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This report is produced by the OCHA Syria Crisis offices with the contribution of all sectors in the hubs and at the Whole of Syria (WoS) level. It covers the period from 6 November – 10 December 2017. The next report will be issued on or around 10 January 2018.

Highlights

- The overall humanitarian and protection situation for civilians displaced from Ar-Raqqa city remains of high concern, particularly with regard to explosive hazards contamination, amongst other factors. Surveys and clearance of potentially contaminated areas is required to ensure access for humanitarian partners and create a safe environment that is conducive for safe, voluntary and informed returns.
- Despite continued messaging against returning to areas contaminated with explosive hazards, death and injury due to mine explosions continue to be reported with alarming frequency with trauma cases nearly doubling since the height of the military offensive. Between 20 October and 13 December, approximately 209 civilians were reportedly killed and hundreds of others injured due to presence of explosive hazards in Ar-Raqqa city.
- The humanitarian community has developed a joint position paper on the return to Ar-Raqqa city, highlighting the imperative of safety, voluntary, well informed and sustainable return as the criteria guiding interventions in support to the return of the displaced population.
- Ongoing military operations in Deir-ez-Zor and associated heavy aerial attacks have reportedly resulted in hundreds of civilian casualties, as well as increased civilian displacement. During the reporting period, an alarming number of unconfirmed indiscriminate airstrike attacks against 15 IDP sites reportedly killed 166 civilians and injured hundreds more.

20,694

people displaced from Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor governorates between 1 – 30 November (Source: CCCM Cluster). Over 570,000 displacements recorded since November 2016



420,186

people reached with food assistance from 1 – 30 November in Ar-Raqqa, Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh and Deir-ez-Zor governorates



91,610

people benefiting from nutrition assistance distributed in Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor and Hassakeh governorates from 1 – 30 November



15,700

children aged 0-59 months were vaccinated against polio in Al-Hasakeh governorate from 1 – 30 November



Situation Overview

Ar-Raqqa Governorate

With reduction of hostilities across the governorate since late October, thousands of IDPs seek to return to their communities of origin, likely to locations in severe need of mine action and repairs to shelters, roads and other infrastructure and with severely limited basic services.

In Ar-Raqqa city, some civilians are reportedly returning to the east and western peripheries of the city despite continued warnings by parties in control to urge residents to not return until mine clearance operations are completed. Numbers of returnees remain difficult to verify, as many people simply return to Ar-Raqqa to check on their houses and belongings, inspect the extent of damage to their property, carry out simple repairs and leave soon after. A few choose to stay. According to local authorities, approximately 12,500 people returned to the Ma'amoun and Tishreen neighborhoods. Approximately 130 families have returned to Hetin neighborhood and an estimated 20 IDP families reportedly returned to the Ammar Ibn Yaser neighborhood in Ar-Raqqa city. According to parties in control, about 2,100 families also returned to Al-Mashlab neighborhood east of Ar-Raqqa city. Qassedine neighborhood was also declared cleared for civilian returns in early December by parties in control.

One of the most pressing challenges facing returnees to Ar-Raqqa city is the presence of scores of IEDs and landmines. Residents will be allowed by parties in control to return on a neighborhood-to-neighborhood basis, as

each is declared free of landmines and rubble removed. To date, only Tishreen, Hettin and Ma'amoun neighborhoods in the eastern part of Ar-Raqqa city have been declared cleared by parties in control for civilian returns, while individuals who had previously returned to the Yarmouk neighborhood were permitted to stay. Mine action partners however, continue to warn that areas declared as 'cleared' continue to be unsafe for civilians particularly as clearance efforts taking place are limited to roads and critical infrastructure and do not include residential areas which remain highly contaminated. Those who have returned permanently did so due to the lack of any other options, and are therefore considered to be in dire need.

As IDPs return to Ar-Raqqa city, the number of protection incidents from explosive remnants of war (ERWs) has increased. Between 20 October and 13 December, approximately 209 civilians were reportedly killed and many others injured due to presence of explosive hazards. Amongst those killed, four were individuals working for mine action partners. This trend is likely to continue, particularly since mine clearance activities do not include household-level clearance.

Humanitarian partners continue robust messaging in IDP sites that Ar-Raqqa city and surrounding areas are not safe for returns, as well as against provision of broad humanitarian assistance in Ar-Raqqa city which may create a pull factor for IDPs. The humanitarian community has developed a joint position paper on the return to Ar-Raqqa city, highlighting the imperative of safety, voluntary, well informed and sustainable return as the criteria guiding any intervention in support to the return of the displaced population.

In addition to the threat posed by unexploded hazards, up to 80 per cent of all buildings in Ar-Raqqa city are severely damaged, and at risk of collapse. Many corpses reportedly remain trapped under the rubble, where they, until adequately buried, pose a risk of spreading communicable diseases amongst the returnee population. Rubble removal work will be conducted in tandem with a medical team.

Returnees to Ar-Raqqa city reportedly face additional challenges amidst a shortage of basic necessities and services. Electricity and waste management services are unavailable, and about 60 per cent of the sewage system is damaged. Water is being pumped for two hours per day, however, 40 per cent of returnees to Ma'amoun neighborhood do not have access to water due to damage in the water supply network and many resort to purchasing water. Some food can be purchased in the reopened stores, and bread is being produced by local bakeries. The single greatest protection concern, however, remains the prevalence of UXOs and landmines despite Tishreen and Ma'amoun neighborhoods having been officially opened for civilian returns by parties in control, following demining efforts. During the reporting period, between 70 and 80 trauma cases were reported from Ma'amoun alone, with almost all blast injuries occurring in the victims' homes or in the immediate vicinity of their home.

In the western countryside of Ar-Raqqa governorate, electricity returned to around 13 villages after village-level initiatives succeeded in repairing the damaged networks in these villages. The local authorities carried out repair works of the damaged part of the networks between the different villages, and connected them to the lines that are coming from the Tabqa dam.

In Ath-Thawrah (Tabqa) town and surrounding communities, the legislative council passed the conscription law for men between the age of 18 – 40 years old. The law offers exemption for several cases including men with medical conditions and those who have already had lost a family member while fighting with the SDF, however, NGO workers are not among the exempted category. Similar to Menbij district, the issue of conscription is likely to present a challenge for NGOs operating in the area, as a significant number of NGO workers are between 18 – 40 years of age. The general perception of the law by the locals is mostly negative, which could lead to tensions – similar to those recently seen in Menbij district - between the locals and the authorities.

On 27 November, local authorities issued a circular asking NGOs not to hire any workers outside of the list that is provided by the local labour office. Following discussions between humanitarians and local authorities, the latter agreed to adjust its position and issued another circular with the following five points: i) NGOs are requested to share job advertisements with all councils and publicly on social media, ii) NGOs are requested to clarify the type of requirements that are needed for the advertised position, iii) Priority to be given to locals from the area, iv) NGOs are entitled to accept applicants irrespective of whether they are registered with the labor office, v) NGOs are urged not to hire more than one person from the same family.

In Government of Syria (GoS) controlled areas of Ar-Raqqa governorate, an estimated 1,800 IDP families have reportedly returned the eastern countryside. An estimated 800 families have returned to Ma'adan area in the southern and western banks of the Euphrates River, where some basic services have been restored. In Debsi and Mansura villages, so far about 1,900 families have returned after access to water was reportedly restored. Another 35 IDP families reportedly returned to Sabkha town and the countryside, where humanitarian conditions reportedly remain dire. As there are reportedly no bakeries available in the area, bread is reportedly smuggled from SDF-controlled areas for 300 SY/bundle. People also purchase basic commodities from the SDF-controlled areas. The only available health center in the area is not operational due to lack of equipment and staff. The area also lacks drinkable water in

quantities sufficient from all returnees. Although SARC had sent a water purification station to the area on 20 November, drinkable water remains scarce due to a shortage of fuel which means that the pump cannot be operated effectively.

