

Whole of Syria Earthquake Response Situation Report

Reporting period: 3-16 April 2023

This Whole of Syria Situation Report reflects the collective information and operations implemented from WHO's office in the Syrian Arab Republic, and from cross-border operations via WHO's office in Gaziantep, Türkiye.

To support WHO's response efforts, please visit:

[WHO flash appeal: Earthquake response in Türkiye and Whole of Syria](#)

For the latest data/information on the earthquakes, please see:

[Syria Earthquake response](#)

WHO Earthquake Response [Dashboard](#) and [Data Portal](#) for Northwest Syria

[WHO Earthquake Response for the rest of Syria](#)

[Health Cluster Cholera Response Tracking Dashboard](#)

[Health Cluster for Northwest Syria Mental Health and Psychosocial Support \(MHPSS\) dashboard](#)

1. EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



All figures are estimates, data sources include Syria Ministry of Health, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian affairs (UNOCHA), Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster

Priority needs and concerns

- **Noncommunicable diseases:** There is an ongoing need for medical care and medication for patients with chronic health conditions.
- **WASH:** As displaced people return to their homes or shift to new shelters, ensuring access to safe drinking water is critical. This is particularly important given pre-existing waterborne diseases (such as cholera) and the upcoming onset of summer. Appropriate WASH facilities and infection prevention and control (IPC) measures also remain a key need in earthquake-affected areas.
- **Medicines and medical equipment:** It is reported that there is an urgent requirement for life-saving medicines and medical equipment, particularly in secondary health care and intensive care units. Ensuring a continued and reliable supply of essential medicines and medical supplies remains crucial.
- **Medical evacuation:** Despite ongoing negotiations, referrals from Northwest Syria to Türkiye for critically-ill oncology and cardiology patients are largely suspended.

Priority actions

- WHO has deployed 22 mobile medical teams (MMTs) to Aleppo (15) and Hama (7) governorates. They provided 6318 outpatient consultations to 90 shelters and to affected communities during the reporting period.
- Since the earthquakes, WHO partners have provided over 660 000 people in earthquake-affected areas with activities to support mental health – from psychological education to psychiatric care and awareness sessions. WHO continues to expand mental health services, which are now available in over 500 sites.
- WHO has delivered essential medicines and supplies to 22 health facilities and public hospitals in earthquake-affected areas, sufficient to cover the needs of more than 85 000 beneficiaries.
- In Syria, mobile teams have been screening emergency shelters for tuberculosis (TB). In the last two months, they have screened over 23 800 people, identifying 1450 suspected cases. Of these, 42 cases of TB have been confirmed with laboratory testing, and the patients were referred onward for case management and provision of treatment.
- Four TB centres operate in Northwest Syria, receiving technical support and medicines from WHO. They diagnose an average of 10 new cases per week, the majority at the centre in Idlib. During the reporting period, 17 new TB cases were detected including one multi-drug resistant case in Al Bab.
- WHO supports nine primary health care (PHC) facilities as last resort coverage. From 3 to 16 April, they provided 9000 consultations. Within the Afrin and Northern Aleppo health networks, WHO supports a further 26 PHC facilities.

Current public health concerns

Please see [previous sitreps](#) for more detail on public health concerns.

- **Vector-borne diseases:** The increase in leishmaniasis is of concern, particularly as the presence of debris and damaged buildings increases the likelihood of sandfly infestation while inadequate shelters increase risk of exposure. Leishmaniasis medication stock is low in the country and a global shortage has been reported, making replenishment of stock difficult.
- **Tuberculosis:** The recent identification of 59 new TB cases is concerning given the overcrowded settings and transient populations, which complicates TB control, treatment and follow up activities.
- **MHPSS:** After the earthquakes, affected populations are reportedly suffering from anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. This emphasizes the importance and increased need for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). MHPSS teams deployed to shelters and health facilities are providing critical services, but more are needed.

2. SITUATION UPDATE

The humanitarian situation after the earthquakes remains critical. In many areas of Syria, the main priorities are to promote safe drinking water practices and monitor water quality. Sustaining essential health services through MMTs and strengthening PHC centres to provide services remains of high importance. This includes the provision of mental health services.

