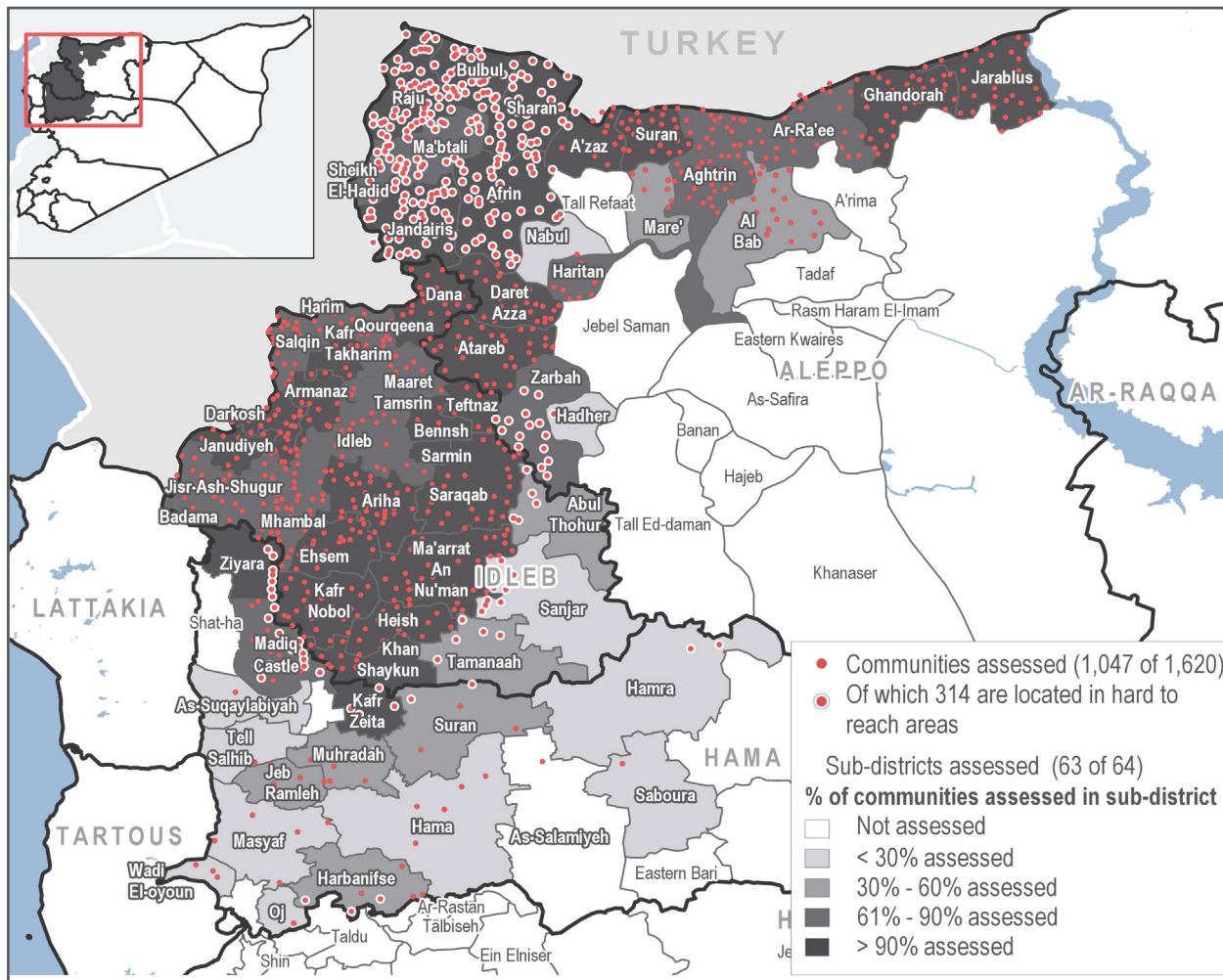


# Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria (HSOS)

## Northwest Syria, February 2019

### Coverage



### Introduction

HSOS is a monthly assessment that aims to provide comprehensive, multi-sectoral information about the humanitarian situation inside Syria. The assessment is conducted at the community level covering [displacement, shelter and non-food items \(SNFI\)](#), [health, water, sanitation and hygiene \(WASH\)](#), [food security and livelihoods \(FSL\)](#), and [education](#).

The factsheet presents information gathered in 1,047 communities across Idleb (426 communities), western Aleppo\* (81 communities), northern Aleppo (452 communities), and Hama (88 communities) governorates. Data was collected during the month of March 2019, and refers to the situation in the northwest region in February 2019. Findings are indicative rather than representative, and should not be generalised across the region.

For community-level data, datasets are available on the [REACH Resource Centre](#), the [Humanitarian Data Exchange](#), and are also distributed through partners across the humanitarian community.

\*The western part of Aleppo where humanitarian response and coordination is conducted from the northwest rather than the northeast.

### Top 3 reported priority needs in assessed communities:

- 1 Healthcare
- 2 Food Security
- 3 Livelihoods

### People in Need (PiN)\* in assessed communities:

**2,631,842** PiN      **1,463,709** People in Acute Need

### Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB):<sup>1,2</sup>

Average price in **January 2019**      **59,710** Syrian pound (SYP)  
 One month change:      **+4%**  
 Six month change:      **+12%**

\* PiN refers to people whose physical security, basic rights, dignity, living conditions or livelihoods are threatened or have been disrupted, and whose current level of access to basic services, goods and protection is inadequate to re-establish normal living conditions within their accustomed means without assistance.

People in Acute Need refers to those facing more severe forms of deprivation in terms of their security, basic rights and living conditions and face life-threatening needs requiring urgent humanitarian assistance ([HNO 2019](#)).

The calculated PiN numbers are indicative as they are calculated using the OCHA dataset and coverage varies slightly.

### Key events impacting the humanitarian situation in Northwest Syria (NWS)

|                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Operation "Olive Branch" commences in Afrin.<sup>a</sup></p> | <p>213,000 individuals spontaneously return to 287 communities in rural Aleppo governorate and 355,000 individuals return to Aleppo city.<sup>b</sup></p> | <p>Approximately 1.9 million IDPs reside in Idleb, western Aleppo, northern Hama and eastern Lattakia according to UNHCR.<sup>c</sup></p> | <p>Announcement of a demilitarised zone in NWS that bars the presence of heavy weaponry and certain armed opposition groups.<sup>d</sup></p> | <p>Cold temperatures, heavy rainfall, and flooding lead to deterioration of the humanitarian situation in IDP camps in Idleb and Aleppo governorates.<sup>e</sup></p> | <p>Conflict in Idleb and surrounding areas led to further displacement.<sup>f,g</sup> Renewed escalation of conflict in Southern Idleb and Northern Hama in February 2019.<sup>h</sup></p> |
| January 2018                                                    | February 2018                                                                                                                                             | End of August 2018                                                                                                                        | 17 September 2018                                                                                                                            | December 2018 - Ongoing                                                                                                                                               | December 2018 - February 2019                                                                                                                                                              |

