











COVID-19 Update

COVID-19 STATISTICAL SUMMARY AT WHOLE OF SYRIA LEVEL

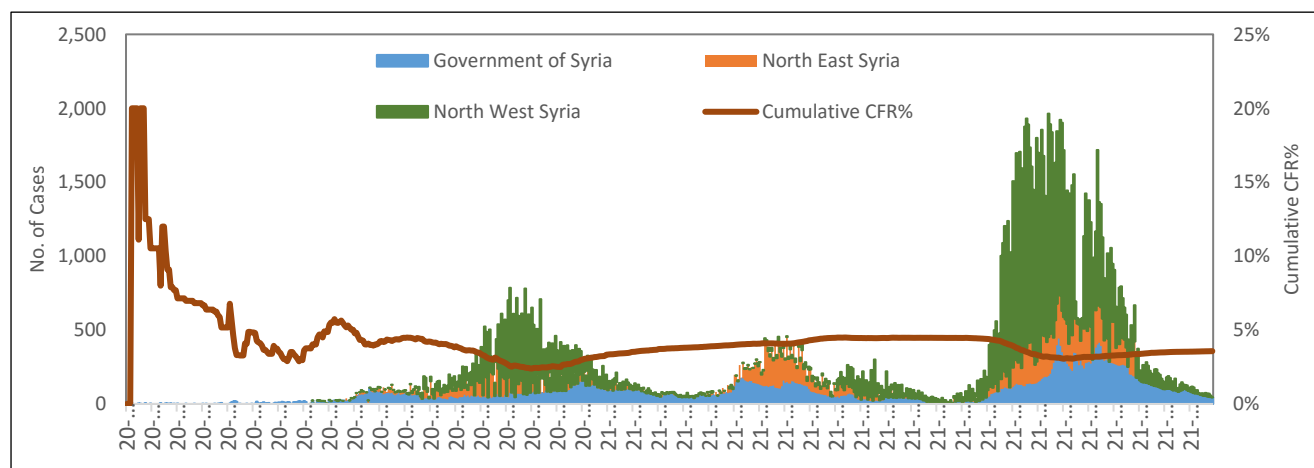
As of 25 December 2021

	179,895	Total cases (including 6,666 health workers)
	71,894	Active cases
	101,335	Recovered cases
	6,666	Deaths
	3.7%	Case Fatality Rate (CFR)
	15	COVID-19 functional laboratories
	565,721	COVID-19 tests done
	2,613	Overall testing rate per 100 000 population
	831	Incidence rate per 100 000 population (highest in Al-Hasakeh; 2,052)
	31.8%	Positivity rate

COVID-19 SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

A total of 179 895 cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in Whole of Syria, including 6 666 deaths, the overall case fatality rate 3.7%, the CFR was highest in Damascus, Deir Ez-Zor, and Tartous (above 8%).

COVID-19 cases were reported mostly from the northwest of Syria 92 884 (51.63%), while 50 051 (27.82%) of cases reported by the government of Syria, and 36 960 (20.55%) of cases reported in the northeast of Syria.



