

3 million people now in need of immediate health care assistance

Cairo, April 11, 2019 – As the number of people impacted by the recent flooding in Islamic Republic of Iran increases, WHO's Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean expressed his condolences to families who have lost loved ones. He also reiterated that the support already provided by his agency will continue as additional needs emerge and he urged the international community to provide urgent financial support and free access of humanitarian aid into the country.

According to an official statement by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, over 3 million people are now in need of immediate health care assistance, up from 1.6 million a few days ago, while almost 14 million are affected and 300 000 displaced.

To respond to this situation, WHO has already airlifted essential lifesaving medical supplies to affected regions and will continue to ensure leadership and coordination of the health sector response, as well as work with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education and its partners to ensure that the health risks associated with flooding, including the risk of communicable diseases, are mitigated.

Extreme rainfall in the country precipitated this wave of intense flooding, which to date has inundated 28 out of the country's 31 provinces and also caused widespread damage to municipal facilities, including water systems, health centres and hospitals. Many health facilities in affected areas are either fully or partially damaged, and the risk of water- and vector-borne diseases, including malaria, cholera and other communicable diseases is increasing. To complicate matters, Islamic Republic of Iran's routine disease surveillance system has also been affected and laboratory functions in many areas damaged.

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