



SAMS

Vol 7 | November 2025

MONTHLY

NEWSLETTER



One Year After Liberation
**Healing, Rebuilding,
and Hope**

SAMS Launches Syria Liberation Month to Celebrate Resilience and Rebuilding

Campaign honors Syria's journey from crisis to liberation and the courage of its people

This December, the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) is launching Syria Liberation Month, a global campaign honoring the strength, resilience, and renewal of the Syrian people.

December 8 marks Liberation Day in Syria, officially recognized as a national day of remembrance and hope. To commemorate this milestone, SAMS will host a month-long series of events, storytelling campaigns, and community gatherings that highlight Syria's journey from crisis to recovery, as well as the critical work still ahead to rebuild the nation's healthcare system.

For fifteen years, the people of Syria have endured one of the world's most devastating humanitarian crises. More than 16.5 million Syrians remain in need of assistance, and nearly half of the country's hospitals and clinics have been damaged or destroyed. Through every chapter of hardship, SAMS has stood by Syria's side, from chemical attacks and underground surgeries during the height of

war, to emergency response during the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2023 Türkiye–Syria earthquake.

Now, following Syria's liberation in December 2024, communities are taking the first steps toward recovery. SAMS' Syria Health 2030 initiative is helping lead that transformation by restoring hospitals, rebuilding medical infrastructure, and training the next generation of healthcare professionals to serve in a new era of peace.

“Our members serve with no expectation of reward, only the hope of healing. Now it's time to grow that hope into something lasting,” said SAMS President Dr. Aref Rifai.

Syria Liberation Month 2025 celebrates not just freedom, but the unbreakable spirit of a people who refused to surrender their humanity. SAMS invites its global network of members, supporters, and partners to join the movement, attend chapter-led events, follow the storytelling campaign, and stand alongside those rebuilding Syria's future.

GIVING TUESDAY



Save the Date for Giving Tuesday on December 2

This Giving Tuesday on Tuesday, December 2, we invite you to join our Syria Health 2030 campaign -- a bold vision to rebuild Syria's shattered healthcare system, one patient, one clinic, one heartbeat at a time.

Your gift helps us:

- Deliver trauma care, cancer care, and life-saving surgeries to patients in need
- Provide health care to children and adults with limited access to care
- Reopen and re-equip hospitals destroyed by conflict
- Train Syrian doctors and nurses to serve their communities
- Build a sustainable health infrastructure for generations to come

Help Provide Life-Saving Aid

Your Giving Tuesday donation can make a dramatic difference to families and children in Syria:

- \$50 can help provide antibiotics for 10 children
- \$100 can help fund a chemotherapy session that could save a life
- \$200 can help provide a life-saving surgery
- \$500 can help train a nurse in Trauma care
- \$1,000 can sponsor a full month of care for a patient in crisis

Join the Global Giving Movement

This Giving Tuesday, let's turn heartbreak into healing. Make your secure online donation today. You can also donate monthly to support our long-term efforts to rebuild Syria's healthcare system.

Mail your donation to SAMS Foundation PO Box 34115, Washington, DC 20043. Please include a note that your donation is for SAMS' Syria Health 2030 Program.

In Syria, every heartbeat is a triumph. Every breath taken in a war-torn hospital is a testament to resilience. And every child who survives because of a donated medicine, a skilled doctor, or a mobile clinic, is a miracle.

The Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) Foundation is a 501(c)(3) global medical relief organization that is working on the front lines of crisis relief in Syria and beyond to alleviate suffering and save lives. Our tax ID is 16-1717058. Learn more here: www.sams-usa.net

For every dollar donated in 2024, 96 cents went directly into relief programs.

Donate now:
bit.ly/sams-givingtuesday25





October Medical Missions Launch Across Jordan and Syria

Dear Fellow Humanitarian,

This October, under the leadership of Dr. Hend Azhari, SAMS launched back-to-back medical missions in Jordan and Syria, bringing healing, hope, and compassion to communities in need.

In Jordan, a dedicated team of volunteer doctors and surgeons provided more than 120 surgeries and over 350 medical consultations in just four days. From eye and dental surgeries to pediatric and internal medicine care at the Za'atari Camp, every patient received treatment marked by dignity and compassion. Every surgery performed, every resident trained, and every patient healed is a testament to SAMS' enduring commitment: to bring healing where it's needed most, and to restore hope where it's been lost.



In Syria, SAMS' impact reached across seven provinces—Iddlib, Aleppo, Homs, Latakia, Damascus, Daraa, and Tartous—where hospitals continue to

face severe shortages of medicine, equipment, and trained specialists. Despite these challenges, SAMS volunteer physicians performed complex cardiac catheterizations, oncology treatments, pediatric and reconstructive surgeries, and gastrointestinal procedures, providing critical care that would otherwise be out of reach for most patients.



Beyond direct treatment, SAMS strengthened Syria's fragile healthcare system through hands-on medical education and hospital support. Over 100 residents and medical students participated in intensive workshops on critical care, neonatal resuscitation, and oncology, gaining practical skills that will save countless lives long after the mission ends.

In just four days, SAMS doctors conducted more than 270 consultations, delivered life-saving procedures in multiple specialties, and assessed

hospital needs to improve long-term capacity. Each mission site became a symbol of resilience — proof that even amid devastation, healthcare and hope can thrive when compassion leads the way.



Donate today to help us continue delivering care where it's needed most. Your support makes this work possible—help us reach more patients and strengthen our ongoing efforts in Syria by visiting: <https://fundraise.givesmart.com/vf/SyriaOct2025>.

Support our Medical Mission
Donate now





SAMS Institute: Training the Next Generation

August and September 2025 were months of growth, innovation, and impact for the SAMS Institute, as teams advanced medical education, workforce development, and institutional operations across Syria.

A major highlight is the new simulation lab in Damascus, modeled after the successful Qah facility. Over the next year, the lab is expected to train around 2,000 healthcare professionals, including physicians, nurses, midwives, and ambulance staff, through hands-on courses like BLS, ACLS, and PALS. The lab will also use a Training-of-Trainers model to ensure long-term sustainability.

The Institute made progress on the GHP Track 2 Postgraduate Medical Education program, focusing on Emergency Medicine, Anesthesia, and Obstetrics/Gynecology. SAMS signed a memorandum with ACGME to adopt the Clinical Educator Milestones framework, enhancing mentorship and clinical supervision across fellowship programs starting January 2026.

Nursing education remains a priority. SAMS proposed a \$6M, three-year initiative to strengthen Syria's nursing and midwifery workforce through curriculum reform, specialized training, simulation-based education, and retention programs. Collaboration with the Syrian Private University is also underway to expand English-language degree

tracks, hybrid learning, and simulation-based training.

Efforts toward ACLS accreditation and establishing an AHA Regional Training Center at Qah are underway, alongside engagement with the Society for Simulation in Healthcare to ensure international recognition.

The Institute also strengthened partnerships and operational systems. A memorandum with Bay Atlantic University (BAU) supports academic collaboration and professional development, while new policies clarify distinctions between SAMS Institute and SAMS Foundation. The Digital Learning team expanded online course delivery, video production, and content management, reaching healthcare professionals across Syria.

Ongoing educational programs include the Clinical Psychology program, CATT and CPT supervision, and new courses on adult hematology, oncology, and communication skills - all integrated into the SAMS Institute Learning Portal (<https://lms.sams.ngo/>) and website for broader access.

Through these initiatives, the SAMS Institute continues to equip Syrian healthcare professionals with critical skills, improve care standards, and build a resilient medical workforce capable of meeting the country's healthcare challenges.



SAMS



SAMS Awarded 2025 Top-Rated Great NonProfits Badge

We're thrilled to share some exciting news — thanks to your unwavering support, SAMS has been awarded the 2025 Top-Rated Nonprofit Badge by GreatNonprofits!

This recognition is more than a badge. It's a reflection of the compassion, generosity, and trust you've placed in our mission to deliver life-saving medical care to communities in crisis. Every donation, every kind word, and every shared story helped us reach this milestone, including this review:

"Incredible nonprofit that has very low overhead and significant on the ground impact. I have personally donated and volunteered with them and the work they do is thankless but incredibly important to the lives of millions. This is as good as nonprofits get, I highly recommend volunteering and donating."

