

North-west Syria

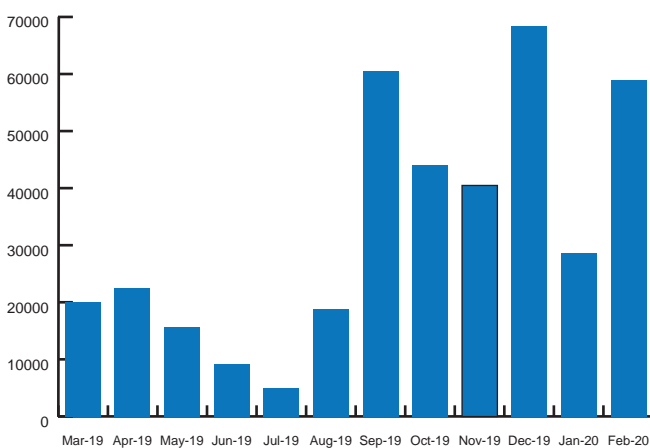
February 2020

Since the start of 2020, UNHCR has delivered core relief items and shelter materials to assist **87,400 individuals** in north-west Syria.

UNHCR has sent **71 trucks** across the border in 2020, carrying humanitarian supplies like blankets, hygiene kits, mattresses and tents.

In 2020, through its partners, UNHCR has provided protection services, such as information dissemination and referrals, to over **17,400 individuals**.

CRI AND EMERGENCY SHELTER ASSISTANCE

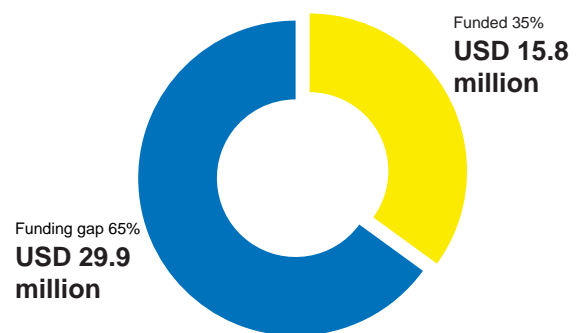


Number of **individuals reached** per month by UNHCR programme partners with core relief items and emergency shelter assistance in the last 12 months

FUNDING LEVEL as of 19 March 2020

USD 45.7 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

Prior to the new wave of violence that has started in mid-December 2019, over 2.8 million people, out of a total population of 4 million living in north-west Syria, were estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance. The 960,000 newly displaced people because of this latest escalation in hostilities in Idleb and western Aleppo are part of a much larger displaced population that shares a now saturated area with the host community: more than 400,000 new IDPs have found shelter in Aleppo and over 555,000 in Idleb. The fighting has caused the destruction of civilian infrastructure, including health facilities, schools, bakeries, and has disrupted the provision of basic services in the region, thus further deteriorating an already dire situation for the population. Most of the new IDPs are women and children and a high number are people with specific needs. Protracted IDPs share the same urgent needs as new IDPs.

In January, the UN Security Council Resolution that enables the cross-border humanitarian response was renewed for six months until 10 July 2020.

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 2020, through its own programme, UNHCR has 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 continued 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 February, **43,323 displaced people were assisted with 4,947 emergency NFI kits and 3,098 tents in Idleb** (4,638 NFI kits; 2,919 tents) **and Aleppo** (309 NFI kits; 179 tents) Governorates. During the month, **five transshipments** took place through the Reyhanli-Bab Al Hawa and Kilis-Bab Al Salam border crossings, with 46 trucks carrying 6,000 emergency NFI kits and 4,800 tents to be distributed to 58,800 newly displaced people.

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 4,017 people** in February. In addition, **4,501 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.



CCCM Cluster

The Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster, led by UNHCR, coordinates the efforts of **29 active member organizations** providing cross-border assistance in north-west Syria. Activities focus on coordinating the Cluster members to cover the multi-sectoral needs in **706 IDP sites that host 1.15 million IDPs** (over 200,000 families) in north-west Syria and, on behalf of the humanitarian community, track IDP movements. In February, 162 new sites were added to the ISIMM and 59 sites were inactivated due to shifting frontlines and subsequent depopulation of sites. It is estimated that 80 per cent of the population in these sites is comprised of women and children; around 11,700 IDPs hosted in those sites are persons with specific needs.

