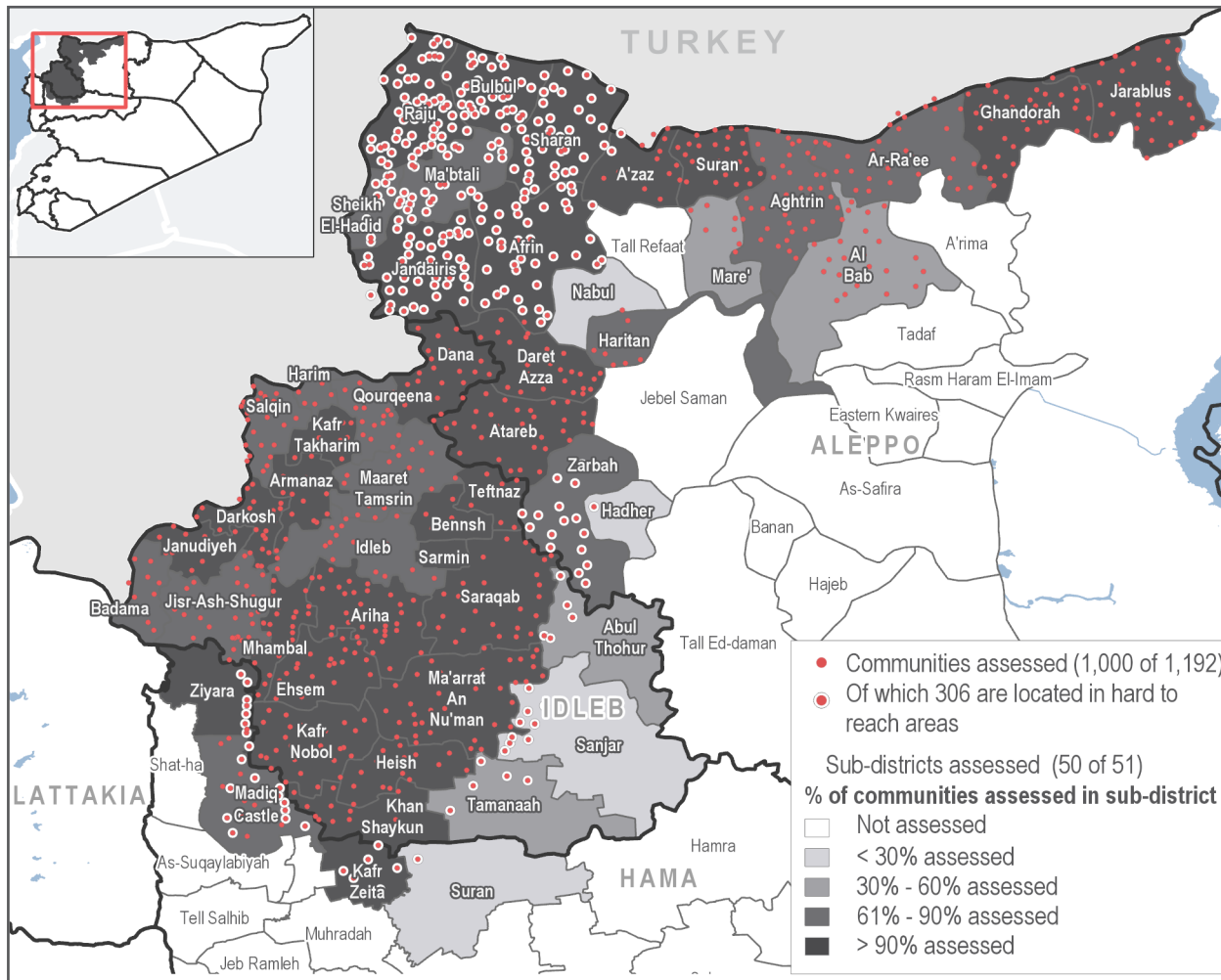


Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria (HSOS)

Northwest Syria, April 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, food security and livelihoods \(FSL\), education, water, sanitation and hygiene \(WASH\), health, and shelter and non-food items \(SNFI\)](#).

The factsheet presents information gathered in 1,000 communities across Idlib (427 communities), western Aleppo* (81 communities), northern Aleppo (452 communities), and northern Hama (40 communities) governorates.** Data was collected during the month of May 2019, and refers to the situation in Northwest Syria (NWS) in April 2019. Findings are indicative rather than representative, and should not be generalised across the region.

Community-level datasets can be found on [REACH Resource Centre](#) and [Humanitarian Data Exchange](#).

*The western part of Aleppo where humanitarian response and coordination is conducted from the northwest.
 **To gain insight into the effects of the recent increase in violence in NWS, the April factsheet includes additional analysis on communities located in conflict-affected sub-districts. These sub-districts are: Abul Thohur, Ariha, Badama, Ehsem, Heish, Janudiyeh, Jisr-Ash-Shugur, Kafr Nobol, Khan Shaykun, Ma'arrat An Nu'man, Sanjar, Saraqab, and Tamanaah in Idlib governorate; Atareb, Daret Azza, Hadher, Haritan, and Zarbah in western Aleppo governorate; and Kafr Zeita, Madiq Castle, Suran, and Ziyara in Hama governorate.

Top 3 reported priority needs in assessed communities:

- 1 Healthcare
- 2 Food Security
- 3 Livelihoods

People in need (PIN) Demographics*

2,595,089 PIN 1,460,045 People in Acute Need

Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB):^{1,2}

Average price in April 2019 **66,354 Syrian pound (SYP)**
 One month change: **+2.9%**
 Six month change: **+12.9%**

* 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.^a</p> <p>January 2018</p>	<p>Approximately 1.9 million IDPs reside in Idlib, western Aleppo, northern Hama and eastern Latakia according to UNHCR.^b</p> <p>End of August 2018</p>	<p>Announcement of a demilitarised zone barring the presence of heavy weaponry and certain armed opposition groups.^c</p> <p>17 September 2018</p>	<p>Cold temperatures, heavy rainfall, and flooding lead to deterioration of the humanitarian situation in IDP camps in Idlib and Aleppo governorates.^d</p> <p>December 2018</p>	<p>Renewed violence and hostilities in southern Idlib, northern Hama and western Aleppo governorates begin early February 2019.^e</p> <p>February 2019</p>	<p>Towards the end of April, shelling and airstrikes intensify.^f The total number of displaced persons reaches 180,962 in three months' time.^g</p> <p>April 2019</p>
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CONTEXT

