

WINTER NEEDS

IN NORTHWESTERN SYRIA CAMPS

NINTH EDITION



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1- Introduction

The Information Management Unit (IMU) of the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) has published the ninth edition of the “Winter Needs in Northwestern Syria (NWS) Camps” report for the year 2024. This study provides comprehensive demographic data on the camp populations, examines the condition of shelters for internally displaced persons (IDPs), assesses their preparedness for the upcoming winter, and identifies the most critical needs and priorities for the season.

Executive Summary

The Information Management Unit (IMU) of the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) conducted the ninth edition of the “Winter Needs in Northwestern Syria Camps” study by administering a questionnaire across 1,508 IDP camps registered under the Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster in Turkey (CCCM)

This report emphasizes the urgent need for targeted interventions to improve living conditions and security within the camps, especially in preparation for the challenging winter months.

Key findings from the assessment include:

- The camps host a total population of two million individuals and 370 K households, with over 70% located in Greater Idlib. Children (0-18 years) make up 55% of this population, underscoring the need for child-focused services.
- Significant housing challenges persist: 53% of accommodations are semi-permanent rooms; however, 39% are temporary tents with Ariha and Afrin camps heavily reliant on tents, and 7% are caravans. Notably, 50% of rooms have concrete roofs and 45% feature rain insulation, but two-thirds require additional floor or rain insulating measures.
- Infrastructure issues are prevalent: Half of the camps experience road closures during rains, affecting access to essential services. More than half the camp lands, particularly those in A'zaz, Jarablus, and Jisr Ash-Shugur, are prone to flooding due to inadequate drainage systems.
- 52% of the camps are located on flat or poorly graded terrain, significantly increasing the risk of flooding during heavy winter rains.
- In flood situations, residents often seek temporary refuge in neighboring camps, villages, mosques, or schools.
- 70% of the camps lack firebreaks and dedicated, trained committees to manage fire emergencies.
- Security concerns affect nearly 75% of camps during winter, exacerbating challenges in accessing facilities and services. Additionally, 99% of camps report difficulties in obtaining nutritious food.
- Winter preparedness is inadequate: 82% of camps need blankets, and coping strategies often include unsafe practices such as burning harmful substances. There is a dire need for financial assistance, heaters, and fuel, alongside significant demands for shelter repair and rehabilitation.

1- Each survey required several interviews to be completed based on the information required.

Methodology

The IMU developed a questionnaire to collect data for the study. This questionnaire was circulated among various stakeholders, including the (CCCM) and the Shelter Cluster, to gather their feedback, which was subsequently incorporated into the questionnaire.

In this edition of the study, 65 enumerators collected data from 1,508 camps across the governorates of Aleppo and Idlib. The enumerators conducted interviews with a variety of key informants (KIs)¹, including camp management, humanitarian organizations active in the NWS camps, community leaders, local councils, and IDPs residing in the camps. These interviews focused on assessing the IDPs' most critical needs and priorities.

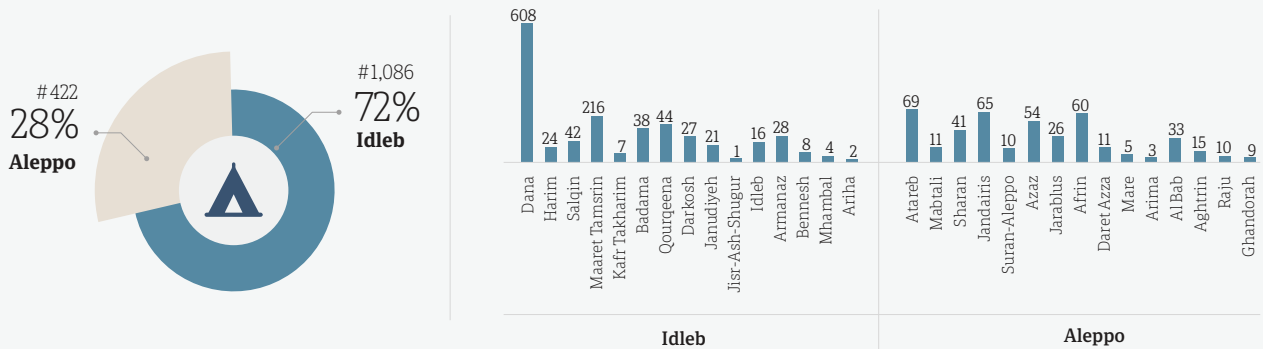
After being trained on the questionnaire, the IMU field enumerators completed 1,508 surveys through interviews with various KIs. The data collection phase of the study spanned from August 4 to September 3, 2024.



3- General Information About the Camps

Number of Assessed Camps

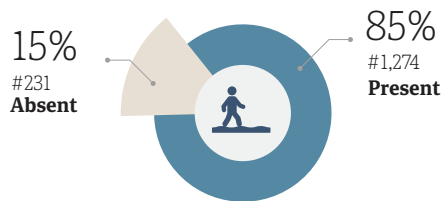
This edition of the study covered 1,508 camps in Idleb and Aleppo governorates.



