



Humanitarian Situation in Ras Al-Ain and Tall Abiad

20 March 2024

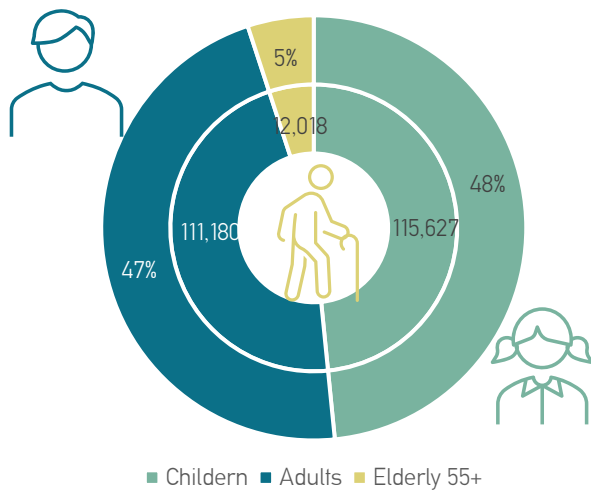


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1. Demographic Information:

The area of Ras al-Ain and Tell Abyad is located in northeastern Syria within the governorates of Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa, where the Ras Al-Ain district belongs to the Al-Hasakeh governorate, while the districts of Tall Abiad, Suluk, and Ein Issa belong to Ar-Raqqa governorate. The population in this geographical area amounts to 238,825 people.

