

### KEY FIGURES

**2.8 M**

internally displaced persons (IDPs) in north-west Syria

**1.7 M**

people in displacement sites

**88,423**

confirmed COVID-19 cases (31 October)

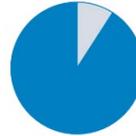
**1,020**

trucks of UN cross-border assistance transhipped in October

### FUNDING

**\$213 MILLION**

**41% funded/pledged**



of estimated total financial requirements (\$513) for north-west Syria for the last quarter of 2021.

Source: North-west Syria: Funding gap analysis (October - December 2021)

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Shelling of civilian areas continues to take lives, including women and children.
- A total of 14,969 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 were recorded in October and 96 per cent of ICU beds were occupied.
- A third of households do not have meaningful access to fuel as winter approaches.
- People with disabilities face significant challenges accessing sanitation, livelihoods, and educational resources.
- UN cross-border operations from Turkey through the Bab al-Hawa border crossing delivered 1,020 trucks of humanitarian aid to north-west Syria. NGO assistance continued at high levels.

### OVERVIEW

#### Protection

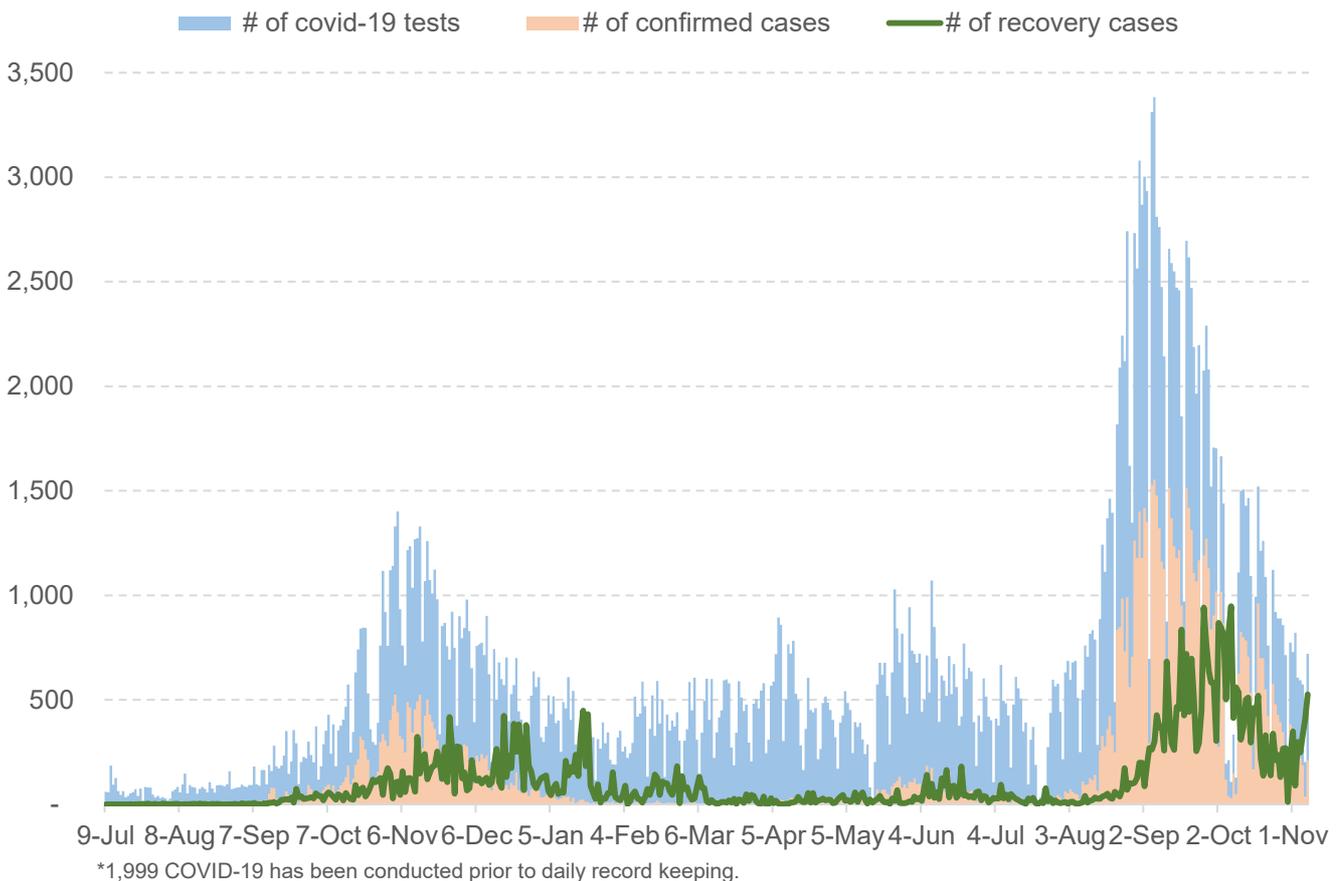
- Hostilities continued in the north-west, though there has been a decrease in the intensity of airstrikes.
- At least one civilian woman was killed and three civilian women and two children were injured as a result of shelling and airstrikes. Unexploded ordnance (UXO) incidents resulted in the death of at least one child and the injury of at least three children, as reported by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).
- However, a yet to be verified shelling incident on 20 October in Ariha town resulted in at least 10 civilian deaths, including a female schoolteacher and three children, and the injury of at least 30 people.
- The Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) cluster tracked 19,940 new displacements of people and 2,540 return movements in October, due mainly to economic opportunities or in search of better services. More than 3,000 people left the Ehsem sub-district. Ariha, Dana and Afrin sub-districts each received around 1,500 people. Newly arrived people say their main needs are cash support, food and shelter.
- The situation in north-west Syria contributes to a protection concerns for the civilian population. According to estimates, 97 per cent of the population, even those that are in employment, are living in extreme poverty. Lack of resources causes people to resort to negative coping mechanisms, such as reducing expenditure on essential items.

