22 September 2019 –The World Health Organization (WHO) has serious concerns over recent reporting of an increase in the number of child deaths in Al Hol camp. Such reporting has provided an inaccurate analysis on under-5 mortality, misrepresented some of the data, and overstated the gravity of the health situation in the camp.

While health needs in both the Annex – which houses foreign nationals - and the rest of the camp remain acute, overall mortality rates have been within international standards since April 2019; under-5 mortality rates have remained within international standards since May 2019. Contrary to the inaccurate reporting, there has been no increase in child deaths since March and mortality rates have remained stable over the past 6 months. Given the challenging operating environment and large health needs in Al Hol, these outcomes reflect well on the effectiveness of the collective humanitarian response in the camp.

The number of deaths reported decreased from 52 deaths during the week of 5–11 March, to 3 deaths during the week of 27–31 August. In total from 4 December 2018 to 31 August 2019, 406 deaths were registered in the camp, including 313 children (77%) under the age of 5. The high proportion of childhood deaths is largely due to the unusual demographics of the camp – the vast majority of residents are women and children – of which children under 5 currently represent 28.5% of the overall camp population.

WHO and health partners are working tirelessly to respond to health needs in Al Hol camp and have made significant efforts to scale up to the provision of health services.

Access to health care for camp residents is being progressively expanded, with 3 field hospitals, 18 static medical points, 8 mobile teams, 3 delivery clinics, 2 vaccination teams, and two family well-being centres providing services to the camp's inhabitants. 12 medical points are reporting cases of infectious disease to the camp's disease surveillance system.

WHO and partners will continue to work in a coordinated manner to further increase the range, coverage and quality of health services in the camp – and to avert all preventable deaths. Concerns regarding access to health care services in the Annex, as well as the high percentage of deaths in the community are shared by WHO and health partners, who are working vigorously to address these issues.

While continuing to expand access to humanitarian assistance is vital, WHO affirms that finding durable solutions for the residents of the camp must remain a major priority for the international community.

Sunday 8th of June 2025 07:14:12 AM