

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

SYRIA

PART A I Overview and sectoral analysis

STRATEGIC NEEDS ANALYSIS PROJECT

Q4 2014 | OCTOBER - 31 DECEMBER 2014

This Regional Analysis of the Syria conflict (RAS) is produced quarterly and seeks to bring together information from all sources in the region to provide analysis of the overall Syria crisis. Part A covers the situation in Syria. Part A I highlights countrywide humanitarian concerns while Part A II provides detailed analysis per governorate. Part B covers the impact of the crisis on neighbouring countries. More information on how to use this document can be found on the last page of this report.

The Strategic Needs Analysis Project welcomes all information that could complement this report. For more information, comments or questions please email SNAP@ACAPS.org.

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I. OVERVIEW

I.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

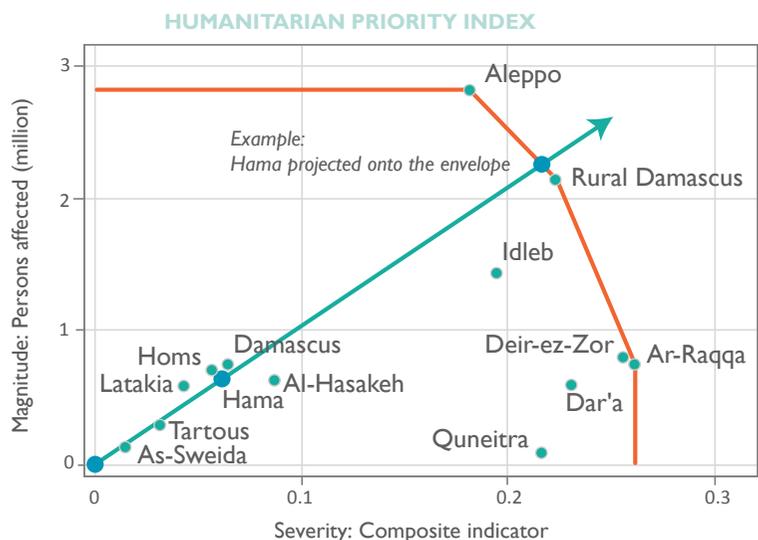
The situation within Syria in Q4 2014 was characterised by relatively minor, incremental changes in conflict and political dynamics, combined with an ongoing deterioration of the general humanitarian situation on all fronts.

The major drivers of humanitarian needs remain unchanged. All parties to the conflict continue to engage in violence against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including water and power facilities, schools and hospitals. The result is massive internal displacement, widespread disruption of markets and basic services, and loss of livelihoods. In addition to long term deterioration, the advent of winter weather conditions is believed to have increased the severity of humanitarian needs across the board during Q4, though information is limited.

Priority Needs

Owing to sustained levels of fighting, the winter season, and continued economic hardship, the last quarter of 2014 was characterised by increased protection concerns, critical shelter needs, and a deteriorating food security situation. The humanitarian situation appears most critical in the governorates of Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa, Rural Damascus, and Deir-ez-Zor. All these governorates showed high severity scores across all sectors and currently host some of the highest numbers recorded for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and people in need (PiN) in the country. (See Cross-sector Analysis chapter, p.21)

To assess the 14 governorates in terms of their relative humanitarian priority, a Priority Index was formed, combining measures of severity and magnitude from the latest data available to SNAP. The chart below shows the prioritisation of areas, with the governorates plotted along the orange line (Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Ar-Raqqa) the most affected. For the governorates inside, the distance to the orange line can be used to calculate priority. (See Annex A p. 36 for details and methodology)



'OCHA has raised its estimate of the number of displaced within Syria to 7.6 million, a 1.2 million-person increase from its mid-year figure of 6.4 million'

Armed Conflict

The main development in Q4 was a US-led, multi-national coalition's intervention against the Islamic State (IS). This was at least partly responsible for stalling the group's rapid advance, which had dominated Q2 and Q3. There is limited information available on the impact of the intervention, and its effect on conflict dynamics will be difficult to ascertain. The trigger for intervention was IS assault on the Syrian Kurdish town of Ain Al Arab/Kobani at the end of Q3. A combination of US airstrikes and support from the Government of Iraq's Kurdish Region to Syrian Kurdish fighters has brought the conflict there to a stalemate, but has not halted IS efforts to take the town. Likewise, while IS has opened no major new fronts in Q4, international intervention has not been successful in rolling back its advances. The intervention also appears to have increased infighting among armed opposition groups (AOG), widening rifts between those that sympathise with IS and those that oppose it: although such conflicts have remained at a relatively low level, they could lead to a significant re-alignment of AOG forces. The (primarily) US bombing campaign also appears to have disrupted IS governance in areas it controls, though to what degree remains unclear.

Otherwise, heavy battles on many fronts, including Ain Al Arab/Kobani, Deir-ez-Zor airport, Castello road into Aleppo, Northern Hama and Southern Idlib, and approaches to the capital from Rural Damascus, have resulted in no change in front lines, or in relatively small victories achieved at great cost. In some areas, particularly Idlib, AOG infighting has contributed to overall deterioration of the situation. In Dar'a and Quneitra, where AOG have remained relatively united, an opposition advance has made some progress, though far from the opposition's stated goal of reaching Rural Damascus, and again with heavy fighting. (See Political and Conflict development chapter, p.6)

Displacement

OCHA has raised its estimate of the number of displaced within Syria to 7.6 million, a 1.2 million-person increase from its mid-year figure of 6.4 million. Individual reports from Q4 highlight the displacement of some 290,000 people during the reporting period owing to major conflict events, though it is certain much ongoing displacement remains unreported. Displacement figures vary widely and are sometimes little better than guesses, so it is impossible to say how much new displacement occurred in Q4, or whether it was more than in previous reporting periods. There is evidence that roughly half of Syria's pre-war population has been displaced either internally or across border, and the overall number is growing.

As the refugee crisis in countries surrounding Syria has grown, those countries have increasingly restricted the entry of Syrian refugees. The increasing difficulty of fleeing the country may lead to a further rise in the numbers of internally displaced. (See Displacement chapter, p.11)

Operational Constraints

Widespread violence continues to be the main obstacle to humanitarian action in Syria, though interference in humanitarian deliveries by the Government of Syria (GoS) and various AOG is also a factor. OCHA currently estimates that over 210,000 people are residing in besieged areas with almost no access to assistance, a slight decrease from Q3. However, thousands of others are thought to live in hard-to-reach areas that have been more or less equally inaccessible. Overall, 4.7 million people reside in hard-to-reach areas, where aid access is severely limited. IS controlled areas are some of the most affected, though the GoS also continues to put restrictions on the delivery of assistance, particularly medical supplies. Numerous parties engage in besiegement as a military tactic.

UN Security Council resolution 2191 has renewed for 12 months the mandate for UN agencies to provide cross-border assistance to opposition held areas. In Q4 the resolution allowed the delivery of assistance in multiple sectors to hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries, however the effect has been more limited than was hoped. WFP food deliveries decreased somewhat from their record highs in Q3, due to both logistical and security concerns.

Funding appears to be a growing challenge: by the end of 2014, the main Syria appeal was only 47.5% funded, compared to 68% for the (considerably smaller) 2013 appeal. (See *Operational Constraints chapter, p.13, OCHA 01/01/2015, OCHA 01/01/2014*)

Information Gaps

Reporting on humanitarian needs remains highly limited. Most of the available information focuses on conflict incidents and subsequent protection concerns but overlooks other sectors. Likewise, some areas, like Aleppo, have received a great amount of attention, while others are neglected, notably Rural Damascus. There are also indications from a recent Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) conducted in August-September in Syria that there may be a serious underestimation of humanitarian needs in the southern governorates of Dar'a and Quneitra. (See *Information Gaps chapter, p.18*)

Possible Developments

Despite the perspective of renewed peace talks, the humanitarian situation in Syria is expected to further deteriorate in the beginning of 2015, leaving the vast majority of the population in need of support. The proportion of people depending solely on humanitarian aid will continue to increase with a large share in need of life-saving assistance, especially those concentrated in besieged and hard-to-reach areas, under-served rural areas, heavily contested areas, and areas hosting large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Humanitarian access is not expected to improve significantly. Key possible developments which could impact the humanitarian situation in the first half of 2015 include the run-up to the peace talks, the implementation of the Whole of Syria approach, and the potential besiegement of eastern Aleppo city. (See *Possible Developments chapter, p.15*)

'By the end of 2014, the main Syria appeal was only 47.5% funded'

1.2 TIMELINE

OCT - JAN

Following two unsuccessful Geneva-based initiatives to end the Syrian conflict, Russia has proposed to renew talks based on intra-Syrian dialogue, which GoS and some members of the opposition have indicated willingness to attend.

(Section 1.3)

NOV

Coalition airstrikes that began in September 2014 have expanded the target set beyond Islamic State to include areas in northwestern Syria controlled by Jabhat al Nusra (JAN) and Ahrar al-Sham.

(Section 10)

DEC

GoS approved UN deliveries of urgently needed medical and surgical supplies to AOG-controlled areas in Aleppo, as well as Mouadamiye and Eastern Ghouta districts in Rural Damascus, areas defined as 'hard-to-reach'.

(Sections 1.6.1; 5.4)

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

EARLY OCT

Negotiations over Homs' heavily besieged al-Wa'er neighborhood broke down in early October and hostilities have since resumed with civilian deaths.

(Section 9)

7 DEC

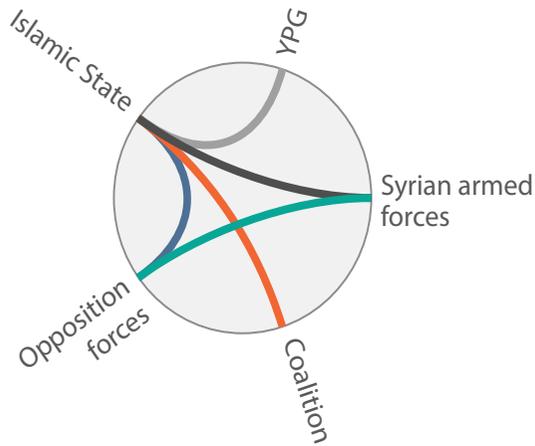
Israeli warplanes again allegedly struck targets within Syria, thought to be advanced weapons systems, this time in Dimas and near Damascus International Airport. Later that same month, GoS reportedly shot down an Israeli drone overflying Quneitra governorate.

(Section 5.3)

18 DEC

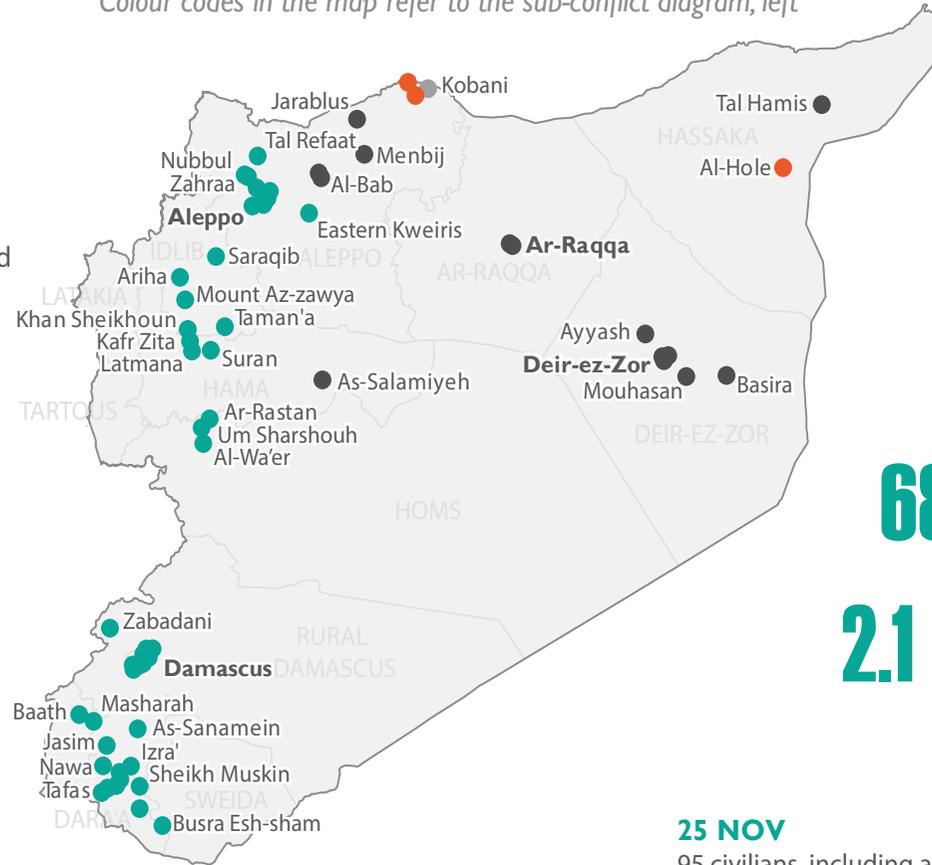
The humanitarian community launched its 5th Funding appeal for Syria, requesting USD 2.9 billion to support 12.2 million people. In preparation for the appeal, OCHA raised the estimate of displaced people within Syria to 7.6 million, up 1.2 million from early 2014.

SUB-CONFLICTS RELATIONS



HIGH FREQUENCY CONFLICT LOCATIONS

Colour codes in the map refer to the sub-conflict diagram, left



Q4 IN NUMBERS

11 Besieged locations
(Data Review 11/2014)

289 Hard-to-reach locations
(Data Review 11/2014)

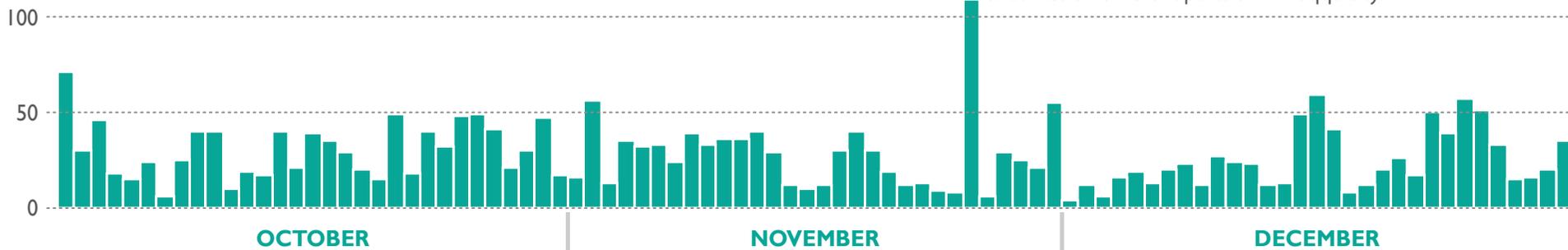
2,609 Documented civilian deaths
(SOHR)

680,000 Houses completely destroyed, since 2011
(Projected estimate, ESCWA 04/2014)

2.1 million Damaged houses
(Projected estimate, ESCWA 04/2014)

CIVILIAN DEATHS

(SOHR)



I.3 POLITICAL AND CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS

An escalation in fighting, new fronts, new alliances and new political efforts were the main headlines for the 4th quarter of the year.

The International Coalition continued its military operations in both Syria and Iraq, focusing mainly on air strikes in Syria, targeting various areas under Islamic State (IS) control, and slowing IS progress on Ain alArab/Kobani front. These strikes were accompanied by active political efforts by the United States foreign ministry to widen the alliance and include more anti-terrorist powers in it. (AFP 01/11/2014, Reuters 01/10/2014, Al Jazeera 04/10/2014, As Safir 22/10/2014, Reuters 12/11/2014, Reuters 12/12/2014, Reuters 24/12/2014)

Over the reporting period, different international sources declared four chemical weapons facilities in Syria, which means that the country is not totally free of chemical weapons, as the Government of Syria (GoS) declared earlier in September, and some storage locations were not investigated by UN representatives. (CNN 08/10/2014, CBS 03/12/2014)

In December, Israel attacked military sites in the capital Damascus, and accusations were made that these locations were used to store rockets to be shipped to Hezbollah in Lebanon and could be used against Israel. (Washington Post 07/12/2014, The Guardian 07/12/2014)

One notable development was the attempts by UN Envoy Staffan de Mistura to freeze battles in Aleppo city, with the aim to de-escalate violence in the area, build local political processes, and potentially expand the initiative to other areas affected by high levels of violence. In a separate development, Russia gathered several opposition leaders in a bid to establish a plan for power sharing between the opposition and the GoS. In December, another set of opposition leaders met in Egypt with the stated aim to form a united opposition front, in view of future potential peace talks. (Foreign Policy 14/11/2014, Al Jazeera 28/12/2014, NYT 14/01/2015, Reuters 05/01/2015)

Opposition VS Government of Syria (GoS): Government forces, supported by para-military groups, clashed with several armed opposition groups (AOG) including Jabhat Al Nusra (JAN) on the northern edge of Aleppo City during the last quarter, threatening to take the last main opposition supply route into the city and trap opposition forces and civilians inside. Although there are smaller, more indirect routes into Aleppo, taking the road passing from Handarat and Mallah areas would significantly reduce the opposition's ability to resupply. This would also allow GoS forces to besiege areas of the city that fell under opposition control two years ago. Clashes were severe around Mallah, Handarat Camp, Sifat and other areas north of the city. Many casualties were recorded on both sides. At the time of writing, areas are changing hands regularly. Battles between the two sides are expected to continue around this strategic area and their resources will be highly mobilised on this front. This development was accompanied by several attacks with aerial bombardment by GoS air force on opposition-held neighbourhoods in the city and in the villages surrounding it. (Reuters 04/10/2014, Al Jazeera 05/10/2014, As Safir 22/10/2014, AFP 24/10/2014, AFP 06/11/2014, AFP 09/11/2014, Al Jazeera 02/12/2014, Al Akhbar 09/12/2014, Al Hayat 10/12/2014, Reuters 15/12/2014, SOHR 17/12/2014)

Clashes were reported as well on the southern parts of Aleppo Governorate, in As Safira area mainly, where GoS has one of its main strongholds and have factories of the Ministry of Defence supporting different fronts with weapons and ammunition. There was no clear progress by AOG in the area but casualties were reported from both sides. Another active front during the last quarter was in the western areas of Nubul and Zahraa fronts to the west of the governorate,

'International Coalition strikes were accompanied by active political efforts by the United States foreign ministry to widen the alliance and include more anti-terrorist powers in it'

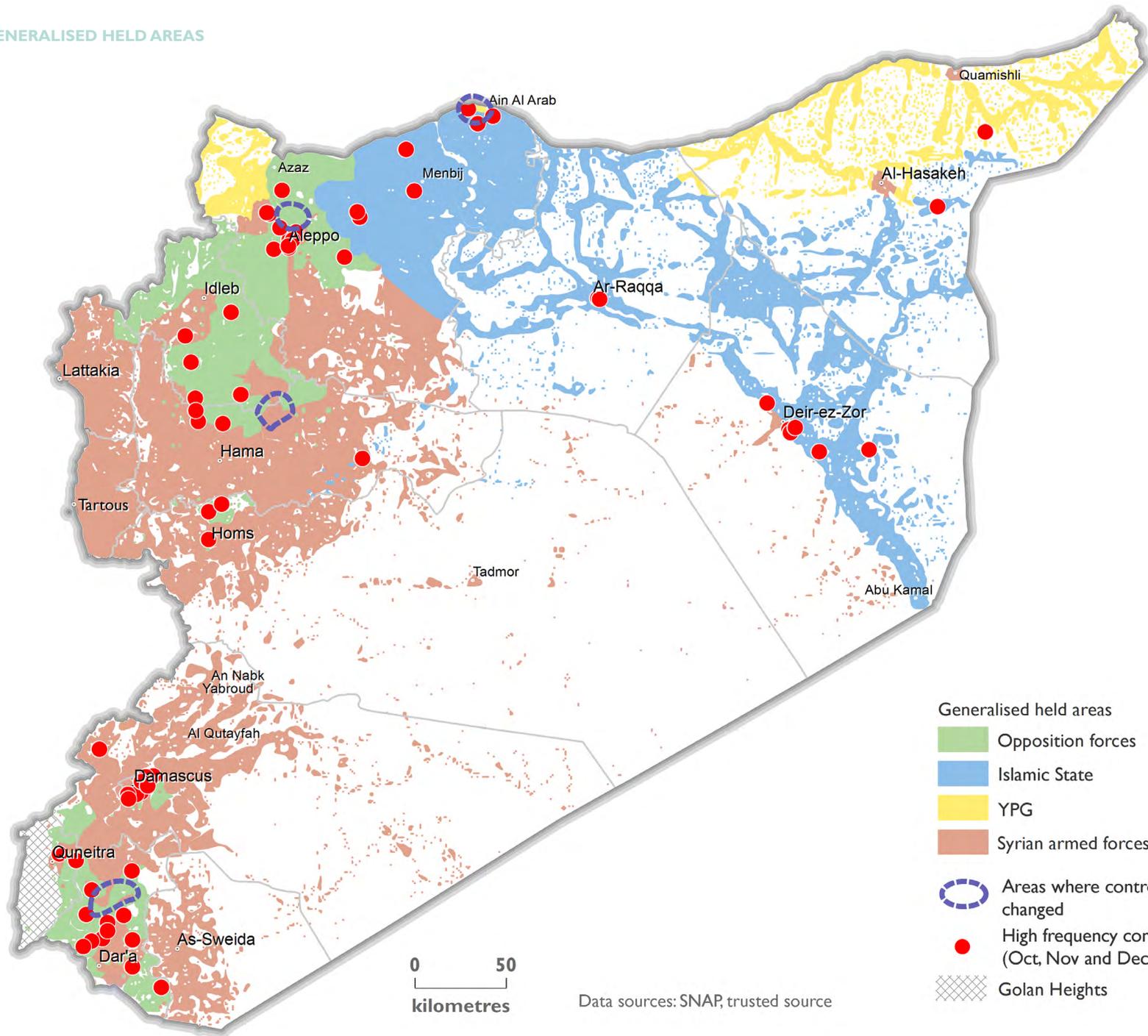
where JAN supported by several groups from the Islamic Front reportedly attempted to break into the two towns, no success was recorded, but opposition is expected to keep the pressure on this front in order to ease the pressure on Handarat front north of Aleppo City. (AFP 23/11/2014, UNOCHA 05/12/2014, Syrian Observer 13/10/2014)

