




**SYRIAN
EMERGENCY
TASK FORCE**



Syrian Emergency Task Force

2023 Annual Report



The Syrian Emergency Task Force was formed in March 2011 to respond to the Syrian dictatorship and its allies waging war on innocent civilians. As a 501(c)(3) headquartered in Washington, D.C., SETF works tirelessly to bring an end to the killing in Syria through advocacy, humanitarian initiatives, and the pursuit of justice and accountability for war crimes.

Today, SETF is the most notable Syrian-American organization working on Syria, as evidenced by the impact we have made on the ground in Syria and the U.S.

For more information about SETF's mission and programs, please visit setf.ngo

© 2022 The Syrian Emergency Task Force



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from SETF Leaders	4
SETF Media	6
Policy and Advocacy	12
Events and Awards	22
Humanitarian	29
Operation Syrian Oasis	44
Syria-Ukraine Network (SUN)	49
Justice and Accountability	53
Crime Documentation	57
Fiscal 2023	60
Board and Staff	61
Contact Information	63

MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERS

As we reflect on the past year, the Syrian Emergency Task Force team's commitment to advocating for the people of Syria remains unwavering. In the face of immense challenges, our collective efforts have been a beacon of hope for those affected by the ongoing crisis.

Through your unwavering support, we have continued our mission to bring attention to the human rights violations in Syria, working tirelessly to amplify the voices of those who often go unheard. Our humanitarian projects have made a tangible impact, providing essential aid to those in desperate need. However, the road ahead is long, and there is much work to be done. The human rights violations persist, demanding our continued commitment and concerted efforts.

In the coming year, we pledge to continue our advocacy initiatives, pushing for tangible change and justice for the people of Syria. Your support is not just appreciated; it is the lifeblood of our organization. Together, we have the power to make a difference.

As we present this annual report, we express our deepest gratitude to all who have stood by us—donors, volunteers, and partners. Your belief in our mission fuels our determination to create a better future for Syria.

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey. Together, we will strive for a world where human rights are upheld and the people of Syria can rebuild their lives with dignity.

In solidarity,

Mouaz Moustafa,
SETF Executive Director

Jerry Adams,
Chair of SETF Board of Trustees

“Our work to document the war crimes in Syria will continue. Our work to help-- individuals, heroes like Caesar and others, will never cease. And as long as Caesar and the Syrian people are resilient justice will prevail.”

Mouaz Moustafa,
SETF Executive Director





SETF MEDIA

SETF is proud to have cultivated an exceptional media network, forging strong connections with influential outlets and journalists across the U.S., Europe, and the Middle East.

Our extensive portfolio includes collaborations with major print, television, and radio platforms, and we have actively contributed to or been featured in 14 documentaries. Our impactful articles and co-produced programs have garnered esteemed recognition in journalism, including prestigious awards such as Emmys, the Pulitzer Prize for Literary Journalism, and Dupont Awards for Journalism, among others.

SETF MEDIA

SETF enjoys an unrivaled network with key media outlets and journalists across the U.S., Europe, and the Middle East.

We have worked with all major print, television, and radio outlets and have taken part in facilitating or being the subject of 14 documentaries. Many of the articles and programs we helped produce have won the most prestigious awards in journalism, including Emmys, Pulitzer Prize for Literary Journalism, and Dupont Awards for Journalism, among others.

Since the February earthquake, SETF has successfully coordinated permissions and logistics to bring journalists to Northwest Syria. During this year, SETF facilitated trips for journalists from dozens of outlets such as the New York Times, PBS NewsHour, CBS, The Washington Post, NPR, The Guardian, and AP News.



1M

Social Media Reach

500K

Google Impressions

30K

Website Traffic

90

News Articles

WASHINGTON POST



Congressional trip to Syria, rare and brief, highlights a forsaken region

By Kareem Fahim | August 29, 2023

NEW YORK TIMES



With a Hand From the U.S. Military, Aid Finally Reaches a Syrian Camp

By [Raja Abdulrahim](#) | June 23, 2023

THE GUARDIAN



'Where are they?' Anger in north-west Syria at slow earthquake response

By Martin Chulov | February 15, 2023

PBS NEWS HOUR



Northwest Syria faces slow recovery 6 months after devastating earthquake

August 23, 2023

ABC NEWS



Giving birth in a war zone: The struggles of many Syrian mothers

By Ibtissem Guenfoud and Abdul Razzaq Al-Shami | October 6, 2023

POLITICO



US urged to hold Assad to account as power shifts in Middle East

By Martin Chulov | March 27, 2023

NEW YORK TIMES



After American’s Killing in Syria, FBI Builds War Crimes Case Against Top Officials

By Katie Benner, Adam Goldman | April 17, 2023

POLITICO



Russia Is Fighting More Than One War. I Went to Check on the ‘Other’ One.

By Tim Mak | December 03, 2023

CNN



How a group of digital activists are helping earthquake survivors

By Alaa Elassar | March 5, 2023

THE NATIONAL



US politicians speak to Druze Sheikh Al Hajari as anti-Assad protests continue

By Ellie Sennett | September 21, 2023

DOHA NEWS



Saudi Arabia officially invites Syria’s Assad to attend Arab League summit

By Asmahan Qarjouli | May 11, 2023

AL-JAZEERA



Assad normalisation leaves Syrians in Rukban camp fearing future

By Hanna Davis | May 28, 2023

EL PAÍS



La Siria rebelde, la gran olvidada del terremoto

By Antonio Pita | February 11, 2023

CHANNEL 4



'Situation in Syria is worse than what we are seeing in the media'

By Krishnan Guru-Murthy | February 7, 2023

CBS 60 MINUTES



Healing and Hope After the Earthquakes

By CBS 60 Minutes | April 21, 2023

FRANCE 24



'Nothing left to lose': Syrian protesters reigniting 'noble' revolution

By Mark Owen | August 30, 2023

CNN



Mouaz Mustafa on CNN Talking About Devastating Earthquake in Syria

By Kate Bolduan | February 8, 2023

ASSOCIATED PRESS



Members of US Congress make a rare visit to opposition-held northwest Syria

By Elle Knickmeyer and Abby Sewel | August 27, 2023



“Presidents die, regimes fall, and the only one that stays is the people. Assad will die, the Syrian regime will fall, and the only one staying is the people of Syria. The people will remember who stood on their side and who welcomed their raper and killer!”

Omar Alshogre
SETF Detainees Affairs Director
said to Doha News



POLICY & ADVOCACY

SETF has a strong track record of impactful advocacy and policy engagement, working closely with governments and organizations to champion human rights in Syria.

We consistently provide briefings to Members of Congress and their bipartisan staff, engaging with various government sectors in Washington, D.C. Our discussions focus on the latest developments in Syria and the surrounding region, fostering collaboration on legislative initiatives. Through our advocacy events like Caesar exhibits, policy roundtables, and panels held globally, we actively reach out to the general public. These initiatives aim to create grassroots movements that enhance and complement our direct advocacy efforts.

ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

01

Government Engagement

SETF regularly collaborates with congressional offices and various sectors of the US and European governments to provide briefings on regional developments and offer consultations on policies.

02

Advocacy Events

SETF organizes numerous global educational and advocacy events to address human rights issues in Syria. We work in collaboration with Congressional committees to host hearings, advancing the cause of a free Syria.

03

Media Exposure

SETF collaborates with various media outlets to highlight crucial issues in Syria and offer commentary on Syria policy and human rights initiatives. Our organization consistently releases statements and press releases addressing human rights violations and detailing our policy work.

04

Key Witnesses

SETF actively works with crucial whistleblowers and eyewitnesses to mass atrocities in Syria, assisting them in evacuating and exposing human rights violations they have witnessed. We are dedicated to providing steadfast support to these individuals.

“We cannot condone normalization with the Assad regime. We have to stand firmly with the people of Syria who are asking for democracy, freedom, human rights and all the things that the U.S. counts as its own core values.”

Veronica Zanetta Brandoni,
SETF Advocacy Director
said to POLITICO


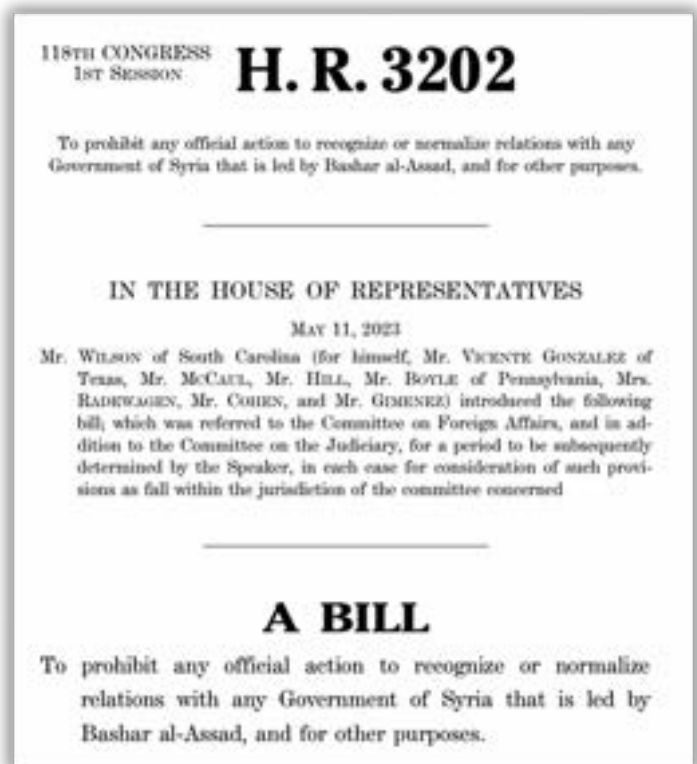


Anti-Normalization Act

SYRIA LEGISLATION

A bipartisan group of U.S. lawmakers introduced the “Assad Regime Anti-Normalization Act” in **May 2023** in the House of Representatives—a crucial step toward preventing the recognition of Dictator Bashar Al-Assad amidst the growing trend among countries normalizing relations despite its decades of human rights violations.

The bill passed the House Foreign Affairs Committee unanimously and is currently waiting to be put up for voting in the House and Senate. We continue to work closely with the congressional offices to ensure the legislation’s passage as a significant follow-up to our Caesar Act passed in 2019



“Those who normalize relations are aiding and abetting the ongoing crimes of the Syrian regime, as it seeks to rebuild Syria on the property of citizens it has murdered or driven from their homes.”

– Stephen Rapp, former US Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes and member of SETF Board of Trustees.

Captagon Trafficking Act

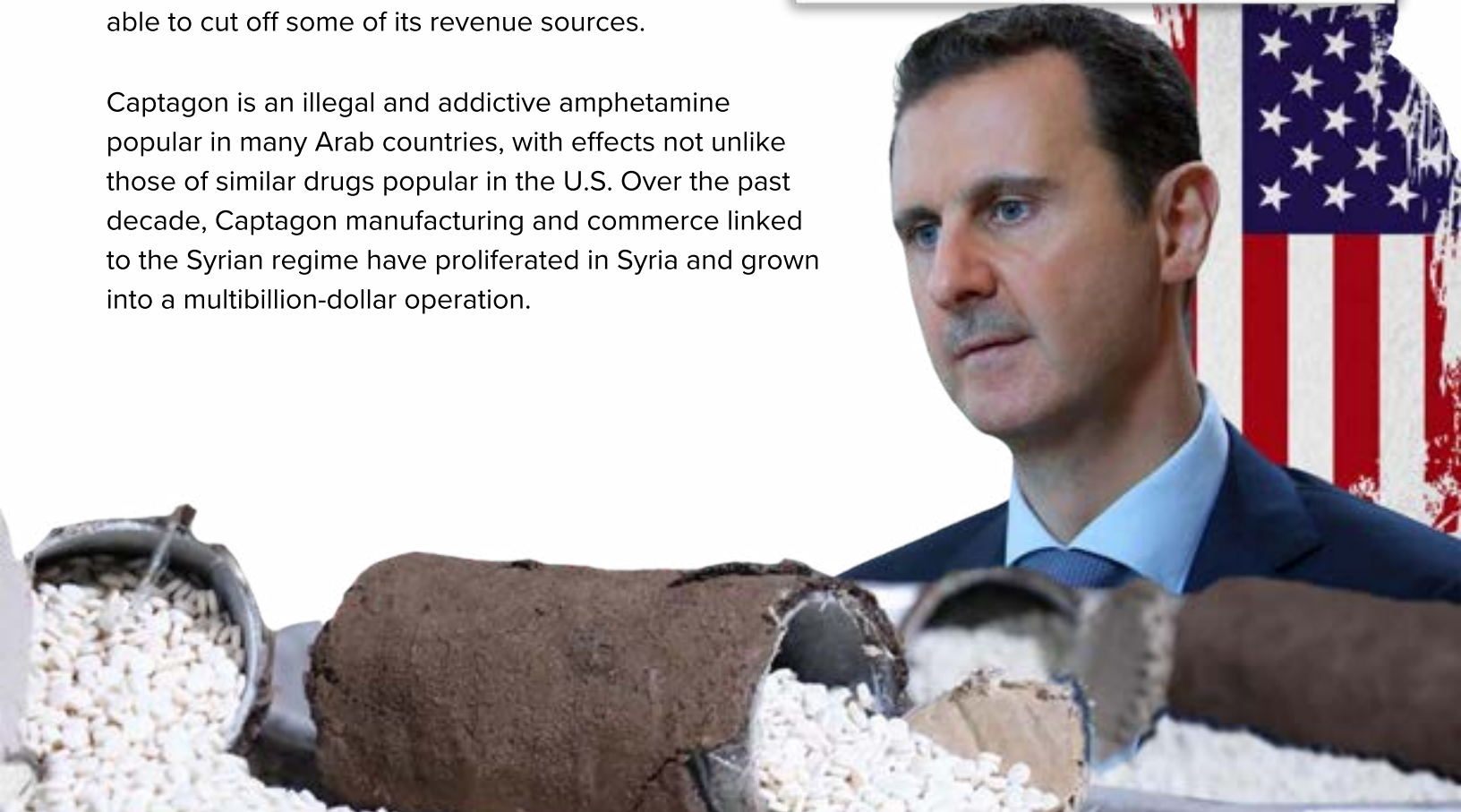
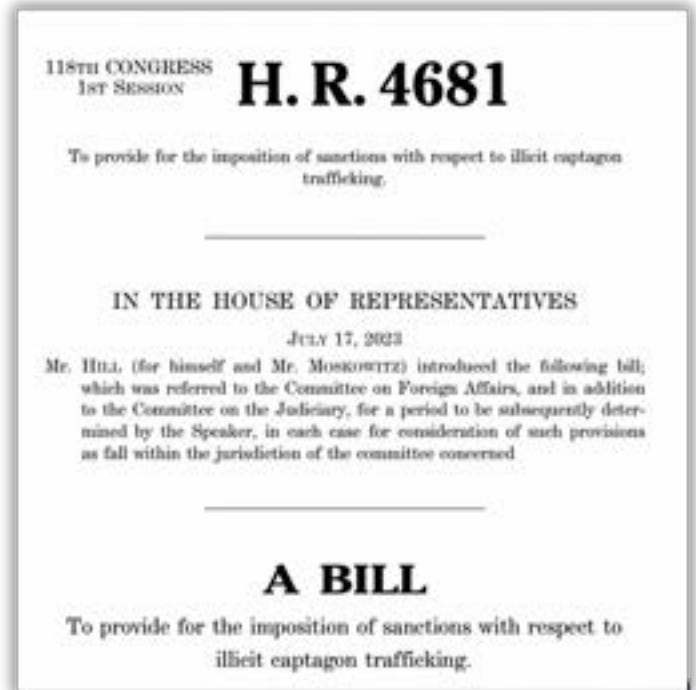
SYRIA LEGISLATION

