

## **Information about the Syrian American Will Association (SAWA)**

### ***Introduction***

Syria, the land of birth and ancestry of many Americans, is a cradle of civilizations and religions. It is the home of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, where humanity was presented with its first alphabet. From the time of the ancient Akkadians, Amorites, Canaanites, Phoenicians, and Arameans – all left their mark on Syria in the areas of the arts, culture, diplomacy, law, economics, and public life.

Over the centuries Syria has been coveted by outsiders because of its strategic geographic position, its economic importance, and its wealth. Accordingly, it has suffered countless barbaric attacks throughout its long history. The latest of these attacks is occurring in our own day. Since March 21, 2011 (Mother's Day in Syria), the country has experienced a savage assault aimed at destroying the national infrastructure, blurring the united Syrian identity, and fanning the flames of sectarianism, with the purpose of dividing the heirs of Syria's rich heritage, erasing their self-awareness as single people, and debasing the unique civilization bequeathed to us by our venerable ancestors. But anyone with a good reading of history knows that Syrians through all the ages have transcended every adversity and beat back every scheme to demolish or divide them. This time as well, Syrians and all those of Syrian heritage will stand strong in opposition to the current campaign against our land of origin and our kin. Inspired by the rightness of our cause and unity of purpose with our compatriots in the homeland, we have established our organization, the "Syrian American Will Association" (SAWA), to join together and work hand-in-hand in support of our ancestral motherland, Syria.

### ***Dear members of the Syrian American community***

As we all know, the land of our ancestors is going through the most difficult times, and clearly the situation in Syria is getting worse day after day. It is also obvious that Syria and the Syrian people need our support. As Syrian Americans we must be a strong voice in the United States for showing the facts as they are on the ground in Syria, a voice for showing right from wrong, without compromise of the truth or omission of facts.

We in SAWA represent that voice, and with your support as we can:

- Make a difference!
- Work for the sake of a change in U.S. policy towards Syria.
- Join hands and push for a just and peaceful solution to the current crises.
- Help U.S. policymakers to learn the difference between truth and lies about Syria.

We the Board members at the Syrian American Will are working diligently and will continue to reject all terrorist groups. Our goal is to streamline our community voice, to be an organization that unites and empowers Syrian Americans. I have long advocated this goal, but now with the current dire situation in Syria, we must stand together and express our voice to our U.S. policymakers. We in SAWA are committed to meeting all challenges and work to help resolve them with the decision-makers, to the benefit of both Syria and the United States.

Syrians alone, without any external interference, must decide the future of Syria. In accordance with Article 11 of the Syrian Constitution, the Syrian Arab army is the only body legally authorized to defend and protect the land and people of the Syrian Arab Republic. All terrorist groups, even those made up of so-called “moderates,” must be dismantled, and all forms of support and assistance to such groups must be rejected. We in SAWA call for a unified Syria that is a sovereign, secular, and democratic state under the Constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic and the authority and will of its people.

Whether as individuals or as a group, let us work together to stand against the horrific acts being committed against Syria and Syrians, let us devote more of our time, our knowledge, and our resources to support the principles and the dignity of our families and in our ancestral motherland. Let us do everything possible to help set things right and emphatically warn against the dangerous path and policies pursued by the United States, which endangers us as Americans in the future.

I ask you to join with us in supporting SAWA and in our work together to help Syria and the Syrian people, and to achieve a change in American policy.

With assurances of my highest respect,

Mounzer Ahmad  
773-983-1553  
Chairman, Syrian American Will Association (SAWA)

### ***Who are the members of SAWA?***

We, the founders of the Syrian American Will Association (SAWA), are American citizens of Syrian origin. Although SAWA was founded in 2015, many of us have been working in this field since 2012 under the name of various associations and other institutions. Because we do not accept compromise on basic principles relating to the homeland, we decided the establishment of SAWA to work boldly and impartially.

Vision of the future for the Syrian American Will Association (SAWA):

*"To help our ancestral motherland Syria's return to safety and security"*

We at SAWA believe that any Syrian, regardless of his beliefs or affiliation, will join in our vision in support of civilized values. With the support of all those who shares our vision, and with the help of Almighty God, we hope to achieve in the near future a return of safety and security to Syria.

We at SAWA believe that Syria and the Syrians are at a crossroads, as is American policy towards Syria. SAWA aims to highlight the importance of basic human and social values of Syrian society, and to clarify these concepts and values for American political decision-makers and for American media and public opinion.

