time deployed in our Hulluk district in Aleppo.



Later the White Helmets came. Before they arrived, they first visited the militants’ headquarters where guards were dispatched to accompany them. I once watched two civil defence vehicles guarded by eight to ten militants with machine-guns from the Sultan Murad brigade drive up to the Al Zawi Mosque. There were people dying in the rubble of buildings.

The scene was being filmed but White Helmets did nothing to rescue the people, leaving eight of them to die in the rubble of the building. This sparked a conflict with locals, who could not understand why rescue work was delayed.

Muhammad Al-Fara says the following in the Oscar-winning film *The White Helmets*: “A child, even if he is not my son, is like my son.” At approximately the same time and close to this White Helmets centre a staged video was being filmed about the dead child whom White Helmets took away from its mother, in a scene witnessed by Abdul Razak Na’asan bin Mohammed.



Abdul Razak Na'asan bin Mohammed shows the exact spot where White Helmets took a child who was killed from its mother, put the body on the pavement and started filming with a video camera. He says: "I saw with my own eyes that they took a woman whose child was killed in the mortar or artillery attack with them. They took the child from its mother, drove the mother away and put the dead child on the pavement and started filming. This happened in the al-Salihin district. I saw this from the shop I work in."

The staging of chemical attacks was another aspect of the White Helmets' efforts to create fake news. White Helmets and witnesses who were present at the scene of staged events give a detailed account of how this was done.

Ahmad Zaino Mohamed, 43, blacksmith in Aleppo

I was in my house when the militants announced that a chemical attack was coming on this street. The next day we went outside at the time of the alleged chemical attack. My house is about 50–60 metres from the



A witness of a chemical attack in Aleppo staged by the White Helmets, Abdul Razak Na'asan bin Mohammed, says: “The scene of the alleged chemical attack by the Syrian government forces was near the place where I was hiding — close to the vegetable market in the Al-Maadi district. White Helmets remained at the scene without gas masks or protective gloves. They gathered residents of the district, poured water on them and started shouting that the regime had used chemical weapons. However, this was not the case — there was only the smell of chlorine that is used in households and people were standing in a circle and watching.”

attack site. We saw the militants cordoning off the site while the White Helmets began pouring water and washing the street. There was no odour inside the house. Outside there was a smell of chlorine used in household cleaning products. We were not allowed to move closer. They conducted an evacuation, splashed water and white foam. People were told to lie down and sprayed with water. In reality there was no chlorine attack. Those who were directly involved in the evacuation were wearing gas masks whereas the militants and some White Helmets had no gas masks on.



Suleiman Mohamed Darwish, 35, a White Helmets employee in Saqba

The head of the centre received a report of a helicopter with gas. Some time later, after about 40–50 minutes, I heard on the radio about a gas cylinder in front of the Osman Mosque in Hamouriyah. Ambulances and people were ordered to go there. Our ambulance headed to where the gas cylinder was found. The gas cylinder valve was broken. I was about 20–50 metres away. There were other White Helmets working with it, some of them were wearing gas masks while others had flu masks on.

Some gas was coming out of the cylinder by not very strong. We were told that the cylinder had been dropped from a helicopter. But it should have been deformed then, and yet the cylinder had no dents, it was intact. Only the valve was broken. Then two White Helmets tied up the cylinder and took it to a place with no people around. They wore no protective clothes, they knew it was safe.



Mohamed Bahar al-Shihadi ibn Fronzi, 23, a White Helmets employee

The other White Helmets in the centre told me how they recorded staged videos in the Sakhur district. They brought 10 children and women to the Sakhur hospital, put them on the floor and began spraying them with water while the cameras were recording as if a chemical agent had been used.

I was told that by our centre's employees, five brothers— Mohammed Ibrahim, Mustafa Ibrahim, Abdulla Ibrahim, Mahmud Ibrahim, and Hussein Badejki. Al-Nadjar arranged the video recording.

Zakaria Mustafa, 42, salesman in Aleppo

The White Helmets spread fakes. Once Ali Hisham Farhudi gathered hundreds of children on a wide street in the Sakhur district.

A lot of fire engines and cars with the White Helmets logo arrived at the scene. I saw it myself as it was close to my house. The children were from 6 to 12 years old. Parents of the younger ones were waiting for them. The children were coming back to them very happy because they had been given money, and told them what had happened there. They showed the 50 dollars they got for taking part in the staging of a chemical attack. The White Helmets organised these stagings because they were lavishly paid for them.



Nihad Damerji ibn Mohamed, 57, construction worker in Aleppo

The White Helmets arranged a staged attack on Al-Wadi Street, I can show you the place. You can find many witnesses living in the area. The day before the event people from the organisation came and said that the Syrian government would use chemical weapons in that area.

They prepared fire engines, brought a water tank, media people, and came on the following day. They released some liquid with a sharp smell but not real chlorine, since they worked without gloves and gas masks, and started pouring water on the people and recording it. Then they recorded the evacuation, also in the presence of reporters and photographers. The participants in the event were paid 1,500–2,000 Syrian pounds depending on their age. Most of the participants were militants' relatives. Three or four video cameras were used.



Radwan Hoseira ibn Husein, 39, construction worker

Once I saw video cameras and water trucks in the Al-Ameriya district. We were told the Syrian authorities had used chemical weapons there. There were 20–25 White Helmets and security there. They pretended to be saving people, doused children with water but it was obvious they had no gloves or gas masks on, and there was no smell of chlorine even in the vicinity. We stood nearby, so it was a fraud. Some of the White Helmets who did not let us to the site had Kalashnikov assault rifles.

Ahmed Buweidani, 24, a White Helmets employee in Douma

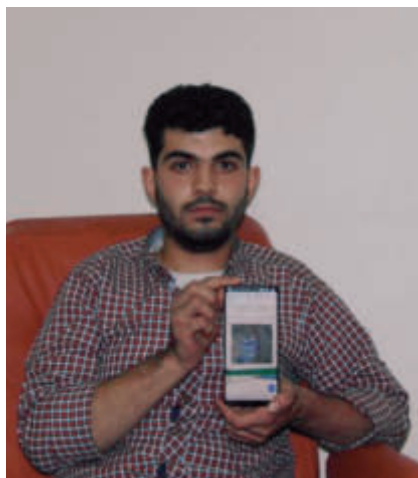
In the month of Ramadan we were told that there is a township here in Douma called Al-Hajariya where people injured in a chemical attack are lying. We went there, took those people to hospital, doctors examined them. It appeared the people had food poisoning.

The doctors in the hospital asked what had happened, and our man with a camera said it was a chemical attack while in reality they all got sick from eating rice.



Mohamed al-Mustafa ibn Hassun, 48, salesman in Aleppo

The White Helmets always spread information that the authorities used chemical agents. It was wrong — in fact, we, the people living in the area never heard of a child suffering from a chemical attack. Since I work in a grocery store, a lot of people come to me and I heard a lot from them. I heard conversations between people who worked for the White Helmets and people who worked with the militants. They told each other that they got



Left: Propaganda material claiming that the child in the photo died after a chemical attack by the Syrian army. Right: Ahmed Buweidani of the White Helmets exposes this fake: “The White Helmets said the child died due to a chemical attack but the story was a lie. When we arrived there were no traces of chlorine being used. I was the first to find the child, he was under the rubble. I took him out, put him in the ambulance and went to hospital. However, his breathing was weak and he died on the way. And then the White Helmets came to the hospital and started recording the dead child saying that he had died as the result of a chlorine attack.”

US support, they spoke about Mustafa al-Bataihi who gathered people to stage events for money. Mustafa al-Bataihi agreed with someone to make those recordings. He got money and his task was to bring children together and organise the staging.

Omran Makia, 21, a White Helmets employee in Douma

Sometimes we were called and said that there were victims of a chemical attack, go there. We arrive and see that everything is OK, nothing special,

just a fire but the White Helmets would take photos, record and say that it was the aftermath of a chemical attack. I remember this happened on Al-Shuhada Square.



Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed, 41, small business owner in Aleppo

They simulated a chemical attack in the following way: they brought children, put them on the floor, simulated the use of chemical weapons, put on gas masks, pushed civilians away, poured water on the alleged corpses in front of them as if those were children who died from chemical weapons. I saw it myself.

Ahmed Buweidani, 24, a White Helmets employee

The White Helmets said the child died of a chemical attack but the story was a lie. The child lived with his family in an old house in al-Shaifuniyah next to the militants' headquarters.



The house where the child lived collapsed after artillery strikes on the headquarters. When we arrived, there were no traces of chlorine being used. I was the one who found the child, he was under the rubble. I took him out, put him in the ambulance and went to hospital. However, his breathing was weak and he died on the way. And then the White Helmets came to the hospital and started recording the dead child saying that he had died as the result of a chlorine attack.”

In April 2018, the White Helmets recorded the notorious video about the alleged chemical attack in Douma, Eastern Ghouta, following which they spread the fake news that several hundred people

were injured. Despite evidence that the alleged victims recorded in the video were not injured and there was no chemical attack, on April 14, 2018, the United States, Great Britain and France used this fake material to justify massive missile strikes on Syria.

Said Ibrahim al-Masri, 27, a White Helmets employee

There were cases when terrorists and illegal armed groups fought with each other and opened fire.

Mortar shells hit buildings and people. The White Helmets concealed that and claimed that it was an attack by the Syrian army.



I saw it myself. This happened in Hazza, Zamalka, Beit Sawa and Aftaris. Once there was a fire at a medication storage facility. The fire was caused by faulty wiring. They said it was caused by a bomb.

Another group owned an explosives factory. There was an explosion that occurred because of an error but they said that the Syrian troops bombed the place causing the fire.



Seif al-Din Hubiya, a doctor in Douma

They would find and photograph stillborn babies and later blame it on the Syrian army, the blockade and lack of food supply.

For example, once at six in the morning they announced on megaphones that the Syrian army had just used chemical weapons. I live 400 metres from the site where the attack allegedly took place and I didn't see any chemical attack, didn't smell anything odd, nothing like that.

Ahmed Buweidani, 24, a White Helmets employee in Douma



I remember how our employees were sent to a stadium in Douma. There were eight small children in the street there. We gave them sweets and asked if they wanted to play a game. Then they were covered in white dust, put in a van and taken to hospital. Once there, they were filmed and our members kept saying that those children suffered from a chemical attack. There were four of us from the White Helmets, one cameraman, four people from Jaysh al-Islam and their cameraman. All that was later shown on Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya and Orient. There was an explosion in the militants' headquarters in Shaifuniya. A baby was killed in a house nearby. The White Helmets filmed it and claimed it was killed in a chemical attack. That was a lie. I went there on behalf of the White Helmets.



Said Ibrahim al-Masri, 27, a White Helmets employee

We were at the White Helmets' centre. Bashar al-Hafi told us that helicopters would be flying over Ghouta spraying a liquid. I asked what kind of liquid and they said chlorine. After a while, Bashar al-Hafi came out with Hasan al-Huseini and told us that there was a fire in Hamouriyah. We received orders by phone to put out the fire. We were told that a helicopter dropped a gas cylinder but it was intact. We got there and saw people tying up the cylinder. They weren't wearing any protection.

Abdul Razak Na'asan bin Mohammed, 45, Aleppo

I was hiding from Ahrar al-Sham with another group of militants, the so-called First Regiment. Their headquarters was based in a school, near the Abdulaziz hospital in Al-Maadi.

The site where the Syrian government allegedly used chemical weapons was near the place where I was hiding in Al-Maadi, near a vegetable market.



Ten to fifteen White Helmets, two or three fire engines as well as two reporters and several members of the opposition media participated in the staging. They brought people from around the area, doused them with water and started shouting that the regime had just used chemical weapons.

However, nothing of the kind happened, it only smelled like household chlorine. People stood around and watched. White Helmets were not wearing any gas masks or gloves. There were many civilians nearby. If the White Helmets had been worried about them they would have instructed everybody to leave the site but the crowd just stood there and watched.

Another eyewitness, Omar al-Alush ibn Mohamed, confirmed that the chemical attack near the market in Al-Maadi was faked by the White Helmets. He was also within 50 metres of the event. Like Abdul Razak Na'asan bin Mohammed, he saw that most people were not wearing any protective gear and did not sustain any injuries. When he attempted to film the scene, the White Helmets took away his cell phone and beat him up.

Omar al-Alush ibn Mohamed, 50, satellite television technician

I was 50 metres from that scene in Al-Maadi where the White Helmets claimed the Syrian government used chemical weapons. The incident took place at a vegetable market in Al-Maadi. White Helmets arrived and started filming. Reporters and photographers were not wearing



gas masks. I tried to take a video with my cell phone but they saw me, took away my phone and broke it. There were around 20 White Helmets. They arrived in two pickup trucks with 15 to 17 militants. They tried to talk people into posing but most people refused. Some of the White Helmets were not from our area and spoke a foreign language. One of the foreigners saw me taking a video and ordered them to beat me up and get me out of there.



Professor Rakan Barhum, a chemist and head of a university department of natural sciences

As an expert, I can see that the White Helmets' footage was poorly directed. There is no logic. For example, they claim that chlorine was used in the area. But chlorine is a heavy gas. Small amounts of chlorine in an open space will hardly have any effect. But in the video we can see children suffering. Then, after being doused with water, they suddenly get up.

For the White Helmets, filming scenes took precedence over helping the injured. Eyewitnesses recall cases when members of the organisation filmed instead of helping people.

Zakaria Mustafa, 42, a salesman

My uncle's house was not far from mine. Once a shell landed near his house. There was a lot of damage. The White Helmets arrived and started filming. I came over there and saw that instead of helping people they were filming. I told them: "This is our street. You have no business here." All the more so because the shell was fired by militants. People were saying that Jabhat al-Nusra arrested a militant from another group. There was a conflict and eventually they opened fire. A shell landed in the



courtyard. I told the White Helmets to get out of there and they used the radio to call the militants.

Militant Hasan Djader arrested me. They beat me up really bad and detained me for four or five hours. Then they told me: “Shut up or if you don’t like it, go to the regime’s territory.” Everybody suffered pretty badly in that area.



Mohamed al-Mustafa ibn Hassun, 48, salesman in Aleppo

When one of the buildings in Aleppo at the Qassara slope near the fountain was destroyed, the White Helmets arrived at the site but did not help anybody. Locals had to administer first aid to each other. The White Helmets used various excuses to justify themselves, be it technical failures or obligation to be at another site. I think their main purpose was to film staged scenes, to film and get money for it.

