

KEY FIGURES

2.8 M

internally displaced persons (IDPs) in north-west Syria

1.7 M

IDPs in displacement sites

74,750

confirmed COVID-19 cases (2 October 2021)

433

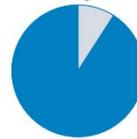
trucks of UN cross-border assistance transhipped in September

FUNDING

Syria Humanitarian Response

\$1.31 BILLION

31.1%



of estimated total financial requirements under the 2021 Syria HRP (as of 6 October)

HIGHLIGHTS

- COVID-19 cases sharply increased across north-west Syria, with more than 1,000 daily cases recorded and schools temporarily closed.
- Since June, 99 civilians were killed and 261 civilians injured in an escalation of hostilities (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights - OHCHR).
- The needs of people are much higher than can be adequately met by the humanitarian community, especially with winter approaching. The latest plans shows critical funding gaps on winterization, food and education.

OVERVIEW

Access

- In September, the UN continued its cross-border operations from Turkey through the Bab al-Hawa border crossing under the Security Council resolution 2585 (2021), delivering 433 trucks of humanitarian assistance to north-west Syria. NGO assistance continued at high levels.

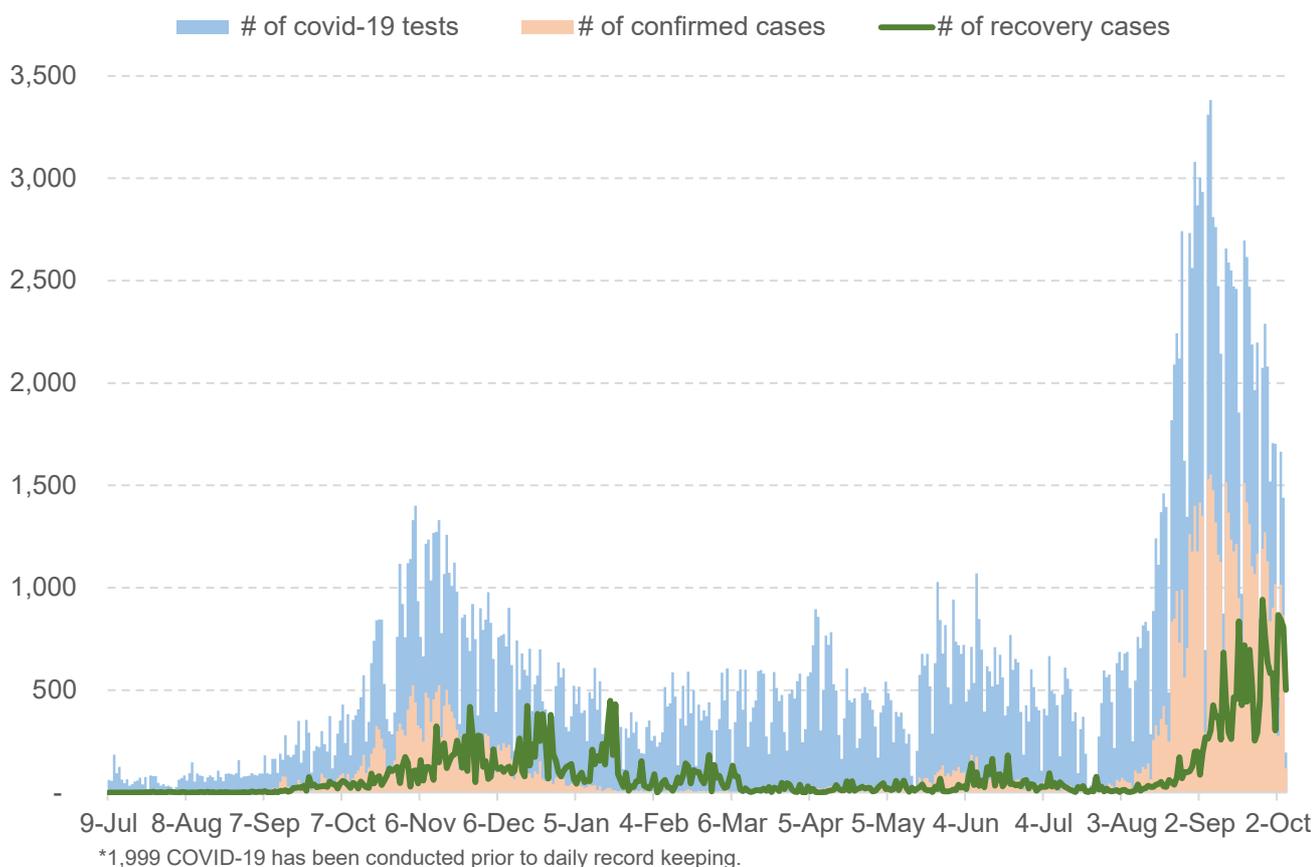
Protection

- In September, hostilities continued in north-west Syria. Airstrikes have increased along the frontlines in southern Idlib, especially in the Ehsem sub-district.
- In September, at least nine civilians (including three women and four children) were killed and 28 civilians (seven women and 10 children) were injured in airstrikes or shelling (OHCHR). 11 improvised explosive device (IED) and unexploded ordnance (UXO) incidents killed at least four civilians and injured at least 28 civilians (including two women and seven children).
- In north-west Syria, 97 per cent of people live in extreme poverty (they are part of a household where each individual lives below \$1.90 per person per day). Coupled with the low purchasing power of the Syrian Pound (SYP), poor families are struggling to meet their most basic needs.
- A monitoring study by the cluster for Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) shows 91 per cent of the residents live in sites without adequate lighting on main roads. Lack of lighting is a protection concern, especially for women and girls. The study shows that most displacement sites are overcrowded with poor living conditions, increasing the risk of COVID-19. Syria is projected to be one of the countries most impacted by the climate emergency, with prolonged droughts and flash floods. A third of displaced people in the north-west – 500,000 people – live in sites that flooded last year.

COVID-19

Data suggests that the pandemic is peaking in the north-west, with a 61 per cent positivity rate. Since mid-August, COVID-19 cases rose sharply. By 4 October, there were more than 76,632 confirmed cases (45,997 in Idlib Governorate and 30,635 in Aleppo Governorate). In September, 34,184 cases were recorded. In total, 1,311 COVID-19 associated deaths were reported. All districts in the north-west are high or very high risk areas. Epicenters for cases are Harim, Idlib, Azaz and Afrin districts. Current ICU occupancy rate is 93 per cent while the ventilator occupancy rate is 82 per cent.

NUMBER OF COVID-19 TESTS, RECOVERY AND CONFIRMED CASES as of 5 October 2021



There are currently 16 community-based treatment centres (CCTCs) and five more are prioritized for activation. There is not enough capacity within the functional oxygen stations to meet the needs. The daily gap for oxygen is 4,350 m³. Displacement sites are high risk. There is the need for temperature screening, raising awareness and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures, among others.

