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# REGIONAL ANALYSIS SYRIA

30 October 2013

## Part I – Syria

*This Regional Analysis of the Syria conflict (RAS) is an update of the September RAS and seeks to bring together information from all sources in the region and provide holistic analysis of the overall Syria crisis. While Part I focuses on the situation within Syria, Part II covers the impact of the crisis on the neighbouring countries. More information on how to use this document can be found on page 2. Please note that place names which are underlined are hyperlinked to their location on Google Maps. The Syria Needs Analysis Project welcomes all information that could complement this report. We would like to invite you look at the questions in Annex A to help us improve our understanding of the current situation. For more information, comments or questions please email [SNAP@ACAPS.org](mailto:SNAP@ACAPS.org).*

### Content Part I

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 Red flags indicate new information

### Overview

**Conflict and political developments:** In the wake of the Government of Syria (GoS) permitting the UN and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to start destroying its declared stockpile of chemical weapons, the international community reinvigorated its efforts to push for the Geneva II peace conference, touting 23 - 24 November as possible date.

Parties to the conflict in Syria have redoubled efforts to gain ground to strengthen their negotiating positions before any such peace talks to strengthen their negotiating positions. Fighting in October has been fierce with areas of control shifting significantly in several areas across the country. Concurrently, the renewed possibility of a peace conference has further divided opposition groups, with some blocs supportive of such a process while others stating that attendance would amount to treason. The same factors that led to an impasse at Geneva I are still at play, namely: many opposition groups are refusing to come to the table without the assurance that President Assad will not figure in any transitional government while the GoS is refusing to enter discussions if this demand is met.

**Besieged areas:** While many areas remain under siege, with an estimated 2.5 million people in hard to reach areas, access improved slightly in two areas. The long siege of Madamiyet Elsham in Rural Damascus was temporarily lifted to allow for a number (an estimated 3,000) of civilians to leave. In Aleppo, GoS forces regained control of a strategic town opening a supply route into western parts of Aleppo city, to which access had been blocked for many months.

**Health:** Reports of malnutrition have emerged from hospitals in Hama, Homs and Idleb this month, as the lack of food and appropriate health care is for the first time leading to incidents of hospitalisation having been reported outside of besieged areas. This month has seen outbreaks of typhoid and polio, the upshot of which has been the launching of a mass immunisation campaign by the MoH and UNICEF.

**WASH:** Issues relating to water availability and sanitation facilities have been cited as of the highest concern, as fighting has disrupted power supplies on several occasions, leading to mass power outages and halting water pumping. The influx of IDPs is further exerting pressure on water supply in relatively safe areas. Residents of IDP camps continue to live in conditions of dire sanitation, a problem compounded as the intense fighting has displaced thousands more and the collective shelters become more crowded.

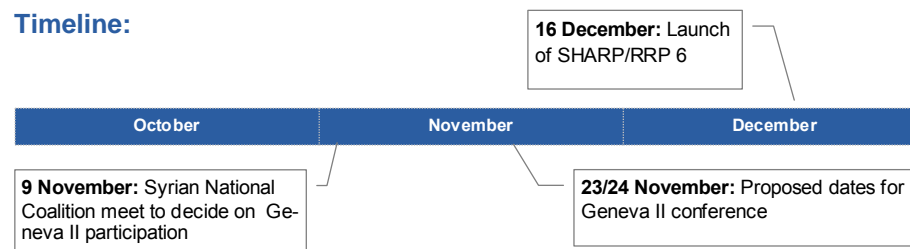
**Livelihoods and food security:** The current olive harvest illustrates the impact the crisis has on agricultural productivity, with governorates reporting far below average yields. Prices for food items further increased as a result of the withdrawal of part of the GoS subsidies on fuel. Although the GoS continues to subsidise bread across much of the country, with the breakdown of state price controls, this bread is frequently sold at higher prices.

**Protection:** During the battles in Aleppo, IDP camps were deliberately targeted by airstrikes highlighting that, in some cases, camps for the displaced also function as safe havens and supply routes for opposition fighters, thereby exposing the civilian residents to attacks by GoS forces. Elsewhere, reports have emerged of members of minority groups being harassed or denied passage at checkpoints controlled by extremist armed groups.

**Access:** As fighting has intensified, security, and with it humanitarian access, has further deteriorated. Kidnappings of humanitarian workers, including that of the ICRC and SARC staff in Idleb, illustrate how respect for the humanitarian principles is far from universally upheld.

**Assessments:** The UN is working together with NGOs to obtain a complete picture of the needs in Syria to inform the revision of the Syrian Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP), which will be launched at the start of December. Coordinated, joint humanitarian needs assessments are planned. Preliminary results from discussions on priority concerns and the number of those in need have not yet been made available.

### Timeline:



## How to use the RAS?

This report is divided into three sections:

- The regional overview summarises the whole report into one page, highlighting the key issues and developments of the last month.
- Part I focuses on the situation in Syria, firstly by outlining the issues on a country level and afterwards, in more depth, on a governorate level.
- Part II deals with the host countries Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq, and discusses the main humanitarian issues related to the crisis.

The different parts and components can be read separately, according to information needs. While those working in a host country or a specific governorate might only be interested in small parts of the report, individuals working on a regional level can benefit from reading all sections.

The information in blue contains explanatory notes on the structure of this report while the information in red boxes outlines SNAP's analysis.

## How to quote this document?

The Syria Needs Analysis Project is established to support the humanitarian response by providing an independent analysis of the humanitarian situation of those affected by the Syrian crisis. We support the communication of humanitarian needs and agree to them being used by other organisations to this end. Please note that most information is derived from secondary data and the original source should be quoted when this information is used. The original source can be found at the end of a paragraph and if possible, the hyperlink to this source has been made available. All information that is not sourced is based on SNAP's own analysis and should be quoted as such.

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## Possible developments

**Armed violence and negotiations:** Political disagreements around preconditions for planned Geneva II peace talks remain unresolved and Geneva II does not take place in November. All parties continue to position themselves in preparation of peace talks, with further fragmentation between opposition groups and continuing intense fighting around key strategic areas. The GoS continues its progress in Eastern and Western Ghouta, while a large-scale battle for the strategic Qalamoun Mountains starts. Fierce battles between the GoS and opposition forces in Dar'a and Aleppo continue. In the north, the fighting among opposition groups on one side and the Kurds on another does not end in the short-term.

**Tightened sieges of districts in Rural Damascus:** The GoS tightens sieges of different areas in their effort to gain control of Eastern and Western Ghouta. Humanitarian access to areas newly controlled by the GoS improves, while the already minimal access to opposition enclaves is further restricted.

**Outbreaks of new diseases and food shortages:** The rapidly decreasing food reserves and the winter lull in agriculture production cause an outbreak of vitamin-deficiency-related diseases. Outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, polio, and typhoid take place. Food shortages, low vaccination coverage and breakdown of the health and WASH system, result in high levels of morbidity and mortality, particularly among children under 5 years of age.

**Hampered access in the south:** Humanitarian actors, activists, and journalists are increasingly targeted in highly contested areas and in areas controlled by extremist groups, forcing international organisations to further rely on remote monitoring of humanitarian projects. The presence of Al-Qaeda-affiliated groups negatively affects humanitarian access to the south.

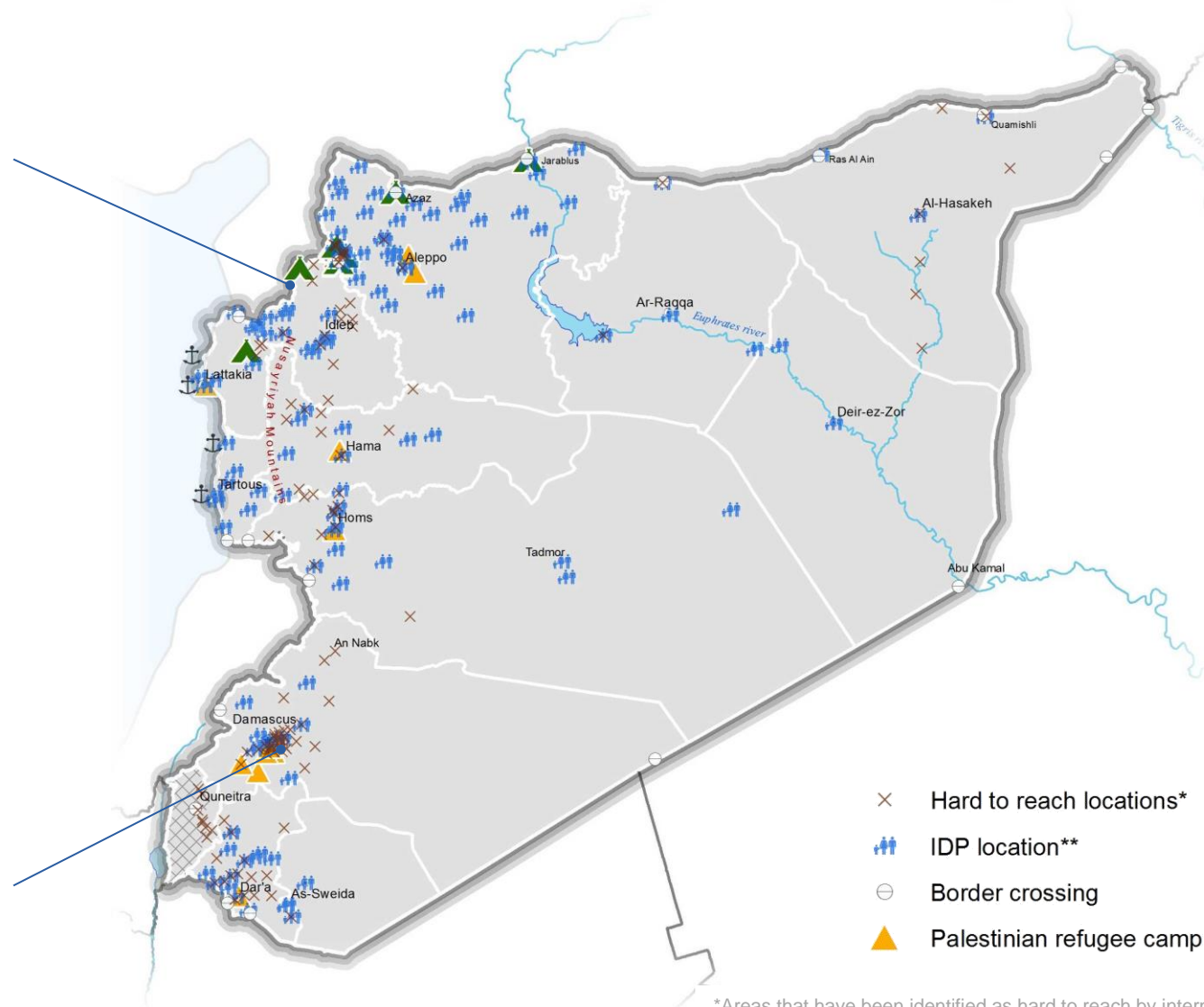
**Shortages of cooking and heating fuel:** The increase in fuel prices puts increasing pressure on households who are faced now by a decline in cooking fuel and heating fuel in the forthcoming winter. With continuous electricity cuts, more households rely on wood fires, burning furniture or felled trees.

# Latest developments

**Food security:** While food remains largely available throughout the country, the food security situation is impacted by high prices, eroding livelihoods and disruption in trade. An assessment by GOAL in Harim, Jisr-Ash-Shugur and Idleb showed that the average monthly income for a household in these areas is USD 29 while expenditure on food alone is USD 37. Only 20% of assessed households reported having a regular source of income.

**Access:** On 2 October, the UN Security Council issued a non-binding Presidential Statement encouraging all parties to the conflict to permit safe and unhindered humanitarian access in Syria. Regardless, access has remained severely limited. 6 International Committee of the Red Cross workers and 1 volunteer from the Syrian Arab Red Crescent were abducted on 13 October in Idleb. The incident highlights the difficulties humanitarian actors face in carrying out their work.

**Besieged areas:** In besieged and hard to reach areas shortages of food and medicine are leading to life threatening situations. In the besieged Palestinian refugee camp Yarmouk, civilians are relying on small scale gardening and the rare supply of goods. The siege on areas in Western Ghouta has been tightened, with the Syrian Armed Forces sealing off remaining smuggling routes into the area. Over 40 such locations have been identified countrywide, with an estimated 2.5 million people trapped.



\*Areas that have been identified as hard to reach by international organisations. List is not exhaustive.

\*\*IDP locations provided by the State Department HIU from open sources and include: collective centres, schools, mosques, sports facilities and host families. List is not exhaustive.

## Information gaps and data limitations

### Data limitations

The current security and political context severely constrains the collection and publication of data, a fact reflected in the limited information available on the humanitarian situation. To obtain a countrywide picture of the needs and priorities, SNAP analyses a multitude of sources. In addition to the information from humanitarian organisations and key informants collated in researching this document, SNAP makes use of media sources from Syria and the wider region.

All these sources are subject to specific limitations:

- **Syrian Media:** Access for journalists to and within Syria is highly constrained. At least 95 Syrian and foreign journalists have been killed in the conflict and dozens kidnapped. As a result, freedom of press is limited and many media sources are dependent on their political allegiances to continue to operate, leaving limited space for independent analysis. The media landscape in Syria is shaped by sources that are affiliated with the Government of Syria (GoS), such as the state-run [SANA News](#), and sources affiliated with the opposition, such as [Eqtisad](#). Although local activists are very vocal in sharing their experiences, this information is often impossible to verify.
- **Media attention:** As in all protracted crises, the media is often forced to focus on new developments at the expense of on-going and structural issues. In the Syria crisis this approach diverts the overall attention away from important issues. A striking example was the situation at the end of August, when international publications focused on the chemical attacks and subsequent possibility of an international military intervention, with the on-going conflict and deteriorating humanitarian situation largely neglected.
- **Relief actors:** Movement for international and national organisations is severely limited and publications are subject to scrutiny by the armed groups and the GoS. The publication of information or advocacy deemed controversial by any party to the conflict has direct implications on humanitarian access. Hence, information on the needs does not always reflect the complete situation on the ground. Protection concerns, for instance, are often too politically sensitive to be included in assessments or publically available reports.
- **Monitoring systems:** The fracturing of the country into areas controlled by the GoS, contested areas and areas led by non-state actors make a countrywide monitoring of the situation by one actor next to impossible. Although several structures were in place even prior to the crisis (including monitoring of disease outbreaks through the EWARS), the security situation hampers countrywide coverage.

