



Experts of emergency medical team on a post re-constructive surgery visit at Madina Hospital, Mogadishu. Credit: WHO/Somalia

Mogadishu, 12 March 2023 – The WHO Country Office in Somalia recently deployed an

emergency medical team (EMT) in Mogadishu to support trauma care and also help build local capacities of doctors, nurses and paramedics in trauma care services, especially in the areas of reconstructive surgery, nursing management of traumatic brain injury, initial assessment, and triage in emergency and thoracic trauma injury.

As part of responding to the twin blasts which rocked the capital city of Somalia in October 2022, WHO deployed this EMT from the United Kingdom, known as UK-Med, which is a frontline medical aid charity borne out of the National Health Services (NHS) of the United Kingdom. The WHO EMT is a global initiative that assists organizations and countries to build capacity and strengthen health systems by coordinating the deployment of qualified medical teams in emergencies. This initiative also helps countries develop national teams, which can be deployed where they are needed most in the shortest time. The deployed team included an orthopaedic surgeon, nurse, infection prevention and control (IPC) specialist and trauma care experts and spent 6 weeks in Somalia between January and February 2023. During their deployment at Madina hospital, they collectively helped to build capacities of 21 doctors and 82 nursing staff working in ICU, emergency and IPC units.

Team lead for UK-MED delegation Catherine Smith considered the deployment of 6 weeks as relatively short but expressed satisfaction about her team's achievements during this deployment. While concluding her placement experience in Somalia, she said that, "A comprehensive series of training and mentoring support has been provided at Madina Hospital for health staff in the emergency department, high dependency unit and in the operating theatres, as well as with the cross-departmental IPC committee, both face to face and online. The trainees felt more confident after series of engagements with UK experts but certainly would need more sustained mentoring to help polish their newly learned skills and provide quality care to challenging cases."

Appreciating the WHO Somalia for deployment of the UK-MED team, the General Director of Madina Hospital Dr Mohamed Jama said that, "Besides carrying out life-altering surgeries, this deployment has helped improve the capacities of the Somali physicians, surgeons and nurses in the areas of emergency preparedness, orthopedics, including reconstructive surgeries, trauma care and IPC." Adding he said, "Together with the rollout of the capacity-building plan of first responders and hospital directors/managers, WHO has helped us bridge some very critical gaps existing in our trauma care facilities and services. More than 40 first responders and about 22 hospital directors and managers have already received the trainings since the October 2022 blast in trauma care handling, management and preparing the hospitals for dealing with the emergencies. Now with these UK-MED experts, our local staff feels more confident and ready to serve but we will request WHO for sustained support in coming weeks and months to help us become self-sufficient."





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