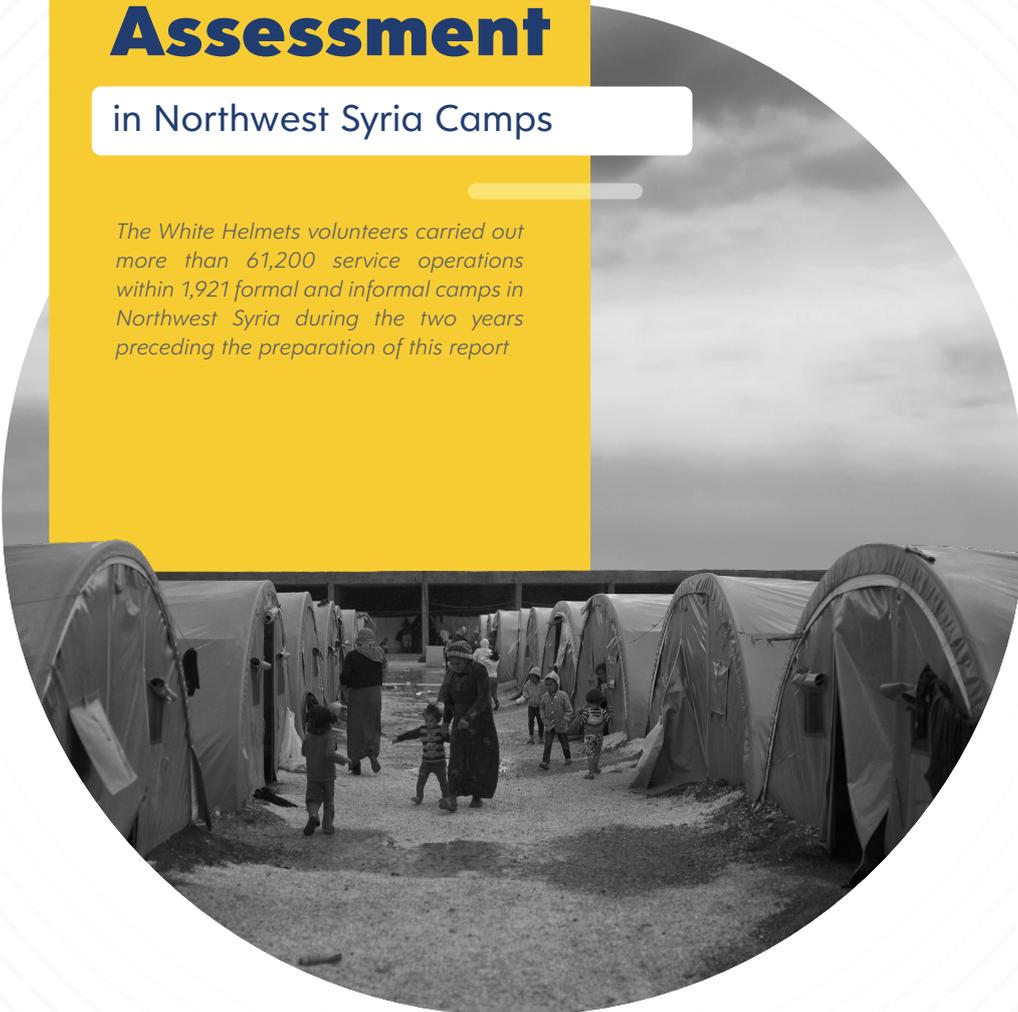


Need Assessment

in Northwest Syria Camps

The White Helmets volunteers carried out more than 61,200 service operations within 1,921 formal and informal camps in Northwest Syria during the two years preceding the preparation of this report



Syrian Civil Defence
The white Helmets

Table Of Content

Introduction	01
Methodology	02
The situation in assessed camps	02
The basic needs of the camps	08
Recommendations	19

List of Figures

Figure 01	<i>Number of IDPs and IDP families within the assessed camps</i>	03
Figure 02	<i>Places of residence of IDPs by type</i>	03
Figure 03	<i>The distribution of camps according to the ownership of the land</i>	04
Figure 04	<i>The camps that were damaged during last winter</i>	05
Figure 05	<i>Camps damaged last winter according to type of damage</i>	06
Figure 06	<i>Camps according to the type of response provided</i>	06
Figure 07	<i>Was the problem solved after response</i>	07
Figure 08	<i>Suggestions for solving the problems encountered in the camps last winter</i>	08
Figure 09	<i>The proportions of the tents according to the type of insulators required</i>	08
Figure 10	<i>No. and types of insulators required</i>	09
Figure 11	<i>No. and types of insulators required according to the sub-district</i>	09
Figure 12	<i>Providing the camps with drinking water</i>	10
Figure 13	<i>Frequency of supplying the camps with drinking water</i>	11
Figure 14	<i>The number of available and required water tanks by sub-district</i>	12
Figure 15	<i>Soil quality in camps that need drainage pits:</i>	13
Figure 16	<i>Percentage of camps with public toilets</i>	14
Figure 17	<i>Percentage of camps that need toilets</i>	14
Figure 18	<i>Availability of separate toilets for males and females</i>	15
Figure 19	<i>Availability of bathrooms in assessed camps</i>	15
Figure 20	<i>The availability of rainwater drainage system in assessed camps</i>	16
Figure 21	<i>The need for rainwater drainage system in assessed camps</i>	17
Figure 22	<i>The availability of paved roads within the assessed camps</i>	17
Figure 23	<i>The availability of solar-powered lighting in the camps</i>	18

Introduction

The suffering of Syrian internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the camps of Northwest Syria is increasing year after year, as they have been waiting for a long time for a solution that ends their tragedy and return them to their homes in their cities and villages. The suffering of these IDPs has increased during the past two years due to the scarcity of humanitarian aid that coincided with the spread of the coronavirus, and the continuation of the attacks by the Syrian regime and its allies.

According to the Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster, 1,683,404 IDPs, including 399,353 women and 945,526 children, live in 1,389 formal camps in Northwest Syria, in addition to thousands of IDPs in informal camps.

The preparation of this report coincides with the onset of the winter season, in which the Syrian IDPs suffer from extremely difficult living conditions, as tragic accidents happen every year, including the sinking of tents and the uprooting of other tents by the wind, or their erosion by torrents, in addition to the burning of tents, and the difficulty of humanitarian access due to rough roads.

These incidents, which lead annually to deaths and injuries among the Syrian IDPs, and that can be avoided through the improvement of infrastructure and providing the camps with basic services, given that the humanitarian response provided by the actors over a decade has not been able to provide sustainable solutions to the camps of Northwest Syria. Instead, most of the humanitarian response was limited to temporary solutions, such as providing food and hygiene kits.

The White Helmets volunteers carried out more than 61,200 service operations within 1,921 formal and informal camps in Northwest Syria during the two years preceding the preparation of this report, i.e., between October 2019 and October 2021, including more than 32,400 service operations related to the infrastructure of these camps.

Disinfection operations, as precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 epidemic, topped the service operations with more than 17,000 operations, considering the spread of the virus and infections in Northwest Syria. The service operations also included more than 9,000 operations of facilitating lands and spreading gravel on the floor, more than 1,900 sewage line digging, more than 1,600 road opening, in addition to preparing more than 900 camps.

This report, prepared by the Information Management Unit of the Syrian Civil Defense (the White Helmets), presents the most important basic needs of the IDPs in 192 camps in Northwest Syria, in an attempt to enhance the capacity of humanitarian actors to plan and provide timely humanitarian support that meets the required needs, aiming at the improvement of camp conditions and reducing frequent tragic accidents.



Methodology:

The Information Management Unit developed the questionnaire for this report based on the minimum standards of the shelter needs and benefited from feedback by stakeholders to bring the survey indicators comparable and context specific. A team of 34 experienced enumerators collected the data in the 192 assessed camps. These enumerators attended special training on the questionnaire to ensure the highest levels of professionalism in collecting field data. The data collection process included direct observation, direct interviews with camp officials, in addition to reports by White Helmets teams that continuously provide services in many camps.

The data collection process was carried out during October 2021, and the final report will be issued in December 2021.