These eyewitness testimonies were corroborated by a public opinion poll conducted in late 2018 among 500 Aleppo residents by the Foundation for the Study of Democracy together with volunteers from youth organisations in Aleppo. The poll was conducted on October 6, 2018 in the territories that were earlier occupied by terrorists and illegal armed groups and where the White Helmets operated.

The results were adjusted to reflect the age and gender composition of the Syrian population. The poll was conducted in the form of street interviews with 500 respondents. The respondents were asked to describe both positive and negative aspects of the White Helmets’ work in Aleppo.

Out of the relatively few responses offered to that question, the third most common answer (13 respondents) had to do with “lying.” For example, the White Helmets were described using the following terms: “lie,” “arrived before a shelling,” “staged videos,” etc. This result clearly shows that a significant part of the Aleppo population believed that the organisation was largely involved in disseminating false information.



PART IV

ORGAN HARVESTING AND STEALING OF VALUABLES FROM SYRIAN CITIZENS, THEFT WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

In 2008, former Chief Prosecutor of the Hague Tribunal Carla Del Ponte published a book titled *The Hunt: Me and the War Criminals*, in which she described the kidnaping of 300 Serbs and Gypsies. According to Del Ponte, the kidnappers extracted the kidneys and hearts of these people. Their organs were sent to Europe, Israel and Turkey. Del Ponte found the house where the surgeries were performed. There were still traces of blood, the remains of medical supplies and surgical dressings. The same year, a group consisting of several people was arrested for illegal organ transplantation at the Medicus clinic in Pristina (Kosovo).

At the time when people were being kidnapped for organ harvesting, the British intelligence official and future founder of the White Helmets James Le Mesurier was working in Kosovo.

Numerous first-hand accounts of Syrian victims' relatives and former organisation members lead to the definitive conclusion that similar human organ harvesting was practiced in Syria with the help of the White Helmets.

Further, you will find evidence that children and teenagers were often killed for organ harvesting. Relatives and neighbours of the organ harvesting victims, medical personnel and residents



Right: The “yellow house” was one of the places where organs were extracted from the Serbian captives. At the time when people were being kidnapped for organ harvesting, the British intelligence official and future founder of the White Helmets James Le Mesurier (left) was working in Kosovo. Numerous first-hand accounts of Syrian victims’ relatives and former organisation members lead to the definitive conclusion that a similar human organ harvesting practice existed in Syria with the help of the White Helmets.

of the districts that were controlled by the militants, as well as former members of armed groups say that it was the centres of the White Helmets that evacuated people, allegedly to render medical aid, and later their relatives received their bodies without the internal organs.

In some cases, the dead bodies weighed two or three times less than the same people when they were alive, while their bodies had traces of organ harvesting, and the cuts on the corpses did not correspond to the wounds those people had. One of such examples was shared by Ahmed Al Omar, head of the nursing staff at the Ibn Rushd hospital in Aleppo, who examined the bodies. Due to the close communication between Syrians, information spread quickly about numerous cases when bodies were received from

the White Helmets' centres in some districts without the internal organs, and there was detailed information about the victims. This is how it came to light that a boy had been killed in Aleppo, and later his parents were found. Below you will find the testimony by Amal Amino, the mother of the boy whose organs were harvested. Particularly common are the stories where human harvesting involved the people evacuated by the White Helmets from Aleppo to Turkey. Ahmad Keddo, Jamal Hamwi and Khairat ad-Din Sadur in Aleppo tell the stories of how they received the bodies of their brother, son-in-law and cousin without internal organs after the evacuation by the White Helmets. Often, employees of the White Helmets would refuse to return to the relatives the bodies of people whom they had evacuated alive. They often insisted that the relatives should not examine the bodies below the neck. Witnesses speak about a tent in the Omar Bin Abdul Aziz hospital in Aleppo, where bodies were kept with their organs extracted.

The fact that there was a criminal organ harvesting scheme involving the White Helmets' centres was widely recognised among the residents of areas where the organisation's centres were located. Omar Al Mustafa ibn Mohammed says that because of the organ extraction practice, "people were scared, they did not dare to call the White Helmets and ask for help." After such districts were liberated from the militants, there was an abnormally large number of patients who needed immediate surgery. When asked why they had not gone to the hospital before, they replied that they knew many people who had turned for medical help to the White Helmets and "came back only as corpses." Syrian witnesses also spoke about

an abnormally high level of kidnapped people, especially children, in the areas controlled by the militants.

Abdul Razak Na'asan bin Mohammed, former member of the Ahrar al-Sham group in Aleppo, says that his commanding officer from the Shadi Qadiq group confirmed the rumours of the organ extraction practice and told him how it was done, in order to provide medical help to the militants.



Ahmed Al Omar, head of the nursing staff at the Ibn Rushd hospital in Aleppo

I live in the Hanano district of Aleppo. One of my neighbours was a driver, and the White Helmets took him away to Turkey for medical treatment. When a dead body was brought back from Turkey, I heard the cries of his parents, the weeping of his relatives. I ran to the car and helped bring his body. I noticed that it was very light. I had known that driver for a long time. He was about 45 years old. When I took away the bedsheet, I saw a large wound from his neck to the stomach. I have a degree in medicine, and when I touched the body with my hand, I knew that there were no organs inside. The skin almost touched the spine. I did not live long on the territory controlled by the militants — only about a year, but in that time, I heard about lots of such cases. Especially about children who went missing, and in some cases their bodies were brought back without internal organs.

Yasir al-Mohamed ibn Khalf, 44

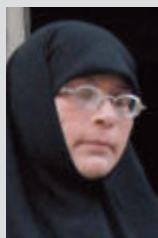
In the al-Salihin district, there was a poor child who was a beggar. He had a tumour near one of his eyes. He used to beg in front of a mosque. As a group of militants was leaving the mosque after praying, one of them slaughtered



the boy and left his body lying. They thought that a tumour was a sign of bad luck. The White Helmets arrived, took the body and later refused to return it to the boy's parents. Everyone in Aleppo knows the story of this boy, he was 12 years old, and his name was Mohammed. Most likely, his organs are already in Europe or America. There were many other similar cases.

Radwan Hoseira ibn Husein, 39, a construction worker

Our neighbour had a son who had a tumour near his right eye. The boy would go to the mosque and beg for money. When he was in al-Salihin, one of the militants killed him. Employees of the White Helmets took the body. The child's parents came to them to ask for the body, so that they could bury him decently. But the White Helmets refused to return the body. All our neighbours knew that it was because his organs had been extracted.



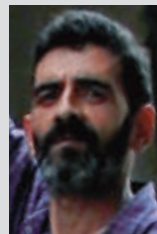
Amal Amino, from Aleppo, the mother of the boy whose organs were extracted

It happened on Friday. There was a knock on the door, and they said: "You have half an hour to save your son, or you'll never see him again." We needed to go to the Omar Bin Abdul Aziz hospital. I went there, and there was a tent with dead bodies behind the hospital, where I saw my son Mohammed. A man with long hair and a beard talked to me. He said: "May he rest in peace, but you have no right to see him." The man was one of the White Helmets, Syria Civil Defence. Another man came up and let me look at my son, but the boy was wrapped. They only let me see his neck and head and didn't let me look lower. I only saw his head, and I wanted to see the whole body, but they didn't let me. I asked them why they had killed a disabled

child. They replied that such an eye tumour was a sign of bad luck, and that is why they decided to kill him. I went outside, and I was never given the body of my son. Everyone here knows that his organs were extracted. I applied to the Omar Bin Abdul Aziz hospital several times to receive the body, and last time they threatened me and said: “We can kill you, even at your own house.”

Ahmad Keddo

My cousin, Abdul Keddo, was wounded in the Bustan al-Qasr district. Employees of the White Helmets evacuated him and took him to Turkey, and three days later they brought back and gave us his body with the organs already extracted. We took it and buried him.



Jamal Hamwi, small business owner

I had a real estate agency in the Al-Miaser district. A man on a motorcycle arrived and said that my son-in-law had been wounded and evacuated by the White Helmets to the Al Dakar hospital. I went to the hospital to ask how he was, and they said that he was all right. Then he was taken away to Turkey. One of his brothers went to Turkey. He was also told that his brother was all right, but he had been transferred to a different hospital. Finally, two days later he received the corpse of his brother. He brought the body back from Turkey accompanied by a man who told him that he had talked to my son-in-law two days earlier, and that he was all right. The same person said that many people who were brought to Turkey became victims of organ harvesting. After my son-in-law's body was brought to Aleppo, I saw it. He had a shrapnel skull wound, but there were cuts in other parts of his body: they had extracted his internal organs.

Dr Khairat ad-Din Sadur, a doctor from Aleppo

My cousin, Jamil Hassan Sadur, contacted a White Helmets medical unit in the Bustan al-Qasr district, complaining of abdominal pains. White Helmets personnel took him to Al Zarzur Hospital near Ansara. They told him that he had to undergo surgery in Turkey and relocated him. They promised to bring him back in a week. But they took his body to Termani in Idlib Governorate and forbade anyone to inspect it. When his parents looked at the body, they saw a large wound, like the one inflicted during the removal of body organs. They were afraid to investigate further because they realised that the militants would kill anyone asking about this situation.



Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed, 41, small business owner

People evacuated by the White Helmets often did not come back alive. For example, a person receives a minor injury, is rescued, evacuated, and then brought back with their stomach cut open and with their internal organs missing. I heard that a little girl was injured by a shell explosion. They took her to Turkey and brought her back three days later, dead and with no internal organs. I personally heard about three or four such cases, but people say there have been many of them. People were scared. When someone got injured, they were afraid to call the White Helmets and ask for help.

Omar al-Alush ibn Mohamed, 50, satellite television technician

I know of cases when they took injured people to Turkey and returned their bodies without internal organs. I recall a situation when a rocket

hit a wide street in the al-Fardus district, with its fragments wounding a man in his leg. A White Helmets ambulance took him to Turkey, and his body was returned two days later. His parents buried the body with abdominal wounds and without internal organs, which had been removed.

How can a person lose a leg, and his body is returned without internal organs? Once I heard a White Helmets employee receiving an order via radio transceiver when they were taking a person to Turkey for treatment. They told him to take the patient to Turkey and added that 75,000 would be paid for him.



Ahmed Maaruf, professor with the Faculty of Agriculture at Aleppo University

Many people at our university knew from their relatives that White Helmets personnel had transported injured and seriously ill local residents to hospitals, but that many bodies were returned with their internal organs missing.

They said White Helmets personnel were also involved in executions, and some of them had even cut off people's heads.

Khaled al-Jumaa al-Husein ibn Subhi, 46, from Aleppo

The neighbours of Abdullah Al Ashqi said he had suffered a motorcycle accident. His neighbours now live near the Hayatto petrol station in Al-Miaser district. The White Helmets evacuated him to Turkey, and brought his body back without internal organs. In another incident, Salekh Hamshu was hospitalised in Turkey, and his body was returned without internal organs. His parents live next door, 50 metres from my home.



Mohammed Hajouh bin Abdul Razzaq, 41, small business owner in Aleppo

Many people, taken by the White Helmets to Turkey, never came back. Many families told me about this.

Nihad Damerji ibn Mohamed, 57, construction worker in Aleppo

There was a tent at Omar Bin Abdul Aziz hospital, where they stored bodies with removed organs.



Fuad al-Ujeili, journalist in Aleppo

The White Helmets evacuated the wounded to Turkey. The big trouble is that the bodies of many of these people were returned without their internal organs to the militant-controlled territory.

I spoke with people who entered our area from the militant-controlled territory many times.

We usually asked them how life was, what news there were, and who was born or died.

And some of them spoke about incidents when their relatives were evacuated to Turkey for treatment by the White Helmets, and their bodies were later returned without internal organs.

After the militants left Aleppo, we spoke with seriously ill people, and we asked them why they did not ask for help in due time and did not receive medical treatment there.

They said they distrusted these White Helmets people because patients went there to be treated, but later their bodies were returned.

Zaher Batal, head of the Aleppo trade union for doctors

As chair of the Aleppo trade union for doctors, I receive many complaints from people about incidents when the White Helmets evacuated people for treatment and later returned their bodies without internal organs.

I remember an incident when, according to one of our hospital chiefs, his driver, who left for the Bustan al-Qasr humanitarian corridor, was abducted by the militants. His parents searched for him for a long time and eventually found him at a Turkish hospital. Later his body was brought here: it was slit wide open from throat to abdomen, and all the organs were missing. That driver, who worked on contract for the director of Ibn Rushd Hospital, came from a poor family. Ahmed Al Omar, who is head of the hospital's nursing staff, personally inspected his body. This is just one out of many similar incidents. Many people were abducted, and many were killed; their organs were removed and sold.

Abdul Razak Na'asan bin Mohammed, 45, from Aleppo, a former member of Ahrar al-Sham

The White Helmets arrived after shelling. When the situation got worse, the wounded were evacuated to Turkey, and many dead bodies were returned with their internal organs missing.



I asked the people whose injured relatives had been taken to Turkey, and they said that the bodies were brought back without some of the organs. In Ahrar al-Sham, I worked under Shadi Qadiq, codename Abu Adel al-Halabi. I asked him why the bodies are brought back with their organs removed after hospitalisation in Turkey. He said they did it on purpose to provide treatment to their fighters. So they take the kidneys and other organs from peaceful civilians and transplant them to the militants who need them. He confirmed all of this.

The officially published White Helmets document Code of Conduct states expressly:

“As the legitimacy of Syria Civil Defence derives from its volunteers, it is crucial that all SCD volunteers be held to the highest standard of personal accountability. While the difficulties of operating in a conflict zone are understood, SCD members are strictly prohibited, on penalty of expulsion, from:

- engaging in embezzlement, corruption, dishonesty, or other breaches of integrity that could detract from the performance of SCD’s duties or harm its reputation and good standing with its volunteers, the communities it serves, and its donors;
- any other activity that could be injurious to SCD’s reputation as a neutral, impartial, independent humanitarian organisation, or that contravenes the spirit of its values and this code of conduct.”

