



Erbil, Iraq, 16 February 2021 – The World Health Organization (WHO) today handed over 13 tons of medical supplies and equipment to the Ministry of Health in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. This donation will scale up intensive care capacity to respond to efforts aimed at controlling the recent increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in Iraq.

The medical consignment worth US\$ 1 million will support health facilities in the Kurdistan region with personal protective equipment (PPE), COVID-19 diagnostic kits, oxygen concentrators, oximeters, intensive care beds and devices, hospital bedding and related medical furniture, patient monitors, and other items. This timely support comes when national health authorities are racing against time to control a new spike in the numbers of confirmed COVID-19 infections, as well as an increase in hospitalized cases. The medical supplies provided by WHO will serve both the diagnosis and the management of COVID-19 patients amid new reports confirming the circulation of a mutant variant of the disease in Iraq.

“Currently, COVID-19 epidemiology is indicating a new spike in the number of reported cases and in view of the confirmation of the circulation of a mutated variant in the country, WHO continues to provide technical and operational support to health authorities at central level and in the Kurdistan region with the aim of scaling up preparedness and response to the pandemic in Iraq,” said Dr Ahmed Zouiten, WHO Representative in Iraq. “Challenging times still lie ahead, that is why we need to unite our efforts, mobilize all possible resources and invest in strengthening both prevention and response measures to win this battle,” he added.

This consignment, the third of its kind since February 2020 was welcomed by health officials in Kurdistan. “We appreciate WHO's continued support to the Ministry of Health in this region. The supplies provided today will certainly increase our capacity to detect and manage COVID-19 infections, and come at an opportune time to support our efforts while we are battling to reverse the upward trend in the number of COVID-19 reported in the last few weeks,” said Dr Saman H. Barzangy, Minister of Health of the Kurdistan region.

As of 15 February this year, Kurdistan health authorities reported 106 976 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 3499 associated deaths and 102 335 recoveries.

WHO gratefully acknowledges the generous contributions from the Government and the people of the State of Kuwait, the Government and people of Germany, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) which enabled continued WHO support to the people of Iraq through the provision of these life-saving medical supplies and equipment.

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