

**BI-WEEKLY
SITUATION REPORT
WHOLE OF SYRIA**

Issue 10 | 16 – 31 May 2021











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1. COVID-19 Update

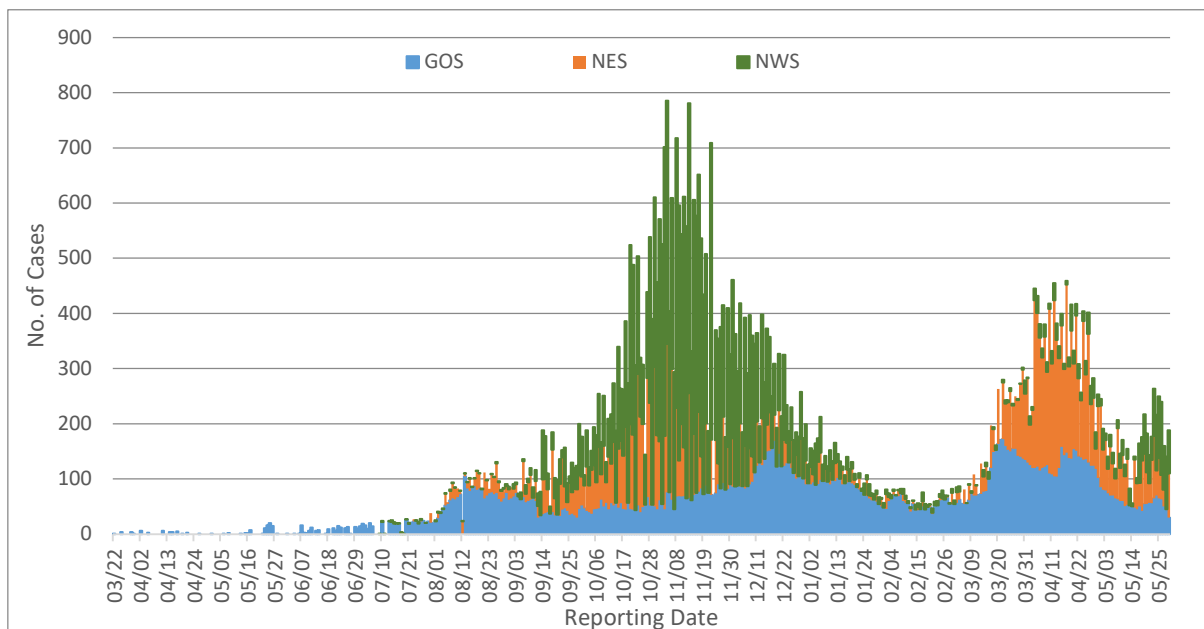
1.1. COVID-19 Statistical Summary at Whole of Syria Level

As of 29 May 2021

	65 592	Total cases (including 4 545 health workers)
	18 427	Active cases
	44 009	Recovered cases
	3 156	Deaths
	4.8%	Case Fatality Rate (CFR)
	14	COVID-19 functional laboratories
	263 366	COVID-19 tests done
	1 291	Overall testing rate per 100 000 population
	322	Incidence rate per 100 000 population (highest in Al-Hasakeh; 995)
	24.9%	Positivity rate (highest in As-Sweida; 71.6%)

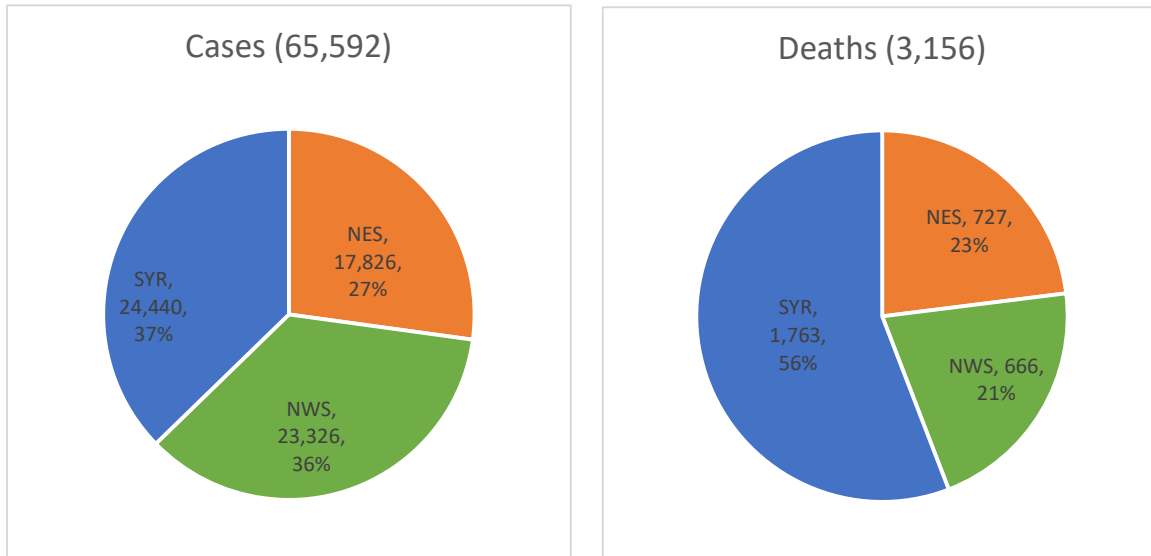
1.2. Daily Distribution of COVID-19 Cases at Whole of Syria Level

