4 August 2015 – A severe funding shortfall has led to the closure of 84% of health programmes supported by humanitarian partners, including the World Health Organization (WHO), in Iraq, leaving almost 3 million people without access to urgently needed heath care services.

More than 184 front line health services in 10 governorates have been suspended, leaving millions of refugees, internally displaced persons and host communities without access to trauma care, nutrition supplementation, primary health care, outbreak detection and management, immunization services and reproductive health care services.

“This is a country ravaged by conflict. Not only do we have innocent civilians being caught in the violence, with so many people fleeing the fighting and living in temporary housing, people are at much higher risk from communicable diseases,” said Dr Syed Jaffar Hussain, WHO’s Representative in Iraq. “Unless additional funding is received, millions more will be deprived of health services they urgently need.”

Despite repeated warnings of the imminent closure of health services, and the revision of 2015 plans to focus on meeting the most basic priority health needs for vulnerable populations, funding for health in Iraq remains scarce. Of the US$ 60.9 million required by Health Cluster, only US$ 5.1 million – or 8% has been received.

“While we are grateful to donors who have helped us decrease the health impact of this crisis on the people of Iraq, we are far from meeting even the most basic health needs,” said Dr Hussain. “We hope the international community will provide the funds needed to reach 5.6 million of Iraq’s most vulnerable populations with life-saving health services and supplies.”
To ensure that halted services are quickly restored, WHO is actively advocating with donors, and in the meantime is using its very scarce resources for the most urgent life-saving interventions.

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