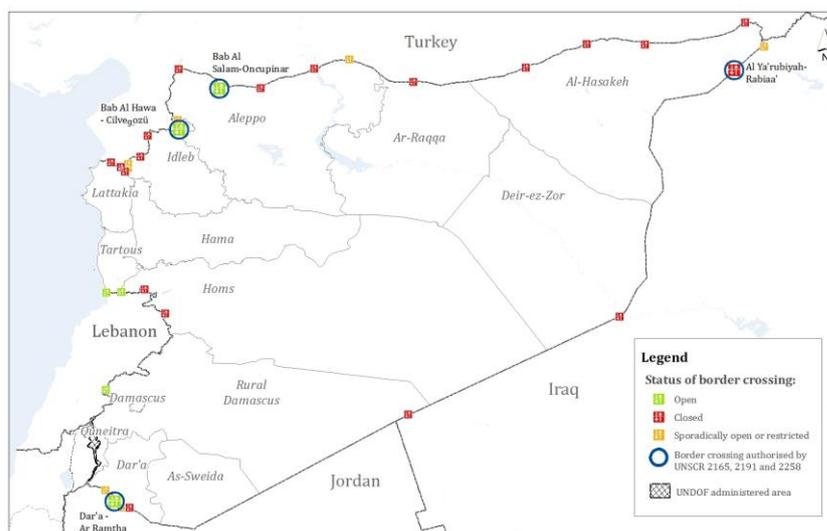




This report is produced by the OCHA Syria Crisis offices in Syria, Turkey and Jordan. It covers the period from 5-18 July 2016. The next report will be issued on or around 4 August 2016.

## Highlights

- Hundreds of thousands of civilians in eastern Aleppo City cut off from humanitarian assistance
- Tens of thousands of civilians trapped in Menbij as fighting continues
- Multiple attacks on hospitals in Aleppo and Idlib governorates
- Airlifts of humanitarian supplies to Qamishli commence
- An estimated 2.9 million children aged 5 and under know nothing but conflict
- One out of three children under five not reached by routine vaccination
- Cross-border operations from Jordan into southern Syria to resume



**13.5 M**

People in Need

**13.5 M**

Targeted for assistance

**6.5 M**

Internally displaced

**4.8 M**

Refugees in neighbouring countries

## Situation Overview

Concern is growing over the plight of upwards of 300,000 civilians in Aleppo, following escalating violence in and around the city. Since 7 July, heavy clashes between the Government of Syria (GoS) forces and Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) have rendered the Castello road, the last remaining access road in and out of eastern Aleppo City, impassable. Since then, Government and Kurdish forces have reportedly gained control of the majority of Castello road, cutting off humanitarian, commercial and civilian movement in and out of eastern Aleppo City, and placing hundreds of thousands of people closer to the line of fire and at risk of besiegement. The UN and partners in east Aleppo had enough food supplies for 145,000 people for one month, at the time the road was no longer passable for humanitarian movement, and are urgently working on a response to meet increasing needs. According to the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), airstrikes escalated in recent months.

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) offensive to take Menbij town has continued for almost two months. Conditions for the civilian populations trapped in the town remain a major concern as electricity, water and fuel are reportedly unavailable. Some people who left the town reported that ISIL fighters threatened to kill anyone who attempts to leave.

Multiple attacks on hospitals in Aleppo and Idlib Governorates were reported between 11 and 16 July resulting in significant structural damages, injuring medical staff and rendering facilities temporarily non-functional.

On 11 July, Al-Shifa hospital supported by a local nongovernmental organization in Idlib was reportedly hit, resulting in the deaths of three civilians. The hospital, which was providing an average of 2,065 outpatient consultations and 86 major surgeries, has, however, resumed operations.

On 14 July, the Kafr Hamra Field Hospital in northern rural Aleppo governorate was significantly damaged and one person was killed and several others wounded in the attack. Health care services are now suspended and the hospital is non-functional. Additionally, a nearby ambulance belonging to a local ambulatory system was destroyed during the attack and a driver injured.

