



©Niclas Hammarström/ Kontinent Agency. Aleppo, Syria. 2012. Children sit on school benches at Al-Tawheed School in Aleppo. Most of the schools in Aleppo are closed. Due to no heat and electricity they move some classes outside.

Kontinent Agency presents the exhibition

## SYRIA

by Niclas Hammarström

The exhibition 'Syria', by Kontinent photographer, Niclas Hammarström, reflects the impact of the conflict in Syria between 2012 and 2013. During several visits to Syria, Hammarström documented the suffering of civilians and the country's decline. Without endeavouring to veil the harsh reality, Hammarström's photographs capture the truths of a civil war, which has led to the largest displacement of people in our times.

This photographic essay earned Hammarström multiple awards both in Sweden and internationally, such as World Press Photo, Picture of the Year International and UNICEF Photo of the Year Award.





Sample images

All images © Niclas Hammarström/Kontinent Agency





## Sample images

All images © Niclas Hammarström/Kontinent Agency





**In Depth****Text by Magnus Falkehed, 2014**

Niclas Hammarström made three travels to Syria during the years 2012 and 2013. In cities like Aleppo, Maasoula and Yabroud he documented the suffering of civilians and the country's decline, generating strong images of everyday life during war and the Free Syrian Army's struggle for a free Syria without oppression. In November 2013, Niclas Hammarström made a final trip to the area around the towns Yabroud and Maaloula, near the border with Lebanon, alongside journalist Magnus Falkehed. The journey ended abruptly on November 23rd when the two journalists were kidnapped by a group of rebels. Hammarström and Falkehed were released after more than six weeks in captivity and returned to Sweden on 9th January 2014.

Everything started in Syria with the children. "Forget your children! If you really want to have your children, you should have more of them. If you don't know how, we can show you." These words met their parents in the city of Deraa, near the Jordanian border. Fifteen children, aged between ten and fifteen, were accused in February 2011 of having sprayed "the people will topple the regime" on a wall. Graffiti was nothing new in a city where an ID card was needed to buy a can of spray paint. Torture and rape, even of children, was also nothing new, in a city controlled with an iron fist by a cousin of the dictator Bashar al-Assad. But this time, nearly all the children came from some of the most prominent families in the city. When the parents eventually got their children's bodies back, they were covered in blood. Their nails had been pulled out. The Arab world was already bubbling with hopes of freedom in what was then called the Arab Spring.

The Syrians never got to experience any spring. They were thrown straight into a darkness deeper than that in which they already lived. Peaceful demonstrations were crushed mercilessly. One of the worst wars and refugee catastrophes in modern history soon became fact. Some said it was conflict between rural communities and big cities. Between Alawites and Sunnis, said another. Between Russia and the USA, or between Iran and Saudi Arabia, said a third. Almost everyone forgot that it was basically about those children. About decency. Ultimately, those fighting for freedom and democracy never got any help worth mentioning from other democracies in the world. The conflict became increasingly ruthless. The wounds deeper and deeper.

In February 2012 an opposition that was still largely democratic fought heroically in the city of Homs while the dictator terror-bombed the population. The freedom-fighters sacrificed their lives to help some foreign journalists who had gone there to bear witness. In spite of everything, a few journalists died. More would follow.

Over the coming years much of the war's focus shifted to Aleppo in northern Syria and its fight against the regime. It was at this time that freelance photographer Niclas Hammarström made his first trip to Syria. He did it with one intention: to depict the children's suffering. He did it in his own particular way: just straight up and down, in a composition that always focused on people, on their feelings. On their vulnerability. Just as Niclas had done when he was first to arrive on Utøya, he did nothing to gloss over reality. Realism was often on the edge of being unbearable. Niclas made two trips to Aleppo, and his reportage won prizes such as "Journalist of the year" and a number of distinctions in "Årets Bild" (Picture of the year).

In November 2013 there was one region in Syria that was under the media radar: Qalamoun, east of Lebanon. I went there together with Niclas in order to depict the children's situation, as well as the chaos and the suffering of the entire population. This was at a time when the dictator wanted to transport his chemical weapons through Qalamoun, in order to then continue the massacre undisturbed, without external interference. There was a high price to pay for this reportage from Yabroud and Maaloula in Qalamoun, both for us and for our families. We were kidnapped and imprisoned by soldiers for 46 days right on the front line. By a miracle, not only did we leave with our notes, Niclas also came out with almost all his pictures.



