

Lebanon Humanitarian Crisis situation report #25 Tuesday 15 August 2006

The WHO Lebanon humanitarian Crisis situation report is issued three times a week.



WHO convoy with fuel leaving for South Lebanon. WHO is sending 67 tons of fuel to 18 hospitals in Tyre, Saida, and Nabatiye, enabling them to function for at least 10 days.
15 august 2006

Daily highlights

- So far, all parties are respecting the UN resolution. Normality is returning to Beirut and other targeted areas in Lebanon.
- In spite of the fragile ceasefire, Lebanese are massively returning to their places of residence in South Lebanon and South Beirut. Some temporary shelters have reportedly been emptied. The humanitarian community is rapidly responding to this drastic shift in strategy. Health agencies are now changing the focus on recovery of the health system in the bombarded areas.
- Due to the seriously damaged road infrastructure, destroyed bridges and traffic jams, humanitarian transportation to the south of Lebanon continue to encounter delays.
- UN offices are now being established in Tyre and Saida.

Situation Overview

- The total dead toll of the war in Lebanon according to the Higher Relief Committee is 1,110, with 3,941 injured. Hostilities continued until five minutes before the official initiation of the UN resolution, causing serious damage to civil infrastructure and killing at least 20 more people in South Beirut and South Lebanon.
- The Lebanese Minister of Public Health in today's health cluster meeting declared that the recovery strategy for the health system in South Lebanon focuses on establishing fixed health facilities, where needed, rather than mobile clinics. The Minister also urges for continuous strengthening of the coordination between all health partners, to avoid duplication of efforts.
- Several deaths caused by unexploded ordnances (UXO) in South Lebanon have already been reported. The UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) together with local NGOs sent a team to Nabatiyeh to disseminate education leaflets and posters among the population, to increase awareness about the risk of between 6-10,000 UXOs, especially focusing on children.
- Out patient consultation was resumed at the public hospital in Baalbek with MSF and Ministry of Public Health doctors working hand in hand

Health Response to the Humanitarian Crisis

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

1. Assessment and monitoring

Lebanon

- WHO is supporting the Ministry of Public Health in finalizing a rapid health facilities assessment for South Lebanon by tomorrow. Data collection on hospitals is currently ongoing. A more comprehensive assessment covering the 600 health facilities as operational in Lebanon before the crisis is expected to be finalized in two weeks. So far, WHO has confirmed that one health facility in Baalbek has been totally destroyed, while several others are reportedly functioning for only 40%.
- UNICEF is planning to conduct a malnutrition survey targeting children. WHO and UNICEF are looking into combining the survey results with the Early Warning and Response System.

2. Health coordination

Lebanon

- The health cluster meeting was held today, with approximately 50 health partners attending, followed by a coordination meeting of all international NGOs. To streamline specific technical aspects of the health response, sub-cluster meetings on mental health, nutrition, reproductive health, water and sanitation, and health promotion are organized on a regular basis.
- WHO will be leading the technical subgroup of the Water and Sanitation cluster.
- Geographical mapping of health activities is ongoing, to ensure equal distribution of supplies to the population in need. ICRC and WHO will be closely collaborating in the supply of fuel and drugs to health facilities in South Lebanon.
- The Ministry of Public Health mechanism for drug distribution through NGOs, which existed before the conflict, will remain and be adapted according to the changing needs due to population movements.
- WHO provided the NGO Response International with drugs, and additional supplies will be sent to Nabatiye and Jezinne hospitals.
- The French Cooperation donated 12 tons of drugs to the Ministry of Public Health, and international and local NGOs. A boat with 1500 tons of supplies, including drugs, cars, beds, etc will arrive on Thursday. The French Cooperation is coordinating with all humanitarian aid agencies for distribution of these supplies.
- Reproductive health and nutrition experts from WHO are currently in Lebanon to coordinate with the Ministry of Public Health and other health partners the establishment of practical and effective working strategies with a special focus on population in shelters.

Syria

- OCHA Syria reports that approximately 10,000 persons staying in schools have already moved back to Lebanon. The Syrian Red Crescent remains the main agency in the management of refugee shelters in the country.

3. Filling health gaps

Lebanon

- WHO is currently offloading in Beirut port a total of 67 tons of fuel to be distributed to 18 hospitals in Tyre, Saida and Nabatiye. The supply should enable the hospitals to function for at least ten days.
- ICRC and MSF are providing fuel for hospitals in Tyre, as well as chronic disease drugs in Baalbek

- UNHCR has sent five emergency mobile teams to the main transit routes from Syria to Lebanon to hand out water, blankets, mattresses and other items to the returning population.
- The Swiss Cooperation together with the Health Council is providing dialysis fluids to the Hotel Dieu de France Hospital.
- World Vision is providing medical supplies to dispensaries in Burj Hammoud, Nabaa, and Sin el Fil.
- MSF continues to supply medical supplies to 11 hospitals: 4 in Sour (Tyre) and 7 in Jezzine, Nabatiye, Jobb Jannine, Qaraaoun and Niha. In each of its three outpatient clinics in Saïda (Sidon), MSF is seeing about 40 patients a day, while MSF mobile teams treat 400 patients a week in Sour and 650 in Beirut. An additional 130 chronic patients were treated, who were tracked through a system put in place between MSF and the Ministry of Public Health.

4. Preserving and supporting local health systems

Lebanon

- The public health laboratory at El Hariri University Hospital in Beirut was identified by WHO as the main reference laboratory for confirmation of suspected outbreaks. WHO will provide all necessary reagents and supplies for a 3-month period. The hospital agreed to provide free laboratory tests for the displaced population.
- To ensure rapid feedback of laboratory results of drinking water quality tests, WHO established agreements with the Central Laboratory in Beirut, and the Environmental Health laboratory of the Ministry of Public Health. Discussions are still ongoing with the laboratory of the El Hariri University Hospital in Beirut.

Syria

- The Syrian Ministry of Health, the Syrian Red Crescent Society and NGOs will be responsible for implementing EWARS in the camps, and WHO will provide technical assistance.

Action Required

- Assessment of the health facilities in South Lebanon needs is a top priority.
- Access to health care needs to be ensured through the reestablishment of primary health care centres in South Lebanon.

World Health Organization

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

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

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