

**BI-WEEKLY
SITUATION REPORT
WHOLE OF SYRIA**

Issue 8 | 16 – 30 April 2021











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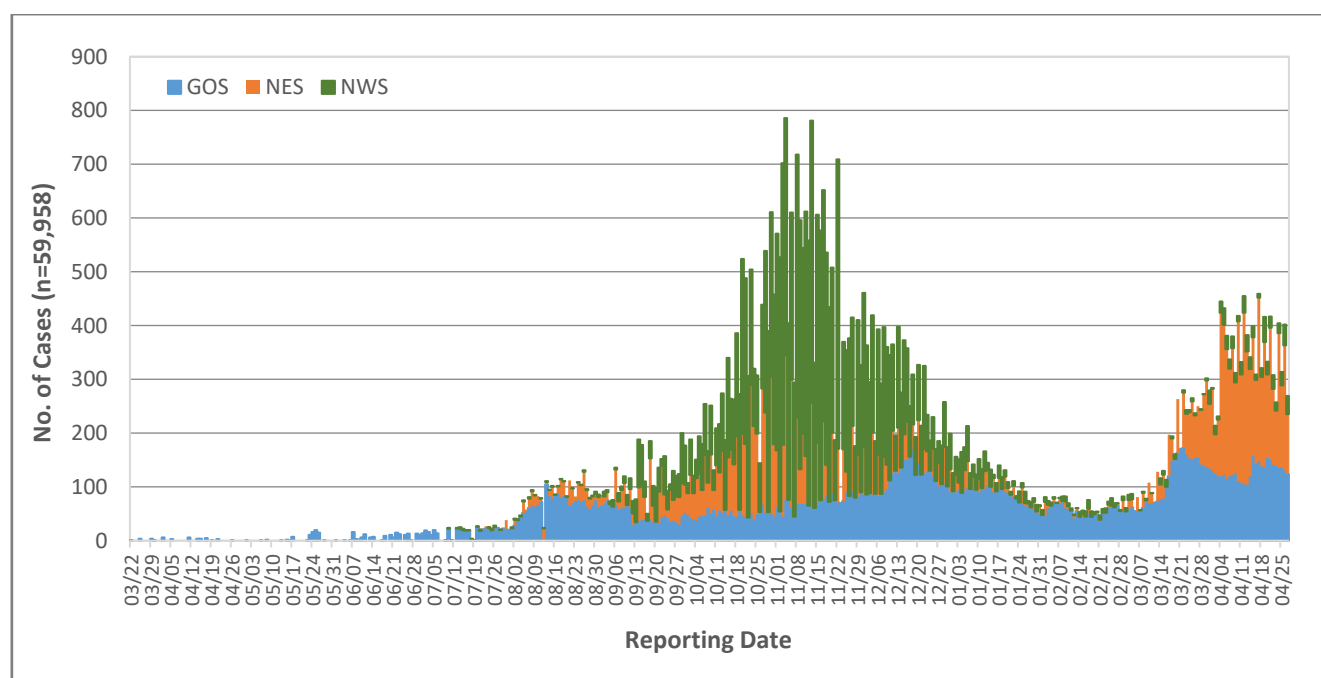
1. COVID-19 Update

1.1. COVID-19 Statistical Summary at Whole of Syria Level

As of 27 April 2021

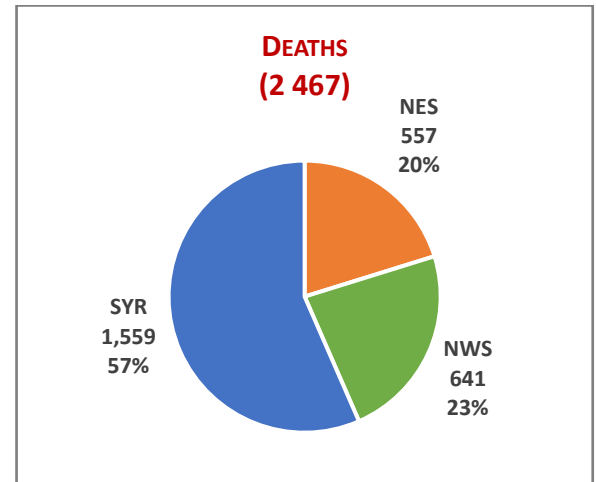
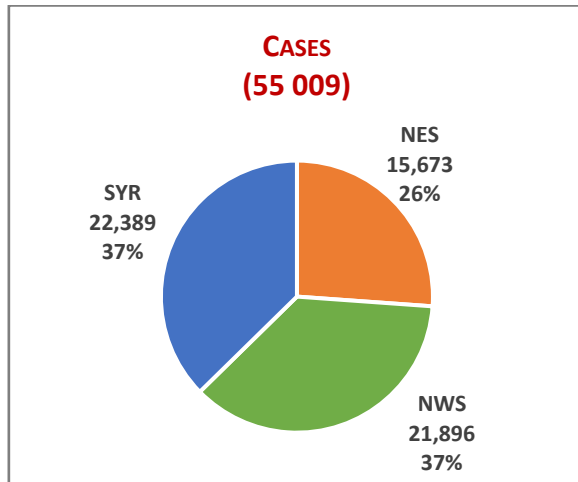
	59 958	Total cases (including 4 545 health workers)
	19 413	Active cases
	37 788	Recovered cases
	2 757	Deaths
	4.6%	Case Fatality Rate (CFR)
	14	COVID-19 functional laboratories
	237 249	COVID-19 tests done
	1 163	Overall testing rate per 100 000 population
	294	Incidence rate per 100 000 population (highest in Al-Hasakeh - 941)
	25.3%	Positivity rate (highest in As-Sweida; 67.5%)

