“MOBILISING PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD TO PROTECT SYRIAN CIVILIANS AND ACCELERATE PROGRESS TOWARDS A PEACEFUL AND DEMOCRATIC FUTURE FOR SYRIA.”

The Syria Campaign mission statement
The bombing of schools, hospitals and homes continued unabated. The use of chemical weapons remained a regular occurrence. And the tactic of mass starvation of civilian areas continued unchecked.

In the context of a failure by the international community to address this crisis, The Syria Campaign focused on elevating the voices of Syria’s peacemakers and mobilising people around the world to support them.

This report features our proudest work. Here are some highlights.

- **Raised more than $9 million.** Crowdfunding support from around the world for the lifesaving work of Syria’s rescue workers, the White Helmets, and building a children’s hospital to treat those injured by the bombings.
- **Brought the demands of Syria’s besieged to the world.** Working with the late British MP Jo Cox to create an alliance of politicians standing with the women of Daraya, one of the most severely starved areas in the country.
- **Challenged the lack of action from the United Nations on aid access.** Along with 50 leading Syrian humanitarian groups, launched a groundbreaking report which featured on the front pages of The Guardian, The New York Times and Foreign Policy which led to more open and robust criticism of the UN’s role in Syria.
- **Propelled Syrian heroes into the mainstream.** Working with the Oscar nominated team of Orlando Von Einsiedel and Joanna Natasegara to create the Netflix film ‘The White Helmets’ a powerful, hard-hitting and inspiring look at Syria’s rescue workers reaching audiences around the world.
- **Celebrated peacemakers.** Organising a campaign to support the nomination of the White Helmets for the Nobel Peace Prize—the most popular in history - backed by celebrities from George Clooney to Alicia Keys. Newspaper editorial boards from The Guardian to The Boston Globe also supported the call.
- **Crisis support.** Working with the media and through elite advocacy to elevate the demands of the White Helmets, doctors and other civil society groups for safe passage out of the siege of Aleppo. This generated an international media spotlight that prevented the worst excesses of the attacks continuing and saved countless lives.

2016 taught us that the international political failure on Syria is profound. However, we remain more convinced than ever that there is still scope for real impact. In a conflict of this ferocity, even the smallest reduction in the violence can affect tens of thousands of lives.

We want to extend the deepest gratitude and love to our partners across Syria - it is a true privilege to be able to support their work. We want to thank all those that make this work possible including our supporters, membership, volunteers and board.
Raised for the White Helmets from 154,000 donors across the globe

**$8.75**

**MILLION**

Placed outside the Russian Embassy in London to protest the killings in Aleppo

**2,000**

**PLASTIC LIMBS**

Of the Netflix 'The White Helmets' film in parliaments, UN Security Council and European Parliament

**10**

**IMPACT SCREENINGS**

Featuring our Syrian partners in major and popular media outlets

**67,500**

**MEDIA STORIES**

On a single 'viral' Facebook video we supported

**49**

**MILLION VIEWS**

Crowdfunded to support those displaced by the siege of Aleppo

**1 HOSPITAL**

in 195 countries taking action to support Syria's heroes

**537,869**

**MEMBERS**

Support the White Helmets' nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize

**54**

**GLOBAL PUBLIC FIGURES**

**+120 SYRIAN PARTNERS**

Supported by our media and communication work

**537,869**

**MEMBERS**
THE SYRIA CAMPAIGN HAD AN INCREDIBLY POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE WORK AND PROFILE OF THE WHITE HELMETS. THEY HELPED US EXPAND THE PROFILE OF OUR WORK FROM SYRIA TO THE WIDER WORLD AND BUILD IMPORTANT ADVOCACY RELATIONSHIPS.

IT IS CRUCIAL THAT WE CONTINUE THIS PARTNERSHIP AND ENSURE THIS WORK CONTINUES.”

— Raed Saleh, Director of the White Helmets (Syria Civil Defence)
THE WHITE HELMETS: A SYMBOL OF HOPE

In 2016 the Syrian regime and Russia intensified their aerial war targeting schools, markets, homes — anything that allows civilians to exist. These attacks furthered the mass displacement that has contributed to the worst refugee crisis since World War II. Chemical weapons were repeatedly deployed on residential neighbourhoods, and hospitals were targeted with impunity.

