



HIGHLIGHTS

- A technical team headed by WHO Representative a.i. in Syria conducted a 2-day mission to Deir-ez-Zor governorate to assess the health situation on the ground and support the ongoing Oral Cholera Vaccines (OCV) campaign. During the mission, meetings were held with Deir-ez-Zor health officials to follow up on the coordinated health response and challenges within the current cholera outbreak context. The team also visited Al-Assad hospital, the WHO-supported microbiological lab, and the Public Health Department which deliver EPI and surveillance services.
- 3 759 health staff were trained in different intervention areas through 124 capacity-building activities.
- More than 190 tonnes of medical, laboratory, and nutritional supplies; kits; PPEs; and cholera-related response supplies including oral rehydration salts (ORS), IV fluids, water purification tablets, haemodialysis sessions, and printed IEC materials were dispatched to 22 MoH facilities, 8 MoHE hospitals, 12 NGOs, 7 INGOs, 17 NGHS, 5 NGPHCs, SARC and KRC.

Oral cholera vaccine (OCV) campaign in Al- Hassakeh governorate in northeast Syria

Health Operational Update

Disease Surveillance and Outbreak Response

- 1 240 out of 1 500 sentinel sites are reporting weekly with 68% completeness and 89% timeliness. The decrease in the completeness of reporting is due to end-of-year official holidays, and the fuel shortage needed for transportation.
- 80% of alerts are responded to within 72 hours.

Cholera outbreak at the WoS level

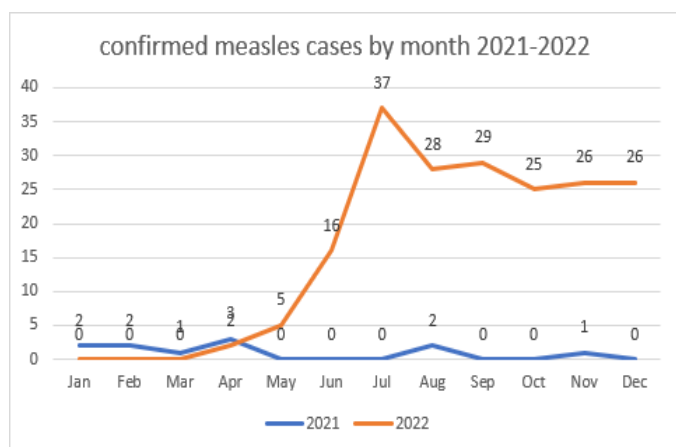
- The first cholera case was detected on 22 August 2022 in Aleppo and was confirmed on 25 August 2022.
- By the end of December 2022, the Ministry of Health (MoH), EWARN system in Northwest Syria (NWS), and health partners in Northeast Syria (NES) reported a total of 70 220 acute watery diarrhea (AWD)/suspected cholera cases, including 98 associated deaths at a case fatality rate of 0.14%. Of the 4 454 samples tested with rapid diagnostic tests, 1 886 have tested positive. The overall proportion of RDT-positive cases is 42.3%. To date, 3 336 stool samples have been cultured, of which 868 have tested positive for Vibrio Cholera. The positivity rate is 26%.
- All 14 governorates in Syria reported AWD cases as well as confirmed cholera cases as per the table:

Governorate	Suspected Cases (AWD)	Attack Rate (%)	RDTs	Positive RDTs	Culture + Tests	Attributed Deaths	CFR%
Deir Ez-Zor	14,051	0.34	1945	1,025	229	43	0.31%
Ar-Raqqa	2,709	0.23	619	111	23	4	0.15%
Aleppo	14,379	1.87	349	74	97	10	0.07%
Al-Hassakeh	81	0.02	83	26	2	0	0.00%
Idleb	41	0.00	99	20	10	1	2.44%
Lattakia	22	0.00	18	5	-	0	0.00%
Damascus	20,593	2.64	703	418	100	24	0.12%
Hama	164	0.01	160	42	39	1	0.61%
As-Sweida	57	0.00	55	28	23	1	1.75%
Rural Damascus	17,788	0.63	155	8	327	14	0.08%
Homs	183	0.01	162	98	12	0	0.00%
Dara'a	17	0.02	23	4	1	0	0.00%
Quneitra	109	0.00	55	17	3	0	0.00%
Tartous	28	0.00	28	10	2	0	0.00%
Total	70,222	0.33	4,454	1,886	868	98	0.14%

Measles cases

- During December, a total of 815 suspected measles cases were reported through the EWARS system in 12 governorates; a 2.7% decrease in the number of reported measles cases compared to November.

