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Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the fifty-eighth submitted pursuant to paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), paragraph 10 of resolution 2165 (2014), paragraph 5 of resolution 2191 (2014), paragraph 5 of resolution 2258 (2015), paragraph 5 of resolution 2332 (2016), paragraph 6 of resolution 2393 (2017) and paragraph 12 of resolution 2401 (2018), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report, every 30 days, on the implementation of the resolutions by all parties to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

2. The information contained herein is based on data available to agencies of the United Nations system and obtained from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and other relevant sources. Data from agencies of the United Nations system on their humanitarian deliveries have been reported for November 2018.

II. Major developments

Box 1

Key points: November 2018

1. November saw shelling in multiple locations in and around Idlib Governorate in the north-west of the country, with civilian casualties reported in a number of incidents. A chemical attack on western Aleppo city allegedly took place on 24 November 2018.

2. Large numbers of civilian casualties continued to be reported in south-eastern Dayr al-Zawr Governorate, where military operations against Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) continued. An estimated 9,000 civilians continued to be unable to move outside the area, owing to restrictions imposed by ISIL, and to face a host of other protection challenges.

3. Between 3 and 8 November, a joint Syrian Arab Red Crescent and United Nations aid convoy delivered humanitarian assistance to up to 50,000 people in the Rukban makeshift settlement, on the Syrian-Jordanian border. The convoy was the



first major delivery of humanitarian assistance to the area since January 2018, and it was also the first time that aid reached the area from inside the Syrian Arab Republic.

4. United Nations humanitarian agencies and their partners continued to reach millions of people in need. From inside the country, the United Nations delivered food assistance to close to 2.9 million people. The humanitarian response from inside the country included several locations under government control categorized as hard-to-reach. The bimonthly inter-agency convoy plan for November and December was not approved by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. Moving forward, ad hoc requests for cross-line inter-agency convoys will replace the bimonthly inter-agency convoy plans. Cross-border assistance also remained an indispensable part of the humanitarian response, with food assistance for some 505,000 people delivered by the United Nations from Turkey during November.

3. Since 24 February 2018, when the Security Council adopted resolution [2401 \(2018\)](#), demanding a cessation of hostilities, military conflict has continued in parts of the Syrian Arab Republic. During the month of November, air strikes, artillery shelling, ground fighting or other military operations were reported in the Governorates of Aleppo, Dayr al-Zawr, Hama, Homs, Idlib Ladhqiyyah, Rif Dimashq and Suwayda'. Civilian casualties were reported in Aleppo city and rural Idlib and rural Hama Governorates. Civilian displacement was reported in Tah, Jarjanaz, Umm Jalal and Tall Sultan in rural Idlib Governorate. Infighting among various non-State armed opposition groups reported in Idlib and Aleppo Governorates continued to result in civilian casualties and damage to civilian objects.

4. A chemical attack on residents of western Aleppo city allegedly took place on 24 November. On 25 November, the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic sent identical letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council ([S/2018/1045](#)) in which he stated that, on 24 November, armed terrorist groups had used toxic gases to attack residential neighbourhoods in Aleppo city. In his letters, he referred to dozens of chlorine-filled mortars that had caused 107 civilians, most of whom were women, children and elderly persons, to suffer from severe asphyxiation and poisoning. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is gathering information related to the incident. Also on 25 November, the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation confirmed that it had carried out air strikes in response to the alleged attack.

5. Military operations against Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) continued. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic continued its operations in rural Dayr al-Zawr, Homs Rif Dimashq and Suwayda' Governorates. The Syrian Democratic Forces continued operations against ISIL to the east of the Euphrates River, in Dayr al-Zawr Governorate.

6. Large numbers of civilian casualties were reported following air strikes in south-eastern Dayr al-Zawr Governorate, east of the Euphrates river. Ground fighting also continued throughout the reporting period. Up to 9,000 civilians continued to be restricted from moving outside the immediate area of the fighting and to face a host of other protection challenges. Living conditions for many of the 6,000 people estimated to have been displaced in the area since October also remained dire, with insecurity impeding efforts by humanitarian organizations to further scale up assistance and protection remaining a key concern, in particular in areas close to front lines.

7. Between 3 and 8 November, a joint Syrian Arab Red Crescent and United Nations aid convoy delivered humanitarian assistance to up to 50,000 people in the Rukban makeshift settlement, on the Syrian-Jordanian border. This aid included

monthly food rations, hygiene kits, winter clothes for children, newborn-baby kits, basic health and nutrition supplies and plastic sheeting. More than 5,100 children were also vaccinated against poliomyelitis and other preventable diseases. The convoy was the first major delivery of humanitarian assistance to the area since January 2018, and it was also the first time that aid reached the makeshift settlement from inside the Syrian Arab Republic. The operation followed extensive engagement by the United Nations with the Governments of the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan, the Russian Federation and the United States, local communities and other interlocutors.

