

Flash Report

Field Developments and Displacement Movements in Idleb & Hama

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First Field situation in Idleb Governorate and the Adjacent Countrysides

Idleb is considered to be the only governorate that is fully under the opposition's control. The opposition factions control the city of Idleb, the centre of the governorate, as well as all the cities and towns of the governorate, except for some towns situated in the southern and eastern Idleb countrysides. The opposition factions also control the areas of Madiq castle, Ziyara and Kafr Zeita in the northern countryside of Hama governorate. The Syrian regime is trying with the support of its international allies to impose control over the governorate of Idleb; so, it escalated its military operations and continued shelling the governorates of Idleb and Hama until SOCHI agreement was reached by Turkey and Russia. This agreement aimed to establish a demilitarized zone in the governorate of Idleb and adjacent countrysides of Aleppo and Hama. The agreement required setting up a 15-20 km demilitarized zone along the contact line between the Syrian regime troops and opposition forces in Idleb, Hama, and Aleppo governorates. Turkey, which guarantees the commitment of the opposition forces to the agreement, deployed its observation posts in opposition-held areas. Likewise, Russian forces stepped up their deployment in the buffer zone within the territory under the control of the regime forces, as the guarantor of the regime's commitment to the implementation of the agreement. The Syrian regime continued violating the agreement by targeting the demilitarized areas on a daily basis resulting in the death and injuries of the civilians. The IMU of the ACU documented all the violations of the regime, Russian and Iranian allies. The IMU issued its first quarterly bulletin "Syrian Crisis I Field Updates on the North West" which monitors the military operations of the regime, and the resulting injuries and deaths.

Since the beginning of April 2019, the Russian forces have been trying to enter areas under the opposition control and have sent military patrols to opposition-held areas, but the opposition, together with the civilians, refused to allow them into the areas under their control. On 29 April 2019, the local councils, along with all the other civilian entities, issued statements refusing to allow any Russian patrols to enter the demilitarized areas located in the liberated areas, where all the local councils and the civilians in the liberated areas demanded the Russian patrols not to cross the contact line in the Regime areas. The local councils emphasized in their statements that Russia is considered to be the regime's partner in committing crimes against humanity inside Syria, and the locals will not allow the Russian forces to enter their lands. Since then, the Russian Air-Force (RUAf) started to escalate its military operations on the liberated areas along with the regime which did not commit to the agreement of the demilitarized zones at all. The IMU enumerators documented the number of victims who fell as a result of the shelling of the Syrian regime and its Russian alliance throughout the first four months of 2019, where the number of dead civilians reached 81, including 81 children, in addition to a large number of dead women.

The IMU through its regular documentation has shown the continuous increase in the number of victims, as the number of victims in January was 34; it reached 74 in February; 87 in March; and 104 victims in April 2019. The shelling of the regime and its Russian ally on the Idleb governorate and adjacent countrysides of Aleppo and Hama led to the injury of 736 civilians, the majority of whom suffered from serious injuries and died days later, while others had some of their limbs amputated.

[1] <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-45554188>

[2] https://www.acu-sy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Syrian-Crisis-Field-Updates-on-the-north-west_Ar_IMU_ACU.pdf

Figure 1 : Number/Percentage of victims (including children and adults) due to Syrian regime bombing during the first four months of 2019

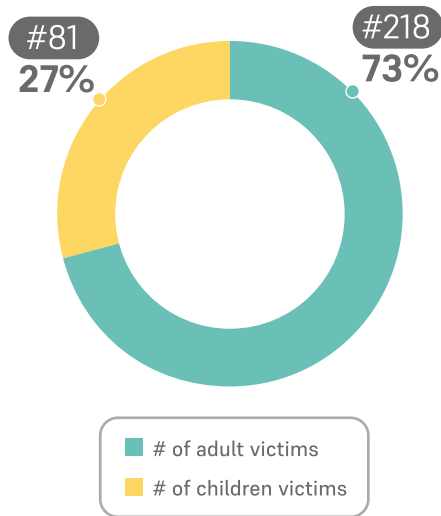


Figure 2 : Total number of injured due to Syrian regime bombing during the first four months of 2019

