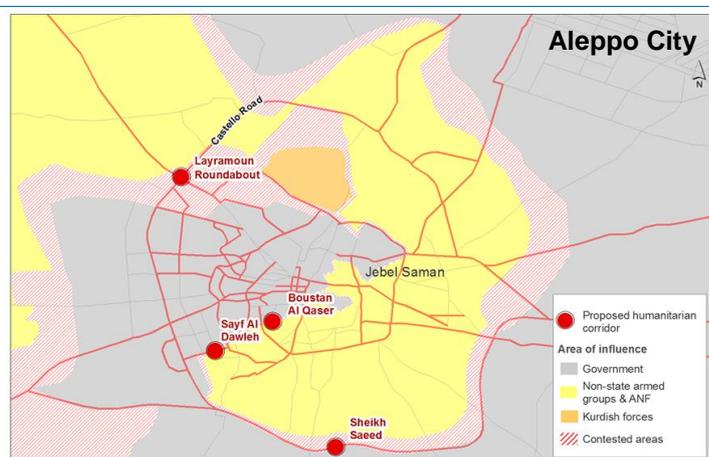




This report is produced by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Syria Crisis offices in Syria, Turkey and Jordan. It covers the period from 19 July- 1 August 2016. The next report will be issued on or around 19 August.

Highlights

- Alarming situation as hundreds of thousands of people trapped in eastern Aleppo
- Russian Federation proposes “humanitarian corridor” initiative for Aleppo
- Re-establishing access to Aleppo and replenishing life-saving assistance key
- Tens of thousands of residents remain trapped in Menbij town
- 2.1 million children in Syria not enrolled in school
- Cross-border operations from Jordan into southern Syria resume



13.5 M

People in Need

13.5 M

Targeted for assistance

6.5 M

Internally displaced

4.8 M

Refugees in neighbouring countries

Situation Overview

Since the closure of Castello Road, an estimated 250,000 – 275,000 people remain trapped in ‘*de facto* besieged’ eastern Aleppo City cut off from humanitarian aid. The lack of safety, freedom of movement and access to humanitarian/commercial goods remain of grave concern. Every neighbourhood of eastern and western Aleppo City has come under fire, as reported by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Syria.

On 28 July, the Russian Federation announced humanitarian corridors (Layramoun Roundabout, Boustan Al Qaser, Sayf Al Dawleh and Sheikh Saeed) to provide an opportunity for civilians to leave the city.

On the same day, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Response Coordinator (ERC), Stephen O’Brien, stated protection must be guaranteed for all according to the principles of neutrality and impartiality. He noted that the proposed corridors must be guaranteed by all sides and proposed an immediate establishment of a weekly, 48-hour humanitarian pause for assistance to reach civilians in eastern Aleppo City and other hard-to-reach areas in Syria.

According to the Syrian Civil Defense, at least 235 people have been killed in eastern Aleppo City since 7 July, and scores have been wounded. On 2 August, the UN’s Children Fund (UNICEF) reported that 25,000 civilians, including 12,000 children fled affected neighbourhoods in western Aleppo. The Directorate of Civil Defense in Aleppo Governorate raised the emergency state to the highest level in the western countryside due to intensified airstrikes in the area on 31 July.

The humanitarian impact of the deteriorating situation has not only been limited to civilian lives, but includes also vital civilian infrastructure such as medical facilities and NGO warehouses. On 30 July, airstrikes struck a hospital in Andan town, while on 31 July, the only blood bank in Atareb town was hit, in addition to four flour mills, now inoperable. On 23 and 24 July, airstrikes rendered the Al-Bayan, Al-Hakim, Zahraa and Al-Daqaq hospitals in eastern Aleppo City temporarily out of operation. During July, the Aleppo National Museum was exposed to shelling causing a partial destruction of the ceiling in different parts of the museum in addition to large damage to the infrastructure.

Moreover, a warehouse belonging to a UN partner was struck by airstrikes destroying 100 food parcels and 100 flour bags in Aleppo. However, pre-positioned food stocks remain available for 145,000 people in eastern Aleppo City.