Throughout April 2019, hostilities continued across NWS, forcing 51,930 people to leave their homes to flee the violence.^h Towards the end of the month, shelling and airstrikes further intensified in southern Idleb, northern Hama, and western Aleppo governorates, causing damage to health facilities, schools, markets, and IDP camps.ⁱ The resultant closure of medical facilities left a large and vulnerable population without access to healthcare, compounding the already precarious humanitarian situation in the region. In addition, access to education further deteriorated in conflict-affected areas, as a result of school closures and decisions by parents to keep their children at home. Finally, heavy rains during the first half of April caused floods in IDP communities in rural areas of western Aleppo and Idleb governorates, leading to the destruction of various IDP sites and spurring further displacement.^j

KEY HIGHLIGHTS³

Drivers of displacement across conflict-affected area

In the 382 assessed communities located in conflict-affected sub-districts^k, departures of IDPs and pre-conflict population (PCP) were reported in 111 (29%) and 79 (21%) communities respectively. In communities witnessing secondary or tertiary displacement of IDPs, key reasons for movement were escalation of conflict (60%), reduced access to basic services (29%), and loss of income (27%). Key motivations for PCP to leave were largely similar, with escalation of conflict (95%), loss of income (23%) and reduced access to services (23%) reported as principal factors influencing PCP decision-making. One important difference between IDP and PCP reasoning becomes apparent however: while in virtually all communities where PCP departures were reported, the escalation of conflict influenced PCP reasoning, this factor played a role in IDP departures in only six out of ten assessed communities where IDP departures were reported. Finally, access to money appeared a larger motivation for IDP movement compared to PCP departures, suggesting that some IDPs resided in communities due to a lack of money for further movement, and decided to move as soon as money became available to them.

When asked about the reasons behind IDP and PCP decisions to remain in their communities, KIs indicated the following: for IDPs, the top three reasons were family ties (77%), access to employment (61%), and a lack of money to pay for movement (34%). For PCP, principal reasons indicated were protecting assets (96%), family ties (81%), and access to employment (70%). The principal reason for PCP to remain, ie. protecting assets, was only reported for IDPs by KIs in 20% of assessed communities, while the lack of money to pay for movement appeared a larger barrier to movement for IDPs compared to PCP. This latter factor also emerges from [the most recent Rapid Needs Assessment in southern Idleb and northern Hama governorates](#). According to the REACH field teams, the price of movement from conflict-affected areas to safer communities in the north of Syria currently costs between 27,000 to 54,000 SYP (between 50 and 100 USD)^l, a high price to pay in a region where the majority of households earn less than 50,000 SYP (reported in 89% of communities located in conflict-affected sub-districts). Furthermore, the number of assessed communities in which KIs reported a lack of money amongst PCP to move has increased by 43% (from 40 to 57 communities) since March, which may indicate an increase in movement costs resulting from the higher demand for transportation and the rise in fuel prices.

Food Security and Livelihoods

- The highest percentage of communities in which KIs reported that children were sent to work or beg was found in western Aleppo governorate (98% of assessed communities), despite a seemingly higher availability of employment compared to other governorates: when asked about common sources of income, KIs in western Aleppo governorate reported stable employment in 25% of assessed communities and unstable daily employment in all communities. Across the other three governorates, these percentages are substantially lower. At the same time, farm ownership as principal source of income is lowest in western Aleppo governorate, reported in 75% of assessed communities, compared to 82% of assessed communities across the other three governorates in NWS. Farm ownership could thus play an important role in increasing security in terms of livelihoods.
- In northern Hama governorate, a shift has been observed in type of income/resources used to cover essential needs. In March, unstable daily employment was the second most commonly reported source of income, reported by KIs in 78% of assessed communities. In April, this percentage fell to 48%, while the use of savings increased from 30% to 63%, potentially indicating a deterioration in access to employment.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

- In 177 (46%) of the 382 assessed communities located in conflict-affected sub-districts, KIs reported water trucking as the most common drinking water source. Considering rising fuel prices and the potentially disruptive effect of conflict dynamics on direct supply lines, a fair share of the conflict-affected population could see their access to drinking water threatened.

Education

- The availability of functioning schools has been further deteriorating in northern Hama governorate. The number of KIs reporting functioning primary schools in assessed communities decreased from 85% in February to 23% in April. During that period, the number of functioning secondary schools (7th - 9th grade) saw a decrease from 40% to 10%, and high schools (10th - 12th grade) from 25% to 8%. Towards the end of April, a number of schools in conflict-affected areas of northern Hama and southern Idleb governorates were reportedly damaged.^l
- In all governorates but Western Aleppo, the proportion of assessed communities in which education was reported as a top priority need has increased, reflecting a trend flagged in last month's factsheet. Key reasons indicated by KIs in NWS why school-aged children were not attending school during April, reported in 43% of assessed communities, are long distances (50%), a lack of teaching staff (44%) and school supplies (39%), and unsafe routes to school (29%). All KIs in northern Hama governorate, one of the most heavily conflict-affected areas, reported that challenges affected boys and girls equally, a percentage that is significantly higher compared to other governorates (reported by KIs in 37% of assessed communities in Idleb, 25% of assessed communities in northern Aleppo, and 33% of assessed communities in western Aleppo governorates).

