

PHOTO GALLERY

The Syrian Arab Red Crescent and the International Committee of the Red Cross: A true partnership to help the most vulnerable*

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Figure 1. The SARC and the ICRC work together for the people of Syria. © SARC.

* Special thanks to Laudi Sarji and Ola Abo Kchachabeh for their work in the preparation of this photo gallery.

The Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have stood shoulder to shoulder in partnership to help the most vulnerable and address the needs of millions of people throughout Syria. Particularly since 2011, the two organizations have collaborated to respond to diverse humanitarian needs with the ultimate goal of protecting human dignity.



Figure 2. Crossing the front lines to provide humanitarian relief. © SARC.

Through humanitarian work carried out under the mantra “For all people everywhere”, SARC volunteers have been deployed in the field, delivering aid via hundreds of humanitarian convoys throughout the crisis, often in collaboration with the ICRC. Seeking access to besieged areas and providing humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of people are objectives that the SARC and ICRC have not abandoned. This has required coordination with relevant authorities, all parties to the conflict and other stakeholders. Many times, the SARC and the ICRC have crossed the front lines to evacuate people in need of medical care to other areas so they could receive adequate treatment that was not otherwise available.



Figure 3. Arrival of a humanitarian convoy at Der Al-Zour. © SARC.

Driven by their commitment to the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the SARC and ICRC work together to respond to humanitarian needs across Syria, including directly providing medical services, ensuring those in hard-to-reach areas can receive medical assistance, delivery of aid convoys, ensuring internally displaced people (IDPs) have access to food and basic necessities, equipping IDP shelters, and helping to restore family links.



Figure 4. Evacuation of people in need from Aleppo. © SARC.



Figure 5. Joint convoy to Aleppo. © SARC.

Not a target

The SARC and ICRC emphasize the protection of their personnel and volunteers. It is a key norm of international humanitarian law that humanitarian volunteers and staff are not a target. Despite this, sixty-five SARC volunteers have sacrificed their lives for the sake of their humanitarian duty. SARC facilities and vehicles have also been badly damaged.



Figure 6. The SARC has tragically lost sixty-five volunteers who have sacrificed their lives in pursuit of their humanitarian mission. © SARC.

Emad's story

SARC volunteer paramedic Emad Hamed will never quite forget 21 February 2018. “I was aware of the serious responsibility and risk of being a SARC volunteer since I joined in 2013, but this did not discourage me from trying to help those in my community who are in need”, the 32-year-old says, referring to his work with first-aid teams at the Rural Damascus branch of the SARC.

At 11:30 p.m. on 21 February 2018, the local SARC team received a report about shells dropped on a neighbourhood in Douma. Emad hurried to the area with two colleagues to evacuate families from their homes and aid wounded people. Upon their arrival, the ambulance in which they were travelling was hit. “At that moment, I could no longer hear anything and we suffered burns before we could exit the car”, he recalls. Emad lost hearing in his left ear in August 2018.

His fellow paramedics treated Emad and other volunteers who were suffering from multiple injuries, varying from first- and second-degree burns on their hands, faces and scalps to multiple shrapnel wounds on their bodies. In spite of the fateful day he will never forget, Emad resumed his humanitarian duties once he had recovered. Volunteering “flows in my veins”, he says.

“I am proud to be a member of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent team since they have a humanitarian impact in the harsh circumstances that our country has faced. We have never fallen short of our duties and we will stay equally dedicated.”



Figure 7. SARC paramedic Emad Hamed says volunteering flows in his veins. © SARC.

Walking again with hope

Like other countries that have seen conflict, Syria has not been spared from the consequences of people losing limbs.

Losing a limb can have a terrible impact far beyond the person who has been injured. There are patients who have difficulty finding work, providing food for their families or managing their household tasks. There are children who are unable to play and move as their friends do, and may not complete their education.

The SARC and the ICRC provide physical rehabilitation and other services, which for many have restored their hope and their self-sufficiency. These services include the manufacturing, fitting and maintenance of prosthetic limbs, in addition to physical therapy and psychological support to allow people who rely on prosthetic limbs to pursue their dreams.

One young patient benefiting from SARC and ICRC services, Abdulazeem, summed up his story in a single sentence: “Now, I’ll go back to school.”



Figure 8. The SARC and ICRC provide physical therapy and psychological support, as well as the manufacturing, fitting and maintenance of prosthetic limbs. © SARC.



Figure 9. Abdulazeem summed up his story in a single sentence: “Now, I’ll go back to school.”
© SARC.

