



SAMS

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MONTHLY

NEWSLETTER



Delivering Life, Care, and Hope Across Syria

SPECIAL UPDATES

Bringing Life-Saving Care Back to Deir Ezzor and Al-Mayadin

In early August, in Deir Ezzor, SAMS, in partnership with the Syrian Ministry of Health, opened a free Hematology and Oncology Center — part of a growing network of specialized cancer facilities across Syria. By providing advanced care locally, patients no longer face the hardship and expense of traveling long distances for treatment.

At the same time, SAMS restored and equipped the city's only Blood Bank, ensuring a sustainable supply of vital blood products, including plasma and platelets, for those who need it most.

In Al-Mayadin, the National Hospital reopened after more than a decade, now fully staffed and equipped to serve nearly 1,000 patients daily. From maternity and pediatric care to dialysis and emergency services, quality healthcare is once again within reach.

These aren't just new facilities — they're a return of dignity, a promise of care, and a rekindling of hope for communities that have waited far too long.

Your support makes this possible. Every act of support helps SAMS continue to rebuild healthcare across Syria and bring lifesaving care to those who need it most.



Hope Restored at Al Tal Hospital

In August, a remarkable milestone was achieved in Rural Damascus.

World Vision Syria Response Director Emmanuel Isch and World Vision Germany Director Janine Lietmeyer, together with SAMS Syria Country Director Baraa Alsmoudi, joined representatives from the Ministry of Health and the Rural Damascus Health Directorate to visit Al Tal Hospital—a critical healthcare center for thousands of families.

Thanks to the generous support of Aktion Deutschland Hilft and World Vision, the hospital's pediatric department has been fully rehabilitated. Families in the area now have access to modern pediatric care, incubator units, and neonatal services that are set to serve over 14,000 people in the surrounding communities.

Janine Lietmeyer reflected on the visit, saying, “I am proud and honored to be in Al Tal Hospital, where World Vision helped rehabilitate the pediatric department. Now, families in Rural Damascus can access the care they urgently need.”

For children and families in Syria, access to quality healthcare is not guaranteed. Every day, children face preventable illnesses, and mothers and families worry

about whether they can get the care they need. Al Tal Hospital is more than a building—it is a lifeline, a place where children can grow stronger and families can find hope in the midst of hardship.



Your support can help ensure that hospitals like Al Tal continue to provide lifesaving medical care. Your generosity can help rehabilitate pediatric and maternal care units, supply essential medical equipment and medicines, and support the dedicated healthcare staff working on the frontlines.

Together, we can make sure no child is denied the care they urgently need — and every family has hope for a healthier tomorrow.





Opening of the Ibn Sina Conference Center in Hama

The Ibn Sina Conference Center was officially inaugurated in August, marking a significant milestone in the SAMS Institute's academic initiatives. The opening ceremony celebrated a promising partnership between SAMS and the University of Hama, and was attended by representatives from the Hama Mayor's Office as well as local academicians.

The center is designed to become a central hub for training the next generation of skilled medical professionals in Hama and neighboring cities. With three auditoriums accommodating a total of 400 students, two fully equipped lecture and training halls, a medical library, and remote training capabilities connecting SAMS physicians in the United States, the center provides both local and international learning opportunities. An intermediate medical simulation lab is currently under development, offering hands-on practice for healthcare providers and ensuring that theoretical knowledge is reinforced with practical experience.



The Ibn Sina Center reflects SAMS' broader commitment to strengthening medical education in Syria. By providing state-of-the-art facilities and access to expert instructors, the center aims to empower medical students, resident doctors, and healthcare professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to deliver high-quality patient care, even in challenging environments.

This initiative not only enhances academic and professional development but also fosters collaboration between local and international institutions, paving the way for sustainable improvements in healthcare delivery.

The SAMS Institute remains dedicated to expanding opportunities like this across the country, ensuring that future generations of medical professionals are well-prepared to meet the growing healthcare needs of their communities.

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PARTNERSHIPS

Dr. Aref Rifai's Visit to Washington, D.C. Strengthens Academic and Humanitarian Partnerships

During his recent visit to Washington, D.C., Dr. Aref Rifai, President of the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS), engaged in a series of high-level meetings to bolster academic partnerships and advance humanitarian cooperation.

Dr. Al-Rifai began his visit at the SAMS headquarters, where he met with the team to review ongoing initiatives and outline future priorities. These discussions emphasized the organization's commitment to strengthening healthcare systems, expanding medical education, and enhancing humanitarian services for Syrians in need.

