

Ready

to respond to emergencies, prevent disease and support the continuity of essential health service in Syria, despite ongoing crises and their impact on the health system.



#revitalizehealth



HIGHLIGHTS

- In conjunction with the Brussels VII Conference, WHO, UNFPA and the Republic of Austria co-hosted a virtual side event and a discussion panel with guest speakers from Medair under the theme of “Working together for a risk-informed, recovered, and shock-resilient health system in Syria”. The participants discussed the importance of collaboration between different stakeholders, including the UN, NGOs, civil society, donors, and neighboring countries, in ensuring a ready, responsive, and resilient health system. Speakers also emphasized the need to build trust with communities and ensure that quality healthcare is available to everyone, everywhere – especially those most vulnerable and in need
- A total of 2,728 health staff were trained in 95 capacity-building sessions in different intervention areas.
- Over 180 tonnes of medical and laboratory supplies, kits, personal protective equipment, and cholera-related response supplies have been dispatched to 24 Ministry of Health hospitals, one Ministry of Higher Education hospital, 15 NGOs, and 3 INGOs, including oral rehydration salts (ORS), IV fluids, hemodialysis sessions, and printed information, education and communication (IEC) materials.

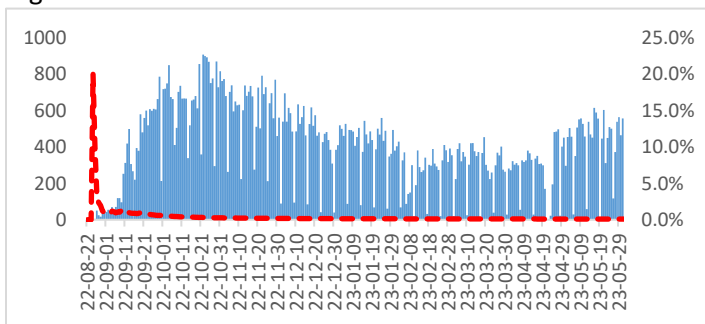
Health Operational Update

Disease Surveillance and Outbreak Response

- A total of 1266 sentinel sites presented weekly reports with 83% completeness and 85% timeliness. A response is provided to 80% of alerts within 72 hours.

Cholera outbreak at the WoS level

- Between 25 August 2022 and 30 May 2023, 132,932 suspected cases were reported from all 14 governorates. The most affected governorates to date are Idleb, Aleppo, and Ar-Raqqa.
- The overall attack rate is 0.63, and the case fatality ratio (CFR) has been reduced to 0.1%, which is well below global standards.

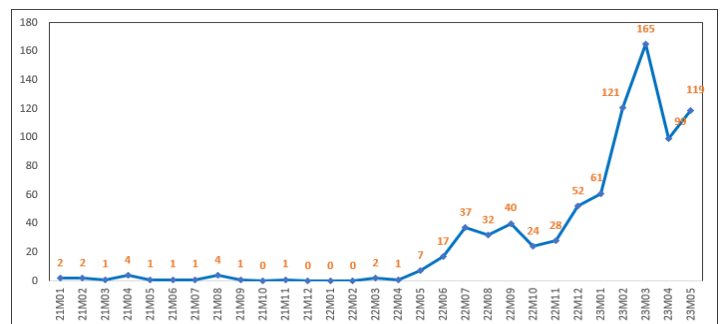


- A total of 5,832 stool samples were cultured, and 1,042 tested positive for Vibrio Cholera, with a positivity rate of 18%. Furthermore, a total of 5,526 samples were tested with rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs), 1,983 of which tested

positive. The overall proportion of RDT-positive cases is 35%. In addition, a total of 13,665 suspected cases and 9 associated deaths have been reported from IDP camps in NES and NWS.

Measles cases

- During May 2023, a total of 1,401 suspected measles cases were reported through the EWARS system in 14 governorates. Measles-suspected cases increased by 6% in May compared with cases reported in April (1,321).
- 119 measles cases were confirmed in May, distributed as follows: Aleppo (49), Al-Hasakeh (17), Rural Damascus (15), Deir-ez-Zour (10), Ar-Raqqa (8), Qunitera (6), Damascus (5), Dara’a (3), Homs (3), Hama (2), Latakia (1).
- So far, the total confirmed measles cases in 2023 is 565.



