

ASSESSMENT OF THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES IN SYRIA INTERNALLY DISPLACED POPULATION CAMPS

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مستدي الأقتصاديين العرب

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Excerpts from the key informants' interviews.

"There is absolutely no social relationship between the residents of the camp and the residents of the neighboring towns. They are a society that is only concerned with trade, profit, and gain by any means. They look at us with a very superior look. They never consider the conditions we have experienced from bombing, killing, and destruction... They do not know our areas. Most of the time, they are busy with their economic activities, so they never follow or care about the news. They constantly monitor the exchange rate of the local currency and its changes. They never realize that our displacement has increased their trade, profits, and real estate prices. This is while we used to own farms and land in hundreds of dunams"... "There is hate between the two communities"... The neighboring localities "has a view of condescension on the IDPs, as if they were inferior to them, knowing that the majority of the camp's residents are well educated and cultured"... "We are a community whose first and last concern is to seek and obtain daily living"... "Marriage dowry in the cities amounts around US\$ 10,000, while ours never exceeds US\$ 200"... "Our relations with the neighboring communities are marked by the exploitation of the young people needing work, with daily salaries insufficient to cover daily needs"... "We have become certain that we are victims of the interests of colonial powers, which forced us to think only about our daily living"... "Services and aid depend primarily on nepotism. Our real needs are not assessed".

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In all areas of control, the internally displaced populations (IDPs) are mostly in poverty and strongly dependent on aid, judged everywhere insufficient and ill-organized, while work opportunities are rare and low-paid. Their livelihood is maintained in some cases by remittances.
- The IDPs in the camps are completely dependent on neighboring towns - more than the closer villages - as sources of provision of goods and services and as places of paid labor for livelihood.
- In-kind food distribution has created significant practices of reselling part of the distributed baskets to wholesalers against cash. This continued even when the in-kind distribution had been replaced by vouchers. The vouchers are sold at discounted prices against cash. This has impacted the prices of basic goods and discouraged local production.
- In-kind food and services distribution for a long period provided by a myriad of NGOs, donor-driven, with little apparent cohesion and organization, has created a "political economy" of aid. Donors are still dealing with aid as if it were an emergency without shifting, after 11 years, to a more sustainable approach to the livelihood of the displaced.
- Several NGOs coordinate their aid distribution activities with the "Salvation Government" of "Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham" (HTS, formerly Al Nusra Front), despite the classification of HTS by the United Nations as a "terrorist organization". This includes Turkish, French, and British-based or sponsored NGOs. German and US-based or sponsored NGOs seem to work mostly in Northern Aleppo.
- Irregular aid distribution and meager work opportunities led many young people to join combating factions for salaries.
- The IDPs linked to combating factions that were displaced following disengagement agreements are directly managed by Turkish authorities and NGOs. They typically live in better conditions than the rural population displaced by the conflict. But their access is strictly restricted.
- In several aspects, the results of the livelihood surveys and inquiries in the studied camps showed differences from those reported by UN agencies; this suggests the need for further detailed investigations .

- Job opportunities are rare and with menial salaries in almost all camps. They generally are in construction and crafts on a daily basis. Seasonal agricultural activities are also observed, mainly for women. Few cases of production-sharing agreements with land owners in agriculture are observed .
- Child labor and schooling dropout are reported in all camps. Schooling and health services are poor and largely insufficient in all camps .
- One of the key issues for the IDP camps is the absence of public or semi-public transportation to neighboring localities. This absence hinders the possibility of obtaining work opportunities, as well as the possibility of shopping at lower prices. It constitutes also a major impediment to schooling, be it elementary, secondary, or university.
- In most camps, the economic relations of the IDPs with the neighboring hosting communities are described as bad. The IDPs have a significant resentment against their exploitation in aid and low-paid jobs, while the hosting communities got enriched because of their presence. This is particularly visible in NWS camps.
- The IDPs have weak social relations and no integration within the hosting communities (rare common marriages for example), while they have a certain degree of internal social cohesion, especially in small camps or within each district of large camps. Strong bonds quickly build up within the IDP communities due to the common suffering.
- The social relations between the camps' IDP population and their hosting communities strongly depend on the origin of the IDP population, urban, rural, or semi-nomad, and on their ability to sustain their livelihood independently. Rural-urban divide and regional differences strongly affect these relations.
- The IDPs of the Yazibagh camp which have some economic independence are best integrated with the hosting communities.
- Rarely, governance structures had been promoted in the camps to represent IDPs' interests and needs towards the ruling authorities and the NGOs. And when they exist, they don't result from a "democratic" process. In best cases, they emerged from traditional leadership, mostly coopted by ruling authorities or NGOs. In all cases, the IDPs don't have significantly a say in aid and service provision. Cases of cronyism and favoritism are common.
- Strict "political" control is applied to the IDP population by the ruling authorities, in particular in GOS, SDF, and HTS areas. In Northern Aleppo, the "political" control of the Turkish-backed factions seems looser.
- The IDPs are losing hope of a return to their original localities. The fear of repression and military service is not the only reason, but also the destruction of their original settlements and the lack of means to restart economic activity. Most IDPs are only hoping to improve their present dire conditions.
- Most IDPs wish for a "political solution" in Syria, with the end of the war, the departure of foreign troops, and an honest Syrian authority capable of rebuilding the country, bringing security and dignity. However, most of them have lost hope of returning from displacement and want better conditions where they are.

المخلص التنفيذي

- في جميع مناطق السيطرة، يعيش معظم السكان النازحين داخلياً في الفقر ويعتمدون بشدة على المساعدات، التي تعتبر في كل مكان غير كافية وغير منتظمة، في حين أنّ فرص العمل نادرة ومنخفضة الأجر. وتحافظ التحويلات المالية من الاغتراب على سبل عيشهم في بعض الحالات.
- يعتمد النازحون في المخيمات اعتماداً كلياً على البلديات المجاورة - أكثر من القرى القريبة - كمصادر لتوفير السلع والخدمات وكأماكن للعمل المأجور لكسب الرزق.
- يؤدي توزيع المواد الغذائية العينية إلى خلق ممارسات واسعة في إعادة بيع جزء من السلل الغذائية لتجار الجملة مقابل النقود. ويستمر ذلك حتى عندما يستعاض عن التوزيع العيني بالقسائم. إذ تباع أيضاً القسائم بأسعار منخفضة مقابل نقود. يؤثر ذلك على أسعار السلع الغذائية الأساسية ويؤدي إلى تثبيط الإنتاج المحلي.
- يؤدي توزيع المواد الغذائية والخدمات لفترة طويلة بشكلٍ عيني من قبل عددٍ لا يُحصى من المنظمات غير الحكومية، التي تعمل حسب أجندات المانحين، مع القليل من الوضوح حول تنظيم وكفاية التوزيع، إلى خلق "اقتصادٍ سياسي" للمساعدات. وما زال المانحون يتعاملون مع المساعدات وكأنّها طارئة دون التحوّل بعد 11 عاماً إلى منهجية أكثر استدامة فيما يخصّ معيشة النازحين.
- تنسّق عدّة منظمات غير حكومية أنشطتها لتوزيع المساعدات مع "حكومة الإنقاذ" التابعة لـ"هيئة تحرير الشام" (جبهة النصرة سابقاً)، على الرغم من تصنيف هذه الهيئة من قبل الأمم المتحدة على أنّها "منظمة إرهابية". ويشمل ذلك المنظمات غير الحكومية المسجّلة في تركيا وفرنسا وبريطانيا أو المدعومة من هذه البلدان. ويبدو أن المنظمات غير الحكومية المسجّلة في ألمانيا والولايات المتحدة أو المدعومة منها تعمل في الغالب في مناطق شمال حلب.
- عدم انتظام توزيع المساعدات وندرة فرص العمل يؤديان إلى انضمام العديد من الشبان إلى الفصائل المقاتلة للحصول على رواتب.
- النازحون المرتبطون بالفصائل التي نزحت بعد اتفاقيات فضّ الاشتباك تُدار أمورهم بشكلٍ مباشر من قبل السلطات التركية والمنظمات غير الحكومية التابعة لها. وهم يعيشون عادةً في ظروفٍ أفضل من سكان الريف الذين شرّدهم الصراع. لكنّ الحركة إلى مخيماتهم ومنها مقيدة بشكلٍ صارم.
- تُظهر نتائج مسوحات سبل العيش التي أقيمت والاستفسارات في المخيمات المدروسة اختلافات في عدّة نواحي عن المعطيات التي تُبلغ عنها وكالات الأمم المتحدة. وهذا يشير إلى الحاجة إلى مزيد من التحقيقات التفصيلية.
- فرص العمل نادرة وبرواتب وضيعة في جميع المخيمات المدروسة تقريباً. وهي عموماً في البناء والحرف على أساس يومي. ويلاحظ أيضاً وجود أنشطة زراعية موسميّة، لا سيّما بالنسبة للنساء. وقد لوحظت حالات قليلة من اتفاقات تقاسم الإنتاج في الزراعة مع ملاك الأراضي.
- تمّ الإبلاغ عن عمالة أطفال وتسرب من المدارس في جميع المخيمات المدروسة. كما أنّ الخدمات المدرسيّة والصحية سيئة وغير كافية إلى حدٍ كبير في جميعها.

- يشكّل عدم وجود وسائل نقل عامّة أو شبه عامّة إلى المناطق المجاورة إحدى المشاكل الرئيسية لمخيمات النزوح الداخلي. هذا الغياب يعيق إمكانية الحصول على فرص عمل، وكذلك إمكانية التسوّق بأسعار أفضل. كما أنه يشكل عائقاً رئيسياً أمام التعليم، سواء كان ابتدائياً أو ثانوياً أو جامعياً.
- توصف العلاقات الاقتصادية للنازحين مع المجتمعات المضيفة المجاورة بأنها سيئة في معظم المخيمات. ويشعر النازحون داخلياً باستياء كبير من استغلالهم في المساعدات والوظائف ذات الأجور المنخفضة، في حين أن المجتمعات المضيفة قد زاد ثراؤها بسبب وجودهم. ويتجلّى ذلك بشكلٍ خاص في مخيمات الشمال الغربي.
- علاقات النازحين مع المجتمعات المضيفة ضعيفة ولا اندماج بين المجتمعين ضعيفة (الزيجات بينهما نادرة على سبيل المثال)، في حين أن لدى النازحين درجة معيّنة من التماسك الاجتماعي الداخلي، خاصة في المخيمات الصغيرة أو داخل كلّ منطقة من المخيمات الكبيرة. إذ سرعان ما تقوى الروابط داخل مجتمعات النازحين داخلياً بسبب المعاناة المشتركة.
- تتنوّع العلاقات الاجتماعية بين النازحين داخلياً في المخيمات مع المجتمعات المضيفة حسب أصول السكان النازحين، إن كانوا حضريين أو ريفيين أو شبه رحل، وعلى قدرتهم على الإمسك بسبل عيشهم بشكلٍ مستقل. وتؤثر الفجوة بين الريف والحضر والاختلافات المناطقيّة تأثيراً قوياً على هذه العلاقات.
- رصدت أفضل حالة اندماج للنازحين داخلياً مع المجتمع المحليّ المضيف في مخيم يازيباغ لأنهم يتمتعون ببعض الاستقلاليّة الاقتصادية عن المجتمعات المضيفة.
- نادراً ما تمّ تعزيز هياكل الحوكمة المحليّة في المخيمات لتمثيل مصالح النازحين واحتياجاتهم تجاه السلطات القائمة والمنظمات غير الحكومية. وعندما تكون موجودة، فإن هياكل الحوكمة هذه لا تنتج عن عملية "ديمقراطية". إذ تنبثق عن القيادة التقليدية في أفضل الحالات، نتيجة اختيار السلطات القائمة أو المنظمات غير الحكومية لها. وفي جميع الحالات، لا يكون للنازحين داخلياً رأيٌ كبير حول شؤون تقديم المساعدات والخدمات. وحالات المحسوبية والفساد شائعة.
- يتمّ فرض رقابة "سياسيّة" صارمة على السكان النازحين من قبل السلطات القائمة، ولا سيّما في مناطق الحكومة السوريّة وقوات سوريا الديمقراطية وهيئة تحرير الشام. أما في شمال حلب، فتبدو السيطرة "السياسيّة" للفصائل المدعومة من تركيا أقلّ شدّةً.
- يتمنّى معظم النازحين "حلاً سياسياً" في سوريا، عبر إنهاء الحرب ورحيل القوات الأجنبية ووجود سلطة سورية نزيهة وقادرة على إعادة بناء البلاد وتحقيق الأمن والكرامة. لكنّ أغلبهم فقد الأمل في العودة من النزوح ويريد أوضاعاً أفضل حيث هم.

ABBREVIATIONS

AFAD	the Disaster & Emergency Management Presidency of the Turkish Ministry of Interior
CC	Collective shelter Centers
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster
FGD	Focus group discussions
GOS	Government of Syria
HAO	“Humanitarian Activities Organization” of the OMCD
HH	Household
HLP	House, land, and property
HSK	The Kurdish Red Crescent (Heyva Sor a Kurd)
HTS	“Hay’at Tahrir Al-Sham”, Organization of the Liberation of the Levant
IDD	Insana Deger Derneği (Care for Humanity) Turkish NGO
IDP	Internally Displaced Population
IS	Informal Settlements
ISIS	"Islamic State of Iraq and Syria"
IYD	ULUSLARARASI İNSANİ YARDIMLAŞMA DERNEĞİ NGO
KI	Key informants
MRFS	The "Medical Relief for Syria" NGO
NES	Northeast Syria
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NRC	The Norwegian Refugee Council
NWS	Northwest Syria
OMCD	“Office for the management of the camps and the displaced”
PC	Planned Camps
PMTF	Protection Monitoring Interactive Dashboard
SAMS	The Syrian American Medical Association
SARD	Syrian Association for Relief and Development
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SG	“Salvation Government”
SEMA	The Medical Association for Syrian Expatriates
SRC	Syrian Red Crescent
SRD	Syria Relief & Development NGO
SYP	Syrian Pound
T/RC	Transit and Reception Centers
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	The United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Program
WHH	German “Welt Hunger Hilfe” NGO

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INTRODUCTION

This study aimed at investigating the economic, social, and governance situation of the IDPs within Syria and their relations with their hosting communities and ruling authorities in the 4 areas of control of the presently divided Syria. Most of the current humanitarian assistance literature addresses such issues in a way that cannot assess such relations as they developed on the ground since the displacement, in particular as IDPs are mostly living in camps and the resident communities in existing towns and villages, near which the camps were established. A strong relation of “dependency” of the IDPs on the host communities is expected to have developed, even while the displacement has occurred for several years.

The study was conducted in two campaigns based on interviews of key informants (KIs) among the displaced population. A semi-structured questionnaire was established for both campaigns, inviting the interviewee to answer freely some of the aspects. The second campaign was complemented by focus group dialogue on the most important issues in some camps.

The first campaign of the study was conducted on 6 IDP camps in North-West Syria (NWS): 4 in the so-called “Euphrates Shield Operation” area of the Turkish forces and allied Syrian factions, and 2 others in the region of Idlib, controlled by Hay’at Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS) and its “Salvation Government”.

The second phase of the study extended the investigation to other 6 IDP camps all around Syria: 3 in North-West Syria (NWS), intending to cover new areas; 1 in North-East Syria (NES), avoiding Al-Hol camp where ISIS families are located; and 2 in the areas controlled by the Government of Syria (GoS).

The choice of these new camps was intended to somehow complete the coverage of different IDP situations, both in terms of authority of control and population and hosting community backgrounds.

PART ONE: THE FIRST CAMPAIGN



Photo credit: Jodi Hilton/IRIN

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Objectives of the investigation

A study in 2021 dealt with the comparative economy and political economy of three Syrian towns under three different "ruling powers": Tartous (under GOS), Qamishli (NES), and 'Azaz (NWS)¹. During the performance of the surveys of this study, it was observed that the conditions in the cities were very differentiated between the hosting communities and the internally displaced persons (IDPs), especially when those IDPs are hosted in camps in the surroundings. Then, it was of interest to dedicate a special investigation on the situation in the camps, especially in Northwest Syria (NWS)², where the largest share of Syrian IDP communities is concentrated³.

The first campaign of surveys examined then the economic, social, and political economy situation in 6 IDP camps; all situated in NWS. 4 are situated nearby 'Azaz (Figure 1), in the "Euphrates Shield Operation" area of the Turkish forces and allied Syrian factions⁴: the **Al-Barakeh** (Kafr Janneh), **Yazibagh**⁵, **'Aziz** and **Al-Bil** camps. The first three are situated in 'Azaz subdistrict and the last in that of Soran. 2 other camps were selected in the region of Idleb, controlled by Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS, formerly "Al-Nusra" organization) and its "Salvation Government"⁶: the **Sarout** camp, near Dana city and the **Ali Ibn Abi Taleb** Camp, near Sarmada (figure 1). Both are situated in the Dana subdistrict.

This part of the report describes the findings of the investigations made in these 6 camps and explores the different challenges facing their population, with their similarities and their differences.

1.2 Research methodology

The study is based on key informants (KI) interviews made in each of the camps in November 2021, realized with a detailed questionnaire on various economic, social, and political economy aspects (See Appendix A). 5 to 8 open interviews were performed in each camp. Following a first analysis of the results of the surveys, the research team returned to further investigate some worth detailing aspects.

Surely the selected camps constitute a small sample of camps among the around 1,400 camps attested by the UN to be present in NWS. However, their choice intended to cover a variety of situations.

The characteristics of the KI informants of the 1st campaign are indicated here below in Table 1 and Appendix B. Most of the KIs were heads of families, with a fair representation of women, except in the

¹ Aita, the political economy..., 2021.

² Within UN agencies, North-West Syria (NWS) is sometimes used to designate only the areas around Idleb controlled by HTS, while those by Turkish forces and allied Syrian factions are referred as NS (Northern Syria). And in other occasions, NWS is used to do designate both areas. See: UN HNAP, 2021. In this report, NWS is used to designate both areas. If used in a strict area context, it shall be noted NWS*.

³ There is similarly a large concentration of Syrian refugees in Lebanon forming a significant share of the population. For research on the situation of these refugees and their relations with the hosting communities, see Sanchez 2021 a and b.

⁴ Thus, in NS in HNAP terminology.

⁵ The Yazibagh camp is on the fringes of the "Olive Branch" Turkish controlled area of 'Afrin.