Significant humanitarian gaps remain across the governorate, particularly in strained communities hosting thousands of displaced people. Access to clean water and electricity is severely limited throughout the governorate. The lack of operational health care facilities remains a critical concern with approximately 92 per cent of the 77 health facilities in Ar-Raqqa governorate are non-functional, with only one health facility fully functional. Many IDPs are in need of adequate shelter, particularly in informal tented settlements, where IDPs are using makeshift shelters or are sleeping in the open.

Deir-ez-Zor Governorate

Throughout the reporting period, GoS and aligned forces on the one hand, and Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) on the other, continued their separate advances against ISIL in southern rural Deir-ez-Zor governorate. Throughout the reporting period, clashes continued between GoS forces and ISIL in areas east of Al-Mayadin and other areas west of Abu Kamal city. On 20 November, GoS forces gained full control of Abu Kamal city. At the same time, SDF forces advanced south from Al-Hasakeh governorate, gaining control of formerly ISIL-held territory north of the Euphrates river.

Ongoing military operations and associated heavy aerial attacks have reportedly resulted in hundreds of civilian casualties, as well as increased civilian displacement. GoS advances against ISIL in southeastern Deir-ez-Zor governorate along the Euphrates River displaced more than 69,000 people from Abu Kamal sub-district between November 1 and 12, according to IOM. More than 42,000 IDPs fled to nearby areas of the governorate, while more than 18,000 fled to Ar-Raqqa and Al Hasakah and more than 8,100 fled to Idlib governorate. During the reporting period, an alarming number of unconfirmed indiscriminate airstrike attacks against 15 IDP sites reportedly killed 166 civilians and injured hundreds more.

On 16 November, GoS forces took control of Hwyjet Katea, an island in the Euphrates River in the outskirts of Deir-ez-Zor city, after surrounding the area since the beginning of November 2017. ISIL had reportedly retreated to the island on 2 November, taking with them around 150 civilians, after the GoS took full control of Deir-ez-Zor city. The fate of the estimated 150 civilians who had also been on the island remains unknown.

Across the governorate, humanitarian needs remain high. Communities are reportedly unable to access the main water network, and most face issues with water quality. To cope with reduced access to water, communities are relying on previously stored water, purchasing water with cash usually reserved for other purposes, and in some instances reducing water consumption or drinking unsafe water. Although markets are reportedly operating in most communities, most are not fully functional and access is challenging. Disrupted supply routes are limiting the quantity of food available. Access to healthcare is also limited, with an estimated 57 per cent of health facilities partially functional and the remainder non-functioning. There is no access to the main electricity network across the governorate.

While displacement remained high during the reporting period, hundreds of IDPs began to return to their homes. On 7 November, dozens of families arrived in Deir-ez-Zor via public transport buses. On 23 November, 570 families returned to Basira and the north-western rural countryside. An additional 200 families returned to Al-Qusour and Al-Joura neighborhoods in Deir-ez-Zor city from Damascus and other Syrian governorates. On 26 November, about 200 families returned to their home area Husseinieh in the western countryside. Between 4 and 5 December, about 250 families returned to GoS-controlled areas in the western countryside. On 6 December, an estimated of 100 IDP households from Al-Hirri IDP camp, which lies close to the Iraqi border, were reportedly allowed to return to their houses in Abo Kamal sub-district in Deir-ez-Zor governorate. Approximately 600 IDP families also returned to their homes in GoS-controlled eastern countryside.



Displacement Trends

More than 570,000 displacements (some may be secondary displacements) have taken place from Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa governorates since the start of military operations in November 2016, according to the CCCM cluster.

Ar-Raqqa governorate

As military operations against ISIL in Ar-Raqqa governorate concluded, further large scale displacements are unlikely. As the focus shifts to returns, conditions are not met for a safe, dignified and sustainable return of IDPs, especially in terms of physical safety.

Deir-ez-Zor governorate

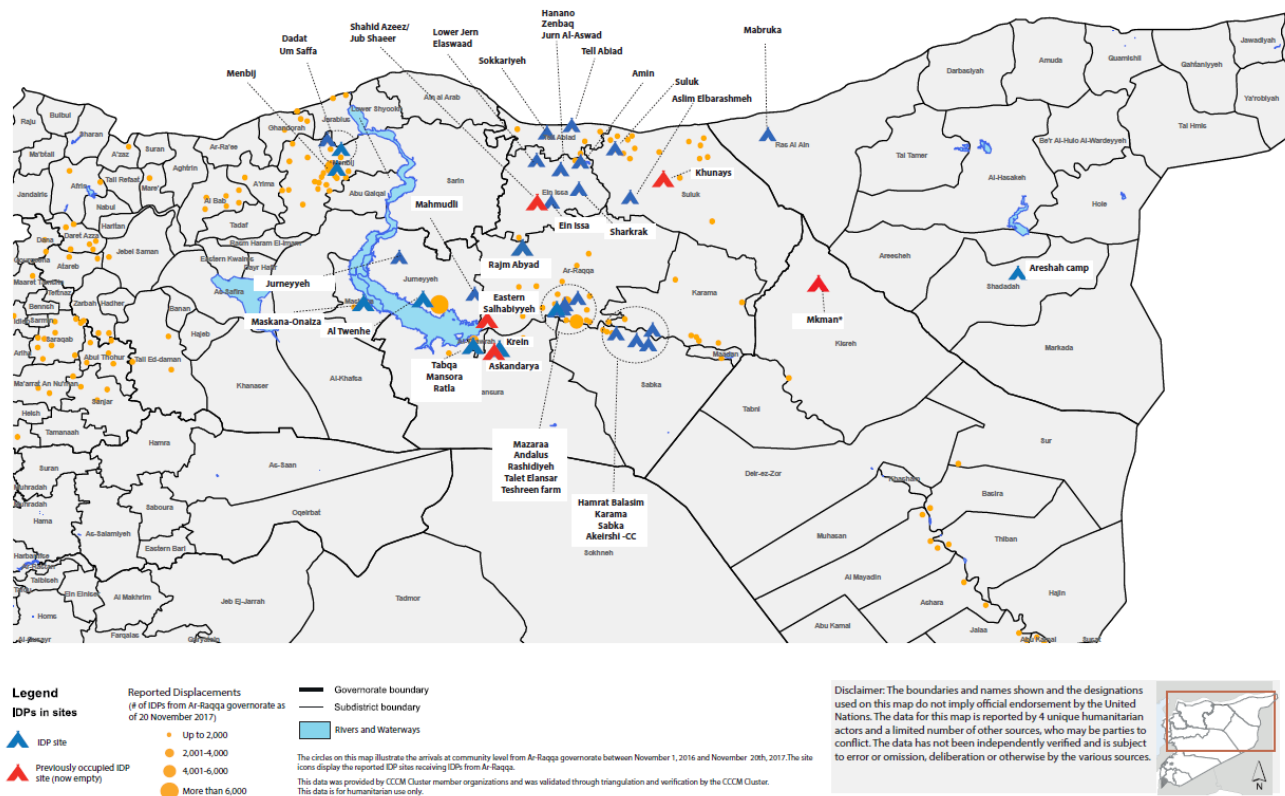
Military offensives to retake the remaining ISIL-held areas continue to prompt significant population displacement, with 20,381 displacements registered from or within the governorate between 1 and 30 November, according to the CCCM cluster.

GoS advances against ISIL south-east along the Euphrates River displaced more than 69,000 people¹ from Abu Kamal sub-district between November 1 and 12, according to IOM. The majority of IDPs, more than 42,000, fled to nearby areas of the governorate, while more than 18,000 fled to Ar-Raqqa and Al-Hassakeh and more than 8,100 fled to Idlib Governorate. It was reported that the majority of IDPs are suffering dire circumstances, due to extreme shortage of shelter, food items and potable water. The majority is currently staying in makeshift camps or out of camps. On 6 December, an estimated number of 150 households were displaced northwards from Swaidan village located on the north side of the Euphrates River bank under the SDF control due to ongoing fighting.