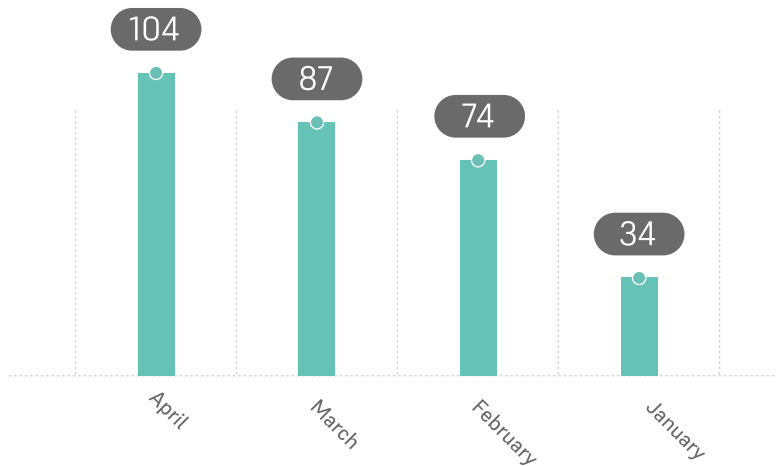
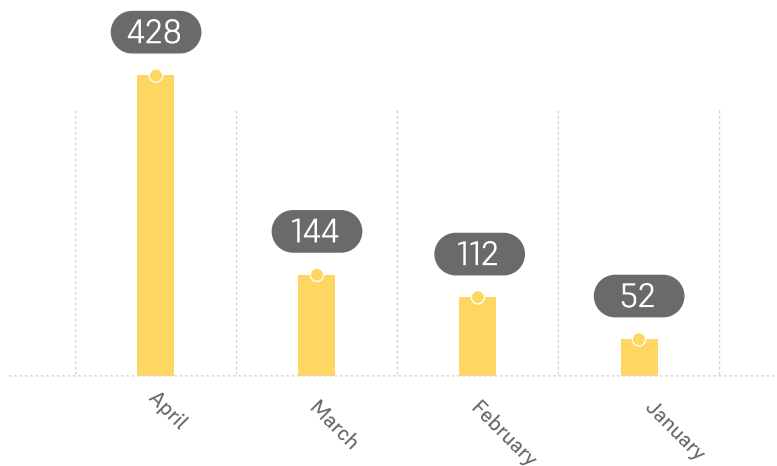


Figure 3 : Total number of victims due to Syrian regime bombing during the first four months of 2019



On first of May 2019, the RUAF shelled the town of Kansafra, situated in the middle of Idlib governorate, and targeted it with several airstrikes, which led to the death of a family consisting of a mother and a father and three children. The regime's helicopter targeted Maarzita town with two explosive barrels leading to the death of one civilian. The regime also targeted Rakaya Sajna with three explosive barrels killing one woman and one man and targeted Kafranbul city with two airstrikes causing the death of one civilian, where the regime's helicopter shelled a building near kafr nobol surgical hospital. The helicopter also targeted a car carrying many IDPs on the road of Abdin village which caused the death of three of them, including one child and one woman, and serious injury to one woman. The Russian warplanes shelled Msheirfeh town in western Idlib countryside targeting it with an airstrike that resulted in serious injuries of two children.

On second of May 2019, the regime's helicopter shelled Abdita town with explosive barrels, causing the death of one civilian and injury of three others. It also shelled Ehsem city with 9 explosive barrels leading to the death of five civilians and shelled Ablin with 4 explosive barrels killing one woman and one child, where one of the barrels targeted a kindergarten near Ablin bakery. The Russian warplanes shelled Mhambal city and the towns of Baydar Shamsu, Qrsaya, Bsanqul with many airstrikes, where the shelling on Baydar Shamsu led to the killing of one child and injury of three civilians.

On third of May 2019, the regime forces launched a guided missile in the northern countryside of Hama targeting the car of the administrative manager of Sham hospital near Madiq Castle and killed him. The regime's warplane targeted with airstrikes Sehriye town, leading to the death of one child and one woman, and the injury of two civilians. The Russian warplanes shelled Bab Eltaqa town killing one civilian and injuring one another.

On fourth May 2019, the Russian warplanes targeted Mhambal city with an airstrike leading to the death of one child and injury of one civilian and two children. The RUAF targeted Hbit town with 14 airstrikes, and the regime's aircraft targeted the same town with two explosive barrels and tens of rocket launchers leading to the death of one woman and injury of seven civilians. The RUAF targeted a bush near Has town with 6 airstrikes and also targeted Has town with one airstrike. The RUAF targeted Maar Tahroma with 9 airstrikes, leading to the death of one civilian and injury of three children, and two women. The regime's helicopter shelled Sfuhen with 3 explosive barrels which led to the death of one woman and three civilians. It also shelled Rakaya Sijneh with 6 explosive barrels leading to the death of one woman and one volunteer of the civil defence' team. One of the barrels targeted the town's health centre, the thing which led to the destruction of the building.

