



WINTER EMERGENCY

IN NORTH-WEST SYRIA

“After a decade of conflict, in the middle of a global pandemic, and faced with a steady stream of new crises, Syria has fallen off the front page. And yet the situation remains a living nightmare.

- ANTONIO GUTERRES, UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

Exhausted by years of conflict and poverty, Syrians face **another bitter winter**. They are **worse off than at any time since the conflict began in 2011**. In the north-west, millions of people, most of them women and children, are **trapped along the border** with Turkey in an active **war zone**. People are crammed into flimsy tents, in valleys **that flood**, or on rocky hillsides exposed to **harsh weather**. Many have been **killed or injured** as fires have ripped through crowded camps. Storms wreak havoc and tens of thousands of tents have been washed away during floods. Outside the camps, there are a million more displaced people. Some have found refuge in unfinished buildings, or in the ruins of bombed-out towns and villages.

The United Nations and its humanitarian partners have plans to provide safe and warm shelter, education, food, healthcare, better work opportunities, and other life-saving aid. However, **with large gaps in funding, millions of people will be left out in the cold.**

SNAPSHOT

WINTER IN NORTH-WEST SYRIA 2021 - 2022



2.8 Million

displaced people

1.7 Million

people living in displacement sites

DISPLACEMENT

Over 2.8 million people are displaced and 1.7 million people are living in 1,400 mostly unplanned sites and camps, often lacking adequate shelter, infrastructure, and basic services.



PROTECTION

Air raids and shelling are at their highest level since March 2020 despite a ceasefire in place, adding to the displacement and difficulties in accessing basic services.



COVID-19

The pandemic is surging in north-west Syria with people living in overcrowded camps, low vaccination rates and the health system near collapse. As winter forces people inside, worse could follow.

2.2 Million targeted people

RESPONSE

Winter plans aim to respond to 2.2 million people in need, providing fuel, stoves, plastic sheets to add to tents, thermal blankets and winter clothes. On flooding, since 2021, partners have been focusing on ground leveling, strengthening basic infrastructure, ensuring emergency response capacity and market access.



97% of population

live under the poverty line

+200%

rise in food prices

POVERTY

97 per cent of the population live under the poverty line. An economic crisis has seen prices of food rise by over 200 per cent. Even those in work can't cover the basic needs for their families.



85% of tents

are older than their expected lifespan

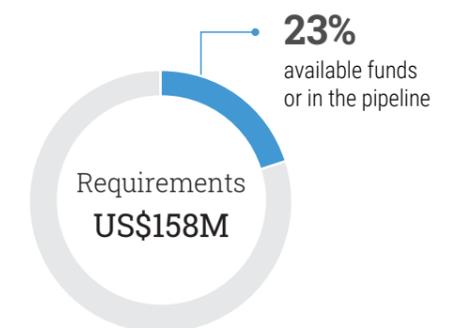
SHELTER

85 per cent of tents are older than their expected lifespan and more likely to be damaged, less resistant to weather conditions and prone to leaks. A third of displaced people live in sites that were flooded in the past year.



FUNDING

Current plans estimate that US\$158 million is required to meet the winter needs, but only 23 per cent of the required funds are available or in the pipeline.



A CLOSER LOOK

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I can't afford to buy fuel. I'm an old woman and have no family to support me. Without the aid, I would be without heating and would suffer from the cold.

- AZIZA HAZIN, MOTHER, AL ARABIYA CAMP

The conflict in Syria is one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world. In the north-west, 4.4 million people face another winter against the backdrop of an intensification of hostilities, a deepening economic crisis, an unprecedented rise in COVID-19, and a severe funding crisis. Winter plans aim to respond to 2.2 million people in need, mainly focusing on people in camps, collective shelters, and informal settlements. To maximize reach, humanitarian partners are planning a variety of methods including cash support, vouchers, and in-kind distribution. However, funding gaps will leave people without assistance.



SHELTER AND NON FOOD ITEMS

Providing protection against sub-zero temperatures is a lifesaving activity, especially for children and the elderly. 63 per cent of people living in displacement sites lack access to fuel. The price of fuel has increased by 36 per cent since the beginning of the year. 14 per cent of households are living in small shelters without space for essential items like cookers and heaters.

Since May, humanitarian partners have reached 130,000 people in displacement sites through infrastructure repairs and rehabilitation activities. Partners plan to reach 415,000 people by February 2021. Winter activities focus on fuel, stoves, plastic sheets to add to tents, thermal blankets, and non food items kits such as winter clothes.

With the available funding, humanitarian partners plan to reach 870,000 people with at least one type of winter assistance. However, there is an 81 per cent gap in funding. \$93.8 million is needed in order to cover all people in need. Last year, 1.65 million people were reached with winter items. At current funding levels, nearly 850,000 people who received winter assistance last year will not receive this assistance in 2021.



