WHO EMRO | Conflict in Yemen kills and injures hundreds, places major strain on health system

WHO is working with a range of partners in Yemen to provide treatment and health services to people in need

1 April 2015, Sana’a, Yemen – An escalation in conflict and violence in Yemen has resulted in hundreds dead and thousands injured, and placed immense strain on health facilities and humanitarian health care providers.

Populations in the capital city of Sana’a and 13 of Yemen’s 22 governorates have been affected by the violence, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

“Communities across Yemen have been caught up in attacks and cross-fire, endangering the lives and health of the young and old, and even people already displaced by violence,” according to Dr Ahmed Shadoul, WHO Representative in Yemen.

In areas where violence is ongoing, some hospitals are functioning at minimum capacity. The country’s second largest hospital in Sana’a City has been partially evacuated due to its proximity to a military base, and full evacuation is expected to take place soon. In some areas, where populations are unable to leave due to the violence, health facilities, including ambulances, are unable to cope with the number of casualties.

Hospitals in all affected governorates are in urgent need of oxygen supplies, medicines and supplies for treating trauma wounds, life-saving equipment and medicines, additional health staff and additional bed capacity. Due to the violence, there are also concerns about the ability of ambulances and other vehicles to transport injured people to hospitals to receive care, as well as the availability of fuel for ambulances and hospital generators.

WHO, in support of Yemen’s Ministry of Public Health and Population, is working with the International Committee of the Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF France and Spain)
and other partner organizations to ensure that patients receive the treatment they urgently need and that health facilities are provided with sufficient medicines and medical supplies.

To date, WHO and partners have provided interagency emergency health kits for more than 80,000 beneficiaries, as well as blood bags, oxygen cylinders with regulators, and IV fluids. Urgently required medicines and other supplies that are available in the country are being procured locally. With the closure of all airports and ports to Yemen, WHO is coordinating with the World Food Programme and UN partners to explore alternative solutions for the provision of additional medicines and medical kits from its humanitarian hub in Dubai.

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