

Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation in Dara'a, Qunaitra and As-Sweida Governorates

Situation Report No. 6



This report is produced by OCHA in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It covers the period from 3 August to 16 August.

Highlights

- In the past two weeks, as the Government of Syria regained most of the South-West and local agreements were reached, hundreds of displaced families returned to their areas of origin in Dara'a and Qunaitra Governorates.
- The number of displaced people has reduced significantly, from an estimated 184,000 on 1 August to up to 57,000 people as of 16 August.
- Life-saving humanitarian assistance and services are being provided by the UN and its partners across the South-West. During the reporting period, two UN inter-agency convoys took place: in Dara'a Al-Balad for 32,500 people and Busra al-Sham for 7,500 people.
- The large numbers of returns has not reduced the need for humanitarian assistance and protection services. The internally displaced and those who are returning are in significant need of multi-sectoral assistance and services, especially given the suspension of cross-border activities.
- According to partners on the ground, the mobility of the population is sometimes hindered by lack of documentation, ongoing security processes for some individuals, or simply by unaffordable transport costs.

 **394,115**
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monthly food rations

 **398,087**
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 **118,200**
beneficiaries reached
collectively to date with
shelter and NFI support¹

 **24 victims**
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Situational Overview

During the reporting period, the Government of Syria (GoS) regained control of Dara'a Governorate and most of Quneitra Governorate, with the exception of a small area in the south-west (Al Ragad valley), where a number of ISIL fighters remain present and there are ongoing military activities. The GoS also began a military campaign in Al Badia in As-Sweida Governorate against ISIL, where the latter controlled parts of the desert area. As of 12 August, GoS forces reportedly took control of a large portion of Al Badia and the entire administrative boundary of As-Sweida governorate.

In the past two week, as the GoS regained most of the South-West and local agreements were reached, hundreds of displaced families returned to their areas of origin in Dara'a and Qunaitra governorate. As a result, the number of displaced people has reduced significantly, from an estimated 184,000 on 1 August to up to 57,000 people as of 16 August. While the exact numbers of returnees is still unknown, during the reporting period, large numbers of families returned to their homes via Khan Arnabah – Ofania crossing and Al Ba'ath city – Hameidiyyeh crossing; where they returned to Jbata Elkhashab (1,500 families), Hameidiyyeh

¹ Approx. 93,000 reached with a Shelter and NFI response from Jordan; and 25,200 from Syria

sustained access and necessary Government approvals.

According to partners on the ground, the mobility of the population is sometimes hindered by lack of documentation, ongoing security processes for some individuals, or simply by unaffordable transport costs. There are also reports of significant unexploded weapons contamination, especially in the Yarmouk Basin and in Dara'a Governorate, where there have been reports of numerous deaths and injuries as a result. Currently, information on humanitarian needs and protection, particularly in Qunaitra Governorate remain a serious gap and access is needed to carry out detailed sectoral assessments.

Humanitarian Response



Food Security

Needs:

- Initial rapid assessment findings indicate that fields along the road were cultivated and wheat has been harvested for this season, while some other plots look abandoned. Families used to grow vegetables in their backyards for daily consumption, but lack of water resulted in the loss of these crops for many.
- Markets are starting to operate in most areas, although more limited in those towns that experienced significant damage. Food is available in many markets, however, people's purchasing power, particularly for those that are displaced and returnees, is limited.
- **First Line Response:** As of 12 August, WFP/SARC distributed 7,590 Ready to Eat Rations (benefiting an estimated 37,950 people) in As-Sweida, Dara'a (Izra, As, Sanaymyn, Dara'a city and the Jbab camp), Rural Damascus (Kisweh).
- **Second Line Response:** As of 12 August, WFP/SARC distributed Monthly Food Rations with wheat flour to 78,823 households (benefiting an estimated 394,115 people) in 37 locations in East and West Dara as well as Qunaitra. These locations were previously assisted from Jordan hub.



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Gaps and Constraints:

- Insecurity in certain areas still prevent access and hopefully areas that have not received food assistance will be reached in the coming weeks.
- Need for an assessments and price monitoring to be conducted to get a complete overview of needs and gaps.



