

Rapid Needs Assessment: Aleppo and Ar-Raqqa Governorates

Northeast Syria, December 2019

REACH Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

OVERVIEW

Residents of Northeast Syria (NES) face a new humanitarian crisis since the escalation of conflict in October 2019; this resulted in significant displacement from the region, both internally and towards the Kurdish Region of Iraq (KR-I).¹ A majority of internally displaced persons (IDPs) originate from sub-districts directly affected by conflict, such as Ras Al Ain, Tel Abiad and Tal Tamer; however, significant preventive displacements have occurred from most communities near the border with Turkey, with IDPs traveling south to communities further from the border.² Days after a ceasefire agreement was reached on 17 October,³ the situation in northeast Syria started to stabilise. Nonetheless, humanitarian access in the region remains limited.

This REACH Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) aims to address existing information gaps and provide a better understanding of the multi-sectoral needs of residents and IDPs residing in communities in Aleppo and Ar-Raqqa governorates.

MAIN FINDINGS

Demographics: An estimated 849,035 residents (141,506 households) were living across all assessed communities at the time of data collection. **IDPs were reported to be living in 228 of the 414 assessed communities across Aleppo and Ar-Raqqa governorates, making up an estimated 20% of the total population (209,737 IDPs).** IDPs displaced after the escalation of conflict in October 2019 were reportedly living in 142 of the 218 assessed communities where IDPs were present.⁴

Movement Intentions: In 81% of assessed communities where movement intentions data was available (208 communities) KIs reported that no IDPs intended to leave in the two weeks following data collection. The most commonly cited reason IDPs intending to stay was the stability of the security situation.

Protection: Protection concerns were reported in 128 of assessed communities. **Among these communities, 56% reported child labour as a concern.**⁵ Intercommunal tensions were reported in 240 of all assessed communities. Among these, **intercommunal tensions over an actual or perceived increase of commodity prices were reported in 93% of communities.**

Shelter & Non-food items: Shelter was reported among the three main priority needs in 16% of communities hosting IDPs. **Winterisation items were reported as a priority need in 61% of all assessed communities.**⁷ A majority of household, winterisation, fuel, and hygiene items were reportedly unavailable in 37%, 33%, 17%, and 15% of assessed communities, respectively.⁷

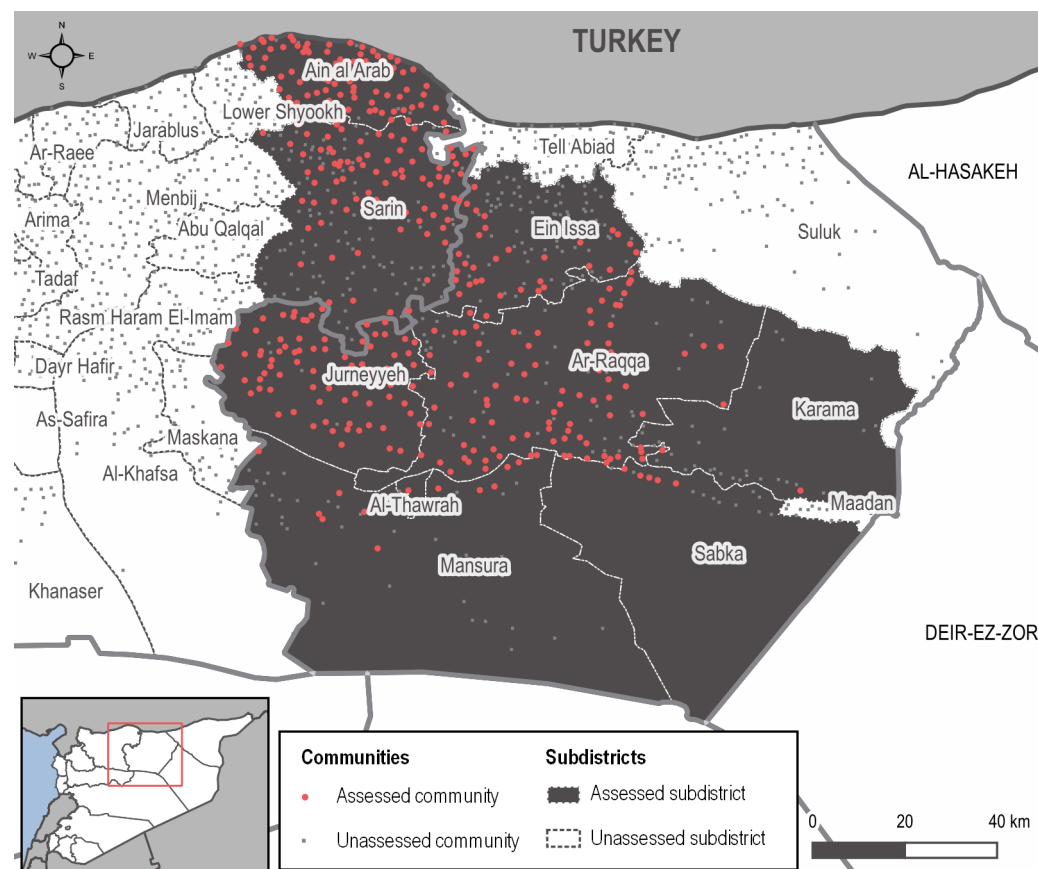
Food Security & Livelihoods: Livelihoods was reported as a priority need in 56% of all assessed communities. Food was reported among the top three priority needs in 38% of all assessed communities. The percentage of assessed communities that reported food as a top three priority need was higher among communities hosting IDPs (58%).