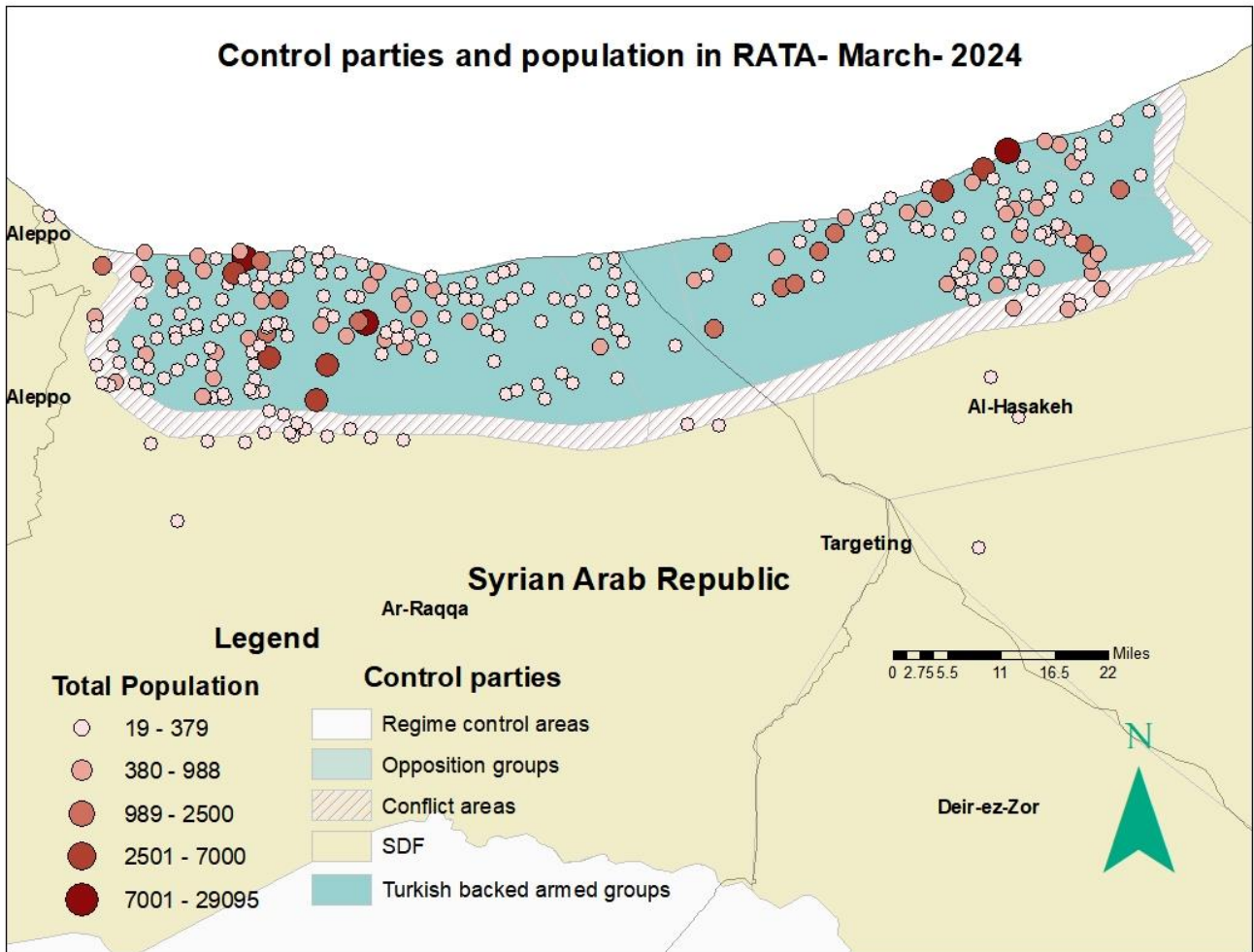


48% of the population are children, numbering 115,627, while
5% of the population are elderly, numbering 12,018.
48% of the population are females.
10% of the population are IDPs.
2% of the population are refugees.

Table 1 Population Census by Age Groups and Gender

#	Age groups	Tall Abiad			Ras Al-Ain		
		Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
1	6-0	12,126	12,813	24,939	11,131	11,199	22,330
2	7-12	14,762	11,814	26,576	9,445	6,866	16,311
3	13-18	10,171	8,348	18,519	3,778	3,174	6,952
4	19-25	8,018	7,704	15,722	3,368	2,975	6,343
5	26-35	8,135	7,808	15,943	8,053	7,834	15,887
6	36-45	7,207	6,228	13,435	10,091	9,979	20,070
7	46-55	3,858	4,496	8,354	8,051	7,375	15,426
8	56-64	2,379	2,154	4,533	1,637	1,909	3,546
9	65 +	1,759	2,180	3,939			-
		68,415	63,545	131,960	55,554	51,311	106,865
Total				238,825			

Map 1 Controlling Parties and Population Census



2. Security Situation

The security situation has seen significant improvement over the past year, with a cessation of terrorist bombings, a reduction in the frequency of disputes and clashes between factions controlling the region, and decreased incidents of theft, armed robbery, and infringements on rights. Conflicts between the factions of the National Army controlling the area and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have become almost nonexistent, and the activation of both civil and military judiciary in the region has led to increased discipline.

3. Governance and Local Councils

There are two local councils in the area, one for the Tall Abiad region and the other for the Ras Al-Ain region. They undertake service, educational, and health-related roles under the supervision of the Turkish province of Şanlıurfa through coordinators for each office of the councils. However, the local councils lack sufficient support and necessary expertise for their work, and there are no rules of procedure for the local councils in the area. While there are rules of procedure within the Interim Government, they are inadequate for the local councils in this region. The local councils have been appointed since the National Army forces took control of the area, and the members of the local councils have not been changed since that date. Only some individuals are replaced periodically, with the absence of electoral mechanisms. There is no representation for women; there is only one woman among the local council members for Ras Al-Ain, totaling 14 members. There is no representation for the IDPs within the local councils; instead, their representation is limited to mukhtars responsible for the IDPs.

4. Humanitarian Aid and Active Organizations

No UN resolution allows the entry of humanitarian aid from the Tell Abiad border crossing, and therefore, UN in-kind aid does not enter the region. Through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for northwestern Syria, the United Nations is trying to assist the region through the Central Emergency Response Fund to finance some projects. However, large local organizations do not go to this region because of the lack of continued support. Organizations prefer to obtain projects in Idlib because donors prefer to provide support there, which means that projects that receive UN funding have greater opportunities to continue in Idlib, unlike projects in the areas of Ras Al-Ain and Tell Abiad, which will not find that a donor may support them to continue. Similarly, humanitarian organizations should coordinate their response through Turkish authorities or the Turkish Red Crescent. Organizations wishing to distribute humanitarian aid directly must pay taxes on the goods imported through the crossing, as these items are considered commercial. Employees of the Şanlıurfa province in Turkey regularly convene with organizations operating there to coordinate regional humanitarian response efforts.

Within the region, 22 humanitarian organizations are operating, with the Turkish Red Crescent and Turkish AFAD being the most active in responding to the area's needs. While the Turkish organization IHH was active in the region, its activity decreased following the conflict in Gaza.

