

WASH SITUATION OF RETURNEES IN SYRIA - HNO 2020

December 2019

Context

The conflict in Syria has created and exacerbated large-scale humanitarian needs around water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) for the country's population.

Returnees in Syria face a different set of challenges compared to other population groups. Upon arriving back to their place of origin, returnees may be faced with the prospect of large-scale damage of property and lack of compensation, a lack of livelihood opportunities, high living costs¹ and limited access to services. Such circumstances have the potential to exacerbate WASH needs in areas where infrastructure and basic services are already stretched. Understanding the specific challenges returnee households (HHs) face is intrinsic to the planning and delivery of an inclusive humanitarian response.

The Whole of Syria (WoS) WASH Sector, together with HNAP, conducted a WoS HH survey between June and July 2019 to inform the 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO). This factsheet draws on data from the assessment to provide an overview of the differences in circumstances between returnees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and resident populations in Syria. The factsheet focuses on availability of and access to WASH services, but also covers shelter, health and livelihood considerations. The majority of the analysis centers on the differences between HHs from different population groups (Residents, IDPs and returnees) with data aggregated to the country and governorate level.

Methodology

The assessment of HHs in communities covered 25,664 HHs in 4,517 communities across 268 sub-districts of a total of 272, in all 14

governorates in Syria. Findings for the assessment are representative at the sub-district level with a confidence interval of 95% and a margin of error of 10%. This assessment did not specifically target informal sites within communities. However due to the random sampling methodology used, some HHs in informal sites were also interviewed.

Two stage random sampling was carried out for the assessment, with communities and then HHs randomly selected using the probability proportional to size method. The method provides representative findings that can be used to draw conclusions about the WASH situation across Syria.

For the purposes of this assessment, the following definitions were used:

Returnees: Refers to IDPs or refugees who were displaced for at least one month and returned to the community they lived in prior to their displacement during 2019. Only those who returned at least one month prior to the time of interview were here considered as returnees.

IDPs: IDPs are people or groups of people who have been forced to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, and who have not crossed an international border.

Resident population: Resident population refers to all persons (habitually) residing in a community at the present time who have lived in the area before the beginning of the conflict. It excludes current IDPs and returnees who returned to the community in 2019.

For additional information regarding the findings presented in this factsheet please refer to contacts below.

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AREA OF ASSESSMENT

25,664

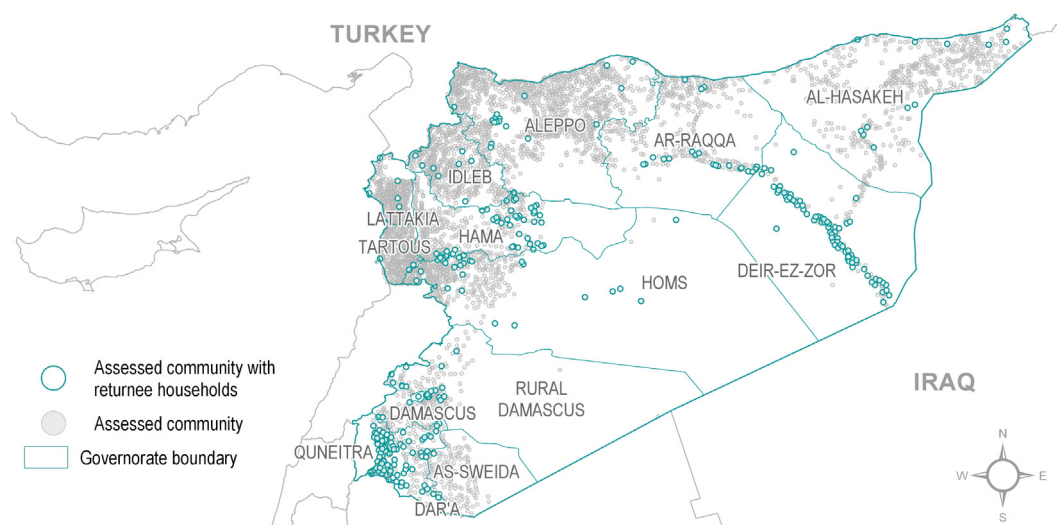
Total households assessed
in 4,517 communities

4,416

IDP households assessed

1,115

Returnee households
assessed in 313 communities



Four sub-districts were not assessed: Hajar Aswad in Rural Damascus governorate, Rabee'a in Lattakia governorate, Masaada and Al-Butayhah in Quneitra governorate.

