

Hama Governorate, March 2018

Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria (HSOS)

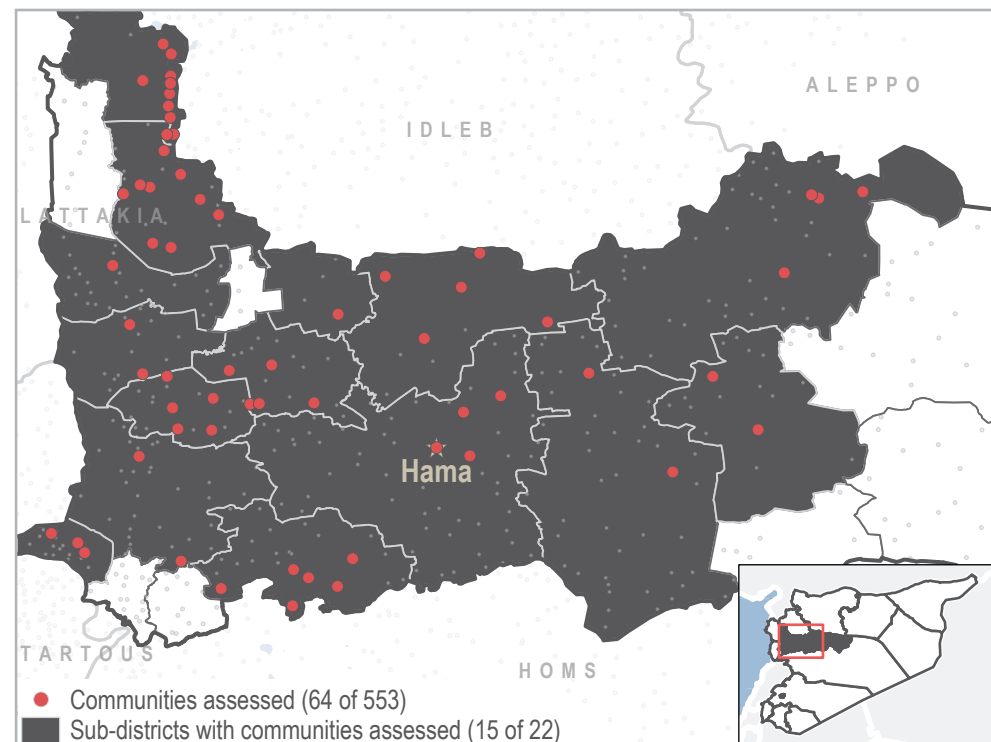
OVERALL FINDINGS¹

Hama governorate, located on the banks of the Orontes River, is positioned to the south of Idleb governorate and the north of Homs governorate. An offensive against the group known as the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in late August 2017, followed by a rapid escalation in conflict in northern Hama in mid-September, resulted in large-scale displacement, both within and out of the governorate to neighbouring Idleb. In March 2018, **18** of the **64** assessed communities, primarily in Hama and As-Suqaylabiyah districts, reported that only **1-25%** of the pre-conflict population remained. Additionally, **23** of the assessed communities stated that further pre-conflict populations left their communities in March, primarily due to an escalation in conflict. However, unlike the previous month, which only saw approximately **287 IDP** returns total and no spontaneous refugee returnees, approximately **30,175 IDPs** and **27 refugees** reportedly returned to the assessed communities in March, mainly Madiq Castle and Ziyara sub-districts. The most commonly cited reason for return was family reunification, although key informant (KIs) in Madiq Castle sub-district reported a perceived cessation of hostilities as the reason for IDP returns². Please see the IDP Situation Monitoring Initiative (ISMI) [March 2018 monthly report](#) for further analysis.

Ten of the assessed communities, all in Hama and As-Suqaylabiyah districts, reported between **51-100%** of the buildings in their community were damaged. Furthermore, **four** of these communities, Mansura, Northern Fan, Suran and Harbanifse, all reported that there was no electricity source available. In addition to a lack of electricity, KIs in Suran community reported that the water tasted and/or smelled bad and **28** of the assessed communities reported having an insufficient amount of water to meet household needs. Of the assessed communities, **38** reported that there were no health services available in their communities in March. Furthermore, **25** of the assessed communities reported that women gave birth at home rather than in formal health facilities. Orthopaedic assistance, chronic disease support, and surgical care were listed as the most needed healthcare services throughout the assessed communities. Additionally, **24** communities reported that residents were coping with a lack of medical services by using non-medical items for treatment, recycling medical items, or carrying out operations without anaesthetics.

Of the assessed communities, **52** reported experiencing difficulties in accessing food with the high cost of some items, and a lack of resources to purchase available foods being the most commonly reported challenges. Overall, **38** of the assessed communities reported that the majority of household incomes in their community were insufficient in March. The majority of these communities stated that residents coped with the lack of income or resources by borrowing money from family and friends, selling household assets or reducing the size of meals. Additionally, **14** of these communities reported that children were being sent to work or beg and **five** reported that residents used extreme food-based coping strategies in order to supplement insufficient household incomes³. These extreme food-based strategies included going days without eating or eating plants not meant for consumption. Only residents in Ziyara and Madiq Castle sub-districts reported using these strategies. This is significant as these **two** sub-districts saw the highest amounts of returnees, meaning that while there may be a perceived cessation of conflict, access to basic services such as food remains limited.

