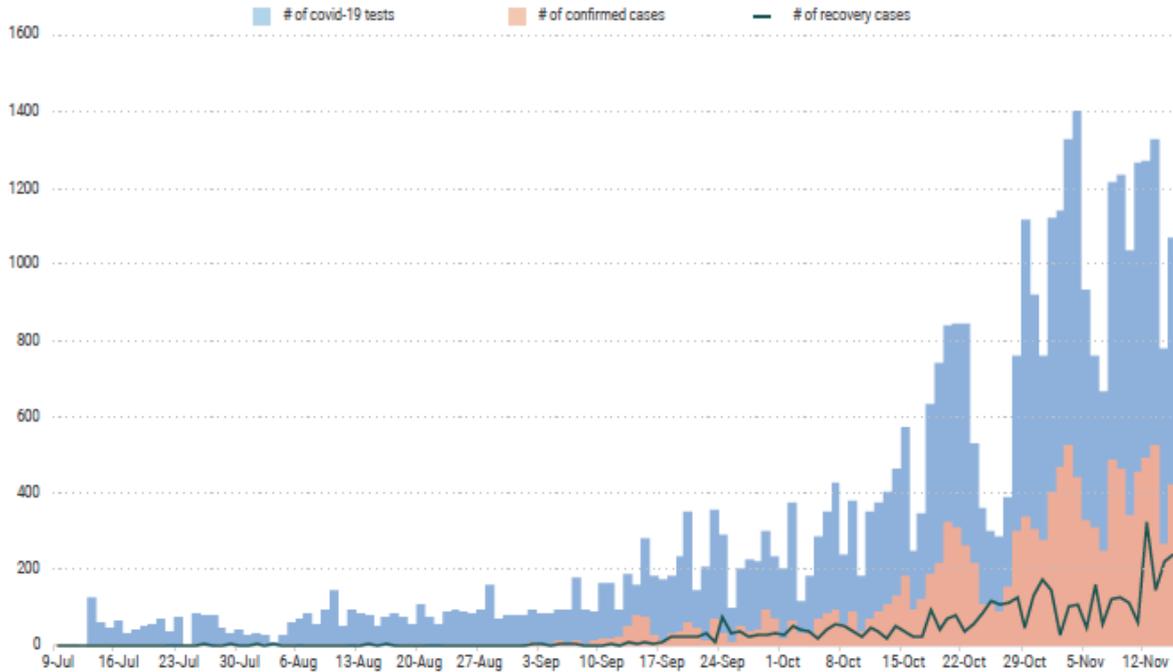


### KEY FIGURES

NUMBER OF COVID-19 TESTS, RECOVERY AND CONFIRMED CASES as of 15 November 2020



**>45K**  
COVID-19 tests conducted

**13,179**  
confirmed COVID-19 cases

**4,906**  
recoveries from COVID-19

**95**  
COVID-19 associated deaths

\*2,396 COVID-19 had been conducted prior to daily record keeping  
Source: Health Cluster, as of 15 November 2020

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Some 80 percent of all confirmed COVID-19 cases in northwest Syria were identified in the past month. Seven new treatment centres have been added, for a total of 26 with a capacity of 1,110 beds, and precautionary measures are being reintroduced especially in the Idleb area.
- Ongoing hostilities encroach on population areas, leading to higher civilian casualties.
- Flooding destroyed and damaged tents in at least 10 IDP sites, and caused access issues in many others.
- The SYP is on a downward trend, devaluing some 15 percent against the USD in the past month, while prices in the northwest have fluctuated according to exchange rate trends.

### SITUATION OVERVIEW

**Intensifying hostilities:** Communities continue to endure bombardment, especially south of the M4 highway and around the M5 highway. Casualty figures reported by local sources are on the rise as hostilities increasingly encroach on population centres, such as on 4 November when intense shelling was reported in communities across Ariha and Idleb districts, harming numerous civilians and killing two workers of a Syrian NGO. Several airstrikes were also recorded during the reporting period, most notably in Dweila on 26 October, in an incident away from the frontlines and several hundred metres from several IDP camps, prompting widespread demonstrations against the hostilities. Overall, according to local sources, at least 22 civilians were killed (including six children) and at least 59 civilians were injured as a result of shelling and airstrikes since the last situation report on 20 October. The security situation is further undermined by the prevalence of

explosive hazards and in-fighting between NSAGs, which take a toll on civilian life. Since 20 October, local sources reported at least 10 people killed and 19 people injured in nine IED and four landmine incidents in northwest Syria, while many more IEDs, landmines and UXOs were discovered and neutralised.