Nutrition

Needs:

- Screening and treatment of acute malnutrition of children 6-59 months, pregnant, and lactating women, infant and young feeding support and counselling for children 0-24 months.
- Controlling and monitoring donations of breastmilk substitute (BMS).
- Blanket supplementary feeding including Plumpy'Doz, high energy biscuits and micronutrient distribution for children 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women.

Response:

- UNICEF with the Department of Health (DoH) in Dara'a supported three integrated health and nutrition Rapid Response Teams for the provision of out-patient medical consultations, vaccination, reproductive health and nutrition services. These interventions in Jbab and newly accessible areas in western and eastern countryside of Dara'a and southern eastern countryside of Quneitra included targeting IDPs in collective shelters, and are equipped with UNICEF supplies such as paediatric kits and nutrition items.
- 44 newly accessible locations were visited and supported including in Quneitra (e.g.: Jbata Elkhashab, Bir Ajam, Um Eledam and Rweheineh)
- Since 8 August, the services of DoH medical point in Jbab were on hold except services for urgent cases; while UNICEF-partner SFPA are still providing services to people in need;
- DoH Dara'a installed three UNICEF Tents at the Nassib border crossing in addition to sending 2 UNICEF-supported mobile medical teams to provide health and nutrition services for people who may come from Al-Za'atari Camp in Jordan.
- Health and Nutrition supplies were delivered to SARC Dara'a (Dara'a Al-Balad) and to UNICEF partner in Dara'a, Al-Birr NGO, who is providing health and nutrition services in Dara'a Al-Balad and some villages in the western and eastern countryside of Dara'a (Zayzun camp, Khrab Alshahem, Kherbet Quais and Al-Fawwar).
- Between 1 and 14 August, 4,129 children under five were screened for malnutrition and routine immunization; of them 82 had moderate acute malnutrition and 22 had severe acute malnutrition and were treated; 1,218 out-patient medical consultations were provided for pregnant women. A cumulative 12,921 children under five were screened for malnutrition; and 164 MAM and 57 SAM children were treated and out-patient medical consultations were provided for 2,399 pregnant women.

Gaps & Constraints:

- There are remaining gaps between the response from within Syria and nutrition activities that were previously taking place from the Jordan hub.
- Access constraints remain for Syria hub partners and there are many funding constraints



Shelter and NFIs

Needs:

- Families that are returning back to their homes in Atman, Hirak, and Khirbt Ghazalah in Dara'a are in need for shelter assistance such as rehabilitation of damaged houses and shelter kits.
- Returning IDPs are in need of NFI assistance; however, there are no accurate number of returnees. Our partners estimate that at least 15,000 families remain in need of NFIs in several areas within Dara'a governorate and at least 8,000 families in several areas within Quneitra governorate.
- Shelter and NFI needs are particularly acute for Palestine refugees and host families affected by the developments in south-west Syria.
- Hundreds of families in Sweida remain displaced from the eastern region of the governorate, with no accurate numbers available. An estimated 500-600 families remain displaced within the governorate,

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² Approx. 93,000 reached with a Shelter and NFI response from Jordan; and 25,200 from Syria

with an estimated 5,000 families in need of NFIs (including winter items). A detailed assessment is currently underway.

- Further shelter repair is required at the Jbab IDP site.

Response:

- During the reporting period, Syria-based NFI sector partners distributed NFIs including: blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets, plastic sheets, jerry cans, sleeping mats, hygiene kits, solar lamps, rechargeable fans to 3,500 households, in addition to 2,605 children's summer clothing kits, and 200 newborn kits.
- During the reporting period, shelter sector partners installed 10 shelter kits at Jbab IDP site benefiting 50 IDPs. Moreover, 15 big tents were erected in the yard of Al Atem collective shelter as a preparedness step to accommodate any newly displaced people.
- Shelter sector partners have started assessing damaged houses in Dara'a to identify the scope of rehabilitation work required in areas where people have started to return to their houses.
- Syria-based shelter sector partners have rehabilitated shelters, installed shelter kits and tents, benefiting 4,495 individuals up to the end of the reporting period.
- Shelter and NFI activities through the Jordan hub have been suspended due to the current situation. Since the onset of the emergency, Jordan-based partners reached a total of 93,000 individuals with shelter and NFI interventions.