Primary Health Care (PHC) and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

- Under the slogan “Grow Food, not Tobacco”, WHO organized a 2-day workshop for tobacco control focal points from the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Directorates of Health (DOHs). To mark the day, a joint activity was implemented with MoH on May 31, 2023.

Secondary and Tertiary Health Care (STHC)

- 50 health workers from the DoH in Hama and Latakia governorates received training on emergency preparedness and response for the hospital sector during emergencies and outbreaks.

Trauma Care

- Over 11,438 treatment courses of life-saving medicines and medical kits were delivered to health partners in Damascus and northeast Syria (NES).
- Approximately 670 persons with disabilities benefited from the delivery of assistive devices.
- More than 200 health workers from the MoH and DoH in Damascus, Latakia, Deir-ez-Zor, Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa, and Quneitra received training on Major Incident Medical Management and Support (MIMMS), and First Aid and Basic Life Support (BLS).
- The MoH prosthetics and rehabilitation center in Damascus trained 50 health workers on disability and rehabilitation. Trainees included prosthetic and orthotics technicians, physiotherapists, and physicians.

Mental Health (MH)

- WHO supported outreach teams in the earthquake-affected areas to deliver 188,024 MHPSS interventions, as well as 29,918 mhGAP consultations.
- More than 400 health workers received training on different mental health and psychological interventions including mhGAP Intervention Guide (IG), mhGAP Humanitarian Intervention Guide (HIG), and self-help plus.
- The MHPSS technical working group conducted several meetings and activities in NES, Aleppo, and Deir-ez-Zor to scale-up coordination.
- To cover urgent needs, WHO distributed psychotropic medications to different partners.

Nutrition and Child Health

- 64,116 children under five years old were screened for malnutrition in 941 health centers in April 2023.

- A total of 1,267 global acute malnutrition cases were detected, including 326 severe cases (SAM) and 941 moderate cases (MAM).

International Health Regulations (IHR)

- Ahead of the Joint External Evaluation (JEE) scheduled for 4 June 2023, every pillar of IHR met with its technical team and reference documents were developed for each pillar.

Communicable Diseases - TB & HIV

- TB mobile clinics continued to operate in Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor, and Rural Damascus. Over 4,346 beneficiaries attended 45 TB awareness sessions and 102 suspected cases were tested for TB, with 24 confirmed.
- IOM and Global Fund supported the desk review meeting for the HIV Programme in Syria. An analysis of the HIV test-treat-retain cascade was presented to key stakeholders who subsequently validated the findings and made recommendations for urgent action to address gaps and missed opportunities.
- WHO trained the health staff in the National AIDS Programme on the SPECTRUM application for collecting and analyzing data to be used in monitoring the progress of the ongoing activities and making projections for the future.

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)

- On May 24, the WHO-supported national deworming campaign was completed covering all Syrian governorates except for Al-Hasakeh due to some delays in shipping of medicines. The next campaign will take place in September at the start of the new school semester.

External Relations and Communication

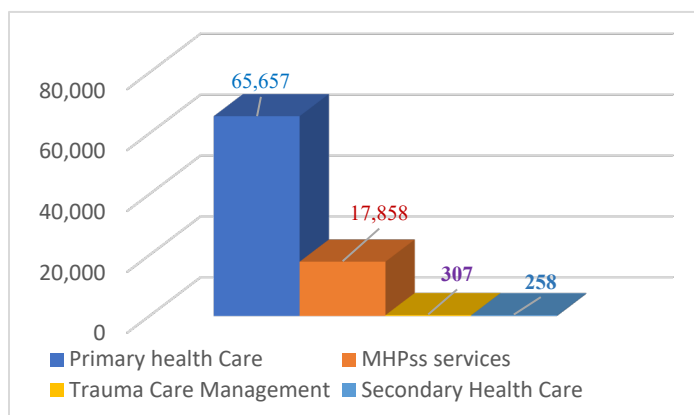
- A visibility video and an advocacy package were developed for the Brussels VII conference on “Working together for a risk-informed, recovered, and shock-resilient health system in Syria.” [link](#), [link](#).

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

- In collaboration with all RCCE partners, WHO developed the intersectoral cholera RCCE strategy and 6-month plan.
- In Damascus, 60 community health responders were trained by WHO. Outreach teams were trained on their roles and responsibilities and the critical role they play in providing health information and education.

