The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to coordinate the global emergency response to save lives and protect people in humanitarian crises. We advocate for effective and principled humanitarian action by all, for all.

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WINTER RESPONSE

Colder temperatures, compounded by the risk of flooding, will bring additional hardship to thousands of Syrians in need in northwest Syria. As winter conditions worsen, those displaced sheltering in tents and other informal dwellings will be further exposed to severe protection and other risks, including respiratory tract infections and other illnesses associated with cold weather. There are 630,000 people in IDP sites, with almost 200,000 of those having arrived since the last winter. More than half of these people lack heating fuel for their home as estimated by Inter-Cluster Coordination Group members.

The winter response has already started in October with the delivery of key winterization items such as heating stoves, fuel, blankets and winter clothes. However, emergency stocks have been depleted and resources diverted from existing projects to meet the needs of people affected by the recent violence.

An estimated $25 million is needed for winterization efforts. The funding will be used to cover emergency needs such as shelter, upgrading new informal sites and the extension of the existing IDP sites, winterization needs such as fuel and insulation, providing basic WASH services, and helping provide education, health and protection services. In preparation, Early Recovery & Livelihoods (ERL), WASH, Shelter& NFI and CCCM cluster members are working to prevent possible new flooding in the Dana area by rehabilitating roads and drainage systems in formal settlements.

FUNDING

Overall funding for the Syria response remains low, with the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) only 53 percent funded ($1.73 billion of $3.3 billion requested) through 15 November. Within the HRP, $269.7 million is needed to respond to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in northwest Syria, as identified through the Northwest Syria Readiness and Response Plan.

The Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF) launched a standard allocation to address current needs in northwest Syria for a total amount of US$30 Million. The allocation is in line with HRP objectives to address the needs and priorities of vulnerable people and communities. The key objectives for the allocation are:

1. Helping to create a safer and more secure environment for children. This priority will focus on children under the age of 18 in and out of school by providing an integrated set of services that targets the gaps and needs of the most vulnerable groups while ensuring the centrality of protection. The clusters prioritized to support this objective are Education, Child Protection, Nutrition, Health (child health) and WASH.
2. Improving the living conditions of vulnerable conflict-affected people both in camps and out of camps. This priority aims to pull together the key clusters to ensure provision of basic services and working in collaboration on a set of mutually agreed-upon locations and communities to ensure integrated response. The clusters prioritised are CCCM, Shelter/NFI, Protection, Health and WASH.
3. Improving livelihoods of vulnerable conflict-affected people both in camps and out of camps. This priority focuses primarily on livelihoods and enabling conditions for provision of these services and interventions. The clusters prioritized are FSL and ERL (that will focus on agriculture and livelihoods including cash interventions while considering seasonality).

Under each strategic objective, projects must have a strong emphasis on support for women and girls, people with disabilities, and protection. For more information, the allocation strategy is available online.

KEY MESSAGES

- Any further escalation in violence in north-west Syria will negatively impact the well-being of the population, who already suffer from high levels of vulnerability. Any mass displacement due to military activity, which could push over 600,000 people towards the Turkish border, would trigger a massive humanitarian crisis.
- Thousands of aid workers in north-west Syria respond to meet people’s needs to the best of their ability each day. Supporting the ability and capacity to enable their response remains critical.
- Of the $3.29 billion requested under this year’s HRP, just 53 per cent has been funded to date, leaving a funding gap of $1.73 billion (as of 15 November). Given increased need in north-west Syria, this critical underfunding will have a significant impact on the ability to bring to scale the much-needed scope of the response.

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