

**BI-WEEKLY
SITUATION REPORT
WHOLE OF SYRIA**

Issue 17 | 1 – 15 September 2021











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1. COVID-19 Update

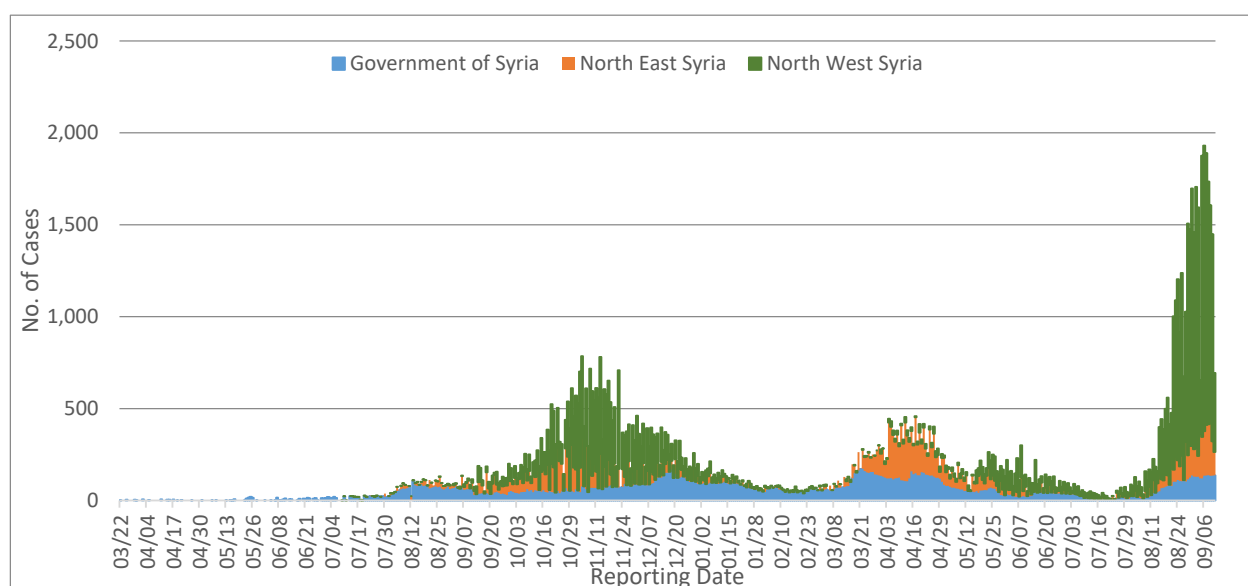
1.1 COVID-19 Statistical Summary at Whole of Syria Level

As of 11 September 2021

| | | |
|---|----------------|--|
|  | 104,427 | Total cases (including 5,443 health workers) |
|  | 47,783 | Active cases |
|  | 52,898 | Recovered cases |
|  | 3,746 | Deaths |
|  | 3.6% | Case Fatality Rate (CFR) |
|  | 15 | COVID-19 functional laboratories |
|  | 386,952 | COVID-19 tests done |
|  | 1,827 | Overall testing rate per 100 000 population |
|  | 493 | Incidence rate per 100 000 population (highest in Al-Hasakeh; 1,277) |
|  | 27% | Positivity rate |

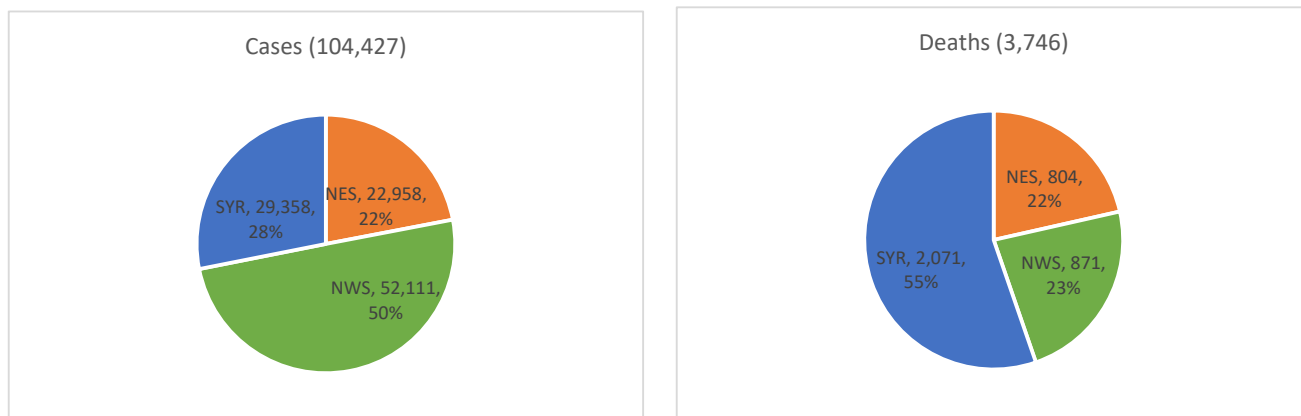
1.2 Daily Distribution of COVID-19 Cases at Whole of Syria Level

