

Whole of Syria Earthquake Response Situation Report

Reporting period: 17-30 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 Aleppo, Hama, southern Idlib, Latakia and Tartous

[Health Cluster Cholera Response Tracking Dashboard](#)

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

1. EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

11 200

 INJURED

5900+

 DEATHS

8.8 M

 AFFECTED
POPULATIONS

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



Fig. 1. WHO truck crossing Bab Al Salama border gate from Türkiye into Northwest Syria

Priority needs and concerns

- **Noncommunicable diseases:** there is an ongoing need for medical care and medication for patients with chronic health conditions.
- **Water, sanitation and hygiene (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. There is a need to restore the WASH sector functionality to provide the minimum level of services to the population.
- **Medicines and medical equipment:** 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.
- **Risk communication and community engagement (RCCE):** needed for the prevention of dust-related respiratory problems resulting from large-scale building demolitions and risk due to the presence of asbestos in the debris.
- **Border crossings:** in Northwest Syria, Bab Al Salama and Al Ra'ee border gates -- exceptionally available for delivering humanitarian aid from Türkiye into Northwest Syria in response to the earthquake -- are expected to close on 14 May. The closure of borders will affect the supplies provided to affected people in Northern Aleppo.

Priority actions

- In Syria, mobile teams have been screening emergency shelters for tuberculosis (TB). In the last two months, they have screened over 25 000 people, identifying 1750 suspected cases. Of these, 48 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. During the reporting period, 219 beneficiaries visited the TB centres. Of these, 18 new TB cases were confirmed with laboratory testing.
- WHO has deployed 22 mobile medical teams (MMTs) to Aleppo (15) and Hama (7) governorates. They provided 6550 outpatient consultations to 90 shelters and to affected communities during the reporting period.
- Since the onset of the earthquake, WHO partners have prescribed 764 assistive devices in Northwest Syria. In the last two weeks of April, WHO procured and delivered 681 additional assistive devices, consisting primarily of rough terrain wheelchairs, including paediatric models.
- In Aleppo, Hama, southern Idlib, Latakia and Tartous, WHO partners and collaborating entities, such as the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, have reached an estimated 720 000 people since the start of the response. WHO partners in Northwest Syria provided psychological first aid support to 174 574 people. Additionally, WHO supported 10 primary health care (PHC) centres as last resort coverage. From 17 to 30 April, these centres provided over 9000 consultations.

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. Sixty-eight cases have been reported and referred for treatment in Syria. Due to concerns of an outbreak, vector surveillance has started preparations for residue spraying.
- **MHPSS:** the affected populations continue to report 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. As confirmed by data from health centres, a surge of 2000% in stress-related disorders was

reported post the earthquake in February (in comparison to January), while concerted efforts to provide MHPSS services have contributed to the decline in cases, as observed in March and April. In Northwest Syria, WHO estimates over 1.1 million people are affected by moderate stress disorders.

- **Rehabilitation:** Increase in military operations in Northwest Syria which has led to a rise in the number of civilian casualties. In Jandairis, where 19% of injuries from the earthquake were reported, there is only one rehabilitation facility for 104 000 people.
- **WASH:** the earthquake and subsequent aftershocks have caused severe damages to water and sewage infrastructure which has exacerbated the already strained and damaged WASH systems.

2. SITUATION UPDATE

The humanitarian situation after the earthquakes remains critical. 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. Additionally, in many areas of Syria, the main priorities are to promote safe drinking water practices and monitor water quality.

As per the [Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(OCHA\)](#), from 13 to 27 April, emergency shelters in Aleppo are being evacuated. Families whose dwellings were assessed as structurally safe have returned home, while those whose homes were confirmed to have structural damage will be residing in mid-term shelters (four rehabilitated and four under rehabilitation). In Aleppo, the number of emergency shelters have reduced from 33 (13 April) to three (27 April). The evacuation process of emergency shelters was concluded in April. Currently, four mid-term collective shelters are in service, hosting 168 families.

In Hama Governorate, 1996 (481 families) internally displaced persons (IDPs) are hosted in 14 shelters while an additional four shelters are empty. In addition, 5093 families are hosted within the local communities. In Homs City, 171 IDPs (40 families) are accommodated in two shelters. Moreover, 2943 IDPs (748 families) are hosted by local communities.

In Latakia Governorate, 2958 IDPs (717 families) are accommodated in 13 shelters. As of 27 April, 12 collective shelters located in school buildings were closed down to allow the school to resume education, while families were relocated to other shelters in the area. Up to 1000 prefabricated units are being set up in Latakia for families that require medium-term residence.

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. There are 109 emergency shelters hosting people affected by the earthquake.

