

## SNHR Condemns the WHO's Use of Cham Wings Airlines, Which Is Involved in Supporting the Syrian Regime's Egregious Violations

The World Health Organization Should Cancel Contracts with Cham Wings Airlines and Apologize to the Syrian Regime's Victims

Friday 15 January 2021



World Health Organization in Libya  
@WHOLIBYA

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The World Health Organization ([#WHO](#)) continues to provide humanitarian assistance aid to the people of [#Libya](#). More than sixteen tons of medicines, supplies and equipment dispatched from WHO warehouses in [#Dubai](#) have just arrived at [#Benina](#) International Airport in [#Benghazi](#).



The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, independent group that is considered a primary source for the OHCHR on all death toll-related analyses in Syria.

**SNHR**  
SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان

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## I. The World Health Organization Uses the 'Cham Wings Airlines', Which Is Involved in Supporting the Syrian Regime's Violations and Transporting Russian Mercenaries to Syria:

On January 10, 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO), through its official accounts on social media, published a news report stating that a quantity of medical supplies related to the humanitarian response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which had been stored in the organization's warehouses in Dubai, had arrived at Benghazi Airport in Libya.

The photo published with the news report showed that the transfer took place through Cham Wings Company, as is evident:



[The Cham Wings Company](#) is a private Syrian aviation company that was established in late [2007](#) as one of the commercial Shammout group companies, with the Ministry of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection approving Resolution No. 365, under which the company's charter was ratified, with the declared capital of the company being 225 million Syrian pounds. While Muhammad Issam Shammout is nominally the company's chairman, with his deputy being Muhammad Alaa Shammout, the actual owner, according to many sources, is Rami Makhlouf, the cousin of the regime's president, Bashar al Assad, with the latter recently confiscating the vast majority of Rami's property in Syria. We believe that the Cham Wings Company was among these assets seized from Makhlouf, as it operates in Syria, and it is unlikely that the Syrian regime would allow it to operate in Syria unless it has taken full possession of the airline following the dispute with Rami Makhlouf.

Given the Sham Wings Company's contribution to financially supporting the Syrian regime and its role in transferring supplies, equipment and mercenaries from Iran and other countries supporting the Syrian regime, as well as its other help for the regime in suppressing the Syrian people and committing egregious violations that sometimes amount to crimes against humanity, the United States of America imposed [sanctions](#) on the airline through the Office of Foreign Assets Control on December 23, 2016.

Numerous [reports](#) also confirmed that 'Cham Wings Airlines' had transported Russian mercenaries and military contractors to Damascus and Latakia from Platov International Airport.

Other reports [showed](#) the involvement of the 'Cham Wings Airlines' in transporting Syrian mercenaries, where they had been recruited by Russia [to fight in Libya](#) alongside the forces of the retired Libyan Major General Khalifa Haftar in the battles against the Libyan Government of National Accord.





## II. Ms. Elizabeth Hoff, the Representative of the World Health Organization in Libya, Is Responsible for Supporting 'Cham Wings Airlines':

While it is true that 'Cham Wings Airlines' is not sanctioned by the United Nations, the failure of the United Nations to impose sanctions on all companies involved in supporting the Syrian regime's atrocious violations does not justify the World Health Organization using them, even if their prices are lower than other service providers, since any financial payment to this company constitutes support for the continuation of its work and the transportation of more militias, Iranian weapons and Russian mercenaries to commit more brutal violations in Syria; the World Health Organization could have used any other airline, including Libyan airlines.

Ms. Elizabeth Hoff, as the representative of the World Health Organization in Libya, who was previously the representative of the World Health Organization in Syria for seven years between 2012 and 2019, is responsible for the use of this airline which constitutes tangible support for 'Cham Wings Airlines' and is a gross insult to the millions of Syrian victims, whose lives have been ended or blighted by the violations of the Syrian regime.

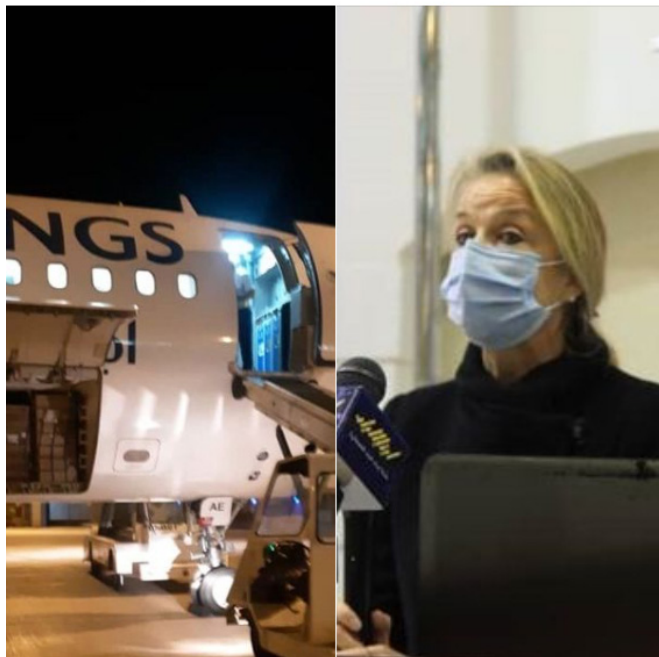


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Ms. Elizabeth Hoff, the WHO Representative in Libya, said that the supplies would be used to support services in health care facilities as well as strengthen the health response to the #COVID19 pandemic. She added that WHO, with support from its international donors, was working to meet increasing health needs in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and other national and local partners.



### III. Condemnation and Recommendations:

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) strongly condemns the World Health Organization's use of 'Cham Wings Airlines', and condemns any financial or logistical support for any of the companies affiliated with or owned by the Syrian regime, since the greater part of these revenues will be used in funding the most horrific violations in order to preserve the regime's power. The Syrian regime is a totalitarian dictatorship and there is hardly any independent institutional life in Syria, where most institutions exist to serve the security services and the ruling authority.

#### **Recommendations:**

##### **World Health Organization:**

- Open an investigation into the use of 'Cham Wings Airlines', which is involved in egregiously supporting the Syrian regime and its allies, and hold those responsible accountable.
- Cancel all contracts with 'Cham Wings Airlines', and pledge not to return to using it.
- Issue a statement that includes an explanation and an apology for the additional psychological trauma caused to the regime's victims who have been further affected by grief and pain, with SNHR noting that many of them expressed their outrage at this latest gross insult on their social media pages.

##### **All United Nations bodies and organizations:**

- The failure of the Security Council to impose sanctions on individuals and companies that support the Syrian regime's violations does not in any way mean that they may be used and supported financially or logistically.
- The use of companies involved in supporting the Syrian regime constitutes an insult to the United Nations, and leads to it losing much of its reputation for objectivity and credibility; all United Nations bodies should avoid such acts and adhere to the highest standards of human rights and respect the feelings of the victims of human rights abuses.



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