



*IOM's quarterly  
communication with  
expatriate groups from MENA*

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## THE SYRIAN AMERICAN MEDICAL SOCIETY

The Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) is a non-profit, non-political, professional, medical relief organization that represents over 1,000 Syrian American medical professionals in the United States. SAMS is working on the front lines of crisis relief in Syria and neighboring countries to save lives, support doctors and medical professionals, and rebuild healthcare.

SAMS was founded in 1998 as a professional society, working to connect physicians of Syrian descent through educational and professional activities. When the Syria conflict began in 2011, SAMS expanded its capacity significantly to meet the growing needs and challenges of the medical crisis. SAMS is now a leading organization in Syria crisis response, impacting the health and lives of millions.

SAMS has so far supported over 84 field hospitals, clinics, and surgical centers inside of Syria. The organization continues to assist hundreds of Syrian doctors, nurses, and health workers by paying salaries and providing trainings on emergency medicine during conflict; additionally, their physicians have performed over 70,000 trauma surgeries inside of Syria. SAMS has sent hundreds of Syrian American medical personnel into Syria, Jordan, and Turkey

on lifesaving medical missions, and has brought numerous shipments of aid and medical equipment into Syria. In response to specific needs from Syrian health workers and civilians, SAMS has initiated innovative programmes such as mobile clinics, tele-ICUs and tele-operating rooms, and art therapy programmes. Through their vast network of contacts on the ground, SAMS's operations are able to cover many remote areas where other NGOs are unable to reach.

SAMS also supports Syrian refugees in neighboring countries with critical psychosocial support and medical and social services. SAMS's work includes providing psychiatric services to refugees inside and outside of camps, facilitating group therapy for children, women, and victims of torture and domestic violence, supporting the surgical treatment and post-operative care of hundreds of wounded Syrians, and supporting multi-specialty clinics. SAMS's multi-specialty clinic in Al-Zaatari Camp is the largest in the camp and the only medical center operated by Syrian doctors.

SAMS has developed meaningful partnerships with international NGOs and UN agencies to collaborate effectively in the overall Syria response and best serve

Syrians in need. The organization works closely with leading INGOs on humanitarian assistance and refugee services. SAMS is one of select NGOs working as a UN implementing partner for cross-border aid distribution in northern Syria through UN Resolution 2165, and is an active member of the health working group for the Syria response.

### **For more information, contact:**

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SAMS doctors perform surgery on a child.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Feb 10-13:** In cooperation with Notre Dame University in Lebanon, IOM will deliver a training workshop looking at the key inter-linkages between migration and development, and engaging expatriate communities in development. The workshop will focus on examples and initiatives from Lebanon.

**For more information or to register, contact:**

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## SUBMIT TO THE NEXT ISSUE

We want to hear from you! Submissions accepted for the following sections:

### *Highlighting a Diaspora Group*

- This section, aimed at spotlighting an expat group, is on page 1. It should be around 450 words, with a good picture.

### *Notable Project*

- Are you or your organization running a project in MENA that you would like to publicize? Write a 400 word article and submit it with a picture. This article is featured on page 2.

### *Expatriate Success Story*

- Page 3's article is designed to highlight a successful member of an expatriate community from MENA. Write a 400 word article about yourself or someone you know, and submit with a picture.

### *Announcements*

- Tell us about upcoming conferences, workshops, events, calls for project proposals etc.

The next newsletter will be released at the end of April. For information and submissions, e-mail [iommenanews@iom.int](mailto:iommenanews@iom.int).

# MOROCCO BENEFITS FROM TEMPORARY RETURN OF QUALIFIED NATIONALS PROGRAMME

IOM started its Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals (TRQN III) programme in Morocco in October 2012, with the goal of utilizing the advanced skills and training of expatriates living abroad to build capacity in countries of origin. To date, over forty capacity building exercises have been carried out across the Kingdom in a variety of fields ranging from programmatic technical support, to social development, scientific and technological research, law, advocacy, health and communication.

During the two years the project has been running, two exchange visits to the Netherlands have been organized for delegations from partner and Moroccan institutions. During the visits, participants had the opportunity to engage on a variety of topics, including transfer of expertise, networking between countries, cooperation with other institutions, developing new areas of research, and training and programming.

Additionally, returning nationals have participated in similar, pre-existing local initiatives such as the "FINCOME Project", which is led by the Center for Scientific and Technological Research and the Ministry of Moroccans Residing Abroad and Migration Affairs. Returning expatriates have also participated in the JMDI Project (Joint Migration and Development Initiative), that supports local municipalities in their development agendas by involving their diasporas.

