

Lebanon Humanitarian
Crisis situation report #22
Wednesday 9 August 2006

The next situation report on the Lebanon humanitarian Crisis will be issued on Friday 11 August 2006.



Photo: WHO/Christopher Black

WHO medical supplies unloaded in Zahle. The supplies included essential drugs such as chronic disease medication for hypertension, diabetes, pediatric medications, and first-aid materials. 6 August 2006

Daily highlights

- Access to health care remains a major problem.
- Shortage of fuel for hospitals is having serious consequences.
- Humanitarian operations for displaced populations continue.
- The first humanitarian hub is expected to open soon in Saida. Local authorities and civil society will partner with the UN in assessing needs and delivering assistance.
- The UN and donors are looking at solutions for the quick reconstruction of bombed bridges and roads.
- The UN is looking at establishing passenger sea transport between Cyprus and Lebanon.

Situation Overview

- UNRWA reports the bombardment of the outskirts of Ein el-Hilweh, a Palestinian refugee camp, leaving three dead and eight injured.
- A humanitarian shipment from Saida consisting of ambulances, medicines and food was unable to reach Tyre because air strikes destroyed the passage.
- It is estimated that if fuel is not delivered this week, 60% of all hospitals in Lebanon, in addition to other health facilities will cease to function.
- Key infrastructure continues to be destroyed: the only road communication between Tyre, Saida and Beirut has now been effectively cut off.

Health Response to the Humanitarian Crisis

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

1. Assessment and monitoring

Lebanon

- A humanitarian joint assessment will take place tomorrow in Saida, which hosts an estimated 70,000 displaced persons.
- MSF runs an outpatient clinic in Bashour Hospital (with about 100 consultations per day), and supports the displaced population in Beirut, Tyre and other areas through mobile clinics. They report that 20 to 30% of all consultations are related to mental health problems.
- WHO was able to contact 23 of the 28 public hospitals to assess their functional status and urgent needs. All report to be operational. The most urgent needs are fuel, staff, oxygen, drugs and medical sundries. The list is available at <http://ochaonline2.un.org/LinkClick.aspx?link=ocha&docid=17123>.
- Four private hospitals (out of 151 countrywide) are reportedly not functioning, of which one is located in South Lebanon. The list of private hospitals (in Arabic) is available at <http://ochaonline2.un.org/LinkClick.aspx?link=ocha&docid=17122>
- A rapid survey on nutrition status will take place tomorrow at two food distribution centers and some schools in Beirut.
- The protocol for the implementation of the Early Warning and Disease Surveillance System (EWARS) has been agreed on by the Ministry of Public Health and health NGOs.

Syria

- The same protocol for EWARS is being implemented in Syria.

2. Health coordination

Lebanon

- A health cluster meeting was held yesterday in Beirut, with nearly 30 health cluster partners. The *Who is Doing What Where* table is regularly updated and available at OCHA's virtual Humanitarian Information Centre www.virtualhic.org.
- Preparations are set for the large vaccination campaign organized between the Ministry of Public Health and UNICEF, with support from WHO. They are awaiting the arrival of vaccines.
- UNRWA offers assistance to the UN in establishing the humanitarian hub in Saida.

Syria

- Coordination with the Syrian Red Crescent Society continues.
- Health Cluster meetings are ongoing.

3. Filling health gaps

Lebanon

- Further WHO shipments of chronic disease medicines and desferal for thalassemia patients arrived in Beirut and were distributed through the Ministry of Public Health.
- WHO provides medical supplies to local NGOs working with the affected population.
- MSF supplies medicines for chronic diseases and other drugs to health facilities in Jezzine, Nabatiye and Jobb Jannine, as well as to dispensaries in El Qmatiye and Kaifoun. MSF also provides clean water, baby milk formula, hygiene kits and other items to 25,000 displaced people.
- IMC provides medical supplies to Hiram Hospital in Tyre, the hospital in Chouf and runs mobile units in the affected areas. Complete Basic Emergency Kits were distributed to hospitals in Marjaayon, Tebnine, Hasbaya, Aley and Movbile.
- UNIFIL evacuated 175 civilians from Hulam, and provided medical assistance and water to Ibil as Saqi village.

- UNICEF will upgrade drinking water and sanitation systems in 154 schools in Beirut where 36,929 people are sheltered. UNICEF distributed drinking water, water purification tablets, hygiene items, vaccines for polio and measles as well as recreational kits for a total of 467,934 beneficiaries.
- The NGO YMCA provided dispensaries in the Beirut area, where the displaced are located, with basic supplies and medication for approximately 40,000 chronic patients for the next two months.

Syria

- A water and sanitation programme for the temporary shelters is being implemented by all health partners focusing on hygiene, health education and waste disposal.
- The immunization campaign for Lebanese refugees in schools continues. Lebanese staying with host families have not yet been vaccinated.
- MSF is supporting 8,500 Lebanese in Damascus, Tartos and Homs with medical and relief supplies such as cooking equipment, mattresses, stoves, and hygiene kits.
- UNICEF distributed hygiene kits for 1,700 refugees in UNRWA schools in Damascus.

4. Preserving and supporting local health systems

Lebanon

- WHO is stepping up efforts to implement an efficient and transparent humanitarian supply management system. Two experts on the WHO originated software Logistics Supply System (LSS) are mobilized and will build capacity of locally recruited warehouse managers and pharmacists.

Syria

- WHO is supporting the Syrian Red Crescent Society to establish an emergency operating centre.
- Training on EWARS for public health officers will take place in Syria tomorrow.

Technical Guidance

- UNFPA is providing updated information on the crisis in Arabic: <http://www.unfpa.org/emergencies/me/index-ara.html>
- WHO released the document *Disease surveillance / Early Warning and Response Guidelines - Middle East Crisis*, which provides health professionals with technical guidance and templates for implementing disease surveillance and early warning and response system for the current Middle East crisis. It is available at: http://www.who.int/diseasecontrol_emergencies/guidelines/en/
- WHO updated its website with documents on basic essential medicines, common antidotes for common poisonings, a draft fact sheet on issues affecting older persons in emergencies (for informing care givers, aid workers, etc), and WHO's position for feeding of infants and young children during the emergencies. These documents are available at: http://www.who.int/hac/crises/international/middle_east/en/index.html

Action Required

- WHO urges for immediate cessation of all hostilities, to ensure the safety of all civilians, civilians infrastructure, humanitarian aid and humanitarian aid workers.
- WHO also urges for safe passage for humanitarian supplies and medicines.
- Fuel supplies for hospitals and other essential health facilities (e.g. cold chains, storage) need to be replenished urgently.
- A rapid needs assessment should be conducted to determine urgent needs in regards to water and sanitation.

Donor Support

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

World Health Organization

<http://www.emro.who.int/eha/>

<http://www.who.int/hac/en/>