

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

Issue 9 | 1 – 15 May 2021











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1. COVID-19 Update

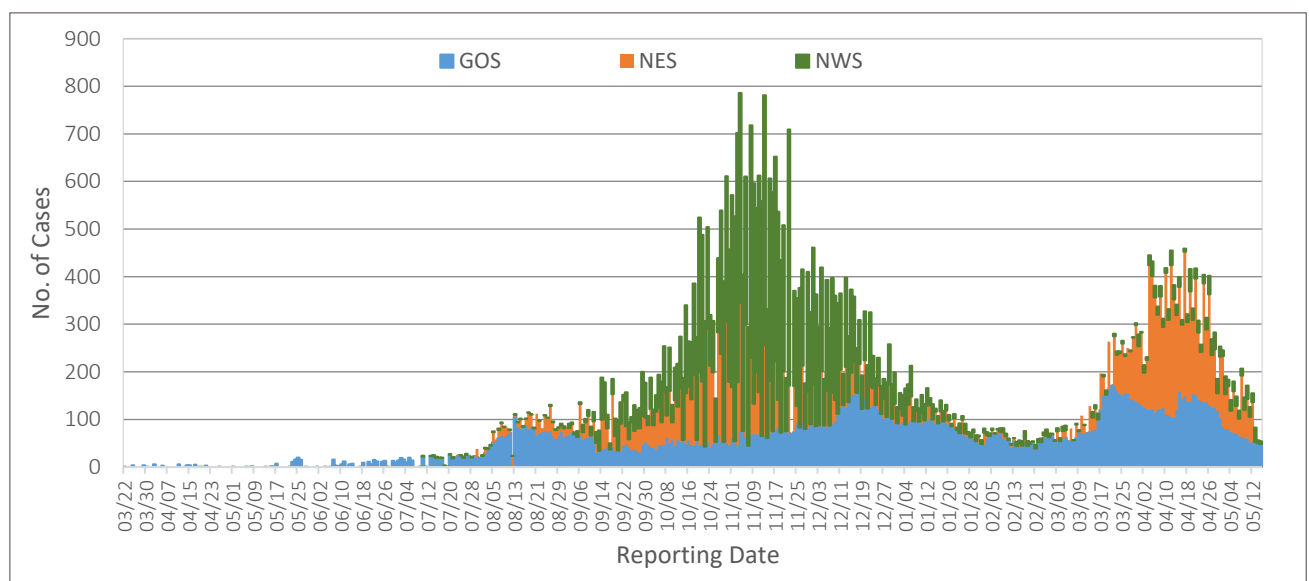
1.1. COVID-19 Statistical Summary at Whole of Syria Level

As of 15 May 2021

| | | |
|---|----------------|--|
|  | 62 884 | Total cases (including 4 545 health workers) |
|  | 17 226 | Active cases |
|  | 42 576 | Recovered cases |
|  | 3 042 | Deaths |
|  | 4.8% | Case Fatality Rate (CFR) |
|  | 14 | COVID-19 functional laboratories |
|  | 249 442 | COVID-19 tests done |
|  | 1 223 | Overall testing rate per 100 000 population |
|  | 308 | Incidence rate per 100 000 population (highest in Al-Hasakeh; 995) |
|  | 25.2% | Positivity rate (highest in As-Sweida; 71.6%) |

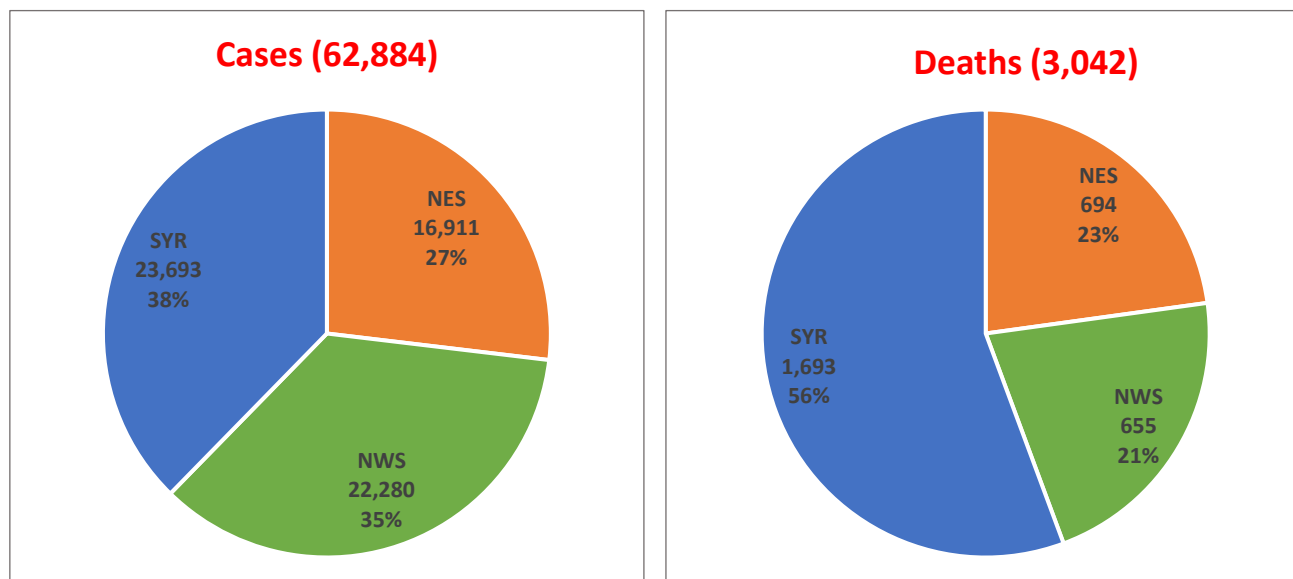
1.2. Daily Distribution of COVID-19 Cases at Whole of Syria Level

