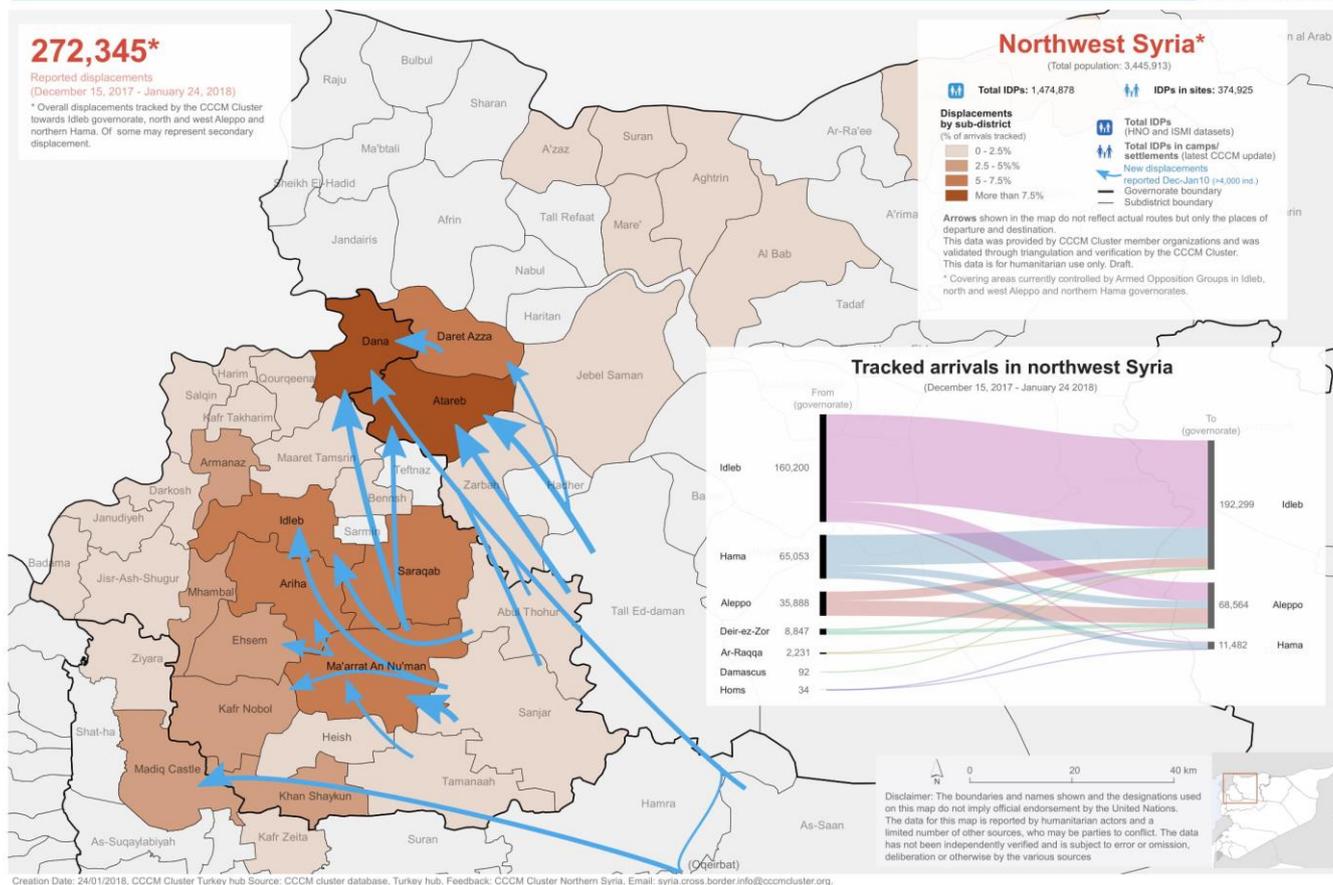


Highlights

- Hostilities in north-western Syria continued with fighting reported in the southern and eastern countryside of Idleb Governorate, as well as Afrin district.
- Civilian displacement in Idleb Governorate continues as hostilities intensify. The Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster tracked a total of 272,345 displacements to central and northern rural Idleb as well as northern rural Hama and western rural Aleppo (some may be secondary displacements) between 15 December and 24 January.
- While IDP outflow from Afrin district remains limited due to the closure of the district's three exit points, there are unverified reports of internal displacement of civilians from peripheral communities towards central Afrin district. Reports indicate that possibly some 15,000 people have been internally displaced since 20 January.
- Concerns over the safety of civilians in Idleb Governorate and Afrin district continue. The UN continues to call on all the parties to the conflict to strictly adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law, in particular to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure.

Syrian Arab Republic (Northern Governorates): Displacements to northwest Syria as of January 24, 2018



Creation Date: 24/01/2018, CCCM Cluster Turkey hub Source: CCCM cluster database, Turkey hub. Feedback: CCCM Cluster Northern Syria, Email: syria.cross.border.info@cccmcluster.org

Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement by the United Nations. The data for this map is reported by humanitarian actors and a limited number of other sources, who may be parties to conflict. The data has not been independently verified and is subject to error or omission, deliberation or otherwise by the various sources

Situation Overview

1.1. Idleb Governorate:

In Idleb Governorate, heavy fighting between Government of Syria (GoS) forces and non-state armed groups (NSAGs) continued in the eastern countryside of the governorate, primarily around the town of Abul Thohur and the adjacent military airbase. The situation in the NSAG-held pocket east of Al-Hijaz railway remains unclear, with no available information on whether civilians are still present in that area.

