

12 May 2026

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY 2026

Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMRO) E-Journal

Celebrating EMRO nursing leadership and impact



International Council of Nurses

**OUR NURSES.
OUR FUTURE.**

International Nurses Day 2026

Empowered Nurses Save Lives



ICN

International
Council of Nurses

Introducing the IND2026 EMRO E-Journal

Nurses throughout the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMRO) continue to deliver lifesaving care, often under extremely challenging circumstances, including responding to, recovering from, and rebuilding after conflicts and crises.

This e-journal is a celebration of all that EMRO nurses represent. The region's National Nurses Associations (NNAs) have created this journal, supported by the International Council of Nurses (ICN), as a platform to celebrate, connect, and amplify the voices of nurses throughout EMRO.

This International Nurses Day, under the theme "Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives," we honour the dedication of nurses in the region, recognizing their impact, and reaffirming our collective commitment to their empowerment, protection, and continued growth. These pages give voice to their experiences and expertise, share their stories, and shine a light on the extraordinary work happening across EMRO every day.

The digital format reflects our commitment to inclusive, innovative, and accessible communications and ensuring that the stories, achievements, and initiatives of nurses reach the widest possible audience – across borders, languages, and circumstances.

Opening message from HRH Princess Muna Al Hussein

- | WHO Patron for Nursing and Midwifery in the Eastern Mediterranean Region
- | Global Ambassador for ICN
- | Honorary Ambassador to Alzheimer's Disease International



On the International Nurses and Midwives Day, we honour the nurses and midwives of the Eastern Mediterranean Region – leaders whose strength, determination, and steadfast dedication uplift societies amid complex challenges and circumstances.

My dear nurses and midwives – my heroes – you are more than caregivers; you are architects of resilient health systems, champions of equity, and pillars of stability. You safeguard population health, reduce future burdens through prevention, and reinforce trust in times of uncertainty.

Your role is essential to sustainable progress and must be fully recognized and supported through decisive investment, enabling policies, and strengthened nursing and midwifery leadership and education. Healthcare and technology advancement require nursing and midwifery empowerment and representation at all levels of policymaking.

Indeed, no nation can achieve universal health coverage without an empowered nursing and midwifery workforce. This is a defining moment for governments to act.

I thank all our great nurses and midwives, and I extend my sincere appreciation to nurses and midwives around the world, as well as to WHO/EMRO, ICN, ICM, NNAs, GCNMOs, regulatory bodies, service providers, and academicians for their leadership and commitment to advancing and empowering the nursing and midwifery professions.

Dear nurses and midwives, with deep respect, I salute your leadership and enduring service and reaffirm my sincere and continued personal commitment to advancing and supporting nursing and midwifery professions at all levels.

You have always been and will be "My Heroes", Thank you

Foreword

| Dr José Luis Cobos Serrano
| ICN President



Across the Eastern Mediterranean Region, nurses continue to provide care in some of the most challenging and dangerous circumstances imaginable. Many are working in environments shaped by conflict, instability, and displacement, where health systems are under immense strain and the needs of communities are overwhelming. Yet as this e-journal shows, despite these conditions, the region's nurses remain steadfast in their commitment to care, often at great personal risk. We know that nurses do not only respond in times of crisis, they are essential to healing, recovery, and the restoration of peace.

On behalf of the International Council of Nurses, I want to reaffirm our unwavering support for National Nurses Associations, for nurses, and for all those affected by these crises. Through ICN's #NursesforPeace campaign and Humanitarian Fund, we directly support nursing in crisis situations and advocate at the highest levels for an end to violence and attacks on healthcare.

We stand in solidarity with you. Your courage, professionalism, and humanity embody the very best of our profession, and we will continue to raise your voices, work for your protection, and work to ensure you receive the support you need.

A message to EMRO nurses

| Dr Myrna Abi Abdallah Doumit

| ICN Board Representative, Eastern Mediterranean region



Dear EMRO nurses,

On the occasion of International Nurses Day, we stand united across the EMRO region, sharing the clear and powerful message that Empowered Nurses Save Lives. You demonstrate this in your lived reality every single day. In the face of war, instability, displacement, and unimaginable strain on health systems, you have not stepped back – you have stepped forward. You have remained at the bedside, in communities, in shelters, and in the most dangerous and uncertain environments, delivering care with courage, dignity, and unwavering commitment. You have carried not only the burden of care, but the weight of humanity itself.

