

Highlights

- The Ministry of Health has reported that after the alleged deliberate release of chemicals near Aleppo, 25 people were killed and 134 were injured. Reported symptoms included: loss of consciousness, dimness of vision and neurological symptoms.
- United Nations' senior advisers are working closely with relevant bodies, including the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and WHO, to investigate this matter further.
- UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has appointed Professor Åke Sellström of Sweden to head the United Nations fact-finding mission.
- On 13 March 2013, the WHO Deputy Regional Director for Eastern Mediterranean, visited the Syrian Arab Republic to discuss future plans for cooperation with health authorities.
- Jordan saw a cabinet reshuffle in which a new Minister of Health and the Environment Dr Mujalli Mhailan was appointed.
- Confirmation of two cases of measles in Al Zaatari camp; a Ministry of Health, WHO, United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNICEF response was initiated.
- In Iraq; 90% of refugees in Domiz camp in Iraq have received an essential package of life-saving services.



Medical staff are briefed on the TB awareness campaign in Domiz camp, Iraq

Health situation

Syrian Arab Republic

- Between 3 and 9 March 2013, the Early Warning and Response System (EWARS) reported 226 new cases of suspected hepatitis A. Most of the cases were reported in Deir Ezzor (86 cases), Aleppo (46 cases) and Rural Damascus (35 cases).

- EWARS also reported 302 new cases of leishmaniasis. Most of the cases were reported in Hama (172 cases), Deir Ezzor (107 cases) and Rural Damascus (19 cases).
- 11 new cases of tuberculosis were reported. Cases were seen in Hama, Aleppo and Damascus.

Jordan

- As part of a cabinet reshuffle following January 2013's parliamentary elections, H.E. Professor Dr Mujali Al Muhailan (former President of Jordan University Hospital) is the new Minister of Health and Environment in Jordan.
- A parliamentary visit to Al Zaatari camp resulted in a list of 50 recommendations (including health-related recommendations) by MPs for the new government's action regarding the refugees in Al Zaatari camp.
- There have been two confirmed cases of measles (23-year-old woman confirmed and 5-month-old male child confirmed) detected and reported from Al Zaatari camp.
- There has been 1 confirmed death from lower respiratory tract infection in Al Zaatari refugee camp.
- Over a two-week period, over 14 000 Syrians inside Al Zaatari camp have received medical consultations. Although the majority were for acute and chronic health conditions, 260 Syrians were also consulted for mental health-related issues (Figure 1).

Al Zaatari Refugee Camp - January and February 2013								
Number of Consultations			Number of Surgical Procedures			Number of Hospital Transfers		
January	43302		January	94		January	967	
February	54344		February	134		February	1113	
Number of Health Care Facilities								
6								
Number of Deaths			Number of Children Vaccinated			Number of Births		
January	8		January	2847		January	68	
February	14		February	5462		February	132	

Source: Ministry of Health, Jordan

Figure 1. Data on a number of indicators for Al Zaatari camp, January-February 2013

Iraq

- The leading cause of morbidity is acute upper respiratory infections for adults and diarrhoea for children.
- Domiz Camp performs approximately 650 new consultations per day.
- WHO Iraq aims to mobilize mental health specialists to train health personnel in the host areas.
- For chronic conditions, hypertension and diabetes are the two main conditions for consultation among Syrian adults over 45 years.

Health response

Syrian Arab Republic

- WHO Syrian Arab Republic has dispatched two shipments of emergency medicines and supplies for Aleppo and surrounding areas. These contain emergency supplies for 87 000 patients, including medical supplies

for 2300 surgical interventions; treatment for common diseases, such as diarrhoeal diseases; four reproductive health kits to treat 40 000 people for three months; and two blood transfusion kits.

- On 17 March 2013, a national vaccination campaign was launched by the Ministry of Health in the country. WHO and UNICEF continue to support the Ministry in the implementation of the campaign, which aims to target 2.5 million children in internally-displaced persons (IDPs) shelters, schools and health facilities. The campaign in schools aims to vaccinate 1.5 million children (under the age of 5) against measles, while the campaign in IPD shelters will target 300 000 children against measles between (aged between 6 months and 15 years old.)
- WHO has provided the Ministry with 2500 supplies of noncommunicable diseases medicines to treat 117 cancer patients for one month; five laboratory diagnostic kits, and life-saving medicine (oxytocin) to treat 1200 patients.

Fact box

Health in complex humanitarian emergencies for responders to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic (Amman, March 28, 2013)

WHO, UNICEF, UNHCR, CDC and IMC jointly prepared and delivered a regional training session in health in complex emergencies for the responders to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic and affected countries. The training included different aspects of planning, management and response to complex emergencies, providing an overview on basic indicators, surveillance and outbreak investigation, exploring various methodologies and resources for assessments and impact measures.

Country offices participating in the training included; Syrian Arab Republic, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, with representation from all sectors: government, nongovernmental, local and international organizations. WHO, UNICEF, UNHCR, IMC, CDC and EMPHNET experts facilitated the sessions, providing specific case studies.

