

North-west Syria

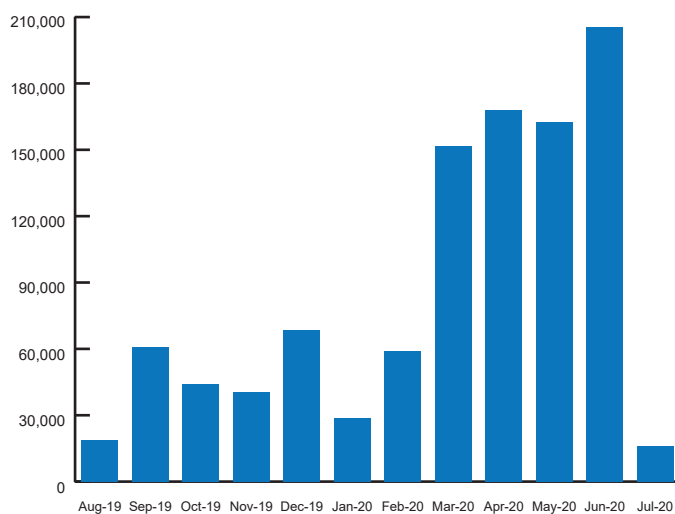
July 2020

Since January, UNHCR has sent across the border 150,000 core relief items kits and shelter materials to assist **790,000 individuals**.

During protection interventions, UNHCR's partners have distributed nearly **20,000 hygiene kits** as part of initiatives to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

In 2020, through its partners, UNHCR has provided protection services, such as psychosocial support and referrals, to nearly **119,000 individuals**.

CRI and Emergency Shelter Assistance



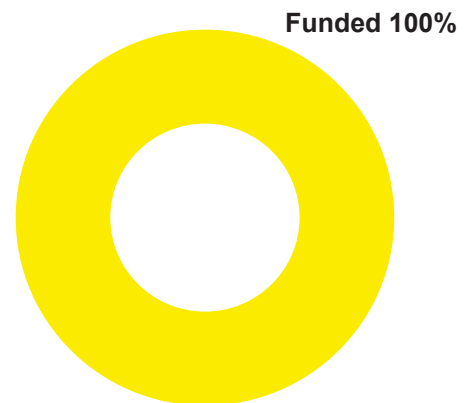
Number of **individuals targeted** per month with the **humanitarian assistance transshipped**.

By July 2020, UNHCR sent across the border all the humanitarian assistance planned to be delivered to IDPs for the duration of the UN Security Council Resolution that ran between 11 January 2020 and 10 July 2020. During this period, UNHCR transshipped the highest number of items since the establishment of the cross-border operation in July 2014.

Funding Level as of 18 August 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 solutions
4. Build capacity of (local) humanitarian organizations
5. Fill critical gaps in the basic needs of IDPs where required and feasible

Major Developments

Of a total population of 4 million people in north-west Syria, there are around 2.7 million IDPs, who are considered to be in need of humanitarian assistance. New and protracted IDPs share the same urgent needs, in an area that has limited shelter options and where the fighting has caused the destruction of civilian infrastructure, including health facilities, schools, bakeries, and has disrupted the provision of basic services. With the Syrian Pound losing value in comparison to other currencies, and with an increase in hostilities, the population is now facing more difficulties in addressing their basic needs.

On 11 July 2020, the UN Security Council Resolution that enables the cross-border humanitarian response through the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing was renewed for twelve months until 10 July 2021. Bab Al-Salam, the other border crossing utilized for transshipments to north-west Syria, was removed.

In July, the first positive COVID-19 cases were detected in north-west Syria. As access to health and adequate sanitation in the context of continuous displacement remains limited across the region, the humanitarian community is actively operating to deliver lifesaving assistance while ensuring the safety of the people.

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 nine organizations - IRC, ACTED-REACH, WATAN, Bir Dunya Çocuk Derneği (Children of One World), SHAFAK, NRC, Maram Foundation, SEMA and SRD - 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.

