



### Key Figures

<b>563,330</b>
Treatment courses provided
<b>2,140</b>
Trauma cases delivered
<b>2,656</b>
Healthcare providers trained
<b>38,714</b>
Outpatient consultations provided
<b>59,76</b>
Tonnes of health supplies delivered
<b>88 %</b> of sentinel sites submitted weekly disease surveillance reports
<b>85%</b> of disease alerts were responded to within 72 hours



*WHO Representative a.i. Dr Iman Shankiti visits one of the WHO-supported NGOs in Damascus*

### Top four morbidities reported by Early Warning Alert and Response System (EWARS & EWARN)

Influenza-like illness (ILI)	<b>192,029 (68%)</b>
Acute Diarrhea (AD)	<b>76,057 (27%)</b>
Acute Jaundice Syndrome (AJS)	<b>3,551 (1%)</b>
Leishmania	<b>5,738 (2%)</b>

### Highlights

- The theme for this year’s World Health Day, ‘My Health, My Right’, emphasized the importance of providing access to quality health services to everyone, everywhere, regardless of their financial status. WHO Syria, together with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and health partners, is actively working towards achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by supporting the healthcare system to become more resilient, accessible, and of higher quality. On this occasion, Dr Iman Shankiti, WHO Representative in Syria a.i., visited Al-Tamayyoz Health Center in Damascus which is supported by WHO. During her visit, Dr Shankiti met with health and community workers, patients, and children, emphasizing the significance of this year's theme.
- April 17th marked the eighth Senior Officials Meeting in Brussels which focused on discussing the humanitarian situation in Syria and listening to the voices of the Syrian people. The Regional Director of Health Emergencies – Dr Rick Brennan, and WHO Representative in Syria – Dr Iman Shankiti, attended the meeting and raised the alarm regarding increasing needs in health, declining funds, deterioration of health system functionality and resilience, and the cost of inaction. They also called for new and flexible funding streams to support key early recovery efforts to empower communities to exercise their right to health; ensure the sustainability of essential and emergency health services for millions of Syrians across the country; and deliver on WHO collective promise under SDG3 to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

## Security Situation

- The security situation within WHO Syria's area of operations remained unstable in several hotspots, including northeast (Al Hassakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and Deir-ez-Zor), Dara'a, Quneitra, Aleppo, Idleb, Hama, and Homs.
- On 01 April 2024, the Iranian Consulate Building along the Mezzeh highway in Damascus was targeted by an airstrike. The attack, which originated from the direction of Syrian Golan Heights, resulted in the total destruction of the building and the loss of at least six lives.
- Hostilities persist in rural areas of NES, leading to instability and threatening the safety of both civilian populations and security forces.

## Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI)

- In collaboration with MoH, WHO and UNICEF concluded 10–days of the Big Catch-Up vaccination activities. This initiative aimed to ensure that all children under the age of 5 have access to life-saving vaccines across all Syrian governorates. More than 10,000 health workers, including 4,541 vaccinators, were deployed to fixed sites, in addition to 1,097 mobile medical teams. WHO's support included covering the operational cost, shipping the vaccines to NES, and printing the needed forms and reporting tools. These activities were funded by GAVI and USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance. Two additional rounds are planned for July and October 2024.

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

- WHO conducted a 2-day central stakeholders' meeting to prepare a strategy to prevent and control non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The meeting involved representatives from MoH and other ministries, doctors' syndicates, UN agencies, NGOs, and health partners. The participants presented a situation analysis and discussed the next steps, which included developing the NCD strategy, with the help of a consultant from WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO).
- WHO supported a central workshop for 25 health workers to strengthen their capacities on cardiovascular disease risk approach, prevention, and management.

## Secondary Health Care (SHC)

- WHO facilitated a 2-day online webinar on hospital resilience, preparedness, and response. The webinar focused on all phases of disaster risk management and emergencies, aiming to enhance hospital resilience based on WHO EMRO practical guidance for hospital managers and members of hospital emergency management committees from MoH and Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE). The main goal was to improve hospital resilience by enduring the impact of hazards while maintaining essential health service functions and recovering from their original state.
- WHO visited hospitals in Aleppo where it supported rehabilitation, including:
  - The Pediatric Hospital for which an assessment of the work process and the site's readiness for installing medical equipment was conducted, including the installment of an oxygen generator.
  - Zahi Azrak Hospital, Aleppo University Hospital, and Al Razi Hospital: assessing the functionality of the installed medical equipment donated by WHO.

