



Training on risk assessment and outbreak investigations. Photo credit: WHO/WHO Gaziantep Field Presence Office 5 December 2023, Cairo, Egypt, and Gaziantep, Türkiye – To strengthen the response to disease outbreaks and public health emergencies in northwest Syria, WHO conducted a training on risk assessment and outbreak investigations in Gaziantep, Türkiye.

The training was for 24 health professionals from northwest Syria who are engaged in the implementation of early warning, alert and response network. Led by the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and the WHO Field Presence Office in Gaziantep, the training ran from 27 to 29 November 2023.

Participants are now equipped with the knowledge and skills to address health risks and acute public health emergencies in a more timely and effective manner.

“The training provided a great opportunity for health actors to work in the same direction and to the same standard operating procedures to better detect, assess, report and respond to public

health events,” said Ms Rosa Crestani, Head of Office, WHO Gaziantep, in her opening remarks.



Training participants. Photo credit: WHO/WHO Gaziantep Field Presence Office The training boosted participants’ skills in conducting rapid risk assessments and situation analysis during public health emergencies and acute events in northwest Syria. Health actors from northwest Syria will collaborate with WHO Gaziantep and the WHO Regional Office in future to ensure rapid intervention during outbreaks.

“We hope that this training will also strengthen collaboration between WHO and its partners and among partners themselves, and that the training can cascade down to other partners working in northwest Syria,” said Dr Aura Corpuz, Team Lead, Public Health Intelligence, Health Emergency Information and Risk Assessment Unit, WHO Regional Office.

This training is vital given the severe, long-term disruption to northwest Syria’s health system, which has been made worse by COVID-19, other disease outbreaks, the February 2023 earthquake and renewed hostilities.

Moreover, the political and administrative context in northwest Syria, and the absence of a health ministry, make it increasingly challenging to report through the International Health Regulations (2005). Timely and effective risk assessment and outbreak investigation are thus more important than ever to control diseases and prevent and manage public health emergencies. Such efforts are critical to strengthen health emergency response in this setting.

This training is part of a series of trainings offered by the WHO Regional Office that aims to strengthen the capacities of Member States and territories to conduct rapid risk assessments and public health situation analysis.

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