



Mobile teams supported by WHO provide essential health services in DEZ

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Following the emergency in Deir-ez-Zor, WHO dispatched six medical teams to provide primary and secondary health care, as well as maternal and mental health care to the affected population noting that women and children constitute the majority of the displaced population. In addition to facilitating referrals to secondary care, the team also provided safe water access.
- Over 2,619 health staff participated in 111 capacity-building workshops in different intervention areas.
- Over 43 tonnes of medical, laboratory, WASH and nutritional supplies, kits, personal protective equipment, and hemodialysis sessions— have been dispatched to 16 Ministry of Health (MoH) facilities, two MoHE hospitals, seven local NGOs, and four non-governmental hospitals.

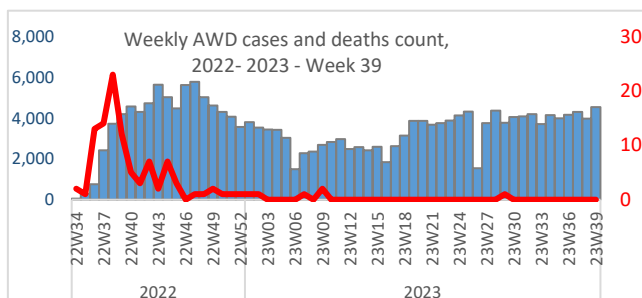
## Health Operational Update

### Disease Surveillance and Outbreak Response

- A total of 1,267 sentinel sites submitted weekly reports with 84% completeness and 82% timeliness. 88% of alerts were responded to within 72 hours.

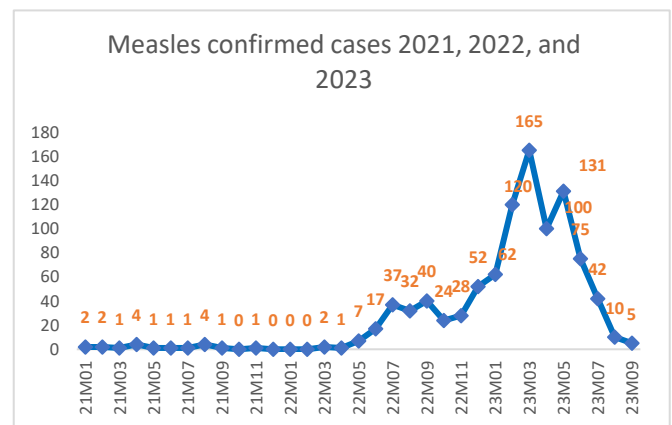
### Cholera outbreak at the Whole of Syria (WoS) level

- In the period from 25 August 2022 and 30 September 2023, 206,579 suspected cases have been reported from all 14 governorates. Idleb, Aleppo, and Ar-Raqqa are the most affected governorates to date.
- The estimated attack rate is 0.97, and the case fatality rate within the affected areas is 0.05% which is well below acceptable global standards.
- 9,278 stool samples were cultured, of which 1,352 tested positive for the presence of vibrio cholera: a 14.6% positivity rate. Moreover, rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) were conducted on 9,011 samples of which 2,131 tested positive. Overall, 23.6% of cases are RDT-positive. Additionally, among IDPs, there were 33,261 suspected cases and 11 associated deaths.



### Measles cases

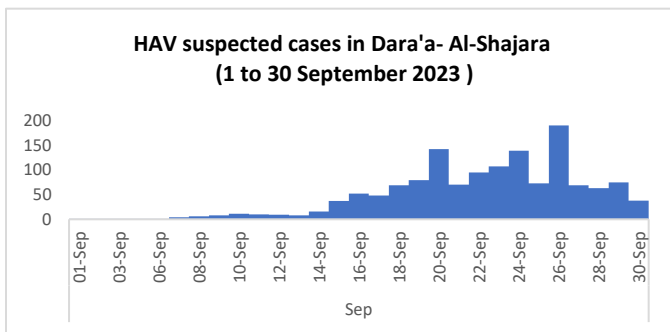
- During September, a total of 111 suspected measles cases were reported through the early warning alert and response system (EWARS) in 14 governorates. Suspected measles cases decreased by 56.6% in September compared with cases reported in August (256).
- Total confirmed measles cases in 2023 is 712, of which 6 cases were confirmed in September as follows: Tartous (1), Aleppo (1), Deir ez Zor (1), Al-Hasakeh (1), and Hama (2).



