

An update on Northwestern Syria

In addition to the humanitarian and current field conditions in Northwestern Syria, this report monitors the violations that were observed from the period between **8 to 14 of March 2020** within the areas outside the control of the Regime in Idlib governorate, Western Aleppo governorate, Northwest Hama countryside, and Lattakia countryside. The region has a population of more than 3.5 million.

The Northwest is witnessing a general and sometimes partial calm, as a result of the Turkish-Russian armistice to reduce the escalation, signed on March 6, 2020. This week no civilian casualties were recorded, however, there were a number of violations recorded from the Regime forces and their allies. These violations can be seen in the table below.

First: Violations recorded by the Syrian civil platform:

Kind of Violation	Area	The party that did the violation	Time and Date	Notice
Heavy machine guns	Aleppo - Abzemo	Regime forces and their allies	8/3/2020 4.13	
Artillery	Idlib – Al-Ghassaniya	Regime forces and their allies	8/3/2020 13.00	
Artillery	Idlib – Al-Mastouma	Regime forces and their allies	9/3/2020 15.00	
Artillery	Aleppo – Daret Azza	Regime forces and their allies	9/3/2020 5.03	
Heavy machine guns	Aleppo – Near Fouj 46	Regime forces and their allies	9/3/2020 7.18	A Turkish military convoy was targeted
Artillery	Aleppo – Kafar Amma	Regime forces and their allies	9/3/2020 9.55	
Infiltration attempt	Kafar Amma - The western countryside of Aleppo	Regime forces and their allies	9/3/2020	It was addressed by Opposition armed factions
Artillery	Hama – Al-Sirmaniya	Regime forces and their allies	11/3/2020 13.00	
Artillery	Aleppo – Kafar Amma	Regime forces and their allies	12/3/2020 7.33	
Artillery	Sfouhin – Kafar Awid	Regime forces and their allies	13/3/2020 8.00	7artillery shells

In addition to the above violations, a group of people were monitored having a a sit-in called "The Dignity Sit-In" aiming to cut the M4 road to Lattakia, and announced several demands. This included calling upon the Regime to return of the borders of the Sochi Agreement.

Second: Economic conditions

The economic conditions in the Northwest are still poor, especially after the Regime forces took control of large areas of agricultural land, which is the main source of income for the population, which also contributed to the high prices of vegetables and fruits in all the Northwest. An air storm has also affected the remaining crops in the lands that were not controlled by the Syrian Regime.

The value of the Syrian pound against the U.S. dollar has continued to decrease, which has led to an increase in costs of commodity prices, coupled with weak purchasing power for the common Syrian population.

The situation has become worse by the continued rise in fuel prices due to the closure of the road between the Northeast and Northwest by the Syrian Democratic Forces. It has secured the needs of the Northwest with fuel in sufficient quantities, and fuel is currently being secured through import through the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing with Turkey with equipment Limited and high prices.

The crossing with Turkey is still open for the movement of commercial and relief shipments, but it is closed to the movement of patients with the cases that not dangers and not emergency , according to a statement of the Syrian Bab Al-Hawa crossing.

Third - The housing crisis for the displaced:

The Northern countryside of Idlib, near the Turkish border, is witnessing a large population congestion that has exceeded its absorptive capacity. Displaced people have sought agricultural lands and mountains for shelter and live in the open, and in some villages, some of them are being housed in schools and mosques.

The areas controlled by the Regime forces are still completely empty of population, even those areas that were controlled in the previous military campaign and at the present time far from the lines of contact (Khan Shikhoun, Morik, Kafarzita, Qalaat Al-Madiq) are still completely empty of population.

Displaced people in the area suffer from difficult humanitarian conditions, especially with bad weather conditions, as the number of camps affected by windstorms reached more than 19 camps in the Northwest, causing more than 983 families to be affected, and dozens of families were displaced within those camps without shelter. This impacted other camps by crowding and causing damage.

The suffering of the IDPs in Syria has increased the weak response of the organizations for the humanitarian needs of the IDPs, especially shelter, food, education, water, sanitation and heating fuel. Some of the IDPs are still homeless, or they live in tents in the open within the agricultural lands and mountains.

Fourth: The Educational process:

The education sector is still suffering from paralysis and almost complete cessation of the educational process, especially after the European Union suspended its grant to the education sector in Idlib, which used to cover 65% of the total grant for education from the Manahel Project for the Kimonex organization.

Added to this is the problem of overpopulation in the Northwest, and the inability of schools to absorb the large numbers of students in light of the massive displacement that occurred in the past three months.

To make matters worse, the educational process in some of the schools has stopped due to the presence of displaced people in it because of the lack of alternative places, but initiatives are underway to restore the education wheel for these schools by either providing tents as an alternative for families in schools or emptying a section of the school and resuming work in the morning and evening periods.

On 14/3/2020, the Directorate of Education in Idlib issued a decision to suspend working hours in private and public schools and educational institutes for a week, "in order to ensure the safety of students and educational personnel from the Corona virus"; a statement from the Directorate of Education.