

# North-west Syria

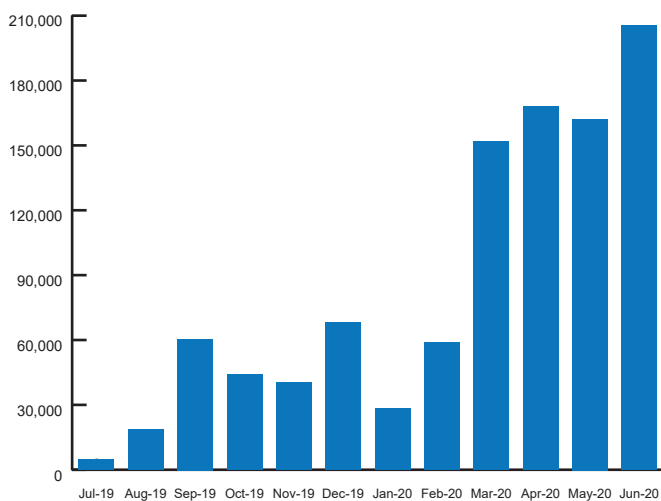
June 2020

Since January, UNHCR has sent across the border nearly 150,000 core relief items kits and shelter materials to assist nearly **770,000 individuals**.

As humanitarian needs increase, despite COVID-19, UNHCR has **quadrupled** its emergency response and support to the people in north-west Syria.

In 2020, through its partners, UNHCR has provided protection services, such as information dissemination and referrals, to nearly **97,000 individuals**.

## CRI AND EMERGENCY SHELTER ASSISTANCE



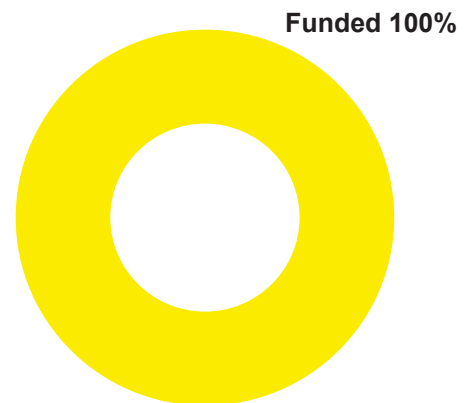
Number of **individuals targeted** per month with the **humanitarian assistance transshipped**.

Because of COVID-19 related pipeline disruptions, suppliers have significantly slowed down production and delivery of tents and core relief items. Nonetheless, to respond to the humanitarian needs of the population, UNHCR has been able to maintain its trend of highest number of items transshipped since the cross-border operation was established in July 2014.

## FUNDING LEVEL as of 22 July 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

Of a total population of 4 million people in north-west Syria, there are around 2.6 million IDPs, who are estimated 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. Half of the IDPs are children and many are people with specific needs. With the Syrian Pound dramatically losing value in comparison to other currencies, the population is now facing economic hardship that compounds the already dire situation.

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

Across the region, access to health and adequate sanitation in the context of continuous displacement remains limited. In June, no positive COVID-19 cases were detected in north-west Syria. Humanitarian actors are active in preparedness and response planning to ensure effective prevention and response to COVID-19 and, at the same time, continue delivering lifesaving humanitarian assistance.

## 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 have 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. Moreover, to respond to the COVID-19 situation, the UNHCR cross-border operation has been putting in place mitigation measures and has increased, prioritized and expedited transshipments and distributions of hygiene kits. UNHCR continues to closely monitor its partners' activities - which are in line with recommendations and guidelines issued by the WHO, the clusters and the relevant coordination fora - to ensure the continuity of the humanitarian response. In this context, partners carry out their activities preventing large gatherings and preferring door-to-door distributions and small groups sessions, and utilizing psychological first aid techniques. Partners staff are provided personal protective equipment and receive awareness sessions on prevention and safeguarding.



