Key findings (as of March 2022)

Consolidated access severity scores across all humanitarian partner groups – UN Agencies, International NGOs and Local NGOs – reveal that from among the 14.6M people in need (PiN) of assistance living in 270 sub-districts across Syria, the level of access constraints were found to be:

- High in 23 sub-districts (representing 4 per cent of PiN - 620K)
- Moderate in 71 sub-districts (27 per cent of PiN - 4M)
- Low in 176 sub-districts (69 per cent of PiN - 10M)

The second edition of the Access Severity Overview finds that conflict-related dynamics continue to be the most common constraints faced by all humanitarian partners in the 'moderate' and 'high' ranked districts, particularly in the form of military operations and contamination of unexploded ordinances across the country. In many of the areas where access severity is recorded as moderate or high, humanitarian partners report higher levels of movement restrictions (of personnel and goods) and/or interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities when compared with the previous reporting period. Humanitarian partners reported that access was found to be largely permissive for the vast majority of sub-districts.

Background and methodology

In March 2022, focus group discussions were convened (separately) with UN Agencies, INGOs and National NGO partner organizations from each response modality to collect and distil an agreed understanding by the humanitarian community of the access environment in Syria. Once consolidated, the findings were cross-checked by field-based experts, including to avoid discrepancies with other quantitative data or reporting. The findings for all organization types, and for all sub-districts, were applied to a three-point severity scale – generally the average score per sub-district. This is the second edition of the Access Severity Overview, following the August 2021 iteration.

To note: the information presented for much of the Northeast includes a combined severity scoring based on the expert and collective understanding of the NES Forum coordinated partners and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)-coordinated partners operating cross-line.

Legend

- Lower access severity (Level 1): Relatively few access constraints. Armed actors, checkpoints, or other impediments such as administrative obstacles may be present and may impede humanitarian activities. However, with adequate resources and clearances, humanitarian organisations can still operate and reach all or nearly all targeted people in need.
- Moderate access severity (Level 2): Armed actors, checkpoints, lack of security, administrative impediments, or other impediments may be present, and often result in restrictions on humanitarian movements and operations. Operations continue in these areas with regular restrictions.
- High access severity (Level 3): Armed actors, checkpoints, high levels of insecurity, administrative obstacles, as well as other impediments are present and very often result in restrictions on humanitarian movements and operations. Operations in these areas face high difficulties and sometimes are impossible.
- Areas with no or limited population
- No data
Moreover, civilians' access towards Aleppo city remains subject to approvals. All UN assistance bound for the eastern areas of Northern Aleppo must cross between areas under the control of different armed groups. Since September 2019; there has been no access for camp residents to the UN clinic on the Jordanian side of the border since March 2020.

• Services and assistance, including arbitrary restrictions on crossing points between areas under the control of different parties, were highlighted in many focus group discussions. This includes reporting on the deteriorating socio-economic conditions, namely the reduced availability of electricity, fuel, and water, which hinders access of affected populations to assistance, including implementing and sustaining programming.

• Humanitarian partners report violence against personnel and assets, interference by the authorities, and restrictions on humanitarian workers accessing areas such as the Annex. Focus group discussions continue to reveal significant access constraints in other IDP camps and informal settlements across Northeast Syria (particularly for HCT-coordinated UN agencies and INGOs), limiting response capacity. Access is currently permissive for NES Forum coordinated partners.

• Access to Alouk water station remains a significant concern as disruptions continue to impact nearly 500,000 people in Northeast Syria, primarily in Al-Hasakeh and Tal Tamer, including IDP sites such as Al Hol and Areesha camp. Periodic disruptions to the water supply from Alouk were experienced during the reporting period, due to insufficient electricity and reduced access for technicians to carry out maintenance and repairs.

• In the Northwest, ongoing active hostilities, particularly around frontline areas, have been reported at reduced frequency than July 2021. Interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities have been most prevalent in Idleb, primarily in IDP camps and in northern Aleppo where bureaucratic impediments create delays in approvals of projects and implementation of humanitarian programs. Gender-segregation regulations hamper access and implementation of gender specific activities, particularly at IDP camps. NGO staff members remain at risk of arbitrary arrests and detention. Overall, the access environment is considered more enabling as of late by humanitarian partners.