Health: Health was the most commonly reported priority need across all assessed communities, with KIs reporting it as a priority need in 77% of them. Services such as surgery, diabetes care, and child immunisation were reportedly unavailable in 87%, 69% and 60% of assessed communities, respectively.

Education: Education was reported as a priority need in 30% of all assessed communities. While children were able to access schools in 81% of all communities assessed, KIs in 31% of IDP-hosting communities reported that less than half of all IDP children (5-11 years old) attended school in the two weeks prior to data collection.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: Water, sanitation and hygiene was reported as a priority need in 10% of assessed communities. However, KIs reported that **one quarter or more of the population did not have access to a sufficient amount of water to meet their basic needs in 42% of assessed communities,** in the two weeks prior to data collection.⁵

Coverage of Aleppo and Ar-Raqqa governorates:

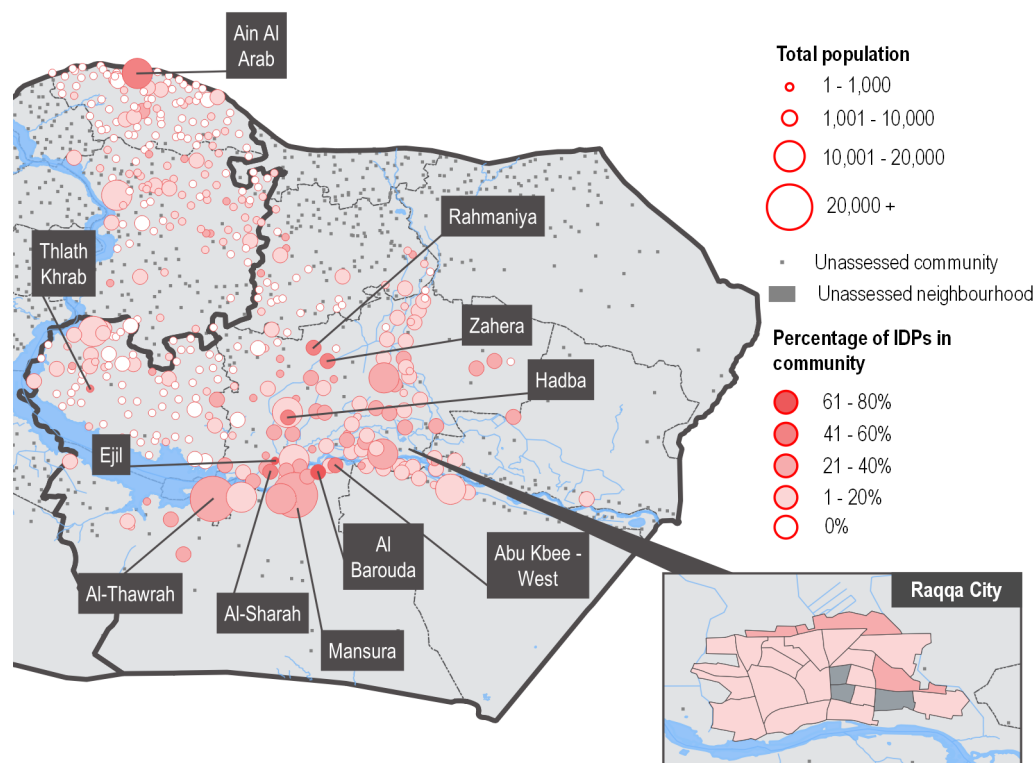


METHODOLOGY

A remote data collection methodology was employed for this RNA, at the community level or lower, through phone interviews. On average, 2 KIs were interviewed per assessed community. KIs were selected, wherever possible, based on their knowledge of IDP and resident populations in the community, as well as their sector-specific expertise in relation to the different sections throughout the assessment e.g. shelter, healthcare, etc. Due to the inevitably lower reliability of remote data collection compared to direct data collection, a confidence rating system was applied to each individual KI, based on the level of expertise that they held regarding the situation and sector on which they are reporting.⁶

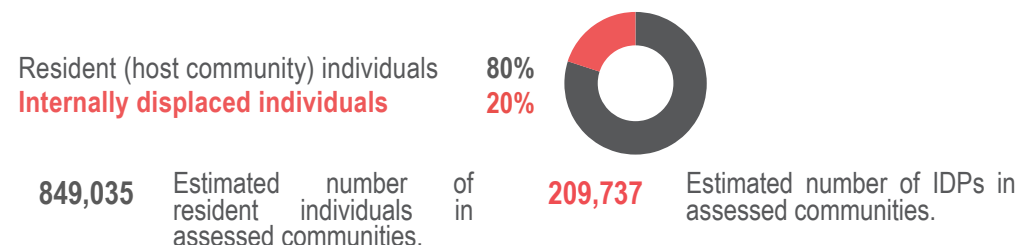
KIs were asked to report at the neighbourhood or community level. A total of 414 locations were covered, including 394 communities and 20 out of 23 neighbourhoods in Ar-Raqqa city. Data was collected between 19 and 26 December, looking at the two weeks prior to data collection. Findings are indicative rather than representative, and should not be generalised across the region. The complete dataset can be found [here](#).

