

MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER



A MESSAGE OF COMMITMENT AND COMPASSION

By Dr. Aref Rifai, President of the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS)

Dear Supporters,

I write to you today following my recent visit to Syria, where I had the honor of participating in the SAMS International Conference and meeting with our dedicated colleagues—physicians, nurses, and volunteers—who continue to serve on the ground with unwavering commitment and compassion.

I returned filled with pride, having witnessed firsthand the tangible impact of our work and the far-reaching presence of SAMS' mission across the country. From Damascus to Aleppo, from Homs to Daraa, from Deir Ezzor to Idlib—SAMS teams were actively engaged in every region, reflecting our deep commitment to professional excellence and the spirit of humanitarian service.

Over a short span of two weeks, our teams delivered dozens of scientific lectures and training workshops, alongside a broad range of specialized medical interventions, including:

- Treatment of retinopathy of prematurity (ROP)
- Complex cardiac surgeries and pacemaker implantations
- Coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) and advanced valve interventions (TAVR)
- Gastrointestinal endoscopies and oncology care
- Nephrology, dental services, and intensive care training

These accomplishments were not the result of any individual effort but a testament to the power of collective action. SAMS members from across specialties came together—driven by a shared belief in a mission and vision that extends beyond medicine to the very heart of humanity.

I extend my sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to these efforts—whether on the ground in Syria or as part of our volunteer teams who traveled from abroad. They donated their time, expertise, and energy to enhance the level of medical services and education, despite all the challenges.

At SAMS, we do not view our work as temporary, tied only to conferences or medical missions. It is a long-term continuous commitment to a humanitarian mission we deeply believe in. For us, the true value lies in every patient who recovers, every young physician whose skills are developing, and every nonfunctioning medical device that is brought back to service.

We remain true to this mission—working quietly, consistently, and in collaboration with the Government's policies that seek to advance Healthcare services and medical education.

We build through action. We move forward with purpose. The mission endures wherever there is a human being in need. We know that our true impact is measured: by the lives that we save, by the suffering that we ease, and by the hope that we restore.

With deep respect and appreciation,

Dr. Aref Rifai

Aret Ritai

President, Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS)

ØSAMSANNUAL REPORT

SPECIAL UPDATES

2024 Annual Report: Over 4.4 Million Medical Services Delivered

e're proud to share our 2024 Annual Report—a powerful reflection of what we've accomplished together.



With your support, SAMS delivered over 4.4 million medical services in 2024, reaching patients in Syria, Gaza, refugee camps, and other vulnerable communities across the region.

This year marked a bold expansion of our work inside Syria—reaching Damascus, Homs, Latakia, Daraa, and Aleppo for the first time. It was the launchpad for our Syria Health 2030 initiative, a vision to rebuild a sustainable, community-driven healthcare system.

We also responded to urgent needs in Gaza, provided mobile and mental health care in Lebanon, Jordan, and Türkiye, and carried out surgical missions for patients with nowhere else to turn.

Some key highlights from the report:

- ▶ Providing essential healthcare to over 1.4 million beneficiaries globally
- ▶ Delivering more than 4.4 million medical services to patients in urgent need
- ► Training and supporting over 4,000 healthcare workers
- ► Supporting 145 health facilities across 7 countries
- ► Safely delivering over 22,000 babies, including in active conflict zones
- ▶ Providing nearly 35,000 oncology services through 5 cancer care clinics in Syria

Every number represents a life changed, and it all happened because of your generosity. Thank you for standing with us.

Read our 2024 Annual Report today!

Read the report at bit.ly/sams-ar-2024





Standing with Latakia: SAMS' Emergency Response to Wildfires in Syria

n the face of disaster, the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) stands present—committed to rapid, compassionate, and tangible action. Following the devastating wildfires that tore through the Latakia region in July, SAMS launched an urgent multi-pronged humanitarian response, delivering critical fuel, medical aid, and direct field support to impacted communities and local health authorities.

