

Storm Huda Rapid Needs Assessment

Southern Syria, January 2015

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SITUATION OVERVIEW

Introduction

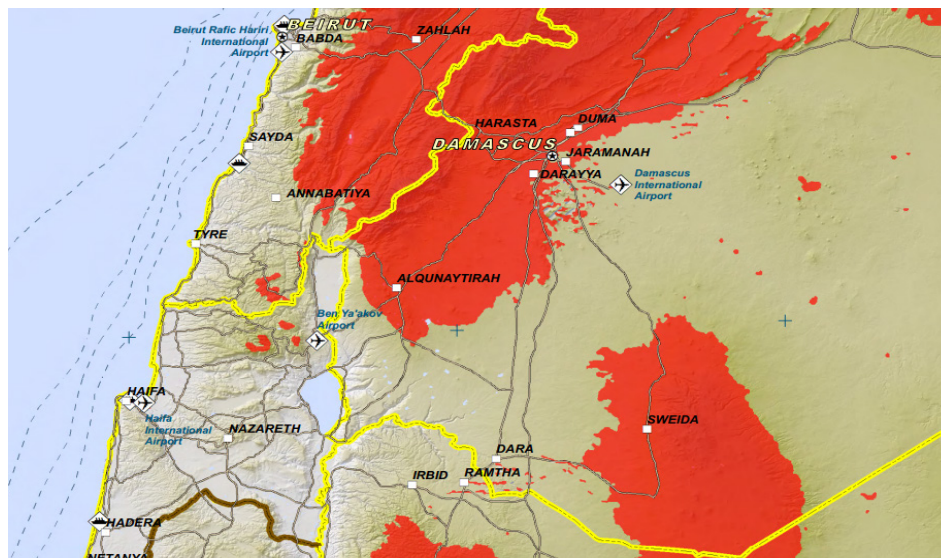
On Tuesday 7th January 2015, a severe winter snowstorm nicknamed “Huda” by many in the region, brought heavy rain, hail, snow and winds to southern Syria as temperatures descended to below zero at night in many areas in Quneitra, Dar’a and Rural Damascus. Minimum day temperatures on the 7th, 8th and 9th of January were recorded between 0 and 2 degrees Celsius in these three governorates. As temperatures reached record lows, key informants reported some areas were inaccessible due to snow accumulation ranging from 10 to 65 cm. An estimated 65cm of snow was reported in Quneitra City, while in Khan Arnaba and Nawa sub-districts, there was an estimated 31-40 cm of snow, along with strong winds and cold temperatures.

The assessment was conducted to measure the immediate impact of the storm on shelter and local infrastructure, and to identify the

need for non-food items. The assessment enquired about damage levels and the capacity to repair shelters, in order to inform a targeted response for the most vulnerable caseloads identified in Dar’a, Rural Damascus and Quneitra Governorates.

Map 1: the extent of snow cover from storm Huda across southern Syria

Source: UNOSAT, 12-13 January 2015



METHODOLOGY

Conducted between 9-12th of January 2015, this rapid assessment evaluates access and immediate needs for shelter and NFIs in Dar'a, Rural Damascus and Quneitra Governorates in Southern Syria. As all three governorates targeted by this assessment are hosting numerous IDPs, their specific vulnerabilities will be assessed in order to evaluate storm-specific and household needs.

Interviews were conducted with with key informants (KIs) in Za'atari camp in Jordan, and in host communities in Lebanon, through speaking to Syrian refugees from the governorates of Dar'a, Quneitra and Rural Damascus. A total of 109 KIs were interviewed to assess the situation in 94 villages, in 26 sub-districts.

LIMITATIONS

Key informants reported about the situation at the village level, and findings should therefore not be generalized to the entire population in the areas targeted by the assessment. Because the storm had brought down some phone networks, 12 key informants could not contact their villages of origin and these areas could not be included.