Total populations reported in assessed communities, as of the date of data collection:

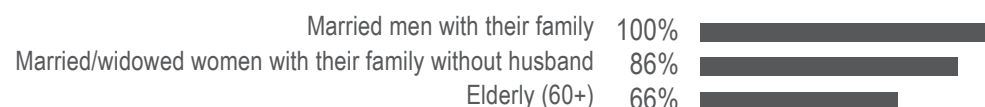


DEMOGRAPHICS [CL: 3/3]⁶

An estimated 849,035 residents (141,506 households) were living across all assessed communities at the time of data collection. Of these communities, KIs reported that a total of 228 communities were hosting 209,737 IDPs (35,682 IDP households), with **IDPs making up 20% of the total population**. KIs reported in 142 of the assessed communities were hosting IDPs who had been displaced since the escalation of conflict at the beginning of October.



Top three IDP household profiles, by proportion of assessed communities, as reported:⁵



PRIORITY NEEDS [CL: 3/3]^{*}

Top three reported priority needs, by number of assessed communities, for residents and IDPs:⁵

| | 1st | 2nd | 3rd |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Safety and security | 40 | 3 | 0 |
| Shelter | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Health | 188 | 90 | 40 |
| NFIs | 14 | 23 | 25 |
| Food | 37 | 41 | 78 |
| Education | 10 | 62 | 52 |
| Water, sanitation and hygiene | 6 | 15 | 19 |
| Protection | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Livelihoods | 50 | 97 | 84 |
| Winterisation or equivalent | 63 | 77 | 114 |

Top three reported priority needs, by number of assessed communities, for new IDP arrivals:⁵

| | 1st | 2nd | 3rd |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Safety and security | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Shelter | 27 | 5 | 0 |
| Health | 3 | 12 | 21 |
| NFIs | 10 | 31 | 6 |
| Food | 33 | 27 | 25 |
| Education | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Water, sanitation and hygiene | 2 | 6 | 5 |
| Protection | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Livelihoods | 17 | 31 | 27 |
| Winterisation or equivalent | 41 | 23 | 48 |

^{*}CL: average Key informant confidence level.

MOVEMENT INTENTIONS [CL: 3/3]*⁶

In 81% of the 208 IDP-hosting communities where movement data was available, KIs reported that no IDPs intended to leave in the two weeks following data collection. The most commonly cited reasons for IDPs intending to remain were the stability of the security situation and the availability of basic services. Comparatively, in the communities where KIs reported that at least some IDPs intended to leave, a lack of income and employment opportunities was most commonly cited as reason for movement.

16% Proportion of assessed communities, where data was available, where it was reported that **some residents** intended to leave in the two weeks following data collection.

19% Proportion of assessed IDP hosting communities, where data was available, where it was reported that **some IDPs** intended to leave in the two weeks following data collection.

PROTECTION [CL: 3/3]*⁶

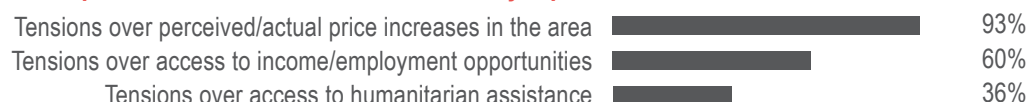
Across the 128 communities where protection concerns were reported, child labour was the most widely reported protection concern (56%). Threats from airstrikes (35%), threats from sniper/gunfire (32%), and threats from mines (16%) were also reported.⁵

Intercommunal tensions were reported in 58% of communities assessed; among these, tensions over perceived or actual price increases were reported in 93% of communities. Tensions over access to income/employment opportunities (67%), and tensions over access to humanitarian assistance (42%) were also reported.⁵

IDP-hosting communities: most commonly reported protection concerns in the two weeks prior to data collection:⁵



IDP-hosting communities: most commonly reported intercommunal tensions in the two weeks prior to data collection most commonly reported tensions were:⁵



Top three reported intended destinations, for IDPs:⁵

| Movement intentions for IDPs | # | % |
|--|----|-----|
| 1. Not sure | 35 | 59% |
| 2. Host communities (in the same or another governorate) | 18 | 31% |
| 3. Go back to community of origin | 6 | 10% |

Of the communities where IDPs were reportedly intending to leave, the top three reported reasons to leave were:⁵

| Reasons to leave for IDPs | # | % |
|---|----|-----|
| 1. Lack of access to income / employment opportunities in the community | 47 | 80% |
| 2. Cost of living is too high in the community | 33 | 56% |
| 3. Safety and security concerns in the community | 25 | 42% |