Most of the camps were selected from the camps that witnessed an emergency intervention by the White Helmets volunteers during the last winter (especially after they witnessed accidents or disasters), in order to follow up the current situation of these camps, evaluate the interventions during the last period and their impact on the IDPs at those camps, take appropriate measures, and develop appropriate strategic intervention plans there.

The situation in assessed camps

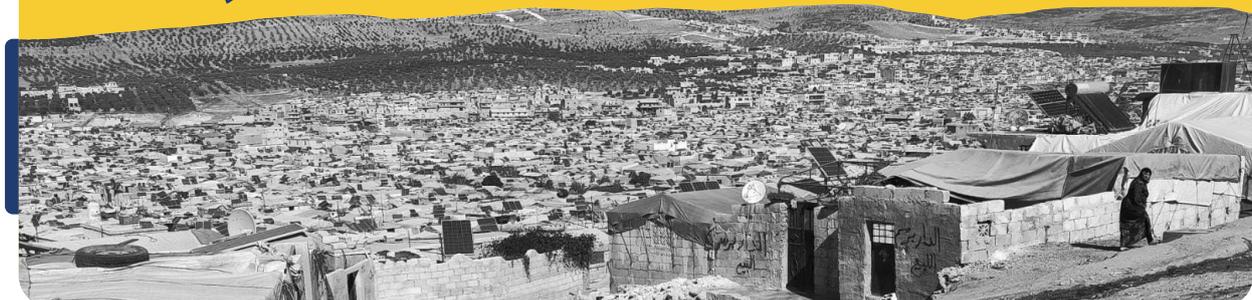
No. of camps and their geographical distribution by sub-district

International human rights law recognizes the human right to adequate housing. This right includes a number of freedoms, including the protection of the individual against forced evictions and the arbitrary destruction and demolition of his home, the right to choose his place of residency, and the freedom of movement. Most of the forcibly displaced Syrians suffered from the bitterness of forced eviction, and their homes, neighborhoods, cities and villages were destroyed, and they were forced for repeated displacement waves to save their lives due to the change in the areas of control map.

The studied sample included 192 camps within 12 sub-districts in Idlib and Aleppo governorates. Including 183 camps within 11 sub-districts in Idlib governorate and nine camps within al-Atareb sub-district in Aleppo governorate. The sample included 179 formal camps and 13 informal camps within 45 villages in Northwest Syria.

The largest number of the camps within the studied sample was within the Dana sub-district (102 camps), because it contains the largest number of camps in Northwest Syria, as 891,341 IDPs live in 569 formal camps within Dana sub-district, according to CCCM cluster, knowing that this number does not include the IDPs within the informal camps.

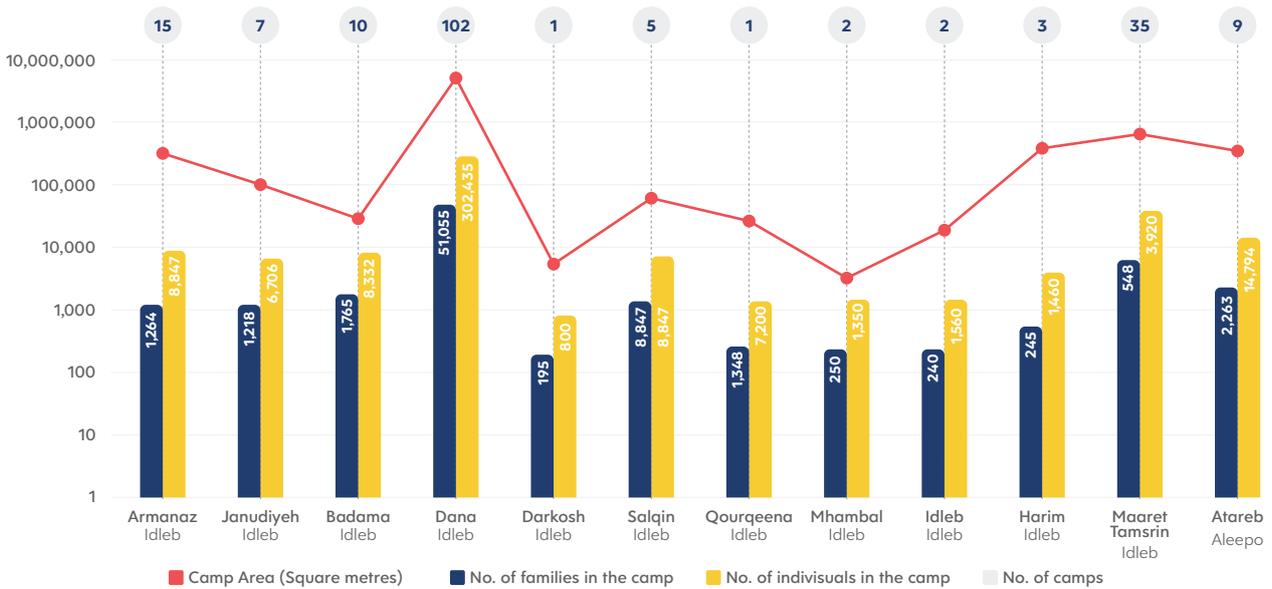
891,341 IDPs live in **569** formal camps



Families and individuals in assessed camps

The number of the IDPs living in the assessed camps was (394,969 IDPs, 66,553 IDP families), with an average of six persons per family. The largest number of IDPs (302,435 IDPs, 51,055 IDP families) live in the Dana sub-district, on a total area of 5,348,350 square meters within 102 camps.

Figure 1: Number of IDPs and IDP families within the assessed camps



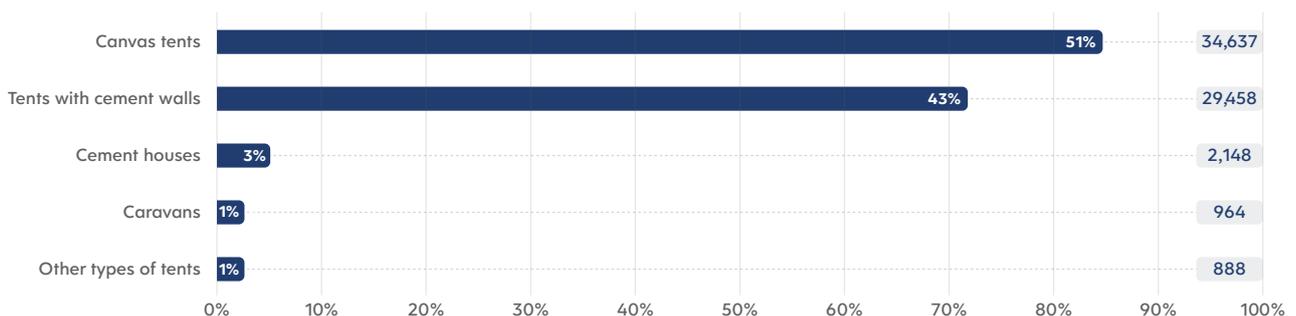
IDPs places of residence by type

The total number of shelter units within the assessed camps was 68,095 shelter units, of which the fabric tents constituted the largest proportion, (34,637, 51%) tents, and (29,458, 43%) tents with concrete walls roofed with rain insulators, whereas cement homes constituted (2,184, 3%) homes, and caravans constituted (888, 1%) caravans.

The largest number of shelter units (48,968) was within the Dana sub-district, of which tents with concrete walls constituted the largest proportion, (27,496, 56%), whereas (18,311, 37%) were fabric tents, in addition to 4% cement houses, and (963, 2%) caravans.

The places of residence of the IDPs were confined to the fabric tents only within all the camps in several sub-districts, including Ma'arrat Tamasrin, Idlib Center, Mhambal, Qourqeena, and Armanaz.

Figure 2: Places of residence of IDPs by type



The area of assessed camps and number of IDPs

The results of the study showed that the average per capita share of space within the assessed camps amounted to 18.5 square meters, knowing that this space is much less than the recommended space per capita according to the Sphere standards, which amounts to 45 square meters.

The minimum space required per person is 45 square meters, including roads and sidewalks, public cooking areas and educational facilities, recreational areas, health facilities, fire prevention, administrative buildings, water tanks, distribution areas, markets, storage areas, and home gardens for families, according to Sphere standards.

