



Syrian Crisis

Field Updates on the North West

This is the second bulletin issued by the Information Management Unit (IMU) that covers the second quarter of 2019 and continues shedding the light on the field and military key incidents in areas outside the Syrian regime's control in the governorate of Idleb and adjacent countrysides of Aleppo and Hama governorates; which witnessed massive military escalation due to the attacks launched by the regime backed by Russian warplanes in the aim of imposing control over the aforementioned areas and emptying them of population.

وحدة تنسيق الدعم

ASSISTANCE COORDINATION UNIT

The Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) aims to strengthen the decision-making capacity of aid actors responding to the Syrian crisis. This is done through collecting, analyzing and sharing information on the humanitarian situation in Syria. To this end, the Assistance Coordination Unit through the Information Management Unit established a wide network of enumerators who have been recruited depending on specific criteria such as education level, association with information sources and ability to work and communicate under various conditions. IMU collects data that is difficult to reach by other active international aid actors, and publishes different types of information products such as Need Assessments, Thematic Reports, Maps, Flash Reports, and Interactive Reports.

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Quarterly Bulletin - Edition 02

SYRIAN CRISIS

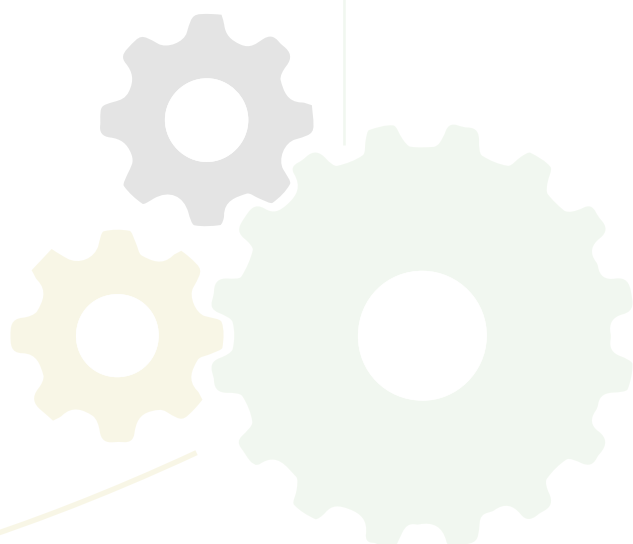
Field Updates

on the North West

April - May – June 2019

Issued by

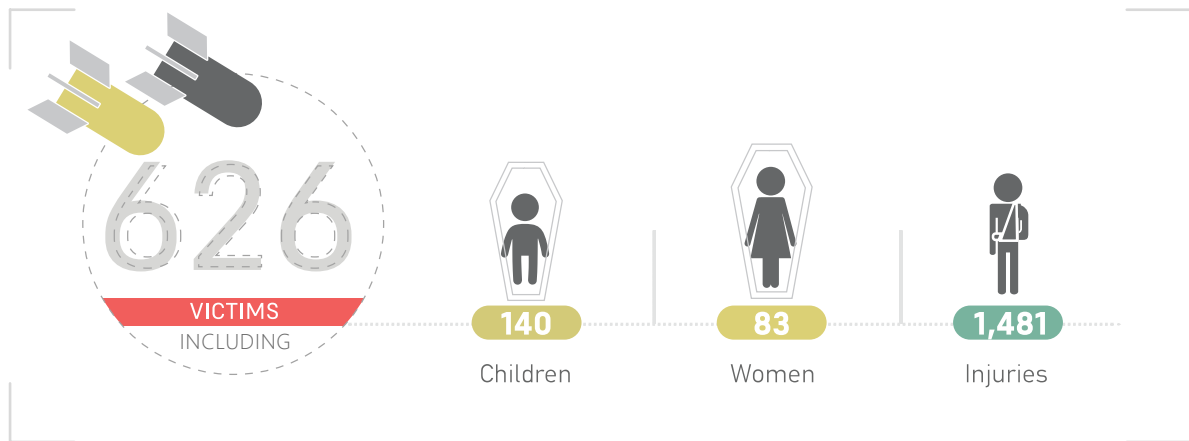
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Background

- The Information Management Unit (IMU) of the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) has issued the first quarterly bulletin¹ titled: *Syrian Crisis - Field Updates on the North West* which covered the first three months of 2019, and through this second quarterly bulletin, IMU continues monitoring the field developments, and documenting the numbers of victims and injuries throughout the second quarter of 2019 in Idleb governorates and adjacent countrysides of Aleppo and Hama governorates, which are considered to be the last stronghold for the opposition and last resort for the forcibly displaced civilians who survived the bombardment and airstrikes of the regime and its Russian and Iranian allies. Since the start of 2019 these areas have witnessed severe military escalation where the regime targeted the civilians and vital facilities in an attempt to impose control over the areas and empty them of their population. Through its network of enumerators, the IMU has documented the killing of 626 civilians, including 83 women, and 140 children during April, May and June, in addition to a large number of injuries that reached 1,481 injuries, with many cases reported to be serious.

