

Syrian Arab Republic unrest

Regional situation report # 1

Date: 9 August 2012



According to the Syrian Ministry of Health, 38 out of 88 hospitals have been damaged *Photo: WHO*

Highlights

- The health system in the Syrian Arab Republic is only partially functioning. Many public health facilities, including hospitals, are inaccessible.
- Numerous pharmaceutical plants located in Aleppo and in Rural Damascus have closed, causing a critical shortage of medicines for tuberculosis, hepatitis, and other chronic health conditions.
- WHO is procuring two caravans to be located in Jordan's newly opened Zataari camp, one for WHO and one for the Ministry of Health. WHO is positioning staff to establish a disease surveillance/early warning system within the camp, and to monitor the public health situation and risks inside the camp.
- A vaccination campaign targeting 8000 susceptible children in Lebanon where displaced Syrians are concentrated is being organized in coordination with the Ministry of Public Health and related stakeholders.

Syrian Arab Republic

- The health system in the Syrian Arab Republic is only partially functioning. The unrest has expanded to all governorates, including the largest cities. There is a general lack of health personnel, essential medicines and medical equipment and supplies. The health facilities that have stopped functioning are located in the most affected areas where the urgent need for medical and surgical interventions is most prominent.
- Many public health facilities, including hospitals, are inaccessible due to long distances and lack of public transportation due to shortages of fuel and increased costs. In many areas where the clashes are ongoing, patients are unable to reach health facilities due to security and safety concerns.
- On 6 August 2012, the Ministry of Health reported that:
 - 38 out of 88 hospitals have been damaged/affected, of which 16 are out of service
 - 149 out of 2000 health facilities have been damaged/affected, of which 45 are out of service
 - 200 out of 520 ambulances have been damaged/affected, of which 91 are out of service
 - 120 vaccination/supply vehicles have been damaged/affected, of which 83 are out of service
 - 39 health staff have been killed (doctors, nurses and paramedics)
 - 51 health staff have been injured (doctors, nurses and paramedics)
 - 6 health staff have been arrested (doctors, nurses and paramedics)
- Hospitals and health facilities are reporting a high volume of patients with gunshot wounds, as well as other trauma due to explosions and fire.
- The most frequently reported diseases are: respiratory infections, diarrhoea, gastrointestinal diseases, non-communicable diseases (diabetes and cardiovascular diseases/hypertension), kidney diseases and orthopaedic.
- Numerous pharmaceutical plants located in Aleppo and in Rural Damascus have closed due to difficulties, including insecurity, sanctions and increased fuel costs. This has caused a critical shortage of locally-produced medicines, especially medicines for tuberculosis, hepatitis and other chronic health conditions, such as hypertension, diabetes, thalassemia and cancer, as well as medicines for kidney disease.

Jordan

- 39 600 displaced Syrians are registered in Jordan, with an additional 2283 persons awaiting registration.
- According to the national nongovernmental organization Jordan Health Aid Society, which operates health clinics in the Ramtha sites, the Mafraq Zaatari camp and within the communities in both areas, reported cases include:
 - Within the Zaatari camp, the number of average cases seen at the clinic per day is around 150 in the camp clinic run by a national nongovernmental organization (Jordan Health Aid Society / JHAS) with support from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

- (UNHCR). There were 25 transfers to Mafraq hospital. Many cases include allergies, asthma, and vomiting; children are not fully vaccinated; some cases of dehydration are seen due to the hot weather; chronic conditions include diabetes, hypertension and cancer; one case of hepatitis, one suspected case of tuberculosis and one case of mental health disorder were detected; cases with reproductive health needs were identified and managed, including two transfers.
- Within the three other sites in Ramtha city, the same profile of cases is being seen by the individual clinics serving in each site.
 - As for those living within the community and accessing health services through the facilities of the Ministry of Health and nongovernmental organizations, no reports are being received from either, but the Ministry of Health is indicating that their health services are being overstretched by the situation.