- During the month, 26 cases were confirmed as follows: Al-Hassakeh (9), Aleppo (7), Ar-Raqqa (5), Homs (1), Deir-ez-Zor (1), Quneitra (1), Damascus (1), and Rural Damascus (1).



- During 2022, there was an overall increase in the number of measles cases since May with a total of 194 confirmed cases compared only with 11 cases in 2021.

Children deaths of Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI)

Between 14th and 31st December 2022, a total of 106 SARI cases were reported from Ar-Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zor, mostly in children and among which 17 deaths in children under 7 have been reported. In response, WHO enhanced surveillance, initiated sample collection, and testing, and launched a verbal autopsy process.

In Ar-Raqqa

- 12 specimens (nasopharyngeal swabs) and 3 blood samples were collected from SARI cases and were sent to the central public health laboratory (CPHL). The results were as follows:
 - Six cases tested positive for influenza B.
 - Two cases tested positive for influenza H1N1.
 - Two specimens out of three tested positive for measles.

In Deir-ez-Zor

- In eastern Deir-ez-Zor, 12 specimens were collected (nasopharyngeal swabs), and the results came out positive for influenza B in two of the cases.

- In western Deir-ez-Zor, 7 samples from SARI cases were taken, where the results came out to be H1N1 positive for three of the cases.

Trauma

- Over 93 237 treatments of life-saving medicines, 24 trauma and emergency surgery kits (TESK), and different types of medical equipment/supplies (126 oxygen concentrators, 5 patient beds, 100 pulse oximeters, and 1 134 venturi masks with percent O2) were delivered to health partners in Damascus, Aleppo, Hama, Ar-Raqqa, Al-Hassakeh, and Deir-ez-Zor. These deliveries are part of enhancing the capacity of public health facilities to deliver timely, appropriate life-saving interventions.
- 633 persons with disability benefited from different types of assistive devices delivered to health partners across the country.
- 75 health workers from Damascus received training in the field of disability and rehabilitation at the MoH Centre of Prosthetics and Rehabilitation in Damascus.
- 11 training courses were conducted in 6 governorates (Homs, Idleb, Aleppo, As-Sweida, Quneitra, and Lattakia) through which 275 health professionals from MoH received training on cholera case management, standard case definition, and infection prevention and control (IPC) standards for cholera treatment centers and units (CTC/CTUs).

Primary Health Care

- WHO Participated in the Primary Health Care (PHC) Conference held in Tartous governorate on 1-2 December 2022. Different topics were discussed, including the progress achieved at the public health level based on specific indicators, and the way forward to achieve Universal Health Care (UHC) and 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The strategies needed to enhance PHC accreditation standards, sectoral response, human resources, and legislation to sustain basic PHC within the context of SARS-CoV-2 and emerging diseases were also covered during the conference. Consolidated recommendations were drafted to be reviewed and endorsed by the Minister of Health.
- WHO conducted a coordination meeting with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MOSAL) to discuss the collaboration in 2023 with a focus on PHC, non-communicable diseases (NCDs), elderly health,

reproductive health (RH), disability, and gender-based violence (GBV).

- WHO facilitated the participation of MoH focal points in the Global and Regional Technical Meeting on addressing NCDs in emergencies. A presentation on the NCD status, challenges, and way forward at the country level was presented.

Secondary Health Care

To sustain safe healthcare service delivery, personal protection equipment (PPE), and infection, prevention, and control (IPC) supplies were dispatched to different health partners including the Ministry of Health across the country. Overall, 472 300 masks, 62 500 FFP2 masks, 2 187 500 examination gloves, and 24 500 bottles of alcohol hand sanitizer were distributed.