According to the UNHCR Handbook in Emergencies, the recommended minimum space per person is 30 square meters, including public space, such as roads, market areas, health care facilities, schools and administrative buildings. If conditions and culture permit agricultural activities such as maintaining gardens or raising small animals, then an area of 45 square meters is considered the minimum per person.

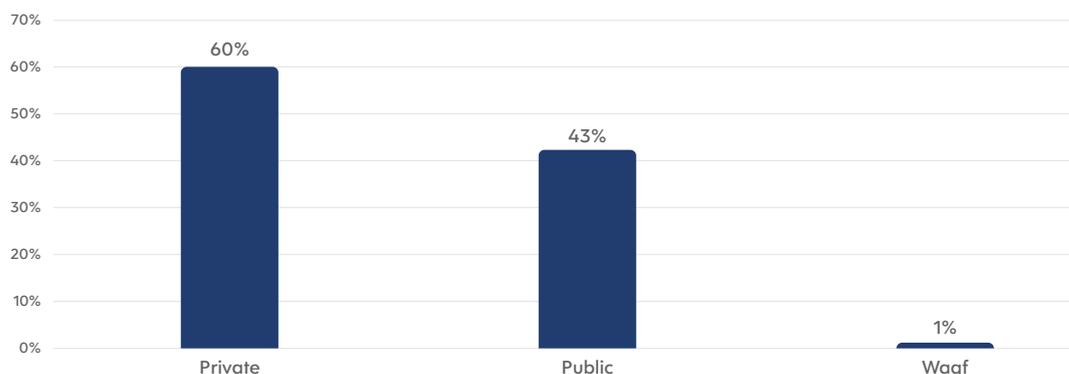
The Sphere standards also state the entitlement of residents to improve or increase the available roofed space: “Since the urgent shelter operation provides only the minimum amount of roofed space and the necessary material aid, the distressed family often has to look for alternative means to increase the roofed area available, and that the form of the shelter and the materials used to build it should allow each family to gradually adapt or improve some of its aspects to meet their long-term needs using locally available tools and materials.” “The stricken population, if they are responsible for building or maintaining their shelter or clearing the rubble, should have the necessary tools, and additional training to carry out this task.”

The distribution of camps according to the ownership of the land

The results of the study indicate that the highest number of camps was established on privately owned lands by 60%, while 43%, of camps were established on publicly owned lands, and 1% of the camps were established on endowment lands. Whereas some camps were established on common property, both public and private.

The results showed that the assessed camps in Qourqeena sub-district were established on 100% privately owned lands, while the camps in the following four sub-districts (Harem Center, Idlib Center, Mhambal, Darkush) were established on 100% public ownership.

Figure 3: The distribution of camps according to the ownership of the land



¹https://ccmcluster.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/CMT_FR_00_18_Digital_1.pdf

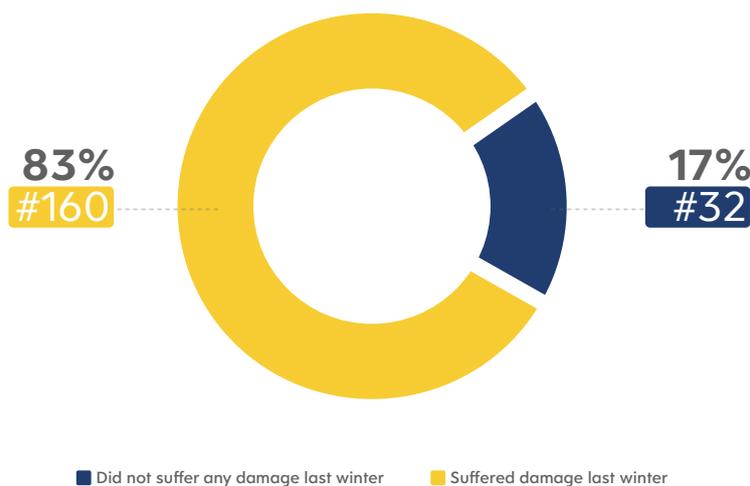
The camps that were exposed to accidents or damaged during last winter

The scene of the suffering of the Syrian IDPs in their camps is repeated every year, especially during the winter season, as they suffer from torrential rains and the flooding of tents, whereas the supporters and supervisors could not find a sustainable solution for the IDPs. On the other hand, the interventions of White Helmets volunteers stand out to respond to these accidents and natural disasters.

Many camps, especially informal ones, were established by the IDPs themselves, without any planning, facilities or infrastructure, and without a study of the nature or inclination of the land, which makes these camps vulnerable to many risks resulting from the informal planning of construction operations, which affects the White Helmets teams and makes them in a permanent race against time in a trial to take needed actions to prevent these disasters from occurring before the onset of winter.

(160 camps, 83%) of the assessed sample were damaged during the last winter season, while (32 camps, 17%) were not damaged during the same period.

Figure 4: The camps that were damaged during last winter:

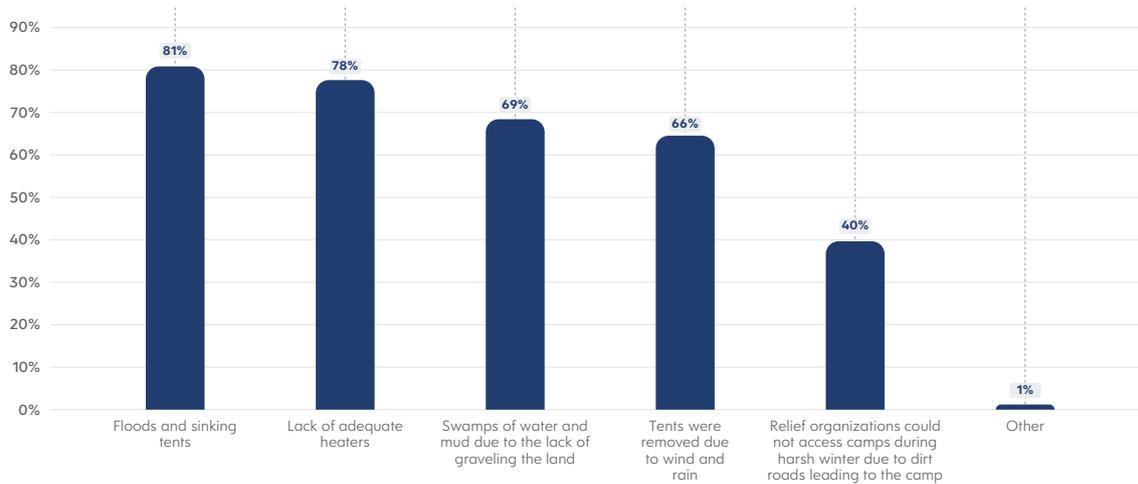


Difficulties and problems faced by the camps:

In a review of the most prominent difficulties and challenges faced at these camps, 81% of the assessed camps suffered from floods and tents sinking, while 78% suffered from the lack of adequate heating, and 69% of the camps suffered from the formation of water swamps and mud as a result of the poor condition of roads and sidewalks.

Tents at 66% of the camps were torn down because of strong winds and heavy rain, and 40% of the camps faced difficulties because of the inability of humanitarian organizations to reach to them due to the poor condition of the roads leading to the camps.