Furthermore, the tracking of people remains a challenge due to continuous movement of IDPs between emergency shelters to camps and/or homes in whole of Syria.

In Northwest Syria, military operations on the ground resumed, reportedly injuring civilians and children. Escalation of the conflict and military tensions may follow in the coming weeks. In the end of April, mortars, artillery shelling and other fighting activities negatively impacted United Nations (UN) agencies' missions in the field.

Additionally, Bab Al Salama and Al Ra'ee border gates -- exceptionally available for delivering humanitarian aid from Türkiye into Northwest Syria in response to the earthquake -- are expected to be closed on 14 May. WHO is extremely concerned by the upcoming closure, especially of Bab Al Salama gate, which allowed humanitarian aid to reach people affected by the earthquake living in Northern Aleppo more efficiently and expediently. Approximately, every three days, a WHO truck full of medicines and medical equipment has

crossed the border into Northwest Syria from Bab Al Salama border gate since its opening. In the case of closure, this will no longer be possible.

As for damaged health facilities, a rapid HeRAMS assessment in Aleppo, Hama, Latakia and Tartous found that 31 hospitals and 133 PHC facilities were damaged – of which six were completely destroyed -- in addition to 13 public health structures used for purposes such as administration, storage or training. Furthermore, in Northwest Syria, an earlier HeRAMS assessment found that 67 health facilities were damaged by the earthquakes and aftershocks – of which six were completely destroyed – and over 10 500 buildings were either partially or completely destroyed.

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

- International referrals from Northwest Syria to Türkiye are increasing, especially for cardiology and oncology, providing life-saving support to critically-ill patients..
- 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.
- WHO is leading regular missions into Northwest Syria from Türkiye to monitor available services after the earthquake. On average, WHO conducts two such missions per week at hospitals, PHC centres, medical warehouses, dialysis and TB centres. These missions allow WHO to better adjust the public health response in areas which are not controlled by the Government of Syria.
- A survey of all physiotherapists was conducted in Northwest Syria, to evaluate the technical capacity of the available workforce and understand its needs. The results from the survey are currently being analyzed.
- The dialysis task force, a collaboration between WHO and [Afaq Humanitarian and Relief Organisation](#), continue to support the laboratory needs of the 15 dialysis centres currently operating in Northwest Syria.
- The Syrian Needs Assessment Template (SYNAT) has been completed, targeting earthquake-affected communities outside collective shelters with the aim to inform the Inter-sector Coordination Group (ISC), the UN Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and partners, on the humanitarian situation midway through the three months earthquake response plan. The humanitarian situation in 821 communities and neighborhoods has been assessed in Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous, Hama, Homs and Idlib governorates, covering earthquake-affected people who live outside collective shelters. Preliminary findings reported on adequate services provided and accessed by populations, but also highlighted gaps in particular service delivery, challenges faced by vulnerable populations (including disabled and elderly). The information generated from the assessment will guide evidence-based response.

Health information and planning

Surveillance

- During the reporting period, a total of 358 out of 461 Early Warning, Alert and Response System (EWARS) sites in Aleppo, Hama and Latakia submitted reports for the week 16 (16 to 22 April) with 77.7% completeness.
- Forty-one Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) continue to verify and investigate reported alerts. In week 16, a total of 23 alerts were reported and are under verification or investigation. In addition, during week 16:
 - EWARS weekly reports collected from earthquake-affected governorates showed a decline in the number of cases of almost all EWARS conditions, except the increase in cases of brucellosis (eight suspected cases compared to one suspected case during week 15) in Latakia Governorate and a slight increase in acute diarrhea, influenza-like illness (ILI) and suspected hepatitis (jaundice) in Hama Governorate.
 - The most detected concerns by EWARS in week 16, in comparison to week 15 include:
 - Aleppo – leishmaniasis (96.1% decrease), acute diarrhea (37.9% decrease), ILI (60.7% decrease), scabies (75% decrease), and lice (75% decrease).
 - Latakia –acute diarrhea (52% decrease), ILI (67.1% decrease), lice (40.2% decrease), and SARI (79% decrease)
 - Hama – ILI (26% increase), acute diarrhea (14% increase), leishmaniasis (80% decrease), and lice (77% decrease).
 - Response to reported alerts:
 - Measles-confirmed cases are still being reported from Aleppo, in addition to other areas in north-eastern governorates of the country. As per the Ministry of Health, in week 17 (23-29 April), a total of 403 measles cases were reported, of which 127 (31.5%) from Aleppo, and seven (1.7%) from Hama. No cases were reported in Latakia.
 - No acute watery diarrhea cases were detected during the reporting period.
- All three EWARN labs are functional in northern Aleppo and Idlib. They administer diagnostic tests for measles, hepatitis, cholera, rotavirus and adenovirus. Of 225 sentinel sites, 99% in Northern Aleppo and 98% in Idlib achieved completeness of reporting, and 86% timeliness of reporting in Northern Aleppo and 96% in Idlib.
- As of 30 April, a cumulative total of 69 080 suspected cholera cases including 23 deaths (case fatality ratio 0.03%) have been reported in Northwest Syria. Of these, 39 970 were reported from Idlib Governorate followed by 29 110 suspected cholera cases in Aleppo Governorate. A decline of 24% in cases was reported between 24 to 30 April as compared to the previous week (17 to 23 April). 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, MMTs have been screening emergency shelters for TB. In the last two months, they have screened over 25 000 people, identifying 1750 suspected cases. Of these, 48 cases have been confirmed with laboratory testing, and the patients referred onward for case management and provision of treatment. In Northwest Syria, four TB centres are currently operating, 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, 18 new TB cases were detected, including one multi-drug resistant case in Al Bab.