Health

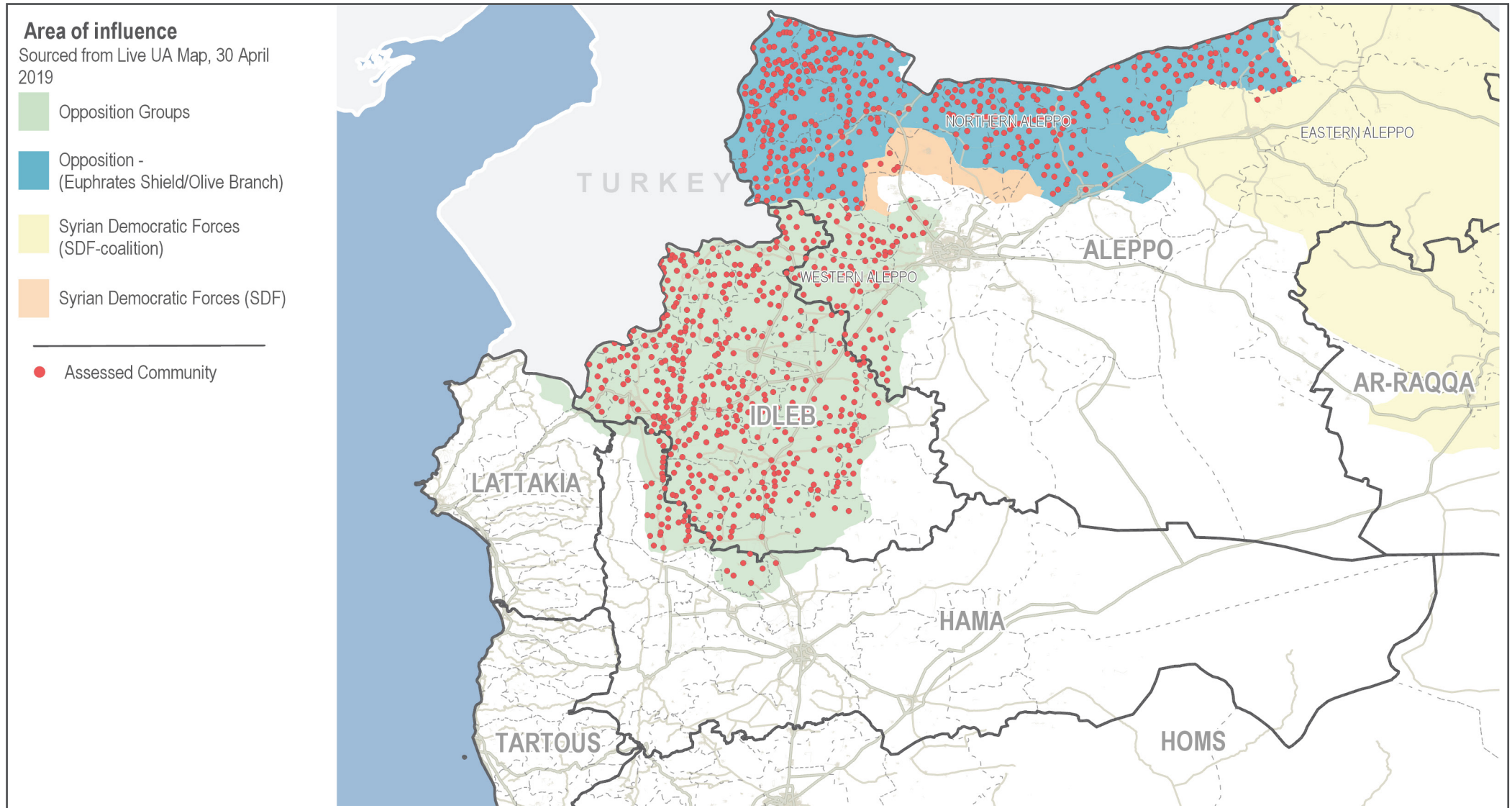
- Across NWS, KIs in 58% of assessed communities reported that no medical facilities were functioning in their community, while KIs in 43% of communities perceived a total lack of facilities in the area. Health facilities and health infrastructure have been damaged or destroyed throughout the Syrian crisis, leading to an overall deterioration in the healthcare system in NWS. It is also notable that healthcare has been reported as the top priority need in NWS for at least ten months (since August 2018).

Shelter and non-food items (NFI)

- KIs in 289 (29%) of 1,000 assessed communities in NWS reported a lack of fuel. Coping strategies included burning agricultural apparel or productive assets, reported by KIs in 192 communities; cutting trees to burn (160 communities), and burning plastic (133 communities). The first is likely to have a negative impact on already poor livelihoods in the region, while burning plastic may have an adverse impact on air quality and therefore on the incidence of respiratory illnesses.
- Tenancy arrangements for IDPs varied substantially across NWS. KIs reported renting as the most prevalent tenancy arrangement in Idleb (57%), northern Aleppo (61%) and western Aleppo (75%) governorates. In contrast, in northern Hama governorate KIs in 90% of assessed communities reported that most IDPs are hosted without paying rent.

Northwest Syria, April 2019

Regional areas of influence:



Northwest Syria, April 2019

➔ DISPLACEMENT⁴

57,406 - 63,938 Estimated number of IDP arrivals in assessed communities in April 2019

2,465 - 2,740 Estimated number of spontaneous returns in assessed communities in April 2019⁵

Communities with the largest estimated number of IDP arrivals:

Idleb (Idleb, Idleb) **3,400 - 3,500**
 Tramla (Kafr Nobol, Idleb) **1,900 - 2,000**
 Ariha (Ariha, Idleb) **1,700 - 1,800**

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

Top 3 reported subdistricts of origin for IDP arrivals:^{6,7}

Madiq Castle (Hama)
 Khan Shaykun (Idleb)
 Kafr Nobol (Idleb)