22 March 2020 – 11 September 2021



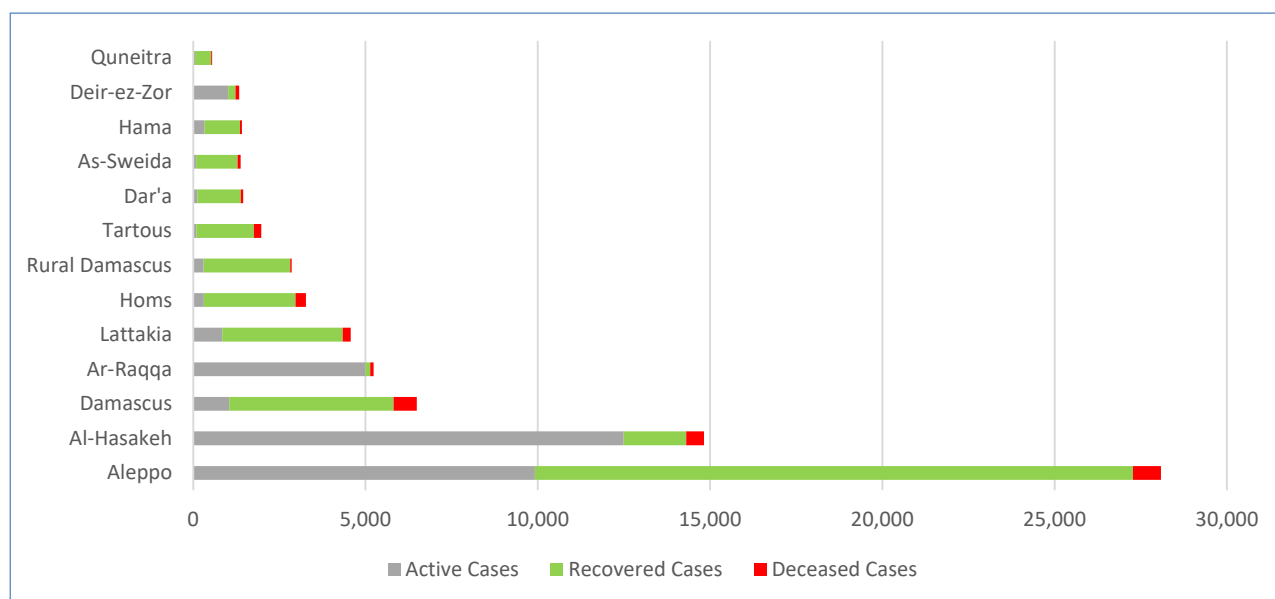
1.3 Distribution of COVID-19 Cases and Deaths at Whole of Syria Level

22 March 2020 – 11 September 2021



1.4. Distribution of COVID-19 Cases and Deaths by Governorate

22 March 2020 – 11 September 2021



2. WHO Syria Response

2.1. Points of Entry (PoE)

MoH and WHO are equipping the medical point at Abu Kamal in Deir-ez-Zor with medical devices and furniture to enable the provision of health services to travellers. WHO is also establishing a medical point at Jubousiya ground-crossing in Homs and another at Judeidet Yabous in Rural Damascus, rehabilitating spaces and equipping them with medical devices. Installation of medical devices at the medical point in Abu Kamal will be complete by the end of September.

2.2. Environmental Health

During the reporting period, 69 water samples were collected for testing from Al-Aziziah and Al-Naourah villages in the south-east of Aleppo; 21 from eight districts of Rural Damascus and 50 from subdistricts of Deir-ez-Zor and Al Bukamal in Deir-ez-Zor. A further 1 187 samples were tested in NES - Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and Deir-ez-Zor, including eight IDP camps and collective shelters – of which 18 were from ice blocks at Al-Hol and Areesheh camps. Contaminants were detected in 65 water sources in Rural Aleppo, 17 water sources in Rural Damascus, 80 sources in NES.

In Deir-Ez-Zor, a total of 50 water samples were collected from wells, water tanks and tankers in subdistricts of Deir-ez-Zor, Al Mayadin, Al Bukamak between 21 and 24 August. Of them, only 26% (13) were found to be safe for drinking. The Entamoeba coli bacteria was detected in eight of 10 samples on which culture tests were performed. WHO is supporting the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment to conduct further laboratory analysis of E. coli water specimens from Deir-ez-Zor on a weekly basis.

To respond to the increasing risk of water-borne diseases during summer time among vulnerable populations, WHO conducted awareness raising campaigns in north-east Syria at Areesha, Al-Hol, and Abu Khashab camps, as well as in seven districts in Deir-ez-Zor (Muhassan, Khasham, Al Tebni, Al Mayadin, Al Ashara, Al Jalaa, and Abu Kamal). The campaign targeted more than 85 000 IDPs and 11 070 households in Deir-ez-Zor and included the provision of 400 000 chlorine tablets and IEC materials.