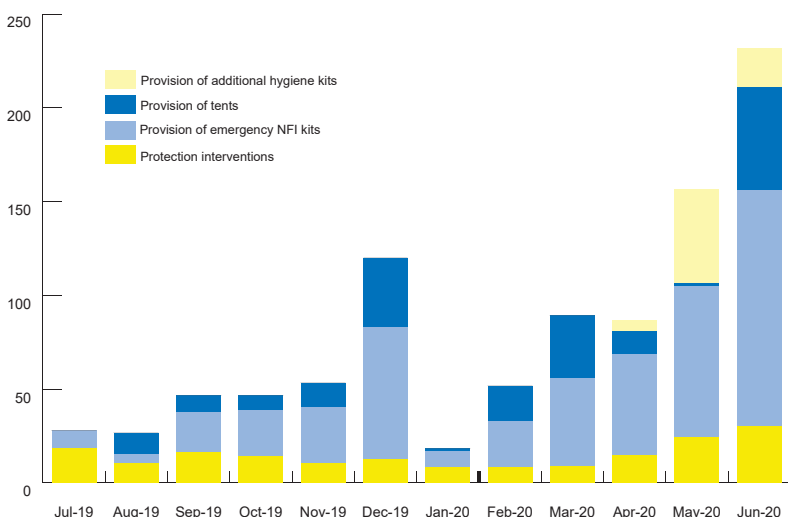
Men participating in a COVID-19 awareness sessions © SRD

In June, UNHCR's partners distributed a total of **25,264 non-food item (NFI) kits** (16,182 NFI kits in Idleb and 9,082 in Aleppo) **and 9,084 tents** (1,335 in Aleppo and 7,749 in Idleb) **to assist 180,824 conflict-affected and displaced people**. Moreover, 20,770 people were assisted with 4,154 **hygiene kits** in Idleb Governorate.

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 27,607 people**. In addition, 2,666 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 of June, COVID-19 preventing measures continued to cause delays in the procurement of items. Nonetheless, UNHCR organized **15 transshipments** through the Bab Al Hawa and Bab Al Salam border crossings: The distributions of the items transshipped (22,000 NFI kits and 15,860 tents) will target a total of 205,160 people. **From January to June 2020, UNHCR transshipped NFIs, tents and hygiene kits to assist 769,160 people** in north-west Syria.

## IDPS AND HOST COMMUNITY MEMBERS REACHED IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

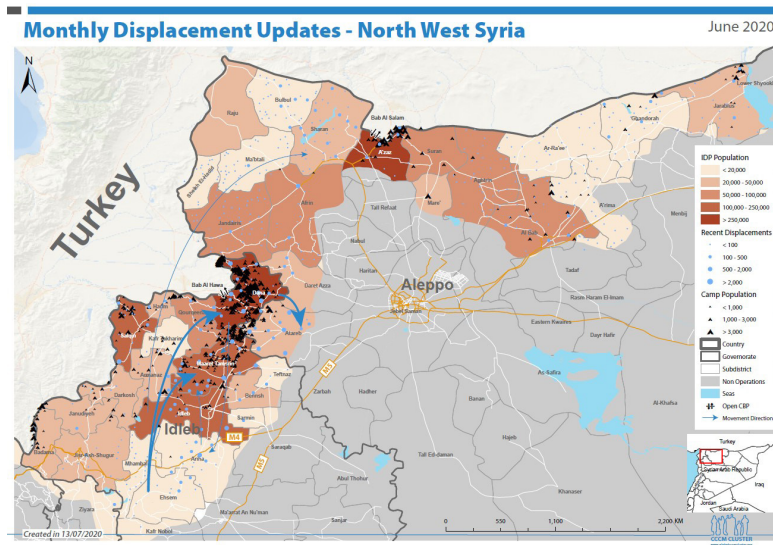


The graph shows the number (in thousands) of **individuals who received humanitarian assistance as tents, emergency NFI kits, hygiene kits and who were assisted with protection interventions** per month.

