

## **The Significant Impact from Syria's White Helmets Organization Toward the Condition of Syria's Civil Society: Under Bashar al-Assad Administration**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to analyze the role of the white helmets organization by involving in the world peace mission in Syria. The condition of Syrian civil society is very horrifying after Bashar al-Assad become the leader of Syria a thousand of people are suffering because of his policy and also creating tension between Islamic Sunni and Syiah in Syria. However, White Helmets Organization is one of the Organization that concern on mitigate and help the society under conflict and one of their concern nowadays is how to help Syria society from trouble condition. By using alternative and transformative regionalism theory and also qualitative method this research found if the reason behind why White Helmets Organization take any action is purely because a sense of humanitarian and by involving in this mission White Helmets has given a thousand of beneficial that make Syrian society felt better in many aspect of life. This research also found a lot of obstacle that White Helmets Organization dealing with due to the conflict area.

**Keywords:** Peace, War, Humanitarian, White Helmets Organization.

### **Abstrak**

*Makalah ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran White Helmet Organization yang terlibat dalam misi perdamaian dunia di Suriah. Kondisi masyarakat sipil Suriah sangat memprihatinkan setelah Bashar al-Assad menjadi pemimpin Suriah. Ribuan orang menderita karena kebijakannya dan juga menciptakan ketegangan antara Islam Sunni dan Syiah di Suriah. Namun White Helmets Organization merupakan salah satu organisasi yang memiliki kepedulian untuk meringankan dan membantu masyarakat yang berada dalam konflik dan salah satu perhatian mereka saat ini adalah bagaimana membantu masyarakat Suriah dari kondisi kesulitan. Dengan menggunakan teori regionalisme alternatif dan transformatif serta metode kualitatif penelitian ini menemukan bahwa alasan mengapa White Helmets Organization mengambil tindakan adalah murni karena rasa kemanusiaan dan dengan terlibat dalam misi ini White Helmets telah memberikan ribuan manfaat yang membuat masyarakat Suriah merasa lebih baik dalam banyak aspek kehidupan. Penelitian ini juga menemukan banyak kendala yang dihadapi White Helmets Organization akibat wilayah konflik tersebut.*

**Kata kunci:** Perdamaian, Perang, Kemanusiaan, White Helmets Organization

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The condition of the Middle East was very messy started in the last of many years ago. There are many of factors that triggered why the condition of the middle east was ruined and the conflict almost in every single country in the middle east was happened. The conflict including in political stabilization, economic declination, and the civil war until the intervention from the big power country like the influence and

intervention of the USA and USSR. Some of the country like Iraq, Yemen, Sariah, Palestine, and other Middle East countries still dealing on it and there no speculation when the conflict will be ended. However, this conflict will always run and run and will involve many of victim including women, child and other society in the Middle East (Ruslin, 2013).

The problem in the Middle East is not that easy to solve (Ramadhan, 2019). The

problems in the middle East is full of foreign intervention, national interest of big superpower countries, Middle East problems cannot be predicting what is the main reason because there are many factors that caused the problems in the Middle East. For the example how US and Russia become two major power who involved to support one of instrument who are in the middle east conflict. Not only for the major power but also the middle power also takes a part for the example how Saudi Arabia try to defeat what Iran done in order to become the most powerful and can bargainers power to the others or vice versa Saudi and Iran are still dealing in the Islam is issue and government which today are coma from the middle power countries in order to create the better for the middle east program war and peace. However, this we should give out best effort and endeavor to give solution toward the middle East countries. From many of the problems in the middle east the author only would like to focus on how the dynamic and how to give best solution toward the condition of the ruin and worst one of the countries in the middle East (Rosenberg, 2019).

Talking about the Middle East issue not only talking about the majority society. Most of the people believe if talking about the Middle East is talking about Islam majority than many people believe if the one who have to help and support the problem of the Middle East should from the Islamic society as well, unfortunately many of the Islamic countries nowadays also still dealing with the problem on their own problem or simply they still has not finish with their own problems. That's why nowadays if talking about Middle East is not only talking about who are they but see what the problem is there are dealing which is most of the conflict in the Middle East is about the humanitarian issue which this also talking about human right violence (UNICEF, 2019). However, seeing those kinds of problem the people around the world should aware as soon as possible if this is not only talk about their

own national interest but as human we should act and realize like human and should thinking about what other people dealing nowadays. Because of that this paper trying to analyze some humanitarian organization to repair the condition of the Middle East in some of the countries.