Nutrition and Child Health

- In November 2022, 83 096 U5 children were screened for malnutrition in 941 health centres across the country.
- 1 899 cases of global acute malnutrition were detected (479 severe and 1 420 moderate).
- To improve the well-being of caregivers of children with malnutrition and in line with evidence-based approaches, WHO supported the Ministry of Health in Syria, to conduct a 2-day workshop on integrating MHPSS services with the Nutrition Program. During the workshop, more than 40 active health professionals convened and were updated with the methods and tool kits needed to start implementing the integrated program in 2023.



WHO -MoH workshop on integrating MHPSS services with the Nutrition Program

Mental Health (MH)

- The current mental health coverage through mhGAP & psychological programs at the primary health care

PHCs level has risen to 48.9 % across Syria, with around 8% increase at the school's level.

- In cooperation with the mental health (MH) unit at MoH, WHO conducted a workshop at the central level where MH focal points reviewed the MH strategy, and updated MH indicators and M&E tools, in addition to the psychosocial support indicators.
- With WHO support the health directorate at the Ministry of Education will launch a new psychological program for children with mental conditions and their caregivers. The preparation for nationwide campaigns is in the process to be implemented in the first and second quarters of 2023.
- # MHPSS services delivered at the community level: 1 643 in 75 locations, through a partnership with 2 NGOs in NES.

Communicable Diseases

- WHO attended and facilitated the participation of MoH representatives in the regional orientation workshop on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and HIV self-testing (HIVST), conducted on 13 - 14 December 2022 in Amman. During the workshop, the National AIDS Program (NAP) presented its experience in implementing PrEP for 100 persons living with HIV-positive partners.
- Through the Global Fund support, WHO delivered 20 000 HIV rapid tests to NAP at MoH.
- WHO also delivered a full set of medical and IT equipment, as well as furniture, to the two MoH medical points established with WHO support at Jedeideit Yabous ground crossing in Rural Damascus and Jouseih ground crossing in Homs.
- Finally, WHO supported MoH to finalize the Leishmaniasis guidelines and conducted capacity-building training for the program staff.

Communication

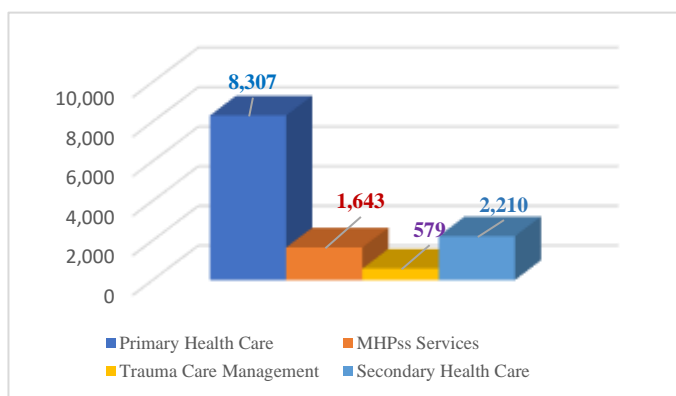
- WHO designed and disseminated a flyer about the oral cholera vaccine (OCV) and possible OCV side effects. The flyer was disseminated in targeted governorates to promote vaccine acceptance and ensure that the public's concerns about OCV were answered. The flyer was also printed for further distribution among MoH vaccination and communication teams.
- WHO's Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) team amplified social media

messages on oral cholera vaccines, including their safety and effectiveness, highlighting the ongoing cholera vaccination campaign taking place in selected governorates. [Link](#)

- The communications team provided visibility coverage to WHO’s field mission to Deir-ez-Zor which included meeting with health officials, field visits, and follow-up on the OCV campaign, [Link](#)
- WHO also developed and published an article on WHO’s response to leishmaniasis, [Link](#).
- In cooperation with MoH, WHO conducted two capacity-building workshops for 60 media professionals on health threats, including COVID-19 and cholera.