¹ Source REACH Initiative: <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/displaced-returned-reintegrated-while-returns-north-east-syria-continue>



Key findings WASH Infrastructure and Services

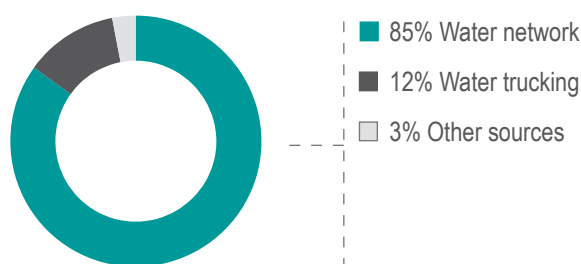
Within communities in Syria and based on the definitions presented on page 1, the demographic profile showed that only 4% of assessed HHs were returnee HHs (1,115 out of 25,664). The majority of these HHs were located in Deir-ez-Zor, Dar'a and Homs governorates. Analysis of HH access to basic services revealed that, at the national level, returnee HHs reported marginally higher rates for water network access and sewer connections than resident population HHs, and similar rates of water chlorination. These statistics suggest that functional WASH infrastructure and the availability of basic services are a potential pull factor for IDPs or refugees returning to their places of origin. The situation among returnees appears to be significantly worse with respect to solid waste management services. A much higher proportion of returnee HHs (42%) report leaving garbage in public areas compared with IDP (8%) and resident population HHs (7%). This may be indicative of a lack of formalised solid waste management services in the areas where returnees live, or a lack of financial resources among returnees, to acquire paid garbage disposal services.



Water Access and Water Quality

85%

Of returnee HHs reported a network connection as their primary water source, compared with 81% of resident population HHs and 69% of IDP HHs.³



84%

Of returnee HHs water supplies tested had a positive result for the presence of free residual chlorine (FRC), compared with 84% of resident population HHs and 92% of IDP HHs³. The presence of FRC in drinking water indicates that a sufficient amount of chlorine was initially added to disinfect the water, and that the water has a level of protection from microbiological recontamination.³

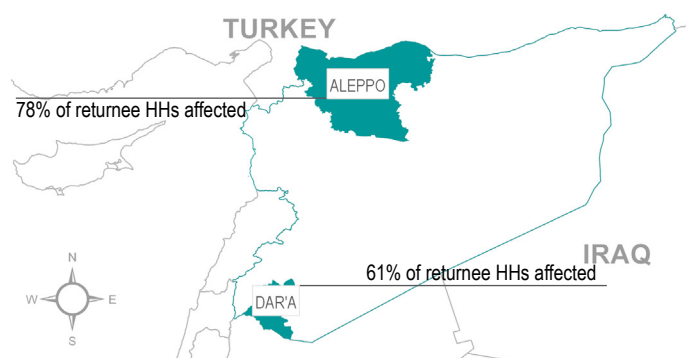


Solid Waste Management

42%

Of returnee HHs reported that garbage is commonly left in public areas, compared with 7% of resident population HHs and 8% of IDP HHs.

Governorates with the highest proportion of HHs reporting that garbage is left in public spaces².



Sanitation and Wastewater Disposal

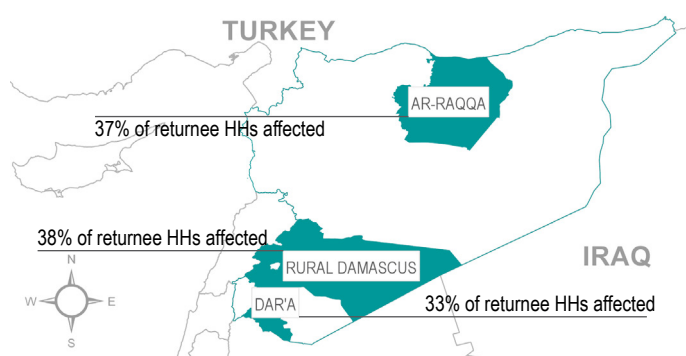
87%

Of returnee HHs reported that HH wastewater was disposed of via a connection to the sewer network, compared with 83% of resident population HHs and 79% of IDP HHs.³

17%

Of returnee HHs reported wastewater disposal issues related to poor network functionality or a lack of desludging services in the previous month (blocked sewer connections or pipes, sewage overflows, no desludging services, no water to flush), compared with 11% of resident population HHs and 24% of IDP HHs.³

Governorates with the highest proportion of returnee HHs reporting wastewater disposal issues



²Only the 7 governorates with a sufficient number of returnee respondents for representative data at the 90/10 confidence level were included in this analysis: Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa, Dar'a, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama, Homs and Rural Damascus.

³Assessment findings have a 10% margin of error, differences between groups may not be significant when the reported percentage differences are below 10%.