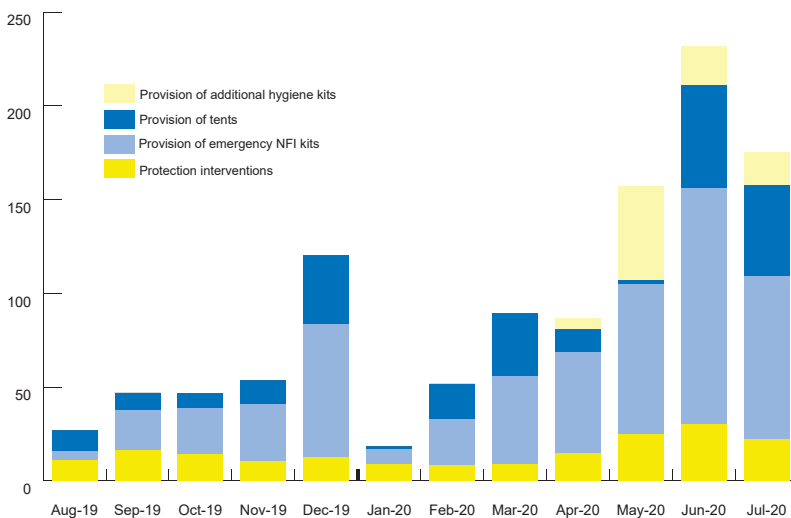
UNHCR Programme

In 2020, UNHCR and its partners scaled up their response 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. With the first cases of COVID-19 found in the region, considerations around the displaced people's health, as well as that of humanitarian workers, were strengthened in the planning of activities. UNHCR continued to work with its partners to ensure that proper measures to mitigate the risk of the spreading of the virus were in place.

In July, **UNHCR's partners reached 135,134 conflict-affected and displaced people with distributions of a total of 17,338 non-food item (NFI) kits** (9,315 NFI kits in Idleb and 8,203 in Aleppo) **and 8,074 tents** (1,487 in Aleppo and 6,587 in Idleb). Moreover, 17,645 people were assisted with **3,529 hygiene kits** in Idleb Governorate. At the same time, 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 19,734 people**. In addition, 2,843 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.

During the month, UNHCR organized **one transshipment of tents** through the Bab Al Hawa border crossing: The distributions will target 2,640 families. From January to July 2020, UNHCR transshipped NFIs, tents and hygiene kits to assist around 790,000 people in north-west Syria.

IDPs and Host Community Members Reached in the Last 12 Months



The graph shows the number (in thousands) of **individuals who received humanitarian assistance as tents, emergency NFI kits, hygiene kits and who were assisted with protection interventions** per month.

Despite the limitations caused by the measures put in place against COVID-19, UNHCR's partners worked tirelessly to provide the humanitarian aid coordinated by UNHCR. During the last few months, more NFI kits and tents than before were distributed to IDPs and other conflict-affected people. Moreover, additional hygiene kits were distributed during protection interventions, as part of COVID-19 mitigating measures. These kits contained an increased quantity of soap to help preventing the spread of the virus. During protection interventions, UNHCR's partners also shared information to raise awareness on COVID-19.



The **Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster**, led by UNHCR and co-led by Global Communities, coordinates the efforts of 74 member organizations providing cross-border assistance in north-west Syria; in July, 33 members actively responded to the needs of the displaced population. Activities focus on coordinating and monitoring the Cluster members to cover the multi-sectoral needs in **1,116 IDP sites that host 1.48 million IDPs (over 285,000 families) in north-west Syria** and, on behalf of the humanitarian community, track IDP movements. It is estimated that 80 per cent of the population in these sites is comprised of women and children; nearly 23,000 IDPs are persons with specific needs and around 52,000 people are elderly. In July, 85 new sites were added to the ISIMM and 27 sites were inactivated for reasons such as depopulation of sites and their subsequent closure.

