

KEY FIGURES

2.8 M

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) in north-west Syria

1.7 M

IDPs in displacement sites

43,511

Confirmed COVID-19 cases (4 September 2021)

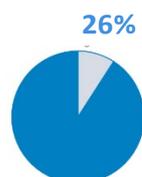
37

trucks of UN cross-border assistance transhipped in August

FUNDING

Syria Humanitarian Response

\$1.11 BILLION



of estimated total financial requirements under the 2021 Syria HRP

HIGHLIGHTS

- COVID-19 cases have increased across north-west Syria since mid-August, with more than 1,000 daily cases recorded in the past few weeks.
- Since June 2021, an escalation in hostilities resulted in 86 civilians killed and 205 civilians injured (UN Human Rights Office – OHCHR).
- The Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, undertook a seven-day visit to Syria, Lebanon and Turkey between 28 August and 3 September.
- WFP humanitarian aid reached north-west Syria from Government-controlled areas on 30 – 31 August in the first crossline mission since 2017.
- A Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP) report on livelihoods shows even among people with work, nine out of ten live in extreme poverty.

OVERVIEW

Displacement

- The Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster tracked 31,081 displacements of people in August.
- Idleb and Afrin sub-districts recorded the highest number of departures. Some 4,000 people left Idleb and over 3,500 people left Afrin. Bulbul and Raju sub-districts received the highest number of arrivals, each receiving over 2,500 people.
- Across Syria, the humanitarian community recorded 2,715 returns in August compared to 3,558 returns in July. Ariha sub-district in Idleb recorded the highest number of returns in north-west Syria.

Access

- On 30 August, the first crossline mission since 2017 reached north-west Syria from Government-controlled areas. A first convoy of three trucks brought 127 MT of food rations from Aleppo to the WFP warehouse in Sarmada in Idleb. The next day, 11 trucks brought 447.55 MT of food rations. The mission will provide food assistance to 50,000 people.
- In August, the UN continued its cross-border operations from Turkey through the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing under the Security Council Resolution 2585 (2021). Although distributions focused on using the aid prepositioned prior to 10 July, some 37 trucks of humanitarian assistance were delivered. Expectations are that that number will increase back up to around 1,000 trucks a month in the fourth quarter, as winterization deliveries begin.

Protection

- Beginning in June, communities across north-west Syria and in the Ras Al Ain and Tell Abiad (RAATA) areas are witnessing the largest escalation of hostilities since the March 2020 ceasefire.
- An escalation of hostilities resulted in the loss of 86 civilian lives and the injury of 205 civilians since June 2021, reported the OHCHR. Shelling in August killed at least 20 civilians (including one woman and 15 children) and injured at least 41 civilians (including four women and 20 children). OHCHR reported nine incidents of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and unexploded ordnances (UXOs) killed at least five civilians and injured 15 civilians.
- In August, the escalation trend continued, concentrating around the south of M4 highway and around the M5 highway in southern Idlib. At least 29 airstrike incidents affected locations mostly in mountainous areas, and daily shelling affected towns and villages around the frontlines in southern Idlib, particularly Ehsem, northern Lattakia and western Hama.
- In northern Aleppo, Al Bab town and surroundings were affected for the first time since March 2021. In a series of shelling incidents on 5 and 6 August, at least 24 civilians were injured, and some civilian houses sustained structural damage.
- In August, heavy artillery shelling and nighttime clashes were reported in RAATA, especially on the eastern frontlines. On 12 August, clashes affected Abu Rasin, Umm al-kif, Al-Fakka, Tal al-Ward, al-Daldara, Tal Manakh, al-Rihaniyah and al-Qasimiyah villages. Artillery shelling affected Abu Rasin town in eastern Ras Al Ain countryside in August, reportedly displacing 420 families towards Al-Hasakeh city.
- Hostilities escalated in Dar'a from the beginning of July, particularly in Dar'a Al Balad, which has approximately 55,000 residents, resulting in displacements. While the displacement is largely limited to the Dar'a city and surrounding areas, where over 36,000 people remain displaced, in late August 36 civilians arrived in Al Bab in north-west Syria.
- Meanwhile, humanitarian needs are much higher than the sectors can adequately respond to. According to estimations, across north-west Syria, 3.2 million people are acutely food insecure, while 3.1 million people are in need of health assistance.
- 2.2 million people remain in need of shelter assistance. 15 per cent of the households in north-west Syria live in tents, 85 per cent of whom report that their tents are over 12 months old, rendering the tents vulnerable to the elements. 13 per cent of the households reside in damaged shelters. Overall, 46 per cent of all households cannot afford shelters repairs.
- About one million people in north-west Syria do not have access to at least one essential clean water and sanitation service or supply. 70 per cent of the people in displacement sites and 33 per cent in communities rely on water trucking to access clean water. Less than half of the population in displacement sites have access to soap, water and handwashing facilities.