1.2. Daily Distribution of COVID-19 Cases at Whole of Syria Level



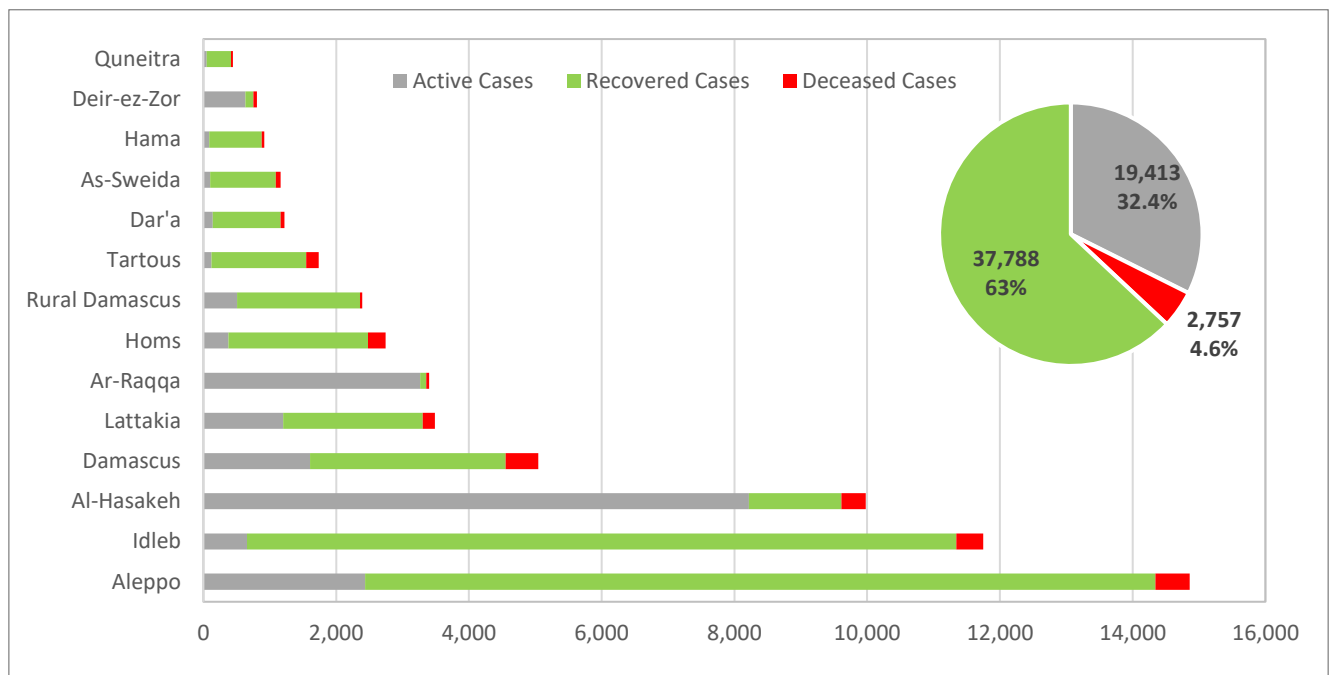
1.3. Distribution of COVID-19 Cases and Deaths at Whole of Syria Level

22 March 2020 – 27 April 2021



1.4. Distribution of COVID-19 Cases and Deaths by Governorate and Outcome

22 March 2020 – 27 April 2021



2. WHO Syria Response

2.1. COVID-19 Response

2.1.1. Brief Update on COVAX Vaccines

- On 22 April 2021, Syria received the first batch of 256 800 doses of COVID-19 vaccines facilitated through COVAX. This vaccine delivery (AstraZeneca vaccines from the Serum Institute of India, AZ SII) will be distributed to frontline health workers across Syria, including the northeast and northwest. The COVID-19 vaccines were delivered through two shipments: 203 000 doses arrived in Damascus for all governorates and additional 53 800 doses were delivered through Gaziantep for the cross-border shipment to the northwest. Vaccine distribution and administration will start in early May 2021.

2.1.2. COVID-19 Laboratories

- Within the COVID-19 laboratory expansion plan to 6 more governorates, trainers of As-Sweida lab technicians concluded training on molecular biology testing (SARS-CoV-2 PCR tests) and GeneXpert testing, in addition to biosafety and biosecurity training. Trainees were from Hama, Tartous, Quneitra, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-Ez-Zor, As-Sweida and Dara'a.
- Further to the previous 10 biosafety cabinets delivered to functioning COVID-19 laboratories, WHO has delivered a new biosafety cabinet class III to the emerging disease laboratory at CPHL.
- The new PCR delivered to Rural-Damascus at Jdeidet-Artouz centre was put into function on 15 April.
- As a preparation for the COVID-19 serosurvey, WHO has delivered 96 ELISA kits for testing COVID-19 antibodies and conducted training for laboratory technicians at the four laboratories that will be performing the testing in Damascus, Aleppo, Tartous and Hama.

2.1.3. Points of Entry (PoE)

- WHO has supported the Ministry of Health (MoH) to enhance the national capacity of preparedness and response to health emergencies and ensure health security under International Health Regulations (2005), including strengthening the core capacity at points of entry (PoE).
- A medical point in Al-Boukamal ground-crossing is under construction by DoH Deir-Ez-Zor. MoH and WHO are working on equipping the point with medical devices and furniture to provide health access to travelers. In addition, WHO is working on establishing a medical point in Dabbousiyah ground-crossing, in Homs, including rehabilitating and equipping it with medical devices.
- The COVID-19 Intra-Action Review (IAR) report is being finalized. Based on the IAR recommendations, the 2021 priorities were identified, and the action plan was developed based on national stakeholders.

2.2. Environmental Health

- WHO continues to monitor the water quality to check for chemical and biological contamination of different water sources, such as water networks, ground wells, reservoirs, water tanks, jerrycans, and also culture to identify pathogens.
- During the reporting period, 57 tests were conducted in four villages in Rural Aleppo (northern and eastern parts), and 1 165 tests in NES (Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and Deir-Ez-Zor) including eight IDPs camps and collective shelters. Among them, 47 water sources in Rural Aleppo and 120 sources (mainly jerrycans) in NES were found contaminated and were sterilized.
- WHO is coordinating with Deir-Ez-Zor governorate to expand the drinking water quality monitoring activity.

2.3. Health Sector Coordination

Syria National Health Sector Activities

- Organized and conducted a health sector coordination meeting on 20 April. During the meeting, attended by 41 participants, the selection and rehabilitation criteria for health facilities, which was developed in consultation with partners, as well as gender mainstream in health, were presented; the revised Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) 2021 timeline was shared. The deadline to submit Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) projects was extended till 27 April.
- Collected operational updates from health partners, prepared and disseminated updates for the period from 1-15 April 2021.
- Conducted a bilateral call with partners to support and provide guidance in the development of HRP projects.
- Conducted a bilateral call with the regional office (RO) to discuss HRP projects.
- Produced and disseminated the March health sector bulletin, on 25 April.