22 March 2020 – 15 May 2021 (n = 59 958)



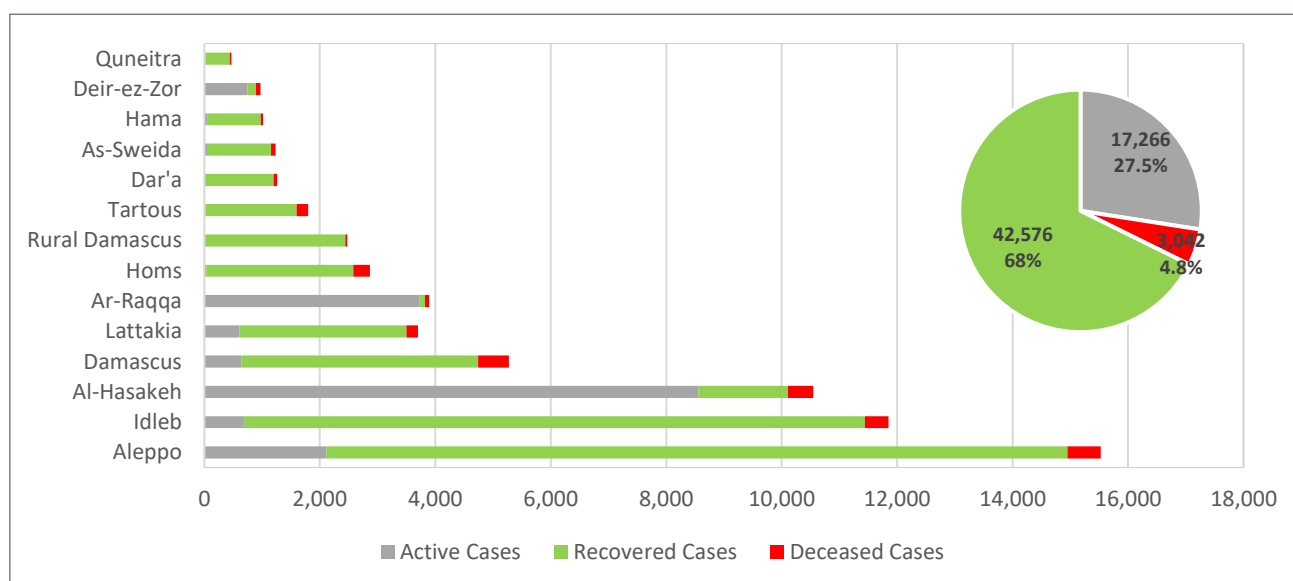
1.3. Distribution of COVID-19 Cases and Deaths at Whole of Syria Level

22 March 2020 – 15 May 2021



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

22 March 2020 – 15 May 2021



2. WHO-Syria Response

2.1. COVID-19 Response

Points of Entry (PoE)

- WHO has supported the Ministry of Health (MoH) to enhance the national capacity for preparedness and response to health emergencies and to ensure health security under International Health Regulations (2005), including strengthening core capacities at points of entry (PoE).

- A medical point is being constructed at Al-Boukamal ground-crossing by DoH Deir-ez-Zor. MoH and WHO are working on equipping the point with medical devices and furniture to provide health access to travellers. In addition, WHO is working on establishing a medical point at Dabboussieh ground-crossing in Homs, including its rehabilitation and medical device provision.

2.2. Environmental Health

- WHO has been monitoring water quality, testing for contamination in different water sources, such as water networks, ground wells, reservoirs, water tanks, jerry cans, and running culture tests to identify pathogens.
- During the reporting period: 40 tests were conducted in two villages in the northern and eastern parts of Rural Aleppo, 24 tests in eight districts in Rural Damascus, and 1 197 tests in Northeast Syria (NES: Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqqa, and Deir-ez-Zor) including at eight Internally Displaced People (IDP) camps and collective shelters. Among the sources tested, found contaminated and sterilized were: 20 in Rural Aleppo, two in Rural Damascus and 116 (mainly jerry cans) in NES.
- WHO will be conducting an awareness campaign to deliver key messages, about safe water usage and preventive measures related to water-borne diseases, at six IDP camps in NES (Al-Hol, Areesheh, Abu Khashab, Mahmoudli, Roj and Nowruz) between May and November 2021. Preparations are ongoing.
- WHO is coordinating with Deir-ez-Zor Governorate to expand the activities to monitor the quality of drinking water as of the second half of May 2021.

2.3. Health Sector Coordination

The Syria National Health Sector:

- Produced, in consultation with hubs, the Health Sector Needs and Priorities Brief and shared it with OCHA for Syrian Pooled Fund Standard Allocation 2021. The brief focused on geographic prioritized locations.
- Organized and conducted a technical review of Health Response Plan (HRP) projects together with the technical review committee (TRC) between 2 and 9 May. The TRC is composed of members from WHO, Medair, SSD and the Health Cluster Coordinator. Six project reports were approved while 13 were returned to agencies for edits/revisions based on TRC comments.
- Reviewed justification requests from three health partners for approving revisions and a no-cost extension for pooled funds.

The Northeast Syria coordination team:

- Provided inputs at various meetings and briefings on issues related to COVID-19 vaccination in NES, health sector coordination, the humanitarian situation in NES and NES supply needs, including Al-Hol camp coordination meeting (4 May), Whole of Syria call (5 May), briefing with the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (6 May), Whole of Syria call with donors (10 May) and a joint WHO Syria-EMRO call (12 May).
- Met with several health sector partners to discuss health sector coordination in NES and measures to strengthen joint collaboration, including with UNFPA Damascus (3 May) and UNICEF Damascus (4 May).
- Hosted several meetings, as Health Sector Lead, including a bi-weekly inter-hub meeting involving NES Forum, UNICEF, OCHA and WHO (4 May), a regular Al-Hol camp health sector coordination meeting (6 May) and an ad-hoc meeting with health partners and camp management on COVID-19 response in Areesheh camp (9 May).
- Prepared talking points about the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out and supply needs and gaps.
- Co-facilitated internal WHO Damascus/Quamishli team meeting on COVID-19 response at camps in NES.
- Initiated the COVID-19 daily tracker tool to follow up on COVID-19 records/updates on a day-to-day basis.
- Coordinated with OCHA to enhance the capacity of the isolation area in Areesheh camp under the current SHF-funded project.

2.4. Routine Immunization

- Primary consultations with GAVI and partners about 2022 vaccine requirements for Syria have begun and are to be followed up in the second half of May with the submission of a draft request to GAVI.
- On 4 May, an application for funding for the 2022 measles vaccination campaign in Syria was submitted to GAVI.

COVID-19 vaccine update:

- Vaccination registration and reporting materials such as vaccination cards and certificates, registers, and reporting forms were printed with WHO support and distributed to all governorates.
- Two workshops were delivered on data processing using the COVAX portal at the central level, engaging data managers from all 14 Syrian governorates. WHO provided financial support.
- Operational and distribution costs for a vaccine roll-out are being evaluated.
- NES vaccines were shipped to Quamishli Airport on 3 May, in line with the Ministry of Health (MoH) plan.
- Internal technical discussions are taking place with all WHO field to ensure readiness for the current COVID-19 vaccination rollout in Syria in each governorate.
- Procurement of Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) treatment kits and PPEs for the vaccination campaign is in process.
- UNDOF provided 1 000 doses of AZ to UN staff; WHO country office is the custodian.

