

Winter Storm Jana Rapid Assessment

Syria, February 2015

REACH An initiative of
IMPACT Initiatives
ACTED and UNOSAT

SITUATION OVERVIEW

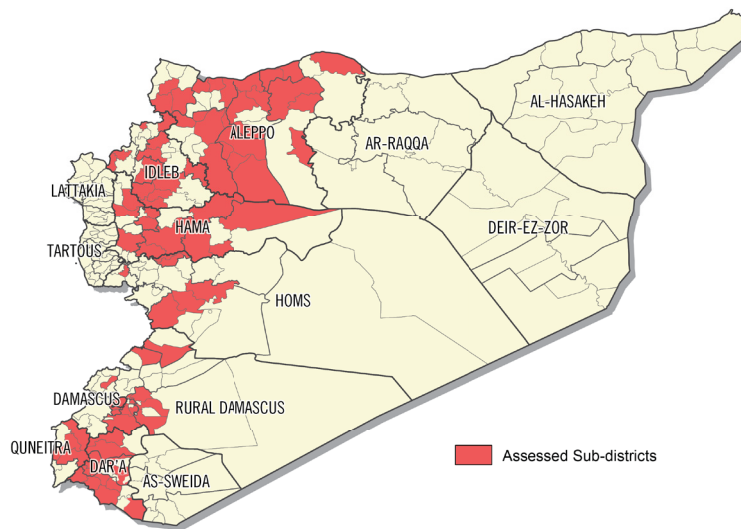
INTRODUCTION

Less than two months after much of the Middle East was blanketed with up to 65cm of snow as a result of Storm Huda, the region was struck by Winter Storm Jana between the 19th and the 22nd of February 2015, resulting in heavy rain, snow, severe winds, and freezing temperatures, and affecting a large proportion of Syria.

In this context, REACH mobilized 182 key informants (KIs) in Jordan and Lebanon to conduct a remote assessment of 143 villages in 91 sub-districts across the affected areas (Aleppo, Damascus, Dar'a, Hama, Homs, Idleb, Quneitra and Rural Damascus) between the 22nd and the 24th of February, to measure the impact of the storm in terms of immediate needs for life saving shelter and non-food items (NFIs) (see Map 1).

Key informants reported about the situation at the village level. As a result, when aggregated at the sub-district level, information on the magnitude of Jana's impact can only be considered indicative.

Map 1: Assessed sub-districts in Syria



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KEY FINDINGS

SHELTER

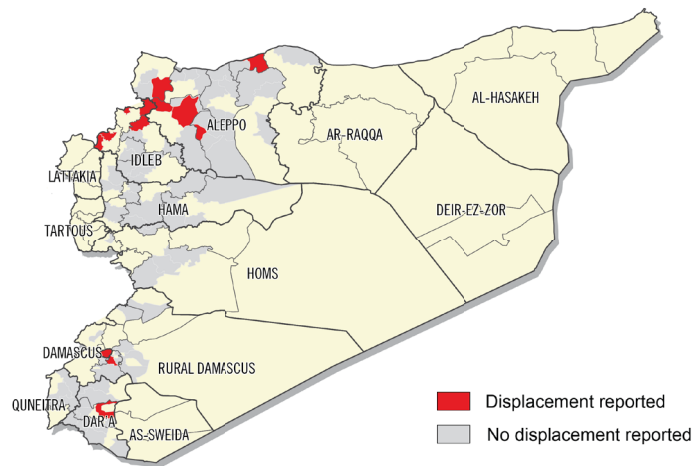
Shelter damage was reported by KIs in 26 sub-districts in Idlib, Aleppo, and Dar'a Governorates. While much of the damage reported to permanent structures was superficial – requiring repairs to roofs, windows, and doors – even minor damage can have a more serious impact on families living in damaged or non-permanent shelters. Displaced families, many living in tents and sub-standard shelters, were reportedly among the worst affected by the high winds, snowfall and flooding (see Map 3).

Flooding was reported to have affected shelters in sub-districts in Aleppo governorate (Al Bab, Jarablus, Jebel Saman), Dar'a (Busra Esh-Sham, Da'el, Dar'a, Izr'a and Tassil) and Idlib (Barama and Heish). The highest levels of flood damage were reported in the towns of Busra Esh-Sham and Tassil in Dar'a. Additionally, flooding of shelters was reported in multiple areas around Jarablus sub-district. With an overall population estimated to be around 88,000 (including 48,000 IDPs) and an additional influx of IDPs from neighbouring areas due to storm conditions, this sub-district is likely to contain a high caseload of families living in vulnerable types of shelter.