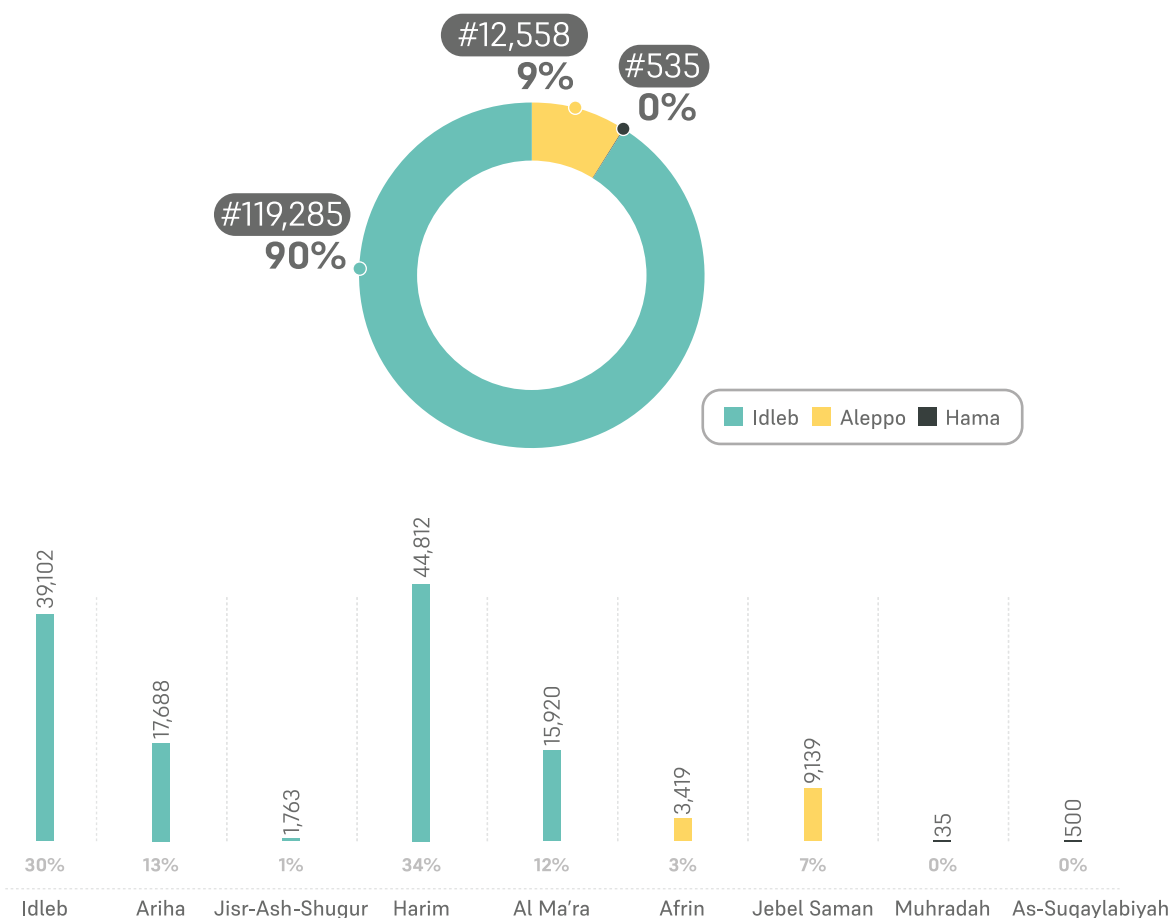
Second Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Statistics

The IMU of the ACU, through its network of enumerators distributed in all areas outside the regime's control, and northern Syria camps, periodically track the numbers of IDPs, where the IMU released its first issue of "The Field Developments & Displacement Movements in Idlib" flash report in September 2018, documenting the displacement of 85,233 IDPs. The IMU released the second issue of the flash report in December 2018 documenting the displacement of 21,243 IDPs, the majority of whom were from Jarjnaz, and Tah towns.

Since the beginning of the recent military escalation which has been ongoing for approximately 20 days and until 4th of May 2019, The IMU enumerators managed to document a total of 143,710 IDPs distributed among the cities and towns of Idlib, Aleppo and Hama governorates, where also 11,332 IDPs arrived in the northern Syria camps.

[3] https://www.acu-sy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Field-updates-and-displacement-movements-in-Idlib-140918_.pdf
[4] https://www.acu-sy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/IMU_Displacement-in-Idlib_Ar_051218.pdf

