



28 June 2018, West Bank – The World Health Organization delivered essential psychotropic medicines to the Central Drugs Store of the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Nablus, West Bank, on Sunday 24 June. Psychotropic medicines are used to treat the symptoms of mental disorders, such as depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. They are shown to reduce disability resulting from mental illness and prevent relapse. The procurement of essential psychotropic medicines for the occupied Palestinian territory is a main component of the EU-funded WHO project *Building Palestinian resilience: improving psychosocial and mental health responses to emergency situations*.

The Palestinian National Mental Health Strategy (2015-2019) recognizes that long-term shortages of psychotropic medicines represent a major challenge to the health sector, hindering the continuity of mental health services for patients in the occupied Palestinian territory. The procurement and delivery of essential medicines to treat mental illness forms a core component of the WHO Mental Health Project, which has utilized 800,000 Euros to deliver psychotropic medicines to the West Bank and Gaza in 2017-2018.

The WHO Mental Health Project aims to improve mental health services, and particularly access to mental health services during emergencies. In addition to the procurement and delivery of essential medicines, the Palestinian Ministry of Health and WHO have developed a national emergency mental health plan and intervention guidelines and delivered training to health professionals on the Mental Health Gap Action Programme, as well as training to emergency teams for the provision of psychological first aid.

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