A key highlight of the visit was Dr. Al-Rifai's meeting with Bay Atlantic University, where SAMS signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support the training of medical and nursing personnel in Syria. The agreement establishes a framework for collaboration in medical and health sciences education, promotes institutional development, and strengthens humanitarian and educational efforts in Syria and the broader region. The MoU also facilitates cooperation between SAMS and Bahçeşehir University in Istanbul, creating additional opportunities for international academic collaboration.



In addition to academic engagements, Dr. Al-Rifai met with officials at the U.S. Department of State to follow up on grants and relief programs implemented in partnership with SAMS. These discussions underscored the organization's ongoing role in delivering critical aid and healthcare services to Syrians affected by conflict.

Dr. Al-Rifai's visit reflects SAMS' dedication to expanding academic collaboration, strengthening healthcare capacity, and advancing humanitarian services for the people of Syria. Through these partnerships, SAMS continues to build sustainable solutions that support healthcare professionals and improve access to care across the region.



Delivering Life-Saving Cardiac Care: Dr. Ebrahim Sabbagh's Volunteer Mission in Syria

Over the course of two intensive days, Dr. Ebrahim Sabbagh, a cardiologist from the United States, brought his expertise to Syria, performing eleven critical coronary catheterization procedures that had an immediate and profound impact on patients' lives.

The cases ranged widely in complexity. Some patients required referrals for heart surgery, while others received stent placements or underwent detailed diagnostic evaluations that informed tailored treatment plans. Each procedure was carried out with meticulous precision, demonstrating the value of combining advanced medical knowledge with the expertise of local healthcare teams.

This initiative is part of SAMS' ongoing mission to bridge global medical expertise with local capacity. By bringing volunteer specialists into Syrian hospitals, SAMS ensures that patients have access to high-level cardiac care that would otherwise be unavailable in the region.

The presence of volunteer physicians like Dr. Sabbagh does more than provide treatment—it strengthens the skills of local medical staff, fosters knowledge-sharing, and builds sustainable improvements in healthcare delivery. For many patients, these interventions are life-changing, providing relief, renewed hope, and a chance for a healthier future.



SAMS is deeply grateful to all volunteers who dedicate their time, knowledge, and compassion to serve those in need. Their work embodies the organization's mission of saving lives and improving health outcomes across Syria, one patient at a time.





Roots Amid Ruins: Noah & Mutasem's Journey Back to Deir Ezzor

This summer, Noah and Mutasem—both medical volunteers with the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS)—returned to their homes in Deir Ezzor and faced a powerful mix of pain and connection. For Noah, it was his first visit since 2009. He walked through his childhood home with his father, finding old photos that hold deep memories. He felt a deep sadness at the sight of their destroyed city—“the city center flattened and so many lives upturned is almost beyond belief.” Still, the constant flow of patients and the strength of local doctors gave him hope: “seeing how much they’ve struggled in the past 15 years... I’m really excited to return in the near future.”

Mutasem's return was just as meaningful. “Alhamdulillah we were able to come to Deir Ezzor to support our people,” he said, as he looked around the downtown area where more than 85 percent of

the buildings lie in ruins. Reuniting with his aunts, uncles, and cousins grounded him in a way he hadn't felt after 15 years in the U.S. without roots.

At the Euphrates River bridge, Mutasem held an old family photo taken there during his childhood. He tried to stand in the same spot to recreate it—but the buildings behind him were gone: “I wasn't able to recreate that exact photo because the buildings were knocked to the ground.”

Noah and Mutasem's return to Deir Ezzor this summer reaffirmed their commitment to rebuilding their homeland. Despite the city's devastation, their experiences with the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) have strengthened their resolve to contribute to Syria's recovery.



Yusra Mardini Joins SAMS to Support Syrian Hospitals

Olympic champion and goodwill ambassador Yusra Mardini recently joined the SAMS Summer 2025 medical mission in Syria, visiting hospitals in Aleppo and Idlib. She met patients, medical staff, and volunteers who continue to provide care despite monumental challenges.

Her visit was a powerful reminder that building a better future begins with upholding Syrians' right to health and dignity.

