

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	443
Land:	Syrien
Kilde:	ACAPS
Titel:	Regional Analysis Syria, Part I - Syria
Udgivet:	4. april 2014
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	23. april 2014

REGIONAL ANALYSIS SYRIA

04 April 2014

Part I – Syria

This Regional Analysis of the Syria conflict (RAS) is now produced quarterly, replacing the monthly RAS of 2013. It 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 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. For more information, comments or questions please email SNAP@ACAPS.org.

Content Part I

Overview

How to use the RAS?

Possible developments

Main events timeline

Information gaps and data limitations

Operational constraints

Humanitarian profile

Map - Conflict developments

Displacement profile

Country sectoral analysis

Governorate Profiles

Previous and forthcoming SNAP reports

Annex A: Definitions Humanitarian Profile

Overview

Large-scale displacement in 2014 exacerbates limited capacities: At least 793,000 people are estimated to have been displaced across Syria since the start of 2014. The greatest reported displacement is in Aleppo with 450,000 in and around Aleppo City alone. Between 4 and 18 March, an additional 98,500 people were reportedly displaced from eastern Aleppo, the majority fleeing either to western Aleppo (despite proliferation of checkpoints) or the Turkish border. A further 160,000 have fled conflict in Dar'a Governorate, while around 50,000 are reported to have been displaced within Rural Damascus and over 35,000 in Quneitra. Parts of Rural Damascus also saw returns following a wave of local ceasefires. These displacement flows have resulted in critical shortages of shelter and food in the areas hosting the newly displaced. The large-scale displacement within Aleppo Governorate has significantly increased the number of people in need of food assistance, with 1.25 million people estimated to be in need in rural and eastern areas of the governorate.

Conflict and political developments: While the opposition groups have been increasingly factionalised, as they compete for control and authority, attempts at unification have been ongoing in light of recent gains by the Syrian Armed Forces. On 16 March the SAF took control of the opposition stronghold of Yabroud, forcing the conflict to the neighbouring villages. The majority of Qalamoun area now controlled by SAF giving the Government of Syria a secure route between Damascus and Homs, a key link in the supply route between the

north and the capital. A week after losing control of Yabroud, the opposition forces took control of the strategic village of Kasab in Lattakia and its border crossing with Turkey. This conflict continues as SAF responded with heavy aerial bombardment and the redeployment of troops to the area. Meanwhile ISIL withdrew from many areas in northern and Western Aleppo (Hreitan, Azaz, Mennegh) and Idlib by the end of February after months of clashes with rival fighters. The ISIL fighters have mostly moved to eastern Aleppo (Menbij, Al-Bab and Jarablus), Ar-Raqqa, and Al-Hasakeh. This withdrawal was coupled with increased violence on the borders with Turkey.

Access: In early February a group of independent UN experts reported that deprivation of basic necessities and denial of humanitarian relief has become a widespread tactic utilised in the Syrian conflict. This includes deliberate attacks on medical facilities and staff; cutting off of water supplies and attacks on water facilities; actions to destroy harvests and kill livestock – all of which obstructs access to basic services and livelihoods. Of particular concern are those communities in areas under prolonged and ongoing siege, specifically Nubul and Al-Zahraa in rural Aleppo; Eastern Ghouta, Daryya and Moadamiyah in Rural Damascus; the Old City in Homs; and Yarmouk Camp in Damascus. Recent assessments in four neighbourhoods in Damascus have shown significantly higher severity of needs particularly related to the lack of food and health care in areas under siege.

Humanitarian concerns: Protection concerns are widespread, with many areas in the north subject to widespread bombing and human rights violations by armed groups. Protection issues were highlighted as major humanitarian concerns in the first quarter of 2014 particularly in areas with strong presence of extremist groups further limiting people's freedom of movement.

With high intensity conflict resulting in a new wave of large-scale displacement coupled with high level of damages to private buildings and shelters, shelter needs have significantly increased since the beginning of the year. Severe shortages of adequate shelter and NFIs are reported from the western parts of Aleppo city as well as from conflict affected Quneitra, Dar'a and Damascus. Heavy damage to shelters and lack of safe shelter is a particular concern in the besieged neighbourhoods where the limited number of people remaining have little protection from the frequent shelling and sniper fire.

Food continues to be a priority sector across all governorates, particularly in areas under siege. With expected shortfalls in agricultural production due to insecurity, lack of inputs, high transportation costs as well as below average rains in the winter drought like conditions are further likely to result in food shortages.

With the low capacity of the health system and decreased immunity of the affected population the great risk lies with the approaching spring and summer seasons – which are high transmission seasons for diseases of current concern inside Syria, namely measles, polio and leishmaniasis

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 sectoral level.
- Part II deals with the host countries Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq, and discusses the main humanitarian issues related to the crisis.

The RAS is intended as a reference document and 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 which is not sourced is based on SNAP's own analysis and should be quoted as such.

Should you wish to reproduce the maps or other information within this document, kindly use [this link](#), to agree to the copyright terms and conditions.

Possible developments

- **Instability on the Syrian-Turkish border:** The re-grouping of ISIL fighters to their strongholds along the border is resulting in increased insecurity. The closure of border crossings by the GoT in response to the increasing influence of ISIL limits the flow of commodities and humanitarian aid upon which many northern governorates rely and preventing the UN capitalising on the recent agreement between Turkey and Syria to facilitate aid across the border.
- **Besiegement policy and local truces:** The policy to besiege and seal off areas persists as the political and military benefits increase. However as humanitarian needs in besieged areas reach critical and life-threatening levels, local truces and negotiated agreements to facilitate the delivery of vital humanitarian assistance are replicated in an increasing number of locations and are thus utilised to reach de-facto, albeit temporary, cease-fires in contested areas.
- **Food shortages:** Availability of food is further limited by insecurity and besiegement practices disrupting market flows. In addition, the decrease in income generating opportunities and price increases, fuelled by water shortages in cropping areas, high transportation and input costs, and restricted movement in areas facing insecurity and blockades by armed groups result in widespread food shortages exacerbating the vulnerability of food insecure populations. The full extent of the impact of drought conditions becomes apparent during the June wheat harvest.
- **Prolonged displacement crisis Western Aleppo city:** Irrespective of the security situation in Eastern Aleppo, the high level of damage to basic infrastructure caused by widespread aerial bombardment deters people from returning. The large number of IDPs from eastern Aleppo resident in western Aleppo remain and become increasingly unable to meet basic needs and due to overcrowding of the limited available shelter. Further outbreaks of communicable diseases are reported.
- **Humanitarian situation deterioration in north-west and south-east:** In the south, As-Sweida is increasingly impacted by the conflict, both directly, as fighting spills-over from Dar'a, and indirectly, by hosting increasing numbers of displaced, the spread of diseases and limited access of water and basic goods. In addition, as the number of IDPs across the country grows and there number of safe places to flee reduces. In the north, confrontation between GoS and opposition forces in Lattakia increases in frequency and intensity causing secondary displacement of IDPs from Lattakia to Tartous, Idleb and Aleppo and ultimately towards Turkey, putting pressure on already strained host communities and exacerbating the need for adequate shelter.

2014 Q1 Timeline - Main events Syria

Economic crisis:

The economy has contracted by 13% in 2013 following a 19% decrease in 2012. GoS oil revenues have declined by 95%. Other small-scale economies have been severely affected such as an 80% decline in the dairy production. Shortages of flour and food have been continuously reported, especially in besieged areas such in Yarmouk.

Local truces allow for limited access of aid to besieged areas:

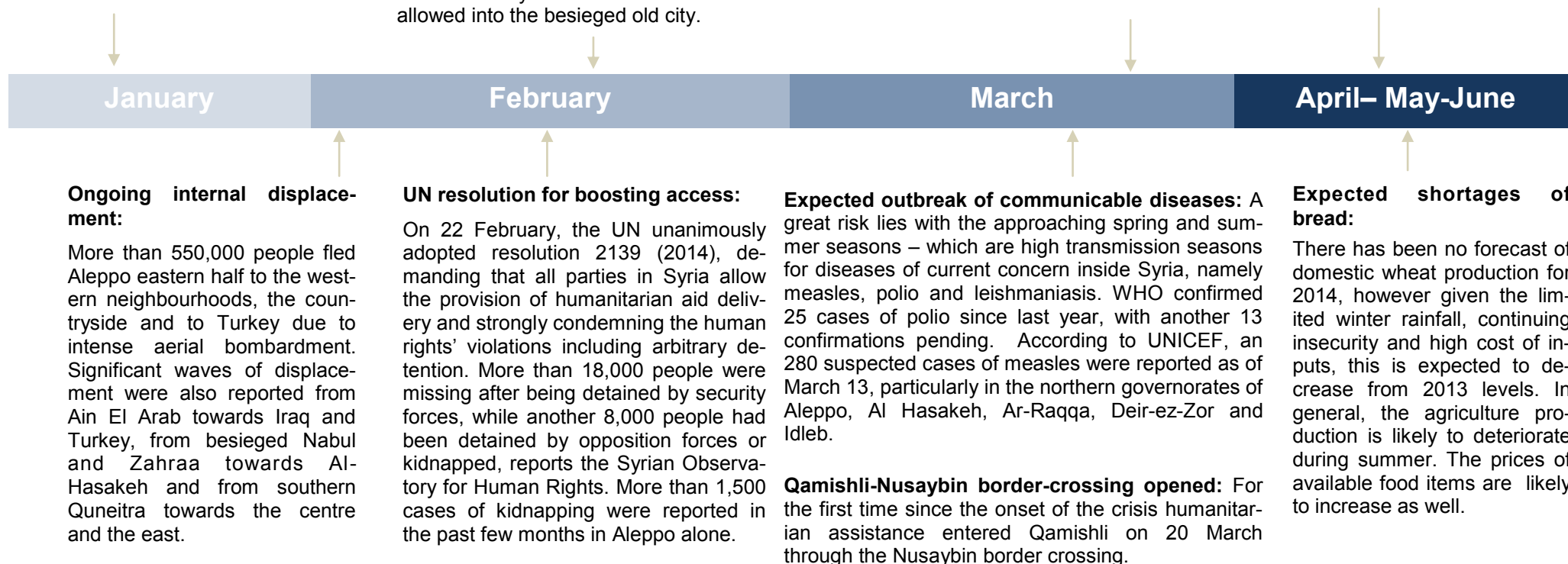
Between January and March, local truces were reached in Barzeh, Qudsaya, Yalda, Beit Sahem, Babilla, and Madaya between the warring parties which permitted the access of aid to the besieged towns. Truces broke in Qudsaya and Babilla violated and in these areas and GoS-checkpoints still prevent entry.

Only days after reaching an agreement and following the evacuation of 1,500 residents from Yarmouk, Jabhat al-Nusra re-entered the camp and clashes re-ignited. More than 1,400 people were evacuated from Old Homs on 8 February and humanitarian access was allowed into the besieged old city.

Fierce battles in the centre and the north:

ISIL has withdrawn from Aleppo strongholds towards the east and the in-fighting became limited to some areas in Al-Hasakeh and eastern Aleppo. A new cycle of clashes between ISIL and YPG erupted in Kurdish Ain El Arab in Aleppo prompting a wave of displacement. Following the fall of Yabroud on 16 March and western Homs on 20 March in the hands of the GoS, the opposition forces started a new offensive in northern Lattakia on 21 March and took control of Kasab village bordering Turkey. The battle is still ongoing in the region. The GoS barrel bombing on eastern Aleppo has also been incessant.

Water shortages: Lack of water is already being reported across Syria, as in Hama and Quneitra. Due to lack of electricity, increased demands from IDPs and reduced rainfall levels, water supply is reportedly at half of Syria's pre-crisis levels. The water shortages are most likely to be a flagrant problem during summer and people will increasingly rely on trucked tanks. The increased incidence of water-borne diseases is highly probable during summer.



Information gaps and data limitations

Data limitations

Information available on the humanitarian situation, specifically primary data, is extremely limited. To obtain a countrywide and objective picture of the needs and priorities, SNAP analyses a multitude of sources. In addition to consolidating the reports and assessments of humanitarian organisations SNAP relies on Government of Syria (GoS), opposition, media sources and key informants when researching this document.

While some information from GoS-held and hard-to-reach areas is available, huge gaps remain. In some cases, restrictions on information sharing hamper the formation a comprehensive picture on several regions in the country.

All these sources, however, are subject to specific limitations:

- **Syrian media:** Access for journalists to and within Syria is highly constrained. 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 GoS, such as the state-run SANA News, and sources affiliated with the opposition, such as Eqtisad. Although local activists are vocal in sharing their experiences, this information is often impossible to verify. ([Guardian 2014/01/07](#), [RSF 2013/12/18](#))
- **Relief actors:** Movement for international and national organisations is severely limited and publications are subject to scrutiny by the armed groups and the GoS. Publication of information or advocacy deemed controversial by any party to the conflict has direct implications on humanitarian access. Protection concerns, for instance, are often too politically sensitive to be included in assessments or publically available reports, which results in underreporting of key protection concerns.
- **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. Multi-sectoral joint assessments in Syria are similarly difficult. Although several structures were in place prior to the crisis (including monitoring of disease outbreaks through the Early Warning and Reporting System), the security situation hampers countrywide coverage.

Publicly available assessments and reports

Despite the constraints, several assessments and studies have been made available, including:

- **Shelter:** In the absence of a large-scale shelter assessment, numerous small-scale assessments have been conducted, most focusing on the situation of IDPs in camps and collective shelters.
- **Protection:** The Commission of Inquiry of the UN Human Rights Council publishes periodic reports on the human rights situation in Syria, as does Human Rights Watch (HRW). For example, in mid-March HRW conducted a field investigation in Bab al-Salame camp, near the Syrian town of Azaz, which houses over 16,000 IDPs. HRW also published a report on the GoS prolonged air-strike campaign on Aleppo on 24 March. ([HRW 2014/03/28](#), [HRW 2014/03/24](#))
- **Health:** The Early Warning and Reporting System (EWARS) publishes regular reports on health issues. However, communication channels are often interrupted and some areas are not included in the system. The Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) established a parallel surveillance system – the Early Warning Alert and Response Network (EWARN) – in opposition-held areas in September.
- **Monitoring:** WFP runs a price and market monitoring system, while the Ministry of Health and WHO maintain the EWARS. The ACU, in cooperation with international partners, leads several monitoring systems in northern governorates, including the regularly updated EWARN and an IDP camp monitoring system. However, due to the significant access constraints, none of these systems are comprehensive, covering only parts of Syria.

Recent information sources

- The following reports on the humanitarian needs in Syria became available in February and March:
 - UNICEF published a multi-sectoral report on the impact of the 3-year conflict on children, entitled 'Under Siege'. ([UNICEF 2014/03](#))
 - Utilising similar methodology - thereby allowing comparability between areas - multi sector needs assessments were conducted in both Quneitra and Dar'a, and the Complementary Operational Analysis Report for the SINA were published in January and March. ([AWGSS 2014/03/18](#), [SNAP 2014/01/24](#), [NGO Forum COAR 2014/01](#))
 - The ceasefire in Barzeh (Damascus) brokered in February led to a UN inter-agency mission to the area on 25 February in order to conduct sectoral assessments and identify residual needs and gaps. ([OCHA 2014/02/26](#))

- Updated results from the Health Resources & Services Availability Mapping System, conducted collaboratively by WHO and the Ministry of Health. ([WHO/MoH 2013/09](#))

Planned humanitarian assessments

- The OCHA-led Joint Humanitarian Assessment (JHA), due to start on 5 March and collect data from 1,000 key informants across all 14 Syrian governorates, is further delayed pending final approval from the GoS. WFP will participate in the assessment to be conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs. Approximately 186 enumerators were trained in Damascus and Tartous on 11 and 14 February respectively.
- The UNICEF-led Nutrition Working Group launched its 2014 nutrition strategy agreed by all sector members. Preparations are being finalised to conduct nutrition assessment with field activities planned to start in March 2014. The assessment will entail Ministry of Health staff collecting data from a sample of 3,000 children across all governorates except Ar-Raqqa. Trainings of enumerators were conducted by WFP and UNICEF in Damascus and a pilot nutrition assessment was conducted in Lattakia to better inform the formal assessment planned for March. ([UNICEF 2014/02/20](#), [WFP 2014/03/04](#))
- A pilot weight-for-height assessment is planned to be launched in one governorate by an INGO in May 2014, to be followed by a larger assessment in additional governorates in early summer. ([PI 2014/04/02](#))

Operational constraints

- On 22 February, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2139 (2014), demanding that all parties in Syria allow the provision of humanitarian assistance, cease depriving civilians of food and medicine, and enable the rapid, safe, and unhindered evacuation of all civilians who wish to leave. Russia, with support from China, had previously blocked 3 resolutions aimed at pressuring the GoS to comply. In February, neither Moscow nor Beijing blocked the resolution, although Russia did not allow an earlier draft that threatened sanctions should Syria fail to comply. On 2 October 2013, the Council had adopted a non-binding statement urging more humanitarian access, but the statement produced little administrative progress. ([UN News Service 2014/02/22](#))
- On 20 March, a 79-truck convoy carrying vital aid supplies intended to reach hundreds of thousands of people in Al-Hasakeh left the Turkish border crossing at Nusaybin, bound for the city of Qamishli, marking the first time in the 3 years of conflict that the UN has been able to carry aid into Syria from Turkey. The convoy was a tangible illustration of the impact of Security Council resolution 2139. It is currently unclear how far into the region the assistance was distributed – some aid officials feared it would not reach those most in need. ([OCHA 2014/03/26](#), [AlertNet 2014/03/19](#))
- In Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa governorates, the closure of main roads continued to make the delivery of humanitarian supplies difficult. According to WFP, Ar-Raqqa did not receive any of the planned food dispatch allocations for the fourth consecutive month while Deir-ez-Zor, to which access has been limited since October 2013, only received 9% of the food planned for the latest cycle due to widespread insecurity and the presence of armed groups along access routes. ([UNICEF 2014/03/23](#), [WFP 2014/03/27](#))
- On 24 March, UN chief Ban Ki-moon reported that humanitarian access to Syrians remains "extremely challenging". His report estimated that 3.5 million people were trapped in areas under siege or difficult to reach because of fighting, 1 million more than at the start of the year. According to the report, 220,000 people are living under siege in Homs, Nubl and Zhara in rural Aleppo, and in several localities on the outskirts of Damascus. About 175,000 are under siege from the Syrian military and the remainder by opposition forces. The UN has identified 258 "priority zones" where improved humanitarian access would have an especially positive impact. According to OCHA, access restrictions continue to hinder dispatch of food assistance at the scale of 4.25 million people per month. ([OCHA 2014/02/15](#), [AFP 2014/03/24](#))
- Transport and warehousing continue to be ever more unpredictable and insecure due to the dynamic areas of control, with numerous checkpoints manned by various groups. Humanitarian actors have been subject to

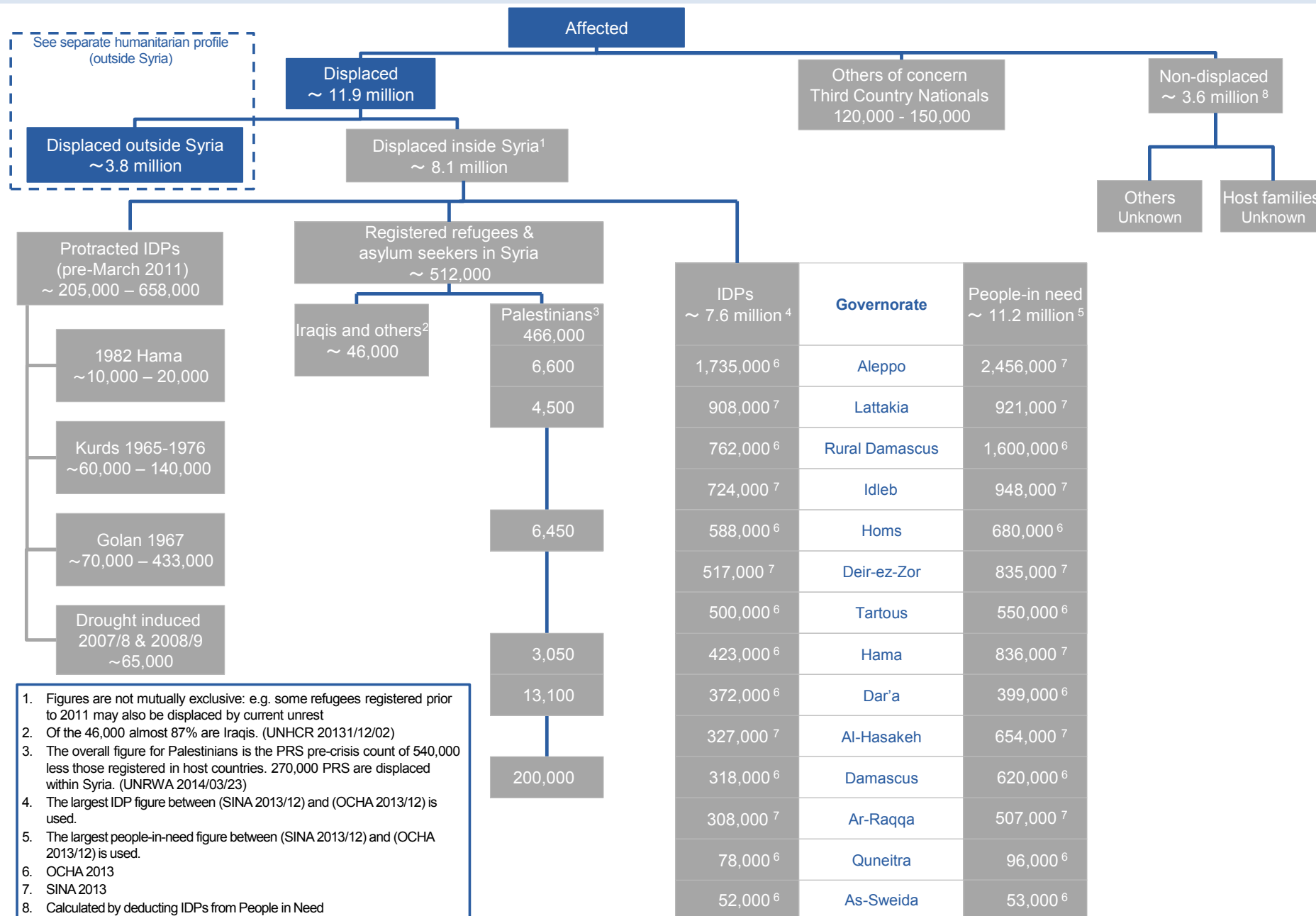
kidnappings, harassment and theft of supplies and equipment and it has become increasingly difficult for partners to provide assistance. ([OCHA 2014/01/31](#))

- **Interference of armed groups:** The further consolidation of control of areas in the north and centre of Syria was coupled with increasing restrictions on humanitarian aid delivery. In September 2013, ISIL issued rules requiring aid agencies working in Jarablus in Aleppo to register and regularly report to them and took responsibility for approving aid staff and beneficiary selection. ([Noria 2013/12/05](#), [Life4Syria 2013/10/25](#))
- **Hard to reach and besieged areas:** In early February, opposition forces and the GoS formed an agreement ensuring a break in fighting so as to allow humanitarian assistance into the Old City of Homs. The fragile truce, which was broken several times over the days it was planned, allowed aid into the area for the first time in 2 years, and also allowed the evacuation of hundreds of civilians who had been trapped there. Aid convoys came under attack when the ceasefire failed. While some analysts initially thought that the ceasefire might pave the way for similar processes in other regions, it has not led to any wider improvement in humanitarian access in Syria. ([Reuters 2014/02/15](#))
- Yarmouk Palestinian camp in Damascus, under siege since July 2013, received no assistance between August and December 2013. Over 80 people died of malnutrition, dehydration, and treatable diseases as a result of food and medical shortages. In mid-January, a truce between opposition fighters and the GoS, enabled assistance to the camp until 7 February when the truce broke. On 24 February, UNRWA resumed the delivery of aid to the camp until the truce failed again on 2 March, highlighting the volatile and unpredictable nature of cease-fire agreements and the ensuing danger that humanitarian workers confront when fighting spontaneously breaks out. ([ECHO 2014/02/25](#), [OCHA 2014/02/15](#))
- **GoS impediments to humanitarian access:** The bureaucratic procedures imposed by the GoS related to visas for international staff of humanitarian organisations and movement of goods, especially medical items, have posed a major challenge to operations. The international humanitarian response was significantly impeded when the GoS reduced the number of local NGOs authorised to support the work of international aid agencies from 110 to 60. As of October 2013, 16 international NGOs were registered inside Syria, up from 8 in January 2013. ([UN 2012/12/18](#), [ECHO 2013/01/14](#), [ECHO 2013/09/04](#), [OCHA 2014/01/31](#), [USAID 2013/12/06](#), [WFP 2013/07/01](#))
- **Border crossings:** Cross-border relief operations, informal and formal import of goods are reportedly important sources of basic items for the population, particularly in areas difficult to reach from Damascus. However, the border crossings between Syria and its neighbouring countries have been subject to intermittent openings and closures throughout the year, particularly the

Jordan/Syria official border crossing point 'Al-Naseeb', a vital point for the entry of goods. The Lebanon/Syria border crossing 'Al-Masnaa' has been consistently operational, while the Lebanon/Syria 'Al-Arida' crossing point faced closures depending on the security situation along the Northern Highway to Tripoli.