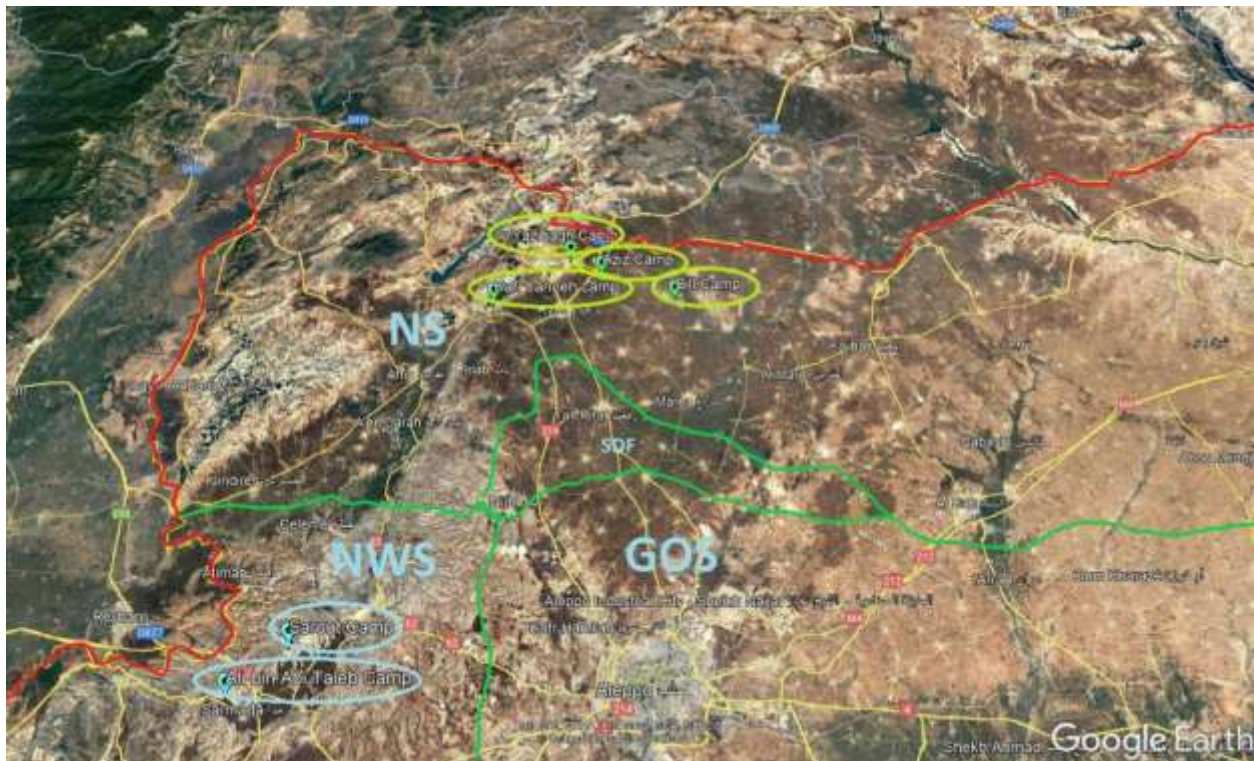
⁶ Thus, in the strict NWS in HNAP terminology.

Al-Barakeh camp. The average family size was large, as well as the number of persons living in the same tent or settlement.

Table 1. The characteristics of the key informants of the 1st campaign

Camp	Sarout	Ali Bin Abi Taleb	Al-Bil	'Aziz	Yazibagh	Al-Barakeh
Number of KIs	8	8	5	5	5	5
% Females	38%	38%	40%	40%	40%	0%
Average age	44.3	39.3	35.0	38.4	36.2	44.4
Average family size	6.8	5.8	6.2	7.8	6.6	6.4
The average household size in settlement	5.6	5.6	7.4	7.2	7.6	6.4

Figure 1. Location of the studied camps in the first campaign



1.3 The selection of the IDP camps

The selection of the camps was certainly constrained by the possibility of making such interviews and investigations. However, the main aim was to consider camps with differentiated conditions (origin of the population, authority of control, etc.).

The oldest established camp is that of **Yazibagh**, created in 2015, with mostly IDPs from the Eastern countryside of Aleppo (Table 1). It is by far the largest in terms of population (Table 2). The newest one is that of **'Aziz**, created in 2020, to host in decent shelters the IDPs who were initially distributed in different temporary tent camps; noting that the factors leading the selection of the IDPs that profited from this resettlement are unclear. The smallest camp is that of **Al-Barakeh** hosting only around 220 households (HHs)⁷.

Table 2. General characteristics of the 1st campaign IDP camps

Camp	Sarout	Ali Bin Abi Taleb	Al-Bil	'Aziz	Yazibagh	Al-Barakeh
Year of installation	2019	2018	2018	2020	2015	2018
UN classification	Informal	Formal	Formal	Formal	Informal	Informal
Nbr of Households (KIs/CCCM)	?/216	1,600/944	600/67	520/522	2,400/1086	220/346
Situation	Near Dana & Deir Hassan	Near Atmeh & Sarmada	Near Soran & 'Azaz	Near Niyara & 'Azaz	Near Sejjo, Bab Al-Salameh crossing	Near Kafr Janneh & 'Azaz
Terrain	Rocky hills	Agricultural land	Agricultural land	Agricultural land	Rocky hills	Agricultural land
Origin of IDPs	South Hama	South Idleb	Damascus Suburbs (East Ghouta)	West Aleppo, Idleb & Ghouta	South & East Aleppo	West & North Aleppo

It is to be noted that the number of households in each of the camps, as assessed by key informants, is different from that reported by the camp coordination management cluster (CCCM)⁸, and most often higher.

⁷ The data in Table 1, including population, are those collected through key informants interviews and are compared with those of the OCHA Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster (CCCM) of the UN, https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/cccm_northsyriaxb.

⁸ See OCHA Integrated Monitoring Matrix (ISIMM), December 2021, <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/stima/document/idp-sites-integrated-monitoring-matrix-isimm-december-2021>

CHAPTER 2: THE GENERAL SITUATION IN CAMPS

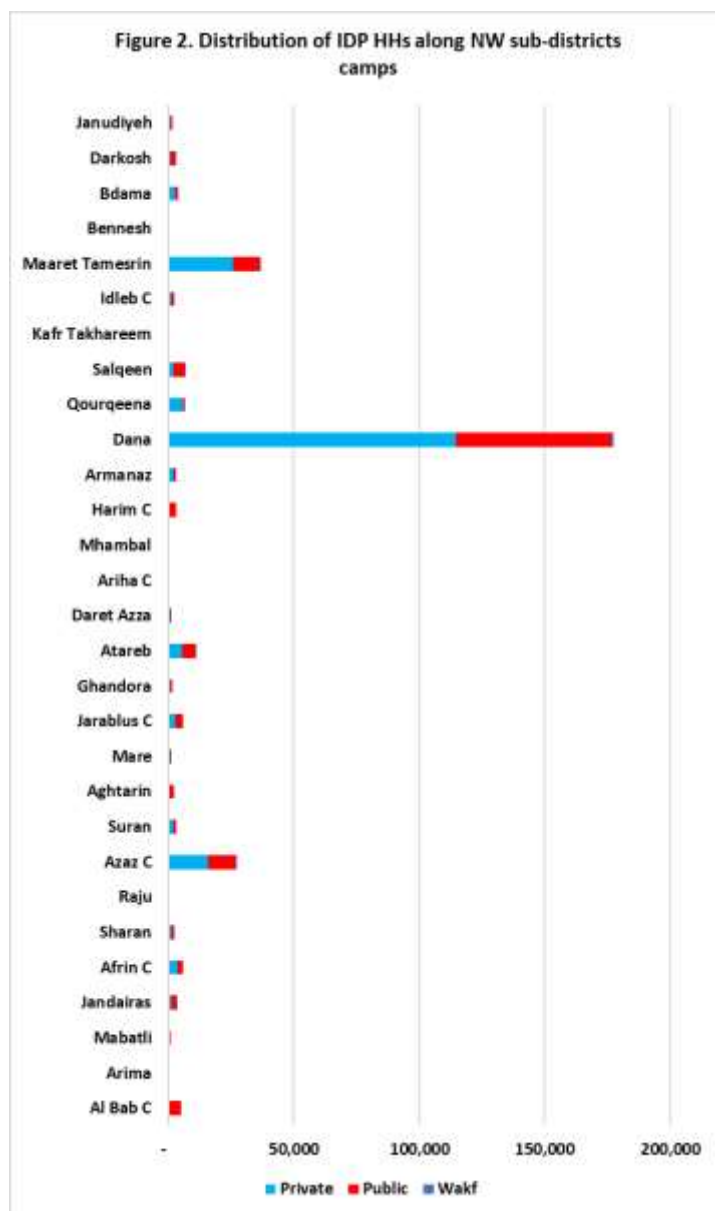
2.1 The general situation of IDP camps in North-West Syria

4 million people are estimated living in NWS, among them 2.8 IDPs⁹. 1,398 IDP sites are reported, hosting 1.7 million IDPs (321,085 HHs). Thus, only half of the IDPs in NWS live in camps; the others live in the different towns and localities.

It is worth noting that the UN accounted for 6,670,720 IDPs in Syria in 2021¹⁰. 3,297,933 were in GOS areas (49.4%, with only a small share in camps), 898,883 in Northern Syria (NS) (13.5%), 1,875,311 in NWS* (in the strict usage of NWS for Idleb surroundings and HTS control) (28.1%) and 598,593 in North-East Syria (NES) (9.0%).

In September 2021, the Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP) conducted a nationwide demographic household survey of Internally Displaced (IDP) households (HHs) across all of Syria. A specific report was issued on its results for NWS¹¹.

It showed that around 50% of IDPs in NWS are economically and socially dependent, thus below the age of 15 or above the age of 64 (51% in NS and 49% in NWS*). The dependency ratio for NWS IDPs is then much higher than the average for IDPs in Syria: 41%. Also, 42% of IDP HHs in NWS live in formal and informal settlements, out of the existing cities and villages. 27% of them are in tents (84% of which for more than one year). 87% reported major issues with their shelter, and 49% of them faced cold and damp



⁹ UNHCR, December 2021.

¹⁰ UN HNAP, 2021.

¹¹ Global Shelter Cluster, 2022.

conditions. Very few IDPs (5%) live in “planned settlements”, while the informal settlements host 37% of the IDP HHs.

The last detailed UN camp coordination and management (CCCM) IDP sites integrated monitoring matrix (ISIMM)¹² of December 2021 indicated that 321,085 households (HHs) (1,694,312 individuals) live in 1,398 camps in NWS (Figure 2). These include:

- 143 planned camps (PC, i.e., “places where displaced populations find accommodation on purpose-built sites, where service infrastructure is provided and distributions take place”),
- 6 transit camps and reception centers (T/RC, i.e., intermediate or short-term installations “providing temporary accommodation for displaced persons pending transfer to a suitable, safe, long-term camp, or at the end of an operation as a staging point of return”),
- 28 collective centers (CC, i.e., “pre-existing buildings may be used to host IDPs”)
- and 1,221 informal settlements (IS, i.e., where “displaced groups may settle in camps that are independent of assistance from the government or humanitarian community. Self-settled camps, sometimes known as ‘spontaneous sites’, may be sited on state-owned, private or communal land, usually after limited negotiations with the local population or private owners over use and access”).

The informal settlements form thus the large majority of IDPs’ settlements in NWS.

By far, most of the camps (42%) and IDP HHs (56%) are located in the Dana sub-district (Governorate of Idlib, Harim district), closer to the Turkish border (Figure 3). The other two major locations of camps are Ma’arret Tamisrine (12% of HHs, Idlib district) and ‘Azaz (8% of HHs, ‘Azaz Center sub-district, governorate of Aleppo). The largest camp in NWS is that of Karameh at Atmeh in Dana Subdistrict. It hosts around 12,984 HH (50,018 individuals). However, for camp management purposes, the camps are administratively distributed in around 60 sectors. The largest camp managed as one sector is Mukawameh, near Shamarekh in the ‘Azaz Center sub-district. It hosts 4,386 HHs (23,930 individuals).

According to the CCCM, most of the camps (67%) are situated on privately owned land, while hosting 61% of the IDP HHs. Very few are located on *Wakf*¹³ land (see Figure 2). This aspect raises the issue of the negotiations between the camp IDPs and the owners of the land on compensations to be paid for the occupation of the land. This issue is discussed here below in the report.

The UN assessment showed that 54% of adults are women and that 92% of total HHs have minimal shelter, 70% receive food aid, 54% have non-food assistance; 95% have access to water, 87% to sanitation, and 96% to waste removal.

The data concerning the other protection issues are parsimonious: only 154 settlements (11%) are reported to have healthcare facilities, and 357 (26%) have schools. 350 settlements (25%) are reported to

¹² <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/stima/document/idp-sites-integrated-monitoring-matrix-isimm-december-2021>

¹³ The Wakf is a religious endowment.

Shelter detail	Mixed	Tented	Tented	buildings	Tented	BBB
Land ownership	Private	Private	NA	Private	Private	private
HLP	valid	Not valid	NA	NA	NA	No ag.
Number of HHs	216	944	346	522	1,086	67
Food	100%	90%	100%	0%	70%	NA
NFI	0%	60%	100%	0%	100%	NA
Water	100%	85%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Sanitation	100%	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Waste management	100%	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Social protection	No	Yes	NA	NA	NA	NA
Children protection	No	Yes	NA	NA	NA	No
Gender basedGender-based violence	NA	Yes	NA	NA	NA	No
Mining action	No	No	NA	NA	NA	No
Healthcare facility	No	No	NA	Yes	NA	NA
School	Yes	No	NA	No	NA	Yes

* Mixed = tented & buildings, NA = not available, IS= Informal settlement, PC =planned camp, BBB = buildings, brick houses & concrete blocks, No ag. = no agreement,

Most of the housing in the camps is reported by CCCM as made of tents. However, the **'Aziz** camp is reported to be made of buildings, in fact as a result of a program for proper settlements generated by the "Molham Volunteering Team"¹⁵ and operated as an endowment (wakf). The **Al-Barakeh** camp is made of brick houses, and that of **Sarout** is mixed.

No aid distribution is reported for the **'Aziz camp**, be it food or non-food items (NFI). But it is assumed to have a healthcare center. **Sarout** and **Al-Barakeh** camps are assessed to have schools; **Ali bin Abi Taleb** is reported to experience gender-based violence.

The number of HHs in each of the studied camps as given in the CCCM is less than that provided by the present investigation key informants. The continuous change of locations of IDPs, within each of the two governorates (Aleppo and Idleb), and from one camp to another does not fully explain such differences¹⁶.

Little damage (less than 5%) to shelters is reported by the Global Shelter Cluster¹⁷ in the sub-districts where the 6 studied camps are situated. However, around half (41-50%) of the shelters in the Dana subdistrict have their HHs reporting severe damp and cold conditions. This is while around one-third (21-35%) report on the lack of heating and roof leaking during rain.

More astonishingly, the UN surveys showed that 55% of IDP HHs in the Aleppo governorate (80% in the 'Azaz sub-district) pay rent for their shelter, and 65% in the Idleb governorate. Only 21% of Aleppo IDP HHs are hosted for free by private owners, and 28% of Idleb IDP HHs. This suggests that some IDP HHs pay rent for their tents even on public land (!). Local controlling factions or authorities collect such "rents". This is while most of the camps in the NWS are erected on public land (Figure 4).

¹⁵ https://molhamteam.com/en/until_last_tent. This Syrian NGO developed initially in Jordan but had been later registered in Turkey. For the history of the camp, see <https://molhamteam.com/en/campaigns/204>.

¹⁶ <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syrian-arab-republic-idp-movements-november-2021-enartr>

¹⁷ GSC, 2022: IDP Shelter Situation in North-West Syria; February 2022.

Otherwise, UNHCR has established a detailed “Protection Monitoring Interactive Dashboard” (PMTF)¹⁸ on the situation of the IDP camps. The results for the studied camps are indicated in Table 3 below.

A significant share of the IDPs in the studied camps has lost their civil documentation. This is while, except for the **Ali bin Abi Taleb** case, the displacement did not seem to result from forced eviction.

Negative relations between the IDPs and host communities were recorded in most of the camps, especially those of **Sarout**, **Al-Barakeh**, and **Ali bin Abi Taleb**. The highest disappointments for being in the settlements’ locations and the worst relations with host communities are observed in Idlib (Dana Sub-district) camps. This is while **Al-Bil** camp experiences the highest security incidents rate.

For children's schooling, the UNHCR assessment has contradictory results with the CCCM assessment. **Sarout** camp is reported to have a school but it has the largest perception of boys and girls not attending; more than **Ali bin Abi Taleb** camp which has no school. No school is reported in **Al-Bil** camp while there is no perception of children's non-attendance to schools.

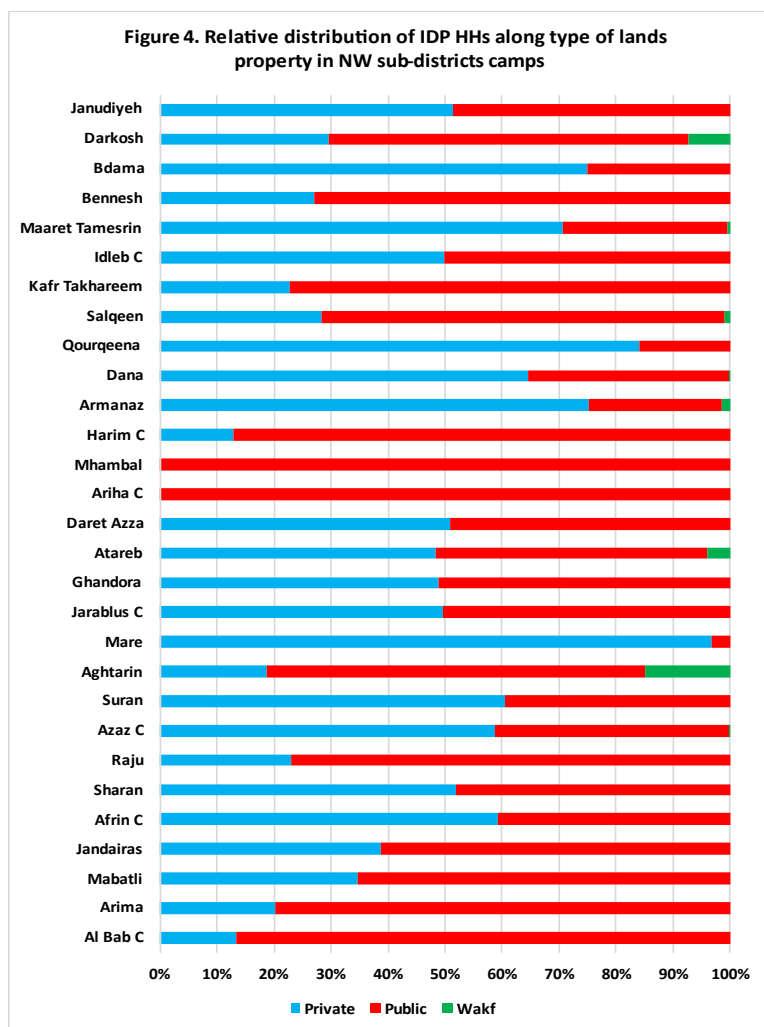


Table 4. UNHCR assessment of protection issues in the studied camps

Protection issue	Sarout	Ali Bin Abi Taleb	Al-Bil	'Aziz	Yazibagh	Al-Barakeh
Prevalence of loss of civil documentation	0.40	0.21	0.42	NA	0.25	0.36
Prevalence of forced eviction	0.04	0.44	0.00	NA	0.00	0.08
Prevalence of negative relationship between IDPs & Host communities	0.26	0.17	0.00	NA	0.00	0.21
Prevalence of boys and girls not attending school	0.40	0.37	0.00	NA	0.25	0.25

¹⁸ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/78?sv=31&geo=0>

Prevalence of challenges accessing health services	0.22	0.05	0.00	NA	0.25	0.03
Prevalence of children affected by the risk of exploitation	0.35	0.22	0.00	NA	0.00	0.00
Prevalence of arbitrary restrictions on freedom of movement	0.08	0.09	0.00	NA	0.00	0.14
Degree to which IDPs would not like to integrate into current location	0.63	0.59	0.25	NA	0.25	0.19
Prevalence of contamination with explosive hazards	0.02	0.03	0.00	NA	0.00	0.03
Prevalence of security incidents	0.14	0.09	0.06	NA	0.13	0.35
Total PMTF index	0.25	0.21	0.07	NA	0.11	0.16

High value (maximum =1) represents more protection threats

2.3 Key informants' characterization of the camps populations

According to the key informants, most of the population in the 6 camps of this study are of rural origin, except those of **Al-Bil** camp who were originally urban from the suburbs of Damascus, Syrian nationals, or Palestinians (Table 4). The IDPs of **Yazibagh** came from a rural tribal area, as they used not only to grow crops but also to raise herds of sheep in their villages of origin. They brought their herds with them in their displacement, which provided them with resources for livelihood.