Figure 5: Camps damaged last winter according to type of damage

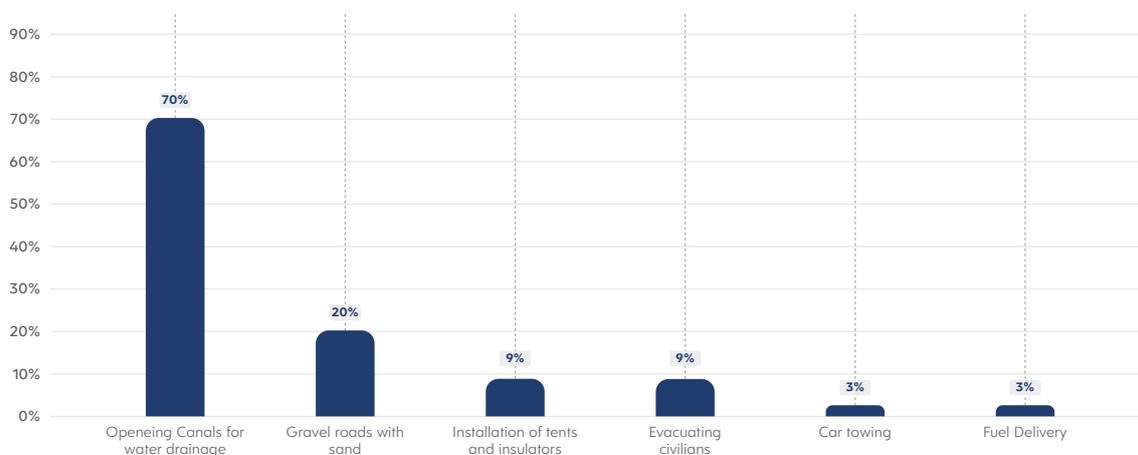


Response operations within the camps that were damaged last year:

According to the information sources, humanitarian actors intervened within (64 camps, 40%) of the assessed camps, which were exposed to accidents and difficulties during the past winter, in an attempt to remedy these damages and the difficulties that emerged there, while humanitarian actors did not intervene in (96 camps, 60%).

The information sources added that the most prominent intervention in 70% of the camps was opening rainwater drainage channels, whereas the roads in 20% of the camps were gravelled with sand, tents and insulators were installed in 9% of the camps, and civilians were evacuated from 9% of the camps as well. In addition to towing cars and providing fuel in 3% of the camps.

Figure 6: Camps according to the type of response provided



The White Helmets volunteers
carried out more than

61,200

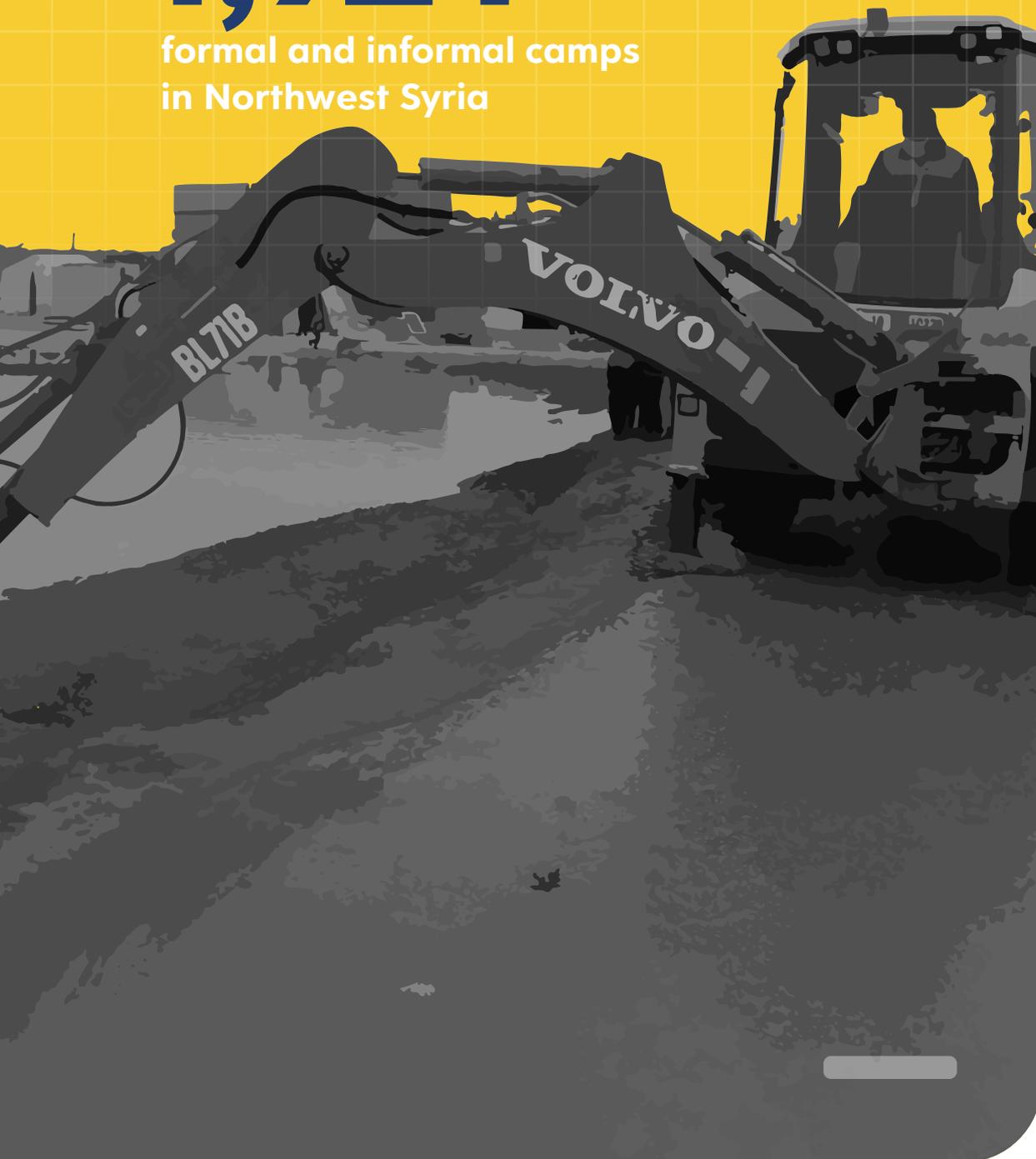
Service operations



within

1,921

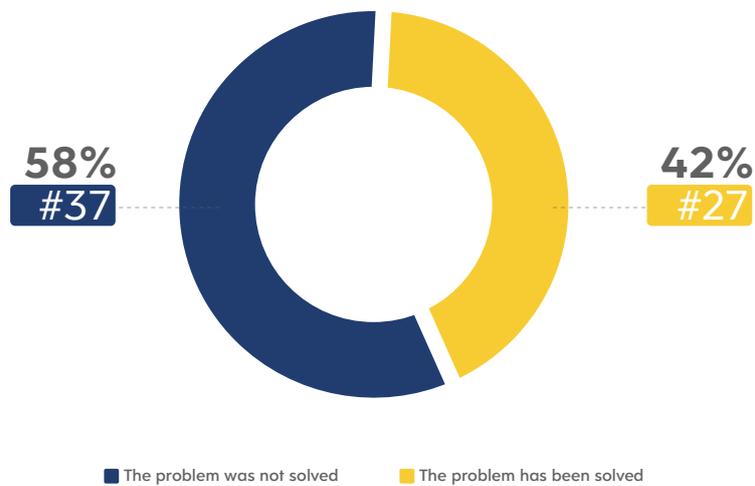
formal and informal camps
in Northwest Syria



The impact of the response in addressing difficulties and problems:

Upon asking the sources of information whether the contribution or the intervention solved the problem. The results showed that the intervention solved the problem in (27 camps, 42%) of the camps, while the problem was not resolved despite the intervention in (37 camps, 58%), 18 camps of them were within Ma'arrat Tamasrin sub-district, and 12 camps within the Dana sub-district. Noting that the biggest problem that has not been resolved in most sub-districts was opening rainwater drainage channels.

Figure 7: Was the problem solved after response

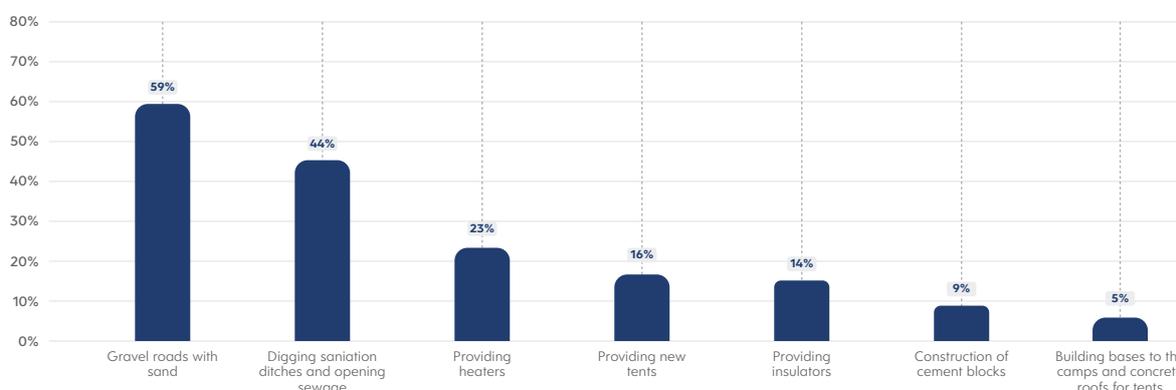


The basic needs of the camps

The most prominent suggestions to solve the problems faced by the camps:

Based on the experience and knowledge gained by the camp supervisors during the last period, especially with their efforts to solve the problems they face in their camps, the sources of information were asked about their suggestions to avoid the problems that the camps faced during the winter season, and the ways to solve them if they occur next winter. Paving the roads and spreading gravel on it topped the priorities, followed by providing sewage channels and sewage pits. The priorities also included providing heating facilities, replacing worn-out tents with new ones, and providing insulators.

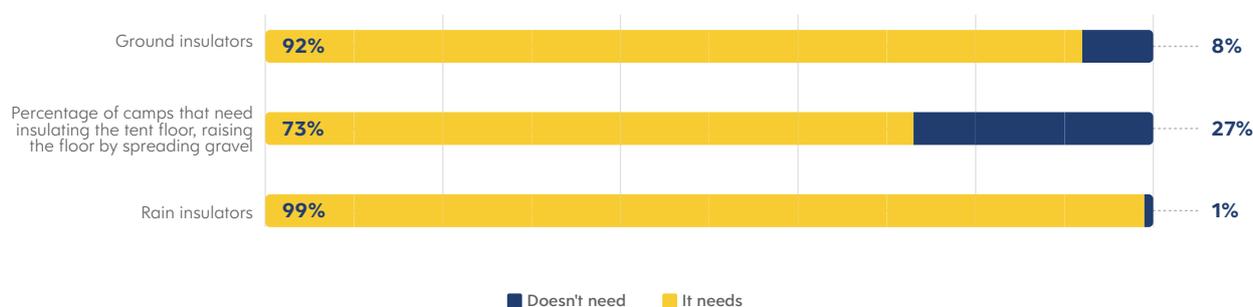
Figure 8: Suggestions for solving the problems encountered in the camps last winter



The need for insulators at camps:

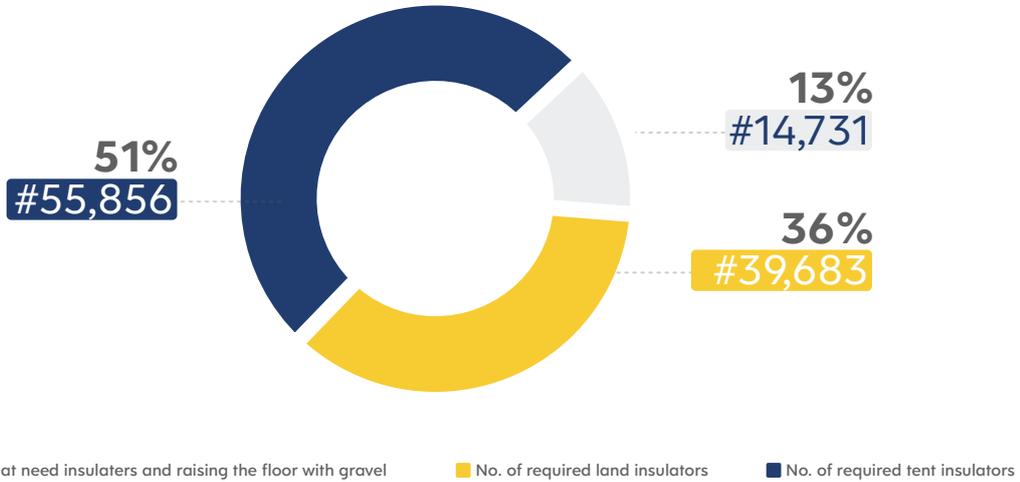
The results of the study indicate that the vast majority of the camps need all kinds insulators, as 99% of the camps (190 camps) need rain insulators, and 92% of the camps (176 camps) need ground insulation, whereas 73% of the camps need (140 camps) additional isolation measures such as raising the floor of the camp and spreading gravel on the floor.

Figure 9: The proportions of the tents according to the type of insulators required



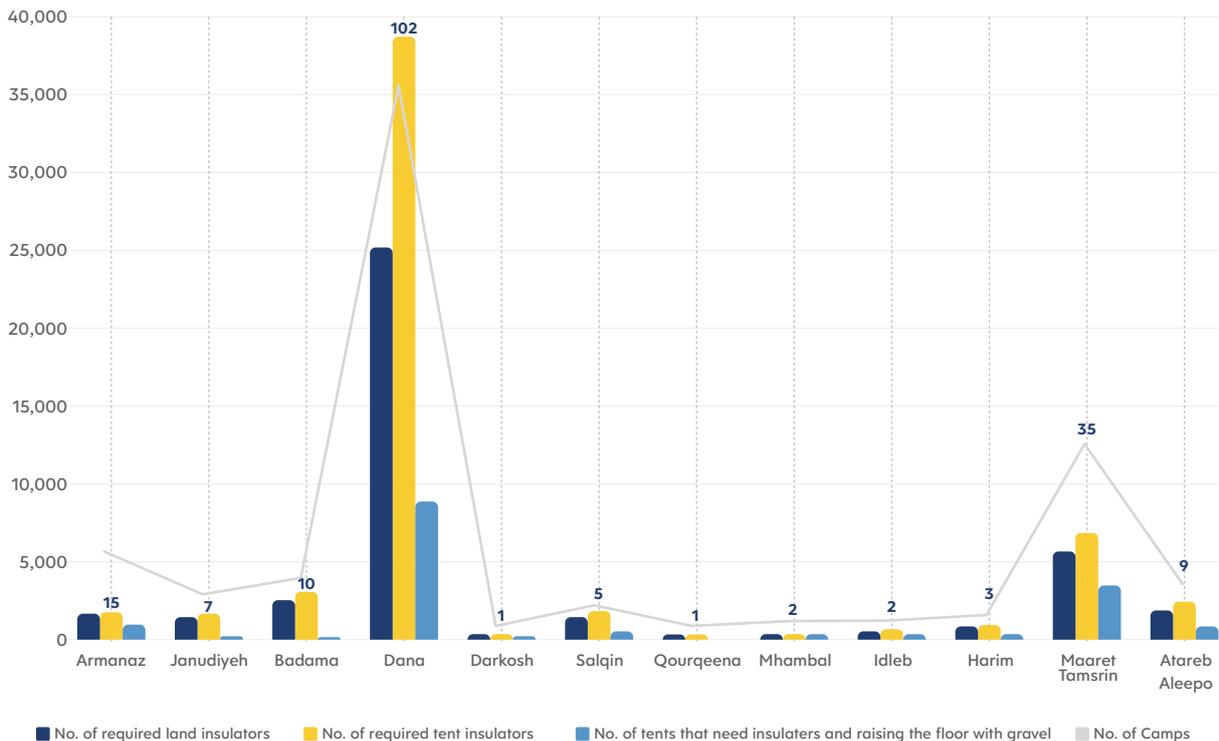
In numbers, a total of 55,856 tent rain insulators and 39,683 ground insulators were needed. In addition, 14,731 tents need additional insulation measures by insulating the tent floor, raising the floor, and spreading gravel on the floor.

Figure 10: No. and types of insulators required



At the sub-districts level, the greatest need for insulators was recorded within the camps of Dana sub-district, as 101 camps need a total of 37,495 rain insulators, and 90 camps need a total of 24,362 floor insulators, and 77 camps need additional insulation measures by isolating the tents' floors, raising the floor of the camp, and spreading gravel on the floor in 8,552 tents. Followed by the camps in the Ma'arrat Tamasrin sub-district, where 35 camps need a total of 6,570 rain insulators, as well as 35 camps need a total of 5,405 floor insulators, and 32 camps need additional insulation measures by isolating the tents' floors, lifting the land and covering it with gravel in 3,315 tents.