On 16 July, the Omar Ibn Abdel Aziz Hospital, located in Al-Maadi neighbourhood in the eastern part of Aleppo City, was hit and a number of medical staff reportedly injured. The hospital was reportedly hit a few days earlier on 14 July, sustaining significant damage to infrastructure. In total, the Omar Ibn Abdel Aziz Hospital has been hit three times over a 45-day period in June and July 2016. The hospital was providing an average of 5,500 outpatient consultations, 125 obstetric deliveries, 74 caesarean sections and 143 major surgeries per month.

The World Food Programme (WFP) commenced airlifts into Qamishli town in Al Hasakeh Governorate in north-eastern Syria on 9 July, to provide supplies to 41,000 civilians and started a second round of airdrops over Deir-ez-Zor City for 24,000 civilians.

On 18 July, the Government of Jordan (GoJ) officially confirmed cross-border operations between Jordan and Syria will be resumed, after it ordered all northern borders with Syria closed on 21 June as a result of the attack in Rukban in north-eastern Jordan. According to GoJ, an estimated 104,000 Syrians are stranded along the Syrian/Jordanian border area in makeshift tented settlements. Water has been provided to the settlements since 23 June and permission for one-off food assistance was secured on 29 June. Modalities for the food distribution are still being put in place with the authorities. In the extreme heat, the delivery of life-saving water, food and basic medical care remains critical.

## Access Developments

Over the reporting period, two inter-agency convoys were completed under the July inter-agency operation plan. The plan aims to reach 1,110,750 beneficiaries, including 754,250 people in hard-to-reach areas, 286,500 people in besieged areas, and 70,000 people in other areas with acute needs located across conflict lines.

- **Sheikh Maqsoud:** On 12 July, a UN/Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) team completed the third and final inter-agency convoy to Sheikh Maqsoud neighbourhood in Aleppo, with the remaining assistance to reach a total of 27,000 beneficiaries, as approved in the June plan. The convoy delivered nutrition, food, WASH, education, NFIs and health items. As per usual practice, the convoy was accompanied cross-line by a SARC team only. The last SARC-accompanied convoy had reached Sheikh Maqsoud on 28 June.
- **Al Wa'er:** On 14 July, a UN/ICRC/SARC team successfully conducted the first of two planned convoys to Al Wa'er neighbourhood in Homs, bringing multi-sectoral assistance to 75,000 beneficiaries. Medical supplies (diarrhoeal disease packs, midwifery kits, emergency kits), however, were not permitted on the convoy. Advocacy efforts to include the removed items in the second convoy are underway. On 18 July, the second of two UN/ICRC/SARC convoys reached Al Wa'er, with multi-sectoral assistance for 75,000 people. The UN had last accessed Al Wa'er on 16 June, when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) had only permitted deliveries for 37,500 beneficiaries, which is half of the residents of the besieged neighbourhood.

### July Plan

On 6 July, the GoS informed that of the 35 requested locations submitted under the Inter-Agency Convoy plan for July, 34 were approved; 17 in full and 17 with a lower number of beneficiaries. One location (Qaboun neighbourhood in Damascus) was denied. Assistance was approved for a total 910,250 people of the 1,220,750 requested beneficiaries. All 18 besieged locations were fully or partially approved to receive assistance.

### Second round of airdrops over Deir-ez-Zor City begins

As of 1 June, all 110,000 beneficiaries received a full parcel of 41kg. Since then, 30 more airdrops were delivered and are ongoing during July to deliver a full second ration and will continue until all targeted beneficiaries are reached.

Since airdrops started on 10 April, WFP has delivered a total of 1,320 metric tons of food in 75 airdrops by 19 July (of a target of 144). Some 1,203 metric tons (91 per cent) were received by SARC in good condition.