In Idlib and Hama, GoS forces have continued their offensive in northern Hama. They succeeded in retaking several villages, thereby pushing AOG away from the cities of Muharreh and Hama. Fighting in northern Hama during October has resulted in many casualties and the displacement of at least 75,000 people to rural areas of northern Hama and southern Idlib. Airstrikes targeted various towns including Kafr Zeita, Ma'ara and Saraqeb. GoS forces were able to seize full control on Morek town, and made small progress in the surrounding areas toward Kafr Zeita. Infighting between JAN and other opposition factions helped GoS to progress. However, in southern Idlib, GoS's final stronghold was taken over by JAN and Ahrar al Sham fighters in December when fighters took control of Wadi ad Deif military camp. (OCHA 03/10/2014, Reuters 13/10/2014, Al Jazeera 27/10/2014, Al Jazeera 30/10/2014, Guardian 15/12/2014, SOHR 15/12/2014, Reuters 24/10/2014, Al Akhbar 30/10/2014)

In the central governorate of Homs, twin bombings near an elementary school in the city caused the death of 41 children in October. Other bombings were recorded on several occasions in government-held neighbourhoods in Homs city, and reportedly caused protests against local authorities. Over the reporting period, GoS targeted opposition-held areas inside Homs city in Al Wa'er neighbourhood and north of the city in Ar Rastan and Talbiseh. This caused a significant number of casualties mainly among civilians, especially in Al Wa'er neighbourhood, which was already under siege. These different areas were targeted with different types of attacks including barrel bombing, shelling and rocket attacks. (AP 01/10/2014, New York Times 02/10/2014, AFP 26/10/2014, Syrian Observer 27/10/2014, Syrian Observer 05/11/2014, Syrian Observer 30/11/2014, HRW 23/12/2014)

In Damascus and Rural Damascus, GoS forces were able to seize control of Dukhaniya area in Eastern Ghouta, after months of intensified fighting. The area is of high strategic value because it is on the road linking opposition-held areas in Rural Damascus with the capital. GoS forces targeted various opposition-held areas in and around the capital, including an airstrike on a crowded market in Arbin, which caused many deaths, mainly civilians. Airstrikes, shelling and rocket attacks also targeted the areas of Duma, Kafr Batna, Harasta, Jowbar, Qaboun, Ain

GENERALISED HELD AREAS



- Generalised held areas
- Opposition forces
 - Islamic State
 - YPG
 - Syrian armed forces
 - Areas where control has recently changed
 - High frequency conflict locations (Oct, Nov and Dec 2014)
 - Golan Heights

Tarma, and Darayaa, along with other attacks in and around the capital. Clashes were recorded in all the traditional frontlines in the capital and its surroundings, with no significant changes in terms of area of control. The number of civilian casualties caused by air strikes increased significantly in this quarter compared to the 3rd quarter, especially in Eastern Ghouta towns. Clashes were recorded continually during the last quarter in Qalamoun area, and opposition forces targeted both GoS forces and Hezbollah forces in the area. (AFP 06/10/2014, MSF 16/10/2014, Syrian Observer 24/10/2014, Syrian Observer 30/10/2014, Syrian Observer 06/11/2014, AFP 07/11/2014, Al Jazeera 27/11/2014, Syrian Observer 30/11/2014, As Safir 12/12/2014, Al Jazeera 23/12/2014, SOHR 24/12/2014)

Further south, in Dar'a and Quneitra governorates, opposition forces continued to make significant progress, adding to the gains made in the 3rd quarter. Opposition fighters took control of the strategic Harra hill and Tal Saghir hill in Dar'a Governorate, and seized a large amount of weapons and ammunition from the military bases in these areas. Opposition fighters progressed also toward the Nasib border crossing with Jordan and seized control of Um el Mayathen area. Progress was also reported in Nawa town, which is considered a strategic point for GoS forces, and borders both Quneitra and Rural Damascus, which gives opposition better access to areas close to the capital. GoS forces lost the supply route between Izra'a and Nawa, with opposition controlling Sheikh Miskin area in Dar'a. Opposition was able to progress in Quneitra as well, where JAN and other AOG are planning to take control of Al Ba'ath and Khan Arnaba towns, considered the last strong bastions for GoS in the governorate. GoS airstrikes targeted different areas in Dar'a this month, causing civilian deaths, mainly with barrel bombs. (Al Jazeera 06/10/2014, Syrian Observer 07/10/2014, AFP 09/10/2014, Al Jazeera 23/10/2014, AFP 09/11/2014, Syrian Observer 13/11/2014, As Safir 19/11/2014, Reuters 20/11/2014, Al Jazeera 07/12/2014, SOHR 23/12/2014)

Islamic State (IS) VS Government of Syria (GoS): In the eastern governorate of Deir-ez-Zor, severe battles took place during the last quarter around the Deir-ez-Zor military airport, which is the last strong bastion for GoS in eastern Syria. Following the Islamic State's (IS) successful campaign against GoS forces in Ar-Raqqah in the 3rd quarter, the Deir-ez-Zor airport was expected to be the next target for IS. The battles around the airport resulted in a high number of casualties from both sides. At the time of writing, the airport was still under GoS control, but its takeover by IS remains a possibility, since the pattern shows dramatic wins for IS forces in sudden attacks. GoS forces targeted areas under IS control on several occasions in both Ar-Raqqah and Deir-ez-Zor, causing a high number of casualties mainly among civilians, especially in Ar-Raqqah City. Clashes were recorded between IS fighters and GoS forces on the outskirts of neighbourhoods controlled by GoS in the city of Deir-ez-Zor. (As Safir 08/12/2014, Reuters 14/10/2014, AFP 19/11/2014, Al Jazeera 26/11/2014, SOHR 02/12/2014, Reuters 04/12/2014, OCHA 22/12/2014)

In Aleppo Governorate, areas under IS control witnessed several aerial attacks with barrel bombs by GoS forces, causing the death of a significant number of civilians during the last quarter, especially in Al Bab area and Kabbasen. Direct clashes between the two sides were not reported significantly in the governorate, but there were unconfirmed reports at the end of December that IS attempted to invade As Safira area to the south of Aleppo Governorate. (Reuters 22/10/2014, SOHR 25/12/2014)

In the central governorates of Hama and Homs, IS maintained its effort to control more oil-rich areas, and renewed attacks on Al Sha'er oil field to the northeast of Homs were recorded. GoS forces were able to seize control of the strategic oil field in November, but attacks by IS on the area are expected to continue, and the group is also likely to target other areas, such as Farqalas area between Homs and Palmyra, where two main gas plants are based. The battles in the Syrian Desert around areas rich with oil is consuming the capacity of GoS forces in the area, and the number of casualties recorded in Al Sha'er area was quite high. In Hama, IS was able to shoot down a Syrian military aircraft. The

'The battle in Kobani turned to a stalemate during the 4th quarter, with heavy casualties on both IS and YPG sides'

situation in eastern parts of Hama Governorate is fragile; especially since IS is now close to the Ismaeli-majority city of As Salamiyeh, and fears of targeting this minority are high if IS is able to invade As Salamiyeh. (Al Monitor 30/10/2014, Reuters 06/11/2014, Syrian Observer 11/11/2014, Al Monitor 18/11/2014, Syrian Observer 20/11/2014)

People's Protection Unit (YPG) VS Islamic State (IS): The main headline for the conflict between these two sides was the Kobani battle. Since September, IS took control of more than 300 villages in Aleppo Governorate in a short timeframe, and progressed toward the border area of Kobani, where they clashed with local Kurdish forces led by the People's Protection Unit (YPG). The battle had a major humanitarian impact, with over 200,000 people fleeing toward Turkey, and took a regional dimension, with the involvement of various regional and international powers, including the US-led International Coalition, and the Peshmerga forces coming from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I). The battle in the city turned to a stalemate during the 4th quarter, with heavy casualties on both IS and YPG sides. IS is currently struggling to keep fighting in Kobani, because of the loss of manpower and weapons after weeks of street fighting. The international support for parties defending Kobani is not expected to change in the near future. (Al Jazeera 01/11/2014, Reuters 01/10/2014, BBC 04/10/2014, Al Jazeera 05/10/2014, Reuters 07/10/2014, Al Jazeera 09/10/2014, Guardian 10/11/2014, AFP 10/12/2014, Reuters 16/10/2014, AFP 19/10/2014, As Safir 22/10/2014, Syrian Observer 27/10/2014, AFP 05/11/2014, Syrian Observer 17/11/2014, Reuters 29/11/2014, As Safir 04/12/2014, Reuters 18/12/2014, Reuters 26/12/2014)

Clashes were recorded through the 4th quarter between the two sides in Al-Hasakeh Governorate as well, in different locations, especially on the boundaries of Ras al Ain subdistrict, where Kurdish forces attempted to put pressure on IS to ease the IS pressure forced on the Kobani front. Clashes were recorded as well to the south of Qamishli city, especially around Tal Hmis, and there were threats of a Kobani-like scenario against Qamishli, even though this is considered unlikely in the near future. (OCHA 03/10/2014, ARA News 26/12/2014)

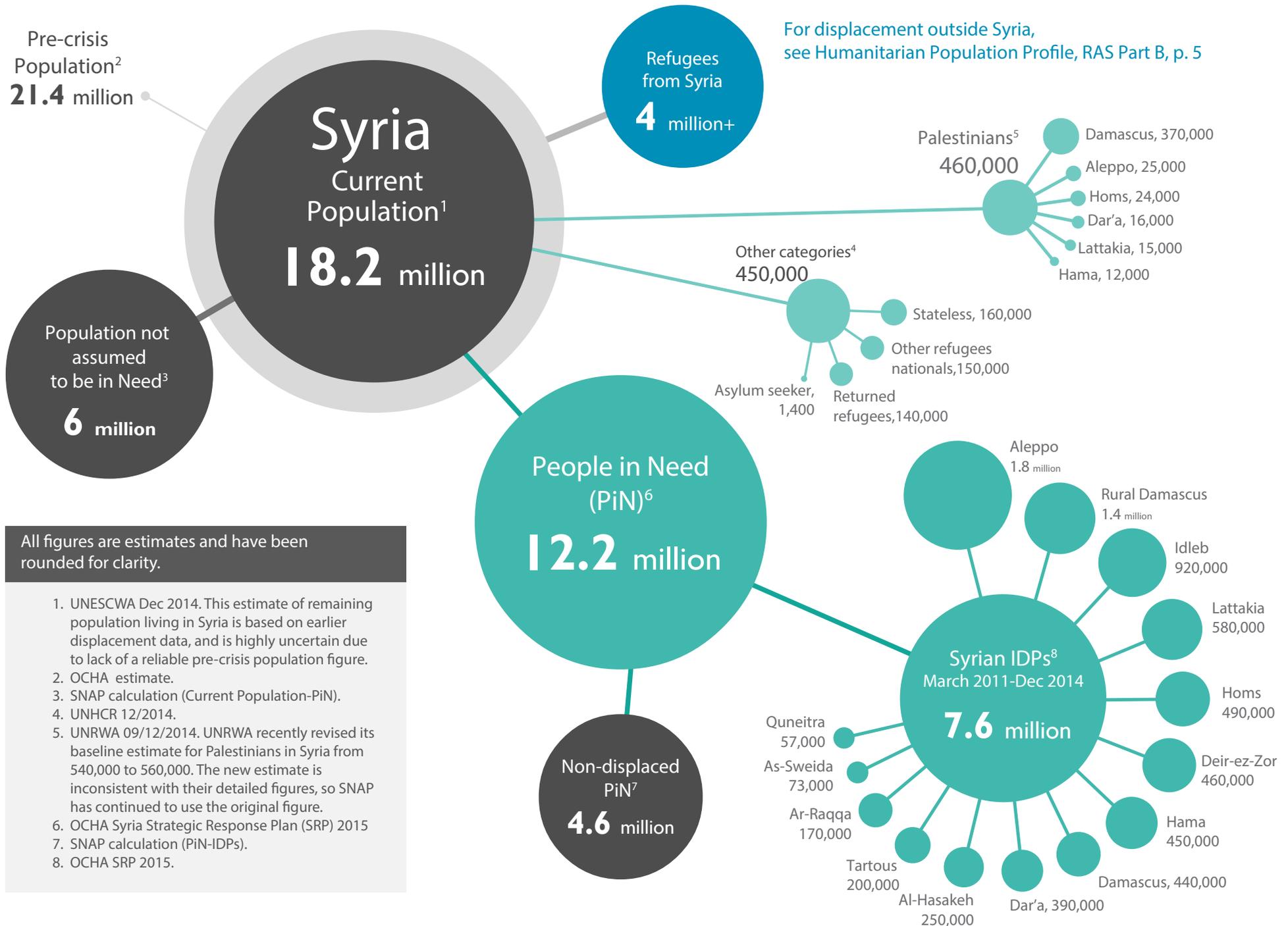
Opposition VS Jabhat Al Nusra (JAN): Although opposition groups, mainly the Free Syrian Army (FSA), fought against GoS forces and IS throughout the year, in the 4th quarter some important developments took place, with JAN becoming another fighting force against mainstream opposition groups in several locations in Syria. The two sides are fighting side by side against GoS forces in Aleppo, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Dar'a and Quneitra, but the dynamic has changed in Idleb, Hama, Homs and some locations in Quneitra. JAN forces launched a battle against the Syria Revolutionary Front (SRF) in Idleb, stormed their main areas of control in the north of Hama and the south of Idleb starting from end of October, and successfully increased their presence across both governorates. The fighting resulted in SRF completely withdrawing from Idleb and Hama. JAN forces clashed as well with the Hazem Movement, one of the main fighting powers against GoS in

the north, and arrested and kidnapped several leaders from the Movement, which caused a high level of tension and caused other forces such as Jaysh Al Mujahadeen to intervene to reduce the tensions. JAN seems to have the ambition to control the Bab al Hawa border crossing, which is expected to trigger future battles against the Hazem Movement and other brigades working under the Islamic Front. (AFP 01/11/2014, Al Jazeera 02/11/2014, Syrian Observer 03/11/2014, Mc Clatchy 07/11/2014, Syrian Observer 17/11/2014, SOHR 18/11/2014, OCHA 21/11/2014, As Safir 09/12/2014)

In Homs, JAN has reportedly started implementing a tactic utilised by IS: arresting leaders of opposition forces affiliated with the FSA that refuse to obey their rules, mainly in northern Homs, in Ar Rastan and Talbiseh. (Syrian Observer 03/12/2014)

Further south, in Quneitra and Dar'a, tensions were recorded between JAN and Lewaa Shohadaa al Yarmouk, one of the main FSA groups in southern Syria. Tensions were expected to escalate with both sides resorting to kidnapping and arrests, but other local opposition groups intervened to reduce the tensions, and were able to force the two sides to reach a truce. These various developments were accompanied with protests against JAN presence in different areas in Idleb and the south, and this phenomenon is expected to increase in the near future, with JAN imposing tight rules affecting local ways of living, and with different opposition groups refusing to ally with JAN. (Syrian Observer 08/12/2014, SOHR 15/12/2014, As Safir 16/12/2014)

1.4 HUMANITARIAN POPULATION PROFILE



All figures are estimates and have been rounded for clarity.

- UNESCWA Dec 2014. This estimate of remaining population living in Syria is based on earlier displacement data, and is highly uncertain due to lack of a reliable pre-crisis population figure.
- OCHA estimate.
- SNAP calculation (Current Population-PiN).
- UNHCR 12/2014.
- UNRWA 09/12/2014. UNRWA recently revised its baseline estimate for Palestinians in Syria from 540,000 to 560,000. The new estimate is inconsistent with their detailed figures, so SNAP has continued to use the original figure.
- OCHA Syria Strategic Response Plan (SRP) 2015
- SNAP calculation (PiN-IDPs).
- OCHA SRP 2015.

1.5 DISPLACEMENT PROFILE

Syria is now the site of the world's biggest internal displacement, though after nearly four years of repeated, mostly unmonitored population movements, and with no reliable population baseline, any estimate of the scale is inherently incomplete.

In December, the Syria Strategic Response Plan (SRP) raised its estimate of the number of displaced within Syria to 7.6 million. (SRP 2015) This is an increase from 6.4 million estimated in early 2014. (OCHA 06/08/2014) In a multi-sector needs assessment conducted in the second half of Q3 2014 by OCHA, REACH and SNAP, key informants described about 4.8 million IDPs in areas with around 15 million total inhabitants, representing 55% of Syria's administrative districts, and probably a considerably larger portion of its population. (MSNA 30/10/2014)

The Syria Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) conducted in August-September is the latest in a series of similar attempts to globally assess the needs in portions of Syria (J-RANS, SINA, Dynamo, etc.). However, the different reports do not consistently cover the same geographical areas, results are not readily generalizable across areas, and there are differences in methodology, either major or minor, between reports. It would therefore be very difficult to extract any meaningful information about trends in displacement over time at the national or even governorate level. However, there is some agreement as to broad outlines: OCHA's early 2014 estimate and the August/September MSNA both indicate that 30% of the pre-war population in assessed areas had been displaced. OCHA's December estimate raises that number to nearly 36%. A March/April assessment by the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) put the figure at 27%. This tells us little about the short term trends: for example, there is no way to tell if the change from 30% to 36% represents a surge in displacement between September and December, or is simply the result of different estimation methods, though the latter seems more likely. But the data does indicate a broad pattern: roughly a third of Syria's population has been internally displaced, and the number is growing.

Barriers to exit: As the refugee crisis in countries surrounding Syria has grown, those countries have increasingly restricted the entry of Syrian refugees. Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt are now essentially closed to new arrivals, as is Iraq, with periodic exceptions. (See country chapters) The growing difficulty of fleeing the country may lead to further increase in the numbers of internally displaced.

Palestinian refugees in Syria: UNRWA estimates that out of some 560,000 Palestinians registered with UNRWA in Syria, more than 50% have been displaced inside Syria, while 14% have fled to neighbouring countries. (UNRWA 03/12/14)

Returns: Significant numbers of Syrians who have sought asylum in host countries continue to return to Syria. These returns are not well tracked, and information about both the destinations of returnees and their reasons for return is limited. Some exit interviews suggest reasons for return can include checking up on property or dwellings, family reunification, increasingly harsh conditions in host countries, medical care, and other reasons. (UNHCR 31/08/2014, UNHCR 15/08/2014, UNHCR 31/07/2014, UNHCR 16/07/2014) Some Syrians have also returned to their homes after internal displacement. OCHA included more than 360,000 returnees in its estimates of people in need from mid-2014.

'In Idleb governorate, recent estimates suggest the number of displaced is equivalent to between 47% and 61% of the pre-war population'

1.5.1. Most Affected Areas

Recent estimates suggest Idleb Governorate has one of the highest rates of displacement in the country: estimates range from 47% (OCHA early 2014) to 61% (Data Review 11/2014, see p.16-17 for more information) of the governorate's pre-war population. The governorate may house close to one million IDPs.

Quneitra Governorate may also be considered very heavily affected, with IDPs equivalent to 68% (MSNA 10/2014) or 63% (Data Review 11/2014) of its pre-war population. However it is an outlier because of its size, with a pre-war population between 57,000 and 90,000 (depending on the estimate): less than 0.4% of Syria's total population. However, comparing absolute and relative figures between governorates can be misleading. The MSNA identified 16 subdistricts with equivalent or a greater concentration of IDPs than the caseload identified in Quneitra and many of these subdistricts hosts a larger number of people than all of Quneitra governorate. When reviewing the data on a governorate level, these IDP concentrations are averaged out of the overall figures for their governorates, illustrative of the limitations of comparing results aggregated at governorate level.