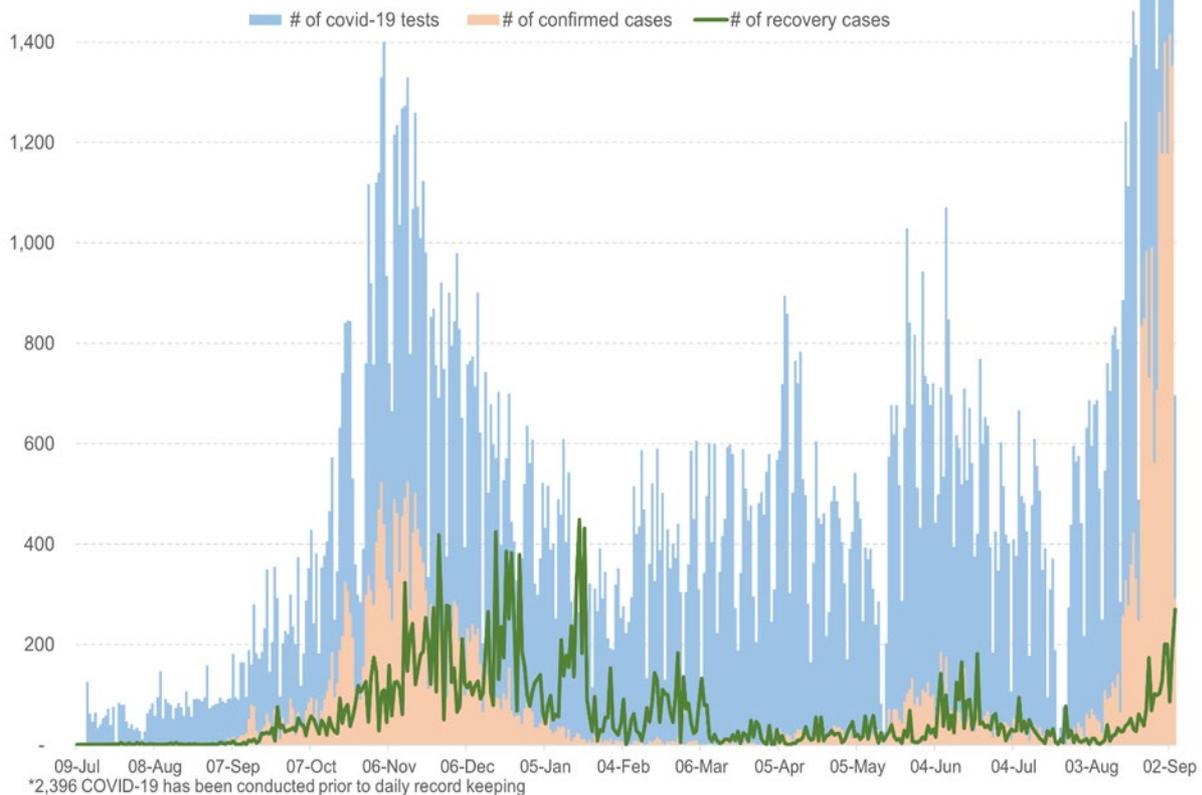
COVID-19

The incident rate of COVID-19 significantly increased across north-west Syria in August with 12,839 new cases, marking a sharp increase compared to 771 new cases in July. Since the last week of August, daily COVID-19 cases have been peaking over 1,000 daily new cases. Most districts in the north-west Syria are high risk, including Afrin, Jarablus, Harim, Idlib, Jish-Ash-Shugur and Ariha, while the rest are considered medium risk. The PCR test positivity rate has been significantly high, fluctuating between 40 – 50 per cent.

The COVID-19 Task Force is assessing the response capacity and gaps to avoid overburdening the healthcare system, including surveillance activities, the occupancy rate in the community-based treatment centres (CCTCs) and intensive care units (ICUs). Oxygen generator and cylinder capacity have been assessed and additional support has been planned in coordination with partners.

For better monitoring and planning, partners were invited to ensure timely and accurate reporting of the new cases. The use of the antigen detection rapid diagnostic test (Ag-RDT), as per the protocol of use and diagnosis of COVID-19 through Ag-RDT, was promoted for the healthcare workers across north-west Syria to prevent the spread of the virus among the workers.

NUMBER OF COVID-19 TESTS, RECOVERY AND CONFIRMED CASES as of 4 September 2021



Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) activities, including trainings and periodic supervision visits, were scaled up through the integrated health delivery networks to cover gaps in the field. COVID-19 test kits capable of detecting alpha, beta and delta variants have been procured.

By mid-July, the response activities were supported by points of entry (PoE) screening and the referral system, detecting and transporting suspected COVID-19 cases. Two PoEs and 10 patient transportation vehicles have already been reactivated and WHO is working to cover the gaps to ensure that all PoEs and vehicles are reactivated and functioning.

The vaccination campaign, coordinated by the Syria Immunization Group (SIG), began on 1 May in Idleb and Aleppo and on 29 May in Afrin, first targeting healthcare and social workers. The vaccination of people with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) began on 7 June, followed by people above 60 years old on 1 July. The campaign was extended to people without NCDs over 50 years old on 21 August. On 8 September, the SIG plans to begin the vaccination of people without NCDs over 40 years old.