COVID-19 VACCINATION

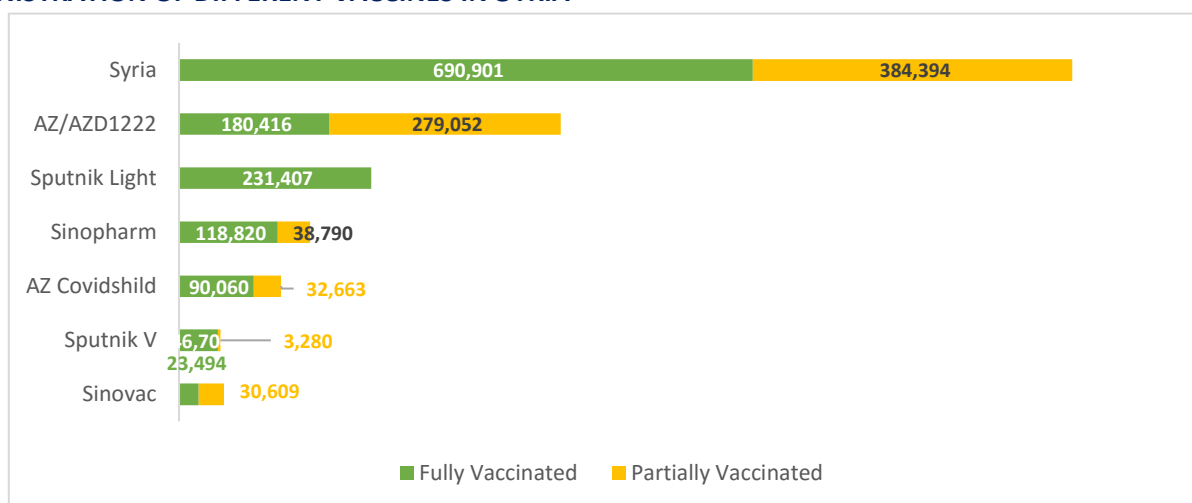
The MOH vaccination campaign that began in November has been ongoing throughout December 2021 with the aim of reaching up to 20% of the adult population by year’s end. Partners have been working with MOH to secure vaccines.

Vaccination supply status and plan (as of 25 December 2021)

- a. Population vaccinated
 - **6.6%** of the total population received at least one dose of the vaccine, and only **4.2%** are fully vaccinated.
 - A total of 1 534 789 doses of vaccines (of all types) have been administered to a total of 1 075 295 people.
- b. Delivery of vaccines in 2021:
 - April: 203 000 doses of AZ COVISHILD, delivered through COVAX mechanism
 - August: 138 240 doses of AZ/AZD1222, donated by Sweden (COVAX)
 - 23 September: 170 400 doses of AZ/AZD1222, donated by Sweden (COVAX)
 - 5 November: 1 356 000 doses of the Sinovac vaccine (COVAX)
 - 5 November: 500 000 doses of the Sinopharm vaccine, delivered through bilateral agreement
 - 6 November: 115 200 doses of AZ/AZD1222, donated by Sweden (COVAX)
 - 1 December: 313 700 doses of AZ/AZD1222 (COVAX), of which 112 800 donated by Greece
 - 3 December: 204 000 doses of AZ/AZD1222 (COVAX)
 - 16 December: 129 600 doses of AZ/AZD1222 (COVAX)

In north-west Syria: a total of 243 578 people (5.6% of the NES population) has received one dose of the vaccine, of which 120 111 (2.8% of NES population) have received two doses.

ADMINISTRATION OF DIFFERENT VACCINES IN SYRIA



WHO-SYRIA RESPONSE

EPI VACCINATION ACTIVITIES

WHO supported the delivery of two EPI planning workshops for all governorates, during which identification of needs and expectations for 2022 in relation to the immunization programme and COVID-19 vaccination campaign was finalized. Each governorate documented its objectives and a detailed plan of action for 2022 and shared them with the PHC Directorate in Damascus.

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE AND NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

WHO supported three supervisory visits to support monitoring and evaluation of NCD services and supply chain management at specialized centres in Rural Damascus, As-Sweida and Quneitra.

The Organization, in cooperation with MOH, also visited centres in Rural Damascus, Homs, Hama, Lattakia and Tartous to evaluate the delivery of health service to the elderly. WHO also ran workshops to strengthen the capacity

of 120 HCWs from Damascus, Rural Damascus and Quneitra in their ability to care for the elderly at home. The workshops focused on the impact of COVID-19, prevention of injuries, first aid and the elderly statistical form.