The Illicit Captagon Trafficking Suppression Act of 2023 (H.R. 4681) introduced by Rep. French Hill (AR-02) in **July 2023** aims to impose new sanctions to directly target individuals and networks associated with the production and trafficking of Captagon.

The bill was passed unanimously in the House Foreign Relations Committee and is now being considered in the mark-up session.

SETF is working with the U.S. government on implementing the Captagon Act that passed in 2022. Captagon is used to fuel the Assad regime's machinery of death after our 2019 Caesar Act was able to cut off some of its revenue sources.

Captagon is an illegal and addictive amphetamine popular in many Arab countries, with effects not unlike those of similar drugs popular in the U.S. Over the past decade, Captagon manufacturing and commerce linked to the Syrian regime have proliferated in Syria and grown into a multibillion-dollar operation.



CONGRESSIONAL TRIPS

In August 2023, SETF brought three members of Congress, including Representatives **French Hill (R-AR), Ben Cline (R-VA), and Scott Fitzgerald (R-WI), into Northwest Syria**. This was the first congressional delegation in Northwest Syria since 2014. The congressmen met our Wisdom House students and also visited our House of Healing in Turkey. This trip provided a firsthand opportunity for lawmakers to witness the critical situation on the ground and engage in discussions with impacted Syrians and key stakeholders.

We also brought three members of Congress, including Representatives **Joe Wilson (R-SC), Victoria Spartz (R-IN), and Dean Phillips (D-MN), to Turkey** to meet with the White Helmets, the Syrian Opposition leadership, and Turkish officials.



RUKBAN BRIEFING

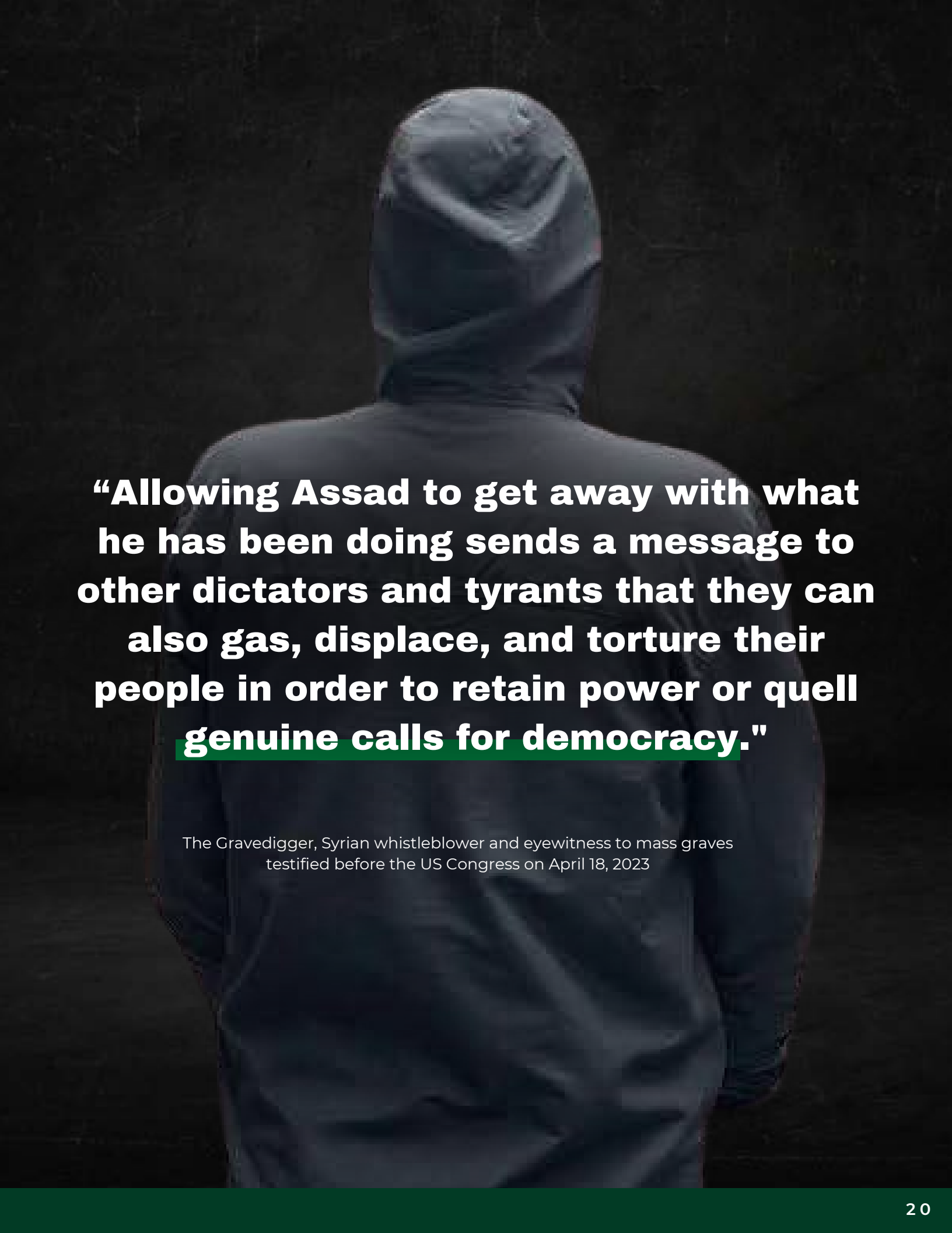
On September 13, SETF hosted a briefing on Capitol Hill on our “Operation Syrian Oasis,” a humanitarian initiative launched in June 2023 in collaboration with the US Military. This operation successfully broke an eight-year siege on 8,000 civilians in the Rukban IDP camp imposed by the Assad regime, Russia, and Iran. SETF is now the sole NGO providing aid to Rukban, and this operation was entirely funded by individual donors and organized by SETF’s dedicated team.