## CONTEXT

In February, a further escalation of conflict was witnessed in northern Hama and southern Idlib governorates, impacting the security situation and population movement throughout northwest Syria (NWS). Approximately 45,000 individuals fled to more than 86 communities and camps throughout NWS.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the increase in conflict impacted access to services throughout northern Hama and Idlib governorates. In northern Hama governorate, access to medical services was negatively impacted.<sup>2</sup> The food situation deteriorated in both accessible and hard-to-reach areas due to the unstable security situation.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, approximately 130 schools stopped providing services in northwestern Idlib and Hama governorates, affecting more than 60,000 students in those areas.<sup>4</sup>

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS<sup>5</sup>

### Different priority needs in Hama governorate

In Hama governorate, the priority needs were significantly different from the overall priority needs in the rest of NWS. Of the 88 assessed communities in Hama governorate, the three most commonly reported priority needs were livelihoods, reported in 69 (78%) assessed communities, protection, reported in 42 (48%) assessed communities, and early recovery, reported in 39 (44%) assessed communities. In comparison, of the assessed communities in the rest of NWS, the three most commonly reported priority needs were healthcare, food security, and livelihoods. This highlights that humanitarian actors should tailor their response accordingly for Hama governorate. Protection concerns such as threats from airstrikes, mines and snipers/gunfire in northern Hama were also reported in the [Southern Idlib and Northern Hama Rapid Needs Assessment February 2019](#).

### Limited access to healthcare facilities in NWS

Healthcare was continuously a most commonly reported top priority need in December 2018, January as well as February 2019. Across NWS, KIs in 564 (54%) of 1,047 assessed communities reported that there were no medical facilities functioning in their community. This was most commonly reported in northern Aleppo, by KIs in 306 (68%) of 452 assessed communities. In addition to the limited availability of functioning healthcare facilities in assessed communities, a more general lack of healthcare facilities in the area was reported as a major barrier to accessing needed healthcare service. Out of the 1,047 assessed NWS communities, KIs in 465 (44%) communities reported the perception that there were no healthcare facilities available in the area. KIs in 540 (52%) of 1,047 assessed communities - only slightly more than half - reported that all population groups had equal access to healthcare. Vulnerable groups were reported by KIs to experience more barriers to accessing healthcare, including women (17% of assessed communities), the elderly (17%), children (10%), and IDPs (10%). Coping strategies were more commonly reported in Idlib governorate (19% of assessed communities), in comparison to Aleppo (1%) and Hama (2%) governorates. KIs in 41 (10%) of 426 assessed communities in Idlib governorate reported recycling medical items, and KIs in 41 (10%) of assessed communities reported using less than the recommended dose of medication. These coping strategies were almost exclusively reported in Idlib governorate. This is likely linked to KIs in 230 (54%) assessed communities reporting that drugs were needed, which was most commonly reported in Idlib governorate.



## Displacement<sup>4</sup>

- Of the 1,047 assessed communities in NWS, KIs in 272 (26%) assessed communities reported that already internally displaced people (IDPs) left the community again in February (secondary displacement). This was especially prevalent in Hama governorate, where KIs in 74 (84%) of 88 assessed communities reported that IDPs were displaced again.
- The most commonly reported reasons for IDPs leaving assessed communities were reduced access to services (reported in 25% of communities reporting secondary displacements), loss of income (21%), escalation of conflict (15%) and access to money to pay for movement (15%). While escalation of conflict was the most commonly reported reason for secondary displacements in assessed communities close to conflict lines in southern Idlib and northern Hama, reduced access to services and loss of income were most commonly reported as reasons in northern Aleppo and Idlib governorates.



## Food Security & Livelihoods

- All assessed communities in NWS reported challenges to accessing food in February. The most commonly reported coping strategies were borrowing money from friends, as reported by KIs in 683 (65%) assessed communities, and children being sent to work or beg, as reported by KIs in 504 (48%) assessed communities. In western Aleppo governorate, KIs in 79 (98%) of 81 assessed communities reported children being sent to work or beg.
- Across NWS, KIs in 87 (8%) of 1,047 assessed communities reported residents of their communities not accessing bread daily. This was more often reported in Idlib governorate, by KIs in 60 (14%) of 426 assessed communities, and in Hama governorate, by KIs in 16 (18%) of 88 assessed communities.



## Education

- KIs in 449 (43%) of 1,047 assessed communities in NWS reported that children were not accessing education services. The most commonly reported reasons were the distance to services being too far, the lack of school supplies, and lack of teaching staff.
- Across NWS, the destruction of facilities hindering children's access to education was reported by KIs in 69 (7%) assessed communities. This was most commonly reported in Hama governorate, by KIs in 24 (27%) of 88 assessed communities.



## WASH

- Of the 1,047 assessed communities in NWS, KIs in 370 (35%) reported problems with the latrines in February. The most commonly reported problem - septic tanks not being emptied - was mainly reported in northern Aleppo (85% of assessed communities) and Idlib governorate (65%).



## Health

- Healthcare was the top reported priority need in NWS. KIs in the majority of assessed communities reported diseases affecting children under five (71% assessed communities), followed by chronic diseases (55% of assessed communities), and lastly acute respiratory infections (54% of assessed communities) as the most commonly cited health problems. The latter is likely related to winter conditions impacting respiratory health problems.
- KIs in assessed communities throughout western Aleppo, Hama, and Idlib governorates identified a high prevalence of skin disease (reported in 33% of assessed communities in these three governorates). Public health concerns in these areas were likely also compounded by the reported lack of access to healthcare services.