Figure 01: The Number of Civilian Victims During April, May and June 2019



Political Overview

- The Syrian regime continued its operations and military escalation along with its Russian and Iranian allies, blatantly disregarding the local and international appeals, amongst which, a joint statement² issued by Great Britain, Germany and France asserting the necessity to stop the military escalation in the north west of Syria due to the recent increase of military violence. The three countries called for an end to the violation of the international humanitarian law committed by the regime through its indiscriminate bombardment on population centres, civilian infrastructures, schools and health facilities.

The regime continued its military escalation and violations including that of Sochi agreement³ established by Russia and Turkey on 17 September 2018, despite Russia's being the guarantor of the regime's commitment to the agreement. The agreement stipulates setting up a 15-20 km demilitarized zone along the contact line between the Syrian regime troops and opposition forces and conducting joint Turkish and Russian patrols. With the advent of April, the regime started launching attacks on the southern part of Idleb countryside backed by Russian warplanes to open the major highways M4 & M5 (Aleppo-Damascus) and Aleppo-Lattakia) to traffic.

¹ https://www.acu-sy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Syrian-Crisis-Field-Updates-on-the-north-west_Ar_IMU_ACU.pdf

² <https://www.euronews.com/2019/05/13/uk-france-and-germany-say-gravely-concerned-at-escalation-in-syrian-fighting>

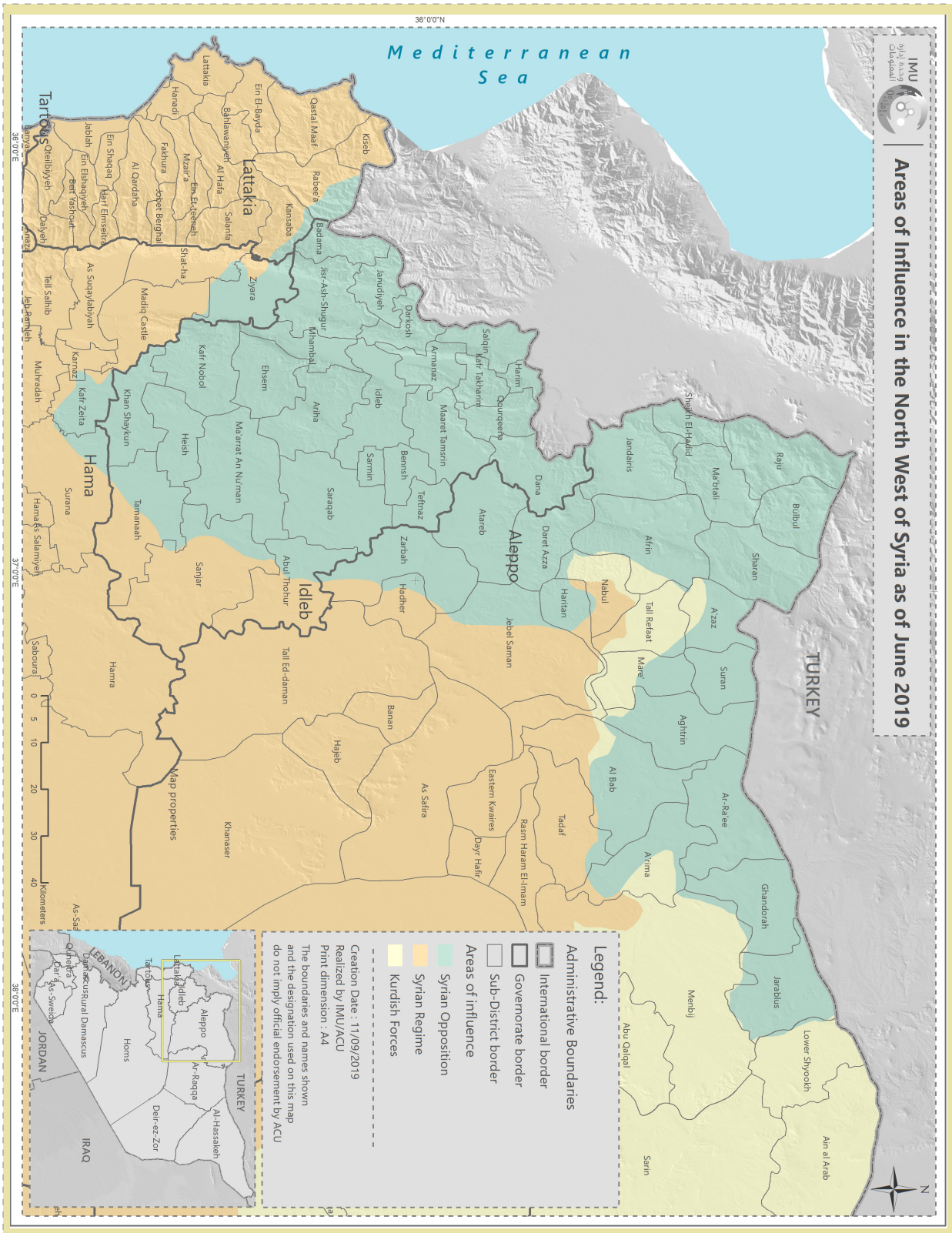
³ <http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-45549979>