Yusra shared:

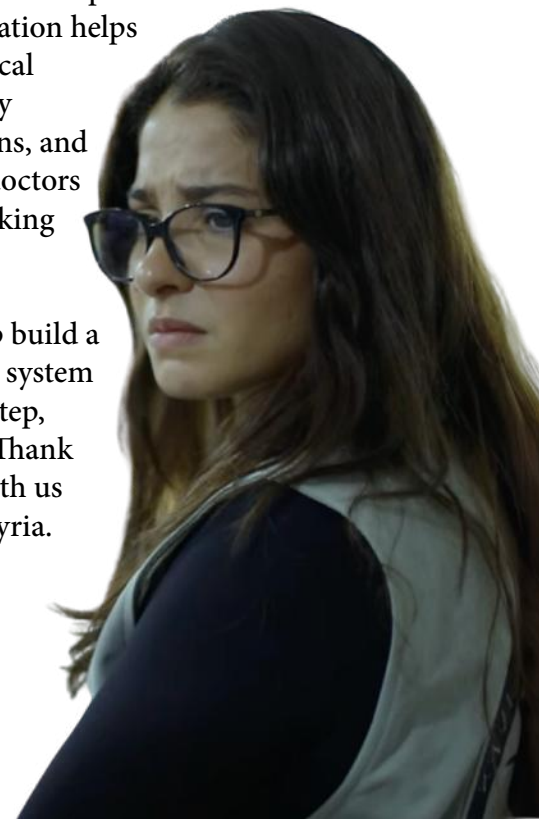
"There is joy, but there is sadness too. I still have hope that one day we will have a really good healthcare system in Syria, step by step. I met many doctors working with SAMS. They're not obligated to help, but they want to help. They genuinely care about people here. SAMS is trying to help, and all the doctors are trying to help, but the situation requires more.

There are a lot of emotions, honestly. I saw all the patients here and got to know many of them. There's a huge shortage of medications, and some medicines patients simply can't afford—they're just too expensive.

Why did I decide to enter the medical field now? Because I felt the need was so great. Sports and education are important, but they can wait until we fix the healthcare system here. Fixing it is extremely, extremely important. God willing, in a few years, we'll have a really good healthcare system."

You can help make this hope a reality. Every donation helps SAMS provide critical medical care, supply essential medications, and support the brave doctors and volunteers working on the frontlines.

Donate now to help build a stronger healthcare system for Syria—step by step, patient by patient. Thank you for standing with us and the people of Syria.





IMPACT

Bringing Hope, One Patient at a Time: Sofouh's Journey

For years, Sofouh lived with a silent and debilitating struggle. Severe shortness of breath made even the simplest daily tasks feel impossible. Her right heart chambers were enlarged, and relentless exhaustion shadowed every moment of her life—all without a clear diagnosis or a path forward.

Everything began to change in July, when a SAMS volunteer noticed her condition during routine outreach. After performing initial tests, the volunteer recognized the complexity of her case and promptly referred her to the cardiac catheterization team for specialized evaluation.

At the hospital, Dr. Munes Fares led a series of advanced examinations, including a detailed echocardiogram, an ECG, a CT scan, and an in-depth study of her pulmonary arteries and veins. After careful analysis, the team arrived at a definitive diagnosis: primary pulmonary hypertension, a condition that explained the years of unexplained symptoms and exhaustion.

The case was then reviewed with Dr. Bassel Nijres, and after thorough discussion, the team determined that surgical or catheter-based intervention would not be effective. Instead, they designed a comprehensive long-term medical therapy plan, combined with close monitoring and follow-up, to ensure Sofouh receives ongoing support and optimal care.

The doctors did not stop at diagnosis. They provided her supervising physician with a detailed care plan, ensuring that every aspect of her treatment would be carefully managed. This level of dedication reflects SAMS' broader mission: to provide expert, compassionate care that extends beyond the hospital walls and into the lives of patients who need it most.

Sofouh's story is a powerful reminder of the impact that attentive, coordinated medical care can have. In every breath, there is life. In every life, there is hope. SAMS continues to stand by patients like Sofouh, bringing hope, healing, and opportunity—one patient at a time.