8. Humanitarian teams confirmed a dire situation in Rukban, with limited and irregular access to basic services, food and other commodities, as well as deteriorating health conditions. Numerous serious protection concerns were identified, with large numbers of women, children and elderly persons living in a state of fear caused by criminality, risks of violence and a lack of access to basic services. Most people expressed the desire to leave the area, but also concern about safety and security in their areas of origin. Many also referred to various impediments blocking movement out of the area, including the presence of non-State armed opposition groups, fears of arrest, a lack of documentation and high costs. Following the assessment carried out during the first convoy, the United Nations now estimates that 41,725 people live in the makeshift settlement. In view of the high levels of need identified, United Nations teams recommended the deployment of a second convoy in December, to deliver additional aid, including winter support, and carry out a more detailed survey of intentions and concerns around durable solutions.

9. On 24 November, within the framework of the Astana guarantors' working group on the release of detainees and abductees, handover of bodies and identification of missing persons, 20 detainees were released (10 from the opposition side and 10 from the government side). The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic did not grant the United Nations its request to observe the release.

10. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria engaged senior representatives of Iran (Islamic Republic of), the Russian Federation and Turkey in Astana on 27 and 28 November, as he sought to establish a United Nations-facilitated constitutional committee in Geneva, in line with the Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process mandated by the Security Council in its resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#). He reminded all parties that the United Nations-facilitated "middle third list" as it stood was on the table and encompassed all the necessary elements that ensured its credibility and legitimacy. He noted that there had been no tangible progress in overcoming the 10-month stalemate on the composition of the constitutional committee as outlined in the Sochi final statement of 30 January 2018 ([S/2018/121](#), annex). In Geneva, the Special Envoy consulted with the Syrian Women's Advisory Board and the Civil Society Support Room. Those groups called for strengthened participation of women in the political process, the establishment of the constitutional committee under the auspices of the United Nations by the end of the year and credible participation in that committee by women and representatives of civil society. They appealed to all parties to protect civil society representatives and humanitarian workers inside and outside the Syrian Arab Republic and called for adherence to and continuity of the memorandum of understanding agreed between the Russian Federation and Turkey in Idlib on 17 September.

Protection

11. Despite a relative decrease in the overall intensity of violence, civilians in many parts of the Syrian Arab Republic continued to be severely affected by the direct and indirect consequences of hostilities. Air and ground-based strikes continued to kill and injure civilians and damage and destroy civilian infrastructure. The number of civilian casualties and the scale of the destruction of civilian infrastructure remained

a strong indication that the fundamental rules of distinction, proportionality and precaution, in particular the prohibition on the launching of indiscriminate attacks, may not have been respected.

12. Explosive weapons continued to be fired into populated areas, killing and injuring civilians and destroying and damaging vital infrastructure. Explosive hazard contamination in a number of populated areas continued to kill and injure civilians and to impede humanitarian access. The use of improvised explosive devices in some areas added to the complexity of the explosive hazard threat and continued to hinder the work of humanitarian actors.

13. In areas of the eastern part of Dayr al-Zawr Governorate that remained under the control of ISIL, an escalation of military operations continued to have a devastating toll on civilians, including through killing and injury. In one incident, on 15 November, a family of 18, including three women and 14 children (eight girls and six boys), were killed as a result of what were believed to be air strikes that hit the village of Abu Badran in Susah district in rural Albu Kamal subdistrict. ISIL continued to prevent civilians from fleeing the violence to areas outside its control and to abduct and execute civilians accused of being affiliated with either the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic or other armed groups, including the Syrian Democratic Forces. In identical letters dated 13 November 2018 to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2018/1020), the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations reported that 60 civilians had been killed or wounded, and that hundreds of others had been displaced, owing to air strikes on Sha‘fah village and other locations on 12 November. A field hospital in Sha‘fah was reportedly hit by air strikes on 29 November, with women, children and medical personnel among those killed. A prison in Hajin had also reportedly been hit the previous day. The United Nations has not been able to verify those reports owing to a lack of access to the area.

14. In Idlib Governorate and surrounding areas, despite the setting-up of a “demilitarized buffer zone” between areas under the control of non-State armed opposition groups and Government-affiliated forces, the United Nations documented incidents of artillery shelling by both government forces and their allies on the one hand, and non-State armed opposition groups on the other, with civilians killed and injured in what remains a highly volatile situation.

