



Security Council

Distr.: General
16 December 2019

Original: English

Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018) and 2449 (2018)

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the sixty-fourth submitted pursuant to paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), paragraph 10 of resolution 2165 (2014), paragraph 5 of resolution 2191 (2014), paragraph 5 of resolution 2258 (2015), paragraph 5 of resolution 2332 (2016), paragraph 6 of resolution 2393 (2017), paragraph 12 of resolution 2401 (2018) and paragraph 6 of resolution 2449 (2018), in the last of which the Council requested the Secretary-General to provide a report at least every 60 days, on the implementation of the resolutions by all parties to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

2. The information contained herein is based on data available to agencies of the United Nations system and obtained from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and other relevant sources. Data from agencies of the United Nations system on their humanitarian deliveries have been reported for October and November 2019.

II. Major developments

Key points: October and November 2019

1. Civilians continue to face significant hardship in the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic. Despite the ceasefire in Idlib announced by the Russian Federation and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic on 30 August, active hostilities escalated throughout the reporting period on both sides of the front line. From 1 October to 22 November, the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded 136 civilian deaths in the de-escalation zone in the north-west of the country, including many women and children. On 20 November, missiles that, according to OHCHR, were fired from government-held territory hit the Qah camp for internally displaced persons in Idlib, allegedly killing at least 16 people, including 4 women and 6 children, and injuring 30 more civilians.



2. Health-care and education services continued to be affected by hostilities throughout the Syrian Arab Republic during the reporting period, with 18 incidents affecting health-care facilities and assets confirmed by the World Health Organization, and 5 incidents affecting education facilities verified by the United Nations. The incidents resulted in the killing of 3 people in need of medical care and humanitarian workers and the injuring of another 21 people.

3. On 9 October, Turkey launched Operation Peace Spring in an area between Tall Abyad and Ra's al-Ayn in the Syrian Arab Republic. Over 200,000 civilians fled their homes amid the hostilities and OHCHR recorded 147 civilian casualties, including women and children, many from improvised explosive devices. Many international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) temporarily suspended activities, but have since restarted their work. Operations at the Aluk water station in Hasakah were interrupted during the reporting period as a result of hostilities. Access to the water stations was possible through a communication channel set up between the United Nations and Turkey, which also supported evacuations of NGOs and internally displaced persons from the area. Parts of the M4 highway, a critical route for the delivery of humanitarian supplies to the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic, continue to be disrupted by hostilities. As at 26 November, 123,000 people had returned, while almost 75,000 remained displaced from Hasakah, Raqqah and Aleppo Governorates and nearly 17,000 had fled to Iraq.

4. In the north-east of the country, the Hawl camp in Hasakah Governorate hosts 68,400 people, 94 per cent of whom are women and children. Services in the camp continue, despite a temporary reduction in the presence of humanitarian partners and the suspension of several activities following the launch of Operation Peace Spring, in particular in relation to health and protection. Camp administrators temporarily suspended non-emergency medical referrals, leave permits and camp visits immediately after the hostilities began on 9 October, but have since lifted those restrictions.

5. Humanitarian assistance provided by United Nations agencies included food for an average of 4.3 million people in need each month and more than 1.3 million health and medical treatments to people throughout the country. Cross-border assistance, authorized under Security Council resolutions [2165 \(2014\)](#), [2191 \(2014\)](#), [2258 \(2015\)](#), [2393 \(2017\)](#) and [2449 \(2018\)](#), remained a vital part of the humanitarian response. In October and November, 1,955 trucks (39 consignments) delivered general food assistance for over 1 million people (monthly average).

6. Response efforts from within the Syrian Arab Republic continued at scale in response to assessed needs throughout much of the country, even as access to some areas and for some humanitarian actors, including the United Nations, remained limited. During the reporting period, the United Nations and its partners received approval from the Syrian authorities to conduct 825 missions, 774 of which were approved at the local level (blanket approval or Governorate approval) and 51 at the national level (formal approval).

Humanitarian update

3. On 9 October, Turkey, with the support of non-State armed groups, launched Operation Peace Spring in an area between Tall Abyad and Ra's al-Ayn in the Syrian Arab Republic. In a letter dated 9 October addressed to the President of the Security Council and to me ([S/2019/804](#)), the Permanent Representative of Turkey stated that "Turkey initiated Operation Peace Spring on 9 October 2019". Agreements and understandings between the various parties to the conflict were announced: a military understanding between the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Syrian Democratic Forces dated 13 October 2019, the joint Turkish-United States statement

on the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic dated 17 October 2019 and the memorandum of understanding between Turkey and the Russian Federation dated 22 October 2019, each establishing parameters between various parties to the conflict throughout areas of the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic.

4. Hostilities in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic have resulted in civilian death and injury and in several cases have damaged and destroyed essential civilian infrastructure. The Aluk water station, which provides 460,000 people with water in Hasakah Governorate, was non-operational on multiple occasions. Between 15 October and 4 November, four cross-line missions with technical teams from the Hasakah water directorate were completed to restore service at the Aluk water station, facilitated by Turkey. A total of 10 other missions to the facility were aborted owing to insecurity on the roads to the facility on both sides of the conflict line. An arrangement between the Russian Federation and Turkey has since been reached to ensure access for teams to keep the station operational.

5. Over 200,000 people have been displaced since 9 October owing to the hostilities. Two camps for displaced people had to be completely evacuated after coming under attack, with residents relocated to other camps in the north-east. One of the camps, Mabrukah, was evacuated with the assistance of Turkish authorities. The United Nations and Turkey set up a channel of communication to allow for engagement on humanitarian concerns. In late October, tens of thousands of civilians began to return to their areas of origin, and humanitarian operations resumed once hostilities had decreased following a series of agreements among the parties to the conflict. As at 26 November, 123,000 people had returned, while almost 75,000 remained displaced from Hasakah, Raqqah and Aleppo Governorates. In addition, nearly 17,000 people fled into Iraq. Humanitarian organizations have mounted a significant humanitarian response to assist hundreds of thousands of people directly affected by the hostilities, as well as the tens of thousands more indirectly affected. Children are among those most affected by the recent escalation of hostilities.