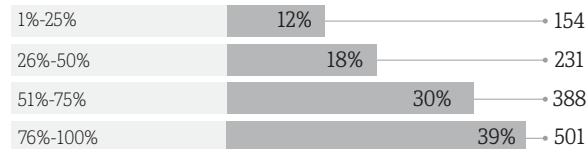
Roads in the Camps

According to Sphere standards, "Access: Consider the condition of local roads and the proximity to transport hubs for the supply of relief assistance and other goods. The supply of relief assistance must avoid damaging the local road infrastructure."²

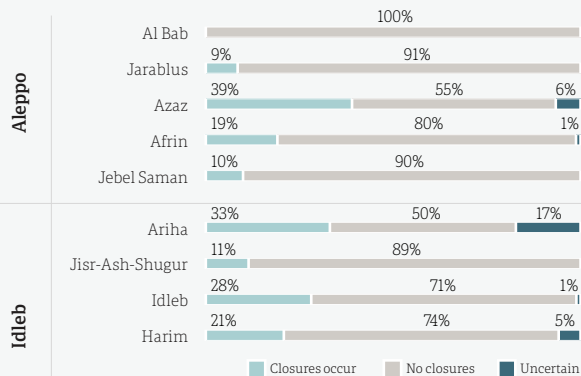
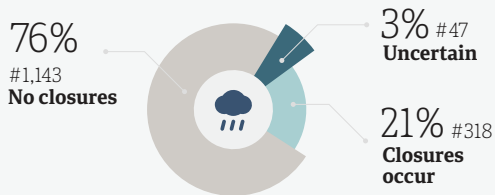
The study looked at the nature of roads within the assessed IDP camps in NWS. The following chart highlights the percentage of paved or asphalted roads within the IDP camps.



The proportion of respondents reporting the extent of road coverage



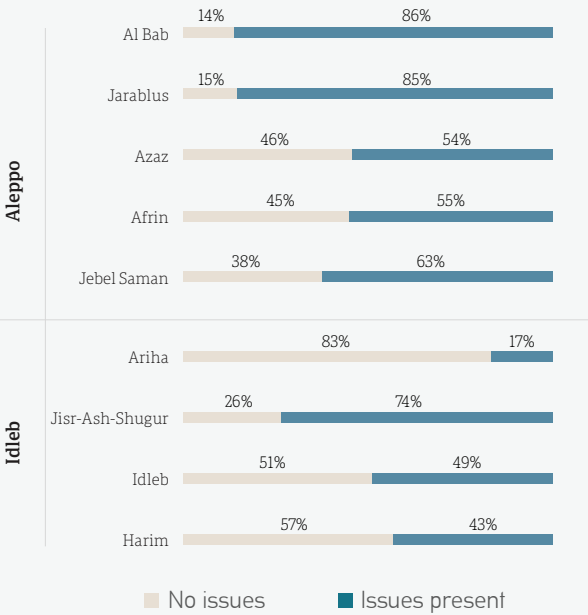
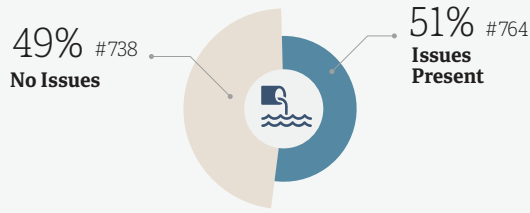
Camp Road Closures Occur During Heavy Rain



2-https://handbook.spherestandards.org/?handbook=Sphere&lang=english&chapter_id=ch008§ion_id=ch008_004&match=roads required.

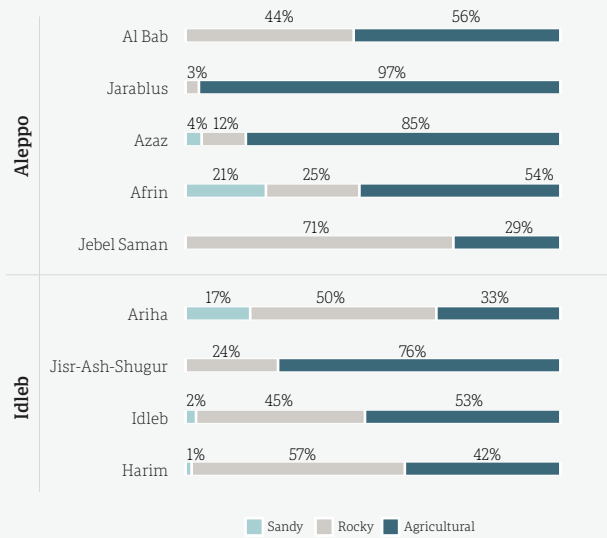
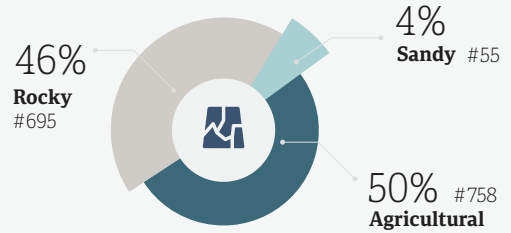
Water Drainage in IDP Camps

The study tried to identify the camps that face issues with water drainage, which may result in floods in case of heavy rains.

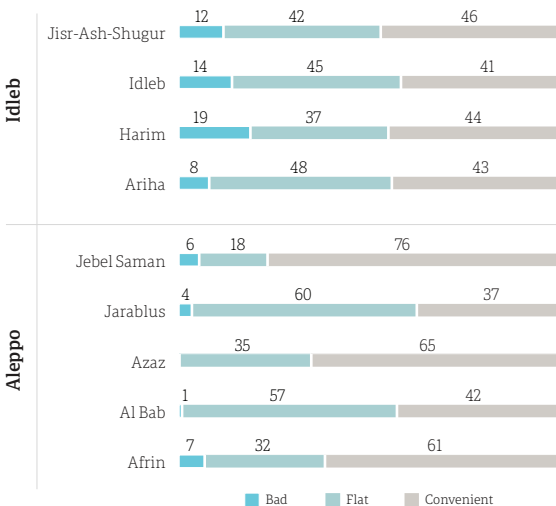
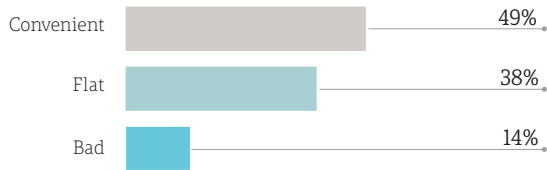


Nature of the Camp Land

The study tries to identify the nature of the land of the IDP camps. Agricultural and sandy lands are more vulnerable to floods if they do not have suitable gradient or water drainage systems.



