WHO carried out three regular assessment and monitoring missions to Grozny on 26 May and 4 & 18 June 2004. Among the locations visited were the Ministry of Health of Chechnya, the Republican sanitary epidemiological surveillance service (SES), the Centre for medicine of catastrophe, the Republican children clinical hospital, the psycho-neurological children hospital N2, the Republican AIDS centre and the Republican endocrinology dispensary, several city policlinics and temporary accommodation centres (TAC).

Meetings at the Ministry of Health of Chechnya reiterated the current priorities of the healthcare system in Chechnya as physical reconstruction of state health structures, maternal and children health, medicine supply to population, TB, communicable disease surveillance, and continuous information flow between all actors in the health field. The Minister of Health appreciated the coordinating function of WHO, and expressed his gratitude to the whole humanitarian community.

Commenting on the vaccination coverage, the Minister assured that the MoH has sufficient stock of the necessary vaccines, but that nevertheless better control and proper enforcement for provision of planned calendar immunization is needed. The main reason for the low vaccination coverage is that a large percentage of population missed calendar vaccinations during the previous war. Returning IDPs from Ingushetia with unknown vaccination status present an additional problem, as even though vaccination is performed according to the schedule, no additional rounds are foreseen.

The main responsibility of the Republican sanitary epidemiological surveillance service (SES) lies in communicable disease surveillance and control, implementation of preventive measures and quality control of food, air and drinking water. SES surveys monthly in all 21 TACs in Grozny the quality of the drinking water and disinfects and disinfests as appropriate. SES also controls the water quality in the 32 still water ponds around the Republic. Twenty to forty percent of drinking water tests show contamination with chemicals or micro-organisms.

SES reports a sufficient stock of disinfecting materials but there is a need of regular bacteriological media. In TACs the basic problems lie in the lack of sewage and regular garbage collection and in the lack of washing facilities. Rooms designed for this purpose are used residentially.

The Centre for Medicine of Catastrophe belongs to the Ministry of Health of Chechnya res-
responsible for response to emergency situations, including car accidents, natural and technogenic disasters. The building of the Centre is under reconstruction since 2000. The staff amounts to 42 full-time employees. Three standard “tabletka” ambulances are operated by mobile teams with a doctor and a nurse each. In case of emergency the Centre can draw on several back-up teams from various healthcare structures.

The Republican children clinical hospital – not much has changed since the last WHO visit in October 2003 – one of the two hospital buildings is in need of capital reconstruction, awaiting federal funding. Gas and electricity are available. Water is provided by the PHO water truck.

Mortality and morbidity of newborns and infants remain critical, often due to late hospitalisation, lack of specialised medical equipment and complex pathologies.

ICRC and MDM are providing regular monthly assistance with drugs, medical consumables for surgery and ICU units. Additional specialist care (surgeon, paediatrician, and neurologist/cardiologist) is supported by IHI (International Humanitarian Initiative). The hospital has recently acquired an ambulance for intensive care emergency cases.

The psycho-neurological children hospital was previously the central in-patient facility for children with diseases of the nervous system as for example cerebral palsy and epilepsy. Currently it is a day-care centre for up to 30 children with general and neurological diseases. It is also providing regular paediatric outpatient services to the local population. Handicap International supports the facility, nevertheless the administration of the hospital requests more assistance with drugs, medical rehabilitation items, sports equipment and food.

The Republican AIDS centre has notably improved its reporting system lately and is now capable of producing various statistical data and
analysis, such as: monthly breakdown of all laboratory analyses, including anonymous tests, by population categories (obligatory tests, blood donors, medical personnel, risk groups as drug addicts, homosexuals, pregnant, clinical indications, imprisoned and people with STD); registration of HIV cases from 1987 by districts; HIV incidence rates by districts (city vs. rural), gender and age; HIV detection rates by health institutions, etc. The Centre reported cumulative 404 registered HIV cases as of 25 May; 35.7 per 100,000 population.

The Republican endocrinology dispensary is the central structure responsible for provision of specialised medical assistance to patients with endocrine system diseases. Since 2002 an increase of 18-38% endocrine system diseases is reported and as the main reasons for this was given the long-term psychological stress and improper nutrition. Lack of regular prophylactic activities aggravate the situation. The dispensary does not have a basic laboratory; patients are referred to the Urus-Martan district hospital.

City polyclinic N1

City polyclinic N1 is one of eight policlinics and it used to be the largest and central outpatient facility in pre-war Grozny. Due to its location in the central part of the town, it has incurred the greatest degree of destruction. At present, the polyclinic services are subdivided in two buildings across the road. One is located in its previous premises and another one in a former apartment complex. The polyclinic has only electricity, but no water, gas or sewage. The division of polyclinic services took place a month ago due to shortage of space for the 72 staff members. Most of staff members are working on part-time basis also for other health institutions in Grozny. According to the state requirements, this facility needs 48 doctors and 76 nurses.