As wildfires raged across the mountain forests of Latakia, Civil Defense teams faced immense challenges in controlling the spread of the flames and protecting lives and property. In response, SAMS delivered **40,000 liters of diesel fuel** to the Civil Defense teams—an essential resource to power emergency vehicles, water tanks, and vital equipment used in firefighting efforts. This contribution aimed to enhance the teams' operational readiness, allowing them to sustain their life-saving mission amid grueling conditions.

SAMS' support did not stop there. Recognizing the urgent health needs of those affected, **Dr. Basil Termanini**, a SAMS Board Member, traveled to Latakia to oversee the organization's medical relief efforts and express solidarity with local communities. In coordination with the **Latakia Health Directorate**, SAMS teams conducted field visits, assessed damages, and delivered essential aid directly to the frontline.

What SAMS provided on the ground:

- Two ambulances to strengthen emergency medical response
- Essential medications and supplies delivered to the Latakia Health Directorate
- Field visits to affected health centers, including **Qastal Maaf**
- On-site support at Tishreen University
 Hospital, where SAMS helped restore
 operations of the hospital's linear
 accelerator, ensuring continuity of life saving cancer treatment during the crisis











Local health leaders praised SAMS' rapid response.

Dr. Khalil Agha, Director of Health in Latakia, emphasized the immediate and meaningful impact of the supplies and support in strengthening the Directorate's emergency efforts.

Dr. Firas Hussein, Deputy Director of Tishreen University Hospital, shared how SAMS' intervention enabled the hospital to maintain essential services amid extreme conditions.

And as **Dr. Termanini** stated, SAMS' mission in Latakia was not only about delivering aid—it was about showing up, side by side with the people of Latakia, in their time of greatest need.

At SAMS, our commitment is clear: we will always stand with our people—wherever they are, and whenever disaster strikes.

Support families impacted by the Latakia wildfires. Your donation brings hope, healing, and relief.

Donate now: bit.ly/sams-Aid4Latakia



SAMS Responds to Escalating Crisis in Southern Syria with Urgent Medical Relief

s violence and displacement surge across southern Syria, the Syrian American ► Medical Society (SAMS) has mobilized a swift, coordinated emergency response—bringing critical medical care, supplies, and compassion to the heart of the crisis. From the frontlines of Daraa to the shelter centers receiving displaced families from Suwayda, SAMS teams have been on the ground for over a week, providing lifesaving services to communities in distress.

Mobilizing for Emergency Relief

On July 21, 2025, a fully equipped SAMS convoy departed from Idlib to southern Syria, comprising four ambulances staffed by trained medical professionals and loaded with the latest emergency medical equipment. A fifth vehicle was dedicated to delivering urgent medical and logistical supplies to health facilities in Daraa Governorate, where the healthcare system is under strain due to recent escalations.

SAMS leadership—including Dr. Mazen Kewara, Dr. Mossab Breij, and Dr. Ghazzy Sheikh Debs accompanied the convoy and visited key medical sites like Izraa Hospital and the Daraa Health Directorate. Izraa Hospital, in particular, has been overwhelmed with casualties, highlighting the critical need for expanded emergency response.







Reaching Displaced Families from Suwayda

The humanitarian toll of the conflict is particularly visible in the growing number of families fleeing from rural Suwayda to Daraa. Displacement has surged in recent weeks, and SAMS has responded by deploying its mobile medical units and teams to shelter centers across the region.

In just one day, SAMS teams reached 120 displaced individuals at the Al-Karak Al-Sharqi and Umm Walad shelters. Services provided included:

- First aid for minor injuries and burns
- ► Pediatric care for children suffering from infections and diarrhea
- Basic reproductive and women's health services
- ► Distribution of essential medications including antibiotics and fever reducers

Each of these 120 individuals arrived carrying the weight of loss, trauma, and uncertainty. SAMS teams responded not only with clinical care, but with humanity and compassion.