### Hepatitis A outbreak in Dara'a

- On 10 September 2023, WHO received notification of a cluster of suspected hepatitis A virus (HAV) cases in the Al-Shajara district of Dara'a governorate.

- During September, 1,423 suspected cases of hepatitis A have been reported from 10 villages in the Al-Shajara district without any associated deaths or hospitalizations.
- The serological laboratory results of IgM for 8 samples tested at a private laboratory were positive for HAV.
- Initial laboratory tests of water samples collected from different sources (the main water storage units and water network) revealed contamination. Public health and WASH interventions were carried out by the Directorate of Health (DoH) and water authority in Dara'a governorate, including repairs to the water networks, cleaning of the reservoir, and chlorinating the drinking water.
- Following the above interventions, adenosine triphosphate (ATP) measurements conducted on samples collected from water networks, households, and reservoirs showed that water was no longer contaminated.



### WHO Response

- Rapid response teams were immediately dispatched to collect information about the reported cases, conduct laboratory testing to confirm the outbreak, assess the outbreak, and provide response.
- Medical supplies and medicines were provided per the requests from the DoH, including cholera kits.
- WHO supported testing of water storage units and water sources.
- Implemented risk communication activities and raising awareness campaigns among affected communities, focusing on three main points:
  - The best hygiene practices, especially hand washing and water storage;
  - Promoting the knowledge of cleaning water tanks and educating households on how to use chlorine tablets; and
  - Safe food preparation messages.

### Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI)

- EPI outreach/mobile teams continued activities in all governorates to improve routine vaccination coverage in remote and high-risk areas.
- In the period of January to August 2023, diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis 3rd dose (DPT3) coverage improved to 74.3% compared to 65.4% in 2022. The EPI program, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health (MOH), will continue its efforts to vaccinate more children in all accessible areas, including hard-to-reach locations.

### Primary Health Care (PHC) and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

- WHO, in coordination with UNFPA, local NGOs, and the DoH Latakia, conducted awareness activities on Breast Cancer. Different topics were discussed, including referral mechanisms for advanced diagnostic procedures and management protocols.
- 75 health workers from the governorates of Damascus, Rural Damascus, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, Dara'a, Quneitra, and As-Sweida received training on diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and chronic respiratory disease risk approach and management.
- Under the Tobacco Control Program, 80 health workers from the DoHs in Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Tartous, and Latakia were trained in tobacco cessation in order to strengthen their capacities.
- 50 oncologists from the governorates of Damascus, Aleppo, Tartous, Latakia, Homs, Hama, and As-Sweida were trained on cancer statistics and reporting, including tumor categorization codes (ICD-O-3).
- WHO prepositioned lifesaving PHC/NCD medicines, at the MOH central level, including insulin vials.

### Secondary Health Care (SHC)

- WHO conducted three training courses for 75 laboratory staff from Damasus, Rural Damascus, and Latakia in order to enhance their capacities in the area of patient safety and IPC standards in hospitals.

### Infection Prevention and Control

- On 19 September, WHO attended and facilitated the MOH participation in the online global and regional consultations on the draft global action plan and monitoring framework for infection prevention and control. The consultation focused on the revision of targets and indicators proposed for 2032.

## Trauma Care

- 75 health workers from Hama, Daraa, Quneitra, and Damascus received training on “Immediate Life Support and Ventilator Management, and Trauma life support.”

## Nutrition

- 73,703 children under five years old were screened for malnutrition in 981 health centers in September 2023.
- A total of 2,875 global acute malnutrition cases were detected, including 768 severe cases (SAM) and 2,107 moderate cases (MAM).

## Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support (MHPSS)

- WHO continues to support MoH in delivering services across the primary health care centers, outpatient clinics, and specialized facilities. During the reporting period, the following services were supported:
  - 38,524 MH services at the community level.
  - 20,888 psychological interventions at the PHC level.
  - 21,313 mhGAP and specialized consultations at the PHC level.
  - 310 health and community workers received training on MHPSS interventions across the country; and
  - 1,682 individuals were reached with raising awareness sessions on gender-based violence (GBV) first aid support.
- In conjunction with World Mental Health Day, WHO and MoH conducted consultive workshops for media professionals on how best to portray sensitive topics related to mental health and psychological support (MHPSS) in a dignified and non-stigmatizing way.
- To ensure that MHPSS is coordinated among all partners in all sectors, WHO chaired 4 MHPSS technical working group meetings in Damascus, Aleppo, northeast Syria (NES), and Homs.

## Communicable Diseases - TB & HIV

- Tuberculosis (TB) mobile clinics continued to operate in Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor, and Rural Damascus. Over 1,582 beneficiaries attended 47 TB awareness sessions and 150 suspected cases were tested for TB, 23 of which were confirmed.
- WHO facilitated MoH staff participation in a regional training workshop on TB data management and analysis, including DHIS2 for TB, in Amman, Jordan.

## Environmental Health / WASH

- A joint monitoring effort between WHO and MoH continues in Latakia, Homs, Hama, and NES. A total of 2,504 samples were tested from different sources, of which 3.6% were contaminated with bacteria.
- In Deir-ez-Zor, WHO supported the testing of 2,330 samples, of which 1.3% were bacteriologically contaminated.

## Health Systems

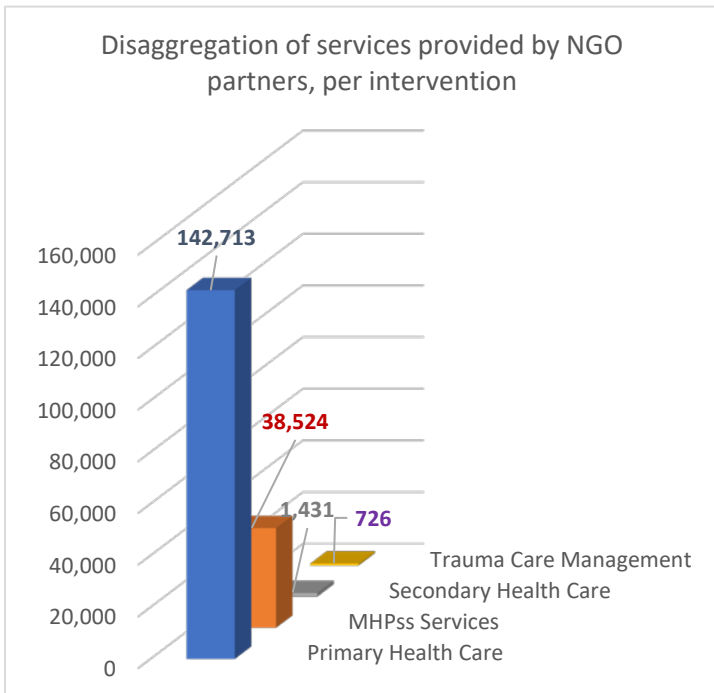
- WHO facilitated a dialogue between MoH and the Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) regarding the introduction of the Field Epidemiology Training Program in Syria and agreed upon the next steps.
- On 5 September, WHO facilitated a knowledge management session led by colleagues WHO from Headquarters and the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) to introduce the concept of Cross Programmatic Efficiency Analysis (CPEA), a diagnostic method for identifying key inefficiencies within and across health programs.

## Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) and Communications

- RCCE interventions have been further integrated within routine immunization activities in Qamishli and Deir Ez-Zor.
- RCCE team also developed educational communication materials to support awareness-raising interventions among communities affected by AWD, as well as a poster displaying WHO hotline for use by NGO partners.
- WHO’s communications team provided visibility coverage for:
  - The joint WHO-MoH workshop to develop Syria’s MHPSS Strategy - [link](#)
  - A story regarding the support provided by the EU to the WHO in Syria – [link](#)

## Partnerships (NGOs)

- A total of 18 WHO implementing partners operated 22 mobile medical teams (MMTs) across Damascus, Rural Damascus, Dara’a, Homs, Hama, Idlib, Aleppo, Latakia, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, and Al-Hasakeh providing primary, secondary, and trauma care, as well as rehabilitation and MHPSS services to underserved populations.
- Support was provided for 183,394 healthcare services.