22 March 2020 – 29 May 2021 (n = 65 592)



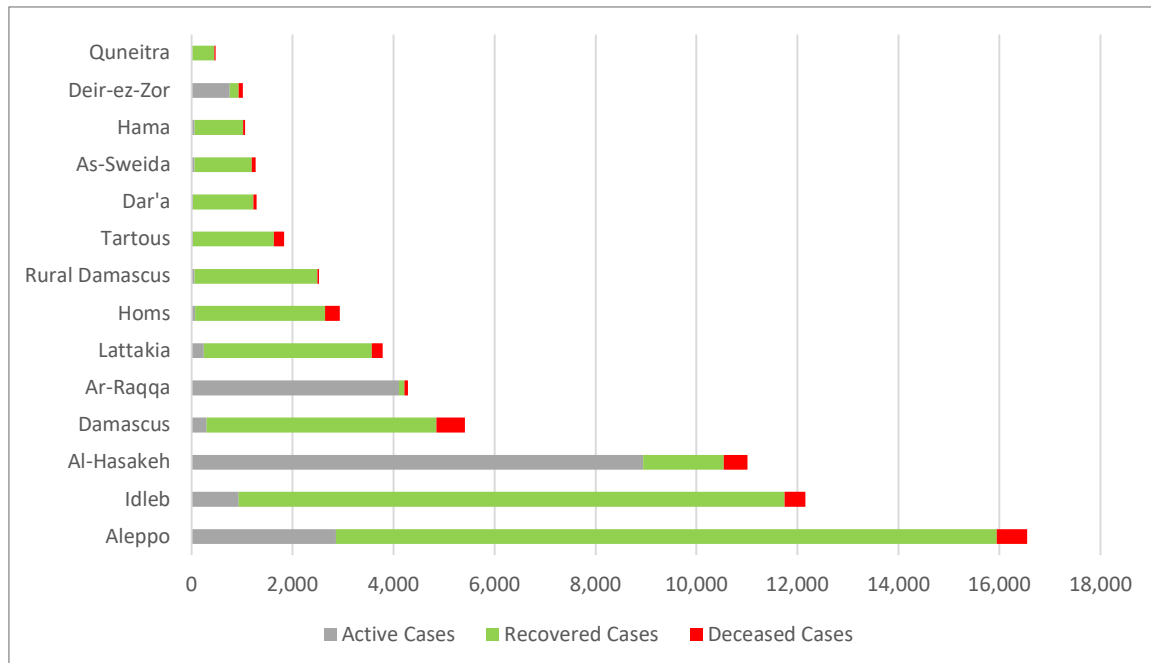
1.3. Distribution of COVID-19 Cases and Deaths at Whole of Syria Level

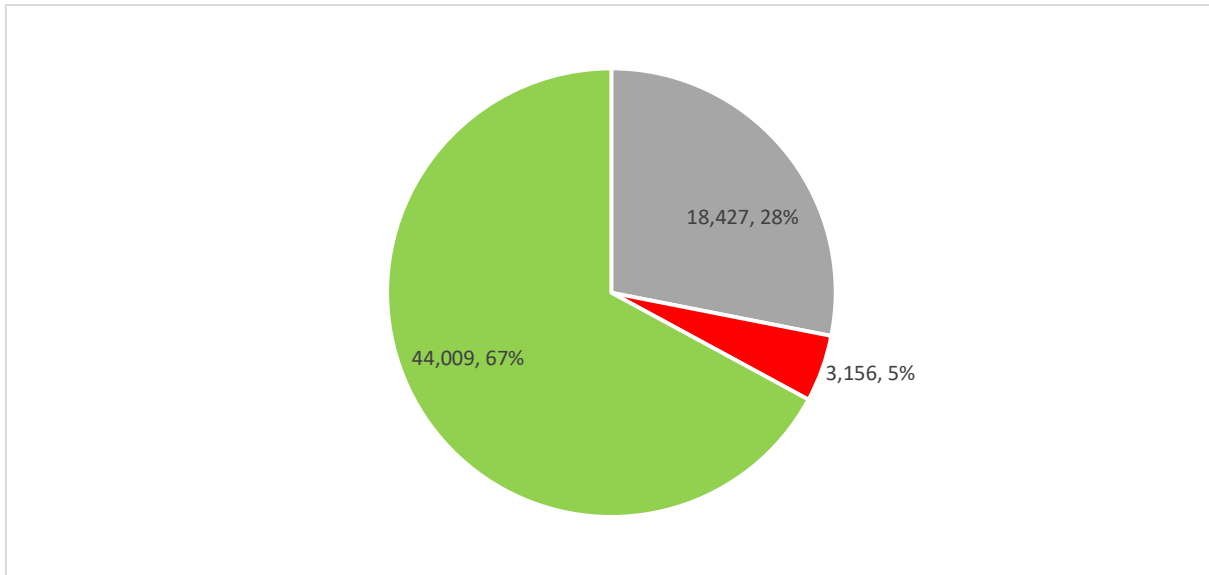
22 March 2020 – 29 May 2021



1.4. Distribution of COVID-19 Cases and Deaths by Governorate and Outcome

22 March 2020 – 29 May 2021





2. WHO-Syria Response

2.1. COVID-19 Response

2.1.1. Update on COVAX Vaccines

- Vaccination of health workers in Aleppo with AstraZeneca SII Covishield vaccine (COVAX) began on Monday, 17 May 2021, and on 18 May in most of the governorates. In Hassakeh the campaign started on 23 May.
- According to MoH micro-plan, 72 hospitals and 116 PHC will provide vaccination using 206 fixed teams in addition to 100 mobile teams assigned to cover high-risk groups and remote areas.
- As of 24 May a total of 24,781 people were vaccinated in all governorates, most of them are health workforce.
- WHO has been providing technical support in the development of the pre-registration system and the production of printed materials (cards, reporting forms, registers, Adverse Effects Following Immunization materials).
- The Organization has also supported the operational costs of vaccine delivery, fixed and mobile teams, supervisory visits, central operational room, and other related activities.
- There are currently no clear details as to when the second batch of AZ vaccines will arrive.

Northeast Syria Updates:

A. Vaccine doses and priority groups

- COVID-19 vaccination in Northeast Syria (NES) is implemented as part of the national immunization programme of Syria, which serves as an overall vaccination framework in all of Syria regardless of areas of control.
- The first batch of AstraZeneca vaccines provided to Syria through the COVAX facility has been airlifted to Quamishli (Al-Hasakeh governorate) on 3 May 2021. In total, **17 500 doses** were shipped to Quamishli airport; **13 320 doses** of which were allocated for Al-Hasakeh governorate and **4 180 doses** were allocated for Self-Administration controlled areas of Deir-Ez-Zor governorate.
- An additional **6 000 doses** (expected to be sent by road) have been allocated to cover the needs of Self-Administration controlled areas in Ar-Raqqa governorate.
- After local authorities in Northeast Syria (NES) put a stop to vaccination activities, strenuous negotiations, moderated by WHO, led to the identification of a vaccination site at which healthcare

workers (HW) started receiving doses since 25 May. The following day local authorities in Quamishli agreed to expand the vaccination to larger areas to cover the whole NES. Only health workers will be targeted in NES until 5 June, after which other priority groups will be vaccinated.

