

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024





## About NORWAC

NORWAC is a humanitarian non-governmental organization. Established in 1983, with a long history in the Middle East and longstanding relations and cooperation with major local service providers across different communities. Our mission is to provide humanitarian medical assistance to the most vulnerable and neglected groups mainly living in the most exposed areas which are characterized by instability and frequent crises. All projects are implemented through local partners and based on a needs-based approach and the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality. The core aim of all programs is to help our partners build resilient health care services that will be self-sustaining.

Through close cooperation with medical institutions in Norway, many highly qualified experts cooperate with us in a wide range of medical specialties, as consultants, trainers or to work in the field in emergency situations. As a result, this has contributed to NORWAC's position in designing and implementing successful capacity building projects. This expertise also allows NORWAC to perform professional assessments and evaluations of the healthcare services in the countries we work in.

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Cover photo: Program coordinator, Mahmoud Abu Amer, checking NORWAC's inventory in WHO warehouse in Gaza. The aid arrived from Cairo. Photo: Kristil Haraldstad.

## Board Members

**Head of Board:** Berit Jagmann

**Board members:** Anne Merete Bull and Kirsten Hald

**CEO:** Erik Fosse

## Country Directors

**Lebanon:** Dagfinn Bjørklid

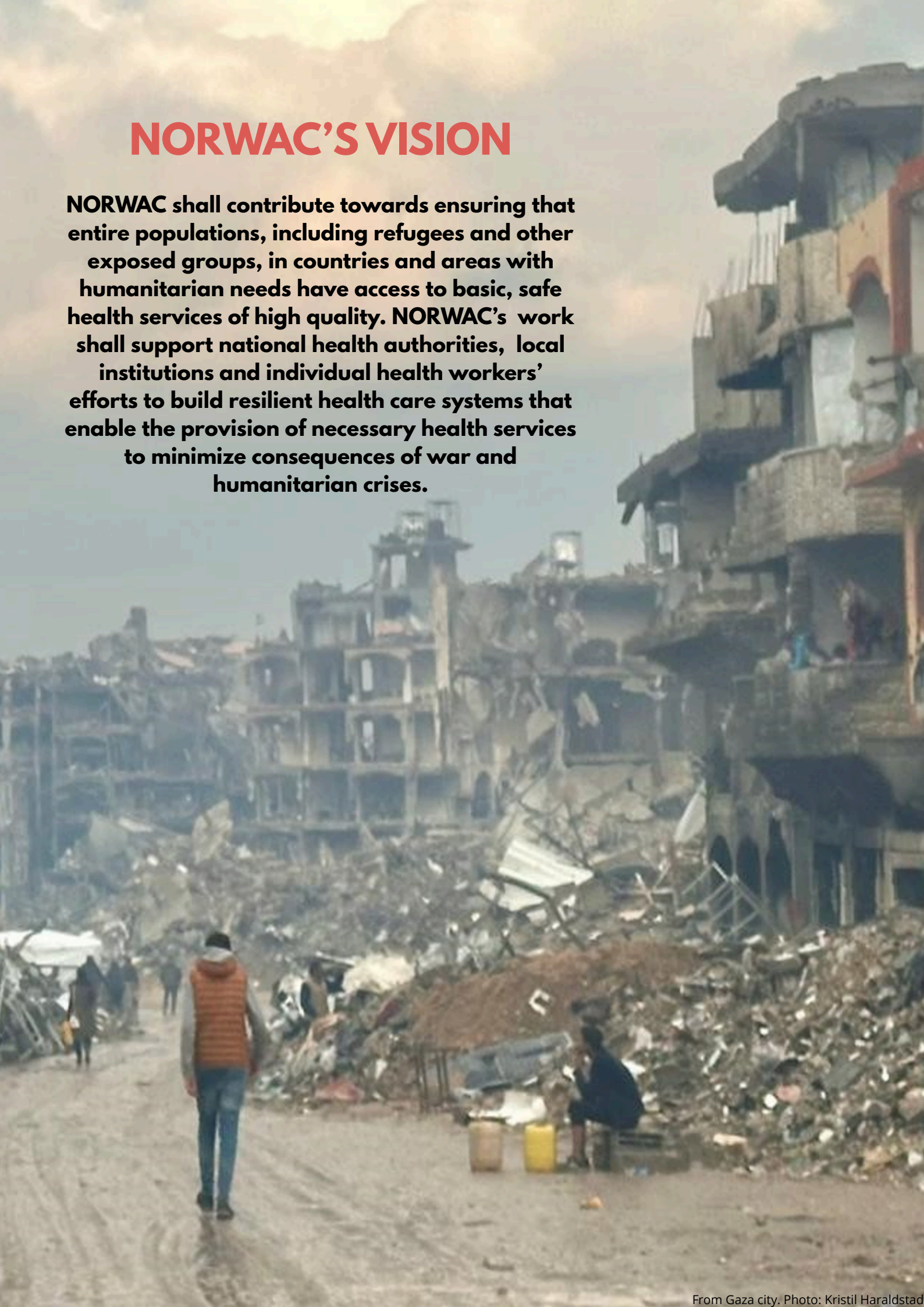
**Palestine:** Kristil Haraldstad

**Syria:** Belal Aljabri



# NORWAC'S VISION

**NORWAC shall contribute towards ensuring that entire populations, including refugees and other exposed groups, in countries and areas with humanitarian needs have access to basic, safe health services of high quality. NORWAC's work shall support national health authorities, local institutions and individual health workers' efforts to build resilient health care systems that enable the provision of necessary health services to minimize consequences of war and humanitarian crises.**



## About Norwegian Aid Committee (NORWAC)

**FOLLOWING THE** Israeli invasion of Lebanon, there was an urgent need for medical support for Palestinian refugees in South Lebanon. In response, the Norwegian Aid Committee (NORWAC) was established in January 1983 with the mission to provide humanitarian aid to those affected by conflict and crisis. Since its founding, NORWAC has maintained a presence in Lebanon, collaborating with various Lebanese and Palestinian partners.

**NORWAC BEGAN** working in Palestine in 1983, partnering with local NGOs. After the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994, NORWAC primarily focused on collaborating with the Palestinian Ministry of Health to build capacity and infrastructure. Key initiatives included ensuring self-sufficiency in oxygen supply, developing prenatal care, and training midwives and other medical staff.

**IN THE SPRING** of 1999, during the Kosovo crisis and ethnic cleansing, NORWAC deployed and managed a field hospital in the Albanian village of Krumë to assist refugees and those injured in the conflict. Subsequently, at the request of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), NORWAC contributed to the restoration of healthcare systems in Albania, Kosovo, and Macedonia. This effort continued for fifteen years and involved developing national health plans and restructuring specialized care through capacity and infrastructure building.

