

North-west Syria

April 2021

In 2021, UNHCR has sent across the border over 53,000 core relief items kits and shelter materials to assist close to **265,000 individuals**.

UNHCR's protection partners have been able to adapt their activities to the COVID-19 situation, **without disrupting protection interventions**.

In 2021, through its partners, UNHCR has provided protection services, such as psychosocial support and referrals, to more than **90,000 individuals**.

Humanitarian assistance trans-shipped in April

126,500  people targeted with the humanitarian assistance trans-shipped this month

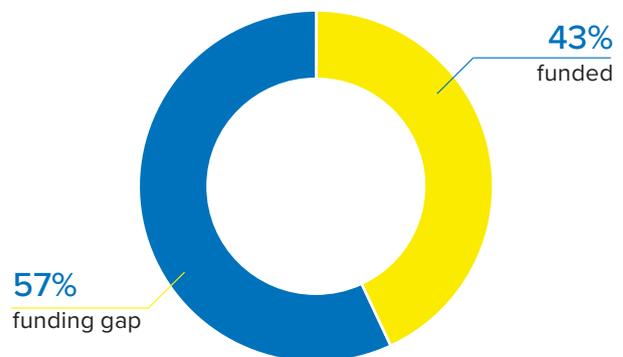
25,300  core relief items kits and shelter materials trans-shipped across the border from Turkey to north-west Syria

29  trucks used to transport the items

Funding requirements for 2021

US\$ 18 million

requested for the UNHCR cross-border humanitarian response



as of 25 May 2021

Main objectives of the cross-border operation

Support the coordination of the cross-border humanitarian response through the Cluster system

Identify protection risks and assistance needs and inform the overall response

Provide protection services and emergency assistance with core relief items and shelter solutions

Build capacity of (local) humanitarian organizations

Fill critical gaps in the basic needs of IDPs where required and feasible

Situation overview

Of a total population of 4 million people in north-west Syria, it is estimated that there are around 2.7 million IDPs, who are considered to be in need of humanitarian assistance. New and protracted IDPs share the same urgent needs, in an area that has limited shelter options and where the fighting has caused the destruction of civilian infrastructure, including health facilities, schools, bakeries, and has disrupted the provision of basic services. With an increase in hostilities, with a deteriorating economic situation and with harsh weather conditions that have been severely damaging IDPs' shelter and properties, the population is now facing more difficulties in addressing their basic needs. Weather and fire-related incidents continue to affect the displaced population, while new displacements continue to be tracked.

On 11 July 2020, the UN Security Council Resolution that enables the cross-border humanitarian response was renewed again for twelve months until 10 July 2021, although this time trans-shipments are allowed only through one border crossing, Bab Al-Hawa.

As the number of positive COVID-19 cases rises slowly, access to health and adequate sanitation in the context of continuous displacement remains limited across the region, the humanitarian community is actively operating to deliver lifesaving assistance while ensuring the safety of the people.

Background

Following the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2165, UNHCR established its cross-border activities from southern Turkey in July 2014. In 2021, through its own programme, UNHCR has partnerships with eight organizations - ACTED, BDC, Maram, Muzun, SEMA, Shafak, SRD and Watan - to assist displaced people by providing core relief items (CRIs), shelter support, and protection services. In addition, UNHCR is co-leading the Protection, Shelter/Non-Food Items (Shelter/NFI) and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Clusters. All Clusters closely follow the humanitarian developments in the conflict areas in north-west Syria and contribute to emergency preparedness response plans accordingly.

Response updates

UNHCR Programme

In 2021, in coordination with its partners and other humanitarian actors, UNHCR continues to provide basic assistance and protection services to IDPs and conflict-affected vulnerable host community members in north-west Syria under the cross-border operation from Gaziantep, Turkey. The response was scaled up in 2020 to serve the urgent humanitarian needs of the population in the region, who has been severely affected by the ongoing hostilities, inadequate shelter conditions and a deteriorating economic situation, and continued despite the limitation of having only one border crossing through which deliver humanitarian assistance.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR closely monitors its partners' activities - which were modified in line with recommendations and guidelines issued by the WHO, clusters and relevant coordination fora - to ensure the continuity of the humanitarian response. Some of the measures that UNHCR's partners have put in place are door-to-door distributions and small groups sessions, avoiding large gatherings and ensuring social distancing.

In April, UNHCR organized four trans-shipments of a total of 2,000 core relief items (CRI), 20,000 hygiene kits and 3,300 tents, which will be distributed by partners in Idleb and Aleppo Governorates.

During the month, around 17,200 conflict-affected people in Aleppo and Idleb were assisted with 3,440 CRI kits by UNHCR's partners, while, in coordination with the CCCM Cluster, UNHCR's partners distributed tents to 565 families (around 2,800 individuals) in Idleb.

By the end of April, more than 3,300 families (21,700 individuals) had moved into the improved shelter units installed in north-west Syria.

UNHCR's protection partners conducted awareness raising and psychosocial support sessions, identified cases and referred them to basic services in Idleb and Aleppo; such community-based protection interventions reached over 19,700 people.