As shown in the graph, in June, UNHCR's partners continued with the distribution of additional hygiene kits 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, coordinates the efforts of 74 member organizations providing cross-border assistance in north-west Syria; in June, 31 members actively responded to the needs of the displaced population. Global Communities co-leads the Cluster. Activities focus on coordinating and monitoring the Cluster members to cover the multi-sectoral needs in 1,057 IDP sites that host 1.47 million IDPs (nearly 280,000 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; over 22,000 IDPs are persons with specific needs and around 52,000 people are elderly. In June, 84 new sites were added to the ISIMM and 20 sites were inactivated for reasons such as depopulation of sites and their subsequent closure.



This map, produced by the CCCM Cluster, shows displacement movements and size of IDP population in north-west Syria between 1 and 30 June 2020.

affected almost 1,000 families, destroying 575 tents and damaging 405 tents, and injuring 3 people across 40 IDP sites. The urgent needs were reported as being tents, NFI kits and infrastructure. The Cluster was active in coordinating with its members to better understand the causes of the incidents, increase community awareness about fire risks, identify needs and gaps in the firefighting system, and develop firefighting plans as part of contingency planning.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, expanding and establishing camps are essential to decongest overcrowded sites, while also ensuring that services are available in the new locations. In a coordination meeting in June, the Cluster and its members discussed the COVID-19 response in four **reception centres** that host 3,801 IDPs. Overall, the current mitigation measures being taken are positive and NGOs are focused on preventing exposure to the virus. However, one concern is IDPs going in and out of the reception centres and the risk of exposure related to this. Notably, it is important to balance providing immediate shelter for those fleeing conflict, while also making sure to implement thorough mitigation measures against COVID-19 transmission. Generally, the best solution is to evacuate the reception centres by providing long-stay shelter solution for better living conditions and make reception centres ready in the event of any security escalation.



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, 32 member organizations actively responded to shelter and/or NFI needs in June. 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 June, Cluster members reported that **more than 314,000 individuals received NFI kits**, which contain kitchen sets, mattresses and blankets. At the same time, **shelter needs of nearly 83,000 people were addressed** with activities including emergency shelter assistance and shelter rehabilitation. In 2020, Cluster members have reported reaching **a total of 662,820 people with shelter assistance**, including rehabilitation of infrastructure, provision of emergency shelter, shelter rehabilitation and transitional shelters, and seasonal shelter assistance, **and around 1.3 million people with NFI assistance** like seasonal and/or supplementary, and core NFI distributions.

With the increase in fire incidents due to poor electric networking that causes fire hazards, many tents have been

damaged. The Cluster and its members are mapping the incidents and delivering tents and NFIs to the affected households.

In June, the Cluster conducted a second round of assessment of the situation of **collective centres** in north-west Syria and found that the centres had predominant issues with **damages in the building and sanitation issues**, like no bathing facilities or toilets below the post-emergency standards. In line with these key findings, the Cluster has recommended to its members to prioritize collective shelter interventions that aim to decongest overcrowding in existing collective shelters and to aim to improve available sanitation services and the ability to store water for drinking, cooking and bathing.



## Protection Cluster

The **Protection Cluster** (co-led by UNHCR and IRC) brings together 126 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 June, 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 June, Protection Cluster members reported to have provided **146,033 protection interventions to IDPs and affected host community members** in 311 communities in three governorates (Aleppo, Idlib and Ar-Raqqa). Key services provided were: psychological first aid for 2,053 girls, 1,761 boys, 1,588 women and 1,580 men; legal awareness-raising sessions focusing on housing, land and property and/or civil status documentation for 192 girls, 193 boys, 3,987 women and 3,918 men; integrated/comprehensive case management services for 90 girls, 142 boys, 281 women and 169 men; and referrals to other services for 879 girls, 1,121 boys, 1,637 women and 1,048 men. Since the beginning of the year, the Protection Cluster and Sub-Clusters members provided **over 1.5 million protection interventions** across 12 districts in Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa and Idlib Governorates.

Partners of the **Protection Monitoring Task Force** conducted in June a total of 784 key informant interviews (433 males, 351 females) in Idlib and Aleppo Governorates, reaching 131 communities within 18 sub-districts.

## 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