

HIGHLIGHTS

- Opposition forces reversed government forces gains in Mallah Farms and retook Handarat village in Aleppo.
- Several large Islamic Front and FSA-affiliated factions in Aleppo have merged into the 'Levant Front' (Jabhat al-Shamia).
- Al-Nusra has made some efforts to consolidate its influence in rural Idlib, setting up checkpoints on key access routes.
- During the reporting period, UN cross-border shipments under Security Council Resolution 2165/2191 reached 282,198 individuals in Aleppo, Idlib and Hama Governorates.
- During the reporting period, UN cross-border shipments under Security Council Resolution 2139, 115 trucks with UN humanitarian supplies crossed the Nusaybin/Qamishli to Al-Hasakeh Governorate.

FIGURES

# of People in Need (PiN)	12.2 m
# of IDPs	7.6 m
# of reported camps in northern Syria	147
# of IDPs in reported settlements	174,624



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Humanitarian Context

Opposition makes counteroffensive against government forces in Aleppo

Opposition forces have launched an incremental counteroffensive that has reversed government forces' most recent gains in Mallah Farms and seen opposition forces retake Handarat village. The presence of government forces in Mallah Farms had put them in relative proximity to a stretch of the Castello road – the only remaining access route into Eastern opposition-controlled Aleppo city. The counteroffensive reduces the likelihood of government forces advancing to Haritan or Castello road, a move that would result in 300,000 civilians in Eastern Aleppo being largely cut-off from ease of humanitarian access, as the only two remaining routes would no longer be usable without passing through opposition and government controlled front lines.

Major opposition forces merge in Aleppo against Al-Nusra Front

Several of the large Islamic Front and FSA-affiliated factions in Aleppo have announced their merger into the 'Levant Front' (Jabhat al-Shamia). [Reports claim](#) that the merger aims at improved coordination between factions and reversing government advances to encircle the city. However, there are also indications that the Levant Front merger may be a [response](#) to the growing threat posed by al-Nusra Front. Al-Nusra Front has recently carried out an arrest campaign against a number of FSA-affiliates in Aleppo, as well as seizing the weapons of several sub-factions, causing them to disband. There is some concern that these tensions could result in sustained conflict between Al-Nusra Front and other opposition forces, hindering humanitarian access in the area.

Al-Nusra Front exerts influence in Idlib, creating tensions

Following recent victories against both government and rival opposition forces, Al-Nusra Front has attempted to consolidate its influence in rural Idlib, setting up checkpoints on key access routes and, in one town, arresting up to 50 activists seen as affiliated to FSA-affiliates. This has resulted in protests and in Salqin in Western Idlib, clashes between Ahrar al-Sham (Islamic Front) and Al-Nusra Front. This development may result in sustained conflict between the Islamic Front groups and al-Nusra Front in coming months, possibly restricting humanitarian access into Idlib, rural Lattakia and Northern Hama.

Al-Nusra Front cuts water and electricity to government-held areas of Idlib and Aleppo, as well as cross-line access

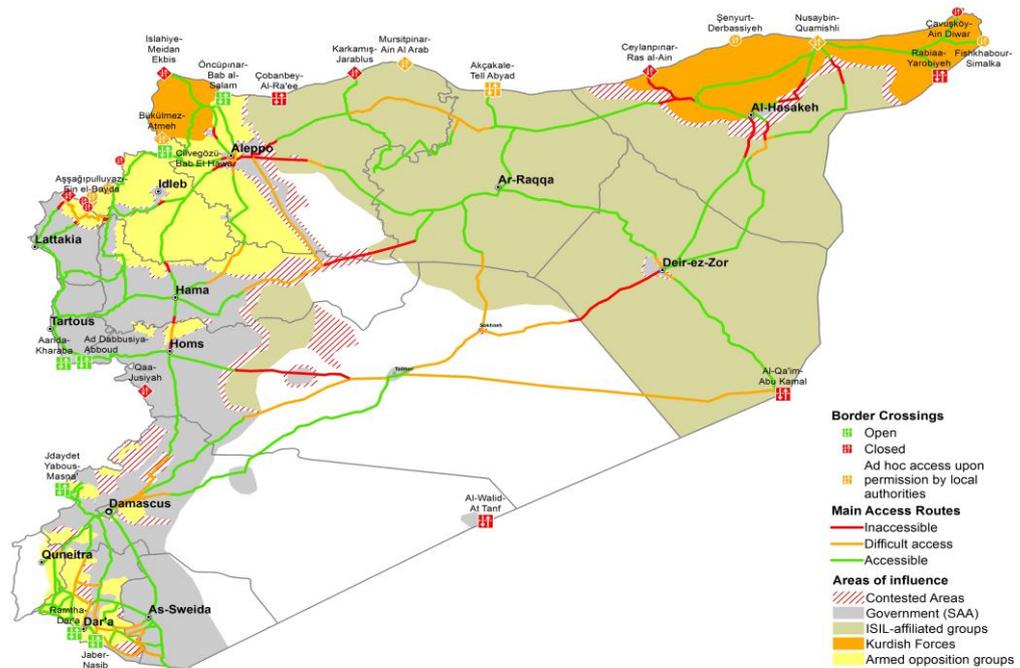
On or about 22 December 2014, Al-Nusra Front blocked all roads from government-controlled Idlib city to surrounding opposition-held areas, as well as cutting electricity and water to Idlib city. These actions have affected approximately 600,000 people living under

government-control in Idlib, with blocks on access routes preventing food produce from reaching the city and causing prices to rise; while cuts to water have caused a spike in water prices inside of the city. Water and electricity supplies were reportedly restored in Idlib city on 30 December 2014. On 24 December 2014, Al-Nusra Front cut electricity and water to large parts of Aleppo, including to government-controlled areas. Al-Nusra's official justification for these moves was to pressure government forces to release 43 female students who had been arrested on the road between Idlib and Aleppo as they were on their way to attend university. Nevertheless, some fear that the move was part of a broader strategy to exert pressure on government forces in Idlib.

