

2.7 M

displaced people living in northwest Syria

1.6 M

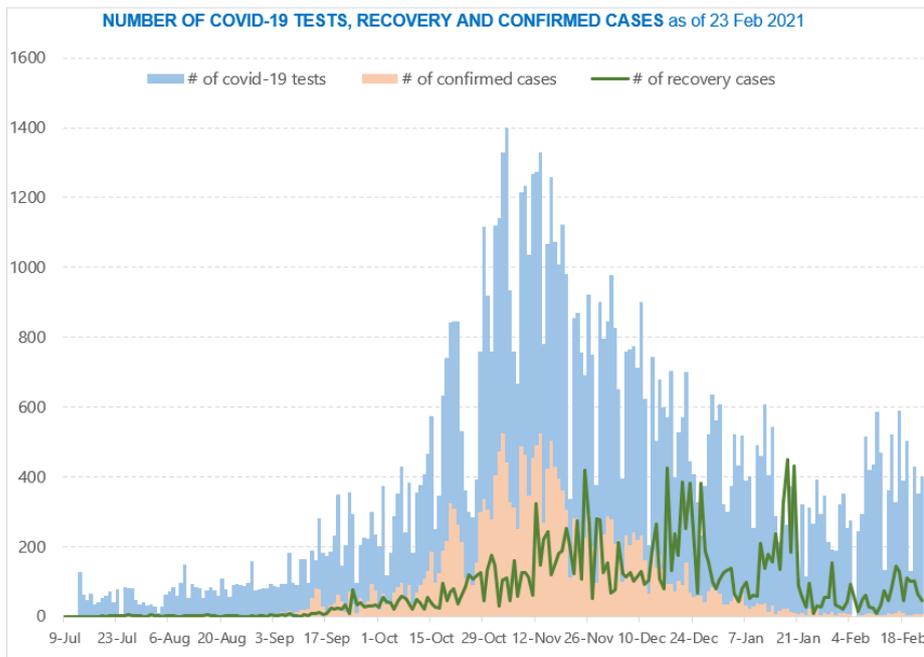
displaced people living in IDP sites

21,164

confirmed COVID-19 cases

18,345

recoveries from COVID-19



*2,396 COVID-19 tests had been conducted prior to daily record keeping

US DOLLAR VERSUS SYRIAN POUND TREND (2021)



As of 25 February 2021

HIGHLIGHTS

- A declining trend in new COVID-19 cases has been seen in northwest Syria during the reporting period while preparations for a vaccination campaign are ongoing.
- The devaluation of the Syrian Pound continues to create severe economic instability, with new historical lows of 3,510 SYP/USD on 24 February.
- A funding shortfall in water and sanitation services continues with the number of people in need of these services increasing to over 3 million people in the last four months. Further gaps are expected to compound with the existing gaps in the upcoming months.
- Funding gaps in protection services also jeopardize critical protection activities, such as the provision of dignity kits and gender-based violence programming.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Ongoing hostilities: Hostilities continued to impact communities across northwest Syria during the reporting period, especially in areas near the M4 and M5 highways in Idlib governorate where some 400,000 people live. Daily shelling, intermittent airstrikes, in-fighting between non-state armed groups (NSAGs) and the prevalence of explosive hazards in residential areas and public spaces continue to be a particular risk to civilians. From 20 January to 23 February, the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) verified that at least ten incidents of ground-based strikes in northwest Syria resulted in the death of at least ten civilians (including two women and four children) and the injury of at least 47 others (including seven women and 17 children). Seven incidents of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and two incidents of explosive remnants of war (ERW) in northwest Syria also resulted in civilian casualties, with at least 18 civilians killed (including one woman and five children) and 55 civilians injured (including five women and 17 children). On 16 February, a humanitarian worker was killed, and two others injured in Al Bab city as a result of an IED that had been attached to their vehicle. Many more IEDs, landmines and UXOs were also reported within communities and public spaces and later neutralised.

COVID-19: The number of new confirmed COVID-19 cases in northwest Syria have declined significantly during the reporting period, with a more than 80 per cent decrease noted in new cases compared to its peak in the month of November. 93,713 tests have been conducted to date, with 21,164 cases confirmed as of 26 February – 11,552 cases in the Idlib area and 9,612 in northern Aleppo governorate. The test positivity rate during the reporting period also decreased to 6.9 percent compared with 23 percent in December. A total of 408 COVID-19 associated deaths have been reported to date with an overall fatality rate of 1.93 percent in northwest Syria. The percentage of current cases among medical healthcare workers are 7.4 percent, encompassing nurses, doctors and midwives, while a further 5.4 percent are auxiliary workers in the health sector. Some 10.5 percent of all COVID-19 cases are in IDP camps.

Since the last situation report, eight COVID-19 Community-based Treatment Centres (CCTC) remain deactivated, which are critical for triage and case detection as they are the first contact points in the community. Further imminent funding gaps risk disrupting vital response services, in particular the referral system for patient transportation, manning points of entry with Infection Prevention Control and screening measures, and essential health services such as hospitals and primary health centres across the northwest in the coming months. 24 active CCTCs (with 1,088 beds) remain in northwest Syria, while 12 hospitals that treat COVID-19 (with 234 intensive care unit (ICU) beds and 926 regular beds) remain.

Planning for a COVID-19 vaccination campaign continues, with the initial request to secure vaccines for some 20 percent of the population through the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility (COVAX) facility having been accepted in February. This equates to some 855,000 people, and will prioritise around 130,000 health and social workers, 320,000 people over 60, and 400,000 people between the ages of 20 and 59 with underlying health conditions. Talks are ongoing to secure further vaccines and a vaccine roll-out plan is being planned including logistics and cold chain delivery, as well as a social mobilization and engagement strategy.

SYP devaluation: The value of the Syrian Pound (SYP) against the US Dollar continued to weaken steadily in the last few months. The issuance of a new 5,000 SYP banknote led to exchange rates reaching a new historical low in northwest Syria at around 3,510 SYP/USD on 24 February. At the time of reporting, the SYP was over 235 percent weaker than at the same date last year and has devalued some 20 percent against the USD in the last month. The most recent wave of devaluation is a continuation of the economic turbulence that has been affecting the Syrian people across the country, particularly since late 2019.

Flooding and winterisation: In the month of January, heavy rainfall and widespread flooding further increased the needs of communities in northwest Syria. According to the CCCM Cluster, from 14 to 31 January, approximately 140,700 IDPs were affected by the flooding, with one death and three injuries reported, as well as some 25,600 tents destroyed or damaged. Many people also had food and household items damaged or destroyed during the floods. This affected at least 403 IDP sites, and access issues were reported due to the flooding. The flooding increased the need for tent replacements, food, non-food-items, plastic sheets, multi-purpose cash assistance, ground levelling, winterisation and gravelling support, and the provision or repair of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services.

Without adequate winterisation and due to the general economic deterioration in northwest Syria, people in need have continued to resort to negative coping mechanisms, such as the reliance on burning unsafe materials for heat. The CCCM Cluster reported that there had been 34 fire incidents in IDP sites from 22 January to 23 February, mainly due to malfunctioning or misused heating or cooking stoves, which destroyed 55 tents and resulted in 18 injuries.

Population movements: More than 2.7 million people remain displaced in northwest Syria. According to the CCCM Cluster, there were more than 22,940 displacements in January, with departures principally occurring from Dana, Ariha, Ehsem, Afrin and A'zaz. The main locations where displaced people had arrived to include Bulbul, Dana and A'zaz sub-districts. Some people may have been exposed to multiple displacements. According to the CCCM Cluster, more than 4,900 IDP returnees returned to their homes or to previous places of displacement during the same period, mainly arriving to the Ehsem, Ariha and Mhambal sub-districts.

FUNDING

The Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF) started the year with US\$16.8 million and to date the support of three donors has brought the total available amount to US\$45 million. Based on this, the Fund's Advisory Board has endorsed the preparation and launch of a first standard allocation in March, noting that due to the increased needs in northwest Syria, the allocation strategy will require a strong prioritization process to identify the areas where the Fund has the best comparative advantage and can maximize impact. A set of allocation guiding principles have also been endorsed by the Advisory Board which will guide the allocation process for 2021, with the funding target for the year set at \$120 million. The review of the SCHF operational manual is finalized and will be circulated to partners. Information sessions will be organized to present the changes made.

The needs in northwest Syria remain unabated yet the level of contributions may drop in comparison to 2020. Additional funding is urgently needed. As of 25 February, the 2020 Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) was 56.1 percent funded out of a \$3.82 billion total requirement. Data is not yet available for 2021.

Resource mobilization efforts have also been ongoing since the beginning of the year, with a "Senior Official's Meeting" held in February between many donors and the humanitarian community to highlight the situation in Syria and the funding needed. Another fundraising conference is planned in Brussels in the coming weeks. Donors are encouraged to pledge and disburse their regular contributions as early as possible, especially since funding challenges may exist in 2021 due to the global economic challenges presented by COVID-19, while at the same time a provisional estimate for the 2021 HRP has increased from 2020 to an estimated US\$4.2 billion.

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

KEY PRIORITIES & RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

 **Camp Coordination and Camp Management:** From 22 January until 23 February 2021, the CCCM Cluster reported that fire incidents affected 34 IDP sites and led to 18 injuries, as well as the destruction of 55 shelters. From 14 to 31 January, approximately 140,700 IDPs were affected by the flooding, with one death and three injuries reported, as well as some 25,600 tents destroyed or damaged. As part of ongoing efforts to respond to the flood incidents, the CCCM Cluster is engaging in the multi-sectoral Technical Working Group on floods, which aims to ensure a well-coordinated and harmonious response across sectors.

