

T.C
HASAN KALYONCU ÜNİVERSİTESİ
LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ
SİYASET BİLİMİ VE ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER ANABİLİM DALI
İNGİLİZCE TEZLİ YÜKSEK LİSANS PROGRAMI

**INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS
WORKING IN NORTHWEST SYRIA AND THEIR HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT TO
INTERNAL DISPLACED PEOPLE**

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

HAZIRLAYAN

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TEZ DANIŞMANI

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi YAMAN KEPENÇ

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TEZ ETİK VE BİLDİRİM SAYFASI

Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak sunduğum “**INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS WORKING IN NORTHWEST SYRIA AND THEIR HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT TO INTERNAL DISPLACED PEOPLE**” başlıklı çalışmanın tarafımca, bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurmaksızın yazıldığını ve yararlandığım eserlerin kaynakçada gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu ve bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanmış olduğumu belirtir ve onurumla doğrularım.
12/04/2022.

KASEM HIJAZY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To my parents who spent all their life searching for ways how to support me and my siblings to be successful in our life journey.

To my wife Walaa NAJJAR who supported me days and nights with my tough daily work and with my studies. She took the challenge with me and started the refugee life away from her parents and family members. To my son who is growing with us wish he will learn something from me and his great mom.

My great supervisor Dr. Yaman who supported me with his utmost power to complete my thesis and finalise my masters' studies and look for the future. My great line manager at work who was so patient and supported me to take time off and take care of my studies to be successful.

At the end and the biggening my gratitude is always to Allah who empowered me to complete this master and start new chapter of my life.

Kasem Hijazy

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to analyse the humanitarian aid response for the internally displaced people living in the Northwest of Syria which is correlated with the security situation of the area and the funds donors are allocating to the Northwest of Syria. The thesis focuses on the Northwest of Syria examining the four main humanitarian sectors of food security, health, water sanitation and hygiene and protection. Then the thesis will move to the challenges which are impacting the humanitarian aid response in the Northwest of Syria as experienced by the United Nations agencies workers, humanitarian organisations and the clusters.

The study looks at the multiple flows of internally displaced people who ended up residing in the Northwest of Syria. It will review the military and political developments which led to opposition groups ending up in the Northwest of Syria controlling an area inhabited by millions of individuals. Also, will be examining the humanitarian response based on the motivation and needs fulfilment of these IDPs. The study presents some differences as well between the delivery mechanisms between cross border and cross lines aid delivery which were adopted in the humanitarian response for the Northwest of Syria.

As coordination is vital in the humanitarian response in the Northwest, the study will focus on the multiple stakeholders involved in the coordination process of this response. After that the study will present the findings of the survey and key informants interviews conducted to inform the study.

Keywords: Humanitarian non-Governmental Organisations, Internally Displaced people, Host Communities, Northwest of Syria, Funds, Challenges, Access

ÖZ

Bu tez Suriye'nin kuzeybatısında yaşayan ülke içi göçmenlere, bölgede ki güvenlik durumuyla ve bağışçıların kuzeybatı Suriye'ye tahsis ettiği fonlarla ilişkili olan insani yardım hareketlerini analiz etmeye çalışır. Tez, Suriye'nin kuzeybatısına odaklanarak gıda güvenliği, sağlık ve su sağlığı, hijyen ve koruma gibi dört ana insani yardım sektörünü inceler. Daha sonra, Birleşmiş Milletler teşkilatları ve toplulukların yaşadığı gibi Suriye'nin kuzeybatısında insani yardım hareketlerini etkileyen zorlukları ele alacak.

Araştırma, Suriye'nin kuzeybatısında ikamet eden ülke içi göçmenlerin çoklu göçlerini inceliyor. Raporda, muhalefet gruplarının Suriye'nin kuzeybatısında milyonlarca kişinin yaşadığı bir bölgeyi kontrol etmelerine yol açan askeri ve siyasi gelişmeleri gözden geçirecek. Ayrıca, bu IDPK'lerin motivasyonu ve karşılanması gereken ihtiyaçları temel olarak insani yardım hareketlerini inceleyecek. Çalışma, Suriye'nin kuzeybatısına yönelik insani yardım olarak kabul edilen sınır ötesi ve hat ötesi yardım dağıtımındaki dağıtım mekanizmalarının bazı farklılıklarını da sunmaktadır.

Kuzeybatıdaki insani müdahalede koordinasyon hayati önem taşıdığı için, çalışma bu yardım hareketlerinin koordinasyon sürecinde ilgili kişilere odaklanacaktır. Ardında çalışma anket sonuçlarını ve haber kaynağı röportajlarını sunacaktır.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	: Ahrar Al-Sham
ACU	: Assistance Coordination Unit
AFAD	: Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency
BNFs	: Beneficiaries
ES	: Euphrates Shield
FGD	: Focus Group Discussion
FSA	: Free Syrian Army
GOS	: Government of Syria
GOT	: Government of Turkey
HH	: Household
HLP	: Housing, land and property
HNO	: Humanitarian Needs Overviews
HTS	: Hayat Tahrir Al-sham
IDP	: Internally Displaced People
IG	: Interim Government
IHL	: International Humanitarian Law
INGOs	: International Non-Governmental Organisations
ISIS	: Islamic State of Iraq and Levant
KIIs	: Key Informant Interviews
LC	: Local Council
LNGOs	: Local Non-Governmental Organisations
NE	: North East
NGOs	: Non-Governmental Organisations
OCHA	: Office of Coordination Humanitarian Assistance
ICRC	: International Red Cross and Red Crescent
SNA	: Syrian National Army
SNC	: Syrian National Coalition
SARC	: Syrian Arab Red Crescent
SSG	: Syrian Salvation Government
TRC	: Turkish Red Crescent

UN : United Nations
WD : Water Directorate
WOS : Whole of Syria
WS : Water Station
WS : Water Stations
WU : Water Unites
YPG: People's Protection Unit



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Introduction

After more than a decade of the conflict in Syria, the world witnessed unprecedented displacement and deportation within the country and outside the country. Based on the United Nations (UN), more than 12 million people were forced to move their homes because of the on going conflict half of this number moved to another safer areas while others chosen to leave the country to neighbouring countries or Europe. 6.6 million people are registered as internally displaced within the country spread between areas under the three main controlling areas as in Syria government area of control, Syria Defence forces-controlled areas and opposition groups controlled areas. According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 2.7 internally displaced people (IDPs) are living in the opposition-controlled areas while the rest 3.9 million IDPs live within SDF and government of Syria controlled areas (UNHCR, 2021). Many factors led to this influx of IDPs to the northwest of Syria which is under the opposition groups control as it is closer to the Turkish border while others chosen to go further and cross the border looking for safety and security and also better life conditions. The protracting conflict and violence resulted on the death of more than 350.000 people based on the 2021 of the UN reports, more than half of the Syrian population are living outside their homes. Tens of thousands are in detention centres or forcibly disappeared (UN, 2021).

The grievance of the conflict continues after ten years also causing hundreds of thousands of injured and disabled people, in addition to worsening the economic situation in the country and decreasing purchasing power. Employment opportunities are also limited which increase the suffers of the Syrian families living inside the country. Since 2011 until now, Syria was coloured with death and destruction and was mainly in top of the media reports with lots of events, many journalists and writers whether local or international have documented most of these incidents. Hundreds of articles and books documented the sufferings of the Syrian people as the death tools are still active. One of the Syrian IDPs from Hama wrote a poem on his suffers during his displacement journey and the grief he has in his exile in Atma camps close to the Turkish border. The author translated quotation from Nader Shalish's poem

“I dispatched my soul to check on my house when we were unable to meet,

To see if it still remembers us or if it forgets its children when they are gone,

*To see if the roof is still presiding over the walls despite what has been done,
Or if it fell to its knees, complaining in pain to the absentees,
To see if the dates on the palm-tree have ripened, and to check on the fig and olive trees.
No way for a peaceful life, no way for regathering after war dispatched us
Patience, O house, do not weaken our hope, my soul would remain residing there
What do I have in Atma, no camel no sheep?
O house if I die or lasted long, patience will not weaken our hope
The night must be squandered by morning”*

Nader who wrote this poem after his displacement in 2016 died in his tent at one of Atma camps in 2021 (IdlibCalling, 2021).

In general, the thesis tried to put big events in small synopsis to summarise the internally displacement crisis in Syria and how it ends up with them in what was later called as the Northwest of Syria. In the course of the last ten years, Syria witnessed many mass displacement movement especially from the enclaved areas essentially created by the conflict parties. Most of the IDPs movement was from the central and south east of Syria towards the north and the northwest after Syrian regime used this technique of evacuating opposition areas with Green Buses (Denselow, 2017).

The huge influx of IDPs all round the country, and the loss of control of the Syrian regime over some areas, resulted on depriving these areas from the basic services such as electricity, water, bakeries and health. Tens of United Nations agencies and international humanitarian organisations rushed to Syria to support those who were affected with the on going conflict using different mechanisms and modalities to deliver aid to affected population. UN delegations were deployed to Syria to guarantee access to besieged areas and areas under opposition groups control, however, the humanitarian response always suffered from obstacles and constrains which affected the efficiency of these responses (OCHA, 2014). First when the humanitarian response started in Syria, UN agencies and INGOs followed the cross lines mechanism, however, with time the international community realised that this mechanism is ineffective and moved to cross border mechanism in 2014 under resolution 2165 which permitted UN agencies and INGOs to send aid from nearby countries through the three hubs established in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey (UN, 2014). In addition to

permit new aid delivery mechanism, this resolution shifted local NGOs and civil society organisations in Syria to a new era where it gave them the opportunity to get more funds and also work closely with UN agencies and INGOs to build their internal systems and improved their capacity.

Having said that, the huge forced displacement of people to safer areas made the humanitarian response imperative. After ten years of the Syrian conflict and shifting the Syrian conflict to be a regional and global issue with many governments and militias interfering in the Syrian context, the Syrian IDPs situation became worst with lack of a horizon of solution to the crisis. The last stronghold for the opposition groups in Syria is the Northwest of Syria where it is hosting more than 4 million people, 2.7 million people are IDPs moved from different parts of the countries where most of them forced to be displaced more than 3 times based on the conflict developments (UNHCR, 2021). In Martin, C., *Syrians in Displacement*, He focused on the difficulties IDPs are facing with lack of documentation for Syrian IDPs in Syria which is adding extra burdens on IDPs not allowing them to have their basic rights according to the international law (Clutterbuck, 2018).

Save the Children INGO argued in their report of the crucial need for the humanitarian response for the Syrian families in the Northwest of Syria as a vital assistance to meet the basic needs. The report found that poor families as well are now entirely dependent on aid where all NGOs responding to the humanitarian needs in north of Syria should focus on meaningful adaptation of livelihoods opportunities to rebuild a resilience at the household level (SCI, 2015). Donors have been funding Syria response for more than ten years with no clear resolution of the conflict nor when they can move from emergency responses to shocks to build more sustainable responses. Having the funds allocated to Syria in an annual basis eliminated the option for NGOs to build better responses and long term strategies for their programs. Despite of the damage in infrastructure resulted by the war, the capacity of the Northwest of Syria before the war and economic situation, yet donors are cutting down their money from the Northwest. Based on the UN reports, Idlib governorate had population of 1.3 million before the war while now it is accommodating more than 3 million people (PIN, 2018).

The latest Covid-19 pandemic had impacted the situation in the Northwest for both IDPs and host community. With limited capacity for health facilities working in the Northwest and the bad economic situation, this pandemic made the situation even worst

where lots of health workers suspended their work in addition to humanitarian aid workers who had limited access to beneficiaries who are in need.

The current scholarship showed specific timeline and facts about forced displacement of Syrians including the drivers and the destination of each displacement. Another spectrum of the research focus on the humanitarian aid provided to people in the Northwest of Syria illustrating the funds allocated to each sector praising the vital role of the coordination bodies such as Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), OCHA, clusters and Syrian coordination bodies which played a vital role to improve the response and have better coordination between all humanitarian actor's despite of the complexity of the context.

Statement of the Problem

Millions of people were forced to leave their homes in Syria heading to the last stronghold of the opposition groups in the Northwest of Syria based on many factors and developments. Many reasons led to lack of a horizon for a solution for the conflict and made Syria a mere chaos which directly affected internally displaced people and made them lose hope of having stable life as they had prior to the conflict in 2011. there were millions of dollars spent in the Syrian response. However, the response is still working to meet the basic needs with so many failures and shortages. The problem that the thesis discusses is the current situation of the IPDs living in the Northwest of Syria and the humanitarian aid responses which meant to alleviate sufferings of these IDPs and host communities. Then the thesis tries to identify the challenges which humanitarian actors are facing in the Northwest in relation to the security apparatus and the de facto authorities overseeing the humanitarian responses in both Idlib and Northern Aleppo. This thesis tries to answer questions related to the humanitarian response in the Northwest in regard to:

- How the humanitarian intervention started in the Northwest of Syria?
- How are funds allocated to each sector in the humanitarian response?
- What is the status of the IDPs in the Northwest of Syria? And what were the factors ended them up in this region?
- What are the needs to move from fulfilling the basic needs for IDPs and community in need in the Northwest of Syria towards self-fulfilment and move from emergency towards more sustainable response?

- What are the security challenges both local and international NGOs are facing during implementing their projects in Northwest of Syria?
- How security situation is affecting the destination of IDPs towards the Northwest and what is needed to return to their homes?

Methodology

The research relies on a mix of qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. This came because the research topic is vast and covers a protracting conflict for more than ten years occurring concurrently. The research analysis the security situation in Syria dividing the chronology of the developments between the period from 2011 until 2015 and from 2015 until 2021 focusing on the drivers to the evolution of the Northwest of Syria terminology used globally. Data collection will be through:

1. Survey designed to collect information, feedback and data from Syrians living in the Northwest of Syria from both IDPs and host community.
2. Key Informants' interviews with key stakeholders in the humanitarian response in the Northwest of Syria.

Key Informants' Interviews:

1. Interviews with four main clusters for the sectors will be covered in this research (food security, health, WASH and protection). In addition to OCHA, NGO Forum and INSO.
2. Interviews with local councils and relief committees of six districts covered in this research (Salqin, Qourqania, Maret Tamsrin, Afrin, A'zaz and Albab).
3. Interviews with ten NGOs working in the Northwest divided as five INGOs and five LNGOs.
4. Interviews with AFAD coordinators for Olive Branch Area based in Hatay and Azaz area based in Kilis.
5. Migration and IDPs expertise specialised in migration advocacy for the middle east.

Survey Sampling:

Based on OCHA's latest report, there are four million people living in Northwest Syria divided between Idlib province 2.8 million and in Northern Aleppo 1.2 million. According to Rao soft website, the research survey should include 386 samples population

for the four million people. However, the participants number in the survey was 376 participants with the following findings about participants:

- The sample gender was divided as 42.6% females and 57.4% males, this reflects the culture in the Northwest of Syria context.
- 64% are residing in Idlib province while 36% are living in Northern Aleppo region.
- The participants to the survey were originally from Aleppo and Idlib provinces with other percentages of IDPs from other areas such as 9.6% from Damascus, 8.2% from Homs and 11.2% from Northeast of Syria (Al-Hasaka, Deir Azur and Raqqa).
- Answering the marital status, 41% answered that they are married while 37.2% single while 13.8% widows and 8% divorced.

Geography

The research is covering the area of control of opposition groups in Idlib governorate and the area of control of the opposition groups in Northern Aleppo. Which means in the map, from Jisr Ashougur and Jabal Azawia south of Idlib to Jarablus in the eastern side of Northern Aleppo and from Binnish and Atareb western Aleppo to the Turkish border in the north.

Limitation of the Research:

- The research is covering the Northwest of Syria only while the humanitarian response plan for UN agencies and clusters was covering whole of Syria. So, finding resources focusing only on the Northwest of Syria response was limited.
- Due to the researcher enablers and restrictions of covid-19, the researcher could not conduct focus group discussions which could inform the research.
- As local councils in Idlib province are linked directly to the Syrian Salvation Government and MDHA, the author could not get approvals to interview key local councils such as Idlib city and Al-Dana.

CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Humanitarian Aid

Humanitarian aid is the material or logistics assistance to people who are in need for help and it is always defined as a short-term help waiting until the longer-term help will be starting which is generally led by the governments and other national or international institutions. People who are in need for humanitarian aid can be affected by war, natural phenomenon or natural disaster, however, humanitarian aid response can be implemented for refugees, internally displaced people or for homeless people. The main objective for humanitarian aid is to save lives, support human dignity and alleviate sufferings for those who are in need. With this definition, we can distinguish between humanitarian aid from development aid whose main objective is to respond to socioeconomic factors which could have led to a crisis.

1.1.1 The Origins of Humanitarian Aid:

In a wide culture, political, practical and philosophical point of view, the humanitarian aid or action can be traced back to hundreds of years from history. Two theories or approaches of the most widely known as main but not the only categories of the factors helped in emergence of the humanitarian aid are formation of the war law and religious belief. According to (*Ghandour, 2002; Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan, 2003; Krafess, 2005*), The Christian beliefs and ideas about the charity works has been important particularly in both Europe and Northern America. However, researches emphasised on the importance of the charity activities in the other religions including Islam as the term known Zakat. In ancient Greece and Rome, they adopted the war law on the acceptable conducts elaborated in the *Art of War* book which is ascribed to *Sun Tzu*. It was promoted by Saladin in the Middle East in the 1100s and adhered to be the Swedish soldiers in the 1600s and also recognised by Islam, Hinduism and Judaism principles (*Sinha, 2005; Cockayne, 2002; Solomon, 2005*), (Davey, 2013).

The humanitarian movement or action as we know it today, went through a root in the nineteenth century as Walker and Maxwell mentioned “*something changed around the middle of the nineteenth century which galvanized humanitarian action, by states and private individuals, from a handful of disconnected instances to a more organized series of thought-through policies and activities with global connections*”. One of the factors that affected these

changes was the connections between cities and countries by railways and telegraphs. However, nowadays with the transportation means which connects all continents, humanitarian organisations can deliver aid to those in need anywhere in the world (Walker & Maxwell, 2009).

The nineteenth century relief or relief work was not only motivated by altruistic or selfless in nature. There are some examples about preserving power as motives behind the aid work as in the Indian famines of 1837 and 1866 and the Irish famine in 1845 to 1849. Some believe that concerns to maintain social and political order in the colonies motivated aid provision more than the humanitarian aid imperative itself. As Davey thinks that the aid work was driven by the efforts to control criminal activities that the famine could lead to or even a revolution from those who were affected by the famine. As the origins of aid in the famines in Ireland, India and the colonial China in 1867 to 1879 was self-interest, however, it led to awareness or insights which would pave the road for the conceptual roots of the humanitarian action. As in the India case, they started a government committee which started the first organised study of the causes of famine and the needed appropriate responses. The Indian Famine Codes were developed by the British as a result to the multiple famine assessments. These codes helped in defining famine, explored ways to measure famines and articulated early indicators for famine such as market prices changes and movement of the population and identified the role of the free food distribution to displaced people and to support those who are vulnerable (Davey, 2013).

Throughout the years, the colonies were the early ground for testing of many techniques that guided the humanitarian aid response such as the provision or cash assistance and food distributions. While the British were working according to their organised approach to the famine response in India, the humanitarian aid response to the war was developed through the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Movement. The founding of this movement by Henri Dunant marked as a significant era in the humanitarian response and was argued as the most instrumental event in the history of the humanitarian aid response. Henri Dunant is a young man lived in Geneva at the same time while philanthropy was a practice for the young men. He grew in a rich family who was deeply engaged with the charitable activities and their son grown with these values. Dunant and his friends first established a charity called the League of Alms which expanded internationally and became part of the Men's Christian Association. In 1859, Dunant travelled to northern Italy and arrived to Solferino city where he witnessed the catastrophe of the war between enemies of the French Sardinian Alliance

and Austria. In the city he found approximately 40 thousand dying and wounded soldiers were left without medical care nor any kind of support. To care for the wounded soldiers and civilians, Dunant gathered the women in the nearby villages and with doing so he established the first principles of a humanitarian response such as access to besieged areas, negotiations, impartiality and neutrality. These principles and his efforts to get the civil society organised to provide care to affected communities and soldiers informed the ideals of the Red Cross and also informed the modern concept of humanitarian aid action (Morgenstern, 1981).

1.2 Humanitarian Non-Governmental Organisations

The concept of non-governmental organisation can be defined in a varied way. NGOs as a word might include myriad kinds of organisations based on their origins and area of interest. Some people might understand that the term NGO includes hospitals, private schools or even terrorist armed groups since they are part of the term non-governmental organisations. Also, NGOs can vary based on their sizes scopes, structure and objectives (Kim, 2011). From here it is important in this thesis to define organisations then to go into more specific to outline the evolution of the humanitarian organisations to illustrate clearly when an organisation is called humanitarian and when is not.

1.2.1 Definition of Non-Governmental Organisations

I should first mention that during my research for the definition for the non-governmental organisations, I could not find united definition for this term, it varies from one writer to another as they are defining NGOs based on their politics background, humanitarian or social.

World Bank defined NGOs as “*group of people or institutions that are completely independent from governments and their primarily focus on humanitarian or cooperative objectives rather than commercial objectives*” (Malena, March 1995). While Clark defined NGOs as non-profit and private organisations with distinct legal character with profession and focus on the public welfare objectives (Clark, 2003). While based on University of California, they defined NGOs as any civil society organisations which is not established by governments. According to their definition, NGOs are comprising the third sector of the modern society as complementary to the private and public sectors (California, 2021). However, I would agree with Willetts who clarified that until now there is no accepted definition of NGOs. However, there are three main aspects and characteristics which determine whether some organisations are considered as NGOs or not. He listed the three

characteristics as first; NGOs should not be based on political parties or part of governments. Second, all criminal groups should not be considered as NGOs and lastly, they should not be profit-based organisations (Willetts, 2002).

From these definitions, we can identify key common areas where most definitions were common at that NGOs should not be affiliated with the government institutes nor be part of a government, and they should have independent entities from governments. From this point, we can now move to the evaluation of the first humanitarian organisation as a sector.

1.2.2 Evolution of the First Humanitarian Organisation

After Dunant went back to Geneva, he wrote about his experience in Solferino in a 1862 memoir called “A memory of Solferino” he tried to articulate the cost on human being of the war and clarified the principles directed his intervention on the battlefield in Italy. During his book he called for relief agency from volunteer committees to support soldiers during war times. To put the Dunant’s words and ideas into practice, in the following year, the Geneva Society for Public Welfare established a committee to look at these ideas and principles. This committee which consisted of five men, organised an international conference in October 1863 and the outcome of this conference was the establishment of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Also, there was a recommendation from this conference to establish committees on the national level to support on the care for the soldiers during war times and to prepare for assistance during peacetime with the possibility to have war. One of the recommendations was also to encourage governments to support these relief committees and ensure the neutrality of the medical workers and facilities providing medical care for soldiers (Walker & Maxwell, 2009).

In 1864 a conference attended by twelve nations in Geneva which produced the first Geneva convention and formally titled as *Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field*. The Convention summed up the standards for care for wounded soldiers and killed ones from the battleground without looking at their nationality and also for protecting aid workers during war times. The ICRC also declared a clear mandate to provide neutral assistance for civilians and war military victims, this became the first international aid organisation after this convention. The twelve attended nations signed and committed to support the Convention trying to civilize the conduct of war (Brauman, 2017).

The event of the two World Wars was a real test for the International Red Cross Movement cemented who gained their position as leaders to the humanitarian actors during the nineteenth century. Also, for the period after the two world wars during the first half of the twentieth century to deal with the after war consequences. The United Nations agencies were founded after the war which until today they play leading role in the humanitarian action. Also, the post-war period experienced a shift in attention to the developing countries and at the same time the foundation of the nongovernmental organisations (NGOs). The ICRC and the national societies played a fundamental role in providing care for the wounded soldiers during the world war I and they visited prisoners and their families they also acted as a watchdog for the application and adherence of the opponents to the Geneva Convention which had been reviewed and revised in 1906 (Palmieri, 2012).

The United States started to provide aid to Europe as one of the countries that survived from the World War I and played a pioneering role in revisiting the relief principles followed by the ICRC during the wartimes. Tens of millions of US dollars were raised by Herbert Hoover to the Commission for Relief to Belgium which later on started to be known as the American Relief Administration (ARA) and started to have broader activities and mandates to provide aid across Europe. The year 1919 experienced the signature of the Treaty of Versailles which established the League of Nations which led to many humanitarian reforms. The primary goal for the League of Nations was to address some issues such as the treatment of colonial population, labour conditions and also focused on preventing war. The league of Nations established organisations and treaties which became essential to the humanitarian community to protect populations affected by the war. The League as well helped establishing organisations to provide aid to victims of disasters such as the International Relief Union which was the first organisation established as a first attempt to work with governments to protect and provide aid to war victims (Walker & Maxwell, 2009).

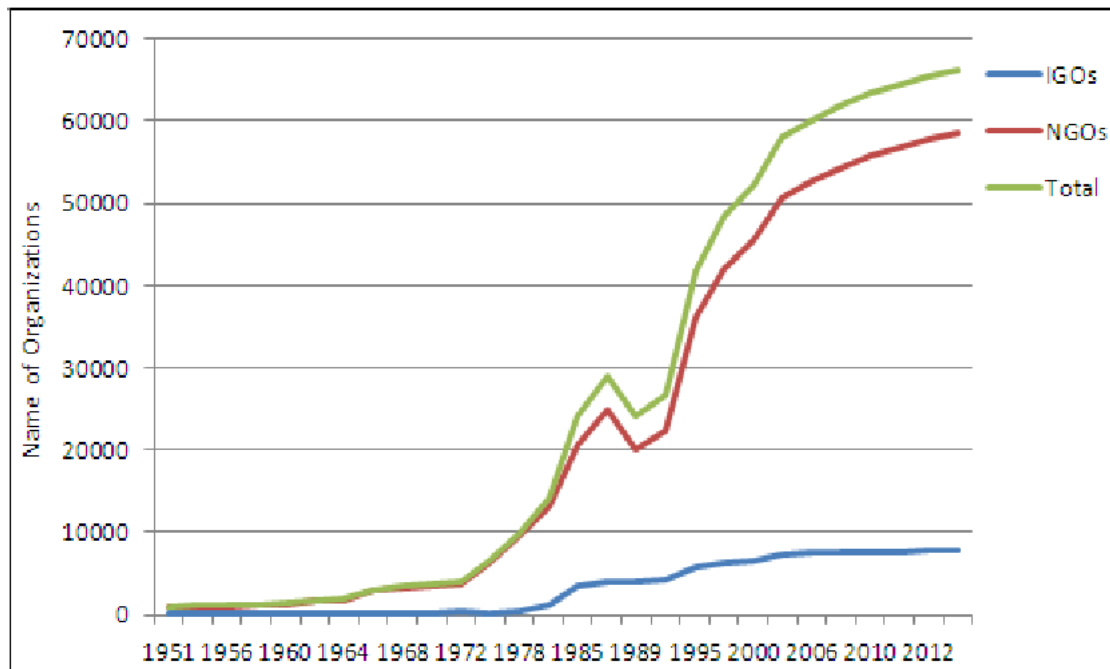
As ICRC mainly supported those who are directly involved in the war and provided care for the wounded soldiers and their families, the need to find a way to support civilians affected by the war was higher. In 1919 several community leaders led by Eglantyne Jebb found Save the Children Fund to support and provide aid to families and children affected by the on going besiege imposed on Germany and Austria after the war. Save the Children Fund organisation was known as the first organisation dedicated only to provide aid to children and families affected by the war and the consequences after the war. Jebb worked with his

colleagues to establish the *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* which was adopted later on by the league of nations in 1924. The event of the raise of fascist governments in Europe and the lack of funds and showed the ineffectiveness of the humanitarian actors during the World War II. After the World War II, the United Nations was founded and many agencies were also found. At the same period, new International Humanitarian laws were approved by the UN security council which is known nowadays as the humanitarian system which emerged from the period during the World War II and the following Cold War (Davey, 2013).

After the foundation of the United Nation System, 50 countries participated in creating the Charter of the United Nations which was ratified by the five permanent members of the UN. The UN led the process of drafting several frameworks focusing on human rights. With these efforts, the Geneva Convention was expanded to include human rights for civilians affected by the war and also internal armed conflict which is called now civil war. The Declaration of Human Rights document was adopted by the UN in 1948 which described the minimum rights which all people have such as the right to live, the right to protect and the right to nationality. After this period the UN started to emphasis on the urgency to empower and fund its agencies which concerns about providing humanitarian aid such as World Food Program (WFP) 1961, The UN International Children's Fund (UNICEF) 1953 and other agencies. (Walker & Maxwell, 2009). Since that time lots of international organisations emerged however, they did not operate internationally but they are called international organisations as they are operating regionally or covering more than one country. These international NGOs are often called INGOs. In 1990s, lots of INGOs started to cover many countries over the globe and some of them were reported to be covering more than 100 countries. Willetts differentiated between national and international NGOs by saying that international organisations have a varied ranged of projects because they have more resources than the national or local NGOs (Willetts, 2002).

The figure below illustrates the trend of increased number of NGOs after 1958s where the Union of International Associations records that there are about 26,789 INGOs. If we compare this number of the NGOs established before the 1950 when there were only few NGOs. Based on the 2021 figures of the Union of International Associations there are 74,000 international organisations from more than 300 territories (UIA, 2021).

Figure 1 Number of Active NGOs based on the UIA figures



1.3 Internally Displaced Persons Terminology

The United Nation created a guidance in 1998 called “Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement” which defined internally displaced persons as: *“persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.”* This definition is used as base line for the humanitarian actors in their responses to the affected people, clarifies the reason behind their displacement and outlined mainly the difference between refugees and IPDs in general (UNHCR, 1998).

The United Nation Agency UNHCR states that IDP are more vulnerable than refugees as IDPs are in run of their home and remain under the protection of their government even if that government is the reason of their displacement therefore, UNHCR considers IDPs as the most vulnerable people in the world as mentioned in the article; *“Unlike refugees, they [IDPs] are on the run at home. While they may have fled for similar reasons, IDPs stay within their own country and remain under the protection of its government, even if that government is the reason for their displacement. As a result, these people are among the most vulnerable in the world.”* (UNHCR, 2017).