We proudly recognize the critical role of all NNAs across the region, who have worked tirelessly to advocate for every nurse, to strengthen the profession, and to ensure that nursing remains visible, valued, and heard at the highest levels. Yet beyond the institutions, it is you, the nurses of the EMRO region, who have defined what true empowerment looks like. You have led under pressure, innovated under scarcity, and stood firm when everything around you was uncertain.

Let there be no doubt: you are the backbone of our health systems, the guardians of health and life, and the force that holds communities together in times of crisis. Your resilience is extraordinary, your voice is essential, and your role is indispensable.

On the occasion of International Nurses Day 2026, we want to do more than simply thank you – we honour you, we stand with you, and we call for your continued empowerment. Keep rising. Keep leading. Keep demanding the recognition, protection, and support you deserve. Because when nurses are empowered, lives are saved, systems are strengthened, and futures are rebuilt.

As your representative on the ICN Board, I feel immense pride in what you have achieved, especially under such extraordinarily challenging circumstances. I want to extend my deepest gratitude to each and every one of you. Your strength, commitment, and humanity inspire not only the region, but the global nursing community.

The voices of regional nursing leaders

**I A message from Prof Rowaida AlMaaitah, BSN, MPH, DrPH
I Former Senator and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research,
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan**



On the occasion of International Nurses Day, we honour our extraordinary nurses of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, including NNAs, government chief nursing and midwifery officers (GCNMOs), regulatory bodies, service providers, and academics. Their resilience, courage, and unwavering commitment sustain health systems under some of the most complex and demanding circumstances.

In times of conflict, economic uncertainty, and evolving health threats, our great nurses have stood on the frontlines, not only as caregivers, but as pillars of stability, compassion, and hope. Your contributions go far beyond service delivery; you are system leaders, equity champions, guardians of resilience, and drivers of progress toward healthier and more just societies.

Through your leadership and expertise, you strengthen health system resilience, deliver impact, and shape the future of health every day. As we mark this day with global, regional, and national partners, we reaffirm our commitment to elevating nursing, strengthening capacity, embracing digital innovation, and ensuring your voice informs policies and interventions that move us toward achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This demands political will, sustained investment, and cross-sector collaboration. Nurses must be recognized, resourced, and represented at all levels of decision-making.

United in voice and purpose, let us stand tall and affirm to all policymakers and leaders: nurses are the smartest and most strategic investment any nation can make.

With sincere appreciation, I thank all of our region's great nurses, and extend my gratitude to ICN, WHO EMRO, and to HRH Princess Muna Al Hussein (Patron for Nursing and Midwifery in the EMR and Global Ambassador for ICN) for their continued leadership, partnership, and unwavering commitment to advancing and empowering the nursing profession.

| A message from Dr Fatima Yousef AlRefai
| Emirates Nursing Association Board Member
| Former ICN Board Member



To every nurse across the Eastern Mediterranean region,

You are the heartbeat of our health systems – and today, we say that with full conviction.

Across EMRO, nurses are working in some of the world’s most demanding conditions, in regions touched by conflict, displacement, climate crises, workforce shortages, and growing health needs. Yet every day, in clinics and field hospitals, in communities and emergency wards, you show up. You save lives. You hold communities together.

The theme of this year’s International Nurses Day says it clearly: Empowered Nurses Save Lives. Nurse empowerment is not a gift – it is a right. It means safe workplaces free from violence and burnout. It means being resourced, recognized, and given the authority to practise to the full scope of your skills. It means your expertise shaping the policies and systems that affect the people you serve. And it means sustained investment in nursing education, because the future of healthcare runs through you.

Your courage in crisis. Your creativity in scarcity. Your compassion in every encounter. These matter more than words can express. You are answering the call of today’s urgent needs, but you are also laying the foundation for tomorrow’s healthier, more resilient region.