A legal awareness raising session in Idleb. ©Shafak



The Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster, led by UNHCR and co-led by Global Communities, coordinates the efforts of 68 member organizations providing cross-border assistance in north-west Syria; in April, 35 members actively responded to the needs of the displaced population. Activities focus on coordinating and monitoring the Cluster members to cover the multi-sectoral needs in 1,398 IDP sites that host around 1.7 million IDPs (320,000 families) in north-west Syria and, on behalf of the humanitarian community, track IDP movements. It is estimated that some 25,000 IDPs are persons with specific needs, while more than half are children. Most sites are concentrated in Dana. In April, 13 new sites were added to the ISIMM and 21 sites were inactivated for reasons such as depopulation of sites and their subsequent closure. The majority of these sites are self-settled and lack camp management systems. To identify gaps and facilitate the coordination of multi-sectoral services, the

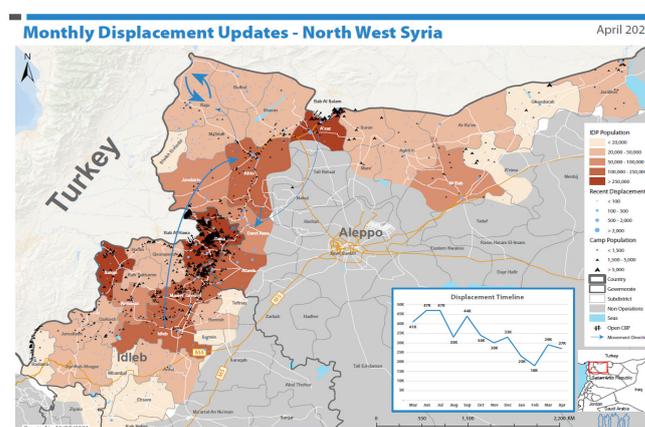
Cluster is prioritizing monitoring and collecting information as part of its coordination response, which is particularly important in the implementation of the COVID-19 response and mitigation measures.

The Cluster reached 97 IDP sites with 177 activities in April, ranging from camp management and capacity building activities to community mobilization, site assessment and risk mitigation, site management support, as well as fire awareness, prevention and response. During this month, a total of over 463,000 IDPs (nearly 93,000 families) were reached.

The total estimated IDP population in April 2021 is 2,836,927 IDPs. The number of displacement movements during the month was around 27,000, mostly to Afrin, Bulbul and Raju sub-districts, whereas the number of IDPs who were reported as having returned to their community of origin is around 6,400 IDPs, with Elsem, Mhambal and Ariha sub-districts recorded as the top three returnee destinations.

Between January and April 2021, the Cluster tracked over 97,000 individual displacements, which include second or third displacements, meaning that some people may have been forced to move multiple times within the same period and that the reasons for movement may vary.

In coordination with other humanitarian actors, the Cluster has been collecting data on COVID-19 cases inside camps. As of 8 May 2021, 2,363 confirmed cases were reported in camps, representing 10 per cent of all cases in north-west Syria. Over-crowding and lack of camp management remain major challenges in the fight against the pandemic in IDP sites.



Map produced by the CCCM Cluster.

Shelter/NFI Cluster

The Shelter/Non-Food Items (Shelter/NFI) Cluster, led by UNHCR, is coordinating the efforts of 55 member organizations in the cross-border operation who implemented shelter and/or NFI activities as of April 2021. The Cluster addresses emergency shelter and NFI needs by providing in-kind assistance as well as cash or voucher assistance. It promotes household and community resilience. The Cluster also raises awareness and provides technical guidance on housing, land and property rights relevant for humanitarian shelter activities. The Cluster is co-chaired by CARE.

Cluster members continue to actively respond to the needs of the newly displaced population as well as protracted IDPs in north-west Syria. In April, more than 110,000 individuals received NFI assistance, in the form of NFI kits, kitchen sets, mattresses, jerry cans, carpets, solar lamps, tarpaulin, blankets

and seasonal assistance such as fuel and stove, or through multi-purpose cash transfers. Shelter needs of over 42,000 people were addressed during the month, including the provision of emergency shelter, shelter rehabilitation and transitional shelters. Moreover, some 3,500 individuals were reached with infrastructure improvements in IDP sites such as roads and drainage. The need for infrastructure support in north-west Syria is still significant, especially for the sites that have been established by the IDPs themselves. Nearly a third of the 1,400 IDP sites in north-west Syria flood every year.

As part of the COVID-19 response, as was recommended at the beginning of the pandemic in coordination with the WASH and Health Clusters, Cluster members have so far provided over 400,000 people with additional soap with their NFI distributions in 2021, including 71,000 in April.

Protection Cluster

The Protection Cluster (co-led by UNHCR and IRC) brings together 78 member organizations, which include actors of the three Sub-Clusters: Child Protection (led by UNICEF and World Vision), Gender Based Violence (led by UNFPA and Global Communities) and Humanitarian Mine Action (led by UNMAS and Halo Trust). The Cluster also convenes regularly the Protection Monitoring Task Force (led by UNHCR and Shafak) and a Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Technical Working Group (co-led by UNHCR and NRC), as well as a Technical Working Group on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (co-led by UNHCR and Humanity and Inclusion). The Cluster continues to prioritize the provision of lifesaving emergency protection services to newly displaced populations and to deliver specialized protection services to communities and individuals in need and at risk, including using outreach capacity and mobile teams. The Cluster continues to inform

advocacy and the overall response through protection monitoring, while also supporting capacity building of cluster members to strengthen programming, information collection and advocacy on protection concerns and principles.

In April, Cluster members provided 181,125 protection interventions to IDPs and affected host community members in Aleppo, Idlib and Homs. Key interventions included: psychological first aid; legal awareness-raising sessions focusing on housing, land and property and/or civil status documentation; integrated/comprehensive case management services; community-based protection initiatives; and referrals to other services. At the same time, 13 Protection Monitoring Task Force (PMTF) partners conducted 586 (260 females and 326 males) key informant interviews on general protection trends in Idlib and Aleppo.

UNHCR is grateful for the support of:

Belgium | Canada | Denmark | Finland | France | Germany | Ireland | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland | USA | Private donors