WHO delivered a training workshop on diabetes mellitus that was attended by 25 MOH HCWs from Damascus, Lattakia, Aleppo, Tartous, Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor. The Organization also strengthened the capacity of 125 MOH HCWs, tobacco control coordinators and community volunteers in topics related to tobacco control, including: the activation of Decree #62 (2009) banning smoking in public places, FCTC and smoking-free initiatives at universities and in select villages. HCWs, tobacco coordinators, and representatives from communities and 'healthy villages' across all governorates were also among the 275 participants of 11 interactive workshops during which an action plan was developed for the 'Smoking-Free Healthy Villages' initiative. Similarly, an action plan to support the 'Smoking-Free University' initiative was developed over 11 interactive workshops attended by 275 university students, academics and HCWs.

SECONDARY AND TERTIARY HEALTH CARE (STHC)

WHO visited Al-Bairouni Oncology Hospital in Damascus to oversee progress and assess readiness for the installation of medical equipment, including an integrated variable angle dual head gamma camera donated by WHO.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

A high seasonal increase has been observed in the number of cases of cutaneous leishmaniasis in the west and south of Al-Hasakeh governorate (Tal Tamer, Ghorra, Abu Tweineh), as well as in Tal Abyad in the governorate of Ar-Raqqa. WHO focal points in NES responded immediately to rapidly assess the situation. Data was verified in coordination with health partners and the following measures were taken:

1. WHO immediately released 18 000 ampoules of meglumine antimoniate, a medication to treat leishmaniasis that is unavailable in Syria, from its warehouse in Quamishli, where stocks were being stored as a contingency measure. Deliveries of the medication were made through DoH Al-Hasakeh, the INGO Mentor and directly to various camps.
2. WHO also supported delivery by air, on 16 December, of a shipment of 5 000 ampoules from MoH to DoH Al-Hasakeh.
3. No further gap in medicines is anticipated.
4. An assessment, planned for Q1 2022, will help WHO verify data, identify duplicates in case reports and gaps in service, and plan for a long-term response, as has been previously done in Deir-ez-Zor.

TRAUMA

Over 2 962 treatments of life-saving medicines and 510 treatments for trauma cases were delivered to health partners in Damascus, Lattakia and Al-Hasakeh. These deliveries aim to enhance the capacity of public health facilities in the delivery of timely and appropriate responses to emergency cases, including cases of COVID-19.

HIV/TB

The TB mobile clinics in Rural Damascus remain functional. Five awareness sessions delivered during the reporting period were attended by 289 beneficiaries. Of 11 suspected cases tested for TB, two were confirmed. In cooperation with EMRO, WCO and MOH, the National TB Programme began to update the national strategic plan for the coming five years, with the aim of developing a framework for implementation of standardized and context-appropriate TB prevention, care and control services, including TB/HIV collaborative activities across MER countries for refugees, IDPs, and returnees. Two consultants will support the finalization of these activities. A three-day workshop attended by WHO and the TB National Committee at MOH supported the development of the strategic plan through discussion of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). WHO met with representatives of the national AIDS and TB programmes to discuss new grants and activities to be implemented in Q1 2022.

MENTAL HEALTH (MH)

Three campaigns supported by WHO were launched to address women's health and GBV during the '16 days of activism'. The campaigns, which include COVID-19 RCCE and MHPSS components, continued in Homs, Hama, Lattakia and Aleppo throughout December. Campaign activities were run by 130 health and community workers who received training in advance and are were supported by a WHO technical team.

WHO participated in the technical annual retreat of the Working Group on Reproductive Health (RH), delivering a presentation on the systematic integration of MPPSS within RH.

IHR

MoH and WHO are equipping the medical point at Abu Kamal in Deir-ez-Zor with medical devices and furniture to enable the provision of health services to travellers in line with IHR (2005). WHO is also establishing a medical point at Jubousiya ground-crossing in Homs and another at Jdidet Yabus in Rural Damascus, rehabilitating spaces and equipping them with medical devices.

