

CHAPTER IV

THE WHITE HELMETS IN ADVOCACY PROCESS

Syrian civil war has been running for years since March 2011. Since 2011, the conflict of Syria has been getting worse time by time then it turns to Syrian civil war. Many actors involved in the Syrian civil war. It leads the other actors to intervene the problem that happened in Syria. The Syrian civil war has resulted in many damage and disadvantage. Since 2011 until today the population of Syria decreases significantly, as the civilians they become the victim of the war. The number of the victims from the Syrian war reach to 500,000 since 2011 until today. The evidence showed that the attack was using the hazardous materials such as barrel bomb, chemical weapon, ammunition, and chlorine gas. Those attacks were launched by aircraft.

After the United Nations Security Council passed resolution 2139, it was expected could help the civilians as the victim of the terribleness of the Syrian war. Nevertheless, the reality is different from the expectation because the resolution 2139 still could not be implemented effectively. The White Helmets want to protect the right of civilian to obtain safe life and to reduce the victim.

A. Providing Information About The Terrible Condition of Syrian Civilians As The Victims of Syrian Civil War

The advocacy process is defined as an effort to approach others. The advocacy subject tries to build communicative interaction with people in order to influence their sympathize with the problems that are happening around us. The definition of advocacy according to Advocacy Institute, in Joel Bhosle's book is:

“Advocacy is a series of actions designed to persuade and influence those who hold governmental, political, or economic power so that they will adopt and implement public policies in ways that benefit those with less political power and fewer economic resources (Bhose, 2003).”

The White Helmets’ mission is to help the Syrian civilians in the battle area and to reduce the number of the victim. The other NGOs that have same mission have been partnering with the White Helmets. However, the knowledge and awareness of the world related to the Syrian civilian condition are still not enough to make their life better. Therefore, the White Helmets wants to provide direct information to the world about the Syrian civilian condition, including what they need and want, what will happen if the world and International actors do not care or do anything to help Syrian people, and the reason for the no-fly zone policy should be fought together with other actors. Hopefully, after the world and International actors understand the reason for the enforcement of resolution 2139 and no-fly zone policy to be realized, the public’s awareness to participate in the advocacy process will increase. Moreover, the advocacy process will be more successful if there are many parties who join.

Example case on the report made by the White Helmets:

Since the middle of 2014, the people protested toward the United Nation Security Council peace resolution 2139 which is passed in 2014. The movement started since there was big attack by Assad regime on 21 August 2013 by aircraft. The communities organized various actions against the peace resolution including discussions, actions, protest, and campaigns.

In response to the chlorine attack by aircraft, the United National Security Council passed resolution 2139 that concerned about the prohibition of chemical weapon’s utilization and humanitarian assistance access. The failure implementation of resolution 2139 made the White Helmets with other parties asked for United Nations Security Council

to give sanction to the violators and demanded new policy to make the resolution become more effective to be implemented. The White Helmets called for the United Nations to uphold its demand to stop the chemical attacks and barrel bombs by implementing a 'no-fly zone' in Syria on 16 March 2015. Through various media, the White Helmets give information to the people about the condition of Syrian civilians. Media had been used to share the information including their official website, mass media, peace campaigns through the documentary film published in Netflix, and also participate in International discussion forum. In their official website, the White Helmets created petition to persuade the people to join the White Helmets to support their action to realize the no fly zone policy.

The White Helmets and no fly zone movement realize that the cause of the no-fly zone cannot be realized because the implementation of this policy is expensive, not all of the parties agree with this proposal. Moreover, the sanction from UN is still weak. Based on the data, the usage of chemical weapon launched by air attack increased the number of the victims significantly.

Table IV.1 The International Forum Agenda of the White Helmets

N	Event	When	Where	Coordinator	Themes
1	UN- Arria Formula Briefing	26 June 2015	New York	UN Permanent members of France and Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection • Displacement and Humanitarian Response • Human Rights • Implementation 2139
2	Supporting Syria & The Region 2016	4 Feb 2016	London	UN UK Germany Kuwait Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the condition of Syria and the civilians as the local rescue workers.
3	Atlantic Council Discussion	24 April 2017	Washington	Atlantic Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the condition of Syria and the civilians as the local rescue workers by showed up the video. • Open discussion toward the needs of civilians and the problem solving.

