

Rapid Protection Assessment

North-West Syria



June 2023

Photo credits Shafak Organization. NWS Protection Cluster Mission to Harim.



The current Rapid Protection Assessment was possible thanks to 32 of our partners providing an effective response in 259 communities in the Northwest Syria region.

Despite the trauma, family separation, destruction of their homes and direct impact on their well-being and mental health, our partners supported this significant effort to adjust our strategies, identify more affected population groups, understand our gaps, and improve our response.

To all the NWS protection cluster partners, our deepest recognition and thanks, to the communities in Northwest Syria, our support and commitment to keep working with you and for you.

Additional thanks to the GPC team for their constant support throughout this process.

Additional information is available at:

[Rapid Protection Assessment Dashboard 2023 | ReliefWeb Response](#)

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I. Key Findings:

1. Child and family separation: Following the earthquake, there were high population movements and displacements, leading to the separation of children from their parents and family members. This exposes children to additional risks of violence, abuse, and exploitation. *In 34% of assessed communities, there are children without parents or family members taking care of them.*
2. Restrictions to access civil documentation and judicial processes for compensation/rehabilitation of housing, land, and property (HLP): The loss of housing and property due to the earthquake has exacerbated issues related to civil documentation and HLP rights. Limited access to civil documentation and the damage to land and civil registries hinder people's ability to claim their legal rights and access remedies. *Before the earthquake, 61% of households in NWS reported at least one household member lacking civil documentation.*
3. Risks related to limited protection services and access to humanitarian assistance: There are reports of limited access to humanitarian assistance and protection services, which is a result of pre-existing access challenges in the region. Certain groups, such as those denied civil documentation and belonging to certain ethnic groups, are more exposed to these risks. Access to services such as health, food, shelter, education, and mental health support is also mentioned as lacking. *55% of respondents reported no signs of humanitarian assistance in their community.*
4. Risk of psychological abuse (MHPSS): The earthquake and ongoing conflict have caused distress and trauma, increasing the need for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). However, the existing capacity to provide MHPSS is insufficient, leaving many without access to these critical services. *65% of all respondents reported a need for MHPSS services in their community.*
5. Denial of resources and services: Certain population groups, such as persons with disabilities, destitute older persons, homeless individuals, and children, face denial of services and assistance. Misconceptions and stigmas around disabilities contribute to the denial of services for persons with disabilities, while destitute older persons and homeless individuals lack access to basic services and support. *40% of IDPs aged 12 and above in NWS have disabilities.*
6. The assessed communities reported unsafe living conditions for women, boys, and girls, with a lack of separate facilities exacerbating the risks of gender-based violence. *23% of respondents reported the setting they are living in as unsafe for women, boys, and girls.*