Community Engagement (NGOs)

- 8 WHO implementing partners provided primary, secondary, trauma, rehabilitation, and MHPSS services to people in need in underserved areas. A total of 26 mobile medical teams are supported in five governorates: Rural Damascus, Dara'a, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo.
- A total of 84,081 healthcare services were supported.



Health services delivered by WHO-supported NGOs in May

Health Sector Coordination

- Completed mapping of hospitals and PHC centers managed and supported by national NGOs and local charities.
- Developed an update for the health sector medium-term strategy for Al Hol camp.
- Participated in the WoS joint Health & WASH Cholera Operational meeting conducted in Amman, and developed the following updates:
 - Health sector Syria, Damascus, 2023, Cholera Integrated Operational response, “What went well”. A chronology of events.
 - Health sector Syria, Damascus, 2023, Cholera Integrated Operational response, “What did not work well, challenges”.
 - Health sector Syria, Damascus, 2023, Cholera Response, Leadership, and Coordination, What worked well and what did not work well. Presentation.
 - Health sector Syria, Damascus, Early Recovery/Post Earthquake disaster recovery priorities for the health sector: What works and what doesn't in a variety of ER actions/ initiatives and related subjects on unilateral coercive measures/sanctions. Presentation.

- Health sector coordination meetings, national and sub-national levels; sector and sub-sector working groups, January – April 2023.
- Health sector Syria, Damascus, 2023, Prioritization exercise for sector coordination/leadership. Presentation.
- Health sector Syria, Damascus, 2023, Joint Health and Protection Framework – Operationalize at WoS health sector 2023: Discussion on real-time examples from the response areas including AAP and PRSEAH, Presentation.

Health Systems

- WHO trained hospital directors and representatives from the two hospitals nominated for a pilot project on hospital resilience operationalization. WHO experts from the Asia Disaster Preparedness Centre and EMRO conducted a one-day online training on 30 May. This pilot project will kick off soon using the standard data collection sheet.
- A regional training on Universal Health Coverage (UHC) was held in Cairo in mid-May that aimed to support the ongoing work of the MoH to finalize the National Essential Health Services Package, which is currently under development.
- The WHO supported the library of the Centre for Strategic and Health Studies with a collection of textbooks to support the postgraduate students continuing their studies in Public Health and Health System Administration.

WHO Syria Sub-Offices

Aleppo

- More than 20,000 outpatient consultations were provided by 13 WHO-supported mobile teams, and 80,667 MHPSS services were provided by 2 fixed health centers.
- A leishmaniasis campaign was launched in Aleppo, targeting more than 61,000 beneficiaries.
- A WHO team visited Tal Refaat to assess the healthcare needs of IDPs in Tal Refaat enclave (NWS).



WHO field visit to IDP camps in Tal Refaat area

- In May, WHO continues to monitor the quality of drinking water in Aleppo. 416 samples were tested from collective shelters, wells, primary health care centers (PHCs), and villages, of which 173 showed bacterial contamination.
- 42 schools in Aleppo accommodated 6,628 students from hard-to-reach areas for their national exams. A total of 32 static medical points were established with over 100 health workers by WHO to ensure ongoing access to medical care for these students. Moreover, a total of 16 MHPSS service providers were mobilized to support the students through different psychosocial sessions and help students develop coping strategies and relaxation techniques to manage stress.
- Essential services for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) were maintained. More than 15,740 treatments were provided to health facilities by WHO.

Latakia

- WHO conducted a coordination meeting with the official authorities in Latakia governorate to review and update the current humanitarian and health needs.
- WHO conducted joint field visits with GAVI and UNICEF to Latakia's main immunization centers and assessed the EPI program activities and vaccination coverage.

- In earthquake-affected areas, WHO continues to support mobile medical teams. More than 3,000 services were provided to more than 770 beneficiaries together with 19 awareness sessions on health topics and 16 MHPSS awareness sessions.
- WHO continues to monitor the quality of drinking water in Latakia. 137 samples were collected from collective shelters and areas affected by the earthquake, of which 90 showed bacterial contamination.
- In 6 different communities and shelters and shelters, chlorine tablets (200mg) were distributed for water purification and 128 samples were sent to the Damascus public health laboratory for testing.

Homs

- WHO Representative (WR) visited Homs and Hama on 21-23 May. Meetings were held with the governors of Homs and Hama, the Directors of Health in those cities, and other health partners. The WHO team visited Homs Grand Hospital, Karm Al-luoz Hospital, and Homs National Hospital. In addition, the WR met with WHO implementing partners and visited Al Dar Al-Kabira village.
- An oxygen generator was supplied to the Homs National Hospital with WHO support.