Despite the very limited support provided to the region, the support allocated to the Ras Al Ain area is much less compared to Tell Abiad area, with almost no support in Ras Al Ain. This can be attributed to several reasons, including the proximity of Ras Al Ain to the border crossing with Turkey. Additionally, many humanitarian organizations established offices in the city of Tell Abiad since the area fell out of the regime's control, as the Tell Abiad border crossing served as a gateway for all humanitarian aid and commercial goods entering the eastern region spanning Raqqqa, Hasakah, and Deir ez-Zor provinces. Some humanitarian organizations have maintained their offices in the Tell Abiad area, but support has significantly decreased.

Table 2 Humanitarian Organizations Operating in Ras Al-Ain and Tell Abiad.

#	Organization	Sector	District	Response Type
1	IHR	Service	Tell Abiad	WASH
2	Med Global	Medical	Tell Abiad	Hammam At-Turkman
3	Independent Doctors Association (IDA)	Medical + Awareness Raising	Tell Abiad	Kormazh Health Center + Muheisen Health Center
4	Union of Medical Vehiclee and Relief Organizations (UOSSM)	Medical + Health Awareness	Tell Abiad	Dialysis Center + Suluk Health Center + Ras Al-Ain Dialysis Center
5	Syrian American Medical Society SAMS	Medical + Health Awareness	Tell Abiad + Ras Al-Ain	Mukheflah Center
6	Syrian Expatriate Medical Association (SEMA)	Medical	Tell Abiad +Suluk	Tell Abiad Center + Suluk Public Hospital
7	Molham Volunteering Team	Livelihood	Tell Abiad	Support to Orphans
8	Social Development International and Human Support (SDI)	Medical	Tell Abiad	Physiotherapy Center in Tell Abiad Hospital
9	ALAMEEN	Medical	Ras Al-Ain	Al-Sharqi Center
10	Al-Rasheed Humanitarian Foundation	Relief + Education + Water	Tell Abiad + Ras Al-Ain	Bread distribution + shelter support
11	Assistance and Coordination Unit (ACU)	Routine Vaccine Services	Tell Abiad +Ras Al-Ain	Routine Vaccination + Vaccination Campaigns
12	Al-Birr and Social Services Association	Relief	Tell Abiad	
13	Turkish Red Crescent	Service +Relief	Tell Abiad +Ras Al-Ain	Free Clothing Distribution Center + Ras Al-Ain Hospital + Tell Abiad / Flour Distribution.
14	Joud Volunteer Team	Relief	Tell Abiad	Shelter support and bread distribution
15	IHH	Relief	Tell Abiad +Ras Al-Ain	
16	Hayrat Humanitarian Aid Association	Relief + Service	Tell Abiad	Education and Sponsorship of Orphans
17	AlSham Association	Service + Relief	Tell Abiad	Education and sponsorship of orphans
18	Doctors around the world YYD	Medical	Tell Abiad	Suluk Health Center
19	ATAA Relief	Education + Relief	Tell Abiad	Tell Abiad
20	Islamic Relief	Medical	Tell Abiad	Tell Abiad Center/Thalassemia
21	Syria Relief	Service	Tell Abiad + Ras Al-Ain	
22	Onsur	Education + Food Security	Tell Abiad + Ras Al-Ain	

5. Health sector

There is a significant shortage of qualified medical personnel due to the emigration of doctors from the region. Most medical services in the area are limited to primary healthcare. The National Hospital in Ras al-Ain has only four doctors (dermatologist, orthopedic, pediatrician, internist), and the hospital lacks a gynecologist despite the importance of this specialization. Also, people face difficulty accessing medications due to their high prices.

Within the area, there are 28 health centers.

