



This report is produced by OCHA Syria and Turkey in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It was issued on 8 April. It covers the period from 2-6 April 2015.



Civilians flee Idleb city amid reports of intense fighting.

Credit: OCHA/Khalel Ashawe

## Highlights

- The humanitarian community remains extremely concerned about the protection of civilians given reports of intense fighting, shelling and aerial bombardment of Idleb city and surrounding areas. Significant civilian casualties have been reported, including of civilians sheltering in schools.
- At least 77,000 people have reportedly been displaced as a result of the fighting in the last two weeks, including 23,500<sup>1</sup> to Government-controlled areas and 53,500<sup>2</sup> into areas controlled by Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG), with some sources reporting higher figures.
- Community sources report significant damage to civilian infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, as a result of aerial bombardment.
- On 2 April, two SARC volunteers were killed and four injured in the line of duty in two separate incidents in Idleb governorate.
- Lack of access, due to the prevailing security situation, significantly hampers tracking of population movement, safe registration of IDPs, identification of life-saving needs and provision of humanitarian assistance.
- 20,000 predominantly Shia' population in Foah and Kafraya towns in Idleb are cut off and surrounded.
- The Humanitarian Pooled Fund (HPF)<sup>3</sup> issued a call for proposals for rapid response activities for US\$4 million.

<sup>1</sup> Numbers as confirmed by SARC, but may not yet capture all displacement.

<sup>2</sup> Numbers are those that have been confirmed in at least a preliminary way according to the methodology of the CCCM cluster, but may not yet capture all displacement.

+ For more information, see "background on the crisis" at the end of the report

## Situation Overview

Fighting, shelling and aerial bombardment of Idleb city and the surrounding areas, including Mastumeh, Bennsh, Sarmin, Saraqab, Maárt Al Numan and Kafr Takharim have intensified during the reporting period. Insecurity on the road between Ariha and Jisr-Ash-Shughur is reportedly preventing movement of civilians as they seek refuge in safer areas.

The risk to humanitarian workers and civilian installation is of concern. Two Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) volunteers were killed in two separate incidents on 2 April while carrying out lifesaving humanitarian activities in Idleb city and Marat Al-Numain. Four SARC volunteers sustained injuries in the Idleb city incident. According to community sources, at least two schools have been hit by aerial bombardments, one of which was being used as a collective shelter for IDPs, many of whom were reportedly killed. In addition two hospitals in Idleb city have suffered damage due to aerial bombardment, with one rendered non-operational. Two field hospitals and a field clinic have also been damaged. A wheat silo has reportedly also been damaged, negatively affecting access to food.

As the violence continues, humanitarian needs are growing. Although access constraints make it difficult to verify numbers and locations of those displaced, it is understood that at least 77,000 individuals have been displaced from Idleb and surrounding villages. Out of these, 53,500 have been displaced into areas controlled by Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG) and over 23,500 individuals into Government of Syria-controlled areas, mainly to southern and western Idleb governorate and rural Hama, but also to Aleppo, Homs, Lattakia and Tartous governorates. It is understood that a majority of the IDPs in Hama are mostly women and children and that many are severely traumatised by their experience, in addition to requiring physical humanitarian assistance.

## Humanitarian Response

Humanitarian partners (UN, International and National NGOs, Red Cross/Red Crescent movement) continue to provide rapid response to the increasing identified needs of people displaced due to the intense fighting in Idleb while strengthening coordination mechanisms within and between hubs. Health, food, WASH, NFI and shelter needs are identified as being amongst the most pressing, both for IDPs and those remaining in Idleb city. SARC, local NGOs and INGOs are the primary actors on the ground and remain the first responders.



### Protection and Community Services

#### Needs:

- The situation for the estimated 20,000 Shia minority populations of Foah and Kafraya remains precarious as the town remains surrounded by NSAGs, which have issued warnings of violent reprisals.
- During an assessment mission to rural Hama on 6 April IDPs exhibited and reported distress in response to traumatic events witnessed during the intense fighting in Idleb city. The existing Psycho-Social Services (PSS) programmes need strengthening to respond to the needs.
- In two focus group discussions in Lattakia, IDPs from Idleb reported feeling traumatized by seeing corpses during their escape from Idleb city.
- A number of the households displaced to Tartous have been identified as having specific protection needs: nine households are residing in the Pioneer collective shelter; two households arrived without the necessary documents needed to qualify them for assistance; two households are headed by women; and one household has been displaced for the second time. One pregnant woman gave birth prematurely and the infant requires special care.
- Eight Palestine refugee families, out of 40 who reside in Idleb and receive assistance from UNRWA, have been displaced to Lattakia where UNRWA continues to assist them. Information on the 32 households remaining in Idleb is not available at present.