A reduction in numbers of IDPs at the Al Malha and Abu Khasheb IDPs gathering sites as well as in key IDP camps has been noticed during the reporting period. While intermittently up to 7,000 people had been assembled at the Al Malha IDP gathering point, daily arrival numbers have since dropped to between 100 and 120 families. The reduction in arrival numbers has been attributed to a reduction of military operations in some areas as well as increased departure rates. The Al-Malha screening point is located 70 km north of Deir-ez-Zor city and serves, alongside Abu Kashab, as one of the primary IDP screening sites. Both facilities lack basic necessities, such as sufficient tents and WASH facilities, and are located in unsafe locations.

On 1 December, approximately 400 families reportedly displaced from Sweidan Jazira and Darnaj areas to Al-Hassakeh governorate due to clashes between SDF and ISIL. On same day, approximately 500 families reportedly displaced from Kishkiyeh and Abu Hamam areas to Al-Hasakeh governorate and Al-Badiyeh (i.e desert areas) due to clashes between SDF and ISIL. On 2 December, SDF reportedly permitted about 100 IDP families to return to their areas of origin in the Thiban area in the Deir-ez-Zor countryside. On 6 December, a number of IDPs reportedly returned to their villages in rural Deir-ez-Zor after displacement to northern rural Deir-ez-Zor governorate and IDP camps in Al-Hassakeh governorate. An estimated 400 households returned to Hatla, 350 households to Murat and 250 households to Al Salhiya under the SDF held-area.

Syrian Arab Republic: IDP sites, displacements from Ar-Raqqa + Deir-ez-Zor governorates as of 20 Nov. 2017



¹ Inconsistent displacement estimations are largely attributed to delays in data verification and triangulation.

Main IDP sites (as of 29 November 2017)

IDPs from Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor governorates continue to be accommodated in a number of camps across northeast Syria. The average daily arrival for Areesh, Mabrouka and Ain Issa camps decreased significantly during the reporting period. In the case of Areesh and Mabrouka camps, departure rates now exceed the arrival rates, leading to a gradual emptying of the camps. Al-Hol camp also recently saw the departure of 12,000 some Iraqi refugees back to Iraq.

Notwithstanding the improvement in screening procedures and the reduction of daily influx, many sites continue to have an IDP population that is exceeding the camps' intended capacity.

Al Hol Camp	
Population	Approximately 5,494 IDPs and 9,500 Iraqi refugees (camp capacity: 34,000)
Response	An estimated 500,000 liters of water are trucked into the camp each day by UNICEF and WASH partners. Hygiene promotion sessions are on-going. The construction of 80 emergency VIP latrines is completed and latrine cleaning is ongoing. In phase 1, installation of a 45 m3 water storage tank is ongoing. In phase 4, construction of a 7.8 km sewage network is also ongoing.
Gaps	A mobile medical unit will be deployed to provide health care services in Phase 5 area following delays in the establishment of health care services.
Key Concerns	During the reporting period, the average daily arrival rates decreased significantly. The overall camp population has decreased by 42 per cent. 12,000 Iraqi refugees recently departed the camp and returned to Iraq.

Ain Issa Site	
Population	Approximately 18,645 individuals (camp capacity: 14,000 people)
Response	A combination of water network and water trucking provides an estimated 450,000 liters of water each day. The construction of 100 toilets and showers is completed. An additional 23 emergency latrines are under construction. WASH facilities cleaning, camp cleaning, garbage collection, hygiene promotion sessions and desludging services are ongoing.
Gaps	There is no health care clinic operating within the expansion area. The site lacks ambulances and an established referral system. More than half of households reported that shelter maintenance and repair are needed in advance of the winter season.
Key Concerns	The camp has more than 13,000 children, with approximately 6,000 under the age of five. Average daily departures now outpace daily arrivals, with 1,350 departures compared to 880 arrivals. The overall camp population has decreased by 16 per cent.

Mabrouka Site	
Population	Approximately 9,274 individuals (camp capacity: 7,200 people)
Response	An estimated 340,000 liters of water are trucked into the camp each day by UNICEF and WASH partners. Construction of 100 toilets and 100 showers is completed. Garbage collection and cleaning of latrines is ongoing. WASH partners are conducting hygiene promotion sessions and distributed 1,600 family hygiene kits.
Gaps	Gaps in the provision of health assistance continue. On 7 December, a woman and three children reportedly died in the camp allegedly due to medical negligence amidst heavy rainy storms. The camp administration denied any deaths. 150 tents and 500 blankets were provided to IDPs whose tents were damaged by the storm. Garbage removal remains a critical need.
Key Concerns	On November 25, IDPs originally from Deir-ez-Zor governorate were allowed to return to areas in Deir-ez-Zor under SDF control. During the reporting period, the average daily arrival and departure rates decreased significantly. The overall camp population has decreased by 64 per cent.

Areesh (Bahra) Transit Site	
Population	Approximately 25,124 individuals (camp capacity: 28,000)
Response	Winterization response is ongoing. Water trucking provides an estimated 500,000 liters of water per day. Water tank installation ongoing, with 11 out of 60 tanks installed. Construction of 130 emergency latrines completed, with an additional 80 latrines under construction. WASH facilities cleaning, garbage collection, and desludging services are ongoing. During the reporting period, 50,680 bars of soap, 4,598 baby diapers, 5,608 washing powder, 3,978 women sanitary napkins and 3,000 family hygiene kits were distributed.
Gaps	While health services are available from MSF and KRC/UPP, there is currently no health screening for new arrivals. Garbage collection and waste management required.

Key Concerns	Average daily departures now outpace daily arrivals. Voluntary registration of IDPs at the site who wish to return to Deir-ez-Zor on-going. The camp maybe closed due to flooding risk in the winter season. The overall camp population has decreased by 36 per cent.
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Al-Malha Checkpoint	
Population	Approximately 4,000 individuals
Response	An estimated 75,000 liters of water is trucked into the camp each day. During the reporting period, 3,700 bars of soap, 370 washing powder packages, and 370 women sanitary napkins distributed.
Gaps	Urgent needs at the site include food, medicine, shelter, and sanitation facilities.
Key Concerns	Security conditions appear to have improved at the checkpoints in recent weeks following shifts of conflict lines. As per the latest update received in early December, only some 100 people remained at the screening site who are expected to proceed to the camps, once their screening procedures have been completed.

Abu Khashab Checkpoint	
Population	Approximately 525 families (camp capacity: 1,000 households)
Response	Family hygiene kits, food kits, and daily potable water distributed by INGOs.
Gaps	Urgent needs at the site include medicine, shelter, and sanitation facilities.
Key Concerns	An estimated 1,000–2,000 IDPs transferred from Abu Khashab to Mabrouka IDP site in early November; however, the checkpoint was not receiving large influxes of IDPs as of 9 November. The number of newly arriving families has significantly declined, from several hundreds of displaced families per week to no more than five families, following the recent military developments in the governorate. Local authorities are preventing IDPs from proceeding to their onward destinations. IDPs are permitted to return to their homes in Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa governorates, provided these areas are cleared from UXOs.

Tuwayhinah IDP site	
Population	Approximately 7,500 individuals
Response	Humanitarian partners agreed to maintain only minimal, life-saving assistance to minimize the risk of creating a pull factor to the site, which is unsuitable for IDPs due to its exposure to environmental factors, lack of facilities and camp administration, and flood-prone location. Partners continue to provide minimal, life-saving assistance at the site to support the existing IDP population until the population is relocated.



Access

During the month of November, a series of intermittent restrictions on humanitarian assistance were imposed by authorities in the area having an impact on distributions of the UN team in Qamishly. These were ultimately resolved on 21 November but the situation remains volatile. Efforts to sensitize parties in control on the need to limit interference in humanitarian assistance efforts and enhance freedom of movement for IDPs in camps would help alleviate the situation and mitigate further possible restrictions.