On International Nurses Day, 12 May 2026, we honour each of you and we renew our commitment to stand beside you with action, not just appreciation. “Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives.”

| A message from Dr Naeema Al Qasseer, PhD, BSc, MSc, FAAN

| Global Health and Sustainable Development

| Former WHO Senior Scientist for Nursing and Midwifery

| Advisor, Bahrain Nursing and Midwifery Society



I am radiating a message of positive energy and solidarity to nurses across the Eastern Mediterranean Region – all of you who lead from the frontlines in times of instability and disruption. I salute your commitment as you deliver care with courage, integrity, and accountability, often under the most challenging conditions, bringing solutions where they are most needed.

Your daily work represents the full nexus of care: you connect health with social support, trust, and hope. Your compassion and dedication not only sustains individual lives but supports the resilience of communities and the stability of societies.

My message is grounded in firsthand experience across humanitarian and development contexts in our region. I have witnessed how nurses uphold the humanitarian–development–peace nexus, where care and trust are the foundation of leadership. Your resilience is lived daily through action, judgment, and service.

As a nurse and midwife, I recognize that your role extends beyond service delivery. You embody the principles of humanity, impartiality, and respect for life. Your voice belongs at decision-making tables where policies are shaped and futures defined.

Continue to lead, with knowledge, ethical strength, and solidarity. You are not only caregivers; you are leaders, innovators, and builders of peace. Together, let us elevate nursing as a force that heals communities for equity, dignity, and lasting positive change.

The voice of EMRO NNAs Activities across the region

The following section features contributions from National Nurses Associations (NNAs) across the Eastern Mediterranean Region, in their own words. Each country entry includes a message from nursing leadership and a summary of important activities, initiatives, and achievements on the ground. Together, they provide a full, multidimensional snapshot of how nurses across the region are delivering care, strengthening health systems, and driving change, in diverse and often difficult conditions.



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OUR FUTURE.**

International Nurses Day 2026

Empowered Nurses Save Lives



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**International
Council of Nurses**

The global voice of nursing

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

I A message from Seham Alshaikh
I President, Bahrain Nursing & Midwifery Society



“In Bahrain, our nurses embody resilience and leadership, and through empowerment, they safeguard lives while shaping the future of healthcare for generations to come. The Bahrain Nursing and Midwifery Society stands united behind this year’s IND theme, affirming that empowered nurses are the guardians of health and the architects of a stronger, healthier nation.”

Activities

The Bahrain Nursing and Midwifery Society (BNMS) works closely with the government to **strengthen and advance the nursing profession**. It is committed to empowering the community through **impactful health education and awareness campaigns**. BNMS bridges generations of nurses, combining the expertise of experienced professionals with the energy of a younger workforce eager for growth. The Society supports professional development by offering training opportunities and promoting career progression across the Kingdom.

Nursing in Bahrain stands as a pillar of compassion, resilience, and professional excellence within the healthcare system. Nurses consistently demonstrate dedication, particularly during times of crisis, serving on the frontlines of care. Their role extends beyond clinical practice to include advocacy, education, and leadership in improving public health outcomes. **During recent regional events, Bahrain activated its National Emergency Preparedness Plan, with nurses playing a key role in translating policy into coordinated action across healthcare settings.** BNMS has provided a strong platform for unity, ensuring nurses’ voices are heard and their contributions recognized. Through its initiatives, it promotes ethical standards, collaboration, and resilience, empowering nurses to actively engage with communities and contribute to a healthier future for all.



ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT



I A message from Dr Kawther Mahmoud Mahmoud I President, Egyptian Nursing Syndicate



“Our nurses are the first line of defense and the true difference-makers in patients’ lives; investing in their empowerment is a direct investment in the future of health. When we empower nurses with knowledge, support, and leadership, we not only advance the profession – we save lives and build a stronger, more sustainable healthcare system”

Activities

Egypt has witnessed **a significant transformation in the nursing profession** in recent years, driven by strong and consistent support from the political leadership. His Excellency the President of the Republic has placed notable emphasis on empowering nurses, reflected in my appointment to the Egyptian Senate, which has **strengthened the profession’s representation in national decision-making**.

This support has extended to enhancing the image of nursing and improving financial and moral incentives as well as comprehensive administrative, financial, and scientific backing. Families of fallen nursing heroes have been honoured and outstanding role models recognized, including the honouring of a nursing supervisor in North Sinai by the First Lady.