22,940

New displacements in January

Due to the context of largely self-settled sites and the subsequent lack of camp management systems, monitoring and information collection as part of the coordination response are essential aspects of the CCCM Cluster's priorities. The Cluster closely monitors **1,374 active IDP sites hosting 1.6 million IDPs**. Of these, 80 percent are women and children and some 22,000 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 the CCCM Cluster to analyse trends and quickly identify IDPs in need of assistance. The Cluster tracked **22,940 recent displacements** in January, which is the lowest number of displacements reported in the past year, with departures principally occurring from Dana, Ariha and Ehsem. The main locations where displaced people arrived to included Bulbul, Dana and A'zaz sub-districts. Some people may have been exposed to multiple displacements and reasons for moving vary. The main shelter types for new arrivals in January were reported as being solid/finished houses (66%), unfinished/damaged houses (14%) and self-settled camps (14%).

The coordination and dissemination of operational information on IDP sites are key priorities for the CCCM Cluster to analyse trends and quickly identify IDPs in need of assistance. The Cluster continues to monitor and report on flooding at IDP sites, as well as other incidents affecting sites, in a timely manner with tools such as the CCCM Live Flood Incident Tracker for partners to quickly report and access information on flood incidents.

 **Early Recovery and Livelihoods (ERL):** To reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 and the ongoing economic crisis on the affected population and on markets, ERL Cluster partners are prioritising **increasing access to livelihoods opportunities with a focus on cash-for-work schemes (CfW) / multi-purpose cash**, including CfW linked to rehabilitation works improving access to services (markets, main roads, access ways to camps), CfW linked to local manufacturing of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as fabric masks to prevent and mitigate COVID-19 diffusion, support to urban/rural new businesses and existing entrepreneurial activities for the local manufacturing of PPEs, restoration/rehabilitation of access ways and roads critical for the transportation of humanitarian supplies across northwest Syria, and roads and drainage emergency repair works near camps to prevent natural calamities such as floods. In January, **1,695 people were employed through the creation of short-term work opportunities** in the response to COVID-19 (such as CfW for mask manufacturing, soap production, and COVID-19 awareness raising campaigns), rubble removal and solid waste collection. These activities were mainly concentrated in the Idleb, Dana and Armanaz subdistricts of the Idleb governorate and the Azaz subdistrict of the Aleppo governorate. **Entrepreneurial activities also supported 161 entrepreneurs** to start a business or service with micro-loans in the Armanaz and Dana subdistricts of the Idleb governorate and the Al Bab sub-district of the Aleppo governorate. 213 individuals were employed through CfW activities in mask production and distribution and 1,008 individuals were employed through other COVID-19 related CfW activities such as COVID-19 awareness raising campaigns, solid waste removal and soap production. **Approximately 3,000,000 masks were produced and distributed through CFW schemes from October to January.** As of 22 January, ERL partners reported that 2,250,000 masks were still under production and 2,500,000 out of 3,500,000 masks planned for production had not yet been funded. In January, one ERL partner reported that the reparation work of roads, including the paving work and furnishing of the ground with stone, had been completed in two camps in the Dana subdistrict of Idleb.

1,695*people employed through CFW activities in January*

 **Education: Provision of continued learning in a safe environment** in northwest Syria remains the key priority for the education sector, especially due to the impacts of the security situations and COVID-19. Where most schools are operating either fully or partially, partners are continuously **prioritising COVID-19 mitigation measures and ensuring schools are accessible following the recent flooding.** These activities include the provision of additional learning spaces, sterilisation and awareness raising, as well as rehabilitation efforts such as the draining of water out of learning spaces, ground levelling and gravelling of roads to enable children to access education facilities. **During the reporting period, 29,638 children benefited from the sterilization of schools and temporary learning spaces.** Despite the low learning outcomes due to the lack of capacities and available tools, distance learning is still taking place in most schools. This is due to there not being enough space to accommodate all the children to fully shift to physical learning only. Provision of **support to education personnel and teacher incentives, internet provision and training** for teaching and learning continue to be a top priority as this trend continues. Since the last situation report, **unpaid teachers went on a strike in northern Aleppo governorate** to demand payment of their salaries, with **teaching and learning suspended for a couple of weeks in at least in 32 schools.** The Education Cluster is preparing an advocacy statement in order to further raise this issue. **Winterisation of learning spaces**, including the provision of fuel for heating, insulation of windows and cementing of floors, has also been added as a key priority during the winter as at least 65 percent of schools in northwest Syria are not supported with heaters and heating. **Child safeguarding training was also provided to cluster partners** in the beginning of February.

