

Saving Syria's Children – Summary and Update

BBC



Robert Stuart | Frome Stop War | 11 June 2017

Newsnight, BBC2, 11 August 2014 – HOSPEX (Hospital Exercises)



Kirsty Wark: “Emergency medicine doctor Saleyha Ahsan has been investigating a valuable if traumatic benefit that the Afghan experience might bring to medical training within the NHS at a fake Camp Bastion **that treats seriously-looking, but entirely fake battlefield injuries**”



Saleyha Ahsan (describing the British Army medical services “HOSPEX” exercises in York):
“It’s a method called macro-simulation, replicating exactly the conditions medics will face in the field”.



Saleyha Ahsan: “The principle behind macro simulation is that it’s as close to reality as possible. **Actors and make-up artists mimic even the most severe of injuries**”



Saleyha Ahsan: “In charge of the whole operation is doctor and army brigadier Kevin Beaton. **He was my squadron commander in Bosnia and inspired me to study medicine**”



Saleyha Ahsan: “It’s looking quite gruesome already – **but it is fake, it’s not real**”



Dr Saleyha Ahsan

Saleyha is on the front line of medicine, working as an A&E doctor in a busy London hospital.

She's a former British Army Captain who served in Bosnia, has a Masters in International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law and works as a freelance filmmaker and medic, reporting on stories concerning healthcare in the UK and around the world. Recently she's reported on the conflict in Syria for Panorama and other media outlets and has written about the state of emergency medicine (A&E) in the NHS for the Guardian newspaper.

In Trust Me I'm a Doctor, Saleyha shares her A&E experience by giving us simple lifesaving tips, as she explains how to treat burns, bleeds and hypothermia. Saleyha also investigates if acupuncture is as effective as painkillers at treating lower back pain and she finds out if taking vitamin C stops you getting a cold.



“She's a former British Army Captain who served in Bosnia”

: Saleha Hasan



“I came out to support the revolution... ..then I worked in the hospital to look after the wounded fighters”

*Dr Saleyha Ahsan,
speaking about her time
in Libya, You Tube video,
2012*



1:10 / 2:08



CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL AND NUCLEAR

The UK has both Civilian and Military CBRN training facilities that manage the training of medical and emergency personnel in the triage and treatment of casualties with a possible CBRN contamination and deal with the management of such an incident, delivering training exercises on a small or large scale.

Trauma FX has supported CBRN training and are specialist in simulating CBRN injuries and conditions, our support to such training centres has given us an understanding of the visual and emotional effects on a casualty presenting with a CBRN contamination, from the blistering from mustard gas to small pox and the effect of a nerve agent on the body.

Our *role play casualty actors*, presenting with simulated injuries whether traumatic or sustained from a possible CBRN or hazardous area incident can be rescued and treated, then put through a casualty decontamination process, while remaining in role play. The *simulated make-up effects* are robust, water resistant and can withstand the decontamination process.

GET IN TOUCH

Please contact us via our contact form.



07736410612

enquiry@traumafx.co.uk

“Trauma FX ..are specialist in simulating CBRN [Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear] injuries and conditions”

VIEW GALLERY





Blog | Contact

07736410612 enquiry@traumafx.co.uk

UK'S LEADING PROVIDER OF REALISTIC CASUALTY SIMULATION

Home

Make-up Services

Actor Services

Industry Services

Training Courses

SIMBODIES

SIMWOUNDS

Shop

Gallery

Trauma FX » Industry Services » International Military



“..we can easily travel international as we are a mobile team and can work in any location”

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY

Trauma FX support various military forces internationally, providing our superior services in support of Pre deployment training and specialist combat medical training for assessments and training exercises, we can easily travel international as we are a mobile team and can work in any location.

Trauma FX recently supported US, UK and German Army combat medics in a multinational training exercise in Grafenwoehr, Germany. For a fascinating account into our time supporting the joint forces training event, please see the video on our [home page](#).

GET IN TOUCH

Please contact us via phone, email or our contact form.



