

# **SRD Policy on Medical Neutrality and Impartiality**

Syria Relief and Development (SRD) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization providing humanitarian aid to Syrians affected by violence, hunger, poverty, injury and displacement.

SRD works to address the dire need for food, shelter, medical care and health through our established programs within Syria and in surrounding regions. SRD provides assistance irrespective of race, religion, creed, or political convictions.

SRD observes neutrality and impartiality in the name of universal medical ethics and the right to humanitarian assistance and claims full and unhindered freedom in the exercise of its functions.

SRD staff members are committed to upholding the highest standards of professional and medical ethics, including complete independence from all political, economic, or religious powers.

## **Principles of Ethics**

SRD's actions are guided by medical ethics and the principles of independence and impartiality.

## **Medical Ethics**

SRD is committed to respecting the fundamental principles of medical ethics in providing care without causing harm to individuals or groups. We do so by abiding by the duties the International Code of Medical Ethics outlines that physicians should uphold in general and with respect to patients and colleagues.

## **Independence**

SRD is entirely autonomous of any political, economic, military or other objectives of actors with an interest in the area where our work is implemented. We strive to maximize our independent decision-making while maintaining our commitment to international humanitarian law. We strive to ensure that we have the power to freely evaluate medical needs, to access populations without restriction, and to directly control the aid we provide.

## **Impartiality**

SRD offers assistance to people based on need and irrespective of race, religion, gender, or political affiliation. Our decisions are not based on political, economic, or religious interests. SRD views impartiality as an essential condition for humanitarian aid support and delivery as outlined by Article 70 of Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions and Article 59 of the Fourth Convention.

## **Neutrality**

SRD does not take sides in hostilities or intervene according to the demands of governments or warring parties, including controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

## **Bearing Witness**

The principles of impartiality and neutrality are not synonymous with silence. When SRD witnesses acts of violence against individuals or groups, the organization may speak out publicly. We may seek to bring attention to extreme need and unacceptable suffering when access to lifesaving medical care is hindered, when medical facilities come under threat, when crises are neglected, or when the provision of aid is inadequate or abused.

SRD subscribes to the following internationally recognized documents as they relate to medical ethical responsibility, impartiality, neutrality and non-discrimination.

- [The Geneva Conventions](#)
- [Declaration of Geneva](#)
- [International Code of Medical Ethics](#)