29,638*children benefited from the sterilization of schools and temporary learning spaces*

 **Food Security and Livelihoods:** Delivery of food assistance, bread distribution, and the restocking of warehouses in northwest Syria continued over the reporting period. **Livelihoods programmes** were prioritised to scale up support to local communities on agricultural production (wheat planting season had begun in November) along with technical assistance on small-scale food production and assets, while boosting food processing as part of the target population's income generating activities. **The main priorities for livestock in the first half of 2021 are to provide long-term support for local animal feed production and fodder barley production to ease animal feed shortages and to provide veterinary vaccinations against Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD), Sheep & Goat Pox (also called Sheep Pox or just Pox by vets in northwest Syria) and against Bovine Ephemeral Fever (BEF).** Since 15 January, FSL Cluster partners launched two livestock vaccination campaigns in northwest Syria. The Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) vaccination campaign provided booster vaccinations for 950,000 sheep and goats, benefiting some 41,000 households. The PPR vaccination campaign began 25 January and is expected to be completed by mid-March. The Newcastle Disease (ND) vaccination campaign provided vaccines for 2.2 million chickens benefitting some 75,000 households. The ND vaccination campaign began 31 January and is expected to be completed by the end of March.

346,521*new IDPs received emergency food assistance*

From 23 January to 23 February, FSL Cluster partners provided **food assistance to 346,521 newly displaced people** and returnees in northwest Syria, including 19,847 emergency food baskets, 215,801 ready-to-eat (RTE) rations, 17,222 cooked meals and US\$2,155,391 in multi-purpose cash grants (MPCG). Additionally, 2.2 million beneficiaries received bread bundles and more than 1.3 million beneficiaries received 30 percent of their bread needs through the food baskets provided by FSL Cluster partners in December 2020. In February, March, and April 2 million, 0.7 million and 0.7 million people are targeted for bread distribution respectively. The Cluster lead agency has 153,207 RTEs available with its partners and warehouses in northwest Syria, which is enough to provide food assistance to 766,035 IDPs. On **winterisation support**, the Cluster lead agency and its partners continued to provide a double ration of RTEs in February to some 10,000 households assessed as being most vulnerable. The main priority on food assistance is to provide regular food assistance to 1.3 million people in northwest Syria.



Health: The number of new COVID-19 cases continues to decline in northwest Syria, with 225 new cases reported from 25 January to 25 February. Overall, 21,164 confirmed positive cases had been identified as of 25 January, with 18,889 (89.4 %) cases developing mild symptoms, 1,224 developing moderate/severe symptoms, and 1,016 cases showing as asymptomatic. As of 26 February, the total number of COVID-19 associated deaths were 408, with a case fatality rate of 1.93 %. The mean age of COVID-19 cases was 37.4 years, with 53 cases reported to be under the age of five and 2,172 (10.3%) cases reported to be over the age of 60. Since the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed on 9 July, by 25 February some 94,000 samples had been tested via RT-PCR, with a total test positivity rate of 24.0%. As of 25 January, the number of health care workers (HCWs) and health facilities staff (physicians, dentists, nurses, midwives and various medical technicians) who contracted COVID-19 disease reached 1,554 (7.4 percent) and another 1,136 (5.4 percent) were other staff working in healthcare facilities or community health workers.

21,164
Confirmed COVID-19 cases

The COVID-19 response continues to be a Health Cluster priority, with the maintenance of non-COVID-19 life-saving and sustaining services expected to be prioritized during the next phase as the number of new cases continues to decline. The Health Cluster and the COVID-19 Taskforce prioritization exercise to identify the critical COVID-19 health facilities is ongoing, with the aim to manage available resources and cope with the recent epidemiological indicators related to COVID-19. As a result of this prioritization exercise, some of the COVID-19 facilities are expected to either be discontinued or remain functional at minimum capacity in order to be scaled up again in the case of a second wave of COVID-19 cases.

During the reporting period, eight trucks containing medical supplies were shipped for distribution and repositioning through the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing. 343,000 treatment courses of essential medicines for primary care and specialized emergency kits for trauma, surgical, and ICU care were distributed from these supplies and from existing supplies that had been previously been prepositioned. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) materials were also distributed to 134 health facilities and included 10,290 Gowns, 11,130 protective disposable suits, 12,766 face shields, 2,838 goggle protectives, 995,000 examination gloves, 499,900 surgical masks, 48,690 N95 masks and 134 IPC kits.

Beyond COVID-19, the 93 EPI centres in northwest Syria are fully functional with a total of 134 teams. In January, 2,562 sessions were conducted via mobile teams and fixed sites fulfilling 98 percent of the planned sessions.

The Thalleseima Working Group was reactivated in February with an assessment to understand the existing capacity and gaps. The eLearning of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD)/ Package of Essential Noncommunicable (PEN) continued in February, with the support of 14 Health Cluster partners and 70 doctors from 64 PHCs. 400 Community Health Workers (CHW) were being provided with capacity building on NCD Prevention and CVD Screening for persons ages 40 and over. The two-day refresher training began on 08 February and is on track to be completed around the end of February. As of 17 February, 24,582 people had been screened for NCD (ages 40 and above) of whom 59 percent were IDPs (14,538). A total of 2,471 individuals were referred to health facilities for comprehensive NCD.



