

# SYRIA: FLASH UPDATE ON RECENT EVENTS

29 March 2018

This update provides a summary of recent displacement, along with developments from the **UNHCR co-led Sector/Clusters of Protection, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) and Shelter/Non Food Items (SNFI)**.

## KEY DISPLACEMENT STATISTICS (AS OF 20 MARCH 2018)<sup>1</sup>

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- **1,495,888** displacements recorded by the CCCM Cluster **in the last 12 months** from affected areas of northern and southern Syria:
  - **1,468,911** displacements from affected areas of northern Syria, including Idleb (386,500), Ar-Raqqa (295,823), Hama (279,347), Deir-Ez-Zor (253,035), Aleppo (161,837), Homs (34,756), Al-Hassakeh (13,470), Latakia (1,540) governorates, northern Syria. This also includes around 42,600 displacements under verification. Around 8,000 displacements were recorded so far in March 2018, primarily from Hama, Aleppo and Idleb governorates.
  - **26,977** displacements from affected areas of Damascus, Rural Damascus, Sweida and Dar'a, south-western Syria.

## CONTEXTUAL DEVELOPMENTS

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- Over 80,000 people have fled eastern Ghouta since 9 March, with some 47,000 people currently hosted in eight collective shelters in Rural Damascus. Following the most recent local agreements for Harasta and the Ein Terma, Kafr Batna, Hezzeh areas, only the town of Douma currently remains besieged. The UN [estimates](#) around 70,000 individuals remain in Douma.
- There are around 137,000 IDPs from Afrin, including some 105,000 people displaced to Tal Refaat, and 30,000 people to Nubol and Zahraa villages. Freedom of movement of IDPs continues to be the principal concern in all locations. Meanwhile, the UN [estimates](#) that between 50,000 to 70,000 people remain in Afrin town.
- The UN has [received reports](#) of an increase in violence in Idleb Governorate in recent days. According to local sources, on 20 March, airstrikes hit an IDP shelter in the outskirts of Haas village in southern rural Idleb Governorate, reportedly killing at least ten displaced people. On 21 March, airstrikes in southern rural Idleb reportedly killed scores more. On 22 March, the central market in Harim town was hit by an airstrike, reportedly killing 35 people, including women and children.

## UNHCR CO-LED SECTOR/CLUSTER UPDATES

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### Protection

#### **Response to displacement from eastern Ghouta:**

- **Syria Hub:** Protection teams are visiting the collective shelters in Rural Damascus hosting IDPs from eastern Ghouta on a daily basis to identify protection needs, organize referrals, and to inform evidence-based advocacy. Legal aid support on civil status documentation is being provided to IDPs in several

<sup>1</sup> Some displacement statistics mentioned in other sections of this report may not be reflected in the "Key Displacement Statistics" as they are in the process of being triangulated by established population tracking mechanisms.

collective shelters. Some 19,000 legal interventions have been provided to IDPs so far by specialized national legal partners. Several child protection teams and gender-based violence (GBV) teams are on the ground, conducting protection screening and services. The lack of registration of IDPs in the shelters continues to raise protection concerns, both in terms of the identification of vulnerabilities and special needs, as well as ensuring the re-unification of unaccompanied children. Protection Sector-leading agencies have offered technical support to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) to assist with rapid registration.

- **Turkey Hub:** The Protection Cluster, Child Protection, GBV and Mine Action Sub-Cluster members continued their emergency service provision to recently displaced communities from Al Qadam and eastern Ghouta, now residing in Idleb and Aleppo governorates. Fourteen Cluster members provided 13,675 protection interventions to IDPs and affected host community members, reaching 6,753 individuals (1,949 girls, 1,155 boys, 3,395 women, and 254 men) across 19 communities within 11 sub-districts in Idleb and Aleppo governorates.

#### **Other key activities:**

- **Turkey Hub:** In line with the Protection Cluster's emergency response package, the main services provided by protection actors between 20-26 March included psychological first aid for 355 girls, 226 boys, 303 women and 47 men; psychosocial support for 966 girls, 776 women, and 541 boys; distribution of dignity kits to 329 girls and 2,266 women; and mine risk education for 633 girls, 506 boys, 286 women, and 207 men. Cluster members also referred individuals for more specialized services, providing GBV and child protection case management, and initiated family tracing. Collaboration is ongoing with the mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) technical working group to ensure that any mental health needs are responded to and coordinated. Cluster members reported high levels of trauma and psychological distress, as well as a significant number of separated and unaccompanied minors.
- **Jordan Hub:** The latest monthly Population Monitoring Initiative (PMI) for southern Syria was finalized. In February 2018, the volume of both new displacements and returns slowed. Only around 800 individuals returned in February marking the lowest number since the July 2017 ceasefire. Despite a short-lived flare in conflict resulting in shelling in some major population areas, displacements were mostly elastic and totalled only 1,060 new IDPs over the month, half the volume recorded in January 2018.