## COVID-19

The COVID-19 situation remains bleak in north-west Syria. High daily numbers of new COVID-19 cases have been recorded throughout October, with a total of 14,969 new confirmed cases. There were 34,184 confirmed cases in September. Due to a temporary lack of testing kits, a fluctuation in the infection curve was observed. The PCR test positivity rate has varied from between 36 to 58 per cent for the last two weeks of the month. Since the start of the pandemic, there has been a total of 1,847 COVID-19 associated deaths and 50,928 recovered cases. At the end of October, ICU occupancy rate was at 96 per cent. All districts of north-west Syria remain either very high risk or high risk. According to a recent funding gap analysis, the health sector has a gap of 91 per cent in available funds.

There are now 61 vaccination teams in operation. In order to better reach communities, health partners are shifting from working in fixed teams to semi-fixed and mobile teams. The vaccination rate remains very low, with only 3.83 per cent of the population of north-west Syria vaccinated as of 31 October. A total of 164,645 people received at least one dose, of which 63,885 received the second dose. Vaccination hesitancy is a major issue. Social mobilization activities are planned by partners to tackle misperceptions around the vaccines. All people over 18 are now eligible for vaccination.

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



## Winter

Winter poses major challenges in north-west Syria with an increase of people in need, a decrease in funding compared to previous years, the consumable nature of much of the response, challenging shelter conditions, the priorities of donors, and the planning and funding cycles. The number of people in need of winter assistance has increased significantly in the north-west over the past few years, and current plans cover the needs of 2.2 million people. However, only 23 per cent of the required \$158 million is available or in the pipeline. 97 per cent of the

population live under the poverty line. Even those who are employed cannot cover the basic needs of their families. 85 per cent of the tents are older than their expected lifespan, rendering them vulnerable to elements.

Improvements to shelter conditions are key to reducing significant recurrent costs. Most winter items such as fuel, winter clothes, blankets, and tents are considered “consumable”. A standard tent, for example, has a live expectancy of maximum of one year, while winter clothes and blankets are usually worn out after using them constantly during a winter season.

The Shelter and Non-Food Items (SNFI) Cluster has shown the comparative advantage of long-term shelter solutions over tents, in regard to dignity and cost-effectiveness. Compared to other types of longer-term choices, such as prefabricated shelter, tents are cheaper but they need to be replaced each year. The average unit cost of a family tent is between \$400–600, while the average cost of a prefabricated shelter unit ranges between \$800-1200, making tents cost-ineffective option in four years. Long-term options also provide more security and privacy than tents.

Land and property issues, continuous displacement, and donors being reluctant to fund activities seen as being outside of immediate emergency needs remain key challenges. Dignified shelter and local value chains for winter items need to be implemented during spring and summer months which doesn't necessarily coincide with donor and other humanitarian actor priorities at the beginning of the year.

## People with disabilities

People with disabilities in Syria are estimated to be at 25 per cent and 36 per cent among the displaced population (compared to 15 per cent in the global population).

CCCM data shows that 83 per cent of the 1.7 million people living in displacement sites are in sites with a critical level of population density, which makes access to services for all a major challenge. Access is even more difficult for people with disabilities and a lack of awareness, especially in identifying less visible disabilities, leads to needs not being identified and further challenges in providing tailored assistance.

Beginning in September, the Water and Sanitation (WASH) Cluster partners launched an outreach initiative to speak with people with disabilities, conducting interviews with over 800 people in 100 displacement sites. The findings show most people had no proper access to services or supplies according to their needs.

- 61 per cent of the consulted individuals stated that they did not have access to water facilities
- 80 per cent were not consulted on the design of facilities
- 78 per cent were not consulted on the location of facilities
- 68 per cent did not have access to a functional latrine
- 96 per cent of individuals did not receive a hygiene kit that met their needs
- 92 per cent stated that they were not consulted during assessments
- More than half of individuals said that they did not know of any complaint mechanisms
- More than half of individuals said that they did not know what local support was being provided

With high unemployment rates across north-west Syria, access to livelihood opportunities is difficult for all. Misconceptions around disabilities, infrastructural barriers and lack of services and especially lack of systematic engagement at the community level are additional barriers facing people with disabilities in accessing livelihoods.

From January to September 2021, Early Recovery and Livelihoods (ERL) Cluster partners have been supporting short-term work opportunities for 3,641 people with disabilities, support for entrepreneurship for 2,071 persons and vocational and skills training for 1,692 persons. Apart from these specific interventions, more than 10,000 people with disabilities in 15 communities benefitted from rehabilitation of health and education facilities and about 4,000 people benefitted from basic house repair activities in 16 communities.

Customized support to these children and strengthened awareness raising among communities and education staff are particularly needed to remove stigmas related to disabilities. The lack of sufficient financial resources and prioritization of support to children with disabilities, along with the fear among some families that their children might be bullied because of their disabilities resulting in families not sending their children to school are the key challenges. Currently, 11 partner organizations in the Education Cluster are providing support to children with disabilities, reaching 1,721 children so far against a target of 51,000 children, for which an additional \$5 million is required.

In 2021, the Syria Cross-Border Humanitarian Fund and the Syria Protection Cluster (Turkey) – Inclusion Technical Working Group launched a disability inclusion pilot for the partners to identify barriers, map risks and identify appropriate mitigation measures to remove barriers in order to promote the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and enable them to benefit from services and engage in inclusive activities. Five clusters (WASH, Health, Education, Food Security and Livelihoods, and CCCM) have been selected, and the pilot is currently ongoing with 13 projects.

**For further information, please visit:**

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

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