The places of origin, the initial characteristics of the IDP population, and their social organization influenced largely the integration of the IDP population into their new environment. The **Al-Bil** camp urban population, strongly linked to the "Jaysh Al Islam" faction, which was active in the Eastern Ghouta of Damascus, does not seem willing to deal with the (poor) villages neighboring their camp and are somehow isolated¹⁹. They interact only with the main city nearby, 'Azaz. Their settlement in this camp was from the beginning strictly organized by the Turkish authorities, and aid was fully managed by the Turkish official NGOs.

Table 5. General characteristics of the studied camps' population

Camp	Sarout	Ali Bin Abi Taleb	Al-Bil	'Aziz	Yazibagh	Al-Barakeh
Places of origin of the IDPs	Ma'ar Zita, Jbala, Ma'ar T'herma, Rikaya, Habit (South Hama)	Mzara (Zawiya Mountain), Ma'ar T'herma, Sheikh Mustapha, Kafr Sejneh, Hass, Kawkaba (South Idleb), also from Saraqeb & Ghab villages	East Ghouta (Damascus suburbs), including Palestinians	West Aleppo, South Idleb villages & Ghouta	Sfeira, Khanasser, Al 'Iss, Abu D'hur (East Aleppo)	'Injara, Qabatan, Bsartoun, Anadan, Hayyan (West Aleppo)
Type of population	Rural	Rural	Urban	Mostly rural	Rural tribal	Rural

¹⁹ Contrary to the indications of the UNHCR survey (see Table 3 above).

Type of shelters	Tents	Tents	Tents & block houses	Cement decent houses	Tents	Tents
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On the contrary, the **Yazibagh** IDPs share livelihood with the adjacent Sejjo village, the camp constituting presently almost a large extension of the village. Here, the camp population seems to be fully integrated with the hosting nearby community. This probably results from the fact that the **Yazibagh** IDP community has some economic independence, as they continued after displacement with their main activity: raising sheep.

The other camps have diverse and complex relations with neighboring towns or villages, tense in most cases²⁰, with typically no social ties. This is while the neighboring towns play a major role in the provision of aid, as sources of provision of goods and services, and as places of paid labor for livelihood. The IDP camps population is completely dependent on the hosting resident communities and their economic, social and political networks, including with international donors. It is not clear if donors and NGOs implemented projects for social cohesion. If any, the impact is not perceivable.

2.4 The IDPs' livelihood in camps

The key informants were asked about livelihood in the camps, i.e., the aid provided and its nature, the possibilities of additional financial resources through employment, and the provisioning of goods and services (see Appendix A). The assessed situations of the 6 camps were extremely different.

Idleb camps (NWS*)

The camps of the Idleb governorate are directly managed by the “Salvation government” (حكومة الإنقاذ) and its “humanitarian activities organization” (هيئة العمل الإنساني) of the “Office for the management of the camps and the displaced” (إدارة المخيمات والمهجرين). These “institutions” are assumed to provide all aid, or at least coordinate it. However, aid in the form of food baskets or other forms of assistance is provided by NGOs such as the Syrian-Turkish “IYD”²¹ or “Shafak”²², the French “ACTED”²³ or the Syrian-British “Syria Relief”²⁴ (Table 5). Some of the NGOs manage the distribution of aid through their relations with the “Salvation Government”, created by “Hay’at Tahrir Al-Sham” (HTS, formerly Al Nusra Front), despite the classification of HTS by the United Nations as a “terrorist organization”²⁵. Regularly, reports on such coordination lead to the suspension of financing and aid.

The food basket distribution (typically: vegetable oil, lentils, bulgur, rice, wheat flour, chickpeas, etc.) is irregular in the 2 camps and does not reach all sectors of the **Ali bin Abi Taleb** camp. The value of the basket is also reported to be different: US\$ 27/family/month in **Ali bin Abi Taleb** and US\$ 35 in **Sarout**²⁶.

²⁰ See also Table 3.

²¹ IYD is a Syrian NGO founded in 2013 and registered in Turkey, under the name ULUSLARARASI İNSANİ YARDIMLAŞMA DERNEĞİ; see <https://iydreliief.org/en/about-us/>.

²² SHAFAK is an NGO created in 2013 in Turkey, formed from the merger of several local Syrian civil society organizations (<https://shafak.org/about-us/?lang=en>).

²³ ACTED is a French registered major international charity; see <https://www.acted.org/en/about-us/governance/>

²⁴ Syria Relief is UK largest charity focused on Syria established since 2011 in Manchester (<https://syriareliief.org.uk/about-us/>), part of the UK “Action for Humanity” Muslim religious medical I NGO (<https://www.actionforhumanity.org/who-we-are/>).

²⁵ As well as by the United States (2017), Canada, the United Kingdom and Turkey.

²⁶ Some key informants report a face value of the basket around US\$70 or even 85.

The IDPs are reported to sell part of the content of the baskets to wholesalers located in proximity to the places of distribution to obtain cash for their other needs. In this last camp, the in-kind food distribution had been recently replaced by voucher distribution (with an assumed value of US\$65) to purchase specific foods from agreed shops at Dana or Deir Hassan. However, the same practices of IDPs reselling parts of their food baskets to wholesale traders in exchange for cash²⁷ had been replaced in this case by reselling the voucher amount at discounted prices against cash (around US\$ 40) to the agreed shops. The key informants also indicated that the size of the family is not taken into account in the size of the basket or the amount of the voucher. The impact of these practices on the prices of basic goods and the discouragement of local production had been analyzed in an earlier report²⁸.

The aid distribution is not sufficient for livelihood and a large share of the population of both above camps needs to work to earn living. However, working opportunities in trade or construction are meager even though the neighboring cities (Sarmada and Dana) are experiencing economic and construction “booms”²⁹. Seasonal agricultural employment sees entire families participating, including women and children. Also, cases of contracts (“Dhaman”)³⁰ for cropping lands were observed leaving 35% of total revenues for the workers.

The **Sarout** camp IDPs seem to have even fewer working opportunities than those of **Ali bin Abi Taleb**. Most of such opportunities consist of daily waged work in construction in Dana: *“Daily labor by going to the worker’s yard in the city of Dana and waiting for an employer. Most contractors prefer youngest workers”*, as noted by one KI. Rare cases exist of craftworkers, such as blacksmithing in the workshops of Dana. Women’s work opportunities outside seasonal agriculture consist of knitting and embroidery on a piece-by-piece basis. With these meager working opportunities, the key informants of **Sarout** camp report large numbers of young people joining the combating factions for a salary of around US\$ 25 per month (!).

The major problem for working and employment opportunities is mobility and transportation, as motorbikes constitute the main link between the camps and the cities, with the risk of getting the motorbike, if owned, stolen in the city. This is while there is no public transportation of any kind. Workers, as shoppers, wait most often for passing cars on the road to get a lift.

Aleppo camps (NS)

In Aleppo governorate, the **Al-Bil** camp is a special case, as it is completely controlled by the Turkish authorities, (the AFAD - the Disaster & Emergency Management Presidency - of the Turkish Ministry of Interior³¹). It is fenced and only the Turkish official relief organizations are enabled to be active. The aid is provided directly by the Turkish Red Crescent (Kizilay)³². However, the US-based “Syria Relief &

²⁷ On the impact of the trade of the content of the food basket on local agricultural production, see Aita, 2021.

²⁸ Aita, the political economy..., 2021.

²⁹ Both cities are considered as “economic capitals” for their role in trade with Turkey, not only for NWS but even for GOS areas; see Aita, Trade without religion..., 2017.

³⁰ The “Dhaman” contract is a common practice in Syria. The contractor offers to harvest the crop or collect the fruit or vegetables produced on an agricultural against a sharing of revenues with the land owner.

³¹ <https://en.afad.gov.tr/>

³² <https://www.kizilay.org.tr/what-we-do>

Development” (SRD)³³ is also active in the health sector and the “Al-Salameh”³⁴ NGO distributes drinking water.

Food and non-food items are distributed regularly in the **Al-Bil** camp. However, most of the young people are employed in the combating factions. Other employment opportunities are as “civil servants”, NGOs’ staff, or in the construction at ‘Azaz (17 km away) or at Souran (9 km away). Transportations to these two towns constitute, here also, real issues.

Contrary to the particular situation of the **Al-Bil camp**, a variety of NGOs operate in the other camps. The German “Welt Hunger Hilfe” (WHH)³⁵, the Czech “People in Need”³⁶, the Turkish “Hudayi Waqf”³⁷, the Syrian-Turkish “Shafak”³⁸ and “IDD”³⁹ and the Syrian- British “Watan Foundation”⁴⁰ distribute food aid in ‘Aziz camp. The Turkish “IHH”⁴¹ and the Turkish-Syrian “Bahar”⁴² deliver aid to **Al-Barakeh** Camp. This is while in **Yazibagh**, the Syrian-Turkish “Shafak” is also active, as well as the French government aid body “Solidarités Internationales”⁴³, the French NGO “Acted”⁴⁴, the Syrian-Turkish “SEMA”⁴⁵ and “SARD”⁴⁶ provide assistance. The diversity and number of acting NGOs in these camps are noteworthy, as well as the irregularity of assistance (see table 5), suggesting weak coordination between the different aid actors in Northern Aleppo.

Table 6. IDP livelihood aspects in the 6 studied camps

Camp	Sarout	Ali Bin Abi Taleb	Al-Bil	‘Aziz	Yazibagh	Al-Barakeh
Type of population	Rural	Rural	Urban	Mostly rural	Rural tribal	Rural
Type of shelters	Tents	Tents	Tents & block houses	Cement decent houses	Tents	Tents
Rent payment	yes	?	yes	?	?	yes

³³ SRD is an NGO created in November 2011 in the US, active in Syria, Turkey and Jordan; <https://srd.ngo/our-story/>

³⁴ No record was found for this NGO.

³⁵ <https://www.welthungerhilfe.org/our-work/countries/syria-turkiye>.

³⁶ See <https://www.peopleinneed.net/search?q=Syria>.

³⁷ The Hudayi Waqf is an old Sufi Naqshbandi foundation, following the Sheikh Aziz Mahmoud Hida’i (1541-1628). Its endowments had been confiscated by Mustapha Kemal, to be born again in 1983, while at odd with secularists. See <https://www.hudayivakfi.org/images/download/arabic.pdf> and

<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/reportsandinterviews/2014/5/8/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D9%82%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D9%88%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%87-%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A>.

³⁸ Already mentioned for Idleb camps.

³⁹ IDD, Insana Deger Derneği (Care for Humanity) is based in Aintab (Gaziantep), with Radwan Agha Alkalaa as Deputy chairman; see <https://www.idd-tr.org/learn-more>.

⁴⁰ <https://www.watan.foundation/>.

⁴¹ IHH, the Humanitarian Relief Foundation, is a Turkish religious endowment, <https://ihh.org.tr/en/history>.

⁴² <https://bahar.ngo/home>.

⁴³ <https://www.solidarites.org/en/missions/syria/>.

⁴⁴ Already mentioned for Idleb camps.

⁴⁵ The Medical Association for Syrian Expatriates; <https://www.sema-sy.org>, <https://www.sema-sy.org/en/about-us/>.

⁴⁶ Syrian Association for Relief and Development, <https://www.sardngo.org/our-history>.

Active organizations	Acted, IYD	Syria Relief, IYD, Shafak	Turkish Red Crescent (Kizilay), AFAD, Salameh, SRD	WHH, Hida'i Waqf, Shafak, IDD, People in Need	Solidarités Internationales, Shafak, Acted, SEMA, SARD	IHH, Bahar
Food distribution	Food baskets (Acted), replaced by vouchers	Food baskets (IYD), not all sectors	Food baskets (Kizilay)	Vouchers and in-kind aid (WHH, IDD, People in Need)	Monthly food baskets (Shafak), in addition to irregular vouchers (Solidarités)	Irregular food baskets and vouchers (Bahar)
Other sources of revenues	Few working opportunities, seasonal agriculture, construction, slam crafts. Combat factions.	Labor in agriculture, construction, small crafts, "coins"	Combat factions, construction	Rare work opportunities in agriculture, construction and handicrafts	Growing and selling vegetables, raising livestock, agriculture, and construction	Rare work opportunities in agriculture and construction, with children, work
Women employment	Agriculture, sewing	Agriculture			Agriculture	Rare
Place of Labor	Dana, Deir Hassan, Daret 'Azza, etc.	Sarmada, Dana, Atmeh, etc.	Souran, 'Azaz	'Azaz	'Azaz and Sejjo	'Azaz and 'Afrin
Typical salary (TL/day)	20-30	20-30	NA			
Main transportation means	Motorbikes, passing cars	Motorbikes, passing cars	Irregular bus	Motorbikes, passing cars	Rocky area. Motorbikes and rare passing cars.	Motorbikes, passing cars. Only 2 cars in the camp.
Remittances	heavily	yes	yes		Yes, from family members in Turkey	
Heating	No distribution	Olive pit (purine) distribution, not regular		Winter and fuel kits	Heating voucher (Shafak)	No distribution
Electricity	Solar panels, purchased	Solar panels, purchased	Solar panels, partially purchased	No, but the Molham team is working on fixing the	Solar panels and batteries, purchased. Public	Solar panels and batteries

				electricity network	lighting (Acted)	
Water	Individual tanks (Syria Relief) filled by trucks (Acted)	By trucks, purchased (IYD)	By trucks (Salameh)	By Trucks (Molham)	By trucks (Solidarités Internationales)	By trucks. However insufficient this year.
Waste removal	No	Yes (IYD)	Yes (Salameh)	?	?	Yes (Bahar)
Markets in camp	Yes, small	yes	Yes, some small shops	Yes, some small shops	Yes, village market	Yes, some small shops
Main market	Dana	Sarmada	'Azaz, Kafra and ouran	'Azaz. Prices in the camp are cheaper	Azaz and Sejjo. Mobile sellers and shops in the camp	'Azaz and 'Afrin
School	Two tents for primary school, few children go to Deir Hassan school	Self-built (limited support from Syria Relief and Shafak)	Built by AFAD, small, also Al-Bil village school is used	School built by Molham team and camp management	One school established by the IDPs in 2 tents.	No school. Closest school is 2 km away
Health	None in the 3 sectors	Caravane in one sector (Syria Relief)	Small center (SRD, 11 am-2pm)	Small clinic (Watan NGO) and drugs provided by Molham	Medical mobile unit (SEMA). Health center in Yazibagh village, far from the camp.	Medical mobile unit that works for 2 hours per week

2.5 Health and education

The key informants were also asked about healthcare and education in the camps.

Idleb camps (NWS*)

The IDPs of **Ali bin Abi Taleb** camp created their own school⁴⁷ consisting of 6 tents. It was initially supported by the Syrian-British "Syria Relief" (salaries of teachers) and then by Syrian-Turkish "Shafak" (new larger tents). But the support ended, and the teachers work now voluntarily. However, the teaching curriculum is that imposed by the "Salvation Government" of HTS⁴⁸.

⁴⁷ See <https://horrya.net/archives/137028> and <https://horrya.net/archives/87948>. Note that the CCCM cluster does not report a school or a health center in this camp.

⁴⁸ This curriculum is similar to the official GOS one, with all references to the Syrian State's controversial issues removed. There were claims to adopt the curriculum of the "Provisory Government" of the opposition, refused by the "Salvation Government".

The KIs indicated that a very small number of students attend universities. The closest university is that of Sarmada and is private with a fee reaching US\$ 1,200 per year; which is a very large amount for the IDPs. The other option is the “public” university of Idleb, more distant. In both cases, the students face the major issue of means and cost of transportation, as rents in Idleb are out of reach.

The situation is worse in the **Sarout** camp⁴⁹, where only two tents were installed for primary schooling. Few children go to the school of Deir Hassan locality. The poverty in the camp seems to make no student able to reach the private university of Sarmada and a little number join the public one in Idleb.

Concerning healthcare, only the second sector of **Ali bin Abi Taleb** camp has a healthcare center, non-permanent in a caravan, provided by the British “Syria Relief”, operating as first aid with no medicines. The center dispatches patients to hospitals in Sarmada, Dana, or Bab Al Hawa. On the contrary, the **Sarout** camp has no healthcare center.

Aleppo camps

The educational situation in **Al-Barakeh camp** is very bad, as there is no school in the camp. The nearest elementary school is 2 to 3 km away in the village of Kafr Janneh, while the nearest secondary school is 5 km away from the camp in 'Azaz. The interviewees estimate that only 40% of children go to school, while the remaining children do not receive any type of education, due to the absence of any schooling in the camp, as well as the difficulty and high cost of transportation. The camp also suffers from the spreading of child labor. As for university education, interviewees assert that only five students were able to continue their university education. This is due to the high tuition costs, books, and stationery expenses, and monthly costs.

The bad situation is not limited to education, as the camp suffers from the absence of any medical points. Medical services are provided by mobile medical teams that come once a week for approximately two hours only. In emergency cases, patients are transferred to hospitals in neighboring areas, either by private means of transport (motorbikes) or by the “civil defense” or “White Helmets”⁵⁰. There is a general satisfaction with the role played by the civil defense units in mitigating health issues.

The **'Aziz camp** has an elementary-primary school, in two rooms providing education until the ninth grade. The school was established by the “Molham Volunteering Team”⁵¹. Some university students are studying at Free Aleppo University⁵² and Al-Nahda University⁵³. University students in the 'Aziz camp face similar problems than in other camps: weak transportation networks, high rents in 'Azaz, and high tuition fees.

There is a medical unit established by the Syrian-British “Watan “Foundation”⁵⁴. This unit includes three medical clinics: a children's clinic, a women's clinic, and a general clinic. In some cases, patients are

⁴⁹ The CCCM reports a school in Sarout camp, while the absence of school is reported as a major complaint of the IDPs, see <https://our-syria.com/11167/>.

⁵⁰ <https://www.whitehelmets.org/en/>. The White Helmets were founded by the British James Le Mesurier and his Mayday Rescue Foundation.

⁵¹ <https://molhamteam.com/>. “Molham Volunteering Team is a nonprofit, charitable organization founded in 2012 in Jordan, by a group of then university students. It aims at providing aid to internally displaced and refugee Syrians in northern Syria and neighboring countries. The organization is registered in several countries around the world, including Germany, Canada and Sweden”.

⁵² <https://uoaleppo.net/>. Created in 2015 in 'Azaz, depending on the “Interim Government”.

⁵³ <https://iru.university/wt/>. The International University of Science & Renaissance, also located in Azaz.

⁵⁴ See above note 38.

transferred to hospitals in nearby areas. The “Molham Volunteering Team” supports the medical unit by providing medical drugs.

The **Yazibagh camp** has a small school, consisting of two tents connected, with limited equipment. The school works for only four hours a day, from 11:00 to 3:00. The camp suffers from educational dropout and child labor. Most young men and women do not seek to pursue their university life, but some interviewees confirm that females are more inclined to universities, as young men go to work at an early age. The students go to the “Free Aleppo University” and to the private “Sham university”⁵⁵ in Shammarin/Azaz, close to the Turkish border. The students also suffer from high tuition fees and poor transportation network.