Figure 4 : Number/Percentage of IDPs - Governorate Level



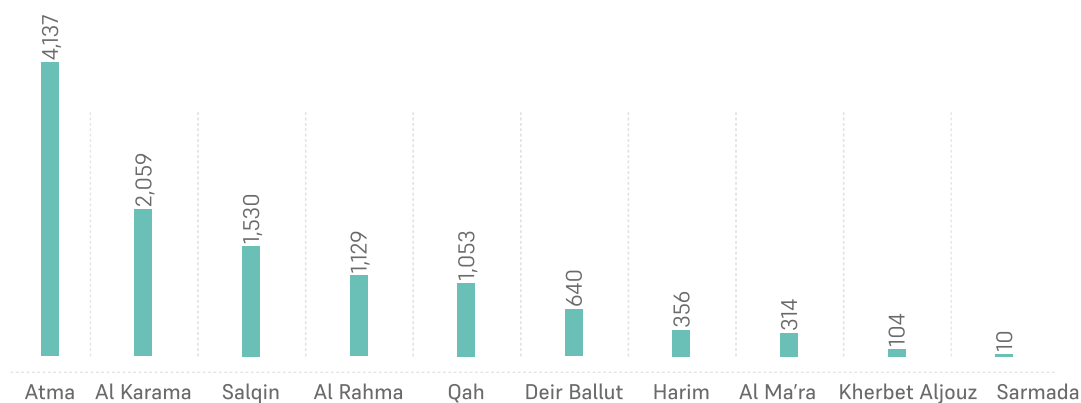
The bulk of IDPs are distributed in Idleb governorate by 119,285 (90% of the total IDPs), as 44,812 IDPs arrived and settled in the cities and towns of Harim district; 39,102 IDPs settled in the cities and towns of Idleb district; 17,688 IDPs settled in the Ariha district; 15,920 IDPs were still in the cities and towns of Ma'arrat An Nu'man district. It should be mentioned that Ma'arrat An Nu'man district is considered a first displacement area for all IDPs due to heavy shelling that took place there on a daily basis.

The number of IDPs who arrived in Aleppo governorate have formed 12,558 (9% displaced) of the total IDPs; 9,139 IDPs of whom were displaced in the cities and towns of Jebel Saman district in the western countryside; whereas 3,419 IDPs arrived in the Afrin district. As it was reported, the IDPs are still attempting to reach Afrin district, where they consider it a safe area and not exposed to shelling, while other displaced are trying to cross into the western countryside of Aleppo. However, the closure of roads and the battles in the northern countryside of Aleppo are an obstacle to the arrival or the crossing of IDPs to Afrin district.

535 IDPs fled from the heavy shelling that took place in their towns and they are now in the northern Hama countryside, trying to cross into a safe area; 35 displaced of whom are in Kafr Zeita sub-district of Muhradah district, while 500 displaced are in Ziyara sub-district of As-Suqaylabiyah district.

11,332 IDPs arrived in the northern Syrian camps during April 2019; the bulk of whom were distributed within Atma Cluster by (4,137 IDPs); whereas, the number of IDPs in Al Karama Cluster was (2,059 IDPs), and the number of IDPs in Salqin cluster was (1,530 IDPs), while only 10 new IDPs were registered in Sarmada Cluster. In Afrin district, only (640 displaced) arrived at the camps of Muhammadiyah and Deir al-Bailout. From another side, there are 700 families stuck near the Afrin checkpoint trying to enter Afrin district and its camps; however, the closure of the checkpoint due to the Tall Refaat battle prevented the IDPs from entering the area. It is noteworthy that the IDPs are still sitting on the agricultural land surrounding the checkpoint waiting for permission to enter Afrin district.

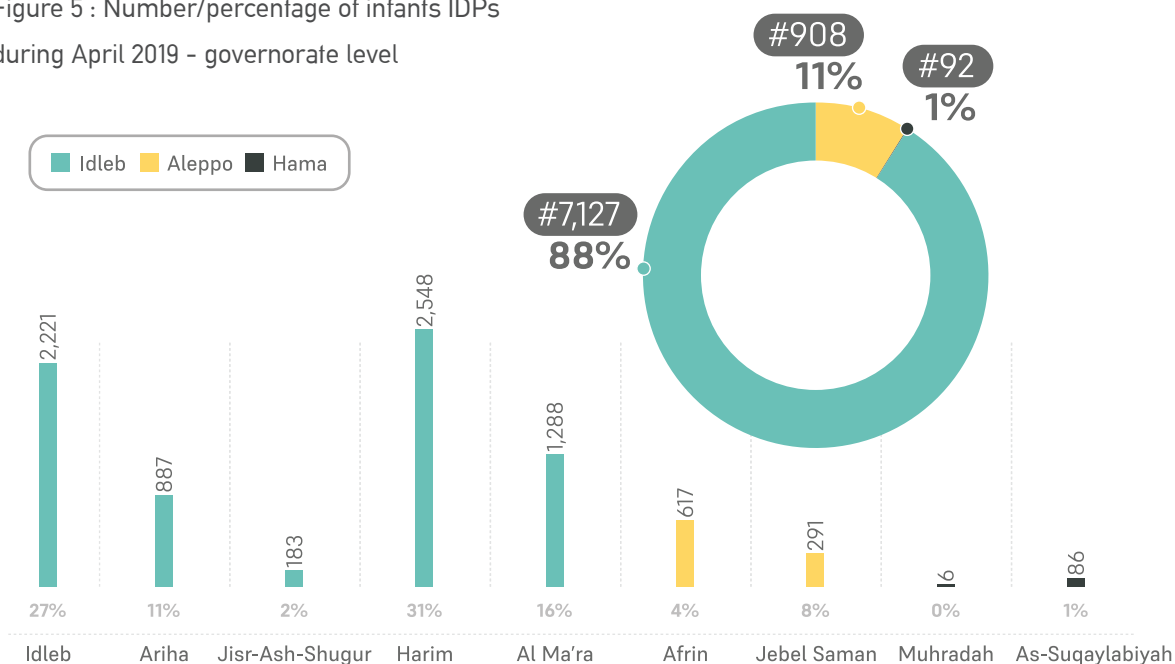
Figure 4 : Number of IDPs in the Northern Syria Camps during April 2019 - Cluster Level