## Trauma Care

- WHO donated and installed an oxygen generating station in Al Zahera Hospital in Damascus affiliated with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC). This generator will enhance the capacity of the hospital to provide emergency and other life-saving services dependent on oxygen supplements.

## Nutrition

- A total of 106,001 children under the age of five were screened for malnutrition across 983 health centers.
- A total of 1,592 cases of acute malnutrition were identified, including 467 cases of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and 1,125 moderate acute malnutrition cases (MAM).

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

In partnership with 2 local non-governmental organizations (NGOs):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1,908 different MHPSS services were provided, including recreational activities and vocational training.</li> <li>- 158 beneficiaries received GBV awareness sessions.</li> <li>- 207 beneficiaries received MHPSS awareness sessions.</li> </ul>
Primary health centres (PHC), outpatient clinics, and specialized facilities provided:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6,280 psychotropic medication treatment courses.</li> <li>- 20,344 mhGAP and specialized consultations at the PHC level.</li> <li>- 24,830 basic psychosocial support services and 461 therapeutic psychological interventions.</li> </ul>
In partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 569 MHPSS services were provided online to those requiring emotional and psychological support.</li> </ul>

## Tuberculosis (TB) & HIV

- TB mobile clinics continued operating in Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor, and Rural Damascus. A total of 1,889 beneficiaries attended 35 TB awareness sessions, and 149 suspected cases were tested for TB, resulting in 14 confirmed cases.

## Health Systems Strengthening

- WHO organized a two-day capacity-building workshop at the Centre for Strategic Studies and Health Training on “Enhancing the national institutional capacity for evidence-informed policy-making to create an impact” targeting senior policy-makers. The regional plan was introduced to improve national institutional capacity for using evidence in health policy-making in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.
- Two workshops on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) health-related indicators took place in Damascus during the first and second weeks of April. These workshops aimed to discuss the SDG agenda in the country and the role of health within the SDGs, as well as the interrelation of other targets such as education, gender, water, sanitation, and hygiene, among others. Teams will be formed as an outcome of the workshops for the SDG localization project.

## Preventing and Responding to Sexual Misconduct (PRS)

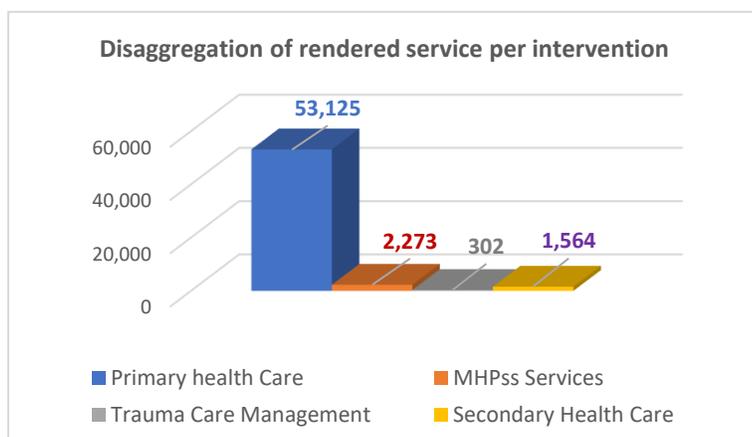
- The Prevention & Response to Sexual Misconduct (PRS) team in Syria hosted a mission from EMRO to strengthen PRS at various levels of the organization and to highlight the work implemented in Syria, and the progress made over the years. Sub-national focal points were identified to strengthen PRS efforts and a list of implementing partners for the rollout/update of the 2018 implementing partner protocol was submitted to EMRO and HQ.

## Community Engagement (NGOs)

- 4 WHO implementing partners operated five static medical points, and one community well-being centers across Damascus, Rural Damascus, and Homs providing primary, secondary, and trauma care, as well as MHPSS services to underserved populations.
- A total of 57,264 healthcare services were supported during the reporting period.

## National Health Sector Coordination

- On April 4th, the Health Sector developed the Health Sector Syria Field Directory, 2024-2025 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) projects for Syria and the Whole of Syria.