The period has also seen clear support from Ministers of Health, demonstrated through their participation in International Nurses Day and by **enabling nurses to assume leadership roles** within the Ministry of Health and population, particularly in infection control, quality, and internal audit.

I have also had the privilege of participating in presidential events and contributing to legislative efforts aimed at ensuring safe working environments and strengthening legal protections for nurses, including the Medical Liability Law. These efforts reaffirm **the vital role of nursing in Egypt’s healthcare system**.



HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

I A message from Dr Abdullah Haymour
I Board Member, Jordan Nurses and Midwives Council (JNMC)



“Not all heroes wear capes – some wear scrubs. Happy International Nurses Day to the incredible men and women on the front lines. Your courage and compassion define the true meaning of care.”

Activities

The Nursing Stars 2026 award, organized by the Jordan Nurses and Midwives Council, is **a prestigious national initiative designed to foster a culture of excellence, innovation, and evidence-based practice within the healthcare sector.** The award features five distinct categories, including best published scientific research, quality improvement projects in hospitals and health centres, specialized midwifery initiatives, and a dedicated prize for creative innovations in technology and AI. Open to registered members who have fulfilled their 2026 subscriptions, the competition requires participants to submit a comprehensive PDF application between April 18 and April 25, 2026, showcasing measurable impact through performance indicators or indexed publications. With a total prize fund of \$12,350, the award honours three winners per category – offering \$1,410 for first place, \$705 for second, and \$352.5 for third – alongside honorary shields and certificates. The winners will be celebrated during a grand official ceremony held under the royal patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Muna Al-Hussein serving as **a premier professional platform to recognize the vital role of nurses and midwives** in advancing Jordan's sustainable health quality.



ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

I A message from Ahmad Nejatian I President, Iranian Nursing Organization



“Nurses are the backbone of healthcare systems, demonstrating remarkable resilience and adaptability of health systems. Crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, and conflicts highlights the necessity for policymakers to recognize their contributions and invest in their education, well-being, recruitment and retention to strengthen health systems and ensure readiness for future health emergencies to save lives.”

Activities

Iran has endured two imposed wars within a single year, significantly impacting many infrastructures, including health facilities. During the most recent conflict, numerous hospitals and health facilities were destroyed, along with ambulances, resulting in the tragic loss of 11 nurses. Despite these challenges, Iranian nurses have demonstrated remarkable bravery and self-sacrifice, working on the front lines of health services under constant bombardment. While the war inflicted considerable damage, it has also fostered a profound sense of public solidarity and strengthened the social capital of the nursing profession.

The images below show the appreciation of Nurses by the President of Iran on National Nurses Day; an interview by Press TV with the INO President in the destroyed Hospital in Tehran; a meeting of nursing managers of provinces and INO officials with the Health Minister of Iran; and INO leadership speaking in the Parliament Health Committee.



LEBANESE REPUBLIC



I A message from Abir Kurdi Alame I President, Order of Nurses in Lebanon



“Our nurses in Lebanon are not only resilient, they are making the difference every day. Through their unwavering presence, commitment, compassion and courage even in the face of danger, they have proven that nurses save lives. Empowering them means sustaining this impact, because “Empowered nurses always save lives.”

Activities

In Lebanon, nurses across all healthcare settings have demonstrated **exceptional commitment, resilience, and leadership, particularly amid ongoing crises**. They remain on the frontlines, responding to mass casualties while working under extremely unsafe conditions, often exposed to direct threats targeting healthcare professionals and facilities. Despite being displaced or relocating their families to safety, many nurses have continued their duties, sometimes residing in hospitals near active conflict zones. Throughout these challenges, they have preserved the core values of nursing – compassionate, humane, and patient-centred care.

In this context, **the Order of Nurses in Lebanon has played a vital leadership role. It has supported workforce mobilization by identifying displaced nurses’ needs, facilitating their redeployment, and strengthening national surge capacity**. Through active advocacy and coordination, the Order has engaged with ministries, parliamentarians, NGOs, and key stakeholders to align national response efforts.

The organization has also prioritized nurse well-being by contributing to mental health initiatives, offering psychosocial support, and promoting continuous communication with nurse leaders. In addition, it has **enhanced capacity building** through specialized clinical trainings and preparedness programmes. Ongoing outreach efforts have ensured continuous support for nurses across regions while engaging nursing students eager to contribute to national response efforts.



SULTANATE OF OMAN

| A message from Dr Yusra Al Nasiri
| President, Omani Nursing Association



“Our nurses are the foundation of a resilient healthcare system. By empowering them with knowledge, leadership, and opportunity, we secure a healthier future for all. Empowered nurses care, lead, innovate, and save lives. Our future depends on how strongly we support them today.”

Activities

We have organized many **hands-on training sessions (CPR sessions) using simulation-based learning** to enhance clinical competence and confidence.

We have also conducted various research workshops to encourage nurses to engage in research by offering **mentorship, proposal-development sessions**, and opportunities to present innovative projects at the Nursing Forum.

Moreover, we have led different awareness programmes and initiatives in the community (schools, malls, health centres) focusing on **prevention, health promotion, and the role of nurses in saving lives**.

In addition, we have involved nursing students through competitions, poster presentations, and training programmes to **build the next generation of empowered nurses**.



KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

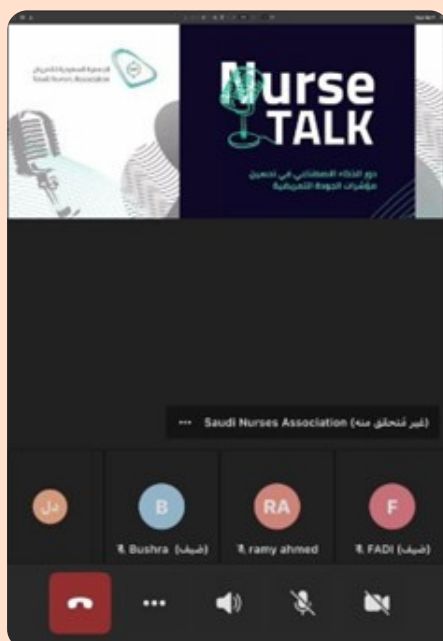
I A message from Dr Samia MUSAAD Almutairi
I Saudi Nurses Association
I Head of the Community Engagement and Public Relations Committee



“Nursing in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is witnessing **remarkable development, reflecting the strength of the healthcare system and its commitment to excellence.** The nursing staff stands out as a model of solidarity in facing health challenges and resilience in adapting to diverse clinical and humanitarian circumstances. Nurses have demonstrated their **leadership role** in improving the quality of healthcare, actively participating in decision-making, and fostering innovation in nursing practice. Saudi nursing continues to solidify its position as a cornerstone in achieving health sustainability, driven by an ambitious vision and ongoing investment in developing national talent.”

Activities

The Saudi Nurses Association conducted a webinar to highlight the role of nurses in advancing healthcare through innovation, leadership, and resilience. The session focused on improving clinical practice, enhancing decision-making in emergency settings, and promoting the use of technology in patient care.



REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN



I A message from Mowafag Hassan Hshim I President, Sudanese Nurses Organization



“On International Nurses Day 2026, under the theme ‘Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives’, I highlight the **urgent need to empower nurses as the backbone of resilient health systems**. This message is especially critical in our region, where ongoing **conflicts**, including in Sudan and Palestine, continue to **disrupt healthcare delivery and endanger both patients and healthcare workers**.

Upholding **international humanitarian law** is essential to ensure the protection of healthcare providers and enable them to serve safely and effectively. According to the World Health Organization, the global nursing workforce has grown by only 3%, emphasizing the urgent need for stronger investment in human resources for health.

We call for enhanced support for education and capacity-building initiatives for nurses and policymakers alike. Empowering nurses through education strengthens health systems, improves outcomes, and builds resilience. By investing in our nurses, we invest in a healthier, more secure future.

Happy International Nurses Day 2026: Our nurses, our future!”

Activities

In December 2025, the Sudanese Nursing Organization advanced healthcare leadership by launching an **endorsed Nursing Development Framework addressing education, workforce development, and career pathways** across seven key nursing sectors nationwide.

In celebration of IND2026, SNO plans to **conduct community outreach** to celebrate IND, to recommit to our role and to remind our community we are there for them. We will also conduct generational dialogue with the old generation of nurse leaders in Sudan, alongside the big celebration with our nurse members.