**WHEN THE** Syrian civil war erupted in 2012, nearly two million refugees fled to Lebanon, prompting an increase in NORWACs activities there. Many refugees suffered from chronic illnesses, necessitating an expansion of services such as renal dialysis and blood banking.

**NORWAC ALSO** began establishing similar services in parts of Syria where government healthcare services were no longer available, aiming to reduce the need for refugees to leave the country due to chronic conditions.

**IN 2023**, NORWAC continued its work in Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria, focusing on developing modern healthcare services for chronic illnesses, reproductive health, pain management, psychiatric disorders, cancer, and spinal cord injuries. Additionally, NORWAC supported hospital infrastructure, including library services and oxygen supply. Since the last war in Gaza erupted in October 2023, NORWAC has collaborated with WHO to send Emergency medical teams consisting of surgeons, anaesthesiologists and operation theatre nurses. During 2024, NORWAC sent nine Emergency medical teams to work in public hospitals in Gaza together with their Palestinian colleagues.

**IN LEBANON**, NORWAC responded to the Israeli attacks in South Lebanon by strengthening the national health structure by facilitating upgrading a public hospital in Saïda.



# Message from the CEO

## 2024 - A Year of Transition and Turbulence

**FOR MORE** than forty years, medical professionals working in university hospitals in Norway, with a background in several medical specialties, have constituted the core of the NORWAC management. Their clinical experience, combined with a profound understanding of the region's history and challenges, has shaped our ability to respond effectively and compassionately in times of crisis.

**OUR PROJECTS** have spanned a wide spectrum — from establishing oxygen infrastructure in hospitals and providing prenatal midwifery care, to training in laparoscopic surgery, dialysis treatment, blood bank services, pain management, mental health support, and rehabilitation for patients with spinal cord injuries. Across all initiatives, capacity building and local staff training remain central, empowering our partners to deliver sustainable, independent healthcare services.

**IN 2024**, NORWAC underwent a significant transition as the responsibility for funding shifted from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Norad. This change required the implementation of new reporting and accounting systems, coinciding with a year marked by intense activity and instability across all three countries where NORWAC operates.



*Erik Fosse*

Erik Fosse  
CEO  
NORWAC

**“In the last four decades, NORWAC has drawn strength from a unique combination of professional expertise, deep regional knowledge, and a genuine commitment to the people of the Middle East. This has enabled us to stand by our partners as they strive to sustain and improve healthcare under the most difficult circumstances”**

**IN PALESTINE**, the war that erupted following the Hamas attack on Israel in October 2023 escalated dramatically. In response, NORWAC collaborated with the World Health Organization (WHO) to deploy Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) to Gaza. After months of coordination, our first team was deployed to the European Gaza Hospital in Khan Younis in January 2024. Throughout the year, we sent a total of nine surgical teams, including missions to hospitals in North Gaza and renewed deployments to Khan Younis in the fall.

