



**Joint  
statement**

## **Jo Cox, Humanitarian**

[22 June 2016] Humanity lost a champion when Jo Cox was stolen from us. We are deeply saddened by the loss. We extend our most sincere condolences to Jo's family and friends, and our thoughts and prayers are with them.

Syrians learned of her last year as a new MP prepared to speak up on Syria after two years of near-silence in the UK Parliament. Her view of the crisis was both moral and realistic, rigorous in seeking to understand what was happening, and clear in seeing what could and should be done.

The Syrian war is not just a humanitarian crisis; it is a crime against humanity. Jo Cox was not content to settle for helping the victims, she demanded action to end the crime.

Her focus was civilian protection: achieve that, and the rest follows; fail on that and no lasting good can come of our actions. She advocated action by the UK and allies to stop Assad's deliberate bombing of civilian areas as the single greatest threat to civilians. She advocated humanitarian airdrops by the UK to besieged civilians to force an end to Assad's deliberate use of starvation as a weapon.

Jo Cox abstained on the December 2015 vote on extending anti-ISIS airstrikes into Syria. She was deeply unhappy that the proposed intervention offered no relief to civilians. She refused to cast her vote either for isolationism or for a narrow counterterrorist policy that failed to deal with the ultimate cause of Syria's horror, the Assad regime's campaign of mass murder.

Britain's failure to act in 2013 came in part because politicians allowed the massacres in Syria to become the subject of UK party politics. In all of her work on Syria, Labour MP Jo Cox reached out across party lines, working with Conservatives on the need to stop the bombing, and with Liberal Democrats on the need for action to break the sieges. In the last fortnight of her life she had the satisfaction of seeing MPs from across the House of Commons stand to speak in favour of humanitarian air drops.

Failure to act to protect civilians inside Syria has now become failure to protect civilians fleeing Syria. Victims of the murderous dictatorship are now used as a propaganda tool by the UK's own inhumane far right. We have tolerated organised thuggery in Syria; now the thuggishness has entered our own politics.





Humanitarianism is caring for others, and through that we nurture our own humanity. British politics sacrificed its own humanity in its response to the Syria crisis. Jo Cox did her best to redeem it. We will miss her deeply.

Batool Abdulkareem, Heba Ajami, Muzna Al-Naib, Mark Boothroyd, Clara Connolly, Amr Salahi, Kellie Strom, Syria Solidarity UK  
Yasmine Nahlawi, Rethink Rebuild Society  
Dr Sharif Kaf Al-Ghazal, Syrian Association of Yorkshire  
Dr Mohammad Tammo, Kurds House  
Reem Assil, Syrian Platform for Peace  
Rouba Mhaissen, SAWA for development and aid  
Mazen Ejbaei, Help 4 Syria UK  
Dr Amer Masri, Scotland4Syria  
Dr Mohammad Alhadj Ali, Syrian Welsh Society  
Dr Abdullah Hanoun, Syrian Community of the South West  
Dr Fadel Moghrabi, Peace and Justice for Syria  
Talal Al-Mayhani, Centre for Thought and Public Affairs  
Amjad Selo, Syrian Society in Nottinghamshire  
Jonathan Brown, Saleyha Ahsan, Ben Midgley, Liberal Democrats for Syrian Freedom, Peace & Reconstruction  
Yara Bader, Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression  
Mazen Darwish, Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression  
Yara Tlass, Watanili  
Rafif Jouejati, FREE-Syria  
Moataz Aljbawi, Union of Syria Civil Society Organizations  
Bassam al-Kuwlati, RMTeam  
Violations Documentation Centre  
Assaad al Achi, Baytna  
Aref Alkrezi  
Alaa Basatneh  
Majd Chourbaji, Basamat for Development  
Salim Salamah, Palestinian League for Human Rights  
Syria Civil Defence, 'The White Helmets'  
Emissa for Development  
Majd Chourbaji, Basamat for development  
Fadel Abdul Ghany, Syrian Network for Human Rights  
Hozan Ibrahim, Citizens for Syria