Field and Military Overview

- During the military campaign launched in April, May and June by the regime against areas outside its control in the north west, 626 civilians were killed, including 83 women and 140 children, in addition to 1,481 injuries with many of the injured being in severe conditions which required limbs amputation. The regime concentrated the shelling on the southern part of Idleb in addition to northern Hama countryside in an attempt to expand its control over the area. The opposition forces launched a counter attack to restore control over Kafr Nabutha after the regime imposed control on it. The opposition forces entered the city but were then forced to leave due to the severe rocket and artillery bombardment of the regime which managed at the end to regain control over it along with Madiq Castle city and the towns of Jamasa Odayat - Alshareeah, Tweini, Karkat, and Bab Eltaqa. In southern Idleb countryside, the regime targeted the Turkish observation post in Sher Maghar with artillery shelling several times leading to the killing of one Turkish soldier and causing severe injuries to three others. Significant population displacement started from the military escalation areas to northern Idleb countryside; consequently, a new camp has been established for IDPs near Babesqa town of Dana sub-district with an accommodation capacity of 450 households; it is intended for IDPs fleeing northern Hama and southern Idleb countrysides.



Map 1: Areas of Influence in the North West of Syria as of June 2019



Key Incidents

During April - May - June 2019

Year 2019

APRIL

4 April

In the southern countryside of Idlib, the regime shelled cluster rockets at Kafr Nobol city killing 11 civilians, two of whom were children, and injuring 30 other civilians as the regime bombed a popular market in the city.

7 April

In the southern countryside of Idlib, the regime fired cluster rockets at Saraqab city, killing 4 civilians and injuring 20 other civilians, including two children and two women, and at Nayrab town, killing 7 civilians, including a child and a woman, and injuring 18 other civilians.

8 April

In the western Idlib countryside, Jisr-Ash-Shugur city was shelled by three large-scale rockets that caused extensive destruction in the city; the act of hostility resulted in injuring 17 civilians including four students, where one of the rockets hit Raqiah school in the northern neighborhood, which led to completely destroying it. Several sources confirmed that the rockets were fired from the Russian base in the Mediterranean Sea.

23 April

In the western Idlib countryside, the Syrian regime shelled Hambushiyeh town of Jisr-Ash-Shugur district with dozens of missiles; the aggression resulted in killing a civilian and injuring 13 others, as the shelling targeted residential neighbourhoods and a school within the town, as well as tents near the town. The shelling caused panic among the IDPs and students, in addition to massive destruction of property. Furthermore, the regime shelled the civil defence teams during their evacuation of the wounded from the rubble.

26 April

In the northern Hama countryside, the Russian warplanes shelled Tal Hawash; an aggression rendered seven civilians dead and eight civilians wounded. Moreover, the Russian warplanes shelled the agricultural lands between Kafr Zeita and Latmana, and Hasraya town with a missile; as well as, Lower Amiqa town; an aggression rendered a family of five people dead, including three children, as well as injuring seven civilians.

29 April

In the northern Hama countryside, the Russian warplanes shelled Lower Amiqa with cluster rockets and Kafr Nabutha town with heavy machine guns, while the Russian helicopter shelled Latmana town with vacuum bombs. Meanwhile, the regime shelled an IDP camp near Sher Maghar town, an act of hostility resulted in killing two civilians, including a child and injuring three civilians. It is worth mentioning that the camp is about 100 meters away from the Turkish observation point, so the displaced people settled in this camp, as they consider it relatively safe due to its proximity to the Turkish post.