- The border crossings with Turkey are subject to frequent closures due to insecurity on the Syrian side. ([Logistics Cluster 2013/07/01](#))
- Both the GoS and Iraqi authorities authorised the passage of humanitarian supplies between the 2 countries. This new corridor is expected to allow more regular assistance to reach the previously hard to reach governorate of Al-Hasakeh and eventually Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor. ([WFP 2013/12/16](#), [WFP 2013/11/20](#))
- **Supply routes:** Throughout the country, the conflict has led to intermittent closures of the main roads that connect the country. The closure of the Dar'a-Damascus highway affected the dispatch of food to parts of Dar'a, Quneitra, Damascus and Rural Damascus. The Damascus-Homs highway experienced sporadic openings and closures. The blockage of this vital supply route meant, for example, that food aid in WFP's warehouses in Damascus could not reach areas in the centre of Syria. ([WFP 2014/02/04](#))

Humanitarian profile (see annex A for definitions)



IDPs ~ 7.6 million ⁴	Governorate	People-in need ~ 11.2 million ⁵
1,735,000 ⁶	Aleppo	2,456,000 ⁷
908,000 ⁷	Lattakia	921,000 ⁷
762,000 ⁶	Rural Damascus	1,600,000 ⁶
724,000 ⁷	Idleb	948,000 ⁷
588,000 ⁶	Homs	680,000 ⁶
517,000 ⁷	Deir-ez-Zor	835,000 ⁷
500,000 ⁶	Tartous	550,000 ⁶
423,000 ⁶	Hama	836,000 ⁷
372,000 ⁶	Dar'a	399,000 ⁶
327,000 ⁷	Al-Hasakeh	654,000 ⁷
318,000 ⁶	Damascus	620,000 ⁶
308,000 ⁷	Ar-Raqqa	507,000 ⁷
78,000 ⁶	Quneitra	96,000 ⁶
52,000 ⁶	As-Sweida	53,000 ⁶

- Figures are not mutually exclusive: e.g. some refugees registered prior to 2011 may also be displaced by current unrest
- Of the 46,000 almost 87% are Iraqis. (UNHCR 2013/12/02)
- The overall figure for Palestinians is the PRS pre-crisis count of 540,000 less those registered in host countries. 270,000 PRS are displaced within Syria. (UNRWA 2014/03/23)
- The largest IDP figure between (SINA 2013/12) and (OCHA 2013/12) is used.
- The largest people-in-need figure between (SINA 2013/12) and (OCHA 2013/12) is used.
- OCHA 2013
- SINA 2013
- Calculated by deducting IDPs from People in Need

Conflict developments (Jan-April 2014)

Al-Hasakeh continues to see pockets with heavy clashes. In mid-March, clashes broke out between pro-GoS National Defence fighters and YPG in the city of Qamishli. In addition, renewed clashes were reported between ISIL and the YPG in Ras Al Ain. ISIL controls most areas not under Kurdish control, including of Tal Hmis, Al Hol and Shaddadi. However, clashes erupted on 12 Feb between ISIL and other opposition groups on the supply line between Deir-ez-Zor and Al Hasakeh.

Aerial bombardments, including barrel bombing, have been continuously targeting the eastern half of **Aleppo** city since the beginning of the year in a campaign by the SAF to take control of opposition-held neighbourhoods.

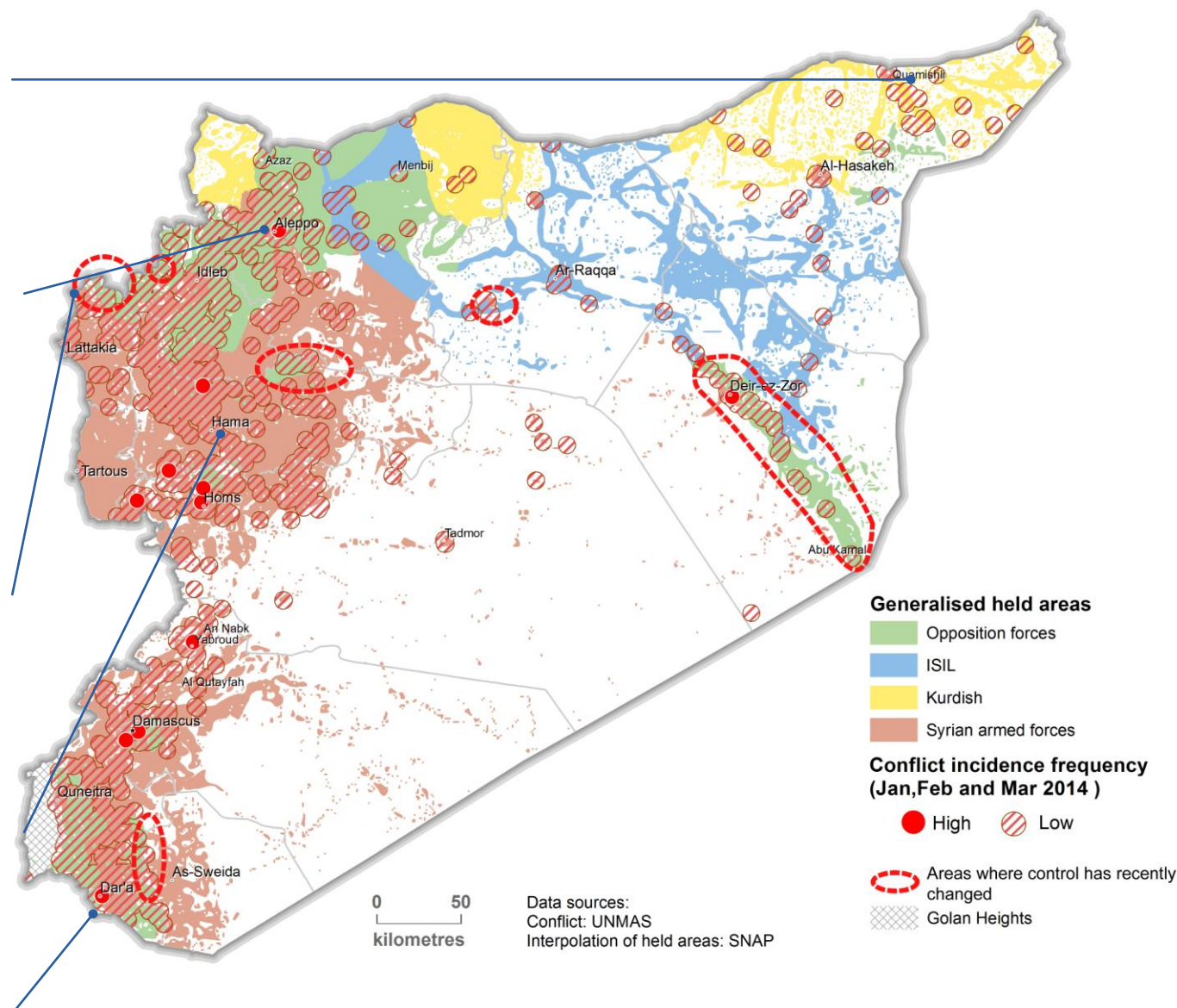
After months of clashes with rivals, ISIL fighters withdrew from many areas in northern Aleppo (Hreitan, Azaz, Mennegh) and Idleb, mostly to eastern Aleppo (Menbij, Al-Bab and Jarablus), Ar-Raqqa, and Al-Hasakeh, causing increased clashes with opposition groups in these areas, including security incidents on the borders with Turkey.

Opposition forces took control of the strategic Kasab village in **Lattakia** and the border crossing with Turkey, on 23 March, gaining access to the Mediterranean Sea for the first time. Since then, SAF aerial bombardment has been severe and troops have been deployed to the region to halt this opposition progress. Due to the mountainous terrain and the strong presence of government army in the area it is unlikely that the opposition will make significant gains in this area in the short term.

In early February, opposition forces initiated a new offensive against GoS-controlled strongholds in **Idleb** and **Hama**. Fierce clashes erupted with the SAF in northern Hama and southern Idleb.

On 8 March, SAF seized full control of the western-half of the governorate of **Homs**, cutting opposition supply lines from Lebanon and securing a highway that connects the capital to the coast

Dar'a governorate has witnessed an escalation in clashes and barrel bombing as the opposition launched an offensive in the south in order to attempt a breakthrough to Damascus via Ghouta.



Conflict Developments

The second round of Geneva-II negotiations that started on 10 February resulted in minimal progress towards a resolution of the Syrian crisis, except for the evacuations of civilians from Old Homs, and no immediate prospects of further negotiations. After the Syrian Armed Forces (SAF) took control of the Palestinian camp Yabroud in Damascus on 16 March and the opposition gained Kasab (in northern Lattakia) on 23 March, the conflict is set to continue, with the fighting in Lattakia marking a new battle-ground.

Despite the withdrawal of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) from areas in the north towards the east, clashes continue among opposition groups in certain areas, predominantly between ISIL and an alliance of Islamic opposition groups. Some analysts suggest that in-fighting is linked to the political dispute between supporters of Saudi Arabia on the one hand and Qatar on the other. Unification attempts on the ground between opposition groups continue to be recorded, illustrated by the establishment of the Mujahideed Army and the unification of small and large brigades such as Asefat al Shamal with Liwaa al Tawheed.

Key Events

- **The Qalamoun battle:** On 16 March the Syrian Armed Forces (SAF) took control of the opposition stronghold of Yabroud, and new battles started in the neighbouring villages. The majority of Qalamoun area is currently under control of SAF securing a link between Damascus and Homs. Following the capture of Yabroud, the SAF offensive is expected to ignite in and around the remaining opposition strongholds in Damascus city.
- **Opposition offensive in Lattakia:** On 23 March, opposition forces took control of the strategic village of Kasab and its border crossing into Turkey. The SAF responded to this move with heavy aerial bombardment and conflict continues as SAF has sent reinforcement troops to the area. Given the mountainous terrain of the area, and the widespread support for the GoS in the governorate, it is unlikely that the opposition fighters will be able to expand their area of control in the short-term. ([AFP 2014/03/22](#))
- **Infighting among opposition groups:** Various FSA groups, in cooperation with Islamic armed groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra and Ahrar al Sham, formed an alliance with which to battle ISIL in early 2014. A senior Al Qaeda operative and one of the founders of Ahrar El Sham Brigade, Abu Khalid As-Suri, was killed by ISIL in Aleppo on 24 February, resulting in the head of Jabhat al-Nusra reportedly threatening to fight ISIL in Syria and Iraq. These developments have resulted in the withdrawal of ISIL from locations in Idleb, Western Rural Aleppo and Rural Lattakia, while it has strengthened its hold on Ar-Raqqa and Eastern Rural Aleppo. Infighting has continued between

ISIL and other opposition groups, concentrated in the areas of Al-Hasakeh and eastern Aleppo. ([Al-akhbar 2014/02/24](#), [Assafir 2014/03/12](#))

- **Unification attempts:** While hard-line opposition groups vie for control and authority, attempts at unification have been ongoing. The Islamic Front, Al Mojahideen Army and Jabhat al-Nusra unified under "The Common Room for People of the Levant" in Aleppo, while the Northern Storm brigade joined Liwa' Al Tawhid, a major battalion in the Islamic Front. Additionally, 49 FSA factions announced their merger under the umbrella of the "southern front". "Failaq Al Sham", another opposition brigade merging 19 battalions, was formally created as well. These conglomerates aim at unifying efforts to gain control of more GoS-held areas and prevent in-fighting. ([Al-akhbar 2014/02/14](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/02/26](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/03/11](#))

Northern governorates

- **ISIL withdrawal towards the east:** ISIL withdrew from many areas in northern and western Aleppo (Hreitan, Azaz, Mennegh) and Idleb by the end of February after months of clashes with rival fighters. ISIL fighters have mostly moved to eastern Aleppo (Menbij, Al-Bab and Jarablus), Ar-Raqqa, and Al-Hasakeh. This withdrawal resulted in increased violence on the borders with Turkey, including fighting between ISIL and other opposition groups in Jarablus. In Ar-Raqqa, ISIL took control of Tabaqa town. ([Al Jazeera 2014/02/28](#), [Assafir 2014/02/15](#), [Daily Star 2014/03/03](#), [Daily Star 2014/02/23](#), [AFP 2014/02/20](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/03/03](#), [aawsat 2014/03/14](#))
- **Ongoing battles between the SAF and opposition groups in Aleppo:** The barrel bombing campaign on opposition-held neighbourhoods of eastern Aleppo city continued. SAF reportedly made some gains in the city in February after retaking control of Jabal Bardo neighbourhood and part of Sheikh Najjar area, securing major supply routes to the opposition-held part of the city. The opposition launched an assault on western GoS-controlled Aleppo and took control of Layramoun and Ar-Rashideen neighbourhoods. ([AFP 2014/02/20](#), [AFP 2014/02/07](#), [AFP 2014/02/04](#), [Daily Star 2014/02/14](#), [AFP 2014/02/04](#), [El-Nashra 2014/02/26](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/02/22](#), [al-Modon 2014/02/25](#), [Assafir 2014/03/25](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/03/27](#))
- **YPG-ISIL fighting in Ain El Arab:** Clashes reignited between the Popular Protection Units (YPG) and ISIL in areas close to Ain al Arab, including Sarin and Shoyoukh ([ARANews 2014/03/15](#))
- **Opposition offense in Hama and Idleb:** Fierce clashes erupted in northern Hama and southern Idleb (especially in and around Khan Shaykhoun, Al Dana, and Kafr Takharim) as SAF and opposition forces vied for control of the strategic town of Morek on the supply route between Hama and Idleb and specifically to GoS-controlled Wadi El Daif military camp in Idleb. Fierce clashes also erupted around Idleb city as opposition forces attempted to break into the city, though no decisive victory was achieved. ([Al-akhbar](#))

2014/02/26, ARANews 2014/02/22, Daily Star 2014/03/06, Al-Modon 2014/03/07, Assafir 2014/03/08, Aljazeera 2014/02/18, Daily Star 2014/03/25)

- The situation in **Ar-Raqqa** remained calm apart from small-scale clashes. ([AFP 2014-03-07](#), [ARANews 2014/03/07](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/03/04](#), [ARANews 2014/03/15](#))

Eastern governorates

- **ISIL v opposition clashes in Al-Hasakeh and Deir-ez-Zor:** In early February, ISIL secured control of most of the opposition strongholds in the South of Tal Hamis, Al Hole and Shaddadi in Al-Hasakeh. However, clashes erupted on 12 Feb between ISIL and Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic Front in Markada village, on the supply line between Deir-ez-Zor and Al-Hasakeh. Following severe clashes, ISIL withdrew from Deir-ez-Zor after which security incidents in the city have been mainly restricted to frequent suicide bombings. ISIL is not likely to accept the loss of Deir-ez-Zor with its rich oil reserves thus another cycle of fighting in the governorate is possible. Reports already suggest ISIL has re-taken control of some areas. ([Al-akhbar 2014/03/03](#), [Lebanonfiles 2014/03/02](#), [Alalam 2014/02/21](#))
- **SAF and opposition clash in Deir-ez-Zor:** Ongoing clashes were reported between the opposition forces and the SAF around the military airport and town of Muhassan in Deir-ez-Zor and within the city itself. ([ARANews 2014/03/18](#))
- **Kurds v ISIL clashes in Al-Hasakeh:** Conflict between the YPG and ISIL has continued in both rural areas (such as Jazaa village, rural Qamishli, and Tal Brak) and near the border town of Ras Al Ain. YPG-controlled areas have also been subject to frequent suicide bombings. ([El Nashra 2014/02/12](#), [Assafir 2014/02/08](#), [ARANews 2014/02/13](#), [Assafir 2014/03/07](#), [ARANews 2014/03/08](#), [Zamanalwsl 2014/03/11](#), [ARANews 2014/02/17](#), [ARANews 2014/03/24](#))

West and Centre

- Violence in **Homs** has continued with an opposition assault on Al-Qumeiri village, 2 explosions in the mostly Christian Armenian quarter, an explosion in mostly Alawite Az-Zahra, and fierce shelling of the Al-Waer neighbourhood, with more than 400,000 IDPs. SAF took control of the western-half of the governorate securing a highway that connects the capital to the coast. ([Daily Star 2014/02/21](#), [AFP 2014/03/06](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/03/10](#), [Daily Star 2014/03/21](#).)
- No conflict incidents were reported in the coastal governorate of **Tartous**.
- The opposition, on 23 March, took full control of Kasab village and the border-crossing with Turkey. Following this gain, the Islamic Front and its allies proceeded to take control of Al Samra village, gaining access to the coast. There is contradictory information as to who currently controls the strategic location Observatory 45, with state media announcing a victory though this has not been confirmed and battles are ongoing. ([Al-Modon 2014/03/25](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/03/24](#), [Assafir 2014/03/25](#), [Daily Star 2014/03/27](#))

Damascus and its countryside

- **The Qalamoun battle:** Following the strategic gains in Qalamoun, northern Rural Damascus, the SAF, supported by Hezbollah and Iraqi fighters, seized the key strategic stronghold of Yabroud on 16 March. After SAF took control of Yabroud, the last opposition bastion in the north of Damascus, SAF took control of neighbouring villages (incl. Ras Al Ain, Ras El Maarra and Flita). In parallel to the capture of Yabroud, the SAF sealed 14 of 18 irregular routes into Lebanon. The Qalamoun operation and the sealing off the border are expected to decrease spill-over of violence into Lebanon. Shelling, though on a lower scale than previous months, was also reported in Eastern and Western Ghouta. **Jowbar**, already subject to fierce shelling, is expected to be the new battlefield after Qalamoun. ([Daily Star 2014/02/12](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/03/03](#), [El-Nashra 2014/03/07](#), [AFP 2014/03/07](#), [Al-Jazeera 2014/02/18](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/03/12](#), [Reuters 2014/03/16](#), [Al-Monitor 2014/03/06](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/03/28](#))

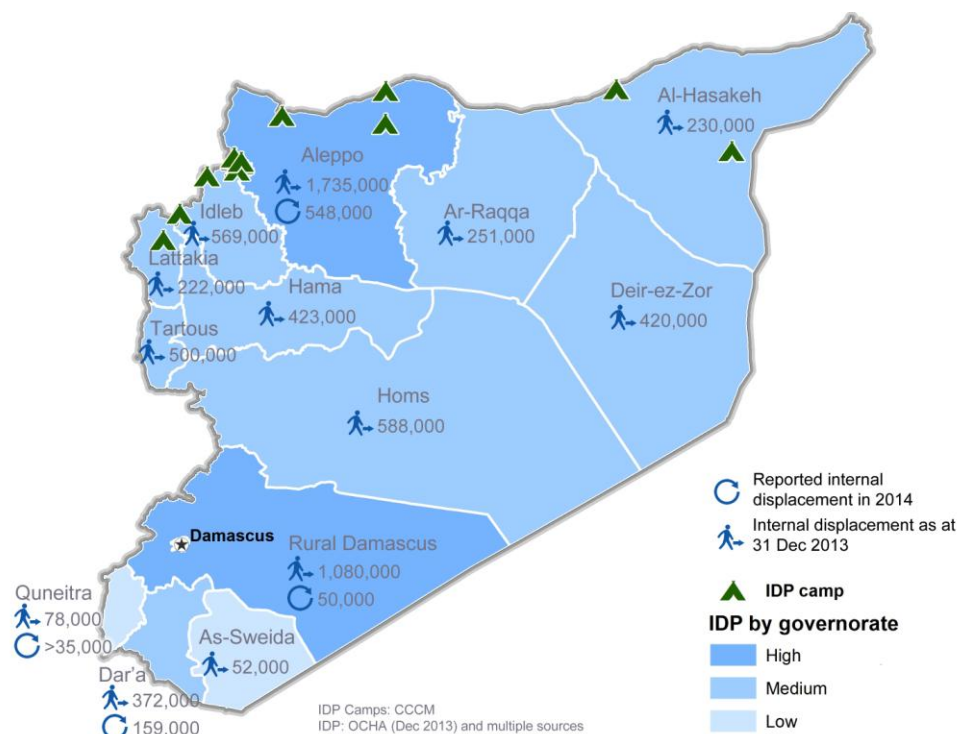
Southern governorates

- Statements from some FSA leaders asserted the intent of opposition forces to launch a massive attack in the south in order to achieve a breakthrough across Eastern Ghouta to Damascus. This led to GoS redeploying troops to the area. However, no attack was launched.
- **Increased violence in Dar'a:** Dar'a has seen a major escalation in clashes and barrel bombings with several explosions reported in the city and the countryside including in the vicinity of 2 UNRWA schools in Mzeireb on 10 and 19 February. Opposition forces took control of the central Gharaz prison on 21 March, freeing hundreds of prisoners. ([AFP 2014/02/13](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/02/15](#), [ARANews 2014/02/14](#), [UNRWA 2014/02/19](#), [Assafir 2014/02/25](#), [Daily Star 2014/03/19](#))
- **Increased security incidents in Quneitra:** Rural Quneitra is mostly opposition-controlled while the GoS maintains control of the city and other towns such as Khan Arnaba. In general, **Quneitra** has not seen a major increase in violence in February and early March despite the shelling of Mount Hermon on 28 Feb on an Israeli post and the Israeli response by shelling Syrian Army posts. On 17 March, a bomb exploded on the Israeli part of the occupied Golan Heights, prompting artillery fire into Syria that killed a number of Syrian soldiers. The bombing came four days after explosives were allegedly detonated near an Israeli army patrol along the Lebanese borders and which prompted Israeli shelling of southern Lebanese territories. Israeli reinforcements along the Quneitra border have been put in place. ([Daily Star 2014/03/03](#), [Assafir 2014/02/25](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/03/06](#), [Assafir 2014/03/13](#), [Daily Star 2014/03/19](#))
- No fighting was reported in the governorate of **As-Sweida**.

Displacement profile

Estimates indicate that over 40% of Syria's pre-conflict population has been displaced:

- **IDPs:** There are 2 recent estimates on the number of people displaced within Syria:
 - Nationwide 6.52 million people were estimated to be displaced as of December 2013, most residing in Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Homs & Idlib. This includes 270,000 Palestine Refugees. ([SHARP 2013/12/16](#), [UNRWA 2014/03/26](#))
 - The SINA assessment estimated 4.1 million IDPs to be in the 111 sub-districts assessed in 8 northern governorates (out of a total of 272 sub-districts countrywide). ([SINA 2013/12/31](#))
- In addition, 793,000 are estimated to have been displaced since the start of 2014 as shown below:



Main displacement events January to March

- **Aleppo:** On 2 February, a mass movement of people was reported from eastern Aleppo city, as a result of heavy aerial bombardment on the area. Initially people fled to neighbourhoods in the west of the city but after two weeks movement to rural areas and towards Turkey was reported. This change was due to movement restrictions caused by the crossing point between eastern and western Aleppo and a proliferation of checkpoints. By the end of February, some 250,000 people had fled to relatively safer rural areas, while over 200,000 had sought shelter in safer neighbourhoods in western Aleppo city. The large influx to western Aleppo city, has stretched the capacity of safer neighbourhoods to absorb the new displaced families. To control the influx, displacement was channelled towards the neighbourhoods of Al-Furkan, New Aleppo and Jamelieh. At the start of March, western neighbourhoods of the city continued to witness a sustained influx of IDPs from the east. ([OCHA 2014/02/15](#), [OCHA 2014/02/26](#), [WFP 2014/02/21](#))
- **Al-Hasakeh:** Significant waves of displacement affected Al-Hasakeh governorate in February and March, mainly towards Quamishli and the rural areas surrounding Al-Hasakeh city. ([WFP 2014/03/25](#))
- **Dar'a:** Heavy fighting between GoS forces and armed opposition groups escalated at the start of 2014, resulting in the displacement of around 160,000 people. ([UNSC 2014/03/26](#))
- **Rural Damascus:** Between 9 – 20 February, over 50,000 people fled the violence in the Qalamoun area, including 13,000 to Lebanon. The pace of the influx into Lebanon significantly decreased toward the end of February, with only 640 new arrivals identified in Aarsal between 20 and 25 February. Some of those fleeing the area indicated that the route into Lebanon was blocked. ([UNHCR 2014/02/20](#), [AFP 2014/02/13](#))
- **Quneitra:** Mid-February saw an escalation of fighting in Quneitra, resulting in displacement of an estimated 35,000 people from the south and south-eastern areas to central and eastern Quneitra, north and western Dar'a, and large numbers to Damascus City and Rural Damascus. ([OCHA 2014/02/26](#), [WFP 2014/03/07](#))
- **Returnees and evacuations:** A wave of ceasefires in Damascus and Rural Damascus permitted the return of thousands of displaced families to their homes. In addition, evacuations have taken place in several areas in Homs and Rural Damascus, allowing for the evacuations of an unknown number of people. ([WFP 2014/03/07](#), [IOCC 2014/02/17](#), [UNICEF 2014/02/25](#))

Countrywide sectoral analysis

Priority sectors

- Although priority needs differ significantly by location, some generalisations can be made: **protection** concerns are widespread, with many areas in the north subject to indiscriminate bombing and human rights violations by armed groups. Protection issues were highlighted as major humanitarian concerns in the first quarter of 2014 particularly in areas with strong presence of extremist groups further limiting people's freedom of movement.
- **Food** continues to be a priority sector across all governorates, particularly in areas under siege. With expected shortfalls in agricultural production due to insecurity, lack of inputs, high transportation costs as well as below average rains in the winter drought-like conditions are further likely to result in food shortages.
- With high intensity conflict resulting in a new wave of large-scale displacement, coupled with high level of damages to private buildings and shelters, **shelter** needs have significantly increased since the beginning of the year. In 2013 some 247,000 people were reported to be in acute need in 8 assessed Governorates. By January and February 2014 reports of the acute need of shelter had increased; in Dar'a and Quneitra alone some 263,000 people reported life-threatening need of shelter. With recent fighting and new displacement across the country, including the mass displacement in Aleppo City, acute shelter needs are anticipated to be significantly higher.
- While access to adequate **WASH** assistance is a growing concern in the north, centre and east of the country, recent assessments highlight a relatively better situation in southern governorates such as Dar'a, Quneitra and Rural Damascus where WASH needs are less severe due to the better availability of safe water. However with the below average rainfall the situation is expected to deteriorate in these areas as well in the upcoming summer months.
- While information on the **health situation** is limited, the reports on disease outbreaks, including measles, typhoid and polio, highlight the consequences of the partial collapse of the health system coupled with the weakened immune system of the population due to a lack of food and access to WASH services. The north of the country appears to be most affected with public hospitals no longer operational and access difficulties hampering the supply of medicines and medical equipment.