The violence that had started in mid-December continued in February and caused hundreds of thousands of people to move towards the Syria-Turkey border, in an area that continues to shrink. **Movements were mainly to the north of Idleb and to Aleppo**, particularly in the sub-districts of Dana, Maaret Tamsrin, Afrin, Salqin and Atareb. The Cluster tracked **more than 1.6 million individual displacements** in January and February, which includes second or third displacements, meaning that some people may have been forced to move multiple times within the same period. **The new IDPs between 1 December and 29 February were over 961,000.**

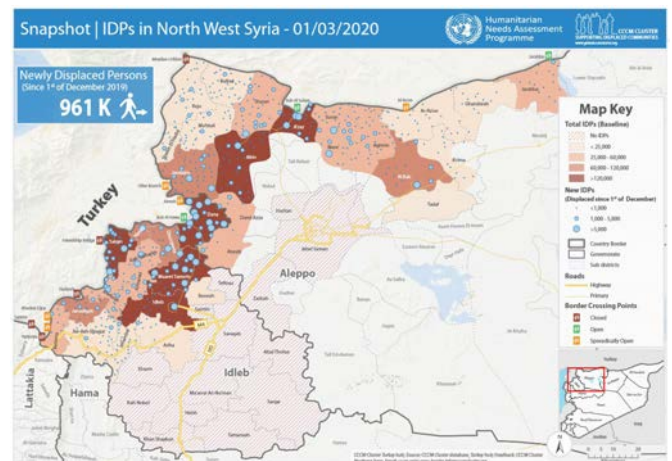
Due to challenges in finding shelter with relatives, host families or rented houses, many IDPs have approached



Muddy ground in an IDP site in Idleb negatively affected tents installation
© Maram Foundation



Snow and bad weather created difficulties during distributions
© Maram Foundation



Map of new IDPs in north-west Syria
Source: CCCM Cluster database

IDP sites, which are now operating over their maximum capacity. Likewise, with the reception centres, which are designed as a temporary solution for new influxes, are now hosting IDPs who cannot find shelter elsewhere. Whereas **some 3,500 people were reported in open areas, urgently seeking shelter**, and around 23,000 IDPs have used schools for shelter, thus disrupting educational activities, in addition to those finding shelter in unfinished buildings.

Further constraints severely affecting people on the move are the lack of options to shelter, connected with the limited capacity of humanitarian actors: in Idlib, lands to pitch tents are either unavailable or privately owned, or present physical characteristics, such as rocky or prone to flood terrain, that impede proper and safe installation of tents; in northern Aleppo, instead, it is the lack of access or difficulties in obtaining permissions from authorities that inhibits shelter.



Shelter/NFI Cluster

The Shelter/Non-Food Items (SNFI) Cluster is led by UNHCR, coordinating the efforts of **48 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.

The weather continued to be harsh in February: freezing temperatures, snow and rain worsened the already difficult living conditions of the hundreds of thousands of new and protracted IDPs in north-west Syria; **shelter options are extremely limited** and fuel for heating is largely unavailable or very expensive. Many IDPs have resorted to find shelter in substandard buildings, tents and makeshift shelters. **Humanitarian workers are also being displaced** and struggle to find shelter for themselves and their families.

In February, the Cluster continued to provide winter assistance to protracted IDPs and, at the same time, kept responding to the emergency resulted from the latest surge of violence. Cluster members assisted a total of around **400,000 IDPs and members of the host community with NFI and/or shelter assistance**. Large part of the assistance was delivered in Dana sub-district of Idlib Governorate. Almost **230,000 individuals received NFI assistance, including winter assistance**, like mattresses, kitchen sets, blankets, winter clothes and heaters. Cluster members rolled out activities including **emergency/seasonal shelter assistance and shelter rehabilitation as well as repairing and rehabilitation of public infrastructure in IDP sites** to address the shelter needs of over **170,400 people**.

To address the increasing number of displacements, the winterization plan was revised and scaled up to target 1.34 million IDPs. Since the start of the winterization for 2019-2020, **more than 768,000 IDPs received winter assistance**.

The SNFI Cluster has planned to provide tents for 435,000 people and NFI for 873,850 people in the coming months; 25 per cent of tents installation and 31 per cent of the NFI distribution was completed in February.



Protection Cluster

The Protection Cluster (co-led by UNHCR and IRC) brings together **72 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, as well as a Technical Working Group on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, formed in February 2020. 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 February, Cluster members reported to have provided **200,575 interventions to IDPs and affected host community members** in 253 communities in three governorates (Idlib, Aleppo and Ar-Raqqa). Main services provided were: psychological first aid for 181 girls, 693 boys, 1,406 women and 1,545 men; legal awareness raising sessions focusing on housing, land and property and/or civil status documentation for 18 girls, 255 boys, 3,082 women and 2,701 men; integrated/comprehensive case management services for 8 girls, 59 boys, 177 women and 1,285 men; and referrals to other services for 349 girls, 25 boys, 1,210 women and 633 men.

The **Protection Monitoring Task Force** conducted in February a total of **585 key informant interviews** (328 males, 257 females) in Idlib, Hama and Aleppo Governorates reaching 111 communities within 25 sub-districts.

External and Donor Relations

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

Canada | Denmark | Germany | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | CERF | Private donors Spain