

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION MONITORING (HSM)

May 2026 | Syria

KEY MESSAGES

- The **economic pressures** observed in March continued to intensify, emerging as a **key underlying driver of the most frequently reported needs**. Rising prices and the depreciation of the Syrian Pound relative to the US Dollar further reduced households' ability to afford food, healthcare, and other essential goods and services.
- Food remained the most frequently reported priority need**. While KIs in most communities (83%) reported sufficient quantities of food available in local markets, affordability remained a major challenge. **KIs in two thirds of communities (67%) reported significant increases in food prices**, with the high cost of food cited as the primary barrier to food security (77%).
- Livelihoods also remained a major concern, with KIs in 90% of communities reporting that people struggled to earn enough income to meet their basic needs**. Low wages (91%) and limited work opportunities (90%) were identified as the primary barriers to sustainable livelihoods, continuing the trend observed in March.
- Health was among the three most frequently reported priority needs**, cited by KIs in 50% of assessed communities, similar to the findings from March. Access to healthcare remained a challenge, with KIs in 78% of communities reporting barriers to accessing services. Affordability (64%) and the lack of medicines and medical equipment (54%) were the most commonly reported obstacles.
- Severe flags were concentrated in a limited number of governorates**, with As-Sweida once again having the highest proportion of assessed communities with more than five severe flags (32%), in addition to Tartous (24%), and Deir-ez-Zor (23%).

PRIORITY NEEDS AND HOTSPOTS

Priority needs, by proportion of KIs in communities reporting the need among their top three priorities:

1	Food	72%
2	Livelihoods	70%
3	Health	70%
4	WASH	30%
5	Electricity	30%
6	Education	14%

Governorates with the highest proportion of assessed communities reporting more than five severe flags:

1	As-Sweida	32%
2	Tartous	24%
3	Deir-ez-Zor	23%
4	Al-Hasakeh	17%
5	Latakia	11%
6	Homs	9%

ABOUT THE ASSESSMENT

HSM is a key informant (KI) assessment that monitors humanitarian conditions and needs across communities in Syria on a quarterly basis. Results are indicative and are presented as the percentage of assessed communities where KIs reported a given condition.