The briefing was co-sponsored by the co-chairs of the Syria Caucus, Rep. French Hill and Rep. Brendan Boyle.



CONGRESSIONAL HEARING

On April 18, 2023, the SETF organized a hearing before the Middle East North Africa subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The hearing featured one of SETF's key witnesses, known as the Gravedigger, who provided vital testimony concerning mass atrocities in Syria.

A person wearing a dark hoodie is shown from the back, standing against a dark background. The person's face is obscured by the hood. The text is overlaid on the image.

“Allowing Assad to get away with what he has been doing sends a message to other dictators and tyrants that they can also gas, displace, and torture their people in order to retain power or quell genuine calls for democracy.”

The Gravedigger, Syrian whistleblower and eyewitness to mass graves testified before the US Congress on April 18, 2023

HIGH LEVEL ENGAGEMENTS

Through our Key Witness Fund, SETF actively empowers witnesses to atrocities, offering them opportunities to share their invaluable insights with decision-makers. This year, we brought on an additional key witness known by the pseudonym “Bulldozer Driver,” who was a witness to the mass grave in Syria.

In 2023, SETF facilitated impactful high-level engagements for key witnesses, forging connections with policymakers in the United States and Europe. Noteworthy encounters included meetings with influential figures such as the UK Special Representative for Syria, Ann Snow, German Envoy to Syria, Stefan Schenk, Assistant Secretary for State, Barbara Leaf, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Ethan Goldrich, along with key staffers in the House of Representatives and Senate.



Two key witnesses to mass graves in Syria, known as the “Bulldozer Driver” (left) and the “Gravedigger” (right), met with UK Special Representative for Syria, Ann Snow.

EVENTS

In 2023, the SETF team hosted and participated in over 68 events across the world. Our team gave dozens of presentations to tens of thousands of students and community members at universities, high schools, rotary clubs, and houses of worship, featuring keynote speakers such as Ambassador Rapp, Omar Alshogre, and Mouaz Moustafa.

68

Events in 2023

17

Countries

HOLOCAUST MUSEUM



SETF, in partnership with the the USHM, hosted a panel for the 13th anniversary of the Syrian revolution.

OSLO FREEDOM FORUM



SETF Omar Alshogre participated in a panel at the 2023 Oslo Freedom Forum.

FOLKEMØDET SUMMIT



SETF's Mouaz Moustafa, Ivan M. Nielsen, and Amb. Stephen Rapp participated in the People's Democracy Summit in Denmark.

ARKANSAS



SETF team participated and hosted 26 events in with out community in Arkansas.

THE CAESAR EXHIBITS

The Caesar File is a collection of 55,000 photos depicting men, women, children, and the elderly who were brutally tortured and killed by the Assad regime inside prisons.

As custodians of the Caesar File, SETF works to expose the regime's flagrant human rights violations by continuing to identify victims, witnesses, and evidence that support accountability cases against the regime.

6

Exhibits in 2023

SETF hosted six Caesar exhibits and panel discussions in 2023 at Sciences Po in Paris, Hendrix College in Arkansas, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Bornholm Folkemødet Festival in Denmark, the University of Central Arkansas, and the SOAS University of London.



JAMES FOLEY FREEDOM AWARD

SETF Executive Director Mouaz Moustafa received the 2023 James W. Foley Legacy Foundation Humanitarian Award for his dedication to freedom and justice for all Syrians.





“Mr. Moustafa’s tireless humanitarian advocacy on behalf of the Syrian people is a powerful example of moral courage in action. His work to expose and document war crimes, hold human rights abusers accountable, and help survivors rebuild their lives brings hope to some of the most desperate places in the world.”

Diane Foley, President and Founder of the James W. Foley Legacy Foundation

GLOBAL JUSTICE AWARD

SETF Board of Trustees Chairman Jerry Adams received the 2023 Global Justice Award for his exceptional humanitarian work for Syria.



“Over seven years ago, I had the honor of meeting Jerry Adams in my home state of Arkansas. It just took one conversation for him to hear about the plight of others and then be committed to helping in the humanitarian realm, education, advocacy, and beyond.”

— Mouaz Moustafa,
SETF Executive Director



Students from the SETF Arkansas chapter organized a peaceful rally in Arkansas in solidarity with the 2023 protests in Suwayda.





HUMANITARIAN

SETF has five programs operating regularly that reflect the much larger humanitarian crisis, and we respond to immediate crises such as the earthquake in February 2023 and reaching residents in the forgotten Rukban camp.

The humanitarian situation worsens every day for civilians in Syria as the Regime continues to displace, detain, and attack civilians. SETF's main humanitarian programs provide support for the most vulnerable, including orphans, widows, children, and internally displaced persons (IDPs). These critical programs ease some of the massive and widespread suffering Syrians endure. They provide hope and build bridges between Syrians on the ground and the world.

OUR HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMS

Tomorrow's Dawn Women's Education Center

A secondary school for women and girls in Idlib, Syria, that provides no-cost education courses and workshops to gain professional skills and become financially independent.

House of Healing

A home away from home for internally-displaced Syrians with critical medical conditions, most due to war, allowed to enter Turkey temporarily for treatment.



Rukban Hope Pharmacy

The only no-cost pharmacy serves as the camp's only regular source of essential medicine, baby milk, first-aid, and life-saving supplies.

Wisdom House Kindergarten

A Kindergarten for displaced children in the Aleppo countryside where five amazing teachers provide education and a nurturing environment to 138 students.

“Don’t be afraid to talk about Syria. Even talking about it with your family is a great thing. The Letters of Hope program is a beautiful way that you can just show someone you care about them.”

Natalie Larrison,
SETF Director of
Humanitarian Programs



CAMPAIGN BENEFICIARIES

SETF's humanitarian programs and campaigns helped around 36,808 people in Syria in 2023

15,228

Earthquake Relief



8,000

Rukban Syria Oasis



4,486

Eid Campaign



459

Ramadan Campaign



PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

6,400

Rukban Hope Pharmacy



1,750

House of Healing



277

Wisdom House Kindergarden



184

Tomorrow's Dawn Center



24

Key Witness Fund



WISDOM HOUSE

120

**Students in the
graduating class**

In June 2023, the 7th class of kindergarteners at Wisdom House celebrated their graduation, marking the culmination of their early education journey with a total of 120 students.

The new class commenced in August 2023, welcoming 138 students, reflecting a notable **15% increase in enrollment**.