6. In the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic, 1.8 million people are in need of assistance, including populations in camps, informal settlements and in urban and rural areas. Currently, around 92,000 people live in five formal camps across the north-east (Hawl, Ruj, Arishah, Mahmudli and Nawruz). There are concerns about the ability of women and children, including adolescent girls, to obtain access to life-saving health and social services, including those related to reproductive health and protection from gender-based violence.

7. Amid developments in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Hawl camp in Hasakah Governorate continues to host about 68,400 people, 94 per cent of whom are women and children. Services in the camp continue, after a temporary reduction in the presence of humanitarian partners and the suspension of several activities, in particular in relation to health and protection. Camp administrators suspended non-emergency medical referrals, leave permits and camp visits immediately after the hostilities began on 9 October. Referrals have since resumed, and movements out of the camp are permitted again. On 13 November, more than 70 Syrian nationals left the camp for other parts of the north-east. Since the beginning of June, approximately 2,640 residents departed the camp, around 1,240 of whom were Syrians and 1,400 were third-country nationals, including women and children.

8. Civilians continue to be killed and injured and face significant hardship in the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic owing to the hostilities. Despite the ceasefire in Idlib announced by the Russian Federation and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic on 30 August, active hostilities escalated throughout the reporting period on both sides of the front line, especially in southern Idlib, northern Hama, eastern Ladhivah and western Aleppo. Shelling by non-State armed groups, as well as

Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, which is designated as a terrorist group by the Security Council, in government-controlled areas was also reported. On 20 November, missiles that, according to OHCHR, were fired from government-held territory hit the Qah camp for internally displaced persons in Idlib, killing at least 16 civilians, including 4 women and 6 children, and injuring 30 more. It has been reported that thousands of camp residents fled to nearby locations, and that a maternity hospital next to the camp was damaged.

9. The overwhelming majority of persons in the north-west displaced as a result of the hostilities are reported to remain in densely populated areas in northern Idlib Governorate, where humanitarian assistance is already overstretched. The onset of rain and winter conditions has compounded the situation for the most vulnerable, especially those in exposed conditions. Fuel prices in the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic remain above the national average, owing to both a reported shortage of supply and the depreciation of the Syrian pound on the informal market. The humanitarian community continues to respond by drawing on reserve stocks to sustain response activities, including in providing winter assistance. The most critical need remains for shelter.

10. Conditions inside Rukban on the border between Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic continue to be challenging. Since late March, more than 18,000 people have left the area. The remaining population requires continued assistance, until durable solutions can be found for them. Despite repeated efforts, following the most recent mission in September 2019, a second mission conducted by the United Nations and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to support the voluntary departures of people wishing to leave Rukban in a safe and dignified manner has been unable to proceed owing to the lack of necessary security guarantees. Efforts continue in order to secure the agreements from all parties necessary for the mission to proceed in a safe manner. Meanwhile, many residents of Rukban continue to express their desire to leave the area. Since the most recent mission conducted by the United Nations and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, 542 people have spontaneously left the camp through their own means. More are expected to leave in the coming months, as temperatures decrease. Financial constraints, however, prevent others from being able to leave the camp without support. During the reporting period, three of the five collective shelters in Homs were evacuated to make room for potential new arrivals and to centralize service provision. Former Rukban residents were consolidated in two shelters in Homs. On 12 and 25 November, United Nations teams conducted monitoring missions to the two collective shelters now accommodating 312 former residents of Rukban, pending onward movement to their places of origin or areas of second destination.

11. Insecurity persists in the south-west of the Syrian Arab Republic. In Dar'a Governorate, amid continued reports of attacks and clashes, tensions between Syrian government forces and local populations have reportedly risen in recent weeks. According to OHCHR, Syrian government security branches reportedly detained individuals with former links to armed opposition groups, including those who had signed so-called local agreements or reconciliation agreements with the Government. Local cells of former opposition fighters reportedly carried out attacks on Syrian government-linked targets, using small arms and explosive devices, some reportedly in response to the detentions. Assassination attempts that targeted both pro-government and former opposition-linked individuals continued to be reported as well. Concerns have emerged regarding the impact of the insecurity on freedom of movement for the population in the area, as well as access for humanitarian aid deliveries.

Update on overall developments

12. On 30 October, in Geneva, my Special Envoy for Syria, Geir O. Pedersen, convened the 150 members of the Syrian-led and Syrian-owned Constitutional

Committee facilitated by the United Nations, almost 30 per cent of whom are women. Members of the Constitutional Committee offered visions for the future constitutional arrangements of the Syrian Arab Republic. They adopted by consensus a code of conduct and a set of initial procedural practices for the work of the Committee. Agreement was also reached on the 45 members who will work in the small drafting body. The small drafting body reviewed ideas and proposals in the speeches delivered by members of the large body of 150, and also offered other ideas, to identify potential constitutional principles.

13. A session of the small drafting body was scheduled to be held between 25 and 29 November, but it was not convened owing to the lack of agreement on the agenda by the Chairs of the government and opposition delegations. My Special Envoy held several rounds of discussions with the Committee co-chairs, which did not yield the necessary consensus on the agenda. He has asked the two co-Chairs to continue to work on the agenda, in order to reach consensus ahead of the next session.

14. Member States continued their support for this political process, which is facilitated by the United Nations. The Astana guarantors and the small group welcomed the launch of the Constitutional Committee and reaffirmed their support for Security Council resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#) and my Special Envoy for Syria. The League of Arab States reaffirmed its commitment to the implementation of all elements of the resolution.

