



UNICEF/UN0348583/Saad

UNICEF Whole of Syria Northwest Syria Situation Report No. 2



Reporting Period: 1- 26 February 2020

Highlights

- The humanitarian crisis for people in northwest Syria continues to reach new and dire levels. 948,000 people have been displaced since 1st December 2019, exceeding previous worst case planning figures by the humanitarian community. Of these, some 569,000 are children and over 195,000 are women, together comprising 81 percent of the newly displaced population.
- Indiscriminate attacks in civilian areas continue to drive people from their homes and destroy vital services, including hospitals, markets, and schools. In the last week, in Idlib, 10 schools and kindergartens have come under attack, killing at least 9 children and 3 teachers.
- Considering the scale of this dire humanitarian situation, humanitarian actors on the ground continue to leverage all efforts to scale up. However, people's needs are so vast, that with the current resources it is a struggle to meet their needs, which grow exponentially despite all humanitarian efforts.
- UNICEF and partners are scaling up their response to meet the needs of 800,000 internally displaced people in northwest Syria. The scale up plan is US\$ 36 million with US\$ 18.8 million as a gap considering funding received from CERF.

Situation in Numbers

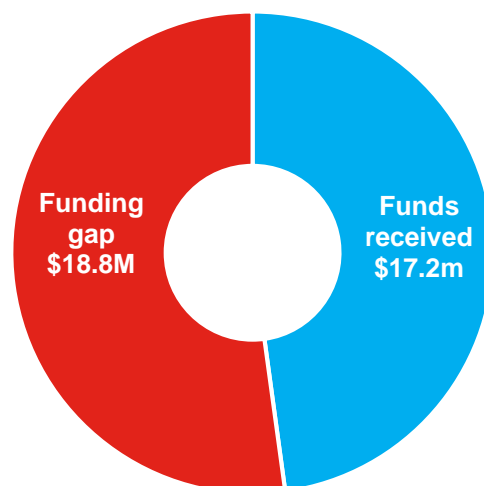
1,800,000
 children in need of humanitarian assistance

570,000
 children newly displaced since 1 December 2019

948,000
 People newly displaced since 1 December 2019 (OCHA)

UNICEF Appeal 2020 US\$ 36 million

Funding Status (in US\$)



UNICEF's Response and Funding Status

	People to be reached by UNICEF response from 1 Dec 2019	Cluster plan from 1 Dec 2019	UNICEF Funding Required (US\$)	UNICEF Funding Gap (US\$)
WASH	800,000	1,100,000	\$15,750,000	\$7,000,000
Nutrition	308,000	828,000	\$4,900,000	\$2,250,000
Health	800,000	1,100,000	\$2,500,000	\$1,500,000
Education	153,000	210,000	\$6,500,000	\$2,900,000
Child Protection	180,000	450,000	\$4,600,000	\$3,380,000
Non-food items	30,000	852,000	\$750,000	\$750,000
Operations			\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
TOTAL	800,000		\$36,000,000	\$18,780,000

Funding Overview

UNICEF and partners are scaling up their response to meet the needs of 800,000 IDPs in northwest Syria. The scale up plan is US\$36 million with \$18.8 million as a gap considering funding received from CERF. This represents approximately two thirds of what UNICEF Clusters have asked in the interagency response plan. The Interagency Readiness and Response Plan planning figure currently stands at 1.1 million people with US\$500 million in funding required for the next 6 months.

Partners

UNICEF Cross-Border in Gaziantep has 21 operational partners in north west Syria, with 48 active Program Documents (PDs) worth US\$ 20.3 million and US\$ 10.8 million in supplies.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Renewed military operations and an escalation of hostilities continued in southern and eastern Idlib and Western Aleppo. Government of Syria (GoS) and allies continued to advance in the past days in eastern and southern Idlib and northern Hama, with 30 communities and villages coming under its control. Military action has been associated with high number of civilian casualties.