**COVID-19:** The identification of COVID-19 cases in northwest Syria is accelerating, with 13,179 confirmed cases as of 18 November – 7,530 cases in the Idleb area and 5,649 in northern Aleppo governorate. Some 80 percent of all confirmed cases were recorded in the past one month. Daily testing capacity has exceeded 1,400 tests in a day, with 45,924 tests performed to date. 95 COVID-19 associated deaths have been recorded and 4,906 people have reportedly recovered. Since the last situation report on 20 October, the percentage of current cases among healthcare workers increased to some 15 percent, including nurses, doctors, technician, midwives and non-medical staff. A significant increase of positive cases has also been noted among students and teachers, weeks after the reopening of schools in September. With nearly 60 percent of all cases in Idleb governorate and over a third of all cases at the time in Idleb sub-district, the Idleb health authorities issued a statement on 6 November calling for additional support to hospitals, health centres and health workers in the area, and Idleb authorities have begun reintroducing temporary precautionary measures such as the closure of markets and suspension of in-person schooling. Additionally, humanitarian partners are in the process of setting up the first quarantine centre in northwest Syria. This will provide an isolation option for people who have been exposed to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases, and for whom isolating amid the crowded everyday living conditions may not otherwise be possible. With some 8 percent of cases in camps and rising, the need for this is particularly acute.

**Flooding:** Rainfall during the reporting period caused widespread damage to IDP sites across northwest Syria, inducing flooding and damage to tents. CCCM partners reported that at least 25 tents were completely destroyed and 345 tents were partially damaged, affecting at least 334 households in 10 IDP sites in Maaret Tamsrin and Dana sub-districts in Idleb governorate and Atareb sub-district in western Aleppo governorate. Beyond this, dozens of IDP sites were reportedly affected by flooding that inhibited movement and in some cases caused sewage overflows.

**SYP devaluation:** The value of the Syrian Pound (SYP) against the US Dollar continued to weaken steadily, reaching around 2,680 SYP/USD in northwest Syria on 17 November. This is the first time the SYP has reached this level since June 2020, as its value was recovering from record lows of some 3,200 SYP/USD reached earlier that month. The SYP today is over 190 percent weaker than at the start of the year, and has devalued some 15 percent against the USD in the last month.

**Price fluctuations:** Fuel prices returned to similar levels as at the end of September 2020, following two price increases and two price decreases since the last situation report on 20 October, in line with fluctuations in the value of the Turkish Lira (TRY) against the US Dollar. Despite decreasing since 10 November, prices remain notably higher than when they first began to be posted in TRY five months ago. Compared to 14 June and as of 14 November, per litre prices are higher by around 26 percent for “imported first type benzine”, 23 percent for “imported first type diesel”, 14 percent for locally refined diesel and 30 percent for a gas cylinder. The increase in fuel prices has negative knock-on effects on the cost and supply of other goods and services. This includes transportation and electricity as well as staple items such as bread and vital functions such as medical services and emergency response operations. It exacerbates concerns about increased health and fire risks, particularly with the arrival of winter and increased demand for heating. Inaccessibility of safe heating sources leads to reliance on negative coping mechanisms such as burning unsafe materials, which in previous years has resulted in outbreaks of fires in IDP sites and other residential areas as well as poisoned people through the emission of toxic fumes. During the reporting period, electricity prices were also raised, while the price of bread in the Idleb area rose and fell alongside fuel prices, culminating at 6 percent more expensive than a month ago.

## FUNDING

Due to the scale of winterisation needs, the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) has identified key winterisation priorities requiring urgent funding, amounting to US\$49 million. This includes US\$39 million for shelter and NFIs, US\$5.7 million for water and sanitation, US\$3.1 million for education, and US\$1.2 million for road and drainage works. Only supplies and activities that can be delivered quickly are included, such as emergency repairs and procuring heating fuel. Longer term projects are not part of this prioritised ask.

The Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF) has closed the call for proposals for its second standard allocation. The allocation strategy focused on two strategic objectives: (1) supporting immediate and critical measures to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and (2) contributing to the most urgent lifesaving winterisation interventions in high-needs and underserved areas. Forty-four proposals were submitted by 44 partners for a total ask of US\$33 million, exceeding the tentative funding envelope of US\$13 million. The project review committees will take place over the next two weeks. In line with ongoing efforts to mobilise additional funding for winterisation, options for increasing funding under this allocation will be reviewed where possible.

Thanks to generous contributions from 15 donors, in 2020 the SCHF has been able to support 2.9 million people with lifesaving and basic assistance across ten clusters and with the critical COVID-19 preparedness, prevention and response in northwest Syria. However, as of 17 November, the 2020 Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) remains underfunded, with only 54.4 percent of the total requirement funded as the year nears its end.

Further information on SCHF activities and contributing donors are available here: <https://pfbf.unocha.org>

The latest SCHF dashboard provides an up-to-date overview of the fund's activities since the start of 2020: [www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/stima/infographic/2020-schf-allocation-cumulative-dashboard-13-jul-2020-en](http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/stima/infographic/2020-schf-allocation-cumulative-dashboard-13-jul-2020-en)

## KEY PRIORITIES & RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

 **Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM):** The CCCM Cluster is currently focused on **developing and strengthening fire response and prevention measures** under the Second Standard Allocation of the SCHF. Awareness raising, providing fire-fighting materials and developing systems to coordinate and respond to fires (such as fire response committees and warden systems) are some of the main prevention and response measures that CCCM is focusing on and advocating for. Adopting an integrated approach is a key aspect of this response, and CCCM is engaging with other clusters such as WASH and Shelter/NFI to ensure a multi-sectoral approach.

**1.5M**

*people hosted in IDP sites  
monitored by CCCM*

Due to the context of largely self-settled sites and associated lack of camp management systems, monitoring and collecting information as part of its coordination response are essential aspects of CCCM's priorities. The Cluster closely **monitors 1,172 active IDP sites hosting 1.5 million IDPs**. Of these, 80 percent are women and children, and approximately 23,000 IDPs are reported to be persons with specific needs. Coordinating and disseminating operational information on IDP sites, as well as tracking IDP movements, are key priorities for CCCM to analyse trends and quickly identify IDPs in need of assistance. The CCCM Cluster tracked **34,103 displacements in October**, with departures principally occurring from Ehsem, Idleb and Dana. The main locations where displaced people arrived to include A'zaz, Afrin and Dana sub-districts. Noting that some may have been displaced multiple times and that reasons for moving vary. The top three shelter types for new arrivals in October were reported as solid/finished houses (67 percent), individual tents (18 percent), unfinished/damaged buildings (10 percent) and camps (5 percent).

 **Early Recovery and Livelihoods (ERL):** To reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 and the ongoing economic crisis on the affected population and markets, ERL partners are prioritising **increasing access to livelihood opportunities**, with a **focus on cash-for-work (CfW) schemes and multi-purpose cash**. These include CfW linked to rehabilitation works improving access to services, such as rehabilitation of markets, main roads and access routes to camps; CfW linked to local manufacturing of COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE) such as fabric masks; support to urban/rural new businesses and existing entrepreneurial activities for the local manufacturing of PPEs; restoration/rehabilitation of access ways/roads critical for transporting humanitarian supplies across northwest Syria; and emergency repair works of roads and drainage in proximity of camps to mitigate against flooding and other weather impacts. From January to September, 6,807 persons were employed through the **creation of short-term work opportunities** concerning light rehabilitation works of social infrastructure, basic infrastructures, and roads, as well as CfW activities such as mask manufacturing. These activities were mainly in A'zaz and Suran sub-districts in northern Aleppo and in Dana, Armanaz and Maaret Tamsrin sub-districts in Idleb governorate. Some 573,000 masks were produced and distributed through CfW schemes. Entrepreneurial activities supported 881 entrepreneurs, mostly supporting women and youth, to start a business or service in Atareb and Jarablus sub-districts in northern Aleppo and in Ariha and Idleb sub-districts in Idleb governorate. Four ERL partners completed **restoration of roads and drainage systems** in 64 camps and in three communities in proximity of camps in Idleb, Dana and Maaret Tamsrin sub-districts. Reparation works by three ERL partners in 17 camps and three communities (mostly in Maaret Tamsrin) are ongoing.