Health information management

- 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. To address the rehabilitation needs, WHO has completed an initial service mapping to identify the availability of rehabilitation services in Northwest Syria.
- Results of HeRAMS are available on WHO's [Earthquake Response Dashboard](#).

Health operations and technical expertise

Health care

- WHO delivered medications and medical kits to cover the needs of more than 1 600 000 treatments and 1030 trauma cases (652 000 beneficiaries). Supplies have been distributed to 19 health facilities and public hospitals in the affected areas. The supplies included life-saving and essential medicines, 52 different types of interagency emergency health kits (IEHK), trauma and emergency surgery kits (TESK) and medical equipment.
- From 15 to 30 April, 22 MMTs in Aleppo (15) and Hama (7) governorate and one fixed health point in Latakia provided 6550 outpatient consultations in shelters as well as affected communities.
- During the reporting period, a total of 4835 consultations for integrated management of childhood illness were given by 39 national MMTs at targeted shelters in Aleppo, Latakia, Hama and Idlib; 21 cases were referred for hospital care.
- WHO operationally supports five hospitals in Northwest Syria. Between 17 and 30 April, they provided over 6000 outpatient consultations and 750 inpatient treatments. Additionally, since the earthquake, WHO partners have provided 27 236 rehabilitation sessions, including to 3279 new patients.
- WHO supported 10 PHC centres as last resort coverage, in addition to the three PHC networks and referral desk in Northwest Syria.
- Since the earthquakes, WHO has supported 27 727 trauma interventions and surgeries in affected areas.
- Since the earthquake, WHO partners have prescribed 764 assistive devices in Northwest Syria. In the last two weeks of April, WHO procured and delivered an additional 681 assistive devices, consisting primarily of rough terrain wheelchairs, including paediatric models.
- The dialysis task force continues to support 15 dialysis centres to provide dialysis patients with the required basic medical tests for the next four months. From 17 to 30 April, WHO has distributed dialysis supplies, namely intravenous (IV) fluids, heparin and epoetin, to the dialysis centers in Northwest Syria to cover the most urgent needs.

WASH

- During the reporting period, WHO-supported WASH teams visited six shelters in Aleppo and collected 41 samples of which four (9.7%) presented bacterial contamination.
- In Aleppo city, bacterial contamination was detected in 23 of 128 (17.9%) samples collected from the community. In response, 1200 water purification tablets were distributed in host communities.
- In Hama, 15 water samples were collected and tested from water sources in Hama city, rural areas and one shelter, of which no samples were contaminated. Water samples were mainly collected from the water reservoirs and taps.
- Water quality checks have also been expanded to Homs where 24 samples were collected and analyzed from water sources in Homs city, and from one shelter, of which six samples (26%) were contaminated with bacteria. These samples are mainly collected from well- and reservoirs and taps.
- The WASH team conducted 79 water quality tests in the cholera hotspot areas in coordination with RRTs during the reporting period in Northwest Syria.

MHPSS

- Since the earthquake, MHPSS outreach teams have collectively provided over 720 000 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, focusing on outreach to affected communities and service strengthening at health centre level. In May, WHO will deploy 55 specialized teams to provide MHPSS services in Latakia, Tartous, Aleppo and Hama.
- Additionally, mental health hotlines continue to provide support to affected populations through equipped and trained psychosocial workers, trained Mental Health Gap Action Program (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. So far, 211 people have benefitted from the hotline services.