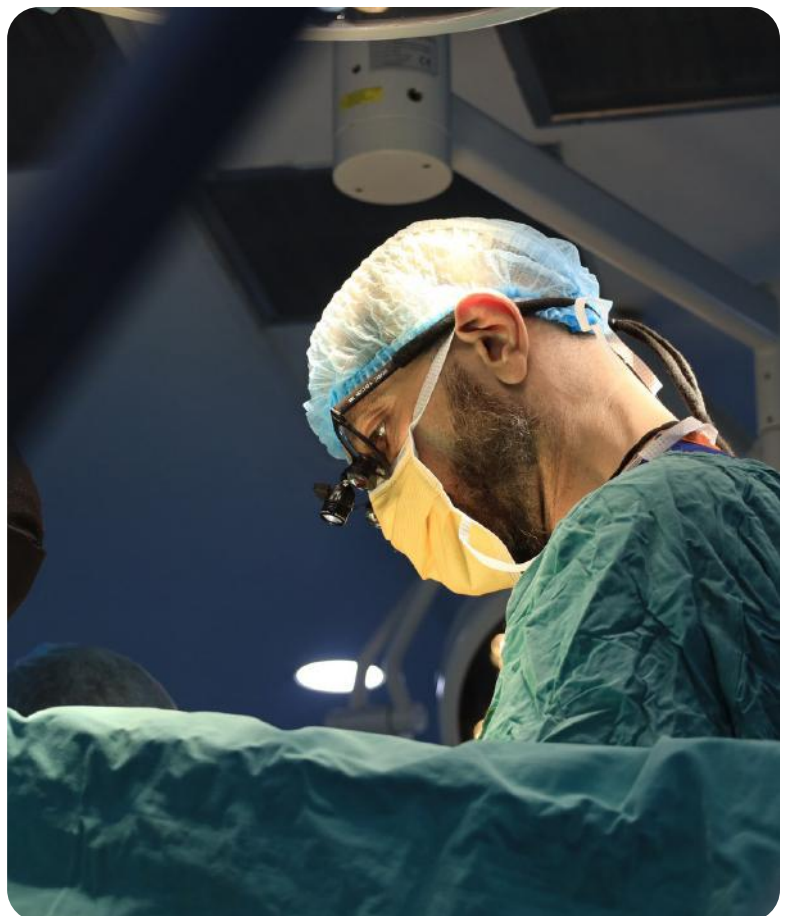
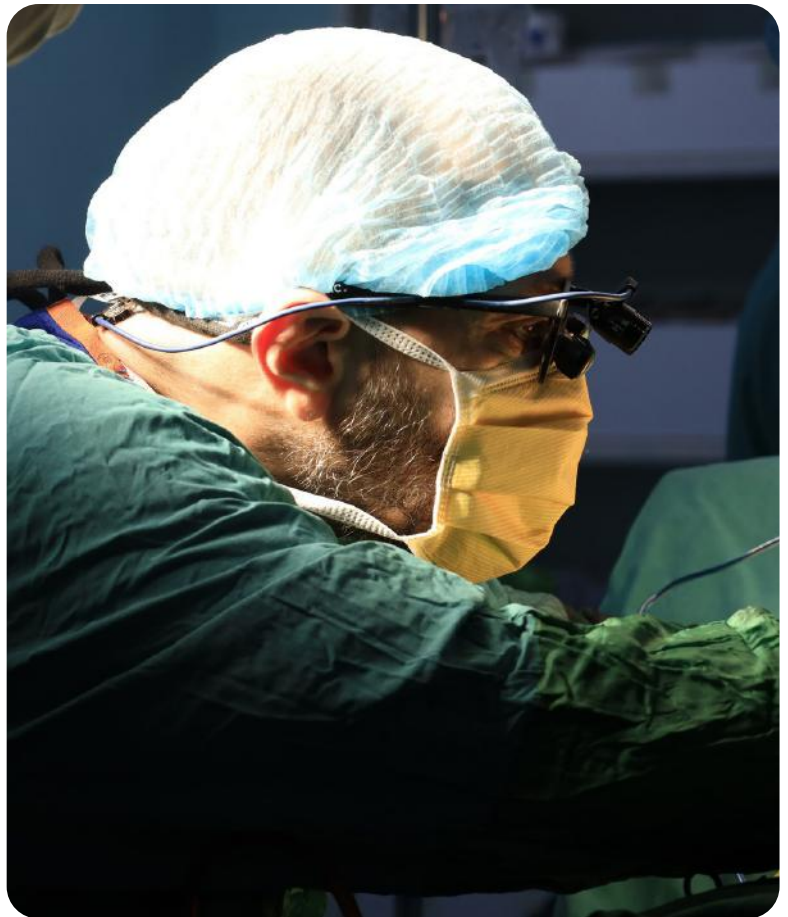
Saving Lives Through Precision: Haifa's Heart Surgery

Haifa, a 70-year-old woman, faced a life-threatening challenge: a rare fibrous tumor had developed on one of the leaflets of her aortic valve. Though the tumor was benign, its delicate location posed a serious risk, with the potential to trigger severe complications such as stroke or angina.

