**Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria (HSOS)**

**Northeast Syria, February 2019**

**Coverage**

Top 3 reported priority needs in assessed communities:
1. Healthcare
2. Livelihoods
3. Education

People in need (PIN)* in assessed communities:
- PIN: 1,163,429
- People in Acute Need: 651,103

Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB):^1,2
- Average price in February 2019: 65,009 Syrian pound (SYP)
- One month change: -2%
- Six month change: +1%

**Key events impacting the humanitarian situation in Northeast Syria (NES)**
- Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor cities fully liberated from ISIL.\(^a,b\)
- Forces escalate offensive on ISIL in southeastern Deir-ez-Zor governorate and in southern Al-Hasakeh governorate.\(^c\)
- Delayed rainfall and deteriorated agricultural infrastructure and input resulted in the lowest annual wheat yield since 1989.\(^d\)
- 244,655 spontaneous returnees in Deir-ez-Zor governorate and 166,305 in Ar-Raqqa city reported by OCHA since November 2017.\(^e\)
- Offensive to retake final ISIL-held enclave continues in southern Deir-ez-Zor governorate contributing to additional displacement.\(^h\)
- Civilians evacuated from Baghouz, the last ISIL-held Syrian enclave.\(^i\)

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* HSOS is a monthly assessment that aims to provide comprehensive, multi-sectoral information about the humanitarian situation inside Syria. The assessment is conducted at the community level covering displacement, shelter and non-food items (SNFI), health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), food security and livelihoods (FSL), and education.

* The factsheet presents information gathered in 617 communities across Al-Hasakeh (200 communities), eastern Aleppo* (46 communities), Deir-ez-Zor (158 communities), and Ar-Raqqa (213 communities) governorates. Data was collected during the month of March 2019, and refers to the situation in the northeast region in February 2019. Findings are indicative rather than representative, and should not be generalised across the region.

* For community-level data, datasets are available on the **REACH Resource Centre**, the **Humanitarian Data Exchange**, and are also distributed through partners across the humanitarian community.

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* The eastern part of Aleppo where humanitarian response and coordination is conducted from the northeast rather than the northwest.

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* People in need (PIN) refers to people whose physical security, basic rights, dignity, living conditions or livelihoods are threatened or have been disrupted, and whose current level of access to basic services, goods and protection is inadequate to re-establish normal living conditions within their accustomed means without assistance.

* People in Acute Need refers to those facing more severe forms of deprivation in terms of their security, basic rights and living conditions and face life-threatening needs requiring urgent humanitarian assistance (HNO 2019).

* The calculated PIN numbers are indicative as they are calculated using the OCHA dataset and coverage varies slightly.

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^a: Forces escalate offensive on ISIL in southeastern Deir-ez-Zor governorate and in southern Al-Hasakeh governorate.
^b: Civilians evacuated from Baghouz, the last ISIL-held Syrian enclave.
^c: Delayed rainfall and deteriorated agricultural infrastructure and input resulted in the lowest annual wheat yield since 1989.
^d: 244,655 spontaneous returnees in Deir-ez-Zor governorate and 166,305 in Ar-Raqqa city reported by OCHA since November 2017.
^e: Offensive to retake final ISIL-held enclave continues in southern Deir-ez-Zor governorate contributing to additional displacement.
^f: Offensive escalate offensive on ISIL in southeast Deir-ez-Zor governorate and in southern Al-Hasakeh governorate.
^g: People in need (PIN) refers to people whose physical security, basic rights, dignity, living conditions or livelihoods are threatened or have been disrupted, and whose current level of access to basic services, goods and protection is inadequate to re-establish normal living conditions within their accustomed means without assistance.
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^i: The calculated PIN numbers are indicative as they are calculated using the OCHA dataset and coverage varies slightly.
Northeast Syria, February 2019

CONTEXT
In February 2019, further displacement occurred in Northeast Syria (NES), in light of the offensive against the final ISIL-held enclave located in Baghouz, Deir-ez-Zor governorate. Many of the internally displaced persons (IDPs), who largely got displaced due to conflict, arrived to Al Hol camp in Al-Hasakeh governorate. The humanitarian situation in Al Hol camp continues to be worrying as the camp, originally established to hold 10,000 people, was as of late February, hosting over 70,000 people, the majority being women and children. The cold weather, the lack of WASH services, and the shortages of healthcare services in this area leave camp residents vulnerable to hypothermia and waterborne and other communicable diseases. For more information see the Al Hol refugee Camp Map December 2018, and the Al Hol IDP Camp Map December 2018.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS
Deir-ez-Zor governorate reports limited bread consumption, likely exacerbated by recent increases in the prices of key goods such as electricity, fuel and flour