While armed clashes remained confined to the eastern countryside of the governorate, heavy shelling and aerial bombardment were reported on Saraqab town and other communities along the M5 highway. On 22 January, local media sources reported that airstrikes struck the Ebla Private University in the vicinity of Saraqab town, causing partial destruction to its building and damaging its furniture. In Khan Shaykun town, local sources reported the death of four people (including a child) by airstrikes. In Ghadqa village east of Ma'arrat An Nu'man town, local media sources reported that airstrikes damaged the fence and the building of a high school.

On 23 January, local media sources reported the death of two people when several rockets struck Jisr Ash-Shugur town in the western countryside of Idleb Governorate. On 24 January, local sources reported the death of eight people and the wounding of 12 in Sanghara village in Al-Rouj plain area due to airstrikes. Also on 24 January, airstrikes on Saraqab town reportedly caused damage to a high school.

On 28 January, airstrikes on Saraqab town reportedly killed nine people and wounded 20. Following days of heavy bombardment, the local council of Saraqab town issued a statement on 28 January declaring the town to be a disaster zone, calling on the international community to intervene to stop the hostilities. In Ma'arrat An Nu'man town, eight people were reportedly killed by airstrikes. Furthermore, one person was reportedly killed in Sheikh Mustafa village. Due to insecurity in southern and south-eastern rural Idleb, the education assemblies in Kafr Nobol, Saraqab and Ma'arrat An Nu'man sub-districts announced the suspension of activities on 29 and 30 January. In Al-Tah village, the local council stated that most of the inhabitants of the village displaced due to the heavy aerial bombardment on the area during the past week.

On 29 January, airstrikes and shelling on Saraqab town continued. Local sources reported that airstrikes on the potato market in Saraqab town resulted in a large number of casualties. Initial reports indicate that at least 16 people were killed and many others were wounded. On the same day, an NGO-supported hospital in Saraqab town was reportedly damaged by an airstrike. According to the hospital manager, at least five people were killed, including a child; and at least six people were injured including three medical staff. On a monthly basis, the hospital was providing 5,000 consultations and 320 surgeries. This is the second attack on this hospital since 21 January. Also on 29 January, airstrikes on Maasaran village near Ma'arrat An Nu'man town reportedly caused the death of five people (a woman and her four children).