**6,807**

*people employed through  
cash-for-work activities*

 **Education:** Provision of continued learning remains a key priority. Due to the increased COVID-19 cases and deteriorating security situation, more schools are now closed either fully or partially. **Distance and blended learning support** have thus become a top priority, including provision of support to education personnel and teacher incentives and training for learning to be continued. For schools that are fully

**11,889**

*children reached through  
distance learning*

or partially operating, partners are prioritising **COVID-19 mitigation measures** such as providing additional learning spaces, sterilisation and awareness raising as well as rehabilitation. As the winter is approaching, **winterisation** of learning spaces including provision of fuel for heating and ventilation of windows has also been added as a key priority.

 **Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL):** Priorities during the reporting period continued to be pre-positioning food supplies, providing food assistance, and livelihoods support. From 13 October to 13 November, FSL partners provided **food assistance** to 43,571 displaced people and returnees. This included 5,705 emergency food baskets, 2,422 ready-to-eat (RTE) rations, 2,108 cooked meals and US\$2,100 in multi-purpose cash grants (MPCG). In-kind food assistance for over 1.3 million people continued, and at least 1.5 months' prepositioned food supply was maintained in addition to 192,320 RTEs. Approximately 1.5 million people were targeted for bread distributions in October and 1.3 million people in November. Livelihoods support continued to focus on small-scale food production, income-generating activities, recovering agricultural production, and producing animal-source foods to reduce malnutrition. Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) vaccinations and a cattle census in northwest Syria were completed in October; 23,331 dairy cows were vaccinated against LSD, benefiting 11,113 smallholder households. Since October, reports have been received of Bovine Ephemeral Fever (BEF), an insect-transmitted fast-spreading viral infection that can disrupt milk production for 9-12 months, posing a serious threat to local milk availability. The spread of BEF is expected to subside in the cold weather, and preparations are underway for a coordinated BEF vaccination campaign to prevent a larger outbreak in 2021.

**1.3M***people targeted for bread distribution in November*

 **Health:** The Health Cluster's focus during the last month was to **boost testing capacity for COVID-19** in northwest Syria, which has doubled since the last situation report. Three testing laboratories are fully functional with four PCR machines, and plans are in place to add more testing and surveillance capacity in Jandairis and Dana. The Cluster continues to disseminate daily updates on the COVID-19 situation in northwest Syria and to update the [COVID-19 response tracking dashboard](#) with the latest information on the epidemiological situation, COVID-19 community-based treatment centres (CCTC), dedicated hospitals, points of entry, referrals and logistics. **Seven new CCTCs** were added to the response, for a total of 26 CCTCs functional with a capacity of 1,110 beds (55 percent more than last month). The CCTCs have admitted 4,777 positive and suspected cases, while the **eight hospitals** are functional with a capacity of 615 beds and 142 intensive care unit (ICU) beds, and have admitted 619 positive and suspected cases. The number of ventilators has also been increased to 155 from 86 previously. Health partners have supported the **distribution** of 81,500 testing kits (11,500 last month), 38,200 Viral Transport Media (VTM; 11,500 last month), 227 infection prevention and control kits (IPC; 120 last month), 12,482 goggles and protective equipment (7,810 last month), 17,359 protective gowns, 212,269 N95 masks (111,128 last month), 1,082,366 surgical masks (308,952 last month), 1,035,475 examination gloves (548,859 last month) and 13,426 face shields (7,056 last month). The Health Cluster continues to coordinate with other clusters to ensure a comprehensive multi-sector approach focused on expanding quarantine options, and with the Education Cluster to respond to the significant increase in cases among students and teachers. Apart from COVID-19, previously reported elevated **leishmaniasis** cases have since reduced to levels below last year.