- Allocated doses for northeast Syria are sufficient to cover 100% of the health workers (**around 8 900**) with two doses, which is more than what other governorates received (around 80%). The target vaccination groups are all healthcare workers, including those affiliated with the Government of Syria's (GoS) Directorate of Health, Self Administration's Local Health Authority, Kurdish Red Crescent, cross-border INGOs, and camp-based health workers.
- Prioritizing health care workers is an essential component of COVID-19 vaccination activities in NES. Healthcare workers are the frontline service providers who serve local populations as the first point of care in health facilities around Northeast Syria. They play a crucial role in fighting the pandemic; hence their vaccination is of utmost importance.

B. COVID-19 vaccine rollout arrangement

- **Al-Hasakeh governorate:** On 18 May 2021, the vaccination rollout in Al-Hasakeh governorate started at limited fixed vaccination sites in areas controlled by the Government of Syria and Self-Administration (SA), targeting mostly health workers from the Directorate of Health (DoH). A wide-scale COVID-19 vaccination campaign was launched in Al-Hasakeh governorate on 23 May 2021 using the AstraZeneca vaccines provided through the COVAX facility. A mix of fixed and mobile vaccination teams have been deployed. The vaccination teams are targeting all health workers in the governorate irrespective of their affiliation (GoS and Self-Administration). While the DoH has mentioned that they would target the elderly, people with comorbidities and the health workforce as part of the first phase of vaccination. WHO advocated for prioritizing healthcare workers before offering the vaccines to the next priority group (elderly people aged 55+).
- **Ar-Raqqa governorate:** Ar-Raqqa DOH received 1 000 doses of AZ vaccines (out of approximately 6 000 doses allocated for Ar-Raqqa). Details of the vaccine rollout in Ar-Raqqa are currently being developed. As of 27 May 2021, WHO was informed that the MoH planned to deploy around eight fixed vaccination teams in areas controlled by the Self-Administration. WHO is following up with the health authorities to get more information.
- **Deir-Ez-Zor governorate:** About 12 fixed vaccination teams are planned to be deployed in various areas controlled by Self-Administration to vaccinate the healthcare workers. Several mobile vaccination teams were also planned to be deployed. Same as in Ar-Raqqa governorate, WHO is in contact with health authorities to expand the vaccination efforts.
- **Aleppo governorate:** Two vaccination teams are on stand-by in Aleppo governorate to access Kobani and Manbij, pending approval from the Self-Administration.

C. Challenges and WHO's role in addressing them

- Certain challenges have been faced since the vaccination campaign was launched. WHO intervened and mediated with health authorities in NES to agree on operational and technical elements of the vaccination campaign. After a full day of negotiations, WHO was able to bring both sides for the vaccination in Al-Hasakeh Hospital on 25 May 2021, where several health care workers from the Self-Administration were vaccinated by the DoH.
- This has been a trust-building exercise and WHO hopes to gradually build upon this first step and expand vaccination to a greater number of individuals representing the target vaccination group, if need be, visiting various districts including camps and camp-like settings. This is an incremental process that requires quiet diplomacy and balanced efforts aiming to keep health away from excessive politicization. In this process, all parties are called on to support and sustain health efforts around COVID-19 vaccination in NES.
- While negotiations around vaccination appear to be yielding results, the vaccine expiry date, which is August 2021, is of particular concern. By this time, significant vaccination coverage should be ensured with both doses (each 8-12 weeks apart) as part of the first phase of vaccination.

Northwest Syria Updates:

A. Targeted groups and type/amount of vaccine:

- Health workers: more than 21,313 individuals
- Community workers: more than 25000 individuals
- 53,800 doses (AstraZeneca SII) reached Adana on 19/4 and delivered to Mersin warehouse on the same day, it was transported to NWS on 21/4/2021 and now stored in the main cold room, the expiry date for the Vaccine is August 2021.
- The campaign started on 1st of May as planned with two teams (one in Idlib and one in Aleppo).
- Other 93 teams started joining the campaign incrementally starting from 3 May according to their micro plans.
- Till 23 May a total of 11,579 health workers and social workers were vaccinated, 2,016 females (17%) and 9,563 males (83%), 7,243 were Health Care Workers and 4,336 were social workers.

B. Challenges

- There was some hesitancy among the health staff due to the negative effect of rumors in the social media, there is gradual increase in the numbers of vaccinated beneficiaries.
- Several virtual meetings with the health facility management are planned to motivate the staff to get their vaccination.
- There are some difficulties in coordination with non-health NGO. And we are waiting the feedback from administration of these NGO.

2.1.2. Points of Entry (PoE)

- WHO continues to support the Ministry of Health (MoH) to enhance the national capacity for preparedness and response to health emergencies and to ensure health security under International Health Regulations (2005), including strengthening the core capacity at points of entry (PoE).
- MoH and WHO are working to equip the medical point in Al-Boukamal, Deir-Ez-Zor with medical devices and furniture to make it functional for providing health access to travellers. WHO is also working on rehabilitating and equipping two further medical points: one at Al-Dabbousieh ground-crossing in Homs, and one in Jdayet Yabous in Rural Damascus.
- WHO supported MoH in the delivery of a workshop on enhancing preparedness and response capacity at PoE, with a focus on Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures and the management of unwell travellers. The workshop, held at MoH between 25 and 27 May, was attended by 25 officials from Directorates of Health in nine governorates (Al-Hasakeh, Aleppo, Deir-Ez-Zor, Tartous, Lattakia, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Homs and Dar'a).

