

Lebanon Crisis Health
situation report #29
Friday 25 August 2006

Starting next week, the Lebanon Crisis Health situation report will become the Health Cluster Bulletin, issued once a week.



Picture: Dr. Hammam El Sakka

The Lebanese Minister of Public Health participating in a WHO teleconference presenting the Health Facilities Assessment results.
25 august 2006

Highlights

- According to casualty figures provided by the National Demining Office of the Lebanese Army, 12 people are reported to have been killed and 51 wounded due to the UXO/B and cluster bombs.
- From the 202 health centers and hospitals that were covered by the health facilities damage assessment, 83% are not functioning in Bent Jbeil and Marjayoun (19 and 15 health facilities respectively).
- UNHCR reports that a total of 158,000 Lebanese refugees returned to Lebanon from Syria and will be registering the remaining Lebanese refugees in Damascus.
- No outbreaks of diseases have been reported to the Ministry of Public Health.

Situation Overview

- Reconstruction activities of destroyed roads and bridges is facilitating the transport of people and humanitarian aid.
- UN envoy to Lebanon has warned that the security situation is likely to remain "fragile" for the next two or three months.
- Demining activities are ongoing by the Lebanese army in Nabatieh, clearing residential areas such as Zawtar and by the UN Mine Action Coordination Center (UNMACC) in Yohmor, Smayieh, Ras Al Ain, Tebnine and Aita Al Jabal in South Lebanon. UNMACC is conducting daily mine awareness workshops for humanitarian aid staff.
- According to UNHCR, the daily flow of Lebanese refugees returning from Syria is still high: 3,841 on 24 August and 4,948 on 22 August.

Health Response to the Humanitarian Crisis

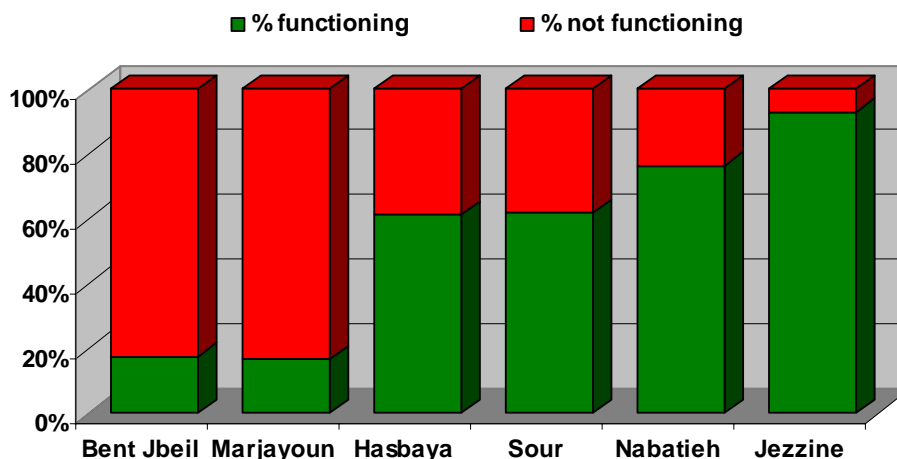
National and international Health Cluster partners are providing support in four core areas:

1. Assessment and monitoring

Lebanon

- Results of the health facilities damage assessment conducted in the most affected areas of South Lebanon are shown in the graph below. In-depth analysis of the health facilities assessment is expected to be ready by next week Tuesday. Assessments are currently being conducted in Bekaa valley and Southern Beirut. Baalbek will follow as soon as security allows, as well as the less affected areas in Lebanon.

Graph 1: Percentage of functioning and non functioning health facilities **due to the war** in six affected districts in South Lebanon as of 25 August 2006 Source: WHO/MOH assessment



- As part of the Early Warning and Response System (EWARS), one case of suspected measles was reported from Bent Jbeil among an 8 month-old-child. Case investigation is ongoing to verify the diagnosis.
- According to IOM, provisional results of the Rapid Appraisal Procedure Assessment on short and mid-term psychological needs confirm that the affected Lebanese population suffer from typical war related stress such as security issues, breakdown of social structure, experience of psychic violence, etc.

2. Health coordination

Lebanon

- The Health Cluster coordination meeting was held today with the participation of 30 health partners. It was emphasized that the majority of the health partners have now moved their activities and offices to the South, where further health coordination meetings are organized in Tyre.
- The next health cluster coordination meeting in Tyre will take place Tuesday 29 August.
- Two studies are under preparation by the American University of Beirut and Balamand university focusing on special needs groups in emergencies. One study will concentrate on the difficult access of elderly and disabled to primary health care centres and the possibility of outreach services. It is estimated that 7.5% of the total population is either over 65 years of age or physically impaired, demonstrating the urgent need for special attention.

Syria

- A meeting will take place on 27 August with UNICEF, WHO and Ministry of Health to review the immediate emergency response by government, Syrian Red Crescent and

UN agencies in the area of health, lessons learnt and needs to strengthen emergency preparedness and response.

3. Filling health gaps

Lebanon

- UNICEF is delivering 60,000 gallons of bottled water to communities in South Lebanon. Additionally, 27 collapsible water tanks and 3,200 hygiene kits have been distributed. UNICEF is also supporting the Beirut and Mount Lebanon Water Authorities in the repair water supply facilities in Saida and Ayta Al Jabbal, with around 95,000 inhabitants using these water supply systems.
- A large number of different kinds of kits are distributed by UNFPA. Reproductive health kits for up to 18,000 women, approximately 950 clean delivery kits, and 4,500 hygiene kits were dispatched to NGOs in Marjayoun, Srifa, Ayta el Chaeb, Tebnine, and Southern Beirut.
- UNHCR is assisting the returning Lebanese population with 15,000 tool kits to carry out repairs. Also blankets, plastic sheets, tents, and hygiene items were transported to Sidiqqine, which is between 60-70% totally or partially destroyed and Ghanduryah.
- IMC is distributing medicines and disposals to the affected hospitals in Hasbaiya (near Nabatieh), Marjayoun and Bent Jbeil.
- MSF-Belgium remains active in South Lebanon and is currently providing medication for chronic diseases and other essential drugs as well as surgical equipment to Bent Jbeil and Tebnine.

4. Preserving and supporting local health systems

Lebanon

- Training on the Early Warning and Response system (EWARS) will be conducted in Hermal District, Nabatieh and Tyre next week. District health staff from all public and private health units and hospitals will be trained in surveillance, case definitions of diseases under surveillance and epidemic thresholds.
- The Ministry of Public Health with the support of WHO and UNICEF is planning a measles vaccination campaign in the underserved and affected areas targeting children between 9 months and 15 years of age. The main challenge in the revitalization of fixed vaccination posts in the health units, is the re-establishment of the cold chain.

Technical guidance

- A joint statement on Infant Feeding agreed upon with UNICEF, WHO, WFP, UNFPA and Lebanese Ministries of Health and Social Affairs will be available soon.

Action Required

- Action should be taken to collect accurate data on the magnitude and nature of injuries causing disabilities. Health facilities in the affected areas are overwhelmed by amputations and other injuries causing long-term physical limitations. Community-based services to assist families of disabled need to be established, well after the end of the recovery phase.

Donor Support

- WHO acknowledges with gratitude the generous contributions to the health component of the Flash Appeal coming from Australia, Canada, ECHO, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Norway, Sweden, and the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

World Health Organization

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