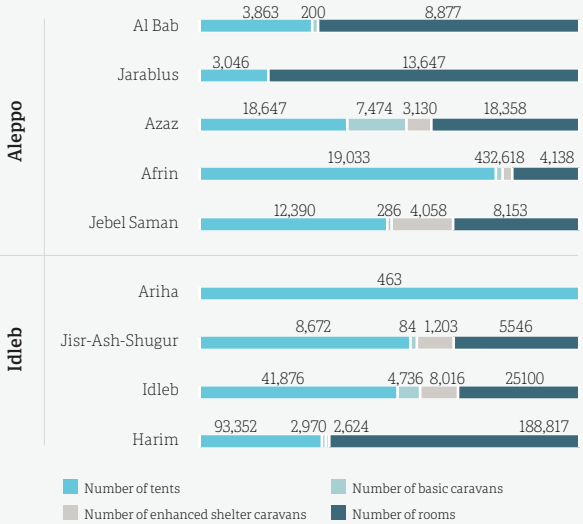
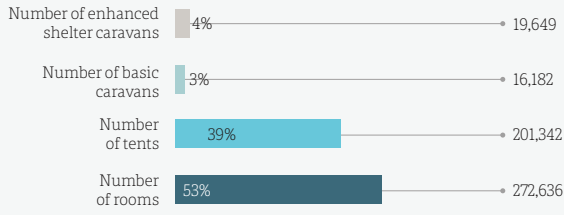
The Gradient of the Camp Lands



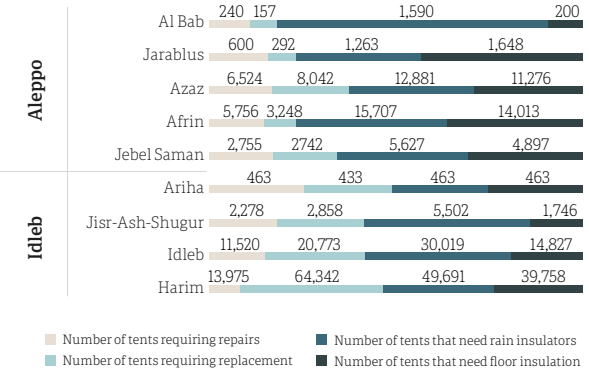
4-Shelters in IDP Camps

Types of IDP Shelters in the Camps

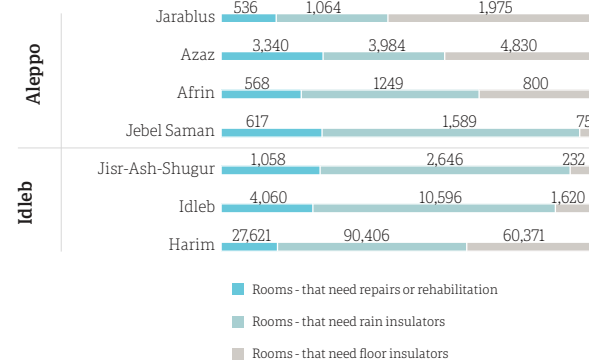
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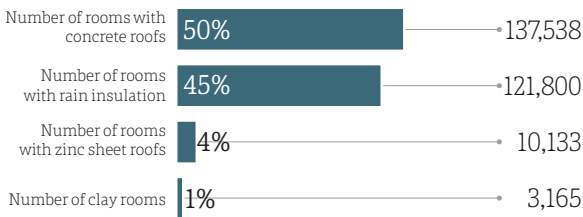
Tents that Need Support



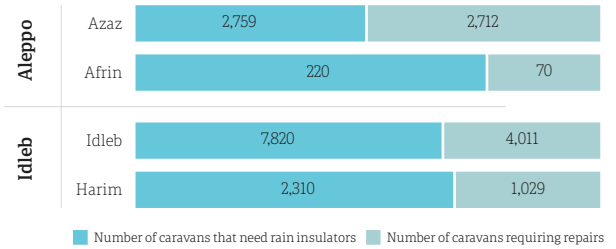
Rooms that Need Support



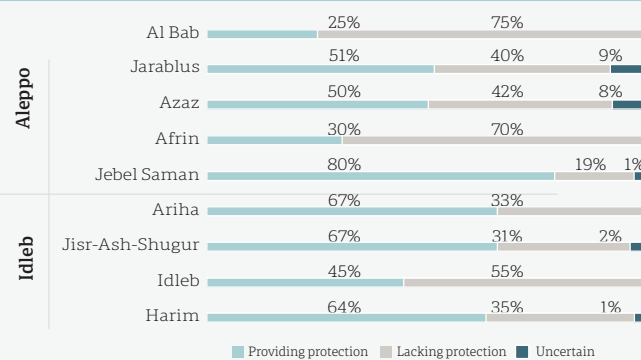
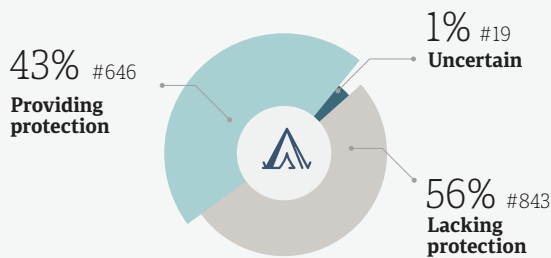
Types of Rooms in IDP camps