WHO supports water quality monitoring in Rural Damascus, Aleppo and Deir-ez-Zor and at IDP camps in NES. During the reporting period: 94 water samples were tested from the four villages of Bishkateen, Eingarah, Al-Mansourah and Kafr Dael in western Aleppo; 27 samples were tested from nine districts of Rural Damascus; 913 from NES (Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and Deir-ez-Zor, including from the 10 IDP camps of Al-Hol, Areesheh, Washokani, Al Talaea, Roj, Neuroze, Mahmoudli, Tal Alsmen, Abu Khashab, Old Menbge and New Menbge; and 29 samples from collective shelters in Al-Hasakeh. Among the samples tested, contaminants were found in 55 (58.5%) from Rural Aleppo and 19 from Rural Damascus (70.3%). Four samples from NES (0.4%), taken from jerry cans, were found to be contaminated, while all others were found to be potable.

Reproductive Health

WHO co-chaired a retreat for the Working Group on Reproductive Health, during which the sub-sector working group's TORs were reviewed and progress made was reflected on. Plans for service enhancement and amendments to the TORs will be finalized in the beginning of 2022.

NUTRITION

WHO delivered a workshop with MOH, national partners and UN agencies to develop the Syrian Nutrition Action Plan for 2022-2025.

One workshop on trans fatty acid limitation in food and another on the Nurturing Care Framework in Humanitarian Settings were conducted in partnership with multi sectorial partners and MOH.

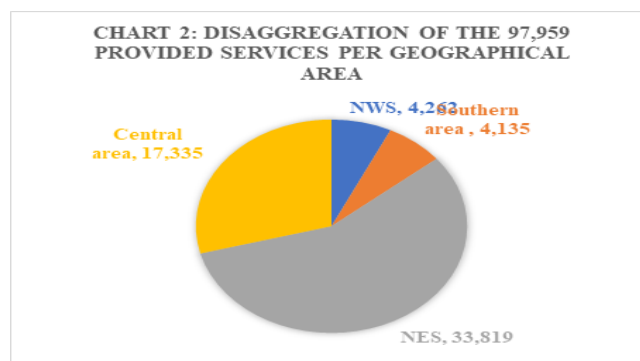
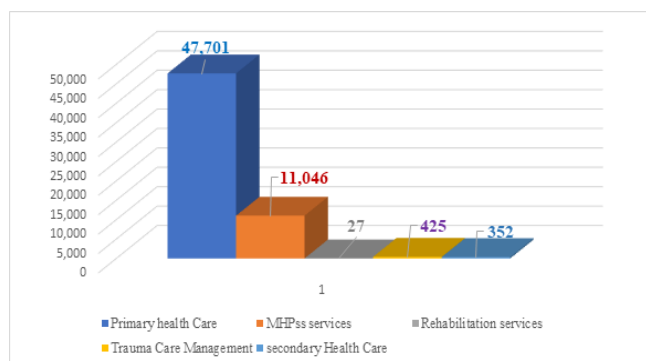
HEALTH SYSTEMS

WHO supported MOH in the delivery of a series of workshops on clinical governance. The workshops, which focused on several issues, including medical records, operating rooms, and IPC, resulted in the production of a number of items and reports that will soon be finalized and disseminated.

WCO continued its support of the Centre of Strategic Studies and Health Training (CSSHT) in the finalization of training manuals and a research strategy document.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (NGOs)

WHO supports 12 implementing partners and four community initiatives to strengthen health responses across Syria: one in Damascus, two in Rural Damascus, one in Aleppo, two in Homs, one in Hama, one in Quneitra and four in NES. The Organization also supports community initiatives in NES.