As of 30 November, humanitarian actors have limited access to Ar-Raqqa city due to the presence of unexploded hazards. Survey and clearance operations are reportedly ongoing and remain limited. Local authorities have reportedly informed humanitarian actors of the importance of waiting a minimum of 60 days before operating in the city.

On 18 November 2017, the United Nations in coordination with SARC dispatched twelve trucks to Deir-ez-Zor, loaded with blankets, mattresses, plastic sheets and solar lamps. On 25 November 2017, WFP wheat flour and other humanitarian materials were delivered to people in Abu Kamal by a SARC convoy.

On 2 December, the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) conducted a security assessment mission to Deir Ez-Zor to identify safe access roads and locations for humanitarian interventions. The team also met with the governor of Deir-ez-Zor to exchange information on the status of the demining process and on key humanitarian needs. DSS were informed that while demining efforts were ongoing, progress was slow due to the lack of needed equipments.

Humanitarian Response



Protection

Key developments and needs

In November 2017, the protection environment for the civilian population in northeast Syria remained complex. Overall, the displacement situation remained fluid, with multiple axes of displacement and movements in and out of the IDP sites, as captured by a basic system of identification supported by UNHCR and partners.

Evolving situation in Deir-ez-Zor generating continued IDP movements

In the first half of November, IDPs continued to reach IDP sites located in Hassakeh and Ar-Raqqa governorates, as they were fleeing active hostilities led by SDF and Government of Syria forces against the dwindling ISIL presence in Deir-ez-Zor. Those IDP movements were sometimes mixed with a smaller number of Iraqi refugees. As the military operations largely shifted to the eastern part of the governorate, influxes from Deir-ez-Zor toward existing IDP sites, though continuous, relatively stabilized. Meanwhile, the concentration of people on the move earlier observed in Al Malha and Abu Kashab screening sites/mustering points progressively decreased, easing the pace of security screening procedures conducted there. However, conditions in these two remote assembly sites, remain of concern, while only limited assistance was brought by humanitarian partners and other actors active on the ground. Families gathered in those locations remained exposed to dire humanitarian situations, especially in view of the approaching winter season.

Shifting of active frontlines to the south and eastern parts of Deir-ez-Zor governorate, close to the Iraqi border, posed new challenges. Concentrations of IDPs started to be reported in areas largely outside of the reach of most humanitarian actors, thus limiting possibilities to deliver direct support or assistance. Both unverified and verified reports of civilian casualties emanated from the last areas controlled by ISIL (e.g. Al-Sha'afa and Sooh Al-Rifa'I, in eastern Albo Kamal region), including from locations where no military operations were reported.

The protection situation in IDP sites has registered some progress but most of the recurrent and widely-reported protection challenges continued to affect IDPs over the reporting period, with particular consequences on the most vulnerable segments of the population. After a slow start at the beginning of the month, departures from the IDP sites towards destinations located outside Ar-Raqqa and Hassakeh governorates resumed. Through advocacy conducted by UNHCR, the departures started to be scheduled during the day, rather than during the night, so as to avoid exposing departing IDPs to long waiting hours in difficult conditions.

Persisting concerns related screening and sponsorship procedures

Freedom of movement remained restricted, particularly with regards to certain locations. While many IDPs chose to continue their journey towards destinations located in the western part of Syria and potentially to neighboring countries, the sponsorship system regulating exit of IDP sites and the possibility to settle in hosting communities in Ar-Raqqa and Hassakeh governorates is still implemented. It remains conditional to a series of procedures requiring strict family linkages and application fees. In several instances, IDPs have reported that procedures remain extremely long and that applicants lack clarity on the status and progress of their demands.

Following sustained local advocacy and interventions by protection actors, efforts have been made to avoid family separation. A process of transfer of IDPs whose family members are known to reside in given sites, due to the time of arrival or to procedures at checkpoints, has been set up. Lists of separated IDP families are collected by protection teams and provided to the site administration for cross-checking and transfer. This process is however hindered by the fact that family members reportedly need to pay the cost of the transfer. Considering that these transfers seek to mitigate adverse consequences resulting from procedures and restrictions of freedom of movement imposed by local entities, advocacy should continue for the site administration to lift such fees. Child protection actors have also disseminated simple safety messages to communities to reduce unintended instances of family separation.

Risks of loss of civil documentation, as a result of confiscation, is still high. The amount of accumulated confiscated documentation remained considerable. UNHCR protection teams continue to try to mitigate potential loss and damage of documentation, as a result of these procedures. Some measures suggested by protection actors have been adopted or resumed at checkpoints, such as placing the documents belonging to the same family in one envelope at the moment of confiscation. In Mabrouka IDP site, the ordering and storing has reportedly been completed. Stored documents occupy an entire area in the premise of the site administration. Efforts are also underway to transfer documentation to IDP sites where the titular family or individuals are actually staying. However,

the situation of conservation and restitution of documentation differs from site to site. Areesh camp presents the most challenges in this regard, with delays in restitution and frequent losses of documentation. The issues of IDPs leaving sites for onward journeys without their documentation continues to be raised by the protection actors. In some cases, IDPs agreed to delay their departure to be able to recover their documentation, however, in other circumstances their eagerness to leave the sites induced IDPs to proceed onward undocumented.

Reports of child recruitment

Child recruitment remained a concern in northeast Syria, with cases being directly observed by partners on the ground as well as reports of promotional activities conducted in different sites to encourage children and youth to join ranks. Protection partners have promptly and repeatedly called for the respect of general International Humanitarian Law obligations but also for local forces on the ground to honor public commitments made in recent years on the respect for the protection of children from the effects of armed conflict ².

Protection concerns related to return movements

The return of initial groups of IDPs to former ISIL-controlled areas raises a number of concerns within the humanitarian community especially in view of the key principles of safe, voluntary, well-informed and sustainable character of the return process.

Conflicting messaging and initiatives have been taken by local civilian and military entities, including site administration, regarding IDP return movements during the month of November. While the official line of local entities was initially to acknowledge safety risks and prevent unsafe returns, and in some cases allegedly actively prevent returns, especially to Ar-Raqqa city, including through reported media campaign, some areas have however since then been declared “cleared” (including after returns have started to take place) in different locations of Ar-Raqqa governorate. In Ar-Raqqa city, the neighborhood of Al-Mashlab (eastern outskirts of Ar-Raqqa city) was declared “cleared” after waivers had already been asked from IDPs willing to return. These waivers state that the decision to return is under the sole responsibility of the family, with no liability for other stakeholders. Local entities indicated that these measures were taken to face the growing pressure exercised by communities desiring to return. Furthermore, there have been unconfirmed reports of IDPs from Deir-ez-Zor en route passing through the Abu Kashab assembly point to reach sites in Hassakeh that have been requested not to proceed further and to return to Deir-ez-Zor areas under the control of SDF.

During the second half of the month, the site administration in all IDPs sites located in Raqqa and Hassakeh governorates started posting lists of areas and neighborhoods in Ar-Raqqa city as well as in SDF-controlled areas of Deir-ez-Zor governorate where the return was declared admissible including due to the alleged completion of clearance operations. However, in the absence of surveys conducted by humanitarian mine action agencies, no detailed information is currently available on actual levels of contamination in areas of return and on the standard followed in the clearance process, which may not be in line with humanitarian demining standards. It is also not clear how to avoid that population whose areas of origin has not been cleared eventually registering for return. These dynamics remain highly fluid and require constant follow-up.

Recent consultations with IDPs in the sites have revealed that return remains the preferred solution for IDPs. A recent survey in Mabrouka site conducted by UNHCR and partners and targeting a total of 1,437 HHs/8,657 individuals reported that the overwhelming majority (78 per cent) is inclined to remain in Mabrouka site to return as soon as possible to their places of origin or previous residence in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor governorates.