- Participated in an ad-hoc ISC meeting, on 20 April, to discuss the strategic priorities for Syrian Humanitarian Fund Standard Allocation.

Northeast Syria coordination updates

- On 17 April, a joint meeting with NES Forum COVID-19 Emergency Coordinator was arranged to discuss the COVID-19 challenges and response at formal camps.
- By 18 April, the COVID-19 vaccination plan for northeast Syria was drafted and submitted to WHO Damascus. Several meetings were held to discuss further steps to finalize the plan, including a meeting of WHO and UNICEF Regional Directors, on 18 April; a joint meeting with UNICEF Qamishli, on 19 April, and a meeting for Damascus-based technical teams from WHO and UNICEF, on 20 April.
- Attended several health sector meetings, including the Health Sector Coordination meeting arranged by WHO Syria Health Cluster Coordinator, on 20 April.
- Attended the Whole of Syria weekly calls arranged by WHO EMRO, On 21 and 28 April.
- Provided health sector inputs during Al-Hol Camp Coordination meetings, which were arranged by UNHCR, on 20 and 27 April.
- Organized regular bi-weekly Inter-hub calls involving WHO Syria Hub and NES Forum INGOs, on 20 April.
- Organized and facilitated Sub-National health sector coordination meeting, on 25 April; regular health sector coordination meetings for Al-Hol camp on 22 and 29 April, Al-Roj camp on 25 April, Al-Areesha camp on 27 April and Mahmoudli camp on 28 April.

2.4. Routine Immunization

- The national immunization days conducted on 4-13 April, reached 2 780 911 children under five. A measles committee meeting was conducted in Damascus following the campaign.
- The measles and rubella campaign proposal is under revision and will be submitted to GAVI on 1 May.
- The joint 2020 EPI Reporting form was uploaded into the regional platform on 25 April.

On COVID-19 vaccine introduction:

- On 22 April, Syria received its first batch of AstraZeneca SII Covishield vaccines consisting of 203 000 doses.
- On 14-17 April, cascade training was conducted at the governorate level for service delivery.
- On 16 April, the UN vaccination plan was submitted to UN global support team for revision.
- A pre-registration system was developed by WHO and being piloted by MoH.
- WHO supported printing vaccination registration and reporting materials such as vaccination cards, vaccination certificates, registers, and reporting forms. Those materials are currently under distribution to all governorates.
- The financial part of the National Deployment Vaccination Plan (NDVP) has been finalized and shared with the regional office.
- A workshop on service provisions targeting vaccination teams was conducted in Aleppo.
- A workshop on the vaccine program bottleneck was conducted in all Syrian governorates.
- A Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop on post-vaccination side effects was conducted in Damascus.

2.5. Primary Health Care and Non-Communicable Diseases

- Continued coordination with MoH to prepare for “World No Tobacco Day” on 31 May. Key regional health messages were shared for further dissemination.
- An invitation to the Tobacco-Free Initiative (TFI) webinar on "Tobacco Taxation – Strategizing effective tobacco taxation using the WHO tax manual and Tobacconomics Cigarette Tax Scorecard” was shared with MoH, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economics and External Trade.

- Facilitated EMRO webinar on Children Cancer Research Proposals (Global Initiative for Children Cancer).
- Under WCO support, the Oral health project in Eastern Ghouta schools was launched on 18 April at Zamalka school. A total of 612 students benefited from 2 038 dental services including clinical examination, therapeutic services, as well as preventive and health promotion sessions for 612 students and 24 teachers. The ceremony was attended by the governor of Rural Damascus, the Minister of Education, Heads of School Health and Heads of Education Directorates.
- The PHC Measurement and Improvement Initiative progression model data is under EMRO review.
- Dispatched in-kind donation of lifesaving medicines to health partners. The number of provided PHC treatments courses was 19 993.



WHO-supported oral health project in eastern Ghouta, Rural Damascus.

2.6. Secondary and Tertiary Health Care (STHC)

- Delivered in-kind donation of lifesaving medicines, antibiotic injections, and medical consumables to MoH, MoHE including DOH in Al-Hasakeh (dialysis supplies). The number of provided treatments courses under STHC was 25 533.

2.7. Trauma

- As part of enhancing the capacity of the public health facilities; WHO delivered 15 IEHK kits providing 15 000 treatments to health partners in Al-Hasakeh, in addition to one Automated Hematology Analyzer to DoH Aleppo.
- Delivered prosthetic device components and manufacturing materials, sufficient to produce 950 artificial limbs, to the MoH Center of Disability and Physical Rehabilitation in Damascus. This centre provides rehabilitation care to people with disabilities from all over Syria and remains the main medical and qualified public institution in the country. The provided physical rehabilitation services contribute to improving the quality of life of amputees and their ability to live independently.
- 75 health workers from Quneitra, Damascus and Rural Damascus were trained on “Hospital Major Incident Medical Management and Support”, “Management of ICU patients” and “Managing the Emergency Plan”. The courses targeted health professionals (doctors, nurses, and anaesthesia technicians) working in isolation centres as well as ICU and emergency departments.

2.8. Communicable Diseases

- Delivered 20 000 Vials of anti-Rabies Vaccines. About 7 000 persons, who are subject to deadly rabies disease, from all around Syria could benefit from these life-saving vaccines.

2.9. Tuberculosis (TB) / HIV

- Two out of the three TB mobile clinics are still functioning in Aleppo and Rural Damascus governorates. A total of 1 399 beneficiaries have benefited from 26 awareness sessions on TB, during which 390 suspected cases were tested and five have been confirmed as positive cases.
- On 19 April, TB active case finding in prisons started in six governorates. During the reporting period, a total of 1 704 beneficiaries have benefited from awareness sessions on TB. Among the 182 suspected cases that were tested for TB, 5 were confirmed to be positive.
- Al-Sham NGO, WHO’s local partner for implementing the project of “Prevention and Promotion for Health and Mental Health on HIV to the Most At-Risk Population”, continued to provide awareness sessions in 11 Syrian governorates. A total of 864 beneficiaries have been targeted through 96 awareness sessions. On other hand, a total of 799 have taken the voluntary test for HIV as part of this project; two positive cases were reported.

2.10. Mental Health

- Together with stakeholders from the directorates of health and education, as well as from NGOs (Al-Ikhaa, Kibarouna, and SSSD) in Latakia and Tartus, WHO conducted a field mission to the coastal area - Latakia sub-office where several meetings took place to discuss, enhance and expand MHPSS services.
- Finalized the 2nd quarter distribution plan for Psychotropic medications after assessing the needs at MoH/MH directorate, MoHE, MH hospitals, long term care facilities, and other MH partners.
- Finalized the MHPSS guidelines for elderly people with COVID-19 which will be sent to the MHPSS Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group (IASC RG) for clearance.
- Actively participated in the meeting with MHPSS IASC RG / DRC, Save The Children to discuss the new “Durable Solution Conditions for Displaced Syrians” report and the way forward for further collaboration in Syria on the MHPSS field.
- Actively participated in the global meeting for IASC RG on MHPSS in Emergency Settings, with a focus on publication updates, civil society engagement in World Health Assembly (WHA), updates from peace-building Technical Group (TG) and People-in-the-Move TG.
- Technically followed up with trained community workers who will participate in the “My Hero Is You” campaign.

2.11. Nutrition

- Met with partners to coordinate and review of the Early Child Development program at MoH in three governorates.
- Virtually met with the nutrition unit from the regional office to finalize the 2021 plan.
- Collected data from neonatal resuscitation program for March 2021; 5 724 deliveries in 47 hospitals at 12 governorates.
- Collected data from 21 stabilization centres for March 2021: 87 admissions with the highest number being in Aleppo (20 admissions).
- Collected data from nutrition surveillance for March 2021; 121 105 services from 926 health centres.

2.12. Pharmaceuticals

- Followed up on the joint work between WHO, MoH, MoHE, the National Cancer Control Steering Committee (NCCSC), and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to implement the imPACT review mission in Syria.
- Followed up on timely distribution of medicines and medical equipment to health facilities.
- Closely coordinated with MoH counterparts on the required capacity building activities.

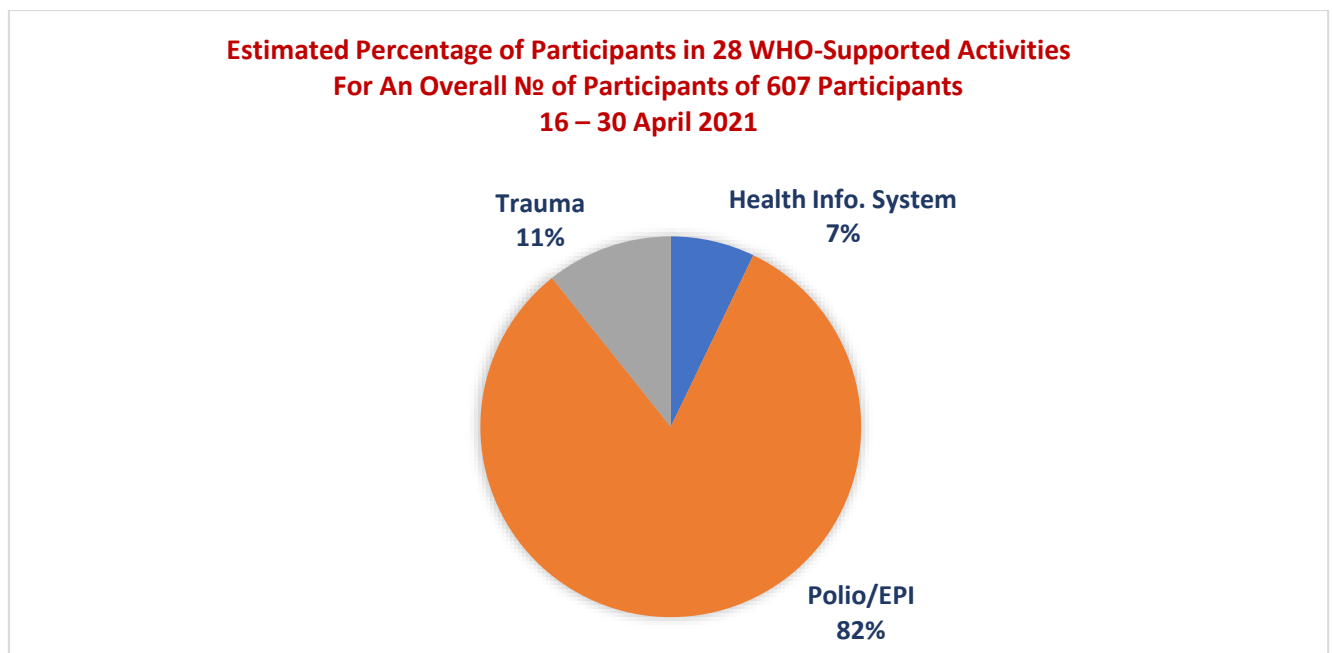
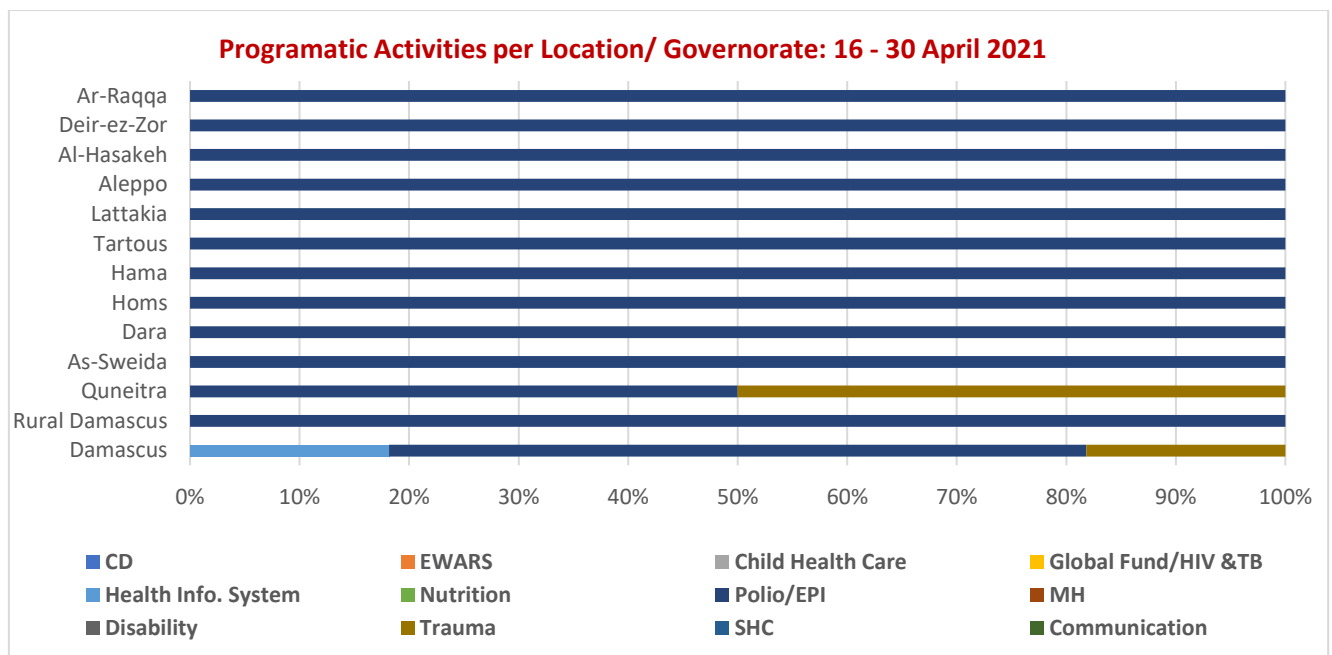
2.13. External Relations and Communication