Nutrition: According to data from monthly nutrition surveillance and admission into programmes for treatment of acute malnutrition, **the nutrition situation continues to deteriorate across northwest Syria with a 55 percent increase in cases of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in January 2021 compared to January 2020.** Similarly, the proxy prevalence of chronic malnutrition (stunting) in January 2021

263,000
women and children reached
With lifesaving nutrition

increased by 5 percent compared to the same period in the year prior, affecting one-third of children aged 6-59 months. Trend analysis indicates that women and girls are disproportionately affected by malnutrition, with malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women (PLW) reported to be five times higher than it is among children aged 6-59 months. Similarly, the odds of being wasted are consistently higher in girls compared to boys which is possibly attributed to preferential feeding practices and gender dynamics. Since the start of 2021, some 263,000 children aged 6-59 months and PLW have been reached by Nutrition Cluster partners with lifesaving nutrition services (including flood response and COVID-19 related activities).

 **Protection:** During the reporting period, Protection Cluster partners continued delivering **activities under the emergency response model**, including the provision of protection services to families affected by the recent flooding. **In total, 1,241 IDPs and affected host community members received 1,678 protection interventions within seven communities in Idlib.** Services were mainly related to Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Psychosocial Support (PSS), in addition to the dissemination of basic messaging on Gender Based Violence (GBV) prevention and awareness raising activities on Child Protection (CP) such as the prevention of family separation. Protection Cluster partners engage **flood affected communities via outreach modalities to provide psychosocial first aid and identify households and individuals in situations of vulnerability and requiring specific interventions and support.** The Cluster partners provided referrals to appropriate service and assistance providers, as well as the provision of direct individual cash or material support for protection. The Protection Cluster also have mechanisms, resources and standards for the **voluntary relocation process** of impacted families who wish to move to another location. The **Inclusion Technical Working Group (ITWG)** will host a webinar in March where the outcome and recommendations of the *Report on Self-Reported Barriers to Activities of Daily Living of Persons with Disabilities Living in IDP sites in Northwest Syria* will be discussed and persons with disabilities will speak to the group on their experiences and priorities. Moreover, the ITWG, as member of the Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)/ Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) / Inclusion group, is **engaged in developing recommendations to HLG on implementation of key mechanisms** for 2021. In cooperation with the Cash Working Group, the GBV Sub Cluster (GBV SC) conducted a **GBV risk analysis exercise for cash and voucher assistance (CVA) programming** in northwest Syria. The analysis aims to inform the work of the UN Joint Cash Assessment by ensuring that any scale up of CVA programming does not cause or increase the likelihood of GBV for women and girls and to identify needed mitigation measures. The **GBV SC conducted consultations with partners and revised the GBV SC Awareness Raising Toolkit** based on lessons learned from the two years of implementation thus far. In collaboration with partners, the Protection Cluster facilitated **the first of a series of good practices workshops themed around Awareness Raising with the participation of ten agencies and twenty participants.** The aim of the workshop is to develop useful resources to agencies in northwest Syria based on good practices, common understandings and the harmonized implementations of protection activities. Moreover, under ongoing protection monitoring activities, **thirteen Protection Monitoring Task Force (PMTF) partners conducted 807 (346 females and 461 males) Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) in Idlib and Aleppo governorates covering 7 districts, 18 sub-districts, and 125 communities on general protection trends.**

1,241

flood affected IDPs received protection interventions

 **Shelter and Non-Food Items:** The Shelter/NFI (SNFI) Cluster partners continue to actively respond to the needs of the newly displaced population as well as protracted IDPs in northwest Syria. In January, some **389,000 individuals received NFI assistance** in the form of NFI kits, kitchen sets, mattresses, jerry cans, carpets, solar lamps, tarpaulins and blankets, or through multi-purpose cash transfers. **The shelter needs of more than 94,000 people were addressed** in the same month. Of this support, 49 percent was related to the provision of emergency shelter, 40 percent to the rehabilitation of infrastructure in IDP sites and 11 percent to shelter rehabilitation and transitional shelters.

389,000

people received NFI assistance in January

The SNFI Cluster aims to contribute to the most urgent life-saving winterisation interventions, through the **provision of timely winterisation supplies as well as cash-based programming** where possible. The Cluster is active in the coordination of the winterisation response to ensure that plans are implemented in an efficient and timely manner to target close to 1.5 million people in northwest Syria. From October to January, SNFI Cluster partners reached over 1.2 million individuals with winterisation assistance. The main activities included fuel distribution, and cash and voucher assistance for winter NFIs. As of 12 February, the SNFI Cluster partners had provided 1,928 tents reaching some 9,640 individuals as part of the flood response and had also provided 4,262 NFI kits reaching 21,310 individuals.

