23 May 2017 – The health situation in Ar-Raqqa governorate in north-east Syria continues to deteriorate, with more than 400 000 people in and around the governorate facing increasingly limited access to health services. All 4 national hospitals in the governorate are only partially functioning and facing shortages in health staff, medicines, electricity and safe water supplies.

As a result of the fighting, up to 150 000 people have been displaced from and within the governorate in 2017. Many are living in temporary camps with limited access to health services, water and sanitation services. Hundreds of pregnant women, people with disabilities, and patients suffering from chronic diseases are in urgent need of medical care, and there is also an increased demand for mental health services.

Despite challenges related to access, humanitarian response efforts are underway to meet the most urgent needs of affected populations. In March, WHO supported a polio campaign in the
area, reaching 45 187 children under 5 in northern rural Ar-Raqqa. The disease surveillance and reporting system continue to function, and the nutrition surveillance system has been activated in northern rural Ar-Raqqa and camps to screen the nutritional status of children.

Scaling up its response, WHO has airlifted 4 shipments of supplies sufficient for more than 360 000 medical treatments, including lifesaving medicines, treatments for chronic diseases, and medical equipment to Al-Qamishli in Al-Hassakeh governorate for distribution to camps hosting displaced populations, and Ar-Raqqa once access is gained.

WHO and partners continue to monitor the situation and call for increased access, so that urgent health services can be delivered to thousands of men, children and women in need.

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