



SHELTER AND NFI ASSESSMENT: SYRIA

SYRIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT

MARCH 2017

Photo: Salaheddin, Aleppo. Credit: Freedom House/Creative Commons

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SUMMARY

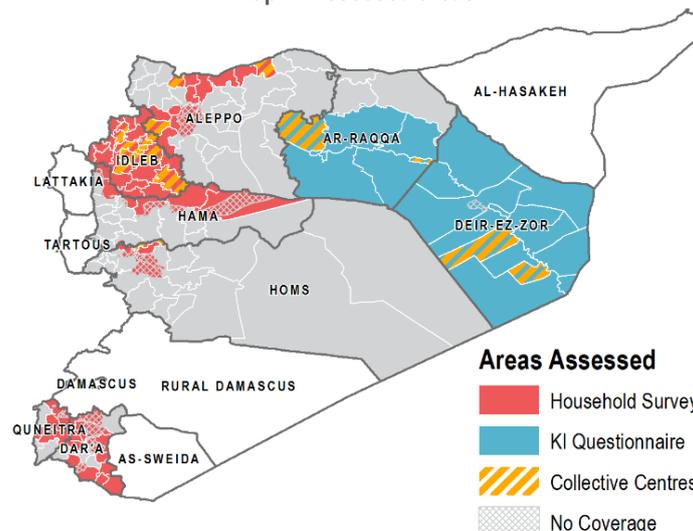
Background

An estimated 13.5 million are in need of humanitarian assistance in Syria, including 5.8 million in need of non-food item (NFI) assistance and 4.3 million in need of shelter assistance.¹ The effectiveness of planning and implementing an adequate shelter and NFI response is hindered by significant information gaps regarding needs. In light of this, REACH, with the support of the Shelter/NFI Cluster and UNHCR, have undertaken a comprehensive assessment of shelter and NFI needs across Syria, covering opposition controlled areas only in 83 of the 156 sub-districts within Aleppo, Idleb, Hama, Homs, Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa, Dar'a and Quneitra governorates. The assessment aims to identify the current shelter status of populations, availability of and access to NFIs, and priority shelter/NFI needs. Assessment findings will inform Shelter/NFI Cluster member's programming and contribute to an improved sectoral understanding across Syria. The assessment also covers key WASH and livelihood indicators related to shelter.²

Methodology

Primary data for this assessment was collected between 29th October and 31st December 2016, using a mixed methodology. A total of 6,541 household interviews and 36 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted in Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Idleb, Dar'a and Quneitra, with household findings a) representative at the governorate level with a 99% confidence level and a 5-7% margin of error³, and b) representative at the sub-district level with a 95% confidence level and 10% margin of error.⁴ Two FGDs, one with IDPs and one with non-displaced populations were conducted in each district where access and security permitted to supplement information gathered through household level interviews. In Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa governorates, security and access considerations rendered these methods unfeasible; as such, 234 direct purposively sampled Key Informant (KI) interviews were the primary method of data collection and findings should be considered indicative rather than representative. Additionally, a separate sample of collective centres was surveyed in Aleppo, Idleb, Homs, Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa governorates, assessing indicators developed in coordination with the CCCM cluster to capture issues which may be uniquely experienced by populations living in collective shelters in order to inform a tailored response. Assessing the situation of IDPs in camps was beyond the scope of this particular assessment and was not incorporated into research design; as such, camps are not represented in the proportional breakdown. In particular, this excluded a large number of people living in informal settlements in Quneitra government, as these settlements were not assessed

Map 1: Assessed areas



¹ UN OCHA Syria, January 2017, <http://www.unocha.org/syria>

² Indicators were aligned with those used in previous assessments led by the WASH and FSL clusters across Syria to allow for comparability of findings

³ In Homs and Quneitra findings have a maximum margin of error of 7%,

⁴ With the exception of Jebel Saman sub-district, in which data collection halted after 56 forms were collected due to escalation of conflict. As such, results for Jebel Saman apply to the situation before escalation of conflict in November 2016, and are representative with a lower confidence level.

Main Findings

Findings for shelter indicate prevalence of structural problems and adequacy issues requiring targeted response, particularly notable in areas that have suffered significant damage due to conflict in all governorates assessed, and widespread in assessed areas of Homs, Aleppo, Dar'a and Deir-ez-Zor. Adequacy issues, relating to space, suitability to different weather conditions, access to basic needs such as electricity and latrines, were differentiated from shelter damage issues, relating to physical disrepair to walls, floors, roofs, doors and windows. Shelter adequacy issues were expectedly correlated with damage suffered, with high proportions of households reporting some damage to their shelters in assessed areas of Homs (87%), as well as Aleppo, Hama and Dar'a (53%, 55% and 68% respectively). Further, in all governorates, with the exception of Quneitra, conflict damage in the form of airstrikes or explosions was more common in urban compared to rural areas. Similarly, conflict damage from battle and gunfire was more common in urban areas in Aleppo, Dar'a and Quneitra, but more common in rural areas of Homs and Idlib. In contrast, in all governorates, weather damage was more common in rural areas.

