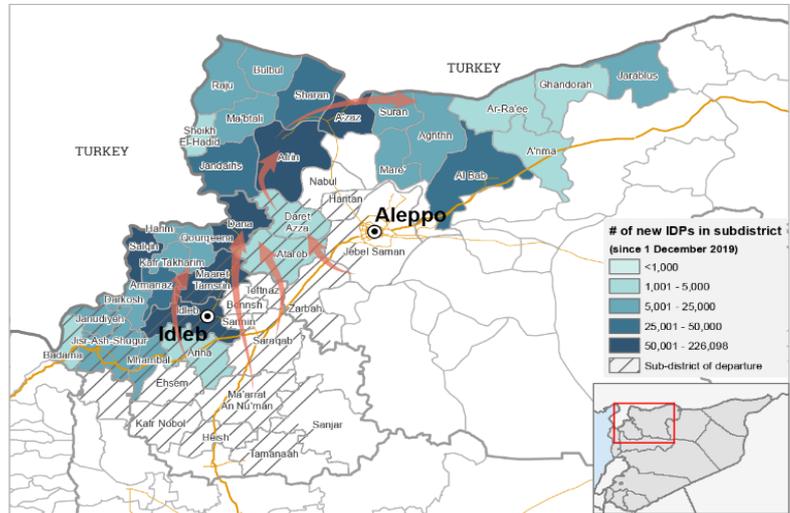


HIGHLIGHTS

- The ongoing humanitarian crisis in northwest Syria continues to deepen as needs across the area multiply with almost 1 million people displaced within the space of three months. Most recent displacement further aggravated an already dire situation in northwest Syria where 2.8 million people out of 4 million were already estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance.
- In northwest Idlib governorate, more and more people are displaced into small areas where existing services that are vital for their survival are overwhelmed.
- While the humanitarian community is scaling up its response to the ongoing crisis, gaps across sectors persist due to the scale of humanitarian needs.



Source: CCCM

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

4 M

People in northwest Syria comprising Idlib area and northern Aleppo governorate

over
960,000

People newly displaced since 1 December

US\$ 371 M

additional funding required to support 1.1 million people for the next 6 months

51%

CHILDREN (est)

60%

Of them are CHILDREN

over
US\$ 100 M

Emergency funding already secured

25%

WOMEN (est)

21%

Of them are WOMEN

SITUATION OVERVIEW

The ongoing humanitarian crisis in northwest Syria continues to deepen with devastating consequences for the four million civilians living across the region comprising the Idlib area and northern Aleppo governorate. From December 2019 to February 2020, almost one million people, or one third of the total civilian population of the greater Idlib de-escalation zone, were forced to flee from their homes to escape from the violence. Some 560,000 people, more than half of the people who have been displaced since December, moved to northwestern areas Idlib governorate, into a small area already hosting hundreds of thousands of the displaced people. The entire population of the greater Idlib de-escalation area, estimated at just over 3 million people prior to the latest wave of violence, have now increasingly concentrated in this small area along the Turkey-Syria border with nowhere else to flee. Some 400,000 of those who escaped from the violence moved to areas in northern Aleppo governorate such as A'zaz, Afrin, Jandairis and Al Bab.

The indiscriminate violence has grave implications for civilian lives and infrastructure, especially as population densities increase in towns, villages, camps and informal settlements in northwest Syria. On 3 March, shelling reportedly hit several locations in Idleb city, killing nine people including five children and injuring 21 others in a residential neighbourhood. On 2 March, airstrikes reportedly hit a school in Ora Qabli – Edwan adjacent to an informal IDP settlement near Ariha killing two people while a hospital in Bennsh was damaged due to airstrikes. Since 26 February, local sources reported that shelling and artillery strikes damaged five schools in Ariha and Janudiyeh in Idleb area.

On 1 March, Turkey announced a new military operation in northwest Syria on 27 February. Military activity along the frontlines of the Idleb area have increased with several towns and villages, including Saraqab, changing control between NSAGs and GoS several times. Given the previous displacement from areas that are now at the frontlines, no large-scale movement was reported as of 4 March. Local sources reported that some families who fled from Idleb to northern Aleppo have returned to Sarmada in Dana district and to Ariha town.

While the most urgent needs of those people who newly displaced remain food, shelter, water, hygiene, sanitation, and protection assistance, the need for health and education assistance for the newly displaced people as well as host communities persist. Some 338,000 people are currently staying in camps and individual tents making up 35 percent of those displaced in the past three months while 173,000 people are in unfinished houses or buildings. Some 350,000 IDPs are currently living with host families or in rented homes while some 90,000 people are staying in collective shelters, most of which were converted from public buildings such as schools and mosques. In northern Aleppo governorate, more than 177,000 people are staying in makeshift tent settlements and unfinished buildings, which makes up 45 percent of some 400,000 people who have been displaced to these areas. In the Idleb area, only 23 percent - some 130,000 people - are sheltering in these conditions. On the other hand, 28 percent of the newly displaced people are in IDP camps in the Idleb area while this figure drops to 11 percent in northern Aleppo governorate.

The delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Idleb area remains susceptible to conditions. Humanitarian transshipments via the Bab al Hawa crossing that provides a lifeline to Idleb were again temporarily suspended on 27 February when hostilities intensified. In February, 927 trucks transported UN humanitarian assistance into northwest Syria via the Bab Al-Hawa and Bab Al-Salama border crossings, providing vital humanitarian assistance to more than 2 million people. This is in addition to humanitarian assistance provided by NGOs in northwest Syria, which is estimated to be much higher.

On 2 March, a UN mission was organized across the border from Turkey into northwest Syria where the need for humanitarian aid and protection are growing more desperate by the day. During the mission, UN humanitarian personnel gathered first-hand information from the affected population about their humanitarian needs. The mission found people living in fear of bombings and fighting, and in need of adequate shelter, food, sanitation, basic health services and protection. The following day, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock visited Hatay, Turkey. He highlighted the priority needs of the estimated 2.8 million people requiring humanitarian assistance in northwest Syria and reiterated the commitment of the UN to stand by the people of Syria.

On 21 February the humanitarian community issued the updated inter-cluster readiness and response plan for northwest Syria, revised for the ongoing reality. The financial requirement to implement the plan fully is US\$ 500 million, in order to provide basic humanitarian support to some 1.1 million people who are displaced or at risk of displacement in the greater Idleb area and northern Aleppo for the next 6 months. More than US\$ 100 million has been raised towards this, including from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF), leaving a gap of some US\$ 371 million still to be filled. A number of donors have made pledges to provide further support in recent days.

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