When aggregated at governorate and district level, data can be considered as indicative of the trends and magnitude of the issues addressed.

Shelter and Displacement

Overall, a third of KIs reported shelter damage inflicted by the storm. Tents, farms and private houses were reported to have been the most severely affected, with between 22% and 37% of these structures reported as damaged.

Where tents sustained damage from the storm, they were reportedly flattened under the weight of the snow. For permanent structures, reported damage included flooding, broken windows and doors, and damaged roofs. Combined with a lack of heating and very little capacity to repair, even minor damage is sufficient to make structures barely habitable.

In Dar'a district, 11 KIs reported damage while 8 KIs reported damage in Rural Damascus district, and 6 KIs in Duma district. All key informants reported damage in the sub-districts of Busra Esh-Sham, Jasim, Jizeh and Mseifra in Dar'a Governorate.

IDPs living in storm damaged tents represent the most vulnerable section

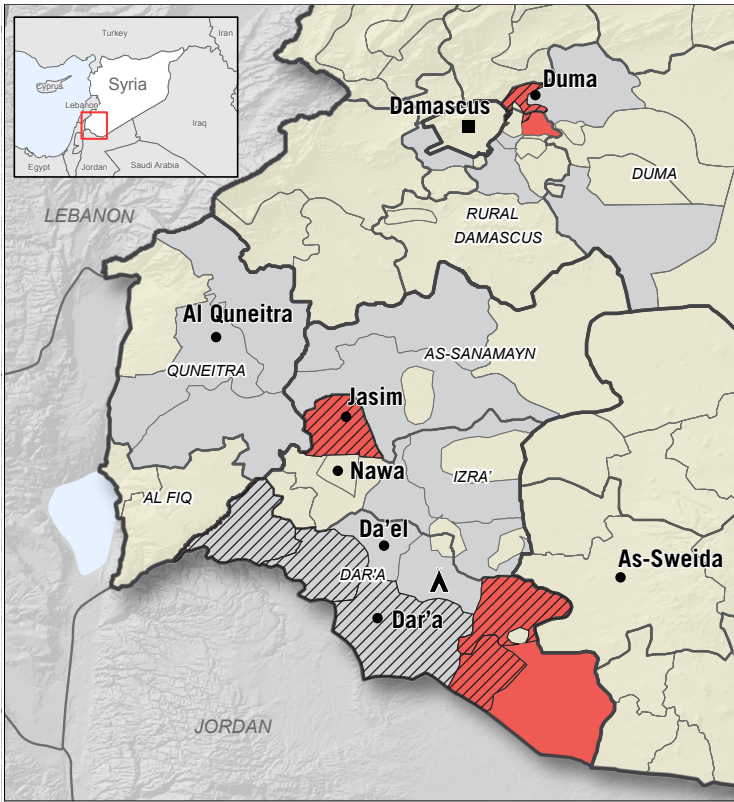
of the affected population. In Western Ghariyeh sub-district, all tents are reported to have sustained damage, affecting an estimated 2,000 IDPs. Other sub-districts with a high percentage of storm-damaged tents include Ghizlaniyyeh and Kherbet Ghazala, where respectively 4,800 and 20,000 IDPs are estimated to be living.

Due to poor shelter conditions before the storm, internal displacement in anticipation of the storm has been reported in several sub-districts including Mseifra, Quneitra, Markaz Darayya and Ghizlaniyyeh sub-districts (Table 1). Further displacement as a result of the storm will need to be monitored.