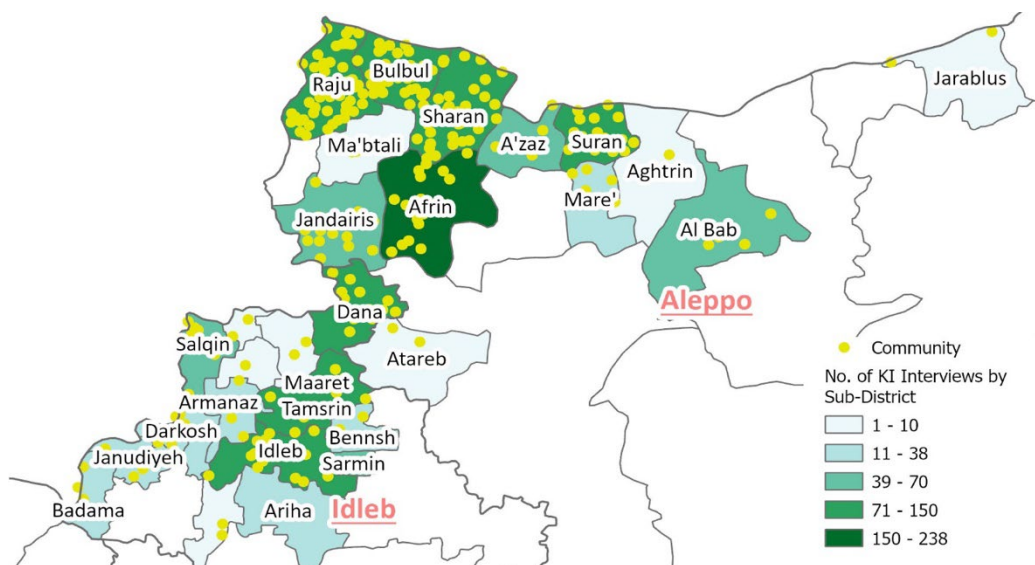
II. Introduction and objectives

The two devastating earthquakes that hit Turkey on 6 February, with more than 6,000 aftershocks reported both in Turkey and Syria, have severely affected communities in North-West Syria (NWS). The scale of the disaster is overlaid on an already acute humanitarian and protection crisis in the area, with a total of 3.7 million people assessed as requiring humanitarian assistance prior to the earthquakes. Along with ongoing human rights abuses and protection risks, the further loss of homes and properties, livelihoods, civil documentation, and social services, communities affected by the earthquake in NWS are exposed to compounded protection risks and will have even less capacity to keep themselves and their families safe.

On this background, the Rapid Protection Assessment (RPA), a community-level survey, was conducted across NWS with the objectives to:

- 1) Identify emergent protection risks,
- 2) Identify the most affected population groups,
- 3) Identify key protection gaps in the response.

The assessment was made possible due to the indispensable efforts of the staff of 32 protection cluster partners based in NWS, who carried out 1579 key informant interviews in 259 communities. The interviews were conducted between 20 Feb 2023 to 3 Mar 2023.

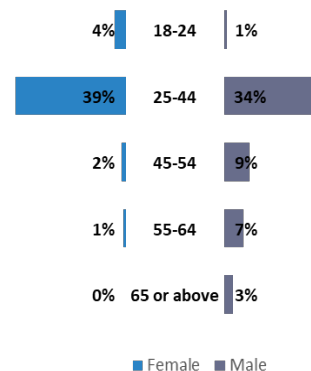


Map of coverage of the assessment

III. Methodology

The usage of the RPA tool is intended for the first period of a crisis. The RPA is used to gather community-level information using Key Informants (KIs) interviews and focuses on the immediate impacts of the crisis, providing initial data on the characteristics of the crisis and how it has impacted the protection environment. The RPA is not an inter-sectoral assessment and does not provide information at the household (HH) level. The RPA does not generally facilitate referrals for case management, but referrals may be facilitated on a case-by-case basis, based on urgency and need.

The sample methodology used was a blanket approach based on the partner's capacity on the ground. The partners who conducted the RPAs were encouraged to be diverse across age and gender, with equal numbers of males and females reflecting a wide spectrum of age groups. Also, the key informants selected for the interview were diverse across age and gender as well as according to their roles and responsibilities in the community.

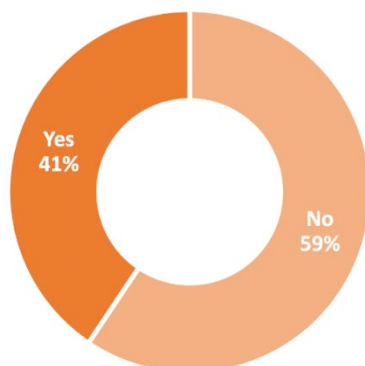


Key Informant Age and Gender Breakdown

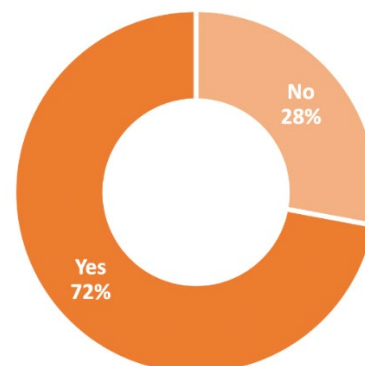
IV. Findings and key protection risks identified.