- Following the arrival of the first batch of COVID-19 vaccines, WHO in cooperation with MoH and UNICEF conducted a ceremony on 22 April with the participation of the Minister of Health, a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, the Ambassador of India, WHO and UNICEF representatives. The ceremony was followed by a press conference attended by local and international media.
- WHO shared with partners the latest situation updates on COVID-19 along with materials developed by the regional office and headquarters, including guidance for safe Ramadan practices in the context of COVID-19.
- WHO plans to support the Ministry of Information in developing educational TV spots to raise community awareness on the importance of adhering to COVID-19 precautionary measures, including key messages for safe Ramadan practices as well as TV spots on the adverse effects of smoking on health especially within the context of COVID-19. The spots will be broadcast on all national TV channels and social media platforms.

2.14. Community Engagement (NGOs)

- Maintained the provision of lifesaving and life-sustaining health care services in northeast Syria (NES) where 139 patients benefited from trauma care services and 92 benefited from advanced surgical operations. Beneficiaries are mainly from IDP camps and informal settlements.
- Delivered primary health care services including medical consultations and medications for child health, reproductive health, and chronic diseases. In Damascus and its rural, 1 686 health services were provided.
- Delivered secondary health care services to beneficiaries in Damascus including 19 surgical interventions and 5 referred trauma care services.
- Launched a new engagement with the “Aamal Syrian Organization” for people with disabilities to strengthen the capacity of children suffering from disabling hearing loss in Damascus and Lattakia.

2.15. Capacity Building

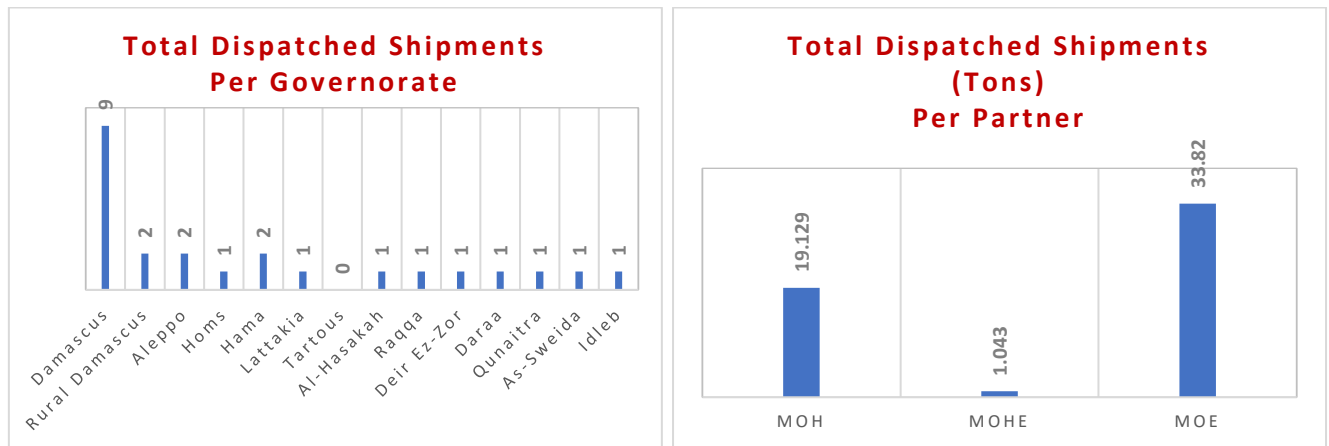


2.16. Information Products and Related Activities

- Information Products and Related Activities:
 - Supported the HeRAMS Annual Report 2020 of NGOs health centres.
 - Produced WoS January 2021 4Ws snapshots.
 - Updated COVID-19 Dynamic Infographic Dashboard for Syria.
 - Updated the online item tracking system for COVID-19 in Syria.
 - Provided key information on health facilities based on HeRAMS.
 - Updated Maps for health sector interventions.

2.17. Operations Support and Logistics

- Dispatched 53.9 tons of medical & lab supplies, kits, equipment, artificial limbs, hemodialysis sessions and medical waste truck - covering 13 governorates (except Tartous). Recipients included 9 MoH facilities, MoHE, and MoE.
- The total number of treatments is 245 841.



3. WHO Syria Sub-Office Response

3.1. Aleppo Hub

- Al-Sham NGO, the WHO local implementing partner for the project of “Prevention and Promotion for Health and Mental Health on HIV to the Most At-Risk Population” in Aleppo governorate continued to provide awareness sessions. A total of 268 beneficiaries were targeted through 29 awareness sessions. A total of 81 beneficiaries took the voluntary test for HIV as part of this project, through which one positive case was registered.
- Participated in a coordination meeting between the Directorate of Education and UN agencies to discuss the essential needs of students, accommodation sites and main challenges. A separate coordination meeting is planned to be conducted by health sector partners and DoH in the upcoming days.
- Through the TB mobile clinics that are still functioning in Aleppo, 2 880 beneficiaries benefited from 48 awareness sessions on TB. 1 113 suspected cases were tested, out of which 16 cases were confirmed. Moreover, through the awareness sessions conducted at Aleppo Central Prison, one case was reported.