Figure 02: Number of Civilian Victims and Injuries in the North West during April 2019

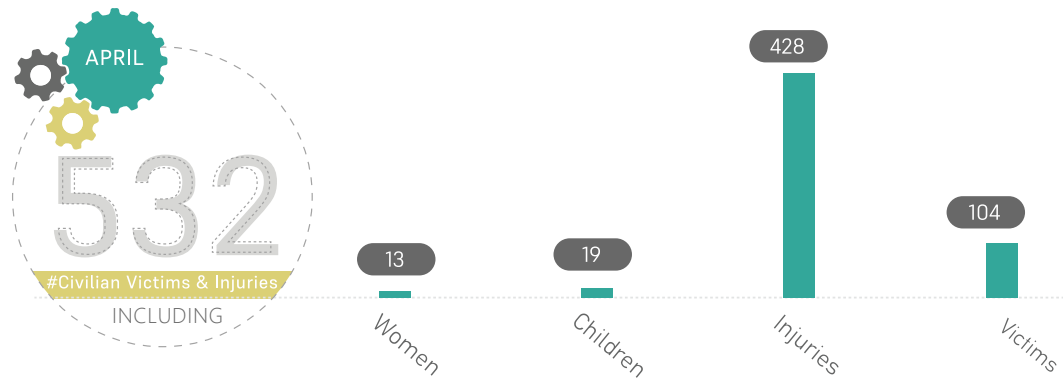
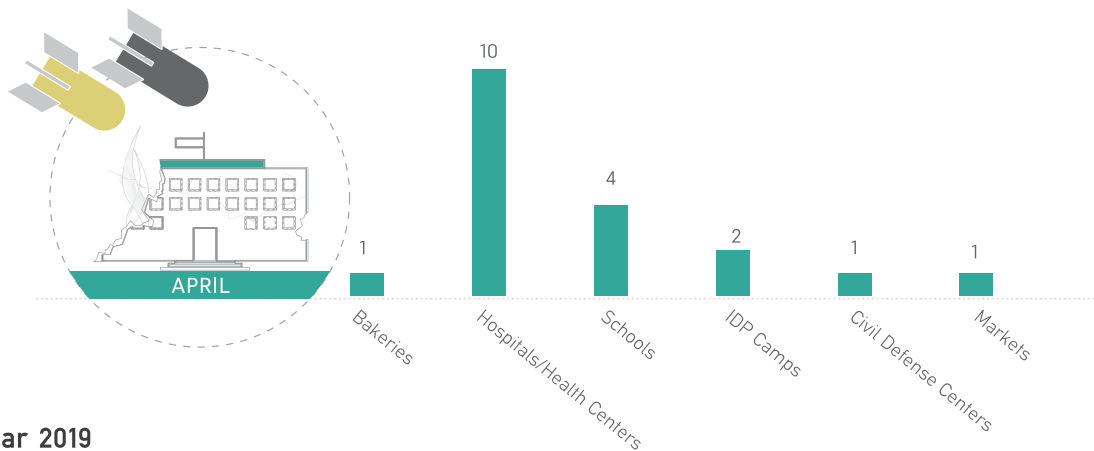


Figure 03: Number of Damaged Vital Facilities in the North West during April 2019



Year 2019

MAY

1 May

In the central area of Idleb governorate, the Russian warplanes shelled Kansafra town with several air strikes; an aggression resulted in killing a family of a father, a mother and three children.

5 May

In the southern countryside of Idleb the Russian warplanes shelled Has town with five airstrikes, two of which targeted Sham Hospital (Nabd Al-Hayat Hospital), which rendered it out from service. The Russian warplanes also shelled Raba Al-Jozz town; an act that led to the death of five civilians, including four women. Furthermore, the regime helicopters shelled Nqeir town with five explosive barrels, and three naval mines, which resulted in wounding five civilians, including two women and two children. From another hand, the Syrian warplanes targeted Kafr Nobol city with three air strikes and the city forest with an air strike; an aggression resulted in killing two civilians, one of whom is a paramedic in the first-aid system, where he was killed by an air strike while he was administering aid to the wounded.

8 May

In the southern countryside of Idleb, the regime warplanes shelled Khan Shaykun city with 25 air strikes, and the regime helicopters shelled the city with eight explosive barrels. Additionally, the regime shelled the city with dozens of artillery and missile shells; where the aggression resulted in killing four civilians, including a child, and injuring 26 others, including 10 children and six women, most of whom reported to be in serious conditions.

17 May

In the southern countryside of Idleb, the regime warplanes shelled Ma'arrat An Nu'man city with five air strikes, one of the raids targeted a vegetable market; an aggression resulted in killing four civilians, including two women, and injuring seven others, most of whom reported to be in serious conditions.

19 May

In the southern countryside of Idleb, the Russian warplanes shelled Kafr Nobol city with ten air strikes; an aggression resulted in killing nine civilians, including two children and two women, and injuring 25 others, in addition to several wounded civilians who were still trapped under the rubble. More to the point, Mariam's Obstetrics hospital has been out of service because of being targeted directly with an airstrike by the Russian warplanes.

21 May

In the southern countryside of Idleb, the regime warplanes shelled a popular market within Ma'arrat An Nu'man city; an act of hostility resulted in killing ten civilians, including a child, and injuring 36 others.

