

# North-west Syria

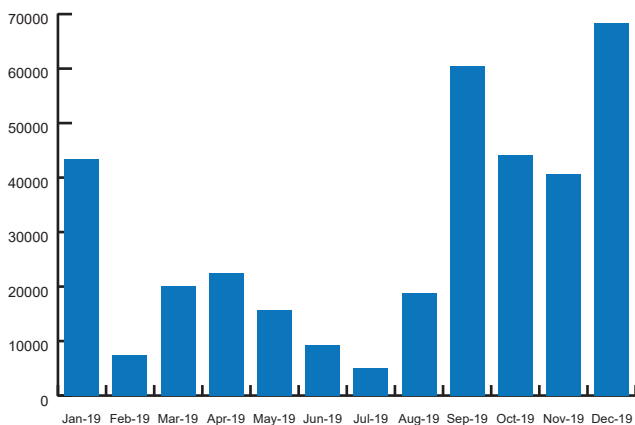
December 2019

Through its partners, in 2019, UNHCR assisted more than **358,000 individuals** with core relief items, shelter material and house rehabilitation.

UNHCR sent **344 trucks** across the border in 2019, carrying humanitarian supplies like blankets, hygiene kits, mattresses and tents.

In 2019, through its partners, UNHCR reached **153,241 individuals** with protection services, such as information dissemination and referrals.

## CRI AND EMERGENCY SHELTER ASSISTANCE

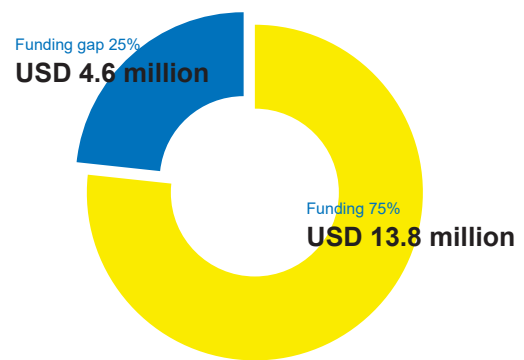


Number of **individuals reached** per month by UNHCR programme partners with core relief items and emergency shelter assistance in the last 12 months

## FUNDING LEVEL AS OF DECEMBER 2019

USD 18.4 million

requested for the UNHCR cross-border humanitarian response



## MAIN OBJECTIVES

1. Support the coordination of the cross-border humanitarian response through the Cluster system
2. Identify protection risks and assistance needs and inform the overall response
3. Provide protection services and emergency assistance with core relief items and shelter material
4. Build capacity of (local) humanitarian organizations
5. Fill critical gaps in the basic needs of IDPs where required and feasible

## MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Escalating hostilities are affecting hundreds of thousands of people in north-west Syria. Intense violence that started in the last days of April 2019 and is continuing unabated has caused high numbers of casualties, destruction of civilian infrastructure and disruption in the provision of basic services in Idlib. A new surge in violence in December has displaced hundreds of thousands of people from Idlib and western Aleppo. As a result of this, the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate and a harsh winter has aggravated the already dire living conditions of IDPs.

More than a million displacements were recorded in 2019, with the majority having occurred between May and November, during which time more than 860,000 displacements were tracked, and spiked again in December: people were displaced, some multiple times, from southern Idlib and northern Hama and the majority of the displaced are concentrating in northern Idlib, close to the Turkish border, in areas that are now densely populated.

A Readiness and Response Plan for north-west Syria is still in play and outlines the planned response to the cross-border team in Turkey.

## BACKGROUND

Following the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2165, UNHCR established its cross-border activities from southern Turkey in July 2014. In 2019, through its own programme, UNHCR had partnerships with seven organizations - IRC, ACTED-REACH, WATAN, Bir Dunya Cocuk Dernegi (Children of One World), SHAFAK, NRC and Maram Foundation - to assist displaced people by providing core relief items (CRIs), shelter support, and protection services. In addition, UNHCR is leading the Protection, Shelter/NFI (SNFI) and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Clusters. All Clusters closely follow the humanitarian developments in the conflict areas in north-west Syria and contribute to emergency preparedness response plans accordingly.

## UNHCR Programme

UNHCR and its partners continue to provide basic assistance and protection services to IDPs and conflict-affected vulnerable host community members in north-west Syria under the cross-border operation from Gaziantep, Turkey. In December, **107,008** (68,266 Idleb and 38,742 in Aleppo) **displaced people were assisted with 14,090 emergency and winter NFI kits** (7,718 in Idleb and 6,372 in Aleppo) **and 6,093 tents** (4,946 in Idleb and 1,147 in Aleppo) in Idleb and Aleppo Governorates. Throughout the month, **six transshipments** took place through the Reyhanli - Bab Al Hawa border crossing carrying 9,500 emergency NFI kits and 3,460 tents to assist 68,260 newly displaced people. In total, **UNHCR assisted 358,586 displaced and conflict-affected people with NFI kits, emergency shelter material and house rehabilitation in 2019.**

Moreover, UNHCR's protection partners conducted awareness raising and psychosocial support sessions, identified cases and referred them to basic services in Idleb and Aleppo Governorates; such **community-based protection interventions reached 7,533 people** in December. In addition, 5,488 displaced and vulnerable people received protection services such as awareness raising on civil status documentation and housing, land and properties, legal counselling and assistance, case management and referrals. **The total number of people reached with protection interventions in 2019 is 153,241 individuals.** As part of the emergency response, sessions on integrated protection awareness, protection risk awareness, information and psychosocial first aid are conducted by UNHCR's partners and people are referred to the needed internal and external services.