Caravans that Need Support

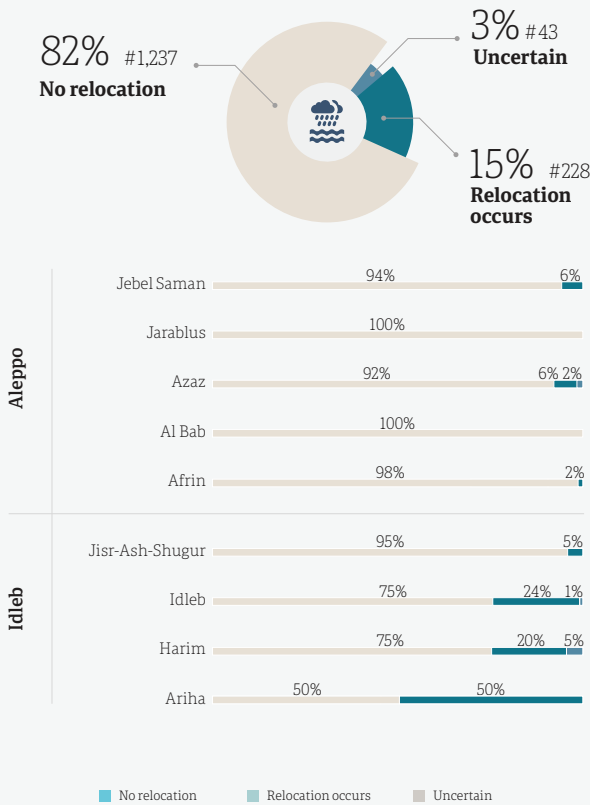


Shelters that protect from cold and other weather conditions

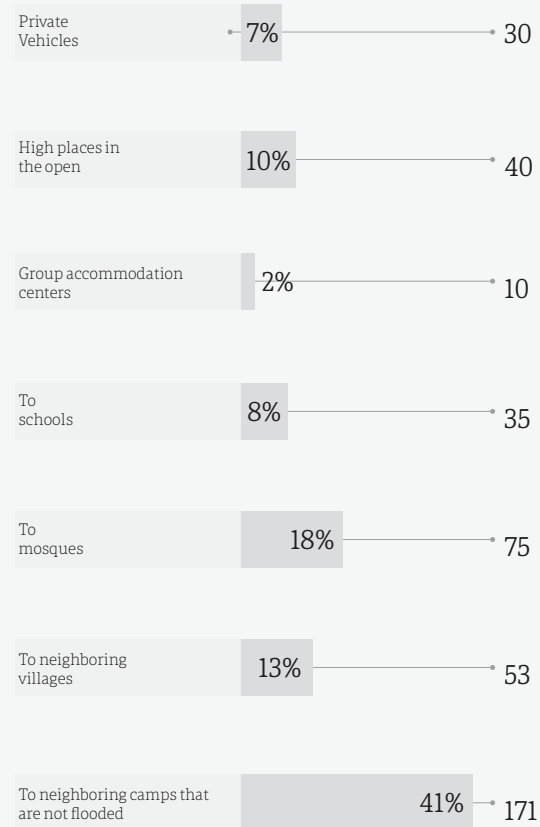


Impacts of floods on IDP camps

The following charts highlight the camps at risk of floods and the number of shelters expected to be affected.

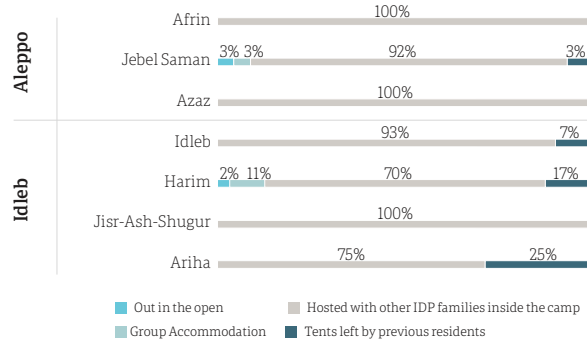
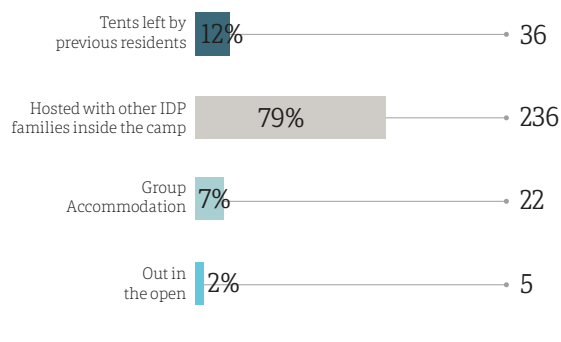


Alternative Shelters in cases of floods



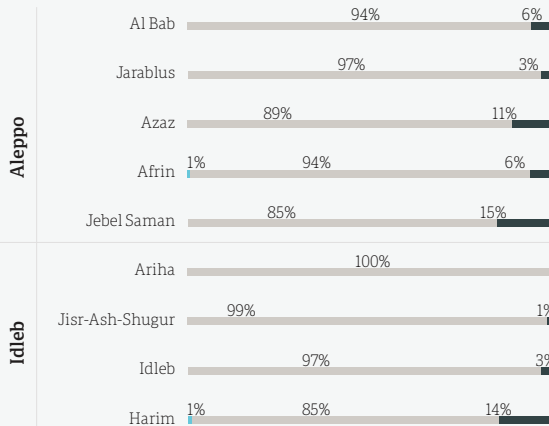
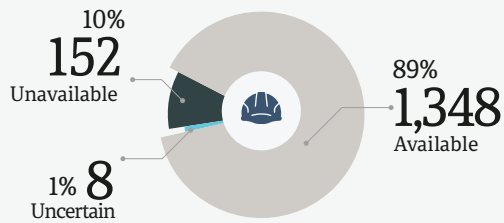
Families without Independent Shelter

The study revealed that a total of 5,066 families lacked access to independent shelter.