2.2. Environmental Health

- WHO has been monitoring the water quality, testing for chemical and biological contamination of different water sources, such as water networks, ground wells, reservoirs, water tanks, jerrycans, and running culture tests to identify pathogens.
- During the reporting period, 89 tests were conducted in three villages in northern and eastern parts of rural Aleppo, 36 tests in 11 districts in Rural Damascus, and 1 253 tests in NES (Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and Deir-Ez-Zor) including at eight IDPs camps and collective shelters. Among them, 28 water sources in Rural Aleppo, 18 sources in Rural Damascus and 145 sources (mainly jerrycans) in NES were found to be contaminated and were sterilized.
- WHO is preparing to conduct an awareness campaign at six IDP camps in NES (Al-Hol, Al-Areesheh, Abu Khashab, Mahmudli, Al-Roj and Nowruz) between June and November. The campaign will focus on the delivery of key messages related to the safe use of water and the prevention of water-borne diseases, in addition to distributing chlorine tablets and information, education, and communication (IEC) materials.

- To respond to the increased risk of water-borne diseases during the summertime, WHO provided 60 000 NaDCC water disinfectant (purification) tablets to partners at Al-Hol camp to ensure water safety for the most vulnerable population.
- WHO is coordinating with the governorate of Deir-Ez-Zor to expand monitoring of drinking water quality as of June 2021.

2.3. Health Sector Coordination

The Syria National Health Sector:

- Followed up with 13 health sector partners and guided the revision of HRP projects. A second technical review, held between 20-27 May together with the technical review committee (TRC), focused on 13 revised HRP health projects.
- Collected biweekly operational updates from health partners, and prepared and disseminated the biweekly report outlining activities and updates for the period of 1 - 15 May 2021.
- Prepared a draft HCT presentation, shared it with WHE TL for the HCT meeting conducted on 19 May, and provided input on the UNCT presentation.
- Participated in ICC meetings held on 17 and 31 May, and provided health sector operational updates with a focus on HRP projects, review, COVID-19 situation and COVAX.
- Attended a call with the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) on 17 May to discuss and finalize the terms of reference for the review of coordinated health interventions in Syria.
- Participated in the most recent bi-weekly inter-hub meeting (18 May) attended by NES Forum partners, WHO, UNICEF and OCHA.
- Participated in a webinar titled “COVID-19 Pandemic: New Waves and Variants” on 17 May.
- Participated in Whole of Syria (WoS) weekly meetings held on 19 and 26 May 2021.
- Organized and conducted Health Sector coordination meeting on 25 May 2021.
- Worked with the Head of WHO Health Information Management Unit (HIMU) to review and finalize the Response Monitoring Indicators for the COVID-19 Response.

The Northeast Syria coordination team:

- Attended several regular and ad-hoc meetings, including a meeting with FCDO to discuss the ToR for health sector response coordination (17 May) and WoS regular weekly calls (19 and 26 May).
- Contributed health sector inputs to Al-Hol camp coordination meetings (18 and 25 May) and presented information on the health situation and gaps in the COVID-19 treatment facility.
- Contributed to a series of meetings with WHO Damascus and EMRO focused on COVID-19 vaccination in NES; prepared a package of briefing documents shared by EMRO colleagues, NES Forum partners and other humanitarian partners.
- Hosted a regular bi-weekly inter-hub meeting (18 May) involving NES Forum partners, WHO, UNICEF and OCHA; Presented on COVID-19 vaccination in NES.
- Hosted a meeting with the Sector focal points (18 May) to address the gaps and needs in isolation areas/COVID-19 treatment facilities in camps in NES. A follow-up meeting was held on 25 May.
- Hosted a Sub-National Health Sector coordination meeting (24 May) as well as regular health sector coordination meetings for Mahmudli, Al-Areesheh (19 May), Al-Hol (20 and 27 May) and Al-Roj camps (26 May).

2.4. COVID-19 Laboratories

- The central public health laboratory (CPHL) has initiated nine training workshops on biosafety, biosecurity and good laboratory practice. The first workshop, which began on 23 May, targeted laboratory technicians in 11 governorates.

2.5. Communicable Diseases

- WHO has supported UNRWA through the provision of 108 000 mebendazole chewable tablets for the next deworming campaign and 12 cholera community kits to help combat summer diarrheal diseases.
- Preparation for leishmania indoor insecticide residual spraying campaigns has begun. The campaigns will target neighbourhoods in Aleppo and Deir-Ez-Zor with a high burden of leishmaniasis cases.

2.6. Routine Immunization

- WHO supported the delivery of 13 seminars on the surveillance of vaccine-preventable diseases, targeting private and public sector entities in a bid to improve the quality and timeliness of reporting of suspected cases and accelerate response readiness. 325 participants from Aleppo, Lattakia, Tartous, Al-Hassakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deirezzor, Damascus, Rural-Damascus, Qunaitra, Daraa, As-Sweida, Homs and Hama attended the workshop.
- WHO also supported the delivery of two quarterly workshops for 50 participants from all governorates on vaccination coverage to review achievements and endorse innovative solutions to boost coverage.
- A mid-level management training workshop for vaccine program officers has been planned for the end of May 2021.

2.7. Primary Health Care and Non-Communicable Diseases

The PHC and NCD units:

- Continued to follow up on oral health activities in eastern Ghouta (EG) schools supported by WHO country office. To date, a total of 1 298 students have received 12 396 dental services. They include a clinical examination and therapeutic services, as well as preventive and health promotion sessions attended by 3 473 students and 106 teachers.
- Supported a 2-day training workshop, delivered in coordination with MoH, on data collection for the private sector (PS) assessment study in Syria and the role of PS in achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
- Continued to prepare for activities to be held around “World No-Tobacco Day” (31 May) in coordination with MoH team; four workshops planned for Damascus will target media focal points and tobacco coordinators at the government level, while a seminar with the Youth Union will include a promotional performance focusing tobacco prevention among youth.
- Delivered an in-kind donation of lifesaving medicines including PHC/NCD medicines, 3 NCD kits, 17 050 insulin vials, scabies solutions, and 7 300 copies of NCD guidelines, dispatched to health partners in Damascus (MoH, MoHE), Quamishli (KRC Al-Areesheh Camp), Lattakia (Syrian Youth Council, Mosaic NGO, Syrian Youth Council, Syrian Association for Children with Special Needs, Giving Heart NGO), Aleppo (DoH, SARC Aleppo, ASSLS, Aleppo Hub, Al-Ihsan Charity). 68 320 PHC treatment courses have been provided.