Humanitarian actors, and protection actors in particular, have consistently engaged in a dialogue with local entities to highlight the importance of safe, voluntary and fully-informed returns of IDPs, especially regarding the risk of explosive hazards contamination. In November, the Protection Sector has developed an inter-sector guidance document on the “*Conditions for voluntary, informed, safe and dignified returns of IDPs to Ar-Raqqa city*”, endorsed by the Humanitarian Coordinator and Regional Humanitarian Coordinator as a joint position of the humanitarian community. The main purpose of the document is to outline key principles that should inform the decision-making process of operational actors intending to provide assistance to Ar-Raqqa city so as to avoid push and pull factors leading to unsafe and involuntary returns. This guidance document has been used to engage with local entities on the matter and should continue to serve as a reference point to continue assessing conditions for principled assistance, including in areas of Deir-ez-Zor currently controlled by the Kurdish Self-Administration. It is available upon request to the Protection sector.

Meanwhile, there were continued reports of civilian casualties (injuries or deaths) as a result of return movement to the Old city of Ar-Raqqa and other neighborhoods of the city due to ERWs. Advocacy continues at highest levels to

² In July 2014, local civil and military entities signed a series of Deeds of Commitments on Children in armed conflict, Gender-Based Violence and Mine Action with the known humanitarian actor “Geneva Call”; seemingly, in November 2016, the SDF issued a Declaration on the respect of humanitarian principles in the conduct of hostilities.

strengthen decontamination efforts, including by military and stabilization actors, information-sharing and coordination between Mine Action actors as a pre-condition to allow the safe return of IDPs to Ar-Raqqa city.

Response

The presence of protection actors continued to be consolidated in the various IDP sites. Various efforts have been made to elaborate mappings of protection activities and services in different IDP sites and in hosting communities, from both UN agencies and NES NGOs. Discussions are ongoing as to how to streamline current initiatives, avoid duplication and find ways to share information as appropriate. Efforts are currently conducted to map services specifically related to mine risk education. Referral systems are still in need of improvement, given fluidity of movements and insufficient number of partners on the ground with the capacity of addressing complex cases, such as unaccompanied and separated children.

UNHCR and partners continue to operate in Ain Issa and Mabrouka IDP sites through mobile teams from satellite community centers located in Tal Abyad and Ras El Ein and are expanding their presence in Areesheh site, with partners already operating out from Hassakeh. Mobile teams are engaged in consulting the population and in the organization of various activities to support the psychosocial well-being particularly of women and children. Three Community Centers are operational in Hassakeh and Qamishly towns for IDPs that manage to settle in the local communities.

UNHCR protection staff and facilitators continued to address the site administration and the local entities in different locations on several issues of concern and to advocate for the right of IDPs, in particular: to improve the protection situation in camps; to progress on freedom of movement, including increasing the swift exit of population from IDP sites; to facilitate family reunification across camps; and to continue to address the challenging process of sorting, preservation and restitution of confiscated civil documentation. In addition, UNHCR teams intend to disseminate leaflets produced by legal partners on the procedures to obtain civil documentation issued by the Government of Syria for IDPs who start travelling onward to different destinations. Protection actors at different levels have worked intensively to sensitize various stakeholders on principles that should guide the return process and trigger high level advocacy as necessary.

UNICEF partners continued providing Child Protection services inside and outside IDP sites through static facilities /centers and mobile teams in different areas of Hassakeh governorate³ as well as in different areas of Ar-Raqqa governorate⁴. 41 children (18 female and 23 male) were registered in November and received case management services, including referrals to specialized services, health and basic needs assistance. UNICEF partners supported a total of 15 family reunifications in the month of November, one family consisting of 11 siblings. In Areesheh camp, a fixed child friendly space and 2 mobile teams have been established by UNICEF partners. Child Protection services are provided through structured psycho-social support (PSS) activities, that target more than 400 children every day. Case management services continue to be provided through UNICEF partners by the Child Protection Unit located inside the space. An emergency safe space for unaccompanied children has been set up inside UNICEF space with 24 hours care-giving supervision. 2 unaccompanied children have benefitted from this service during the past weeks, and 2 family reunifications were completed in the last month. 45 children with links to ISIL families, and kept in a separate area of Ain Issa camp, were reached by UNICEF partners organizing PSS and recreational activities on a daily basis. Case managers were involved, and started addressing cases of separated and unaccompanied children and gender based violence. Referrals were made for health and basic needs assistance. Outside IDP sites, in Suluk and Journeyeh sub-districts in Ar-Raqqa governorate, UNICEF partners started conducting after-school PSS, recreational and mine risk education awareness activities, targeting 90 schools with more than 500 children per school.

NES NGOs continue to provide services through child friendly spaces in Ain al Arab (Aleppo governorate, neighboring Ar-Raqqa) and At-Thawra. Another NES child protection partner provided psychosocial services to 2,140 beneficiaries through static facilities across Hassakeh and Ar-Raqqa governorates, in addition to 646 case managements leading to referrals (in both governorates) and 83 beneficiaries were trained on child protection in Amuda. 20 incoming protection staff were also trained on Child Protection Information Management.

During the reporting period, UNFPA through its partners, offered GBV awareness sessions in both Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS) in Hassakeh and Ras Al Ain communities. In addition, recreational activities and vocational trainings are taking places on regular basis. Through a joint effort between UNHCR and UNFPA, fifteen sewing machines have been distributed to 15 beneficiaries who have been successfully trained in the WGSS. In addition, mobile teams supported by UNFPA continue to ensure PSS services and GBV awareness sessions in different locations of Mabrouka camp as well as in the countryside of Ras Al Ain. On 25 November, start date for the 16 Days

³ Hassakeh city, Amuda, Derbasiye, Al Hol district and camp, Tel brak, Qamishli, Tel Hamis, Mabada, Jawadiyeh, Newroz camp- Ras-Al-Ein, Mabrouka site and Areesheh site

⁴ Tel Abyad District, Ain Issa sub-district, Suluk and Journiyyeh sub-districts and Ain Issa camp.

of activism campaign, different activities including youth initiatives started being implemented throughout IDP-hosting locations in Hassakeh and Ar-Raqqa Governorates. All activities were conducted in line with the theme for the 2017 campaign “Together We Can End Gender Based Violence in Education”. A NES NGO has provided GBV case management services, community-awareness activities on GBV and PSS interventions (including recreational activities) through both static and mobile modalities, in particular in Amuda, Tal Hmis, Ain Issa and Suluk.

The humanitarian mine action response in Ar-Raqqa governorate will continue through the deployment of an integrated mine action response. This will include: 1) Risk Education delivered to vulnerable populations, including IDPs in the surrounding area to improve knowledge of the local population of the local threats. Furthermore, a risk education capacity will also be focused towards south Hassakeh with the large number of IDP movements; 2) response by clearance teams to hazardous areas identified by humanitarian partners, local communities and local entities across accessible areas of Ar-Raqqa governorate, where active hostilities have ceased. Clearance will be prioritised in coordination with the wider humanitarian community to improve safe access to critical infrastructure and improve safety for civilians and humanitarian workers; 3) Contamination surveys will be deployed to map contamination and to mark dangerous areas for future clearance; 4) NGO staff trained on risk education in order to share knowledge on the dangers left by contamination in the area and promote safe behaviours for those working to respond to the overwhelming humanitarian needs found in northeast Syria. An NES NGO reached a total of 2951 beneficiaries of mine risk education activities in Ain Issa sub-district over the month of November (946 boys; 926 girls; 476 men and 603 women).

At the beginning of November, the Protection Sector (Syria hub) was able to secure an allocation of 1.5 million USD (out of 15 million USD allocation) from the Syria Humanitarian Fund as part of a standard allocation targeted to the northeast Syria, and particularly to IDP sites, informal settlements and possibly other areas of displacement. Only two partners submitted projects, one UN Agency for GBV interventions in IDP sites and one local NGO for protection interventions in favor of women-headed household and children in displaced and hosting communities of Deir-ez-Zor.

Gaps and challenges

Despite active and continued advocacy on freedom of movement by the protection sector and its partners, at different levels, including through civil-military coordination channels, challenges persist. Concerns increase in a context where IDP return may be seen as highly political, leading to returns happening and/or being encouraged while they still fall short of basic conditions of safety, voluntariness and dignity. In these conditions, an emphasis needs to be put on mine risk education activities and safety messages.

