

Epidemiological Overview

Between 25 August and 15 February, 92,649 suspected cases have been reported from all 14 governorates, including 101 associated deaths to date at a case fatality rate of 0.11%. 8,042 new suspected cases since the last SITREP 12 was issued. The most affected governorates to date are Idleb (27,863 cases, 30%), Aleppo (22,123 cases, 23.9%), Deir Ez-Zor (20,671 cases, 22.3%), and Raqqa (17,578 cases, 19%).

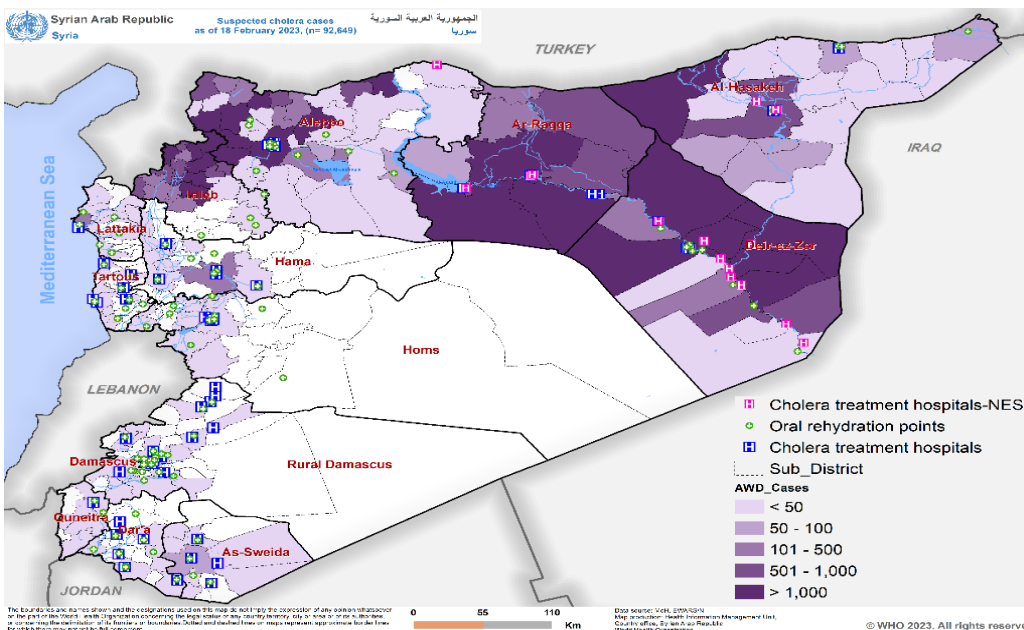
The devastating earthquake had a significant impact on the cholera response operations. The earthquake affected access to services, reduced partner capacity, diverted already limited funds available, and also affected negatively the mental health of the workforce. So far, a total of 171 (54 in Latakia, 48 in Hama, 14 in Aleppo, and 55 in NWS)– are reportedly damaged, including at least seven hospitals, with assessments ongoing. 15 health facilities had to suspend their operations, and 18 health facilities have reduced functionality due to earthquake damage

Thousands of people are currently housed in overcrowded collective shelters, many without adequate access to sufficient safe water, sanitation, and hygiene measures; Temporary disruption of infectious disease surveillance systems and laboratory capacity across affected areas;

The Risk of increase of waterborne diseases including Cholera is very high due to over-crowded settings, extensive damage to water and sanitation infrastructure, and damage and disruption to cholera treatment infrastructure;

- Suspected Cases**
92,649
- Positive Cases**
Xx
- Cholera Sus. Deaths**
101
- Case Fatality (CFR)**
0.11%
- Overall Attack Rate**
0.44%
- Affected Governorates**
14
- Grade**
2

Figure 1 Distribution of suspected cholera cases by date of onset as of 18 February 2023