There is high infection rate and vaccination hesitancy among frontline health workers. Vaccine hesitancy is also prevalent among the population. Vaccination coverage, the percentage of people who received at least one dose, is around three per cent. Close to 500,000 doses has been delivered to north-west Syria, yet only around 160,000 jabs have been given as of 4 October.

Humanitarian organizations provided close to 100,000 PCR test kits to improve the testing capacity. Partners are looking at public education to address vaccination hesitancy through social mobilizers, increasing the accessibility of vaccination sites and working with relevant clusters to address safer social distancing in displacement sites.

On the funding side, the Syrian Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF), in its fourth reserve allocation, is providing over US\$1.8 million to expand the health response to the pandemic and provide urgent medical supplies to hospitals treating COVID-19. The funding prioritize procurement and delivery of urgent health supplies to help care for vulnerable communities affected by COVID-19.

Insufficient funding cuts overall health services, further strained by the increase in COVID-19 cases. Medical and logistical support has been halted to several hospitals and medical points serving a large number of people in northern Syria as a result of funding issues of NGOs. These include Al-Rahma Hospital in Darkosh, Save a Soul Hospital in Salqin, Peace (Al Salam) Hospital in Harim, Surgical Hospital in Atareb, Al-Firdaws Hospital in Daret Azza, IDA COVID-19 Hospital in Azaz.

Food Response

The 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) shows food insecurity has risen to 12.4 million people from 9.8 million in 2020. 3.6 million out of 4.4 million people in north-west Syria, including everyone in displacement sites, need food assistance and livelihood support.

The ongoing hostilities and displacement, changing weather patterns leading to low rainfall and water levels, and the worsening economy have resulted in low food production across north-west Syria. With extreme poverty, even among people who work, and increasingly low purchasing power, access to food has become increasingly difficult.

Food production is constrained by limited access to agricultural inputs, including seeds such as the highly productive Syrian wheat varieties. Bread production is not evenly distributed across the north-west, due to insufficient funds, access issues and whether or not recipients are in sub-districts where displacement sites are concentrated, and the means of bread distribution (subsidized, non-subsidized or free of charge). That leads to inadequate bread production levels in bakeries in some areas, such as Dana, Idleb, Salqin and Atareb sub-districts.

Humanitarian partners have been assisting the people in need through the delivery of food baskets, bread distribution, emergency food baskets, livestock asset restoration, animal treatment, provision of agricultural inputs, income generating activities and infrastructure rehabilitation.

A funding analysis for October – December 2021 shows there is 49 per cent pledged of the required \$211 million, leaving a gap of \$107 million. The Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster (FSL) identified three priorities: emergency food assistance, regular food baskets, and support to livelihoods. The FSL will have to reduce these activities, impacting 1.2 million people. 300,000 people will have reduced emergency food rations and 1.2 million people will be affected by reduced food distribution.