### Information sources

SNAP: Regional Analysis Syria – Part I: Syria - 30 October 2013

- 2 reports on the humanitarian needs in Syria have become available in October.
  - GOAL – Food Basket Assessment in parts of Idleb (September 2013)
  - UNRWA quarterly socioeconomic monitoring report covering March to June
- In late September, the GoS's [Central Bureau of Statistics website](#) came back online after having been down since June. The latest information on the website is the Consumer Price Index figures for May this year and inflation figures from March. The website also includes a 2013 Syrian population figure of 22.3 million, but the methodology behind this number is unknown and thus the estimate of 24.5 million (from 2011 civil affairs records cited in the COD) is generally used.

### Planned humanitarian assessments

- More information on the humanitarian situation, including planning figures and sector priorities, is expected to become available in December, with the revision of the SHARP.
- To ensure the on-going humanitarian response is based on the needs, several multi-sectoral assessments are planned, including the OCHA-led Joint Humanitarian Assessment (JHA), a reduced version of which has recently received GoS approval. In addition OCHA is working with NGOs to assess areas not covered by the JHA, to build a 'whole of Syria' picture.
- In a separate process, OCHA has been collecting information at the governorate level on the humanitarian situation and needs of the population in Syria. The reports are expected before the end of the year and will offer essential insight into the current figures of numbers of displaced and in need.

Please note that a number of other assessments have been finalised or planned, but, because of the nature of the assessment or lack of GoS approval, no information on these assessments can be shared.



## Operational constraints

**Context:** Access restrictions resulting from active fighting, bureaucratic impediments, increasing road blockages and a proliferation of non-state actors controlling transit routes, continue to slow or stall the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Particularly critical is the situation in the governorates of Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-Ez-Zor and Rural Damascus.

Some areas in Aleppo and Idleb, partially under control of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Jabhat Al Nusra, remain inaccessible to humanitarian actors. ([PI 2013/10/14](#), [WFP 2013/09/20](#))

### Operational constraints currently affecting humanitarian operations

Access of the affected population to aid	●
Active hostilities	●
Restriction of movement	●
Violence against, personnel, facilities and assets	●
Lack of funding	●
Diversion of aid	●
Government impediments to entry	●
Lack of fuel and logistics	●
Presence of mines and IED	●

## Recent developments

✎ **UN Security council statement:** In a non-binding statement on 2 October, the UN Security Council called for the easing of access for relief workers, including across lines of conflict and—where appropriate—across international borders. In addition, the statement urges all parties to immediately demilitarise medical facilities, schools, and water stations; refrain from targeting civilian infrastructure; and agree on ways to implement humanitarian pauses to facilitate humanitarian transport and response. However, parties to the conflict have not respected the statement and humanitarian access has further decreased. ([UNSC 2013/10/02](#))

✎ **Besieged areas:** An estimated 2.5 million people are in areas under siege or areas inaccessible to international humanitarian organisations. Government approval to work in specific areas, required by the international community and its implementing partners, has been denied on multiple occasions, including to the area of [Madamiyet Elsham](#), which has been under siege for 11 months. This month, around 5,000 civilians, mostly women and children, were evacuated from Madamiyet Elsham, southwest Damascus. An estimated 1,000 remain trapped. Thousands of families also remain trapped in other locations across Syria that are under siege from Government or opposition forces, for example in Nabul, Az-Zahra, Aleppo old city, Homs old city, Eastern and Western Ghouta, southern Rural Damascus and Al-Hasakeh. ([OCHA 2013/10/25](#), [Al-akhbar 2013/10/14](#), [Daily Star 2013/10/13](#), [MSF 2013/10/14](#), [OCHA 2013/10/19](#), [BBC 2013/10/29](#))

✎ The siege on the GoS-controlled part of Aleppo was lifted when the road between As Salamiyeh (Hama) and Aleppo (Khanasir military route) was opened for civilians and (aid) convoys. ([Al-akhbar 2013/10/08](#), [Daily Star 2013/10/07](#))

✎ **Funding:** Humanitarian operations remain significantly hampered by funding constraints. In the revised SHARP, compiled in consultation with the GoS and launched in June, the UN agencies, IOM and INGOs officially accredited in Syria, seek USD 1.4 billion to provide humanitarian response in 2013. By 28 October, 56% had been funded. The development of a 2014 SHARP, scheduled for release in early December, has started. ([WFP 2013/09/20](#), [OCHA 2013/10/28](#))

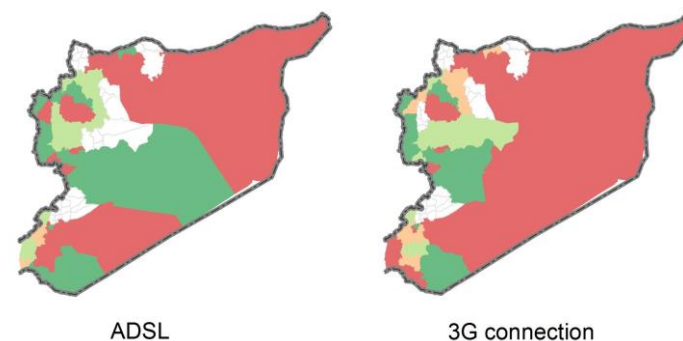
✎ **Active hostilities against humanitarian personnel, facilities and assets:** Humanitarian staff continue to be subject to harassment, intimidation and kidnapping incidents while humanitarian supplies and convoys are frequently looted. Since the start of the conflict, 8 UNRWA staff members have been killed, 17 staff are currently detained or reported missing and 14 staff injured. 21 UNRWA vehicles have been stolen. ([UNRWA 2013/10/01](#))

✎ Another danger for humanitarian workers and volunteers is arbitrary arrest during their humanitarian work. 6 ICRC members and 1 SARC volunteer were kidnapped in Idleb on 13 October. 4 of them were released the following day while 3 are still abducted. ([RCRC 2013/10/1](#), [Al-Jazeera 2013/10/14](#), [BBC 2013/10/14](#))

✎ **Logistics and telecommunications:** In addition to insecurity, the lack of telecommunications has been identified as a major constraint for the delivery of relief items. After the disruption of telecommunications in Aleppo city caused by opposition control of a telecommunication station in Sararqib, the service returned on 9 October to coincide with the lifting of the siege over the city. ([Al-akhbar 2013/10/10](#))

✎ **Fuel:** The Government of Syria announced a cut in fuel subsidies early this month, raising the price of a litre of gasoline from SYP 80 to SYP 100:

### Internet connectivity



Data source: SecDev (25/10/13). This map is generated based on information from social media and field sources. It does not include satellite internet or connections from neighbouring countries.

## Conflict developments October

### Examples of conflict incidents

**Al-Hasakeh:** Kurdish fighters have seized 1 of the 2 main crossings with Iraq (Ya'roubieh cross-border) from Al Qaeda-affiliated groups. Clashes continue in Tell-Abiad in Ar-Raqqa. ([Al-akhbar 2013/10/28](#))

**Aleppo:** The Syrian Armed Forces captured several areas in the south, took back control of the strategic town Khanaser and thereby reopened the supply route into the capital. ([Assafir 2013/10/17](#))

**Palestinian camps:** conflict is increasingly affecting Palestinian camps with shelling and clashes continuing to take place in and nearby a number of them. A reported 25 Palestine Refugees were killed in the last 2 weeks of October as a result. ([UNRWA 2013/10/29](#))

**Damascus:** Rockets and mortar shells fired by opposition groups have increasingly been launched on various neighbourhoods of the city, including Bab Touma, Umayyad Square, Bab Sharki and on the outskirts (Jaramana, Tadamoun etc.).

**Rural Damascus:** The SAF has recently taken control of the towns of Al-Huseiniyah, Al-Thiyabiyeh and Buwayda in Western Ghouta and Hteitet Al Turkman, the gate between Eastern and Western Ghouta. This capture strengthens the Government's hold on major supply lines and puts pressure on besieged opposition brigades. The SAF has started mobilizing its troops in the vicinity of Qalamoun in the north. ([AFP 2013/10/08](#), [AFP 2013/10/24](#), [Assafir 2013/10/25](#), [Al-akhbar 2013/10/30](#))

**Dar'a:** Opposition fighters, mainly Jabhat Al Nusra, have taken control of 1 of the 2 border crossings with Jordan (the customs cross-border with Ramtha on the Jordanian side). Armed fighters have been progressing in Dar'a El Mahatta, the other division of the city and have captured the town of Tafas which links western to eastern Dar'a. ([The Syrian Observer 2013/09/25](#), [AFP 2013/10/08](#), [Al Jazeera 2013/10/27](#))

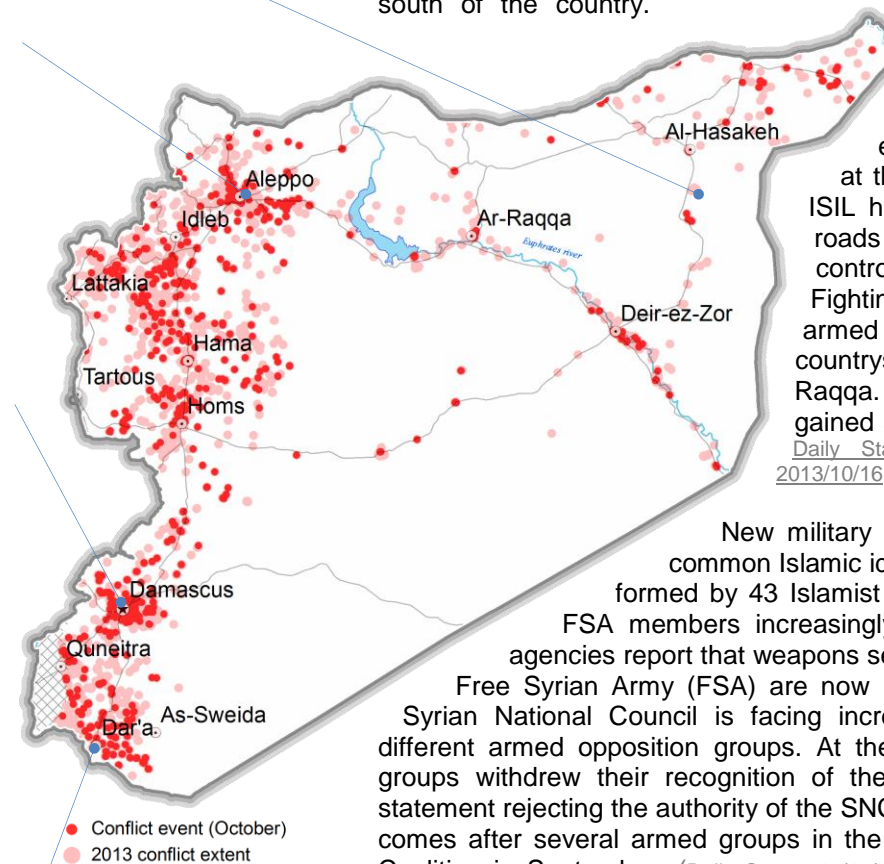
## Key developments country-wide

With the Geneva II peace conference back on the international diplomatic agenda, fighting has increased across Syria since the start of October. Clashes, shelling and airstrikes were reported particularly in Dar'a, Homs, Al-Hasakeh, Aleppo, Idleb, Deir-ez-Zor, northern Lattakia and Damascus and its countryside. The stalemate which characterised the conflict over the last month has reportedly been broken, with the GoS taking control of strategic areas around Damascus and in the south of Aleppo. Opposition forces managed to take control of small pockets in the south of the country.