In this paper the author would like to concern on the conflict which happened in Syria's. Cannot be denied Syria's conflict is one of the worst conflicts in the middle East. The society are suffering, the war never stops every day, health facility was nothing, food, drink sanitation in the level of not feasible to use. The relation between the government and the society unrelate one and another. The involvement of Russia and United State of America created worst condition. The society become confuse because of the condition because they don't know who will save them and help them, one by one the victim become rapidly high and high the future of Syrian youth in term of education and other facility which can support their skill. However, because of this condition the Syrian society need institution who can help them in many crucial aspects. Because of this issue someone from formers British army his name is James Le Mesurier who have many experiences involved in term of middle East conflict and war created some organization by the name Syria's White Helmets. This organization try to help and save the Syrian civil society in term of keeping them save, health and many of crucial aspect which become the main topic will discuss in this paper.

### **Literature Review**

In this paper the, author would like to use the Alternative and Transformative regionalism theory which focusing on the issue of the human right or humanity (Shaw, 2003). This theory concern on how the civil society or the organization in some of the regional of some country trying advocate and move in order to solve the problem on their society or environmental. This theory was reflected toward the condition of the world

nowadays which the regionalism is not only related to the European centric, not only talk about how the integration of the economic cooperation and to strengthen the relation among the countries (politic). This theory would like to explain about the society movement trying to help them own self by using cooperation to another society movement which can create significant impact toward their condition when and where they are suffering. However, by using this theory which the non- governmental has big rule and contribution in term of better society and repair the condition of the society who are become the victim of violence and become the society who are suffering in the worst condition and it can because of war, disaster and so on and so far as long as its reflect toward the human right or the issue about the humanitarian.

The reason behind why the author of this paper using this theory is because government agency nowadays was not really that can help the condition of the society directly to the grass root and full of complexity of procedural which some time it become the most difficulties which become the way of government cannot easiest like what non – government agency done (Suharko, 2003). what government do is only formality and only become the ceremonial. However, in this paper, This theory will reflect the movement of Syria White Helmets is one of the examples the second movement which trying to solve the problem in Syria which concern on how to fulfill the human right of the society to create peace from the war and preventing a lot of negative impact from the Syria conflict. This paper trying to analysis the reason behind why someone non-Muslim really care about the problem of the Muslim society in Syria. Than the organization which he created is can give very significant impact to the condition in Syria beside of the government of the Syria it's self which dealing with a lot of conflict which if waiting for the government doing will not give any positive impact until undecide time because most of

the conflict in Syria its self are coming from the political problems which of course the high political issue and the government become the one and only the main actors in this problems.

## **Research Methods**

The research methods used within this research were library research technique and qualitative data approach to explain how and what Turkish government did to handle the Syrian refugees through open door policy.

Library research is step process used to gather information in order to write a paper, create a presentation, or complete a project. It is also collecting primary and secondary data relating to the material. Those library research can be obtaining from books, journals, official website, trusted site and so on. Qualitative data is the non-numeric examination and interpretation of observations to discover underlying meanings and patterns of relationships. This approach is most typical of field research and historical research. In other words, qualitative analysis is methods for examining social research data without converting them to a numerical format. Thus, both of library research technique and the qualitative data approach are used as research methods. Furthermore, the data that has been collected is then processed qualitatively according to the problem, objectives, and theoretical basis, which can later be concluded.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The explanation what is White Helmets Organization**

The White Helmets comprise an unarmed, neutral organization of more than 3,000 volunteer rescue workers operating in opposition-held areas of Syria (The White Helmets , 2019). The White Helmets Organization doing their works without seeing who the victims are whether they are Muslim or not, Syria or not, child, youth even old man is become their target of their operation. And one of the example what White Helmets Organization has done by creating agenda

which When airstrikes rain down on civilian targets in the war torn nation, the men and women of the White Helmets carry out search and rescue operations to save as many lives as possible. "Any human being, no matter who they are or which side they're on, if they need our helps. It's our duty to save them," explains Abu Omar, a former blacksmith and current member of the group. This sentence is very made everyone understand about how to be care and try to solve the problems for the humanitarian issue (Park, 2016). However, it still progresses and progress under the direction of its current leader, Raed al Saleh, a former electronics trader, these ordinary citizens, who in previous lives were engineers, pharmacists, bakers, tailors, carpenters, students and more do extraordinary, difficult work. Since Syria's civil war began in March 2011, dozens of bombs land daily in neighborhoods throughout Syria, leaving dead and injured in their wake. The White Helmets deal with the aftermath. They dig for survivors using tools and their bare hands. They evacuate the injured. They help bury the dead and notify victims' families. The group says it has saved more than 99,000 lives (Sabbour, 2018).

