



A new health centre was opened by the Iraqi Ministry of Health in Al Qaim's second camp (with a population of 4000 refugees)

Highlights

The Syrian Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan has been revised for the first 6 months of 2013 and was launched in Geneva on 19 December. The plan includes a total of 16 health projects from 6 UN agencies amounting to US\$ 81 905 133.

There is an increased demand for medicines, medical supplies and the provision of free medical services in Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic, due to the deteriorating socioeconomic situation and reduction in the number of operational health facilities. Al-Thanaa haemodialysis centre has reported that the number of free haemodialysis sessions have decreased from 3 per week to 2 per week due to a shortage in machines, medical equipment and supplies.

A total of 38 Syrian refugees have been referred to Lebanon's national tuberculosis programme for treatment and further clinical management, including two multidrug-resistant cases.

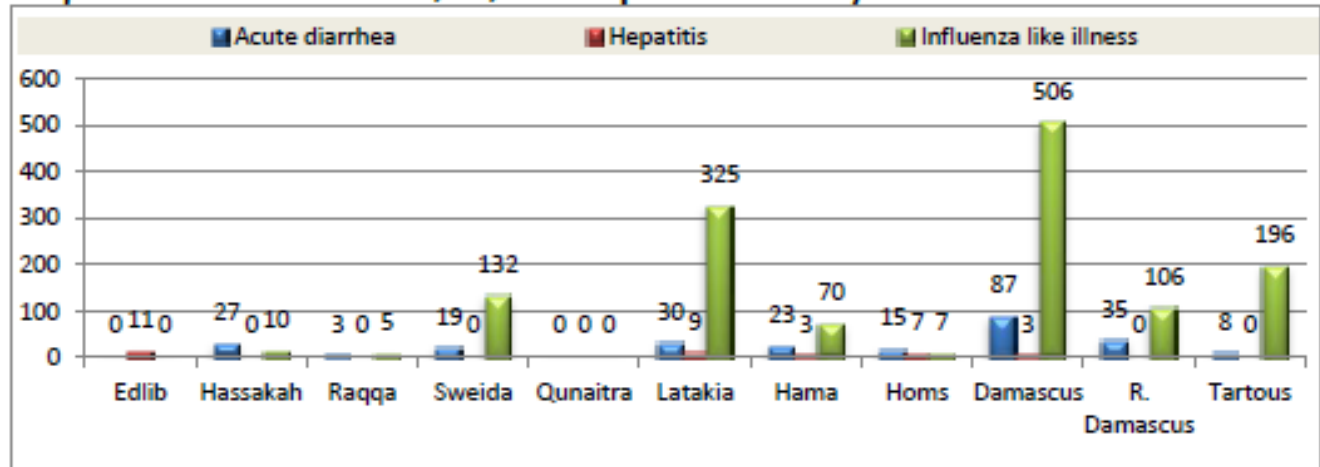
Three confirmed cases of hepatitis A were reported in Jordan's Al Zaatari camp. Despite an increase in cases of watery diarrhoea in Jordan's Al Zaatari camp during November, the number of cases decreased and stabilized in December.

The Ministry of Health in Iraq opened a new primary health centre in Al-Qaim on 19 December 2012. Support from UN agencies and other partners to effectively manage the centre will be needed.

Health situation

Syrian Arab Republic

- WHO continues to monitor the health situation in the Syrian Arab Republic through visits to health facilities, partner nongovernmental organizations and information collected from the field. During reporting period of 18–31 December, assessment visits were made to Al-Afya Fund (national nongovernmental organization supported by WHO), Al-Thanaa haemodialysis centre (supported by Al-Afya Fund) and Damascus Hospital (largest referral hospital operated by the Ministry of Health).
 - Al Afya Fund has reported an increased demand for medicines, medical supplies and provision of free medical services due to the deteriorating socioeconomic situation and reduction in the number of operational health facilities.
 - Al-Thanaa haemodialysis centre reported that the numbers of free haemodialysis sessions have decreased from 3 per week to 2 per week due to a shortage in machines, medical equipment and supplies.
 - Damascus Hospital reports that it is receiving 70–100 injured patients/day. The majority of these patients are men. The most frequently observed injuries are burns, gunshot wounds and injuries from explosions affecting civilians, including an increasing number of women and children.
 - Health professionals and staff continue to face difficulties in reaching hospitals and health facilities whether they work due to access issues.
 - There are shortages in particularly anaesthesia, ointments for burns, antibiotics against multidrug-resistant infections, as well as equipment for cardiovascular treatments, orthopedic and haemodialysis supplies. Damascus Hospital reported it was experiencing shortages in medicines and supplies from both the international and the local markets due to economic sanctions and currency fluctuations.
 - Due to a severe shortage of nitrogen gas used for normal anesthesia, doctors in Damascus Hospital reported that they had to defer to alternative forms of anesthesia.
 - The provision of mental healthcare remains a challenge, with a severe shortage of psychiatrists in the country and increased needs of mental health services being reported.
- With the absence of routine data, malnutrition remains an area of concern. Recently, the only hospital in the country equipped to treat severe acute malnutrition, has had a slight increase in cases referred from Rural Damascus, Deir Al-Zor, Hasaka, Daraa and Homs.
- The EWARS bulletin for Week 49 has reached 67% reporting completeness. During the reporting period, 1865 cases were documented, of which the highest percentage was for influenza-like illnesses at 73% (1357 cases) followed by acute diarrhoea at 13% (247 cases). Additionally, there were 33 cases of hepatitis reported and six cases of suspected measles (four of which were reported from Damascus).