After nearly three months of humanitarian airdrops, there has been a significant drop in the market prices of those commodities provided to beneficiaries (58 per cent) between May and June. It appears that direct food distribution and lower market prices contribute to increased food security among civilians. However, market prices in Deir-ez-Zor City remain more than double the prices found in Damascus. Additionally, the availability of bread in Deir-ez-Zor City remains an issue, as bakeries continue to run low on fuel and reportedly exhausted their yeast supplies by 6 July.

## Airlifting of humanitarian supplies to Qamishli commenced

Since WFP initiated airlifts to Qamishli City in Al Hasakeh Governorate on 9 July, 14 airlifts have been completed dispatching 8,280 complete food rations and 1,560 nutributter boxes as of 18 July. The nutributter boxes provide supplementary food needs for 18,720 children under five. Distributions of supplies to beneficiaries has started on 20 July. Under the current plan, in July at least 25 rotations between Damascus and Qamishli City will deliver over 1,000 metric tons of food, nutrition supplies, medicines and other relief items on behalf of other humanitarian organizations operating in Syria including the World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (GOPA).

Following a six-month closure of the Nusaybin/Qamishli border crossing between Turkey and Syria, the comparatively expensive option of airlifts to Qamishli has turned out to be the most viable one. Road access from within Syria for the UN has been cut off since 2013, when ISIL seized territories along the Damascus/Al Hasakeh route. The area has been cut off from receiving food and humanitarian supplies for six months, despite some supplies provided by NGOs from Iraq via Fishkhabur crossing.

## Heavy aerial bombardment in southern Syria

In southern Syria heavy aerial bombardment over Busra Ash-Sham town, in southeast Dar'a City, temporarily displaced some 2,000 people toward the villages of Moraba, Sahwa, and Ghasm. Consistent with recurring, short-term displacement in the south, the IDPs eventually returned to Busra Ash-Sham once aerial bombardment began to stop. OCHA is assessing possible damage to infrastructure within the town.

Over the reporting period, clashes continued to take place between Liwa Shuhada Al Yarmouk (LYS), locally perceived as an ISIL affiliate, and NSAGs in southwestern Dar'a, concentrated around Ain Thakar village. LSY's stronghold, Ash-Shajara Sub-district, remains a hard-to-reach area, with humanitarian actors facing multiple challenges in their efforts to deliver assistance to the estimated 6,150 IDPs and other people in need in the sub-district. Alongside food, shelter is a particularly acute need.

## Medical evacuations under Four Town Agreement

On 11 July, a SARC mobile team evacuated one civilian from Madaya town, injured by fighting on the outskirts of Bqine town. Two other medical cases could not be evacuated from Madaya until 14 July due to delayed security clearances. Simultaneously, four individuals (one injured and three accompanying family members) were transferred from Foah/Kefraya towns in Idleb Governorate.

Under the Four Towns Agreement, medical evacuations of the wounded and sick by parties to the conflict can only proceed on the basis of reciprocity, a condition to the agreement long criticised by the United Nations.

The transfers are noteworthy as evacuations of humanitarian cases under the Four-Town Agreement had been suspended in recent months due to disagreements between the parties to the agreement. While partial resumption of medical evacuations under the auspices of the Four Towns Agreement is a welcome development, no agreement has been reached regarding aid deliveries. The UN has been able to deliver humanitarian assistance to all the four towns every month from January to April 2016. Since 30 April, however, disagreements between parties to the agreement have prevented planned convoys from proceeding. In the absence of sustained humanitarian assistance, the humanitarian situation in all four besieged locations continues to deteriorate. On 8 July, a newborn baby died in Madaya. Despite conflicting reports that attributed the baby's death to starvation, the incident was eventually linked to the lack of an incubator.

In a statement on 4 July, Yacoub El Hilo, UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator in Syria and Kevin Kennedy, Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis, called on the parties to the Four Towns Agreement to allow for immediate and unconditional access for humanitarian actors without delays.