Continuing Mobile Clinic Operations

SAMS' mobile clinic operations in Daraa have continued daily, moving between shelter centers and providing essential services to displaced families. On July 23, the mobile clinic reached Al-Musayfrah Shelter Center, delivering checkups and medications to 100 individuals. The next day, the team reached Al-Mleha Al-Gharbiyeh, where 70 more individuals received emergency care and consultations.

These operations are supported by the same SAMS ambulance network stationed at Izraa Hospital, ensuring emergency referrals can be handled quickly and efficiently.



Supporting Health Facilities in Sweida

In parallel to the frontline medical work in Daraa, SAMS has also extended support to the embattled health sector in Sweida. On July 24, SAMS dispatched a shipment of medications and medical consumables to support healthcare providers in the area, including Shahba National Hospital. This aid is aimed at reinforcing local capacity to handle rising medical needs amid instability and displacement.

A Commitment Without Borders

Whether operating ambulances in active conflict zones, treating displaced children in makeshift shelters, or restocking hospital pharmacies under siege, SAMS' mission remains constant: to uphold healthcare as a human right.

"Our duty to serve is unwavering. We go where the need is greatest—not just to treat illness, but to restore hope."

SAMS Representative

As the situation in southern Syria continues to evolve, SAMS remains on the ground—steadfast in its commitment to provide healing, dignity, and resilience to those who need it most.



Hearts That Never Left: SAMS Summer Missions 2025 Rekindle Healing Across Syria

This summer, the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) launched its largest medical **mission in history**—a monumental effort that brought together over 140 volunteer medical professionals across specialties to deliver urgent care throughout every major region of Syria. For the first time, SAMS operated simultaneously in Deir Ezzor, Daraa, Idlib, and beyond—marking a milestone in medical humanitarian response.

These weren't just missions of treatment. They were missions of return. Physicians walked into operating rooms and clinics with memories in their pockets and hope in their hands. They returned to homes reduced to rubble, to cities where they once played as children—and rebuilt, one consultation and one surgery at a time.



Deir Ezzor — Medicine in the Memory of Home

In Deir Ezzor, the past is never far. It lingers in the air like the scent of Euphrates water, in alleyways where laughter once echoed, and in the hearts of doctors who never forgot where they came from.

SAMS' Summer Medical Mission launched here on **July 7, 2025**, in coordination with the Ministry of Health. Across **hospitals and clinics in Al-Thawra, Al-Qusour, Al-Hweidi**, and the City Center, SAMS deployed a team of physicians spanning specialties: internal medicine, cardiology, endocrinology, ENT, dentistry, and surgery.

But the most powerful moments weren't only clinical—they were personal.

Dr. Mohammad Saleh, walking with his team after dinner, realized the restaurant overlooked what remained of his childhood home. Quietly, he stood and walked into the ruins. There, among shattered bricks and twisted metal, he found pages of the Qur'an and fragments of old family photos. He brushed the dust from them as if wiping sorrow from the brow of a waiting mother.

He didn't come alone—he came with toys from his son and fellow doctors in the U.S. These small gifts brought laughter to children who hadn't played in years.

Dr. Muhammad Alsayid, passing a ruined church, saw the leaning wall of what had once been his home. The building had collapsed, but his memory stood tall.

"I wish my grandfather were alive to see this. I came with my children and husband to my father's birthplace. These days feel like a dream."

Dr. Sirin Chaker



On the clinical front, doctors provided hundreds of consultations, performed surgeries, and delivered lectures on critical topics like diabetes management, ECG interpretation, and ENT techniques. Specialists like **Dr. Iyad Hamady** and **Dr. Ahmed Chaballout** performed life-saving surgeries at the National Hospital, while others like **Dr. Ibrahim Kassas** and **Dr. Amer Issa** blended diagnostics with teaching, helping local teams grow in knowledge and confidence.

By day's end, Deir Ezzor's Governor personally visited the mission team, thanking them for bringing not just treatment—but dignity.



Daraa — A Soft Voice for a Resilient South

Daraa does not speak loudly. Its silence is deliberate—a region scarred by siege, resistance, and loss. But into this quiet came the steady footsteps of SAMS physicians, determined to bring not only medicine, but presence.



At Izraa Hospital, Dr. Molham Aldeiri saw patients suffering from critical cardiac conditions and personally referred them to Damascus for urgent catheterizations. His return to Daraa for a lecture on cardiac arrhythmias demonstrated SAMS' dual commitment: care and capacity-building.

Meanwhile, **Dr. Sausan Abouharb**, an oncologist, began her mission among patients battling breast, ovarian, and laryngeal cancers. She listened more than she spoke—offering her heart before her science. She treated over **30 patients**, many of whom hadn't seen a specialist in years.



Dr. Mayssoun Alhariri, along with hospital leaders, visited the wards not as a courtesy, but as solidarity. Later, she gave a lecture on the dangers of smoking—a small but significant blow against a long-burning fire in many chests.

At Al-Mouwasat Hospital in Damascus, Dr. Khaldoun Aswad and Dr. Jihad Alharash performed multiple cardiac catheterizations for Daraa patients. Meanwhile, in Daraa's ICU, doctors battled severe cases—atrial fibrillation, DKA, heart failure. These weren't just patients; they were lives hanging in the balance.

"It was powerful to sit bedside with residents and review real cases, ethics, sepsis protocols, and anticoagulation best practices. We're not just treating we're investing in the future of medicine in Syria."

Dr. Jihad Alharash

SAMS' work in Daraa extended beyond urgent care—it set the foundation for **long-term healthcare revival**, with plans for equipment delivery and signature programs to fortify the region's fragile system.



Idlib — Precision in the Pulse of the Northwest

In **Idlib**, hope pulses through the corridors of **Al-Ziraa** Specialized Hospital, home to SAMS' pioneering Integrated Cardiac Center. Here, the Summer Mission delivered its **most advanced interventional and surgical care** to date. On Day One:

- ➤ **Dr. Hazaim Alwair** performed **two openheart surgeries**, including double valve replacements.
- ➤ Dr. Bakri Kaakeh handled complex consultations and took part in three surgeries, including pacemaker implantation and CABG.
- ▶ Dr. Hassan Alkhawam participated in diagnostics like TEE and coronary interventions.

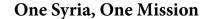
But Day Two made history:

The team—Drs. Kassas, Kaakeh, and Alkhawam—completed **three Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacements (TAVRs)** in a single day. That brought the program's total to **five successful TAVRs**, a gamechanging benchmark in cardiac care for the region.

In parallel, SAMS' **pediatric cardiology** team led by **Dr. Munes Fares** and **Dr. Bassel Nijres** addressed congenital heart conditions in children as young as 9 days old. Echocardiography and interventional procedures like **balloon dilation and PDA closures** were conducted daily—restoring the rhythm of life in the smallest of patients.

One child, just nine days old, was diagnosed with severe pulmonary stenosis. He was treated swiftly—because in Idlib, there's no time to wait.

This was more than technical excellence—it was emotional precision. Every heartbeat restored in Idlib carried with it a defiance against despair.



Across Syria's fractured map, SAMS volunteers stitched together a fabric of healing and solidarity. In every governorate visited, local health workers were engaged, trained, and supported. Dozens of **medical lectures**, workshops, and collaborative rounds turned these missions into living classrooms.

This was not a charity campaign—it was an infrastructure of care, powered by knowledge and anchored in return.

"It was more than a medical trip," said one volunteer.
"It was a reunion—with my land, with my people, and with the future we still believe in."

From the **Euphrates to the Tigris**, from the South's silent streets to the North's echoing heartbeats, the message was the same:

We never left you. And we never will.

By the Numbers — SAMS Summer Missions 2025

- ► 140+ medical professionals
- ► Thousands of patient consultations
- ► **Dozens of advanced surgeries** (TAVR, open-heart, catheterizations)
- ► Multiple cities covered: Deir Ezzor, Daraa, Idlib, Damascus
- ► Training sessions delivered to over 100 local healthcare workers
- ➤ Specialties: Internal Medicine, Cardiology, Surgery, ENT, Oncology, Endocrinology, Pediatrics, Sports Medicine, Anesthesiology, and more.

