

## Introduction

Since the Syrian crisis started in 2011, Menbij district has continually witnessed periods of heightened clashes and displacement, leading to a decline in the overall humanitarian situation.<sup>1</sup> While the district has seen a near cessation of conflict in the last two years, there are still significant needs, especially related to a lack of sufficient livelihoods. To date, despite sustained response from a number of cross-border NGOs addressing all key sectors, ad hoc support from other partners, and a United Nations (UN) inter-sector assistance convoy delivered in March this year, gaps in humanitarian assistance persist.

This assessment provides information about demographics, availability of essential services, priority needs, and existing response activities to both guide and inform the current response in Menbij district and to inform an evidence-based expansion of the response. This situation overview (SO) provides analysis on the humanitarian situation in the opposition-controlled sub-districts in Menbij district, followed by information specific to Menbij city, and then sector-related information on [livelihoods](#); [shelter](#); [electricity and non-food items \(NFIs\)](#); [water, sanitation and hygiene \(WASH\)](#); [healthcare](#); [food security](#); [education](#); and [protection](#) for the entire assessed area. The assessment and this SO are the result of a collaborative effort between the Northeast Syria (NES) NGO Forum, the Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme Syria (HNAP) and REACH. More information about each organisation is available on [page 18](#).

## Methodology

HNAP collected data from 9 to 29 April 2019 in the 171 communities in 3 sub-districts comprising the opposition-controlled area of Menbij district. In Menbij city, data was collected at the neighbourhood level in all 16 neighbourhoods. For analysis and reporting, each neighbourhood in Menbij city is considered as a community, making 186 total assessed locations. Two key informants (KIs) from HNAP's network were interviewed in each assessed location, based on their sector-specific expertise or position of leadership. Responses were triangulated between the two KIs<sup>2</sup> and then triangulated with other sources, including data collected by REACH and HNAP for other assessments.

Information related to the humanitarian response was provided by the NES Forum and received from the NGOs operating in Menbij district. Information regarding the UN inter-agency convoy was gathered from information shared by UN OCHA. All findings are not statistically representative and should be regarded as indicative only, particularly as they are aggregated across communities within which humanitarian conditions may vary widely. Response by other actors, such as stabilisation actors and a limited response by other cross-border organisations, is not reflected.



## Key Findings

Total estimated population:<sup>17</sup>

**380,000**

Estimated proportion of IDPs<sup>3</sup> in total population:<sup>17</sup>

**16%**

While Menbij district has seen a relatively stable security situation in the last two years, especially when compared to other parts of NES, people living in the area have significant needs related to past and current displacement, a lack of sufficient livelihoods, and the reduced access to services in rural areas. The depreciating Syrian pound,<sup>3</sup> coupled with limited opportunities for employment outside of agriculture mean that people struggle to afford costly medical services, food, non-food items (NFIs), and educational materials even though they are largely available. These issues are especially severe for internally displaced persons (IDPs),<sup>4</sup> who face particular challenges to accessing adequate livelihoods, and for people living in rural areas, where fewer opportunities are available.

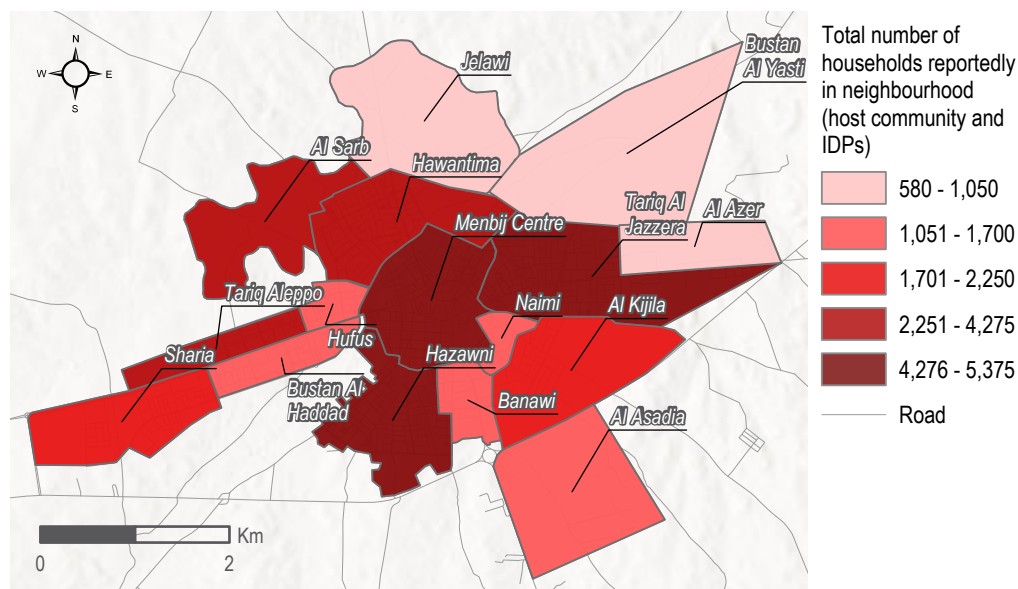
- **Despite an active humanitarian response in Menbij district, there are gaps in the available humanitarian assistance relative to needs.** Five cross-border NGOs with sustained response operate in Menbij district, with activities addressing key sectors including shelter and NFIs, WASH, healthcare, food security, livelihoods and early recovery, education, and protection. However, food, healthcare, and NFIs remained the most common priority needs for IDPs and host community members, which is likely related to the high cost of these goods and services.
- **In Menbij city, where an estimated 39% of people in the assessed area reside, access to goods and services was significantly better than in rural areas.** In all 16 neighbourhoods, people reportedly lived within an accessible distance to healthcare facilities, markets, and education facilities. The availability of infrastructure such as the main water network and generators translates to an additional day of water access per week (4 days in Menbij city on average compared to 3 elsewhere), and at least 7 additional hours of electricity per day (11 hours on average in Menbij city compared to 5 elsewhere). KIs in all rural communities reported that households access healthcare and markets in locations outside of their community. The cost of transportation to access these essential goods and services was commonly reported as a barrier, and likely has a particular impact on households with lower incomes. More information, along with definitions of urban and rural, can be found on [page 6](#).
- **The humanitarian situation for IDPs was notably more difficult than that for host community members.** Barriers to accessing sufficient livelihoods and earning adequate wages leave many IDPs living in damaged shelters (15% of the IDP population), relying on armed groups as a source of livelihoods (reported in 6% of assessed communities), and keeping their children out of school to work (reported in 96% of assessed communities).

# CONTEXT

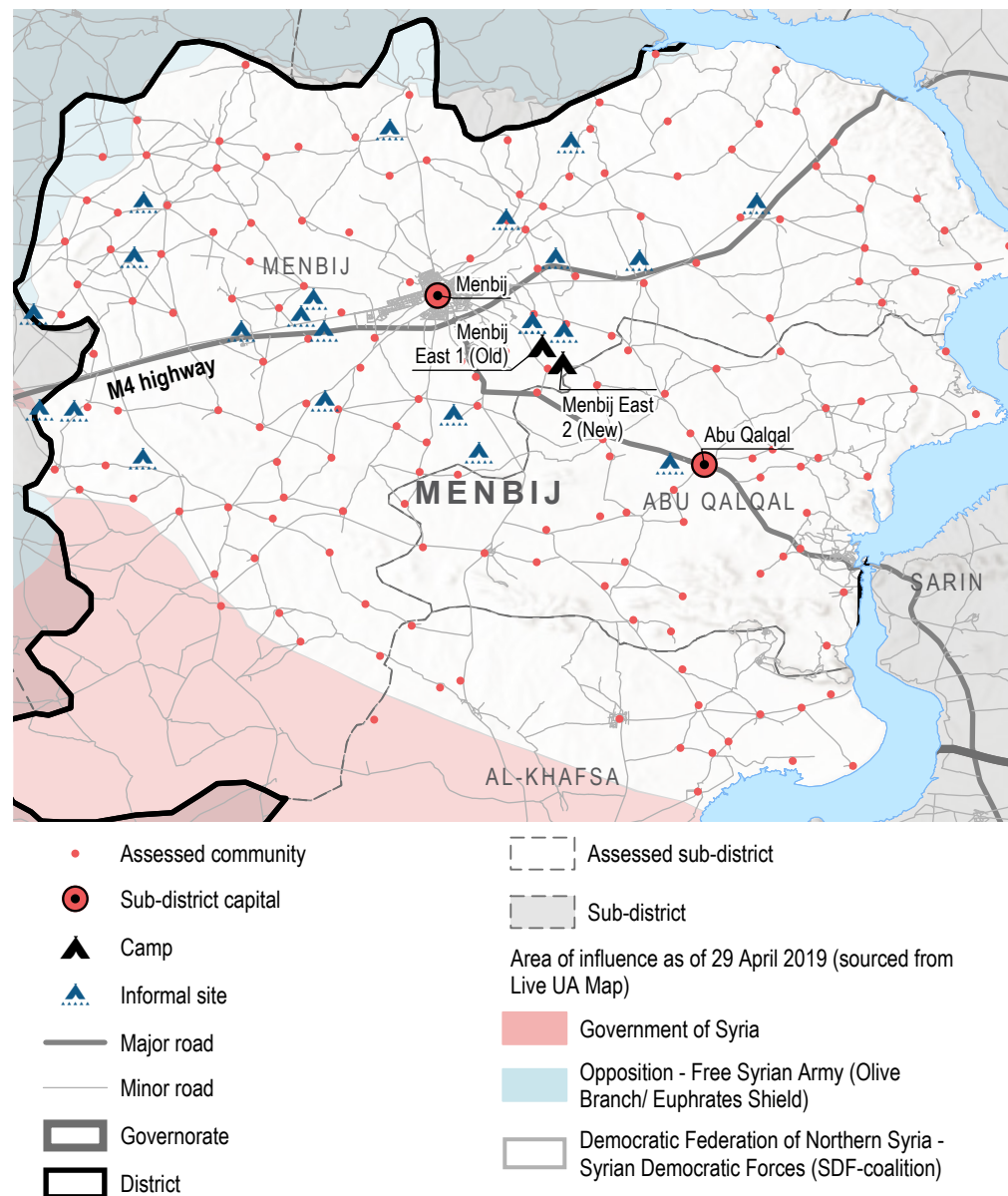
Since the start of the Syrian conflict in 2011, several different Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs) have assumed control over areas of Menbij district.<sup>5</sup> The conflict first reached the region in July 2012, when, following clashes, AOGs gained control of several parts of the district, including Menbij city.<sup>6</sup> In January 2014, the group known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) seized control of the area, resulting in casualties and mass displacement to the northern border with Turkey.<sup>7</sup> With the obstruction of humanitarian access, living conditions quickly deteriorated as food and medical services became scarce and civilian movement was restricted.<sup>8</sup> In June 2016, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the US-led coalition began a military operation against ISIL. The rapid escalation of conflict resulted in casualties, displacement, and large-scale destruction of infrastructure.<sup>9</sup> By August 2016, the SDF had taken control of much of Menbij district, leading thousands of people to return.<sup>10</sup> However, despite initial recovery efforts, civilians were still exposed to insecurity, especially as a result of unexploded ordnance (UXOs) around schools, homes, and roads.<sup>11</sup>

While the situation in Menbij district has been relatively stable since 2016, people living in the district continue to face hardship due to high prices, lack of access to livelihoods, and limited access to basic services such as education and healthcare. Safety and security risks also remain high as clashes and security incidents continue to occur, leaving people in fear of an escalation of conflict.<sup>12,13</sup>

MAP 1. MENBIJ CITY AREA OF ASSESSMENT



MAP 2. MENBIJ DISTRICT AREA OF ASSESSMENT

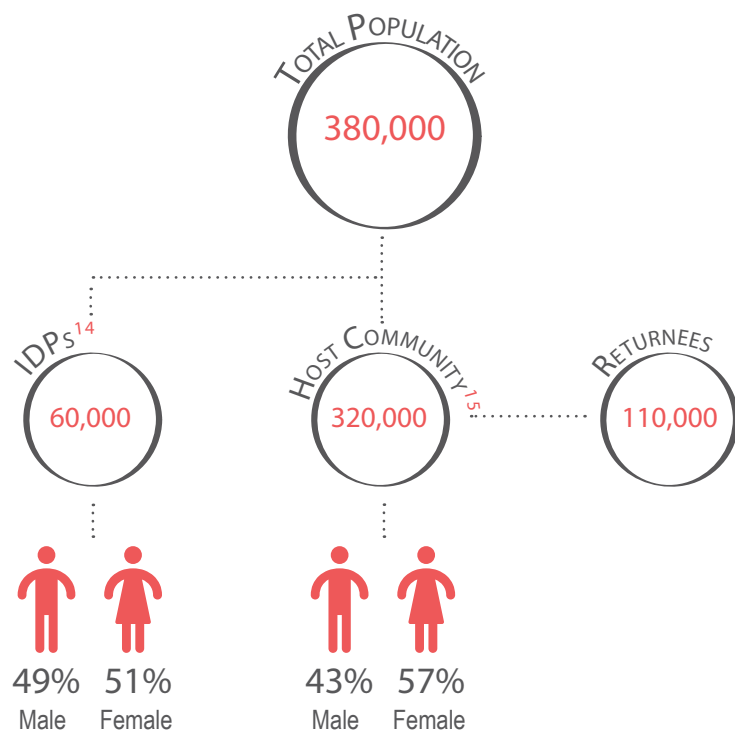


# DEMOGRAPHICS

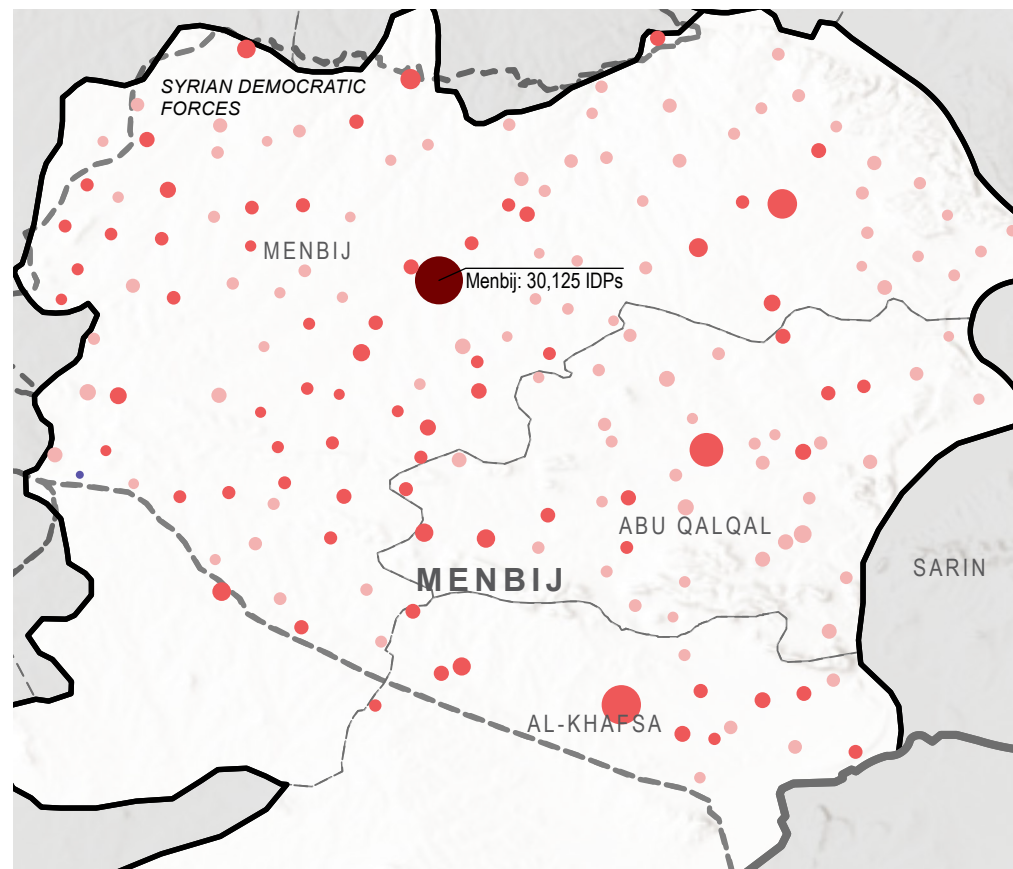
Following clashes in the district from 2012 to 2016, large numbers of people were displaced from Menbij district, particularly Menbij city.<sup>16</sup> However, following a near cessation of clashes in the area since 2016, an estimated 110,000 people have returned to their communities of origin, contributing to the significant spontaneous returnee population in district. The actual number of people who were previously displaced may be higher than 110,000, as many were displaced for only a short time before returning and are not captured in the definition of spontaneous return.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, due to its relative stability compared to other areas of NES, Menbij district is home to a large population of IDPs.<sup>3</sup> Half of these IDPs are reported to reside in Menbij city. It is important to note that these population figures do not include people living in informal sites or camps in the district, which is estimated to be an additional 7,500 people.<sup>18</sup>

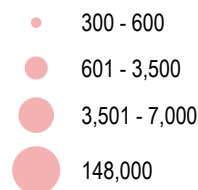
Estimated population figures for assessed communities in Menbij district:<sup>19</sup>



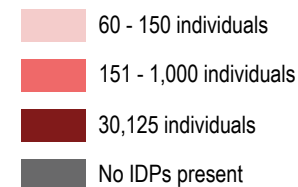
MAP 3. POPULATION SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION IN ASSESSED COMMUNITIES



Number of resident/pre-conflict individuals reported in each assessed community as of 29 April 2019



Number of IDP individuals reported in each assessed community as of 29 April 2019



# HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITY AND NEEDS

While there has been ad hoc humanitarian assistance from the UN and other partner organisations, a total of five cross-border NGOs are currently providing humanitarian assistance on a consistent basis in Menbij district. On average, these NGOs reportedly reach 26,000 people in need each month, with the number of people in need in assessed locations estimated at approximately 230,000 according to the 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO). Response activities are primarily focused on Menbij city, with two NGOs working in camps, providing a comprehensive response, and two providing assistance in rural areas.<sup>20</sup> In addition, in March 2019, the UN and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) delivered a multi-sector aid convoy, with one-off, short-term assistance for 50,000 people. The convoy was the first large-scale delivery of formal assistance to Menbij, and specifically targeted vulnerable groups such as female-headed households, people with disabilities, and people living in informal settlements.<sup>21</sup>

Despite this activity, there are significant unmet needs across Menbij district. Healthcare, NFIs, and food ranked among the top needs for both IDP and host community households in nearly every assessed community. With only one NGO providing healthcare assistance through the national hospital, and food and NFI-related assistance almost exclusively targeted toward vulnerable groups such as those living in poverty and IDPs, there is a significant gap in aid provision for these sectors.

## Cross-border NGO activity in Menbij district by sector:<sup>16</sup>



**2 NGOs**

Winterisation, NFI kits, shelter rehabilitation, summer kits

*Menbij city, formal camps, informal settlements*



**1 NGO**

Primary healthcare, secondary healthcare, ambulances/referrals

*Menbij city, Abu Qalqal city*



**2 NGOs**

Monthly food vouchers, food rations

*Formal camps, informal settlements*



**2 NGOs**

Shower construction, hygiene kits, water trucking, desludging, latrine construction/cleaning, water network rehabilitation, water quality improvements

*Menbij city, communities in Menbij sub-district, formal camps, informal settlements*



**3 NGOs**

Social cohesion and youth programmes, child friendly spaces, adolescent girls programmes

*Menbij city, formal camps*



**3 NGOs**

Cash for work, vocational training

*Menbij city, formal camps*

## MOST COMMON PRIORITY NEEDS

### IDPs

#### Most commonly reported IDP priority needs

(by % of 183 locations that were reported to have IDPs):<sup>22,23</sup>

- 1 NFIs (100%)
- 2 Food (100%)
- 3 Healthcare (95%)
- 4 Shelter (5%)

NFI needs	#	%
Cooking fuel	183	100%
Mattresses/Sleeping mats	167	91%
Clothing	144	79%
Sources of light/solar lamps	128	70%
Shoes	32	17%

Food needs	#	%
Cooking oil	176	96%
Rice	175	96%
Bulgur	111	61%
Sugar	82	45%
Fresh vegetables	62	34%

Healthcare needs	#	%
Chronic disease treatment	173	95%
Antibiotics	163	89%
Surgery	145	79%
Skilled care during childbirth	125	68%
Vaccination	21	11%

### HOST COMMUNITY

#### Most commonly reported host community priority needs

(by % of 186 locations where reported):<sup>22</sup>

- 1 Healthcare (98%)
- 2 NFIs (96%)
- 3 Food (80%)
- 4 Education (30%)

Healthcare needs	#	%
Chronic disease treatment	183	98%
Skilled care during childbirth	152	82%
Surgery	150	81%
Antibiotics	147	79%
Vaccination	69	37%

NFI needs	#	%
Cooking fuel	179	96%
Clothing	170	91%
Solar panels	128	69%
Shoes	94	51%
Sources of light/solar lamps	66	35%

Food needs	#	%
Cooking oil	140	75%
Meat	130	70%
Sugar	98	53%
Rice	73	39%
Fresh vegetables	69	37%



# INFORMAL SITES

Findings on informal sites come from a REACH assessment of informal sites conducted in December 2018.\* Seven locations of the 22 known camps and sites in Menbij district<sup>24</sup> were assessed; all were informal tented settlements. The most commonly reported areas of origin for residents of these settlements were within Aleppo governorate itself, with some coming from Idleb and Ar-Raqqa governorates.



As of December, there was reportedly no access to education for people living in the seven assessed sites, as there were no schools within an accessible distance. It is likely that a lack of livelihoods also limited access to education, as children reportedly worked to support their families. This trend is also commonly seen for IDP families living in other assessed communities in Menbij district.



The majority of people in the assessed informal settlements in Menbij district resided in tents. Shelter conditions were reportedly inadequate for winter, with new and additional tents as well as winter blankets and heating fuel reported among the most common priority needs.



Markets outside the settlement were the most commonly reported source of food across the seven assessed sites. In one site, Um Tnakh, food distributions were reportedly available. Food was reportedly not sufficient, with residents of at least one site, Little Osajli Camp, reportedly spending days without eating.

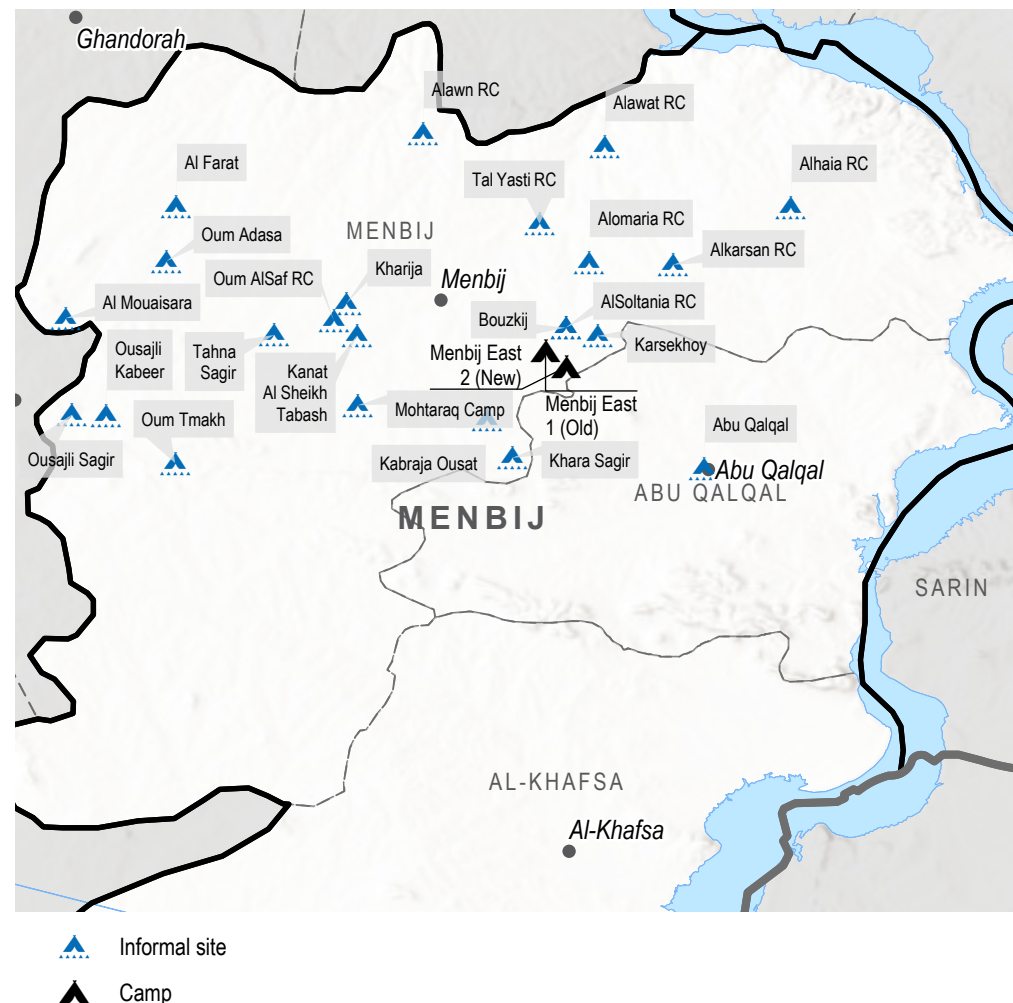


A variety of water sources were reportedly available, yet access to water varied significantly across sites. Moreover, sanitation issues were common in all assessed sites, with open defecation the most common alternative to latrine use and a severe lack of garbage collection and sewage systems, leading to a buildup of refuse, which likely negatively impacted the health situation.



People living in informal sites were reported to most commonly access health facilities in neighbouring communities, which was also found to be the case for the majority of assessed communities in Menbij district as a whole. Six of the seven informal sites reportedly had no access to some essential medical services or supplies for chronic disease treatment.

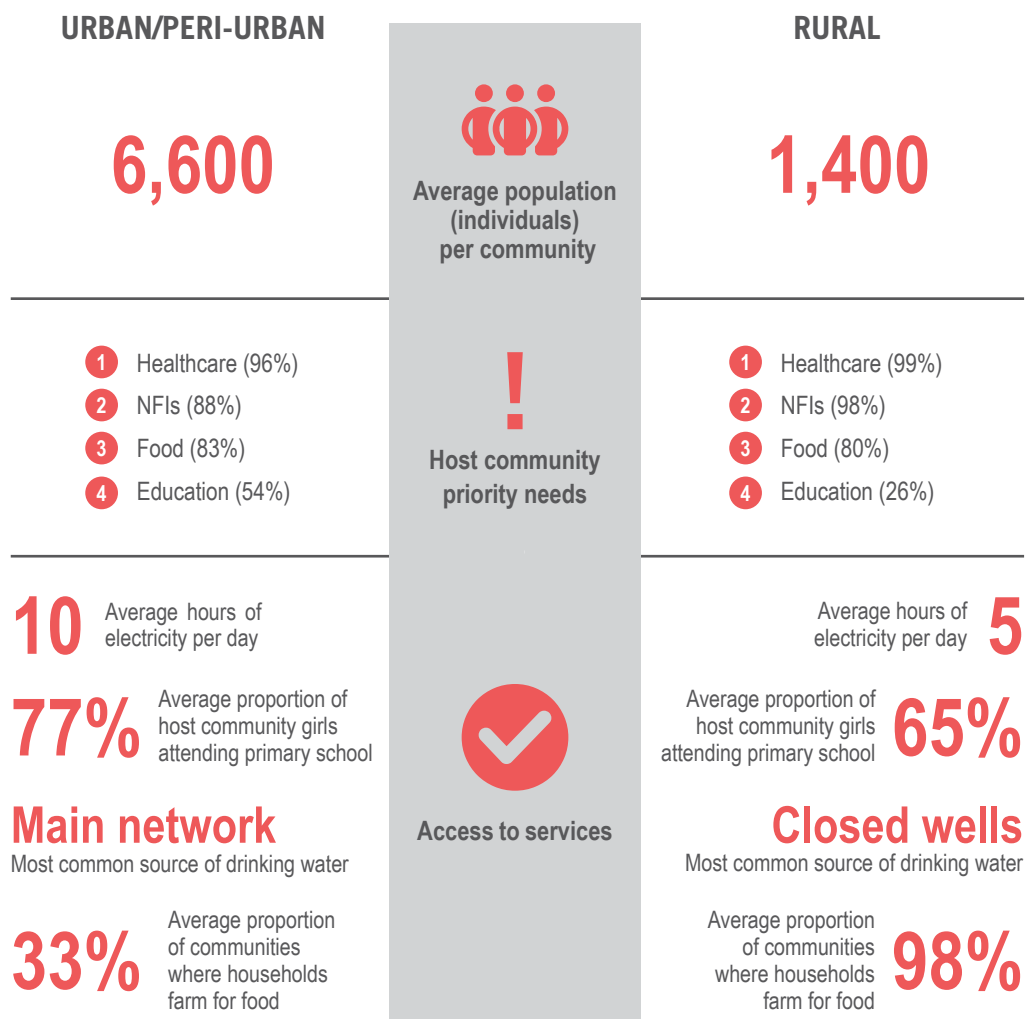
MAP 4. LOCATION OF INFORMAL SITES IN MENBIJ DISTRICT



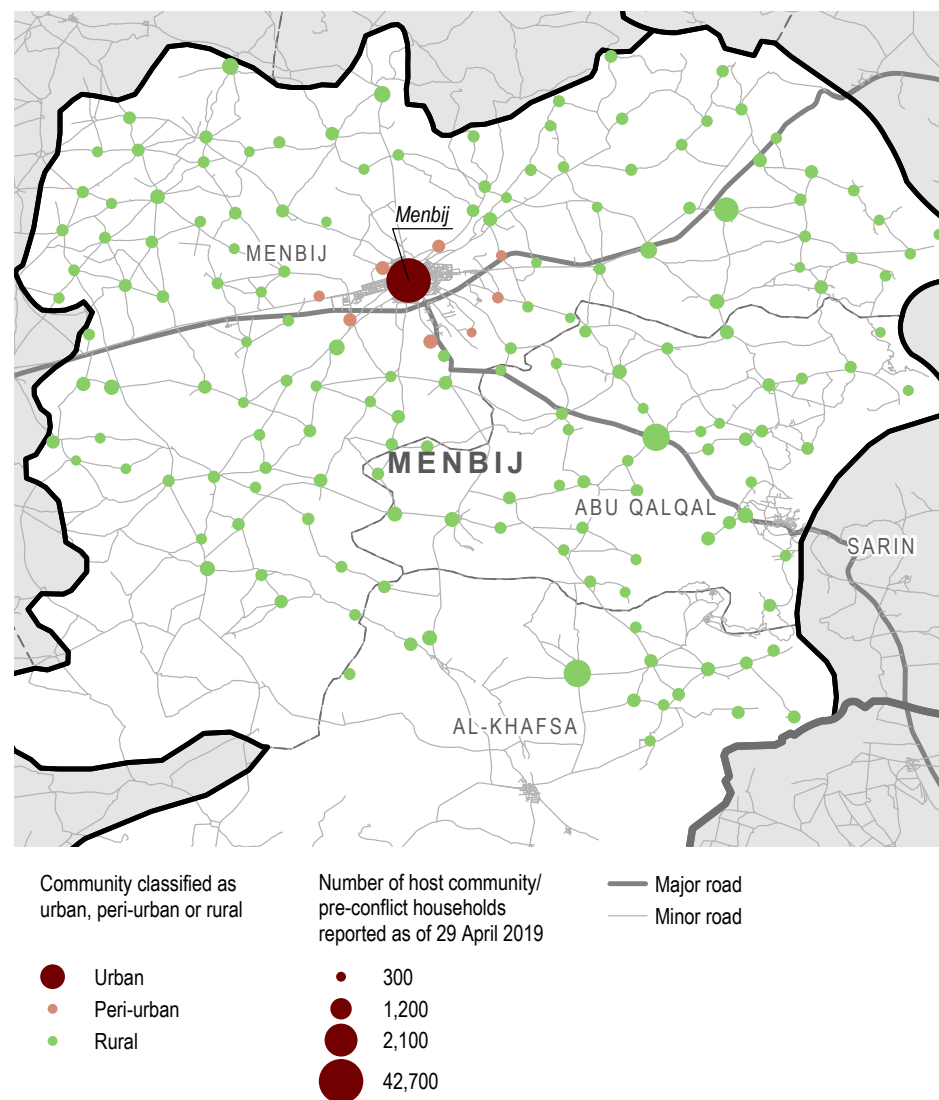
\*Data for this assessment was collected from 16 to 20 December 2018 using a KI methodology. Findings are not statistically representative and should be considered only as indicative of the situation in informal sites. The findings for these seven sites do not necessarily represent the conditions of other sites in Menbij district. [Access the factsheet for the camps and sites assessment here.](#)

# URBAN AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

People living in the 24 assessed communities considered urban or peri-urban were able to access essential goods and services more easily due to the availability of markets, schools, and health facilities in close proximity.\* Other infrastructure, such as the main water network, was also more commonly available in urban than in rural areas. Although those living in rural communities had less access to services than those in urban communities, the response was relatively limited with only two out of the five cross-border NGOs providing humanitarian assistance in rural areas.<sup>16</sup>



MAP 5. MENBIJ DISTRICT URBAN AND PERI-URBAN VERSUS RURAL COMMUNITIES



\*The definition of urban used for this assessment was 'any community with a population greater than 2,500 households.' Menbij City was the only assessed community that fit this definition. Communities within a 5 km distance of Menbij city are considered peri-urban due to their proximity and thus the relatively easier access to services within the city compared to other communities. All urban/peri-urban proportions are reported as a percentage of the 24 communities/neighbourhoods considered urban or peri-urban, and all rural proportions are reported as a percentage of the 162 communities considered to be rural.

# MENBIJ CITY

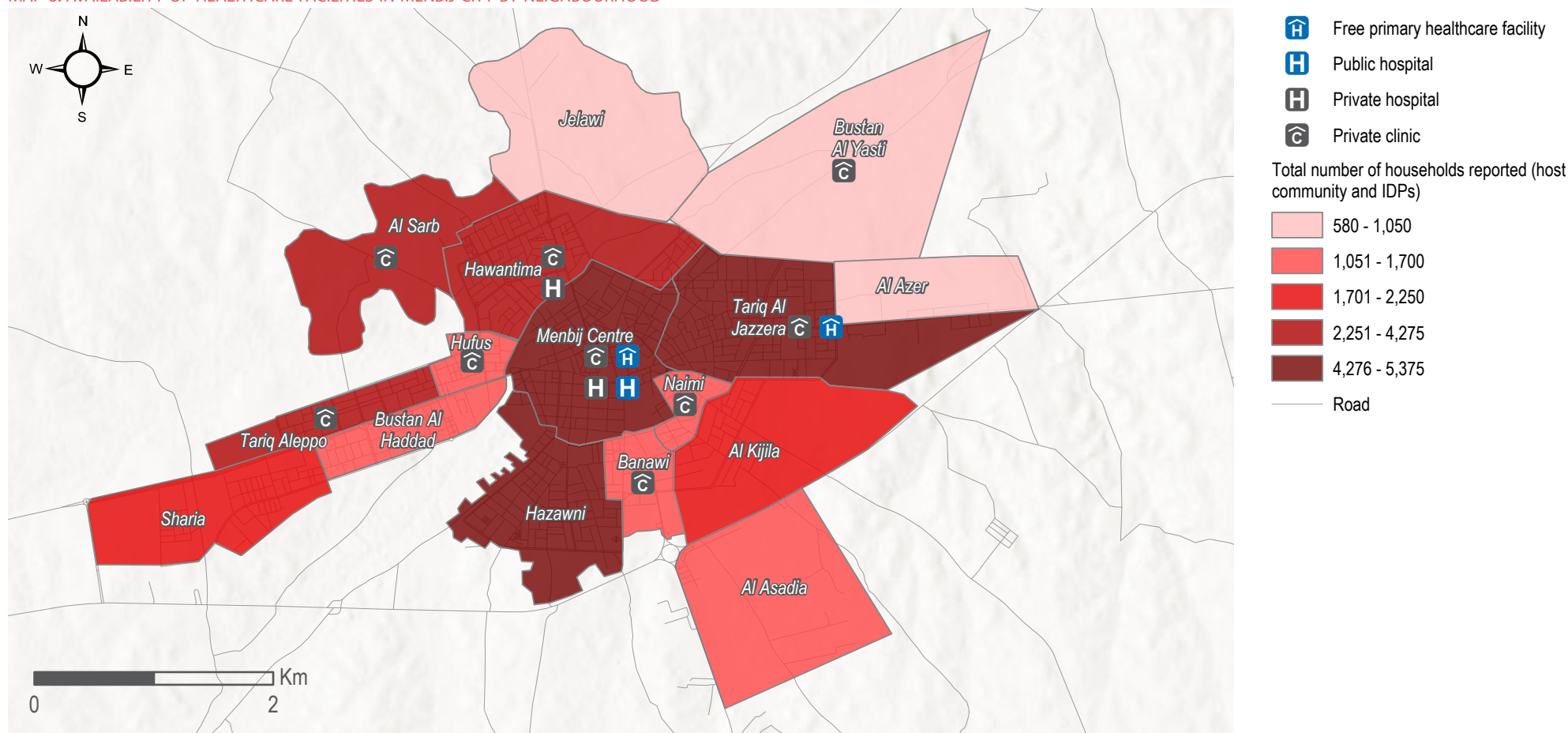
An estimated 150,000 of the 380,000 people (39%) living in Menbij district reside in Menbij city. The city has seen similar instability as the rest of Menbij district, with issues compounded by its population density and strategic value to parties to the conflict.<sup>25</sup> According to estimates from KIs, 75% of the host community population in Menbij city had previously been displaced at some point since the beginning of the conflict, compared to 38% on average for the entire district. While humanitarian conditions for those in Menbij city differ significantly compared to those in the rest of the district, challenges still persist:

- People residing in Menbij city reportedly live within accessible distance of hospitals, schools, and markets. However, in all 16 neighbourhoods, KIs reported that healthcare was unaffordable and that it was not easily accessible to all members of the community. Safety and security concerns were the main

reported barriers to accessing markets, but all food items were generally available.

- Likely related to the unaffordability of medical services, healthcare was reported as the first priority need in all neighbourhoods of Menbij city. NFIs and food were also among the top priority needs, similar to the rest of the district.
- KIs in the majority of assessed neighbourhoods reported day labour, skilled trade, and shopkeeping as sources of income for host community members. Low wages and restrictions by local authorities were reported as barriers to livelihoods in all neighbourhoods. Children working was reported in every assessed neighbourhood, particularly for boys.

MAP 6. AVAILABILITY OF HEALTHCARE FACILITIES IN MENBIJ CITY BY NEIGHBOURHOOD



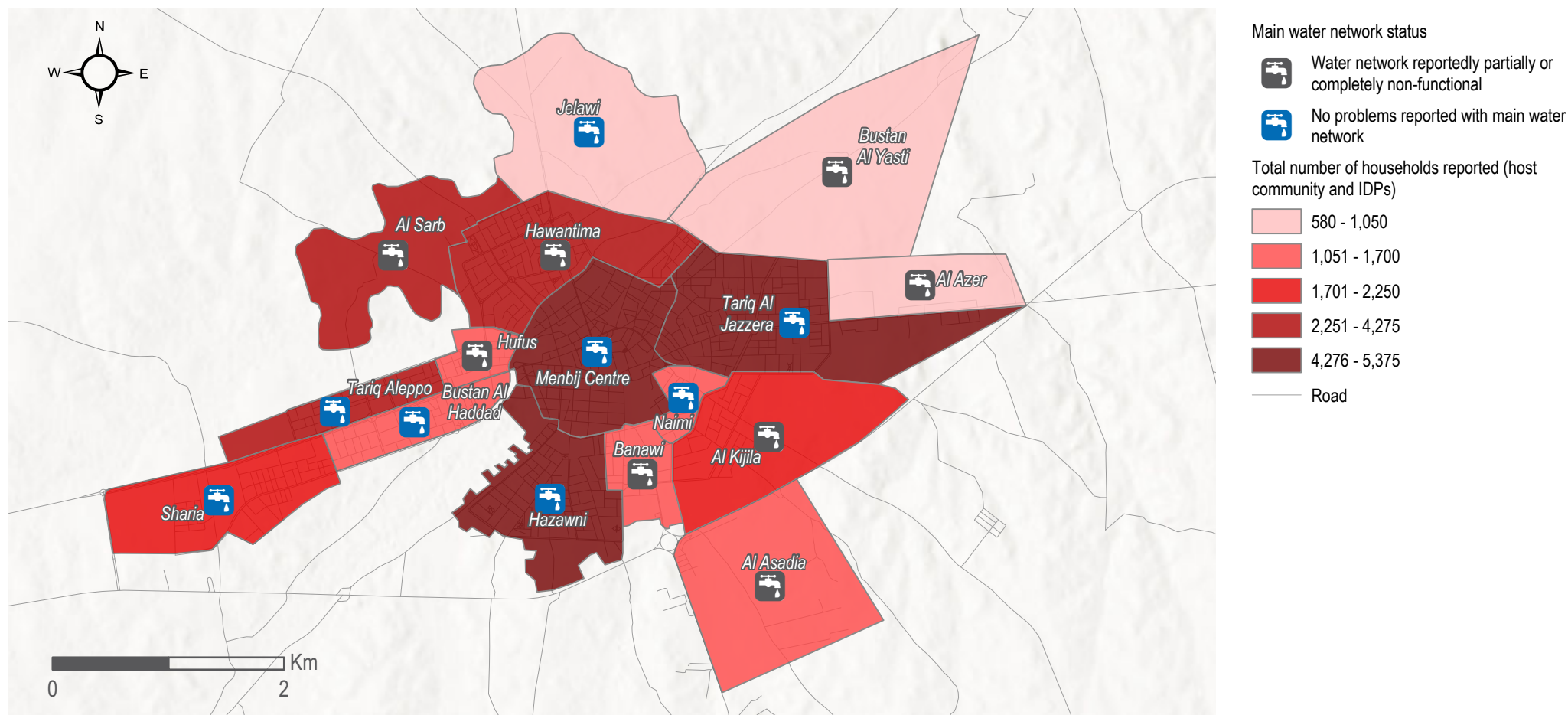
- The main water network was the main source of water for all neighbourhoods in Menbij city. However, the main network was completely or partially not functioning in half of these neighbourhoods. In all neighbourhoods, the main water network was reportedly only working a few hours per day and did not have enough pressure to pump sufficient water. In 75% of neighbourhoods, alternative sources of water were too expensive to be viable options for households in the community.

- While education facilities were available in every neighbourhood of Menbij city, significant challenges to education access were reported. In all neighbourhoods, a lack of personal documentation required to enrol was reported as an issue for both IDP and host community children, likely related to displacement, including for those who were displaced temporarily before returning. In addition,

overcrowding, and a lack of teaching and learning supplies were reported in all neighbourhoods for both IDP and host community children.

- A higher proportion of shelters were reportedly damaged in Menbij city compared to the rest of Menbij district, which is likely due to past clashes that took place in the city. 8% of shelters reportedly had major damage (compared to 1% for the district as a whole), while 4% of shelters saw severe damage and 4% were completely destroyed (compared to less than 1% for the entire district).

MAP 7. ISSUES WITH THE MAIN WATER NETWORK BY NEIGHBOURHOOD





## LIVELIHOODS

A lack of sufficient livelihoods is an issue that affects needs across nearly all sectors in the assessed area. High prices of goods, services, and transport were reported to limit households' access to food, healthcare, WASH, electricity, NFIs, and education. Most people living in Menbij make a living through agricultural activities and remittances, rather than skilled employment or trades. Of note, the livelihoods situation for IDPs in Menbij is considerably worse than that of host community households, with the average IDP household earning 10,000 SYP less per month than a host community household. The average income for both IDPs and residents in Menbij district is reportedly on par with an average income between 50,000 and 100,000 SYP (93 to 186 USD<sup>30</sup>) for most regions of NES.<sup>26</sup>

IDPs **60,000 SYP** ————— Estimated average monthly household income<sup>27</sup> ————— Host community **70,000 SYP**

**Most commonly reported sources of livelihoods for IDPs and host community** (by % of locations where reported).<sup>22,23</sup>

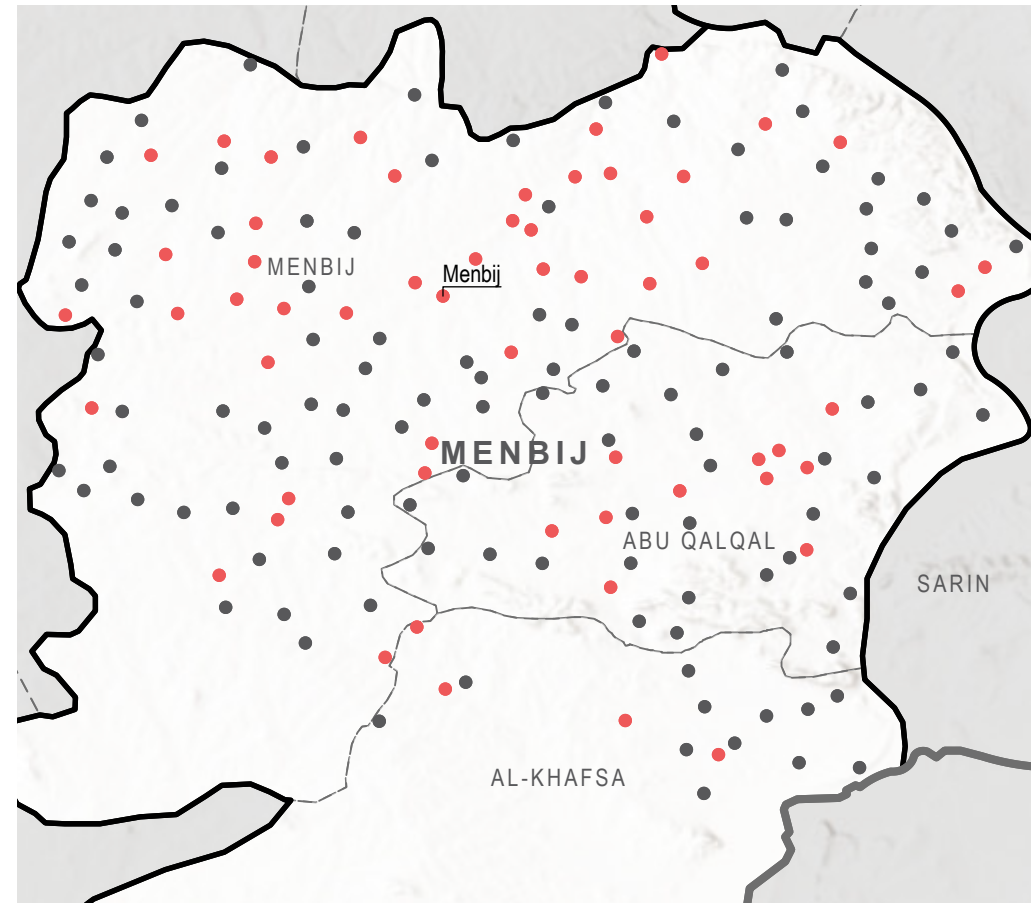
IDPs		Host community
Daily waged labour (100%)	1	Remittances (100%)
Remittances (99%)	2	Growing crops (91%)
Raising livestock (84%)	3	Raising livestock (90%)
Trade/shopkeeping (6%)	4	Daily waged labour (15%)
Armed groups (6%)	5	Skilled trades (6%)

**Most commonly reported barriers to accessing livelihoods for IDPs and host community** (by % of locations where reported).<sup>22,23</sup>

IDPs		Host community
Lack of resources needed for work (94%)	1	Lack of resources needed for work (92%)
General lack of employment (87%)	2	Low wages (91%)
Restrictions by local authorities (87%)	3	General lack of employment (86%)
Low wages (82%)	4	Restrictions by local authorities (41%)
Lack of skilled employment (37%)	5	Lack of skilled employment (27%)

KIs in assessed communities reported that IDP and host community households earning less than 50,000 SYP per month most commonly had trouble accessing healthcare, NFIs, and food. These services also correspond with the top priority needs in the district, which denotes a likely relationship between livelihoods and needs in this area.

MAP 14. COMMUNITIES WHERE HOST COMMUNITY CHILD LABOUR WAS REPORTED



Presence of host community households reportedly sending children under the age of 15 to work

- Yes
- Not reported

# DAMAGED OR DESTROYED BUILDINGS

Though clashes in Menbij district resulted in widespread damage to buildings and infrastructure, the past two years of relative stability in the district have allowed time for repair. Nevertheless, a significant portion of buildings across the district remain damaged, negatively impacting access to services and creating challenges for already precarious livelihoods, especially for the urban poor. It is notable that the 10% of shelters that are reported to have minor damage could lend themselves well to small-scale shelter rehabilitation and repair. While this assessment collected information specifically on damaged shelters, it is reasonable to assume that other buildings such as health facilities and schools have similar levels of damage within the community.

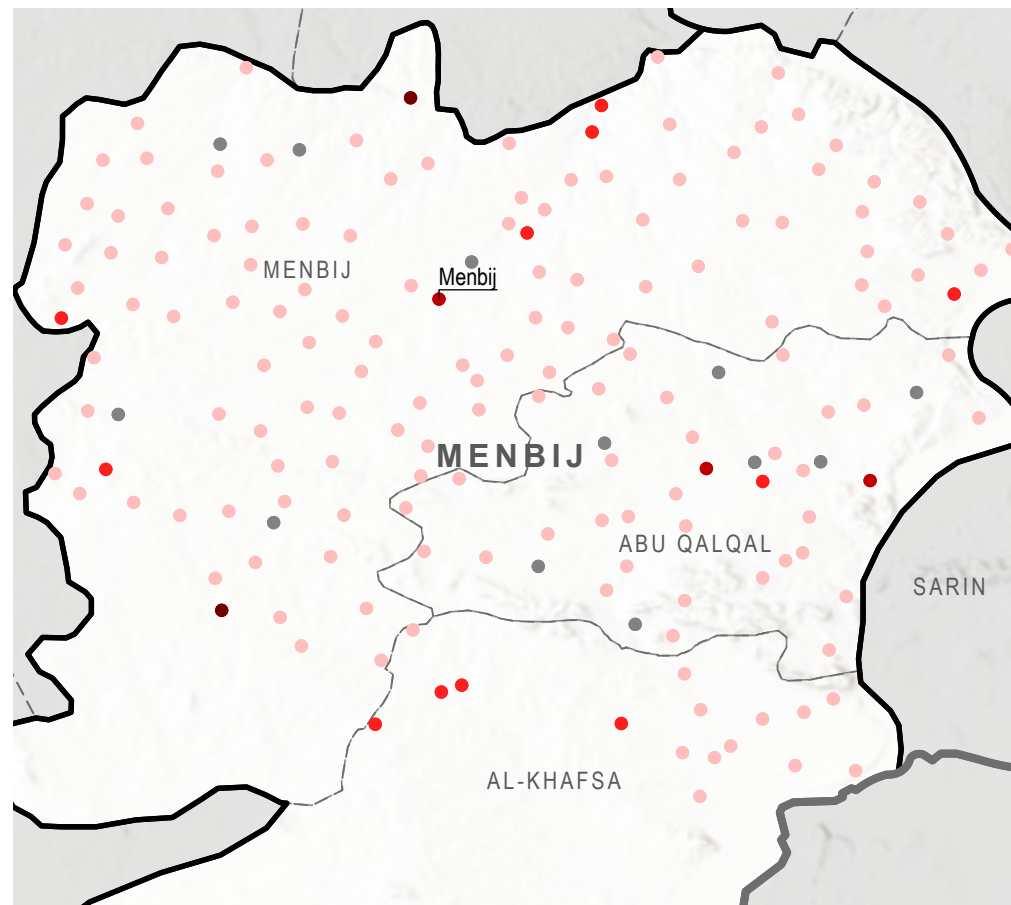
**Average level of damage to shelters in assessed communities** (by % of shelters reportedly damaged).\*

<b>NO DAMAGE</b>	No damage or negligible damage	<b>90%</b>
<b>MINOR DAMAGE</b>	Shelters with limited damage to doors, walls, and windows	<b>10%</b>
<b>MAJOR DAMAGE</b>	Shelters with extensive damage, but structure is still intact	<b>1%</b>
<b>SEVERE DAMAGE</b>	Shelters with extensive structural damage, requiring significant repairs	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>COMPLETELY DESTROYED</b>	Shelters with damage so extensive that rehabilitation is not possible	<b>&lt;1%</b>

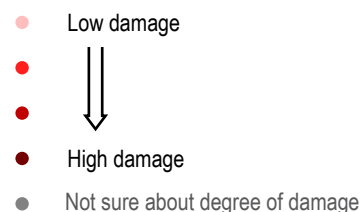
As depicted in the map on the right, damage in Menbij district is fairly evenly spread, with a higher proportion of communities in Abu Qalqal and Al-Khafsa sub-districts reporting more extensive damage. Notably, Menbij city is among the most damaged of the communities assessed due to intense clashes that took place there in 2016.<sup>29</sup>

\*Proportions do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

MAP 8. COMMUNITIES WITH DAMAGED OR DESTROYED BUILDINGS<sup>28</sup>



Damage Index



## SHELTER






Solid, finished buildings were the most common shelter type reported for both IDPs and host community members living in Menbij district. However, despite the high proportion of people living in solid shelters, KIs across Menbij district reported issues with insulation and heating, lighting, and access to water in homes. In Menbij city, shelters were particularly unequipped to keep residents warm, with KIs in 100% of assessed neighbourhoods reporting a lack of heating and KIs in 88% of assessed neighbourhoods reporting a lack of insulation from cold.

### Most commonly reported shelter types (by % of total population in assessed locations):<sup>20</sup>

IDPs	Host community
Solid/finished buildings (owned/rented) (86%)	1 Solid/finished buildings (owned/rented) (99%)
Unfinished/damaged buildings (15%)	2 Solid/finished buildings (not owned/rented) (<1%)
Solid/finished buildings (not owned/rented) (14%)	3 Unfinished/damaged buildings (<1%)

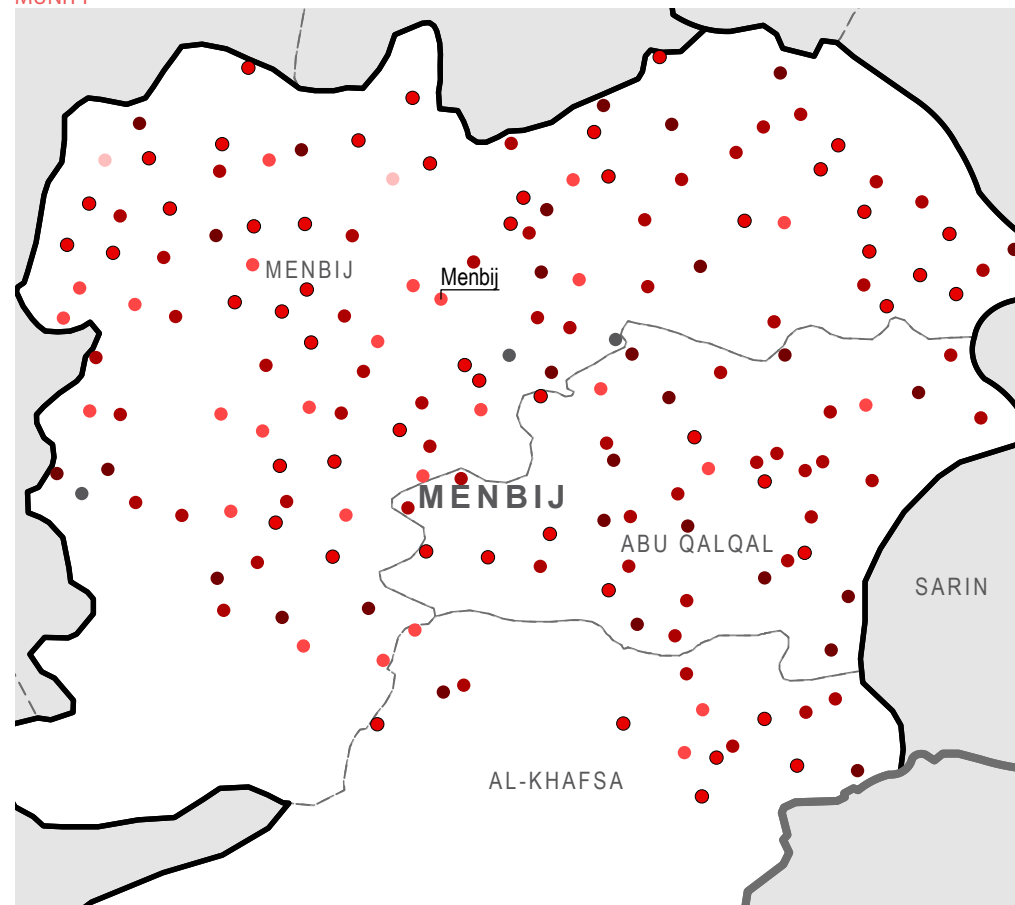
The majority of people living in Menbij district owned or rented the shelter in which they were living in the month prior to the assessment. In 98% of assessed communities, the cost of rent reportedly stayed approximately the same compared to the month before. However, as pictured in map 9, an estimated 15% of IDPs reportedly did not pay rent for the buildings they lived in, which may be associated with an inability to pay. This could signal other potential housing, land and property issues.

### Most commonly reported shelter issues in the month prior to the assessment (by % of locations where reported):<sup>22</sup>

Lack of heating	86%	
Lack of lighting around shelter	42%	
Lack of safe access to drinking water	38%	
Lack of lighting inside shelter	24%	
Lack of insulation from cold	13%	

Lack of lighting in and around shelters is a protection risk that impacts women and children in particular. KIs in 42% of assessed communities reported a lack of lighting around shelters as a key shelter issue, which highlights a potential source of vulnerability across the district.

MAP 9. PROPORTION OF IDPS LIVING IN BUILDINGS THEY DO NOT OWN OR RENT, BY COMMUNITY



Proportion of IDPs reportedly living in a shelter that they do not own (solid/finished house or apartment)

0%

1-22%

23-25%

26-33%

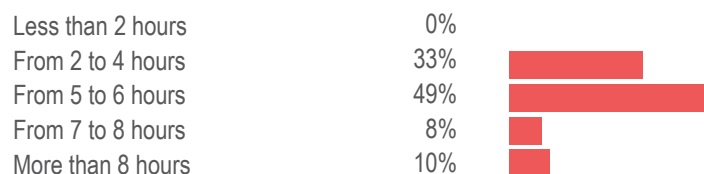
34-45%

No IDPs in the community

## NFI ELECTRICITY AND NON-FOOD ITEMS

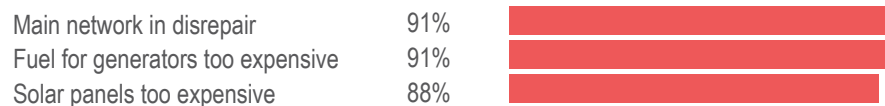
Electricity access was fairly limited for those living in Menbij district, with people in assessed communities most commonly accessing between 5 and 6 hours of electricity per day. This was notably better in Menbij city, where all residents had access to at least 11 hours of electricity per day on average. Livelihood-related barriers to electricity access were particularly common across Menbij district, with KIs in the vast majority of communities reporting that the high cost of fuel and solar panels prevented residents from accessing electricity.

### Average hours of electricity access per day (by % of locations where reported):



In Menbij city, community generators were the most common source of electricity (reported in 100% of neighbourhoods). In the rest of Menbij district, the most commonly reported source of electricity was the main network (reported in 72% of the 171 assessed communities outside of Menbij city).

### Most commonly reported barriers to accessing electricity (by % of locations where reported):<sup>22</sup>



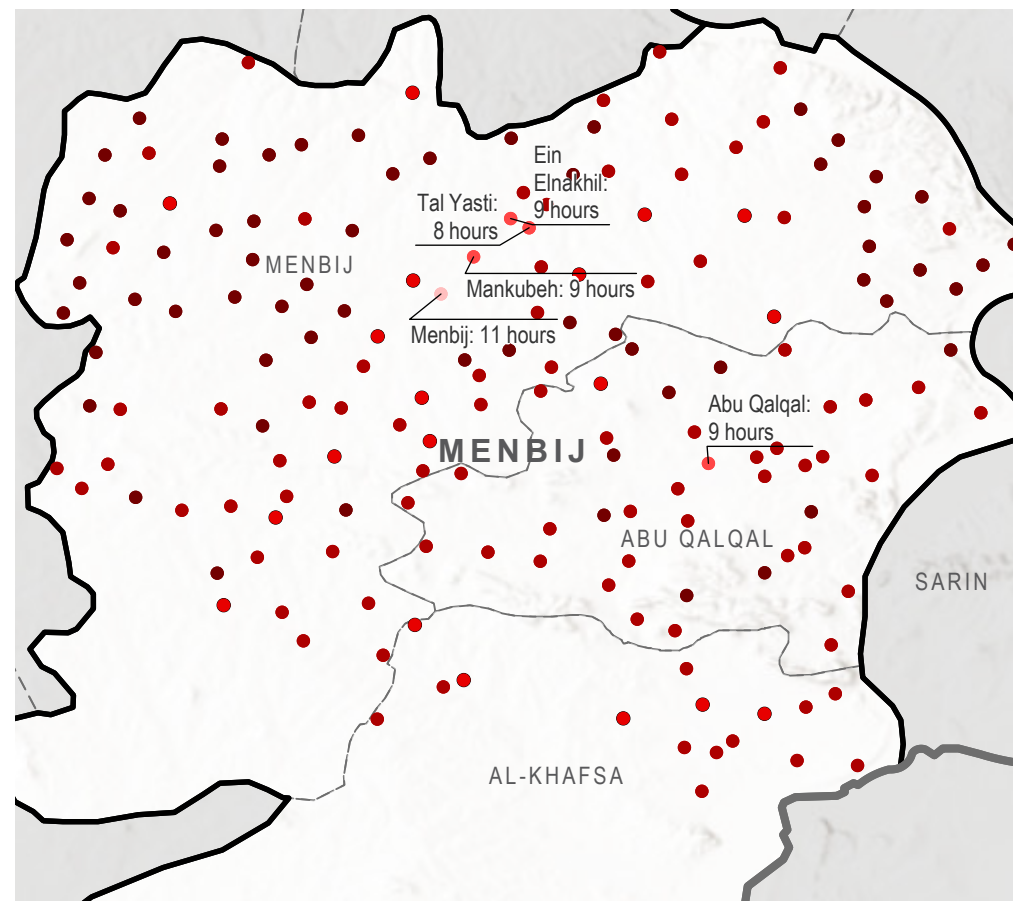
### Items most commonly reported to be unavailable for purchase in the month prior to the assessment (by % of locations where reported):<sup>22</sup>

- 1 Cooking fuel (5%)
- 2 Solar lamps (3%)
- 3 Solar panels (3%)

### Items most commonly reported to be unaffordable for most people in the month prior to the assessment (by % of locations where reported):<sup>22</sup>

- 1 Cooking fuel (97%)
- 2 Solar panels (7%)
- 3 Solar lamps (5%)
- 4 Children's clothing (5%)
- 5 Batteries (5%)

MAP 10. AVERAGE HOURS OF ELECTRICITY PER DAY, BY COMMUNITY



### Average numbers of electricity hours reportedly available per day in the last month

- 3 or less
- 4 - 5 hours
- 6 - 7 hours
- 8 - 9 hours
- 10 - 12 hours



While many communities in Menbij district were connected to a main water network, infrastructure-related problems were reported as major barriers to water access. KIs in 51% of assessed communities reported that the main network in their communities was not properly functioning due to disrepair. In addition, sanitation was reported as a major issue in Menbij district, with KIs in over 90% of communities reporting a lack of garbage collection services and no available sewage network. As a result, public areas are filled with garbage and sewage, which presents significant risks to public health, especially as temperatures rise in the summer months.

**Main reported source of drinking water in the month prior to the assessment** (by % of locations where reported):



**55%** Main network  
**42%** Closed wells  
**3%** Paid community borehole

**Most commonly reported barriers to accessing water** (by % of locations where reported):<sup>22</sup>

Alternative sources too costly	88%	<div></div>
High price of water trucking	70%	<div></div>
Water pumps do not always function	58%	<div></div>

**Most commonly reported sanitation issues in the month prior to the assessment** (by % of locations where reported):<sup>22</sup>

Garbage in the streets	94%	<div></div>
No sewage system	90%	<div></div>
Sewage flowing onto the streets	89%	<div></div>

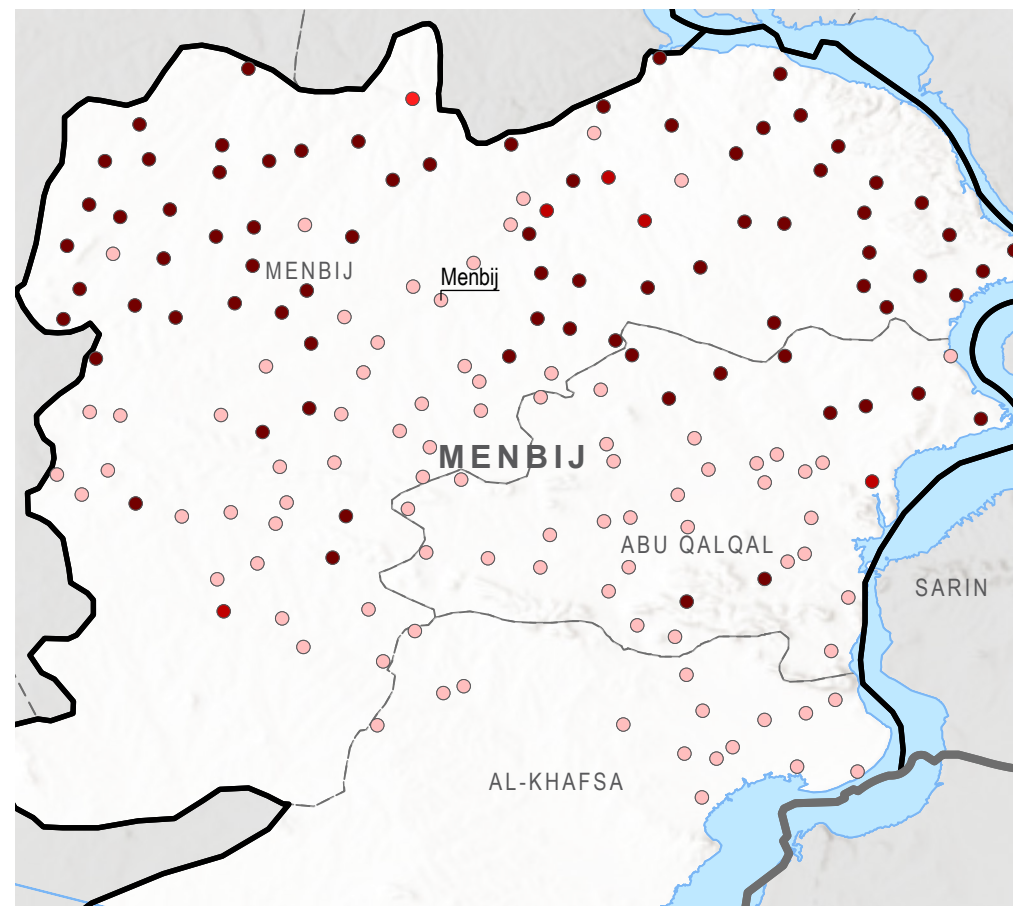
**100%**

Percentage of assessed communities where KIs reported the use of coping strategies to deal with lack of water

**3**

Average number of days per week water was available from the main network\*

MAP 11. MOST COMMON SOURCE OF DRINKING WATER, BY COMMUNITY



Most commonly reported source of drinking water in the community in the last month

- Closed wells
- Community borehole paid
- Community borehole paid, Main network (no consensus from KIs)
- Main network

\* In the 56% of assessed communities that were reported to be connected to a main water network.

## HEALTHCARE

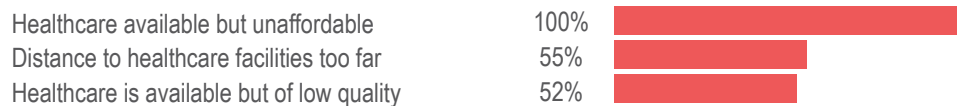
While most, though not all, essential healthcare services were reportedly available in Menbij district, KIs across assessed communities described a situation in which not all households are easily able to access the health services they need. The long distance that many must travel to access services, coupled with the high cost of healthcare, puts many at risk of being unable to access care. Healthcare was among the top three reported services that both IDP and host community households making less than 50,000 SYP per month were unable to access due to their low income.

### Most commonly reported healthcare facilities available in the assessed community in the month prior to the assessment (by % of locations where reported):<sup>22</sup>



While most communities across Menbij district reportedly lacked healthcare facilities within the community, KIs in more than 90% of assessed communities reported that households were able to access pharmacies, private clinics, primary care facilities, and private and public hospitals in neighbouring communities. Menbij city was notably reported as the most common place for people to access healthcare, as depicted in the map on the right. However, long distances and the cost of transportation are reported to make healthcare difficult or impossible to access for many households across Menbij district.

### Most commonly reported barriers to healthcare access in the month prior to the assessment (by % of locations where reported):<sup>22</sup>



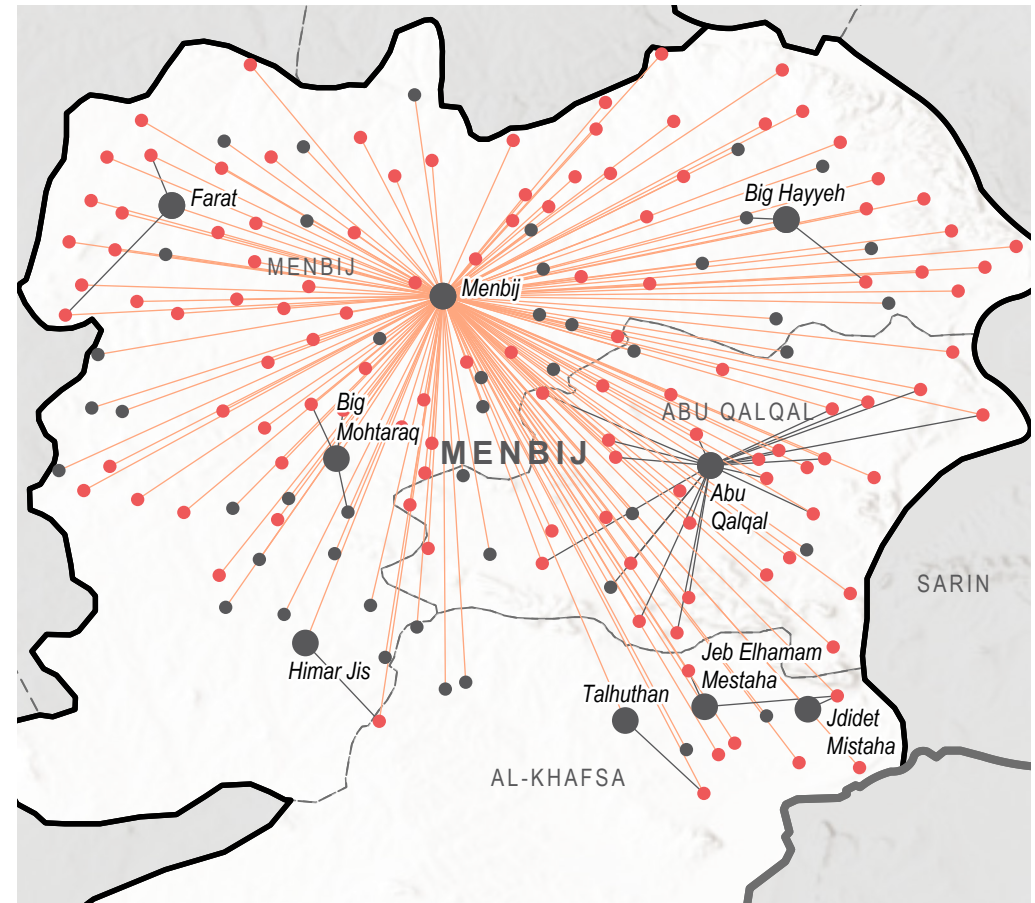
### Estimated proportion of households that could access healthcare services when needed in the month prior to the assessment:

79%

### Healthcare services most commonly reported to be unavailable for purchase in the month prior to the assessment (by % of locations where reported unavailable):<sup>19</sup>

- 1 Post-exposure prophylaxis for STI (99%)
- 2 Leishmaniasis treatment (99%)
- 3 Prosthetics (99%)

MAP 12. LOCATIONS WHERE HOUSEHOLDS ACCESS HEALTHCARE

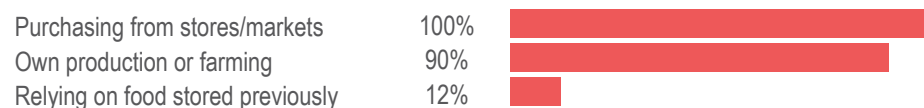


- Secondary location where communities reportedly access healthcare
- No health facilities reportedly in the community
- Health facilities reportedly available in the community
- Line showing which communities reportedly access healthcare in Menbij
- Line showing which communities reportedly access healthcare in another community

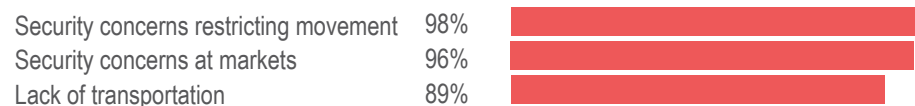
## FOOD SECURITY

Menbij district is predominantly rural, and while all households reportedly purchase food from stores and markets, the vast majority of residents also rely for a great part on their own agriculture and livestock as sources of food. While essential food items were available for purchase in all communities and most households could reportedly afford them, access to food was hampered by security concerns, coupled with challenges related to travelling to markets, such as lack of transportation to markets.

**Most commonly reported sources of food in the month prior to the assessment** (by % of locations where reported):<sup>22</sup>



**Most commonly reported barriers to accessing markets in the month prior to the assessment** (by % of locations where reported):<sup>22</sup>



Safety and security were reported as major factors preventing access to markets in the month prior to the assessment. In January 2019, an explosive attack occurred in a marketplace in Menbij City, likely contributing to a perceived sense of insecurity at markets. In addition, the continued presence of UXOs, especially around Menbij city, poses danger to travel throughout the district.<sup>10</sup> As Menbij district is part of a critical trade route in NES, the presence of UXOs may have broader implications for markets in other areas of NES as well.

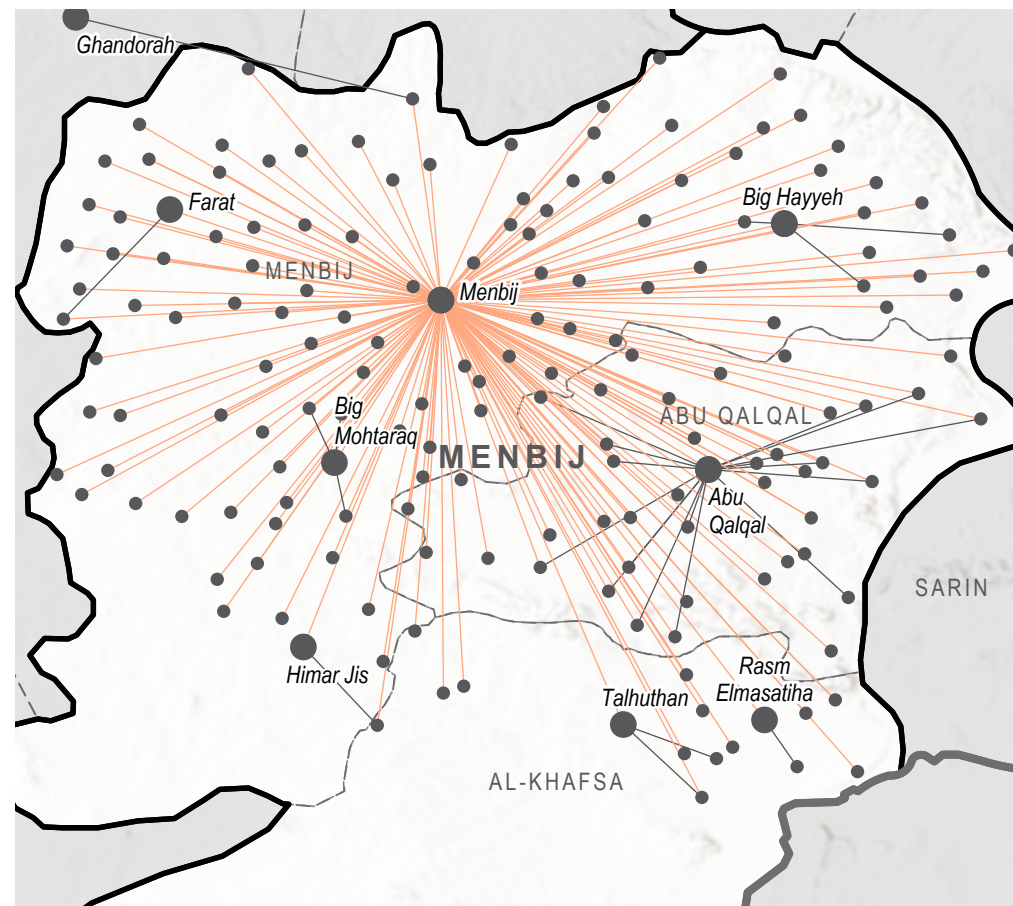
**Proportion of communities where all essential food items were reported to be available for purchase in the month prior to the assessment**

100%

**Food items most commonly reported to be unaffordable for most people in the month prior to the assessment** (by % of locations where reported unaffordable for most):<sup>19</sup>

- 1 Bread (13%)
- 2 Fresh vegetables (8%)
- 3 Meat (other than chicken) (6%)
- 4 Chicken (4%)
- 5 Cooking oil (4%)

MAP 13. LOCATIONS WHERE HOUSEHOLDS ACCESS MARKETS



- Secondary location where communities reportedly access markets
- Community reportedly has a market
- Line showing which communities reportedly access markets in Menbij
- Line showing which communities reportedly access markets in another community



## EDUCATION

Education in Menbij is characterised by a significant difference in access for IDP and host community children. Host community children were much more likely to be enrolled in school at all levels, while barriers specific to displacement, such as lack of documentation, kept many IDP children at home. In addition, the relatively more precarious livelihood situation of IDP households means that IDP children are more likely to work than host community children; children working was reported as a coping strategy for insufficient livelihoods in 96% of communities for IDPs, compared to 39% for host community members.

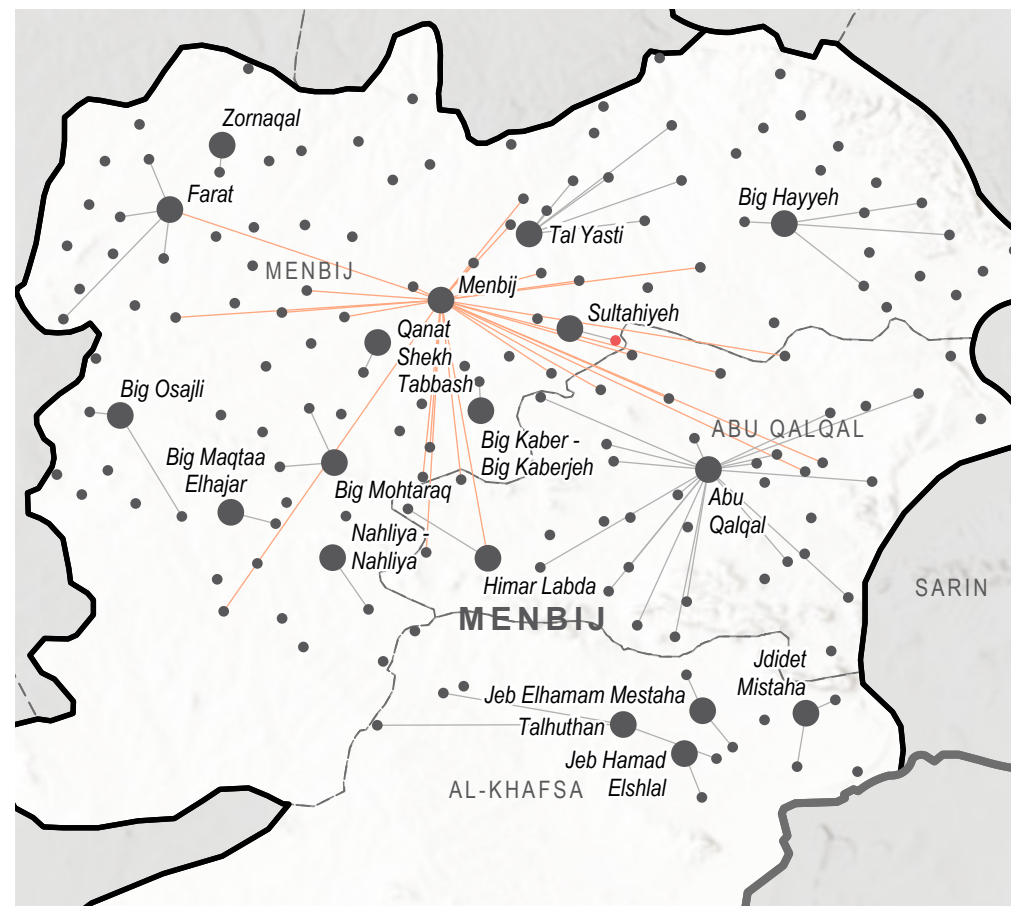
**School attendance rates by population group, gender, and age level** (by # of communities where reported out of 186 assessed locations);<sup>19</sup>

		HC boys	HC girls	IDP boys	IDP girls
	Attendance rate	# of communities reporting			
PRIMARY	0%	0	0	0	0
	1-20%	0	1	1	11
	21-40%	1	5	24	51
	41-60%	3	62	107	109
	61-80%	83	91	50	12
	81-100%	99	27	1	0
INTERMEDIARY	0%	33	97	145	166
	1-20%	65	64	35	17
	21-40%	49	18	3	0
	41-60%	31	5	0	0
	61-80%	8	2	0	0
	81-100%	0	0	0	0
SECONDARY	0%	111	157	175	175
	1-20%	65	25	8	8
	21-40%	9	2	0	0
	41-60%	1	2	0	0
	61-80%	0	0	0	0
	81-100%	0	0	0	0

**Most commonly reported barriers to accessing education in the month prior to the assessment** (by % of locations where reported);<sup>22</sup>

	IDP children	Host community children
Families cannot afford to prioritise school (100%)	1	Unsuitable environment for learning (i.e. insufficient/no heat, electricity, etc.) (97%)
Discomfort re-entering/attending school (98%)	2	Not enough teaching supplies (97%)
Lack of personal documentation to enrol (92%)	3	Overcrowding (91%)

MAP 15. LOCATIONS WHERE HOUSEHOLDS ACCESS EDUCATION FACILITIES



- No access to education reported in the community
- Access to education reported in the community
- Line showing which communities reportedly access education in Menbij
- Line showing which communities reportedly access education in other communities



## PROTECTION

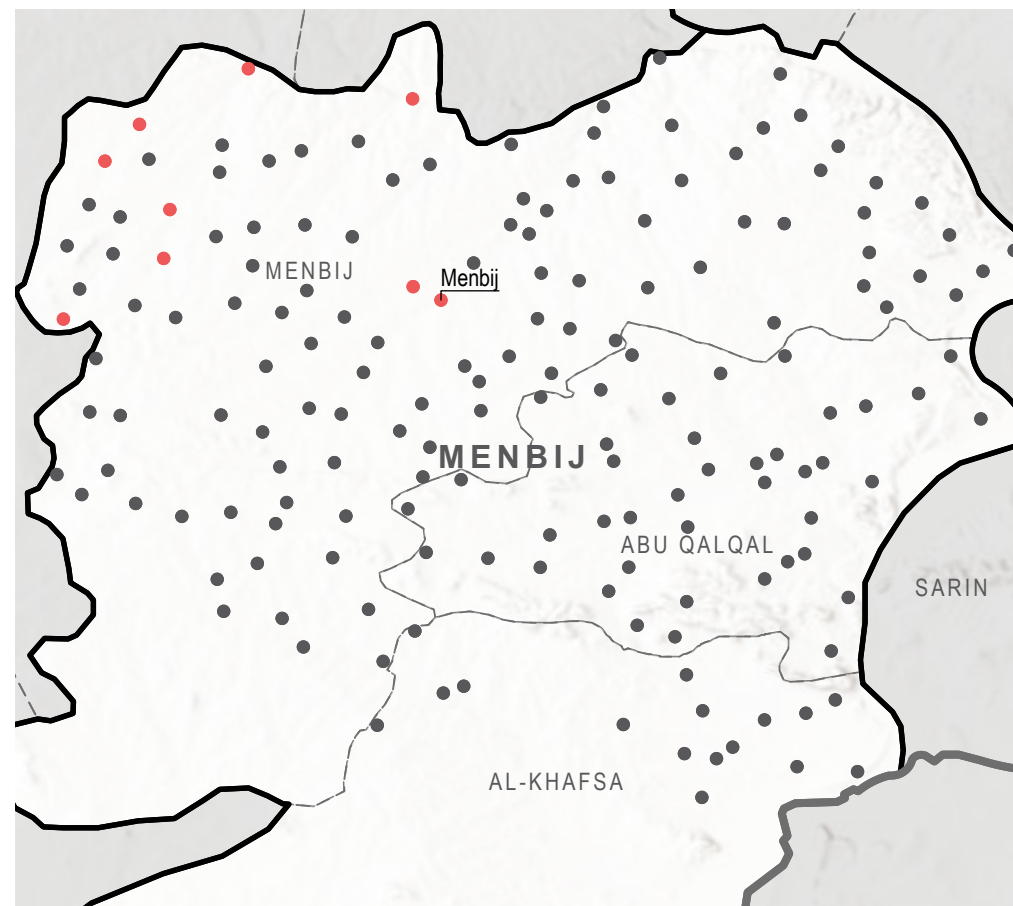
As opposition-controlled parts of Menbij district have seen a near cessation of clashes over the past two years, most of the reported protection issues were related to livelihoods and legal issues, rather than conflict. Movement restrictions were much more commonly reported for women and girls than for boys and men, which HNAP field teams reported is likely due to both social norms dictating that women should be accompanied outside the home and civil movement restrictions by authorities. However, other kinds of protection concerns, such as conscription campaigns, may play a role in limiting the movement of boys and men in some communities.<sup>30</sup>

**Top 3 most reported protection risks for men, women, boys, and girls** (by % of locations where reported).<sup>22</sup>

Men		Women
Lack/loss of civil documentation (88%)	1	Lack/loss of civil documentation (95%)
Movement restrictions (15%)	2	Movement restrictions (97%)
Housing, land, and property issues (12%)	3	Housing, land, and property issues (12%)
Boys (under 18)		Girls (under 18)
Lack/loss of civil documentation (99%)	1	Lack/loss of civil documentation (99%)
Children working (98%)	2	Movement restrictions (99%)
Movement restrictions (32%)	3	Children working (96%)

Children working, which was reported in nearly every assessed community, is a more frequent problem for IDP children compared to host community children. This may be linked to the relatively more difficult livelihoods situation for IDPs and the barriers to education faced by IDP children due to their displacement that lead parents to have their children work rather than attend school.

MAP 16. COMMUNITIES WHERE PEOPLE FACE HOUSING, LAND, AND PROPERTY ISSUES



Housing, land and property issues reported in the community

- Yes
- Not reported

## ENDNOTES

1. Syria Deeply, [‘Thousands Return to Manbij After Islamic State Militants Flee City’](#), 15 August 2018
2. When the two KIs presented conflicting information, enumerators were requested to follow up with the KIs to confirm the values reported. If responses still conflicted, an unweighted average between the two KIs was reported. In cases where it was not possible to take an average, the data was coded as “Not sure.”
3. The Syrian Observer, [‘Six Reasons Behind the Decline of the Syrian Pound Against the US Dollar’](#), 8 February 2019.
4. IDPs are defined as ‘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. Reuters, [‘With U.S. departure, Syria’s Manbij braces for upheaval’](#), December 2018.
6. Al Ameen for Humanitarian Support, [‘Manbij Need Assessment Report’](#), January 2019.
7. Assistance Coordination Unit, [‘Manbij City Under Siege’](#), July 2016.
8. Amnesty International, [‘USA must come clean about civilian deaths caused by Coalition airstrikes in Syria’](#), October 2016.
9. Assistance Coordination Unit, [‘Manbij City Under Siege’](#), July 2016; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, [‘Syria: Flash Update on Recent Events’](#), 17 August 2016.
10. Human Rights Watch, [‘Syria: Improvised Mines Kill, Injure Hundreds in Manbij’](#), 26 October 2016.
11. REACH, [‘Manbij District Situation Overview’](#), October 2018.
12. Malcolm Nance, [‘Defeating ISIS: Who They Are, How they Fight, What they Believe’](#), March 2016.
13. This context section was adapted from the [REACH Syria Damage Atlas](#), published in March 2019.
14. Estimates of IDP population numbers provided by local authorities in Manbij tend to be significantly larger than those found in this assessment. However, the numbers provided here are triangulated against several other sources of humanitarian demographics, including numbers from H NAP and other REACH assessments.
15. Host community is defined as ‘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.’
16. Assistance Coordination Unit, [‘Manbij City Under Siege’](#), July 2016.
17. Spontaneous returns are defined as ‘Internally Displaced Persons (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 a prolonged period of time; and who do not necessarily enjoy the full spectrum of rights afforded to them prior to their displacement.’ This definition differs from the definition normally used by H NAP and the Population Task Force.
18. The population estimates for informal sites are based on data provided by an NGO which conducted a mapping exercise of informal sites in November 2018, and the population estimates for formal camps are based on the REACH [‘Northeast Syria Camps and Sites Profiling assessment’](#), April-May 2019.
19. Population figures are estimates provided from KIs and rounded to the nearest ten-thousand.
20. According to information provided by the NES Forum.
21. The United Nations, [‘The United Nations and Syrian Arab Red Crescent Deliver Humanitarian Assistance to 50,000 People in Manbij, Aleppo Governorate’](#), 7 March 2019.
22. KIs could select more than one answer.
23. Three of the assessed locations reportedly had no IDPs. Therefore, information related to IDPs is reported as a proportion of the 183 communities that were reported to have IDPs.
24. According to data provided by an NGO which conducted a mapping exercise of informal sites in November 2018.
25. Syria Deeply, [‘Thousands Return to Manbij After Islamic State Militants Flee City’](#), 15 August 2018.
26. REACH, [‘Humanitarian Situation Overview of Syria dataset’](#), April 2019.
27. Average income was calculated based on range estimates provided by KIs and weighted by the number of IDPs and residents in each community.
28. The five damage categories for shelter provided to KIs were assigned a weight and multiplied by the proportion of shelters in the respective category in order to create an index, which was then mapped.
29. The Guardian, [‘US-backed fighters take town of Manbij from ISIS’](#), 6 August 2016.
30. Al-Monitor, [‘SDF Arrests Syrians who Refuse to Serve’](#), May 2019.
30. The exchange rate in NES in April 2019 was 1 USD = 539 SYP (see [Market Monitoring Dataset April 2019](#)).

## ABOUT

**The Northeast Syria NGO (NES) Forum** is the core representative and coordination body for NGOs in NES. The forum leads on policy and advocacy, information management, and operation coordination for the NES NGOs, including local and Syrian NGOs.

**The Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP)** for the Syrian Arab Republic is a joint UN assessment initiative, which tracks displacement and return movements, conducts sector and multi-sector assessments, and monitors humanitarian needs inside Syria. HNAP is implemented through local Syrian NGOs, with technical support from UN agencies. For more information please contact [hnap-syria@un.org](mailto:hnap-syria@un.org).

**REACH Initiative** facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).