The [Shelter Conditions in Northwest Syria Report](#) was published in collaboration with the SNFI Cluster partners, investigating IDP shelter conditions across northwest Syria. The report focused on shelter types, settlement types, shelter

damages, problems or issues reported in shelters, hazards, evictions, occupancy status and property status in the place of origin. The SNFI Cluster also published a report on [Shelter Types in Northwest Syria](#), available in both English and Arabic, which covers the main shelter categories and classifies damages with a view to better guide shelter assessments or surveys in a systematic and harmonious way.

In February, the SNFI, CCCM, WASH, ERL and the Logistics clusters initiated the creation of a Joint Technical Working Group (TWiG) on Floods Planning and Response, which will be led by a site planner deployed by the Cluster lead agency and consist of technical focal points from partner organizations of all five clusters. The main aim of the TWiG is to compile and share best practices, to produce guidelines on infrastructure upgrades and implementation in camps and/or informal settlements within the context of northwest Syria, in order to protect IDPs, prevent item losses and to improve access to other cluster services.

 **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene:** In January, over **2.1 million people were reached with water trucking**, while **960,000 people were reached with desludging services** and **2.3 million people were reached with solid waste management**. Some 70 percent of displaced people in camps in northwest Syria continue to rely on WASH partners to provide daily water trucking, which is costly and short-term. The WASH Cluster continues to advocate for funding to support connecting camps to existing piped water systems, which would dramatically improve the quantity and quality of lifesaving water services while substantially reducing costs. The WASH Cluster is in the final stage of proposing new wastewater treatment methods to be implemented in northwest Syria, for which a specific meeting was held, and methodologies were discussed with cluster partners. The final recommendations are expected to be published in the near future.

2.1M
people reached
with water trucking

Access to safe water through piped systems remains a challenge, with only 130 out of 200 (65 percent) systems in Idleb and 138 out of 244 (56 percent) systems in Aleppo currently functioning. Meanwhile, 15 percent of the stations in Aleppo and 16 percent of the stations in Idleb are running without being chlorinated. Without electricity, partners continue to operate these water stations through diesel generators, with the **cost of fuel accounting for an estimated 30 per cent of the total WASH cluster expenditure**. Further support is needed for the repair and rehabilitation of water stations and networks in order to connect these stations to electricity grids and improve service delivery while at the same time reducing the cost. The WASH Cluster is advocating for the inclusion of connections to electrical grids and managing electricity bills to ensure that communities have improved access to water via networks, as water stations will be operating at maximum capacity.

The Ar-Ra'ee, Jarabulus, Sarmin, Mhambal, and Badama sub-districts continue to be the most significant hotspots for waterborne diseases in northwest Syria, while the 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 six to eight months and therefore a decrease in cases is expected around May to August 2020. As the spring season approaches, further efforts are needed to ensure that Indoor Residual Spraying activities are implemented for more control over the number of leishmaniasis cases. Failing to secure funds will lead to a dramatic increase in the cases especially with the high density of people in northwest Syria.

 **Logistics:** The Logistics Cluster continues to prioritise **the maintenance of unimpeded physical access to northwest Syria** through reliable transshipment services and the provision of up-to-date information on logistics capacity and physical access. An update to the road conditions map, with inputs from partners, can be found [here](#).

1,472
trucks of UN assistance
transshipped from
1 January to 15 February

In January, **1,034 trucks of UN assistance, carrying 21,640 metric tonnes** of FSL, Shelter, WASH and Health sector items were transhipped via Bab Al-Hawa, while another **438 trucks carrying 9,848 metric tonnes** of FSL, Shelter, WASH and Health sector items were transhipped between 1 and 15 February. The full overview of Logistics Cluster transshipment achievements in 2020 can be found [here](#).

The Logistics Cluster is continuing to work with its partners to **identify the cold-chain warehousing and transportation capacity available in northwest Syria for the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign**. A survey has been conducted and monitoring of the capacities continues.

Close collaboration between the Logistics and ERL Clusters and their partners resulted in **the first Road Rehabilitation Works Map which shows completed, ongoing and planned road works in northwest Syria**. The link to the map can be found [here](#).

OPERATIONAL GAPS & CHALLENGES

 **Camp Coordination and Camp Management:** Although IDP sites are usually a last resort option, there are currently 1,374 IDP sites listed in the CCCM database, the majority of which are self-settled (1,243 sites). The CCCM Cluster continues to monitor these sites to identify gaps and facilitate the coordination of multi-sectoral services. **The needs of people in IDP sites continue to be exacerbated by issues such as lack of proper infrastructure, site planning or camp management systems** (especially in self-settled IDP sites). The top three urgent needs reported in January were tents, NFIs and gravelling. In terms of numbers of affected sites, the Maaret Tamsrin, Dana and A'zaz subdistricts were the locations most impacted by fires and floods in January.