Assessing the quality of mobile aids provided by YBY NST in Aleppo governorate

- WHO Aleppo sub-office conducted three site visits targeting Yadan Bi Yad (YBY), Al-Ihsan and Health promotion Non-State Actors (NSA). The visits aimed to re-assess their capacity before the starting date of grant LOAs; WHO micro assessment tools were used with a focus on organizational structure, staffing, mentoring and evaluation plans.
- Followed up on lab equipment delivery to Ibn Khaldoun Mental Hospital. A list of the needed support for the hospital and MH residents was received.
- Coordinated with UNHCR on the provision of psychotropic support for community facilities with MH specialized services.

3.2. Latakia Hub

- On 18 April, TB screening began in prisons in Latakia and Tartous, targeting 2 400 prisoners in Latakia and 1 100 in Tartous governorates. Out of 12 suspected samples, one positive case was confirmed in Latakia.
- WHO supported three surveillance teams in Latakia as well as two in Tartous to enhance active surveillance and screening at schools.
- WHO provided community-based mental health training for 48 community workers and NGO health personnel to strengthen NGOs capacity to provide psychosocial support consultations at the community level.
- Through a collaboration between WHO & UNDP, light rehabilitation projects began at COVID-19 labs in both Tartous and Latakia.



TB screening for prisoners in Latakia governorate

3.3. Homs Hub

- Updated the humanitarian situation at Al-Rukban second destination, with a focus on the non-official camps in Al-Zohoriya, Fruglus and Shamsin areas. The response plan was updated in coordination with all respective sub-sectors.
- WHO mobile teams, in cooperation with the Directorates of Health in both Homs and Hama, supported the tuberculosis program in surveying the local prisons to investigate TB cases amongst prisoners.

3.4. Deir-Ez-Zor Hub

- On 21 April, WHO supported the school health department in Deir-Ez-Zor with 5000 100-ml-bottle of 1% permethrin lotion, and 1000 30-g-tube of 5% Permethrin cream. These medicines will be used for the treatment of lice cases among school students.
- The approvals for the water quality monitoring project in Deir-Ez-Zor governorate were received. This will ensure the safety of drinking water for vulnerable population by checking chemicals and biological contamination of different water sources, such as water networks, ground wells, reservoirs, water tanks, jerrycans, and also conducting bacterial culture to identify pathogens. The project will be implemented by the directorate of environment with coordination with the directorates of health and water resources. Deir-Ez-Zor sub-office is preparing to secure the operational needs to launch the project soon.



WHO-supported shipment against lice for school children in Deir-Ez-Zor governorate

- The case fatality ratio (CFR) reported in Deir-Ez-Zor governorate has been rising during the hard-hit COVID-19 third wave due to poor awareness and low adherence to precautionary measures. Deir-Ez-Zor sub-office, in coordination with the rapid response team (RRT) in DoH and the mental health unit at WCO, is planning to implement COVID-19 psychosocial support and awareness campaign. The proposed campaign aims to carry out four key activities:
 - Visiting high-risk area, in response to RRTs notifications of suspected cases, to provide awareness-raising sessions, and MHPSS services to suspected cases and their families and the community in affected communities.
 - Conducting awareness-raising sessions in public places (schools, markets, mosques, etc.)
 - Disseminating IEC materials.
 - Conducting private health sector visits to encourage doctors for timely notifications as well as to distribute the latest COVID-19 standard case definition to doctors.
- On 15 April, conducted the monthly health cluster coordination meeting. Deir-Ez-Zor sub-office presented on COVID-19 service delivery including micro-planning of COVID-19 vaccination in Deir-Ez-Zor, targeted groups of the first phase of vaccination, locations of vaccination centres, the electronic platform for vaccine registration, and pharmacovigilance plan.
- On 26 April, Health Information System focal point conducted a desk assessment for Al Suheil Surgical Hospital at Al Basira sub-district in the eastern Euphrates under SDF control. Al Basira sub-district has a health severity scale of 3, and the hospital serves more than 350 000 people in its catchment area. The objectives of the assessment were to:
 - assess the current situation of the hospital in terms of infrastructure, staffing, and type of services provided.
 - identify areas of potential WHO support in the future.

3.5. Al-Qamishli Hub / Northeast Syria (NES)

- **Nutrition SAM with complications:** The following cases have been reported:

	New Admissions	Recoveries	Active Cases
Al-Hikma Hospital	5	4	3
Al-Tabaqa National Hospital	3	2	2

- The number of beneficiaries covered through the **Neonatal Resuscitation Program** at Al-Hikmah hospital was 118.
- **Monitoring of drinking water quality:** Monitoring of drinking water quality has been carried out through regular visits to 8 camps and many collective shelters. Around 1 165 samples were tested, 10.3% of samples were contaminated on the jerrycan level.
- **EWARS:** One suspected case of Polio was reported from Al-Areesha camp; the sample was collected and sent to Damascus.
- **Trauma/Case Management Activities:**
 - Conducted an assessment for the services needed to receive UN staff COVID-19 cases in Al-Hikmah Hospital and in Qamishli Hospital in coordination with HeRAMS Focal Point. In addition, an assessment was conducted on the Al-Hikmah ambulance services to allow to refer cases outside of NES when needed.
 - Finalized a combined report on the joint assessment of Al-Hol camp's COVID-19 Treatment Facility (CTF). The report was shared with the WHO health sector coordinator, to be circulated among partners and call on their involvement to fill in the gaps and to address the existing needs of the CTF.

- On 24 April, conducted a joint field visit with EPDC (a local NGO) to CTF at Al-Hol camp, to brief them about the mechanism of work at the isolation centre. A meeting was conducted with EPDC project manager to address the needs of the isolation centre in Al-Roj and Al-Areasha camps.
- Through the WHO-contracted Al-Hikmah private hospital, WHO provided support for treating 115 trauma cases and 74 secondary health care services. Beneficiaries were mainly IDPs.
- Several shipments were distributed, including to DOH in Al-Hasakah (sessions and kits providing 15 213 treatments), Qamishli National Hospital (trauma kits and medicines for 1 142 treatments) and Al-Bir Qamishli (insulin for 30 treatments).