#	Center Name	Supporting Entity	Title
1	Tell Abiad Hospital	Turkish Red Crescent	Tell Abiad – City
2	Blood and Thalassemia Bank Center	Islamic Relief	Tell Abiad – City
3	The Health Center No.1	SEMA	Tell Abiad – City
4	Routine Vaccine Center	ACU	Tell Abiad – City
5	COVID-19 Testing Laboratory	ACU	Tell Abiad – City
6	physiotherapy Center	SDI	Tell Abiad – City
7	Dialysis Center	UOSSM	Tell Abiad – City
8	Mobile Clinic	UOSSM	Tell Abiad – Southern and Western countryside
9	Routine Vaccine Center	ACU	Tell Abiad
10	Kormazh Health Center	IDA	Tell Abiad-Kormazh
11	Hammam At-Turkman Center	Med Global	Tell Abiad – Hammam At-Turkman town
12	Routine Vaccine Center	ACU	Tell Abiad – Ali Bajliyah
13	Ali Bajliyah Center – ALAMEEN	SAMS	Tell Abiad – Ali Bajliyah
14	Al-Hikmah Private Hospital	Private Hospital	Tell Abiad – City
15	Suluk Hospital –Clinics	Qatar Charity	Suluk – City
16	The Health Center No.1	YYD	Suluk – City
17	The Health Center No.2	UOSSM	Suluk – City
18	Routine Vaccine Center	ACU	Suluk – City
19	Mobile Clinic	UOSSM	Suluk Eastern countryside
20	Muhaisen Health Center	IDA	Suluk – Muheisen Village
21	Felio Health Center	Closed	Suluk – Felio Village
22	Suluk Al Ahli Hospital	Private Hospital	Suluk – City
23	Ras Al-Ain Hospital	Turkish Red Crescent	Ras Al-Ain – City
24	Routine Vaccine Center	ACU	Ras Al-Ain – City
25	Dialysis Center	SEMA	Ras Al-Ain – City
26	Mukheflah Health Center	SAMS	Ras Al-Ain – Mukheflah Village
27	Mobile Clinic	SAMS	Ras Al-Ain – Southern and Western countryside
28	Al Jazeera Private Hospital	Private	Ras Al-Ain – City

Key Health Needs:

Fully equipped operating rooms – Activation of vehiclediac catheterization procedures – Incubators for infants – Hearing screening devices – MRI machine – Replacement of current laboratory equipment due to its age and poor performance – Contracting with gynecologists, general surgeons, and specialists from various other fields – 24-hour maternity services in rural areas of Tell Abiad and Ras Al-Ain – Support for malnutrition programs

6. Education sector

- There are 462 schools in the areas of Ras Al-Ain and Tell Abiad, with the majority being rural schools (consisting of clustered classrooms accommodating multiple educational stages within each class). However, not all schools in the region are qualified to accommodate children with disabilities.
- 82% of teachers hold only a high school diploma, indicating a lack of qualified educational staff.
- None of the schools in the area have psychosocial counselors.
- 84% of teachers have not signed a code of conduct agreement and are unaware of child safeguarding rules.
- 43% of children drop out of school.
- 52% of children confirmed paying school fees to schools.
- 70 teachers resigned from their positions in the last two months due to salary cuts, leading to the suspension of classes in 14 schools.
- No higher education is available, prompting children to leave school due to the perceived futility of their education. Anyone wishing to pursue higher education must migrate outside the region.

7. Opportunities and How to Exploit Them.

In the Tell Abiad and Ras al-Ain areas, there are 200,000 hectares of arable land and a large workforce with experience in agriculture. The necessary water resources are available but require extraction or rationalization of consumption through support for agricultural irrigation projects. However, most lands have turned into rain-fed agricultural lands due to the inability of residents to finance irrigation projects. The region produces high-quality wheat varieties that can be utilized by supporting the establishment of bulgur or pasta production facilities. Additionally, the area needs support in acquiring plastic greenhouses to enable residents to grow vegetables and fruits locally as an alternative to imported vegetables from Turkey, which have become very expensive.

The region also has over 6,000 families engaged in livestock farming, raising more than 300,000 sheep and 3,000 cattle. These livestock require support in terms of fodder and medicines. Moreover, large quantities of animal products, especially dairy derivatives, are produced. However, the absence of markets for these products has decreased prices, making it difficult for livestock breeders to cover production costs. Therefore, there is a need to market these products outside or secure means of transporting them to northwest Syria.

Furthermore, the region needs to secure small and medium-sized projects, vocational training courses, and support for trainees to start small projects.

8. WASH Sector:

a. Water Stations:

The areas of Ras Al-Ain and Tell Abiad have 116 water stations, with 48 of them being non-operational and 68 operational. However, some of these operational stations occasionally cease to function.