Health

There have been no major developments reported since the beginning of 2014 with regards to the status of Syria's health system; as in previous months, the health system remains weak as equipment, medicines and personnel are in short supply throughout the country. In the first quarter of 2014, information on further impact of the crisis on the health sector remains limited.

With the low capacity of the health system and decreased immunity of the affected population the great risk lies with the approaching spring and summer seasons – which are high transmission seasons for diseases of current concern inside Syria, namely measles, polio and leishmaniasis. Already there has been a notable increase in suspected measles cases, with 3,500 suspected clinical cases reported largely in Deir-ez-Zor, Aleppo and Idlib. As was demonstrated by the 7,000 recorded measles cases by last June (2013) there remains a viable risk of further outbreaks in the coming warmer months.

Additionally, despite widespread polio vaccination campaigns in recent months, the WHO confirmed a total of 39 cases of polio since 2013. As summer approaches, temperatures rise and water becomes scarcer there may as well be increased incidence of other water-borne diseases such as cholera and typhoid. ([Global Polio Eradication Initiative 2014/03/31](#), [SNAP 2013/06/26](#), [BBC 2014/03/26](#), [Guardian 2014/03/28](#), [ACU-EWARN 2014/03/08](#))

Key Developments Q1

- The aerial bombardments of Aleppo city led to mass displacement of people from the eastern part of the city to the western part and out into the surrounding rural areas. These population movements have made it hard to respond to people's needs: the few remaining health providers inside Aleppo are overwhelmed by the number of people seeking medical services and it has become difficult to meet the needs of people displaced outside Aleppo. The barrel bombings have also led to increases in trauma patients, and shortages in medical equipment and expertise have thus exacerbated medical needs in Aleppo. Some 20,000 people have reportedly suffered injuries directly linked to barrel bombing since December 2013. Anaesthetics were noted to be in particularly short supply.

Additionally, regular aerial bombardment has forced many hospitals and facilities to move activities and equipment underground to ensure the security of both staff and patients. ([CNN 2014/01/05](#), [PI 2014/03/20](#))

- A growing concern is the frequency and accuracy of attacks on medical staff and health facilities. Several hospitals in Aleppo were targeted in airstrikes, and on 23 February a car bomb went off near a field hospital in Atmeh. ([Al Jazeera 2014/02/23](#), [Reuters 2014/02/23](#), [ACMC 2014/02](#), [CNN 2014/01/05](#), [PI 2014/03/20](#))

- As of 31 March the ACU EWARN monitoring system had confirmed only 8 measles cases in northern Syria, due to lack of lab confirmation capacity. As many as 3,500 suspected clinical cases were reported via EWARN, mostly from Deir-ez-Zor, Aleppo and Idlib governorates. ([ACU-EWARN 2014/03/31](#))
- The WHO confirmed a total of 39 cases of polio across Syria since 2013; 27 cases were confirmed by MoH in Damascus and another 12 were confirmed by other sources in the north. The majority of cases have been coming from the harder-to-access governorate of Deir-ez-Zor.

Vaccination efforts continue, with the most recent campaign in the governorates of Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama, Idlib and Latakia resulting in the vaccination of 1.42 million children (out of a targeted 1.45 million). ([BBC 2014/03/26](#), [WHO 2014/03/09](#), [Global Polio Eradication Initiative 2014/03/26](#), [Guardian 2014/03/28](#), [OCHA 2014/02/26](#), [ACU-EWARN 2014/03/22](#), [Polio Control Task Force, 2014/04/01](#), [Global Polio Eradication Initiative 2014/03/31](#), [PI 2014/04/02](#))

- There are fewer obstetricians available to provide emergency or continuous obstetric care. There has also been an increase in the proportion of women delivering at home. Despite the costs, many women are interested in having caesarean operations and long waiting-lists are reported. ([PI 2014/03/20](#))

Underlying Problems

Weakened health system

- The WHO/MoH Health Resources & services Availability Mapping System stated that, by the last quarter of 2013, 64% of 91 public hospitals had been severely affected by the conflict with 40% rendered out of service. Medical staff and equipment remained in short supply, and there continued to be alarming shortages of medicine as national medicinal production has almost ceased. It was also recently reported that 93% of Syria's ambulances have been damaged, stolen or destroyed. The collapse of the health system is manifested in many Syrian children being affected by diseases that are preventable within a functioning health system (e.g. measles, diarrhoea and respiratory illnesses) and reports of 200,000 Syrians have died of treatable chronic diseases such as cancer, asthma and diabetes. ([IFRC 2014/02/20](#), [IOCC 2014/0224](#), [OCHA 2014/02/25](#), [Save the Children 2014/03/09](#), [WHO/MoH 2013/09](#))
- The besieged areas across the country and particularly in Aleppo, Homs and Damascus suffer from serious medical shortages and lack of personnel and equipment to meet the needs of the population. During the February evacuations of both the Old City of Homs and Yarmouk camp many evacuees showed signs of trauma, illness and malnutrition. ([AFP 2014/02/28](#), [AFP 2014/02/11](#), [UNICEF 2014/02/25](#))
- An assessment conducted in Quneitra in February found health services to be seriously affected by the lack of qualified medical staff, medical supplies

and medicines (particularly for chronic diseases). Only 1 field hospital was providing first aid, and many emergency medical cases were referred to Dar'a Governorate or to Jordan, despite transport being expensive and dangerous. A total of 156,300 people were found to be in need of health assistance, and many medical facilities were damaged as a result of aerial bombardment and shelling. Conflict-related injuries were found to be the key health concern, followed by water-related diseases, such as diarrhoea and skin diseases, pneumonia and Hepatitis A. ([AWGSS 2014/03/18](#))

Nutrition

Key Developments Q1

Rapid MUAC assessments and weight-for-height assessments of 39,000 children aged 6-59 months (in host and IDP populations) conducted in Ar-Raqqa, Aleppo and Idlib from May to December 2013 found less than 0.5% SAM and less than 2.4% MAM, indicating that acute malnutrition is currently not prevalent in areas receiving humanitarian assistance. However stunting and micronutrient deficiencies were reportedly high.

Infant & Young Child Feeding (IYCF) are reportedly poor, highlighting the need for strengthening IYCF practices and support within communities. As reduced access to food sources, medical services and water continue, the risk of malnutrition particularly micronutrient deficiencies, persists. As such, preventive measures, awareness and monitoring activities should continue. Assessments need to be undertaken in areas that are not receiving food assistance, where GAM rates are likely to be higher.

- In Hama, MUAC screenings in mid-February found an increase in the number of children under 5 vulnerable to or already having MAM. ([OCHA 2014/02/15](#))
- The populations in the besieged camps of Sbeineh and Yarmouk are of particular concern given the length of time during which both camps have been cut off. Malnutrition is a particular concern in Sbeineh given that has not received supplies or any other assistance, and the risk of starvation in Yarmouk camp is compounded by medical shortages. Evacuees from Homs in February displayed signs of malnutrition as well. ([UNICEF 2014/02/25](#), [AFP 2014/02/28](#), [OCHA 2014/02/26](#), [WFP-USA 2014/01/22](#), [UN News Centre 2014/01/17](#))
- WFP was forced to reduce its March food basket due to late confirmations of donor contributions, which prevented timely arrival of food. As a result, food baskets contain 20% less nutrients than those required for families to stay healthy (kcal 1,530 as compared to the planned 1,920). Without confirmation of additional contributions, WFP reported that it will be forced to reduce food ration distributions to vulnerable families by 80% in May. ([WFP 2014/03/04](#))

Protection

As violence and infighting continues among the warring factions, the Syrian population continues to be exposed to grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law by all parties involved. Although the figures of dead, injured and affected continue to rise, and more light is shed on particular situations of concern, it is likely that many more violations and protection concerns go unreported. Nevertheless, protection issues and the human rights abuses and violation in this context received increased attention by the international community, as demonstrated by recent reports produced by groups such as the Commission of Inquiry and other UN teams of experts.

Key Developments Q1

- According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, as of 1 April, the death toll since the start of the Syrian conflict, stood at 150,000. The figure includes nearly 50,000 civilians, of whom over 7,000 are children and over 5,000 are women. It is further estimated that 17,000 people are missing and “tens of thousands” are held in regime prisons. In January 2014 the UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights indicated that it has stopped updating the death toll since its last formal count of 100,000 in late July. ([Reuters 2014/04/01](#), [Guardian 2014/03/11](#), [AP 2014/01/07](#))
- Several peace deals and truces were negotiated between December 2013 and March 2014 in various parts of Rural Damascus. When adhered to by the agreeing parties, these agreements enabled people to move in and out of areas, as well as the movement of relief goods to varying degrees. For more information, please see the section on.

Intensification of violence and infighting

- February saw an intensification of violence with the escalation in the frequency and amount of barrel bombing occurring in places such as Aleppo, Hama, and Dar'a. The intense air strikes in February led to the displacement of over 450,000 people mainly from eastern Aleppo and resulted in injuries of 20,000 people. Protection risks may be encountered along escape routes (e.g. harassment or arbitrary arrests), and the well-being of the vulnerable groups remaining in eastern Aleppo is of concern as well, given the difficulty in getting assistance into the city and the risks of further attacks. ([AFP 2014/02/04](#), [WFP 2014/02/18](#))
- Starting in mid-February the Syrian Armed Forces reportedly began utilising a new type of cluster munition rockets against opposition areas. Although Syria is a non-signatory party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and therefore is not obligated to avoid using such weapons these rockets are considered to be deadlier and more powerful than other weapons previously

used by the GoS, and are leading to a deadly legacy of unexploded ordinances. ([Reuters, 2014/02/19](#))

- Additionally, near Aleppo it was reported that an al-Qaeda splinter group summarily executed relatives of fighters from a rival group, underscoring the increased infighting between groups. ([Reuters 2014/02/14](#), [Reuters 2014/02/14](#), [Al Jazeera 2014/02/10](#))

Denial of Basic Requirements and Besiegement Policies

- In early February a group of independent UN experts reported that deprivation of basic necessities and denial of humanitarian relief has become a widespread tactic utilised in the Syrian conflict. This includes deliberate attacks on medical facilities and staff; cutting off of water supplies and attacks on water facilities; actions to destroy harvests and kill livestock – all of which obstructs access to basic services and livelihoods and with the apparent intention of starving out the targeted populations. Of particular concern are those communities in areas under prolonged and ongoing siege, specifically Nubul and Al-Zahraa in rural Aleppo, Eastern Ghouta, Daryya and Moadamiyah in Rural Damascus, the Old City in Homs and Yarmouk Camp in Damascus. ([UN Human Rights Council 06/02/2014](#), [Tishreen 2014/02/26](#), [Al Akhbar 2014/03/10](#))
- A recent assessment in the governorate of Quneitra found that armed violence and lack of access to basic services were ranked as the greatest concerns in the assessed areas. ([Assessment Working Group for Southern Syria 2014/03/18](#))
- Across Syria the severity of humanitarian needs is more extreme in besieged communities, characterised by lack of access and restricted movement of people and goods. Findings from different assessments demonstrated that conditions in besieged areas were generally worse off, with greater unmet humanitarian needs. The SINA and other assessments found that several communities under siege faced life-threatening conditions due to extremely low availability of food and health supplies – a conclusion supported by the condition of evacuees from places such as Yarmouk Camp and the Old City of Homs in February. ([SINA 2013/12](#), [NGO Forum COAR 2014/01](#), [Reuters 2014/02/07](#), [Al Jazeera 2014/02/09](#))

Human Rights Violations

- The International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic called on the UN Security Council to refer grave violations of the rule of war to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for prosecution. The Commission document records that war crimes have been committed on both sides - including torture, massacres, rapes and recruitment of children - as well as utilisation of the practices of besiegement and bombardment of civilian

areas. The report included confidential lists of suspected war criminals from both sides. ([Reuters 2014/03/05](#), [Al Jazeera 2014/03/19](#))

- The acts of arbitrary detention (especially of civilians) were highlighted and addressed in UN Security Resolution 2139 adopted on 22 February 2014, which explicitly called for ending these practices and demanded the release of all arbitrarily detained persons.
 - The arbitrary detention of civilians may be used as a leveraging tactic, as was demonstrated by the Nusra Front's release of 13 Greek Orthodox nuns by in exchange for the release of 25 prisoners by the GoS in early March. It is possible that 94 women and children belonging to the Alawite minority in Lattakia (in August) are being held hostage by Sunni Islamist rebels in order to facilitate the release of opposition supporters held by the GoS.
 - Additionally, relatives of the opposition's delegation to the Geneva II peace talks were reportedly arrested by the Syrian regime. This came on top of designating the delegates as terrorists and seizing their assets.
 - There are also reports of the Syrian Government detaining whole families and children, as well as abducting children in order to force family members to turn themselves.

([Al Jazeera 2014/02/27](#), [Reuters 2014/03/13](#), [Human Rights Watch 2014/03/17](#), [VDC 2014/03](#), [Human Rights Watch 2012/07](#))

- Other violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) include attacks on civilian areas and facilities such as schools. In early March a collective shelter (abandoned school) in Homs was attacked, resulting in one death, several injured and evacuees. Similar incidents were reported in Yarmouk, where schools, hospitals and a mosque suffered from shelling. On 31 March Syrian warplanes attacked the town of Harem in the governorate of Idleb, injuring dozens of people. Other violations include the harassment and arrests of medical workers. The random arrests and detention of civilians in Yarmouk were reported as well. ([UNHCR 2014/03/08](#), [Amnesty International 2014/03/10](#), [AP 2014/03/31](#))
- Additionally, journalists are reportedly not afforded the protections that are generally afforded to them in crisis zones; in 2013 15 journalists and media workers were killed in the Syrian civil war. ([IFJ 2014/02/15](#))
- Various Islamist groups gained strength in the governorates of Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa, leading to the implementation of strict Islamic rule and restricted freedoms along with other human rights violations.
 - ISIL has been increasingly accused of kidnapping and killing civilians and members of rival opposition groups. In Ar-Raqqa, where ISIL has been cementing its control, the group reportedly urged citizens to turn to

Islamic courts (with limited judicial guarantees) if they feel they have been mistreated by ISIL fighters. ([AFP 04/02/2014](#))

- In most recent reports, women and girls in Deir-ez-Zor were prohibited from moving freely in public unless abiding by the imposed dress code. ([Reuters 2014/03/05](#))
- Groups affiliated with the Islamic Front, Jabhat al-Nusra, Jaish al-Mujahedeen and the Syrian Revolutionary Front in Ar-Raqqa have placed checkpoints around different areas and cut off electrical and water supply lines. ([Reuters 2014/03/05](#), [Daily Star 2014/03/20](#))

Homs Evacuation

- A humanitarian truce was negotiated for 8 February allowing the evacuation of people from the Old City of Homs and the entrance of a relief convoy into the city. However, humanitarian activities were delayed following explosions and shelling along the route through which aid was to be delivered. While approximately 1,400 people were evacuated during this truce, activists stated that a remaining 1,500 people may be trapped inside, struggling with hunger, malnutrition and severe shortages of other basic necessities. ([Reuters 2014/02/07](#), [Al Jazeera 2014/02/09](#), [AFP 2014/02/10](#), [UN News Service 2014/02/13](#), [AFP 2014/02/16](#))
- As part of the evacuation process, a group of males between the ages of 15-55 years was held in a school as part of a screening process coordinated by the Syrian authorities. Given the lack of clarity and information surrounding this process of security checks, there was grave concern for the fate of these individuals. By the end of February 330 males were released, with 181 remaining in detention. The lack of clarity surrounding the treatment of men and boys has been a growing protection concern throughout the various recent evacuations. ([AFP 2014/02/21](#), [Reuters 2014/02/14](#), [AFP 2014/02/13](#), [AFP 2014/02/24](#), [PHAP 2014/02/07](#))
- Another report also indicated that some girls below the age of 18 were being detained along with a few boys under the age of 15, positing further protection concerns. ([AFP 2014/02/18](#))

Yarmouk Evacuation

- After nearly a year under siege aid teams were able to evacuate 1,500 people from Yarmouk Camp in February. A negotiated agreement allowed UNRWA to distribute aid within the camp in January 2014, but the aid distribution was halted in early February following renewed fighting in the camp. In late March, aid distributions began again but UNRWA was instructed to halt operations until 4 April for unknown reasons. In mid-February parties reached an agreement under which only Palestinian armed

men remain in the camp, preventing non-Palestinian armed men from entering. ([AFP 2014/02/16](#), [UNRWA 2014/04/02](#))

Children

- UNICEF estimates the number of children affected by the Syrian crisis to be 5.5 million and the number of children displaced inside Syria stands at close to 3 million. ([UNICEF 2014/03](#))
- The first report on the situation of children and armed conflict was released in late January, describing that disproportionate and indiscriminate use of weaponry and military tactics has resulted in numerous killings and maiming of children. Further infringing on children's rights, the fighting and violence have disrupted children's access to education and health services. The report adds that GoS forces were responsible for the arrest, arbitrary detention, ill treatment and torture of children, while armed opposition groups have been responsible for the recruitment of children in combat and are using them to assist in military and terror interventions in civilian-populated areas. The report also highlights the trend of children's disappearances. ([UN Security Council 2014/01/27](#), [OCHA 2014/02/13](#))
- A recent desk review by the Global Protection Cluster and HelpAge International discussed the vulnerabilities of boys in the Syrian crisis. The report stated that boys are particularly vulnerable to recruitment by armed forces and that the phenomenon of youth engaging in paid and unsafe labour is growing. Past reports underscored the vulnerability of boys to acts of violence, citing that of children killed, boys outnumbered girls by more than 2 to 1 overall. ([GPC & HelpAge, 2014/03](#), [Oxford Research Group 2013/11](#))
- It is also estimated that 1 in 10 refugee children in the region is thought to be working – either as cheap labour on farms, cafes or as beggars in city streets. ([UNICEF 2014/03](#))
- A recent report by War Child provided general insight about children's perception of protection issues in Syria. Findings included:
 - 81% of participating children identified protection (expressed as safety, security and their right to live) as the most important and urgent concern they face today, while 100% of adults identified their safety and security as the most critical concern.
 - Participants also identified that their protection was threatened most commonly by threats of displacement or armed attacks. The findings of the study also showed a general unstable perception of safety (e.g. identifying parks as both safe and unsafe places), indicating a general atmosphere of fear and unpredictable violence in Syria.

- Children face greater threats of violence, deprivation and other forms of deteriorating care within the home as a result of increased pressures faced by parents due to the conflict.
- Findings also showed that civilian spaces such as and schools were being targeted, militarized or at greater risk as a result of the nearby presence of checkpoints or authorities.
- Displacement was identified by children as increasing other risks to their safety, including family separation and discriminatory practices by members of host communities.
- The risks to children posed by being hosted in collective shelters were highlighted as well, and included vulnerability to physical and sexual harassment, spread of disease, lacking privacy and safe access to bathrooms.

([War Child Holland 2014/01](#))

Women & Girls

- Apart from being exposed to GBV and sexual violence, women and girls are also impacted by extremely reduced access to reproductive health services (including emergency obstetric care) as a result of the violence. Girls are also victim to early marriage, with parents marrying off their children as young as 11 years as a way of 'protecting' them from potential sexual violence. ([UNFPA 2014/02/28](#))

Disabled Persons

- Sudden displacement in Homs showed the vulnerability of persons with physical disabilities in this context. They are dependent on others to carry them and help them flee, and are often also unable to carry their supportive equipment - further increasing their vulnerability and eroding their independence. Additionally, there is a risk that disabled persons get left behind and/or separated from their families. ([OCHA 2014/02/27](#))

Food security and livelihoods

Access to food continues to be hampered due to a combination of high prices and a lack of access to income opportunities due to the impact of the crisis on trade and production. Availability of food is limited by insecurity and besiegement practices disrupting market flows. The main recent developments relate to the identification of drought conditions in cropping areas and further price spikes in areas facing insecurity and blockades by armed groups.

Key Developments Q1

Number of people in need

- According to initial findings of the WFP/FAO Joint Rapid Food Needs Assessment, 9.9 million people are vulnerable to food insecurity. Since this assessment, large-scale displacement within Aleppo Governorate has significantly increased the number of people in need of food assistance, with 1.25 million people estimated to be in need in rural and eastern areas of the governorate. ([SHARP 2013/12/16](#), [OCHA 2014/02/26](#))
- An assessment by the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) at the start of 2014 found over 3.5 million people in need of food assistance in 78 sub-districts across the north of Syria (of 272 sub-districts countrywide). ([ACU 2014/03/18](#))
- Several recent assessments have highlighted food security as the top priority:
 - A Multi-Sector Needs Assessment of Quneitra and Sa'sa' and Beit Jan sub districts of Rural Damascus in February 2014 highlighted food security as a top priority. Over 60% of the population covered by the assessment were found to be in need of food and livelihood assistance. ([AWGSS 2014/03/18](#))
 - According to Syria Integrated Needs Assessment (SINA) conducted in November 2013, food security was the second highest priority across all assessed areas in 8 northern governorates, with 5.5 million people in severe and moderate need of food assistance. The largest populations affected by food insecurity were located in Aleppo, Latakia and Idlib. ([SINA 2013/12/31](#), [SINA COAR 2014/01](#))
 - A Dar'a assessment in November 2013 found that food security was the top priority across 12 of the governorate's 17 sub-districts, with 85% of the assessed population in immediate and moderate need of food aid. ([SNAP 2014/01/24](#))
 - Refugees arriving in Jordan cite the lack of food as the second most important reason for leaving Syria, after concerns for their safety and security. ([WFP 2014/02/10](#))

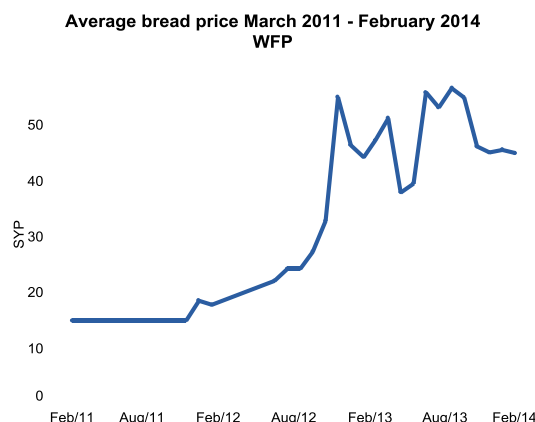
Macro-economics and livelihoods

- The Syrian economy is estimated to have contracted by 13% in 2013, following a 19% contraction in 2012. According to the GoS, losses resulting from the conflict amount to USD 31 billion, a figure nearly equivalent to the entire GDP, forecast at USD 34 billion for 2014. ([Daily Star 2014/03/18](#), [GIEWS 2014/01/28](#))
- The Economist intelligence unit projects that the GoS will likely continue scaling-back subsidies in order to ease pressure on public finances. Local sources estimate that GoS revenues from oil production, an important source of income, have decreased by 95% since the start of the crisis. Fuel subsidies have already been lowered four times in 2014. ([OCHA 2014/02/26](#), [SANA 2014/02/15](#), [Assafir 2014/02/17](#))
- Local media sources highlight the impact of the crisis on production and subsequent unemployment:
 - According to the Ministry of Agriculture, 70% of planned areas of wheat crop and 80% of barley crop were planted. Taking into account the lack of agricultural inputs and large-scale displacement flows in the main areas of agricultural production (the north-east of the country), the actual areas planted are likely to be lower. ([Tishreen 2014/02/20](#))
 - As a result of the breakdown of the tourism sector, over 250,000 workers are estimated to have become unemployed. ([Tishreen 2014/02/10](#))
 - The Ministry of Industry estimated in February that the damage to the over 700 industrial establishments has led to SYP 254 billion (USD 1.75bn) in losses. ([Al Modon 2014/02/08](#))
 - Syria has lost more than 80% of its dairy industry during the crisis as most of the production is concentrated in the heavily contested region of Irbeen, Rural Damascus. Over 60% of livestock in Damascus and its countryside is estimated to have died. ([Al Iqtisadi 2014/02/18](#), [Al Iqtisadi 2014/03/16](#))
- A study by the Central Bureau of Statistics indicates that each person requires SYP 4,700, or USD 32, per month to be able to buy basic food products, the equivalent of a full salary of an entry-level civil servant. ([Syria Deeply 2014/03/19](#))