**>1,400***daily COVID-19 testing capacity*

 **Nutrition:** A deteriorating nutrition situation continues in northwest Syria as indicated by monthly nutrition surveillance data, with **increasing levels of both acute and chronic malnutrition**, particularly among IDPs. One-third of children aged 6-59 months are stunted and the proxy prevalence of acute malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women (PLW) is at 11 percent. Lifesaving nutrition services are provided through both **static and mobile delivery mechanisms** across northwest Syria by 28 Nutrition cluster partners. Since the start of 2020, some 1.7 million children aged 6-59 months and PLW have been reached with lifesaving nutrition services in 582 communities and 42 sub-districts of northwest Syria. This represents nearly 75 percent of the population in need, and a nine percent increase in coverage compared to the last situation report. The nutrition cluster has also initiated **collaboration with the global Technical Rapid Response Team** (Tech RRT) to augment technical capacity and the quality of nutrition programming in northwest Syria

**1.7M***women and children reached with lifesaving nutrition services*

 **Protection:** In response to increased needs related to the adoption of harmful coping mechanisms, including child labour, early and child marriage, and domestic violence, Protection Cluster partners continue to implement programmes responding to rights violations and to prevent and mitigate the risks of protection violations,

**>2M***cumulative interventions in 2020*

including through community-based activities. In 2020, over two million cumulative interventions have been reported by partners. The Protection Cluster is collaborating with the Education Cluster and other clusters to develop a **joint approach to an increase of forced evictions of IDPs residing in schools**, developing guidelines on non-emergency relocations, mitigating harm during forced evictions, and working towards an agreed response package. On behalf of the Quarantine Centre Task Force, a report was produced based on **Focus Group Discussions to highlight dynamics around COVID-19 related stigma, health seeking behaviour, and barriers to voluntary entrance in quarantine and isolation facilities**, aiming to inform and support the overall health response. The Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Sub-Cluster has **updated the content of dignity kits** to reflect needs for the COVID-19 response including the addition of hand sanitisers and bleaches. Dignity kits provide essential items to women and girls and serve as an entry point for further GBV prevention and response activities. The GBV Sub-Cluster is also working with the Cash Working Group to strengthen use of **cash/voucher assistance for protection outcomes** in GBV case management. The Child Protection sub-cluster continues to provide capacity development trainings to partners, including on case management and protection of children in armed conflict, and provided support to the SNFI Cluster in winterisation planning, focusing on addressing **needs of children in the winterisation response**. The Inclusion Technical Working Group in collaboration with the WASH Cluster finalised a brief guidance note on the **inclusion of persons with disabilities in the COVID-19 WASH response**. Protection Cluster partners are also continuing to respond to new displacement, reaching 8,221 individuals (3,602 girls, 3,149 boys, 1,198 women and 272 men) with outreach and acute emergency specific protection services between 11 October and 8 November.



**Shelter and Non-Food Items (SNFI):** SNFI partners continue to actively respond to the needs of the newly displaced population as well as people in protracted displacement in northwest Syria. In September, **more than 85,000 individuals received NFI assistance** in the form of NFI kits, kitchen sets, mattresses, jerry cans, carpets, solar lamps, tarpaulin and blankets. **Shelter needs of close to 170,000 people were addressed** during September. Of this support, 72 percent was related to infrastructure rehabilitation, in addition to activities such as provision of emergency shelter, shelter rehabilitation and transitional shelters. In preparation for the imminent winter and the impact of the harsh weather conditions on people's living conditions, a main priority for SNFI is the **coordination of the winterisation response**. The SNFI Cluster has focused on engaging with members to harmonise the winterisation response and minimise gaps and overlaps, as well as advocating for a strengthened response to address the identified gaps in winterisation and infrastructure. SNFI partners are currently targeting 1.3 million individuals with the winter response, mainly in sub-districts including Dana, Maaret Tamsrin and A'zaz.

## 1.3M

*people targeted for the winter response by SNFI*



**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH):** During the reporting period, over 2.1 million people were reached with water trucking, 890,000 people with desludging services and 2.4 million people with solid waste management. Despite the WASH Cluster's efforts to phase out costly and short-term activities such as water trucking, 70 percent of IDPs in camps in northwest Syria continue to rely on WASH partners to provide trucked water on a daily basis. The Cluster continues to **advocate for funding to support the connection of camps to existing piped water systems**, which would dramatically improve the quantity and quality of lifesaving water services while substantially reducing costs. Only 255 water stations out of 448 in Idlib and Aleppo are currently functioning (57 percent), from which 209 (82 percent) are being chlorinated. Without electricity, partners continue to operate these water stations through diesel generators, with the cost of fuel accounting for an estimated 30 percent of the total WASH Cluster expenditure. Further advocacy is needed with donors to support the **repair and rehabilitation of water stations and networks** and to **connect these stations to electricity grids**.