- WHO provided the Ministry of Health with 20 000 supplies of noncommunicable diseases medicines to treat cardiovascular diseases (azathioprine); three ventilators for intensive-care units; 3576 boxes of life-saving midlines to treat 120 patients for a month and life-saving medicine oxytocin to treat 1100 patients.
- WHO has also provided Health Directorates in Tartous, Hama, Rural Damascus, Homs, and an IPD shelter in Damascus with 1550 bottles of lice treatment.
- During a 3-month period of a WHO-supported project, the nongovernmental organizations LamsetShifa provided secondary and tertiary care for 326 patients, including pregnant women and infants, through provision of diagnostics, medicines, surgical interventions and natal care.

Jordan

- Intensive consultations are ongoing. WHO Jordan continues to meet with its partners, such as the Ministry of Health, the Parliamentary Health and Environment Committee to ensure better camp management and improved reporting of specific health challenges throughout Jordan.
- WHO is coordinating closely with the Ministry of Health, UNHCR, UNICEF and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to mount a vigorous and effective response to the two measles cases confirmed in Al Zaatari camp.
- A massive, camp-focused, joint immunization campaign has been planned to begin on 13 April 2013. Similarly, a non-camp campaign is planned for May 2013.
- WHO and UNHCR are working closely together to ensure that the Ministry of Health, as well as health partners among UN agencies and nongovernmental organizations formulate the Jordan health

sector input for the Regional Response Plan 5 due to be completed this week.

Iraq

Provision of medicines and medical supplies

- A shipment of 20 Interagency Emergency Humanitarian Kits (IEHKs), 3 diarrhoeal kits, and 2 safety boxes (for use in Domiz camp) has been delivered to the Department of Health in Duhok.
- WHO Iraq has supplied 10 IEHK diarrhoeal disease kits and one safety box to be used in Al Qaim camp's primary health care centre.
- WHO Iraq is also working closely with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF-Holland) to provide health services to Syrian refugees living in the host communities. WHO has provided 3 IEHKs to MSF.
- To assist persons living with disabilities and elderly persons with limited mobility WHO continues to procure wheelchairs. WHO Iraq has handed over to UNHCR a total of 123 wheelchairs.



A football game is played on World TB Day to raise awareness of TB prevention measures

TB activities in Domiz camp

- WHO Iraq has built the capacity of camp health personnel on TB case management. It has also helped raise the awareness of camp residents, particularly women, on the measures needed to prevent the spread of TB among the refugee population and in the host communities.
- A football game was organized on World TB Day with key messages on TB prevention. Promotional materials, such as T-shirts, were distributed to Syrian refugees.

Disease surveillance and investigation of trends

- On 19 March, a WHO team visited a Domiz camp health centre for assessment of TB disease among Syrian refugees.
- Following reports on the increase of measles cases among new Syrian arrivals in Domiz camp, daily vaccination for all new arrivals is in place. Similarly, a national vaccination campaign is ongoing, targeting schools.

Visiting Syrian refugees in Domiz camp

- A WHO team visited the Syrian refugees in the Domiz camp, Duhok governorate. This was a fact-finding visit to identify health-related issues for Syrian families living there in tents.

Coordination

Syrian Arab Republic

- The Health Working Group (HWG) held its regular meeting on 19 March 2013 to review the coordinated needs assessment tool developed by UN agencies in Beirut last week.
- The HWG agreed to publish a monthly bulletin on health activities conducted by all health partners. The objectives of the bulletin are to portray emerging health needs and public health risks and the health sector response across the Syrian Arab Republic to reach the most affected populations.
- Inconsistency and under-reporting on functionality and accessibility to health facilities from highly affected areas are some of the challenges faced with regard to information management. WHO is coordinating with its partners to strengthen the mapping of services provided. Further, WHO is supplying communication tools to promote compliance with regular reporting.

Jordan

- WHO is co-chairing the mental health and the psychosocial group in Amman and the mental health coordination group in Al Zaatari camp with International Medical Corps (IMC).
- Under the patronage of the Ministry of Health, WHO and IMC organized the launch of the mental health and psychosocial support interagency guidance note for Syrians in Jordan. This is endorsed by 17 UN agencies, international nongovernmental organizations and local civil society organizations.
- Different regular coordination meetings between health partners continue to be held.

Iraq

- WHO Iraq continues to actively participate in the health and nutrition coordination meetings in Dohuk.
- WHO, in coordination with other UN agencies within the UN Humanitarian Country Team, is discussing the regional response plan and the Iraq contingency plan.

Donors and funding

Appeal document	Country of operations	Total requested by health sector	Total requested by WHO	Amount received by WHO (including pledges)**	% of overall amount requested by WHO	WHO unmet requirements
Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (1 January to 30 June 2013)	Syrian Arab Republic	81 905 133	48 465 000	11 703 846	24%	36 761 154
Regional Response Plan 2013	Iraq**	4 978 196	1 350 000	–	0%	1 350 000
Regional Response Plan 2013	Jordan	30 403 752	4 000 000	–	0%	4 000 000
Regional Response Plan 2013	Lebanon	18 492 775	576 000	151 111	26%	424 889
Regional Response Plan 2013	Turkey		2 400 000	–	0%	2 400 000
Regional Response Plan 2013	Egypt	2 504 590	–	–		–
		56 379 313	8 326 000	151 111	2%	8 174 889

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