The contradiction of this idea that the protection of the people remaining in the war zone is under the jurisdiction of that government in the country, the same government which might be behind their displacement at the first stage is unique to the IDPs and might increase their vulnerability. In general, the literature and the research of IDPs is limited to three domains which humanitarian organisations, governments and international institutions depend on to analyse and respond to IDPs movements. The first domain analyses the motivation for being displaced at the first place, or the risk factors which were identified as reasons why a population moved and this domain is mostly associates population movements with conflicts rather than natural disasters. The second domain is basically concerned on where IDPs are moving and what are the factors pulled them to move to that direction. Governments and international organisations mostly concern about this type of research which would allow them to predict where and when IDPs might move to prepare the needed responses as necessary. Finally, the last domain is basing the analysis on the vulnerability and need of the IDPs as IDPs are different and unique in their needs from other populations. Humanitarian organisations and policymakers look closely at this domain as they always desire to serve IDPs with the best aid and programming (Bern, 2005).

The Norwegian Refugee Council through the Global IDP project published the book *Internally Displaced People: A Global Survey*. This book identified some reasons of why people became IDPs which included violence, armed conflicts and violation of human rights and of course some other reasons. All reasons mentioned in the book might be applicable for the Syria case and might be good guid for humanitarian organisation to understand better the drivers of the displacements for the Syrian population and where they might be located more. The Book *Internally Displaced People: A Global Survey* identified four reasons a government conduct a policy of forced displacement which can be classified as the following:

1. *“The forced relocation of populations by state and paramilitary forces as a means of isolating and combating insurgency movements.*
2. *The state-ordered grouping of civilians into ‘peace villages and other settlements with the official aim of ensuring their greater protection and access to basic services (while unofficially depriving rebel groups local support and at the same time securing a labour base to combat them).*
3. *The sometimes decades-long political strategy of altering the demographic composition of a region by evicting or otherwise expelling indigenous populations considered undesirable and replacing them with other populations; and*

4. *The struggle for control of strategic and resource-rich territories.*”

Based on these four categories mentioned in this book, the local government might be the key actor in any displacement whether it is voluntary or forced displacements (Hampton, 2002).

1.3.1 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

The objective of setting the Principles by the United Nations is to reduce the causes of the forced displacement but at the same time it outlines its illustrated roles and responsibilities when forced internal displacement occurs. The principles were founded to determine the specific need as well for the internally displaced persons globally. They also guarantee protection for persons from displacement but also illustrated the need for assistance for the displaced people. These principles reflect and in line with international human rights law and international humanitarian law (Kalin, 2008).

The United Nations approved these principles in 1998 and published them since then there were so many researchers and experts working on developing these principles to identify the challenges and limitation on these principles. Despite to the fact that the principles are clear and prolonged into 30 principles, the United Nations has no mechanism to oblige governments nor conflict parties to adhere to these principles which keeps them weak (IDMC, 2014).

These principles as mentioned addressed many issues as in protection for populations against displacement as in principles (P. five to nine) and protection for displaced people during displacements as in principles (P. ten to twenty-three). They provided an outlined framework for humanitarian assistance as in principles (P. twenty-four to twenty-seven) and also discussed the protection of internally displaced people during return, relocation to another part of the country and integration with the communities they were displaced to as in principles (P. twenty-eight to thirty). It was outlined in these principles that IDPs are entitled to enjoy the exact same rights and freedom under international and domestic law without any discrimination. The principles as well established that the IDPs must not be discriminated against only because of their displacement nor because of their sex, race, language, religion nor other similar factors (OCHA, 1999).

1.3.2 Internally Displaced People Needs

So far, we looked at the definition of the Internally Displaced people and also touched on the Guiding Principles for the Internally displaced people, here in this part of the

thesis will touch on the essential needs for IDPs which are adhered to by all international and national organisations.

Based on IOM and IDMC figures more than 55 million people are internally displaced for multiple reasons around the world. The displacement reasons vary from conflict, violence and natural disasters. Most internally displaced people live in crowded areas with so few job opportunities and services are so limited and few. With the covid-19 pandemic around the world, and as internally displaced people are part of the communities they live in, they were also deeply affected by the on going pandemic and increased the needs for IDPs and made them more valuable than before (IOM, 2020).

1.4 Collaborative Approach

The International system put in place for meeting the needs of the internally displaced people is known as the collaborative approach, which is mainly focusing on the reality that assisting and protecting IDPs is the responsibility for United Nations agencies and international organisations. United Nations agencies such as World Food Program (WFP), United Nations Office for Displaced People (UNDP) and United Nations Children Funds (UNICEF). And International Organisations as International Office of Migration (IOM), ICRC and other international organisations (NRC & IDMC, 2007). The coordination of humanitarian response between all the aforementioned agencies and organisation is delegated to the Emergency Relief Coordinator in the country. The Emergency Relief coordinator is hosted by the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2004).

In 2005 there when a review made for the collaborative approach, it was noted that this coordination approach is inefficient when it comes to IDPs as there is no agency is focusing on the responsibilities especially when it comes to assisting and protection. *“Recent humanitarian emergency operations have often fallen short of their goals. For many years we have discussed the need for change. The time for change is now”*. There was an attempt to fix this approach by allocating responsibilities to specific agencies to lead in and here it came the idea of having the Cluster Approach (Marion Couldrey, Dr Tim Morris, 2005).

1.5 Cluster Approach

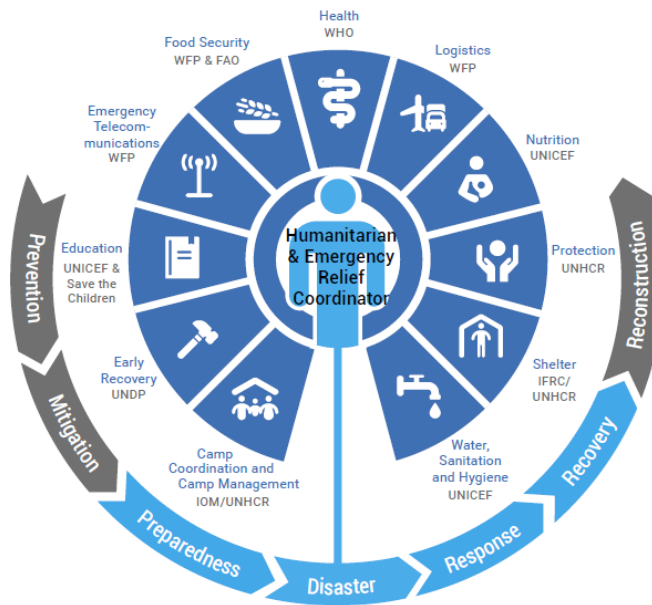
The cluster approach was created to allocate individual agencies to act as sector leads who will in their turn coordinate operations in the ground and identify gaps to delegate one of the implementing partners to cover that gap.

“The cluster approach was introduced to ensure that there is predictable leadership and accountability in all main sectors or areas of humanitarian response and to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies”.

This approach is implemented in the local and the international level. In the local level, the cluster works on coordinating needs and assuring that all gaps are met, while on the international level, the cluster is working on building capacities with providing technical capacity and develop better surge capacity of the implementing partners. (Save the Children and Translators Without Borders , 2020). Based the Cluster Approach there are nine areas of concentrations to lead both assisting and protection work for United Nations Agencies and the International Organisations as below:

- Health (World Health Organisation)
- Logistics (World Food Program)
- Camps Coordination and Management (UNHCR for conflict generated IDPs and IOM for disasters generated IDPs)
- Nutrition (UNICEF)
- Early Recovery (UNDP)
- Protection (UNHCR)
- Emergency Cluster (World Food Program)
- Shelter (IFRC in natural disasters cases, UNHCR for conflicts cases)

Figure 2 Humanitarian & Emergency Relief Coordination- Clusters Division



In this thesis the author will touch on the needs one by one based on the Sphere Standards which are applied by all International Agencies and Organisations working in the humanitarian sector in chapter three. In addressing the need for protection for internally displaced people, a long-term safety and protection prevailing as priority for all IDPs globally. As many psychologists labelled safety and security as top need for human beings, it is valid for IDPs to rebuild their lives and have assurance to improve their life economy. According to Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs for human beings, the author found that security and protection outlined as a second important need for human beings which is of course increased when we are discussing the most vulnerable category of people (Jassen, 2017).

1.6 Maslow’s Theory of Motivation and the Hierarchy of Needs

When we talk about the protection and security of internally displaced people, it is useful to understand and apply Abraham Maslow’s definition of human beings’ basic needs. Maslow set up his theory pyramidically categorised into five basic needs. Maslow presented in his theory five categories in hierarchy way because he is of the opinion that when the lower need is fulfilled, we can move to the higher need. And when the lower need is fulfilled, it is no longer has a huge impact on people (Green, 2000). Based on Maslow’s theory, it is an innate human instinct to move to higher goals whenever human beings, however, in hard situations such as displacement, one need is to dominate people (Maslow, 1943).

The below figure is divided into 5 categories which can be summarised as the below:

a) Basic Needs:

- Physiological needs, food, Water warmth and rest.
- Safety and security

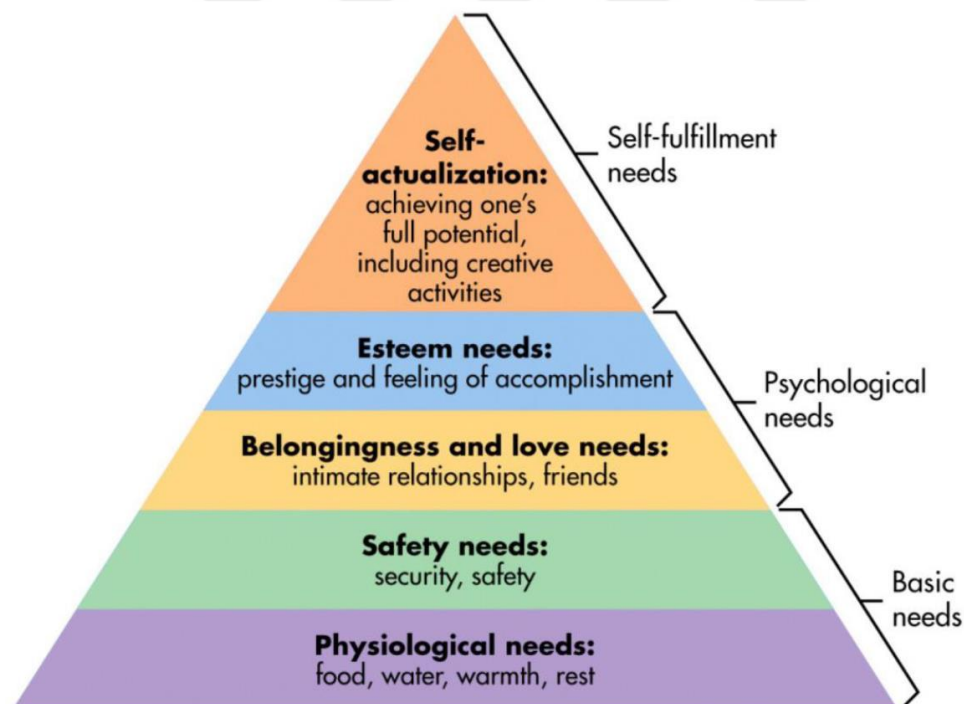
b) Psychological needs:

- Belongingness and love need, where people need intimate relationships and friends.
- Esteem needs when people need feeling of accomplishment and prestige.

c) Self-fulfilment needs:

- Self-actualisation needs when people need to achieve a creative activity.

Figure 3 Maslow's Pyramid of Needs



As mentioned above that Maslow's theory can be applied to IDPs as they are identified as most vulnerable people. And the first category of the pyramids as shown in figure 3 is the basic assistance of water, food and rest while in the second category comes the

safety and security. As clarified by International Federation of Red Crescent, *“Across the globe, people who migrate or are displaced from their homes face unacceptable risks. Too often they are denied the humanitarian assistance and protection they need to ensure their safety, dignity and rights”* (IFRC, 2021).

The thesis looked at this chapter at the theories and history behind the emergence of the term humanitarian aid, the definition and evolution of the non-governmental humanitarian organisations. Then we looked at the term Internally Displaced People or Persons, their needs and theory used to help identifying the main needs for IPDs. Now will move to the next chapter in the thesis where the author will talk about the literature review addressing the history of Syria as a country talking about the geography and populations and the synergies between the political situation in Syria and the evolution of the uprising in Syria. The author will try to cover also the conditions contributed to constructing Northwest of Syria as part of the country and then the IDPs flow to this location.

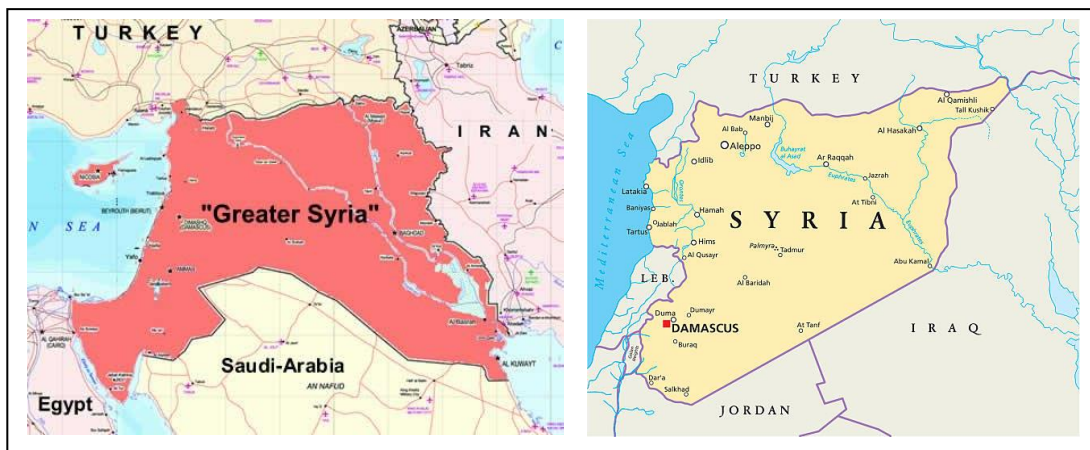
CHAPTER II: SYRIA GENERAL OVERVIEW

2.1 History of Syria

Syria is a country located on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea in the continent of Asia. The present area of it does not correspond to ancient Syria, which was the phrase that fertile lands lie between the eastern coast of the Mediterranean and the desert of the northern Arabian Peninsula.

The Syrian people have emerged from several origins over a long period of time. Greek and Roman influence was insignificant in comparison with other peoples of Arabia and Mesopotamia - the Arameans, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Canaanites. The Turkish influenced Syria, like the Greeks and Romans before them, but in general the Arab character remained dominant over the Syrian people (Mark, 2014) Arabic is the official language of the country, however, there are other unofficial languages spoken in Syria as Turkish, Circassian, Armenian and finally Kurdish (SyriaHR, 2018). Based on the United Nations figures before 2011, Syria had 21.4 million population living in the country (MSF, 2021).

Figure 4 Ancient and Modern Syria map



2.1.1 Syria and the French Mandate

Syria's borders were formed, as are many countries in the Middle East, after World War I and the signing of the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Syria fell under the French mandate in 1922. This mandate was placed on France to establish administration and control over Syria, develop its resources, and prepare it for self-government (Khoury, 1987). Where several local governments were formed and Syria was divided internally into three sub-governments: the Ansari Mountains area, where most of them belong to the Alawite sect, and one to the al-Druz Mountains, where most of its inhabitants were the Al-Druz, and the last for the rest of Syria include Damascus the capital.

It was more difficult to prepare Syria for local government because of the difference between French and Syrian conceptions of what was underlying. Most French officials and statesmen thought in terms of a long period of control. Moreover, they did not want to hand over power to the majority who were Muslims in a way that might be perceived by the Christians Christian that they were conceding France's historical policy of protecting the Christians of the Levant. Many Syrians who were from the minority or from the majority of the population supported the idea of keeping the French existence which would support in building up the government and infrastructure's support to the country. However, the majority of the literate population and the elite seek the independence for Syria and to include other countries like Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan and to keep the Alawits and Druz mountains as part of the country (Albert Habib Hourani, William L. Ochenwald, n.d.)

The first uprising in French, Syria relations took place in 1925, when the revolution in the Druze Mountain started in relation to local grievances, and an alliance was formed between Druz and the nationalist's population of Damascus, who had formed a party called the People's Party. This continued until 1928, when elections were held to constitute a local government, which were won by a large percentage of the People's Party. But this came with a big rejection by the French mandatary, as the government draft was not acceptable to France because it talks about the geographical unity of Syria ignoring the French control of Syria. This government did not last long. It was dissolved in 1930 by the French mandatary. Many negotiations took place to reach a French Syrian treaty until 1936, when it was agreed on the independence of Syria and the preservation of French Syrian consultation on external policy while maintaining military bases inside Syria. But that agreement did not receive any signature from the French side until 1939, when it was clear that France had no intention of ratifying the treaty.

Meanwhile, France was preoccupied with some issues and problems with Germany, and there was political uncertainty and economic turmoil in Syria. This led to Syrian political movements led by some local politicians, such as Shukri al-Quwatli and others. A local Syrian government was formed. That government faced a major French rejection that led to a military invasion and war between the two sides until Damascus was re-controlled by the French forces in cooperation with the British forces in 1941. That control continued until 1946, when Britain persuaded the French government to transfer power to the Syrian government and declare the independence of Syria fully after the World War II. By April 1946, the Syrian government, led by Shukri al-Quwatli, became a founding member of the United Nations and the League of Arab States after agreeing to the withdrawal of British and French forces from Syria. *During World War II, British and Free French troops occupied Syria—but shortly after the war ended, Syria officially became an independent country in 1946* (Editors, 2017). After this period, Syria experienced an era of many unrests after the independence were lots of cops took place by the Syria army. In the coming section the researcher will cover the period from 1946 until 1961 where Al-Bath Party emerged in Syria.

2.1.2 Politics in Syria after Independence

The researcher is going to examine the period between 1946 to 1961. Despite of the fact that this period experienced internal political unrest but it played a critical role in shaping the modern Syrian identity with all its complexity. Based on Dr Bashir Abdeen in his interview, Syria was during that time in a critical period where Syria was on crossroads between building a modern state and strengthening the institutions of republican rule on the one hand. And on the other hand, an attempt to establish the basement of the authoritarian power (Albdeen, 2020). The fluctuation between powers and streams was due to the differences between the social, religious, and political groups in Syria. This increased after the Palestinian issue in 1948 and the failure of the Arab intervention to prevent the establishment of the State of Israel on the Palestinian territories. This has tarnished the reputation of Arab governments, most notably the Syrian government. Then many internal problems began, especially since the nature of the emerging government was racially, religiously, and socially heterogeneous. That government worked to unify the areas previously divided by France - the Alawites and Druze areas - with the rest of the predominantly Sunni Muslim areas with a mixture of Christian communities. In addition to this heterogeneity, there was also social heterogeneity, as Syria consisted of three classes - city dwellers, peasants, and Bedouins with little in common with each other. Not to mention

the economic differences, where the opulent wealth of the notables contrasted sharply with the poverty of the rest of the classes.

By 1949, the middle and small classes were developing, especially after they resented the growing threat especially after World War II. This led to the division of the Syrian government into two parties - a national party headed by Shukri al-Quwatli, which represents commercial interests, and the People's Party, which represents many notables of Syria. Meanwhile, the Iraqi Ba'ath Party was recruiting followers among students and army officers to gain great support, especially among the Alawites and other minorities inside Syria. Then came the end of the first short-lived government in Syria in March 1949, when a series of coups started by Colonel Hosni al-Zaim against the government of Shukri al-Quwatli. Who was also overthrown in August by Colonel Sami Al-Hanawi. This was followed by a third coup led by Colonel Adib al-Shishakli in December of the same year and he demand the formation of a new government. Indeed, it was formed, but it was also overthrown in 1954 after a wave of protests against the one-party system in which the government operated. Shukri al-Quwatli returned and gained the leadership of the Syrian government from 1955 until 1958, to start a new chapter in the life of Syria and Egypt. These coups paralyzed the role of constitutional institutions, disrupted public freedoms, imposed censorship on newspapers and media, and strengthened the role of security and intelligence services. In the meantime, these coups led to the spread of Chaos and the emergence of the phenomenon of assassinations and liquidations within the military establishment. As Dr Basheer mentioned in his interview: *while government ministries became a puppet in the hands of the army leaders, whose appetites opened to take over the reins of power, and the conflict between them to take over civilian positions became one of the most important features of the fifties of the twentieth century.* (Albdeen, 2020). The year 1958 there was announcement of the unity between the two countries of Egypt and Syria led by Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, which lasted until 1961 to announce the disintegration of the unity between the two countries, after movements of Syrian army officers who were dissatisfied by the unity. The year 1961, was the beginning of the path of military rule in Syria and the Baath Party's gaining power and more followers in Syria (Hopwood, 1988).

Al-Bath Party Evolution in Syria

Based on the review of Al Atassi the Bath Party was founded in 1943 in Damascus, and its constitution was adopted in 1947 and merged with the Syrian Socialist Party to form the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party in 1953. While for Derek Hopwood, the party was founded in 1947 by Michael Aflac, a Syrian Teacher who was radical Arab nationalist (Hopwood, 1988). According to Nashwan Al Atassi who argued of the theory of the emergence of the new Bath Party from the old Baath principles. Al Atassi assumed that AL Bath Party who led the coup in Syria was not the same who was before the unity between Egypt and Syria. The Bath Party embraced many principles, the most important of which are non-alignment, opposition to colonialism, and calls for the unification of the Arab national in one state (Alatassi, 2019)

In 1961, a military coup led by a group of Syrian army officers took place over the unified government between Syria and Egypt. The entire power in Syria was in the hands of the army, but it chose not to run the country's affairs directly and delegated politicians from the parties to form a Syrian government under the name of the Syrian Arab Republic, which lasted until 1963. Meanwhile, the Ba'ath Party was reconstituted/revived through military officers and activists who began to think of seizing power and taking over the leadership of power in Syria. Indeed, they succeeded by carrying out a military coup against civilian authority and the Baath Party took power in Syria in 1963. With the control of the Alawite army officers, the Syrian Ba'ath Party crushed the internal opposition by establishing a police state and by appealing to the middle- and lower-class residents of towns and villages, who have always resented the influence of politicians and large landowners (Beyoghlow, 2013). Dr Carsten Wieland argued that Al Bath Party was skilful in combining two main ideologies in Syria which was dominant between 1950s and 1960s of Arabs unity ideology and the struggle for an overdue land reform. He stated in his article that: *Al Bath Party skilfully combined the two elements, which broadened its base and mobilized the peasants according to the national agenda. The national revolution therefore became, in turn, a social one. Those who prospered were the small and medium-sized farmers who profited significantly from the redistribution of land.* (Wieland, 2007)

Soon, however, an internal conflict erupted in al- Ba'ath Party, which split into a mostly civilian part led by Salah Jadid, and a mostly military part led by Hafez al-Assad. Among the vocabulary of that conflict was the dispute over how best to recover the land occupied by Israel in southern Syria in 1967. Civilians saw that the popular war of liberation

is more beneficial, as it is the one that inflicts human losses on an enemy whose population is mostly immigrants, and its consequences can affect them, and this is what terrifies Israel. While the military saw that Israel possesses a strong army, which is matched only by an army like it. Based on the Wieland article; the truth is that the depth of the conflict in Hafez al-Assad's thinking was focused on power, and that the popular war of liberation had weakened him at a time when he had finished arranging the army in his favour (Wieland, 2007).

Although the civil wing won the majority in the extraordinary Tenth National Congress held in 1970, it decided to expel everyone who held a leadership position in the government for four consecutive years, which means that it includes Hafez al-Assad. Thus, Hafez al-Assad found in the decision a justification for his coup, which enabled him to take power without any competitor, with international, Arab, and local support, so he took power in 1970 and was sworn in as President of Syria in 1971. Since Hafez Assad came on power as the Syrian president, he worked on controlling the party by controlling the organisations of peasant's students and workers while internally he did not any attempts to broaden the bases of the political control of Al Bath party in the country (Galvani, 1974). In the coming section, Hafez Al Assad control period will be covered touching on the unrest the country experienced since he came on power until 1992 and then from 1992 until he passed away in 2000.

2.1.3 Syria under Hafez Al-Assad Presidency

As most of the resources agreed that Hafez Assad was born in 1930 as found one of his speeches mentioned: "*I believed in the greatness of martyrdom and the importance of redemption early in my life, and this was my motivation to volunteer in Palestine in 1947 when I was seventeen years old*". Hafez Al-Assad received his first education in the schools of Qardaha and then moved to Lattakia. Where the coastal city in Syria overlooking the Mediterranean Sea and the Alawites Mountains in western Syria. And that his family's financial situation did not allow him to complete his education, Hafez al-Assad enrolled in the Air College and graduated as a pilot officer in 1945. Hafez al-Assad's status as an officer was affected by the unstable political situation in Syria, so he was released from military service in 1961, two months before the separation from Egypt. Hafez al-Assad was returned to military service when the Baath Party seized power in 1963 and his name began to circulate in political and military circles. Hafez al-Assad was appointed commander of the Syrian Air Force in 1964 and was elected as a member of the Baath Party's regional

command three times, in 1966, 1968 and 1969. He held the position of Minister of Defence four times during the years, from 1966 to 1969. By reviewing many memos by some Arab and regional politicians and leaders, we find that many of them seeded some of the characteristics that characterized Hafez al-Assad's personality, as stated in the memoirs of Cyrus Vance, Minister of Foreign Affairs. The American: *“President Hafez Al-Assad was another strong and hard-line leader, with a sharp mind and penetration”* (Othman, 2014).

If the French Mandate lasted for twenty six years, the independent and coups lasted for twelve years, the unity between Egypt and Syria lasted for three years and then the separation era lasted for two years but the era of Hafez Assad presidency lasted for thirty years. Hafez Al-Assad established the security iron fist that controlled public life in Syria, security, politically, economically, culturally, and even religiously, since the Baath Party took power in Syria in 1963 and turned it into a powerful arm of authoritarianism that penetrated the state, society and public life. That security fist was pursuing all the policies that strive to link the movement of citizens and the state with its security and oversight determinants. That institution, in addition to the military institution, was the first and last line of defence for the ruling regime by virtue of the tight control and operational engineering of the sectarian composition and structure of the Syrian army, in which the Alawite sect controls the command centres and those who owe absolute loyalty to the regime (Ziadeh, 2011). Hafez Al-Assad was nominated as a president of Syria for five terms starting from 1971 when he started the coup until 2000 when he died. According to Othman's book, the second term was the most critical and crucial for Hafez presidency where the big two incidents happened with the Muslim brotherhood in 1982 and then the issue with his brother in 1985. This engineering of Al-Assad's control became clear after Hafez Al-Assad's dispute with his brother Rifat, who nearly toppled him in the eighties of the last century, as he restructured the army and security forces and controlled security interactions with the Syrians daily life as with the political leadership of the country.

Hafez Al-Assad's authoritarian control was based in part on the powers granted him by Military Order No. 2, which established Syria's 48-year state of emergency. The order was never reviewed by Syria's parliament nor any other legislative court in Syria. The law designated the prime minister as military governor and the minister of interior as his deputy and expanded executive control over legislative and judicial powers. It authorized precautionary detention of any person suspected of being a security threat, which resulted in widespread arbitrary arrest security services to suppress all forms of dissent through the

regular use of force. The most notorious case of this severe approach was the government's brutal 1982 crackdown on a Muslim Brotherhood movement in Hama city which is in the middle of the county. This incident resulted in killing about 20,000 insurgents and civilians. The state of emergency also restricted freedom of movement and choice of residence; limited freedom of expression in all publications and forms of artistic expression; and authorized official disruption of virtually all forms of public interaction. His presidency ended by his death in 2000 after he suffered from many illnesses. The scene was prepared from his close leaders and especially the defence minister Mustafa Tlas as he mentioned in his book, the scene was prepared and a call for the parliament to gather was released in order to amend the Syrian constitution's article 83 to reduce president's age from 40 years old to 34 years old to fit Hafez Al- Assad's second son Bashar Al-Assad. The parliament voted by majority for the amendment and since 2000 Bashar Al-Assad became the president of Syria inheriting the ruling from his father (Al-Mutairi, 2007).

2.1.4 Presidency of Bashar Al-Assad from 2000 until 2011

Hafez al-Assad maintained power until his death in 2000, when his son Bashar assumed the presidency. Bashar Al-Assad is educated in the West and speaking English fluently. He is an ophthalmologist who moved to live in Syria after the death of his elder brother Basel in a car accident on January 21st 1994. The attempt to prepare Bashar to inherit the presidency started in 1995 when Bashar joined the military in Syria and he began to gradually rise through the military ranks within the military institution that was led by his father as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Armed Forces. Early in his tenure, Bashar spoke of his desire to eliminate corruption and modernize government institutions, and he gradually replaced his father's cronies with allies of his own. During his first months in power, he released several political prisoners, permitted the return of exiled dissidents, and allowed more frank political discussion. Based on Dr Tim Anderson, he stated that reform efforts were limited because of the limited space Al Assad had from the eagles of Al-Bath who were against any reform attempts. *He probably had little room for political reform in the early years as he did not have an organised constituency outside the Ba'ath Party* (Anderson, 2015). This opening, called the Damascus Spring, continued only until February 2001, when activists and reformers who had begun to flourish in the liberalized atmosphere were abruptly jailed or subjected to police surveillance and harassment. Some of Bashar's economic liberalization policies remained in place, but the promise of the Damascus Spring was largely extinguished. Hopes of political reform rose again in 2003 and 2004, when the fall of the

Iraqi Baath regime emboldened Syria's political reformers and inspired cooperation between dissidents in the secular and Islamist communities. Activists demanded political reform, including the cancellation of the state of emergency, the legalization of political parties, and the release of political prisoners. Syria's sizable Kurdish community, similarly, affected by the events in Iraq, pushed for greater rights and recognition. Culminating in eight days of rioting in March 2004, during which at least 30 people were killed and more than 2,000 arrested in Qamishli city which is mostly Kurdish. It was not surprising in light of the recurring pressures and political tension that Syria was experiencing. The protests in Qamishli started on March 12 and 13, which spread in the form of demonstrations and spread to other areas in Al Hasaka governorate such as Al Malikiyah, Amuda, Ras al-Ain and al-Darbasiyah, and to the capital, Damascus, in its university city. The Mashrou' neighbourhood, where the Kurdish majority resides, before moving on the following 15th and 16th of March 2004 to the Sheikh Maqsood and Ashrafieh neighbourhoods in the city of Aleppo and to the Afrin area from its countryside. These demonstrations were met elsewhere by shooting from the security forces (Buni, 2004) Amid international pressure and growing allegations of Syrian involvement in the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Hariri, Bashar al-Assad's regime attempted to quell the rising dissent through the release of hundreds of political prisoners and public hints of coming political reforms, none of which ever materialized. The opposition boycotted the 2007 elections which, unsurprisingly, resulted in overwhelming victories for Al-Assad and the Baath-led coalition (Wikas, 2007). All in all, since Bashar Al-Assad came in power in 2000 he had many secular oppositions which developed more in 2005 and 2006 in light of the developments in Iraq and Lebanon. Secular oppositions from Arabs and Kurds elements tried to call for Democratic National Change but the Syrian government tight control over the daily life in Syria was an obstacle faced any attempt to calling for change in the country. However, the Syrian government lead by Bashar Al-Assad attempted to confront any call for change by secular oppositions or Muslims oppositions who were mainly led by the Muslims Brotherhood. Still all attempts did not prevent Syrians from being affected by the Arab Spring which broke up by 2010 in Tunisia and moved to other Arabian counties (Kawakibi, 2007).