1. Child and family separation

Following the earthquake, there were high population movements and displacements, and family members were separated, including persons with disabilities, the elderly, and children. Poor living conditions, threats and the disruption of community-based protection networks are other factors that force parents to separate from their children, exposing them to additional, risks of violence, abuse, and



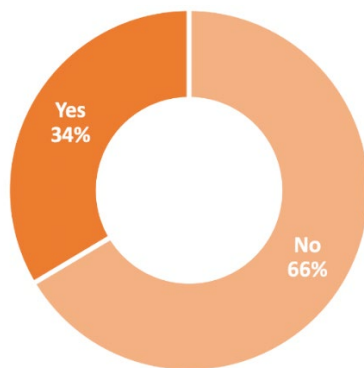
Has there been recent displacement of people **from** this area? (All areas assessed)



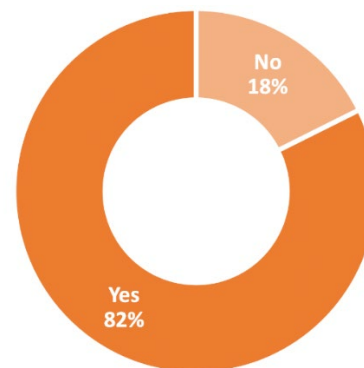
Has there been recent displacements of people **to** this area? (All areas assessed)

exploitation. Displacements to and from communities were reported to be relatively high. Only 110 of the communities assessed indicated that there had been no displacement from their area.

In 34% of the assessed communities there are children without parents or family members taking care of them. There are communities where this number is higher e.g., in Jandairis community in Afrin, 82% of the respondents indicated that there are children separated from their parents or family members. In the same community, 65% of the respondents indicated that there are also children who head households, adding a layer of vulnerability and exposure.

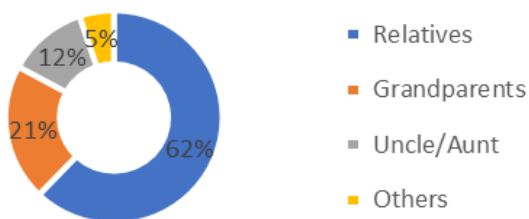


Are there children in this location without parents or other family members taking care of them?
(All communities assessed)



Are there children in this location without parents or other family members taking care of them? - Jandairis Community

With whom are they staying?



Concerning children who have been separated from their parents, respondents indicated four main categories with whom the children are staying. These included relatives, grandparents, their uncle/aunt, and others, which included living in hospitals and with neighbours.

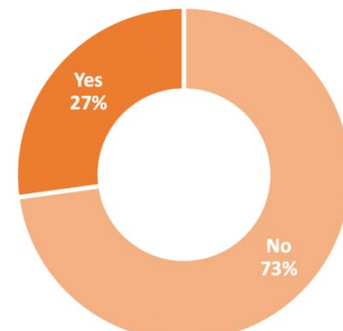
2. Restrictions to access to civil documentation and judicial processes for compensation/rehabilitation of housing, land, and property

The loss of housing and property from the earthquakes and sudden displacement has exacerbated issues related to civil documentation and HLP rights including limited access to civil, land and housing ownership documents and forced evictions. Before the earthquake, the lack or loss of civil documentation was a widespread protection issue in NWS. According to the 2022 MSNA Survey (Protection KI), 61% of households in NWS reported that at least one household member lacked civil documentation issued by the Government of Syria. Hostilities have caused severe damage to civil, residential areas and people's properties. Also, the land and civil registries that record/update HLP transactions were affected by the