A general lack of shelter suitability for winter conditions was particularly prevalent:⁵ including lack of insulation from cold, leaking during rain, and a lack of heating were the most commonly reported issues. This was most common in Dar'a and Aleppo governorates, where 73% and 57% of households reported issues respectively (compared to 48% in Hama, 35% in Homs, 33% in Idlib and estimated at 36% and 9% by KIs in Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa). In these governorates, rates of shelter adequacy issues were similar between urban and rural areas, though households in urban areas were more likely to report a lack of lighting and heating, as well as a lack of access to cooking fuel. In contrast, elsewhere (Hama, Homs, Idlib and Quneitra),⁶ rural households were more likely to report issues including a lack of shelter suitability for winter conditions, as well as a lack of lighting, a lack of access to safe drinking water and a lack of space and privacy within the shelter.

Households reported a general lack of NFI items, due to a combination of lack of access to markets, lack of availability of items on markets, and affordability of items relative to household income and market prices. Households in assessed areas of Homs governorate⁷ faced particular challenges to accessing markets most commonly due to safety and security concerns at markets, while other areas also faced challenges most commonly associated with market not functioning at times of conflict (Dar'a, Aleppo, Idlib, Ar Raqqa and Quneitra) and distance to markets being too far (Quneitra and Hama).

Further, a lack of access to markets for women was highlighted as a significant issue in Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa. Where market access was possible, certain governorates (Aleppo, Homs, Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor) exhibited a lack of availability of particular items, in contrast to assessed areas of Dar'a, Hama, Idlib and Quneitra, where most NFI items were reportedly available

Many of the NFI items most commonly missing in households were winter-related items⁸ such as heating fuel, winter clothes, winter shoes, blankets and heaters. Batteries and cooking fuel were also highlighted to be commonly lacking, while batteries (large car / 12V batteries) are being used to supplement electricity where available, as the majority of households reported having fewer than 4 hours access per day.

Across the areas assessed, HLP issues were reportedly most prevalent in Deir-ez-Zor (estimated to affect 28% of households), Homs (reported by 21% of households) and Dar'a (15%), followed by Idlib (9%), Aleppo (8%) and Ar-Raqqa (7%); issues were reportedly less prevalent in assessed areas of Hama and Quneitra (5% in both). In general, the most commonly reported HLP issues were lack / loss of documentation, as well as other disputes (not involving landlords or rent, e.g. with neighbours). The nature of issues faced was different in Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa, where the most common issues were inheritance issues and looting of private property (Deir-ez-Zor) and expropriation of property and unlawful occupation (Ar-Raqqa), as although pre-conflict ownership

⁵ It should be noted that the assessment was conducted during winter months when interviewees are more likely to report such issues; it is also worth conducting assessments during the summer to identify if different challenges are faced in this period.

⁶ Disaggregated findings are not available for Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa due to the KI methodology used.

⁷ Three of the four sub-districts assessed in Homs governorate (Ar-Rastan, Talbiseh and Taldu) are classified as hard to reach by the UN; populations in such areas typically face challenges to accessing goods and this may not hold across unassessed areas of the governorate

is typically recognised within communities, authorities have since established new systems which do not necessarily give recognition to pre-conflict documentation.

Households with lower incomes were more likely to report prevalence of damage and adequacy issues in all governorates: overall, those with damage or adequacy issues had an average income of \$136, compared to \$163 for those without). Furthermore, households reporting damage issues were less likely to be able to report being able to make repairs to their shelters. Households with particular shelter profiles were also more likely to suffer from water shortages and have a lack of access to bathing and latrine facilities, particularly those in vulnerable shelter profiles and damaged homes.

Across locations assessed through household interviews,⁹ disaggregated findings highlight that specific groups were particularly vulnerable to certain issues: female headed households were more likely than others to report damaged shelters, less likely to own homes in some governorates, more likely to report having being evicted and more likely to report lacking NFIs in their households. Part of this vulnerability stems from a comparatively lower economic status. Although female-headed households reported similar rates of adults in employment as male-headed households, type of employment was more likely to be daily/casual labour rather than permanent or temporary jobs. This type of work typically generates less income, with female-headed households reporting lower incomes than male-headed households in all governorates assessed.

Similarly, findings for IDP populations indicate less stable tenancy conditions as well as decreased access to NFIs compared to households without IDPs. Other than having negligible ownership rates (below 5% in all governorates) and being more likely to live in more vulnerable shelter types, households with IDPs lived in more crowded conditions, were less likely to have legal documentation to prove tenancy (ownership or rental status) of current homes and more likely to report adequacy issues. Furthermore, they were more likely to be lacking NFIs in their households compared to non-displaced populations which households attributed to a lack of affordability; particularly given lower income of IDP households, inhibiting the ability to access NFIs. IDP households were most prevalent in areas assessed in Homs (53%), Aleppo (43%), Idleb (27%) and Dar'a (20%).

In general, the main issue highlighted for returnee households was decreased access to NFIs, though to a lesser extent than IDP populations. With regards to shelter, returnees had similar occupancy ratios and proportions of households living in vulnerable shelter types compared to non-returnee populations, and were only less likely to own their homes in Hama and Quneitra. However, outside of Homs and Aleppo (where rates were similar between returnee and non-returnee households), returnees were more likely to report some level of damage to their shelters.

All assessed areas have been affected by conflict to different extents and access to and availability of NFIs, as well as shelter adequacy and status, is highly context specific and susceptible to fluctuations in relation to conflict intensity. At times of intensified conflict, rates of damage increase and markets are commonly reported to cease functioning. In a majority of cases, this has translated to a reduced ability of households to meet basic shelter and NFI needs with increased challenges to accessing markets, decreased availability and affordability of core household items, increased shelter damage, inadequate shelter conditions and widespread need of shelter repair.

Elsewhere and across the entire area assessed, significant issues are related to the deterioration of livelihoods which has reduced the capacity of households to afford essential items and address shelter adequacy issues. Large scale internal displacement also poses challenges, indicating continued and deteriorating vulnerability for individuals who have fled their homes, many of which have been destroyed, looted or occupied without consent, with temporary and reported inadequate shelter solutions in current locations.

The section below gives an overview of some the key sectoral findings of the assessment across all governorates assessed. Throughout, findings for Aleppo, Idleb, Hama, Homs, Dar'a and Quneitra are representative, whilst findings for Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa are indicative only. For all governorates, findings apply to assessed sub-districts only rather than the entire governorate.

⁹ Aleppo, Idleb, Hama, Homs, Dar'a and Quneitra – results not available for Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa due to the KI methodology used

Key Findings: Sectoral Breakdown

Demographics and Displacement

- **The average household size was approximately 6 people**, being slightly higher in Deir-ez-Zor and Dar'a (6.6) compared to elsewhere.
- **In the majority of governorates assessed, the proportion of children was greater than 50%**, resulting in a dependency ratio greater than one; this was particularly high in Aleppo and Idleb where 57% and 56% of the assessed population were below 18.
- **Rates of chronic illness and disability were 9% and 6%, respectively**, across areas assessed through household interviews; 26% reported hosting people with chronic illness, and 17% reported hosting people with a disability.
- **Across the areas assessed, shelters typically contained more than one household¹⁰** (average of 1.3 in Dar'a, Idleb and Aleppo, 1.2 in Homs and Quneitra and 1.1 in Hama)¹¹. The highest averages of people per shelter were in Dar'a (7.5), Idleb (7.2) and Aleppo (7.2) compared to Homs (6.2), Quneitra (6.0) and Hama (5.8). Households in Deir-ez-Zor were reportedly larger (6.6) compared to Ar-Raqqa (6.1).
- **IDPs comprised the largest proportion of the overall population in Homs (53%)** followed by Aleppo (42%), Idleb (27%), Hama (21%), Dar'a (20%) and Quneitra (6%). Returnees were most prevalent in Aleppo (22%), Dar'a (20%) and Idleb (17%), compared to Hama (12%), Homs (9%) and Quneitra (2%). KIs estimated that IDPs comprised 16% of the population in Ar-Raqqa and 18% in Deir-ez-Zor, with returnees comprising 6% in Ar-Raqqa and 16% in Deir-ez-Zor.
- **The most commonly reported reason for IDP movement in Aleppo, Dar'a, Homs and Idleb was due to conflict in the area of origin, whilst in Hama and Quneitra, IDPs had moved most commonly for access to employment, income or shelter at the destination.** In Ar-Raqqa, the relative distance to the communities, a lack of money to pay for movement elsewhere and physical blockages leaving were the most common reasons for choosing the present community, indicating that the locations may not be the preferred choice of the IDPs and movement could occur if it became possible. In Deir-ez-Zor, family ties and a lack of money to pay for movement elsewhere were the most commonly reported reasons for choosing the present location.
- **IDPs in assessed areas of Dar'a, Homs, Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor had spent a longer average time in their shelters compared to elsewhere.** In Idleb and Aleppo, IDPs were also more likely to have been displaced multiple times compared to other governorates, and thus having spent a shorter average time in their shelters.
- **The majority of IDPs in each governorate stated that they had owned a house prior to displacement**, with no other property type reported. Pre-displacement ownership was most commonly reported by IDPs currently in Homs (94%) and Dar'a (92%), and less common in Hama (61%) and Idleb (57%). Most commonly, IDPs reported that their properties had since been damaged (44% of all IDP households) or destroyed (36%), with 34% also reporting looting. Only 1% of IDP households with properties reporting selling their pre-displacement properties, due to a combination of desire to return once the conflict is over and the difficulties of selling real estate assets.

¹⁰ For the purposes of the assessment, a household was defined as a group living together and eating from the same pot, typically but not necessarily comprising a family group

¹¹ Information not available for Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa due to the KI methodology used

Shelter Type and Ownership

- **Households in Idleb were the most crowded across the area assessed through household interviews¹²**, occupying an average of 4.1 rooms and an occupancy ratio of 1.5 people per room (including kitchens, bathrooms, bedrooms, living room and other). This was followed by Dar'a (occupancy ratio 1.4), Aleppo (1.3), Hama (1.3) and Quneitra (1.3), whilst Homs had slightly higher ratio (1.0). IDPs typically live in more crowded conditions with higher occupancy ratios.
- The largest proportions of populations living in more vulnerable shelter types found in Idleb (16%), Deir-ez-Zor (12%), Aleppo (9%) and Quneitra (9%).¹³ Households in rural areas, as well as IDP households were more likely to live in more vulnerable shelter types¹⁴.
- **The majority of non-displaced households in all governorates but Homs owned their houses** though it was highly uncommon for IDP households to own the homes in which they were currently residing (fewer than 5%¹⁵). Overall, the largest proportions of renters were found in Idleb (27%), Aleppo (23%) and Ar-Raqqa (24%) compared to a range of 16% in Deir-ez-Zor and Quneitra and 4% in Hama, while free accommodation (charity of family / friends, institutional charity, squatting) was common in areas with large proportions of IDPs, especially in Homs (52%), Hama (27%), Aleppo (24%) and Dar'a (18%).
- The highest rental costs were recorded in Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa and Idleb (\$33 - \$31 per month), while the lowest in Hama, Homs and Dar'a (\$24 - \$21). Sub-districts with relatively high rents are home to a relatively high proportion of IDPs, who commonly live in rental properties. This indicates a significant strain on the resources of IDPs.

Housing, Land and Property (HLP)

- **It was reportedly common to have legal documentation to prove ownership or tenancy of houses in Ar-Raqqa (91% of households), Quneitra (71%), Dar'a (65%), Hama (62%) and Deir-ez-Zor (65%), and less likely in Aleppo (52%), Homs (42%) and Idleb (40%).** Overall, households with IDPs were much less likely to have legal documentation.
- **Despite general possession of legal documentation, when asked to report on the most common HLP problems, lack / loss of HLP documentation was nevertheless the main issue reported in Aleppo, Dar'a, Hama, Idleb and Quneitra** (affecting 1-7% of households). In Homs, the most common issue was other disputes not related to rent or landlords (e.g. with neighbours), affecting 13% of households, which was also the second most commonly reported issue in Aleppo, Dar'a, Idleb and Quneitra. Common HLP issues were notably different in Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa: most commonly inheritance issues and looting of private property in Deir ez Zor, and expropriation of property and property being unlawfully occupied in Ar Raqqa.¹⁶
- **It was uncommon for land registries to be functioning and issuing documentation for new sales and transfers.** However, it was possible to access pre-conflict records in many locations, commonly controlled by the current authority. Nevertheless, issues typically arose where records were not available, disputed, or new arrangements required. In Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa, authorities have established new systems for resolving disputes, under which those who have left their home are not guaranteed to be able to reclaim it back, regardless of possession of legal documentation.

¹² Occupancy ratios were not assessed in Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa due to the KI methodology used.

¹³ Note that sampling was not stratified by shelter type, rather households were selected randomly across communities. As such, it is possible that the proportion of alternative shelter types may not fully represent the situation across each governorate, as these shelter types may be clustered rather than distributed evenly across communities.

¹⁴ Disaggregated results for Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa are not available due to the KI methodology used.

¹⁵ 5% in Idleb; 4% in Aleppo and Homs; 2% in Dar'a and Hama; 0% in Quneitra; disaggregated results for Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa are not available due to the KI methodology used.

¹⁶ This is related to the different system established by authorities, in which pre-conflict ownership structures are commonly recognised by communities but authorities have established systems to reassign empty homes, creating particular difficulties for those who have left their homes and want to return as well as those with issues with authorities.

Shelter Adequacy and Damage

- **Households were most likely to have shelter adequacy issues in Dar'a (73%) and Aleppo (57%), with large proportions still in Hama (48%), Homs (35%), Idlib (33%), and Deir-ez-Zor (36%).** In contrast, only 10% of households in Quneitra and 9% in Ar-Raqqa had adequacy issues.¹⁷ In all governorates but Homs, households with IDPs were more likely to face adequacy issues.¹⁸
- **In governorates with higher reported rates of shelter adequacy issues, shelter damage was also more common.** Proportions of households reported to have some level of damage were highest in Homs (87%) and Dar'a (68%), followed by Hama (55%), Aleppo (53%), Deir-ez-Zor (46%) and Idlib (37%), with lower rates in Quneitra (20%). In all governorates but Homs and Aleppo, households with IDPs and returnees were more likely to report shelter damage, indicative of barriers to finding adequate accommodation for IDPs as well as the common issue of damage to property whilst returnees are away¹⁹.
- Urban areas of Dar'a, Homs and Quneitra, which have experienced significant conflict, had higher rates of damage, while little differences in damage between urban and rural areas was observed elsewhere.
- Most significant damage was reported in the form of large cracks in most walls (8-12% of households in Aleppo, Da'ra and Hama), heavy fire damage (20% of households in Aleppo and Da'ra), partial collapse of some walls (14% of households in Hama). Total collapse is unlikely to be reported at the household level as these shelters would no longer be inhabitable, however at the community level KIs reported that 85% and 47% of households in Ar Raqqa and Deir ez Zor, respectively, had experienced total collapse.
- **The most common type of damage across the majority of households were broked or cracked windows** in Aleppo (42% of households), Hama (31%), Homs (80%), Dar'a (51%) and Idlib (26%), followed by cracks in some walls and doors not shutting properly.
- **Households in Da'ra and Aleppo were least likely to be able to make repairs.** The most significant barrier to making repairs was the expense; either that repairs require a professional, which households could not afford, or that households are able to make repairs but the materials are too expensive – this was more commonly reported than a general lack of shelter materials, although this was a particular issue in Homs.

Access to electricity

- **The main network was the primary source of electricity in Hama (90% of households), Homs (88%) and Dar'a (64%), whereas people relied primarily on generators in Aleppo (87%) and Idlib (81%), as did those in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor.** The most outstanding report was in Quneitra where 64% of the households declared having no electricity source, as the main network was shut down at the time of assessment and had also been heavily damaged during hostilities.²⁰ To deal with limited hours of electricity, use of alternative sources, such as solar panels and car batteries, was common where available.

Shelter Assistance

- **Around a fifth of households in Aleppo (17%), Hama (20%) and Dar'a (21%) reported receiving shelter support in the past year, whilst the proportion was as high as 61% in Homs.** Shelter

¹⁷ Findings apply to assessed households only; as detailed in the methodology section, this does not necessarily include a representative sample of collective centres, informal settlements and other shelter types, where the situation may be different. In particular, Quneitra hosts a number of clustered informal settlements and collective centres which were not captured in this assessment.

¹⁸ This is reflective of the higher need for such items during the winter months in which this assessment took place. It is important to also conduct similar assessments during summer to identify if and how NFI needs differ throughout the year.

¹⁹ This information is not available for Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor due to the KI methodology used.

²⁰ At the time of writing (March 2017), a lack of electricity was still an issue though to a lesser extent. Although some people have been attempting to obtain generators and alternative sources of electricity to supplement the lack of power, these were not always available or affordable for everyone.

assistance was least reported in Idleb (7%), Deir-ez-Zor (7%) and Ar-Raqqa (2%).²¹ In most governorates; 80% of households in Idleb reported not having access to information on shelter assistance, 78% in Homs, 70% in Hama, 69% in Aleppo, 61% in Dar'a and 47% in Quneitra. All KIs in Deir-ez-Zor and the majority in Ar-Raqqa reported that information on how to receive assistance was not available in their community.

- **All households were asked their preferences over types of potential shelter support. Households typically indicated a preference for unconditional cash support (60% in Dar'a, 56% in Quneitra, 53% in Idleb, 47% in Aleppo).** In Hama, households most commonly reported not having a preference (54%), whilst in Homs a large proportion preferred that external actors make repairs directly (48%). To a lesser degree, in all governorates with the exception of Hama, there was some preference for external actors making repairs directly, particularly in Quneitra (15% of households) and Dar'a (21%). Direct distribution of shelter or repair materials was not commonly preferred (less than 10% of households in each governorate).

NFIs

- **NFI access and availability varies across governorates**, with households assessed in Aleppo the most likely to report lacking NFI items inside their homes, followed by Homs, Idleb and Dar'a governorates.²² **Overall, households with IDPs were more likely to be missing items than non-IDP households**, as were returnee households though to a lesser extent, particularly cooking fuel, heating fuel and batteries.
- Further, female headed households were more commonly missing NFI items compared to male headed households. Differences in availability were most evident for heating and cooking fuel, batteries and winter items. For example, in Homs, only 28% of female-headed households had winter shoes compared to 70% of male-headed households, while in Aleppo, 37% of female-headed households had cooking fuel compared to 58% of male-headed households.
- **For all households, items most commonly reported missing were often winter-related items:** heating and cooking fuel, batteries and winter clothes, shoes, blankets and heaters.²³
- **The lack of items in households is due to a combination of lack of access to markets, lack of availability of items on markets, and affordability. In Aleppo, Homs, Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor, NFI items were commonly unavailable in markets.** In Aleppo and Homs, the most commonly unavailable items were cooking fuel, batteries and heating fuel, though hygiene products were also often unavailable. Despite the availability of items elsewhere, affordability of NFIs was an issue for large proportions of households across all governorates assessed, particularly for IDPs. The most commonly unaffordable items in Aleppo, Idleb, Dar'a, Quneitra, Hama and Homs were heating and cooking fuel, winter items and batteries. In Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa, commonly unaffordable items included water containers, diapers, batteries, sources of light and winter items.
- **A majority of households across all governorates adopted coping strategies to address the lack and expense fuel**, most commonly reducing expenditure on other items, limiting the use of fuel and in some cases reducing the amount of food eaten. The lack of access to fuels was most evident in Homs, Aleppo, Idleb, Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor, households commonly used less preferred fuels such as kerosene or wood and charcoal, as well as burning plastic and other waste in severe cases.

²¹ Findings may be subject to recall bias on the part of households, or assistance underreported due to a lack of knowledge about sources of assistance received, in particular regarding more informal types of assistance. Households may also have underreported assistance due to the perceived influence of answers on future likelihood of receiving assistance, though enumerators were trained to attempt to dispel this perception.

²² Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa not included due to the KI methodology used.

²³ As noted, the assessment was conducted during winter months.

- **In all governorates but Homs, over half of households reportedly did not receive any NFI assistance in the last year.**²⁴ The presence of NFI support was mostly known through friends and relatives rather than directly from the assistance provider, local councils or media channels.²⁵ In all governorates, over two thirds of households had challenges to access NFI support, most commonly due to insufficiency in the amount of support available, the perceived unfair treatment of some groups during distribution²⁶ and the lack of awareness about available aid.

Livelihoods

- **Fewer than half of adults were involved in some form of employment in all governorates assessed.** Further, there has been a shift in income sources since the beginning of the conflict towards less stable income sources such as casual labour, remittances, joining armed groups and humanitarian assistance; most pronounced in Aleppo, Dar'a, Homs, Idleb, Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor.
- **Average household monthly expenditure exceeded average monthly income for all governorates, except Hama.** Households are resorting to coping strategies, such as spending savings, selling assets and goods and taking on debt. The highest levels of debt were recorded in Aleppo, Idleb and Homs.
- **Children were reported to be working in all governorates, with a particularly high proportion reported in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor.** Obtaining income from joining armed forces has become a common source of income in all governorates assessed (20% of households in Quneitra, 13% in Dar'a, 10% in Aleppo, 8% in Homs, 5% in Idleb and 1% in Hama).

WASH

- **In Homs, Hama, Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa governorates, the most common main source was the general water network, whilst in Aleppo, Idleb, Dar'a and Quneitra water trucking was most common.** There were no significant disparities between the main source of water in rural and urban areas, although households in Dar'a were slightly more likely to rely on the main network in rural areas.
- **Households in Idleb and Aleppo were most likely to report water shortages in the form of spending two or more days without water** (49% and 40% respectively), followed by those in Dar'a (26%) and Quneitra (22%). Shortages were less prevalent in Homs (15%) and Hama (4%). In Ar-Raqqa, KIs in 25% of communities reported that people had intermittent access problems. In Deir-ez-Zor, water access was more problematic; KIs reported that 66% of communities face intermittent access problems and 11% with nearly everyone facing water access issues.
- **Prevalence of water shortages was more common for specific groups of people, including those living in rural areas in Dar'a, Homs and Quneitra²⁷; IDP households in Dar'a, Idleb and Hama²⁸; those who rented their shelters or lived for free, rather than owned their home; and finally, households reporting some level of damage to their shelters: overall, 48% of households with some shelter damage reported facing shortages, compared to 23% of households without shelter damage.**
- **Households typically reported that most members had access to bathing facilities.** Households in rural areas, households with IDPs, and populations living in more vulnerable shelter types were slightly more likely to report some or all members not having access to bathing facilities.

²⁴ Findings may be subject to recall bias on the part of households, or assistance underreported due to a lack of knowledge about sources of assistance received, in particular regarding more informal types of assistance. Households may also have underreported assistance due to the perceived influence of answers on future likelihood of receiving assistance, though enumerators were trained to attempt to dispel this perception.

²⁵ Sources of shelter support may be misreported due to recall bias on the part of households, or in cases of international actors operating through partners, the source of support may not be fully clear to community members.

²⁶ As with reporting on shelter assistance, this was clarified as referring to the selection of beneficiaries usually undertaken before distributions, rather than during distributions themselves.

²⁷ 32%, 45% and 26% of rural households in Dar'a, Homs and Quneitra reported shortages compared to 24%, 11% and 7% of urban households respectively. 50%, 21% and 55% of urban households in Aleppo, Hama and Idleb reported shortages compared to 31%, 13% and 46% respectively.

²⁸ 35%, 63% and 26% of IDP households in Dar'a, Idleb and Hama compared to 24%, 3% and 14% of non-IDP households respectively.

- **Households in Homs (24%), Quneitra (21%) and Aleppo (15%) were most likely to report not having access to a fully functional toilet.** In Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa, KIs reported that in 27% and 9% of communities, respectively, some households did not have access to a fully functioning toilet. Damaged households were more likely to report some or all members not having access to facilities²⁹.

Collective centres

In Aleppo, Idleb, Homs, Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa³⁰, a separate survey of 80 collective centres (hosting an estimated 1,900 – 2,200 households in total) was implemented in order to identify priority needs of populations in these shelters. The majority of surveys were completed in Aleppo and Idleb, which host the the highest number of collective centres; with fewer centres assessed in Homs, Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa governorates.

- **The majority of collective centres, as well as the largest, assessed were located in Aleppo and Idleb governorates,** 32 centres in Aleppo housed over 2000 people, while 38 centres in Idleb hosted nearly 600 individuals. It was less common to find collective centres in Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa, due to authority preference to allocate empty homes to house family units separately.
- **Previous collective centre use was diverse in Aleppo and Idleb, reflecting the large number of centres in these areas. Many centres were previously schools, as with other governorates.** In Aleppo, the collective centres which were previously schools were reportedly no longer functioning as schools, whilst in Idleb, the majority were still being used as schools (12 of 17 schools assessed).
- **Management was typically through a committee of residents.** No residents reported having to pay a fee in order to stay in the majority of collective centres assessed across the area, with exception of a few shelters in Idleb (3 of 38) and Aleppo (4 of 32).
- **Space and privacy were reported most limited in shelters in Aleppo.** Similarly, residents in half of shelters assessed in Aleppo indicated that they couldn't store their belongings safely. Some of the centres assessed in Homs had limited space and privacy, and conditions appeared generally poor.
- **Overall, collective centres most commonly offered some services to centre residents in all governorates assessed,** including medical access, food or cash distributions and/or education opportunities. In general, centres assessed in Homs, Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor had a lower level of service provision than those in Aleppo and Idleb.
- **No residents reported having to pay a fee in order to stay in the majority of collective centres assessed across the area, with exception of a few shelter in Idleb, Homs and Aleppo.**
- **Shelter adequacy issues were reported in all shelters with the exception of 4 in Aleppo and 9 in Idleb.** The 6 collective centres assessed in Homs presented the worse conditions out of the shelters assessed across all governorates; all 6 were reportedly lacking insulation from cold, rain, lacking space, privacy and security (unable to lock), lack cooking and bathing facilities, latrines, drinking water, heating and lighting.

²⁹ Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa not included due to the KI methodology used

³⁰ Collective centres were not assessed in Dar'a and Quneitra as information on these is available in separate assessments.

Key Findings: Governorate breakdown

Idleb

Findings indicate a high prevalence of shelter issues in terms of overcrowding, as Idleb has the highest occupancy ratio of areas assessed (1.5 people per room). In addition, IDPs had the highest proportion of people renting their homes (27%) and relatively high rental rates (\$31 per month). A third of households reported adequacy issues, most commonly leaking during rain, lack of insulation from cold and a lack of heating, which were the most common issues reported across most governorates. In terms of access to NFIs, households commonly reported missing items in their households, largely due to a lack of affordability rather than challenges to accessing markets (reported by 26% of households) or a lack of availability of items on markets. Households primarily relied on generator power (81%) as the main network was reportedly either not functioning or unreliable. **At the governorate level, in Idleb (in which all sub-districts were assessed), a high proportion of the assessed population were IDPs or returnees (27% and 17% respectively),** and findings indicate a precarious situation for IDPs in particular, who were more likely than elsewhere to come from outside of the governorate and have been displaced multiple times and for shorter periods than elsewhere (except for Aleppo). IDPs were less likely to own a house in their area of origin compared to elsewhere and those with houses were less likely to have legal documentation than IDPs elsewhere

Aleppo

Findings demonstrate similar patterns to Idleb, with high average occupancy indicating crowded conditions (occupancy ratio 1.4), large proportions of people renting due to the prevalence of IDPs (43%) and one of the highest rates of people living in vulnerable shelter types (9%, though this is perhaps higher due to concentrations of collective centres in certain areas and camps being excluded from the assessment), as well as the highest rental prices across the areas assessed (\$33). In Aleppo governorate (in which 12 sub-districts were assessed), a high proportion of the assessed population were IDPs or returnees (42% and 22%). A majority of households reported shelter adequacy issues (57%), linked to high levels of damage primarily caused by conflict. Although it was common for households to report that they did not have certain NFI items in their household as in Idleb, this was partially due to a lack of availability of certain items on markets as well as challenges to accessing markets (reported by 35% of households) and a lack of affordability. As in Idleb, the main source of electricity was generator power, with 87% of households reporting it as a primary source.

Homs

In Hom, the sub-districts assessed comprised Hom which contains the main city, as well as Talbiseh, Ar-Rastan and Taldu, which are classified as hard to reach due to ongoing restrictions in movement and access. Across the assessed areas, renting was uncommon (5%), with the highest proportion of people living for free compared to elsewhere (52%). Approximately a third of households (35%) reported shelter adequacy issues, and the governorate had the highest rates of reported damage (87%) primarily due to conflict. Largely due to the hard to reach nature of assessed sub-districts, findings for Hom showed the largest proportions of households reporting facing challenges to accessing markets (86%), primarily due to safety and security concerns as well as markets not functioning at time of conflict. Items were also commonly unavailable, in particular cooking fuel (35%), batteries (37%) and heating fuel (44%); where items were available, they were commonly unaffordable, exacerbated by particularly low average incomes (\$134, third lowest recorded after Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor). As such, households commonly reported that they did not have many of the assessed NFI items in their household. Although the governorate exhibited high rates of IDPs in the assessed population (53%), this was mostly prevalent in Hom sub-district rather than elsewhere and IDPs had been there for a longer time compared to Aleppo and Idleb.

Dar'a

In Dar'a governorate, in the south of the country, o. households were more likely than in any other governorate to report adequacy issues (73%) and high levels of damage were reported (68% of households). Occupancy ratios were the second highest across the area assessed indicating crowded conditions, with little difference between IDP and non-IDP households due to traditionally larger family sizes. Items were typically commonly available on markets, though a large proportion of households (37%) reported facing challenges to accessing them due to a lack of functioning markets at times of conflict, safety and security concerns, and distance to markets being far. The main network was still a primary source of electricity for 64% of households,

though households reported using alternative sources such as solar panels and large batteries where these were available. Dar'a also hosts a significant proportion of IDPs and returnees (20% and 20% of the assessed population). Here, average times spent in shelters were longer than in Idlib and Aleppo, as was the average length of time that IDPs had been displaced, with a high majority of IDPs from elsewhere in Dar'a governorate. Ownership was very common (70%), and renting slightly cheaper than elsewhere (\$21).

Quneitra

In Quneitra, bordering Dar'a governorate in the South, a relatively high proportion compared to elsewhere lived in vulnerable shelter types (9%) though renting and living for free was uncommon (home ownership was the second highest of the governorates assessed at 84%). High occupancy ratios were evident (1.3 people per room); though households were the least likely to report shelter adequacy issues (10%) and prevalence of shelter damage (20%). The most common type of damage suffered differed to elsewhere, being heavy fire damage followed by some cracks in walls and broken / cracked windows. Regarding NFIs, households were less likely than elsewhere to report lacking items in households and items were typically available, though challenges to accessing markets were common (49%) as reportedly markets did not function at times of conflict, the distance from markets was too far and there was a lack of transportation to markets. At the time of assessment, a majority of households reported having no main source of electricity, as the main network had been shut down and was also heavily damaged during conflict.

Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa

Findings for Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa present a different situation to elsewhere. Due to movement restrictions, much of the displacement is longer term and lower proportions of IDPs as well as high prevalence of pre-conflict ownership mean that levels of home ownership are reportedly high (75% in Ar-Raqqa and 72% in Deir-ez-Zor). However, authorities have established courts to replace the pre-conflict property transfer and dispute resolution system, and although communities typically recognize pre-conflict ownership amongst themselves, documentation is not necessarily recognized by the new system. This leaves parts of the population vulnerable, such as those who have left their homes and cannot reclaim them regardless of whether they have legal documentation, as well as those who find themselves in disputes with authorities who can choose to not recognize pre-conflict documentation. Related to this, the most commonly reported HLP issues were expropriation of property and property being unlawfully occupied in Ar-Raqqa, and inheritance issues and looting the most common issues in Deir ez Zor. Shelter adequacy was more commonly reported as an issue in Deir-ez-Zor, as was shelter damage (46% of households in Deir-ez-Zor, 19% in Ar-Raqqa).

In both Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor, items were commonly unavailable in markets, in particular cooking and heating fuel, winter items, batteries, sources of light, water containers, sanitary pads and diapers; access to markets was also reportedly commonly a challenge, particularly for women. Affordability of most items was reportedly an issue, particularly those which were typically unavailable. Households in both governorates commonly use less preferred fuels such as kerosene or wood and charcoal, and often use other coping strategies to deal with the lack of fuel. Although the main network was reportedly functioning well in parts of Ar-Raqqa governorate, the primary source of electricity across the two governorates was reportedly generators.