

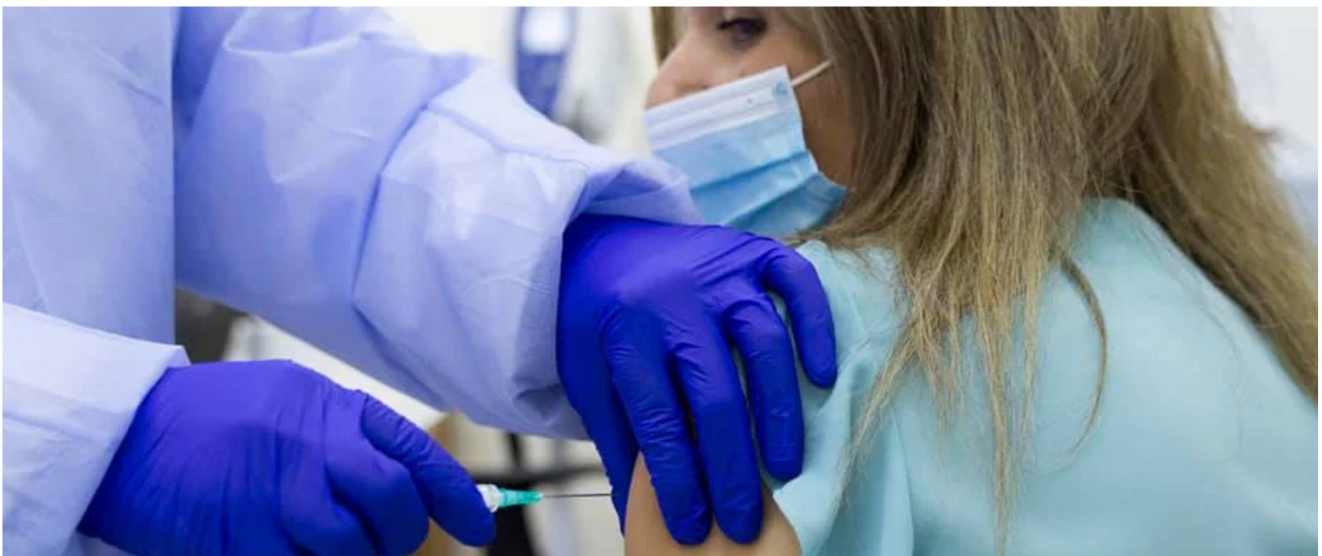
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# WHO in Syria

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## Syria completes the first phase of COVID-19 vaccination campaign



6 July 2021 – Syria received the first batch of vaccines supplied through the COVAX initiative on 21 April 2021. In total, 256 800 doses of AstraZeneca SII COVIDSHILD

### DOSES RECEIVED AND STRATEGY

256 800 Total doses received

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Deployment and vaccination Plan. The 2 different vaccination strategies are applied: in northwest Syria – all currently available vaccine quantities are dedicated for first dose vaccination, while the national immunization programme split the total quantity available into 2 and has administered first dose vaccines only, keeping the second dose in stocks for later vaccination.

**Challenges**

As in all countries, the COVID-19 vaccination has been a novel process in Syria and a number of challenges was faced since the onset of the vaccination campaign. Though healthcare workers were prioritized, some hesitated to accept a COVID-19 vaccine in general, and AZ, in particular. Vaccine demand generation was and remains especially difficult. With vaccine availability only adequate to cover 0.5% of the population of Syria – compared to the 3% initially planned by June and 20% by December 2021 – a national promotional campaign was suspended, leading to challenges in creating demand. However, as more people received vaccines, the demand also gradually rose.

**Joint efforts and way forward**

WHO and partners reached out to health care workers at health facilities and through medical syndicates to promote vaccine uptake.

As the vaccines expire in August 2021 and doses must be taken at least 8 weeks apart, the campaign was time sensitive and therefore, vaccines were offered to other groups in order to avoid waste.

Vaccine uptake was initially low across all governorates, but coverage grew as more people took the vaccine without experiencing side-effects, thus building confidence in the vaccine.

WHO works with GAVI – the Vaccine Alliance, UNICEF and its partners to secure the second batch of COVAX facilitated vaccines in the near future.

**Related link****controlled areas and northeast Syria**

*[the campaign for the first dose was completed by the end of June]*

**< 1%**

The **wastage rate** in government-controlled areas and northeast Syria

**35 021**

Total number in northwest Syria until the end of June *[vaccination campaign continues]*

**VACCINATION IN NORTHEAST SYRIA**

Northeast Syria received 22 500 doses of vaccines from the batch that were delivered to the Government of Syria under the COVAX Facility (203 000 doses), airlifted to Qamishli airport for Hassakeh, Der-Ez-Zor governorates and by road for Raqqa governorate.

The national campaign aimed to reach people in all regions of northeast Syria, irrespective of areas of control.

As of 27 June, a total of 11 012 people in northeast Syria received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine under COVAX, including 2222 health workers and 8790 people aged 55+ and people with co-morbidities.

Vaccination updates, January-June 2021