Community Engagement (NGOs)

- Five contracted NGOs are providing primary and secondary healthcare services to people in need in underserved areas. NGOs are supporting 6 fixed health facilities, one hospital, and 2 mobile medical teams in Homs, Rural Damascus, and Al-Hasakeh, governorates.
- WHO partners provided 12 739 healthcare services:



Pharmacy

- 50 pharmacists received training of trainers (ToT) to enhance their capacities, especially in the areas of quality control and pharmaceutical affairs.
- 90 healthcare workers received training in pharmacovigilance to enhance the quality of reporting.
- WHO also conducted two meetings with MoH to discuss the objective and agenda for the Logistic Management Information System (LMIS) activity.

Health Systems

- On 8 December 2022, WHO conducted the first meeting with the national inter-ministerial committee to review the national essential health services package. Directors from the Ministry of Health and representatives from other ministries met to discuss the way forward to review and refine the national essential health services package drafted in 2019. WHO’s Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) supported with a presentation on health benefit packages and how to design them. The work plan and way forward will be drafted in January to be agreed upon by all concerned parties.
- On 4 and 19 December, WHO participated in two advocacy workshops conducted in cooperation with the Syrian Commission on Family Affairs and Population on the SDGs, with a focus on goal 3 “Good Health and Well-being” and goal 5 “Gender Equality”. The national commitments of the Nairobi population conference were presented, in addition to discussing the role of professional societies (Obstetrics, Gynaecology, and Paediatrics Association) in reducing maternal and child mortality. Moreover, the commitment to decrease early marriages, as a form of GBV, was discussed with selected NGOs to be reflected within potential interventions and better coordination mechanisms.

Health Sector Coordination

- A three-day field mission was conducted to Aleppo governorate. The visit included meetings with the Director of Health, the Director of SARC Aleppo, the sub-national health sector coordinator, WHO and UNICEF. The following sites were visited: conflict-affected communities of eastern Aleppo, Salah Ed-Din PHC, Boutan Al-Qaser PHC, Al- Shawaf elementary school (in Saif Ad-Dawla), Zahi Azrah Public Hospital, Field DoH hospital, the site of Aleppo pediatric hospital and ophthalmology hospital. Key recommendations were developed for follow-up by the health sector.
- Produced 2 weekly AWD/cholera (Health, WASH, RCCE sectors) Syria situation reports, 1-7 December, 8 -15 December.
- Reviewed 31 health sector projects submitted under 2023 HRP (initial funding requirement amounts to 70 million USD)

- Reviewed and provided inputs for the 2023 Health Sector Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and strategy.
- Finalized health sector contingency plan for north Syria as part of a broader inter-sector plan.
- Updated health sector coverage mapping of partners' direct service provision (mobile medical teams, fixed health points/centers, community centers) at a sub-national level.
- Conducted 2 national health sector coordination meetings in Damascus on 6 and 20 December 2022.
- Updated the health sector with a detailed list of NES-related operational issues.
- Finalized and disseminated Health Sector Syria 2022 CCPM report.
- Followed up on coverage of OCV in 4 top affected governorates.
- Provided health sector inputs on the impact of fuel on health sector service provision.
- Updated interested health sector partners on COVID-19 priorities in NES.
- Shared Syria inputs for high-level collective reflections in 2022 under WoS.

WHO Syria Sub-Offices

Aleppo

- To highlight the 2022 World Antimicrobial Awareness Week "WAAW" theme "Preventing antimicrobial resistance together", WHO supported 2 workshops in Aleppo with more than 250 doctors to enhance their understanding of antimicrobial resistance and encourage the prudent use of antimicrobials.
- The oral cholera vaccination campaign has been concluded in the high-risk areas in Aleppo governorate reaching all targeted populations. 350 000 people were reached during the campaign's ten days.