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



I A message from Dr Sumaya Mohamed AlBlooshi I President, Emirates Nursing Association



“On the occasion of International Nurses Day 2026, under the theme Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives, I extend my sincere appreciation to the International Council of Nurses for providing this meaningful platform to unite the voices of nurses across EMRO, strengthening our shared vision, deepening collaboration, and amplifying our collective impact. We also recognize the inspiring support of Princess Muna Al Hussein, whose enduring commitment continues to champion nursing and midwifery across the region.

This e-journal stands as a tribute to nurses who give so much every single day. It reflects a profession that is not only at the heart of care, but at the forefront of change – shaping systems, advancing knowledge, and leading with purpose. Because when nurses are empowered, lives are saved, systems are strengthened, and the future of healthcare is transformed.

To all nurses across the UAE, I extend my deepest gratitude for your unwavering commitment, resilience, and compassion. Every day, you make a profound difference, touching lives, improving outcomes, and strengthening communities.”

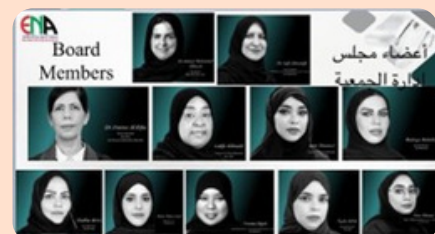
Activities

In the United Arab Emirates, the nursing profession continues to advance with remarkable progress and excellence. Through the leadership and dedication of the Emirates Nursing Association, nurses have achieved **significant milestones in professional development, education, research, and leadership**. These efforts not only elevate standards of practice but have also empowered nurses to take their rightful place as influential leaders within a world-class healthcare system.

We have hosted events including the Nursing Informatics Conference, focusing on digital skills in healthcare; the Effective Communication in Nursing Workshop; and the Operating Room Nursing Seminar. We organized the 21st UAE Critical Care Conference and the 1st National Diabetes Educators Conference.

We have launched Sanad wa Rahma first aid initiative in schools across all UAE emirates (75% improvement in emergency readiness) and delivered first aid workshops. We have also launched the ENA Excellence Award to recognize outstanding nurses and midwives and the Emergency & Disaster Nursing Division document.

In line with the IND 2026 theme and the UAE “Year of the Family,” a series of regional activities will promote nursing innovation and family-centred care. These include showcasing innovative nursing projects across the national level, expanding telehealth initiatives to enhance access for families, and conducting capacity-building programmes focused on continuous professional development, with a special emphasis on mental health and wellbeing initiatives for nurses and families, as well as strengthening community engagement.



Afterword

| Howard Catton

| ICN Chief Executive Officer



What we see in the Eastern Mediterranean Region reflects the broader global reality: nurses are at the forefront of every crisis, every conflict, and every effort to rebuild. They hold health systems together when they are at their most fragile and they witness firsthand the human cost of violence and instability. This is why world's 30 million nurses are such a powerful force in calling for peace and why ICN's [#NursesforPeace](#) campaign works to amplify the voices and experiences of nurses affected by conflict and to advocate for their support and protection.

This year's International Nurses Day report, *Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives*, highlights the "power of peace" as one of the defining strengths of our profession. Peace is absolutely fundamental to health, to safety, and to the ability of nurses to do their work. When we invest in nurses, protect them, and empower them to lead, we are also investing in more stable, resilient, and peaceful societies. Supporting nurses is not only the right thing to do, it is one of the most effective ways to build a healthier and more peaceful world.

Acknowledgement

On behalf of the EMRO NNAs, we would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the Emirates Nursing Association for its outstanding efforts in consolidating and collecting the information for this e-journal in a professional and timely manner. Your dedication, coordination, and commitment to excellence have made this publication a valuable platform for sharing knowledge, highlighting achievements, and strengthening collaboration among nurses across the region.

We also wish to express our deep gratitude to the International Council of Nurses (ICN) for its continuous support and commitment to advancing the nursing profession. Together, your contributions play a vital role in amplifying the voice of nursing and fostering development at both regional and international levels.

Contact us at media@icn.ch