## Cross border operations

On 18 July, the GoJ granted official approval to resume cross-border operations. The resumption of operations follows the unprecedented attack against border guards in Rukban at Jordan's north-eastern border on 21 June. Following that attack, the Jordanian Armed Forces declared the north-eastern region a closed military zone and sealed its entire northern border with Syria. As a result, UN cross-border operations from Jordan under UNSC Resolution 2165/2258 were temporarily suspended and the convoy scheduled to depart to southern Syria via Ramtha border crossing on 22 June was postponed.

## Spotlight on Children in Syria

According to UNICEF, Syria remains one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a child. An estimated 2.9 million children aged 5 and under have experienced nothing but conflict in their lifetimes. The number of children forced to flee has increased from just over half a million children in 2013 to 2.4 million by March 2016. In the first six months of 2016, over 850 verified grave child rights violations were documented, of which more than one third alone was perpetrated in June 2016. The majority of children were killed or maimed due to of aerial attacks, shelling or exposure to unexploded ordinances and mines. UNICEF reports a significant increase in child recruitment with the majority of children recruited under the age of 15 years, lured by salaries and ideology. The agency also recorded cases of abduction, detention and even torture. One in four children is at risk of developing mental health disorders, including psychological distress and hardship. The majority of children face severe protection risks, including the worst forms of child labour, child marriage, and family separation.

On 3 July, attacks on the Khan Eshieh Palestine Refugee Camp in the Damascus area destroyed the only child-friendly space depriving around 1,000 children of facilities for education, psychosocial care and recreational activities. In late June, 25 children were killed by collapsing buildings hit by air strikes in the eastern governorates of Al-Quria and Deir-ez-Zor.

Access to and quality of education for Syrian children is heavily constrained by mass displacement, the destruction of schools and lack of qualified teachers, which continues to have a crippling effect on the education system. More than 6,000 schools can no longer be used or are used for non-educational purposes since the beginning of the crisis. Schools in safer areas are struggling to accommodate the large influx of children. Schools and hospitals are continually at risk, particularly in besieged and hard-to-reach areas where these facilities now operate underground for fear of attack. From January to May 2016 alone, humanitarian partners recorded 23 attacks on educational facilities. In 2015 UNICEF recorded 50 such attacks. The lack of a secure operational environment remains the primary challenge for humanitarian partners in providing educational support to children.

2.1 million school-aged children are not attending school, while another 1.4 million children are at risk of dropping out due to continued displacement, UNICEF estimates. An additional 700,000 children are out of school in neighbouring countries. Children in Syria have already missed multiple years of classes and are at increased risk of dropping out of school again, even if re-enrolled. The Education Sector's interventions have focused on access to quality education, especially for children in besieged and hard-to-reach areas. As of end of June, over 500,000 children were reached by the sector across the country with different education services and programmes, including 140,000 children in hard-to-reach and besieged areas. UNICEF estimates that two decades of investments in education in Syria are lost with enrolment rates in primary education comparable to the 1980s in Syria.

With three out of four Syrians living in poverty, many children are forced to work to support their families, including some children as young as three. In Syria alone, nearly seven million children live in poverty and 70 per cent of those are without access to reliable and clean water.

Access to healthcare for children, particularly in active conflict zones, remains a huge challenge and has been reduced significantly due to the conflict. All parties to the war have disrespected the safeguarding of medical facilities as per international humanitarian law. Over the course of the conflict, several paediatric hospitals were destroyed or have ceased to operate, the latest of which was the Children's Hospital in eastern Aleppo City hit by barrel bombs on 8 June. Currently, for 50,000 children residing under fire in eastern Aleppo City, only two or three paediatricians are available.

Syria's immunization coverage rates for polio and measles was above 90 per cent prior to the crisis. Syria was declared polio-free in 1999 and maternal and neonatal tetanus was eliminated. Since 2011, the situation has deteriorated significantly. Syria experienced a polio outbreak in 2013 and routine immunization has been almost non-existent, particularly in hard-to-reach and besieged locations of the country. WHO and UNICEF estimate that vaccination coverage may have fallen to below 50 per cent. One out of three children under five is not reached by routine vaccination. Some children living in besieged, hard-to-reach and/or contested areas have not been vaccinated in the last few years, despite significant efforts by health actors. UNICEF and WHO are supporting an accelerated routine immunization campaign to be conducted over three rounds.