Coverage



Top 3 reported priority needs

1. Food security
2. Healthcare
3. Education

Demographics*

1,466,242 people in need

747,783 **718,459**

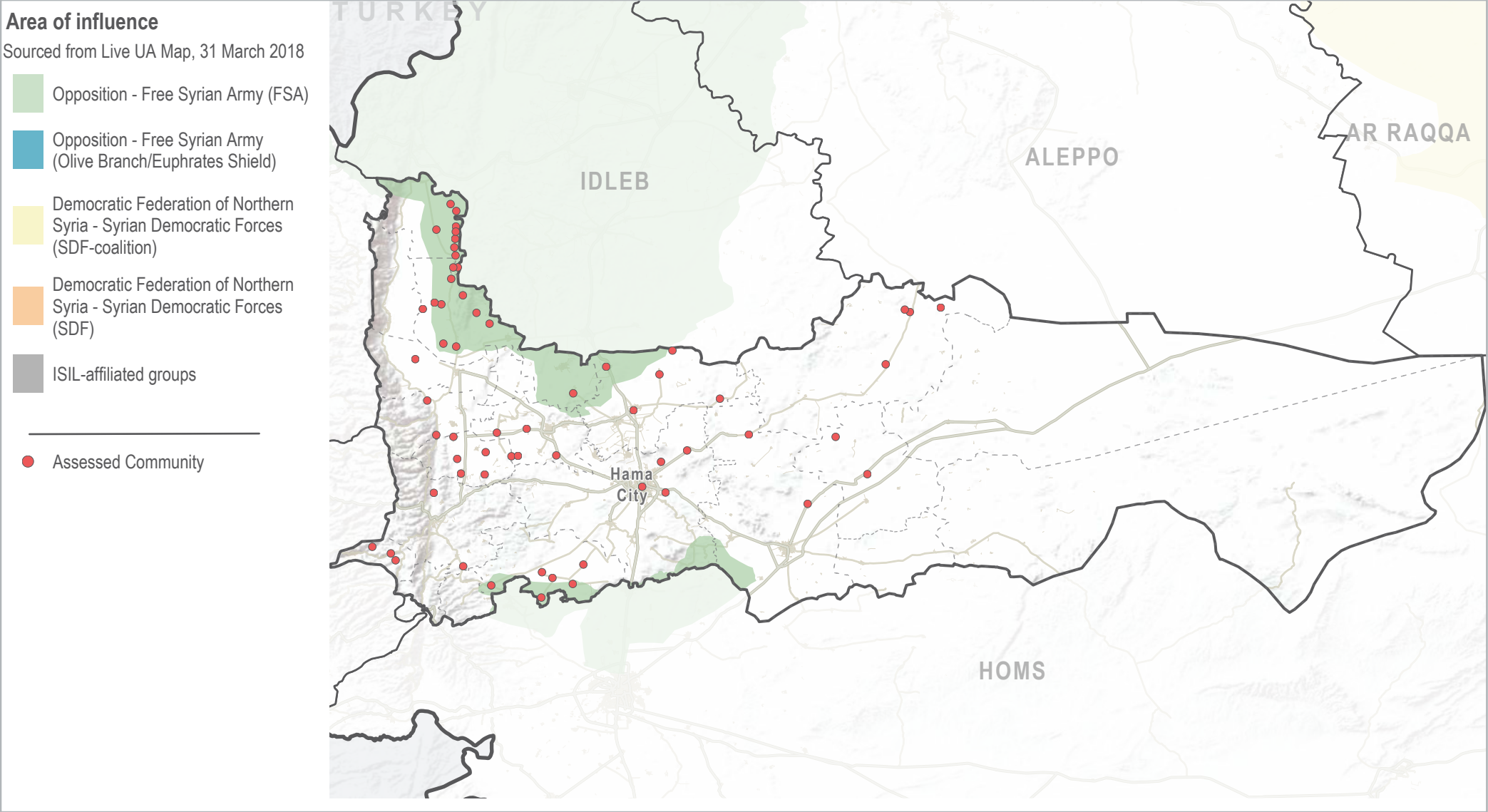
* Figures based on HNO 2018 population data for the entire governorate.

KEY EVENTS

First Hama offensive launched north of Hama city, resulting in the displacement of over 40,000 individuals ⁴ .	ISIL comes under siege in Oqairbat ⁵ .	Second Hama offensive launched north of Hama city, resulting in the displacement of over 120,000 individuals ⁶ .	ISIL-held pocket in northern Hama governorate continues to grow ⁷ .	ISIL-held pocket in northern Hama decreases as offensive to expel the group intensifies ⁸ .	Conflict intensifies in Northern Hama governorate between opposition groups and government forces ⁹ .
21 March 2017	18 August 2017	19 September 2017	January 2018	Early February 2018	Mid-March 2018

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Governorate areas of influence:



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DISPLACEMENT

1,708 - 1,814 Estimated number of IDP arrivals in assessed communities in March.

