SUDAN

Events:
- As of 24 May, the Government of Sudan is issuing entry visas for humanitarian workers within 48 hours and waiving travel permits to Darfur.
- Immediate measures to improve humanitarian ground capacity were discussed at the first technical meeting between key ministries, the Sudan Humanitarian Aid Commission, and UN agencies on 22 May.
- On 23 May, 70 community health workers conducted an active measles case finding in Kaalma camp; nine cases were identified.
- Twenty-seven cases of leishmaniasis are suspected in Malha, North Darfur.
- On 20 May, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees warned that widespread violence and human rights abuses in Darfur could drive more refugees into Chad, where there are already 120,000.
- On 25 May, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group will meet in Geneva to plan an intensified response to the situation in Darfur.
- The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is convening a high-level Donor Alert Meeting and Consultation on Darfur on 1 or 3 June 2004 (date to be confirmed).

Actions:
- An early warning system for diseases and outbreak control has been established in all states and is ready for testing.
- WHO, the Federal MOH and the State MOH are investigating the suspected leishmaniasis cases in Malha, North Darfur. Pentostan, the only effective drug treatment, and dipsticks for rapid diagnosis are being sent.
- The Federal MOH, WHO, Médecins Sans Frontières and Save the Children Fund have finalized a nutrition information template. The WHO Regional Nutritional Advisor has completed his mission for the establishment of a nutritional surveillance system.
- The three WHO-backed national public health coordinators have participated in workshops in Khartoum to plan state-level activities, discuss budgets, and identify needs for the next three months. For June, the mass measles campaign and comprehensive support to key rural hospitals are priority actions.
- WHO continues to support camp cleaning and vector control in Abu – Shouk and El Meshatal.
- WHO will visit Nyala and El Fashir to conduct an assessment of vector-control measures for malaria.

SOUTH SUDAN

- Nineteen cases, including four deaths, of Ebola haemorrhagic fever (EHF) have been reported in Yambio, Western Equatoria, south Sudan. Laboratory testing by the Kenya Medical Research Institute and the CDC (US) have confirmed EHF.
- WHO South Sudan Early Warning and Response Network (EWARN), along with a team from WHO headquarters, have been working closely with the health authorities and partners to create a Crisis Committee to control the outbreak.
Events:
- The security situation remains tense in Najaf, Kerbala Amara and Nassiriya.
- The spraying campaign against malaria has been successfully completed. Spraying for leishmaniasis is still ongoing.
- There are no major public health problems in Falluja; watery diarrhoea was reported and control measures (including a public health information campaign and water chlorination) were carried out.
- An Iraqi delegation headed by the Minister of Health participated in the World Health Assembly in Geneva, from 17-22 May. The Minister presented at a technical briefing on Health Action in Crises on 18 May (see “Inter-Departmental” for a link to his presentation).
- A National Health Accounts training workshop—organized by the World Bank—took place in Amman on 15-18 May. WHO provided four facilitators/experts. A total of 30 participants (25 accountants and five medical doctors) participated.
- The UNDG Trust Fund Steering Committee met in Amman on 20 May to review a WHO-led proposal on Primary Health Care. The project, valued at US$ 38 million, has been approved.
- The Japanese government has announced that it has earmarked US$ 11 million for a WHO-led project on non-communicable diseases and mental health in Iraq.

Actions:
- WHO continues to organize coordination meetings for emergency response in vulnerable areas such as Basra and Najaf.
- Two UN flights—loaded with 4.5 MT of medical supplies—arrived in Iraq on 23 May.
- Requests for blood testing kits for Falluja are being locally procured and will be delivered this week.
- WHO is assisting in the shipment of a donation from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health to Basra.
- A MOH-CPA team visited the Najaf Teaching Hospital to assess its situation and the accessibility by patients.
- The Plan of Action for Mental Health in Iraq is ready and implementation has started. WHO is sponsoring a MOH staff to participate in a training on mental health in Cairo.
- WHO sponsored three training courses on tetanus and one course on hepatitis.
- WHO will participate in the Iraq Donor Committee meeting in Doha, Qatar, on 25 and 26 May.

WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP

Events:
- Approximately 1,600 residents have lost their homes due to the demolitions carried out in Rafah since 11 May.
- The Ministry of Health reported that 55 Palestinians have been killed. An additional 144 were injured in Rafah between 13-20 May.
- A curfew has been imposed in Rafah, prohibiting access by chronic patients to health services, as well as severely limiting evacuation of the injured and referral to backup hospitals.
- More than 70% of the population in Rafah Governorate are suffering from complete lack of water, electricity and communications.
- UNRWA has opened two schools to house 1,000 of the victims and is distributing tents, food, water, kitchen kits, mattresses and blankets. Overcrowding, lack of hygiene and the deterioration of nutritional status may contribute to the increased risk of infectious diseases in the two locations.

Sources: UN Resolution 1544 (2004), UNRWA, Khan Younis Municipality, Rafah Municipality.
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**Actions:**

*Health Inforum*—collaborative effort of WHO, the Italian Cooperation, and USAID—has served as the Health Operation Room to monitor and follow-up on urgent health needs in Rafah. This has been done through:

- Direct and continuous contacts with the Ministry of Health, Rafah Municipality, ICRC, UN agencies, and NGOs.
- Publication of daily updates through the [Health Inforum Web site](http://www.healthinforum.org/).
- Field visits with other UN agencies in Rafah on 20 May to directly assess health needs.
- Delivery of pharmaceutical drugs and disposables on 20 May, in coordination with ICRC.