WHO supports the delivery of oral health care in Rural Damascus.

2.8. Secondary and Tertiary Health Care (STHC)

The SHC and THC units:

- Delivered in-kind donations of lifesaving medicines, including 7 000 vials of Human Erythropoietin Injection, 4 000 IU for kidney failure, antibiotics injection, ICU medicines, NCD medicines, 1 900 items of

dialysis supplies and medical consumables had been delivered to health partners in Aleppo (DoH, Menbij National Hospital, Al-Ihsan Charity, Aleppo Hub), Lattakia (Mosaic, Syrian Youth Council, Syrian Association for Children with Special Needs, Giving Heart NGO), Al-Hasakeh (Al-Hasakeh Health Authority).

- Held a joint meeting with the MoH research team to discuss proposals related to the regional rollout of the WHO CureAll guidelines, the WHO Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer.
- Supported the Ministry of Education (MoE) by providing a second batch of IPC/PPE supplies to be used during the national exams of grades 9 and 12. They included 145 000 surgical masks, 200 promotion posters, 700 bottles of 70% alcohol hand rub, and 454 COVID-19 posters.
- Donated 20 966 pieces of IPC/PPE equipment to the Quamishli PCR Lab, Areesheh Camp Management, KRC Areesheh Camp and KRC Al-Roj Camp in Al-Hasakeh, Quamishli Hub. Supplies included 7 450 surgical masks, 220 coveralls, 170 goggles, 220 protective gowns, 11 700 gloves, 400 bottles of 60% alcohol hand rub, 800 headcovers, and 6 infrared thermometers.

2.9. Trauma

- 351 992 treatments of life-saving medicines and supplementary kits, as well as 40 trauma kits for 4 000 trauma cases, were delivered to health partners in Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-Ez-Zor, Homs, Damascus and Lattakia. These deliveries aim to enhance the capacity of the public health facilities for a timely and appropriate response for emergency cases, including cases of COVID-19.
- 128 persons with disability benefited from various assistive devices delivered to local NGOs in Lattakia and Hama.
- 100 health workers from Damascus, Hama and Rural Damascus received training on “Dealing with chemical attacks and hazard materials”, “First aid and basic life support”, and “Advanced child and adult life support”. The training courses are intended for health professionals (doctors, nurses, and anaesthesia technicians) working in isolation centres and intensive care units (ICU) and emergency departments.
- 75 health workers from Damascus and Rural Damascus (prosthetics and orthotics technicians, physiotherapists and physiatrists) received training delivered at the MoH centre of prosthetics and rehabilitation in Damascus in the field of disability and rehabilitation. The workshops included “The procedures and preparations of physical rehabilitation during of COVID-19 pandemic”, “manufacturing the above-knee prosthesis - quadrilateral socket design”, and “therapeutic exercise for children with cerebral palsy”.

2.10. Tuberculosis (TB) / HIV

- Two of three TB mobile clinics remain functional in the governorates of Aleppo and Rural Damascus. A total of 783 beneficiaries have benefited from 20 TB awareness-raising sessions, during which 329 suspected cases were tested, five of which were confirmed as positive.
- TB active case finding in prisons began in six governorates. During the two-week reporting period, a total of 7 810 beneficiaries benefited from TB awareness-raising sessions. Among the 802 suspected cases that were tested for TB, 12 were confirmed positive.
- Regular activities for both TB and HIV programs were conducted as planned. They included supervision visits by National TB program staff to TB centres in Quneitra, Hama and Homs and for national AIDS program staff to the AIDS centre in Homs. Moreover, four educational sessions were delivered to youths and a Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) workshop was delivered as part of the HIV program in Damascus.

2.11. Mental Health (MH)

The Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) team:

- Together with the health directorate at the MoE, worked on synchronizing the mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) basic and advanced interventions for students coming to government-controlled areas.
- Provided 8 978 consultations through implementing partners across Syria during April 2021.
- Continues its preparations for the national MH workshop with directors at MoH and focal points at the governorate level to evaluate the mental health programme activities and implementations of 2019 and 2020, the MHPSS referral pathway system, and the monitoring and evaluation, as well as to develop the plan for expanding the integration of MH with new programmes such as health promotion, smoking cessation, and community-based interventions through the healthy village programme and midwives.
- Conducted several coordination bilateral meetings with MH partners (UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, Medair, Oxfam, Syrian Society for Social Development (SSSD) as well as other NGOs) to provide technical MHPSS support and explore different joint project opportunities.
- Drafted staff care and stress management plans for UNFPA and Oxfam national staff.
- Together with MoH and MoE, conducted 14 capacity-building activities, targeting health staff and school health workers in nine governorates, on the Mental Health GAP (mhGAP) programme, Psychological First Aid (PFA), and First-Line Support. Health and community workers trained on the MHPSS programme are provided with continuous technical assistance.
- In collaboration with the communication and NGO units, conducted meetings to finalize the technical and operational aspects of the “My Hero is You” campaign under the COVID-19 RCCE pillar, targeting communities in Rural Damascus (Al-Tal and Al-Qutaifeh).

2.12. Nutrition

- WHO participated in the regional meeting on childhood obesity held on 24 and 25 May 2021.