Gaps and Constraints:

- The rapidly evolving situation remains a challenge, with displacement and returns still fluid and ongoing.
- The rapid and high mobility of the population creates a challenge to accurately assessing needs and estimating the number of people in certain areas. The limited number of NGOs operating on the ground is another challenge.
- Lack of approvals either for distribution or field missions has limited the ability of some sector partners to operate quickly and conduct a comprehensive needs assessment. As a result, there is limited information on NFI and shelter needs.
- Funding remains a challenge for partners to scale up.



Health

Needs:

- All 94 health facilities that used to be under NSAG control in Dara'a and Quneitra have come under GoS control. Out of 94 facilities, 56 are partially functioning and 38 are not functioning. 23 are fully damaged, 54 are partially damaged, 15 are not damaged, and 2 have not reported.
- Rehabilitation of health facilities is required, as is the rolling out more mobile teams and establishing temporary fixed health centers.
- There is a need for continuous support with mother, child and non-communicable diseases medicines, in addition to medical consumables (dialysis sessions), reproductive health medicines, and generators for health facilities.



38 health facilities

are not functioning and 56 are partially functioning of the 94 health facilities

- Support requested by the DoH Dara'a (medical equipment) include: digital mammography; dentist's office with full equipment, X-ray; flexible bronchoscope; CT Scan; Haemodialysis; Oxygen concentrator; video EGD and colonoscopy; digital panoramic radiography; generators; and refrigerators.

Response:

- Health sector response is provided by DoH Dara'a, DoH Qunaitra, SARC, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and their implementing partners among national NGOs.
- The most essential locations are currently covered through different modalities of health response, but not being sufficient, at this stage, considering the degree of health service disruption.
- WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA are providing regular shipments of health supplies to the DoH Dara'a and Qunaitra and SARC.
- Disease surveillance: 185 sentinel sites in 3 governorates report to the EWARS program.
- Referrals to hospitals: 363 patients were referred by SARC to Dara'a and Damascus health facilities. 283 patients were referred through DoH during July to Izra'a hospital and public hospitals in Damascus. About 10-12 patients are being referred to Mamdooh Abaza Hospital on a daily basis, mostly for surgeries. There is an emergency team from MoH deployed to support the hospital consisting of several surgeons in different specialties. There are 7 MoH ambulances working in the governorate, in addition to SARC ambulances. Reportedly, most cases that need referrals are patients with chronic diseases and malnourished children.
- Handover of XB supplies: The Syria hub is ready to accept any health supplies which are located in Jordan if approvals are received from the relevant authorities. The list of health supplies in stock in Jordan was shared with the Syria hub. Efforts are currently underway through the logistic cluster to explore options of transporting the supplies first to warehouses in Damascus followed by coordinated distribution with authorities and partners.

Gaps and Constraints:

- Increased access is needed, particularly in Qunaitra and western Dara'a, for a range of national and international NGOs ready to establish operational presence.
- Most essential health services have been largely disrupted especially in Qunaitra and western part of Dara'a governorates.
- There is a lack of doctors in Qunaitra Governorate.

Protection

Situation and Needs

- While the response in a few IDP sites in Sweida and Dara'a has ceased, a sizeable part of the population remains scattered in underserved rural areas only reachable by mobile activities.
- Little is known of the situation and the protection needs of the remaining displaced population in Qunaitra, since no protection partner has been able to reach the areas and conduct any meaningful consultation or more detailed assessment. It is assumed that the halting of the cross border activities has left a vast gap in protection services in a context of high needs among the local population.
- According to partners on the ground, the mobility of the population is sometimes hindered by lack of documentation, ongoing security processes for some individuals, or simply by unaffordable transport costs. This situation challenges the reach of existing protection static facilities in the areas.

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- In the aftermath of the extremist attack at the end of July in As-Sweida and with military operations still ongoing in the Eastern part of the Governorate, new localized displacement in urban areas of As-Sweida demands targeted protection interventions (e.g. PFA/ PSS for affected families and children). Partners consequently are prioritizing individual interventions through mobile outreach over community or group gatherings.
- Recent incidents have highlighted the serious concern for explosive hazard contamination, particularly affecting children. According to Risk Education actors, 24 new victims have been reported in Dara'a (in Koayiah and Shajara); 12 have died (5 children; 2 girls and 3 boys) and the rest were injured (5 children; 3 girls and 2 boys) bringing the estimated number of incidents in Dara'a since 5 August to 25 cases. This situation calls for an urgent need to scale up the MRE awareness sessions across the areas and a need for advocacy to urge that appropriate clearance standards are maintained.
- Restoring civil status documentation for the civilian population is also needed, particularly families that resided for prolonged time in NSAG controlled areas. Civil status documentation also facilitates mobility through areas where security controls and presence is still high.