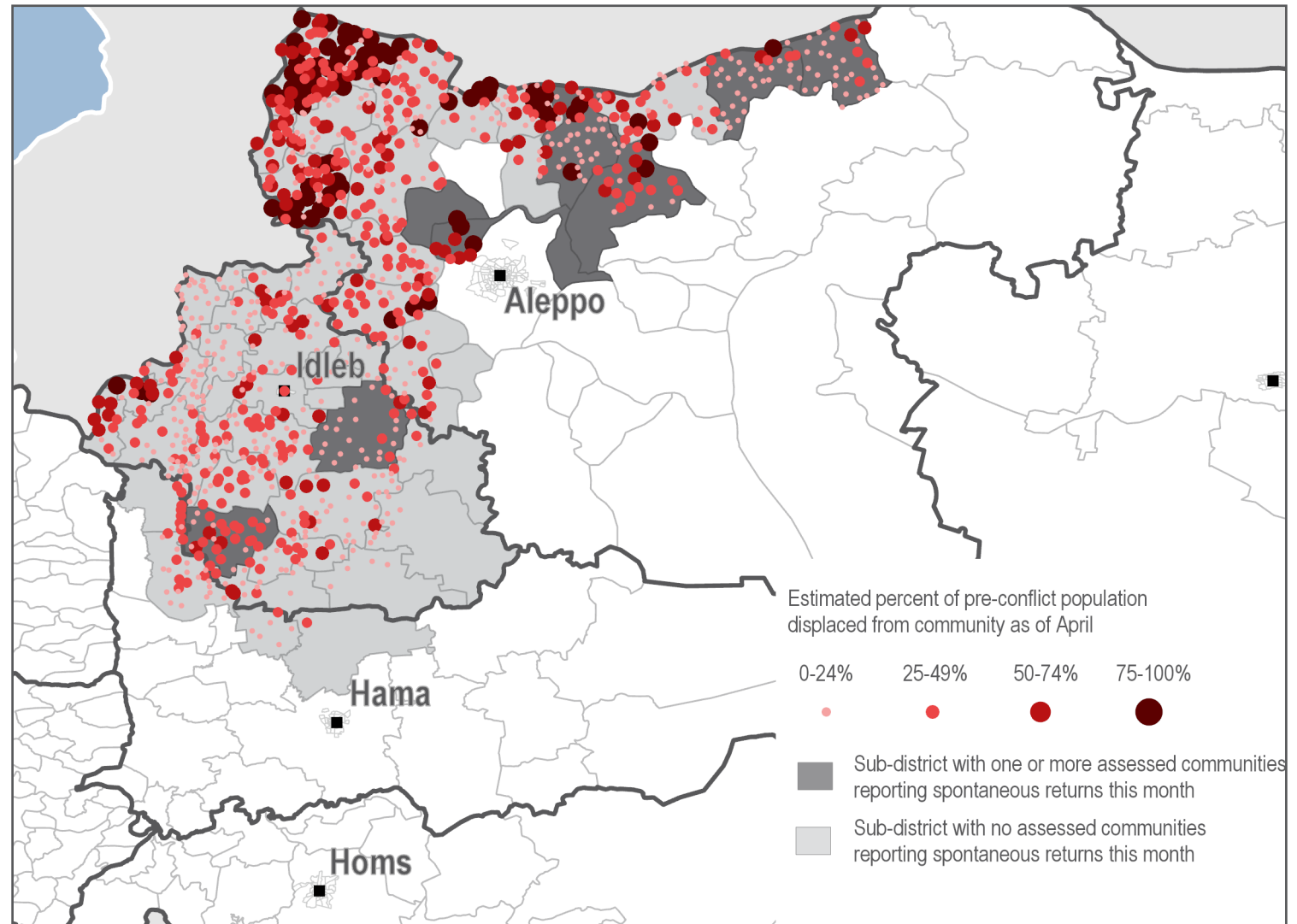
* Reported as sub-district (governorate)

900 communities reported no PCP departures.⁸

Top 3 reasons for PCP departures in the remaining 100 assessed communities:^{6,7,9}

Escalation of conflict	77%
Reduced access to basic services	35%
Loss of income	24%

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

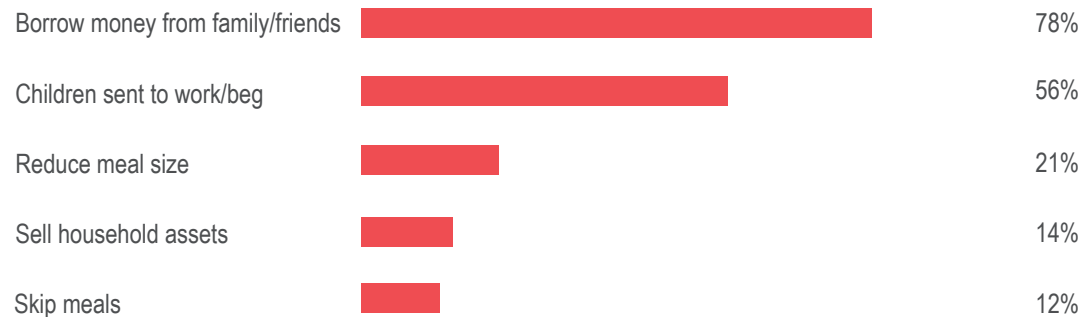


Northwest Syria, April 2019

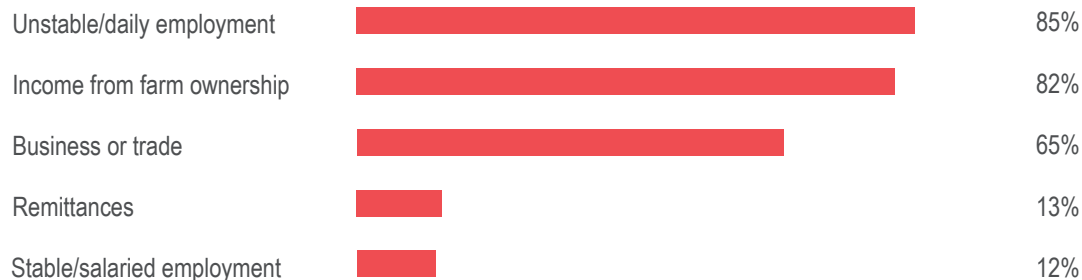
FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOODS

- 215/1000** Communities reported that residents were unable to access shops and markets.
- 246/1000** Communities reported having received food distributions in the last month.
- 1/1000** Community reported that residents used extreme food-based coping strategies to deal with insufficient income.¹⁰
- Less than 50,000 SYP** Most commonly reported household monthly income range.¹