2.5. Primary Health Care and Non-Communicable Diseases

The PHC and NCD units:

- Facilitated the participation of MoH and the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) in the online survey on “Health Governance Research”.
- Participated in the third virtual workshop of the Primary Health Care Measurement and Improvement (PHCMI) Initiative on 6 May. Both WHO Country Office reps and MoH focal points attended.
- Continued to deliver oral health activities in eastern Ghouta schools. So far this year, a total of 1 298 students benefited from 5 386 dental services. They include clinical examinations, therapeutic services, and preventive and health promotion sessions for 1 298 students and 48 teachers.
- On 5 May, WHO facilitated the participation of MoH in the regional office meeting on WHO Agreement and Arab Board of Health Specializations Ceremonial Meeting and the signing of a collaborative agreement to promote family medicine as a means to progress towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in the region. The 5-year agreement (April 2021–April 2026) represents an ambitious project that aims to improve health system resilience by building future capacities in public health and community medicine and strengthening the postgraduate speciality training system in the region.
- EMRO launched the application for Tobacco FCTC project phase III. MoH Syria will be participating.
- Supported the Ministry of Education (MoE) through the provision of the first batch of IPC/PPE supplies for national exams of grades 9 and 12. They included: 55 000 surgical masks, 2 388 protective gowns, 200 COVID-19 promotion posters, 460 bottles of alcohol hand rub 70%, and 127 infrared thermometer devices. More PPE supplies are in the pipeline.
- Donated 4 700 gloves, 11 850 surgical masks, 50 alcohol hand rub and 50 alcohol-based surface sterilizer bottles (1000 ml) to rapid response teams (RRT) in DoH Aleppo, Al-Waleed Hospital Homs, Quamishli hub, Aleppo hub, Directorate of Social Affairs in Lattakia in favour of Al-Rahmeh and Al-Saedeh homes for the elderly.



Supporting oral health activities in Eastern Ghouta

2.6. Secondary and Tertiary Health Care (STHC)

The SHC and THC units:

- Delivered in-kind donations of lifesaving medicines, antibiotics injections, IV fluids, ICU medicines, NCD medicines, dialysis supplies and medical consumables to health partners in Homs (Al Waleed Hospital), Aleppo (Al-Ihsan Charity), Lattakia (Mosaic, Syrian Youth Council, Syrian Association with children with special needs) and Deir-ez-Zor (Al Assad Hospital). The number of provided treatment courses under STHC was 11 056.
- Donated basic and advanced medical equipment to the Public Paediatric Hospital in Aleppo (2 water baths, 1 water distilling unit) and 50 different diagnostic machines to Harasta National Hospital in rural Damascus (6 patient monitors, 1 central monitor, 8 electrocardiograms (ECG), 8 defibrillators, 4 pulse oximeters, 3 foetal dopplers, 8 infant incubators, 2 neonatal phototherapy units, 2 infant warmer units, 1 portable incubator, 3 blood transfusion chairs, 2 photometers, 1 blood bank refrigerator, 1 sedimentation rate device).
- A joint assessment visit to the Syrian Arab Red Cross (SARC) Isolation Hospital for UN staff was conducted in coordination with UNFPA, UNICEF and UNDP.

2.7. Trauma

- 40 equipped ambulances were delivered by WHO to MoH to reduce life-threatening delays in obtaining emergency health services and enhance their ability to respond effectively. Patients with severe conditions, especially people living in hard-to-reach areas or those not able to afford transportation, will benefit from timely referrals made possible by the newly arrived ambulances, following a critical gap in referral services in Syria. These functional, fully loaded and advanced ambulances will be distributed to health directorates in governorates across Syria according to the agreed distribution plan. The ambulances, as part of the emergency medical system, will (a) boost the Ministry's efforts to increase access to health care services; (b) enhance the provision of emergency services in the country, including COVID-19 related services; and (c) play a critical role in strengthening the referral system, a key aspect in the achievement of UHC.
- In cooperation with MoH, WHO conducted a high-level consultation workshop to establish Public Health Emergency Operation Centres (PHEOC) at the national and sub-national levels. The Minister of Health, deputy ministers and directors of health of all 14 governorates attended the event. Key discussions were held to identify the gaps and strategies to strengthen Emergency Operation Centres in the country.
- Fifty health workers from Damascus and rural Damascus were trained on "Basic Trauma Life Support" and "War Wounded Injury Management". The courses targeted health professionals (doctors, nurses, and anaesthesia technicians) working in isolation centres, ICUs and emergency departments.
- Twenty-five health workers from Damascus and rural Damascus (prosthetics and orthotics technician, physiotherapist, and physiatrists) were trained at the MoH centre for prosthetics and rehabilitation in Damascus in the field of disability and rehabilitation on "Manufacturing the prostheses for trans-hip amputation".

2.8. Tuberculosis (TB) / HIV

- Two out of three TB mobile clinics are still functioning in the governorates of Aleppo and Rural Damascus. A total of 713 beneficiaries have benefited from 12 TB awareness raising sessions, during which 295 suspected cases were tested, five of which were confirmed as positive.
- TB active case finding in prisons began in six governorates. During the two-week reporting period, a total of 2 448 beneficiaries benefited from TB awareness raising sessions. Among the 249 suspected cases that were tested for TB, 8 were confirmed to be positive.

2.9. Mental Health

- The Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) capacity building activity plan was approved with MoH and MoE. It covers the mhGAP programme, Psychological First Aid (PFA) and basic psychosocial skills for health and community workers. The plan for MoHE health staff will be finalized during the second quarter in all Syrian University hospitals.
- A community campaign was launched in Lattakia. During the two-week reporting period, 5 064 people were reached through MHPSS services, and campaigns to raise awareness and combat stigma.
- A psychotropic shipment was released to Lattakia hub to cover the needs of rural communities.
- WHO coordinated with MEDAIR, OXFAM and UNHCR in relation to different mental health activities, mainly capacity building and reporting mechanisms for health and community workers active in MHPSS.
- WHO prepared for the launch of the “My Hero is You” campaign and followed up with trained community workers from NGOs.

2.10. Nutrition

- WHO collected data for new-born at-home care in 131 villages in 11 governorates, conducting a total of 2 107 home visits. 30 cases were referred for the provision of needed care.
- WHO met with partners to review the health response plan (HRP) nutrition project for 2021.

2.11. External Relations and Communication

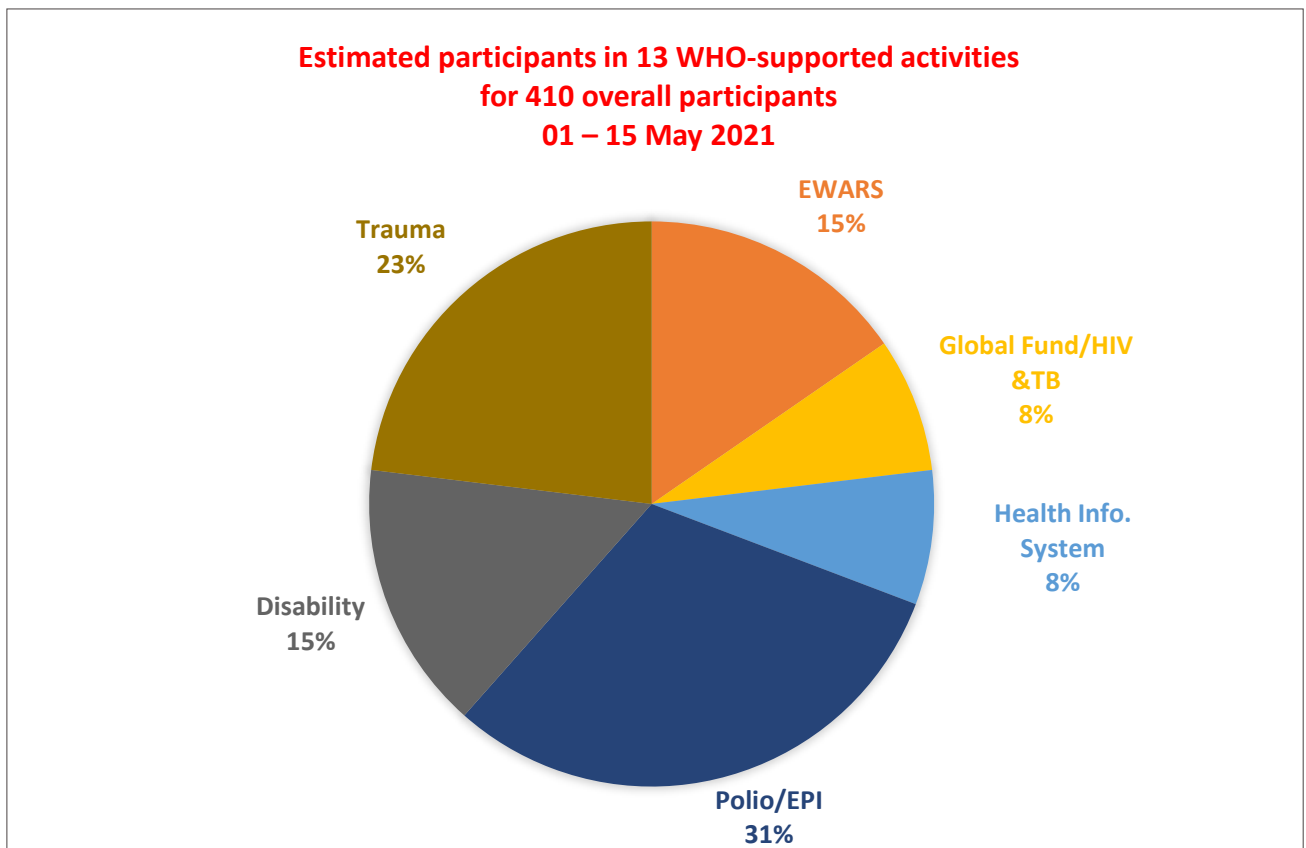
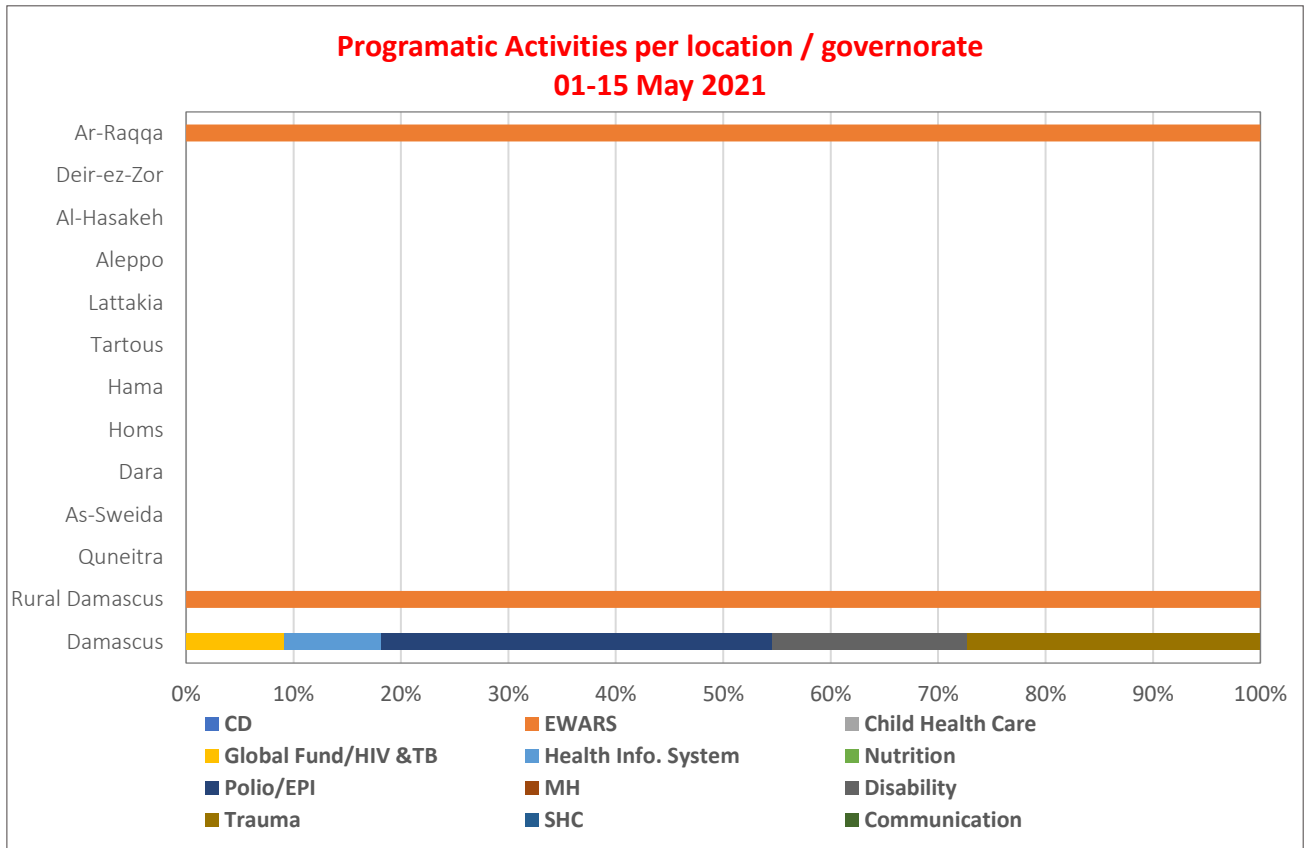
- In cooperation with MoH, WHO conducted a ceremony on 9 May, with the participation of the Minister of Health and WHO Head of Mission, to hand over 40 fully equipped ambulances procured by WHO. Ambulances will play a vital role in strengthening emergency response and referral capacity across the country, including the COVID-19 response. The ceremony was followed by a press conference attended by local and international media.
- WHO began publicising the vaccination process. The first coverage was on 5 May, when Dr Akjemal Magtymova, Head of Mission and WHO Representative in Syria, visited the vaccination site in Aleppo governorate. Simultaneously, WHO staff and the UNICEF Representative visited the vaccination site in Quamishli in northeast Syria (NES), details of which were also posted on social media.
- UNICEF and WHO have developed a full-fledged media campaign to promote vaccine uptake within target groups. The media campaign is currently in the process of approval by the Ministry of Health and is expected to be launched this month. Available quantities of vaccines can cover only 0.5% of the population, not sufficient to even cover all health workers. Therefore, the MoH is hesitant to launch activities that increase demand as future supply remains uncertain.