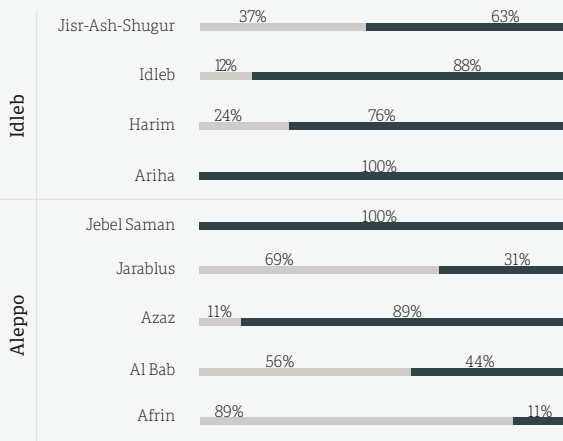
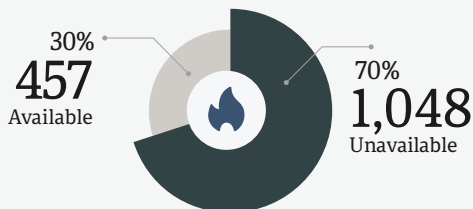
5-Response to Emergencies

Availability of Civil Defense Centers in camps

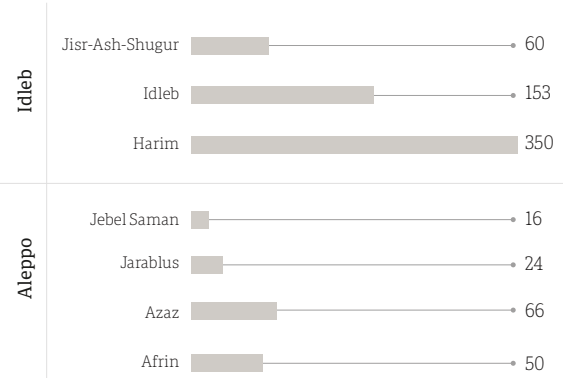


Availability of Firebreaks to Prevent the Spread of Fires in IDP Camps

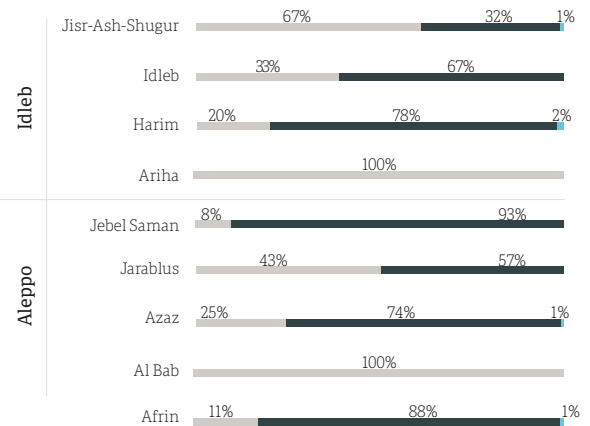
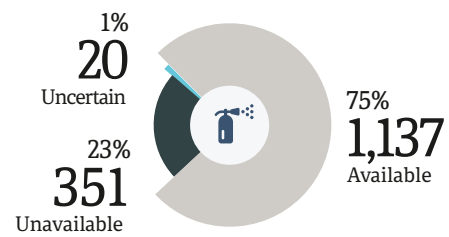
These firebreaks are designed to partition the camp into blocks, limiting the potential spread of fires in case of an outbreak.