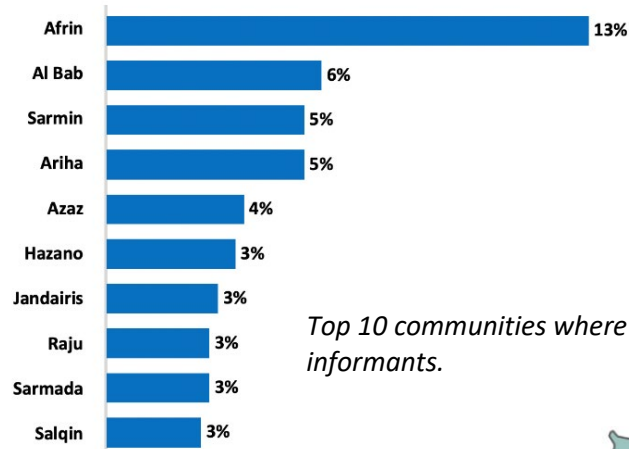
conflict. The broad range of administrative regulations and impediments of de facto authorities governing HLP transactions adds to the complexity of ascertaining legal rights and accessing remedies.

Addressing this protection risk is fundamental to enable persons to also claim other rights and enjoy basic services, including the right to freedom of movement and access to education, healthcare, and adequate housing.

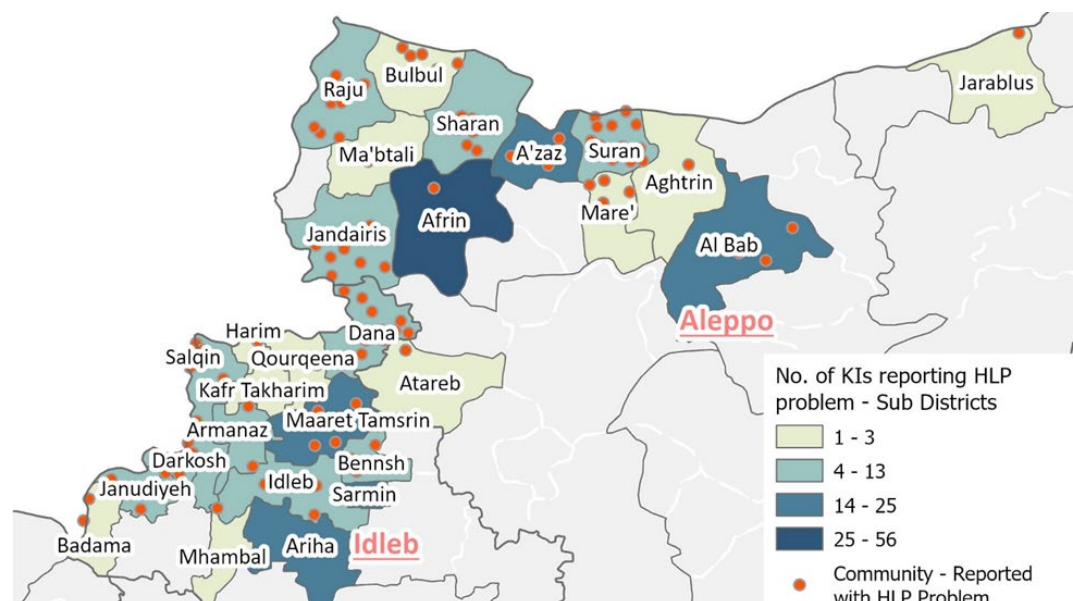
27% of respondents reported problems related to housing, land, and property, e.g., evictions and homelessness. This issue varied across communities and districts. The below figure shows the communities with the highest number of respondents who indicated that there are HLP problems. The analysis indicates there is a presence of homeless persons in the same communities, suggesting that this group is facing heightened protection risks.



Are there any problems of housing, land, and property, e.g., evictions, homelessness?



Top 10 communities where HLP problem reported by key informants.



Sub-districts and communities where HLP problem reported by key informants.