Third Infant Statistics

The number of infant IDPs has reached (8,127 infants); 7,127 (88% infants) of the total number of infant IDPs were distributed in Idleb governorate, 908 (11% infants) in Aleppo governorate, and 92 (1% infants) in Hama governorate.

Figure 5 : Number/percentage of infants IDPs during April 2019 - governorate level

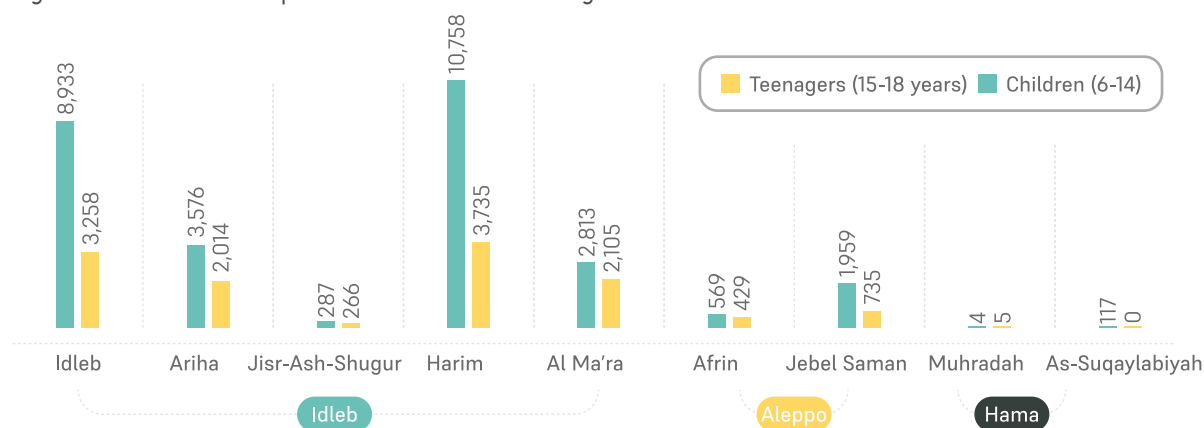


The bulk of infants are in Harim district by (2,548 infants); there are (2,221 infants) in Idleb district and (1,288 infants) are in Ma'arrat An Nu' man district. The IDPs are demanding the humanitarian organizations to provide infant formula for babies, as mothers complain that natural milk is not available in saturated quantities. IDPs are also complaining about the lack of privacy in displacement places to feed their children; therefore, nutrition programs should be provided to help mothers feed their children through breastfeeding and avoid malnutrition for the child and nursing mother. Moreo ver, action should be taken to provide places that are consistent with the community's traditions, which require the privacy of mothers to breastfeed their children; as well as, to provide Baby diapers to the displaced children regularly.

Fourth School-Age Children Statistics

The number of school-age children IDPs has reached (41,564 children); (29,017 children) of whom are in primary education, between 6 to14 years; while (12,547 children) are in secondary school, between 15 to 18 years. It should be mentioned that the fierce-shelling escalation of the Syrian regime and its Russian ally coincided with the period of final examinations of schools in Syria. On this view, the Education Directorate suspended the school attendance in all the schools of the northern countryside of Hama and the southern countryside of Idleb in order to ensure the students and education staffs safety.

Figure 6 : Number of displaced children at school-age - Governorate Level/ District Level



In the northern countryside of Hama, the Education Directorate has suspended school attendance since the beginning of April 2019; the school suspension was due to the severe shelling on the cities and towns of the northern countryside of Hama, which are beyond the Syrian regime control. In the Idleb district, the school attendance was suspended several times in Ma'arrat An Nu'man district for several days due to the fierce-shelling escalation of the regime on the area. As it was reported, the final exams were not conducted until the date of preparation of this report, despite the start of exams in the other relatively safe areas.