Graph-2: Distribution of AD, ILI, and Hepatitis Cases by Governorate

Jordan

Al Zaatari camp

- The deaths of two infants (7 and 10 months) were reported in November 2012. Both deaths were a result of acute watery diarrhoea.
- A two-year-old girl died in hospital after suffering burns from a fire caused by an electric heater in the family tent.
- Health facilities in southern governorates are reporting an increasing numbers of Syrians seeking health care, particularly women and children.
- Despite an increase in cases of watery diarrhoea in the camp during November, the number of cases decreased and stabilized in December. All age groups were affected by a threefold increase in cases, with the highest-affected group being children under the age of 5, showing a five-fold increase in incidence between week 46 and 47 (27.7/1000 in week 46 and 127/1000 in week 47). Laboratory results for stool samples tested showed positive for rotavirus. Measures taken to date include:
 - WHO conducted a presentation on the clinical management of diarrhoeal diseases and shared protocols with all health agencies.
 - WHO and partners conducted training for health care providers in the camp on diarrhoea case management.
 - Adequate supplies of oral rehydration salts and zinc tablets were procured.
 - WASH team have been engaged and will focus on improving hygiene promotion practices; soap distribution will be conducted with an emphasis on families with children aged under five years.
 - The incidence of watery diarrhoea has decreased with 24.2/1000 reported in week 49 compared to 70/1000 week 48. The incidence of these cases is now stable.
- Three confirmed cases of hepatitis A were reported in Al Zaatari camp, in addition to cases of acute jaundice. Increased cases of viral conjunctivitis were reported. The Ministry of Health is continuing with current measures to promote hygiene inside the camp.

- There are a total of 30 confirmed cases of tuberculosis among Syrians in Jordan (24 pulmonary and 6 extra-pulmonary). 3 cases are multi-drug resistant. 27 cases and their contacts are being monitored by International Organization for Migration (IOM)/Ministry of Health through the national tuberculosis programme procedures.
- The top acute disease and conditions are acute respiratory infections, allergies, acute watery diarrhoea, influenza-like illnesses, intestinal worms, ear and dental conditions.
- The top chronic diseases reported are: musculoskeletal, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, asthma, gastrointestinal and cardiovascular.
- No outbreaks have been reported among Syrian refugees in Jordan.

Nutrition

- The results of the nutrition assessment both inside and outside the camp do not currently point to an alarming under-nutrition problem among Syrian under-fives and women of childbearing age, but the situation needs to be closely monitored due to a real risk.
- A five-day training workshop on nutrition in emergencies was conducted by International Medical Corps (IMC) for staff from the Ministry of Health, UN agencies and nongovernmental organizations, with emphasis on infant and young child feeding among Syrian refugees.
- There is an identified need to establish outpatient therapeutic feeding and supplementary feeding for the management of severe and moderate malnutrition.
- Mid-upper arm circumference screening of new arrivals between 6 and 59 months will begin taking place in Al Zaatari camp. The screening will take place in the French field hospital during vaccination sessions for new arrivals.
- 363 antenatal care visits took place over a 4-week period:
 - 53% of women were in the first trimester)
 - 32 deliveries took place (3 by caesarian section).
- 15 providers in Al Zaatari camp were trained on the clinical management of sexual violence, with emphasis on the referral of patients for psychosocial support and protection services.
- Over a 4-week period, 636 mental health consultations took place, with the most common causes including anxiety, chronic depression, schizophrenia and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Lebanon