#### Response:

- In Hama, four mobile teams provided Psycho Social Support (PSS) to IDPs and the host communities, as well as conducted psychiatric and psychological referrals.
- A mobile response team is to be mobilized to provide PSS, reproductive health and family planning services to IDPs registered for assistance in Hama.

<sup>3</sup> The Humanitarian Pooled Fund (HPF) is a multi-donor fund managed by OCHA to expand and enable the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Syria. The fund was established in July 2014 following UN Security Resolutions 2139 and 2165.



### Needs:

- Hospitals in Idleb city have suffered damage from aerial bombardment, with one rendered non-operational. Two field hospitals and a field clinic have also been damaged. The Health Centre in Ariha is no longer functioning due to the lack of medicines and supplies.
- The immediate Health Sector priorities include a coordinated emergency health sector response, information management, and strengthened essential primary health care, including communicable diseases surveillance, detection and response.
- Emergency health, trauma and surgical kits to cover the most urgent needs for acute trauma care are urgently needed in Idleb city. Other priority needs are to maintain emergency referral systems, 24/7 hospital services and blood bank equipment and supplies.
- In Hama and Lattakia, the immediate health needs include access to health for IDPs, especially with life-saving and non-communicable disease (NCD) medicines, medical supplies and equipment.
- Idleb has reported a high number of acute jaundice syndrome (AJS) cases, with incidence primarily in Ariha, Harim, Idleb City, Jisr ash-Shughur and Maaret Al-Numan.

Medicines and supplies dispatched to Idleb sufficient to treat  
**236,000**  
individuals

### Response:

- Five surgical kits sufficient to treat 3,000 people were delivered to IDP-hosting locations in areas under NSAG-control.
- Plans are in place to dispatch medicines and medical supplies to one trauma center inside Idleb by one partner. 20 Inter-Agency Emergency Health Kits (IEHK) are to be prepositioned, while six IEHK, sufficient to cover 60,000 people for three months, were delivered to Masyaf and Tamanet Elghab.
- Consumables, medicine and surgical supplies were delivered to three hospitals with one more delivery planned. Anesthesia drugs, 20 compressed nebulizers and IV fluids were provided by one partner in areas under NSAG-control.
- As of 1 April, the Health Sector had re-prioritized and delivered medicines sufficient to treat 236,000 beneficiaries in Idleb, 436,367 beneficiaries in Hama, 380,406 beneficiaries in Lattakia and 144,420 beneficiaries in Tartous for one to three months, depending upon need.

### Gaps & Constraints:

- Primary gaps are the non-functioning health facilities inside Idleb city and disruption to health service provision at all levels.
- Access to health assistance, including access for delivery of medical supplies and equipment, remains severely constrained by the deteriorating security context, population movement, and limitations imposed on humanitarian operations by parties to the conflict.

### Coordination:

- 11 health providers working in Idleb conducted an inventory of contingency stocks and 3Ws of facilities where potential displacement and increased demand of services are expected. Needs, gaps, and response by health actors are updated every day in an online group managed by the Health Cluster, with gaps addressed by partners with the capacity and working in the affected location.



## Food Security and Agriculture

### Needs:

- Thousands of people displaced around Idleb and in Idleb city require food assistance, including ready-to-eat rations and wheat flour.
- The production of food has been severely affected as many farmers have faced challenges accessing their fields during this cereal planting season or have fled the area and may not return until after the planting season. In addition, the olive groves currently serving as a buffer between parties to the conflict have sustained significant damage, and this will have a negative impact on livelihoods as well.