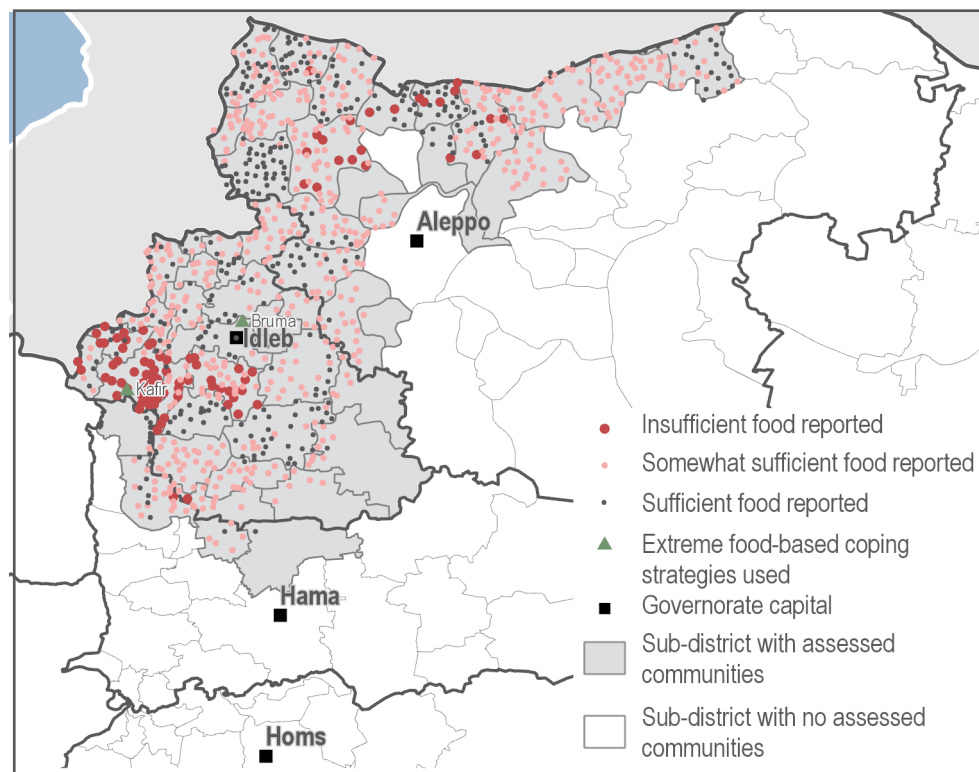
118 communities reported that residents had enough income to cover household needs. The most commonly reported coping strategies to deal with a lack of income in the remaining 882 assessed communities were:^{6,7,9}



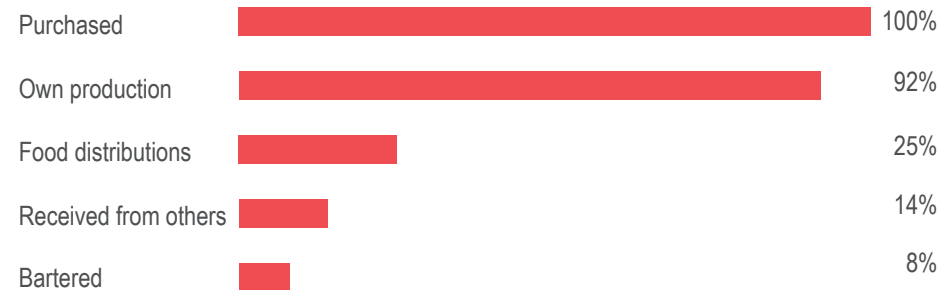
Most commonly reported main sources of income:^{6,7}



Communities that reported having an insufficient quantity of food:¹¹



Most commonly reported ways of obtaining food:^{6,7}



Northwest Syria, April 2019

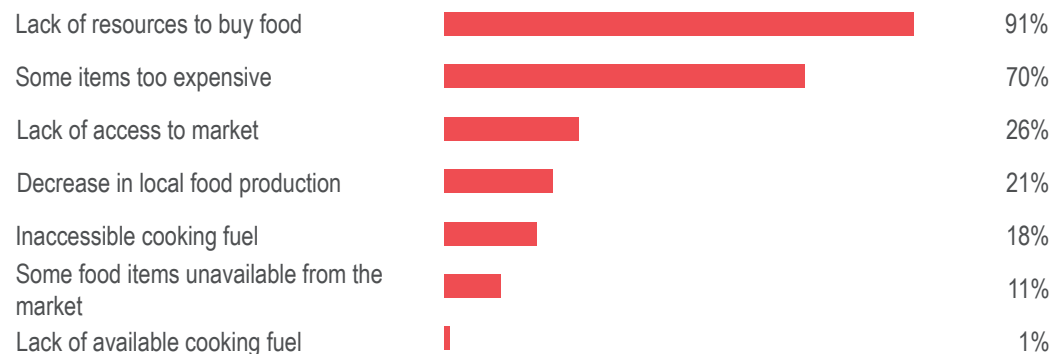
FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOODS

Core food item prices reported (in SYP):^{1,12}

Food item:	Regional average price in April 2019:	One month change:	Six month change:
Bread (8 pieces)	150	0%	0%
Rice (1 kilogram)	350	+8%	+17%
Lentils (1 kilogram)	276	0%	+11%
Sugar (1 kilogram)	300	+9%	+33%
Cooking oil (1 litre)*	3,850	0%	+5%

*includes the combined vegetable oil and ghee prices

179 communities reported that residents experienced no challenges in accessing food. The most common difficulties experienced in the remaining 821 assessed communities were:^{6,7,9}



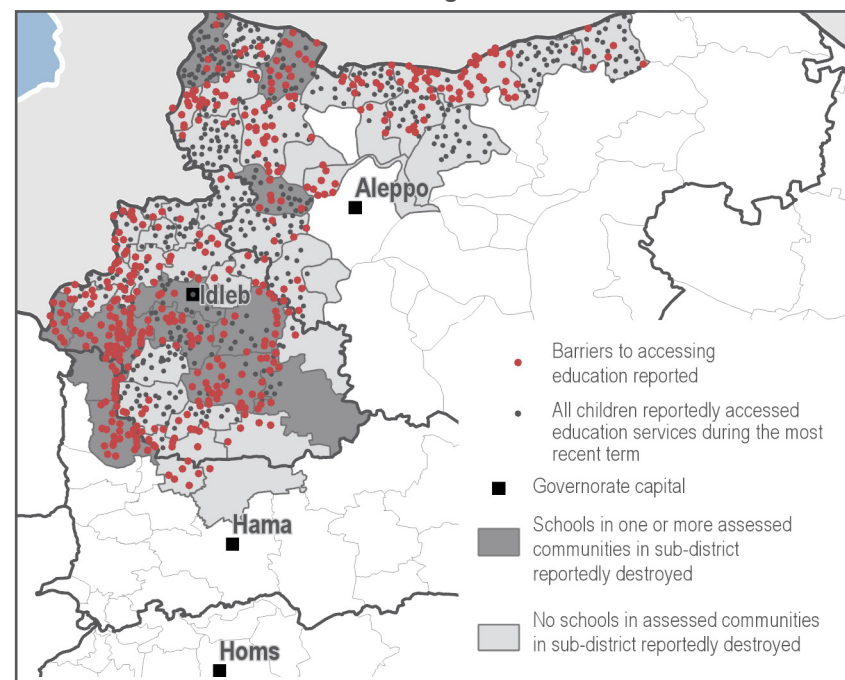
EDUCATION

897/1000 communities reported having functioning primary education facilities, while 436 communities reported having functioning secondary education facilities.¹³

