



Gaza, 18 August 2014 – The World Health Organization has been providing medicines and medical supplies to the Palestinian Ministry of Health to fill critical shortages in hospitals in the Gaza Strip providing health services for a total of 1.8 million people.

The most recent shipment consisted of 24 trucks with medical supplies sent via the Rafah border with Egypt with the support of the Egyptian Red Crescent. These supplies will be distributed to all hospitals in the Gaza Strip, benefiting 100 000 patients for a period of two months.

Even before the escalation of violence in Gaza, the Ministry of Health was reporting critical shortages in medicines and medical supplies. According to the Ministry of Health Central Drug Store, 28% of medicine stocks and 54% of medical disposables were at zero stock in June, improving only by 1% for medicine stocks and 2% for medical disposables in August. Due to these shortages, the Ministry has halted all elective surgical procedures in Gaza in order to conserve medicines and supplies for coping with the increased number of emergency surgeries for casualties.

In July, WHO called on the international community to support the health response in Palestine so that men, women and children affected by the conflict could receive the health services they need. An appeal for a total of US\$ 60 million was made by WHO to allow the Ministry to provide essential supplies for health care sufficient for six months. With donations from Switzerland, Norway and Italy, WHO has been able to deliver medicines and medical supplies worth US\$ 1.7 million to the Palestinian Ministry of Health so far, along with in-kind donations from Italy, Switzerland, Bahrain and the Jordanian army for distribution to Ministry of Health hospitals. These supplies were delivered with the ongoing support of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). In June, prior to the crisis, Turkey donated US\$ 1.5 million to WHO for procurement of medical supplies for Gaza health services.

In response to the appeal, Saudi Arabia announced a donation of 100 million Saudi Riyals to the Palestinian Ministry of Health. However, more funds are still needed to enable WHO to support the provision of urgently-needed essential supplies and coordination/information services for the Gaza crisis over the coming six months. It is essential that cash or in-kind donations be delivered through bilateral or multilateral channels and adhere to WHO's drug donation guidelines. For coordination purposes and to enable WHO to keep track of gaps, donors and charity organizations are also requested to inform WHO of their donations with regards to specifications and quantities.

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