

Western Governments Seek to Evacuate White Helmets From Syria, Resettle Them in Canada

The White Helmets have been shown to effectively be the same organization as terror group al-Nusra Front and have been caught on film aiding al-Nusra terrorists execute Syrian civilians. It is hard to imagine any Westerner who would want the White Helmets as neighbors.

By [Whitney Webb](#)

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Throughout much of the Syrian conflict, the exploits of the rescue organization that calls itself the Syrian Civil Defense, better known to Western media as the White Helmets, have been a source of constant controversy. Much of this controversy stems from their [multi-million dollar funding](#) from Western governments and their [documented collaboration](#) with terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda, all while purporting to be a local “first responder” organization with a neutral stance regarding the country’s conflict.

Yet now, following the recent success of the Syrian government’s campaign to rid southern Syria of both radical jihadist and foreign influence, the same Western governments that have long funded the White Helmets are seeking to evacuate their assets and resettle them abroad.

According to [a report recently published in CBS News](#), several Western countries that have provided funding for the group – such as the Netherlands, the U.K., Germany and France – are now “scrambling” to evacuate the estimated 1,000 White Helmets and their families, claiming that they are “in danger of assassination” and “now in need of rescuing themselves.”

Several of these countries had brought up the issue with U.S. President Donald Trump at last week’s NATO summit, per CBS’ sources. However, the Trump administration – which [recently restored](#) \$6.6 million in funding for the White Helmets — declined to comment on rescue efforts for the group, but did voice its concern that the White Helmets and related groups could face “reprisals” from the Syrian government.

The report asserted that, of all the leaders who had discussed the White Helmets at the recent NATO summit, U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May was the most adamant, as she also brought up the issue during her personal meeting with Trump over the weekend in London. May’s concern is unsurprising, given that the U.K. has spent [more than any other government](#) in funding the White Helmets, spending more than \$80 million from the time the group was founded in 2013 through 2016. Furthermore, the group itself was founded by [a former U.K. military intelligence officer turned mercenary](#), James Le Mesurier, which suggests that the U.K.’s connection to the group may go deeper than mere funding.

Western diplomats who spoke to *CBS* stated that, while no formal plan has yet been adopted, “dozens of ground escape routes” that would lead White Helmets out of Syria are currently being explored. However, if that method fails, those diplomats asserted that Russia would have to approve an aerial escape, though they openly doubted whether Russia could be trusted to aid such an effort.

Terrorists as neighbors?

Another area of confusion for those governments seeking to extract White Helmet members from Syria is where they should be resettled. While the Trump administration’s travel ban excludes the U.S., given that the ban prohibits the entry of Syrian nationals, Canada was named by *CBS* as a top possibility for a White Helmet “safe haven.” The report also asserted that Jordan and Israel would also likely assist such efforts.

However, resettlement may be a problem, not so much for the White Helmets as for Canadians, or the citizens of whatever nation would host the evacuees. This is because the White Helmets have been shown [on several occasions](#) to effectively be the same organization as terror group al-Nusra Front and have been caught on film aiding al-Nusra terrorists execute Syrian civilians. It is hard to imagine any Westerner who would want the White Helmets as neighbors.

Evacuation phase

Ultimately, the fact that the group’s foreign funders are acting to evacuate White Helmet operatives from Syria makes it clear that the Syrian government, thanks to its own efforts and those of its allies, clearly has the upper hand in now seven-year-long conflict. A U.S. official speaking to *CBS* all but confirmed this, stating:

This effort says we are in the evacuation phase. It is an admission that the regime is going to regain control of the country and the White Helmets can’t remain.”

Though this could well be the final chapter for the Syrian White Helmets, such reports should be taken with a grain of salt, as they have been used in the past to generate sympathy among the Western public in order to justify increased support for the group. For instance, [a prior CBS report](#) had spoken of the Trump administration’s “funding freeze” for the White Helmets and how this endangered the group’s activities. However, as noted above, just two months later the U.S. [restored funding](#) for the group to the tune of \$6.6 million.

Thus, while the group may be finished in Syria’s south, its presence along with its activities in service to its Western paymasters is likely to continue in other areas of Syria that are controlled by terrorists and foreign occupiers, despite assertions of the group’s imminent evacuation.

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