

SYRIAN CRISIS

FORCED DISPLACEMENT FROM THE EASTERN GHOTA

FLASH REPORT

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Forced Displacement from the Eastern Ghota Rural Damascus Governorate

Background:

Pre- Forced Displacement

For the past five years, the Eastern Ghota - the last major Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs) stronghold near Damascus the Capital of Syria - has been under siege by Syrian Regime. However, food items and fuel were smuggled by AOGs from Burza neighborhood through underground hand-dug tunnels that are considered Life Arteries, passing Al-Kabon neighborhood, which separates the eastern part of Damascus from Burza neighborhood or sneaked through some regime-affiliated traders through Mohkaiyem Alwafideen crossing point to the Eastern Ghota.

On February 18, 2017, Syrian Regime launched military offensive to force in Jobber and Al-Kabon neighborhoods in an endeavor to separate Burza neighborhood completely from the Eastern Ghota. After many foiled attempts, Syrian Regime managed to storm into Burza neighborhood and control it completely, thereby preventing the entry of any food items through the tunnels and putting the Eastern Ghota under deadly siege. Moreover, Syrian Regime started to control the entry of humanitarian aid to achieve political goals or under pressure of International Community.

In December 2017, the IMU of the ACU issued its first version of the sitrep "*Siege and Death in the Eastern Ghota*"¹, reflecting the devastating escalation waged by regime and its collaborating allies on the Eastern Ghota and the most urgent humanitarian needs people in the area are in want for, under the deadly siege imposed by the regime.

On 18th February, Syrian Regime and pro-forces launched "Leave or Die" offensive to recapture the Eastern Ghota with more than 1,700 victims and thousands of casualties. On 24th February, the U.N. Security Council adopted the resolution 2401², demanding a cessation of hostilities throughout Syria for at least 30 days proposed by Kuwait and Sweden. Following that, daily five-hour humanitarian pauses were declared starting from February 27, which the UN saw not enough to enter Humanitarian Aid and evacuate the wounded.

In March 2018, the IMU of the ACU issued its second version of the sitrep "*Siege and Death in the Eastern Ghota*"³, to sound off warning bells about the hardship situation in Eastern Ghota and the displacement enforced along with the human rights violations committed by Syrian regime.

¹ https://www.acu-sy.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Eastern-Ghota_Dec-2017_Eng.pdf

² <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13221.doc.htm>

³ https://www.acu-sy.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Ghota_En_010318_.pdf

Post- Forced Displacement:

Russia brokered agreements with Ahrar al-Sham and Faylaq al-Rahman to transfer civilians and AOGs fighters to Idleb Governorate. Meanwhile, Syrian Regime opened the so-called “Humanitarian Corridors” to its held areas. Furthermore, negotiations are still ongoing with Jaysh al-Islam in Duma – the last stronghold of AOGs in Eastern Ghota.

Firstly, according to last Situation Report issued by OCHA covering the period from 09 and 26 March, over 80,000 individuals left the Eastern Ghota⁴ to Syrian Regime-held areas where the conditions in the shelters are often dire, with overcrowding and poor sanitation. However, there were other reports talking about arresting and kidnapping along with field executions among the civilians. Footage videos showed humiliating the civilians during the distribution of some life-saving items who were forced to glorify Bashar al-Assad. Others were kept in closed areas to be filmed as prevented by AOGs from fleeing the Eastern Ghota. Other civilians were reported to be used as human shields by Syrian Regime and pro-forces to advance towards AOGs-held areas.