- Additionally, the health sector contributed to the preparation for the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on Syria, planned for April 17 in Brussels.
- The terms of reference for the Health Sector Coordination Group in Syria were updated in both English and Arabic languages.

## WHO Syria Sub-Offices

<b>Aleppo Hub</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Aleppo, the Big Catch-Up vaccination activities concluded, with a total of 344 mobile teams, and 1100 health workers deployed across 69 fixed centers.</li> <li>• WHO dispatched 11 shipments of medicines and medical supplies to local NGOs, MoHE, MoH, and SARC. In addition, an oxygen generator was delivered to the Paediatric Hospital and installed.</li> <li>• According to the education sector in Aleppo, approximately 12,000 students are expected to travel to Aleppo City from the hard-to-reach areas on 20 May 2024, to take the final national exams. WHO is ensuring that the necessary health support is provided, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ At the Al-Tayha checkpoint, students will be received by the Department of Health (DoH) ambulances for health screening and to address any emergencies.</li> <li>○ WHO provided medication as an in-kind donation through implementing partners supported by WHO.</li> <li>○ Secondary cases will be referred to both Al-Razi and University Hospital.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Lattakia Hub</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 425 health workers from Lattakia and Tartous underwent training covering various interventions including mental health, surveillance, pharmacovigilance, hospital preparedness, and readiness.</li> <li>• 2 WHO-supported implementing partners reached 15,000 beneficiaries with various services including primary and secondary health services, MHPSS, and physical consultations for people with disabilities.</li> <li>• WHO conducted assessment field visits to primary health services (PHC) centers in Lattakia and Tartous to assess the health services provided, including the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI), Health Resources and Services Availability Monitoring System (HeRAMS), Early Warning, Alert and Response System (EWARS), and nutrition.</li> </ul>
<b>Homs Hub</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WHO participated in the inter-sector coordination mission to Zalaqit and Abu Obaidah villages in northwest Hama to assess the health situation on the ground.</li> <li>• WHO supported MoE in responding to the increased cases of lice and scabies in Hama Governorate by providing treatment and conducting awareness sessions. More than 28,000 students were reached in 75 schools in Hama City and its rural area.</li> </ul>
<b>Deir-ez-Zor Hub</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MoH), WHO supported the operational costs for the Big Catch-Up vaccination activities on the eastern side of the Euphrates, successfully reaching children at the Abo Khashab camp.</li> <li>• WHO delivered and installed essential equipment and solar systems to strengthen the capacities of three vaccine warehouses in Kubar, Thiban, and Hajen villages. This initiative ensured better storage and management of vaccines, improving the overall efficiency of the EPI programme in the region.</li> </ul>
<b>Northeast Syria (NES) - Qamishli Hub</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 1 April, WHO chaired Al-Hol camp health coordination meeting and presented a technical update on WHO activities.</li> <li>• On 2 April, WHO held the Al Hassakeh sub-national health sector meeting.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 8 April, WHO conducted a coordination meeting with DoH and UNICEF to plan for the Catch-Up vaccination activity and proceed accordingly.</li> <li>In Ar-Raqqa, WHO worked with the DoH to develop a thorough plan for the activity spanning 10 working days and covering all areas of the Ar-Raqqa Governorate. Due to delays in vaccine delivery, the activity was extended for an additional 6 working days.</li> <li>WHO delivered essential guidance to education sector partners and caregivers on managing the final national exams, emphasizing coping strategies.</li> <li>In April, WHO distributed 16 tons of medical supplies to the Al Hassakeh DoH and health partners.</li> <li>Water quality monitoring was carried out in 11 camps, 51 shelters (12 in Ar-Raqqa and 39 in Al-Hasakeh), 37 water stations, and 49 boreholes. A total of 1,016 water samples were tested with 1.77% bacterial contamination detected.</li> <li>On risk communication and community engagement, preparation for the Catch-Up vaccination activity was in place including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness sessions for health and community workers at Al Hol Camp focusing on vaccination and standard disease definitions.</li> <li>Conducting a qualitative survey at Al Hol Camp to gauge community practices and perspectives on vaccination.</li> <li>Organizing a seminar on vaccine importance at Al Hol Camp in collaboration with UNICEF.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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## WHO Gaziantep Field Presence for the Cross-Border Response \_ Northwest Syria