Of the 4.5 million people living in Northwest Syria, 2.9 million are internally displaced. Of the 1.9 million living in last resort sites, 80% are women and children, and 80 000 are people with disabilities. The risk of gender-based violence (GBV), sexual exploitation and harassment is exacerbated by overcrowding and lack of privacy. The earthquakes forced a further 108 000 people to flee their homes while around 50 000 are still staying in 69 emergency shelters. At least 25 emergency shelters established after the earthquake will remain operational for the medium-term, until more dignified solutions for residents are identified.

The most recent OCHA figures (2 April) show that the number of displaced people in the rest of Syria due to the earthquake has reduced to just over 210 000, a 42% decrease since early March. The numbers continue to decrease as shelters close down. More than 60 shelters have been evacuated in Aleppo and displaced people have been moved to mid-term emergency shelters whilst the 17 longer-term shelters are being built. Damage evaluation has been completed for most areas, meaning that families are able to return to homes marked as safe.

In Hama, there are 14 remaining shelters hosting displaced people. However, these are slowly closing down as families depart to their homes. In Latakia, 15 shelters remain operational and temporary pre-fabricated shelters are being established for the mid-term accommodation of the remaining families.

WHO recently completed a rapid Health Resources and Services Availability Monitoring System¹ (HeRAMS) assessment in Syria of the damage caused by the earthquakes, as well as the impact on health facility functionality and service availability. In total, 673 health centres and 34 hospitals were assessed across four governorates: Aleppo, Hama, Latakia and Tartous. Six health centres in Latakia and Tartous suffered significant damage and had to go out of service. There was partial damage to 133 PHC centres and 18 hospitals in the four governorates mentioned. Additionally, 10 other facilities, either public health administrative facilities, training facilities, or warehouses, were affected.

In Northwest Syria, an earlier HeRAMS assessment had found that 67 health facilities were damaged by the earthquakes and aftershocks – of which six were completely destroyed – and over 10 500 buildings have been either partially or completely destroyed. Hostilities and military operations on the ground have now resumed to pre-earthquake levels. Artillery and mortar shellings took place in Idlib, northern Latakia and western Hama. Landmines exploded in Al Bab district, eastern Aleppo, killing two children.

3. ACTIONS TO DATE

WHO's goal is to save lives in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, mitigate longer-term health consequences, and rapidly restore essential health services across all earthquake-affected populations.

Leadership and coordination

- Since the earthquakes, WHO has supported 9000 trauma interventions and surgeries in Aleppo, Latakia, Hama and Tartous.
- In order to consolidate the work of all health sector partners and highlight priority areas for support, a health sector meeting is convened on a regular basis. These meetings are led by WHO and bring together national and local partners, UN partners, and local health authorities to map and support service delivery at already-known and newly-identified emergency shelters and affected communities.
- WHO continues to scale up coordination efforts in earthquake-affected areas, closely liaising with national counterparts and partners. In Hama, WHO took part in an assessment mission to emergency shelters to re-assess health needs and monitor the response. Additionally, WHO is supporting the Departments of Health in Hama and Latakia in planning for and prioritizing local service delivery.
- A survey of all physiotherapists is underway in Northwest Syria, to evaluate the technical capacity of the available workforce and understand the workforce needs.
- The dialysis task force, a collaboration between WHO and [Afaq Humanitarian and Relief Organisation](#), purchased laboratory kits to cover the needs of the 15 dialysis centres currently operating in Northwest Syria for the next four months. This will provide dialysis patients with the required basic medical tests.
- WHO is conducting a needs assessment in Syria, to identify the needs of earthquake-affected communities who are not in emergency shelters. The findings will inform the inter-sector coordination group (ISC), UN

¹ <https://www.who.int/initiatives/herams>

Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and partners about the humanitarian situation midway through the three-month response plan. The assessment covers 821 communities and neighbourhoods in Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous, Hama, Homs and Idlib governorates.

Health information and planning

Surveillance

- In Aleppo, Hama and Latakia, 374 out of 461 (81%) Early Warning, Alert and Response System (EWARS) reporting sites submitted reports for epidemiological week #14, 2-8 April.
- Forty-one rapid response teams (RRTs) remain deployed in Aleppo, Hama, and Latakia to verify and investigate reported alerts. Between 2 and 8 April, 23 alerts were reported and are under verification or investigation.
- Between 2 and 8 April, (epidemiological week #14), the concerns detected by EWARS with the most notable change in comparison with epidemiological week #13 were in:
 - Aleppo: scabies (18% decrease), lice (35% decrease)
 - Latakia: influenza-like illness (ILI) (24% decrease), lice (34% decrease), acute jaundice syndrome (14% increase), leishmaniasis (25% increase)
 - Hama: ILI (22% decrease), leishmaniasis (19% decrease), lice (43% decrease).
- In response to a huge increase (422%) in lice cases previously reported in Latakia in emergency shelters between 12 and 25 March, WHO supported an active case-finding campaign conducted by public health teams, and provided oversight and monitoring of the activity.
- All three EWARN labs are functional in northern Aleppo and Idlib. They administered over 2500 diagnostic tests for measles, hepatitis, cholera, rotavirus and adenovirus. Of 225 sentinel sites, 97% in Northern Aleppo and 96% in Idlib achieved completeness and timeliness of reporting.
- Over 67 000 suspected cholera cases have been reported in Northwest Syria up to 16 April. Of these, 42% were in Aleppo governorate and 57% in Idlib governorate. The total number of cholera-related deaths in NWS is 23, giving a case fatality rate (CFR) of 0.03%. The attack rate is 1.45%. The most affected districts in Idlib Governorate are Harim and Idlib, and in Aleppo Governorate, Azaz and Jebel Saman. Seven cholera treatment centres are functional in the area.
- In Syria, mobile teams have been screening emergency shelters for TB. In the last two months, they have screened over 23 800 people, identifying 1450 suspected cases. Of these, 42 cases of TB have been confirmed with laboratory testing, and the patients referred onward for case management and provision of treatment.
- Four TB centres operate in Northwest Syria, receiving technical support and medicines from WHO. They diagnose an average of 10 new cases per week, the majority at the centre in Idlib. During the reporting period, 17 new TB cases were detected including one multi-drug resistant case in Al Bab.

Health service information

- WHO has developed a [mobile services dashboard](#) to locate and track the 63 mobile clinics and 62 mobile teams currently deployed and covering 86 communities. The dashboard shows the geographical distribution of mobile services and operating partners.



Fig. 1. Map showing population clusters for secondary health care planning in Northwest Syria

- WHO has mapped rehabilitation capacity, finding that there are 28 rehabilitation centers covering 31 communities in Northwest Syria.
- WHO has created a map to show population clustering in Northwest Syria to facilitate the planning of secondary health care and other health programmes.
- Further analysis of data from the recent earthquake-specific HeRAMS demonstrated the type of damage caused to health facilities, including internal or external infrastructure and water systems. Severity of damage was mostly witnessed in Latakia and Hama (Figure 2). The analysis is used to inform response measures and to understand the types of repair required.
- Results of HeRAMS are available on WHO's [Earthquake Response Dashboard](#).

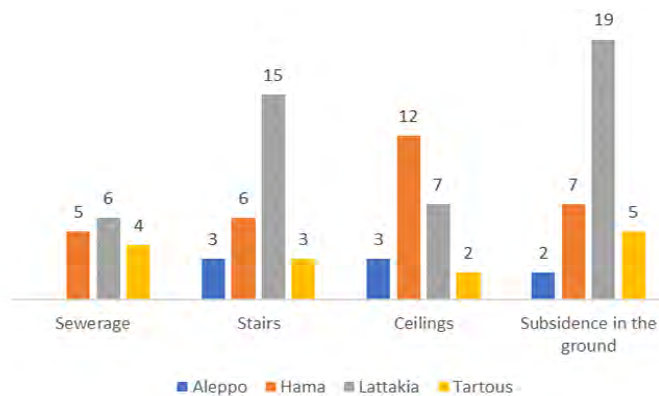


Fig. 2. Impact of earthquakes on facilities by type of damage and governorate

Health operations and technical expertise

Health care

- During the reporting period, WHO delivered medications, medical kits and medical equipment to provide over 205 000 treatments and 3200 trauma consultations in the affected areas (22 health facilities and

public hospitals). Supplies distributed included life-saving and essential medicines, 88 different types of IEHK kits and TESK kits, 30 patient hospital beds, 134 oxygen cylinders and concentrators, nine pulse oximeters and six patient monitor devices to provide an adequate provision of life-saving interventions and sustain health care provision for patients in needs.