Reuniting families

In November 2017 at the Kasab border crossing between Syria and Turkey, two children were reunited with their families after being separated for six months and nineteen months respectively. The SARC worked to facilitate these reunifications, securing the consent of all stakeholders concerned, and brought the families to the border for these unforgettable reunions.



Figure 10. An emotional moment. Elaf is in her mother's arms after they are reunited. © SARC.

Rebuilding livelihoods, restoring normalcy

The SARC-ICRC livelihoods programme allows families to achieve food security and restores economic stability through microeconomic grants, which vary depending on the beneficiary's skills and background and are appropriate to the economic opportunities in the surrounding area.

Hisham's plans for the future

Despite their young age, Hisham's daughters, aged 10 and 7, understand their father's precarious health and financial situation. Hisham lost a leg in an accident that cost him his job as a tailor.

He tells his story in his own words: "We left our house in the Al-Shaar neighbourhood as it was totally destroyed. I lost my job because of the injury. Our financial situation worsened and I could no longer secure the needs of my wife and children."

"I was unemployed for a year and eight months," adds the 29-year-old father. "I was angry and devastated... A young man, yet unable to provide for my family."

With the help of the SARC, Hisham was able to start over. After getting fitted with a prosthetic leg, he started his own business with a grant from the SARC-ICRC livelihoods programme. "Now, I have my grocery shop and I am able to provide for my family, and with the profits I opened another store", he says. "Today, I no longer pay attention to looks of pity or hurtful words."

The small family now lives in Salaheddine, a community in rural Aleppo, and some normalcy has been restored to their lives. The girls are back at school and have made new friends. Pursuing his dreams for his little ones, Hisham spends much of his time at work, without taking days off. He hopes that one day he will be able to drive his own car, but he will have to wait as his first priority is ensuring stability for his family.



Figure 11. Hisham, father of two daughters, talks to SARC volunteers. © SARC.



Figure 12. Hisham pictured in his shop. © SARC.



Figure 13. A coffee machine in Hisham's shop. © SARC.

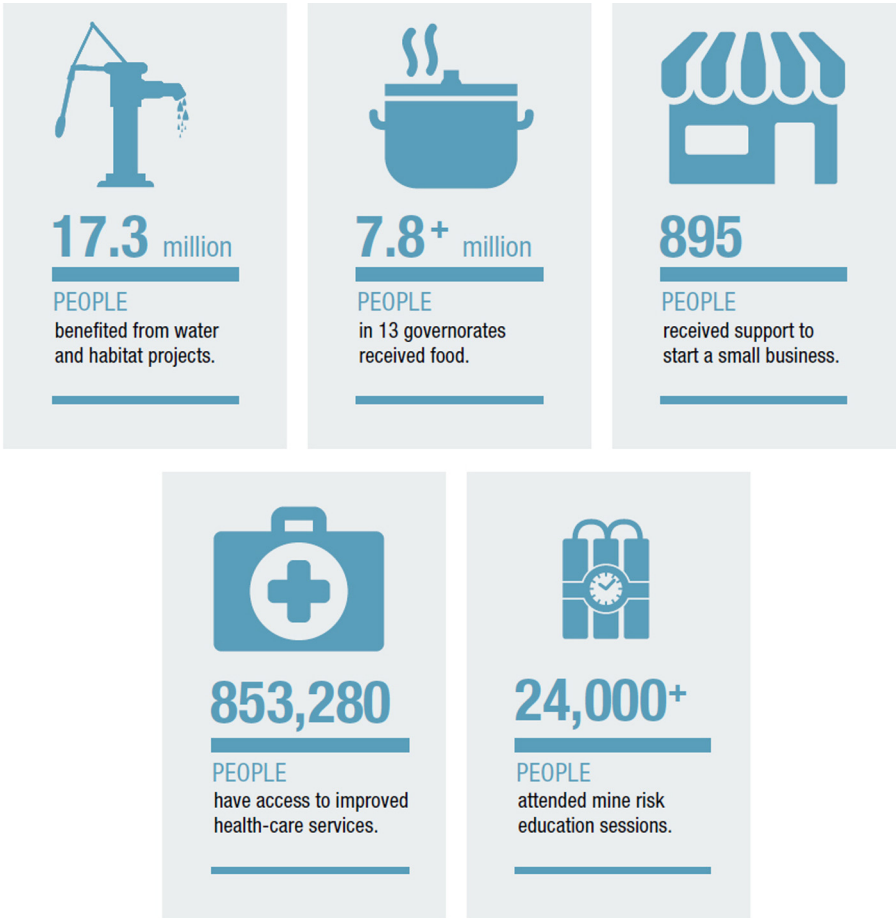


Figure 14. Syria facts and figures, 2018.