



ARAB LEAGUE / B

Integration and provision of resources to white helmets and support groups in conflict zones.

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INTRODUCTION

Conflict comes in many shapes and forms; there is a special cause for it and, therefore it also has a special effect, a special answer. Belic conflict is one of the most present problems that member nations of the Arab League are facing these days. Along these lines, there are Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen. But, indeed, the country most affected and most known internationally is Syria, in spite of the fact that at the moment, Syria is no longer a member of the Arab League. The conflict taking place in Syria does not only divide the country affecting all the people who are located living there, but also causes the Syrian economy to be a total disaster, or as the Atlantic Council's Mohsin Khan and Faysal Itani, who have the ability to describe it better once said, to be in "total disarray".

According with page "I am Syria", in regards to death count, 75% were adult males, 9.2% adult females and 15.7% children. In spite of the fact that this does not sound very impressive, the numbers are worst; total quantity is 470, 000 of which 55, 000 are children since war began in 2011.

In light of the fact that these were so shocking, the Syrian Civil Defense, also known as White Helmets, were created. This organization is formed by volunteers who once were teachers, tailors, firefighters and even militants who set down their firearms to join, saving people from all sides of the conflict. Furthermore, their duties consist of urban research and rescue, evacuating civilians from threatened areas, essential service delivery, and medical evacuation; all of these in response to bombing. However, The White Helmets also perform vital services for the public, such as

reconnecting electricity and securing buildings after bombings. They deal with the hardest part of the war, or as they like to say “The White Helmets mostly deal with the aftermath of government air attacks”. According to their site, they have saved more than 95,024 lives from attacks. - and this digit is growing daily.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

French Control

1920 June - San Remo Conference puts Syria-Lebanon under a French mandate and Palestine under British control

1920-21 - Syria divided into three autonomous regions by the French, with separate areas for the Alawis on the coast and the Druze in the south. Lebanon is separated off entirely.

Uprising

1925-26 - Nationalist agitation against French rule develops into uprising.

1941 - British and Free French troops occupy Syria. General De Gaulle promises to end the French mandate

1943 - Veteran nationalist Shukri al-kuwatli is elected first president of Syria, leads the country to full independence three years later.

Tensions with US

2002 May - Senior US official includes Syria in a list of states the make-up an “axis of evil”

2004 May - US imposes economic sanctions on Syria over what it calls its support for terrorism and failure to stop militants entering Iraq.

Diplomatic overtures

2006 November - Iraq and Syria restore diplomatic relations after nearly a quarter century.

2007 September - Israel carries out an aerial strike against a nuclear facility under construction in northern Syria

2008 October - Syria establishes diplomatic relations with Lebanon for first time since both countries established independence in 1940s

2010 May - US renews sanctions against Syria, saying that this supports terrorist groups, seeks weapons of mass destruction and has provided Lebanon’s Hezbollah with Scud missiles in violation of UN resolutions

CURRENT RELEVANCE

2011 April - Al-Assad lifts the country's 48-year-old state of emergency. He also abolishes the Higher State Security Court and issues a decree "regulating the right to peaceful protest, as one of the basic human rights guaranteed by the Syrian Constitution."

2011 July - President Assad sacks the governor of the northern province of Hama after mass demonstration there, eventually sending in troops to restore order at the cost of scores of lives.

2011 October - New Syrian National Council says it has forged a common front of internal and exiled opposition activists.

2011 November - Arab League votes to suspend Syria, accusing it of failing to implement an Arab peace plan, and imposes sanctions.

2011 December - Syria signs an Arab League proposal aimed at ending violence between government forces and protesters.

2012 January- The Arab League suspends its mission in Syria as violence there continues.

2012 February - Government steps up the bombardment of Homs and other cities.

2012 June - Turkey changes rules of engagement after Syria shoots down a Turkish plane, declaring that if Syrian troops approach Turkey's borders they will be seen as a military threat.

2012 July - Free Syrian Army blows up three security chiefs in Damascus and seizes Aleppo in the north.

2012 August - Prime Minister Riad Hijab defects, US President Obama warns that use of chemical weapons would tilt the US towards intervention.

2012 October - Fire in Aleppo destroys much of the historic market as fighting and bomb attacks continue in various cities.

2012 November - National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces formed in Qatar, excludes Islamist militias. Arab League stops short of full recognition.

2012 December - US, Britain, France, Turkey and Gulf states formally recognise opposition National Coalition as "legitimate representative" of Syrian people.

2013 January - Syria accuses Israel of bombing military base near Damascus, where Hezbollah was suspected of assembling a convoy of anti-aircraft missiles bound for Lebanon.

2013 February - The UN Security Council estimates that the number of civilians killed in the two-year civil war in Syria is approaching 70,000.

June 13, 2013 - US President Barack Obama says that Syria has crossed a “red line” with its use of chemical weapons, including the nerve agent sarin gas, against rebels. His administration indicates that it will be stepping up its support of the rebels, who have been calling for the United States and others to provide arms needed to battle Assad’s forces.