138

New students

Notably, half of the new students are displaced individuals, underlining the school's commitment to serving diverse communities. The new academic year also heralded a significant development as the Wisdom House relocated to a larger space with six classrooms and an outdoor space for activities.



TOMORROW'S DAWN

In July 2023, the inaugural class of 80 students at Tomorrow's Dawn High School for girls successfully completed their academic year, marking a significant milestone in the school's history. As of now, seven graduates are enrolled in university.

The Class of 2023/2024 began in August with 85 seniors, mostly displaced women and girls, showing a **15% increase in enrollment**, with 80% displaced.

The Tomorrow's Dawn Women's Education Center **offers courses in Arabic, Science, Physics, English, Religion, and Math**. Graduates receive their high school diploma, leading to increased economic opportunities, higher education, and improvements in mental, emotional, and social well-being.

80

Students in the
graduating class



HOUSE OF HEALING

The House of Healing serves as a refuge for internally displaced Syrians with critical medical conditions, accommodating an average of 75 patients at a time.

Following a significant increase in admissions after the February earthquake, with a **67% rise from the previous year**, the facility hosted 64 groups of patients from Syria with their transfers facilitated by the Turkish Ministry of Health. Services provided include food, accommodation, transportation, and assistance in accessing treatment.

Approximately 500 patients have received assistance in accessing treatment for various conditions such as heart disease, cancer, burns, amputation, and blindness. A notable addition to their services is a classroom where children residing at the House of Healing receive educational lessons.

500

Patients received accommodations



HOPE PHARMACY

SETF provides Rukban camp's sole no-cost pharmacy that caters to the pharmaceutical requirements of 80% of Rukban's 8,000 residents, serving approximately 40-50 individuals daily and up to 90 on particularly busy days.

The pharmacy offers essential medications such as antibiotics, treatments for chronic conditions, diabetes, hypertension, baby formula, and diapers.

To meet the growing demand, we have augmented our regular supply shipments by 50% and expanded our staff to provide additional support.

SETF's Hope Pharmacy is the only no-cost pharmacy in Rukban IDP camp .

8000 PEOPLE



LETTERS OF HOPE

SETF started the Letters of Hope Program in 2016 to let Syrians suffering from conflicts and displacements know that they are not forgotten.

The aim of Letters of Hope is to create a connection between the international community and the Syrian children and families residing in northwest Syria so that they can exchange messages and letters of support and encouragement.

3000+

Letters of Hope
delivered in 2023



EARTHQUAKE RELIEF RESPONSE

Following the devastating February earthquakes in northern Syria and southern Turkey, SETF fundraised over \$100,000 from over 500 individual donors and launched several initiatives benefiting over 16,000 people.

\$100K fundraised for **16K** people impacted.



SETF provided cash assistance to displaced families in the greatest-impacted areas, including Adiyaman, Hatay, Osmaniye, Nurdagi, Gaziantep, and Antakya in Türkiye and Jindiris and Afrin in Syria.



SETF procured and delivered **over 1,000 food baskets** and physical aid such as hygiene products, diapers, and warm clothes, among others. We also delivered **two full trucks of humanitarian aid** to northwest Syria.



SETF built a new tent **camp in Afrin for 50 families**, including heaters and water and sanitation systems.

EARTHQUAKE MEDIA COVERAGE

In response to the lack of media coverage in northwest Syria following the earthquakes, SETF facilitated trips for over 20 journalists from outlets such as the New York Times, PBS NewsHour, CBS, The Washington Post, NPR, and The Guardian.

Additionally, SETF facilitated a special episode for 60 Minutes on the impact of the earthquakes on displaced Syrians.

20+ International journalists



The Washington Post



The Guardian



60 MINUTES





The SETF team brought CBS 60 Minutes inside Northwest Syria to cover the impact of the earthquakes on displaced civilians.

SETF videographer and photographer Sullivan Gaudreault traveled to southern Turkey in February to document the impact of the earthquakes on residents and displaced Syrians.



“The earthquake was a reminder of the criminality of the Assad regime, which not only refused aid to the hardest-hit population centers but also bombarded within hours the survivors of the earthquake.”

Mouaz Moustafa,
SETF Executive Director





RUKBAN OPERATION SYRIAN OASIS

In June 2023, SETF launched the Syrian Oasis Aid Operation, bringing an end to an agonizing eight-year-long siege imposed by the Assad regime, Russia, and Iran and confirming SETF's continuous commitment to providing relief for the much-deserving camp residents.

Learn more about the operation at setf.ngo/breaking-the-siege-operation-syria-oasis

RUKBAN OPERATION SYRIAN OASIS

Near the Jordanian-Iraqi border, about 8,000 displaced civilians remain in the clutches of a suffocating siege on Rukban surrounded by Assad forces and their Russian and Iranian allies, where civilians have sought safety in the 55-km deconfliction zone surrounding the US military base, al-Tanf Garrison. These women, children, and men have endured abysmal living conditions and severe deprivation of basic necessities due to the blockade that has barred any aid from reaching them.

The initial delivery in June 2023 included seeds and irrigation tools to enable the residents to cultivate their own sustenance, as well as school supplies for the over 1,000 children in the camp who have been deprived of any education.

In 2023, SETF completed eight aid deliveries to the camp. We continue to be the first and only organization to break the siege on Rukban and deliver aid directly to 8,000 residents.



RUKBAN OPERATION IMPACT



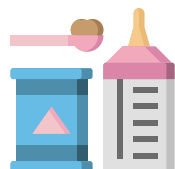
Books and School Supplies

SETF provided **over 16,000 school books for over 1,700 school-aged** children in the camp. SETF also gave stipends to the over 60 teachers working in Rukban and nearby Bedouin communities, impacting around 1,200 children. Our partner organization, Global Justice, donated 11,000 schoolbooks and has initiated regular support for teachers for all 8 schools in the camp.



Seeds, Farm Equipment and Food Baskets

Our team sent over ten different types of fruit and vegetable seeds, irrigation equipment, and hundreds of pounds of canned items so residents would be able to feed their families. For immediate nutrition, we bought food baskets for **all 1,800 families in the camp, nearly 8,000** people who will be provided for one month.



Baby Formula and Prenatal Vitamins

SETF sent three thousand bottles of prenatal vitamins for the 600 currently pregnant women for 4 months and **1,662 units of baby formula** for one month for all 1-3-year-olds.



Medical Treatment

SETF Executive Director Mouaz Moustafa traveled to Rukban camp with an American doctor from Philadelphia for the first time since the imposition of the siege. Dr. Haitham, President of Global Justice, provided input for SETF's first medical assessment in the camp and treated over 60 patients.

SETF is actively recruiting American doctors who can travel to Rukban immediately to perform urgent and lifesaving treatments and operations. We remain the only way for doctors to enter the 55km deconfliction zone with thousands of civilians, mostly children.

SETF is the first NGO to have visited the Rukban IDP camp after a years-long siege

In September 2023, the SETF Executive Director Mouaz Moustafa, accompanied by the President of Global Justice, Dr. Haytham Al-Bizem, arrived at the besieged Rukban IDP camp.