## Health Sector Coordination

### National health sector coordination and sub-national health sector coordination:

- WHO conducted the following meetings:
  - National health sector coordination meeting in Damascus, Aleppo, Latakia, Hama, Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa, and NES.
  - Al Hol camp health sector coordination meeting (online).
- A field mission to Aleppo and Ar-Raqqa was conducted to assess the health situation in these governorates.
- The First Standard Allocation SHF was launched, and a technical review committee composed of 1 UN, 1 INGO, 1

national NGO, and 1 health sector coordinator was formed.

- Discussions continue with the UNDP team on the sector profile, strengthening conflict sensitivity in the health sector, and preparations for the next step.
- WHO health sector and technical teams are working collaboratively with the WoS Health Cluster Coordination team to update the WoS Risk Assessment and develop all-hazards preparedness and response plans for the WoS health sector.
- Health sector provided inputs:
  - Into briefing notes for the Humanitarian Coordinator's Diplomatic Briefing
  - On the impact of underfunding on health the sector to inform the UN Security Council meeting in September.
  - For the inter-sector contingency plan for Deir-ez-Zor.
  - Regarding health sector response in Al-Hasakeh for inter-sector update for the Governor's Office
- Health sector engaged with sector partners on:
  - Next steps to potentially support Al Loula Hospital (under DoH Al-Hasakeh).
  - The updated list of 650 patients in Al Hol camp who remain listed as non-emergency "cold cases" and/or not covered through current health care services due to the limited health services at the camp level and lack of public referral hospitals in the area. UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR, WHO, MSJM, and NES cross-border partners were encouraged to support this gap.
  - Mapping operational coverage across NES.
- Health sector assessed the public health impact of the attack on Mehkan water station in Deir-ez-Zor.

## WHO Syria Sub-Offices

### Aleppo

- WHO supported 12 primary healthcare centers (PHCs) and 4 MMTs in rural Aleppo. In September, the team delivered:
  - 7,223 outpatient consultations.
  - 4,348 mental health consultations.
  - 4,240 treatment courses delivered to health facilities.



*A team of WHO-supported implementing partners is providing assistive devices to people in Rural Aleppo*

- TB mobile clinics continue to operate in Aleppo. 573 beneficiaries attended 17 awareness sessions on TB, and 234 suspected cases were tested, of which 15 were confirmed.

## Latakia

WHO supported:

- A mobile team in the northern countryside of Latakia to provide 5,241 medical consultations and 1,426 MHPSS services.
- 320 RCCE awareness sessions in cooperation with 10 NGOs to raise awareness on different health topics, reaching 11,068 beneficiaries.
- Health facilities in Latakia and Tartous with 2.2 tonnes of essential health supplies covering the main primary health care centers run by national NGOs.
- TB screening in the earthquake-affected areas of Latakia and Tartous. A total of 3,500 individuals were screened, of which 8 cases were confirmed.

## Homs

- On 25 September, WHO facilitated the joint Health & Nutrition Sub-Sector meeting for Hama.
- The WASH rehabilitation of Der Shmayyel & Maar Shuhour health centers in Hama governorate has been finalized and the facilities have been turned over to the DoH.
- WHO supported the ongoing provision of health services through support to NGO partners in Homs and Hama as follows:
  - Lamset Shifa assisted the Dar Al Kabera Family Wellbeing Health Center in providing 9,572 medical consultations and 1,282 MHPSS services.
  - Al Afia Fund provided 960 hemodialysis sessions, 2 referrals for catheterizations, and 184 MHPSS services in Homs City.
  - Al-Birr provided 35,527 medical services in Hama City and its northern rural area.
- Building Community Association for Development (BCAD) worked in the Sqelbiyah district in Hama and provided 15,621 medical consultations and 1,011 MHPSS services, reaching 875 beneficiaries with awareness-raising sessions.