Winter

The humanitarian community is working on winter plans to respond to 2.2 million people in need in north-west Syria, but funding gaps will leave people without the assistance that they need.

Current plans estimate that \$158 million is required to meet the winter needs. Only 23 per cent of the required funds is available or in the pipeline. Given the enormous task for a proper winter response, many humanitarian partners do not have adequate capacity. The Shelter and Non-Food Item cluster (SNFI) funding gap is 81 per cent, the education funding gap is 80 per cent, and the early recovery funding gap is 92 per cent. Delay in disbursement of the funds might lead to late implementation of activities.

Access to dignified shelter is essential, especially during winter. Improving infrastructure to prevent flooding is also vital. Since the beginning of 2021, according to CCCM data, over 400 displacement sites were affected by floods. Flooding incidents are expected to increase in winter. The humanitarian community is providing maintenance of site infrastructures through its planned flood response.

The SNFI cluster published a Guidance Note on Winterization for the north-west Syria, advising on activities and modalities, timelines, vulnerability and eligibility criteria and necessary winterization items. This year activities will focus on the provision of fuel and stoves, distribution of Non Food Items (NFI), which include winter clothing, blankets and insulation materials as well as cash assistance to households. The current funding is enough to help 806,000 people out of 2.2 million in need (as of 4 October). Atma, Dana, Qah, Deir Hassan, Darhashan, Idleb and Sarmada have gaps according to current plans, with few partners planning activities. They will need more support for the communities to adequately benefit from winter aid.

Fires in displacement sites are frequent all year round and can only be expected to increase during cold winter months, with the heating equipment in shelter units exacerbating the risks. Consequently, fire prevention is another essential winterization activity to prevent loss of life, injuries, and material damage. CCCM is planning to strengthen the fire response in displacement sites, developing emergency plans, establishing and equipping fire units and distributing fire blankets.

As part of the winter response related to food, the Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) cluster supports agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilizers, and production, processing and marketing of the crops. Rehabilitation and maintenance of bakeries is important to bread production through the winter. FSL is planning food related income generating activities, including the bakery repairs and crop production.

The Early Recovery (ERL) cluster partners are focusing on functioning markets, through repair of shops, storehouses and other infrastructure, and emergency repairs of roads connecting markets to displacement sites and host communities, along with supporting local production of winter-related goods through grants, in-kind support, or cash-for-work.

Enhancing access to formal and non-formal education services requires preparation of the learning facilities to winter conditions, including minor rehabilitation work to the buildings and providing heaters and fuel for heating to the facilities. Humanitarian partners have rehabilitated 107 schools in camps and 211 schools out of camps in the past months, with the work to continue into October. On heating, available funding will be sufficient only for a limited number of schools and lack of heating will leave children learning in the cold.

It's essential to prepare for outbreaks of diseases, sometimes exacerbated by the cold climate. Procurement of medication for respiratory infections, distribution of generators and fuel to health facilities, capacity building for detection, management and diagnosis of respiratory diseases and tuberculosis and health education and social mobilization of communities for COVID-19 and influenza prevention are among the winter response activities.

Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF)

The SCHF funds critical needs and allows partners to boost response and preparedness in priority areas and strengthen coordination. So far in 2021, the SCHF received close to \$124 million in paid contributions from 13 donors and allocated \$100.2 million to 103 projects, across ten clusters, under one standard and three reserve allocations, targeting 2.2 million people.

The standard allocation, completed prior to the latest UN Security Council resolution, focused on three strategic objectives:

- Providing life-saving humanitarian assistance with an emphasis on areas with high severity of needs.
- Supporting protection by promoting humanitarian law and human rights through principled assistance.
- And increasing the resilience by improving access to livelihood opportunities and basic services.

The first reserve allocation supported cross-border logistical operations, enabling improved humanitarian access from Turkey into north-west Syria. The second reserve allocation focused on prepositioning essential, non-perishable key items, to be transhipped in advance of the Security Council vote to ensure the humanitarian community was able to provide life-saving assistance in the event of changes to the operating circumstances. In June, the last reserve allocation prioritized winter needs and measures to limit flood damage. A fourth reserve allocation is ongoing.

So far 51 per cent of allocated funds went to Syrian NGOs, 25 per cent to UN organizations, 22 per cent to international NGOs and 2 per cent to the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement.

In 2021, SCHF launched a Disability Inclusion Pilot to increase access to humanitarian assistance for people with disabilities. Allocations have targeted 887,000 people with disabilities in 14 projects.

The SCHF continues to prioritize projects supporting vulnerable people, including women, girls and elderly. The Fund supports initiatives targeting specific gender and age groups to contribute to equality and equity and to address gender and age-related needs. Of the 103 supported projects, 81 are considered to likely contribute to gender equality, including across age groups, and 14 projects are likely to contribute to gender equality, but without attention to age groups.

For further information, please visit:

www.unocha.org
www.reliefweb.int
www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/stima

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