

<http://wilpf.org/joint-statement-humanitarian-corridor-proposal-deeply-flawed/>

Joint Statement: “Humanitarian Corridor” Proposal Deeply Flawed

August 3, 2016

A statement from over 35 Syrian, regional and international humanitarian, human rights and development organisations on the Russia-Syrian proposal to establish “humanitarian corridors” out of Aleppo

We are extremely alarmed at Russia and Syria’s joint proposal to set up so-called “humanitarian corridors” out of eastern Aleppo. We consider the proposal deeply flawed on humanitarian grounds and consider it warning for the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) to urgently step up efforts to end the use of brutal siege tactics and illegal attacks on civilians.

A true humanitarian operation would not force the people of Aleppo to choose between fleeing into the arms of their attackers or remaining in a besieged area under continued bombardment. No one should be forced to flee or remain, and measures must be put in place for the UN to ensure and monitor the safety and protection of anyone voluntarily evacuating.

Far from averting a humanitarian catastrophe in Aleppo, we are gravely concerned that the proposal for “humanitarian corridors” forewarns of a significant risk to civilians who remain. A ‘safe passage’ offer does not mean that those who stay behind become legitimate military targets. The city cannot be allowed to become another theatre for mass slaughter.

If Russia is serious about averting a humanitarian disaster in Aleppo it should strongly support the UN’s call for an immediate weekly 48-hour humanitarian pause to ensure safe, unimpeded and immediate humanitarian access – both for aid to get into Aleppo and for civilians to leave voluntarily. As long as the bombing, shelling and fighting continues, and in the absence of any genuine confidence-building measures, civilians cannot be expected to trust in the safety of walking through these proposed corridors. All efforts of the ISSG must focus on pushing for a sustained ceasefire, and for an immediate end to the shameless and unacceptable attacks on hospitals and civilian targets.

Signed:

1. ASML
2. AWO International
3. BINAA
4. Bridge of Peace

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5. The Council for Arab-British Understanding (CAABU)
6. CARE International
7. CCFD-Terre Solidaire
8. Christian Aid
9. Doctors of the World UK
10. EuroMed Rights (EMHRN)
11. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
12. GOAL
13. Hand in Hand for Syria
14. Human Appeal International
15. Human Rights and Democracy Media Center "SHASM" /Palestine
16. Islamic Relief USA
17. Karam Foundation
18. Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies
19. NuDay Syria
20. Oxfam
21. Physicians for Human Rights
22. Refugees International
23. Relief & Reconciliation for Syria
24. Relief International
25. Rethink Rebuild Society
26. Save the Children
27. STAND: The Student-led Movement to End Mass Atrocities
28. Stichting Vluchteling
29. Syria Relief
30. Syria Relief and Development
31. Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS)
32. Tearfund
33. The International Rescue Committee
34. The Syria Campaign
35. Trocaire
36. Vision GRAM-International
37. WATAN
38. WILPF
39. World Vision