UNHCR SYRIA SITUATION REPORT FOR THE EASTERN GHOUTA AND AFRIN HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES

As of 25 March 2018

EASTERN GHOUTA

- As of 25 March, UNHCR has delivered, through its partners, 225,188 core relief items, for distribution to displaced people from Eastern Ghouta.

- UNHCR, through SARC, has assisted 63,716 individuals in Dweir, Herjelleh, Adra, Naja and Nashbiyeh with core relief items, including high thermal blankets, kitchen sets, sleeping mats, mattresses, solar lamps, sleeping bags, hygiene kits, jerry cans and rub hals.

- UNHCR continued its daily multi-functional teams’ missions to the various collective shelters. To this end, on 23 - 25 March, UNHCR’s field, protection, and shelter teams visited Dweir, Herjallah, Najha, Fayhaa al Sham and Adra electricity complex.

- Over 7,000 legal counselling interventions were provided to IDPs in four collective shelters by UNHCR’s partner the Syria Trust.

- 2,200 shelter kits were provided to SARC for partitioning, doors and windows in several collective shelters. In addition, UNHCR has redeployed 800 tents ready as stock in Rural Damascus to bridge shelter gaps as necessary, inter alia, to de-congest crowded collective shelters.
IDP population in collective shelters

Emergency response update

Protection concerns and response;

- Nearly 20,000 IDPs, mostly women and children, are reported to have been released from collective shelters, primarily through the ‘sponsorship’ programme, whereby women with children under 15 are allowed to leave the shelter, subject to availability of a sponsor. The “sponsorship” programme’s eligibility criteria has recently been extended to also include men aged 55 and above. However, positive as the “sponsorship” programme may be as a measure to de-congest the very crowded shelters, it may result in family separation; hence reports of IDPs not wanting to leave their non-eligible family members behind in the shelters continue to be received. Moreover, UNHCR teams visiting collective shelters have witnessed long queues of IDPs waiting to register for leaving the shelters. They also revealed inconsistencies in the granting of leave permissions and a varying degree of difficulty to leave one or another shelter, with some shelters being easier to leave than others. UNHCR continues to advocate for the freedom of movement of the IDPs.

- The prevailing chaotic situation is aggravated by inexistence of a meaningful shelter coordination/management system, coupled with absence of an organized registration system at the shelter shelters. The lack of registration raises protection concerns, not only because it prevents the identification of vulnerabilities and special needs, but also makes very challenging to ensure re-unification of unaccompanied children found in one shelter with their families who may have been directed to another shelter. Therefore, while continuing to advocate for respect to the principle of family unity, UNHCR has pledged to support SARC both with registration staff and technical support, including the provision of tablets to facilitate registration in all the collective shelters.

- 35 lawyers from UNHCR’s partner, the Syria Trust, are present on a daily basis, assessing protection needs and conducting interventions as necessary and possible in the given circumstances in the collective shelters. Among other activities conducted in...
collective shelters by the Syria Trust and other UNHCR protection partners, are legal counselling and identification of unaccompanied minors as well as persons lacking documentation, particularly new-born children. As of 23 March, the Syria Trust provided legal counselling to 7,789 individuals in various collective shelters, including, 3,314 in Herjalleh, 1,135 in Nijha, 1,400 in Dweir and 1,940 in Electricity complex in Adra.

The Syria Trust also revealed that more than 10,000 individuals in the shelters are in need of legal interventions before administrative bodies and/or in courts, and reported that 95 percent of the IDP families are in need of legal counselling as well as one or more interventions on civil documentation issues. Moreover, awareness raising amongst the IDPs as to the difference between official civil registration, and registration by non-state bodies inside Eastern Ghouta.

UNHCR participated in an Inter-Agency mission to Fayha Al Sham and Adra Electricity complex on 23 March. Reportedly, 6,000 IDPs are residing in a warehouse/hanger in highly congested conditions, in Fayha Al Sham collective shelter. Unlike other collective shelters, the IDPs in this shelter are neither allowed to leave the hanger/warehouse, nor do they benefit from the “sponsorship” programme. 50 shelter kits have been delivered to the site; however, they are not yet being installed as partitioning would further limit the space available for the current shelter’s inhabitants. 1,200 NFI kits (mattresses, blankets, kitchen sets, jerry cans) have been delivered but the situation is dire and people are in need of further humanitarian assistance. The need to vacate the people from this shelter is a priority, not only to avoid serious health risks, but also to mitigate protection/SGBV risks.

Whereas UNHCR has provided more than 2,000 solar lamps for distribution in the various collective shelters, a mission to Adra Electricity complex identified lack of lighting as a major concern exposing the IDPs, particularly women and children, to SGBV risks. UNHCR has encouraged SARC to distribute the solar lamps urgently.

