



SAMS

MONTHLY

NEWSLETTER

Vol 1 | April 2025



Healing with Hope

SAMS Expands Impact at Home and Abroad



CURRENT PROJECTS: Syria

The humanitarian crisis in Syria continues to deepen. With over 16 million people in need of assistance—including 7 million internally displaced persons—the pressure on Syria’s health system is immense.

We are proud to share the release of our latest Syria Flash Update (Jan–Feb 2025), providing a detailed look into the most urgent health needs and how SAMS is responding with expanded operations, medical missions, and life-saving care across the country.

Despite funding shortfalls and continued hostilities, SAMS is scaling up its in-country operations with a new national office in Damascus and four regional hubs to ensure efficient service delivery.

Read SAMS’ latest Syria Flash Update at sams-usa.net/reports



Key Highlights



73 health facilities supported nationwide



Dialysis and maternity care expansion in **Deir Ez-Zor**



Over **\$1 million** in medical supplies delivered



Return of medical missions inside Syria, offering **specialized care** and **training**



Urgent response in **Aleppo, Homs, Hama, and Damascus**

New Situation Report: Syria's Health Sector

In parallel, SAMS, in partnership with LUGARIT and the R4HSSS Project, released a landmark Situation Report titled “Syria’s Health Sector: Challenges & Intervention Priorities.” The report draws from regional workshops conducted across Syria in early 2025 and reflects the insights of nearly 300 stakeholders, including healthcare workers, civic leaders, and international experts.

Organized around the World Health Organization’s six pillars of health systems—governance, finance, human resources, service delivery, supply chains, and health information systems—the report outlines both the current challenges and actionable steps required to rebuild Syria’s healthcare infrastructure. It serves as a strategic roadmap for donors, policymakers, and practitioners to align around a shared, locally informed vision for sustainable health recovery in Syria.

Read SAMS’ reports to explore how your support is making a difference and where urgent action is still needed: sams-usa.net/reports



World Health Day & Our Gratitude Campaign



As we mark *World Health Day* on **April 7**, we honor the incredible resilience of healthcare workers in Syria and across our programs. In recognition of our generous supporters, SAMS is also launching a **Gratitude Campaign** throughout the month of April—highlighting your role in sustaining life-saving care where it’s needed most.

Stay connected to our social channels and email updates as we share stories of hope, recovery, and the people who make it possible—*you*.



ADVOCACY & POLICY UPDATES

Strengthening Global Support for Syria's Health System

In March, we were excited to welcome **Noor Shakfeh** as our new Advocacy Manager and **Basil Alsubee** as our Senior Advocacy Officer. Through their efforts, SAMS' Advocacy team has been actively pushing for increased investment in Syria's health system and raising awareness about the harmful impact of sanctions on humanitarian operations.

Global Health & Syria Policy Highlights

- **Canada** pledged **\$84 million CAD** in humanitarian aid to Syria and announced steps toward diplomatic re-engagement, including sanctions relief.
- The **WHO** urged global donors to prioritize sustainable, long-term investment in Syria's health system ahead of the Brussels Conference.
- The **Brussels Conference** on March 17 resulted in **\$6.3 billion** in pledges. SAMS welcomed the commitments, especially for healthcare, food, water, and education, though noted the total fell short of the previous year's \$8.2 billion.
- The **U.S.** outlined terms for renewing **General License 24**, highlighting the urgent need to expand humanitarian carve-outs.
- **Italy** later pledged an additional **\$73.2 million USD** for health, infrastructure, and food security.
- Domestically, Syria announced a new health policy push, including a plan to build **2,000 new health centers**. Dr. Musab Al-Ali, a neurosurgeon, was appointed as the new Minister of Health.