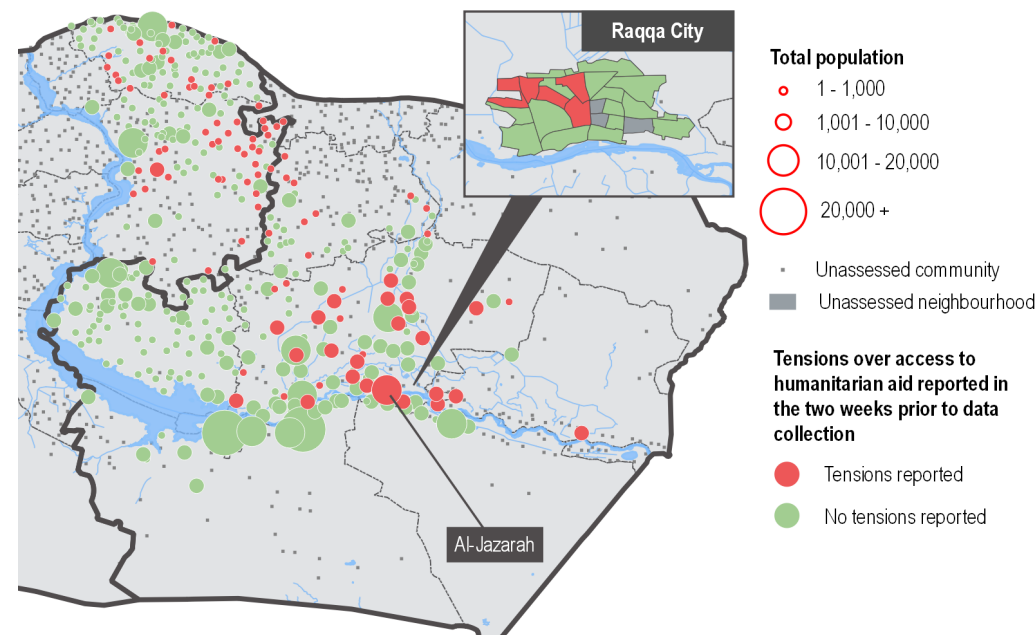
Main reported intended destinations, for residents:⁵

| Movement intentions for residents | # | % |
|---|----|-----|
| 1. Not sure | 38 | 59% |
| 2. Host communities within the same governorate | 26 | 41% |

Of the communities where residents were reportedly intending to leave, the top three reported reasons to leave were:⁵

| Reasons to leave for residents | # | % |
|--|----|-----|
| 1. Safety and security concerns in the community | 59 | 89% |
| 2. Cost of living is too high in the community | 33 | 50% |
| 3. Insufficient access to humanitarian assistance in the community | 22 | 33% |

Tensions reported in assessed communities, in the two weeks prior to data collection:



SHELTER [CL: 3/3]*6

Shelter was more commonly reported among the three main priority needs in communities hosting IDPs, compared to communities without IDPs. However, KIs in 50% of all assessed communities reported at least one problem with the adequacy of shelters in the community. Six of the communities assessed reportedly received shelter assistance in the two weeks prior to data collection.

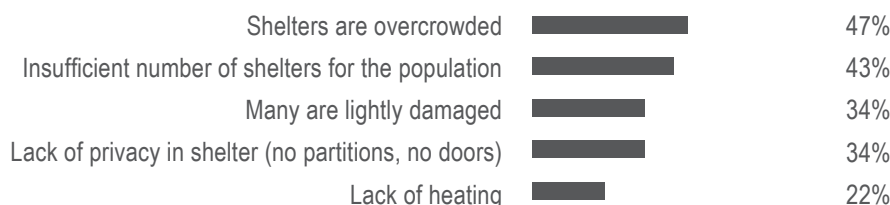
16% Proportion of IDP-hosting communities in which KIs reported shelter to be among the top three priority needs.

47% Proportion of assessed communities where shelter adequacy issues were reported, where KIs reported that shelters are overcrowded.⁵

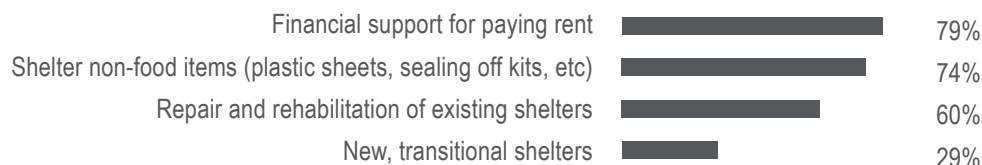
Most commonly reported shelter types of IDPs, by proportion of assessed communities where IDPs were present:⁵



Most commonly reported shelter adequacy issues for IDPs, by proportion of assessed communities where IDPs were present:⁵



Most commonly reported shelter support needed to address IDP shelter inadequacies, by proportion of assessed communities where IDPs were present:⁵

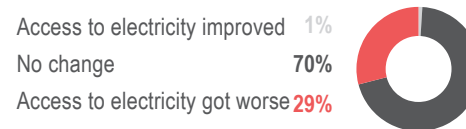


NON-FOOD ITEMS and ELECTRICITY [CL: 3/3]*6

Non-food items (NFIs) were reported among the top three priority needs in 15% of all communities assessed, and in 32% of assessed communities hosting IDPs. Conversely, **winterisation⁷ items were among the three main priority needs in 61% of all assessed communities, and 79% of assessed communities hosting IDPs.**

15% Proportion of assessed communities in which NFIs were reported to be a priority need.

