



Update #4

Impact of the Escalations of Hostilities in Syria on displacement
towards Northeast Syria

10 December 2024

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displacement in Northeast Syria
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INFORMATION CORRECT AS OF 2000hrs ON 10 DEC

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Situation Overview

Since the events of 08 December, the security and humanitarian situation in Northeast Syria (NES) has remained **volatile, with continued clashes and shifts in territorial control** in Manbij and in Deir Ez-Zor.

Throughout this period NES has continued to receive individuals displaced by the conflict in Tel Rifaat and Aleppo. **General estimates from authorities remain at an approximate 100,000 individuals displaced to date, with further 15,000 individuals** anticipated to be arriving in another convoy from Tel Refaat.

The verification of these figures remains a challenge, as many are being moved directly into homes and public sites identified by authorities within communities, prior to registration. Partners on the ground are reporting overwhelming numbers in Tabqa and Raqqa, where the reception sites have reached full capacity. **As of 10 December, 220 sites including municipal buildings, schools, mosques, stadiums and residential buildings are being used as reception sites and collective centres to accommodate people across all NES areas.**

Following the clashes in Manbij and the advancement of SNA in the area, **NGOs present in Manbij had to close their offices and suspend their activities.** As a result, WASH actors reported the suspension of WASH services in Manbij camps and Health actors reported the **suspension of all activities in NGO supported healthcare facilities**, including 7 PHC, one hospital, one emergency coordination center and one mobile medical unit, all of which have been **vandalized and looted.**

Access and delivery of service has faced challenges across all parts of NES, most particularly including Raqqa and Tabqa, and in Mahmoudli Camp. **While a NES-wide curfew has been imposed from 8pm to 8am**, local authorities have assured NGO exemptions from this curfew except in Deir Ez-Zor. The NES NGO Forum with local authorities to negotiate continued safe, informed access for NGOs to move freely during this period, as well as to receive timely and relevant information on developing events and dynamics. Nonetheless, **sporadic blocks to movement have been repeatedly reported at checkpoints across Raqqa, Tabqa, Hasakeh, and Derik.**

Late on the afternoon of 10 December, reports indicated that **clashes in the vicinity of Tishreen Dam in Manbij affected the structure of the dam**, and prevented technicians from access to intervene. Were the dam to stop functioning, impacts to electricity, water, and agriculture across NES would be severe. **Were the dam to collapse, severe and rapid flooding could be expected, threatening loss of life and livelihood to nearly 1,000,000 individuals.** Concurrently, reporting indicated that armed groups were moving towards Kobani from Manbij, with electricity cut off in both areas. Clashes have not resumed, however, in either area following the announcement of a ceasefire agreement that saw SDF withdrawing from Manbij. **Airstrikes, however, have continued to target areas around Kobani**

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with reported loss of civilian lives, including healthcare staff when an ambulance was targeted. The pause in clashes on the ground has allowed for technicians to access Tishreen dam with a view to assessing and mitigating the damage.

Humanitarian Impact

Needs remain high across NES. **Recent developments have led to the closure of approximately 220 schools across Raqqa, Hassakeh, and Tabqa.** These schools are now being used as temporary collective centres for internally displaced persons (IDPs) fleeing the conflict in the Aleppo governorate. After initial SNFI support, households now urgently require winterization support, as well as cash and food assistance.

Whilst the **current priority is to meet the life-saving shelter and non-food item needs**, in the near future, there is a **need to establish alternative shelter options for IDPs residing in schools**, or set up temporary education facilities, to minimise the impact on schooling.

The influx of IDPs is **straining existing healthcare services**, particularly as cases of acute watery diarrhoea and suspected cholera have been reported since August 2024 in various governorates in northeastern Syria (NES). There has further been an **increase in violence targeting health facilities in Raqqa and Menbij, resulting in the closure of nine health facilities.**

The influx has also continued **to exacerbate the protection environment.** Protection partners continue to identify critical gaps, including the need for safe and dignified access to basic services, including shelter, consistent access to essential psychosocial support, legal counseling, and safety and security.

Humanitarian Response and Coordination

Information Collection and Coordination

The NES Forum continues to coordinate closely with the crisis cell and the different authorities at NES and canton level to receive timely information on the displacement, the location of the reception sites and collective centers and the needs. The ISWG are likewise coordinating continuously with SSWG, UNHCR, UN OCHA, INSO, NGO partners and key stakeholders both at the NES and WoS levels to monitor and respond to the crisis.

A tracker has been created jointly between the ISWG and the SSWG, in coordination with all sectors, to track planned and conducted assessments and interventions in any of the identified reception sites and collective centers.

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The NES Forum IM unit developed an interactive dashboard to support sector leads and partners on the ground to disseminate available information and identify the type of support that is required. New EMR codes have been developed to allow for double-blind coordination with crossline actors, as an added safeguard through which to facilitate effective information-sharing in the current volatile environment.

Ad hoc meetings continue to be conducted at sector level, ISWG and with partners to ensure a proper flow of information and joint planning.

SSWG

Needs: Needs remain high across NES. After initial SNFI support, households now urgently require winterization support, as well as cash and food assistance.

Response: Since the increase in hostilities in Northwest Syria (NWS) resulting in eastbound displacement, over 220 new emergency collective centers (E-CCs) have been established across NES. Assessments and interventions are underway.

Gaps & Constraints: CCCM activities are interrupted in Manbij areas as of 09 December. Gaps for all sectors remain in E-CCs.

SNFI

Needs:

6,924 HHs confirmed in emergency collective centres require core relief items and winterisation support.

186 collective centres require communal or private cooking facilities, including the provision of stoves and kitchen items.

The majority of the 220 E-CCs require shelter support either in the form of sealing off kits or light rehabilitation activities where HLP conditions allow, to ensure protection from the elements.

Response

Essential non-food items have been to newly-displaced households in 62 emergency collective centers.

Children's winter clothes have been distributed in 11 emergency collective centres.

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Big size tents have been distributed, including 14 large tents provided in Tabqa stadium Transit site.

Gaps & Constraints

Needs include:

1. Cooking stoves, cooking fuel and kitchen sets in all emergency collective centres, to ensure nutritional needs are being met.
2. Heaters and heating fuel across the emergency collective centres.
3. Need to ensure emergency collective centres, protect IDPs from the elements, as many have minor damage with missing or broken windows and doors for example.

Whilst the current priority is to meet the life-saving shelter and non-food item needs, in the near future, there is a need to establish alternative shelter options for IDPs residing in schools, or set up temporary education facilities, to minimise the impact on schooling.

Cash

The Cash Working Group CWG in coordination with other sectors and FSL sector is planning to distribute MPCA in locations in Tabqa, HSK and Kobani. Registration is ongoing.

FSL

Needs

FSL has begun looking beyond immediate food needs, as partners will soon need to return to already supported locations due to the supply of Ready To Eat Ration (RTER) kits being exhausted within a week.

Response:

The last 48 hours have adversely affected the FSL response, so as to ensure the safety of humanitarian food security response.

Gaps & Constraints:

Ath-Thawra is a critical gap, and has been tentatively allocated to a partner to respond to the estimated

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6,000 households. It will be imperative that cooking facilities are established to ensure dry food rations can be cooked at the collective centres for the IDPs.

Amuda is another critical gap the FSL response needs to address, as well as scaling up in Hasakah as displaced people continue to arrive.

Support with cooking facilities is also a key gap, as distributions of dry food rations commences.

Market monitoring will be critical due to the high fluidity of the situation, as Cash WG is planning to complement the FSL response to address the food needs in locations where RTER or dry food rations have been supported, so that households have resources to buy the necessary cooking materials.

Education

Needs:

The continued influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) remains the primary driver to repurposing schools.

Regular schooling remains suspended due to the ongoing crisis, with 140 out of 530 schools in NES repurposed as Emergency Collective Centres.

The crisis has disrupted education for 70,400 children in affected schools, while a total of 184,840 students are now entering their third week without access to education, raising concerns over the potential loss of the current scholastic semester.

Psychosocial support services are needed alongside educational resources to address the trauma and instability experienced by affected children.

Response:

Partners are exploring alternative education pathways.

Efforts are focused on preventing long-term educational disruption by advocating for the resumption of essential educational activities where possible.

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The EWG is developing a comprehensive assessment to identify school-aged children residing in Emergency collective centres located in schools and communities to enable effective planning and response by partners.

Gaps and constraints:

There is a need to prioritize the urgent installation of safe and temporary learning spaces for displaced children to ensure continuity of education, particularly for students who have been out of school for the third consecutive week.

Formal communication from authorities is awaited to facilitate solutions and guidance for reopening schools.

Insufficient data is available regarding school-age children residing in collective shelters and community locations impedes effective planning and targeted education responses.

One refugee camp experienced vandalism, resulting in damage to one school and other services.

Non-formal education services have been suspended as NGOs paused their activities, further limiting access to essential education for affected children.

Protection

Needs:

The influx of IDPS into NES has continued to exacerbate the protection environment. Protection partners continue to identify critical gaps, including the need for safe and dignified access to basic services, including shelter, consistent access to essential psychosocial support, legal counselling, and safety and security. Overcrowded and inadequately equipped shelters have increased vulnerabilities, particularly for women, children, and persons with disabilities, who face heightened risks due to a lack of gender-sensitive and accessible facilities. Psychological distress is widespread among affected populations, with communities and children showing signs of trauma and families experiencing significant stress due to displacement.

Despite ongoing efforts from CP actors and other sector actors, the unexpected large-scale displacement has dramatically affected children's well-being. Many children have been left without access to education, adequate food, clean water, winterization kits, baby milk, diapers, and health services, in addition to the other individual needs.

Response:

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In response to these heightened risks, the Protection Working Group and its partners have intensified coordination efforts to address urgent needs.

The Protection Working Group (PWG) has prioritized protection monitoring to identify and respond to protection risks; this monitoring aims to inform tailored interventions and strengthen advocacy efforts.

Mobile teams are providing Psychological First Aid (PFA) at displacement sites to address immediate trauma. However, the scale of distress requires more comprehensive mental health services, including safe spaces for children and specialized support for women.

The Protection Working Group and AoRs have created an online emergency response tracker to capture the ongoing response and monitor the activities implemented by partners.

The PWG is working with partners to advocate for protection guarantees and ensure the safety of displacement sites. Awareness campaigns targeting displaced populations aim to disseminate critical information on available services and security precautions.

Work is progressing on rapid protection needs assessments, led by the PWG and AoRs to identify critical risks and service gaps and inform targeted interventions.

Child Protection (CP) AoR is actively collaborating with the Child Protection Case Management Task Force partners to prevent child separation as much as possible. The emergency Case Management team has created identification cards for families to reduce instances of child separation and missing cases. These cards, which include caregivers' contact details, are being distributed in reception centres, transit sites, and collective centres.

The Case Management Task Force is collaborating closely with the Women's Committee to support unaccompanied children through their institutions and interim care centres. In addition, CP AoR is recommending child protection actors to address the immediate needs of these children.

In addition, the CP AoR developed a tracking tool for Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) to help identify and monitor their whereabouts; the tool is shared with CP actors who are engaging in the prevention of child separation and family tracing. This tool also aids in establishing a database for these highly vulnerable children.

Child Protection actors continue to provide immediate services to displaced families, including psychological first aid, awareness on child separation, individual psychosocial support (PSS), and information about available services. They are also distributing essential items like clothes and diapers, although these distributions are still limited compared to the needs.

Gaps & Constraints:

Despite ongoing efforts, the scale of displacement far exceeds the current capacity of protection partners,

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The rapid and dynamic nature of displacement coupled with access constraints further added a layer of complexity to the response.

The huge number of displaced people makes it challenging to identify the most vulnerable children like children with disabilities and respond to their needs in an appropriate way ..

HLP

Many families are currently being hosted in vacant shelters across Hassakeh and Qamishli, raising the question of HLP and the ability of NGOs to intervene and support, especially in any maintenance or rehabilitation interventions. The HLP sub-WG is engaging with partners to launch due diligence assessments in these locations to provide guidance to the other sectors.

Briefings were held for NES sectors and NGOs starting on Sunday 08 December on the relevant due diligence guidelines.

Mine Action

NES Humanitarian Mine Action actors have continued actively addressing the associated risks of explosive ordnance (EO). Additionally, partners are coordinating with health authorities to deploy ambulances and paramedics alongside clearance teams, ensuring immediate medical response in displacement sites

To establish emergency shelters in Raqqa and Tabqa to accommodate the displaced population, partners cross-referenced EO data near schools and public sites to prioritize future clearance tasks. There has been active coordination with NESMAC to streamline administrative procedures for timely interventions. Mine action actors remain prepared and have prepositioned to support land assessments should authorities expand displacement sites or install additional tents in Tabqa to ensure the safety of affected communities. Meanwhile, HMA partners are actively participating in overall protection assessment and need analysis efforts and have deployed teams for victim assistance.

Health

There has been an increase in violence targeting health facilities in Raqqa and Menbij, resulting in the closure of nine health facilities, including seven Primary Health Centers (PHC), one hospital, one emergency coordination center, and one MMU (Mobile Medical Unit) all of which have been vandalized and looted. A flash update will be shared by the NES Health Working Group.

All health activities have been suspended by NESF HWG partners in Menbij.

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WASH

Needs:

WASH partners have conducted or planned to conduct assessment in 33 collective centres, out of the 220 locations so far. The needs are provision of water, sanitation services, hygiene and dignity kits to address the need of on average 44 households per emergency collective centres.

Response:

WASH partners have planned or conducted provision of water related activities such distribution of bottled water, jerry cans, and installation of water tanks in 30 emergency collective centres.

In terms of hygiene items, WASH partners distributed/planned hygiene kit and/baby kits in 122 emergency collective centres, dignity kits in 77 collective centres.

WASH partners have planned rehabilitation of facilities in 21 locations/CCs.

In terms of Sanitation, there is a plan to distribute garbage bins and collect solid waste in 15 locations.

Gaps & Constraints:

180 locations are not yet covered by provision of water related activities and the numbers will continue to grow.

In more than 100 locations there is a gap in either core hygiene kits, baby kits or dignity kits.

There is significant gap in terms of sanitation activities in almost all collective centres.

NES WASH partner has lost access of Menbij camps and suspended provision of WASH services.

NUTRITION

The NES NWG continues to monitor violations of the BMS Code and the random distribution of BMS products.

The NES NWG has developed a BMS SOP, which has been reviewed by the IYCF TWG and shared with health partners and authorities for endorsement.

Despite curfews and movement restrictions, nutrition partners continue to provide life-saving nutrition services to IDPs, ensuring critical support in affected areas.

Gaps persist in preventive nutrition supplies, particularly HEB, LQNS, MNP, and MMS.

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Additional funding is urgently needed to strengthen the IYCF response, including establishing MBAs, supporting non-breastfed infants, and enhancing complementary feeding (CF) interventions.

On December 08, Raqqa authorities imposed a curfew, leading to the suspension of all nutrition services in Raqqa, including both routine and emergency responses for IDPs.

In Deir-ez-Zor, three mobile clinics reported a suspension of nutrition services due to movement restrictions.

On December 09, one partner suspended their emergency response in an IDP gathering in Hasakah city and Qamishli city. Additionally, seven RRTs in Raqqa ceased operations due to limited movement.

Conflict in Manbij resulted in the closure of two CMAM nutrition centers, rendering them out of service. The main health facility in Manbij is also out of service, affecting 73 community health workers (CHWs)