



Baghdad, Iraq, 22 November 2020 – The World Health Organization (WHO), in coordination with Ninewa Directorate of Health, has established an isolation unit in Hamam Aleel Field Hospital in Ninewa to treat suspected and confirmed cases of internally displaced COVID-19 patients in Hamam Aleel and surrounding areas. It will also serve to limit COVID-19 transmission in camps for the internally displaced in the governorate.

“The emergence of the COVID-19 outbreak in Iraq has increased the concern of WHO and local health authorities over the health situation in camps for the internally displaced and refugees in Iraq,” said Dr Adham Ismail, WHO Representative in Iraq. “The project we are inaugurating today will support local health authorities to ensure access of the displaced population living in camps and underserved surroundings in Ninewa governorate to quality COVID-19 health services,” added Dr Ismail.

The unit is composed of 2 wards, each of which has 5 rooms with a total capacity of 20 beds. The referral services have accordingly been strengthened to facilitate the transfer of patients from camps to the isolation unit and from the unit to other secondary health facilities where advanced medical intervention is required.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has overwhelmed the fragile health system in Ninewa where almost all the secondary health facilities have been damaged and over 75% of hospital bed capacity lost during the 5-year internal conflict which erupted in the governorate in 2014.

Before establishment of this unit, WHO had treating COVID-19 patients within the internally displaced and vulnerable underserved populations in Hamam Aleel and other surrounding areas in the governorate but greater support is required to improve and ensure access to sustained

health care service delivery to the over 52 000 internally displaced people and over 225 000 returnees living in severe and difficult conditions in Ninewa.

The World Health Organization (WHO) extends its appreciation to the Government of Kuwait and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for their generous contributions which have supported the establishment of this unit.

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