2.13. External Relations and Communication

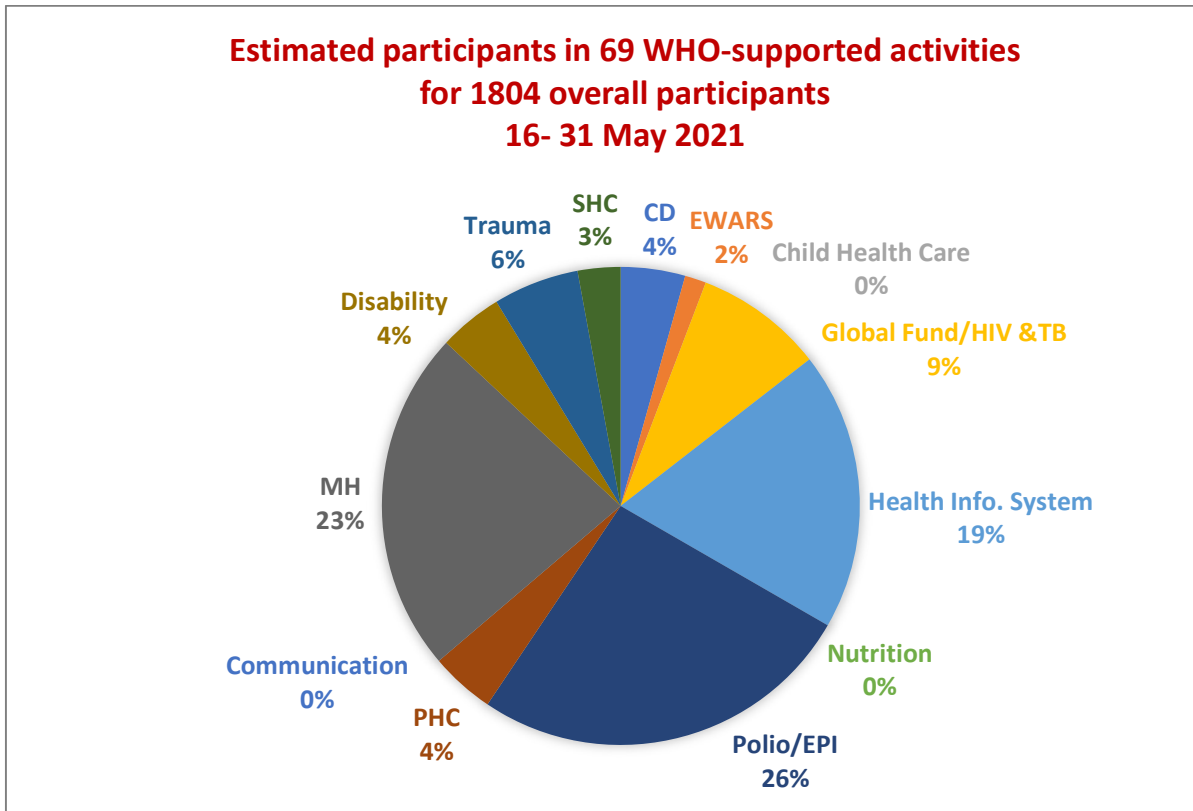
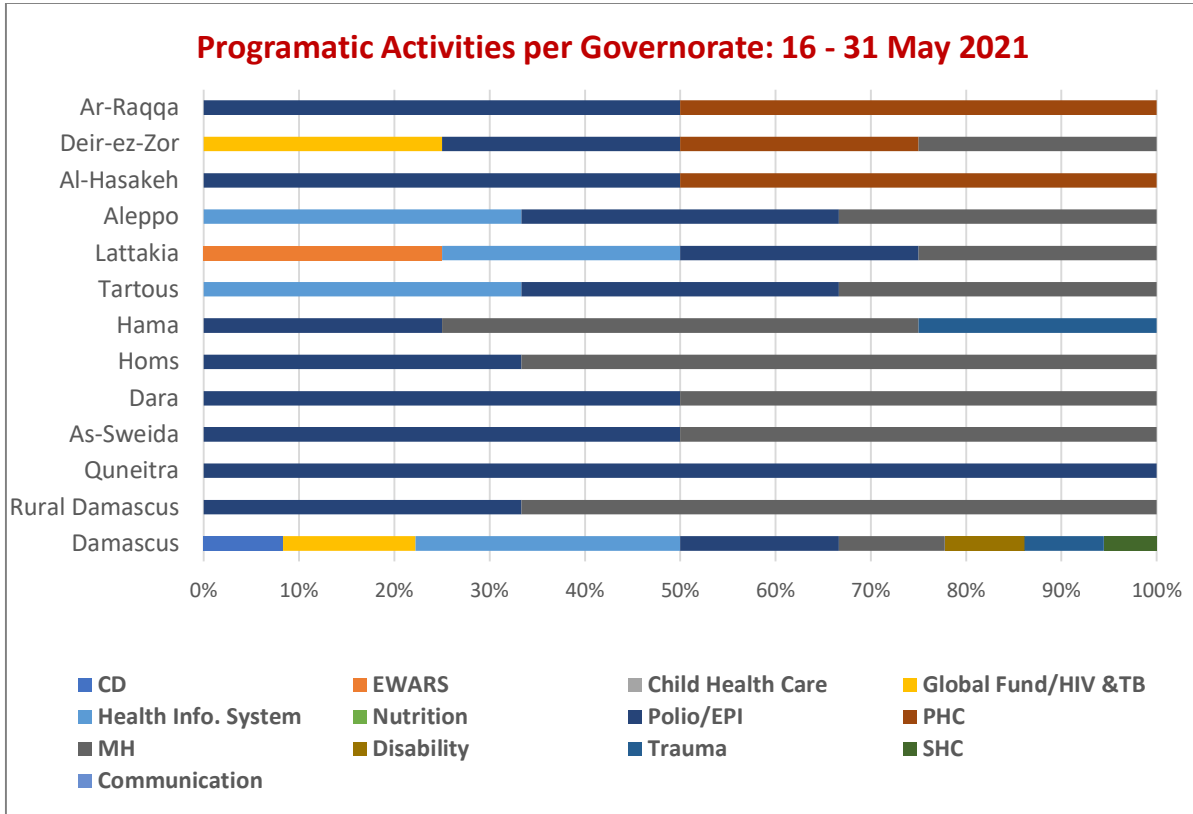
- A Risk Communication and Community Engagement expert from the regional office visited Syria to provide the support needed to scale up the RCCE response at the national level, particularly in relation to COVID-19 vaccination and demand generation.
- On the occasion of the World No Tobacco day (31 May), WHO, in close cooperation with the MoH, is preparing an advocacy media campaign that includes workshops for media professionals and tobacco control program coordinators, and the production of IEC materials and animated videos conveying the theme of this year’s event: “Commit to Quit”.
- UNICEF and WHO have developed a full-fledged media campaign to promote vaccine uptake within target groups. The media campaign is currently in the process of approval by the Ministry of Health.
- A series of posters on vaccine demand generation focused on healthcare workers, elderly and those with comorbidities are being developed to support the demand generation communication in NES.