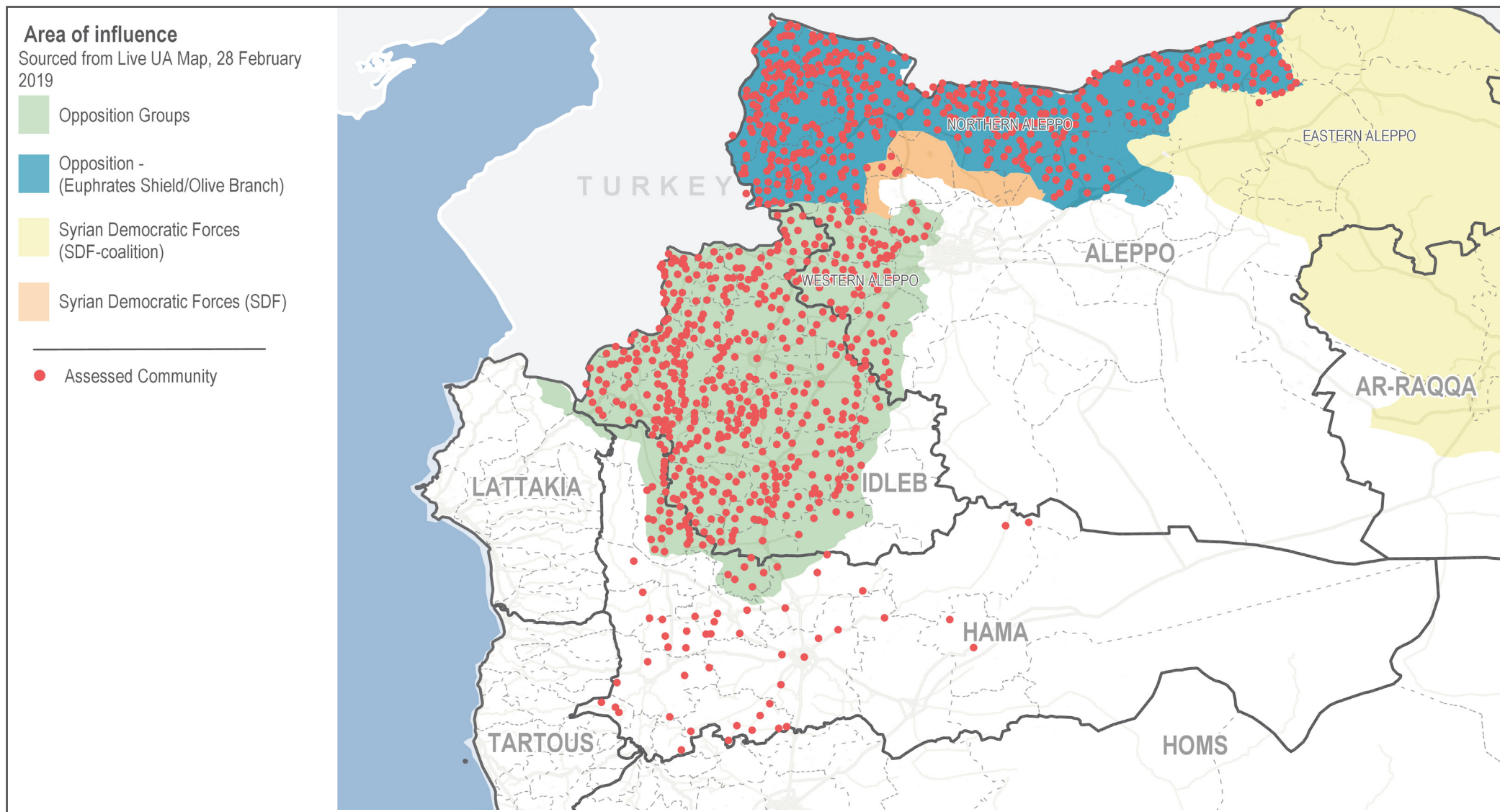


## Shelter and NFI

- Across NWS, a lack of fuel was reported by KIs in 41% of assessed communities. Coping strategies to deal with the lack of fuel, reported by KIs in 428 (41%) of 1,047 assessed communities in NWS, varied between governorates. In Hama governorate, the most commonly cited coping strategy was cutting trees (to burn). In northern Aleppo, burning plastics was most commonly reported. In western Aleppo, burning waste was commonly reported, but not reported frequently in other governorates in NWS.

# Northwest Syria, February 2019

## Regional areas of influence:



# Northwest Syria, February 2019

## DISPLACEMENT<sup>4</sup>

**48,710 - 54,580** Estimated number of IDP arrivals in assessed communities February 2019.

**5,230 - 5,720** Estimated number of spontaneous returns in assessed communities February 2019.<sup>5</sup>

### Communities with the largest estimated number of IDP arrivals:

Idleb (Idleb, Idleb) **3,500 - 3,600**  
 Maarzita (Kafr Nobol, Idleb) **1,900 - 2,000**  
 Banin (Ariha, Idleb) **1,600 - 1,700**

\*Reported as community, (sub-district, governorate)

### Top 3 reported subdistricts of origin for IDP arrivals:<sup>6,7</sup>

Khan Shaykun (Idleb)  
 Madiq Castle (Hama)  
 Ma'arrat An Nu'man (Idleb)

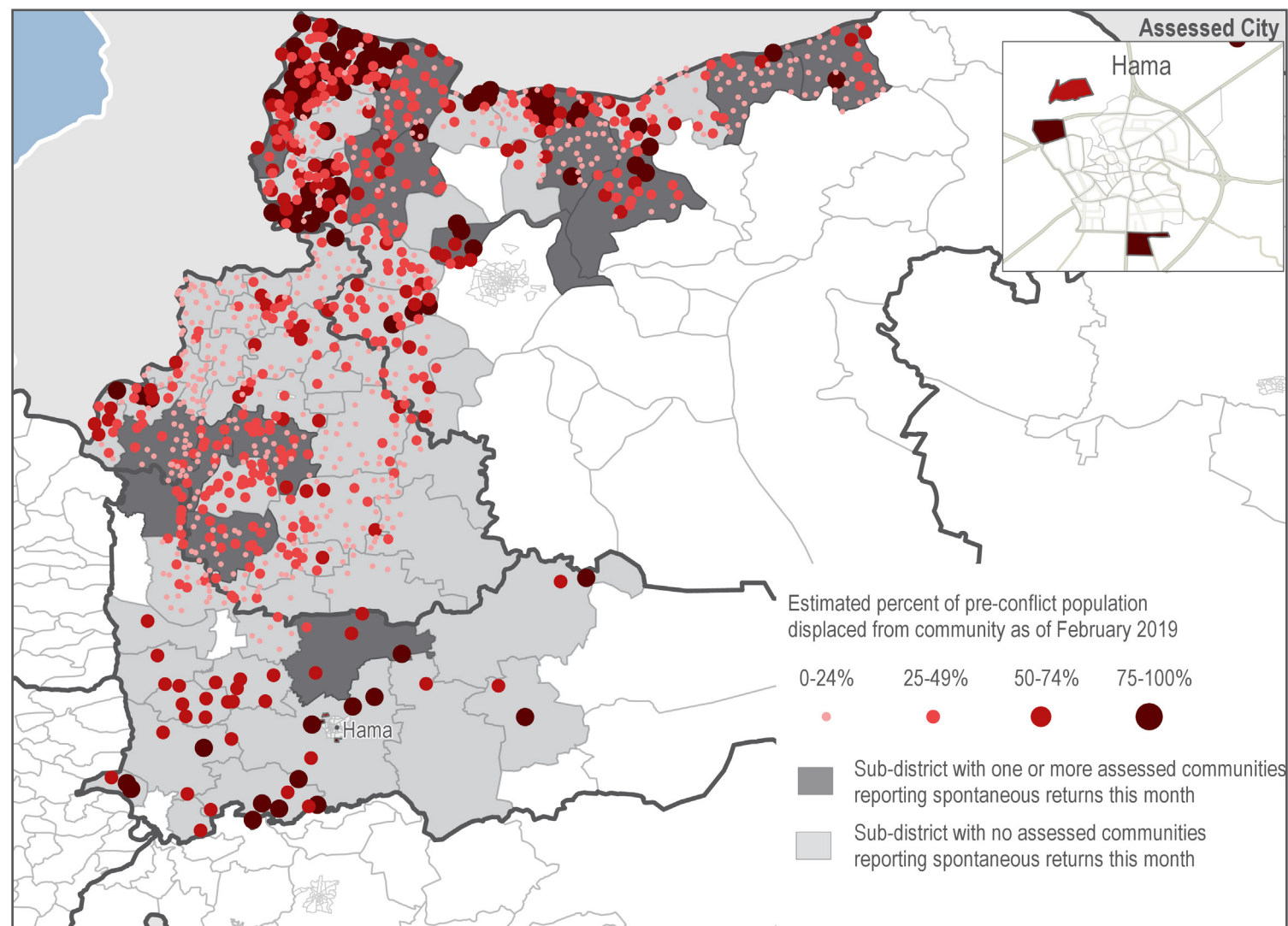
\*Reported as sub-district (governorate)