([Daily Star 2013/10/03](#), [NYT 2013/10/12](#), [AlJazeera 2013/10/14](#), [Al-akhbar 2013/10/17](#))

Meanwhile, ISIL, an extremist armed group linked to Al-Qaeda, enlarged its areas of control in the north, at the expense of other opposition groups. ISIL has for instance set up checkpoints on roads to Turkey border crossings and took control of the strategic border town of Azaz. Fighting raged between ISIL and the Kurdish armed groups in rural Aleppo and Al-Hasakeh countryside and is on-going in Tell Abiad in Ar-Raqqa. In the south, extremists have recently gained a stronger presence. ([Al-akhbar 2013/10/04](#), [Daily Star 2013/10/06](#), [AFP 2013/10/13](#), [Daily Star 2013/10/16](#), [Assafir 2013/10/08](#), [Al Jazeera 2013/10/16](#))

New military alliances have been formed based on common Islamic ideologies, for instance the Army of Islam formed by 43 Islamist groups at the end of September. With FSA members increasingly joining hard-line groups, local news agencies report that weapons sent by international actors to support the Free Syrian Army (FSA) are now reaching the hands of extremists. The Syrian National Council is facing increasing difficulties in consolidating the different armed opposition groups. At the start of the month, major opposition groups withdrew their recognition of the Syrian National Council (SNC). The statement rejecting the authority of the SNC signed by more than 60 armed groups comes after several armed groups in the north announced their rejection of the Coalition in September. ([Daily Star 2013/10/03](#), [AlJazeera 2013/10/05](#), [Al-akhbar 2013/10/07](#), [Assafir 2013/10/14](#), [Assafir 2013/10/25](#))



## Country sectoral analysis

### Key issues October

- **DISPLACEMENT AND SHELTER:** The number of displaced inside Syria is presently estimated at 6.5 million, an increase from 4.25 million in April. While much of the shelter support appears to focus on those in GoS-supported shelters, only an estimated 3% of the total number of displaced reside in these communal centres. The remainder find shelter with host families, in rented apartments, in vacated buildings or in informal tented settlements. Since the start of the school year in September, IDPs residing in school buildings are increasingly forced to find alternative accommodation
- **FUEL:** At the start of October, the GoS withdrew part of the subsidy on fuel, increasing the price by 25% (SYP 20 per litre), making it even more difficult for households to access fuel needed for heating, transport and cooking.
- **FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS:** Even before the subsidy cuts, a large part of the population was unable to access enough income to pay for basic needs. An assessment in the northern governorate of Idlib found that only 20% of households assessed had a regular source of income. Average monthly income was assessed at USD 29, while the costs of food alone stand at USD 37. The absence of GoS price controls puts further pressure on households' income. The wheat planting season started in October, but productivity is severely hampered by the lack of inputs and displacement.
- **PROTECTION:** There are increased reports of the targeting of minorities by Al-Qaeda linked groups. Minorities, including Alawites, Christians, Armenians and Kurds, reportedly suffer a number of human rights violations at ISIL checkpoints.
- **HEALTH and WASH:** The Ministry of Health started a large-scale vaccination campaign for 2.4 million children, following the outbreak of polio in Deir-ez-Zor. The polio outbreak is illustrative of the rapidly deteriorating health situation, with decreasing vaccination coverage (estimated at 70% in 2012), limited access to health care, contamination of water sources and widespread displacement. IDPs face challenges in maintaining hygiene practices, with limited access to sanitation facilities and hygiene items.
- **NUTRITION:** Malnutrition cases were reported in Hama, Homs, Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Quneitra, Deir-Ez-Zor, Idlib and rural Dar'a. As Syria's health system has limited experience with malnutrition, it is likely that the issue is underreported.
- **EDUCATION:** Education facilities continue to be exposed to attacks. An air strike on a high school in Ar-Raqqa city killed 16 people. At least 64 schools have been attacked since the start of 2013

## Displacement

- **Number of IDPs:** Revised estimates indicate that the number of IDPs has increased to 6.5 million from April estimates of 4.25 million. The majority of new displacements between June and September reportedly took place in Homs, Idlib, Aleppo and the north-eastern part of the country. ([WFP 2013/10/18](#))
- While estimates on a governorate level are not yet available, unconfirmed reports indicate that:
  - **Aleppo:** Since 8 October, over 130,000 people have fled As-Safira and surrounding IDP camps due to intensive bombardments. ([MSF 2013/10/14](#))
  - **Dar'a:** The GoS reports that there are over 350,000 IDPs in Dar'a, of which 21,000 are residing in collective shelters. This is nearly double the April estimate of 180,000 IDPs in the governorate. UNICEF indicates that the current estimated population in Dar'a city is 1.2 million people, including 72,000 IDPs families, which have moved from other parts of the city or from the outlying rural areas. Around 4,500 families live in shelters, such as schools and other public buildings, and unfinished buildings. ([OCHA 2013/04/16](#), [Tishreen 2013/10/11](#), [UNICEF 2013/09/26](#))
  - **Hama:** The estimated number of IDPs residing in the city has increased significantly from 90,000 to 130,000 people. ([OCHA 2013/10/10](#), [UNICEF 2013/10/10](#))
  - **Homs:** An attack by the Al Nusra Front in a village 65 km north of the city Homs led to the displacement of an estimated 7,000 people to Mukharram, where they are being hosted by local families or accommodated in schools. ([WFP 2013/09/20](#))
  - **Idlib:** In Idlib city, an estimated 70% of the 1.5 million residents are IDPs. An estimated 430,000 people are 'in need' in the governorate. ([UNICEF 2013/10/24](#))
- Approximately 235,000 refugees are displaced in Syria with over 200,000 in Damascus, around 6,600 in Aleppo, 4,500 in Latakia, 3,050 in Hama, 6,450 in Homs and 13,100 in Dar'a. This number has not been updated since UNRWA's first estimate of displaced Palestinian Refugees in June. As of 20 October, over 8,000 people, including 7,000 Palestinian refugees were accommodated in UNRWA facilities. ([UNRWA 2013/10/20](#), [UNRWA 2013/10/19](#))



## Protection

### Background information

- The Syrian Observatory of Human Rights reports that over 110,000 people, of whom over half were civilians, have been killed since the start of the conflict. The large majority of people were killed in attacks with conventional weapons. Heavy weaponry is being used by GoS forces and increasingly by opposition groups on densely populated areas: improvised explosive devices; explosive fuel bombs, cluster munitions and rocket-propelled grenades are used on civilian neighbourhoods. Targeting of bakeries, schools and health facilities continues to occur. ([UN 2013/09/16](#), [UNHRC 2013/09/25](#), [Daily Star 2013/09/01](#), [SOHR 2013/09/27](#), [HRW 2013/10/01](#), [CMC 2013/08/29](#), [Cluster Monition Coalition 2013/09/09](#), [Inter Press Service 2013/10/10](#))
- Large-scale human rights violations continue to be committed by all sides to the conflict, including summary executions; ill treatment of detainees; torture; rape and kidnappings. Forced displacement of the civilian population, often multiple times, is common. Kidnapping for political, sectarian and financial reasons by both armed and criminal groups is a growing concern. ([UN News Service 2013/09/16](#), [ARA 2013/09/01](#), [Syrian Free Press 2013/09/03](#), [Assafir 2013/09/05](#), [Daily Star 2013/09/11](#))
- Freedom of movement for civilians is severely restricted in parts of the country:
  - GoS forces and opposition groups have systematically besieged certain areas across the country. Sieges, reinforced by snipers and heavily guarded checkpoints / barriers, hamper the free passage of food and other essential supplies and severely limit civilian movement. Areas that have been under siege for multiple months include neighbourhoods of the cities of Aleppo, Damascus, Homs and Idleb and the Palestinian refugee camp Yarmouk. ([AFP 2013/09/18](#), [UNOCHA 2013/09/13](#), [UNICEF 2013/08/29](#), [Human Rights Council 2013/06/04](#))
  - The proliferation of checkpoints along transit routes enables parties to the conflict to harass, detain, and rob civilians, including IDPs and minorities. At checkpoints, people must show ID cards indicating their place of origin and religion; some men from areas alleged to support the opposition have reportedly been questioned and detained at GoS checkpoints. ([Brookings LSE 2013/07/10](#), [WFP 2013/07/25](#), [HRW 2013/07/01](#), [Human Rights Council 2013/06/04](#), [PI 2013/09/20](#))
  - Flight options for those trying to leave the country are limited as entry to Jordan and Turkey is restricted and certain groups cannot enter Lebanon through official border crossings. Border crossings in Iraq remain closed since late September. ([UNHCR 2013/07/16](#), [UNFPA 2013/09/01](#))
- Due to the high levels of displacement and destruction of GoS infrastructure, security of tenure is under threat. The lack of documentation is likely to hamper the return of IDPs to their places of origin. Residents of informal settlements,

which existed pre-crisis near urban centres, with weak tenure are particularly vulnerable. ([OCHA 2013/07/18](#), [Guardian 2013/07/22](#), [Habitat 2013/09/25](#))

- **Palestinian refugees:** Palestinians have been disproportionately affected by the conflict. The vast majority of approximately 530,000 Palestinians registered with UNRWA are in need and more than 50% of all registered Palestinians have been displaced. Yarmouk, the largest Palestinian camp, has been an active centre of conflict. With external flight options restricted, (the Government of Jordan does not allow Palestinians to enter and there are increased restrictions for those entering Lebanon) Palestinian refugees remain a particularly vulnerable group. ([UNRWA 2013/09/06](#), [UNRWA 2013/06/21](#))
- **Third country nationals:** There are a significant number of third country nationals in Syria, including about 49,000 refugees (primarily Iraqi but also Somali and Sudanese) registered with UNHCR, 120,000 migrant workers and a large number of Lebanese who have resided in Syria for a long time. Key protection issues reported include risks from shelling, threats (especially for Iraqi refugees), and incidents of abduction. Most of refugees do not have documentation, apart from UNHCR papers, and experience problems at checkpoints and when crossing borders. ([UNHCR 2013/08/20](#), [OCHA 2013/09/09](#), [IOM 2013/06/07](#), [IOM 2013/03/04](#), [IOM 2013/02/01](#), [CARITAS 2013/01/11](#), [SHARP 2013/06/07](#))
- **Elderly:** Only 2.9% of the registered refugee population is older than 60, compared to an estimated 6% of the Syrian population. This illustrates the particular vulnerability of older people, with many unable to flee. Older people are often forced to stay behind with no support as family members move away. ([UNHCR 2013/10/24](#), [NRC 2013/03/15](#))
- **Disabled:** The crisis has left a significant number of people disabled, with a large number of amputations and a higher proportion of spinal cord injuries than seen in other crises. Persons with disabilities generally represent 15% of a given population and this proportion can increase to 18%-20% in case of a conflict-affected population. However, only 1% of the UNHCR registered population in Lebanon concerns persons with a disability, reflecting the specific vulnerabilities of persons with a disability while trying to flee or accessing registration and services. ([HRW 2013/09/19](#), [Lebanon Protection WG 2013/09/18](#))

### Recent developments

- Extensive negotiations between parties to the conflict led to some positive developments in October, although they were limited in scope and impact. Negotiations between the GoS and SARC temporarily broke the 11 month siege of Madamiyet Elsham to allow approximately 3,000 women, elderly and children to leave the suburbs. There were reports that civilians came under sniper fire as they left Madamiyet Elsham but it was unclear by whom. Once the evacuation was completed, attacks resumed in force. A second round of negotiations allowed hundreds of civilians to leave on 29 October but those

evacuated reported that some civilians refused to leave due to fear. ([OCHA 2013/10/19](#), [ICRC 2013/10/14](#), [Reuters 2013/09/24](#), [PI 2013/10/22](#), [NYT 2013/10/13](#), [PI 2013/10/18](#), [BBC 2013/10/29](#))

- ✦ Negotiations involving the Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Syria and Turkey led to the release of 3 hostage groups. 9 Lebanese men were released by the Northern Storm brigade, 2 Turkish pilots were released by Lebanese kidnappers and about 60 women detainees were released by the GoS in late October. According to Human Rights Watch, tens of thousands of people are in detention due to their involvement in peaceful opposition activities as well as involvement in relief activities, including health staff that treated protestors. ([The Guardian 2013/10/24](#), [AFP 2013/10/20](#), [HRW 2013/10/03](#))
- ✦ In October, 30 Palestinian refugees were killed due to clashes and shelling in Damascus, Rural Damascus and Dar'a governorates, highlighting their heightened vulnerability in the conflict. ([UNRWA 2013/10/29](#), [UNRWA 2013/10/19](#))
- ✦ Opposition groups are holding 104 villagers from northern Lattakia, mostly Alawite women and children, hostage in an attempt to pressure the GoS to release prisoners. ([Amnesty 2013/10/25](#))
- ✦ The Kurdish Popular Protection Units (the YPD) called for a ceasefire for Eid, but it was rejected by extremist Islamic groups. ([Al Jazeera 2013/10/22](#))
- ✦ The increased presence of armed extremist groups, particularly ISIL, has posed threats to minorities and increased sectarianism. In Deir-ez-Zor, a Sufi shrine was reportedly destroyed by Al Qaeda linked groups. Syrian minorities, including Alawites, Christians, Armenians and Kurds are reportedly vulnerable to a number of human rights violations at ISIL checkpoints. ([Al Arabiya 2013/10/13](#), [PI 2013/10/14](#))
- ✦ Due to entry restrictions on Syrians entering Lebanon with damaged or no identity documents as well as threats to activists remaining in Syria, there is reported growth in the sale of fake or forged identity documents, which run from 30 to 50,000 SYP each (170 to 285 USD<sup>1</sup>). ([All4Syria 2013/09/26](#))
- ✦ The rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation created by the conflict and lack of aid in Yarmouk and some other Palestinian camps has created resentment among camp residents against UNRWA and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), which generally have responsibility for basic services. UNRWA withdrew their staff from Yarmouk earlier in the year due to insecurity. ([IPS 2013/10/25](#), [PI 2013/10/16](#))
- ✦ There are unconfirmed reports of organ trade increasing in Syria, with people involuntarily or voluntarily delivering organs in exchange for money. ([Syrian Observer 2013/10/24](#))

## Health

### Background information

- **Health infrastructure:** Large parts of the health infrastructure have been damaged or destroyed: a July MoH report stated that up to 60% of public hospitals have limited or no capacity. The same report indicated that most of the recently damaged health facilities were located in Homs. In Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor and Idleb governorates, 70% of health centres are either damaged or out of service. Makeshift clinics have taken over part of the functions of hospitals but lack equipment and qualified staff. Functional health facilities in relatively secure areas of the country also report overcrowding, long waits and shortages of medicines and supplies due to the increase number of IDPs. About 90% of public ambulances have been damaged. As a result, Syrians are increasingly turning to private health care facilities as the public health system continues to collapse, even though there are limited resources available for additional medical costs. ([OCHA 2013/09/25](#), [OCHA 2013/08/14](#), [IRIN 2013/08/07](#), [Daily Star 2013/09/17](#), [WHO 2013/10/04](#), [Tishreen 2013/10/14](#), [PI 2013/10/29](#))
- Parties to the conflict are using denial of access to medical care as a military tactic. The UN Human Rights Council Commission of Inquiry states that GoS forces have targeted hospitals and medical units to deprive persons perceived to be affiliated with the opposition of medical care. The policy is implemented through attacks on medical units, by endangering hospitals, targeting medical personnel, and interfering with patients receiving treatment. Opposition groups have also attacked medical staff and equipment – for instance, on 16 August, armed groups attacked a Kurdish Red Crescent ambulance in Aleppo governorate killing the driver, a patient and a paramedic. ([UN News Service 2013/09/16](#))
- **Health personnel:** There is a widespread shortage of qualified health personnel, as many have fled and those who remain often face security obstacles in travelling to their place of work. ([OCHA 2013/09/09](#), [Al Watan 2013/09/11](#))
- Although some health facilities and personnel face attacks, the GoS continues to support many hospitals, which includes paying the salaries of health staff working in opposition-controlled areas. Facilities no longer receiving GoS support are reliant on external funding or are forced to raise the standard fees, which are normally set by the MoH. Health personnel are forced to look for other sources of income. ([PI 2013/09/15](#), [Ar-Raqqa City Council & Relief Office 2013/07/24](#), [OCHA 2013/09/09](#), [Al Watan 2013/09/11](#))
- Even before the conflict, mental health care was in short supply in Syria, with reportedly only 70 psychiatrists countrywide. The only functioning public psychiatric hospital, located outside of Damascus, operates with limited capacity because of security concerns. ([WHO 2013/09/22](#))