2.14. Community Engagement (NGOs)

Together with NGO partners, WHO:

- Strengthened the provision of lifesaving and life-sustaining referral-based health care services in northeast Syria. A hundred recipients benefited from trauma care services as well as 76 from advanced surgical intervention. Beneficiaries were mainly from IDP camps and informal settlements.
- Boosted the delivery of primary health care services including medical consultations and medication for child health, reproductive health and chronic diseases. 1 142 health services were provided in Damascus and Rural Damascus.
- Conducted 85 hearing evaluation tests, delivered 64 speech and language therapy sessions, and provided five hearing aids to beneficiaries in Damascus and Lattakia.

2.15. Capacity Building



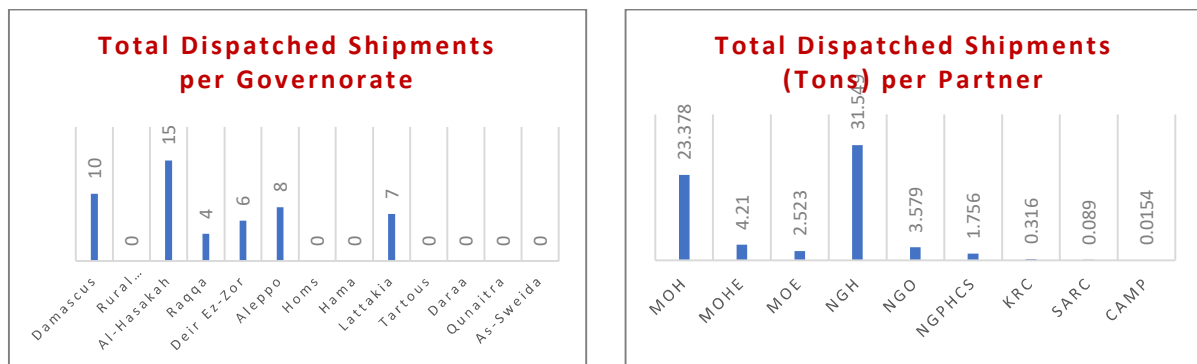
2.16. Information Products and Related Activities

Information products and activities delivered include:

- Updated HeRAMS annual report of 2020 for public hospitals in NES (Al-Hasakeh, Deir-Ez-Zor, and Ar-Raqqa).
- HeRAMS Syria conducted a follow-up meeting with Headquarters and East Mediterranean Regional Office.
- Conducted quarterly meeting with Health Information System Focal Points.
- Updated COVID-19 Dynamic Infographic Dashboard for Syria.
- Updated the online item tracking system for COVID-19 in Syria.
- Provided key information on health facilities based on HeRAMS.
- Updated Maps for health sector interventions.

2.17. Operations Support and Logistics

- WHO dispatched 67 415 tons of medical and lab supplies, kits, equipment and printing materials to six governorates (Al-Hasakah, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-Ez-Zor, Damascus, Aleppo and Lattakia). Recipients included nine MoH facilities, MoHE, MoE, 11 NGO, 15 National General Hospitals, 2 National Primary Health Centers, SARC, KRC and a camp.
- A total of 504 335 treatments were delivered and 3 900 trauma cases were addressed.



3. WHO Syria Sub-Office Response

3.1. Aleppo Hub

- During the reporting period, the daily number of COVID-19 confirmed cases decreased, as reported by MoH and the management of the Cardiovascular Hospital. Occupancy rates at COVID-19 public isolation centres varied between 75 and 90%.
- WHO conducted a meeting with UNDP to follow up on supporting disability interventions at the national and hub-level, tailoring the successful partnership with Yadan-Bi-Yad NGO, which is specialized in dealing with persons with disability, and the possibility of expanding this experience to the national level.
- A coordination meeting was conducted jointly by WHO, UNICEF and DoH Aleppo to finalize the health response for 7 000 students who will be arriving for the national exams from hard-to-reach areas in late May 2021. WHO will support seven static and mobile medical teams in two shifts to cover the essential health needs of students. Moreover, an effective referral pathway for emergency cases was developed in coordination with the ambulatory unit at Aleppo DoH.
- The number of mental health consultations supported by WHO implementing partners through April 2021 reached 1 153.

- A coordination meeting was held with UNICEF and UNFPA to discuss support of capacity development activities.
- The National AIDS Programme in Aleppo conducted an awareness workshop targeting medical students at Aleppo university. A total of 200 students participated, of whom 60 took the voluntary test for HIV. No positive cases were registered.
- As part of the National AIDS Programme, physicians at two obstetrics hospitals in Aleppo attended two training workshops focusing on the importance of the Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission (PMTCT) and the use of HIV rapid diagnostic tests by HIV-positive pregnant women.

3.2. Lattakia Hub

- WHO, in collaboration with the directorates of health and social affairs, is following up on a 1-month COVID-19 awareness-raising campaign in rural areas of Lattakia, targeting communities with low health coverage and those in areas affected by the outbreak of wildfires.
- WHO and UNICEF conducted a joint visit to the COVID-19 vaccination centre at the Obstetrics and Paediatrics Hospital in Lattakia.
- A COVID-19 vaccination campaign began in Tartous on 18 May targeting 8 100 beneficiaries.