#### **Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)**

##### **Response to displacement from eastern Ghouta:**

- **Turkey Hub:** Since 14 March, the CCCM Cluster tracked around 23,000 IDPs from eastern Ghouta to Idleb. In the past week, the Cluster tracked and responded to the arrival of around 5,980 IDPs from Harasta (Rural Damascus). A first group of 1,680 individuals was transported to the CCCM Maaret Elekhwan reception centre (Idleb Governorate) on 23 March. Another group of 4,175 IDPs arrived to the Maaret Elekhwan and Mezanaz (Aleppo Governorate) reception centres on 24 of March, with smaller movements to the communities of Armanaz and Kafr Takharim. The two CCCM reception centres are both over capacity, now hosting 2,234 and 3,507 IDPs respectively. The CCCM Cluster, in collaboration with member agencies and the Shelter and NFI Cluster, continues to prepare for additional arrivals expected in the coming days.

#### **Shelter/Non-Food Items (SNFI)**

##### **Response to displacement from eastern Ghouta:**

- **Syria Hub:** The collective shelters in Rural Damascus housing IDPs from eastern Ghouta remain overcrowded, and many of the buildings currently used as living spaces are not suitable to provide adequate shelter and protection to the affected population. One partner provided 2,300 shelter kits for partitioning, doors, and windows. Light rehabilitation of shelter buildings was also conducted in the various IDP sites, including repairs of doors, windows, electrical connections, and partitioning. In addition, over 225,000 NFIs have been distributed to the affected population in the shelters. Over 63,700 individuals in Dweir, Herjelleh, Adra, Naja and Nashbiyeh have been reached with NFIs, including high thermal blankets, kitchen sets, sleeping mats, mattresses, solar lamps, sleeping bags, hygiene kits, and jerry cans.

- **Turkey Hub:** SNFI Cluster members are fully mobilized to respond to the new arrivals from eastern Ghouta (Rural Damascus) to Idleb Governorate. NFIs are being distributed in both settlements and urban areas through Turkey Humanitarian Fund contingency stock and Cluster members' own resources. Around 20,000 IDPs are currently being assisted with shelter support in IDP sites and in collective shelters. Additional IDP sites are being prepared for a potential 15,500 IDPs.

#### **Response to displacement from Afrin:**

- **Syria Hub:** On 25 March an inter-agency convoy carrying multi-sectorial assistance for around 50,000 people reached Tal Refaat, which is hosting around 105,000 IDPs from Afrin. NFIs including solar lamps, mattresses, high thermal blankets, plastic sheeting, sleeping mats, kitchen sets, jerry cans, and winter clothing were included in the delivery.
- **Turkey Hub:** The SNFI Cluster reached out to all the members to collect information on access and capacity to respond. Nine organizations confirmed having access to Afrin, but only five of them have the capacity to respond (mainly with clothing kits, blankets, and shelter items). In order to inform the response strategy and tailor the interventions of the identified needs in Afrin, the SNFI Cluster is examining a recent needs assessment conducted by three organizations.

#### **Overall Cluster preparedness:**

- **Turkey Hub:** The SNFI Cluster has a total capacity to reach between 184,810 and 221,772 individuals with NFI kits, including clothing, plastic sheeting, jerry cans, and blankets. These items are already in stock inside Syria, or in Turkey ready for trans-shipment. In addition, the SNFI and CCCM Clusters in the Turkey Hub have mapped the available shelter space in north-west Syria. As of 28 March, there is shelter space for an estimated 5,600 individuals. Additional space for around 6,000 individuals will be available shortly, once the sites are considered to be adequate. Preparations are ongoing to arrange supplementary shelter for a potential 24,000 individuals. However, of note, a significant portion of the shelter space available is around A'zaz (Aleppo Governorate) in areas which are currently not accessible. An online dashboard of shelter availability in north-west Syria is available [here](#).