In the midst of this darkness, the White Helmets struggled to save the lives others were trying so hard to take. They emerged as a shining example of the Syrian revolution the world forgot: heroes struggling for freedom and democracy caught between dictatorship and extremism. In 2016 we supported the White Helmets in becoming a symbol of hope for those in Syria and for millions more across the world.

The Nobel Peace Prize Campaign

While the world focussed on the killing in Syria, we wanted to shine a spotlight on these heroes struggling for peace, who many Syrians and people around the world felt would be worthy winners of the Nobel Peace Prize.

We played a key role in securing official nominations for the prize, approaching academics and political figures who were only too happy to support these rescue workers. One of these included the late British MP Jo Cox, whose moving nomination was published after her death.

Then came the public campaign that made them the most supported nomination in history, picking up endorsements from newspapers like The Guardian and The Boston Globe, and featuring on the cover of Time Magazine. We generated over 325,000 signatures in support, leading the Huffington Post to describe them as the ‘People’s Choice’ for the award. As a result, bookmakers at the time had the White Helmets as favourites to win.

On October 8th, the White Helmets gathered around their screens in Syria to watch the ceremony live. While they missed out on the prize itself, the nomination brought them over 7,000 media articles and gained the admiration of millions of new fans around the world.
Netflix Film

In early 2016 we met with Oscar-nominated director Orlando Von Einsiedel and producer Joanna Natasegara who were seeking to make a new documentary about the White Helmets. We introduced them to the leadership of the organisation, and brokered a relationship which led to them gaining access to a training camp in southern Turkey.

The Syria Campaign then led the advocacy campaign around the film which included screenings at the UN Security Council with Ambassador Power, at the US Senate with key policy makers, as well as at a number of European parliaments.

In addition, we ran a high profile fundraising campaign alongside the film to ensure that these rescue workers received the greatest public support possible. The film’s screening in the US also enabled us to curate a US tour for the White Helmets leadership, including Raed Saleh, to meet with key figures from political, business and entertainment sectors.

“The Syria Campaign has successfully united a broad coalition of creative people to bring the stories of Syrian heroes to a global audience. It’s been a real privilege to work with them.”

— Orlando von Einsiedel, Director, The White Helmets.
The Hero Fund

In building the profile of the White Helmets, we created a story about heroes that people around the world wanted to support. We established and managed an online crowdfunding platform that raised over $7m to look after injured volunteers and families of the fallen.

In the coverage around the siege of Aleppo, the White Helmets emerged at the top of lists of organisations to support in outlets ranging from Vogue, Huffington Post and TIME magazine. Social media amplified this call, including Khloe Kardashian posting to her 70 million followers on Instagram.

"THE WHITE HELMETS’ HUMANITARIAN WORK AND THEIR DEEP COMMITMENT TO HUMANITY HAS THE POTENTIAL TO UNITE SYRIANS ON ALL SIDES, AND THE WORLD BEHIND THEM."

—Excerpt from Nobel Peace Prize nomination letter from the late MP Jo Cox, friend of The Syria Campaign.

Khaled Omar Harrah — a hero amongst heroes

In August 2014, a White Helmets volunteer named Khaled Omar rescued a ten-day-old baby from under the rubble of his family’s three-storey home. The rescue was captured on camera and Khaled’s tears of joy became a powerful symbol of the humanity that defines the work of the White Helmets. The resulting video, produced by The Syria Campaign, has been watched by millions including in screenings at the White House, United Nations Security Council and European parliaments.

In 2015 The Syria Campaign organised an advocacy delegation for Khaled Omar to New York and Washington DC. In every meeting he asked the same question, "Why can’t the world stop the bombings?" Khaled wanted an answer for his colleagues in Aleppo. He boarded the plane home without an answer.

In August 2016, Khaled was killed in an airstrike in Aleppo whilst driving to the scene of a rescue. We remember the bravery of Khaled and the countless other lives he saved. Before the revolution, Khaled was a painter and decorator. He died a hero, celebrated by his colleagues and by his community as a rescuer of children.
SUPPORTING ALEPPO’S HEROES
ALEPPO’S DARKEST DAYS

This once vibrant historical city came to symbolise the atrocities of the war as forces allied to the Syrian regime pushed to recapture the east of the city. As a few square kilometres became completely encircled, civilians found themselves facing Russian-backed airstrikes from the sky and regime-affiliated militias going street to street on the ground. There was nowhere to escape. In those last few months we supported humanitarian workers calling out to a world seemingly unwilling to stop these crimes.

Rally for Aleppo

Knowing that we needed the story of Aleppo to reach the mainstream, we met with the editors of The Daily Mirror and Sunday Mirror and worked with both newspapers to launch a campaign to ‘Save Aleppo’s Children’. Both newspapers ran detailed feature stories on the work of the humanitarian workers in the city during November and December. The culmination of this campaign partnership was a “rally for Aleppo” that brought together thousands of people outside 10 Downing Street, attended by War Child ambassador actor Carey Mulligan and co-organised by The Syria Campaign. This was covered on the front page of the Observer newspaper as well as all major national TV stations.

Dr. Maaz — a Surgeon of Courage

In the lead up to the siege of Aleppo, airstrikes on hospitals increased. When the Al Quds hospital in Aleppo was hit in April 2016, it was the latest of 350 medical facilities that had been targeted. Yet this attack had killed one of the city’s last remaining paediatricians, a courageous surgeon called Dr. Waseem Maaz.

After contacting the independent Doctors Association, we asked one of Dr. Maaz’s closest colleagues in Aleppo to write a letter in tribute to his friend in the hope of helping the world understand this loss. After sharing this letter on The Syria Campaign’s Facebook page the story went viral online, shared by over 100,000 people and reaching over 10 million people. At that point the doctor’s story became a major news item, covered widely across international media including Channel 4, BBC News and CNN.

Direct Action at the Russian Embassy

Despite clear evidence of war crimes, Russia’s bombing campaign in Aleppo was met with impunity and many felt Russia was impervious to public pressure. Responding to an ‘SOS’ call from Syrian activists on the ground, we planned and carried out a direct action at the Russian Embassy in London.

We blockaded the Russian embassy with more than two thousand mannequin limbs to protest the killing in Aleppo. Meanwhile our supporters called their switchboard in their hundreds, shutting down the Embassy telephone lines.

The action led to an official reaction from the Russian embassy in London, which called it “openly provocative”. The protest not only grabbed headlines worldwide but prompted Putin to authorise counter protests at embassies in Moscow. The next day, a hired crowd in Moscow staged a protest outside the British embassy, and even threw a mannequin limb over the gates.

OPENLY PROVOCATIVE
— Official statement from The Russian Embassy in London about The Syria Campaign’s mannequin protest

“RALLY FOR ALEPPO”
— A Save Aleppo’s Children rally in London
“THE SYRIA CAMPAIGN MADE THE PERFECT PARTNER. THEY HAD THE AGILITY NEEDED FOR AN EMERGENCY, THE EXPERIENCE AND REACH TO CO-CREATE A REALLY IMPACTFUL CAMPAIGN AND THE DEDICATION AND DETERMINATION TO MAKE IT HAPPEN. THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES SHOULD BE MADE OF.”

—Dr. Rola Hallam, Founder of CanDo

‘Hope’ Hospital
With the news that the final children’s hospital in Aleppo was forced to close its doors, we wanted a campaign that could transform public outrage at these attacks into a source of hope for frontline medics on the ground.

Partnering with Can Do and other Syrian and British doctors, we launched a crowdfunding website and campaign for a ‘Hope Hospital’ in the countryside near Aleppo to treat the children and women. We created the campaign in just ten days and thanks to our supporters and media work, we raised over $275,000 in just over two weeks.

