

UN agencies rush in medical supplies for thousands wounded in Iran-Iraq earthquake

17 November 2017 – United Nations agencies have delivered medical supplies to the areas of Iran and Iraq struck by a devastating earthquake, and are urging vigilance against the possible outbreaks of infectious and waterborne diseases.

The World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) has airlifted trauma kits and medical supplies to Iran to support treatment for thousands of people injured as a result of the 12 November quake.

Additional trauma kits are available in WHO's emergency logistical centre in Dubai and will be delivered as needed to health facilities reporting [shortages](#), said Michel Thieren, WHO Regional Emergency Director.

While there is no direct link between earthquakes and disease outbreaks, close monitoring for cases of infectious diseases, especially waterborne diseases, is also required, he added.

The supplies, enough to provide surgical care for up to 4,000 trauma patients, were transported from WHO's emergency logistical centre in Dubai to Kermanshah province in western Iran on Thursday. They were immediately delivered to hospitals and other health facilities receiving the injured.

Almost 9,400 people in Iran were injured as a result of the earthquake, including more than 1,000 people hospitalized in Kermanshah province with serious injuries, and 340 more who were transferred to hospitals in neighbouring provinces, including Tehran.

The two cities of Sar Pol Zahab and Ghasr Shirin in Kermanshah province, with a total population of almost 115,000 people, are reported to have suffered considerable damage, with almost 80 per cent of infrastructure destroyed. One main hospital in the province was forced to close, and 49 more health facilities were damaged, but remain open.

In Iraq, WHO's country office deployed a medical team and three ambulances, and delivered four tents and emergency lifesaving supplies sufficient for 200 surgical operations, to hospitals in Sulaimaniyah governorate receiving critical cases.

The earthquake was felt in the major cities of Sulaimaniyah, Halabja, Erbil and Duhok, with a total of eight fatalities and 525 people injured. Darbandikhan in northern Sulaimaniyah was most affected, with damages to Darbandikhan hospital and Sharazoor maternity hospital.

WHO continues to work closely with national health authorities in Iran and

Iraq to monitor the health impact of the earthquake and respond to urgent needs.

Earlier in the week, a Mobile Medical Team from the UN International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) in Iraq [arrived](#) in Kani Bardina village, Warmawa district, to provide medical assistance to families, following the earthquake.

Approximately half of the 40 homes in Kani Bardina village were damaged or destroyed in the earthquake, according to IOM.

The IOM Mobile Medical Team is providing assistance in response to a request from the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre of the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq, for medical support in the area to assist those who were injured in the earthquake. The team is receiving guidance from local health authorities.

The IOM Mobile Medical Team visited Halabja Hospital, which during the earthquake sustained damage to the ceiling, floor, and walls, with blocks falling onto empty hospital beds.

The hospital's director Dr. Ranj Zangana explained that they continued to provide services for visiting patients, but those who needed longer-term care were transferred or referred to Sulaymaniyah hospital.