**956 communities reported no PCP departures.<sup>8</sup>**

**Top 3 reasons for PCP departures in the remaining 91 assessed communities:<sup>6,7,9</sup>**

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Escalation of conflict           | 54% |
| Loss of income                   | 40% |
| Reduced access to basic services | 33% |

Estimated proportion of pre-conflict population (PCP) displaced from community:



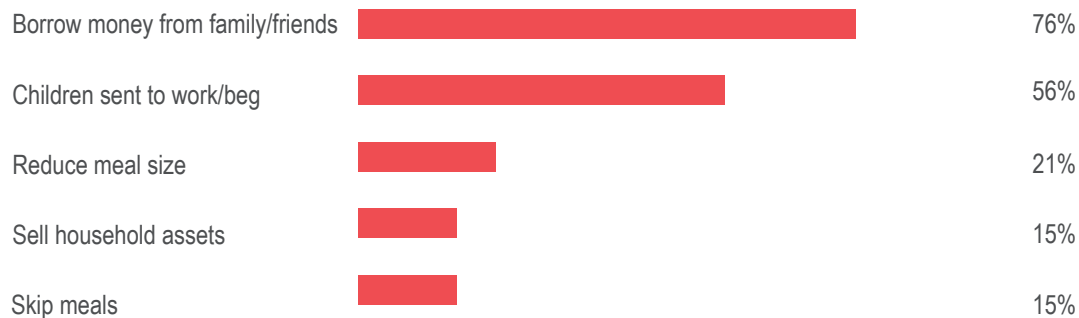
# Northwest Syria, February 2019



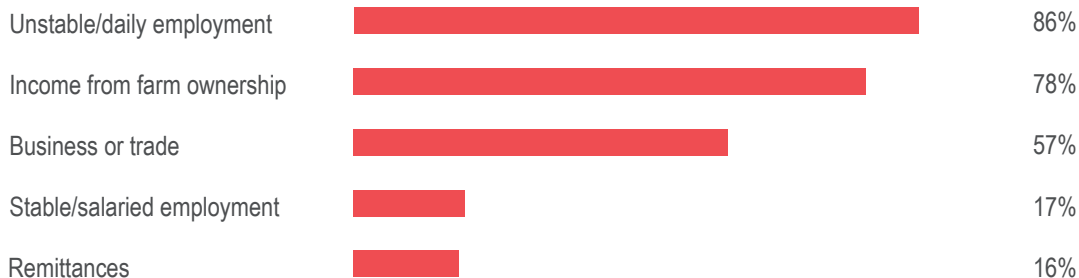
## FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOODS

- 240/1,047** Communities reported having received food distributions in the last month.
- 234/1,047** Communities reported that residents were unable to access shops and markets.
- 3/1,047** Communities reported that residents used extreme food-based coping strategies to deal with insufficient income.<sup>10</sup>
- Less than 50000 SYP** Most commonly reported household monthly income range.<sup>1</sup>

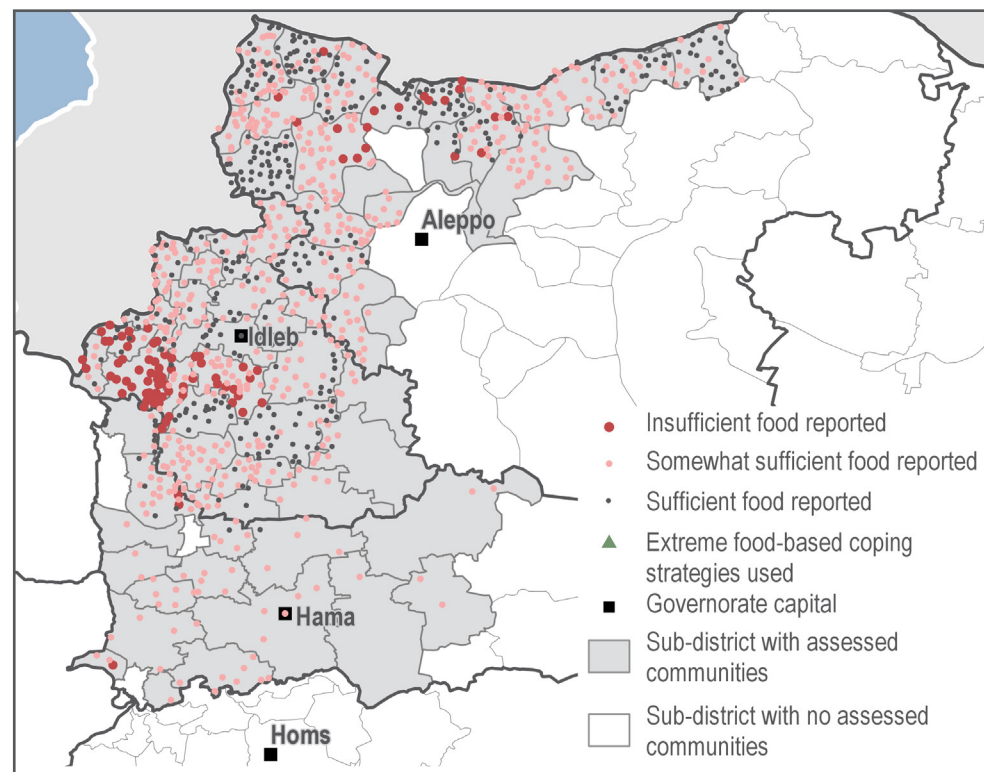
**147 communities** reported that residents had enough income to cover household needs. The most commonly reported coping strategies to deal with a lack of income in the remaining **893 assessed communities** were:<sup>6,7,9</sup>