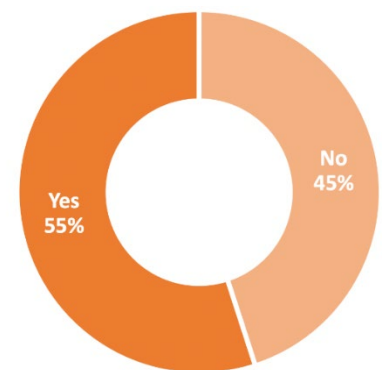
3. Risks related to limited protection services and access to humanitarian assistance.

Reports of limited access to humanitarian assistance and protection services after the earthquake need to be analyzed with an understanding of the pre-existing access situation in NWS. Conflict-related dynamics have long been a significant challenge for humanitarian access. This has limited protection and humanitarian actors to build trust with affected communities and the most affected population groups, constrained reporting of violations by survivors, and hindered sustained service provision. The impacts of the earthquake added to this, with physical barriers hindering the delivery of assistance and services due to damaged roads and infrastructure.

There are groups and areas that are more exposed to these risks, including those who are denied civil documentation and belong to certain ethnic groups. Others include persons who are in higher need of specialized services, including persons with disabilities, destitute older persons and persons with chronic illnesses, including those with mental health conditions and pregnant and lactating women. Youngsters and boys also appear to be lacking access to protection services.

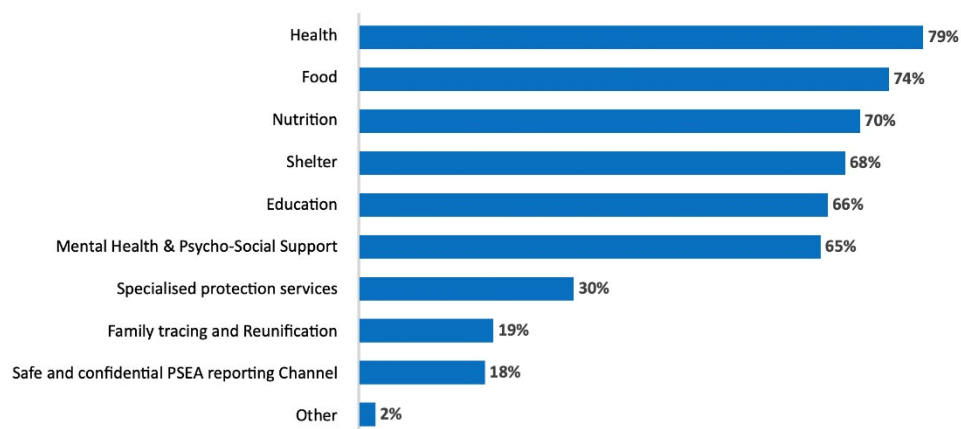
Overall, 55% of the respondents reported that there were no signs of humanitarian assistance in the community.

Of the specific humanitarian services needed and that was not available at the time of the assessment, health, food, nutrition, shelter, education and mental health and psycho-social services were those commonly mentioned. The lack of existence of a safe and confidential PSEA reporting channel was also identified by key informants.