2.3. Routine Immunization

The Ministry of Health implemented enhanced outreach activities in six prioritized governorates (Deir-ez-Zor, Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Aleppo, Homs, and Rural Damascus) in a bid to strengthen routine immunization coverage during 2021, complement the Routine Immunization Vaccination programme and reduce the number of zero dose children.

Periodic intensification of routine immunization, using multi-antigen vaccinations, is ongoing in areas east of the Euphrates in Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa.

A nationwide polio campaign will be conducted in October 2021 targeting 2.8 million children aged under 5 years, using the bivalent oral polio vaccine (bOPV).

2.4. COVID-19 Vaccination

The national COVID-19 vaccination campaign ran across Syria between 5 and 16 September. Three types of COVID-19 vaccines are currently being administered: AstraZeneca AZ/AZD1222, Sinopharm, and Sputnik Light. Health care workers, elderly, people with comorbidities, and teachers are among the campaign's target groups, and all people aged over 18 years could register for the vaccine on the platform during this round. A national mass-media campaign was launched in early September to encourage uptake. Of the 394 031 people targeted in this round, 127 000 are teachers. Vaccines were administered at 199 fixed facilities (hospitals and health centres) and 197 mobile teams in different governorates.

2.5. Primary Health Care and Non-Communicable Diseases

In close cooperation with OCHA and other UN agencies, WHO is preparing for an interagency mission to Al Waha as part of the Rukban response. WHO participated in the monthly dialogue on tobacco control impact, with a focus on taxation and country experience.

2.6. Secondary and Tertiary Health Care (STHC)

Seventy five (75) health care and front line workers from NES received training in infection, protection and control (IPC) measures within the context of COVID-19; 90 from different governorates received training on IPC measures

within the context of emerging diseases, and 90 employees of the Ministry of Health were trained in issues related to health economics, with a focus on priority needs assessment for health service delivery.

Fifty (50) technical staff from the Ministry of Health received training in priority topics related to non-communicable diseases, namely diabetes mellitus, CVD prevention and management, and thalassemia life-course management, while 125 school health staff in north-east Syria were trained in protocols for a safe return to school.

2.7. Communicable Diseases

Leishmaniasis vector control activities conducted by the Department of Health in Deir-ez-Zor with the support of WHO are in the final stages. A campaign of indoor long lasting insecticide spraying that began on 6 June has to date successfully covered 19 131 households in the first round and 19 891 in the second round. The campaign included distribution of 39 960 treated and 100 untreated infant bed nets during the first round and 35 400 treated leishmania bed nets and 60 untreated infant bed nets during the second round.

WHO, in collaboration with DoH and local NGOs, concluded a WASH campaign launched in response to a spike in cases of acute diarrhoea and the Euphrates crisis in the governorate of Deir-ez-Zor. Read more on page 10.



The indoor long lasting insecticide spraying campaign in Deir ez Zor governorate

2.8. Trauma

Over 11 000 treatments of life-saving medicines and interagency emergency health kits, in addition to kits for 2 420 cases of trauma and surgery were delivered to health partners in Al-Hasakeh, Quamishli, Aleppo and Homs. These deliveries are part of efforts to enhance the capacity of the public health facilities to deliver timely and appropriate responses to emergency cases, including cases of COVID-19.

An additional 18 pieces of physiotherapy equipment were delivered to the DOH centre in Jib Al Jandali, Homs, previously rehabilitated by WHO, while 40 wheelchairs and 88 walkers and crutches were delivered to NGOs in Lattakia and Aleppo.

100 health workers (doctors, nurses, and anaesthesia technicians) working in isolation centres and ICU and emergency departments in Damascus, Homs, Al-Hasakeh and Damascus were trained in first aid and basic life support and immediate life support and ventilator management. The targeted groups for those courses are health professionals.

100 prosthetics and orthotics technicians, physiotherapists and physiatrists working in Damascus received training at the MOH centre of prosthetics and rehabilitation in Damascus in the field of disability and rehabilitation. Workshops focused on: equipment in physical therapy centres, compensatory movements in patients with amputations, rehabilitation of traumatic brain injuries and gait analysis for patients with lower limb prostheses.

2.9. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

Twenty WHO supported MHPSS nationwide projects are mapped through the MHPSS referral pathway, and technically monitored by the mental health experts to ensure the highest standards of service delivery.

WHO, in cooperation with the Mental Health director at the MOH, conducted a consultative workshop to draft an update for laws related to mental health, aligning hospitalization needs assessment, supporting hotlines to provide services remotely, and enhancing engagement with communities and other levels of the MH organizational system.