The total reported IDP population in July 2020 is 2,673,777 IDPs. The number of displacement movements during the month was above 47,000, mostly to Dana and Atareb sub-districts, whereas the number of IDPs who were reported as having returned to their community of origin during the month is 21,456 IDPs; with Ariha, Ehsem and Mhambal sub-districts recorded as the top three returnee destinations. The Cluster tracked over **1.9 million individual dis-**

placements between January and July 2020, which include second or third displacements, meaning that some people may have been forced to move multiple times within the same period and that the reasons for movement may vary.

The Cluster continued to monitor and report on **multiple incidents in IDP sites** as part of the coordination response. After the several incidents that occurred the month before, in July, 29 families had their tents destroyed in 18 fire incidents across 18 IDP settlements. One incident caused the death of one person; six people were injured in other incidents. The urgent needs were reported as being tents, NFI kits and fire extinguishers. The Cluster was active in coordinating the response to these incidents as well as the discussions around causes and prevention, including maintaining clean sites; preventing in-shelter cooking and burning waste; developing IDP community knowledge on fire prevention and firefighting; and using non-flammable materials to build shelters.



Shelter/NFI Cluster

The **Shelter/Non-Food Items (SNFI) Cluster** is led by UNHCR coordinating the efforts of 76 member organizations in the cross-border operation who have implemented shelter and/or NFI activities since the beginning of the year. Specifically, 35 member organizations actively responded to shelter and/or NFI needs in July. 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 Cluster is co-chaired by CARE.

Cluster members continue to actively respond to the needs of the newly displaced population as well as protracted IDPs in north-west Syria. In July, Cluster members reported that **more than 200,500 individuals received NFI kits**, which contain kitchen sets, carpets and mattresses. At the same time, **shelter needs of over 96,000 people were addressed** with activities including emergency shelter assistance and shelter rehabilitation. In 2020, Cluster members have reported reaching nearly 760,000 people with shelter assistance, including rehabilitation of infrastructure, provision of emergency shelter, shelter rehabilitation and transitional shelters, and seasonal shelter assistance, and around 1.5 million people with NFI assistance like seasonal and/or supplementary, and core NFI distributions.

As IDPs sites in the region are often affected by rainfall causing various degrees of damages, the Cluster published a document that examines different levels of floods and their effects and aims to provide possible response interventions. The Cluster updated its English and Arabic guidance on COVID-19 with a new recommendation to include cloth-masks in NFI kits to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission in line with WHO recommendations.



Protection Cluster

The **Protection Cluster** (co-led by UNHCR and IRC) brings together 127 member organizations, 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 (directed by UNMAS and Halo Trust). In July, 51 members actively participated in the humanitarian response in north-west Syria. 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) regularly, as well as a Technical Working Group on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, formed in February 2020 (co-led by UNHCR and HI). The Cluster continues to prioritize the provision of lifesaving emergency protection services to newly displaced populations and to deliver specialized protection services to communities and individuals in need and at risk, including using outreach capacity and mobile teams. Besides, the Cluster continues to inform advocacy and the overall response through protection monitoring, while also supporting capacity building of cluster members to strengthen programming, information collection and advocacy on protection concerns, and do-no-harm efforts.

In July, Cluster members reported to have provided **164,517 protection interventions** to IDPs and affected host community members in 306 communities in five governorates (Aleppo, Hama, Rural Damascus, Idleb and Ar-Raqqa). Key services provided were: psychological first aid; legal awareness-raising sessions focusing on housing, land and property and/or civil status documentation; integrated/comprehensive case management services; and referrals to other services. Partners of the **Protection Monitoring Task Force** conducted in July a total of 748 key informant interviews (428 males, 320 females) in Idleb and Aleppo Governorates, reaching 120 communities within 20 sub-districts.

In the current situation, the currency devaluation is affecting the capacity of households to pay their rental fees and basic expenses. Cluster members have also observed that households are increasingly adopting negative and harmful coping mechanisms, resulting in incidents of child rights violations and GBV.

External and Donor Relations

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

Germany | Japan | United States of America | CERF | International Organization for Migration