2013 September - Syria agrees to a Russian proposal to give up control of its chemical weapons. UN weapons inspectors conclude that chemical weapons were used in an attack on the Ghouta area of Damascus in August that killed about 300 people, but do not allocate responsibility. Government allows UN to destroy chemical weapons stocks, process complete by June 2014.

2013 December - US and Britain suspend “non-lethal” support for rebels in northern Syria after reports that Islamist rebels seized bases of Western-backed Free Syrian Army.

2014 January-February - UN-brokered peace talks in Geneva fail, largely because Syrian authorities refuse to discuss a transitional government.

2014 September - US and five Arab countries launch airstrikes against Islamic State around.

2015 May - Islamic State fighters seize the ancient city of Palmyra in central Syria and proceed to destroy many monuments at pre-Islamic World Heritage site.

2015 September - Russia carries out its first airstrikes in Syria, saying they target the Islamic State group, but the West and Syrian opposition say it overwhelmingly targets anti-Assad rebels.

2015 December - Syrian Army allows rebels to evacuate remaining area of Homs, returning Syria’s third-largest city to government control after four years.

2016 - The organization of White Helmets was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Thousands more barrel bombs have been dropped, killing thousands more children. The Council did not act.

2016 August - Turkish troops cross into Syria to help rebel groups push back so-called Islamic State militants and Kurdish-led rebels from a section of the two countries’ border.

2016 - In agreement to the French Government White Helmets Organization has 121 centers and 3000 volunteers who had saved more than 60 000 lives.

September 15, 2016 - At least 23 people, including nine children, are killed during airstrikes in Syria, with the United States and Russia accusing each other of violating the ceasefire in effect since September 12.

2017 April - US President Donald Trump orders a missile attack on an airbase from which Syrian government planes allegedly staged a chemical weapons attack on the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhoun.

2017 May - US decides to arm the YPG Kurdish Popular Protection Units. These fight alongside the main opposition Syrian Democratic Forces, which captures the important Tabqa dam from Islamic State.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS

In 2012, the UN created UNSMIS (United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria) which started in April and ended in August from 2012. This was designed to end the escalating conflict and the main element of this plan was to bring a sustained cessation of armed violence.

White helmets helped different countries from 2014 to 2015 including Bolivia, Brazil and Chile. First in January from 2014 the white helmets send humanitarian Aid against floods in the Southeast of Brazil, then in February from 2014 flood humanitarian assistance in 3 Departments in Bolivia. This are just a few examples of how this organization has been helping around the world. White helmets haven't just helped in Latin America, they have also been really important in Europe. Countries like Bosnia- Herzegovina, Croatia, Rusia and Poland needed White Helmets in 2014.

UN ACTIONS

2012 - Monitoring a cessation of armed violence in all its forms. Establish by United Nations Security Council resolution 2043 of 21 April 2012, initially for a 90-day period, to monitor a cessation of armed violence in all its forms by all parties and also support the full implementation of the Joint Special Envoy's six point plan to end the conflict in Syria. On 20 July 2012, the Security Council extended the mission for 30 days. UNSMIS mandate came to an end at midnight on 19 August 2012. On February of the same year the The United Nations General Assembly approved a nonbinding resolution endorsing the Arab League plan for al-Assad to step down. The vote was 137 in favor and 12 against, with 17 abstentions.

2014 - Security Council of the United Nations passed 2139 resolution which banned barrel bombs and other indiscriminate weapons. Two years later barrel bombs have been dropped. The council didn't act.

2015 - Another resolution passed were the use of chlorine as a chemical weapon was banned. It was said if chemical attacks continued, Security Council would take action under "Chapter VII" of the UN charter - that allowed them to use force to protect civilians.

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Syria's seat was assumed by the SNC and so the Arab League authorized member states to actively provide support. Arab leaders entrusted the Arab League Council at the ministerial level to debate the foundation of a specific system to assist Arab countries hosting refugees to enable them to shoulder this task.

POINTS TO DISCUSS

Reasons why these kinds of supportive groups are important and deserve support from the UN, different countries and volunteers
Importance of the actions made by these supportive groups in conflict zones

Risk that the supporting groups have to deal with during their actions

In here you can include cultural differences that may provoke misunderstandings that could lead to problems that would make more difficult the help actions

Also, the risk that being in a conflict zone can provoke to members of these supporting groups

Regulations that have been made in order to have a control in the actions that the supporting groups make (ways to get in and out of the affected zones)

Acceptance of the people that needs support towards these groups
Where does the budget for the groups come from?

Possible ways to impulse the supporting groups in order to give them enough resources make them able to continue working and improve their procedures

New regulations to make the work of the supporting groups safer and more effective, as well to develop new strategies to deliver and control resources to the groups

Focus in the way in which the resources will be given and controlled

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