Joint Rapid Assessment in Northern Syria (J-RANS) January 2013
- Executive Summary -

Summary

This survey covered 45% of the six northern governorates, representing 34% of the total population\(^1\), and found:

- 3.4 million people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance
- 1.1 million internally displaced people
  - 3.4 million people in need of Food and Livelihood support
  - 3.2 million people in need of Health support
  - 3 million people in need of Shelter/NFI support
  - 2 million people in need of WASH support

Priority Recommendations

1. There is an urgent need to stop indiscriminate bombing and shelling and ensure protection of civilians, especially vulnerable groups such as children, women, older people and the disabled.

2. There is an urgent need to scale-up cross-border as well as cross-lines assistance (including from Damascus) to reach vulnerable groups in the northern governorates, and in particular neglected areas such as Deir-ez-Zor (high priority) and some parts of Ar-Raqqa, Aleppo and Idleb. However, all areas covered in this assessment are in significant need.

3. There are life-threatening gaps in medical, WASH and shelter assistance, and food is increasingly becoming a critical issue. Respondents identified food as their highest priority need overall.

4. There is a need for more comprehensive (sectors of intervention and geographical coverage), systematic and regular assessment to provide an increasingly accurate and timely picture of needs that will allow relief actors to save lives.

Introduction

The Joint Rapid Assessment in Northern Syria (J-RANS) was undertaken over a two-week period in mid-January 2013. The key purpose of the J-RANS was to provide strategic information on needs, key affected populations, priority sectors for intervention and to determine where assistance is reaching people.

The assessment was a collaborative effort between a range of humanitarian actors, supported by ECHO, DFID and OFDA and facilitated by the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU). International needs assessment and GIS experts provided technical support.

Key findings

The J-RANS assessment was able to reach 58 of the 128 sub-districts representing 45% of the area and an estimated 34% of the total population of the six Governorates. It indicated that there are over 1 million internally displaced people, and that over 3.4 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance in the surveyed areas.

The numbers of people in need, including IDPs, are likely to rise when areas not yet covered are assessed.

\(^1\) Source: Syrian Arab Republic, Central Bureau of Statistics, Civil Affairs Records Status 01/01/2011
The assessment identified that the humanitarian needs differ significantly between Higher Conflict Intensity (HCI) areas and Lower Conflict Intensity areas (LCI).

Amongst other pressing needs, HCI areas have acute medical needs arising from the military operations, whereas LCI areas are providing refuge to large numbers of IDPs.

### Food Security:
- Findings indicate that the situation is not immediately life threatening for the majority of the affected population, but that a vast majority of the visited sub-districts are borderline food insecure.
- Over 50% of the assessed areas in Al-Hassakeh and Idlib had not received any regular food support over the past 30 days. In the remaining 4 governorates, two-thirds or more have received regular food supplies over the past month, from various actors.

### Health:
- The capacity of first responders to conduct triage and proper case management is limited. This is leading to excess morbidity and mortality on the way to health facilities.
- In the sub-district of Ath-Thawrah in Ar-Raqqa district, key informants are reporting that “many people are dying now” due to the lack of access to health services. In Aleppo, respondents in one eastern sub-district reported that “many will die soon” if no health support is provided. The same is true for two sub-districts in Deir-ez-Zor governorate.

### Water, Sanitation, Hygiene (WASH):
- Respondents in five assessed sub-districts indicated that “many will die soon” if access to drinking water does not improve.

### Shelter and Non-Food Item:
- During the cold season over the past month, “many are dying now” in at least one assessed area (Ar-Raqqa governorate) – according to key informants interviewed during this assessment. Findings from Aleppo and Deir-ez-Zor indicate that “many will die soon” if no adequate shelter/NFI support is provided.

### Priority Sectors

The assessment identified the following priority sectors in descending order of priority:

**Figure 3: Priority sectors for humanitarian interventions in the survey area**
Priority Target Groups

The assessment identified the following affected groups requiring immediate assistance, in descending order of priority:

1. IDPs living in collective accommodation (and in improvised shelter)
2. IDPs living in host families (this represented the vast majority of those who received aid)
3. Households facing financial insecurity, often unable to leave contested areas due to lack of resources
4. Families hosting IDPs who are stretching their resources

Relief actors meeting the needs

Figure 4: Supply of aid in the four sectors: food, water, health, and shelter (as of 26 Jan 2013)

Respondents were asked if they had received regular assistance in the last 30 days. The assessment indicated that local relief groups consistently provide the largest amount of regular assistance and that there are significant gaps, especially in shelter and WASH.

The assessment identified the following level of support received in 58 sub-districts in 6 governorates over the past 30 days:

Percentage of sub-districts receiving support in different Sectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Support Received</th>
<th>No Support Received</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5: Percentage of sub-districts in the survey area receiving aid over the past 30 days (by sector)

Type of Support providers for different Sectors listed by sub-districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>INGO</th>
<th>Local Donor</th>
<th>Local relief provider</th>
<th>SARC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Total number of relief actors in the survey area providing aid over the past 30 days (by sector)
Methodology

The J-RANS process drew on existing secondary data and needs assessments from NGO partners combined with a rapid primary data gathering exercise. 30 enumerators covered 58 sub-districts in six northern governorates (Idleb, Aleppo, Lattakia, Ar-Raqqa, Al-Hassakeh and Deir-ez-Zor), building on an earlier UN analytical model. Qualitative and quantitative data was gathered, using key informant interviews and direct observation. Relief committees, religious leaders, local organisations, heads of household, medical staff and local police were interviewed. Public places such as schools, hospitals, water points, markets or small shops were also visited to complement interviews with direct observation.

Each enumerator underwent a complete debriefing on return and was asked to provide evidence where reported information showed critical trends or severity levels (lists, photos, etc.). Care was taken to mix enumerator teams to reduce bias and to crosscheck findings: enumerators were debriefed separately to verify consistency. Additionally, random verification was performed via telephone (as possible) to judge the accuracy of the information provided. Reliability of sources was also noted in the questionnaires, specifically for quantitative data. Data that did not pass the verification protocols were discarded and are not presented in this report.

Field data was triangulated with general knowledge about the situation in a given area (displacement patterns, conflict period, etc.), compared to baseline information (demographics, health statistics, price trends, socio-economic profile of the population, etc.) and with independent secondary data (partners report and databases). Data that were considered inconsistent, incomplete or contradictory were discarded.

Limitations

Limited sectoral coverage: It is recognised that there are substantial problems in the surveyed area in the sectors of protection and education. The scope of the J-RANS in the initial phase covers only 4 sectors (due to the rapid character of the exercise), and further assessment of these specific sectors is urgently required. To the extent possible, secondary information on protection and education is included in the report (see also the recommendations for further assessments).

Limited geographic coverage: The J-RANS reached 58 (45%) of all 128 sub-districts in 6 northern governorates of Syria. Due to constraints in time, accessibility and security, the city of Aleppo was not covered under this assessment. The population figures provided in this report are estimates made on the ground by observers and verified through existing registration lists, beneficiary lists, and local knowledge or data verifications. While these figures should not be considered precise, the trends reported were verified.