Protection

15. Hostilities continued to have acute consequences for civilians across the Syrian Arab Republic. From 1 October to 22 November, OHCHR documented 136 civilian deaths within the de-escalation zone in Idlib and Aleppo: 59 men, 29 women and 48 children (28 boys and 20 girls). The deaths were attributed to alleged air strikes by government and pro-government forces and ground-based strikes exchanged between government and pro-government forces and non-State actors, as well as the terrorist group Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, which has been designated as a terrorist group by the Security Council. From 9 October, when Operation Peace Spring began, to 22 November, OHCHR documented incidents in which at least 147 civilians were killed, including 100 men, 20 women and 27 children. These reported deaths were attributed to military operations and other attacks involving improvised explosive devices.

16. OHCHR has recorded a significant increase in the apparent indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices, including the use of vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, in populated areas under the control of various non-State armed groups in the Syrian Arab Republic. A total of 123 incidents was reported during October and November, leading to an estimated 148 people killed and 352 wounded. On the basis of the consistent pattern of civilian harm, OHCHR assesses that there is a high likelihood that parties to the conflict have failed to respect the key international humanitarian law obligations of distinguishing civilians from fighters and civilian objects from military objectives; refraining from indiscriminate attacks; proportionality in attack; and precaution in the conduct of military operations. Civilians were also killed and injured by abandoned mines and explosive remnants of war, including unexploded ordnance.

17. OHCHR has continued to receive reports of arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances. Reported cases include those of returnees in areas controlled by the Government through various government security forces. Relatives of those persons were not informed or were denied information about the circumstances, outcome and location of their family members.

18. In areas under the control of non-State armed groups, including Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, which has been designated as a terrorist group by the Security Council, in Idlib and surrounding areas, actions carried out by such groups continued to raise concerns that they may be committing serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses with impunity. Non-State armed groups have continued to systematically use intimidation and harassment as tactics against civilians, the media and health service providers perceived as affiliates to an opposing party or solely for being critical of the armed group in control of the territory. In the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic, OHCHR recorded incidents in which civilians and fighters placed hors de combat appeared to have been summarily executed. The Government informed the United Nations that 83 civilians had been killed and 226 injured in attacks in areas not under their control between 22 October and 21 November.

19. Hostilities affecting educational facilities continued to be reported by humanitarian organizations. In total, five incidents were verified by the United Nations during the reporting period,¹ including three in Idlib and two in Raqqah Governorates:

(a) On 9 October 2019, a school in the village of Yabisah in Tall Abyad, Raqqah Governorate, was reportedly hit by rockets;

(b) On 12 October 2019, the Barah school in the village of Barah, Idlib Governorate, was reportedly partially damaged by a rocket;

(c) On 6 November 2019, the Ali Ibn Abi Talib primary school in the city of Jisr al-Shughur, Idlib Governorate, was reportedly destroyed by air strikes affecting the wider city;

(d) On 8 November 2019, the Zakariya Akta' primary school in the city of Jisr al-Shughur, Idlib Governorate, was reportedly partially destroyed by air strikes;

(e) On 19 November 2019, the Jurn al-Haj Saleh primary school in Lower Jurn al-Aswad, in Ayn Isa district, Raqqah Governorate, was reportedly damaged by crossfire.

20. The Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care of the World Health Organization reported 18 incidents affecting health-care facilities and assets.¹ In October, there were 8 attacks, while in November, 10 attacks were registered. The incidents reportedly resulted in the killing of three health workers and patients and the injuring of an additional 21 people, as well as damage to the facilities.

21. During the reporting period, the internal United Nations Headquarters board of inquiry continued to investigate a series of incidents that had occurred in the north-western part of the Syrian Arab Republic since the memorandum on the stabilization of the situation in the Idlib de-escalation area was signed between the Russian Federation and Turkey on 17 September 2018. It will ascertain the facts of the specific incidents concerned and report to me once it completes its work.

Humanitarian response

22. United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners reached on average 5.6 million people in need each month in 2019, including children, adolescent girls and women of reproductive age, throughout the Syrian Arab Republic. During the reporting period, humanitarian assistance provided by United Nations agencies

¹ These attacks have been confirmed using tried and tested systems, whereby the United Nations receives reports from partners on the ground and reviews them against at least two other independent sources. Only attacks that are fully vetted and confirmed by all independent sources are included in the list of confirmed attacks. These systems are used worldwide and are widely respected.

included food delivered for 4.6 million people in need in October and over 4.2 million people in November. More than 1.3 million health and medical treatments were provided to people throughout the country during the reporting period (see table 1).

Table 1
Average number of people reached each month by the United Nations and other organizations through all modalities throughout the Syrian Arab Republic: October and November 2019

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Average number of people reached monthly</i>
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	36 576
International Organization for Migration	50 000
Mine Action Service	27 000
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	895 000
United Nations Children's Fund	2 764 000
United Nations Development Programme	679 000
United Nations Population Fund	812 000
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	219 000
World Food Programme	4 400 000
World Health Organization	672 000

23. From inside the Syrian Arab Republic, humanitarian assistance provided by United Nations agencies included food for 3.6 million people in government-controlled areas and in the north-east in October and 3.2 million people in November. In total, throughout the reporting period, approximately 1.3 million people received water, sanitation and hygiene services and supplies. Over 174,000 individuals were reached with core relief and winter items. A total of 62,874 children were provided with psychosocial support and other child protection services. United Nations operations from within the Syrian Arab Republic also included the distribution of over 900,000 health and medical treatments to people throughout the country.

