



The Head Nurse at Al-Hikmah nongovernmental hospital in Al-Hasakeh governorate in north-east Syria. Photo: WHO/Syria 2019

20 August 2019 – 32-year-old Bayan is the head nurse at Al-Hikmah hospital in Al-Hasakeh governorate. She has spent the past 8 years in critical care, looking after emergency, trauma and intensive care patients. “Nursing is immensely fulfilling”, she says. “People are admitted in a critical condition, and you nurse them back to health. You accompany them on their journey: you rejoice with them when they make progress, you encourage them when there are setbacks, and you let them express their fears and frustrations. Not all of them do so well, of course; some patients die suddenly, and not all newborn babies survive.”

Bayan says that the last 8 years have been extremely difficult. “Our hospital admits dozens of critical cases every single day. Managing the sheer volume of patients is very stressful. The patients who have affected me the most have been the severely malnourished children admitted from Al-Hol camp. Many of them have been orphans; it is heartbreaking to see them so ill, lost and scared. In moments like those, I forget I am a nurse; I try to be a mother and give them

extra care and support.”

Bayan’s work is not easy. “Sometimes, when my job gets really tough, I ask myself why I chose to be a nurse. But seeing one child cured and discharged, or receiving the heartfelt thanks of just one patient’s family, is enough to make me forget the long hours and stressful work.”

Bayan thanked WHO for its support to the hospital. “I’ve learned so much from the training provided by WHO. Hospital staff have benefited from so many courses in different medical areas. Thanks to WHO’s support, we’ve been able to establish a nutritional stabilization centre to manage severely malnourished children with medical complications. Hundreds of children have been successfully treated and discharged. This makes me so happy.”

“WHO has supported A-Hikmah hospital since March 2018”. More than 157 of doctors, nurses and health care workers have been trained on a variety of topics, including trauma health care, Secondary health care, mental health and psychosocial support and managing the complicated severe acute malnutrition cases as per WHO protocols.

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