2.2 Syria Uprising in March 2011

To understand the current situation in Syria in 2022, it is inevitable to understand how the Syrian uprising started, what was the causes, motives and purpose when it first started. The research found that the Syrian situation was named differently from different political governments, humanitarian agencies or institutions and some media articles. The western countries and some affiliated research institutes called the Syrian situation as the Syrian conflict this includes some UN agencies and organisations. While the government of the United States used the term conflict which then turned to use the Syrian Civil war after the protests moved to armed clashes. Some other news agencies named it as the Syrian events which moved later to use the term Syrian conflict. Some supporters for the oppositions are calling the incidents in Syria as revolution which the Syrian government in Damascus called it as terror attacks. Here in this research, the term will be used is Syria uprising to avoid adopting a term (BBC, Syria profile - Timeline, 2019).

The Arab Spring

Since the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011, the Arab region has witnessed a political transformation and a wave of the protests and the popular itching that swept many Arab countries, and was characterized by its different style, new political and social forces, and the contrast of its interactions between reform demands and the "revolution", and was reinforced by the winds of change that ran from Tunisia through Egypt and interacted with the Arab peoples, including the Syrian people. Starting up from December 2010 till mid 2015 there was what we can describe as seismic events of the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring is a term used to refer to the denoting revolutionary sweeping in forms of protests and other forms of opposition the authorities in many countries in the Arab countries. Until this time we are living the consequences of the Arab Spring in countries as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yamen, Bahrain, Sudan and Syria. While other countries experienced protests by the community to show dissatisfaction with the government which broke out in Algeria, Iraq, Jordan Morocco and Kuwait. It also protracted to another middle eastern countries and moved to another continents in Europe and Africa as well. Spread of social media within communities helped in sharing news quickly about events in each of the countries which helped spreading the revolutionary motives within the communities in the region. *The protests in all the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries have a common method. To some extent, the civil resistance showed similar patterns involving strikes, demonstrations, marches and rallies, as*

much as the effective use of social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp and the like to organise, communicate and create awareness (Abdelsalam, 2015).

The protests that emanated from the Arab Spring has another common factor as well that all of them have been met with violence by the governments and denial of their legitimacy. The Arab Spring is believed to be caused by the way and manner the governments and rulers ran the governments or kingdoms and how they are handling the administrative affairs for the locals. Others attributed it to the general feeling in the Arab countries of inequality of income and sharing the power and resources of these countries away from those who has the power or close to the ruling groups. Others have explained the main factors and causes for the Arab Spring spread quickly within the Arabian countries because of the authoritarian or monarchic systems which included many violations of inalienable rights for the citizens. (Abdelsalam, 2015)

As Syria is in a strategic location where it links Asia with Europe and neighbouring Palestine therefore Syria was in the core of the Arabian countries and has Arabian and regional importance. This made Syria as a fertile country for the Arabian Spring. As we mentioned before those main causes of the Arabian Spring are found in Syria from economic to political factors.

2.2.1 First Spark of the Arabian Spring in Syria

The Syrian government initially thought it was immune to the waves of protests due to the security grip. It based its belief that the Syrian people are satisfied with the Syrian foreign policy and that the Syrian internal situation is stable since President Bashar al-Assad is close to his people and their beliefs. However, the different happened when the first spark of the Syrian uprising or protests against the Syrian regime started on 17th February 2011, when Syrian police forces attacked civilians in Harika market in Damascus. Which cause anger within the community there and led to direct un-planned demonstrations in the market coping the demonstrations happened in Tunisia. Protesters started shouting in the market with the famous slogan “*Syrian People can not be Humiliated*”, security forces at that time used force to end this protest and they were successful. This incident was followed by protests in Daraa, the southern city of Syria, after the security forces arrested school students some of them were killed under torture and others were released after couple of on 15th of March 2011. The protests in Daraa developed to be regular gathering and protests until the security forces broke into the main gathering point in Daraa city centre which is Alomari Mosque on

24th of March 2011. Reports mentioned that about 150 protesters killed and hundreds injured in the protests and the government attack on Alomari Mosque. This was the turning point when videos were released from the protests in Daraa and how civilians were targeted by the security forces. Lots of call for protests all over Syria were released all over Syria to protest against the incidents taking place in Daraa (BBC W. , 2011). Activists called for the protests after the Friday prayers of March 24th 2011 and named it as “The Dignity Friday”. From that point, activists started using Fridays to give names for the days as it is the only event in Syria bringing people together regularly. The protests spread to Homs, Hama, Baniyas and Aleppo while the security forces kept their approach with using force against protesters which resulted of fatalities and casualties in Latakia and Homs. On April 21, amidst rapidly spreading public disorder, President al Assad lifted the longstanding state of emergency and promised to enforce the right of the Syrian people to engage in peaceful protest. The Syrian government used to deny any protests and the state television ignored completely the in-going protest in different cities. The turning point in the first year of the protests in Syria was when a group of soldiers and lieutenants from the Syrian army who defected and announced the establishment of the Free Syrian Army in August 2011. Military confrontations began on small scales between the Syrian army and the opposition groups including the Free Syrian Army which later gradually developed to reach the level of direct battles by the end of 2011 (Aljazeera, 2011).

With the beginning of the new year, the use of heavy weapons began to increase in the conflict between the FSA and SA. In July 2012 the Syrian army started using jets in targeting the areas controlled by the FSA when so many cities experienced heavy damage by these attacks. In July also the FSA announced the start of The Volcano of Damascus. The next day an explosion targeted the national security building which resulted in the death of so many leaders from the Syrian government including the defence minister and the head of the National Security office. After couple of days The FSA entered Aleppo city and controlled many neighbourhoods which was a dramatic development in the crisis Syria was experiencing. On 19th July, the UNSC failed, by a Russian and Chinese veto, to approve a resolution calling for imposing sanctions on Syrian regime under chapter VII of the UN Charter if the Syrian regime withdraw its heavy machinery from within 10 days. By August 2012, most of the cities in the north of the country were captured by the FSA while still city centres under the government and the SA control. The year 2013, alleged chemical attach by the Syrian government were reported from Syria. More than 35 people were killed in two

chemical attacks in both Damascus and Aleppo cities. This was a turning point and as mentioned by the US president “the use of chemical weapons in Syria is a game changer”, this was followed with an investigation by the UN as announced by the UN Secretary General. The investigation proved the usage of the chemical weapon and the US president released the US government assessment which support the findings of the UN report (The White House, 2013). Finally, the Russian foreign minister announced the readiness of the Syrian regime to place the Syrian chemical weapon under the international control. This proposal was accepted and the UN officials started the destruction plan of the chemical weapons in Syria (Kimball, 2021).

2.3 Political Developments from 2011 to 2015

In the political side, lots of the Arabian countries cut all relationships with the Syrian government. This includes many other countries all over the world including United States and Europe. With the spread of the protests all over the country, there were so many conferences which gathered the Syrian oppositions outside Syria and resulted in establishing the Syrian National Council in October 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey. After the failure of the UNSC of issuing any resolution condemn the Syrian regime or gain support for the Syrian people, France initiated a coordination group to find solutions for the Syrian crisis away from the UNSC. This group was called as “Friends of Syria Group” and consisted of more than 70 countries. The first conference for the Friends of Syria Group was in 24th of February 2012 and resulted on a call for the Syrian regime to end violence and guarantee humanitarian assistance access to all the country especially areas affected by the on going conflict and also recognised the SNC as the only representative for the Syrian people. The SNC had many meetings and resulted in many decisions while the main one was in Doha in Qatar which resulted in establishing the Syrian National Coalition in November 2012 (Carnegie, 2012).

With prolonged history for Syria since the French Mandate of not having unified political platform gathering the opposition against the French at that time, the same applies during Hafez Al-Assad and Bashar Al-Assad eras. During the Syrian uprising, there were many attempts to gather the Syrian political oppositions in one platform, but all were in vain. The Syrian National Coalition is not the only platform which was representing the Syrian opposition against the Syrian government, therefore the SNC decided to elect members of them to establish the Syrian Interim Government which was established in 19th of March 2013 electing Ghassan Hito as the first prime minister for the Syrian Interim Government (SIG). Many ministers of the SIG were either members of the SNC or they were independent

oppositions. Since 2013 until today there were 10 PMs elected for the SIG and based mainly in Turkey as their host. Please refer to annex 2 which illustrated the main ministries and prime minister of the current SIG in 2022 (Gündemi, 2019).

The main political event in 2013 was calling the Syrian National Coalition and the Syrian Interim Government to attend the Arab League meeting in Doha, Qatar during the 24th meeting of the Arabian league in March 2013. Both the SNC and the SIG attended as representatives for the Syrian people as called by the head of the meeting. This meeting was the only event attended by opposition bodies during official conferences. In parallel to the Syrian National Coalition and the Syrian Interim Government, the Kurds established their own platform as well in 26th of October 2011 in Erbil in Iraq. The platform called the Kurdish National Council which was supported by Masoud Barzani the prime minister of Kurdistan in Iraq. This organisation consists of 11 Kurdish Syrian party and later 4 more parties joined the KNC in 2012. The main difference between the Kurdish National council and the Syrian National Coalition was that the KNC called for decentralisation of the Kurdish areas which was rejected by the SNC and called for either delaying discussing such topics or keeping Syria united and not to cope the Iraqi's example (Kajjo, 2020). As part of the Syrian opposition, the Kurdish opposition has also significant disagreements between all the parties existing in the Kurdish areas. Their dream to have their autonomy led the Kurdish opposition parties to form what they called the People's Council of Western Kurdistan; the council included all parties in addition to the Kurdish military groups as PKK and PYD.

The Syrian Opposition groups and platforms struggled with the fragmentation since the beginning of the protests in Syria and were unable to build a unified body representing the Syrian's interest globally. There were many factors affected the Syrian political oppositions which were mainly:

- Representation: since the establishment of the SNC and the SIG, struggled with the representation issue because of its internal structure. The internal structure did not have a balance between the political parties under its umbrella.
- Independence: despite of the fact that the SNC and the SIG were established after an international call for building a representative body for the Syrian people and especially oppositions, yet it lost the margin of independence. They were always dependent on the outside even in its administrative and organisational arrangements.

- Lack of vision: As the opposition groups including the SNC has no clear vision or a clear road map for Syria.

With the emergence of the Islamic groups in Syria and the growth of their supporters and ideology, the global political attention transferred from supporting the Syrian opposition and stopping violence by all parties into fighting Islamist groups and reducing their threats in the country (Assi A. , 2020).

2.3.1 Emergence of the Islamic State and Jabhat Al-Nusra

Some articles and researches traced the emergence of the Islamic groups in the Syrian uprising to the very beginning when the Syrian president released some prisoners in mid-2011. Since Assad released some prisoners as the Syrian government stated that this came in response to the protests and call for freedom, the released ideologists, according to Fawaz Tello in his article for Aljazeera, started organising themselves whoever they did not participate in a revolutionary act until mid-2012 (Tello, 2014). While Cepoi traced the emergence of the Islamic groups in the Syrian uprising to fact that the Syrian protests turned into real civil war falling into paroxysmal violence and the rise of militarisation. This mainly affected the local and the international community to the opposite camp and shifted the attention of the international community from supporting the Syrian oppositions.

“What characterizes this approximately two years period is, on one hand, the failure of a solution both military and political to the crisis and, on the other hand, a continuous process of Islamisation of the conflict (based on Sunni-Alawi differences), as a result of both endogenous attitudes and options and influence exerted by the regional environment” (Cepoi, 2013).

The same leaders who were released from the prison mid-2011, started preparing and forming their own military groups one of them was Jabhat Al Nusra which later pledged allegiance to Al-Qaida leader. After one year of operating in Syria and participating in many battles with the different opposition armed groups, a group defected from Al Nusra forming the Islamic state in Iraq and the Levant which was called ISIS later on. The Syrian government started in the early days of the uprising mentioning in the state TV and all media channels some leaders’ of Jabhat Al Nusra who were released from prison and accused them of terrorising the Syrian and committing crimes in Syria to legitimize the violence used by the Syrian government. Furthermore, the Syrian government accused these terrorist groups of being aligned with Israel and other regional countries as mentioned in many news reports

(SANA, 2014). Thus, both ISIS and JN affected both civilians and the opposition in the opposition held areas especially in Homs, Aleppo, Daraa, Idlib and Raqqa. The turning point between JN and ISIS was in mid-2013 when the top leader of ISIS announced that JN is part of ISIS and they should act under the command of ISIS. The leader of JN Abu-Mohammad Aljulani refused this request and assured that JN is part of Al-Qaida. This resulted in heavy clashes between the two groups in many areas within Syria as in Raqqa, Idlib, Aleppo, Damascus and Daraa. Shortly, JN lost their controlled areas in western Syria and withdrew to Aleppo and Idlib to have their stronghold in the two cities in the north. While in southern Syria, their area of control remained the same with less clashes compared to northern Syria. Both groups strengthened their hegemony over the areas they control. For ISIS, they had full control over Raqqa in the north east, Deir Alzour and parts of AL Hasaka, while JN moved to Idlib and Aleppo (Cameron Glenn, Rowan et al, 2019). Shortly, and after lots of massacres committed by ISIS including but not limited to killing FSA commanders, kidnapping western journalists and activists, suicide bombs in opposition held areas and government areas, the US government called to establish a coalition to fight ISIS which was called later on the US coalition against ISIS. In August 2014 the US president announced the start of the international coalition against ISIS in both Syria and Iraq. This announced the start of diminishing ISIS control over the Syrian cities which continued until the last neighbourhood held by ISIS in Syria in 2019 (Anadolu, 2017).

Regarding JN, it went through multiple stages since the emergence of this group in Syria until today. JN was listed by the US government as a terrorist group since its establishment and even when JN changed its name to be Jabhat Fateh Al sham in 2016 and their defection from Al Qaeda. The JN or JFA members are none of their experience in training in combat, which made them one of the main groups of the armed opposition groups all over Syria. JFA later in December 2017 announced their merger with other groups forming Hayat Tahrir Al sham (HTS) which is the name used nowadays. The US government still listing HTS as a terrorist group despite of the fact of the many attempts of the group to show their attempts to modernise and limit their agenda to be internally only (CSIS, 2018).

2.3.2 Main Battle of Idlib

After the fight broke between different opposition groups including JN and ISIS in January 2014 mainly in Idlib but spread to all over the country. The opposition groups and JN launched a military operation against ISIS in February 2014 and managed to expel ISIS from Idlib completely. While for Northern Aleppo countryside and Aleppo city ISIS kept their centres and soldiers in place after reduction of violence agreement with opposition groups. Pockets of ISIS also remained in Hama and Homs territories similar to Daraa and Damascus provinces (Beauchamp, 2014). Starting from March 2014, JN and armed opposition groups and brigades had several meetings to agree on the areas of control and checking any chance to merge between each other. The number of IDPs in Idlib has increased significantly this year as there were couple of on going clashes with the Syria regime in Homs, Hama and Aleppo cities. By the end of 2014, opposition armed groups and JN agreed to form Al Fattah Army operation room which was crystallized at the beginning of 2015. By March 2015, Al Fattah Army operation room announced the great battle to liberate Idlib city from the Syrian regime. The battle lasted for three weeks before the AL Fattah Army announced the liberation of the city of Idlib and continuation of the attacks against the government held areas in Ariha and Jisr Alshugur. Both cities are in the southwest of Idlib and they have strategic location as they are bordering Latakia province. Another military operation room was established and called Al Naser operation room and the main battle started after one week of capturing Idlib city. The battle in Ariha and Jisr Alshugur lasted for one month when in 1st of May Al Naser Operation room announced capturing both Ariha and Jisr Alshugur cities which were the last Syrian regime basements in Idlib province (Decker, 2015). Capturing of Idlib province is considered to be the second city lost by the Syrian regime after losing Raqqa city to ISIS in 2014. Al Fattah Army operation room and Al Naser operation room announced the end of the battler for Idlib and handing over the administration of the newly captured areas to a civilian body which was selected from each group. The city of Idlib remained under both the same civilian body administration until 2017 before HTS take control over all the city and widespread their hegemony over the opposition controlled areas inside Idlib province and western countryside of Aleppo (White, 2015). The year 2015 marked as a significant year in Syria as the Syrian regime started losing many battles initiated by opposition armed groups, HTS, what was called JN or ISIS. Therefore, the Syrian regime started looking for external support in addition to the Hizbullah, Iranian and Iraqi Militias. Talks started early 2015 between the Syrian regime and their allies to get the needed support

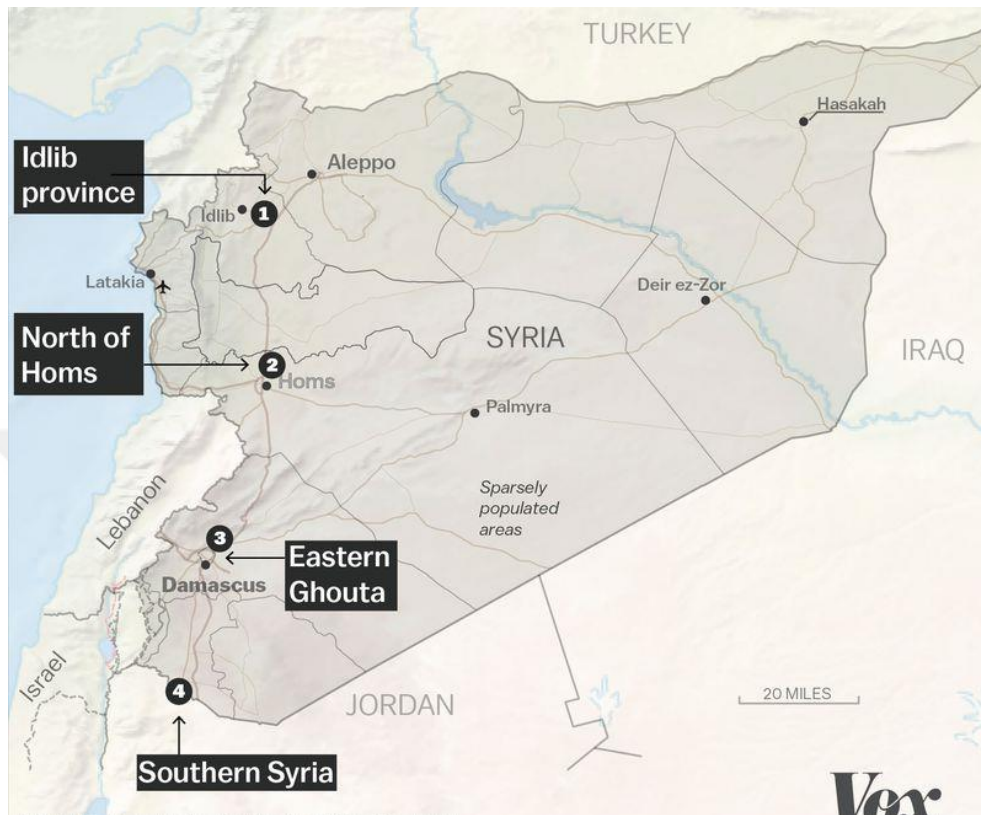
to push back opposition groups and support the Syrian army in defending their areas of control.

2.4 Russian Involvement in Syria

The political ties between Russia and Syrian government are not new or improved because of the Syrian uprising. The strong relationship between Russia and Syria is traced back far more before the creation of modern Russia. As Luke Bartz mentioned in his article, The relationship between the two countries is back to the Soviet Union and might be far before as well. *“In fact, interactions have been recorded as far back as the tenth and eleventh centuries as Russian merchants and pilgrims travelled to the Levant for reasons of religion and trade. relations between the two areas were drastically changed in 1917 with the October Revolution and the creation of the Soviet Union”* (Bartz, 2016). Coming back to the Syria uprising, after prolonged negotiations between the Syrian regime and Russia, the Russian Federation Council authorised the Russian forces to intervene in Syria in September 2015. Of course, there were many motives behind this decision as stated by Charap, Treyger and Geist in their article Understanding Russians Intervention in Syria. They mentioned political and military factors which pushed Russia to intervene in Syria. However, the beginning of the first air force deployment to Syria was limited only to air forces support which later on expanded to send some military expertise acted as consultants for the Syrian army and militias supporting them. The first six month of the Russian intervention did not have huge impact on the ground while in the second six month until now adays it significantly impacted the military situation in the ground and lead to recapturing many areas by the Syrian regime forces and the supporting militias from Iranians, Iraqis and Lebanese. The Syrian regime was controlling less than 22% of the country while after the Russians intervention the Syrian regime recaptured most of the oppositions strongholds and reached to more than 65% control over the country (Lister, 2020). The year 2016 noted the recapture of the city of Aleppo by the Syrian regime with support from the Russian air forces which resulted on more than five hundred thousand IDPs who were pushed to leave Aleppo and forced to move to Idlib and the northern Aleppo. After capturing Idlib city, the Astana agreement between Turkey, Russia and Iran as they created a negotiation platform after the UNSC failed to stop the on going war in Syria. The Astana talks established de-escalation zones in Syria in 2017. This agreement aimed to end the hostility between the opposition groups and the Syrian regime deciding to divide Syria into 4 de-escalation zones; (zone1 Idlib province, zone 2: Northern Homs countryside, zone 3: Eastern Ghouta in Damascus and zone

4: Southern Syria) (Gregor Jaecke, David Labude, 2020). In figure 6 below it illustrates the four agreed zones in the Astana agreement.

Figure 5 De-Escalation zones agreed in Astana between Turkey, Russia and Iran in 2017



Yet this agreement did not help in decreasing hostility and the opposition groups lost again in 2018 and 2019 all of Homs countryside, Damascus countryside and Daraa. People who were living in the areas controlled by the opposition groups were forced to leave to northern Syria in convoys from all over Syria.

2.5 Northwest Syria

Northern West Syria is the main focus of this research therefore, understanding the factors and events participated on the evolution of this geography or terminology is imperative. This term was used from USAID the biggest donor for the Syrian humanitarian response. Other entities or NGOs followed the same spelling used by USAID as the International Safety Organisation (INSO) who used in their reports either Northwest or only the shortcut (N.W). OCHA and UN agencies uses Northwest Syria in all their reporting's and internal and external communications in addition to European Commission's Directorate for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) they spell it as. However, some other donors such as Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) spell it as North-West. Therefore,

the author here would use Northwest of Syria as it is commonly used by UN security council, the UN agencies and both USAID and ECHO.

Nowadays, Syria is divided into three main regions based on who controls these areas. Most of the country is controlled by the government of Syria or Syrian regime, this includes the main cities of Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Hama and Daraa. The Syrian regime is controlling approximately 63.38% of the Syrian geography, this includes the border crossings with Jordan and Iraq (EASO, 2020). The second largest area fall under control what is called the Syrian Democratic forces. This area is mainly Kurdish and it refers to the area from Manbij in eastern Aleppo until Hasaka and the Iraqi border. Mainly the Euphrates River draw the border of this area and separate it from the other areas of control. The SDF was formed in October 2015 in response to the ISIS threats and control of Kurdish territories. SDF is not solidly Kurdish as there are some Free Syrian Army elements joined SDF since the establishment of this group. The SDF is backed by the US coalition against ISIS and they initiated operations against ISIS stronghold in north east in cooperation with the US coalition the research covered it on the *Emergence of Islamic State* section. SDF and the US coalition controls over with 25.64% of the country, however, the areas under the SDF control are the richest in Syria as 90% of the oil well and resources on the country are in the NE (B. Nasrollah, A.Sharifa , O.Abdullah, 2021).

The third area of control is under the armed opposition factions which is about 10.98% of the Syrian geography and mainly called the Northwest of Syria. This area is distributed between Idlib, Northern Aleppo, western countryside of Raqqa and southern Syria. The Northwest of Syria is the last stronghold for the Syrian opposition, however the Northwest Syria itself is divided into two areas based on the factions they are controlling these areas and also based on the civil administration in charge. As the research referred to the falling apart between ISIS and JN and the shift for the JN to Idlib in 2014 in *Emergence of Islamic State* section. Since that time, JN who changed its name to be HTS tried to increase their hegemony over the area and had couple of inter-faction clashes with other FSA factions. In 2017 and as outcome of the Astana agreement between Turkey, Russia and Iran, Turkey established observation points to monitor the de-escalation of hostility and prevent initiating any offensive against the area (Gregor Jaecke, David Labude, 2020). HTS established the Salvation government in 2017 to be the civilian body in charge of the areas under HTS control. However, SSG faced some obstacles to enforce their decision over the area as there are several military groups in charge. Therefore, HTS initiated two main military operations

to increase its hegemony over Idlib and Aleppo western countryside. In 2018, clashes broke between Nour Aldien Azanky group and HTS which resulted on removing NDZ group from western Aleppo and the area full completely under HTS control and administration. This was followed by clashes in 2019 between HTS and Ahrar Alsham, the second largest group in Idlib, the clashes ended with losing 80% of AaS strongholds and losing Bab Alhawa crossing border with Turkey which is the main economic resource for Idlib and western Aleppo (ICG, 2020).

Despite of the fact that HTS and the SSG were in charge for most of Idlib and Aleppo countryside, however, they could not secure the area from a Syrian regime offensive. The military attacks by the Syrian regime and their allies increased against Idlib and western Aleppo simultaneously with the interaction clashes between HTS and AaS. The offensive lasted for 7 months resulted on recapturing areas by the Syrian regime which he lost by 2013 such as Khan Shikhoun, Marat Al-Numan, Northern Hama countryside and parts of the western Aleppo countryside. Despite of the ceasefire agreement signed between Turkey and Russia, Idlib is still subject to intensive aerial bombardments by Russian and Syrian forces (BBC, 2020). Losing huge geography of Idlib by the offensive attack resulted on huge IDPs movements as reported by OCHA 2020 that more than one million people forced to leave their homes and move closer to the Turkish border and to Northern Aleppo (OCHA, IDPs Movement, 2020). The 7 months lasting operation also resulted on shifting Turkish Observation Points from areas in Aleppo, Hama and southern Idlib as they were recaptured by the Syrian regime, therefore, they lost their main purpose of being established on these areas. The observation points were shifted to from southern Idlib closer to the highway, which is called M5, the road linking Idlib with Latakia and Damascus (Al-Kanji, 2020).

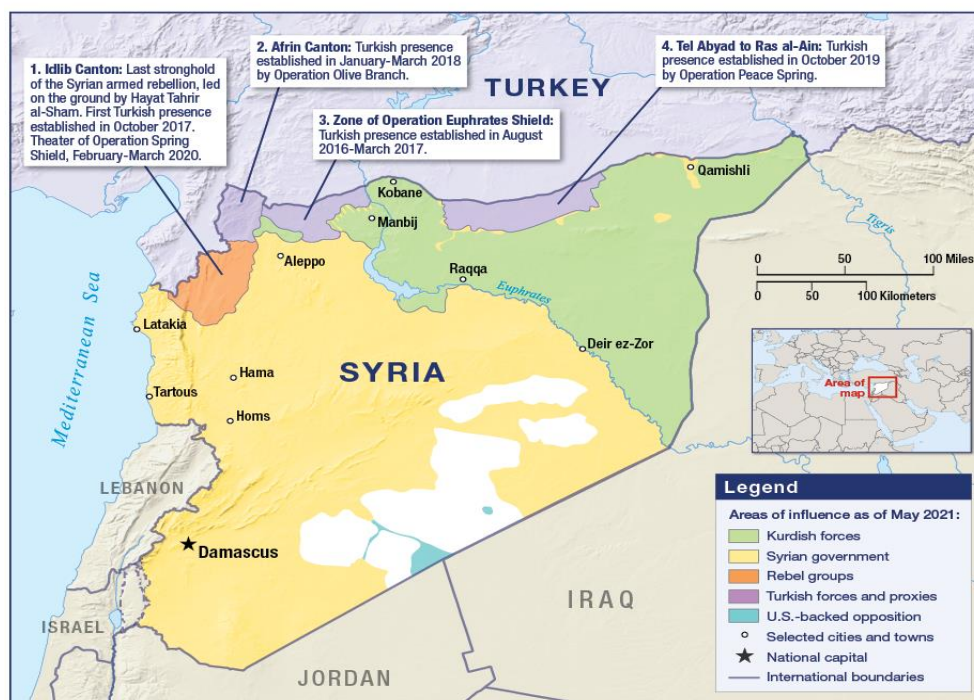
2.5.1 Turkey's Operations in Northwest of Syria

The increased threat of ISIS and SDF in Northwest of Syria and especially in northern Aleppo. These threats encountered in the Turkish border, requested from Turkey to respond to protect its border based on the Article 51 of the United Nation Charter. *“Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security”*. The Turkish backed opposition groups and the Turkish army initiated an operation called “Euphrates Shield Operation “against ISIS and SDF in 2017. This battle resulted in controlling fully the area from A’zaz to Jarablus including Al-Bab city which was the stronghold for ISIS. Since

then, the ES area is under the opposition groups and the Syrian National Army, after restructuring the FSA in 2017, successively in the past 5 years. After the ES operation the Turkish army and the SNA launched another military operation called “Olive Brach” to liberate the area of Afrin District in northern Aleppo from SDF groups in 2018 (Haber, 2018). The operation successfully expelled SDF and YPG (Kurdish Protection Units), which is terrorist group for Turkey, from Afrin. Then in 2019 third military operation started which was called “Peace Spring” aimed to expel SDF and YPG from the cities of Tal Abyad and Ras Alin in Raqqa countryside (Hurriyet, 2019). The SNA and the Turkish army are controlling until now both cities and maintain peace for the local community there. The three operations led by the Turkish army achieved stability for Northern Aleppo, however, there are still safety and security concerns in the area as there is sporadic shelling from SDF and YPG controlled areas against northern Aleppo (COI, 2020).