26 May

In the southern countryside of Idleb, the Syrian warplanes shelled a popular market in the Ma'arrat An Nu'man city with four airstrikes; an aggression resulted in killing six civilians, including two children, and injuring 45 others, including nine women and five children.

Figure 04: The Number of Civilian Victims and Injuries in the North West during May 2019

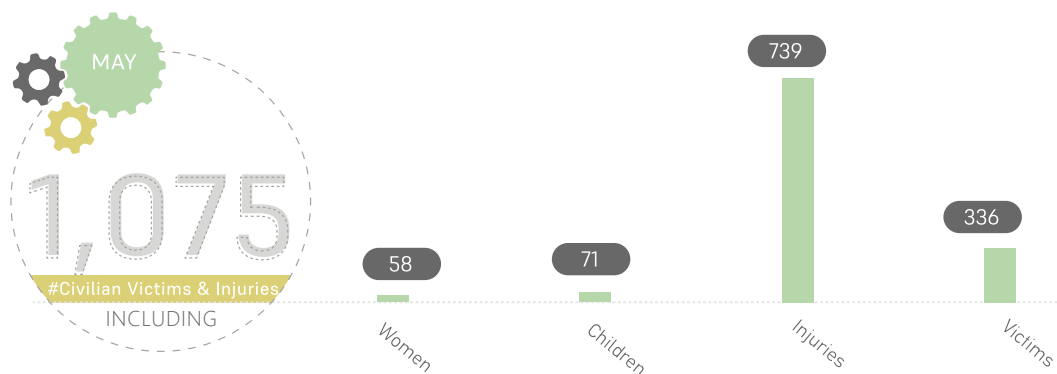
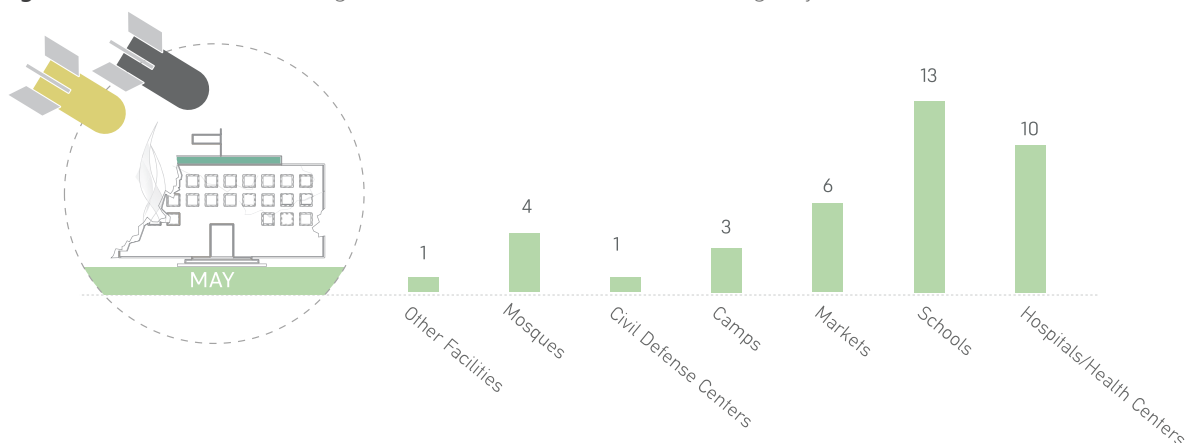


Figure 05: The Number of Damaged Vital Facilities in the North West during May 2019



Year 2019

JUNE

1 June

In the southern area of Idlib governorate, the regime opened its rocket launchers on Kafr Nobol city; several rockets targeted the hospitals of Al Baraka and Al Khatib within the city, which led to rendering them out of service. The act of hostility on the city resulted in killing a child and seriously injuring a family consisting of a father, a mother and two children.

5 June

In the southern countryside of Idlib, the regime warplanes shelled Kafr Oweid town with two air strikes; an aggression resulted in killing five civilians, including two children and a woman. In the meantime, the regime warplanes shelled Big Dara town with an air strike, which resulted in killing two civilians.

7 June

In the northern Hama countryside, the regime warplanes and helicopters shelled the sites and the towns in northern Hama countryside with more than 100 air strikes. The air strikes targeted Kafr Zeita city and the towns of Murak, Latmana, Zakat, Hasraya, Jbine, Tal Milh, Latmin, Lahaya, and Sayadi. The regime targeted the mentioned town and cities with dozens of heavy artillery and rocket shells; where the aerial and land bombardment resulted in burning more than 300 dunums of unharvested agricultural land and massive destruction of property.