2.12. Community Engagement (NGOs)

Together with NGO partners, WHO:

- Maintained the provision of lifesaving and life-sustaining health care services in NES, where 213 people benefited from trauma care services and 105 benefited from advanced surgical interventions. Beneficiaries are mainly from IDP camps and informal settlements.
- Delivered primary health care services, including medical consultations and medications, in child health, reproductive health, and chronic diseases. In Damascus and rural Damascus, 3 063 health services were provided.
- Performed 149 hearing evaluation tests as well as 18 speech and language sessions for beneficiaries in Damascus and Lattakia.

2.13. Capacity Building

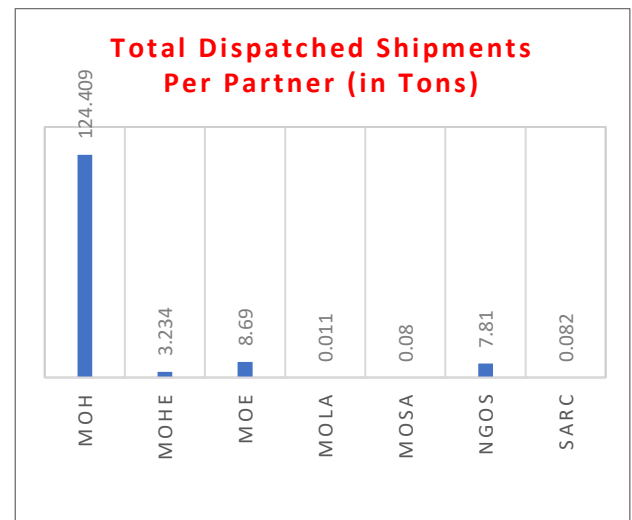
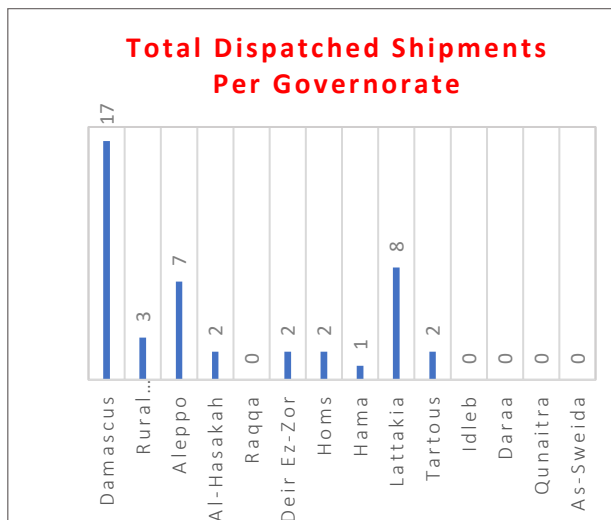


2.14. Information Products and Related Activities

- Information Products:
 - Electronic platform to register for COVID-19 vaccine was launched.
 - WoS Summary of WHO Key Performance Indicators for January and February 2021.
 - WoS February 2021 4Ws snapshot.
 - WoS HeRAMS (Q3 and Q4 2020) snapshots.
 - (Health Sector & WHO) 4Ws snapshots for March 2021
 - Health Sector COVID-19 response metrics from January to March 2021
- Related Activities:
 - Updated COVID-19 Dynamic Infographic Dashboard for Syria.
 - Updated the online item tracking system for COVID-19 in Syria.
 - Provided key information on health facilities based on HeRAMS.
 - Updated maps for health sector interventions.

2.15. Operations Support and Logistics

- WHO dispatched 144 317 tons of medical and lab supplies, kits, equipment, ambulances and ICU equipment, covering 9 governorates (all but Idleb, Ar-Raqqa, Dar'a, Al-Quneitra and As-Sweida).
- Recipients included 15 MoH facilities, 3 MoHE facilities, MoLA, MoSA, MoE, 10 NGOs and SARC.



3. WHO Syria Sub-Office Response

3.1. Aleppo Hub

- During the reporting period, the daily number of COVID-19 confirmed cases was on the rise, as reported by MoH and the management of the Cardiovascular Hospital. Occupancy rates at COVID-19 public isolation centres varied between 90-100%.
- WHO conducted a meeting with UNDP to discuss disability interventions by UN actors on the national and hub-level, as well as successful engagements between UN and Non-State Actors (the partnership with Yadan-Bi-Yad NGO, which is specialized in PWDs in Aleppo governorate) and the possibility of expanding this experience at the national level.
- A WHO team conducted a field visit to the Hanano workshop for manufacturing mobile aids operated by YBY non-state actor. The workshop is supported by UNDP and WHO and produces various scale of Kinetic Assistive Devices and prosthesis.

- A coordination meeting was conducted jointly by WHO, UNICEF and DoH Aleppo to finalize the health response for 7 000 students arriving from hard to reach areas in late-May 2021 for their national exams, to whom DoE assigned 28 schools as accommodation sites. WHO will support seven static and mobile medical teams in two shifts to cover the essential health needs of students. Moreover, an effective referral pathway for any emergency case was developed in coordination with the ambulance unit in DoH Aleppo.

3.2. Lattakia Hub

- WHO delivered 40 ambulances from WHO Lattakia's warehouse to MoH to strengthen their emergency referral health system.
- Active TB screening (awareness, testing, management, prevention, and treatment) was conducted in:
 - Tartous governorate, where 220 prisoners were examined; 50 samples were collected, and none were found positive.
 - Lattakia governorate, where 500 prisoners were examined, samples of suspected cases were sent to the TB centre and none were found positive.
- WHO, in collaboration with the directorates of health and social affairs, started a 1-month campaign in the rural areas of Lattakia, targeting communities with low health coverage, in addition to areas that were affected by the outbreak of wildfires.
- An AIDS awareness campaign, in partnership with Al-Sham NGO, is ongoing. In Tartous governorate, the total beneficiaries reached during the reporting period is as follows:



40 ambulances at Lattakia warehouse ahead of their delivery to MoH



COVID-19 awareness raising campaign in the Rural Areas of Lattakia

| TARGETED GROUPS | NUMBER OF SESSIONS | NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES | NUMBER OF RAPID TESTS | POSITIVE RESULTS | |
|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------|
| | | | | Males | Females |
| PROSTITUTES | 6 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| HOMOSEXUALS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| PRISONERS | 6 | 46 | 46 | 0 | 0 |
| DRUG ADDICTS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| YOUNG TEENS | 12 | 108 | 108 | 0 | 0 |
| TRUCK DRIVERS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

3.3. Homs Hub

- A COVID-19 vaccination campaign began in Homs and Hama, targeting health care workers, with a special focus on hospital staff. 3 010 were vaccinated in Hama and 1 518 in Homs since the vaccination began.