This momentous visit marked the first time an outside civilian medical professional and two heads of international non-governmental organizations (NGO), one of whom is a specialist doctor, have been able to access the camp since the devastating siege began in 2014.

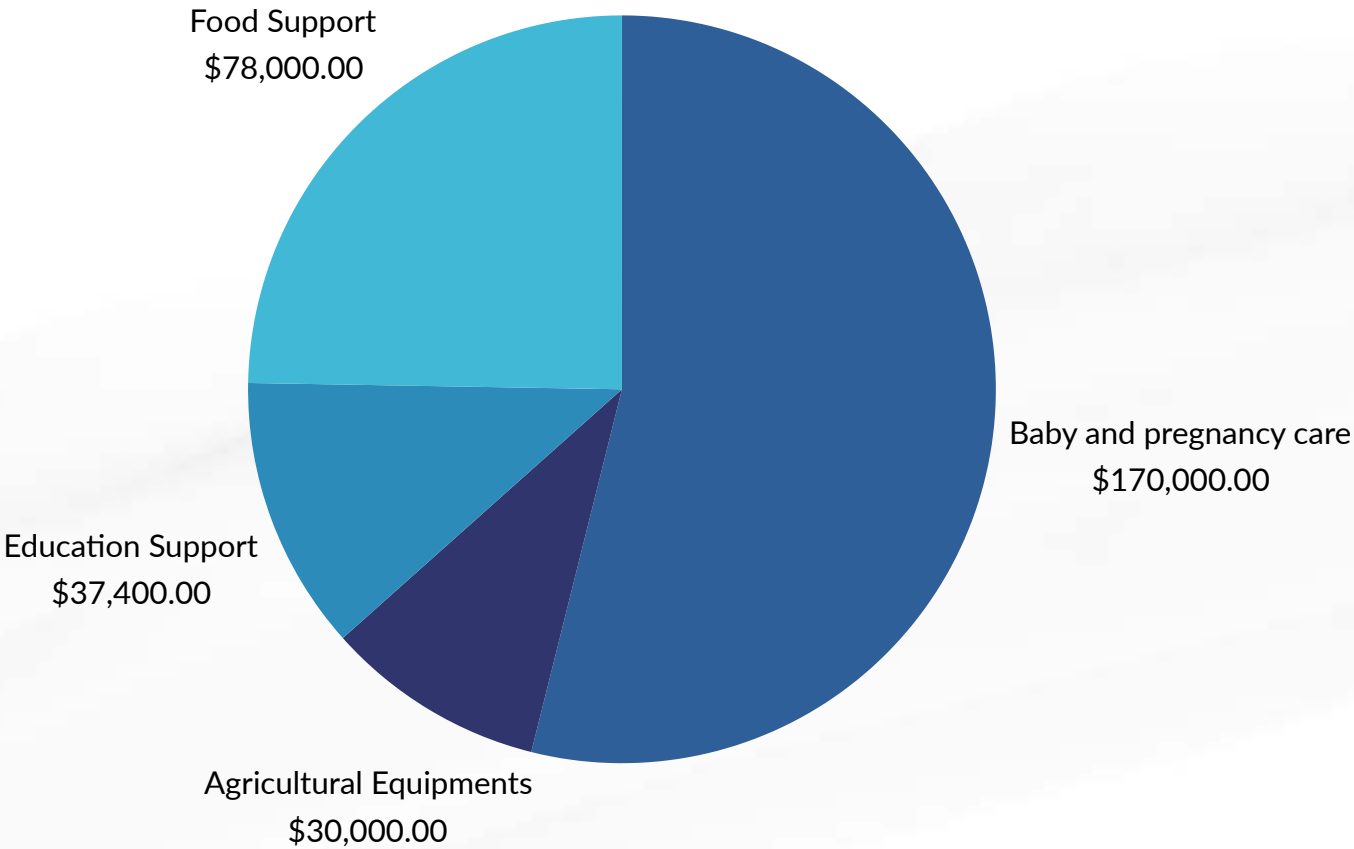
Dr. Al-Bizem provided input for SETF's first medical assessment in the camp and treated over 60 patients. SETF is actively recruiting American doctors who can travel to Rukban immediately to perform urgent and lifesaving treatments and operations.



RUKBAN OPERATION FINANCIALS

Through “Operation Syrian Oasis,” we have successfully delivered the following to 8,000 civilians living under siege in the Rukban IDP camp.

- Irrigation equipment, fertilizer, and over 6,000 lbs of seeds
- 1,500 bottles of baby formula for 900 babies and 3,000 bottles of prenatal vitamins for 400 pregnant women
- 16,000 textbooks for all 1,200 students
- 1,800 food baskets





SYRIAN-UKRAINE NETWORK (SUN)

The Syria-Ukraine Network (SUN) is a coalition of prominent organizations and individuals in Syria, Ukraine, and their diasporas, working and organizing together in various fields.

SETF established the Syria-Ukraine Network shortly after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The scenes of carpet-bombed cities, tortures, disappearances, wide-scale atrocities, and war crimes were all too familiar to Syrians under the Assad regime with the full support of Russia, who endured this for over a decade. Syrians had a lot of experience dealing with these atrocities on a large scale and wanted to help Ukrainians.

“The Syrian community saw the carpet bombings of Ukrainian cities. They saw the bombings of hospitals, humanitarian corridors, and schools, and this was so familiar to them because Russia has been committing the same atrocities, war crimes, and crimes of aggression for the past decade in Syria.”

Olga Lautman,
SUN Coordinator
& Co-Founder



SUN CONFERENCE IN UKRAINE

In October 2023, SUN, in partnership with the SETF, RAZOM, and the Center for Civil Liberties, hosted a two-day conference in Kyiv focused on discussing Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, drawing parallels with its aggression in Syria in support of the Assad regime.

The conference covered a wide range of crucial topics, including enforced disappearance, torture, and killing of civilians, deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure, the use of chemical weapons, and the besiegement of towns.







Panels explored the intersectionality between the Syrian and Ukrainian cases, accountability for war crimes, prosecution, amplification of victims' stories, the politicization of humanitarian response, illicit financial flows funding Russia's military, countering disinformation, and the geopolitical insecurity resulting from international inaction.