The White Helmets informed the public about the dangers of air attack which used chemical weapon through discussions in United Nations Arria Formula meeting. The White Helmets was invited into this International discussion as representative

of NGOs. From these discussions, Raed Al Saleh stated that the White Helmets hoped that public awareness would increase to fight and protect the right for the civilian in Syria. On 26 June 2015, France and the United Kingdom held the Arria meeting discussion related to the failure of UN promises toward implementation of resolution 2139 and initiation of the new solution no fly zone policy, which would be proposed to the Syrian government and UN Security Council.

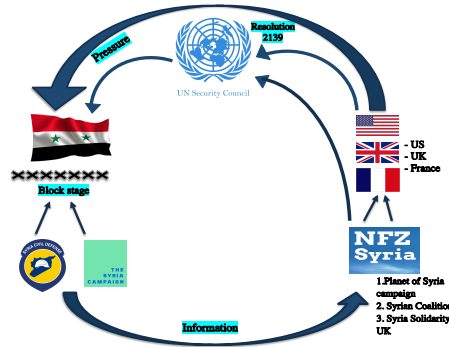
The second chance that the White Helmets got was invited by the United Nations to involve in the international forum in Supporting Syria & The Region in 2016. Raed Al Saleh as the representative of White Helmet was given two minutes to give his statement to make big picture about who they are, and how the condition in civilian in Syria is.

The last international meeting that was attended by White Helmets was Atlantic Council Discussion. On 24 April 2017, the White Helmets involved in order to discussion about the possible solution for the Syrian civil war and also the feasible way to protect the right of Syrian civilians.

B. Developing Transnational Advocacy Network With No Fly Zone Movement

Boomerang pattern models can be used to see how the White Helmets build their mass base of advocacy at the international level. This model can also provide information about the international norms on human right. It guided by the norm, the White Helmets supported by the global movement in efforts to promote human rights for Syrian civilians and to advocate the new policy to get better condition and also reduce the victims from attack.

Figure III.1 The Implementation of Boomerang Pattern



The White Helmets known as Syrian Civil Defense is a Syrian NGO. It consists of rescue workers that always help the Syrian civilians when they were attacked. The White Helmets established in 2013 as an organization of rescue workers that cooperated with other NGOs and the permanent members of the United Nations: France, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The project aimed to enforce the UN peace resolution 2139 and also to propose a no-fly zone policy. It is deemed that this could protect the Syrian civilians from chemical air attacks and in order to reduce the number of victims. The UN Security Council released peace resolution 2139 to protect the Syrian civilian. The resolution provides for the protection of the civilian, the prohibition in the usage of chemical weapons, and also the humanitarian assistance access for the war's victims. This situation is not in accordance with what has been mandated by the United Nations that Syrian civilians have their own right to have a peaceful life. All the parties have to oblige to respect, protect, and fulfill the rights of Syrian civilians.

As an organization that wants to promote and to protect the rights of the Syrian civilians in Syria, the White Helmets were strongly against the air attacks that had been done by

Assad regime and other parties so that increasing the number of victims significantly. To advocate the right of Syrian civilians, the White Helmets cannot move by themselves. An advocacy process requires a lot of mass support. In order to suppress the Syrian government and also United Nations, the White Helmets must mobilize assistance from international level organizations that share a common vision and mission to promote the human right.

The White Helmets strengthens their advocacy base by forming alliances and working with several cross-border non-governmental organization. The White Helmets cooperated with global working base called No Fly Zone movement. No Fly Zone movement consists of The Syria Campaign, Planet of Syria, Syria Solidarity, the United Kingdom, and permanent membership of the Security Council specifically France, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The Syrian non-violent activists from planet Syria asked to the world solidarity to joint with them. Since the extremism that is growing in the cities in Syria is rooted in the Syrian conflict. To stop the extremism the Planet Syria and other NGOs actors have to end the bloodshed in Syria. Stopping the violence requires two steps which cannot achieve alone: (1) an end to the Assad regime's barrel bombs and air strikes and (2) negotiations between all Syrian groups and their international backers. To do that action planet Syria, the White Helmets with other NGOs need the barrel bombs to stop even if it takes a 'no-fly zone' and meaningful peace talks (Planet of Syria, 2017).

