

### KEY FIGURES

**2.7 M**

displaced people  
living in northwest Syria

**1.7M**

displaced  
people living  
in IDP sites

**24,941**

confirmed  
COVID-19 cases (as of 15  
June 2021)

**979**

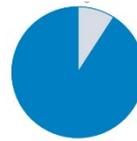
trucks of UN assistance  
transhipped in May

### FUNDING

(towards the Whole-of-Syria  
coordinated humanitarian  
response)

**\$627 million**

**14.9%**



of estimated required  
financial requirements  
under the 2021 Syria HRP  
(not yet published)

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Cross-border assistance continues to rely on UN aid deliveries enabled through the Security Council Resolution. In May, 979 UN trucks delivered cross-border assistance to northwest Syria through the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing.
- The COVID-19 vaccination program for northwest Syria began on 1 May, covering over 21,900 health care and social workers as of 14 June. The number of new cases remained low during the reporting period although a slight upwards trend can be observed.
- After more than ten years of conflict, improving shelter conditions remains a top priority in northwest Syria, with more funding required for innovative solutions that better support people in protracted situations of displacement.
- The SYP has stabilized in May, but the economic crisis continues to drive humanitarian needs.

### SITUATION OVERVIEW

**Ongoing hostilities:** Communities continue to suffer from the impact of hostilities across northwest Syria and in the Ras al-Ain and Tell Abiad (RAATA) areas, especially south of the M4 highway and around the M5 highway. Overall, the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) verified that at least 12 civilians were killed (including five women and four children) and at least 17 civilians (including four children) were injured as a result of shelling and airstrikes in April and May.

The security situation is further undermined by the prevalence of explosive hazards and in-fighting between non-state armed groups (NSAGs), which take a toll on civilian life. Twelve incidents of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and five incidents of explosive remnants of war (ERW) in northwest Syria and the Ras al-Ain and Tell Abiad areas also resulted in civilian casualties, with at least six civilians killed (including one woman and four children) and 35 civilians injured (including one woman and 11 children).

During the same reporting period, OHCHR reported that no humanitarian workers were killed or injured in northwest Syria and the Ras al-Ain and Tell Abiad areas.

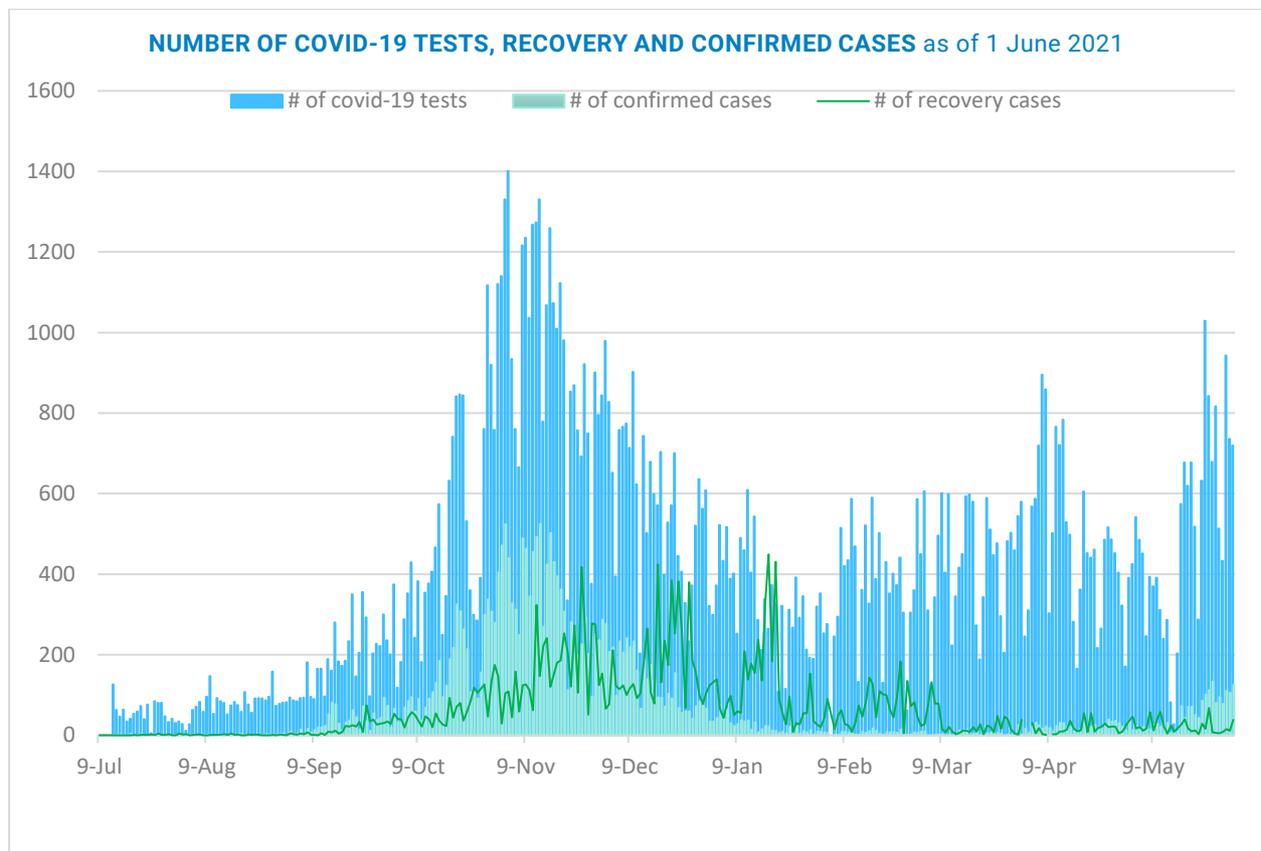
**COVID-19:** While the overall number of new confirmed COVID-19 cases have remained low in the last month, recent figures seem to suggest that there is a slight upwards trend after many weeks of declining or stagnating figures. As of 15 June, 122,738 tests had been conducted in