*Providing primary health care services through partnerships with WHO-supported organizations in Rural Hama*

## Deir-ez-Zor

- A field visit was conducted to the eastern countryside of DeZ, including the villages of Al Mayadeen, Al-Taybah, Mahkan, and Al-Qurayyah to evaluate the activities carried out by WHO-supported MMTs operated by Syrian Pulse, Children’s Cancer Society, and Youth Charity, which provide services to the displaced from conflict areas.
- During September, 6 mobile medical teams delivered:
  - 8,092 outpatient consultations.
  - 329 awareness sessions reaching 4,787 beneficiaries; and 24,000 IEC materials.



*WHO supports its implementing partners in conducting awareness campaigns in rural DEZ*

## Qamishli Hub / Northeast Syria (NES)

Coordination:

- On 20 September, WHO participated in the health-sector meeting at Al Hol camp and provided updates

on MHPSS, referrals, disease surveillance, and immunization.

- During the sub-national health sector meeting of Ar-Raqqa governorate, technical updates on MHPSS were exchanged, and other areas of concern.

#### **MHPSS services:**

- On 10th September - World Suicide Prevention Day - key messages on MHPSS were shared with actors to be disseminated during the WHO-supported awareness-raising sessions.

#### **Pharmacy:**

- A six-ton shipment of essential medicines, personal protective equipment (PPEs), IV fluids, NCD medications, and consumables was distributed to NES health facilities.

#### **EWARS:**

- Measles: Since January 2023, 1,669 cases were reported in Al-Hasakeh, and 51 cases in Ar-Raqqa through active case finding. Ongoing active surveillance, line list development, sample collection, and RCCE planning are in place.
- AWD/Cholera: Since January 2023, 779 AWD cases have been reported in Al Hasakeh and 235 in Ar-Raqqa, and active surveillance and preparedness are ongoing.
- Leishmaniasis: 6 new cases of leishmaniasis were treated; 24 follow-up awareness sessions were conducted by the WHO team at the camp level.

#### **Nutrition:**

- At Al Hikma and Al Tabqa hospitals, 50 severe acute malnutrition (SAM) cases with complications were treated in August.

#### **Secondary health care:**

- WHO provided secondary and trauma services to 590 beneficiaries at Al Hikma Hospital and provided continuous monitoring to ensure alignment with WHO criteria for supporting so-called red code emergency cases.

#### **Health Information Systems:**

- Data was collected for national hospitals in Al Hasakeh governorate during August 2023 (HeRAMs).
- Assessment of pharmaceutical needs in NES was carried out by health partners and facilities in the network for 2023.

#### **WASH:**

- Water quality monitoring was conducted in 11 IDP camps, 53 collective shelters, and 37 drinking water stations in NES. Of the 2,044 samples tested, 47 (2.6%) had bacterial contamination.



*Monitoring of water quality in NES*

## **Northwest Syria (NWS)**

#### **Operational Update**

- From the beginning of the earthquake emergency until 30th September 2023, the WHO delivered 129 truckloads of medical supplies to northwest Syria via the Bab Al Hawa and Bab Salam border crossings.
- In September, 7 trucks were delivered to NWS as part of the earthquake emergency response. The supplies included medical kits, essential medicines, and medical consumables expected to provide 349,553 treatment courses, including 9,950 trauma interventions.
- A total of 18 shipments by air freight and 1 shipment by sea freight were received in NWS as part of the earthquake response.



*WHO-supported medical shipments in NWS*

## Vaccination

### Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI)

- Through its implementing partners, WHO continued supporting 42 out of 93 (45%) routine immunization centres in NWS. In September 2023, these centres conducted 1,329 (46%) out of 2,855 immunization sessions in NWS, including 551 (44%) out of total fixed sessions and 778 (49%) out of total outreach sessions.
- Overall, in NWS, 93 EPI centres provided routine immunization including BCG 12,622 (97%), Hep B 10,270 (79%), and a total of 11,978 (92%) OPV1, 11,205 (86%) OPV2, and 10,510 (81%) OPV3, while 11,965 (92%) doses of Penta 1 and 10,507 (81%) of Penta3 were provided for children under one-year-old. In Addition, a total of 13,654 (105%) doses of MMR1 and 13,767 (106 %) doses of MMR2 were provided for children 12-23 months.