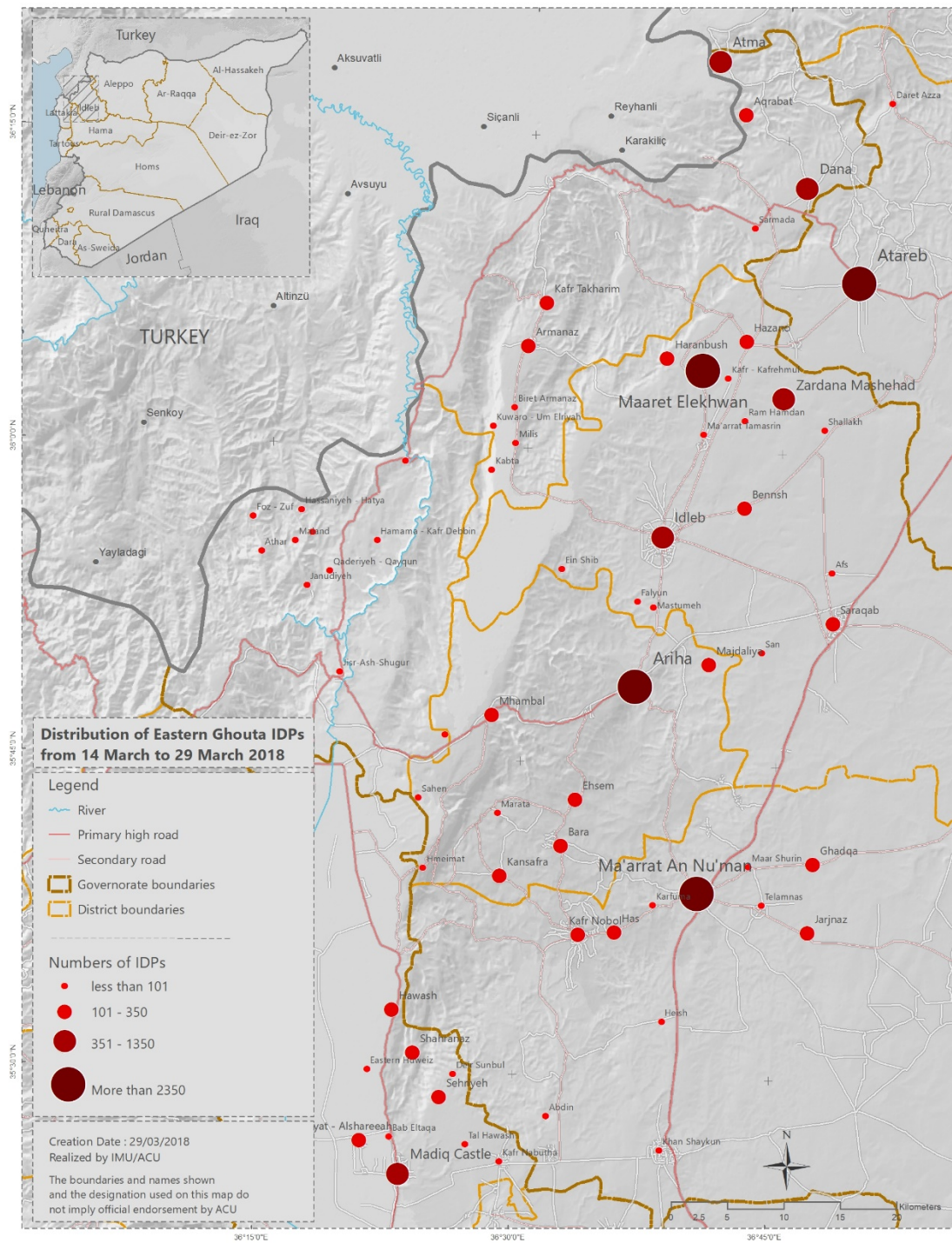
On the other hand, five convoys were reported to arrive at Idleb Governorate, carrying more than 30,000 individuals through Madiq Castle in As- Suqaylabiyah District in Hama Governorate. These IDPs encountered difficult humanitarian and living conditions from the very beginning of their arrival because of the large numbers that are much more beyond the capacity of the active agencies to meet the basic needs of the new arrivals of food, shelter and medical care, especially, there is a good deal of casualties who need immediate medical interventions. The concern now is that how to mitigate the suffering of these IDPs, host them properly and not to contribute to their frustration by not being able to provide them with the minimum standards that save their dignity and support them with suitable interventions beyond the normal in-kind relief response and primitive shelters which would never solve the problems of the evacuees, who would be re-displaced due to the lack of services. Consequently, not to give a justification for the remaining population who are estimated by 80,000 as per Rural Damascus Provincial Council to arrive to the Northern Syria who might prefer to head to Syrian Regime-held areas.