07736410612



enquiry@traumafx.co.uk

VIEW GALLERY





This video contains some disturbing images

Syria crisis: Incendiary bomb victims 'like the walking dead'

A BBC team inside Syria filming for Panorama has witnessed the aftermath of a fresh horrific incident - an incendiary bomb dropped on to a school playground in the north of the country - which has left scores of children with napalm-like burns over their bodies.

Eyewitnesses describe a fighter jet dropping the device, a low explosion, followed by columns of fire and smoke.

Ian Pannell and cameraman Darren Conway's report contains images viewers may find extremely distressing.

29 Aug | World

BBC1 News at Ten
Thursday 29
August 2013

Share

- ❑ Attack occurs Monday 26 August 2013, at Urm Al-Kubra, Aleppo (five days after Ghouta chemical attack)
- ❑ Syrian fighter jet drops an incendiary bomb containing “something like napalm or thermite”, first on a residential building and then a school playground
- ❑ "Scores of children with napalm-like burns over their bodies”, over 10 killed
- ❑ “There were no shrapnel injuries or loss of blood, typical of most aerial bombs”
- ❑ BBC reporter Ian Pannell and cameraman Darren Conway, in Syria filming for Panorama, record the aftermath as victims arrive at nearby Atareb Hospital
- ❑ Two British doctors from the charity Hand in Hand for Syria, Rola Hallam and Saleyha Ahsan, take charge of the situation
- ❑ Full length Panorama special *Saving Syria's Children* broadcast a month later features extended footage of the incident



“This footage was first aired on BBC’s ten o’clock news on August 29 2013, just as the UK parliament were debating possible military intervention in Syria. As it happens the motion for intervention was unexpectedly defeated by a narrow majority. If this had not happened the BBC’s footage would unquestionably have served as very timely and useful PR in support of the coming war against Assad.”



**Dr Saleyha Ahsan,
former British Army
Captain**



The Two Doctors

**Dr Rola Hallam,
executive of
British charity
Hand in Hand
for Syria**





Rola Hallam

“[Dr Rola Hallam’s] father, also a doctor, helped coordinate medical logistics from inside Syria in the early days of the uprising. **He is now involved politically with the Syrian National Council.**”

Saleyha Ahsan, Medicine as a weapon of war in Syria, Open Security, 6 February 2013



Saleyha Ahsan

Dr Mousa al-Kurdi (Dr Rola Hallam's father)



**“Either you defend us
or you arm the Syrian
Free Army to defend
us – you have the
choice!”**

*Dr Mousa al-Kurdi,
addressing Foreign
Ministers of Turkey,
USA and Canada,
Friends of Syria
summit, Istanbul, 2012*



Abdulrahman Obied,
Medical Director of Atareb
Hospital with Dr Rola
Hallam (August 2013)



Hand in Hand for Syria
executive Dr Rola Hallam
(Saving Syria's Children)



Iessa Obied,
Abdulrahman's
brother. (Facebook,
16 January 2013)



Iessa Obied, Facebook, Nov 2012 – Nov 2013



Hand in Hand for Syria logo



Original logo



Revised logo, 2014

I HAVE WATCHED THE PANORAMA BBC DOCUMENTARY. MAKES FOR INTERESTING VIEWING BUT I THINK THE SCENE OF THE SCHOOL CHILDREN COMING IN WITH THE BURNS WAS AN ACT.

GMC Registered Doctor



“They were able to sit down, be touched by others even talk. This is not how a severe burn victim would present. **Most victims:**

- **would be screaming the place down in agony.** Even after treatment and with all sorts of pain drugs they still hurt and still scream.
- would have difficulties with their airways, almost immediately... **This shows them able to speak and breathing very well no obvious signs of respiratory distress like coughing, shallow breathing etc..”**

GMC Registered Doctor



“Some are shown with skin hanging off **but the flesh beneath is not that convincing it actually looks like more skin.**”





comes to these things. There wasn't doubt about Assad's brutality, by











Syria crisis: Incendiary bomb victims 'like the walking dead', BBC News at Ten, 29 August 2013



A simulated burns casualty played by a professional actor

Clinical Training on a Grand Scale, Army Medic, 2008.