The capacity of national humanitarian actors in northeast Syria, as well as the lack of steady presence of actors with expertise, has been repeatedly identified as a major challenge for the protection response in the area. It remains a constraint in providing more specialized and technical protection responses, particularly in case management, family tracing and reunification and detention-related issues. Given the sensitivity of certain protection issues, which might cause operational challenges to protection partners and individual interventions, there is an increased need for mandated actors.

Access and presence become even more critical as the hostilities move toward the eastern part of the Deir-ez-Zor area, as locations where IDPs gather or potentially return are outside the reach of humanitarian actors. As a result, the situation cannot be monitored closely and opportunities to consult the population and provide needed assistance in Deir-ez-Zor governorate are constrained.



Food Security and Agriculture

Response

As of 30 November, the Food Security Sector, through WFP and nine cross-border NGOs, has been able to respond to the conflict-affected people fleeing the Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor governorates in various parts of Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor governorates and neighboring Al-Hassakeh and Aleppo governorates.

The overall response from 1 to 30 November reached around 420,186 beneficiaries across northeast Syria through various types of food assistance (food baskets, ready to eat rations, food vouchers, cash grants and bread). During the reporting period, 8,172 ready-to-eat rations (RTERs) covering food needs for ten days for a family of six were distributed to 48,573 beneficiaries; 7,305 RTERs covering food needs for five days for a family of five or six were distributed to 35,681 beneficiaries; 17,755 dry food rations covering food needs for ten days for a family of six were distributed to 104,493 beneficiaries; 37,886 regular food baskets covering food needs for a month for a family of five or six were distributed to 189,995 beneficiaries; 5,435 unconditional cash grants covering food needs for a month for

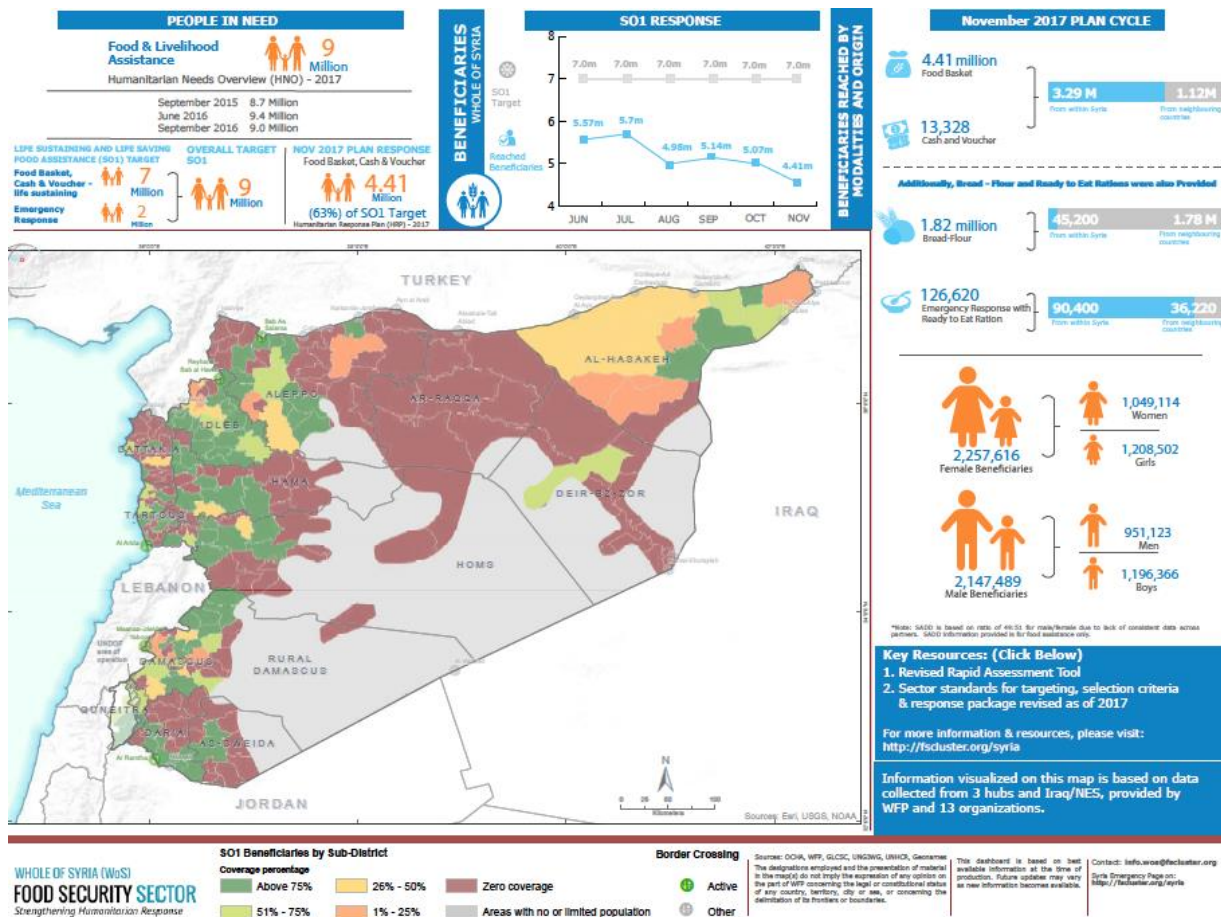
a family of six were distributed to 32,712 beneficiaries; 1,653 food vouchers covering food needs for a month for a family of six were distributed to 8,732 beneficiaries; and 66,572 individuals received supplementary assistance through daily bread distribution throughout the month in three camps (Al Hol, Mabrouka and Areesheh) Ar-Raqqa Governorate.

A total of 302,196 beneficiaries were reached in November by WFP and five cross-border INGOs in Ar-Raqqa governorate (Ar-Raqqa, Karama, Mansura, Ein Issa, Jurneyyeh, Ath-Thawrah, Maadan, Sabka, Tell Abiad and Suluk sub-districts with food assistance). During the reporting period in Ar-Raqqa governorate, 3,325 RTERs, covering food needs ranging from five or ten days for a household of five or six reaching 18,187 beneficiaries; 13,064 dry food rations and food baskets covering food needs from ten days to a month for a household of five or six reaching 75,121 beneficiaries; 5,341 unconditional cash grant covering food needs for a month reaching 32,101 beneficiaries; 1,208 food vouchers covering the food needs for a month reaching 6,102 beneficiaries; and 34,024 food baskets covering needs for a month reaching 170,685 beneficiaries.

A total of 6,505 beneficiaries were reached in November by two cross-border INGOs in Aleppo governorate (Menbij and Ain Al-Arab sub-districts). During the reporting period in Aleppo governorate, 544 dry food rations covering food needs for ten days for a household of six reaching 3,264 beneficiaries; 94 unconditional cash grants covering food needs for a month reaching 611 beneficiaries were distributed by one cross-border NGO; 445 food vouchers covering food needs for a month for a household of six reaching 2,630 beneficiaries were distributed by one cross-border NGO.

A total of 80,667 beneficiaries were reached in November by WFP and six cross-border INGOs in Al-Hassakeh Governorate, in Ras Al-Ain, Areesheh and Al-Hol sub-districts respectively in Mabrouka, Areesheh and Al-Hol Camps with food assistance. During the reporting period in Al-Hassakeh governorate, 14,691 RTERs, food baskets and dry food rations covering food needs from five days to one month for a household of five or six reaching 80,667 beneficiaries. Additionally, bread reached 66,572 beneficiaries in all of in Al-Hol, Mabrouka and Areesheh Camps as a complementary support to food rations assistance.

