

North-west Syria

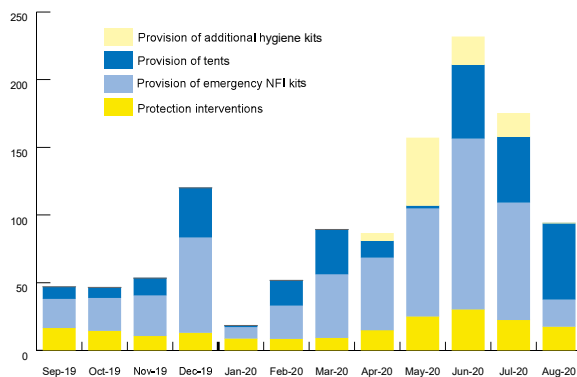
August 2020

Since January, UNHCR has sent across the border 150,000 core relief items kits and shelter materials to assist **790,000 individuals**.

UNHCR's partners have been doing **quick fixing interventions** to improve the conditions of houses where IDPs have found shelter.

In 2020, through its partners, UNHCR has provided protection services, such as psychosocial support and referrals, to nearly **133,000 individuals**.

Protection, CRI, Emergency Shelter Assistance



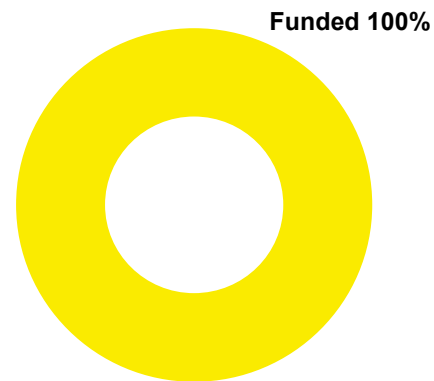
Number (in thousands) of individuals who received humanitarian assistance as tents, emergency core relief item (CRI) kits, hygiene kits and who were assisted with protection interventions per month.

Despite the limitations caused by the measures put in place against COVID-19, UNHCR's partners worked tirelessly to provide the humanitarian aid coordinated by UNHCR. During the last few months, more NFI kits and tents than before were distributed to IDPs and other conflict-affected people. Moreover, additional hygiene kits were distributed during protection interventions, as part of COVID-19 mitigating measures. These kits contained an increased quantity of soap to help preventing the spread of the virus. During protection interventions, UNHCR's partners also shared information to raise awareness on COVID-19.

Funding Level as of 29 September 2020

USD 55.2 million

requested for the UNHCR cross-border humanitarian response



Main Objectives

1. Support the coordination of the cross-border humanitarian response through the Cluster system
2. Identify protection risks and assistance needs and inform the overall response
3. Provide protection services and emergency assistance with core relief items and shelter solutions
4. Build capacity of (local) humanitarian organizations
5. Fill critical gaps in the basic needs of IDPs where required and feasible

Major Developments

Of a total population of 4 million people in north-west Syria, there around 2.7 million IDPs, who are considered to be in need of humanitarian assistance. New and protracted IDPs share the same urgent needs, in an area that has limited shelter options and where the fighting has caused the destruction of civilian infrastructure, including health facilities, schools, bakeries, and has disrupted the provision of basic services. With the Syrian Pound losing value in comparison to other currencies, and with an increase in hostilities, the population is now facing more difficulties in addressing their basic needs.

On 11 July 2020, the UN Security Council Resolution that enables the cross-border humanitarian response through the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing was renewed for twelve months until 10 July 2021. Bab Al-Salam, the other border crossing utilized for transshipments to north-west Syria, was removed.

Positive COVID-19 cases continued to be detected in north-west Syria in August. As access to health and adequate sanitation in the context of continuous displacement remains limited across the region, the humanitarian community is actively operating to deliver lifesaving assistance while ensuring the safety of the people.