Demographics of IDPs:

The Information Management Unit (IMU) of the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) through its network of field enumerators worked on tracking the newly arrived IDPs in the locations where they settled after they passed the crossing point at Madiq Castle who were sent to their potential already prepared shelters but, afterwards, the majority of them made up their minds and their own way.

⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syrian-arab-republic-east-ghouta-displacement-situation-report-no-1-26>

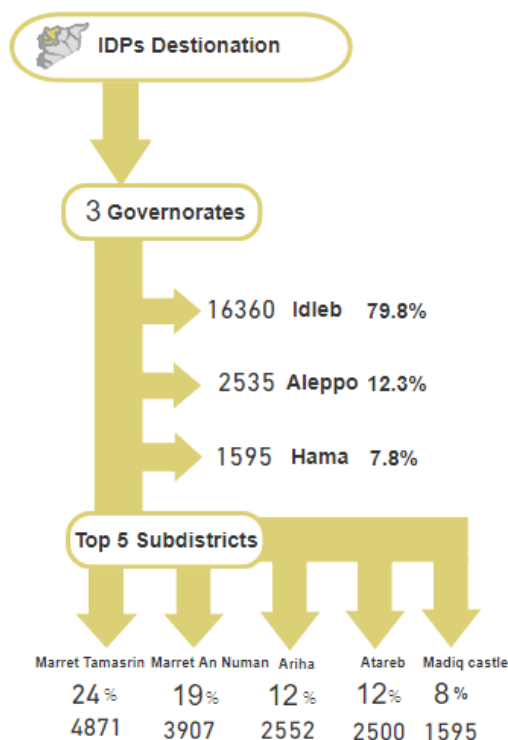
Map 2: IDPs Distribution Locations



IDPs Distribution:

Up to 28th March 2018, 20,490 IDPs were reported by the enumerators of IMU to arrive at their destination in 3 governorates. 80% of the IDPs are settled in Marret Tamasrin (4,871 IDPs), Ma`arrat An Nu`man (3,907 IDPs) and Ariha (2,552 IDPs) Sub-districts in Idelb Governorate, 12% of them are found in Atareb Sub-district (2,500 IDPs) in Aleppo Governorate and the remaining 8% settled in Madiq Castle (1,595 IDPs) in Hama Governorate. It is worth mentioning that these figures are increasing on daily basis so an update report will be produced periodically.

Figure 1: # of IDPs by top 5 sub-districts

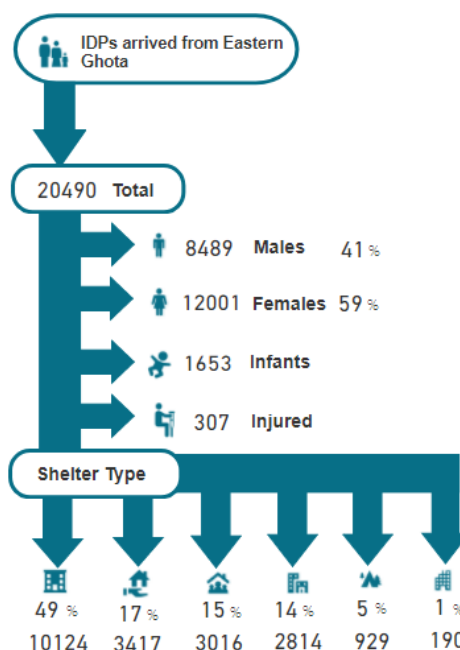


Shelters of IDPs:

The majority of the IDPs found shelter in collective centers by 49% (10,124 IDPs), followed by 17% (3,417 IDPs) settled in right-to-use houses, 15% (3,016 IDPs) hosted by other families, 14% (2,814 IDPs) settled in rented houses and flats, 5% (929 IDPs) found shelter in the open air and 1% (190 IDPs) settled in empty houses.