SUN MEMBERS

In 2023, SETF expanded the Syria-Ukraine Network to include partnerships with organizations such as Global Justice, Multi-Faith Alliance, Syrian Network for Human Rights, David Nott Foundation, Scan UK, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

19 members:

 <p>Bahar Organization Gaziantep, Turkey</p>	 <p>Center for Civil Liberties Kyiv, Ukraine</p>	 <p>Syrian Emergency Task Force Washington D.C., USA</p>	 <p>European Expert Association Kyiv, Ukraine</p>	 <p>StopFake.org Kyiv, Ukraine</p>	 <p>Syrian American Medical Society Washington D.C., USA</p>
--	--	--	---	--	--

 <p>Starting Point Toronto & Kyiv</p>	 <p>Direct Initiative Toronto & Kyiv</p>	 <p>Ukrainian World Congress Toronto, Canada</p>	 <p>RAZOM New York, USA</p>	 <p>Global Justice Philadelphia, USA</p>	 <p>American Coalition for Ukraine Washington D.C., USA</p>
---	--	--	---	--	---

 <p>Verify-Sy Gaziantep, Turkey</p>	 <p>Multifaith Alliance New York, USA</p>	 <p>ANTS Kyiv, Ukraine</p>	 <p>Syrian Network for Human Rights The Hague, Netherlands</p>	 <p>Halab TV Gaziantep, Turkey</p>	 <p>Citizens for a Secure and Safe America Washington D.C., USA</p>	 <p>Ukrainian Congress Committee of America Washington D.C.</p>
--	---	--	--	---	---	---



JUSTICE & ACCOUNTABILITY

SETF pursues legal efforts in the United States and abroad to bring perpetrators of war crimes in Syria to justice. The team works closely with renowned experts and lawyers specializing in human rights and international humanitarian law to pursue justice, accountability, and war crimes documentation.

Kevin Dawes Civil Case

LEGAL WIN

SETF assisted in filing a civil case in the US District Court in Washington, D.C. in 2021 for Kevin Dawes, an American citizen detained by the Assad regime in 2013 and held for 3 ½ years in Syria. On October 31, 2023, US District Court Judge Rudolph Contreras ordered a judgment against the Assad regime of nearly \$50 million for the unlawful detention and torture of Mr. Dawes.

Mr. Dawes crossed into northwestern Syria from Turkey in 2012, hoping to provide medicine to civilians and cover their plight. Soon after, he was captured and transferred to an Intelligence Branch in Damascus. The Syrian regime did not acknowledge holding Mr. Dawes until another prisoner, a British doctor named Abbas Khan, was able to inform the British government that Mr. Dawes was also wrongfully detained.

In his ruling, Judge Contreras states that “Syria’s conduct reflects the type of ‘extreme, deliberate and unusually cruel practices’ that other courts have held to constitute torture” and that “the character of Syria’s acts is reprehensible and deserving of the most severe condemnation.”

Mr. Dawes has been struggling with the physical and mental aftermath of the horrific torture he endured for nearly four years. Despite his trauma, Mr. Dawes has continued to speak out on behalf of the countless civilians who remain in Assad’s dungeons, enduring unspeakable torture.

SETF is proud to have Mr. Dawes as part of its family and as a voice of conscience for the tens of thousands of detainees in Syria.



LEGAL CASES

In January 2023, SETF assisted in filing a civil lawsuit in the D.C. Federal Court on behalf of Sam Goodwin, an American wrongfully detained by the Assad Regime in 2019.

SETF initiated efforts to file a case for the Kamalmaz family, whose father was wrongfully detained in 2017 and is presumed to have been murdered by the Assad regime.

SETF is actively pursuing cases in Europe, including that of Omar Abou Nabout in France. His father, Salah Abou Nabout, fell victim to a barrel bomb in Daraa, Syria, in 2017.

Obada Mzaik, a Syrian-American detained by Air Force Intelligence in 2012, is taking legal action against the Assad regime for the torture he endured during his detention. This pursuit is supported by the legal advice and guidance of SETF board member Ambassador Stephen Rapp.

SETF is actively supplying witnesses and documentation to bolster the case before the International Court of Justice. The first hearing for *Canada and the Netherlands v. the Syrian Arab Republic* took place in October 2023.



“As long as Assad is in power, we will never be safe in that country. And our revolution will never end. It lives in our hearts until the last day of our lives, until Assad is prosecuted, and until every single Syrian soul and body gets justice for what they have done to us.”

Celine Kassem,
SETF Director of Media said
at the Holocaust Museum Panel



CRIME DOCUMENTATION

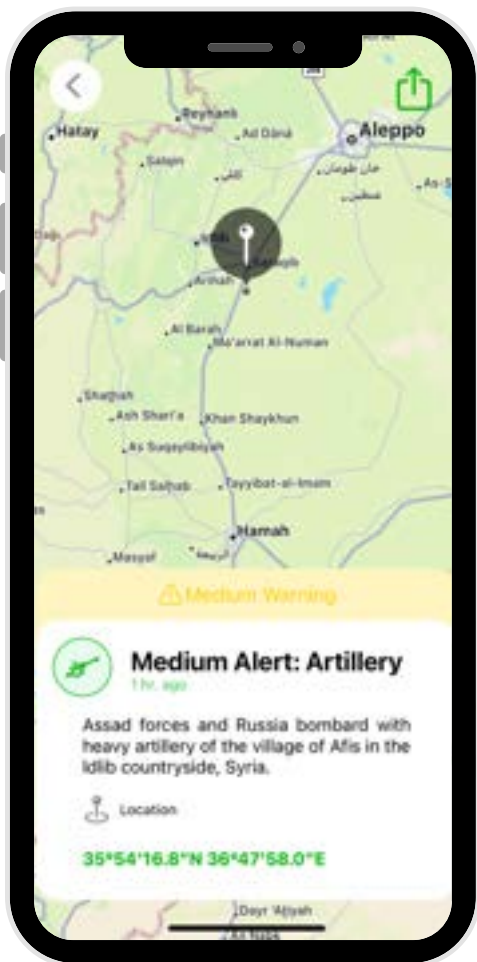
In 2023, the SETF team continued its efforts to document the locations and acquire satellite imagery of new mass graves in Syria, specifically focusing on the Baghdad Bridge mass graves. Furthermore, we successfully identified and secured a new key witness to mass graves, who is receiving support through our Key Witness Fund program.



SYRIA WATCH APP

The Syria Watch application is a SETF project that provides users with real-time notifications of attacks launched against civilian/IDP targets in Syria.

Classifying attacks by type and providing greater context, this application seeks to help people outside Syria understand the level of near-perpetual danger people in Syria currently experience daily.