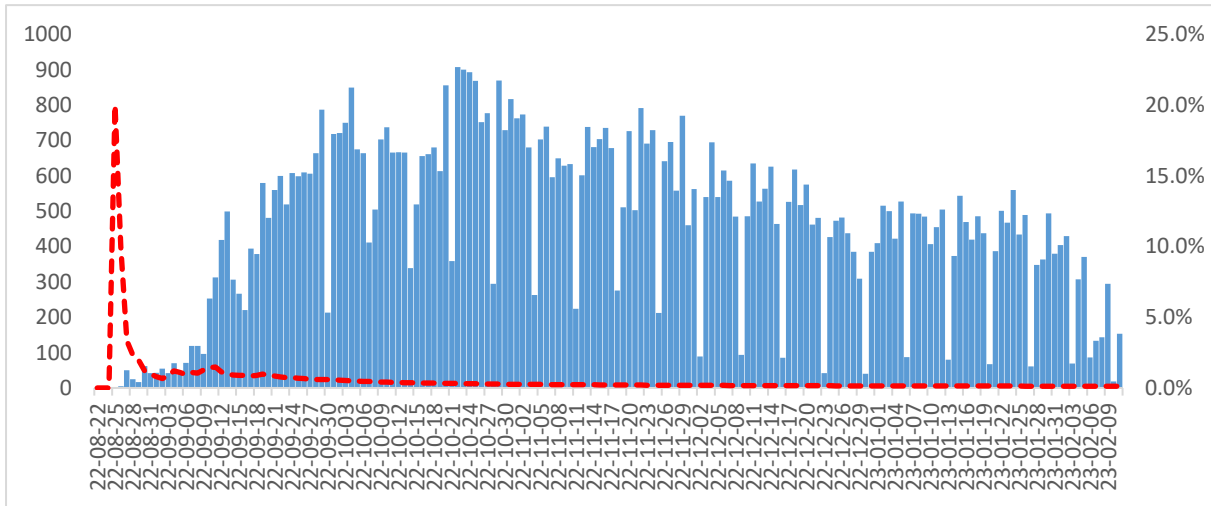
Epidemiological Data

Table 1 provides a breakdown of reported suspected cholera cases and deaths, as well as the number and type of tests performed in Syria's governorates.

Table 1: Epidemiological data, as of 15 February 2023

Governorate	Suspected Cases (AWD)	Population	Attack Rate (%)	RDTs	Positive RDTs	Culture + Tests	Attributed Deaths	CFR%
Aleppo	22,123	4,170,826	0.53	2,051	1,032	252	46	0.2%
Al-Hasakeh	3,672	1,160,335	0.32	1,177	189	23	4	0.1%
Ar-Raqqa	17,578	767,956	2.29	631	129	101	10	0.1%
As-Sweida	81	380,118	0.02	81	26	2	0	0.0%
Damascus	43	1,829,796	0.00	40	20	10	1	0.0%
Dar'a	22	1,037,690	0.00	22	5	0	0	0.0%
Deir-ez-Zor	20,671	779,283	2.65	855	479	100	24	0.1%
Hama	195	1,344,853	0.01	188	52	54	1	0.5%
Homs	60	1,520,283	0.00	59	31	25	1	0.0%
Idleb	27,863	2,826,874	0.99	227	8	345	14	0.1%
Latakia	184	1,274,118	0.01	161	98	31	0	0.0%
Quneitra	17	113,254	0.02	17	4	1	0	0.0%
Rural Damascus	112	3,032,345	0.00	111	17	3	0	0.0%
Tartous	28	943,399	0.00	27	10	2	0	0.0%
Total	92,649	21,181,130	0.44	5,647	2,100	949	101	0.11%

Table 2 Distribution of suspected cholera cases by date of onset, as of 23 February 2023



Cholera Outbreak Response

Health

Leadership and Coordination

- WHO continues to coordinate the overall cholera response and Health and WASH clusters are jointly coordinating the overall cholera response, at WoS and Hubs levels. WHO, UNICEF and OCHA are working together to ensure the leadership of the different response pillar.
- WoS Cholera Response Plan Jan – June 2023 has been endorsed and released out widely.
- Bi-weekly situation reports on the cholera outbreak continue to published /produced.
- Joint monitoring activities under the M&E framework outlined in the Response Plan are ongoing, infor-graphic on 2022 cholera KPI is being finalized.
- WHO/ cholera task force GZT is restoring surveillance activities and expanding cholera treatment services to cover the newly emerged Reception Centers.
- Cholera forecasting was completed 2% rate in earthquake areas while areas unaffected remained the same.

Surveillance and Laboratory

- As a result of the earthquake impact, WHO HCT has increased the number of RRT teams and reoriented collective shelters for active case search.
- In NWS, restoration of surveillance and scale up of sentinel sites to include the Reception Centers and cover the surrounding villages to Jindaires is ongoing with strong support and guidance from WHO.
- Cholera surveillance restored and Active Case Finding expanded to newly established Reception Centers in NWS. Cholera supplies continue to flow to NWS from WHO GZT. This includes lab kits, treatment kits and RDTs. Testing for Rota and Adeno viruses has been introduced. Training of CTC/CTU, surveillance and lab teams on the new RDT strategy is

ongoing. Sample collection, testing and reporting is constantly being improved and adapted to meet the population needs after the earthquake.

Case Management

- WHO has supported the resumption of 8 cholera treatment centres (CTCs) and is coordinating with partners to activate additional CTCs to scale-up the cholera response in earthquake-affected areas.
- In light of the earthquake's devastation, the cholera Task Force has identified the need for an additional 2 CTCs/CTUs and 14 ORPs in NWS. Repurposing of current Mobile Medical Teams to serve as ORPs is ongoing, and additional CTCs are being installed.
- One of 8 functional CTCs was hit by the 6.4 richter scale earthquake sequel on 20 February, and was immediately evacuated (Al-Atareb CTC). Alternative plans are underway to resume services from another building in the same area.
- NES HWG partners prioritized enhancing the efforts and support to Kobani and Minbij in which the HFs were badly impacted by the earthquake especially Al-Furat hospital.

