



# HASAKEH GOVERNORATE MULTI-SECTOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2016

SYRIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AUGUST 2016

## ABOUT THIS SUMMARY

This document presents a short summary of the multi-sector needs assessment of Hasakeh Governorate, Syria, based on primary data collected by REACH in May and June 2016. Further details of the assessment and findings are available via the links below:

- [Report: Hasakeh Multi-Sector Needs Assessment Report, August 2016](#)
- [Factsheets: Hasakeh Key Findings by Sub-district, August 2016](#)

Photo girls in Quamishli © Beshr Abdulhadi, 19 March 2013

### About REACH

REACH is a joint initiative of two international non-governmental organizations - ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives - and the UN Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). REACH's mission is to strengthen evidence-based decision making by aid actors through efficient data collection, management and analysis before, during and after an emergency. By doing so, REACH contributes to ensuring that communities affected by emergencies receive the support they need. All REACH activities are conducted in support to and within the framework of inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. For more information please visit our website: [www.reach-initiative.org](http://www.reach-initiative.org). You can contact us directly at: [geneva@reach-initiative.org](mailto:geneva@reach-initiative.org) and follow us on Twitter @REACH\_info.

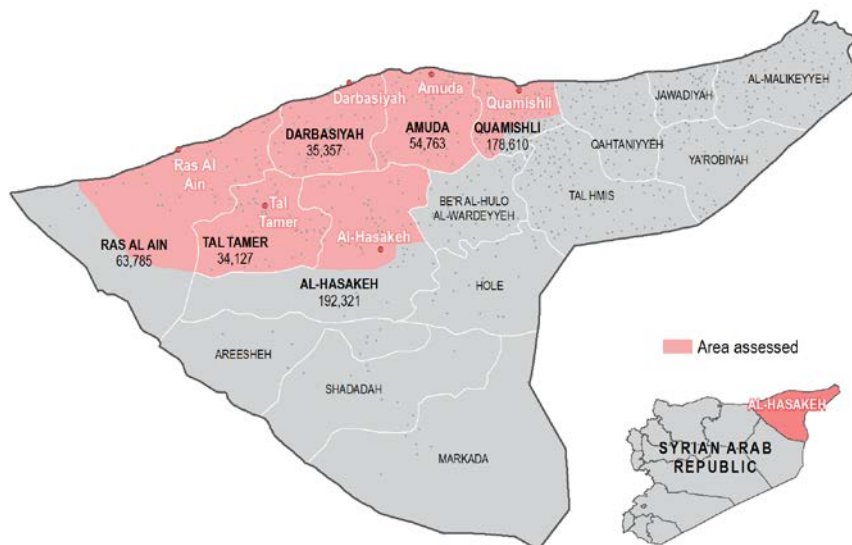
## SUMMARY

Since the beginning of the crisis in March 2011, conflict has caused 4.8 million people to flee Syria. Within the country, vulnerable populations include an estimated 13.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and 6.6 million internally displaced people (IDPs)<sup>1</sup>. Accessing parts of this population remains challenging due to the ongoing conflict, and there is often little detailed information on the needs and vulnerabilities of people inside the country, which further impedes the response.

Hasakeh governorate, situated in the north-eastern corner of the country, is home to a diverse mixture of ethnic groups, predominantly Arab and Kurdish. The governorate provides an illustration of the challenges mentioned above: the south of the governorate is difficult for international humanitarian actors to access due to the presence of hostile armed opposition groups (AOGs), whilst the north remains affected by sporadic outbreaks of clashes. In addition to these access issues, it is estimated that between January and May 2016, the governorate received 34,950 returnees, the second largest number of returnees in any governorate in Syria after Dar'a. Meanwhile, during the same period, 6,000 people became displaced within the governorate and approximately 11,300 left for other locations in Syria<sup>2</sup>. As in the rest of the country, household-level information on the overall impact of sustained conflict on humanitarian needs in Hasakeh governorate is limited due to the challenges in access, hindering any systematic or regular household level data collection.

