

HIGHLIGHTS (20 Oct 2022)

- An 82 per cent funding gap is putting the lives of 2.5 million people in north-west Syria at risk this winter.
- The first cholera case in north-west Syria was confirmed on 19 September. See below for the latest updates.
- On 17 September, at least six airstrikes were reported in Idlib, 10 km away from the road used by the 7th cross-line convoy. One man was injured.
- On 27 September, an airstrike reportedly hit in the vicinity of five IDP camps in Idlib, near the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing, injuring a woman, child and seven men.
- HNAP recorded 19,545 new internal displacements in north-west Syria in September – the highest record so far in 2022 - largely driven by the deteriorating economy.



The new school year resumed in September in north-west Syria. With a crutch in hand, Fatima (right) walks up to four km to school. In an attack, she lost her father and leg but she has not given up on her dream of becoming a doctor. 21 September 2022. (Photo: OCHA/Abdul Aziz Qitaz)

KEY FIGURES

4.6M

Population in north-west Syria

4.1M

People in need in north-west Syria

3.1M

Food insecure people

2.8M

Internally displaced people (IDPs)

1.8M

IDPs living in camps

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BACKGROUND (19 Jun 2022)

Disclaimer

This Situation Report covers developments in north-west Syria and Ras Al Ain – Tell Abiad. OCHA Türkiye prepares this report with the support of Cluster Coordinators and the Humanitarian Field Officers (HFO). The data/information collected come from both sources.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE (20 Oct 2022)

Cholera cases confirmed in north-west Syria and RAATA

According to WHO, as of 18 October, 140 lab-confirmed cholera cases and one death have been recorded in north-west Syria. Reportedly, 37 confirmed cases and two deaths have been confirmed in RAATA.

Since the identification of the first cholera case in north-west Syria, on 19 September in the Aleppo governorate, 11 rapid response teams have been activated. Five Cholera Treatment Units have been set up in Jarablus, Darkoush, Afrin, and Ad Dana with three more centers on standby and 20 planned.

There are currently enough cholera kits for 1,000 cases, and a shipment of kits to treat 3,500 additional cases should arrive this week, according to WHO. A third request was placed for enough kits to treat up to 10,000 more patients, with the support of the Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF).

For the latest information on the cholera outbreak in whole of Syria, please [click here](#).



Early Warning, Alert and Response Network (EWARN) team member distributes flyers to community members in Afrin on cholera preventive measures. 10 October 2022. (Photo: HFOs)

FEATURE (24 Oct 2022)

Funding gap is putting millions of Syrian lives at risk this winter

The 2022-2023 winter season is anticipated to be [one of the harshest](#) in Syria.

In the north-west, 4.6 million people are bracing for another cold winter season of flooding, snowstorms, and unpredictable weather events. Half of this population depends on winter assistance to meet their most basic needs, the majority of whom are women and children living in camps with limited or no access to heating, electricity, water supply or adequate sewage systems.

Today, 1.8 million out of 2.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in north-west Syria are living in over 1,400 camps and unplanned, self-settled sites. 838 IDP sites are now categorized as “bad”, “very bad” and “catastrophic” risk levels by the [Syria Cross-border CCCM Cluster](#), making them vulnerable to harsh weather and fires. Since the last winter season, in October 2021, 31,041 IDP shelters were damaged by weather incidents to varying degrees. During this same period, 540 shelters were destroyed by fire resulting in nine deaths and 116 injured people.

In anticipation of rising needs in the upcoming months, the humanitarian community has finalized its [Winterization and Flood Preparedness Response Plan](#) in September. According to this plan, US\$209.5 million are needed to fund 40 activities to meet the needs of 2.5 million people in north-west Syria this winter. Activities range across clusters, from providing agriculture inputs for winter crops and medicines for respiratory infections to distributing fuel, blankets and winter clothes.



Last year, the winter response reached 70% of the people living in camps in north-west Syria. Urgent funding and support are needed to realize a timely response ahead of this winter season. January 2022. (Photo: OCHA/Ali Haj Suleiman)

At the peak of winter also comes the expiration of the Security Council Resolution 2642, which authorizes the UN to deliver aid from Türkiye to north-west Syria.

Currently, this resolution is set to expire on 10 January 2023 unless an extension is granted by the Security Council members. Given that this uncertainty may affect the winter response from January to March 2023, the humanitarian community will start winterization aid delivery early from October to the end of December this year.

At the same time, the response plan is at risk if there is a persisting funding gap. Currently, only \$38.15 million have been secured to meet winter and flood preparedness needs, resulting in a funding gap of 82 per cent (or \$171.36 million).