24. As part of its countrywide humanitarian response, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners continued to deliver life-saving assistance to the 1.8 million people in need in the three Governorates of the north-eastern part of the Syrian Arab Republic, namely, Dayr al-Zawr, Raqqah and Hasakah Governorates. Humanitarian partners within the country have mounted a significant response in the north-east since early October, reaching more than 530,000 people with food assistance until the end of October, as well as 135,000 people in collective shelters, camps and host communities assisted with core and winter non-food items, in addition to other forms of health, water, sanitation and hygiene protection and nutrition assistance. Turkish authorities announced that they had been providing humanitarian assistance in the area between Tall Abyad and Ra's al-Ayn since 15 October. At the Hawl camp, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners continued to implement a major relief operation, despite a temporary reduction in some activities following reported changes in control in the north-east. Following the escalation of hostilities in the north-east, a number of humanitarian actors (mainly cross-border actors) temporarily suspended activities in the Hawl camp, affecting in particular the health and protection sectors. Since then, minor surgical interventions have resumed, although major surgeries are not being performed owing to a lack of surgeons. A total of 16 of the 18 primary health facilities and four mobile units remained active, and three vaccination teams, as well as service points for leishmaniosis, tuberculosis and HIV,

remained operational. Other key services, such as emergency food assistance, water trucking, the maintenance of key water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure and winterization, continued uninterrupted. Aside from support for the Hawl camp, regular assistance continued to be delivered to the 92,000 internally displaced persons residing in sites, camps, collective shelters and informal settlements across the north-east of the country, as well as to host communities.

25. Humanitarian mine action partners continued to implement activities, including contamination surveys, risk education and victim assistance in support of vulnerable populations. However, military operations in north-eastern parts of the Syrian Arab Republic have significantly disrupted humanitarian mine action activities in the area. In Rif Dimashq, Dar‘a, Suwayda’ and Hama Governorates, risk education teams trained by the Mine Action Service delivered awareness-raising sessions to promote safer behaviour in communities most affected by explosive ordnance contamination. The Service provided training-of-trainers courses to 57 personnel from agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and other humanitarian actors, enabling them to deliver risk awareness programmes on explosive hazards to their colleagues working to provide humanitarian aid and relief in locations where explosive hazards have an impact on their safety. The Service also made available risk education materials to humanitarian organizations to reach a maximum number of people with basic safety messages.

26. Cross-border deliveries continued under the terms of Security Council resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017) and 2449 (2018) (see table 2). In line with those resolutions, the United Nations notified the Syrian authorities in advance of each shipment, including its contents, its destination and the number of beneficiaries expected to be reached. In October and November, 1,955 trucks (39 consignments) delivered food assistance for more than 1 million people through cross-border deliveries (see figure I).

Figure I
Number of beneficiaries assisted by the United Nations and its partners through cross-border humanitarian deliveries, by cluster: October and November 2019 (monthly average)

(Thousands)

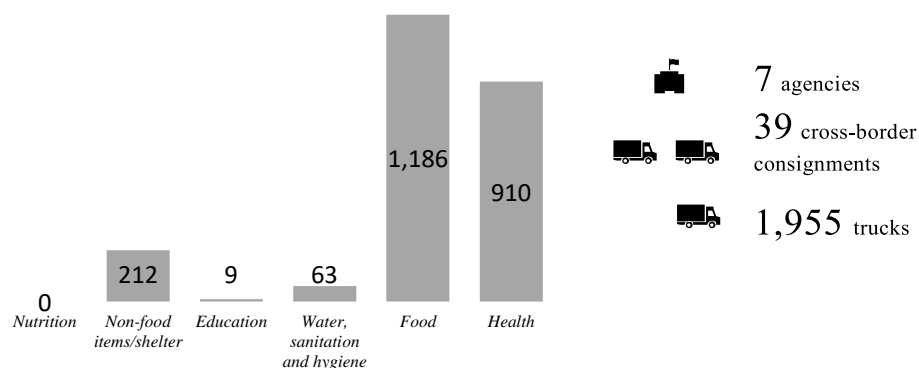


Table 2
Number of beneficiaries targeted through cross-border deliveries, by sector and by district: October and November 2019 (monthly average)

<i>Governorate</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Food</i>	<i>Health</i>	<i>Non-food items/ shelter</i>	<i>Nutrition</i>	<i>Water, sanitation and hygiene</i>
Aleppo	Afrin	–	50 738	–	–	–	–
Aleppo	I'zaz	1 775	99 003	188 744	12 210	–	7 000
Aleppo	Jabal Sim'an	4 310	82 228	32 800	–	–	–
Hasakah	Qamishli	–	–	262 650	–	–	–
Idlib	Ariha	–	–	11 150	–	–	–
Idlib	Harim	3 220	953 130	383 455	178 524	–	43 823
Idlib	Idlib	–	825	26 550	21 500	–	12 500
Idlib	Jisr al-Shughur	–	300	5 050	–	–	–

27. In the north-western part of the Syrian Arab Republic, humanitarian organizations continued to provide food assistance to newly displaced households, increase health services in areas that were receiving people and provide emergency protection services. Owing to the growing humanitarian needs across the north-west, the World Food Programme has increased its cross-border beneficiary caseload to over 1 million people. This aid was delivered exclusively through the cross-border modality. Tens of thousands received other services and support, such as schooling, non-food items, clean water, shelter and emergency and protection services.

28. While humanitarian needs in the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic have increased, the massive response by the United Nations and its partners has helped to avoid a further deterioration of the humanitarian crisis. In the past three months, the highest number of trucks has been recorded passing through the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic cross-border operation since its inception in 2014, with 936 trucks delivering aid across the border in October. The United Nations and its partners operating cross-border and from Damascus have contingency plans in place in case of a further escalation of violence. Donor support is urgently needed; without it, partners will not be able to scale up their operations and respond to both new and existing needs.

29. During the reporting period, the Russian Federation sent informational bulletins to the United Nations from the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides and Refugee Migration Monitoring, which outlined the provision of bilateral relief assistance. Other Member States also continued to provide bilateral and other forms of humanitarian assistance.

30. As at the end of November, the humanitarian response plan for the Syrian Arab Republic was funded at 55 per cent, with \$1.8 billion provided of the \$3.3 billion requested for 2019.² The response to meet the needs of the affected population in the north-western part of the country is folded into the response plan.

