24 April 2017, Erbil, Iraq – The demand for emergency referral services in west Mosul continues daily. More than 1900 trauma cases from west Mosul have received medical care in hospitals in Ninewa and neighbouring governorates. As military operations reach the densely populated parts of Mosul city, health partners anticipate a significant increase in the number of war-related casualties. Ensuring timely referrals and transport from the frontlines to trauma stabilization points and field hospitals is critical to sparing civilian lives. Ambulances provide a 24/7 response to medical and trauma-related emergencies, while lessening the tedious travel hours spent by patients on the roads.

In an effort to support the Federal Ministry of Health and Ninewa Directorate of Health with the anticipated surge of trauma needs, the World Health Organization (WHO), with logistics support from the World Food Programme, has airlifted an additional 15 fully-equipped ambulances into Iraq.

These ambulances will be deployed to trauma stabilization points in west Mosul as well as to field hospitals. This new airlift completes the delivery of 30 ambulances in total to Ninewa Directorate of Health. The first shipment of ambulances that were delivered two weeks ago are now serving Athba Field Hospital, Hamam al' Alil camp and Al-Shefaa hospitals. The procurement and management of these 30 ambulances has been made possible with generous funding from the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), USAID/Office of Foreign Disaster (OFDA), the Governments of Kuwait and Japan.

For more than five months, health actors have expressed concerns over shortages of ambulances. Efforts by WHO, the Federal Ministry of Health, Ninewa Governorate and UNFPA have prepositioned more than 71 ambulances at the frontlines. With more ambulances now in circulation, it is envisaged that Ninewa Directorate of Health, WHO and health partners will establish a call centre at Maamoon in west Mosul. This will ensure timely coordination and transportation of trauma patients, but also serve medical emergencies for internally-displaced people in camps.

In the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2017, WHO and partners are appealing for US$ 110 million. These critical funds are needed to support health care interventions for 6.2 million people across Iraq. The current funding gap of 85% leaves millions of people with reduced access to lifesaving health care.

http://www.emro.who.int/irq/iraq-news/mosul-ambulance-deployment.html?format=html