Your support is fueling our mission and the impact is being felt every day in hospitals, clinics, and refugee camps across Syria and beyond. In 2024, 96 cents of every dollar you gave went directly to our programs — saving lives, restoring health, and healing wounds both seen and unseen. We're proud to receive this badge, and grateful for your continued trust and support.

Read inspiring stories about us and add your own.

Donate now:
sams-usa.net/donate



Strengthening Collaboration for Syria's Future

SAMS recently hosted representatives from government institutions and humanitarian organizations at its Damascus office, including Mr. Qutaiba Idlibi, Director of American Affairs at the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During the meeting, Dr. Abdulfatah Elshaar, Chair of the SAMS Board, and Dr. Mazen Kewara, SAMS Middle East Regional Director, emphasized the critical role of collaboration among all stakeholders in the humanitarian and healthcare sectors. They highlighted that strong partnerships are essential for delivering effective programs, addressing pressing needs, and ultimately fostering a more stable, resilient, and prosperous future for the people of Syria.

Through initiatives like this, SAMS continues to strengthen its network of humanitarian partners, ensuring that coordination, knowledge-sharing, and joint efforts remain at the heart of its mission to support vulnerable communities across the region.





SAMS Launches CATT Training in Egypt

In October, SAMS Egypt kicked off a four-day Children's Accelerated Trauma Treatment (CATT) training at the Palestinian Embassy in Cairo, bringing together 28 mental health specialists from organizations across the country.

The CATT Training is designed to equip mental health professionals with practical, evidence-based tools to help children and adolescents process traumatic experiences, manage stress, and build resilience. By focusing on hands-on techniques and interactive learning, the program empowers participants to provide more effective, compassionate care to young survivors of trauma.

Through initiatives like this, SAMS continues to strengthen local mental health capacity and ensure that vulnerable children and youth receive the support they need to heal and thrive.



Healing Gaza: Delivering Care in the Face of Crisis

Gaza Interventions Update: July–September 2025

October 2025 marks two years since the mass displacement of 1.1 million Palestinians in Gaza. While the recent ceasefire brings a moment of relief, the humanitarian crisis remains severe. Since October 2023, over 67,000 people have been killed, 169,000 injured, and approximately one million children require mental health support. More than 15,600 critical patients—including 3,800 children—need medical evacuation abroad, and 1.5 million people lack emergency shelter and essential household items.



Amid these challenges, SAMS continues to deliver life-saving care. From July to September, our Primary Health Care Project provided over 29,000 services to more than 29,000 individuals, including mobile and static consultations, sexual and reproductive health care, nursing and wound care, psychological support, health promotion, referrals, and preventive and therapeutic dental services. Mobile medical teams have been essential in bringing care to displaced families and host communities despite overcrowded shelters and limited resources.

Nutrition support has prioritized infants at risk of malnutrition. Between September 21 and October 12, SAMS screened families and distributed 896 units of baby formula across Nuseriat, Deir El-Balah, and Mawasi Khanyounis, helping ensure vulnerable infants receive the nourishment they need.



Dental services also remain critical. At the SAMS Dental Clinic in Nuseirat Camp, over 2,700 patients received over 3,000 dental services, including check-ups, fillings, extractions, and gum care. The clinic conducted 27 oral health education sessions and hosted 17 dental interns, strengthening local professional capacity while addressing urgent oral health needs.



Emergency response efforts have supported hospital functionality despite electricity outages, including delivery of generator parts and nearly 50 oxygen cylinders with regulators to restore life-saving oxygen stations.

Looking ahead, SAMS plans to expand Primary Health Care Centers, strengthen mobile medical units, broaden dental services, resume Infection Prevention and Control initiatives, and facilitate entry of medical supplies, medications, and emergency medical teams as conditions allow. Mental health and psychosocial support will remain a top priority throughout recovery.

Through these interventions, SAMS is committed to restoring hope, dignity, and essential healthcare to the people of Gaza.

Donate now:
sams-usa.net/donate



Supporting Ukraine's Frontline Health Workers Through MHPSS

In Ukraine, SAMS continues to stand alongside frontline health workers through its Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) program. Since 2023, the program has provided direct support to over 1,150 physicians and nurses, while awareness campaigns have reached more than 3,500 people, helping reduce stigma around mental health and promoting wellbeing among those on the frontlines of conflict.