Humanitarian access

31. The provision of humanitarian assistance requires timely, safe, sustained and unimpeded access by the United Nations and all humanitarian partners to people in need across the Syrian Arab Republic. The access landscape in the country is

² See Financial Tracking Service reporting on the humanitarian response plan for the Syrian Arab Republic, available at <https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/663/summary>.

complex, with different areas serviced differently and different types of services requiring different operating modalities. Access is critical for principled humanitarian action, which depends notably on the ability to independently assess needs and deliver assistance and to monitor and evaluate the impact independently, including by regularly engaging directly with affected people.

32. During the reporting period, the United Nations continued to provide assistance from within the Syrian Arab Republic to millions of people in need in thousands of locations throughout the country. More than 1,700 United Nations staff members are present in the Syrian Arab Republic, with more than 700 deployed in nine hubs outside Damascus (Aleppo, Dar'a, Dayr al-Zawr, Hama, Homs, Ladhqiya, Qamishli, Suwayda' and Tartus). A further 3,538 staff members of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) are deployed across the country. The decentralized presence of United Nations staff contributes to greater access and proximity to affected populations.

33. Many of the aid deliveries are implemented through national partners, in particular NGOs and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. The United Nations is regularly deployed alongside the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, including to undertake assessments, accompany deliveries and follow up with monitoring and evaluation missions. In October and November, the United Nations conducted 825 missions throughout the Syrian Arab Republic.

Table 3

Total number of missions conducted from within the Syrian Arab Republic by United Nations agencies and third parties/facilitators, by type: October and November 2019

<i>Type of mission</i>	<i>Note verbale</i>	<i>Blanket approval</i>	<i>Governorate approval</i>	<i>Total number</i>
Assessment missions	7	74	4	85
Missions accompanying aid deliveries	8	275	1	284
Monitoring missions	25	289	21	335
Security, logistics and administrative support missions	11	107	3	121
Total	51	745	29	825

Figure II
Total number of missions conducted from within the Syrian Arab Republic by United Nations agencies, by Governorate: October and November 2019

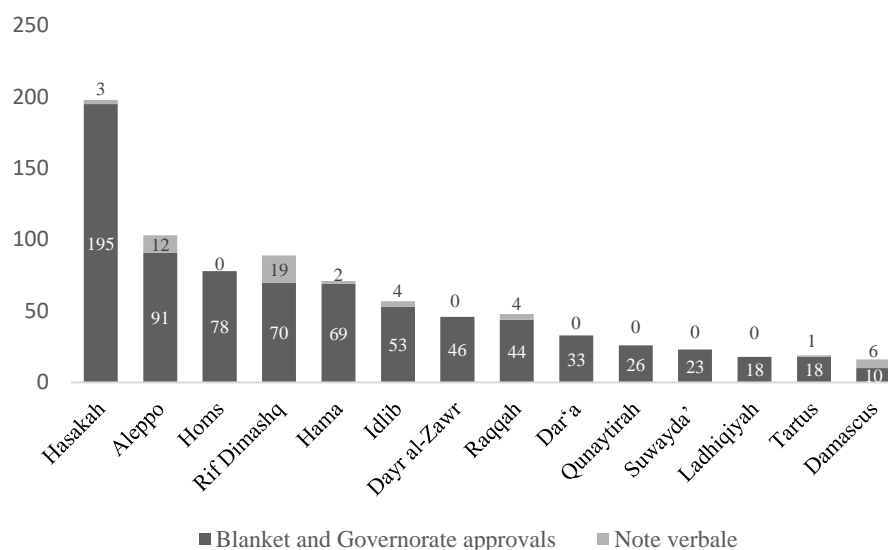


Table 4
Requests for United Nations access for single-agency missions: October and November 2019

Type of request	Number requested	Number approved	Percentage approved
Assessment missions	38	18	47
Missions accompanying aid deliveries	22	15	68
Monitoring missions	85	36	42
Security, logistics and administrative support missions	35	21	60
Total	180	90	50

34. During the reporting period, the United Nations and its partners received approval from the Syrian authorities to conduct 825 missions, 774 of which were approved at the local level (blanket approval or Governorate approval) and 51 at the national level (formal approval) (see table 3 and figure II). During the reporting period, the United Nations and its partners continued to have more sustained access from sub-offices than from missions originating in Damascus.

35. Response efforts from within the Syrian Arab Republic continued at scale in response to assessed needs throughout much of the country, even as access to some areas and for some humanitarian actors, including the United Nations, remained limited. Limitations on the ability of certain sectors to carry out structured needs assessments across the country remained. Of the 180 submitted mission requests that required formal approval at the national level by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 90 mission requests were approved (50 per cent). While requests were made in the last days of the reporting period would not be expected to receive a formal response before the end of the month, the numbers indicate limitations on access for humanitarian actors (see table 4).

36. During the reporting period, a number of access constraints continued to be reported in parts of Idlib, northern Hama and south-eastern Aleppo Governorates, owing mostly to heightened hostilities, although limited response efforts are under way in those areas.

37. Emergency programming from within the Syrian Arab Republic to the area between Tall Abyad and Ra's al-Ayn has not been possible in view of developments on the ground since 9 October, although cross-line access was deployed to support the Aluk water station and for the evacuation of civilians and NGO staff. On 20 November, Turkish authorities reopened the border crossing between Akcakale and Tall Abyad in order to deliver humanitarian assistance.

38. Humanitarian supplies and commercial goods from Damascus heading for Qamishli and the rest of the north-east are being redirected along alternate supply lines because parts of the strategic M4 highway are closed. Access to services for populations either remaining in or returning to Raqqah Governorate has reportedly declined since 9 October, while access east of the Euphrates River in Dayr al-Zawr, including the Hajin enclave, is limited owing to widespread explosive hazard contamination, although regular food assistance is being delivered.