Figure 6 Three Turkish Military Operations in Syria map and AoC (2016-2020)

Turkey's Presence in Syria, May 2021



SOURCE: Adapted from Max Hoffman and Alan Makovsky, “Northern Syria Security Dynamics and the Refugee Crisis,” Center for American Progress, May 26, 2021, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2021/05/26/499944/northern-syria-security-dynamics-refugee-crisis>.

The fourth operation of the Turkish military in Syria called “Spring shield” in Idlib in 2020 (Ozcan E. E. & Barakat M., 2020). This operation was initiated as a response of the aerial bombardment of the Syrian forces on a Turkish observation point in Saraqeb which killed dozens of soldiers. This operation was not long on time nor high in cost and so far, it achieved a good level of the planned goals.

2.6 Governments in Northwest Syria

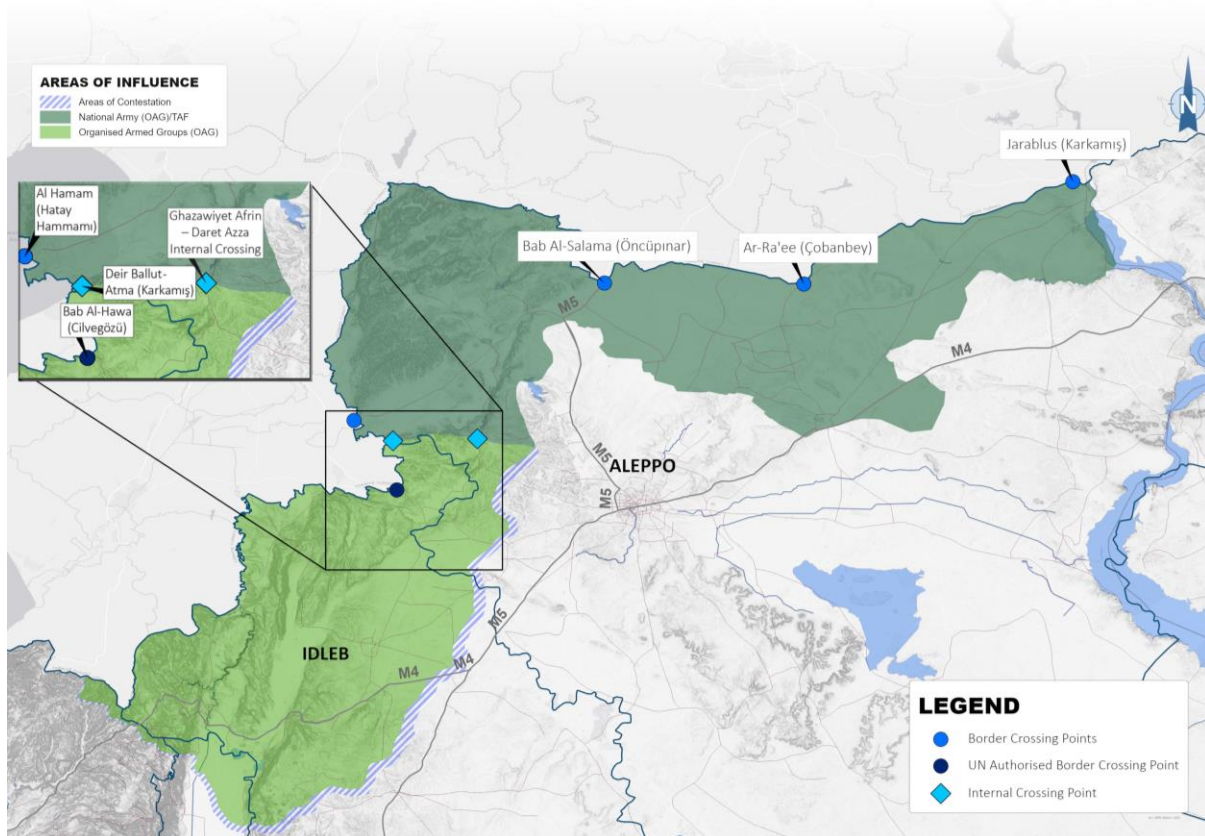
From what the researcher covered in previous sections, it is clear that there are two main governments in Northwest of Syria controlling the area. To start with useful to define the term government as it is in Cambridge Dictionary as *“the group of people including the system used, the activities involved in controlling officially a country, city or group of people. And it also refers to the offices, departments and organisation that officially manage and controls”* (Cambridge).

2.6.1 Syrian Salvation Government

The Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) was established by Hayat Tahrir Al Sham in November 2017, and it is mainly identified as Islamist opposition government because of the strong ties with HTS. The SSG was established as a rival to the secular Syrian Interim Government (SyriaDirect, 2020), which gradually started to lose areas of control in Idlib and western Aleppo as mentioned in the *Northwest Syria* section. HTS establishment of SSG seek to achieve to main goals: first to select technocratic ministers who has academic background and to present itself as a civilian government showing that HTS is moving toward more moderate in governance matters (Fahim, 2022). Before SSG the role of the local councils was more significant while since SSG was established and dominant Idlib and western Aleppo countryside, the role of the LCs was limited and weaker. As mentioned by Ayman Al-Dassouky *“In the shadow of the Salvation Government, the role of local councils became weaker”* (AFP, 2019). The SSG is formed from eight main ministries and a prime minister who was nominated based on the Founding Body of the Syrian General Conference (FBSGC) which was established in 2017. The ministries are justice, interior, religious endowments, education, health, local administration & services, economy and development and humanitarian affairs. After the FBSGC select the PM for the SSG, the PM is giving 15 days to nominate his ministers and present his ministerial portfolios to the conference members. For the ministers, some are considered to be proponent to HTS and others accepted to assume their positions to work on improving the situation in the areas under SSG control. According to a former minister of the SSG he was interviewed by Syria Direct and he said *“I agreed to assume my position hoping to benefit the people of my country, but I found myself between a rock and a hard place”* (SyriaDirect, 2020). SSG is gaining important economic income from the strategic location of Idlib as located in the border with Turkey. The most significant and important crossing border for civilians, commercial and humanitarian crossing border with Turkey which was controlled by HTS since 2017 after clashes with AaS. In addition to Bab

Al-Hawa crossing border, HTS and SSG controls the two main crossing points between Idlib and Northern Aleppo which are Ghazawia and Deir Ballout. In both crossing points there is administration imposing fees on all commercial shipments with tight control over all goods moving from Idlib to northern Aleppo vis vera (Nisreen Al-Zaraee, Karam Shaar, 2021). The figure below shows the exact location of the two crossing points between Idlib and northern Aleppo and all official border crossing gates with Turkey.

Figure 7 Access Points in the Northwest



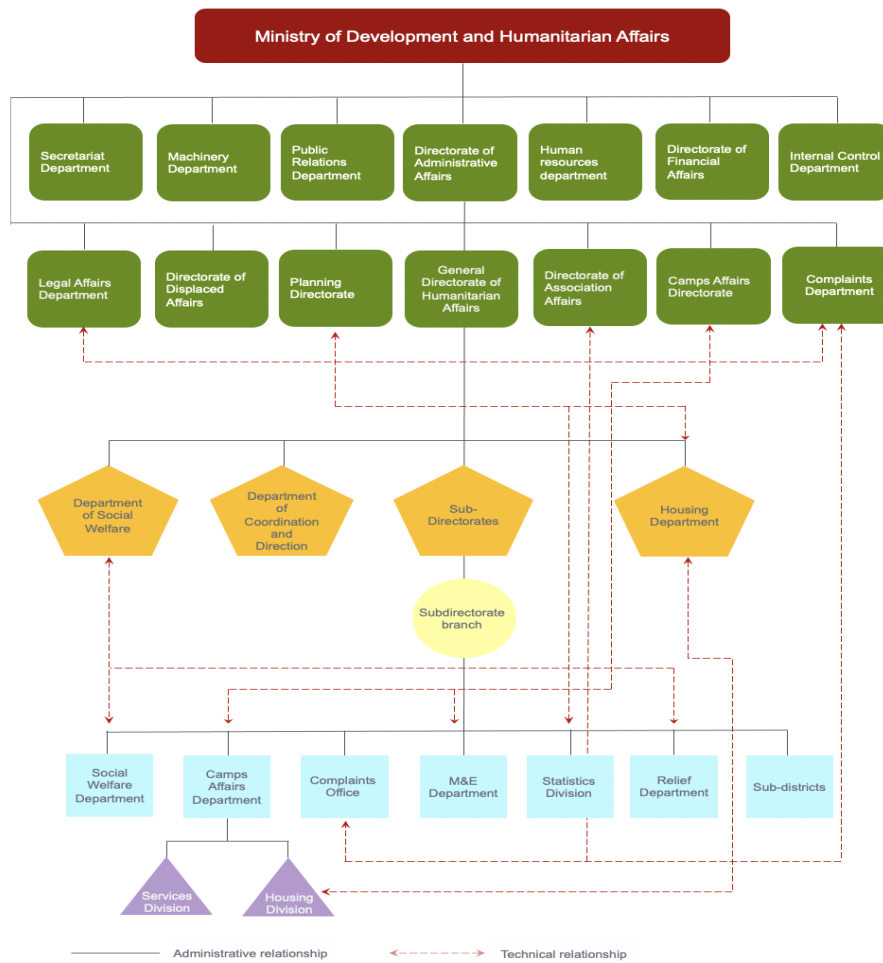
In addition to controlling the crossing points, HTS and SSG established the General Monetary Agency for Cash Management and Consumer Protection, in order to control all money exchange operations in Idlib. The SSG based the establishment of this agency “in order to prevent monopoly and manipulation of currency rates in Idlib governorate” (Enab.B, 2017).

Ministry of Development and Humanitarian Affairs

The Ministry of Development and Humanitarian Affairs (MDHA) is the central institution within the SSG responsible for humanitarian activities and humanitarian organizations operating in SSG controlled areas in the Northwest of Syria. The MDHA was established with the emergence of the Syrian Salvation Government and soon established

control over two main entities: the Organizations Office of the Hayat Tahrir Al- Sham General Administration for Services (GAS) , which was established in 2015 and responsible for humanitarian work, and relief offices also known as local council humanitarian offices in the cities and villages located in SSG-controlled areas (Shaam.N, 2017). At its inception, the MDHA replaced the GAS's Organizations Office with three main directorates or sub directorates to manage humanitarian affairs alongside relief offices in the regions. This situation continued until early 2019 when the MDHA was restructured and expanded to include 14 directorates and seven sub-directorates, each of which has a different role in the field of humanitarian work, please refer to Figure 8 The MDHA's General Directorate of Humanitarian Affairs had directly implemented several humanitarian projects in IDP camps, including extending water networks, sewage networks, paving camp roads, and distributing relief baskets to IDP camps and hard-to-reach areas. The MDHA is restricting access to locations in areas under SSG control where any NGO would need a no objection letter, please refer to annex 3 from their office before initiating any field activities. As mentioned by MDHA officials during an interview, that *“the development of the ministry's structure has helped speed up the issuance of permits to implement humanitarian projects, as the ministry's capacity has increased from more work permits per day”* (MC, 2021). In addition to issuing work permits, the MDHA's General Directorate of Humanitarian Affairs had played a significant role in overseeing the implementation of various service provision projects in IDP camps and communities. Currently, out of the 14 directorates only four have direct interactions with humanitarian agencies: the General Directorate of Humanitarian Affairs, Camps Affairs Directorate, Directorate of Association Affairs, and Legal Affairs Department.

Figure 8 Ministry of Development and Humanitarian Affairs Structure



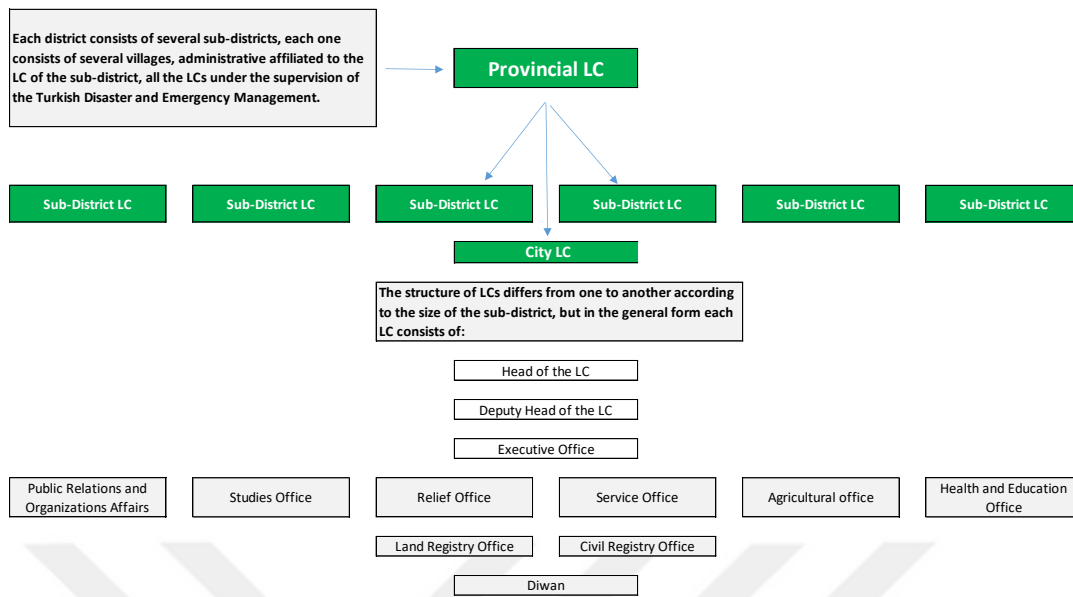
All in all, the SSG and its MDHA are one of the main obstacles for many donors and implementing humanitarian organisations because of the many restrictions they impose on many projects in addition to the bureaucracy documentation and approvals required.

2.6.2 Syrian Interim Government

The Syrian Interim Government (SIG) as aforementioned in Political Development section, was elected based on the Syrian National Coalition trying to create a political body including all opposition factions under one umbrella. However, with the continuous fragmentation of the Syrian oppositions and the loss of territories under the oppositions control, the SIG lost significant power and support internationally. In addition to that the SIG is not accepted by HTS and SSG which is controlling significant portion of the geography under the opposition factions' control in the Northwest of Syria. Since the establishment of the SIG, it was seen by many countries as possible replacement for Assad government. After the Russians intervention in 2015 and recapturing lots of areas in Syria by the Syrian regime

and its allies, and after the expansion of HTS hegemony over Idlib and loss of territories since 2017, the existence of the SIG is limited to northern Aleppo region where they have their influence and they imposed their structure over the administrative institutes over the area. Internationally, the SIG was less recognised as replacement for Assad government and lost its influence globally over the political decisions as TRT referred in their report “Over the years, this de-jure decision has not changed but more and more states have forgotten about it. The main reason for this was the inability of the SNC to operate inside Syria as an alternative governing body to the Assad regime” (TRT, 2021). The SIG controls two official gates of Bab Al-Salam and Cobanbey in northern Aleppo. The main civilian actor in the northern Aleppo area is local Councils (LCs) who were founded since the opposition groups captured some areas and the government institutions withdrew from these areas. The LCs are responsible for all public services including but not limited to the humanitarian work and population centres. Compared to the SSG and MDHA, humanitarian space is much better as the SIG and LC are not labelled by US as terrorist group and as the SIG and the LCs coordination with NGOs and OCHA is much better. The LCs are playing the role as administration and coordination body for humanitarian activities in northern Aleppo in support from AFAD, the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency which is mainly the coordination body of humanitarian activities in northern Aleppo based on the AFAD mandate for northern Aleppo. In the figure 8 below it illustrates the standard structure for LCs in N. Aleppo with slight changes from a district to another.

Figure 9 Local Council Structure in Northern Aleppo



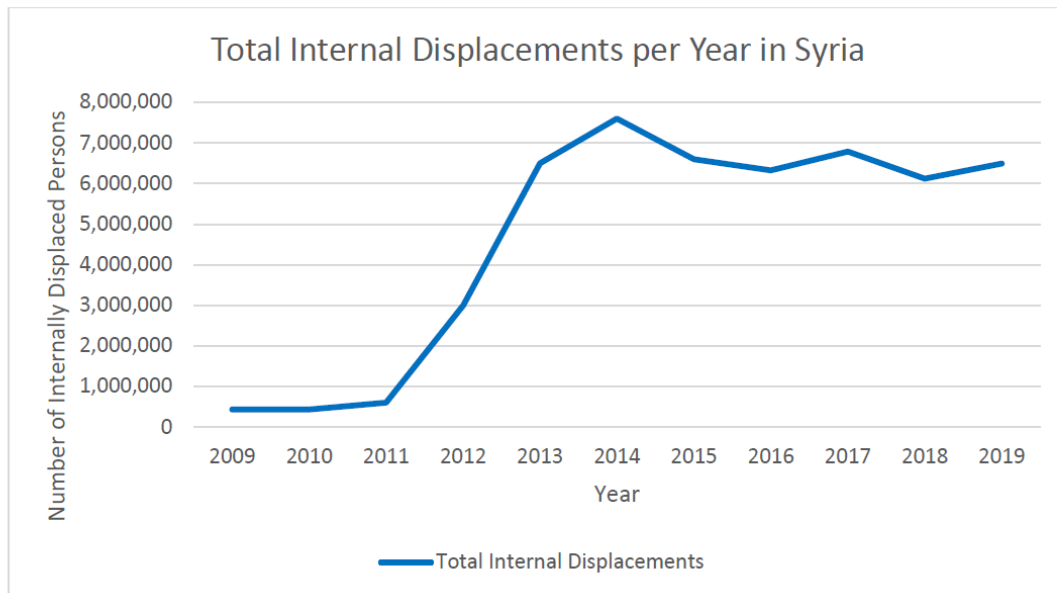
In general, the LCs similar to the SIG faced many challenges in their role in the areas under their control. Some of these challenges were mentioned by the SIG itself such as the weakness in ability to execute decisions, lack of required expertise, limited income and finally lack of accurate data of the population they serve (Aljundi, 2019).

2.7 IDPs Influx to the Northwest of Syria

Since protests started in Syria in March 2011, dramatical increase in the violence rate all over the country. Syrian intelligence forces checkpoints ramped up the Syrian provinces, many securities inspection and detention campaigns initiated by the Syrian intelligence forces targeted protestors. With the shift from protests to armed activities by the protestors against the Syrian army and the intelligence forces, many people were forced to leave their homes looking for more safe and secured areas and others had to leave the country to be refugees in another countries. After three years of the on going conflict and with the emergence of ISIS in approximately a third of Syria (Cameron Glenn, Rowan et all, 2019), more people were forced to leave their home towns and cities moving to more secured areas. After the Russian interference and offensive attacks against the opposition held areas more IDPs were forced to leave seeking safety to be protected against the on going clashes first in Aleppo city, then with the fall of the Astana de-escalation zones, hundreds of thousands of opposition groups and families forced to leave to Northwest of Syria as it experienced stability after the Turkish military operations initiated starting from 2017 (Anadolu, 2018). As many IDPs reached to their final destination or they already left the country, the IDPs

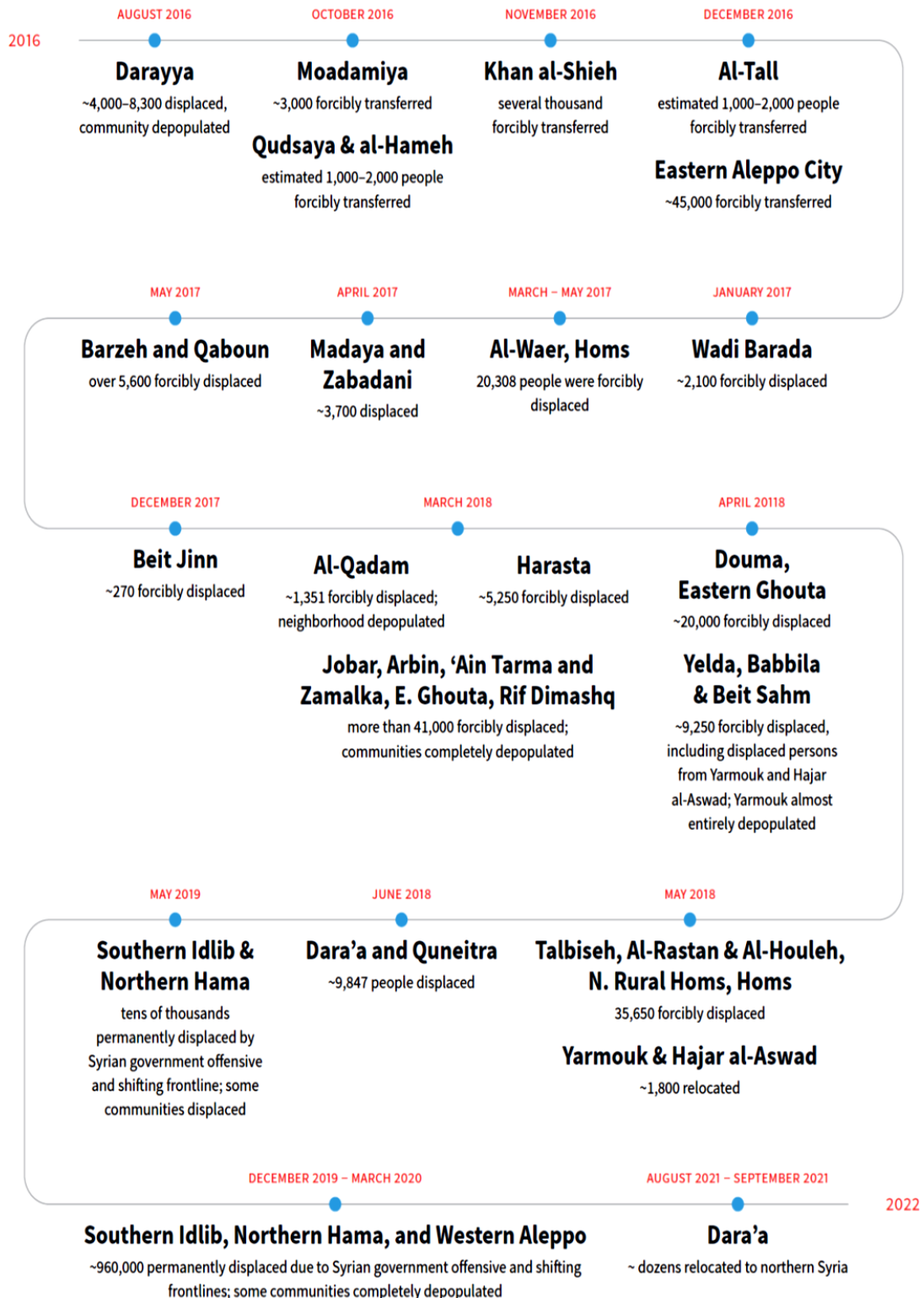
movement was steady in some parts of the country which was interrelated to so many factors. Still number of IDPs in 2018 and 2019 was more than six million all over Syria. The chart below illustrates the IDPs movement figures in Syria since 2011 until 2019 before the last offensive in Idlib (Global.A.M, 2021)

Figure 10 Internal Displacement in Syria per Year between 2011 and 2019



Another wave of IDPs of more than one million people were forced to move from northern Hama, southern Idlib and western Aleppo countryside as consequences of the battle initiated by the Syrian regime and its allies in 2019 and 2020 (OCHA, 2020). In the figure below and based of the author’s research, illustrates the timeline for IDPs forced to move to Northwest of Syria per year and numbers based on multiple resources. The numbers mentioned in the figure below are depending on the OCHA, UN agencies and news article of the forced displacement convoys which was facilitated by the Syrian regime and Russia with what was called green busses.

Figure 11 Permanent Forced Displacement to Northwest of Syria



Based on the UNOCHA report of January 2021, more than 6.7 million are internally displaced all over Syria, while 2.7 million of them are IDPs in the living in the Northwest Syria (OCHA, 2021). These IDPs are either living in houses or living in IDPs sites.

According to CCCM cluster, IDP sites are the structures of tents or other types of housing units established either by IDPs, informal camps, or by accountable humanitarian actor, formal camp or other types of settlements which are called collective centres (CCCM Cluster & UNHCR, 2017).

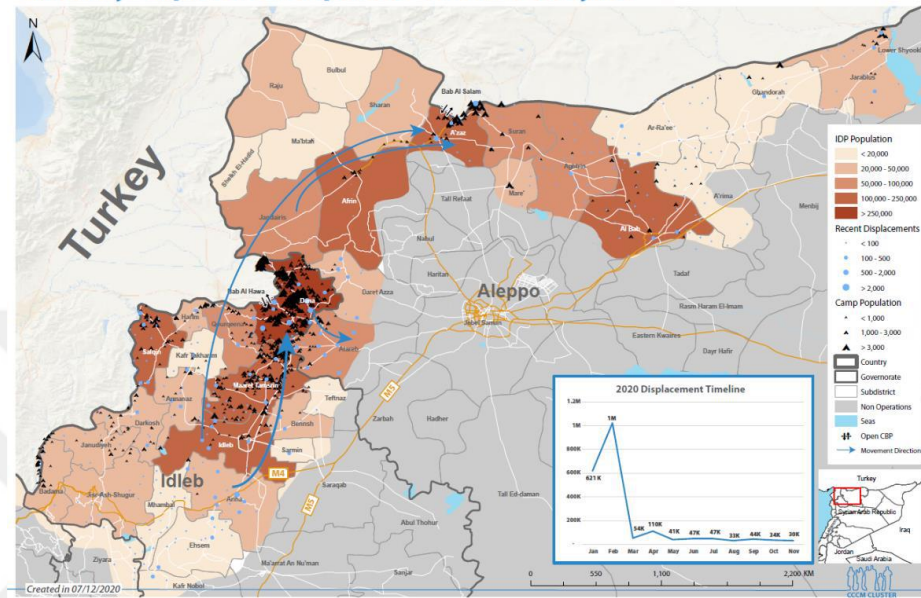
Figure 12 IDPs in Northwest of Syria

2.7 M
displaced people
living in northwest
Syria

1,302
active IDP sites
in northwest Syria

1.6 M
displaced people
living in IDP sites

67,647
IDPs affected by
flood incidents



The fact that these IDPs arrived at Northwest of Syria might be their second, third or fourth displacement over the course of the Syrian crisis which worsened their situation of instability over the previous ten years. According to the UNHCR, the total population of the Northwest of Syria are 4 million people (UNHCR, 2021), which means more than half of them are IDPs. Based on the Guiding Principles (UN, Guiding Principles Reporting Framework, 2016) and Maslow’s theory (Maslow, 1943), these internally displaced people in the Northwest of Syria they are in desperate need for physiological needs and protection in the first place. The physiological need was also affected with the pandemic since 2020 with limited number of health facilities and equipment’s in the Northwest.

2.8 The Emergence of Syrian Humanitarian Non-Governmental Organisations

History of Syrian NGOs

As we are talking about the history of the Syrian NGOs especially working in the Northwest Syria, we should have start with talking about the Syrian Civil Society as an introduction for the evolution of the Syrian Humanitarian NGOs sector. As the NGOs sector was not known in Syria, all charitable work was based on the civil society which was defined differently based on different specialists. Based on the UN Guiding Principles, the definition of Civil Society is a non-state voluntary for non-profit entities established by group of people independently from the state government (UN, 2016). While Kawakbi and Sawah argued that the emergence of the Syrian Civil Society using definition based on the operational point of view and referred to the SCOs as the participation of the group of people and voluntary participation of citizens in organisations, not related to their family nor friends, where their ideas, views, interests and ideologies (Dr Máiréad Collins, Christian Aid, 2019). However, Civil Society Organisations emerged without a strong historical base, and the CSOs had to struggle to improve and develop to be functional. According to the Syrian Human rights lawyer, Layla Alodat in her podcast, she mentioned that *“for sure there was a body which was not existing before established and we can identify whether it is civil society or not but it is an existing body”* (Afkar, 2019). However, according to the different definitions I reviewed during my research, the Civil Society, I found it clear that the CSOs can include non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations.

Going back to the emergence of the NGOs in Syria, the author will start with covering the period since the first charitable activity emerged in Syria until the present time tracing back all factors that collaborated in the emergence of the Syrian NGOs. Syria had a reach culture of giving inspired from religions from both Muslims and Christians and often donations made directly from rich families to those who are in need. A group of charities were constructed before the Syrian uprising based on some female leaders or some wealthy individuals. Traditional charity institutions were founded in Syria even before independence. The legal framework for these Civil Society and NGOs was set in 1958 where lots of local organisations and civil society institutions were registered according to the decree called *“Syrian Associations and Private Institution Law No. 93”*. Other charitable organisations were constructed after this law was issued such as the Female Unions, Youth and kids Union

and Labour Union. All these unions were controlled later on Al Bath Party later on (Bosman, 2012).

After that, and during the seventies and eighties, registration of new charities or NGOs was so difficult if not impossible. This was because of imposing the emergency law order that had been in place since Al-Baath Party came to power in 1963. And the decree (93, 1959) was curtailed and suspended completely. However, the individual donations and giving continued in an individual level but still the Syrian government kept monitoring these activities through intelligence departments in the country. After Bashar Al-Assad reached to control in 2000, the monitoring of the small charities and individual charitable works were reduced and small number of new charities and humanitarian organisations were registered but still in limited scales. This period lasted for very short time and the Syrian government put again limits for the acceptance of registrations of new charities. Some campaigns of the intelligence forces started against some human rights institutions and this ended the era of accepting any civil society organisations to be registered or exist in Syria (Bosman, 2012).

In 2005, Asmaa Al-Assad the Syrian president wife initiated what is so called the Syria Trust for Development which was registered officially in 2011 which had joint project with the United Nations Development Program. Her project aimed to develop capacity for the Syrian NGO sector by providing information, communication, capacity building and guidance. She herself had established many Syrian organisations and all were operating under the Syria Trust for Development Organisation umbrella but all in somehow were linked in some way or another to the Syrian government and operating according to the regime's view of the humanitarian work in the regime-controlled areas (Assi A. , 2020).

Transformation of Syrian NGOs after 2011

The incidents both Daraa and Homs witnessed during early 2011 when the Syrian community witnessed the first mass population mobility through that year, thousands of civilians were in need for emergency humanitarian assistance. The situation was disastrous as the humanitarian work or any kind of assistance to Syrian IDPs mobilized within the country was illegal and many activists faced detention and death accused of supporting the Syrian revolution. Although the needs were high and there was not system in place to support these communities, lots of local activists and local volunteers supported some of the families with basic needs as shelter, food and health support. Some volunteers started collecting donations from the local community to support the IDPs. Then in 2012, Syria witnessed the emergence

of what was called the Relief and the Health offices in each city, town or village. The Syrian Dialogue Centre in its research in 2021 found that more than 1000 relief offices, voluntary groups and small organisations were found during the period 2011 and 2014. Between 2012 and 2014, the Syrian government started losing control over some locations which left a huge humanitarian gap. The main resource of funds for the relief offices was the donations from some Syrian businessmen and from some Syrians living in Europe of the Arabian Gulf. As the International response to the Syrian IDPs was delayed until 2014 which experienced the first international response based on the *United Nations Security Council resolution 2165* which authorise UN Agencies and the international NGOs to have cross border and cross lines humanitarian assistance. This came after the famous speech for Valerie Amos the Emergency Relief Coordinator who said, *“despite of the huge humanitarian needs for Syrian internally displaced people, intense fighting and shifting conflict lines continue putting obstacles for aid delivery for Syrians. Therefore, sustainable access for humanitarian organisations was limited despite of the high needs”* (UNSC, United Nations Security Council, 2014). This resolution permitted access to the UN agencies and the INGOs to deliver all kinds of humanitarian aid for Syrian IDPs all over the country without restrictions or constraints from the conflicted parties in Syria. It was reported by the UN and mentioned in UNSC resolutions since 2014 that the humanitarian actors were facing many constraints and difficulties to access some areas as in resolutions 2191, 2258, 2328 and 2332. And also, with the high risk for INGOs to reach some hard-to-reach areas because of the on going conflict, the need to depend on Syrian organisations or Local organisations was higher. As we mentioned before that the number of Syrian NGOs was limited and we had only local initiatives from the Civil Society organisations or the relief offices, and with the high demand from the international agencies to have local partners, the Syrian civil society institutes and relief offices started to transfer to have more systematic and organised internal management system (Ahmad Qurabi and Kinda Hawasli, 2021).

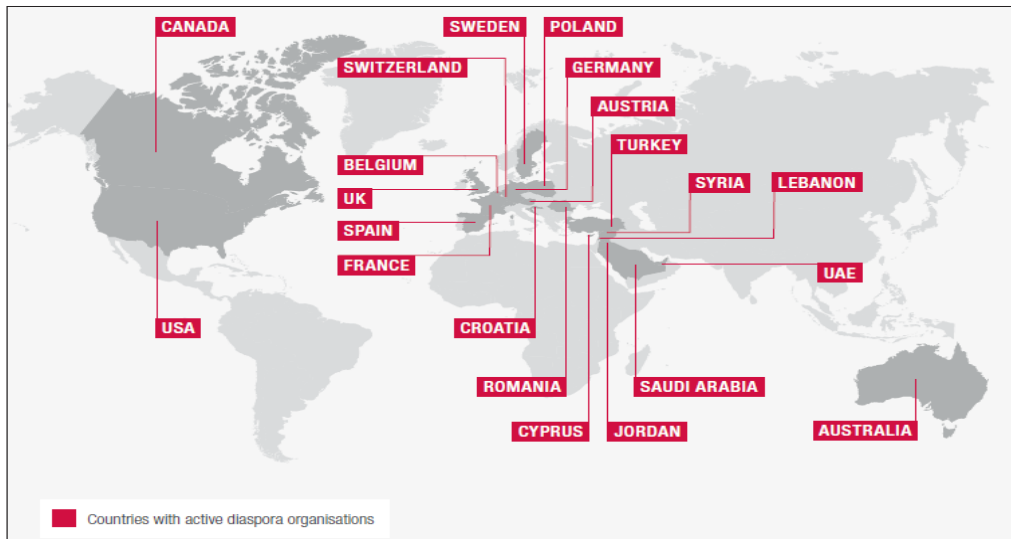
Based on the UNSC resolution 2165 facilitated the establishment the international coordination units and mechanisms including the humanitarian cluster systems. This contributed to building the expertise of the Syrian NGOs as they are now able to engage closely with the INGOs and the international coordination mechanisms. This made it possible for the Syrian NGOs to apply to obtain direct funding and partnership from the UN agencies which require from them first to prove organisational capacity to meet the minimum requirements of the UN agencies and the INGOs. From 2015 until now, the performance and

presence of the Syrian NGOs have improved significantly as a result of the partnerships and close coordination with the INGOs and the UN agencies. With above mentioned timeline occasions which contributed to the modern Syrian NGOs after 2011 we have clear idea about the evolution of these organisations and all factors contributed to their developments. In the next part the author will be talking about the types of the Syrian NGOs who are working in Syria and focus only on the NGOs responding in the Northwest of Syria.

Typology of Syrian Humanitarian NGOs

The Syrian local organisations (LNGOs) are so called local, but in fact not all of them are local. The distinction between local and diaspora groups is not easily made. The according to the research made by Eva Svoboda & Sara Pantuliano in 2015, they classified Syrian Local NGOs based on the time they were established, size, the area they focus at, locations Syrian humanitarian NGOs based at and the reason they were established at the first stage. Eva and Sara gave examples of medical organisations which was found before the war as The Syrian British Medical Society which was established in 2007 and they were focussing on fostering academic links and promote standards between Syrian and British healthcare professionals. However, they moved after the war broke out to provide relief and medical trainings in Syria. In their research they found as well that some organisations are consisting of few volunteers and so limited budgets and other local NGOs who has hundreds of volunteers with high annual budgets (Eva Svoboda & Sara Pantuliano, 2015).

Figure 13 Countries with Syrian Diaspora Organisations



Other type of NGOs who were first established as local relief committees and then stepped up after 2014 UNSC resolution and became a local humanitarian organisation as in the case of Ihsan organisation who became active in areas under the opposition control areas, but with shrinking the areas controlled by opposition groups, Ihsan is operative only in Northern Aleppo and Northern Idlib. Other Syrian organisations working only in coordination and networking to identify the gaps and share these gaps with humanitarian actors such as the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU). Classifying the Syrian NGOs based on their locations, we had Syrian NGOs all over Syria nowadays either based in country or they are based in the nearby countries as having their head offices. With the huge number of National Syrian organisations which reached to more than 135 LNGOs registered in Turkey based in the OCHA report (OCHA, Syria Annual Report, 2018). The need to have more coordination's bodies working on coordination and networking all national NGOs together and with donors. In the following part, I am going to touch on the Syrian networks and their mandates based on their objectives.

Syrian Humanitarian Networks

For international NGOs and agencies there are specific coordination bodies such as OCHA which mandates is to coordinate assistance and delivery of aid to those who are in need and find better access solutions (OCHA, 2015). While for the Syrian national NGOs who are still new for this sector, there was a need to find a body which can support on this objective. Below I am mentioned three coordination bodies that are noteworthy.

The Syrian NGO Alliance (SNA)

This network was established in 2014 as a result to the perceived growing need for stronger and better coordination and exchange of information of the humanitarian response in Syria. The SNA today consists of 24 organisations who gained their membership until 2021. The SNA was founded by 5 core LNGOs who first identified the need for a Syrian representative in the international coordination efforts. The SNA is mainly active in the Turkish hub and cooperating with UNOCHA (Reliefweb, 2014). The SNA main objectives are to supervise, lead and coordinate the humanitarian response to the Syrian people. According to SNA website, its criteria set complying with the international standards and they have a steering committee as their leadership which is elected annually. SNA has adopted Arabic language as a communication language for coordination and communication between its members. The main list of objectives for SNA are the following:

- Establish work groups which will address all humanitarian sectors. To note, the research will touch on all sectors in chapter III.
- Interact and coordinate with all humanitarian actors and agencies outside the SNA.
- Improve the humanitarian response of the Syrian LNGOs who are members of the SNA
- Leading in advocacy for the humanitarian needs in Syria to the international community.

Reviewing the SNA website and going through their activities and work they have achieved so far; it seems that the SNA had good acceptance from the international actors and managed to improve the humanitarian response within the Syrian actors.

The Syrian Relief Network (SRN)

The Syrian Relief Network was established in 2015 by a number of Syrian NGOs and active within the neighbouring countries and inside Syria. It is acting as an umbrella for more than 60 Syrian NGOs active inside Syria and based in Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan. Besides their main objective of coordination, the SRN works to present the interest of the member organisations before the international NGOs and agencies. The SRN tries to play a role in training Syrian humanitarian workers and building the capacity of the national organisations. Main objectives of the SRN are based on their site (SRN, 2015):

- Advocate the crisis and needs in Syria to the international and Arab public opinion
- Build the capacity of the field staff of the Syrian NGOs

- Creating and updating a comprehensive map of the affected areas and populations.
- Maintain a database for every material damage or human lose in Syria to be used in the advocacy efforts before the international opinion.
- Coordinate efforts with all NGOs and agencies not part of the SRN to improve the humanitarian response in the field.
- Work with all humanitarian actors to build a strategy for NGOs regarding the Humanitarian response in Syria.

It is clear that the SRN has more members than the SNA and they focus more on information sharing between their members and building capacity of the Syrian humanitarian workers.

The Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU)

The ACU was established in December 2012 by the Syrian National Coalition to coordinate humanitarian assistance to be reached to all affected population. Thus, unlike the other coordination bodies, the ACU has a political connection as it was formed first by the SNC, however, they adhere to the humanitarian principles based on what they declared in their mandate. The ACU main objective is to connect Syrian NGOs, local councils and relief offices with international NGOs and donors directly to obtain funds for the needs in each location. The ACU was funded directly by the United States government from 2013 until 2014 with donation reached up to 180.5 million USD. They received direct cash donation in addition to in-kind donations. The mandate and objectives for the ACU are (ACU, 2013):

- Information management where they collect data and generate reports as needs assessments inside Syria.
- Manage projects directly as they have direct staff and offices inside Syria.
- Monitor and Evaluate projects they delegated to local NGOs.
- Generate advocacy and media reports about the needs and the crisis in Syria.
- Build capacity for the local NGOs.

The research so far covered the types of the Syrian NGOs who are active in the Syrian response and covered three of the main networks created based on the increased number of the Syrian NGOs. It is fair to say that the war in Syria gave great opportunity for local organisations to build their capacity and improve their response to be more systematic and agile in order to best respond to the needs in the affected areas.

2.9 Delivering Aid Mechanisms in Syria

In delivering aid to those who are in need, the UN agencies authorised two mechanisms of delivering aid to affected populations during conflicts and disasters based on resolution 46/81 on December 1991. This resolution established the coordination of the humanitarian emergency response during conflicts and disasters. It also states that all humanitarian activities should be complying with the humanitarian framework, which is based on the Guiding Principles, please refer to *chapter II Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*. In the same resolution 46/81, the UNSC clarify how the response for a conflict or disaster should be, who will be responsible for coordination of the humanitarian response and what mechanism to be followed (UNGA, 1991). During conflicts, the cross lines mechanisms means that the humanitarian workers and the UN humanitarian delegations should have access to all population in the concerned country without any constrains or objections from the conflicted parties. The second mechanism is cross border aid delivery mechanism where the UN agencies and international organisations are allowed to access populations through identified border crossing gates from the nearby countries. In the below two sections the author is going to review the history of both mechanisms in the Syrian response (SCR, 2021).

Cross Lines Mechanism

Since the start of the uprising in Syria, the United Nations through the Security Council adopted many resolutions to guarantee the delivery of aid for those who are affected by the on going conflict. The first mechanism was applied by the UN agencies was cross lines, which means that the UN delegation and the humanitarian actors can and allowed to have access to all populations within the political geography of Syria to all affected populations without constraints. The first resolution of the UNSC was in 21st of April 2012, one of the resolution's main points was number 11 which requested from the Syrian government and the opposition to allow unimpeded access of humanitarian personnel to all populations. The resolution also requested from the Syrian government to facilitate and cooperate fully with the UN agencies and the international NGOs to facilitate provision of humanitarian aid.

“11. Reiterates its call for the Syrian authorities to allow immediate, full and unimpeded access of humanitarian personnel to all populations in need of assistance, in accordance with international law and guiding principles of humanitarian assistance and

calls upon all parties in Syria, in particular the Syrian authorities, to cooperate fully with the United Nations and relevant humanitarian organizations to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance” (UNSC, Resolution 2043 , 2012). This resolution was extended with other resolutions on 20th July 2012 (R.2059) and 27th of September 2013 (R. 2118) and after that there was another resolution which started new era of delivering aid in Syria which is the Cross border Mechanism and its resolutions.

Cross Broder Mechanism

After two years of using the cross lines mechanism of delivering aid in Syria, the United Nations and the international agencies admitted that there are shortages and obstacles of delivering aid in Syria. Mainly these challenges were access issues as the UN convoys were unable to respond on timely bases to some emergency needs for the Syrian population affected by the war. The UNSC resolution 2165 in July 2014 which was clearly asking the Syrian government to adhere fully to the humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law and also authorised the UN agencies and international humanitarian actors to have access to affected populations cross lines but also cross borders using mainly the border crossing gates of Bab al-Salam, Bab al-Hawa, Al Yarubiyah and Al-Ramtha.

“2. Decides that the United Nations humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners are authorized to use routes across conflict lines and the border crossings of Bab al-Salam, Bab al-Hawa, Al Yarubiyah and Al-Ramtha, in addition to those already in use, in order to ensure that humanitarian assistance, including medical and surgical supplies, reaches people in need throughout Syria through the most direct routes, with notification to the Syrian authorities, and to this end stresses the need for all border crossings to be used efficiently for United Nations humanitarian operations” (UNSC, Resolution 2165, 2014).

Nevertheless, this resolution was valid for 180 days only which was extended with other resolutions 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020) and 2585 (2021). Based on the resolution 2504 in 2020, The UN eliminated two crossing borders of Al-Yarubiyah and Al-Ramtha from the resolution and kept only Bab Al-Hawa and Bab Alsalam gates to be used by the UN agencies and international NGOs to deliver humanitarian aid including medical supplies. Then in the resolution 2585 in 2021, Bab Al-Salam was removed from the resolution and only left Bab Alhawa to be used within the scope of the cross border humanitarian activities in Syria. One of the important points mentioned in the resolution 2585 is that the extension of the resolution 2165 will be only for

six months for only Bab Al-Hawa and look for way of improving cross line assistance through the UN agencies. Therefore, since August 2021, World Food Program agency completed the first shipment of food kits following cross-line mechanism based on the UN last report. According to the political situation and the cross line shipment mechanism renewal from the Syrian regime areas, it is expected that this resolution will not be renewed after July 2022.

Figure 14 UN Resolution 2585 for Syria Cross Border Mechanism



The researcher covered in this chapter covered the general overview about Syria and also touched on the Syrian local NGOs emergence and transformation after 2011 and the mechanisms of delivering aid inside Syria adopted by the international organisations and the United Nations agencies since that time. As the mechanisms adopted by the United Nations played a critical role in the emergence of the new Syrian NGOs after authorising the cross border resolution by the United Nations Security Council. In the coming section the

researcher is covering the main humanitarian principles which are the director of the humanitarian response in the Northwest Syria, then the researcher is going to cover the main standards followed by humanitarian organisations before the researcher touch on the humanitarian needs overview for the Northwest of Syria.



CHAPTER III: HUMANITARIAN AID SECTORS IN NORTHWEST OF SYRIA

As this research is covering the humanitarian response in Northwest Syria, will start in this section to go through the funding mechanisms for Syria before we cover the sectors of humanitarian aid and the findings of the survey conducted. As the conflict in Syria continues and as the humanitarian situation in the Northwest Syria becomes more critical, the number of LNGOs and INGOs responding to the humanitarian crisis in Northwest is growing as well. According to UNOCH, there are 135 NGOs registered in the Turkey hub responding to the Syrian IDPs and host community in the Northwest Syria in addition to ten coordination bodies which coordinate the humanitarian activities (UNOCHA, 2018). There are also UN agencies dedicated to specific sectors as in health, food security, shelter and livelihood. UNOCH stated that there are 55 UN agencies and international organisations working in the Northwest of Syria in the different sectors. Since the approval of the cross border aid in 2014 under the resolution 2165, international donors and UN agencies started talking about localisation of humanitarian aid in Syria as it is more cost effective in delivering aid (Crawford, 2015). The approach has been developed and invested more at for many reasons identified by report published by Building Markets and Global Affairs Canada (GAC), where they identified three main reasons for using local NGOs instead of depending solidly on international NGOs as below:

First, there is significant gap faced by the humanitarian actors with funding, so using local partners was seen as more cost effective way to deliver aid in Syria.

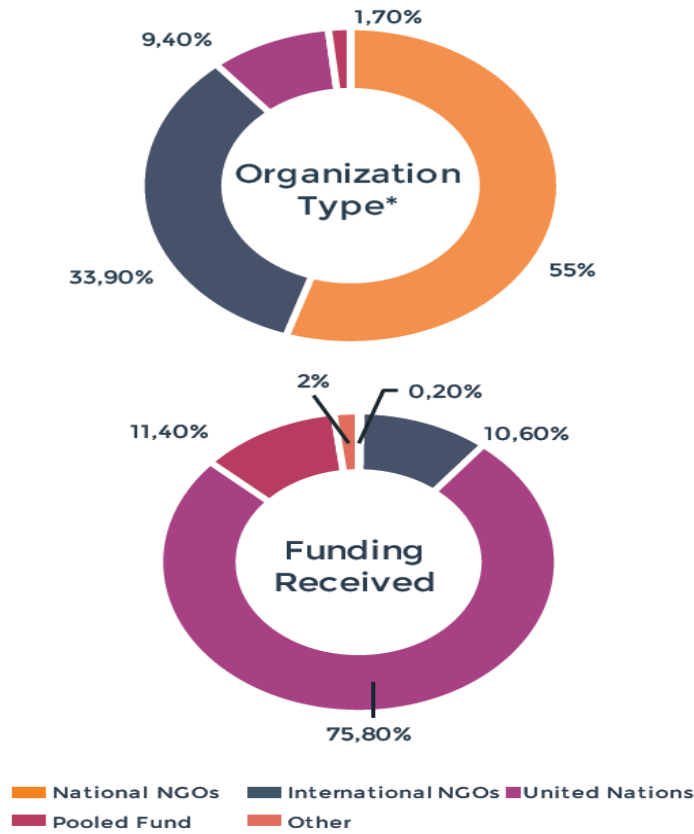
Second, because of the security situation inside Syria and the Northwest, the INGOs had to move their offices to cross the border which disrupted the traditional aid delivery approaches.

Third and lastly, there is a growing consensus that humanitarian aid always favours INGOs which is affecting the impact and sustainability of the aid delivered within the community.

“Using national partners offers donors the opportunity to “spend the development dollar twice” by funding the provision of vital services and relief to people affected by crisis, while at the same time creating local capacity, jobs, and sustainability of organizations and marketplaces” (Building Markets & GAC, 2018). According to the figure below from the Humanitarian Response Plan report for 2021, the local organisations are receiving 55% of the allocated funds to Northwest of Syria while INGOs are receiving 33.90% of the allocated

funds. This illustrated the strategy of the donors in Syria where it is heading more towards localisation of the humanitarian response in the Northwest of Syria.

Figure 15 Syrian Humanitarian Funding by Organisation



All the local NGOs working in the Northwest of Syria are not receiving direct funds from donors, while either they are receiving funds for their projects either from the pooled funds from OCHA through the Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF) mechanism which was established in 2014 after the UNSC resolution or from international NGOs as a proxy for humanitarian donors. During my interviews with the selected LNGOs and INGOs, it was mentioned that LNGOs receive their funds either from the SCHF pooled funds or through INGOs as Ihsan mentioned. For the INGOs, 3 of them stated that they are receiving funds for shelter and winterisation from SCHF only while they do receive funds from other international donors. All the 5 INGOs interviewed stated that international donors and SCHF are requesting to partner with a local partner through implementing their projects. The NGO Forum coordinator stated that “before 2018 there was no percentage of the allocated funds was compulsory to be implemented through local partners, however, since 2018 until 2022,

all international donors are requesting from implementing INGOs to share funds not less than 45% of the total budget allocated for each NGO”.

3.1 Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund

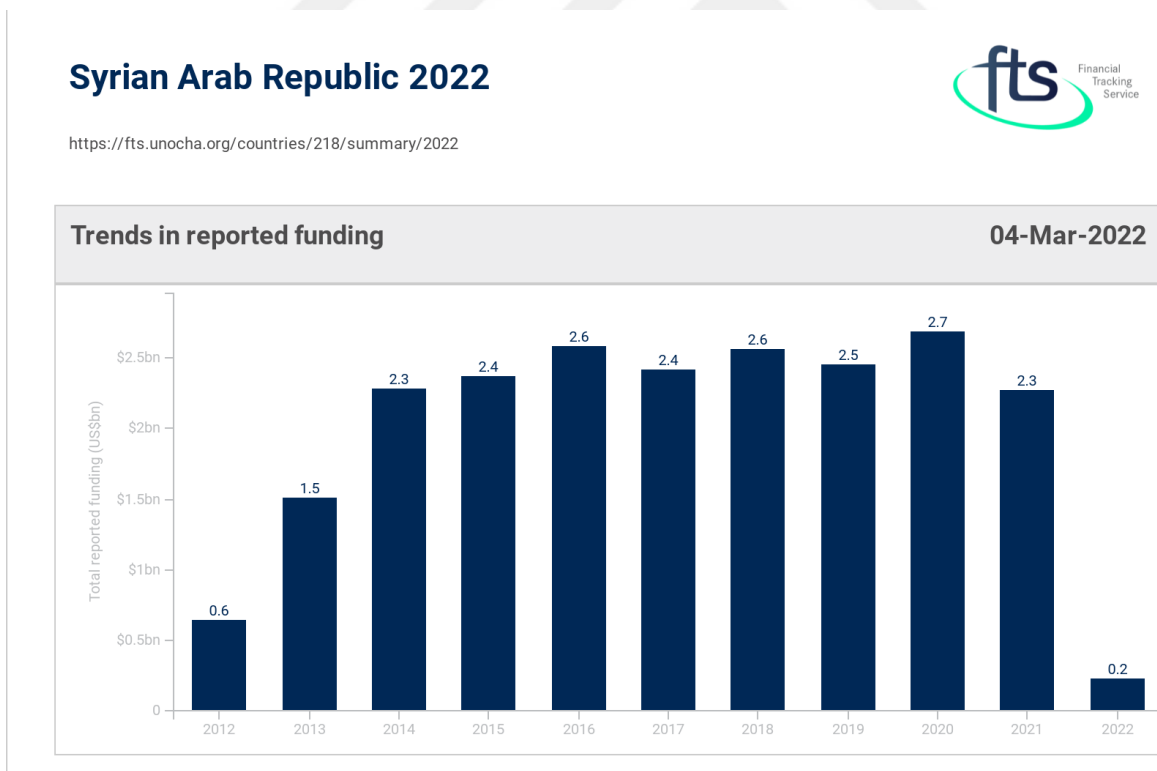
As aforementioned, the SCHF pooled fund mechanism was created in 2014 following the UN resolution 2165. First it was called HPF and later on in 2019 the name was amended to be SCHF to refer to the multi donor funding mechanism for the Syria response as the humanitarian crisis continue with its complexity. The main objective of the SCHF mechanism is to provide resources to implementing NGOs in a timely, predictably and consistent ways which helped a lot to speed up responses and improve LNGOs capacity throughout the years. All funds’ allocations are distributed in line with the Syrian Humanitarian Response Plan and the Annual Humanitarian Needs Overview and requires approvals from the Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator of the UN (OCHA, 2014). Another objective of the SCHF as stated by OCHA, is to strengthen the capacity of the local NGOs despite of the fact that other INGOs can still receiving funds from the same mechanism, however, throughout the years LNGOs were receiving more than 55% of the funds allocated to Northwest of Syria under this mechanism (Building Markets & GAC, 2018). In order to get funds from this mechanism, there is a complicated process which NGOs applying to this fund should go through, this made the number of the NGOs who are regularly getting funds through this mechanism is limited to the active NGOs who really has a robust internal system in place and have work experience in the context of the Northwest of Syria. However, this complexity helped so many LNGOs to improve their internal systems and step up to be equal to INGOs in regard to the internal systems and implementation methods.

3.2 International Donors

International donors mostly are linked to the governments as in the US or the UK government. During the annual conference in Brussel, which started to be conducted since 2017, there are many donors both government and private donors attends this conference. The conference is called, Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region. For the latest conference in 2021, 37 donors attended the meeting with international and national NGOs working in Syria (Chadwick, 2021). The conference where the UN and the European Union host pledging funds for Syria. Last year, 2021, as the Syrian conflict entering the 11th year, the EU, US and many other donors pledged 6.4 billion for Syria while the call and the need was for 10 billion USD. 37 aid agencies commented on this year’s allocations for Syria

saying: “While we welcome countries’ pledges that have kept their funding at similar levels to last year’s or increased it, as did Germany, it is extremely disappointing to see two major donors, the UK and the US, turn their back on the plight of Syrians,” they said. “This will have a devastating impact on their lives” (Arab.W, 2021). The money collected from international donors are for both IDPs inside Syria and refugees and host communities in the region. According to the EU figures that the EU and the member states have donated 24.9 billion Euro since 2011 until 2021 (EU, 2021). Not all the funds gathered in this conference are allocated to be spent inside Syria, for 2021, only 2.3 billion USD were allocated for humanitarian activities inside Syria while the left amount was allocated to support refugees at other countries. With the on going Covid-19 pandemic since 2020, the situation is even worst, however, the international funds were less than before as there is clear indicator that the international donors are losing interest in supporting Syrians and also because of the on going economic crisis accompanying the pandemic worldwide. The below figure shows the funding trends for Syria since 2012 by all international donors (FTS, 2022).

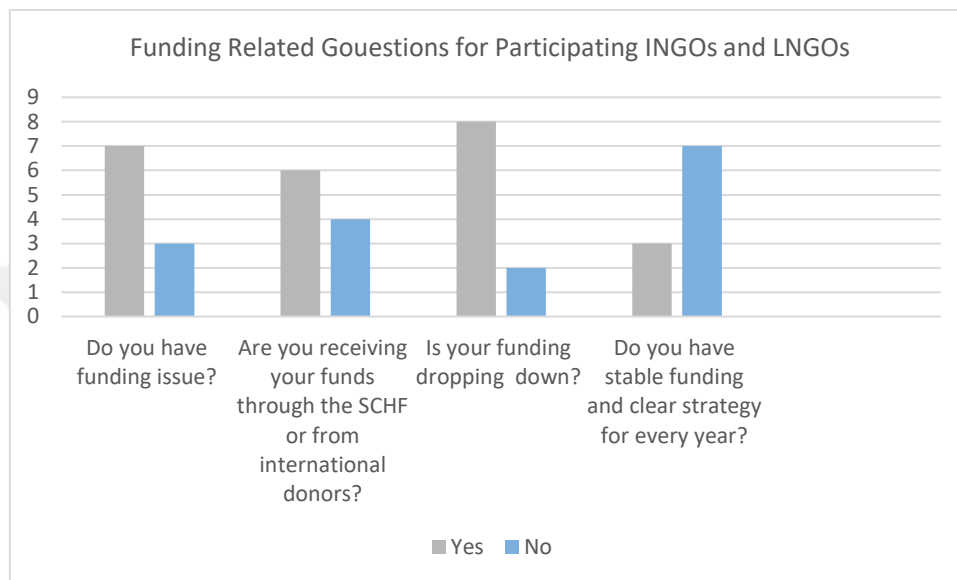
Figure 16 Funding for IDPs and in-country Humanitarian Activities from 2012 to 2022



Every year there are gaps in the funds and not all the needs are met in the Northwest based on the OCH reports which is conducted annually. As an example, for 2021 the funding gap for the cross border mechanism was 300 million USD divided between different sectors

(OCHA, 2021). Through the interviews the researcher had with ten INGOs and LNGOs 70% of them stated that they have shortage of funds every year and they appeal to SCHF and international donors for more funds to cover the needs. While all ten NGOs interviewed stated that funds allocations are decided on annual bases with lack of long term plans to achieve stability and sustainability with their programs.

Figure 17 Funding Related Questions to LNGOs and INGOs Interviewed



3.3 Humanitarian Principles

To understand the original mandate followed by all humanitarian actors in Northwest of Syria which is the focus of this research, it is imperative to go through the humanitarian principles and their origins in this sector before we go through each sector implemented in Northwest of Syria. All NGOs who are working in the humanitarian sector are obliged to stick to the humanitarian principles. These principles are defined as the governing principles in delivering aid to beneficiaries (BNFs) regardless of their religion, political side, ethnic or colour of BNFs of the humanitarian response. These principles were formally established by the UN General Assembly 1991 as the principles were three only as “humanity, impartiality and neutrality”. In 2004 the principal “independence” was added to them and retreated by the ICRC (UN Resolution 46/182, 1991). To understand these principles will go through their definitions based on the ICRC published definition (ICRC, 2015):

Humanity: refers to the aid provision to all who are in need wherever the need exists and to protect and respect all who are in need.