To date, 2 645 different activities have been conducted across 45 different communities in three governorates of Aleppo, Homs, and Hama, that focus on risk communication and community engagement and mental health and psychosocial support within the context of COVID-19 under “My Hero is You’ and ‘Living with Times’ initiatives that target children, elderly, parents and caregivers.

A MHPSS Working Group meeting took place where MH programme partners received updates and materials related to suicide prevention, in preparation for a campaign to mark World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September 2021.

2.10. TB/HIV

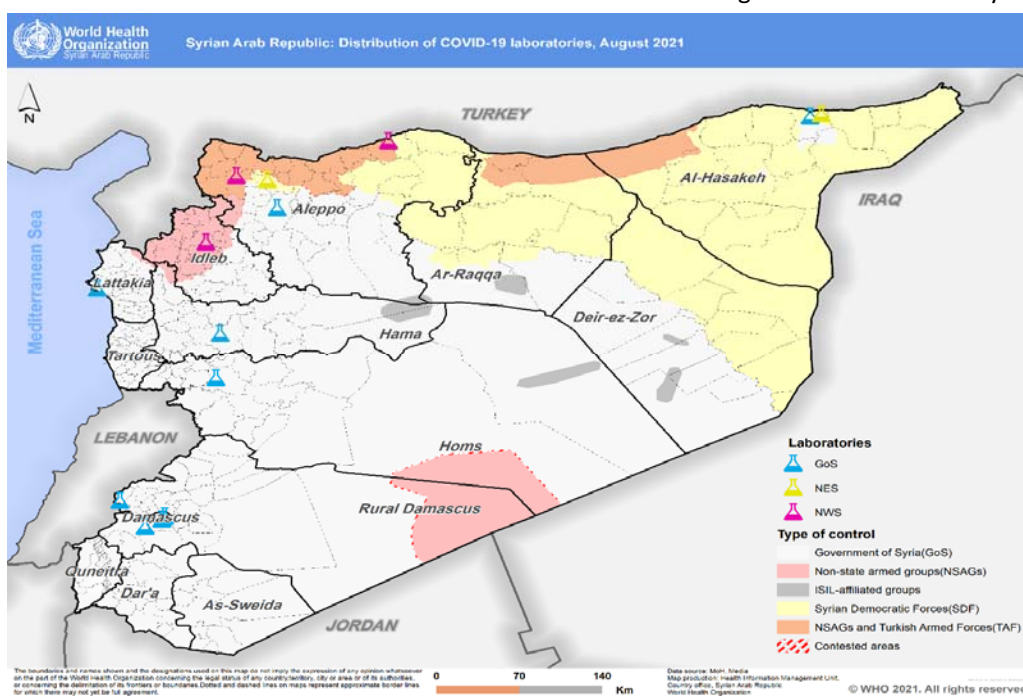
Two of the three TB mobile clinics are still functioning in the governorates of Aleppo and Rural Damascus. A total of 768 beneficiaries attended one of seventeen awareness sessions about TB. Of 38 suspected cases tested for TB, nine were confirmed. In total, since the beginning of the year, a total of 128 cases have tested positive for TB through the mobile clinics that were mobilized to continuously provide TB services (diagnosis, treatment and awareness sessions) for IDPs and other vulnerable populations in emergency response areas and closed settings such as prisons.

The WHO regional office has been providing the national tuberculosis programme of Syria with technical assistance in the management of drug resistant tuberculosis (PMDT). WHO Syria in cooperation with the regional office and the national TB programme, has now completed the delivery of training in the technical expertise required to develop national guidelines on drug resistant TB.

2.11. Public Health Laboratories

In the reporting period, WHO delivered additional three new PCR machines to support three newly established public health laboratories in the governorates of Deir-ez-Zor, Al-Hasakeh, and Lattakia. WHO has to date delivered 11 PCR machines and one GeneXpert to support COVID-19 testing capacity in Syria, and continues to support the provision of essential equipment and devices to laboratories to accelerate testing and ensure biosafety and biosecurity.

The map below shows the distribution of COVID-19 established and functioning laboratories across Syria:



2.12. Nutrition

Nutrition surveillance data collected from **21** stabilization centres for July 2021 indicates **120** admissions nationwide, 40 of which in Aleppo alone. Nutrition surveillance data for June 2021 collected from **926** health centres indicates the provision of a total of **67 811** services.

2.13. External Relations and Communication

WHO Syria spread the messages of safe school reopening. WHO Representative delivered messages on TV and social media on public health and social measures that should be followed during the ongoing pandemic to maintain good health targeting health educators, caregivers and students <https://bit.ly/3EdfcSA>. WHO also supported the Ministry of Education in developing video messages by the Minister of Education, teachers and students on the importance of school reopening and adherence to preventive measures.