A total of 30,818 beneficiaries were reached in November in Deir-ez-Zor governorate by WFP and three cross-border INGO, in Kisreh sub-district in Abu Khashab, Allkede and Jazaret Elbuhmeid camps, Malha informal settlement and other neighborhoods with food assistance. During the reporting period in Deir-ez-Zor governorate, 1,316 RTERs covering food needs between five and ten days were distributed by three cross-border INGOs reaching a total of 7,668 beneficiaries; 1,154 dry food rations covering food needs for ten days for a household of six were distributed by one cross-border INGO reaching a total of 8,150 beneficiaries; 3,000 food baskets covering food needs for one month for a household of five were distributed by WFP reaching a total of 15,000 beneficiaries.



Gaps and Challenges

- The Food Security Sector (FSS) remains concerned with the returnees movement to the outskirts of Ar-Raqqa city due to presence of explosive hazards contaminations and high incidents of deaths and injuries recorded all throughout the month.
- Conscription concerns in Menbij causing a strain on operations to some INGO and their staff.
- The interruption of WFP distributions from Qamishli for almost two weeks caused a major concern and disruption in assistance, however identified needs were covered immediately after suspension was lifted around 20 November. Another delay in deliveries was around the 28 November caused by upcoming local elections.
- Close monitoring of Deir-ez-Zor situation is ongoing and limited coverage have been taking place in Kisreh sub-district only so far due to access and security constraints. Needs are expected to continue in various parts of the governorate.

Some of the main gaps and challenges identified by the Food Security Sector are:

- Coverage of Menbij District – in informal settlements and host communities. This needs to be extended to more partners given the large reported numbers of IDPs and vulnerable host communities. This includes important needs of support for breastfeeding mothers and infants.
- Coverage of villages around Ar-Raqqa city (north, south, east and west), that have not been either sufficiently or regularly covered or reached at all, due to security risks and large presence of explosive hazards. A closer and more granular field coordination mechanism is being set up among cross-border partners and WFP to ensure gaps are being identified and covered while preventing any overlap.
- The delivery of humanitarian assistance continues to be highly challenging in Twehina informal camp due to the complete absence of a formal and civilian camp management, hindering beneficiaries identification process, including new arrivals and departures and leading to an increasingly unsafe environment with high protection concerns.

- The Food Security Sector continues to urge all authorities to remove all administrative impediments regarding the delivery and distribution of humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian assistance should be unfettered and delivered to all in need in a timely manner.

December Plan

As per the December Plan established, the Food Security Sector through its partners (WFP and four cross-border partners) will be able to cover food needs for a total of 572,435 people in December through a wide range of modalities based on needs and context adequacy including RTERs, food baskets and cash-based response. As for Twehina camp, monthly food rations will be distributed to the whole camp by WFP, followed with another ten days dry food rations blanket distribution two weeks later by one cross-border partner, to cover the food needs of the estimated 1,500 households in the camp.

Close field coordination has been established for Tabqa city to prevent any overlapping coverage where eight cross-border partners and WFP are currently operating through various modalities including general food rations, unconditional cash grants and food vouchers.

Contiguous to IDP movements, the sector through its partners, will try to cover most of the gaps, based on their stocks and access capacities. The continuous fluidity of movements makes it a challenge to set fixed allocation plans in advance in most parts of northeast Syria. However, and very recently camps are being decongested and numbers of arrivals no longer exceed departures in most of the locations.

Close monitoring of the Ar-Raqqa city situation is ongoing although no direct interventions are planned into the city by FSS partners until all the pre-conditions for returns to Ar-Raqqa city as established by the Protection Sector are fully met, including ERW clearance and/or mapping conducted allowing safe and secure distribution of humanitarian assistance for both humanitarian workers and conflict-affected populations. The Pre-Conditions for Returns to Ar-Raqqa City document was translated to Arabic and handed out to respective and concerned authorities



Health

Response

Collectively, humanitarian partners estimate that more than 200 trauma cases had to seek treatment for injuries sustained inside Ar-Raqqa city in ERWs explosions since November. Blood supply and referral pathways continue to be a major challenge for the facilities treating the injured, while the stream of returnees continues uninterrupted. Concerns of disease spreading due to unburied bodies have also been reported.

On 1 December, one health partner issued a statement related to the returns to Ar Raqqa city and the increasing number of people injured by UXO, etc. highlighting the ongoing increase of number of patients in need of trauma/surgical and referral assistance. These injured people are being referred to Tal Abyad hospital. 51 were admitted and 15 more to be moved to the hospital. Immediate needs are: blood support; referral of patients to other health facilities within NES; reinforcement of surgical care.

In response to trauma cases in Ar-Raqqa city, WHO delivered trauma related supplies: two shipments to Tal Abyad hospital (glucose; normal saline, wheelchairs, family doctors' practice kit, monitor device, infant ventilator, burn dressing kit, silver sulphadiazine); two shipments to Al Tabqa (monitor device, defibrillator, ultrasound system; silver sulphadiazine, trauma kits, x-ray machines, infant ventilator, burn dressing kits, operation table, wheelchairs); Ein Al Arab (Kobani) hospital (water baths, burn dressing kits, wheelchairs). The network of WHO supported mobile medical teams and health centers is ready to enhance the referral of identified patients to other facilities, including private hospitals. Health partners delivered medical equipment to two health centers of NGO partner in Al Hassakeh and Deir-ez-Zor (electrocardiographs, length and weighing scales for children and adults, blood pressure meters and stethoscopes). Delivered an electrocardiograph and bronchoscope to Qamishli national hospital.

No new cases of Circulating Vaccine-Derived Poliovirus type (2cVDPV2) were reported since September. The most recent case (by date of onset) is 9 September 2017 from Mayadeen district. The total number of confirmed cVDPV2 cases remains 70. During the reporting period, 15,700 children under five were vaccinated in Al-Hassakeh camps. Planning continues for the second phase of the outbreak response. The Syrian Ministry of Health has requested additional doses of mOPV2 and inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) for two further immunization rounds planned for 2018.

Key Gaps and Challenges

- With the surge in trauma cases, the health system is strained and blood supply is again a critical need. Tal Abyad Hospital is at capacity and has no ICU level care. Current staff do not have the capability to manage advanced care. O Negative blood is urgently required.
- Referral coordination across northeast Syria is an ongoing critical need.
- Enhancement of primary health care (PHC) coverage in Ain Issa camp is an urgent need.
- Hospital beds and mattresses are needed for Tal Abyad national hospital.
- Pending approvals to dispatch 38 tons of health supplies to Deir-ez-Zor (8 tons) and Qamishli (30 tons).



Nutrition

Key Developments

Through UNICEF, WFP and UNFPA support, nutrition partners provided preventive nutrition support including provision of fortified spread (Plumpy Doz), high energy biscuits and micronutrients as well as treatment of acute malnutrition to 20,252 children under five and pregnant and lactating women in Mabrouka, Ain Issa, Jalaa, as well as rural Ar-Raqqa governorate.

Nutrition partners delivered lifesaving assistance in rural Ar-Raqqa governorate. A total of 4,906 boys and girls under 5-year-old as well as pregnant and lactating women (PLW) were reached with the provision of preventive nutrition supplies distribution. 478 boys and girls under five were screened for malnutrition, out of those 21 moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and 4 severe acute malnutrition (SAM) cases were identified and received the required treatment.

Due to alerts received via the nutrition surveillance system from Ain Issa and Tal Abyad sub-districts, the Nutrition sector through WoS cross-border partners plan to verify the nutrition situation of the children with a SMART nutrition survey in Ain Issa, Tel Abyad and Suluk sub-districts. The survey will be conducted using SMART methodology and will sample 40 clusters in the above three locations. Under the supervision and technical guidance of the WoS nutrition team, the survey is expected to begin by third week of December 2017 with preliminary results expected in the third week of January 2018. The outcome of the survey will guide nutrition responses in the area.

A UNICEF supported nutrition partner delivered infant and young child feeding (IYCF) messages and sessions to 1,729 women of child-bearing age and PLW in Areesheh, Mabrouka and Al Hol camp.