The Syria Campaign is a global advocacy group launched in 2014 with the mission to mobilize people around the world to advocate, to protect Syrian civilians and to accelerate progress towards a peaceful and democratic future for Syria. They work in two ways: 1). Creating communication materials such like reports, infographics, videos that have the ability to cut through the complexity of the conflict and shift the public narrative on Syria; 2). Running large-scale campaigns that elevate the voices of Syrians and deliver real impact on the

ground. The Syria Campaign collaborates with the White Helmets in promoting the campaign through media.

Syria Solidarity UK movement is a network of activists committed to solidarity with the Syrian Revolution. The aim of Syria Solidarity the United Kingdom is to provide political solidarity for the people of Syria and support their struggle for freedom. They work with all existing campaigns and progressive organizations to help build a movement that can assist the Syrian people in their struggle for a democratic and free Syria with the support of the international community.

The White Helmets with No Fly Zone Movement were doing their advocacy process upholds the values of humanity which produced by the United Nations. As what had been declared that human rights must be positioned as basic needs of human being. The norm is listed in Chapter VII of UN Charter, UNSC peace resolutions, Geneva Communiqué 1949, Chemical Weapon Convention 1993, and Kosovo International Convention the United Kingdom – NATO 1999. The White Helmets uses the norms declared by the United Nations to remind the Syrian government, Russia, and China to respect toward peace resolution 2139 and called United Nation to make policy no-fly zone in Syria which is considered to support their action to protect the Syrian civilian.

C. Giving Pressure To The UNSC To Renew The Peace Resolution 2139

The publication of the peace resolution 2139 by United Nation Security Council on 22 February 2014 protested against discrimination attack and permission of humanitarian assistance access in Syria. However, after few months had passed there was no response from the defendant. The White Helmets, other NGOs, the United Kingdom, the United States, and France tried to call UN to enforce the resolution 2139 and proposed no-fly zone.

The United States and France gave a push to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and UN Security Council to investigate the possibility of the indiscriminate attack

against the civilians and also to give sanction to the parties that violate the peace resolution 2139 on 7 May 2014. On 25 June 2015, the White Helmets and other NGOs were united calling for the consequences for violations of UN Security Council 2139, specifically since a lot of violations of the resolution's it led demand to stop the air attack in the populated area. This coalition consisted of 81 NGOs were urging the Council to use the next peace talk in Arria Briefing meeting to take the momentum on this critical issue and to commence the process required to set up a mechanism to track and publically expose indiscriminate attacks by any means against civilians.

On the 26 June 2015, United Nation Security Council members, France and Spain, arranged the meeting. The White Helmets was invited to this meeting to represent NGOs. They delivered the information concerning about the condition of civilians of Syria and also their disappointment toward the failure of implementation of 2139. The head of the White Helmets, Raed Al Saleh, attended the Arria Briefing in order to call the Council to authorize a no-fly zone that would provide civilians with an area safe from the bombs.

The case of a discriminate attack in Syrian civil war since 2014 is a clear proof that the validity of the contents Peace resolution 2139 did not have decisive regulation for the violator toward the resolution. The White Helmets together with the Community Coalition for No-Fly Zone has filed a report against the Assad regime to the UN Security Council and International Criminal Court. The White Helmets wants the government to be responsible and also to be submissive toward the humanitarian law and resolution. The White Helmets also wants the UN Security Council to give sanction to the parties that break the rule and approve the proposal of new no-fly zone policy in Syria.

The United Nations Security Council resolution 2139 was vetoed by Russia and China, whereas the resolution could be vetoed by any permanent members of United Nations. One of Russia's reasons to veto the resolution is Russia did not want Syria to get the sanction. The veto that had been done by

Russia and China became contradiction for the implementation toward the resolution 2139.

The violence of resolution 2139 leads the demand from all of the parties in order United Nations takes clear action to give sanction to the violators. The United Kingdom, the United States, France and also the NGOs demanded the new no fly zone policy. However, in the end of 2016, on 28 December, Russia and Turkey held talk in Astana and it discuss about the ceasefire in Syria. On 30 December 2016, the ceasefire was implemented and agreed by some of opposition of Syria parties, The National Coalition for Syria Revolutionary and Opposition Forces. The ceasefire in January could not be implemented well because the violation from Russia and opposition decided to freeze from the peace talk for Syria. Until now the proposal of New Fly Zone policy still could not pass for being implemented.