Reportedly, only one of two milling facilities is operational. However, civilians facing long waiting hours at the bakeries are increasingly exposed to shelling. Reportedly, at least 50 bakeries across the city remain functional. However, on 25 July, the last remaining bakery in East Al Ansari area in eastern Aleppo City was closed due to lack of flour.

Within eastern Aleppo City, shortages in food supplies and significant price increases were observed shortly after the closure of the Castello Road. The price of fuel has reportedly tripled, while it is urgently required to keep water pumps and medical facilities running. Amid these developments, all civilian movement on the Castello Road has come to a standstill. The highest priority remains to re-establish access to eastern Aleppo City, through both cross-line convoys from western Aleppo and cross-border operations from Turkey to replenish critical life-saving assistance like food, medical supplies and fuel.

The humanitarian situation in Menbij town and the surrounding areas in eastern Aleppo Governorate is of utmost concern. An estimated that 30,000 – 40,000 people have been trapped in the town since 10 July. Since 31 May, more than 78,000 have fled their homes due to ongoing hostilities. No humanitarian or commercial goods have reached the town.

In response to the worsening situation, the Turkey Humanitarian Fund launched an Emergency Reserve Allocation of US\$10million across five clusters (\$2 million each for water/sanitation, camp coordination, health, non - food items and food security) with the objective to pre-position emergency supplies for Menbij, Aleppo and Idlib, while awaiting improved access to those areas. On 22 July, aerial bombardment on Duma city in Rural Damascus hit the city's central market. Following the attack on the main water pipeline in Barada Valley supplying Damascus on 24 July, the Water Authority reportedly gradually restored water supply into Damascus on 26 July. Reportedly, roads to Barada Valley - previously closed on 24 July - were partially re-opened.

Over 12,000 people have fled Idlib into neighbouring districts following increased bombardment of civilian infrastructure. On 27 July, three barrel bombs were dropped on Salqin town in the northern countryside of Idlib Governorate, which injured nine people and destroyed civilian houses and commercial shops. A number of villages in Idlib Governorate were struck multiple times by aerial attacks, including the last functioning bakery in Binnish town (serving 70,000 people) that was rendered inoperable.

On 27 July, an explosion struck Quamishli town in Al Hasakeh Governorate, killing at least 43 people and wounding dozens. Airlifts into Quamishli with humanitarian supplies were not affected by the incident. On 26 July, the Al-Zara power plant in southern Hama Governorate reportedly went out of service after being hit by several rockets. In besieged Daraya town in Rural Damascus, an estimated 4,000 civilians are cut off from water and agricultural land due to continued fighting.

Access Developments

Over the reporting period, eight inter-agency convoys were approved and completed under the July Plan reaching four governorates across Syria.

Homs Governorate

- Talbiseh: An inter-agency convoy delivered multi-sectoral aid for 84,000 people in need on 26 July. The last UN/ICRC/Syria Arab Red Crescent (SARC) inter-agency convoy to the area was on 2 May.
- Ar-Rastan: On 28 July, a UN/ICRC/SARC convoy delivered multi-sectoral assistance for 110,000 beneficiaries in the hard-to-reach area. A joint convoy last reached the area on 28 April.
- Al Houla: A UN/SARC joint convoy on 31 July delivered multi-sectoral assistance to 71,000 in Al Houla. This was the first convoy to the area since 25 May.

Aleppo Governorate

- Big Orm: On 21 July, a UN/SARC convoy delivered multi-sectoral assistance to 50,000 beneficiaries. The last UN/SARC mission to the area was on 21 March 2016.
- Hajeb and Bnan: A UN/SARC inter-agency convoy on 26 July delivered multi-sectoral assistance to 7,000 beneficiaries in the two locations. This was the first inter-agency convoy to the area in 2016.

Rural Damascus Governorate

- Sarghaya: On 19 July, a UN/SARC team delivered food, nutrition, hygiene kits, non-food items (NFIs) and health items for 15,000 beneficiaries. This was the first time an inter-agency convoy reached the hard-to-reach location.

- Madmiyet Elsham (Rural Damascus): On 24 July, a UN/ICRC/SARC inter-agency convoy delivered multi-sectoral assistance to 40,000 beneficiaries in the besieged area. The last UN/SARC convoy to the area was on 3 June.

Hama Governorate

- Qalat Al Madiq: On 21 July, a UN/ICRC/SARC convoy delivered multi-sectoral assistance for 32,000 beneficiaries. Some medical supplies were not allowed in the convoy. This was the first inter-agency convoy to the area in 2016.

Out of the eight convoys, for five convoys, medical items, including surgical items, antibiotic and emergency kits, were removed by Syrian authorities.

August Plan

As of 31 July, a response from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the August inter-agency convoy plan was still pending. The plan, which was submitted on 19 July, includes 24 requests to reach 991,050 people in need across 32 besieged, hard-to-reach and cross-line locations. In the absence of a response for the August plan, the UN and partners continue to implement July requests where possible.

Cross border operations

The first UN convoy via Ramtha since the 21 June attack on the Jordanian command post was completed on 28 July. The convoy comprised of 19 trucks and contained sodium hypochlorite for water purification, education and recreation materials, and “sealing-off” kits. While operations are now expected to continue on a rolling basis, the suspension of operations has a considerable impact on affected civilians. As of 28 July, up to 16 health facilities were reportedly running short of essential medical supplies and up to 140,000 people had been affected by the disruption of food assistance. NFI stocks in southern Syria have been all but exhausted. The UN and its implementing partners are now working hard to replenish stocks across the south.

Spotlight on Education

Since the crisis began in March 2011, the protracted nature of the Syrian crisis has had a devastating impact on education, with more and more school-aged children dropping out of school or not even having seen a classroom. Reportedly, Syria’s enrolment rates are considered the second worst globally.

An estimated 36 per cent of school-aged children in Syria, or 2.1 million children, are currently not enrolled in school, while another 1.4 million children are at risk of dropping out due to continued displacement. In neighbouring countries, an additional 700,000 school-aged Syrian are out of school. Increasing pressure on those countries’ education systems stretch their resources and capacities. Across Syria, an estimated 5.7 million children are in need of education assistance. Prior to the conflict, Syria had near universal enrolment rate in primary education and 67 per cent enrolment in secondary education. The literacy rate in Syria was over 90 per cent. UNICEF estimates that Syria’s education system has been set back by two decades and the total economic loss due to dropout of elementary and secondary education is estimated at US\$10.67 billion.¹ This equals about 17.6 per cent of Syria’s 2010 GDP.

Since 2011, Syria has lost 52,500 teachers due to displacement, loss of income, insecurity and violence. This constitutes a 22 per cent drop in the country’s pre-crisis teacher work force. By 2016, one out of four schools in Syria – an estimated 6,000 facilities - can no longer be used for learning, but continue to be attacked and suffer structural damage as a result of attacks. Schools might also be used as shelters for internally displaced people (IDPs) or be occupied by military forces, in violation of international humanitarian law. Violence, safety concerns and child labour are the main reasons for children not to attend school.

Despite the deteriorating security situation, the Directorate of Education (DoE) in Idleb was able to resume high school and elementary exams on Thursday 28 July. Syrian refugee children making an unprecedented effort to go to school in neighbouring countries struggle with overcrowded classrooms, an unfamiliar teaching language and with providing the required paperwork to enrol in schools.

In response, during the first semester of 2016, education sector partners delivered assistance and quality education material to children of all ages, including educational kits, transportation, school meals, vocational trainings, as well as professional teacher-training for educators.

¹ <http://learningforpeace.unicef.org/resources/technical-resources/economic-loss-from-school-dropout-due-to-the-syria-crisis/>



1,130,440 children, youth and education personnel received quality education assistance (including **46,802** Palestinian refugees over **450,000** children in besieged and HTR areas)

Over **22,000** pre-school children have access to early childhood education activities



2,793 damaged classrooms in nearly **200** schools restored for over **115,000** students in schools in **10** governorates



3,960 educators receive professional teacher training in **11** governorates



Alternative education provided to **56,086** children to access education in besieged and HTR areas in **11** governorates

10,702 students supported from HTR and besieged areas received catch-up classes, transportation, shelter and food to sit their exams for Grade 9 and 12.



535,000 children received education school supplies in **12** governorates. Out of that, **84,670** children in besieged and HTR areas were reached by inter-agency convoys

over **162,000** children and youth receive vocational and life skill training in **11** governorates

Whole of Syria (WoS) Education Sector Results January – June 2016 (credit: WoS Education Sector, as of August 2016)

An estimated 34,291 children from besieged and hard-to-reach areas, travelling to Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Damascus, Dar'a, Hama, Homs and Rural Damascus governorates, were able to sit their exams in May and June 2016.

The protection of and unimpeded access to educational facilities, sustainable funding for quality education programming, teacher training and psychosocial support for children and teachers remain key priorities.

Other Humanitarian Developments by Governorate

Aleppo Governorate

In line with proposed humanitarian corridors, it was announced that IDP camps would be established and equipped to provide assistance to those coming to camps. In parallel, the Government of Syria (GoS) announced amnesty for combatants surrendering within three months, as long as they haven't committed "crimes against civilians or humanitarians". It is unclear what the amnesty entails, and what guarantees can be given to ensure the safety of those surrendering.

The UN is currently examining whether the corridors established for the evacuation of the East Aleppo population can be used to deliver assistance inside eastern Aleppo City to those staying. Sustained, regular and safe humanitarian access to the quarter of a million people is key as well as protection of civilians, ramifications with international humanitarian law and the security and viability of the proposed corridors are to be considered. As of now, there has been little to no movement of people leaving the encircled area.

Humanitarian and commercial access to eastern Aleppo City is potentially more restricted since the closure of Castello Road since 7 July. With no external supplies reaching the city for nearly three consecutive weeks, a fuel shortage in eastern Aleppo City could particularly affect hospitals heavily depend on fuel-operated generators as a result of frequent and prolonged electricity cuts. The World Health Organization (WHO) is currently coordinating humanitarian actors based in Aleppo and Gaziantep on procedures for possible medical evacuations. Cross-border partners were encouraged to draft a detailed list of medical cases in eastern Aleppo requiring immediate external medical treatment. SARC Aleppo is one partner for such evacuations able to undertake medical evacuations for patients requiring urgent surgeries, dialysis and chemotherapy.

A planned UN convoy to eastern Aleppo with July approval to deliver for 60,000 beneficiaries continues to be on hold due to the volatile security situation. For western Aleppo, supply streams were secure as of 31 July, as Khanaser Road and Ramouseh entrance remain open.

Four Town Agreement

On 28 July, one medical case and six accompanying family members were evacuated from Foah town, while one medical case and seven accompanying family members were evacuated from Madaya town. On 20 July, ten individuals (eight medical cases and two accompanying relatives) were evacuated from Madaya to Damascus to receive medical care. At the same time, an undisclosed number of medical emergency cases were evacuated from Foah and Kafraya, as foreseen under the provisions of the Four Town Agreement. As during previous evacuations, the evacuated cases from Foah and Kafraya were received by SARC Hama and Lattakia at the Qalat Al-Madiq checkpoint before being transferred to Lattakia City. Those evacuated from Madaya were transported by SARC Damascus to the respective checkpoint and handed over to SARC Idleb. Under the Four Towns Agreement, medical

evacuations of the wounded and sick by parties to the conflict can only proceed on the basis of reciprocity, a condition to the agreement long criticized by the United Nations. In the absence of sustained humanitarian access for over three consecutive months, the situation inside all four locations continues to deteriorate. The UN continues to call on the parties to the Four Towns Agreement to allow for immediate and unconditional access for humanitarian actors without delays.

Idleb Governorate

On 30 July, airstrikes hit a maternity hospital in Kafr Takharim town, killing two and injuring six people according to Save the Children. The facility is operating now at reduced levels, with critical medical equipment damaged and the only ambulance inoperable. Furthermore, as a result of heavy aerial bombardment, about 1,000 families were reportedly displaced from Salquin and Kafr Takhrim towns. An estimated 9,000 families fled Idleb City between 22 and 29 July with some 4,000 families staying in the countryside and while 5,000 families staying elsewhere in the governorate. Only 15,000 families still remain inside Idleb City, compared to an initial 45,000 families prior to the start of the airstrike campaign in June, SARC Idleb estimates.

