



Union of Medical Care and Relief Organizations

Press Release

For Immediate Release

April 15, 2016

Lead Doctor of Hama's Medical Directorate Killed by Targeted Air Strike During Cease Fire

Dr. Hassan Al-Araj, Head of the Health Directorate in Hama, Syria, was killed in an airstrike Wednesday April 13, during the ceasefire. Dr. Al-Araj had just left the the Al-Maghara Hospital, where he was Hospital Director, and was on his way to the Health Directorate when a surface to air missile struck approximately 60 feet from the hospital and less than one foot from his car killing the doctor instantly. Activists on the ground report that Dr. Al-Araj was the target of that air strike.

The "Cave Hospital" was built inside a mountain to protect the facility and staff from targeted airstrikes. This was the third time the hospital was targeted in the past month. UOSSM via UOSSM Canada equipped and furnished the emergency department for the hospital.

Syria has been under a ceasefire since February 27, in observance of the United Nations Resolution 2254, that was passed in December 2015. Since then there have been numerous attacks on medical facilities killing and wounding many.

Dr. Al-Araj donated his own specialty hospital that he transformed into a field hospital providing free medical care to 4000 patients a month. The hospital has been directly targeted ten times causing casualties and damage, and indirectly targeted over 150 times, and has been damaged and rebuilt many times. Three medical staff have been killed in separate attacks in that hospital.

Dr. Al-Araj, the 45-year-old cardiologist, was in Geneva in December 2015 in the "Protect Hospitals and Health Care Workers in Syria" conference defending health workers and facilities against the systematic targeting of health facilities by air forces. Dr. Al-Araj is survived by his wife and five children ranging in ages from 2-16.

The Union of Medical Care & Relief Organisations (UOSSM), Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS), Syrian Expatriate Medical Association (SEMA), Sham Humanitarian, and Physicians Across Continents (PAC), strongly condemn this deplorable act and all war crimes targeting medical facilities, clinical staff and innocent civilians within Syria, and urge all influential parties to take immediate action to enforce the UN Security Council Resolutions and International Humanitarian Laws.

Dr. Khaula Sawah, CEO of UOSSM USA said, “We mourn the loss of a great doctor, Dr. Al-Araj, was a compassionate man who gave his life serving others.” Adding, “We strongly condemn this act and all targeting of medical facilities and staff, which is a clear war crime and in clear violation of UNSC Resolution 2254. We urge the UN to take action and enforce the ceasefire and force all parties to abide by international laws of war.”



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Dr. Khaula Sawah is available for interviews, for media inquiries, please contact Najah Allouch: us.media.relations@uossm.us



Union of Medical Care and Relief Organizations UOSSM is a federation of humanitarian medical aid and relief, non-for-profit, non-governmental, member organizations. Founded in January 2012 in France, with the vision to work under a unified strategic framework, to increase the effectiveness of the humanitarian response in areas of crisis; aiming at providing medical aid and support to affected people and communities, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion or political affiliation.

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