The CCCM Cluster partners reported various challenges, such as some families refusing to be relocated to new sites in order to stay closer to work or income areas. Likewise, affected families often do not want to move to Reception Centres due to concerns about leaving behind tents and belongings or having already paid for their rent in advance. Limited tents and NFIs were also observed as being a source of tension, with delays in tent replacement noted as a further cause of tension between IDPs who temporarily resorted to staying with neighbours or relatives. A further major challenge was regarding the access to IDP sites, as the floods created additional access problems for partners, with damage to both the paths to and within IDP sites. Temporary solutions for rain drainage are also unlikely to be able to withstand further floods.

The CCCM Cluster continues to closely cooperate with other clusters, including the Shelter/NFI, WASH, Logistics and ERL Clusters, as well as OCHA, on the response to floods and fire. The Cluster continues to focus on monitoring, reporting, and coordinating the response to the incidents, as well as advocating and planning to resolve some of the underlying challenges related to these incidents.

 **Early Recovery:** The effects of the economic downturn and COVID-19 restrictions have further aggravated the already dire livelihood opportunities in northwest Syria. According to a January report by a UN partner, **livelihoods and basic services were reported to be the highest priority needs for every population group** (residents, IDPs, and returnees). 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 the creation of emergency short-term employment, cash assistance and support to businesses. Additionally, of approximately 70 kilometres of road requiring urgent restoration between Bab Al-Hawa and northern Aleppo governorate a gap of some 36 kilometres remains to be covered. Despite limited funding available, ERL Cluster partners have been working to restore/rehabilitate some 50 to 70 kilometres of road in order to facilitate access to markets and to/from camps to enhance access to livelihoods opportunities, mobility and flood prevention.

 **Education: Lack of funds continues to inhibit providing adequate education support.** Information provided by the Education Cluster partner indicates that at least 200 schools were affected due to the recent flooding and that these schools are in need of urgent support, particularly in the rehabilitation and replacement of damaged tents as well as the provision of psychosocial support. Due to increased cases of COVID-19 and schools not being able to operate fully, the **demand for distance and blended learning remains high**, with the survey conducted by the Education Cluster in November 2020 revealing that this was the highest need for schools. **The establishment and expansion of new learning centres and WASH facilities**, to respond to consequences of the conflict and the current COVID-19 situation, continued to be a gap that need to be addressed. In addition, **winterisation of learning spaces** through the provision of fuel for heaters and protective measures against possible flooding were also identified as large priority gaps for the winter season. The above-mentioned survey also confirmed gaps in winterisation, with 65 percent of students in northwest Syria affected by the lack or only partial support of heating for the classrooms. The biggest funding gap remains in the support to **teacher incentives**, which enable teachers to continue teaching especially through distance learning modalities. Strengthening teachers' capacities and providing access to internet and digital devices both to teachers and students are also critical gaps that need to be addressed.

 **Food Security and Livelihoods:** Based on the latest FSL Cluster Gap Analysis, from 11 to 18 February, some 28,000 out of 142,000 flood affected IDPs had been assisted by the FSL Cluster partners with a current gap of 114,000 IDPs in the following sub-districts: Maarat Tamasrin, Dana, Atareb, Afrin, Qourqeena, Suran, Al-Bab, Idleb, Armanaz, Rajue, and Aghtrin. On livelihoods, farmers are highly constrained by the **lack of agricultural inputs, increased prices, and limited access to high quality of the seeds** - especially the Syrian wheat varieties that usually provide a high yield. The critical

economic situation, the negative impacts of COVID-19 (especially for those households amongst host communities and IDPs with limited to no income) are the main drivers **compounding food insecurities** for most people in northwest Syria. On livestock, the **limited availability of pasture and high costs of animal feed** present a major challenge to all livestock owners. Given the scale of the problem, current funding levels do not permit significant upscaling of mitigation measures such as increased planting of fodder and on-farm animal feed production. On bread and bakeries, the transfer of wheat and flour from Idlib to Aleppo and the need for additional rehabilitation activities for bakeries and flour mills were reported as a major gap that needs to be addressed.



Health: After a year of active COVID-19 response and efforts made by Health Cluster partners, the greatest challenge for 2021 will be to sustain an appropriate response and manage the spread of the virus in northwest Syria. Funding is needed to meet the response plan set forth by the COVID-19 Task Force, with proper consideration for an exit plan, and crucial to ensure that essential health services are available and accessible by all people in northwest Syria. The security situation has proven many times how fragile it is, while winter conditions continue to place IDPs at risk of waterborne, skin and respiratory diseases.



Nutrition: The poor living conditions, unsanitary environments, increased morbidity from flooding and the burning of unsafe materials for heat or cooking are elevating the risks of further deteriorating the nutrition situation. The recent flooding also increased access challenges to the affected locations by the Rapid Response Teams (RRT), with an estimated **1,700 people in need inaccessible to partners** due to COVID-19 mobility restrictions and programming challenges. Due to the spread of COVID-19, several mothers have been refusing the use of Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) tapes to screen their children for acute malnutrition. Nutrition Cluster partners are also faced with funding constraints which limits the number of RRT available to deploy to inaccessible locations and scale-up the response.