FIRE SAFETY

Without proper camp management systems and sufficient "winterization" response – preparing shelters and camps to withstand the harsh conditions and keep occupants warm – people in need could resort to negative coping mechanisms, such as burning unsafe materials for heat, raising the risk of fire outbreaks and toxic fumes.

The likelihood of accidental fires is increased by challenges in accessing safe fuels, as a result of scarcity and high prices as well as the general economic deterioration in north-west Syria.

Humanitarian partners have established and equipped 45 fire units, and selected and trained 1,226 people as members of Emergency Intervention Teams. 2,200 fire extinguishers and 1,436 fire blankets have been distributed. Fire awareness, prevention and response training has been held for 882 people. Camp maintenance committees have been formed in all camps, and maintenance groups have been selected, trained and equipped.

Humanitarian partners have reached 685 displacement sites with fire mitigation and preparedness activities. However, over 715 sites are not yet benefiting from fire prevention and response activities due to a lack of funding. \$1.4 million is needed.



EDUCATION

Children cannot study in freezing conditions. Humanitarian partners have rehabilitated 107 schools in camps and 211 schools out of camps in the past months, providing safe access to schools for 107,444 students during winter. \$1.5 million was secured through a Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF) allocation for in camp and off camp schools.

Humanitarian partners aim to provide heaters and fuel to 800,000 children in schools, as well as to rehabilitate learning facilities. There is a funding gap of over 80 per cent. \$14.1 million is needed.



EARLY RECOVERY AND LIVELIHOODS

Access to markets, infrastructure, displacement sites and connectivity between sites and host communities, as well as livelihoods and job opportunities are vital during winter months. Humanitarian partners have been rehabilitating approximately 100km of roads and related drainage systems for flood prevention.

In order to sustain livelihoods and contribute to the provision of essential items, partners plan to support the local production of COVID-19 prevention items and essential winter items such as warm clothing. Lack of funding means emergency repairs to ensure access to displacement sites, access to and correct functioning of markets, and connectivity between sites and host communities will not be possible in case of urgent need. Furthermore, it will affect the livelihoods of those involved in production of winter and COVID-19 prevention items. \$6.2 million is needed.



FOOD

Reports show that households mainly prioritize food and do not spend money on winter items such as fuel and clothes. There are 3.4 million food insecure people in the north-west. Humanitarian partners have targeted one million people with winter crops and the rehabilitation of bakeries. \$4.6 million is required to deliver ready to eat rations (RTEs), cooked meals, emergency food baskets and bread distribution.



HEALTH

The health system is on the verge of collapse due to COVID-19. Currently there are three hospitals which are facing challenges in terms of service delivery due to lack of funding. Around one million people are living in the catchment areas of these facilities. Infections are increasing rapidly. Key challenges include vaccination hesitancy, infections among frontline health workers, high transmission rates in displacement camps, lack of oxygen supplies, funding constraints, limitations of refrigeration capacity, and limited management capacity. On top of the pandemic, health partners are preparing communities to prevent and respond to respiratory diseases such as Influenza and TB.



FLOODING

With 76 per cent of displaced people living in sites with no drainage for storm water, humanitarian partners have been focusing on flood mitigation and winter preparation activities. 594 sites now have the capacity to repair minor damages in infrastructure and drainage system. Humanitarian partners have conducted flood mitigation and winter preparation activities in 104 sites.

Partners have been replenishing emergency stocks to respond to floods. Humanitarian partners have a capacity to provide non-food items up to 300,000 affected people. There will be emergency food rations for up to 100,000 people for three months.

Care and maintenance activities in displacement sites prevent and mitigate flood risks and keep essential facilities functioning during the winter. They also ensure protection for beneficiaries at risk.

SYRIA CROSS-BORDER HUMANITARIAN FUND (SCHF)

The SCHF is an essential source of funding for the provision of life-saving interventions with a primary focus on underserved and high-needs areas through best-positioned responders in the Syria cross-border response. For 2021/2022 winter response, the SCHF allocated \$6,104,429 targeting 230,367 beneficiaries through eight projects.

MOVING FORWARD

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At least

2.2 Million

people are still in need of assistance

In May, the Inter Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) led by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Gaziantep, Turkey developed a Winterization and Flooding Preparedness and Response plan. Since then, humanitarian partners have been carrying out activities to mitigate the impact of flooding and winter conditions and prepare a timely winter response. At least 2.2 million people are still in need of assistance. With worn-out tents, lack of warm winter clothes and blankets and no access to fuel or heaters, Syrians face a bleak winter without our help.



My husband died during the war and my son died because of COVID-19. My daughters and I depend on the humanitarian aid that we receive, especially for fuel, because it is expensive and difficult to find.

- ELHAM AL-BAKOUR, A WIDOW WITH FIVE DAUGHTERS, IN RAMA ALLAH CAMP IN ATMA.

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Further information

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