Figure 11: No. and types of insulators required according to the sub-district



The need for drinking water at the assessed camps:

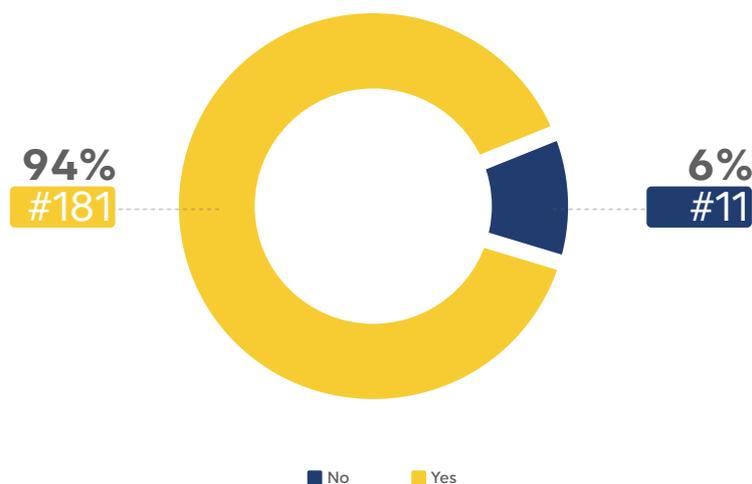
In a comparison of statistics and estimates issued by the Sphere Standards for Quality Humanitarian Response, the results of the study showed that individuals obtain this standard amount within only 54 camps of the assessed camps, while the individual receives less than standard amount in 138 camps.

Providing water to the IDPs of these camps is one of the simplest rights that all humanitarian organizations and international bodies should secure, especially considering the current Covid-19 pandemic which require access to increased quantities of water for cleaning and disinfecting, to ensure people remain safe.

Providing the camps with drinking water

The results of the study showed that 94% of the assessed camps were provided with drinking water during the data collection period. While the residents of (11 camps, 6%) of the assessed camps, suffer due to the lack of an entity that supply their camps with drinking water. Therefore, they must secure drinking water themselves.

Figure 12: Providing the camps with drinking water

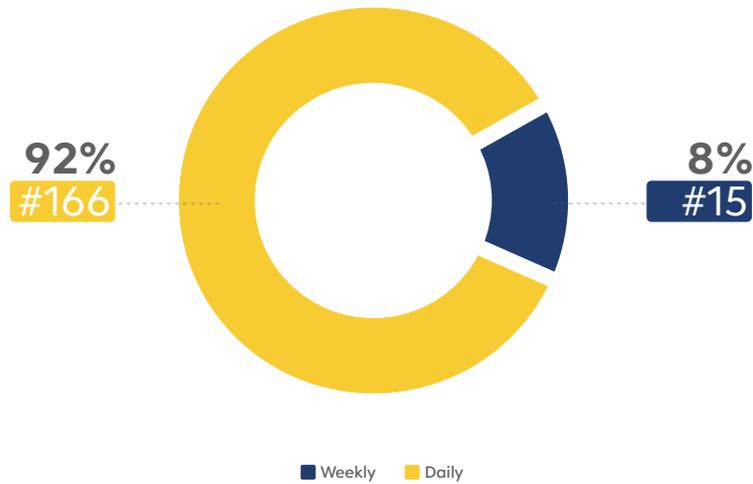


Upon asking the information sources about the frequency of water supply to these camps, they stated that (166 camps 92%) are supplied with water daily, while (15 camps, 8%) are supplied with water weekly.





Figure 13: Frequency of supplying the camps with drinking water



Do supplied quantities of water meet the required needs?

The quantities that are currently supplied to the camps by various parties do not meet the needs, according to camp directors. The results of the study showed that the amount of water required for the assessed camps is 10,079 cubic meters per day, while the camps are supplied daily with only 7,460 cubic meters. So, there is a daily need for a total of 2,619 cubic meters of water in the assessed camps. Noting that the largest need is in Dana sub-district for additional 1,839 cubic meters per day.

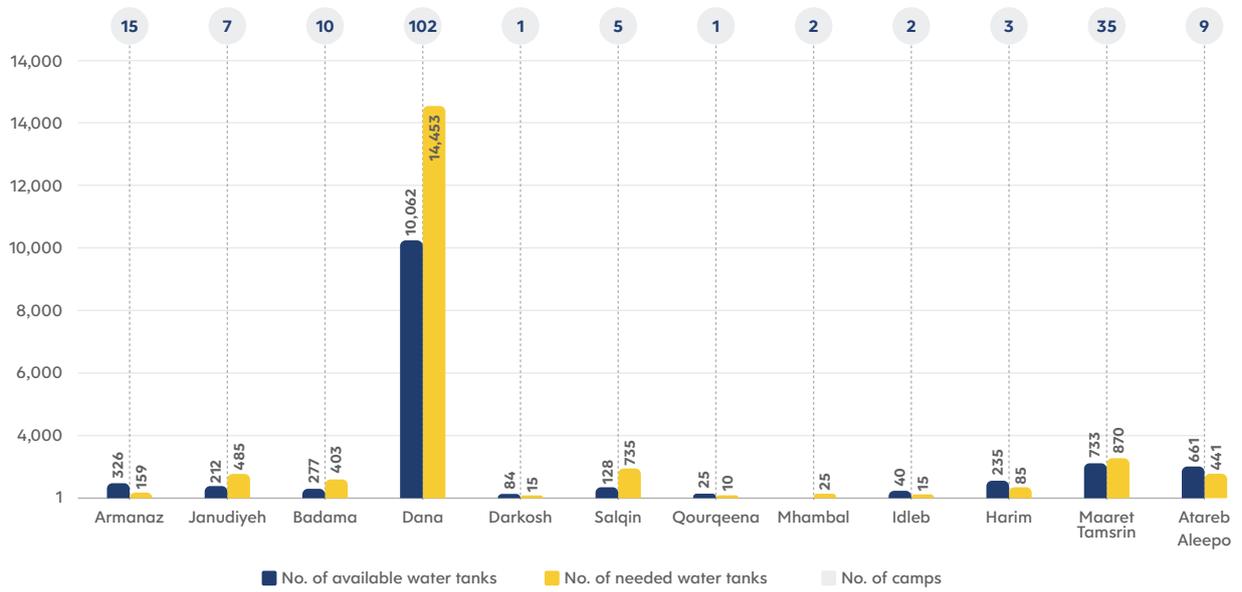
suitability of water for drinking

Many humanitarian organizations and local bodies work to monitor and analyze the quality of the water supplied to the camps as a preventive measure that preserves the safety and health of the beneficiaries and helps them to avoid many risks resulting from contaminated water. According to the information sources, the water supplied to the camps is tested and analyzed to monitor its quality and potability within (171 camps 94%) of the assessed camps, while the water is not subject to analysis within four camps. Moreover, the participants also indicated that they are not sure about the analysis of water within six camps.

Need for water tanks:

There are 12,783 water tanks within 72% of the assessed IDP camps, while there are no such tanks in 28% of the assessed camps. The number of tanks currently required to fill the current need is 17,696 tanks. The largest percentage of this need is concentrated in the Dana sub-district, which needs 14,453 water tanks.

Figure 14: The number of available and required water tanks by sub-district



Sewage and sanitation

Sewage

Effective drainage is needed to reduce the risk of flooding within the camps, deterioration of environmental health conditions due to stagnant water, and to guarantee safe transportation of waste and rainwater away from living areas.

Citizens' access to clean water and effective sanitation services is essential to their lives, health and dignity. Within this criterion, the teams participating in the assessment of the targeted camps conducted an analysis of the reality of sanitation within the assessed camps.

Sewage pits are available in only 48% of the assessed camps, while 52% of them (99 camps) need sewage pits out of 192 camps.

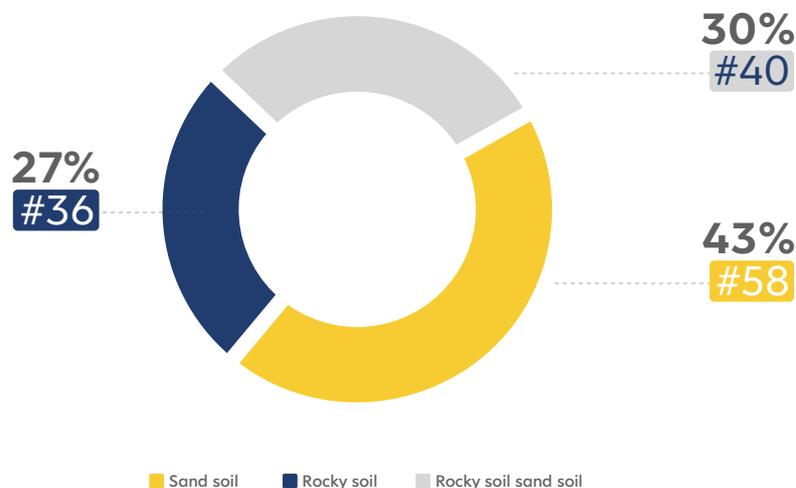
The estimated need for sewage pits within the assessed camps is 2,832. These needs are distributed in several sub-districts, and the largest need is in the camps within the Dana sub-district for 2,013 sewage pits.

Soil quality in camps that need drainage pits:

The camp site should be planned prior to the arrival of IDPs, preferably on sandy soil and a slightly sloping ground surface to facilitate drainage. Such sites may require only limited interventions to ensure adequate drainage throughout the camp. In sites that lie on flat or steep terrain, effective drainage becomes critical. However, it may pose a particular challenge.

The study results showed the diversity of soil in the camps that need drainage pits, as the proportion of sandy lands was 43%, while rocky lands was 27%, whereas the proportion of mixed sandy and rocky lands was 30%. This diversity in soil properties poses challenges that must be considered, especially when carrying out construction works in those camps.

Figure 15: Soil quality in camps that need drainage pits:

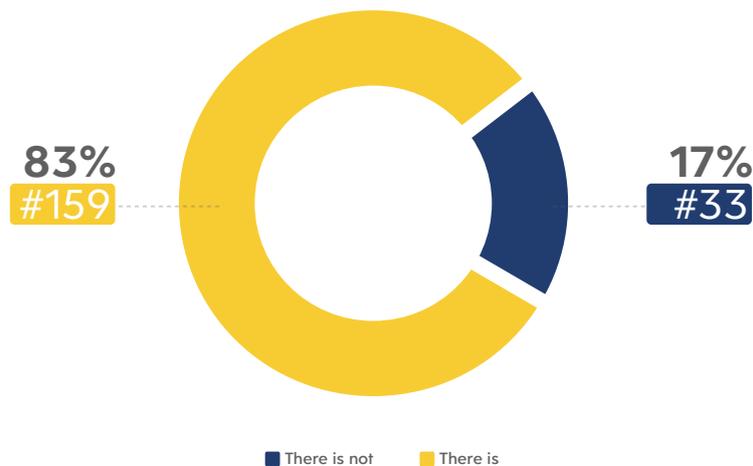


Availability of toilets:

Providing toilets within the camps is one of the basic needs that must be secured within these population centers.

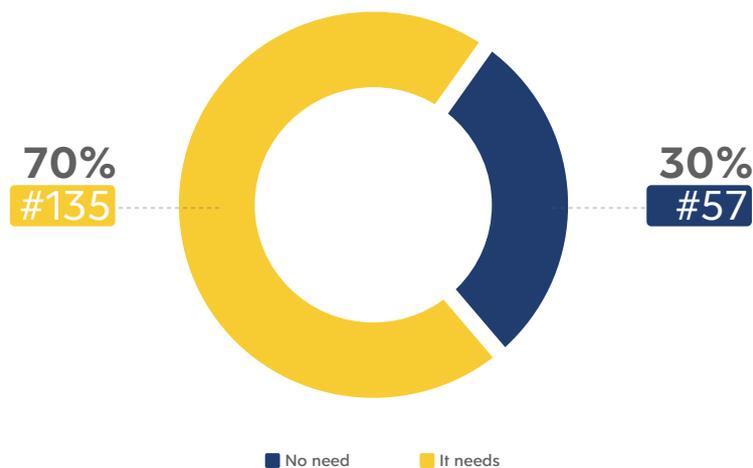
The results of the study showed that there were no toilets at all in (33 camps, 17%), which reflects the extent of the suffering experienced by the Syrian IDPs there and makes these camps potential hotbeds for the spread of diseases and epidemics.

Figure 16: Percentage of camps with public toilets



The availability of toilets within the camps does not mean that they meet the minimum needs of the IDPs, although there are toilets in a number of camps, (135 camps, 70%) of the assessed camps need additional toilets.

Figure 17: Percentage of camps that need toilets



A need for 2,400 toilets was recorded within the assessed camps, where the largest need was recorded within the camps of Dana sub-district, which needs a total of 1,641 toilets within 102 camps, as well as the camps of Ma'arrat Tamasrin, which needs 274 toilets within 35 camps.



68,095

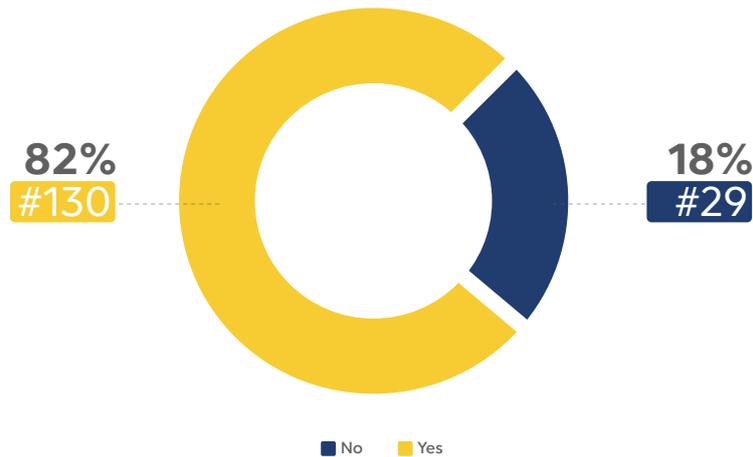
The total number of shelter units
within the assessed camps



Availability of separate toilets for males and females:

Most of the IDPs camps lack standards that consider the privacy of women and their special living conditions and their special needs within these camps. The results of the study showed that there are not separate toilets for women in 18% of the assessed camps that contain toilets, which limits the access of women and girls to these toilets.

Figure 18: Availability of separate toilets for males and females:



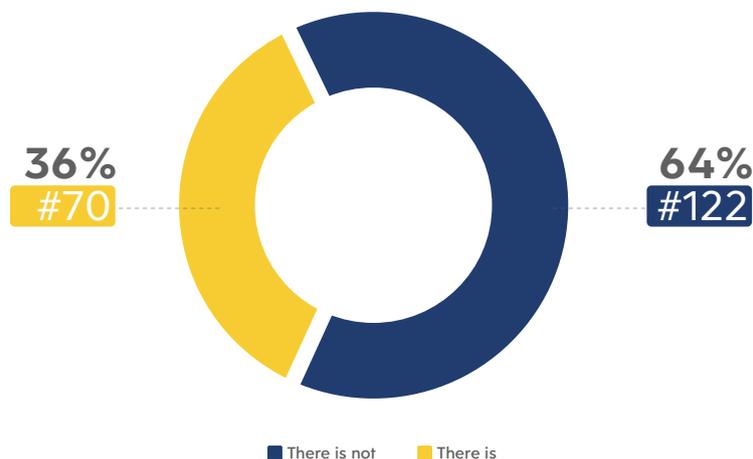
The need for separate toilets for women is concentrated in 29 camps that contain toilets in five sub-districts, 15 of which are within the Ma'arrat Tamasrin sub-district, and seven camps are in the Dana sub-district.

The need for bathrooms

The availability of bathrooms within the camps is a priority that must be provided mainly by the supporting and supervising authorities in these camps, especially in light of the spread of diseases and epidemics and the need to combat these dangers that result from the lack of hygiene standards and preventive measures.

The study results showed that 64% of the assessed camps lack bathrooms within the camps, although it is one of the basic conditions that must be met within the camps, and its unavailability reflects the tragic circumstances that the IDPs face at these camps.