Therefore, this Multi Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) intends to provide an overview of the humanitarian situation in selected areas of Hasakeh governorate, covering the six sub-districts of Ras al Ain, Tal Tamer, Darbasiyah, Amuda, Quamishli and Hasakeh (see map below). It aims to provide an overview of the situation across the aforementioned sub-districts to enable identification of the composition and living conditions of people in these areas as well as allow a comparison between areas in order to assist humanitarian actors with the planning and targeting of assistance. Emphasis has been laid on findings related to food security and livelihoods in order to determine the long-term impact of the crisis on populations that have not left the country. The assessment also covers key indicators related to shelter, non-food items (NFIs), health and education needs. A detailed section on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) has also been included as data was collected in alignment with a WASH Cluster-led assessment in the North West, South and North East of Syria.

Map 1: Assessed areas of Hasakeh governorate



Data for this assessment was collected through 1,524 household-level interviews conducted between the end of May and the beginning of June 2016. The sample collected allows results to be a) representative across the whole area covered with a confidence level of at least 95% and margin of error maximum 5%; b) generalizable at the sub-district level with a confidence level of 95% and margin of error of 10%; and c) generalizable across rural and urban

<sup>1</sup> UN OCHA Syria, May 2016, <http://www.unocha.org/syria>

<sup>2</sup> UN OCHA, [Syrian Arab Republic: Internal Displacement \(January-May 2016\)](#)

areas with a confidence level of at least 95% and margin of error maximum 5% (with urban taken to be the main cities of each sub-district collectively and rural taken to be all other communities in the sub-districts assessed).

The section below highlights some of the key sectoral findings of the assessment across all sub districts assessed, followed by a comparison of WASH, livelihoods and food security findings between sub-districts as well as between urban and rural areas.

## Key Findings: Sectoral Breakdown

### Demographics and Migration

The assessment found that the average household size was 6.2 people, typically comprising of 3.5 adults and 2.7 children. Rural households were found to be larger (7.1 people compared to 5.9 people) and as such, households in those sub-districts with larger proportional rural populations also tended to be larger on average (for example, in Tal Tamer the average household size was 6.6 people compared to Quamishli with 5.8 people).

Children resided in 82% of households with children under the age of 5 living in approximately half of households, resulting in a high dependency ratio<sup>3</sup> of almost 1 across the area, meaning that for every working age individual in the areas assessed, there is one economically dependent individual of non-working age. This represents a significant difference from the country-wide average of 0.7 from 2014<sup>4</sup>.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) comprised 9% of the population assessed<sup>5</sup>, whilst returnees<sup>6</sup> made up 11% of the population assessed. The largest proportions of returnees were found in Ras al Ain (24%), Tal Tamer (21%) and Hasakeh (15%), whilst the largest proportions of IDPs were found in Hasakeh (11%), Darbasiyah (10%) and Quamishli (8%). Households in urban areas were more likely to contain both IDPs and returnees when compared to rural areas, potentially indicative of the greater pull towards these locations. Of the 8.9% of IDPs, approximately half were from elsewhere in Hasakeh governorate (49%), with substantial proportions from Aleppo (22%) and Deir ez Zor (11%). In particular, many were from Shadadah (14%) and Hasakeh (14%) sub-districts within Hasakeh governorate, parts of which have seen conflict and takeover by different AOGs since the beginning of the crisis. Further, of the 126 households assessed that were found to host IDPs, just 8 of these households (6%) were shared with members of the pre-conflict populations, indicating that IDPs typically live independently from host populations.

### Food Security

Overall, 78% of households had an 'acceptable' Food Consumption Score indicating acceptable short-term food consumption in terms of dietary diversity, and 97% of households reported typically eating three meals per day. Nevertheless, 21% of households were classified as food insecure<sup>7</sup> highlighting presence of a particularly disadvantaged pocket of people. Although the remaining 79% are classified as food secure, this is comprised of 21% food secure and 58% marginally food secure, indicating that the majority of these households are potentially close to becoming food insecure. Indeed, it appears that the majority of households were able to access food sources and maintain a reasonable level of dietary diversity: 97% of households reported that shops and markets were one of their most common sources of food. However, it was reportedly difficult to maintain this level of consumption, as 86% of households reported challenges to accessing food; these were commonly related to a lack of income opportunities and the comparative expense of food, as well as a lack of certain items on markets; the majority of households adopted negative coping strategies as a result.