Response Activities

- With the gradual stabilization of population outflows, protection presence and activities have been discontinued in the previously active IDP sites of Jbab and Rassas.
- Protection facilities in As-Sweida continued to be operational, although partners are limiting community gatherings. As-Sweida, Salkhad, Shahba based partners continued to undertake missions to rural areas via mobile teams to identify recently displaced families from East Sweida and provide PSS support, legal/ civil documentation assistance, some targeted assistance for persons with specific needs (e.g. mobility devices or some forms of material/in kind assistance to reduce immediate acute vulnerability).
- Legal aid partners from Dara'a continue to follow up on cases identified in previous outreach missions in Dael, Ibt'a'a, and Al Yadoudah. They carried out interventions with administrative authorities in Dara'a to facilitate the issuance of IDs, birth registration and family booklets as well as some 20 interventions in courts for marriage and lineage authentication. Some 150 cases were addressed in the reporting period, including through the cooperation of some heads of municipalities, who collected names of persons in need to be referred to the legal aid provider.
- Regrettably, some legal aid partners had to halt their interventions since the previous week following a countrywide communication from government institutions limiting permission to conduct legal activities to selected national partners only.
- Activities in support of women and girls, through awareness and PSS counseling combined with GBV and reproductive health services, have addressed more than 1,020 women and girls. Activities were largely carried out through mobile teams active in rural Dara and Rural As-Sweida.
- In cooperation with UNICEF, a three-day Training of Trainers session was conducted in Damascus for UNHCR staff and key protection partners operating Community Centers in various regions, including in As-Sweida and Dara'a.

Challenges and gaps

- Regular access to areas remains sub-optimal for many Syria-based partners, especially for UN protection agencies. The convoy modality may allow rapid needs assessments, when protection staff is present, but it remains unsuitable for the delivery of protection services and for community-based interventions, requiring regular presence and contacts with communities.
- The reach out to rural areas where residual IDP and returnee population are scattered requires additional mobile resources (North Dara'a, Quneitra).

- The newly introduced limitations for certain specialized partners to continue conducting legal aid interventions (awareness and counseling) counters the high demand from the families on the ground, particularly in areas that shifted control.
- Sub-national operational coordination remains complex given the asymmetrical presence of various partners in different locations As-Sweida, Dara'a and Damascus.
- Even if access improves and authorization to operate is given, the funding situation for many partners is critical and hinders the expansion of activities.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Needs:

- Needs remain the same as reported in the previous SitRep.



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Response:

- Daily water trucking service from cross-border partners reached over 158,087 people including 27,752 people in this reporting period in 44 locations (camps, collective centers, informal settlements) in Zayzoun, Tal Shihab, Mzeireb, Nahj, Jasim, Eli Aliyah, Ankhal, Nawa) as well as 15,090 hygiene kits benefitting over 76,152 people in the same locations.
- Syria hub partners completed water trucking with over 1,600m³ including installation of 248 water tanks, critical hygiene supplies (jerry cans, solid waste containers) and hygiene kits for IDPs and people who have used safe corridors benefitting approximately 95,000 people.
- As part of UNICEF's commitment to support the restoration and rehabilitation of 100 existing boreholes (of the total 400) in Dara'a, 50 submersible pumps and control panels have been delivered to the water authorities. Of the total, 29 boreholes have been rehabilitated along with control panels in eastern and western rural Dara'a (Saida, Aumwald, Eastern Herak, Naima and Western Khareh, Kherbet, Ghazala, Alma- Western Ghariyeh, Dael, Ibta, Zemrin, Semlin, Akraba and Beteha) and benefitted approximately 145,000 individuals, both IDPs and members of the host communities.
- The WASH sector with support from UNICEF continued monitoring delivery and distribution of sodium hypochlorite up to 30MT to ensure disinfection of water delivered through existing water networks/bore holes reaching approximately 200,000 people as part of regular resilience programming in the South.
- WASH partners maintained committed hygiene supplies for approximately 25,000 families in their warehouses and these supplies are in stand-by to deliver to IDPs through inter-agency convoys/other possible mechanisms.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Sudden suspension of cross border operations and deliveries has resulted in the partial discontinuation of distribution of household disinfection products and mobilisation of private water vendors. This in turn has led to a loss of local capacity and impacted the transfer of knowledge on water safety intervention in areas with no functional public water networks.
- There is still limited access and approval from authorities as well as a significant funding gap hindering rapid start of water trucking and repair of critical water boreholes in water stressed areas both in eastern and western Dara'a by Damascus based partners. This is impacting the ability to meet minimum services of both the host population, IDPs and returnees.