**IN THE WEST BANK**, NORWAC opened a new office in Ramallah and appointed a local representative, enabling the reactivation of several suspended projects.

**LEBANON'S ONGOING** economic crisis, compounded by the large Syrian refugee population, placed immense pressure on the healthcare system. NORWAC worked with 12 partners across south Lebanon, Beirut, and the Bekaa Valley. The war in Gaza further heightened tensions, culminating in Israeli airstrikes in South Lebanon and Beirut in September. NORWAC received emergency funding from Norad to respond, coordinating efforts closely with the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health.

**IN SYRIA**, NORWAC successfully opened an office in Damascus and began preparations for projects in government-controlled areas. In opposition-controlled regions, we continued our work through partners in primary healthcare, blood banking, and dialysis services.

**IN LATE 2024**, following the fall of the Assad regime and the formation of a new government, NORWAC suspended operations in government-held areas to reassess and realign its projects with the new political landscape.

**WE ARE PROUD** to stand alongside our partners in Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria, and to represent a small but committed humanitarian organization from a country known for its generosity and global engagement. Our work is a testament to the power of solidarity, professionalism, and enduring partnerships in the face of adversity.

# PALESTINE



## Target Groups



- The Palestinian population in need of health services, with a focus on war injured
- Palestinian governmental health sector

## NORWAC's Goals

- Increased access to primary healthcare service
- Increased Emergency Response for disaster-affected populations
- Improved health force capacity
- Improved health facilities' capability/ assets

## Local Partners

- Palestine Ministry of Health (MoH) West Bank and Gaza
- Central Engineering Department (CED) Gaza and West Bank
- Makassed Charitable Children hospital
- World Health Organization (WHO)

## Projects

- Emergency Medical Teams (EMT)
- Oxygen (O2) support in Gaza
- Makassed Hospital support
- Pain Management clinic in Gaza
- Capacity building, Maternal and Neonatal intensive care West Bank
- Medicines and medical disposables to Gaza

**“The work in Palestine in 2024 has been deeply affected by the ongoing crisis in Gaza, as well as in the West Bank. Working in Gaza has become extremely complex and challenging. In this context, NORWAC is largely implementing its activities independently”**

Kristil Haraldstad - Country Director, Palestine.





## NORWAC IN PALESTINE IN 2024

**THE CONFLICT IN GAZA** represents one of the most severe humanitarian crises globally, with devastating impacts on the population and healthcare system.

**THE SCALE OF** destruction of civilian infrastructure in 2024 was catastrophic. Hospitals, schools, power stations, and water facilities were severely damaged or completely destroyed, compromising the delivery of essential services. The healthcare system has been particularly hard hit, with major hospitals like Al-Shifa rendered partially or completely non-functional. The healthcare workforce has suffered tremendous losses, with more than 1,400 healthcare workers reported killed since October 2023. Many highly specialized doctors fled from Gaza during the initial months of the war, further compounding the drain of medical expertise and leaving primarily junior medical doctors to respond to overwhelming needs.

**THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION** was further exacerbated by relentless bombardment and frequent evacuation orders issued by the Israeli military, forcing multiple displacements with no safe place in Gaza. Restrictions on the entry of medical supplies have led to preventable deaths, while the rapid spread of communicable diseases, including polio, threatens to create additional health crises. The combination of these factors has created an environment where delivering even basic healthcare services is extraordinarily challenging.

**DESPITE THESE** immense challenges, NORWAC maintained its commitment to supporting healthcare delivery in Gaza, adapting its programming to respond to the evolving context while maintaining a focus on both immediate life-saving interventions and longer-term system strengthening where possible.



Photo: Kristil Haraldstad

## A SUCCESS STORY



# Emergency Medical Teams to Gaza

**BETWEEN JANUARY** and December 2024, NORWAC deployed a total of 9 Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) to Gaza, in close cooperation with the WHO EMT Coordination Cell (EMTCC) in Cairo. The teams have mainly been orthopaedic Special Care Team (SCT), and each team consisted of 4 members: two surgeons, one anaesthesiologist, and one operating theatre (OT) nurse.

**THE TEAMS** were deployed for approximately 4 weeks at a time, and the primary location of work was European Gaza Hospital (EGH). However, during certain periods, teams were also deployed to Kamal Adwan Hospital and Al Awda Hospital in the North, depending on the situation and needs on the ground.

**TEAMS BOTH LIVED** and worked inside the hospitals, often around the clock. Their main role was to support the local medical staff, sharing the heavy workload during an extremely challenging and often catastrophic situation. The conditions have been very tough, and team members have been physically and emotionally exhausted after working day and night for weeks on end. At the same time, we observed that nearly all the participants wanted to return to Gaza and work.

**DESPITE THE** circumstances, the EMTs have also contributed to capacity building when time allowed –

sharing knowledge, offering hands-on training, and supporting the local staff in any way possible. The presence of an international team has also provided essential security for the staff and the patients inside the hospital.