When the bombs rain down, the White Helmets (also known as the Syria Civil Defence) rush in. In a place where public services no longer function, these humanitarian volunteers risk their lives to help anyone in need regardless of their religion or politics. Known for their distinctive headwear, the rescue workers operate in the most dangerous place on earth and have saved more than 100,000 lives over the past five years. Former bakers, tailors, engineers, pharmacists, painters, carpenters, students and many more professions besides, the White Helmets are volunteers from all walks of life. Many have paid the ultimate price for their compassion 252 have been killed while saving others.

The historical background of the White

Helmets Organization itself emerged when in the late of 2012 after the ruin condition of the Syria under the Bashar Al-Assad administration. The historical background of why White Helmets Organization appear is totally because the issue of the Humanitarian when there is no one can handle, less of care from the others and the condition of the Syria society become worst and worst in every single their life. James Le Mesurier as the founder of this Organization known regarding about how the condition of the society when dealing with the war. However, the funding of the organization also coming from many of institution, not only come from the west but also from many of institution such as from individual or charity who willing to help the condition of the society in the Syria. Furthermore, this Organization until nowadays still can work and sustain to help the society if Syria who still dealing with war condition. Hopefully, soon this Organization will not only focus on mitigation but also this organization can work in term of education and other crucial aspect which can lift the condition of young generation in Syria.

### **The Significant Impact from The Syria White Helmets Toward the Syria Society**

The volunteers save people on all sides of the conflict pledging commitment to the principles of "Humanity, Solidarity, Impartiality" as outlined under international humanitarian law (Al-Jablawi, 2018). This pledge guides every response, every action, every life saved so that in a time of destruction, all Syrians have the hope of a lifeline. Their inspiring work has earned them recognition at the highest international levels, and they have been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times. The White Helmets' motto is taken from the Quran: 'to save a life is to save all of humanity'. In a conflict where too many have chosen violence, the White Helmets wake up every day to save the lives others are trying so hard to take. As Syria's peaceful revolution descended into conflict in late 2012, the Syrian government began dropping bombs on homes and

neighbourhoods in areas outside of their control. These strikes were the first explosions of an aerial war on civilians that would lead to tens of thousands of deaths and millions displaced from their homes.

In the areas under attack public services no longer functioned so groups of volunteers formed to provide emergency response in communities across Syria. These self-organised groups would respond to the cries of their neighbours and friends trapped under the rubble. They had no specialised equipment or training and were powered only by their concern for human life. In March 2013, some of these volunteer teams received their first training in Turkey on the work of 'urban search and rescue' from a training organisation that specialises in response to natural disasters, such as earthquakes. With this training the groups became more organised, establishing civil defence centres and specialised teams. By 2014, there were teams in seven governorates across Syria. In October 2014, these teams voted to form one national organisation, the White Helmets (or Syria Civil Defence) and pledged allegiance to a set of international humanitarian values and principles as laid out in the Geneva Conventions. The White Helmets is led by a democratically elected Leadership Council that represents teams across the country, headed by Raed al Saleh who was formerly the Head of the White Helmets in Idlib, northern Syria.

The work of the White Helmets has expanded in response to the needs of the communities they serve, now providing essential services to millions of people (Grigoriev & Maizel, 2019). Their work includes fixing electrical grids, maintaining sewage works, clearing rubble from roads, removing unexploded weapons, as well as community education and preparation for future attacks. The White Helmets have emerged as heroes of the communities they serve. Their work has done what the world has failed to restore hope to people who now know that, no matter what, there is someone

there to help. The White Helmets have had female volunteers since their formation now there are 221 women who are trained in medical care and light search and rescue work. Like their male counterparts, the female White Helmets started out doing search and rescue work. Seeing the needs of their communities, the female teams have now expanded their work to provide trauma counselling, community education to help children and families prepare for attacks and recover afterwards, and in areas where there are few medical services, they have opened women maternal health clinics.