41% (8,489 IDPs) of the total number of IDPs tracked by IMU enumerators are males in comparison with 59% (12,001 IDPs) are females. The reported five convoys contained 1,653 infants who suffered from malnutrition because of the siege and 307 injured who need immediate medical interventions as well.

Figure 2: # of IDPs by Shelter

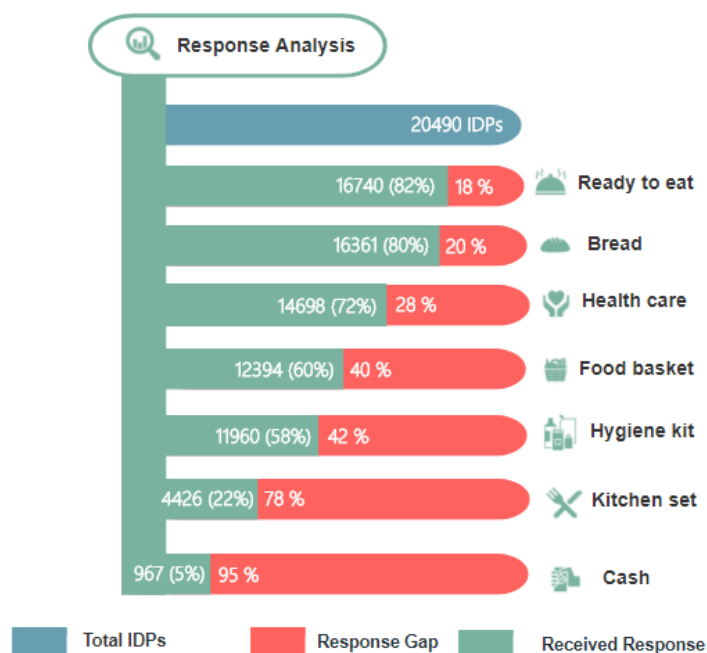


Response Analysis:

Out of 20,490 IDPs, only 82% (16,740 IDPs) were supported by ready to eat rations (RTEs). 80% (16,361 IDPs) were supported by bread. 72% (14,698 IDPs) received health care. 60% (12,394 IDPs) were supported by food baskets. 58% (11,960 IDPs) were supported by hygiene kits. 22% (4,426 IDPs) received kitchen kits, and only 5% of the total number (967 IDPs) were supported by cash grants which is considered the most needed gap.

It should be noted that the provided response is an urgent one and needs to be increased during the next period as it is expected that more displaced will be arriving during the next weeks.

Figure 3: Provided Response and Response Gap



Recommendation:

The evacuees of the Eastern Ghota spent 5 years under siege, were subject to every type of weapons, experience starvation and faced the killing machine of the Syrian. Yet, they refused to leave their houses and settle in tents. However, they were forced to head to Idleb Governorate which is considered their final destination where they should find proper replacement.

ACU calls the international community and all working organizations to search for a strategic solution to secure a permanent shelter for the Eastern Ghota displaced, in addition to providing the suitable health care, psychological support, and supporting them with urgent cash grants to acquire the basic needs for the displaced households.