Feature on the Army Medical Services Training Centre (AMSTC) near York, location of the HOSPEX exercise seen in Newsnight

Conflicting accounts of time of alleged incendiary bomb attack



"Around **midday** on August 26, 2013"
Human Rights Watch, November 2013

"On 26 Aug 2013, at **02:00 pm**"
*Violations Documentation Center in Syria, October 2013 (VDC quotes alleged witness Mustapha Haid who claims he "heard rumours" about the attack at "**3 in the afternoon**")*



"The attack happened on the 26th of August at **around 5.30pm** at the end of the school day." *Ian Pannell, 18 February 2014*

"I would say it was around, I don't know, **between three and five**, something like that." *Darren Conway, Saving Syria's Children cameraman, speaking at the Frontline Club, London, 15 October 2014 (The Frontline is withholding video of the event). Conway received an OBE for "services to British broadcast journalism" a few months after Saving Syria's Children aired.*

"**5:30 to 6 in the evening**... ..more or less." *Alleged eye witness Abu Youssef, You Tube, 1 September 2013.*

"At **6 pm** yesterday evening, warplanes fired a missile and then sprayed a phosphorus bomb."
Syrian doctor who travelled to Turkey with alleged victims, reported sceptically on website 'Syria Truths'.

“We the fighters of the Free Syrian Army in the North West areas of the City of Aleppo we declare that we were present in this region in August 2013 and **we did not meet any air strike with the substance of Napalm on Urum al Kubra or on any other region in the North West Aleppo countryside** and we deny the cheap fabrication of the BBC and of the stations that imitate her because it undermines the credibility of the Free Syrian Army.”

Former commander of the Al-Tawhid Brigade, based in Aleppo province in August 2013

Where were Drs Ahsan and Hallam when the crisis began?



“It was a hot, balmy late afternoon on 26 August and I was sitting **on the hospital balcony** overlooking the olive groves.”
Dr Saleyha Ahsan, Independent, 29 September 2013

“Ummm...we had just come out of **the basement of the hospital** because a warplane was flying above so we were all advised as we always do to go to the lowest part of the hospitals in case they target it.”

Dr Rola Hallam, Women in the World Summit, April 2017



<http://bbcpanoramasavingsyriaschildren.wordpress.com>

Dr Saleyha Ahsan: contradictory accounts of first victim

“The sudden screech of a truck pulling into the hospital courtyard was the only alert we got that a patient had arrived. I ran down the stairs to the sparse “re-sus” room – the patient was an **eight-month-old baby.**”

The Independent, 29 September 2013



“I felt as if I was having an out of body experience because I couldn’t quite work out what I was seeing, **there was a boy, covered in this strange white dust,** had wide staring eyes, his clothes were hanging off him, and he had this huge laceration on the side of his face, and his skin looked like it had areas of burn, and he was **saying in a very calm voice ‘where shall I go ukhti?’** which means sister in Arabic.”

ABC Radio (Australia), 27 November 2013

<http://bbcpanoramasavingsyriaschildren.wordpress.com>

Contradictory accounts of baby's alleged burns



“Then an eight-month-old baby came in with **nasty scolds [sic] on his legs.**”

Dr Saleyha Ahsan, Romford Recorder, 11 October 2013



“We were working in the emergency department when a baby, a seven month old, came in with **80% burns**”

Dr Rola Hallam, Save the Children event, 27 November 2013

<http://bbcpanoramasavingsyriaschildren.wordpress.com>



Dr Saleyha Ahsan: contradictory accounts of male victim



I treated five teenage boys: One of them, **Mohammed**, was so badly burned that **his hair had melted**. His body still emanated heat. **“I want to sleep,” he kept saying.**

Foreign Policy, 4 September 2013

One of my patients, **Anas Said Ali**, 18, was so badly burnt **his hair had melted**, his body still emanating heat. **“I want to sleep,” he kept saying.**