What White Helmets Organization has done toward the condition in Syria was given a lot of significant benefit. There are a lot of contribution from this organization toward the condition of society started from how they save a thousand of people in Syria. The way how they mitigate in the middle of the rain bomb from Bashar Al-ashad government. How this organization facilitated the necessity of the society in Syria was very meaningful. This is a very great solution toward the countries in the world who facing the war condition than the world really need much more people who care with the condition of the others brother because no need to be Muslim in order to help the Muslim society in the ruin condition you only need to be human to feel about how bad the humanity nowadays.

### **Syria's White Helmets Obstacle to Help the Syria Civil Society**

The White Helmets are being targeted for daring to operate outside the control of the Syrian regime and showing the world what is happening in Syria (DW, 2019). Their data and eyewitness testimonies, as well as photographic evidence, have been vital sources of information for international investigations into war crimes compiled by the United Nations Commission of Inquiry, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and human rights groups. These crimes include the use of chemical weapons, the collective punishment of

civilians through starvation sieges and the targeting of hospitals and medical facilities. The leading perpetrators of these crimes, the Syrian government, and its ally Russia, are targeting the White Helmets on the ground and attempting to discredit their work online and in the media. 252 volunteers have been killed in the line of duty since 2013. More than half of those have been killed in 'double-tap' strikes where Syrian regime and Russian warplanes return to the site of a bombing to target the rescue workers. Their centres and teams of volunteers have been hit by missiles, barrel bombs and artillery bombardment 238 times in just over 18 months between June 2016 and December 2017.

As frontline humanitarians, they are protected by international humanitarian law. Although they work exclusively in areas outside of government control, they have saved lives from all sides of the conflict, including that of government soldiers. They are also subjected to constant attack online – both personally and through a hate-filled Russian-backed disinformation campaign carried out by bloggers, bots, and trolls. This online war is designed to create doubt and confusion about the facts on the ground. Ultimately these efforts to discredit the White Helmets' work is to obscure the reality of war crimes being committed by Russia and the Syrian regime. The White Helmets dream of an end to their work pulling bodies from under the rubble and a time when their beloved Syria is at peace. When this day comes the White Helmets want to play their part in rebuilding a Syria where everyone's rights are realised. Already they are dealing with some of the most visible remnants of the war unexploded weapons. They have trained teams who are clearing farmlands so that farmers can start growing the crops needed to feed communities. They are restoring schools so children can return to learn in safety and securing roads so that everyday journeys are no longer a matter of life and death. In a country where more than half of the population have been forced to

flee their homes, the White Helmets want to help rebuild these homes and help rehouse families who want to return. The White Helmets will also continue to provide essential services, such as the maintenance of electrical grids, sewage works and water mains, while the generational task of re-establishing state provision is undertaken. The work of rebuilding Syria is not just physical, it will take years to bring communities back together and the White Helmets want to help build those bridges.

The big obstacle which dealing by the White Helmets Organization of course coming from the government of the Syria itself (Walt, 2019). Not mention what Bashar done by his own society was not rational he braves to kill a lot of society without thinking whether they are child, women or old society. What he has done was totally irrational. Not only about that unfortunately the way how the Bashar trying to prevent the White Helmets Organization also become one of the examples if Bashar doesn't like with what the White Helmets Organization done. Because of that White Helmets Organization sometime also become the target of the government. The other obstacle is coming from the lack of education sometime the volunteers still need additional knowledge in order to make them understand how to mitigate and so on so far in term of medicine or etc. but overall in term of education or skill is not become the main obstacle because there are a lot of agency or institution who also trying to help them by give them opportunity and provide them the way how to solve problem when earthquake and other humanitarian action.

## **CONCLUSION**

White Helmets Organization is the one of the NGO who concern on humanitarian issues in Syria. Based on how about the condition in Syria one of the forms British Army trying to dedicate his own self to create this organization. By this Organization there are a lot of contribution toward the condition of the Syria society who facing the ruin condition because of what Bashar done

because of the political interest and economic. By this organization, a million people are saved. The health can become better than before. The condition of Syria society can much more like human compare than before not only about that most of the volunteers in White Helmets Organization or

really care about the humanity they give up them self in order to create peace and the better condition of the Syria society even dead is clearly become their responsibility. No need to become Islam to care about the Islamic problems we only need become human to care about humanity issue.

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