UNICEF estimates that 2.5 million children and half a million pregnant and lactating women are at risk of malnutrition, while an estimated 86,000 children suffer from acute malnutrition. Only recently, UNICEF completed the first comprehensive nutrition assessment since the start of the crisis. The assessment revealed acute malnutrition levels of 2.2 per cent (female 2.3 per cent, male 2.1 per cent). The nutrition situation in some besieged locations, however, is dire. From January to May 2016, the nutrition sector reached 1.5 million children and women with nutrition interventions, including 440,000 in besieged and hard-to-reach areas.

## Other Humanitarian Developments by Governorate

### Aleppo Governorate

Reports from Aleppo City confirm that government forces have captured parts of Castello Road on 17 July. Due to the increased risk of insecurity on the last access road into eastern Aleppo City, humanitarian assistance and commodities cannot reach the civilian population. The freedom of movement of upwards of 300,000 people in eastern Aleppo City in urgent need of assistance is curtailed. Since 7 July 2016, humanitarian actors have been unable to reach eastern Aleppo City. Significant price increases of food, vegetables and fuel have been reported, and dairy products are reportedly unavailable. The quantity of reserved fuel and wheat flour is unknown. Reportedly, less than 50 per cent of all bakeries remain operational, and those operational are only running for 5 to 6 hours a day. People, crowding at these few operational bakeries, are increasingly exposed to aerial bombardment and continuous shelling.

While there was enough food in eastern Aleppo City for at least 145,000 people for one month at the time the road closed for humanitarian movement and enough essential medical supplies for approximately four months, replenishing fuel supplies is crucial to power medical facilities, water stations and bakeries. The limited available fuel supplies are pre-positioned for medical facilities and water stations. In an effort to regulate prices, the Aleppo Local Council – following consultations with humanitarian actors in eastern Aleppo City – has issued a number of directives to fix prices for basic commodities and services (e.g. electricity communal generators). Rationing of supplies has already been reported. Access to fresh food, including fruit and vegetables, is limited, according to reports. One cross-line convoy was approved.

WFP has prepositioned food for 117,000 people in July and for almost 55,000 people in August inside eastern Aleppo City. Additionally, WFP has 3,000 wheat flour bags, 700 rice bags and 3,000 mixed food items. Combined with other pre-positioned stocks provided by NGOs, food supplies inside eastern Aleppo City appear to be sufficient for 145,000 people for one month. Despite available stocks, the highest priority is to resupply food stocks through using cross-line convoys and cross-border operations from Turkey.

In western Aleppo, at least 15 civilians in Al-Masharqa District and Aleppo's Assyrian neighbourhoods were killed in heavy shelling on 9 July. Between 8 and 11 July, 57 people were reportedly killed, including 15 children, and 497 people were injured. Explosive anti-aircraft projectiles and mortars were launched in the past week and continue to pose a serious threat to civilians. Reportedly, the GoS intensified airstrikes on areas in rural Aleppo, killing at least 19 people in the town of Ibeen and seven people in the town of Shantra on 10 July.

Conditions for civilians trapped in Menbij remain a major concern, with electricity, water and fuel reportedly unavailable. Some people who left the town reported that ISIL fighters threatened to kill anyone who attempted to leave. Given the situation, it is not possible to know the exact numbers of civilians trapped in the town, but it is estimated there may be still some 30-40,000 civilians who remain without electricity or water and the situation is deteriorating rapidly as fighting continues.

### Idleb Governorate

On 11 July, multiple airstrikes struck the town of Ehsem south of Idleb City. On the 15 July, Bab Al-Hawa crossing was closed for pedestrian use. Despite its closure for pedestrian use, commercial and UN shipments continue as planned. NSAGs discovered a car bomb on the Syrian side and were able to render it safe.