Number of Fire Prevention Points in IDP Camps

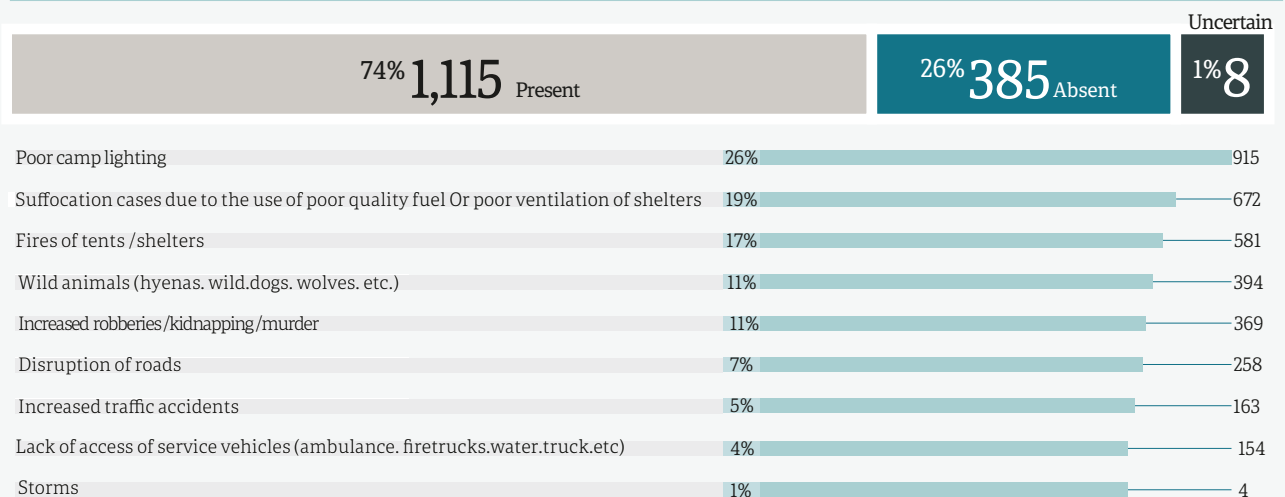


The Presence of a Dedicated and Trained Committee to Fight Fires in IDP Camps

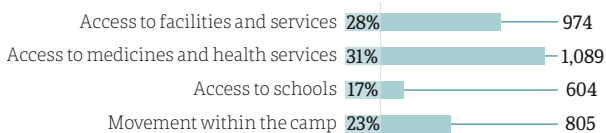


6-Concerns and Difficulties in IDP Camps in Winter

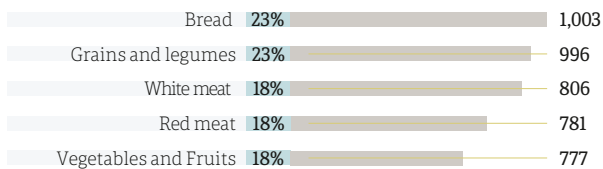
Security Concerns or Risks Associated with Winter



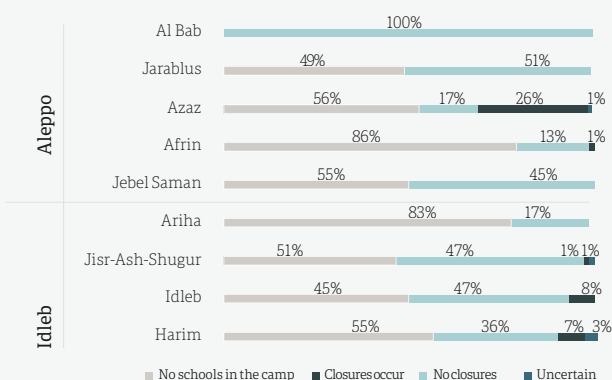
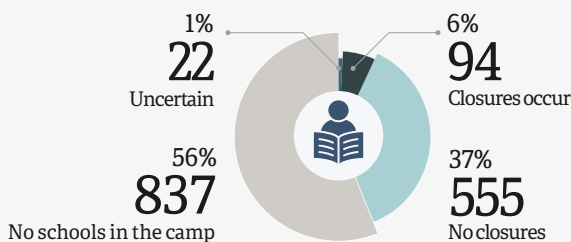
Challenges Faced by Vulnerable During the Winter