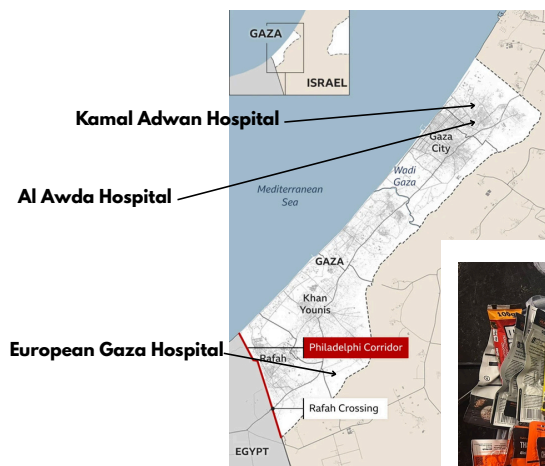
**THE TEAMS** have worked effectively, and cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health (MoH) has been running efficiently.

**OVER THE PAST YEAR**, we've built up valuable experience in how to recruit, prepare, and follow up our teams – which has made the process more effective and responsive. Due to the security situation, especially after the closure of the Rafah border crossing, the teams now rotate in and out through Allenby Bridge. This has created serious logistical challenges, especially with luggage restrictions. Our teams bring with them all the food they need for the entire month, as supplies are very limited inside Gaza. With strict luggage limits, this has made packing and preparation increasingly difficult.

**IN SPITE OF** the many challenges, the teams have continued to carry out their missions with dedication and professionalism. Based on this, NORWAC is now in the process of becoming officially recognised as an EMT organisation under the WHO umbrella – a big step forward in our international emergency medical work.



## The 9 EMTs sent to Gaza in 2024



The teams are operating in these hospitals

Each team member must bring food for the whole 4-week mission





Photo: Bjørn Øgland



**40** attended specialised training courses over six days

## PROJECT FROM 2024

# Capacity Building in Maternal and Neonatal Intensive Care Units in the West Bank

**WOMEN IN** the northern West Bank—particularly in areas such as Jenin and Tulkarem—face significant challenges in accessing emergency maternity care. These difficulties stem from a combination of limited healthcare infrastructure, movement restrictions, and the ongoing conflict. Israeli imposed and settler-related movement restrictions, including checkpoints and roadblocks, severely hinder Palestinians' access to essential medical services.

**IN 2024**, NORWAC implemented specialized training courses in obstetrics and neonatology simulation for Palestinian healthcare professionals. The courses brought together a diverse group of participants working in maternal and neonatal care, including gynecologists, anesthesiologists, pediatricians, nurses, and midwives. Most participants were junior staff, with approximately half having fewer than four years of clinical experience.

**THE NORWEGIAN TEAM** consisted of a consultant neonatologist, a nurse specialist in neonatology, a consultant obstetrician, and experienced midwives. The training combined theoretical presentations, hands-on clinical skills training, and realistic simulation exercises. To enhance accessibility, all course materials and local guidelines were made available in advance via a dedicated website. Website analytics indicated engagement from both participants and healthcare workers in neighboring areas.

**FEEDBACK FROM** the 40 participants was overwhelmingly positive. Both the neonatal and obstetric components received high ratings, particularly for the interactive and practical nature of the sessions. Many attendees emphasized the direct relevance of the training to their daily clinical work. The course also underscored the need for continued professional development, especially given the limited experience among many of the healthcare providers.



## A SUCCESS STORY

# A Powerful Wave of Solidarity to Gaza

**Private donations received: 8 786 137 NOK**

The war in Gaza sparked an overwhelming response from the Norwegian public. Across the country, individuals, artists, companies, and organizations mobilized to support NORWAC's emergency efforts. Through fundraising campaigns and direct contributions, private donors demonstrated extraordinary solidarity.

By 31 January 2024, NORWAC had received 8 786 137 NOK in private donations. These funds were swiftly allocated to procure critical medical equipment, essential medicines, and disposable supplies—delivering life-saving support to healthcare facilities in Gaza during a time of urgent need.

This collective effort highlights the vital role of private donations in enabling rapid humanitarian response and sustaining medical aid in crisis zones.



Medical supplies purchased with private donations being transported in the WHO warehouse in Gaza.



**Please donate to Gaza by  
using **VIPPS 126863** or  
account number  
**1506.99.02488****

## The war in Gaza has sparked a wave of support from people all across Norway.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to all who have donated to us in 2024. Private donations have been received from music concerts, poetry nights, art auctions, cake stands, restaurants, birthdays and christmas presents, tattoo artists, local food shops, crafts, beauty and hair salons, traditional "selbuvotter", and many more.

We are truly overwhelmed and so grateful for all your support. We are a small organization, and although we may not be able to respond right away, please know how much we appreciate your support.