SYRIA WATCH IN 2023

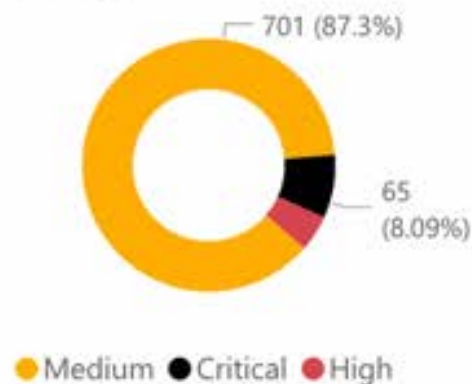


895 Documented attacks in 2023

Alert Type

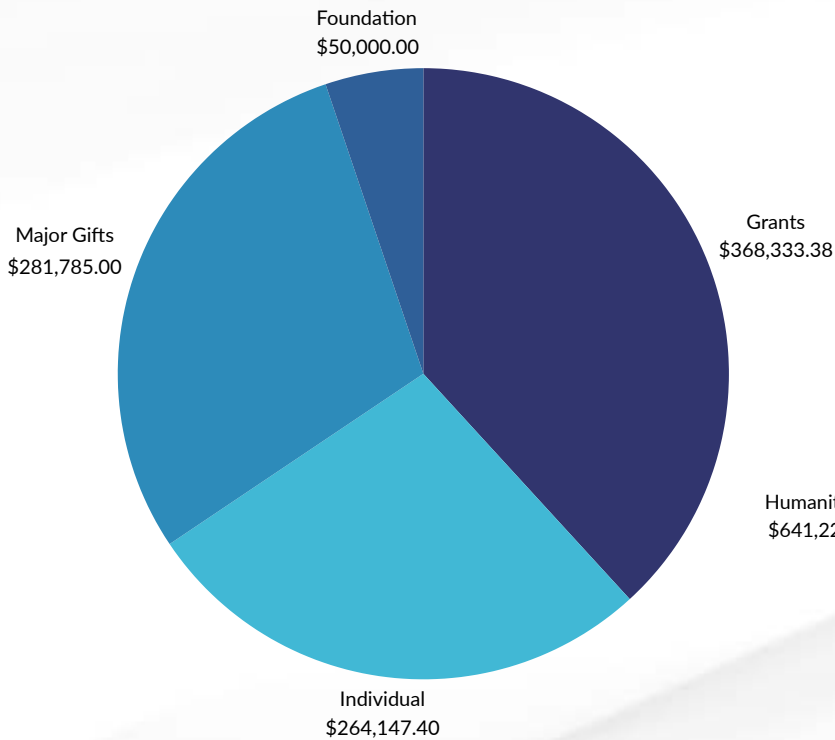


Alert Priority

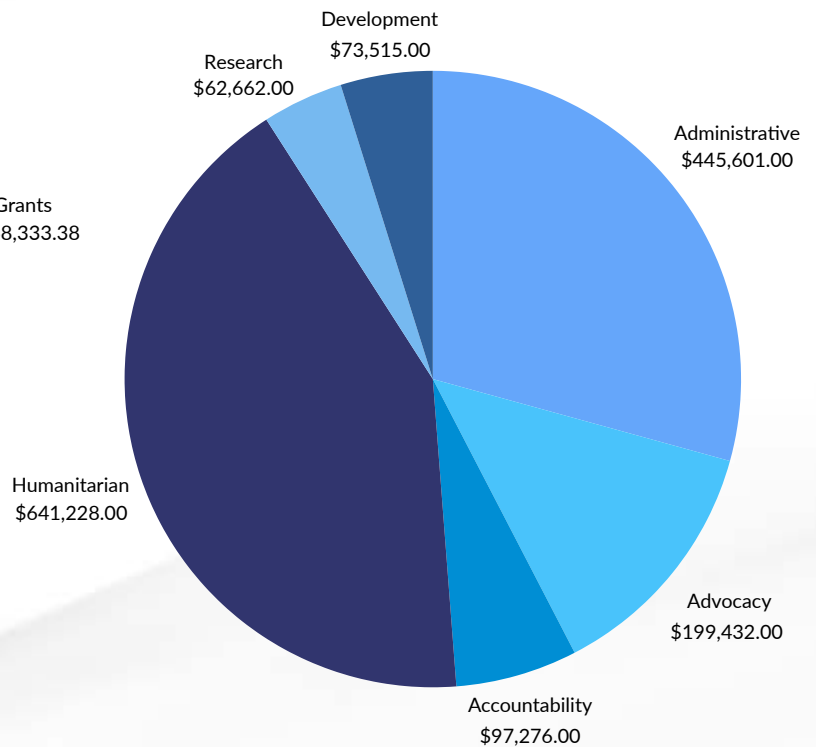


FINANCIALS

2023 Revenue



2023 Expenses



SETF's 2023 expenses exceeded our incoming revenue due to our significant and costly Rukban operation. After years of efforts to break the humanitarian siege on the Rukban camp, in 2023, SETF was finally successful in utilizing the US Military Denton Program to deliver aid to 8,000 civilians. Despite lacking the budget, we could not decline this opportunity, leading to a dramatic increase in our 2023 expenses. SETF continues to seek partners to sponsor this ongoing operation and support the continuation of providing aid to the besieged Rukban camp.

SETF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (EIN: 45-1230533). It relies on the generosity of its donors to make its work possible. Any contribution, big or small, is meaningful. Donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of US tax law.

Learn more and make a gift today at setf.ngo/donate

OUR TEAM

Executive Staff

Mouaz Moustafa
Executive Director

Veronica Zanetta Brandoni
Director of Advocacy

Natalie Larrison
Director of Humanitarian Projects

Celine Kassem
Director of media

Maria Cure
Director of Communications

Omar Alshogre
Director of Detainee Affairs

Alexi Carr
Director of Development

Policy Advisors

Nina Bang-Jensen
Senior Peace Fellow at the Public International Law and Policy Group (PILPG)

Dr. Steve Heydemann
Director of Program in Middle East Studies at Smith College

Jim Hooper
Former State Department Official

Catinca Slavu
Governance Consultant

Toby Dershowitz
Senior Vice President for Government Relations and Strategy at FDD

Juleanna Glover
Corporate Public Affairs Consultant

Olga Lautman
Syria-Ukraine Network Coordinator

Staff

Janthe Van Schaik
Development Officer

Maryam Hassan
Advocacy Officer

Bahar Ghandehari
Advocacy Officer

Sullivan Gaudreault
Videographer/Editor

Mohamad Kazmooz
Photographer

Chloe Webster
Humanitarian Officer

Anas Altaan
Graphic Designer

Ali Rehbi
Web Developer

Sarah Mushtaha
Content Creator

Tamer Turkmane
Archive provider

Ahed Bakkora
Humanitarian Financial Officer

Fared Al Mahlool
Photographer

Mariam Fathallah
Humanitarian Programs Officer

Alaa Kasmoo
Letters of Hope Coordinator

Ahmad Kindawi
Researcher

Board of Trustees

Jerry Adams
Ivan M. Nielsen
Dr. Muhammad Khawam
Ambassador Stephen Rapp

Volunteers

Abby Twining
Nicki Stephenson
Firas Arodaki
Garance Nouveau
Malak Fathallah

Interns

Olivia Jaffe
Sana Alabed
Lily Radwan
Carlena Sanchez
Seth Wyatt
Michaela Klein Weinstein
Coumba Soumare
David Lewis

#FreeMazen

In February 2023, we marked three years since our friend and colleague Mazen Al-Hamda's re-arrest by the Assad regime in Syria. We continue to keep his memory alive and fight for his release.



"We went to America and told them the whole story. We went to Germany and told them the whole story. People didn't listen. The whole world didn't listen."



MORE ABOUT US

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our findings further, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.



Email
contact@syriantaskforce.org



Office Address
1455 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 436
Washington, D.C., 20004



Website
www.setf.ngo



Facebook
[@syrianetf](https://www.facebook.com/syrianetf)



Instagram
[@syrianetf](https://www.instagram.com/syrianetf)



Twitter/X
[@syrianetf](https://twitter.com/syrianetf)

Donate to support our work at www.setf.ngo