Key Findings Shelter, Livelihoods and Health

Within communities in Syria, the demographic profile showed that the average (median) size of returnee HHs is larger than that of resident population HHs, with five HH members compared to four in resident population HHs. In addition to larger HH sizes, returnee HHs also have a lower average (median) income than resident population HHs, a monthly HH income of \$133 USD compared to \$152 USD for resident population HHs. The combination of larger HH sizes and lower HH incomes results in significantly less financial resources available per individual in returnee HHs; \$28 per person, compared to \$36 per person in resident population HHs. Further compounding the lack of income is the financial burden carried by returnees facing large scale property damage - compared to resident population HHs, returnee HH were more than four times as likely to report living in a home that had sustained damage during the conflict.

Returnees have been recognised as one of the most vulnerable population groups by the Health sector, since returnees often have limited access to overstretched health services in the locations which they are returning to.⁴ This is particularly true of returnees living in communities over-burdened by large concentrations of IDPs. Assessed returnee HHs reported HH members suffering from diarrhoea at a very similar rate to IDP HHs and at a rate 32% higher than resident population HHs.

Livelihoods and Household Spending on WASH

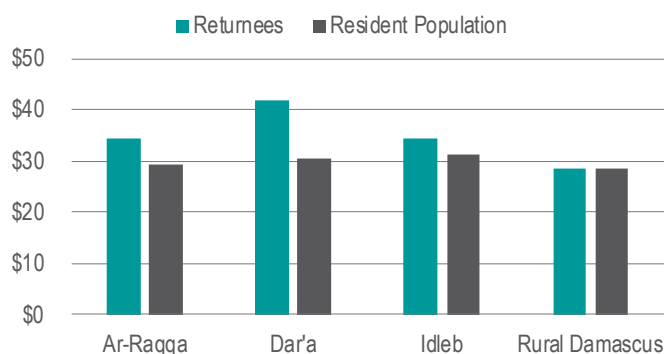
\$133^{USD}

Median monthly HH income for returnees, compared with \$152 USD for resident population HHs.

\$27^{USD}

Median monthly HH spending on WASH for returnees (purchasing water and hygiene items and paying for garbage disposal and desludging services), compared with \$26 USD for resident population HHs.⁶

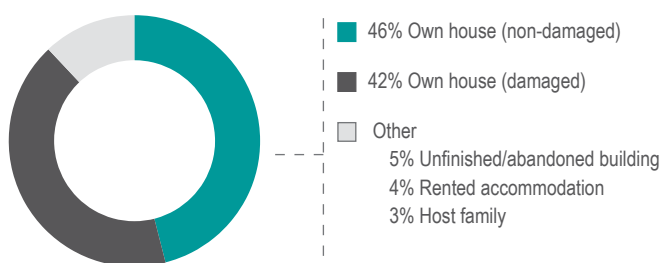
Top four governorates with highest average HH WASH Spending



Shelter

42%

Of returnee HHs reported living in a damaged home owned by members of the HH, compared with 8% for resident population HHs.



9%

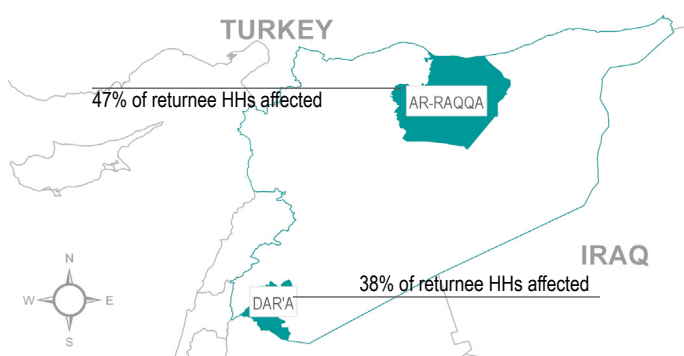
Of returnee HHs reported sharing a shelter with one of more HH, compared with 5% for resident population HHs and 15% for IDP HHs.⁶

Health

25%

Of returnee HHs reported that one or more HH members suffered from diarrhoea in the month prior to the assessment, compared with 19% of resident population HHs and 24% of IDP HHs.⁶

Governorates with the highest proportion of returnee HHs reporting individuals suffering with diarrhoea in the month prior to the assessment⁵.



⁴Source Humanitarian Needs Overview 2019

⁵Individual reports of diarrhoea by HH respondents do not constitute a clinical diagnosis of diarrhoea

⁶Assessment findings have a 10% margin of error, differences between groups may not be significant when the reported percentage differences are below 10%.