**Tens of thousands**  
of IDPs in Idleb governorate were provided with food assistance

**Response:**

- Over 41,000 people in Ariha were provided with food assistance, including 7,284 family food rations and 1,000 ready-to-eat rations. If the Mastumeh highway remains accessible, 10,000 family food rations (sufficient for 50,000 people for one month) will be pre-positioned in Ariha.
- 8,340 people in NSAG-controlled areas of Ariha, Harim, Idleb, Jisr-Ash-Shughur and Ma'ra districts have received food assistance including a food basket sufficient for one month. Over 65,000 people have received bread at a subsidized price every day for the last 21 days. An average of 5,360 people has received daily cooked meals with two loaves of bread. In total, these distributions have totaled 1,390 food baskets, 230 metric tons of flour, almost four metric tons of bread and over 107,000 cooked meals. Over 51,400 food baskets and 307 metric tons of flour remain available for distribution. In addition, almost 1,500 vouchers worth 15,000 SYP each are ready to be distributed.
- Partners in Hama currently have sufficient stocks to provide food assistance to IDPs arriving from Idleb.
- Resources from ongoing agriculture assistance projects will be re-prioritized to provide fast production cycle interventions for IDPs in peri-urban and rural areas of Idleb. Amongst, the most appropriate interventions are vegetable production and provision of laying hens and sheep.

**Gaps & Constraints:**

- Funding gaps may hinder the response as the sector has so far received only 8.3% of the required funding under SRP.
- Difficulties getting a full picture on the dynamics of IDP movements, in addition to access constraints due to insecurity.

**Coordination:**

- The Cluster launched a Contingency Plan following two meetings organized to coordinate the response. Ten partners agreed to send weekly reports of activities to improve coordination. The Cluster is also working closely with the CCCM Cluster to establish an updated document to compare numbers of IDPs and partner response at the village level.

**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene****Needs:**

- Intense fighting in Idleb city has resulted in further damage to infrastructure and exacerbated existing severe water shortages and poor sanitation conditions, resulting in acute needs for clean water, chlorination, storage tanks, hygiene kits and WASH NFIs.
- The one deep tube well available for connection to water tankers is too far from Idleb city to support water trucking.

Distribution of hygiene supplies to more than

**50,000**  
IDPs

**Response:**

- Local councils are providing water trucking in many locations and are seeking support to continue this. WASH partners plan to increase water pumping hours and water trucking, particularly in areas where WASH partners already operate. 1,279 families received hygiene kits, and 2,540 hygiene kits are to be distributed in Dana and Harim. At least 1,441 families in 23 villages in Maarat Misreen, Dana, Harim, Saraqab, and Kafr Takharim have been reached through water trucking.
- Dispatch of hygiene supplies sufficient for 40,000 IDPs in Ariha is underway, including completed delivery of 5,000 baby hygiene kits; 5,000 hygiene kits; 25,000 bars of soap and 5,000 rations of washing powder.
- WASH sector members have dispatched 500 basic water kits, 10,000 collapsible jerry cans (10L), 6x5m3 water tanks and stands for water points to Ariha.
- While limited water trucking in Ariha is underway, support is needed to ensure the quality of drinking water meets the scale of needs. Three existing water tanks (two T-90 and one T-70) will be available for water storage following minor maintenance.
- 83 IDP households in Lattakia were provided with hygiene kits.

**Gaps & Constraints:**

- Access constraints hinder detailed assessment of needs for drinking water, sanitation and hygiene.
- Lack of fuel for the water stations in Allej (Jabal Alzaweya), Seija and Arshan (Idleb city) which together serve 34 communities and Idleb city.

- Water trucking in Ariha is limited due to the lack of available trucks. Support is needed to ensure the quality of drinking water and to meet the scale of needs. Three existing water tanks (two T-90 and one T-70) will be available for water storage following minor maintenance.

### Coordination

- On 3 April, the WASH Cluster Idleb Response Working Group reviewed the current capacity and ongoing response, as well as coordination between members to ensure complementarity and identification of gaps.
- Regular updates on delivery and response plans have been provided by members following an extraordinary sub-sector meeting in Tartous.
- Following an assessment mission to Ariha on 31 March, WASH partners are developing a plan to meet essential and urgent identified needs.



## Shelter and Non-Food Items

### Needs:

- The NFI Working Group developed an emergency response plan based upon a mapping of available stocks and response capacity.
- The Tartous NFI Working Group plans to target 7,000 households in Ariha, Jisr ash-Shughur, Lattakia City and Tartous City.
- The Homs NFI Working Group plans to target 5,000 households in Hama and Homs.