Without adequate resource mobilization and timely support, the lives of at least 2 million Syrians are at stake this winter season.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE (21 Oct 2022)

The race to winter: dignified shelters action plan

Shelter needs make up a bulk of the winter and flood preparedness response in north-west Syria. 52 per cent of the funding requirement alone (\$110 million out of the \$209.51 million) is dedicated to shelter and non-food items, targeting 2 million people. In preparation for the upcoming winter season, clothes, blankets, insulation from the ground and stoves are needed to increase the thermal comfort in households and reduce the need for people to gather closely for warmth, which in turn creates fire hazard risks.

Today, 800,000 people in north-west Syria are still living in tents.

In principle, tents need to be replaced every six months yet more than 90 per cent of tents are one year old. According to an [OCHA Community Voices Bulletin](#), displaced Syrian families have raised various common concerns about tents, notably the cold and damp conditions as well as the lack of space and privacy, leading to protection risks, especially among women and children.

In March 2022, the humanitarian community launched the [Action Plan for Dignified Shelter and Decent Living](#) with the aim of replacing nearly all tents in the north-west. It also makes a business case for dignified shelters, noting its value for money given its privacy, durability, fire-retardancy and structural integrity for harsh winter conditions compared to tents. As of the end of September, a total of 2,685 dignified shelters have been implemented and 19,766 dignified shelters are in progress and funded by OCHA's Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF).

However, \$102 million is still required to fund the 41,000 remaining dignified shelters as part of Phases 3 and 4 of the Action Plan.



In 2022, the humanitarian community has started to implement its dignified shelters action plan in north-west Syria. So far, more than 2500 dignified shelters have been implemented and more than 19,700 are in progress. (Photo: BINAA for Development)

MEDIA (20 Oct 2022)

From tents to “dignified shelters”: a new beginning for displaced families

“Every year, we face the same tragedy of repeating rain and flooding. The water in our tent has reached up to 30 cm high.”

Feda, a displaced widow and mother in Al Bab, recalls the floods and snow from last winter. She stood for three days to empty out the water from their home and dry what furniture and materials remain in the sun.

For ten years, Feda and her four children have lived in the same tent, far exceeding the six-month lifespan of an emergency shelter.

Her circumstance however is not unique. After over a decade of war, 800,000 people in north-west Syria are still living in tents, often in overcrowded conditions unfit for protection against the extremes of heat and cold in summer and winter.

“Living in a tent is like living on the streets. If there is rain outside, there is rain inside as well,” shares Yazı, another displaced widow, mother of three and friend to Feda.

Things took a brighter turn in September when Feda, Yazı and their children were moved to one of 400 new building blocks in the Al Baraziyah Aljadeed camp with the support of [BINAA for Development](#) and OCHA’s [Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund \(SCHE\)](#).

“I felt such a relief the moment I saw the new housing unit. There is no mud or dirt, and it did not feel cold. It feels like a home,” tells Feda.

This relocation is part of a grander [action plan](#) put forward by the humanitarian community to move people out of tents into dignified shelters.

Unlike the flimsy fabric lining of a tent, the new block is equipped with a sturdy door, lighting and a sink with flowing water. Each unit has its own individual bathroom – a stark difference from the previous communal WC shared by multiple families.

“I can finally put my head on a pillow and sleep,” says Yazı, adding that the “feelings of privacy and safety” have been what she most appreciated with the new home.

While shelter conditions have improved, both mothers also noted other challenges that remain. “Primary necessities” such as food baskets, emergency kits, health clinics and job opportunities are absent in the new camp. The closest medical point is five kilometers away.

“We have to walk seven kilometers just to get bread because it is cheaper than paying fuel,” says Yazı.

When asked about the future, Feda grieves: “My grandson is eating water with sugar to survive. There is nothing I can do at this point but just accept the situation.”



400 new building blocks in the Al Baraziyah Aljadeed camp. Dignified shelters are designed to last five to ten years compared to the six-month lifespan of tents. (Photo: BINAA for Development)

FEATURE (20 Oct 2022)

Explosive ordnance: a continuing threat in north-west Syria

After over a decade of war, explosive ordnance (EO), including improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and landmines, continues to put lives in Syria at risk of injury, trauma and death.

According to the [2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview \(HNO\)](#), 10.2 million people in Syria live in areas contaminated by EO and are in need of mine action assistance. More than 4 million, or nearly 45 per cent of the figure, are children. The Idleb and Aleppo governorates in the north-west are among the areas most reportedly affected by intensive hostilities and EO incidents over the past five years. Since the beginning of this year, the OHCHR has documented at least 113 civilian casualties as a result of airstrikes, shelling as well as EO incidents and landmines in north-west Syria and RAATA.

Between 2014 and 2022, more than 4,000 EO accidents and 5,000 EO victims were recorded in the region.

A [2018-2020 assessment](#) found that at least 400 communities in Aleppo and Idleb were contaminated with EO. Today, between 30 per cent and 70 per cent of agricultural land in the Aleppo governorate is found to be contaminated. Of the 426 EO items recorded, [177 \(or 41.5 per cent\) were submunitions](#), or small bombs. EO contamination is more frequently reported in “agricultural land, on roads, on private property, as well as in and around schools, other public infrastructure and hospitals.”

