



Lubna Alkanawati

Profile

Lubna Alkanawati is a distinguished feminist leader and human rights defender with over a decade of experience advancing justice, political participation, and women's rights across Syria and the diaspora. As the Executive Director of Women Now for Development (WND)—the pioneering organization founded and led by Syrian women—she has transformed grassroots activism into a powerful force for systemic change. Under her leadership, WND has earned international acclaim, including the International Women's Freedom Award – Mahsa Amini and the 2025 Peace in Progress Award from the Catalan International Institute for Peace (ICIP).

Lubna's work operates at the vital intersection of activism and policy. She has fearlessly occupied male-dominated spaces to ensure Syrian women are recognized not as victims, but as powerful agents of social and political change. Her pivotal role in negotiations has secured safe passages for civilians and integrated gender-sensitive policies into the broader humanitarian landscape.

A witness to the 2013 Eastern Ghouta chemical attacks, Lubna has turned lived experience into a relentless pursuit of accountability. She served as a key civil party in the historic French legal case that led to arrest warrants against Bashar al-Assad and senior officials for crimes against humanity. Her advocacy reaches the highest international levels, from briefing the UN Security Council to co-organizing the Syrian Civil Society Chemical Weapons Conference in The Hague.

Her leadership is equally defined by crisis response. Following the 2023 Syria-Turkey earthquake, Lubna led a feminist humanitarian response that raised over \$4 million, ensuring women-led organizations remained central to recovery efforts. By bridging grassroots struggle with high-level advocacy, Lubna continues to challenge systems of impunity and build a feminist vision of justice where women's experiences shape the future of peace and security.

Why is the CHS Alliance important to the sector?

The CHS Alliance is the vital backbone of humanitarian integrity. By promoting the Core Humanitarian Standard, it ensures that aid is not merely delivered, but delivered with quality and accountability. In complex conflicts like Syria, the Alliance provides the necessary framework to shift power dynamics toward affected populations. It moves the sector beyond "doing no harm" toward actively fostering dignity and resilience. For women-led organizations, the Alliance's focus on standards is a critical tool for demanding equitable partnerships and ensuring that humanitarian action remains transparent, inclusive, and truly responsive to those on the ground.



What motivates you to join the Alliance's Board?

That humanitarian action must be locally led and gender-transformative. My experience as a survivor and an Executive Director has shown me that accountability often fails at the intersection of conflict and gender. I want to bring a Syrian feminist perspective to the Board to help the Alliance deepen its impact in fragile contexts. I am driven to ensure the CHS is accessible to grassroots actors and that the voices of those directly affected by crises are central to the Alliance's strategic decisions, fostering a more equitable global humanitarian system.