

# SYRIA BEHIND THE LINES

1 X 53 HD



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The world has watched Syria's agony from a distance. For tens of thousands of Syrians the civil war is unfolding with intimate horror: families destroyed in an instant; once-peaceful villages ripped apart by sectarian rage; neighbors confronting neighbors across a no man's land of hatred, suspicion, and terror.

FRONTLINE's Olly Lambert is the first Western filmmaker to spend an extended period living on both sides of Syria's war—and to document, on camera, the realities of everyday life for rebels, government soldiers, and the civilians who support them. *Syria Behind the Lines* is an unforgettable portrait of a disintegrating nation and of the dividing lines between communities and between life and death.

Lambert crisscrossed the Orontes River valley in Idlib province, a once-peaceful area in Syria's heartland that is now a perilous sectarian front line. On one side of the river, the rebel Free Syrian Army holds Sunni villages whose residents are calling for the fall of President Bashar Al-Assad. On the other side, less than a mile away, villagers from Assad's Alawite minority remain fiercely loyal to the government and gladly host army checkpoints that fire shells and mortars into neighbouring Sunni villages.

In the rebel-held village of Kansafra, Lambert lives in the very houses the regime is targeting, meeting farmers who are shot at when they try to check their crops, and a young rebel soldier who used to think nothing of crossing the river to play with the friends he is now fighting. Also in the village are refugees who came to Kansafra seeking safe haven but they have found nothing of the sort. Instead, these refugees are left to grieve as their families become the latest victims of regime shelling. In a devastating sequence, Lambert films a regime air strike that hits civilian homes barely 300 yards from where he is standing, killing 17 people, mostly unarmed women and children.

Both sides in the conflict think they are working to make the country safe, and they blame each other for the death, destruction, and fighting. But both sides also express a longing for a return to peace. And as *Syria Behind the Lines* reveals in stark, gripping detail, both sides believe that peace can only be achieved if they are the victors.

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## CREDITS

*Writer, Director, Producer:* Olly Lambert

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