In the last week, in Idlib, 10 schools and kindergartens have come under attack, killing at least 9 children and 3 teachers. Attacks have also been reported on one health centre, two collective centres, a city council building and a bakery. The hospital and city council building in Idlib city and the hospital in Ma'arrat Tamasrin were reportedly put out of service due to the severity of material damage.

According to OHCHR monitoring at least 108 civilians including 19 women and 36 children were reportedly killed as a result of what were reported to be airstrikes and ground-based strikes by pro-government forces between 1-20 February.

Turkey deployed a reported 7,000 troops into Idlib and established additional four observation points in rural southern Idlib. So far, the total number of Turkish observation points in Idlib and Aleppo reached 43.

The humanitarian crisis for people in northwest Syria continues to reach dire levels. 948,000 people have been displaced since 1st December 2019, exceeding worst case planning figures by the humanitarian community. Of these, some 569,000 are children and over 195,000 are women, together comprising 81 percent of the newly displaced population. Most people moved within Idlib governorate; with Dana sub-district hosting the largest population of the newly displaced people, followed by Ma'aret Tamsrin, Salqin and Idlib city. Tens of thousands of others moved to areas in northern Aleppo governorate, mainly Afrin, A'zaz, Jandairis and Al Bab.

Over 380,000 of the total displaced fled to areas in northern Aleppo governorate such as Afrin, A'zaz and Al Bab. Some 17,000 people are still living under trees and in open spaces, representing 1.5 per cent of the recently displaced population. 21 per cent live in formal camps (some 196,000 people), 9 per cent are in collective centres (some 82,000 people) and 14 per cent in individual tents (some 135,000 people), while 36 per cent live with host families or in rented houses (some 343,000 people) and 17 per cent – some 163,000 people – are in unfinished houses or buildings.

Indiscriminate attacks in civilian areas continue to drive people from their homes and destroy vital services, including hospitals, markets, and schools. Cold weather has made the situation worse for people exposed in harsh conditions. The frontlines in northwest Syria are rapidly moving closer to densely populated areas, with bombardments increasingly affecting IDP sites and the areas around them.

Despite the deteriorating situation on the ground, humanitarian agencies continue to leverage all efforts to scale up. However, current resources and capacities are unable to meet the exponentially growing needs of internally displaced and host community populations.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Nutrition

Since December 2019 to date, **16,706** pregnant, lactating mothers and **42,700** children under the age of five years were reached with life-saving nutrition services reached in 112 communities in 20 sub-districts in Idlib through 52 Rapid

Response and mobile teams by 10 partners. This represents nearly 23.6% of the currently displaced children and mothers and 20% of the inter-agency response plan. UNICEF response accounts for 77% of the overall nutrition cluster response.

A total of **14,532** of displaced children under the age of 5 years, pregnant and lactating mothers received high-energy biscuits for preventing acute malnutrition. It is also reported that **30,981** pregnant and lactating mothers and Children 6-59 months age received micro-nutrient supplementation; while additional **26,494** children 6-59 months of age received high calories lipid-based nutrition supplements for prevention of acute malnutrition.

Out of the 81,679 Screened mothers and children for Acute Malnutrition, **313** cases of severe acute malnutrition and **1,049** cases of moderate acute malnutrition were identified among displaced children, with the highest number of cases found in Afrin and camps in Northern Idlib. Identified Malnourished children were referred to appropriate care. Malnutrition among pregnant and lactating mothers is also detected with **2,034** acutely malnourished mothers identified and referred to appropriate care. Acute Malnutrition cases among mothers are increasing by 46% in two weeks. Around 23,632 mothers and care givers were reached with infant feeding and caring practices messages and counselling.

UNICEF provides all the nutrition supplies with the exception of Supplementary Food and Ready to Eat Rations. The first week of March the distribution of 17,500 cartons of high Energy Biscuits; which will prevent 80,000 displaced children of the age 6-36months from becoming acutely malnourished in Northern Idlib and Northern Rural Aleppo.

