



FACT SHEET | MERCY SHIPS OVERVIEW



Mercy Ships, founded in 1978, operates hospital ships that deliver **free surgeries** and other healthcare services to those with little access to surgical care. An international faith-based organisation, Mercy Ships has focused on partnering with African nations for the past three decades. Working with in-country partners, Mercy Ships also provides **education and training across the surgical ecosystem** to strengthen healthcare systems and leave a lasting impact.



A SURGICAL FLEET

Mercy Ships bases its work from its two hospital ships, the **Africa Mercy®**, which went into service in 2007, and the **Global Mercy™**—the world's first purpose-built civilian hospital ship—which began serving African nations in 2022. Each year, more than **2,500 volunteer professionals** from over **60 countries** serve on board a Mercy Ship, including surgeons, dentists, nurses, teachers, cooks, engineers, and others who dedicate their time and skills to accelerate access to safe surgical, obstetric, and anaesthetic care.

Mercy Ships focuses on the areas of sub-Saharan Africa where, according to the 2015 Lancet Commission on Global Surgery study, at least **90% of the population lacks access to safe, affordable, and timely surgery¹**. Since 1990, Mercy Ships has served 14 African nations through 45 field services.

TWO PROGRAMMATIC PILLARS



Direct Medical Services

Mercy Ships provides safe, free surgeries on board its hospital ships, focusing on seven surgical specialties: maxillofacial/head and neck; reconstructive plastics; paediatric orthopaedic; general; paediatric; ophthalmic; and women's health.



Education, Training, and Advocacy

Mercy Ships focuses on long-term, sustainable education and training for healthcare professionals, working to create lasting impact by increasing surgical capacity in host nations.

MERCY SHIPS' LEGACY SINCE 1978*



122,000+
life-changing surgical procedures



556,900+
dental procedures



55,500+
professionals trained in their area of expertise



2.88 million+
direct beneficiaries

¹Global Surgery 2030 | *as of Dec 2024, includes ship- and land-based programmes.





FACT SHEET | SIERRA LEONE



MERCY SHIPS AND SIERRA LEONE

The *Global Mercy*™ arrived in Sierra Leone for her first full-length field service in August 2023. The purpose-built hospital ship will remain in the Port of Freetown through June 2026, with breaks for maintenance. In addition to providing surgeries, Mercy Ships is working closely with national partners to strengthen Sierra Leone's surgical and anesthetic systems. Healthcare professionals will receive in-depth training and mentorship across areas like nurse anesthesia, biomedical technology, and ophthalmology. The Mercy Ships team works in collaboration with the leadership of Sierra Leone, alongside partners like Connaught Hospital in Freetown, the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons, and the West African College of Surgeons.



Anastasis
1992 – 1993
2001 – 2002
2002 – 2003
2003 – 2004



Africa Mercy
2011



Global Mercy
2023 – 2024
2024 – 2025
2025 – 2026

HISTORY

The first Mercy Ship, the *Anastasis*, visited Sierra Leone in 1992. She planned to return soon, but a devastating civil war kept the ship away for a decade.

After the war, Mercy Ships returned for three field services in a row, from 2001 to 2004, and again in 2011. In addition to performing surgeries, volunteers partnered with the community as they rebuilt what had been lost: fitting prosthetic limbs, repairing wells, and offering training to people whose lives and education had been paused by the conflict.

Mercy Ships also built, established, and ran the Aberdeen Women's Center (AWC), now owned by Freedom From Fistula, which continues to provide free obstetric fistula surgeries and training.

MERCY SHIPS' LEGACY IN SIERRA LEONE*



16,000+
life-changing surgical procedures



62,220+
dental procedures



16,170+
professionals trained in their area of expertise



315,500+
direct beneficiaries

*as of Dec 2024



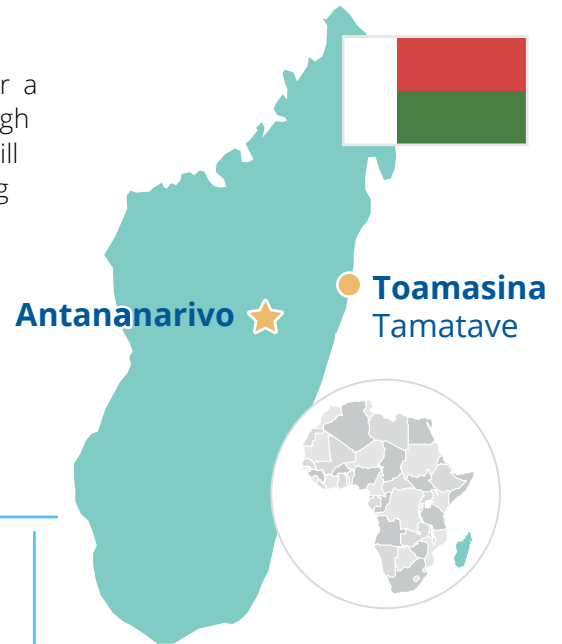


FACT SHEET | MADAGASCAR



MERCY SHIPS AND MADAGASCAR

The *Africa Mercy*® arrived in Toamasina in February 2024, and after a short maintenance break, will serve the people of Madagascar through December 2025. During the ten-month field service, Mercy Ships will provide direct medical services and continue to develop a strong Education, Training, and Advocacy (ETA) program in partnership with local hospitals and healthcare professionals. Mercy Ships will also continue to invest in Madagascar's healthcare system, working with the government and the Ministry of Health to identify training and mentoring opportunities to help strengthen local surgical and anesthetic systems.



Anastasis
1996



Africa Mercy
2014 – 2015
2015 – 2016
2024
2025

HISTORY

The first Mercy Ship, the *Anastasis*, docked in Toamasina, Madagascar, in 1996. Then, starting in 2014, the *Africa Mercy*® returned for two back-to-back field services.

Madagascar's rugged terrain means that transportation is often a barrier to surgical access for rural populations. In response, during the 2015 – 16 field service, Mercy Ships began traveling to remote areas to seek out patients instead of hosting all patient selection events in the port city. Mercy Ships has continued using this model moving forward.

In 2015, Mercy Ships established an obstetric fistula clinic to provide free care for women suffering from this condition. The clinic was later handed over to Freedom From Fistula, who continue to run it today.

In 2021, Mercy Ships supported Madagascar's pandemic response by donating emergency Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as well as working with local nonprofits to support several ongoing humanitarian projects.

MERCY SHIPS' LEGACY IN MADAGASCAR*



7,510+
life-changing surgical procedures



56,860+
dental procedures



2,050+
professionals trained in their area of expertise



85,790+
direct beneficiaries

*as of Dec 2024



mercyships.africa