<sup>1</sup> Within this report, the exchange rate used is SYP 175 to USD 1  
SNAP: Regional Analysis Syria – Part I: Syria - 30 October 2013

- **Medicines and medical equipment:** Syrian pharmaceutical factories currently only cover an estimated 20-30% of the required medicines, compared to 90% pre-crisis. Most factories are located in the heavily contested areas of Aleppo (which covered about 50% of Syria's needs), Homs and in the outskirts of Damascus. 18 of 73 factories have closed because of damage and transport difficulties. In addition, the inability to access raw materials due to the sanctions on imports is one of the main constraints to local production. Although medicines are not subject to sanctions, the financial sanctions hamper transfers through international banks and delays transfers of payments in foreign currencies. The significant depreciation of the SYP compared to the USD is making imports more expensive. The GoS reports that there are 62 kinds of medications missing and the MoH stated that it has major difficulties in securing medicines for chronic diseases, such as diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular conditions. ([Daily Star 2013/07/01](#), [AFP 2013/08/19](#), [Tishreen 2013/10/13](#), [Tishreen 2013/09/17](#), [AFP 2013/08/19](#))
- The GoS has increasingly restricted the delivery of medical supplies to opposition-controlled areas in recent months, refusing to approve medical deliveries; taking medical supplies out of aid convoys; and requiring case-by-case negotiations for the delivery of surgical kits. The restrictions come on top of other constraints facing medical aid deliveries, including the hijacking of aid convoys, attributed to armed opposition groups and criminal elements. ([IRIN 2013/08/07](#))
- **Vaccinations:** Coverage of the pre-crisis Syrian population is estimated at 95%. In 2012, vaccination coverage is estimated to cover 68% of the population due to the conflict, lack of vaccination, cold chain supplies, fuel and import restrictions, which have indirectly challenged the procurement system. As a result, outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles, typhoid, Hepatitis A and polio - a rare occurrence before the conflict - are becoming more common. ([SANA 2013/10/20](#), [BBC 2013/10/21](#), [BBC 2013/10/19](#), [WHO 2013/10/29](#))
- **Quality of medicines:** There are concerns about the quality of the available medicines due to the numerous logistical challenges and lack of regulation, particularly with smuggled goods. Insulin is for instance imported into the country without the necessary cold chain. ([AFP 2013/09/18](#))

#### Recent Developments

- **Health infrastructure:** In the Palestinian camp in Dar'a city, an UNRWA health facility was heavily damaged by intensive clashes among parties to the conflict but is reportedly functional. ([UNRWA 2013/10/14](#), [UNRWA 2013/10/22](#))
- The first specialised burns unit in Syria was established at al Mouwassat Hospital in Damascus in July to responding to the increased number of cases.

The unit currently sees 15-17 patients each week. It is estimated that 15,000 people suffer from burns injuries in Syria. ([WHO 2013/09/17](#))

- **Morbidity and mortality:** Only limited information pertaining to morbidity and outbreaks is available. In September, acute diarrhoea and influenza-like illnesses constituted 78% of the causes of morbidity recorded by the Early Warning and Response System (EWARS) – an average of 86% of sites report. ([WHO 2013/09/07](#), [UNICEF 2013/09/06](#), [OCHA 2013/09](#), [WHO 2013/10/24](#))
- **Outbreaks:** The first polio outbreak in 14 years occurred in Deir-Ez-Zor in early October, with 10 cases confirmed and a further 12 still under investigation. Surveillance is underway to detect other possible cases and immunisation. Around 500,000 children in Syria have not been sufficiently vaccinated against polio in the past two years due to insecurity and access constraints. Estimated immunization rates declined from 91% in 2010 to 68% in 2012. On 24 October, the MoH started a campaign targeting 2.4 million children with vaccines against polio, measles, mumps and rubella but it will be challenging to implement an effective campaign, given the ongoing insecurity. Immunisation campaigns are also planned in neighbouring countries. ([BBC 2013/10/29](#), [Reuters 2013/10/24](#), [UNICEF 2013/10/25](#), [WHO 2013/10/29](#), [WHO 2013/10/29](#))
- Among children under 5, the most common illnesses reported to the EWARS in September were acute diarrhoea and influenza-like illnesses. Throughout September, the number of reported influenza-like illnesses steadily increased, despite variations in the number of reporting sites. During the up-coming winter months, influenza-like illnesses are likely to resurface, as was the case during last winter. In the first week of January 2013 for instance, 93% of morbidity cases reported were due to influenza-like illnesses. ([OCHA 2013/01/21](#), [WHO 2013/10/24](#), [WHO 2013/10/24](#))
- Outbreaks of leishmaniasis (particularly in Aleppo and Homs), brucellosis, tuberculosis (particularly in Homs) and typhoid (190 cases in the village of Kafr Takharim in Idlib) were reported. There were increased reports of other vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles and Hepatitis A.
- **Nutrition:** Increased malnutrition cases were reported in Hama, Homs, Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Quneitra, Deir-Ez-Zor, Idlib and rural Dar'a. The situation in neighbourhoods sealed off from all supplies, including food and medicine, such as Madamiyet Elsham, Yarmouk and Ghouta are of particular concern. The Nutrition Cluster reported that 6 of the estimated 2,000 children in Madamiyet Elsham have died from acute malnutrition. ([UNOCHA 2013/09/13](#), [Syria Observer 2013/09/02](#), [UNICEF 2013/09/19](#), [AFP 2013/09/25](#), [UNICEF 2013/10/10](#), [AFP 2013/10/15](#))
- A WHO partner reported seeing 30-35 cases of malnutrition ranging from anaemia to severe acute malnutrition out of approximately 500 patient consultations per day. ([WHO 2013/09/26](#))



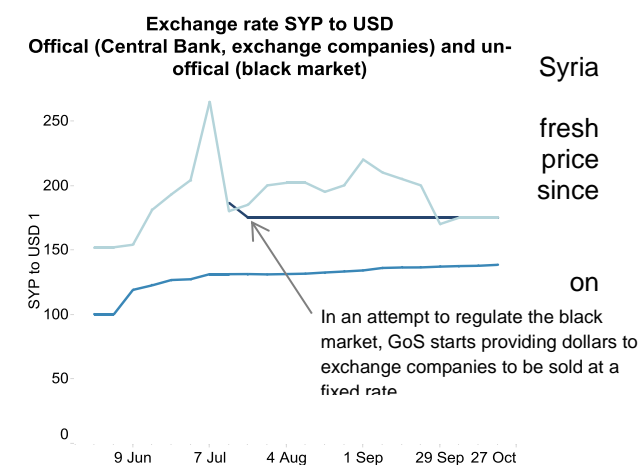
## Livelihoods and food security

### Background information

- **Food availability:** The main sources of wheat, the staple food in Syria, are domestic production and import by the GoS. Due to a lack of inputs and insecurity, the June wheat harvest was the worst in decades. International sanctions on financial transactions have damaged Syria's ability to fund food imports and tenders to buy wheat flour on the international market are often unmet.
- However, commodities are largely available on the market, due to on-going cross border trade, stocks and local production (albeit limited). However, food shortages are apparent in pockets of the country, particularly areas under siege. ([NPR 2013/10/07](#), [AFP 2013/10/15](#), [GOAL 2013/09](#))
- **Food access:** The main reason for food insecurity is affordability of food, as households face increasingly high prices with limited income opportunities. Price increases are largely caused by the decrease of local production, high costs of fuel and the lack of state price controls. In addition, inability of food transport from one area to another due to insecurity, theft, bribes required at check points and road blocks lead to high price variations between different areas. Depreciation of the Syrian Pound against the dollar has increased the price of raw materials, further pushing up prices.
- Before the crisis, the GoS subsidised several basic goods, including bread, and put price caps on other commodities. However, as the GoS resources dwindle, with an estimated 95% drop in oil revenues, subsidies for many items, such as fuel have been cut multiple times since the start of the crisis, although bread subsidies have remained in place. ([Al Watan 2013/10/07](#), [Eqtsiad 2013/10/12](#))
- The FSA and other opposition groups have taken control of public bakeries, which are continuing to sell bread at prices lower than private bakeries. In Aleppo for instance, bread at FSA controlled bakeries costs between SYRP 55 – SYP 75 at the start of October, compared to SYP 150 at private bakeries. ([PI 2013/10/14](#))
- **Livelihoods:** With the deterioration of the economy, illustrated by an estimated 40-60% decrease in GDP since the start of the crisis, a large proportion of the population have lost their traditional source of income. Agriculture, industry and services are the main employment sectors in Syria and all, apart from the public services sector, have been significantly affected by the current crisis. The public sector, employing an estimated 30% of the formal work force, appears to be less affected and continues to form an important source of income for many Syrian households.

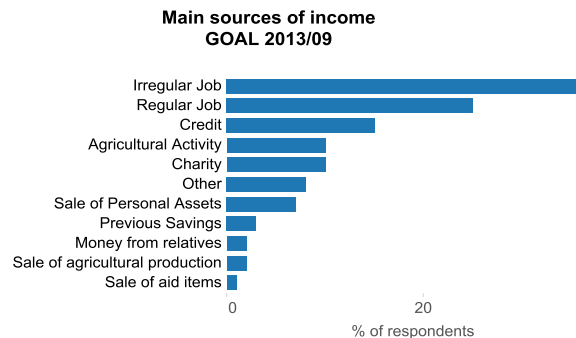
### Recent developments:

- **Food availability:** Along the border with Turkey, markets are fully functional due to cross-border trade with Turkey. However, the Government of Turkey (GoT) has occasionally closed border crossings following clashes in Syria. At the start of the month, one of the official border crossings, Kilis/Oncupinar, was closed due to on-going fighting between different opposition groups in Syria. It can be assumed that this has impacted the availability and prices of goods in the areas around this border crossing.
- **Areas under siege:** Residents of the long besieged areas face acute food shortages and are reportedly surviving on rapidly decreasing stocks, smuggling, and on locally planted herbs and vegetables. In several areas, the food shortages are leading to life-threatening situations, including in the old city of Homs, areas of Eastern Goutha, the Palestinian camp Yarmouk and in Madamiyet Elsham. Syrian clerics issued a ruling or fatwa in mid-October allowing people living in besieged suburbs of Damascus to eat meat that is normally forbidden. In Western Aleppo, up until the lifting of the siege at the start of the month, prices for a tie of bread (900 gram) were as high as SYP 250 and many residents were acquiring bags of flour from smugglers at exorbitant prices. Despite the lifting of the siege at the start of the month, prices remain high. ([AFP 2013/10/15](#), [NPR 2013/10/07](#), [PI 2013/10/14](#), [Al Akhbar 2013/10/07](#))
- **Prices and income:** Food prices continue to rise, increasing overall inflation and further eroding families' purchasing power. Prices for commodities such as rice, lentils, oil and tea have registered the largest increases, at up to 30% in some governorates in the month of September. An assessment in northern showed that the majority of items assessed, including fruit, dairy and meat, saw a increase of over 250% the start of the crisis. Before and during the Islamic holiday Eid-al-Adha, 14 and 15 October, a slight increase was reported. ([Tishreen 2013/10/15](#), [GOAL 2013/09](#))





- ✦ The lack of state control is an additional issue: the price caps (set by the GoS) for food items such as vegetables, fruit and meat, have largely broken down. As a result, prices vary highly across the country and on a daily basis. While bread continues to be subsidised in parts of the country, due to the absence of control, subsidised bread is sold above the 'set' price. ([Syrian Observer 2013/09/20](#))
- ✦ The GoS decreased the subsidies on gasoline and transportation at the start of the month, thereby increasing the prices by 25% (from SYP 80 to SYP 100 per litre of gasoline). This will lead to significant price increases, especially in areas where food is not locally produced. In addition, the GoS issued a decree raising the price of subsidised rice and sugar from November. ([Daily Star 2013/10/05](#), [SANA 2013/10/19](#))
- ✦ Prices for bread have consistently been highest in Aleppo, due to the widespread insecurity and large scale fighting along supply routes.
- ✦ Several NGOs have expressed concern about the impact of bulk buying by humanitarian organisations on local market prices. One NGO reported having stopped the distribution of food baskets in northern areas for a month, to decrease the demand on the market. ([PI 2013/10/24](#))
- ✦ A recent assessment in Idleb, found the average monthly income for a household to be USD 29, while expenditure on food alone is USD 37. ([GOAL 2013/09](#))
- ✦ **Cooking gas:** The same assessment in Idleb found over 50% of the households to have been unable to cook at least once due to their inability to purchase or procure fuel. It is expected that the winter months will compound this problem as more fuel will be used for heating purposes. This will make it increasingly difficult for households to consume dry food. ([GOAL 2013/09](#))
- ✦ **Livelihoods:** The recent increase in transport prices, by 17%, will make it more difficult for people to reach their work or to market their produce. In Damascus, taxi fees increased from SYP 5 to 20 and reached SYP 50 in the countryside. ([Eqṭisad 2013/09/30](#))
- ✦ An assessment in Idleb indicated that only 20% of the 600 households assessed had a regular source of income. Other income sources include irregular jobs, credit, agricultural activities and charity: ([GOAL 2013/10](#))