Rukban Returnees:

- WHO conducted a meeting with SARC on 5 May, in the presence of concerned organizations, to improve the response plan for Rukban at the second destination.
- WHO supported mobile teams in Homs and Hama through the TB program in both directorates of health, to survey the local prisons and to investigate cases of tuberculosis among prisoners. 308 prisoners were screened, and no cases were found positive.

3.4. Deir-Ez-Zor Hub

- In the reporting period WHO supported the delivery of 1000 adult- and 680 children-haemodialysis sessions at Al-Assad Hospital. The haemodialysis unit at Al-Assad hospital is providing more than 800 sessions per month and services the whole of Deir-ez-Zor governorate and parts of Ar-Raqqa governorate.
- Since the governorate of Deir-ez-Zor is considered to have a high prevalence of waterborne diseases (WBD), due to poor water sanitation and hygiene situation, Deir-ez-Zor WHO hub procured 800 000 1-g chlorine (NaDCC 1.67 g) tablets in favour of Deir-ez-Zor DoH. The tablets will be distributed among households, primary health centres and municipalities to ensure safe drinking water access, especially in the summertime. A hygiene promotion campaign is being planned to accompany chlorine tablet distribution in high-risk areas.
- WHO has been coordinating with DoH regarding finalization of specific hospital books for Al-Mayadin National Hospital and the Public Health Laboratory projects. Files were sent to the WHO country office to finalize procurement process preparations while awaiting receipt of original documents through the directorate of planning and international cooperation at MoH.
- Deir-ez-Zor WHO-hub and other UN hubs participated in a Population Task Force (PTF) exercise on 9 May, during which colleagues from OCHA presented the definition, background and objectives of the PTF. This exercise aimed to update population data according to data triangulation methodology. In the absence of an official census, it is crucial to have a close-to-reality estimate of the population, especially in the context of a humanitarian crisis, in order to provide evidence-based justifications for HRP as most of the indicators and humanitarian needs overview severity scales are calculated according to population count.



WHO-supported haemodialysis session in favor of Al-Assad hospital in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate

3.5. Quamishli Hub / Northeast Syria (NES)

- On 3 May, WHO facilitated the shipment of the first batch of Covid-19 vaccines to Al-Hasakeh DoH. Priority groups for this first batch include healthcare workers across northeast Syria.
- On 5 May, a WHO team met with Mr Bo Viktor Nylund, UNICEF Representative in Syria. During the meeting, the current situation and activities in NES were discussed as well as issues related to enhancing WHO-UNICEF collaboration to support the affected population in NES.
- A joint visit to DoH Quamishli district centre was arranged to follow up on the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccination in NES.
- WHO continued to closely monitor the COVID-19 situation in the camps prioritizing the following activities:
 - Visiting Al-Roj camp and the Malkieh COVID-19 treatment ward, on 5 May. A meeting was conducted with Al-Roj camp management and health partners to ensure use of the correct case definition for COVID-19, RRT procedures, forms, and possible ways to allocate a team to actively identify cases, in addition to discussing services and isolation area capacity. Moreover, a visit was conducted to the Malkieh National Hospital, where a COVID-19 treatment ward is allocated, to discuss case management protocols and ensure use of WHO recommended protocols.



Delivering the first batch of COVID-19 vaccines to Al-Hasakeh DoH



Follow-up on the ongoing COVID-19 vaccination campaign in northeast Syria

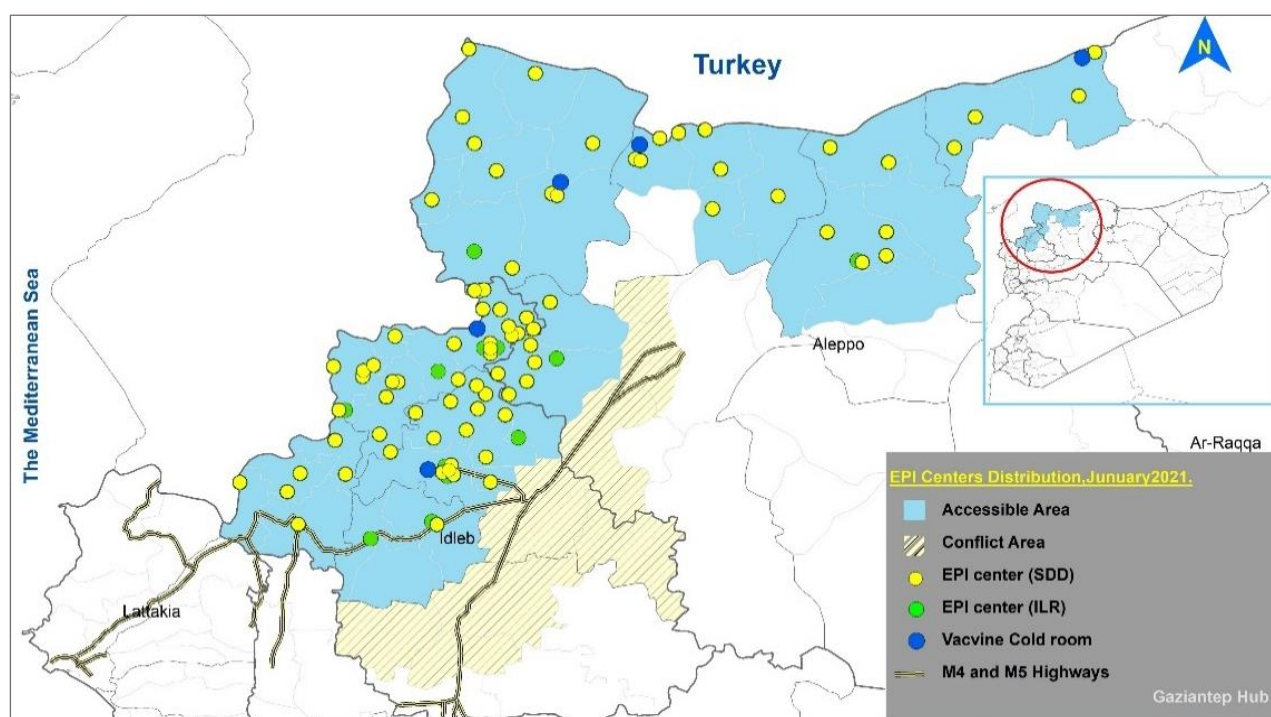
- Visiting Al-Hol and Al-Areesheh camps on 6 May. The aim was to meet camp management and health partners to ensure use of the correct case definition for COVID-19, RRT procedures, forms, and possible ways to allocate teams actively identify cases, in addition to discussing services and isolation area capacity.
- Developing an online tracker sheet for COVID-19 cases in camps in order to enhance surveillance.
- WHO completed a rapid assessment of isolation centres' responsiveness to the COVID-19 pandemic in NES, checking the availability of beds and supplies and ensuring the continuous provision of health services.
- The following cases of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) cases with complications were registered:

| | New Admission | Recovery | Active |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------|--------|
| Hikma Hospital | 7 | 5 | 3 |
| Al-Tabqa National Hospital | 2 | 2 | 1 |

- The hub used the Health Information System (HIS) /HeRAMS to:
 - Follow up on the needs of Menbej General Hospital.
 - Update data for COVID-19 isolation and quarantine centres in NES.
 - Update data for PHC centres in Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa.
- The hub monitored the quality of drinking water through regular visits to 8 camps and 20 collective shelters. 1 197 samples were tested and 9.7% of the samples taken from jerry cans were found to be contaminated.
- The hub contributed to the Early Warning and Alert Response System (EWARS) by following up on the WHO-run leishmaniasis treatment point in Al-Hol camp.

