

The Impact of War on Syrian Health and Medical Services

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Among sectors that have suffered quite substantially during the imposed war in Syria are healthcare and medical services. Fingerprints of U.S. imperialism can be found all over the [manufactured insurrection](#) there. A sectarian [uprising](#) was fomented to serve the ultimate goal of destabilization and eventual “regime change.” Prior to the internationally imposed war that has cost over one half-million civilian lives, and resulted in millions of refugees, the Syrian Arab Republic had made substantial improvements in these sectors.

Healthcare in Syria is relatively decentralized and offers services to the both rural and urban areas. Since the war began it is difficult to fathom on-the-ground conditions and consequences in Syria that have resulted from seven years of conflict. Although we might be privy to the images of the suffering, death, and destruction that has taken place, the daily struggles Syrians have endured exceed our comprehension.

One of the main reasons for this disconnect is that selective information is being transmitted on our airwaves. Western media has been discriminatory and biased, choosing which aspects of the war to highlight and which to withhold. A filtering process serving carefully planned regime change and war propagation agendas. Nonetheless, progress to rebuild and improve medical and health conditions are proving fruitful and are helping to counter efforts made by nations with vested interests in seeing the cradle of civilization destroyed and reduced to rubble.

Hospitals and Medical Centers

In an interview granted [SANA Health Minister Nizar Yazigi](#) said the Ministry’s hospitals and centers provided around 40 million health services at a cost of over SYP 81 billion in 2017, showing the exceptional efforts of workers in the health sector despite circumstances of the war.

He said that in 2017 42 damaged health centers have been repaired (6 in eastern neighborhoods of Aleppo city), asserting that the Ministry will continue repairing damaged centers in areas secured. He added that 5 new health centers have been opened in Aleppo, Tartous, Homs, and Damascus Countryside and 26 new ambulances and 6 mobile clinics were put into service during last year.

Yazigi pointed out that terrorist attacks left many people with injuries and disabilities, prompting the Ministry to expand the work of its prosthetics unit. While that unit provides

around 35 prosthetics to patients each month, investigations teams have been working hard across all provinces to monitor for possible epidemics and prevent the spread of contagious diseases still within normal limits in Syria.

Pharmaceuticals

Regarding pharmaceuticals, the Minister stated locally-produced medicine covers around 90% of the local population's needs despite difficulties encountered, and efforts are ongoing to work with friendly countries and international organizations to access types of medicine not produced in Syria, such as vaccines and medicine for hereditary, immune, epidemic, and terminal diseases, and build production lines for these types of medicine. He said there are currently 1,195 health centers providing medical services to citizens, with special emphasis on 7 vaccination campaigns; 5 to provide polio vaccines (2 of those in northern provinces) and 2 for measles vaccination campaigns across the country.

Regarding future plans, Yazigi said the Ministry will soon launch both a services center to simplify and facilitate paperwork and a project for establishing a database for medical human resources and equipment.

Diabetic Concerns

As the Syrian Health Ministry continues to utilize public as well as special centers to provide diagnostic and treatment services to those suffering from diabetes free of charge the Damascus Health Directorate pointed out this year the value of using automation technology in maintaining clinical database records for child and adult diabetic patients. **Director [Ramez Orfali](#)** described it as a "successful and useful method to counting the number of patients and assessing their pharmaceutical needs."

Saad al-Quseiri, Head of the Communicable and Non-communicable Diseases Department at the Directorate, mentioned that automating patient records greatly assisted regulating the [diagnosis](#), follow-up and treatment processes. [According to Al-Quseiri](#) diabetic patients are referred to the al-Zahera Diabetes Center; they receive comprehensive medical evaluation for functions of glands, the heart, eyes, kidneys, the nervous system and joints—all without charge. He remarked upon "shortage of insulin and other diabetes medications, and difficulties hindering its accessibility due to current war circumstances", made "providing insulin therapy to children a priority."

17,000 adults and up to 500 children received [diabetic treatment](#) in Damascus alone, according to **[Walid Makhoul](#)**, Head of Specialized Medical Centers. Additionally, in order to help educate patients about their condition, diabetes awareness sessions are held regularly which, according to him, provide beneficial psychological support as well.

New Stage of Recovery

According to [SANA](#), the health sector in Syria has achieved a new stage of recovery in 2017, particularly in Deir Ezzor and Aleppo, through continuing rehabilitation of health centers and hospitals affected by terrorism. New sections were opened at standing health establishments provided with medicines and medical equipment to meet the increasing demand of therapeutic and medical services.

The Health Ministry announced again this year that it managed to prevent outbreak of any

epidemic despite the circumstances of terrorist war waged against the country. It asserted that registered infections with communicable diseases were within normal rate due to efforts exerted following up and immediately intervening in health situations while paying attention to periodical vaccination programs and campaigns. Most medicine factories damaged by terrorism returned partially or fully to work as new factories were licensed and opened in Tartous, the industrial city of Adra, and other areas. Regarding medicines not produced locally, the Ministry continued coordination with friendly countries to procure them and operate new local production lines for medicines addressing chronic diseases.

In 2017 Syria participated in several international specialized conferences; at local levels about 60 conferences, workshops and symposiums were held.

Conclusion

Wars reveal and exacerbate socioeconomic issues which typically lag long after bombing campaigns have ended. Despite relapses caused by this imposed conflict, which has visited a particular sort of “brutality” upon Syrians already battling a metabolic enemy they’ve no choice about, we are seeing substantial efforts made by the Syrian Health Ministry and the government to repair and progressively recover quality of health and living conditions for civilians.

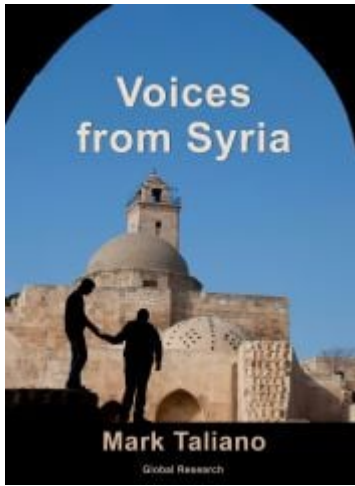
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Sarah Abed is an independent journalist and analyst who is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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