568 communities reported that all children were able to access education. The most commonly reported barriers to education in the remaining 432 assessed communities were:^{6,7,9}



Prevalence of barriers to accessing education services:



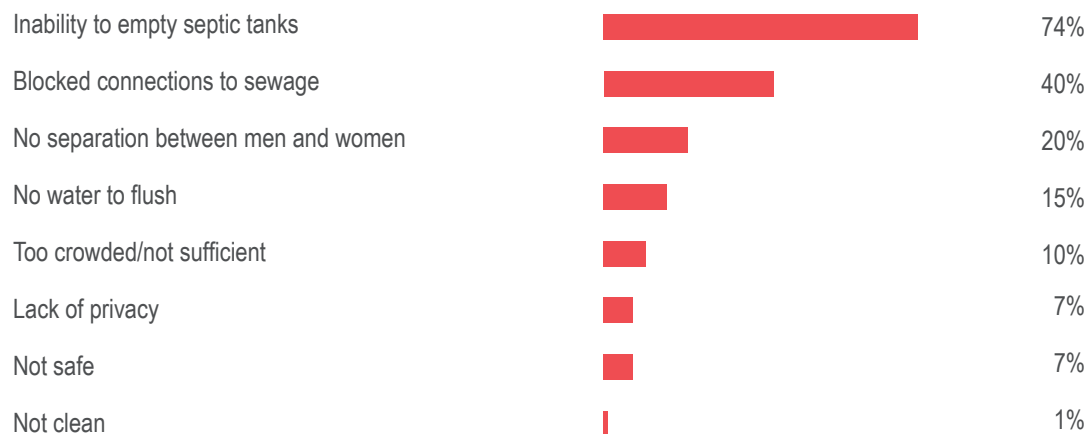
Northwest Syria, April 2019

WASH

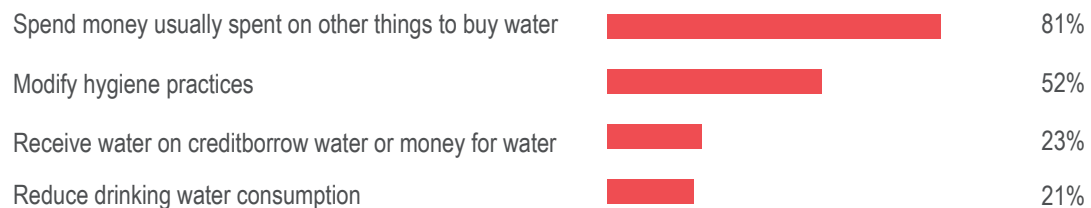
12/1000 Communities reported that water from their primary source tasted and/or smelled bad.

1/1000 Community reported that drinking water from their primary source made people sick.

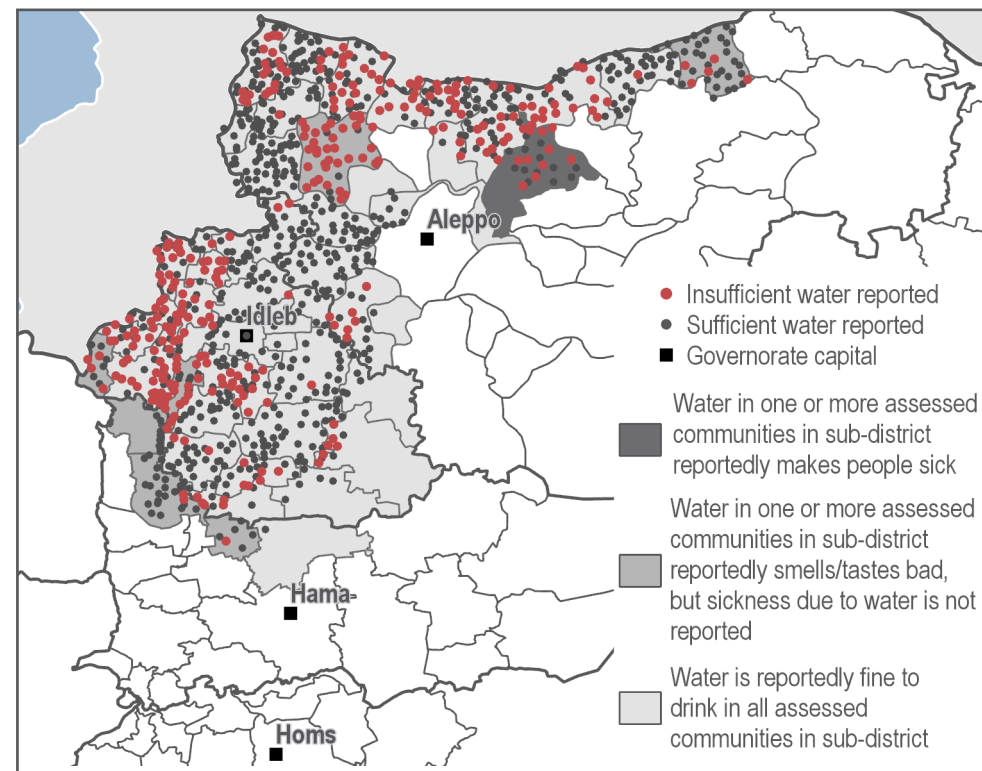
626 communities reported that residents had no problems with latrines. The most commonly reported problems with latrines in the remaining 374 assessed communities were:^{5,7,9}



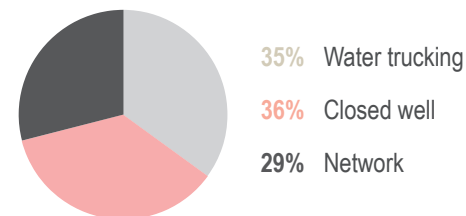
689 communities reported that they had sufficient amounts of water to meet household needs. The most common coping strategies to deal with a lack of water in the remaining 311 assessed communities were:^{6,7,9}



Communities that reported insufficient amounts of water to meet household needs:¹¹



Primary drinking water source reported:⁷



Primary method of garbage disposal reported:^{6,7}



Northwest Syria, April 2019

HEALTH

213/1000 Communities reported that no assessed medical items were available in their community.¹⁴

123/1000 Communities reported that the majority of women did not give birth in a formal health facility.