Nutrition program will continue its efforts to reach 308,000 newly displaced children, pregnant and lactating mothers.

Since the start of hostilities in Idlib, Nutrition Surveillance data showed an increase in Acute Malnutrition among the pregnant and lactating mothers which has reached 30% with an increase of 3-6% every week, which highlighted the possibility of increased illness and reduced access to food among mothers; which requires a comprehensive maternal health and nutrition care in close coordination with Food Security, WASH and Shelter Clusters. Chronic Malnutrition proxy indicator among displaced children remains beyond emergency threshold of 20% (currently at 28%).

Health

The health section has been preparing the implementation of a Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices (KAP) study in order to better understand the reality on the ground regarding immunization and identify barriers and challenges, in order to better address them with a more targeted Communication for Development (C4D) strategy. This week the interviewers have been trained on the questionnaire, and a pilot has taken place in order to iron out any possible problems. Data collection will take place next week.

WASH

Since December 2019 to date, UNICEF WASH response has reached **677,923 people** in host communities and **585,000** internally displaced people. Recently restored water stations are supporting **259,000** host communities in Armanaz, Dana, Kafar Nubul and Ma'arrat Tamasrin in Idlib governorate. Operational and management support for water stations is provided to 280,000 people at Afrin and Azaz districts in Aleppo governorate.

A total of 585,000 displaced people continues to receive water supply through repair of existing water station and trucking and solid waste management services in Aleppo and Idlib governorates. At least 11,250 people benefited from the construction/installation of new latrines as most of the existing public/community latrines are overcrowded. About 250,000 people benefited from the desludging and maintenance and repair of latrines support. Rehabilitation of three sewerage systems has helped improve sanitary conditions for over 25,000 people. Over 350,000 people benefited from water purifying agents (using Aqua-tabs and HTH) and 70,000 newly displaced people received jerry cans for household water storage. Over 70,000 people received hygiene kits, and 35,000 people in self-settled camps received tarpaulin sheets.

Constraints

Inadequate space in existing shelters complicates the response, as recently displaced people keep moving from one location to another. The recently displaced people are looking for potential shelters with existing services or where there is a possibility of receiving services from humanitarian agencies. The WASH cluster is working with CCCM and Shelter Clusters to ensure joint planning and installation of new camps with requisite WASH services for 100,000 IDPs

Notable challenges include the delivery of hygiene kits as production and packaging takes time, as well as challenges around border crossing capacity, and the ability to accommodate more trucks to deliver supplies inside Syria. Efforts to improve and upgrade the border crossing points are well under way through Logistics Cluster and OCHA.

Strategy for responding to new displacements

UNICEF's WASH response is well coordinated with the cluster, to identify gaps on daily/weekly basis and mobilize implementing partners (IPs) to respond to the gaps, especially with the rapid response mechanism within 24-hours. The rapid response includes critical hygiene promotion, hygiene kits and supply of drinking water.

Arrangements are made to ensure that water purification and hygiene NFIs are available to newly displaced people in all locations through stocks kept with UNICEF partners. Cluster member organizations can access UNICEF WASH supplies through requesting supplies directly from UNICEF IPs to respond to arriving IDPs, considering UNICEF's quick preapproval.

UNICEF, in line with the WASH cluster strategy, is promoting restoration of water stations in the communities that are receiving high number of IDPs, especially through quick repairs and rehabilitation. This intends to reduce the prevailing demand-supply gap on water supply that has resulted due to limited capacity of private water truckers to meet the increasing demands of the large number of newly arrived IDPs.