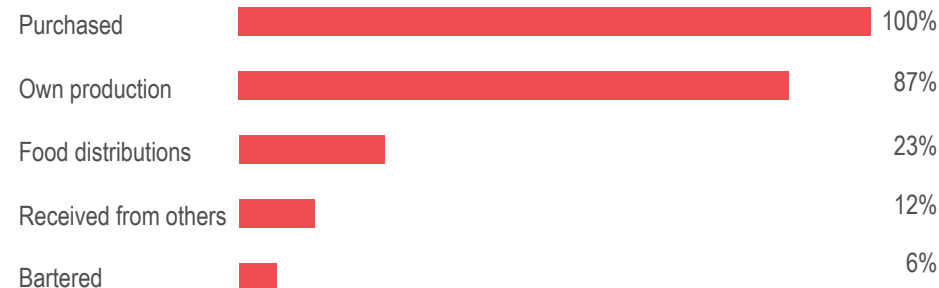
### Most commonly reported main sources of income:<sup>6,7</sup>



### Communities that reported having an insufficient quantity of food:<sup>11</sup>



### Most commonly reported ways of obtaining food:<sup>6,7</sup>



# Northwest Syria, February 2019



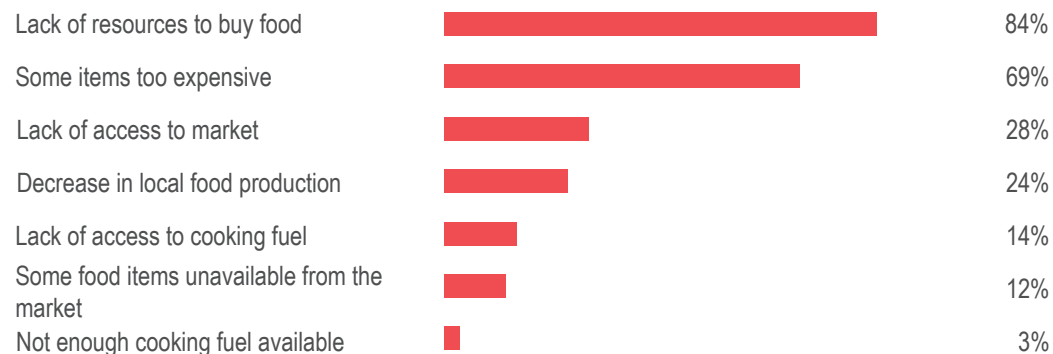
## FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOODS

Core food item prices reported (in SYP):<sup>1,12</sup>

| Food item:             | Regional average price Feb 2019: | One month change: | Six month change: |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Bread (8 pieces)       | 150                              | 0%                | 0%                |
| Rice (1 kilogram)      | 318                              | +6%               | +6%               |
| Lentils (1 kilogram)   | 250                              | -9%               | +11%              |
| Sugar (1 kilogram)     | 250                              | +9%               | 0%                |
| Cooking oil (1 litre)* | 3,784                            | +5%               | +5%               |

\*includes the combined vegetable oil and ghee prices

204 communities reported that residents experienced no challenges in accessing food. The most common difficulties experienced in the remaining 843 assessed communities were:<sup>6,7,9</sup>



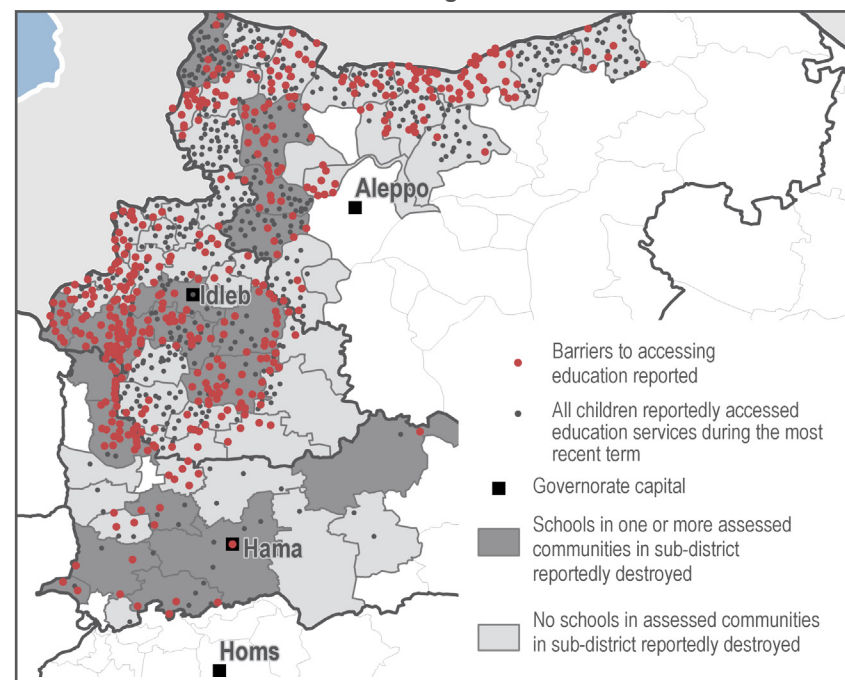
## EDUCATION

975/1,047 communities reported having functioning primary education facilities, while 483 communities reported having functioning secondary education facilities.<sup>13</sup>

598 communities reported that all children were able to access education. The most commonly reported barriers to education in the remaining 449 assessed communities were:<sup>6,7,9</sup>



Prevalence of barriers to accessing education services:



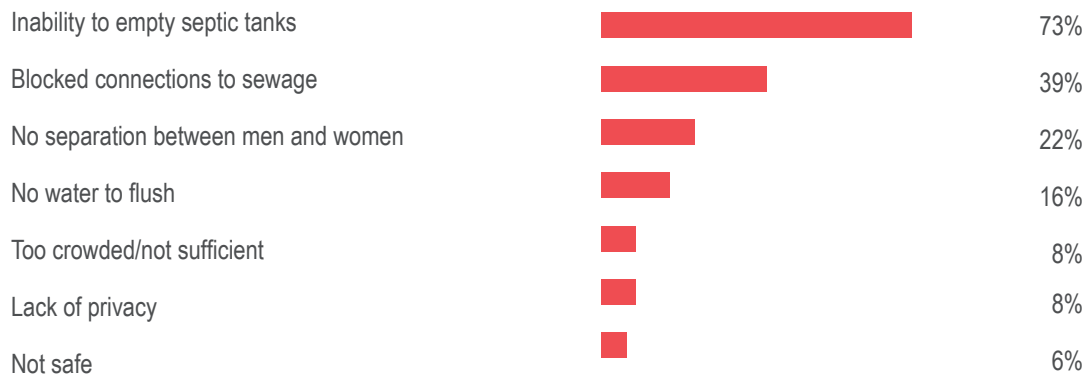
# Northwest Syria, February 2019



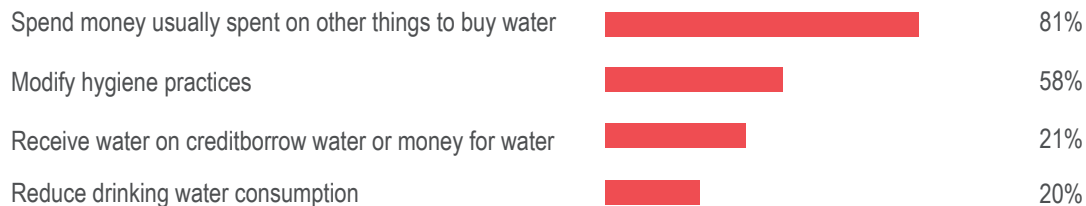
**15/1,047** Communities reported that water from their primary source tasted and/or smelled bad.

