



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

المفوضية السامية للأمم المتحدة لشؤون اللاجئين

UNHCR Syria

In Focus

Fortnightly Update
Apr 2014



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Highlights

- Following negotiations with the Government and SARC which negotiated with the opposition, core relief items have been delivered to the **Bustan Al Qasr in Aleppo, Termalla and Ghanto in Homs.**
- Early marriages, child labour, school dropout, family separation, unaccompanied children, children heading the households and insufficient reproductive health care are **the most notable protection concerns** in Al Tal and Kiwseh shelters in Rural Damascus.
- Number of training workshops have been organized for national and international NGOs on Protection issues including **Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Child Protection.**

UNHCR is crossing lines - Eastern Aleppo... Areas in Homs reached on the same day with truckloads of Aid



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The city of Aleppo is still divided between east and west where some areas, particularly in Eastern Aleppo, remain besieged and inaccessible because of ongoing fighting and a multitude of armed groups on the ground. UNHCR does reach this area sporadically through implementing partners however this area was last accessed by UNHCR in June 2013 and no humanitarian aid has reached the population there since then.

In December 2013, reports received indicated that Core Relief Items (CRIs) cannot be delivered into Orem, Al Bab and Jesser Al Haj on the eastern side of the city due to the security situation. Despite this a UNHCR supported health clinic continued to function in the area until



February 2014 when it was forced to close temporarily on account of damage incurred due to the shelling. Quick rehabilitation work was done which allowed the clinic to continue to function in a low profile manner.

Following agreement with the Syrian Government and with the assistance of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) which negotiated with the opposition groups, UNHCR and SARC carried out on Tuesday 8 April a rare and risky operation to deliver humanitarian assistance to the besieged neighborhood of Boustan al Qaser in Eastern Aleppo. Two trucks packed with blankets, plastic sheeting, hygiene kits and kitchen sets and food packages were offloaded at the last checkpoint at the outskirts of the city.

The goods were then transported into the community using 54 pull-carts and 75 workers, back and forth one and a half kilometers each way and in 270 trips, for later distribution to the needy population. A ceasefire, agreed for the duration of the operation, was fully respected by all parties.

UNHCR staff observed a dire humanitarian situation inside Eastern Aleppo, noting an acute shortage of food, water, medicine and basic supplies.



Homs is also one of the Syrian governorates which have been significantly affected by the crisis. The closure of the main road to Homs and the besiegement of some areas in the governorate have hindered the provision of humanitarian aid. Following the extensive and lengthy negotiations with the governorate of Homs, Termalla and Ghanto, two opposition-controlled villages in Northern Homs were finally reached for the first time in 6 months on the same day 8 April by a UN inter-agency cross line mission with 17 trailer trucks loaded with humanitarian assistance. During the mission, UNHCR delivered CRI which included plastic sheets, hygiene kits, baby and elderly diapers for 5,000 beneficiaries in Termallah and 2,500 beneficiaries in Ghanto. Since the beginning of the year, 292,467 individuals in Aleppo and 150,183 in Homs have benefitted from CRIs including winterized items delivered by UNHCR.

Protection concerns monitored during assessment visits to Al Tal and Kisweh shelters in Rural Damascus

As part of UNHCR Protection efforts to identify the populations at risk and the threats facing them, UNHCR conducts regular shelter visits, this time to Al Tal and Al Kisweh shelters hosting 46 families/230 individuals.

Three group discussions with a total of 31 women and men in the shelters as well as discussions with six individuals and SARC Coordinator have been carried out. More than 17 women reported seven hours of walking during their displacement from Adra Omalieh to reach a safer area. Some of these Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) were accompanying their family members with disabilities and most of them were carrying their belongings that they had to throw away later due to the long distance. A woman reported that she had to leave behind the body of her husband who died out of the fatigue.

Many protection concerns were monitored during the visit such as early marriages due to the economic hardship of families, child labour, school dropout, family separation, unaccompanied children, children heading the households and insufficient reproductive health care. IDPs in the shelters also lack access to essential medical services especially for serious diseases and psychological and mental conditions such as epilepsy. More than 22 individuals with disabilities were found in Al Tal shelter living with their families.



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UNHCR is currently working on designing a suitable response to these protection concerns and making referrals to the relevant partners when necessary.

Capacity building makes protection intervention more sustainable

Building the capacity of national and international NGOs engaged in the humanitarian action aims to promote a protection response that conforms to international standards in order to effectively address the protection risks that IDPs face during the humanitarian crisis in the country.

The latest round of training which UNHCR provided and International Medical Corps (IMC) facilitated was organized from 31 March to 2 April 2014 to enhance basic concepts of Gender Based Violence (GBV), provide a common understanding and orientation on GBV issues and elaborate on related principles and concepts as well as psychosocial considerations for frontline workers. 30 individuals participated in the training representing national NGOs; Ahl Al Khair, Syrian Society for Social Development (SSSD), Al Nada and Al Batoul from the governorates of Damascus, Hama, Homs, Aleppo and Tartous.

This training workshop was preceded by workshops on Child Protection and Psychosocial Care and GBV addressing 28 programme coordinators and NGO managers as well as 26 field staff from SSSD, Al Tamayouz, Al Batoul, Amal association, GOPA, Angelic Anees Saadi, Al Nada, Al Baraka and Al Namaa from the governorates of Damascus, Tartous, Hassakeh, Daraa, Homs, Hama, Idlib and Aleppo. A “Code of Conduct” training to 47 outreach volunteers who have regular access and contact with the affected population was also organized as well as a training on the basic principles of legal protection for 27 lawyers, managers and social workers from Homs, Damascus, Hama, Hassakeh and Aleppo.

This series of capacity building is part of a myriad of capacity building activities currently taking place in Syria under the UNHCR-led Protection Sector. So far training sessions have taken place on, *inter alia*, the Child Rights Convention, Mine Risk Education, family tracing and reunification and counter-trafficking measures. Beneficiaries include lawyers, community workers, caregivers and teachers in various governorates in Syria.



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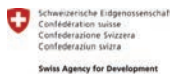
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