northwest Syria, with 24,941 cases confirmed – 12,776 cases in the Idlib area and 12,165 in northern Aleppo governorate. A total of 692 COVID-19 associated deaths had been reported as of 15 June with an overall fatality rate of 2 percent. The percentage of current cases among healthcare workers is 6.8per cent, encompassing nurses, doctors and midwives, while a further 4.9percent are auxiliary workers in the health sector. Some 10.9 per cent of all COVID-19 cases are in IDP camps.

In the Ras Al-Ain and Tell-Abiad area, 366 new cases and six deaths had been reported (in April (between 10 – 30 April), while 1,290 new cases and 14 deaths were reported in May.

Since the last situation report, two new COVID-19 laboratories began operations in northern Aleppo in Afrin and Jinderes which aim to complement the existing testing capacity. These two laboratories are part of six laboratories covering Idlib and Aleppo governorates.

Critical funding gaps remain in the COVID-19 response as well as the vaccination campaign, which was initiated in early May.



**SYP devaluation:** Following months of devaluation, with the most significant devaluations noted in March 2021, the value of the Syrian Pound (SYP) against the US Dollar rebounded slightly in April and May, returning to 3,155 SYP/USD by 31 May. Despite a significant improvement against the USD since the record low rates in mid-March, the SYP remains over forty per cent weaker than it was at the same date the year prior.

The volatility of the SYP continues to increase the prices of goods and services, while many commodities such as fuel, bread, transport, electricity and telecommunications services are commonly priced in Turkish Lira (TRY), making it difficult for people without access to TRY to buy these commodities. The dire economic situation continues to impact households, particularly

since late 2019. The devaluation of the SYP and economic turbulence over the past year has significantly eroded people's ability to meet their basic needs, no longer being able to afford bread, fuel and other vital commodities.

**Population movements:** More than 2.7 million people remain displaced in northwest Syria. According to the CCCM Cluster, 25,429 displacements throughout northwest Syria were tracked in May. These movements are estimated to mostly be incentivised by access to services and livelihoods. This figure is approximately six cent lower than the figures recorded in April. As in preceding months, most IDP movements were concentrated in northwest Syria; within and between Aleppo and Idlib governorates, and Afrin, Bulbul and Raju sub-districts in Aleppo received the largest number of IDPs, with around 2,000 movements each.

Return movements have also slightly declined compared to previous months. In May, the humanitarian community recorded some 5,822 IDP return movements across Syria, compared to 6,441 in the month prior. Over half of the returnees recorded in May returned to Ehsem, Idlib Governorate.

**Ras al Ain – Tell Abiad area situation update:** Hostilities remained the major concern for humanitarian partners in the Ras Al Ain – Tell Abiad (RAATA) area as they impact the daily life of residents.