On 15 August, a new batch of 36,840 COVAX facilitated AstraZeneca vaccines was received. A third - and the largest to date - batch of COVAX facilitated Sinovac vaccines of 358,800 doses crossed into north-west Syria on 3 September.

By 5 September, some 79,002 people received at least one dose of the vaccine in Idleb and Aleppo governorates, corresponding to 1.84 per cent of the total population. The administration of the second doses, which had begun on 3 July, has so far reached 17,541 people, some 0.41 per cent of the population.

RAATA began to see increasing numbers of new COVID-19 cases from mid-August onwards, confirmed cases peaking around 100 daily. As reported by Early Warning, Alert and Response Network (EWARN), as of the end of the month there were more than 4,000 confirmed cases, 40 associated deaths and 1,249 recoveries.

During the Eid Al Adha visits, where Syrians are allowed to cross into RAATA from Akcakale border crossing in Turkey, local sources reported that border authorities from the Turkish side began to request proof of COVID-19 vaccination, or a PCR test taken within the past 72 hours from people with transit approvals to be allowed back in Turkey. A clinic has been established in the customs area where people wishing to do so can receive the first dose of vaccine or alternatively take a PCR test.

First visit of new UN Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator

On 28 August, UN Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, started a seven-day visit to Syria, Lebanon and Turkey. During his visit to Turkey 31 August – 3 September, Mr Griffiths carried out meetings with Turkish government officials, the diplomatic community, the Turkish Red Crescent, UN agencies and the humanitarian community. In Hatay, he visited the UN transshipment hub for the Bab Al Hawa crossing on the Turkish – Syrian border. “With greater access and expanded funding, the UN could do more to help the rising number of people in need. Humanitarians and donors must keep Syria high on our collective agenda to prevent an entire generation being lost,” said Mr. Griffiths.

Economy

The Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP), in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and north-west Syria’s Early Recovery and Livelihood Cluster, released a new report in August with analysis on the livelihood situation in north-west Syria. Drawing on data collected across the whole of Syria in a representative household survey in May 2021, the findings show chronic economic deprivation, regardless of employment status as well as employment dynamics intertwined with respondent sex and age. The study reveals the critical gaps in the current economic landscape, but also shows the vital role of complementary income sources, such as humanitarian assistance and remittances from abroad. In addition, it also highlights which industries may be more susceptible to economic shocks and what the subsequent ramifications may be for individuals operating in those sectors.

- 70 per cent of men and 61 per cent of women who are out of work and seeking employment say lack of work opportunities are the main reason for unemployment.
- 91 per cent of employed people in north-west Syria are in households who are in extreme poverty, signalling the weak state of the local economy.
- Only 18 per cent of men that have worked in past three months are employed with regular income.
- Gender roles heavily dictate employment trends. Women who are out of work and not seeking employment cite traditional labour distributions, like that of domestic care work (83 per cent) as the primary inhibiting factor from seeking employment.
- Inclusive employment activities, which provide necessary accommodations for individuals with chronic illness and/or persons with disabilities are vital to increasing the proportion of individuals engaged in the labour market.

For the full report, contact HNAP – hnap-syria@un.org. For questions, please contact hnap-syria@un.org as well as UNDP at info.scbi@undp.org and the ERL Cluster at info.ercluster@undp.org

Funding constraints

Inadequate funding hinders the delivery of lifesaving cross-border assistance and the conduction of critical activities across all sectors, inevitably having immediate and longer-term negative implications for the 3.4 million people in need in north-west Syria.

In a funding gap analysis for the July – September quarter, sectors across the humanitarian cross-border community identified a 60 per cent gap in funding out of the required US\$403 million. Although some sectors are more affected than the others, insufficient funding have negative consequences on sectoral priorities, forcing partners to re-adjust programming and thus, worsening the conditions for people in north-west Syria.

Critically, regular food assistance will have to be reduced, affecting more than a projected 1 million people, along with emergency food assistance in the form of ready-to-eat rations, impairing the Food Security Cluster’s capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies. With the winter approaching, gaps in funding also result in households being forced to live in inadequate tents, for which, insulation might not be provided, and unfinished or damaged buildings might not be rehabilitated, impacting 400,000 people as estimated by the Shelter and Non-Food Item (NFI) Cluster.

Low levels of rainfall and river flows in north-west Syria contribute to water shortages across the region, reducing agricultural production and forcing people to purchase water at unaffordable prices. Under these conditions, continuity of WASH services, including restoration of water stations and systems and water trucking, is of cardinal

importance. According to estimations, not having the totality of the required funding for WASH cluster might result in the suspension of these activities and less access to hygiene items for people, along with fewer prevention measures against COVID-19 in an operational area where COVID-19 cases have been soaring.

Funding gaps have an impact not only on material assistance but also on the sustained delivery of other services. The Protection Cluster projects that reduced availability of key protection services, such as child protection programmes and individual assistance for specific protection needs, may result in harmful coping mechanisms and gaps in the identification of vulnerable cases, potentially affecting 650,000 individuals.

For further information, please visit:

www.unocha.org
www.reliefweb.int
www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/stima

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