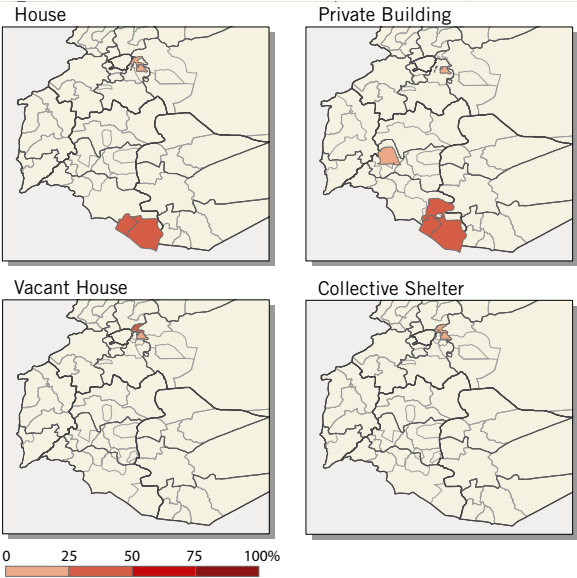
Table 1: Reported displacement prior to the storm due to poor shelter conditions

Sub-district of origin	Reported # of IDPs	Intended destination prior to the storm
Mseifra	1000	Jizeh sub-district
Quneitra	200	Quneitra sub-district
Markaz Darayya	150	Damascus City
Ghizlaniyyeh	150	Damascus City and Jaramana sub-district

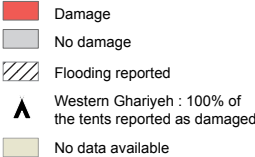
Map 2: The impact of winter storm Huda on Shelter in Southern Syria



Reported percentage of shelters damaged



Reported effect of the storm on shelter



With an overall population of 73,000 including 22,000 IDPs, and an additional 1,000 newly displaced people prior to the storm, **Jizeh sub-district was reported to contain a high caseload of vulnerable families**, with many houses are reported to be affected by flooding. Particularly vulnerable caseloads were also identified in Ghizlaniyyeh sub-district, where the storm is reported to have affected 300 IDPs living in tents.

Flooding was reported to affect around half of shelters in Mseifra (53%), and Jizeh (50%) and just under half of shelters in Ghizlaniyyeh (40%). With warmer temperatures expected in the next days, melting snow may cause additional flooding and cause further problems for shelters already damaged by the storm.

The highest percentage of damaged houses was reported in Busra Esh-Sham (47%), Izra' (40%) and Jizeh (30%) sub-districts. In Busra Esh-Sham, damage is reported to affect an estimated 16,000 residents, reports of flooding and damage to roofs and windows.

Overall, the majority of KIs reported that households are unable to repair their own shelter or house. Babella and Markaz Darayya were the only sub-districts where households were reportedly able to repair their shelters themselves. A lack of materials was the most commonly reported reason why repairs could not be completed.

In Mzeireb and Busra Esh-Sham sub-districts, KIs reported that damage was too severe to be repaired at all.

Access and Infrastructure

Access to affected areas has been hampered by the accumulation of snow, flooding and debris on the roads. Trucks and cars are reportedly not using numerous roads in the three governorates assessed. The phone and electricity networks have also been affected by the storm, leaving several areas, including Tassil, unreachable at the time of assessment.

The majority of KIs (65) reported that roads had been affected by the storm.