**1/1,047** Community, Qubbet Elsheikh (Northern Aleppo governorate), reported that drinking water from their primary source made people sick.

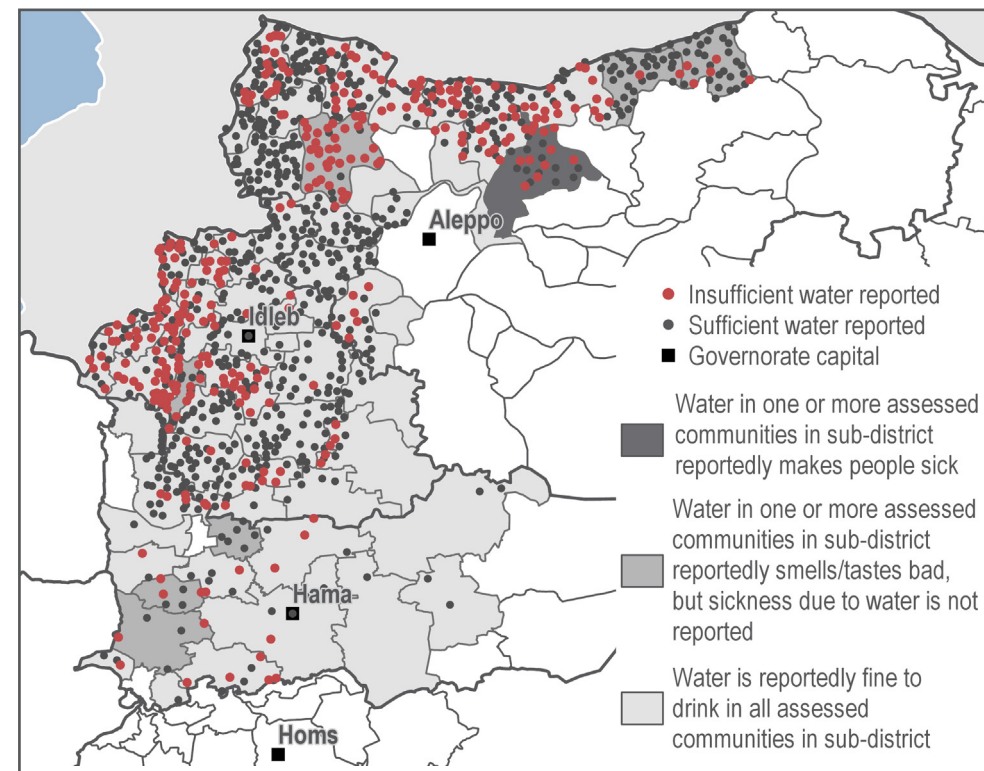
**677** communities reported that residents had no problems with latrines. The most commonly reported problems with latrines in the remaining **370** assessed communities were:<sup>5,7,9</sup>



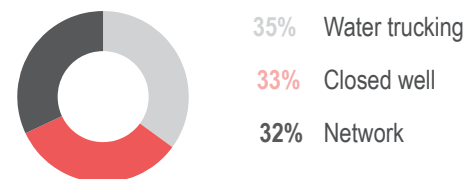
**722** communities reported that they had sufficient amounts of water to meet household needs. The most common coping strategies to deal with a lack of water in the remaining **324** assessed communities were:<sup>6,7,9</sup>



Communities that reported insufficient amounts of water to meet household needs:<sup>11</sup>



Primary drinking water source reported:<sup>7</sup>



Primary method of garbage disposal reported:<sup>6,7</sup>



# Northwest Syria, February 2019

## HEALTH

**215/1,047** Communities reported that no assessed medical items were available in their community.<sup>14</sup>

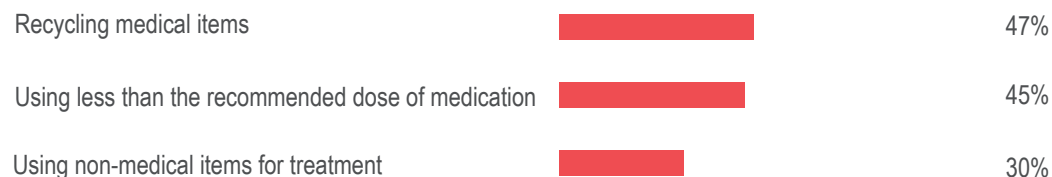
**140/1,047** Communities reported that the majority of women did not give birth in a formal health facility.

**7/610** Communities reported that some individuals had been diagnosed with SAM (Severe Acute Malnutrition).<sup>15</sup>

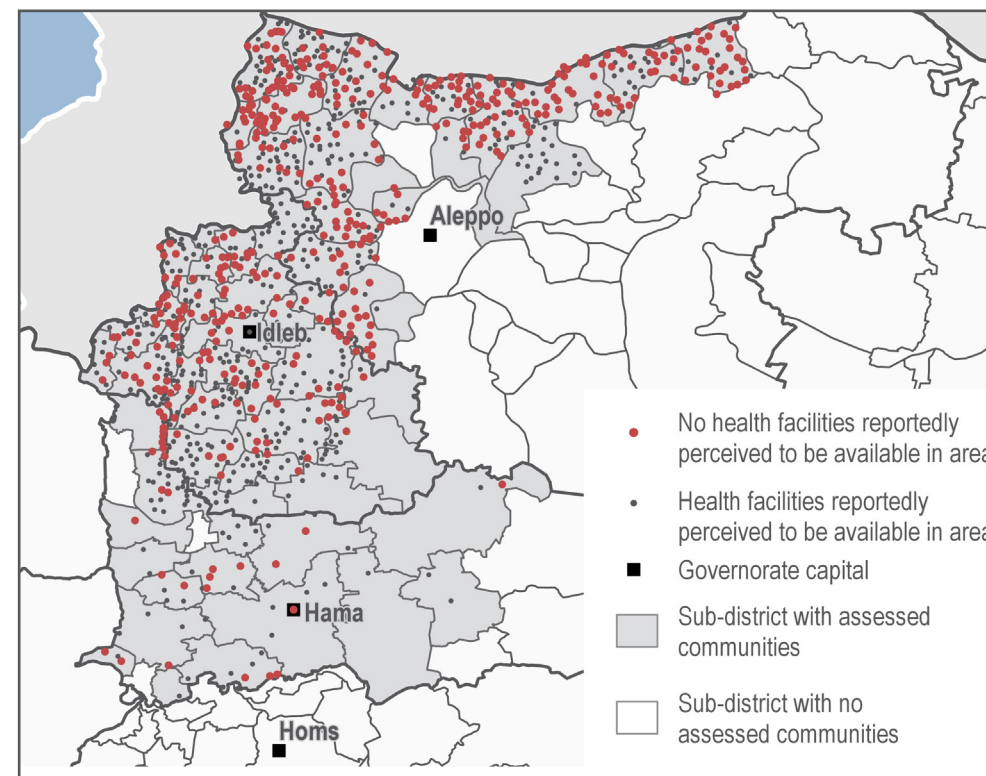
**268 communities reported that residents experienced no barriers to accessing healthcare services. The most commonly reported barriers in the remaining 779 assessed communities were:**<sup>6,7,9</sup>



