

# Whole of Syria (WoS) Monthly Situation Report July 2023



WHO and MOH joint workshop to launch Syria's health care strategy for 2023-2027

## HIGHLIGHTS

- With WHO support, the Ministry of Health has pioneered Syria's primary health care strategy for 2023–2027, gathering insights from various stakeholders. This strategy, echoing the Alma Ata and Astana Declarations, offers a blueprint for health system recovery, emphasizing universal health care and Syria's 2030 goals. Central to the strategy is the family health care model, encompassing child health and immunization, all to be operationalized through a comprehensive action plan.
- A total of 1,890 health staff were trained in 69 capacity-building sessions in different intervention areas.
- Over 65 tonnes of medical, laboratory supplies, kits, personal protective equipment, and cholera response supplies – including oral rehydration salts (ORS), IV fluids, hemodialysis sessions, and printed IEC materials – have been dispatched to 20 Ministry of Health (MoH) facilities, three MoH hospitals, the Ministry of Education (MoE), six local NGOs, two international NGOs (INGOs), four non-governmental hospitals, and the KRC.

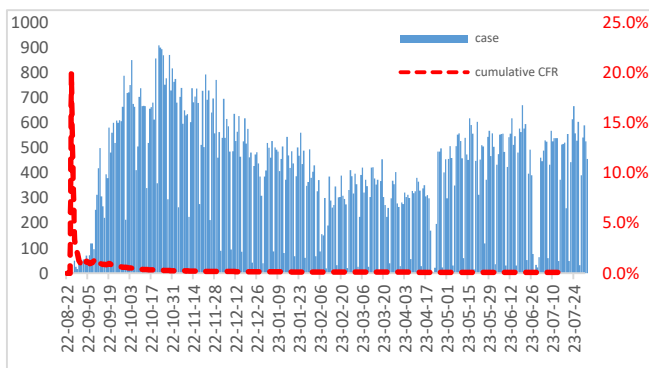
## Health Operational Update

### Disease Surveillance and Outbreak Response

- A total of 1,252 sentinel sites submitted weekly reports with 86% completeness and 82% timeliness. 83% of alerts were responded to within 72 hours.

### Cholera outbreak at the Whole of Syria (WoS) level

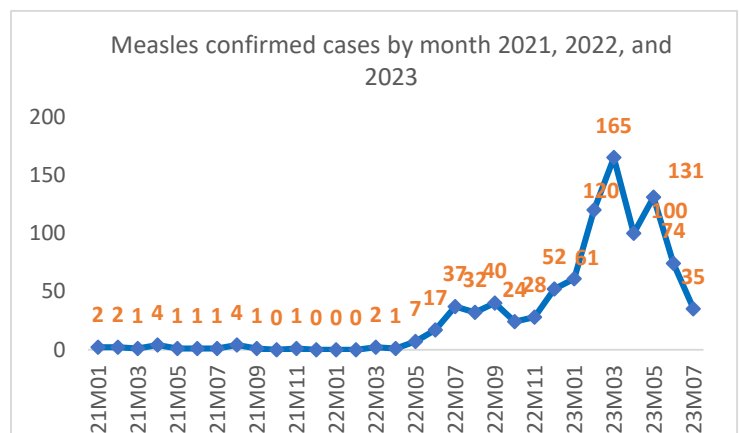
- In the period from 25 August 2022 and 31 July 2023, 171,201 suspected cases have been reported from all 14 governorates. Idleb, Aleppo, and Ar-Raqqa are the most affected governorates to date.
- The estimated attack rate is 0.76, and the case fatality rate within the affected areas is 0.06% which is well below acceptable global standards.
- 7,937 stool samples were cultured, of which 1,280 tested positive for the presence of *vibrio cholera*: a 16.1% positivity rate. Moreover, rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) were conducted on 7,614 samples of which 2,068 tested positive. Overall, 27.1% of cases are RDT-positive.