### Response:

- The Shelter & NFI Cluster has provided assistance to IDPs in 17 sub-districts in NSAG-controlled areas through eight partners. The Cluster has the capacity to provide 275,000 individuals with items such as blankets, kitchen sets, covers, standard kits, winterization kits, jerry cans, mattresses, and tents. Items in the pipeline include clothes, plastic sheets, and shelter kits.
- The Cluster is prioritizing shelter and NFIs for IDPs living with host families, or in unfinished buildings and Community Centers. The Cluster is also replenishing stockpiles and prepositioning NFIs.
- 1,315 households were provided with full NFI kits, including 1,000 households (5,000 individuals) in Ariha, 250 households (1,250 individuals) in Lattakia and 13 households (65 individuals) in Tartous. Numerous households in Jisr ash-Shughur received blankets and kitchen sets.
- 1,000 households were provided with full NFI kits, including 500 households (2,500 individuals) in Hama city and 500 households (2,500 individuals) in As-Suqaylabiyah. 320 households (1,600 individuals) in Tamanet Elghab received blankets and winterization kits.

### Gaps & Constraints:

- Lack of access to the population by sector members constrains the identification of IDP locations and the scale of needs. The response plan will be adjusted as information becomes available.
- The Cluster has identified some gaps in Atareb, Darkosh, Idleb, Kafr Takharim, Qourqeena, Saraqab, while IDPs in Dana, Ehsem, Kafr Nobol, Sanjar, Ariha, Qorqanya, Tamanaah, Tlul, and Samaan are yet to receive assistance. Cluster partners are following up to cover these gaps.

### Coordination:

- The national NFI Working Group mapped contingency stock available with sector members for dispatch to the Tartous and Homs hubs as needed.
- The Shelter & NFI Cluster has identified areas of gaps and overlap according to reported numbers of displacement in NSAG-controlled areas. The Cluster is following up on potential gaps have been noted in 15 sub-districts.
- The Cluster recommends that, due to the potential risks of tent distributions (potentially creating pull factors, facilitating the establishment of informal settlements in sites at risk, or becoming targets for aerial bombardments), partners only provide single family-tents in safe locations or to host families in order to decongest sites when 3,5 m<sup>2</sup>/person cannot be ensured.
- The Cluster is also updating a distribution matrix on a weekly basis and holds ad hoc coordination meetings.

**Tens of thousands**  
of IDPs from Idleb will be provided NFI assistance



## Camp Coordination and Camp Management

### Needs:

- As of 4 April, the CCCM Cluster reported that at least 53,357 individuals (9,559 families) were displaced in NSAG-controlled areas as a result of the fighting in Idleb. Most IDPs have been displaced from the city, but some also from the surrounding countryside.
- While there is some movement to camps in NSAG-controlled areas, the majority have been displaced to the countryside with many reportedly scattered in farmhouses, local communities, and under trees.

At least  
**53,357**  
IDPs displaced from  
Idleb into NSAG-  
controlled areas

### Response:

- The Cluster is working with local partners to quantify displacement patterns and refer immediate needs to the other clusters for assessment and response.
- The Cluster is also working with the Shelter & NFI Cluster to provide additional assistance required by new arrivals in camps.
- To provide as accurate a picture as possible, partners continue to triangulate data and undertake further information gathering.

### Gaps & Constraints:

- Lack of access and accurate information makes it difficult for humanitarian partners to confirm numbers and locations of IDPs and people in need. Reports of “go-and-see visits” by IDPs to Idleb city further complicate the consolidation of figures.
- There are not yet reliable estimates for the number of people remaining in Idleb city, complicated by a lack of clarity on the numbers in the city before the conflict. Pre-conflict estimates of the city population range from 250,000 to 500,000.



## Education

### Needs:

- The Sector estimates that 106,332 out of 354,441 (30 percent) students enrolled in basic education for the 2014-2015 academic year are not able to attend school due to armed conflict in Idleb governorate.
- Many classrooms are either being used as collective shelters, are over-crowded with an influx of displaced children and adolescents or are damaged and insecure due to the fighting.
- 16 schools are reportedly being used as shelters by newly displaced persons, six in Shat-ha (As-Suqaylabiyah district, Hama) and 10 schools in Ariha (Idleb). The Sector is monitoring the use of schools as collective shelters in Idleb and Hama but do not have reports from north and eastern rural areas.