15. Infighting continued to be reported among various non-State armed opposition groups in areas in Idlib and Aleppo Governorates, primarily through the use of improvised explosive devices, resulting in civilian casualties and damage to civilian objects. Lawlessness and criminal acts that included threats, intimidation, kidnapping and killing continued to be reported in Idlib Governorate and other areas under the control of non-State armed opposition groups in the north-west.

16. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights continued to document numerous incidents of possible abuses of human rights and possible violations of international humanitarian law committed by non-State armed opposition groups against civilians in the north-west of the country. The abduction of men, including activists, doctors, journalists and other civilians accused of being affiliated with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic or having expressed criticism of groups such as Hay‘at Tahrir al-Sham, continued to be reported. Many of those civilians remain missing. In one incident, on 10 November, unidentified gunmen alleged to be Hay‘at Tahrir al-Sham fighters abducted a medical doctor from his clinic in the village of Kurayz in western Idlib city for unknown reasons. The doctor’s whereabouts remain unknown.

17. Three incidents of violence affecting health-care facilities were verified by the World Health Organization (WHO) during the reporting period. On 2 October, an

improvised explosive device reportedly planted underneath an ambulance near a hospital in Busra town, Dar'a Governorate, detonated, causing minor damage to the ambulance but no casualties. An assault, which did not involve weapons, was reported in the Izmu primary health-care centre, in Aleppo Governorate, on 20 October. On 29 October, an armed group, accompanying a wounded person, forcefully entered the Huraytan primary health-care centre, also in Aleppo Governorate.

18. The United Nations also received several verified reports of attacks on schools and other interference with education during the reporting period. On 6 November, in the Dayr al-Adas area of Dar'a Governorate, four boys were injured by unexploded ordnance in a primary school. On 8 November, in I'zaz city, an improvised explosive device placed in a car detonated in front of Andalus primary school during school hours, partly damaging the school building and furniture and injuring six children — three girls and three boys — of between 7 and 11 years of age. On 12 November, in Jarabulus city, in Aleppo Governorate, an improvised explosive device detonated near Ahmad Salim Malla primary school, partially damaging the school building. On 19 November, on the outskirts of Darat Izzah, in Aleppo Governorate, five boys of between 6 and 10 years of age were wounded when an improvised explosive device in a garbage basket near the fence of Hoteh school was detonated, resulting in structural damage and the closure of the school. On 24 November, in Jarjanaz town in Idlib Governorate, artillery shells landed in Khansa' primary school, killing four boys and two girls and injuring nine boys and one girl. The incident took place in the afternoon, when the students were about to leave the school. On 24 November, in Jarjanaz town in Idlib Governorate, artillery hit a teacher training institute located near Khansa' primary school, causing severe damage to the building.

Humanitarian access

Box 2

Key points

1. United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners continued to reach millions of people in need, including from within the Syrian Arab Republic. Humanitarian assistance provided from within the Syrian Arab Republic by United Nations agencies included food for more than 2.83 million people.
2. There are an estimated 1.16 million people in need in hard-to-reach areas, down from 2.98 million at the same time last year. Around half of those people are in areas controlled by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, such as western Aleppo, eastern Idlib, northern rural Homs and some areas of Dar'a and Qunaytirah Governorates. The other half are in areas controlled by non-State armed opposition groups. Access in hard-to-reach areas continues to be challenging owing to a number of constraints, notably residual, but often intense, ongoing hostilities, geographical factors, insecurity, explosive hazard contamination and administrative restrictions.
3. In Rukban, between 3 and 8 November, the United Nations, together with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, was able to deliver aid to up to 50,000 people — three quarters of them women and children. This aid operation, approved by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and facilitated by the Russian Federation and the United States of America, was the first major delivery of material assistance to people in Rukban since January 2018, and the first time that aid had been delivered to that location from within the Syrian Arab Republic.

4. The November–December inter-agency convoy plan was not approved, although the authorities confirmed that authorization would be provided for humanitarian response in areas under government control and in areas where so-called reconciliation agreements had been concluded. For locations outside government control, future cross-line inter-agency convoys will be requested on an ad hoc basis. During November, a request was submitted for a second inter-agency convoy to Rukban.

5. Cross-border assistance, authorized under Security Council resolutions [2165 \(2014\)](#), [2191 \(2014\)](#), [2258 \(2015\)](#) and [2393 \(2017\)](#), remained a vital part of the humanitarian response. In November, 496 trucks (17 consignments) delivered life-saving assistance to more than 663,000 people through cross-border deliveries, including food assistance for some 505,000 people.