<sup>3</sup> Comparison of working age individuals to economically-dependent individuals of non-working age.

<sup>4</sup> The World Bank (2015), [The World Bank Data, Syrian Arab Republic](#), accessed 23/06/2016

<sup>5</sup> Since IDP camps were not targeted during this assessment, this population breakdown is only indicative and not a reflection of the situation across the governorate or the assessed sub-districts.

<sup>6</sup> For the purposes of this assessment, returnees were defined as those who had left the community (neighbourhood / village) since the beginning of the crisis but who have since returned

<sup>7</sup> Methodology for calculating Food Consumption Score and overall food security were taken from WFP (2015) [VAM Guidance Paper CARI Guidelines. Food Consumption Score measures households' current status of food consumption based on the number of days per week a household is able to consume items from standard food groups. The Food Security Index measures household overall food security status, comprises measures of short-term consumption \(Food Consumption Score\) and long-term coping capacity \(food expenditure share and use of livelihood-based coping strategy\). Therefore, households with an acceptable FCS may not be classified as food secure, if they are unable to meet long-term coping capacity criteria; similarly, households with an unacceptable FCS may be classified as food secure if they demonstrate positive long-term coping capacity.](#)

A slightly greater proportion of rural households (15%) were estimated to be food insecure in comparison to urban households (13%). Examining the components of the food security calculations reveals little difference in the short-term ability to maintain dietary diversity, but a greater reliance on coping mechanisms indicating a low long-term coping capacity of households in rural areas. When considered against findings for food expenditure share and challenges to accessing food, different dynamics are evident. Urban households, which are slightly less encumbered by debt and have lower monthly expenditures partially due to lower debt repayments, tend to spend a larger proportion and a larger nominal amount of their income on food. In contrast, rural households are perhaps less able to do so due to their heavy debt burden; as well as a slightly greater reliance on sources of food other than stores/markets compared to urban areas, they tend to resort to coping strategies and in a minority of cases, extreme coping strategies. With the unsustainable debt load and decreasing food production, this could potentially increase in the future.

## Livelihoods

Employment opportunities in the sub-districts assessed appear limited: the total reported proportion of adults working was 38%, indicating that 62% of adults are not employed which is higher than the present estimated country-wide average of 53%<sup>8</sup>. Further, there has been a reported decrease in levels of employment-based income sources since before the crisis, such as salaried employment, daily casual labour, farm ownership, and business/trade. In parallel, there has been an increase in reported reliance on non-employment based sources which typically generate less income and are less stable than employment based-source, such as remittances from outside and inside Syria, borrowing from family/ friends, and using savings.

The lack of livelihood opportunities is evident in the high proportion of households reporting facing challenges to maintaining household income in the 30 days prior to assessment (90%), as well as the nature of challenges reported: a lack of employment opportunities, low wages/salaries and high cost of inputs were the most commonly reported challenges (by 42%, 40% and 37% of households respectively). Indeed, this appears to have manifested itself in unsustainable levels of expenditure and debt in comparison to income: average monthly expenditure (106,370 SYP or \$168.04) and average debt (172,995 SYP or \$273.29) far exceeded average monthly income (64,284 SYP or \$101.55). The debt burden appears to inhibit short term ability to sustain livelihoods, as debt repayment is the second largest portion of monthly expenditure (19%), after food expenditure (44%).

The majority of households (64%) resorted to livelihoods-based coping mechanisms to meet their basic needs in the 30 days prior to assessment. The majority of coping mechanisms used fell into the 'stress' category, such as reducing food intake, spending savings, and borrowing money or buying on credit (by respectively 25%, 18% and 19% of all households); these decrease the household's ability to weather future shocks due to a reduction of resources. A high level of 'crisis' strategies was also prevalent: selling goods and assets was reported by 25% of households and selling productive assets or means of transport by 11%. Such strategies negatively affect future productivity, indicating likelihood of further deterioration.