39. Access to Rukban, where a mission to conduct evacuations for those who want to return to government-controlled areas continues to be negotiated, remained challenging owing to the lack of security agreements from all parties. However, missions were deployed on 12 and 25 November to reach the collective shelters in Homs for those leaving Rukban during the reporting period. Some areas in the south of the country were also not accessible in a sustainable manner to some humanitarian actors, including the United Nations, owing to administrative restrictions and, in some locations, insecurity. Nonetheless, the United Nations continues to advocate unimpeded and unconditional humanitarian access with all relevant stakeholders.

40. The United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic continued its operations as authorized under Security Council resolutions [2165 \(2014\)](#), [2191 \(2014\)](#), [2258 \(2015\)](#), [2332 \(2016\)](#), [2393 \(2017\)](#) and [2449 \(2018\)](#). During the reporting period, the Mechanism has continued its operations in Iraq and Turkey. During that period, 39 consignments consisting of 1,955 trucks crossed into the Syrian Arab Republic from Iraq and Turkey: 18 from Bab al-Hawa (1,717 trucks), 19 from Bab al-Salam (231 trucks) and 2 from Ya'rubiyah (7 trucks). This brings the total number of trucks since the beginning of cross-border operations to 30,338 (22,139 through Bab al-Hawa; 3,495 through Bab al-Salam; 4,595 through Ramtha; and 109 from Ya'rubiyah). There were no concerns or questions about the humanitarian nature of the consignments sent during the reporting period. The United Nations provided 48-hour notice to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding all shipments. The Mechanism continued to benefit from the excellent cooperation of the Governments of Iraq, Jordan and Turkey.

41. Response from the cross-border operation from Turkey continued at high levels to address existing needs, as well as new needs resulting from the recent escalation in conflict. Access constraints persisted in front-line areas owing to the intensity of hostilities. In general, humanitarian access in areas of Idlib not affected by hostilities remained unconstrained, with some isolated incidents or bureaucratic impediments. In northern Aleppo, access challenges, primarily bureaucratic impediments, remained.

Visas and registrations

42. The United Nations continued to work with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to allow for the timely provision of visas to staff (see table 5).

Table 5
Requests for United Nations visas: October and November 2019

<i>Type of request</i>	<i>Number requested</i>	<i>Number approved</i>	<i>Number rejected</i>	<i>Number pending</i>
Visas requested during reporting period	135	75	11	49
Renewals requested during reporting period	170	108	–	62
Visas pending from before reporting period	119	39	23	44
Renewals pending from before reporting period	59	54	–	5

Note: The United Nations withdrew 13 pending requests from before the reporting period.

43. A total of 28 international NGOs are registered with the Government to operate in the country.

Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and premises

44. The United Nations and NGOs continued to implement programmes in areas affected by frequent clashes among parties to the conflict, by air strikes and by the regular exchange of indirect artillery fire and other attacks. Humanitarian relief personnel also operate in areas highly contaminated with unexploded ordnance, explosive remnants of war and landmines.

45. Since the beginning of the conflict, hundreds of humanitarian workers have reportedly been killed, including 23 staff members of the United Nations and of the entities of the United Nations system, 18 of whom were staff members of UNRWA; 66 staff members and volunteers of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent; and 8 staff members and volunteers of the Palestine Red Crescent Society. Many staff members of international and national NGOs have also been killed.

46. A total of 27 staff members of agencies and programmes of the United Nations system (all from UNRWA) were detained or missing at the end of the reporting period.

47. The threat of indirect artillery fire affecting the city of Aleppo has increased over the past three months. More than 150 incidents have been reported, targeting residential areas in Aleppo over the period from September to November. A building used by UNRWA staff members in Aleppo was damaged in one incident.

48. Asymmetric attacks have been on the rise during the past three months, especially in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic. Of the 167 incidents with improvised explosive devices reported over the past three months in the north and north-east of the country, 4 involved such devices detonated in residential areas of the city of Qamishli, in close proximity to the United Nations hub.

49. A staff member of the United Nations Development Programme was injured in an incident on 12 November when a residential area in the Mazzah neighbourhood, within a radius of 500 m of the United Nations offices in Damascus, was struck.

III. Observations

50. In 2019, there has been a further deterioration of an already extremely difficult humanitarian situation for people throughout the Syrian Arab Republic, where over 11 million people remain in need of assistance. In too many areas, civilians continue to be killed and injured, critical civilian infrastructure is destroyed and damaged and access to basic humanitarian services is hindered as a result of the conflict. As the year draws to a close, I am particularly concerned about the impact that a potential

full-scale military offensive in the north-west could have on the already vulnerable population, while I am also watching with concern the impact of ongoing hostilities in the north-east, as well as increasing tensions in the south-west. The use of improvised explosive devices is on the rise throughout the country, with terrible consequences for civilians. As winter sets in, needs will continue to increase, in particular for those living in camps or informal settlements. At the same time, the rapidly depreciating currency makes meeting basic needs for the entire population ever more challenging.

51. In the last weeks of November, an increase in hostilities in the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic has again been registered, leading to further civilian casualties. The World Health Organization has now reported 66 attacks affecting the provision of health-care services in the area in 2019 until the end of October. A full-scale military offensive would result in a devastating humanitarian cost for the 3 million people living in the area. It must be avoided.

52. I have expressed my grave concerns over the humanitarian impact of military developments with regard to the north-east, which reportedly resulted in civilian casualties and displacement. In addition to the civilian deaths, displacement and in some cases destruction of civilian infrastructure, the ability of some humanitarian actors to respond has also been affected. Humanitarian organizations present in the area have demonstrated tremendous agility to adapt, scale up and ensure that the necessary assistance reaches those most in need. Any cut in access for humanitarians to provide life-saving assistance and services to the 1.8 million people in need in the north-east will only cause further suffering. Civilians must have safe, sustained and unimpeded access to humanitarian aid and services.