19. United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners reached millions of people in need, including women and children, through all available access routes, including humanitarian operations from within the Syrian Arab Republic, whereby humanitarian deliveries reach those in need without crossing conflict lines; cross-line convoys, whereby assistance from within the country is delivered across conflict lines; and cross-border deliveries, whereby assistance is provided to those in need from neighbouring countries (see table 2). In addition to the United Nations and its partners, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and non-governmental organizations continued to deliver life-saving assistance to people in need. Local authorities in many areas controlled by non-State armed opposition groups also continued to provide services where possible.

20. The Syrian authorities have stated that areas under the control of the Government should now be reached through regular programming modalities. At the same time, they have indicated that they would facilitate a greater number of missions and authorize increased deployment of United Nations personnel to accompany aid deliveries to those areas. The United Nations is ensuring that locations that have recently come under government control are included in monthly planning requests, while maintaining that some hard-to-reach locations should continue to be targeted through the inter-agency convoy modality. On 31 October, the United Nations submitted its plans for access via inter-agency convoys to six hard-to-reach locations in November and December, with a view to reaching 352,400 people in need in those areas. The plan was not approved, but the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reconfirmed that it would approve the delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need in areas that it controlled. For locations outside government control, authorizations for future cross-line inter-agency convoys will be requested on an ad hoc basis.

21. In Rukban, between 3 and 8 November, the United Nations, together with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, was able to deliver assistance to up to 50,000 people — three quarters of them women and children. This aid operation, approved by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and facilitated by the Russian Federation and the United States, was the first major delivery of material assistance to people in Rukban since January 2018, and the first time that aid had been delivered to the makeshift settlement from within the Syrian Arab Republic. The mission also allowed for the vaccination of more than 5,100 children with the assistance of 21 vaccinators supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

22. Individual agencies continued to submit requests for single-agency deliveries to locations across the country. Such deliveries are undertaken by United Nations agencies based in Damascus to regularly accessible areas. In November, all 2,138

official requests submitted by the World Food Programme (WFP) to the Syrian authorities to obtain facilitation letters for the transport of food assistance to locations across the country were approved. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) submitted 78 requests for facilitation letters for the movement of core relief items and livelihood kits, all of which were approved. UNHCR reached more than 2,959,576 people with multisectoral support. UNICEF provided more than 2.6 million children and mothers with primary health-care and immunization services. In addition, an estimated 188,100 children and pregnant and lactating women were provided with complementary feeding and micronutrient supplementation. Some 150,000 children benefited from educational supplies and services, school rehabilitation and textbooks, and 302,800 benefited from protection and psychosocial support services. Reproductive health and gender-based violence services supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and its partners reached more than 308,000 people. WFP provided approximately 3.5 million people with food assistance through both cross-border and regular deliveries. Around 1,120,000 people benefited from water, sanitation and hygiene services and supplies.

Table 1

People reached by the United Nations and other organizations through all modalities: November 2018

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Number of people reached</i>
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	201 000
International Organization for Migration	3 900
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	2 960 000
United Nations Children's Fund	3 500 000
United Nations Development Programme	936 000
United Nations Population Fund	308 000
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	260 000
World Food Programme	3 500 000
World Health Organization	865 000

23. Cross-border deliveries continued under the terms of Security Council resolutions [2165 \(2014\)](#), [2191 \(2014\)](#), [2258 \(2015\)](#), [2332 \(2016\)](#) and [2393 \(2017\)](#) (see figure under para. 27 and table 2). In line with those resolutions, the United Nations notified the Syrian authorities in advance of each shipment, including its contents, its destination and the number of beneficiaries expected to be reached.

24. The United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic continued its operations as authorized under Security Council resolutions [2165 \(2014\)](#), [2191 \(2014\)](#), [2258 \(2015\)](#), [2332 \(2016\)](#) and [2393 \(2017\)](#). During the reporting period, the Mechanism monitored the delivery of 17 consignments by six United Nations agencies, consisting of 496 trucks, from three border crossings: nine from Bab al-Hawa (378 trucks); six from Bab al-Salam (107 trucks); and two from Ya'rubiyah (11 trucks). There were no concerns or questions about the humanitarian nature of the consignments sent. The United Nations provided 48-hour notice to the Government regarding all shipments. Once in the country, United Nations partners ensured that shipments arrived at the designated warehouses. Independent third-party companies contracted by the United Nations ensured independent verification of the assistance arriving at the warehouses and monitored the distribution and/or service provision. The Mechanism continued to benefit from the excellent cooperation of the Governments of Iraq, Jordan and Turkey.

