WHO visits Al Jumhury Teaching Hospital in Erbil to assess its capacity and preparedness for the influenza season

Erbil, Iraq, 14 January 2020: Technical teams from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health in Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRG-I) visited on 12 Jan the WHO supported Isolation Unit in Al Jumhury Teaching Hospital in Erbil Governorate. The visit came to assess the preparedness of the facility and its Isolation Unit capacity to accommodate the seasonal influenza cases which have increased with the decrease of temperature in the region.

As of 12 January, this year, seven H1N1 cases were reported positive by the facility including three deaths identified as one from Mosul, one Syrian Refugee, and one from the hosting community. “I had a fruitful meeting with His Excellency the Minister of Health in KRG on 12 Jan and was pleased to accompany him in a field visit to Al Jumhury Teaching Hospital to evaluate the facility preparedness to deal with the scale up in cases of influenza in the governorate,” said Dr Adham Rashad Ismail Abdel Moniem, WHO Representative in Iraq. “WHO stands ready to support the Ministry of Health in KRG and build the national health capacities on early detection and response to communicable diseases including all types of seasonal pandemics,” Dr Abdel Moniem Added.

Al Jumhury Teaching Hospital is the only secondary health care facility serving the population of Erbil of approximately 940,000 in addition to 222,162 Internally Displaced Population (IDPs) and 124,182 Syrian refugees.

The Isolation Unit in the hospital is one of four units established with the support of WHO in Iraq during the H1N1 Influenza pandemic in 2009. The other 3 units were established in Baghdad, Ninewa, and Basra governorates within the same period.

WHO has previously supported through a comprehensive provision of medical equipment and supplies in addition to a wide-ranged training program for Erbil Directorate of Health staff as part of the preparedness plan to respond to the influenza pandemic emergency in the region in 2009.

The 10-bed Unit is currently used to treat communicable diseases such as measles, hemorrhagic fever, hepatitis C cases, and many others.

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