

# Syria

**Facing a persistent conflict since 2011, Syria continues to experience a severe humanitarian crisis.**

The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is among the highest in the world, and the population is grappling with a faltering economy, the aftermath of the February 2023 earthquakes, outbreaks of disease and

climate change. Hardships for Syrians are intensifying, compounded by tensions in the surrounding region and collapsing public services.

International Medical Corps has operated inside Syria since 2008, first supporting Iraqi refugees and vulnerable local populations and later expanding our work to respond to the needs of the population affected by the conflict and earthquakes.



Through operations based in Damascus and beyond, in 2023 International Medical Corps:



provided **149,837** primary healthcare consultations, 15.7% of which were for children under 5



screened **32,584** children for malnutrition



provided mental health services to **2,426** people



reached **5,359** people with psychosocial support (PSS) activities



reached **3,477** people through outreach and awareness-raising on gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection (CP) topics

## An estimated 16.7 million Syrians will require humanitarian assistance in 2024.

The widespread and intense nature of the war has led to one of the largest population movements since World War II, with more than 7.2 million people displaced inside Syria and millions more seeking refuge in neighboring countries and beyond. Those who have remained in the country face increasing challenges in accessing and affording basic services and commodities.



## HEALTHCARE

The February 2023 earthquakes, the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and outbreaks of cholera and other water-borne diseases—compounded by the prolonged conflict and worsening security situation in northern Syria—have severely compromised the country’s healthcare system. Some hospitals and clinics have been destroyed; the remaining health facilities continue to grapple with severe shortages of supplies, equipment and qualified personnel. Deteriorating socio-economic conditions and environmental pressures have further stretched the health system’s capacity, leading to an increase in water-borne diseases and critically worsening the nutritional status of children, pregnant women and lactating mothers, and deepening the public health crisis.

With two primary healthcare clinics and nine mobile medical teams (MMTs), we provide healthcare services across several governorates, including Aleppo, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Daraa, Hama and Latakia. These facilities are crucial for delivering essential primary healthcare services such as disease prevention and treatment, maternal and child health, reproductive health, nutrition services and health education.

For example, following the earthquakes, we deployed additional MMTs to provide primary healthcare services and strengthen health systems in the most affected areas. This proactive response was crucial in mitigating the disaster’s impact on the already vulnerable population.

We ensure that those in need receive referrals to specialized care, and provide essential medical support and supplies to patients with disabilities.

In addition to providing routine care, we have bolstered the healthcare infrastructure by providing vital medical equipment and supplies—including donations of critical equipment to public hospitals and supporting operating theaters—which has helped to improve service delivery in facilities affected by the recent crises.

International Medical Corps remains committed to supporting and enhancing the resilience and sustainability of Syria’s public health system. Through our continued efforts, we aim to build a robust foundation for the ongoing delivery of medical care, ensuring that the health system can withstand current challenges and future crises.

## CHILD PROTECTION, GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

The Syrian crisis has profoundly affected families, exposing them to high levels of violence, psychological distress and safety hazards. Women and children have been particularly impacted. To address this, International Medical Corps integrates CP, GBV and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) into our general healthcare services.

Our activities include extensive mental health programs, psychotherapy, psychiatry services, structured psychotherapy groups for chronic illnesses, recreational and educational initiatives, distribution of dignity kits, parental skills training, and educational sessions on mental health, CP and GBV. We offer vocational training for women and educate local community members on the principles of humanitarian work, protection mainstreaming and the referral processes for specialized mental health support.



Our interventions, which are tailored to all genders and age groups, are delivered at women’s and girls’ safe spaces, community centers, family centers and MMTs. We have also established a family support program in Hama to provide tailored support to vulnerable families, helping them manage stress and strengthen family bonds.

## TRAINING AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

International Medical Corps conducts training for frontline health and protection workers. Since 2015, we have conducted technical training sessions and capacity-building activities that have reached more than 4,500 people, helping to foster self-reliance among populations affected by Syria’s crises.

## SYRIAN REFUGEE RESPONSE IN JORDAN

In Jordan, we provide comprehensive services to Syrian refugees. In the Azraq and Za'atari refugee camps—home to more than 42,000 and 78,000 refugees, respectively—International Medical Corps provides primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare, including emergency care, sexual and reproductive care, emergency obstetrics, neonatal and postnatal care, pediatric care, dental care, and pharmaceutical and diagnostic care.

We also run MHPSS clinics inside and outside the camps, reaching 8,000 people each year. We provide nutrition support, GBV prevention and response services, CP and livelihood support services that benefit refugees and vulnerable host communities throughout Jordan.

## SYRIAN REFUGEE RESPONSE IN LEBANON

International Medical Corps provides a comprehensive package of essential services in Lebanon, home to an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees. We support more than 50 primary healthcare centers nationwide that offer a wide range of curative and preventive healthcare services through routine physical examinations, including pediatric checkups, growth monitoring, immunizations and reproductive health services, including maternal health and family planning.

To improve access among Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese communities, we integrate mental health services into primary healthcare in a culturally sensitive manner. Mental health case management teams comprising social workers, psychotherapists and psychiatrists work with local partners to ensure that services are available to those in need of psychiatric, psychological and social support. At the community level, case managers play a key role in raising awareness about the importance of mental health and provide information about available support services.



[www.InternationalMedicalCorps.org](http://www.InternationalMedicalCorps.org)

A pre-eminent first responder since 1984, International Medical Corps delivers emergency medical and related services to those affected by conflict, disaster and disease, no matter where they are, no matter what the conditions. We also train people in their communities, providing them with the skills they need to recover, chart their own path to self-reliance and become effective first responders themselves.

May 2024

**COUNTRY CONTACT:** Wafaa Sadek, Country Director  
[wsadek@InternationalMedicalCorps.org](mailto:wsadek@InternationalMedicalCorps.org)

**HEADQUARTERS CONTACT:** Elsona Agolli, Deputy Director  
(Middle East and Europe)  
[eagolli@InternationalMedicalCorps.org.uk](mailto:eagolli@InternationalMedicalCorps.org.uk)

International Medical Corps is headquartered in Los Angeles, CA, and has offices in Washington, DC; London, UK; and Split, Croatia.  
For contact information, visit [InternationalMedicalCorps.org/contact](http://InternationalMedicalCorps.org/contact).