With the funds received from you, we were able to purchase urgently needed medicines and medical supplies that we delivered to Gaza.

Thank you!



Some of the many events who donated to Gaza



# LEBANON



## Target Groups



- A community of around 1 500 000 refugees-Palestinians from Lebanon (PRL), Syrians and Palestinians from Syria (PRS) - and an increasing number of vulnerable groups in the host community

## NORWAC's Goals

- Increased access to primary healthcare service
- Increased access to specialized healthcare services
- Improved health workforce capacity
- Improved health facilities' capability / assets

## Local Partners

- Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS-L)
- National Institution for Social Care and Vocational Training (NISCVT)
- Maarouf Saad Social and Cultural Foundation (MSSCF)
- Mousawat
- Imam Sadr Foundation (ISF)
- Health Care Society (HCS)
- Palestinian Student Fund (PSF)
- Ghawth for Relief and Emergency
- SANAD
- Ministry of Public Health (MoPH)

**“Once again our partners in Lebanon managed to shift from daily duties to implementation of their well-developed contingency plans – almost overnight. Their ability to follow patients displaced because of the war and include more beneficiaries in their services is amazing. All respect for the effort they make”**

Dagfinn Bjørklid - Country Director, Lebanon.





Photo: MSSCF Clinic

## NORWAC IN LEBANON IN 2024

**THE CROSS-BORDER** hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel, ongoing since October 2023, witnessed a serious escalation in September 2024. With a series of Israeli attacks on Hezbollah and waves of continued air raids on Beirut's southern suburbs, South Lebanon and the Bekaa valley, in addition to Israeli ground troops' incursions across the border. More than 4,000 people, including many civilians, were killed by the time of the 27 November ceasefire. 100,000 Lebanese homes were destroyed or damaged, and around 1 million Lebanese were displaced.

**WHILE MANY** of the displaced returned to their homes after the ceasefire, others currently have no home to return to. The ceasefire agreement has been violated several hundred times, primarily by Israel, which is still maintaining five posts on the Lebanese side of the border.

**THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM** in Lebanon faced immense strain during the 2024 war, pushing hospitals and emergency services to their limits. By the time of the ceasefire, the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health reported a total of 4,047 deaths and 16,638 injuries since 8 October 2023.

**80,000**

received medical services provided  
by NORWAC's partner projects

**60,000**

of the beneficiaries received  
primary healthcare services,  
including sexual and reproductive  
healthcare



Approximate figures based on 2024 reporting.

**222 HEALTHCARE** workers were killed and 330 injured, while 251 ambulances, 94 medical centers, and 40 hospitals were damaged or destroyed. Documented assaults include 67 attacks on hospitals and 231 on emergency medical services, underlining the fragility of a health system still reeling from the 2020 economic collapse in Lebanon.

**AROUND 210,000** Syrians have returned to Syria from neighboring countries, including Lebanon, after the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024. On the other hand, the fall of the Assad regime, spurred on new waves of refugees from Syria to Lebanon.

**NORWAC HAS SINCE** its establishment in Lebanon in 1983 supported local NGO health actors with a particular focus on refugees, who have been excluded from national public health services. During times of crisis in recent years, NORWAC has also supported the public health sector, as after the Beirut port explosion in July 2020, and during the autumn 2024 war, when NORWAC joined forces with other INGOs and the MoPH to make the Saida Governmental Emergency Hospital (the "Turkish Hospital") operational as an emergency hospital.



Photos: MSSCF





children received specialized health services provided by Beit Atfal as-Sumoud's project with NORWAC  
Approximate figures based on 2024 reporting.

## PROJECT FROM 2024

### Aiding Refugees in Times of War

**The autumn 2024 war forced NORWAC's partner Beit Atfal as-Sumoud to respond quickly in order to safeguard staff and beneficiaries**

**TO MANY**, the National Institute of Social Care and Vocational Training (NISCVT) is better known as Beit Atfal as-Sumoud (The home of the steadfast children). Originally established to provide care for orphans after the 1976 siege and massacre in the Tel al-Zaatar Palestinian refugee camp, the organization gradually grew to provide a range of social and educational services throughout Lebanon. Almost fifty years after its inauguration, Beit Atfal is among the most prominent Palestinian civil society organizations in the country.

**NORWAC HAS** collaborated with Beit Atfal for decades, supporting the organization's primary health care services, sexual and reproductive health, and their Family Guidance Centers, which provide specialized health services to children with special needs, including psychological evaluations, psychomotor and speech therapy sessions. With the support of NORWAC, Beit Atfal has become a leading NGO within the mental health field over the past two decades.

**THE 2024 WAR** between Hezbollah and Israel posed imminent threats to the lives and wellbeing of the Palestinian community in Lebanon, particularly in the southern part of the country, where most of the hostilities took place.