In addition to the hostilities, communities in the RAATA area have also been impacted by economic turmoil, the COVID-19 pandemic as well as significant water and electricity shortages. While communities across northeast Syria have been suffering most severely from the regional water crisis, the implications of current water shortages are becoming increasingly apparent in the RAATA area as well. The water level of the Euphrates River has dramatically decreased in previous months, leaving millions of people with limited access to drinking water, electricity and water for irrigation. In the RAATA area specifically, some of the communities/villages impacted most heavily were Um Jarn, Harrobi, Rajaan, Rajia, Al-Qulaya, Urida, and Abu Jalloud, where reportedly the price of one barrel of water has reached up to 3,000 SYP (compared to 1,500 SYP – 2,000 SYP in April), an amount that is not affordable for most people. Residents of the RAATA area are increasingly turning to demonstrations to voice their needs and frustrations regarding the poor living conditions in the area.

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## Cross Border Assistance through Security Council Resolution (SCR) 2533

### SCR-enabled cross-border assistance remains the backbone of UN humanitarian aid provided in northwest Syria

After ten years of conflict, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and rising humanitarian needs, more humanitarian assistance and greater access to areas in northwest Syria is needed to save lives.

Under Resolution 2533 (2020), the Security Council approved delivery of United Nations aid through the Bab al-Hawa crossing until 10 July 2021. Assistance sent by the UN from Turkey through this crossing reaches 2.4 million Syrians monthly, with approximately 1,000 trucks of aid crossing the border each month in 2020 and 2021.

Some 3.4 million people in northwest Syria need humanitarian assistance, and it is crucial that

the cross-border mandate be renewed so that many of these people will continue to receive the humanitarian assistance needed for survival. Failure to renew the UN's cross-border authorization would greatly diminish essential humanitarian operations and could plunge northwest Syria into yet another humanitarian catastrophe.

Since the passing of SCR 2533 in 2020, the Bab al-Hawa crossing is the UN's last remaining entry point for transporting assistance to northwest Syria. Despite ongoing efforts by the UN to begin cross-line convoys from government-controlled territory, this modality is not yet available, and even if deployed regularly, could not replicate the impact of the cross-border operation.

People in northwest Syria are in greater need of the assistance than when the issue was last reviewed by the Security Council in July 2020. The number of people reliant on aid has increased by 20 per cent to 3.4 million people. Prices of food staples rose by over 200 per cent in the last year alone, while income sources and livelihoods have been eroded by the ongoing economic crisis. Severe acute malnutrition (SAM) for children increased by 55 per cent in April 2021.

More than 8 out of 10 people in need in northwest Syria are reached through cross-border aid. Since the beginning of cross-border assistance in 2014, the United Nations has sent over 44,000 trucks through the Bab al-Hawa and the Bab al-Salam crossings, carrying much needed food, nutrition, health and protection assistance. Notably, the first batch of COVAX COVID-19 vaccinations were transported through this mechanism (see section on COVID-19 Vaccination Program). Failure to renew the authorisation would also end the UN COVID-19 vaccine distribution plans for millions of people in northwest Syria.

UN and non-UN partners distributed food baskets to over 1.9 million people in northwest Syria on a monthly basis from January to March 2021. In a deteriorating economic situation, Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) Cluster partners supported 1.4 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities with agriculture and livelihood activities in 2020, which were mostly funded by the Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF), a mechanism enabled by the Resolution.

Data shows 129,961 children aged 6-59 months and 240,647 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) were reached with nutrition services between January-May 2021, including COVID-19 related activities. More than 19,390 new mothers and children under 5 years were admitted to malnutrition treatment and 2,322 children were treated for severe acute malnutrition. With no UN cross-border assistance, the delivery of nutritional supplies and life-saving services will be only partially provided, constraining the ability to counter the rise of malnutrition and increased morbidity and mortality among children.

#### Feature Story

Nader (38) lives in Atareb with his wife and six children, who were all displaced to Afrin in early 2020. After selling his assets and using up all his savings, Nader and his family were able to return to their hometown, which was damaged by shelling during last year's military escalation. While food and commodity prices soared and the purchasing power of the community fell sharply, Nader lost his job in construction because of the conflict and doesn't currently have any other source of income. Nader is supported through a regular food assistance project implemented by Takaful Al Sham, an FSL Cluster partner of the cross-border programme in northwest Syria. These food baskets are an essential lifeline for people like Nader, offering a chance to recover from the impacts of conflict and displacement and to provide for their families again.

Please visit <https://fscluster.org/gaziantep> for further information and more *Voices from the Field*, a recent initiative by the Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster in Gaziantep.

Some 1.7 million people live in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs). A non-renewal would result in the loss of more than half of the funding available for shelter. Approximately 2.75 million people would be at risk of loss of shelter assistance in the event of non-renewal of the Resolution.