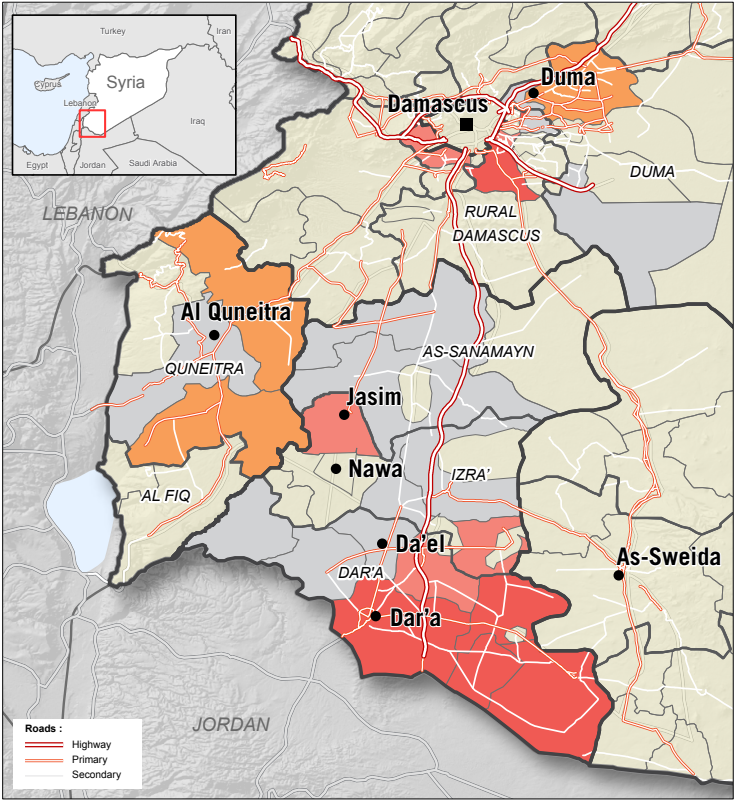
This was mostly due to the accumulation of snow (reported by 34%), ice (31%), flooding (20%) and fallen trees (15%) (see Map 3).

Flooding has affected roads in Quneitra, Mseifra, Jizeh and Babella sub-districts. As a result trucks and cars in these districts were not able to pass through certain roads impeding accessibility and preventing the delivery of assistance.

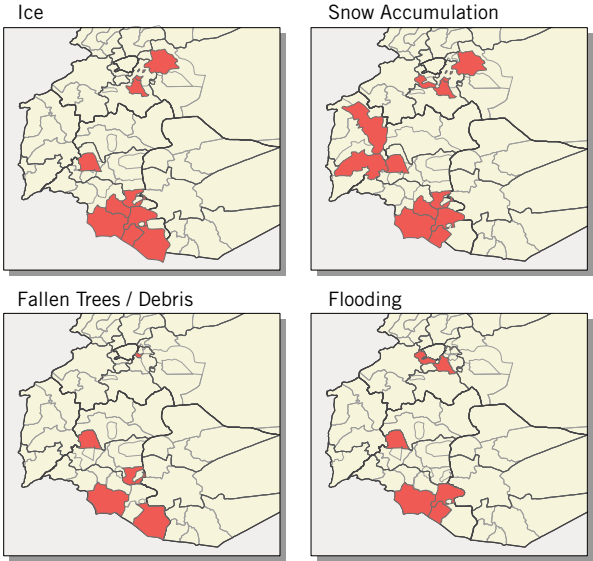
Overall, the majority of KIs (94) reported that no organization had been able to deliver assistance in the past week. Humanitarian assistance was only reported in 8 sub-districts: As Sanamayn, Babella, Busra Esh-Sham, Jarama, Kafr Batna, Khan Arnaba, Markak Darayya and Quneitra. The Syrian Red Crescent was the only organization reported by KIs to have been able to access these areas.

Fuel, blankets and gas are the most reported winter priority needs. Winter clothes were cited as the second need by the key informants (13), especially in Kherbet Ghazala and Hrak. Fuel and

Map 3: The impact of winter storm Huda on roads in Southern Syria



Reported reasons for lack of road access



Reported impact of the storm on roads

- Roads affected, and not accessible (by car or trucks)
- Roads affected, but still accessible (by car or trucks)
- Roads affected, status unknown
- Roads not affected
- No data available

gas are mostly reported to be needed in Quneitra, Darayya and Duma districts. Wood has been prioritized in Da'el, Mzeireb, Markaz Darayya, Duma and Babella. In Busra Esh-Sham, Da'el and Ash-Shajara sub-districts heaters were cited as winter priority need (see Figure 1).

