

REACH Situation Overview: Displacement from Eastern Aleppo City, Syria

30 November 2016

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INTRODUCTION

Following four months of intermittent access and escalating violence, neighbourhoods in eastern parts of Aleppo City have experienced an acute intensification of conflict in mid-November 2016. By November 27th conflict dynamics suddenly and significantly shifted within the city with the presence of ground clashes directly affecting the besieged neighbourhoods of east Aleppo. This fighting has primarily been focused in the areas of Hanano, Baaden, Shiekh Kheder, Jabal Badro, Al Sakhour, Ayn Al Tal, Sheikh Fares, Bostan Al Bash and Helluk¹, within the neighbourhoods of Masken Hanano, Tarek al Bab and Kady Asker.

As a result, an estimated 20,000-50,000 people from these areas have been displaced to different parts of the city². Many of the displaced have moved west, towards the Kurdish neighbourhood of Sheikh Maqsoud, the only reported access route out of besieged areas. Over 10,000 people have arrived in the past three days, 3,000 of which have been permitted to travel onward into western Aleppo.

The other displaced populations have been reported as moving away from the escalating ground clashes to other besieged areas of eastern Aleppo. Displacement is expected to

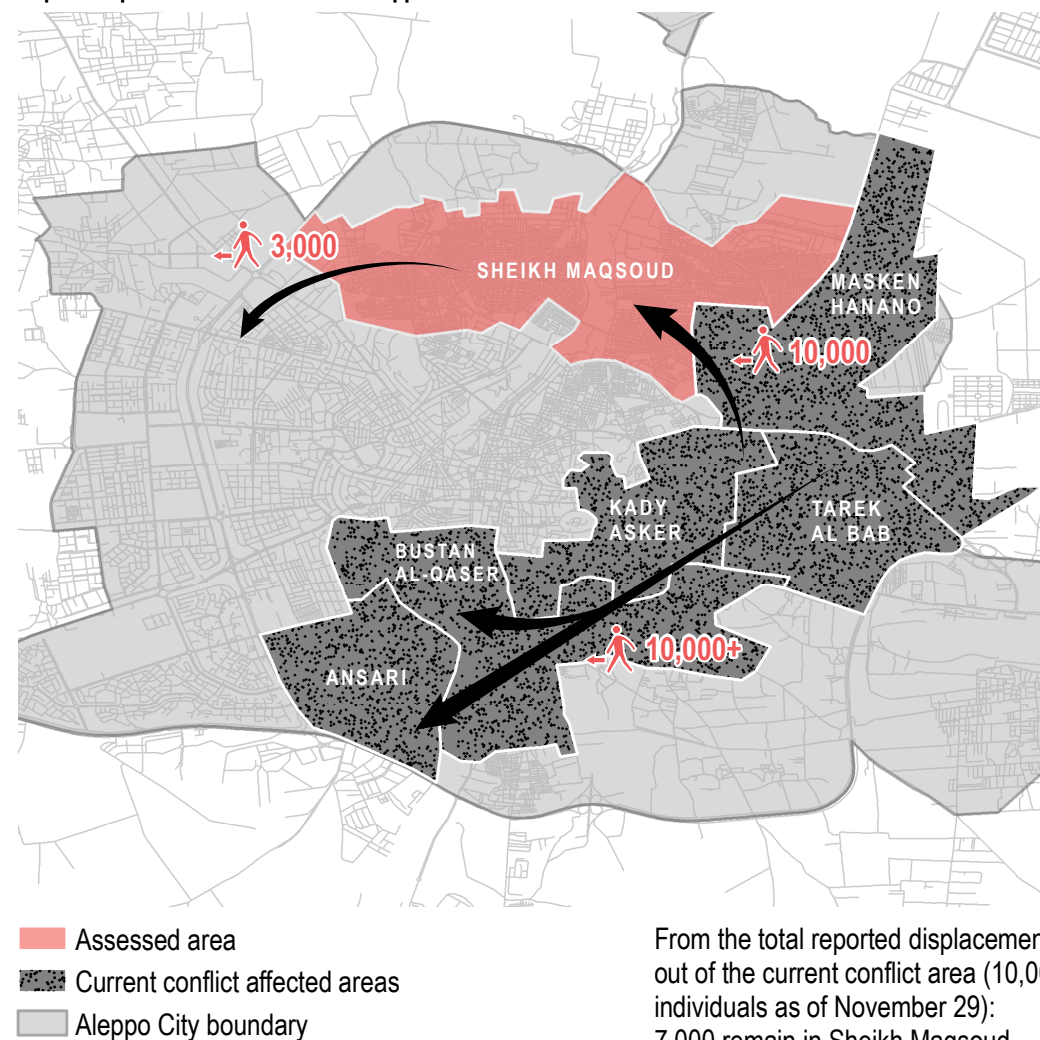
continue as clashes advance south into the remaining neighbourhoods of eastern Aleppo, where ongoing airstrikes continue to affect populations³.