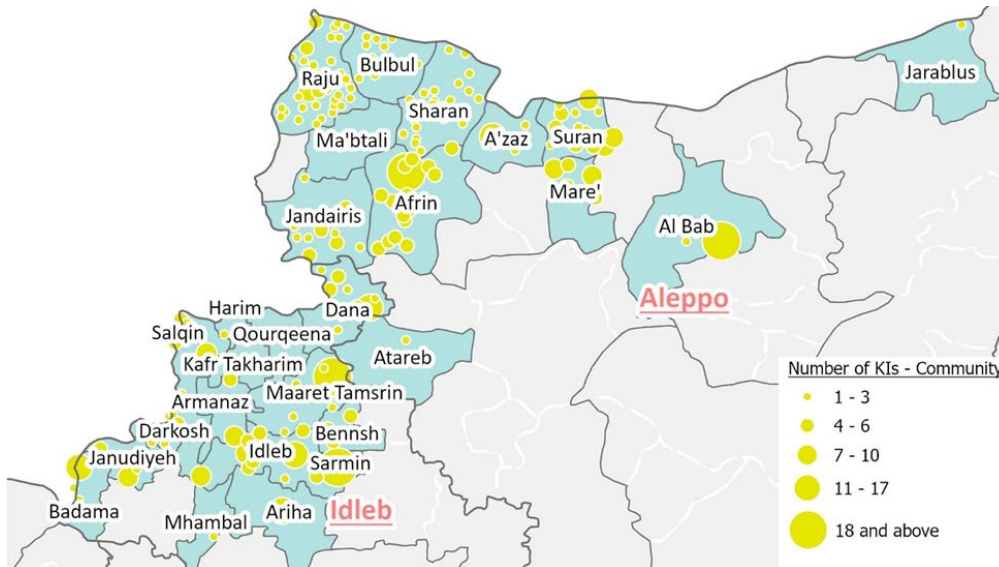


Are there signs of humanitarian assistance at this site?

Overall, respondents in 197 communities out of 259 indicated that there were no signs of humanitarian assistance in the area. This suggests that people need to rely on community networks and other coping strategies for support. The map on the following page illustrates that the communities with no humanitarian assistance are spread across the assessed area.



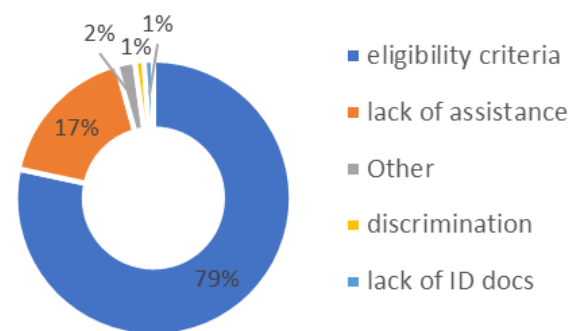
Specific humanitarian services needed that are not current available.



Communities where there are no signs of humanitarian assistance.

22% of the respondents reported that there are certain persons and/or groups that are being excluded from receiving assistance. The reasons mentioned include factors such as strict eligibility criteria set by distributing organizations, insufficient aid, discrimination, and lack of identification documents. The groups identified as not receiving assistance included affected households, internally displaced persons (IDPs), the host community, individuals with disabilities, widows, women and girls, and the elderly. Among these groups, IDPs were mentioned most frequently.

Reasons for lack of assistance



The analysis indicated that communities find organizations responsible for the distribution of assistance to be using stringent criteria to determine who should receive assistance and that, in a few locations, the affected population were excluded from cash assistance. There are also indications that individuals who have relocated from other regions are encountering more obstacles when accessing assistance, and new arrivals in a few camps have not received any assistance.

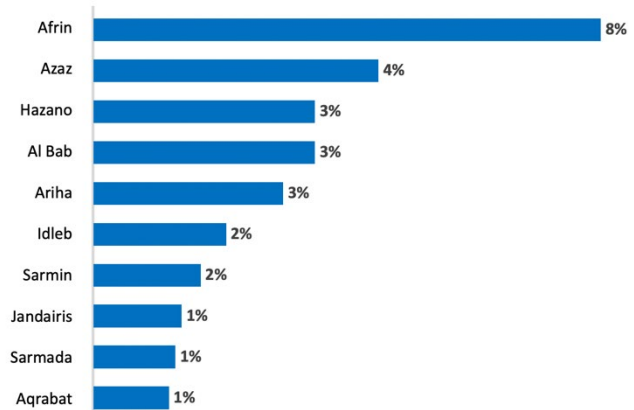
In terms of risks related to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), including vulnerable people forced to engage in exchange of sex for money or assistance, 40 respondents indicated that SEA is prevalent.