4. Northwest Syria (NWS) Response

4.1. COVID-19 Vaccinations (COVAX)



Distribution of EPI Centres in NWS, April 2021

- More than 21 313 health workers and 25 000 community workers are planned to be vaccinated.
- 53 800 doses of the vaccine AstraZeneca SII were delivered through Gaziantep office.

Vaccination implementation strategy

- The hub has finalized micro plans for the first targeted group (health care workers and community workers).
- 93 newly assigned vaccination teams with 4 members per team have been identified.
- Training will be delivered to service providers in the week of 16 May.
- The implementation strategy will cover more than 495 health facilities (285 in Idlib and 210 in Aleppo).
- Each team will vaccinate the health staff of defined health facilities and community workers in non-health NGOs.
- More than one visit to each health facility will be conducted in order to vaccinate the staff.

4.2. COVID-19 Update

- As of 9 May 2021:

| | North West Syria (NWS) | Government-Controlled Syria (GCS) |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Confirmed Cases | 22 169 | 23 379 |
| Deaths | 655 | 1 657 |
| Recovered Cases | 20 196 (91.1%) | |
| Active Cases | 1 499 (6.8%) | |
| Tests Performed | 126 041 | 72 547 |
| Case Fatality Ratio (CFR) | 2.95% | 7.1% |

4.3. Surveillance / Early Warning, Alert and Response Network

- As of Epi-week 18, out of 240 sentinel sites (Aleppo 131 and Idlib 109), a total of 239 sites (Aleppo 131 and Idlib 108) reported on the 13 syndromes/diseases under EWARN, constituting 99.6% completeness and 91% timeliness of reporting (compared to 87% the previous week).
- As of Epi-week 18, a total of 213 417 consultations were recorded (37% <5 years) which represents a 0.02% decrease in the number of consultations compared to the previous week (213 458).
- As of Epi-week 18, a total of 154 alerts were recorded in northern Syria; following primary screening and verification, 25 were identified as valid alerts.
- During Epi-week 18, the highest syndromes reported from NWS were:

| | Cases reported in Epi-week 18 | Change compared to Epi-week 17 | Cases reported in Epi-week 17 |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Influenza-Like Illnesses (ILI) | 15 165 | 3.8% decrease ↓ | 15 758 |
| Acute Diarrhoea | 9 956 | 4.2% increase ↑ | 9 557 |
| Jaundice Syndrome | 228 | 0.9% decrease ↓ | 230 |
| Sever Acute Respiratory Illnesses (SARI) | 213 | 0.9% decrease ↓ | 215 |

4.4. Routine Immunization

- All 93 EPI centres in NWS are functioning. All 134 working teams are working as well. The estimated number of under-1-year monthly targeted children in the region is 13 578.

- All EPI teams (622 participants) were trained by Syrian Immunization Groups (SIGs) on COVID-19 awareness, physical distancing and protective measures. A monitoring tool was developed to measure the adherence of teams to WHO guidelines regarding physical distancing, the use of PPEs and raising COVID-19 awareness. Governorate and district supervisors are submitting reports that are discussed during virtual meetings; all indicators exceeded 90%.
- The COVAX Technical Assistance plan was finalized and submitted and processed and approved by GAVI. The COVAX Vaccine Request was finalized and submitted on time. NWS has not been able to secure cost-sharing of vaccine procurement, however this will not hinder the ability to access fully subsidized donor-funded doses provided through the COVAX Advanced Market Commitment.
- WHO and partners finalized the first draft of the COVAX vaccination campaign plan and draft budget. With the new data available, multiple scenarios have been developed.
- WHO and partners finalized the development of the National Deployment and Vaccination Plan (NDVP) for NWS, the plan was submitted to EMRO, presented and approved by the Regional Review Committee (RRC).
- A Targeted Country Assistance (TCA) plan was developed and shared with the regional office for further discussion, then submitted to GAVI, which approved it.
- WHO developed different formats for the collection of data in relation to the upcoming COVID-19 vaccination campaign. They were shared with COVID-19 treatment facilities (CTF). The development of COVAX campaign registers and Standard Operation Procedures (SOP) is ongoing.
- The COVAX vaccination campaign was launched on 1 May with the participation of 2 teams (one in Idlib and one in Aleppo), teams were added incrementally from 3 May. As of the 7th day of the campaign, a total of 5 223 healthcare workers and social workers were vaccinated.

4.5. Primary Health Care

- A WHO team met with Gaziantep Health Directorate and discussed the North Aleppo Network. Another meeting will be held on the referral system and network expansion in the second half of May. The 2021 COVID-19 Preparedness and Response draft Plan was prepared and will be shared with partners in the COVID-19 Task Force to get their feedback.

Primary Health Care Referrals

- WHO continues to support 26 PHCs and mobile teams (MT) in NWS; nine of them through integrated service delivery networks and 17 as part of last resort coverage.
- The functionality of the referral system in north Aleppo, Afrin and Idlib is minimal, however the main implementing partner for the referral system was being audited. Idlib is covered by the Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF) and WHO will cover the referral system of two geographical areas in north Aleppo.
- Preparatory work on an extension to the north Aleppo network is underway. This phase will focus on Human Resource Management standards, skills availability, salaries, etc. A further scale of supply chain management training, beyond facilities participating in the network, will be organized. A meeting was held with Gaziantep Health Directorate on 4 May 2021, and another one will be organized for the Afrin network with the Hatay health directorate by the end of May on capacity building and staff salary scale.

4.6. Non-Communicable Diseases

- WHO started coordinating with PCI-UK and SRD technical working group (TWG) in relation to the provision of capacity-building for 460 midwives currently engaged in essential non-communicable disease interventions (NCD PEN). Training is needed in the screening and management of pregnant women.
- Thalassaemia Task Force created an advocacy power-point presentation that was shared in the last Health Cluster meeting to support 997 patients, 688 of whom were children.