WHO continues to advocate for vaccine uptake on its social media channels, targeting priority groups including the elderly, people with chronic diseases, people in high-risk settings, teachers as well as all men and women aged over 18 years. The national media campaign, launched on 25 August by the Ministry of Health in cooperation with WHO and UNICEF, continues to target priority groups with messages to generate vaccine demand and reduce hesitancy. The campaign is running in parallel with the National COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign from 5 to 16 September 2021.

WHO Syria posted an article on social determinants of health and how they influence health outcomes.

<http://www.emro.who.int/syria/news/every-sector-in-syria-has-a-role-to-play-in-addressing-social-determinants-of-health-and-influencing-health-outcomes.html>



2.14. Syria Health Cluster Coordination

WHO provided input at the intersector coordination meeting in Dar'a held on 1 September, as well as during the Whole of Syria bi-weekly call and the WoS meeting on the water crisis response. The CO also organized and facilitated a Health Sector coordination meeting on 7 September, during which the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 preparedness and response needs were discussed. A list of needs was then shared with health partners. WHO has provided health sector inputs to prepare the Multisector Envelope (WASH, FSA, Nutrition, Health, Protection, Early Recovery and Livelihoods) as part of the SHF 2021 second reserve allocation.

Northeast Syria Cluster Coordination

WHO has:

- Provided health sector inputs at the Al-Hol camp coordination meeting organized by UNHCR, the nutrition subsector meeting organized by UNICEF and the Areesheh Camp management meeting, during which health needs in the expansion area of the camp were discussed.
- Organized and facilitated the Al-Hol camp health sector coordination meeting, held on 2 September.
- Hosted and facilitated the north-east Syria interhub meeting.
- Attended the Quamishli AHCT meeting.
- Followed up with partners on issues related to health sector activities in the camps in NES.

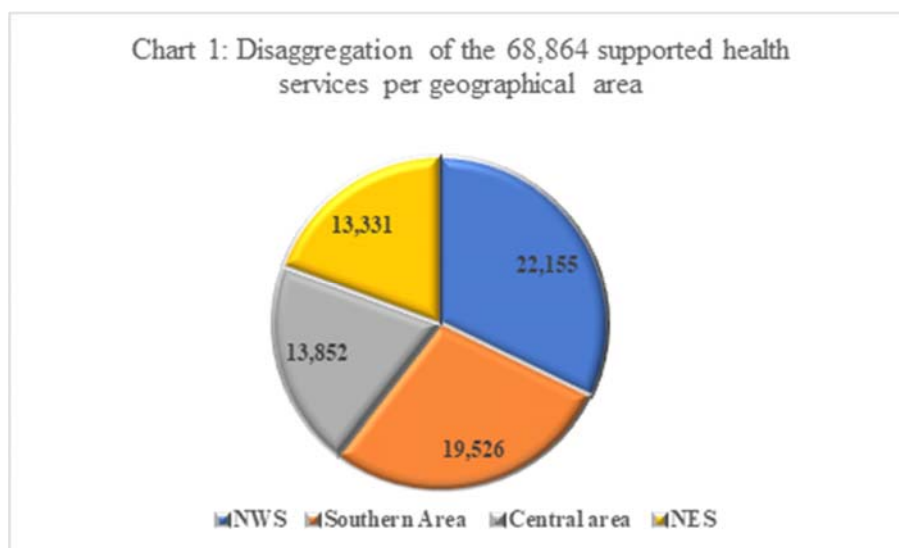
2.15. Information Products and Related Activities

Information products and activities delivered include:

- WoS Summary of WHO key performance indicators for the period January to June 2021.
- Health Sector & WHO 4Ws snapshots for July 2021.
- Flash update #58 & 59 about the recent incidents at the National Hospital of Dar’a & Al Shifa private Hospital in Dar’a city (30 August 2021)
- Flash update #57 about the recent incident at the Damascus public hospital (Al-Mujtahed) (27 August 2021).
- Flash update #56 about the recent incident against a cardiologist private clinic in Lattakia city (23 August 2021).
- Health Sector COVID-19 Response Monitoring (1 January to 31 July 2021).
- Updated COVID-19 dashboard and online item tracking system.

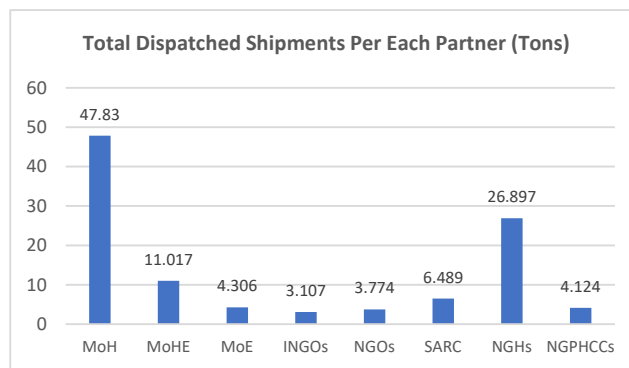
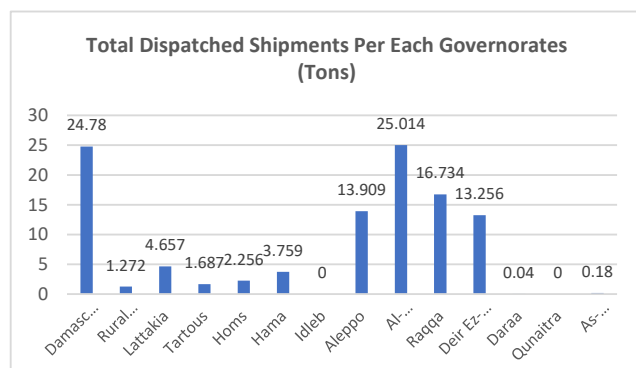
2.16. Community Engagement (NGOs)