Background

Following the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2165, UNHCR established its cross-border activities from southern Turkey in July 2014. In 2020, through its own programme, UNHCR has partnerships with nine organizations - IRC, ACTED-REACH, WATAN, Bir Dunya Cocuk Dernegi (Children of One World), SHAFAK, NRC, Maram Foundation, SEMA and SRD - to assist displaced people by providing core relief items (CRIs), shelter support, and protection services. In addition, UNHCR is leading the Protection, Shelter/NFI (SNFI) and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Clusters. All Clusters closely follow the humanitarian developments in the conflict areas in north-west Syria and contribute to emergency preparedness response plans accordingly.

UNHCR Programme

With the spreading of COVID-19 in the region that has added to the ongoing hostilities, inadequate shelter conditions and a deteriorating economic situation, in 2020, UNHCR provides basic assistance and protection services to IDPs and conflict-affected vulnerable host community members in north-west Syria under the cross-border operation from Gaziantep, Turkey. Following the renewal of the UN Security Council Resolution that allows for the delivery of cross-border humanitarian assistance in July 2020, UNHCR has been updating its programming and has been coordinating with its partners, as well as the other humanitarian actors, to continue responding to the humanitarian needs of the population in the region.

In August, **UNHCR's partners reached 76,662 conflict-affected and displaced people with distributions of 4,044 non-food item (NFI) kits** (785 NFI kits in Idleb and 3,259 in Aleppo) **and 9,407 tents** (3,390 in Aleppo and 6,017 in Idleb). Moreover, by the end of August, UNHCR's partners did **quick fixing to rehabilitate 2,000 houses** for approximately 12,000 people. At the same time, UNHCR's protection partners conducted awareness raising and psychosocial support sessions, identified cases and referred them to basic services in Idleb and Aleppo Governorates; such **community-based protection interventions reached 13,725 people**. In addition, 3,762 displaced and vulnerable people received protection services such as awareness raising on civil status documentation and housing, land and properties, legal counselling and assistance, case management and referrals.



Gravelling of tents in Idleb. ©WATAN



The **Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster**, led by UNHCR and co-led by Global Communities, coordinates the efforts of 76 member organizations providing cross-border assistance in north-west Syria; in August, 38 members actively responded to the needs of the displaced population. Activities focus on coordinating and monitoring the Cluster members to cover the multi-sectoral needs in **1,104 IDP sites that host 1.46 million IDPs** (over 280,000 families) in north-west Syria and, on behalf of the humanitarian community, track IDP movements. It is estimated that 79 per cent of the population in these sites is comprised of women and children; over 22,000 IDPs are persons with specific needs. In August, 10 new sites were added to the ISIMM and 22 sites were inactivated for reasons such as depopulation of sites and their subsequent closure.

The total reported IDP population in August 2020 is 2,669,869 IDPs. The number of displacement movements during the month was nearly 33,000, mostly to Atareb and Dana sub-districts, whereas the number of IDPs who were reported as having returned to their community of origin during the month is around 6,700 IDPs, with Ehsem, Atareb and Idleb sub-districts recorded as the top three returnee destinations. The Cluster tracked over 1.9 million individual displacements between January and August 2020, which include second or third displacements, meaning that some people may have been forced to move multiple times within the same period and that the reasons for movement may vary.

Over-populated sites and lack of camp management continue to be prevalent concerns, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic where the application of preventive, response and mitigation guidance is essential. In addition, the Cluster continued to monitor, report and coordinate the respond to **multiple incidents in IDP sites**. In August, 32 families had their tents destroyed in 18 fire and wind incidents in IDP settlements. Four people were injured in some of these incidents. The urgent needs were reported as being tents, NFI kits and fire extinguishers. Since 1 January until 10 September 2020, a total of 84 incidents were reported affecting 121 camps.



Shelter/NFI Cluster

The **Shelter/Non-Food Items (SNFI) Cluster** is led by UNHCR coordinating the efforts of 78 member organizations in the cross-border operation who have implemented shelter and/or NFI activities since the beginning of the year. Specifically, 39 member organizations actively responded to shelter and/or NFI needs in August. The Cluster addresses emergency shelter and NFI needs by providing in-kind assistance as well as cash or voucher assistance. It promotes household and community resilience. The Cluster also raises awareness and provides technical guidance on housing, land and property rights relevant for humanitarian shelter activities. The Cluster is co-chaired by CARE.