We at SAWA also believe that the U.S. and Syrian governments must work together to reach a positive relationship at the political level and cooperate economically, for the benefit of both sides and to help promote regional stability through a secure and peaceful Syria.

We at SAWA believe that the best path forward can, and indeed must, include the following principles:

1. **An end to the conflict in Syria.** SAWA believes in peaceful and national reconciliation through negotiation and constructive dialogue among the Syrians.
2. **A united, sovereign, secular, and democratic Syria** under the authority of the constitution of the Syrian Arab Republic and the will of the Syrian people.
3. **Rejection of all foreign aggression towards Syria.** The future of Syria should be decided by Syrians and only by Syrians. SAWA opposes arming, training, and support of all groups like the so-called "moderate rebels." SAWA opposes anyone, whether Syrian or non-Syrian, who takes up arms against the Syrian government seeking the violent overthrow of established law and order.
4. **A positive and mutually beneficial relationship between the United States and Syria.** SAWA believes that a better political, economic, and cultural relationship between the United States and Syria as two sovereign countries can make an essential contribution to human civilization, and in particular the defense of civilization against terrorist groups.
5. **The safety, welfare, and prosperity of all Syrians.** SAWA believes in the freedom of religion, speech, and the press for all Syrians. SAWA hopes for an early return to peacetime economic development and opportunities for improved education, employment, and well-being for all Syrians.

In order for us to achieve our vision and to help our ancestral motherland, we have set as SAWA's interim goals for achieving a better tomorrow for the people of Syria in a unified, secure, and sovereign state the following:

- Work to mobilize the energies of the Syrian community to stand against terrorism, criminality, and external interference, and to stand against the division of the country;
- Work to transform the image and the reality of what is happening in Syria to the American people and political decision-makers, and to draw to the attention of the media the truth as it is – without falsification, lies, or omission;
- Play an effective and positive role by boldly and openly standing for what is right and against terrorism and conspiracy against the Syrian motherland;
- Work on the convergence of views of members of the Syrian American community, encourage dialogue, and open windows and channels of communication to serve the interests of the Syrian motherland; and
- Work on the convergence of views between the Syrian and American peoples and stimulate contacts between Syrian and U.S. government

The establishment and existence of SAWA, which is working for Syria and America alike, builds upon the successful work for all members of the Syrian American community. There are many and varied paths of work, but these multiple ways can converge as a strong one direction to help achieve the noble goals which serve all those descended from Syria, and as well strengthening links with our new home here in America.

### ***The basic principles of SAWA***

The basic principles of SAWA are constant, clear, and straightforward:

- Rejection of violence and terrorism directed against Syria.
- Putting a stop to regional and international intervention against Syria.
- Stop arming terrorist groups and the so-called “opposition” and instead to work for national reconciliation and the preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria through dialogue.
- Reject splits in Syrian society.
- Syria was and still must remain united – we are working on behalf of each and every Syrian.
- No foreign intervention. No to arming the so-called “opposition.” Yes to dialogue and political solutions. We support any conference to bring Syrians together.

## *The organizational structure of SAWA*

The Syrian American Will Association (SAWA) consists of the following founding members:

Mr. Mounzer Ahmad  
Mr. Ali Rayes  
Dr. Khaldoun Makhoul  
Dr. Suhael Saba  
Dr. Amer Abboud  
Dr. Antonius John Ashkar  
Dr. Ibrahim Ahmad  
Ms. Aliss Obeid  
Dr. Rami Rustum

The governing the work of SAWA includes the following committees:

Executive Committee: Meets frequently, provides work plans to the SAWA Board, executes SAWA's work, and oversees other committees

Management Committee: Deals with administrative and organizational matters of SAWA's work, including obtaining any necessary licenses and approvals, ensuring our procedures are in compliance with applicable laws, and building SAWA's membership.

Media Committee: Outreach to all American media (TV, newspapers, radio, internet, etc.) regarding the Syrian crisis on the political or social level and communicating to them the truth of the real state of affairs in Syria. This includes connecting with American media to cover SAWA's activities to help spread our message and profile.

Political Committee: Communicate effectively with decision-makers and political institutions to advocate a fair, accurate, and balanced picture that listens to differing viewpoints, to encourage a fact-based positive outlook.

Finance Committee: Conduct fundraising and annual subscriptions in coordination with the management committee and to submit SAWA's annual budget. SAWA's activities depend solely on donations from their members and private contributors who support SAWA's goals. SAWA does not solicit or accept any support from any government.

[www.sawaus.org](http://www.sawaus.org)