

WHO Calls for More Funding to Deal with Syria and Iraq Crisis



Geneva, March 19 (RHC)-- The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned of the deteriorating health condition in Syria and Iraq due to lack of funds. "We have now reached a level in which we are very worried of the possibility that we could not continue to offer services and support due to the scarcity of funding," The WHO's regional director for the Eastern Mediterranean, Ala Alwan, said on Tuesday.

Alwan also warned of the possibility of a spread of infectious diseases as well as widespread chronic illnesses. "The spread of diseases in Syria or Iraq will endanger all regional countries," Alwan said: "The longer we wait, the more critical the situation becomes for those who need urgent, life-saving health services."

Last month, the WHO appealed for one billion dollars in additional funding to help provide life-saving health services to millions in need in Syria, Iraq, the Central African Republic and South Sudan. More than half of the requested funds is needed for Syria alone.

Alwan said the situation in war-torn Syria is "very worrying," due to a shortage of donor funds. Referring to the disrupted aid programs by the donors, Alwan said: "There are major problems linked to the difficulty in reaching large sectors of the Syrian society to offer basic health services."

According to a recent report by the UN, the country's deadly violence, which began in March 2011, has driven nearly four million Syrians from their country since the beginning of the crisis, and internally

displaced 7.6 million civilians.

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