11/1000 Communities reported that some individuals had been diagnosed with SAM (Severe Acute Malnutrition).¹⁵

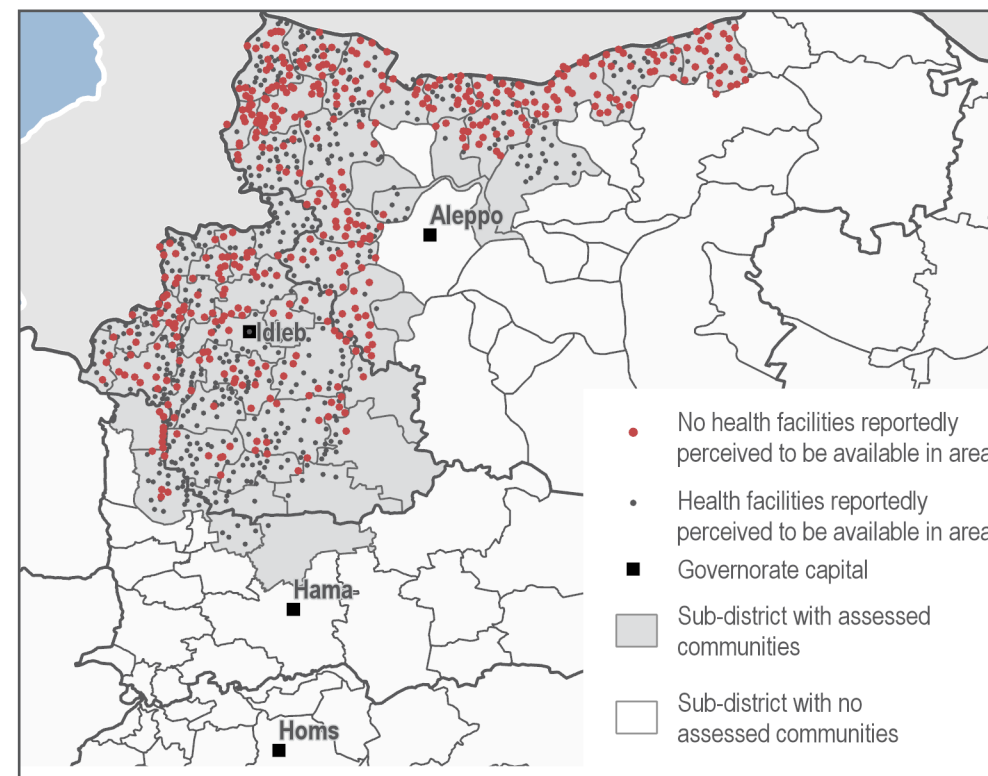
238 communities reported that residents experienced no barriers to accessing healthcare services. The most commonly reported barriers in the remaining **762 assessed communities** were:^{6,7,9}



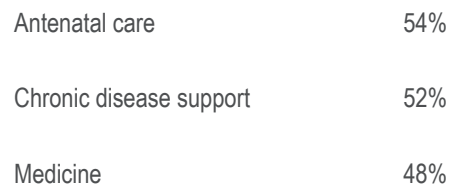
911 communities reported that residents were not using coping strategies to deal with a lack of medical services and items. The coping strategies used in the remaining **89 communities** were:^{6,7,9}



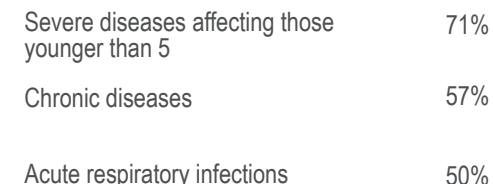
Perceived presence of medical facilities in assessed communities:



Top 3 most needed healthcare services reported:^{6,7}



Top 3 most common health problems reported:^{6,7}



Northwest Syria, April 2019

SHELTER AND NFI

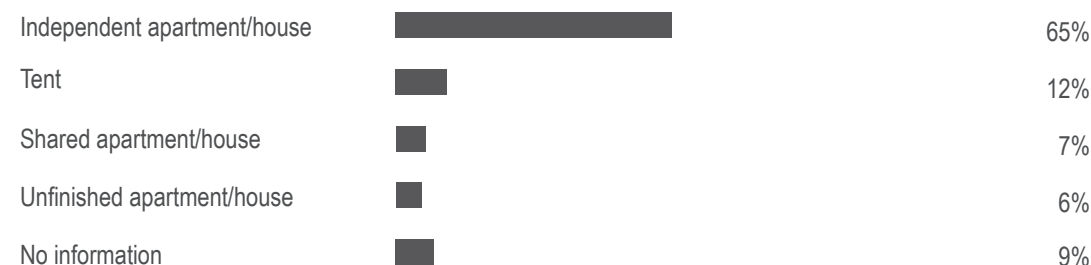
5,421 SYP Regional average monthly reported rent price in SYP across assessed communities.¹

5,827 SYP Northern Syria average monthly reported rent price in SYP across assessed communities.^{1,16}