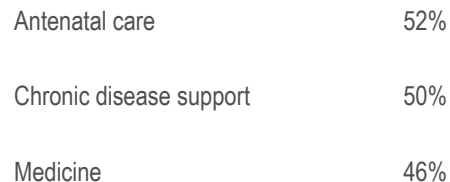
**956 communities reported that residents were not using coping strategies to deal with a lack of medical services and items. The coping strategies used in the remaining 91 communities were:**<sup>6,7,9</sup>



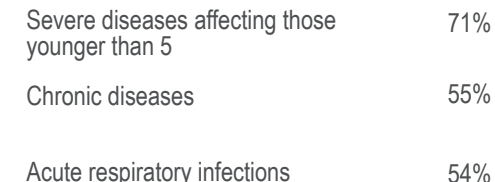
### Perceived presence of medical facilities in assessed communities:



### Top 3 most needed healthcare services reported:<sup>6,7</sup>



### Top 3 most common health problems reported:<sup>6,7</sup>



# Northwest Syria, February 2019

## SHELTER AND NFI

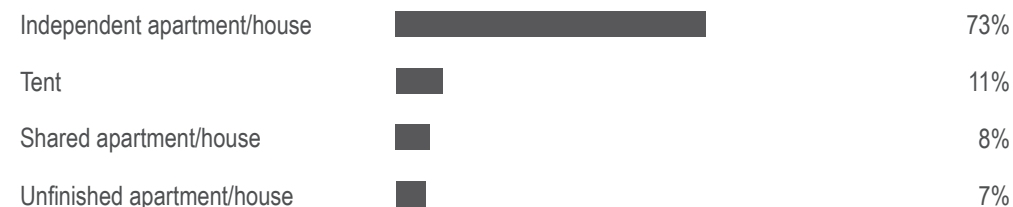
**5,545 SYP** Regional average monthly reported rent price in SYP across assessed communities.<sup>1</sup>

**5,962 SYP** Northern Syria average monthly reported rent price in SYP across assessed communities.<sup>1,16</sup>

### Most commonly reported shelter type for PCP households:<sup>7</sup>



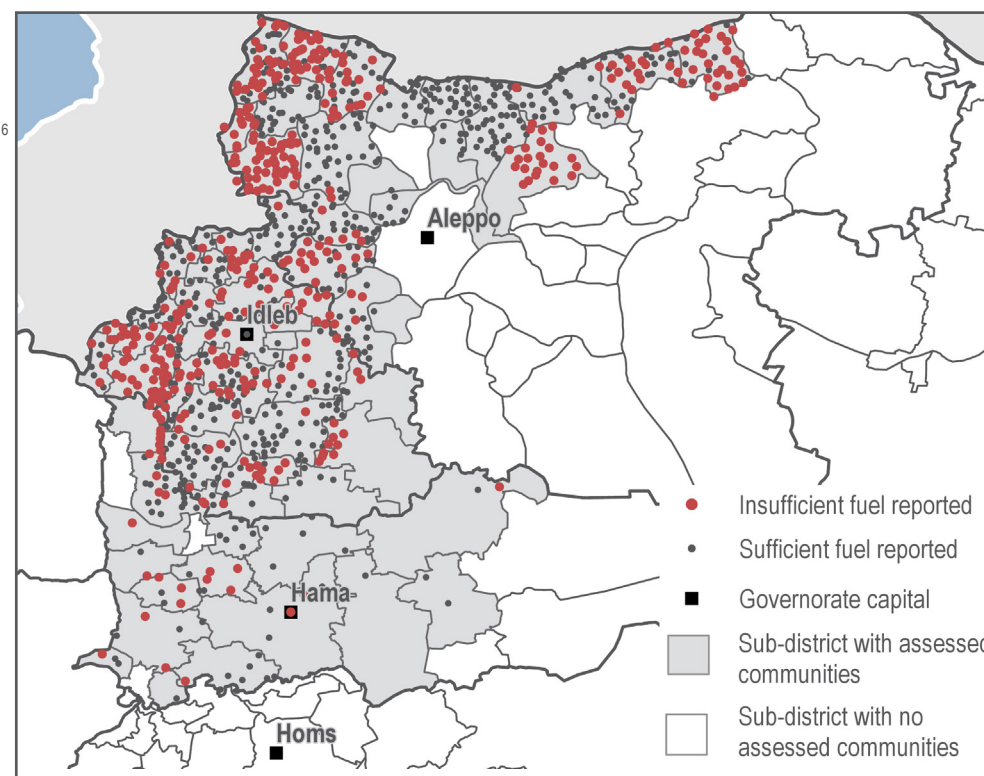
### Most commonly reported shelter type for IDP households:<sup>7</sup>



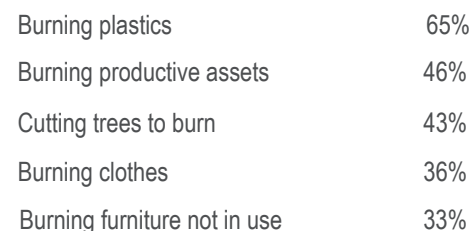
### Reported fuel prices (in SYP):<sup>1,2</sup>

| Fuel type (1L):         | Regional average price |                   |                   |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                         | Feb 2019:              | One month change: | Six month change: |
| GoS petrol              | 400                    | 0%                | 0%                |
| GoS diesel              | 350                    | -5%               | -3%               |
| Manually refined petrol | 300                    | 0%                | +20%              |
| Manually refined diesel | 240                    | -4%               | +26%              |
| Cooking fuel            | 7,500                  | 0%                | +2%               |

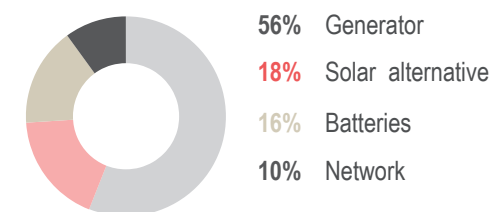
### Communities that reported insufficient amounts of fuel to meet household needs:<sup>11</sup>



**619** communities reported no lack of fuel. Most common strategies to cope with lack of fuel in the remaining **428** assessed communities:<sup>6,7,9</sup>



### Primary source of electricity reported:<sup>7</sup>



## METHODOLOGY

HSOS data collection is conducted through an enumerator network in accessible locations throughout Idlib, Aleppo, Hama, Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa, and Al-Hasakeh governorates. REACH enumerators are based inside Syria and interview Key Informants (KIs) directly in the community about which they are reporting. Where access and security constraints renders direct data collection unfeasible, some KI interviews are conducted remotely through participants identified in camps and settlements in neighbouring countries by REACH field teams. Participants contact multiple KIs in their community in Syria to collect information about their community. KIs are asked to report at the community level.