Additionally, in 2019, UNHCR and its partners conducted trainings in Gaziantep and northern Syria to build the capacity of 408 key stakeholders and humanitarian staff on civil status and housing, land and properties (HLP) documentation, protection monitoring and referrals.

The displacement and protection monitoring initiatives proved to be essential during the large-scale displacements, providing ad hoc updates and conducting rapid needs assessment. In 2019, UNHCR's partners produced six protection monitoring reports, two HLP due diligence guidance documents and several rapid needs assessment reports.



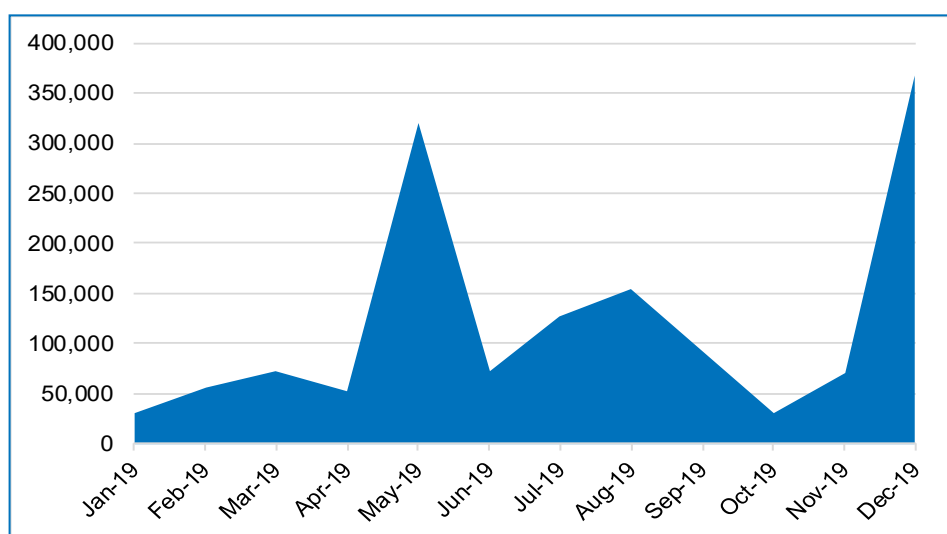
Distributions of NFI kits in Idleb  
© WATAN



Distributions of tents in Idleb  
© WATAN

The CCCM Cluster, led by UNHCR, coordinates the efforts of **17 active member organizations** providing cross-border assistance in north-west Syria. Activities focus on coordinating the joint efforts of the Cluster members to cover the multi-sectoral needs in **579 IDP sites hosting 868,486 individuals/158,634 families in north-west Syria** and, on behalf of the humanitarian community, track IDP movements. From May 2019 (the beginning of the current emergency) to 31 December 2019, 128 new IDPs sites were added to the list. The population number in the IDP sites increased by 294,418 (33 percent) during the same period.

The latest rise in violence displaced thousands of people towards the end of the year 2019: in December, the Cluster tracked **367,026 individual displacements in north-west Syria**; 83 per cent of these were from Idleb Governorate and 17 per cent from Aleppo Governorate. Movements were mainly to the north of Idleb and to Aleppo near the Turkish border, particularly in the sub-districts of Dana, Maaret Tamsrin, Afrin and Atareb. Of those movements, the large majority were displacements to areas out of IDP sites, with IDPs finding shelter in places such as with host families, in rented houses, unfinished buildings. In total, **1,446,401 individual displacements were recorded between 1 January and 31 December 2019**.