### **In Focus: Dr. Ahmed Rachid**

Dr. Ahmed Rachid is a professor of electrical engineering and renewable energy at the University of Picardie Jules Verne, Amiens in France. He returned to Morocco as part of a TRQN programme to work at the School of Sciences and

Engineering at Cadi Ayyad University in Marrakech where he assisted in the construction of a prototype solar car which the university entered in the national solar car race that took place in September 2014. Working over three months with a team of doctoral students and the president of the Faculty of Sciences, Dr. Rachid's team built a car that won at a national level in an event organized by the Cherriffian Office for Phosphates, in partnership with the IRESEN-Institute of Research in Solar and Renewable Energy. Universities from France, Australia and Turkey also participated. While the latter won at the international level, the University of Marrakech's teams received a special commendation from the jury of the International Federation of Solar Cars, and were invited to participate at the international level in Abu Dhabi in 2015.

### **For more information, contact:**

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Top: Dr. Rachid and student in his workshop preparing for a solar car race, August 2014

Bottom: Dr. Rachid and a PhD student during the solar car race in Marrakech, September 2014

## SUCCESS STORIES FROM THE EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY



*John Shehata, 33, is a Special Counsel for Orrick, Herrington, and Sutcliffe law firm in Milan, Italy.*

*What is your link to the expatriate community?*

My family migrated from Egypt in the late 1970s. My uncle first, and then my father, came to Milan as migrants to find a job and an opportunity to help their family in Egypt. My grandfather died young and the two elder sons did their best to support the rest of their siblings in getting an education and having a decent life in Cairo. My parents got married in Egypt – they were university mates – and my mother moved to Italy without a permit of stay. They decided to relocate to Venice where they found jobs in the tourism industry. After I was born, my parents decided to send me to my grandmother in Cairo, where I spent my first few years. I returned to Italy a couple of years later when my parents obtained a permit of stay.

*What was your trajectory for success? Did being a member of the diaspora contribute?*

Many people see the status of an immigrant as a weakness, but I have tried to leverage my participation in two different cultures, and turn it into one of my biggest assets. Being a foreigner in the northern region of Italy was not always easy—there are still some biases toward Middle Easterners—but I did my best to maintain ties with my

country of origin: I learned Arabic, and completed an internship in Cairo which focused on international business in the MENA region. Being part of two cultures and – different – worlds is a great competitive advantage in my career; that was what really made me distinctive and boosted my path to success. Rethinking my identity and redefining myself not as an Egyptian who had to migrate to Italy, but as a European who understands the Middle East and its complexities, was a tipping point. I participate in Egyptian culture and traditions through my family, but have also tried to become part of the country where I actually live.

*Have you been involved in any successful projects, current projects, or initiatives in MENA?*

Now I maintain my ties to the Middle East both through family and my work as Special Counsel at a law firm in Milan. Orrick has many projects in MENA; the main target, actually, is trying to strengthen the cooperation between young entrepreneurs in Europe and the Middle East to create good cooperation and added value for both countries, and to create a vehicle for the appropriate know-how and capacity building to enhance the rise of Egypt. Orrick often assists Italian companies that are investing – directly and/or indirectly – in Egypt and vice-versa. However, the most important real success achieved in working between the two countries was a case in which we, with the support of many friends both Italian and Egyptian, helped a child, heavily burned during the 2011 turmoil, to receive medical attention at the University of Padua.

*What are your views for the future in terms of how the diaspora can meaningfully engage with countries of origin?*

In terms of how the expatriate community can engage with countries of origin in the long term, migrants should make the effort to integrate within the host country and accept that they migrated because their countries of origin were not granting them the same opportunities. Migration provides individuals

### WHAT'S NEW AT IOM

IOM signed an agreement with the NGO Silatech in November 2014 to support the organizations' on-going collaboration on the NARWI crowdsourcing platform across the region, reaching Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Somalia, and Yemen. The platform aims to allow Arab expatriates to contribute their financial and human resources to support entrepreneurs and small business owners in the MENA region.

Also in November, IOM signed an agreement with Legacy International to support collaboration on two programmes which aim to provide promising Arab youths with opportunities for short-term study in the United States where they will also engage with youths and mentors within the Arab-American community. Programme participants will share their knowledge and experience through community projects upon their return.

On December 18<sup>th</sup>, IOM celebrated International Migrants Day with events across the MENA region. In Cairo, IOM's office organized an event in collaboration with the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration while in Morocco, in collaboration with partners, IOM's office in Rabat coordinated a full week of academic and cultural events highlighting the importance of migration, integration, and migrants' contributions to society.

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with a chance to learn and understand the best practices of the host country, which made it a more desirable environment than the country of origin, and do their best to bring that know-how to the mother country. It is not a matter of financial resources as much as it is a matter of skills, capacity building and education. These are what can really make the difference for all the stakeholders: country of origin, country of destination, migrants and their children.

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