SAMS Advocacy in Action

- In response to coastal clashes and attacks on healthcare, SAMS called for protection of civilians and reaffirmed its commitment to emergency medical missions.
- From March 10–13, SAMS engaged in high-level **UN meetings** in New York, advocating for Syrian healthcare with partners including **WHO, UNICEF, and UNOCHA**.
- Post-Brussels, SAMS issued a statement urging increased donor support, particularly for health services.
- SAMS participated in **coalition meetings** with humanitarian actors and diplomatic discussions, including with the **Embassy of Saudi Arabia**, to address the impact of sanctions on healthcare access.
- On April 9, 2025, the SAMS advocacy team met several **members of Congress** to raise awareness for its expanding efforts in Syria. Our conversations focused on strengthening Syria's healthcare system, accountability for attacks on healthcare, and our upcoming medical conference in July. We look forward to our continued engagement with Members of Congress and their staff who received us warmly and affirmed their intentions to support our work on the ground.



Get Involved

The Advocacy Team invites all SAMS members and supporters to join ongoing efforts to rebuild Syria's health system. Your voice, expertise, and advocacy make a difference.

Take Action: Support SAMS in advocating for increased humanitarian aid to Syria. Contact advocacy@sams-usa.net to learn more about how you can get involved.

Key May Dates:



World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day
May 8



International Day of Families
May 15



World Day for Cultural Diversity for
Dialogue and Development
May 21



International Day of United Nations
Peacekeepers
May 29



SAMS RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Advancing Knowledge to Strengthen Humanitarian Care

The January 2025 edition of our *SAMS Research Digest* showcases new studies that deepen understanding of healthcare challenges in conflict-affected Syria.

Featured research includes a study on **breast cancer care** in Northwest Syria, which highlights the impact of sociocultural barriers, financial strain, and the lack of radiotherapy services—underscoring the urgent need for localized cancer treatment.

Another study examines the effects of **attacks on health facilities**, revealing sharp and sustained declines in outpatient, trauma, and maternal care services. A third study explores how **attacks on healthcare infrastructure fuel further conflict and displacement**, reinforcing the need for legal protections and accountability.

Explore the full digest
and publications at:
sams-usa.net/reports



SAMS INSTITUTE

Advancing Medical Innovation and Capacity Building

The SAMS Institute continues to make strides in medical education, research, and capacity building in conflict-affected regions. In a recent training workshop in **Erbil, Iraq**, held in collaboration with the **University of California, San Diego (UCSD)**, physicians from Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, and beyond came together for a three-day course focused on **medical education, research methodology, and strengthening clinical capacity**. This training provided participants with essential tools to advance evidence-based practice and improve care in their communities.

Additionally, the SAMS Institute recently welcomed two new fellows into its **Global Health Research Fellowship**, expanding our ability to conduct impactful research that shapes humanitarian response and informs global health policy.

Through continued collaboration and innovation, the SAMS Institute is bridging the gap between frontline care and academic research to create lasting impact.





EVENTS & CONFERENCES

SAMS 23rd International Conference: The 1st in *Free Syria*

July 4 - July 6, 2025

 Damascus University

This is your opportunity to make history with us.

Registration is open now:
[society.sams-usa.net/
conference-registration/](https://society.sams-usa.net/conference-registration/)



SAMS 1st International Conference in Free Syria

July 4-6, 2025

Join us for:



The first-ever Dental Scientific Conference



SAMS Scientific Week with expert-led workshops



Medical missions and field trainings



Young Professionals Program and mentorship opportunities



SAMS GLOBAL Work Beyond Syria

GAZA: Rebuilding Health Amid Crisis

After 470 days of relentless conflict, Gaza faces a devastating humanitarian emergency. With over 90% of the population displaced and only half of health facilities partially functioning, the need is urgent and ongoing.