In Najha, which was visited by a UNHCR multifunctional team on 24 March, over 5,000 IDPs are residing in mosques and other collective shelters, WASH was indicated by the IDPs as being a dire need. Moreover, cases of early marriage, unaccompanied children as well as family separation were revealed. UNHCR’s NFIs have been distributed thereby to ensure that the residents sleep on mattresses and with blankets. There are several families in each room, and most families, but not all, have received a UNHCR solar lamp. Most families in the collective shelter originate from Douma and arrived recently. Like in other shelters, civil registration and documentation, as well as the possibility to leave the shelters are main concerns of this shelter inhabitants. These and other identified issues were brought to the attention of UNHCR’s partners on the ground to ensure appropriate follow up.

UNHCR’s NFI response;

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UNHCR’s response to the shelter needs;

- UNHCR has provided 2,200 shelter kits to SARC for partitioning, doors and windows. The work is ongoing in two sites (Al Dweir and ADRA electricity site). In addition, UNHCR provided 3 Rub halls that have been installed in Adra electrical site and Adra School.

- UNHCR’s partner ADRA is rehabilitating two of the buildings in the Najha collective shelter, in addition to the construction of big size sheds in Herjaleh collective shelter for IDPs living in open areas.

- 800 family tents are ready in UNHCR stock in Rural Damascus and will be used to bridge shelter gaps in various locations.

- On 24 March, UNHCR’s shelter team, together with UNICEF, SARC, the Syria Trust and the municipality conducted a visit to Sahnaya Karnak garage to validate the plan to use the area for a new collective shelter. UNHCR will be providing family size tents as well as big size tents, while UNHCR’s partner the Syria Trust will be working on the ground preparing the area for the installation of the tens, and UNICEF will ensure the installation of WASH facilities on the site.

Contribution to health sector response;

- In addition to the six doctors and six nurses deployed from UNHCR’s, SARC clinic continues to provide healthcare services in two consecutive shifts in Hammouriya crossing point and Adra collective shelter. Moreover, UNHCR, will start its supported services, through partnership with SARC, in 2 Emergency Health Points (EHP) in Dweir and Adra on 27 March.
AFRIN

- An increase of IDP arrivals was reported, therefore as of 25 March, the IDP figures stand at 136,750 individuals/27,350 families.
- UNHCR participated in an Inter-Agency mission with 30 trucks to Tal-Refaat, Kafr Naya and Ziyara on 25 March, delivering NFIs for 50,000 IDPs. UNHCR’s contribution was 13 trucks of non-food items for 10,000 IDPs in need.

Emergency response
Shelter and NFI response:
- UNHCR delivered on 22 March NFIs for 32,500 individuals/6,500 families in Tal Refaat (5,000), Nubol (1,000) and Zahraa (500).
- UNHCR’s partner SARC confirmed that they will have storage space available in Nubol and Tal Refaat for UNHCR’s NFIs.
- 300 shelter kits arrived to Tal Refaat and 200 kits arrived to Nubol. UNHCR’s partner GOPA have started the installation of the shelter kits on 24 March.
- SARC is carrying out a detailed shelter assessment in Tal Refaat, as the number of IDPs has increased and more spread out across multiple locations. It is expected that distribution and installation of shelter kits will commence early this week.

- UNHCR’s partners GOPA and ADRA have initiated the installation of shelter kits in three hangars in Nubol, which are accommodating 2,200 individuals/440 families.

- During the Inter-Agency mission, UNHCR observed comparatively better access to assistance in Tal Refaat and significant NFI needs in Ziyara and Kafr Naya. However, it is unclear if other villages have similar needs. Follow up visits to assess the needs are being planned by UNHCR and partners.

**Protection response;**

- During the Inter-Agency mission to Tal Refaat, UNHCR noted that the conditions in Tal Refaat were comparatively better than in other locations. Here IDPs have better access to assistance, goods and services, and most are allocated accommodation in empty homes.

- Freedom of movement continues to be the principal concern of IDPs in all locations. IDPs are frustrated by being unable to return home and prevented from onward movement to Aleppo city, where reception conditions and access to services and assistance would mitigate their need for humanitarian assistance.

- In addition to freedom of movement, access to adequate health services is another priority concern. UNHCR was informed of four deaths in different locations where patients could not access appropriate medical services. Meningitis and Tuberculosis cases have been reported in collective shelters and costs of some healthcare services in Zahraa hospital (i.e. – caesarean births) exceed IDPs’ financial resources. SARC is compiling a list of emergency and urgent cases requiring medical attention in Aleppo city and is advocating for permission of exceptional movement for health reasons.

- There are serious gaps related to language barriers and access to information as many IDPs do not speak Arabic, especially children aged 10 or younger, placing significant constraints on assessing and responding to protection needs. IDP accommodation in abandoned homes imply possible Housing, Land and Property (HLP)-related concerns. Limited services and assistance for persons with specific needs (especially persons with disabilities and elderlies) necessitate mobile General In kind Assistance (GIKA) and Medical In Kind Assistance (MIKA) response.

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