### Situation Update

- The security situation in northwest Syria has remained unstable with an increase in hostilities. Local authorities reported a total of 124 casualties and 616 injuries due to ongoing hostilities since October 2023. Nearly half of the injured were women and children, they also comprise a majority of the casualties.
- The sustained provision of health care services in northwest Syria continues to face challenges due to lack of funding. Many health facilities are being forced to downsize operations, close departments or reduce working hours. An estimated 160 health facilities are expected to fully or partially cease operations by the end of June due to the lack of funding. The health sector estimates that this will result in 1.5 million people losing access to life-saving and emergency care services in northwest Syria. Additionally, more than one million children will be at increased risk of disease outbreaks, especially cholera/AWD and other infectious diseases.

Syria through cross-border missions, averaging two missions per week.

<b>Key Figures</b> <b>January to April</b> <b>WHO Cross-border Response</b>
<b>1,324,679</b> Treatment courses provided
<b>42,880</b> Trauma cases treatments delivered
<b>340</b> Tones of health supplies delivered

### Northwest Syria Response

- Since January 2024, WHO has delivered 37 truckloads of emergency kits and essential medicines to northwest

### Commemorating World Health Day

- In northwest Syria, World Health Day served as a reminder of the persistent healthcare challenges, where the right to health is being increasingly challenged. Nearly 80 percent of the 5.1 million people living in northwest Syria require health assistance.

Natural disasters and the lack of funding worsen an already dire situation, seriously challenging the provision of essential health services.

- On World Health Day, Mr. David Carden, the Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria, along with WHO and UNHCR, went on an advocacy joint mission to Ariha, in Idlib Governorate. The goal was to raise awareness about the humanitarian situation in northwest Syria, particularly emphasizing the health needs in frontline areas. They also aimed to advocate for urgent funding for the cross-border response.



*The Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria and WHO head of office for Gaziantep Field Presence Office speak with patients requiring rehabilitation following landmine injuries at Ariha Specialized Hospital in Ariha, Idlib*

### **Commemorating World Immunization Week**

- In 2017, the Expanded Immunization Programme (EPI) was re-established in northwest Syria, together with WHO, UNICEF, and the Syria Immunization Group, following disruption from the conflict.
- During World Immunization Week, the progress made in immunization coverage in northwest Syria was commemorated with events held in Gaziantep, Türkiye, and in Idlib Governorate.
- The EPI successfully ensured the routine vaccination of 80% of children in northwest Syria.

### **Investing in the health workforce in Syria at the Day of Dialogue for Brussels VIII Conference on “Supporting the future of Syria and the region”**

- As part of the Brussels VIII Conference, a Day of Dialogue was held on 30th April, engaging Syrian Civil Society. Ms. Rosa Crestani, Head of Office of the WHO Field Presence Office in Gaziantep, spoke at the roundtable discussion on “Triggering Meaningful Change: Investing in the Health Workforce in Syria”. The discussion focused on challenges and opportunities in health workforce planning,

management, education, and training in Syria. It also highlighted the mismatch between education and employment strategies and the needs of the health system and population.



*Ms. Rosa Crestani speaking at the roundtable discussion focused on the health workforce in Syria during the Day of Dialogue, ahead of the VIII Brussels Conference on Syria and the region*

- Ms. Crestani spoke of the harmonized salary scale for the health workforce in northwest Syria, which is being supported by WHO and the Health Cluster. She emphasized its significance in strengthening the health workforce in northwest Syria.

### **Improving capacities to manage mass casualties**

- WHO rolled out a series of trainings for 160 health workers at 4 hospitals in northwest Syria. The goal was to provide them with the necessary skills to effectively manage mass casualties and reduce fatalities. The training took place within the hospitals' premises, in Idlib and northern Aleppo, allowing the entire health teams to participate and gain a better understanding of their needs.
- Conflict, natural disasters, and hazards in northwest Syria increase the risk of mass casualty incidences. However, the capacity of the health system to manage and respond is limited, making this training timely and critical.

## 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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## Contact Us

**Dr Iman Shankiti**

WHO Syria Representative, a.i.

[shankitii@who.int](mailto:shankitii@who.int)

**Ms. Rosa Crestani**

WHO Health Emergencies (WHE)  
Team Lead and Head of Office,  
WHO Gaziantep

[crestanir@who.int](mailto:crestanir@who.int)