- WHO currently has 22 MMTs deployed in Aleppo (15) and Hama (7) governorates. During the reporting period, they provided 6318 outpatient consultations to 90 shelters and other affected communities. A total of 6245 consultations for integrated management of childhood illness were given by 39 national mobile teams at targeted shelters in Aleppo, Latakia, Hama and Idlib; two cases were referred for hospital care.
- WHO operationally supports four hospitals in Northwest Syria. Between 3 and 16 April they provided 5000 outpatient consultations and 600 inpatient treatments.
- From 3 to 16 April, 11 partners have provided rehabilitation services across 25 health facilities in Northwest Syria.
- In Northwest Syria, WHO provided clinical coaching at the maternity hospital in Al Bab, quality improvement in a hospital in Azzaz and reviewed the health information system in Al Shifaa.
- WHO supports nine PHC facilities as last resort coverage. From 3 to 16 April, they provided 9000 consultations. Within the Afrin and Northern Aleppo health networks, WHO supports a further 26 PHC facilities.
- To support the technical capability of rehabilitation services in Northwest Syria, 100 Arabic language copies of [Early Rehabilitation in Conflict and Disaster](#) are being distributed to partners of the working group for trauma and disability. In addition, WHO shipped 374 specialized rehabilitation assistive products (mainly all-terrain wheelchairs and walking aids) from Türkiye to Northwest Syria.
- The WHO-supported Dialysis Committee visited 12 dialysis centres in Northwest Syria as part of the regular supervision and quality improvement program. The committee evaluated these centres in terms of adherence to approved medical protocols (medical quality and infection prevention and control).



WHO-supported rehabilitation session for a child in Northwest Syria. ©WHO

WASH

- During the reporting period, WHO-supported water quality monitoring teams visited six emergency shelters, collecting 40 samples, of which 7.5% were found to be contaminated by bacteria.
- In Aleppo city, of 170 collected samples, 56 (33%) were contaminated. In response, 1670 water purification tablets were distributed in host communities.
- In Hama, 41 water samples were collected and analysed from water sources in Hama city, rural areas and three shelters, of which just one sample (2.4%) was contaminated. Water samples were mainly collected from water reservoirs and taps.
- In 2023 so far, with WHO support, partners in Northwest Syria have conducted water quality testing at 120 water stations, including 64 cholera-related tests.

MHPSS

- Since the start of the earthquake, MHPSS outreach teams have collectively provided over 660 000 mental health consultations in Latakia, Tartous, Aleppo and Hama.
- MHPSS services continue to be a major need in earthquake-affected populations. As the 90-day acute response period is nearing its end, WHO plans to adapt its second phase response focus on outreach to affected communities and service strengthening at health centre level. WHO will deploy 55 specialized teams to provide MHPSS services in Latakia, Tartous, Aleppo and Hama.
- Additionally, mental health hotlines are being established to provide support to affected populations by equipped and trained psychosocial workers, trained mhGAP doctors and/or resident psychiatrists. Staff are able to support callers with general depression, anxiety, suicidality, addiction, psychotic breaks, and manic episodes. Based on the level of intervention/treatment required, referrals are made to specialized psychologist or psychiatrists. Hotlines have been set up in two specialized psychiatric hospitals: Ibn Khaldoun and Ibn Rushd, and with Agha Khan NGO in Hama. Additional hotlines are planned with the Ministry of Education to reach children, adolescents, care providers and educational staff, as well as two NGOs in Aleppo and Hama. During the month of March, 204 people have benefitted from the hotline services
- In Northwest Syria, MHPSS services have expanded to reach 381 sites since the onset of the earthquakes, including 84 camps and 26 emergency shelters. During the reporting period, WHO partners reached almost 41 000 individuals with psychosocial first aid sessions and provided over 4300 patients with psychiatric outpatient and inpatient care. Since the onset of the earthquakes, over 55 000 people have participated in mental health group awareness sessions organized by WHO partners.

Nutrition

- During the reporting period, 30 MMTs screened a total of 6870 children under 5 years in emergency shelters in Aleppo, Latakia, Hama and southern Idlib for malnutrition. They detected 67 cases of global acute malnutrition (GAM), and subsequently referred them for treatment, noting this was a similar proportion of cases as those reported in the previous fortnight.
- At health centres, the nutrition surveillance programme screened 11 935 children under 5 years in Aleppo, Latakia, Hama and southern Idlib; 287 GAM cases were detected and referred for treatment and 38 cases of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) with complications were admitted to stabilization centres. MMTs and nutrition surveillance centres reached over 6400 mothers to provide counselling on infant and young child feeding.