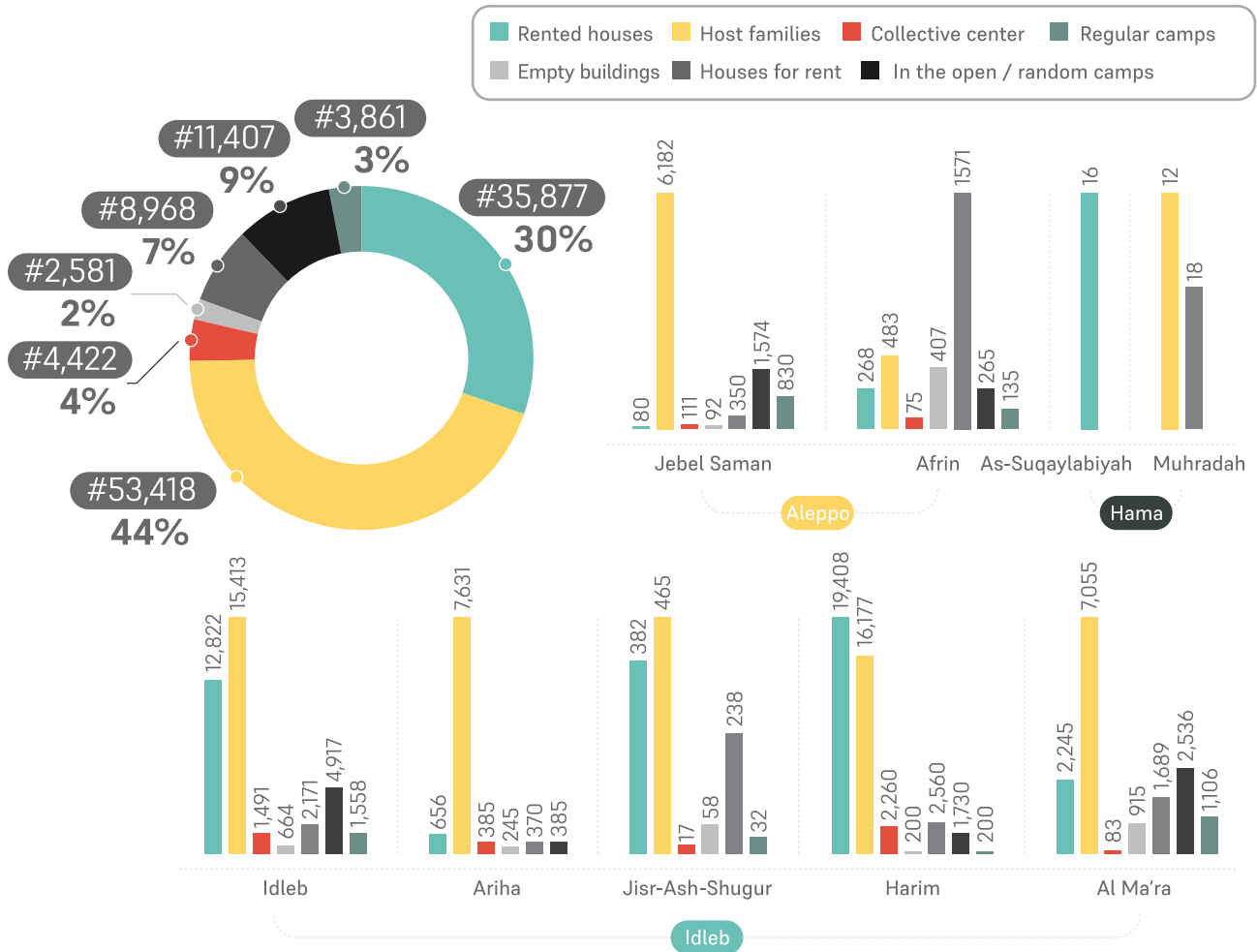
The largest number of displaced school-age children are in Harim district by 14,439 children; (10,758 children) of whom are in primary school age; (3,735 children) are in the secondary school age. Harim district is considered a relatively safe area in comparison with the other areas of the governorate; Therefore, displaced children in Harim schools should be enrolled to take their school exams, so that they will not miss the academic year and face problems in the coming school year.

A total of 4,918 displaced school-age children are in Ma'arrat An Nu'man. It should be mentioned that the school attendance is suspended in the area until the date of preparation of this report, which may deprive displaced and household students in the area from conducting their school exams.

Fifth Places of IDPs Settlement

The majority of IDPs were settled at host families by (44,418 IDPs), these places are considered temporary, where the IDP families resort to their relatives or friends who are residents of cities and towns, or to IDPs who are previously settled in the area. Rented houses came in the second place, as 35,877 (30% IDP) of the total IDPs settled in it, while 11,407 (9% IDPs) settled in the open and in random camps.

Figure 7 : Number /Percentage of IDPs by temporary settlement places



In the northern countryside of Hama, 18 displaced within Muhradah district settled in houses for free; while 12 displaced settled at host families. The bulk of the Kafr Zeita sub-district population in Muhradah district are forcibly displaced by the heavy shelling on the area, which results in a large number of empty houses. From another side, 16 displaced in Ziyara sub-district of As-Suqaylabiyah district have settled within rented houses.