- A total of 38 Syrian refugees have been referred to the national tuberculosis programme for treatment and further clinical management, including two multidrug-resistant cases.
- Out of 2588 patients admitted to hospitals in the north between September and mid-December 2012, 20 deaths were reported; out of 1645 cases admitted to hospitals in the Bekaa between June and October 2012, 11 deaths) were reported.
- No outbreaks have been reported among Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Iraq

Domiz camp

- During week 50, there were 15 suspected and 2 confirmed cases of measles in Domiz camp. A health care provider working with the refugees also showed signs of measles. Confirmation tests for the 15 cases are ongoing. So far, there have been no severe cases and no deaths related to measles.
- 12 000 refugees were tested for at the blood clinic in Domiz camp for HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C. Results revealed:
 - 193 positive cases of hepatitis B
 - 8 positive cases of hepatitis C
 - 0 positive cases of HIV

Al Qaim Camp

- During week 50, there were 741 medical consultations, 3 deliveries and 0 deaths. The main causes of consultation were respiratory infections and diarrhoea.
- There were 37 suspected cases of hepatitis A.
- The clinics in the camp are reporting shortages in medications, especially antibiotics for children. The hospital in Al Qaim is reporting shortages in life-saving medicines.

Health response

Syrian Arab Republic

- In spite of the difficulties faced with regards to access and security, the national vaccination campaign was completed in the Syrian Arab Republic on 20 December. As per initial reports from governorates, the following number of children were vaccinated from 26 November to 18 December out of a total under-5 population of 2.5 million children:
 - 1 100 971 total children below the age of 5 vaccinated against measles
 - 1 350 193 total children below the age of 5 vaccinated against polio
 - The Ministry of Health is awaiting additional information from Aleppo, Daraa, Homs and rural Damascus to release the final coverage figures.
- WHO has signed memorandum of understandings with 4 additional nongovernmental organizations, increasing the total number of WHO-contracted nongovernmental organizations partners on the ground to 15. The newly contracted nongovernmental organizations provide:
 - referral services for internally-displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities in need of surgical interventions, haemodialysis, obstetric and antenatal care, medicines (life-saving and noncommunicable diseases) and diagnostic tests in Damascus, Rural Damascus and Quneitera.
 - communicable and noncommunicable diseases medicines and primary health care services, including reproductive health, nutrition, mental health, and child health care through 2 mobile clinics in Homs and Aleppo.

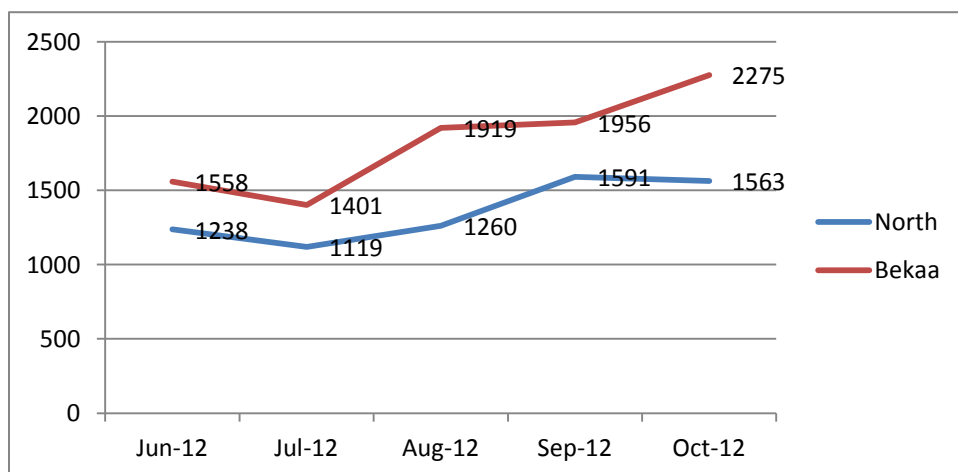
- During the last week of November, WHO provided:
 - Reproductive health kits 4 and 5 (contraceptive and STI treatment for 30 000 people for one month)
 - Reproductive health kits 8 and 9 (supplies for the management of abortions and sutures for gynaecology/obstetrics use for 90 000 people for one month)
 - 1 surgical supply kit for 100 surgical interventions to AlZahrawi maternal hospital in Damascus
 - Consumables to serve 1500 haemodialysis patients through the Ministry of Health in Damascus.
 - 50 interagency health kit basic units to a local nongovernmental organization to treat 5000 patients for 3 months in Damascus, Rural Damascus, and Quneitera.

