

*This update is compiled with inputs from different sources, reflecting developments as they unfold and/or as they are reported to OCHA Syria by partners.

Highlights

- On 13 August, the Alouk water station – the main water supply for at least 460,000 people in Al-Hasakeh Governorate – stopped pumping water amid reports of a technical fault. This was the thirteenth time water supply from the station had been disrupted since January 2020.
- On 25 August, technical teams from the Al-Hasakeh Directorate of Water Resources (DoWR) were granted limited access to carry out essential repairs to six boreholes.
- As of the early hours of the morning on 27 August, seventeen boreholes and four horizontal pumps are operational at Alouk with water pumping to Al-Himme water treatment station. However, due to fluctuating electricity from the Derbasieh power station, it took longer than usual for Al-Himme water storage tank to fill.
- On 27 August the Governor of Al-Hasakeh announced that water had started to reach several neighbourhoods of Al-Hasakeh city as of 18:00 hours.
- In response to the water shortages, WASH sector partners are providing average daily water deliveries of 1,500-1700m³ to 170,000 people. To mitigate damage on the water pumps caused by fluctuating electricity, UNICEF has also procured 33 voltage stabilizers and is preparing to install these as soon as access is granted to Alouk.
- The UN system, and partners, continue to advocate for uninterrupted safe access for DoWR engineers and UNICEF to Alouk water station to ensure smooth operation and functioning and to enable the installation of the voltage stabilizers needed to prevent the pumps from being further damaged.



Humanitarian Impact

At least 460,000 people in Al-Hasakeh city, Tal Tamer and surrounding areas, including Al Hol and Areesha camps, are dependent on the Alouk water station as their primary water supply. Safe and regular access to water (of good quality and sufficient quantity) is essential to safeguard public health and protect against the transmission of disease. While humanitarian partners have increased water trucking in response, as the affected population requires 4,000m³ of water to meet their minimum daily needs, this is neither a sufficient nor a sustainable solution. On 25 August, the Head of the Al-Hasakeh Directorate of Health announced that more than a thousand cases of diarrhea had been reported in health centers since the beginning of August due to water purchased by individuals in local markets that came from contaminated wells. Continual disruptions to the Alouk station are of additional concern given the rapid increase in COVID-19 cases across northeast Syria, for which communities require reliable access to safe water to prevent further spread of the pandemic.

Background

Disruptions in water supply from Alouk have been recurrent since October 2019 when the water station and its connecting power lines were damaged. Following this, access was initially negotiated by humanitarian actors, including SARC, OCHA, UNICEF and ICRC, in close coordination with technicians from the Al-Hasakeh Water and Electricity Directorates. Six cross-line missions to repair, maintain and rotate the technical team were undertaken between October and November 2019. Since December 2019, access for technicians to the station has been coordinated between the relevant parties, but has been limited in timeframe, frequency, and scope. Access for humanitarian actors has not been granted.

Alouk water station is comprised of 34 boreholes, of which seventeen are currently operational and seventeen are in need of repair / equipping.

Al-Himme water treatment station is comprised of a dam and a full water treatment plant. Recently, 50 boreholes have been drilled and equipped in and around the station. These have been connected to a large reservoir/collection point (with a capacity of 30,000 cubic meters) within the station where water flowing from Alouk is stored before onward supply to Al-Hasakeh city.

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