



ACU
ASSISTANCE
COORDINATION
UNIT



WASH
WATER
SANITATION
AND HYGIENE



منصة الموارد المائية
Syrian Water Resources Platform

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CHOLERA

IN NORTHWEST SYRIA IS A
PROVEN FATAL FACT



01. Introduction and overview

On the 17th of September 2022, the first cholera case was confirmed in Jarablus, Aleppo, then, the cholera epidemic began to spread to other areas in northwest Syria. Cholera is a rapidly spreading disease with a severe impact on the patient affecting both children and adults. Although 70% of patients do not show any symptoms during the infection period, which lasts from 7 to 14 days, cholera infection may cause death within hours if left untreated, especially for those with weak immune systems.



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02. The latest updates related to the spread of cholera in northwestern Syria

According to the latest reports and information issued on 12th of October 2022 by "The Early Warning and Response Network (EWARN)" at the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU), the number of suspected cases in northwest Syria reached 1013, while the number of confirmed cases reached 92 which are distributed over several areas, camps, and residential communities extending from the countryside of Jarabulus in Aleppo to the areas of Jisr Al-Shughur and Harim in Idlib, including Afrin, Azaz, and Al-Bab which means that the cholera outbreak is no longer confined to one region or one part of northwest Syria but rather it is spread to all areas in northwest Syria.



the number of **suspected cases** in northwest Syria reached

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3. The environmental, health, and humanitarian reality in northwest Syria

The current reality in northwest Syria can be summarized by several main points as follows:

I. Camps

Most of the camps in northwest Syria suffer from a lack of services in general, overcrowding, and shortage in environmental and privacy standards, in addition to the spread of poverty and unemployment among the displaced people, and the lack of health care, except in the camps where there is a medical point or mobile clinic. Taking into consideration that there are more than 1200 camps in northwest Syria in which more than 1.2 million displaced people live in these camps and suffer from a lack of sufficient support, and the availability of infrastructures such as roads, sewage, rain drainages, and landfills, which can guarantee better environmental and humanitarian conditions.

II. Sanitation

The sewage systems in northwest Syria, whether in camps or in villages and towns, are dilapidated and unable to serve people correctly, ensuring safety in the collection and drainage. Most of these networks and systems need rehabilitation, restoration, or extension, and they are insufficient or appropriate to serve people in many communities. Moreover, more than 70% of wastewater is drained randomly and untreated to the plains and valleys around cities, towns, and camps.

III. Water Supplies

In northwest Syria, 771 registered public drinking water stations serve villages, towns, and camps, and this does not include private wells and sources or agricultural wells, out of which 355 unfunctional stations (i.e. 46% of the water stations in northwest Syria) due to either a lack of the operational cost or the need for maintenance. As for the functional stations, which are 416 stations, there are 111 stations (i.e. 27%) where the water is not sterilized, and this poses a direct danger to the population who receive this water from those stations.

IV. Health

The poor health situation experienced by most villages and towns in northwest Syria is due to the fragility of the health system there and the restrictions imposed on support or limited fund to operate some health centers, points, or clinics that provide limited services to the local population according to the available capabilities.

V. Humanitarian Aid

There are many restrictions imposed on the humanitarian interventions in northwest Syria by restricting the entry of humanitarian aid to one crossing, which is Bab Al-Hawa crossing point in Idlib, and closing the rest of the humanitarian points that lead to the other areas in Aleppo, which negatively affects the medical situation in northwest Syria.

4. Recommendations and key messages

I. Water

As water is an essential and decisive factor in the transmission of cholera germs, we must work on operating unfunctional water stations for any reason and ensure that drinking water is sterilized regardless of its source or delivery way to the local population (The final users of the water) and the calibration of free residual chlorine must be 1 mg/liter at the “water source” and so that it is 0.5 mg/liter at the point of use (house - tents - shop - store- ice factory...).

II. Sanitation

- A quick and effective solution must be found to the problem of random and open sewage drained randomly around villages, towns, population centers, and camps, which has become a real threat to public health and a main source for transmission of many diseases, including cholera.
- The closure of opened sewage systems and collection pits, especially in the camps is critical and must be implemented quickly, also, we must work on treating this contaminated water before it is discharged to rivers and open lands.
- We must work to prevent the use of untreated wastewater to irrigate crops, especially vegetables that are close to the soil and can be eaten raw.

III. Humanitarian Community

Urging the local and international humanitarian community and decision-makers to increase the provided support and provide additional support to the health, water, and environmental health sectors so that they can respond better.