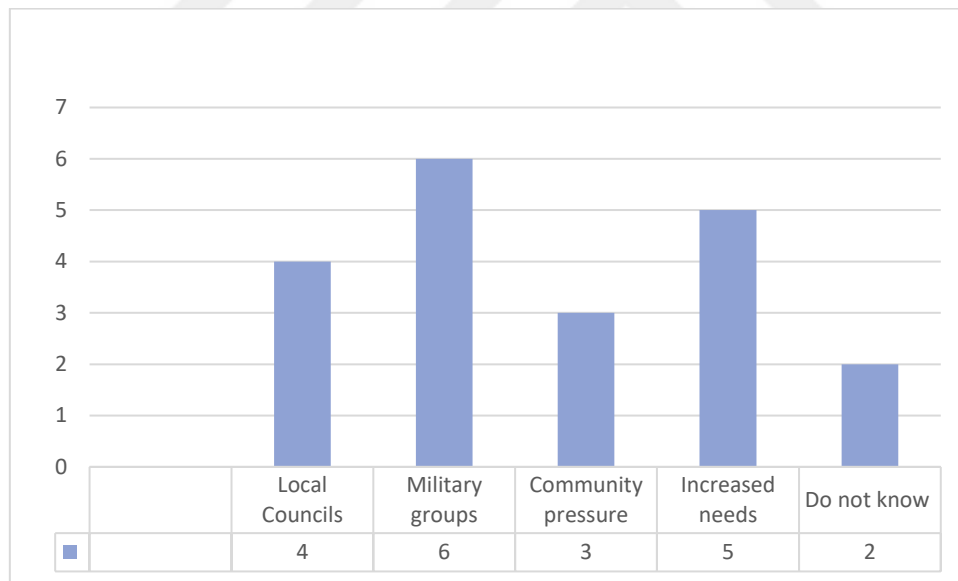
Impartiality: refers to the aid provision based on needs not based on any other distinctions including gender, race, nationality of ethnicity.

Neutrality: is the responsibility of the organisation or aid workers not to choose sides in conflicts or to favour particular political, religious or ideological bent.

Independence: all aid organisations should be autonomous from any political or military objectives.

Interviews with LNGOs and INGOs showed that all participants were aware of the HPs while the community sample surveyed showed that only 23% of the community are aware of the HPs while 16% of the surveyed community stated that the HPs are not applied in the Northwest for multiple reasons. The local councils interviewed stated that they are aware of the term HPs but they are not sure if it is followed by NGOs or not during implementation of projects. When INGOs and LNGOs asked about the reason why on some occasions HPs are not applicable, different reasons were given as shown in the figure below.

Figure 18 Obstacles NOGs facing on applying HPs in the Northwest of Syria



Despite of the necessity of applying HPs in the humanitarian response to guarantee fair access to services by BNFs, not all NGOs are able to apply the HPs during implementing their programs. For sure this is affecting the humanitarian response in a negative way which is again preventing improvements of the response.

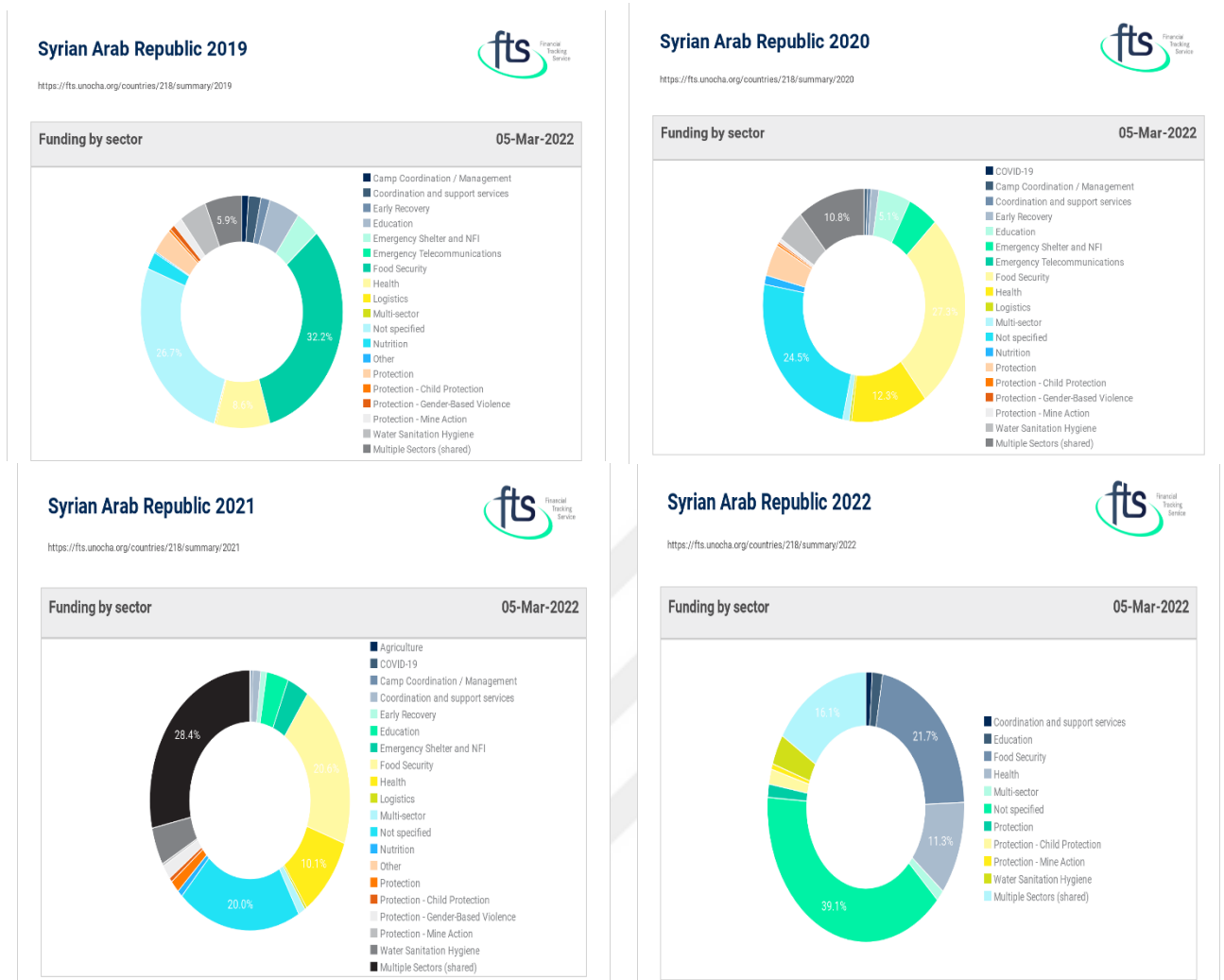
3.4 Sectors in the Humanitarian Response in the Northwest

Based on the UN division of the humanitarian sectors, there are nine main sectors covered in Syria since 2011 these sectors are protection, camp coordination and camp management, early recovery and livelihood, education, food security and agriculture, health, nutrition, shelter and non-food items and water sanitation and hygiene. In this research, the focus will be on the humanitarian aid delivered of **food security and agriculture, health, water sanitation and hygiene** and **protection** to measure these sectors based on Maslow's theory of needs (Maslow, 1943).

3.4.1 Food Security and Agriculture

Food security and livelihood projects in the Northwest of Syria is the largest sector within the humanitarian sectors based on size but comes second based on budget allocated for this response (FTS, 2022). This sector has multiple definitions based on the main objectives of this sector response. Based on the USAID, the United States government Agency for International Development, defined the food security and agriculture sector (FSL) as having the access both physical and economical to sufficient food to meet the people's needs for productive and healthy life. *"Food security means having, at all times, both physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet dietary needs for a productive and healthy life. A family is food secure when its members do not live in hunger or fear of hunger"* (USAID, 2022). While World Food Program define this sector based on the main objective as to ensure food is available for people with respected access to enough required amounts (WFP, 2010). OCHA team pointed out in the interview conducted with them that *"Still the focus of the SCHF and the humanitarian actors is the food security and agriculture sector as it is the main needs seen in the rapid needs assessment conducted and illustrated by the HNO reports annually"*. The figures of the 2021 of funding by sector inside Syria shows that Food Security and Agriculture is coming second in the allocations with 21.7% of the allocated budget while it was 27.3% in 2020 and 32.2% in 2019. This shows that the focus on food security and agriculture is becoming less either because NGOs are moving more towards livelihood projects where they create income to people in need or the food insecure people were less during 2022. The Humanitarian Needs Overview report shows that the percentage of the people food insecure in 2022 dropped four percent compared with 2021 which clarify the logic behind allocating less funds for this sector (HPC, 2022). The figure below illustrates the funds allocated to each sector in 2022 (FTS, 2022).

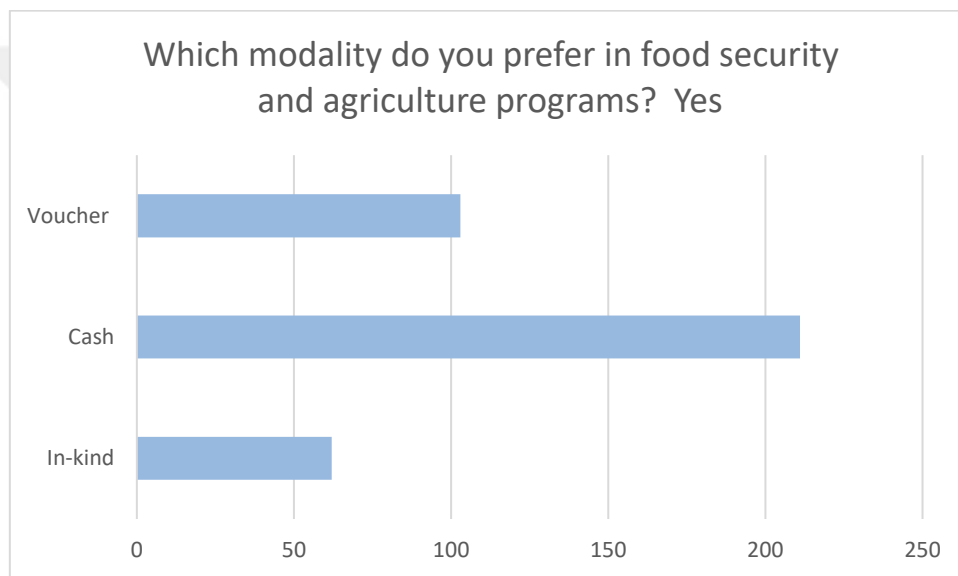
Figure 19 Funding per Sector from 2019 till 2022



The Food Security and Agriculture response is divided into two main modalities, either in-kind assistance or cash and vouchers for the Northwest. The in-kind modality is when an NGO distribute items as food kits, food items or agricultural items as pesticide grains or farming materials for the farmers. While voucher modality is when the NGO is distributing capons to beneficiaries in order to go to shops and purchase food items either restricted to specific items or unrestricted. This modality has restriction of time as the vouchers would be valid for specific period and are valid with limited number of contracted shops. The cash distribution modality is when NGOs are distributing money and BNFs has flexibility to do shopping of food items with no restriction of time nor place. In the interview with AFAD coordinators for Afrin and A'zaz areas, both stated that they do not prefer the regular food baskets distributions as it is creating dependency of the community on NGOs. *“I do not want regular food distribution to continue in our area as this is keeping the community dependent for unlimited time, the Syrian IDPs and communities have been*

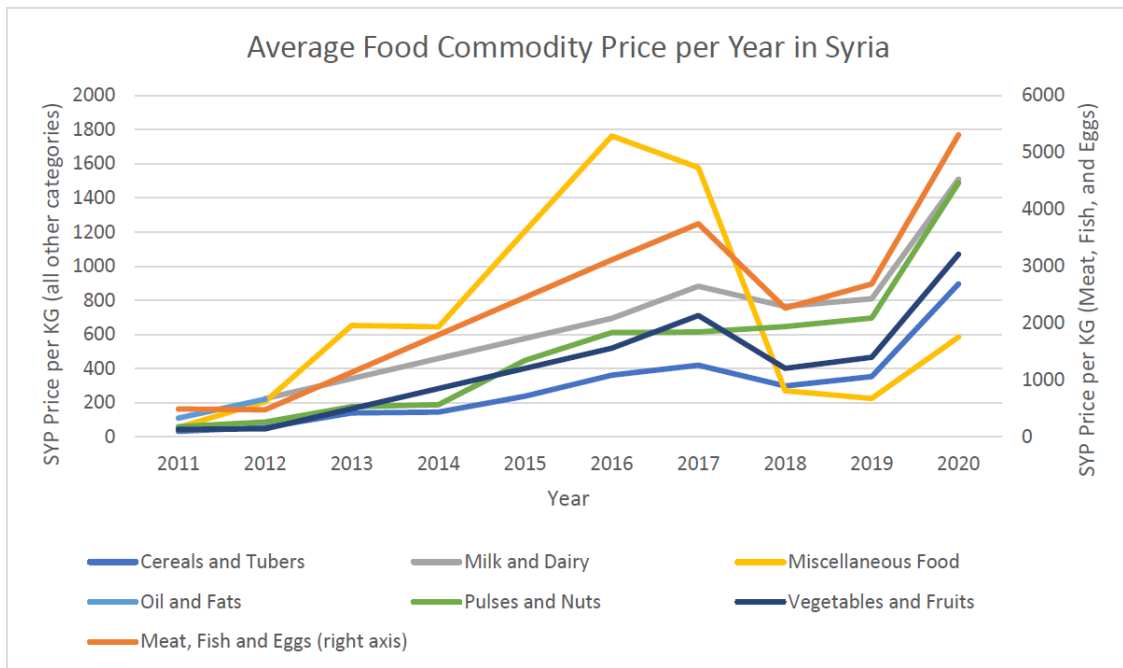
experiencing the same circumstances for eleven years, it is time to move on to more sustainable programs as LLH and job creating programming” (A’zaz Coordinator). Most of the LCs were interviewed they supported the same idea, however, they argued that the need for food distribution in both modalities is still needed as there are still vulnerable community members who would not be able to work either because of disability or they are children. The survey had a question to the sample community participated of which modality do you prefer in delivering food security and agriculture sector. More than 50% of the surveyed sample stated that they do prefer cash distributions which give families flexibility to purchase what they need on timely manner.

Figure 20 Figures on Modality Preference per HH Surveyed



With the deteriorating economic situation in the Northwest of Syria accompanied with the covid-19 pandemic, the food commodity prices are going up which is making numbers of people in need for food security support higher and worsen the situation of the families living in the Northwest of Syria. In the figure below illustrates clearly how prices went up starting from 2019 after the pandemic spread in Northwest based on the HNO report in 2020 (HPC, 2021)

Figure 21 Food Commodity Prices Per Year from 2011 until 2020



Finally, the Syrian conflict has brought several challenges that impacted the food security and agriculture of Syrian people. Based on the HNO for 2022 more than 50 percent of the IDPs in Idlib are food insecure while the percentage of Idlib population in total 66% are found food insecure including both IDPs and host communities (HPC, 2022). Based on Maslow's theory, it is true that in Northwest of Syria the second most important need for the IDPs and host communities is food and physiological needs based on the pyramids of need detailed in the chapter I.

3.4.2 Health

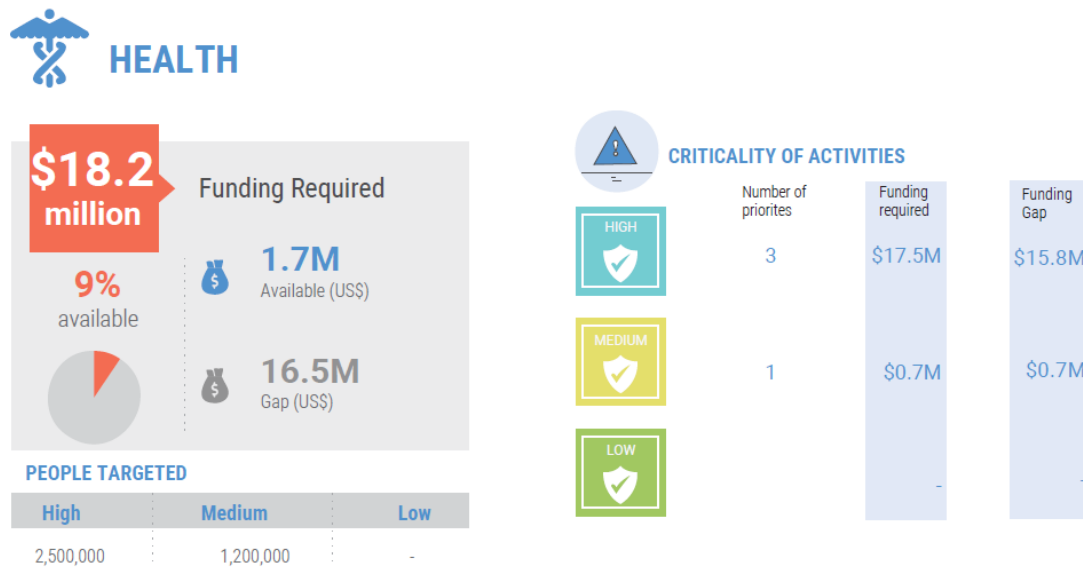
As stated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) which is a United Nation Agency responsible for coordination of the health sector worldwide, the health sector activities are divided into many modalities of deliveries in conflict or disaster areas. General speaking, the main mandate for the health sector is to support with medical supplies needed, treatment, prevention of pandemics and trainings for health sector workers (WHO, 2013). The main activities of the health NGOs working in Syria and specifically in the Northwest of Syria are specified by WHO technical guidance as the following:

- *Deliver medicines and other supplies.*
- *Vaccinate hundreds of thousands of Syrian children against polio, measles, diphtheria and other diseases.*

- *Treat burns and severe injuries.*
- *Provide primary health care to more than a million people.*
- *Prepare for outbreaks, like cholera.*
- *Care for patients with diabetes and other non-communicable diseases.*
- *Identify the signs of psychiatric trauma and refer patients for proper care.*
- *Train health care workers.*

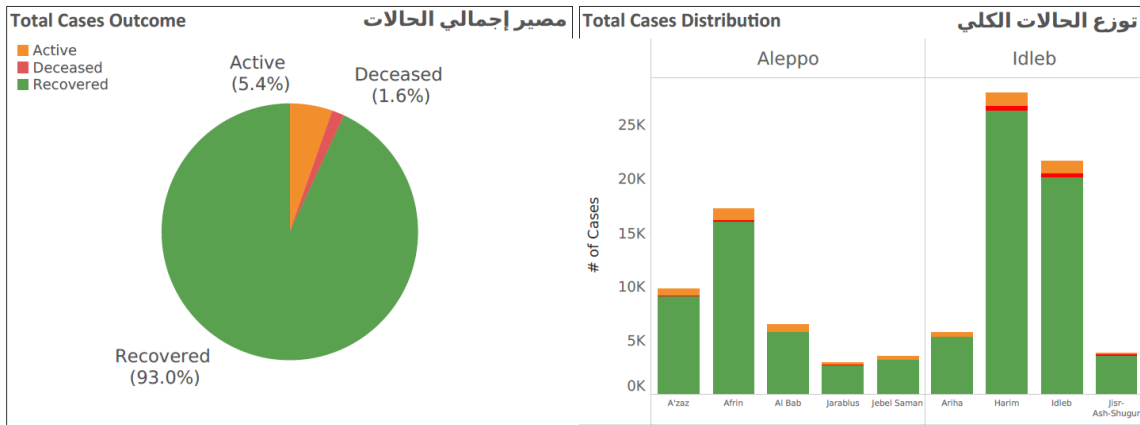
According to the latest report of the health cluster who is based in Gaziantep since 2013, there are 56 hospitals in Idlib and 21 active hospitals in northern Aleppo however, not all of them are supported by NGOs nor the cluster. At the same report in May 2021, it stated that there are 95 clinics in Idlib and 87 clinics in northern Aleppo. the functionality of the health facilities is being assessed by the cluster in a quarter basis. Latest update on January 2022 showed that only 18% of the hospitals and clinics in both Idlib and northern Aleppo are functional while 30% are partially damaged and 52% are fully damaged (WHO, 2022). Funding for the health sector as shown in the figure 19 that it is between 11.3% and 8.6% of the total funds coming to Syria which is not sufficient based on the increased need and the damage to the infrastructure of the health sector. According to SCHF only 9% of the total SCHF funds were allocated to the health sector in 2021. They stated that the need is 18.2 million USD while only they got 1.7 million with 16.5 million gap as per the OCHA report (OCHA, 2022). In the figure below is illustrated by OCHA on the health sector.

Figure 22 SCHF Funding Required vis Availability 2021



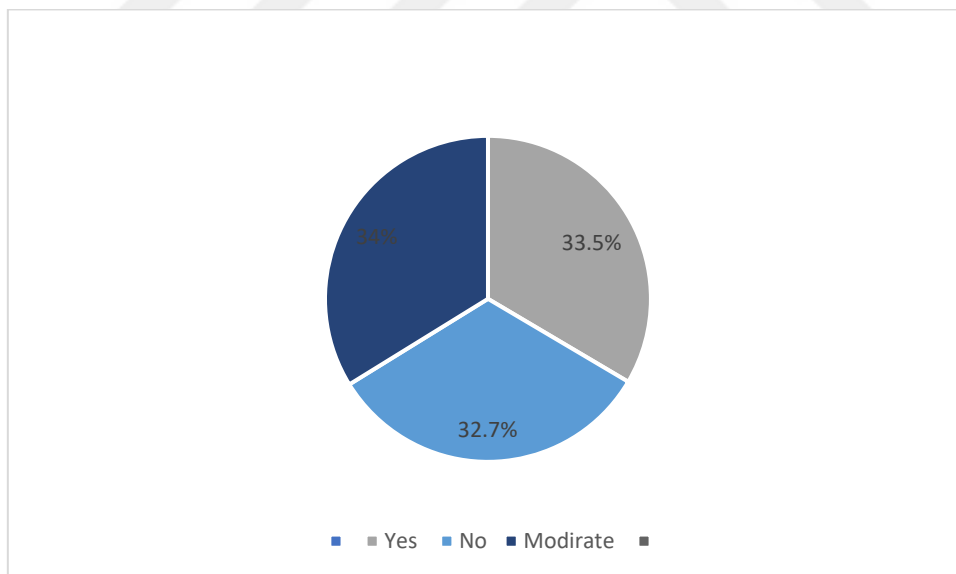
During an interview with one of the health NGOs it was mentioned that one of the difficulties and challenges faced by the health actors are lack of funds and lack of capacity building plans for the health workers. *“We are always suffering from the issue of lacking resources and trainings for the health sector workers. Me personally, I had to work several months a year as a volunteer as there was no capacity to pay my salary from the hospital management. The health directorates responsible for the health sector in the Northwest has no resources and they are fully dependent on the donors’ resources”*. Covid-19 pandemic affected in a critical way the health sector as already has limited capacity and limited resources. There were many calls from the health actors that all hospitals were fully occupied because of the increased number of covid-19 cases confirmed in the Northwest of Syria. According to the ACU and EWARNS system, which is coordinating the covid-19 response in the Northwest of Syria, there are 99.000 cases so far in Northwest of Syria divided between Idlib governorate and northern Aleppo area (EWARN, 2022). The figure below shows the distribution of the total cases per districts over the Northwest of Syria in addition to dividing the cases outcomes into three categories or active, deceased and recovered based on the EWARNS report.

Figure 23 Covid-19 Cases Distribution and Outcomes February 2022



In the researches' survey, many questions related to the health sectors were asked to participants, when they answered the question if they are satisfied with the health services provided to them by the health facilities within their area of residence 32.7% were not satisfied while 33.5% were satisfied and 33.8% gave moderate feedback.

Figure 24 Satisfaction of the Health Services



While interviewing M.H.H from UOSSM medical organisation, he mentioned that there are so many difficulties they are facing while doing their daily activities and he mentioned the following:

- *The health sector inside Syria is not so developed and can be considered as emerging sector after 2011 therefore there is no capacity to do sophisticated surgeries and operations therefore, we have to transfer patients of some cases to Turkey to be*

treated. Thus, this process is complicated and always there are tens if not hundreds are waiting in the list to cross to Turkey.

- *Local authorities or military groups always try to interfere in our work; therefore, we are always in danger of being attacked by some armed people in order to adhere to their requests.*
- *In Idlib, SSG is controlling the health directorate and the sector and as SSG is listed as affiliated to HTS which is considered a terrorist group, lots of donors are stepping back and withdrawing their funds from the area.*
- *One of the major risks we are facing is the deliberate attacks against the health facilities by the Syrian regime and Russia which is deepening our suffer and shortages.*
- *Lack of medicine is critical issue we are facing, most of the medicines available in the market are not certified or locally produced in newly established factories.*

Local councils in both northern Aleppo and Idlib governorates stated that the health sector is completely linked to the health directorates under SSG or the SIG where they do not have any interaction with them. As AFAD stated that the health sector in Northern Aleppo, Euphrates Shield Area and Olive Branch, is linked directly to health ministry in Turkey and not under AFAD supervision. All in all, the research found that the health sector is not operating in a way satisfying the community nor meeting the needs of the population of the Northwest of Syria for many reasons and factors aforementioned either related to the funds, security situation or the context itself.

3.4.3 Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Water Sanitation and Hygiene sector or as it is known as WASH, is the sector which has the main objective that people in disasters and conflicts should have affordable and sustainable access to WASH which is a main factor for improving the public health. Access to WASH includes access to safe and drinkable water, adequate sanitation and hygiene education for the population targeted (WASH.C, 2020). People in conflicts and disaster are much more susceptible to diseases and illness which to large extend related to inadequate sanitation, inadequate water supplies and inability to maintain good hygiene. Based on the Sphere Standards handbook, the main objectives of WASH programmes in fragile contexts are to promote the following practices (Ton Van Zutphen, John Damerell, 2011):

- Good hygiene practices

- The provision of safe drinking water
- The reduction of environmental health risks
- The conditions that allow people to live with good health, dignity, comfort and security.

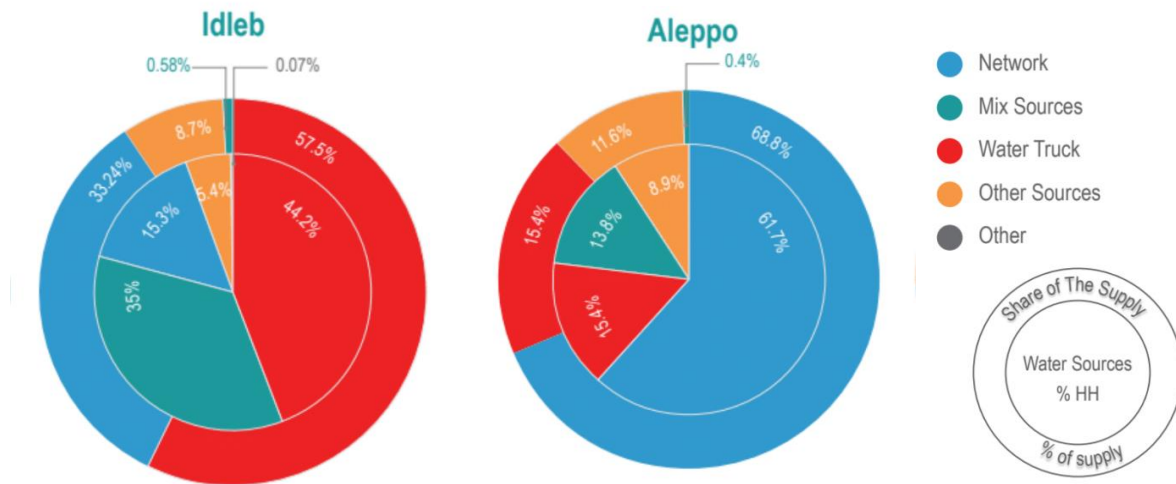
Related to the funds in the annual budget, the WASH sector comes fifth or sixth in the priority lists as 6% of the total budget allocated. For the SCHF, the allocated funds for inside Syria projects is 1% of the total budget for SCHF in the Northwest of Syria. Compared with 2020 the allocations were 2% of the total SCHF budget and 8% of the total budget for Syria (OCHA, 2022). This shows that the attention to WASH sector in Syria is dropping down and resources are so limited (FTS, 2022). Based on the HNO reports from 2020 to 2022, they are showing that the climate change is affecting the WASH sector in Syria and increasing the percentage of people in severity need for clean water with limited resources available (HPC, 2022). In this research the focus will be on the Water component of this sector rather than focusing on sanitation and hygiene as water component is much easier to measure and get feedback from the community and NGOs.

Water Delivery Models in the Northwest of Syria

Before the crisis the vast majority of Syrians, 85% as per Van Den's book the IBNET Water Supply and Sanitation Performance, especially in urban areas, accessed clean water through networks supplying HH level taps. Power was provided from the electric grid at Government subsidized prices. Backup generators were fuelled with subsidized fuel. Water rates of \$3-4 per month were charged but they were very low due to the heavy subsidies on inputs (Van den Berg, C. & Danilenko, A, 2014).

In the absence of local experience in humanitarian work and in cost recovery, donors and international humanitarian actors defaulted in the early stages of the crisis to water trucking to address the initial acute water needs of the large numbers of displaced persons close to the Turkish border. Water trucking term, in this sector is used to refer to the delivery mechanism of water using trucks or containers to ship water from the water resource to the consumer houses. This shifted the focus away from existing networks (WASH.C, North West Syria WASH Cluster - Turkey Cross Border - Gaziantep Hub, 2020). Based on the WASH cluster needs assessment for Syria, it showed that the Northwest of Syria governorates between northern Aleppo and Idlib, Idlib governorate depends more on the water trucking despite of the high cost compared to the water network modality.