Vaccines and immunizations

- In response to the increase in reported measles cases in Syria, a small-scale vaccination campaign is ongoing in areas that reported unvaccinated measles cases. To date, in earthquake-affected governorates, the campaign has reached more than 197 000 children aged under 5 years (93.5% coverage). The campaign is complemented with risk communication and awareness-raising interventions to enhance vaccination uptake and ensure higher coverage.

- On 8 April, WHO launched a 10-day polio and measles vaccination campaign in all accessible areas in Northwest Syria, reaching approximately 800 000 children aged under 5 years with each vaccine. WHO and partners deployed 754 teams and 195 team supervisors.

Risk communication and social mobilization

- WHO has continued increasing its risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) activities in earthquake-affected areas. During the reporting period, WHO conducted four training sessions in Aleppo and Latakia for 135 community health responders to support them in reaching affected populations. In Northwest Syria, 93 community health workers, 55 social mobilizers and seven camp managers were trained on RCCE to strengthen capacity and improve outreach.
- In Northwest Syria, 17 WHO partners reached 126 000 people through face-to-face awareness sessions conducted by community health workers (CHWs) and social mobilizers between 3 and 16 April. Awareness sessions focused on MHPSS and communicable diseases (especially cholera, measles, scabies, and COVID-19). Since the onset of the earthquakes, over 400 000 people have been reached by awareness sessions.
- In preparation for the Eid festive period, WHO carried out awareness-raising sessions with 1500 community and religious leaders, to prepare for mass gatherings and public events in Northwest Syria.
- WHO RCCE partners conducted awareness and referral activities in 33 sub-districts in earthquake-affected areas in Northwest Syria during the reporting period. They referred 3034 people to health facilities for reproductive and child health, internal medicine and malnutrition care. Since the onset of the earthquakes, RCCE partners have made over 7500 referrals, including for over 2300 suspected cholera cases.

Supplies and logistics

- Between 3 and 16 April, medical supplies valued at US\$ 993 000 and weighing 129 metric tonnes were delivered to health facilities in Aleppo, Latakia, Homs and Hama.
- Between 3 and 16 April, 11 WHO trucks containing WHO-procured medical supplies for the response worth US\$ 1.1 million crossed the border to Northwest Syria, providing over 70 000 treatments.
- Since 6 February, WHO has delivered over 350 metric tonnes of medicines, medical supplies, and equipment, valued at over US\$ 3 million and accounting for over 946 000 treatment courses (388 000 beneficiaries), to Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous, Hama and Homs. Since 6 February, WHO has delivered 47 trucks cross-border from Türkiye to Northwest Syria, containing emergency supplies and medicines worth over US\$ 5 million, with a weight of 380 metric tonnes. These supplies are sufficient for approximately five million treatments and over 51 000 trauma cases.
- Since 6 February, four charter flights containing medical supplies worth over US\$ 7.5 million and weighing 96 tonnes have arrived in Türkiye for dispatch to Northwest Syria.
- Since 6 February, WHO has distributed medicines, medical supplies and equipment to support 298 hospitals and healthcare facilities and provided three million treatment courses in this region.

Resource mobilization

- The WHO Flash Appeal estimated that the immediate response for the Whole of Syria in the first three months following the earthquakes would require US\$ 33.7 million.
- In response, WHO's Contingency Fund for Emergencies provided a loan of US\$ 11.3 million.
- The UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the US Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), the Government of the State of Kuwait and Novo Nordisk Foundation have together provided over US\$ 15 million.
- Further funding is pledged by King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre and the UN Central Emergency Response Fund, to a total of US\$ 10.7 million.

4. KEY NEXT STEPS

WHO is focused on the following priorities:

- The review and extension of the WHO 90-day operational plan until the end of the year;
- Strengthening TB detection and treatment capacity with the procurement of an X-ray machine and four microscopes for the TB centres in Northwest Syria, to improve their diagnostic capacity; and scale up of TB centres and response activities in Aleppo to fulfill the needs of newly-confirmed cases and expand screening activities to other earthquake-affected governorates. A second reactive vaccination campaign (one-dose strategy), targeting 1.1 million people in eight sub-districts and emergency shelters in Northwest Syria, to begin in May.