Since October 2023, SAMS has responded with a multifaceted approach:

- **Health Access & Aid:** From December 2023 to April 2024, SAMS supported Mobile Medical Units, delivered medications and PPE, and provided food and non-food items to over 25,000 displaced individuals.
- **Emergency Healthcare:** Two medical missions in 2024, deployment of ICU-level care, and the establishment of advanced dental services in southern Gaza in January 2025.
- **Mental Health & Education:** Psychosocial support for thousands and sponsorship of 43 Gaza medical graduates in Egypt.
- **Long-Term Impact:** In January 2025, SAMS officially registered its Gaza country office, now leading a recovery plan to rehabilitate health facilities, expand MHPSS integration, and build sustainable healthcare through medical education.

LEBANON: Mobile Units Delivering Vital Care

From December 2024 through March 2025, Lebanon faced ongoing instability and displacement. SAMS has maintained a strong presence through five Mobile Medical Units and psychosocial teams, offering:

- **Medical Consultations:** Over 4,200 individuals served from January 1–16, including general care, health awareness, and GBV-focused sessions.
- **Inclusive Outreach:** Reaching vulnerable Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian communities across regions including Beirut, Bekaa, Baalbak, and Al Nabatieh.
- **Looking Ahead:** In February and March 2025, SAMS began transitioning from emergency response to recovery by establishing static Primary Health Care Centers and expanding MHPSS services. Plans are underway to revitalize Lebanon's health system through medical missions, education initiatives, and health facility rehabilitation.



In March 2025, during Ramadan, SAMS conducted a vital medical mission in Syria, delivering essential healthcare services and training to communities in need.

Mission Highlights:

- **Specialized Medical Procedures:** SAMS volunteers performed critical interventions, including vision-saving retina surgeries, emergency cardiac procedures, pediatric and neonatal care, surgical oncology treatments, and maternal health services.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** A scientific workshop was held at Idlib University Hospital, where doctors convened to discuss the latest medical advancements, fostering knowledge exchange and enhancing local medical expertise.
- **Commitment During Ramadan:** Demonstrating remarkable dedication, 16 volunteer doctors observed Ramadan by fasting alongside their patients, embodying the spirit of selflessness and compassion inherent in the month.

This mission underscores SAMS' unwavering commitment to rebuilding Syria's healthcare infrastructure and providing life-saving care to vulnerable populations during critical times.

SUCCESS STORY

Dr. Ahmad Osama Al-Rifai, a nephrology and hypertension specialist from the U.S., has returned to Syria as part of a SAMS medical mission in Syria this Ramadan. In a time of compassion and generosity, his humanitarian duty transforms into life-saving action.

"I see Syria as my mother—she raised and educated me, and it's my duty to care for her as I would my own child. Being here, providing medical care and training, is my way of giving back. This is more than a mission; it's a responsibility to build a Syria rooted in knowledge, solidarity, and humanity."

Now on his 20th medical mission, Dr. Al-Rifai reflects on the profound impact of his work—empowering local doctors, training future generations, and delivering care to those in need. *"Every visit, I see hope growing despite the hardships. Our return is not just a journey, but a message of life and a future rebuilt through compassion."*



UPCOMING MEDICAL MISSIONS



Jordan

April 19–25

Led by **Dr. Hend Azhary**, this mission includes **80+ volunteers** providing care across key specialties such as cardiology, pediatrics, OB/GYN, dentistry, and surgery.



Syria

April 20–25

Dr. Amjad Rass is leading **40+ medical professionals** to Idlib, Homs, and Hama, delivering essential services and advanced training in internal medicine, ICU, oncology, and more.



Syria

May 17–23

Under the leadership of **Dr. Aref Rifai**, this team will focus on pediatric care, cardiology, ICU, and dental services, supporting both patients and local healthcare providers.





**STAY
CONNECTED.
MAKE A
DIFFERENCE.**

As we reflect on the critical updates shared in this month's newsletter—from lifesaving interventions in Gaza and Lebanon to upcoming medical missions in Jordan and Syria—it's clear that our collective impact is stronger 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



Become A SAMS Member:
society.sams-usa.net/membership/



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



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