



Increased Access to Primary Health Care for Populations in Need in War Torn Syria

4 December—In partnership with local non-governmental organizations and the Ministry of Health, IOM has recently established eight Primary Health Care Centres (PHCCs) in five governorates in Syria (Homs, Hama, Latakia, Damascus, and Aleppo). To date, these health care centres have assisted 16,922 vulnerable individuals in need of primary health care.

The protracted crisis in Syria continues to affect the lives and security of the population with devastating consequences for vulnerable groups, particularly women and children and individuals with specific health needs. The ongoing violence has led to severe disruption of public and private health services, resulting in unmet health needs of the affected population. This has contributed to increased mortality and morbidity, higher risk of outbreak of communicable disease, a higher incidence of malnutrition, and decreased reproductive health outcomes. As of September 2014, some 2.4 million people were reported to be in need of health assistance, with Ar-Raqqa Governorate reporting the highest number, followed by Aleppo and Al-Hasakeh (Multi Sector Needs Assessment, 2014).

The following PHCCs were established by IOM and its partners:

- On 31 August 2014, one PHCC in Homs started operations in coordination with Al-Inshaát Association reaching 2,500 individuals and serving areas of an estimated 55,000 inhabitants.
- On 16 September, one PHCC opened in Latakia, providing care to 4,772 vulnerable displaced individuals living in one of the biggest public shelters in Syria where the PHCC is located.
- On 26 September, one PHCC in Afrin, Aleppo, a cross-line area, began operations in coordination with Al-Ihsan Association, reaching 1,350 individuals to date and serving

an area of 140,500 inhabitants.

- On 6 October, three PHCCs opened in three neighbourhoods in Aleppo (Hamadaniyah, As Sabil, and Masharqa), providing direct services to 3,300 individuals and serving areas of approximately 143,000 inhabitants.
- On 8 November, one PHCC opened in Damascus old city, providing direct services to 2,500 individuals and serving areas of an estimated 40,000 people.
- On 14 November, one PHCC started in Hama, providing direct services to 2,500 individuals and serving areas of an estimated 20,000 inhabitants.

“The ultimate goal of primary health care is better health for all,” states Dr. Basem Stass, IOM’s Health Officer in Syria. “But more importantly, it saves the lives of vulnerable individuals and displaced and affected by the ongoing violence,” he added. The PHCCs offer a variety of essential health services, among them maternal and child healthcare, prevention and control of locally endemic diseases, treatment of common diseases and injuries, and provision of essential drugs.

Since the beginning of the crisis, IOM health programmes in Syria have reached 146,908 individuals through increased access to primary health care, and the provision of medical equipment, including disability support items.

IOM’s lifesaving health interventions are framed by international best practices for equal access to primary health care and services in order to respond to populations in need inside Syria. Bringing health services to underserved and hard-to-reach areas, in coordination with local and international humanitarian partners, is a top priority for IOM.

IOM health activities in Syria are made possible through the generous contribution of the Government of Japan and UN-OCHA’s Emergency Response Fund.

For more on IOM’s response to the Syrian crisis, [click here](#) for the latest situation report.



A doctor performs a check-up in a new PHCC. © IOM 2014

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