## Shelter

### Background information

- ✦ **Shelter:** According to various sources, an estimated 20-30% of buildings in the country have been damaged or destroyed, including as many as 5,500 schools and 3,800 mosques. The conflict and widespread damage to infrastructure has resulted in a large number of displaced, with current estimates on the number of IDPs exceeding 6.5 million. Although around 1,000 collective shelters have been set up by the GoS (hosting 180,000 people), 98% of IDPs reside outside these shelters, mostly with host families. Others reside in schools, unfinished buildings, vacated buildings or have pitched tents on vacant lots. As the conflict has continued, both IDPs and host communities' coping mechanisms have been severely overstretched leading to an increasing number of Syrians living in inadequate public or private shelters. Relatively safe areas, such as Damascus city and Tartous, experienced large-scale IDP influxes, further exerting pressure on the already stretched infrastructure and basic social services. Locations where IDPs reside are often congested and rent is increasing. ([UNCR 2013/10/22](#), [WFP 2013/10/12](#), [IOM 2013/07/29](#), [Assafir 2013/08/01](#), [Tishreen 2013/07/31](#), [Al-Akhbar 2013/08/01](#), [AFP 2013/07/06](#), [OCHA 2013/04/08](#))
- ✦ **Electricity and fuel:** Prior to the crisis, over 90% of Syrian households had access to electricity and the Syrian economy and infrastructure rely heavily on the constant flow of electricity. Although power cuts were common before the crisis, the damage to the electricity infrastructure now leaves some areas without electricity for long periods of time. At least 30 of the 400 power stations have been damaged and areas including Aleppo city and Rural Damascus witness power cuts for days on end. In GoS-held areas, GoS subsidised fuel remains the main source of fuel. In the northern areas, fuel originates from Iraq, the makeshift oil refineries across opposition-held areas, or is smuggled from GoS-held areas. The 3 varieties are of different qualities and different prices, but all are much more expensive than before the crisis. Fuel in the north is often of a poor quality, which reportedly causes cooking stoves to explode and cause severe burns. ([Tishreen 2013/09/04](#), [Assafir 2013/09/05](#), [PI 2013/09/19](#), [WB 2009](#), [SANA 2013/07/18](#), [Tishreen 2013/07/18](#), [INGO 2013/07/11](#), [Al-Akhbar 2013/06/28](#), [IPS 2013/10/10](#), [MSF 2013/10/24](#))

### Recent developments:

- ✦ **Shelter:** With the start of the school year in September, IDP families residing in schools were requested to vacate the school to free up classrooms. One NGO reported having been discouraged from providing aid to IDPs in schools. In some instances, alternative shelter for these families is identified. In Lattakia for instance, around 200 families were relocated from schools to unfinished buildings. However, more often, families are not provided alternative shelter. In

Aleppo for instance, families were found squatting in public parks close to the school after they were forced to leave. (PI 2013/10/14, UNICEF 2013/10/10)

- The majority of IDPs living in shelters or vacated buildings are extremely vulnerable to low winter temperatures as shelters lack windows, doors and electricity. (IOM 2013/10/10, Huffington Post 2013/10/17)
- **Electricity and fuel:** Local sources report that cutting of trees is already taking place in preparation for winter. During the last winter, a lack of access to fuel prompted many Syrians to rely on electric heating. However, electricity cuts are now widespread causing many to rely on wood for fuel. (Al Akhbar 2013/10/05)
- Large parts of Syria faced temporary power blackouts after malfunctioning of an electricity plant on the 14 October while, on 23 October, widespread electricity cuts followed an attack on a gas pipeline supplying a power station near Damascus airport. The GoS reports that it is gradually restoring the power supply. (Daily Star 2013/10/14, Tishreen 2013/10/15, Daily Star 2013/10/24)
- The recent GoS decision to decrease subsidies on gasoline will increase gasoline prices throughout the country. Syrians living in opposition controlled regions will see even higher price increases as the increase in fuel prices will directly influence transport costs. (Gulf News 2013/10/21)

Price/ 1 litre	Gasoline
October 2013	SYP 100
May 2013	SYP 80
March 2013	SYP 65
2011	SYP 55

Sources: Al-Watan 2013/10/8, Al-akhbar 2013/10/21

## WASH

### Background information

- Syria's water infrastructure has been regularly damaged during the on-going conflict while electricity cuts prevent water from being pumped to entire neighbourhoods. In one example, damage to a water pipeline in Homs affected water supply to an estimated 1.3 million people in August and it was 2 months before an emergency repair resolved the issue. As the infrastructure across the country is often not repaired in a timely or sustainable manner, it is at risk of deteriorating beyond the point of salvation. The latest figures, from December 2012, showed that an estimated 35% of water treatment plants have been damaged. The lack of chemicals to treat water is a major obstacle to an improvement of the situation, as is the lack of spare parts to repair damaged mechanisms. (UNICEF 2013/10/10, Al Akhbar 2013/10/11)

### Recent developments:

- Contamination of water sources is widespread with, for instance, drinking water in rural Tartous being affected by sanitation waste from a nearby town, endangering the health of the population. Similar cases have been seen regularly across the country as water supplies are affected by infrastructure damage, pollution due to waste and riverbeds disturbed by heavy artillery. (Tishreen 2013/10/20)
- **Waste management:** Many areas, particularly where conflict has concentrated or where GoS services have broken down, have little or no waste management. Rubbish is left on streets, comprising a significant health hazard, and water sanitation treatment may not occur. Industrial waste and rubbish is in some areas dumped into rivers, including into the Baranda River that flows into Damascus. (Tishreen 2013/10/22)
- **Hygiene:** Maintaining hygiene practices is particularly problematic for displaced persons. The IDP camps and collective shelters often lack safe drinking water, sufficient water for washing and an acceptable number of latrines per person, if any are present at all. (UNICEF 2013/08/24)

## Education

- Background information:** The education system in Syria has been heavily affected, with facilities damaged, shortages of staff and material and a large number of students displaced or unable to attend classes due to insecurity. Local media reports that over 4.5 million students started the academic year on 15 September. However UNICEF reports that almost 2 million children have dropped out of school since the last school year. As the estimated number of school age children was 5.3 million in 2010, the reported number of students starting this year may be over-estimated. UNRWA reported in August that of 22,000 school buildings, over 3,600 (16.5%) are damaged, destroyed or being used as shelters by displaced families. As fighting has continued and expanded to different geographic areas since then, it can be assumed that more schools are currently not functional. ([UNRWA 2013/07/22](#), [Save the Children 2013/07/12](#), [SHARP 2013/06/07](#), [UNICEF 2013/09/07](#), [Al Baath 2013/09/16](#))
- Recent developments:** Education facilities continue to be exposed to attacks. An air strike on a high school in Ar-Raqqa city killed 16 people, most of them students and teachers, on 29 September. At least 64 schools have been attacked since the start of 2013. ([AFP 2013/09/29](#))
- The influx of IDPs into relatively safe areas is leading to overcrowding of schools. One source in Tartous estimates that over 35,000 IDPs of school going age are residing in the governorate. Before the crisis, around 160,000 students at pre-university level were enrolled in schools in Tartous. Hence, the influx represents an increase of around 20%. ([Tishreen 2013/10/01](#), [UNICEF 2013/03](#))
- Extremist groups, including ISIL, have opened primary schools. There are concerns over the curriculum taught to children attending classes in these schools. ([Assafir 2013/10/14](#))








## Governorate profiles

The following pages provide a profile of each of the 14 governorates (in alphabetical order). Within these governorates, the following topics are covered: the conflict dynamics, displacement occurring in the governorate and specific needs reported. In addition, an infographic describes the level of information available per sector for the specific governorate.

### Information gaps

	Information available	Limited to no information available
Protection		
Livelihoods and food security		
Health		
Shelter		
WASH		
Education		

### Map symbols

	Conflict extent (October 1-25)		Major roads
	Palestinian refugee camp		Power plants
	IDP camp		Airports
	Official border crossing		

## North Syria

### Aleppo

**Context:** Before the crisis, Aleppo was home to around 20% of Syria's total population and Aleppo city was the country's economic capital and the centre of agriculture, industry and trade. In February 2012, opposition forces gained control over the northern area of the governorate between Aleppo city and the Turkish border, including the 2 official border crossings.

Aleppo city is currently divided between GoS and opposition controlled areas with large swathes of eastern, southern and some of northern areas of the city under opposition control, and the remaining, including the western area, under GoS control. Fierce clashes also broke out in some neighbourhoods as factions within the opposition fought one another for control. Clashes between Kurdish groups and opposition factions are also common.

Aleppo has been severely hit by the conflict and daily life has been heavily affected. For example, OCHA reports that only 6% of school-aged children in Aleppo are attending school and only 18% of the planned agricultural cotton crop was planted - indicating long-term negative effects on the population. ([SOS 2013/09/27](#))

The devastation of Aleppo has far-reaching effects. Before the crisis, 65% of Syrian-manufactured pharmaceuticals were produced in Aleppo's 32 pharmaceutical factories, of which only 9 now function. Of its 26 wheat mills, between 3 and 5 now operate. ([Tishreen 2013/10/03](#))

#### Key developments:

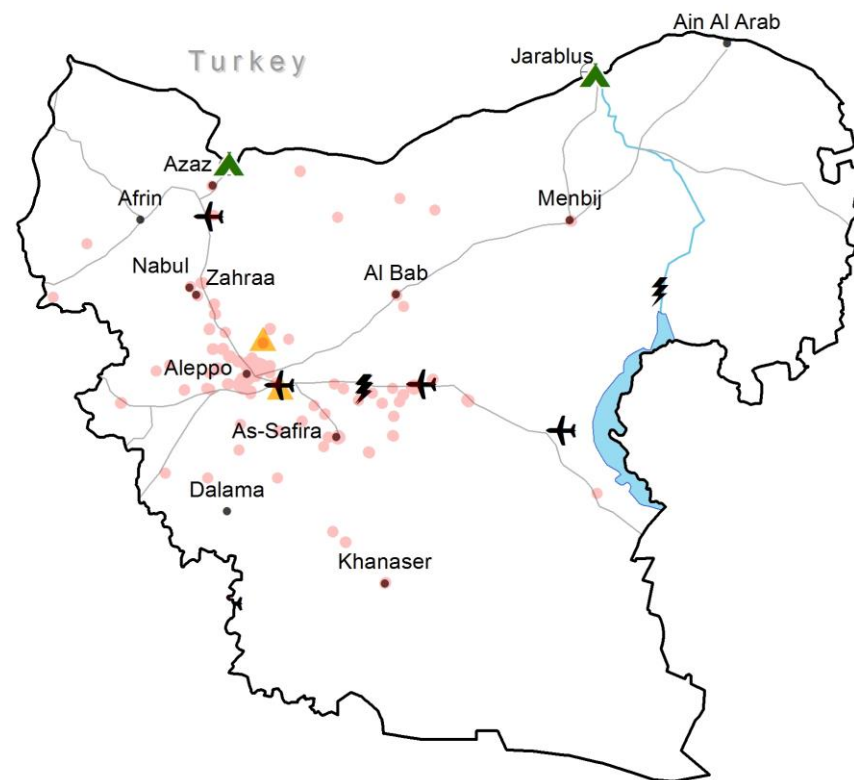
Fighting in October intensified, with dynamics in the governorate shifting: GoS forces made progress in the southeast while opposition forces gained ground in the north. GoS forces secured a victory in the strategic town of Khanasser that led to a route being opened permitting supplies to enter parts of western Aleppo city that for many months had been besieged by opposition forces. Meanwhile, ISIL maintained control of the border town of Azaz and clashes periodically erupted between ISIL and fighters of other opposition groups. The presence of ISIL prompted Turkey to close the border, which was a lifeline for opposition-held northern areas, allowing refugees out and supplies in. ([Daily Star 2013/04/10](#), [Daily Star 2013/10/03](#))

IDP camps in the governorate were shelled this month, displacing at least 130,00 people from the town of As-Safira and the surrounding camps who then fled north. On 21 October, a barrel of TNT was dropped by helicopter onto a field hospital, destroying it. ([MSF 2013/10/25](#))

This month's heavy fighting further disrupted service provision; Aleppo's electricity plant was attacked, causing widespread blackouts and disrupting water supply, leaving some neighbourhoods completely without water. Meanwhile, intense shelling of rural areas displaced many thousands and caused secondary displacement from some IDP camps. ([Al Akhbar 2013/10/11](#), [MSF 2013/10/14](#))

The situation in some neighbourhoods has improved slightly due to the lifting of the siege, which improved the supply of goods to the city of Aleppo. However, the lack of bread, fuel and healthcare continues to affect the local population. Bakeries and hospitals have been repeatedly targeted by GoS forces. ([Inter Press Service 2013/10/10](#))

In Aleppo city, a large number of pedestrians continue to cross between GoS and opposition controlled areas through the Bustan Al-Zahra crossing in search of work or lower prices for basic commodities. The crossing is extremely dangerous and civilians are frequently targeted by snipers.





## Al-Hasakeh

**Context:** Much of Al-Hasakeh is under Kurdish control and there are strong linkages between the Kurdish population in the governorate and their fellow kinsmen in neighbouring Iraq. Although the governorate is Syria's main oil and grain producing region, Al-Hasakeh is traditionally one of the poorest areas in Syria, in part due to the marginalisation, by the GoS, of the Kurdish population.