Just like in case of most other principles proclaimed by the White Helmets, facts submitted by Syrian eyewitnesses prove that the real actions of the organisation and its volunteers amounted to a systemic and all-out violation of their own principles and code of conduct, and that their own proclaimed striving to meet them was a lie. Numerous accounts by White Helmets personnel themselves and affected civilians, as well as their neighbours and relatives, prove that the chiefs of White Helmets centres and their paid full-time employees (whom the organisation tried to pass off as volunteers) considered it normal to regularly and systematically take part in robbing injured and killed people, looting flats and homes; the same

concerns widespread embezzlement, corruption and deception of the organisation's donors.

For example, former White Helmets employees in Douma, namely, Omran Makia, Ahmed Buweidani and lawyer Mohamed al-Naasan, said the organisation's employees often stole gold items from injured people and dead bodies. In some cases, they left the wounded to their own devices after stealing their jewellery. Mohamed Rajih, the Muezzin of Al-Tuabin Mosque in Aleppo, said White Helmets personnel once cut off the hand of a dead woman to steal her gold bracelet. According to Sabri Hamo Kordi, wounded women and girls usually fell prey to the White Helmets, who took away their jewellery, watches and mobile phones. Ali Mohamed al-Mardini, a former Jaysh al-Islam member, cites specific facts when, after the White Helmets provided assistance following the shelling of a shop, tens of thousands of dollars and a considerable amount of gold were stolen by them. When the organisation's employees took part in evacuating a wealthy family in Saqwa, they stole a bag with valuables. Eyewitness Mahmud al-Mohamed speaks about a similar incident involving the robbery of a jewellery shop in the Hulluk district after it came under fire. Nihad Damerji ibn Mohamed Fathi, an eyewitness from Aleppo, said he had seen White Helmets personnel cut off earrings, pendants and bracelets from women after a shelling. White Helmets employee Mohamed Bahar al-Shihadi ibn Fronzi mentioned an incident when the organisation's employees burglarised a flat and set it on fire. Former White Helmets employee Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka confirmed that such practice was widespread.

5. Individual Civil Defenders will be held strictly accountable to the values of neutrality, impartiality, and humanity, and to the letter and spirit of this Code of Conduct and all SCD policies.

As the legitimacy of SCD derives from its volunteers, it is crucial that all SCD volunteers be held to the highest standard of personal accountability. While the difficulties of operating in a conflict zone are understood, SCD members are strictly prohibited, on penalty of expulsion, from:

- Engaging in embezzlement, corruption, dishonesty, or other breaches of integrity that could detract from the performance of SCD's duties or harm its reputation and good standing with its volunteers, the communities it serves, and its donors
- Any other activity that could be injurious to SCD's reputation as a neutral, impartial, independent humanitarian organisation, or that contravenes the spirit of its values and this code of conduct.

6. We shall respect culture and custom

We will endeavour to respect the culture, structures and customs of our resistant Syrian people, and we shall ensure that we respect all and will refrain from doing any action that is considered harmful to any component of the Syrian people.

7. We shall attempt to build local capacities

Our people in general and members of the SCD in particular possess great capacities. Where there are vulnerabilities, we will strengthen these capacities and receive technical and professional support from international partners. We shall use these partnerships appropriately in search and rescue response to save the maximum number of lives.

8. Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of search and rescue

Disaster response assistance should never be imposed upon our volunteers or us. Effective relief and lasting rehabilitation can best be achieved where they are involved in establishing needs, receiving professional and technical training programs and capacitation.

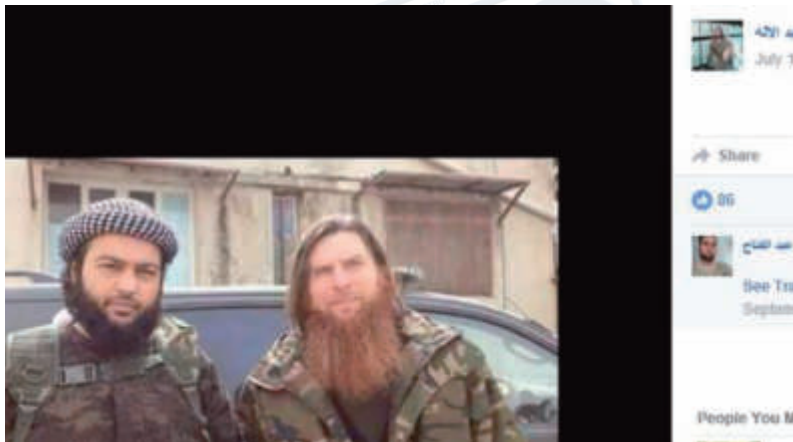
9. Our responsibility towards donors:

Based on our main mission that is search and rescue response and saving the largest number of civilian lives possible by our individual members and volunteers, all our dealings with donors and beneficiaries shall reflect an attitude of openness and transparency. We recognise the need to report on our activities, both from a financial perspective and the perspective of effectiveness in an open manner. We will continue the provision of search and rescue response based on high standards of professionalism and interactive expertise in order to minimise the wasting of valuable resources.

Photo: Pages from the White Helmets Code of Conduct stating expressly that “Syria Civil Defence members are strictly prohibited, on penalty of expulsion, from engaging in embezzlement, corruption, dishonesty, or other breaches of integrity that could detract from the performance of SCD’s duties or harm its reputation and good standing with its volunteers.”

In reality, as numerous eyewitness accounts show, embezzlement, theft of assets and sponsors' money were widespread among the leaders of the White Helmets centres. In turn, rank-and-file employees often took part in robbing wounded and dead civilians and burglarising flats and homes.

Witness accounts were confirmed by an opinion poll that was carried out in 2018 among 500 Aleppo residents. The poll was carried out on October 6, 2018 by the Foundation for the Study of Democracy together with volunteers from Aleppo's youth organisations in areas that were previously held by terrorists and illegal armed groups, and where the White Helmets operated. The results were adjusted to reflect the age and gender composition of the Syrian population. The poll was carried out in the form of street interviews with 500 respondents who were asked to answer open questions on the positive and negative aspects related to the White Helmets in Aleppo. While replies to these questions were relatively few, most of them (32) included statements related to such notions as "robbery," "violence," "violence against women," and "abuse." For example, the activities of the White Helmets were described in the following terms by respondents: robbery, burglary of homes, robbing people, burglary, burglary during rescue, robbed people, thieves, abuse, abusing people, killed, abusing local residents, killing people for money, breaking into homes, igniting fear, violence against women. The poll clearly showed a well-established and lasting practice of the White Helmets to commit robbery, violence and burglary against civilians, especially women.

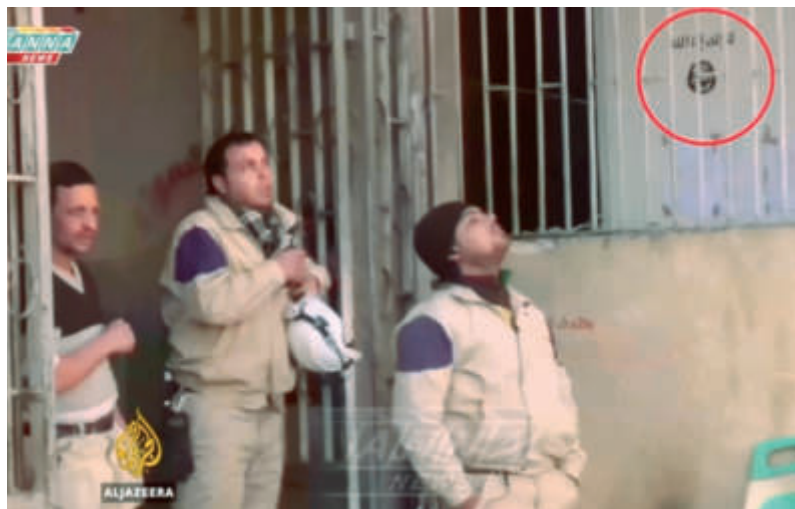


In the photo: a screenshot of a Facebook page of Haitam Abu Abdul, a White Helmets employee who openly publicised Abdullah al-Muhaysini, a well-known terrorist recruiter linked to al-Qaeda who was involved in establishing ties between ISIS, al-Nusra Front and Ahrar al-Sham, and called for killing Alawites. He was designated on a sanctions list by the US Department of State for raising funds for terrorists in Syria.

While under the much publicised Code of Conduct of the White Helmets, members are strictly prohibited from “engaging in embezzlement or corruption,” its former members, as well as members of terrorist and illegal armed groups provided ample evidence proving that the organisation relied on a broad range of methods used by heads of the group’s centres and designed to deceive donors and steal funds. The evidence that was obtained also points to the fact that the misappropriation of property was not a secret for the White Helmets employees or for the people living in the areas where the White Helmets operated. Consequently, it can be argued that the norms proclaimed by the White Helmets were all a lie, and the organisation had a long track record of systemic and constant embezzlement and corruption practices.

For example, former White Helmets employees in Saqba Mohamed Saber and Suleiman Mohamed Darwish shared information about the mechanisms of theft and embezzlement that were used by the White Helmets: they exaggerated vehicle repair costs or purchase prices, stole money by pretending to buy new minibuses, while actually replacing them with old vehicles that had been repaired, and exaggerated fuel prices many times over. Former fighters from Jaysh al-Islam and other groups confirmed that these methods actually existed. For example, Ali Mohamed al-Mardini said that the White Helmets took \$7–\$8 per litre of petrol, while they actually paid about \$1 per litre.

Former White Helmets in Douma, Ahmed Buweidani and Omran Makia, as well as Abdulmunam Faiz al-Alush from Homs province provided an insight into how the funds allocated by the donors were



The White Helmets made no secret of their affiliation with or sympathy towards the terrorists. The photo above shows the emblem of ISIS, a terrorist group, on the wall in a White Helmets centre. The photo below shows a White Helmets employee with the flag of the Syria opposition frequently used by the Free Syrian Army, an illegal armed group.

embezzled. This was done by paying employees less and keeping the difference, purchasing worn clothes and claiming that they were new, buying old car parts as new, and exaggerating the volume of petrol that was used.

Seif al-Din Hubiya, a doctor, lived in Douma throughout the period when it was held by armed groups. He said that the corruption and theft by the local White Helmets head, Mohamed Masarwi Abu Salyam, was common knowledge both among members, as well as city residents. He used stolen money to buy cars and flats, and was killed by Jaysh al-Islam fighters when the Syrian army was about to restore control over the city as he was trying to take away the money he had stolen.

Omran Makia, 21, a White Helmets employee in Douma

There were cases where we would arrive at the site of an explosion to help people. Whenever we found gold or gemstones we would take it all. In one apartment there was a woman who did not feel well. We arrived to help her, found some gold and stole it.



Ahmed Buweidani, 24, a White Helmets employee in Douma

When civilians were taken by an ambulance to the hospital, the White Helmets could take the gold from a woman or money from a man. For example, in the incident when people got food poisoning, while the White Helmets pretended that it was a chemical attack by the Syrian army, they simply robbed the people who were involved.

Mohamed al-Naasan, 49, attorney in Douma

One day several shells fell near the Hassiba Mosque. There was a woman there who was robbed and left to her devices. The White Helmets wanted to help the poor woman, but then they saw gold on her hands. They took everything and left without helping her.



Sabri Hamo Kordi, 54

Our district was controlled by Jabhat al-Nusra. But they behaved so badly that people turned against them and expelled them from our neighbourhood. In response Jabhat al-Nusra shelled our district, and one rocket hit the Ashur Mosque, where boys and girls attended classes.

The fighters came and replaced the fragments of the improvised rocket with fragments of a Syrian army missile.

After that the White Helmets came in and started filming as women and children were being evacuated. While doing so, they took earrings from girls, and watches and telephones from women.

Ali Mohamed al-Mardini, 28, former Jaysh al-Islam member in Damascus

The al-Kuatli Street in Douma was shelled by al-Nusra, and the shell hit a store offering money transfers and selling gold. There were about \$60,000, 1.5 million Syrian liras and half a kilogram of gold in the store, but all this was gone after the White Helmets provided their assistance. I saw them do it.



Ali Mohamed al-Mardini, 28, former Jaysh al-Islam member in Damascus



One day there were well-known television networks including Al Jazeera covering a staged chemical attack, and a woman was shown on screen wearing a chain, and when she got into the frame the second time the chain was gone. The White Helmets were accompanied by Jaysh al-Islam fighters for security. No civilians were allowed there. When Beit-Hamis building on Sahet al-Jamiya Square in Saqwa was shelled, the White Helmets arrived to save an affluent family that lived there. During the rescue operation they took a bag with money and gold. I saw them do it.



Mohamed Rajih ibn Hasan, 49, muezzin at the Al-Tuabin Mosque, Tell Sahur District in Aleppo

The White Helmets came to our district under the pretext of helping civilians, but in fact all they did was rob and pillage. One time they cut the hand from a woman's corpse to take her gold bracelet. Humanitarian aid distributed by the White Helmets went primarily to members of their organisation and the families of fighters.

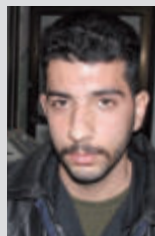
Mohamed Bahar al-Shihadi ibn Fronzi, 23, a White Helmets employee



There were times when the White Helmets would be called to put out a fire in a flat but instead they robbed the place and set in on fire afterwards. This happened in the al-Shaar district. The Ibrahim brothers from the White Helmets centre where I worked told me that there were a lot of valuables in this apartment. They belonged to the people who left Aleppo as refugees.

Mahmud Buweidani, 22, a White Helmets employee in Douma

Sometimes people were robbed, forced to surrender their money, mobile phones and gold. Once, when a woman was killed in an artillery attack, the White Helmets provided assistance and helped put out fires. But later the woman's relatives complained that a bag with money was missing. The helpers stole it.



Ratim Akrad, 26, a former member of the Free Syrian Army

A woman was wounded in the arm in the town of Assed. The White Helmets took her to a hospital. When she regained consciousness, she saw that all her gold was missing.

Nuuman Buweidani, 35, a White Helmets employee

Some leaders of the White Helmets centres stole money, while others sold humanitarian aid on the market. The leader of our centre, Muhammad Kiakia, drained and sold 125 litres of fuel from our equipment every time. Fuel is expensive. He said we used the fuel for our missions.



Ashik Aliua, 49, household appliances salesman in Daraa

Once, a fighter of the Free Syrian Army was wounded. When the White Helmets arrived, they started undressing him. He had 75,000 liras, a mobile phone and a lighter. They took everything. The man died. Next day, his son asked about his father's telephone and money. They said he had nothing on him.