Across Syria, [men and boys are most impacted by EO](#) and children are more likely to die from an EO accident than adults. Among those who survive an accident, it is estimated that one in three suffers from an amputation of limb and two in three sustain a lifelong impairment. Adding to these challenges, on-going hostilities and EO contamination have also destroyed vital infrastructure, including hospitals and schools, and in some cases prevented “safe and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance.”



In north-west Syria, 11 organizations are implementing mine action activities as of September 2022. (Photo: Mine Action Sub-Cluster)

FEATURE (20 Oct 2022)

The five pillars of mine action response

A mine action response aims to identify and reduce the risk and impact of explosive hazards and protect people. It is comprised of [five pillars](#):

- Clearance
- Mine Risk Education
- Victim Assistance
- Advocacy
- Stockpile Destruction

In north-west Syria, 11 organizations are implementing mine action activities as of September 2022.



Nearly all organizations covering mine action in north-west Syria are implementing Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) activities. (Photo: HIHFAD)

Out of this figure, 10 are providing Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) and three are providing Victim Assistance services.

From January to August 2022, the Syria Cross-border Mine Action sub-cluster has reached more than 205,000 people, of which 68 per cent are children, through EORE sessions. During the same period, more than 10,000 victim assistance services have been provided to explosive ordnance survivors. These services included continuing and emergency medical care, rehabilitation sessions, psychosocial support and the provision of assistive devices.

In July 2022, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams were trained to identify explosive remnants of war and dispose of them in full compliance with international standards. The teams are now able to provide first aid responses to injuries caused by EO as well. Since mid-August 2022, 25 items have been destroyed including mortars, improvised hand grenades, submunitions, fuze, and cluster munitions.

MEDIA (21 Oct 2022)

Q&A: Engaging communities and changing behaviors on mine risks

Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) is among the core pillars of mine action response. But how does it actually work and what are the impacts? In a short interview, Yasmen Alsayed from Hand in Hand for Aid and Development (HIHFAD) shares her experiences and insights, having worked as a Risk Education Trainer in north-west Syria for over two years. Today, she is a Senior Protection Programme Officer at HIHFAD and is a member of the Working Group under the Syria Cross-border Mine Action sub-cluster.

How would you describe EORE to people working outside of the mine action field?

Yasmen: EORE is about educating people through direct face-to-face engagements or indirect ways such as through posters or social media. The objective is to raise awareness of the risks and dangers of explosive ordnances with the ultimate aim to reduce incidents and death cases. For social media, for example, we have targeted returnees with shared Facebook posts, telling them to ask authorities if the area they are returning to is safe in case of reported incidents. With regard to community sessions, we have targeted different groups at risk, from women, children, farmers, IDPs and returnees, and community focal points. We have seven main topics ranging from the recognition and effects of explosive ordnances to suspected areas and risky behaviors.

Could you speak more about the impacts of such training with community members? How do you measure impacts?



Top: EORE awareness session provided to children and their caregivers in their camp.
Bottom: Example of visual materials used in EORE session on safety/risky behaviors.
(Photos: HIHFAD)

Yasmen: After the community engagement sessions, we gather feedback from participants through repeated surveys. The first survey is conducted immediately after the session, the second after three months and the third follows six months. This way, we can see if participants have increased their knowledge of mine risks and safety precautions. We have also updated and modified sessions depending on the feedback we get. In addition to the surveys, I also find that talking with participants after each session has been very useful to get their immediate impressions. For instance, we found that many women have used some of the EOs for decorative purposes. After the session, they told us that they will immediately contact authorities to remove the items.

In your view, what are the key challenges in implementing EORE sessions?

Yasmen: The main challenge lies in changing the behaviors of certain target groups. We have the uninformed and the misinformed but regardless, it is difficult to convince the so-called “risk-takers,” namely comprised of young boys. Once, we had a session where the facilitator spoke of the dangers of EOs and one youth shared that he had the object with him in the room. The second unconvincing target group is the people working on scrap and metal collection. For them, this is a livelihood opportunity where they can get some income and provide food for their family. But to overcome these challenges and do more, we need continuous funding and support for EORE. In the absence of EO and mine clearance, these educational sessions are life-saving.

FEATURE (20 Oct 2022)

Launch of Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund Reserve Allocation

The 2022 First Reserve Allocation of OCHA’s Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF) was launched in September, valued at \$25 million, with priorities toward the pre-positioning and distribution of core emergency and relief items, including those for winterization and cholera interventions.

[Click here](#) to read more about the allocation



Over 2.8 million people remain internally displaced in north-west Syria, the majority of whom are women and children. (Photo: OCHA/Ahmed Alito)

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