Figure 25 Whole of Syria WASH Assessment- 2021



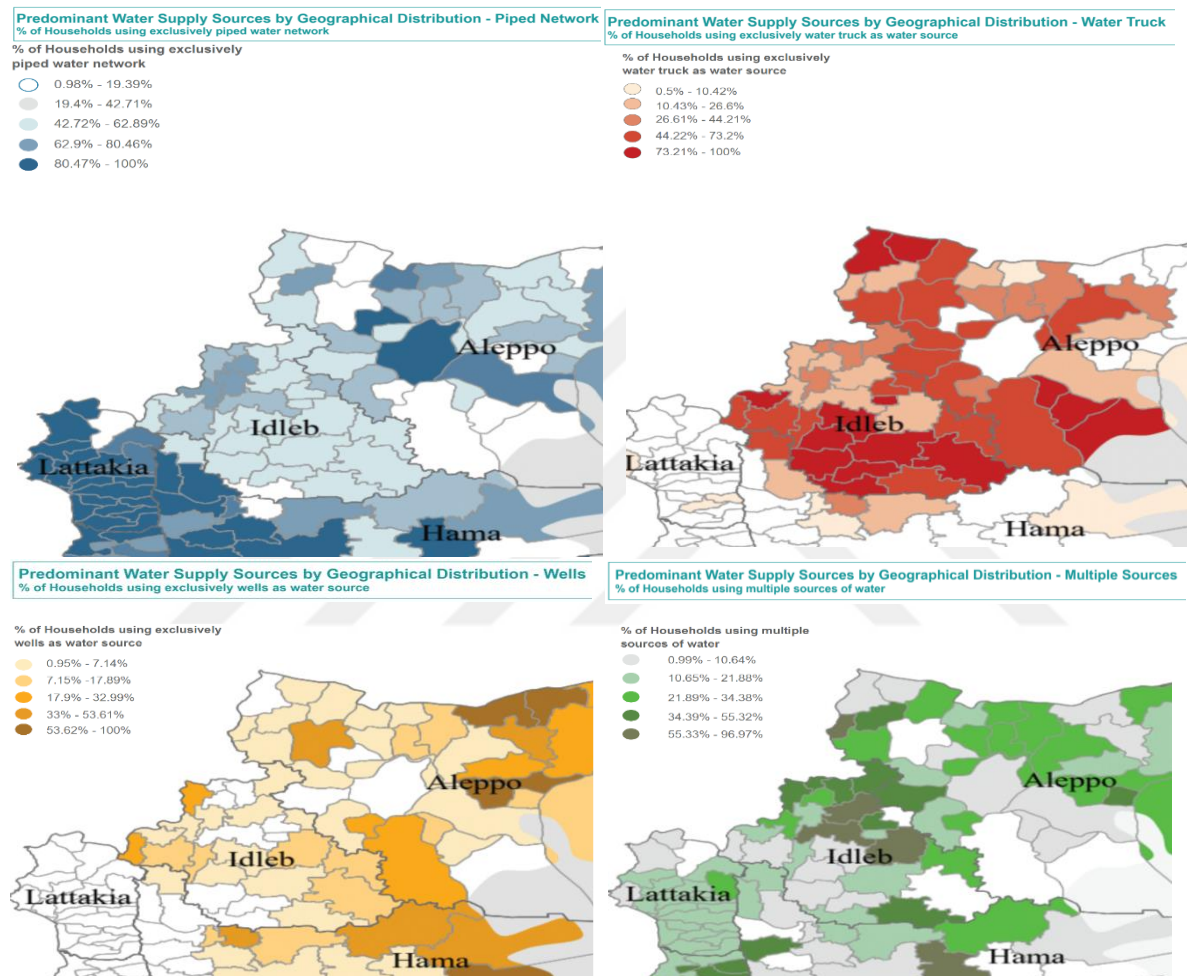
The WASH cluster emphasized the importance of restoring what used to exist and extending this to cover the increased demand. Once some NGOs did start supporting existing water stations to continue pumping, the focus was on the provision of consumables. According to the WASH cluster, donors did not want to hear about systems and system strengthening. The WASH cluster coordinator stated during the interview that “*knowing that the funding would run out, the cluster was pushing cost recovery through a tariff system with a proper focus on hardware and software (including mass media). However, this has been hampered by the lack of disposable incomes and the implicit risks of affording material or reputational benefit to armed groups through cost recovery mechanisms*”.

The current range of modalities for water delivery include the following: *Municipal WS with networks, NGO managed WS with networks, private local boreholes, water tank installations, rehabilitation of local boreholes, WS infrastructure rehab and water trucking* this is according to the WASH cluster coordinator. As can be seen above, figures from mid-2021 indicate that water trucking accounts for 57,5% of the total water supply in Idleb, versus 33% for networks and 8,7% for wells. 35% of households obtain water from multiple sources with 15% only using a network and 44% getting their full needs from water trucking. The figures from Aleppo include Aleppo city which is under GOS control explaining the large proportion – over 60% of households can exclusively rely on networks for their water needs.

Below figure show how varied the picture is across Northwest of Syria, even for adjacent geography such as Azaz and Afrin, with water trucking accounting for slightly more than half of the total water supply in Afrin, and wells for the balance, with networks

reportedly having no role in water provision. In Azaz networks account for 76,4% of the total water supply, versus 19.3% by water trucking and 3,7% from wells. 15% of households in Azaz obtained water from multiple sources with 65.7% only using a network and 16,2% getting their full needs from water trucking and 3% from wells.

Figure 26 Whole of Syria WASH Assessment Water Supplies Modality in Northwest of Syria- 2021



Water trucking supplements networks in many cases as the quantity is not enough for needs or the community has expanded beyond the reach of the initial network. In NA camps there are not many water networks and as such most of the camps in Northwest of Syria are still relying on water trucking which is costing huge sums of money. Some projects are underway by NGOs to put networks in place, however there are some reports of resistance to this change, which will be elaborated on in another section (WASH.C, 2021).

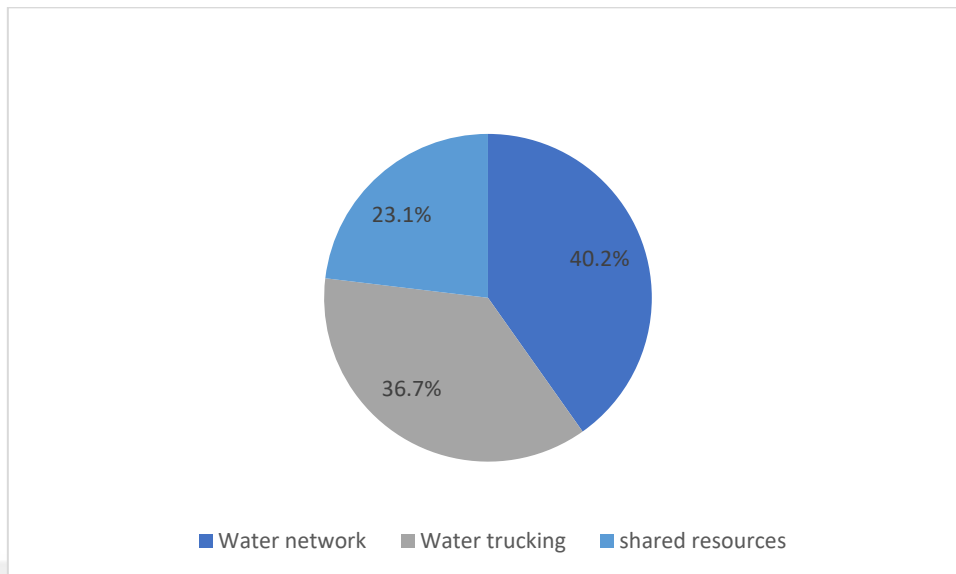
It may be interesting to consider the case of Atma cluster of camps. Back in 2011, Atma had a few displaced families under olive trees. Following the displacements in late

2020, the area hosted around 160,000 persons and had the capacity for under 300,000 according to a respondent working in the camp. As such the water delivery modalities have changed a lot during the course of the crisis. Initially there was a separate supply for drinking and domestic use, however it not like that anymore, with no drinking water in bottles and limited water collection in containers, as water is now delivered to household tanks or through a water distribution network in the established parts of Atma camp. A.D from Global Communities mentioned that *“there are two water systems in Atma: water trucking is still active due to topography and new arrivals camped in informal settlements. In the past 2 water pumping stations were built by an NGO with a long and complicated network. This system was later abandoned as it was inefficient and unfair. People were making informal connections to the network and stealing the water. Currently there is a private water station with a service provider who is responsible for sourcing the water and pumping to the tanks”*. The INGO is responsible for water quality of source and water treatment.

When the water directorate in A'zaz was asked about their preferences of water network or water trucking and whether water network is still functioning he replied *“the water network is still active in A'zaz district but the reality that the water resources are placed outside A'zaz in Afrin, the cost is hight and no NGO yet are able to cover this water unite more than six months. We depend on the local council's resources to pump water, but it is not consistent and cannot be more than few hours per day. Therefore, water trucking is inevitable in A'zaz”*.

In the survey when the sample of community answered the question, do you have access to clean water through water network or water trucking, 40.2% mentioned that they have access to clean water through water network while 36.7% stated that they have only water tucking resource while 23.1% answered that they have access to water network however, they get water by trucks as the water network resource is instable.

Figure 27 The Source of Clean Water for the Surveyed Sample



During my interviews with local councils and NGOs, found out that pumping 1 cubic meter of water through the network is between 0.6 and 0.8 USD based on the network situation and the depth of the bore hole while it is costing between 2.0 and 2.3 USD with water trucking depending on the distance the trucks transport water to. Yet, the highest percentage population surveyed are getting their water through water trucking which is adding extra financial burdens on the vulnerable families. The researcher found in this sector that despite of the fact that Syria is listed as high priority for water (WASH.C, 2022), funds and NGOs are unable to cover the needs nor finding sustainable programming. Please refer to Annex four for the GWC priority countries per year.

3.4.4 Protection

In this part, the researcher will go through the definition of protection sector, the standard operating principles for protection sector in NGOs, then we will show the funds allocated to this sector and how the NGOs activities are going on in the field to meet the needs. We specified NGOs and communities in our survey and interviews as this sector implies of some sensitivity to be discussed with local authorities nor coordination bodies in the ground. Protection as a definition is all activities which NGOs are doing to protect and obtain full respect for the rights of individuals in accordance with the letter and spirit of the related laws specifically the human rights law and international humanitarian law. The protection cluster and the UNHCR guidelines identified three main dimensions which protection sector can operate in accordance as mentioned in the UNHCR guidelines handbook:

Protection is an objective which requires full and equal respect for the right of all individuals, without discrimination, as provided for in national and international law. Protection is not limited to survival and physical security but covers the full range of rights, including civil and political rights, such as the right to freedom of movement, the right to political participation, and economic, social and cultural rights, including the rights to education and health.

Protection is a legal responsibility, principally of the State and its agents. In situations of armed conflict, that responsibility extends to all parties to the conflict under international humanitarian law, including armed opposition groups. Humanitarian and human rights actors play an important role as well, in particular when States and other authorities are unable or unwilling to fulfil their protection obligations.

Protection is an activity because action must be taken to ensure the enjoyment of rights. There are three types of protection activities that can be carried out concurrently:

- **Responsive** – to prevent or stop violations of rights.
- **Remedial** – to ensure a remedy to violations, including through access to justice and reparations; and
- **Environment-building** – to promote respect for rights and the rule of law (GPCWG, 2010).

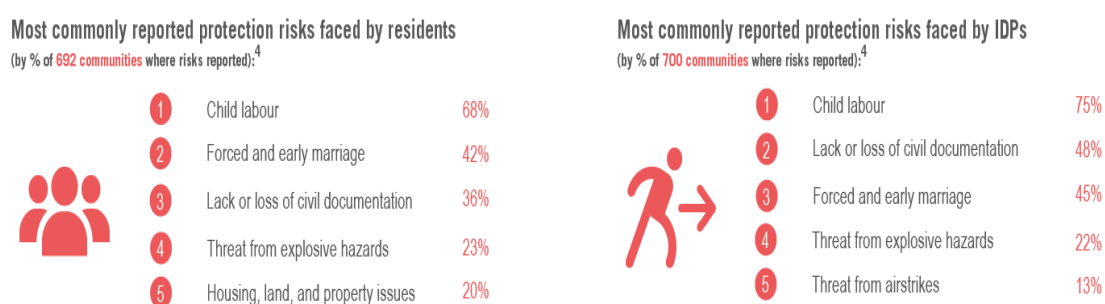
According to the guideline, the responsibility of protecting IDPs and all people living in in their country is under the national authorities. The national responsibility is the essential of any protection response in a country. In the Northwest context, responsibility here rests under SSG, SIG and the Syrian regime in Damascus as they are identified as national governments based on the government definition the researcher covered in section II. But also, it was mentioned by the guidelines that protection responses rests also under the international community and international organisations but their role is to reinforce but not to replace the national governments responsibilities (GPCWG, 2010). NGOs were interviewed stated that they have two modalities of protection sector, first NGOs who has a dedicated protection sector and second NGOs who has no protection sector while they follow the mainstreaming approach. As Global Protection Cluster defined mainstreaming protection as: “It is the process of incorporating protection principles and promoting meaningful access, safety and dignity in humanitarian aid” (GPC, 2015). This means that when NGOs provides humanitarian assistance such as food, WASH, health etc. they need to identify risks to the

affected population in relation to safety, dignity and meaningful access when providing humanitarian aid. The main areas where protection sector is concentrating in Northwest of Syria as identified by the protection cluster are:

- Child labour: Children under 18 years old should not be working.
- Lack or loss of civil documentation: All people during conflict times are entitled to have access to documentations.
- Forced and early marriage: Female members of the family should not be forced to marry while they are under 18 and they should have the right to choose who they will marry from without any pressure from their parents.
- Threats from explosive hazards: as IEDs and UEXO are spread in the Northwest, it is becoming a real threat for the residents of Northwest of Syria.
- Threats from airstrikes and shelling
- Housing, land and property issues: landlords should not be deprived from their houses, lands or property by force from conflict parties this is known as HLP (SPC, 2020).

In reviewing the report from REACH organisation in 2020 about a protection assessment they conducted in Northwest of Syria, the below figures were found after conducting the survey covered 891 communities across the Northwest of Syria (REACH, 2020).

Figure 28 REACH Protection Survey Outcome 2020



Fund wise, the protection sector comes at the bottom of the list of funds allocated for the humanitarian response in Syria. While based on the SCHF, protection allocations are 7.3 million USD for 2022 compared with 9.8 in 2021 and 14.5 in 2020. This again shows that the resources for humanitarian aid in the Northwest are becoming less every year despite of the fact the need is much higher than before. The local council of Al-Bab mentioned that “the highest protection and risk for the community both IDPs and host communities are the

shelling, IEDs and unexploded ordinances. Yes, we have child labour, but this is inevitable as families are so poor and they need to work men, child's and women to cover small percentage of their expenses". While local council of Maret Tamsrin in Idlib province stated that "the highest risk we have is the continuous shelling and airstrikes as we are so close to the frontlines. The city is densely populated so every time the Syrian regime target the city, we have many fatalities and casualties, yet people keep going to markets and continue their daily life as having no other choices".

During interviews with NGOs, IYD area manager mentioned that *"as we are operational in both northern Aleppo and Idlib province, we face many difficulties to get approvals from LCs or MDHA to start our protection programs. I might say that it is easier to get approval from the LCs in northern Aleppo than getting no objection letter from the MDHA in Idlib. In general, there is rejection for the concept 'Protection' as it is misunderstood when we talk about women and children".*

IRC programs coordinator stated that *"there is real issue with HLP in Northwest of Syria as lots of reports from IDPs and host community received on HLP issues. As military groups are the ones who are seizing the properties by force, there is so limited space for NGOs to negotiate with. In Afrin district as an example, they established reconciliation committee to look at the HLP issues, still it is not empowered but they were successful on some occasions".*

In the survey, and to be context sensitive, the researcher asked participants to answer a closed question of "what were the highest risk you face every day while living in Northwest of Syria?" participants chosen the below risks from the given options in order:

- Shelling and airstrikes
- IEDs and explosions
- Theft and criminal acts
- Kidnapping
- HLP

As the sample is mixed from IDPs and host communities, it shows that both groups are having multiple risks other communities would not have to experience. As safety and security comes second in the Maslow's pyramid as basic need, here from the feedback the researcher got clearly shows that safety and security is an issue for IDPs and host community

in Northwest of Syria. All in all, the protection sector is not functioning well based on the UNHCR guidelines for multiple restrictions can be listed below:

- Acceptance from the local authorities is law for protection programming.
- Funding is limited and all NGOs are suffering from lack of resources.
- Security situation is so complicated and affecting the protection of the resident in a crucial way.

By this, this chapter addressed the main sectors in the humanitarian response which interact with Maslow's theory and went through each sector based on funds, gaps and feedback from LCs, community, AFAD and clusters. In the next chapter, the research will look at the challenges NGOs face while delivering humanitarian aid and the clusters role to support NGOs in their programming.

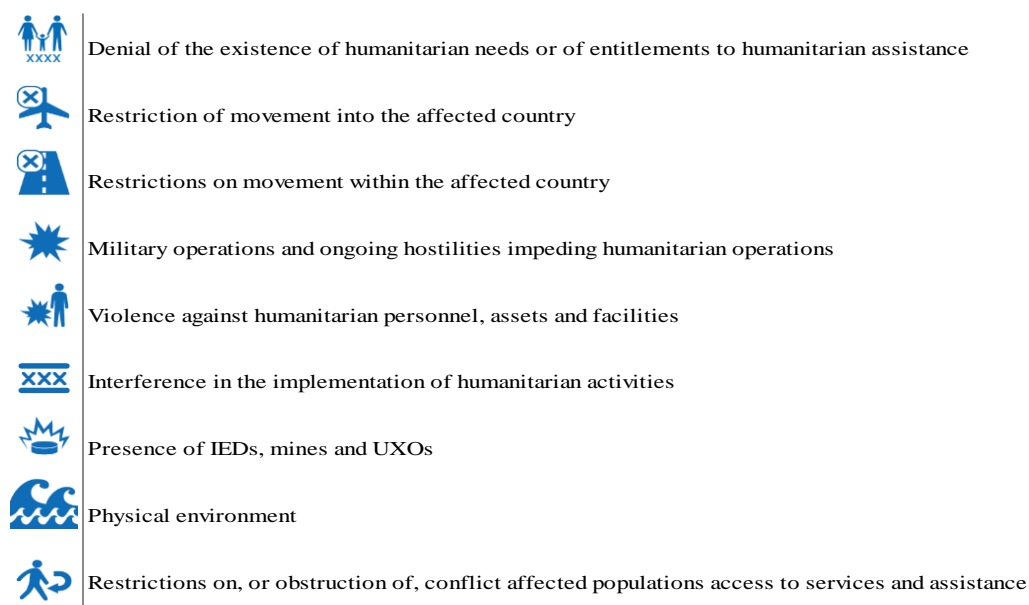
CHAPTER IV: CHALLENGES FOR HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATIONS

There are many challenges and obstacles still affecting activities of the Local and international humanitarian organisations. These obstacles are affecting the projects NGOs are implementing in Northwest of Syria significantly and these challenges sometimes are either changing the design of these projects, changing location of implementing these projects or even cancelling these projects completely because of these challenges and obstacles. During this research, the author managed to list the most important and influential challenges based on the literature review, the interviews conducted and also the survey conducted within Northwest of Syria. Since the start of the Syrian conflict, the UNSC clearly mentioned in many occasions and many resolutions the importance to apply the International Humanitarian Law and to make sure people who are in need have easy and fast access both cross-line and cross-border as was mentioned in resolution 2165 (UNSC, 2014). In the Rule 55 of the IHL stating that parties of the conflict must facilitate quick and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief as mentioned in the Rule “*Rule 55. The parties to the conflict must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need, which is impartial in character and conducted without any adverse distinction, subject to their right of control*” (ICRC, 2005). Below the researcher will go through the identified most effective challenges and obstacles facing NGOs in their daily activities.

4.1 Access Related Challenges

According to OCHA report in 2019, nine access constraints or access severity for NGOs were identified (OCHA, 2019). These constraints were identified from the reports received from LNGOs and INGOs working in the Northwest of Syria. But also, this practice was adopted by other hubs as in Damascus and Jordan OCHA offices to identify the most critical and most reported access constraints to be analysed and shared in reports in an annual basis. These constraints as a summary are the following:

Figure 29 Access Severity Based on OCHA Guidance 2019



Please refer to Annex 5 to review definition of the nine constrains for Northwest of Syria. The report published in August 2021 after consultation of participants from INGOs and LNGOs, it showed statistics about the access severity in Northwest of Syria based on assessment from all NGOs participated. The report came up with results of Northern Aleppo security situation remain volatile. Asymmetric attacks including improvised explosion devises and also armed disputes between armed factions in Al-Bab, A'zaz and Afrin or what is called Euphrates Shield Area. While for Idlib governorate, high risks for NGOs staff members of arbitrary arrest and detention by non-state armed groups which is mainly HTS and SSG. NGOs also reported that there many factors hampering access and implementation of humanitarian activities such as gender segregation regulations imposed. Notably, the report found as well that there is high risk of mines explosion and ordnance where approximately one in two people are at risk of explosive contamination and this is across Northwest of Syria. Mainly in percentages, the report found that presence of mines and UXOs is 46% while 41% for military operations and 31% for the interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities constrains. While 20% went to restriction on access to conflict affected population to assistance and lastly 16% when to violence against humanitarian workers. The figure below is the outcomes of this assessment conducted in 2021 and released in August 2021 (OCHA, 2021) .

Figure 30 Access Severity Overview for Northwest of Syria 2021

ACCESS CONSTRAINT	PERCENTAGE OF REPORTING	
Presence of mines and UXOs	46%	
Military operations and ongoing hostilities impeding humanitarian operations	41%	
Physical environment	36%	
Interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities	31%	
Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods within the affected country	31%	
Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods into the affected country	20%	
Restrictions on, or obstruction of, conflict affected populations access to services and assistance, including the denial of access of women to services	20%	
Violence against humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities	16%	
Denial of the existence of humanitarian needs or of entitlements to humanitarian assistance	0.4%	

One of the interviewees stated that *“the biggest fear for humanitarian workers in Idlib is abduction or kidnapping for ransoms. Their NGO is not declaring salary scales for staff and keeping it confidential as mitigating measure for this risk, it is mostly more common in Idlib province than northern Aleppo”*. 40% of the NGOs were interviewed stated that they are paying their salaries in Turkish Liras while 60% stated that they pay in US dollars which might be higher risks to their staff. Another interviewee mentioned that *“it is well known for the community that salaries for aid workers are much higher than any other job opportunity available in the market, this is attracting lots of people to apply for positions while in other occasions it is turning to be a factor against our organisation’s acceptance in the field”*. A question was asked during interviews about interference of the local de facto or local administration in the program implementation and where it starts an interviewee from OCHA field team mentioned that *“they are receiving reports from NGOs in Idlib province much more northern Aleppo about interference in program implementation starting from beneficiaries lists continuing to monitoring and evaluation reports. NGOs in Idlib needs to have no objection letter for any project or field visits they would like to have, while in northern Aleppo, it is enough to sign a memorandum of understanding with AFAD and LCs which are covering all activities NGOs would like to conduct”*. In the interview with OCHA team it was mentioned as well that the Joint Operating Principles were first developed in

2015 and are available to all NGOs. The JOPs is a document shows exactly what can and can not be done from NGOs side and from conflict parties in Northwest of Syria, this document was signed by all Syrian National Army factions and brigades, but they were not signed by the SSG nor the HTS. Every time this topic was brought to SSG when engaging with them, they delay giving answer or address this topic seriously. From the aforementioned, the research found that despite the huge needs for humanitarian aid in the Northwest of Syria, yet there are so many access severities affecting NGOs activities in Northwest of Syria.

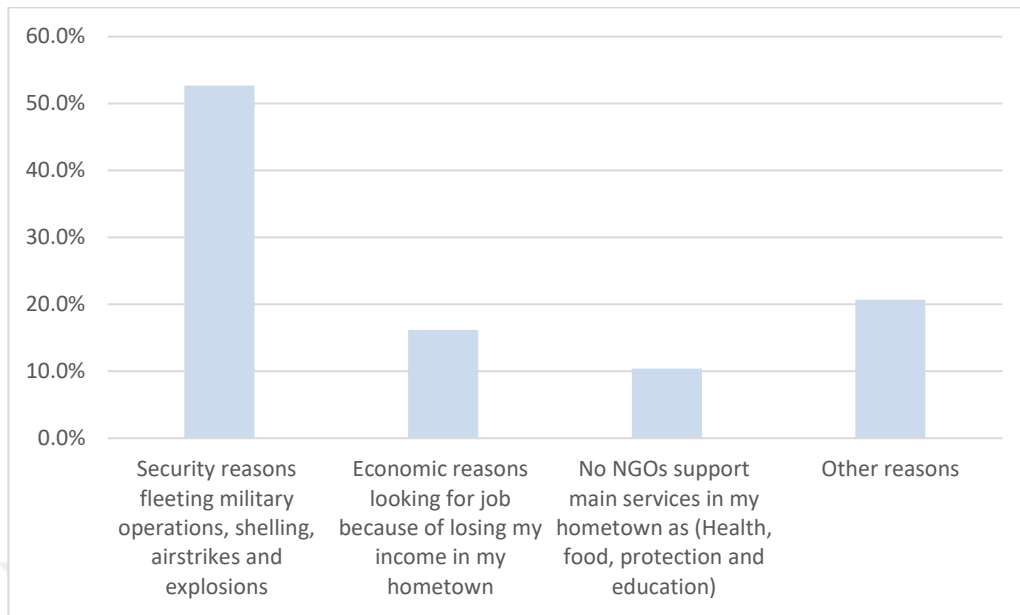
4.2 Funding Challenges

Comparing the huge needs for the IDPs and the host community with the available funds, still resources and funds are still limited and not sufficient to cover all needs. Every year since 2012 until today, the number of IDPs dependant on humanitarian aid is increasing and based on the OCHA reports 2.7 million internally displaced people are living right now in the Northwest of Syria (OCHA, 2021). As mentioned earlier, most of these IDPs were forced to displace for many times which worsened their economic situation and most of them consumed all their savings during their displacement journey. During interviews conducted, it was clearly stated that funds and the reductions every year on the budgets allocated to the Northwest of Syria is one of the main challenges NGOs experiences in their response to the Northwest of Syria communities. An interviewee from an INGO stated that *“donors discuss their allocated budget to Syria and other countries in an annual bases and last 5 years, we always suffered from reductions in resources and imposing cuts on our funds either because of the government’s plans or because of the economic situation”* while during discussing the exact impact of not having clear financial plans form donors including SCHF an interviewee from a local NGO stated that *“not having a two or three years budget plans is affecting our programs sustainability and not have the right impact on the targeted communities. It is also huge risk for our staff when every year we are reducing the number of BNFs and have to cut down the number of BNFs we are targeting in our project. As in last month, we had some angry families broke into our office in Afrin city as they were receiving regular aid in monthly bases while with the new project which started last December, they were dropped off from the lists which drove them to attack our office and suspend activities for 5 days until we negotiated with them”*. While interviewing AFAD coordinator for A’zaz district and asked about the funds and AFAD’s point of view of the allocated funds for the region under his supervision he mentioned that *“We have significant needs in A’zaz district as after ten years of war we have new generation growing under the war circumstances and we should make*

sure that they receive the basic needs they are in need for. AFAD is supporting bakeries in A'zaz district in addition to other projects but still the need for schools and more sustainable programming is much higher. It is time to shift IDPs and disabled people from being dependent to be independent and create small businesses for them and stop the food kits distributions". Based on AFAD International Humanitarian Aid Activities report, it was stated that more than 2.75 billion Turkish Lira was distributed in Syria as in-kind aid for Syria from 2011 until 2019. Most of the activities were conducted through the Turkish Red Crescent but through AFAD resources. The focus of the report was on the Olive Branch region which is referring to Afrin district and also Euphrates Shield region, which is referring to A'zaz, Albab and Jarablus (AFAD, 2019).

One of the funding challenges mentioned by participants was the focus of donors and funds on specific geographic areas. As most of the funds are going to Idlib region compared to the funds allocated to the northern Aleppo region. Unfair distribution of funds between areas hosting IDPs in both Idlib and northern Aleppo was referred to by an interviewee from a LINGO as mentioned *"Our area of response is determined mostly first by the donor's request then based on the needs assessment we conduct. There are some areas in the Northwest which donors are either not attracted to work at or they have other excuses which we might not be aware of. We noticed that areas which are covered by NGOs are attracting families to move to as their areas are not covered as in the WASH programs as an example".* A question was asked to people participated in the survey as why you moved to this area you are in right now where you pushed to leave because of the security situation, the economic situation or because your area was not covered with humanitarian activities? The below figures shows that 52.7% answered that they left because of the security situation, 10.4% answered that they left because their areas had no services nor humanitarian aid and 16.2% left their hometowns or cities because of the economic situation and looking for new opportunities.

Figure 31 Survey question on reasons for running out of their hometowns



WASH cluster stated that the lack of stabilization or early recovery funds because of many reasons also increase dependency on the humanitarian funds and stopped any plans to do cost recovery where NGOs can support local administration to collect fees from customers because of the economic situation of these families.

4.3 Administrative Challenges

One of the burdens which is restricting the humanitarian aid and also limiting options for NGOs to operate normally in Northwest of Syria is the administrative challenges. There are critical differences in operating in northern Aleppo than working in Idlib. During interviews and discussions with LNGOs and INGOs the author listed some of the main administrative burdens which are affection activities as the below:

First: registration in Turkey, As NGOs operating in the Northwest of Syria are based mainly in Turkey, both INGOs and LNGOs mentioned that they struggled to get their registration in Turkey approved after waiting for more than a year to receive the registration. It was mentioned that registration for LNGOs is much easier than registration for INGOs. This happened after authorities in Turkey revoked registration for some INGOs and started restricting registration for INGOs for multiple reasons. It was mentioned that in 2018 an INGO applied for registration for one year, they got their registration approved by 2020 as after two years of not operating in Turkey. Some INGOs mentioned that it might be the acceptance of the organisation plays a significant factor here and it might be general policy for the country. If an NGO does not have valid registration this means they can not use the

cross border gates to ship any of their commodities. OCHA team mentioned that recently since 2019, there was a shift in the Turkish government perception to NGOs and getting registration is easier than before if NGOs are following the right procedures.

Second: remote management, as some NGOs lost their registration in Turkey, some of the INGOs moved their offices out of Turkey and started operating in the Northwest from Jordan similar to other INGOs. This created another burden as INGOs international staff has no access to Northwest of Syria but there was limited staff allowed to cross border after they are approved from the related gates administration. International staff were not able to cross to Northwest of Syria since 2014 since ISIS emerged and couple of NGO workers were kidnapped in Idlib province (Rukmini Callimachi, at all, 2019). It is clearly stated by OCHA about the SCHF funds that they prioritise NGOs who has physical existence in Turkey than NGOs who are managing their projects from abroad which is less stable and feasible. Based on To Stay and Deliver book for Jan Egeland, she defined remote management as “*an adaptation to insecurity, the practice of withdrawing international (or other at-risk staff) while transferring increased programming responsibilities to local staff or local partner organizations*” (Egeland, 2011).

Third: negotiation with SSG/MDHA in Idlib, as all NGOs were interviewed stated that there is always pressure and interference from SSG and their ministry of development and humanitarian affairs (MDHA) with all programs. Recently SSG linked all local councils and relief offices to their ministries and none of the LCs are able to deal with any of the implementing organisation unless they get approval or no objection letter from MDHA please refer to *annex 3* as sample for no objection letter was given to one of the NGOs implementing in Idlib province. For so many donors, getting no objection letter or requesting official documents from SSG or their ministries are not allowed as one of the interviewees mentioned. In this case, NGOs are falling in the middle between donor regulations and SSG requests from NGOs. There are some examples of NGOs who closed their responses in Idlib completely because of the interference from MDHA as Big Heart organisation mentioned “*we had to close our mission completely in Idlib as we reached to a cross road where our donors are not allowing us to engage with SSG and SSG are controlling all humanitarian activities in Idlib*”. NGOs operating in northern Aleppo stated that they are not facing same difficulties as SSG does not control the area and the SIG has better acceptance by donors so it is easier for NGOs to implement in northern Aleppo than in Idlib.

