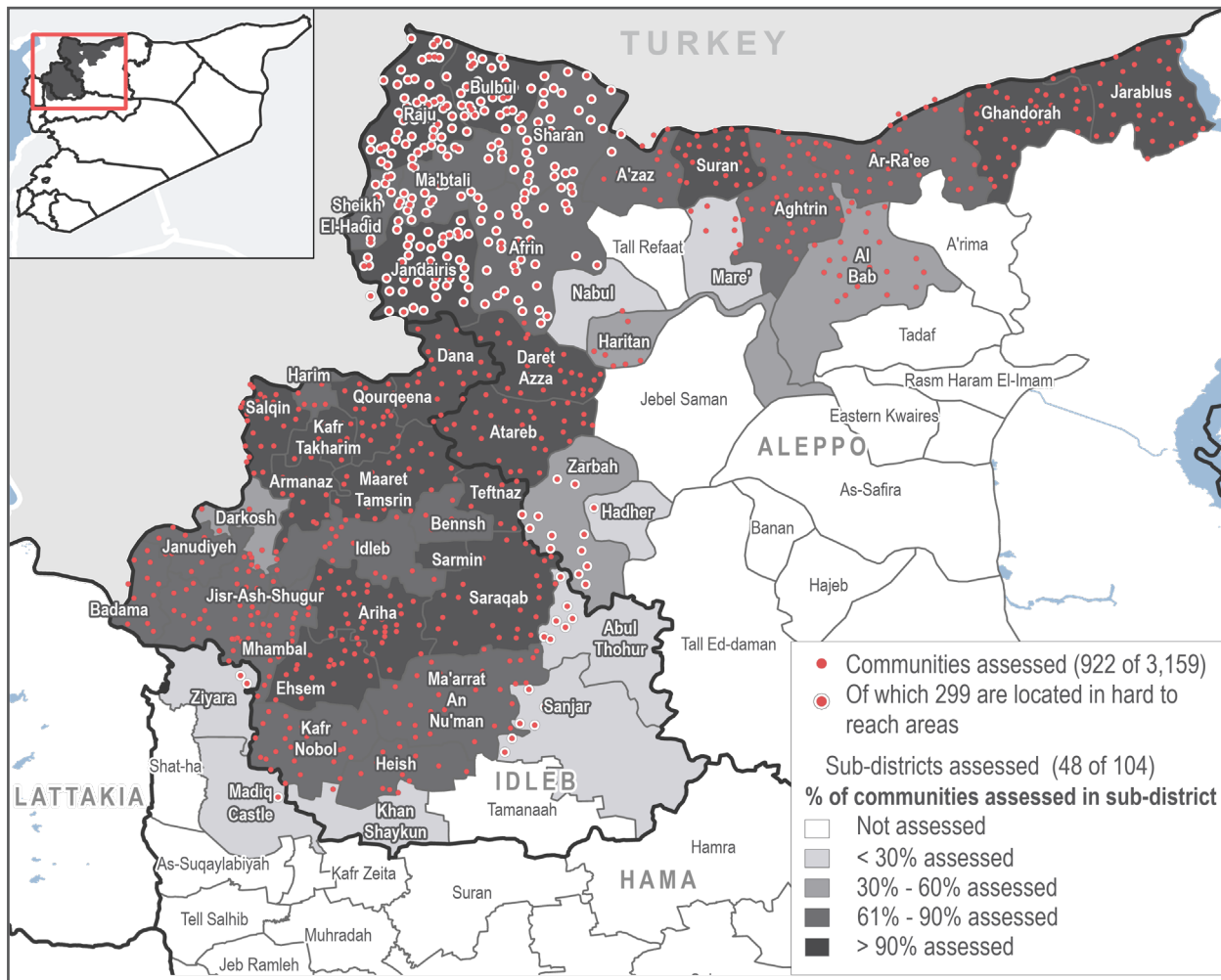


# Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria (HSOS)

## Northwest Syria, August 2019

### Coverage



### Introduction

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

The factsheet presents information gathered in 922 communities across Idlib (396 communities), western Aleppo\* (78 communities), northern Aleppo (443 communities), and northern Hama (5 communities) governorates.\*\* Data was collected during the month of September 2019, and refers to the situation in Northwest Syria (NWS) in August 2019. Findings are indicative rather than representative, and should not be generalised across the region.

Community-level datasets can be found on the [REACH Resource Centre](#) and [Humanitarian Data Exchange](#).

\*The western part of Aleppo where humanitarian response and coordination is conducted from the northwest.  
 \*\*To gain insight into the effects of the increase in violence in NWS, the August 2019 factsheet includes additional analysis on 147 communities located in conflict-affected sub-districts. These sub-districts are: Madiq Castle, and Ziyara in Hama governorate, Zarbah in western Aleppo governorate, and Heish, Kafr Nobol, Ma'arrat An Nu'man, Jisr-Ash-Shugur, Badama, Abul Thohur, Khan Shaykun in Idlib governorate.

### Top 3 reported priority needs in assessed communities:

- 1 Healthcare
- 2 Food Security
- 3 Livelihoods

### People in need (PIN) Demographics\*

👤 2,409,370      PiN 1,415,586      People in Acute Need

### Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB):<sup>1,2</sup>

Average price in August 2019      63,000 Syrian pound (SYP)  
 One month change:      +2%  
 Six month change:      -3%

\* PiN refers to people whose physical security, basic rights, dignity, living conditions or livelihoods are threatened or have been disrupted, and whose current level of access to basic services, goods and protection is inadequate to re-establish normal living conditions within their accustomed means without assistance.  
 People in Acute Need refers to those facing more severe forms of deprivation in terms of their security, basic rights and living conditions and face life-threatening needs requiring urgent humanitarian assistance (HNO 2019).  
 The calculated PiN numbers are indicative as they are calculated using the OCHA dataset and coverage varies slightly.

### Key events impacting the humanitarian situation in Northwest Syria (NWS)

Operation "Olive Branch" commences in Afrin. <sup>a</sup>	Approximately 1.9 million IDPs reside in Idlib, western Aleppo, northern Hama and eastern Latakia according to UNHCR. <sup>b</sup>	Announcement of a demilitarised zone barring the presence of heavy weaponry and certain armed opposition groups. <sup>c</sup>	Towards the end of April, shelling and airstrikes intensify. <sup>d</sup>	Almost 270,000 people displace from northern Hama and southern Idlib governorates between 1-22 May. <sup>e</sup> Large areas of cropland were burned since 10 May. <sup>f</sup>	More than 130,000 people displace from northern Hama and southern Idlib governorates. <sup>g</sup>
January 2018	End of August 2018	17 September 2018	April 2019	May 2019	August 2019

# Northwest Syria, August 2019

## CONTEXT

Humanitarian conditions in northwest Syria further deteriorated after a ceasefire between the Government of Syria (GoS) and armed opposition groups collapsed in early August.<sup>8</sup> The resulting increase in levels of violence, including airstrikes, shelling, and the highest number of recorded barrel bomb incidents since the beginning of 2019, led to large-scale displacement.<sup>9</sup> In August alone, more than 130,000 people were displaced from northern Hama and southern Idlib governorates.<sup>9</sup> Following clashes, GoS forces gained control of several communities including Skik, Hbit, Abdin, Arbain, Zakat, Um Zaytuna and, eventually, Khan Shaykun. Due to ongoing fighting, these areas, as well as Kafr Zeita, Latmana and Latmin in northern Hama governorate were not accessible to humanitarian organisations, meaning civilians had no access to humanitarian assistance and services.<sup>1</sup> Most of the displaced were heading towards already densely populated areas of northern Idlib governorate, with Dana sub-district continuing to be the most common destination for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).<sup>4</sup>

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS<sup>3</sup>

### Water insufficiency reportedly affects a third of communities across NWS

KIs across NWS reported issues with access to sufficient water, where water access was reported as a top priority need, after healthcare, food security and livelihoods. KIs in 317 (34%) of 922 assessed communities reported that water was not sufficient to meet household needs. The water quality was furthermore called into question. KIs in 1 community reported that the water made people sick, and KIs in 11 communities reported that the water tasted or smelled bad. Water trucking was the primary source of drinking water reported throughout NWS, reported by KIs in 348 (38%) of 922 assessed communities. With the ongoing offensive in NWS, and the resulting damage to infrastructure, it is possible that water transport and truck movements will be hindered, further increasing water access needs.

### Effects of ongoing offensive evident in decreased access to services and infrastructure in conflict-affected communities

In the months following the escalation of the offensive in May, KIs in communities in NWS witnessed a deterioration of access to services. Communities in the conflict-affected areas\* were reportedly especially affected in comparison to other communities in NWS. In terms of reported barriers to accessing health care, security concerns around travel to health facilities (38%) and entering or remaining in health facilities (36%) were reported most commonly in conflict-affected communities. Furthermore, in terms of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), KIs in half (50%) of assessed conflict-affected communities reported problems with latrines (in comparison to 40% of communities reporting this across all of NWS). Lack of gender-segregated latrines was also most commonly reported in conflict-affected communities in which latrine problems were reported (41%). KIs in conflict-affected areas also reported a less regular garbage collection in comparison to other communities in NWS, reporting it once a week (33%), and once every two weeks (27%). Lastly, in terms of access to education, KIs in only 15% of conflict-affected communities reported that all children accessed school. The route to education services being unsafe was the most common barrier reported in conflict-affected communities, with KIs in more than a third of such communities (35%) reporting the issue. Access to services in conflict-affected areas might further deteriorate if the offensive continues.

\*To gain insight into the effects of the increase in violence in NWS, the August 2019 factsheet includes additional analysis on 147 communities located in conflict-affected sub-districts. These sub-districts are: Madiq Castle, and Ziyara in Hama governorate, Zarah in western Aleppo governorate, and Heish, Kafr Nobol, Ma'arrat An Nu'man, Jisr-Ash-Shugur, Badama, Abul Thohur, Khan Shaykun in Idlib governorate.

## Displacement<sup>4</sup>

- Reasons for pre-conflict population (PCP) and Internally Displaced People (IDP) movement were according to KIs mainly attributed to escalation of conflict. The most commonly reported reason for PCP leaving in August was escalation of conflict, reported by KIs in 109 (12%) of the 922 assessed communities, and by KIs in 85 (58%) of the 147 conflict-affected communities.
- KIs in 41 (28%) of 147 conflict-affected communities reported IDPs leaving due to escalation of conflict.

## Food Security and Livelihoods

- KIs in 32 (22%) of 147 assessed conflict-affected communities reported insufficient food to meet household needs.
- KIs in 136 (93%) of 147 assessed conflict-affected communities reported less than 50,000 SYP as an average monthly income of households in the community. KIs in these communities also reported strategies to cope with insufficient income such as borrowing money from family or friends (88%), reducing the size of meals (37%) and sending children to work or beg (30%).

## Education

- KIs in 497 (54%) out of the 922 assessed communities in NWS reported that all children accessed education. In communities experiencing obstacles to education, the most common reasons were the following: distance to services was too far (45%), lack of teaching staff (42%) and lack of school supplies (37%).
- Furthermore, in conflict-affected communities, additional challenges were reported such as the route to schools being perceived unsafe (41%) and the destruction of facilities (37%).
- Challenges to accessing education were reported in 425 communities across NWS. KIs in 74 (17%) of those 425 assessed communities reported that girls were mainly affected by these challenges.

## Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

- KIs in 55 (37%) of 147 communities in conflict-affected areas reported insufficient water to meet household needs. The majority of these communities (31) were located in Jisr-Ash-Shugur sub-district.
- Furthermore, KIs in 10 (26%) of the 39 assessed communities in Jisr-Ash-Shugur sub-district reported that garbage was left in the street or in public areas, reflecting serious WASH issues in the area.

## Health

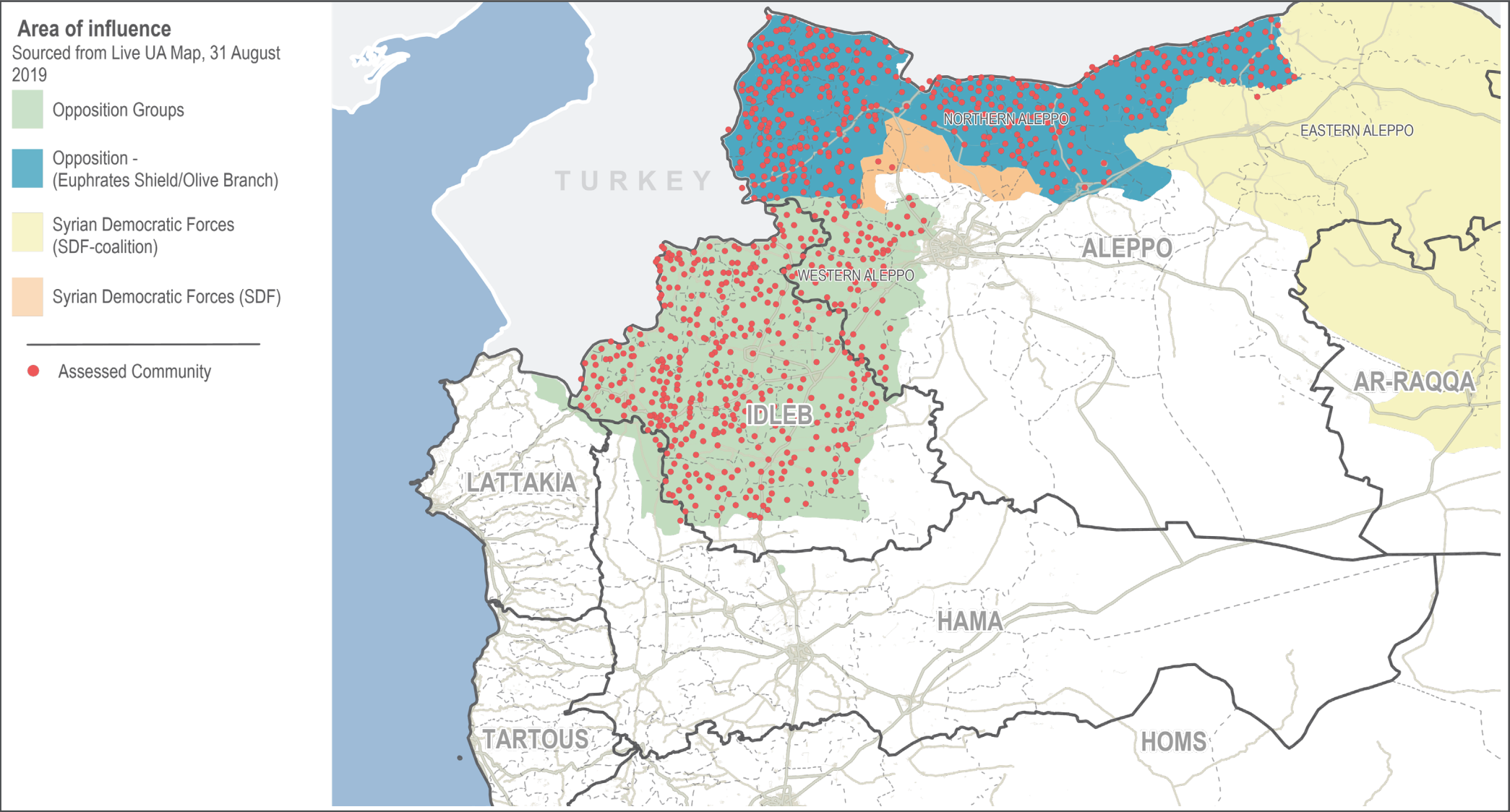
- KIs reported no medical facilities were functioning in 293 (66%) of the 443 assessed communities in northern Aleppo governorate. The high cost of transportation to health facilities, as reported by KIs in 132 (40%) assessed communities, and the lack of transportation to facilities, as reported by KIs in 118 (36%) assessed communities, were the main barriers to accessing healthcare services. In northern Aleppo governorate, these factors can likely contribute to challenges for pregnant women as KIs reported that the majority of pregnant women delivered babies in facilities in nearby communities (73%).
- Of the 147 assessed communities in conflict-affected areas, KIs in 133 (90%) reported that people in their community experience challenges accessing health care services. These difficulties were mainly related to security and transportation, including the high cost of transportation to health facilities (45%), security concerns around the travel to health facilities (42%) and security concerns within the health facility (40%).

## Shelter and non-food items (NFI)

- Solar alternatives as a source of electricity were more commonly reported in conflict-affected areas (in 51% of communities), in comparison to all assessed communities in NWS (in 30% of communities). This likely correlates to a lack of fuel being more commonly reported in conflict-affected areas. KIs in 52 (35%) of 147 communities in conflict-affected areas reported a lack of fuel. This was only reported across all 922 communities in NWS by KIs in 150 (16%) of 922 assessed communities.

# Northwest Syria, August 2019

## Regional areas of influence:





# Northwest Syria, August 2019

## ➔ DISPLACEMENT<sup>4</sup>

**219,351 - 252,459**

Estimated number of IDP arrivals in assessed communities in August 2019.

**3,324 - 3,614**

Estimated number of spontaneous returns in assessed communities in August 2019.<sup>5</sup>

### Communities with the largest estimated number of IDP arrivals:

Atma (Dana, Idleb) **44,000**

Idleb (Idleb, Idleb) **10,000**

Salqin (Salqin, Idleb) **7,000**

Reported as community, (sub-district, governorate)

### Top 3 reported subdistricts of origin for IDP arrivals:<sup>6,7</sup>

Khan Shaykun (Idleb)

Ma'arrat An Nu'man (Idleb)

Kafr Nobol (Idleb)

Reported as sub-district (governorate)

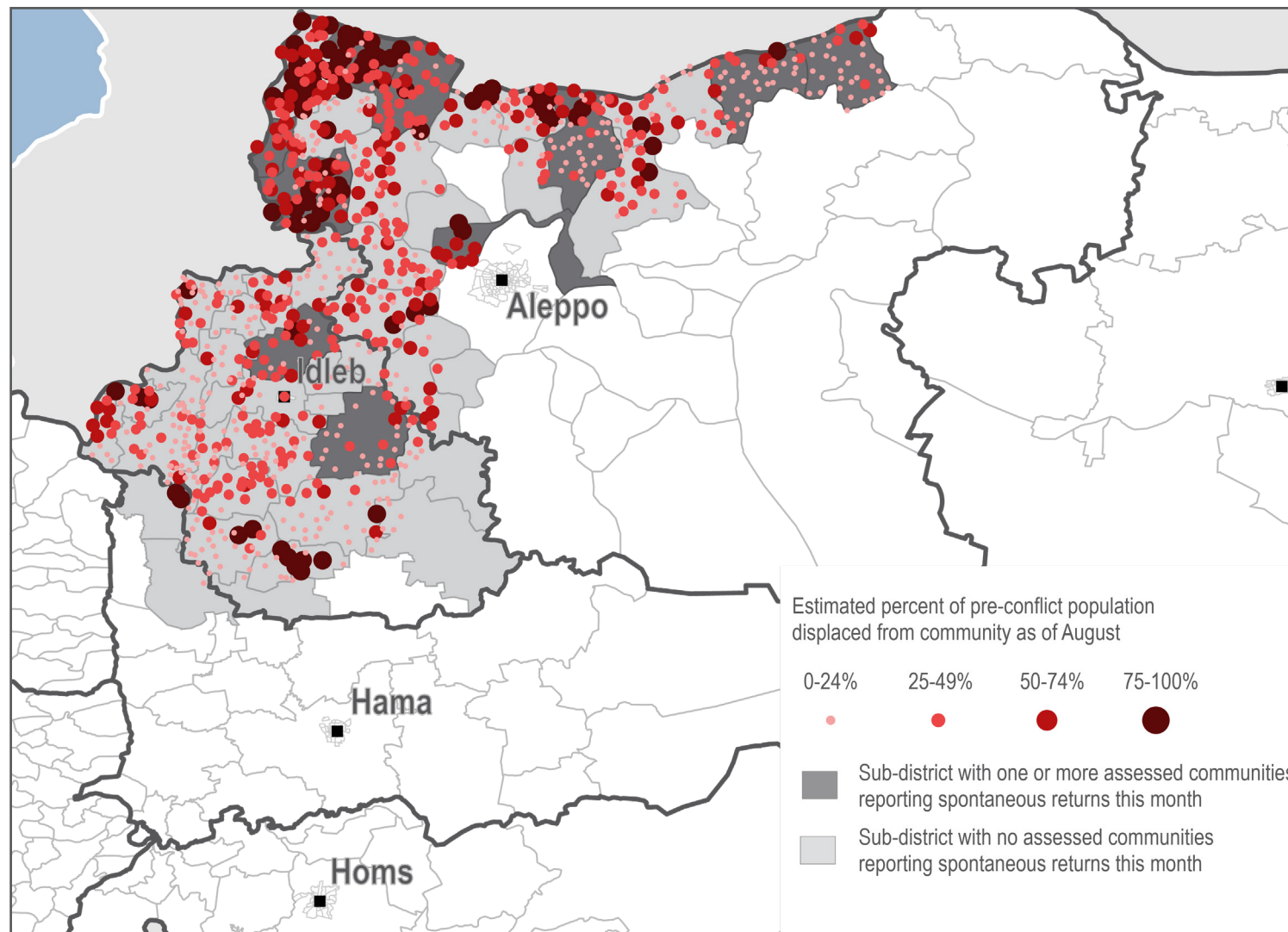
**787** communities reported no PCP departures in August.<sup>8</sup> Top 3 reasons for PCP departures in the remaining **135** assessed communities.<sup>6,7,9</sup>

Escalation of conflict 81%

Loss of income 30%

Loss of assets 30%

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

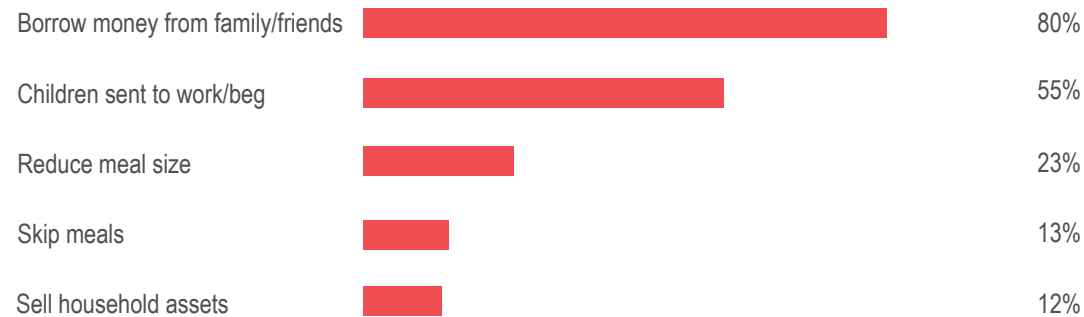


# Northwest Syria, August 2019

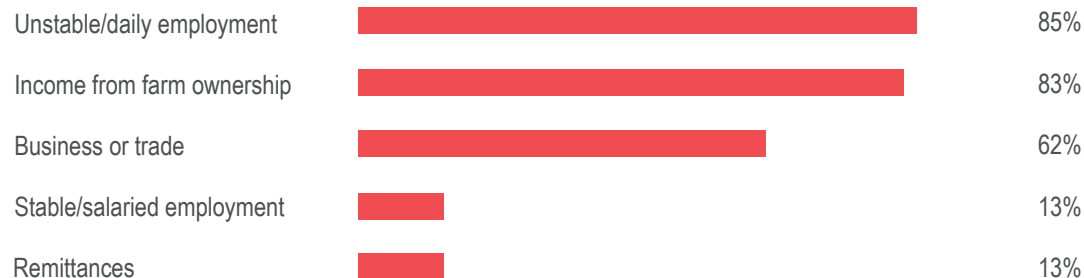
## FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOODS

- 246/922** Communities reported having received food distributions in the last month.
- 181/922** Communities reported that residents were unable to access shops and markets.
- 0/922** Communities reported that residents used extreme food-based coping strategies to deal with insufficient income.<sup>10</sup>
- Less than 50,000 SYP** Most commonly reported household monthly income range.<sup>1</sup>

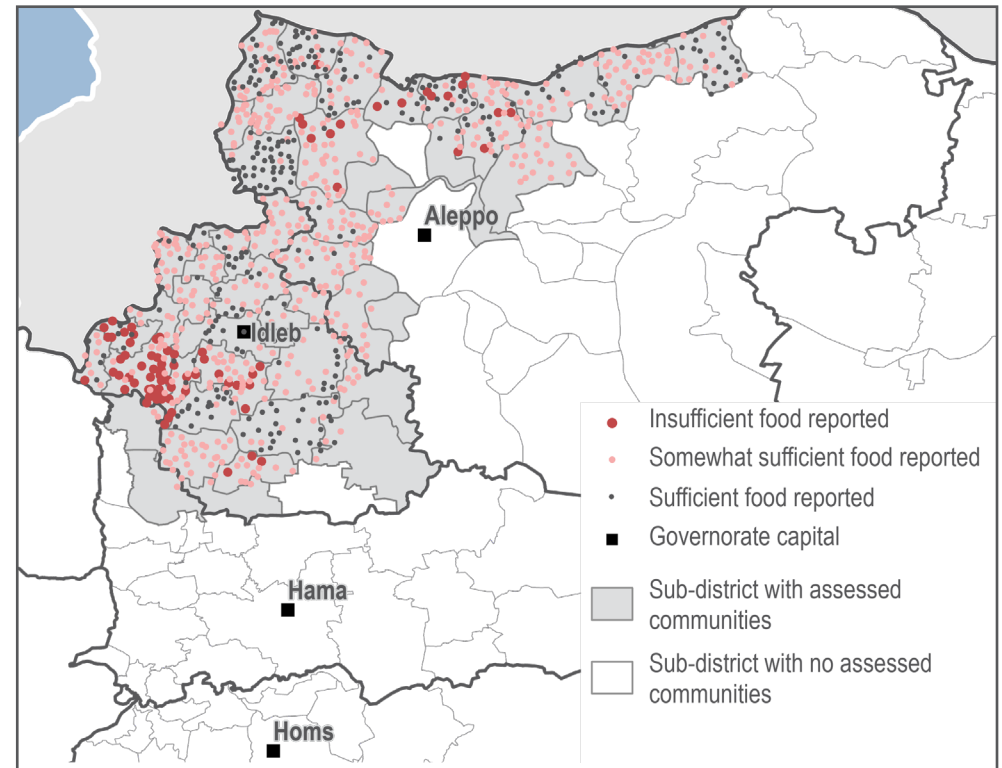
**132 communities** reported that residents had enough income to cover household needs. The most commonly reported coping strategies to deal with a lack of income in the remaining **790 assessed communities** were:<sup>6,7,9</sup>



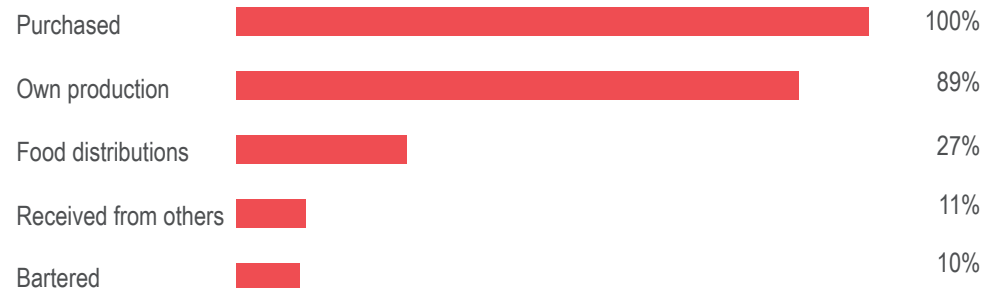
### Most commonly reported main sources of income:<sup>6,7</sup>



### Communities that reported having an insufficient quantity of food:<sup>11</sup>



### Most commonly reported ways of obtaining food:<sup>6,7</sup>



# Northwest Syria, August 2019

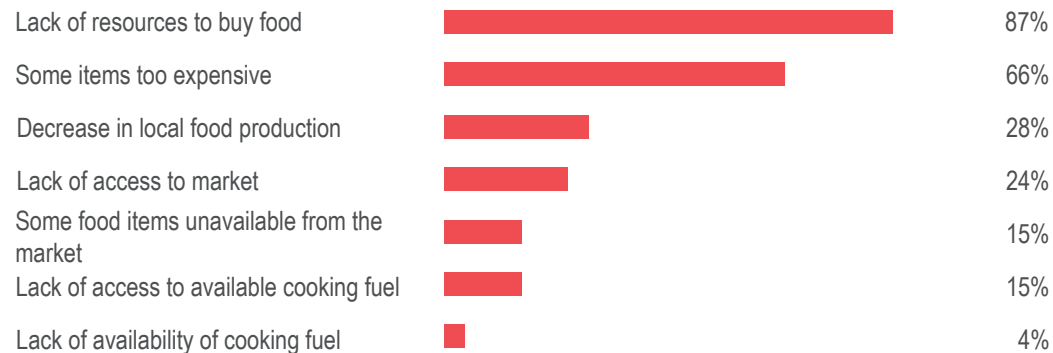
## FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOODS

Core food item prices reported (in SYP):<sup>1,12</sup>

Food item:	Regional average price in August 2019:	One month change:	Six month change:
Bread (8 pieces)	160	0%	+7%
Rice (1 kilogram)	338	-4%	+8%
Lentils (1 kilogram)	275	-8%	+5%
Sugar (1 kilogram)	326	0%	+17%
Cooking oil (1 litre)*	3,959	+3%	+3%

\*includes the combined vegetable oil and ghee prices

161 communities reported that residents experienced no challenges in accessing food. The most common difficulties experienced in the remaining 761 assessed communities were:<sup>6,7,9</sup>



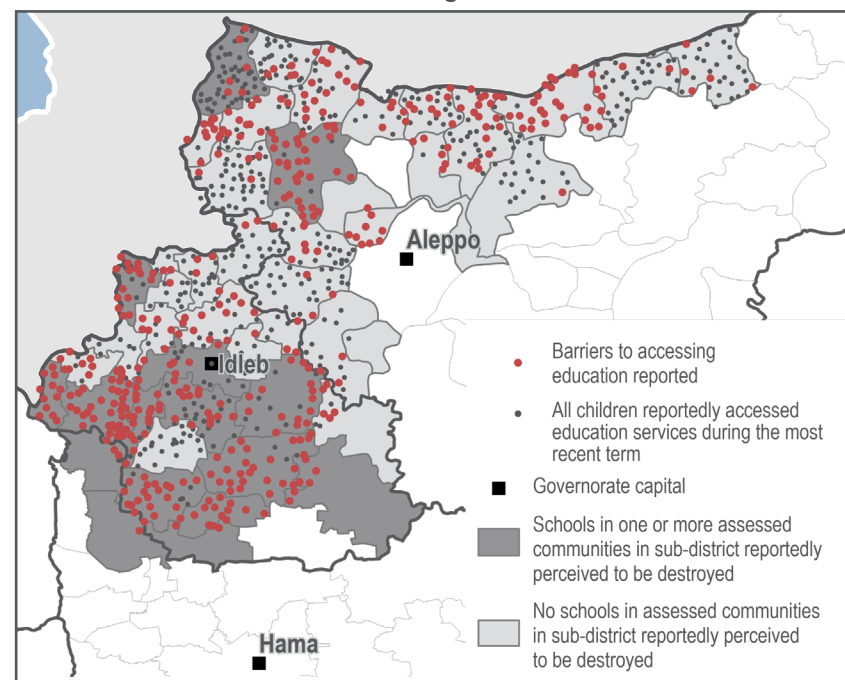
## EDUCATION

821/922 communities reported having functioning primary education facilities, while 408 communities reported having functioning secondary education facilities.<sup>13</sup>

497 communities reported that all children were able to access education. The most commonly reported barriers to education in the remaining 425 assessed communities were:<sup>6,7,9</sup>



Prevalence of barriers to accessing education services:



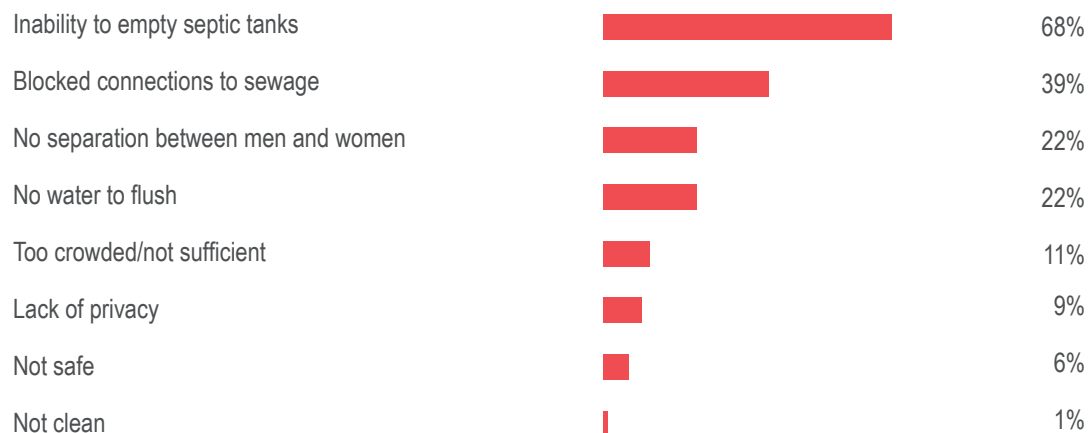
# Northwest Syria, August 2019

## WASH

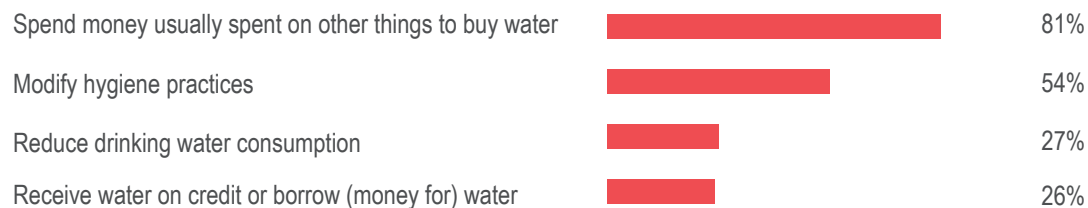
**11/922** Communities reported that water from their primary source tasted and/or smelled bad.

**1/922** Qubbet Elsheikh community (Al Bab sub-district, Aleppo governorate) reported that drinking water from their primary source was perceived to have made people sick.

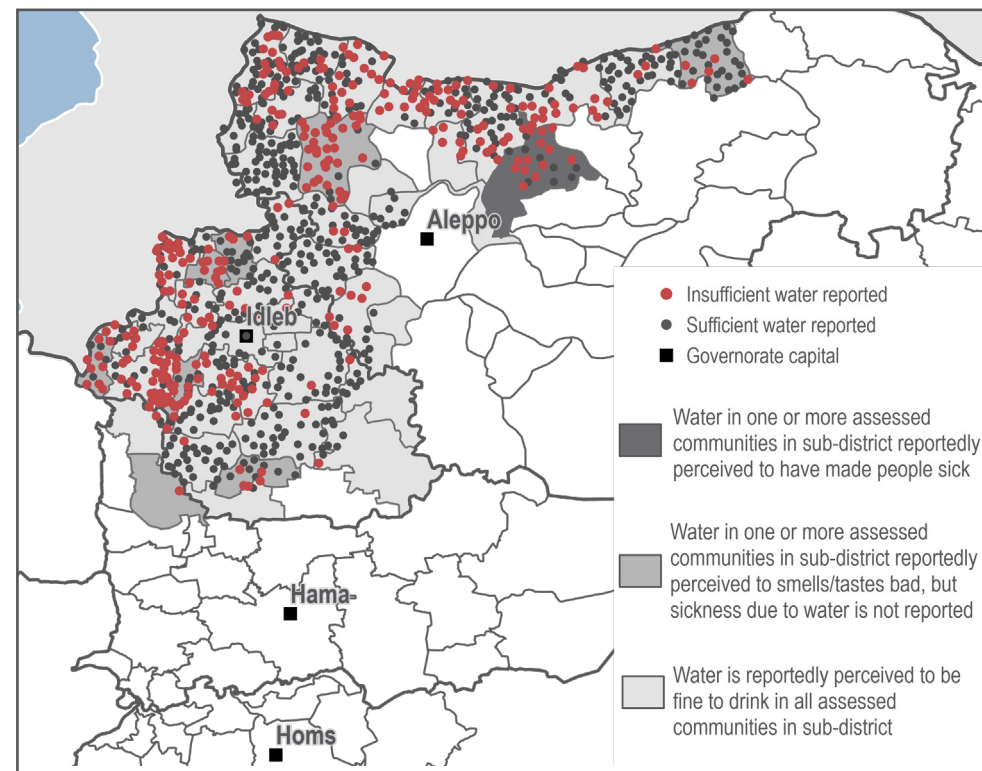
**556 communities** reported that residents had no problems with latrines. The most commonly reported problems with latrines in the remaining **366 assessed communities** were:<sup>5,7,9</sup>



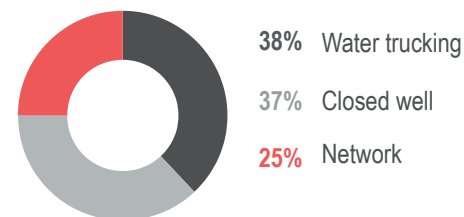
**605 communities** reported that they had sufficient amounts of water to meet household needs. The most common coping strategies to deal with a lack of water in the remaining **317 assessed communities** were:<sup>6,7,9</sup>



Communities that reported insufficient amounts of water to meet household needs:<sup>11</sup>



Primary drinking water source reported:<sup>7</sup>



Primary method of garbage disposal reported:<sup>6,7</sup>





# Northwest Syria, August 2019

## HEALTH

**184/922** Communities reported that no assessed medical items were available in their community.<sup>14</sup>

**100/922** Communities reported that the majority of women did not give birth in a formal health facility.

**0/922** Communities reported that some individuals had been diagnosed with SAM (Severe Acute Malnutrition).<sup>15</sup>

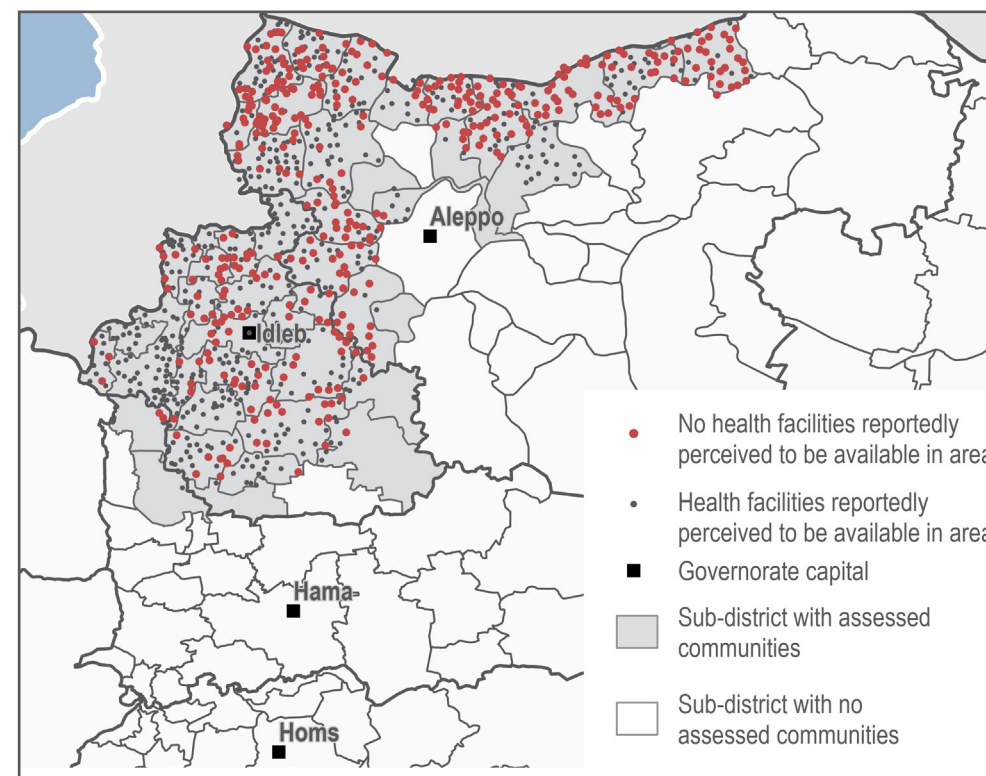
**226 communities** reported that residents experienced no barriers to accessing healthcare services. The most commonly reported barriers in the remaining **696 assessed communities** were:<sup>6,7,9</sup>



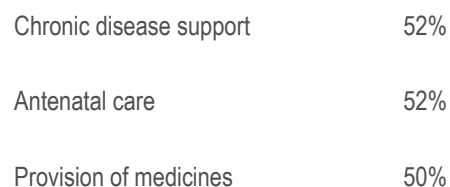
**841 communities** reported that residents were not using coping strategies to deal with a lack of medical services and items. The coping strategies used in the remaining **81 communities** were:<sup>6,7,9</sup>



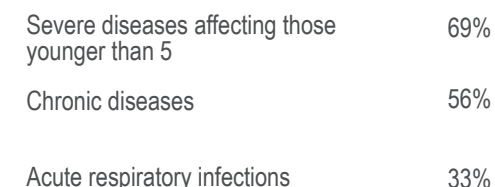
### Presence of medical facilities in assessed communities:



### Top 3 most needed healthcare services reported:<sup>6,7</sup>



### Top 3 most common health problems reported:<sup>6,7</sup>





# Northwest Syria, August 2019

## SHELTER AND NFI

**6,057 SYP** Regional average monthly reported rent price in SYP across assessed communities.<sup>1</sup>

**6,394 SYP** Northern Syria average monthly reported rent price in SYP across assessed communities.<sup>1,16</sup>

### Most commonly reported shelter type for PCP households:<sup>7</sup>



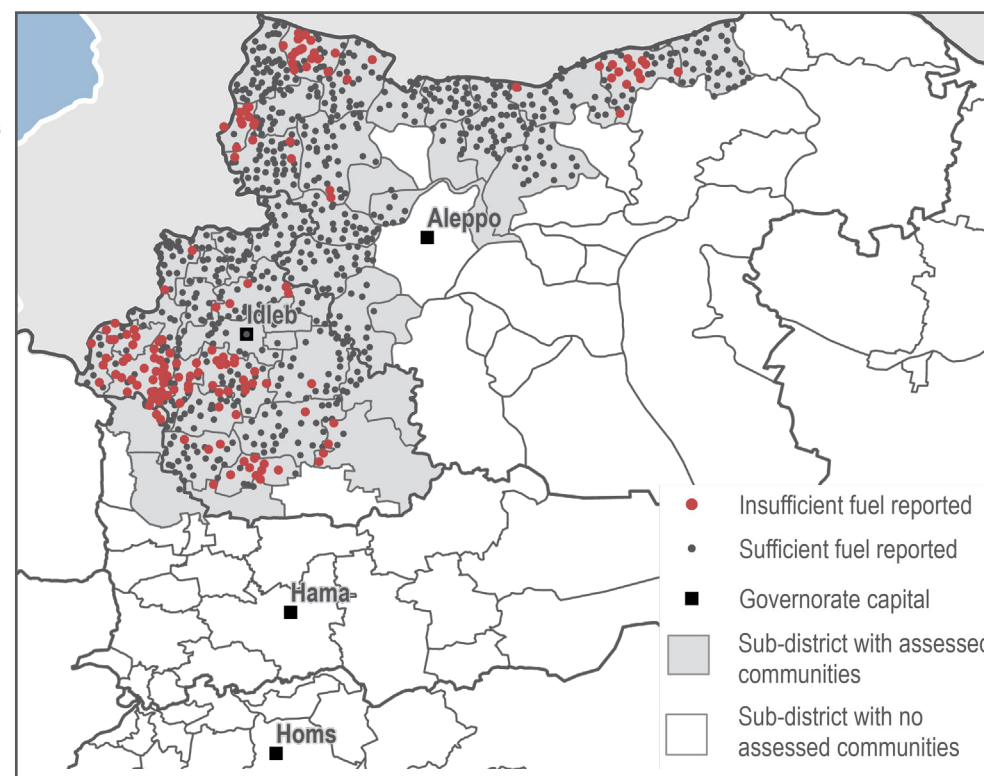
### Most commonly reported shelter type for IDP households:<sup>7</sup>



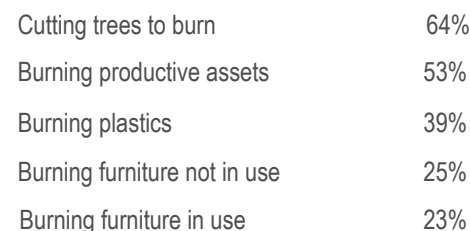
### Reported fuel prices (in SYP):<sup>1,2</sup>

Fuel type (1L):	Regional average price in August 2019:	One month change:	Six month change:
GoS petrol	500	0%	+25%
GoS diesel	459	+2%	+15%
Manually refined petrol	300	-5%	+3%
Manually refined diesel	268	+1%	+10%
Cooking fuel	7,500	0%	0%

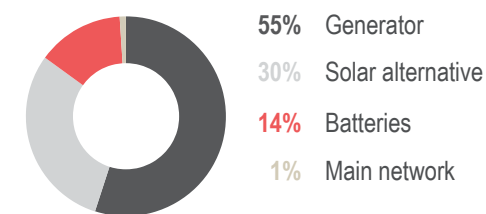
### Communities that reported insufficient amounts of fuel to meet household needs:<sup>11</sup>



**772** communities reported no lack of fuel. Most common strategies to cope with lack of fuel in the remaining **150** assessed communities:<sup>6,7,9</sup>



### Primary source of electricity reported:<sup>7</sup>



## METHODOLOGY

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

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

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

## About REACH

REACH facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT). For more information please visit our website: [www.reach-initiative.org](http://www.reach-initiative.org). You can contact us directly at: [geneva@reach-initiative.org](mailto:geneva@reach-initiative.org) and follow us on Twitter [@REACH\\_info](https://twitter.com/REACH_info).

## ENDNOTES

### KEYEVENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

<sup>a</sup> Sen. (18 October 2017). After the Battle for Raqqa, Now Comes the Hard Part. News Deeply. Retrieved from <https://www.newsdeeply.com/syria>.

<sup>b</sup> UNHCR. (21 January 2018). Syria Crisis: Northeast Syria Situation Report No. 20 (1 December – 31 December 2017). Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int>.

<sup>c</sup> Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. (4 April 2018). The International Coalition and SDF prepare for a massive military operation against ISIS amid alertness in the east of the Euphrates River and south of Al-Hasakah. Retrieved from <https://www.syriaahr.com>.

<sup>d</sup> REACH. (May 2019). Southern Idlib and Northern Hama RNA. Retrieved from <https://reachresourcecentre.info>.

<sup>e</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (31 May 2019) Situation Report 4: Recent Developments in Northwestern Syria. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int>.

<sup>f</sup> The new humanitarian. (7 June 2019). As crops burn in Syria conflict, hunger warnings for civilians. Retrieved from <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org>.

<sup>g</sup> World Health Organization (1 September 2019). WHO statement on attacks on health facilities in north west Syria. Retrieved from <https://www.reliefweb.int>.

<sup>h</sup> The Guardian. (8 August 2019). Syria: new Idlib clashes sow 'total panic' among civilians, UN says. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com>.

<sup>i</sup> Syrian Network for Human Rights (3 September 2019). The displacement of approximately 100,000 more civilians from northeastern Syria in August. Retrieved from <https://www.sn4hr.org>.

<sup>j</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (23 August 2019). Syrian Arab Republic: Recent Developments in Northwestern Syria Situation Report No. 10 - as of 23 August 2019 [EN/AR]. Retrieved from <https://www.reliefweb.int>.

<sup>k</sup> World Food Programme (22 August 2019). WFP Syria North-Western Syria Emergency Situation Report #6, 22 August 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.reliefweb.int>.

### MAIN TEXT

<sup>1</sup> 1 USD = 614 SYP (See [Syria Market Monitoring Dataset August 2019](#)).

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

<sup>3</sup> All information and figures reported in HSOS factsheets refer to the situation in assessed communities and

## MAIN TEXT

cannot be generalised to other non-assessed communities of the region.

<sup>4</sup> For population numbers, KIs were asked to provide the number of resident and IDPs present in the community as of 31 August 2019. A minimum of three KIs were interviewed in each assessed community. Where discrepancies in the information provided by KIs were deemed too large, further triangulation with additional KIs and local organizations was conducted. Estimated individual figures in this report are rounded to the nearest tenth.

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

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

<sup>5</sup> Spontaneous returns refers to IDPs or refugees who return to their community of origin that they left due to conflict but not necessarily to their places of habitual residence (their former homes); who intend to remain in the community for an undetermined period; and who do not meet the IASC framework on durable solutions (IASC framework includes "not necessarily voluntary, safe or sustainable" elements).

<sup>6</sup> Assessed using select multiple questions.

<sup>7</sup> By percentage of communities reporting.

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

<sup>9</sup> Not all surveys have answers for every question, in these scenarios the KI or participant will input no answer. When the dataset has no answer for a particular question, the reported number of assessed communities will not add up to the total number of communities assessed and percentages will be calculated based on submitted responses.

<sup>10</sup> Extreme food-based strategies: eating food waste; eating non-edible plants and spending days without eating.

<sup>11</sup> Based on KI perception of sufficiency.

<sup>12</sup> Bread, rice, lentils, sugar, and cooking oil are considered core food items used in food baskets across Syria. For further information on all SMEB items please see the [Northwest Syria Market Monitoring Situation Overview August 2019](#).

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

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

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

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