53. I once again remind all parties to the conflict of their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, as well as the need to respect international human rights law. All parties must exercise maximum restraint and cease any indiscriminate and disproportionate use of air strikes, shelling and improvised explosive devices in populated areas. Any military operations, including those by and against terrorist groups designated as such by the Security Council, must respect the rules of international humanitarian law, including those on the protection of civilians and civilian objects.

54. I commend the efforts made by the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations to respond to humanitarian needs despite the range of difficulties faced. On average, 5.6 million civilians are reached each month. The majority of the response is delivered from inside the Syrian Arab Republic, where, despite ongoing challenges, there have been some improvements in access. I call for these steps to be further expanded to ensure access to all in need.

55. An essential part of the response continues to be delivered from across the border, as authorized under Security Council resolution [2165 \(2014\)](#) and subsequent resolutions. This aid has staved off an even larger humanitarian crisis inside the Syrian Arab Republic. While I welcome ongoing efforts to scale up humanitarian assistance delivered from inside the Syrian Arab Republic, I reiterate that the United Nations does not have an alternative means of reaching people in need in the areas in which cross-border assistance is being provided. The Security Council has a critical role to play in support of these humanitarian efforts. I count on Security Council members to ensure that the United Nations is authorized to meet the needs of all who need humanitarian assistance, including by the swift renewal of the modalities set out in its resolution [2165 \(2014\)](#) and subsequent resolutions.

56. The humanitarian response plan for the Syrian Arab Republic remains underfunded, at 55 per cent, or \$1.8 billion of the \$3.3 billion requested currently funded. While I commend Member States for mobilizing funding, including

additional funding to scale up in the face of emergencies such as those in the north-east and north-west, I continue to count on donor support to further support response efforts. In addition to areas witnessing continuous displacement, priorities include support for winterization efforts in the cold winter months.

57. Continued impunity for alleged serious violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law by parties to the conflict remains of grave concern. Perpetrators of serious violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law must be held accountable. I call upon all parties to the conflict, in particular the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, all States, civil society and the United Nations system to cooperate fully with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, in particular by providing relevant information and documentation. Taking measures to address serious violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law is both a legal requirement and central to achieving sustainable peace in the Syrian Arab Republic. I reiterate my call for the situation in the country to be referred to the International Criminal Court.

58. In view of the ongoing serious concerns repeatedly raised with regard to the protection of civilians and other human rights concerns in the Syrian Arab Republic, I continue to strongly urge the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, in line with Human Rights Council resolutions [S-18/1](#) and [19/22](#), to cooperate with OHCHR, including through the establishment of a field presence with the mandate to protect and promote human rights.

59. An important step forward has been taken for the political process, with the convening of the Constitutional Committee on 30 October. I continue to express appreciation to the parties for their support for the start of the political process with active participation in the dialogue on the future of the Syrian Arab Republic. Regional and international actors must also be recognized for their commitment and ongoing support to the process. That said, discussions in late November during the second session were difficult and the 45-member small drafting body of the Committee was not convened owing to a lack of agreement on the agenda by the Chairs of the government and opposition delegations. I urge all sides to seize upon the opportunity provided by the Constitutional Committee and continue to work towards holding a constructive session of the Committee in the near future.

60. The Constitutional Committee is a first step towards the full implementation of Security Council resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#). My Special Envoy will continue to seek a strengthening of the process to build trust and confidence between Syrians and with the international community. This requires genuine dialogue and cooperation between the main international players and with the Syrian parties. Only an inclusive political solution that meets the aspirations of all Syrians can lead to sustainable peace and put an end to one of the gravest humanitarian crises.

Annex

Reported incidents affecting civilians recorded by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: October and November 2019*

Idlib Governorate

- On 24 October, 5 civilian men were killed and 17 other civilians were injured in reported ground-based strikes in a marketplace in the village of Janudiyah, Idlib Governorate.
- On 25 October, three civilian women were killed and four children (three girls and one boy) were injured in reported ground-based strikes in Bdama in western rural Idlib.
- On 2 November, four civilians, including two women, were arrested by fighters of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham in the city of Idlib.
- On 4 November, a health centre was damaged in reported ground-based strikes in the city of Jisr al-Shughur in western rural Idlib.
- On 6 November, three medical personnel were injured during reported air strikes that damaged the Ikhlas hospital in the village of Shinan in southern rural Idlib. On the same day, Kafr Nubl hospital was damaged and temporarily put out of service owing to alleged air strikes in the city of Kafr Nubl in southern rural Idlib. The hospital had previously been hit in May and July.
- On 8 November, the Zakariya Akta' school was damaged in a reported air strike in the city of Jisr al-Shughur in western rural Idlib.
- On 9 November, one girl was killed and two civilian men and a boy were injured in an air strike near a settlement for internally displaced persons in the village of Nayrab in eastern rural Idlib.
- On 10 November, seven civilians, including two girls and one boy, were killed in air strikes in Kafr Ruma in southern rural Idlib.
- On 15 November, five civilians (two men, two girls and one boy) were killed outside a residence after a reported air strike in the town of Barah in southern rural Idlib. On the same day, one boy was killed and three other boys were injured in a reported air strike in Kafr Ruma in southern rural Idlib.
- On 17 November, six civilians from one family (one man, four women and one girl) were killed in a reported air strike in the village of Mallajah in southern rural Idlib.
- On 20 November, at least 16 civilians (2 men, 6 women, 4 girls and 4 boys) were killed and at least 30 other civilians were injured after reported ground-based strikes in the Qah al-Qadim camp for internally displaced persons in the village of Qah in northern rural Idlib. A maternity hospital inside the camp sustained damage in the incident.

* The list of incidents exemplifies human rights issues of concern raised in the report. Owing to the changing patterns of conflict and the loss of networks of credible and/or reliable sources in many conflict-affected areas, however, verifying incidents is increasingly difficult. The list, which contains only those incidents that were reported to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and that have been verified according to its methodology, should not be considered comprehensive.