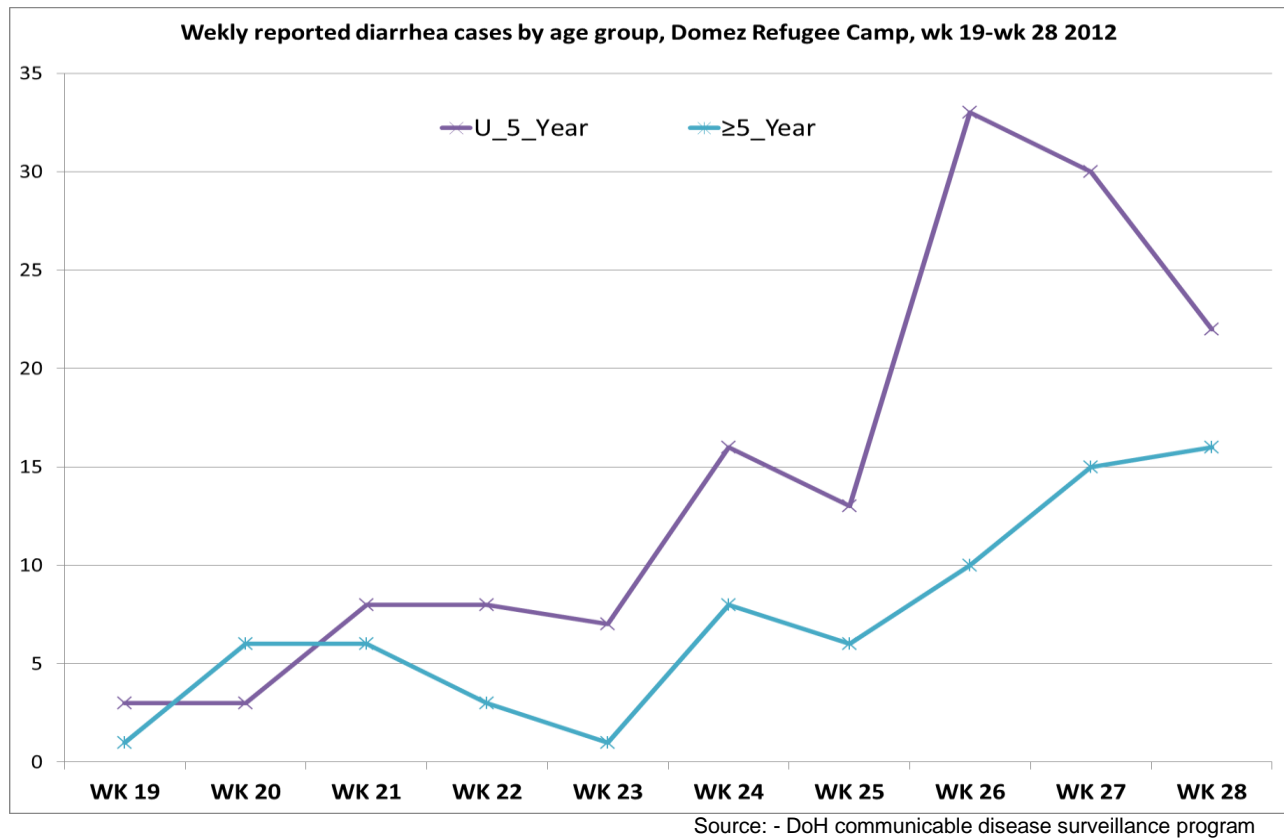
Lebanon

- Over 35 000 displaced Syrians are currently receiving protection and assistance in Lebanon through the efforts of the Government of Lebanon and UN and nongovernmental organizations partners.
- The decision by the Lebanese High Relief Commission to discontinue covering the cost of secondary and tertiary health care for displaced Syrians has caused numerous challenges.
- During the month of July 2012, 25 critical cases from the registered displaced Syrian community and six war-injured cases were admitted for secondary care to hospitals in the north and covered financially by various partners.
- Access to primary health care services continues, with shortages reported in medications for chronic diseases and cancer.
- No outbreaks of communicable diseases have been reported so far.

Iraq

- 9053 displaced Syrians are registered in Iraq.
- There is an increased demand for health services in hosting areas.
- Respiratory tract infections and diarrhoea, especially among children, as well as urinary tract infections and insect bites are the main consultations among displaced populations living in the camps.
- The national tuberculosis control programme team, together with WHO, has enhanced the efforts for early detection and treatment of cases in camps.
- So far, no increase in communicable diseases has been reported from any of the hosting areas.

Weekly number of diarrhoea cases reported by the health centre in Domiz camp.



Health response

Syrian Arab Republic

- To date, WHO has provided the Ministry of Health and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent with medical equipment, including surgical, trauma, first aid and emergency kits, to cover the health needs of 700 000 people.
- Sixty thousand blood safety kits are being shipped by WHO to the Syrian Blood Bank to ensure the safety and quality of blood and blood products required in surgery and trauma care.

Jordan

- Six basic interagency health kits and two supplementary interagency health kits were provided to the Ministry of Health, in addition to a list of medications for the management of chronic diseases which was procured from the local market to bridge the gap in public facilities in Mafraq and Ramtha.
- WHO is conducting a desktop review for available capacities and services in health facilities in Mafraq and Irbid. This situation analysis will help in generating an overview picture for the current health status and enable identifying gaps and potential referral facilities outside the Syrian refugees' camps, as well as developing a preliminary general database for health facilities that can be used as baseline information for further detailed assessment.

- WHO is procuring two caravans to be placed in Zaatari camp, one for WHO and one for the Ministry of Health and placement of staff to establish a disease surveillance/early warning system within the camp, and to monitor the public health situation and risks inside the camp.
- WHO performed an assessment mission to three refugee camps in Jordan, and strengthened its surge capacity at the borders by deploying one public officer and one information management officer.
- Recruitment of national staff is underway to support the Ministry of Health/disease surveillance unit and the Department of Health in Mafraq and Ramtha is under process.