WHO supported Homs National Hospital with an oxygen generator

- In the earthquake-affected areas, 7 mobile medical teams (MMTs) provided essential health services. During this reporting period, 9,763 primary health services, 5,560 treatment courses, and 2,783 MHPSS services have been provided to the affected population.

- More than 13,000 children were vaccinated through an EPI vaccination campaign in Hama- Homs targeting drop-outs.
- Lamset Shefa, a WHO-funded non-governmental organization, worked with the Dar Al Kabera Family Wellbeing to give 9,340 medical consultations and 4,877 MHPPS services.

Deir-ez-Zor

- Rehabilitation of the National Hospital in Al-Mayadeen has reached its final stages.
- The WHO completed the installation of a CT scan at Al Assad Hospital. More than 700,000 people are projected to now enjoy access to advanced diagnostic services and the device will also enhance overall trauma services.
- As part of the cholera response, WHO started light WASH-related rehabilitation at Al Assad Hospital. Solar heaters and water tanks will be installed, along with WASH facility rehabilitation according to IPC guidelines.

Qamishli Hub / Northeast Syria (NES)

Coordination:

- WHO co-chaired the meeting of the NES MHPSS technical sub-working group meeting.
- On 24 May, WHO delivered 3.5 tons of medical supplies to Tal Abyad area as part of a joint UN cross-line mission.
- Two missions were conducted to follow up on the measles-rubella MR vaccination campaign in Al Hol Camp.

MHPSS services:

- Presented a knowledge and awareness session on suicide prevention interventions to the NES MHPSS TWG.
- More than 13 NGOs supported MHPSS interventions in 97 locations.

Pharmaceuticals:

- WHO distributed 23 tonnes of essential medicines, IV fluids, leishmaniasis treatment, chlorine tablets, and consumables to five hospitals in NES.

EWARS:

- WHO conducted 15 field visits in Al-Hasakeh governorate, including camps, private hospitals, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), DoH, and NGOs.
- WHO trained 15 members of the Al Yamama charity on the Early Warning, Alert, and Response System (EWARS) at new medical points in Jwadia and Al Malkia.
- Six suspected cholera cases were followed up closely at Qamishli National Hospital; test results were negative.
- Cases of suspected measles were investigated in Al-Hasakeh by the EWARS team. with WHO support for transportation and shipment of samples.

- Based on the EWARS analysis, the top five morbidities in NES, as compared to April, are:
 - Influenza-like illness (ILI)/COVID-like illness (CLI) increased (3350 vs. 2933 in April).
 - Acute watery diarrhea (AWD) cases decreased (1340 vs. 1249).
 - Leishmaniasis cases decreased (102 vs. 103).
 - Worms cases increased (212 vs. 198).
 - Scabies cases increased (75 vs. 69).

Nutrition:

- Al Hikmeh and Al-Tabqa hospitals collectively received 102 cases of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) with complications.

Immunization

- On 11 May, WHO delivered shipments of vaccines from Damascus to both Al-Hassakeh and the eastern part of Deir ez-Zor.
- Routine immunization activities continued, including Covid-19 vaccination.
- Together with the Al-Hassakeh DoH and other health partners, WHO launched a two-month response campaign in the Al-Hol camp to combat the ongoing measles outbreak. More than 107 community workers are now equipped with essential messages and techniques to raise awareness among camp residents regarding the critical importance of vaccinating their children to control the outbreak. By the end of the campaign, measles vaccination coverage has increased by more than four folds among children aged 7 months to 12 years as a result of awareness-raising and community engagement.

Secondary Healthcare:

- With the support of WHO, 1,035 beneficiaries were referred to Al Hikmeh Hospital, for secondary and trauma services.
- NES cholera treatment centers (CTCs) and cholera treatment units (CTUs) at Qamishli National Hospital, Lo'lo'a, Hajin Hospital, and Hawaj center were assessed in accordance with WHO preparedness plan.

WASH:

- Water quality monitoring continued in 11 IDP camps, 39 collective shelters, and 17 drinking water stations. A total of 6,232 samples were tested, of which 115 showed bacterial contamination.