COORDINATION

WHO Syria continues to engage in coordination efforts nationwide. During the reporting period, the CO:

- Prepared for health sector partner participation in the 2022 HPC project module training.
- Initiated the production of the 2021 Health Sector Field Directory.
- Completed an inventory of health sector projects in Syria.
- Completed an overview of health sector coverage across the country.
- Engaged in the preparation of a WHO overview of the COVID-19 situation nationwide.
- Engaged with the NES Forum to enhance and streamline information sharing.
- Held a technical discussion to enhance sectoral and intersectoral coordination across the south.
- Reviewed and advised on the terms of reference and compact of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) during a meeting of agency focal points.
- Followed up on the utilization of the COVID-19 Global Portal by health sector partners.
- Shared with OCHA information on the impact of a lack of electricity on health care services.
- Prepared an overview for HQ of the work of mobile medical teams supported by partners.
- Delivered a presentation on health sector coordination during the retreat of the Reproductive Health Working Group.
- Coordinated efforts between the Gaziantep Hub and the WoS Health Cluster on XL/XB assistance (convoys to NWS and parts of NES).
- Attended sub-national health sector meetings that took place in Aleppo on 21 December and in Lattakia on 22 December.
- Reviewed the FCDO draft report on the challenges and lessons learned from the coordinated health sector response in Syria.
- Disseminated the following updates: weekly and monthly COVID-19 reports, NES EWARS bulletin, monthly Al-Hol camp mortality report, 4W WoS Health Cluster snapshot for September, a list of present operational updates.
- Attended the Whole of Syria partners' quarterly meeting held on 16 December.
- Organized and facilitated the north-east Syria inter hub call on 21 December, bringing together the main health coordination partners in NES.
- Attended an ad hoc AHCT meeting held on 27 December to discuss recent population displacement in Abu Rasin in the governorate of Al-Hasakeh.
- Organized and facilitated the Al-Hol camp health sector coordination meetings held on 23 and 30 December.
- Provided health sector inputs at the Al-Hol camp coordination meeting hosted by UNHCR on 28 December.
- Provided input to the formulation of management responses regarding the Whole of Syria programme evaluation.
- Updated the map of services for Al-Hol camp.
- Followed up with relevant operational agencies on reported displacements from Abu Rasin, and will represent the health sector in the planned interagency assessment mission.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION

WCO promoted and ensured coverage of the new allocation of an additional €1 million by EU Civil Protection & Humanitarian Aid to WHO Syria to help strengthen the COVID-19 response. The humanitarian funding will primarily be used to increase testing capacity and scale up vaccination across Syria. More information is available at <https://bit.ly/3gmxHy4>.

To scale up COVID-19 vaccination during the next phase, WHO shared an outline of the RCCE UN Interagency Operational Plan with UNICEF and other UN sister agencies following the interagency technical meeting held on 2 December.

To enhance resilience following recent COVID-19 developments, WHO continued to generate IEC materials, including videos and social media content, about the new variant of concern, ‘Omicron’.

To expand its reach and increase vaccination uptake, WHO engaged influencers to share relevant COVID-19 messaging.

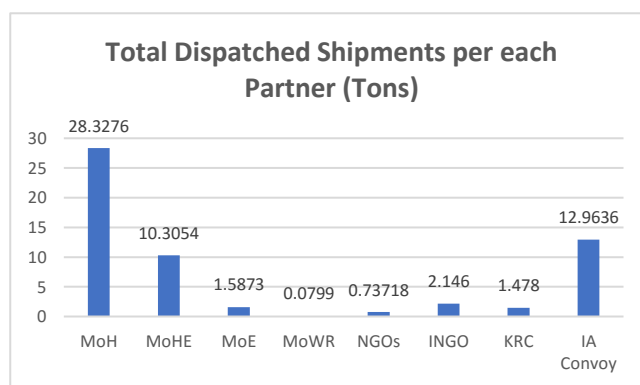
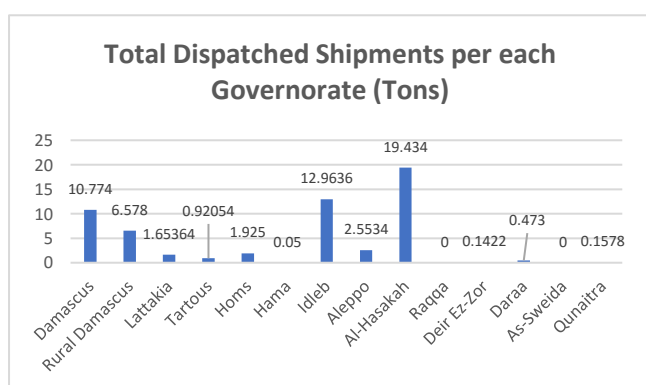
INFORMATION PRODUCTS AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