Whilst employment opportunities appeared limited in both urban and rural areas (36% of adults working in rural households compared to 38% in urban households), the type of employment differed, with temporary or daily jobs more common in rural areas (17% compared to 15%), and stable salaried employment less common (19% compared to 23%). Overall rural populations were more reliant on less predictable sources of income which appears to have exacerbated unsustainable income, debt and expenditure patterns in rural households (in rural areas, average monthly income is \$100.46, average monthly expenditure is \$180.64 and average debt is \$299.82).

## Shelter / NFIs

The majority of the population lived in independent houses / apartments (97%), with small proportions residing in unfinished buildings/squatting (3%), collective centres such as schools and mosques (0.2%), and informal settlements such as tents and hand-made shelters (0.2%). IDP households were more likely to be in vulnerable shelter types: whilst 87% resided in homes / houses / apartments, the remainder lived in unfinished buildings (9%)

<sup>8</sup> Syrian Centre for Policy Research (2016), [Confronting Fragmentation: Impact of Syrian Crisis quarterly based report](#)

collective centres (2%), informal settlements (2) and other miscellaneous accommodation (1%). It was common to own shelters (79%), with smaller proportions of households renting (15%), being hosted (3%) and squatting (2%).

Shelter dynamics appear quite different in urban and rural areas. Those in urban areas are more likely to rent their homes (19% compared to 5% in urban areas), with typically a larger average proportion of their income being spent on rent. Further, rent in urban areas was much more expensive (\$13.19 compared to \$10.26 in rural areas). In contrast, those in rural areas are more likely to own their homes than those in urban areas, and there is a larger pocket of people living in less secure shelter types (unfinished buildings / squatting, informal tented settlements). Rural households were also more likely to be damaged (46% lightly, moderately, heavily damaged or destroyed) in comparison to urban households (39% damaged).

Although almost all households assessed reported having some access to electricity (99%), access was commonly limited. 95% of households still had some access to the main network; however, 49% of households had fewer than eight hours of access per day and only 50% used the network as their primary source of electricity. The other half (49%) used generator power as their primary sources, with a few households (1%) using small private generators or borrowing electricity from family or friends. Households using generator power as their main source of electricity were less likely to have a constant supply than those relying on the main network: of the 49% households that primarily relied on generator power, just 1% of these had more than 12 hours of access to electricity per day compared to 42% of the 50% of households which relied on the main network.

The main sources of cooking fuel for the majority of the population were gas (73%) and kerosene/kaz (24%) with few households using electricity (1%), wood / charcoal (1%) and diesel (0.3%). Kerosene appears to be most commonly used in households which have limited access to resources, potentially acting as a proxy for vulnerable households. It was the most common fuel used in most households with no source of electricity (63%), whilst gas was most common in households using generator and main network power (74%, 74% respectively). Further, kerosene is the most common fuel source in 46% of households classified as food insecure.

In terms of access to electricity, all households with no electricity source were located in rural areas (1% of households overall); these households with no electricity typically resided in heavily damaged shelters, indicating presence of a small pocket of relatively disadvantaged households. However, households in rural areas were slightly more likely than households in urban areas to use the main network as their primary source of electricity (53% compared to 49%). When taken alongside the finding that rural areas tended to be able to access more hours of electricity through the main network per day (73% of households accessing more than four hours per day compared to 65% in urban households), this indicates that rural households have better access to the main network. However, urban households were more able to supplement the lack of access through generator power; 75% of households had more than 4 hours access per day whilst 47% of rural households did.

## WASH

Overall, reliance on the main network as a source of water for both household and drinking purposes was prevalent across the area assessed. The majority of households (85%) used water from the main network as their main drinking water source, with a small number using open wells (6%), closed wells (4%), water trucking (4%) and bottled water (1%). Despite good connection to the main network, water consumption appeared limited for the majority of households, with presence of a number extremely disadvantaged households evident. In terms of sufficiency of water, almost a quarter of households (24%) spent 2 days or more without water in the 30-day period prior to assessment, and 14% of households reported that they did not have sufficient water over the past 30 days to meet their needs. The average water consumption per household was 19.3 barrels in the 30-day period prior to assessment, corresponding to an average usage of 623 litres per person per month. The lack of sufficient water appears to be leading a minority of households to resort to behavioural changes: 14% of households reported having changed their hygiene practices in the 30 days prior to assessment due to a lack of water.