Emergency shelters suffered damage in several sub-districts. All tent structures in the town of Mzeireb (Dar'a) – housing up to 30% of the locality's 4000 IDPs – were reported to have been damaged due to heavy rain and snow.

Map 2: Reported displacement due to the storm

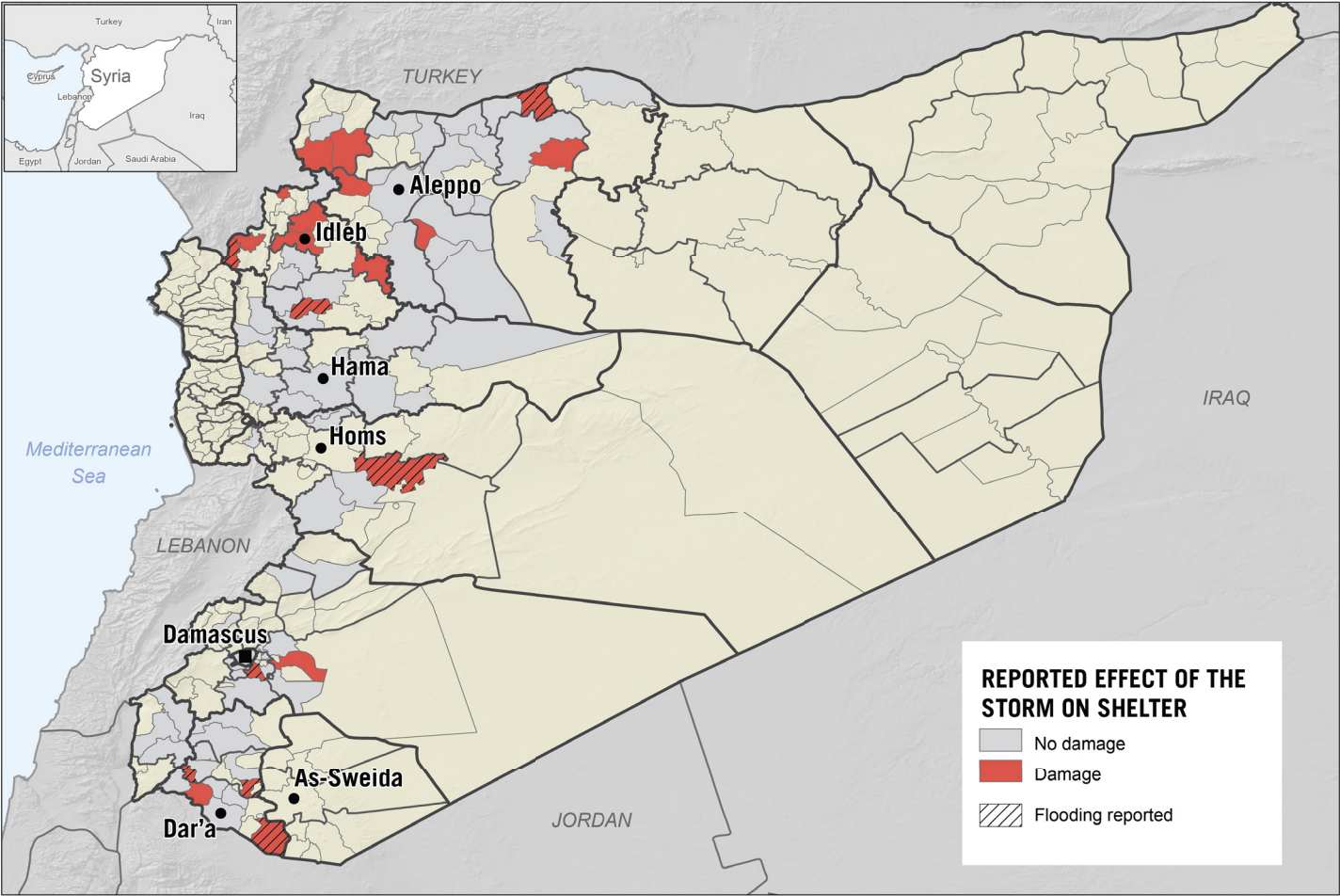
Displacement due to the storm was reported in a small number of sub-districts, including Jarablus and Daret Azza (Aleppo), Ankhal (Dar'a), and Janudiyeh, Maaret Tamsrin, & Harim (Idlib).



Other sub-districts with a high percentage of storm-damaged tents include Babella and Jarablus (hosting 130,000 and 50,000 IDPs respectively).

