14 December 2016 – A week ago, the Dar Al Bushi (also known as Dar Al Safaa) residency for 260 elderly and physically and mentally disabled people was hit by a rocket. The centre is located in the old city of eastern Aleppo. As a result of fierce fighting and partial damage to the building, 102 residents were evacuated to Ibn-Khaldoun Mental Health Hospital, and 18 injured patients to the Al-Razi public hospital in Aleppo city, while 63 patients preferred to stay in the residency, including 9 children, with the rest of the residents fleeing to unknown destinations.

For the first time in more than four years, Elizabeth Hoff, WHO Country Representative, accompanied by 15 technical and specialized staff, managed to enter the area and reach Dar Al-Bushi to conduct a rapid assessment of the status of the patients and the conditions of the facility. As an immediate response to the dire situation, WHO provided the clinic with 6 months supply of psychotropic and chronic disease medicines, winterization supplies and hygiene kits.

In addition, WHO has commenced rehabilitation of the facility, in collaboration with a local nongovernmental organization, focusing on the work most needed, such as reinstalling windows and doors to protect residents from the extremely cold weather. This will be followed by further rehabilitation and other humanitarian support so that the facility can function again with enhanced capacity to accommodate more residents.

Elizabeth Hoff said: “We will spare no effort to support these patients and the children residing there with health care and psychosocial support services. This vulnerable group has been traumatized by the current escalation of violence and is in urgent need of assistance.”