25. Since cross-border operations began in July 2014, following the adoption of resolution 2165 (2014), the United Nations has conducted more than 904 cross-border consignments, with more than 22,935 trucks (18,814 through Bab al-Hawa and 2,467 through Bab al-Salam from Turkey; 4,595 through Ramtha from Jordan; and 59 through Ya'rubiyah from Iraq). Those operations complement and support the aid provided by international and Syrian non-governmental organizations that provide services to millions more from neighbouring countries.

26. During the reporting period, humanitarian cross-border operations through Jordan remained suspended. WFP and its implementing partners delivered food assistance to some 580,000 people from the two authorized cross-border entry points with Turkey. WHO also conducted health and medical deliveries, providing treatment for more than 520,000 people through the cross-border mechanism. In the northern part of the Syrian Arab Republic, UNICEF delivered winter kits, child protection assistance, nutrition, education, health and water and sanitation and hygiene supplies through a number of cross-border shipments. Some 1.1 million children between the ages of 5 and 15 were vaccinated against measles during the second round of the measles campaign conducted by WHO, UNICEF and partners on the ground. Moreover, nearly 10,000 children under the age of 5, as well as pregnant and lactating women, were reached with micronutrient supplies. More than 19,000 children under the age of 5, as well as pregnant and lactating women, were screened for acute malnutrition; of them, 362 severely malnourished children received appropriate treatment.

27. UNHCR and its partners continued to enhance the response to the protection needs of internally displaced persons, returnees and other crisis-affected populations. By the end of November, 1,754,791 individuals had been reached through protection interventions, including 1,302,118 individuals through general protection activities; 263,974 individuals had been reached through child protection activities; and 188,699 individuals had been reached through awareness-raising campaigns on prevention and response activities relating to sexual and gender-based violence in 13 governorates. As at the end of November, the total number of functioning UNHCR-funded community centres and mobile units stood at 97 community centres, 21 satellite centres and 95 mobile units, supported by 2,431 outreach volunteers. This network provided protection-related services, including services related to community mobilization, child protection, legal aid and the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence, livelihood services and services for persons with specific needs, to benefit some 2.6 million internally displaced persons, returnees, members of host communities and other crisis-affected people across 12 Syrian governorates. As at 30 November, 218,786 internally displaced persons, returnees and members of host communities in Damascus, Rif Dimashq, Suwayda', Dar'a, Qunaytirah, Tartus, Ladhikiyah, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, Hasakah and Dayr al-Zawr Governorates had benefited from the UNHCR legal assistance programme. In addition, UNFPA had reached more than 308,000 people, carrying out activities relating to reproductive health and the prevention of and response to gender-based violence and youth-related violence. During the reporting period, through the services of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA): a total of 193,226 Palestine refugees received food parcels; in Yalda, some 8,000 displaced Palestine refugees from Yarmouk received ready-to-eat food baskets; and some 115,000 Palestine refugees received emergency cash assistance. As a result of the financial crisis faced by UNRWA, the number of rounds of cash distribution has been decreased to three rounds over the course of 2018, as opposed to the six rounds planned in the Agency's Emergency Appeal.

Figure
Number of beneficiaries assisted by the United Nations and its partners through cross-border humanitarian deliveries, by cluster: November 2018
 (Thousands)

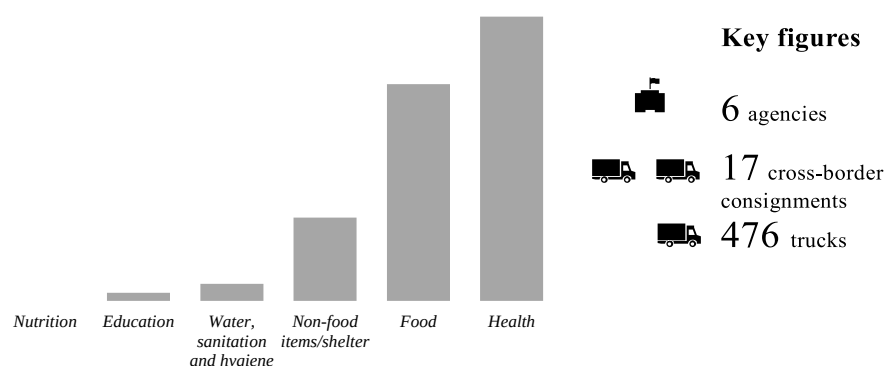


Table 2
Number of beneficiaries targeted through cross-border deliveries, by sector and by district: November 2018