Food prices

- At the end of January, the price of unsubsidised bread across Syria ranged from SYP 50 to 500, 3 to 30 times the SYP 15 cost of subsidised bread. By March, prices of bread registered increases due to reduced availability of baking facilities and a lack of inputs. ([WFP 2014/03/07](#))

- Particularly significant price fluctuations continue to be observed in highly insecure areas, where armed groups are present and road blocks limit movement of goods:
 - In Deir-ez-Zor, the price of wheat flour increased by as much as 50% between 27 January and 4 February due to access restrictions. By March, the partial lifting of blockades imposed by armed groups controlling access routes into the governorate led to a relative decrease in prices of most commodities.
 - In Ar-Raqqa, intensified fighting severely disrupted supply chains over the first 3 months of 2014, leading to significant price increases. For instance, the price of diesel increased by 160% in the last 2 weeks of January.
 - Price increases of both food and non-food items were also reported in Al-Hasakeh, where insecurity along the access routes and unofficial fees for the passage of goods significantly increased transport costs. The most significant increases were registered in the price of butane, which rose by up to 90% in Al-Hasakeh city in January. However, this increase was partly offset by intensified informal trade from Iraq leading to a reduction of 20% in the price of fuel by March.
 - Heavy fighting in Aleppo and Idleb disrupted market supplies. During the first week of February, the price of bread increased by 50% as a result of damages to bakeries and milling facilities and shortages of wheat flour. (WFP 2014/02/21, WFP 2014/02/10, WFP 2014/03/07, Tishreen 2014/01/06, Eqtisad 2014/01/08, WFP 2014/01/26, WFP 2014/03/07, WFP 2014/02/10, WFP 2014/03/20)
- Large-scale displacement to a specific area does not automatically lead to price increases. The large scale influx into western Aleppo of IDPs fleeing insecurity in the eastern parts of the city did not appear to impact the demand for food items, as most of the families fled with almost no savings or belongings and are unable to buy items. Consequently, commodity prices have remained stable. (WFP 2014/02/21)
- Some recent IDPs in Aleppo, Damascus, Homs, Quneitra, Rural Damascus and Tartous do not have access to cooking facilities. Thus, even when goods



are available on the market, people are not able to consume items. (WFP 2014/03/07)

Food availability

- Agricultural production:** Within a March GIEWS update, FAO warned that drought conditions have been detected in main cropping areas of the country (in Aleppo, Hama, Idleb, Homs and Dar'a). These findings are based on remote sensing indicating that these areas have received well below average rainfall in the last few months. Additional monitoring is recommended. (GIEWS 2014/04/01)
- Syria's requirements for wheat imports are estimated at 1.47 million tons for 2014, of which 1 million tons is expected to be commercially procured. Apart from the Ministry of Agriculture estimates on areas planted, there has been no forecast of domestic wheat production for 2014. However, given the limited winter rainfall, continuing insecurity and high cost of inputs, agricultural production is expected to decrease from 2013 production levels. (GIEWS 2014/01/28)
- In northern Idleb, wheat production has decreased by 65-70% while consumption has nearly doubled due to the increase of IDPs in the area. In addition, there has been a 75% decrease of irrigated land and the cost of fertiliser has increased between 750-1,200%. (PI 2014/01/15)
- Bakeries:** An assessment at the start of 2014 of 78 sub-districts found that out of the 756 bakeries assessed, 33% were not functioning. (ACU 2014/03/18)
- Food shortages:** In pockets of the country, shortages of flour and food items have been reported:
 - In areas hosting a large number of IDPs, such as Ariha and Mamble in rural Idleb, an inter-agency rapid needs assessment on 2 February highlighted significant shortages of wheat flour. (WFP 2014/02/21)
 - Areas where access is partly or fully blocked, such as Yarmouk, face critical flour shortages. (AFP 2014/03/11)
 - In areas affected by heavy fighting, such as Al Halou in Homs a rapid needs assessment observed severe shortages of food, with the limited food available on local markets smuggled through the river from nearby villages. (WFP 2014/03/20)
 - In difficult to reach areas, for instance in Quneitra, flour is mostly imported from Jordan and a lack of flour is caused by the high transportation costs. (AWGSS 2014/03/18)
- In many areas, there is no regular supply of commodities and trade is halted for days at a time. Due to the security situation and lack of resources, people and bakeries do not store large stocks of food and as a result, a temporary breakdown of the supply chain has an immediate impact on food availability.

For instance, in parts of Quneitra it was reported that bakeries hold only sufficient flour for immediate use, and would run out of flour within 4-5 days should the security situation or other access issues halt flour deliveries and/or purchases. ([AWGSS 2014/03/18](#))

- A number of humanitarian organisations are looking into the possibility of providing cash or vouchers instead of in-kind assistance. A multi-sectoral assessment in Tartous, Latakia, Homs and Qamishli to determine the feasibility of a WFP cash and voucher programme highlighted that increasing market prices and limited income sources are a major cause of food insecurity. While markets were found to be moderately functioning in all visited locations and sufficiently supplied with fresh food items, access to markets was constrained due to security constraints and fluctuating commodity prices. ([WFP 2014/02/10](#))

Underlying problems

- **High bread prices:** Before the crisis, the price of bread was subsidised at SYP 15. Since the start of the crisis, prices have increased significantly and by February 2014, the average price across the country stood at SYP 46, with large geographical differences.
- **Food shortages:** In general, access to, rather than availability of, food has been considered as the main food security issue. However, in contested and besieged areas, food shortages are more prominent.
- **Decrease in agricultural production:** Agricultural production has been significantly affected. The persistent civil insecurity and conflict continue to hamper agricultural production, as access to farmlands becomes difficult. Shortages of fuel to operate irrigation pumps and other equipment have compounded the problem. The June 2013 harvest was estimated at 2.5 MT compared to the 10 year average prior to 2010/11 of 4-4.5 MT.
- **Exchange rate:** At the start of the crisis the exchange rate stood at SYP 47 : USD 1. During the crisis, the exchange rate has fluctuated heavily, with a temporary spike up to SYP 280 : USD 1 in September 2013 when an international military intervention seemed imminent. In 2014, the official exchange rate stood at SYP 144 : USD 1.
- **Decrease in production and rise in unemployment:** The deterioration of the Syrian economy has led to widespread unemployment; further eroding purchasing power.

Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Key Developments Q1

- Following major damage to a main water channel supplying over 1 million people in Homs and Hama governorates in late 2013, new damages to the water infrastructure left residents of Hama city and As Salamiyeh (located in Hama governorate), estimated at 3 million people, without water since late January. While aid agencies have provided WASH assistance, local media reported that the disruption has led to the unregulated digging of wells. In addition, the local water authority lacked water trucks for delivery. Hama has already reported relatively high rates of suspected Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) and measles cases compared to other governorates, which is likely to spread further without consistent and adequate safe water supplies and sanitation services. This will be further exacerbated by the warming weather in the coming months. ([Tishreen 2014/02/26](#), [Al Watan 2014/02/09](#), [UNICEF 2014/02/20](#), [OCHA 2014/02/15](#))
- Access to water varies significantly by governorate, depending on the extent of the damage to water infrastructure, the numbers of IDPs in host communities and the availability of fuel and electricity.
- Hama appears to be particularly vulnerable to WASH needs as the SINA found that the governorate hosts the largest number of people in acute need of water assistance. Needs are especially high in terms of both the number of people affected and the severity of need in Hama City, where 300,000 people are in acute need of safe water supplies. Hama governorate is becoming increasingly reliant on wells, instead of the piped network due to damages and contamination. Much of the purchased trucked water supplies, on which the population relies, are no longer treated. While not everyone can afford to pay for water, it was reported that neighbours generally help one another and share their water supplies. ([SINA 2014/01](#), [NGO Forum COAR 2014/01](#))
- During a multi-sector assessment in February, 31% of the population of Quneitra were assessed to be in need of WASH assistance. Although there has been a complete breakdown of water infrastructure in areas of Quneitra, less than 2% of the population were assessed to be in acute need. This is likely due to the general availability of water sources in the governorate, coupled with its relatively low population density and the fact that existing resources are not overstretched by large IDP influxes. ([AWGSS 2014/03/18](#)) As found in other multi-sectoral assessments in the South access to safe water and WASH needs was not reported to be of a high severity compared to assessments in the northern governorates, where water systems have suffered higher levels of destruction as well as traditionally are experiencing lower availability of water.

- According to the Dar'a assessment, access to safe water was ranked the least of the 5 sector priorities by key informants. However, there were severe water needs reported in Busra Esh-Sham sub-district, with 62% of the population in acute need. Mzeireb, Jizeh and Jasim sub-districts reported 17-21% of their respective populations to be in acute need of safe water. (SNAP 2014/01/24)
- In the besieged town of Al Houla north of Homs city, at least 70,000 people reportedly lack access to clean water supplies. Water is pumped from local wells when electricity is available for several hours each day, but the water is not treated due to lack of chemicals. (OCHA 2014/03/19)
- The Directorate of Water Resources for Rural Damascus estimated that the damage to the local water network amounts to SYP 70 million (USD 0.5 million) and that revenue had decreased by 40%. This damage estimate appears particularly low given the extensive damage across the country and the high intensity of conflict in areas of Rural Damascus, which has likely taken a toll on the water infrastructure. Water shortages have been reported across the city due to the lack of fuel and electricity and increased demand due to IDPs, particularly in poorer parts of the city. (Al-Iqtisadi 2013/12/04, Al-Modon 2014/01/13)
- Water treatment plants in Damascus, Deir-ez-Zor and Idleb were frequently disrupted in February due to low water tables and lack of fuel to pump the water. (UNICEF 2014/02/20)
- IDPs residing in unfinished buildings often do not have adequate access to water supplies due to the lack of water storage containers. UN agencies reported poor access to some IDPs living in unfinished buildings in Rural Damascus due to insecurity and poor physical road access. (OCHA 2014/02/15)
- There were unconfirmed reports that armed groups in Al Hasakeh reportedly opened up a major dam outside Al Hasakeh city, in an attempt to deplete water sources available to civilian populations. In addition, there were media reports of gunmen disrupting water supplies to northern As-Sweida, as well as to the eastern village of Ar-Rashida. It was unclear whether the attacks were linked to any armed group and whether the infrastructure was rehabilitated. (Al Akhbar 2014/03/10, Tishreen 2014/02/26)

Underlying problems

- **Damage to infrastructure:** Damage to infrastructure and the lack of fuel to operate the system has become an increasingly hampers the availability of water. Initially the main problem related to access and availability of water was the lack of economic resources needed to access existing water systems. Gradually, the lack of fuel/electricity to operate the system, including local wells, and the breakdown of the water infrastructure have

become more pertinent factors to lack of access to water. In addition, conflict-related damage to major water pipelines has periodically affected millions of people while repairs were underway. This underscores the interconnectivity of the water infrastructure, whereby damage to one part of the network can affect the water supply available to large segments of the population.

- **Water shortages:** A number of areas experience frequent water shortages due to lack of water being pumped, increased demand by IDPs and seasonal shortages in the summer. According to the SHARP, the water supply is reportedly at half of Syria's pre-crisis levels. Some areas experience dryness year-round and water shortages have been exacerbated by damaged infrastructure. Water shortages have caused an increased reliance on water trucking, some of which is organised privately, requiring locals to pay, or through aid organisations.
- **Water quality:** As the water infrastructure is placed under severe stress and supplies and maintenance staff are limited, there are growing concerns among aid agencies regarding water contamination contributing to the spread of diseases. Most of Syria's water treatment chemical production facilities have been closed, and now these chemicals have to be imported, as well as transported across the country, which entails a number of access challenges. Assessments have found that piped and trucked water sources are no longer being treated on a regular basis. The discovery of a cluster of polio cases in Deir-ez-Zor in October 2013 is believed to be linked to the lack of proper water treatment. (SINA 2014/01, NGO Forum COAR 2014/01, AWGSS 2014/03/18)
- **Deregulation:** Before the conflict, the GoS tightly regulated the provision of water through the local water boards. In several areas, this regulatory framework is no longer upheld and the lack of control results in the establishment of unofficial water sources. In October, for instance, it was reported that in one district the number of wells increased from around 6,500 before the crisis to over 20,000 currently. Although this remedies the current water shortages, it negatively affects the water table and can have long-term implications. (PI 2013/10)
- **Solid waste collection disrupted:** Solid waste collection used to be organised by municipal services but have stopped in a number of areas. While in some cases, opposition groups have organised garbage collection services, some urban centres and besieged areas have been neglected due to insecurity and lack of resources. This has led to solid waste piling up on streets and in public places. There has also been an increase in people, including children, going through the waste to find items to use or sell, which increases their exposure to diseases as well. (PI 2014/01)

Shelter/NFI

Key Developments Q1

- Recent assessments have identified shelter/NFI as a high priority after food security and health. The massive displacement, coupled with significant infrastructure damage and ongoing shelling has caused a significant shortage in safe shelter. This has resulted in major overcrowding with several families reportedly sharing a single room and people living in the open, as well as in organised camps. ([SINA 2014/01](#), [NGO Forum COAR 2014/01](#), [AWGSS 2014/03/18](#))
- IOM has identified 823 collective shelters since the beginning of the crisis. 25 new centres were identified in both Quneitra and Rural Damascus governorates. The largest collective shelter identified in Rural Damascus is hosting 2,600 IDPs. (IOM 2014/03/06)
- A negotiated settlement between parties to the conflict allowed some access and the return of 1,000 residents to the Damascus suburb of Barzeh, which has suffered 'mass destruction' according to a UN inter-agency mission which took place on 25 February. Due to the damage, some residents could not return and are instead renting accommodations in surrounding areas. (OCHA 2014/02/26)
- The massive displacement taking place in Aleppo is causing rents to increase in western Aleppo and further overcrowding of the already limited available accommodations. Many people are reportedly sleeping in public parks and out in the open due to the lack of shelters and there is a severe lack of NFIs, including clothing, mattresses and hygiene supplies. The SINA report found that before this latest mass displacement, Aleppo already hosted the largest number of IDPs, around 50% of which were accommodated in collective/vacated buildings. Several assessments have indicated that collective shelters and vacated buildings are often congested, do not have the required facilities and are unable to provide adequate protection from weather conditions. (OCHA 2014/03/19, UNICEF 2014/02/20, SINA 2014/01)
- Due to the high levels of displacement and destruction to residences in Quneitra governorate, shelter was identified as the third priority sectoral need. However, in some areas of Quneitra, there was a large proportion (10.5%) of people in acute need of shelter assistance due to besiegement policies, high levels of conflict and widespread damage to shelters. In some areas, there is severe overcrowding with up to 50 people reported to be sharing 2 rooms. NFIs are available in the markets but are inaccessible due to the lack of income. ([AWGSS 2014/03/18](#))

- Prior to the latest surge in violence in Dar'a in February, an assessment found 342,000 people to be in need of shelter assistance (34% of the total population), of whom 101,000 had acute shelter needs. Some of these areas have been subject to increased levels of conflict in the first quarter and shelter needs have likely increased as a result. The sub-districts of Kherbet Ghazala, Jasim, Da'el and Ash-Shajara reported that 35-50% of shelters were heavily damaged or destroyed, and in the most recent spate of violence have experienced either increased violence or new IDP influxes. (SNAP 2014/01/24)
- The Deir-ez-Zor Palmyra gas pipeline was attacked on 2 March, causing an explosion, fire and loss of 2.5 million cubic metres of gas, according to state media. The loss amounts to about 1 day of production and there were no major electricity outages reported as a result. Oil production has reportedly decreased by 96% according to the GoS. (Xinhua 2014/03/02, Tishreen 2014/03/03, Al Nashra 2014/03/02)
- Access to electricity varies across the governorates due to fuel shortages, infrastructure damage and conflict over control of power plants. In southern Quneitra, there has been no electricity for at least the past 6 months. According to the SINA, 30% of assessed sub-districts reported to have less than 6 hours of electricity per week, while in Dar'a governorate, this rate was 17%. The southeastern region of Dar'a governorate has very limited access to electricity, which also exacerbates the governorate's already limited access to water supplies. (Tishreen 2014/01/27, ARA News 2014/01/27, [NGO Forum COAR 2014/01](#), [Dar'a Assessment 2014/01/24](#), Al Jazeera 2014/02/02, Tishreen 2014/02/10, SANA 2014/02/16)

Underlying problems

- Destruction of infrastructure:** In early 2013, it was estimated that 3 million buildings were damaged, of which 20% were completely destroyed, due to the conflict. Heavy fighting, including the widespread use of heavy weapons and attacks on residential areas has led to heavy damage across Syria and rendered many homes uninhabitable. Some residential areas around strategic locations, such as military bases, or heavily-contested areas have been subject to large-scale demolition by GoS forces.
- Lack of safety:** Where there may be available shelters, some are rendered uninhabitable due to siege policies and/or exposure to shelling or other violence.
- Weather conditions:** Although this winter was expected to be particularly severe, the weather was relatively mild and dry in early 2014. However, due to widespread displacement and sub-standard shelters, there was still a significant need for heating fuel. A lack of access to fuel and electricity cuts prompted many Syrians to cut down trees and burn doors, furniture, window frames and garbage to keep warm during the winter.

- **Fuel and electricity cuts:** Rising fuel prices, subsidy cuts and decreasing purchasing power have led to a lack of access to fuel. This has resulted in the increased costs of transportation and commodities, affecting people's ability to access livelihoods and services, heat their homes and cook food. Electricity cuts have become normal due to the lack of fuel and damage to infrastructure, while areas subject to besiegement and heavy conflict have not had electricity for months. This has a significant negative impact on the supply of water from both piped networks and wells.

Education

Key Developments Q1

- After 3 years of the Syrian crisis, the violence has spread all over the country. More than 18% of schools have been either destroyed, militarized or transformed into collective shelters. The precise number of Syrian children dropping out of school is difficult to identify given varying estimates and inaccessible areas, yet it is estimated that at least 40% of children currently do not go to Syrian schools. Children in contested areas or in areas with high concentrations of IDPs remain the most vulnerable.
- Out of an estimated 380,000 students eligible to attend university, 204,000 students are currently enrolled. Insecurity has limited the access of students and academics to universities. Insecurity has also caused extensive displacement, though students have valiantly attempted to continue studying at alternative institutes. The majority of universities are currently under GoS control, which makes it difficult for students from opposition areas to attend. One of the safest schools is Tishreen University in Latakia, though students supporting the opposition are unlikely to attend. (Brehon Advisory 2013/10/13)

Underlying Problems

- According to the Ministry of Education, 4 million Syrian children are attending schools out of 5.5 million Syrian students (i.e. only 1.5 million children are not going to schools). Other sources state that 2.3 million children have not been attending school as a result of a crisis entering its 4th year, and that thousands of young school-aged children have never been enrolled in any kind of education. (Al-iqtisadi 2014/03/19, MoE 2014/03/10, BreakingNews 2014/01/28, UNICEF 2014/01/07, Washington Post 2014/03/11, Al-akhbar 2014/03/27, UNICEF 2014/03/11, CBS 2010)
- The student drop-out rate is attributed to overcrowding in schools and the inability of households to send their students to schools because of insecurity or their inability to cover associated transport and education material costs. Other students have either left the country or work to support their families, while other students are recruited by armed groups to join the fighting. (alkhabarpres 2014/03/26)

- In Aleppo, Ar-Raqqah, Dar'a, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama and Idleb less than 50% of the children attend school. Aleppo and Idleb have lost a quarter and a sixth of their schools respectively, with attendance plunging below 30%. (OCHA 2013/12/16)
- **18% non-operational schools:** Schools have been destroyed or transformed to military barracks by parties to the conflict and are also used as collective shelters, including more than 4,000 of 22,000 pre-crisis schools. According to the Ministry of Education, 3,465 schools have been partially or completely damaged and another 1,000 schools have been transformed to collective shelters. (OCHA 2014/02/25, UNICEF 2014/03/11, Al-Baath 2013/09/16)
- **Palestinian students and UNRWA schools:** More than 44,000 Palestinian students are attending UNRWA schools and public schools which UNRWA was approved to use for afternoon shifts. There were 118 UNRWA schools pre-crisis receiving more than 65,000 Palestinian students. Currently only 42 UNRWA schools are operational, while the remaining schools are either closed because of damages and insecurities or because they are used as collective shelters. (UNRWA 2014/03/26, CBS 2010)
- There are 5 main state universities in Damascus, Aleppo, Latakia, Homs and Deir-ez-Zor with branches open in every governorate. There are also 15 private universities which opened since the 2001 decree, yet only 6% of graduate students attend private universities. (Brehon Advisory 2013/10/13)

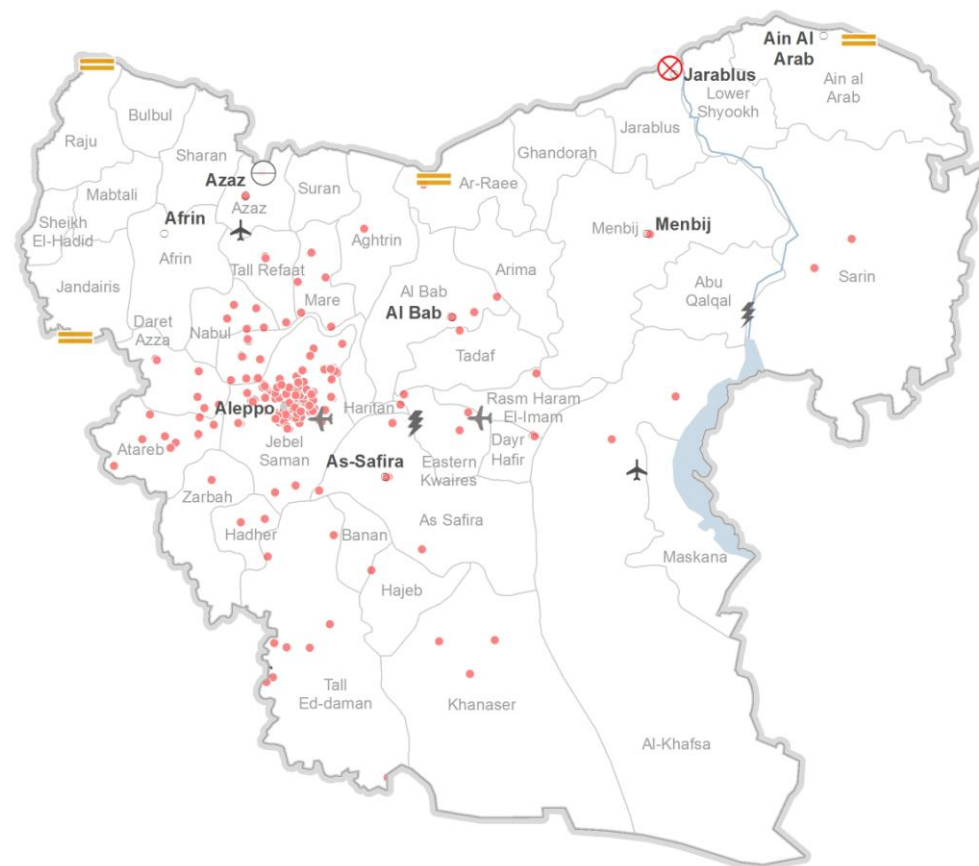
Governorate profiles - Key developments Q1

The following pages provide a profile of each of the 14 governorates (in alphabetical order). Within these governorates, the following topics are covered: the key issues and possible developments, the context (including conflict dynamics), access issues, displacement occurring in the governorate and specific humanitarian needs reported.

Legend for all governorate maps:

Border crossing	• Conflict event (Jan 14 - Mar 14)
⊖ Open	✈ Military airport
⊗ Restricted access	✈ Civil airport
== Unofficial crossing	⚡ Power plant
	▭ Sub-district

Aleppo



Key Issues and possible developments

- Fierce fighting for control of Aleppo city has persisted during the start of 2104 and is likely to extend into a prolonged stalemate.
- The critical health situation is expected to significantly worsen: in addition to already high numbers of conflict related injuries, measles outbreaks and probably underreported other communicable diseases will pose a significant threat to people's health status in light of the severe lack of medical staff, medicines and equipment.
- In addition to widespread bombing of civilian neighbourhoods the affected population in Aleppo is further exposed to protection concerns related to

extremist groups such as forced displacement of minority groups, mass executions and collective punishment.

- Severe access constraints for humanitarian actors including SARC persist within the governorate. As the fighting over control between the different armed groups pushes north and east of Aleppo City impacting the security situation at the border with Turkey and thus limiting the possibility of delivery of assistance through respective border crossings, the severity of humanitarian needs is expected to grow.