Fourth: challenges to get access to northern Aleppo as not all NGOs met the requirements from Turkish authorities and AFAD in order to have access to northern Aleppo areas. As Afrin district falls under Hatay governorate administration, A'zaz district falls under Kilis governorate administration and Albab and Jarablus fall under Gaziantep governorate administration, all INGOs and LNGOs are required to get access permission and sign memorandum of understanding with AFAD and deputy governors managing each district. One of the INGOs interviewed mentioned that they access permission and MOU was revoked for second time therefore they could not have access to Afrin district so far. The author raised this question to AFAD coordinators for Afrin and A'zaz, Afrin coordinator mentioned that *“Access permission are granted to NGOs after they pass due diligence conducted by related departments, if NGO pass their due diligence they move to next stage. Then decision on whether the specific NGO will get their MOU signed or not is based on the proposed activities and modalities which in our turn we measure these proposals with the needs in the ground”*. While A'zaz coordinator stated that *“NGOs first they should delegate the right employees for negotiating access and MOU with AFAD and deputy governor. NGO's staff should be flexible and change their MOUs based on the needs not based on their donors' requirements. One of the most critical points we always face with NGOs is that they come to propose programs based on donors' desire not based on the needs required on the ground. We are in the ground and we face challenges every day”*. Notably, some NGOs mentioned in the interview that they are not facing any issue with signing MOUs as they have been working with AFAD for couple of years and attending regularly the monthly meetings facilitated by AFAD on each month. Because of covid-19 pandemic, the coordination was not great but still they managed to keep communicating remotely.

Fifth: covid-19 pandemic, all NGOs interviewed mentioned that since covid-19 pandemic evolved in the Northwester Syria in 2020, they had to suspend most of their activities, and they started to have limited access to communities. NGOs mentioned that they had to change their implementation modality completely based on the pandemic, one NGO mentioned that they had to shift from food kits distribution into electronic vouchers where they had to have less interaction with BNFs. A health NGO mentioned that they faced huge challenges as they already have limited capacity, while with covid-19 they were understaffed, and they had shortages with medicine and equipment.

Finally, there were other administrative challenges faced by NGOs but they were not critical and did not impose changes on their implementation modalities. These challenges are for

example, transferring documents from Syria into Turkey, suspending cross border lists for staff which affected coordination and lack of good quality communication in Syria which limited their coordination with field staff as well. From this point, the research would move to next challenge which is coordination challenges.

4.4 Coordination Challenges

The UNSC asserted on the importance of coordination between NGOs while responding to people affected during conflicts and disasters based on the resolution 46/81 on December 1991 (UNGA, 1991). Yet, it was noted during interviews with NGOs that they are struggling with having the right coordination between all NGOs working the Northwest of Syria. The author found multiple reasons for lack of coordination based on the feedback from NGOs interviewed:

- Lack of trust between NGOs as some NGOs mentioned that sharing information with other NGO might be risky for their programs.
- Security risks where if information shared in a transparent way it might reach to conflict parities which might limit their negotiation options.
- Remote management as lots of NGOs are working either home based or based in another country as one of the NGOs mentioned that their head office for Syria mission is in Jordan which is limiting their access to other NGOs and clusters' meetings.
- Competition between LNGOs, most of the LNGOs interviewed stated that they always worry that if they share information with other NGOs, it might affect their chances in getting funds from donors.
- Fears from donors' this found to be common with LNGOs more than INGOs. One of the LNGOs mentioned that *“our donors are so strict, so we always feel worried that the more information we share, the higher risk we are taking to be excluded from funds opportunities from donors”*.
- No benefit of sharing information, some NGOs mentioned that they tried to be active in sharing information and coordination with other NGOs and clusters, but they could not find benefits worth taking this risk to share their projects information with others.

The WASH cluster coordinator stressed on the importance of information sharing between INGOs, LNGOs and clusters as it is vital to get funds from donors and also to avoid overlapping of aid by NGOs. He also mentioned that *“information sharing and coordination between NGOs and the cluster is vital as we have constant dialogues with donors in monthly*

bases, so unless NGOs share with us the needs and lessons learned, we can not support them to get more funds. We share with NGOs the four (Ws) draft which they should be filling every month, but we do not have feedback from majority of the cluster members. At the end, donors consult clusters before they partner with and of the NGOs in the Northwest of Syria". The four double-Us draft report here refers to the template which NGOs should fill with information of (where, when who and what). Where they are working, when they are implementing their projects, who is implementing this project and what exactly they are doing in details.

When AFAD A'zaz coordinator was asked about the level of coordination they have with NGOs working in the area under their administration and how he sees coordination between NGOs themselves going on he stated that *"we try always to keep good coordination level with all local councils, AFAD team and NGOs sometimes we have regular meetings with all NGOs and sometimes we have bilateral meetings with each NGO. However, we have an issue that NGOs are not sharing their BNFs lists with us or details of their projects which is resulting in overlapping sometimes where some NGOs are serving the same BNFs with same service yet there is rejection from many NGOs to be open and share information"*.

To conclude, the research covered here four main challenges which are affecting the implementation of projects in Northwest of Syria. For sure there are other challenges but here the author covered the most significant and influential ones. For sure to overcome these challenges there should be collaborative approach from local authorities, NGOs themselves, clusters, Turkish authorities and also donors. There should be transparent and open dialogue between all these stakeholders in order to improve the response and serve those who are in need in the best way.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Findings

Throughout the literature review and the interviews and survey findings, the research reached to the below results and findings:

Humanitarian aid Mechanisms Findings:

- There are 135 NGOs responding to the needs in the Northwest Syria for both host communities and IDPs.
- Since July 2014 and under resolution 2165 cross border resolution was approved by UNSC and cross border response started which gave opportunities to local NGOs to improve their capacity and their internal systems. This was known as the localisation approach for the aid in the Northwest.
- HPF which was later changed to be SCHF is the funding mechanism for cross border and managed by OCHA from Gaziantep in Turkey. Since 2014 until 2018 the funding allocation was 55% going to LNGOs and 33.90 was going to INGOs.
- Most probable the resolution 2585 (2021) will not be renewed which will have significant impact over the humanitarian response in the Northwest of Syria. UN agencies and OCHA will have to suspend their operations while INGOs will have to take the lead in coordination and partnership with LNGOs.

Funding Related Findings:

- Starting from 2018 all international donors made it compulsory to INGOs to allocate 45% of their funding to LNGOs in order to proceed with their agreements.
- Not all funding pledged to help Syrian people are allocated to be spent inside Syria. Between 2.3 and 2.7 billion USD are allocated to be spent inside Syria.
- Trends of funding allocations are based on donor countries plans and trends inside Syria affecting the budget allocated to Syria.
- Seven out of ten NGOs interviewed has funding issues as stated that the needs are much higher than the funding they have. While the rest stated that the funding they have is meeting the needs and the capacity of their organisations.

- Not all NGOs are eligible to receive funding from SCHF mechanism, six out of ten NGOs interviewed were receiving funds from SCHF.
- There is a critical dropping down of funds for NGOs as eight out of ten NGOs stated that their funds are dropping down because of multiple reasons. In the four sectors the research examined, all of the sectors covered experienced fund shortages.

Humanitarian Sectors Analysis Findings in the Northwest:

- NGOs operating in the Northwest Syria are facing many obstacles which is affecting their adherence to the Humanitarian Principles. Mostly they are affected by military groups, local councils, community pressure and increased needs which are affecting NGOs adherence to HP.
- 56.1% of the participant answered that they prefer cash distribution while 27.4% preferred vouchers and 16.5% preferred in-kind distributions. This shows that not all food security distributions are meeting the exact needs of the BNFs.
- There is significant gap with the health sector as not all hospitals and clinics are operational in the Northwest of Syria. 52% of the health facilities in Northwest are fully damages and 30% are partially damaged. Between 11.3 and 8.6% of the allocated funds for Syria is going to the health sector which is insufficient. When the covid-19 pandemic started, it worsened the situation and created significant shortage in the health facilities capacity. 32.7% of the participants in the survey were not satisfied of the health services they provide.
- For water supplies, 36.7% of the participants in the survey answered that they are getting their water from the water trucking while 40.2% through the water network and 23.1% are getting their water from shared resources of both modalities. Despite of the fact that the water trucking costs are much higher than pumping water through the network yet lots of organisations are supporting water trucking modality which is not cost effective nor sustainable. With all attempts from donors, cluster and NGOs to push the cost recovery methodology forward but there were many obstacles did not allow this method to be implemented.
- Protection sector is the most critical sector, yet there were many risks identified by participants as:
 - Shelling and airstrikes
 - IEDs and explosions

- Theft and criminal acts
- Kidnapping
- HLP

There is lack of understanding of the real objectives of the protection-based programming which is in some cases cancelling the projects or causing delays which should not be the case.

Challenges for Humanitarian Organisations Findings:

There were many challenges NGOs are facing in the Northwest of Syria which is affecting programming and development of responses for BNFs. The biggest challenge NGOs are facing is the security situation and the de facto authorities which are in charge of the Northwest. On going military operations and presence of mines both are restricting access and as OCHA called them access severity or access constrains. Kidnapping and abduction for aid workers are also one of the highest fears and worries for the aid workers in the field. The research identified some mitigating measures NGOs applied to mitigate the risks and keep their programs going on.

One of the challenges NGOs are facing is lack of funds and resources compared with the huge needs and demands of humanitarian aid in the Northwest. 2.7 million IDPs are living in the Northwest. The research found that after ten years of the on going conflict in Syria and the Northwest, the interest of donors to support Syrian people was down and always kept emergency responses rather than looking for development projects and improve the market situation through finding generating income projects for BNFs rather than keeping BNFs dependent on regular distributions.

Getting approvals to access the communities in need also going through completed process in both Idlib and Northern Aleppo provinces. The research identified five main administrative challenges mostly related to Idlib province while for Northern Aleppo, NGOs need to understand the Turkish law to guarantee access and speed up the process.

Coordination Related Findings:

Despite of the multiple coordination platforms and bodies responsible for coordination of humanitarian response in the Northwest, there are many gaps and challenges faced by NGOs related to coordination. Information sharing is vital in the response in the Northwest however, NGOs participated in the interviews stated many risks and challenges prevented them from being transparent and sharing information widely between different

platforms. LINGOs created their own coordination platforms to help gather their voices in one body. AFAD, clusters and OCHA also were identified as coordination bodies for humanitarian response in Northwest of Syria, yet information sharing is not ideal and affecting programming negatively where lessons learnt are not usefully shared. With having issue with coordination is discouraging donors to invest more money in the Northwest response as interviewees stated.

Fulfilment of Basic Needs Findings:

Based on Maslow's hierarchy of motivation and basic needs, the research found that basic needs are not met for IDPs and host communities in the Northwest of Syria based on the below:

- In the four sectors examined in this research, there is significant gaps of funds as seven out of ten interviewed NGOs stated that they have funding issues and lack of resources which is limiting their responses to specific number of BNFs. While needs assessment they conduct and based of the HNO, the needs are much higher than the allocated funds.
- BNFs are not getting the service or aid they are looking for as in food distributions modalities, health, water and protection. Answers from BNFs showed that there is significant gap between BNFs and programs implemented.
- Security situation is affecting both the community and the NGOs in the Northwest. As safety and security comes second in the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it is fundamental to have better security environment in order to allow community living in the Northwest to next stages of psychological needs and self-fulfilment needs. It is basic and should be first step to improve the security situation first in order to move for more sustainable and resilient programming in the Northwest and build independent communities rather than aid-dependent communities.

5.2 Conclusion

Through the last decade, the Syrian conflict produced over than 2.7 million IDPs living in the Northwest of Syria. As the Turkish government steps improved the security situation in Northern Aleppo while there is more work to be done in Idlib to improve the security situation. 2.7 million IDPs forced to live their home towns and cities are residents of Northwest Syria now in addition to the 1.3 million host communities most of them are in need for humanitarian aid to be able to meet their basic needs.

The research focused on the IDPs and host community living in the Northwest of Syria examining their needs and safety and security situation while living in this geography. However, there is a major theme was not covered in this research and would be recommended for following researchers to cover as in the psychological needs and self-fulfilment needs to measure the exact status of the community living in the Northwest.

According to the research, the humanitarian response in the Northwest is not fulfilling the needs for the community living in this geography and more should be done by donors, UN agencies, NGOs and clusters to improve their responses and to move from emergency response to more development projects. There is significant worry that the cross border resolution would not be extended which would mean that a significant portion of funds for Northwest Syria would not be existing soon. This would have significant impact on LNGOs as well as the INGOs operating in the Northwest of Syria through the Turkey hub.

Eventually, it is concluded that there is significant challenges and obstacles preventing NGOs and BNFs from moving up from meeting basic needs towards building better environment for better response. Improving the security situation and having better coordination between all actors would be basic in order to improve the NGOs performance in the Northwest of Syria. Improving the security situation would allow number of IDPs to move back to their towns and cities which would reduce pressure from NGOs and donors at once.

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Annex 1

Overview of Global Clusters and Sectors

Table 1: Overview of global clusters and sectors

	Area of activity	Lead agency
CLUSTERS		
<i>Cross-cutting areas</i>	Protection	IDPs (<i>from conflict</i>) UNHCR
		Civilians affected by conflict (other than IDPs) UNHCR / OHCHR / UNICEF ⁵
		Disaster situations
	Camp coordination and management	IDPs (<i>from conflict</i>) UNHCR Disaster situations IOM
	Early recovery	UNDP
<i>Technical areas</i>	Emergency shelter	IDPs (<i>from conflict</i>) UNHCR
		Disaster situations IFRC ⁶
	Health	WHO
	Water, sanitation and hygiene	UNICEF
	Nutrition	UNICEF
	Education	UNICEF / Save the Children
	Agriculture	FAO
<i>Common service areas</i>	Logistics	WFP
	Emergency telecommunications	OCHA / UNICEF / WFP
SECTORS		
	Food	WFP
	Refugees	UNHCR

Annex 2

Current ministers of the Syrian Interim Government based in Turkey since 2019.



Annex 3

No objection letter from MDHA issued to NGOs would like to implement a project in areas under SSG control.

وزارة التنمية والشؤون الإنسانية
Ministry of Development and Humanitarian affairs

تصريح لا ملتم من مباشرة المشروع

الجهة المنفذ فيها المشروع:
المنظمة المنفذة للمشروع: رقم التواصل:
خطة المشروع:
اجمالي التوزيع: /
لجنة التنسيق

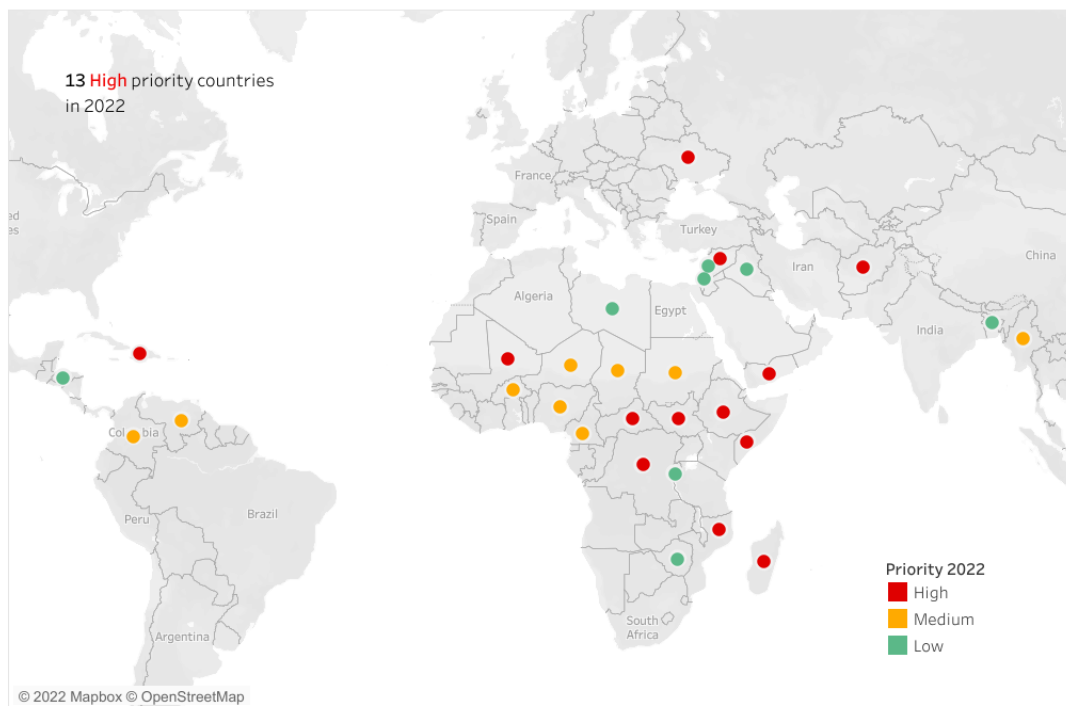
نسخة الى:
- ديوان لجنة التنسيق
- الجهة المعنية بتنفيذ المشروع

الرقم: (—) /ص
التاريخ: ٢٤١/ ٧ / ١٤٤١هـ الموافق لـ: ١١ / ١٩ / ٢٠١٩م

Annex 4

Global WASH Cluster priority countries per year 2020 till 2022

GWC Priority countries in 2022



GWC Priority countries per year

2022	Country	2022	2021	2020	
High	Afghanistan	High	High	High	■
	CAR	High	High	High	■
	DRC	High	High	High	■
	Ethiopia	High	High	Medium	■
	Haiti	High	Medium	Low	■
	Madagascar	High	Low	-	■
	Mali	High	Medium	High	■
	Mozambique	High	High	Low	■
	Somalia	High	High	High	■
	South Sudan	High	Medium	High	■
	Syria	High	High	High	■
	Ukraine	High	Low	Low	■
	Yemen	High	High	High	■
Medium	Burkina Faso	Medium	Medium	High	■
	Cameroun	Medium	Medium	High	■
	Chad	Medium	Medium	Medium	■
	Colombia	Medium	Low	Low	■
	Myanmar	Medium	Medium	Medium	■
	Niger	Medium	Medium	High	■
	Nigeria	Medium	Medium	High	■
	Sudan	Medium	Medium	Low	■
	Venezuela	Medium	Medium	High	■
Low	Bangladesh (CXB)	Low	Low	Medium	■
	Burundi	Low	Low	Low	■
	Honduras	Low	Low	-	■
	Iraq	Low	High	High	■
	Lebanon	Low	-	-	■
	Libya	Low	Medium	Medium	■
	Palestine	Low	Low	Low	■
	Zimbabwe	Low	Medium	-	■

Annex 5

Definitions of Access Constraints based on OCHA's Syria Access Severity Product Methodology Guidance May-2021

DESCRIPTION	SUGGESTED INDICATOR	IMPACT (SUGGESTED MEASUREMENTS)
1 CONSTRAINTS: Denial of the existence of humanitarian needs or of entitlements to humanitarian assistance.		
Refusal (normally by host government) to acknowledge humanitarian needs or the need for a humanitarian response (and/or appeal), AND/OR denial of assistance to certain communities (often based on a particular group trait, e.g. ethnicity, religion, or on their circumstances, e.g. having been displaced by a group/in a geographic area that is not recognised to be part of the conflict).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public statements made on humanitarian needs Private statements made on humanitarian needs (e.g. official letters, verbal communication) Community perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of affected people not receiving humanitarian assistance due to denial of need or exclusion of certain communities Number of days/weeks/ months of delay in launching a humanitarian response and/or appeal due to denial of need
2 CONSTRAINTS: Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods into the affected country.		
Bureaucratic and administrative requirements for entry into the country of operation, such as registration for the organisation or visas and work permits for personnel, AND/OR constraints on import of equipment and relief items into the country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays/denials of visas Delays/denials in official registration (permission to operate) of a humanitarian organisation Delays/denials for import of goods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of visas or official registrations pending/ delayed/ denied Duration that goods are held back by customs Staff hours required to process administrative requirements Costs incurred to process administrative requirements Number of affected people not receiving humanitarian assistance, or suffering from delays
3 CONSTRAINTS: Restriction of movement of agencies, personnel, or goods within the affected country.		
Impediments to freedom of movement as experienced by humanitarian actors in-country in order to reach affected populations and transport essential relief. These could include either physical restrictions (such as security checkpoints) or administrative restrictions (e.g. restricted travel or project permits, arbitrary or illegal taxation, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays/denials of travel permits Delays/denials of project permits Cancellation/ Postponement of field visit/work-related travel Demand for search of personnel and vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of affected people not receiving humanitarian assistance, or suffering from delays Number of days that affected population/geographic area inaccessible Staff hours required to process administrative requirements Cost of arbitrary fees/taxes imposed per incident or organisation Days relief goods are held back from transport and delivery
4 CONSTRAINTS: Military operations and ongoing hostilities impeding humanitarian operations.		
Implications of the military activities of the parties to conflict and other weapon bearers for the movement of people and goods. Absence of arrangements to facilitate the passage of emergency relief supplies during active hostilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Withdrawal of personnel Suspension of humanitarian activities Relocation of staff or bases for safety and security reasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duration that affected population is inaccessible/ number of affected people inaccessible Number of days that humanitarian activities were suspended

DESCRIPTION	SUGGESTED INDICATOR	IMPACT (SUGGESTED MEASUREMENTS)
5 CONSTRAINTS: Violence against humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities.		
Politically or economically motivated violence as well as exposure to incidental violence directly affecting humanitarian personnel, equipment and facilities. This may include threats of violence, coercion, theft or looting of aid supplies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attacks against humanitarian workers Threats against humanitarian workers Theft or looting of humanitarian assets (vehicles, relief items, etc.) Use of social media to propagate negative perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of staff killed/injured Numbers of staff abducted Amount and type of assistance stolen/looted and number of beneficiaries therefore not reached Degree to which public acceptance of humanitarians decreases
6 CONSTRAINTS: Interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities.		
Direct interference (usually by political or military actors) with humanitarian activities during or after their implementation. This may include pressure to work in specific geographic area or insistence to link humanitarian assistance to a specific political or military agenda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interference or attempted interference into beneficiary selection Interference or disruption of humanitarian activity during implementation Interference into other operational modalities (transport, distribution, etc.) Post-distribution looting or confiscation of relief items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of affected population excluded from assistance due to interference Amount/type of assistance diverted Duration of delay caused to humanitarian activities as a result of interference (including any decision by humanitarian actors to suspend activities until interference is resolved)
7 CONSTRAINTS: Presence of Mines and UXOs.		
Mines, improvised explosive devices, cluster munitions and other unexploded ordnance inhibiting the movement of equipment, goods and personnel or otherwise impeding humanitarian activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of mines/ERWs per geographic area (including suspected presence, reported but not demarcated, demarcated area, defined hazardous area, cleared area) Incidents and trends of people / livestock injured or killed by mines / ERW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of affected population killed/injured by mines or UXOs Numbers of affected population unable to receive assistance because of presence of mines
8 CONSTRAINTS: Physical environment		
Obstacles related to terrain, climate and lack of infrastructure, such as roads, bridges and airstrips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State of physical infrastructure Climatic or other event temporarily affecting infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of affected population unable to receive assistance due to physical environment
9 CONSTRAINTS: Restrictions on, or obstruction of, conflict affected populations access to services and assistance		
All events and practices which interfere with the ability of conflict-affected populations to access assistance and services. These may include forced population movement as well as physical or administrative restrictions that prevent affected populations (or specific individuals or groups) to access services and assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forced movement of population away from location of assistance People involuntarily forced / encouraged into an area in order to receive assistance Denial of population movement to location of assistance Restriction on population movement Involuntary return to place of origin Prevention of use of services/ assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of affected population unable to receive or excluded from assistance

Annex 6

Key informant interview with Local Councils and relief committee members

1. What is your name and position in the Local council?
2. What is the structure of the local council you are heading?
3. How would you describe the security situation in your village/town? Do you think the security situation is affecting the decision of NGOs working in your village?
4. How many organisations work in your villages/town?
5. What are the programs implemented in your village/town? And how many BNFs as in total for all projects?
6. Who is coordinating the activities of the organisations in your village? What phase are you involved in the program design for NGOs? Program design? Program implementation? Program evaluation?
7. Have you been able to change any of the programs planned to be distributed in your village/town? Can you please give an example if there are any?
8. For food distribution programs, do you have food kits distributions, food vouchers or cash for food? What do you think are the preference of the beneficiaries?
9. Do you have WASH programs in your village? What are the modalities followed? Water trucking or network? Which modality do you prefer and why?
10. Do you have protection program in your village/town? What are the main challenges for this project? From one to four, could you please list the most critical protection issues for your community and for beneficiaries?
11. How many health facilities do you have in your village towns? Are they supported from NGOs or not? Are they supporting the community with sufficient services?
12. Are there IDPs staying in your village only because they are receiving aid? Are there IDPs residing in your village despite of the fact that their villages/towns are safe?

Local Councils of:

(Salqin, Maret Tamsreen , Qourqania, Afrin , A'zaz , Albab)

Key informant interview with AFAD Coordinators for Euphrates Shield Area and Olive Branch area.

1. Approximately, how many LNGOs and INGOs are active in the area under your supervision?
2. How do you assess the security situation in the area under your supervision? Are there any interventions from military groups in humanitarian activities? How do you avoid this interference?
3. One of the challenges identified by LNGOs and INGOs that they are facing some difficulties to sign MOUs with AFAD and deputy governorates, what do you think about this issue and how NGOs can guarantee access to areas in need for humanitarian aid?
4. How do you assess coordination between NGOs and AFAD in the area under your supervision? Do you have direct contacts with NGOs head offices in Turkey?
5. In the programs implemented in your area, do you think that needs are met? What should be done differently in each sector if we talk about food security, WASH, health, and protection?
6. What do you think is missed and NGOs are not focusing at? Or what are your recommendations for NGOs to focus at more in the coming projects to meet the needs of the IDPs and host communities?
 - O.H: AFAD Afrin Coordinator
 - H. K: AFAD Azaz Coordinator

Key Informant Interview with INGOs and LNGOs working in the Northwest of Syria

1. What are the areas your organisation is covering in the Northwest of Syria as of Idlib and Northern Aleppo?
2. What sectors you are active at? Do you have WASH, food security, protection and health? What are the gaps in your projects? And which modality you follow during implementing your projects according to the following:
 - Food security and agriculture: in-kind, cash or vouchers?
 - Water supplies: water trucking water network?

3. Do you receive funds from SCHF pooled funds or directly from government donors? What is the percentage of the total funds you get from each resource?
4. Comparing between gaps and the funds you receive; how do you describe your resources? Do you have funding gaps or you think you are having enough resources? Where should donors focus more?
5. Speaking about coordination, what coordination bodies do you coordinate with during implementing your projects? (AFAD, clusters, OCHA, governorates, local councils and any other stakeholders? Who do you describe coordination in the Northwest response?
6. Speaking of security situation in the northwest, could you please label the access constraints you are facing in the field? Do you report regularly security incidents to OCHA?
7. Do you attend clusters meetings regularly and your report the four double-Us?
8. When you have security incident, who is helping to mediate and solve the incident for you in Idlib and Northern Aleppo?
9. Who do local councils in Northern Aleppo and MDHA in Idlib interact with your projects and in which phase? Have you had to cancel or delay a project because of the interference of one of the stakeholders in both areas? If yes, please describe the incident.
10. What are the main challenges you have as a humanitarian NGO working in the Northwest of Syria? Could you please mention the top 5 challenges? And what mitigating measures have you put in place to overcome these challenges?
 - H.S: İnsani Yardımlaşma Derneği (IYD)
 - J.K: Bahar organization
 - M.N: WATAN organisation
 - M.R: Shafaq organisation
 - M.H.H: UOSSM medical organisation
 - M.H. Care International (INGO)
 - M.O: People in Need (INGO)
 - K.L: ACTED (INGO)

- O.A: Global Communities
- S.Q: Hand in Hand (INGO)

Key informant interview with cluster coordinators

1. What are the challenges NGOs are facing in your sector?
2. How many NGOs are registered under your cluster? How do you describe the interaction of INGOs and LNGOs under your cluster in term of reporting and information sharing?
3. As every year there are funding gaps with funds allocated to your sector from the SCHF and from international donors, what are the risks NGOs are facing because of these gaps? what are the mitigating measures NGOs are implementing?
4. Do you have direct coordination with other clusters or coordination bodies as of (OCHA, AFAD, LCs and other stakeholders)?
5. Reviewing the access severities prepared by OCHA, in your opinion, what are the most critical severity which is affecting implementation of projects within your cluster?
6. In which stage are NGOs right now in term of serving BNFs, are they only working in fulfilling basic needs or they are trying to build more resilient and sustainable communities?
7. What is needed to build more resilient communities and move from depending completely on aid towards more independent community from aid?
8. What are your recommendations to donors to focus at in the Northwest of Syria response for the coming five years?
 - O.N: WASH cluster Co
 - A.M: Health Cluster Co
 - A.A.M: Food Security Cluster Co
 - M.S: Protection cluster Co

Key informant interview with OCHA access officer

1. What are the key stakeholders you engage with to maintain access for humanitarian NGOs in the Northwest of Syria?

2. How many NGOs are registered under the OCHA coordination mechanism of both INGOs and LNGOs and how do you describe interaction and coordination of both types of NGOs in term of reporting and information sharing.
3. In general, how do you see the interaction of local authorities and government entities in both Northern Aleppo local councils and MDHA and SSG in Idlib?
4. How can better encourage NGOs to coordinate better the humanitarian response in the Northwest?
5. For the SCHF pooled funds, in case of non-renewal of the cross border resolution what are the scenarios are you working at as preparation and mitigating measures from your side?
 - K.H: Member of the access working group
 - H.M: head of the access in the field
 - M.K: head of the access working group in Gaziantep

Survey link

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe19LSPCJKE73HqESiBsDufqcvIhqIUh5fIKkgS7_XFpnXgAw/viewform

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