15 June

Idlib governorate and its adjacent countrysides of Aleppo and Hama governorates were struck with 82 airstrikes by the regime and Russian warplanes, and hundreds of shells and missiles by the regime artillery, killing 13 civilians, including four children and four women, and injuring 16 civilians.

19 June

The Russian and regime warplanes shelled the governorate of Idlib and its adjacent countrysides of Aleppo and Hama governorates with 113 air strikes, along with hundreds of heavy artillery and rocket launchers. The aggression resulted in killing 17 civilians, including four children and two women, and injuring 24 others, including seven children and seven women; additionally, the shelling targeted a crowded market in Banin town on the central area of Idlib governorate.

20 June

The Russian warplanes shelled the governorate of Idlib and its adjacent countryside of Hama governorate with 38 air strikes, while the regime warplanes shelled it with 67 airstrikes, along with hundreds of heavy artillery and rocket launchers; the aggression resulted in killing 21 civilians, including nine children, one woman, and three paramedics, in addition to injuring 29 others, including nine children and one woman.

26 June

Idlib governorate and its adjacent countryside of Hama governorate were struck with 57 airstrikes by the regime and the Russian warplanes, and hundreds of artillery shells and missiles by the regime, killing 12 civilians, including a woman, and injuring 10 civilians, including three children. Moreover, the bombardments targeted Civil Defense teams evacuating the wounded, killed two of the volunteers, injured one other, and destroyed two of their vehicles.

Figure 06: The Number of Civilian Victims and Injuries in the North West during June 2019

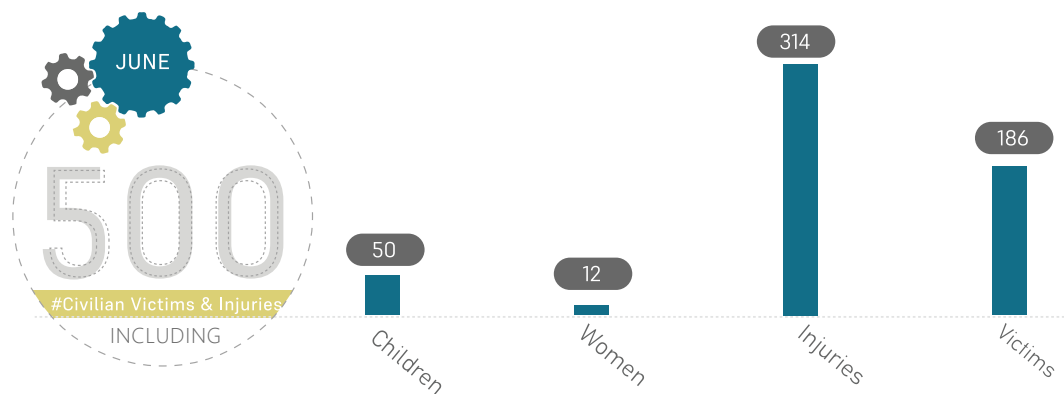
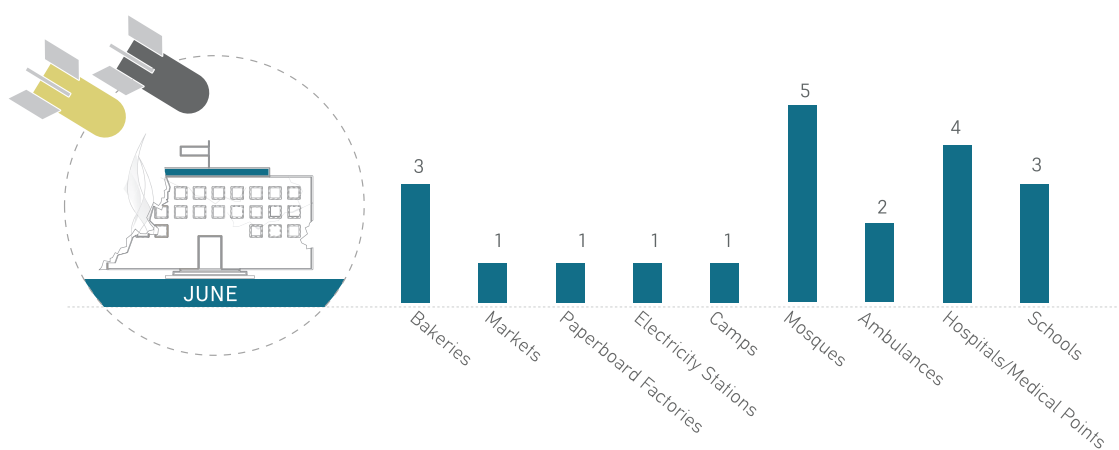


Figure 07: The Number of Damaged Vital Facilities in the North West during June 2019