WHO supports 16 implementing partners to strengthen the health response in different areas across Syria; two are in Damascus, two in Dar’a, three in Rural Damascus, four in Aleppo, four in NES and one in Homs.



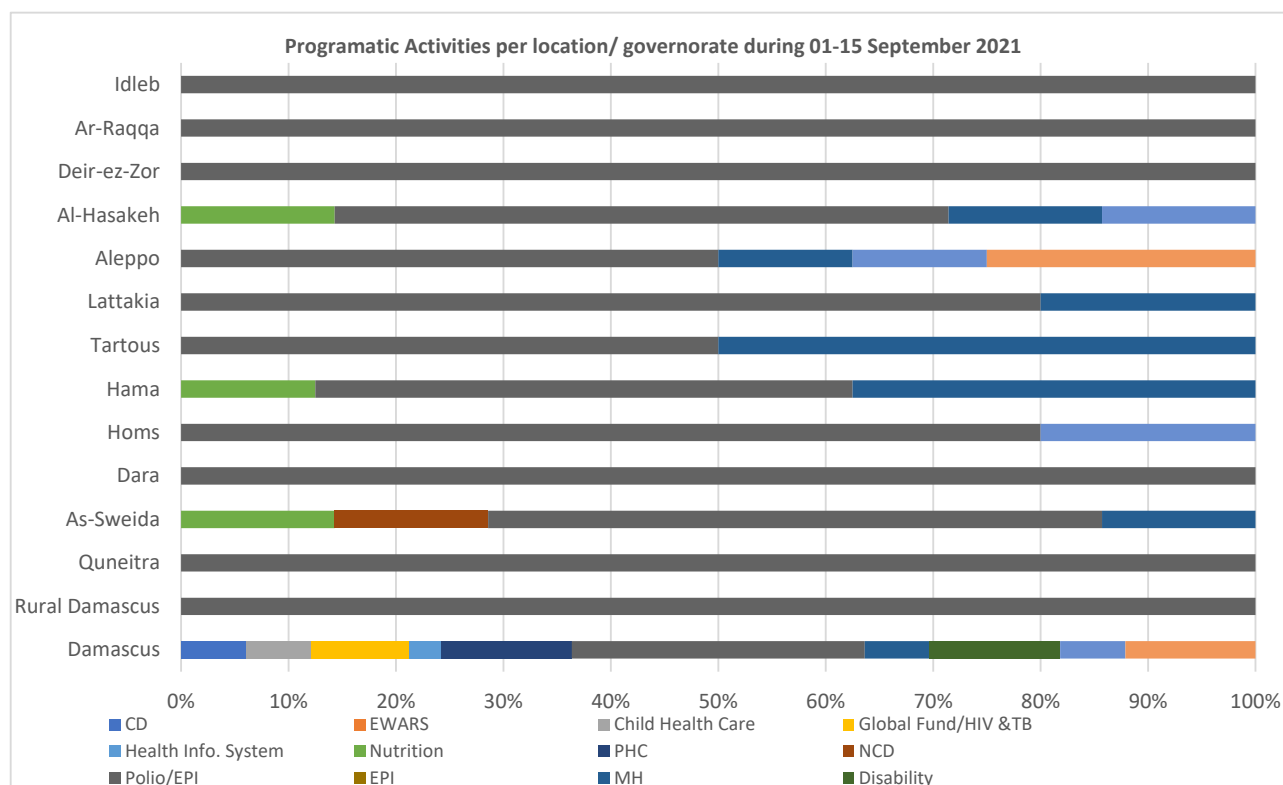
2.17. Operations Support and Logistics

WHO dispatched 107.5 tons of medical and lab supplies, kits, equipment, and haemodialysis sessions to nine governorates. They were received by 31 MoH facilities, five MoHE facilities, 16 NGOs, five INGOs, 17 NGHs, NGPHCC & SARC.



2.18. Capacity Building

WHO supported 96 activities for a total of 2 504 participants during the reporting period.



3. WHO Syria Sub-Office Response

3.1. Aleppo Sub-Office

During the reporting period, 22 167 health care services were provided through WHO-supported non-governmental organizations in five primary health care centres, eight mobile medical teams and two trauma & rehabilitation centres.