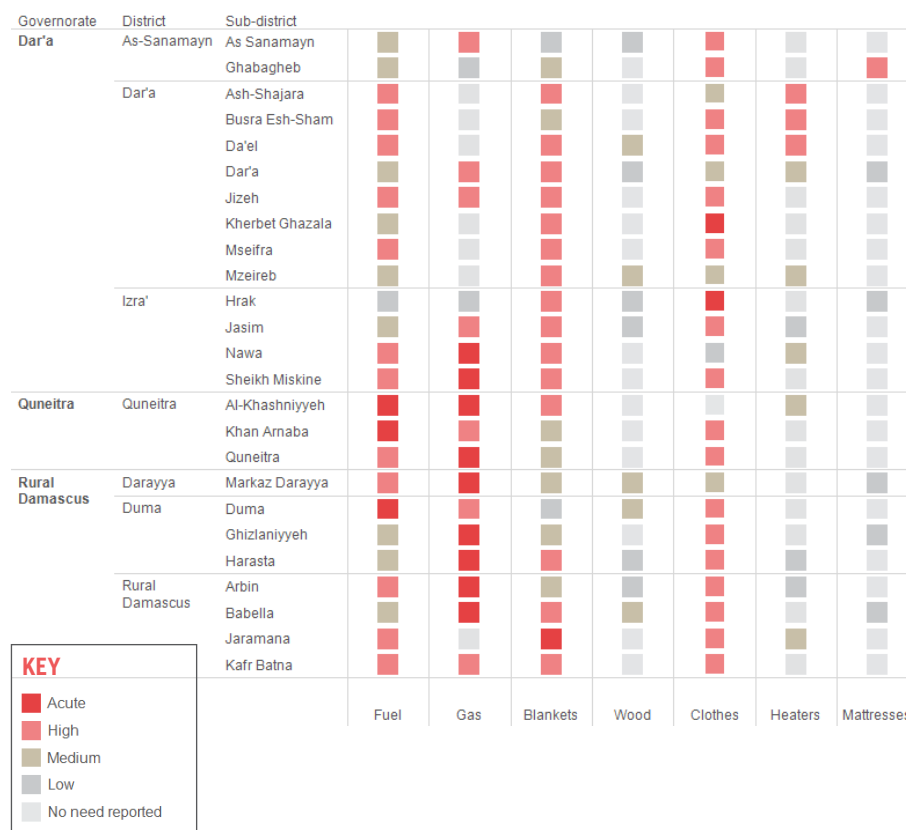
Access limitations will directly impact immediate assistance delivery as lacking infrastructure will prevent access to relief items and effect a potential price increase for essential items.

Non-Food Items and Emergency Supplies

To assess whether access limitations to affected areas have had an impact on the availability of non-food items, KIs were asked about the availability of fuel, heating, household items and other emergency supplies.

In Jizeh, Al Khashniyyeh, As Shajara, Mseifra and Mzeireb sub-districts, all KIs reported that some members of population had difficulties accessing butane, propane,

Figure 1: Winter priority needs per sub-district according to the key informants



kerosene and coal and are resorting to alternative sources of fuel for cooking and heating. **KIs reported that the most common sources of fuel for both cooking and heating were wood and household items.** Furniture the most commonly reported household item to be burnt as fuel. In Busra Esh-Sham, Da'el and Khan Arnaba sub-districts respectively, KIs reported that 92%, 73% and 71% of the population burn household items.

Key informants reported the existence of a black market where **high prices for wood are preventing part of the population to purchase it in sufficient quantity.** In Mzeireb, Arbin and Markaz Darayya sub-districts, wood has been reported as a priority winter need precisely because of its elevated price. Anecdotal figures collected during the assessment suggest that wood is being bought for between 50,000 Syrian pounds (SYP) per ton (277 USD) in Quneitra and 20,000 SYP per ton (111 USD) in Mzeireb sub-districts. The large numbers of IDPs staying in poorly insulated tents and makeshift shelters

in these sub-districts are reportedly the hardest hit by high fuel prices.