This mission was not an end. It was a new chapter in SAMS' enduring story—a story written in clinics and corridors, in whispers of prayer, and in the joy of a child holding a toy they thought the world had forgotten.



First Cohort of Clinical Psychology Master's Students Graduate from Free Aleppo University

n a significant step toward advancing mental health services in northwest Syria, Free Aleppo University recently celebrated the graduation of a cohort of master's students in Clinical Psychology—marking the successful defense of their first research theses.



This milestone is part of a pioneering academic program implemented by the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS), in partnership with Free Aleppo University and with support from the European Union (@euinsy). The program is the first of its kind in northwest Syria and is designed to build a strong foundation for mental health care in a region that has long faced both conflict and chronic shortages in specialized services.

The program offers a range of academic pathways, including a Master's in Clinical Psychology, a Diploma in Psychiatric Nursing, and a Diploma in Psychosocial Support. To date, more than 110

students have enrolled, many of whom are now equipped to provide much-needed psychological support to their communities.

Among the graduating students is Abdullah Al-Zaidan, who presented a thesis exploring the relationship between cognitive schemas, anxiety, and depression in Idlib. His research, like many others in this cohort, reflects both academic rigor and deep relevance to the local context.

Dr. Amjad Abu Joudi, a program leader, praised the students' work, noting that the quality of the research presented signals an important shift toward evidence-based practices in mental health. "This is a critical step in establishing a scientific approach to mental health services in the region," he said.



As these students take their next steps, they carry with them the tools to help rebuild not only individual lives, but also the mental wellbeing of communities across northwest Syria.



SAMS Responds to Mass Casualty Explosion near Idlib, Syria

he Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) is deeply alarmed by today's devastating explosion near the city of Idlib in northwest Syria, which resulted in mass casualties. The blast occurred near the SAMS-supported Maarat Misrin Hospital, which has already received more than 92 wounded individuals, many in critical condition. The source of the explosion remains under investigation.

Despite sustaining minor damage to both Maarat Misrin and Avicenna Hospitals, SAMS medical teams immediately mobilized to provide life-saving emergency care. As the largest nonprofit healthcare provider in Syria, SAMS is urgently assessing the situation on the ground, coordinating with partners and the Ministry of Health, and activating referral pathways to ensure the continuity of care.

SAMS anticipates a need for emergency medical supplies, trauma medications, and additional staff capacity to manage the influx of patients. Our teams are working around the clock in close coordination with the Idlib Health Directorate and other local partners to ensure a swift and effective response.

"This explosion is a heartbreaking reminder of the ongoing fragility and danger faced by civilians and healthcare workers throughout Syria," said Dr. Aref Rifai, President of SAMS. "Hospitals are sanctuaries of healing and recovery — not the frontlines of

mass casualty events. We are proud of our brave medical teams across Syria who continue to deliver life-saving, dignified care under the most perilous conditions."



SAMS provides free, high-quality healthcare in every governorate of Syria in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. In 2024 alone, SAMS delivered 4.2 million medical services and hosted hundreds of educational webinars to support and train Syria's next generation of medical professionals.

To support our emergency response and help us save lives, please visit sams-usa.net/donate



As Civilian Casualties Mount, SAMS Deeply Concerned About Escalating Violence in Southern Syria

The Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) is deeply alarmed by credible reports of hundreds of civilian casualties and dozens of critical injuries in the southern Syrian governorates of Suwayda and Daraa. We urgently call for a cessation of hostilities and the rapid deployment of humanitarian aid and emergency medical supplies to local hospitals—many of which are overwhelmed and operating at limited capacity.

Today's airstrikes in Damascus have resulted in additional civilian deaths and a surge of patients into already strained public hospitals. These attacks reignite trauma for a population that has endured 14 years of war and is desperately seeking peace and stability. Syria cannot afford a renewed descent into violence.