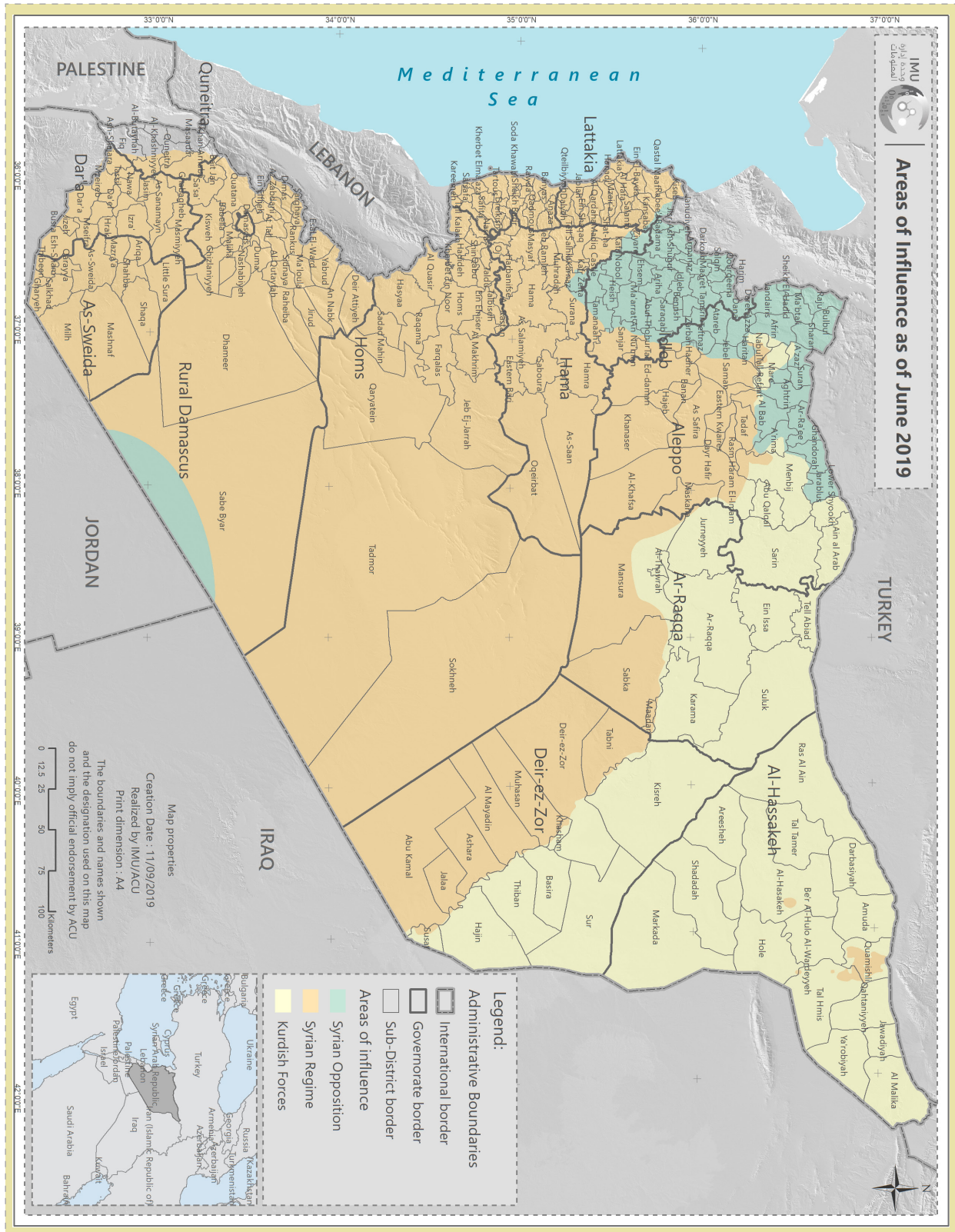


Crops Fires in the North West of Syria

- The three months of April, May and June, witnessed massive fires in the agricultural lands caused by the regime and its allies due to targeting the agricultural lands directly with hundreds of airstrikes, heavy artillery, barrel bombs, and rockets which led to having all the crops burnt. It is worth mentioning that the majority of people depend on crops of wheat and barley which are found in the southern countrysides of Aleppo governorate and southern countryside of Hama governorate. The farmers suffer from the regime's shelling on their agricultural lands forcing them to give some part of their crops to the commanders at the checkpoints of the Syrian regime in order to allow the farmers to harvest their lands. The director of the civil defense, Ali Jomaa, stated that the regime forces, along with their Iranian and Russian allies, had set fires in more than 200 hectares of agricultural lands in the western and southern countrysides of Aleppo during May 2019. The director also asserted that 50 hectares of the burnt lands had been planted with wheat and barley, but hadn't been harvested yet, whereas 150 hectares of lands had already been harvested though included hay that is used as fodder for livestock.

