

Cairo, 25 April, 2013 - Today, countries across the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region are celebrating World Malaria Day with the theme of “Invest in the future. Defeat malaria”.

Malaria is still a big challenge for the Eastern Mediterranean Region, as more than 50% of the regional population lives in areas in which there is a risk of contracting malaria.

Based on 2010 estimates, about 10.4 million people were affected by malaria and 15 000 people die of malaria in the Region every year.

Dr Ala Alwan, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, urged stronger and improved efforts in the fight against malaria. “We need to focus our efforts in areas of greatest need and protect every person living in areas at risk of malaria with effective prevention tools”.

Malaria control efforts continue to be restrained by low political commitment, weak infrastructure and lack of national capacities. Malaria is not just a problem for the Eastern Mediterranean Region alone; the disease continues to kill an estimated 660 000 people worldwide (range 490 000–836 000), mainly children under five years of age in sub-Saharan Africa. Every year, more than 200 million cases occur; most of these are never tested or registered.

WHO T3 (Test. Treat. Track.) is an essential approach in guiding countries to ensure that every suspected malaria case is tested, and every confirmed case is treated and tracked effectively through surveillance to stop transmission.

The Region has had several successes in its fight against malaria in the last decade since the launch of Roll Back Malaria initiative. In 2000, 10 countries in the Region were free from malaria, a number which rose to 14 in 2010 with 2 further countries vigorously pursuing elimination targets.

A regional Malaria Day ceremony will be held in Islamabad, Pakistan, to highlight the problem of malaria in the country. Pakistan is one of the top three malaria-endemic countries in the Region.

The ceremony will be held in the presence of national authorities, organizations and WHO. As part of the occasion an advocacy video will be screened providing an overview of the regional struggle against malaria, progress made, challenges encountered and outlining a way forward.

The Region has prioritized malaria control and elimination with the aim of providing universal access to malaria diagnosis and effective treatment, including artemisinin-based combination therapy for falciparum species, along with prevention through effective vector control.

Despite the gains made globally in malaria prevention and control, global funding for malaria control has seen a decline and emerging drug and insecticide resistance threaten to reverse recent progress made. Global efforts in the fight against malaria are at a critical juncture with only two years left to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Malaria is cross cutting to all health-related MDGs i.e. 4, 5 and 6, making progress in malaria control more important and urgent. Since 2000, malaria mortality rates have fallen by more than 25%, and 50 of the 99 countries with ongoing transmission are now on track to meet the 2015 World Health Assembly target of reducing incidence rates by more than 75%. A major scale-up of vector control interventions, together with increased access to diagnostic testing and quality-assured treatment, has been key to this progress.

For details, please visit: [Malaria control and elimination](#) [World Malaria Day](#) Saturday 17th of May 2025 04:44:01 PM