Millions of refugees and internally displaced people are watching these developments with dread. This latest wave of violence not only endangers lives it also undermines the hope of returning home, rebuilding communities, and restoring normalcy. Every escalation delays Syria's healing and obstructs urgently needed recovery efforts.

"The utmost care must be given to innocent civilians and the brave healthcare workers who continue to serve them under fire," said Dr. Aref Rifai, SAMS President. "Syria needs to rebuild and focus on

recovery after years of war—not endure further violence that terrorizes families and shatters hopes for normalcy and recovery."



As the largest nonprofit healthcare provider in Syria, SAMS works closely with the Ministry of Health and communities across all governorates. Our teams also provide medical relief to Syrian refugees and vulnerable populations in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Turkey. We stand ready to scale up our emergency response—if we are granted the necessary access and support.

Donate now:

sams-usa.net/southern-syria-crisis/







SAMS Gaza Interventions: April-June 2025 Update

Delivering Urgent Medical Relief Amid Escalating Crisis

s the humanitarian crisis in Gaza continues to deepen, the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) remains steadfast in its mission to provide essential healthcare services to Palestinians facing unprecedented challenges. Between April and June 2025, SAMS ramped up its emergency interventions to reach thousands of displaced and vulnerable individuals across both northern and southern Gaza, despite limited access, ongoing hostilities, and immense pressure on local healthcare systems.

Gaza's Dire Humanitarian Landscape

According to the Gaza Ministry of Health, from October 7, 2024, to July 9, 2025, over 57,000 fatalities and 137,000 injuries were reported, a staggering increase from earlier in the year. One million Palestinians face food insecurity, and more than one million children are in urgent need of mental health support. Medical workers are stretched beyond capacity, struggling with severe shortages in fuel, medication, and hospital space.

SAMS Response: Mobile Units and Lifesaving Outreach

In response, SAMS deployed three mobile medical teams equipped to deliver primary health care, emergency consultations, maternal services, and psychosocial support. These teams—each staffed

by a general practitioner, obstetrician-gynecologist, nurse, midwife, and social worker—operated throughout Gaza City (Remal, Sheikh Redwan, Galaa) and in Deir El-Balah Governorate (including Nuseirat, Buraig, and Maghazi camps).

- ► North Gaza (May–June): 6.782 beneficiaries served
- ► South Gaza (April–June): 7,093 beneficiaries served
- Services included treatment of acute illness, chronic disease management, wound care, reproductive health, health education, and mental health care

SAMS also contributed to the Early Warning, Alert, and Response System (EWARS) to monitor and respond to potential disease outbreaks.



Women and Children at the Heart of Care

SAMS prioritized maternal and child health, with 77% of services directed at women, children, and youth. From April to June, outreach teams provided vital prenatal and postnatal care, child consultations, and acute care targeting those most at risk.

A collaboration with the Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS) allowed SAMS to serve **8,580 individuals** through mobile outreach, particularly in areas newly affected by displacement or ceasefire breakdowns.



Restoring Smiles: Dental Services in Deir El-Balah

At the Palestinian Medical Center in Nuseirat Camp, SAMS-supported dental teams performed **5,110** procedures for 3,436 patients, addressing urgent needs such as tooth extractions, gum treatment, and restorative care. Additionally, 19 oral health education sessions were delivered and 396 dental interns trained, strengthening local capacity.

Mental Health & Psychosocial Support

SAMS scaled its mental health services, reaching 431 individuals in South Gaza and 1,233 in **North Gaza**. With the psychological toll of war compounding physical trauma, these services are vital to long-term recovery.

Looking Ahead

SAMS is committed to expanding access to health, dental, and mental health care across Gaza through mobile and static clinics. Future plans include:

- Minor rehabilitation of local hospitals
- **Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)** support
- ► Delivering essential supplies and PPE via humanitarian corridors

In the face of immense hardship, SAMS continues to stand with the people of Gaza—offering not only medical care but also dignity, compassion, and hope for a healthier tomorrow.



Donate now: sams-usa.net/donate





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: sams-usa.net/donate





Volunteer your time and sams-usa.net/volunteer



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

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