6 November 2019 – The conflict in Yemen continues to intensify, sparking multiple frontlines across the country. Since 2015, an estimated 70 000 men, women and children have either lost their lives or suffered serious injuries as a result of the conflict. These injuries threaten to debilitate thousands physically and financially — especially those who do not have immediate access to trauma care.

The injection of 5 million euros from the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) is dedicated to supporting trauma care, emergency medical services and surgical mobile teams in Yemen, while strengthening the hospital referral system in country. With the support of the Milan-based nongovernmental organization EMERGENCY — WHO and ECHO are working to provide effective and timely trauma support in Yemen.

“The conflict in Yemen is a harsh reality that continues to evolve and escalate and EMERGENCY, and WHO, with the support of its partner ECHO, are working to strengthen access to life-saving specialized surgical care for the conflict-affected population. The opening of a surgical centre for war victims in Hajjah will allow reaching out to a large population in need of war surgery,” said Emanuele Nannini, EMERGENCY's Deputy Director of Operations in Milan.

This lifeline of funding aims to target over 30 000 beneficiaries, support over 40 surgical team specialists and provide incentives to almost 300 health workers.

Trauma cases add to the health burden in Yemen

“Yemen is a crisis of epic proportions. Only 50% of hospitals are functioning. In the remaining half, health staff and capacities are overstretched. The European Union is supporting emergency health services in Yemen so that victims of violence can get rapid access to quality care,” said Christos Stylianides, EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management. “As the conflict rages on, we need to do our utmost to reduce loss of life and lessen the suffering inflicted on the Yemeni people.”

Though many deaths have occurred due to noncommunicable and communicable diseases, a large number of deaths also happen outside of the health system, like conflict-related trauma. Trauma patients are part of the reason why hospital resources are so overstretched.

Bed occupancy, prescription of medicines and other health needs of trauma patients add an additional burden on facilities that are also overwhelmed with patients suffering from non-war injuries or diseases. Conflict-related injuries have consequences that reverberate even after the patient is discharged. Trauma patients with serious injuries who are not treated immediately risk living with life-long disabilities that threaten their health and livelihoods, affecting their capacity to earn a living, lead a normal life and contribute wholly to society.

“Peace is the only solution to this conflict but for now, ECHO, EMERGENCY and WHO, along with local authorities and partners, are working to ensure that trauma patients receive the help they need immediately because Yemen can’t wait,” said Altaf Musani, WHO Representative in Yemen.

Note to editors: The 2019 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan requires US$ 4.2 billion to assist more than 20 million Yemenis, including 10 million people who rely entirely on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs every month. As of today, the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan is 56% funded, we need to close this gap. At the High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen convened by the United Nations Secretary-General in February 2019, the United Nations and humanitarian partners were promised US$ 2.6 billion to meet the urgent needs. Humanitarian agencies are appealing to donors to provide funds as quickly as possible.

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