Notable in the November Data Review is a massive upward revision of the number of IDPs in Rural Damascus: from 770,000 (27%) to 1.4 million (49%). OCHA describes the change as the largest IDP influx since May.

Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor, Dar'a and Homs have all appeared in some 2014 assessments as having high levels of IDPs, more than 30% of pre-war populations; however, estimates of IDP numbers in all these areas have varied considerably across assessments, showing no clear trend. It is unclear to what degree this is caused by movement of displaced populations, and to what degree this reflects differences in assessment methodology. Aleppo in particular stands out because of its massive population: it hosts more than 1.5 million IDPs, possibly nearing 2 million.

AI-Hasakeh Governorate is an outlier: the MSNA suggests that in Q3 it hosted 510,000 IDPs, roughly double the highest other estimate (OCHA estimates the IDP population grew from about 200,000 in early 2014 to around 250,000 at the end of the year). This discrepancy deserves further investigation. (Data Review 11/2014, MSNA 30/10/2014, OCHA 06/08/2014, ACU Dynamo 08/08/2014)

1.5.2. Main displacements in 2014 Q4

The UN Security Council (UNSC) reports an unsourced estimate that some 80,000 people have been displaced from Ar-Raqqqa city, IS-controlled border areas of Deir ez-Zor, and Al Bab in Aleppo following coalition airstrikes. Their destinations were largely rural areas in Ar-Raqqqa and Deir-ez-Zor governorates. (UNSC 23/11/2014)

In Dar'a, WFP reports ongoing displacement during Q4, presumably in response to the major AOG military operation there. (WFP 15/10/2014) In late October, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent reportedly registered 50,000 new IDPs in As-Sanamayn and vicinity, who had fled violence in Inkhil and other rural areas of the governorate. (WFP 30/10/2014) In November, there were unconfirmed reports of 18,000 people displaced to Izra', Dar'a city, Ash-Shajara and Tal Shihab in less than 48 hours, who were forced to find temporary shelter, often in unsuitable conditions. (WFP 11/11/2014) At the end of November, one source reports that another 40,000 reportedly fled Sheikh Miskine, which was heavily contested and under frequent air and shelling attacks by GoS. (WFP 25/11/2014)

In Quneitra, an attempt by AOG to oust GoS forces from their last stronghold in the governorate, Ba'ath city, reportedly led thousands to flee. (Reuters 20/11/2014) WFP reported at least 7,500 had fled to other areas of the governorate, as well as rural Damascus, in response to a military advance, and further displacements were expected. (WFP 25/11/2014) A likely destination in Rural Damascus is Qatana, where ICRC reported receiving 25,000 refugees from Quneitra in September. (ICRC 15/09/2014) In late September, ICRC said fighting had displaced more than 100,000 in Dar'a and Quneitra during the month (ICRC 17/10/2014)

In Idleb, an estimated 1,700 individuals recently fled rural Idleb towards other parts of the governorate including Salqin, Ariha and Abul Thohur. (OCHA 05/12/2014) JAN's commandeering of Wadi Deif and Hamidiyye camps, which were a source of GoS shelling of the surrounding area, has apparently encouraged the return of some IDPs. (OCHA 19/12/2014)

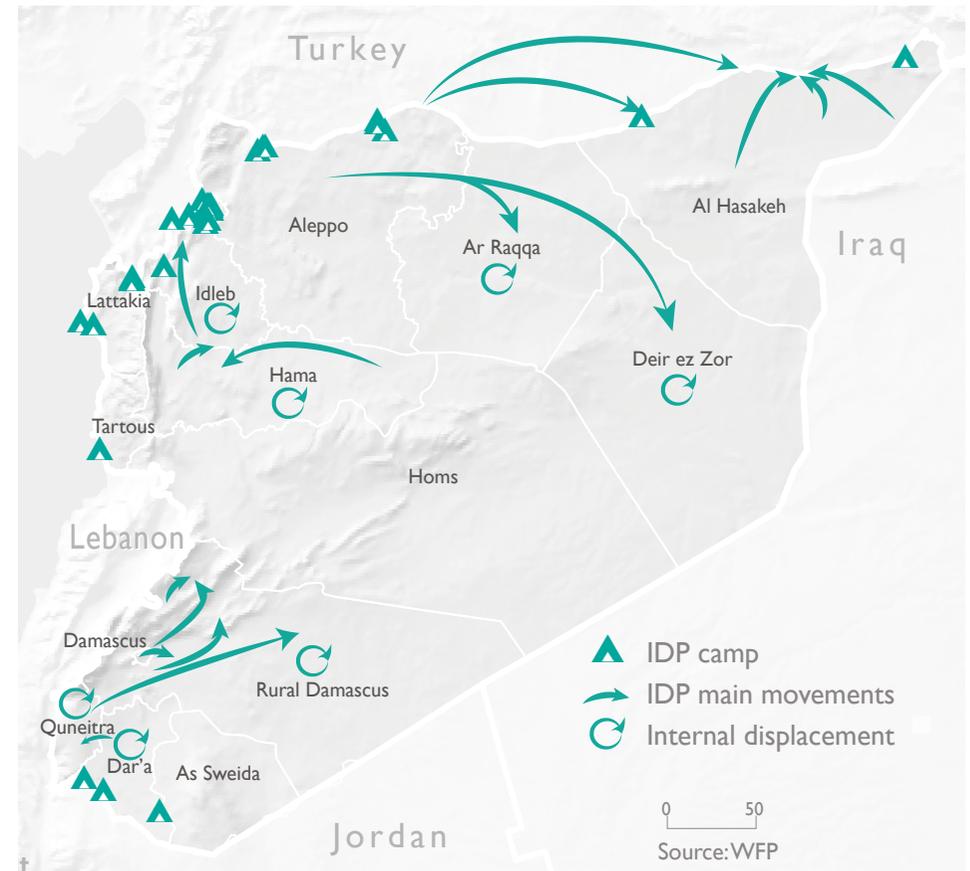
Hama appears to have had an ongoing displacement crisis from late Q3 to early Q4; in early September, WFP reported that some 100,000 people displaced to the cities of Hama and As-Salamiyeh were fleeing their homes in northeast of the governorate due to the ongoing violence. (WFP 02/09/2014) In late September and early October, government forces have continued their counteroffensive to retake parts of northern Hama, which resulted in at least 75,000 people being displaced to rural areas of northern Hama and southern Idleb, of which at least 25,000 are staying in open-air informal settlements outside of villages. (OCHA 03/10/2014)

In Al-Hasakeh, around 40,000 civilians are said to have fled clashes in various parts of the governorate, mostly to Quamishli city and surrounding areas. (UNSC 23/10/2014) Additionally, at least 2,600 people who fled from Ain Al Arab/Kobani have settled in Darbasiyah and Ras Al Ain. (WFP 15/10/2014)

WFP reports the displacement of families from Marj Al Sultan in Eastern Ghouta, Rural Damascus, although the numbers are not clear. (WFP 11/11/2014) There are also vague reports of thousands fleeing fighting in the Dukhania area of Damascus, to neighbouring areas such as Jaramana and Doyla'a. (UNSC 23/10/2014)

'Roughly a third of Syria's population has been internally displaced, and the number is growing'

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT Q4 2014



1.6 OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Humanitarian access to people in need throughout Syria continues to be regularly obstructed, with different levels of accessibility across the country, denying hundreds of thousands of people access to basic services and goods. Violence, shifting frontlines, administrative hurdles and deliberate access restrictions by all parties to the conflict constitute the main physical constraints to cross-line and cross-border delivery of assistance. Other factors hampering humanitarian assistance include funding cuts, namely and most prominently the recent cut in WFP funding.

1.6.1. Humanitarian access to the affected population

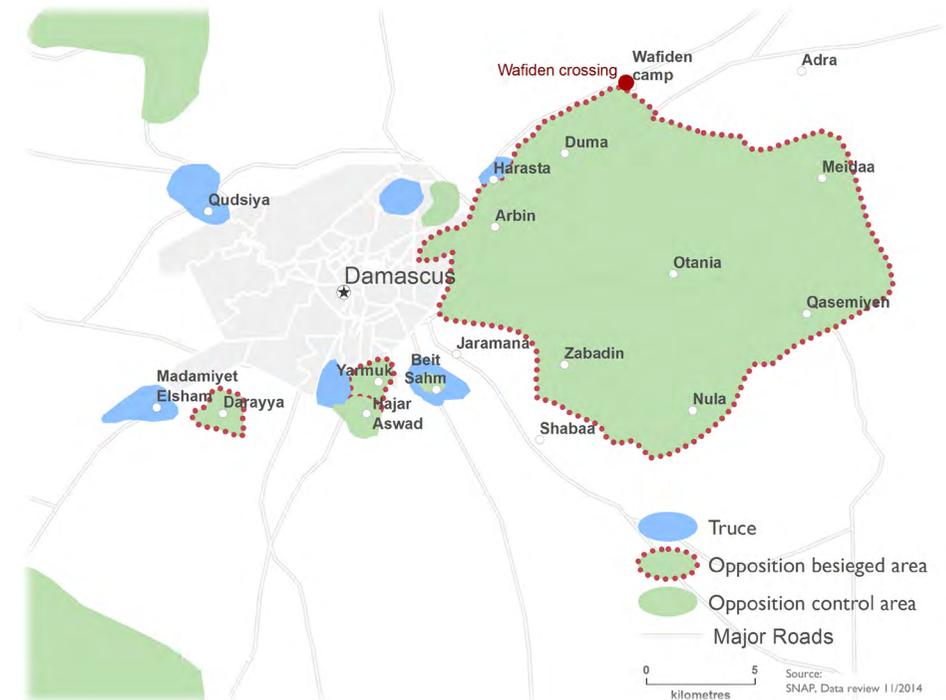
Besieged Areas: Access to an estimated 210,000 people residing in besieged areas across Syria continues to be severely constrained by the Syrian Armed Forces (SAF) and armed opposition groups (AOG). Some 160,000 people are besieged by SAF in Eastern Ghouta, 4,000 in Darayya and 18,000 in Yarmouk, while another 27,000 are still besieged by AOG in Nubul and Zahraa. However, thousands of others reportedly live in hard-to-reach areas that have been more or less equally inaccessible such as Al-Wa'er neighbourhood in Homs, eastern Aleppo City and Deir-ez-Zor City. (UNSC 21/11/2014, MSNA 10/2014)

Humanitarian access to besieged and hard-to-reach areas in both Damascus and Rural Damascus continues to be subject to government restrictions, particularly medical and surgical supplies, and halted by hostilities and conflict incidents. However, access to besieged and hard-to-reach areas is expected to improve in the coming period because of ongoing truce attempts in Rural Damascus. In this context, WHO's representative in Syria stated that the GoS approved the delivery of medical and surgical supplies to three areas that were previously viewed as hard or impossible to reach, including Mouadamiya and Eastern Ghouta, however medical assistance has not yet been delivered to the areas at the time of writing. (Reuters 22/12/2014)

The besieged areas of Rural Damascus, particularly Eastern Ghouta, have been the most affected by access restrictions with approximately 170,000 civilians still besieged within the governorate, comprising almost 80% of all civilians residing in besieged areas across the country. Duma in eastern Ghouta, the only area that has reportedly received assistance, last received medical, water and sanitation assistance in September and food supplies were last delivered to the city in May. Darayya was also inaccessible during the reporting period. The city which lies in southern Rural Damascus, last received assistance in October 2012. Some reports indicated that access to parts of Western Ghouta significantly improved after opening the Babila crossing, which connects GoS-held areas to other areas that have undergone localised truces. However, both the Khan Esheeh and Sbeineh Palestinian camps were reported as inaccessible owing to conflict incidents in their perimeter. According to MSF, an additional 50,000 people in the Erbin town were besieged, alongside other areas in Eastern Ghouta. (MSF 16/10/2014, UNSC 21/11/2014, Assafir 22/11/2014, UNRWA 16/10/2014)

'Some 18,000 people remain under siege in the Yarmouk camp in southern Damascus. UNRWA expressed grave concerns over the degrading humanitarian access to the camp since July'

BESIEGED AREAS IN DAMASCUS AND RURAL DAMASCUS



Some 18,000 people remain under siege in the Yarmouk camp in southern Damascus. UNRWA expressed grave concerns over the degrading humanitarian access to the camp since July because of restrictions and insecurity. This has significantly decreased the amount of food and other vital forms of assistance provided to the camp, despite GoS authorisation for UNRWA to distribute humanitarian assistance to the camp three days a week. However, distribution is regularly interrupted or halted by violence. UNRWA was able to deliver food for almost 9,000 people and hygiene kits for 5,000 people; however the agency was not cleared to access the camp in November or December. Access to medical aid has slightly improved in the camp following authorisation for UNRWA to reopen its temporary health centre. (UNRWA 02/11/2014, UNRWA 04/11/2014, UNRWA 16/10/2014, AFP 29/10/2014, UNRWA 03/12/2014, UNSC 21/11/2014)

Access to approximately 27,000 people in Nabul and Zahraa in northern rural Aleppo remains restricted following a siege imposed by AOG on both areas. No humanitarian assistance was delivered to the areas since May 2014. (UNSC 21/11/2014)

Lack of access to besieged areas, particularly Eastern Ghouta, will significantly impact people's ability to withstand the harsh winter conditions. Information collected by SNAP from several Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reports indicates that in December alone, five children died of malnutrition and lack of medicines in the besieged areas of Eastern Ghouta.

Hard-to-reach Areas: Constrictions to humanitarian access to approximately 4.8 million people residing in areas categorised as hard-to-reach have remained unchanged. However, no significant countrywide improvements or deterioration in access has been witnessed during the reporting period. There are recurrent obstructions preventing access to hard-to-reach areas, either because of violence or restrictions imposed by one of the conflicting parties. UN agencies and partners reportedly reached 26% of besieged and hard-to-reach areas in October and 23% of areas in November, although overall estimates of people reached during the quarter is not yet available. (UNSC 23/10/2014, OCHA 21/12/2014, UNSC 21/11/2014)

Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa, Aleppo and Rural Damascus have been among the most affected governorates in terms of access restrictions and difficulties, mainly due to fears from Islamic State (IS) practices, conflict incidents, and restrictions by one or more of the conflicting parties in accessing particular areas. Other governorates in northern, northwestern and southern Syria have been significantly more accessible because of their proximity to Turkey and Jordan, respectively, facilitating though not completely, cross-border humanitarian access. GoS-held areas in central and coastal Syria have also been relatively more accessible for Damascus-based humanitarian actors. (MSNA 10/2014)

2.7 million people live in hard-to-reach areas under the control of IS in Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa and Al-Hasakeh, according to a recent data review. Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa last received assistance in May and July respectively, mainly due to fears from IS's infamous practices, insecurity, restrictions and interference in humanitarian work, but also because of AOG restricting access to IS-held areas. IS has reportedly issued new rules allowing itself to intervene in planning and implementing humanitarian activities in its areas of control. (MSNA 10/2014, Data Review 11/2014, see p.XX for more information)

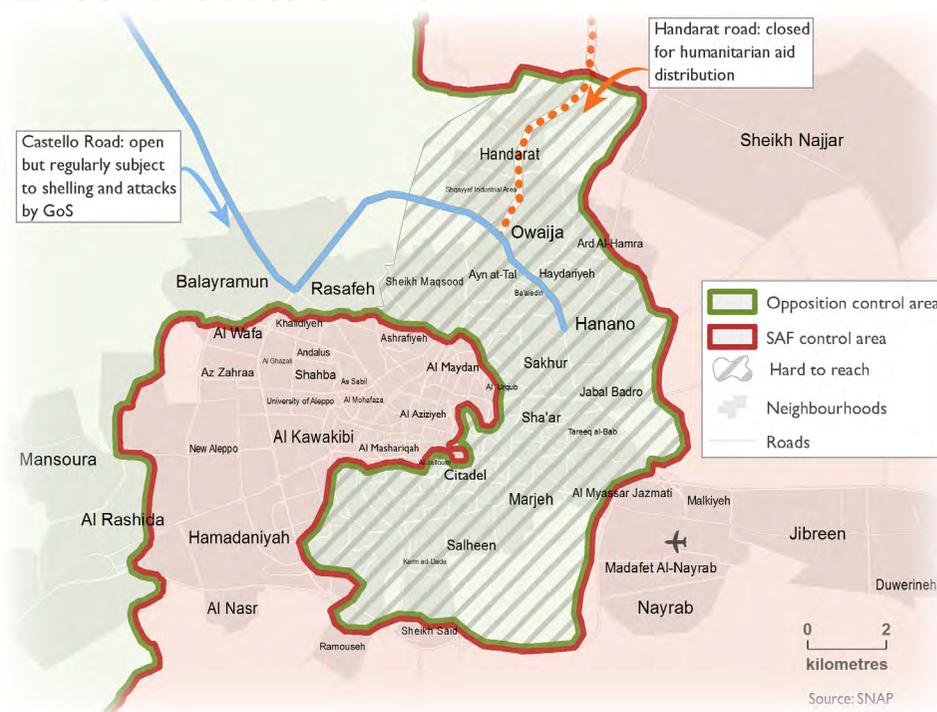
The GoS-held western neighbourhoods of Deir-ez-Zor have been reportedly inaccessible because of IS restrictions to humanitarian access, triggerings concerns over an estimated 150,000 civilians still residing in the area. Access to some 15,000 people in the eastern neighbourhoods of Deir-ez-Zor City, controlled by IS and AOG, has become almost impossible owing to regular SAF airstrikes and lack of access routes into the city, particularly exacerbated after GoS forces bombed and destroyed the last remaining bridge into the city. All other passages to the city are under GoS control and are currently blocked. In October, a WHO request to deliver medical assistance to eastern Deir-ez-Zor city was rejected by the GoS. WFP reported that insecurity and access restrictions to Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa prevent some 600,000 targeted beneficiaries from receiving much needed humanitarian assistance. (OCHA 07/11/2014, WFP 10/2014, UNSC 21/11/2014)

Access to opposition, Kurdish and IS held areas in northern rural Aleppo Governorate continues to be largely problematic, mainly because of the intensity of fighting in the area. However, access

'Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa, Aleppo and Rural Damascus have been among the most affected governorates in terms of access restrictions and difficulties'

to the northern area is still relatively better than that to the opposition-held eastern Aleppo City. The Syria Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) conducted in August-September identified eastern Aleppo City as holding the largest hard-to-reach population during the past six months, estimated at 300,000. Following the Government's takeover of the Handarat area in August 2014, the only remaining route to the eastern part of the city has been the Castello route, which has been regularly subject to SAF shelling and airstrikes, possibly in attempts to obstruct any humanitarian access into the city. If SAF successfully encircled eastern Aleppo City it would completely cut off humanitarian assistance from the 300,000 people still residing there. (MSNA 10/2014, OCHA 07/11/2014)

ALEPPO OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS



During the reporting period, the Al-Wa'er neighbourhood in Homs was also subject to access restrictions following the failure of truce talks with the GoS. Some 130,000 people currently reside in the almost besieged neighbourhood, with only limited and irregular access to humanitarian assistance. (UNSC 2111/2014, Assafir 14/11/2014, WFP 20/11/2014)

According to the MSNA, which covered 12 out of 16 subdistricts in Al-Hasakeh, movement restrictions for humanitarian actors and goods comprised the main operational constraints for humanitarian access into the governorate. Conflict in surrounding governorates and IS takeover of roads from Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor, have made it impossible for Damascus-based agencies to reach Al-Hasakeh Governorate. Therefore, the only possible route to access the governorate is through the two remaining border crossings into Al-Hasakeh, which have been authorised for cross-border provision of aid under UN Security Council Resolutions 2139 and 2165: Quamishli (with Turkey) and Al-Ya'roubiyah crossing (with Iraq). However, the Ya'roubiyah crossing from the Iraqi side has had clashes in its perimeter. As of 30 September, UN-led convoys were allowed passage through the Nusaybin/Quamishli crossing for the first time since May and WFP entered two shipments of food assistance through the crossing in October and November. (Col 21/11/2014, WFP 20/11/2014, OCHA 21/11/2014, WFP 20/11/10/30, UNSC 2111/2014, Col 23/10/2014, Field Exchange 11/2014, ISW 18/11/2014, WFP 11/11/2014)

Information gaps as expressed by the community: Access of the affected population to assistance and basic needs is also hampered by a lack of information. The MSNA found that, across all areas assessed, communities highlighted the need for information on how to find adequate work to secure the necessities of life. A lack of information on how to access assistance was noted as well, with key informants indicating a need for more information on how to access healthcare and how to get money/financial support. In areas with a large number of IDPs (incl. Lattakia, Hama and Aleppo) information on how to find missing people is a priority need.

1.6.2. Continued restrictions on medical assistance

The GoS recently stated that it would allow for the provision of medical aid and supplies into hard-to-reach and besieged areas. WHO's representative in Syria said the Government had approved the delivery of medical assistance to three areas that were previously inaccessible, including Eastern Ghouta and Maadamiyat. However, such promises have not met their expected impact on the ground. The Syrian authorities continue to restrict the provision of medical assistance to several areas across the country. (Reuters 22/12/2014)

Ten WHO requests to deliver medical assistance have been either unanswered or rejected by the Syrian authorities since the beginning of October. In mid November, security forces prevented an inter-agency convoy from entering much needed medical and surgical supplies to the opposition-held Al-Wa'er neighbourhood, despite having previous GoS approval. Security forces also restricted an inter-agency convoy from entering midwifery kits into opposition-held neighbourhoods in northern rural Homs, despite WHO having received official approval by the Governor of Homs. (UNSC 2111/2014, Assafir 14/11/2014, WFP 20/11/2014, WFP 30/10/2014, WFP 15/10/2014)

1.6.3. Security Council Resolution 2165

The implementation of UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2165 remains limited, despite having improved cross-border humanitarian access since its adoption earlier in July. The Security Council extended its authorisation for humanitarian access without GoS approval through

Resolution 2165 for an additional 12 months in mid-December. The resolution grants authorisation for cross-border humanitarian access through the Al-Ya'roubiyah border crossing with Iraq, Al-Ramtha with Jordan and Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa with Turkey. (UNSC 17/12/2014)

During October and November, shipments with humanitarian supplies crossed the Bab Al-Hawa and Bab Al-Salam borders and assisted over 75,000 people mainly in the districts of Muhradah and Hama. However, no detailed information was available on where the assistance was distributed. (OCHA 05/12/2014, OCHA 21/11/2014)

Resolution 2165 significantly improved access to southern governorates, more so than the northern and northwestern governorates, mainly because conflict in the south has been relatively distant from the Al-Ramtha border crossing, making it safer for cross-border humanitarian missions to reach targeted areas. WFP has reportedly been able to access opposition-held areas in Dar'a from Jordan under resolution 2165. Despite being able to reach 69 out of the 70 areas classified as hard-to-reach in the governorate during the reporting period, conflict incidents continue to prevent the delivery of assistance to conflict areas in rural Dar'a. (WFP 11/11/2014, WFP 25/11/2014, UNSC 2111/2014, UNSC 2191 17/12/2014) Quneitra Governorate also reportedly remains accessible to humanitarian convoys since the adoption of the UNSC resolution. All 13 areas categorised as hard-to-reach in Quneitra were accessed with humanitarian assistance during the reporting period. (MSNA 10/2014, UNSG 21/11/2014)

1.6.4. Hostilities against humanitarian personnel and aid

One of the most imperative challenges to the delivery of aid has been, throughout the conflict, the targeting of humanitarian convoys and personnel. Humanitarian work inside the country has been viewed by all parties to the conflict as supporting their opponents, therefore frequently targeting humanitarian personnel and missions across the country.

Seventeen UN staff, 14 of which are from UNRWA, have reportedly been killed throughout the conflict, another 26 UNRWA staff are currently detained or missing, and 26 others have been injured at certain points during the conflict. (UNRWA 16/10/2014) On 7 November, two Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) volunteers were killed by a mortar shell while transporting supplies for an inter-agency centre. A truck driver was injured while delivering humanitarian assistance as part of a joint UN-SARC mission to Al-Wa'er. It is not known who fired upon the truck. (UNSC 2111/2014, UNSC 2111/2014)

1.7 POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS

Overview: Despite the perspective of renewed peace talks, the humanitarian situation in Syria is expected to further deteriorate in the beginning of 2015. Although conflict continues around key frontlines, it is unlikely there will be a significant change in areas of control. Owing to the protracted nature of the conflict and the targeting of sources of income, parties to the conflict are increasingly challenged in obtaining the resources required to sustain the current level of engagement. Consequently, armed forces and groups are increasingly conducting voluntary or forced recruitment, and other forms of resource mobilisation. In Damascus, the Government of Syria (GoS) is expected to maintain restrictions and constraining administrative procedures, preventing the scale-up of much needed assistance.

Geographic hotspots: Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa, Damascus, Dar'a, Deir-ez-Zor, rural Homs, Hama, Rural Damascus, and Quneitra governorates.

Population status & movements: In Dar'a and Quneitra, heavy fighting between government forces and armed opposition groups (AOG) is expected to trigger significant population movements.

In Aleppo City, 300,000 people are at risk with Government forces getting closer to encircling fully the eastern areas controlled by the opposition. In northern rural Aleppo, several small scale displacements are expected with Jabhat Al Nusra (JAN) attempting to take strategic areas under GoS control.

Rural Damascus, Homs and Hama might witness additional population displacement with the Islamic State (IS) expanding its fronts in these areas, while continuing its operations in Deir-ez-Zor.

Ar-Raqqa, one of IS's current strongholds, continues to be affected by a combination of targeted coalition strikes and indiscriminate GoS aerial bombardments. Small-scale population movements can be expected.

General shrinking of the protection space, cuts in humanitarian assistance, and growing hardship and instability in host countries are resulting in an increasing number of Syrian refugees trying to return to Syria. Numbers could rise up to several thousand, especially if a major national crisis were to occur in Lebanon. Many of the returnees are considered extremely vulnerable and will be in need of immediate and medium-term assistance in order to cope with their return to Syria. GoS authorities are suspicious of the returning refugee population and their potential affiliation with opposition groups in exile, leading to several thousand people – primarily men and adolescent boys, being arbitrarily arrested and detained. International agencies based in Damascus only have limited access to returnees, while cross-border and remote assistance programmes do not, for the most part, reach returnees who tend to be concentrated in areas controlled by GoS.

Further protests will emerge in Lattakia and/or Tartous owing to increased discontent triggered by forced military conscription activities in these governorates.

Projected impact

National: By April 2015, over 80% of the remaining population in Syria will need support, with a large share in need of life-saving assistance. The proportion of people depending solely on humanitarian aid continues to increase. Those most affected are concentrated in besieged and hard-to-reach areas, under-served rural areas, heavily contested areas, and areas hosting large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Protection issues remain the main source of concern. While indiscriminate violence and insecurity continue to affect the population in general, all armed groups increasingly resort to voluntary and forced recruitment, making it extremely difficult for men and adolescent boys to move around. Freedom of movement is further constrained by border restrictions imposed by neighbouring countries.

Despite the current global decrease in oil prices, Syrian consumers witness a surge in fuel prices and general inflation, while the protracted economic shutdown causes livelihood opportunities to become increasingly scarce.

Owing to the increased monopolisation of basic goods and services, access to a basic standard of living is restricted to those with access to resources and connections, further pushing the rest of the population into poverty.

Areas under GoS control: Civilians in areas under GoS control still have relatively good access to basic services. However, the gradual scale-down of subsidies and market support, triggered by an increasingly tightened GoS budget, increases fuel and bread prices.

Areas outside GoS control: Service delivery is ad-hoc and highly dependent on the capacity and willingness of the armed group in control to provide services or allow support from humanitarian actors. The large-scale infrastructure projects required to repair, maintain and expand water and electricity provision do not take place. As a consequence, the provision of water and electricity through the public system continues to deteriorate. More and more civilians turn to negative coping strategies or join ranks of the well-funded armed groups. Emergence of localised outbreaks as seen in 2014 is also very likely, such as measles, typhoid and Hepatitis A.

Besieged areas: Besieged areas of Damascus, Rural Damascus and Homs generally remain cut off. Eastern Aleppo City becomes increasingly encircled by GoS. The movement of goods and relief decreases, resulting in increased life-threatening conditions in all areas concerned.

Kurdish areas: Although clashes between IS and the People's Protection Unit (YPG) continue, areas away from frontlines, particularly in Al-Hasakeh, remain relatively stable, resulting in improved access to health and education. The main concern remains access to water, because of fuel shortages, destruction of infrastructure and pre-crisis vulnerabilities.

Humanitarian access: No significant positive changes are expected in the level of humanitarian access.

The Whole of Syria approach will offer an opportunity to improve the coherence of the current response, and allow for a clearer coordination structure and a more solid analysis of needs and gaps. However, significant administrative, logistic and political obstacles are likely to prevent a full alignment of all response actors and gaps. Redundancy and overlapping response initiatives will remain common.

1.8 DATA SOURCES AND INFORMATION GAPS

1.8.1. Available information and data limitations

Information available on the humanitarian situation, specifically primary data, is extremely limited in Syria. Aiming to obtain a countrywide and objective picture of the needs and priorities, SNAP analyses a multitude of sources. In addition to consolidating the reports and assessments of humanitarian organisations, SNAP collates information from a wide range of media sources to feed into the Regional Analysis for Syria.

1.8.1.1. Recent assessments and reports

- The Syria Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) was published in Q4, covering 114 subdistricts in 10 of Syria's 14 governorates, and collecting primary data through key informant interviews in five sectors as well as data on demography and displacement, humanitarian access and communication with the affected population. (MSNA 10/2014)
- At the end of 2014, a comprehensive review of data was undertaken by a number of humanitarian actors, including sector specialists. Based on the MSNA and a range of

other primary and secondary sources, the review provides detailed information on the current humanitarian situation in Syria as well as estimates of the population in need and number of displaced per governorate. An analysis of the data by the participating actors resulted in an initial prioritisation of governorates according to the severity of needs. Although the results of this study have not yet been published, SNAP deems the findings sufficiently authoritative to inform our analysis. Within the RAS, this unpublished report is sourced as 'Data Review 11/2014'.

- The opposition-aligned Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) tracks casualties among civilians and combatants in Syria, among other groups. The UN Secretary-General (mandated under resolutions 2139 and 2165) and the Commission of Inquiry of the UN Human Rights Council publishes periodic reports on the human rights situation in Syria, as does Human Rights Watch (HRW), Amnesty International (AI), and Physicians for Human Rights (PHR). (UNSG 23/10/2014, Col 14/11/2014, HRW 23/12/2014, AI various dates, PHR various dates)
- The Early Warning and Response System (EWARS) publishes regular reports on health issues. However, communication channels are often interrupted and some areas are not included in the system. The Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) established a parallel surveillance system, known as the Early Warning Alert and Response Network (EWARN).
- WHO and the Ministry of Health publish quarterly reports on the functionality, accessibility, and damage to public hospitals and health facilities, based on information collected through the Health Resources and Services Availability Mapping System (HeRAMS). (WHO/MoH 06/11/2014)
- Several sector-specific assessments have been conducted and published, including a bakery assessment conducted by ACU in 72 subdistricts and a total of 434 bakeries, a primary school facility assessment in 62 subdistricts and a livelihoods analysis in 8 villages in Aleppo and Idlib. (ACU 18/12/2014, ACU 18/12/2014, Save the Children 01/2015)
- REACH published reports on urban profiles of Hama City and eastern Aleppo City. (REACH 22/10/2014, REACH 15/10/2014)

1.8.1.2. Data Limitations MSNA

The primary source of information in Q4 is the Syria MSNA, conducted in August-September by OCHA, REACH and SNAP. However there are several limitations to this data source:

Highly dynamic situation: Population movements in Syria are highly dynamic, secondary and tertiary displacements are frequently reported, and no monitoring system captures displacement in real time. There are also no reliable pre-conflict population estimates. As a result, estimates of current population and displacement are very difficult, and estimates will quickly lose their value over time. In the five months since the MSNA was conducted, displacement patterns may have changed significantly.

Representativeness: The MSNA reached 114 of the 209 subdistricts in 10 governorates of Syria. Population figures presented in the MSNA report account uniquely for the visited subdistricts, and generalisations made from this selection to the entire population of these governorates would neither be appropriate nor statistically valid. This is especially true for governorates where a low coverage was recorded: for example, in Rural Damascus, only four out of 36 subdistricts were assessed.

The figures presented further do not account for all the visited population. By discarding data judged unreliable (category 5 and 6 of the confidence scale), and depending on the sectors, some populations became invisible in the population statistics table of this report.

Data Quality: Some governorates assessed in the MSNA, such as Dar'a, Quneitra and Rural Damascus, were covered for the first time in such a large-scale multi-sectoral needs assessment. While the MSNA in northern Syria is based on a long history of previous assessments, in these southern governorates it is not, and this may have affected the quality of the data collected there. It is notable that in the MSNA, Dar'a and Quneitra had, in virtually every sector, the highest severity ratings in Syria, considerably higher than affected governorates such as Al-Hasakeh and Aleppo. If this is a true result, it indicates a serious response and information gap. However, it may also be influenced by having less-experienced enumerators in these governorates, who were trained remotely by the MSNA coordination team. It may also indicate that Dar'a and Quneitra are relatively homogeneous, while in larger governorates like Aleppo and Rural Damascus, extremely severely affected areas are balanced out by relatively unaffected ones.

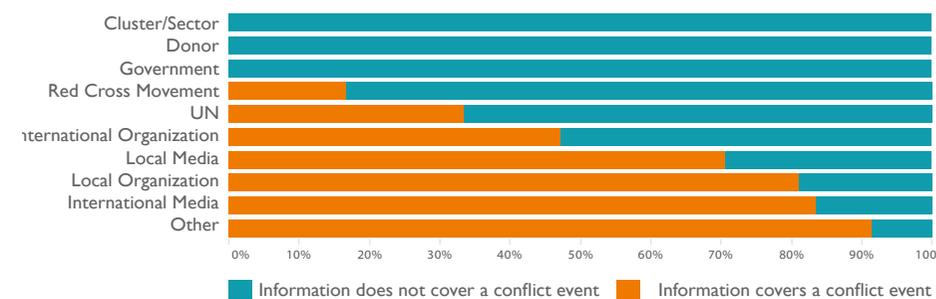
The methodology is based on perceived needs as expressed by Key Informants and the responses aggregated into one single questionnaire at the end of the field visit. Therefore the assessment does not always account for the diversity of situations within a subdistrict.

Gender lens: Only 7% of the enumerators were female. This gender imbalance should be kept in mind when interpreting the results of the assessment. Additionally, the majority of Key Informants interviewed were male.

1.8.1.3. Collated Information

In the fourth quarter of 2014, SNAP reviewed over 70 information sources, collecting and categorising more than 1,000 entries on needs and problems in Syria in the Daily Needs Update (DNU). Through this process, information from the before-mentioned assessment reports is captured, together with other information sources such as situation reports and media articles. A review of the available data shows that most publicly available information on Syria stems from local and international media reports. By nature, these focus on conflict events rather than humanitarian concerns, with 80% of the information snippets captured by SNAP from media sources concerning one or more conflict incident (e.g. an attack on a village). In Q4, as in Q3, media coverage of Syria was dominated by the IS threat and the US-led airstrikes, thus areas unrelated to IS activities were heavily underreported.

TYPE OF CONTENTS PER TYPE OF SOURCE



The amount of data available on livelihoods, education and shelter/NFI needs is limited. In addition, the amount of information available differs significantly per governorate, ranging from 293 entries for Aleppo to less than 30 entries for governorates such as Dar'a, Quneitra and Al Hasakeh. Needs and concerns are severely underreported in Lattakia, Tartous and As-Sweida governorates, which host large numbers of IDPs, and remain a destination for displaced people because of their relative stability and availability of services.

1.8.1.4. Reliability and credibility of available information

To judge the usability of the information gathered, the reliability of all information used is ranked as 'reliable', 'fairly reliable', 'fairly unreliable', 'unreliable' or 'reliability cannot be judged'. The ranking is determined by the history of reliability of the source, expertise of the source to report on the information concerned, whether there is a motivation for bias, and the level of transparency on the origin of the data. Sources are also evaluated for credibility: can the information be triangulated with other sources. Information that is deemed unreliable can still be usable if it is confirmed by a multitude of other sources.

When applying this framework to the information available on the current humanitarian situation in Syria, the following becomes clear:

- In many otherwise reliable sources of humanitarian information, lack of transparency about the origin of data remains a significant problem. Many actors that have adequate background, a specific expertise and limited motivation for bias publish information with no details on data-gathering or methodology, which makes it difficult to judge the quality of the information, compare figures across sources, and explain discrepancies.
- Due to the significant constraints related to data collection within Syria, there is little diversity of information sources. There are several key publications that currently inform the understanding of the humanitarian situation. However, there is little overlap between the content available through these sources, making it difficult to triangulate information.

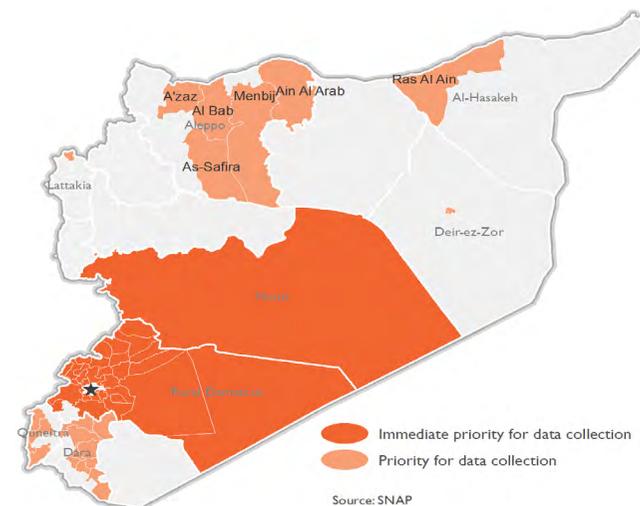
1.8.2. Information gaps

1.8.2.1. Geographic information gaps

The geographic coverage of available information shows large discrepancies, with almost no information covering As-Sweida and Tartous, compared to extensive information on the needs in, for instance, Idleb and Aleppo. This disparity can be largely explained by the humanitarian situation within these governorates: in the least affected areas, such as Tartous, there is less of a priority to collect data to inform humanitarian programming. However, this does not account for information availability across the board, with several governorates reporting critical needs, although a comprehensive picture of the situation is lacking. When reviewing information gaps and the severity of the humanitarian situation on a governorate level, a geographic prioritisation for data collection can be identified. Following this logic, the governorates of Homs and Rural Damascus (apart from the areas assessed during the MSNA) stand out as geographic priorities for immediate data collection. Within other governorates, several subdistricts experiencing high levels of displacement or conflict were not assessed during the MSNA, and are a priority for data collection. Although Ain al Arab/Kobani was covered under the MSNA, the situation has markedly changed since the assessment and limited additional information has become available. *(In the first quarter of 2015, SNAP will publish 'Defining information value and gaps', a note which will provide more information on how to judge geographic priorities for data collection).*

In the absence of a country-wide, comprehensive assessment approach, Specific geographic priorities for data collection include:

GEOGRAPHIC PRIORITIES DATA COLLECTION



- An additional geographic priority for data collection concerns areas along the Iraqi, Jordanian, Lebanese and Turkish borders where IDPs are stranded, unable to enter the respective neighbouring country.
- Please note that these are the current geographical priorities for data collection. Over time, the data collected through the MSNA and other recent assessments is no longer relevant and, without a comprehensive data collection system tracking key indicators in place, the geographic information gaps will expand.

1.8.2.2. Subject specific information gaps

Across the board, there is a need for more regularly updated information on displacement figures and priority needs. When looking at the most recent developments, information is specifically required regarding:

- The nutrition situation, with a recent nutrition assessment recording Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates above 10% in at least three governorates. A more comprehensive nutrition assessment, including a larger sample, is required to measure the exact scope of the situation.
- The situation of IDPs stranded at international borders.
- The trajectory of market prices of fuel, water trucking and staple food
- The protection situation, with large information gaps on the number of people missing/detained and limitations to freedom of movement.
- Informed estimates on the current population residing in the country, disaggregated to the lowest administrative area possible. There are large discrepancies between available numbers and a common planning figure is required.
- The MSNA did not specifically assess the needs of IDPs in informal settlements and secondary data indicates that their situation differs significantly from those residing in

collective shelters. A multi-sectoral needs assessment in the IDP camps is necessary to identify priority needs and gaps. The last multi-sectoral needs assessment in the camps was conducted in November 2013 as part of the Syria Integrated Needs Assessment (SINA) but the population residing in camps has almost doubled since then and access to the camps has decreased.

- **WASH:** There is limited information on the effect of the dry weather conditions on the availability of drinking water, crop production, and livelihoods. There were reports on water shortages and poor water quality in several governorates, especially Deir-ez-Zor.
- **Shelter and NFI:** In the absence of a large-scale shelter assessment, numerous small-scale assessments are conducted, mostly focusing on the situation of IDPs in camps and collective shelters. However, no reports comprehensively assessed the overall damage to homes and shelters by the ongoing conflict.

A number of assessments are planned for the first quarter of 2015 or already underway, including:

- A food security and livelihoods assessment is planned by the Food Security Sector based in Turkey
- Nutrition and education assessments led by UNICEF and its implementing partners. The aim of the education assessment is to understand the challenges in access and quality of education across Syria in order to inform education programming. (UNICEF 19/09/2014)

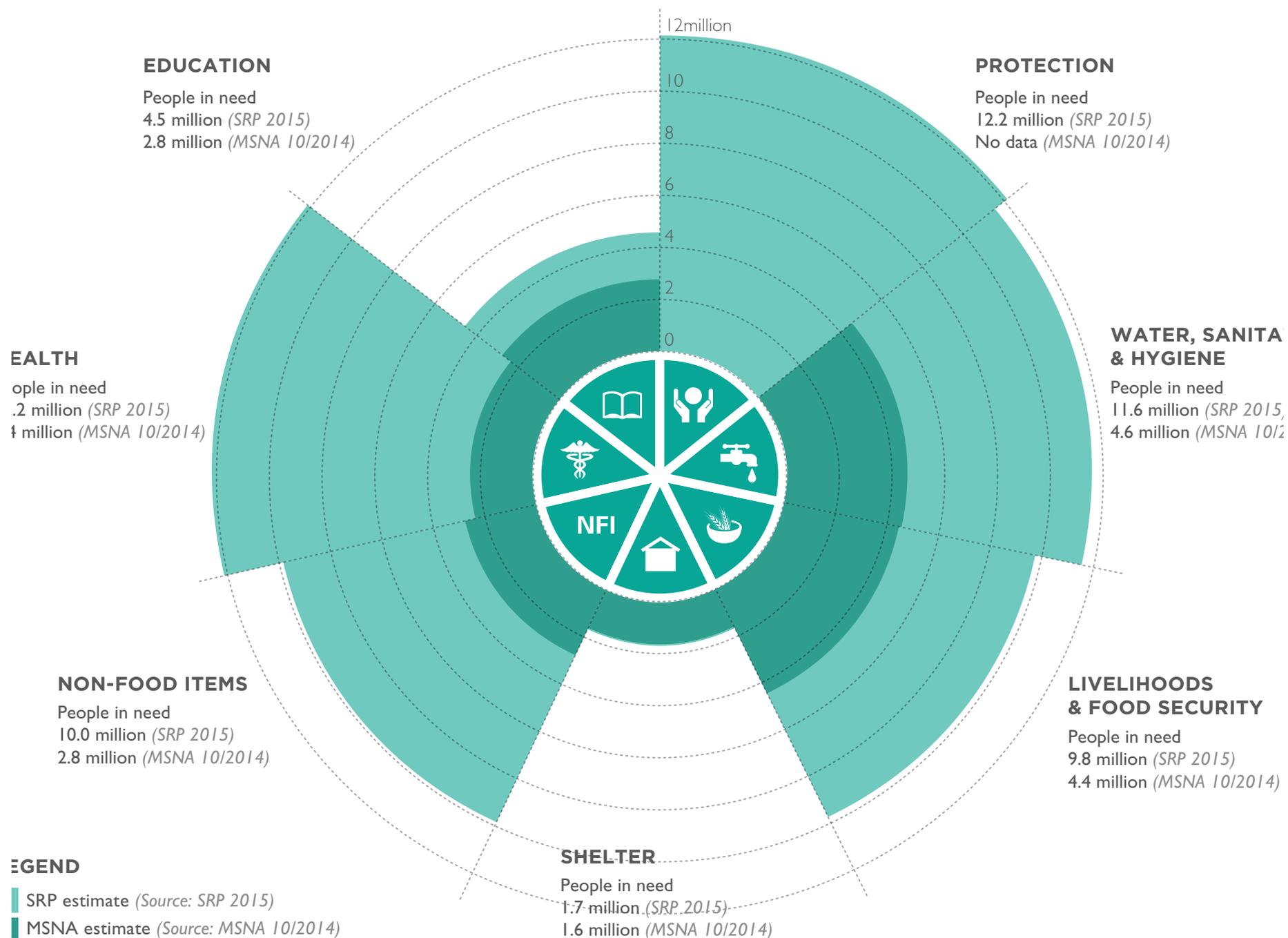
1.8.2.3. Recommended assessment approach

A 'Whole of Syria' assessment strategy is required to address existing information gaps and ensure reliable and timely information is available to humanitarian actors responding to the crisis. A comprehensive strategy relies on the following components, each of which should be suited to the operational constraints inside Syria:

- A light continued monitoring system (CMS), which relies on a network of trained focal points in all affected geographic areas, focusing on the basic information that is required for the immediate response: displacement flows, priority needs, priority groups, humanitarian access, etc. Data is to be collected at the lowest administrative level possible, to account for the large differences between areas. The first round should include baseline questions, to enable comparison with the follow-up findings. Where this baseline is already available, such as in northern Syria, it needs to be taken into account when designing a CMS, to ensure comparability of results.
- In the event of a significant improvement in humanitarian access, a rapid assessment of the area should be jointly undertaken by the main humanitarian responders, based on a pre-defined commonly agreed inter-agency questionnaire.
- In relatively stable areas, in-depth sectoral assessments should be undertaken to feed into sector specific programming.
- Continued review of secondary data to complement primary data collection exercises is essential to complement and triangulate the results.
- Harmonisation of assessment approaches and tools remains crucial to ensure comparable data and account for the lack of primary and secondary data. For example, the MSNA, as the previous assessment efforts covering the North of Syria, has used severity scales to measure the impact of the crisis, which consists of measuring the intensity (degree of harm) and size (number and proportion of people affected) of the population affected. It remains essential in the future, as a Whole of Syria approach is implemented, that the same tool is used to measure impact of the crisis across and between all humanitarian actors in a joint, coordinated approach to ensure comparability of the information.

'A multi-sectoral needs assessment in the IDP camps is necessary to identify priority needs and gaps, as the last one was conducted in 2013'

2. SECTORAL ANALYSIS

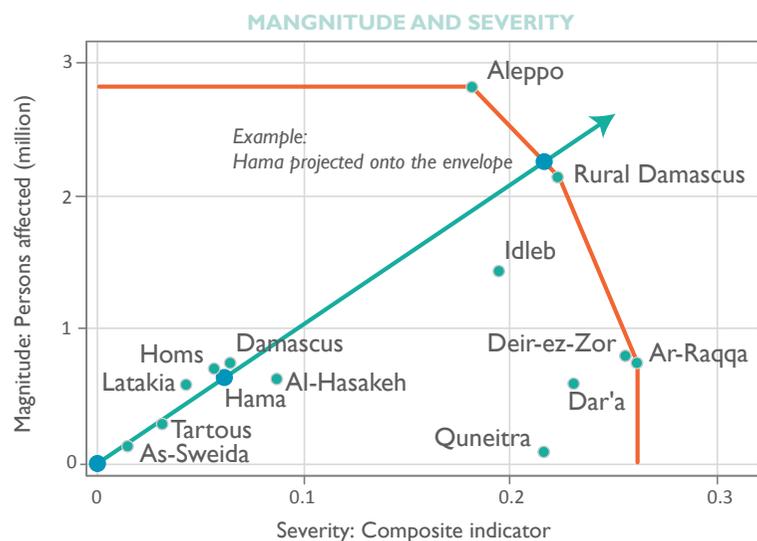


2.1 CROSS-SECTOR ANALYSIS AND GEOGRAPHIC PRIORITIES

 <p>People in Need (PiN)</p>	<p>6 million</p> <p>MSNA 10/2014, 114/209 subdistricts covered (55%)</p> <hr/> <p>12.2 million</p> <p>SRP 2015</p>
 <p>Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)</p>	<p>4.8 million</p> <p>MSNA 10/2014, 114/209 subdistricts covered (55%)</p> <hr/> <p>7.6 million</p> <p>SRP 2015</p>

Owing to sustained levels of fighting, the winter season, and continued economic hardship, the last quarter of 2014 was characterised by increased protection concerns, critical shelter needs, and a deteriorating food security situation.

To assess the relative humanitarian priorities among 14 governorates, a Priority Index was formed using vulnerability scoring from the latest data review (*Data Review 11/2014*) and combining it with caseloads of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and people in need of assistance (PiN) from the Syria Strategic Response Plan (*SRP 2015*). The chart below shows the prioritisation of areas, with the governorates plotted along the orange line (Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Ar-Raqqa) the most affected. These governorates currently host the highest recorded IDP and PiN numbers in the country. For the governorates inside the orange line, the distance to the line can be used to calculate priority. For more information regarding this index and its methodology please refer to Annex A, p. 36.



'As of late 2014, estimates indicated that 9.8 million people are in need of food and livelihood assistance, a 55% increase from the 6.3 million estimated in December 2013.'

Although priority needs differ significantly by location, some key issues can be identified:

- Protection:** Violence and protection concerns are the centrepiece of the Syrian crisis, with the proliferation of armed groups and sustained levels of engagement by all parties to the conflict. This leads to an escalation of violence against civilians across the country, regardless of who controls which area. Main protection concerns result from indiscriminate aerial shelling/bombing, exposure to ground fighting, brutality by armed groups, and forced recruitment impacting freedom of movement and increasing the risk of arbitrary arrest. Since the start of the conflict, the number of civilian deaths is estimated at 63,000. Q4 saw a slight increase in the number of civilian casualties resulting from the scale-up of aerial campaigns by the Government of Syria (GoS) across the country, targeting mostly Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor, Dar'a, Damascus, Hama, Homs, and Idleb.
- Shelter/Non-Food Items (NFIs):** Although much of the available information on shelter conditions was collected before the onset of winter; it can be assumed that known shelter issues have worsened with decreasing temperature and harsh weather conditions affecting those living in sub-standard accommodation, especially in informal settlements, collective centres, and damaged or unfinished buildings. Between January and September 2014, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in informal settlements increased by more than 50%. Continued violence and additional displacement in Q3 and Q4 suggest an extension of this trend. With the winter season, the need for NFIs for weatherproofing and heating is also considered as critical, and mostly reported in Dar'a, Quneitra, Rural Damascus, and Al-Hasakeh.
- Food Security:** As of late 2014, estimates indicated that 9.8 million people are in need of food and livelihood assistance, a 55% increase from the 6.3 million estimated in December 2013. Those living in conflict zones and besieged areas are considered particularly at risk, as they face limited availability and price inflation. Poor households increasingly face difficulties meeting their basic food needs, a result of reduced purchasing power and low levels of income, especially with the ongoing winter and subsequent slowdown in activities generating livelihoods.
- Health:** Continued hostilities and direct targeting of the health care system have resulted in damaged health centres, shortages of supplies and staff, and deteriorating access of affected populations to health care services since the start of the crisis. According to September estimates, more than half of Syria's hospitals have been destroyed or badly damaged and only an estimated 40% of hospitals are fully functional. While outbreaks of waterborne diseases continue to represent a main concern in densely populated areas and displacement camps, the winter temperatures also raise fears of increased morbidity and mortality from respiratory infections.

2.2. PROTECTION

People in Need	12.2 million
	SRP 2015
	No data
	MSNA 10/2014, 114/209 subdistricts covered (55%)
Most affected areas	Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, Damascus, Idleb, Dar'a



2.2.1. People in need and geographic priorities

As the Syrian conflict persists, with seemingly growing numbers of fighting factions and militant groups, violence and protection violations remain the centrepiece of the Syrian crisis. In a recent data review it is reported that 12.2 million people are in need of one or more protection interventions, which accounts for 70% of the population estimated to be still residing within the country. (Data Review 11/2014) Although the overall population in need has increased, the number of people targeted has decreased by some 43%, likely reflecting a more realistic approach to the level of protection interventions that are possible within the current restricted context. Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor, Damascus, Ar-Raqqa, Idleb and Dar'a are particularly affected as a result of high levels of conflict and displacement, severe limitations on freedom of movement and protection concerns posed by the presence of Islamic State (IS) and affiliated groups.

2.2.2. Main protection concerns

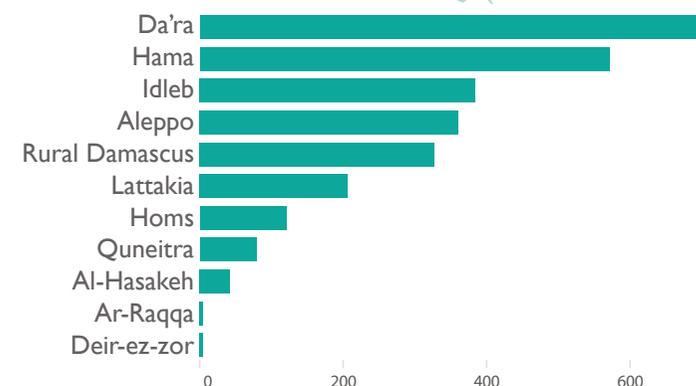
The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) estimates that close to 300,000 people have been killed since the start of the conflict in March 2011. Of these, civilian deaths are estimated at 63,000 (including close to 10,000 children). (SOHR 02/12/2014, AFP 02/12/2014) Acts of violence and the number of deaths have grown across the country as fighting has become more intense, and as certain armed groups have proliferated and gained control of more territory. This has prompted more frequent targeted attacks by GoS, leading to an escalation of its violence against its citizens. (SCI 21/10/2014, Al Jazeera 10/11/2014)

As found by the Syria Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) conducted in August-September, across 119 subdistricts in ten assessed governorates, continued aerial shelling/bombing, armed violence as well as arrest and detention were the top three safety and dignity concerns affecting the population, followed by kidnapping and restricted freedom of movement. The latter is of concern particularly in rural areas, which compounds the effect of reduced accessibility to basic services and goods. When asked how the community copes with safety and dignity concerns, key informants reported that the most common coping mechanisms is to approach community leaders, seek out religious leaders, and obtain support from close friends and family, followed by actively engaging in the conflict. (MSNA 10/2014)

'Although the overall population in need has increased, the number of people targeted has decreased by some 43%, likely reflecting a more realistic approach'

2.2.3. GoS Targeted Attacks Against Civilians

NUMBER OF BARREL BOMB ATTACKS RECORDED IN Q4 (VARIOUS SOURCES)



Although GoS carrying out targeted attacks against civilians throughout the country is not a new development, the last quarter saw an increase in the number of civilian fatalities. When the international focus shifted to battling extremist Islamist groups in the northern parts of the country, there was a concomitant increase in the number of attacks on civilians across different parts of the country. In fact, there were consistent reports in October of SAF bombardments occurring at double the usual rate. (Reuters 13/10/2014, Reuters 21/10/2014) Some have explained this by saying GoS has been optimising the focus on other groups to escalate and consolidate its own efforts; this is augmented by the fact that as different parties to the conflict shift their focus to fight other groups, it is easier for GoS to carry through with this. To date, GoS indiscriminate and targeted attacks have occurred primarily in Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor, Dar'a, Rural Damascus, Hama, Homs, Lattakia and Idleb, and included predominantly barrel bombing and aerial bombardment, targeting health facilities, markets, schools and other civilian gathering points including IDP camps. (Al Jazeera 30/10/2014, Syrian Observer 06/11/2014, AFP 06/11/2014, The Economist 08/11/2014, SOHR 19/11/2014, Reuters 19/11/2014, Al Jazeera 07/11/2014, AFP 28/11/2014, UNSC 15/12/2014, Syria Deeply 20/11/2014) In most attacks involving civilian centres, it has been noted that children have fallen victim (AP 01/10/2014, Al Jazeera 02/10/2014, AFP 24/10/2014, AFP 26/10/2014, Syrian Observer 27/10/2014, Syrian Observer 30/10/2014, AFP 05/11/2014), and IS-held areas, such as the city of Ar-Raqqa, seem to be another particular target for GoS air raids. (AFP 09/11/2014, Syrian Observer 27/11/2014, AFP 26/11/2014, Al Jazeera 07/11/2014) Other acts displaying GoS's targeting of civilians include sniper activities. (AFP 02/11/2014, MSF 16/10/2014, AFP 09/10/2014, Syrian Observer 08/12/2014)

2.2.4. Coalition Airstrikes Collateral

While efforts have been made to minimize the number of civilian casualties in the coalition airstrikes against hardline groups, civilians have been caught in the crossfire and it is not uncommon for attacks to include civilian fatalities. There were reportedly such cases in the area of Ain al Arab/Kobani (Aleppo), where coalition airstrikes began in September against IS, but as other extremist groups – such as Jabhat Al Nusra (JAN) and Ahrar Al Sham – were included as targets, such reports extended to Al-Hasakeh, Idlib, Deir-ez-Zor, and Ar-Raqqa. The total death toll is unclear, but the monitoring group Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) estimated that close to 1,000 people were killed in the first two months of the airstrikes; while the greater proportion of those were fighters, a proportion of those killed included women and children. (*Guardian* 18/10/2014, *Al Jazeera* 17/10/2014, *Reuters* 18/10/2014, *Guardian* 23/10/2014, *Reuters* 23/10/2014, *SOHR* 22/11/2014, *Al Jazeera* 06/11/2014, *Reuters* 06/11/2014)

2.2.5. Arbitrary Detention

Arbitrary detention and forced disappearances have been a strong feature of the Syrian conflict and are committed by all stakeholders of the conflict. Arbitrary detention and forced disappearances were not wholly uncharacteristic before the war began. A few reports recently indicated that conditions in state prisons are particularly worrying, and there have been several reports on the employment of torture mechanisms in the prisons (Amnesty International documented 31 methods of torture in a recent report) – highlighting additional human rights violations at the hands of the GoS. Estimates of the number of people in prisons vary (SOHR gives the figure of 200,000 people), and a UN briefing stated that tens of thousands of civilians continue to be arbitrarily detained and tortured, underscoring the widespread nature of this phenomenon. (*The Economist* 08/11/2014, *AFP* 02/11/2014, *AFP* 11/11/2014, *The Damascus Bureau* 31/10/2014, *UNSC* 15/12/2014)

Though there are no concrete figures available, the phenomenon of kidnapping and disappearances has been associated with the Syrian conflict from the start. Recently there have been some reports indicating that kidnappings are happening more frequently in some areas, and that a form of a 'kidnapping trade' has developed throughout the conflict. The former is indicative of a population adapted to the realities of the war and passively accepting such activities, whereas the latter implicates an income source that is undermining Syria's social fabric while also fuelling the war economy on all sides of the conflict. (*Syrian Observer* 28/11/2014, *Syrian Observer* 18/11/2014)

2.2.6. Chemical Weapons

Despite the ban on chemical weapons that went into effect following Syria's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention in September 2013, there have still been reports of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Mostly used by GoS against some of the other fighting factions, there also unconfirmed instances in which several civilians were impacted. (*Syrian Observer* 03/11/2014, *The Economist* 08/11/2014, *Al Jazeera* 07/12/2014)

2.2.7. Violations by hardline armed groups

During the last quarter, IS conduct in areas under its control, particularly the extreme violence directed against civilians, has attracted greater international attention. While IS features prominently as the main group employing draconian practices, there have been reports of other Islamist factions, such as JAN, starting to employ similar tactics and imposing stringent interpretation of Islamic law

'Child-headed households and children without caregivers (unaccompanied children) were reported to be among the most vulnerable groups after female-headed households.'

in their areas of control (e.g. restrictions of movement of women and dress codes). The extremist practices—captured in a recent UN Commission of Inquiry report examining IS acts—include extreme punishing tactics, which include various types of executions (e.g. beheading, stoning, lashing, amputation) for different kinds of ascribed violations (*Syrian Observer* 21/10/2014); extreme violence and threats of mass killing (*Reuters* 10/10/2014, *UN* 10/10/2014); enslavement (including sexual enslavement (*Al Jazeera* 23/12/2014); and child recruitment and training. (*Radio Free Europe* 30/10/2014) These alleged war crimes have been mostly reported in IS-controlled areas, as well as areas controlled by other extremist Islamist organisations, namely Aleppo, Hama, Idlib, Yarmouk (Damascus), and Ar-Raqqa. (*UN News* 10/10/2014, *BBC* 14/11/2014, *Al Jazeera* 14/11/2014, *OHCHR* 14/11/2014, *SOHR* 16/11/2014, *AFP* 17/11/2014, *Al Akhbar* 06/12/2014, *Reuters* 13/12/2014, *Syrian Observer* 22/12/2014, *Al Jazeera* 20/12/2014)

2.2.8. Child Labour, Child Recruitment, and Sexual Exploitation

Concerns regarding early marriage and child labour remain, particularly as families are pushed further into poverty, necessitating a need to find alternative methods of support – either by sending their children to work or marrying off daughters with the expectation they will be better provided for. (*UN Population Fund* 15/10/2014, *Al Jazeera* 10/11/2014) Child labour may further increase with the dramatic rise in the number of orphans – a direct result of the violence killing parents and other caregivers. (*Syrian Observer* 09/10/2014) Child-headed households and children without caregivers (unaccompanied children) were reported to be among the most vulnerable groups after female-headed households. Children were reported to be slightly more vulnerable and exposed to protection concerns in urban areas, where they may be exposed to higher intensity conflict and violence, higher competition over scarce livelihood opportunities, and less protection by community and societal solidarity. Female-headed households were on the contrary reported to be ranked slightly more vulnerable in rural areas, where they face higher restrictions of movement because of lack of transportation, high cost of transportation, remoteness of basic services, and imposed restrictions of freedom of movement by armed groups. (*MSNA* 10/2014)

Concerns regarding child recruitment and desensitisation to violence are growing. Reports have come out regarding IS operating training camps for children (some as young as 13 years old) in different parts of Syria; the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) was reportedly recruiting people under 18 years old. It is reported this practice was recently prohibited and nearly 150 child soldiers were consequently demobilised. (*Radio Free Europe 30/10/2014, Al Jazeera 13/12/2014*) Both examples, however, underscore the vulnerability of children to recruitment by fighting factions – a vulnerability that increases with fewer economic sources, fewer educational opportunities and eroding support networks. Another concern that has been highlighted is the practice of IS militants forcing children to watch videos of beheadings and exposing them to other forms of extreme violence. While the long-term impact of this has yet to be measured, constant exposure to these forms of violence at such a young age will likely result in desensitisation – elevating the risk of such actions becoming more prevalent and tolerated by the population. (*Reuters 04/11/2014*)

In general, sexual violence is difficult to document because of the sensitivities and challenges associated with the current environment and cultural norms existing prior to the conflict. Mass rape accusations have circulated, and the SOHR has documented thousands of cases of sexual violence so far – all based on witness testimony rather than victim statements – suggesting that sexual violence is likely far more prevalent than is currently recorded. (*LA Times 18/11/2014*) This is particularly a widespread concern in IS-controlled areas, with recent reports on women and girls from the Yazidi community in Iraq being forced into sexual slavery by IS fighters. (*Al Jazeera 23/12/2014*) Similar to child labour concerns, as support networks diminish and economic resources dwindle, women and girls become more vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

2.2.9. Minorities

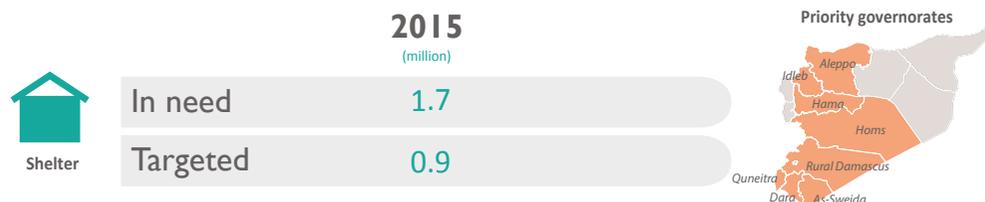
The wellbeing of minorities has been a concern since the start of the conflict – with the concern escalating over time and as extremist groups have gained more power in the country. While there were a handful of incidents of kidnapping Christians earlier, in October, there were several different reports of Christians being kidnapped in Aleppo and Homs by Islamist militants (such as JAN). (*Reuters 07/10/2014, Syria Deeply 14/10/2014, Syrian Observer 05/11/2014*)

The main safety and dignity issues affecting individuals across all governorates were reported to be the lack of or loss of personal identify documentation (e.g. birth certificate, passport, family booklet), followed by recruitment of children into armed groups and family separation and harassment and discrimination. (*MSNA 10/2014*) The lack of official documentation is particularly highlighted as people are unable to defend their property rights on assets or houses. This is of specific concern as IS fighters are reported to systematically loot, destroy and confiscate the property of ethnic Kurds, and in some cases, resettle displaced Arab Sunni families from the Qalamoun area (Rural Damascus), Deir-ez-Zor, and Ar-Raqqa in abandoned Kurdish homes. A similar pattern was documented in Tel Arab and Tal Hassel in July 2013 as well as in over 400 villages subject to the September offensive of IS towards Ain Al Arab/Kobani. (*OHCHR 14/11/2014*) The lack of documentation could pose significant constraints in the future if a transitional justice process is established and victims of misappropriation are to be resituated.

2.3. SHELTER AND NFI

	People in Need NFI: 9.9 million Shelter: 1.7 million <i>SRP 2015</i>
	NFI: 2.8 million Shelter: 1.6 million <i>MSNA 10/2014, 114/209 subdistricts covered (55%)</i>
Most affected areas	Dar'a, Quneitra, Rural Damascus, As-Sweida, Hama, Homs, Damascus, Idleb, Aleppo

2.3.1. Shelter



2.3.1.1. People in Need and geographic priorities

According to a recent data review, some 1.7 million people are in need of shelter support, with the governorates of Dar'a, Quneitra, Rural Damascus, Al-Hasakeh, Damascus, Idleb, and Aleppo being worst affected. (*Data Review 11/2014*) The areas most in need host a high concentration of IDPs and/or have seen extensive destruction of infrastructure as a result of conflict and/or are difficult to access. For example, according to the MSNA, 40% of all individuals in need of shelter are located in Aleppo Governorate, one of the most affected governorates in terms of damage to infrastructure and displacement. (*MSNA 10/2014*)

Al-Khashniyyeh subdistrict, in Quneitra is a geographic priority. The subdistrict reports frequent fighting, and IDPs are forced to reside in open spaces and to a lower extent, in damaged/unfinished buildings. (*MSNA 10/2014*) Within Idleb's IDP settlements, shelter was the least well-covered sector (notably in Bab al-Hawa, Karama and Sarmada clusters) at the time of the MSNA (August-September 2014). Many IDPs receive tents, but these rarely last longer than a year. The poor coverage was attributed to the high price of tents and the lack of contingency warehousing capacity of humanitarian actors, and is expected to grow more urgent as temperatures drop further. (*MSNA 10/2014*)

In Homs, half of the besieged Al-Wa'er suburb's population (estimated at 130,000) are IDPs and reportedly live in unstable conditions in makeshift accommodations, schools and unfinished

'The main constraint to accessing shelter countrywide is the lack of financial resources coupled with an increase in rental costs.'

buildings. According to an UNOSAT assessment that was concluded in April 2014, more than three years of conflict has led to 13,800 structures in the city of Homs being damaged (42% severely, 36% moderately) or destroyed (22%). Continued heavy fighting until the May ceasefire is certain to have occasioned additional destruction, although from then onwards some limited reconstruction may also have taken place. Returnees to areas of origin, including to Homs, reportedly face difficulties rehabilitating partially damaged structures. (*WFP 15/10/2014, UNOSAT 06/11/2014, Data Review 11/2014*)

Those residing in informal settlements, collective centres, and damaged or unfinished buildings are most vulnerable. The low quality of housing offers little protection from the elements, overcrowding, lack of privacy and resulting social tensions, etc. The number of IDPs in informal settlements increased by more than 50% in 2014 between January and September. By September, over 170,000 IDPs were residing in informal settlements, primarily in the north, where 130 informal IDP camps and settlements were recorded. The subsequent siege of Kobani by IS is certain to have increased the recorded needs. With continual displacement and limited safe spaces, the absorption capacity of these settlements is a growing concern. Nine informal tented settlements were identified in the south (Dar'a and Quneitra). The Syrian Ministry of Local Administration (MoLA) reported that 180,000 individuals are residing in 997 public collective shelters across all 14 governorates. However, the data has some limitations as it only covers areas accessible by MoLA staff. (*MSNA 10/2014, Data Review 11/2014*)

2.3.1.2. Access and availability Constraints

The main constraint to accessing shelter countrywide is the lack of financial resources coupled with an increase in rental costs. While cash assistance has been indicated as the priority, both the lack of supply in the market or the low quality of shelter items has also been noted. In Rural Damascus, security constraints hampering access to shelter was flagged by 100% of assessed communities. (*MSNA 10/2014, Data Review 11/2014*)

In the conflict-affected areas of Ar-Raqqa, Deirez-Zor, Al-Hasakeh, Idleb and Aleppo governorates, accommodation options are in low supply, prompting many to stay with host communities. In the relatively calm governorates of Lattakia and Al-Hasakeh, the unavailability or unsustainability of shelters is also exacerbated by the lack of shelter repair tools and materials. (*MSNA 10/2014*)

In Hama Governorate, insecurity of belongings (in temporary shelters) was flagged as a concern in six of nine subdistricts assessed by the Syria Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) conducted in August-September. (*MSNA 10/2014*)

2.3.1.3. Coping Mechanisms

Coping mechanisms adopted by communities in need include improvised tent repairs and sharing of accommodation by multiple families to reduce rent burdens. (MSNA 10/2014) The latter could lead to increased interpersonal and social tensions.

In governorates where shelter needs were assessed by the MSNA to be relatively low (such as Al-Hasakeh), the situation is certain to have already deteriorated by the current winter months, especially given inadequate protection against hard weather conditions, and shortages in materials and tools for the repairs and economic resources. (MSNA 10/2014)

2.3.2. NFI

2.3.2.1. People in Need and geographic priorities

Dar'a, Quneitra, Rural Damascus, Al-Hasakeh and Damascus were found to be in critical need of NFI support. According to the MSNA, Dar'a hosts the largest absolute number of individuals in acute need, who cited water storage containers, solar lamps (notably for the winter), and bedding items as priorities, in decreasing order of importance. (MSNA 10/2014, Data Review 11/2014) Alongside IDPs, female-headed households have been identified as the most in need of NFI and shelter assistance. (MSNA 10/2014)

2.3.2.2. Access and availability Constraints

As with shelter, the main constraint to accessing NFIs is the lack of financial resources exacerbated by increases in market prices. While cash assistance has been indicated as the priority, both the lack of supply in the market or the low quality of NFI items has also been noted. After cash assistance, access to water containers and bedding material rank as priority needs. (MSNA 10/2014)

Material for shelter refurbishment (plastic, string, repair kits) is generally available at relatively low cost in many places. However, many existing informal settlements are located away from urban commercial hubs and people are burdened by transportation costs.

2.3.2.3. Fuel and electricity

Rising fuel prices and subsidy cuts, compounded by decreasing purchasing power, continue to affect communities everywhere. (MSNA 10/2014) At the start of October, the GoS increased the price of gasoline from 60 to 80 SYP per liter. Additional cuts are expected. (Assafir 20/10/2014, Data Review 11/2014) In Idleb Governorate, diesel prices remain one of the highest in the country: as of October, one liter costs 188 SYP. (WFP 10/2014) In view of the current winter months, when fuel use typically increases, inadequate supply or access will certainly be an even more significant concern.

Other than across-the-board, knock-on effects on consumer goods and other economic sectors, scarcity or rising prices of fuel risk further restricting access to pumped water, forcing communities to rely on open and often contaminated water sources such as rivers.

'Involvement in armed groups is an important source of income, ranging from smuggling to manning road blocks to participating in active conflict'

In Aleppo, IS and the GoS agreed to reactivate a thermal station located east of the city, which until about a year ago served as the city's main source of electricity. (Assafir 28/11/2014)

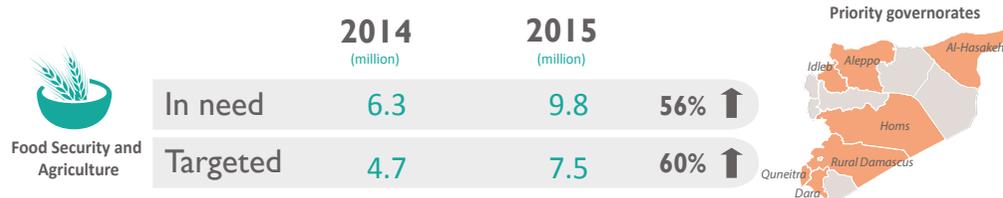
2.3.2.4. Coping Mechanisms

Coping mechanisms adopted by communities lacking fuel for cooking and heating include: burning firewood, scrap parts, and even nylon bags; borrowing or selling of assets to purchase fuel; reducing fuel consumption. (MSNA 10/2014)

Coping mechanisms in the absence of other NFI items include sharing, limiting the acquisition of new items, and in some instances, selling food items to purchase NFI. (MSNA 10/2014)

2.4. LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY

People in Need	9.8 million
	SRP 2015
	4.5 million
	MSNA 10/2014, 11/2014/209 subdistricts covered (56%)
Most affected areas	Rural Damascus, Quneitra, Al-Hasakeh, Homs, Dar'a, Aleppo, Idleb



2.4.1. People in need and geographic priorities

The most recent estimates suggest that 9.8 million people are in need of food and livelihood related assistance, a 56% increase from the 6.3 million people estimated to be in need in December 2013. Without a significant change in the situation, food security will continue to deteriorate in 2015. (SRP 2015)

WFP documented a decrease in food security among its beneficiaries, with the rate of borderline food consumption increasing from 39% to 52% between the 2nd and the 3rd quarter of 2014. It can be assumed that the food security situation for non-WFP beneficiaries residing in inaccessible areas such as districts of Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa is significantly worse. (WFP 18/12/2014)

Estimates on number of people in need of food assistance are partly based on a large scale multi-sector assessment undertaken in ten governorates in August and September. During this assessment, a total of 4.5 million people were reported to be in need of food assistance, amounting to 30% of the assessed population. As this assessment was conducted immediately after the harvest season, and coincided with an expanded food security response, it is assumed that the number of food insecure individuals in the areas assessed has significantly increased since the assessment. (MSNA 30/10/2014)

The Food Security cluster defined priority districts where an estimated 6.8 million people require immediate food assistance. A recent data review and other information indicate that geographical vulnerability is determined by the levels of conflict, access and concentration of IDPs within the district. (Data Review 11/2014) The Syria Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) conducted in August-September supports the assumption that severity of food security is highly dependent on the levels of conflict. Almost all areas facing a life-threatening food security situation also witnessed frequent fighting over extended periods of time. Other priority areas include those that are under (partial) siege, rural areas and areas hosting a large number of IDPs. (MSNA 10/2014, SRP 2015, AI Monitor 24/11/2014, REACH 01/09/2014, Syria Deeply 16/10/2014, NYT 13/11/2014)

'Widespread destruction of critical infrastructure and displacement has set Syria's economy back more than 30 years'

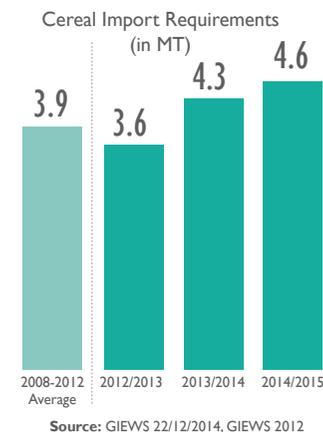
At least 460,000 Palestinian refugees (PR) require food assistance, up from 440,000 a year ago. This amounts to 80% of the 560,000 PR registered in Syria. The estimated 18,000 PR residing in Yarmouk remain a priority concern, as the area has been under siege since July 2013. (Amnesty International 10/03/2014, UNRWA 11/12/2014, SRP 2015, AFP 29/10/2014)

2.4.2. Macro economy

A UN official recently estimated that the sanctions, widespread destruction of critical infrastructure and displacement has set Syria's economy back more than 30 years. The recent scale-back of GoS subsidies is both a cause and a symptom of the contraction of the economy, and highlights the difficulties faced by the GoS to maintain current levels of spending. Other economic problems such as decreasing tax revenues, the costs of military operations, depreciation of the currency and higher import costs, further erode the GoS budget. This trend is expected to lead to further cuts in spending on social welfare, impacting public service provision and the population's purchasing power. (For more information on the possible consequences of GoS budget constraints, see SNAP's latest scenarios). (Washington Post 29/11/2014, AFP 19/11/2014)

Government resources are under further pressure, as a result of the required increase in imports, to substitute for lack of local production. Import costs are increasing sharply, driven by the depreciation of the Syrian currency and economic sanctions. FAO estimates that the cereal import requirement in 2015 will increase to 4.6 million tonnes compared to 4.3 million tonnes in 2014. (FAO 22/12/2014)

In October, Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) was projected at 35%. This means that Syrian families need to spend 35% more Syrian Pounds to purchase the same amount of goods compared to 2013. Although disaggregated information is not available, it can be assumed that CPI differs significantly between subdistricts. The main source of the high inflation rate is the increase in food and fuel prices. (Economist 10/10/2014)



2.4.3. Availability

In several areas, availability of food items is a major concern, with a low quantity of goods available on the market. One of the main determinants of food availability are conflict levels, with shortages of basic food commodities more commonly reported in areas experiencing frequent fighting. During the MSNA for instance, in all but one conflict area shortages of infant formula were reported. Other areas reporting shortages include areas with a large concentration of IDPs (e.g. Hajin, Deir-ez-Zor) and areas that are effectively cut off from supply routes by border restrictions (Quamishli, Al-Hasakeh) or besiegement (Eastern Ghouta in Damascus, Al-Waer in Homs) In addition, the quantity of food in markets was reportedly lower in rural areas compared with urban areas. There are unconfirmed reports of demonstrations in Ar-Raqqa and Duma as a result of food shortages. (Al Jazeera 10/10/2014, MSNA 30/10/2014, Syria Deeply 16/10/2014, Assafir 17/11/2014, Al Monitor 24/11/2014, ibtimes 25/11/2014)

Restricted agricultural production and supply chain cuts have led to a lack of food diversity in markets and shops, with fresh fruit, vegetables and dairy shortages widely reported across the country. (MSNA 30/10/2014, Data Review 11/2014)

Several assessments have demonstrated that the functionality of bakeries is hampered by electricity shortages and cooking fuel. (ACU 01/09/2014, MSNA 30/10/2014, REACH 01/09/2014) An assessment across over 400 bakeries in 10 governorates in September 2014 found that most bakeries rely on unsustainable or illicit sources of flour: Non-Governmental Organisations were the main source of flour (41%) for assessed bakeries while IS was reported as the second main source of flour (28%), providing flour to bakeries located in areas under its control. In many areas armed groups play an important role in the wheat and bread supply chain. The 'militarisation' of this staple food exposes the population to exploitation. (ACU 01/09/2014, OCHA 03/10/2014)

2.4.4. Access

Despite existing availability constraints, access to food remains a greater challenge. Declining purchasing power is a major source of food insecurity, fuelled by a decrease in income generating opportunities and surges in prices for basic commodities.

2.4.4.1. Sources of income

The MSNA showed that sources of income have changed in the areas assessed. In 2013, food crop production and sales followed by skilled employment/salaries and petty trade were the most important sources of income. As a number of skilled workers have left Syria and the provision of government salaries has decreased, people have turned to different sources of income. Food crop production and sales remains the most important source of income according to MSNA results, but across the areas assessed, petty trade is the 2nd main source at the time of the assessment, followed by casual/wage labour. (MSNA 10/2014)

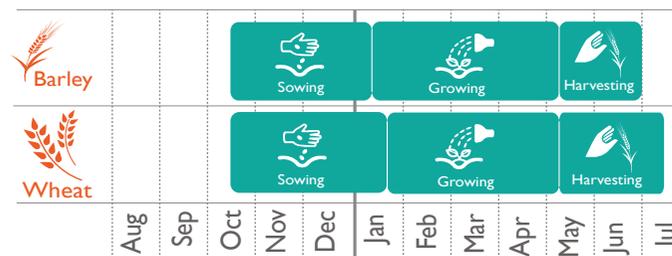
Farmers are currently sowing wheat and barley. The Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian reform estimates that wheat and barley are being planted respectively 23% and 19% less than intended, compared with a 21% decrease last year. This seems a modest estimate when taking into account the damage to infrastructure, high levels of displacement, conflict barring access to land and shortages of inputs. (FAO 22/12/2014, MSNA 10/2014)

'Declining purchasing power is a major source of food insecurity, fuelled by a decrease in income generating opportunities and surges in prices for basic commodities.'

As food crop production and sales have remained the primary source of income in many areas and as there is a growing focus on local food production for household consumption, any decrease in yields will have an immediate impact on economic resources and the amount of food available to households in these areas. (FAO 29/08/2014, Al Jazeera 16/11/2014) A small scale livelihoods assessment in Aleppo and Idleb highlighted the importance of own production, with the difference between poor and very poor families largely influenced by whether families were able to grow food in home gardens. (Save the Children 01/2015)

The livelihoods assessment identified several labour opportunities that have emerged during the conflict. The assessment confirmed the assumption that in areas outside of GoS control, involvement in armed groups is an important source of income, ranging from smuggling to manning road blocks to participating in active conflict. (Save the Children 11/2015)

CROP CALENDAR SYRIA



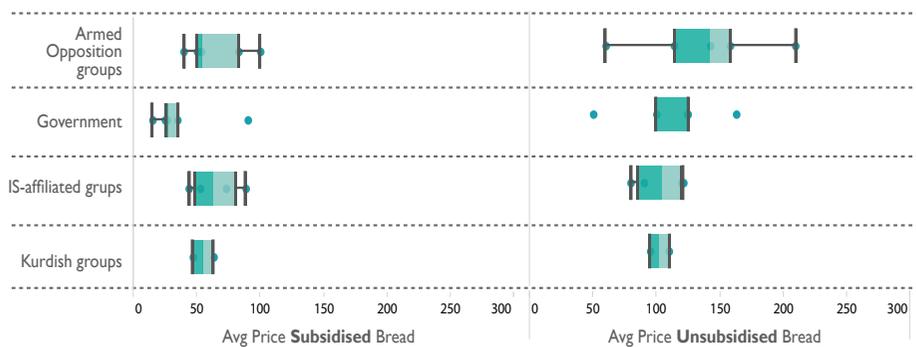
2.4.4.2. Food prices and financial access

WFP market price data shows that after a relatively stable period between December 2013 and July 2014, bread prices started to increase as of August. By October, the bread price in shops reached SYP 75, a 50% increase from July 2014. This price surge is linked to the increasing fuel prices following subsidy cuts. (WFP 31/10/2014) GoS attributes fuel price increases to the thriving black market, and the frequent power cuts caused by the shelling of power stations. (Damascus Bureau 24/11/2014) One local source reports that International Coalition attacks on oil refineries have resulted in electricity cuts and by extension, spikes in food prices in parts of Ar-Raqqa. (Syria Deeply 16/10/2014) This could not be confirmed.

There is no updated price information available since October, but it can be assumed that bread prices, on average, have further increased as a result of fuel price increases during the current winter months. (WFP 31/10/2014)

Prices for commodities vary widely between areas. In October, WFP recorded the highest price for bread in Dar'a (SYP 200/kg) and the lowest in Hama, Homs, Lattakia and Tartous (SYP 30/kg). Prices are not only influenced by the levels of conflict and supply routes, but also differ on the basis of areas of control. An analysis of the MSNA data shows that subsidised bread in government-controlled areas is more often closer to the pre-crisis subsidised price of SYP 25. In addition, prices for unsubsidised bread vary widely in areas controlled by armed opposition groups (AOG), compared to Kurdish groups and IS-affiliated groups, which is in line with reports that the latter groups tightly control the bread supply line. (MSNA 30/10/2014, WFP 31/10/2014)

AVERAGE BREAD PRICE PER AREA OF CONTROL (MSNA SEP 2014)



The MSNA's results show that food is the main expenditure for households. Price increases result in an increase in poverty and further difficulties accessing health care, water and shelter. (MSNA 10/2014)

2.4.5. Food assistance and coping mechanisms

As a result of funding cuts, WFP was forced to reduce the size and scope of its food distributions. In October, the food basket was reduced to a little over 1,100 kcal, while November's value was predicted to be 60% of the recommended nutritional value (2,100 kcal). (AFP 13/10/2014)

'By October, the bread price in shops reached SYP75, a 50% increase from July 2014. This price surge is linked to the increasing fuel prices following subsidy cuts.'

- The Food Security Cluster expects that the current and possible future cuts will result in:
- Increased population movements within Syria and, where possible, across its borders in search of income generating opportunities and basic needs.
 - An increase in food insecurity, which is likely to exacerbate the vulnerability of communities to the influence of IS and other extremist groups. (Food Security Cluster 10/2014)
 - Adoption of other harmful coping mechanisms, including early marriage, begging and human rights violations and child labour, as well as eating lower quality and less nutritious food. (WFP 18/12/2014, Save the Children 01/2015)

The MSNA results confirm the use of the above-mentioned negative coping mechanisms, despite the fact that the assessment followed the harvest season, when food access is expected to be above average. The MSNA further noted a difference between coping mechanisms adopted in urban areas and rural areas, depending on the resources available. Urban areas reported slightly more areas where people coped by reducing the number of meals eaten in a day; rural areas reported a higher frequency of using wild food, hunting, harvesting immature crops or collecting food from wild plants compared to urban areas. (MSNA 10/2014)

2.5. HEALTH

People in Need	12.2 million
	SRP 2015
	2.4 million
	MSNA 10/2014, 114/209 subdistricts covered (55%)
Most affected areas	Quneitra, Dar'a, Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa,



2.5.1. People in need and geographic priorities

Within the Syria Strategic Response Plan (SRP 2015), the Health sector provided an estimate on the population in need. The new estimate covers all those in need of health support, rather than the total population, as reflected in the 2014 estimate.

The Health sector severity ranking determined that 23 out of 272 subdistricts in Syria had the severest lifethreatening humanitarian health needs. Quneitra, Dar'a, Aleppo and Ar-Raqqa were specifically highlighted within a recent data review as areas with critical needs. (Data Review 11/2014) In addition, during the Syria Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) conducted in August-September, Deir-ez-Zor was highlighted as particularly affected, with a large risk of disease outbreaks and limited humanitarian access. (MSNA 10/2014)

2.5.2. Targeting of health facilities

Targeting of medical staff and health facilities continues to be a serious issue dealt with by Syria's medical system. Human-rights groups say that systematic and deliberate attacks, by all parties to the conflict, on medical personnel and facilities have become the norm. Such attacks occur all over the country; on 16 December government forces carried airstrikes that involved hitting the largest hospital in Al-Mayadin in Deir-ez-Zor, as well as another hospital in Kafr Nobol in Idlib. These attacks result not only in the deaths of civilians and medical staff, but also tend to severely damage facilities and render them nonfunctional, thereby reducing access to medical care for everyone in the catchment area. In fact, it was reported that more than half of Syria's hospitals have been destroyed or badly damaged and that an estimated only 47 hospitals (40%) are fully functional. (Syria Deeply 20/11/2014, Syrian Observer 17/11/2014, OCHA Turkey 19/12/2014, SRP 12/2014) Targeting of health facilities was reported as an obstacle reducing access to health care particularly in Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa and Rural

'Doctors are sometimes forced to work in secret, moving hospitals to underground locations to avoid barrel bombing and shelling'

Damascus in the MSNA. (MSNA 10/2014)

To cope with these challenges, a local source reports that doctors are sometimes forced to work in secret, moving hospitals to underground locations to avoid barrel bombing and shelling of their facilities. Such underground locations are not guaranteed to have electric power or medical supplies, compromising the quality of care. (Syria Deeply 20/11/2014)

2.5.3. Vaccinations

Of 1.2 million children under five years targeted in the August/September polio vaccination campaign, UNICEF reported vaccinating 1.0 million across the governorates. However, as occurred in previous campaigns, children were inaccessible in areas experiencing conflict and therefore over 28,000 children were not immunised against polio. (UNICEF 13/10/2014)

Other immunisation campaigns, such as against measles, face similar challenges and present a growing concern regionally and globally. Overall, it is estimated that vaccination rates plunged from 90% before the war to 52% in 2014, allowing diseases such as measles, hepatitis and typhoid to spread (figures for typhoid range around 6,500 cases and 4,200 cases for measles). (Reuters 19/12/2014, Syrian Observer 18/11/2014)

2.5.4. Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases

The lack of medicines, medical equipment, and available staff have made it increasingly difficult to treat non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and cancer.

However, with crowded shelter conditions, lack of water and hygiene products, scarce clean water and garbage accumulation, there has also been a noticeable rise in hygiene- and water-related communicable diseases. There have been outbreaks of scabies and lice (in parts of Aleppo), the emergence of Myiasis, a tropical disease spread by flies (in Eastern Ghouta), and other diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis. These are only a handful of examples, underscoring the communicable diseases burdening the Syrian population. (Syrian Observer 01/12/2014, UNRWA 03/10/2014, Syria Deeply 20/11/2014, Reuters 19/12/2014, Reuters 27/11/2014)

The MSNA further found that skin diseases was the most reported health concern across all 119 subdistricts in the ten assessed governorates, followed by watery and bloody diarrhoea, kidney diseases, fever of unknown origin and Acute Jaundice Syndrome (AJS) among the top ten most reported health concerns. Such diseases indicate a direct linkage to deteriorating water, sanitation and hygiene conditions.

Cases of AJS have been increasing over the last few months, most notably in Deir-ez-Zor and Idlib, and the number of recorded Leishmaniasis cases has been increasing over the last quarter (namely in Aleppo, with cases also reported in Idlib and Al-Hasakeh). Environmental pollution, damaged infrastructure, lack of waste management capacity, and frequent population movements are among the compounding effects particularly contributing to a spread of Leishmaniasis. Health actors estimate that enhanced efforts at provision of medicine are needed to cope with the outbreak. An estimated 750,000 ampules of Glucantime are required, possibly more, as data remains incomplete. (PI 23/10/2014)

Additionally, Typhoid presented as the leading cause of diseases throughout the last quarter. These diseases are closely linked to poor hygiene conditions, attributed to poor water quality and poor sanitation services such as lack of garbage collection. (WHO-EWARS Weekly Bulletins 12/10/2014-22/11/2014, ACU-EWARN Weekly Bulletins 12/10/2014-20/12/2014) Typhoid is endemic in Syria, and outbreaks are still reported in Aleppo, Der-ez-Zor, Idlib, Ar-Raqqa and Lattakia. Lattakia is considered to have a strong reporting system, thus the number of recorded typhoid cases there indicates a serious concern. Typhoid is also a symptom of underlying problems in access and availability of safe drinking water issues and poor hygiene practices. While fever of unknown origin has increased, as also confirmed by the MNSA, this does not necessarily represent typhoid cases. There is a heightened need for lab tests to confirm cases of fever of unknown origin and a focus on prevention efforts to avoid bigger outbreaks. (PI 23/10/2014) Records by the main disease surveillance systems indicated that the number of people with suspected measles continuously declined over the last quarter. While this is encouraging, it is important to remember that the peak season for measles is the spring – it remains important to pursue regular monitoring and vaccination activities in order to prevent outbreaks in 2015. Conversely, respiratory illnesses were on the increase (specifically upper respiratory tract illnesses, severe acute respiratory illnesses, pertussis and bronchiolitis), reflecting the seasonal impact, and in some areas the impact of poor air quality as well. (WHO-EWARS Weekly Bulletins 12/10/2014-22/11/2014, ACU-EWARN Weekly Bulletins 12/10/2014-20/12/2014)

For all communicable diseases, the main source of information is the surveillance systems EWARNS (Early Warning Alert and Response Network) and ERWAS (Early Warning and Response System). Both systems are sentinel site approaches whereas these should be exhaustive/comprehensive and even the compiled caseload is likely to represent an underestimation. Compilation is thus recommended for all communicable diseases. As long as EPI efforts are not comprehensive enough, further outbreaks are expected. Diphtheria is one of the potential risks for the upcoming months.

The number of Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP, a common sign for possible polio) cases also declined over the last quarter. EWARNS figures indicate that there were no recorded AFP cases in the last week of December, and a total of 92 AFP cases were reported by its sentinel stations throughout 2014; EWARNS captured similar declining figures through its sentinel sites. The decline in AFP figures is encouraging as well – and indicative of the success that can be achieved through widespread collaboration to actualise a comprehensive vaccination and awareness campaign. This underscores the vital importance of continuing such efforts throughout 2015 in order to prevent outbreaks and/or escalations of devastating diseases such as polio. (WHO-EWARS Weekly Bulletins 12/10/2014-22/11/2014, ACU-EWARN Weekly Bulletins 12/10/2014-20/12/2014)

2.5.5. Conflict-related Injuries, Reproductive and Mental Health

The MSNA found that some of the biggest health issues dealt with throughout the country were conflict-related injuries. This is particularly the case in areas experiencing heavy fighting, aerial bombardments, bombings and sniper activity. In mass casualty events, such as the bombing of a market in Eastern

'It is estimated that approximately 1,500 women give birth in dire conditions every day'

Ghouta early in October, depleted medical supplies and facilities, leave overstretched staff struggling to provide adequate treatment to all those injured. It is important to note this does not even account for needed rehabilitation and recovery services – which are often more scarce than trauma services. (MSF 16/10/2014, MSNA 10/2014)

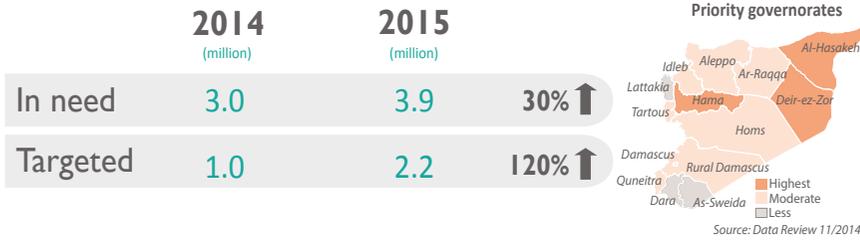
While addressing these injuries is challenging given the dynamic conflict environment and limited resources, international media reports that another challenge has arisen in parts of northern Syria in addressing injuries. Since the start of the conflict, emergency cases occurring near enough the Turkish border have often been rushed cross-border to receive treatment in Turkey. Coupled with depleted medical supplies, as fighting increases in areas near the Turkish border, such as Ain al Arab/Kobani (bordering the Turkish district of Suruc), there has also been a sharp increase in the volume of injuries requiring treatment – and more cases of people seeking treatment on the Turkish side. Delays in getting through and the increased demand on Turkish medics present an additional and increasing challenge in providing timely medical attention to those injured. (Reuters 05/10/2014, Reuters 14/10/2014)

Data for reproductive/maternal health and mental health issues are slim. Recent reports have indicated that services addressing these health concerns are inadequate. It is estimated that approximately 1,500 women give birth in dire conditions every day (given the poor health infrastructure and available medical equipment and staff). (SRP 12/2014) It is further estimated that given repeated exposure to severely distressing situations many Syrians are affected by mental health and psychological problems, with an estimated 350,000 suffering from severe mental disorders and over two million suffering from mild to moderate conditions such as anxiety and depression disorders. (UNHCR 19/10/2014)

2.5.6. Nutrition



Nutrition



'2% of the areas assessed in the MSNA reported that the amount of food consumed in the prior 30 days had reduced.'

The nutrition cluster highlighted Hama, Deir-ez-Zor and Al-Hasakeh as areas particularly in need, based on a combination of small scale nutrition assessments.

A recent Rapid Nutrition Assessment (conducted March – July 2014) found a serious nutrition situation in Hama, Aleppo and Deir-ez-Zor. Within the sample of children living in collective shelters and host communities in these governorates, the overall Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate was 7.2% and Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) was 2.3% — both are levels of 'poor' nutrition by WHO classification. This is not surprising given that nearly a third of surveyed families indicated they did not have enough food for all family members and that nearly 80% of families rely on food aid in combination with purchased food. (UNICEF 22/12/2014)

42% of the assessed areas in the MSNA (August and September, 2014) reported that the amount of food consumed in the prior 30 days had reduced. Food consumption was particularly reduced in Dar'a, Quneitra, Hama, Al-Hasakeh and Aleppo. More rural areas reported a reduction of food consumption compared with urban areas. Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh and Hama were the only three governorates in the MSNA reporting that chronic malnutrition is one of the most reported health concerns. Acute malnutrition was reported to be a health concern in Aleppo, Hama, Rural Damascus and Lattakia. (MSNA 10/2014)

2.6. WASH

	11.6 million <small>SRP 2015</small>
	4.6 million <small>MSNA 10/2014, 114/209 subdistricts covered (55%)</small>
Most affected areas	Deir-ez-Zor, Dar'a, Ar-Raqqa, Aleppo and Idleb

	2014 <small>(million)</small>	2015 <small>(million)</small>	
 WASH	In need	21.0	11.6 45% ↓
	Targeted	10.0	16.5 65% ↑



2.6.1. Most affected areas and groups

Almost four years of conflict has severely impacted access to and availability of clean water and sanitation, to a point where an estimated 35 % of the water infrastructure is damaged, impacting both the quality and quantity of current water supplies, forcing civilians to use alternative sources of water. An estimated 12.2 million people are in need of water and/or sanitation support. The number of people targeted (16.5 million) exceeds the number of people in need, likely because water interventions, such as repairs to water infrastructure, benefit a large number of people directly and indirectly. (MSNA 10/2014, Data Review 11/2014)

WASH continues to be one of the highest priorities in Syria, especially in eastern and northern Syria. Deir-ez-Zor, Dar'a, Ar-Raqqa, Aleppo and Idleb were highlighted as areas with critical WASH needs within a recent data review. All data indicate that WASH issues are mostly related to the conflict dynamics and the capacity of the infrastructure to either resist to damages or to be timely repaired. Certain areas within the governorates of Rural Damascus and of Dar'a are within WASH priorities owing to the number of high intensity conflicts occurring within these governorates. (MSNA 10/2014, Data Review 11/2014)

On a country level, Aleppo Governorate had the highest number of people in need of WASH assistance, mainly because of the damage of the city's water network in July 2014. In contrast, relatively better water infrastructure and a lesser number of people in need of water are reported in Lattakia, where the governorate's stability has left its water infrastructure relatively undamaged. IDPs living in collective shelters and unfinished and damaged buildings, however, are in need within the governorate. (MSNA 10/2014)

The importance of the WASH as a priority sector is further confirmed in the latest Strategic Response Plan for Syria (SRP 2015) where the WASH sector has requested the 5th largest budget and has one of highest PiN (11.6 million). Furthermore, the Syria Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) conducted in August-September (ten governorates out of 14 and 114 subdistricts out of 155) reports 4.6 million people in urgent need of WASH assistance, 2.7 million of which are reportedly facing a life-threatening situation. (MSNA 10/2014, OCHA 18/12/2014)

Owing to overcrowded shelters, lack of adequate water infrastructure and relatively lower financial capabilities, IDP populations in informal settlements and collective shelters have been identified, by the MSNA, as the most vulnerable population groups in terms of access to water; aggravating the risk of communicable diseases and diarrhoea. IDPs residing in damaged and unfinished buildings, particularly in Deir-ez-Zor, Quneitra and Ar-Raqqa, are also among the most in need of water. One of the main problems reported in IDP collective shelters and informal settlements was the lack of storage capacity for water. (MSNA 10/2014)

2.6.2. Access and Availability

The impact of electricity shortages on water availability has been mostly reported in conflict areas, such as Deir-ez-Zor and Dar'a, due to the damage of electricity infrastructure. In late October, Idlib City's water supply was disrupted for six days after fighting damaged an electricity cable. (UNSG 21/11/2014, MSNA 10/2014)

Another common concern in access to water is reportedly the lack of money, income or resources to buy bottled water and water from water trucks, which is in line with the fact that one of the most commonly used sources for water is water trucking, as well as financial incapability to buy fuel to operate pumps for individual water wells. (REACH 10/2014)

The water network in Aleppo has been among the most damaged water networks in Syria. Estimates hover around 30%, with most of the network suffering slight to no damage and approximately 12% catalogued as heavily damaged to completely destroyed. Although there have been repairs, the network is not fully functional. In early November, UNICEF reported a water crisis in Aleppo, arising from a reduction in the water level of dams and armed opposition groups (AOG) controlling the water supplies. (MSNA 10/2014, REACH 10/2014, Washington Post 29/11/2014, UNICEF 12/11/2014, Independent 12/05/2014)

Water, among other basic services, has been used as a means of coercion by all parties to the conflict. A local source reports that opposition factions in the Barada valley, which holds Damascus' main water supply, completely cut off water from Damascus for several days in November, allegedly as a means to pressure the Government of Syria (GoS) into halting military airstrikes on Barada. (Syrian Observer 28/11/2014, Syrian Observer 02/12/2014)

Access to water in the Yarmouk refugee camp is reportedly deteriorating, and Palestinians in the camp continue to be deprived of water due to intentional water cuts. (AFP 29/10/2014, Jafra 12/2014)

Contamination of the Euphrates River, which provides water for Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa and other areas in its surroundings, also poses a major problem in water quality. The river has been reportedly contaminated by the spillover of oil, as well as the spillover of sewage water because of power outages, affecting not only drinking water but also agricultural production. This has caused health concerns in subdistricts that rely on the river for drinking and irrigation. (MSNA 10/2014)

Damage of water infrastructure from shelling and clashes have not only led to a decrease in the quantity of water provided by networks but have also led to a decrease in water quality. MSNA reports that breaks and leaks in the water network have contributed to the contamination of water because of reduced pressure of water pumps. (MSNA 10/2014)

Alternative sources

	Aleppo	Al-Hasakeh	Ar-Raqqa	Dara'a	Deir-ez-Zor	Hama	Idleb	Lattakia	Quneitra	Rural Damasc	All
Trucked (purchased)	91%	88%	60%	100%	80%	100%	87%	60%	100%	100%	87%
Wells	97%	75%	50%	71%	53%	89%	83%	80%	100%	100%	80%
Public pipe network	66%	56%	90%	57%	60%	44%	57%	60%	50%	25%	61%
Reservoirs / tank	40%	6%	60%	14%	33%	56%	48%	40%	0%	0%	36%
Purchased bottles	14%	0%	10%	0%	27%	0%	13%	60%	0%	0%	13%
Springs	3%	0%	0%	29%	0%	0%	22%	60%	50%	25%	10%
Trucked (free)	6%	13%	20%	14%	0%	33%	0%	20%	0%	25%	10%
Rivers	0%	0%	40%	0%	27%	0%	4%	20%	50%	0%	9%

2.6.3. Water Quality

Access to chemical water treatment remains a challenge. Even the quality of water provided by trucks, which is becoming one of the main sources of water, cannot be guaranteed. Piped and trucked water sources are reportedly no longer being treated on a regular basis. The discovery of a cluster of polio cases in Deir-ez-Zor in October 2013 is believed to be linked to the lack of proper water treatment. (SINA 12/2013, NGO Forum COAR 01/2014, AWGSS 18/03/2014)

Access to and availability of clean water is expected to deteriorate in the near future, with 2014 having witnessed one of the worst drought periods in Syria in the past 60 years. (Data Review 11/2014, Syria Deeply 01/12/2014) Violence will continue to obstruct access to vital equipment and services necessary for the continuation and/or rehabilitation of water networks such as spare parts, water treatment chemicals, maintenance, etc.

2.6.4. Hygiene and Sanitation

The MSNA identified a lack of personal hygiene products, such as soap and shampoo, on the markets in 40% of all assessed subdistricts. This can be traced to the decrease in local production of hygiene products because of the conflict; it was also reported that among the raw materials needed for hygiene products are chemical substances subject to international sanctions. The lack of personal space in collective shelters, informal camps and unfinished buildings also poses a problem for IDPs unable to wash or bathe. (MSNA 10/2014)

Conflict events, particularly the use of heavy-damage weapons such as barrel bombs, have significantly damaged sewage networks. Thus, civilians have resorted to other means of sewage disposal. 74% of subdistricts assessed by the MSNA were relying on soak pits as a means of sewage disposal. This was more apparent in rural areas (85%). The second most common method was using the partially functioning public networks for sewage disposal. However, in 37% of subdistricts assessed by the MSNA, sewage was being disposed in public, particularly in Hama, Ar-Raqqa, Al-Hasakeh, Aleppo and Quneitra, where high numbers of skin diseases were also reported. (MSNA 10/2014)

Garbage collection and disposal have been significantly hampered throughout the conflict, leading to the accumulation of garbage in public spaces. This is mainly due to the lack of municipal capacity to carry out services, including incineration services, possibly due to physical access restrictions and lack of equipment and staff. (MSNA 10/2014)

2.6.5. Health Impact

As a result of the deteriorating WASH situation, outbreaks of waterborne and communicable diseases continue to be reported. The lack of water, sanitation services and hygiene supplies manifested most recently in an outbreak of lice and scabies in parts of Aleppo City and eastern rural Aleppo. Thousands of children were infected, according to health facilities and schools, mainly due to prolonged water shortages in Aleppo; accumulation of garbage; inability to wash clothes because of a lack of fuel and electricity, and lack of medicines. (ACU-EWARN 13/12/2014, MSNA 10/2014)

The accumulation of waste in populated areas increases the risk for communicable diseases, especially in besieged areas, heavily contested areas and among the high concentrations of IDPs living in unfinished buildings. (MSNA 10/2014)

2.6.6. Coping Mechanisms

Lack and disruption of pre-conflict water sources have led civilians to resort to alternatives. MSNA identified the most common mechanisms to cope with a reduction of water services. They include water trucking, digging wells, rain water collection, getting poor-quality water from irrigation channels, economising daily consumption of water, relying on wealthier neighbours, and prioritising the use of water for necessities instead of hygiene practices and house cleaning. (MSNA 10/2014)

MSNA identified water trucking as the third most commonly used source of water among the ten governorates assessed. Water trucking represented 30% of water sources in Idleb, 27% in Hama and 26% in Deir-ez-Zor. However, the increase in price of water sold amid a decrease and lack of household income, as well as the reported use of unsafe water sources for water trucking still pose serious problems in the use of water trucking. (MSNA 10/2014)

2.7. EDUCATION

	People in Need 4.5 million
	<small>SRP 2015</small>
	2.8 million <small>MSNA 10/2014, 114/209 subdistricts covered (55%)</small>
Most affected areas	Dar'a, Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa, Rural Damascus, Idleb and Aleppo

	2014 <small>(million)</small>	2015 <small>(million)</small>	
 <small>Education</small>	In need	3.9	4.5 15% ↑
	Targeted	3.9	4.5 15% ↑

2.7.1. Most affected areas and groups

The Syria Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) conducted in August-September indicates that the vast majority of school aged children residing in contested areas or in areas which have experienced intense armed conflict do not attend primary or secondary learning facilities on a regular basis. All governorates, apart from Tartous and As-Sweida were identified in high need of educational support within a recent data review. In Aleppo, one of the most affected governorates, there was a decline of about 640,000 in the number of registered students between 2012 and 2014, a decrease that can only be partly explained by displacement of school aged children. (MSNA 10/2014, Data Review 11/2014)

2.7.2. Attendance Rates

Before the crisis, Syria had near universal attendance rates, with 97% of children attending primary school and 67% attending secondary school. Literacy rates across the country surpassed the regional average. (UNICEF 13/12/2013) As a direct impact of the conflict, between 2.1 and 2.4 million school aged children are either out of school or attending school irregularly (which adds up to 50% of all children between 6 and 17). Some of them have been out for two to three years. (UNICEF 19/12/2014, MSNA 10/2014)

According to the MSNA, attendance of students in secondary schools is lower than in primary schools. Only around 10% of all assessed areas reported that 76-100% of boys and girls within the appropriate age-group were attending secondary learning spaces regularly; 20% of all assessed areas reported a 76-100% attendance rate for primary school aged children. (MSNA 10/2014)

2.7.3. Barriers to attendance

Overall, the access to education continues to deteriorate. The MSNA and other information sources confirm the main issues related to access to education:

- Constant shutdowns of education facilities, to be either turned into shelters for newly arrived IDPs from other conflict affected areas in Syria, or to be converted into command centres for military forces. According to the MSNA, Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor and Idleb have the highest percentages of occupied schools, ranging between 20% and 30%.
- Damage and destruction caused by continuous fighting. According to the MSNA, heavily damaged and destroyed schools were reported in Quneitra and Rural Damascus. Among all the assessed areas in the MSNA the proportion of destroyed schools was over 40%.
- Shortage of teachers. The Ministry of Education reportedly lost more than 20% of its pre-conflict workforce. A Rapid Public School Assessment in Northern Syria found that a large part of the official staff covered by the assessment (80%) did not regularly receive a salary and the system relies heavily on volunteers. Some other reports added that the Ministry of Education is trying to put more pressure on residents in contested areas by withholding salaries, as is the case for 6,000 teachers in the Kurdish-dominated city of Afrin, in north Aleppo. (Al Jazeera 10/11/2014, WFP 20/11/2014, MSNA 10/2014, ACU 30/11/2014, Syrian Observer 05/11/2014, Data Review 11/2014)
- Lack of school supplies. According to the Rapid Public School Assessment in Northern Syria, Hama had the lowest percentage of available teaching books among the assessed public schools, with only 28% of needed books available, followed by Al-Hasakeh with 35%.

The three main reasons identified for children not attending school, which represented 78% of all the answers provided in the Public School Assessment in Northern Syria, include:

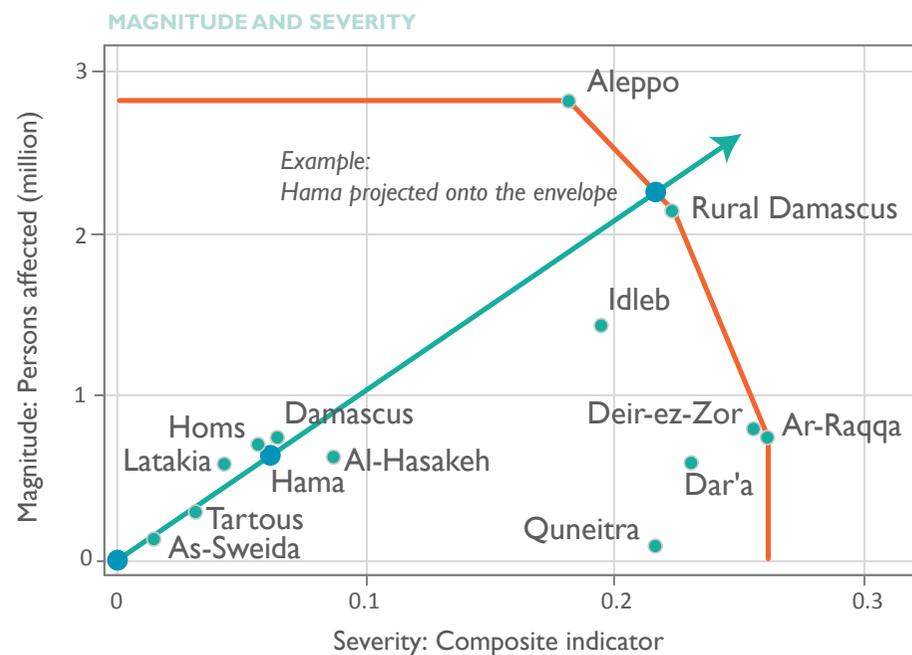
- Participation of children in the household's income-generating activities.
- Continuous displacement.
- Security reasons, as many children have to travel through insecure and conflict-affected areas.

2.7.4. Curriculum

The type of education provided differs per area, depending on who controls the area. In many areas under Islamic State (IS) control, the curriculum was adapted to fit the group's extremist views. Classes such as history, philosophy, music, physics and literature have been cancelled or significantly adjusted, while teachers are forced to follow religion-based teacher training. In some cases, schools have been used for recruiting under-aged children for active combat. It has also been reported that it has become common in IS controlled areas to show in schools videos of mass executions of GoS soldiers, provoking children's desensitisation to extreme violence. In Ar-Raqqa, there is a large disparity between girls and boys attendance rates, with girls facing above-average difficulties in accessing education, attributable to the restrictions imposed by IS on female engagement in the public sphere. In areas that remain under control of the Government of Syria (GoS), the Ministry of Education continues to deliver public education services. In these areas, most of the schools remain open, the Syrian national curriculum is followed, and official exams take place. (MSNA 10/2014, Data Review 11/2014, MSNA 10/2014, UN 14/11/2014, Reuters 07/11/2014, ARA news 2/11/2014)

ANNEX A: HUMANITARIAN PRIORITIES AMONG THE 14 GOVERNORATES OF SYRIA

To assess the 14 governorates in terms of their relative humanitarian priority, a Priority Index was formed using information from the latest data review available to SNAP, as well as data from the Syria Strategic Response Plan (SRP 2015). The index combines measures of severity and magnitude. To capture severity, a composite measure was built incorporating five sector severity indicators, the pressure on local society (expressed as the proportion of affected persons), and two factors inhibiting humanitarian action (access and protection challenges). Magnitude is a composite of the numbers of IDPs and persons in need. (At the end of 2014, a comprehensive review of data was undertaken by a number of humanitarian actors, including sector specialists. This review, which is based on the MSNA and a range of other primary and secondary sources, provides detailed information on the current humanitarian situation in Syria as well as estimates on the population in need and displaced per governorate. An analysis of the data by the participating actors resulted in an initial prioritisation of governorates according to the severity of needs. Although the results of this study have not yet been published, SNAP deems the findings sufficiently authoritative to inform our analysis.)



This scatterplot gives the positions of the governorates on magnitude and severity, combined into a priority index following the 'benefit of the doubt' method of social indicator research. A governorate is assigned high priority if it has a high value on one of the indicators, regardless of its value on the other (i.e., 'enjoys the benefit of the doubt' even if, by its low value on the second, it would not seem to qualify). This is the same as saying that for different governorates severity and magnitude are given different weights. (For a rationale and methodological detail, see Cherchy, L., W. Moens, et al. (2007). 'An introduction to 'benefit of the doubt' composite indicators.' *Social Indicators Research* 82(1): 111-145. The foundations of this method belong to the statistical field of Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA), pioneered by Cooper, W.W., L. M. Seiford, et al. (2007). 'Data envelopment analysis: a comprehensive text with models, applications, references and DEA-solver software'. New York, Springer.)

'Benefit of the doubt' precautions were employed also at the lower levels of index formation. Thus, for each governorate, the maximum value was taken from among the severity scores of the five sectors food security, health, non-food items, shelter and WASH. The protection and humanitarian access metrics seem more comparable; therefore the inhibiting factor score was calculated as their mean score. Between the proportions of IDPs and persons in need in the population (for which the 2011 pre-crisis estimates proxied), again the higher value was taken (only in Lattakia was the IDP proportion higher than that of persons in need). This value can be interpreted as a measure of the pressure on the local society. Because the metrics of sector severity, inhibiting factors, and pressure on the local society are not naturally comparable, these three sub-indices were aggregated multiplicatively into the overall severity index. On multiplicative aggregation, see e.g. Tofallis, C. (2013). 'An automatic-democratic approach to weight setting for the new human development index.' *Journal of Population Economics* 26(4): 1325-1345, and Zhou, P. and B. Ang (2009). 'Comparing MCDA aggregation methods in constructing composite indicators using the Shannon-Spearman measure.' *Social Indicators Research* 94(1): 83-96. Finally, the magnitude was expressed as the larger of the numbers of IDPs and persons in need in the governorate.

This approach saves us from assigning uniform weights to all values of a measure; it also solves the 'apples and oranges' conundrum when measures have incomparable metrics.

The 'benefit of the doubt' method belongs to the statistical field of Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA), which also provides the algorithm for computing the priority scores. There are two motivations for employing the DEA framework in order to model humanitarian priorities. One is the absence of a validated model justifying an identical weight on a given indicator for all areas, groups or cases. The second is a precaution against paternalism: needs assessments should not prejudge, via fixed weights and aggregation modes, the real impact that the conditions/events our indicators try to capture have on people. To counteract that, DEA selects, for each case, the most favourable weighting scheme. This tradition goes back to well-being and deprivation studies (For critical remarks see Decancq, K. and M.A. Lugo (2012). 'Weights in Multidimensional Indices of Wellbeing: An Overview.' *Econometric Reviews* 32(1): 7-34. In the humanitarian field, DEA as a technique is primarily used for the optimisation of logistics. This usage is closer to the original efficiency concept of DEA. See, for an overview, Zinnert, S., H. Abidi, et al. (2011). 'Data Envelopment Analysis for Humanitarian Logistics.' *Maritime Logistics in the Global Economy: Current Trends and Approaches* 5: 423 sqq. and for a practical application, Alsharif, K., E. H. Feroz, et al. (2008). 'Governance of water supply systems in the Palestinian Territories: A data envelopment analysis approach to the management of water resources.' *Journal of Environmental Management* 87(1): 80-94).

Once the severity and magnitude measures are available, the priority scores are computed in two steps, based on the DEA framework:

An envelope (red line) is drawn around the points farthest from the origin, such that the line nowhere bends inward, and is closed by lines from the two extreme points perpendicular to the axes. The observations on the envelope - in our model Aleppo, Rural Damascus, and Ar-Raqqa - are all assigned the highest priority, numerically expressed as a score of one.

To determine the priority scores of the governorates whose points lie inside the envelope, rays are shot from the origin through their points onto the envelope. In the scatterplot, this is exemplified for Hama. By convention, the priority score of an inlying governorate is computed as the ratio of two distances: the distance from the origin to the point divided by the distance from the origin to the projected point on the envelope. Governorates located closer to the envelope are assigned higher priority than those farther removed.

The following table reproduces the severity and magnitude readings as well as the scores:

Governorate	Severity: Composite measure	Magnitude: Persons affected	Humanitarian priority score
Aleppo	0.18	2,824,000	1.00
Ar-Raqqa	0.26	741,000	1.00
Rural Damascus	0.22	2,135,500	1.00
Deir-ez-Zor	0.26	794,000	0.99
Dar'a	0.23	602,000	0.88
Quneitra	0.22	80,000	0.83
Idleb	0.19	1,428,000	0.83
Al-Hasakeh	0.09	632,000	0.37
Damascus	0.06	750,000	0.31
Hama	0.06	636,000	0.28
Homs	0.06	699,000	0.28
Lattakia	0.04	584,000	0.22
Tartous	0.03	278,000	0.14
As-Sweida	0.01	118,500	0.06

Under this model, one might argue that there is a partition into two groups with a sharp break: a high-priority group including the seven governorates from Aleppo to Idleb, and a group of lesser priority, also counting seven governorates, from Al-Hasakeh to As-Sweida. In this latter group, a further distinction seems plausible; the first sub-group would include the five governorates from Al-Hasakeh to Lattakia; the second comprises Tartous and As-Sweida.

The priority score calculation and any classification of governorates based on it assumes the absence of measurement error. Some level of error, however, must be assumed. The 'doubt of the benefit' method, like other composite-measure methods, is sensitive to measurement error. Finer gradations, therefore, are not robust. It is reasonable, however, to expect that the larger differences, i.e. between the high- and low-priority groups, would persist if indicator values were adjusted for error. Within each group, however, the Priority Scores, as presented and calculated in this issue of the RAS, only have indicative value.

Definitions humanitarian profile

Affected

The number of affected refers to people affected by the violence in Syria. The number of affected can be divided in two groups: those non-displaced and those displaced.

Non-Displaced

The non-displaced include all those within Syria that have been, directly or indirectly, affected by the conflict, including those who have been injured, have lost access to essential services, and those whose vulnerability has increased due to the impact of the unrest on livelihoods and access to essential services. (OCHA 05/06/2012)

In addition, this group includes the host community, the people who are part of a community or family receiving displaced people. Host families and communities are considered part of the humanitarian caseload because of the extra stress placed on their resources. As there is currently no information available on the needs of the host communities, these groups are currently excluded from this humanitarian profile.

Displaced

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are those persons or groups of persons who are residing in Syria but who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict. (OCHA 2004)

Refugees and Asylum Seekers are those who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, are outside Syria, and are unable to, or owing to such fear, are unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country. (UN 1951).

For the purpose of this document, the category ‘refugees’ includes those registered, awaiting registration as well as those unregistered – despite the fact that unregistered Syrians are technically not refugees, as their refugee status has not been established. Within this group, the Iraqi and Palestinian refugees are in a particularly vulnerable position, both within Syria as outside.

Others of Concern - Persons who have been displaced by the emergency and form part of the humanitarian caseload, but do not fall into either of the above categories (e.g. migrants, returnees).

Other definitions

In this report the term ‘armed opposition groups’ is used to refer to all armed groups and individuals engaged in armed conflict against the Government of Syria.

Previous SNAP reports

Regional Analysis for Syria

January 2013 – October 2014

Thematic reports

Aleppo Governorate Profile	April 2013
Legal Status of Individuals Fleeing Syria	June 2013
Impact of the Conflict on Syrian Economy and Livelihoods	July 2013
Syrian Border Crossings	September 2013
Assessment Lessons Learned	September 2013
Lebanon Baseline Data	October 2013
Cross-Border Movements of Goods	December 2013
Relief Actors in Syria	December 2013
Jordan Baseline Data	December 2013
Palestinians from Syria	February 2014
Idlib Governorate Profile	June 2014
Explosive Remnants of War	August 2014
The Onset of Winter	October 2014
Latest Scenarios	November 2014

All reports can be found on: <http://www.acaps.org/en/pages/syria-snap-project>

Map data sources

Administration: OCHA Common Operational Datasets. Syria IDP camps: U.S. Department of State HIU, SNAP. Syria IDP movements: WFP. Iraq IDP camps: UNHCR, REACH. Refugee camps: U.S. Department of State HIU. Informal tent settlements: inter-agency Lebanon, REACH/UNICEF. Refugees: UNHCR. Infrastructure: Global Energy Observatory, OCHA, WFP. Border crossings: SNAP.

How to use the RAS

This report is divided into three sections:

- Part A-I focuses on the situation in Syria, first by outlining the issues on a country level and afterwards, in more depth, on a sectoral level.
- Part A-II outlines the humanitarian situation per governorate
- Part II covers the host countries Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq, and discusses the main humanitarian issues related to the crisis.

The RAS is intended as a reference document and the different parts and components can be read separately, according to information needs. While those working in a host country or a specific governorate might only be interested in small parts of the report, individuals working on a regional level can benefit from reading all sections.

Disclaimer: Information provided is provisional as it has not been possible to independently verify field reports. As this report covers highly dynamic subject, utility of the information may decrease with time.

How to quote this document

The Strategic Needs Analysis Project (SNAP) is established to support the humanitarian response by providing an independent analysis of the humanitarian situation of those affected by the Syrian crisis. We support the communication of humanitarian needs and agree to them being used by other organisations to this end. Please note that most information is derived from secondary data and the original source should be quoted when this information is used. The original source can be found at the end of a paragraph and whenever possible, the hyperlink to this source has been made available. Information sourced as 'PI' refers to personal interviews with persons unknown to the SNAP project. Information sourced as a 'Trusted Source' refers to information received from an actor known and trusted by the project. All information that is not sourced is based on SNAP's own analysis and should be quoted as such. Should you wish to reproduce the maps or other information within this document, kindly use this link, to agree to the copyright terms and conditions.