Change in access to electricity, since the beginning of October:

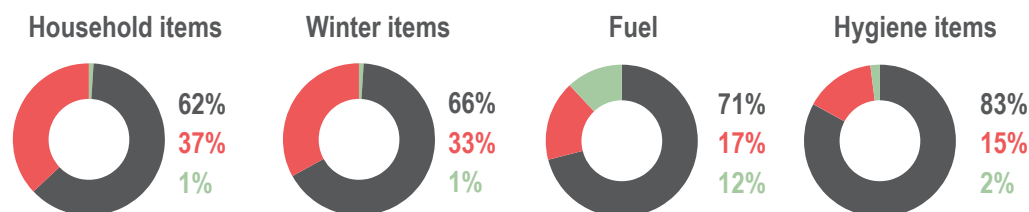


61% Proportion of assessed communities in which winterisation was reported to be a priority need.⁷


IDP hosting communities: hygiene items needed:⁵

| | # | % |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Disposable diapers | 230 | 96% |
| Sanitary pads | 25 | 10% |
| Soap | 87 | 36% |
| Toothpaste | 3 | 1% |
| Washing powder (for clothes) | 210 | 88% |
| Cleaning liquid (for house) | 82 | 34% |
| Detergent (for dishes) | 81 | 34% |

Availability of NFIs in markets in assessed communities, in the two weeks prior to data collection:



 Most of these items are available and affordable

 Most of these items are available but are unaffordable for a majority of people

 Not sure

 Most of these items are unavailable in markets

Household items include: bedding items (sheets, pillows), mattresses/sleeping mats, carpets/mats for the floor, cooking utensils, cooking stoves, sources of light/solar lamps, jerry cans, batteries.

Winter items include: heaters, heating fuel containers, blankets, winter clothes, winter shoes.

Fuel items include: fuel for generators; fuel for cooking; fuel for heating.

Hygiene items include: disposable diapers, sanitary pads, soap, toothpaste, washing powder (for clothes), cleaning liquid (for house), detergent (for dishes).

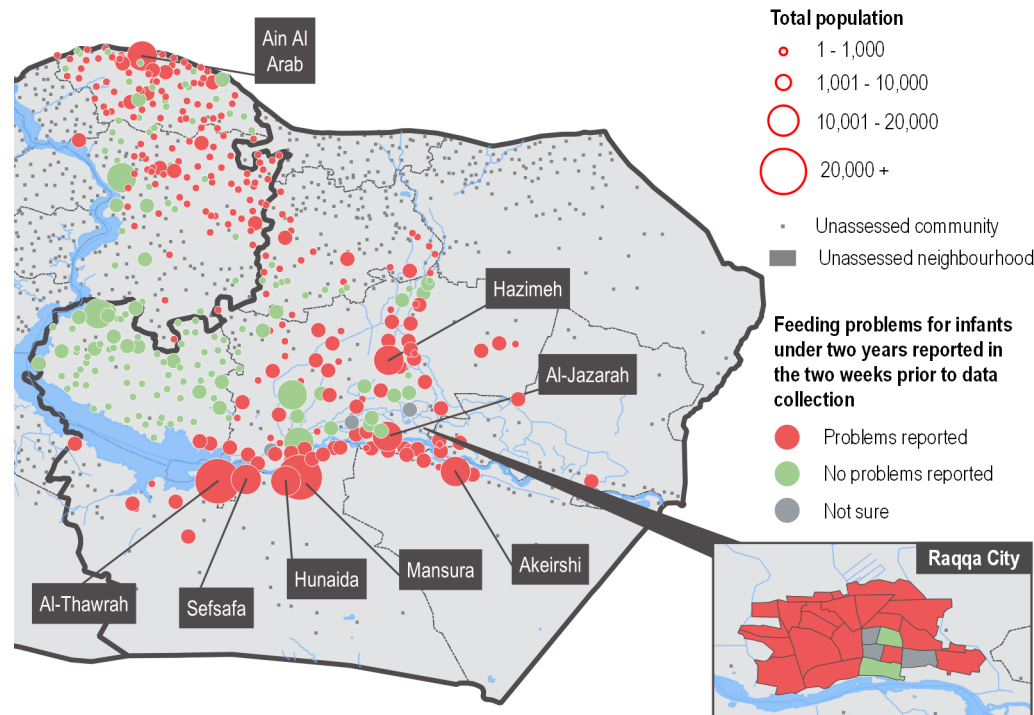
FOOD SECURITY [CL: 3/3]*6 & LIVELIHOODS [CL: 3/3]*6

Livelihoods was reported as a priority need in 56% of all assessed communities. Food was reported among the top three priority needs in 38% of all assessed communities. The percentage of assessed communities where food was reported among the top three priority needs was higher among communities hosting IDPs (58%). **KIs in 61% of all assessed communities reported problems with feeding infants and children under 2 years old, citing the discontinuation of exclusive breastfeeding during the first 5 months as the primary reason (71% of communities, where reported).**

