

Current major events

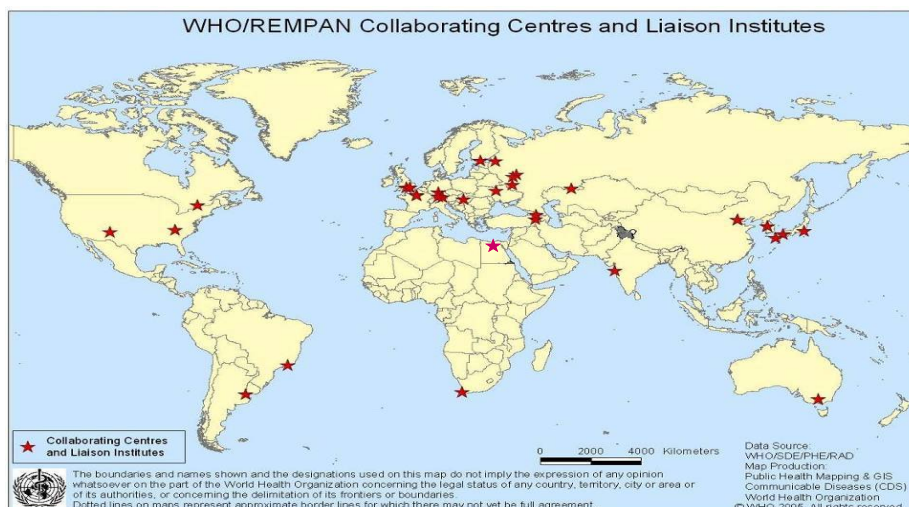
In response to the request by the IHR national focal points during the IHR Monitoring Workshop held on 29 March – 1 April 2010 in Cairo, Egypt, the units of CSR, PHE and EHA in the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) have started an in-house consultations to identify best practices for strengthening the public health preparedness and response capacities of the EMR Member States to radiation events, taking into account the all hazards approach of the IHR (2005).

Editorial note

Effective public health measures are an essential component of the overall preparedness and response to all kinds of events at the country level. The increasing interest for using the atomic energy in the region along with presence of uncontrolled conflict situations mandates the public health professionals to include nuclear or radiological (radiation) emergencies in their national emergency preparedness and response plans (EPR). In general, public health and medical response may represent a difficult challenge for the authorities due to the complexity of the situation, often requiring specialized expertise, and special organizational arrangements and materials, which in turn necessitate proper planning.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a full Party to the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Conventions on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident (the 'Early Notification Convention') and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency (the Assistance Convention'). These are prime legal instruments that establish an international framework to facilitate the exchange of information and the prompt provision of assistance in the specific event of a radiation emergency, with the aim of minimizing the consequences.

In helping countries to manage the public health aspects of emergencies, WHO calls upon the assistance of various networks and partners. Established in 1987, the Radiation Emergency Medical Preparedness and Assistance Network (REMPAN) gather forty medical and research institutions around the globe that are specialized in diagnosis, treatment and long-term follow-up of people over-exposed to ionizing radiation. These centers are mainly concentrated in Europe, North America and South East Asia. The



Organization of WHO-REMPAN



network is designated to provide medical and public health assistance and facilitate long-term care and follow-up of acute radiation syndrome, local radiation injuries, radionuclide contamination and other possible health consequences of radiation exposure. REMPAN centers also conduct research in radiation emergency medicine, radiation biology, bio-dosimetry, internal contamination, radiation epidemiology and other radiopathology.

The REMPAN institutes and centers serve as regional or nation focal point for assisting the Member States in development of national infrastructure for medical management of radiation emergencies as well as development of the national public health preparedness and response plans for radiation events.

Interested research and training centers in the Eastern Mediterranean Region as well as specialized treatment facilities are encouraged to apply for membership to the REMPAN. The criteria for joining the WHO/REMPAN and detailed terms of Reference is accessible on the below link:

http://www.who.int/ionizing_radiation/a_c/rempan/en/

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Suspected viral haemorrhagic fever (VHF) in Iraq; Suspected Anthrax in southern Sudan; Cholera in Djibouti

Current public health events of international concern

[cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

Avian influenza

Egypt	[109 (34), 31.1%]
Indonesia	[165 (136), 82.4 %]
Cambodia	[10 (8), 80%]
Global total	[498(294), 59%]

Dengue fever

Sudan	[3000 (12), 0.4%]
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Rift Valley Fever

Saudi Arabia	[1 (0), 0%]
South Africa	[210 (20), 9.5%]

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 (Est. Deaths)

AFRO	168
AMRO	8401
EMRO	1019
EURO	4878
SEARO	1814
WPRO	1834
GLOBAL Total	18,114

CFR=Case-Fatality Rate