Lattakia

- To strengthen AWD/cholera coordination and response in the governorates of Lattakia and Tartous, WHO implemented the following:
 - Enhanced active surveillance by supporting 4 rapid response teams (RRTs) in Lattakia and 3 RRTs in Tartous.
 - Provision of essential health supplies to the cholera treatment centers, and supporting the collection and transportation of samples to the lab, in addition to different RCCE activities through which more than 7 400 IEC materials were distributed.
- At the community level, WHO supported 13 training courses in Lattakia and Tartous for 325 health and community workers under different intervention areas including nutrition, primary health care, mental health, trauma, and health information system.

- WHO conducted a rapid health assessment for several HeRAMS health facilities in Lattakia and Tartous.

Homs

- The WHO-supported Al-Afia Fund NGO in Homs governorate provided 962 haemodialysis sessions to the most vulnerable groups in Homs and its countryside.
- WHO conducted a rapid health assessment for HeRAMS health facilities covering 48 PHCs in Homs governorate and 59 PHCs in Hama.
- WHO assessed the Water Resource Directorate's needs for training and lab supplies in Homs and Hama governorates.

Deir-ez-Zor

- The OCV campaign has been concluded in the Deir-ez-Zor governorate with 750 000 doses administered in areas with high AWD/Cholera cases.
- WHO conducted assessment visits to the health facilities that treat AWD/cholera cases to follow up on the quality of IPC measures and identify the needs.
- A technical team headed by WHO Representative in Syria a.i. conducted a 2-day mission to Deir-ez-Zor governorate to assess the health situation on the ground and support the ongoing OCV campaign. During the mission, meetings were held with Deir-ez-Zor health officials and health partners to follow up on the coordinated health response, and challenges within the current cholera outbreak context. The team also, visited Al-Assad hospital, the WHO-supported

microbiological lab, and the Public Health Department which deliver EPI and surveillance service. In addition, the team visited Al Mayadeen hospital to follow up on the rehabilitation works being implemented with WHO support and evaluate the process of work.



WHO Representative is taking part on the OCV campaign in Dier-ez-Zor governorate

Qamishli Hub / Northeast Syria (NES)

- On 5 December, WHO team conducted a mission to Al-Hassakeh DoH to discuss the planned OCV campaign in the governorate and provide the needed support.
- WHO, in cooperation with the DOH, conducted field visits to the OCV vaccination locations, including Al-Hol camp, to follow up on the ongoing process of the campaign.
- In Al-Hassakeh, the OCV campaign was launched on 20 December targeting the > 1-year-old population in 5 locations (Al-Hassakeh city, Tal Berak, Al-Hol camp, Al-Areesha camp, and Markadah). 57 mobile teams and 8 fixed sites were mobilized for the campaign.
- In Ar-Raqqa, the OCV campaign was concluded with 87% coverage of the set targeted population while in Al-Hassakeh, the campaign was extended into early January 2023 to complete all activities.
- During December, more than 4 436 beneficiaries were reached by RCCE sessions through which more than 4 582 IEC materials were distributed.
- Conducted several awareness-raising sessions:
 - 822 sessions were delivered through EWARS focal points and WHO implementing partners at camps and hospital levels. More than 4166 beneficiaries were reached.
 - Offered online sessions targeting 7 health partners in NES.

- WHO, in cooperation with UNICEF, conducted 10 training courses on case management associated with RCCE components targeting camps' health workers in Ar-Raqqa and Al-Hassakeh.
- 20 000 IEC materials were distributed to 8 partners and stakeholders in Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and eastern DEZ.
- WHO conducted a series of capacity-building exercises covering different intervention areas, including nutrition surveillance, mental health, and cholera-related topics.
- In terms of supplies, the WHO
 - Distributed 58 tonnes of medicines to different health partners in NES: and
 - Received 4.5 tonnes of medical shipment, including IV Fluids, communicable diseases, medications, and consumables, sufficient to provide around 2 000 treatment courses.
- WHO-supported implementing partners are providing essential health services to the affected population in NES as follows:
 - a. Through an agreement with Al-Hikmeh Hospital, WHO is ensuring access to life-saving secondary healthcare services across NES. Within the reporting period, WHO supported the referral and care of 773 cases, including 498 trauma cases and 275 secondary cases.
 - b. With WHO support Siamese twins from the Tweina camp in NES were provided with incubator services and meningitis treatment in Al-Hikmeh Hospital.