• The RAATA area is currently only accessible via Turkey by a few International and Local NGOs (those granted permissions report relatively low access constraints). In Menbij and Ain Al Arab in Northern Aleppo, UN agencies and HLG and HCT coordinated INGOs in particular, continue to face a range of access challenges, while NES Forum coordinated partners report relatively lower access constraints. Nevertheless, with the limited partner presence, largely attributed to funding constraints and bureaucratic impediments, response remains below requirements.

• In Tall Refaat enclave in Aleppo Governorate, where access remains restricted to HCT coordinated partners, tensions due to proximity to frontlines continue to impact civilians, as well as humanitarian partners reporting delays associated with bureaucratic processes and high transportation costs.
HUMANITARIAN ACCESS CONSTRAINTS BY CATEGORY

Top five humanitarian access constraints

In the following maps, sub-districts highlighted in blue indicate that the corresponding access constraint was reported by partners but does not reflect occurrences or level of impact of the constraint. Determination of a sub-district's overall access severity scoring is based on experts' collective assessment regarding the impact the combined constraints have on affected populations.

**Interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities**

61 out of 270

**Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods within the affected country**

46 out of 270

**Physical environment**

139 out of 270

**Presence of mines and explosive ordnance**

136 out of 270

**Military operations and ongoing hostilities impeding humanitarian operations**

121 out of 270

**ACCESS CONSTRAINT**

**PERCENTAGE OF REPORTING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access Constraint</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods within the affected country</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical environment</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of mines and UXOs</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military operations and ongoing hostilities impeding humanitarian operations</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictions on, or obstruction of, conflict affected populations access to services and assistance</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence against humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denial of the existence of humanitarian needs or of entitlements to humanitarian assistance</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend

Areas with no or limited population

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Comparing severity scores – access and needs

- Map A shows the 51 sub-districts which suffer extreme and catastrophic severity of needs (as published in the 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview) and moderate or high access severity. 35 per cent (95 in total) of all subdistricts nationwide are classified as facing extreme or catastrophic needs; 54 per cent of these same subdistricts face moderate (39) or high (12) levels of access severity.

- Access severity as reported by humanitarian partners shifted for 44 subdistricts in total, reducing in severity for most of those subdistricts, while increasing for 20 subdistricts (see map B). For the 7 subdistricts where conditions have shifted from moderate to high in access severity, all are located in Al-Hasakeh (Al Hol, Darbasiyah and Tel Tamer sub-districts), Deir-ez-Zor (Basira and Thiban), and Dar’a (Jasim and Hrak) governorates – where close to 225,000 people in need reside.

- In 12 of the subdistricts – where there are high access challenges, and where residents in need (see map C). A majority of these subdistricts suffer from various humanitarian access constraints – primarily in the form of ongoing hostilities between armed groups, restrictions of movements within the country, including presence of unexploded ordnances. These subdistricts are primarily found in Deir-ez-Zor, Idleb, Dar’a and Rural Damascus governorates.

- Similar to findings from July 2021, Atareb and Maaret Tamsrin sub-districts in Aleppo and Idleb governorates respectively present catastrophic severity of needs with moderate access constraints. However, conditions have deteriorated for Ehsem sub-district in Idleb Governorate, where catastrophic severity of needs are coupled with high access constraints.

- 44 subdistricts face catastrophic (3) and extreme (41) severity of needs while humanitarian partners report low access constraints (and insufficient partner presence) – Nashabiyeh sub-district in Rural Damascus Governorate, and Harim and Dana sub-districts in Idleb Governorate.

- As previously observed, despite the relatively lower access constraints reported in Menbij and Ain Al Arab in Northern Aleppo, challenges remain for UN agencies and INGOs to operate in the area, particularly for HCT partners, resulting in limited response capacity for the 195,000 people in need which reside in these areas.

C) Access Severity and People in Need - Subdistricts > 100,000 people in need by sub-district

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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