The departure of the ‘People’s Convoy’ from the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital for Syria was a major media event, attended by broadcast news outlets including BBC TV and Radio, Sky News, ITV, London Tonight and the Press Association. This provided a platform for the doctors to explain the situation facing their counterparts in Syria, and to call on the UK government to take action to protect medical workers from deliberate attacks. The hospital has now opened and is treating children from Aleppo and across the region.

Direct Advocacy
In September we supported Raed al Saleh (Head of the White Helmets) on an advocacy trip to the UN General Assembly where he met with Syria envoys from the US, Germany, Holland, UK and France, and with the US Secretary of State John Kerry. We also co-hosted a side event with the Dutch Mission focussed on Aleppo.

In the last weeks leading up to the fall of Aleppo we organized an advocacy and media tour for the White Helmets and Dr Osama Aba Elezz from Syrian American Medical Society to meet key European decision makers and discuss their demands for safe passage out of the Aleppo siege. They had meetings with key advisors to Merkel and representatives from the Green and CDU parties. In Paris they met the Ambassador for Syria and a number of politicians from across the political spectrum. We also secured them media including the homepage of BILD and on Germany’s biggest morning TV show.

Safe Passage Call
During the chaotic final days of the siege of Aleppo, we helped deliver a single, clear message from the White Helmets and other humanitarian workers: the need for safe passage for civilians. We placed an op-ed from Raed Saleh on the front page of the Guardian site which was shared thousands of times on social media.

Responding to the urgent need for more human stories from the ground, we released daily dispatches from Aleppo as well as data on airstrikes and the availability of food and other supplies. Working around the clock, we connected journalists to contacts on the ground resulting in over 50 broadcast news stories.

Although The Syria Campaign was only one of a network of people and organisations working to highlight the horrific situation in Aleppo, we heard from high-level government and UN sources that the public outcry and media spotlight generated played a key role in Russia’s decision to allow safe passage from the city.

Doctors’ Call to Obama
In the attacks on Aleppo we saw an unprecedented targeting of hospitals with multiple strikes on the same facility in a single day. In partnership with Crisis Action we worked on a public call from the last remaining doctors in Aleppo to President Obama asking for protection. The letter grabbed headlines around the world including on the BBC, CNN and the Guardian, forcing the White House to comment on it within 24 hours.

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BREAK THE SIEGE
BREAK THE SILENCE, BREAK THE SIEGE

The areas that were once the beating heart of Syria’s peaceful revolution have been subjected to the most brutal sieges for daring to oppose dictatorship. The Syrian regime has pursued a strategy of “starve or submit”, encircling entire neighbourhoods and cutting them off from food and medicine. This started in the early days of the uprising in Dera’a and then spread to Homs, Daraya, Moadamiya, Ghouta, Aleppo and many other towns besides. Although all sides have used siege as a weapon of war, it is the Syrian regime that is responsible for restricting access to 99% of the one million civilians under siege.

At the beginning of 2016, aid was being routinely denied to millions of Syrians and yet there was very little international attention on the issue. Even more shocking was the fact that some of the worst hit areas were only a few minutes’ drive from the UN’s headquarters in Damascus, where it was overseeing the largest aid budget in the organisation’s history.

**Creative intervention**

In January 2016 we brought the issue of siege and aid access to the heart of political negotiations around Syria. We travelled to Geneva, Switzerland and along with activists in Planet Syria we set up a stall selling “Siege Soup” to journalists and delegates attending the peace talks. Dressed as leaders who were continuing to fail the people of Syria, the stunt had a simple and powerful message to the world’s media: that ordinary people were being starved due to their inaction.

For the first time, questions about aid access were being posed by journalists to negotiators involved in the talks. Pictures and videos from our action were carried by the Associated Press, Agence France Presse, the BBC, the New York Times and printed on the front page of the Daily Star Lebanon, the Middle East’s leading English-language daily.

**Understanding the scale**

The slow, gradual increase of suffering in places like Daraya and Madaya was calculated to avoid producing the kind of dramatic moments that would engage a global audience.

In order to break the sieges, we needed key decision makers to understand the size of the problem because official UN figures were vastly underestimating the scale of the crisis. We worked to elevate the figures produced by Siege Watch, an initiative by the Syria Institute and Pax International, and soon after, the true figure of a million under siege was being referenced on newspaper front pages and on TV news.