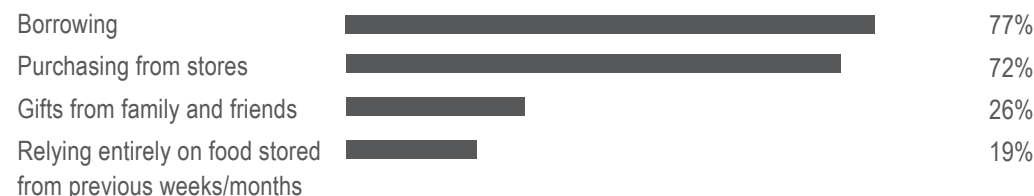
84% Proportion of all assessed communities where KIs reported the use of one or more food coping strategies to deal with a lack of food.⁵

85% Proportion of assessed, IDP-hosting communities in which daily labour was reported among the main sources for IDPs to meet their basic needs.⁵

Reported problems with feeding infants and children <2 years, in the two weeks prior to data collection:



Most commonly reported sources of food for IDPs in the two weeks prior to data collection:⁵



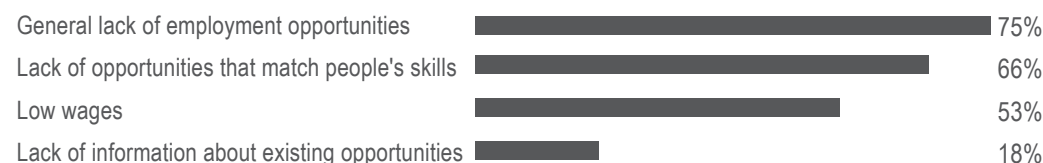
Most commonly reported strategies used by households to cope with a lack of food, in the two weeks prior to data collection:⁵



Most commonly reported main sources for IDPs to meet their basic needs, in the two weeks prior to data collection:⁵



Most commonly reported barriers to accessing livelihoods faced by IDPs in assessed communities, in the two weeks prior to data collection:⁵





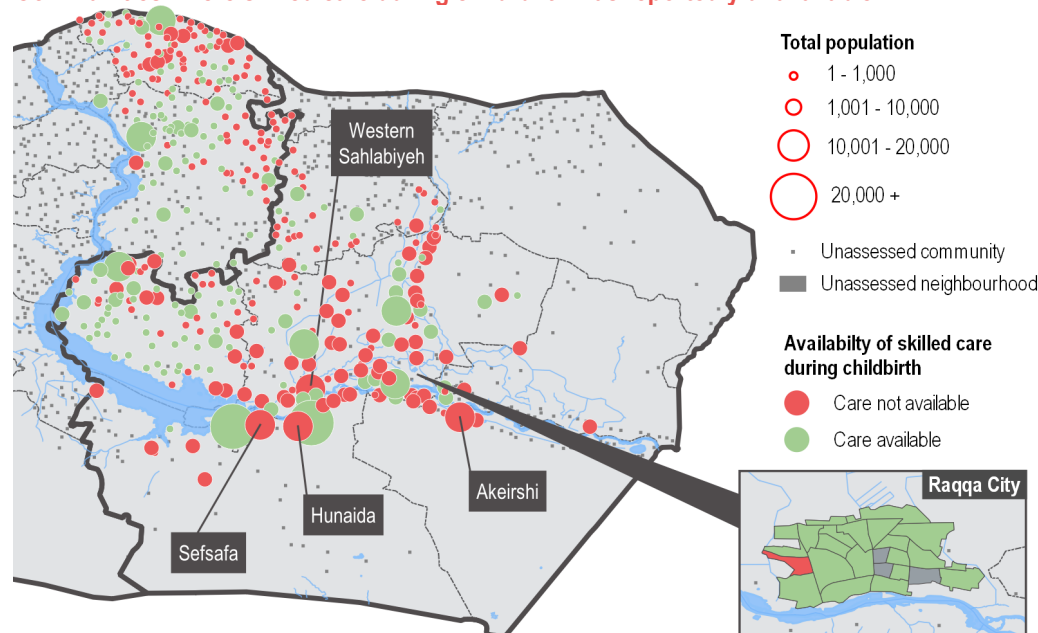
HEALTH [CL: 3/3]*6

Health was the most commonly reported priority need across all communities, with **77% of assessed communities reporting it among the top three priority needs**. Patients were reportedly transferred to health facilities by car, most commonly, in nearly all communities assessed (98%). **KIs in 57% of all assessed communities reported that the nearest health facilities did not have ambulances**, and only 2% of all assessed communities reported ambulances as the most common means of transportation to a local health facility.

| Type of health facilities available to households (in the assessed community or in other/nearby communities) | # | % |
|--|-----|-----|
| Mobile clinics / field hospitals | 9 | 2% |
| Informal emergency care points | 20 | 5% |
| Private clinics | 311 | 75% |
| Primary care facilities | 241 | 58% |
| Hospitals | 162 | 39% |

| Communities where the following medical services were reportedly UNAVAILABLE | # | % |
|--|-----|-----|
| Child immunisation | 248 | 60% |
| Diarrhea management | 243 | 59% |
| Emergency care (accidents and injuries) | 192 | 46% |
| Skilled care during childbirth | 239 | 58% |
| Surgery | 362 | 87% |
| Diabetes | 286 | 69% |

Communities where skilled care during child birth was reportedly unavailable:



EDUCATION [CL: 3/3]*6

KIs in 30% of all assessed communities reported education as a priority need. Further, while children were able to access schools in 81% of all communities assessed, KIs reported that less than half of all IDP children (5-11 years old) were attending school, in 31% of the 172 IDP-hosting communities where data was available.