Most commonly reported shelter type for PCP households:⁷



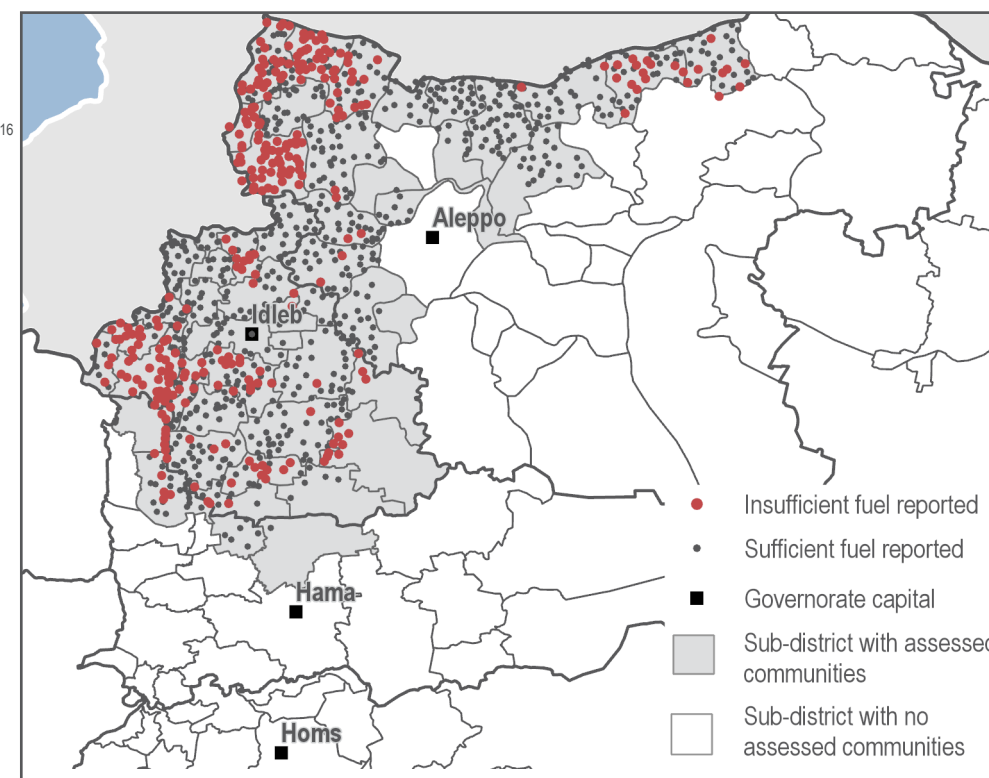
Most commonly reported shelter type for IDP households:⁷



Reported fuel prices (in SYP):^{1,2}

Fuel type (1L):	Regional average price in April 2019:	One month change:	Six month change:
GoS petrol	423	+6%	0%
GoS diesel	400	0%	+7%
Manually refined petrol	300	+4%	+10%
Manually refined diesel	250	+4%	+4%
Cooking fuel	7500	0%	+10%

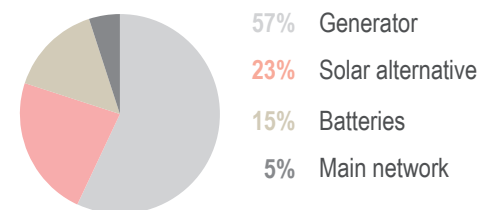
Communities that reported insufficient amounts of fuel to meet household needs:¹¹



711 communities reported no lack of fuel. Most common strategies to cope with lack of fuel in the remaining 289 assessed communities:^{6,7,9}

Burning productive assets	66%
Cutting trees to burn	55%
Burning plastics	46%
Burning furniture not in use	31%
Burning clothes	18%

Primary source of electricity reported:⁷



METHODOLOGY

HSOS data collection is conducted through an enumerator network in accessible locations throughout Idlib, Aleppo, northern 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 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). For more information please visit our website: www.reach-initiative.org. You can contact us directly at: geneva@reach-initiative.org and follow us on Twitter [@REACH_info](https://twitter.com/REACH_info).

ENDNOTES

KEYEVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

- ^a Ibrahim and Edelman (26 February 2018). Turkish-backed offensive on Afrin leaves 50,000 students out of school. Retrieved from <https://syriadirect.org>.
- ^b UN High Commissioner for Refugees (31 August 2018). Cross-Border Humanitarian Response Fact Sheet - Northwest Syria - August 2018. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int>.
- ^c France 24 (17 September 2018). Russia and Turkey agree to demilitarised zone around Syria's Idlib. Retrieved from <https://www.france24.com>.
- ^d Union of Medical Care and Relief Organizations (27 December 2018). Record Rainfall Devastates IDP Camps in Northern Syria. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int>.
- ^e REACH (February 2019). Southern Idlib and Northern Hama Rapid Needs Assessment. Retrieved from <http://reachresourcecentre.info>.
- ^f REACH (May 2019). Southern Idlib and Northern Hama Rapid Needs Assessment. Retrieved from <http://reachresourcecentre.info>.
- ^g CCCM Northwest Syria Population Tracking (1 February 2019 - 30 April 2019). Retrieved from <http://maps.unhcr.org>.
- ^h CCCM Northwest Syria Population Tracking (1 April 2019 - 30 April 2019). Retrieved from <http://maps.unhcr.org>.
- ⁱ Syria mVAM Bulletin 36 - April 2019. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int>.
- ^j World Food Programme Syria Country Brief April 2019. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int>.
- ^k To gain insight into the effects of the recent increase in violence in NWS, the April factsheet includes additional analysis on communities located in conflict-affected sub-districts. These sub-districts are: Abul Thohur, Ariha, Badama, Ehsem, Heish, Idlib, Janudiyeh, Jisr-Ash-Shugur, Kafr Nobol, Khan Shaykun, Ma'arrat An Nu'man, Sanjar, Saraqab, and Tamanaah in Idlib governorate; Atareb, Daret Azza, Hadher, Haritan, and Zurbah in western Aleppo governorate; and Kafr Zeita, Madiq Castle, Suran, and Ziyara in Hama governorate.
- ^l UN Children's Fund (4 May 2019). 12 Children killed in past two weeks in Northwest Syria. Retrieved from: <https://reliefweb.int>.

MAIN TEXT

- ¹ According to an exchange rate of 1 USD = 540 SYP (see [Syria Market Monitoring Dataset April 2019](#)).
- ² 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).
- ³ 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.

⁴ For population numbers, KIs were asked to provide the number of resident and IDPs present in the community as of 30 April 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'.

⁵ 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).

⁶ Assessed using select multiple questions.

⁷ By percentage of communities reporting.

⁸ 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'.

⁹ 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.

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

¹¹ Based on KI perception of sufficiency.

¹² 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 April 2019 Situation Overview](#).

¹³ 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.

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

¹⁵ 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.

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