Risk communication and community engagement activities that started in August and are still ongoing with 14 community teams in Aleppo governorate reached out to communities and focused on children and the elderly, as well as their parents or caregivers, to promote health and mental health associated with COVID-19.

TB mobile clinics in Aleppo are still functioning. A total number of 618 beneficiaries benefited from 10 awareness sessions on TB. Of 30 suspected cases tested for TB, eight were confirmed.



WHO supported intellectual development session in Souq Al Inta in rural Aleppo.

3.2. Lattakia Sub-Office

WHO conducted an infection control and patient safety workshop for public and private hospitals in Lattakia to enhance overall quality control management procedures.

WHO participated in an interagency assessment visit to areas in Qastal-Maf sub-district in northern Lattakia, to which a large number of returnees are expected to arrive soon. WHO conducted an assessment of anticipated health & nutrition needs in order to develop a workplan prior to the arrival of families.

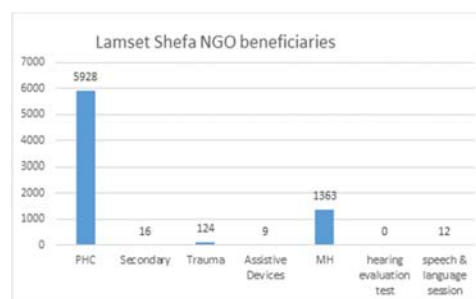
WHO conducted a coordination meeting with MOH and non-state actors, targeting all active NGOs working in health (eight in Tartous and 14 Latakia). The meeting facilitated coordination of health activities to strengthen areas with low health coverage.



Inter-agency assessment visit to the newly returned areas in northern Lattakia

3.3. Homs Sub-Office

With WHO support, the non-governmental organization Lamset Shefa, in cooperation with the Family Wellbeing Center in Dar Al Kabera and two medical mobile teams in the north and east of Rural Homs, has been providing primary and secondary health care services and mental health and psychosocial support to people suffering from psychological distress and domestic violence. 5 928 beneficiaries received medical consultations, of which 16 were secondary, 142 were for trauma, 1 363 were mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services and 12 were speech and language sessions.



The ongoing awareness campaign entitled ‘My Hero is You & Living with Times’ was initiated in Homs and Hama in August at a community level to raise awareness and promote adherence to COVID-19 precautionary measures, as well as offer MHPSS. The campaign is still ongoing.

Mobile teams have reached more than 82 villages in rural Homs and Hama that do not have any medical services, targeting children, the elderly, parents and caregivers, within the context of the COVID-19 response.



Implementing “My Hero is You” Initiative in rural Hama.

Four medical mobile teams supported by WHO began on 9 July to provide primary health services and offer free medicines to the most vulnerable people in the district of South Hama as well as six slums in Hama, the district of East Salamiya and north-west Hama.

5 293 beneficiaries were reached during the reporting period. 1 079 received gynecology services, 1 154 internal services, 1 276 paediatric consultations and 743 psychosocial support services, while 1 041 attended awareness raising sessions.

3.4. Deir-ez-Zor Sub-Office

WHO, in collaboration with DoH and local NGOs, concluded a WASH campaign launched in response to a spike in cases of acute diarrhoea and the Euphrates crisis in the governorate of Deir-ez-Zor. The campaign aimed at raising awareness of hygiene, safe drinking water, protection from water and food borne diseases in rural communities, and included the distribution of chlorine tablets. During the campaign period, more than 11 000 households were reached and more than 79 000 persons benefited from awareness raising sessions. In addition, 420 000 chlorine tablets and 50 000 IEC materials were distributed.

Three haemodialysis machine were installed at Al Assad Hospital and 1 400 haemodialysis sessions delivered as part of ongoing efforts by WHO to strengthen the capacity of the health system in the governorate of Deir-ez-Zor.

With WHO support, the Deir-ez-Zor Directorate of Health has launched a campaign on COVID-19 RCCE and MHPSS that will continue until end September. The launch was preceded by two-day training workshop on psychological first aid skills within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, attended by 30 health care workers.



Installation of hemodialysis sessions in Deir ez Zor governorate

3.5. Qamishli Sub-Office / Northeast Syria (NES)

WHO is providing life-saving treatment for cases of malnutrition identified at the camps. During the reporting period, 6 patients were admitted to the malnutrition treatment centres and 12 were discharged having fully recovered.

Several IPC training workshops were delivered to health workers in NES. They aimed at enhancing effective personal protective practices to reduce infection among health care workers by enhancing adherence to hand hygiene practices and strengthening awareness of the risks.

The head of the WHO Qamishli sub office and the NGOs coordinator visited WHO-supported health facilities in Al Hol camp to monitor and evaluate the quality of services and the routine vaccination point.