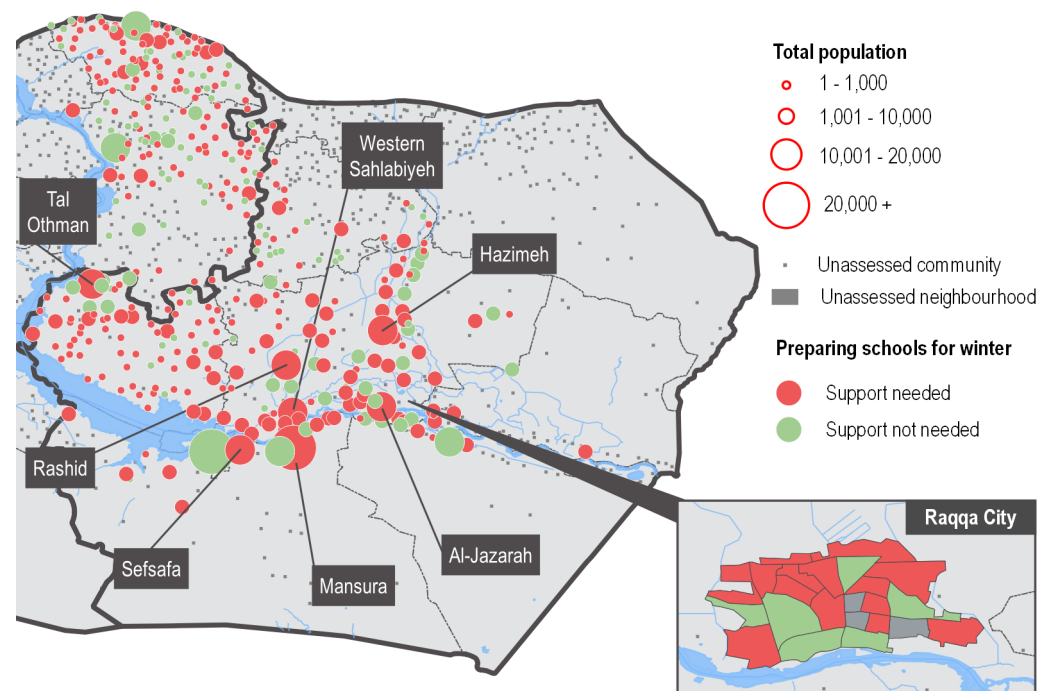
Most commonly reported reasons IDP children in the community did not go to school in the two weeks prior to data collection

| | # | % |
|---------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Children needed to help parents | 132 | 85% |
| Not enough qualified teachers | 31 | 20% |
| Low quality of education | 22 | 14% |

Most commonly needed education support, as reported by KIs in assessed communities

| | # | % |
|---|-----|-----|
| Prepare schools for winter (repair windows/doors, provide heaters and fuel, etc.) | 289 | 70% |
| Provide learning supplies (textbooks, stationery, etc.) | 165 | 40% |
| Provide school furniture | 144 | 35% |

Communities where winterisation of schools was reported as a priority education need:^{5,7}

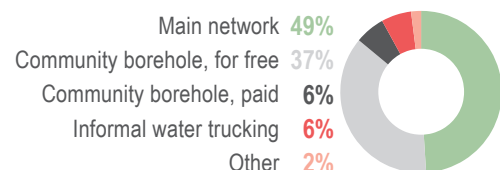




WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH) [CL: 3/3]⁶

Water, sanitation and hygiene was reported as a priority need in 10% of assessed communities. However, KIs reported that **one quarter or more of the population did not have access to a sufficient amount of water to meet their basic needs in 42% of assessed communities**, in the two weeks prior to data collection.

Most common sources of drinking water in the two weeks prior to data collection:



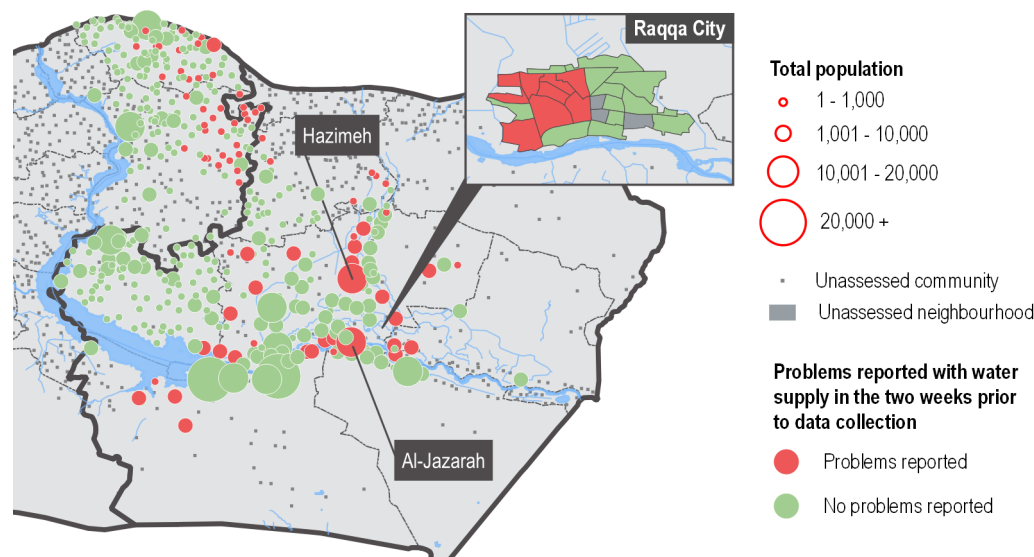
Quality of water from main drinking water source, in the two weeks prior to data collection:



Most commonly reported sanitation issues in the two weeks prior to data collection, across the communities where sanitation issues were reported:⁵



Communities reporting issues with water quality:⁵



SURVIVAL MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET (SMEB)^{8,9}

MEDIAN SMEB FUEL PRICES:⁹

| SMEB Fuel | Median Price (SYP) | SMEB Hygiene | Median Price (SYP) |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Manually refined kerosene (1 litre) | 250 | Laundry powder (1 kilo) | 950 |
| Government petrol (1 litre) | 700 | Bathing soap (1 bar) | 225 |
| Manually refined petrol (1 litre) | 275 | Dishwashing liquid (1 litre) | 400 |
| Government diesel (1 litre) | 125 | Toothpaste (1 tube) | 250 |
| Manually refined diesel (1 litre) | 190 | Sanitary pads (1 pack of 10) | 250 |
| LP cooking gas (20 litres) | 2800 | | |

MEDIAN SMEB FOOD PRICES:⁹

| SMEB Food | Median Price (SYP) | SMEB Food | Median Price (SYP) |
|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Flour (1 kilo) | 300 | Cucumbers (1 kilo) | 350 |
| Rice (1 kilo) | 600 | Tomato paste (1 kilo) | 1200 |
| Bulgur (1 kilo) | 425 | Chicken meat (1 kilo) | 1300 |
| Lentils (1 kilo) | 500 | Cooking oil (1 litre) | 1000 |
| Ghee (1 kilo) | 1000 | Eggs (pack of 30) | 1350 |
| Sugar (1 kilo) | 500 | Salt (1 kilo) | 100 |
| Potatoes (1 kilo) | 250 | Bread (8 pieces) | 100 |
| Tomatoes (1 kilo) | 400 | Baby formula (1 kilo) | 3450 |
| Onions (1 kilo) | 250 | | |

INFORMAL EXCHANGE RATE MEDIAN ACROSS 9 ASSESSED SUB-DISTRICTS⁹

(AIN AL ARAB, AL-THAWRAH, AR-RAQQA, EIN ISSA, JURNEYEH, KARAMA, MANSURA, SABKA, SARIN)

1 USD = 890 SYP

Rapid Needs Assessment: Aleppo and Ar-Raqqa Governorates

ENDNOTES

¹ OCHA Northeast Syria – As half a million people gradually regain access to safe water – the number of displaced people nears 180,000. [22 October 2019](#).

² Northeast Syria - [HNAP Flash Update #10](#) - 23 October 2019.

³ OCHA. Syria Flash Update #7, Humanitarian impact of the military operation in north-eastern Syria. [16-18 October 2019](#)

⁴ Figures in this report do not include IDPs in informal settlements and sites in Aleppo and Ar-Raqqa governorates, when these are located outside of community boundaries. This is due to the limited extent of coverage as well as limitations inherent to the methodology adopted.

⁵ By proportion of assessed communities reporting. KIs were allowed to select multiple options.

⁶ Confidence levels were defined in consultation with field teams, based on the expertise and knowledge each KI type was expected to hold for each question. The confidence levels associated with each question are presented in the final dataset and the confidence matrix is available on request. Findings reported in sections with lower KI confidence levels should be viewed with increased caution.

⁷ Winterisation is the process of preparing for winter; winterisation activities may include the distribution of items including blankets, quilts, kerosene, heating stoves, jerry cans, as well as thermal floor mats and insulation to make shelters warmer and more resistant to harsh winter conditions.

⁸ The Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) represents the minimum, culturally adjusted items required to support a 6-person household for a month. The commodities are typically sold in markets and consumed by average Syrian households.

⁹ SMEB prices reported in this assessment do not include all SMEB items typically covered in the REACH Market Monitoring Exercise, nor do they represent the requisite quantities per item as established in the SMEB. Additionally, the methodology used for this assessment differs from that of Market Monitoring and Rapid Market Monitoring assessments. These prices represent the median price for the specified quantity of each good across all assessed locations, as reported by KIs. Please refer to the [December 2019 Northeast Syria Market Monitoring Exercise](#) for additional data on prices.

About REACH

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](https://twitter.com/REACH_info).