For healthcare, the camp includes a mobile clinic supervised by the Syrian-US “SAMS”⁵⁶ and the Syrian-Turkish “SEMA”⁵⁷, which operates on Wednesdays and Thursdays only from 8 am to 4 pm. The mobile clinic is a caravan that includes an ambulance bed, medicines, and simple examination devices. In addition, there is another mobile clinic in the **Yazibagh** supervised by the Syrian-Turkish “SARD” and the Turkish “Blue Crescent”⁵⁸ Hospital at the Bab al-Salameh crossing.

Figure 5. Localization of Aleppo (NS) camps, comparatively to ‘Azaz and Bab Al-Salameh crossing



Interestingly, the proximity of Bab Al-Salameh facilities is mentioned for the **Yazibagh** camp and not for the **‘Aziz** camp, while the latter is much closer (figure 5).

The educational situation in **Al-Bil camp** is much better than many other camps, as the camp includes a school divided into a group of classes. Additionally, there is another school in the nearby Souran village to which many students go. These schools use the curriculum of the Interim Government and are supervised by the Turkish official AFAD organization. The camp also includes a teacher training institute, where

⁵⁵ <http://shamuniversity.com/>.

⁵⁶ <https://www.sams-usa.net/>. The Syrian American Medical Association.

⁵⁷ See above note 43.

⁵⁸ International Blue Crescent for Relief and development, <https://www.abc.org.tr/>.

teachers are trained in Mathematics, English, Turkish and Arabic matters every two years. For university education, there is a group of students who study at 'Azaz University, but they also suffer from high tuition fees and the bad transportation system.

Regarding the health situation, this **Al-Bil camp** has also the best situation. There are several reasons for that, the most prominent of which is that **Al-Bil camp** hosts the urban displaced population from Ghouta (Rural Damascus), who have initially significant medical expertise, and most of them can perform first aid. This is due to the severe siege they had experienced in the earlier years of the conflict, which forced them to acquire such skills. The camp also includes a medical clinic, which is managed by the US “SRD” and works for approximately three hours. In addition, some of the IDPs go to medical hospitals and clinics in the surrounding areas when necessary, especially in Souran city.

CHAPTER 3: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE

SITUATION OF THE IDPs IN CAMPS

3.1 The economic situation

Idleb camps

The **Sarout and Ali Ibn Abi Taleb camps** are located near Al Dana and Sarmada, the two cities with intense economic activity as they are located near the Bab Al Hawa border crossing (figure 6), the only still open humanitarian cross-border aid gateway authorized by the UN Security Council resolutions⁵⁹.

At **Sarout camp**, the livelihood of the population is extremely dependent on aid, and in a few cases on remittances of family in Turkey or Europe. In 2021, the aid transformed from in-kind (valued US\$ 35 per household monthly) to monetary cards (valued US\$ 65 per household monthly) to be used exclusively in shops in Al Dana and Deir Hassan contracted by the aid NGOs. However, the cards are often monetized at discounted value against cash (at around 60% of their value). Thus the aid is not sufficient and complementary revenues are necessary. They can be obtained on a daily basis during the agricultural seasons (essential for women and the very young) or in small crafts and shops in the neighboring towns. Other opportunities exist in the sawmills of Hazri or in the construction in Al Dana and Deir Hassan. Some women work also in their tents in the embroidery of beaded clothes. The KIs noted that the agricultural season constitutes a main opportunity for mobility outside the closed environment of the camp.

All these menial jobs (2 to 3 US\$ per day) are obtained “*through relations*”⁶⁰ (meaning clientelist relations), creating social and political dependency. And the major issues are transportation to the place of work as well as the preference for young workers. As mentioned by a KI: “*We can sit for several days without having a job opportunity, after having all the trouble to get to Al Dana main square*”. There are rare cases of better daily salaries (US\$ 5 to 10) for very specialized workers (in car or motorcycle reparations for

⁵⁹ UN Security Council resolution 2585 of 2021, renewed in July 2022 for six months.

⁶⁰ Unless indicated differently, the texts in italic under brackets are extracted from the interviews with the KIs.

example). Also, young people are often hired in the combatting factions for a salary of US\$ 25 per month. The IDPs see the population of Al Dana as *“the biggest beneficiaries, whose trade and profits have increased. They are mainly a society with huge capital, and Dana has become a commercial center for the entire North of Syria”*.

“We need the cities, but they don’t need us, while their prosperity, the progress of their urbanization, and the increase of their capital were due to our displacement to their area. We need to go to the city to have our needs and buy things that are not available in the camp”. Few IDPs have motorcycles as transportation mean. However, they don’t dare take it to the cities for long days, as many cases of thefts were mentioned. And as there is no public transportation, IDP workers usually wait for a passing motorcycle, car, or truck for mobility. Otherwise, there are some rare cases of *“Dhaman”* (literally guarantee) agricultural contracts between IDPs and landowners, especially in the cases of olives, with a profit-sharing of the benefits of the crops between the *“guarantor”* (the worker, usually 35%) and the owner (usually 65%).

The situation seems less favorable in **Ali Ibn Abi Taleb camp**, as the value of the still in-kind aid distribution is estimated by the KIs at only US\$ 25-27 per household monthly. Many IDPs resell their food baskets at discounted prices to obtain cash. As indicated by a KI: *“Most of the IDPs have other sources of income because the aid provided is symbolic⁶¹ and does not meet personal needs”*. Dependency on remittances and more significantly on employment is more important.

Figure 6. Localization of Idleb (NWS) camps, comparatively to Sarmada, Al Dana, and crossing



Job opportunities are similar to those in **Sarout** camp, in addition to crafts (electrical reparations) in Sarmada and stones cutting at quarries (typical salary US\$ 3-4 per day for a normal worker and US\$ 10 for a chief operator). The proximity to the Bab Al Hawa-Sarmada road creates even job opportunities for taxi

⁶¹ Some KIs indicate that there is no aid distribution in the camp. So not all sectors receive aid.

drivers. Here also, transportation to the place of work is a major issue. It is mainly made by motorcycles, or by truck provided by an employer against a share of the salary. An additional source of revenue, practiced at a significant scale, consists of playing and collecting digital “coins” on mobile phones (Yalla chat room per example), then selling them to a collector passing monthly in the camps. Revenues from such gaming could reach up to US\$ 100 per month.

The complaints about the exploitation by the “hosting communities” of the neighboring localities are here also severe.

Aleppo camps

As noted earlier, the **Al-Bil camp** is a special case among the 4 studied camps in the 'Azaz region (NS), as it is totally managed by the Turkish authorities. Its population's livelihood depends on aid directly and regularly provided by the Turkish Red Crescent and other Turkish NGOs, as well as more largely on salaries to combatants and some employment opportunities.

Figure 7. View of Al-Bil camp



The urban nature (Damascus Suburbs) of the camp population makes it skillful in various fields. “*We have teachers, engineers, nurses, carpenters, Blacksmiths, etc.* ». But the main problem is that the location of employment is far away, with no public transportation. “*The lines of “services”⁶² are rare here. One at noon and one at dawn*”. Souran, the closest town, is 9 km from the camp, while mostly rural, and ‘Azaz, the main commercial, craftwork, and industrial city is at 17 km. Motorcycles are thus the main transportation mean. Typical job opportunities are in construction. However, there are many cases of

⁶² “Services” are collective taxis, very common in Levant towns.

employment in NGOs, while most of the young people are combatants. Some are even fighting in Libya. The economy of the camp and the neighboring localities has been qualified as “prosperous”, despite the existence of poverty.

‘Aziz camp is situated near the Turkish border and the Bab Al Salameh crossing. However, it little profits economically from being there and near the most active trading road between Turkey and Syria (the Bab Al Salameh- ‘Azaz road, see figure 5 above)⁶³.

Few NGOs provide aid to the camp, in kind or cash. And the distribution is not regular. *“We suffer from the lack of interest of the NGOs”*. So many IDPs work in the city of ‘Azaz on a daily basis in construction, and less in industry and crafts with relatively better transportation means (“services”, hitchhiking, etc.). Even though the camp is situated in the middle of a rich agricultural land, and that most of the population is of rural origin, there are few employment opportunities for the **‘Aziz camp** IDPs in agriculture, even seasonally. However, the camp has its own market with many shops, easy to access. Also, the population often visits the nearby village of Nayarah for fresh dairy products.

The **Yazibagh camp** is situated in the same area as the ‘Aziz camp (figure 5). However, it is an older camp, with a more homogeneous population (localities of origin, rural-tribal). The camp receives regularly in-kind food and non-food aid distribution, as well as remittances from members of the family working in Turkey. Many of the families raise herds of sheep and cows and obtain thus decent living. Men work also in construction and crafts in the neighboring localities (‘Azaz, Sejjo, Salameh, ...), as well as truck drivers. Other opportunities exist in the intense commercial activities at the Bab Al Salameh crossing. While women, as before displacement, work largely in agriculture in the whole region towards ‘Azaz. The transportation issues to localities of work seem less acute than in the other camps. The camp seems also well economically and socially integrated with the neighboring village of Sejjo.

The **Al Barakeh camp (Kar Janneh)** is a smaller remote informal camp, totally dependent on aid as few job opportunities are available, except the rare ones in agriculture in the nearby. The transportation to ‘Azaz constitutes a real challenge, to get there a low-paid daily construction job. *“We spend hours in the early morning to get a lift to ‘Azaz, maybe from 6 a.m. to 10”*. Only 2 or 3 cars are available for the whole camp. The livelihood situation is qualified by the KIs as *“very bad”*, as the mainly in-kind aid is not regular. *“We don't produce anything. We don't have agriculture or industry or workshops or animals... The neighboring localities are living in their homes and they are stable while they depend on us completely for our shopping for their products and goods”*. Young children are reported working, and fewer women, except collecting olives during the season.

In all studied camps, there were no mentions of employment opportunities in NGOs, even in those serving the concerned camp.

⁶³ Bab Al Salameh crossing is more active in trade than Bab Al Hawa crossing. The latter is the only dealing with official UN humanitarian aid.

3.2 The social relations

Idleb camps

The **Sarout camp** KIs report excellent social relations and solidarity within the camp, as all residents come from the same villages and communities (within each of the sectors of the camp). They however indicate tense relations between their society and that of Dana. One indicates that: *“There are absolutely no social relationships between the residents of the camp and the residents of the neighboring towns. They are a society that is only concerned with trade, profit, and gain by any means. They look at us with a very superior look. They never consider the conditions we have experienced from bombing, killing, and destruction... They do not know our areas. Most of the time, they are busy with their economic activities, so they never follow or care about the news. They constantly monitor the exchange rate of the local currency and its changes. They never realize that their trade, their profits, and their real estate prices have increased because of our displacement. This is while we used to own farms and land in hundreds of dunams”*. Another KI points out that there is *“hate between the two communities”*. *“The community of the neighboring cities is commercial and industrial, it has huge capitals. They have import and export companies. We are a community whose first and last concern is to seek and obtain a daily living. The differences between us are great, so we don’t have with them any social relationship. As for marriage between the children of the two communities, this never happens”*. Women of the camp work in agriculture, not those of the cities. *“Marriage dowry in the cities amounts to around US\$ 10,000, while ours never exceeds US\$ 200”*. Women barely go outside the camp. One KI noted that *“our relations with the neighboring communities are marked by the exploitation of the young people needing work, with daily salaries insufficient to cover daily needs”*. And there are no ways to complain about low salaries, as employment demand largely exceeds the offer.

The **Ali Bin Abi Taleb camp** is also divided into several sectors, each grouping families from an initial locality⁶⁴. Most such localities are in the Jabal Al-Zawiya mountains, the southern countryside of Idleb, and in Al-Ghab Plain. Thus, the IDPs were more recently displaced, mostly in 2018. Some social and cultural differences can be observed between the sectors, depending on the original tribal or rural social structures in the original localities. However, strong relations had emerged due to the commonly lived dire situation: *“We have become one community, sharing the same pains”*. The relations with the hosting communities are here also limited, with no common marriages. However, *“it is possible to take a bride from the camp to the city, but the marriage of a bride from the city to the camp is not possible, because the community of neighboring cities does not even think about living in a tent”*. This is in addition to the marriage dowry: US\$ 200 at marriage and US\$ 500 for divorce in the camp, US\$ 5,000 at marriage, and US\$ 10,000 at divorce in the city. But generally, the population of the neighboring localities *“has a view of condescension on the IDPs, as if they were inferior to them, knowing that the majority of the camp's residents are well educated and cultured”*. The notables among the IDPs are community leaders and Muslim Sheikhs. However, most extended families seem to be represented when negotiating with the ruling authorities.

⁶⁴ Most of the sectors are named by the locality of origin: Hass, Shahshabo, etc....

Aleppo camps

In the **Al-Bil camp**, all the displaced people in this camp came from the eastern Ghouta of Damascus, which increased the level of social cohesion among the camp members, since they belong to the same urban communities and traditions. The interviewees also indicate that the camp witnessed many marriages in displacement, which illustrates the social bonding among the camp residents. One of the KIs says: *“We are relatives and people of the same city. Simply we are all brothers”*. However, many of the displaced from Eastern Ghouta, even from the same families and neighborhoods, stayed in Idlib or installed in ‘Afrin. The relationships with the neighboring towns and the host communities are weak, nothing more than buying and selling. *“There is no compatibility between our state of mind and that of the people of this region”*, as one KI put it. Only one or two marriage cases out of the camp. Most of the women are unemployed, but many of the educated obtain a job. There are social activities in the camp in which women participate. Early marriages for young girls (15 years old) are common. *“The best thing to happen to a young girl is to get married, especially since there are a lot of children here”*.

The **‘Aziz camp** is recent, and its population was gathered from several smaller informal IDPs’ settlements following the construction of decent housing there by the “Molham Volunteering Team”. However, good relationships were built gradually among the there-settled IDPs despite their different origins (West Aleppo, South Idlib countryside, Damascus suburbs, etc.). *“During life in the camp, we were forced to become one community, because today we have a year of living together and the camp consists of residential blocks next to each other”*. But no social relations exist with the neighboring communities: *« there are no relations, as our camp is well controlled. But we have no problems with our neighbors”*. On the situation of women, a KI indicated: *“Women are in their homes, inactive, and men are at work”*.

The population of **Yazibagh camp** is homogenous, all “Arabs” (tribal organization) from South Aleppo villages. They came here as the camp is close to the Turkish border, the fence is in fact 200 m from the last tent. The camp is very large and divided into 5 sectors. The large surface enables space for the livestock. *“We don’t want to move to another better-equipped camp with houses, as we have here space for the livestock”*. The women’s society is cohesive. Women of each sector meet every morning to organize journeys to the markets or to prepare vegetables for conservation (during the season). However, a KI indicates that: *“women are somehow confined. Most of what they do is raising children, grazing livestock, and buying things from neighboring villages”*. With their specific social characteristics, the IDPs of Yazibagh maintain little but good social relations with the neighboring localities.

Even smaller, the **Al-Barakeh camp** is divided into several sectors, each grouping the IDPs from a village or a town in Northern or West Aleppo. *“When we were displaced, we sat under the trees. Then we were taken to shelters where the women were separated from the men. We lived with 140 men in a big tent until this camp was built and we were taken to it. Then the families came back and gathered in the tents. It wasn’t by our wills, but by reality, it was imposed on us”*. Each sector is made of 20 or 30 families: *“we have a strong sense of solidarity, we carry together the weight of the camp... unless the ship could sink”*. *“We have nothing in common with the neighboring communities, but we have no problems with them”*. On women conditions: *“as we are a conservative society, our women suffer from staying in the tents. The women remain trapped in the tent and suffer from the nature of this housing. However, families are*

cooperating to overcome these difficult circumstances”. And a KI comments: “The men in the camp have also become helpless women” (!).

3.3 The “governance” situation

Idleb camps:

Extended family and tribal relations govern the society of the **Sarout camp**. Traditional notables solve local disputes. However, the camp affairs are managed by a “director”, nominated and chosen among the notables by the “Office for the management of the camps and the displaced” (OMCD)⁶⁵ of the “Salvation Government” (SG). The “director” defends the interests of the sector with the OMCD and the NGOs. However, “he often receives only promises”, and “those who have direct good relations with OMCD and the NGOs obtain what they need”. The “director” has no salary or compensation for his continuous displacements to the OMCD and NGOs offices. He is changed regularly for unknown reasons.

The relations with the OMCD and its "Humanitarian Activities Organization" (HAO) were qualified as “a relationship with a de facto power. They set priorities and define the aid received. They coordinate with the NGOs. Our needs, transmitted by the “director”, are often postponed because of more urgent priorities, as they say. We complain about our needs of heating materials. And we have no answer”. No political representation exists in the camp, no elections, and no discussions are made on return from displacement. “Since the first day of our displacement, we have been living with the hope of a dignified return to our villages”. However, the hope is diminishing. “We have become certain that we are victims of the interests of colonial powers, which forced us to think only about our daily living”.

In Ali Bin Abi Taleb camp, 3 notables represent the IDPs towards authorities. There is also a “director” nominated by the OMCD of the SG. Such representation is qualified as “making nonsense, as it is made by appointment with no elections, and three directors had been successively changed without consulting the residents of the camp”. The director takes advantage of his position for aid⁶⁶, while he receives no salary. The relations with the NGOs are qualified as cumbersome, as it is difficult to know which is in charge of food aid and which of healthcare or other issues. The meetings of the director and the notables with the HAO/OMCD and NGOs on needs are qualified as formal with no real results. The claims to transform the tents into simple houses made of mud⁶⁷ with minimal services, as in Barisha, had been refused.

“Services and aid depend primarily on nepotism. The needs are not assessed. The biggest example is that the services to the neighboring camps and sectors, such as the xxx camps or the yyy sectors⁶⁸, where there are acquaintances with the Salvation Government and the OMCD, are continuously provided. They have monthly baskets and heating material, and the roads leading to their sectors have been paved, while we do not have the minimum necessities of life”. Although, “We have no more hopes to return to our villages...

⁶⁵ Called locally the “blue factory”, following the location of the premises of the “Humanitarian Activities Organization” (HAO) of the OMCD.

⁶⁶ One of 8 KIs contradict these general statements, as the director being proposed by the inhabitants and famous for his honesty.

⁶⁷ Tradition construction technique in Syrian villages, see per example <https://inhabitat.com/these-earthen-beehive-houses-have-been-keeping-syrians-naturally-cool-for-centuries/>

⁶⁸ The name of the camps and sectors have been removed, not to create specific harm.

We have become victims of the Russian-Turkish understandings". "We made some demonstrations near the Turkish military point of Al Mastouma, but they refused to receive our delegation".

Aleppo camps

In the **Al-Bil camp**, each sector has its own "mayor" (*Mukhtar*), selected by the Turkish AFAD from the elders. Some mukhtars are officially employed by the AFAD and have a salary. They can be removed if the population complains. The coordination is only made with the Turkish AFAD and Red Crescent, and no NGO can intervene in the camp without their approval. *"We don't intervene in the coordination between the mukhtars, the Turkish authorities, and the NGOs, as the services are somehow good"*, as per one KI. *"The relations with the authorities are generally good. I can't say more. But they are very restricted"*. On the issue of returning, the perception is that *"Eastern Damascus Ghouta is out of reach, and most of the people have given up hope on return. They adapted with the current situation and established a stable life for their children"... "Maybe our grandchildren would return"*.

The **'Aziz camp** is managed by a local administration that was appointed directly by the "Molham Volunteering Team", without elections. In fact, it is this team that represents the camp towards the ruling authorities, including the local councils. But generally, such management is assessed as good or improving. The interviewees indicated that there is a complaint mechanism that the camp administration takes seriously. The camp administration and the population do not discuss any issue related to the return of the displaced to their original areas. *"There are discussions on building similar new villages and only about that. No discussions are made on return to the initial locations before displacement. Return is far away"*. It is worth noting that the camp management possesses good communication skills and connections with the authorities, donors, and agencies.