In Deir-ez-Zor governorate, KIs in 145 (92%) of 158 assessed communities reported not accessing bread on a daily basis. Reasons for limited access to bread were various: KIs in 131 (87%) assessed communities reported that flour was too expensive and KIs in 57 (36%) assessed communities reported that wheat was too expensive and hard to access. Other reported reasons were related to fuel; KIs in 59 (37%) assessed communities reported that there was not enough fuel for electricity, and KIs in 25 (16%) assessed communities reported that fuel for electricity was too expensive. This trend of increased prices of key goods such as electricity, fuel and flour is described in the Northeast Syria Market Monitoring Exercise February 2019 that shows the gradual increase of the NES Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) cost since May 2018. Considering the fact that KIs in Deir-ez-Zor reported the highest proportion of communities making their own bread compared to other governorates in NES, a lack of fuel for electricity could have a significant impact on people’s bread consumption, and resultant food security. For further context, see the Deir-ez-Zor Area Based Assessment February 2019.

Latrine-related challenges in Deir-ez-Zor governorate
KIs in 140 (89%) of 158 assessed communities reported multiple challenges with latrines in Deir-ez-Zor governorate in February. More than half of KIs reported that latrines were not clean (51%), and that there was a lack of privacy (54%). Furthermore, no separation between men and women was reported a challenge in 62 (39%) assessed communities. Additionally, a lack of water to flush (26%), a blocked connection to the sewage (22%), and problems with emptying the septic tank (20%), were commonly reported. KIs in Deir-ez-Zor governorate reported also that water tasted/smelled bad in 75% of assessed communities, highlighting that WASH conditions could have potential implications on the population’s health.

Sharp decline in reported sufficient income in eastern Aleppo governorate
In February, KIs in 12 (26%) of 46 assessed communities in eastern Aleppo governorate reported income was sufficient to meet household needs, reflecting a sharp decline since January, when KIs in 21 (46%) communities reported income was sufficient. Additionally, in February, KIs in all assessed communities reported a lack of resources to buy food available in markets, compared to KIs in 41 (89%) assessed communities in January. This was likely related to the increased SMEB cost in NES.

Displacement
- KIs in 108 (68%) of 158 assessed communities in Deir-ez-Zor governorate reported IDPs leaving the community, likely due to the escalation of conflict. Across NES, the governorate with the highest reported number of IDP arrivals in assessed communities was Al-Hasakeh governorate, with KIs reporting that 8,000 out of 12,010 IDPs arrived in Hole sub-district. KIs reported that all IDPs arriving in Al Hol camp came from Baghouz community in Deir-ez-Zor governorate.

Food Security & Livelihoods
- Across all four governorates, livelihoods were considered a top priority need. In Deir-ez-Zor governorate, KIs in all 459 assessed communities reported income was insufficient to meet household needs, as compared to 385 (84%) of the 459 assessed communities in Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, and eastern Aleppo governorates.
- KIs in all 617 assessed communities across NES reported challenges in accessing enough food to meet household needs. The most commonly reported barriers to accessing food were the high price of some food items, reported in 432 (70%) assessed communities, and a lack of resources to buy food available in the markets, reported in 421 (68%) assessed communities.
- KIs in 156 (25%) of 617 assessed communities in NES reported that local food production has decreased, which is considerable since KIs in 151 (96%) of 158 assessed communities in Deir-ez-Zor governorate and KIs in 172 (86%) of 200 assessed communities in Al-Hasakeh governorate reported food was obtained through own production.

Education
- Among the 617 assessed communities in NES, KIs in only 181 (29%) assessed communities reported that all children had access to education services. In Al-Hasakeh governorate, KIs in 94 (47%) of 200 assessed communities reported access to education for all children compared to KIs in 87 (21%) of 417 assessed communities in Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor and eastern Aleppo governorates.
- In Al-Hasakah governorate, KIs in 18 (21%) of 200 assessed communities reported parents not approving of curriculum as the most common reason why school-aged children were not attending school; a barrier also reported by KIs in 18 (5%) of 317 assessed communities in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor governorates, and not reported at all by KIs in the 46 assessed communities in eastern Aleppo governorate.