Context

- Areas of control within Aleppo Governorate have been fluid since the conflict reached Aleppo in August 2012. Clashes started in the countryside of Aleppo and increasingly drew in fighters from neighbouring Idleb. Jabhat al-Nusra gradually gained importance and control within the governorate and in mid-2013 ISIL fighters appeared. The fighting against ISIL, led by the Islamic front jointly with Jabhat al-Nusra and Al-Mojahideen Army started in late 2013. ISIL started withdrawing from its areas of control in northern Aleppo (Azaz, Hreitan, Mennegh). Meanwhile, SAF has been progressing in the southern and eastern countryside partly due to the weakening of opposition forces due to in-fighting. In November 2013 SAF took control of As-Sfeireh opening a major supply route to western Aleppo from the south, maintained its grip on the International airport, took control of Sheikh Najjar village, while preserving its stronghold of besieged Nobbul and Az-Zahraa in the north. The ongoing siege by opposition forces on the towns of Nobbul (50,000 people) and Az-Zahraa (15,000 people) in the northern countryside of Aleppo has exacerbated living conditions especially due to the disruption of inflows of basic goods and medicine, the deterioration of health care, and the ongoing shelling. ([El-Nashra 2014/02/11](#), [Zaman El-Wasel 2014/03/11](#))
- Following the heavy fighting with opposition forces in Idleb and Western rural Aleppo, ISIL started withdrawing in early 2014 towards eastern Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa and Al Hasakeh with the aim of securing their areas of control in Deir Hafer, Maskaneh, Menbij, Al Bab and Jarablus. Most recently, the fighting has raged in Ain El Arab, between ISIL and PYD. The PYD, fighting ISIL since June 2013, has managed to tighten its grip on its areas of control and the renewed battle is expected to be more severe with no positive prospects for ISIL. The fighting between the opposition groups and SAF has also been on-going. The SAF has been progressing in the eastern countryside, with military air support that has used heavy weaponry, including barrel bombs, on the city of Aleppo. The SAF has maintained control of the Central Prison while opposition fighters have taken control of new areas in the western half of the city, including Layramoun and Ar Rashideen neighbourhoods. ([Al-akhbar 2014/03/27](#), [Daily Star 2014/02/10](#), [Daily Star 2014/02/17](#), [El-Nashra 2014/02/25](#), [Al-](#)

[akhbar 2014/03/03](#), [El-Nashra 2014/03/07](#), [ARANews 2014/03/15](#), [ARANews 2014/03/18](#), [Assafir 2014/03/25](#), [AlertNet 2014/02/26](#), [Reuters 2014/03/23](#))

- The city of Afreen, though under siege, has remained under the control of the PYD. The clashes in various neighbourhoods of the city of Aleppo, divided between a GoS-held western half and an opposition-held eastern part, have been ongoing.

Access

- **Fighting around the Central Prison of Aleppo blocked SARC access:** Fighting between GoS and opposition forces around the central Prison in early February prevented humanitarian access until early March. 30 prisoners were said to have died because of starvation and diseases, as the SARC was prevented entry. On 2 March, and after the fighting subsided, SARC was able to deliver aid. ([SANA 2014/02/10](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/03/22](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/03/03](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/02/26](#))
- **Insecurity has blocked access to the eastern parts of Aleppo City:** The ongoing hostilities including barrel-bombing in the opposition-held part of Aleppo city have significantly limited the aid access to the city from the rural areas. ([WFP 2014/02/10](#), [WFP 2014/03/07](#), [OCHA 2014/02/26](#))
- Bostan Al Qasr crossing point, the main crossing used to enter from eastern Aleppo city to the western part, has been intermittently closed and security checkpoints have been intensified, causing some families to flee to other parts of the governorate. The armed groups controlling this crossing have previously prevented the entry of food to besieged western Aleppo in 2013. Individuals crossing are required to pay a fee on both sides of the crossing - SYP 2525 (~USD16) to the Islamic committee on the eastern side and a similar amount is imposed on the GoS-controlled western part. ([WFP 2014/02/21](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/03/27](#))
- **Insecurity Incidents on the borders with Turkey:** Months of opposition infighting in and around Azaz, 5 km from the Turkish border, has hampered efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance from Turkey into Aleppo. ([AlertNet 2014/02/06](#), [EuroNews 2014/02/20](#))

Displacement

- **Displacement from eastern Aleppo:** Seeking to escape heavy barrel bombing, more than 450,000 of civilians in the eastern half of Aleppo fled to the GoS-held part of the city or to opposition-held areas in the North of the governorate (Al Bab, Tal Hasel, Tal Aren) since mid-February. Some 5,000-6000 families have also fled to Turkey into Kilis. At the start of February, 500-2,000 persons were arriving daily to Turkey, via Kilis crossing point. ([Awsat 2014/02/22](#), [AFP 2014/02/04](#), [USAID 2014/02/13](#), [OCHA 2014/02/15](#), [WFP 2014/02/21](#), [HRW 2014/03/24](#))

- Displacement into the western neighbourhoods continued in March, albeit at a reduced pace owing to the proliferation of checkpoints. In addition, between 4 to 18 March, more than 98,500 people have reportedly been displaced from eastern Aleppo fleeing mainly to western Aleppo and the Turkish border. ([WFP 2014/03/18](#))
- **Returnees to Azaz:** After the withdrawal of ISIL from Azaz, an unknown number of Syrian refugees in Turkey (Kilis) have started to return to Syria. ([Eqtisad 2014/03/02](#))

Humanitarian Needs

Protection

- Indiscriminate use of barrel bombs in eastern Aleppo: ICRC reported that the hostilities, which reached alarming levels in eastern Aleppo in February, affected mainly civilian neighbourhoods, in a breach of international humanitarian law and of the recent UN resolution number 2139 (2014). Remaining doctors reported high civilian casualties as a result of the air raids.
- At least 2,401 civilians were killed in the Governorate between 1 November 2013 and 21 March 2014. According to the Violations Documentation Center more than 20,000 people were wounded as a result of the attacks during the same period. ([HRW 2014/03/24](#), ([Daily Star 2014/02/21](#), [ICRC 2014/03/13](#), [UN Security Council 2014/02/23](#))
- ISIL hostilities:
 - A mass grave was found of Qabtan al-Jabal area, 16 km west of Aleppo city, following ISIL withdrawal from the town on 14 February. ([ARANews 2014/02/15](#), [Chamtimes 2014/01/18](#))
 - ISIL arrested more than 160 civilians, mainly from Tall Abiad and Ain El Arab, most of them Kurdish. They were reportedly heading to Simalka border crossing to enter Iraqi Kurdistan on 19 February. ([ARANews 2014/02/23](#), [ARANews 2014/03/28](#))
 - ISIL control on Jarablus, Menbij and Al Bab has been largely targeting the Kurdish minorities there. In March, ISIL killed tens of people in Shuyukh area in Jarablus, 100 km northeast, in mass executions and shelling residential neighbourhoods. The majority of the residents escaped the area following this assault around mid-February. ISIL groups have been also continuously attempting to take control of the grain silos in Serrin, southern Kobane. The PYD has been able to repel these attacks that threaten to leave the semi-besieged city in an acute shortage of bread. ([SOHR 2014/03/10](#), [ARANews 2014/03/13](#), [ARANews 2014/03/18](#))

Health

- Of the 2,500 doctors at the start of the conflict, only around 40 (less than 1%) remain to provide health care for an estimated 2.5 million people in need.

- Only 9 hospitals remain functioning in the city (5 trauma clinics and 4 primary health care centres). In every centre, over 35 serious cases are treated daily and the casualty toll has sometimes surpassed 100 people due to the intensive barrel bomb campaigns. ([Daily Star 2014/02/21](#), [Save the Children 2014/03/10](#))
- In one sub-district of Aleppo, 750 cases of thalassemia, a genetic blood disorder, were reported in children, 3 of whom had died from the condition. Some of these patients need blood transfusions at least once or twice a week, yet there are no hospitals with blood transfusion units. ([Save the Children 2014/03/10](#))
- Leishmaniasis, a fatal disease if left untreated, continues to be a problem in Aleppo, especially among the displaced people. The garbage accumulation and sanitation breakdown have led to the breeding of insects which cause the disease. ([Save the Children 2014/03/10](#))

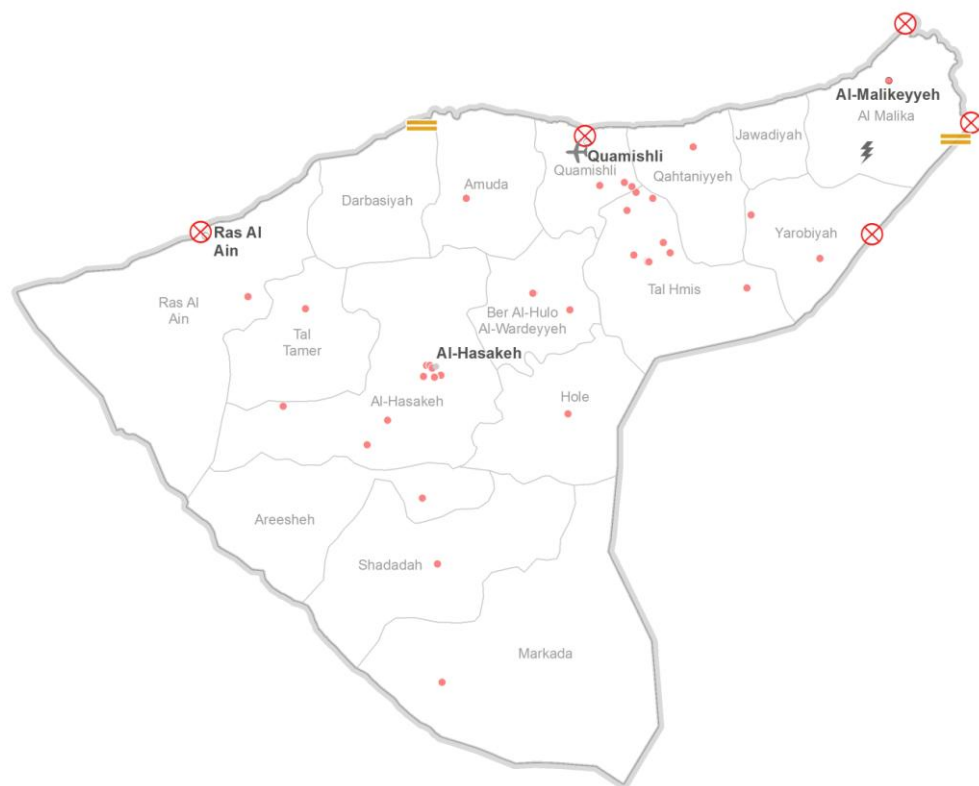
Livelihood and Food Security

- Inflation and acute shortages of food commodities, particularly wheat flour and bulgur, were reported in eastern Aleppo as on-going heavy fighting severely disrupted market supplies. Compared to average January prices, the price of bread during the first week of February skyrocketed by 49% as damages to bakeries and milling facilities and shortages of wheat flour almost halted production. Prices of other essential food items also increased, including rice, wheat flour, and vegetable oil and diesel prices. ([WFP 2014/02/21](#))
- Most of the displaced families fleeing eastern Aleppo had almost no savings or belongings and have relied almost entirely on humanitarian assistance to cover basic needs. ([WFP 2014/02/21](#))

Shelter and NFIs

- The high rents for apartments in western Aleppo along with the overstretched capacity of the local communities caused critical shortages of shelter. With limited availability of safe shelter in both formal and collective shelters and public buildings, large numbers of IDPs were forced to stay in public parks and streets without access to food, shelter and warm clothes. ([WFP 2014/02/21](#), [UNICEF 2014/02/20](#))
- Satellite imagery disclosed heavy destruction of residential buildings with 340 sites hit in opposition-controlled Aleppo between early November and late February. The damage sites were widely distributed across almost all the opposition neighbourhoods, with a majority falling in heavily built-up residential areas far from the frontline. ([HRW 2014/03/24](#))
- Power supply returned to Kurdish Afreen city and its countryside, north of Aleppo, after 6 months of power outage. ([ARANews 2014/03/29](#))

Al-Hasakeh



Key Issues and possible developments

- Access to the eastern governorate remains challenging. Despite the opening up of access for a U.N. convoy to Qamishli through Turkey at the end of March and by airlifts since the end of 2013, the south appears to remain largely inaccessible. The humanitarian conditions of about 500,000 people-in-need, particularly in the south, remain dire. In addition, these areas have been inaccessible to vaccination campaigns and the risk of a polio outbreak in the governorate remains high.
- Price of both food and non-food items significantly increased and insecurity along the access routes and unofficial fees for the passage of goods significantly increased the transaction costs for transporting commodities into the governorate, reducing access to food for populations in need, particularly in the more remote and rural south. In addition the high prices further affect

the availability of agricultural inputs, which coupled with low rainfall levels will result in significantly reduced agricultural production ultimately reducing availability of food.

- As in other governorates, protection concerns related to the strong presence of extremist groups have been reported including arbitrary detention, mass executions and collective punishment.

Context

- After expelling extremists out of Ras Al Ain bordering Turkey and Ya'roubiyah bordering Iraq in October 2013 and declaring an administrative autonomy in late September 2013, the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) managed to consolidate the grip on the mostly Kurdish north-eastern region. At the start of 2014, the fighting between YPG, the military wing of the PYD, and hard-line fighters has concentrated in southern Qamishli (Tal Hmis and Tal Brak) and re-ignited in Ras Al Ain. Yet the Kurdish troops were forced to withdraw from the majority Arab opposition-held region. The clashes between the Kurdish fighters and opposition forces intensified in Al Hasakeh in May-June 2013 especially after the split between Al-Qaeda affiliated groups Jabhat al-Nusra and ISIL.
- In ISIL controlled areas the group is reported to provide public services there, and will pay salaries to the employees in the newly established Islamic administration in an attempt to foster the new rule of law. ([ARANews 2014/03/02](#), [ARANews 2014/03/10](#))
- Clashes between YPG and ISIL continue in the north of the governorate. Elsewhere ISIL has consolidated control of most of the opposition strongholds in Al-Hasakeh (Al Hole, Khatoonieh, Shaddada, Tal Hmis). By mid-February, the Popular Protection Units (YPG) achieved some progress in eastern rural Qamishli and Ras Al Ain after fierce clashes with ISIL. ISIL suicide bombings were frequent in Al-Hasakeh during this period. ([Assafir 2014/02/08](#), [El-Nashra 2014/02/12](#), [Daily Star 2014/02/17](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/02/24](#), [ARANews 2014/02/16](#), [Assafir 2014/03/07](#), [ARANews 2014/03/08](#), [ARANews 2014/02/14](#), [ARANews 2014/03/08](#), [Newroz-syria 2014/03/26](#), [El-Nashra 2014/03/11](#))
- The fighting between ISIL and Jabhat al-Nusra and its allies, however, has moved to Al-Hasakeh after ISIL withdrew from Deir-ez-Zor on 11 February. Since then, clashes erupted in Markada, 108 km south of Al Hasakeh and bordering Deir-ez-Zor. ([ARANews 2014/02/17](#), [ARANews 2014/02/23](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/02/26](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/02/28](#))

Access

- On 20 March, a U.N. convoy crossed the Turkish border into Qamishli for the first time since the onset of the conflict. This convoy was halted less than 24 hours after the long-awaited humanitarian mission began but all trucks were

said to have crossed into Syria by 26 March. Similar to airlifted assistance in the previous months, concerns remain whether the aid would only reach the Kurdish areas of northeast Syria while opposition-held areas in the rural south remain inaccessible. ([Alertnet 2014/03/19](#), [Reuters 2014/03/21](#), [ARANews 2014/03/16](#))

- In December and January, a series of airlifts to Quamisli airport allowed a limited number of food parcels and NFIs to reach populations in need in the northern part of the Governorate, where access constraints were paramount since July 2013. Starting in early February, another series of UN airlifts from Damascus and Iraq to Qamishli has resumed delivering NFIs, medicines, food parcels and other supplies to IDPs and people-in-need. However, WFP coverage still amounts to less than 30% of the overall target for the Governorate and the humanitarian conditions of about 500,000 people-in-need, particularly in the south, remain dire. Access to food has been increasingly limited by the prolonged blockade and steep food prices. Furthermore, as escalating violence forces large population displacement towards relatively safe areas, urban centres such as Quamishli struggle to stretch their limited resources to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population, according to WFP. ([SINA 2013/12/31](#), [UNHCR 2014/02/09](#), [WHO 2014/02/10](#), [USAID 2014/02/13](#), [WFP 2014/03/21](#), [IOM 2014/02/23](#), [WFP 2014/03/07](#))

Displacement

- Ongoing displacement both within the governorate as well as from other governorates continues with civilians fleeing from areas of conflict to mostly urban centres:
 - The number of IDPs in the main cities is increasing, as families flee to urban centres to escape the conflict in many rural areas, particularly in the east and south. A growing IDP influx into Qamishli, specifically from the southeastern areas, has been witnessed in February and March. In early February, it was reported that around 7,500 people fled clashes that erupted in rural parts of Al-Hassakeh to Qamishli city while others fled towards the Iraqi border. ([WFP 2014/02/04](#), [WFP 2013/03/07](#), [WFP 2014/03/28](#), [UNICEF 2014/02/20](#))
 - A movement of displacement of residents of the town of Shaddada was witnessed around mid-February due to fears of a renewed attack from Jabat al-Nusra against the ISIL stronghold in the town. ([ARANews 2014/02/17](#))
 - In late February, escalating violence in the Guweiran neighbourhood in Al-Hasakeh city resulted in the displacement of an estimated 2,500 people to different parts of the city and surrounding areas. ([WFP 2013/03/07](#))

Humanitarian Needs

- Basic social service providers in the urban centres, with high IDPs concentration, are struggling to deliver service and assistance with fewer resources to meet increased demands. Many health centres are closed or operating below capacity, schools are overcrowded or closed in areas affected by the conflict, and water and electricity services severely rationed with some areas of the city receiving only 4 hours of water and electricity in 3 days. ([UNICEF 2014/02/20](#))
- 500,000 people are estimated to be in critical need of food, medicines, NFI and shelter according to WFP. The people-in-need in the Governorate were 319,000 in October 2013 according to OCHA and 654,000 according to SINA results in November 2013. ([OCHA 2013/12](#), [SINA 2013/12/31](#), [WFP 2014/02/10](#))

Livelihood and Food Security

- A UN inter-agency mission undertaken to Al Hasakeh on 19- 24 January reported a worsening of the humanitarian situation in the Governorate with basic food items found to be in short supply or sold at inflated prices. Price increases of both food and non-food items were also reported, where insecurity along the access routes and unofficial fees for the passage of goods significantly increased the transaction costs for transporting commodities into the Governorate. In February, the price of butane was reported to have risen by 90% in the city of Al Hasakeh. ([WFP 2014/02/10](#)) High transport costs in addition to high food prices have led to reported food shortages across the Governorate. However, the situation varies per district, depending on the security situation and levels of access:
 - Shortages of basic food supplies, mainly bread were reported in Tal Tamr town. The costs of fertilizer have significantly increased while diesel has been in acute shortage. ([ARANews 2014/02/09](#), [ARANews 2014/02/12](#))
 - The bread production and the supply of flour in Amuda city have been stable as the existing mills in the area are able to meet the city's provision of flour –which ranges between 9.5-12 tons every day. The automatic bread furnace, run by the GoS, the 4 mills, and the 60 bread distributors, provided daily with 100 bread ties, are all working properly. The distributors sell the bread tie at SYP 20, while the tie is sold at SYP 15 at the automatic public furnace. ([ARANews 2014/03/17](#))
 - A grain silo and a number of residential buildings in Atshana village (Be'r El Hulo Al-Wardeyyeh) were targeted by unknown groups in March. Locals blamed ISIL for the incident. Other grain silos in Ras El Ain were also exposed to looting by armed groups in January 2014. ([ARANews 2014/03/21](#), [furat 2014/01/17](#))

- The low rainfall levels in the governorate, in addition to shortages of pesticides and their high prices have reportedly resulted in a spread in crop diseases. This is expected to have major effects on the agriculture production of wheat, barley, and vegetables for the upcoming season. ([ARANews 2014/02/12](#), [Basnews 2014/03/02](#))

Protection

- Human rights violations are reported in both opposition-controlled areas as well as in areas controlled by YPG and/or GoS forces as in the cities of Qamishli and Al Hasakeh.
- As in other ISIL-controlled areas, ISIL imposed strict Islamic rules on the residents of Shaddada town, threatening those who violate their newly announced rules to face imprisonment. (ARANews 2014/03/02, ARANews 2014/03/10)
- A mass grave was found in the Maamal al-Ghaz area near Shaddada town. (ARANews 2014/03/10)

Health

- 2 polio cases were confirmed in Al Hasakeh in early March. However, as southern Al Hasakeh remains inaccessible polio cases are likely to be underreported. In addition, areas have been inaccessible to vaccination campaigns and the risk of a polio outbreak in the governorate remains high. ([UNICEF 2014/03/09](#))
- A number of measles cases are suspected in the governorate and in the north in general. These cases are still not confirmed. Measles is most likely to be severe in poorly nourished young children or in those with low immunity. ([USAID 2014/03/27](#), [EWARN 2014/03/08](#))

Ar-Raqqa



Key Issues and possible developments

- Security in Ar-Raqqa governorate remains unstable with frequent reports of conflict between opposition groups and humanitarian access to the governorate is limited.
- Due to the specific context, there is almost no information coming out of the governorate and regular reporting mechanisms have been disrupted – as a result, disease outbreaks can go underreported. This could be a major hazard for the population both within the governorate as well as the

surrounding governorates. As polio vaccination efforts were disrupted in January, people in inaccessible areas remain highly vulnerable to polio.

- Protection concerns are particularly severe in Ar-Raqqa with the majority of the governorate being under control of extremist groups. The civilian population has been faced with collective punishment, forced displacement of minority groups, mass executions and imposing of strict Islamic regulations.

Context

- Conflict has been reported persistently since the beginning of 2014. Clashes erupted in the city of Tabqa between ISIL from one side and FSA and Jabhat al Nusra from the other side on 4 January. Clashes expanded later with opposition forces uniting against of ISIL in various locations in the North of Syria. FSA and other Islamic forces such as Jabhat al Nusra and Islamic Front laid siege on ISIL's headquarters in the city of Ar-Raqqa. FSA fighters further released 50 prisoners from jails established by ISIL. Clashes were reported also in other areas in Ar-Raqqa governorate such as Ain al Arous and Tal Abiad and the conflict resulted with dozens of casualties from both sides. However ISIL fighters regrouped again in Ar-Raqqa city on 14 January and launched an offensive against Islamic front and Jabhat al Nusra fighters pushing them out of the city and the overall result for the fighting was ISIL taking control of the majority of the governorate and all the major cities in it such as Ar-Raqqa, Tabqa, Tal Abiad and Ma'adan. ISIL executed 46 Islamists from Ahrar al Sham in Kantari (North of Ar-Raqqa city with 80Km) in a strong message to its rivals. Clashes kept occurring occasionally between FSA and ISIL such as the clashes reported in Tabqa on 4 March. ([AFP 2014/01/05](#), [Daily Star 2014/01/06](#), [Al Akhbar 2014/01/08](#), [Daily Star 2014/01/14](#), [AFP 2014/01/13](#), [Al Akhbar 2014/03/04](#))
- Conflict between YPG and ISIL was also reported frequently since the beginning of 2014 in various locations especially in Tal Abiad and Ain Issa sub districts. YPG forces were reported to be preparing an offensive against the headquarters of ISIL in Tal Abiad near Turkish borders during January. On 14 February YPG forces attacked the headquarters of ISIL in Birkino village near Tal Abiad. Clashes between the two sides were reported again on 23 February and on 24 March. ([ARA News 2014/01/27](#), [ARA News 2014/02/14](#), [ARA News 2014/02/24](#), [ARA News 2014/03/24](#))

Access

- WFP was not able to reach people in need in Ar-Raqqa governorate in December 2013, mainly due to the security situation. ([WFP 2014/01/22](#), [UN News Service 2014/01/28](#))

Displacement:

- Some 600 Kurds were forcibly displaced from villages under control of ISIL in Tal Abiad sub-district toward Ain Al Arab. Similarly, displacement of a number of Christians in the governorate toward Al Hasakeh and Turkey has been reported. The on-going fighting in Tal Abiad and the surrounding caused the displacement of civilians with dozens of families leaving Tal Abiad and crossing into Turkey as reported in March. ([Daily Star 2014/03/21](#), [ARA News 2014/03/24](#))

Humanitarian Needs

Health

- The representatives of UNICEF and WHO in Syria strongly condemned the interruption of Polio immunization campaign in January in Ar-Raqqa due to the intense fighting and access issues. Since ISIL dominated the city of Ar-Raqqa the city has been suffering from an acute shortage in medicines due to ISIL prevention of the entry of medicines from outside the governorate. ([WHO 2014/01/13](#), [Eqtisad 2014/03/05](#))

Protection

- Protection was reported to be the main concern in Ar-Raqqa governorate since ISIL took control of the majority of the governorate. Various reports document human rights violations against civilians in ISIL controlled areas including collective punishment, forced displacement, mass execution and imposing of strict Islamic regulations. Cases of arbitrary mass execution were also reported such as the execution of dozens of rival Islamists after regaining control on most of the territories lost during the conflict with FSA at the beginning of the year. Violence against Kurdish minority groups in Ar-Raqqa by ISIL was reported on 21 January with ISIL capturing 11 Kurdish civilians leaving the town of Tabqa and taking them to unknown destination. In March it was further reported that ISIL forced an Islamic tax on the Christians in the governorate stating that it is for protection purposes. ([Al Modon 2014/01/02](#), [Hurriyet Daily News 2014/01/13](#), [AFP 2014/01/20](#), [ARA News 2014/01/21](#), [AFP 2014/01/25](#), [ARA News 2014/02/06](#), [ARA News 2014/02/15](#), [Daily Star 2014/03/08](#), [Daily Star 2014/03/24](#))

As-Sweida



Key issues and possible developments

- Although it has been one of the least affected governorates to date, As-Sweida is likely to face increasing conflict-related effects due to spill-over of the conflict from neighbouring Dar'a resulting in displacement, spread of diseases and limited access of water and basic goods.
- Also in March, 2 cases of AFP were reported from As-Sweida. While the arid region has received favourable rainfall this quarter, there is an ongoing threat to water access, particularly as water wells and infrastructure come under attack by unknown groups and due to lack of fuel and electricity to operate water systems.