The "directors/representatives" of each sector of the **Yazibagh camp** are selected by the population for their status or knowledge, through a formal vote or men assembly consultation. The NGOs consult them to assess the needs and they organize the distribution of aid. *"No negative incidents have been reported or complaints on "directors/representatives" performance, except that some problems may occur during aid baskets' distributions because they are not enough"*. However, disputes are solved with a common understanding. The KIs mention that some of the IDPs had returned to their original locations, but most fear army enrollment for their sons and dealing with Syrian security services or with the "Syrian Democratic Forces". Other reasons are mentioned including the fact that people have found their way of living here and jobs, and they don't want to restart a new life.

The "directors/representatives" of the **Al-Barakeh camp** are also chosen by the community, and elected by the notables of the families of each sector. *"They represent us. Sometimes they take advantage of that, and sometimes not. However, they are the lower hand, and if the higher hand (meaning the NGOs) had nothing for us, nobody gets anything"*. On the question of return, *"this is the people's daily talk and their daily wish, especially as life in the settlement is unbearable. People are waiting for salvation to leave this place and this is the talk of every gathering"*. *"This is the obsession and the big dream of all the inhabitants of the camp. Even the children. Everyone asks to go home. They just want to go home and they don't want anything else"*. And another KI points out that: *"At the end, as combating factions or social organizations,*

we are all sons of the same country, and we are all relatives with the people inside (meaning in the areas controlled by the government of Syria). Sometimes, we get visits from personalities of the interim government, and discussions happen. They give us promises. The TV channels or the media people are the ones who convey the picture of our suffering or our desires to the world and abroad”.

PART TWO: THE SECOND CAMPAIGN

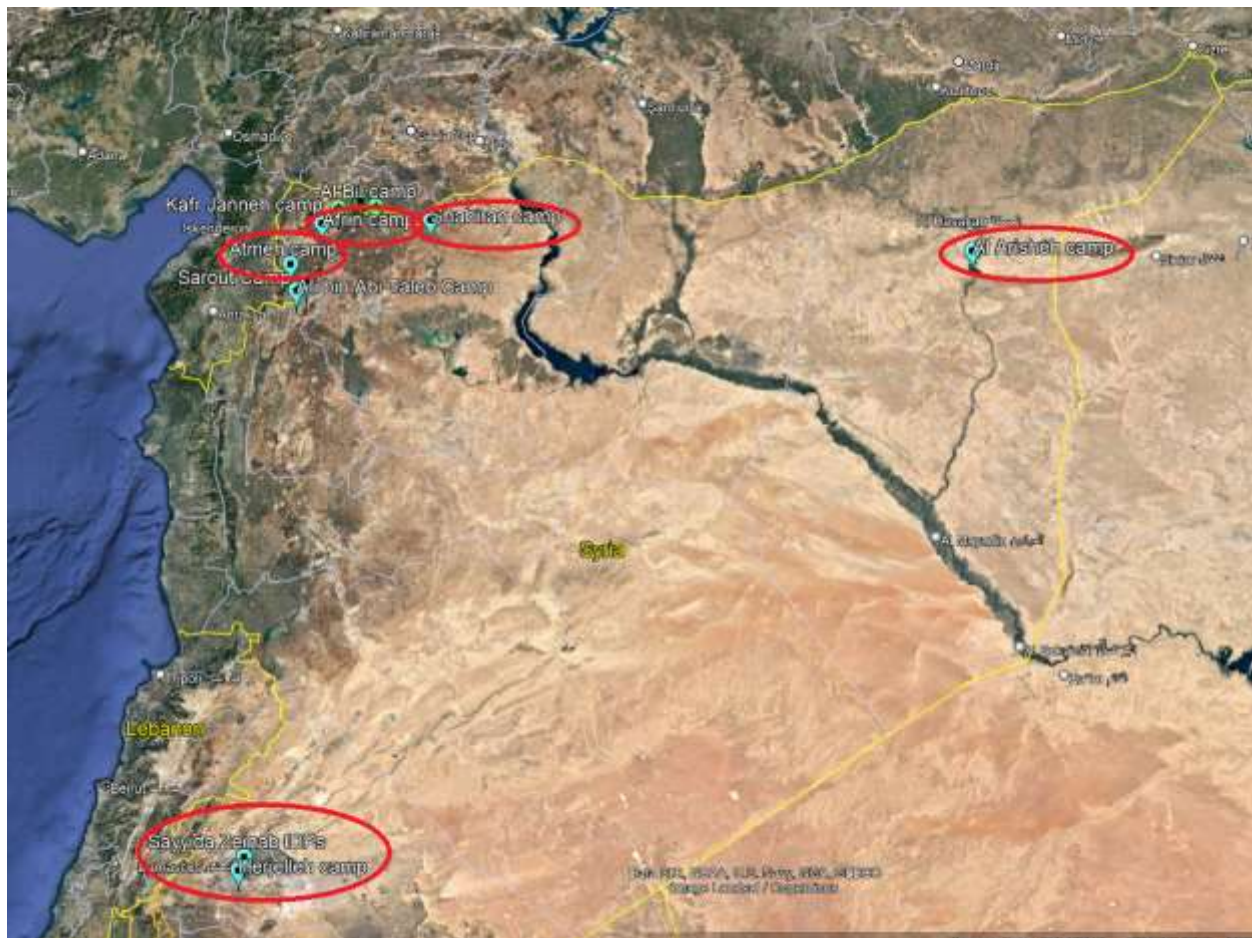


CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 Objectives of the investigation

Following the first campaign, the question has been raised if the results obtained could be generalized to other IDP camps, including those in the North-East under the control of the "Syrian Democratic Forces" (SDF) and those in the zones controlled by the government (GOS). However, as this second campaign was performed by another research team, camps in NWS were also included for comparison (figure 8). The selection of camps offers then a wider perspective on the IDP situation in all of Syria.

Figure 8 The IDP camps of the second campaign



3 camps were selected in the North-West, but away from the locations of the 6 camps studied in the first phase: the **Jazireh sector** of the large **Atmeh camp** near Harem (figure 9), the **'Ibad Al Rahman camp** (also named Military hospital) near 'Afrin and **Shabiran camp** near Al Bab (figure 10).

In the Northeast, were excluded the camps hosting the population that had strongly supported the "Islamic State of Iraq and Syria" (ISIS), as they merit special consideration for what concerns their social, economic, and governance relations. Thus, **Al 'Arisheh camp** was selected, situated on the right bank of the Khabur river South of Hassakeh (figures 8 and 11).

Figure 9 The large Atmeh Camp



Figure 10. The Shabiran camp



Figure 11. Al 'Arisheh camp



For the GOS areas, two camps were selected, both in the neighborhoods of Damascus: **Herjelleh camp** (near Al Kesweh, figures 8 and 12) and **Sayyida Zeinab camp**. They are both located in the southern neighborhood of Damascus.

4.2 Research methodology

The research methodology of the second campaign consisted of a survey of 89 inhabitants of the concerned camps, using the same questionnaire as in the first campaign⁶⁹, completed by extended key informants interviews for each of the camps (figure 13). Following the analysis of the results, focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted in 3 camps, one in each area of control, on some of the major issues encountered by the IDP communities (see below in chapter 5).

The characteristics of the sample of the survey of the 2nd campaign are indicated here below in Table 7 and Appendix C. Noting that the questionnaire of the survey was exactly the same as for the 1st campaign KI interviews, the sampling has been enlarged. The share of women interviewed also generally increased. Most of the interviewees have passed several years in the camp.

Table 7. General characteristics of the KI surveyed in the 2nd campaign

Camp	Atmeh (Jazireh)	'Ibad Rahman	Sharan	'Arisheh	Herjelleh	Sayyida Zaynab
Number of the	10	10	10	30	15	14

⁶⁹ The questionnaire of the surveys and key informants interviews were extended from that of the first campaign, completed by various livelihood aspects, enabling to hide somehow the real objectives of the study.

surveyed						
Females	40%	40%	50%	50%	47%	50%
Average age	37.2	47	37.7	33.9	42.9	41.8
Family size	7.0	7.8	5.8	7.1	6.3	6.3
Years in camp	5.3	2.1	2.3	3.1	4.2	4.1
Number of in-depth KI interviews	1	1	1	3	1	2

4.3 Selection and Typology of the IDP camps of the 2nd campaign

The selection of the IDP camps intended to offer a wider range of situations concerning the IDPs, covering all regions of Syria, its controlling powers, its active NGOs, and its social environments.

NWS camps

The **Atmeh camp** is by far the largest IDP camp in Syria, established in 2012 at the beginning of the crisis for the population that failed to cross to Turkey. It is situated on the borderline with Turkey, near the cities of Jindiris and Al Dana, in the Idleb governorate (figure 9). Alone, it hosts 41,939 HH. It is composed of several districts. The interviews focused on the district of Al Jazira which hosts 623 IDP HH. Most of its population was displaced from Idleb and Hama countryside, but also from several other parts of Syria and even from Iraq.

The **'Ibad Al Rahman camp** is located on the outskirts of the city of 'Afrin. IDPs were settled there following the "Olive branch" military operation in 2018 of Turkey and allied combating forces ousting the SDF forces, as well as a significant share of the mostly Kurdish population of the area.

The **Shabiran camp** is also somewhat large, situated near the city of Al-Bab in Aleppo governorate and comprising 4 sectors (figure 10). It hosts 1,093 IDP HH. Most of the IDPs originated from Southern Aleppo and Hama countryside.

NES camps

Al 'Arisheh camp has been initially installed on a small peninsula in the Bassel dam lake on the Khabur river (figure 11). It was mostly dedicated to IDPs fleeing ISIS from Al Mayadeen, near Deir-Ez-Zor. It has been later extended outside the peninsula to host IDPs initially displaced to Mabrouka camp (near Ras Al 'Ayn, Raqqa governorate) fleeing ISIS from Deir-Ez-Zor governorate (Al Mayadeen, 'Ashara, Deir-Ez-Zor)⁷⁰. This was following Turkey and allied forces' takeover of Rays Al 'Ayn and its surroundings. The total population in the initial camp and extension reached 2,853 HH in 2021⁷¹.

⁷⁰ <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/camp-profile-areesheh-extension-al-hasakeh-governorate-syria-october>.

⁷¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/camp-profile-areesha-al-hasakeh-governorate-syria-february-2022>.

Figure 12. The Herjelleh camp



GOS camps

The **Herjelleh camp** hosted initially the IDPs fleeing East Ghouta near Damascus (Darayya, Hosh, Misraba, ...) in 2018. They were settled in unfinished buildings, schools, and sheds⁷²⁷³. Then, IDPs from Fu'a and Kefraya were also hosted. In 2021, the camp hosted around 60,000 IDPs, after reaching earlier a peak of 200,000⁷⁴.

Sayyida Zeinab is a city on the Southern outskirts of Damascus containing an important Shi'a shrine. The population of the city increased significantly in the last decades due to rural-urban migration, the old displaced population from the Israeli-occupied Golan heights, and the development of the Shi'a pilgrimage, especially from Lebanon and Iran. In addition, the city includes also an important Palestinian refugees camp.

Figure 13. a key informant interview



⁷² <https://www.unhcr.org/ar/news/latest/2018/4/5ad324a04.html>.

⁷³ https://orient-news.net/ar/news_show/185917.

⁷⁴ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/unosd/documents/4325Session%209-5%20Abdul%20Alkhstib.pdf>.

The city and its neighborhood suffered significantly during the Syrian conflict and a large share of its population was displaced. However, most of the displaced returned. Also, following the end of the siege of Al Fu'ah and Kifraya by HTS in Idleb governorate in 2018, most of the population (Shi'a in the majority) was displaced and hosted in a settlement in Sayyida Zeinab: **the Sayyida Zeinab IDP camp**.

4.4 The general characteristics of the IDP camps of the 2nd campaign

The general characteristics of the camps were mostly gathered through the surveys and KI interviews, especially for those in GOS, as UN and relief agencies publish little information on IDP camps outside the North West and North East.

Table 8. General characteristics of the 2nd campaign IDP camps

Camp	Atmeh (Jazireh)	'Ibad Rahman	Shabiran	'Arisheh	Herjelleh	Sayyida Zaynab
Year of installation	2012	2018	2014	2017	2018	2018
UN Classification	informal	informal	Transit/reception center	formal	formal	formal
Nbr of HH KI/CCCM	500/623	240/172	640/173	2400/2850	4,000	3,000
Situation	Harem (Idleb)	'Afrin (Aleppo)	Al-Bab (Aleppo)	Hassakeh	Kisweh (Damascus Sub)	Sayyida Zeinab (Damascus Sub)
Terrain	Rocky hill	urban	Rocky hill	Peninsula in lake	Semi-urban	urban
Origin of IDPs	Hama, Idleb, Aleppo, Damascus & Der'a	Idleb, Aleppo, Homs countryside	Hama, Idleb, Aleppo countryside's	Deir Ez Zor area	Kifraya and Fu'a, Eastern Ghouta	Kafraya and Fu'a, Nubbol
IDP society	Rural, tribal, urban	Rural	Rural, urban	Tribal	Rural, urban	Rural, urban
Type of shelter	Mixed, concrete houses & tents	Tents	Concrete houses & tents	Tents	concrete houses	Concrete houses

4.5 The results of the survey of the camp's population

The answers to the questionnaire survey had been classified into main categories, as in Table 7.

Table 9. General situation of the IDP camps of the 2nd campaign

Camp	Atmeh (Jazireh)	'Ibad Rahman	Shabiran	'Arisheh	Herjelleh	Sayyida Zaynab
How long in the camp	1-9 years	1-3 years	1-4 years	2-5 years	2-5 years	2-4 years
Why this camp	Safety, family	family, good organization	family, good organization	proximity to Deir Zor, good organization	Imposed by GOS, family, Shi'a gathering, safety	Imposed by GOS, family, Shi'a gathering, safety, close to Damascus
Payment of rent for shelter	Partially	in case of concrete house	No	No	No	some cases
Electricity	Solar panels	Solar panels	Rare solar panels	No, very rare solar panels	Public electricity	Public electricity
Drinking water	Trucks	Trucks	Trucks	Trucks	General network	General network
Water support	Global, Green hands	Camp management	Camp management	Camp management	GOS	GOS
frequency	2 days	2 days	daily	daily	2 days	3-4 days
Quality of water	yes	yes	No	yes	yes	No
Payment for water	No	No	No	No	yes	No
Main resource for livelihood	International aid, salary work	International aid	Remittances, salary work, aid	International aid	Salary work, remittances	Salary work, remittances
Food baskets and non-food items	Regular, WFP through Ataa' and Green Hands	Rare	Irregular, From Binaa', Mercy Without Limits and Ataa'	Yes, SRC, UNHCR, UNICEF, Care, ARC, NRC, Acted, Blumont	Regular, SRC and Basmeh	Irregular, SRC
Schooling	Elementary, limited	No, <i>Kuttab</i>	Elementary	Elementary	No	Elementary & secondary

Access to University	Yes, Idleb & 'Azaz	Limited, Aleppo Free University	No	Limited, Furat University Hassakeh	Limited, Damascus University	Yes, Damascus University
Problems with University	Cost & transportation espec. for women	Cost	Cost & transportation	Somehow cost, limited opportunities, enrolment in the army	Somehow cost & limited opportunities	Somehow cost & limited opportunities
Transportation	No, rare motorcycles	No	No, motorcycles	No	Public, services	Public, services
Shops inside camp	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Healthcare center	Limited	No	No	No	No	Limited
Women issues				No		Early marriage
Relations with neighboring localities	Bad , condescend attitude	Good	Excellent	Average	Good	Generally good
Governance	The local council of the area has no representatives	Elected representatives	No	Elected representatives	No	No

NWS camps

The **Atmeh camp** is a major IDP gathering, becoming a real town. It is divided into around 140 sectors/camps, among which the **Jazireh camp sector** is of interest, hosting around 2,500 inhabitants. The land is public (*mashaa'*, common)⁷⁵. The **Jazireh camp** is made of tents and blocks construction with roofs in tissue. The Syrian-Turkish NGO "Ataa"⁷⁶ distributes the food aid of WFP, the "Syrian Green Hands"⁷⁷ the WASH items, as well as water and heating material. However, non-food items are irregular and insufficient. "Maram"⁷⁸ and "Muzun"⁷⁹ NGOs distributed the tents. The drinking water is provided by trucks every two days by the camp management. However, the water needs often to be filtered. The

⁷⁵ This is not the case for all the other districts of Atmeh camp.

⁷⁶ Ataa' Relief is a Syrian NGO registered in Turkey. <https://www.facebook.com/AtaaRelief/> & <https://ataarelief.org/>.

⁷⁷ Syrian Green Hands is a Syrian NGO registered in Turkey, dedicated to Atmeh camp. <https://syriagreenhands.wordpress.com/> & <https://www.facebook.com/syriagreenhands/>.

⁷⁸ Maram Relief & Development is a Syrian NGO registered in Turkey. <http://maramfoundation.org/> & <https://www.facebook.com/maramfoundation/>.

⁷⁹ Muzun for Humanitarian & Development is a Syrian NGO registered in Turkey. <https://www.facebook.com/muzunMHD/>.

“Medical Relief for Syria”⁸⁰ provides non-permanent healthcare. However, the spread of diseases (especially skin diseases) in the camp is considered a major challenge. There is a small school in the camp. But it is insufficient to absorb all of its children. School dropout is estimated at 30%.

The **’Ibad Al Rahman camp** is situated inside the city of ‘Afrin, close to the public hospital. It is mainly constituted of tents and hosts essentially women (75% according to the KIs). The Syrian-Turkish “Bahar”⁸¹ NGO provides drinking water and collects waste, while no food baskets seem to be regularly distributed. The camp inhabitants have difficulties accessing the nearby public hospital, as it was transformed into a military hospital for the combating factions. No school exists in the camp, and the nearby schooling is traditional (*Kuttab*).

The **Shabiran camp** is installed on a rocky hill public land situated near the city of Al-Bab and is also mainly constituted of women (70% according to the KIs). Al-Bab local council takes responsibility for the camp and provides regular drinking water through big tanks installed in some areas. It also collects waste. Bread distribution is reported to be made by the Syrian-Turkish NGO “Binaa”⁸², but in insufficient quantities, in addition to irregular food baskets by the same NGO, as well as by the Syrian-US “Mercy without Limits”⁸³ and by “Ataa”. Healthcare visits are made on a non-regular basis by the Syrian-Turkish NGOs “Al Ameen”⁸⁴ or “Shafak”⁸⁵ and the Syrian-British “Watan”⁸⁶. The population uses the public hospitals of Al Bab or Al Ra’i for healthcare. The camp has also a simple elementary school.

NES camps

Al Arisheh camp is situated on a peninsula in a lake (Al-Bassel lake) made by a dam on the Khabur river (Al Hassakeh dam), at around mid-distance between Al Hassakeh and Shaddadeh. So, it is somehow isolated. It hosts around 14,000 IDPs, among which around 60% are reported to be females. It is mostly made of tents. Most of the inhabitants came from the “Shamiyah” (i.e., the right side of the Euphrates river near Deir Ez Zor). It is much safer than Al Hol camp, situated not so far, where ISIS is still very active. A wide variety of aid organizations are active in the camp, including the official Syrian Red Crescent (SRC), the US “Blumont”⁸⁷, French “ACTED”⁸⁸, Care International⁸⁹, UNHCR, and UNICEF. The camp seems then to have also access to aid coming through GOS-controlled areas. This is while the SDF forces and the US troops control most of Northeast Syria. The population has daily access to drinking water, except in summer when the distribution is reduced to every 2 or 3 days. There is no electricity in the camp, and solar panels and generators are rare. Sewage and waste collection constitute real issues. UNICEF provides elementary schooling covering somehow the needs. However, the camp lacks secondary schooling, and rare are the cases of young people reaching university in Al Hassakeh (cost and difficulties of transportation, limited number of students accepted). The camp has also a healthcare unit, providing

⁸⁰ <https://medicalreliefforsyria.org/about-us/>.