**30%**  
of students enrolled in  
basic education in  
2014-15 are estimated  
to be unable to attend  
school due to armed  
conflict in Idleb.

### Response:

- The Sector is reviewing plans for pre-positioning of teaching and learning supplies in order to direct them to the appropriate locations to meet the new needs of IDPs. Initial estimates indicate that education learning stationaries are sufficient to target 17,000 children in Idleb.

### Gaps & Constraints:

- Access, safety and security constrain collection of information.
- No Education Sector members are currently present on the ground to conduct an assessment and respond to needs.

### Coordination:

- The Sector is liaising closely with the GoS Ministry of Education and focal points in Idleb and Homs to obtain information on the developing situation and needs.



## Early Recovery

### Response:

- Whilst there are no Early Recovery activities in response to the ongoing crisis in Idleb, due to the extensive destruction reported there will be a need for sector engagement as and when the security situation allows.



## Logistics

### Response:

- The Logistics Cluster is on stand-by to support the humanitarian response if and when requested.

## General Coordination

A call for proposals for rapid response for the Idleb crisis has been launched by the Turkey Humanitarian Pooled Fund. Priority will be given to projects from the Health, Shelter & NFIs, FSL and WASH clusters. The total allocation for each cluster is up to US\$1 million. Proposals are to be submitted by 8 April and fund disbursement is expected within 12 days.

The Syria Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) called an ad hoc meeting to agree on a strategic approach to rapid response, coordination and advocacy regarding the developing crisis in Idleb. As agreed, the Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria subsequently issued a statement expressing concern about the evolving situation, escalating humanitarian needs and urged parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations for protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, freedom of movement and humanitarian access [<http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/residenthumanitarian-coordinator-syria-expresses-concerns-about-ongoing>]. Three Flash Updates were issued and shared with partners on 28 and 30 March and 1 April.

Several Clusters have set up Idleb coordination teams, linking in with the coordination cell established by local partners. A number of partners have been conducting assessments on the ground. Despite this, getting accurate and up-to-date information from the field remains a challenge. To help offset this, clusters with the guidance of the Assessment Working Group are developing a joint rapid assessment plan to provide a snapshot on immediate needs.

Daily inter-agency coordination meetings are held in the UN Tartous Hub and partners in the UN Homs Hub are meeting regularly to monitor the situation and undertake operational coordination. Sectors are also meeting at the Hub level, and some national sectors have developed contingency plans and are reviewing stock levels.

An inter-agency assessment mission to Hama scheduled for 8 April was postponed due to insecurity along the route.

Under UNSC resolutions 2165 and 2191, UN agencies conducted the first stages of two UN transshipments of relief supplies from Turkey to Idleb on 6 April. Three trucks transported Inter-Agency Emergency Health Kits (IEHKs) via Bab Al-Salam border crossing and 17 trucks transported food, NFI and agricultural supplies via Bab Al-Hawa border crossing. Additional consignments of 69 trucks are planned for the coming two days.

### Background on the crisis

Humanitarian needs in Syria have increased twelve-fold since the beginning of the crisis, with 12.2 million now in need of humanitarian assistance, including more than 5.6 million children. More than half of all Syrians have been forced to leave their homes, often multiple times, making Syria the largest displacement crisis in the world. An estimated 4.8 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in hard-to-reach and besieged locations. Palestine refugees are particularly affected, with 560,000 in need of assistance.

In 2014, four out of every five Syrians were living in poverty, and almost two-thirds were living in extreme poverty. 9.8 million people are considered food insecure, including 6.8 million in high priority districts. Water availability has decreased to less than 50 per cent of its pre-crisis levels, and 11.6 million people are in urgent need of access to clean water and sanitation. More than half of Syria's hospitals have been destroyed or badly damaged and, it is estimated that only 43 per cent of hospitals are fully functional. An estimated 1,480 women give birth in dire conditions every day due to the weakening of the healthcare system. Outbreaks of communicable and vaccine-preventable diseases (including polio and measles) have increased. Roughly one-quarter of schools have been damaged, destroyed or are used as collective shelters or for purposes other than education. An estimated 1.2 million houses have been damaged or destroyed and more than 1.6 million people are in need of shelter. Due to multiple displacements, 9.9 million are in need of life saving and essential NFIs.

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