30,265 - 31,340 Estimated number of spontaneous returns in assessed communities in March².

Communities with the largest estimated number of IDP arrivals:

Madiq Castle **370 - 400**

Tweini **325 - 344**

Qastun **325 - 335**

Top 3 sub-districts of origin of most IDPs arrivals^{3,4}:

Kafr Batna (Rural Damascus) 25%

Arbin (Rural Damascus) 19%

Harasta (Rural Damascus) 19%

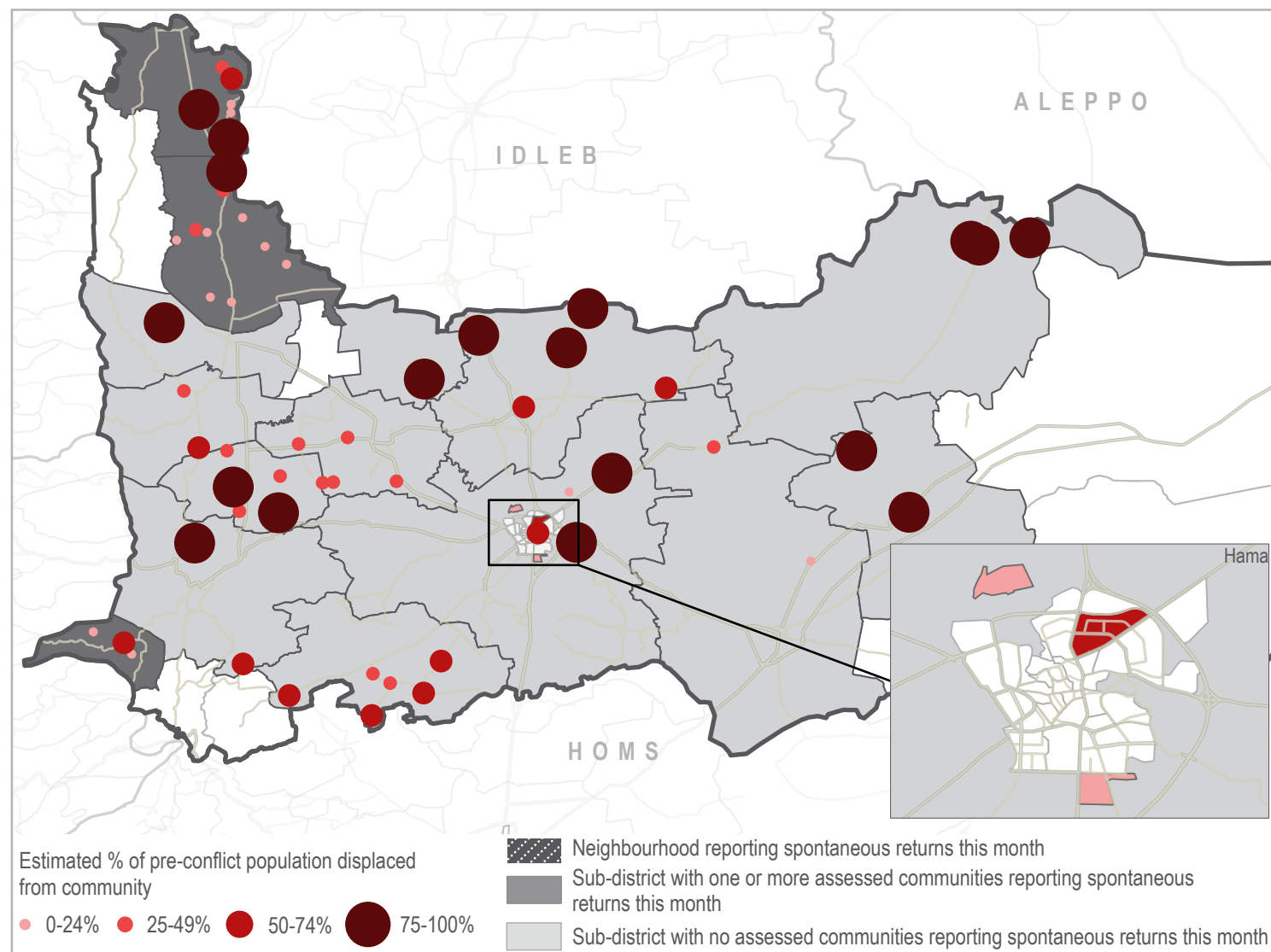
30 communities reported no PCP departures. Top 3 reasons for PCP displacement in the remaining 34 assessed communities^{3,4}:

Escalation of conflict 71%

Loss of income 56%

Loss of assets 50%

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



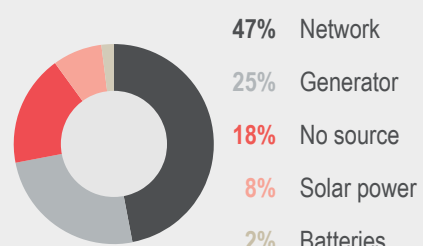
³ Multiple choices allowed.