Special attention is given to the sanitation interventions to prevent both pollution of near-by water sources and potential spread of communicable diseases. At least 700 new public latrines are in the process of being installed to support people in transit-points and camps, in addition to the repair of defunct latrines and frequent desludging of existing public latrines. The number of latrines planned to be installed for women are almost double than that are planned for men. The sites for latrines are decided in due consultation with users, especially with women to ensure their safety and privacy. There is greater work to be done on latrines as targets remain too low compared to population movements – this is a focus area.

The sewage and wastewater drainage are being repaired and expanded to function at their full capacity. The expansion is done to connect to nearby self-settled camps and unfinished buildings that are occupied by IDPs.

WASH cluster is collaborating with UNHCR led Clusters of CCCM and Shelter to help decide the expansion of existing camps and establishment of new camps.

Inter-cluster response with Nutrition cluster is promoted to respond to the malnourished/sick children and their families with critical hygiene promotion, hygiene kits, etc. WASH cluster members are also committed to coordinate with Protection and Education clusters to respond with WASH within child-friendly spaces and schools.

Education

Since December 2019, a total of **80,863** children provided with access to formal education and non-formal education including bursaries to support 9th and 12th grades examination and Self Learning Program (SLP).

UNICEF supported education activities were not impacted in February except for a temporary suspension of activities in Idlib, Dana and Harim districts for 2 days (17th and 18th February) following directives by Idlib Education Directorate/Dana and Atareb Education Assemblies based on the security situation. This has affected 14 UNICEF supported schools. The current renewed hostilities in Idlib affected at least 4 UNICEF supported schools; which were hit on 25th February. Education and learning of children in NWS are mostly impacted by the current population movement and insecurity in general. According to partners on the ground, we conservatively estimate that over 300 schools are out of operation given changes in areas of control and use as shelters and 149 schools were attacked in NWS over 2019.

Education is planning to scale up its response to reach an approximate 153,000 children in the next 6 months.

Child Protection

The Child Protection Programme has 13 Programme Documents (PDs), with 9 partners, working on Child Protection (CP) prevention and response in NW Syria, 4 Humanitarian Programme Documents (HPD) for scale up. The Programme in February alone, 5 UNICEF CP partners reported temporary suspension of activities affecting 18 child protection service delivery points, which included 8 Child Friendly Spaces, 8 mobile teams and 2 Women and Girls Safe Spaces. Additionally, 6 Child Protection partners had to relocate from communities in 7 subdistricts (Ehsem, Teftenaz, Bensch, Ma'arrat Tamasrin, Kafr Karmin, Daret Azzaz and Haritan) in Idlib to new safer locations. Despite interruptions in delivery of services, the Child Protection Programme since December 2019 to date reached **72,681** children and parents/caregivers in 23 high severity subdistricts in Idleb and Aleppo Governorates accounting for an approximate 64% of the child protection sub-cluster total interventions.

Since December 2019 over 300 recreational kits, 33 early childhood development kits were delivered reaching approximately **30,000** children. **Identification wrist bands** for preventing family separation reached **63,500** children

and parents/caregivers. Additionally, 106 first aid kits were distributed in support to the running of Child Friendly Spaces and Women and Girls Safe Spaces, as well as, in support to Child Protection mobile teams.

Strategy for responding to new displacements

The dynamic nature of the conflict compromises services that require continuity and hinders predictability and sustained access. Consistency and sustained follow up is required by child protection structured interventions, particularly Psycho-Social Support (PSS), Parenting Program (PP) and Case Management. Centre-based interventions have particularly been affected by the insecurity and population movement. In this regard, partners are strengthening delivery of services through mobile teams.

In instances where **case management** has been disrupted or simply not possible, partners have resolved to continue to provide Individual Protection Assistance (IPA) through child protection case management teams by utilizing the earlier foreseen case emergency fund. In those instances, partners provide ad hoc in-kind assistance to children and parents/caregivers who present severe protection concerns with the aim to mitigate exposure to further risks. This in-kind assistance is specific to each individual case and circumstances on the ground, but usually consists of food basket for vulnerable family, shelter for limited and specific length of time, support with transport (especially for children with disabilities) or clothes and hygiene items. This support is usually given when referrals to other clusters have not been possible and severe protection concerns are present.