Siamese twins from Tweina camp provided with the needed health services in Al-Hikmeh Hospital.

- c. In partnership with the Syria Association for Child Cancer Care and Treatment NGO in NES, WHO is providing PHC, secondary health care,

trauma, and MH services in 4 locations in NES, including Al Hol camp, Talhamis, and rural Al-Hassakeh through 4 PHC centers.

- d. In partnership with the PAN Arminian NGO, WHO is covering the health needs in NES through 2 PHCs and 2 mobile medical teams covering Qamishli city, Al-Hassakeh, and its rural areas.
- WHO is closely monitoring the services provided through its implementing partners by conducting regular field visits to assess the situation on the ground and provide the needed support.
- The WHO-supported centres for malnutrition treatment received 64 new cases in both Al-Hikmeh

and Al-Tabqa hospitals. 73 cases were discharged after being recovered.

- The post-campaign MR independent survey was conducted in Al-Hassakeh on 7-9 December through which 7 clusters were assessed.
- In NES, WHO continues to monitor drinking water quality within 11 main camps 34 collective shelters, drinking water stations, house tanks, and 37 boreholes.
- 45 000 Chlorine tablets NaDCC 1g were distributed targeting 35 000 beneficiaries in Al-Hassakeh City and its southern neighborhoods.

Northwest Syria (NWS)

Disease Surveillance and Outbreak Response

Surveillance and Early Warning

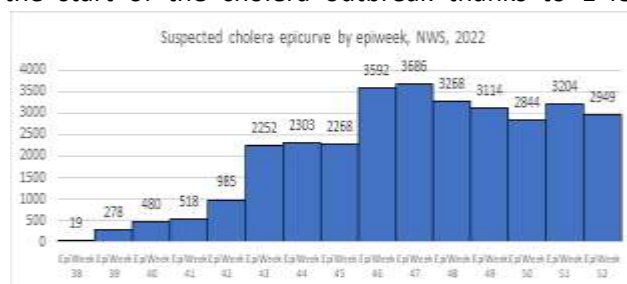
- During the reporting period of the epidemiological (epi) weeks 49-52, from the 4th to 31st of December, ACU's 225 sentinel surveillance centres in North-West Syria (NWS) recorded 700 064 consultations, and received 911 records, with 98.2% of completeness and 87.7% of timeliness; 883 reports were made with a total of 23 reported alerts, 17 were discarded after initial screening and 6 alerts were further verified with no new outbreaks detected during December.

Cholera outbreak

- Since the Early Warning, Alert, and Response Network (EWARN) laboratory in Jarablus confirmed the first cholera-positive case by culture in northwest Syria (NWS) on the 19th of September until the 31st of December 2022, a total of 31 760 AWD/suspected cholera cases (12 287 in Aleppo governorate, 19 473 in Idleb governorate), including 544 confirmed cases and 17 death cases, have been reported by EWARN. The highest number of cases was reported in Harim district (10 017 cases) and Idleb district (5 857 cases) in Idleb governorate, followed by Jarablus (3 135 cases) and Azaz districts (2 906 cases) in Aleppo governorate, with 5 844 total suspected cases reported from camps. By the end of epi week 52, the attack rate has reached 0.69% and the CFR has reached 0.05%. Since 19th September, 2 382 samples (8% of suspected cases) have been collected, of which 544 have been confirmed positive for *Vibrio Cholerae* by culture,

1 786 were found to be negative, and 52 are pending. Culture sensitivity results revealed sensitivity to azithromycin, imipenem, chloramphenicol, ciprofloxacin, and resistance to tetracycline, doxycycline, and sulfamethoxazole-trimethoprim. The samples collection protocol is 5-10 stool samples per subdistrict and 5 samples from the admitted cholera suspected cases in the CTC /CTU.