**FOR LOCAL** civil society organizations, such as Beit Atfal, the war raised several challenges; how to contribute to the arising emergency needs of the thousands of people being displaced, as well as those who remained and faced the dangers at home; how to ensure the safety of staff and beneficiaries, and how to continue to provide services in highly uncertain circumstances.

**WHILE BEIT ATFAL** were able to maintain some of its services in the refugee camps in the south and Beirut, they also expanded their already ongoing services in the northern camps of Beddawi and Nahr al-Bared, where many displaced Palestinians sought refuge, reaching a substantially higher number of people than originally planned for.

**ALONGSIDE OTHER** Palestinian and Lebanese NORWAC partners, the experience of Beit Atfal during the 2024 war testifies to the vital importance of agile local civil society actors during times of crises. Beit Atfal resumed their ordinary services nationwide immediately after the November ceasefire.

## **A SUCCESS STORY**

### **Solidarity with Palestinian Youth in Lebanon**

**Private donations received: 649 777 NOK**

**“YOUTH HELPING YOUTH”** is a project run by Beit Atfal Assomoud (BAS), a non-religious and politically independent Palestinian-Lebanese NGO based in Beirut. Established in 1976 following the Tel al-Zaatar massacre, BAS operates in all major Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Its work focuses on children, youth, and women from families facing severe challenges—economic, social, or health-related. Support is also extended to children of other nationalities when needed. The “Youth Helping Youth” initiative was launched in 2006.

**THE CORE** of the project is to strengthen young people’s identity and dignity. It targets youth aged 14 to 25, offering training in topics such as reproductive health, sexuality, psychosocial well-being, domestic and youth violence, and life skills. The program emphasizes youth participation, creative approaches, and gender-specific issues, with equal involvement of boys and girls. Qualified social workers guide the youth, who gradually take on leadership roles within the camps. The project recognizes that young people learn best from their peers. Families and the broader community are also key partners. “Youth Helping Youth” is part of BAS’s psychosocial program and has replaced the former sponsorship model.

# SYRIA



## Target Groups



- Local communities and IDPs in Syria
- People in need of medical assistance, such as patients with spinal cord injuries, neonates, children, or elderly with chronic renal failure
- Hospitals and health facilities, supported by blood products and oxygen supplies.
- Doctors, nurses, paramedics, and other health personnel

## NORWAC's Goals

- Increased access to specialized healthcare services
- Improved health workforce capacity
- Improved health facilities' capability / assets

## Projects

- Blood banks and laboratories
- Radiology center
- Thalassemia centres
- Kidney dialysis centres
- Urology clinic
- Healthcare staff and midwifery training programmes
- Procurement of medical equipment and consumables

**“2024 marked a year of historic change in Syria - NORWAC finally obtained the registration in Damascus after a challenging process and ended with the fall of the Assad regime and the takeover by opposition forces. Our strategy quickly adopted a “whole of Syria” approach for the first time since the Syrian crisis began in 2011. While challenges are still many, our focus will be to strengthen capacity building, rehabilitation of health facilities and raise the standard of health services.”**

Belal Aljabri - Country Director, Syria.





# NORWAC IN SYRIA IN 2024

**SYRIA HAS ENTERED** a new chapter with the toppling of the Assad regime in December 2024, ending a nearly fourteen-year armed conflict. This political transition has generated hope but also created new challenges. Security remains a major concern, with Israel expanding its occupation of the Golan Heights and continued attacks on Syrian security forces. The economic situation for most Syrians remains dire, with record-high inflation and ongoing sanctions. The transition has prompted an increase in Syrian returnees from neighbouring countries, including Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey, placing additional pressure on an already strained healthcare system.

**THE ONGOING CONFLICT**, insecurity, lack of local expertise, and extensive infrastructure damage across Syria continue to generate barriers to humanitarian access. Reconstruction efforts are hindered by unexploded ordnance, economic deterioration, and degraded essential services. Cuts to humanitarian funding have also created additional gaps in coordination, data collection, and information management.

**IN DECEMBER** 2024, the fall of the Assad regime marked a significant turning point for Syria, bringing an end to nearly fourteen years of armed conflict. While this political transition has sparked renewed hope for peace and recovery, it has also introduced a complex set of challenges.

**SECURITY REMAINS** a pressing concern. Israel has expanded its occupation of the Golan Heights, and attacks on Syrian security forces persist, contributing to continued instability across the country.

**THE ECONOMIC** situation is dire. Most Syrians face extreme hardship due to record-high inflation and the persistence of international sanctions. These conditions have severely limited access to basic goods and services.