In July 2012, the YPG (Kurdish Popular Protection Units, the armed wing of the PYD) took control of all towns and cities in the governorate, with the exception of Al-Hasakeh city and a Syrian army base in Quamishli. Since then, clashes between Kurdish groups and opposition fighters have taken place in several areas, including in and around the strategic border town of Ras Al-Ain.

Bordering Turkey and Iraq, Al Hasakeh is a strategic gateway for the provision of supplies to opposition groups. The import of basic essentials such as food and fuel and humanitarian aid, meanwhile, has been severely limited due to heavy fighting and border restrictions. This lack of basic goods, as much as the violence, is the reason why many thousands have fled the governorate. Concurrently, information on the humanitarian situation is hard to come by.

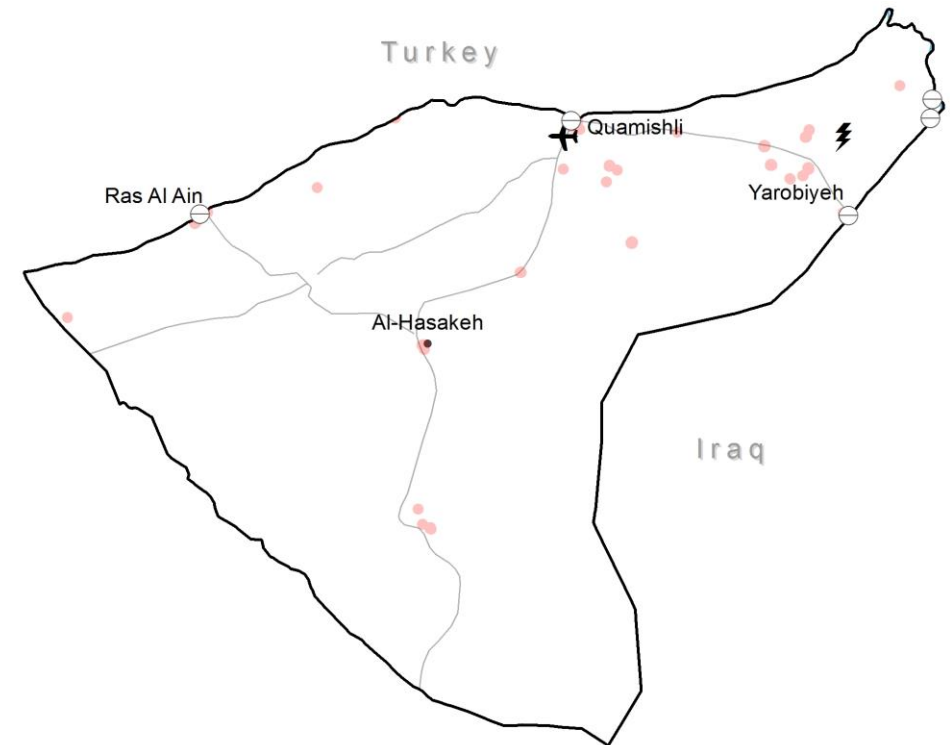
### Key Developments:

Fighting between Kurdish groups and Al Qaeda-linked factions has been fierce. The groups are battling for control of border towns and oil wells. Meanwhile, the southern regions of the governorate continue to suffer GoS aerial bombardments and artillery shelling. On 26 October, Kurdish fighters seized control of the Al Yarobiyeh border crossing with Iraq after a heavy battle with ISIL. Fighting between the 2 groups is ongoing, particularly in Ras Al Ain. ([Daily Star 2013/10/26](#))

A ceasefire for Eid, called for by the YPG, was rejected by extremist groups, highlighting the low chance of the conflict in the governorate abating any time soon. ([Al Jazeera 2013/10/22](#))

Although the heavy clashes this month are likely to have resulted in new displacement and a further deterioration of access to services, no information on these topics has become available.

Of concern are shortages of drinking water due partly to a declining flow between Ar-Raqq'a's western and eastern dams, and partly to the lack of electricity for pumps. In September, the supply of drinking water was for instance interrupted for 4 straight days. ([OCHA 2013/09/25](#), [Tishreen 2013/09/02](#) [Tishreen 2013/09/05](#))



## Ar-Raqqa

**Context:** Ar-Raqqa governorate, located on the bank of the Euphrates, has a long history of Bedouin tribes and Arabic clans. Nowadays the clans represent around 70% of the social structure of the countryside and rely mainly on agriculture.

In March 2013, opposition forces (ISIL, Jabhat Al Nusra and Ahrar El Sham) took control of Ar-Raqqa city, holding it and the surrounding areas ever since. Consequently the governorate is subject to frequent GoS aerial attacks. As in other northern governorates, the humanitarian situation in Ar-Raqqa is dire, with large-scale protection concerns including kidnapping, aerial bombardments and field executions.



### Key developments

Aerial bombardment of Ar-Raqqa city continues, as does sporadic shelling of the town of Ath-Thawra (Al-Tabaqa). Clashes have been reported between ISIL and a battalion of the FSA in Ar-Raqqa city. Tell Abiad city remains heavily contested: the border town is a strategic area through which individuals, arms and goods enter and exit Turkey. In addition, renewed clashes have been raging between Kurdish armed forces and ISIL fighters in the countryside of Tell Abiad. Arbitrary arrests, repression of opponents' opinions and protests, lawlessness and kidnapping have been incessant in Ar-Raqqa governorate. In October, a journalist and several humanitarian activists were kidnapped by ISIL and other Islamic brigades. ([Assafir 2013/10/02](#), [ARA 2013/10/14](#), [Al-Jazeera 2013/09/25](#), [PI 2013/10/21](#))

Displacement from Ar-Raqqa city to the countryside is on-going, due to continuous aerial bombardment of the city and severe protection issues. As in other northern governorates, livelihoods have been severely disrupted in Ar-Raqqa. Rural communities rely mainly on agriculture, which is heavily affected, and the public sector. Farmers have not been able to sell their produce, as families can no longer afford price increases while public sector staff have not been receiving salaries since the city was taken over by opposition groups in March. Wheat reserves are diminishing due to thefts and low agriculture production. ([PI 2013/10/16](#), [PI 2013/10/21](#))

Disease outbreaks are difficult to control as the National hospital, the only public hospital in the city, suffers from an acute shortage of medicines. Shelling by GoS forces recently damaged the hospital ([PI 2013/10/21](#), [PI 2013/10/21](#))

Education facilities have been targeted and, as a result, some families are reluctant to send their children to school. On 29 September for instance, an air strike on a high school in the city killed 16 people. Meanwhile, most of the governorate has been inaccessible to humanitarian agencies for the past 10 months. ([PI 2013/10/21](#), [AFP 2013/09/29](#), [UNHCR 2013/09/27](#), [UNICEF 2013/10/10](#))

## Deir-Ez-Zor

**Context:** Social structures in the energy-rich governorate are primarily tribal, extending across the border into Iraq, and the GoS historically enjoys less of a support base in Deir-ez-Zor. The region is remote, receives little media coverage, and smuggling is rife. Humanitarian access remains problematic owing to the intensity of the fighting in parts of the governorate and the proliferation of armed groups.

### Key Developments:

Polio broke out in Deir-ez-Zor, with 22 young children contracting the paralysing disease (10 cases confirmed and 12 awaiting confirmation). The children are mostly under the age of 2 and are therefore un-vaccinated or have not received sufficient vaccination due to the crisis disrupting healthcare provision. ([WHO 2013/10/29](#))

Shelling of opposition positions has been heavy this month. GoS forces control the military airport and some neighbourhoods in western Deir-ez-Zor city, while opposition groups are in control of a large swathe of territory stretching from Deir-ez-Zor city to the Iraqi border. In addition, tensions between ISIL and other opposition groups are reported to be rising.

Also this month, a Sufi shrine was destroyed in an opposition-held town. Local activists have accused Al Qaeda-linked groups of being behind the explosion and suggest that this latest attack is proof of the extremists' growing presence in the region. ([Al Arabiya 2013/10/13](#))

The breakdown of law and order and social services in areas of the governorate has left local communities with insufficient service provision and vulnerable to extortionate prices. Water supply and electricity are increasingly disrupted, while water pollution is common due to the refinement of oil and damage to water infrastructure. In September, for instance, the disruption of an oil pipeline led to the shutdown of several water purification plants that were affected by the leak. ([Al Watan 2013/09/30](#))

Subsidised bread is largely unavailable and many have to rely on high-priced bread from the black market. ([Al Watan 2013/09/30](#))



## Idleb

**Context:** Some of the conflict's harshest battles have taken place in the governorate, leaving GoS forces in control of the major cities (including Idleb) and access routes (especially towards Hama and the Mediterranean Coast) while the armed opposition's numerous factions have staked out territory in the surrounding countryside. Idleb governorate also hosts the highest number of IDP camps in Syria.

### Key Developments:

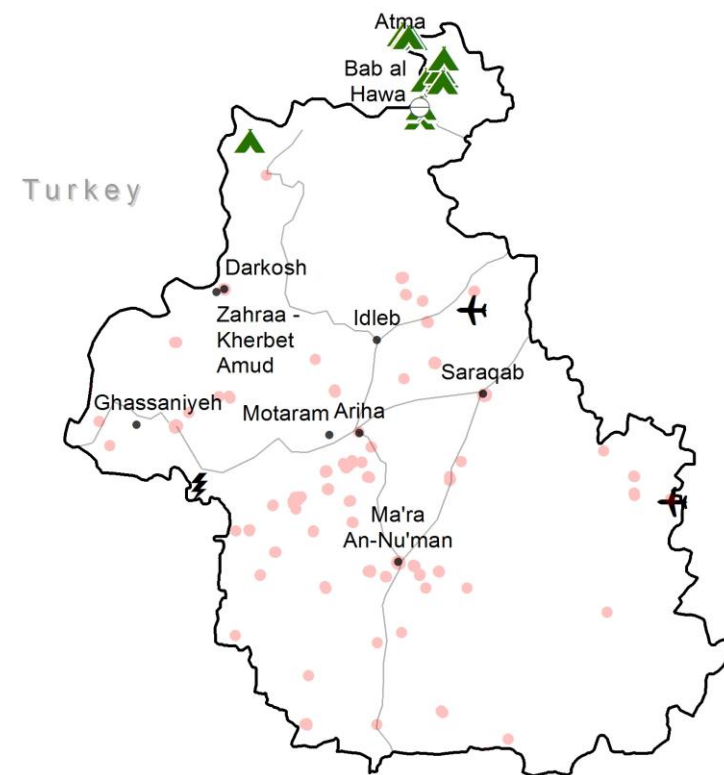
Idleb suffered its most intense fighting in months as opposition forces launched operation 'Earthquake' in a bid to secure the 2 military bases they have held under siege for almost a year, one of which holds a large arsenal of weapons. Elsewhere, fighting between ISIL and Kurdish groups continued. In rural Idleb, ISIL made considerable progress, gaining control of Bab Al Hawa border crossing. Violence is widespread; the latest car bombing in the town of Darkoush, 2km from the Turkish border killed 60 people and injured at least 90 others. The violence and clashes have led to a new wave of displacement. ([AFP 2013/10/07](#), [Al Akhbar 2013/10/09](#), [Al Akhbar 2013/09/27](#), [Al Jazeera 2013/10/14](#))

An estimated 430,000 people are 'in need' in the governorate. In Idleb city, an estimated 70% of the 1.5 million residents are IDPs, displaced from the surrounding countryside. There are at least 26 IDP identified camps in the governorate. In some camps, there is insufficient shelter and families are forced to share tents or even to sleep outdoors. Many camps have insufficient water and sanitation facilities. Waterborne diseases and malnutrition among children have been reported. Perhaps most worryingly, UNICEF has reported the emergence of another typhoid outbreak in the governorate, with 345 cases reported during the second half of September. Also, around 100,000 children under 5 are estimated to be at high risk of polio exposure throughout the governorate. ([Inter Press Service 2013/10/10](#), [UNICEF 2013/10/10](#), [UNICEF 2013/10/24](#))

In Idleb city, there is only one functioning hospital. SARC runs two clinics providing essential medical services, including a mobile clinic servicing the IDP shelters. Diarrhoea and upper respiratory tract infections were reported to be common in children, as was lice. There are field hospitals in the governorate, and a doctor explained that while opposition fighters receive free treatment in these, civilians have to pay 50% of the fees. ([UNICEF 2013/10/24](#))

In rural areas, water networks have broken down and people have to dig wells and rely on untreated water. In Idleb city, all 5 of the city's sewage treatment plants are out of order and the sewage is dumped, causing potential contamination of ground water. ([UNICEF 2013/10/24](#))

6 Red Cross workers and a SARC colleague were abducted on 13 October after delivering medical supplies in Idleb. 4 were released the next day but there is no news on the other 3 as of 28 October. The abductions highlight the risks humanitarian workers undertake and the growing access issues hampering service delivery. Earlier in the month, UNICEF staff visited the governorate, stating that it was one of the few times in 2 years it was considered safe enough to do so. ([Daily Star 2013/10/15](#), [UNICEF 2013/10/24](#))



## West Syria

### Tartous

**Context:** The majority Alawite governorate is separated from the rest of the country by a mountain range, the Orontes River, and a ring of more than 40 checkpoints continuously strengthened by security forces. The governorate has become an important refuge for IDPs from Alawite, Shia, Christian and other minority backgrounds.