## 2.1M

*people reached with water trucking*

As a **COVID-19 response** the Cluster has prioritised handwashing with soap and recommended that water be increased from 25 to 35 litres per person day along with increased distributions of soap. In the last reporting period, 1.4 million people received hygiene promotion messaging and advice on the mitigation of COVID-19 and 367,753 people benefitted from hygiene kits. At the sub-district level Ar-Ra'ee and Mhambal are the most significant **hotspots for waterborne diseases**, while Dana and Al Bab sub-districts have the highest number of **leishmaniasis** cases. Prevention measures have been implemented in the last three to four months, however, the hosting period of the disease is usually between 6-8 months, so a decrease in cases is expected around May to August of next year. Cluster partners were able to **support 73 health facilities** (supporting 280,651 persons) **and 242 schools** (70,666 students) with water supply, sanitation, solid waste services and hygiene promotion activities.

**🚚 Logistics:** The priorities for the Logistics Cluster are to ensure that humanitarian actors with activities in northwest Syria have continued access to key locations in the region. The Cluster does this by continuing to facilitate access to a UN transshipment service through the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing and by supporting the maintenance of physical access inside the northwest. The Cluster will be **collecting, monitoring and analysing physical access information** with inputs from partners operating on the ground to mitigate the impact that winter weather will have on road degradation and access. Coordination and Information Management services, as well as technical GIS support will be key in facilitating information flow and inform decision-making. In addition, a coordinated inter-sectorial approach to the response will be crucial in **identifying priority locations** such as IDP camps and the **roads leading to these that are most at risk of flooding and degradation** during the winter months. The cluster continues to keep up to date its Logistics Capacity Assessment through regular consultation with partners, ensuring the latest information on existing technical capacities inside northwest Syria is at hand. 943 trucks carrying 22,814 metric tonnes of FSL, Shelter, WASH and Health sector items were transhipped in October 2020, while another 358 trucks carrying 7.710 metric tonnes of FSL and Shelter sector items were transhipped between 1 and 13 November 2020.

# 1,301

*trucks transhipped from 1 October to 13 November*

## OPERATIONAL GAPS & CHALLENGES

**🏠 Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM):** Even though IDP sites are usually a last resort option, there are currently **1,172 IDP sites** listed in the CCCM database, the majority of which are self-settled (1,078 sites). The Cluster continues to monitor these sites to identify gaps and facilitate the coordination of multi-sectoral services. Incidents continue to impact IDP sites, exacerbating challenges and vulnerabilities, such as the **lack of proper infrastructure or site planning**, especially in self-settled IDP sites that do not have camp management systems. **Fire and flooding** are significant challenges. In 2020 to date, 65 fire incidents were reported by the CCCM Cluster, affecting 65 sites and 196 households, leading to the destruction of 196 tents, 19 injury cases and 12 deaths. Over the same period, CCCM reported 12 flood incidents affecting 54 sites and 1,864 households. As a result of these floods, 968 tents were destroyed and 896 tents damaged. Given the remote management context, massive data cleaning and verification processes are required to mitigate challenges in processing information provided by multiple members across borders.

**🔧 Early Recovery and Livelihoods (ERL):** The COVID-19 and economic crises further aggravated the already **dire livelihoods situation** in northwest Syria. Livelihoods were reported to be the highest priority needs for each population group (host communities, IDPs, returnees), according to a September report by a UN partner. The **risk of further reduction of purchasing power** points to the urgent need for scaling up access to livelihood opportunities for people in need, particularly through creation of emergency short-term employment, cash assistance and support to businesses. Furthermore, with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2533 limiting transshipment of UN humanitarian assistance into northwest Syria to a single border crossing at Bab Al-Hawa, there is a marked increase in traffic through this point. The **roads connecting Bab Al-Hawa to northern Aleppo thus require urgent rehabilitation** to ensure continued access of humanitarian supplies throughout the winter and beyond. Currently, 20 kilometres of road are being rehabilitated, out of approximately 70 kilometres of critical roads requiring urgent restoration. This leaves a gap of some 50 kilometres to be covered. Similarly, despite limited funding, ERL partners have been working to restore and rehabilitate key access roads to markets and to camps, for which there is a further 50-kilometre gap to be covered. This is taking place in host and displaced communities and in densely populated areas and areas of return, to enhance access to livelihoods opportunities, mobility and mitigate against flooding. According to the latest reports, some 200,000 people in 45 camps in Maaret Tamsrin and 845,000 people in 40 sites in Dana were affected by rains and floods. Some **US\$1.2 million is needed for road and drainage emergency repair works** in proximity to camps (inside and outside camps) and to cover approximately 30 kilometres of road.