This assessment reports on displacement patterns, intentions and assistance received in Sheikh Maqsoud since the 27th of November when displacement began. Findings are based on data collected on the 29 - 30 November through three qualitative interviews with community representatives within Sheikh Maqsoud. KI profiles include a humanitarian worker, a lawyer and shop owner, with information triangulated with available secondary sources where feasible.

DISPLACEMENT

Over 10,000 residents from the northeastern neighbourhood of Masken Hanano and parts of Tarek al-Bab and Kady Asker have moved into Sheikh Maqsoud as hostilities escalated over the past three days. An estimated 10,000 – 40,000 people have also moved south, away from the ground fighting in these areas, remaining within besieged areas of eastern Aleppo². Of those who have recently arrived in Sheikh Maqsoud, the majority have been families, primarily women and children, but without their husbands, as well as some elderly people. IDPs reportedly left suddenly, only carrying some winter

Map 1: Displacement from eastern Aleppo



From the total reported displacement out of the current conflict area (10,000 individuals as of November 29): 7,000 remain in Sheikh Maqsoud.

¹ Al Jazeera, Syrian army captures key districts of Aleppo, 29 November 2016

² ICRC, Aleppo: Around 20,000 flee their homes over past three days, 29th November 2016; Middle East Eye, Tens of thousands flee Syrian army's east Aleppo advance, 30 November 2016

³ Middle-Eastern Eye, Battle for Aleppo, 28 November 2016

clothes and identification documents with them, and walked up to 7kms due to a lack of roads between Sheikh Maqsoud and other neighbourhoods. **KIs expressed concern for the protection of civilians traveling towards Sheikh Maqsoud due to the insecurity within the neighbourhoods of north-eastern Aleppo, with some reporting that civilians have faced gunfire and shelling whilst fleeing.**

Whilst a majority of the 10,000 arrivals have stayed in Sheikh Maqsoud, over 3,000 people have reportedly continued onwards into western neighbourhoods in order to access markets or seek medical treatment, both inaccessible in besieged areas of eastern Aleppo⁴. Approval from Kurdish and Syrian authorities is required to move into western Aleppo, and in general only women and children, as well as those civilians requiring emergency medical care, have been permitted.

In addition to the relative security within Sheikh Maqsoud, KIs reported that reasons for IDPs to stay were often unclear, with many IDPs unsure about their intentions, particularly elderly people. Many families are reportedly staying in Sheikh Maqsoud temporarily but intend to continue towards western Aleppo or further in the coming weeks, although remain hindered by a lack of knowledge of potential destinations and the anticipated availability of essential services upon arrival. Overall, IDPs are reassessing their situation on a daily basis, following their sudden displacement and uncertainty amid the rapidly changing dynamics.

CURRENT HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

Most of the 7,000 new arrivals that have remained in Sheikh Maqsoud are being sheltered in collective centres with some families also being hosted by local residents. All six mosques within Sheikh Maqsoud are currently being used to house the recently arrived IDPs, however they are reportedly now at full capacity. KIs indicated that the community is planning to open a school for IDPs to stay in as numbers increase.

In previous assessments of Sheikh Maqsoud, only one primary healthcare clinic was servicing the population⁵ and despite the recent influx of IDPs, this reportedly remains the case. While medicine and medical supplies have been able to enter the neighbourhood since the truce agreement in mid-September, residents of Sheikh Maqsoud still need to travel to western Aleppo in order to seek medical treatment in hospitals. **Similarly, civilians from eastern Aleppo requiring emergency medical assistance, who have recently arrived, have been permitted to travel for treatment in western Aleppo.** However, due to the increasing caseload within Sheikh Maqsoud, as IDPs continue to arrive, the capacity of the healthcare clinic to meet population needs is decreasing. Local NGOs in Sheikh Maqsoud have been calling for humanitarian assistance, particularly health materials and medical aid to support with the immediate response⁶.

Some food assistance is also being provided for recent arrivals; however, it is reportedly insufficient to meet population needs. World Food Program (WFP) food baskets, which were intended for residents of Sheikh Maqsoud prior to the most recent conflict escalation have been distributed among civilians arriving from eastern Aleppo. Similarly, local councils have been providing bread through distributions; **however, there is reportedly not enough baskets or bread for all arrivals.** WFP previously reported that an additional 5,370 food baskets, sufficient for 26,850 individuals, were prepositioned in areas of northern Aleppo governorate, and had been intended for residents of eastern Aleppo. No reports have indicated whether these stocks have been moved to provide assistance to the recently displaced populations⁷.

Most IDPs reportedly carried bags containing some blankets, clothes and limited amounts of food which were gathered in a rush prior to their departure. However, due to insufficient supplies, it is estimated that less than half of the recently displaced population have been provided with NFI assistance, including winterization items upon arrival. KIs expressed concerns about the lack of sufficient food and NFI assistance for the rapidly-increasing numbers of arrivals and the cold weather.

Finally, despite limited access to the water network in eastern Aleppo, local Kurdish authorities maintain the water network within

Reported access to assistance for recent arrivals

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Bread | ✓ |
| Food baskets | ✓ |
| Healthcare | ✓ |
| Shelter | ✓ |
| Water | ✓ |
| NFIs | ✓ |

- ✓ Access for all IDPs
- ✓ Access for some IDPs
- ✗ No reported access

Sheikh Maqsoud functional. Although access had been limited prior to the local truce agreement, residents of Sheikh Maqsoud, as well as the newly arrived IDPs, reportedly remain able to access safe drinking water from both the network and closed well.

CONCLUSION

Following the displacement of 20,000 – 50,000 residents of eastern Aleppo during the past three days, over 10,000 IDPs have arrived in the neighbouring areas of Sheikh Maqsoud and western Aleppo. **Overall, local actors within Sheikh Maqsoud have been responding to the immediate needs of the recently arrived IDPs. However, both KIs and local NGOs**

⁴ REACH Situation Overview: Displacement and Needs in Eastern Aleppo City, Syria, 25 November 2016

⁵ REACH Situation Overview: Displacement and Needs in Eastern Aleppo City, Syria, 11 November 2016; REACH Situation Overview: Displacement and Needs in Eastern Aleppo City, Syria, 14 October 2016

⁶ Anha, Call for urgent humanitarian aid for families in Sheikh Maqsoud, 28 November 2016

⁷ Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster. Update on Eastern Aleppo City, 14 November 2016

report growing concerns that the need for food, shelter and NFI assistance as well as medical care is expected to increase with new arrivals from conflict affected areas of eastern Aleppo.

With regards to remaining besieged areas of eastern Aleppo the humanitarian situation has reached unprecedented critical levels. According to the most recent REACH needs assessment (November 25), it was reported that remaining populations are without access to food, NFIs, or adequate shelter or healthcare facilities amid the escalating conflict, a situation that will continue to deteriorate without improved humanitarian access.

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. All REACH activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. For more information, you can write to our global office: geneva@reach-initiative.org.

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