- In Northwest Syria,
 - MHPSS services have expanded to reach 381 sites since the earthquakes, including 84 camps and 51 emergency shelters.
 - Additionally, WHO partners have
 - provided 8500 people with psychiatric outpatient care and 32 with psychiatric inpatient care.
 - implemented 7000 detection and referral of mental health cases in Northwest Syria.
 - reached 50 000 people with group awareness-raising sessions and 18 000 children with psychosocial support activities.
 - With support from WHO, 2000 people have received self-care sessions and 4200 have received either peer or group support.
- To increase the capacity of providing rapid support to the earthquake victims, Psychological First Aid (PFA) training and orientation has been delivered to 120 community health workers (CHWs) in Northwest Syria.

Nutrition

- In Aleppo, Latakia, Hama and southern Idlib, a total of 30 MMTs were deployed in shelters. These teams screened 5615 children under the age of five for malnutrition, of which 14 cases of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) were detected and referred for treatment.
- At health centres, the nutrition surveillance programme has screened 8376 children under the age of five in Aleppo, Latakia, Hama and southern Idlib. Of these, 80 GAM cases were detected and referred for treatment. Among the detected GAM cases, 38 had severe acute malnutrition (SAM) with complications and were admitted to stabilization centers.
- Additionally, MMTs and nutrition surveillance centres are offering mothers Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) counselling: 5397 mothers (2073 by MMTs and 3324 at PHC centres) were reached.



Fig. 3. PHC services supported by WHO in Latakia Governorate

Vaccines and immunizations

- A measles vaccination campaign complemented with vitamin A supplementation was carried out between 12 and 16 April, focused on areas with high numbers of measles-confirmed cases. During the campaign, up to 300 000 children (including 136 814 in Aleppo, 46 233 in Hama, and 10 456 in Latakia) under 12 years were vaccinated in all governorates.
- On 8 April, WHO launched a 10-day polio and measles vaccination campaign (8 to 17 April) in all accessible areas in Northwest Syria; 768 785 children between 0 and 5 years were vaccinated against polio (94% of the target) and 668 056 children between 6 and 59 months were vaccinated against measles (88% of the target).

Risk communication and community engagement

- WHO has continued increasing its risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) activities in earthquake-affected areas. During the reporting period, WHO RCCE partners reached a total of 155 027 beneficiaries in 27 subdistricts, referring 698 suspected cholera cases and 3611 other cases (reproductive health, child health, internal medicine, and malnutrition cases) to respective facilities or services in the targeted communities.
- WHO also concluded a special refresher RCCE training series for 240 CHWs (60% women). The training objectives included the following:
 - Identifying the roles and responsibilities of a CHW;
 - Listing the most common diseases, their transmission mode and the appropriate preventive measures post-earthquake;
 - A revision and understanding of RCCE principles;
 - Comparing quantitative and qualitative data and how to use it;
 - Applying qualitative techniques (for e.g., how to conduct a Focus Group Discussion);
 - Implementing a feedback mechanism;
 - Responding to rumours and misinformation.

Supplies and logistics

- Between 17-30 April, 41 metric tonnes of medicines and medical supplies valued at US\$ 477,000 were delivered to health facilities in Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous, Idlib, Homs and Hama.
- During the reporting period, one WHO truck containing WHO-procured medical supplies crossed the border to Northwest Syria.
- Since 6 February, WHO has delivered over 391 metric tonnes of medicines, medical supplies, and equipment, valued at over US\$ 3.4 million and accounting for over 2.5 million treatment courses (1 040 900 beneficiaries) to Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous, Hama and Homs. Since 6 February, WHO has delivered 48 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 treatment courses and over 51 000 trauma cases.

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.

- For the earthquake response in Syria, WHO estimates it will require US\$ 60.2 million for both the immediate 90-day response (18 million) followed by short- and medium-term response needs (42.2 million) for the rest of 2023 in Aleppo, Hama, southern Idlib, Latakia and Tartous. Further resources will be required to support repair and rehabilitation of affected health facilities, as well as respond to anticipated outbreaks and the longer-term health needs of those affected by the crisis.

4. KEY NEXT STEPS

WHO is focused on the following priorities:

- Initiate the implementation of the post 90-day operational plan;
- Strengthen surveillance of vector-borne diseases and implement relevant control measures;
- Activate phase 2 of the MHPSS scale up plan and deploy teams and strengthen health facility level services;
- Expand water monitoring capacity to Latakia and Homs;
- WHO and UN agencies are exploring the opportunity to either establish a more sustainable presence in Northwest Syria or to establish a hub in Reyhanli, Türkiye, right on the Turkish side of the border;
- WHO is planning another round of Oral Cholera Vaccination campaign to prevent the further spread of water-borne disease resulting from disruption of the WASH system;
- GAVI and WHO are exploring opportunities to tackle the ongoing measles outbreak by carrying out mop-up measles vaccination campaigns in areas with low coverage and include children up to 10 years old.