⁸¹ See above Al-Barakeh camp.

⁸² Binaa’ is a Syrian NGO registered in Turkey. <https://www.facebook.com/binaasyria/> & <http://www.binaadev.org/>.

⁸³ Registered in Kansas, see <https://www.facebook.com/%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%AF-551448318564312/>.

⁸⁴ Al Ameen is a Syrian NGO registered in Turkey. <https://alameen.ngo/>.

⁸⁵ See above Al-Bil and Yazibagh camps.

⁸⁶ Watan is a Syrian NGO registered in the UK, see above ‘Aziz camp. <https://www.watan.foundation/>.

⁸⁷ <https://blumont.org/>.

⁸⁸ See above.

⁸⁹ <https://www.care-international.org/our-work/where-we-work/syria>.

different services including for children and women. The unit lacks however medicaments in sufficient quantities and at reasonable prices.

GOS camps

Following 2018, the Syrian government located in **Herjelleh camp** many of the IDPs from the mostly Shi'a cities of Fu'a and Kefraya, long encircled by opposition forces⁹⁰. The camp is made of prefabricated housing in Herjelleh on public land. Other IDPs are still from Eastern Ghouta. The camps hosts around 4,000 households⁹¹, with almost 70% of women according to the KIs. It is managed by the Syrian government in partnership with UN agencies, while many small NGOs are also active in some periods. Only "Bassmet"⁹² NGO seems to be continuously active today with SRC. UNDP funded the prefabricated housing. The Syrian Red Crescent distributes food baskets and emergency health services. UNHCR distributes food and non-food items. WHO offered an ambulance. However, the camp lacks electricity; public electricity is rarely and randomly provided. Solar panels are also rare; not even for supplying the pumps of the two wells in the camp to supply it with fresh water, as water from the public network is scarce. Government trucks deliver water every 2 days. The camp has an elementary and a secondary school, but some of the children go to other schools, closer to their parents' work. However, school dropping is estimated "high" by KIs, as the "*cost of education is high and the parents are no more able to pay it*". Access to the university of Damascus is open. However, daily transportation to the university is a main issue (cost, frequency, distance). The camp has a local market, with numerous shops. A health center has been opened inside the camp, but it lacks permanent doctors and the availability of medicament.

The **Sayyida Zeinab camp** was also used by the Syrian government to host the IDPs from the mostly Shi'a cities of Fu'a and Kefraya. Sayyida Zeinab locality hosts also a Palestinian refugee camp and another camp for the population displaced from the occupied Golan heights. This is in addition to the rapid urban development around the Sayyida Zeinab shrine, important for the Shi'a community, with dynamic rural-urban migration towards the locality and massive flow of pilgrims, especially from Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran. The camp is assumed to host around 3,000 IDP households, with a majority of women. However, according to KIs, the number of IDPs in the camp is "*declining every day*". The camp is installed in unfinished buildings, some even without a roof. Some NGOs have helped to put up windows for some of the buildings. Electricity is provided by the general grid, but for a few irregular hours per day. The population uses then led batteries to have lighting. Drinking water is also from the general grid, provided every 2 or 3 days for a few hours. Noting that the availability of electricity is necessary at the time of water grid operation to enable the filling of the roof reservoirs. Most of the surveyed complain about the quality of the water and they don't use it for drinking. They buy instead water at relatively high prices. There is a market within the camp, with many shops. Food aid was distributed by the Syrian SRC and the UNHCR, but it declined in the last months before the interviews. UNHCR offered also non-food items and some kitchen equipment. UNDP helped with the lighting of the streets through solar energy. UNICEF helps provide equipment for children's schooling, while children of the camp have access to the public school

⁹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_al-Fu%27ah_and_Kafriya.

⁹¹ With another 8,000 HH within the city itself, see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/unosd/documents/4325Session%209-5%20Abdul%20Alkhstib.pdf>.

⁹² « The Imprint of Syria's Youth » (Bassmet) is a Syrian NGO registered in Damascus. <https://www.facebook.com/bassmet.shabab.souria/>.

of the locality and the UNRWA school of the Palestinian camp. UNFPA has also offered a mobile women's healthcare unit.

CHAPTER 5: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE SITUATION OF THE IDPs IN THE CAMPS OF THE 2nd CAMPAIGN

5.1 The economic situation

NWS camps

The main problems in the **Jazireh camp** sector concern the density of its population and the difficulties of transportation to employment locations (bad roads and rare transportation means). The population of the camp is generally very poor, depending mainly on food baskets. Little employment opportunities exist in construction (typical salary of 100 Turkish Lira per day, i.e. around US\$ 5) and seasonally in agriculture. Other rare opportunities are provided by the NGOs, including in education and health; all are poorly paid. Transportation to the workplaces is rare; many walk down the roads. Rare is also the cases of households receiving remittances from abroad.

The IDPs of the **'Ibad Al Rahman camp** are even poorer, and the proportion of females is higher. Their dependence on aid is almost total, as one of their main requests is to have... a common kitchen. Only 10% of the IDPs are reported to receive remittances and job opportunities are assessed as almost inexistent. 5% of men are reported to have occasional daily work in construction.

Dependency on aid is also important in the **Shabiran camp**. However, more employment opportunities exist in Al Bab, Al Ra'i, and Akhtarín, especially in small shops, as well as seasonally in agriculture. Transportation to the place of work is an issue. A significant proportion of households receive remittances.

NES camps

Al Arisheh camp IDPs are poor and depend almost totally on aid. It is densely populated and somehow isolated. Employment opportunities are very rare, mainly in trade within the camp, for those who have the necessary relations. Part of the households receive remittances, but they need to travel to Al Hassakeh to get paid. The traditional economic activity of the population, i.e. raising herds of sheep or cows is not present in the camp. No land is available for agricultural activities.

GOS camps

Initially, the IDPs of the **Herjelleh camp** used to rely on food baskets and aid. But such aid had largely diminished in the last months. Almost all of the 14 persons surveyed in the camp, half of which being women, have salary work outside the camp, in factories at Kisweh, in shops, or even in the public sector. But many rely on daily opportunities, while the availability of such work opportunities and salaries vary greatly from day to day. Inside the camp, little opportunities exist, in the small shops, in addition to in-house sewing or "crochet" activities for women. *"Previously, aid was the main source of income, but it has decreased significantly. Now, job opportunities, if any, are the first source of income, and then comes aid from NGOs, and organizations. Some families have some family members abroad who send them some*

money to help them live". Reported salaries range from 85,000 to 300,000 SYP per month (US\$ 18 to 67 per month). Public transportation ("*microbuses*"⁹³) is somehow available to the workplaces, "*but many have bicycles and some motorcycles what help them to go and look for a daily job*". Also, many families receive remittances from abroad through official means (for example Al Haram⁹⁴ office) or informally (friends, informal Hawala).

Most of the surveyed in the **Sayyida Zeinab camp** are actively working on a daily salary basis (carpenters, in electricity reparation, in construction, cleaning houses, drivers of microbuses, downloading loads in factories, etc.). Some have small shops or crafts. Typical daily salaries are between 15,000 and 30,000 SYP/day (i.e. US\$ 3 to 6/day, which could be occasional or seasonal) and monthly salaries between 200,000 and 300,000 (i.e. US\$ 40 to 60). Transportation to the place of work is made through public transportation (microbuses), with difficulties in availability and regularity, as well as with bikes and motorcycles.

5.2 The social relations

NWS camps

The social coherence in the **Jazireh camp sector** is generally good, but with frequent problems⁹⁵ because of the large heterogeneity of the IDP population, their origins, and their social habits. Conflicts may arise, solved by the notables, the Sheikhs of the mosque, and the administration of the camp. A "social protection committee" had been initiated by "Maram Relief"⁹⁶ NGO in the part of the camp hosting widows, solving female social conflicts. There are some marriages within the camp, facing however financial and new lodging difficulties. The relations with the neighboring localities are minimal, made of trade and employment. Such relations are qualified by KIs as "*bad*", due to the disdainful attitudes towards IDPs and their economic exploitation.

The social relations within the **'Ibad Al Rahman camp** are peaceful. However, the women are confined within the camp. Only, a traditional *Kuttab* is organized among them to teach reading, writing, and religion, similar to most of the children. Here also, the heterogeneity of origin of the IDPs makes internal marriages limited within the groups with the same traditional customs. Conflict resolutions are left to notables, the Sheikh of the mosque, or camp management. The relations with 'Afrin city population are qualified as "*good*". "*We have built friendly relations with the original 'Afrin population...*". No young from the camp are reported to go to University, and most of the children did not reach secondary education. Up to 50% of the children drop out of school, mainly to work helping their parents for livelihood.

Social relations seem also peaceful in the **Shabiran camp**. Here also, no young from the camp are reported to go to University, and 50% of the children drop out of school.

⁹³ "*microbus*" transportation is similar to the "service" chaired taxi, very common in the Levant countries. Owned by the private sector, but prices and daily routes are fixed by government.

⁹⁴ Al Haram is a major money transfer operator in Syria, working with most active banks in the country; see <https://haram-transfer.com/>. It is different from the one with same name, established in Turkey and sanctioned by the US Treasury Department; see <https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2019-20003.pdf?1568637916>.

⁹⁵ The interviewers reported frequent shouting outside the tent during the interviews.

⁹⁶ See above.

NES camps

The social environment in **Al Arisheh camp** is cohesive, as it is tribal and the camp is well managed by ACTED and a tribal council. Remarkably, the women have there their own council to deal with their affairs and protect their rights. It is also remarkable that no ISIS and fundamentalist presence were mentioned in the camp, while ISIS is very active in Al Hol camp and the localities around it.

GOS camps

In the **Herjelleh camp**, the situation of many women is compelling. *“Our society is conservative, and we have no women initiatives”*, answered an interviewed man, *“women gathering are limited to preparing winter food and washing”* (!). *“Women don’t go to universities. They got married at age of 16”*. Some conflicts exist within the IDP population, *“because of different original environment, the complete change in people's lives and how they lost their homes and their properties”*. They are solved by the notables of the camp, and if needed by the management made by the authorities of the Governorate of Damascus suburbs. The relations with the surrounding hosting communities are qualified as good, and even sometimes *“excellent”*. *“Many cases of cross marriages exist with the hosting communities”*.

The IDPs of the **Sayyida Zeinab camp** are from diverse origins: Idleb and Aleppo countryside (especially Fu’a and Kefraya), but also Hama, Deir Ez Zor, and Damascus suburbs (including from the old camps of Yarmouk and Tadamon). Initially, many conflicts emerged between the IDPs, necessitating the intervention of police and security forces, as well as the council of the city. *“This is normal with what happened to us, even though we have the same religion”* (meaning Muslim Shi’a in the majority). But after five years of displacement and settling, all these conflicts calmed down. There are a lot of marriages within the camp. *“We are happy to let our daughters get married at very early ages... to get them protected. We don’t even care about dowry”*. The relations with the hosting community are qualified as *“good”* or *“average”*. Problems arise from *“competition on work opportunities, from uneven distribution of aid and tight security measures, especially as the locality and the camp are overcrowded”*.

5.3 The "governance" situation

NWS camps

The OMCD of the “Salvation Government” nominates representatives for each sector of the **Atmeh camp**, including the **Jazireh** sector. Their role is accepted by the IDPs. However, they are sometimes criticized *“for not appointing the right person for the mission, the presence of cronyism, favoritism, the absence of a democratic atmosphere or elections”*. *“Not all representatives are accountable or sufficiently responsible”*.

A “Relief Council” dependent on the “local council” of Afrin coordinates aid with the notables of the **’Ibad Al Rahman camp**. The choice of the 5 notables representing the IDPs seems to be consensual.

No structured governance is organized in the **Shabiran camp**. A consensual representative of the IDPs serves the community, interacting with the local council of Al-Bab. He receives no salary for his activity.

NES camps

Al Arisheh camp is directly managed by ACTED, in collaboration with a local council of the IDPs, including that for women. ACTED coordinates the activities of the different NGOs present in the camp. Also, there

is a tribal committee to resolve the conflicts between the residents, because the nature of the camp residents is tribal. The tribal committee and the local council are concerned with facilitating, coordinating, and organizing the distribution of aid and service to the population. In addition, *“a special council for women has been created in the camp to solve women's problems and ensure their rights and protection”*. The survey and the KI interviews showed that the IDPs were somehow satisfied by the camp management. However, cronyism in aid distribution is often mentioned.

GOS camps

The **Herjelleh camp** is managed directly by civil servants of the Governorate of Damascus Suburbs. No real representation of the IDPs exists, except a special committee of the elder within the camp whose saying is somehow respected. There are some complaints against the camp management, as *“there is some cronyism and inequalities in the distribution of aid”*. *“We hope that the management and the NGOs care more about the women raising children alone, especially those who are forced to take their children out of schools to work and gain a living. This is while the children have great studying will and capacities”*.

The **Sayyida Zeinab camp** is also directly managed by civil servants of the Governorate of Damascus Suburbs, with the Sayyida Zeinab municipality and the Baath party branch⁹⁷. There is no representation of the IDP community and the fear of the “authorities” was very clear in the survey and the interviews. No mention was made of Iranian actors in the management of the camp or its assistance.

5.4 The focus group discussions

Focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted in the 6 camps of interest following the survey and the key informants' interviews. The driving questions of the FGD were as follows:

- **Economic aspects:**
 - Which organizations provide you with relief assistance? Is it in-kind or financial aid, and how much? What do you think about the method, quantity, and quality of this aid?
 - How to get a job? What are the problems of getting a job and others while working?
 - What is your assessment of the living situation today in general? Has it worsened or improved? How do you think your living situation can improve?
- **Social aspects:**
 - What do you think of the relationship with the communities of the towns that surround you? Is there solidarity or exploitation? Are they slowly improving or worsening as living difficulties increase?
 - What is your assessment of the issue of teaching your children? What curriculum is taught? And what does that mean for your children's future?
 - What is your vision for the solution to your displacement? Do you really want to go back to the places you were displaced from? If yes, what will push you back, or what's stopping you from doing so? If not, what is your vision of the best solution for your future stay and living?
- **Political environment:**

⁹⁷ The two latter authorities were not mentioned in the case of Herjelleh camp.

- How do you think your displaced community can be better represented in front of the authorities and organizations that help you?
- What is the best "solution" for your situation and Syria?

The results of these FGDs could be summarized as follows:

NWS camps

In the **Jazireh camp sector** of Atmeh camp, the FGD (with mostly women participants of different ages) confirmed that only "Ataa" and "Green Hands" NGOs are active but their assistance is rapidly diminishing, *"cooking oil reduced from 6 liters per month per family to only 2; rice from 15 kilos to 5; the same for bulghur and sugar, for which the quantities are today largely insufficient". "Beans are now absent from the basket and we lack items like tea, beans, and ghee... The quality of the distributed lentils is very bad, and we sell them cheaply to get eatable ones"*. The "Green Hands" NGO is now distributing yearly vouchers for WASH and heating, with a value *"largely insufficient"* between TL 400 and 800 function of family size. *"Water distribution by Green Hands is insufficient especially in summer"*. However, all estimated that the distribution mechanisms are fare.

On the issues of labor, the only opportunities for educated people are to be hired by NGOs. *"Such jobs need the intervention of a "wasta" (crony relations) and even when there is "wasta", like for the case of my brother, the job is not stable. It is only a mission for one month". "Work opportunities are very rare, and they don't accept men for agricultural seasonal work. The women got only TL 2 per hour, then TL 20 for a day. This is not sufficient for basic needs". "In addition, the agricultural jobs are far away in 'Afrin. There is a long distance to there. And the women from Idleb camps got half the salary that is paid for women of the region". "There is exploitation here. My husband has no education and works in construction, a hard and dangerous job. He got TL 30 to 40 per day"*.

The livelihood conditions were estimated as having deteriorated in the last months, *"especially after imposing the Turkish Lira (TL). The money exchangers took control". "Before, we were divided into three classes, with no extreme wealth or poverty. Now, we are only two classes: the class of the very wealthy, a very few, and the majority of the population that is very poor... We need equal opportunities. We need control of markets, as everything becomes very expensive". "Crimes have increased, as well as children drop out of schools"*.

Children's education is judged *"below zero"*, due to the lack of support from the NGOs. The curriculum is judged *"good"*. *"You know. We Syrians care about the education of our children. This is the only hope"*. However, *"the problem is the lack of good teachers. Last year, there were no professors for mathematics and English. Due to the low salaries, the teachers prefer to work in private schools... Our English professor preferred to work as a night watcher at an NGO, as the salary is much better"*.

The relations with the hosting communities are judged by all as *"extremely bad"*, but maybe improving with time. *"The majority of the population of the neighboring towns look at us with condescendence. This is while their situation improved precisely because of our presence here. There is no sympathy from them towards us, and there are some of them who say in our faces that they do not like the displaced. Sometimes there is "racial" discrimination against our children in their private schools and even from some hospital doctors originating from those towns. The relationships were worse the days we came and improved somehow, perhaps because of our stability here and our increased independence from them"*.

On governance, most of the participants judged the representation of the IDPs "weak. We need a committee that represents our voice and talks about our suffering and demands. It needs to be made and changed through elections". "In appointing the camp manager, we need to ensure that he does not take sides only with the people of his village and takes care of them and not the others". "However, our demands, however, they are transmitted to the NGOs or authorities, remain forgotten and are not acted upon".

Most of the women present in the FGD wanted to return to their original villages, as "we own land there ensuring revenue". "Here, the camp is overcrowded, we have no opportunity to gain our living and the assistance is meager. We suffer boredom and psychological pressures from the situation of the camp". But the situation there is "not stable". "We need now that our conditions here improve. Unless we are trying to migrate anywhere else at the first opportunity". Some have already taken the "decision" to migrate.

On the best solution for their situation, all participants indicated that it is "the end of the war and having safety everywhere in Syria". "Let's them negotiate a solution and bring us back a decent life".

In the **'Ibad Al Rahman camp**, the FGD involved 6 persons (3 were women). The main food assistance is provided by the German NGO WHH, as food vouchers are valued at US\$ 60 monthly per family. "But their contract is only for 3 months". The local council distributes bread daily, "but the quantities are insufficient for large families". The NGO "Bahar" provides medical care for the sector and distributes water, 1,000 l every 2 days. WHH had also made support with small projects, but there was "some randomness in the provision and we have deposited claims with no response". "Some tents need to be changed and no NGO can provide us with new ones".

Labor opportunities are rare. "There is a contractor who offers some jobs in construction, but not daily. He chooses young men to work 8 hours the day for TL 50 to 80, which is not sufficient for food". "With the high unemployment here, cases of social disintegration are increasing, as well as thefts and crimes".

The livelihood conditions are estimated to be "null". "We need a small capital to start businesses to sustain our lives and families", especially for young people and women "Our livelihood was much better before our displacement. There is not much to do in 'Afrin".