WHO team members visit Al Hol camp

The WHO team in Qamishli is supporting and monitoring the COVID-19 vaccination campaign in NES by conducting regular field visits to the vaccination centres across NES.

Water quality continues to be monitored through regular visits to eight camps and 20 collective shelters and bacterial, F.R.C, T.D.S, EC, PH and turb tests. Of 1 045 samples tested, 5.3 % were found to be contaminated at the jerry can level.

The WHO Qamishli office delivered training workshops on the Mental Health Gap programme to health workers from DoH working in NES. Topics covered included: essentials for practice and care, depression, epilepsy, suicide, child and adolescent mental and behavioural disorders, substance abuse, dementia and other significant mental health complaints.

4. North-west Syria

4.1. Primary Health Care (PHC)

WHO is currently supporting nearly 100 PHCs and MTs, of which 35 are fully supported, in north-west Syria through three integrated health service delivery networks, all of which are functional. The networks include a total of 18 health facilities and two ambulances at phase 3 within the “Afrin network” and 32 health facilities at phase 2 within the North Aleppo network. The Harim PHC network is at phase 7 and includes 31 functioning health facilities. WHO is working with partners to expand the Harim network to include more health facilities. Negotiations are focused on closing service gaps and including additional facilities at no extra cost to the network. An estimated 50 facilities will make up the network. Supervision capacity needs to be expanded to cope with the expansion.

4.2. Non-Communicable Disease (NCD)

The NCD TWG shared health promotion messages related to COVID-19 vaccination with SIG to encourage uptake among NCD patients and health workers. Promotional posters can be viewed online at [LINK1](#), [LINK2](#), [LINK3](#), and [LINK4](#). The Thalassemia Task Force is facilitating planned online mentoring meetings between eight thalassemia centres inside north-west Syria and a thalassemia centre in Lebanon managed by Médecins Sans Frontières, representatives of which the TF met with to coordinate efforts.

4.3. Referral System

The referral systems in north Aleppo, Afrin and Idleb are almost fully functional. The Bab-al Hawa PoE remains inactive. Partners are working on alternative ways of activating the PoE. Support for four other PoEs will be covered through a planned project with IRC.

4.4. Tuberculosis

During the reporting period, 77 beneficiaries visited Idleb and Afrin TB centres; 6 patients were diagnosed with TB in Idleb and Afrin; and 13 Gene Xpert tests were sent from Idleb and Afrin to Antakya, of which one came back positive.

4.5. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

WHO met with the Suicide Prevention Task Force, part of the MHPSS TWG, to discuss a month-long campaign on suicide prevention that will run throughout September through initiatives of partner NGOs due to limited funds.

4.6. Immunization

Routine Immunization

All 93 EPI centres in north-west Syria (NWS) are functional, as are all 134 working teams. Approximately 13 578 children under the age of one year are being targeted. 547 vaccination sessions were conducted during the reporting period, at an average of 4.1 sessions per team. During the month of July, 2 255 vaccination sessions were planned and 2 195 conducted (96%), 913 sessions through fixed locations (42%) and 1 246 by mobile teams (58%).

All 622 members of the EPI teams attended training workshop by SIG on COVID-19 awareness, physical distancing and protective measures. A monitoring tool was developed to measure the observance of teams to WHO guidelines on physical distancing, PPE use and delivery of COVID-19 awareness messaging.

The immunisation team regularly participated in comprehensive dialogues with UNICEF Gaziantep, WHO EMRO, the UNICEF Regional Office and GAVI to ensure sustained delivery of EPI services in NW Syria. A final draft of the Programme Support Rationale document (PSR), budget and planning documents and grant performance framework (GPF) were submitted to and processed by IRC, after which an initial meeting was held during which NWS PSR received feedback, suggestions and requests for further information.

4.7. COVID-19

As the number of cases rises, the need for case management support increases. The COVID-19 Task Force discussed adding intermediate patient beds to enhance effective use of existing inpatient wards and ICU

capacities. The occupancy rate at CCTCs was around 54%, 74% at ICUs and 58% at inpatient wards. The Task Force has decided to explore advising local authorities to implement non-medical guidance.

The third batch of vaccines supplied through COVAX arrived in north-west Syria on 3 September. 358 000 doses of Sinovac were transported across the Bab-al-Hawa border and prepared for further distribution.

The COVAX vaccination campaign started on 1 May 2021 and by 9 September 103 020 doses had been administered.



A third batch of COVAX vaccines has arrived in north-west Syria

5. Vaccine Updates

For COVID-19 vaccine updates, please visit: [Update on COVID-19 Vaccination in Syria](#)

6. Useful Links

- [Syria Interactive Dashboards](#)
- [Syria Page in Health Cluster Site](#)
- [Syria Page in EMRO Site](#)
- [EMRO Dashboard](#)
- [COVID-19 Situation in EMRO Region Reports](#)

7. Follow WHO Syria



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