Tell-tale footage by the White Helmets: One rescuer carrying a victims surrounded by four cameramen and a crowd of gesticulating people who are not taking part in the rescue.

My brother Bilal Aliua was wounded in the leg. The White Helmets who helped him stole his submachine gun and a mobile phone. My brother bought that gun for 350,000 liras.

They always steal mobiles, even from the wounded. They stole my simple push-button mobile phone. I was in the street when I had a heart attack and fell.

When I came to senses in the hospital, I asked about my phone and learned that it had been taken by the people who brought me to the hospital. It was the White Helmets who helped me.

Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka, 44, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo

We did not put out many fires after shooting raids because we were afraid of such missions. We put out big fires approximately once a week. The fighters torched the flats and houses after robbing them, and we were called in to put out the fire.



Feisal al-Bakur ibn Mohamed Hadi, 46, TV repairman in Aleppo

Once the battalion of Abu Ammar and some other unit quarrelled and started shooting at each other near a mobile phone shop in al-Shaar. Civilians were injured. Shells hit the house of the Ahtarini family. The White Helmets came to rescue the residents. One White Helmets employee carried a woman, who was unconscious, and another accompanied them. I saw the second man snatch the woman's necklace and put it in his pocket. Many people saw them do this, which led to a conflict with the locals, who asked the White Helmets why they had come, to steal or to save. Later the fighters who accompanied the White Helmets ordered everyone to disperse. The White Helmets placed the woman on the ground in front of the building and left. Later local women took her to a hospital in a private car. I was standing nearby and saw everything myself.



Khaled al-Jumaa al-Husein ibn Subhi, 46, from Aleppo

I lived in the Al-Miaser district of Aleppo. A shell landed in the building that was 500 metres from my house. Not only me but all the locals heard the explosion and ran towards the building. But fighters from the Hamzi Shaker group did not let us rescue anyone. The evacuation only began after the White Helmets arrived on the scene. They were

accompanied by Hamzi Shaker gunmen. I saw an employee of the White Helmets take a golden bracelet off a gravely wounded woman aged about 23, who was bleeding and could not do anything. He also snatched her golden earrings. I saw this myself. That woman was removed from the ruins of a two-storey building. The White Helmets took her to a hospital and later brought her back dead. The man who snatched her jewellery was in a White Helmets uniform, he was between 25 and 30 years old.



Mohamed Naser Zahra, 46, a worker at the tobacco factory

The district of Bustan al-Basha was directly on the contact line. When the fighters entered it, they plundered the houses, which the locals have long left because of the ongoing fighting. The fighters robbed the houses and then set up mine launchers to shell the nearby neighbourhoods so as to plunder them after their residents fled.

Mahmud al-Mohamed, 45, small business owner

There are three or four jewellers in the main street of the Hulluk neighbourhood. One day shells hit the shop of Mohamed al-Sharif. It was the holy month of Ramadan, and so there were many victims. The White Helmets stole their gold instead of rescuing the survivors. The whole street later talked about this.



Nihad Damerji ibn Mohamed, 57, construction worker in Aleppo

A building was damaged in a raid in the vicinity of Qalyasa, near the al-Kenj filling station on Wadi al-Arais. When the White Helmets came,

accompanied by the fighters, entered the building, they started cutting off and snatching earrings, chains and bracelets from the wounded women. They pretended to rescue the people, while in fact they came to steal their gold. I saw this myself, and you can easily find witnesses from this area.

Seif al-Din Hubiya, a doctor in Douma

I have heard the wounded rescued by the White Helmets later complain about stolen property. Women lost their gold and men, their money.

Ahmed Buweidani, 24, a White Helmets employee in Douma

I worked in Douma, and then the fighters and White Helmets entered the city. They said they would pay big salaries to those who will work for them. It was a difficult time, and the prices were soaring, so I joined them. They said they would pay us \$150. I signed the receipt for \$150 but got only \$50.



The boss of the White Helmets centre in al-Ansari was a man named Ratib Abida. The centre was headquartered in a kindergarten. We were issued identical uniforms and helmets. Those who worked at the headquarters were supposed to be issued additional money for buying meals, but we never got anything. Our bosses said they took the money to buy new clothes and footwear for all of us, but they only bought the cheapest shirts and stole the rest of the money.

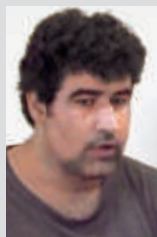
We also had a broken minivan. They said they would buy the spare parts to repair the van. But they bought second-hand parts while reporting to their superiors that they bought new parts. They said they had bought 1,000 litres of fuel, but only bought 500 litres.

Omran Makia, 21, a White Helmets employee in Douma



I joined the White Helmets because I wanted to have a job and a salary, and there were no other jobs around. I heard that they were recruiting people, and so I joined them. My centre, No. 200, was located in a kindergarten. We had a staff of 25.

First I worked from 9 am to 6 pm, and then I changed my shift to working 24 hours every other day. I expected to be paid \$150, but I only received \$50. But they also issued us a 20 kg food package every other month. It contained vegetable oil, sugar, rice and canned foods.



Abdulmunam Faiz al-Alush, 24, a White Helmets employee in Homs

I drove an ambulance for the White Helmets in the town of Kafr Laha, Homs Province.

I joined them to get food for my children. The White Helmets turned six shops on Murimin Street into their headquarters. There were ten of us, plus the boss, Mohamed al-Hadr, codename Mustafa. My immediate superior was Fais Abu Bilial. We had a minivan, a fire engine, a Hyundai lorry with a water cistern, and a small bulldozer.

I worked for them for three months. They promised to pay me \$150 every month, but I only received \$150 for all three months.

Suleiman Mohamed Darwish, 35, a White Helmets employee in Saqba

Our bosses, Yasin Dogmush and Abdulkarim al-Hafi, took all the money. They claimed to use the funds to buy spare parts for our vehicles. Once they

installed a crane on one of our vehicles. It was an ordinary lorry before. The equipment for this cost 100,000 Syrian pounds, but they claimed they spent a million.

Another time they said our van was too old and we need a new one. But they never bought new vehicles, they only said they did. Instead, they repaired the old vehicles. I know that at one time we were issued \$4,300 for diesel and petrol, but our bosses spent only \$1,000 on fuel.

Ali Mohamed al-Mardini, 28, former Jaysh al-Islam member

Jaysh al-Islam sold diesel they received via the tunnel in Barzeh. We paid \$1 per litre, while the White Helmets bought the fuel from us via a man known as Abu Hakim for \$7–\$8.



Mohamed Saber, 33, a White Helmets employee in Saqba

Many times when vehicle repairs cost \$500 they said they spent \$1,500.

Seif al-Din Hubiya, a doctor in Douma

The boss of the White Helmets in Douma was Mohamed Masarwi Abu Salyam, who was rolling in money. He bought cars and mansions. He was completely corrupt. Those who worked for him complained that they never received their salaries in full.

Mohamed Masarwi was a well-known and a very rich man. He hid his money on a farm, and when the Syrian Army launched their victorious offensive he wanted to get the money out, but he quarrelled with the fighters from Jaysh al-Islam who killed him.



A screenshot of the profile of White Helmets employee Ahmed Abu Abdo that is self-explanatory: he posts photos of himself with weapons and pictures of other armed people, adding, “Jihad doesn’t need you, but you need jihad to go to Heaven with the help of Allah.”



Many White Helmets employees openly admitted that they also fought in illegal armed groups and posted photos of themselves holding weapons.

The White Helmets did very lucrative business by selling humanitarian aid on the market.

Ali Mohamed al-Mardini, 28, former Jaysh al-Islam member



When convoys with humanitarian aid reached Douma, we took 25 percent for ourselves, distributed another 25 percent among the people and sold the remaining 50 percent to the White Helmets. We received aid from the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and from the government. The aid included pasta, rice, sugar, beans, carrots, lentils, tomatoes, salt and other foods. The White Helmets issued some of the aid to their employees and sold the rest on the market at sky-high prices. For example, they sold sugar for 20,000 Syrian pounds a kilo.

The United States, Britain and other countries have issued over \$100 million to the White Helmets, who spent the bulk of these funds on salaries for their employees, who were also members of terrorist groups and paramilitary units, and also financed the fortification of their positions.

PART V

THE WHITE HELMETS: IGNORANT AND DESTRUCTIVE

There is a video showing Mujahideen celebrating the liberation of the city that is very easy to find online. The video clearly shows White Helmets celebrating with members of the Jabhat al-Nusra terrorist group. One of the White Helmets is clearly waving a flag of Jabhat al-Nusra, an al-Qaeda branch in Syria and Lebanon.

Most of the White Helmets also shared the organisation's radical ideology, including abandoning general education in favour of religious studies.

According to the evidence provided by Syrian eyewitnesses, the White Helmets had a destructive effect on Syrian education and healthcare. It was a standard practice for the White Helmets to storm schools and kindergartens. Children and students would be forced out of the buildings, while teachers were threatened with death if they continued to teach. They were ordered to send children to religious schools. It was a common practice for the organisation to seize private and public hospitals and prohibit medical staff from treating civilians. They would then be forced to provide medical services to militants only. This had a destructive effect on the healthcare system.

Multiple White Helmets members and affected civilians attested that the organisation seized hundreds of properties from private



Screenshots from the video titled Sarmin: Mujahideen celebrating the liberation of the city. The video clearly shows White Helmets (one of them is wearing a Sarmin civil defence uniform) celebrating with terrorists as they wave flags of Jabhat al-Nusra, an al-Qaeda affiliate in Syria and Lebanon.

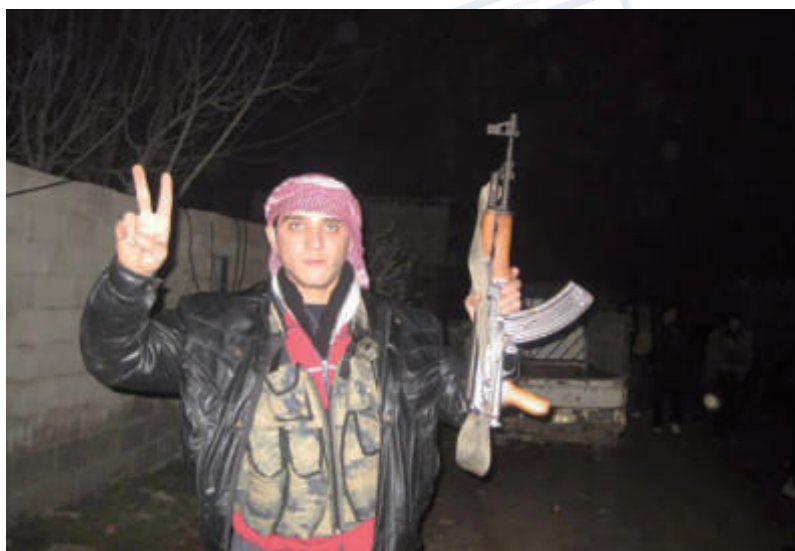


Above: White Helmets and Jabhat al-Nusra celebrate the seizing of Sarmin. Below: One of the White Helmets who celebrated the capture of the city was identified as Moawiah Hassan Agha. He was a member of the organisation and a militant who posted videos and photos of killings of Syrian soldiers on his Facebook page.



Above: White Helmets member Moawiah Hassan Agha with captured Syrian soldiers.

Below: A Syrian soldier whose murder involved a White Helmets employee. The same employee posted the photo on Facebook.



Above: A screenshot of White Helmets employee Moawiah Hassan Agha's Facebook page where he posted videos and photos of Syrian soldiers' killings. Below: White Helmets employee Moawiah Hassan Agha, who was also a militant and participated in armed hostilities.

owners and the Syrian government. They seized hundreds of ambulances and replaced professional doctors with people without medical training, sometimes without any education whatsoever. The White Helmets almost completely destroyed the ambulance network in the areas where they operated.

Even after terrorist and illegal armed groups seized districts and towns, a professional government civil defence system (funded by the Syrian government) continued to operate there and provide help.

The White Helmets seized fire stations and fire equipment, forced out professional firefighters and replaced them with their own untrained employees. A very small number of them completed short firefighting training.

The objective data of the public opinion poll conducted in 2018 in Aleppo indicate that out of all the cases when the injured required first aid during shellings and bombings, the White Helmets were the least efficient group. The poll was conducted by the Foundation for the Study of Democracy and volunteers of Aleppo youth organisations on October 6, 2018, in the areas earlier occupied by terrorists and illegal armed groups and where the White Helmets operated. The age and gender composition of the Syrian population was used for the sample calculation. The poll was conducted in the form of street interviews of 500 respondents. According to the opinion poll among the injured, in more than half of the cases (55.8%) it was their relatives or they themselves who had to administer first aid. Almost one-quarter (24%) were helped by passers-by or neighbours. Professional hospital workers tended to 13% of the injured. The White Helmets rescued 7.1%. This data indicates that

the organisation was extremely inefficient despite the unprecedentedly high level of financing and control over hundreds of facilities and thousands of units of equipment. The White Helmets almost completely destroyed the Syrian civil defence system in the areas where they operated, including the fire service, and then unsuccessfully attempted to replace it with non-professionals who were often hired via newspaper ads or from among former members of terrorist and illegal armed groups.

In their promotional materials, the White Helmets show dozens of photographs in order to convince the public that they are helping schoolchildren. In fact, they were violating the schoolchildren's rights without any grounds whatsoever.

Former White Helmets employees and militants commented that the organisation would seize dozens of schools and completely stall their activity by ousting students and teachers.

For example, they ousted all girls from the Third Women's Art School in Aleppo. The White Helmets prohibited school education not only because they wanted to use the premises for their command posts.

Both students and teachers said that the employees of the organisation in fact advocated against secular education as harmful and imposed religious studies. For example, school teacher Khaled al-Farhan and student Nur al-Farhan, 12, said that when their Gaza school in Sakhur, Aleppo, was seized, the White Helmets directly said that there would be no more classes and "if they want to study, they should go to a mosque." Interestingly, the photographs published by the White Helmets about their work in schools are



Above: Mahmud al-Haj Omar outside his house burned by the White Helmets. He says: “The White Helmets ransacked and burned my house because I fled to the areas that were controlled by the Syrian government.”
Below: Mohamed Rajih ibn Hassan, the muezzin of an Aleppo mosque. He recalls: “There was a White Helmets centre behind this wall. Jabhat al-Nusra’s mortar positions were here as they shelled the city. Their prison where they would beat people up was here too. The White Helmets knew about that and helped Jabhat al-Nusra militants.”