Education in the camp is estimated to be a kind of program to combat illiteracy, nothing systemic. There are some classes in the camp and religious teaching. The closest school is 2 km away "and there is no transportation. We don't send our children there". We need real schools, "with Kurdish language courses". "We are afraid about the fate of our children, ignorant and without education".

The relations with the hosting communities are estimated "good". "There are some rare cases of cross-marriages, but they will increase with time". "We have a common "Shoura" council that multiplies visits and solve peacefully problems". "Between women, we visit each other and they come to our tents. And here, they speak Arabic and not Kurdish. I even learned some Kurdish words".

On governance, "there is an office for camps' affairs within the local council representing the camp and the surrounding camps that discuss with the authorities the problems". The representation in this camp's affairs office is not discussed.

Most of the participants want to return to their original places. *"We have good souvenirs there. But we need to have safety, security, and protection from treacheries of all parties of the conflict"*. Some want to migrate to Europe, *"as those who went there are now living safely and are not afraid of the future"*.

On the solution to their situation, *"we need a new government that represents the whole society and protect the population from all combating factions"*. Some called for the "ousting of the regime", others for the "ousting of all foreign powers", while others asked to be excused from answering.

Thus, despite the insufficiency of aid and the difficult livelihood, the relationships of the IDPs with the hosting community are in this **'Ibad Al Rahman camp** much better than in the overcrowded **Atmeh camp**.

The FGD in the **Shabiran camp** grouped 3 men and 4 women. On assistance, they indicate that bread is distributed daily by the "Binaa" NGO. However, food distribution, mostly made by the NGO "Ataa", is rare, insufficient (*"not even enough for a week"*) and uneven (*"we don't know how they chose to whom they distribute"*). There are no vouchers, but the NGO "Shafak" distributes cash to only a few families, *"we don't know why?"*. "IYD" provides drinking water, sufficiently, *"but we need to filter it, as it is not drinkable"*. *"Last year, the local council distributed some coal for heating, but at the end of the winter season"*. *"The aid assistance is meager and unacceptable. Is it because this camp is overcrowded?"*.

On labor, *"there are few opportunities of work here and around. We need to go to the main towns, while transportations are rare. But the salaries are meager, not sufficient to buy food. So how to pay for the transportation"*.

The livelihood situation is assessed as *"extremely bad, worsening every day. We suffer from accelerating inflation and the devaluation of the Turkish Lira"*. *"The IDP population is in extreme poverty"*. *"The situation cannot improve without creating some industrial city here able to absorb the manpower from the IDPs and the host community, which largely has no employment. There is also a necessity that those in charge of this area care about improving the situation of this area and not stealing and looting it"*. Most of the participants insisted on the "theft" made by the NGOs. *"What we receive is a small part of what they receive for us. The "responsibles" of the NGOs have agreements with local councils to give them directly a share of the assistance due to us"*.

Education is assessed as *"even below zero"*. There is only an elementary school *"that does not deserve to be a place for raising livestock"*. *"We need preparatory and secondary schools and buses to transport students to cities. The future of our children is very dangerous. Education is the basis for building and advancing society"*. *"The "Directorate for Education" (of the Interim Government) cannot take care of education in cities, so how about us in the camps... The curriculum is only for elementary schools... Education necessities are very expensive"*.

The relations with the hosting communities are seen as *"stable"*. *"The surrounding communities, especially the residents of the cities and the owners of the farms surrounding the camp, do not want us to exist, because they believe that we are the cause of instability and that thefts have increased because of the IDPs"*. *"Surely, there is exploitation, but it is made by traders"*. *"From time to time, there are problems because of cases of theft or harassment"*. *"In general, there is no solidarity"*.

On the question of return and future solutions for the IDPs, all FGD participants in this camp do not envisage return. *"There will be no solution and return as long as the regime is still here"*. *"The authorities*

here could build real housing for the IDPs, organize ways for merging IDPs with the hosting communities, and create jobs so we don't anymore the NGOs that give us meager things". "We need dignity, here".

No interest was shown in the **Shabiran camp** to discuss governance.

NES camps

In the **Al Arisheh camp**, 3 FGD meetings were held grouping, each, 6 or 7 persons, men and women mixed and of different ages, but generally younger than those of the KI survey (see Appendix D).

Concerning assistance, several NGOs were mentioned. In food distribution, "ACTED" seems the most active providing 1 or 2 monthly food baskets – judged "*sufficient if not too much delayed*" - function of the size of the household (smaller or larger than 8 persons), but the Syrian Red Crescent and "Al Yamama"⁹⁸ NGO were mentioned distributing bread and food. No cash distribution is reported in the camp, and part of the baskets are resold in the market to get cash for other needs. On education, UNICEF, the British "Save the Children"⁹⁹, the Norwegian "NRC"¹⁰⁰ and the Syrian "Al Yamama" are mentioned as active. In addition, the Kurdish Red Crescent¹⁰¹ is reported also providing health care. The discussion does not reveal a clear idea of which NGOs are providing non-food aid and water.

On labor, no permanent employment exists in the camp. Few daily opportunities are mentioned to work with the NGOs, as teachers or for menial work, such as cleaning, at US\$ 7 per day (for 20 days or so). Complaints are made about the total absence of employment opportunities for women and NGOs employing people from outside the camp for work in the camp. Some in the camp have managed to open small shops.

The livelihood in the camp is assessed as "*very very bad*" and "*worsening every day*". "*We completely depend on aid that is insufficient and diminishing... We fear the coming winter... We are forced to borrow money from family and friends to live... Why no one cares about creating small projects for women and young people inside the camp?... We want decent living*".

The education in the camp is reported as generally good; the camp has schools up to the secondary, supported by "Al Yamama" (2 schools), "Save the Children" and the "NRC" (1 school each). "*The teaching is generally good, and my daughter was able to get his secondary degree last year. We care about the education of our children for the future*". The curriculum is that of the GOS.

No relations with the hosting communities are reported, as "*we are surrounded by a fence, and no one can leave the camp without permission from the camp management. And no one from the outside can enter*". "*We have only contacts with civil servants coming from Hassakeh*". "*But the surrounding communities are nice, friendly, and understanding with us. When we go out, they provide us with a lift to our destination and they don't take money when they know that we live in the camp*".

⁹⁸ Syria Al Yamama Charity Organization, a Syrian registered NGO based in Al Hassakeh, in partnership with UNFPA; see <https://www.facebook.com/alyamsasy/> and <https://rawabet.org/tag/%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9/>.

⁹⁹ <https://www.savethechildren.net/>

¹⁰⁰ The Norwegian Refugee Council, <https://www.nrc.no/>.

¹⁰¹ "HSK", created by the Self Administration in NES, see <http://hskurd.org/ar/homear/>

Governance issues were considered not important by all 3 FGD participants. *"We don't care about who represents us, even elected and even if we have something like the Kurdish "communes"¹⁰². The important is that he brings out our voice to the NGOs and the management of the camp. This is while no one is answering our demands".* However, some stated that *"we only need people who represent all categories of the population in the camp, assess our needs and help coordinate even between the management of the camp and the NGOs".* But this will only come *"when nepotism disappears"*.

Most of the participants want to return to their original villages and towns. But *"this is only possible when there will be a solution, safety, security and dignity to everyone in Syria. And we need reconstruction as our homes have been destroyed or looted, and our towns and villages still have mines".* *"We know that this is difficult now".* *"The main obstacles are also the mandatory military service for our children, which duration should be reduced, as well as the security prosecutions from all parties".* *"We don't want any Syrian or foreign armies or militias in our areas, as before".* *"We can't bare these tents anymore, but "conjunctivitis is better than blindness"¹⁰³.*

On the solution, *"the Syrians should be left alone to change their destiny. All foreign troops and persons should leave the country".* *"The best solution for us and all Syrians is a political solution for all Syrians, and there should be no arrests, fears of arrest, blackmailing, looting, etc., and that security and stability prevail in Syria".* *"The war must end... We need freedom and democracy... And we need an effective authority that can bring order to the country, rebuild the infrastructure of the state and be honest and capable to rebuild the country in a record time"*.

The performance of these FGDs was difficult, only possible through extended family relations. The participants feared giving their names and opinions to all present authorities in Syria and refused to be taken by photo.

GOS camps

In **Herjelleh camp** one FGD was held with only men (see Appendix D).

Concerning assistance, a difference is noticed between the early times of displacement when many NGOs were actively providing sufficient aid. *"Now, only the Syrian Red Crescent is providing insufficient in-kind food assistance and some medical support, every two months or so. The aid is only sufficient for a week and the quality is very bad compared to the market... The Russians are sometimes providing aid, and some NGOs take care of orphans".* *"Last time, only 500 baskets were distributed by the Russians for the whole camp, and there was a lot of nepotism in the distribution"*.

On labor, *"there are little opportunities in the area here, and if there are in the factories in Kisweh, in agriculture or shops, the salaries are very low. We cannot go to get work in Damascus, as the transportation to the city costs more than the salaries we can gain"*. Most of the men rely on occasional menial jobs.

¹⁰² The Self administration in NES had created elected "communes" in their areas of control. Like in GOS areas, most of the elected are sponsored by the authorities, the SDF in this case.

¹⁰³ A Syrian proverb, meaning that there is worse than what we are experiencing (!).

The livelihood situation is considered *"very bad now. It gets worse with the high rise of prices. Sometimes, we really don't have enough to eat. We don't know how the situation can improve, but the State must decrease the prices"*. *"Nobody cares about creating job opportunities for us"*.

On education, the discussions were controversial. Some estimated it *"good, with special "alternative teaching" for the children who left schools for some years. However, we can't give any support to our children to get to the University"*. Others considered this education *"bad, with a lot of children in the classroom, and with teachers not caring. There is a large dropout at elementary school; the children looking for work to help their parents. Even the "alternative teaching" has its own problems, with children having large age difference in the class and discouragement"*.

The relations with the hosting community are considered as bad. *"Most of them don't like the IDPs, especially as there are few work opportunities. The permanent dispute is that they say that we are taking their jobs at lower salaries. They don't understand that we don't have any other choice"*.

No representation of the IDPs exists in the camp or any sort of governance. *"We need that our voice gets to the officials. We need to explain our needs"*.

The willingness to return is common. However, *"we don't know how this could happen. An international effort is needed. Our areas are destroyed, and we have no means to rebuild them. This is while our life here is unbearable. Even the toilets are common, and this is a problem for our women"*.

On the solution for their situation, *"the war should stop, as well as the foreign sanctions"*. *"We need permanent work, we need lower prices, and we need that theft and corruption be stopped"*.

It is to be noted, that the realization of this FGD discussion was extremely difficult, as IDPs don't trust NGOs and activists, and as security services are present everywhere in the camp.

In **Sayyida Zeinab camp**, 2 FGD meetings were held, one for men and one for women (see Appendix D).

The assistance to the camp is described as similar to that in **Herjelleh camp**. It was good with many NGOs but has decreased significantly, and it is mostly made now by the Syrian Red Crescent, with lower content, quality, and regularity. Some cash aid assistance is said to be made by "good people" and Iraqi or Iranian religious scholars, especially during Ramadan. There are also numerous complaints against nepotism in aid.

Labor opportunities are also described to be very rare in the area and with very low salaries. All the men in the group were however working, either in menial jobs around or having small shops. 2 women out of 5 were working: one in a food and the other in socks factories. The cost of transportation to the jobs is indicated to be a major issue.

Even if the situation of the IDPs in **Sayyida Zeinab camp** seems slightly better than that of the IDPs of **Herjelleh camp**, the livelihood is here also assessed by both women and men to be *"very bad"*. *"Our livelihood was much better in 2020... We don't know if it will get better. This is what we say every year, but it is getting worse... The inflation of prices has become very stressful... We lack food, heating, medicines, and transportation"*.

The education is considered *"insufficient"* and *"much less effective than in the nearby UNRWA schools"*. This is despite the existence of classes with a "B program" helping children who dropped out for years.

"The children who can cope with the present low quality are those getting direct teaching help from their parents". "There are no schools for the children with special needs". "Some boys stopped going to school, discouraged. They went helping at work". "Also, many are not sending their girls to school, waiting that them to get married".

The relations with the hosting community are *"that of exploitation with some, while natural with others. Actually, no one asks us anymore where we are from or where we came from, except when we have to rent a house, for example, or deal with the "mukhtar" or at school, but most of the time when it comes to competition over work, here we see exploitation or rejection, under the pretext that we are displaced and the region has priority for its own people". "The exploitation is also in matters of rents of apartments. The prices are very high. They say that we receive aid while they don't". "But most people are very good with us".*

In this camp also, there is no representation or governance structure for the IDPs. The women FGD courageously stated that *"we don't know how it is possible to improve the representation of our community. Everyone is looting and stealing at our expense and the expense of our children. Neither the senior officials in the authority nor the NGOs know what is happening on the ground. Their visits to us are only to provide aid and basic needs and not to improve our situation for better".*

The willingness to return to the original place is mixed. Some hopes so, and others lost much hope and seek to have a decent life here, that the war stops, and the livelihood situation improves. Men appear more willing to return than women.

And on the solution to the present situation, political issues such as *"the end of the sanctions and the war"* were overcome by the expression of basic needs for living: bread, fuel, jobs, etc.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS and CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Main findings

The surveys, key informants investigations and focal group discussions performed in 2021 and early 2022 showed the very difficult conditions that the IDPs are experiencing in the different areas of control in Syria. The conditions even worsened later in 2022 with the combined effects of the rapid deterioration of the Syrian currency exchange rate, rising inflation, severe reduction of aid, the tightening of the unilateral measures (sanctions) imposed by the US and Europe¹⁰⁴, the continuation of the crisis in Lebanon and the global impact of the crisis in Ukraine.

The worse conditions in the twelve camps studied are found for most of the IDPs of North-West Syria (NWS), as IDPs in camps constitute there almost half of the population, with large inequalities comparatively with the hosting communities. The IDPs completely depend on aid, with low levels of remittances noticed. The aid is provided by a myriad of Syrian and international NGOs; for which the consistency and coordination in the distribution do not appear clearly. Most of the activists of the NGOs are hired from within the hosting community, and rarely among the IDPs. Severe exploitation of the IDPs was observed in aid capturing, rare menial work provision, child labor, and lodging rentals, including for the tents on public land¹⁰⁵. This situation pushes many young people in the camps to join the combating factions, to insure minimum livelihood. The best conditions in NWS are found in the camp hosting a semi-nomad community raising their sheep and caws; thus insuring their livelihood. Other relatively good conditions are observed where the combatant of Damascus Suburbs had been located with their families; such camps are fenced and directly managed by the Turkish authorities. No significant improvement in the IDPs conditions is found in the Idlib region comparatively to Northern Aleppo ('Azaz, Al-Bab). The cohesive management of HTS does not impact the crony exploitation of the IDPs compared to the chaos of combating factions of Northern Aleppo.

The one camp studied in North-East Syria (NES) is completely isolated, hosting tribal Arabs displaced from the Deir-Ez-Zor area under the strict control of the Kurdish-dominated "Syrian Democratic Forces" (SDFs). No activity of the "Islamic State" (IS) was noticed in this camp compared to the Al-Hol camp. However, the movements in and out of the camp are tightly controlled. The livelihood situation in the camp seems better than in those of NWS, as US, French, and other Western-backed NGOs compete with the Government of Syria (GOS) NGOs to provide aid to the IDP communities.

The two studied camps in GOS-controlled areas constitute rare cases of camps there, as most of the IDPs in GOS areas are lodged in public buildings or empty housing. The one hosting mostly a Shi'a community displaced from Northern Aleppo (Fu'a and Kefraya) in the Sayyida Zeinab Shi'a neighborhood is best integrated into the local community. However, their livelihood situation is severe, as for most of the GOS areas' population. The control of the "authorities" on the population of the camp and the neighborhood is also very tight.

¹⁰⁴ See Aita, 2020: The Unintended Consequences of the Unilateral Measures on the Syrian Economy.

¹⁰⁵ In some cases of NWS camps, the payment of rentals for the land on which the tents are erected seems to constitute a way to finance the combating factions. In such cases, the rents are provided as cash aid from NGOs.

In all cases, there is a general feeling of lost hope for a solution to the Syrian conflict and a return to the villages or localities of origin.

6.2 Livelihood and economy in the camps

IDPs in all camps depend for their livelihood mostly on aid, which is estimated everywhere as insufficient. Complementary resources are then necessary for sustainability, either through work opportunities or remittances from family abroad.

Work opportunities are rare, seasonal in agriculture (especially in NWS), or in construction or small shops. Salaries are very low and work conditions are harsh. The main issue is the transportation to the place of work, typically from the camp to the neighboring localities. The cost of transportation, when existent like in GOS areas, constitutes a sizeable share of potential daily salaries. No work opportunities exist for the camp in NES and access in and out of the camp is strictly controlled.

Remittances from family abroad (essentially in Turkey) are common in the camps of NWS as well as for mostly Kurdish hosting communities in NES (from Turkey and Europe), but rare there for the Arab tribal IDP communities. Remittances are also common in most hosting communities in GOS areas. However, they are rare for the two IDP camps studied in these areas, while some cash assistance is received from the Shi'a communities of Iraq and Iran.

Prices of goods in camps are generally higher than those of neighboring towns. And in all areas, inflation has been soaring in the last years, be it because of the devaluation of the Syrian pound or the Turkish Lira.

In most cases, food aid is distributed in kind, of low quality, and not regular. A share of the food basket is sold by households in the market to obtain cash for other needs. Rare cases of cash vouchers were observed in NWS. However, the vouchers are only tradable for goods in specific shops, mostly in neighboring localities. In this case also, vouchers are often traded for cash at discounted value.

Non-food distribution is non-regular or rare, except for water which is distributed by tanks, while it is not always of drinkable quality.

Except for camps in large localities (such as 'Afrin and Sayyida Zeinab), health support consists mainly of irregular caravans for primary healthcare. The IDPs need transportation to major localities to obtain healthcare and medicament.

Education, even at the elementary level, is largely insufficient in most NWS camps, contrary to NES and GOS areas. The camps experience significant schooling dropout and child work. The teaching is everywhere considered of low level, with non-motivated teachers and little means for school equipment and tools. For the rare young people getting their secondary graduation¹⁰⁶, with essentially parents' assistance, access to University is made difficult due to its costs (as there is a large development of private Universities in NWS) and the problems of transportation or rentals for lodging. Even in the case of public universities, such as for Damascus or Hassakeh, it is problematic for a young born in a camp to reach the degrees necessary to be accepted.

¹⁰⁶ It is worth noting that the secondary degrees provided in NWS and NES are not recognized internationally.

The extreme poverty that the UN mentions concerning Syria¹⁰⁷ is observed in most of the camps. This is while some localities nearby the camps have significant economic development and increasing wealth, even compared to the pre-conflict situation. This is the case of localities such as Sarmada, Dana, and 'Azaz that profited from trade and in-kind aid flow through the border crossings with Turkey. Construction, real estate development, and leisure services (restaurants, coffee shops, entertainment centers, etc.) have boomed there in the last few years. This is also somehow the case for Sayyida Zeinab which became a hub for the Shi'a pilgrimage from Iraq, Lebanon, and Iran.

The mapping of the active NGOs in the camps shows a myriad of small NGOs created by Syrian activists in Turkey (mostly), in Europe, or the USA, in addition to the direct intervention of Turkish, European, and American INGOs (see Appendix E). This mapping does not show a geographic logic in this distribution, except that French and British-based or supported NGOs are more active in Idlib region (NWS*) and that those based or supported by Germany and the US are more active in Northern Aleppo; what may reflect different positions of the respective government. A meeting with the staff of the Syrian-originated NGOs in 2021 in Gaziantep (Turkey) has shown that rarely do such NGOs publish transparently their financial reports and that they are generally donor-driven. This questions the coordination and efficiency of aid, as well as the sustainability of these NGOs in the context of diminishing aid funds.