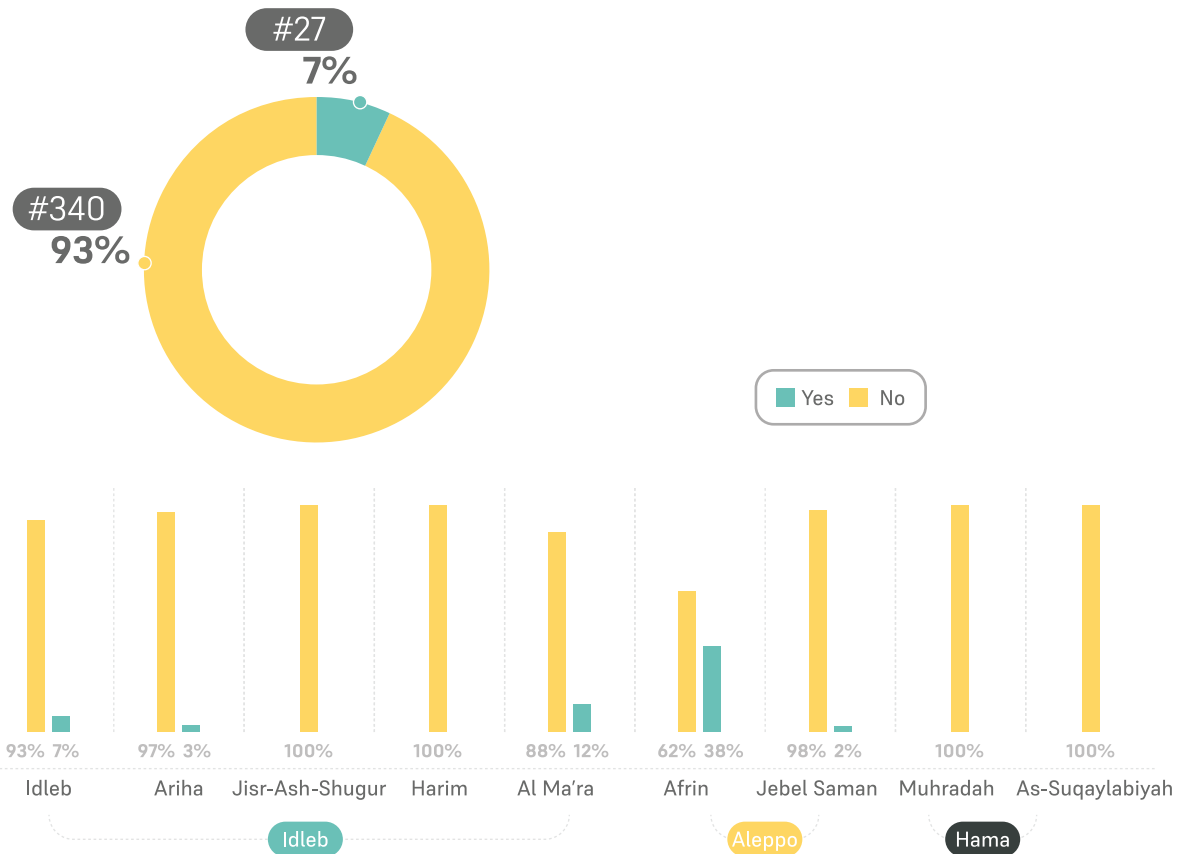
In Ariha district, the largest number of IDPs (7,631 IDPs) settled at host families; while 656 displaced settled in rented houses; 385 displaced settled in collective housing; 385 displaced settled in the open and in random camps.

In Harim district, the largest number of IDPs (19,408 IDPs) settled in rented houses, and (16,177 IDPs) settled at host families.

Sixth Required Response to the IDP Needs

The numbers show that only 27 (7 displacement points) has responded to IDPs' needs; while 340 (93 displacement points) has not provided any response for IDPs need. However, the response at these points was limited to civil initiatives, which included providing meals, water and simple shelter materials.