During SAMS' Summer 2025 medical missions, Dr. Mustafa Zakkar, a cardiac specialist from the United States, traveled to Syria to provide specialized care. Recognizing the complexity of Haifa's case, Dr. Zakkar performed a highly precise open-heart surgery, carefully removing the tumor from its root. Through exceptional surgical skill, he preserved the integrity of the valve leaflets, avoiding a full valve replacement—a procedure typically reserved for more advanced or complex cases.

Following several days of meticulous post-operative care, Haifa's condition stabilized, and she was discharged from the hospital in good health. Her successful surgery not only restored her quality of life but also highlighted the impact of SAMS' medical missions in delivering advanced care to patients inside Syria.

Haifa's story reflects SAMS' ongoing commitment to providing specialized, free medical care to those in need, made possible by the dedication of volunteer physicians who bring their expertise to save lives. Through initiatives like the Summer 2025 mission, SAMS continues to demonstrate that even the most complex medical challenges can be met with skill, compassion, and hope.





EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Reaching Communities Across Gaza

SAMS is delivering lifesaving care across Gaza, reaching thousands of individuals in both the northern and southern regions. Our teams provided essential services to people of all ages—from children and adults to the elderly—ensuring that no one is left behind. On the ground, medical staff saw the human toll of the crisis: children arriving with trauma and injuries, families struggling to access basic care, and elderly patients needing support for chronic illnesses and preventive care.

In South Gaza, SAMS reached thousands through fixed and mobile clinics. Women and men received care for acute and chronic conditions, while children accessed pediatric services, vaccinations, and mental health support. Elderly patients received specialized attention, mobile dental units treated children and adults, and health education sessions empowered families to protect themselves from infectious diseases.

In North Gaza, SAMS delivered similar interventions, bringing services directly to neighborhoods cut off from hospitals. Mental health teams provided counseling and psychosocial support, while families received medications, infection prevention supplies, and health guidance, strengthening community resilience.

OUR IMPACT

APRIL-JUNE 2025

SOUTH GAZA

1,506 women
1,441 men
2,140 girls
1,353 boys
287 elderly women
273 elderly men

NORTH GAZA

2,244 women
1,178 men
1,477 girls
1,390 boys
226 elderly women
243 elderly men



Delivered mobile and fixed clinic services, including health, dental, and mental health care



Distributed medications, infection prevention supplies, and conducted health education sessions

Through these efforts, SAMS continues to bring hope, restore health, and strengthen community resilience, ensuring that women, men, children, and the elderly can access lifesaving care despite the ongoing crisis.

Donate now:

sams-usa.net/gaza





In Southern Syria, a New Exodus

Imagine leaving everything you know behind, like your home, your neighborhood, your belongings, because staying means danger. That's what hundreds of families in southern Syria are facing right now. Many arrive at overcrowded shelters, exhausted and scared.

In recent weeks, our mobile medical teams have been racing against time to reach these families. At the Al-Mleha Al-Gharbiyeh shelter, 70 people received emergency treatment in just one day. The day before, 100 more were cared for at Al-Musayfrah, many suffering from infections, dehydration, and injuries from trauma.

These numbers tell only part of the story. Each person we treat is a life hanging in the balance, and we are committed to saving as many as we can. Our ambulances are ready at Izraa Hospital, but the need grows every hour.

A Blast Near Idlib: A Hospital Under Fire

In August, a devastating explosion rocked the area near Maarat Misrin, sending more than 140 injured to local hospitals, including those we support. Many arrived in critical condition.

Though Maarat Misrin and Avicenna Hospitals suffered minor damage, our courageous medical teams stood firm, providing life-saving care despite the danger.

Hospitals should be places of healing, not targets in conflict. But in Syria, medical workers face threats every day, and yet they continue to serve with unmatched bravery and dedication.



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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Equipping Aleppo's Doctors with Life-Saving Skills

As part of the SAMS Institute's mission to strengthen healthcare across Syria, a comprehensive Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) training was conducted at Zahi Azraq Internal Medicine Hospital in Aleppo.

Over the course of three intensive days, 22 resident doctors from multiple specialties—primarily internal medicine and surgery—participated in hands-on sessions designed to enhance their skills in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), advanced cardiac care, and emergency response. This training provided them with the knowledge and confidence needed to respond effectively in critical situations, ultimately improving patient outcomes across the region.