Photo: A White Helmets teacher wears a niqab, women's Muslim headwear that covers the entire face while leaving a small opening for the eyes. Islam does not require or recommend wearing a niqab. Usually, it implies that the wearer is a strict religionist.

quite telling and confirm their ambition to replace secular education with religious studies. Women from the White Helmets teach wearing niqabs, Muslim headwear that covers the face but leaves the eyes uncovered. Wearing a niqab is neither required nor recommended in Islam.

Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib, an opposition journalist who worked with the White Helmets, quoted statistics. In Eastern Ghouta alone, “10 out of 26 their centres were located in schools and one in a kindergarten.” Without any doubt, the White Helmets would seize kindergartens for their needs and force out children

and teachers. This was confirmed by Nuha Mohamed al-Najar, the director of a kindergarten taken over by the White Helmets in Douma, Hatem Uyn, a member of the Jaysh al-Islam internal security service, Doctor Hasan from Douma and others. Former White Helmets members as well as affected civilians said that the organisation would often seize private clinics and public hospitals. A significant number of these hospitals stopped operating and were turned into White Helmets command centres, while the rest provided medical care exclusively to militants. Ordinary people were no longer treated there.

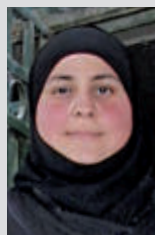
This was confirmed by Aleppo resident Mohamed Said Hyri ibn Mohammed Barakash, Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed, Aleppo doctors' trade union leader Zaher Batal ibn Mohammed Galib and Khairat ad-Din Sadur, the owner of a small dental clinic taken over by the White Helmets, who was threatened with murder.

Former White Helmets employees and members of armed groups also said that seizing private property was a common practice of the organisation. Among others, this was confirmed by Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka, Mohamed Bahar al-Shihadi ibn Fronzi, Omar al-Alush ibn Mohamed and many others.

Similarly to hundreds of properties, the White Helmets seized cars, vehicles, construction and utility equipment from both private owners and local authorities. Former White Helmets employees and members of armed groups say almost all the equipment that the organisation used to provide civil defence assistance and to outfit the military groups' positions had been seized.

Nuha Mohamed al-Najar, the director of a kindergarten taken over by the White Helmets in Douma

We had children here from one to six years old, when the militants seized the kindergarten in 2011. Then they handed the building over to the White Helmets. The children could no longer use the facility.



Ahmed Buweidani, 24, a White Helmets employee in Douma

Our White Helmets centre occupied a kindergarten, as well as the premises of two schools on Al-Ghanam Square and a warehouse.



Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed, 41, small business owner in Aleppo

In Um al-Karamel, the White Helmets organised a centre at a local clinic, which no longer operated after that. There were 20 people, members of the White Helmets. They had a front loader, three ambulances, two small excavators and one fire truck. In Tall al-Daman, the White Helmets set up a hospital for militants. When civilians go to that hospital, they receive care too, but they are not prescribed any medication. But for militants, the place provided a full range of services. The banner on the hospital said “Civil defence centre in Tall al-Daman.”



Mohamed Said Hyri ibn Mohammed Barakash, Aleppo, 45, a truck driver

When the White Helmets arrived at the Jub Al Kobba hospital, they removed all the patients and closed the

hospital. They said this building would be used to treat their employees and militants. After that, ordinary people were no longer seen in that hospital.



Zaher Batal ibn Mohammed Galib, head of the Aleppo trade union for doctors

The White Helmets seized medical centres and hospitals, and used them to treat militants. For example, the Omar Abdulaziz hospital in the al-Fardus district was a regular public hospital that provided assistance to civilians and citizens even when the area was already controlled by the militants.

The White Helmets employees seized it and turned the hospital as well as the outpatient clinic located nearby into a field hospital for treating militants and militant families only.

The White Helmets are less than humane. They are mercenaries who work for money.

As the chairman of the trade union for doctors, I do not know of a single doctor registered in our trade union or in the Aleppo City Healthcare Department who would work for this organisation.

Khairat ad-Din Sadur, a doctor in Aleppo

I owned a dental clinic in the Bustan al-Qasr District. When the White Helmets arrived, they began to threaten me. They said I had no choice: either work for them, or they would kill me. I was personally threatened by one of the leaders of the local White Helmets, Mohammed Hamami.



After I left Bustan al-Qasr, I learned that they had taken over the clinic and the equipment, and turned it into a medical centre for the militants.

Abd Al-Jabar Bodaka, 44, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo

In Bab al-Nairab in Aleppo, where my centre was located, the White Helmets seized two private houses and accommodated their employees there. These houses were in Sakhat al-Milyah Square.



Mohamed Bahar al-Shihadi ibn Fronzi, 23, a White Helmets employee

Our White Helmets centre was located in the Al Saad Wedding Hall on the Al Haidariyah roundabout. It used to be a private venue, but it was seized. They suggested I go on a mission with them. But I refused, fearing for my life.

Omar al-Alush ibn Mohamed, 50, satellite television technician

The White Helmets branch in our area was located in Bab al-Nairab, half an hour from the al-Salihin District. They seized a private house. Their cars, ambulances, fire engines and blue barrels were there.



Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib, 31, opposition journalist who worked with the White Helmets

The White Helmets took nearly all vehicles away from people because they needed them for their work. Some from car dealers, some from the owners. All these centres procured transport in the same way. They did not take property from people who joined the opposition. Each White Helmets centre had up to 30 cars, a bulldozer, an excavator and four ambulances.

It is interesting to note that even the White Helmets themselves do not try to conceal the fact that they seized a large number of schools. For example, the well-known Netflix's film *The White Helmets* shows the location of a centre in Ansari, Aleppo. The film, which creates a false positive image of the organisation, does not say that this building used to house the Third Women's Art School for teaching girls. Local residents confirm that the White Helmets drove all the students and teachers away and cancelled the classes.

Omar Bozo ibn Ali Marosh, 41, imam at the Al-Khansa Mosque, al-Mashhad district

Militants from the Sukur al-Sham and Liwa al-Tawhid brigades came to our Ansari District. The White Helmets came later and seized a school that was at the crossroads of the al-Mashhad District. They set up their command centre there. The teachers were not even given a chance to travel to other areas. They were ordered to stop teaching and stay in the area, or they would simply be destroyed. White Helmets employees wore uniforms with an emblem that said "Civil Defence." There were about 50 people in the school. A map was drawn on the wall, and "Civil Defence" was also written on the map. The opposition flag was hoisted nearby. All of their cars had those "Civil Defence" signs. Part of the equipment the White Helmets used was actually stolen, and some was bought. Other militants were deployed next door. It is a school complex consisting of several buildings. The White Helmets were in the first school, and the next one housed the Fastaqim Kama 'Umirt group. A car wash nearby was the group's command post. The militants also opened the so-called "militant court" in the district administration building.



It is not difficult to find numerous witnesses to the White Helmets' seizing of schools and terminating of the educational process. These numerous cases are confirmed by both the students and the teachers of those schools, as well as their neighbours.

Nur al-Farhan

When the militants came, I was in the third grade at the Gaza school. The civil defence employees came to the school; they wore white helmets and olive-coloured uniforms. We were told to leave the classrooms. They sent everyone outside—the teachers and the students, boys and girls. They stood in front of us and said there would be no more teaching here. If you want to study, then go to the mosque. We could no longer go to school, so we went to the mosque.



The victims themselves confirm the fact that the White Helmets expelled not only students but also the teachers. They also recall how they burned secular books, destroyed school stationery, and stole school property. Experts say that such actions have led to devastating results for national education. The level of children's instruction sharply decreased, and the years spent in areas where the White Helmets worked were lost for their education.

Khaled al-Farhan, a teacher at the Gaza school in Aleppo, Oct. 9

I am a teacher at the Gaza school in the Sakhur District in Aleppo. I am a teacher of elementary grades and have been working as a teacher for 34 years. After the militants



entered the area, the White Helmets employees expelled the teachers and schoolchildren from the school and used the building as their centre. They stole school property and burned books. There was no chance for any dialogue with them. They told us to go away and kicked us out. The teaching and learning process was terminated. And then the teachers, including me, were also watched.



Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib, 31, opposition journalist who worked with the White Helmets

Of the approximately 26 White Helmets centres in Eastern Ghouta, 10 were located in schools and one in a kindergarten.

I also remember two centres in Douma housed in schools, and one in a kindergarten; in Deir al-Asafir there was a centre in a school; in al-Marg they were in schools; a centre in al-Shifunya was located in a school; in Mesraba they were in residential buildings; in Zamalka there was a training centre at a school.

They banned children from attending schools. Classes in these schools were discontinued, so they completely ceased operation.



Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed, 41, small-business owner in Aleppo

When the militants came, I lived in Um al-Karamel, where I had a mobile phone shop. First, these were militants from the Ahrar al-Sham and Suwar ash-Sham groups, and later al-Nusra came. Next, the White Helmets came. They have established several centres in Um al-Karamel, Abu al-Duhur, Saraqib and Tell Al-Daman. They were mainly located in school buildings, so these schools had to suspend classes.

There is a man, Hodr al-Sotari, who was called “doctor,” a member of some British organisation and the head of the so-called Civil Society Union. He is a Syrian national but lives in Saudi Arabia. He was responsible for delivering sponsors’ aid supplies, that is, the provision of material support from abroad. The White Helmets employees, who bought from me on credit, would wait for their wages to be paid at the beginning of a month and make excuses to me, saying that this man Hodr was late, was staying too long some place in the Netherlands or Britain. He was responsible for bringing money to the White Helmets from abroad. I know him personally. I talked to him. I asked him to resume studies at schools. But he answered: “No.”

Radwan Hoseira ibn Husein, 39, a construction worker

I’ve been living for a long time in Sukkari district, so I was there when the White Helmets arrived. They occupied the Omar Abu Rishad School and the Al-Zarzur Hospital. They suspended studies at the school to accommodate their 25 to 30 employees. They kicked doctors and nurses out of the hospital, so it ceased to provide medical care. About 40 White Helmets were put up there.



Hamid Kaid al-Havanda, 31, Al-Qadam

When the White Helmets arrived, they said they would have their administration here. They promised to give me \$220 every month, but they deceived me. I was engaged in providing primary health care. I had no relevant education. Mudir Markiaz was the head of the White Helmets centre, and he carried a handgun. Abdulla Assarhan was the senior person at this organisation in charge of Daraa where they had



eight headquarters. Sometimes militants and White Helmets shared one building. The organisation was headquartered in a school building in south Al-Hara. Children were taken to another school, or so to say, driven out of their own. Militants had agreed with the White Helmets to come to the latter's aid at any time. There were men from the Free Syrian Army and Ahrar al-Sham in our area. Jabhat al-Nusra men also stayed here, but they were squeezed out after a while.

Muhammad Adnan Djabau, former member of an illegal armed group

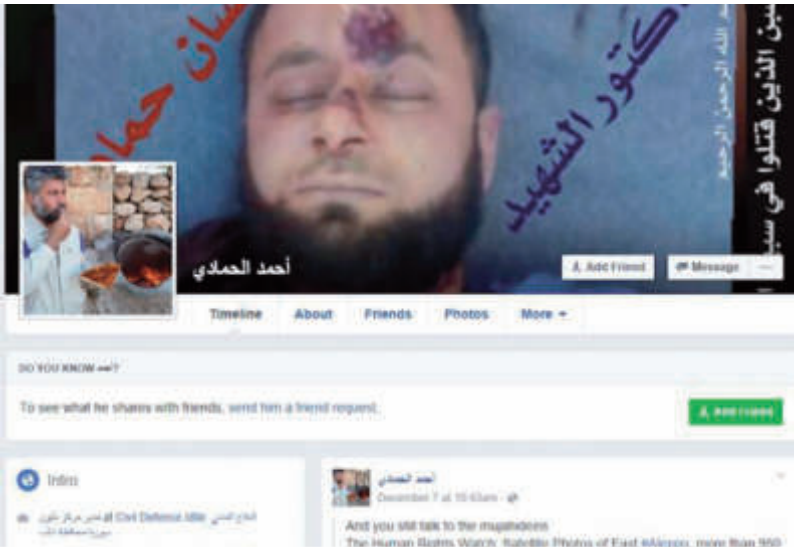


I was the commander of the 100-men-strong Kassion group, part of the Free Syrian Army. Our group was stationed in Deir Yassin, and we forced the White Helmets to leave the area because this organisation had proved useless. They did not help anyone, citing a lack of funds. They were just sitting, waiting for orders from their bosses to come from abroad, and did not listen to the elders who spoke to them.

Zakaria Mustafa, 42, salesman



I've been living in the Sakhur district since the outbreak of the war. We saw militants from many armed groups in our district, including Harakat Nour al-Din al-Zenki, Ahrar al-Sham, brigades of Sultan Mohamed al-Fatih and the Battalion of Abu Ammar. The White Helmets were present in almost all districts in Aleppo, occupying schools and other buildings. In the Sakhur district, they had headquarters in the Seif Mahmud School and the Mustafa Badaoui School, and they also seized the Red Crescent clinic and the local community centre. They kept their vehicles opposite the community centre.



Screenshot of the profile of White Helmets employee Ahmed al-Hamadi, who posted photos of children carrying weapons on Facebook, calling them the “Little Army of Conquest.”



Ahmed Maaruf, professor with the Faculty of Agriculture at Aleppo University

After the eastern districts of Aleppo were liberated from militants, I went there to see my school that I went to in my younger years.

I was shocked to see that the White Helmets had had their headquarters there and had kept detainees in the basement. The White Helmets are militants and take part in hostilities and interrogation of detainees in prisons. Not only this school, but some other schools as well were used as White Helmets headquarters. They suspended studies there.



Mohamed Rajih ibn Hasan, 49, muezzin at the Al-Tuabin Mosque, Tell Sahur District in Aleppo

We saw various terrorist groups come to our district — from Jabhat al-Nusra to Liwa al-Tawhid, Ahrar Sakhur and Ahrar Syria. The White Helmets headquarters was located in the Abi Zar School, the Mustafa Badaoui School

and the Wafa al-Arabi School.

This organisation's logo was put on the façade of the school buildings. When the White Helmets seized these schools, they burned textbooks and school stationery. Studies were suspended. Militants' headquarters were located next to the White Helmets headquarters.