**📖 Education:** Funding shortages continue to inhibit adequate education support. Demand for distance and blended learning is higher than ever, as in the current situation double the number of schools are used as shelters compared to three months ago, children are often on the move, some schools are impacted by hostilities, and schools are often temporarily closed (for example, the one week closure of schools in Aleppo and Idleb due to increased COVID-19 cases). The **biggest funding gap is for teacher incentives** to allow teachers to continue teaching. **Strengthening teachers' capacities** and **providing internet access** are also gaps that need to be addressed, as many children have no access to smartphones or internet services. The establishment and expansion of **new learning centres** to respond to consequences of the conflict and the current COVID-19 situation as well as **winterisation of learning spaces** through providing fuel for heaters are also large

gaps as schools are preparing to reopen again during the winter season. An initial US\$3.1 million was identified for the highest priority winterisation needs, out of an overall total of US\$5.8 million needed by the Education Cluster for winterisation.

 **Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL):** A gap remains of some 237,000 people in need of urgent food assistance in northwest Syria. Of 43 sub-districts assessed, over half had food assistance coverage below 25 percent. **Challenges have also been reported in the marketing of vegetables**, a solution for which may be to enhance food processing that relies on vegetable production. There is also a **need to support livelihood and income-generating activities**, and to **enhance complementarity between food assistance and livelihood activities**. Farmers suffer from the **lack of agricultural inputs** and/or high costs of these inputs, especially the lack of high-quality seeds, including Syrian wheat varieties that used to provide high yields.

 **Health:** Health partners are experiencing **difficulty in mitigating the spread of COVID-19**, especially in crowded places such as IDP camps, while also trying to maintain the continuity of essential public health services. **Referral of positive cases to CCTCs and hospitals remains low** when compared to the number of total positive cases detected (around 10 percent), thus risking wider spread in communities. Challenges remain in convincing local communities to adhere to basic preventive measures such as wearing masks, maintaining distance and avoiding crowds. Health partners are engaged in countering this and community stigma around COVID-19 through awareness raising and community engagement. **Inadequate triage and IPC measures are a challenge**; 35 percent of assessed health facilities reportedly have inadequate measures in place. More effort is needed among health and non-health partners to ensure all necessary precautions are taken by staff and communities and to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 being transmitted. Beyond the pandemic, the **security situation** remains a key challenge for Health partners as organisations and their staff continue to be affected by hostilities, and insufficient human resources continues to be an obstacle.

 **Nutrition:** Proportions of people in need reached with services remain low, with 50 percent reached for treatment of moderate acute malnutrition, 66 percent with micronutrient supplementation, and 67 percent for prevention of acute and chronic malnutrition. **On-the-job trainings and supportive supervision for frontline staff** remains a challenge due to COVID-19 related restrictions. The **increasing number of hotspot locations with high prevalence of acute malnutrition** would necessitate a rapid scale up of the nutrition response.

 **Protection:** Hostilities during the reporting period have resulted in **civilian injuries and deaths**, including of children and protection/humanitarian workers, as well as interrupted delivery of protection services. **Eight partners reported suspension of activities in this period** – on average 200 individuals a day were not reached with protection activities. Most partners have resumed operations in the area albeit with reduced capacity. Protection partners also continue to struggle to access to populations in some IDP sites. As of 31 October, the Protection Cluster in northwest Syria is 53 percent funded with a **remaining gap of US\$42.5 million** against the original northwest Syria activities set out in the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). Progress towards implementation targets is in line with this gap; essential interventions have been prioritised, including according to COVID-19 cluster guidance, while other activities have been deprioritised. **Gaps in capacity exist in the establishment of Women and Girls Safe Spaces, Child Friendly Spaces, and Protection Desks** in larger IDP sites or site-clusters, and are foreseen to grow in 2021. Gaps also exist in the network of Protection Cluster Emergency Focal Points and in case management capacity and emergency funds. Social stigma and fear of loss of livelihoods related to COVID-19, an ensuing reluctance to seek health support, and dissolving of community support mechanisms pose a significant risk to public health. Continued **structured engagement with communities to seek feedback is required to inform the COVID-19 response across sectors**.