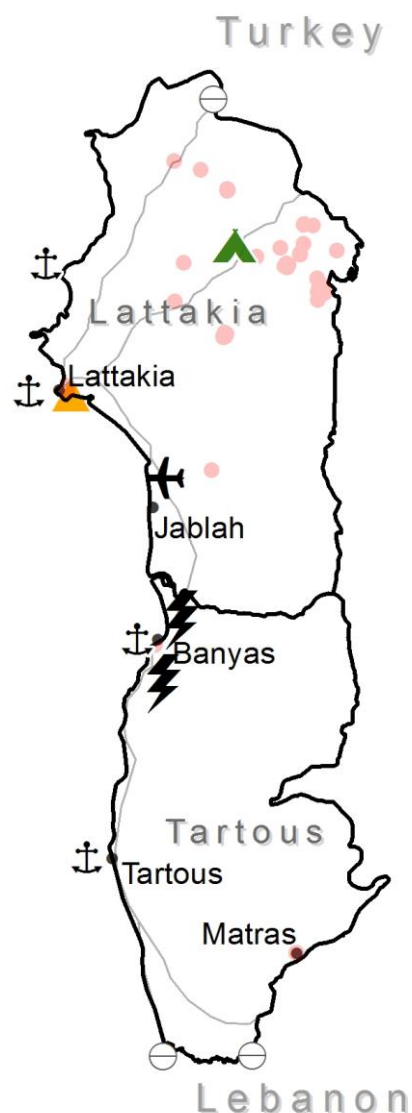
Though violence in Tartous is relatively rare, clashes have recommenced in the southeast of the governorate in October.

#### Key Developments:

Conflict broke out in the town of Al Mitras between GoS forces and Turkmen opposition fighters. Al Mitras used to be a route for the opposition forces to move supplies from Lebanon through to Tal Kalakh. Fighting ended through negotiations, but at least 8 civilians were killed. The town lies near Bayda and Banyas, which saw sectarian violence in May. ([Daily Star 2013/10/05](#), [Al Akhbar 2013/10/07](#))

The governorate hosts at least 21 IDP communal shelters, the inhabitants of which are highly vulnerable to protection concerns and are living in dire WASH conditions. The large majority of IDPs, however, reside outside the communal shelters with host families, in unfinished buildings, etc. Negative coping mechanisms among those displaced are on the rise. ([Huffington Post 2013/08/30](#))

The large IDP population, originating from all over Syria, is placing an increasing strain on infrastructure and basic social services in Tartous. For example, local authorities have estimated that there are 35,000 displaced children of school age in the governorate and 7 local schools have introduced double shifts to accommodate the influx. ([UNICEF 2013/09/06](#), [Tishreen 2013/10/01](#))



### Latakia

**Context:** The Governorate of Latakia is the ancestral homeland of President al-Assad's family and the Alawite sect. The majority of the governorate is under GoS control, although opposition groups have captured villages in the areas bordering Turkey.

Although relatively calm, the governorate has seen clashes in its northeastern region over recent months, which have led to the displacement of thousands. Human Rights Watch in October published a report on the violence and atrocities meted out on civilians in Latakia, 200 of whom died at the hands of opposition fighters. This month Amnesty International stated that armed opposition groups are holding at least 105 hostages, mostly women and children, from villages in the governorate. The human rights group claims that as the hostages belong to the Alawite sect, they are risk of being tortured and killed. ([Amnesty International 2013/10/25](#))

#### Key Developments:

Given the isolation of the conflict in the upper rural region, the governorate attracts many IDPs. Those who can afford it stay in hotels and rented apartments; the prices of which have trebled during the crisis. Others live in schools but recently 200 families been moved to collective shelters in unfinished buildings. ([Al Akhbar 2013/10/12](#), [UNICEF 2013/10/10](#))

The high prices and sheer numbers of IDPs in Latakia mean that those with no resources are highly vulnerable. Police have reported finding expired prescription drugs and bad meat for sale. Hospitals have announced that the increased population is putting pressure on services and waiting times are now very long. ([Tishreen 2013/10/14](#), [Tishreen 2013/10/02](#))



## Central Syria

### Hama

**Context:** Known for its historical opposition to the ruling Ba'ath Party and subsequent government crackdown in 1982, Hama governorate remains largely under GoS control. Hama has endured heavy fighting throughout the 2-year conflict and is one of the most affected governorates in Syria due to its proximity to heavily contested areas in the north and central regions. The north of the governorate is of particular strategic importance due to the main road linking Damascus to Aleppo.

#### Key developments

The number of people in need is estimated to have nearly doubled in Hama since April. The number of IDPs has significantly increased due to Hama's proximity to Aleppo, Homs and Idlib, the most conflict-affected areas of the country. A UN inter-agency mission to Hama city conducted on 23 and 24 September reported a nearly 50% increase in IDPs from 90,000 to 130,000 people due to increased conflict. The priority needs identified by the mission were winterisation, nutrition and WASH. (PI 2013/09/30, UNICEF 2013/10/10, OCHA 2013/10/07)

Alarming numbers of malnutrition cases and critical shortages of medicine and medical supplies have been reported. A local health agency reported seeing 30-35 cases of malnutrition ranging from anaemia to severe acute malnutrition out of approximately 500 patient consultations per day. Shortages of trauma medicine and supplies, such as anaesthetics, intravenous fluids, surgical equipment and burn ointments were reported. In addition, there are shortages of supplies and medicines for chronic treatment. The number of dialysis patients in Hama has reportedly significantly increased while more than half of the available dialysis machines in one hospital are not functioning. (WHO 2013/09/26)

The main water channel supplying 1.3 million people, primarily in Hama as well as Homs, has been repaired following severe damage in mid-August. (UNICEF 2013/10/10, OCHA 2013/10/07)

Although information on the on-going clashes in the governorate is scarce, the few available reports indicate that violence is widespread. On 20 October, a truck bomb struck a SAF checkpoint on the Hama - As-Salamiyeh road on the outskirts of Hama, killing more than 30 people, including dozens of civilians and some soldiers. (BBC 2013/10/20, Al Akhbar 2013/10/20, Reuters 2013/10/20)

Hama National Hospital reportedly requires 75 million SYP in order to continue its work, as it copes with the increase in patients. (Tishreen 2013/10/22)

### Homs

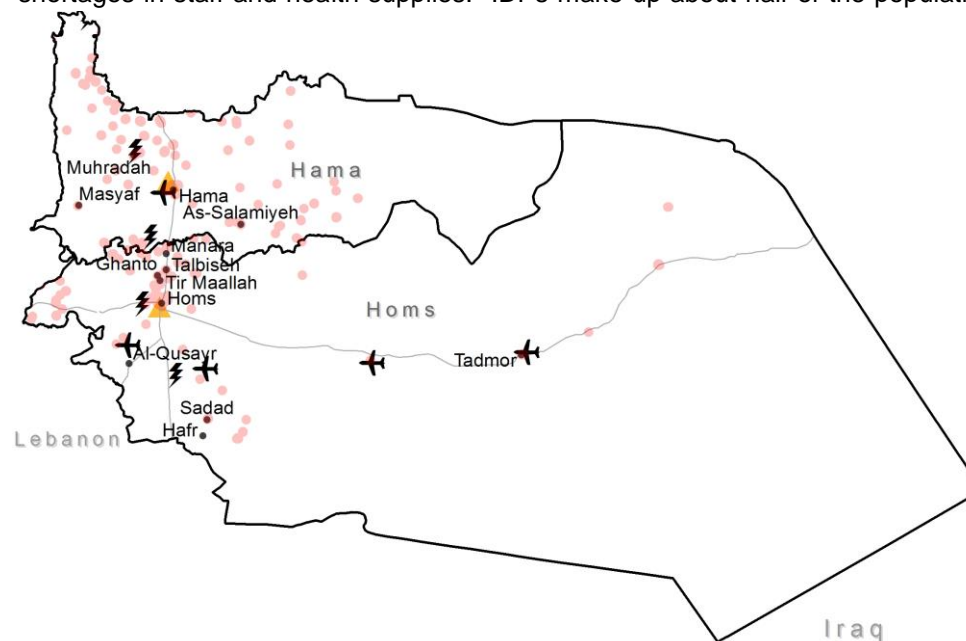
**Context:** Homs lies along a highway axis running north to Hama and Aleppo and south to Damascus and Dar'a, a vital road juncture linking army bases and ports on the coast, and GoS forces in Damascus.

The GoS is in control of Homs city, except for besieged pockets, and most of the governorate - save for several towns in northern, rural Homs. Many opposition-controlled areas across the governorate are under siege by the GoS and have little access to humanitarian assistance or basic supplies.

#### Key developments

Estimates indicate that the number of IDPs in Homs has increased by 40% since April. There are an estimated 30,000 people, including 13,000 IDPs, living in the besieged areas of Tir Maallah and Ghanto in rural Homs. Fighting has taken place in local farmlands in these areas, which have severely affected food availability, leading to skyrocketing prices and limited access to food for the population. (PI 2013/10/28, PI 2013/09/30)

A UN inter-agency mission to the besieged suburb of al-Wa'er took place in early October. The humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate with limited freedom of movement, overcrowded and unsanitary living conditions, serious winterisation needs, and very limited education and health services. 10 out of 11 schools are being used to shelter IDPs, leaving 2,000 children who attend classes to learn in ad hoc and outdoor spaces. One private hospital is operational but faces major shortages in staff and health supplies. IDPs make up about half of the population



of al-Wa'er with approximately 200,000 people. 13,000 of those IDPs are living in collective centres. ([UNICEF 2013/10/10](#), [UNICEF 2013/10/14](#))

The humanitarian situation of an estimated 3,000 people in the besieged neighbourhoods of the Old City, Bab Houd, Joret Elshyah and Alqousor of Homs is deteriorating rapidly as flour, basic medical supplies and fuel stocks are running out and clashes and shelling continue. Doors, window frames and furniture have already been removed from buildings to be used as fuel for the coming winter. The Old City has been cut off from all supplies from outside for 16 months. ([Catholic Herald 2013/09/27](#), [Syria Deeply 2013/09/24](#), [UNICEF 2013/10/10](#), [Daily Star 2013/10/25](#))

Malnutrition is reportedly a priority health concern in Homs, followed by treatment for war wounded, maternal health and chronic diseases. ([PI 2013/10/28](#))

Residents of besieged areas have reportedly dug tunnels to avoid sniper fire and to smuggle in goods from outside. Some tunnels have been found and destroyed by GoS forces. ([Guardian 2013/10/12](#), [Syria Deeply 2013/10/04](#))

The main water channel supplying 1.3 million people, primarily in Hama as well as Homs has been repaired following severe damage in mid-August. ([UNICEF 2013/10/10](#), [OCHA 2013/10/07](#))

The villages of Sadad and Hafr, previously uncontested, in southern Homs governorate were briefly captured by Jabhat al Nusra then re-taken by the GoS after one week of fighting. 5 civilians were reportedly killed during clashes. 3,000 families are believed to be living in the two villages, many of whom are IDPs from other parts of the country. ([Mennonite Central Committee 2013/10/25](#), [AP 2013/10/27](#), [Al Akhbar 2013/10/29](#), [Daily Star 2013/10/28](#))

68 cases of tuberculosis in Homs and 1,000 cases of leishmaniasis were reported to the Homs health directorate between January and July. ([Tishreen 2013/10/06](#))

There are reports of snipers around al-Wa'er preventing free movement of people and goods in and out of the besieged neighbourhood. SARC health teams have come under fire 4 times in one month and a UNICEF partner's office was damaged by rocket fire. Kidnapping of civilians in Homs city remains common for financial gain and political purposes. ([Guardian 2013/10/12](#), [UNICEF 2013/10/14](#), [Syria Deeply 2013/10/04](#))

## Damascus and Rural Damascus

**Context:** Clashes between the SAF and opposition forces have ebbed and flowed since violence first reached the ancient Syrian capital in March 2012. The GoS continues to focus its military forces to secure an area of control in a radius of about 8 km around the city to protect against opposition incursions from strongholds in the Damascus suburbs and Rural Damascus. Damascus city has drawn a large number of IDPs due to its relative safety and availability of goods and services.

### Key Developments

In October, clashes and shelling increased to unseen levels across both the Damascus suburbs, where opposition forces hold a number of enclaves, and central areas of the city which were also targeted by mortar shells and car bombs, and rural areas surrounding the city. The GoS bolstered its forces to re-take the Damascus suburbs by drawing on Iraqi Shi'a militias, in addition to irregular forces such as the National Defense Forces and Hezbollah. At the end of October, the GoS succeeded in gaining control of the strategic Buwaydah neighbourhood, as well as Hteitet Elturkman on the airport highway. Car bombs were largely symbolic, targeting GoS checkpoints and the state television building, but killed and injured a significant number of civilian. ([OCHA 2013/10/10](#), [AFP 2013/09/30](#), [AFP 2013/09/29](#), [Al Akhbar 2013/10/08](#), [Al Akhbar 2013/10/07](#), [Al Akhbar 2013/10/07](#), [Daily Star 2013/10/03](#), [Al Akhbar 2013/10/03](#), [Al Akhbar 2013/10/14](#), [Al Akhbar 2013/10/14](#), [Assafir 2013/10/07](#), [AFP 2013/10/06](#), [Assafir 2013/10/07](#), [Guardian 2013/10/04](#), [Daily Star 2013/10/14](#), [NYT 2013/10/13](#), [AFP 2013/10/18](#), [Al Akhbar 2013/10/21](#), [UNRWA 2013/10/19](#), [AFP 2013/10/24](#) )

Protection, food, nutrition and health in besieged areas including Yarmouk camp, Madamiyet Elsham, Babella, Eastern Ghouta, Qaboun and Barzeh, remain a priority concern. Limited to no supplies have been allowed in, in some cases for nearly one year. The GoS continued to tighten the siege of eastern Ghouta and sealed off more smuggling routes. The lack of supplies has led to skyrocketing prices with a bag of bread reported to cost 5 USD. 12 Palestinian refugees were killed due to clashes in Yarmouk. In addition, there are reports of people grinding lentils with leaves and dog meat to supplement their diet in the Palestinian camp. While some residents of besieged areas are planting food and raising some livestock, the quantities are limited and people risk sniper fire when working in the open. Those injured as a result of increasing clashes and shelling are able to access very limited medical treatment due to the shortage of basic supplies. ([AFP 2013/10/15](#), [OCHA 2013/10/10](#), [Al Akhbar 2013/10/11](#), [Reuters 2013/10/04](#), [WSJ 2013/10/02](#), [UNRWA 2013/10/29](#), [Daily Star 2013/10/23](#))