Aleppo Governorate

- On 5 October, at least 12 civilians, including 1 woman and 6 children, were injured after a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device was reportedly detonated near the Suq roundabout in Qabbasin in the Bab area of rural Aleppo.
- On 9 October, one civilian man was killed in a reported ground-based strike in a camp for internally displaced persons in Jabal in the city of Jarabulus in northern rural Aleppo.
- On 10 October, two civilians (one woman and one boy) were injured in a reported ground-based strike in the city of Mari' in northern rural Aleppo.
- On 11 October, two civilian men were killed in a reported air strike in the village of Quran in the Ayn al-Arab (Kobane) district in northern rural Aleppo. On the same day, a hospital in the city of Ayn al-Arab was damaged in a reported ground-based strike near the facility.
- On 13 October, three civilian men were killed and one infant was injured in reported ground-based strikes near their vehicle on the highway between the villages of Muhsinli and Arab Hasan in southern Jarabulus in northern rural Aleppo.
- On 14 October, three children were injured in reported ground-based strikes in the Jabal camp for internally displaced persons near the city of Jarabulus in northern rural Aleppo.
- On 31 October, 7 civilians (6 men and 1 woman) were killed and 15 civilians (13 men and 2 boys) were injured after a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device was reportedly detonated in a marketplace in the city of Afrin in rural Aleppo.
- On 6 November, seven civilians, including two women, one boy and one girl, were killed and many other civilians were injured in reported air strikes in Saharah in western rural Aleppo.
- On 10 November, one girl was killed after a ground-based strike in the neighbourhood of Sayf al-Dawlah in the city of Aleppo.
- On 16 November, 11 civilians (10 men and 1 boy) were killed and 57 civilians (42 men, 8 women and 7 boys) were injured after a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device was reportedly detonated inside a market in the city of Bab in northern rural Aleppo.
- On 19 November, 1 civilian man was killed and 13 other civilians, including 3 women and 2 boys, were injured after ground-based strikes in the city of I'zaz in northern rural Aleppo.
- On 21 November, 7 civilians, including 1 boy and 1 woman, were killed and at least 29 civilians were injured as a result of reported ground-based strikes in several neighbourhoods in the city of Aleppo, including the neighbourhoods of Jamiliyah, A'zamiyah, Zahra', Furqan, Sayf al-Dawlah, and Salah al-Din.

Hasakah and Dayr al-Zawr Governorates

- On 5 October, one civilian woman was killed and two other civilians (one woman and one boy) were injured after a reported explosive remnant of war exploded inside a residence in the town of Marashidah in eastern rural Dayr al-Zawr.
- On 9 October, water reportedly ceased to flow from the main supply station in the area of Aluk in Ra's al-Ayn, Hasakah, owing to reported damage to the facility and surrounding power lines. The water service to hundreds of thousands of people was interrupted on several occasions in subsequent weeks, until maintenance could be conducted on the station.
- On 10 October, three civilians (one man, one woman and one boy) were killed after alleged ground-based strikes in the neighbourhood of Qaddur Bayk in the city of Qamishli.
- On 11 October, one civilian man was killed and six other civilian men were injured following a reported ground-based strike that hit a bakery in the neighbourhood of al-Hay al-Gharbi in the city of Qamishli.
- On 11 October, the national hospital was damaged as a result of an alleged air strike in the city of Ra's al-Ayn. On the same day, the Diwar clinic was damaged in a reported ground-based strike in the town of Diwar in Malikiyah district.
- On 12 October, one civilian woman was killed by reported sniper fire in the neighbourhood of Hilaliyah in the city of Qamishli. On the same day, one civilian man was reportedly killed by sniper fire in the area of Qasr al-Dib in the city of Malikiyah.
- On 13 October, at least three civilians were killed in reported ground-based strikes that hit a convoy of vehicles on the highway between Tall Tamr and Ra's al-Ayn in Hasakah.
- On 23 October, one boy was killed and one civilian man was injured after a landmine was reportedly detonated on agricultural land in Guzleh in the rural Ra's al-Ayn area in Hasakah.
- On 23 October, three civilian men were injured after a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device was reportedly detonated in a market in the city of Shaddadah in Hasakah. On the same day, at least two civilians were injured after an improvised explosive device was reportedly detonated near a public building in Qamishli in Hasakah.
- On 26 October, one civilian woman was killed in reported ground-based strikes in the village of Qaraj in the rural Ra's al-Ayn area.
- On 31 October, two civilians (husband and wife) were killed after reported ground-based strikes in the village of Tall al-Ward in the rural Ra's al-Ayn area.
- On 4 November, one civilian man was arrested at his house in the city of Ra's al-Ayn. His fate and whereabouts remain unknown.
- On 9 November, one member of the civilian medical personnel was injured and an ambulance was damaged after an alleged drone strike near the vehicle in the village of Dardarah in the rural Tall Tamr area.
- On 11 November, two civilians were killed in the town of Zir in eastern rural Dayr al-Zawr while travelling from Qamishli. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant claimed responsibility for their murder.

Raqqah Governorate

- On 11 October, the national hospital was damaged as a result of what was alleged to be an air strike near the hospital in the city of Tall Abyad in Raqqah.
 - On 14 October, two civilians (one man and one elderly woman) were killed in reported ground-based strikes in the village of Dik in northern rural Raqqah.
 - On 16 October, one civilian man was arrested near the Bassel Garden area in the city of Raqqah for unknown reasons. His fate and whereabouts remain unknown, despite his family receiving assurances of his subsequent release.
 - On 2 November, at least 11 civilians (3 men, 2 women and 6 boys) were killed and 14 civilians, including 3 boys, were injured after a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device was reportedly detonated inside a market in Tall Abyad in northern rural Raqqah.
 - On 6 November, one civilian man was arrested at his house in the city of Tabqah in Raqqah. His fate and whereabouts remain unknown.
 - On 16 November, three civilians (one woman and her two sons) were killed after a reported unexploded ordnance was detonated on agricultural land in the village of Umm al-Tabat in Raqqah.
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