- As the number of IDPs across the country grows and the number of safe places to flee reduces, As-Sweida is likely to witness increasing IDP populations, which will further strain its already limited water supplies and contribute to the spread of communicable diseases. ([Daily Star 2014/03/06](#))

Context

- Mountainous As-Sweida governorate continues to be one of the least directly affected areas in Syria, however, its population is indirectly affected by weakened livelihoods, lack of fuel, increase in prices and limited access to goods and water supplies. The area is inhabited by Druze communities that mainly support the GoS, although anti-government protests have sporadically occurred in 2013.
- Given its relative stability, the governorate became host to a growing number of IDPs in 2013, estimated at between 30,000 to 52,000 people, many of which fled from neighbouring Dar'a. IDP entry and residence in as-Sweida is restricted and closely monitored by GoS forces.
- However, the intense conflict in neighbouring Dar'a Governorate has begun to spill-over into Dar'a. In early March, it was reported that opposition groups clashed with pro-government militias, police and intelligence personnel in the town of Salkhad, in Shahba sub-district.

Access

- There were media reports of gunmen disrupting water supplies to northern As-Sweida, as well as to the eastern village of Ar-Rashida. It was unclear whether the attacks were linked to any armed group and whether the infrastructure was rehabilitated. ([Al Akhbar 2014/03/10](#))

Displacement

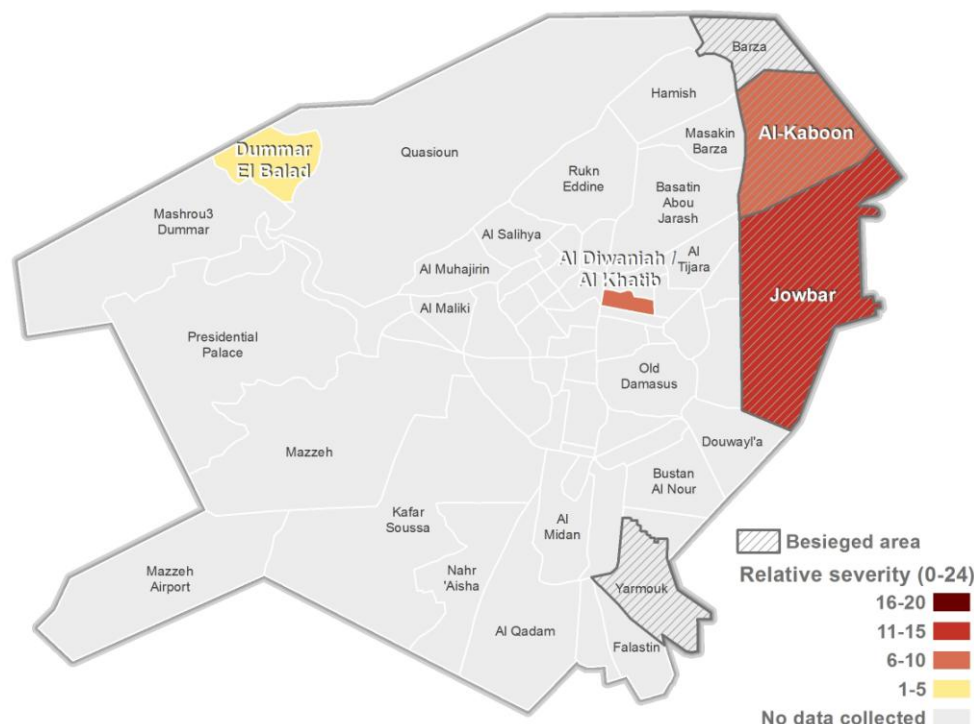
- A NGO reported that 200 displaced families have arrived to As-Sweida city in late January from Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa, Al Hasakeh, Dar'a and Homs governorates. It was also reported that 300 displaced families from Dar'a and Rural Damascus had recently fled to other parts of As-Sweida. Previously, most of the IDPs in As-Sweida were reported to originate from Dar'a, hence these latest displacement reports indicate a possible lack of alternative safe places to flee which force IDPs to travel further afield. ([USAID 2014/02/13](#))

Humanitarian Needs

Health

- 2 cases of AFP were reported from As-Sweida in March. There was no information available on where the cases were detected. ([OCHA 2014/03/13](#))

Damascus



Key Issues and possible developments

- Military truces and ceasefires have been implemented in some hard to access and besieged areas in Damascus and its outskirts, with varying degrees of adherence, allowing partial and sporadic humanitarian access. Despite these efforts, aerial shelling is frequent in besieged areas in and around the capital.
- An assessment of four neighbourhoods in Damascus (Al-Kaboon, Jowbar, Al Diwaniah/Al Khatib, Dummar El Balad) carried out in February identified large differences in needs between the besieged neighbourhoods Al Kaboon, Jowbar and Yarmouk and those under GoS control Dummar El Balad and Al Diwaniah. Some 30,500 people were found to be in need of immediate humanitarian assistance in the assessed neighbourhoods. The assessment supplemented previous assessments conducted in Syria, using similar methodology. However it is important to note that, as the situation varies

significantly among areas, humanitarian needs may be different in non-assessed areas. (Assessment Working Group for southern Syria (AWG-SS) 2014/03)

Context

- Armed violence continued in Yarmouk since the beginning of 2014. On 25 January clashes erupted between GoS forces and opposition forces in control of the neighbourhood. The armed groups, barring Jihadists, reached a settlement agreement with the GoS and it was reported that civilians are ready to push Jabhat al Nusra out if the regime proves it is being serious with the agreement. On 12 February fighters from Jabhat al Nusra and Ibn Taimeih brigade started evacuating Yarmouk camp toward Yalda and Hajar Aswad as part of the settlement agreement in the camp but ISIL fighters broke immediately to the camp and kidnapped 11 young men. Artillery strikes on the camp were recorded on 24 March killing 7 people. (AFP 2014/01/25, Daily Star 2014/01/30, Al Akhbar 2014/02/12, Al Akhbar 2014/02/13, Daily Star 2014/03/24)

Access

- Despite large quantities of assistance being provided to populations in the Damascus and rural Damascus governorates, ongoing sieges continue to prevent WFP from reaching some 40 locations around Damascus city. With some 500,000 people estimated to be living in these locations, some of which have not been accessed for over one year, concerns of deteriorating humanitarian conditions in these areas continue to grow. Sustained truce agreements and trust in Barzeh and Al-Kaboon neighbourhoods, under siege for over a year, allowed for a partial lifting of the restrictions on all incoming and outgoing movements in February. 1,000 people were also believed to have gone back to their homes in Barzeh, where on 27 February a joint humanitarian convoy delivered humanitarian assistance for the first time in over a year. (WFP 2014/02/21)
- Lack of humanitarian access to affected populations has been the main humanitarian concern since the beginning of 2014 in other besieged neighbourhoods in Damascus such as Barzeh and Yarmouk. In Yarmouk, the siege was tightened in July 2013. Various attempts to enter food supplies to the besieged refugee camp occurred since mid-January but they were interrupted by armed fighters inside the camp and by pro-government groups in some occasions. GoS troops were also reported to be obstructing the delivery of vital aid to the camp. A UN convoy carrying polio vaccinations and food was targeted in mid-January and was forced to abandon the delivery. However on 8 January food aid entered the camp for the first time in 4 months. On 19 January, 600 people who were in critical condition were evacuated, including those suffering from chronic diseases, particularly vulnerable children and pregnant women. It was reported later on 5 February

that 1,500 people have left the camp under the settlement agreement between GoS forces and opposition fighters in the camp. ([Al Akbar 2014/01/13](#), [AFP 201/01/14](#), [Reuters 2014/01/15](#), [Amnesty 2014/01/16](#), [AFP 201/01/18](#), [AFP 201/01/19](#), [AFP 2014/02/05](#), [AsSafir 2014/02/24](#), [Amnesty 2014/03/10](#))

- Despite a large number of checkpoints the centre of Damascus remains largely accessible with a constant supply of goods.

Displacement

- According to findings of the assessment undertaken in February in 4 neighbourhoods of Damascus, the displacement patterns highly differ between the besieged neighbourhoods and the neighbourhoods under control of GoS. The besieged neighbourhoods experienced large-scale displacement with high numbers of people fleeing the areas, leaving only 13,000 people in the two neighbourhoods where the original pre-crisis population was 312,000. Main reason for displacement in these two neighbourhoods was the high intensity of fighting between GoS forces and armed opposition groups. The majority of the population who fled the neighbourhoods, settled in the countryside outside Damascus Rural Damascus (mainly Duma) or other neighbourhoods inside the capital. The neighbourhoods under control of GoS were a destination for IDPs due to the relative stability in security situation. IDPs there came mainly from Rural Damascus and other neighbourhoods in the city especially the southern neighbourhoods and Yarmouk camp. No IDPs fled from those neighbourhoods. A total number of 28,000 IDPs who fled to these neighbourhoods settled with host families (13,000 IDPs), in rented accommodation (10,000) and collective shelters (5,000). (AWSSG 2014/03)

Humanitarian Needs

- In the assessed besieged neighbourhoods the humanitarian needs across all sectors are reported to be severe, findings that are similar to those identified by other multi-sectoral assessments. People are depending on whatever they find in the abandoned buildings to survive. Looting is a coping mechanism and a way of securing resources, within a context of very limited assistance provided by local actors. Where food becomes available through humanitarian assistance, its distribution is highly controlled by armed groups who intervene in the implementation of humanitarian activities. The main concerns in the neighbourhoods under control of the GoS are related to the shortage of food supplies, high prices and lack of income and the severity level in these neighbourhoods was low (between 0-people living under normal conditions and 2-many people are facing problems causing discomfort and suffering but they are not life threatening) across all sectors. The highest severity recorded was in Jowbar neighbourhood in food security

sector where it was reported that many people are dying due to shortages of food facing critical, life-threatening problems. (AWSSG 2014/03).

Food Security and Livelihoods

- In the besieged neighbourhoods, food was reported the highest priority sector due to the lack of its availability and the number of people in need of food assistance was high. The entire population in Jowbar (3,000 people) was living in life threatening conditions related to food shortages. (AWSSG 2014/03).
- Malnutrition was the main humanitarian concern reported continually since the beginning of the year in Yarmouk camp. The number of people who died due to starvation reached 73 on 28 January and this was the main driver for the continual attempts to enter relief materials to the camp. Even with the limited humanitarian assistance provided the number of casualties due to of starvation amounted to 124 civilians by 10 March ([AFP 2014/01/02](#), [Al Akhbar 2014/01/28](#), [Daily Star 2014/03/10](#))
- On the contrary the situation in the neighbourhoods under control of GoS was better with a lower severity level (0 in Dummar and 2 in Al Diwaniyeh) comparing to the besieged neighbourhoods. The main problems reported in those areas concern the lack of income and the slight increase in food prices but no availability issues were reported. (AWSSG 2014/03)

Health

- The severity of health needs is higher in the neighbourhoods under siege comparing to the neighbourhoods under control of GoS. In Jowbar 1,900 people are in need of health assistance while in Kaboon only 2 out of 18 health facilities are functional and providing only basic services such as first aid treatment of injuries only. In neighbourhoods under control of GoS the health situation is considered as a problem of a minor concern and no life threatening conditions are reported.
- The main problems in besieged neighbourhoods are lack of sufficient medical staff and lack of medical facilities. No medical facilities are functioning in Jowbar neighbourhood and people cannot access medical facilities in other areas due to siege. In neighbourhoods under control of GoS medical facilities are functional, but lack of income is considered as a minor problem for a limited number of people to receive health services.
- As of 24 January 63 people have died due to the lack of medicines and health care. Lack of heating, electricity and regular water supplies are also contributing to the rapidly deteriorating health and humanitarian situation in the camp. ([AFP 2014/01/10](#), [AFP 2014/01/24](#), [UN General Assembly 2014/01/21](#), [AFP 2014/02/05](#), [Al 2014/03/10](#))

Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI)

- A Socioeconomic and Damage Assessment conducted in June 2013 and published by UNRWA reported in April that in several neighbourhoods in Damascus have suffered damage to over 70% of private buildings. In Saida Zeynab, Douma, and Yarmouk damage was particularly high. A fifth of damaged houses (20 %) were completely destroyed in Yarmouk, followed by 17% in Bustan al Basha and 17% in Douma. Almost half (48%) of the respondents suffered from a lack of shelter, while a third of the respondents in Bustan al-Basha and Saida Zeynab and a fifth in Yarmouk hosted other family and friends in their homes, often in new areas to which they had been displaced. ([UNWRA 2014/01/04](#)).
- Heavy damage to shelters is a main issue reported in the besieged neighbourhoods. Although a limited number of people are still residing in them, the availability of safe shelter is a main concern due to shelling and sniper fire. The high severity of needs in the besieged neighbourhoods is also related to the lack of NFI materials and lack of electricity. The population in neighbourhoods under control of the GoS did not identify the shelter issues cited above as an issue. The main problems with regard to shelter in these areas were related to the pressure on the rented accommodation in some cases and the limited economic resources. Overcrowding and lack of privacy were also reported as problems in these neighbourhoods due to the large IDP populations.
- During winter in Yarmouk camp where the level of destruction to private shelters is very high, people were depending on doors and wood for heating. Water and electricity were also reported to be non-existent in the camp. ([Al Akhbar 2014/01/10](#), [UNRWA 2014/01/17](#))
- Mass destruction of shelters is also reported from the besieged neighbourhood of Barzeh, in particular the Old City. Due to the level of destruction, those with the financial means are renting in the surrounding areas of Barzeh. ([OCHA 2014/02/26](#))

WASH

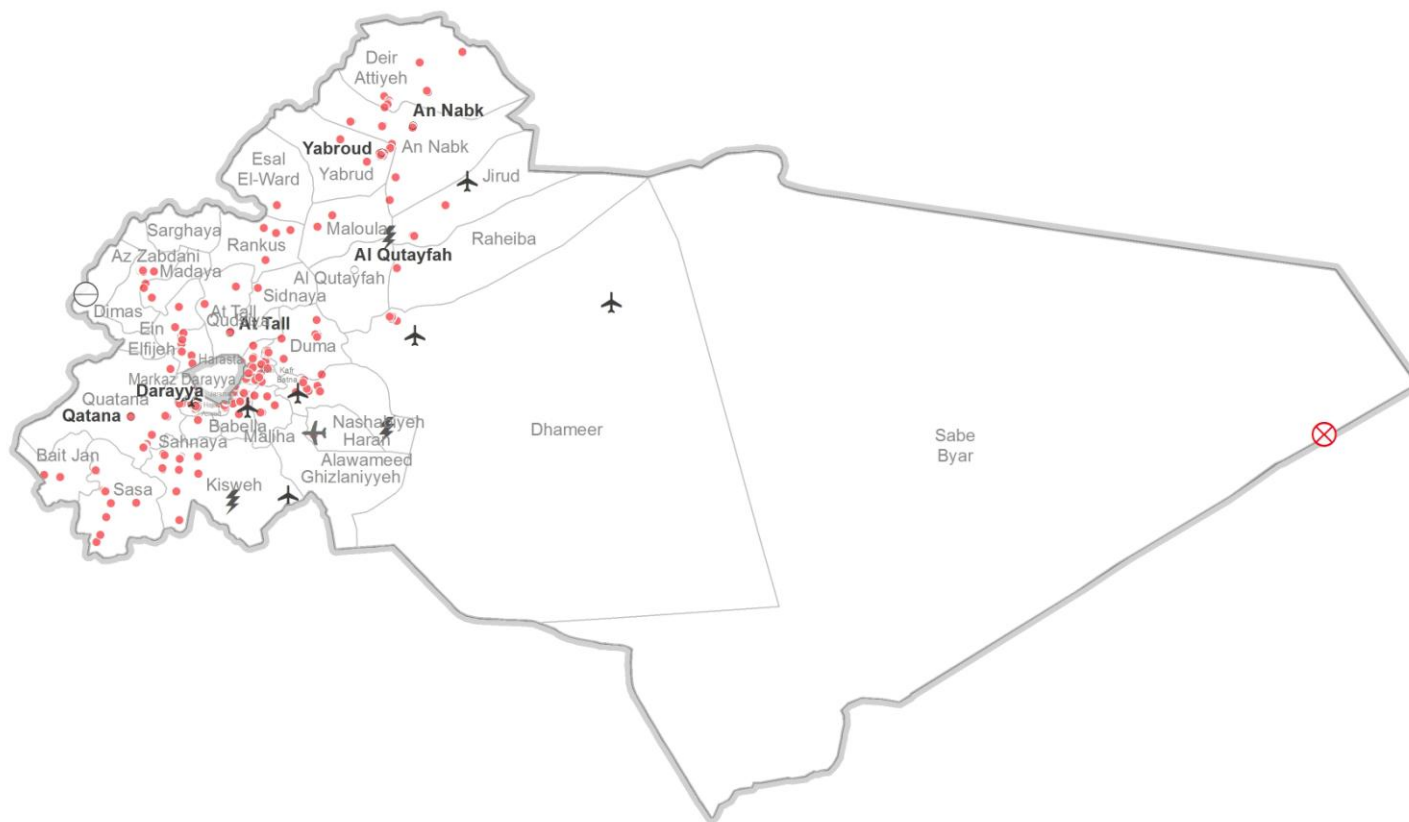
It was reported in all the assessed neighbourhoods that water supply network is functional and water is available, except in Al Diwaniyeh neighbourhood where there is a limited pressure on the network due to the number of IDPs and. The overcrowding in Al Diwaniyeh neighbourhood has led also to a congestion of garbage in the streets and an increase of rodents.

Education

No educational services are available in the besieged neighbourhoods which leaves 33,800 children there without education. On the contrary the education

system is fully functional in the neighbourhoods under control of GoS except of 2 out of 11 schools hosting IDPs in Al Diwaniyeh neighbourhood.

Rural Damascus



Key issues and possible developments

- Access to besieged areas and areas experiencing high intensity of conflict remains extremely limited, directly impacting people's access to basic goods and services and particularly food and health care.

Context

- Fighting in the Qalamoun area was the key development since the beginning of 2014. SAF were able to regain control of most of Qalamoun's main towns such as An Nabk, Deir Atiyeh and Qara. The opposition stronghold of Yabroud was the target of the attacks after that. SAF mobilized a big number of soldiers to the area supported by Hezbollah militia at the end of January.

- The fighting was also fierce around Yabroud and heavy shelling and fighting was reported in Falita, Sahil and Rima around Yabroud. A main component of the battle was the controlling of the illegal crossings between Qalamoun region and Aarsal in Lebanon and the SAF could control 10 out of 18 in February. The towns of Sahil, Aqaba and Jerager fall in the hands of SAF after heavy fighting with opposition troops. Yabroud witnessed heavy fighting and was a target for heavy shelling and aerial bombardment by SAF and fall in their hands on 16 March. Immediately after taking control of Yabroud SAF and Hezbollah moved forward to secure the areas close to the Lebanese borders ([Daily Star 2014/01/03](#), [Al Akhbar 2014/01/30](#), [As Safir 2014/02/07](#), [EL Nashra 2014/02/12](#), [Daily Star 2014/02/17](#), [As Safir 2014/02/15](#), [Al Akhbar 2014/02/15](#), [Al Akhbar 2014/03/03](#), [Daily Star 2014/03/17](#), [Daily Star 2014/03/19](#))

- Other areas in Rural Damascus also witnessed fierce fighting and clashes between SAF and opposition forces. Shelling and/or aerial bombardment targeted frequently Darayya, Duma, Adra, Jowbar, Mleiha, Yalda, Beit Sahem, Qara, Zabadani and Dhameer. The using of barrel bombs was reported in Yabroud and Darayya more than once since the beginning of the year. Battles and clashes between the two sides were reported recurrently since the beginning of the year in many locations but the higher concentration of fighting was reported in Darayya, Duma, Harasta and

Adra. In Eastern Ghouta conflict was reported to be extreme with opposition fighters battling SAF backed with Hezbollah and Iraqi militias. A big ambush on 26 February in Eastern Ghouta ended with SAF killing 175 fighters from Jabhat al Nusra and the Islamic Front ([As Safir 2014/01/06](#), [Al Akhbar 2014/01/08](#), [Al Akhbar 2014/01/27](#), [AFP 2014/01/24](#), [AFP 2014/01/30](#), [EL Nashra 2014/02/15](#), [As Safir 2014/02/27](#), [Al Akhbar 2014/03/12](#))

Access

- WFP said at the beginning of the year that they have been trying for several months to reach besieged areas in and around Damascus especially Muaddamiyyeh, Nashabiyyeh, Duma, Harasta and Yarmouk camp without success. However this has changed slightly with ongoing negotiations

between government and local opposition groups in various locations. There are over 40 locations in Rural Damascus under siege affecting an estimated population of 800,000. UN reported on 13 January that they have written guarantees from opposition groups that they would let assistance to be delivered to Eastern Ghouta. Slight improvement in humanitarian access was reported in Muaddamiyeh on 16 February when SARC was able to distribute humanitarian aid there. 3 of the areas that reached truces between government and opposition forces were assisted during February by SARC with 6,650 food rations distributed in Beit Sahem, Babila and Yalda. Although there was an improvement in access to Muaddamiyeh after the truce reports talked about high restrictions to reach beneficiaries there caused by government army and the truce was reported to be violated on 25 February with government forces closing the roads to the neighbourhood ([Ahram](#) 2014/01/14, [OCHA](#) 2014/01/17, [UN News Service](#) 2014/01/28, [OCHA](#) 2014/01/31, [SANA](#) 2014/02/16, [Daily Star](#) 2014/02/25, [ARA News](#) 2014/02/25)

Displacement

- On 29 December GoS started facilitating the evacuation of people from Adra. By 10 January 2014 at least 35,000 people fled Adra. The escalation of violence in Rural Damascus forced new waves of displacement in several locations but it was more noticeable in Adra Ummaliyeh.

Health

- In Darayya, 2,200 out of 3,000 are affected by communicable diseases due to lack of water and cleaning materials increasing the risk of the spread of diseases among the civilians residing in that area. In Rural Damascus 24 out of 44 private hospitals are out of service in addition to the 3 out of 6 public hospitals in Daryya, Duma and Harasta. Some 54 out of 176 health centres are out of service. On 1 March it was reported that the total number of Leishmaniasis cases in treatment centres in Rural Damascus reached 1685 ([Al Akhbar](#) 2014/01/10, [Al Modon](#) 2014/02/06, [Al Watan](#) 2014/03/01).

Food Security

- According to an appeal issued by the office of relief in Eastern Ghouta nearly 300 people died due to lack of food and medicine in the area which has been affected by the besiegement of the GoS for the last year. Shortage of infant formula and poor health care threatens the lives of about 48,000 children under the age of two. It was reported on 19 March that 2 children died due to starvation and lack of medicines in Eastern Ghouta. The situation in Qudsaya was reported to be deteriorating in terms of food security in March as a result of the siege by GoS forces ([Al Modon](#) 2014/02/06, [Eqtisad](#) 2014/03/06, [Daily Star](#) 2014/03/19).

Shelter

- Extreme shortage of petroleum supplies was reported in January. The shortage and the extreme increase in prices (in some cases more than 300%) were influenced directly with the disruption of the road between Damascus and Homs where the main oil refinery in Syria is situated due to clashes in An Nabk. People in Ghouta were reported to be using any available method for heating including cutting available trees as well as burning tires and prices of fuel (60 SP) rose sharply. Electricity remained a main problem in many areas such as Ain Mneen where complete electricity outage was reported in March. According to GoS media 103 collective shelters in Rural Damascus are hosting increasing numbers of IDPs flowing from several areas of intense armed conflict. ([Institute for War and Peace Reporting](#) 2014/01/13, [Al Iqtisadi](#) 2014/03/02, [Al Watan](#) 2014/03/01)
- Rehabilitation of the 7 collective shelters in Rural Damascus is underway. One key constraint is sourcing raw materials for shelter rehabilitation as they are not available on the local market. ([OCHA](#) 2014/02/15)

Dar'a



Key issues and possible developments

- The conflict has significantly escalated in Dar'a and Quneitra in February as opposition forces in the south re-grouped as the supply of foreign supplied light weapons increased. GoS forces responded with an increase in airstrikes, including barrel bombs and shelling on Dar'a city and surroundings, including Mzeireb, Tfas and Neimeh. As a result, the numbers of displaced and people in need in Dar'a significantly increased throughout February. According to UNHCR, the number of displaced fleeing to Jordan from Dar'a has significantly increased in February, although border restrictions on the western section of border meant that most refugees continued to enter the Kingdom through eastern border crossings.

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. Since mid-2013, GoS forces asserted control over the Damascus-Dar'a highway but the proliferation of checkpoints on the road limited civilians' access to basic services, as arbitrary arrest detention and physical and sexual abuse were frequently reported to take place at such checkpoints. Since mid-2013, unofficial border restrictions have stemmed the flow of IDPs into Jordan, likely leading to a significant increase of IDPs within the governorate. Between June and December 2013, the number of IDPs in Dar'a more than doubled from 180,000 to 372,000.