### COVID-19 vaccination campaign:

- All 199 teams recruited for COVID-19 vaccination continue their work in NWS, out of which 133 teams are working in big hospitals as fixed sites.
- The total number of vaccinated individuals in August was 67,180 (40,419 received the 1st dose, 19,703 received the 2nd dose, and 7,278 received a booster dose). The doses were distributed by gender as follows: 37,713 (56%) females, and 29,467 (44%) males.
- The total number of vaccinated individuals from the beginning of the campaign till the end of September is 882,865 which is 19.5% of the whole population living in NWS (out of this number 75.9% are fully vaccinated).

## Communicable Diseases (CDs) and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

- Specialized tuberculosis lab services (Culture-DST) at Antakya University resumed in September 2023. Since February, this service has been suspended due to the earthquake's effects on Antakya's university hospital. August 2023 saw the hospital reopen after renovations and rehabilitation. These advanced lab services are crucial for monitoring the treatment of Multi-Drug Resistant (MDR) TB cases.
- As the lead of northwest Syria dialysis task force, WHO Gaziantep field presence hosted a technical team from Johns Hopkins University in September to carry out the second evaluation of the dialysis quality improvement initiative that the WHO launched in 2021. All dialysis partners took part in the process, which indicated areas for additional improvement and highlighted areas where the dialysis services had improved. The task force also completed the first draft of the northwest Syria

dashboard for dialysis, which will include data and indicators reflecting the progress of the dialysis activities in NWS.

## Preparedness and Response

### Evaluation of Early Warning, Alert, and Response Network (EWARN)

- From the 17th to the 22nd of September 2023, WHO Gaziantep field presence, in collaboration with CDC and WHO EMRO, conducted an Inter-Agency Rapid Evaluation of Early Warning, Alert, and Response Network (EWARN) in NWS for adopting the “EWARN in emergencies evaluation protocol” published by EMRO in 2018. The evaluation was conducted across the EWARN central operational level in Gaziantep and ten sites (evaluated remotely) in two out of the five governorates in Syria (Aleppo and Idlib) where EWARN is operational.



*Inter-Agency Rapid Evaluation of Early Warning in NWS*

- The evaluation revealed that the existing EWARN is the only system providing comprehensive epidemiologic data on epidemic-prone diseases in northwest Syria, inclusive of the governorates of Aleppo and Idlib. Among many other recommendations, the evaluation team suggested an urgent data review around reporting of AWD cases and considering a review of all epidemic-prone diseases' thresholds.

### All Hazards Preparedness and Response Plan

- A three-day workshop between the 26th and 28th of September 2023 was conducted to develop the Multi-Hazard Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for NWS. The workshop intended to activate the incident management system and to ensure systematic, transparent, and evidence-based discussions on hazard

identification and assessment. Participants included national and international health NGOs, clusters and technical working groups, UNICEF, UNFPA, and local authorities.

- The breakdown of the functional health locations is as follows: 73 (16.6%) are hospitals, 196 (44.3%) are fixed PHCs, 79 (17.9%) are mobile clinics, 44 (10.0%) are specialized care centers, while 50 (11.2%) are other health facilities.

## Health Information

- In September 2023, HeRAMS Quarter 2 report was published revealing an increase in total health facilities assessed from 601 in 1st quarter to 618 in the 2nd quarter, of which a total of 442 HFs were functional compared to 421 functional HFs in the 1st quarter of 2023.

## Useful links

- [HeRAMS public hospitals](#)
- [HeRAMS public health centres](#)
- [WHO-Syria Summary of HRP indicators reported through the 4Ws](#)
- [WoS key performance indicators](#)
- [MHPSS dashboard](#)

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