

Northwest Syria Update

29 February 2020

Introduction: Syrian Civic Platform will monitor the situation in the Northwest of Syria from 22 to 29 February 2020 and will update the Syrian and international actors on the situation. This will respond to the concerns that the Syrian civilians have in those areas because of the escalation by the Syrian Regime and Russia.

This report monitors the humanitarian and field conditions in Northwestern of Syria in the period from 22 to 29 February, and in areas outside the control of the Regime in Idlib Governorate, South and West of Aleppo Governorate, Western Hamah countryside, and Lattakia countryside, where this region is inhabited by more than 3.5 million people.

The North-West is still suffering from the bombing and hostilities launched by the Syrian Regime and Russia, as the Regime forces took control of large areas in the South of Idlib, but the Opposition factions were able to later, retake some of them.

The events witnessed rapid developments after the killing of 34 Turkish soldier which were followed, by air strikes in the village of Balyoun south of Idlib, to be followed by the Turkish air force with a series of air strikes and intense missile launches, which resulted in large numbers of deaths among the forces of the Regime and its allies in addition to a large destruction in the equipment.

The economic conditions in the Northwest are still very bad, as poverty and unemployment are widespread and with the Regime forces controlling more lands and the people fleeing from them, the region lost large areas of agricultural lands that were the main source of living for most of the population in addition to the depreciation of the Syrian pound against foreign currencies in addition to the decrease in the value of the Syrian pound against foreign currencies and weak trade movement.

The suffering of the population is compounded by the onset of winter and the increase in the people's need for heating fuel. In these difficult circumstances, the residents resort to replacing the fuel by burning clothes and used shoes, in addition to the tires and plastic waste, despite their great harm to human health.

Fuel prices continue to rise due to the continued closure of the road between the Northeast and Northwest by the Syrian Democratic Forces, which had secured the needs of the Northwest with fuel in sufficient quantities, while fuel is currently secured through import through the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing with Turkey in limited quantities and high prices.

Victims

The number of victims during the period from 22/2/2020 to 29/2/2020 is 55 civilian victims, in addition to 164 wounded.

164 Wounded		
men	Women	Children
105	23	36

Victims 55		
men	Women	Children
25	11	19

Field Conditions

Southern and Eastern Idlib:

The continuation of the military campaign launched by the Regime forces, backed by its Russian and Iranian allies, in Southern Idlib, where those areas are bombed by Russian and Syrian warplanes and the ground forces of the Regime forces, where the following areas were subjected to daily bombing with various types of weapons:

Southern And Eastern Idlib				
The target areas of the bombing				
Hass	Sfouhin	Der Sunbul	Kansafra	KafarNubul
Al-Fattira	Jouzif	Hzarin	Sarmin	Al-Bara
Bsaqla	Marret Hurma	Ibdita	Iblin	Kafa Awid
Sheikh Damis	Al-Rakaya	KafarSajna	Ihsem	Maarzita
Mhambel	Balyoun	Meraian	Qminas	Al-Nqier
Koukba	Al-Nerab	Tarmala	Sheikh Mostafa	Sheikh Sindian
Dar Al-Kabira	Innib	Bsamis	Bsanqoul	Al-ramy
Aafis	Benin	Al-Rwiha	Saraqib	Maarata
Al-Kfer	Binnish	Arnaba	Al-Lij	Taoum
Ariha	Mashoun	Maaret Alia	Al-Mastouma	Balshoun
Al-Mwazra	Taftanaz	Qouqfin	Sarja	Mentif
Msebin	Al-Salhiya			

As a result of this campaign, the Regime forces and their allies were able to control large areas in Southern Idlib.

Southern And Eastern Idlib				
Areas controlled by the Regime forces and their allies				
Stouh Der	Marretmatir	Jbala	Tall Al-Nar	KafarSajna
Erinba	Hantoutin	Sheikh Damis	Al-Rakaya	Baarbo
Om Sir	Al-Nqier	Maarzita	Marret Hurma	Sheikh Mostafa
Bsaqla	Hass	KafarNubul	Hzarin	Marret Sin
Kursaa	Al-Fqea	Hasana	Jebbin	Dar Al-Kabira
Flefel	Kafar Mous	Al-Mallaja	Al-Fattira	Lwibda
Al-Arema	Al-Sherka	Kokaba Qasira	Kokaba Tawila	Sfouhin
Tarmala	Om Nir	Kafa Awid		

On the other hand, the Opposition factions launched a counter attack on several villages in order to regain control of them, namely:

Southern And Eastern Idlib				
Areas that Opposition factions have retaken				
Qouqfin	Al-Hallobi	Kafa Awid	Saraqib	Al-Nerab
Shabour	Dadikh	Kafar Battikh	Aafis	Joubas
Al-Salhiya	Mjariz	Al-Rweha	Al-Trunba	

Northwest Hama:

Regime forces launched a massive military campaign on the Northwestern Hama countryside backed by its Russian and Iranian allies, where those areas are bombed by Russian and Syrian warplanes and the ground forces of the Regime forces, where the following areas were subjected to daily bombing with various types of weapons.

Northwestern Hama				
The target areas of the bombing				
Kherbet Naqous	Al-Mansoura	Al-Hamidiya	Al-Qastoun	Al-Ziyara
Zeoun	Dwer Al-Akrad	Al-Qarqour	Al-Mshayik	Al-Sermaniya
Al-Sehriya	Koura	Sahab	Medan Ghazal	Al-Ziyadiya
Der Sunbul	Shahranaz	Hourta		

As a result of this campaign, the Regime forces and their allies were able to control most of the Northwestern Hama countryside.

Northwestern Hama				
Areas controlled by the regime forces and their allies				
Al-Sehriya	Al-Diqmaq	Der Sunbul	Sahab	Koura
Al-Derouna	Rasha	Shahranaz	Sher Mghar	Medan Ghazal
Qlidin	Al-Engawi	Al-Qahira	Shoulin	Jirn
Al-Umqiya	Tanjara	Jisr Bet Rass	Al-Hawwash	Al-Hawija
Al-Zaqoum				

On the other hand, the Opposition factions launched a counter attack on several villages, where they were able to regain control of them.

Northwestern Hama		
Areas that Opposition factions have retaken		
Al-Diqmaq	Al-Zaqoum	Qlidin

Idlib City:

On 24 February, 2020, the city of Idlib and its surroundings were subjected to artillery shelling and cluster bombing by the Regime forces, without causing any casualties.

On 25 February, 2020 warplanes of the Regime forces bombed Idlib, targeting a hospital, a popular market, and the industrial zone, killing 3 men and wounding 15 others, including 5 medical personnel.

During the same timeline, Syrian ground forces targeted 4 schools, a kindergarten, and a bakery with cluster rockets and artillery shells, killing 4 civilians (two teachers, a student, and a teacher) and wounding 18 others.

On 27 February, 2020, Idlib city was bombed by Regime force warplanes and artillery, which resulted in the death of 6 civilians, including a woman and 3 children, and wounding 7 others, including 3 children.

Northern Idlib:

On 25 February, 2020, the city of Marret Masrin was bombed by warplanes of the Regime forces, which resulted in a massacre of 11 civilians, including 7 children and women, and 45 injured, including 12 children and 12 women.

On 27/2/2020, Russian warplanes bombed the town of Shillakh, killing civilians 4 people from one family, including two children and a woman, and wounding another man.

West Idlib:

The Western countryside of Idlib witnessed intermittent artillery shelling by the Regime forces on the following areas:

West Idlib				
Areas targeted by artillery and missile shelling				
Al-Janoudiya	Bsanqoul	Bdama	Jisr Shughur	Al-Najiya
Al-Zarzour				

West Aleppo:

Some villages in the Western countryside of Aleppo have witnessed intermittent aerial and artillery shelling by Regime forces and Russian warplanes.

The Western countryside of Aleppo		
The target areas of the bombing		
Al-Jina	Daret Azza	Al-Atarib

Northeast Lattakia:

The region is witnessing intermittent light clashes between the Regime forces and its allies and the Opposition forces, without changing the map of control of the land.

Displacement movement

The number of displaced people in the Northwest, during the period from 22 to 29 February, 2020, has reached to more than 29,500 people.

The total number of IDPs from 1 November 2019 to 29 February 2020 has reached to 1,029,533 displaced persons.

Statistics of the displaced, from 1 November 2019 to 29/2/2020				
Number of Men	Number of Women	Number of Children	Number of Families	Total Number
219203	257383	555947	180619	1029533

Most displaced persons migrated towards the northern countryside of Aleppo (Azaz and Afrin) and the northern countryside of Idlib towards the villages near the border strip in towards to the border camps.

The northern countryside of Idlib, near the Turkish border, is witnessing a very large population congestion that has exceeded its absorptive capacity. This has resulted in many newly displaced persons taking refuge in agricultural lands and mountains, living in open spaces, sometimes in villages where they are housed in schools and mosques.

The displaced people in the northern regions suffer from difficult humanitarian conditions, especially with bad weather and severe cold weather. Their suffering has increased the response of the organizations to the humanitarian needs of the displaced, especially shelter, food, education, water, sanitation and heating fuel, where the majority of the displaced are still without shelter, or live in tents within agricultural land and mountains.

Education

The education sector is still suffering from a paralysis and almost complete cessation of the educational process or institutions, 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.

The continuous and repeated displacement has cast a shadow over the educational process in terms of displaced students, as well as the inability of schools in host areas to absorb the large and increasing numbers of students.

With the huge increase in the numbers of the displaced, some community activities in many areas have resorted to housing the displaced in schools and public facilities, which has led to the pause of the educational process, especially in schools in the northern region of Syria.