Beirut, Lebanon, 15 October 2023 — The World Health Organization (WHO) has expedited the delivery of critical medical supplies to Lebanon in order to be ready to respond to any potential health crisis.

Two shipments arrived in Beirut today from WHO's logistics hub in Dubai, and include enough surgical and trauma medicines and supplies to meet the needs of 800 to 1000 injured patients. The Lebanese Ministry of Health is in the process of identifying the referral hospitals that will receive these vital supplies.

Lebanon's health system has been crippled as a result of an economic crisis, the Beirut port blast that occurred in August 2020, and the additional burden of the Syrian refugee crisis. There are severe shortages of specialized medical doctors and health workers, and medicines and medical equipment.

Since violence escalated between Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory last Saturday, there have also been reports of clashes on the border between Israel and south Lebanon, resulting in casualties among civilians. If these clashes escalate, more civilians will be at risk, and they will need immediate access to lifesaving medical care.

WHO is working with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and health partners in Lebanon to strengthen preparedness and readiness within the health system to respond to potential increases in casualties due to escalating violence. WHO is supporting the MoPH in activating its Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) to facilitate improved coordination of

emergency responses at both central and sub-national levels.

In addition to prioritizing casualty management, significant attention will be directed towards ensuring the uninterrupted delivery of essential healthcare services and providing mental health and psychosocial support.

Within the Gaza Strip, ongoing violence has resulted in thousands of deaths and injuries, and inflicted unprecedented damage on the health care system.

WHO reiterates its plea for the protection of civilians, health workers and health infrastructure, and ultimately, for an end to hostilities and violence.

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