Figure 1 Number of Water Stations by Functionality

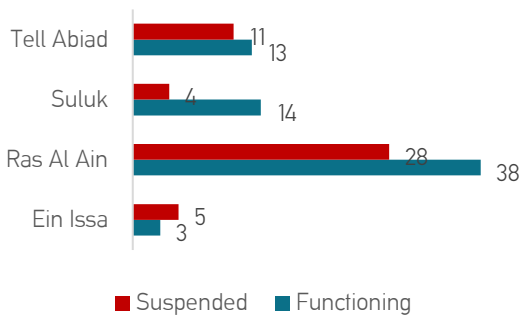
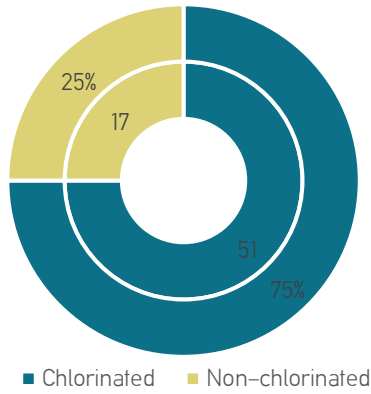


Figure 2 Number of Stations by Water Chlorination



Map 2 Water Stations According to their Functionality in Ras Al-Ain and Tell Abiad

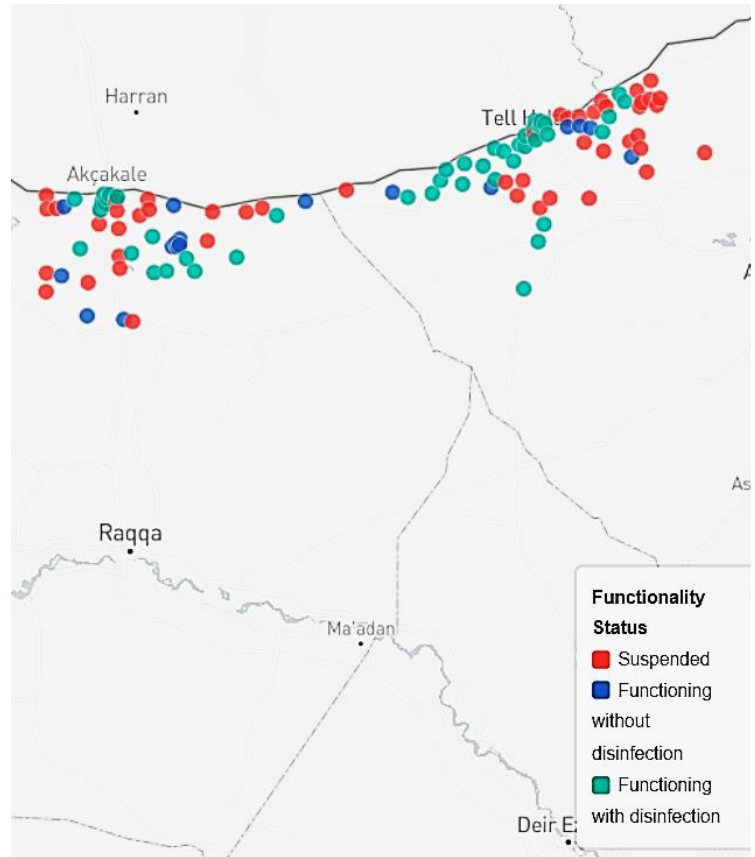


Figure 4 Reasons for Suspending Water Stations

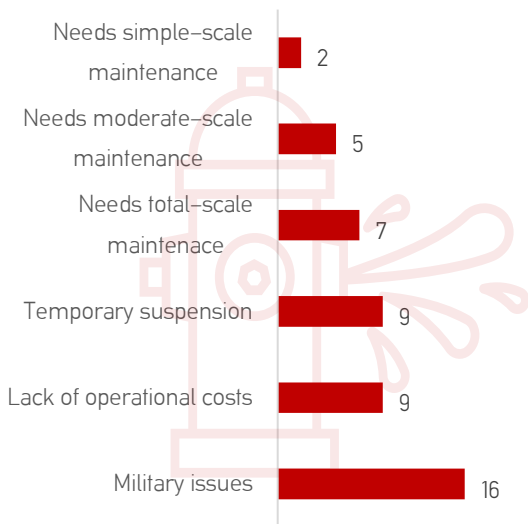
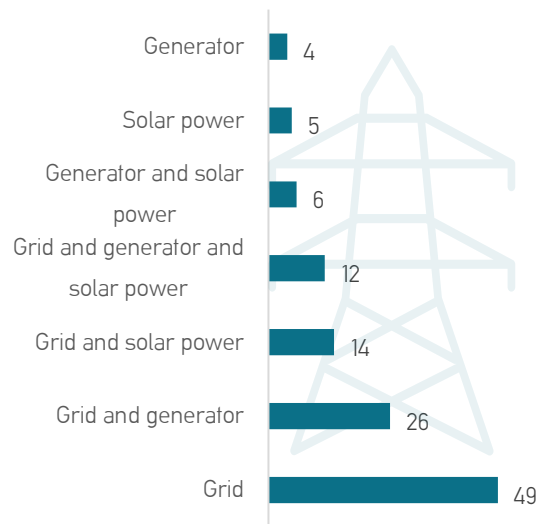