WASH
- In eastern Aleppo governorate, KIs in 26 (57%) of 46 assessed communities reported that garbage is buried or burned as the most common way that people dispose of their garbage, a percentage that is considerably higher when compared to other assessed governorates. In tandem, KIs in only 12 (26%) assessed communities indicated that garbage was collected at least once a week.

Health
- Access to healthcare in NES continues to pose severe challenges. KIs in only 20 (3%) of 617 assessed communities across NES reported no difficulties in access. The most commonly reported barriers in Ar-Raqqa, eastern Aleppo, and Al-Hasakah governorates were the perceived lack of health facilities available in the area, the high costs of transportation to the facilities, and the high price of healthcare services.
- In Deir-ez-Zor governorate, unique barriers were reported: KIs in 24 (15%) of 158 assessed communities reported a lack of specialised clinics, and KIs in 8 (5%) assessed communities reported a lack of professional staff.

Shelter and NFI
- In Al-Hasakah governorate, KIs in 79 (40%) of 200 assessed communities indicated that the majority of spontaneous returnee (both IDP and refugee) households live in homes owned prior to the start of the conflict. This percentage is considerably lower compared to other governorates in NES. In Ar-Raqqa, eastern Aleppo, and Deir-ez-Zor governorates, KIs in 372 (89%) of 417 assessed communities reported that spontaneous returnee households live in homes owned prior to the onset of the conflict.
Regional areas of influence:

**Area of influence**
Sourced from Live UA Map, 28 February 2019

- **Opposition** - (Euphrates Shield/Olive Branch)
- **Syrian Democratic Forces** - (SDF-coalition)
- **ISIL-affiliated groups**

- **Assessed Community**
Estimated proportion of pre-conflict population (PCP) displaced from community:

**DISPLACEMENT**

- **10,890 - 12,010**
  Estimated number of IDP arrivals in assessed communities February 2019.

- **11,790 - 12,890**
  Estimated number of spontaneous returns in assessed communities February 2019.

Communities with the largest estimated number of IDP arrivals:

- **Hole (Hole, Al-Hasakeh)**: 8,200 - 8,800
- **Hajin (Hajin, Deir-ez-Zor)**: 700 - 750
- **Sur (Sur, Deir-ez-Zor)**: 450 - 550

*Reported as community, (sub-district, governorate)

**Top 3 reported subdistricts of origin for IDP arrivals:**

- **Susat (Deir-ez-Zor)**
- **Abu Kamal (Deir-ez-Zor)**
- **Hajin (Deir-ez-Zor)**

*Reported as sub-district (governorate)

**613** communities reported no PCP departures.

**Top 3 reasons for PCP departures in the remaining 4 assessed communities:**

- Access to money to pay for departure: 50%
- Loss of income: 50%
- Escalation of conflict: 25%

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**Reaching**

Informing more effective humanitarian action
Communities reported having received food distributions in the last month.
Communities reported that residents were unable to access shops and markets.
Community, Khaled (Al-Hasakeh governorate), reported that residents used extreme food-based coping strategies to deal with insufficient income.
Most commonly reported household monthly income range.
Communities reported that residents had enough income to cover household needs. The most commonly reported coping strategies to deal with a lack of income in the remaining assessed communities were:

- Borrow money from family/friends: 91%
- Reduce meal size: 34%
- Children sent to work/beg: 29%
- Take loans/buy on credit: 21%
- Skip meals: 12%

Most commonly reported main sources of income:

- Income from farm ownership: 71%
- Unstable/daily employment: 54%
- Business or trade: 43%
- Stable/salaried employment: 38%
- Remittances: 36%

Most commonly reported ways of obtaining food:

- Purchased: 100%
- Own production: 73%
- Bartered: 17%
- Food distributions: 15%
- Received from others: 10%
598/617 communities reported having functioning primary education facilities, while 244 communities reported having functioning secondary education facilities.

181 communities reported that all children were able to access education. The most commonly reported barriers to education in the remaining 436 assessed communities were:

- Lack of school supplies: 53%
- Lack of teaching staff: 52%
- Services are too far: 28%
- Early marriage: 27%
- Child labour: 24%

39 communities reported that residents experienced no challenges in accessing food. The most common difficulties experienced in the remaining 578 assessed communities were:

- Some items too expensive: 75%
- Lack of resources to buy food: 73%
- Some food items unavailable from the market: 28%
- Decrease in local food production: 27%
- Lack of access to market: 16%
- Not enough cooking fuel available: 4%
- Lack of access to cooking fuel: 2%
Communities that reported insufficient amounts of water to meet household needs:

- 11/617
- 41/617

349 communities reported that residents had no problems with latrines. The most commonly reported problems with latrines in the remaining 268 assessed communities were: Lack of privacy (39%), Not clean (38%), No separation between men and women (38%), No water to flush (34%), Inability to empty septic tanks (29%), Blocked connections to sewage (19%), Not safe (7%), Too crowded/not sufficient (3%).

441 communities reported that they had sufficient amounts of water to meet household needs. The most common coping strategies to deal with a lack of water in the remaining 174 assessed communities were: Spend money usually spent on other things to buy water (74%), Modify hygiene practices (28%), Reduce drinking water consumption (22%), Receive water on credit/borrow water or money for water (22%).

Primary drinking water source reported: Network (49%), Water trucking (28%), Closed well (18%), Bottled water (2%), Open well (1%), Rainwater (1%), River (1%).

Primary method of garbage disposal reported: Free public collection (31%), Disposed of at designated site (26%), Buried or burned (18%), Left in street/public area (16%), Paid private collection (9%).
Northeast Syria, February 2019

HEALTH

283/617 Communities reported that no assessed medical items were available in their community.14

179/617 Communities reported that the majority of women did not give birth in a formal health facility.

11/100 Communities reported that some individuals had been diagnosed with SAM (Severe Acute Malnutrition).14

20 communities reported that residents experienced no barriers to accessing healthcare services. The most commonly reported barriers in the remaining 597 assessed communities were:6,7,9

- Healthcare services too expensive: 64%
- No health facilities available in the area: 56%
- High cost of transportation to facilities: 52%
- Lack of transportation/long distance to facilities: 25%
- Lack of specialised facilities: 8%
- Security concerns when traveling to facilities: 3%

276 communities reported that residents were not using coping strategies to deal with a lack of medical services and items. The coping strategies used in the remaining 341 communities were:6,7,9

- Using less than the recommended dose of medication: 74%
- Using low quality medication: 68%
- Using nonmedical items for treatment: 20%

Communities reported that some individuals had been diagnosed with SAM (Severe Acute Malnutrition).14

Top 3 most needed healthcare services reported:6,7

- Chronic disease support: 59%
- Surgical care: 49%
- Medicine: 48%

Top 3 most common health problems reported:6,7

- Chronic diseases: 73%
- Severe diseases affecting those younger than 5: 64%
- Acute respiratory infections: 42%
Communities that reported insufficient amounts of fuel to meet household needs: 1

545 communities reported no lack of fuel. Most common strategies to cope with lack of fuel in the remaining 72 assessed communities: 6,7

- Burning productive assets: 39%
- Burning waste: 38%
- Burning furniture not in use: 29%
- Burning furniture in use: 19%
- Cutting trees to burn: 17%

**SHELTER AND NFI**

**3,866 SYP**  Regional average monthly reported rent price in SYP across assessed communities. 1

**5,962 SYP**  Northern Syria average monthly reported rent price in SYP across assessed communities. 1,16

Most commonly reported shelter type for PCP households: 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shelter Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent apartment/house</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared apartment/house</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most commonly reported shelter type for IDP households: 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shelter Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent apartment/house</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared apartment/house</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tent</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfinished apartment/house</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reported fuel prices (in SYP): 1,2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fuel Type</th>
<th>Regional average price Feb 2019</th>
<th>One month change</th>
<th>Six month change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GoS petrol</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>-74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GoS diesel</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-5%</td>
<td>-17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manually refined petrol</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manually refined diesel</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>+4%</td>
<td>+30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking fuel</td>
<td>3,125</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Insufficient fuel reported
  - Sufficient fuel reported
  - Governorate capital

Sub-district with assessed communities
Sub-district with no assessed communities

Regional average monthly reported rent price in SYP across assessed communities. 1

Northern Syria average monthly reported rent price in SYP across assessed communities. 1,16

Fuel type (1L):
- GoS petrol
- GoS diesel
- Manually refined petrol
- Manually refined diesel
- Cooking fuel

Network: 51%
Generator: 46%
Batteries: 3%
HSOS data collection is conducted through an enumerator network in accessible locations throughout Idlib, Aleppo, Hama, Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa, and Al-Hasakeh governorates. REACH enumerators are based inside Syria and interview Key Informants (KIs) directly in the community about which they are reporting. Where access and security constraints renders direct data collection unfeasible, some KI interviews are conducted remotely through participants identified in camps and settlements in neighbouring countries by REACH field teams. Participants contact multiple KIs in their community in Syria to collect information about their community. KIs are asked to report at the community level.

KIs generally included local council members, Syrian NGO workers, medical professionals, teachers, shop owners and farmers, among others, and were chosen based on their community-level or sector specific knowledge. In cases where KIs disagree on a certain piece of information, enumerators triangulate the data with secondary sources or select the response provided by the KI with the more relevant sector-specific background. For each question asked, confidence levels are assigned based on the KIs area of expertise and knowledge of the sector-specific situation. The confidence levels associated with each question are presented in the final dataset. The full confidence matrix used to assign confidence levels is available upon request.

Findings are triangulated through secondary sources, including news monitoring and humanitarian reports. Where necessary, follow-up is conducted with enumerators and participants. Findings are indicative rather than representative, and should not be generalised across the region.

**ENDNOTES**

1 USD = 434 SYP (UN operational rates of exchange as of 1 December 2018)

2 18 items comprise the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), which represents the minimum culturally adjusted items required to support a 6-person household for a month. SMEB items: Bread, bulgur, chicken, eggs, fresh vegetables, ghee/vegetable oil, red lentils, rice, salt, sugar, tomato paste, bathing soap, laundry/dish soap, sanitary pads, toothpaste, cooking fuel, water trucking, smartphone data, float (other costs).

3 All information and figures reported in HSOS factsheets refer to the situation in assessed communities and
cannot be generalised to other non-assessed communities of the region.

4 For population numbers, KIs were asked to provide the number of resident and IDPs present in the community as of 28 February 2019. A minimum of three KIs were interviewed in each assessed community. Where discrepancies in the information provided by KIs was deemed too large further triangulation with additional KIs and local organizations was conducted. Estimated individual figures in this report are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Discrepancies with other available population data may be the result of any of the following: differences in assessment coverage dates; differences in definitions of population sub-groups (IDPs and residents); differences in geographic scope of assessed locations (e.g. included/excluded nearby camps and sites); differences in KI types interviewed; and differences in average household sizes used to calculate individual numbers, among others.

The definition of IDPs used by enumerators for this assessment was ‘Individuals or groups of people who have been forced to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights, or natural or man-made disasters, and who have not crossed an international border’.

6 Spontaneous returns refers to IDPs or refugees who return to their community of origin that they left due to conflict but not necessarily to their places of habitual residence (their former homes); who intend to remain in the community for an undetermined period; and who do not meet the IASC framework on durable solutions (IASC framework includes “not necessarily voluntary, safe or sustainable” elements).

6 Assessed using select multiple questions.

7 By percentage of communities reporting.

8 The definition of resident (pre-conflict) population (PCP), was ‘Individuals or groups of people who currently reside in their communities of origin, or communities of permanent residence prior to the Syrian conflict. This includes populations that were never displaced as well as previously displaced populations that have returned to their communities of origin’.

8 Not all surveys have answers for every question, in these scenarios the KI or participant will input no answer. When the dataset has no answer for a particular question the reported number of assessed communities will not add up to the total number of communities assessed and percentages will be calculated based on submitted responses.

Extreme food-based strategies: eating food waste; eating non-edible plants and spending days without eating.

11 Based on KI perception of sufficiency.

12 Bread, rice, lentils, sugar, and cooking oil are considered core food items used in food baskets across Syria. For further information on all SMEB items please see the Syria Market Monitoring Northeast Syria February 2019.

13 Reported numbers indicate the number of communities with functioning primary and secondary education facilities during the data collection period. It is important to note that simply having a functioning facility is not indicative of students being able to attend said facility. In addition, in some cases KIs reported that children attend schools in a neighbouring community.

14 Assessed HSOS medical items; anti-anxiety medication, contraception, clean bandages, blood transfusion bags, diabetes medicine, anaesthetics, blood pressure medicine, antibiotics, burn treatment.

15 This information was derived from medical professionals (KIs). The number of total communities refers to all communities that had a KI as medical professional available.

16 Includes HSOS data for Idleb, Aleppo, Hama, Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa and Al-Hasakeh governorates.