28 June 2018, Amman, Jordan -- Opposition-controlled areas in southern Syria are witnessing a dramatic increase in violence that has led to high levels of insecurity and the displacement of tens of thousands of people. Over 80% of the estimated 525 000 people living in these areas are expected to need humanitarian assistance as a result of the fighting. This includes up to 50 000 people who have displaced over the past two weeks.

On 27 June, WHO's office in Damascus dispatched over 27 tons of medical supplies to respond to urgent humanitarian health needs in southern Syria. Items include operating tables, intravenous fluids, antibiotics and trauma supplies, burn medications and emergency health kits. The supplies are sufficient to provide 135 000 treatments. Further supplies have been prepositioned to respond to the rapidly evolving situation.

Health care facilities in southern Syria can also draw on regular cross-border stocks delivered by WHO and health partners in Amman. Current stocks are enough to treat up to 300 000 people for three months. WHO and its partners in Amman plan to pre-position another 51 tons of emergency supplies in warehouses throughout the area, ready for dispatch to health care facilities in southern Syria as and when needed.

"These shipments are timely and essential to help health care facilities in Dar'a governorate cope with the greatly increased demand for health care services, reaching all people in need no matter where they are located" said Dr Michel Thieren, Regional Emergencies Director. "WHO remains committed to working with partners to provide emergency health care in the areas of greatest need."

These are the first in a series of shipments that WHO plans to deploy to southern Syria, where health needs are acute and growing. Recent data from WHO's Health Resources Availability Mapping System (HeRAMS) show that 40% of public health care centres in Dar'a and Quneitra governorates are closed and only one hospital remains open. WHO is supporting the deployment of three mobile clinics that are providing health care services for people displaced by the fighting, and is working to deploy another four in the coming days.

"As the situation in Southern Syria evolves, humanitarian convoys bearing essential supplies must be allowed to proceed across conflict lines, and the government and all parties to the conflict must allow critically ill and wounded civilians to be immediately evacuated for life-saving treatment", added Dr. Thieren.

http://www.emro.who.int/syr/syria-news/who-health-supplies-reach-southern-syria-as-needs-grow-amid-increased-fighting.html