SEVERITY INDEX METHODOLOGY

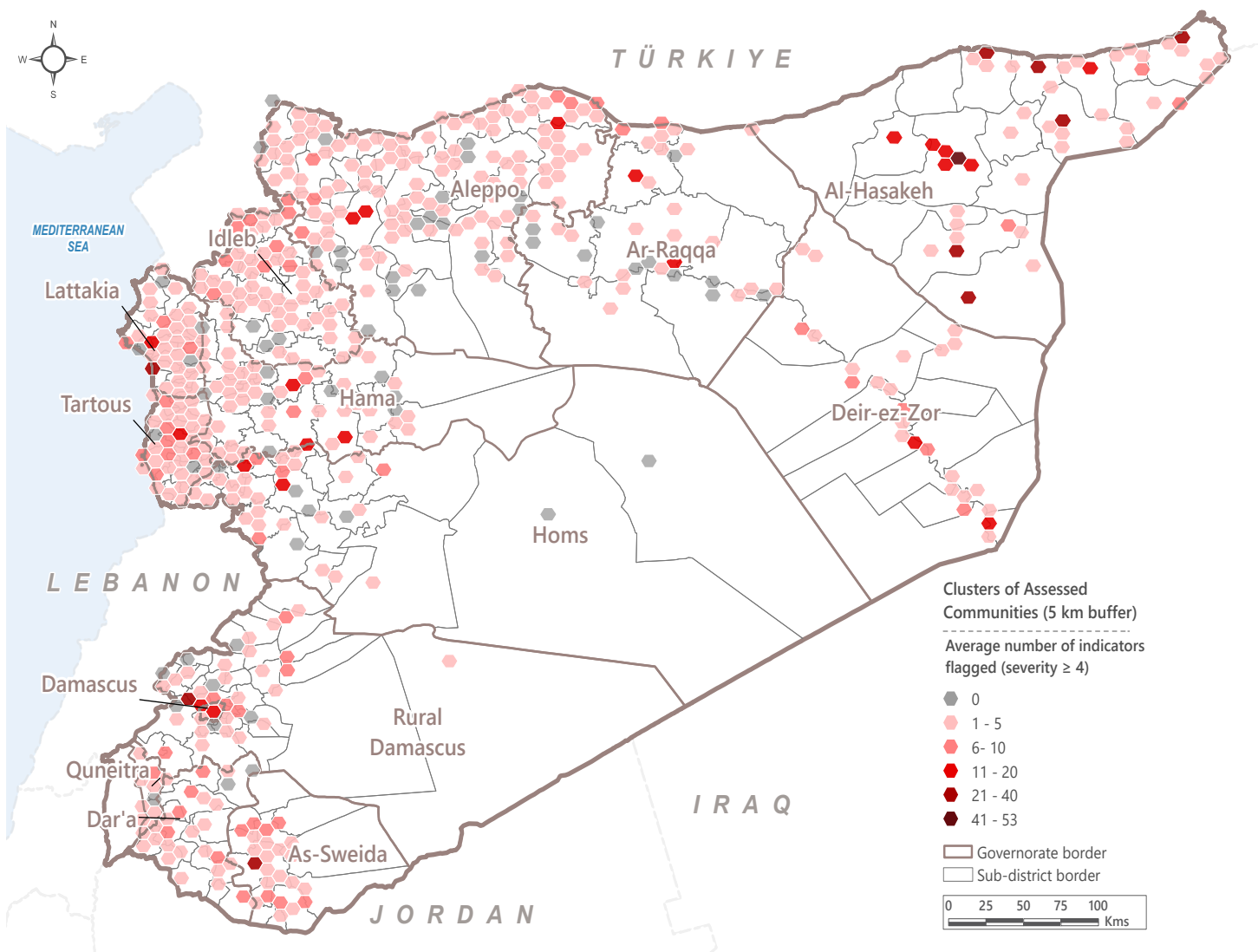
The [Area of Knowledge Severity Index \(AoK SI\)](#)¹ is a composite index methodology that aims to provide a standardized and efficient approach to summarising and interpreting AoK data into meaningful and actionable analysis of acute multi-sectoral humanitarian needs at community and area level. The AoK SI has indicators across nine sectors or themes: Food Security; Livelihoods; Shelter; Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH); Health; Protection; Education; Market Functionality; Shocks; and Displacement. In terms of the threshold, the cutting point is 4 as the standard because it effectively identifies critical needs while aligning with established frameworks.

In Syria, **53 indicators were analysed to calculate the Flag Index**. This approach enables the prioritisation of response actions within a crisis based on an absolute comparison of the severity of needs using a predefined scale. It is important to note that these thresholds are applied per individual indicator, and should not be interpreted as part of a cumulative or scoring system. The severity scale ranges as follows:

- 1 - None/minimal:** Essential basic sectoral needs are met
- 2 - Stress:** Borderline inability to meet basic sectoral needs
- 3 - Crisis/Severe:** Moderate inability to meet basic sectoral needs (and moderate risk of preventable loss of life)
- 4 - Emergency/Extreme:** Extreme inability to meet basic sectoral needs (and high risk of preventable loss of life)
- 4+ - Extreme Emergency/Catastrophic/Sectoral Collapse:** Collapse of basic services and/or total inability to meet basic sectoral needs (and high risk of preventable loss of life)

SEVERITY MAP

The map shows the number of indicators flagged as severe in each assessed community. Each hexagon represents a community, while the colour indicates the average number of indicators reaching severity level 4 or above, either across sectors or within the same sector.



Overall, 11% of assessed communities were flagged for having more than five indicators with a severity score of 4 or higher. **As-Sweida continued the trend observed in the March round, recording the highest proportion of communities with five or more severity flags (32%),** with livelihoods, health, and protection emerging as the primary drivers. Conditions were likely exacerbated by renewed insecurity in May, including Jordanian cross-border airstrikes and subsequent armed clashes across the governorate, which further disrupted livelihoods, access to services, and local stability.²

Tartous also emerged as a hotspot, with 24% of communities recording five or more severity flags, a substantial increase from just 6% in March. The deterioration was driven primarily by vulnerabilities in livelihoods, food security, and health. **Compared to the national average, communities in Tartous reported much higher economic and food security pressures:** KIs in 80% of communities reported a major increase in the cost of living, compared to 62% nationally, while 32% reported severe hunger, compared to just 7% nationally.