The location visited had three rooms including a hall shared by an ophthalmologist and the laboratory expert. A dentist room is in the pass-way to the gynecologist’s room. A gynecological chair, and a scale donated by UNICEF was in place, no other instruments, specula or blood pressure machines, stethoscopes were seen, neither any patients during the visit.

The polyclinic is supposed to provide for the health needs of more than 24,000 people residing in the central part of Grozny. In May 2004 the polyclinic serviced 2989 people. About 500 prophylactic observations and 900 home visits were conducted in the same month. Roughly 11% of those requesting assistance are patients with chronic diseases. The main morbidity conditions are respiratory and infectious diseases.

This polyclinic is in dire need of building reconstruction, essential drugs, basic and specialised medical equipment as well as possibly upgrading of skills of staff. It receives minimum state assistance (only salary payments) and is additionally supposed to care for the needs of the TAC population in Chaikovskaya Street.
The Temporary accommodation centre in Chaikovskaya Street hosts returning IDPs from tent camps in Ingushetia. Living conditions are similar to those in many other TACs: drinking water is delivered, outside latrines and washing facilities; no sewage system.

Gas, electricity and heating are available. In winter there was no heating due to the failure of the local boiling system.

Two nurses from the city polyclinic N1 are assigned for each of the three TAC buildings. Additionally, the polyclinic’s paediatrician visits twice a week.

The state health point functions on a 24-hour basis and provides basic emergency first aid assistance. Ambulance service is available through the local guards’ radio communication.

MSF-Holland mobile medical teams staffed with a paediatrician, a physician and a nurse serve the TAC three times a week. MSF also provides psychosocial services.

The polyclinic N1 is not included in the list of health structures planned for reconstruction and rehabilitation, neither under the federal budget nor the republican one. This leaves the administration of the polyclinic to search for own sources to carry out required building repair activities. Humanitarian assistance would be greatly appreciated.

**TB**

Within the WHO supported TB control and prevention programme in Ingushetia WFP provided from March to May 2004 the republican TB hospital with 9250 kg of flour, 993 litres of oil and 89 kg of salt for 585 hospital patients. 68 patients, who completed treatment in this period, also received 50 kg of flour and 5.5 litres of oil each.

MSF-Holland similarly assists the needs of Nadterechny, Gudermes and Shali TB inpatient department in Chechnya.

**Health assistance**

**ICRC** donated to the Republican Blood Bank in Grozny laboratory equipment and consumables. Regular donations of medical consumables were made to hospitals in Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan.

**World Vision** completed a round of training sessions for the population of 11 villages of Urus-Martan. An average of 30 local people attended each of 10 health and 10 psychosocial sessions, devoted to issues of first aid, women’s health, nutrition, HIV, TB and child care.

**IMC** completed a cycle of five training courses on first aid for 71 representatives of state health structures and the Ministries of Health of Ingushetia and Chechnya. Three of the courses were targeted specifically to local ambulatory and FAP staff.
While the initial basic knowledge of attendees on the topics presented during training was rather low, tests upon completion of the course showed considerable improvement of their theoretical background and practical skills.

**IRC** carried out two training sessions on anaemia aimed at senior schoolchildren, parents and teachers of the 16 schools assisted by the organisation in Ingushetia. It has also published 2000 copies of leaflets with basic information on anaemia for distribution among the same categories of population. Similar activities were held by IRC in ten schools in Chechnya.

## Epidemiology and immunization

**UNICEF** monitored the utilization of the recently distributed cold-chain equipment, provided by the organization to primary health care facilities in Chechnya. The monitoring was aimed to determine existing needs prior to the launch of the next round of procurement of cold-chain equipment.

On 1-2 June **Hammer Forum** conducted in Nazran a training workshop on medical reporting for 12 representatives of health structures, assisted by Hammer Forum in Grozny.

Following the special offer of the Chief Epidemiologist of Russia, the **MoH** and the **Sanitary epidemiological surveillance service** (SES) of Chechnya have launched a measles vaccination campaign targeting some 137,000 children (aged 7-14 years old) in Chechnya. According to the Ministry of Health of Chechnya, 302,000 children under 18 are subject to administration to different types of vaccines this year.

## Mother and child health

**WHO** continues its implementation of the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) strategy in Chechnya. Between 24 April-4 May and 5-15 May **WHO** carried out two training courses in Kurchaloi and Gudermes districts, with 20 health specialists participating in each course. Two more training courses on IMCI took place between the 1-11 and the 14-24 June in Groznensky district. There were again 20 participants in each course – health workers from the primary health care level: paediatricians, mid level health personnel, nurses. During the clinical sessions, held in Grozny maternity ward N2 and the city hospital N4, participants practiced consultation and supervision of children suffering from a wide variety of diseases, including acute respiratory infections, acute diarrhoea, malnutrition, anaemia, sepsis, meningitis, ear infection, fever.

