

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Al Nusra Front continues offensive on Nubul and Zahra and clashes with Islamic Front/FSA forces. Armed groups block each other's access to resources across conflict lines in al-Hasakeh. ISIL made minor advances in Deir-ez-Zor city.
- 49 trucks with UN humanitarian supplies crossed the Nusaybin/Qamishli to Al-Hasakeh Governorate under SCR 2139.
- 291,206 individuals in Aleppo, Idlib and Hama Governorates were reached with UN assistance under SCR 2165/2191.
- The Turkish Red Crescent facilitated 222 truckloads of humanitarian supplies crossing through seven border crossings during the past two weeks.

## 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	174,702



Winter Storm Damages Tents in IDP Settlements in Northern Idlib

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## Humanitarian Context

### Al Nusra Front offensive may trigger displacement and increased humanitarian needs:

A sustained offensive by the Al Nusra Front (ANF) on the besieged villages of Nubul and Zahra as well as a number of clashes between the (ANF) and Islamic Front/FSA forces in Aleppo and Idlib Governorates were reported over the last two weeks. The offensive on the besieged villages might lead to the displacement of the 26,500 civilians based inside of the Nubul and Zahra towards Afrin, all of whom are Shiites and therefore fear being subject to indiscriminate violence. The increased tensions among the armed actors in the area could further lead to increased opposition blocks on humanitarian access to Afrin where 335,000 people are estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance. A potential increase in Al Nusra territorial / civilian control as a result of the fighting might further increase humanitarian needs in the Governorates. Al Nusra has already shown that they are willing to interfere with civilian management by cutting water and power to government-controlled areas of Aleppo and Idlib, and insisting that the GoS should release a number of female detainees.

### ISIL makes minor advances in Deir-ez-Zor:

ISIL made minor advances in government-controlled areas of Deir-ez-Zor city. While there is no indication of further advances at this stage, the clashes indicate that the fall of Deir-ez-Zor city remains a possibility – a scenario that could displace or subject to violence many of the 150,000 people living under government control in western neighborhoods of the city. Reports on fighting from the ISIL-controlled areas of the city suggest that humanitarian partners might need to negotiate with multiple factions in order to deliver assistance in the area.

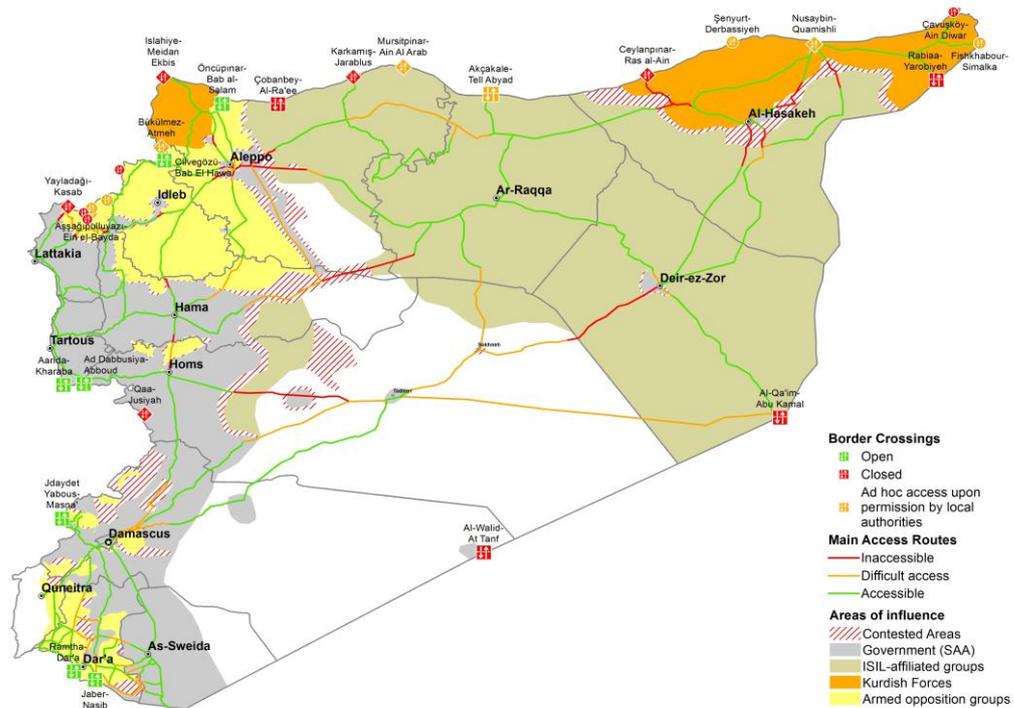
### Armed groups block each other's access to resources:

There are continued instances of conflict parties blocking access across conflict lines. ISIL recently blocked fuel supplies to Government and YPG/PYD areas in al-Hasakeh, apparently because government forces in northern al-Hasakeh prevented flour and food products from reaching ISIL-controlled areas in southern al-Hasakeh. This is another instance of a wider trend of reciprocal blocks on access between ISIL and its opponents, rendering ISIL-controlled areas hard-to-reach, particularly from northern al-Hasakeh, underlining the importance of direct cross-border access.