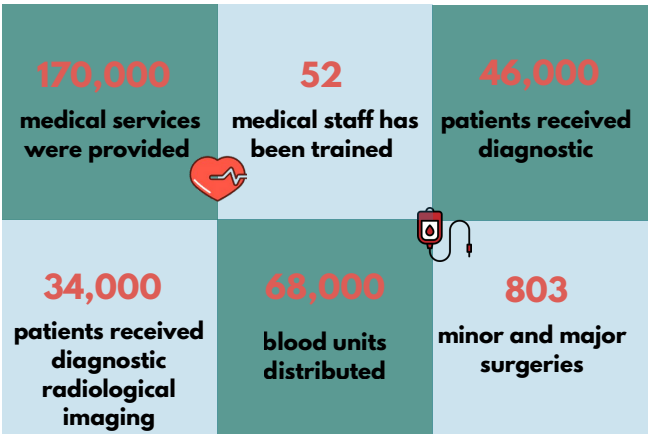
**THE TRANSITION** has triggered a wave of returnees from neighboring countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey. While this reflects a desire to rebuild, it has placed additional strain on Syria's already fragile healthcare system and public infrastructure.

**HUMANITARIAN ACCESS** remains limited due to ongoing conflict, insecurity, a shortage of skilled professionals, and widespread infrastructure damage. Reconstruction efforts are further hampered by the presence of unexploded ordnance, economic decline, and the collapse of essential services.

**CUTS TO** humanitarian funding have created significant gaps in coordination, data collection, and information management, making it more difficult to deliver effective aid.

**WOMEN AND CHILDREN** are particularly vulnerable, facing displacement, food insecurity, and limited access to healthcare and education. Their needs remain urgent and require targeted support.

2024 highlights from NORWAC-funded projects in Syria



Approximate figures based on 2024 reporting

## PROJECT FROM 2024

### Urologic Specialized Healthcare and Rehabilitation Services for Bladder Diseases

**THE CLINIC IN SARMADA** is the only facility specialised in urology in the northern region of Syria. It provides vital health care access to consultations, lab tests, specialized urodynamic diagnostic services, and minor and major surgeries. Because there are no similar projects in the area, the clinic is the only option for many in the Harem district. The alternative would be referral to Turkey, which for most people is not an option.

**THE BLADDER REHABILITATION** unit aims to provide appropriate treatment and management for urinary diseases, with a special focus on bladder diseases after spinal cord injuries.

**THE CLINIC** also provides health prevention and promotion by offering recommendations to patients on how to use urinary catheters, often leading to improved quality of life and self-confidence, which again makes it easier to be more integrated in society. The clinic also relieves pain caused by urinary disease, such as stones, by performing endoscopic and surgical urological operations.

**PROVIDING THESE** services completely free of charge improves the quality of life of the most vulnerable groups in the Syrian society. Since 2013, NORWAC has been providing full support to this project in the form of specialized equipment, compensation to the staff, medicine, medical consumables, fuel, and other running costs.

Photo: Sarmada, Syria 2024 - UOSSM Urological Hospital







Photo: Sarmada, Syria 2024 - UOSSM Urological Hospital - operation room

**AFTER PERFORMING** the first urodynamic study, a treatment plan was developed for the patient, including medication along with behavioral therapy. At a follow-up appointment, a good improvement was noted in the patient's symptoms, and the quality of his life has since dramatically improved.

**SARMADA CENTER** is recognized by the Syrian Board of Medical Specialties (SBOMS) as a training center for resident doctors in the urology specialty. Through this project, resident doctors will be followed and supervised (two doctors under the NORWAC grant and two doctors with the support of Islamic Relief).

**THE CENTER** may also receive additional resident doctors in response to the rotation of doctors between health facilities carried out by SBOMS.

**NORWACs PARTNER**, UOSSM, seeks to support medical education by supporting the medical residency program.

**DURING THE** reporting period, in collaboration with SBOMS, five residents were specializing in urology at the Bladder Rehabilitation Unit. Four residents were supported under the NORWAC grant, while one resident was funded through the SBOMS training program.



**8607**

**nephrological & urological consultations**

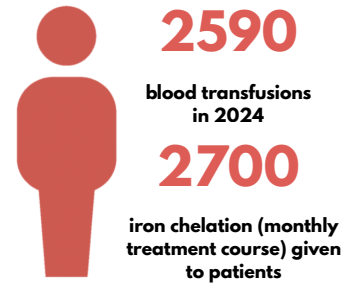
**805**

**cystoscopy and cystometrography services provided**





Photo: Mehad



### A SUCCESS STORY

## Training on “Improved Healthcare for Thalassemia Patients”

**IN JUNE 2024**, a training course was conducted to improve the knowledge and skills of eight nurses, including seven women about good management and advanced healthcare of thalassemia patients. The training, with a total of 16 teaching hours, took place at the thalassemia center at the National Hospital of Al-Raqqa, linking the trainees to the work environment and to the actual routines and clinical cases.

**BY THE END** of the course, the trainees demonstrated a good understanding of the scientific background of thalassemia, insights into the patient’s rights, and gained new knowledge on the significance of lifestyle modification techniques and psychosocial support to improve the quality of patients’ life.