Jordan

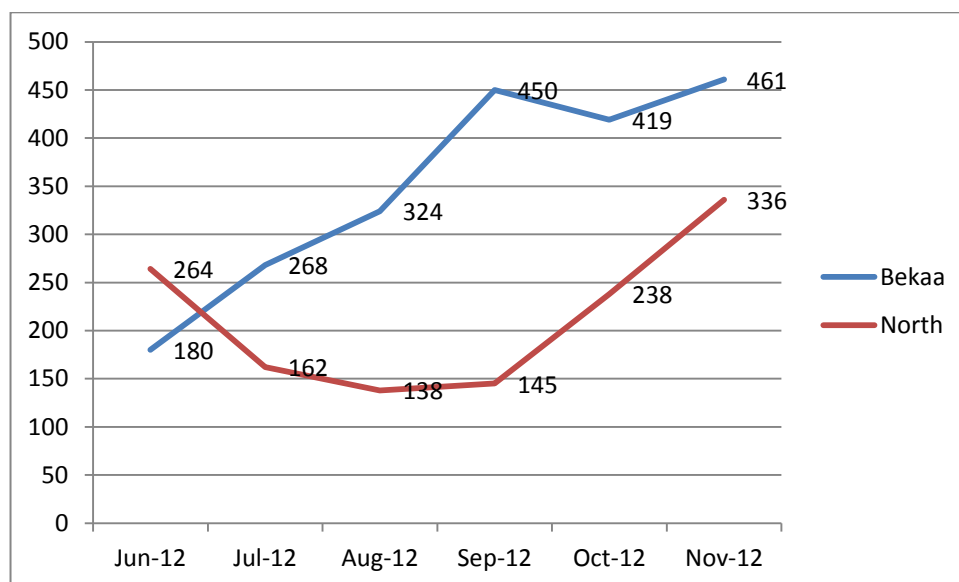
- The Ministry of Health is expanding its presence in Al Zaatari camp with a focus on management and coordination through the establishment of a primary health care centre in the camp.
- To date, 9429 children aged between 6 months and 15 years have received vaccinations in Al Zaatari camp, as part of a campaign launched in September. The campaign is also being supported by increased advocacy and awareness messages in the camps on the need for parents to vaccinate their children.
- The polio and measles vaccination campaign in Irbid and Mafraq for Syrian and Jordanian children reached more than 124 000 children from 27 November to 6 December.
- New arrivals to Al Zaatari camp are vaccinated against measles (children below 15 years), polio (children below 5 years) and given vitamin A supplementation.
- Routine vaccinations by the Ministry of Health are ongoing 2 days a week in Al Zaatari camp and daily for refugees outside the camp.

Lebanon

- The utilization of health services by Syrian refugees is steadily increasing, accelerated by winterization. A total of 1488 refugees received services over a one week period in December through UNHCR subcontracted nongovernmental organizations, including primary health care consultations, free medications, vaccinations and urgent diagnostic tests. A total of 325 Syrian refugees were admitted to hospital over a one-week period in December.



Number of displaced Syrians in Lebanon utilizing primary health care services per region from June 2012 to October 2012 (source: IMC)



Number of displaced Syrians in Lebanon admitted to the hospital per region from June 2012 to November 2012
(source: IMC)

- A review of utilization of health services among registered Syrian refugees indicates that over a 6-month period for a population of 30 000, almost 5%-7% were hospitalized (1500 cases) and 7%-9% received primary health care services (2000 cases).
- A review of utilization of hospital services among registered Syrian refugees indicates the following:
 - Of all hospital admissions, injury and war trauma constituted one third, acute non-surgical conditions constituted one third, pregnancy-related constituted around one sixth, and general surgical non war-related constituted around one tenth.
 - Premature newborns, war related injuries and respiratory conditions had the longest average duration of stay: 9.5 days, 5.7 days and 4.5 days, respectively.
- A review of utilization of primary health care services among registered Syrian refugees indicates the following:
 - Ear, nose and throat, well baby/vaccination, and lower respiratory tract infections were the most common causes for primary health care consultation for those less than 5 years old.
 - Ear, nose and throat, musculoskeletal, gynaecology and gastro-intestinal/ diarrhoea are the most common causes for primary health care consultation for all age groups.
 - Noncommunicable diseases and diabetes constitute around 6%-7% of all cases consulted at primary health care centres.