One of them that had mortar firing positions and prisons was located next door to the White Helmets headquarters. In fact, the White Helmets worked hand in hand with militants, and the mortar firing positions built next door to them were used to shell the city from time to time.



Fuad al-Ujeili, journalist in Aleppo

The White Helmets occupied school buildings, kicked out teachers and quite a few children could not study. This was particularly well illustrated by the school-age refugees who passed through the corridors established by the government. We saw this when we met with school-children after the White Helmets and militants withdrew from Aleppo's eastern areas. Youth aged 17 could only go to the sixth or seventh form. They made poor progress because studies had been suspended in the areas where the White Helmets and militants were present. In addition to schools, the White Helmets occupied clinics and hospitals, kicking out public-sector employees, and brought their operation to a standstill.

Although, in reality, the White Helmets seized schools on a vast scale and denied schoolchildren the opportunity to receive education, they have spared no effort to convince the Western audience that they are friends of schools. Since the establishment of the White Helmets, they have distributed dozens of photos to demonstrate the aid they have allegedly provided to schools. Some of them have obviously been staged and are nothing more than fabrication. For example, a photo taken on October 1, 2018, shows White Helmets hosing down a classroom. Clearly, after this the classroom, complete with the desks and chairs, will inevitably fall into disrepair, making it impossible to hold classes there, and will require repairs.

White Helmets employees and former members of terrorist and illegal armed groups say the organisation was one of the richest operating in the areas that were not controlled by the Syrian Government. Witnesses say White Helmets employees were paid even more than militants, who were happy to join the organisation.



This photo was posted on the Twitter account of the White Helmets to promote the “restoration campaign” they carried out, “washing and preparing schools for the new academic year.” (<https://twitter.com/SyriaCivilDef/status/1046671897948311552>). Obviously, the photo has been staged, as hosing down the classroom, complete with the desks and chairs, will bring it into disrepair, making it impossible to hold classes there.

Ali Mohamed al-Mardini, 28, former Jaysh al-Islam member in Damascus



First, Jaysh al-Islam paid the highest wages, and later the White Helmets started to pay more: instead of paying employees directly, money was transferred to the White Helmets, and it was one of the richest organisations not only in Eastern Ghouta but in Syria. Their employees received high wages, were well-off and also got food packages and firewood for heating every month. But they gave nothing to civilians. They saw with their own eyes poor, hungry women and children, and gave nothing to them.



Omar al-Mustafa ibn Mohamed, 41, small business owner in Aleppo

Militants from al-Nusra joined the White Helmets if given a relevant order — the two are related structures. White Helmets received higher wages than militants, and their families were also fully provided with food, could receive free medical care, were allocated a certain amount of diesel fuel to heat their homes in winter and were given various gifts, such as TV sets and refrigerators. This was standard practice in Um al-Karamel and also in other localities in the southern province.

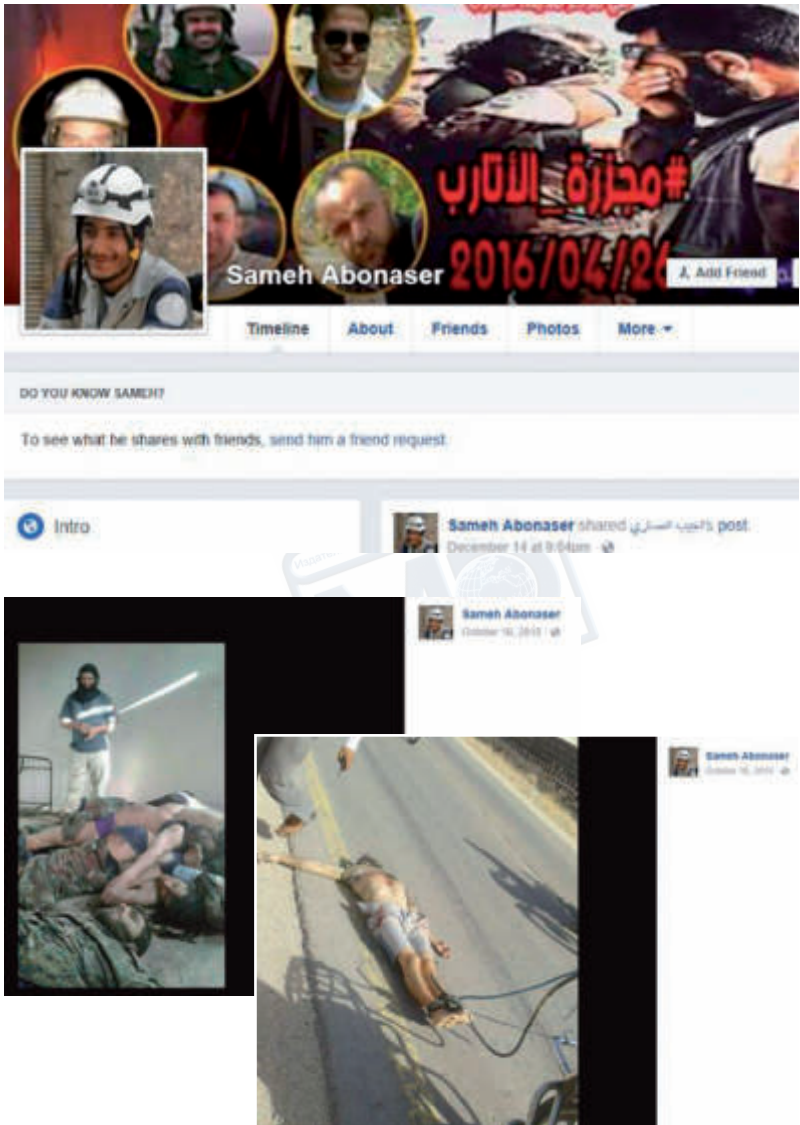


Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib, 31, opposition journalist who worked with the White Helmets

The White Helmets was the wealthiest organisation. They received millions of dollars from abroad, had local resources under their control, and made profits from selling fuel and other goods purchased by their leaders. They stored these goods at the premises of armed groups, sold them and earned profits. There was no shortage in revenue sources for them.

Former members of terrorist and illegal armed groups who shared their testimonies for this report agreed that more than half of the funds available to the White Helmets went towards financing terrorist and illegal armed groups.

Having the White Helmets build fortifications and strengthen combat positions held by the fighters was another way to channel funding to these groups. Producing footage of staged incidents was the biggest and the most financially rewarding aspect of their work. At the same time, employees were poorly educated and lacked



Screenshot from the Facebook page of Sameh Abonaser, a White Helmet who posted photos of killed Syrian soldiers and civilians.



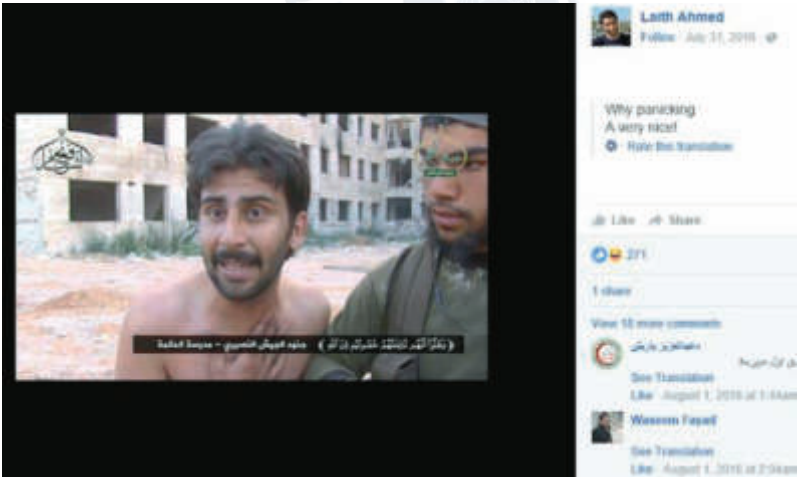
The photo shows former UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson announcing that his country allocated millions of pounds in funding for the White Helmets. According to members of this organisation and witnesses in Syria, these funds went towards, among other things, paying fighters from terrorist and illegal armed groups, as well as erecting fortifications and strengthening their defences.



Screenshot from the Facebook page of a White Helmet who openly advertised Abdallah al-Muhaysini, a well-known terrorist recruiter linked to al-Qaeda who was involved in establishing ties between ISIS, the al-Nusra Front and Ahrar al-Sham, and called for killing Alawites. He was put on a sanctions list by the US Department of State for raising funds for terrorists in Syria.



In November 2018, a photo of Jeremy Hunt, the incoming UK Foreign Secretary, appeared on the Foreign Office's official Twitter account, accompanied by a statement that helping the White Helmets was his first decision in this office.



Screenshot of a White Helmets member, Laith Ahmed, who posted on Facebook photos of propaganda materials from the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham terrorist group, a rebranded version of al-Qaeda, featuring captured soldiers from the Syrian army.



There are plenty of photos on social media showing the White Helmets wearing uniforms of fighters from radical armed groups.

professional skills. It was not uncommon for special-purpose vehicles they captured to sit idle. Having taken over buildings of clinics or fire departments, they would expel professional firefighters or medical staff and replace them with their own unqualified personnel, who were often former fighters or simply people recruited through newspaper advertisements. Most of them were not trained, did not have a secondary school diploma, let alone higher education.

White Helmets employees who worked on ambulances confirmed this. For example, a White Helmet from Douma, Ahmed Buweidani, said that he was “tasked with providing medical assistance to the wounded. I did not go to medical school, and completed only nine grades in secondary school.” Omran Makia, another White Helmet from Douma, said that he had worked for the White Helmets for many years. “My duty was to help the wounded, although I was not trained as a doctor. I do not have a profession, since I did not graduate from school,” he said. Abdul Karim Said Ahmed, a White Helmet from Kafr Batna, said that this was all too common: “We had three ambulances. Those who worked on them had no medical education.” The situation with civil defence and firefighting was similar. The vast majority of the organisation’s members had no experience in this field, and only a few attended short courses for the White Helmets in Turkey. It is noteworthy that this is confirmed in the well-known documentary on the White Helmets, where it is said that “most White Helmet volunteers have no prior rescue experience.” Witnesses noted that special-purpose vehicles taken over by the White Helmets from government firefighting departments and received from sponsors often remained idle. For



Screenshot from Abdu Hassan Agha's Facebook page used to spread propaganda of Jaysh al-Fatah, the so-called Army of Conquest that mostly relied on Jabhat al-Nusra, an al-Qaeda affiliate in Syria.



CODE OF CONDUCT (COC) SYRIA CIVIL DEFENCE (SCD)

Preamble:

The SCD Administration,
Based on the SCD Statement of the Principles signed by 69 leaders and publicised on 2014/10/25, within the framework of International Humanitarian Law, based on international conventions that protect and safeguard human rights and vulnerable individuals, decides to adopt and ratify the following Code Of Conduct (COC):

Purpose:

*The COC seeks to guard the standards of behaviour of the SCD volunteers. It is not about the details of operations, including how to provide search and rescue response or how to conduct life-saving operations. Rather, it seeks to maintain high standards of independence, effectiveness and impact to which international and professional organizations that respond to disasters, wars, and conflicts aspire to, following the example of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. This includes the bombardment and fighting that harm civilians in Syria. The COC is interpreted and applied according to the SCD Statement of Principles and International Humanitarian Law.

Rules of Conduct:

The main rules of conduct for the SCD are to fulfill duties to provide disaster and war response in Syria, to carry out search and rescue operations and to save the maximum number of lives.

WWW.SYRIACIVILDEFENCE.ORG

The photo shows a page from the Code of Conduct of the White Helmets that purports to “maintain high standards of independence, effectiveness and impact.” However, multiple witness accounts suggest that the organisation was far from independent while its effectiveness was extremely poor, since instead of recruiting professionals the White Helmets mostly relied on fighters, as well as poorly trained staff, often recruited through newspaper advertisements and with less than secondary education.

example, Mohamed Bashir Berim, a White Helmet from Aleppo, said that in his centre there were four drivers and up to 15 vehicles. “Most of them were not used, and were on stand-by as reserves,” he pointed out.

When terrorist and illegal armed groups took over districts and cities, professional state-run civil defence units stayed and continued to operate, and were still financed by the Syrian government. Professional firefighters said that the White Helmets caused even more harm to the civil defence system than to education. The organisation destroyed the state’s effective fire service and tried to replace it with its own, staffed with untrained, unprofessional and unmotivated people, including former fighters for whom working for the White Helmets was an alternative to being sent into dangerous combat action. Most of the employees joined the White Helmets as their only way to get food and money in order to save their families from hunger. At the same time, fighters from various terrorist and illegal armed groups engaged in a consistent effort to get rid of professional Syrian firefighters.

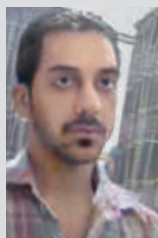
In a media interview, Khaled Nadjab, a firefighter from Aleppo who worked in a district controlled by the Syrian government, said that he had escaped death by a whisker when he was shot by a sniper in the part of the city under terrorist control.

Ramadan Kurdi ibn Mohamed, a firefighter from Aleppo with over 25 years’ experience:

I headed a fire department in Aleppo’s Hanano District, and had 40 people under my command. Even when the fighters came, we still got funding

from the government that paid for everything, and we worked. One day, three men came with computers, radios. They came and said that they were going to give the building to the White Helmets.

Some people employed by the organisation did not adhere to any specific ideology and were motivated primarily by self-interest. For them, the only reason to join the White Helmets was to earn a salary and get food in order to feed their families. At the same time, an important part of the White Helmets, including fighters from illegal armed groups and other employees, mostly held radical views. Employees of the White Helmets said that their colleagues were guided by an ideology that was a far cry from Western approaches. For example, Mohamed Bashir Berim, a White Helmets employee, said that people working in his centre adhered to Jabhat al-Nusra's ideas. Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib, an opposition journalist who used to work with the White Helmets, said that they were radicals. Ahmed Maaruf, a professor at the Faculty of Agriculture at Aleppo University, said that most people of this kind viewed others as infidels and accepted the idea of killing them. It is for this reason that employees of the organisation had no scruples about being present during mass killings or being tasked with disposing of the corpses after executions.



Mohamed Bashir Berim, 23, a White Helmets employee in Aleppo

People working at the White Helmets centre said that they shared Jabhat al-Nusra's ideas. They did not say anything about Western ideas. They were Salafists and prohibited smoking.



Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib, 31, opposition journalist who worked with the White Helmets

I can say that most people from the White Helmets adhered to Islamic fundamentalism. They claimed to support Western democracy, but this was mere propaganda, since they were actually radicals and Salafists.

Neither of them would allow their wife to leave the house with a bare face, without a scarf.



Ahmed Maaruf, professor with the Faculty of Agriculture at Aleppo University

Had the White Helmets been committed to doing good, people would have stood by them and protected them. But the Syrian people have taken a negative view of these people, believing that most of the White Helmets adhere to

and disseminate extremist ideology, while regarding others as infidels and accepting the idea of killing them. There are many fighters and terrorists among the White Helmets.

Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib, 31, opposition journalist who worked with the White Helmets

I saw Jaysh al-Islam representatives execute six people in Douma. White Helmets members standing nearby disposed of the bodies.

Ali Mohamed al-Mardini, 28, former Jaysh al-Islam member

After Jaysh al-Islam militants conducted executions, the White Helmets removed the bodies of those killed to post 200 subordinate to them.





The photo shows images from footage posted online of a man being executed in May 2015. Just as in many other cases, the body was taken by the White Helmets who were present during the execution.

The internet is filled with video materials showing White Helmets employees watching executions and subsequently removing the bodies of those killed. The organisation's former employees confirm reports that its employees did not object to executions of civilians, attended such executions and disposed of the bodies, including the bodies of women and children, all the time. In a well-known incident, photographer Mahmoud Raslan, who worked with the White Helmets, took a picture of a little boy named Omran Daqneesh allegedly being treated by the White Helmets; his picture went viral. Later, it turned out that Mahmoud Raslan maintained relations with the Nour al-Din al-Zenki movement and posed for a photo with its militants who had beheaded a 12-year-old boy named Abdullah Tayseer in 2016. The report's previous sections



Images from a video posted online that shows White Helmets near corpses after execution.

contain testimonies by members of the White Helmets and Syrian residents proving that most of the organisation's members adhered to a radical ideology, and that their actions differed drastically from those of volunteers of public and non-military organisations. Aside from taking part in executions of Syrian citizens, members of the White Helmets conducted reconnaissance operations against Syrian forces, transported weapons and loaned their vehicles to illegal paramilitary units for murdering their rivals. Many White Helmets members were former and active militants who worked for the organisation and also took part in hostilities. According to Syrian eyewitnesses, members of the White Helmets seized people who were not on the side of the militants and turned them in to be executed. They beat up captured Syrian service personnel and

escorted them to prisons. For example, eyewitness Omar al-Alush ibn Mohamed and opposition journalist Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib shared their experience.

Omar al-Alush ibn Muhammad, 50, satellite television technician



During Eid al-Adha celebrations, members of the Ahrar al-Sham group executed a civilian, with the involvement of White Helmets personnel. They accused him of reporting the coordinates of militants' facilities and command centres and their location. White Helmets employees found him and handed him over to Ahrar al-Sham, which had him shot dead.

This also happened on a wide street and at a clothing marketplace in the al-Fardus district. A militant whom I helped install satellite television equipment told me about this. When they shot him, he didn't die straight away. Another Ahrar al-Sham militant, Abu Jasim, then spat on him and fired off another shot into his head. Four White Helmets employees sat inside a car and watched the process.

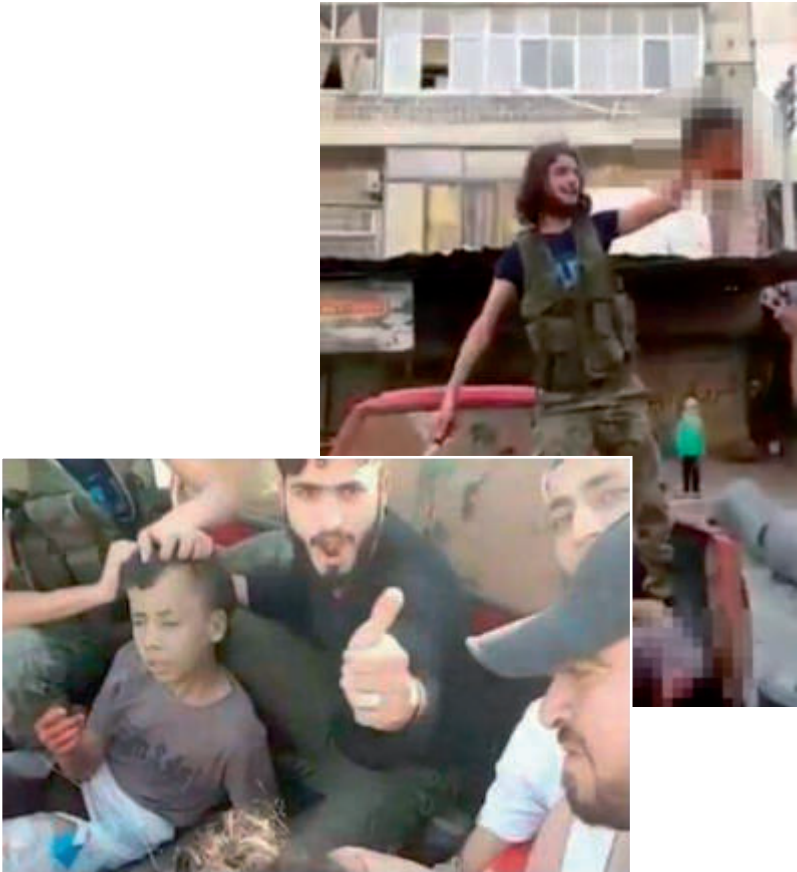


Bassam Az ad-Din Hadi al-Najib, 31, opposition journalist who worked with the White Helmets

When the Syrian army started liberating Eastern Ghouta, Jaysh al-Islam militants managed to capture four Syrian soldiers in the Haush Nasri and Otaya districts. They handed the prisoners to White Helmets representatives who beat them with sticks and green plastic pipes, and took them to the Baton prison. I was there with my colleague Mazen al-Shami and another person who is now staying in Turkey. We went there by sheer coincidence, and we saw what the representatives of the White Helmets did to Syrian soldiers.



Photo: Stills from an online video showing the execution of an unknown man whose body is carried away by White Helmets employees.



A considerable part of White Helmets employees do not conceal their affiliation with or sympathies for terrorist groups, including ISIS and other illegal paramilitary units. A cursory examination of their social media profiles easily confirms these facts. For example, White Helmets employees Ibrahim Abu Mohamed, Mohamed Altuma and Zakaria Abdulhalik with the Facebook profile called Torch of Baybars, and Abu Monzer Kusai openly admire the terrorist



Photo: A dead 12-year-old boy and photographer Mahmoud Raslan, who worked with the White Helmets, together with the boy's murderers. The boy was beheaded less than 200 metres from the White Helmets centre in Aleppo.

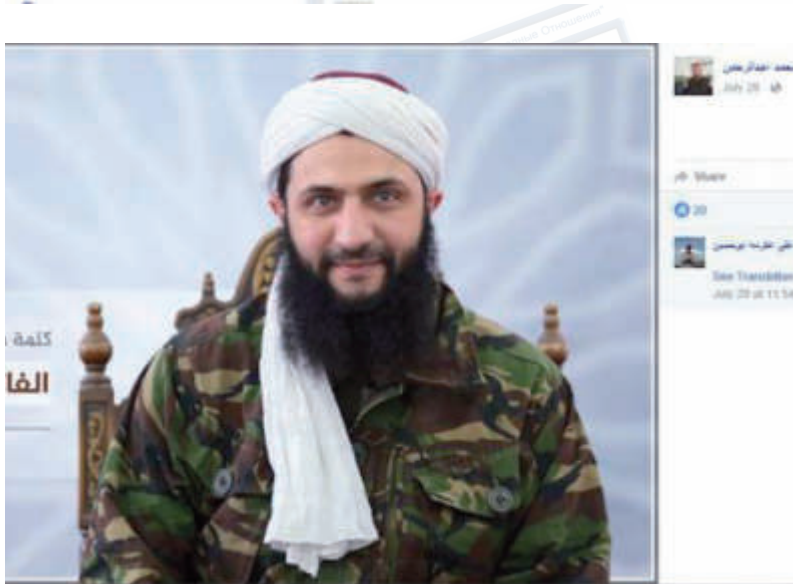
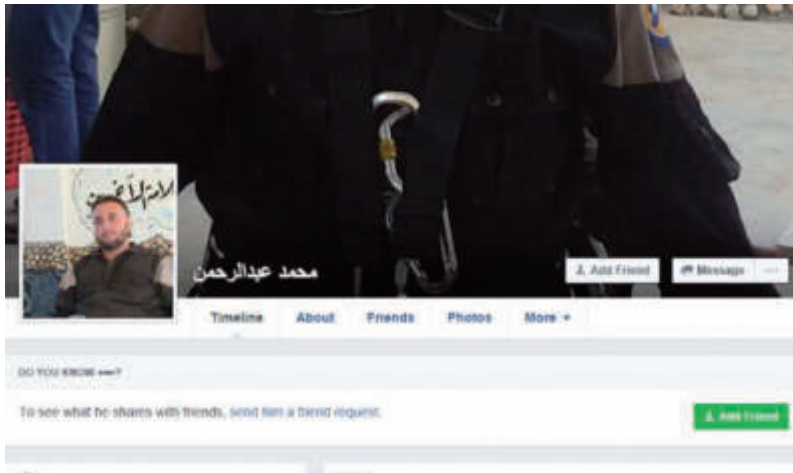
group ISIS. Duraid Haj Hamoud and others admire the illegal paramilitary unit Jaysh al-Fatah, which included Jabhat al-Nusra, an al-Qaeda offshoot. White Helmets employees Ahmed Ibrahim, Haitam Abdul, Ahmed, Muhammad Junaid and others admire the notorious terrorist recruiter Abdullah al-Muhaysini with connections to ISIS. This person streamlined contacts between ISIS, Jabhat al-Nusra and Ahrar al-Sham and called for murdering the Alawites.

The US Department of State put him on its sanctions list for raising funds for terrorists in Syria. The organisation's employees Abdu Hassan Agha circulates propaganda materials of the Jaysh al-Fatah coalition with Jabhat al-Nusra, an al-Qaeda division in Syria, being its main driving force. In turn, Lait Ahmed, Abdu Hassan Agha and Faisal Ruslan promote materials of the terrorist group Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, the renamed al-Qaeda division.

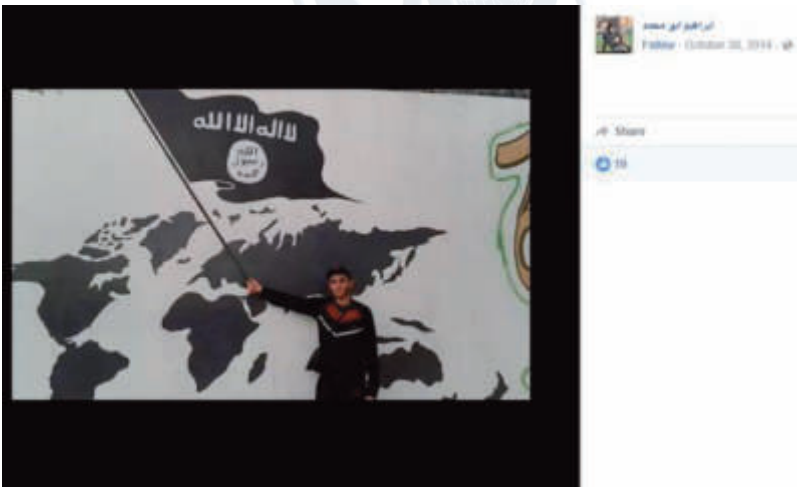
The internet also contains enough video materials that show White Helmets employees expressing their joy in connection with the victories of illegal paramilitary units and posing in front of dead Syrian soldiers. Many employees of the White Helmets openly supported murders and torture of Syrian soldiers and posted these photos on their Facebook accounts. For example, White Helmets employees Sameh Abonaser, Ammar al-Najar, Muhammad al-Baqri, Muawia Hassan Agha and many others openly posted photos of murdered Syrian soldiers and civilians on their Facebook accounts.

Support for the White Helmets by the governments of the United States and Europe, as well as the organisation's huge PR expenses, created a reputation that differed completely from its real activities, which prevented state agencies of these countries from rationally assessing the threats posed by the White Helmets. This situation is hardly new, and recent history has seen examples when biased and politically motivated assessments served to underestimate real threats; this later resulted in terrorist attacks and human casualties.

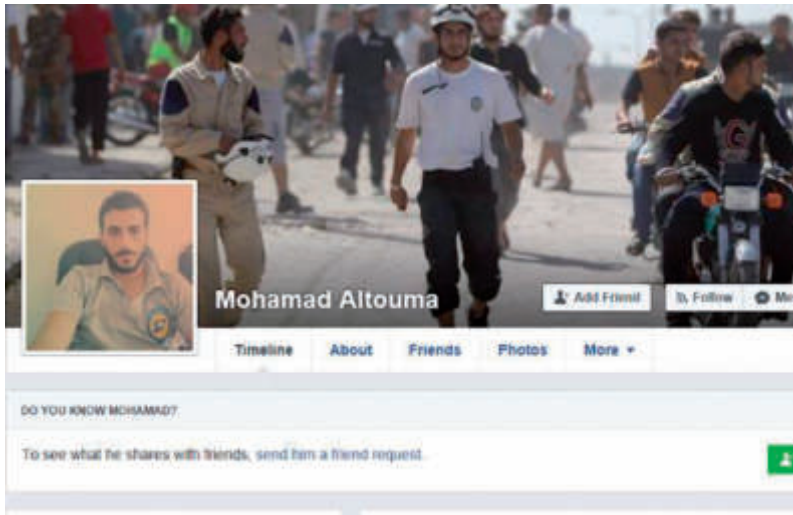
For example, media outlets are currently praising the White Helmets to the skies. This is similar to the inspiration with which the US press created a positive image for Afghan terrorist groups,



Screenshot of the profile of Muhamed Abdul Rahman, a White Helmets employee, who circulated the propaganda materials of Abu Mohammad al-Julani, who was involved in al-Qaeda activities, became one of the leaders of its Syrian division and sided with the notorious terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.



Screenshot of the profile of Ibrahim Abu Mohamed, a White Helmets employee, who openly supported the terrorist organisation ISIS on his Facebook accounts.