Crops and food stocks are reported to have affected all of the sub-districts covered by this assessment. In Dar'a Governorate, which is highly reliant on agriculture for food security, the majority of KIs reported that crops have been directly affected by the storm. The extent of damage was not evaluated during this assessment.

The majority of KIs (65) report that **emergency supplies of food and key household items were not prepared by households in advance of the storm.** The sub-districts of Dar'a, Markaz Darayya, Mzeireb and Ghizlaniyyeh report the lowest rate of emergency supplies available (respectively 8, 5, 4 and 4 KIs reported no stocks available). In three quarters of the sub-districts where households are reported to have emergency supplies, community managed stocks were also reportedly available.

Half of the KIs reported that markets have been affected by the storm. Only minor

damage has been reported to market structures such as broken windows or doors. However, **shops were reportedly unable to replenish their stocks in the coming week** (reported by 41 KIs) **or in the next two weeks** (reported by 35 KIs) due to the storm. Inability to replenish stocks within the coming week was reported in the following sub-districts: Jarama, Jasim, Mseifra, Jizeh, and Kherbet Ghazala. All markets in these sub-districts were reportedly affected.

The lack of access to fuel sources reported by the key informants is affecting both host communities and IDPs in the aftermath of the storm especially in Jizeh, Al Khashniyyeh, As Shajara, Mseifra and Mzeireb sub-districts; where very few key informants reported emergency supplies being available.

Key Findings

- **Overall, the most affected sub-districts have been Jizeh, Mseifra and Jasim in Dar'a Governorate, and Arbin in Rural Damascus Governorate.** In Rural Damascus Governorate, all of the sub-districts assessed were affected by the storm (see Figure 2)
- With roads affected by the accumulation of snow, ice, flooding or fallen trees, accessibility throughout the three governorates has been limited, **in particular in Quneitra, Mseifra and Jizeh sub-districts.** In these sub-districts, trucks were reportedly unable to use many routes, thereby hampering the delivery of any humanitarian assistance.
- **Ghizlaniyyeh and Kherbet Ghazala sub-districts reportedly contain the highest percentage of IDPs in damaged tents, a particularly vulnerable group.**
- Host communities have been mainly affected by damage to houses in Busra Esh-Sham, Izra' and Jizeh sub-districts.

- **Fuel, gas and blankets have been reported as the most acute needs in all of the affected areas.**
- **This assessment observed very little resilience capacity.** There is a lack of tools and materials to repair the shelters, with repairs only reported in Babella and Markaz Darayya sub-districts. If not repaired, shelter damage will decrease the capacity of the population to cope with harsh weather conditions for the whole winter.
- **The majority of the KIs report that no emergencies are available for households and that shops are not able to replenish their stock in the coming 1-2 weeks.** This will potentially increase prices for fuel and food, making these items increasingly difficult to access for the most vulnerable members of the population.

Governorate	District	Sub-district	
Dar'a	As-Sanamayn	As Sanamayn	
		Ghabagheb	
	Dar'a	Ash-Shajara	
		Busra Esh-Sham	
		Da'el	
		Dar'a	
		Jizeh	
		Kherbet Ghazala	
		Mseifra	
		Mzeireb	
	Izra'	Hrak	
		Izra'	
		Jasim	
		Nawa	
		Sheikh Miskine	
Quneitra	Quneitra	Al-Khashniyyeh	
		Khan Amaba	
		Quneitra	
Rural Damascus	Darayya	Markaz Darayya	
	Duma	Duma	
		Ghizlaniyyeh	
		Harasta	
	Rural Damascus	Arbin	
		Babella	
		Jaramana	
		Kafr Batna	

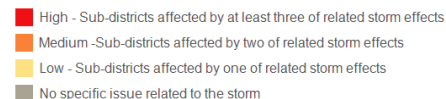


Figure 2: Differential storm impact measured through shelter damage, fuel availability, road access and humanitarian access