Syrian Crisis
Field Updates on the North West

Idleb Governorate is one of the fourteen governorates of Syria situated in the northwest, bordering Turkey and consists of 5 districts and 26 sub-districts, with a population estimated to be 2,379,650 million of civilians, and according to the Office of the Coordination of the Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) August statistics, including 1,225,234 IDPs. Idleb Governorate went out of the Syrian regime’s control in 2015 and is considered, along with the connecting countrysides of Aleppo and Hamah governorates, the last resort for the IDPs fleeing the crimes of the Syrian regime in all of the Syrian governorates.
The Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) aims to strengthen the decision-making capacity of aid actors responding to the Syrian crisis. This is done through collecting, analyzing and sharing information on the humanitarian situation in Syria. To this end, the Assistance Coordination Unit through the Information Management Unit established a wide network of enumerators who have been recruited depending on specific criteria such as education level, association with information sources and ability to work and communicate under various conditions. IMU collects data that is difficult to reach by other active international aid actors, and publishes different types of information products such as Need Assessments, Thematic Reports, Maps, Flash Reports, and Interactive Reports.
SYRIAN CRISIS
Field Updates on the North West

January – February – March 2019

Issued by the Information Management Unit
Background

- Idleb Governorate is one of the fourteen governorates of Syria situated in the northwest, bordering Turkey and consists of 5 districts and 26 sub-districts, with a population estimated to be 2,379,650 million of civilians, and according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) August statistics, including 1,125,234 IDPs. Idleb Governorate went out of the Syrian regime's control in 2015 and is considered, along with the connecting countrysides of Aleppo and Hamah governorates, the last resort for the IDPs fleeing the crimes of the Syrian regime in all of the Syrian governorates.

Political Overview

- The Syrian regime, with the support of its international allies, launched several military campaigns to gain control of Idleb governorate, and escalated its military operations and continued shelling Idleb governorate until SOCHI agreement was reached by Turkey and Russia on 7 September 2018. The agreement requires setting up a 15-20 km demilitarized zone along the contact line between the Syrian regime troops and opposition forces in Idleb, Hamah and Aleppo governorates. Turkey, which guarantees the commitment of the opposition forces to the agreement, deployed its observation posts in opposition-held areas. Likewise, Russian forces stepped up their deployment in the buffer zone within the territory under the control of the regime's forces, as the guarantor of the regime's commitment to the implementation of the agreement.

A total of 195 people fell dead due to the Syrian regime's military escalation in Idleb governorate and the adjacent countrysides of Aleppo and Hama since the start of 2019 till the end of March.

Figure 01: The Number of Victims people throughout the First Three Months of 2019

A total of 62 children were killed due to the Syrian regime's military escalation in Idleb governorate and the adjacent country sides of Aleppo and Hama since the start of 2019 till the end of March.

Figure 02: The Number of Victims throughout the First Three Months of 2019

Issued by The Information Management Unit

A Syrian man carries the body of a dead infant who was pulled from the rubble of a collapsed building following reported air strikes in the town of Kafraya in the north of Idlib governorate on March 22, 2019.
The total number of injuries due to the Syrian regime’s military escalation in Idleb governorate and the adjacent countrysides of Aleppo and Hama since the start of 2019 till the end of March is 308 injured people.

**Figure 03: The Number of injuries throughout the First Three Months of 2019**

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**The Field Situation in Idleb**

- Since signing Sochi Agreement, the regime forces have been targeting the opposition-held towns of Idleb and adjacent to the regime-held areas, particularly those in Idleb’s southern countryside, with continuous and indiscriminate shelling, resulting in the death of 195 civilians including 62 children, and 308 injuries, and the displacement of most of the residents of these towns to the northern areas. With the beginning of 2019, the Syrian regime and Russia intensified the escalation and the violation of the demilitarized zone agreement, which was reached at the end of last year by continuing to launch air strikes on the demilitarized zones agreed upon amid silence and disregard of the international community. The Syrian regime is seeking to take control of Idleb governorate and open both highways of Aleppo-Damascus, and Aleppo-Lattakia.
Key Incidents
Since the Start of 2019 until the end of March
In Idleb Governorate

Year 2019

JANUARY

3 January
The Russian warplanes shelled Tamanaah city, and targeted Mintar town with dozens of raids, causing civilian casualties, some of whom were trapped under the rubble.

4 January
In the southern countryside of Idleb, the Russian warplanes shelled Mintar village, which resulted in the destruction of a house over its inhabitants. The civil defence teams rushed to evacuate civilians trapped under the rubble, to take out a family of 7 people, including women and children.

20 January
In the western countryside of Idleb, the Russian aircraft launched airstrikes on Baksariya town causing the death of 2 civilians.

25 January
In the southern Idleb countryside, the regime fired its heavy artillery shells and surface-to-surface missiles on Elteh town. As a result, the obstetric hospital has suspended its work out of fear for the patients from the intense shelling on the town.

28 January
In the southern Idleb countryside, the Syrian regime shelled Kafr Nobol city with rocket launchers, which resulted in several civilian casualties within the city. The regime also fired its heavy artillery on Hbit town; an aggression that resulted in the injury of a woman reported to be in a serious condition.

29 January
In the southern countryside of Idleb, the regime opened its rocket launchers on Ma’arrat An Nu’man city. The aggression killed 11 civilians and caused several injuries.
In the southern countryside of Idleb, the regime opened its heavy artillery and rocket launchers on Elteh town; the local council announced that Elteh town had become a disaster-struck area.

8 February
In the southern countryside of Idleb, the regime shelled Maar Shamarin town with rockets loaded with cluster bombs.

