

In light of current events in the Region, and the implications of the reactions of some governments to the popular movements aimed at securing basic human rights, first and foremost the right to health and protection, WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean once again emphasizes the importance of taking urgent measures to stop the escalation of violence against civilians and to facilitate immediate humanitarian relief in all the areas of tension.

Based on its professional and ethical responsibility, WHO calls on all Member States to cooperate in confronting the exceptional circumstances that some countries of the Region are passing through, and to overcome the challenges faced by the people, through solidarity which involves all civil society institutions, in order to provide security, protection and health care, and to form national rescue teams to accompany the political effort which it is hoped will stop the violence and provide stability with respect for rights and freedoms and ensure the safety of citizens. The Emergency and Humanitarian Action unit of the Regional Office has been charged with the responsibility of coordinating efforts in the above respect.

WHO, represented by its Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, renews its readiness to provide all necessary medical aid and relief to civilian victims, in cooperation with humanitarian organizations, in countries of the Region whose medical care facilities have been affected. This includes ambulance services and mobile medical teams, in cooperation with national entities that are able to reach the field.

WHO takes this opportunity to commend the role played by Egypt in alleviating the consequences of the current situation on the borders and the role of the Egyptian army in establishing a field hospital on the Egyptian/Libyan border to provide emergency relief to the victims of violence. It further commends the role of the Ministries of Health in Egypt and Tunisia

and the Red Crescent Societies, reiterating its willingness to provide all possible support to these humanitarian initiatives.

In the context of its responsibilities in the field of health work and humanitarian relief, and in referring to recorded deaths and injuries in a number of countries in the Region, particularly in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, which significantly exceeds the rates that would normally be expected rates in such circumstances, in addition to the destruction of health care facilities in the country, WHO calls on Ministries of Health in the Region to assume their responsibilities, and the faith entrusted in them, out of respect for treaties and international charters and resolutions of the World Health Organization on the protection of civilians, and protecting health facilities and personnel, and to provide aid to all victims equally, regardless of political affiliation and religion. The Organization calls on Member States to exercise self-restraint in dealing with these events, and not to overstep the bounds in the use of violence as this constitutes a threat and violates internationally agreed upon human rights, and first and foremost the right to life and the right to health.

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