Figure 8 : Number /Percentage of displacement places by provided response

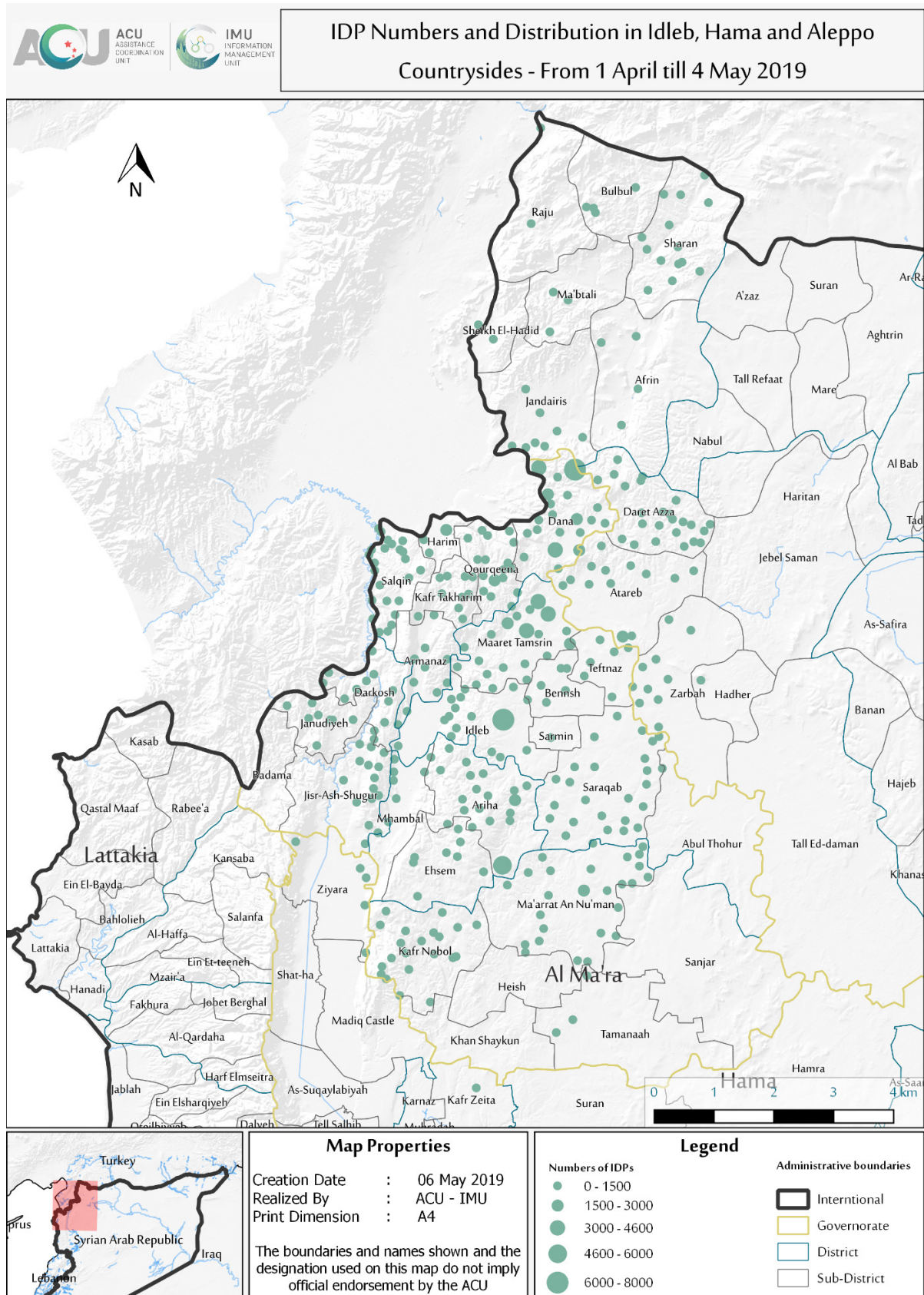


Humanitarian organizations responded to the needs of IDPs in seven towns and cities within Afrin district; they provided food baskets and shelter materials, while no humanitarian organizations responded to the needs of IDPs in 23 cities and towns within the area.

In Ma'arrat An Nu'man district, humanitarian organizations responded to the needs of IDPs in only six towns, as an international organization distributed food baskets in two towns, while local organizations distributed emergency baskets in four towns.

There was no humanitarian response to the need of the IDPs in Harim and Jisr-Ash-Shugur districts in Idleb governorate, as well as to Muhradah and As-Suqaylabiyah districts in Hama, whereas the humanitarian response was nearly inexistent in all other areas.

Map 1 : IDP Numbers and Distribution in Idlib, Hama and Aleppo Countrysides - From 1 April till 4 May 2019



Recommendations

The Syrian regime shelled Idleb and its neighbouring countryside from the governorates of Aleppo and Hama with hundreds of airstrikes, rockets and artillery shells; the aggression resulted in killing 299 civilians, including 81 children and wounding 736 others during the first four months of 2019. On the other side, the Russian warplanes participated in shelling the civilians, despite that the Russian forces are the guarantor of the Syrian regime's compliance to reduce the escalation. Action should be taken to Issue binding decisions ensuring the stop of shelling by the Syrian regime against the civilians in liberated areas, also, to establishing a clear mechanism to monitor the breaches of the escalation.

The information management unit (IMU) have registered 143,710 IDPs distributed among 367 displacement points divided between a city and a town. However, the humanitarian organizations responded to only 27 displacement points; the response consisted of distributing food baskets to the IDPs and some shelter materials. The suffering of the Syrian people continues; therefore, the humanitarian action must be linked to this suffering without any political or military considerations. The Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) calls upon all supporting parties to meet humanitarian and service needs in the areas of displacement and to alleviate the suffering of IDPs.



Field Developments
and Displacement
Movements

in Idleb and Hama

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