## Exhibition details

Kontinent offer a range of photographic exhibitions to museums, galleries and institutions worldwide. The exhibitions vary in size from 14 to 110 images. The minimum showing period is 8 weeks, however we are happy to accommodate your needs wherever possible.

### IMAGES

- 58 colour photographs, printed and framed.
- The photographs have been printed on professional high quality paper and have been approved by the photographer (2015).
- All Kontinent exhibitions are stored in archival crates and are accompanied by explanatory texts.

### EXHIBITOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The exhibition venue is responsible for:

- The rental fee, transportation, wall to wall insurance, and technical installation.
- Travel and lodging expenses for exhibiting photographer/ Kontinent representative (outside of Stockholm) for the installation and opening of the exhibition.
- Production of promotional materials (catalogue, brochure, posters etc).



'Syria' by Niclas Hammarström, Galleri Kontrast, Stockholm, 2015.

### KONTINENT AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

Kontinent Agency will make available to the exhibitor, in the form of digital files, 2-3 photos for editorial promotion of the exhibition in the press, for the poster and for the invitation. These photos may be used solely and exclusively in the context of promotion of the exhibition, beginning 2 months before the opening of the exhibition and until the end. Should certain photographs be used in this context, it is imperative that the photographer's copyright be mentioned: © Name of Photographer/ Kontinent Agency. Appearing on all promotional material will be the Kontinent logos, those of the exhibitor, together with the logos of any sponsors. All promotional material must be submitted to Kontinent in advance to allow for approval before printing or dissemination.

### FURTHER DETAILS

For further information regarding exhibition fees, visual materials and other information please contact Malin Sjöberg, Project Manager on +46 (0) 7 22 62 96 14 or email [malin@kontinent.se](mailto:malin@kontinent.se)



## Niclas Hammarström

Born 1969, Niclas Hammarström has worked in the photographic industry for over 20 years. He began his career in 1993 working as a contract photographer for the Swedish daily Aftonbladet, as their US-based photographer. During this period, he covered many major events, such as the siege in Waco, the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta and coverage of the 9/11 World Trade Centre terrorist attacks. After leaving the industry to pursue a different career path for several years, he returned to the photographic scene again in 2011. He is currently based in Stockholm.

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2016 "Syria", Gustavsbergs Konsthall, Sweden
- 2016 "War Child", Forum Gallerian, Uppsala, Sweden
- 2016 "War Child", Söderhallarna, Stockholm, Sweden
- 2016 "War Child", Mobilia, Malmö, Sweden
- 2015/16 "Syria", Västerbottens Museum, Umeå, Sweden
- 2015 "Syria", Galleri Kontrast, Stockholm, Sweden

### AWARDS

- 2016 "World Press Photo, 3rd Spot News
- 2016 Picture of the Year International (POYi), USA, 2nd General News
- 2016 Picture of the Year International (POYi), USA, 3rd Portrait
- 2016 Picture of the Year Sweden, 3rd Picture Story Abroad
- 2015 Picture of the Year Sweden, 2nd Picture Story Abroad
- 2015 Picture of the Year Sweden, 3rd News Picture Abroad
- 2015 National Press Photographers Association (NPPA), USA, HM Portrait
- 2014 Luis Valtueña International Humanitarian Photography Award, Spain, 1st
- 2014 Picture of the Year International (POYi), USA, 1st General News
- 2014 The winner of Unicef Photo of the Year Award, Germany
- 2014 The winner of Days Japan International Photo-Journalism Award, Japan
- 2014 Picture of the Year Sweden, Picture of the Year
- 2014 Picture of the Year Sweden, 1st Picture story Abroad
- 2014 Picture of the Year Sweden, 1st Portrait
- 2014 The winner of Miran Hrovatin Award, Italy

For further details please contact:



Kontinent - Photojournalist Agency

Malin Sjöberg, Project Manager  
Kocksgatan 17 k  
116 24 Stockholm  
SWEDEN

E-mail: [malin@kontinent.se](mailto:malin@kontinent.se)  
tel: +46 (0) 7 22 62 96 14  
web: [www.kontinent.se](http://www.kontinent.se)