In fact, the continuation of international policies of aid flow for over ten years without creating real possibilities for the economic recovery of the population had created a "political economy" of aid.

6.3 Social life in the camps

The economic exploitation of the camps' IDPs in all areas of control is reinforced by the social differentiation between the IDPs and the hosting communities. Thus, in addition to the general feeling among the IDPs that the hosting communities had enriched because of their situation, social relations are tense and rare cases of marriages or social gatherings exist between the two.

Only the cases of the camps of Yazibagh, where the IDPs have some economic independence, and Sayyida Zeinab, where there is some Shi'a-based solidarity, show lower social tensions with the hosting communities and more social interaction.

Otherwise, the IDP communities have developed some levels of internal social cohesion and solidarity to overcome the dire situation they are facing. This is most visible in small camps or within the different districts of large camps. However, large camps experience some social tensions, especially regarding uneven aid distribution by NGOs or access to services.

It is worth noting that the social implications of the enrolment of the young in the combating factions were not investigated, as it constitutes a sensitive subject. The fact that most IDPs in camps have no say in their area could mean that even if some of their young people are enrolled by financial necessity in the combating factions, these have no leadership positions to influence significantly the livelihood of their communities. Most of such leadership could thus be from within the hosting communities. The only exception is the completely isolated camp of Al-Bil hosting the families of the combating factions displaced

¹⁰⁷ See <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/hunger-poverty-and-rising-prices-how-one-family-syria-bears-burden-11> and <https://press.un.org/en/2021/sgsm20664.doc.htm>.

from Damascus Ghouta. Nothing similar is observed for the Shi'a combating factions from Fu'a and Kefraya hosted in Herjelleh and Sayyida Zeinab camps.

6.4 Governance and future perspectives

Rarely, governance structures had been created within the camps to represent the IDPs' interests towards the ruling authorities, to express needs, or to deliver aid or services. When they exist, these governance structures did not result from a "democratic process". In best cases, they emerged from traditional leadership, mostly coopted by ruling authorities or NGOs. In all cases, they don't have significantly a say on aid and service provision. Cases of cronyism and favoritism are common.

This applies in all areas of control. In GOS, the control of the "power system" and its security services is very strict. This is also true in the NES, where the "Self-Administration" and the "SDF" has created a similar "power system", exerting strict control, especially when the camp Arab tribal IDPs could have ideological issues with the Kurdish "Democratic Union Party". The control of the ruling authorities is less strict in NWS, overcrowded with IDP camps, but it is strong in the Idlib region where "Hay'at Tahrir Sham" (HTS) governs with its "Salvation government".

The hope of returning to their initial towns and villages is low for most of the IDPs in all studied camps. This results partially from the fear of the security conditions in these original places, especially when they are in GOS areas (military service, security apparatus, political revenge, etc.). But other issues diminish this hope, consisting mainly of the destruction of initial homes (physical destruction, or takeover by others) and the lack of means to restart an economic activity (cultivating own land, restarting a shop, extreme economic difficulties all over Syria, etc.). Most of the wills of the IDPs are oriented towards improving the present conditions in the camps (shelters, services, work opportunities, education, health, etc.).

However, the situation is considered unstable and unbearable in some camps. The hopes are thus oriented toward a general solution to the Syrian crisis. Wishes for a "political solution" to the Syrian crisis, for the end of the war, and the departure of all foreign troops are then expressed even in NWS Syria camps, supposedly the most opposed to the ruling "power system" in Damascus. In GOS areas, the wishes for a solution add the end of sanctions, as well as the stopping of theft and corruption. Security and dignity everywhere in Syria are expressed as a major wish and need. But the clearer political expression of the solution came from the NES camp: *"we need an effective authority that can bring order to the country, rebuild the infrastructure of the state and be honest and capable to rebuild the country in a record time"*.

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APPENDIX A: THE SURVEY and KI QUESTIONNAIRE

General information on the interviewed

- social situation: married, single; ...
- age
- employment
- number of family members
- number of persons sharing housing

Livelihood and economy:

- How can camp residents secure their basic necessities?
 - Your own family
 - The rest of the IDPs
- Which are the local or international organizations that provide assistance?
 - Type of assistance for each
- Is it in-kind or financial assistance? Who determines what and how much aid is distributed? How is this aid delivered?
 - What is the price of the aid basket or the amount paid per individual or household?
 - Does the people sell back their aid baskets
- Does the population have other sources of income (agriculture, trade, remittances, etc.)? Are there obstacles to obtaining them?
- Are there markets and shops within the camp? And where do the goods come from?
- Who are the wholesalers they deal with? Where from?
- Do some IDPs work outside the camp? Where and in what?
 - Typical daily or monthly salary
- How are the economic relations between the camp and neighboring towns? What transportation is available?
- How are electricity and water secured in the camp?
 - Is there solar panels or batteries? how do IDPs obtain them? Did NGOs help with this? As for water?
 - Where does the drinking water come from? How often is delivered? Do you for it? How much?

Social conditions

- Where did the IDPs of the camp come from? Were they from villages or cities?
- Did they have social relations in their place of origin before the displacement? Are they relatives?
- How can social relations be described today in the camp?
 - What about traditional customs and traditions?
- How else can you describe the social relations between the camp residents and the neighboring towns? Are there marriages between them?

- Are there differences in customs and traditions between the two?
- Why do camp residents live in this particular camp and not in a nearby town or village or in another camp?
- Is there a social organization (or social organizations) within the camp residents? Who represents the camp towards the others?
 - Give examples of conflict or problems resolution
- How are the conditions of women in the camp compared to men?
- Is there a school in the camp? And who founded it? What curriculum is taught?
- Are there any young boys or girls from the camp who go to the university? To which universities? Private or public? and what are the difficulties facing undergraduate students?
- Is there a healthcare center in the camp? And who founded it? How are cases that require a specialist or hospital treatment dealt with? And how about emergency cases?

Governance conditions

- Who represents the residents of the camp vis-à-vis the operating NGOs, the local councils, or the existing authorities?
- How was this representation chosen? Was this done by vote or what?
- How can the relations between these representatives and external actors be described?
 - Examples
- How also do you describe the relations between the camp residents and their representatives?
- Is return to the original cities or places discussed among the residents of the camp? And at what level? Are there representatives for this debate?

APPENDIX B: The characteristics of the key informants of the 1st campaign

Sarout	Gender	family	age	family size	HH size in settlement	occupation
	F	married	42	8	5	housewife, occasional agriculture
	F	married	32	5	5	housewife
	M	married	48	7	5	unemployed
	M	married	57	8	8	unemployed
	F	widow	55	4	4	housewife
	M	married	38	6	6	mecanician
	M	married	39	7	6	employee
	M	married	43	9	6	agriculture
Averages	38% F	13% S	44.3	6.8	5.6	25% work
Ali bin Abi Taleb	Gender	family	age	family size	HH size in settlement	occupation
	M	married	38	6	6	teacher
	M	married	43	6	6	free
	F	single	28	0	2	teacher
	F	married	30	3	3	teacher
	M	married	41	8	8	employee
	F	married	37	8	8	housewife
	M	married	39	7	7	employee
	M	married	58	8	5	retired
Averages	38% F	13% S	39.3	5.8	5.6	63% work
Al-Bil	Gender	family	age	family size	HH size in settlement	occupation
	F	married	26	5	5	daily worker health
	M	married	40	7	8	carpenter
	M	married	26	4	4	teacher
	F	widow	50	9	14	Civil society activist
	M	married	33	6	6	daily worker
Averages	40% F	20% S	35.0	6.2	7.4	80% work
Aziz	Gender	family	age	family size	HH size in settlement	occupation
	M	married	49	9	9	employee at University
	M	married	50	11	6	policeman
	M	single	27	8	8	internet
	M	married	31	4	6	daily worker
	M	married	35	7	7	daily worker
Averages	40% F	20% S	38.4	7.8	7.2	100% work
Yazibagh	Gender	family	age	family size	HH size in settlement	occupation
	M	married	32	5	5	construction daily worker
	M	married	29	6	8	auto reparator
	M	married	45	7	5	Livestock trader
	F	widow	42	8	13	housewife
	F	married	33	7	7	housewife
Averages	40% F	20% S	36.2	6.6	7.6	60% work
Al Baraka	Gender	family	age	family size	HH size in settlement	occupation
	M	married	31	5	5	teacher
	M	married	45	7	7	unemployed
	M	married	52	6	6	unemployed
	M	married	40	6	6	teacher
	M	married	54	8	8	hawker
Averages	0% F	0% S	44.4	6.4	6.4	60% work

APPENDIX C: The characteristics of the key informants of the 2nd campaign

Atmeh	Gender	Age	in camp (y)	family size	Settlement	education	resource
	M	38	5	7	tent	< elementary	aid
	M	58	5	8	tent	< elementary	aid + daily work
	F	48	3	6	house	certificate	aid
	M	39	3	7	house	university	employee
	F	40	6	8	house	certificate	trade in camp
	F	36	5	9	tent	university	aid
	M	33	9	8	house	university	aid
	M	28	9	4	house	< elementary	aid
	M	26	1	4	house	university	aid
	F	26	7	9	house	secondary	employee
averages	40% F	37.2	5.3	7	30% tent	40% U	40% work
Ibad Al Rahman	Gender	Age	in camp (y)	family size	Settlement	education	resource
	M	55	3	10	tent	secondary	aid
	M	57	2	6	tent	< elementary	aid
	F	35	3	8	tent	certificate	aid
	F	42	1	8	tent	< elementary	aid
	M	52	2	9	tent	secondary	aid
	M	61	3	6	house	certificate	aid
	F	33	1	7	tent	< elementary	aid
	M	55	2	8	tent	certificate	aid
	F	35	2	7	tent	secondary	aid
	M	45	2	9	tent	secondary	aid
averages	40% F	47	2.1	7.8	90% tent	0% U	40% work
Shabiran	Gender	Age	in camp (y)	family size	Settlement	education	resource
	M	32	2	4	tent	certificate	aid
	M	45	1	6	tent	< elementary	remittances
	F	51	1	6	tent	< elementary	daily work
	M	34	3	6	house	secondary	own account
	F	25	2	6	house	< elementary	remittances
	M	40	3	7	tent	< elementary	daily work
	F	58	4	8	house	< elementary	remittances
	F	32	1	5	house	< elementary	remittances
	F	25	3	4	house	< elementary	daily work
	M	35	3	6	house	secondary	daily work
averages	50% F	37.7	2.3	5.8	40% tent	0% U	50% work

Arisheh	Gender	Age	in camp (y)	family size	Settlement	education	resource
	M	37	5	10	tent	< elementary	aid
	M	48	5	8	tent	secondary	aid
	M	42	5	5	tent	< elementary	aid
	M	28	5	6	tent	certificate	aid
	M	31	5	8	tent	secondary	aid
	F	33	3	7	tent	< elementary	aid
	F	28	3	6	tent	certificate	aid
	F	36	2	9	tent	< elementary	aid
	F	26	1	5	tent	certificate	aid
	F	34	2	9	tent	certificate	aid
	F	27	2	6	tent	certificate	aid
	F	32	2	8	tent	certificate	aid
	F	29	5	5	tent	certificate	aid
	M	45	5	7	tent	< elementary	aid
	F	25	4	5	tent	certificate	aid
	F	34	5	9	tent	certificate	aid
	F	31	4	9	tent	< elementary	aid
	F	26	3	7	tent	certificate	aid
	F	29	4	5	tent	secondary	aid
	F	30	3	5	tent	secondary	aid
	F	28	4	6	tent	certificate	aid
	M	50	3	9	tent	< elementary	aid
	M	36	5	6	tent	secondary	aid
	M	35	4	8	tent	< elementary	aid
	M	33	3	6	tent	certificate	aid
	M	40	5	9	tent	certificate	aid
	M	39	5	9	tent	secondary	aid
	M	34	3	9	tent	certificate	aid
	M	35	3	5	tent	secondary	aid
	M	37	5	8	tent	secondary	aid
averages	50% F	33.9	3.8	7.1	100% tent	0% U	0% work

Herjelleh	Gender	Age	in camp (y)	family size	Settlement	education	resource
	M	48	5	6	house	secondary	daily work
	F	30	4	8	house	certificate	daily work
	M	55	5	4	house	certificate	remittances
	F	49	2	7	house	< elementary	aid
	F	80	3	3	house	< elementary	remittances
	F	27	2	6	house	certificate	daily work
	F	32	5	7	house	secondary	daily work
	M	35	5	3	house	secondary	daily work
	F	23	4	9	house	certificate	daily work
	M	49	4	7	house	secondary	daily work
	F	45	5	5	house	certificate	trade in camp
	M	51	5	6	house	< elementary	aid
	F	53	5	8	house	< elementary	aid
	M	30	5	9	house	university	daily work
	M	37	4	6	house	secondary	daily work
averages	47% F	42.9	4.2	6.3	0% tent	1% U	67% work
Sayyida Zeinab	Gender	Age	in camp (y)	family size	Settlement	education	resource
	M	57	7	7	house	secondary	daily work
	F	34	5	6	house	certificate	daily work
	M	50	6	7	house	< elementary	daily work
	F	67	4	11	house	< elementary	remittances
	M	53	5	5	house	certificate	daily work
	F	26	2	6	apartment	secondary	trade in camp
	F	39	4	5	house	< elementary	daily work
	M	38	5	4	house	certificate	own account
	F	22	3	7	house	secondary	daily work
	M	44	5	3	house	certificate	daily work
	F	50	1	9	apartment	certificate	remittances
	M	44	5	5	house	certificate	daily work
	F	31	3	8	house	certificate	daily work
	M	30	2	5	house	secondary	daily work
averages	50% F	41.8	4.1	6.3	0% tent	0% U	86% work

APPENDIX D: The characteristics of the persons involved in NES and GOS FGDs

Arisheh	Age	Gender	Situation	Origin	Activity
FGD1	25	M	single	Deir Ez Zor	unemployed
	34	F	married	Mayadin	housewife
	35	F	married	Hamidiyeh	housewife
	35	M	married	Deir Ez Zor	unemployed
	47	F	married	Deir Ez Zor	housewife
	43	M	married	Quriyeh	unemployed
	55	M	married	Ara	unemployed
Averages	39.1	43% W	14% S		0% work
Arisheh	Age	Gender	Situation	Origin	Activity
FGD2	44	M	married	Quriyeh	unemployed
	36	F	married	Bu Omar	housewife
	29	F	married	Quriyeh	housewife
	37	M	married	Zabari	employed
	27	M	married	Bu Omar	unemployed
	22	F	single	Quriyeh	unemployed
Averages	32.5	50% W	17% S		17% work
Arisheh	Age	Gender	Situation	Origin	Activity
FGD3	52	M	married	Salhiyeh	unemployed
	18	M	single	Salhiyeh	student
	20	F	married	Salhiyeh	housewife
	35	M	married	Quriyeh	unemployed
	46	F	married	Salhiyeh	housewife
	35	M	married	Bu Omar	unemployed
	25	M	married	Bu Lil	unemployed
Averages	33.0	29% W	14% S		0% work
Sayyida Zeinab	Age	Gender	Situation	Origin	Activity
FGD1	34	F	married	Kefraya	housewife
	48	F	widow	Kefraya	housewife
	41	F	married	Fu'a	housewife
	27	F	single	Zahra	employed
	33	F	married	Zahra	employed
	29	F	married	Nubbol	housewife
Averages	35.3	100% W	33% S		33% work
Sayyida Zeinab	Age	Gender	Situation	Origin	Activity
FGD2	39	M	married	Kefraya	own account
	56	M	married	Nubbol	grocery
	42	M	married	Fu'a	employed
	30	M	married	Kefraya	employed
	28	M	single	Zahra	daily worker
Averages	32.5	0% W	20% S		100% work
Herjelleh	Age	Gender	Situation	Origin	Activity
FGD	45	M	married	Kefraya	own account
	48	M	married	Kefraya	guard
	41	M	married	Fu'a	painter
	24	M	single	Kefraya	unemployed
	33	M	married	Fu'a	own account
	31	M	married	Fu'a	own account
Averages	37.0	0% W	17% S		83% work

APPENDIX E: ACTIVE NGOs in the STUDIED CAMPS

- **UN**
 - UNHCR
 - WFP
 - UNICEF
 - UNFPA
 - UNDP
- **Syrian**
 - "SRC", The Syrian Red Crescent
 - "Bassmet", The Imprint of Syria's Youth
 - "Syria Al Yamama Charity Organization"
 - "HSK", the Kurdish Red Crescent (Heyva Sor a Kurd)
- **Turkish**
 - "AFAD", Disaster & Emergency Management Presidency - of the Turkish Ministry of Interior
 - Turkish Red Crescent (**Kizilay**)
 - Turkish "**Blue Crescent**"; International Blue Crescent for Relief and development.
 - "IHH", the Humanitarian Relief Foundation
 - "**Hudayi Waqf**"
 - "Insana Deger Derneği" (Care for Humanity) (**IDD**)
- **Syrian/Turkish**
 - "IYD", ULUSLARARASI İNSANİ YARDIMLAŞMA DERNEĞİ
 - "Shafak"
 - "Bahar"
 - "Ataa"
 - The "Syrian Green Hands"
 - "Maram Relief"
 - "Muzun"
 - "Binaa"
 - "SARD", Syrian Association for Relief and Development
 - "SEMA", The Medical Association for Syrian Expatriates
 - "Al Ameen"
- **French**
 - "ACTED"
 - "Solidarités Internationales"
- **British**
 - "Save the Children"
- **Syrian-British**
 - "White Helmets"
 - "Syria Relief"
 - "Watan Foundation"

- **Germany**
 - "Welt Hunger Hilfe" (WHH)
 - "Molham Volunteering Team"
- **Czech Republic**
 - "People in Need"
- **USA**
 - "Syria Relief & Development" (SRD)
 - "Mercy without Limits"
 - "Blumont"
 - "SAMS", The Syrian American Medical Association
- **Swiss**
 - "Care International"
- **Norway**
 - "Norwegian Refugee Council", NRC
- **Unknown**
 - "Al-Salameh"
 - "Medical Relief for Syria" (MRFS) (phone number in Jordan?).

ASSESSMENT OF THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES IN SYRIA INTERNALLY DISPLACED POPULATION CAMPS

Excerpts from the key informants' interviews.

"There is absolutely no social relationships between the residents of the camp and the residents of the neighboring towns. They are a society that is only concerned with trade, profit and gain by any means. They look at us with a very superior look. They never consider the conditions we have experienced from bombing, killing and destruction... They do not know our areas. Most of their time, they are busy with their economic activities, so that they never follow or care about the news. They constantly monitor the exchange rate of the local currency and its changes. They never realize that their trade, their profits and their real estate prices have increased because of our displacement. This is while we used to own farms and land in hundreds of dunams"... "There is hate between the two communities"... The neighboring localities "has a view of condescension on the IDPs, as if they were inferior to them, knowing that the majority of the camp's residents are well educated and cultured"... "We are a community whose first and last concern is to seek and obtain daily living"... "Marriage dowry in the cities amounts around US\$ 10,000, while ours never exceeds US\$ 200"... "Our relations with the neighboring communities are marked by exploitation of the young people needing work, with daily salaries insufficient to cover daily needs"... "We have become certain that we are victims of the interests of colonial powers, which forced us to think only about our daily living"... "Services and aid depend primarily on nepotism. Our real needs are not assessed".

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