We needed to make sure voices from under siege were being heard. We built networks of trusted sources in towns under siege and connected them to international journalists. We supported an open letter from besieged activists and humanitarians inside Syria, referenced in the Washington Post, which called out the UN for failing the people of Madaya.
“FOR THE FIRST TIME THE WOMEN FELT THEIR VOICE WAS HEARD”
— Mariah Alabdeh, Executive Director of Women Now for Development

Women of Daraya push for air drops

We partnered with the inspiring activists of Women Now in Daraya to elevate their demands to the world. Daraya, a small town governed by a democratic council and just 10 miles from Damascus should have been easy to reach, and yet locals were forced to eat grass because of the tight blockade.

We worked with the late Jo Cox MP to galvanise the support of dozens of European MPs to push for air drops to communities as land routes remained blocked. The Guardian newspaper ran an exclusive, while Germany’s most widely read and influential paper Die Zeit put it on the front page under the headline “we are cowards”. The press coverage, combined with questions asked in UK Parliament, rapidly led to increased international pressure for aid access to Daraya. As the clamour increased for air drops, Russia intervened and pushed its ally the Syrian regime to open the land route to Daraya. There is little doubt that the eventual deliveries to Daraya after more than four years of siege were linked to this public pressure.

Truth to Power: The ‘Taking Sides’ Report

In June we broke a major worldwide story around the international failure to lift the starvation sieges in Syria. With the backing of more than 50 of Syria’s leading humanitarian groups, we released a report and campaign pushing the UN to establish clear conditions on its aid operation inside the country to avoid becoming exploited and weaponised in the conflict.

Our “Taking Sides” report was a carefully researched critique of the UN’s aid programme in Damascus and it sparked a wave of international media coverage and demonstrated our readiness to speak truth to power. The report pushed the issue of aid access once again onto the agenda of political talks and led to a major debate at the UN.

The report was based on the demands of our Syrian partners themselves, and the recommendations were signed by 56 organisations including the White Helmets, Kesh Malek, Women Now for Development, the Daumia local council and many more.

On the day of its release, the report led Foreign Policy’s international briefing and was the lead news story on Al Jazeera as well as covered extensively by the BBC. All the international wires carried the news and the investigation fired the starting gun on several independent efforts to uncover UN wrongdoing in Syria.

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2016 INCOME AND EXPENSES

2016 Income

- Individual £301,300 (57%)
- Foundation £63,400 (12%)
- Crowd-funding £142,500 (27%)
- Other Income £22,800 (4%)

Total Income £530,000

2016 Expenses

- Staffing £396,753 (74%)
- Campaign £70,280 (13%)
- Office Expenses £21,171 (4%)
- Travel & Meeting £29,059 (5%)
- Business Expenses £11,886 (2%)
- Fundraising & Development £3,852 (1%)

Total Expense £533,000
THANK YOU

We are hugely indebted to everyone who has enabled The Syria Campaign to deliver this level of impact.

First and foremost, our Syrian partners who continue to inspire us with their courage, determination and hope despite the constant attacks they face. We want to thank you for your openness, your support for our work and for partnering with us in the deepest way possible. You are the reason we do this work and it is a true honour to support your struggle for a free and democratic Syria.

We would like to extend the most sincere thank you to the individuals and foundations that support our work and share our values. The Syria Campaign is fiercely independent and we have not taken money from governments or individuals linked to the violence of the conflict. All our donors have strong commitments to democracy and human rights, the values we share in our team.

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We want to thank everyone in The Syria Campaign whose commitment, creativity and courage drives everything we do. We appreciate all the sacrifices and extra miles you have gone to bring together these inspiring campaigns. Thank you to our Board Members Ben Stewart, Dan Gorman, Lina Sergie, Sawsan Asfari and Tim Dixon who provided endless amounts of support, guidance and leadership to help build the organisation.

Finally we want to thank the wide network of people who we are so deeply proud to call friends of the campaign.

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