- There is a dire need for iron-chelation therapy, needed to prevent iron overload caused by monthly blood transfusions and which may result in damage to the heart and even death.
- WHO communicated with the Thalassemia International Federation about its readiness to deliver online training sessions for doctors and nurses working at eight thalassemia centres and with the completion of guidance protocols on Thalassemia Management and Treatment for NWS.

4.7. Secondary Health Care

- WHO attended Humanity and Inclusion (HI) implementing-partner-meeting, presented the project closure plan and advised relevant activities related to MHPSS, community awareness, and the referral network. HI agreed to engage relevant sub-technical groups of the referral network, MHPSS, and community health workers in the handover process, and explore the option of integrating some of the activities into existing services.
- WHO continues to support four hospitals; Harem and Medina Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health (MNCH) hospitals, Bab Al Salam General Hospital, and Dana COVID-19 designated Hospital.
- During April, WHO-supported hospitals provided 69 555 consultations, 31 818 of which were outpatient consultations and treatments, 34 184 were medical procedures, 1 798 were inpatient services, and 80 of which were involved the admission of patients to ICU.
- The case management technical group conducted a review of oxygen supplies and equipment in COVID-19 designated hospitals to ensure adequate capacity, readiness and responsiveness for possible upcoming waves of COVID-19 cases. Moreover, the case management TG finalized the COVID-19 Community Treatment Centre (CCTC) minimum resource standard operational procedures.

4.8. Tuberculosis

- The agreement with Hand-in-Hand for Aid and Development (HiHFAD) to support the TB centres in Idlib and Azaz was finalized and shared with the implementing partner to allow for the initiation of activities from 28 April 2021 through to 28th June 2021. An agreement to support the TB centre in Afrin with Bahar NGO has been finalized.
- 148 beneficiaries visited three TB centres during epi-week 19; 9 were diagnosed as positive.
- 45 GeneXpert tests were sent to Antakya. 14 GeneXpert tests came back positive.
- WHO resumed GeneXpert activities and a new patient was diagnosed with multi-drug-resistant (RR/MDR) TB ; a second sample was sent to Antakya, where the diagnosis was confirmed.
- Since the beginning of the year, the total number of RR/MDR-TB cases detected is 19; two of whom have died, one is receiving medication from Aleppo, one is being re-evaluated, one refuses the treatment, one is being prepared to receive treatment, and the remaining 13 are enrolled in treatment.

4.9. Leishmaniasis

- As of epi-week 18, a total of 13 770 cases of leishmaniasis have been reported in 2021. During epi-week 18, 948 leishmaniasis cases were reported, representing a 0.7% decrease compared to the previous week (951 cases).
- A large outbreak of cutaneous leishmaniasis (CL) is emerging in the districts of west rural Aleppo and Harim. The highest number of CL cases was reported in the first 3 months of 2021 (4 361 in January, 4 318 in February and 4 116 in March).
- An increased caseload of visceral leishmaniasis (VL) is being observed in 2021 compared to the previous four years: (20 cases in 2018, 22 cases in 2019, 53 cases in 2020 and already 34 cases in the first four months of 2021). Most cases have been reported in Harim district.

4.10. Mental Health

- The community-based suicide prevention document was shared with the mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) TWG. The suicide prevention task force is being revived.
- A total of three NGOs (MWL, IHSANRD and HIA) conducted nine focus group discussions in the reporting period and shared output with WHO-HQ and the interagency standing committee (IASC) MHPSS Reference Group in connection with children's storybook "My Hero is You". The IASC MHPSS RG and WHO-HQ are planning to create a second book to help children, their caregivers, and teachers cope and return to school in the context of the ongoing pandemic.
- WHO held an MHPSS TWG meeting and discussed planned capacity building needed for MHPSS workers during 2021.
- Specific activities for the continuity of two Mental health mobile clinics under the Union of Medical Care and Relief Organizations (UOSSM) were approved and will begin on 30 April and run through to 30 July 2021. However, WHO still needs funding for the continuity of three mental health mobile clinics for 3 months under the Qatari Red Crescent Society (QRCS), 3 MHPSS facilities for 3 months under UOSSM, and 2 MHPSS facilities under the Hand in Hand for Aid and Development (HiHFAD).
- The MHPSS Helplines and the 24/7 suicide prevention hotlines are being supported by WHO. The Heartland Alliance International (HIA) programme of face-to-face PSS counselling to CCTCs has however stopped due to a funding issue with HIA.

4.11. Haemodialysis

- WHO is developing draft terms of reference to onboard Bloomberg School of Public Health and John Hopkins Hospital teams to undertake a phased approach baseline assessment and curriculum with local partners.

4.12. Information Management (IM) / Health Information System (HIS)

The IM and HIS teams:

- Finalized and shared the Key Performance Indicators' report for March 2021 with WoS.
- Shared the request for COVID-19 supplies with partners.
- Prepared an infographic for breast cancer service mapping.
- Updated amendments to the 4ws and indicators to be in line with the 2021 HRP log frame.
- Updated the dashboard for deliveries and physical rehabilitation with data for March 2021.
- Conducted a mapping of dialysis centres.
- Reported mortality rates to EMRO.
- Shared the weekly COVID-19 update for epi-week 18 and maintained COVID-19 dashboard updates, including data for total vaccinations.

4.13. Supply Chain

The supply chain team:

- Conducted a supply line meeting with health partners and finalized the distribution plan, which will ensure WHO provision of 31 Interagency Emergency Health Kits (IEHK), medicine modules, 15 Trauma and Emergency Surgery Kits (TESK), 80 IEHK Basic Kits, 24 400 insulin vials, 56 490 packs of IV fluids and a 3-month supply of eight items of anaesthetic medicine.
- Reviewed the WHO Mersin stocks and revised the GAP estimation.
- Analyzed mental health supply consumption and developed a mental health distribution plan.
- Accelerated procurements for the implementation of remaining balances in ECHO and OFDA.
- Worked on the expansion of the Bab-Al-Salam warehouse.

4.14. Procurement

- Procurement of Manikins EENC Project is still ongoing. Bids were analyzed and WHO is currently working on purchase orders to be sent out to suppliers.
- WHO is working on local procurement of lab supplies for Ankara laboratory. The purchase order for the first batch of supplies has been approved and sent out to the supplier.
- A catalogue request for the second batch of lab supplies for Ankara lab has been registered on the GSM with a total value of USD 50 000.
- A catalogue request for insulin and insulin syringes has been registered and is currently in the pipeline.

4.15. Logistics

- Purchase orders are being followed up regularly pending delivery in preparation for prepositioning of supplies ahead of the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) deadline.
- WHO is coordinating with Gezairi (the company providing logistics and warehouse services in Turkey) on receipt of incoming deliveries, customs clearance, storage, etc.

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](#)
- [Latest Global WHO Weekly Update On COVID-19](#)
- [WHO COVID-19 Country and Technical Guidance](#)
- [United Nations Office for The Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#)

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