Local NGOs comprise the bulk of the response on the ground. These NGOs would be heavily affected by a non-renewal. The Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund alone provided US\$103 million directly to local NGOs in 2020, with limited funding mechanisms available that could mitigate this loss of funds.

In addition to supplies, the Resolution also enables support for the case management of gender-based violence survivors, salaries for teachers and doctors, running costs for hospitals and other basic services, and so on.

"In northwest Syria you have some of the most vulnerable people anywhere in the world. The Bab al-Hawa crossing is literally all that is left. What we really need is to scale up. We need more access, not less. It's going to be a disaster if the Security Council Resolution is not extended. We know that people are really going to suffer. Our expectation from the Council is that they put the needs of the civilians first," said Mark Cutts, Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis.

### Feature Story

Barakat (50) has four children and resides in Taftanas city in Idlib. He has worked as a teacher for many years and lost his job after the suspension of education activities. He has since worked as a volunteer, even after the re-opening of schools, but has received no salary or income to provide for his family, which has led to the accumulation of debt after several years without an income.

As a beneficiary of an educational project funded by the SCHF that supports schools and teachers with salaries, he is now able to provide for the basic needs of his family. While this financial support is a vital source of income for Barakat and his family, it falls short of covering all his needs and would likely be suspended along with all other SCHF-funded activities in the case of a non-renewal of the Resolution. For people like Barakat, who are the builders of the next generation of young Syrians, adequate and reliable income needs to be available so they can focus on this important task.

## COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAM

### Over 17,000 health care and social workers received COVID-19 vaccinations in May

The vaccination campaign against COVID-19 in northwest Syria started in May. Up until 14 June, 21,872 vaccines have been provided to health care and social workers in Idlib and Aleppo governorates.

These vaccinations have been administered in line with the National Deployment and Vaccination Plan (NDVP) for northwest Syria, which was approved in February 2021. WHO granted Emergency Use Listing (EUL) for the AstraZeneca vaccine produced by the Serum Institute of India, paving the way for its use in northwest Syria. Vaccinations for 855,000 people in the first phase (to cover 20 per cent of the population) have been requested from the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access initiative (COVAX). With two doses each, this means that 1,710,000 doses are needed for the first vaccination phase. COVAX has confirmed that it will supply 336,000 vaccines in the first half of 2021, with these vaccines expected to cover 336,000 people with one dose each

(some 20 per cent of the targeted 855,000 people). Northwest Syria received its first delivery through the COVAX facility on 22 April, with 53,800 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine delivered, enabled by the Security Council Resolution that authorizes UN assistance to reach the area from Turkey.

The vaccination roll-out plan was designed by the COVID-19 Taskforce and includes service delivery, cold chain and logistics, demand generation and communication, prioritization, targeting and COVID-19 surveillance, monitoring and evaluation. Health care workers and high-risk population groups (with associated chronic comorbidities), in addition to other cluster frontline workers (depending on availability) will be prioritized in phase one of the

vaccination roll-out. The vaccination program began on 1 May with two teams – one in northern Aleppo and another in Idlib. On 3 May, 80 additional teams were deployed. On 29 May, vaccinations also commenced in Afrin, relying on eight newly established vaccination teams.

A third-party monitoring mechanism has been set up and has so far reached 438 health facilities to gauge coverage achieved and to understand reasons for any gaps in the coverage, which currently stands at 57 percent.

Up until 31 May, the Syria Immunization group (SIG) conducted the following social mobilization activities to ensure that all targeted persons receive the COVAX vaccine as per the vaccination planning:

- 1,429 awareness sessions were conducted for the targeted group and 10,077 targeted participants attended.
- 14,478 household visits were conducted to mobilize the targeted individuals for the vaccinations.
- 21,706 targeted people were mobilized for the vaccination during this period.

Furthermore, before the vaccination campaign began, SIG conducted media briefings on the COVAX campaign and the targeted group of the first phase of the campaign. SIG has also ensured information, education, and communication planning and social media promotion for the COVAX campaign in northwest Syria. This included 10,000 COVAX FAQ sheets, 1,500 COVAX street posters, 1,000 COVAX “adverse event following immunization (AEFI)” posters and 140 COVAX vaccination site banners, as well as a daily COVAX campaign promotion on social media.