This week, SAMS Executive Director David Lillie and the team visited the program in Ukraine to reaffirm the organization's commitment to these courageous health professionals, recognizing the incredible dedication and resilience they demonstrate every day in the face of war.

Through initiatives like MHPSS, SAMS ensures that those who care for others receive the support they need to continue their critical work, fostering both strength and hope amid the ongoing challenges in Ukraine.





Advocacy Spotlight: Advancing Syria's Recovery on the Global Stage

In October, SAMS actively represented Syrian civil society across several major international platforms, advocating for a sustainable and inclusive recovery in Syria.

At the World Bank and IMF 2025 Annual Meetings in Washington, D.C., SAMS participated in the Civil Society Policy Forum and related sessions, where global leaders emphasized health as a foundation for stability and inclusive growth. SAMS underscored that rebuilding Syria's health system must remain central to national recovery, calling for a transparent Health Fund with civil society participation. SAMS also urged the World Bank to involve non-governmental implementers with proven experience in future Syria programs, offering to contribute technical expertise and operational data.

At the InterAction Annual Forum and Devex Impact House, SAMS joined discussions on the evolving humanitarian landscape, innovation amid shrinking donor funding, and new partnership models that empower local actors. These engagements reinforced SAMS's growing role as a bridge between emergency response and long-term systems recovery.

During the EU Lobby Tour, held October 22–25 across Berlin, Oslo, and Copenhagen, SAMS deepened collaboration with European partners. Discussions focused on locally led recovery, investment in Syria's health workforce, and the integration of education, mental health, and primary care into recovery efforts. SAMS presented its Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) framework and

explored hospital partnerships, quality improvement initiatives, and peacebuilding through health. Conversations also opened opportunities for private-sector collaboration on chronic disease management and simulation-based medical training.

In Washington, D.C., SAMS participated in a roundtable with the Syrian Minister of Economy and Industry and members of the Syrian-American community, discussing Syria's reintegration into the global economy and the critical role of diaspora engagement. SAMS emphasized that rebuilding human capital, particularly in health and education, is essential to any broader economic recovery.

SAMS also continues to engage in advocacy working groups in both the U.S. and Syria, alongside other Syrian civil society partners and INGOs. Current priorities include advancing the dignified and voluntary return of displaced Syrians, supporting housing, livelihoods, and essential services, addressing the impact of sanctions, and promoting social cohesion and transitional justice to rebuild trust and stability.

With a reform-minded government, renewed international attention, and a motivated diaspora, SAMS believes this is a pivotal moment to support Syria's recovery through coordinated, inclusive, and sustainable action.

Donate now:
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Dr. Maria Hafez

From Ras Al Khaimah in the UAE to leading cancer research centers in the U.S., Dr. Maria Hafez has built a remarkable career defined by empathy, perseverance, and purpose.

Born and raised in the UAE, Dr. Hafez earned her Doctor of Medicine from Gulf Medical University and the Jordan University of Science and Technology. Her passion for medicine led her to the U.S., where she completed her Internal Medicine Residency at St. Joseph Mercy Oakland in Michigan, serving as Chief Resident, followed by a Hematology/Oncology Fellowship at West Virginia University (WVU). She is currently pursuing a Master's in Clinical and Translational Science at WVU and serves as an Editorial Fellow for the Journal of Immunotherapy and Precision Oncology.

Dedicated to advancing breast cancer research, precision oncology, and medical education, Dr. Hafez has served since 2023 as Director of Clinical Breast Cancer Research at Thomas Jefferson University's Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center. She recently joined St. Luke's University Health Network as Director of the Breast Cancer Program and Director of Oncology Clinical Trials and Research, while also teaching as an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Temple University's Lewis Katz School of Medicine.

Her work bridges science and compassion—bringing innovative cancer care to patients and expanding access to clinical trials. As she says, “Research is the bridge between science and hope.”

Beyond her clinical work, Dr. Hafez mentors medical students worldwide and lectures at conferences across the U.S. and the Middle East. Outside medicine, she enjoys life with her husband Samer and their three children—Hamza, Asiya, and Maryam—along with audiobooks, hiking, and travel.