The Independent, 29 September 2013

<http://bbcpanoramasavingsyriaschildren.wordpress.com>

Dr Saleyha Ahsan: contradictory accounts of female victim



One girl spoke to me in English. I was humbled by her efforts despite her terrible pain. “How bad is my face, ukhti?” Her mother cried by her side. The girl, composed and calm but in obvious pain asked. **“Do you think they can fix my face?”**

The Independent, 29 September 2013

One girl spoke to me in English. I was humbled by her efforts despite her terrible pain. Her mother cried by her side. **“Do you think they can fix her face?”**

BMJ blog, 30 September 2013

<http://bbcpanoramasavingsyriaschildren.wordpress.com>

Conflicting accounts of number of casualties allegedly treated at Atareb Hospital

T

“This overwhelmed facility in a rebel-held area of northern Syria helped **25 victims**, of whom eight died.” *From “detailed account” by Dr Saleyha Ahsan, Daily Telegraph, 4 September 2013*



“The hospital admitted **30 patients** that day.” *Ian Pannell, BBC News website, 30 September 2013*



“...and then **40 badly-burnt, majority kids**, ranging from the ages of 14 to 18 started to descend upon us en masse.” *Dr Saleyha Ahsan, ABC Radio (Australia), 27 November 2013*



“The bomb hit a school in the village of Orum Alkubra in Aleppo province and **approximately 50 of the victims** were brought to the nearest hospital.” *Website of Hand in Hand for Syria, the UK registered charity featured in the BBC’s reports*

Above: Iessa Obied, an employee of Atareb Hospital, Hand in Hand for Syria’s “flagship medical facility”, posing with a shoulder-launched surface-to-air missile, January 2013, one of many such images posted by Mr Obied on Facebook.

<http://bbcpanoramasavingsyriaschildren.wordpress.com>

BBC: Lutfi Arsi “died on his way to hospital in Turkey”



“The other adolescent who kneels up and looks into the camera wearing a t-shirt that reads “Super-9” is fourteen-year-old Luffi Arsi [sic] who was in the playground when the bomb landed. **He died on his way to hospital in Turkey.**”

Gemma McAleer, BBC
Complaints, 2 December 2013

Magazin

Güzelim



1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10



Halep saldırısında yaralanan Suriyeliler Hatay'a getirildi

Türkiye sınırına 10 kilometre uzaklıkta bulunan Suriye'nin Idlib kentine bağlı Terip kasabasında okula dönüştürülen binaya yapılan hava saldırısında yaralanan ve vücutlarında yanıklar oluşan 25 Suriyeli yakınlarının yardımıyla Türkiye'ye getirildi. (AA)

27 August 2013



Lutfi Arsi, Atareb Hospital, Syria (BBC Saving Syria's Children)

Lutfii Arsi, Reyhanli State Hospital, Turkey (website of Turkish daily newspaper Hürriyet)



Syria crisis: Incendiary bomb victims 'like the walking dead' – Ten O'Clock News, BBC One, 29 August 2013



1. Woman walks unaided to ambulance



2. The woman sits in ambulance



3. After c.10 mile journey to hospital the woman is filmed by the BBC being carried from the ambulance. Two of the men carrying her knew she could walk unaided as they travelled with her (one is seen above, in camouflage)



4. After having cream applied to her face and forearms the woman is filmed by the BBC, standing unaided

5. The woman demonstrates that her legs/feet are in good health by stamping on a hard surface









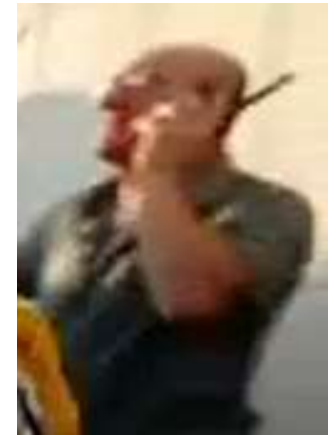
C Panorama - Saving Syria's Children 32:58

BBC Panorama - Saving Syria's Children 36:36

Syria's Children 36:37



“The Walkie Talkie can be one of the most import[ant] tools used daily on a film set. They can ease communication between the crew, various departments and help Assistant Directors run the set. An Assistant Director without a walkie talkie is like a hockey player without a stick.”



