

A photograph showing three people in an office setting. A woman wearing a green hijab and glasses is seated on the left, holding a white folder. In the center, a man with glasses is seated at a desk, looking towards the right. On the right, another man with glasses and a beard, wearing a dark blue polo shirt with 'WHO OMS' printed on the sleeve, is leaning forward and pointing at a laptop screen. The background features a wooden cabinet with blue binders and shelves stocked with various supplies.

EWAR in Emergencies Operational Guidance

WHO early warning experts assess Syria's early warning disease surveillance system (Photo: WHO, 2017)

Background

- **2012:** first foundational guidelines for humanitarian emergencies published
- **2017:** WHO's Health Emergency Program proposed an update that is fit for purpose, with lessons learned from implementations
- **2018:** first update coordinated by Chris Haskew (+ Ruwan Ratnayake)
- Technical Working Group and review process: 2018 (Cairo/EMRO), 2019 (Geneva/HQ)
- **May 2021-present:** final update of guidelines

Outbreak surveillance and response
in humanitarian emergencies

WHO guidelines for EWARN implementation
Geneva, 2012

DISEASE CONTROL IN HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES



Technical working group: who are we?



Why is this guidance needed now?

- Aims to guide decision-making on when and how to implement and strengthen **EWAR in a humanitarian emergency**.
- It **standardizes and consolidates existing guidance** including WHO's Outbreak Surveillance and Response in Humanitarian Emergencies (2012) and WHO's Early Detection, Assessment and Response to Acute Public Health Events (2014).
- Aims is to **provide updated guidance for modern surveillance practices** that will be **more easily understood and applied** during a humanitarian emergency.

Some of the key updates

Rapid assessment of
surveillance needs

Operationalizing event-
based surveillance

Digital tools for data
collection - EWARS-in-a-
Box etc.

Community engagement
(throughout the process)

Linkages to other initiatives
(i.e., Integrated Outbreak
Analytics, IMS, etc.)

Transition strategies

Primary audience for guidance

- **Frontline health care workers and public health staff** who can recognize unusual alerts and collect and report surveillance data;
- **District teams and rapid response teams** who are involved in receiving, verifying, and responding to EWAR alerts;
- **Epidemiologists** who design, implement, monitor, and evaluate surveillance systems, and use EWAR data to prevent, identify, monitor, and mitigate the impacts of outbreaks and other public health emergencies;
- **Advisors and policy makers at Ministries of Health, WHO, and non-governmental organizations** involved in public health decision-making and surveillance.

Next steps

- **18 March:** Final feedback from TWG
- **25 March:** Submission to WHO for final review and editing
- **April/May:** Formatting and publication of EWAR in Emergencies guidance