9 February
In the southern countryside of Idleb, the regime shelled the towns of Elteh and Khan Shaykun with heavy artillery; an aggression which resulted in killing 6 civilians, 3 of whom were women and 2 children.

19 February
In the southern countryside of Idleb, the regime opened its rocket launchers on Khan Shaykhoun city; an act of hostility that left five civilians killed, one of whom was a woman and ten others wounded. The shelling also destroyed Al-Rouda bakery and caused several fires within the city.

21 February
A bomb exploded said to be the remnants of previous regime bombardment that targeted Arynba village, resulted in killing a child and injuring others, where the bomb exploded while the children were playing as reported.

22 February
In the southern countryside of Idleb, the Syrian regime shelled Ma'arrat An Nu'man city with rocket launchers resulting in killing 6 children and a woman and injuring dozens of civilians. Meanwhile, the regime shelled the cities of Saraqab and Khan Shaykun with heavy artillery; the aggression on Khan Shaykun resulted in killing 3 civilians and injuring several others. The Education Directorate suspended school attendance in the southern countryside of Idleb because of the heavy shelling on the cities and towns. On the next day, the regime shelled the town of Khan Shaykun city with heavy artillery and rocket launchers, where 3 civilians, including a pregnant woman, were killed and the fragments of the shelling reached the fetal.
1-2 March
The regime shelled the cities of Khan Shaykun, Ma’arrat An Nu’man and Saraqab with dozens of artillery and missile shells; the bakery of Durrat Al-Khair in Ma’arrat An Nu’man city caught fire due to this shelling.

3 March
The regime opened its heavy artillery and rocket launchers on Khan Shaykun city with more than 60 artillery and missile shells. As it was reported, Khan Shaykun city is witnessing a massive displaced movement towards the neighbouring agricultural lands.

13 March
The Russian aircraft launched intensive air raids on Kafr Omeim in the eastern countryside of Idleb, targeting one of the IDPs’ random camps, and causing the death of two women and injuries to 19 civilians, most of whom were women and children.

The regime uses incendiary phosphorous bombs in Tamanaah city of Idleb
At 01:00 am, in participation with the Russian air force, the regime intensified the air raids and targeted the southern and eastern countrysides of Idleb, including Khan Elsobol, Saraqab and the outskirts of Mardikh and Tamanaah using incendiary phosphorous bombs on the latter. The regime forces, deployed in Abu Dali village in the eastern countryside of Idleb, fired dozens of missiles and phosphorous shells on the town of Tamanaah and its surrounding areas in southern Idleb, without causing any injuries due to the city being void of the residents. The regime is making use of the international community’s continued silence on the regime’s aggression, and significantly escalated shelling in the opposition-held areas.

22 March
In northern Idleb countryside, the Russian air force launched 14 airstrikes on the towns of Kafraya and Foah, killing 15 civilians and injuring 27 others. 2 women and 4 children were reported to be among those killed.
Map 1: Areas Targeted in the Shelling – Southern Idleb Countryside
The Security Chaos

Due to the continuous security chaos in Idleb governorate and adjacent countrysides of Hama and Aleppo, the number of the victims of explosions, kidnapping, and assassinations has been increasing by the beginning of 2019 until the time of preparing this report where more than 75 civilians were killed, and a hundred were injured over the first three months. One of the medical staff and another were killed on the first of January 2019 in the clashes which erupted in Daret Azza city located in the western countryside of Aleppo between The National Front for Liberation of Syria (NFLS) and Hay’et Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) where the latter attacked the city and imposed control over it. The clashes extended for the second day in a row where 2 civilians were killed in Khan Al Asal as a result of the clashes. Several IDPs who live in a random camp on the outskirts of Ghadqa town were wounded, a child was also killed, and several injuries occurred in a camp near Marata town due to the clashes. As for the kidnapping incidents, In Salqin town, masked men kidnapped a media worker from his home to be taken to an unknown destination, and one of the pharmacists was kidnapped from his pharmacy in Jobas town in the southern countryside of Idleb. In Sarmin city, in Idleb governorate, a group wearing masks opened gunfire on a civilian who was killed. In the city of Idleb, a woman was killed, and many civilians were wounded, as a result of an IED planted in the center of the city; it is still unknown who the culprits behind these acts are.

The total number of victims due to the security chaos in Idleb governorate and the adjacent countrysides of Aleppo and Hama since the start of 2019 till the end of March reached 75 people.

Figure 04: The Number of Victims Due to the Security Chaos throughout the First Three Months of 2019

The total number of injured civilians is 106, due to the security chaos in Idleb governorate and the adjacent countrysides of Aleppo and Hama since the start of 2019 till the end of March.

Figure 05: The Number of Injuries Due to the Security Chaos throughout the First Three Months of 2019
The Effect of the Military Operations on the Civilian Life

By 2019, the suffering of the residents and IDPs in Idleb governorate and adjacent countrysides has increased at all aspects, where the suffering of the civilians started because of the complete lack of flour in addition to roads closure due to the clashes between HTS and NFLS. At the education level, a demonstration of the students of International Rescue University (private university) took place in Ma‘arrat An Nu’man demanding to overturn the Higher Education Council and to open the universities that were closed by the salvation government. The administration of the oppositions’ Idleb College and Educational Assemblies announced the postponement of the students’ examination at colleges and institutes, and suspension of school attendance in order to ensure the students’ safety.

At the health level, the regime fired its heavy artillery shells and surface-to-surface missiles on Elteh town in the southern Idleb countryside. As a result, the obstetric hospital has suspended its work out of fear for patients from the intensity shelling on the town. The Idleb Health Directorate (HD) announced that all donors had stopped their support for the health sector in Idleb governorate, where it has issued a statement announcing that all health workers are considered to be working as volunteers starting from 11 January 2019.