



27 December 2018 – A generous donation from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) has enabled WHO to support medical teams in southern Syria. The teams provide primary health care services to thousands of people in the south who fled their homes in late June 2018 following an acute escalation of the conflict.

Each mobile team comprises a gynaecologist, physician, paediatrician, nurse and psychosocial support specialist. In addition, two medical clinics affiliated with local NGOs supported by WHO provide round-the-clock emergency services.

“People in rural Dar’a rely on us to provide health care on a daily basis,” says Hamda, a nurse in one of the medical teams supported by WHO.

“Every morning our mobile clinic finds women and children waiting for us in the central square of the village. Seeing their eyes light up when we arrive gives me an overwhelming feeling of happiness.”

Together with her five children, Oum Belal was displaced from her village in Dar’a governorate in late summer 2018. “Thanks to the mobile teams and clinic we get the basic health care we need for free,” she says.

“We see around 40 patients a day, mainly women, children and the elderly. Most of the children we treat have diarrhoea and malnutrition. Many adults need treatment for chronic diseases such as diabetes, blood pressure and cardiovascular disease,” reports Dr Hassan, a medical doctor in the Ber NGO medical team.

“Working again has given meaning to my life,” says Hamda. “Like many others, I have suffered a great deal in this conflict. My house was destroyed and my husband killed in an explosion five years ago.”

“People in southern Syria, especially children and patients with chronic diseases, are in dire need of health care services. The funds from SIDA have allowed our NGO partners to provide timely health care to thousands of vulnerable people. WHO is very grateful to SIDA for its generous donation,” said Ms Elizabeth Hoff, WHO Representative in Syria.

SIDA’s donation allowed WHO to support a wide range of activities in Syria in 2018, including trauma, primary, secondary and tertiary health care, nutritional screening, disease surveillance and water quality monitoring.

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