

Syrian Arab Republic unrest

Situation Report # 6

Date: 8 May 2012

Highlights

- The Syrian Arab Republic participated in the annual regional Vaccination Week from 24 to 30 March, during which 171 916 children were vaccinated as part of an immunization campaign.
- A mobile health clinic has been renovated and equipped by WHO and is currently stationed in Rural Homs.
- WHO has deployed a senior emergency health coordinator to its country office in the Syrian Arab Republic.



According to the Ministry of Health, 42 ambulances are out of service and 142 ambulances are in need of maintenance as a result of the unrest. Photo: WHO.

Health situation

- Challenges include an increase in the number of weapon-related injuries, as well as complicated and delayed obstetric emergencies. The influx of populations moving from affected areas to Rural Damascus, Tartous and Damascus has increased the burden on health services in the host communities, while facilities in affected areas are underutilized due to security concerns.
- There are no reports from the Ministry of Health or the few nongovernmental organizations sharing information in Homs of communicable disease outbreaks. As the unrest continues into the summer and temperatures rise, the interruption of solid waste and water and sanitation services signals an increased possibility of disease outbreaks, necessitating the need for the strengthening of the country's early warning surveillance system and the development of an automated early warning and response system.
- The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees reports that as of May 2012, more than 72 000 people are estimated to have fled to the neighbouring countries of Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq, putting an increasing strain on the health services of host communities.

Coordination

- Health sector coordination meetings are held on a weekly basis to discuss activities, needs, implementation and the distribution of tasks by each agency.

WHO response

- The Syrian Arab Republic participated in the annual regional Vaccination Week campaign from 24 to 30

March, in partnership with WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund. The Ministry of Health has reported that 171 916 children were vaccinated during the campaign, which is being extended due to a shortage of syringes. WHO is working to procure 1 million syringes from the local market as requested by the Ministry of Health so that vaccinations can resume around the country.

- One mobile health clinic equipped and renovated by WHO is currently stationed in Homs. The clinic, which is staffed by local registered physicians was visited by a total of more than 257 patients from 29 April to 7 May, and referred 22 patients to hospitals.
- WHO is supporting the immediate upgrade of 10 Ministry of Health ambulances for the transportation of critical cases from Hama, Idleb, Dara'a to tertiary hospitals in Damascus. According to the Ministry, 42 ambulances are out of service and 142 ambulances are in need of maintenance as a result of the unrest.
- WHO has deployed a senior emergency health coordinator to its country office in the Syrian Arab Republic. The coordinator reported for duty on 1 May and is currently meeting with stakeholders, ministry officials and health partners in the country. One information management officer and one public health officer are currently being deployed.
- WHO is conducting a rapid assessment for health facilities to measure the functionality and availability of primary health care centres, public hospitals and Syrian Arab Red Crescent clinics in seven governorates (Rural Damascus, Der El Zor, Homs, Hama, Idleb, Dara'a, Tartous).

Donors and funding

- The League of Arab States has pledged to donate US\$ 428 038 to WHO to support the health needs of affected populations.
- The Central Emergency Response Fund has allocated US\$ 1 million to WHO towards its relief efforts in the country.
- WHO is seeking US\$ 12 300 000 from donors for implementation of its health projects and activities in the Syrian Arab Republic.

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