Displacement has increased the risk of family separation particularly for more vulnerable families. To date the pattern of separation that partners have reported, consists of temporary separation, where in the majority of cases children became unaccompanied or separated during the travel. In all identified cases by partners to date, children and caregivers were shortly after reunified with their parents and caregivers. This week, **10 Unaccompanied Separated Children (UASC)** including 4 siblings have been reported to remain in partners caseload since 24th February 2020. Children stayed overnight in a mosque and are showing resistance to move. While an assessment is being conducted, a partner is assigning a female protection caseworker to act as interim guardian of these children, while a more durable solution is being sought.

Increased intensity of air strikes and ground military operations in North West Syria significantly impacted on children's psychosocial wellbeing with reportedly high levels of trauma, as well as parents and caregivers' ability to care for them. Multiple displacements continue to further strain already stretched protection capacities of families. In this regard, child protection plans to continue to scale up and strengthen the emergency response model in line with the Child Protection and Protection clusters, which allows for an integrated phased approach expanding on the capacity of mobile outreach teams and static service points where possible (i.e. CFS, women and girls safe spaces, community centres). The Programme plans to scale up to reach 180,000 affected population in the coming months. Despite capacity gaps and absorption limitations by implementing partners in certain areas, the section seeks opportunities particularly building on earlier efforts of preceding years of investment by UNICEF.

Non-food Items (NFI)

UNICEF has planned to reach 140,000 children in Northwest Syria during 2020, of which 98,500 planned for winter 2019-2020. Considering the large unprecedented displacement of almost one million people in Northwest Syria since 1st December 2019, UNICEF has taken steps to scale up its current winter response capacity to reach an additional 30,000 children.

Since December, UNICEF and partners have provided winter assistance to **87,596** girls and boys in Northwest Syria; of this reach, 41,622 girls and boys under the age of 14 years were reached in February in Kafr Takharim, Armanaz, Salqin, Ma'arrat Tamasrin, Afrin, Azaz, Atareb and Aghtarim sub-districts.

UNICEF implementing partners encountered many challenges including massive influx of IDP's to the targeted areas, which led to increased needs and complicated prioritization and selection of beneficiaries - in addition to onward displacement of registered IDP's before receipt of assistance and suspension/postponement of distributions due to security. However, despite this, UNICEF response is still ongoing to serve an additional 40,904 children.

Annex 1. UNICEF and Cluster Targets, Reach and People in Need

Cluster	UNICEF											
	Existing emergency target for 2020			Scale-up plan target (additional to existing)			Total UNICEF Target			Reach by UNICEF (January 2020)		
	HC	IDPs	Total	HC	IDPs	Total	HC	IDPs	Total	HC	IDPs	Total
Child Protection	159,040	124,960	284,000	54,000	126,000	180,000	213,040	250,960	464,000	15,556	6,315	21,871
Education ⁽⁵⁾	208,880	164,120	373,000	46,065	107,485	153,550	254,945	271,605	526,550	20,946	7,318	28,264
Nutrition	392,000	308,000	700,000	92,400	215,600	308,000	484,400	523,600	1,008,000	22,411	23,990	46,401
Health	168,000	132,000	300,000	15,000	35,000	50,000	183,000	167,000	350,000	9,383	4,509	13,892
WASH	700,000	800,000	1,500,000	700,000	800,000	1,500,000	700,000	800,000	1,500,000	308,289	138,206	446,495
NFI	78,400	61,600	140,000	-	30,000	30,000	78,400	91,600	170,000	-	37,277	37,377

UNICEF Syria Crisis: <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/syrian-crisis>

UNICEF Syria and Syrian Refugees Humanitarian Action for Children Appeal: <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/>

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