During the reporting period, WHO produced and shared:

- WHO Syria KPIs for July 2021 at different levels: Whole of Syria (WoS); north-east Syria; north-west Syria; southern Syria.
- WHO Syria KPIs for October 2021 at WoS level.
- Summary of WHO KPIs for WoS for July & October 2021.
- Health Sector COVID-19 Response Monitoring for January-October 2021.
- Health Sector 4Ws snapshot across Syria for October 2021.
- Updates on COVID-19 dashboard and online item tracking system.
- Key information on health facilities, based on HeRAMS.
- Updated maps for health sector interventions.

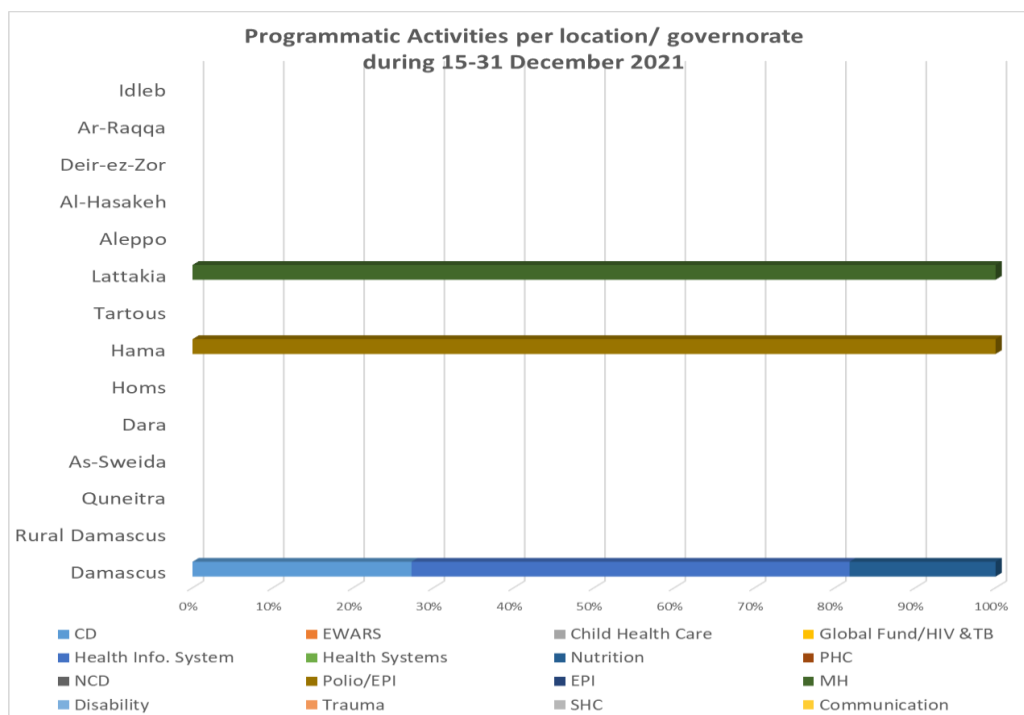
OPERATIONS SUPPORT AND LOGISTICS

WHO dispatched 57.63 tonnes of medical and lab supplies, kits, haemodialysis sessions and equipment to 12 governorates. They were received by 34 MoH facilities, 5 MoHE facilities, MoWR, MoE, 24 NGOs, 7 INGOs and KRC. An XL convoy sent through WFP delivered supplies to Idleb.



CAPACITY BUILDING

A total of 16 capacity building activities attended by 400 participants were supported by WHO during the two-week reporting period.