Response

Nutrition Sector partners conducted mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) screenings for boys and girls under five years old in Areesheh, Mabrouka, Ain Issa and Al Hol camps. Of the 20,744 children screened during the reporting period, 365 (1.76 per cent) were identified with acute malnutrition and receiving treatment. 96 (0.46 per cent) children presented with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and 269 (1.26 per cent) children and PLWs presented with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM). Four children were identified as SAM with complications, which were all referred to either Qamishli National Hospital or Tal Abyad National Hospital and are currently under treatment with support from WHO.

Another health and nutrition organization working in Ain Issa camp has screened 14,168 children in November and identified 79 children (0.55 per cent) with severe acute malnutrition (and no complications) and provided treatment with ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTF).

MUAC screening and treatment for those identified with SAM is also covered in Tell Abyad, Menbij, and Ar-Raqqa sub-districts in camps via fixed clinics and surrounding areas of the camps via mobile clinics by another health and nutrition organization. This organization has also started screening and treatment for SAM cases identified in the Mishlab area of Ar-Raqqa city.

Following the establishment of Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) centres in Al Hol, Mabrouka and Areesheh camps by UNICEF supported partners, many boys and girls under five and PLW received treatment for acute malnutrition with the regular support of nutrition outreach volunteers. There are three other nutrition and health partners that are conducting MUAC screening and referring to these CMAM centres. In addition, UNICEF through partners will establish outreach mobile clinics at the IDP collection sites of Malha and Abu Khashab.

To scale up the response in northeast Syria, the Nutrition Sector conducted a coordination meeting at the sub-national level during this month and decisions were taken for UNICEF, WHO and WFP with their partners to integrate two CMAM units into already established health clinics supported by WHO in Ain Issa Camp and Suluk town. A health and nutrition clinic based in Tal Abyad city will also be established with a roving mobile medical clinic between Tal Abyad and the rural areas of Ar-Raqqa District (locations for the roving mobile medical clinic to be determined based

on surveillance data). There are plans underway to establish nutrition services in Menbij sub-district as well. In addition, through a UNICEF supported partner, regular IYCF interventions will be established in Ain Issa camp.

Key Gaps and Challenges

Enough stocks of the therapeutic nutrition supplies for MAM and SAM management and some stock of preventive items are available, however there is a need for more preventive nutrition supplies to Qamishli warehouses.

In the month of November, there have been a limited number of partners to provide treatment for moderate acute malnutrition in some locations of Ar-Raqqa governorate and Menbij sub-district. The nutrition sector is in the implementation phase for full CMAM services to be available in these areas.



WASH

Response

WASH partners in northeast Syria are providing water trucking services in at least 56 host communities and informal settlements in Ar-Raqqa governorate reaching more than 70,000 beneficiaries on a daily basis, including the daily monitoring of water quality. Several water stations are under rehabilitation or planned for rehabilitation by WASH partners in northeast Syria, including Hamar Boytia, Al Karameh, Abu Wahel, So Al Hal – Raqqa City; Al Dilawia, Abu Qalqal, Dadi - Dada Li, Al Huriyeh, Bir Issa, Salheea, Bnat Ali, Moshrefat Izzo, Monbateh, Suluk Almokhtalta, Khabora, Ber Shamaly, and Skhrat Arbeed. The rehabilitation of the sewage system in Sarin town is nearly complete.



Education

Response

As a part of IDP response, a total of 3,100 school-aged IDP children (1,659 boys and 1,441 girls) have benefited from the provision of school bags and stationery sets distributed by UNICEF and its NGO partner in Ain Issa camp in Ar-Raqqa governorate during the reporting period. Since the beginning of the response in April 2017, a total number of school-aged children from Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor governorate who have benefited from the intervention reached to 43,670 children (22,848 boys and 20,822 girls).

The Back to Learning (BTL) community mobilization campaign through a team of 55 trained outreach volunteers continues and is provided by UNICEF and its NGO partner. This initiative aims to sensitize children and families on the importance of continuing education in Ath-Thawrah district of Ar-Raqqa governorate. As a part of the campaign, awareness sessions on the potential risks associated with explosive hazards were also conducted through child-friendly materials. During the month of November, a total number of 22,107 school-aged children (9,498 females, 12,609 males) have benefited from the campaign activities including recreational activities, school wall paintings and risk education sessions. Since the start of the campaign in October 2017, a total of 59,661 children (28,258 females, 31,403 males) have been reached where 4,924 out of school children have been identified through door to door visits. Based on the reasons why these children are out of schools, future interventions will be planned including the provision of alternative learning opportunities.

December Plan

UNICEF and its NGO are in the process of launching temporary learning services (literacy and numeracy classes) for school-aged out of school children in Ain Issa, Mabrouka, and Areesha IDP camps. The services will be provided at UNICEF's child friendly spaces (CFSS) during December, while temporary learning spaces are under preparation. As teacher recruitment is nearly completed, teacher training on active learning will be provided to those recruited in early December.

UNICEF and the Ar-Raqqa Directorate of Education (DoE) completed contracting process and will start light school rehabilitation of 16 schools in Debsi Afnan and the surrounding areas of Ar-Raqqa. An estimated 2,000 children are now enrolled in these 16 schools after missing three to five schooling years. In addition, teacher training for accelerated learning program (Curriculum B program) for 40 teachers, school principals, and supervisors from Debsi Afnan is scheduled during December.

UNICEF and the Deir-ez-Zor DoE are planning to conduct education assessment for further interventions in Deir-ez-Zor city and rural areas. According to the DoE, 41 schools inside Deir-ez-Zor city and five schools in Tabni sub-

district are currently functioning with more than 10,000 students. The DoE is planning to resume more schools in northern part of the governorate where security has been restored.

Gaps and Challenges

Sporadic suspensions of the distribution of humanitarian assistance including education supplies by the concerned authority have continuously challenged education partners in responding timely to the education needs of children.



Logistics

Response

During the month of November, UN agencies transported humanitarian supplies by road to Qamishli via 138 trucks (23 UNHCR, 2 UNICEF, 93 WFP, 1 GOPA through WFP facilitated by the Logistics Cluster) from Aleppo, Damascus, Tartous, Latakia and Homs.

The Logistics Cluster is also continuing to coordinate humanitarian land transport to Deir-ez-Zor for humanitarian supplies, in close coordination with SARC, OCHA and sectors.

During the same period, UNHCR transported humanitarian supplies by road to Deir-ez-Zor via 12 trucks.

The Logistics Cluster continues to provide logistics coordination and information management to identify gaps and bottlenecks and avoid duplication of efforts. Furthermore, no-cost-to-user land transport for humanitarian supplies to both Qamishli and Deir-ez-Zor is available for requesting organisation.

Gaps and constraints

The process of obtaining all necessary approvals results in long lead times.



Cross-Cutting Operational Challenges

Humanitarian actors face significant challenges in responding to needs in North-East Syria. Key challenges include:

- **Access and insecurity:** Access to vulnerable communities, particularly in and around Ar-Raqqa city, remain challenging due to insecurity.
- **High levels of explosive hazards contamination:** The contamination level in newly-seized areas is considered very high, particularly in Ar-Raqqa City and in Deir-ez-Zor roads, towns and large population centers. This poses a threat both to civilian populations as well as to humanitarian actors aiming to assist them. A mechanism to demarcate and declare areas cleared and safe for humanitarian actors and the population continues to be necessary.
- **Policy environment:** Humanitarian actors also face challenges related to the policies being implemented by local authorities with regards to IDP management particularly those affecting freedom of movement. These policies are contributing to the deteriorating humanitarian situation and hampering humanitarian actors' ability to engage beyond life -saving support in certain settings.
- **Scalability:** The scalability of the supply line remains limited and unpredictable. Increasing humanitarian needs will further strain current capacities and require a scale up of supplies, humanitarian partners and reach. The availability of certain supplies – such as life-saving trauma kits - has been particularly hard hit because of access issues.
- **Funding limitations:** Additional funding is still required to increase reception capacities in key sites and the number of people that can be assisted monthly with basic goods and services.

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