KIs generally included local council members, Syrian NGO workers, medical professionals, teachers, shop owners and farmers, among others, and were chosen based on their community-level or sector specific knowledge. In cases where KIs disagree on a certain piece of information, enumerators triangulate the data with secondary sources or select the response provided by the KI with the more relevant sector-specific background. For each question asked, confidence levels are assigned based on the KIs area of expertise and knowledge of the sector-specific situation. The confidence levels associated with each question are presented in the [final dataset](#). The full confidence matrix used to assign confidence levels is available upon request.

Findings are triangulated through secondary sources, including news monitoring and humanitarian reports. Where necessary, follow-up is conducted with enumerators and participants. Findings are indicative rather than representative, and should not be generalised across the region.

## About REACH

REACH is a joint initiative of two international non-governmental organisations - ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives - and the UN Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). REACH aims 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.

## ENDNOTES

### KEYEVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

- <sup>a</sup> Ibrahim and Edelman (26 February 2018). Turkish-backed offensive on Afrin leaves 50,000 students out of school. Retrieved from <https://syriadirect.org>.
- <sup>b</sup> World Health Organisation (1 March 2018). Health Cluster Weekly Situation Report: Whole of Syria, Week 9 (23 February - 1 March 2018). Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int>.
- <sup>c</sup> UN High Commissioner for Refugees (31 August 2018). Cross-Border Humanitarian Response Fact Sheet - Northwest Syria - August 2018. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int>.
- <sup>d</sup> France 24 (17 September 2018). Russia and Turkey agree to demilitarised zone around Syria's Idlib. Retrieved from <https://www.france24.com>.
- <sup>e</sup> Union of Medical Care and Relief Organizations (27 December 2018). Record Rainfall Devastates IDP Camps in Northern Syria. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int>.
- <sup>f</sup> Syrian Network for Human Rights (1 January 2019). Documenting the Death of 6,964 Civilians in Syria in 2018. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int>.
- <sup>g</sup> World Food Programme (31 December 2018). WFP Syria Situation Report #12, December 2018. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int>.
- <sup>h</sup> REACH (February 2019). Southern Idlib and Northern Hama Rapid Needs Assessment. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2TEw2FL>.
- <sup>i</sup> SMART News Agency (27 February 2019). More than 200 killed and wounded in the shelling on Idlib and Hama, displacement of 8314 families. Retrieved from <https://smartnews-agency.com>.
- <sup>j</sup> SMART News Agency (26 February 2019). Directorates of Health free central and northern Syria, confirms the return of support to the health sector. Retrieved from <https://smartnews-agency.com>.
- <sup>k</sup> World Food Programme (WFP) (28 February 2019). Syria mVAM Bulletin #34: February 2019 - Food security deteriorated in areas directly affected by fighting and among displaced households. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int>.

### MAIN TEXT

- <sup>1</sup> 1 USD = 434 SYP (UN operational rates of exchange as of 1 December 2018)
- <sup>2</sup> 18 items comprise the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), which represents the minimum culturally adjusted items required to support a 6-person household for a month. SMEB items: Bread, bulgur, chicken, eggs, fresh vegetables, ghee/vegetable oil, red lentils, rice, salt, sugar, tomato paste, bathing soap, laundry/dish soap, sanitary pads, toothpaste, cooking fuel, water trucking, smartphone data, float (other costs).
- <sup>3</sup> All information and figures reported in HSOS factsheets refer to the situation in assessed communities and

## MAIN TEXT

cannot be generalised to other non-assessed communities of the region.

<sup>4</sup> For population numbers, KIs were asked to provide the number of resident and IDPs present in the community as of 28 February 2019. A minimum of three KIs were interviewed in each assessed community. Where discrepancies in the information provided by KIs was deemed too large further triangulation with additional KIs and local organizations was conducted. Estimated individual figures in this report are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Discrepancies with other available population data may be the result of any of the following: differences in assessment coverage dates; differences in definitions of population sub-groups (IDPs and residents); differences in geographic scope of assessed locations (e.g. included/excluded nearby camps and sites); differences in KI types interviewed; and differences in average household sizes used to calculate individual numbers, among others.

The definition of IDPs used by enumerators for this assessment was 'Individuals or groups of people who have been forced to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights, or natural or man-made disasters, and who have not crossed an international border'.

<sup>5</sup> Spontaneous returns refers to IDPs or refugees who return to their community of origin that they left due to conflict but not necessarily to their places of habitual residence (their former homes); who intend to remain in the community for an undetermined period; and who do not meet the IASC framework on durable solutions (IASC framework includes "not necessarily voluntary, safe or sustainable" elements).

<sup>6</sup> Assessed using select multiple questions.

<sup>7</sup> By percentage of communities reporting.

<sup>8</sup> The definition of resident (pre-conflict) population (PCP), was 'Individuals or groups of people who currently reside in their communities of origin, or communities of permanent residence prior to the Syrian conflict. This includes populations that were never displaced as well as previously displaced populations that have returned to their communities of origin'.

<sup>9</sup> Not all surveys have answers for every question, in these scenarios the KI or participant will input no answer. When the dataset has no answer for a particular question the reported number of assessed communities will not add up to the total number of communities assessed and percentages will be calculated based on submitted responses.

<sup>10</sup> Extreme food-based strategies: eating food waste; eating non-edible plants and spending days without eating.

<sup>11</sup> Based on KI perception of sufficiency.

<sup>12</sup> Bread, rice, lentils, sugar, and cooking oil are considered core food items used in food baskets across Syria. For further information on all SMEB items please see the [Syria Market Monitoring Northwest Syria February 2019](#).

<sup>13</sup> Reported numbers indicate the number of communities with functioning primary and secondary education facilities during the data collection period. It is important to note that simply having a functioning facility is not indicative of students being able to attend said facility. In addition, in some cases KIs reported that children attend schools in a neighbouring community.

<sup>14</sup> Assessed HSOS medical items; anti-anxiety medication, contraception, clean bandages, blood transfusion bags, diabetes medicine, anaesthetics, blood pressure medicine, antibiotics, burn treatment.

<sup>15</sup> This information was derived from medical professionals (KIs). The number of total communities refers to all communities that had a KI as medical professional available.

<sup>16</sup> Includes HSOS data for Idleb, Aleppo, Hama, Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa and Al-Hasakeh governorates.