**THE TRAINING COVERED** a variety of subjects including:

- An overview of thalassemia definition, epidemiology, hemoglobin patterns, genetic basis and pathophysiology
- Methods of diagnosing thalassemia and the necessary investigations
- Blood transfusion and common standards for safe blood transfusion
- Iron overload and its effect on thalassemia patients
- Pharmacological treatment of thalassemia with iron chelates
- Complications of thalassemia and critical cases
- Community awareness and psychosocial support for the thalassemia patients and their families





Photo: Educational Workshop on "Women Health"

## A SUCCESS STORY

### Women's Health Conference - First of its kind in Damascus

**ON JUNE 27** 2024, NORWAC, in collaboration with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, hosted a pioneering workshop on women's health for media professionals in Damascus. The event opened with an overview of NORWAC's mission in Syria, highlighting its commitment to delivering essential medical services for women and children, particularly in the aftermath of years of conflict.

**THE WORKSHOP** covered a wide range of topics related to women's health, including gynecology, obstetrics, and advanced treatments such as laparoscopic (keyhole) surgery. It also addressed the barriers women face in accessing appropriate healthcare and emphasized the critical role of mental health in women's well-being.

**THE EVENT** concluded with an open media dialogue, fostering discussion on women's issues across social, medical, and psychological dimensions.



Elizabeth Hoff, Country Representative in Syria for NORWAC in 2024

# NORWAC IN NUMBERS

**21**  
employees



**15,6**  
full positions



**38**  
projects  
supported by  
NORWAC

**27+**

active medical consultants

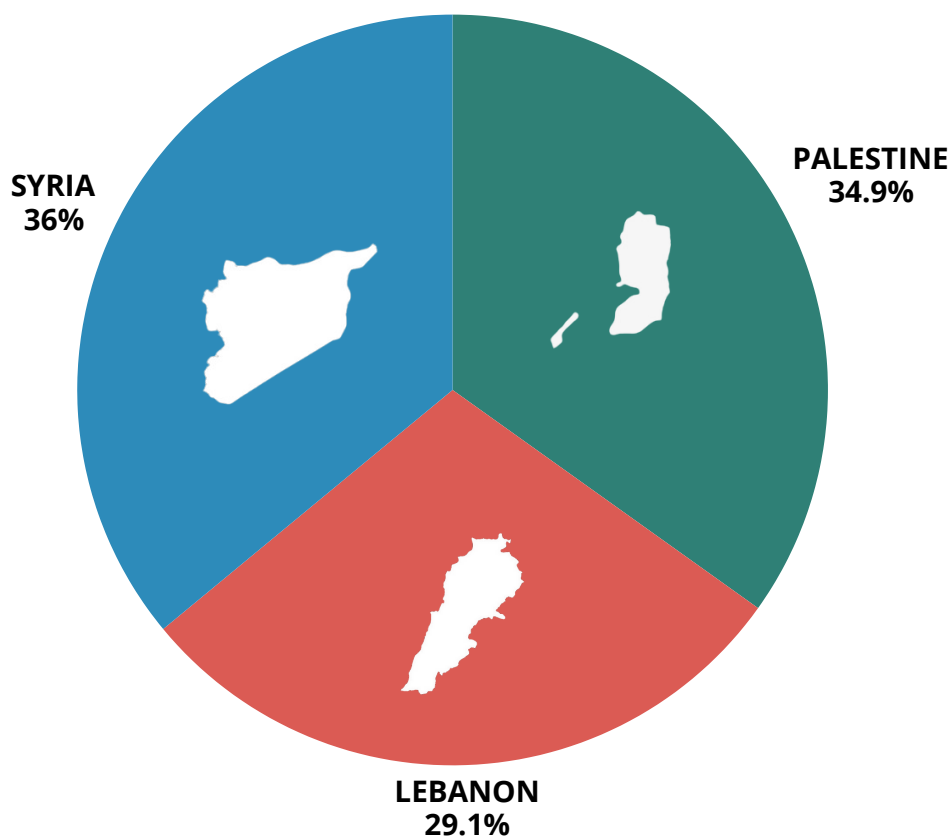


- Doctors
- Nurses
- Midwives
- Physiotherapist
- Occupational therapist
- Orthopaedic surgeons

**58 %**  
of NORWAC projects  
target women and  
children



# EXPENDITURES PER COUNTRY 2024



PALESTINE	27 710 597 NOK / 2 594 625 USD
LEBANON	23 161 513 NOK / 2 168 680 USD
SYRIA	28 591 765 NOK / 2 677 131 USD
SUM	79 463 875 NOK / 7 440 436 USD

\*10.68 NOK for 1 USD when expenditure were used in 2024.





Children attending MADA-center in old city Saida, Lebanon  
Photo: MSSCF

# THANK YOU!

From all of us at NORWAC:  
We extend our sincere thanks to our  
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