The Most Urgent Needs for Food During the Winter

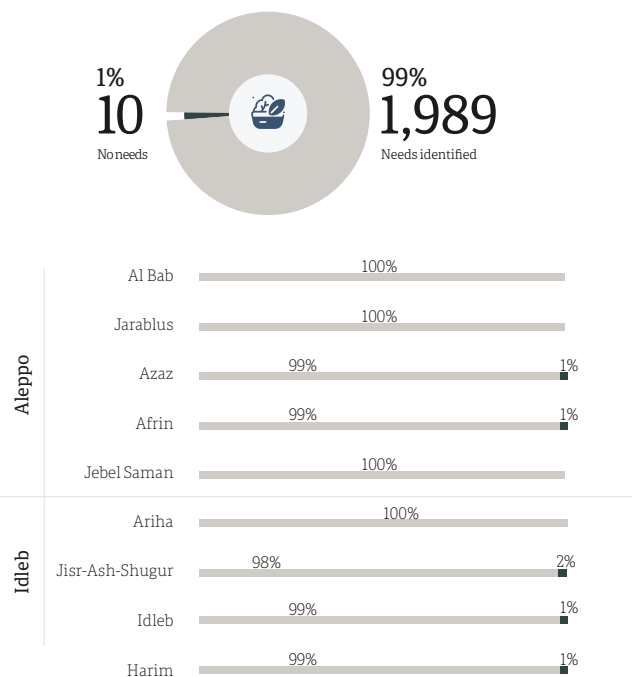


Closure of Schools Due to the Weather Conditions

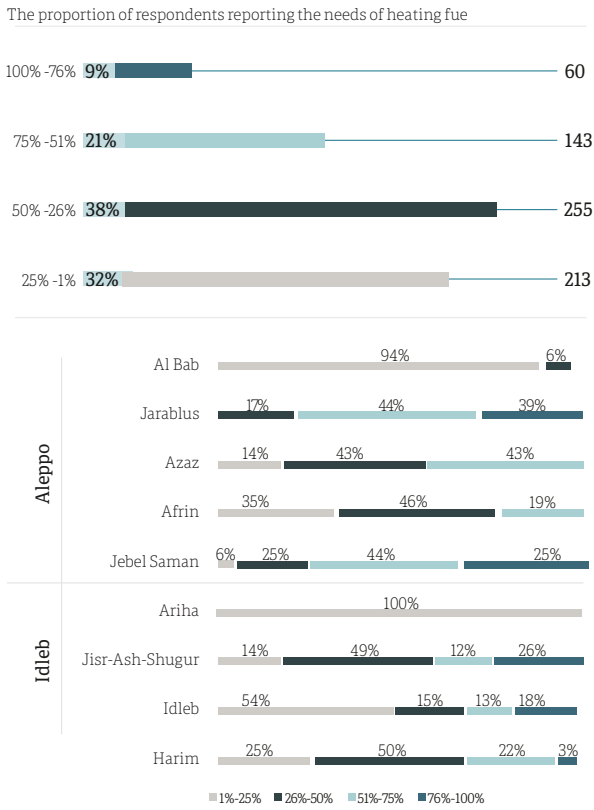


Difficulties in Getting Nutritious Food

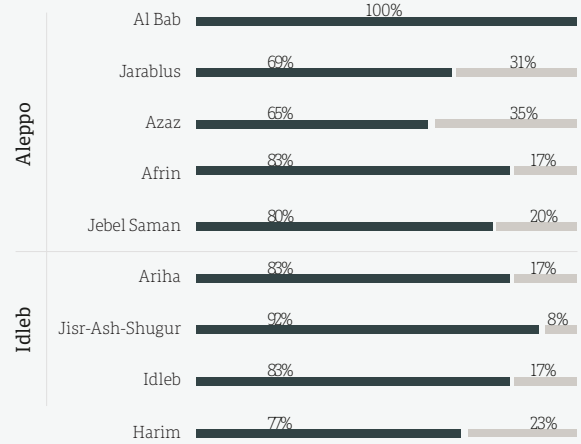
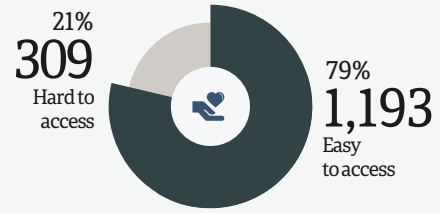
The study tried to identify the camps where the IDPs face difficulties ensuring food that is rich with the necessary nutrients.