“I have no idea who the man pictured is” - Tom Giles,
editor, *Saving Syria's Children*, email 22 March 2015

“This video of Robert Stuart is a must see.
**Let me pin my colours to the mast and say
that I am absolutely convinced that the
BBC did deliberately and knowingly fake
evidence of chemical attacks.”**

Craig Murray, former British ambassador,
blog post, 9 March 2016



Is the BBC still lying over Syria footage?

📅 8 March 2017

Robert Stuart, a tenacious blogger, has been picking away at a scab the BBC would rather leave firmly in place.

His forensic [research](#) concerns an edition of the BBC's flagship investigative current affairs show Panorama called Saving Syria's Children. It was broadcast more than three years ago, as many in the media were trying to push the British government into intervening in Syria with bombing raids against the Syrian government – in a move that would effectively have bolstered ISIS and al-Qaeda affiliates in Syria.

The Panorama programme was one important piece of evidence advanced for such intervention. The footage it included was broadcast in several different formats, and purported to show the victims of a chemical weapon, or possibly incendiary, attack by the Syrian military on a school. The BBC reporter for Panorama was Ian Pannell.

From the outset, there were concerns about the authenticity of the footage, as I [noted in a piece](#) on my own blog in October 2013.

But Stuart's sustained research and questioning of the BBC, and the state broadcaster's increasing evasions, have given rise to ever greater concerns about the footage. [It looks suspiciously like one scene in particular, of people with horrific burns, was staged.](#)

Rather than confront these concerns and dispel them, the BBC and Pannell have tried a mixture of going to ground, stonewalling and misdirection. That has included trying to remove the footage from social media sites where it had been available.

Search Site



ABOUT JONATHAN COOK



Jonathan Cook is a Nazareth-based journalist and winner of the Martha Cellhorn Special Prize for Journalism [[MORE](#)]

DISAPPEARING PALESTINE



“It looks suspiciously like one scene in particular, of people with horrific burns, was staged.”

Jonathan Cook,
8 March 2017

Signs of Life in Music, Film & Culture



26 April 2017

Award-winning digital magazine published in the United States, with over 250,000 Facebook fans and over 200,000 Twitter followers.

“Speaking of atrocity propaganda—very chic these days—the eminent BBC joined the club in 2013, throwing journalistic integrity to the wind with its broadcast of *Saving Syria’s Children*, a documentary that ostensibly showed the aftermath of an incendiary bomb raid. According to the report, the Syrian government used either napalm or thermite to attack schoolchildren in a remote district of Aleppo. **The resulting footage, filmed in a nearby hospital, is bizarre in the extreme, with the alleged burn victims clearly taking stage directions from people off-camera. The story was dissected and ultimately exposed as a sham by journalist Robert Stuart, at which point the BBC began removing all traces of the film from YouTube, citing copyright issues.** No formal retraction was ever made, to the BBC’s everlasting shame.”

Insight: Saving Syria's Children - The Worst Case Of Fake News?



UK Column

The UK Column is an independent multimedia news website and associated newspaper.

February 2017

BBC Sign in News Sport Weather iPlayer TV Radio More Search

FOUR The Undiscovered Peter Cook

Home More



Last on
 BBC FOUR Thu 4 May 2017
 22:25
 BBC FOUR

This programme is not currently available on BBC iPlayer

Following the death of Britain's greatest satirist in 1995, Peter Cook's widow Lin locked the door of his house and refused all access to the media. Until this year, when she invited her friend Victor Lewis-Smith and a BBC crew inside to make a documentary about the man she knew and loved, with unprecedented access to Peter's private recordings, diaries, letters, photographs and much more. 1 hour



VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH

I'm your number 00001 fan

I




B

Our...
 watching...
 looking...
 partner...
 was big...
 because...