- Additionally, among IDPs, there were 18,573 suspected cases and nine associated deaths.

### Measles cases

- During July, a total of 238 suspected measles cases were reported through the early warning alert and response system (EWARS) in 14 governorates. Measles-suspected cases decreased by 44% in July compared with cases reported in June (426).
- Total confirmed measles cases in 2023 is 686, of which 35 cases were confirmed in July as follows: Aleppo (9), Rural Damascus (6), Ar-Raqqa (3), Damascus (3), Deir ez Zor (3), Tartous (2), Al-Hasakeh (2), Homs (2), As-Swieda (1), Qunitera (1), Latakia (1), Dara (1), Hama (1).



## Earthquake Response

### Situation Update

- In the Latakia governorate, the operation room coordinates the earthquake-related activities and response efforts. Based on the recent coordination meeting:
  - A total of 8 shelters are available (4 in Latakia City, 1 in Qurdaha, 1 in Jableh, and 2 in Haffeh).
  - Installation of prefab houses is underway, along with the establishment of mid and long-term shelters.
- In Aleppo governorate:
  - 72,632 families (290,528 individuals) are affected.
  - 452 families are accommodated in 9 mid-term shelters, and 53 are on the waiting list.
- In Hama governorate:
  - School shelters will gradually be closed.
  - The establishment of mid and long-term shelters is ongoing with a plan for 2 in Hama, 2 in Homs, and 2 in Idleb.
  - 101 families are currently accommodated in shelters in Hama, 24 families in Homs, and 47 families in Idleb.

### Essential Health Services:

- Across earthquake-affected areas of Latakia, Aleppo, and Hama, seven WHO-supported mobile medical teams (MMTs) delivered more than 3,500 outpatient consultations and provided 6,064 treatment courses.
- In the Latakia Sport City, WHO provided 1,433 health services including consultations, MHPSS, and health.

### Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI)

- EPI outreach/mobile teams continued activities in all governorates to enhance routine vaccination coverage in remote and high-risk areas.
- A one-day workshop was conducted to update the micro-plans for 40 high-priority districts across Syria.
- Technical committee meetings were held this month, including by the National Certification Committee (NCC), the Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI), the Polio Follow-up Committee, and the Environment Surveillance Committee.
- There is a slight improvement in the diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DPT3) coverage in the first half of 2023 (75%) compared to last year 2022 (65%).

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

- WHO prepositioned lifesaving PHC/NCD medicines, including insulin vials, at the MOH central level.
- Four central orientation workshops were conducted on WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) targeting 100 participants from the Tobacco National Committee, MoH healthcare workers, and representatives from line ministries.
- WHO coordinated with MOE to deploy 7 mobile medical teams (MMTs) to provide the needed health services to students coming from the hard-to-reach areas to rural Damascus, Aleppo, and Deir-ez-Zor for their final national exams.

### Infection Prevention and Control

- WHO conducted two central Training of Trainees (TOTs) workshops on IPC standards for 50 health workers from public hospitals in rural Damascus, Tartous, and Lattakia. The targeted trainees included IPC, quality assurance, and surveillance teams.

### Trauma Care

- WHO delivered over 403,600 treatments of life-saving medicines, 90 trauma and emergency surgery kits (TESK), and different types of medical equipment and supplies to health partners in Damascus, Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Deir-ez-Zor, Latakia, and Tartous. These deliveries are part of WHO's efforts to enhance the capacity of public health facilities in Syria for a timely and appropriate response to health emergencies.
- More than 150 health workers from the MoH and Directorates of Health (DOH) in Aleppo, Lattakia, and Damascus have received training on Advanced Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation emergency response and risk management plans.
- 120 health workers from MoH in different governorates attended a TOT training on First Aid Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) at the PHC level in emergency settings.
- 75 health workers from DoH Damascus, including prosthetics & orthotics technicians, physiotherapists, and physiatrists, attended training in Ibn Al-Nafis Hospital on earthquake-induced stress disorder and depression management for people with disabilities.

## Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS)

- WHO continues to support MoH in delivering services across the primary health care centers, outpatient clinics, and specialized facilities. During the Q2/2023

WHO delivered:

- 143,905 MHPSS services.
- 70,623 Gap-filling Services and Psychiatry.
- 61,945 Basics of Psychosocial Support
- 2,121 Therapeutic interviews at the DoH level.
- 194 Therapeutic interviews in Ibn Sina Hospital.
- Awareness-raising sessions reaching 9,022 beneficiaries.



*Providing MHPSS services in one of the WHO-supported NGOs*

- In July, 546 MHPSS services have been delivered through WHO implementing partners.
- WHO continues to provide MHPSS services at the community level in 106 locations across the country. During the reporting period, 24,301 services were provided, including awareness sessions on Gender-based violence (GBV).

## Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH)

- WHO conducted awareness-raising sessions to introduce the PRS policy (WHO's new Policy and Strategy on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Misconduct) to 34 MoH staff working in the Nutrition Programme in northeast Syria (NES). The sessions aimed to focus on the importance of the policy in addressing and preventing sexual misconduct in the workplace.
- WHO conducted field visits to some shelters in Latakia to follow up on the ongoing joint program with the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs and Population for

victim support. The missions assessed the needs on the ground and identified ways to improve the services provided.

## Communicable Diseases - TB & HIV

- TB mobile clinics continued to operate in Aleppo, Deir - ez-Zor, and Rural Damascus. Over 1,976 beneficiaries attended TB awareness sessions and 369 suspected cases were tested for TB, with 18 confirmed.
- WHO conducted a regional Green Light Committee (rGLC) mission to Syria, focusing on strengthening Syria's National Tuberculosis Programme (NTP). The mission supported updating of the national multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) guidelines and conducting training sessions on new WHO-recommended treatments for both drug-susceptible tuberculosis (DS-TB) and drug-resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB). The mission included visiting the TB centers in Aleppo and Damascus, and attending a 4-day workshop to present the updated MDR guideline.

## Environmental Health / WASH

- In coordination with the MoH, WHO continues to monitor water quality in Latakia, Homs, Hama, and NES. A total of 3,284 samples were tested from different sources of which 7% showed bacterial contamination.
- WHO delivered 26 water quality testing kits to the MoH, Ministry of Water Resources, and Ministry of Local Administration and Environment, in addition to other related supplies.
- WHO facilitated practical training for 80 members of the surveillance rapid response teams on conducting in-field testing for drinking water and water quality monitoring, including free residual chlorine testing and bacterial contamination.

## Health Systems

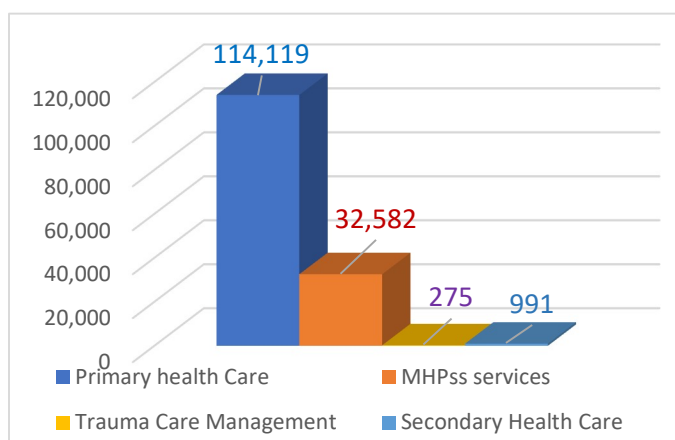
- At the Centre for Strategic Studies and Health Training, WHO supported a four-day capacity-building activity on Health Economics and its use in the health sector. The training was attended by 25 participants from the administrative and financial offices at the MoH.
- WHO participated in the UN Country Team (UNCT) workshop on integrating the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Third Cycle's Recommendations into the UN Strategic Framework (UNSF) 2022-2024 for Syria.

## Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) and Communications

- WHO presented the intersectoral cholera RCCE strategy and operational plan during the RCCE national coordination meeting.
- In Al-Hasakeh governorate, 80 community health responders were trained by WHO. Outreach teams were trained on their responsibilities and the critical role they play in providing health information and education.
- WHO communications team provided visibility coverage for the joint WHO-MoH workshop to develop Syria's Primary Health Care Strategy for 2023–2027 - [link](#)

## Community Engagement (NGOs)

- 12 WHO implementing partners operated 20 MMTs across Rural Damascus, Dara'a, Homs, Al-Hassakeh, Hama, and Aleppo providing primary, secondary, and trauma care, as well as rehabilitation and MHPSS services to underserved populations.
- A total of 147,967 healthcare services were supported.



## Health Sector Coordination

- Finalized health sector inputs for the Interagency Standing Committee's (IASC) operational peer review of the humanitarian response to the earthquake of February 2023.
- Planned standard Syria Humanitarian Fund (SHF) allocation: Inter-sector technical consultations continue with OCHA SHF team on allocation strategy.
- 2024 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) data collection: Syria health sector inputs shared with OCHA Syria and WoS Health Cluster team.
- Health sector gap analysis: The health sector Health Information Systems (HIS) team prepared an update of 40 underserved sub-districts that are home to 2 million people in need.
- Developed an update on "WoS Cluster" and "WoS Agency" specific humanitarian structure.
- The health sector team conducted technical consultations with UNDP team on the way forward for further mainstreaming of conflict sensitivity and analysis into the health response.

## WHO Syria Sub-Offices

### Aleppo

- WHO conducted the sub-national health sector meeting with the participation of 19 health sector partners.
- A meeting with the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs and Population (SCFAP) was held to discuss the WHO-supported PRSEAH activities in Aleppo. During the meeting, a discussion was made on the referral pathway for the critical cases and the way forward.
- WHO deployed seven MMTs to provide basic health care and MHPSS services in rural Aleppo. In July, teams delivered:
  - 3,582 outpatient consultations
  - 259 mental health consultations

- An additional 6,064 treatment courses were delivered by WHO-supported health facilities.

### Latakia

- In the northern countryside of Latakia, the WHO-supported mobile team provided 2,703 medical consultations and 2,146 MHPSS services. In addition, 1,017 beneficiaries were reached with awareness



sessions on health topics, including cholera.



WHO-supported awareness sessions on cholera and AWD

- WHO continued to monitor the quality of drinking water in Latakia. 228 samples were collected from earthquake-affected areas, of which 52 contained bacteria.
- WHO supported 26 RCCE awareness sessions in cooperation with 6 NGOs to raise awareness on summer diseases including AWD.
- WHO supported 16 capacity-building activities for 400 health workers on different health interventions.

## Homs

- Nearly 2,000 leishmaniasis cases were registered in Hama and Idlib governorates. Over 48,000 houses in Hama and 1,548 houses in Idlib received indoor residual spraying from WHO-supported partners in the most affected areas.
- WHO monitored the quality of drinking water in cooperation with the DoH. 115 samples were tested in Homs, of which 63 showed bacterial contamination. While in Hama, 143 samples were tested, of which 32 showed bacterial contamination.
- WHO provision of health services through supported NGOs is ongoing in Homs and Hama as follows:

- Building Community Association for Development (BCAD) worked in the Sqelbiyah district in Hama and provided 1,011 medical consultations and MHPSS services, reaching 875 beneficiaries with awareness-raising sessions.



WHO-supported (BCAD) providing health services in rural Hama.

- Al-Birr provided 1,872 medical consultations and 978 MHPPS services in Hama City and its northern rural area.
- Afia Fund provided 850 hemodialysis sessions, 9 catheterizations, and 103 MHPSS services in Homs City.
- Lamset Shifa assisted the Dar Al Kabera Family Wellbeing Health Center in providing 11,623 medical consultations and 252 MHPSS services.