Disparities appear when considering water availability in urban and rural areas. Households in rural areas were found to be much less likely to use the main network as a main source of drinking and household water (respectively 56% and 61% of households in rural areas compared to 96% for both in urban areas), with greater reliance on non-

piped sources such as closed and open wells, and water trucking. It was more common to spend 2 or more days without water in rural areas (31% of households compared to 22% in urban areas); further, the proportion of households reporting to not have had sufficient water to meet needs was higher in rural areas (20% of households compared to 12% in urban areas). When taken alongside the fact that rural households spent 7% of their monthly budget on water compared to 3% in urban households, it appears that rural households were more limited in the amount of water available for consumption. Indeed, this appears to be reflected in hygiene practices: a greater proportion of households in rural areas reported changing their hygiene practices in the past 30 days (21% compared to 11% in urban areas) to cope with the lack of water.

## Health

Health questions focused on the number of reported illnesses or symptoms of illnesses commonly related to water sources<sup>9</sup>. A reported 9% of the population suffered from diarrhoea in the two weeks prior to the survey, with reported rates significantly higher for children under 5 (28%) compared to 7% of children 6-17 and 5% of adults. Further, males appeared to have slightly higher rates of diarrhoea than females (10% compared to 8%)<sup>10</sup>. A reported 5% of the population suffered from skin infections<sup>11</sup> in the two weeks prior to the survey. As with diarrhoea, children below 5 were more susceptible (7% compared to 5% of children aged 6-17 and 5% of adults), though there was no notable pattern between males and females.

Overall 53% of households reported being unable to obtain some form of required health assistance, whilst 33% reported being able to obtain assistance and 14% reported not needing any assistance. The most common forms of health assistance required were drugs (43% of all households), followed by treatment for chronic disease (18%) and primary health care services (17%).

Diarrhoea was slightly more prevalent in urban than rural areas, affecting 9% of populations in urban areas and 8% in rural areas. In contrast, skin infections were slightly more prevalent in rural areas when compared to urban areas (7% compared to 5%). Required health services differed slightly between urban and rural areas, with those in urban areas more likely to require but not have access to treatment for chronic disease and drugs, as well as psychiatric care, surgical care, orthopaedics, assistive devices and home visits by health professionals. On the other hand, in rural areas, required health services prioritized were drugs, primary healthcare services, treatment for chronic diseases, maternal/ child health services and immunisation.

## Education

In households assessed 8% of children between the ages of 6 and 17 reported to have not attended school (for at least four days per week) during the previous term, and 4% of children were reported to have not attended school for more than one year<sup>12</sup>; this is significantly better than the country-wide estimation that 50% of children are not attending school<sup>13</sup>. When disaggregated by age and sex, rates of non-attendance are higher for those in secondary education (11% of males 13-17 not attending school in the previous term and 8% of females). Further, across both primary and secondary aged children, males were found to be more likely not to be attending school.

The most commonly cited educational needs were related to provision of education materials for both students and teachers, whilst a lack of money for tuition/education materials was the most common reason cited for lack of attendance in schools. Whilst affordability of education and educational materials is relatively easy to respond to, assessment findings highlighted more fundamental challenges to accessing education for a minority of children within the assessed area: of those children not attending school, approximately 10% faced the issue of the curriculum being taught in a different language due to the Arab/ Kurdish split in the region, leaving a small pocket of children completely unable to access education.

<sup>9</sup> These are self-reported by households and not verified by medical reports, therefore findings are indicative only.

<sup>10</sup> Due to the small difference found and the margin of error, this finding is indicative only.

<sup>11</sup> These infections were self-reported by the interviewees and could be based on self-perceptions rather than medical diagnosis.

<sup>12</sup> These rates are self-reported by households and not verified by school attendance records. This could include those who never attended school in the first place, those who were attending school and then dropped out, and those who are registered but are not attending (for example, those who frequently miss school).

<sup>13</sup> Save the Children (2015), [The Cost of War](#)