## 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.

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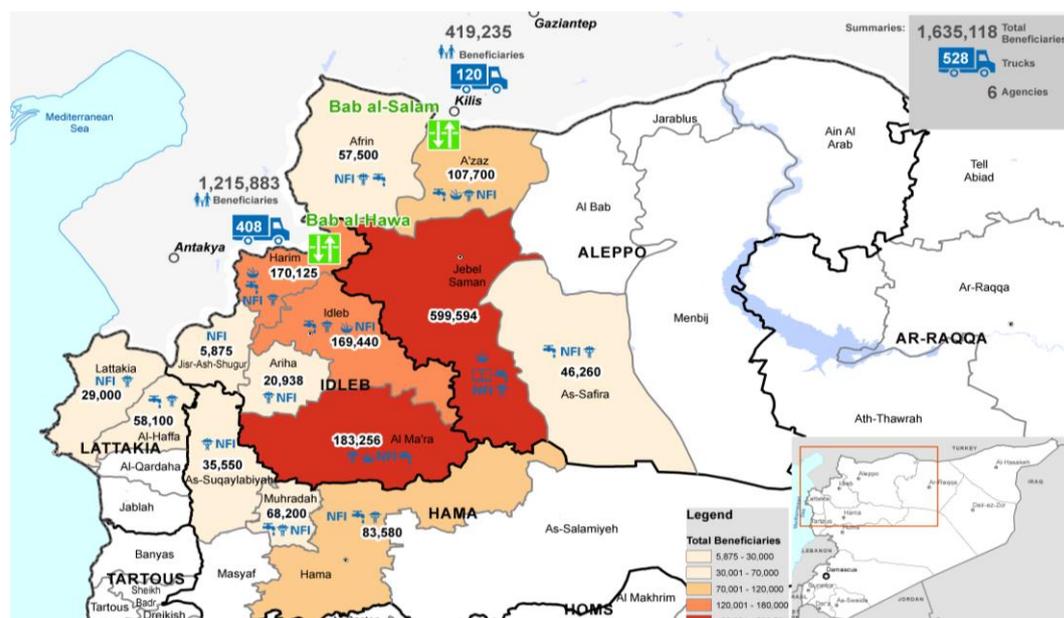
The map above indicates that the broad areas of control by all the parties to the conflict remain roughly the same during the reporting period. Major routes remain largely accessible in Government of Syria (GoS) controlled areas; while routes crossing into opposition-controlled areas remain contested.

## 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.

During the past two weeks, shipments with humanitarian supplies consisting of Health, FSL, NFIs and WaSH items from WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM crossed the Bab al-Hawa border crossing. This aid will assist 291,206 individuals in Aleppo, Idlib and Hama governorates. The map below shows the accumulated assistance provided through UN cross border assistance from Turkey since the adoption of UN SCR 2165, which totals 1,635,118 people assisted.

*The accumulated assistance provided through UN cross border assistance from Turkey since the adoption of UN SCR 2165 totals 1,635,118 people.*



UN agencies 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 01-16 January 2015, the TRC facilitated the crossing of 222 trucks during 11 shipment days using six border crossings.

## Winter Storm Response

While many Syrians cope with severe weather conditions, thousands remain vulnerable as temperatures continue to drop significantly. Primarily, weather conditions disrupted life in the last weeks in IDP camps and settlements in Idlib, Latakia and Homs. Urgent needs are heating fuel, tents and in some cases fuel stoves. Raqqa, Homs, Hama and Latakia governorates remain as areas with lesser coverage and are in need of Shelter/NFI assistance. The most severely affected areas are in Latakia governorate that was hit directly by a winter storm on 07 January 2015. As a result, many tents were destroyed. The CCCM indicates that 174, 624 IDPs were affected by the storm in the Aleppo, Idlib, Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor Governorates.

The CCCM sector established an online information collection tool to seek feedback from partners on their response to the winter storm. Eleven members of the CCCM sector responded and gaps have been mostly covered from NFI and winter clothes distributions in December 2014 or emergency response in January 2015. However, critical gaps remain in areas that were already underserved before the storm, i.e. in particular in the provision of heating fuel, stoves and tents.

Following the identification of these urgent needs, partners are responding through distribution of heating fuel, mattresses, tents and winter clothing. Three partners started distributions of heating fuel (kerosene and charcoal) in IDP camps as well as replacement tents. The FSL sector partners reported they are stocking food baskets in their warehouses inside Syria as part of winterization emergency response. The sector forecasts that in total 971,665 people will receive food baskets in January 2015. The education sector highlighted the need for fuel to heat learning spaces, stating that most partners were constrained by the high costs and difficulties with transportation of fuel. Partners also stated that there is a need for fire extinguishers in the camps. Health partners raised concerns due to reports from Idlib governorate about increase in Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) that has led to increased number of deaths in children under five, in particular newborns. Four deaths of children were also reported from Aleppo and 30 persons have reportedly been transferred

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to Turkey due to ARI. Health partners distributed protocols for pneumonia treatment to responding agencies.

## Border Crossing of Syrian NGO staff

Turkish authorities introduced two border crossing procedural changes as of 01 January 2015, which have direct implications on the crossing of Syrian staff working for NGOs providing humanitarian assistance in Syria. Firstly, Syrian citizens with valid travel documents are no longer exempted from the “90 days stay within a 180-day period” rule (Council of Ministers Decision No: 2014/6281). Secondly, the Temporary Protection Regulation (Council of Ministers Decision No: 2014/6883) is to be applied to Syrian nationals in Turkey who are not eligible to obtain a residence permit. The Temporary Protection status provides security, unlimited stay, protection against forcible returns, and access to reception arrangements for Syrian nationals in Turkey in compliance with Temporary Protection Regulation.

As a result, Syrian valid passport holders who do not have residence permits can only remain in Turkey 90 days within a 180-day period and those under Temporary Protection would lose this status if they return to Syria. Those who violate these two rules have been subject to administrative fines or had to comply with temporary entry restrictions in line with the maximum stay period. The introduction of these new regulations has adversely affected Syrian staff of NGOs that are providing assistance from Turkey into Syria with a large number of staff no longer able to cross the border regularly to accompany shipments and conduct programming activities.

OCHA is working with Turkish authorities to find a solution to the challenges caused by the recent changes.

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