Annex: List of Destination Communities and # of IDPs with Disaggregation

No.	Governorate	District	Sub-district	Community	Pcode	# of IDPs	# of Male	# of Female	# of Infants	# of Injured
1	Idleb	Idleb	Maaret Tamsrin	Ma'arrat Tamsrin	C3947	25	15	10	5	0
2	Idleb	Al Ma'ra	Kafr Nobol	Kafr Nobol	C4068	235	105	130	20	0
3	Idleb	Ariha	Ariha	Ariha	C4278	230 0	100 0	130 0	32 3	0
4	Idleb	Idleb	Teftnaz	Shallakh	C3934	8	6	2	0	0
5	Idleb	Ariha	Ariha	Majdaliya	C4280	120	55	65	10	0
6	Idleb	Ariha	Ariha	Kafr Najd	C6608	132	55	77	15	0
7	Hama	As-Suqaylabiyah	Madiq Castle	Sehriyeh	C3204	165	75	90	2	0
8	Hama	As-Suqaylabiyah	Madiq Castle	Shahranaaz	C3191	150	70	80	2	0
9	Hama	As-Suqaylabiyah	Madiq Castle	Eastern Huweiz	C3194	100	40	60	2	0
10	Hama	As-Suqaylabiyah	Madiq Castle	Hawash	C3195	125	55	70	2	0
11	Hama	As-Suqaylabiyah	Madiq Castle	Jamasa Odayat - Alshareeah	C3193	200	90	110	3	0
12	Hama	As-Suqaylabiyah	Madiq Castle	Madiq Castle	C3207	650	290	360	11	0
13	Hama	As-Suqaylabiyah	Madiq Castle	Kafr Nabutha	C3209	35	15	20	0	0
14	Hama	As-Suqaylabiyah	Madiq Castle	Bab Eltaqa	C3199	50	25	25	1	0
15	Hama	As-Suqaylabiyah	Madiq Castle	Tal Hawash	C3197	30	13	17	0	0
16	Hama	As-Suqaylabiyah	Madiq Castle	Deir Sunbul	C3190	90	40	50	1	0
17	Idleb	Al Ma'ra	Ma'arrat An Nu'man	Ma'arrat An Nu'man	C3985	340 0	130 0	210 0	40	0
18	Idleb	Idleb	Saraqab	Saraqab	C3916	300	160	140	30	0
19	Idleb	Idleb	Idleb	Idleb	C3871	700	350	350	12	0
20	Idleb	Jisr-Ash-Shugur	Jisr-Ash-Shugur	Jisr-Ash-Shugur	C4199	80	25	55	10	0
21	Idleb	Jisr-Ash-Shugur	Jisr-Ash-Shugur	Ein Elhamra	C4202	2	1	1	0	0
22	Idleb	Al Ma'ra	Heish	Heish	C4105	74	42	32	4	7
23	Idleb	Idleb	Maaret Tamsrin	Hazano	C3944	117	55	62	8	3
24	Idleb	Idleb	Maaret Tamsrin	Zardana Mashehad	C3938	135 0	405	945	17 8	28
25	Idleb	Idleb	Maaret Tamsrin	Ram Hamdan	C3941	18	10	8	4	0
26	Idleb	Idleb	Maaret Tamsrin	Maaret Elekhwan	C3950	314 0	125 6	188 4	39 5	71
27	Idleb	Idleb	Maaret Tamsrin	Haranbush	C3943	212	91	121	34	8
28	Idleb	Idleb	Maaret Tamsrin	Kafr - Kafrehmul	C3942	9	4	5	0	0
29	Idleb	Idleb	Idleb	Falyun	C3877	50	20	30	5	0
30	Idleb	Idleb	Idleb	Mastumeh	C3872	15	7	8	2	0
31	Idleb	Idleb	Idleb	Ein Shib	C3868	13	7	6	2	0
32	Idleb	Jisr-Ash-Shugur	Darkosh	Zahraa - Kherbet Amud	C4250	2	1	1	0	0
33	Idleb	Harim	Armanaz	Milis	C4184	65	31	34	4	2
34	Idleb	Harim	Armanaz	Armanaz	C4176	158	73	85	12	17
35	Idleb	Harim	Armanaz	Biret Armanaz	C4180	36	20	16	2	5
36	Idleb	Harim	Armanaz	Kuwaro - Um Elriyah	C4183	27	15	12	3	3