On 28 January, several mortars on the besieged Foah and Kafraya towns reportedly resulted in at least three injuries.

On 23 January, the Syrian Administration of Bab Al-Hawa border crossing announced the closing of pedestrian traffic which was resumed the next day, except for third country visa holders which was resumed in 26 January.

1.2. Afrin district:

In Afrin district in the northern countryside of Aleppo Governorate, Operation Olive Branch continues. The majority of hostilities remain concentrated along the Syrian – Turkish border. On 24 January, local sources in the district reported an airstrike near the 17 April dam in Afrin district, with no damage to the dam reported. On the same day, Turkish media sources reported that two rockets struck a mosque in the center of Kilis city near the Syrian – Turkish border during prayer time. The attack reportedly resulted in the death of two people, of whom one was a Syrian refugee, and the wounding of six.

On 25 January, the Self-administration in Afrin district issued a statement in which it affirmed that Afrin is an integral part of Syria and called on the Syrian state to carry out its duty in protecting Afrin district from attacks.

On 27 January, local sources in Afrin district reported aerial bombardment on the outskirts of Ein Dara village, which reportedly caused damage to the Ein Dara historic temple. On 28 January, shelling on Sheikh El-Hadid village reportedly resulted in the killing of three people – including two women – and the wounding of 10. Furthermore,

airstrikes on Kobali (Zireqat) village, south-east of Afrin town, reportedly resulted in the death of eight people and the wounding of seven, while 10 people are reportedly still missing.

On 28 January, heavy clashes between parties to the conflict was reported in Barsaya mountain, north-west of Azaz town. The clashes are reported to have caused the displacement of some 80 families from the nearby Yazibagh camp. Most of these families attempted to move to Azaz town or to the internally displaced people (IDP) camps to the east of Azaz town.

With more IDPs arriving in Afrin town and surrounding communities, the central part of the district is reportedly becoming congested, putting pressure on shops and businesses, it is reported. Prices of basic commodities have reportedly slightly increased. IDPs are residing in houses belonging to relatives or in unfinished buildings. Fuel shipments going through Afrin district halted, resulting in an increase in fuel prices in Afrin district and in north-western Syria. The provision of water through the network stopped since 27 January, allegedly due to the airstrikes near the 17th of April dam. Civilians in the town are relying on water trucks to meet their water needs. The lack of fuel in the district has reportedly raised the price 1,000 liters of water from 1,200 SYP to 2,500 SYP.

Displacement and Humanitarian Response

1.3. Idleb Governorate:

In its latest update, the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster tracked 272,345 displacements (some may be secondary displacements) between 15 December 2017 and 24 January 2018. Current displacement trends continue both northwards to Dana and Atareb sub-districts, as well as westwards to areas between Kafr Nobol and Salqin sub-districts. Given the adverse effect the recent rainfall has had on the newly displaced population in Idleb Governorate, a decision was made to only distribute tents if it is guaranteed that the ground is elevated. In some of the IDP settlements, the bad condition of the roads is preventing humanitarian organizations from delivering some forms of assistance. The CCCM Cluster approached stabilization actors to explore the possibility of improving the road conditions in some of the IDP settlements in northern rural Idleb. Improving the condition of the roads would enable humanitarian organizations to deliver assistance efficiently.

Health organizations noted that their resources to respond to the ongoing displacement are being stretched to the limit. Prepositioned supplies are running out. The suspension of UN cross-border humanitarian shipments in the past period contributed to the problem. A considerable increase in the number of patients frequenting health facilities in the communities that received a large number of IDPs was noted. This is mostly related to winter-related illnesses and non-communicable diseases. The mobile vaccination teams have vaccinated more than 2,000 children under the age of five at IDP sites in the governorate. Mobile clinics in different parts of the governorate have provided more than 10,000 consultations in the past four weeks. The static health facilities have increased their capacity to respond to the additional caseload.