WHO-run awareness-raising campaign in areas affected by wildfires in Lattakia governorate

3.3. Homs Hub

- A COVID-19 vaccination campaign began in Homs and Hama targeting health workers and people over 55 years old. The number of vaccinated HW was 3 314 in Hama and 1 918 in Homs.
- WHO supported the TB program at both Homs and Hama DoH, assisting mobile teams in surveying local prisons and investigating cases of tuberculosis among prisoners. 411 prisoners were screened and no positive cases were detected.
- In cooperation with the school health directorate in Homs and Hama, WHO conducted four training workshops for COVID-19 responders and mental health GAP facilitators on basic psychosocial skills

3.4. Deir-Ez-Zor Hub

- WHO supported the training of 25 health care workers at primary health centres in Deir-Ez-Zor governorate on infection prevention and control measures and protocols within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The workshop took place between 18 to 20 May. The WHO sub-office in Deir-Ez-Zor presented an RCCE session to the workshop participants.
- To maintain a high level of surveillance of vaccine-preventable diseases (VPD), WHO supported a 1-day seminar for health care workers in public and private health sectors, held in Deir-Ez-Zor on 23 May. 25 health care workers attended the seminar and an additional RCCE session was presented by the WHO sub-office.
- WHO supported the Medair INGO in training 25 medical doctors from public health facilities in Deir-Ez-Zor on mhGAP - phase 1 to build the capacity of non-psychiatrist doctors in the management of basic mental health disorders that have significantly increased throughout the Syrian crisis. The workshop took place from 23 to 27 May, during which an RCCE



Capacity building training on COVID-19 IPC measures in Deir-Ez-Zor governorate

session by the WHO sub-office was also presented. Discussions included the role of medical doctors, as key influencers in the community, to promote and encourage high-risk people to take the COVID-19 vaccine.

- In coordination with Deir-Ez-Zor DoH and MH unit at WHO country office, the hub team finalized a draft proposal and budget for COVID-19 community engagement, awareness-raising and MHPSS campaign in Deir-Ez-Zor governorate. Campaign key activities include:
 - Providing MHPSS services for in-patients admitted to the COVID-19 treatment facilities.
 - Visiting private health sector facilities to advise and encourage doctors in standard definitions and on-time notifications.
 - Conducting Focus Group Discussions in sub-districts to explore vaccine acceptance and potential reasons for refusal.
 - Conducting awareness-raising sessions in locations with a high risk of transmission (schools, markets, mosques, etc.)
 - Visiting high-risk areas responding to rapid response team notifications of suspected cases to provide awareness-raising sessions, and essential MHPSS services to suspected cases and their families and the surrounding community, in addition to distributing face masks among affected healthcare workers
 - Distributing IEC materials.

3.5. Quamishli Hub / Northeast Syria (NES)

- Within the context of COVID-19 and the continuous collective efforts between the Ministry of Health and WHO to control the pandemic in Syria, Al-Hasakeh Directorate of Health (DoH) held a training workshop titled “Infection Prevention and Control at public health centres”. The WHO-supported workshop, held from 18 to 20 May, targeted 25 DoH health workers.
- As part of the activities undertaken by WHO to support MoH in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, Al-Hasakeh DoH started the vaccination process on 9 May, targeting front-line health workers. On 17 May, vaccination of people over 55 years old as well as those with comorbidities was initiated at nine vaccination sites, as was an expansion plan to send six mobile teams to camps and collective shelters.
- A WHO team met with DoH and health partners to follow up and ensure a smooth rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine. Several field visits were conducted to vaccination sites in Al-Hasakeh on 23, 24, 25 and 27 May to monitor and evaluate the campaign.
- Due to access issues, the COVID-19 vaccination campaign was at first impeded at camps, however, through intensive negotiation and coordination efforts by WHO, the campaign was restarted in Al-Hasakeh National Hospital and will be expanded to the rest of NES by the end of May.
- To prepare for the first phase of COVID-19 vaccine rollout, WHO followed up with:
 - Deir-Ez-Zor DoH to target 1 247 health workers among an estimated population of less than 1 300 000.
 - Ar-Raqqa DoH and local health partners to target 2 973 health workers.
 - WHO followed up with Ar-Raqqa DoH to discuss the routine vaccination micro-plan for the second quarter of 2021, which will target 7 380 children through 110 vaccinators in 22 mobile teams.
- In response to the alleged increase in water-borne diseases due to contaminated water in Quamishli city, WHO promptly investigated, visiting public and private hospitals in Quamishli city as well as the Gastro-



COVID-19 rollout at Al-Hasakeh National Hospital

intestine, Internal and Pediatric specialists, and communicating with DoH and health partners. The claims were refuted, and recommendations made to closely follow up and stay alert in case of similar reports.

- An increase in acute diarrhoea cases since early April, in parallel with the shut down of Allouk water station, was reported during WHO's visits to Al-Hasakeh National Hospital. WHO is monitoring the situation and investigating the source of contamination. Below are the figures reported by the hospital during the period 1 April – 20 May 2021:

	Children	Adults	Total
Acute Diarrhea	197	172	369
Digestive disorders	169	1 190	1 728

- Cases of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) with complications were reported as follows:

	New Admission	Recovery	Active
Al-Hikma Hospital	6	5	4
Al-Tabqa National Hospital	3	3	1

- WHO technical teams continued to monitor the quality of drinking water during regular visits to 8 camps and 20 collective shelters. 1 253 samples were tested, 11.5% of which were found to be contaminated at the jerry can level.
- In response to the increased number of cases of typhoid and acute diarrhoea in some villages in eastern Deir-Ez-Zor (Al-Husseinia district: Zagheir, Sawa and Al-Kuber villages), the Early Warning and Alert Response System (EWARS) collected nine samples from different water sources and dispatched them to the central public health lab (CPHL) in Damascus.
- WHO delivered different supplies to 26 health partners across NES, covering the needs of more than 122 000 treatments and/or beneficiaries.

4. Vaccine Updates

- For COVID-19 vaccine updates, please visit: [Update on COVID-19 Vaccination in Syria](#)

5. Useful Links

- [WHO Syria website](#)
- [Syria Interactive Dashboards](#)
- [Syria Page in Health Cluster Site](#)
- [Syria Page in EMRO Site](#)
- [EMRO Dashboard](#)
- [COVID-19 Situation in EMRO Region Reports](#)
- [Latest Global WHO Weekly Update On COVID-19](#)
- [WHO COVID-19 Country and Technical Guidance](#)
- [United Nations Office for The Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#)

6. Contact Us

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