37	Idleb	Harim	Armanaz	Kabta	C4185	45	22	23	5	4
38	Idleb	Idleb	Saraqab	Afs	C3920	20	8	12	2	0
39	Idleb	Idleb	Saraqab	San	C3915	75	30	45	6	0
40	Idleb	Al Ma'ra	Ma'arrat An Nu'man	Kafruma	C3984	86	40	46	3	0
41	Idleb	Al Ma'ra	Kafr Nobol	Has	C4058	182	79	103	17	0
42	Idleb	Al Ma'ra	Ma'arrat An Nu'man	Ghadqa	C3963	178	87	91	9	0
43	Idleb	Al Ma'ra	Ma'arrat An Nu'man	Jarjnaz	C3977	120	66	54	10	0
44	Idleb	Al Ma'ra	Ma'arrat An Nu'man	Telamnas	C3974	73	41	32	5	0
45	Idleb	Al Ma'ra	Ma'arrat An Nu'man	Maar Shurin	C3978	50	22	28	2	0
46	Idleb	Harim	Kafr Takharim	Kafr Takharim	C4157	140	63	77	10	0
47	Idleb	Harim	Qourqeena	Koknaya	C6616	7	3	4	0	0
48	Idleb	Ariha	Mhambal	Mhambal	C4330	177	83	94	12	1
49	Idleb	Ariha	Mhambal	Sahen	C4327	20	8	12	2	0
50	Idleb	Ariha	Mhambal	Hmeimat	C4319	41	17	24	5	0
51	Idleb	Ariha	Mhambal	Alyeh	C6613	38	16	22	5	0
52	Idleb	Idleb	Bennsh	Bennsh	C3904	143	74	69	7	3
53	Aleppo	Jebel Saman	Daret Azza	Daret Azza	C1139	35	16	19	4	0
54	Aleppo	Jebel Saman	Atareb	Atareb	C1022	1000	425	575	100	0
55	Aleppo	Jebel Saman	Atareb	Meznaz	C6679	1500	500	1000	200	0
56	Idleb	Harim	Dana	Dana	C4126	500	225	275	0	0
57	Idleb	Harim	Dana	Sarmada	C4121	35	16	19	0	0
58	Idleb	Harim	Dana	Atma	C4130	509	220	289	25	20
59	Idleb	Harim	Dana	Aqrabat	C4127	350	158	192	0	0
60	Idleb	Al Ma'ra	Khan Shaykun	Khan Shaykun	C3987	40	18	22	2	0
61	Idleb	Al Ma'ra	Khan Shaykun	Abdin	C3990	11	5	6	0	
62	Idleb	Ariha	Ehsem	Ehsem	C4295	200	88	112	19	14
63	Idleb	Ariha	Ehsem	Marata	C4307	64	28	36	9	3
64	Idleb	Ariha	Ehsem	Bara	C4304	276	140	136	27	42
65	Idleb	Ariha	Ehsem	Kansafra	C4309	314	129	185	25	76
66	Idleb	Jisr-Ash-Shugur	Janudiyeh	Athar	C4266	13	6	7	0	0
67	Idleb	Jisr-Ash-Shugur	Janudiyeh	Maland	C4259	6	4	2	0	0
68	Idleb	Jisr-Ash-Shugur	Janudiyeh	Janudiyeh	C4255	19	9	10	0	0
69	Idleb	Jisr-Ash-Shugur	Janudiyeh	Hassaniyeh - Hatya	C4257	13	7	6	0	0
70	Idleb	Jisr-Ash-Shugur	Janudiyeh	Qaderiyeh - Qayqun	C4258	4	3	1	0	0
71	Idleb	Jisr-Ash-Shugur	Janudiyeh	Hamama - Kafr Debbin	C4267	7	3	4	0	0
72	Idleb	Jisr-Ash-Shugur	Janudiyeh	Jdidet Eljisir	C4265	5	3	2	0	0
73	Idleb	Jisr-Ash-Shugur	Janudiyeh	Foz - Zuf	C4263	11	5	6	0	0



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