Lebanon

- WHO distributed its first batch of stockpiled medications to the 14 primary health care centres overloaded by the influx of displaced Syrians, namely in the areas of Akkar and Beqaa. A second batch of medications is planned to be distributed in the coming few days to account for the increased recent influx in the Beqaa area and new areas in Tripoli and Akkar.
- WHO supported a set of 60 health awareness sessions on the most common medical conditions or factors affecting the health of the displaced, reaching around 6000 displaced Syrians in the areas of Akkar, Beqaa and south Lebanon.
- A training on medical management and public health measures for nuclear and chemical exposure targeting health professionals is being finalized with the Ministry of Public Health and private sector.
- Two workshops on surveillance (detection, verification and reporting) have been organized with the Ministry of Public Health to the Qada doctors as part of the EWARS reinforcement.
- Health indicators for the displaced Syrians are being finalized with the Health Working Group.
- A nutrition survey on the displaced Syrians is planned for the last week of August, first two weeks of September, in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF, UNHCR and ACF (a French nongovernmental organization). WHO is coordinating the survey task force.
- A vaccination campaign targeting 8000 susceptible children in border areas where displaced Syrians are concentrated is being organized in coordination with the Ministry of Public Health and related stakeholders.

Iraq

- The health centre at the Domiz camps continues to provide health services to the population. An average of 50 consultations per day is reported. Seasonal diseases remain the main cause of consultations. On 17 July a vaccination team visited the camp to provide required vaccination to the children in Domiz camp. A mobile dental team from the Department of Health also visited the camp last week to provide dental care for the residents in the camp. As a requirement to obtain residency in Kurdistan, all new arrivals are required to undergo blood testing for hepatitis and HIV and the health centre is providing these services to the population arriving in the camp.

- WHO and partners have completed a nutritional assessment of camp residents. The results are being finalized and will be shared with stakeholders.
- In order to respond to the health needs of population, at Al-Waleed and Al-Qa'im crossing areas, the Ministry of Health has sent three medical teams comprising of 8 specialist doctors, 24 paramedics, 10 emergency medical technicians to the crossing. 10 fully equipped ambulances are also dispatched to cater for emergency medical transportation. Al Waleed subdistrict and Al Rutba district hospitals have been designated by the Ministry of Health to deliver specialized care to the displaced population in need.
- To prevent any communicable disease outbreak in the area, the Ministry has enhanced its surveillance activities with monitoring of reported diseases at all health facilities in the target areas. Disease prevention and control guidelines were sent to all health facilities in the area.
- Kimadia, the State Company for medicines and medical appliances, has sent additional medicines and supplies to all health facilities delivering services to the displaced population.
- WHO has procured medicines and supplies to support primary health care service delivery to 50 000 population for a period of three months. These supplies are expected to arrive in Iraq by the end of 2nd week of August.

Coordination

Syrian Arab Republic

- A bi-weekly health working group meeting is co-chaired by WHO and UNICEF.

Jordan

- WHO is coordinating the response with the Ministry of Health and other national and international partners through mechanisms including: Interagency Task Force, Health Coordination Group, Reproductive Health Sub-working Group, Mental Health Psychosocial Group and field coordination meetings in Ramtha and Mafraq.

Lebanon

- Two field health coordination meetings took place (one in Beqaa and one in Akkar).
- One donors briefing meeting chaired by UNHCR was organized.
- One meeting with the WHO country office and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) was held.

Iraq

- WHO is co-leading the health sector along with the Ministry. Regular coordination meetings took place (one in Beqaa and one in Akkar).

- One donors briefing meeting, chaired by UNHCR, was organized.
- One meeting with the WHO country office and DFID was held with partners.

Donors and funding

Syrian Arab Republic

- WHO is finalizing a revised humanitarian response plan for the Syrian Arab Republic. To cover the critical gap in health needs inside the country until the end of 2012, WHO is calling for immediate contributions totalling US\$ 21 million, of which the amount requested for medicines and medical supplies is approximately US\$ 17.5 million.
- WHO has received US\$ 1.5 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund for its ongoing activities in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Jordan

- WHO has requested funding for US\$ 1.5 million for its activities in Jordan. To date, US\$ 240 000 has been received from the Central Emergency Response Fund.

Lebanon

- WHO has requested funding for US\$ 317 000 for its activities in Lebanon. To date, US\$ 138 000 has been received from the Central Emergency Response Fund.

Iraq

- To date, no funding has been received by WHO for its activities in Iraq against a funding request for US\$ 800 000.

For more information, contact:

WHO Syrian Arab Republic Country Office

Elizabeth Hoff, Acting WHO representative
wrosyria@syr.emro.who.int

WHO Jordan Country Office

Dr Nada Al Ward, Sub-Regional EHA Coordinator
alwardn@jor.emro.who.int

WHO Lebanon Country Office

Dr Hassan El Bushra, Acting WHO representative
wroleb@leb.emro.who.int
elbushrah@leb.emro.who.int

WHO Iraq Country Office

Dr Mateen Ahmed Shaheen
Technical Officer Emergency Medical Services
shaheenmat@irq.emro.who.int

WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

shoc@emro.who.int