## Deir-ez-Zor

- WHO participated in the MoH field visit to Al-Mayadeen National Hospital which has been fully rehabilitated with WHO support. A notable highlight of the visit was the inauguration of the medical diagnosis unit by the Minister of Health, Dr. Hassan Muhammad Al-Ghabash. This unit, a key component of the hospital's services, has been established with the aid of WHO and is equipped with a cutting-edge 64-slice CT scanner. The unit promises to elevate the hospital's diagnostic capabilities and enhance patient care.
- WHO conducted a series of field visits to vaccination points across the governorate. These visits aimed to assess the quality of services, evaluate the available resources, and foster collaboration for improved immunization outcomes.



The Minister of Health visits Al-Mayadeen National Hospital in DEZ

- WHO convened the first joint MHPSS sub-working group meeting in the hub. The meeting brought together stakeholders from Deir-ez-Zor and NES to share experiences, align activities with local contexts, and unify data collection tools to enhance information management, service mapping, and needs assessment.

## Qamishli Hub / Northeast Syria (NES)

### Coordination:

- WHO conducted a coordination meeting with UNFPA and UNHCR to explore possible opportunities for further collaboration to scale up MHPSS services.
- On July 24, WHO team conducted a mission to Al-Hasakeh, and met with the governor, and the director of Health to stand on the current situation and the needed support.

### MHPSS services:

- On 24 July, WHO convened the NES MHPSS technical working group (TWG) meeting with the participation of 30 MHPSS stakeholders from different sectors.
- Developed a comprehensive cross-sectoral MHPSS contingency plan with a specific focus on the health sector interventions in NES.

### EWARS:

- The following diseases/syndromes were recorded in NES in July through EWARS:

Disease/syndrome	# of cases
Acute Diarrhea (AD)	3,737
Bloody Diarrhea (Bloody Diarrhea)	26
Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD)	0
Acute Jaundice Syndrome (AJS)	9
Influenza-Like Illness (ILI)/COVID	2,521
Acute Flacid Paralysis (AFP)	0

Suspected Measles (SM)	61
Suspected Meningitis (SMN)	1
Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI)	171

### Nutrition:

- 90 severe acute malnutrition (SAM) cases with complications were treated at Al Hikma and Al Tabqa hospitals in July.
- WHO conducted a follow-up visit to the Community-Based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) clinic in Al-Hasakeh to confirm eligibility criteria and monitor malnutrition cases.
- WHO participated in a nutrition assessment workshop organized by WFP.

### Secondary health care:

- WHO provided secondary and trauma services for 669 beneficiaries at Al Hikma Hospital.
- The rehabilitation of Qamishli National Hospital is ongoing. A meeting with the hospital manager was conducted to follow up on challenges related to installing equipment and allocating space.

### HIS:

- WHO completed HeRAMs Data Collection for national hospitals (June 2023) and health centers (Q2 2023) in Al Hasakeh Governorate, and for health facilities in Al Hol Camp (Q2 2023).
- WHO conducted needs assessments for 2023 pharmaceutical needs in NES health partners/facilities, and dialysis centers in Kobani, Manbij, and Qamishli.



Monitoring water quality in NES

### WASH:

- Water quality monitoring was conducted in 11 IDP camps, 53 collective shelters, and 37 drinking water stations in NES. A total of 1,289 samples were tested

of which 53 samples (4.11%) were bacterially contaminated.

- WHO distributed 169,500 chlorine tablets to various partners.

