

## Middle East Humanitarian Crisis situation report #17 Tuesday 1 August 2006

*On 12 July Israeli forces began attacking South Lebanon and the southern part of Beirut. Existing infrastructure has been severely damaged, hundreds of people have been killed and thousands injured. The crisis has been renamed the Middle East Humanitarian Crisis.*

*WHO and other health partners are supporting the national authorities in meeting urgent needs like access to safe drinking water, health care, vaccines and life-saving medications.*



Picture: WHO/Christopher Black

Dr Ziad Mansour from WHO Lebanon talks to an elderly man at a school housing families displaced from Southern Lebanon.  
31 July 2006

### Highlights

- WHO in Lebanon is concentrating on the procurement of medications for chronic disease and mobilization of appropriate medical and public health staff.
- Relief aid in Lebanon is ongoing despite numerous obstacles. Three convoys with supplies from the World Food Programme and UNICEF departed for South Lebanon today.
- The UN staff in Beirut currently totals 119, including three security officers en route.
- WHO plans to open an emergency office in Cyprus for the next six months to support the Ministry of Health in managing the public health aspects of the influx of refugees and Third Country Nationals arriving from Lebanon.

### General impact

- The remaining population in South Lebanon, primarily elderly and disabled, lack access to health care, medication, drinking water and food.
- Large quantities of drugs available in the WHO and Ministry of Public Health warehouses are expired and unusable.

### Health impact

#### *Lebanon*

- Shortage of safe drinking and bathing water in temporary shelters remains a key problem.
- Palestinian refugee camps run by UNRWA in the bombarded areas in South Lebanon remain comparatively safe.
- The Lebanese Red Cross Society, together with international emergency forces, are still recovering bodies from the rubble in the bombarded villages in South Lebanon.

#### *Syria*

- Many Lebanese refugees are staying in shelters provided by the Syrian government and Syrian Red Crescent Society. However, a significant number are also staying with host families.

*Lebanon and Syria*

- WHO urges all health partners providing psychological support to the displaced population in both Lebanon and Syria to follow WHO guidelines on the use of mental health drugs.

**Health response**

The WHO and partners are providing support in four areas:

**1. Assessment and monitoring***Lebanon*

- Continuous monitoring of the health situation in the temporary shelters is a joint activity between the Ministry of Public Health, WHO and other health partners.

*Syria*

- Interagency rapid needs assessments will be conducted in two newly established temporary shelters. The two teams will comprise experts from UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, and the Red Crescent. WHO is joining UNHCR in the assessment visit to Aleppo, North Syria, where at least 30,000 refugees will be housed.

*Lebanon and Syria*

- Interagency Transport and Logistics Standard Operating Procedures were developed by the Logistic Cluster Group to facilitate the supply of humanitarian relief materials to areas in Lebanon most affected by the recent conflict.
- The management and movement of all UN humanitarian cargo on the corridors will be controlled by a UN Humanitarian Cargo Coordination Centre in Beirut to be managed by the WFP.

**2. Health coordination***Lebanon*

- The UN Country Team in Lebanon is working on a comprehensive humanitarian Program of Action that covers all sectors. A draft will be circulated to UN agencies and cluster leads within the next 24 hours for reviews and comments. The final agreed document should be available by tomorrow.
- WHO Representative Beirut continues daily meetings with the Ministry of Public Health.

*Syria*

- WHO is compiling a health cluster matrix with updated information on 'Who is Doing What and Where' in Syria.

**3. Filling health gaps***Lebanon*

- The measles immunization campaign organized by the Ministry of Public Health and supported by WHO and UNICEF is starting tomorrow in 144 centers hosting displaced people in the Beirut area for all children from nine months to five years of age. Children will also be given vitamin A.
- Al-Islami Hospital in Tripoli and Makassed Hospital in Beirut are providing dialysis to patients with renal failure.
- UNRWA continues to support the displaced population housed in UNRWA schools with the necessary items such as safe drinking water.

- WHO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health and UNRWA, is arranging more warehouse space to ensure adequate storage of large quantities of supplies.
- UNRWA delivered medical supplies, including vaccines and insulin, as well as Oral Rehydration Salts to their clinics in Ein el-Hilweh and Saida area.
- UNRWA schools at Sibliin were handed over to the Hariri foundation, which is taking care of displaced families. UNRWA provides medical support through regular visits of doctors and routine services such as antenatal care, postnatal care, family planning, child health care, immunization, provision of medications, health education, laboratory and radiological services and dental care in the UNRWA Health Centres.

#### *Syria*

- Responding to reports of cases of measles and mumps, the Ministry of Health and UNICEF will start vaccinating all children under the age of 5 against meningitis, polio, and measles, mumps, and rubella. Children between the 5 and 15 years will only be vaccinated against measles. The campaign will be carried out by 53 mobile teams together with fixed medical points and will last 10 days.
- UNFPA has been distributing hygienic kits, and essential drugs to Lebanese refugees, and provides reproductive health services through mobile clinics.

#### *Lebanon and Syria*

- The Brazilian embassy will provide 15 standard kits (5 for Syria and 10 for Lebanon) through WHO. Each kit is sufficient for 9,000 persons.

### **4. Preserving and supporting local health systems**

#### *Lebanon*

- WHO is mobilizing staff to deploy to South Lebanon to serve the health needs of the affected population.

#### *Syria*

- The early warning and response system will be implemented as a pilot project in four refugee camps. WHO will produce a weekly mortality and morbidity summary, which will be widely disseminated to all health partners.
- A fourth workshop on psychosocial support will be conducted tomorrow.

### **Urgent needs**

- Supply of chlorine tablets for safe drinking water, as well as hygiene education to minimize the number of diarrhoea cases.
- Essential medicines for all chronic diseases, including HIV/AIDS, are urgently needed.

## Pledges

Pledges received by WHO to date for the Lebanon crisis (information not yet available from other partners) are depicted in the table below. WHO is currently funded at 38%, and the funding shortfall stands at US\$ 8,013,508.

Health Partner	Donor	Amount	US\$ Equivalent
WHO	Australia	AUS\$ 500,000	364,964
WHO	Italy	€ 200,000	251,256
WHO	Ireland	€ 100,000	125,628
WHO	Sweden	US\$ 600,000	600,000
WHO	Canada	CAN\$ 750,000	669,643
WHO	ECHO	€ 500,000	628,141
WHO	Norway	NOK 8,000,000	1,271,860

United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) US\$ 1,000,000

## World Health Organization

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

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