⁴ By percent of communities reporting.

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SHELTER AND NFI

Primary source of electricity reported:⁴



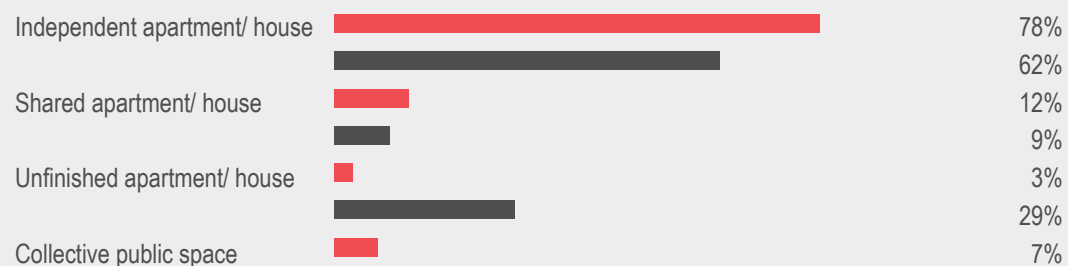
18 communities reported no lack of fuel. Most common strategies to cope with a lack of fuel in the remaining 44 assessed communities^{3,4}:



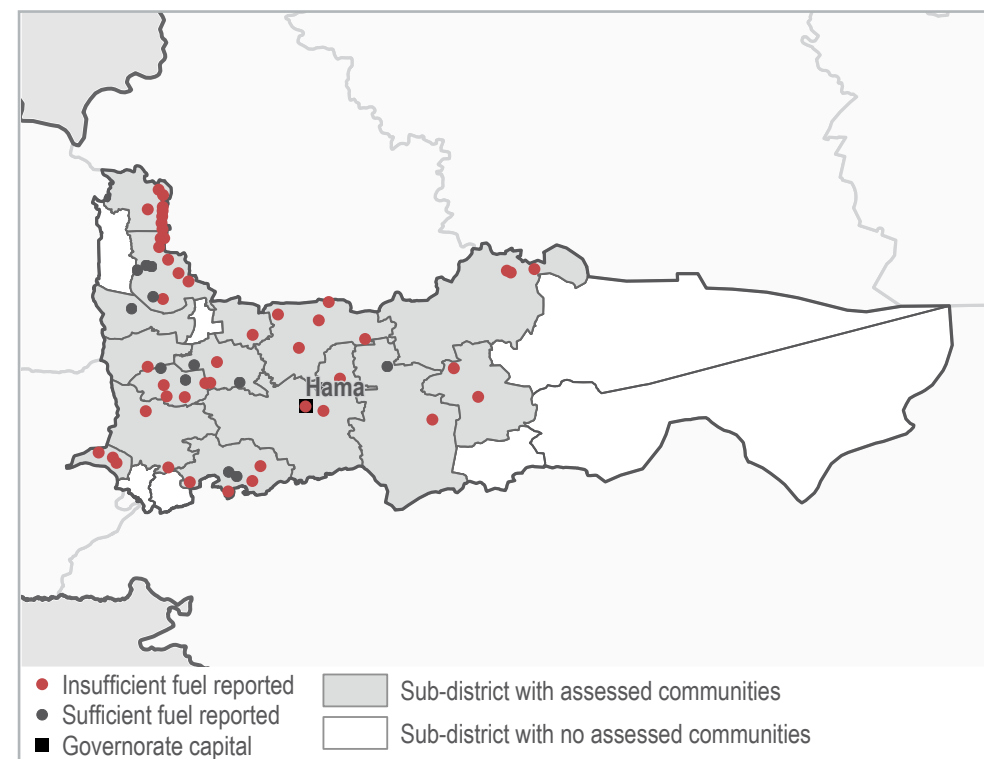
11,398 SYP Governorate average reported rent price in Syrian Pounds (SYP) across assessed communities.⁵

6,730 SYP Syrian average reported rent price in SYP across assessed communities.⁵

Most commonly reported shelter type for PCP (in red) and IDP (in grey) households⁴:



Fuel sufficiency:



Reported fuel prices (in SYP)⁵:

Fuel type:	Governorate average price in March:	Governorate average price in February:	Syrian average price in March:
Coal (1 kilogram)	283	313	333
Diesel (1 litre)	388	367	346
Butane (1 canister)	8,679	6,626	7,521
Firewood (1 tonne)	58,907	56,550	60,850

³ Multiple choices allowed.

⁴ By percent of communities reporting.