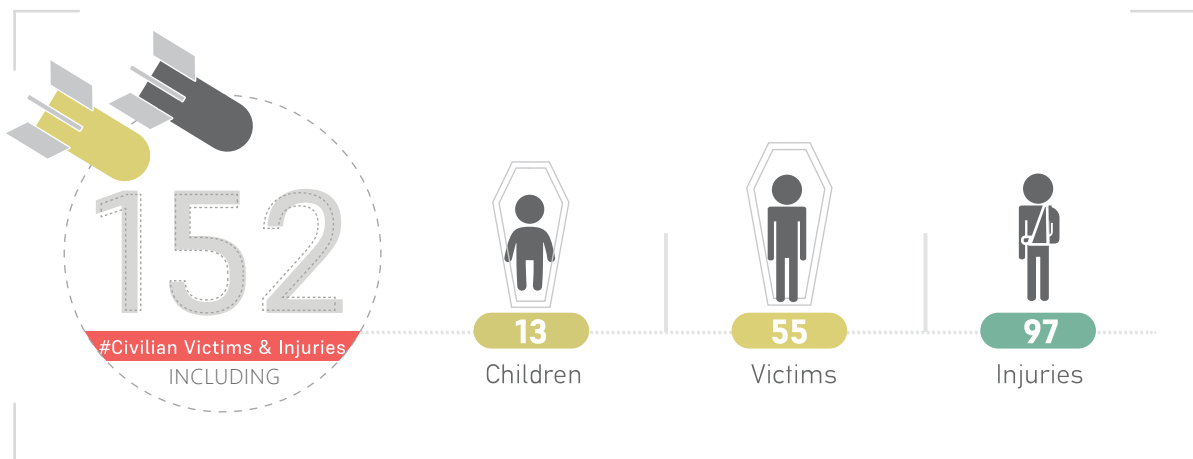
It is so difficult to put out the fires in northern Hama countryside due to the regime's shelling on the area with Napalm every day. On 7 June 2019, the regime burnt more than 300 dunums of unharvested agricultural lands in Kafr Zeita sub-district. In a related context, the teams of the civil defense have been trying to put out the fires, but their attempts were limited due to the lack of the necessary equipment such as firetrucks.

Map 2: Areas of Influence in Syria as of June 2019



Security Chaos

- In the absence of security stability in the north west, the number of civilian victims who fell dead due to the security chaos increased during April, May and June 2019, where 55 civilians were killed with 13 children, and 97 women being among the victims, in addition to 97 injuries, many of which are severe injuries. Some of the security chaos related incidents included finding bodies of civilians who were kidnapped and killed after their money and jewelry had been stolen, with the kidnapping party remaining unidentified. The kidnapping targeted the money exchange workers (currency exchange - money transfers) and jewelry dealers in particular. The incidents also included motorcycle bomb explosions, and random fire shootings where a child was killed and four others were wounded in Shmarekh camp in Azaz sub-district on 21 April 2019, as a result of shooting near the camp; the culprit behind the crime is still unknown. In the western Idleb countryside, an explosion took place in Jisr-Ash-Shugur city, which resulted in killing 16 civilians and injuring 41 others; the population was unable to determine what caused the explosion due to its intensity. In the northern countryside of Aleppo, a car bomb exploded in the market of Azaz city (Central Market of Blacksmith); the explosion occurred at overcrowding time and resulted in killing 21 civilians, including five children and two women; as well as, injuring 15 others, most of whom reported to be in serious conditions. The explosion also led to a massive destruction of shops, and items for sale in the street (street vendors).





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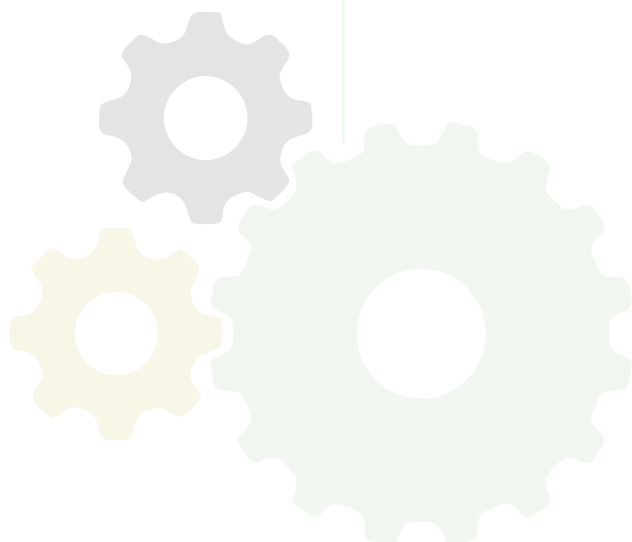
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