

Cairo, Egypt, 6 April 2015 – WHO is responding to increasing shortages in medicines and medical supplies in Yemen as a result of the ongoing conflict.

Health facilities in affected governorates are reporting critical shortages in trauma and surgical medicines and supplies for the treatment of injured patients, and shortages are also reported in medicines for chronic diseases. Supplies are expected to decrease further as local stocks run low and access to Yemen through airports and seaports remains closed.

Since the conflict escalated on 19 March, WHO has provided eight interagency health kits for 240 000 beneficiaries throughout the country from its warehouses in Sana'a, Aden and Hodeidah. WHO has also provided trauma kits for 400 major operations, 11 000 blood bags, IV fluids, analgesics, oxygen supplies and dressing materials to 18 hospitals throughout the country, and is in the process of locally procuring an additional 10 trauma kits for the 1000 major operations.

Given the frequent power cuts in Aden, WHO is exploring options with the Ministry of Public Health and Population for locally procuring generator sets to maintain the cold chain for vaccines, although shortages in fuel are creating additional challenges. To ensure that referral services are available where they are needed most, WHO is coordinating with the Ministry to relocate ambulances to governorates with the largest numbers of injured patients. WHO is also covering the operational costs of the ambulances and installing GPS tracking devices in the vehicles to prevent their misuse. Additional ambulances are also needed, according to the Ministry.

“We are in daily contact with the Ministry of Public Health and Population and all health partners on the ground in Yemen to monitor all gaps in health care services, and ensure that we are able to respond quickly. We have been able to fill most reported shortages for the time being, but the needs are huge and the sooner we are allowed to send additional supplies into the country without restrictions in access, the more lives we can save,” said WHO Representative to Yemen Dr Ahmed Shadoul.

As health needs continue to increase, WHO has also pre-positioned additional interagency health kits and trauma kits in its humanitarian hub in Dubai for transporting to Yemen as soon as access is possible.

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Sunday 17th of February 2019 07:25:54 PM