- RCCE partners have used various modalities to raise awareness about cholera prevention and reach the affected population in NWS including household visits to caregivers; community and religious leaders; awareness sessions (including at schools) and through social media platforms (Facebook, Telegram, YouTube, WhatsApp). Close to 24% of the population in NWS has been reached through RCCE activities since the start of the cholera outbreak thanks to 1 484



community health workers, social mobilizers, and camp managers trained by WHO and NGO partners.

Measles

- Since the beginning of 2022 and up till the end of epi week 52, ACU, the EWARN partner, has reported 5 603 suspected measles cases from Gaziantep's hub-

accessible areas of Idleb and Aleppo governorates of NWS, including 255 new cases during the month of December compared to 486 during the month of November.

Leishmaniasis Surveillance and case management

- During December 2022, ACU the surveillance partner reported 2 468 cutaneous leishmaniasis cases while The Mentor Initiative, the Leishmania management partner, reported on Visceral Leishmania (VL) as per the following: 5 VL cases were diagnosed in December

in NWS: 2 in Afrin, 2 in Harim, and 1 in Ariha. The total number of VL cases diagnosed in 2022 stands at 69 (32 females and 37 males). Most reported cases were from Idlib governorate, mainly from Harim District. The average time between the onset of symptoms and the start of the treatment was 21.4 days. All patients received Ambisome IV treatment, with no adverse side effects reported.

Operational Update

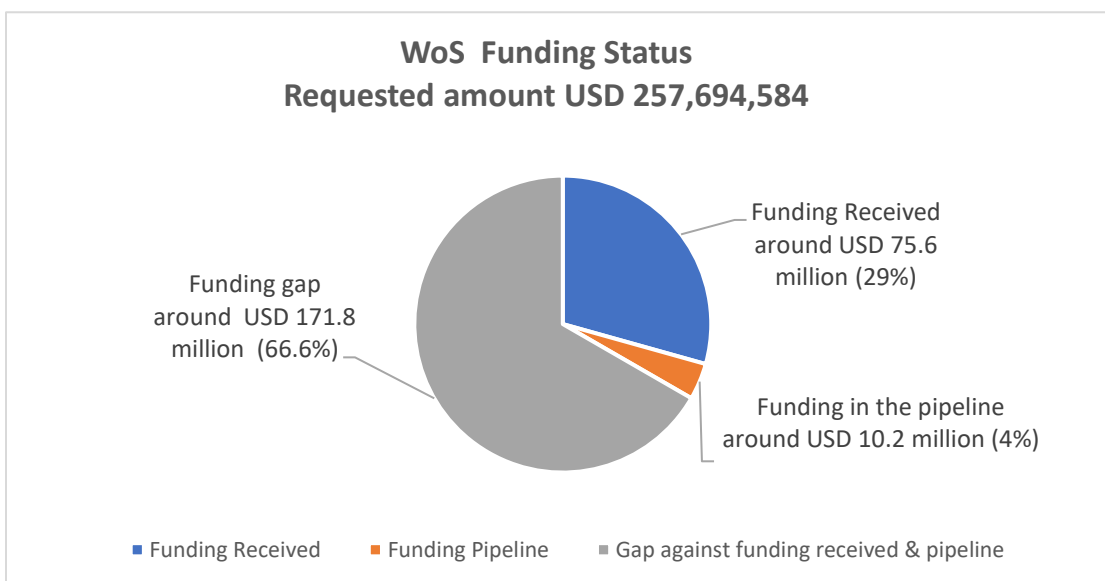
Delivery of essential medicines and supplies to NWS

- The current UNSCR 2642 for the provision of humanitarian aid into northwest Syria expires on 10th January 2023. Due to the uncertainty surrounding the extension of the resolution, a total of 22 truckloads of supplies, including essential medicines, kits, and consumables, were transhipped to north-west Syria in December 2022. With the prepositioned supplies, 1.9 million treatment courses for those in need in northwest Syria are anticipated.



The delivery of essential medicines and supplies to NWS

WoS Funding Status



Useful links

[HeRAMS public hospitals](#)
[HeRAMS public health centres](#)
[WHO-Syria Summary of HRP indicators reported through the 4Ws](#)
[WoS key performance indicators](#)
[MHPSS dashboard](#)

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