Figure 19: Availability of bathrooms in assessed camps



Upon asking the information sources about the sufficiency of available bathrooms and the number of needed bathrooms. The study results showed a need for 2,913 bathrooms in (144 camps, 75%) of the assessed camps. Where the largest need was recorded in the Dana sub-district for a total of 1,662 bathrooms within 102 camps, followed by Ma'arrat Tamasrin sub-district for a total of 564 bathrooms within 35 camps.

Availability of separate bathrooms for males and females:

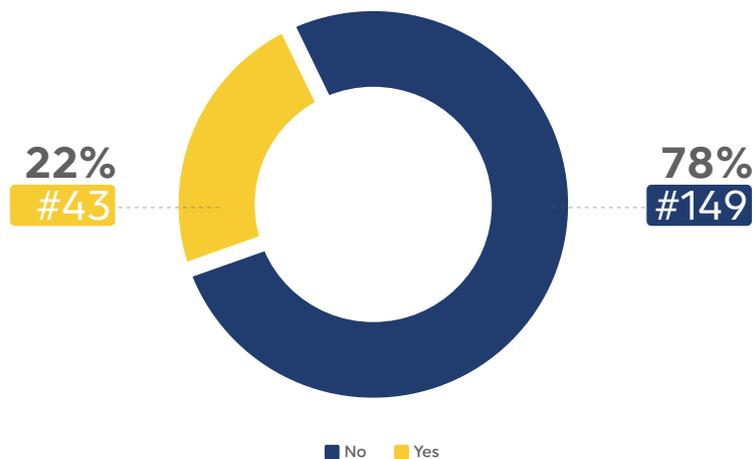
Upon asking the sources of information about the availability of separate bathrooms for males and females within the few camps that contain bathrooms. The study results showed that there are no separate bathrooms for women in 31% of the assessed camps, the fact that limits women and girls' access to these bathrooms.

The need for separate bathrooms for women concentrated in 22 camps within five sub-districts, 14 of which were within the Dana sub-district.

The need for drainage channels and a mechanism for rainwater drainage:

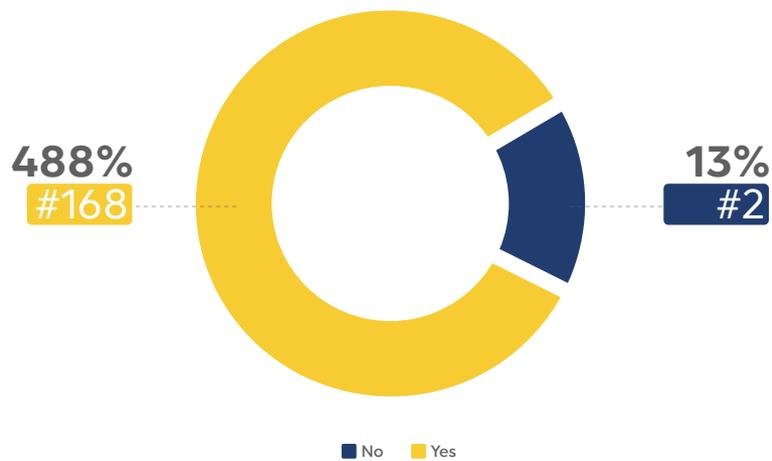
The results of the study showed the availability of rainwater drainage system in (43 camps, 22%) of the assessed camps, while 78% of the assessed camps do not have a rain drainage system.

Figure 20: The availability of rainwater drainage system in assessed camps



Despite the availability of rainwater drainage system in some camps, most of these systems are incomplete or ineffective in a way that protect the camps from the danger of floods or the effects of torrential rains, or they do not cover the entire camp. Therefore, the information sources confirmed that (168 camps, 87%) of the assessed camps need a rainwater drainage system, knowing that 90% of the assessed camps in Dana sub-district need rainwater drainage channels.

Figure 21: The need for rainwater drainage system in assessed camps

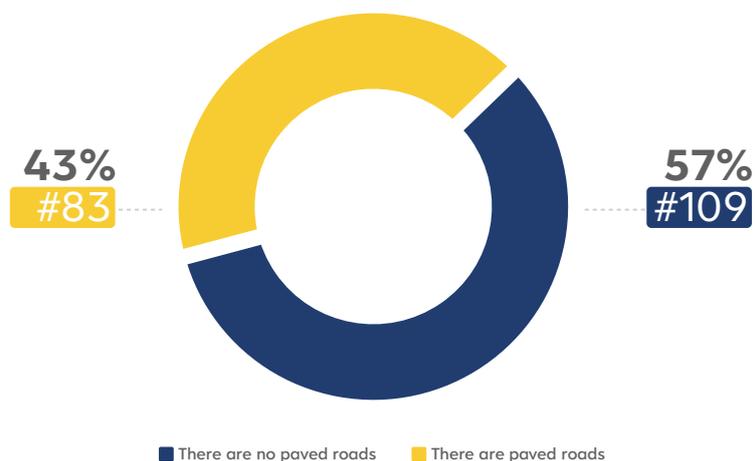


The need for paved roads within the assessed camps

Temporary population sites and major food storage and distribution centers should be accessible by large trucks via all-weather roads (according to Sphere standards)

Information sources confirmed that there are paved roads within 43% of the assessed camps, while there are no paved roads within (109 camps, 57%) of the assessed camps.

Figure 22: The availability of paved roads within the assessed camps



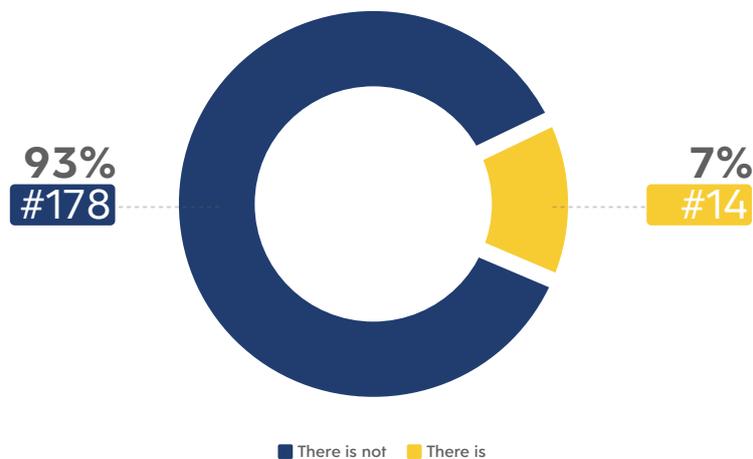
Despite the availability of paved roads in some camps, they do not meet the actual needs of the camp. There was no need for paved roads in only 32 assessed camps, while a total need for 765 paved roads were recorded within 160 camps. Noting that the largest need is in Dana sub-district for a total of 517 paved roads within 84 camps, and in the Ma'aret Tamisrin sub-district, a total of 106 paved roads within 33 camps.

Availability of solar-powered lighting in the camps:

The study reviewed the availability of equipment that provides solar-powered lighting within the assessed camps.

The results showed the lack of solar-powered lighting or solar light columns in (178 camps, 93%) of the assessed camps, which proves the harsh living conditions within these camps and public facilities, and reflects the challenges related to the infrastructure and public services sectors.

Figure 23: The availability of solar-powered lighting in the camps



The need for solar lighting

The need for solar lighting poles in the assessed camps amounted to 8,084 solar light columns, and the largest need was recorded for a total of 5,782 solar light columns in the camps of Dana district.



Recommendations:

The available provided services and the current approach to solve problems within Northwest Syria camps is below the required standard. As many gaps are still exist despite the provision of services within these camps.

The necessity of heading towards informal camps and trying to organize them as much as possible because they are still the most vulnerable to disasters and dangers during the winter season.

The importance of organizing the infrastructure in these camps by providing sewage pits and paved roads in professional and specialized ways that end this dilemma within the camps.

The necessity of providing these camps with bathrooms and toilets to ensure general hygiene and prevent the spread of more diseases and epidemics, especially in light of the spread of the Covid-19 in Northwest Syria

Taking into account humanitarian standards in securing the requirements of vulnerable groups of women and children within the community in terms of providing toilets and bathrooms for these groups.

It is necessary to measure the impact of the projects implemented in the camps by the competent authorities in order to assess the extent of benefiting from these projects, and their positive impact on the IDPs at the camps and how much they address their problems.



Syrian Civil Defence
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