Governorate	District	Education	Food	Health	Non-food items/shelter	Nutrition	Water, sanitation and hygiene
Aleppo	Bab	—	—	7 000	—	—	—
Aleppo	I'zaz	—	78 635	83 500	59 651	—	—
Aleppo	Jarabulus	—	—	2 000	5 404	—	—
Aleppo	Jabal Sim'an	10 022	300 335	93 480	6 626	—	5 000
Hasakah	Qamishli	—	—	143 700	4 400	—	—
Hama	Suqaylibiyah	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hama	Hama	—	—	17 440	—	—	—
Hama	Muhradah	—	—	—	—	—	—
Idlib	Ma'arra	—	50 725	109 720	20 840	—	5 000
Idlib	Ariha	—	30 000	41 540	6 834	—	—
Idlib	Harim	—	—	73 080	68 168	—	10 000
Idlib	Idlib	8 806	45 385	70 880	18 049	—	20 050
Idlib	Jisr al-Shughur	—	—	20 980	3 937	—	—

28. During the reporting period, the Russian Federation sent informational bulletins to the United Nations from the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic, which outlined the provision of bilateral relief assistance. Other Member States also continued to provide bilateral and other forms of humanitarian assistance.

Visas and registrations

29. A total of 49 new United Nations visa requests were submitted to the Government in November. Of those, 27 were approved, 20 remained pending as at 30 November (it being noted that some were submitted late in the reporting period) and two were rejected. Of the 29 previously submitted visa applications that remained

pending at the beginning of the reporting period, 17 were approved in November, 7 remained pending, 4 were rejected and 1 was withdrawn. A total of 85 United Nations visa renewal requests were submitted in November, of which 26 were approved and 59 remained pending as at 30 November (it being noted that some were submitted late in the reporting period). Of the 36 previously submitted visa renewal requests that remained pending at the beginning of the reporting period, 32 were approved, 1 was withdrawn and 3 remained pending.

30. A total of 24 international non-governmental organizations are registered with the Government to operate in the country.

Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and premises

31. Agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system continued to implement programmes in areas affected by frequent clashes among parties to the conflict, by air strikes and by the regular exchange of indirect artillery fire and asymmetrical attacks. As a result of activities relating to the armed conflict, significant populated areas have become highly contaminated with unexploded ordnance, explosive remnants of war and landmines, which pose an elevated risk to the implementation of humanitarian activities in those areas.

32. Since the beginning of the conflict, dozens of humanitarian workers have been killed, including 22 staff members of the United Nations and organizations of the United Nations system, 18 of whom were staff members of UNRWA; 66 staff members and volunteers of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent; and 8 staff members and volunteers of the Palestine Red Crescent Society. It is reported that many staff members of international and national non-governmental organizations have also been killed.

33. A total of 28 staff members of agencies and programmes of the United Nations system (1 staff member of the United Nations Development Programme, 1 staff member of UNFPA and 26 staff members of UNRWA) were detained or missing at the end of the reporting period.

III. Observations

34. I continue to be alarmed by the impact of armed conflict on civilians in many parts of the Syrian Arab Republic, in particular in the north-west and north-east parts of the country. In this regard, I urge all parties involved in military operations against ISIL to take all feasible precautions to avoid harm to the thousands of civilians who are trapped in the midst of air strikes and ground fighting in eastern Dayr al-Zawr, in accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law. In Idlib Governorate and the surrounding areas, where the risk of an even greater humanitarian catastrophe remains, I appeal to all parties to enhance efforts to maintain de-escalation and the agreed demilitarized zone, and to protect civilians.

35. I note that cross-border assistance remains an essential component of the major humanitarian response operation that reaches millions of Syrians each month. One-third of the population in need of humanitarian assistance lives in areas that cannot be accessed from inside the Syrian Arab Republic. This includes close to 2 million internally displaced persons in the so-called Idlib de-escalation area. Aid delivered from Iraq and Turkey continues to save lives.

36. While I welcome ongoing efforts to scale up humanitarian assistance delivered from inside the Syrian Arab Republic, I reiterate that the United Nations does not have an alternative means of reaching people in need in the areas in which cross-border assistance is being provided. The Security Council has a critical role to play

in support of these humanitarian efforts by ensuring the renewal of the modalities set out in its resolution [2165 \(2014\)](#) and subsequent resolutions.

