

Lebanon general context and overview

- The tension and violence within the border between Southern Lebanon and Northern Israel have significantly increased in recent days
- Intensive exchange of fire between Israel and Hizbullah forces, with intense overflight of Apache helicopters were reported
- UNIFIL staff returned to shelters after clashes in the South.
- A journalist was killed, and others injured in South Lebanon by an Israeli Bomb.
- The political cleavage aggravates the political tension.
- As security situation deteriorates in the South Lebanon, many civilians fled their home and were displaced in search of safe place.
- First meeting of the “caretaker Cabinet” was held yesterday October 13th, 2023, to discuss current situation and possible escalation of military actions in Lebanon.
- Visit of Iranian foreign minister on Friday and meeting with PM Mikati. Iranian Minister assured “what is important for us is the security of Lebanon and the preservation of calm in the country” (national news Agency).
- The Minister of Public Health, H.E. Dr Abiad has activated the Public Health Emergency Operation Center (PHEOC) located at the MoPH and has initiated preparations for health emergency response.
- HCT (Humanitarian Country Team) meeting was held on October 11th, 2023: The HC decided that to ensure overall coordination, the proposed Lebanon Response Plan (LRP) structures should be used for preparedness and response to the current emergency, and that structures should be applied flexibly to ensure appropriate collaboration with the Government as needed and in respect to humanitarian principles. He noted that there might also be a need for smaller task groups to support strategic coordination. HCT recommended to plan for a worst-case scenario similar to 2006 and involving over 1 million displaced persons.
 - The situation in Palestinian Camps in Saida remains precarious, with security situation highly volatile.
- Social tension among Lebanese host community and Syrian displaced and refugee communities is on the rise, with evictions, deportation and aggressions frequently reported across the country.

WHO CO readiness progress

- WCO staff reorganizing is in progress. If the situation deteriorates, additional support would be needed which follows surge capacity- logistics, Security, communication, casualty management and for external communication & resource mobilization.
- WCO contingency plan: BCP updated, Country readiness check list updated, and CP developed
- Resource mobilization and coordination are ongoing, CFE 1 million USD is expected, and additional RM initiatives are ongoing.

WHO preparedness and response support

- **Public Health Emergency Operation Center (PHEOC) at the MoPH support ongoing in terms of:**
 - Critical staff incentives/surge capacity (manager, coordinator, data analyst and logistics)
 - Installation of the electronic Public Health Emergency Response Management (e-PHEM) - and linkages with DHIS2 for data import/export
 - Technical supports for SOPs and coordination and kick-starting the operationalization of PHEOC
 - Strengthening coordination among between MoPH and partners through the PHEOC and Health Sector Coordination team
 - Engaged with senior expert to support PHEOC operationalization
 - Further support needed: IT expert, security of PHEOC premises.

WHO preparedness and response support *continued*

- **Hospital/casualty support:**
 - 30 sets of kits (basic trauma, basic ER and basic supplies) in the pipeline for the 30 public hospitals, expected to be delivered within 10 days.
 - 10 advanced trauma and surgical kits under way from Dubai Hub, to be prepositioned in designated public hospitals (expected to be delivered in the next 4 days).
 - Advanced life support training re- initiated.
 - GIS database completed for hospitals, labs and pharmacies.
 - Ongoing project for life saving/ limb saving hospital admissions.
 - Ongoing discussions on hospital reimbursement schemes between UNHCR, UNRWA and WHO and the MoPH.
 - Further support required for Mass Casualty Management (MCM) training which is under preparation.
- **Medications/stock**
 - Updated list of medications available in the local market (from MediTrack, focus on anesthesia and injectable antibiotics)
 - Warehouse stock for Essential Drug List (EDL) updated, with list of medications for potential stock from local market.

Health Sector Coordination

- Under the leadership of H.E. the Minister of Public Health (MoPH) has activated the Public Health Emergency Operation Centre (PHEOC) at MoPH and convened emergency meetings to ensure timely and efficient coordination, preparedness and response plans among the health sector partners and different stakeholders in the case of oPT crisis spills over to Lebanon.
- The health sector coordination team in close collaboration with the PHEOC has updated the emergency contingency stocks and coordinated the capacity assessments among the partners across national and sub-national level for pre-hospital, hospital care and continuation of essential health services. All the partners are advised to ensure maintaining the essential health services while enhancing their preparedness capacity.
- PHEOC and the health sector coordination team with technical support from WHO is compiling a comprehensive assessment report together with the supplementary documents to develop a detailed actor mapping with geographical and technical areas of work, identified areas of gaps and in need of urgent scale-up. Development of dashboards is in progress to support the partners for efficient decision making.

Gaps

- Due to the ongoing unprecedented socio-economic, political challenges and chronic underfunding, the health sector is already going through a critical shortage of human resources, medicine, medical supplies, and equipment, which would eventually worsen in case of mass displacements, surge of wounded patients, and mass casualties.
- Despite the presence of numerous partners, only a handful of partners is supporting the secondary health care (due to the complexity, lack of resources- HR, funds) which puts a disproportionate pressure on the MoPH to provide life and limb-saving hospital care.
- Lack of flexible funding limits the partners to maintain a higher contingency stocks of emergency medicine and medical supplies.

Priority areas

- Receiving the emergency supplies and prepositions of the referral hospitals
- Assisting the MoPH to identify the referral hospitals and conducting thorough assessments to these hospitals
- Enhancing the capacity of PHEOC to better coordinate the emergency preparedness and response
- Strengthening health sector coordination in collaboration with PHEOC
- Timely information sharing through SitReps or short briefs
- Engaging with the donors and other international partners
- Continued repurposing the WCO staff
- Surge capacity for key functions at WCO and following up with RO
- Mobilizing more resources to support the emergency response



Photo 1: PHEOC meeting chaired by H.E. Dr Abiad on 13th October 2023 at the Ministry of Public Health.



Photo 2: Health supplies leaving WHO Dubai logistic hub headed to Beirut.

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