The Protection Cluster, Child Protection, Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Mine Action Sub-Clusters continued to expand their emergency service provision in response to the ongoing displacement from Hama and Idleb governorates. 18 Cluster members provided 30,751 protection interventions to IDPs and affected host community members, expanding the response to 68 communities within 17 sub-districts in Idleb and Aleppo governorates, reaching 17,009 individuals (4,729 girls, 3,963 boys, 5,791 women, and 2,526 men). The main services protection actors provided between 18 and 25 January are psychological first aid for 3,616 girls, 3,186 boys, 4,046 women and 2,123 men; psychosocial support for 736 girls, 997 boys, 327 women, and 56 men; distribution of dignity kits to 476 girls and 2,250 women; and risk education for 860 girls, 885 boys, 671 women, and 631 men.

Cluster members continue to provide child protection and GBV case management, referring individuals for more specialized services, and initiating family tracing. The Cluster also developed key messages for communities in Idleb Governorate. Cluster members are continuing to report high levels of psychosocial distress among girls, boys, women and men. Finally, the Cluster and Sub-Clusters remain concerned about safety of civilians, especially those recently displaced, due to the increasing tempo of the conflict and overstretched resources in Idleb.

1.4. Afrin District:

Reports indicate that internal displacement from the peripheral communities towards the central part of Afrin district continued during the reporting period. Since 20 January, an estimated 15,000 IDPs are reported to have arrived in

Afrin town and surrounding communities according to local sources, but there is no monitoring mechanism or registration process to verify the exact number of IDPs in the area.

The Turkey Humanitarian Fund (THF) provides fund for two protection projects and one education project in Afrin district. The organization implementing the education project informed THF that they had to suspend, while the implementation of the protection projects continues.

On 29 January, an inter-agency assessment mission was conducted in Zahraa town, adjacent to Afrin district. The mission found that the number of families who arrived in Nubul, Zahraa and surrounding villages has increased to 150. Approximately, half of the families arrived to the area before the crossing point between Afrin and Nobol (Ziyara – Nobol crossing point) closed, while the others were reportedly reached it through unofficial means.

The inter-agency assessment mission reported cases of family separation and lost documents among IDPs. The IDPs' identification documents were reportedly confiscated at the Nobol checkpoint and IDPs were given temporary 'visitor cards'. In order to receive their identification documents back, the IDPs must present a residency card that can only be obtained after they sign a housing rental contract. All children can reportedly attend classes in local schools even if they do not have the required documents. SARC distributed NFIs to the families including mattresses, blankets, sleeping bags, hygiene kits, kitchen set and sleeping matt, but people are still in need of other humanitarian assistance, such as winter clothes, solar lamps, stoves, and food. Three medical points are available in the area in addition to one field hospital.

A total of 109 families (Old Sirian: 30 families. New Sirian: 6 families, Ard Al-Hamraa: 3 families. Ashrafiyeh: 70) have been registered as arriving to Aleppo city. Reportedly, 15 children arrived in the Old Sirian neighborhood with their relatives who were separated from their parents because they could not cross into Aleppo. People are reportedly staying at their relatives' and friends' houses, in Ashrafiyeh and some 30 families are staying in empty houses. Families are reportedly receiving shelter support (installing windows and doors for the apartments) through the ICRC; and SARC is distributing NFIs including mattresses, blankets, plastic sheet, sleeping matt, hygiene kits, kitchen sets and solar lights. The Department of Education has reportedly instructed schools to accept all children from Afrin even if they do not have the required documents.

Reports indicate that local authorities in Afrin district continue to prevent displacement out of Afrin and GoS forces at the checkpoint between Nobol town and Aleppo city reportedly continue to prevent IDPs from proceeding to Aleppo. Both the Kurdish forces and the Government of Syria forces are reportedly allowing the passage of critical medical cases.

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