Humanitarian Access Constraints

Access trends generally remain unchanged during the reporting period. Humanitarian supplies and personnel are still generally able to reach their intended areas or beneficiaries in the northwestern Governorates, with occasional delays because of active combat. Access to the Government controlled villages of Nubul and Zahra in Aleppo remains fully restricted. Access to eastern Aleppo city, Kurdish and ISIL controlled northeastern Governorates remains problematic.

Humanitarian supplies and personnel are still generally able to reach their intended areas or beneficiaries in the northwestern Governorates, albeit with occasional delays.



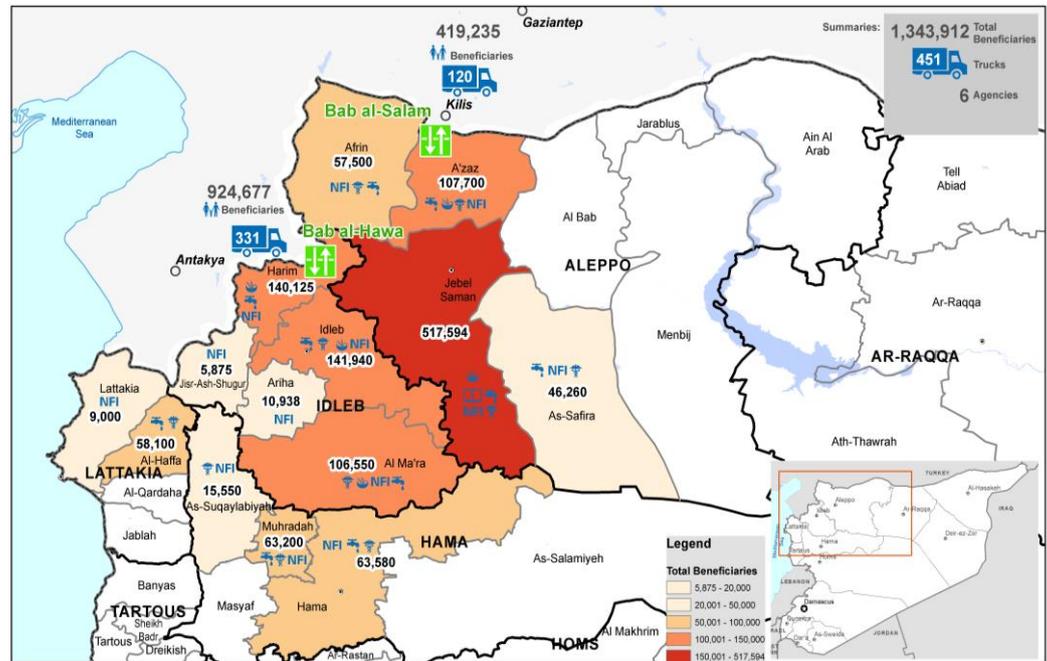
The map above indicates that the broad areas of control by all the parties to the conflict remain roughly the same during the reporting period. Major routes remain largely accessible in Government of Syria (GoS) controlled areas; while routes crossing into opposition-controlled areas remain contested.

Response Update

Through the unanimous adoption of resolution 2191 (2014), the UN Security Council decided that United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners could continue until 10 January 2016 with notification to the Syrian authorities, to use the border crossings at Bab al-Salam, Bab al-Hawa, Al Yarubiyah and Al-Ramtha in addition to those already in use as originally authorized by resolution 2165 (2014). It also renewed the mandate of the Monitoring Mechanism created by that resolution in order to ensure compliance.

The UN Security Council adopts Resolution 2191 thereby extending the UN cross-border mandate until 10 January 2016.

During the past two weeks, shipments with humanitarian supplies consisting of Health, FSL, NFIs and WaSH items from WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF crossed the Bab al-Hawa and Bab al-Salam border crossings. This aid will assist 282,198 individuals in Aleppo, Idleb and Hama governorates. The map below shows the accumulated assistance provided through UN cross border assistance from Turkey since the adoption of SCR 2165, with a total of 1,343,902 people assisted.



UN agencies shipped 115 truckloads of humanitarian aid through Nusaybin/Qamishli border crossing under Security Council Resolution 2139 in the last two weeks of December.

UN resumed its cross border operations under Security Council Resolution 2139 through the Nusaybin/Qamishli border crossing. Over the course of past two weeks, UNHCR shipped 34 truckloads of NFI and WFP shipped 81 truckloads of food assistance through Nusaybin/Qamishli.

In addition to the UN shipments, the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) is facilitating the crossing of humanitarian shipments by NGOs and other actors through designated zero points along the Turkish border. Between 19-31 December 2014, the TRC facilitated the crossing of 235 trucks during nine shipment days using seven border crossings.

IHH Aid Campaign

IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation initiated a humanitarian assistance campaign on 26 December 2014. A 35-truck convoy carrying blankets, food baskets, flour, children coats, children boots, coats and shoes for men and women will be delivered to people in need in several governorates and districts of Syria. As of 1 January 2015, 20 trucks have been loaded with flour, 10 trucks with blankets, 1 truck with food baskets, 4 trucks with scarfs, coast, boots, gloves, and caps. This aid campaign targets people in need in Hama, Idleb, Aleppo, Homs and Lattakia governorates.

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