### Rural Damascus Governorate-Humanitarian situation still deteriorating in Darayya town

For the first time since 2012, military operations on Darayya town intensified on 12 July. GoS and allied troops reached the residential area and captured a significant part of the farms, which are the primary source of food for residents. This latest advance not only poses a threat to their food security, but resulted in the local community being exposed to direct fire and shelling into their residential areas. Although reliable displacement numbers are not available, the southern part of the town now appears to be completely deserted. This led to overcrowding in underground shelters given the absence of other housing alternatives as a result of widespread destruction.

The shelters reportedly lack basic requirements, such as adequate and proper sanitation facilities. A rapid deterioration of the humanitarian conditions, coupled with the prevailing sense of demoralization among the residents as a result of the recent advancement of GoS forces, may also trigger domestic violence incidents. Young men are also reported to be increasingly vulnerable to being recruited into NSAGs. The UN/ICRC/SARC deliveries to Darayya town continues to be on hold, as the "humanitarian pause" that could allow for the safe delivery of aid items, is yet to be confirmed. The last UN/SARC mission to Darayya town took place on 9 June.

## Dar'a Governorate

In southern Syria, heavy aerial bombardment took place over Busra Ash-Sham town, in southeast Dar'a, displacing hundreds of families within the town, as well as some 730 families to the plains near Ghasm and Simj towns and 860 families to Moraba village. With people reportedly sleeping in the open, temporary shelter is among the most urgent needs. Food Security sector partners are also mobilizing to deliver ready-to-eat food rations and, in the longer term, family food rations. Reserve stocks inside Syria are now running low and urgently need replenishment through cross-border supply from Jordan.

Clashes also continued to take place between Liwa Shuhadaa Al Yarmouk (LSY), locally perceived as an ISIL affiliate, and NSAGs in south-western Dar'a, concentrated around Ain Thakar village. LSY's stronghold, Ash-Shajara Sub-district, remains a hard-to-reach area, with humanitarian actors facing multiple challenges in their efforts to deliver assistance to the estimated 6,150 IDPs and other people in need in the sub-district. Alongside food, shelter is considered a particularly acute need, with the Needs and Population Monitoring (NPM) estimating 1,333 people experiencing damage to their shelters. Partners in the south are planning a dedicated access meeting to explore options for assisting this population on 25 July.

## Key Humanitarian Reports and Updates

- [Joint Statement on Escalating Violence in Aleppo, Syria, Damascus/Amman](#)
- ["Aleppo: Civilians trapped in Syrian city as UN warns food supplies and hospital fuel running low", ABC Interview with the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria, Yacoub El Hilo](#)
- ["Despite Aid Deliveries, Besieged Syrians in Madaya Starving to Death", Physicians for Human Rights](#)
- ["UNICEF, UNRWA condemn bombing of child friendly space in Khan Eishieh camp in Syria", UNICEF/UNRWA](#)
- [Syrian Arab Republic: 2016 UN Inter-Agency Humanitarian Operations](#)
- [Syrian Arab Republic: Whole of Syria Who does What Where per Governorate](#)
- [Syrian Arab Republic: Whole of Syria Sectors' Reach at Sub-District Level](#)
- [Syrian Arab Republic: 2016 UN Inter-Agency Humanitarian Operations](#)
- [Syrian Arab Republic: United Nations cross-border operations under UNSC resolutions 2165/2191/2258](#)
- [Fact Sheet: United Nations cross-border operations from Jordan to Syria](#)
- [Southern Syria: Resident Population & Internally Displaced Persons](#)
- [Syria: Flash update on recent events, UNHCR, 5 July 2016](#)
- [Syria: Flash update on recent events, UNHCR, 13 July 2016](#)
- [Syrian Arab Republic \(Northern Governorates\): Displacements snapshot, CCCM Cluster](#)

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