Access

- Due to insecurity, WFP reported that it will only be able to provide assistance to half of the 146,000 people targeted for assistance from Dar'a city and Sanamayn distribution points. Those in rural areas would have to risk insecurity and checkpoints to access this assistance. ([WFP 2014/03/04](#))
- Access to the town of Nawa has been heavily restricted by GoS forces throughout early 2014. Many civilians fled the town, including all the IDPs who had been residing there in December 2013. It is likely that those who remain are extremely vulnerable because they may not have been physically able to flee and due to the limited access to basic goods. ([Dar'a assessment 2014/01/23](#))

Humanitarian Needs

Protection

- The main protection concerns reported in the governorate relate to physical safety and security as a result of frequent air raids and barrel bombing have increased in since the beginning of 2014.

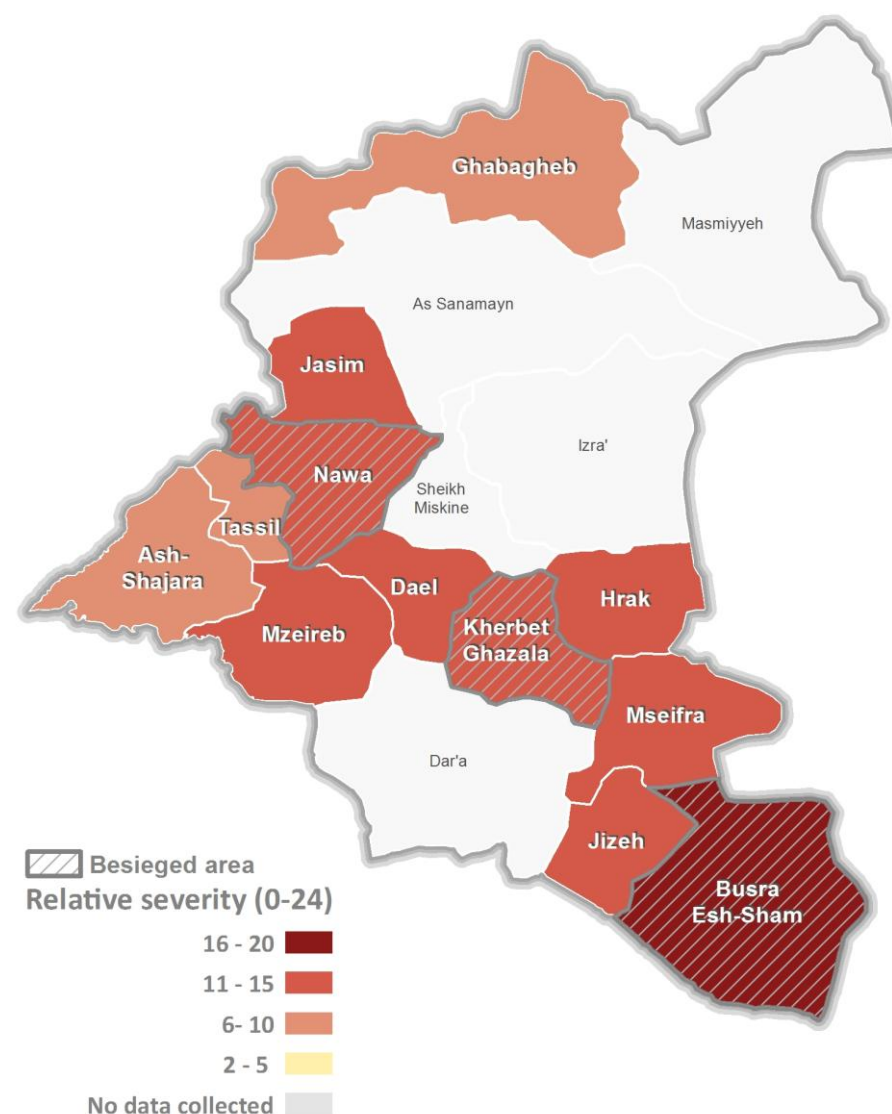
- In mid-March, fighting outside of Dar'a city led to the opposition's takeover of Gharz prison and the release of a significant number of prisoners, many of whom were reported to be political prisoners. ([Al Jazeera 2014/03/20](#), [BBC 2014/03/20](#))
- On 14 February, a car bomb outside a mosque exploded near a fuel tanker killing dozens of people with reports varying from 29 to 43. ([Guardian 2014/02/14](#))

Health

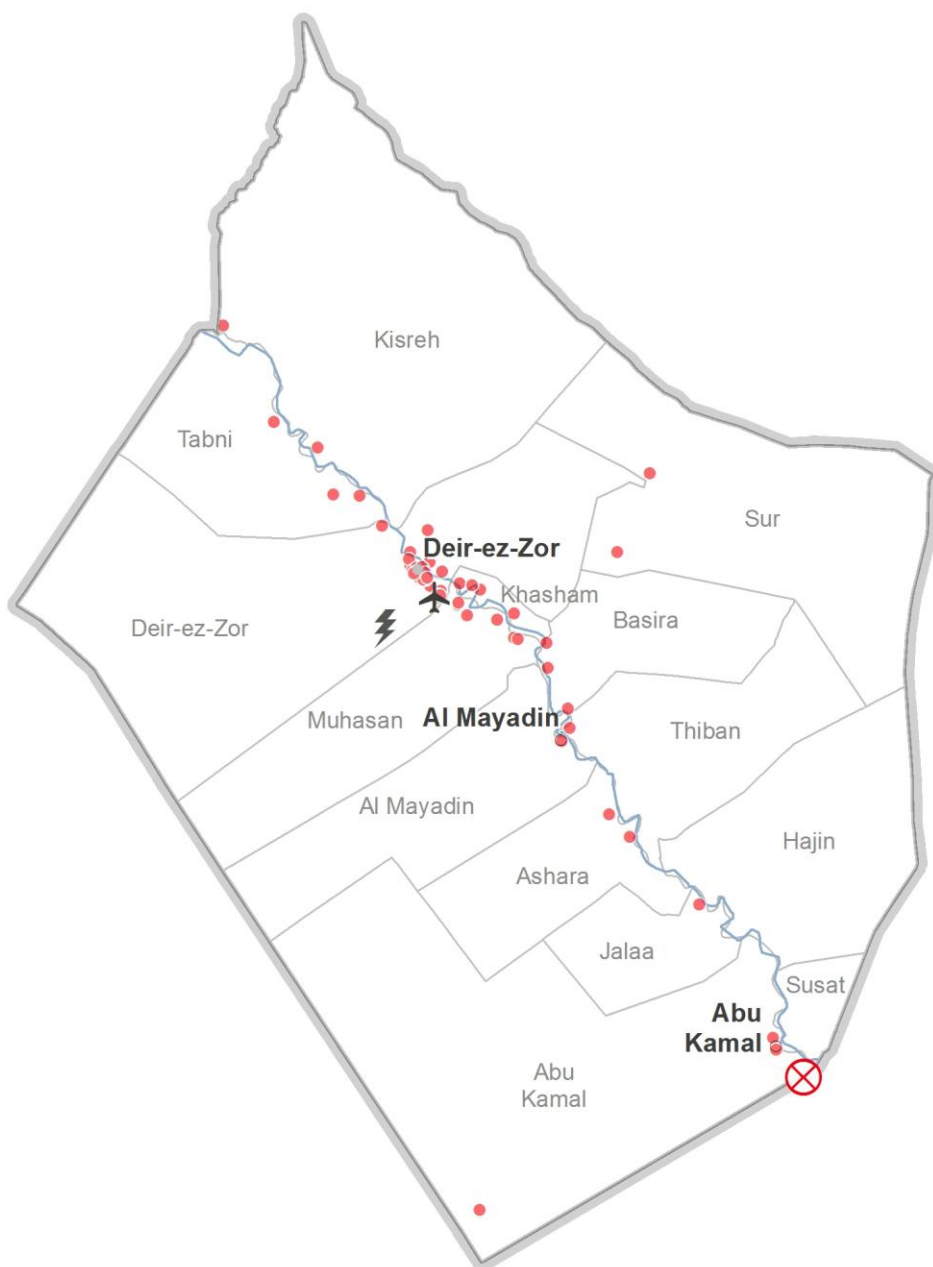
- According to a MoH/WHO assessment of available health resources and services undertaken in September 2013:
 - 2/3 of Dar'a's 9 MoH hospitals are no longer functioning.
 - 5 of the 9 hospitals are partially damaged while the remaining are intact.
 - There is an average of 1 hospital for 342,000 people. While this is the 4th highest average reported, it is below the national average of 1 hospital per 400,000 people.
 - There are no reported emergency physicians available at MoH hospitals in Dar'a. However, according to a January assessment, emergency services were available at various field hospitals, although the qualifications of health staff may not be up to standards due to insecurity. ([MoH/WHO 2014/03](#), [SNAP 2014/01/23](#))

Food security

- According to WFP, GoS efforts to increase the supply of flour to functioning bakeries in some parts of the governorate has led to a 50% decrease of subsidised bread prices and a 30% decrease in unsubsidised bread in early February. However, for all other commodities, prices increased significantly due to the escalation of the fighting disrupting supply routes. In December, the average bread price was assessed at SYP 165 across 12 of 17 sub-districts in Dar'a governorate. Remotely-sensed data reveal that large swaths of cropping areas in Aleppo, Hama, Idlib, Homs and Dar'a governorates may be affected by drought in some areas. ([WFP 2014/02/18](#), [Dar'a assessment 2014/01/23](#), [GIEWS 2014/04/01](#))



Deir-ez-Zor



Key Issues and possible developments

After heavy fighting, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) withdrew from Deir-ez-Zor in early February. The withdrawal from oil-rich Deir-ez-Zor poses a serious loss for ISIL, as it served as an important channel through which it received weapons and fighters. ISIL supporters state that remaining fighters may employ the tactics of assassinations and car bombings in fighting remaining rebel groups in the governorate. Ongoing clashes between the opposition forces and the SAF around the military airport and town of MoHasan in Deir-ez-Zor were reported as well. ([Al Jazeera 2014/02/10](#), [Reuters 2014/02/10](#), [AFP 2014/02/04](#), [ARA News 2014/03/18](#))

With largely insufficient rainfall in the winter months, water plants in Deir-ez-Zor have reported low water tables which will likely further reduce access to water. Lack of safe potable water has been a major humanitarian concern in Deir-ez-Zor since mid-2013 and has largely resulted in the spread of water-born diseases and the deteriorating health status of the population.

Access

Routes to the governorates of Deir-ez-Zor have been blocked since early 2014, due to widespread insecurity and the presence of armed groups along main transport routes. With access continuously curtailed, it has been difficult to deliver humanitarian assistance to the population residing in Deir-ez-Zor (estimated at close to 1.9 million people, according to SINA data). At the end of February, negotiations through local partners allowed humanitarian assistance to reach Deir-ez-Zor, allowing the delivery of limited assistance including food parcels, hygiene kits and chlorine. Nevertheless, accessibility and thus delivery of assistance remains highly unpredictable. ([WFP 2014/02/05](#), [WFP 2014/02/20](#), [WFP 2014/03/04](#), [ECHO 2014/02/25](#), [OCHA 2014/02/2](#), [WFP 2014/03/10](#), [SINA 2013/12](#))

Displacement

Clashes in February resulted in additional waves of displacement, leading to 1,330 people fleeing Deir-ez-Zor City and settling in informal camps in Al-Mayadeen. These informal camps are reportedly further afflicted by a lack of basic services and adequate shelters, increasing the vulnerability of the displacement population. ([WFP 2014/02/05](#))

Humanitarian Needs

Health

An increase in the number of suspected measles cases throughout the country was recorded in the Early Warning And Response System (EWARS). However, EWARS noted that the greatest concentration of suspected measles cases was in Deir-ez-Zor, with 118 cases out of a total of 206 reported. The Early Warning Alert and Response Network (EWARN) reported that since early January 2014

34 suspected measles cases were recorded in Deir-ez-Zor. The governorate is already experiencing some of the highest severity of needs, stating critical life-threatening problems with health including communicable diseases such as polio. ([OCHA 2014/02/27](#), [ACU-EWARN 2014/03/08](#))

Protection

Areas of Deir-ez-Zor saw an increase in enforcement of strict interpretations of Islamic law on the local population by hard-line Islamist groups. In most recent reports, women and girls were prohibited from moving freely in public unless abiding by the imposed dress code. ([Reuters 2014/03/05](#))

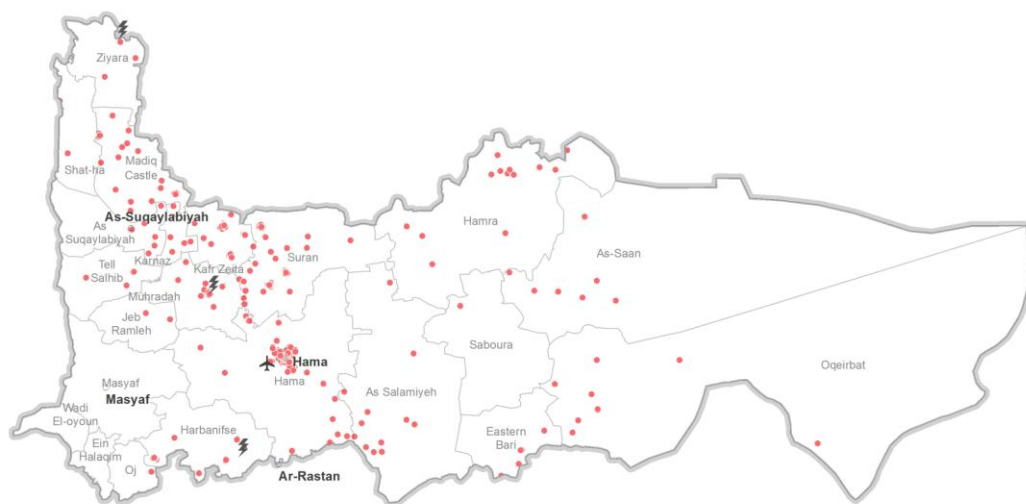
WASH

Water plants in Deir-ez-Zor were reported to have problems due to low water tables and lack of fuel to increase pumping. The SINA assessment conducted late 2013 found that water in Deir-ez-Zor was available in limited quantity and quality, largely caused by pollution resulting from illegal oil extraction activities in the area. Water is anticipated to be even scarcer with overall low rainfall in the winter and the upcoming dry summer months. ([UNICEF 2014/02/16](#), [SINA 2013/12](#), [COAR 2014/01](#))

Food Security & Livelihoods

Despite the brief interlude allowing some assistance and market supplies into the governorate, food shortages and rising market prices are presenting as significant obstacles to people's ability to meet their basic food and nutrition requirements. In Deir-ez-Zor City prices of basic goods reportedly decreased by 10 to 27% following the ease of access restrictions, supporting the notion that increasing access will improve the food security situation in Deir-ez-Zor. ([WFP 2014/02/19](#))

Hama



Key issues and possible developments

- Major damage to Hama's water infrastructure will cause a further deterioration in the governorate's health situation. Hama has already reported relatively high rates of AFP and measles compare to other governorates, which is likely to spread further without consistent and adequate clean water supplies. This will be further exacerbated by the warming weather in the coming months.

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. The governorate has endured heavy fighting throughout the 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. This has led to a large number of IDPs seeking respite from the conflict which also puts significant pressure on limited available resources and humanitarian assistance. There is very limited reporting or information available on the humanitarian situation in Hama.

Humanitarian Needs

Health

- There were 2 new cases of AFP reported from Hama governorate, although neither cases have been confirmed as polio. There were also 8 suspected cases of measles reported during the last week of February, which is the second highest number by governorate, following Deir-ez-Zor governorate. ([OCHA 2014/03/12](#), [MoH/WHO 2014/03/01](#))
- 31% of reported cases of swine flu (H1N1) were found in Hama governorate, where a significant number of health workers had been trained on detection and management of swine flu. ([OCHA 2014/03/12](#))
- In September 2013, 5 out of 6 of Hama's hospitals were reportedly functional and 2 partially damaged. The average catchment population per hospital in Hama is 326,000. As such, particularly compared to elsewhere in Syria, much of the population still has access to medical services. ([MoH/WHO 2014/03](#))

Nutrition

- There was an increase in reported cases of children under 5 who are vulnerable to or have moderate acute malnutrition in Hama governorate. In September 2013, Hama public hospitals had reported a total of 246 cases of severe acute malnutrition – the highest number reported by MoH hospitals. ([OCHA 2014/02/14](#), [MoH/WHO 2014/03](#))

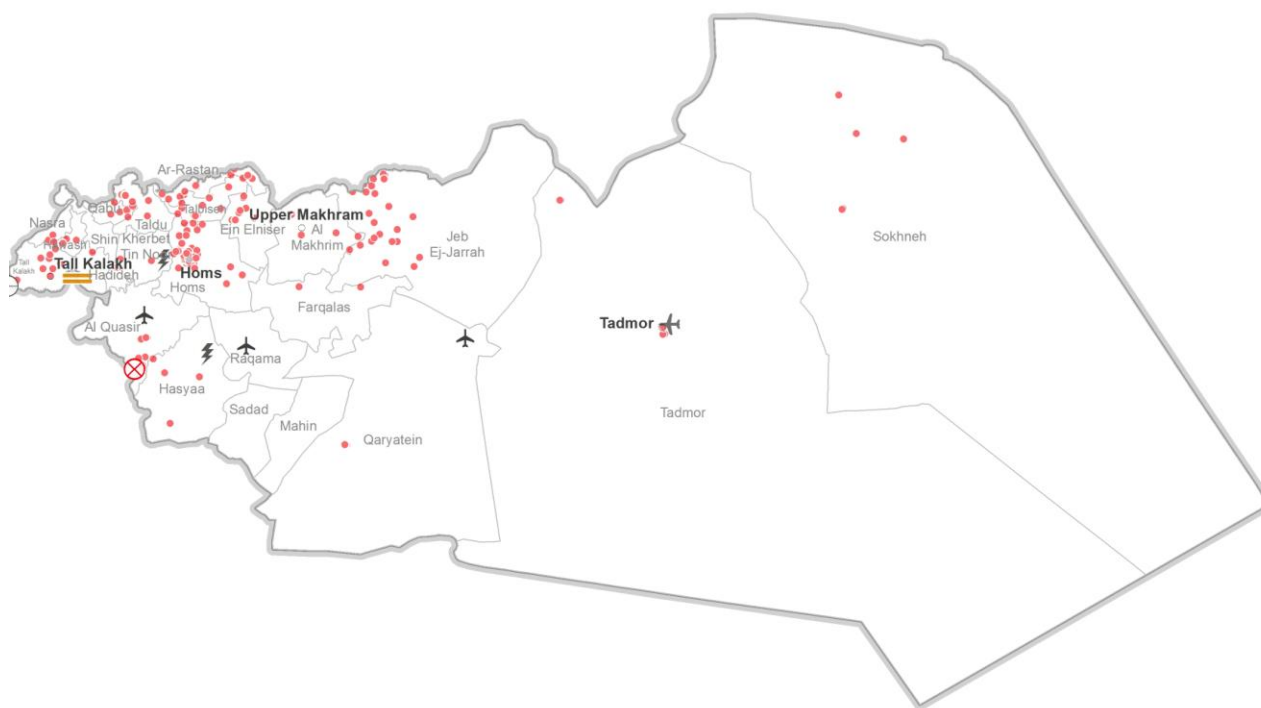
WASH

- The WASH situation in Hama governorate continued to deteriorate. A main water channel supplying over 1 million people in Homs and Hama governorates suffered major damages in late 2013; new damages to the water infrastructure have left residents of Hama city and As-Salamiyeh, estimated at 3 million people, without water since late January. While aid agencies have provided WASH assistance, local media reported that the disruption has led to the unregulated digging of wells. ([Tishreen 2014/02/26](#), [Al Watan 2014/02/09](#), [UNICEF 2014/02/20](#), [OCHA 2014/02/15](#))

Protection

- HRW reported GoS forces using a new and powerful type of cluster munition rocket in the conflict, which is 3 times larger than previous cluster munition rockets used in Syria. The reported attacks happened over a 2 day period in mid February in the village of Kafr Zeita, central Hama governorate, killing 2 people and injuring 10, civilians. ([HRW 2014/02/19](#), [HI 2014/02/24](#))
- Up to 20 civilians were reportedly killed in the mainly Alawite village of Maan in Hama in early February, when opposition groups took over the village. The village was re-taken by GoS forces several days later. ([Reuters 2014/02/09](#), [SD 2014/02/11](#), [Al Jazeera 2014/02/10](#))

Homs



Key issues and possible developments

- Homs witnessed the sole tangible outcome from the failed Geneva II peace talks held in January, as the parties to the conflict agreed to a temporary ceasefire in the besieged Old City of Homs. The agreement led to a 6 day ceasefire which allowed the evacuation of 1,400 people, although over 300 males continue to be held by GoS authorities and there is little information available on their status. Some of the evacuees moved to Al Wa'er, another besieged area which faces quite serious humanitarian issues and regular conflict.
- Although there no detailed information available, the month-long conflict around Zara town is likely to have caused significant displacement most likely towards Homs city. As with other areas recently taken over by GoS forces, it is likely that access to the area will be heavily restricted and IDPs will not be able to return in the short-term.
- The lack of reporting from hospitals and health centres, especially in Homs city is a concern.

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 the capital Damascus. As a result of its strategic location and proximity to smuggling routes with Lebanon, Homs governorate has seen witnessed significant levels of conflict, coupled with a high number of IDPs and people in need. However, there is little humanitarian information available on Homs.

• The GoS took over the town of Zara and the symbolic Crusader era castle, the Krak de Chevaliers after a month long battle for the strategic area which had provided opposition groups with supplies from Lebanon and sat between Syria's main transit route and GoS's coastal strongholds.