## Northwest Syria (NWS)

### Operational Update

- The non-renewal of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2672 will further exacerbate the already dire humanitarian situation in northwest Syria and increase the risk of disrupted delivery of life-saving humanitarian supplies to millions in need.
- Ahead of the non-renewal of UNSC Resolution 2672 WHO prepositioned supplies in Idlib governorate enough to support communities at least for three months, on the assumption that no further sudden onset emergencies will occur.
- After UNSC resolution 2672 was not renewed on 10 July 2023 and following discussions between the Government of Syria and the UN Emergency Response Coordinator Bab Al Hawa border gate will continue to be used for the next six months to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance to millions of people in need in north-west Syria. Bab Al Salam and Al Rae'e also continue to be used without any restrictions after the government's decision to extend permissions to use the Bab al-Salam and Al Ra'ee border crossings until November 13, including for movement of UN aid delivery and personnel.

### WHO cross-border missions to NWS

- After the earthquake, WHO continued to conduct frequent missions to northwest Syria from Türkiye. The increasing frequency of missions aims to engage local communities for more consistent and adequate programme planning and implementation, and also for technical monitoring of activities. Following the change in access after UNSCR non-renewal, WHO missions are currently targeting Northern Aleppo only.
- In July, the WHO organized six missions to NWS from Bab Al Salam border gate and delivered 3 trucks of humanitarian aid to NWS through Bab Al Salam border gate and 15 trucks through Bab Al Hawa. WHO is currently managing 65 contracts with 25 implementing NGO partners, mostly Syrian NGOs legally registered in Türkiye. WHO is also working to transition all service delivery and transshipment of supplies to INGOs.

### Disease Surveillance and Outbreak Response

#### Cholera

- Up to epidemiological week 30 (23/07/2023 - 29/07/2023), a cumulative total of 117,195 suspected cholera cases (51,941 in Aleppo governorate, 65,254 in Idlib governorate) have been reported, including 878 confirmed cases. 24 deaths have also been reported. 3,790 suspected cases of cholera were reported in epi-week 30. A cumulative total of 6,900 samples were collected since the start of the outbreak (6% of overall line listed cases), of which 878 have tested positive by stool culture. The total positivity rate in NWS is 12.8%. The total number of negative cases by stool culture is 5,973, and the remaining 49 are still pending. Active case search is ongoing, especially in the camps.
- The WASH field teams conducted surveillance activities in 496 communities and 946 camps in NWS. In total, 15,202 samples were collected. They were also able to chlorinate 788 water storage tanks during their visits, where about 74% of the samples were tested at 0 free residual chlorine.

#### Measles

- After epidemiological week 27 (02/07/2023 - 08/07/2023), the number of measles cases has significantly reduced. However, the Surveillance, outbreak, preparedness, and response taskforce is currently designing a readiness plan for measles as it is considered a seasonal disease that is most likely to occur during the months of April/May and September/October.

#### Meningitis

- After the epi-week 27, the number of meningitis cases has significantly declined.
- In July, WHO continued providing RCCE training and IEC materials on meningitis to 35 community health workers (CHWs).
- WHO provided case management training to 105 clinicians (72% at the secondary healthcare level and 28% at the primary healthcare level).

## Leishmaniasis

- In July, a total of 10 Leishmaniasis cases and the death of one patient from visceral Leishmaniasis were reported from the University Hospital in Idlib. This patient (male 9 months old) who is reported to be from Darkosh in Jisr-Ash-Shughur, was treated with transfusion and liposomal amphotericin B, however, he did not respond to this treatment. According to the University Hospital in Idlib, he had severe bone marrow inhibition, bleeding, and hepatic and renal failure.

## Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)

- 17–18 July, WHO and UNICEF chaired a workshop for the MHPSS technical working group and cluster coordinators in Gaziantep. The workshop has guided the application of the IASC MHPSS minimum service package as a common framework to identify gaps and opportunities in the MHPSS response. This workshop is expected to be the foundation for a renewed multi-sectorial operational plan for MHPSS in NWS.

- A follow-up workshop facilitated by WHO took place on 25–26 July in Gaziantep focusing on the practical applications of interagency mental health and psychosocial support coordination and operations.
- The two workshops were attended by 104 humanitarian workers.



WHO-supported MHPSS workshop in NWS

## 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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