**Needs:**

- In Dar'a, there are 945 school buildings and six education compounds. The Directorate of Education has assessed 311 schools till now while the process is ongoing. Out of the assessed 311 schools, 50 schools are totally damaged, 78 are partially damaged, and 116 need light rehabilitation. By the beginning of the academic year, no access to education is guaranteed in five locations due to lack of useable school buildings: Bosra Al-Harir, Hrak, Sheikh Meskin, Saida Al-Sharqia and Na'imah. While Hrak and Saida have witnessed a significant number of returnees, the return movement is still gradual at the rest.
- A total of 100 prefabricated classrooms and 30 prefabricated washrooms are immediately needed to resume education, especially in the villages where there are no functioning schools but that witnessed a strong returnee movement, like Hrak, Saida and Na'imah. The provision of prefabs might be challenged by the fact that systematic access to water and electricity is still not secured. Should the prefabs not be made available, schools in tents might be the only alternative to provide education.
- In Quneitira, particularly in newly accessible areas there are 100 basic education schools, five secondary schools and two vocational secondary schools. The DoE has recently started the assessment process, however, initial reports indicate that there is a need to rehabilitate 64 basic education schools, including their WASH facilities. In addition, the two vocational schools in Nab' Al-Sakhr and Ein Al-Teenah need rehabilitation, and schools need full equipment and supplies. At least 10-15 schools are completely damaged.
- Accelerated learning and curriculum B classes for out-of-school-children need to be established in most areas, especially Bosra Al-Sham, Bosra Al-Harir, Hrak, Karak, Taiba and Mta'iyya.
- There is a need to raise awareness about the importance of education especially in the eastern rural parts of Dar'a where children lack access to academic school books.
- School feeding programmes are needed in all schools, this will incentivize families to send their children to school.

Response:

- Dar'a DoE continues with the assessment and has plans for the light rehabilitation of two-three schools in each location to guarantee the availability of schools for the beginning of the academic year in September. DoE Quneitira started the assessment process.
- More than 1,500 teachers were trained on the new curriculum from all South-West Syria locations.
- Some sector partners resumed their education plans, implementing back to learning campaigns, the rehabilitation of education and their WASH facilities as well as the provision of school furniture and materials.
- Three partners from Southern Syria (Amman hub) will reprogram their education programming to Western Syria and North-Eastern Syria.

Gaps and Constraints:

- Due to the ongoing assessment by DoEs and mines security concerns, many partners have suspended their activities.



Logistics

Needs:

- Enhanced logistical coordination is needed to avoid duplication of response efforts and to find viable common solutions to bottlenecks and constraints.
- Due to increasing humanitarian needs, storage and transport capacity in south-west Syria needs to be expanded.

Response:

- The logistics sector has been providing logistical coordination and information management support to organizations responding to the ongoing emergency. Free-to-user transport from inside Syria to affected areas in the south of the country is made available to requesting organizations, access permitting. Mobile Storage Units (MSUs), pallets, diesel, and other logistical assets can be made available to enhance warehouse space and logistical capacity.
- Two inter-agency deliveries of humanitarian assistance of 26 and 21 trucks respectively was organised and conducted on 9 and 16 August to Dara'a Al Balad and Busra al-Sham.
- As a service provision sector, the logistics sector will closely liaise with programmatic sectors and tailor its activities to fill logistical gaps and ensure the timely and effective delivery of assistance.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Sustained access to all affected areas remains the major logistical challenge.

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