4. North-West Syria (NWS) Response

4.1. COVID-19 Response

4.1.1. Brief Update on COVAX Vaccines in NWS

- 53 800 doses of AstraZeneca SII reached Northwest Syria administration on 21 April 2021.
- The implementation strategy involves identifying 93 vaccination teams with four members per team through more than 495 health facilities (285 in Idlib and 210 in Aleppo). Each team will vaccinate health staff in a defined health facility and community workers in non-health NGOs. More than one visit to each health facility and NGO will be conducted to vaccinate the staff.

4.1.2. COVID-19 Update

- As of 27 April, 19 682 (90.9%) cases have recovered, and 1 497 (6.9%) cases are still active. A total of 28 600 PCR and extraction kits, as well as 114 500 UTMs and swabs, are available. WHO is in process of procuring another 20 000 PCR and extraction kits.
- WHO Gaziantep is in the process of procuring 5 000 Ag-RDT.
- On 18 April, Dunya Doktorlari Dernegi (DDD) started their laboratory activities in Jindaris (Aleppo) and Ad-Dana (Idlib). WHO is extending its support to the surveillance and laboratory pillars for another 5 months; an agreement is under process with the selected implementing partners.

4.2. Health Sector Coordination

- **Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)** was submitted on 27 April. A scorecard, like in the Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF), was used.
- **Strategic Advisory Group (SAG):** Nominees from agencies were received by the 23 April deadline. An email was shared with all the needed details on the voting process.
- **Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM) 2020:** The workshop with the global health cluster (GHC) was postponed until a later date.
- The Health Cluster Workplan was drafted and shared with the team.
- **SCHF First Standard Allocation in 2021 (SA1-2021):** The review committee will meet to revise the projects on 28, 29, 30 April, 3 and 4 May 3 and 4. A multi-cluster review will take place on 6 and 7 May.

4.3. Early Warning, Alert and Response Network

- Till Epi-Week 16:
 - Out of 240 sentinel sites (Aleppo 132, Idlib 108), a total of 239 sites (Aleppo 132, Idlib 107) reported on the 13 syndromes/diseases under EWARN which constitutes 99.6% completeness and 94% timeliness of reporting (compared to 85% in the previous week).
 - A total of 214 130 consultations were recorded (36% <5 years) which represents a 3.5% decrease in the number of consultations than the previous week (221 884)

- The highest syndromes reported from NWS were (a) 17 359 influenza-like-illness (ILI) cases, representing a 2.8% decrease from the previous week of 17 865 cases; (b) 9 053 other acute diarrhoea cases, representing a 1.3% increase from the previous week of 8936 cases; (c) 243 acute jaundice syndrome cases, representing 8% decrease from the previous week of 264 cases; (d) 209 severe acute respiratory illness (SARI) cases, representing 6.6% increase from the previous week of 196 cases.
- A total of 119 alerts were recorded from northern Syria. After primary screening and verifications, 22 were confirmed as true alerts.
- In Epi-week 15, the District Level Officers (DLO) conducted 19 training sessions for NGOs' health workers in 19 reporting health facilities in Idleb, Harim, Ariha, Al-Bab, Afrin, and A'zaz districts. Basics of acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) surveillance was the main topic discussed, and the number of trainees was 256.
- In Epi-week 16, DLOs conducted 4 training sessions for NGOs' health workers in 4 reporting health facilities in Harim, Al-Bab, and Afrin districts. Basics of AFP surveillance was the main topic discussed, and the number of trainees was 53.
- WHO's internal EWARN Annual Report 2020 was drafted and submitted last week for review. The Annual report by the EWARN implementing partner is under process.

4.4. Routine Immunization

- During epidemiological week 15: 93 EPI centres functioned; 134 teams worked, 633 sessions were conducted, and about 12 578 children under one were targeted.
- During March 2021, 2 915 vaccination sessions were planned, 2 839 were conducted (97%); 1 171 sessions were conducted through fixed (41%) centres while 1 668 were through mobile teams (59%).
- All EPI teams (622 participants) were trained by Syrian Immunization Groups (SIG) on COVID-19 awareness, physical distancing, and protective measures. A monitoring tool was developed to measure teams' adherence to WHO guidelines regarding physical distancing, using PPEs and conveying COVID-19 awareness sessions. Governorate and district supervisors submitted daily reports that were discussed in the virtual daily meeting.
- The immunization team is regularly participating in a comprehensive dialogue with UNICEF/Gaziantep, WHO EMRO, UNICEF regional office and GAVI for sustained EPI services in NWS. The final draft of the Programme Support Rationale (PSR) document, budget, and planning document, as well as Grant Performance Framework (GPF), were submitted to be processed to the International Rescue Committee (IRC).
- The COVAX Technical Assistance plan is finalized and submitted; it was processed and approved by GAVI. In addition, the COVAX Vaccine Request was finalized and submitted in time. NWS is not able to do cost-sharing of vaccine procurement, but this will not hinder the ability to access the fully subsidized donor-funded doses provided through the COVAX AMC.
- WHO and partners finalized the first draft of the COVAX vaccination campaign plan and budget. With newly available data more than one scenario can be developed.
- WHO and partners finalized the development of the National Deployment of Vaccination Plan (NDVP) for NWS.
- Developed and shared the Targeted Country Assistance plan with the regional office for further discussions which was further submitted to GAVI.
- Developed different formats to collect data for the upcoming COVID-19 vaccination campaign. The development of the registers and campaign SOPs is ongoing.
- The Vaccine Introduction Readiness Assessment Tool (VIRAT) was last updated in March 2021.
- Conducted a 2-day COVAX training of trainers for central supervisors; a second training was conducted for Independent Monitoring NGO staff. Teams' and supervisors' registers were developed and reviewed.

4.5. Primary Health Care Networks

- Network Phase 7 is ongoing; the kickoff meeting took place on 22 April 2021.