### Feature Story

Abdulrahman (25) graduated from the Medical Technical Institute at the Free University of Aleppo in 2018. He started as a paramedic at Orient Hospital in Kafranbel and then worked as a ward nurse at Maarat al-Nu'man National Hospital. As a result of escalating hostilities in Idlib, Abdulrahman and his family displaced to the town of Harem, near the Syrian-Turkish border in the north of Idlib. From the first days of his arrival, he began studying for a technical diploma at the Academy of Health Sciences in addition to working as a nurse in the isolation hospital for people with COVID-19 in the city of Salqin.

Abdulrahman received his first dose of the COVAX-vaccine two weeks ago, after the first batch of vaccinations reached northwest Syria through the Bab Al-Hawa crossing in late April. The vaccine will allow him and his colleagues to continue his work and to provide medical assistance and services to thousands of infected people in the region. Many of his colleagues are still waiting to receive their first shot of the vaccination to protect them and their patients.

Securing funding for the delivery and roll-out costs for the vaccination program remains ongoing, with further support needed to ensure the swift and efficient delivery of the vaccinations supplied. The additional operational costs include salaries or incentives for the vaccination teams, transportation costs, supplies, logistics, training and monitoring. An estimated US\$500,000 is needed to cover the operational costs for the first campaign.

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## SHELTER CONDITIONS IN NORTHWEST SYRIA

**Improving infrastructure in camps and IDP sites is essential, as the SNFI Cluster advocates for dignified and safer living conditions for IDPs.**

Ten years into the crisis, recurrent displacement and population movements continue to drive humanitarian needs in northwest Syria. In addition to new displacements, most IDPs are facing a situation of protracted displacement (72 per cent of newly displaced IDPs in areas under the control of non-state armed groups have been displaced four times or more<sup>1</sup>). The shelter and non-food items response needs to account for this situation and deliver improved temporary shelter solutions that provide adequate protection for those facing prolonged periods of displacement.

According to the joint [Shelter Conditions in NWS Report](#) published by the SNFI Cluster and the Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP) in January 2021, 45 per cent of IDP households across northwest Syria live in finished houses or apartments, 25 per cent in tents, and 12 per cent in both concrete block shelters and unfinished houses/apartments. 17 per cent of IDP shelters across northwest Syria are currently damaged (not including tents, makeshift shelters or concrete block shelters). Close to a third of all IDPs state they have been unable to make repairs on their current shelter because they can't afford it.

Lack of space inside IDP shelters is the most frequently reported problem (36 per cent across northwest Syria). Almost half of IDP households across northwest Syria rent their current shelter (48 per cent) although a significant 36 per cent are being hosted for free. Finally, 83 per cent of IDP households own property in their place of origin, but 64 per cent of these households report that property as either damaged or destroyed. Only 6 per cent report it intact.

In addition, the need for infrastructure support in northwest Syria is still significant, especially for the sites that have been established by the IDPs themselves. The vast majority (90 per cent) of IDP sites listed in the CCCM database are self-settled, meaning that they often lack proper site planning, infrastructure and camp management systems. Other types of sites range from planned sites, to collective centres and reception centres. Strong winds and recurrent flooding further emphasize the need for better infrastructure in camps and better shelter options, to ensure IDPs are protected against the elements: In 2021 so far, fire, flood and high-speed wind incidents have severely impacted shelters in IDP sites. In April and May 2021, CCCM reported on fire incidents impacting 42 IDP sites, resulting in three deaths and two injuries, as well as affecting 84 tents. During this time, one wind incident affected one IDP site and led to the destruction of five tents; in addition to explosion incidents reported in two IDP sites that resulted in one death, five injuries

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<sup>1</sup> According to HNAP's Mobility and Needs Monitoring Factsheet for May 2021, NSAG and TBAF.

and the destruction of two shelters.

SNFI Cluster members continue to respond to the shelter needs of both newly displaced, as well as protracted IDPs in northwest Syria. Shelter needs of close to 43,000 people were responded to in April 2021, including the provision of emergency shelter, shelter rehabilitation and transitional shelters, and rental assistance provision. Around 4,000 individuals were reached with infrastructure improvements in IDP sites such as roads and drainage. Of those reached with shelter assistance in April 2021, approximately 51 per cent were female, and 49 per cent were male.

In this respect, the Shelter/Non-food Items (SNFI) Cluster continues to strongly advocate for better, more dignified, emergency locally built shelters in northwest Syria. The Cluster and its Technical Working Group (TWiG) have published an advocacy paper on [Dignified and Safer Living](#)

[Conditions for IDPs in Protracted Crises: North West Syria](#) to outline general principles that should inform SNFI cluster members' approach to shelter in northwest Syria. It proposes different options that are best suited to the diverse needs of displaced population groups. These include immediate, life-saving interventions as well as humanitarian shelter solutions that reflect situations of protracted displacement and build on the choices that are already being made by IDPs themselves – to avoid dependence on shelter options with a short lifespan and inappropriate protection, such as tents for families that have not been able to return for several years.