Iraq

- The Ministry of Health has opened a new health centre in the second camp in Al Qaim (hosting 4000 refugees). The health centre consists of 3 fully equipped caravans and offers the following services and facilities:
 - General practitioner available 7 days a week
 - Specialized doctor available 2 days a week
 - Laboratory employee available 7 days a week

- Dentist available 7 days a week
- Maternal and child health unit with a female doctor available four days a week
- Vaccination unit
- Pharmacy
- Emergency unit
- Male and female dressing units
- Statistics unit
- School health unit
- Unit for transitional diseases and epidemiological monitoring
- Health promotion unit

While the opening of this centre by the Ministry of Health is a positive development and demonstrates its commitment to respond to the needs of Syrian refugees, it is important to keep in mind that the centre will need the support of different actors working inside the camp for its efficient management and operations.

- WHO has provided 1 trauma kit to Al Qaim Hospital for 100 trauma surgeries and 2 interagency health kits for 20 000 people for 3 months. The hospital is experiencing a strain on its services due to an influx of refugees in the community.



Domiz camp

- All new arrivals between the ages of 6 months to 25 years are vaccinated against measles. The vaccination campaign for children between 6 months and 6 years is ongoing. The vaccines being given are MMR, polio, TB and seasonal influenza. A total of 1602 children have been vaccinated against polio to date.
- Hepatitis A vaccine is given to camp workers in contact with positive cases. A total of 800 adults and 2600 children were vaccinated as of December 18.
- There are reported shortages in psychotropic drugs. The Directorate of Health is working to ensure the availability of drugs. The Directorate of Health is also planning with WHO to conduct a mental health community assessment at the camp.
- Using funds provided through CERF, WHO has initiated the emergency procurement of a list of medicines for chronic diseases in both Domiz and Al-Qaim camps.

Coordination

Syrian Arab Republic

- The Syrian Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP) has been revised for the first 6 months of 2013 and was launched in Geneva on the 19 December. As the health working group lead, WHO coordinated with UN agencies to update the health sector response plan. The aim of the SHARP 2013 is to scale up the humanitarian response in Syrian Arab Republic to cover 4 million affected populations in 2013. The SHARP 2013 has total of 16 health projects from 6 UN agencies i.e. UNICEF, UNHCR, UNRWA, UNDP, UNFPA and WHO amounting to US\$ 81 905 133.
- The health working group convened a meeting on the 11 December to discuss the status of nutrition in the country. As there is no data on the recent nutrition status it was agreed that an assessment is essential and more coordinated activities to prevent an increase in malnutrition cases
- After three months of implementing the early warning alert and response system, a meeting was convened to review the system's progress, achievements and address key shortcomings. A plan of action was developed which included a review of the reporting format, expansion of the system to include more sentinel sites in different governorates and further capacity-building, starting with two workshops to train EWARS focal points at the peripheral level.

Jordan

- The mental health working group in in Al Zaatari camp is developing a database of mental health clients to assist in follow up and reduce duplication. The group is also orienting a number of service providers on mental health referral systems.

Iraq

- The health/nutrition working group and the food security/nutrition working groups will be merged to facilitate attendance of partner agencies and follow-up of recommendations and activities.
- Regular coordination meetings between UNHCR, WHO and UNICEF continue to be held. During the meeting held in Baghdad on 11 December 2012, issues related to the planned mission to assess the capacity of Al-Qaim Hospital for referral and medical evacuation purposes was discussed.

Donors and funding

Country of operations	Total requested by health sector (US\$)	Total requested by WHO (US\$)	Amount received by WHO (including pledges) (US\$)	% of overall amount requested by WHO	WHO unmet requirements (US\$)
Syrian Arab Republic	53 150 319	31 145 000	8 495 750	27%	22 149 608
Iraq	2 089 000	1 350 000	-	0%	1 350 000
Jordan	15 625 999	2 650 000	288 900	11%	2 361100
Lebanon	6 613 440	400 000	149 800	37%	250 200

For more information, contact:

WHO Iraq Country Office

Dr Syed Jaffar Hussein, WHO Representative

wriraq@irq.emro.who.int**WHO Jordan Country Office**

Dr Akram El Tom, WHO Representative

wrjor@jor.emro.who.int**WHO Lebanon Country Office**

Dr Hassan El Bushra, WHO Representative

wroleb@leb.emro.who.int**WHO Syrian Arab Republic Country Office**

Ms Elizabeth Hoff, acting WHO Representative

wrosyria@syr.emro.who.int