- WHO continues to support 37 Public Health Centers and Mobile teams in NWS; 21 of them through integrated service delivery networks and 16 as a last resort coverage.
- Referral System is fully functional in Idleb, and Afrin in North Aleppo. COVID-19 referrals at PoEs are at minimum functionality.
- The Health Information Systems at WHO Gaziantep is working on the integration of the International Classification of Diseases – 11th revision (ICD 11) with UNRWA and EMRO.

4.6. Non-Communicable Diseases

- As NCD Patients Master-Listing Sheets will be included on COVAX vaccination planned for northwest Syria, a total of 227 104 NCD patients have been identified.
- The ad-hoc Thalassemia Taskforce, working under the umbrella of NCD TWG, conducted the **Thalassemia Needs Assessment**. The Thalassemia International Federation recommended online training for all eight thalassemia centres, in addition to issuing standard guidelines on diagnosis, management, and treatment of thalassemia for NWS.
- Raw data on the **Blood Bank Needs Assessment** will be analyzed within the NCD TWG.
- Initial gaps in the Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (**PSEA**) **Needs Assessment** were identified and the Health Cluster was notified.
- The Infographic Breast Cancer Service Mapping was completed by IMO Team.
- An e-Learning project on the package of essential noncommunicable disease interventions (NCD/PEN) was completed in 64 PHCs with PCI-UK who presented in the last Health Cluster meeting.

4.7. Secondary Health Care

- WHO continues supporting four hospitals including Harem and Medina Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) Hospitals, Bab-Al-Salam General Hospital, and Dana COVID-19 designated hospital.
- COVID-19 Community Treatment Centers (CCTC) prioritization list was jointly finalized through the COVID-19 case management technical group.
- Working with COVID-19 case management technical group on mapping of CCTCs service based on the prioritization list was finalized.

4.8. Tuberculosis

- Preparations for the third round of food-baskets distribution to TB patients will be finalized soon. WHO is working on updating the patient's list to share it with colleagues from the International Organization for Migration (IOM).
- The number of beneficiaries who visited all three TB centres during the last week was 197.
- The number of TB patients diagnosed during the last week was 15.
- The number of sputum samples sent to Gaziantep University for culturing was 11.
- GeneXpert activities were suspended temporarily. The HIV Health and Development (HHD) group received a new shipment of cartridges and will resume its activities within the week.
- WHO received updated culture and dexamethasone suppression test (DST) results from Gaziantep.
- So far, 18 multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) cases were diagnosed; 13 were enrolled in the treatment; 2 will be enrolled after the Concilium; 2 died, and 1 is receiving his medications from Aleppo.

4.9. Leishmaniasis

- As of epi-week 16, a total of 11 875 cases of leishmaniasis were reported in 2021.
 - In week 15, 860 leishmaniasis cases were reported which represents a 1.7% increase from the previous week (846 cases)

- In week 16, 992 leishmaniasis cases were reported which represents a 15.3% increase from the previous week (860 cases)

4.10. Mental Health

- Advocacy on suicide prevention by key MHPSS TWG (mental health and psychosocial support technical working group) members was done across the Cluster and will be completed by this week.
- MHPSS TWG members have completed the MHPSS gaps (specific to Idleb, Afrin, Aazaz, Al-Bab, Jerablus), prioritization and actions needed for 2021, which will be used for prioritizing future proposals throughout the year.
- Supported WHO Headquarters and IASC MHPSS Reference Group with the storybook for children “My Hero is You”; a cartoon video was created as well.
- The IASC MHPSS RG and WHO-HQ are planning a second book to assist children, their caregivers, and teachers on how to cope and return to school within the context of COVID-19, which is affecting everyone. HQ made an open-ended questionnaire for NWS, for children between 6 and 11 years of age, for their teachers and another for their parents.

4.11. Hemodialysis

- The first shipment of hemodialysis medications (without Heparin) will be sent to NWS cover the needs for 3 months. The dialysis task force updated the distribution plan, accordingly.

4.12. Community Health Workers

- WHO is still working with the consultant on the final report for the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey.
- A training register was updated with the courses conducted in March for 500 CHWs.

4.13. Information Management (IM) / Health Information System (HIS)

- Shared analyzed data for Insulins, IV fluids and Anesthesia Medicines Survey.
- Finalized 4Ws data for March 2021 with almost 1 million outpatient consultations, a remarkable increase in the number of reporting partners (45 reports reaching 151 communities)
- Finalized and shared the monthly health indicators dashboard (interactive and printed).
- Shared the weekly COVID-19 update for epi-week 16, along with the daily maintenance of the COVID-19 dashboard.
- Shared the first infographic draft for breast cancer service mapping for review.
- Created and shared a survey on mental health consumption with partners for data collection.

4.14. Supply Chain

- Third-party monitoring (TPM) of supply line request for proposal (RFP) was finalized. WHO contacted SREO company for the contractual process.
- WHO has agreed with UOSSM (non-profit organization) on conducting capacity building on medical supply chain management. The project is planned to start on 1 May and end on 31 September. WHO is planning to train 60 pharmacists/pharmacy assistant in 40 health facilities.

4.15. Procurement

- A purchase order for isolation gowns and respiratory masks, valued at around \$156 500, has been approved and sent out to the supplier. Goods are expected to be delivered by end of April.
- A Request for Price Estimate (RPE) has been submitted for Ambisome and Essential Medicines with an estimated value of 124 000 USD.

4.16. Logistics

- On 27 April, WHO send a consignment of 7 truckloads to NWS with medical supplies including essential medicines, surgical instruments, laboratory reagents and supplies.
- On 29 April, WHO sent a consignment of 4 truckloads to NWS with medical supplies including TEST Kits, Insulin, NCD Kits and PCR Kits.

5. Vaccine Updates

- For COVID-19 vaccine updates, please visit: [Update on COVID-19 Vaccination in Syria](#)

6. Useful Links

- [Syria Interactive Dashboards](#)
- [Syria Page in Health Cluster Site](#)
- [Syria Page in EMRO Site](#)
- [EMRO Dashboard](#)
- [COVID-19 Situation In EMRO Region Reports](#)
- [Latest Global WHO Weekly Update On COVID-19](#)
- [WHO COVID-19 Country And Technical Guidance](#)
- [United Nations Office For The Coordination Of Humanitarian Affairs](#)

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