Displacement of some 800 families was also reported from Jisr Al-Shughur city following repeated airstrikes. Some 650 families are currently staying near the Turkish border, while the remaining 150 families were displaced to the surrounding rural areas. The city of Ariha also witnessed some displacement following recurring airstrikes that usually target the city's market. Currently, there is only very limited movement inside the city itself. On 19 July, multiple airstrikes struck Idleb City hitting vital civilian infrastructure.

Ar Raqqa Governorate

On 22 July, airstrikes cut landline communication in the northern and western parts of Al Der'ya City. On the same day, UNICEF and SARC, in coordination with the Water Authority, delivered 160 tons of chloride sufficient to purify water supplies in the entire governorate for two months.

Dar'a Governorate

On 31 July, airstrikes in Jasim, northern Dar'a, hit a field hospital, killing at least ten people (four children, two children, and four men, including two hospital staff) and wounding many more. The hospital was rendered out of service and critical cases were transferred to hospitals in neighboring villages. Prior to this incident, the hospital provided 4,000+ consultations per month. Aerial bombardment in the far south also continued for much of the reporting period, displacing over 5,000 people from Busra ash-Sham town to Jizeh, Sahwa, Ghasm, Moraba, and Smaqiyat villages. Many of the families displaced from Busra Ash-Sham were forced to sleep in the open, with temporary shelter, NFIs, and food among their most urgent needs. Over the past week however, aerial attacks in Busra Ash-Sham have subsided, allowing the majority of IDPs to return.

Ash-Shajara Sub-district remains a hard-to-reach area, with both the Southern Front and Jaish Khaled Bin Waleed establishing multiple checkpoints along access routes to the sub-district. Syrian NGOs report direct KBW threats to those seeking to operate on-the-ground. An estimated 5,850 IDPs and the underserved resident population in Ash-Shajara urgently require food, shelter, and scaled-up NFI assistance.

Update on Berm

An estimated 78,000 men, women and children remain stranded along the Syrian/Jordanian border in makeshift tented settlements (7,000 in Hadalat and 71,000 in Rukban). Since the attack on 21 June, the delivery of humanitarian relief to the population at the berm had been severely disrupted, with clean water being the only assistance reaching the area since 23 June. The Government of Jordan has allowed for a one-off distribution in Haldalat and Rukban and UN partners (World Food Programme, UNICEF, the UN Refugee agency and OCHA) met with community representatives to discuss the modalities of the distribution. The aid will consist of food packages with rice, lentils and dates, bread provided by IOM (in Hadalat only), and hygiene kits from UNICEF (in both locations).

Consultations with community leaders have pointed to a deteriorating health situation among civilians at the two settlements. Unconfirmed reports point to health conditions including a significant number of malnutrition and Hepatitis A or B cases, high incidence of watery and bloody diarrhoea among children. Some members of the community also reported gradual loss of eyesight. An estimated 250 women at Hadalat are in the advanced stages of pregnancy and complications during childbirth are increasingly common, with nine women reported to have died from complications during labour. Only one nurse is available in Hadalat.

Key Humanitarian Reports and Updates

- Statement on Aleppo, Under-Secretary - General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O'Brien, 28 July
- Humanitarian Affairs Chief Calls for Weekly 48-Hour 'Pause' in Fighting to Facilitate Aid Delivery to Syrians Trapped in Besieged Cities, United Nations Security Council
- Flash Update: Developments in Eastern Aleppo City and Menbij Town
- Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Snapshot
- Syria Crisis: CERF-funded response 2011-2016
- Regional Funding Update - Syria Crisis
- "Situation in Aleppo devastating and overwhelming", International Committee of the Red Cross
- Syria: Emergency Dashboard, July 2016, World Food Programme (WFP)
- Syrian Arab Republic - 2016 UN Inter-Agency Humanitarian Operations
- Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015) - Report of the Secretary-General

For further information, please contact:

Sebastien Trives, Head of OCHA Syria, trives@un.org

Trond Jensen, Head of OCHA Turkey, jensen8@un.org

Sarah Muscroft, Head of OCHA Jordan, muscroft@un.org

Helena Fraser, Head of OCHA Regional Office for the Syria Crisis, fraser@un.org

For more information, please visit www.unocha.org/syria www.reliefweb.int