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REGIONAL ANALYSIS SYRIA

30 October 2013

Overview

This Regional Analysis of the Syria Conflict (RAS) is an update of the [September RAS](#). The RAS seeks to bring together information from all sources in the region and provide a coherent analysis of the overall situation in the region as well as in each of the affected countries. While Part I focuses on the situation within Syria, Part II covers the impact of the crisis on the neighbouring countries. 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 additional information, comments or questions, please email SNAP@ACAPS.org.

Peace negotiations: With October seeing the fiercest fighting in months, attempts to end the 32 month-long conflict in Syria are on-going. At a local level, communities have in several instances successfully brokered cease-fires to protect their villages from attacks, while on an international level, efforts to convene a peace conference in Geneva at the end of November have been renewed. However, these initiatives have had limited impact on reducing the intensity of the conflict. Rather, some analysts claim that the possibility of a peace conference has fuelled the conflict further, with actors attempting to gain control of strategic areas before negotiations start.

Humanitarian situation in Syria: An outbreak of polio, a disease not reported in Syria since 1999, in the eastern governorate of Deir-ez-Zor highlights the breakdown of the Syrian WASH and healthcare system in large parts of the country. While the approaching winter and on-going fighting compound the challenges Syrians face in meeting basic needs and accessing essential services caused by the breakdown in supply chains and service provision across much of the country, people increasingly rely on support from their communities; the diaspora; Government institutions; and aid organisations in order to survive.

Food prices, already unaffordable to the average family, are expected to rise further with the recent reduction in fuel subsidies, which raises the price of fuel by 25%. Food, fuel and other goods continue to enter Syria via Government imports, humanitarian organisations and smuggling although in insufficient quantities to meet current demand. The resultant shortages (and increased prices) of food and of basic items will only increase during the winter.

While all areas are affected by increasing prices and limited livelihood opportunities, the humanitarian situation and key priorities differ significantly by area. The population in besieged and hard to reach areas face life-threatening shortages of food and medical care. Relatively safe areas have seen large-scale influxes of

IDPs, putting increased pressure on WASH, healthcare and education facilities. Civilians in areas under control of Al-Qaeda affiliated groups are forced to adapt to a strictly conservative life-style, with some minorities feeling threatened.

Lack evidence for prioritisation: Despite large discrepancies in the humanitarian situation across Syria, to date no countrywide assessments have been undertaken, making it difficult to prioritise the limited resources available to target communities most in need. More information on the countrywide situation is expected to become available in the run up to the launch of the revised humanitarian appeal (SHARP) in December.

Humanitarian situation outside of Syria: The persistent conflict in Syria continues to lead to large-scale new and secondary displacement, with the current number of IDPs estimated at 6.5 million people. A large number of those displaced continue to cross the border into other countries. However, whereas at the start of the crisis countries were largely welcoming, this hospitality has been stretched to breaking point. Public services, already weak in countries hosting large numbers of refugees, can no longer provide the services and support required. Meanwhile, the capacity of Syrians to support themselves is jeopardised by decreasing savings, limited opportunities to work and the sheer numbers of displaced Syrians vying for jobs and access to services.

In search of protection, employment and access to basic services, some Syrians undertake the risky and expensive journey to Europe. Those fleeing Syria now make up the bulk of irregular movements across the Mediterranean Sea. 2 boats capsized in October, killing hundreds of people, including Syrians and Palestinians.

Spillover of the crisis to neighbouring countries: As countries in the region are highly inter-connected, events in Syria have an immediate backlash on the situation in its neighbours, particularly in Lebanon. In Lebanon, clashes between supporters and opponents of the Syrian Government in the northern city of Tripoli re-ignited. The polio outbreak triggered a vaccination campaign in Lebanon, responding to fears that any large-scale disease outbreak in Syria would spread to neighbouring countries. In Turkey, illegal crossings of people and goods prompted the Government to start building a wall along part of its border with Syria.

Situation overview – October 2013

Key developments

Disease outbreaks: Large-scale disease outbreaks in the region are of concern, with low vaccination coverage in Syria, congested IDP locations and the breakdown of WASH and health services. With cross-border displacement continuing and currently estimated at 4,000 a day, the spread of diseases to neighbouring countries is not unlikely. A mass immunisation campaign to prevent the current polio outbreak turning into an epidemic has begun in Syria with international healthcare providers calling for a cease-fire to allow for children in hard to reach areas to also be covered.

Winterisation: Efforts are underway to prepare individuals in Syria and host-countries for harsh winter weather expected from December in parts of the region. Individuals who cannot afford the increased prices for fuel and winter clothes in Syria are the most vulnerable, as are those living in inadequate shelter. Syrian refugees in informal tented settlements in Lebanon are particularly vulnerable as well, as these shelters are often in flood-prone areas and the tents are far from weatherproof.

Displacement to Europe: Increasing numbers of Syrians are attempting the journey to Europe in search of protection, job opportunities and access to basic services. The trip to Europe is expensive and often risky. Earlier in October, more than 300 Syrians and Palestinians attempting to reach Europe were in the 2 boats which sank near the Italian coast on separate occasions this month.