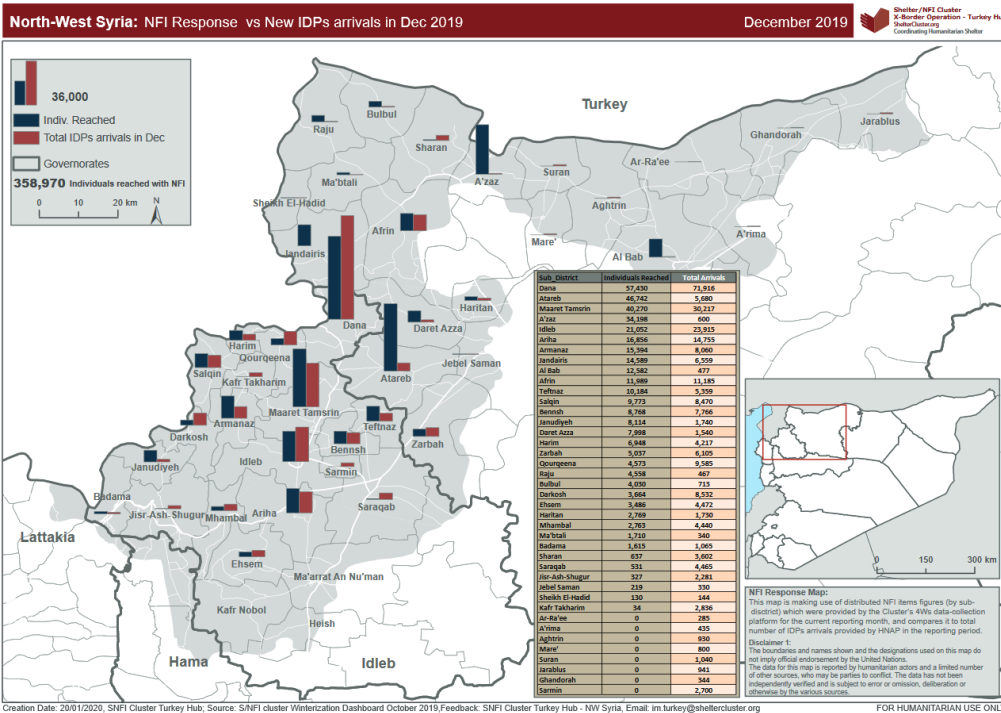
Displacements in 2019 as tracked by the CCCM Cluster

The SNFI Cluster is led by UNHCR, coordinating the efforts of **44 active member organizations** in the cross-border operation. The Cluster addresses emergency shelter and NFI needs by providing in-kind assistance as well as cash or voucher assistance. It promotes household and community resilience. The Cluster also raises awareness and provides technical guidance on housing, land and property rights relevant for humanitarian shelter activities.

Cold temperatures and an intensification of the conflict in Idleb meant that, in December, Cluster members continued to provide winter assistance to protracted IDPs and, at the same time, had to respond to the emergency resulted from the latest escalation of violence. **To respond to the ongoing emergency**, in December, SNFI Cluster members **assisted 455,755 people** (96,555 with shelter and 359,220 with NFI assistance), a large part of whom, close to 90,000 individuals, were in Dana sub-district of Idleb Governorate.

Around 60% of the people reached in December received **winter assistance**, getting this way to a total of **464,322 people** who were reached through the winterization plan for 2019-2020 between October and December 2019. With this winterization, the Cluster provided winter assistance to **almost double the people compared to the previous winter** by the end of December. Despite this increase in people reached with winterization compared to the previous year, it is expected that the winterization efforts will continue for the coming two or three months to reach the Cluster set target of up to 1.1 million individuals.

An average of 178,000 people per month received shelter and/or NFI assistance in 2019, marking a 39% increase from the previous year.



SNFI Cluster NFI response vs new IDP arrivals in December 2019



## Protection Cluster

The Protection Cluster (co-led by UNHCR and IRC) brings together **57 active members**, which include actors of the three Sub-Clusters: Child Protection (led by UNICEF and World Vision), Gender Based Violence (led by UNFPA and Global Communities) and Humanitarian Mine Action (led by UNMAS). The Cluster also convenes the Protection Monitoring Task Force (led by UNHCR and IRC) and a Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Technical Working Group (co-led by UNHCR and NRC) on a regular basis. The Cluster continues to prioritize the provision of lifesaving emergency response services to newly displaced populations and to expand specialized protection services through a wider geographic coverage and outreach capacity, including through mobile teams. In addition, the Cluster seeks to inform the overall response through protection monitoring, while also supporting capacity building with humanitarian actors to strengthen information and advocacy on protection concerns, and do-no-harm efforts.

In December, Protection Cluster members provided **42,329 interventions to IDPs and affected host community members in 375 communities in five governorates** (Idlib, Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, As-Sweida and Ar-Raqqa). The main services were: psychological first aid for 3,726 girls, 3,948 boys, 4,160 women and 4,524 men; legal awareness raising sessions focusing on HLP and/or civil status documentation for 668 girls, 229 boys, 2,013 women and 1,360 men; integrated/comprehensive case management services for 46 girls, 35 boys, 116 women and 4 men; and referrals to other services for 597 girls, 525 boys, 1,054 women and 204 men.

The **Protection Monitoring Task Force** conducted in December a total of 908 key informants' interviews (478 males, 430 females) in Idlib, Hama, and Aleppo Governorates reaching 149 communities within 28 sub-districts.

**From January to December 2019**, 30 Protection Cluster members provided **emergency response services** during escalations of violence and large-scale displacement. Cluster members reported **312,463 protection interventions** to IDPs and affected host community members in 357 communities within 42 sub-districts in Idlib, Aleppo and Hama Governorates, **reaching 106,320 individuals**. During large-scale emergencies and displacement, in line with the Protection Cluster Emergency Response Model, the main services protection actors provide are psychological first aid and psychosocial support, information about other services and referrals, dignity kit distribution and risk education.

## External and Donor Relations

### Thanks to UNHCR's donors for supporting the humanitarian response in north-west Syria:

United States of America | Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund