

An update on Northwestern Syria

In addition to the humanitarian and field conditions in Northwestern Syria, this report monitors the violations that were observed in the period from **1st to 7th of March 2020** in the areas outside the control of the Regime in Idlib governorate, Western Aleppo governorate, Northwest Hama countryside, and Lattakia countryside where he lives. The region has more than 3.5 million people.

The Northwest has been experiencing an unusual calm after the start of the Russian-Turkish agreement in Moscow.

Since the beginning of Friday 3/6/2020, the military operations and the air and ground bombing campaigns that were carried out by the Regime forces and its allies have stopped, and the region has witnessed peace that it has not known for months. However, the Regime forces and their allies have made some violations of the agreement, from bombing operations and advancing on some axes. The violations were as follows:

Kind of Violation	Area	The party that did the violation	Time and Date	Notice
Artillery	Kansafra	Regime forces and their allies	6/3/2020 00.23	4 artillery shells
Artillery	Sfouhin	Regime forces and their allies	6/3/2020 02.00	3 artillery shells
Artillery	Al-Fattira	Regime forces and their allies	6/3/2020 02.00	6 artillery shells
Artillery	Aleppo countryside - Tqaad	Regime forces and their allies	6/3/2020 22.00	2 artillery shells
Artillery	Al-Fattira	Regime forces and their allies	7/3/2020 12.00	20 artillery shells
Artillery	Sfouhin – Kafar Awid	Regime forces and their allies	7/3/2020 20.00	50 artillery shells
Artillery	Al-Fattira	Regime forces and their allies	7/3/2020 19.00	8 artillery shells

On 3-3-2020, the Regime forces launched an attack on the village of Marret Mukhus, south of Idlib, to control it, and withdraw from it at a later time on the same day. On 6-3-2020, the military operations and bombing campaigns launched by Russia and the Regime forces were most intense, with 48 civilian victims documented. The Regime's forces also advanced in several areas, in Eastern and Southern Idlib.

The economic situation in the Northwest is still very bad, as poverty and unemployment continue to prevail, with the Regime forces controlling more lands and the people fleeing from them. The region lost large areas of agricultural lands that provided a major source of income for most of the population. In addition, commercial traffic was weak and the Syrian pound depreciated further.

The suffering of the population is compounded by the beginning of the winter season, and the increase in the need for heating fuel.

Fuel prices continue to rise, due to the continued closure of the road between the Northeast and Northwest by the Syrian Democratic Forces. Previously, this road was being used to transport sufficient quantities of fuel to the Northwest. However, fuel is currently being imported through the Bab al-Hawa border crossing with Turkey, in limited quantities for higher prices.

Victims

The number of victims during the period from 1/3/2020 to 5/3/2020 reached 50, while more than 72 were wounded.

48 Dead		
Men	Women	Children
32	9	9

72 Injuries		
Men	Women	Children
54	7	11

Field conditions

From 1 to 5 March, 2020

Idlib, Southern and Eastern countryside:

The military campaign launched by the Regime forces backed by its Russian and Iranian allies on Southern Idlib continued until the end of Thursday 5/3/2020. These areas were bombed by the Russian and Syrian warplanes, and the ground forces of the Regime, where the following areas were subjected to daily bombings of various types weapons:

Idlib, Southern and Eastern countryside:				
The target areas of the bombing				
Maaret Naasan	Kansafra	Binnish	Sarmin	Saraqib
Al-Bara	Al-Nerab	Jouzif	Jabal 40	Bsamis
Benin	Shnan	Ihsem	Kafar Awid	Hzarin
Qminas	Al-Mastouma	Sfouhin	Al-Fattira	Arnaba
Kafar Shlaya	Al-Rami	Ariha	Mjeriz	Flefil
Meraian	Shellikh	Afis	Balyoun	Nehliya
Joubas	Saan	Al-Rwiha	Der Sunbul	Kafar Battikh

This campaign enabled the Regime and its allies to control Saraqib and several surrounding villages:

Idlib, Southern and Eastern countryside:				
Areas controlled by the Regime and its allies				
Kafar Battikh	Dadikh	Al-Trunba	Joubas	Saraqib
Shabour	Saan			

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

Idlib, Southern and Eastern countryside:				
Areas that Opposition factions have regained control of				
Hirsh Kfarnubul	Kafar Moous	Sfouhin	Al-Fattira	Al-Dar Kabira
Koukaba	Flefil			

Northwestern Hama:

The Regime forces launched a massive military campaign on the Northwestern Hama countryside backed by its Russian and Iranian allies - these areas were also bombed by Russian and Syrian warplanes, and the ground forces of the Regime forces. The following areas were targeted with daily bombardments with various types of weapons:

Northwestern Hama:				
The target areas of the bombing				
Al-Engawy	Al-Diqmaq	Al-Ziyara	Tall Wasit	Al-Qastoun
Zizoun Station	Al-Sirmaniya	Qledin	Al-Qarqour	Al-Mansoura
Al-Zaqqoum	Al-Mshaiyk			

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

Northwestern Hama:				
Areas that opposition factions have regained control of				
Al-Omqiya	Qledin	Tanjara	Al-Qahira	Al-Engawy
Al-Manara	Al-Fatatra			

Idlib City:

On 3/3/2020, Idlib city was targeted by artillery and missile shelling by the Regime forces, which led to a massacre of 11 people, including seven children, while 21 people were wounded.

Northern Idlib countryside:

On 1/3/2020, Russian warplanes bombed the town of Batinta, massacring civilians: four people, including a child were killed and five people, including a woman were wounded

On 2/3/2020, Russian warplanes bombed the village of Al-Foaa, north of Idlib causing heavy casualties –nine people died while others were wounded.

On 3/3/2020, the town of Shillikh was targeted with a missile strike that killed one man and wounded three others, including a woman.

On 3/3/2020, Russian warplanes bombed a gathering of displaced persons on the outskirts of the city of Marret Masrin, which resulted in a massacre of 16 civilians, including seven women and two children while 21 civilians were wounded, including four women and a child.

Idlib Western countryside:

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

Idlib Western countryside				
Areas targeted by artillery and missile strikes				
Al-Janoudiya	Adwan	Al-Najiya	Bdama	

On 3/3/2020, the Regime forces bombed the city of Jisr Al-Shughour with cluster rockets. No victims were recorded.

On the same date, the Regime forces bombed with artillery shells the village of Bdama, killing a child.

Aleppo Western countryside:

Some villages in the Western countryside of Aleppo witnessed intermittent artillery shelling by the Regime forces, in addition to shelling by Russian warplanes.

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

On 4/3/2020, the Opposition factions launched an attack on the axis of the village of Sheikh Aqil to be able to control the town, in addition to Tall Al-Raqqam, but withdrew from it after several hours.

North-West Lattakia countryside:

The region is witnessing minor intermittent clashes between the Regime forces and their allies, and the Opposition forces, without changing the map of control over the ground.

Displacement movement

The number of displaced people in the Northwest, during the period from 1 to 7 of March, reached more than 11,700 people.

The total number of IDPs since 1/11/2019 until 7/3/2020 reached 1041233 displaced.

Statistics on the number of IDPs from 1/11/2019 to 6/3/2020				
Men Numbers	Women Numbers	Children Numbers	Families Number	Total Number
217664	261443	562126	185672	1041233

IDPs from Aleppo countryside	IDPs from Idlib countryside
408780	632453

The displaced people went mainly to the Northern countryside of Aleppo (Azaz and Afrin) and the Northern countryside of Idlib, towards the villages near the border, in addition to the border camps. Some of them are still living exposed, in the open and under olive trees.

Distribution of Displaced	
387622	In random and organized camps
210640	Villages near the border
183406	Afrin Area
151009	Area Of (Al-Bab – Azaz – Jarablus)
108556	In the open and under trees

The Northern countryside of Idlib, close to the Turkish border, is witnessing a population growth that has exceeded its absorptive capacity, as newly displaced people have taken refuge in agricultural lands, mountains. They live in the open and in some villages (some of them were inhabited in schools and mosques).

IDPs in the Northern regions suffer due to difficult humanitarian conditions, especially the extreme cold weather. Poor response of the organizations to the humanitarian needs of the displaced, in particular shelter and food, education, water and sanitation, and heating fuel have contributed to the IDP's tribulations. Majority of the displaced are still without shelter and live in tents on agricultural lands and mountains.

The educational process

The education sector is paralyzed and educational process has been terminated 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 the 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 resorted to housing the displaced in schools and public facilities, which led to the stopping of the educational process in a large portion of schools in the northern region, which is expected to continue in the short term. Other schools stall due to continued military operation of the system and the displacement of local population.