WHO Syria Suboffice Response

Aleppo

The sub-national health sector meeting held on 21 December 2021 was attended by 13 health sector partners, including UN agencies, NGOs and INGOs, as well as SARC and ICRC.

A two-month COVID-19 vaccination campaign began in the governorate of Aleppo on 1 November 2021. Vaccinations were being administered at 65 health centres on a daily basis, as well as at hospitals and through 42 mobile teams, most of which were initiated by 9 November and are in service 12 days per month.

Rehabilitation works at the WHO-supported Zahi Azraq Hospital, the main hospital of communicable and non-communicable diseases in Aleppo, are being finalized. The newly rehabilitated facility will have enhanced capacity to treat patients with COVID-19 symptoms.

WHO delivered an oxygen generator to the COVID-19 isolation centre at the Cardiovascular University Hospital and another to the Paediatrics Hospital.

WHO took part in the successful interagency convoy to NWS, led by WFP. The convoy travelled from Aleppo to the WFP warehouse in Sarmada, Idlib and returned safely. The WHO consignment included 13 tons of basic IPC supplies, targeting eight health facilities in the area.

WHO continues to support, through the provision of grants, the work of implementing partners operating at six PHCs, eight MMTs and two trauma & rehabilitation centres at which a total of 37 314 health care services were delivered during the reporting period.

TB active case finding at the central prison of Aleppo governorate is now complete. By 27 December, 1 248 prisoners had attended awareness sessions, and 11 of 30 suspected cases tested came back positive.

The TB mobile clinic in Aleppo remains functional and hosted 140 beneficiaries who attended one of five awareness sessions held during the reporting period. Three of 10 suspected cases tested for TB came back positive.

Lattakia

WHO conducted an end-of-year health cluster coordination meeting attended by 18 international and national organizations, during which the main challenges, gaps and achievements of 2021 were reviewed and the areas in need of focus in 2022 agreed upon. Among the achievements for 2021 shared by WHO were:

- Distribution of 39 tonnes of essential health supplies in the governorate of Lattakia
- Dissemination of 780 000 PPE items in Lattakia
- Distribution of 21 tonnes of essential health supplies in the governorate of Tartous
- Dissemination of 230 000 PPE items in Tartous
- Delivery of 181 training workshops attended by 4 566 health and community workers

A series of activities aimed at enhancing knowledge, particularly among women, of GBV, wellbeing and coping mechanisms and delivered by WHO during the '16 Days of Activism' came to an end. Most of the 16 428 participants at the 1 742 awareness sessions held were women.

WHO conducted several training workshops for 105 community workers as part of the Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) in a bid to expand the programme horizontally, integrate mental health services within all community-based activities and improve the capacity of NGO community workers.



WHO supported delivery of 1 742 GBV awareness sessions in Lattakia during the '16 Days of Activism'

Homs

Two WHO-supported mobile medical teams are providing primary health services in rural areas of eastern Hama. During the reporting period, 2 363 primary health services, 841 PSS and 328 health awareness sessions were delivered.

Two WHO-supported mobile medical team are providing primary health services in the rural areas of eastern Hama. During the reporting period, 4 369 primary health services, 74 PSS and 45 health awareness sessions were delivered.

A 35-day campaign focused on COVID-19 and GBV awareness began in Homs and Hama on 21 November. Campaign activities include engagement with the community through social listening, focus group discussions and individual consultations that are being carried out by 48 well-trained community workers. The campaign aims to: raise awareness about violence against women; promote gender equality, women's human rights and women's rights on health; deliver RCCE messages on mental health and combat stigma; promote MHPSS for children, the elderly, care givers and families using different WHO and IASC adapted guidelines; and provide the community with stress coping skills and self-care strategies. During the reporting period, 23 050 beneficiaries attended at least one of 833 sessions delivered.