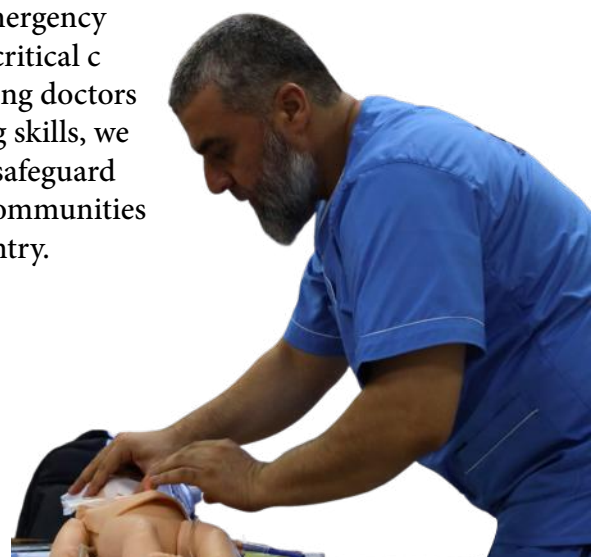
This session is part of a broader Simulation Lab (SIM LAB) program, which delivers high-quality medical training across Syria. The SIM LAB initiative includes BLS, ACLS, and PALS Training of Trainers (ToTs), ensuring that knowledge is not only learned but also shared widely, creating a ripple effect of skilled healthcare providers throughout the country. Looking ahead, SAMS plans to expand the program with advanced simulation workshops for healthcare professionals working in Emergency Rooms (ER) and Intensive Care Units (ICU), further strengthening Syria's healthcare system.

At SAMS, we are dedicated to empowering healthcare workers with the skills, knowledge, and confidence

they need to save lives. By investing in continuous professional development and practical training, we aim to ensure that every patient receives care at the highest possible standards, even in the most challenging environments.



This training highlights SAMS' ongoing commitment to building a resilient, highly skilled healthcare workforce in Syria, capable of meeting the growing demands of emergency medicine and critical care. By equipping doctors with life-saving skills, we are helping to safeguard the health of communities across the country.



MEMBER UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

Born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky, Mahmoud Kutmah has always known that medicine would be more than a career—it would be his path to give back. After graduating as valedictorian from Kentucky Country Day School, he went on to join the highly competitive six-year BA/MD program at the University of Missouri–Kansas City School of Medicine, where he is currently a third-year medical student preparing to apply for residency in surgery.

Mahmoud's journey with SAMS began four years ago, driven by a simple but powerful goal: to support Syrian medical students like himself in their personal and professional growth. Today, he serves as the Coordinator of the SAMS Education Committee, where his leadership and vision have helped launch several impactful initiatives. From observerships and mentorship programs to application guidance and interview workshops, Mahmoud has played a key role in creating opportunities for the next generation of Syrian healthcare professionals.

His dedication doesn't stop there. Mahmoud is also the founder and chair of the SAMS Young Professional Committee (YPC), a thriving community of over 400 students and trainees from around the world. Through YPC, Mahmoud has helped connect aspiring physicians with mentors, research collaborations, and even medical missions—ensuring that SAMS remains a gateway to both service and professional development.



“I joined SAMS to give back to Syria, but found an even greater purpose—a global community working to rebuild healthcare and uplift one another.”

Mahmoud Kutmah

When asked what SAMS means to him, Mahmoud answers without hesitation: mentorship. From his earliest days in the organization, he felt supported by role models who believed in him. That spirit of guidance and connection is what continues to fuel his commitment to SAMS and to the students who follow in his footsteps.

“I initially joined SAMS because I wanted to give back to Syria. But what I found was something even more meaningful—a global community of passionate people working together to rebuild a healthcare system and uplift one another along the way.”

Mahmoud's story is a reminder that leadership is not just about titles or achievements—it's about building something that lasts and creating spaces for others to thrive.

Let's keep shining a light on members like Mahmoud, whose energy, empathy, and initiative inspire us all.



WAYS TO GIVE



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Programs
96%

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STAY CONNECTED. MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Reflecting on this month's stories, from healing in Syria to hope in Gaza, it's clear that our united efforts are making a greater difference than ever.

But the work is far from over.

Whether you're a healthcare professional, advocate, or supporter, you have a role to play in advancing our mission of delivering dignified, high-quality care to communities in crisis.

Here's how you can stay engaged:



Donate to support emergency relief and medical care:
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Volunteer your time and expertise:
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Advocate by amplifying our message and engaging with policymakers

*Thank you for being part of the SAMS family.
Together, we are healing, rebuilding, and
inspiring hope.*

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