37. I am deeply concerned about the most recent allegation of a chemical attack in Aleppo on 24 November. I reiterate that the use of chemical weapons is intolerable and that impunity for their use is equally unacceptable. It is imperative to identify and hold accountable all those who have used chemical weapons. This would be a critical step towards improving compliance with the prohibition against the use of such weapons.

38. I welcome the delivery of desperately needed humanitarian assistance to Rukban between 3 and 8 November. This operation demonstrates that constructive engagement by Member States can lead to positive humanitarian outcomes for vulnerable Syrians. I call on Member States, the Security Council and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to support efforts to deploy a second convoy to the area in December. I reiterate that safe, rapid, unhindered and sustained humanitarian access is critical, for people in need in Rukban and across the Syrian Arab Republic.

39. Continuing impunity for alleged serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations and abuses by parties to the conflict remains of grave concern. I call upon all parties to the conflict, in particular the Syrian Government, all States, civil society and the United Nations system to cooperate fully with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, in particular by providing relevant information and documentation. I reiterate that accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations is also central to achieving sustainable peace in the Syrian Arab Republic. I reiterate my call for the situation in the country to be referred to the International Criminal Court.

40. In view of serious ongoing concerns repeatedly raised with regard to the protection of civilians and other human rights issues in the Syrian Arab Republic, I continue to strongly urge the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, in line with Human Rights Council resolutions S-18/1 and 19/22, to cooperate with OHCHR, including through the establishment of a field presence with the mandate to protect and promote human rights.

41. I take note of the initial, although still limited, movement by the Astana guarantors on the issue of detainees, who were released on 24 November, noting the immense scale and widespread concern among Syrians regarding this vital humanitarian issue. For individuals accused of crimes the Government should ensure full respect for judicial guarantees, as required under international law. I also call upon non-State armed opposition groups to respect the applicable rules of international humanitarian law and international human rights standards in relation to the individuals that they are holding.

42. I deeply regret that, at the special meeting in Astana on 27 and 28 November between my Special Envoy and representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and Turkey, there was no tangible progress in overcoming the 10-month stalemate on the composition of the constitutional committee, in line with the Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process mandated by Security Council resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#), as outlined in the Sochi final statement (see [S/2018/121](#), annex).

43. The Special Envoy, in his remaining time in office, will spare no effort to verify the feasibility of convening a legitimate credible and balanced constitutional committee, in accordance with resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#) and the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012. I reiterate that the goal of the United Nations is to end the suffering

of the Syrian people and to find a sustainable and peaceful solution to the conflict through an inclusive and Syrian-led political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people. I continue to count on all parties to support my outgoing Special Envoy as he pursues this effort and will rely on the same level of support to my incoming Special Envoy for Syria, Mr. Geir O. Pedersen.

Annex

Reported incidents affecting civilians recorded by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: November 2018*

Suwayda' Governorate

- On 8 November, 19 civilian Druze hostages (mainly women and children) taken by ISIL on 25 July were freed following a reported military operation carried out by Government forces and their allies. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) received reports that, during the operation to free the hostages, two boys were killed — one aged 8 and one aged 13.

Aleppo Governorate

- On 24 October, a five-year old girl was killed and at least three other civilians were injured in opposition-controlled Kafr Hamra in western rural Aleppo, allegedly as a result of ground-based strikes.
- On 7 November, an improvised explosive device detonated in the village of Saariya, in Bulbul subdistrict in opposition-held Afrin district, killing six civilians including two girls under 10 years of age.
- On 24 November, five children from the same family (two girls and three boys) were reportedly killed as a result of an unexploded ordnance that detonated near them while they were playing in the village of Tall al-Hawa in Ra'i in non-State armed opposition group-held territory in eastern rural Aleppo Governorate.
- On 24 November, OHCHR received reports alleging attacks with mortar rounds by non-State armed opposition groups on residential neighbourhoods of Khalidiyah, Nile Street and Jam'iyat al-Zahra' in (Government-held) Aleppo city. Reportedly, the mortar rounds contained toxic agents, resulting in dozens of civilians experiencing breathing difficulties being admitted to both Aleppo University Hospital and Razi Hospital in Aleppo city. Medical sources in Aleppo city reported that the patients suffered from difficulty breathing (suffocation) and eye-inflammation. All were all discharged overnight with no reports of deaths. OHCHR was unable to independently verify the allegations.

Idlib Governorate

- On 2 November, ground-based strikes reportedly hit a residential area in the village of Jarjanaz in the eastern Ma'arrat al-Nu'man district of south-eastern rural Idlib Governorate. As a result, at least eight civilians were killed, including three boys, and six other civilians were injured.