Figure 3 Sources of Electrical Power



b. Sanitation

- **Tell Abiad:** The sewage network in the city of Tell Abiad is old, established over 20 years ago, and has not undergone comprehensive maintenance for over 13 years. It covers 90% of the city's neighborhoods but suffers from blockages in some parts. Sewage is discharged south of the city into Jalab River, approximately 3 kilometers away.
- **Suluk:** The sewage network in the city of Suluk is also old, established over 30 years ago, and has not undergone comprehensive maintenance for over 13 years. It covers 70% of the city's neighborhoods. Like Tell Abiad, sewage is discharged south of the city into Jalab River, approximately 3 kilometers away.
- **Ras Al-Ain:** The sewage network in Ras Al-Ain is in dire condition due to tunneling operations vehicleried out years ago during military activities in the area. These tunnels have caused the sewage network to deteriorate so that no water reaches the network's end outside the city. Instead, sewage leaks into the city, posing a threat to buildings and groundwater. In collaboration with the Syria Relief organization, the local council has worked over the past two years to repair parts of this network, partially solving the problem. However, the volume of sewage produced does not match the capacity of the existing sewage system in the city. After reaching the final disposal site outside the city, sewage water is used to irrigate crops, posing a clear and present danger to residents, as this water is completely untreated. Although a treatment plant operated in the past, it has been out of operation for over ten years, with only a few settling basins remaining.

9. Border Crossings and Commercial Traffic

The data shows that approximately 15,527 vehicles were imported in 2023. Most of these imported goods are construction materials, equipment, and food items.

The number of vehicles exported during the year 2023 amounted to 6,023 vehicles. Most of the exported goods are agricultural products. However, exporting dairy derivatives such as butter, cheese, and milk products, which the region is known for, is prohibited.

Some materials are transported from the Ras Al Ain and Tell Abiad areas to northwest Syria (Northern Aleppo countryside and Idleb), but only after obtaining approval from the Turkish government. However, dairy derivatives such as butter, cheese, and milk products are prohibited from entry. Wheat, barley, and corn are exported to Iraq.

One of the significant challenges facing import and export operations is the application of international customs laws in a besieged area. For example, prohibiting importing fodder into this besieged area has led to the deaths of many sheep. Additionally, farmers have been unable to import watermelons into Turkey or transport them to northwest Syria through Turkey, resulting in the complete loss of the crop. Furthermore, some equipment and machinery needed parts for repairs that come from regime-controlled areas or

northwest Syria, requiring approval from the Turkish government, which prohibits the entry of these materials from other areas.

In general, import and export laws need to be reviewed to align with the needs of the besieged area.

Table of the four most imported items during 2023 by the number of vehicles

#	Item	Vehicle No.
1	Limestone and quarry dust	10,200
2	Cement	1,995
3	Fertilizer	554
4	Vegetables and Fruits	852
5	Machinery	646
6	Soft drinks	173
7	Sugar	148
8	Steel for concrete – for construction	112
9	Solar panels	131
10	Ceramic	68
11	Vegetable oil	65
12	Live chicken	108
13	Tea	74
14	Rice	48
15	Salt	43
16	Second-hand furniture	112
17	Mineral oil	48
18	Fuel (gas–diesel)	26
19	Fabric	48
20	Agricultural and human medicines	76
Total		15,527

Table of the five most imported items during 2023 by the number of vehicles

#	Exportation	Vehicle No.
1	Corn	1,978
2	wheat	1,804
3	Barely	635
4	Cotton	720
5	Cottonseed	478
6	Soybean meal	281
7	Beans	68
8	Cumin	32
9	Raw Oil	27
Total		6,023

10. Priorities

Priorities:

- Improve living standards by lifting the siege on the area by opening crossings with other controlling forces and allowing the transfer of goods to northwestern Syria.
- Support the healthvehiclee sector by providing qualified medical staff and ensuring the availability of medications at affordable prices.
- Support the education sector by training teaching staff and providing higher education opportunities to prevent children from being forced to leave their education and migrate elsewhere to continue their studies.
- Support small and medium-sized projects to secure income sources for families.
- Support agriculture and livestock farming and secure markets for local products.

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