Evening Standard, November 2000

PRIVATE EYE

“ In retrospect, lighting the match was my big mistake. But I was only trying to retrieve the gerbil!” Vito Bustone told bemused doctors in the Severe Burns Unit after Bustone, and his homosexual partner Kiki Rodriguez, had been admitted for emergency treatment. “I pushed a cardboard tube up his...”
 (continued on back cover)



FUNNY OLD WORLD

TALES OF THE BIZARRE FROM THE WORLD'S PRESS
 compiled by Victor Lewis-Smith

Victor Lewis-Smith is a British film, television and radio producer, a TV and restaurant critic and newspaper columnist. He is Executive Producer of the [ITV1](#) National Food & Drink Awards.^[1] He is a music graduate from the [University of York](#).^[2] He is a long-standing contributor to [Private Eye](#) Magazine.



Victor Lewis-Smith

@TVOFFAL

 Follow

.@bbcpanorama. Will someone in your office contact me about the possible fake Syria programme you made? Or I will terminate my bbc contract

[10:01 AM - 23 Feb 2017](#)

  122  151



Victor Lewis-Smith

@TVOFFAL

 Follow

I have a contract to make a tx pilot for BBC R4 comedy. That gets ripped up tonight if editor Panorama fails to contact me

.@bbcpanorama

[11:23 AM - 23 Feb 2017](#)

  13  20





Victor Lewis-Smith

@TVOFFAL

Follow

Editor of [.@bbcpanorama](#) contacted me. We are talking on Monday. Hmm

6:24 PM - 23 Feb 2017

5 28



Victor Lewis-Smith

@TVOFFAL

Follow

Editor of Panorama has written. Would rather put her response in writing later today. How about her making the unedited rushes available?

10:47 AM - 27 Feb 2017

17 39



Victor Lewis-Smith

@TVOFFAL

Follow

Just spoke to Robert Stewart [.@cerumol](#). His brilliant research into the [@bbcpanorama](#) fake Syria doc spurs me to make a cinema doc about it

3:47 PM - 27 Feb 2017

67 104





**BBC
Panorama** ✓

@bbcpanorama

Home

Posts

Videos

Photos

About

Likes

Create a Page



Like



Follow



Share



BBC Panorama

1 March · 🌐

Saving Syria's Children - Panorama Statement

On 20th September, 2013, Panorama broadcast "Saving Syria's Children." Travelling with British doctors, it sought to illustrate the devastating impact of the war on children. Filmed in the north of the country, the doctors witnessed the aftermath of the bombing of a school by a suspected incendiary device and experienced medical facilities constantly under attack – both war crimes under international law. Eleven people died in the incident and more than twenty were injured. The BBC subsequently returned to meet some of the children affected, who were still being treated for severe burns. Unicef now estimates that in total tens of thousands of children have been killed in the war in Syria. Human Rights Watch have documented the use of incendiary bombs by pro-government forces in Syria.

It remains an incredibly important piece of journalism, fearlessly reported by Ian Pannell and Darren Conway. It represents the very best of the BBC – reporting the facts, always with due impartiality. A handful of people have raised questions about the programme's authenticity, including RT in 2014. The BBC complained to Ofcom about the RT report, and Ofcom found that RT had indeed breached rule 2.2 of the Ofcom code – which states that "Factual programmes of items or portrayals of factual matters must not materially mislead the audience."



DR LUIS SMITH'S NEUROSEPTIC AUDIO (PILOT)

BBC

Vimeo @Vimeo

 **Victor Lewis-Smith**
@TVOFFAL [Follow](#)

[@racheljupp](#) editor of [@bbcpanorama](#) Ok. As promised, I've torn up my BBC contract. More will undoubtedly follow.
vimeo.com/206285524

7:10 PM - 1 Mar 2017

  33  34



Victor Lewis-Smith

@TVOFFAL

 Follow

@ceremol and I are talking about Associated-Rediffusion producing a crowd-funded theatrical doc about @BBCPanorama Syria debacle (and more) [twitter.com/anonymous4835/...](https://twitter.com/anonymous4835/)

11:29 AM - 3 Mar 2017



8



19



Robert Stuart | Frome Stop War | 11 June 2017

BBC



<https://bbcpanoramasavingsyriaschildren.wordpress.com>