Northwest Syria (NWS)

Rapid Response to the Earthquake and Early Recovery Activities in Northwest Syria

- At the SHC level, WHO supported four hospitals in NWS where close to 13,000 consultations were provided and over 700 patients were admitted to the hospital. WHO supported the integrated health service delivery networks in Afrin and Northern Aleppo, both operationally and technically. In response to the earthquake, WHO supported and four PHC mobile clinics. Nearly 20,000 consultations were provided in northwest Syria by these services.

Delivery of essential medicines supplies into northwest Syria

- Since 6 February, WHO has delivered 68 trucks cross-border from Türkiye to Northwest Syria, containing essential medicines, medical consumables, PCR test kits, assistive devices, and various emergency kits (TESK Modules, IEHK Kits, Cholera Kits) worth a total of US\$ 7.6M, and a total weight of 561 metric tonnes expected to provide almost 5.3 million people with treatment including 191,941 trauma interventions.
- In May, 20 trucks of supplies were shipped to north-west Syria worth US\$ 2.6 M and weighing 179 metric tonnes and providing 230,749 treatment courses for those most in need and 140,525 trauma cases. On 31 May, WHO delivered 15 trucks cross-border, a record number of supplies shipped at once.



WHO-supported shipment in NWS

Disease Surveillance and Outbreak Response

- **EWARN:** All three EWARN labs are functional in northern Aleppo and Idlib. They administer diagnostic

tests for measles, rubella, COVID-19, cholera, rotavirus, and adenovirus. Of 225 sentinel sites, 98% in Northern Aleppo and 94% in Idlib achieved completeness of reporting and 98% timeliness of reporting in Northern Aleppo and 94% in Idlib.

- **Oral Cholera Vaccine (OCV):** Preparation is underway for OCV campaign planned to start on 10 June 2023 for 10 working days in Albab, Afrin, Jendairis, Alatareb, Salqin, Armanaz, Bdama, and Janudieh sub-districts for all individuals above one year of age.
- **WASH:** The WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) team, in coordination with Rapid Response teams (RRTs), carried out 100 water quality tests in the cholera hotspot areas in the month of May.
- **Rehabilitation:** In May, WHO also joined with health sector partners to provide community health services in the areas affected by the earthquake. Some 45 teams of community health workers screened and referred patients with communicable diseases, provided psychological first aid, identified health and safety risks and reported them to the surveillance team, and referred women and girls in need of sexual and reproductive health care.
- In the aftermath of the February earthquakes WHO released a video [here](#).

Health Information Systems

- A comprehensive cholera dashboard is maintained with frequent updates. As of May 2023, NWS reported 88,133 suspected cholera cases. Of these, 38,351 were in Aleppo governorate and 49,146 in Idlib governorate. The total number of cholera-related deaths in NWS is 23, representing a Case Fatality Rate (CFR) of 0.03%.
- In addition to analysing MHPSS earthquake response data, the WHO Gaziantep team worked with partners on the ground to develop a dashboard to support their response efforts. A total of 30,986 MHPSS sessions were provided during April 2023.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

- WHO increased its RCCE activities in earthquake-affected areas. Through 837 Community Health Workers/Social Mobilizers and other mobile teams, 10 RCCE partners implemented RCCE activities in 27 subdistricts in NWS between 22 May and 04 June using face-to-face activities and other modalities to provide awareness about cholera

and communicable diseases. Special focus was placed on leishmaniasis, scabies, and rotavirus. These activities reached a total of 276,703 beneficiaries. Partners referred 1,127 suspected cholera cases and 3,421 other cases (including those in need of services for sexual and reproductive health, child health, internal medicine, and malnutrition) to respective facilities or services in the targeted communities.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

- MHPSS activities covered 31 communities while 29 organizations are implementing psychiatric inpatient and outpatient interventions, mhGAP, individual and group support, psychoeducation, and awareness sessions.

Psychosocial workers, mhGAP-trained doctors, psychologists, and a psychiatrist, are providing integrated MHPSS services within 42 primary health centers and 17 hospitals under the health cluster.

- On 18 May, the Technical Disability Working Group, together with the MHPSS Technical Working Group, conducted a training webinar on a trauma-informed approach to rehabilitation, focusing on amputation and other life-changing injuries.
- WHO launched a programme with partners to provide self-care and coping tools to frontline health workers involved in the earthquake response in northwest Syria. At the end of the project, over 240 health workers will have received mental health and psychosocial support.

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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