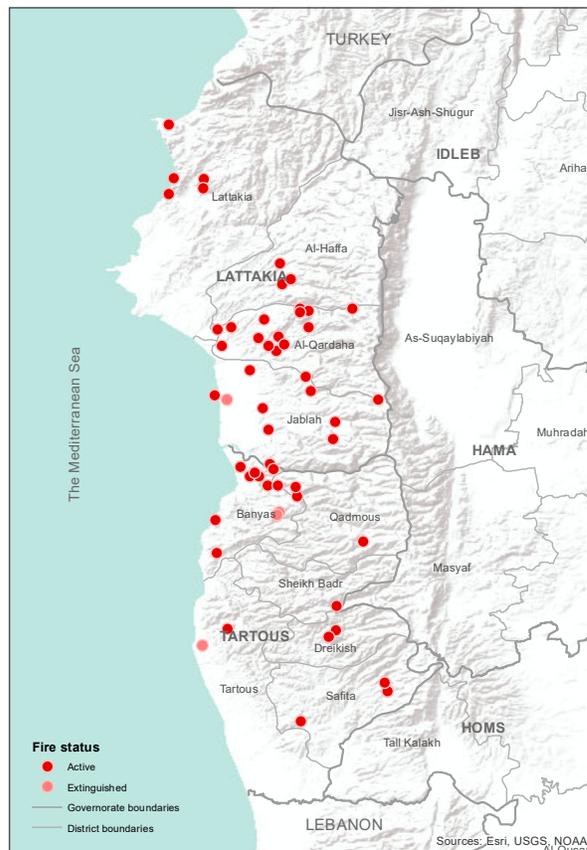


Highlights

- From 8 October, at least 156 fires were reported in Lattakia (95), Tartous (49) and Homs (12) governorates, with significant spread across several areas on 9-10 October.
- As of 11 October, local authorities reported all fires had been contained and/or extinguished, however the risk for reignition in some areas remained.
- To date, three people are reported to have died in Lattakia, with a further 70 people from Lattakia and nine from Tartous admitted to hospitals.
- While verification is ongoing, some reports indicate as many as 25,000 people may have been displaced. Some early returns have also been reported.
- Overall, early estimates indicate up to 140,000 people (28,000 households) were affected through destruction of and damage to homes and assets, including agricultural land, loss of power and water supply and limited access to services such as hospitals.
- Over 9,000 hectares of agricultural and forested land are also reported destroyed.
- As fires approached, 15 COVID-19 patients from the ICU section of Al Haffa Hospital were evacuated to the Tishreen National Hospital in Lattakia City, however the hospital remains functional. WHO further reported medical personnel and nine patients from Al Qirdaha Hospital were evacuated, and the hospital is currently out of service.
- Severe damage is reported to electrical and water networks in Lattakia, with power supply cut off to some area to prevent further damage to infrastructure.
- Assessments to determine the full scope of impact are currently ongoing.



Situation Overview

At the time of writing, large scale fires across the coastal regions in Syria have caused at least three deaths and dozens of injuries, with areas in Al Fakhoura, Al Qirdaha, Jableh and Lattakia districts in Lattakia Governorate and Safita district in Tartous Governorate particularly affected. While assessments are ongoing, local authorities report that up to 28,000 households have been directly impacted, including through casualties or medical conditions, with as many as 80 hospitalized due to smoke inhalation. In addition, significant loss of homes, personal possessions and/or livelihoods assets have been reported in some areas. As many as 25,000 people were reported to have displaced. Further, a significant number of households have been impacted due to disruptions in key public services, such as health, water and power supply. To date, an estimated 5,000 hectares of agricultural land, including orchards, olive trees, and greenhouses, and 4,000 hectares of forested land have been destroyed. Assessments are ongoing to determine the full scope of the impact, led by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC).

At the time of writing, reports indicate the fires had all been contained, with cooling procedures and monitoring ongoing, to mitigate the risk of reignition over the coming days.

Humanitarian Impact



OCHA SYRIA

FLASH UPDATE #01

*Humanitarian Impact of Wildfires in Coastal Areas
As of 11 October 2020*

Over 9-10 October, significant displacements were reported in affected areas, particularly from Al Fakhoura, Al Qirdaha, Jableh and Lattakia districts in Lattakia Governorate, in addition to areas of recently returned IDPs in rural Al Haffa and rural Qastal Maaf districts. Some villages are reported to have completely evacuated as fires approached, with residents taking shelter with family and friends, in schools and vacant shelters. In Ras Al Basit and Badrousieh villages, where significant numbers of displaced persons live, some are reported to have stayed overnight on the beach. In Homs, while agricultural land has been impacted, no displacements are reported to have occurred.

While verification is ongoing, the majority of those still displaced are reported to be living with host families. On 9 October, authorities opened up three schools in Deir Zeinoun, Al Fakhoura and Ein Al Arous villages in Lattakia as emergency shelters for 400 people, although families reportedly left the following day. A further two schools in Balluran and Al Qirdaha towns have been designated to host IDPs if required. As of 10 October, 1,500 people are reported to have returned to their homes. With early reports indicating that some villages have sustained severe damage, it can be expected that some of the displaced may not be able to return to their homes in the short-term.

Priority needs for the displaced include shelter and Non-Food Items such as blankets, clothes, hygiene and dignity kits as well as food assistance, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene services. Health equipment, such as oxygen cylinders and nebulizers are also urgently needed to treat the effects of smoke inhalation. Additionally, in light of the evacuation of COVID-19 patients and personnel from some hospitals, health facilities also require specialist COVID-19 resources including Personal Protective Equipment and other supplies to protect medical staff and other patients. A polio vaccination campaign targeting children under five years in Lattakia and Tartous has been postponed.

Humanitarian Response and Coordination

The UN Country Team and the Area Humanitarian Country Team in Tartous held emergency meetings on 10 and 11 October to discuss rapid interventions and actions. Emergency assessments are ongoing with the results expected in the coming days.

At present, SARC has deployed three ambulances to Baniyas, Safita and Mashta El Helu districts in Lattakia as well as four mobile water tanks to support firefighting teams. A mobile clinic is on standby, and partners have confirmed readiness to provide emergency food assistance and core relief items. OCHA is coordinating with authorities and humanitarian partners to develop a contingency response plan.

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