* In line with Security Council resolution [2258 \(2015\)](#), the present description of incidents that are reported to have occurred during the November 2018 relates to compliance with Council resolutions [2139 \(2014\)](#), [2165 \(2014\)](#) and [2191 \(2014\)](#) by all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic. The information is provided without prejudice to the work of the Task Force on the Ceasefire of the International Syria Support Group. The list of incidents gives examples of human rights issues of concern raised in the report. However, owing to the changing patterns of conflict and the loss of networks of credible and/or reliable sources in many conflict-affected areas, verifying incidents is increasingly difficult. The list, which contains only those incidents that were reported to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and have been verified according to its methodology, should not be considered comprehensive.

- On 6 November, for unknown reasons, two civilians, including one disabled Iraqi refugee, were abducted by unidentified gunmen in the vicinity of the Salem Mosque in the town of Ariha in southern rural Idlib. Their whereabouts remains unknown.
- On 10 November, gunmen belonging to Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham raided homes and reportedly captured 12 men, whom they accused of being affiliated with ISIL, in the village of Tallmannis in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man district. The whereabouts of the abducted men remains unknown.
- On 10 November, unidentified gunmen, alleged to be Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham fighters, abducted a medical doctor from a clinic in the village of Kurayz in western Idlib city. The reasons for the abduction and whereabouts of the doctor remain unknown.
- On 11 November, four civilians, including one woman, were injured as a result of what were believed to be ground-based strikes that hit their home in a residential area in Jarjanaz.
- On 11 November, one civilian was killed and another was injured as a result of an improvised explosive device that detonated in the vicinity of the Field Hospital of Sarmin, in the city of Sarmin, in south-eastern Idlib Governorate. No reports of material damage were received.
- On 23 November, unidentified gunmen shot and killed two media activists in the village of Kafr Nubl in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man district. Both activists were reportedly journalists working with the *Fresh Radio Station*, one running the station and the other a prominent activist, who were known to have played key roles in non-violent anti-Government activities since 2011. Both activists were also known to be very critical of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham and other radical non-State armed opposition groups operating in Kafr Nubl and other parts of Idlib Governorate. OHCHR received reports that both activists were killed in a drive-by shooting while driving in their vehicle.
- On 24 November, eight civilians, including six children (two girls aged 10 and 12 and four boys aged between 10 and 12, all of whom were students) and two women, were killed, and four other civilians, including three children (two girls and one boy), were injured as a result of what were believed to be ground-based strikes that hit a residential area in the vicinity of the Khansa' primary school in southern Jarjanaz. Reportedly, the two women killed were: a pregnant teacher; and a woman who was inside her home at the time of the shelling.
- On 25 November, a three-year-old girl was killed and two other civilian members of her family were reportedly injured when what were believed to be ground-based strikes hit their home in a residential area in Abu Staif Street in northern Jarjanaz.

Dayr al-Zawr Governorate

- On 3 November, at least nine civilians were killed and several others were injured as a result of what were alleged to be air strikes that hit a house in the vicinity of Khalid Ibn al-Walid Mosque in ISIL-held area of Hajin in rural Albu Kamal, in eastern Dayr al-Zawr Governorate.
- On 4 November, three children (two boys and one girl aged between 2 and 6 years of age) were killed as a result of what were alleged to be air strikes that hit their home in the village of Sha'fah in eastern Dayr al-Zawr Governorate.
- On 8 November, at least 10 civilians who were reportedly Iraqi refugees were killed as a result of what were believed to be air strikes that hit the area of Hajin.

- On 10 November, at least seven civilians, including one woman and four children (three girls and one boy), were killed as a result of what were believed to be air strikes that hit Hajin.
 - On 15 November, a family of 18 members, including three women and 14 children (eight girls and six boys), were killed as a result of what were believed to be airstrikes that hit the village of Abu Badran in Susah district in rural Albu Kamal area of eastern rural Dayr al-Zawr Governorate. Reportedly, all victims were internally displaced people from the area of Baghuz in eastern Dayr al-Zawr who had recently fled from intensified bombardment and fighting.
 - On 16 November, ISIL publicly executed two women, aged 35 and 45, by shooting them in the head in Sha‘fah village, after having accused them of providing information to the Syrian Democratic Forces. The two women were reportedly from Busayrah town, rural Albu Kamal, and from the city of Albu Kamal.
 - On 29 November, OHCHR received reports that the “Yarmouk” hospital (reportedly a field hospital for women and children) in Sha‘fah town was hit with what was alleged to be an airstrike. At least 10 civilians, including medical personnel and children, were reportedly killed. It was reported that the hospital building was completely destroyed.
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