Screenshot of profile of Mohamed Altuma, a White Helmets employee, who openly circulated propaganda materials of terrorist group ISIS on his Facebook accounts.

illegal paramilitary units and the terrorist Osama bin Laden in the 1990s. On December 6, 1993, the US newspaper *The Independent* wrote: “With his high cheekbones, narrow eyes and long brown robe, Mr Bin Laden looks every inch the mountain warrior of mujahedin legend. Chadoored children danced in front of him, preachers acknowledged his wisdom.”

The US government’s politically biased attitude and position prevented national law enforcement agencies from heeding the fact that bin Laden had masterminded an armed struggle and terrorist attacks against the government of Afghanistan, and that he held a radical religious and extremist position regarding Western values already in the 1990s. In the long run, this led to the well-known 9/11 (September 11, 2001) terrorist attack that claimed 3,000 lives.

Similarly, the politicised stance adopted by the US government and the media prevented the law enforcers from properly assessing the threat that came from the Tsarnaev brothers, Chechens who came to the United States from Kyrgyzstan. The anti-Russian sentiments of the US government prevented it from rationally analysing the information about the Tsarnaev brothers’ extremist plans, which was made available to the United States by Russia’s law enforcement agencies. This led to the Tsarnaevs organising the Boston Marathon bombing on April 15, 2013, which killed three people and wounded over 280.

On December 19, 2016, a terrorist attack took place in Berlin killing 11 people and wounding over 50 when a truck drove into a crowded Christmas market on Breitscheidplatz. The terrorist was a 24-year-old Tunisian, Anis Amri, who claimed to be an Egyptian

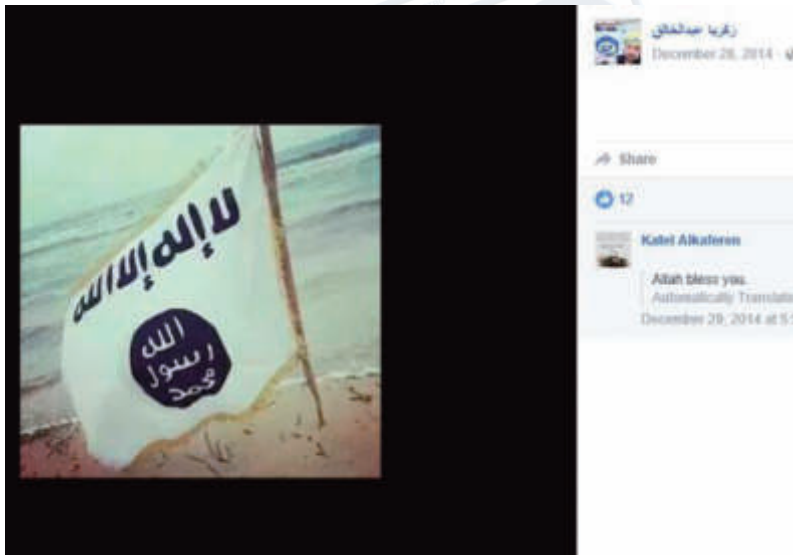
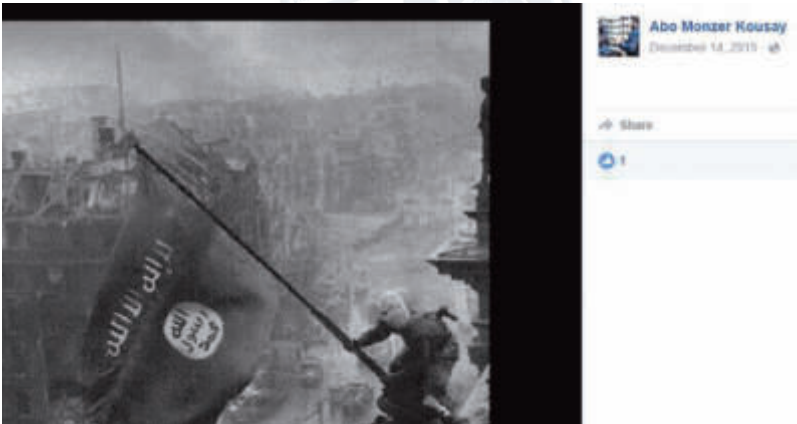


Photo: Facebook profile of a White Helmets employee, Mohamed Zaharia Abdul Khalek, who used his Facebook account to openly distribute ISIS propaganda materials.



A significant number of White Helmets employees did not hide their involvement with or their sympathy for terrorist organisations and illegal armed groups. Photo: Facebook profile of the White Helmets employee Abo Monzer Kousay, who is openly posting ISIS flags on his Facebook account with an inscription: “This is our path” and voices admiration for suicide bombers from Jabhat al-Nusra, an al-Qaeda offshoot.

persecuted in his homeland for political reasons. The politicised stance of the German government and the bias of the German media prevented Germany's law enforcement agencies from properly assessing the threat posed by the terrorist.

On May 22, 2017 there was a terrorist attack in Manchester killing at least 22 people and injuring over 120. The terrorist was a 22-year-old Salman Ramadan Abedi, whose family was considered political refugees from Libya persecuted by the Muammar Gaddafi regime. Even though Salman Ramadan Abedi did not hide his radical views and in 2015, during a sermon condemning terrorism, publicly supported it, the politicised stance of the UK government and the British media who supported the fight against Gaddafi, prevented them from rationally assessing the threat he posed. The fact that a group of Libyan dissidents from the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group lived next door to him didn't help.

The first in modern Swedish history terrorist attack involving human casualties took place in Stockholm on April 7, 2017. A truck going at a high speed rammed into a crowd of people walking along Stockholm's central pedestrian street. As a result, five people died and 14 were injured. A 39-year-old citizen of Uzbekistan, Rakhmat Akilov, was responsible for this terrorist attack. Before this, his country put him on the international wanted list on charges of extremism. The inaction of Sweden's law enforcement agencies was influenced by the politicised position of the official authorities, which believed that the terrorist was persecuted in Uzbekistan for political reasons. At his trial, the terrorist Rakhmat Akilov admitted his guilt and stated that he intentionally rammed the truck into the

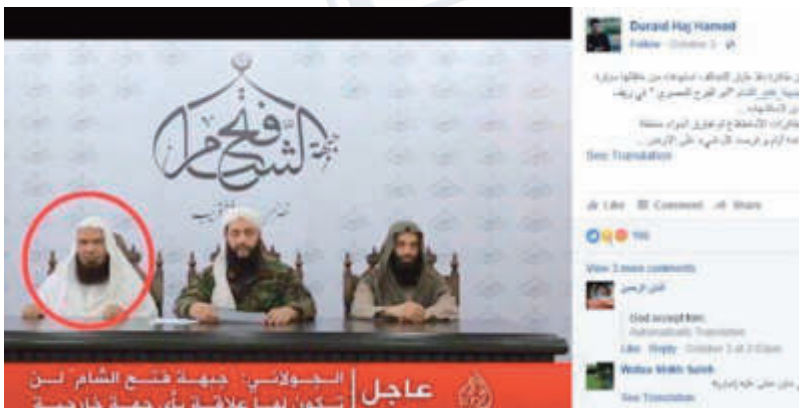
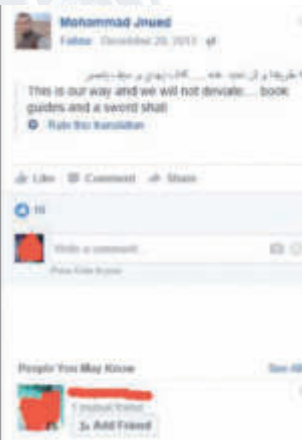


Photo: The White Helmets employee Duraid Haj Hamoud posted on his Facebook account propaganda materials by Jaysh al-Fatah coalition of illegal armed groups, which included Jabhat al-Nusra, an al-Qaeda offshoot.



A significant number of the White Helmets employees did not hide their involvement with or sympathy for terrorist organisations and illegal armed groups. Photo: Facebook profile of Mohammad Jnued, a White Helmets employee in Idlib, who openly posts ISIS flags on his Facebook account with an inscription: “This is our path.”

crowd to kill people in order to show his allegiance to the Islamic State terrorist organisation.

A similar incident involved Ahmed Chatayev nicknamed One-Armed, also known as Ahmed al-Shishani, David Mayer and Elmir Sene. Russia put him on the wanted list for his involvement in terrorist activities, but despite this, in 2003, he received political asylum in Austria. In March 2008, he was detained in Sweden when a Kalashnikov assault rifle, ammunition and explosives were found in his car. The Swedish court sentenced him to imprisonment, but then immediately released him. In 2010, he was detained in Ukraine, but despite the fact that instructions for a subversion were found on him, and thanks to an intervention by Amnesty International, he was released. Later, he was detained in Georgia in 2013, but the anti-Russian stance adopted by the country's President Mikheil Saakashvili led to a situation where the city court of Tbilisi not only declined to extradite him to Russia, but fully acquitted and released him. On June 28, 2016, Ahmed Chatayev became one of the organisers of the explosion at Istanbul Airport, which took the lives of more than 40 people and wounded over 230.

Currently, the White Helmets members who, for political reasons, were able to emigrate to and legalise in Europe, Canada or the United States, are in the same position. The above facts submitted by former members of the organisation and other Syrian witnesses unequivocally prove that a significant number of the White Helmets employees are members of terrorist and illegal armed groups and participated in organising executions of civilians, underwent military training and pursue extremist and radical religious views.

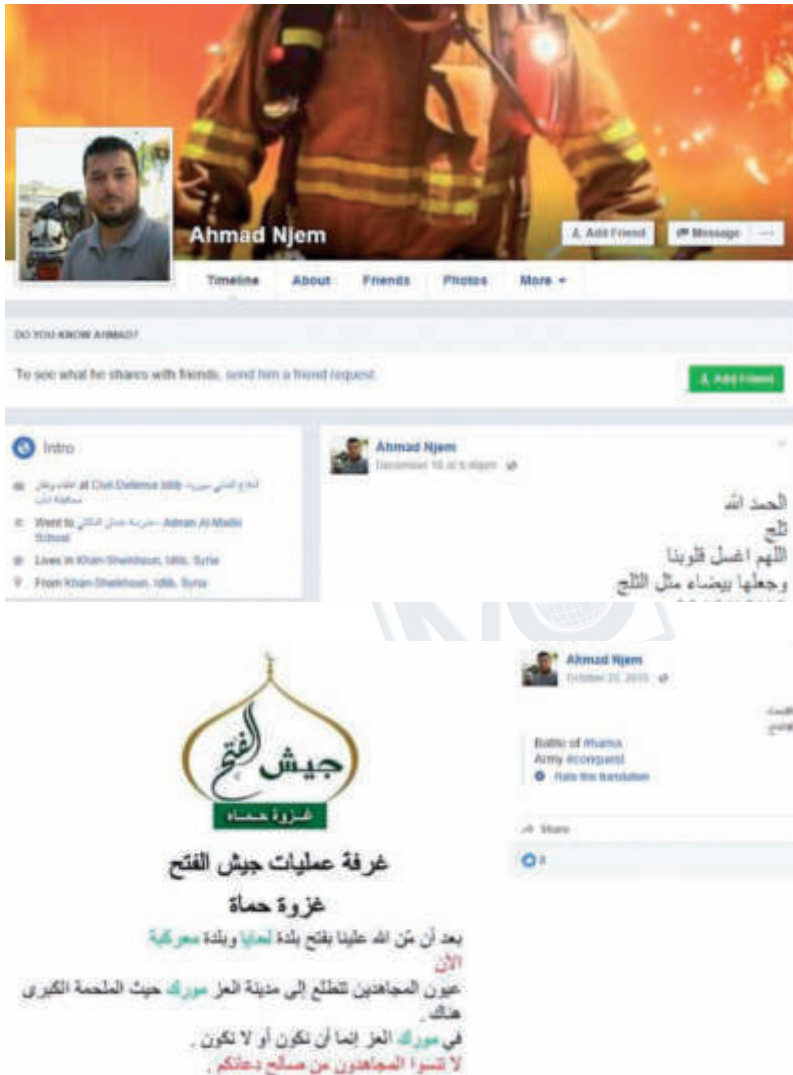


Photo: Facebook page of the White Helmets employee Ahmad Njem showing propaganda materials of the Jaysh al-Fatah coalition of armed groups, which included Jabhat al-Nusra, an al-Qaeda offshoot..



The White Helmets employee Anmar Najar posted on his Facebook account photographs of torture and executions of people with an inscription: “God gave us victory.”



Above: The White Helmets leader Raed Saleh wins the Right Livelihood Award, which is presented to organisations offering solutions to the fundamental global problems. Below: An article from the American press dating back to the 1990s, which created a positive image of terrorist Osama bin Laden with the same enthusiasm the media are now writing about the White Helmets.

In 2018, hundreds of former White Helmets employees independently left for Western countries and, on July 22, 2018, more than 400 of them, along with their families, were taken to Jordan and sent by air to Europe, Canada and other countries. According to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the evacuation operation was carried out at the request of US President Donald Trump, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and others. Clearly, some of the White Helmets who moved to Western countries present a security threat to those countries. This threat has only increased since, in 2016, the White Helmets leader Raed Saleh was prevented from entering the US at a Washington airport and his visa was cancelled due to his being on the list of persons suspected of ties with the terrorist organisations representing a security threat for the United States.

We can only hope that the situation with the White Helmets will not have the same ending as the events with the Tsarnaev brothers and the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013, Anis Amri and the terrorist attack in Berlin in 2016, Osama bin Laden and terrorist attacks in the US in September 2001, Salman Ramadan Abedi and the explosion in Manchester in 2017, Rakhmat Akilov and the terrorist attack committed by him in Stockholm in 2017, Ahmed Chatayev and the Istanbul Airport bombing, and many other terrorists in whose cases the politicised position of the US and European governments led to a radical downplaying of the threat by the law enforcement authorities of these countries, which eventually cost thousands of civilian lives.

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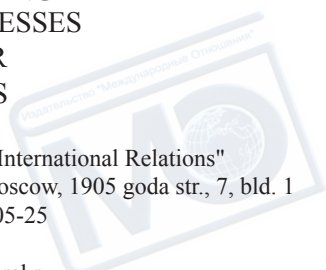
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THE WHITE HELMETS:
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AND FORMER
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