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SBMS statement on the Messenia, Greece boat disaster which occurred on 14th June 2023, in which hundreds lost their lives

The Syrian British Medical Society (SBMS) is profoundly saddened following the reports of the recent incident off the coast of Pylos, Messenia in which hundreds of people, including women and children, are feared dead or missing. **We speak with a unified voice in expressing our deep sorrow over the tragic consequences of the event.** Our hearts go out to all of those affected by this tragedy: the victims and their families, the survivors who have witnessed such unimaginable devastation, and all those involved in rescue efforts and the investigation. The survivors included Syrians, Pakistanis, Afghans, Egyptians, and Palestinians, many fleeing armed conflict and hardship.

In the face of such suffering, it is not enough for us to simply express our sympathy. We need to make our voice heard and speak up to advocate for meaningful and lasting solutions to prevent such incidents in the future. **SBMS calls on the international community to come together to anchor human rights and asylum law in the Mediterranean, to provide adequate search and rescue operations and assistance to those in distress, and to ensure the safety of those seeking protection in Europe.**

At this time, we recognize the need for compassion and support for those who have been directly affected by this incident and we urge governments to ensure that victims' rights are upheld, that survivors have appropriate access to medical care and psychological support, and that victims' families are able to access the necessary assistance and support.

SBMS stands in solidarity with those affected by this tragedy and will continue to call on the international community to take effective action to prevent such disastrous events from taking place in the future.

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20th June 2023