

## WHO-supported mobile clinics combat tuberculosis in the Syrian Arab Republic with Global Fund and International Organization for Migration support



A WHO-supported mobile clinic provides free-of-charge services to people with suspected TB

WHO, the Global Fund and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have been working closely to address the HIV and tuberculosis (TB) epidemics through the Middle East Response (MER) project. As the protracted crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic has severely affected the health system countrywide, WHO, through the MER1 grant, is supporting three National Tuberculosis Programme (NTP) mobile clinics in Aleppo, Rural Damascus and Deir-ez-Zor governorates.

Each of the WHO-supported mobile clinics – with an accompanying doctor, nurse, laboratory technician and driver – is equipped with an X-ray machine capable of sharing high-quality digital images through mobile phone networks for rapid diagnosis. The mobile clinics also carry an electric generator for use in remote areas with severe electricity shortages.

Thanks to the WHO-supported mobile clinic

**83 119 individuals**

in Aleppo governorate have

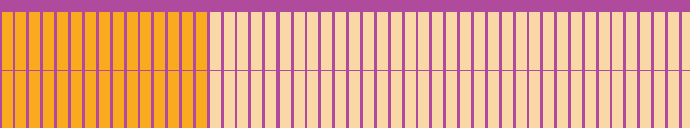
**received much-needed health services**

over the last 2 years, along with key messages about TB integrated with COVID-19 messages.

Of the total population screened

**315 individuals tested positive for TB**

**accounting for 30% of all TB cases in the governorate.**



Samera, a 25-year-old from Deir Haffer in Aleppo, had been suffering from weight loss and severe cough for over 2 weeks. During a medical consultation at an Aleppo health centre, she heard about the WHO-supported mobile X-ray clinic, which provides free health services and which visits her village regularly.

“*Transportation and treatment fees would have overburdened me. Having the mobile clinic in my own village is a tremendous relief.*”

Samera

After her examination and X-ray, the technician sent Samera’s radiology results to an online group of doctors from across the country, including physicians at the specialized Al-Masaranieh Centre, 30 km away. In addition, a requested sputum sample was sent for diagnosis at the Al-Masaranieh Centre laboratory, where, within hours, it was tested using a GeneXpert PCR system to assess drug resistance. Because the mobile clinics transport the samples to the Al-Masaranieh Centre for analysis, patients are no longer forced to make the journey to public health centres for results. Once confirmed as a TB patient, Samera’s treatment was initiated and her care began in her village.

“*Our area is difficult to access for medical treatment and care. The presence of the mobile clinic was simply life saving.*”

Samera



*Tuberculosis is one of the top 10 causes of mortality worldwide and remains a significant threat to human life among the most vulnerable in Syria. Tackling the disease remains highly challenging in a country where widespread shortages of medicines and displacement interrupt essential lengthy treatments that are needed to prevent the development of drug-resistant TB.*

*We highly appreciate our partnerships with the Global Fund and IOM to provide quality health services to all people in need without exposing them to financial hardship, and we will spare no efforts to ensure that everyone everywhere has an equal chance at a healthy life.*

Dr Iman Shankiti, WHO Representative (ad interim) in the Syrian Arab Republic



WHO support also extends to building up the capacity of health care officials at the NTP – in 2021, the NTP and the National Reference Laboratory for TB testing held 15 coordination and capacity-building workshops attended by 390 NTP officials from various governorates.