 **Shelter and Non-Food Items (SNFI):** The SNFI Cluster aims to contribute to the most urgent lifesaving winterisation interventions through the provision of timely winterisation supplies as well as cash-based programming where possible. However, **existing needs exceed available funding**. There are still over 250 communities with displaced people living in emergency shelters who are not yet targeted for assistance. In terms of funding, an **additional US\$10 million is needed** to reach approximately 262,000 individuals who are targeted without secure funding, based on winterisation planning with SNFI Cluster members. Overall, the actual need for winterisation assistance in northwest Syria is much higher. Following a prioritisation exercise, it was clarified that a **further US\$30 million** is required to fill the remaining winterisation gap in IDP sites and camps as well as host communities with the greatest need, for a **total gap of some US\$40 million**. The **need for infrastructure support** is also still significant, especially for sites established by IDPs themselves. Improving

infrastructure in camps and IDP sites is essential to avoid incidents such as flooding, which happens regularly and is particularly prevalent during winter.

 **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH): Continuity of service** remains a problem for the WASH Cluster **due to low levels of funding**. This leaves a significant gap in the WASH response, particularly for the majority of affected populations who require continuous lifesaving services on a daily basis. The current gap analysis for September, across 27 sub-districts, shows that **over 1.3 million people need some form of WASH support**. This includes 53 percent requiring water provision through networks and water stations; 12.6 percent who require water trucking services; 35 percent who need solid waste disposal; 14 percent who require sanitation services; and 5 percent who need hygiene kits. Most of these gaps are in Dana sub-district (31 percent) followed by Idleb at 21 percent, Maaret Tamsrin at 12 percent and Atareb at 9 percent. The gap analysis is reported by partners, but not all partners report gaps, so the Cluster expects actual gaps to be higher than reported. Recent assessments have shown that in camps, 78 percent of displaced people did not have **access to sufficient water** during the past month, compared with just 6 percent in communities and neighbourhoods, reflecting the greater reliability of water services through networks compared to water trucking. In terms of handwashing, which is a key COVID-19 mitigation measure, 22 percent of camps have no soap, 18 percent have no hand washing facility and 2.5 percent having no soap and water. Without longer-term, sustainable funding, cluster partners are not able to deliver reliable services to affected populations to maintain basic health and dignity standards.

In September, WASH Cluster field facilitators complemented recent assessments by examining the **quality and accountability of WASH responses across 83 IDP sites** in Badama, Darkosh, and Maaret Tamsrin sub-districts. They noted that 34 percent of assessed sites reported no chlorination of water; on average 63 people share one latrine; latrines are not disaggregated by sex in 10 percent of sites; 80 percent of assessed sites did not receive hygiene kits in the past 3 months; 40 percent of assessed sites have no access to WASH feedback and complaints mechanisms; 13 percent of assessed sites are not aware of which NGO is providing WASH services; 26 percent of assessed sites have no NGO focal point; and 21 percent of those assessed reported not being consulted during the design and delivery of WASH services. The WASH Cluster is working to improve the response quality and accountability to the affected population, though **high turnover of organisations working in camps due to short-term funding** creates additional challenges for partners to engage fully with communities. The WASH Cluster has also identified a **US\$5.7 million gap for priority winterisation activities**. These include storm water and culvert construction as well as sewage line rehabilitation and unblocking in Maaret Tamsrin sub-district, increased desludging of septic tanks in 803 IDP sites and providing solar heating systems for 17,550 IDP families using communal showers.

 **Logistics:** Winter conditions are a challenge with regards to physical access. To mitigate against this, the Logistics Cluster has begun to map physical access information against priority locations identified with other clusters, which requires **collecting a high volume of precise information** in a relatively short amount of time. A further challenge is the **provision of comprehensive training** to partners on the ground on newly developed data collection tools due to the short timeframe available.

**For further information, please contact:**

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