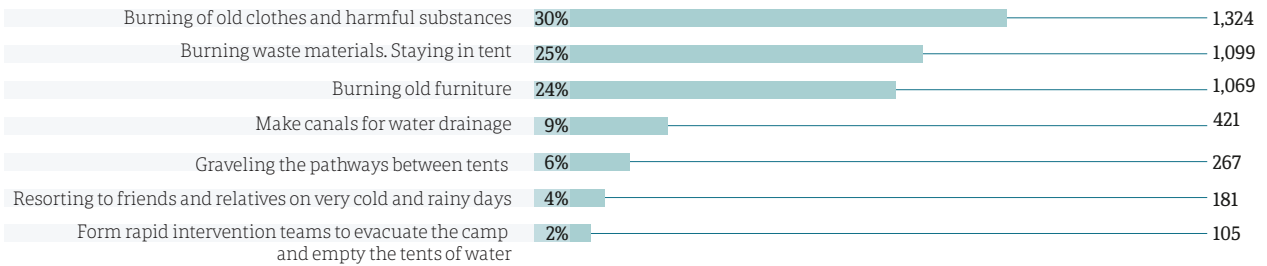
The Schools' Need for Heating Fuel



Access to Primary Health Care Centers in Winter



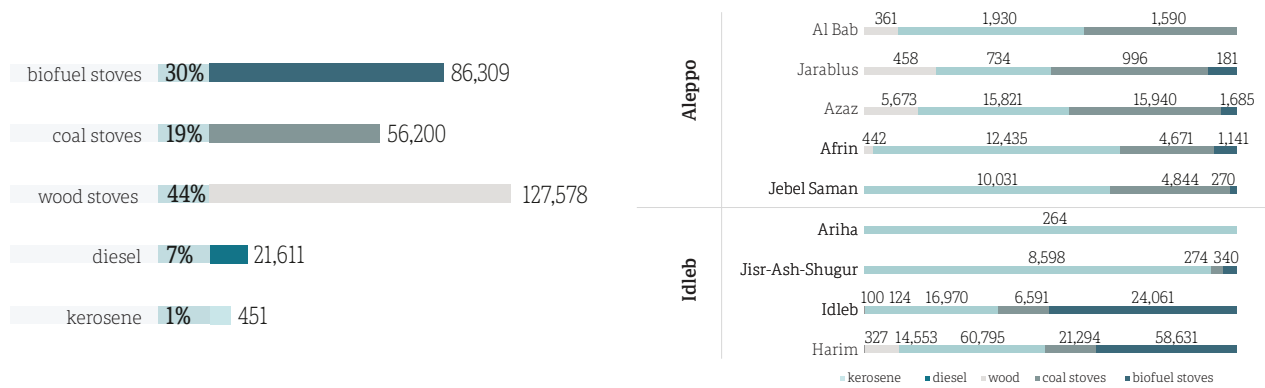
Coping Mechanism During Winter



7-Winter Needs of the Camps

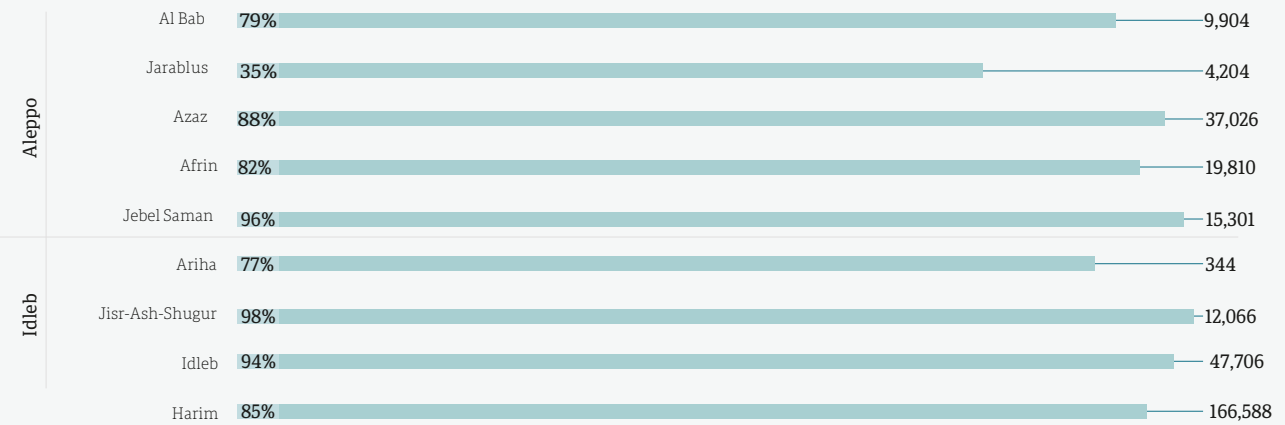
Heaters in the Camps

The study found that the assessed NWS camps required a total of 292,149 heaters. Within these camps, IDPs employ different types of heaters during the winter season, depending on the accessibility and cost of fuel sources for heating.



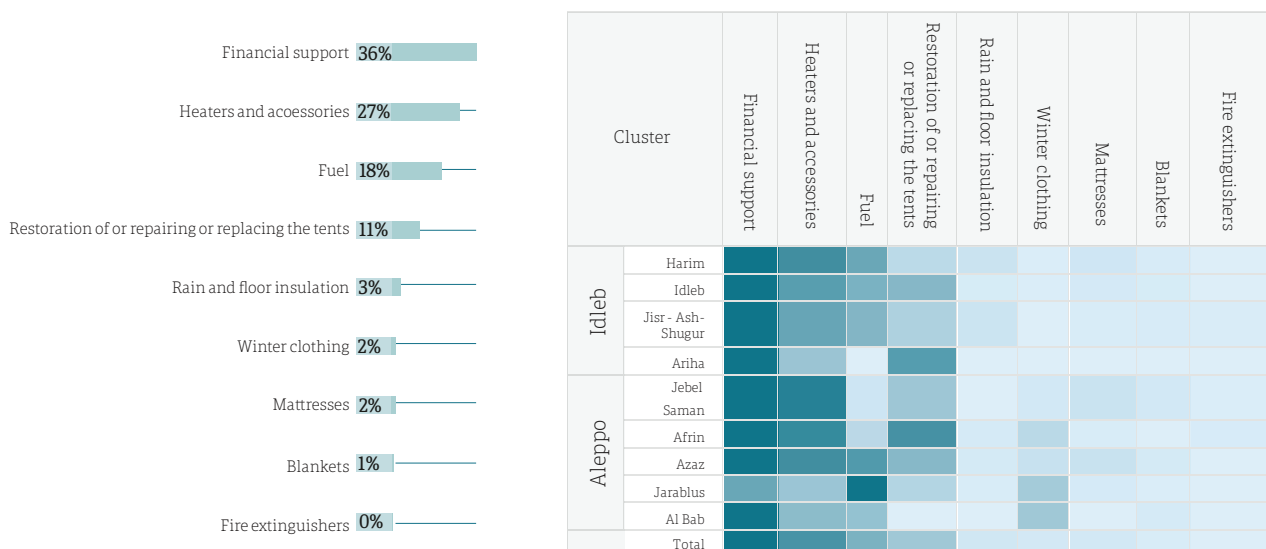
Needed Blankets

The study revealed that 82% (312,949 households) of the total IDP households in NWS camps required blankets.



Priorities

The study sought the input of KIs to identify the top three most pressing winter needs for the IDPs in the assessed camps.



Recommendations

- Many tents and shelters in the camps are deteriorating due to harsh weather conditions. The humanitarian actors should consider **replacing damaged tents and providing proper insulation to protect families from rain, cold, and flooding**. Moreover, urgent efforts should focus on ensuring that shelters can withstand winter storms.
- A significant number of households lack sufficient heating due to outdated or damaged heaters and a lack of affordable fuel. **Distributing new heaters and ensuring a steady supply of heating fuel** will mitigate the harsh winter conditions. This can prevent the use of unsafe heating alternatives and reduce health risks.
- Unpaved and muddy roads become impassable during rain, severely restricting movement and access to essential services in the camps. **Roads should be graveled within the camps to improve mobility** and help transport emergency supplies and services.
- Many camps lack functional fire extinguishers, posing a serious risk, especially in the winter when heating devices are in heavy use. **Equipping camps with fire extinguishers and setting up firebreaks** will reduce the risk of fire spreading. Adding to that, **establishing fire safety committees and providing proper training** are also necessary.
- Camps situated on low or agricultural land are particularly vulnerable to flooding during heavy rains. In response to that, **proper drainage systems should be implemented**. Moreover, **shelters must be situated on higher ground** to reduce the risks of flood damage. Flood preparedness should also **include the availability of emergency shelters for displaced families**.
- The lack of nearby medical centers exacerbates health problems during winter when diseases and injuries related to cold weather increase. **Establishing mobile health units or building health posts within camps** can improve access to primary care.
- A majority of camp residents lack adequate blankets and winter clothing to protect them from the cold. **Distributing blankets and warm clothing to all households, especially children and the elderly**, is crucial for survival during the winter months. This basic humanitarian need should be addressed urgently to prevent cold-related illnesses.

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