Since joining SAMS in 2013, Dr. Hafez has been a key leader in oncology education and research. She serves as Director of Solid Oncology Education and Board Review in Syria, Vice Chair of Policies and Research Quality for the SAMS Research Committee, Chair of the Breast Tumor Board Initiative, and a member of the Oncology Committee. Through SAMS missions, she has lectured in Damascus, Hama, Aleppo, and Idlib, and provided direct patient care across northern Syria.

For Dr. Hafez, SAMS is more than an organization—it's a family and a purpose-driven community. “SAMS allows me to live out my passion for service. It's where I can make a tangible difference in people's lives, and in doing so, I've found a second family and a true sense of belonging.” Stay tuned for more inspiring stories from SAMS Members Under the Spotlight.

SAVE THE DATE

SAMS 24TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

JUNE 27 - 29, 2026

ALEPPO, SYRIA

society.sams-usa.net







SAVE THE DATE

**— SAMS 9th National —
Symposium**

*“Raising the Standard: Defining
Excellence in Modern Healthcare”*

February 14th -16th, 2026

Gaylord Palms
Resort & Convention Center
Orlando, FL

society.sams-usa.net





CALL FOR SPEAKERS

**— SAMS 9th National —
Symposium**

February 14th -16th, 2026

Orlando, FL

Raising the Standard:
Defining Excellence in Modern
Healthcare

Submit by **October 31, 2025**
Apply via **Google Form** →



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SAMS

MIDWEST 18th
ANNUAL GALA



SYRIA REBORN

A BRIGHTER FUTURE *for*
GENERATIONS TO COME

Saturday | December 13 | 2025
5:30 p.m.

HILTON, OAK BROOK HILLS
3500 MIDWEST RD , OAK BROOK, IL 60523



Tickets:
bit.ly/sams-midwestgala25

SAMS EVENTS CALENDAR

We're thrilled to invite you to our upcoming SAMS events—an evening of connection, compassion, and commitment to medical relief in Syria and beyond.

DEC 6, 2025

Healing with Hope: One Year of Liberation in Syria & Solidarity with Gaza

Saturday, December 6, 2025,
6:00 p.m.
5550 Britton Parkway Dublin,
OH 43016

[Register for this event!](#)

DEC 6, 2025

One Year Free: Celebrating the Liberation of Syria

Saturday, December 6, 2025,
6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.
Sheraton McKinney Hotel, 1900
Gateway Blvd, McKinney,
TX 75070

[Register for this event!](#)

DEC 13, 2025

Syria Reborn – A Brighter Future for Generations to Come

Saturday, December 13, 2025,
5:30 p.m.
Hilton, Oak Brook Hills, 3500
Midwest Rd, Oak Brook,
IL 60523

[Register for this event!](#)

DEC 13, 2025

SAMS Michigan Gala

Saturday, December 13, 2025,
6:30 p.m.
Detroit Marriott Troy, 200
West Big Beaver Road Troy,
MI 48084

[Register for this event!](#)

FEB 14-15, 2026

**SAMS 9th National Symposium
“Raising the Standard:
Defining Excellence in Modern
Healthcare”**

February 14-16, 2026
Gaylord Palms Resort &
Convention Center, Orlando,
Florida

society.sams-usa.net

JUNE 27-29, 2026

**Save the Date: SAMS 24th
International Conference**

June 27-29, 2026
Aleppo, Syria

society.sams-usa.net

Each event will feature inspiring stories from the field, updates on SAMS's lifesaving work, and opportunities to support our mission through sponsorships and donations. Whether you've been with us from the beginning or are just joining the movement, your presence makes a huge difference. Reserve your seat today.

For more information on how to organize a SAMS event in your community, please email [**info@sams-usa.net**](mailto:info@sams-usa.net).



WAYS TO GIVE



Website:

www.sams-usa.net/donate



Please mail your check to:

SAMS Foundation

P.O. Box 34115 Washington, DC 20043



To donate real estate, stocks, cryptocurrency, vehicles, or to include us in your estate plan, please email info@sams-usa.net or call **202.930.7802**.

TAX ID: 16-1717058 | CFC 25147



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:
sams-usa.net/donate



Volunteer your time and expertise:
sams-usa.net/volunteer



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.*

SAMS-USA.NET



Follow us for real-time updates and stories from the field:

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 sams4syria

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