Displacement

• Local media reported that 40,000 additional IDPs were registered in the 1st quarter of 2014 and that there were 76 collective shelters in Homs city and surrounding areas. Although unreported, it is assumed that there was significant displacement as a result of the operations on Zara and Krak

de Chevaliers. ([Tishreen 2014/03/14](#))

- Data collected from the Homs Palestinian camp located in Homs city identified 6,200 Palestinian IDPs who have fled to the camp from Aleppo city, Yarmouk and other parts of Homs. The IDP population had been gradually increasing in February due to its relatively security and those who depart the camp are leaving to attempt to reach Europe via overland routes through Turkey. ([AWG – SS 2014/03](#))

Access

- A temporary ceasefire between the GoS and opposition groups in the Old City of Homs was negotiated for an initial 3 day period between 7-9 February and then extended for an additional 3 day period. The ceasefire had been broken on the second day as mortars and gunshots targeted the aid convoy and killed 11 people, however, evacuations and aid distributions resumed in subsequent days. Food rations for 1,000 people for a 1 month period were distributed. ([Reuters 2014/02/09](#), [USAID 2014/02/13](#), [UN News Service 2014/02/13](#))

Humanitarian Needs

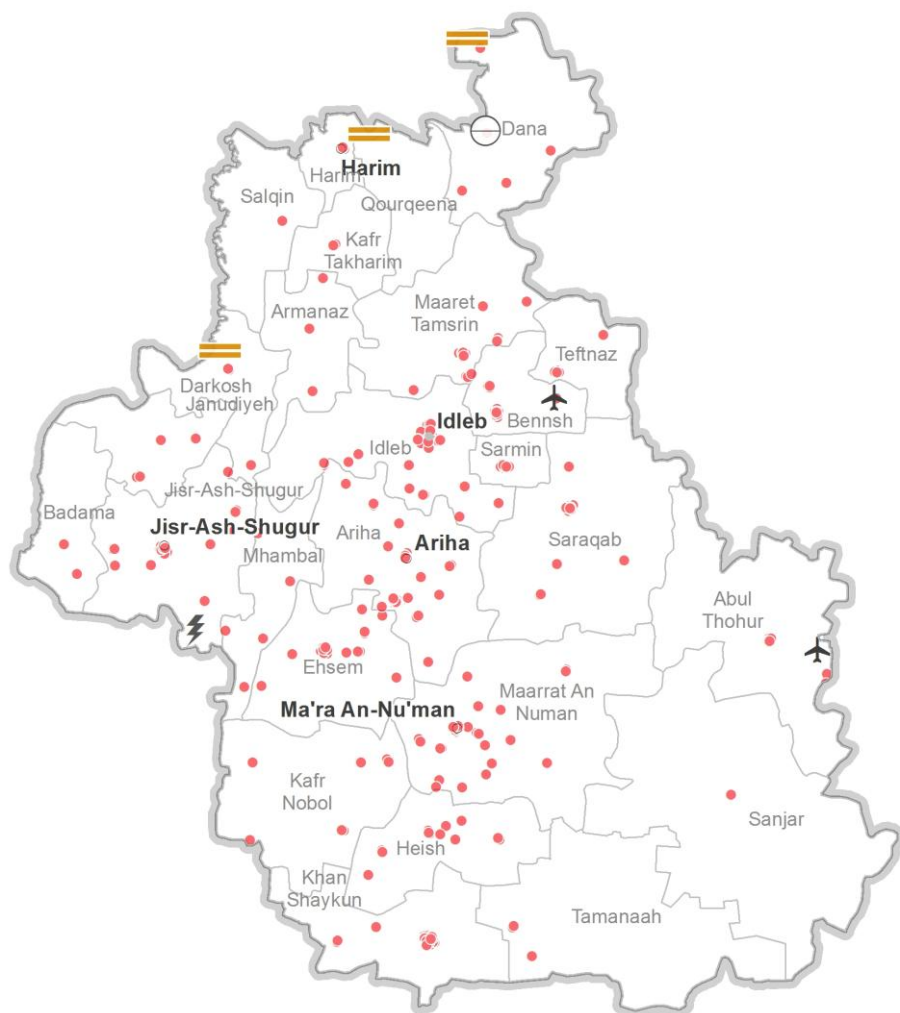
Health

- According to a MoH/WHO assessment of available health resources and services undertaken in September 2013:
 - After Ar-Raqqa, Homs governorate had the highest number of public hospitals (10) not reporting any information. Only 2 out of 12 MoH hospitals reported information. A 4th quarter 2013 MoH/WHO report on the available health resources and services undertaken reported that 4 out of 12 hospitals were functioning in Homs. Nonetheless, none of the hospitals were located in Homs city. ([OCHA 2014/03/13](#))
 - Homs had the second highest average (after Aleppo) number of hospitals per population at 1 hospital for a population of over 900,000. Homs also has the second highest average number of doctors per persons with just 1 doctor for nearly 30,000 people. ([MoH/WHO 2014/03](#))
- There were 3 cases of AFP which are being investigated as possible polio cases. ([UNICEF 2014/03/09](#))

Protection

- The ceasefire allowed for the evacuation of about 1,400 people who had been living under siege for nearly 2 years. There were media reports that evacuees had to salute a Syrian flag and pledge allegiance to the state. About 600 evacuees, primarily males between the ages of 15 and 55, were held by GoS authorities for screening at an abandoned school which was renamed Al Andalus collective shelter. In early March, it was reported that 336 men and boys continued to be detained at Al Andalus when it was struck by mortar. The attack killed a local resident in the area and wounded 10 people within the collective shelter. GoS authorities had designated a collective shelter in Al Wa'er, another besieged neighbourhood of Homs, for evacuees, however most reportedly chose to live with friends and relatives in other areas. ([UNICEF 2014/02/26](#), [AFP 2014/03/12](#), [Reuters 2014/02/10](#), [UNHCR 2014/03/08](#))
- Previous estimates of the besieged population in the Old City of Homs were about 2,500, however after the evacuation, the estimated remaining population was revised to between 2,500-2,600, indicating that there had been about 4,000 people residing in the besieged neighbourhood. Of those remaining, 1,000 were estimated to be civilians and the remaining were fighters. ([UNICEF 2014/02/26](#), [AFP 2014/03/12](#), [Reuters 2014/02/10](#))

Idleb



Key issues and possible developments

Opposition groups and some Islamic forces united to fight ISIL in Idlib similar to offensives in other governorates such as Aleppo and Ar-Raqqa in January. ISIL began retreating in January from strategic towns close to the Turkish borders such as Dana and Atmeh and lost their last strong bastion in Saraqeb on 17 January. ISIL used car bombs to attack FSA fighters in Idlib in Ram Hamdan and

in Bab al Hawa border crossing on 20 January. Further car bomb attacks took place near Atmeh field hospital on 21 February resulting in 14 dead at least. Clashes between the two sides were reported sporadically on smaller scale during February and March. ([EI Nashra 2014/01/01](#), [AFP 2014/01/03](#), [AFP 2014/01/04](#), [Reuters 2014/01/05](#), [Daily Star 2014/01/07](#), [AFP 2014/01/07](#), [AFP 2014/01/11](#), [AFP 2014/01/14](#), [AFP 2014/01/17](#), [Al Monitor 2014/01/20](#), [Daily Star 2014/02/17](#), [Daily Star 2014/02/23](#))

In the meantime Syrian Armed Forces carried out strikes against the headquarters of Ahrar al Sham during a meeting of its leaders in Binnish on 6 January. Aerial bombardment also continued on Khan Shiekhoun was reported on 26 February and on 6 March. GoS air forces also targeted Dana town on 21 February killing at least 5 civilians. Clashes between GoS forces and opposition fighters were reported in Abu Dhour military camp. At the beginning of March fierce fighting raged around the town of Morek on the strategic Idlib-Hama. On 8 March an offensive started by opposition groups on Idlib city in an attempt to take the supply route of Idlib-Mastoomeh from Lattakia and to besiege the city. The offensive failed despite re-controlling Mastoomeh village. On 25 March it was reported that rebels have seized 15 army checkpoints in Idlib governorate. The overall pattern of the conflict in Idlib since the beginning of the year shows a progress of FSA against ISIL in the majority of the governorate. But the conflict between opposition and government forces did not record any high impact incidents even with the slight progress of FSA comparing to the GoS forces ([EI Nashra 2014/01/06](#), [Daily Star 2014/02/14](#), [Al Akhbar 2014/02/26](#), [ARA News 2014/02/26](#), [EI Nashra 2014/02/25](#), [Daily Star 2014/03/06](#), [As Safir 2014/03/08](#), [Daily Star 2014/03/25](#))

There is a lack of information on the humanitarian needs in the governorate.

Access

WFP participated in an inter-agency convoy to Khan Shaykhoun at the beginning of December, delivering enough food to assist 15,000 people for one month, the first time since October 2013. Whilst this reflects some progress, needs are estimated to significantly exceed the assistance provided to the area, where approximately 120,000 people, 40,000 of whom are displaced, are reportedly facing dire humanitarian conditions. ([WFP 2014/01/22](#))

Displacement

Roughly, over 100,000 IDPs are encamped on the Syrian side of the Turkish-Syrian borders in makeshift camps in opposition held territories. According to Turkish government officials most of these IDPs prefer to stay inside Syria in order to enjoy easier access to their families and homes. Many of these IDPs were denied the entry to Turkey due to lack of documentation or lack of space in Turkish-run camps. An estimated 40,000 IDPs have taken shelter in Khan Sheikhoun in the South of the governorate swelling the town's regular population of around 80,000. ([Brookings-LSE 2014/01/15](#), [UNICEF 2014/01/23](#))

Humanitarian Needs:

Food security and livelihoods

Government official report that, as of January, 65% of the total planned area for wheat crop has been planted (45,000 out of 69,000 planned). However this estimate seems high. An EMMA assessment in northern Idlib reported that irrigated land in the assessed areas alone has decreased by 75% and wheat production decreased by 65-70% where the consumption needs have almost doubled from 110,000 MT per year to currently 200,000 mt. WFP monitors reported sharp raises in commodity prices mainly due to the escalation of fighting. The resulting widespread insecurity caused major disruption in the supply chain. Idlib registered raises in the price of bread by 40% in January resulting in a severe shortage of subsidized bread and a general increase of all other monitored commodities. Because of the access difficulties in the transporting of olive oil to the capital and major cities farmers are forced to sell their product to the traders who export it to Turkey. An 18-litres tank of olive oil is sold at 4000SYP to the middle man to be then sold at more than 20,000 SYP (Tishreen 2014/01/15, WFP 2014/01/30, Al Iqtisadi 2014/03/01)

A map of the Latakia Governorate in Syria, divided into administrative districts. The districts shown are Kiseb, Qastal Maaf, Rabeea, Kansaba, Ein El-Bayda, Bahlawaniyeh, Al Hafa, Salanfa, Lattakia, Hanadi, Mzaira, Ein Et-teeneh, Fakhura, Jobet Berghal, Al-Qardaha, Al Qardaha, Jablah, Ein Shaqaq, Harf Elmseitra, Ein Elshaqiyyeh, Beit Yashout, Qteilbiyyeh, and Dalyeh. Military bases are indicated by red dots. Specific locations marked with symbols include a red 'X' in Kiseb, a red circle with a dot in Salanfa, and an airplane symbol near Jablah. Two anchor symbols are located on the western coast near Lattakia.

- Lattakia, the coastal governorate bordering Turkey and one of the strong hubs for President Assad supporters, has seen escalation of fighting during the last 10 days of March which shows no signs of quieting.

- On 21 March FSA and Islamic groups such as Jabhat al Nusra and Islamic Front engaged in fierce clashes in the surrounding of Kasab with SAF. Following the shot down of a Syrian aircraft on 23 March by Turkish authorities, the GoS has accused Turkey of organising, receiving, funding and hosting tens of thousands of opposition fighters and facilitating their entry into the Syrian territories and allowing them to set up bases on the Turkish territories. On 31 March, a SAF rocket hit a mosque next to a refugee camp in the town of Yayladagi and Turkish military responded with retaliatory fire into Syria. While clashes between the opposition and SAF are on-going, the FSA has secured control of the border crossing of Kasab and the town of Kasab and other locations close to it such as As Samra village. There is contradictory information as to who has been able to ascertain control of the strategic military location Observatory 45. The area is contested and the battles are still ongoing as the Syrian government news agency (SANA) reported on 31 March. Kasab town is an Armenian majority town with an estimated population of 3,000 people and concerns were raised as to the politicized language around the possible targeting of the Armenian ethnicity population in Kasab by opposition groups. ([Al-Modon 2014/03/25](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/03/24](#), [Assafir 2014/03/25](#), [Daily Star 2014/03/27](#), [SANA 2014/03/27](#), [mmedia 2014/03/24](#), [Reuters 2014/03/23](#), [Albayan 2014/04/01](#), [Reuters 2014/03/31](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/03/31](#), [Al-Jazeera 2014/03/31](#), [AFP 2014/03/31](#), [SANA 2014/03/24](#), [Reuters 2014/04/01](#))

- The Kasab border crossing has been closed since 21/5/2013 although smuggling of goods and human movement was still reported in that area ([Al Akhbar 2013/08/05](#)).
- As the GoS is still in control of the major access routes to the heart of the Governorate, humanitarian access is not likely to change dramatically. Still, it is unclear whether the fighting in northern Latakia will affect the major cities which would consequently affect the supply of goods, and to a smaller extent the humanitarian aid, from the Governorate's port. As the Damascus-Homs highway remains open, the supply of goods from Damascus is also going to be secured.

Displacement

- Lattakia is already hosting a large influx of IDPs, as it was one of the safest areas in Syria. However, estimates on the number of people displaced in the Governorate vary considerably: from 908,000 IDPs in Lattakia city as reported in the November SINA assessment, to 220,000 people in the whole Governorate according to OCHA as of December 16. While a large number of the IDPs residing in Lattakia city fled contested areas in other governorates, a significant proportion originates from rural Lattakia. ([SINA 2013/12](#), [OCHA 2013/09/09](#), [SHARP 2013/12/16](#))
- Due to fighting and air strikes, most of Kasab's 2,000 Armenian residents have fled to the Lattakia City. Hundreds of Armenian families had fled previously from Sulaiymaniah neighbourhood in Aleppo to Kasab. These families have been forced to flee again. The fighting, which has also affected a number of Alawite villages in the area, has reportedly triggered the displacement of 7,000 people fleeing towards the city of Lattakia. ([Daily Star 2014/03/28](#), [Daily Star 2014/03/24](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/03/24](#), [Daily Star 2014/03/31](#), [OCHA 2014/04/03](#))
- The heavy fights in Kasab border gate across Yayladagi/Hatay, have not yet been reported to have led to an influx of IDPs in Turkey. According to unofficial sources, due to security reasons and fighting very close to the border, it is not safe for people approach the border ([UNHCR 2014/03/26](#)).

Humanitarian Needs:

Protection

- The opposition offensive against northern Lattakia has been largely seen as an offensive against minorities, particularly Armenians and Alawites. Opposition fighters have for been accused of destroying the churches upon their entry into Kasab. With the presence of a sizable Turkmen and Sunni community in rural Lattakia and the city, tensions between Alawites on one hand and Sunnis and Turkmen, perceived as GoT supporters, remain under the risk of escalation. On the other hand, the National Syrian Turkmen Bloc, a member of the SNC, accused the GoS's paramilitaries of murdering two Turkmen minors. ([Daily Star 2014/03/31](#), [Al-akhbar 2014/03/28](#))

Livelihood and food security

- Humanitarian needs remain high in Lattakia City, especially following the influx of IDPs from the contested northern regions. Although it can be assumed that subsidised bread is widely available in the city, the lack of income opportunities makes access to a diverse food diet difficult. Illustratively, food insecurity was identified as the main priority in SINA assessment as 920,000 people were identified as people-in-need of food. ([SINA 2013/12](#))

- The humanitarian situation differs in the northeast of the Governorate, where opposition groups are in control of 3 sub-districts. Low intensity conflict occurs on a regular basis in these areas, which are subject to air raids. It can be assumed that public services, such as water and healthcare services, availability of subsidised bread, are not as widely available as in other parts of the governorate. The same assumption now applies for the northern contested region. ([SINA 2013/12](#))

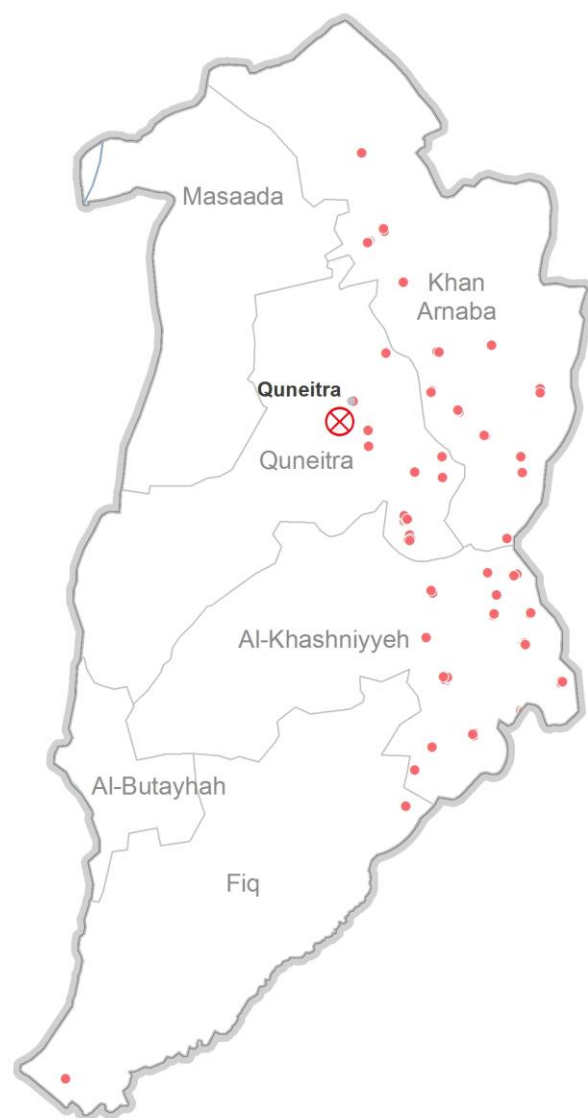
Health

- Although Lattakia's health infrastructure has remained largely intact, the outbreak of communicable diseases has been reported as a problem. The prevalence of communicable diseases (e.g. skin diseases, leishmaniasis, respiratory diseases and diarrhoea) and suspected hepatitis as a great health concern across all assessed governorates, including Lattakia. Nevertheless, no such cases of have been confirmed until now.
- 4 cases of swine flu H1N1 were identified in Lattakia. However, these cases allegedly received the necessary treatment and were completely cured. ([Tishreen 2014/03/14](#))

Shelter

- With the large number of IDPs residing in the city of Lattakia, lack of available shelter and places to rent is a main concern especially for the new IDPs. The large majority of IDPs identified (95%) during the SINA were residing in rented apartments, necessitating a different approach to shelter assistance than in other governorates, where IDPs are mainly residing with host families. ([SINA 2013/12](#))
- Rehabilitation of the Sports Faculty collective shelter in Lattakia is underway. One key constraint is sourcing raw materials for shelter rehabilitation as they are not available on the local market. ([OCHA 2014/02/15](#))

Quneitra



Key issues and possible developments

- The conflict further escalated in Quneitra throughout early 2014, following increased airstrikes and clashes in late December 2013 and spill-over from the opposition offensive in Dar'a which began in February. The humanitarian situation further deteriorated, particularly for civilians trapped in several locations due to the high level of insecurity and besiegement by parties to the conflict.
- A February assessment found that 63% of Quneitra's population was in need of humanitarian assistance. The humanitarian situation in Quneitra has been exacerbated by a lack of basic services and restricted freedom of movement for civilians to access basic services and the flow of food and other commodities into the region, particularly in the southern and northwestern parts of the governorate. (AWG-SS 2014/03/20)

Context

- The rural and sparsely populated governorate is particularly delicate given its proximity to the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. A 1974 armistice prohibits the GoS from engaging in military activity within the buffer zone that runs along the border between Quneitra and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. Nonetheless, Quneitra witnessed sporadic clashes and shelling between the opposition and GoS forces in 2013.

Displacement

- Between June and December 2013, the number of IDPs more than doubled from 30,000 to 78,000. WFP reported that an additional 35,000 people were further displaced in late February, primarily to the central and eastern parts of Quneitra, as well as to neighbouring Dar'a and Rural Damascus governorates. (WFP 2014/03/04)
- A report by the Assessment Working Group for Southern Syria (AWG-SS) found that:
 - An estimated 149,000 people were displaced within Quneitra in February, although Khan Arnaba sub-district was not included in the assessment.
 - Among IDPs in Quneitra, 69% were living with host families and 1,400 IDPs were living in the open in southern Quneitra.
 - The situation of the latter group was of particular concern as there was active conflict and it was reported that IDPs avoided using fire for heating or cooking due to fears of being targeted by shelling.
 - Displacement is frequent within southern Quneitra as there has been significant insecurity and generally IDPs have been unable to flee outside these areas due to severe restrictions on movement. (AWG-SS 2014/03/20)

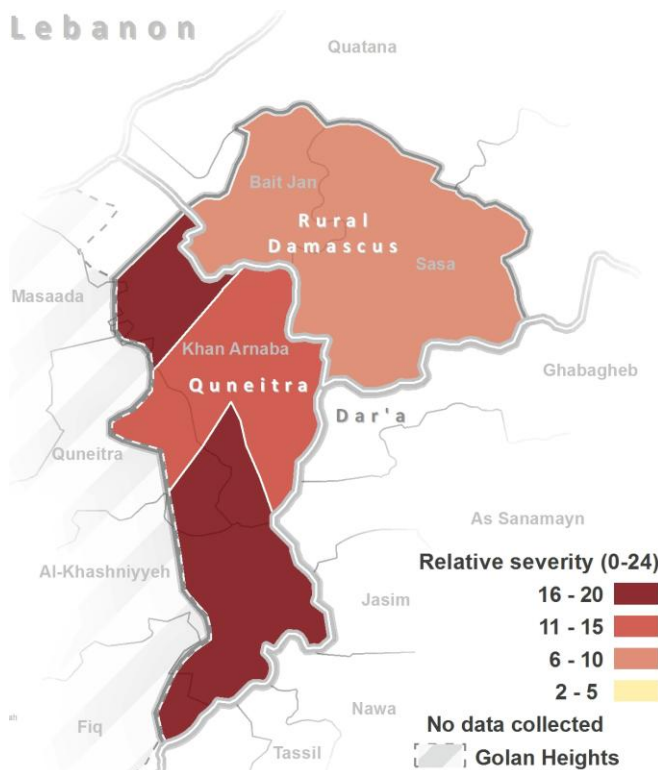
Humanitarian Needs: Lebanon

Protection

- Civilians living under siege were found to be one of the most vulnerable groups in Quneitra due to their lack of mobility and access to food and commodities. In the northwestern part of Quneitra, the entire population of about 5,000 people, including 1,000 IDPs, were identified to be in acute need of humanitarian assistance. (AWG-SS 2014/03/20)
- Similar to other parts of Syria, the primary protection concerns identified in Quneitra were: armed violence against civilians; lack of access to basic services; and unfair treatment, abuse and torture of detainees. (AWG-SS 2014/03/20)

Health

- Health staff, medicines and medical supplies are in very short supply in Quneitra due to the restriction on supply routes and general insecurity. Emergency health services were reportedly only available in southern Quneitra. The priority interventions identified were for the provision of medicines, including those for chronic diseases, health facilities and health staff. (AWG-SS 2014/03/20)
- According to a MoH/WHO assessment of available health resources and services undertaken in September 2013:
 - Quneitra's sole hospital continues to function and is intact.
 - Quneitra has a relatively low ratio of average population to number of functioning hospitals. However, the ratio of emergency physicians to



emergency patients is the 3rd highest across the country, after Damascus and Hama. (MoH/WHO 2014/03)

Food security and livelihoods

- The main food security issue is the lack of income to access foods due to high prices and weakened livelihoods, rather than the availability of food in the markets. Food aid has been provided in the Quneitra but it has generally been insufficient to meet the needs. The 5,000 people remaining in the northwestern part of Quneitra area all in acute need of food assistance as no food has been allowed to enter for since November 2013. People in this area primarily relied on local food production but it was reported that in particular flour supplies will not be adequate in the coming months. Southern Quneitra were able to access some aid through unofficial channels via Jordan, but the transportation costs were extremely high due to insecurity. The priority food needs were reported to be cooking oil and infant formula. (AWG-SS 2014/03/20)
- Quneitra's mainly agricultural economy has been weakened due to the lack of fuel and other inputs to support production, as well as the limited access to markets due to insecurity. (AWG-SS 2014/03/20)

Shelter/NFI

- Despite the high levels of displacement and destruction to residences, shelter was identified as only the third priority sectoral need. About 55% (150,200 people) of the assessed population were in need of shelter assistance, of which 10.5% (28,450 people) are in acute need. In and around the village of Jbata Al Khasab, 1,000 IDPs are extremely vulnerable as they have been living under siege and there are no undamaged areas and safe shelters due to regular shelling. In some areas of Quneitra, there is severe overcrowding with up to 50 people reported to be sharing 2 rooms. NFIs are available in the markets but are inaccessible due to the lack of income. (AWG-SS 2014/03/20)

Education

- There is no formal schooling available in southern Quneitra as all 48 schools are reportedly being used as IDP collective shelters. There are few informal education activities available or occurring on a regular basis, as the lack of security and safe transportation options prevent children from going to school.
- In central Quneitra, it was reported that some schools were occupied by military personnel. (AWG-SS 2014/03/20)

Tartous



Key Issues and possible developments

Tartous has reportedly remained calm and was not experiencing conflict in the first quarter of 2014. Despite its relative stability, information on Tartous is extremely limited.

Since the beginning of the fighting in Syria, tens of thousands of internally displaced people (IDPs) have sought refuge in Tartous. The latest statistics from the Syrian Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour at the start of 2013 indicate that the number of IDPs in Tartous reached 225,360. Many activists and organizations agree that they currently number over half a million. ([Syrian Observer 2014/02/13](#))

With the current offensive on the governorate of Lattakia, which itself is host to a large IDP population, Tartous could experience another wave of influx of displaced, which could further strain local absorption capacities and highlight the need for adequate shelter.

Humanitarian Needs:

While many IDPs in Tartous live in relatively safe conditions, harassment by security forces and militias, lack of freedom of movement and a deteriorating economic situation were the main reported challenges. Adequacy and access to humanitarian assistance has further been flagged as a problem. This is particularly true in the camps and collective shelters overseen by the GoS reportedly suffer from bureaucracy and corruption. The shelters are subject to strict regime security surveillance.

Annex A – Definitions Humanitarian Profile

Affected

The number of affected refers to people affected by the violence in Syria. The number of affected can be divided in two groups: those non-displaced and those displaced.

Non-Displaced

The **non-displaced** include all those within Syria that have been, directly or indirectly, affected by the conflict, including those who have been injured, have lost access to essential services, and those whose vulnerability has increased due to the impact of the unrest on livelihoods and access to essential services (OCHA 2012/06/05).

In addition, this group includes the **host** community, the people who are part of a community or family receiving affected people. Due to the stress placed on the host families and communities, they are considered part of the humanitarian caseload. As there is currently no information available on the needs of the host community, this group is currently excluded from this humanitarian profile.

Displaced

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are those persons or groups of persons who are residing in Syria but who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict. (OCHA 2004)

Refugees and Asylum Seekers are those who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside Syria, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country. (UN 1951).

For the purpose of this document, the category 'refugees' includes those registered, awaiting registration as well as those unregistered – despite the fact that unregistered Syrians are technically not refugees as their refugee status has not been established. Within this group, the Iraqi and Palestinian refugees are in a specifically vulnerable position, both within Syria as outside.

Others of Concern - Persons who have been displaced by the emergency and form part of the humanitarian caseload, but do not fall into either of the above categories (e.g. migrants, returnees).

Other definitions

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

Previous SNAP reports

• Regional Analysis for Syria	January – December 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
Cross-border movements of goods	December 2013
Relief actors in Syria	December 2013
Jordan baseline data	December 2013
Palestinians from Syria	February 2014
• Scenarios	February/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)	Start July 2013
• Scenarios	April 2013
• Thematic reports:	
Governorate profile: Idleb	April 2013
Besieged Areas	April 2013

Map data sources

Administration: OCHA Common Operational Datasets. IDP camps: CCCM. Refugee camps: State Department HUI. Informal tent settlements: UNHCR. Refugees: UNHCR. Infrastructure: Global Energy Observatory, OCHA, WFP. Conflict incidents: UNMAS. Border crossings: SNAP.

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).

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.