In Al-Hasakeh and Deir-ez-Zor, the severity observed in flagged communities was further compounded by the impact of heavy rains and widespread flooding in March, which disrupted livelihoods and damaged critical WASH infrastructure.³ While the floods represented an acute shock, they occurred in a region that has experienced prolonged drought conditions over the past five years and remains structurally vulnerable to water insecurity.

WASH vulnerabilities were further exacerbated by years of conflict-related damage to water infrastructure and delays in rehabilitation during the ongoing transition of administrative control from the SDF to the Government of Syria. Although the transition was formally agreed in January 2025, implementation has faced challenges amid continued political and security tensions.⁴ A notable example is the Alouk water station, the primary water source for the population centres of Al-Hasakeh and Tal Tamer, which incidentally had the communities with the highest number of severity flags, and has been repeatedly affected by outages and service interruptions. While the Ministry of Energy agreed to begin rehabilitation works in April 2026, reliable service delivery has yet to be fully restored.⁵ Against this backdrop, WASH vulnerabilities emerged as a key driver of severity, with KIs in only 33% and 35% of communities in Deir-ez-Zor and Al-Hasakeh, respectively, reporting sufficient water availability in May, compared to 74% nationally.

PRIORITY NEEDS & KEY FINDINGS

Food Security

% of communities with problems accessing food, as reported by KIs

73%	77%	Deir-ez-Zor	100%
MAR	MAY	Ar-Raqqa	98%
		Al-Hasakeh	92%

% of communities with economic barriers to food access, as reported by KIs

78%	97%	Quneitra	100%
MAR	MAY	As-Sweida	100%
		Dara'a	100%

% of communities with a major increase in the price of food, as reported by KIs

61%	67%	Quneitra	100%
MAR	MAY	As-Sweida	98%
		Rural Damascus	92%

Food insecurity remained the most frequently reported priority need. Compared to March, there was a slight increase in the proportion of communities reporting difficulties accessing food, with access challenges reported across the majority of governorates.

While most KIs in most communities (83%) reported sufficient quantities of food available in local markets, affordability remained a major constraint. **KIs in two thirds of communities (67%) reported large increases in food prices**, including for bread (31%), fruits and vegetables (47%), and meat, eggs, and dairy products (47%). As a result, the high cost of food was identified as the primary barrier to food security (77%). The elderly and female-headed households were reported as the groups most at risk of experiencing hunger.

Livelihoods

Livelihoods remained a major concern, with KIs in 90% of communities reporting that people struggled to earn enough income to meet their basic needs. Low wages (91%) and limited work opportunities (90%) continued to be the primary barriers to sustainable livelihoods, consistent with findings from March.

Economic pressures also intensified, with KIs in 62% of communities reporting a significant increase in the cost of living, driven by higher fuel and transportation costs and the depreciation of the Syrian Pound. At the same time, most household incomes remained unchanged, further eroding purchasing power amid rising prices. According to KIs, these challenges affected all population groups, but were particularly acute among female-headed households, households with large numbers of dependents, and people with disabilities.

% of communities with people facing problems earning enough income to meet basic needs, as reported by KIs

91%	90%	Quneitra	100%
MAR	MAY	As-Sweida	98%
		Damascus	92%

% of communities with low wage employment offers, as reported by KIs

88%	91%	Deir-ez-Zor	100%
MAR	MAY	Ar-Raqqa	100%
		Quneitra	100%

% of communities where the majority of people relied on farming for food, as reported by KIs

57%	74%	Deir-ez-Zor	93%
MAR	MAY	As-Sweida	93%
		Quneitra	85%

Health

% of communities with problems accessing healthcare, as reported by KIs

72%	78%	Quneitra	100%
MAR	MAY	Ar-Raqqa	100%
		Al-Hasakeh	96%

% of communities with insufficient medicine/equipment, as reported by KIs

52%	54%	Quneitra	100%
MAR	MAY	As-Sweida	94%
		Dara'a	88%

% of communities without health campaign services, as reported by KIs

31%	37%	Quneitra	100%
MAR	MAY	Deir-ez-Zor	73%
		Lattakia	61%

Health was among the three most frequently reported priority needs, cited by KIs in 50% of assessed communities. Access to healthcare remained a challenge, with KIs in 78% of communities reporting barriers to accessing services. Affordability (64%) and shortages of medicines and medical equipment (54%) were the most commonly reported obstacles.

