Bashtapa Mohammed, a displaced mother of 3 enters a mobile medical clinic to access health services in Qoratu16 May, Baghdad, Iraq – More than 8000 internally displaced Iraqis living in camps and villages in Kalar and Kifri districts in Garmian, south-east of the Sulaymaniyah governorate, now have access to basic primary health services provided by WHO-supported mobile medical teams.

Following the closure of a primary health care in Tazade and Qoratu and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps earlier this year, thousands of men, women and children were left without access to medical care. Together, with the Directorate of Health and Civil Development Organization, a local nongovernmental organization, WHO established 2 mobile medical teams, each comprising a medical doctor, a nurse and a pharmacy assistant. WHO also provided 3 ambulances to facilitate referrals of emergency patients.

The mobile clinics serve IDPs in camps in Tazade and Qoratu, as well as IDPs and host communities in Kalar and Kifri districts. Many of these areas are located more than an hour away from Kalar hospital, the closest available secondary health facility.

Services offered in the clinics include consultations, medicines, and referrals of emergency cases. The most common ailments treated include upper respiratory tract infections, diarrhoea, and chronic diseases, including hypertension and diabetes. The medical teams also provide awareness-raising sessions on prevention of communicable diseases and good health practices.

A doctor takes the blood pressure reading of a patient in the WHO-supported mobile medical clinic in Qoratu“The mobile clinics are important because they also provide services, such as nursing care and consultations, which our community workers cannot provide,” said Dr Sirwan M Jamal, Health Director, Garmian Director of Health. “Without this support from WHO, we would not have been able to reach these locations, conduct 24/7 referrals, as well as pay the incentives for the drivers and nurses working in the ambulances due to the limited resources at our disposal,” Dr Sirwan added.

Seven-month pregnant Bashtapa Mohammed and a mother of 3 children has lived in Qoratu camp for 5 years after being displaced from Diyala following an armed conflict. “There was a primary health care centre here but it closed 2 months ago. I am happy that health care is one of the services that we continue to receive in this camp, because health is important,” she said.

Those displaced are mainly from Anbar, Diyala and Salahadin and it is unknown when they will return. Both Kalar and Kifri districts share territories with Dyala and Salahaddin governorates.

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