Cluster members continue to actively respond to the needs of the newly displaced population as well as protracted IDPs in north-west Syria. In August, Cluster members reported that **nearly 85,000 individuals were reached with NFI assistance in the form of NFI kits**, kitchen sets, solar lamps, jerry cans, tarpaulin and mattresses. Moreover, more than 33,000 individuals were reached by cash or voucher assistance for NFI. At the same time, **shelter needs of over 101,000 people were addressed** with activities including emergency shelter assistance and shelter rehabilitation. In 2020, Cluster members have reported reaching nearly 860,000 people with shelter assistance, including rehabilitation of infrastructure, provision of emergency shelter, shelter rehabilitation and transitional shelters, and seasonal shelter assistance, and around 1.6 million people with NFI assistance like seasonal and/or supplementary, and core NFI distributions.

More than half of the IDPs in north-west Syria are reportedly residing in inadequate housing. With the cold season approaching, the Cluster is preparing the winterization 2020-2021 plan and working with its members to ensure effective coordination of the response. The winterization response will target over 1.3 million individuals; however, for now, there is a gap of over 250,000 people for main winterization activities of core seasonal items and winterization assistance. The Cluster is advocating for more funds to cover this winterization gap. In addition, to prevent misuse and malfunctioning of winterization items, the Cluster has developed an awareness raising brochure focusing mainly on the safe usage of fuel and stoves.

With the support of IMAP, the Cluster has released a new and updated **SNFI dashboard** with detailed information on activities, time and locations.



Protection Cluster

The **Protection Cluster** (co-led by UNHCR and IRC) brings together 68 member organizations, which include actors of the three Sub-Clusters: Child Protection (led by UNICEF and World Vision), Gender Based Violence (led by UNFPA and Global Communities) and Humanitarian Mine Action (directed by UNMAS and Halo Trust). The Cluster also convenes the Protection Monitoring Task Force (led by UNHCR and IRC) and a Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Technical Working Group (co-led by UNHCR and NRC) regularly, as well as a Technical Working Group on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, formed in February 2020 (co-led by UNHCR and HI). The Cluster continues to prioritize the provision of lifesaving emergency protection services to newly displaced populations and to deliver specialized protection services to communities and individuals in need and at risk, including using outreach capacity and mobile teams. Besides, the Cluster continues to inform advocacy and the overall response through protection monitoring, while also supporting capacity building of cluster members to strengthen programming, information collection and advocacy on protection concerns, and do-no-harm efforts.

In August, Cluster members reported to have provided **214,650 protection interventions to IDPs and affected host community members** in 320 communities in three governorates (Aleppo, Idlib and Ar-Raqqa). Key services provided were: psychological first aid; legal awareness-raising sessions focusing on housing, land and property and/or civil status documentation; integrated/comprehensive case management services; and referrals to other services.

Partners of the **Protection Monitoring Task Force** conducted in August a total of 690 key informant interviews (383 males, 307 females) in Idlib and Aleppo Governorates, reaching 113 communities within 21 sub-districts.

The protection environment remains strongly affected by the compounding impacts of COVID-19 mitigation measures, the economic downturn, large-scale displacement as well as the ongoing armed conflict. **Human rights violations and abuses continue to be increasingly reported** by Cluster partners since April this year; all forms of gender-based violence, particularly domestic violence and sexual violence, continue to be reported. Restrictions of movements are impacting access to services for survivors of GBV. Moreover, reports continue to be received of stigma and associated bullying of community members and health workers related to COVID-19.

External and Donor Relations

Thanks to UNHCR's donors for supporting the humanitarian response in north-west Syria:

Germany | Japan | United States of America | CERF | International Organization for Migration