⁵ 1 USD = 434 SYP (UN operational rates of exchange as of 1 March 2018)

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HEALTH

24 Communities reported that no assessed medical items were available in their community.

25 Communities reported that the majority of women did not have access to formal health facilities to give birth.

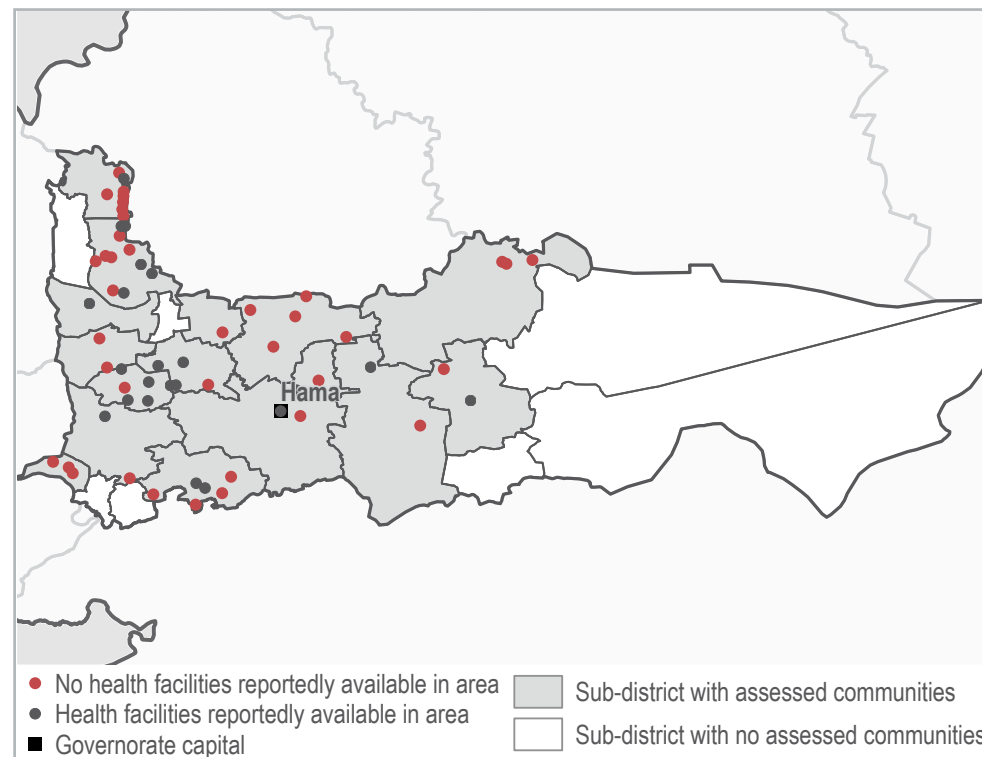
11 communities reported that residents experienced no barriers to accessing healthcare services. The barriers in the remaining **52 assessed communities** were^{3,4}:



34 communities reported that residents were not using coping strategies to deal with a lack of medical supplies. The coping strategies used in the remaining **24 communities** were^{3,4}:



Presence of health facilities in assessed communities:



Top 3 most needed healthcare services reported^{3,4}:

Orthopedic services	42%
Chronic disease support	36%
Surgical care	34%

Top 3 most common health problems reported^{3,4}:

Skin diseases	42%
Chronic diseases	42%
Diarrhoea	42%

³ Multiple choices allowed.

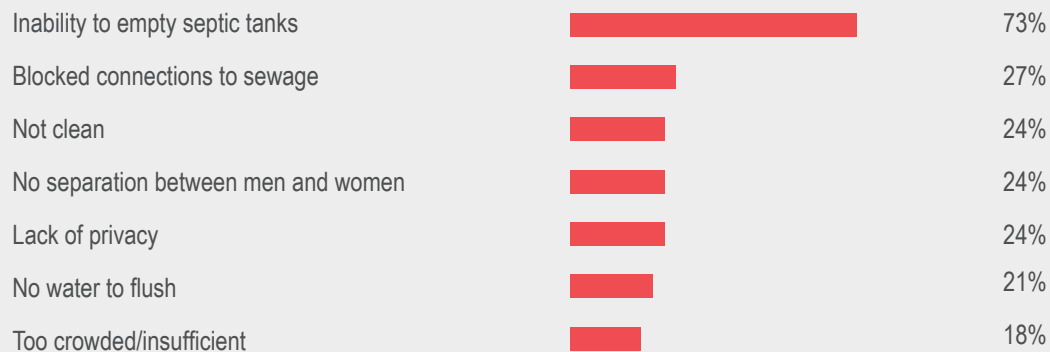
⁴ By percent of communities reporting.

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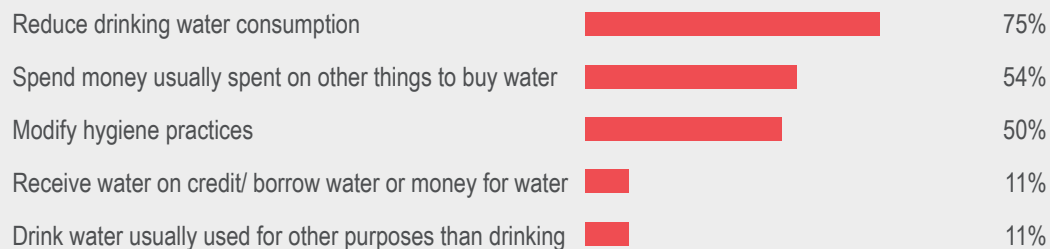


- 10** Communities reported that water from their primary source tasted and/or smelled bad.
- 0** Communities reported that drinking water from their primary source made people sick.

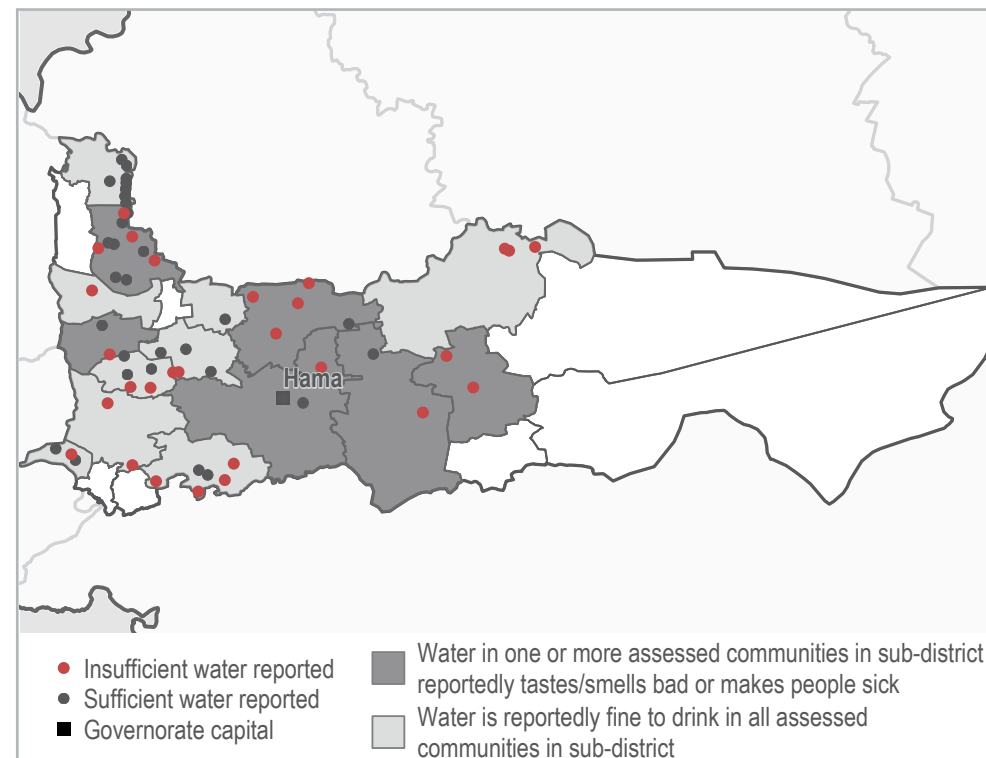
30 communities reported that residents had no problems with latrines. The most prevalent problems with latrines in the remaining 33 assessed communities were^{3,4}:



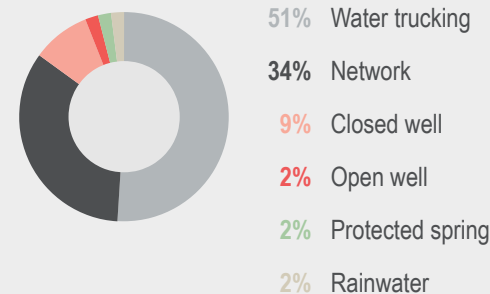
33 communities reported that they had sufficient amounts of water to meet household needs. The most common coping strategies to deal with a lack of water in the remaining 28 assessed communities were^{3,4}:



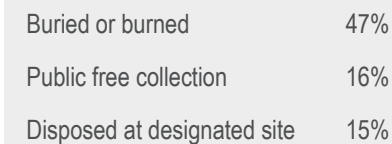
Water sufficiency for household needs:



Primary drinking water source reported⁴:



Top 3 reported methods of garbage disposal^{3,4}:



³ Multiple choices allowed.

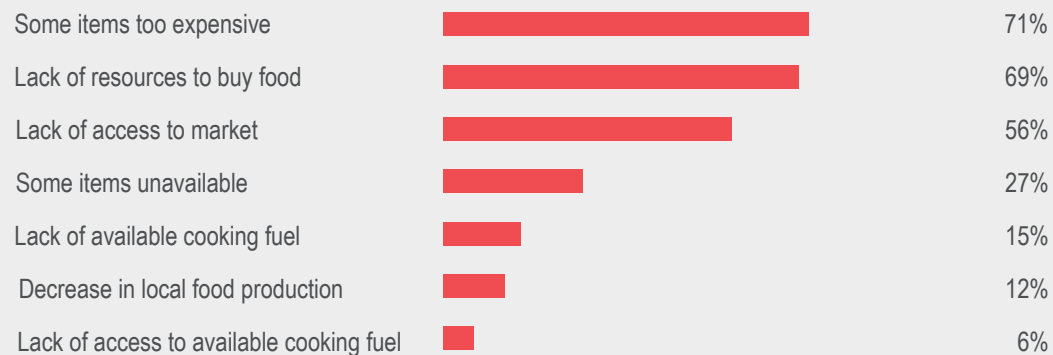
⁴ By percent of communities reporting.

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FOOD SECURITY

- 7 Communities reported not having received a food distribution in the last 12 months.
- 4 Communities reported that residents were unable to purchase food at shops and markets.

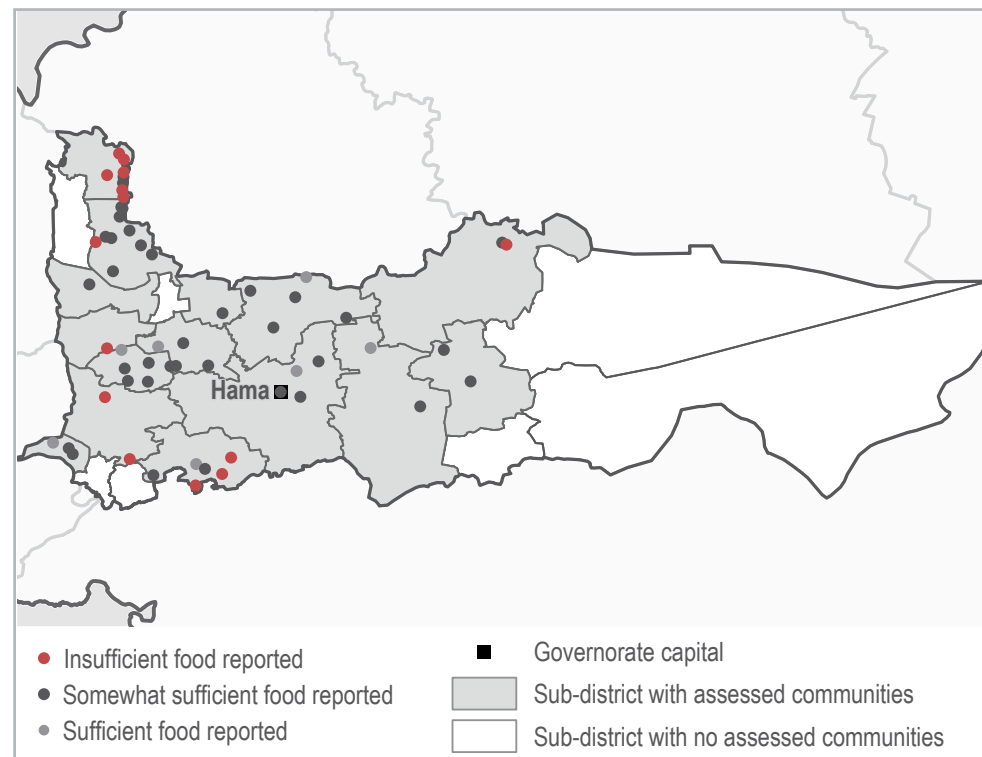
11 communities reported that residents experienced no challenges in accessing food. The most common difficulties experienced in the remaining 52 assessed communities were^{3,4}:



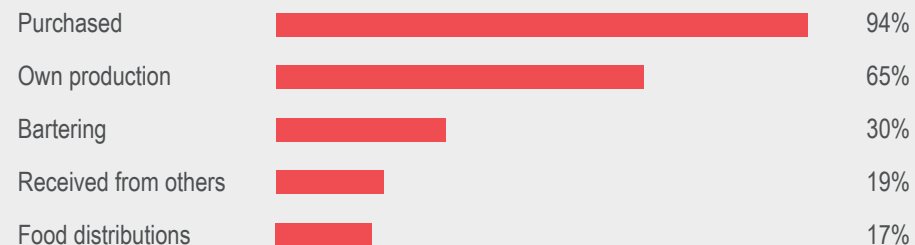
Core food item prices reported (in SYP)⁵:

Food item:	Governorate average price in March:	Governorate average price in February:	Syrian average price in March:
Bread public bakery (1 loaf)	143	128	117
Rice (1 kilogram)	357	422	472
Lentils (1 kilogram)	293	325	367
Sugar (1 kilogram)	306	313	350
Cooking oil (1 litre)	531	533	590

Food sufficiency:



Most common ways of obtaining food reported^{3,4}:



³ Multiple choices allowed.

⁴ By percent of communities reporting.

⁵ 1 USD = 434 SYP (UN operational rates of exchange as of 1 March 2018)

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LIVELIHOODS

Less than 50,000 SYP Most commonly reported household income range⁵.

23,951 SYP Governorate average food basket price^{5,6}.

5 Communities reported that residents used extreme food-based coping strategies to deal with insufficient income⁷.

9 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 **38** assessed communities were^{3,4}:



Most commonly reported main sources of income^{3,4}:



³ Multiple choices allowed.

⁴ By percent of communities reporting.

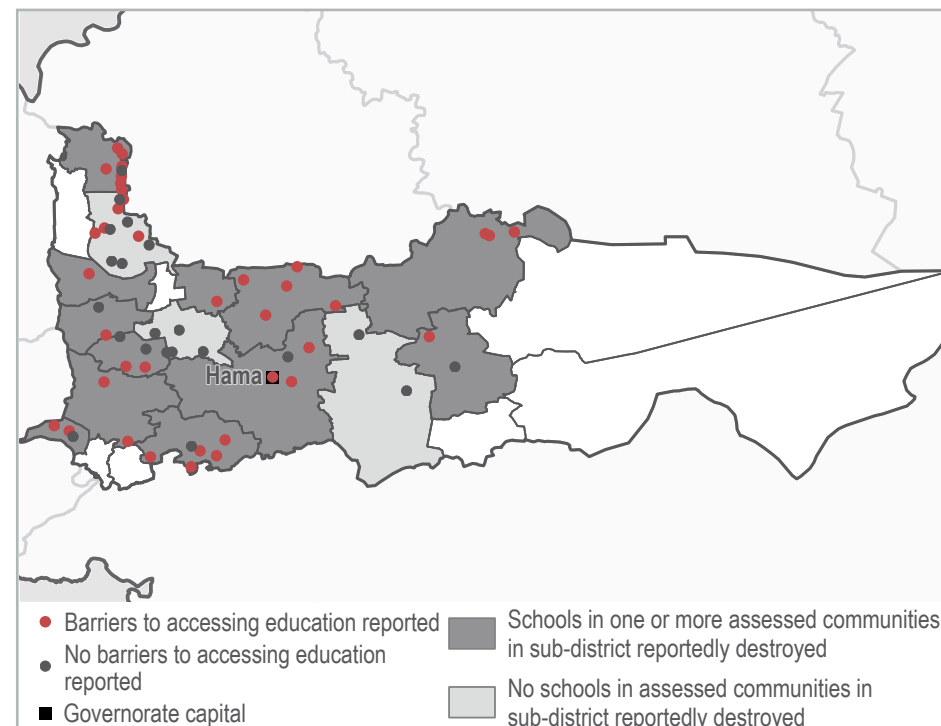
⁵ 1 USD = 434 SYP (UN operational rates of exchange as of 1 March 2018)

⁶ Calculation of the average price of a food basket is based on the World Food Programme's standard basket of dry goods. The food basket includes 37 kg of bread, 19 kg of rice, 19 kg of lentils, 5 kg of sugar, and 7 kg of vegetable oil, and provides 1,930 kcal a day for a family of five for a month.

⁷ Extreme food-based strategies: Eating food waste; eating non-edible plants and spending days without eating.

EDUCATION

Barriers to accessing education services:



26 communities reported that most children were able to access education. The most commonly reported barriers to education in the remaining **36** assessed communities were^{3,4}:



METHODOLOGY

The HSOS project, formerly known as the AoO (Area of Origin) project, is a monthly assessment that aims to provide comprehensive, multi-sectoral information about the humanitarian situation inside Syria. This factsheet presents information gathered in 64 communities in April 2018, referring to the situation in Hama Governorate in March 2018. It presents key indicators, rather than the entire range of indicators gathered in the HSOS questionnaire. For community-level data on assessed sub-districts in Al Hasakeh, Dar'a, Idleb, Rural Damascus and Quneitra, please refer to the monthly sub-district factsheets, available on the [REACH Resource Centre](#). The complete HSOS dataset is disseminated monthly via the REACH Syria mailing list.

Wherever possible, information was collected through an enumerator network. 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 rendered direct data collection unfeasible, KI interviews were conducted remotely through participants identified in camps and settlements in neighbouring countries by REACH field teams. Participants contact KIs in their community in Syria to collect information about their community. KIs were 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 disagreed on a certain piece of information, enumerators triangulated the data with secondary sources or selected the response provided by the KI with the more relevant sector-specific background. For each question asked, confidence levels were 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 were triangulated through secondary sources, including news monitoring and humanitarian reports. Where necessary, follow-up was conducted with enumerators and participants. Findings are indicative rather than representative, and should not be generalised across the governorate.

ENDNOTES

¹ All information and figures reported in HSOS factsheets refer to the situation in assessed communities and cannot be generalised to other non-assessed communities of the governorate.

² Returns are not necessarily voluntary, safe, or sustainable.

³ 'Children' includes all persons below the age of 18.

⁴ Reuters (21 March 2017). Syrian rebels launch attack near Hama. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com>.

⁵ Baladi, E. (22 August 2017). Regime Cuts Homs and Hama Countrysides Into Three Pockets. The Syrian Observer. Retrieved from <http://syrianobserver.com>.

⁶ Al-Zarier, Nassar and Edwards (19 September 2017). Bombardment returns to rebel-held northwest as HTS aims to 'demolish, defeat' Astana ceasefire. Syria Direct. Retrieved from <http://syriadirect.org>.

⁷ Carter Center (17 January). Weekly Conflict Summary January 11-17, 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.cartercenter.org>.

⁸ Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (5 February 2018). The ongoing attack of the regime force with their allies leads the organization to lose more of its influence inside the besieged circle within Hama, Idlib and Aleppo countryside. Retrieved from <http://www.syriaohr.com>.

⁹ South Front (15 March 2018). Syria War Report - Militant advance in Northern Hama ends in failure. Retrieved from <http://www.southfront.org>.

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. You can contact us directly at: geneva@reach-initiative.org and follow us on Twitter: @REACH_info.