GlobalResearch
Center for Research on Globalization

US to Shell Out $6.6mn for White Helmets 'Vital Operations' Weeks after Promising Funding Freeze

By RT News
Global Research, June 15, 2018
RT US News 14 June 2018

Region: Middle East & North Africa
Theme: Militarization and WMD, Terrorism, US NATO War Agenda
In-depth Report: SYRIA

The United States will resume funding for the controversial, militant-linked White Helmets, a month after the group had its financial support frozen. The State Department also lauded the group for saving "100,000 lives" in Syria.

President Donald Trump has authorized the US State Department, in conjunction with the United States Agency for International Development, to release $6.6 million for the *"vital, life-saving operations"* of the so-called Syrian Civil Defense group, known colloquially as the White Helmets, and for the UN's International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM), a UN agency that is investigating war crimes committed during the conflict.

A statement released by State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert claimed that the White Helmets had saved more than 100,000 lives since the conflict in Syria began. The generous praise may even surprise the White Helmets – by their own estimates, they've only rescued some 70,000 people.

> "Despicable. More money to the propagandists of the White Helmets, who so many Aleppo and Ghouta civilians say worked with or were terrorists of al-Qaeda, Jaysh al-Islam," Eva Bartlett, an independent journalist who has made multiple trips to Syria, tweeted in response to the news.

The controversial group – which operates exclusively in militant-held areas of Syria, and whose members have been photographed and filmed fraternizing with jihadists – reportedly had its US government funding cut off in March. A CBS report claimed last month that $200 million used to fund the group, as well as other programs in Syria, were *"under active review"* and that the White Helmets hadn't received US payments in weeks.

In contrast to their American allies, the British government vowed in May to keep money flowing to the White Helmets. UK Prime Minister Theresa May pledged last month to review the current financial package for the group, hinting at further funding down the track.

> "We do support them, we will continue to support them, and… [we] will be looking at the level of that support in the future," May said, during Prime Minister's Questions in the House of Commons.

A Freedom of Information Act request revealed that, as of March 2018, the UK government

has funded the White Helmets to the tune of £38,425,591.23 (approximately $51,148,535).

The group has enjoyed celebrity status in the West, with a documentary praising it even winning an Oscar award. But the western-funded organization has run into hard times lately, both with funding and bad publicity. Pink Floyd co-founder Roger Waters recently lambasted the White Helmets at a concert in Barcelona, calling the group a *"fake organization that exists only to create propaganda for jihadists and terrorists."* His remark came after emails emerged showing that the White Helmets tried to lobby Waters with Saudi money.

The original source of this article is RT US News
Copyright © RT News, RT US News, 2018

Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page

Become a Member of Global Research

Articles by: RT News

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca