

## Alert note

## Syria Crises

**Completed by:** Jana Nasr, Syria and Lebanon Forum Coordinator

**Date completed:** 31/10/2022

**Forum:** Syria

**Type of emergency:** Protracted

**Date of emergency (if rapid onset):**

<p><b>1. The nature of the emergency:</b></p>
<p>Reaching its twelfth year of war, Syria remains a complex humanitarian and protection emergency characterized by ongoing hostilities and their long-term consequences, including widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure, economic collapse, explosive ordnance contamination and one of the largest number of internally displaced people in the world. In many ways, the humanitarian needs across the whole of Syria are currently at their highest since the start of the conflict, and households are reverting to negative coping mechanisms more frequently than before. This includes child labour and child marriage and the sale of productive assets – all of which increase protection needs and/or reduce households' capacity for self-sustenance in the future. As household resilience decreases, humanitarian needs increase.</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic has been affecting the entire socio-economic system and has led to a dramatic loss of livelihoods across the country. The impact of this is expected to be the hardest for 90 per cent of the Syrian population who are living below the poverty line. Due to COVID-19, there has been a decrease of 19.8 percent in average employees in the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector. Unemployment rate estimated closer to 50 per cent of the working-age population at the end of the first quarter of 2021. In particular, there was a decrease in employment of 18.2 percent for males and 19.7 percent for females. The impact on livelihoods and the gloomy economic prospects poses an even higher risk of individuals joining armed groups and committing crimes, and due to the fear of livelihoods loss, parents encouraging early marriages and sending their children to work, that some 2.45 million children inside Syria are out of school, while 1.6 million are at risk of dropping out.</p>
<p><b>2. The impact and scale of the emergency (please include your source of information)</b></p>
<p>The scale of emergency is a medium-scale one and the intervention of Act members is concentrated on areas under the control of the Syrian government as well as in the north western areas outside the control of the Syrian government. Over 14.6 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria, including approximately 9.6 million in severe need<sup>1</sup>. The total number of IDPs is 5.38M<sup>2</sup>, including 4.3M in need of humanitarian assistance, while 56,745 returnees are in need<sup>3</sup>. The overall estimated Sector People in Need (PIN) for 2022 – of food insecure and those at risk of food insecurity – is estimated at 13.9 million, which is approximately more than half the population<sup>4</sup>. While 1.9 million are at risk of sliding into hunger<sup>5</sup>. In addition, more than 90 percent of Syrians live in poverty<sup>6</sup>. As for the education sector, 6.6 M are in need of education support<sup>7</sup>. Some 2.4 million children, aged 5-17 years, are out of school. They represent nearly half of 5.52 million school-aged children. These children fall prey to child labour, early and forced marriage, trafficking, and recruitment into the fighting. More children are likely to miss out on education and are at risk of permanently dropping out.</p> <p>In northwest (NW) Syria, Insufficient access, inadequate funding, and limitations of the operational environment have severely compromised the ability of humanitarians to deliver critical lifesaving aid into the region. What this looks like in practice is very limited coverage of specialized protection services, and extremely limited health care, including mental health and psychosocial support. As people are increasingly forced to resort to negative coping mechanisms given the lack of the very basics, protection risks are further compounded.</p>

The primarily geographical focus of the intervention of the forum's capacity will be Damascus and Damascus rural, South and North of Syria, Central Syria as well as northwest Syria. The joint work of the ASF members have long years presence and activities in the proposed areas.

The protracted imposed sanctions on Syria, which are critical as a means of accountability for systemic human rights violations, contribute directly to the increasing vulnerability of the majority of the Syrian population. These sanctions directly affect the development of internal economic structures and lead to rapidly increasing inflation and the loss of purchasing power of Syrian people. The local currency lost more than 90 percent of its value before the crises. The current economic collapse in Lebanon directly affects the Syrian economy. Due to the inability to deal directly with international traders, the Syrian government has been forced to procure most imports via Lebanon as well as bank transactions with the international cooperations due to the Cesar act. The scarcity of oil and gas also directly affect the communication facilities and productivity of humanitarian responses.

### **3. Local and national capacity**

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Affected communities are at the forefront leading their own recovery where possible in the absence of state, however they also heavily rely on UN organisations, as well as local and international NGOs to support them to address their humanitarian and recovery needs. The emergency response in Syria is currently being led by the Humanitarian Coordinator supported by UNOCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, WHO and other UN agencies depending on the sectors of intervention. The UN Strategic Framework (UNSF) complements the Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) that set out the framework within which the humanitarian community responds to the large-scale humanitarian and protection needs in Syria, on the basis of the prioritization undertaken across and within sectors. A Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP) has been developed and the UN cluster system, including working groups, are active.

All agencies, local and international, are working in a challenging and complex operating environment, with decreasing financial support despite increasing needs. ASF members are well positioned in their areas of operations and all have well trained staff that can work in difficult situations with utmost efficiency and productivity. Their long experiences in humanitarian responses have equipped them with the know-how. ASF members are active in coordination groups such as the Syria International NGO Regional Forum (SIRF), as well as relevant regional forums such as the NW Syria NGO Forum. These forums give voice to LNGOs and INGOs conducting humanitarian responses in the region, as well as avenues to facilitate their collective engagement.

The joint work of the ASF members has allowed a facilitation of implementation of proposed activities to be carried out within a transparent work implementation. ASF members will coordinate with each other to ensure the proposed activities are not duplicated in the same areas. ASF members will maintain communication and collaboration through monthly Forum meetings and/or through side meetings if needed. ASF members will also be reporting their work through coordination agencies to ease the work of local NGOs and INGOs and make sure work and efforts are not duplicated and a synergy approach is taken to alleviate the hardships of beneficiaries by complimenting the work between actors.

Finally, ASF members will liaise with ACT secretariat in Jordan to get any required technical assistance upon revising the appeal or consolidating the reports. All requesting members have developed their EPRP as

well as are in the process of finalising the forum EPRP including the contingency plans. Additionally, the EPRP will be reviewed in the mid of 2023.

#### 4. Key needs and gaps

According to the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2022, needs continue to be high in all areas of Syria and for all sectors, compounded by the challenge of less funding according to the overall estimated budget.

##### **Areas under Syrian Government control:**

In areas controlled by the government including the major governorate of Damascus, Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Dar'a, Al-Swedah, Homs and Hama, over 3 million people are still internally displaced, and 8.2 million are vulnerable people need life-saving aid. The security situation in the South remains volatile with a risk of escalation. The humanitarian and economic situation is deteriorating in all governorates and characterized by the following issues:

- Food was the top priority need, followed by livelihoods, Health and WASH.
- Lack of access to services was reported in several sectors including electricity, health and WASH (half of all communities in Dar'a reported no sewage connection).
- The coping strategies reported for lack of water and lack of food suggested health consequences are likely in the long-term, as people reported they bathe less frequently, reduce drinking water consumption, rely on less preferred/lower quality of food, or reduce/skip meals
- The main protection risk reported across governorates and population groups was theft and child protection issues including early marriage and child labor.
- The most common shelter type reported in communities was solid/ finished houses, and inadequacies with shelter – with the most common being a lack of lighting in and around the shelter.

**Food** prices are on the rise while food availability is decreasing. The top barrier to accessing food is the inability to afford essential food items, with acute food insecurity affects 12 million people in Syria, more than half the population, and an increase of 51 percent more than in 2019, while 1.9 million are at risk of sliding into hunger<sup>8</sup>.

The destruction of hospitals and **health** care facilities and a lack of medical personnel has deprived millions of people of access to basic health care; nearly half of health facilities are not fully functional. More than 50% of experienced medical professionals have fled the country over the past decade, further limiting the capacity to respond to people's health needs.

**Gender-Based Violence** (GBV) is a dominant feature of the Syrian humanitarian crisis that 7.3 M are in need to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. Women and girls are subjected to increased denial of economic resources and education, movement restrictions, exploitation, forced and child marriage, intimate partner and family violence, technology facilitated violence, and physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, and social violence. This violence pervades all walks of life. 19 per cent of household mentioned that women and girls feel unsafe in certain areas. 71 per cent of communities mention that child marriage is an issue for adolescent girls<sup>9</sup>.

As for the **educational** needs and gaps, some 2.4 million children, aged 5-17 years, are out of school. They represent half of the about 5.52 million school-aged children. These children fall prey to child labour, early and forced marriage, trafficking, and recruitment into the fighting. More children are likely to miss out on education and are at risk of permanently dropping out<sup>10</sup>.

50% (6.9 M) of women are in need of **livelihood** assistance. The top barrier to accessing livelihoods is that income does not cover the cost of living. Nearly three quarters of IDP, Returnee and resident households reported a decreasing ability to meet basic needs.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, for 90 per cent of females and 87 per cent of males, the loss/insufficient income, and the lack of opportunities to access income sources

constitute their first concern vis-à-vis physical and mental wellbeing, followed by the unaffordability of food and other essential items. Unemployment rate has increased sharply, with negative consequences on income sources and purchasing power.

**WASH** Systems have suffered from damage owing to hostilities, strain from years of functioning at high capacity due to the growing demand, limited or no maintenance, continuous drain of technical staff and poor water resource management, exaggerated by cascade effects of climate change, economic downturn, and electricity and fuel supply crisis. Access to sufficient and affordable safe water, adequate sanitation, solid waste management and/or hygiene supplies will remain a challenge for more than 2 million people in IDP sites, highly dependent on continued. Shortage of electricity remains the root cause for water supply systems underperformance or cessation and is mostly related to the significant shortages of fuel for power plants<sup>12</sup>.

**North-West Syria:**

The small area of opposition held north-west (NW) Syria consists of Northern Aleppo (Turkish operation area) as well as the areas of Idlib and Western Aleppo. Throughout the NW, basic services remain severely limited and there are huge gaps in funding and needs across sectors. Currently, there are over 4.5 million people living in the NW, 62% are internally displaced people (IDPs), and over 90% are people in need. Out of the 1.8 million people living in 1,434 camps or informal settlements in the NW, 44% live in tents that are often old, overcrowded and unfit for extreme weather. A high proportion (79%) of those living in camps or informal settlements are women and children.

As stated in the section above, and according to the 2022 OCHA HNO, people’s overall ability to meet their basic needs has further decreased compared to 2020. Economic deterioration is now a major driver of needs and OCHA MSNA data from August 2021 indicates that the income gap has continued to widen everywhere. Only 10% of households have an income above the cost of Syria’s Minimum Expenditure Basket.

Overlapping crises and the protracted nature of the conflict have also created a situation of hopelessness. This can be seen, for example, in the increase in suicide attempts and deaths amongst children and young people in NW Syria<sup>1</sup>. People find themselves in a desperate situation, with many unmet vital humanitarian needs such as access to: 1. sufficient food, 2. safe shelter and basic non-food items, 3. basic health services and facilities, 4. safe drinking water, as well as sanitation and hygiene infrastructure, 5. livelihood activities, 6. protection services, and 7. education opportunities. The dire situation has a disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups, people with special needs, and disadvantaged communities, such as female-headed households, older persons without family support, persons with disabilities, IDPs and children.

Of particular note is the ongoing risk that UNSCR 2642 will not be renewed in January 2023. This resolution keeps the cross-border mechanism open, and is a lifeline to millions of people living in NW Syria. With few viable alternatives, its non-renewal would have devastating humanitarian consequences and exacerbate an already dire situation during the harsh winter months.

Please indicate whether you are considering:

	Indicate your intention with an <b>X</b> below
Rapid Response Fund ( <i>intended for small and medium scale emergencies</i> )	
Appeal ( <i>intended for large scale emergencies</i> )	X

If you indicate an intention to launch an appeal, the secretariat will activate an Emergency Steering Committee meeting within two working days on receipt of this alert.

<sup>1</sup> [NORTH WEST SYRIA: HIGH NUMBER OF SUICIDE ATTEMPTS AND DEATHS, WITH CHILDREN ACCOUNTING FOR ONE IN FIVE CASES | Save the Children International](#)

Capacity details of forum members with the intention to respond are given below:

ACT Member	Geographical focus	Sectors of expertise	Support required	Estimated Budget range
Christian Aid	NW Syria	VT, remedial education, PSS, protection, food, NFIs, resilience programming, including community-led actions	Financial	<b>\$236,000</b>
MECC	Damascus and Damascus rural, Darra, Aleppo, Homs, Costa region, Homs, Hassakeh and Kamishly	Education, health, livelihood, NFs, food security and capacity building	Financial	<b>\$500,000</b>
HEKS/EPER	Damascus rural	Food and Agriculture Sector, Early Recovery and Livelihood, and WASH	Financial	<b>\$500,000</b>
GOPA/DERD	All of Syria with the exception of Idlib city (Access to rural Idlib)	Shelter, FSA, FIs/NFIs, Health, Education, Protection, WASH, Livelihood	Financial	<b>\$540,000</b>

#### 5. Potential responses

The **Syrian crisis** is an ongoing multisided armed conflict since the unrest began in March 2011, with international interventions taking place in Syria.

The ACT Syria Forum members in the region, and their work on the ground, has observed the increasing needs of directly and indirectly affected populations, especially among children and youth. In responding to the humanitarian needs of vulnerable people affected, ASF will continue to provide humanitarian assistance in this complex environment. Some of the sectors of response include: Food security, health, WASH, Education, Basic needs, NFIs, livelihoods & early recovery, child & youth forums, SGBV, psychosocial, youth forums, et all. ACT members in Syria will coordinate their work collaboratively in the ASF Forum.

MECC interventions cover most of Syrian governorates including Damascus, Damascus rural, Darra, Aleppo, Homs, Coastal area, Homs, Hassakeh and Kamishly. Besides, MECC has adopted a multi-sectoral approach and intervened in most sectors including rehabilitation, waste management campaigns; health support: medications, health awareness sessions, Hygiene promotion activities; Food and NFI distribution, educational support, livelihoods support: vocational training; Protection support, women empowerment through life skills sessions and conducting PSS to traumatized individuals, teachers and family members injured; WASH support. MECC supported to date more than two million families under different sectors.

Through this appeal, MECC will be focusing its work on Education, health, livelihood, NFs, food security and capacity building and will be reaching more than 5 500 direct beneficiaries.

Christian Aid (CA) has been working with local partners inside Syria since 2015 and has been responding to the associated refugee crisis in neighbouring countries since 2012. CA's aims in Syria are to 1) provide needs-based, accountable, humanitarian relief, and to 2) promote the resilience of communities and Syrian civil society, which are at the forefront of the conflict and response. CA interventions in NW Syria in recent years have included monthly multi-purpose unconditional cash assistance, as well as the distribution of food and hygiene kits, and the distribution of kits consisting of mattresses, pillows, blankets and carpets to displaced families in informal IDP camps. Through a recent EU-funded education and resilience project, 4 community centres were set up in NW Syria with a local partner. These centres provide safe spaces to improve the skills, resilience and social inclusion of young people through remedial

education, university scholarships, vocational training, including specialised nursing diplomas, psychosocial support and community involvement. Through this same project, young people were trained in advanced first response, as well as COVID-19 protocols, and supported to form volunteer first response committees.

With funds from this ACT Appeal, Christian Aid plans to work with one local partner in areas of NW Syria. Based on the needs in the NW, the proposed interventions are on 1. MHPSS for children and young people (individual and group support), 2. Protection and peacebuilding committee community initiatives (60 initiatives / grants), and 3. Individual Protection Assistance (Emergency Case Management) for children and young people.

The number of people reached across the different interventions in NW Syria is expected to be thousands (2000 through MHPSS, 18000 through community led initiatives, and 150 through emergency case management); the estimated budget for these interventions is expected to be in the range of USD 236k.

The Department of Ecumenical Relations and Development (DERD) is the charitable arm of and is affiliated to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East (GOPA) established in 1994 is currently the largest faith-based and one of the few low-risk organization in Syria based on INGO partner assessments. With 45 offices and 43 service centers, GOPA-DERD's total of 2000 main full time/part time staff and outreach mobile teams implement a wide range of programs in 13 out of 14 governorates in Syria, that address all the needs of those affected, IDPs and refugee returnees. GOPA/DERD work under the sectors of: Livelihood (Long-term: VT, Grants & Short-term: Cash (MPCA)/Voucher-assistance), FSA/FSL, FI/NFI distribution, Protection, Education, Health, Shelter & WASH and will be supporting more than 5600 direct beneficiary through this appeal

HEKS/EPER was registered in Syria in February 2020. Its programmatic strategy in Syria relies on three pillars: Water, Bread, and Work, therefore, HEKS/EPER in Syria has signed two MoUs with two line ministries, the Ministry of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection (MoITCP) and The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour. Each MoU will facilitate HEKS/EPER's direct implementation of the planned projects under the aforementioned programmatic pillars, they will also facilitate obtaining the approvals for the projects and accessing the targeted locations.

HEKS/EPER has been implementing Humanitarian Aid projects targeting the most vulnerable population in Syria on; 1) Awareness Sessions on Covid-19 preventive measures and Handwashing practices. 2) distribution of food and non-food items. 3) Provisioning and Installing Solar Panels System for a Borehole in Rural Damascus. 4) Provisioning and installing bread production line for the public bakery in Rural Damascus. And through such activities it will be alleviating the hardships of more than 59 000 beneficiaries. Additionally, HEKS/EPER is also providing support to the Syrian people through its Church Cooperation division, cooperation with churches in Syria has been running since 2017, and too many activities have been implemented through the provision of non-food items and cash assistance.

<sup>1</sup> [UNHCR, Operational Update, August 2022](#)

<sup>2</sup> [HNO 2022](#)

<sup>3</sup> [WHO, Health Sector Syria - Health Sector Bulletin 2 August](#)

<sup>4</sup> [HNO 2022](#)

<sup>5</sup> [WFP, '11 years of conflict: with hunger at historic levels, millions of Syrians hang by a thread,' 08 May 2022. accessed on 27 June 2022.](#)

<sup>6</sup> [UNHCR, 'Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, 27 June 2022.](#)

<sup>7</sup> [HNO 2022](#)

<sup>8</sup> [WFP, '11 years of conflict: with hunger at historic levels, millions of Syrians hang by a thread,' 08 May 2022. accessed on 27 June 2022.](#)

<sup>9</sup> [HNO 2022](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Unicef, Flagship report, Every Day Counts, 2022](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Unicef, hno 2022 final version](#)

<sup>12</sup> [HNO 2022](#)