Protection: The Protection Cluster continues to monitor for potential protection issues that have derived from the flooding in January. **Major protection concerns vulnerable individuals persist, particularly among displaced children, older people and persons with disabilities, with temporary family separations being reported.** Dignity kits are being distributed by different GBV Sub-Cluster partners as a means to provide a crucial entry point to provide other essential GBV services such as PSS, GBV and PSEA awareness raising, and referrals to specialized services. However, **a \$2.9 million funding gap for the provision of dignity kits in northwest Syria places the continuation of these services at risk.** IDP sites exclusive to widowed and divorced women continue to be the cause for significant protection concerns, as the GBV Sub-Cluster is aware of at least 46 such sites across northwest Syria with a population of approximately 13,000 women, girls and boys. Among this population, widowed and divorced women and girls are a high-risk group with their segregation further exacerbating the risk of harm. **GBV Sub-Cluster partners require at least \$1.3 million to provide lifesaving GBV programming** to these sites. Likewise, funding gaps are increasingly leading to the interruption or discontinuation of CP activities which would require continuity, predictability, and full cycles to be completed and effective. Due to the increase in the number of COVID-19 cases, schools continue to be closed in most of northwest Syria, leading to an increase in the number of child labour cases and reports of domestic violence against children. **Recent explosions, such as those in Afrin, Azaz and Al Bab, are of major concern given human casualties involved including children.** Civilians facing multiple displacements, social-economical setting disrupts, and systematic rights violations continue to report mental health related issues, with impacts on women and children more prevalent. As these issues are compounded with COVID-19 related restrictions and social stigma, the available mental health and resilience building resources remain inadequate to respond to all of the needs.



Shelter and Non-Food Items: Recurrent heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding since January has continued to affect IDP sites and camps in northwest Syria, with the impacts of the floods exacerbated by the pre-existing gaps in infrastructure. The SNFI Cluster continues to advocate for **improved infrastructure implementation in IDP sites and camps** and is focused on addressing the urgent needs by coordinating the flood response of its partners. Some of the main challenges included the partner's limited tent stock compared to the large number of sites affected. Further potential challenges and major concerns include Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) due diligence documentation, which could cause delays, as well as IDPs not accepting to be relocated to other safer areas.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: The WASH Cluster has been facing a **funding crisis** for the past four months, leading to unprecedented gaps in the continuity of services with further gaps expected to compound with existing gaps in the next two months. The WASH service gap at the time of reporting stands at **3 million people in need of WASH services** in 739 locations. Additionally, more than **1.4 million people are in need of water system rehabilitation/operational**

support, some 632,000 IDPs are in need of water trucking support, approximately 1 million people are in need of sewerage rehabilitation or construction, 681,000 latrines and showers need construction or maintenance, 1.2 million people are in need of solid waste management support, and 1.4 million people are in need of hygiene kits support. Furthermore, a gap in the provision of water via piped networks in Idlib governorate for approximately 200,000 people is expected to occur in February due to funds no longer being available to support 15 water stations.

In addition to the above gaps, recent WASH Cluster household level surveys have shown that **78 percent of people stated that they did not have access to sufficient water** during the previous month, while only **49 percent of people living in camps have access to both soap and water and handwashing facilities, 22 percent have no soap at all and 18 percent have no handwashing facilities**. The current lack of WASH services are already exacerbating the capability of humanitarian actors and affected populations as cases of water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea are currently higher than in previous years (17,386 cases compared to 13,118 in 2017) and are expected to increase significantly with the reductions in WASH services being experienced. Women and children are estimated to make up 76 percent of the population, while 25 percent are estimated to be persons with disabilities. These groups are particularly vulnerable to any reduction in WASH services and are likely to face increased protection risks as a result.

In January, assessments conducted by WASH Cluster field facilitators found that across 217 IDP sites the average water consumption stands at 27 litres per day (with 51 percent of the locations consuming below the Cluster recommended 30 litres per day); 80 percent were found to lack sufficient water storage capacity for at least one day; 20 percent of the locations had no chlorination; on average there was a ratio of 62 people per latrine (with this number reaching 138, 127 and 125 in some locations); 931 latrines require rehabilitation and an additional 3,866 latrine units need construction to reach a ratio of 25 people per latrine; 100 percent of the sites have ongoing desludging activities which resulted from the preparation and mitigation measures of the cluster to flooding; 44 percent lack access to complaint and feedback mechanism; 9 percent of the sites were not aware of which NGO was providing WASH services; and 94% of IDPs were not being consulted during the project design phase. The WASH cluster aims to improve the quality of its response and its accountability to the affected population, an endeavour that is complicated by the high turnover of NGOs working in camps due to short-term funding.

Logistics: A major challenge remains in identifying partner capacity building needs for 2021, including finding effective ways to provide logistics technical trainings remotely for cross-border partners due to COVID-19 restrictions, with e-learning solutions being developed to address these challenges.

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