- Two hundred people participated in the Stakeholders’ Conferences for Mental Health in both Ramallah and Gaza. The conferences provided the platform for stakeholders to examine the mental health policy prepared by the Ministry of Health and WHO, and explore means of implementation.
- WHO will take part in the high-level conference “Meeting the Humanitarian Needs of Palestine Refugees in the Near East: Building Partnerships in Support of UNRWA”, scheduled to take place in Geneva on 7 and 8 June. The conference is organized by UNRWA and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

**Events:**

- The Government is leading the preparation of an assessment and two-year strategy called the Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF).
- According to a report presented by the Direction d’ Organisation des Services de Santé to the Cellule de Crise Elargi, the health-related economic and social consequences of the crisis include: decline in availability and access to services, absenteeism of staff, and lack of transportation services.
- Although slightly improved, the security environment remains volatile, with gangs, kidnapping and banditry reported in various parts of the country.
- Life expectancy in Haiti fell from 57 years in 1993 to 50 in 2002, primarily as a result of AIDS. (Source: World Health Report 2004)
- Fifty-eight people were killed in Haiti and at least 80 people were killed in the Dominican Republic when two rivers broke their banks near the small border town of Jimani, DR. (Source: BBC)

**Actions:**

- On 22 April in Port-au-Prince, WHO/PAHO participated in a meeting organized by the Government and ICF Steering Committee (composed of representatives from the Inter-American Development Bank, UN, World Bank, and EC) on priorities for the next two years.
- WHO/PAHO contributed to a plan for the rehabilitation of the *Hopital de l’Université d’État d’Haïti*.
- WHO/PAHO, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP and the Department of Civil Protection carried out a rapid assessment of the impact of the floods in North Department.
- On 24 April, WHO/PAHO's Vaccination Week in the Americas was launched in Haiti, with the participation of the Minister of Health.
- On 24 May, WHO/PAHO is participating in the Inter-Departmental Task Force on Haiti in New York. Agenda items include an update on the planning process for MINUSTAH (United Nations Multi-Dimensional Stabilization Mission in Haiti), assessment missions, the humanitarian situation, and consultations with the Organisation of American States and CARICOM.

Health Action in Crises

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INTER-AGENCY INITIATIVES

- **Gender and Humanitarian Assistance.** On 26 May, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance will discuss mainstreaming gender in Consolidated Appeals and provide an update on the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence project. The Task Force, co-chaired by WHO, is also developing a matrix for guidelines for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence interventions in emergency settings.

- **Meeting with International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).** On 27 May, the Representative of the Director-General for HAC will meet with both the Director of Operations and Acting Director-General of the ICRC to discuss WHO’s initiative to secure better health outcomes in communities affected by crises.

- **Central African Republic.** Under the auspices of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), preparations are underway for a donor conference in June (date to be confirmed) to address the funding gap.

- **Natural Disasters.** On 1 June, the IASC Task Force on Natural Disasters—in which WHO participates—will meet to discuss the methodology, implementation method, final group of countries, and funding for the Task Force pilot project.

- **Sierra Leone.** On 2 June in Geneva, WHO will participate in a briefing on transition in Sierra Leone by the Deputy Representative of the Secretary-General in Sierra Leone and a delegate of the Government.

- **Internal Displacement.** On 2 June, the Senior Inter-Agency Network on Internal Displacement will discuss the draft IASC Policy Package on internal displacement for UN Humanitarian and Resident Coordinators and Country Teams. The Package will be presented to the IASC WG in June for endorsement. WHO is a member of the Senior Network and provided inputs.

- **Early Warning.** WHO will take part in the IASC Task Force on Preparedness and Contingency Planning technical consultation on “Early Warning and Early Action” in Rome, 2-4 June.

- **UN Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA).** Under the aegis of ECHA, WHO is providing inputs for the Humanitarian Chapter of the Secretary-General’s 2004 Report on the Work of the Organization. Preparations are underway for the 11 June meeting of ECHA in New York. The Representative of the Director-General for Health Action in Crises will participate via videoconferencing.

- **Consolidated Appeals Process.** On 15 June, WHO/Geneva will host the Mid-Year Review of the Consolidated Appeals (CAP). The Director of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) will chair the meeting.

- **Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group.** Preparations are underway for the IASC Working Group, scheduled to take place in Geneva on 16 and 17 June. The Director of OCHA will chair the meeting, and the Representative of the Director-General for Health Action in Crises will participate.

- **ECOSOC 2004 Humanitarian Segment.** WHO is providing comments on the draft Secretary-General’s report to the ECOSOC Humanitarian Segment 2004, which will be held in New York, 12-14 July. The segment will be attended by the Representative of the Director-General for Health Action in Crises.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL AND INTER-REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

**Note:** Inter-departmental collaboration for a specific country has been listed under the appropriate country.

- A Technical Briefing on Health Action in Crises was held on 18 May in the context of the 57th World Health Assembly. The following presentations from the briefing are available via WHO’s HAC Web site:
  - China: Emergency Response Mechanism for Public Health Incidents
    - [http://www.who.int/disasters/repo/13163.pdf](http://www.who.int/disasters/repo/13163.pdf)
  - Djibouti: Histoire d’une inondation a Djibouti
    - [http://www.who.int/disasters/repo/13164.pdf](http://www.who.int/disasters/repo/13164.pdf)
  - Sudan: Health Action in Crises- Past Experiences and Future Expectations
    - [http://www.who.int/disasters/repo/13166.pdf](http://www.who.int/disasters/repo/13166.pdf)
  - Iraq: Rebuilding the Iraqi Health Care System
    - [http://www.who.int/disasters/repo/13165.pdf](http://www.who.int/disasters/repo/13165.pdf)
  - WHO’s Better Contribution to Health During and After Crises
    - [http://www.who.int/disasters/repo/13167.pdf](http://www.who.int/disasters/repo/13167.pdf)

**Please send any comments and corrections to kollert@who.int.**

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