The shelter response is also becoming more forward looking, to account for recurrent challenges faced by displaced populations, such as harsh winters and floods. The SNFI Cluster continues to lead the Technical Working Group on the Flood Response, in collaboration with the CCCM, ERL and WASH Clusters. The Working Group has published a draft advisory note on [Flood Risk Reduction](#) that aims to provide guidance on infrastructure improvements in IDP sites, camps and communities in order to mitigate the risk of floods and contribute effectively to disaster reduction. In the coming weeks, the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group will produce a plan for both flooding and winterization to advocate for adequate funding for implementation in advance of the winter season.

### Feature Story

More than 200 displaced families from rural Idlib and Hama are living in Al-Nour camp for displaced Syrians near the Syrian-Turkish border. Khalil (86) and his family is one of them, living between four walls and under a plastic sheet roof, which do not offer protection from the heat of summer or the cold of winter. Khalil, who was displaced three years ago from his village of Karsa'a, in southern Idlib, lives with his wife and grandson with special needs who is 22 years old.

All inhabitants of the shelter are unable to move without assistance, hence their children and neighbours living in the same camp take turns to serve and help them according to their abilities. Khalil's family depend on the food, health and services provided by humanitarian organizations to camp residents. They look forward to providing them with more suitable housing and equipment suitable for the elderly and those with special needs, as part of the shelter projects implemented by humanitarian organizations in the area. In case of a non-renewal of the cross-border Security Council Resolution, these programmes would come to a halt.

## FUNDING OVERVIEW

As the 2021 Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is being finalized, initial funding for related activities is being received. By mid-June, an estimated \$627 million USD has been received by

humanitarian partners, which amounts to just below 15 percent of the estimated overall requirements of the HRP (4.2 billion).

As per a funding gap analysis carried out specifically for humanitarian partners in northwest Syria in April, significant gaps are constraining partners' ability to respond. Only 36 per cent of the funding required for the first six months of the year had been received in April. These funding gaps are forcing sectors to re-prioritize, delay, reduce or even suspend their activities, leaving millions of people without sufficient assistance. Up to 3 million people may be affected by adjusted WASH programmes, and up to 2.4 million people by the reduced reach of FSL partners. If more funding is not received, further programme adjustments will be required in the second half of the year, leaving an even larger number of people without the assistance urgently required.

The Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF) continues to provide important funds to respond to critical needs and to allow partners to boost response and preparedness in priority areas and strengthen integration and coordination of interventions. From the beginning of 2021 to the date of reporting, the SCHF has received a total of US\$102 million dollars from ten donors in paid contributions.

With this funding, the SCHF has triggered three allocations, with a fourth allocation being prepared at the time of reporting. The first reserve allocation was launched in early March to provide critical funding to facilitate the cross-border transshipment efforts and field coordination in northwest Syria. The total amount allocated was US\$1.2 million. A first standard allocation was launched at the end of March for an amount of US\$75 million. A total of 105 projects were submitted across 10 sectors. For this allocation, in collaboration with the Inclusion Working Group and the Protection Cluster, a pilot initiative will aim to improve inclusion consideration in partners' project design and implementation.

In parallel, a limited reserve allocation of an indicative amount of US\$8 million was triggered at the end of April to provide funding for the UN procurement of essential items to be prepositioned rapidly in northwest Syria. A second reserve allocation of US\$25 million will be carried out in June, to support partners to close critical gaps, to allow partners to prepare for winter needs and to put in place measures to limit flood damage.

The first quarter SCHF dashboard was released in May and can be assessed here: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/stima/infographic/2021-schf-quarterly-dashboard-q1>

The first SCHF Spotlight issue was issued and serves as the SCHF Quarterly Digest, illuminating SCHF's partners work in northwest Syria. This new platform will provide a more regular insight into partners' achievements.

Further information on the SCHF activities and contributing donors can be found here: <https://pfb.unocha.org/>

Further information on the Inter Agency Appeals can be found here: <https://gho.unocha.org/inter-agency-appeals/middle-east-and-north-africa>

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For further information, please visit:

[www.unocha.org](http://www.unocha.org)  
[www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)  
[www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/stima](http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/stima)

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