![WHO training course on IMCI in Kurchaloi and Gudermes districts of Chechnya combined theoretical classes with practical sessions in local health facilities](image)

The Mother Empowerment Programme, carried out by **UNICEF** through its implementing partner Hammer Forum in Chechnya and Ingushetia, covered in May 200 beneficiaries from the IDP camp ‘Satsita’ and 200 people from a temporary accommodation centre (TAC) in Khmelnitskogo st. in Grozny. **Hammer Forum** printed and distributed- within the framework of this UNICEF project- 4500 copies of the second edition of the booklet on mother and child health issues, designed for pregnant women, lactating mothers...
HIV/AIDS

“HIV/AIDS What you should know about it” is the title of the awareness booklet, issued by WHO in cooperation with the Czech NGO “PIN”, the Russian Federal AIDS centre and the Republican AIDS centre in Grozny. The booklet contains information on what HIV/AIDS is, on how people can protect themselves against it and how to render psychosocial aid to those who are already sick. Copies of the booklet, together with a documentary video were distributed to the Ministries of Health, AIDS centres and psychosocial rehabilitation centres in Chechnya and Ingushetia to be used in health promotion activities.

WHO conducted five one-day training sessions on HIV awareness in Ingushetia. Chechen and Ingush teachers and medical personnel were trained in using the WHO/PIN HIV awareness booklet and video. A total of 19 doctors, 58 teachers from both republics and 13 NGO psychologists participated in the sessions, facilitated by two leading specialists from the Chechen AIDS centre.

To commemorate May 16 – HIV victims day - WHO delivered around 30,000 copies of various HIV/STI awareness publications to the Republican AIDS Centre in Grozny.

From 17-20 May the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation/Swiss Humanitarian Unit (SDC/SHA) conducted a workshop on diagnosis and therapy of sexually transmitted infections (STI) for doctors and laboratory assistants from Ingushetia and Chechnya in Nazran. The latest methodology of Syphilis testing with a specific and sensitive express test was taught.

DRC continues its public awareness activities on issues of HIV prevention, chemical substance dependence, etc. Over 400 children have participated in a series of these events.

Assistance to the disabled

The latest available information (end of May 2004) refers to 3,293 entries in the IMSMA (Information Management System for Mine Action) database. Since 1995, 740 people were killed and 2,553 injured by mines and UXO.

From 19 to 21 May Handicap International held a seminar for staff involved in home care for disabled people. Six special medical institutions in Chechnya received relevant literature. Clothes and tableware was provided to the Samashki and Darbankhi psychiatric hospitals. Also, support was as usual provided to the handicapped individuals in the form of wheelchairs, walking sticks, crutches, beddings and hygienic kits.

In May, Vladikavkaz Prosthetic Centre received increasing numbers of mine/UXO casualties, resulting from the improved transportation from Chechnya and provided them with artificial limbs, corsets, orthopaedic shoes and repaired prostheses.
On 4 June, 2004 the **Mid-Year Review of the 2004 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Chechnya and Neighbouring Republics (CAP)** was presented in Moscow. US $61,923,703 was requested within the framework of the CAP in November last year; nine UN agencies and 12 non-governmental organizations are still seeking US $32,760,122 for support of their humanitarian programmes in the North Caucasus. The Mid-Year Review of the 2004 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Chechnya and Neighbouring Republics is electronically available at [http://www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int).

The **European Commission** has approved a 16.5 million Euro humanitarian aid package for the support of victims of the ongoing conflict in Chechnya. Assistance will be provided in food, non-food, medical, shelter & water/sanitation, education, psychological, mine awareness and protection sectors and will be targeted towards internally displaced persons (IDPs) and vulnerable groups in central and southern Chechnya and the IDPs in Ingushetia and Dagestan.

On 21-22 May, **UNICEF**, in cooperation with **World Vision International** organised a two-day training workshop on the Convention on the rights of the child (CRC) in Nazran. A special presentation on health as part of basic human rights was among the issues included in the workshop's agenda.

**WHO** has finalized the regular update (June 2004) of the health sector field directory, containing programme activity information on Chechnya and Ingushetia. The update is available from the WHO offices in Moscow and Nazran.

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**List of abbreviations:**

- DRC: Danish Refugee Council
- EPI: Expanded Programme on Immunization
- FAP: Feldsher/obstetric post
- GP: General practitioner
- HI: Handicap International
- ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross
- IDPs: Internally displaced persons
- IMC: International Medical Corps
- IMSMA: International Management System for Mine Action
- IR: Islamic Relief
- IRC: International Rescue Committee
- IR: Islamic Relief
- IMSMIA: International Management System for Mine Action
- IR: Islamic Relief
- IRC: International Rescue Committee
- MD: Médécins du Monde
- MoH I: Ministry of Health of the Republic of Ingushetia
- MoH RF: Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation
- MoH Ch: Ministry of Health of Chechnya
- MSF-B: Médécins sans Frontières-Belgium
- MSF-F: Médécins sans Frontières-France
- MSF-H: Médécins sans Frontières-Holland
- PHO: Polish Humanitarian Organization
- OCHA: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
- SARC: Saudi Red Crescent Society
- SES: Sanitary Epidemiological Surveillance
- TAC: Temporary accommodation centre
- UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund
- UXO: Unexploded ordnance
- VOM: Voice of the Mountains
- WHO: World Health Organization

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