Negotiations between the GoS and SARC temporarily broke the 11 month siege of Madamiyet Elsham to allow over 3,000 women, elderly and children to leave the suburbs in two separate evacuations. In the first evacuation, affected civilians were taken to shelters in a neighbouring suburb where they received assistance from SNAP: [Regional Analysis Syria – Part I: Syria - 30 October 2013](#)

SARC. There were reports that civilians came under sniper fire as they left Madamiyet Elsham. Once the evacuation was completed, attacks reportedly resumed in force. On 29 October, hundreds more were released but some reported that civilians remained due to fear. 6 children reportedly died from malnutrition in recent months and starvation remains a major concern, particularly among children and women. ([Al Monitor 2013/10/13](#), [OCHA 2013/10/19](#), [ICRC 2013/10/14](#), [Reuters 2013/09/24](#), [PI 2013/10/22](#), [NYT 2013/10/13](#), [PI 2013/10/18](#), [BBC 2013/10/30](#))

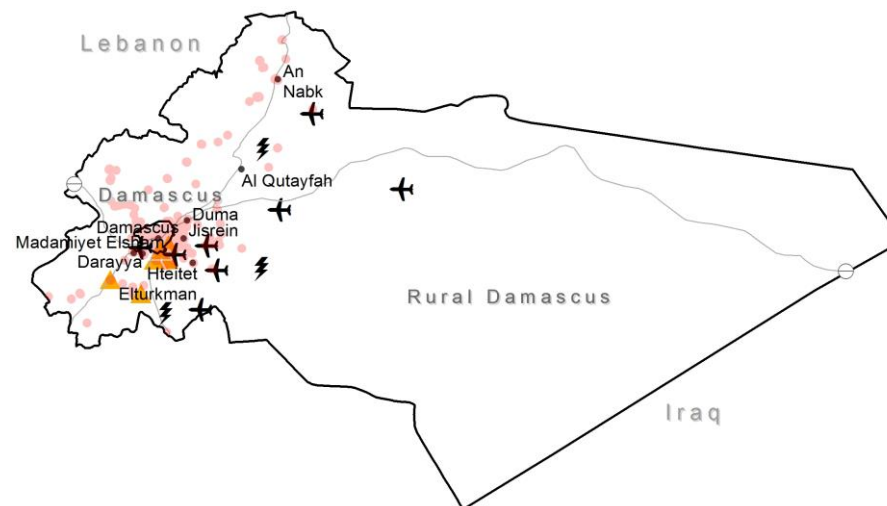
It is reported that some IDPs, particularly those from areas believed to be sympathetic to the opposition, are not permitted to reside in GoS-controlled areas in Damascus. Authorities in these areas reportedly require IDPs to acquire a residence permit, although it was unclear what and who is responsible for issuing the permit. ([Reuters 2013/09/27](#))

There are growing concerns with the public water supply as the GoS seeks to develop emergency water channels from Quneitra for the growing IDP population in Damascus and Rural Damascus. The cost for the water network is estimated to cost SYP 450 million (USD 2.5 million). ([Tishreen 2013/09/30](#))

Housing prices remain high in Damascus. Even in the embattled neighbourhood of Jaramana, rent for a house costs 20,000 SYP (USD 115). ([Al Akhbar 2013/10/22](#))

Clothing prices are estimated to have increased 4-fold since 2011, which will contribute to increased demand for winterisation assistance. ([Al Watan 2013/10/09](#))

**Operational Constraints:** UN agencies have requested access to Madamiyet Elsham 7 times and have still not gained access despite the recent release of civilians. An estimated 800,000 people affected by the conflict in Rural Damascus are not accessible to aid agencies. ISIL forces in Yarmouk have reportedly detained local activists involved in aid activities ([NYT 2013/10/13](#), [Al Akhbar 2013/09/27](#), [PI 2013/10/28](#))



## South Syria

### Dar'a

**Context:** Home to the first uprising in March 2011, Dar'a is an ancient transit route between Syria and Jordan, as well as the Gulf states. Bordering the Golan Heights and close to Israel, Dar'a is traditionally one of the most militarised regions in Syria.

GoS forces lost some momentum in Dar'a in October as it shifted its focus to Damascus. The southwestern corner of the governorate, along the Golan Heights and Jordanian border, is primarily under opposition control and is subject to regular shelling and airstrikes. The GoS controls the north and west of the governorate. Fighting is largely focused on population centres along the transit routes between Damascus and Jordan.

#### Key developments

As GoS forces shifted its focus to the Damascus suburbs, opposition groups took advantage of the reduced SAF presence in Dar'a to launch offensives in the governorate. The opposition is reportedly aiming to re-establish a direct corridor between Dar'a city and the Jordan border, which has been cut off by the SAF presence in the Dar'a al Mahattat neighbourhood.

In late September, opposition groups took control of al Hajjaneh, located between the Jordanian border and Dar'a city. As the border remains closed by the Jordanian authorities, the gain is more symbolic than strategic. Opposition fighters also gained control of checkpoints on the outskirts of Tafas. (Dar'a Provincial Council 2013/10/09, [AFP 2013/10/09](#), [Al Monitor 2013/09/26](#).)

Water shortages are a growing concern in southeastern Dar'a due to increased pressure on wells due to IDP influx, some wells being taken over by armed groups and electricity cuts. (PI 2013/10/28, Dar'a Provincial Council 2013/10/29)

Intensive armed conflict in the Dar'a Palestinian refugee camp continues with at least 7 Palestinian refugees killed by shelling in October. Two UNRWA facilities, a health facility and a women's centre, sustained heavy damage, further aggravating the humanitarian situation in the camp. ([USAID 2013/10/25](#), [UNRWA 2014/10/14](#))

Displacement continues in Dar'a and the number of IDPs have reportedly tripled in the last year. There are large IDP concentrations in districts bordering Jordan as well as Sanamayn and Izraa districts. Recent clashes in October led to IDPs fleeing to al Yadudah, al Mzeireib and al Ajami, where they live in host communities. An estimated 10,000 IDPs are also reported to be displaced in and around Tal Shihab, living in public facilities and local homes. There are no reports of tented settlements along the border. ([Syria Direct 2013/10/01](#), Dar'a Provincial Council 2013/10/14)

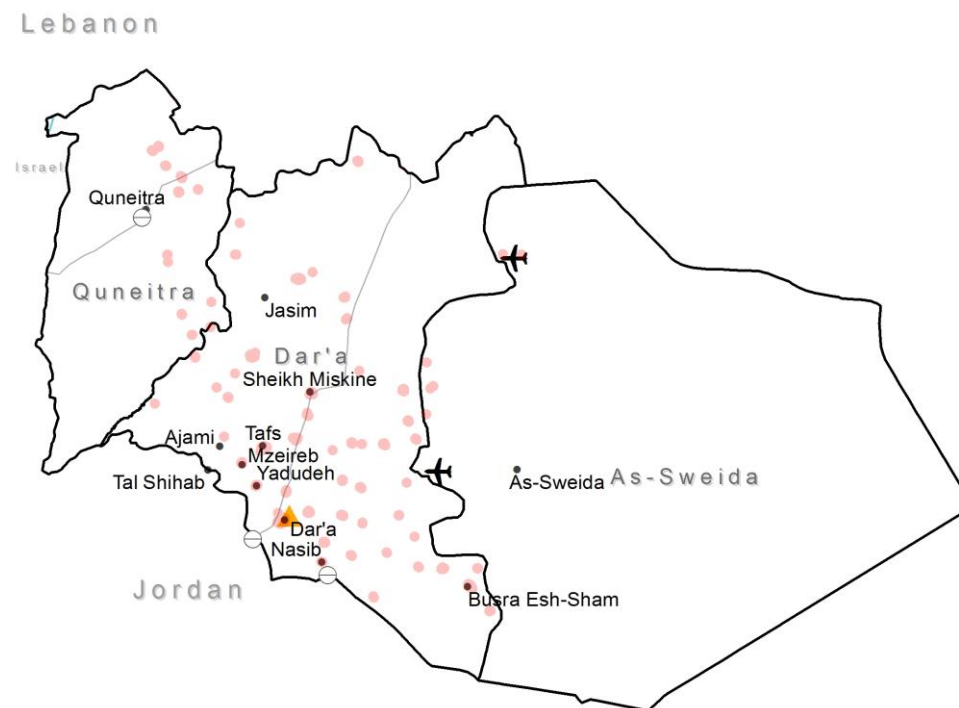
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Major fuel shortages are expected again in Dar'a; the effects of which will be compounded by the increase in IDPs since last winter, overstretched resources and continuing inflation. The heating fuel needs are estimated at 80 million litres for the governorate. Last year, the GoS allocated 9 million litres to the governorate. Opposition-controlled areas generally access supplies smuggled from Jordan or from GoS controlled areas. ([Tishreen 2013/10/15](#))

3 FSA fighters were accused by a local Islamist committee, supported by Jabhat al Nusra, in Mseifra of plotting to assassinate FSA commanders. This action could indicate increased fracturing among the opposition, as widely seen in northern Syria. ([Daily Star 2013/10/15](#))

Local councils reported that the priority winterisation needs are for heating fuel and warm clothing due to limited supplies and increasing prices. (Dar'a Provincial Council 2013/10/09)

Subsidised bread is reportedly available in government-controlled areas at a cost of SYP 15. In other areas, bread costs are approximately SYP 60 per bag. (Dar'a Provincial Council 2013/10/09, [WFP 2013/09/10](#))





## Quneitra

**Context:** This rural governorate is particularly delicate given its proximity to the Israeli occupied Golan Heights. Clashes began in early November 2012, when the SAF clashed with opposition groups in several towns and villages in the governorate. Quneitra generally witnesses sporadic fighting between the opposition and GoS forces.

### Key developments

Contractors hired by Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) have nearly finished constructing a 6 metre high, 65 mile long reinforced wall with motion sensors and cameras along the Golan Heights and Quneitra. ([LA Times 2013/10/11](#))

On 9 October, 2 Israeli soldiers in the Golan Heights were lightly injured by a stray mortar shell from fighting in Quneitra. IDF returned fire with a missile at the source in Syria. ([Reuters 2013/10/09](#), [Times of Israel 2013/10/09](#))

No recent information is available on the humanitarian situation in the governorate, although it is expected that the population continues to have access to most of the GoS provided services and subsidised goods. In July, it was reported that the only hospital in Quneitra was suffering from a significant shortage of medical personnel and equipment. It is unclear if the health situation has improved since then. ([Tishreen 2013/07/13](#))

## As-Sweida

**Context:** Mountainous As-Sweida governorate continues to be one of the least directly affected areas in Syria. The area is inhabited by Druze communities, which mainly support the GoS.

The governorate continued to be relatively calm in October. However, its population is indirectly affected by weakened livelihoods, lack of fuel and increase in prices. Because of its relative stability, the governorate has experienced an influx of IDPs, estimated at between 15 to 30,000 people. IDP entry and residence in As-Sweida is restricted and closely monitored by GoS forces. ([PI 2013/09/18](#))

**Key developments:** If the opposition makes territorial gains in neighbouring Dar'a, particularly on transit routes connecting as-Sweida and Damascus, there could be increased tensions between opposition groups and Druze communities. In addition, the recent detention of 2 Druze FSA fighters by a local Dar'a committee, reportedly with the involvement of Jabhat al Nusra, may heighten sectarian tensions. ([Daily Star 2013/10/15](#))

GoS is providing for 50% of As-Sweida's fuel needs. Winters are harsh in the governorate due to its mountainous geography. ([Al Akhbar 2013/10/21](#))

## Previous SNAP reports

- **Regional Analysis for Syria (Part I and Part II)** January – September 2013
- **Thematic reports**
  - Aleppo Governorate Profile April 2013
  - Legal Status of Individuals Fleeing Syria June 2013
  - Impact of the conflict on Syrian economy and livelihoods July 2013
  - Syrian border crossings September 2013
  - Assessment Lessons Learned September 2013
  - Lebanon baseline data October 2013
- **Scenarios** February 2013 and September 2013

All reports can be found on: <http://www.acaps.org/en/pages/syria-snap-project>

## Forthcoming SNAP reports

- **RAS (Part I and Part II)** 5 December 2013  
*The RAS report will be updated on a monthly basis*
- **Thematic reports:**
  - Cross-border movements of goods November 2013
  - Governorate profile: Al-Hasakeh November 2013

## Map data sources

Administration: OCHA Common Operational Datasets. Oil and Gas: Lynx Information Systems Ltd. IDP camps: ACU. Refugee camps & IDP locations: State Department HUI. Infrastructure: Global Energy Observatory, OCHA, WFP, Global Security. Conflict incidents: UNMAS, UNDSS, Ethnicity: GeoEPR. Border crossings: SNAP. Palestinian camps: SNAP.

## Definitions

In this report the term opposition forces is used to refer to all armed groups and individuals engaged in armed conflict against the GoS.

**Methodology** – This desk study presents estimations of scale, severity and likely impact of a disaster. It aims to inform decision making for preparedness and emergency response and intends to complement and integrate assessment-related data from other agencies. Feedback to improve the RAS is welcome ([snap@acaps.org](mailto:snap@acaps.org)).

**Disclaimer** – Information provided is provisional as it has not been possible to independently verify field reports. As this report covers highly dynamic subject, utility of the information may decrease with time.

**References** – ACAPS and MapAction would like to thank all organisations that have provided input to this report. Please note that all sources which are available online are hyperlinked (underlined, in brackets). Information sourced as 'PI' refers to personal interviews with persons unknown to the SNAP project. Information sourced as a 'Trusted Source' refers to information received from an actor known and trusted by the project.