Health concerns were particularly pronounced in communities affected by active conflict, including Quneitra and As-Sweida, as well as in the northeastern governorates of Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and Deir-ez-Zor, where the ongoing transition of administrative control from the SDF to the Government of Syria has disrupted the provision of health services.

SECTORAL FINDINGS

The following results are presented as percentage of assessed communities at national level.

Displacement Trends

Displacement dynamics remained relatively limited across assessed communities. KIs in most communities (65%) reported no displaced populations currently residing in the area, while recent outflows were also low, with 90% reporting that no households had been forced to leave in the previous 30 days. **Relations between host communities and displaced populations remained largely positive**, with KIs in 94% of communities reporting no tensions. However, the continued arrival of displaced populations is **placing pressure on local resources and services in some areas, particularly in Lattakia**, where KIs in 50% of communities reported being overwhelmed by the scale of the influx.

WASH

Overall, KIs in 71% of communities reported sufficient water for domestic use. Nevertheless, 51% reported some level of drinking water problem, driven primarily by affordability constraints (41%) and limited water points (39%). **WASH needs were particularly acute in Deir-ez-Zor and Al-Hasakeh**, where years of conflict-related infrastructure damage, prolonged drought, recent flooding, and delays in rehabilitation linked to the ongoing transition from SDF to government control have contributed to persistent water shortages and service disruptions.

Protection & Social Cohesion

Protection concerns appeared relatively limited overall, with KIs in 76% of communities reporting no protection issues and 75% reporting no restrictions on freedom of movement. **Social cohesion also remained generally strong**, with KIs in 95% of communities reporting no tensions between population groups. **However, Al-Hasakeh was a notable exception, with KIs in 35% of communities reporting inter-group tensions** amid the ongoing transition from SDF to Government of Syria control, with ethnic, religious, and political differences cited as the primary drivers.

Electricity and Infrastructure

Access to electricity remained widespread but unreliable. The main electricity network was the primary source of power for 75% of communities, reported by KIs, while 22% relied on solar panels. However, only KIs in 18% of communities reported electricity availability for more than 18 hours per day or continuously, while the largest share (35%) reported access for just 7–12 hours per day. **Affordability and system reliability emerged as the main challenges**. KIs in communities reported increasing reliance on solar power (56%), high electricity costs (54%), partially or fully non-functional electricity networks (41%), and electricity rationing by local authorities (37%).

Accountability to Affected population

Information and accountability systems remained only partially functional. KIs in nearly one-third of communities (31%) reported significant information gaps, particularly regarding aid registration (61%), financial support (40%), and livelihood opportunities (33%). At the same time, KIs in half of communities reported that people did not know how to submit feedback or complaints, and only 29% believed humanitarian actors adapted assistance based on community feedback.

Shelter & NFIs

Shelter concerns were driven primarily by affordability rather than physical damage. The inability to afford rent and other housing-related costs was the most commonly reported challenge (79%), followed by overcrowding and lack of privacy (48%). Issues related to shelter conditions were also reported, including poor habitability (26%) and unsafe or damaged shelters (23%). **New shelter destruction was minimal**, with KIs in only 1% of communities reporting damage in the previous 30 days, suggesting that current shelter needs are driven more by economic pressures and protracted shelter inadequacies than by recent damage. Where damage was reported, it was primarily attributed to previous flooding (46%) and conflict (38%).

KEY INFORMATION

Governorates: **14**
Communities assessed: **750**
Key informants: **1,159**
Data collection dates: **13 May to 4 June**
Recall period of indicators: **30 days**

ENDNOTES

1. IMPACT REACH: Area of Knowledge Severity Index (AoK SI)
2. Sari Global: Situation Report (6 May 2026)
3. OCHA: Syrian Arab Republic Flash Update No. 2 (8 April 2026)
4. OCHA: 2026 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (April 2026)
5. OCHA: Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Overview Issue No. 4 (February 2026)

ABOUT REACH

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, Acted and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).