WHO supported delivery of 833 awareness sessions attended by 23 050 in Homs as part of a campaign held that ran during the '16 Days of Activism'

WHO is supporting two organizations, Alber and Social Services Association, to deliver services in Homs, at three static points in northern rural Homs (Ar-Rastan, Talbiseh and Taldu) and through two mobile medical clinics in rural areas in the north, south-east and south-west. Both primary and secondary health care services are being delivered, as is mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to people suffering from psychological distress and domestic violence. During the reporting period, 273 health awareness sessions were conducted, and medical consultations were attended by 7 488 beneficiaries, of which 675 were for MHPSS.

Deir-ez-Zor

Information and updates about activities in Deir-ez-Zor will be included in the following bi-weekly report.

Quamishli Hub / North-east Syria (NES)

Through an agreement with Al-Hikmeh Hospital, WHO delivered health services to 1 000 people living among the most affected communities. Of the services delivered, 634 were trauma related, 370 were for STHC and 36 were for SAM.

The monitoring of water quality is ongoing through regular visits to 11 camps and 27 collective shelters and the provision of bacterial, F.R.C, T.D.S, EC, PH, and turb tests. Of 914 samples taken from the camps for testing, 0.43 % were found to be contaminated at the jerry can level.

Based on EWARs data, the top four morbidities are: (1) ILI/suspected COVID, of which 4 308 cases were reported last week and 4 410 the previous week; (2) LSH, 2 266 and 2 070 cases in each of the last two weeks respectively; (3) AD, 1 273 and 1 458 cases; and (4) worms, 371 and 176 cases.



WHO supports the monitoring of water quality at Al-Hol camp

WHO is providing life-saving treatment for cases of malnutrition identified within camps and local communities. During the reporting period, 15 patients were admitted to the malnutrition treatment centres at Al-Hikmeh Hospital and Ar-Raqqa Treatment Centre, while 12 cases were discharged after full recovery.

North-west Syria

Primary Health Care (PHC)

All three integrated health service delivery networks in Harim, Afrin and North Aleppo are fully functional.

WHO supports 14 PHCs in Idlib as part of last resort coverage and will consider supporting and continuing to support a few more PHCs.

Secondary and Tertiary Health Care (STHC)

WHO attended a meeting of the Thalassemia Technical Working Group, the main agenda for which was updates from current partners and planning for 2022. The group discussed and agreed to remap current thalassemia related services in NWS, including data on functionality, HR and infrastructures, essential equipment, and supplies. Also discussed were: finalization of the Thalassemia Treatment Protocol based on the protocol of the Thalassemia International Federation and special IPC guidelines for the Thalassemia Centre, and in-person training on thalassemia case management and IPC, for which WHO agreed to cover costs while MSF agreed to provide trainers.

COVID-19

The decline in case numbers is ongoing. The positivity rate for last week was 6.27%. Daily test numbers are low as a result of decreased demand following fewer suspected cases.

Genomic sequencing for samples from NWS in reference laboratories in Turkey has begun. The results of the first batch suggest that the Delta variant is in circulation in NWS. Testing will continue every week to enhance understanding of variant trends and prevalence.

The occupancy rate at ICUs is 28%, on ventilation, in hospital wards is 9%, and in CCTCs is 30%. The Case Management Working Group has therefore decided to enhance the capacity of health care workers while the case load remains low and downsize the COVID-19 isolation hospital to ensure efficient use of limited resources.

EPI

WHO, in partnership with SIG, UNICEF and implementing partners, conducted a polio (OPV) campaign and a vitamin A distribution drive on 12-17 December 2021, targeting 87 422 children in the district of Afrin (NWS) aged under five years, of which 87% (78 211) were vaccinated. WHO also contributed to the EOC polio vaccination campaign in NES that was carried by ACU, SIG, MSF and the NGO IBS.

Vaccine Updates

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

Useful Links

- [Syria Interactive Dashboards](#)
- [Syria Page in Health Cluster Site](#)
- [WHO Syria Site](#)
- [EMRO Dashboard](#)
- [COVID-19 Situation in EMRO Region Reports](#)

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