Oral Cholera Response (OCV)

- In NWS, the administration of OCV has started in localized Reception Centers in Afrin, Harem and Salqin to cover the displaced population (1941 doses administered between Feb.19-25).
- The campaign, delayed due to the earthquake, will begin on 7 March 2023 for 10 working days and will now cover all of Harem City. This is an additional scale up of the geographic coverage of the OCV campaign in response to the EQ. The scale up and targeted interventions are closely coordinated with the International Coordinating Group (ICG) on Vaccine Provision secretariat through WHO HQ.

Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

WASH Rapid Response:

- Cumulative 13,212 cases have received WASH assistance by NES WWG. This activity is no longer taking place due to lack of timely data and funding.
- Water testing continues by WHO along with provision of aqua tabs with focus of EQ areas

Access to Safe Water:

Safe water provision

- Water trucking is continued to be provided by partners to communities in Northern and Eastern rural of Deir ez Zor, Rural Damascus, Hasakeh City and IDP camps
- Chlorination of water has been carried out across water storage tanks (Camps: 137, Communities 550), water stations, filling points along the Euphrates(81), and at checkpoints into Hasakeh City.

- 5.6M aquatabs for household use of have dispatched to EQ and Cholera affected governorates; Al Hasakeh, Ar Raqqa, Deir ez Zour and Aleppo.

Rehabilitation

- Light rehabilitation is ongoing at water stations (31 ongoing),
- 2 out 3 motor maintenance works in Suliman Al Halabi, Aleppo City pumping station serving 35,000 residents in Shikh Fares, Shikh Kouder and Hulul neighborhoods.

Water Quality Monitoring

- Along the Euphrates 80 Water Station tested with 11% with no FRC
- In NES, 15% of surveyed households at no FRC
- In coordination with the Water Establishment in Lattakia, Homs/Hama and Aleppo regular water quality monitoring is carried out
- Across Idlib and northern Aleppo 68 camps were monitored with 21% no FRC
- In the same area, 132 camps were monitored with 70% no FRC

Sanitation:

- The sanitation network is major need to reconstruction/rehabilitation which is the leading cause of continued AWD and Cholera cases.
- Sewage network rehab in Safira city is ongoing.

WASH in Institutions:

- HCT partners in 47 Schools in Haran Al-Awameed and Al-Nasabieh, Rural Damascus are provided water trucking of 300 m3 daily serving 60,000 people and students.
- HCT partners have provided 150,000 litres of water by trucking to 83 at risk schools in 12 communities in Northern and Eastern rural of Deir ez Zor. 39,663 students benefit from 4L/day.
- 133 schools have received WASH support by NES WWG (HP and/or soap distribution, disinfection, etc).

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

- Following the earthquake, NES HWG partners in Kobane and Minbij increased MHPSS activities.
 - CHWs supported by NES HWg conducted 263 Awareness session in 14 tents (collective centers) in Kobane attended by 10.154 participants.
- HCT partners have visited 46 schools and carried out hygiene promotion activities
- In Homs, UNICEF partner GOPA continues to conduct awareness sessions about Cholera in Homs and Hama governorates. During the reporting period, they communicated with a total of 662 individuals.
- In Tartous and Latakia, UNICEF continues to deliver water disinfectant materials to the water establishments in the coastal area
- In Aleppo Governorate, 40 community health workers were trained on cholera-related messaging by AAH, and to be responsible for risk communication and community engagement.

Logistics, Equipment, and Supplies

- NA

Challenges / Gaps

- The earthquake had a devastating impact on overall cholera response efforts.
- lack of funding continue to pose an imminent risk of cholera response discontinuation, despite the re-programming by health and WASH partners; some projects have already ended, and other available limited funds will be drained in a few weeks. Lack of funding for sewer networks, including rehabilitation, maintenance, covering open sewage lines and establishing new sewage treatment plants.
- **In NES**, Out of the 6 current WASH partners active in the response, 3 of them are stopping or reducing significantly their response by end of March.
- In NWS, collective centres from the earthquake are of significant cholera risk with 33% without adequate water supply, 66% without latrines and 90% with inadequate hygiene items for washing. Cumulated together, this poses a significant risk to Cholera/AWD outbreaks.
- Difficulty accessing some camps, especially those built on agricultural lands where the roads are cut off when it rains.
- Alouk water station still not operational.

Key Priorities

- With the earthquake impact, the need to maintain and scale up cholera response operations is critical.
- Enhance and scale up surveillance system and lab capacities to all affected areas to ensure timely reporting, detection and response.
- Expand cholera health and WASH response into collective centres. Identify and address WASH issues within schools.
- Maximise rehabilitation of sanitation systems as much as is financially feasible
- Urgent advocacy for funding to support implementation of the cholera response plan including support to installing solar energy systems to secure energy for operation of water pumping stations and improve water and sanitation systems in schools.

Funding

- An estimated total of USD 55,490,944 million is required under the AWD/Cholera Response Plan for the coming six months (Jan – June 2023).

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