The majority of KIs who reported shelter damage also reported that households were unable to repair the damage, primarily due to a lack of money to purchase materials.

Map 3: Reported storm damage to shelters



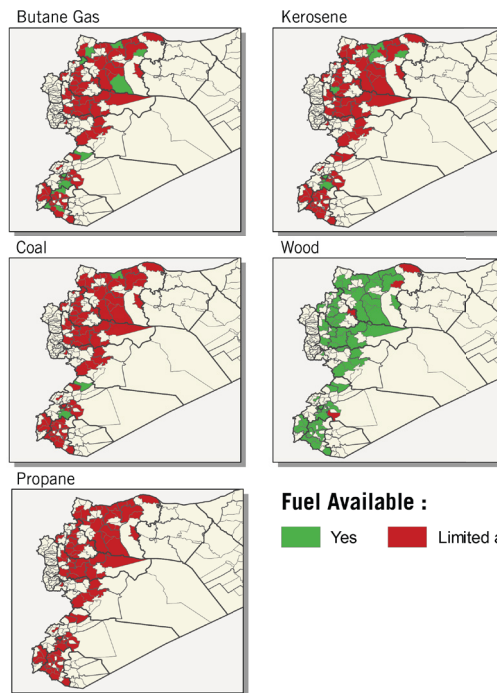
NON-FOOD ITEMS

Overall, KIs reported a limited availability of conventional fuels – including butane, kerosene, propane and coal – in local markets. They reported that the most widely accessible fuel source in local markets was wood (see Map 4).

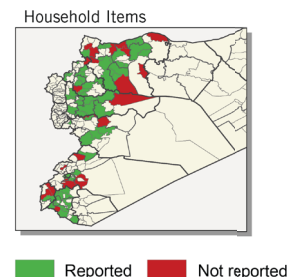
Many reported using household items (including textiles, fabrics, plastic and furniture) to provide heat both during the storm and in its immediate aftermath (see Map 5).

Similar negative coping strategies were reported by KIs during January's Storm Huda; as a result the ability of vulnerable populations to cope with severe storms is likely to decrease.

Map 4: Reported fuel availability (conventional and non conventional sources)



Map 5: Reported use of household items for heating (both during the storm and in its immediate aftermath)



CONTINGENCY STOCKS

Regarding contingency stocks at the household level, the majority of KIs (110) reported that emergency supplies of food and key non-food items had not been stockpiled in advance of the storm. The inability to stockpile essential items in preparation of a storm highlights a decrease in household resilience; potentially as a result of the prevailing situation in Syria and the multiple severe storms during the winter season.

Availability of community managed contingency stocks reportedly varies considerably between governorates. While the majority of KIs in Dar'a and Damascus Governorates reported that affected populations were able to access community managed contingency stocks during the storm and in its immediate aftermath, only a minority did so in the other governorates targeted for assessment.

Damage to food and crop stocks as a result of the storm was reported by KIs to be widespread in Aleppo, Dar'a, Hama, Homs, Idleb, and Rural Damascus. The highest proportion of damage was reported in Northern Syria, in 20 sub-districts in Aleppo and 10 in Idleb; with 10 KIs

across 7 sub-districts in Dar'a (Southern Syria) also reporting to have sustained food/crop stock damage. Regarding market functionality, KIs reported that the storm caused significant damage to markets in Quneitra, Damascus, Idleb and Aleppo Governorates.

The lack of household and community contingency stocks, damage to food and crop stocks, and reduced market functionality will contribute towards a reduced community resilience in the aftermath of future severe weather events.

ACCESS AND ASSISTANCE

The majority of KIs reported that road access has been severely restricted in the immediate aftermath of the storm. The highest proportions of affected roads were in Aleppo, Hama, Homs and Quneitra Governorates, primarily due to the accumulation of snow (reported by 115 KIs) and ice (reported by 28 KIs). As a result, it is likely that there will be only a limited long term impact on supply routes across the majority of the affected areas.

In addition to snow and ice, flooding affected road access in Jarablus (Aleppo), Busra Esh-Sham, Da'el and Dar'a (Dar'a) and Heish (Idleb). 32 sub-districts in 7 governorates were reported by KIs to be totally inaccessible by both cars and trucks as a result of the storm, with the highest number in Aleppo (11), Dar'a (7) and Idleb (6).

The majority of KIs reported that no organization had delivered humanitarian assistance in the week prior to the storm. In the few areas where assistance had been received, distributions of winter preparation supplies had been conducted by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and local charities.

About REACH Initiative

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.

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