4. Risk of psychological abuse (MHPSS)

The loss of lives, distress and trauma caused by the earthquake, on top of the pre/existing and ongoing conflict-related impacts, has left people in urgent need of mental health and psychosocial support. The high levels of child and family separation have fractured pre-existing support mechanisms, compounded by the breakdown of social services, including health and education.

There are limited measures in place to mitigate the intensifying psychological distress including provision of MHPSS services, functional referral systems and accountability measures, addressing of the underlying conditions related to people's vulnerability, and ensuring access to judicial processes. In addition, the existing capacity to provide MHPSS is not sufficient to cover the additional demands follow in the earthquake. There is heightened need for specialized mental health related services including trauma management and psychiatric support.

65% of all respondents reported that there is a need for MHPSS in their community and that the services are currently not available. In some communities the request for MHPSS services was even higher. Figure 15 shows the ten communities where the need for MHPSS services was reported by the most respondents.

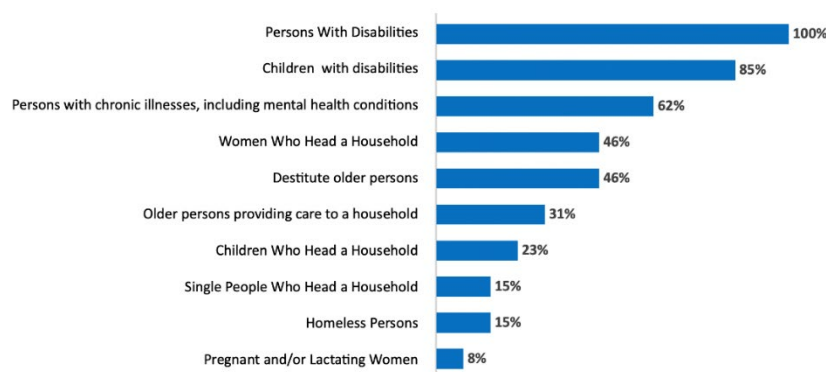


Top 10 communities reporting on MHPSS.

5. Denial of resources and services

Persons with disabilities. Assessments done prior to the earthquake found that 40% of IDPs aged 12 and above in NWS have disabilities¹. Misconceptions and stigmas around disabilities have led to the denial of services and assistance and exposure to risk, including exploitation and violence. Women, including older women and children with disabilities, are particularly vulnerable to compounded discrimination, exploitation, and violence, including gender-based violence (GBV).

During the earthquake, persons with disabilities lost supportive devices and face increasing challenges with accessing services and adequate accommodation. They are met with neglect and abuse as specialized services are either unavailable or inaccessible. In the Kreiz community, in Idleb district, 100% of the respondents indicated that persons with disabilities face specific challenges, and 85% of the respondents indicated that children with disabilities face challenges. There are no specialized services in place for this group in the community.

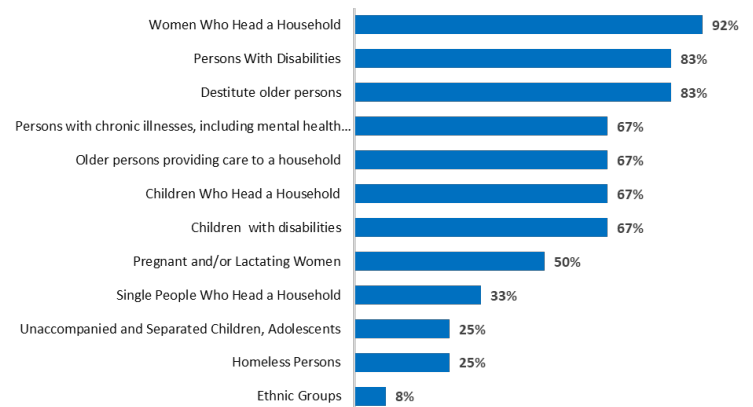


Are there specific challenges in this community facing specific groups? - Kreiz community

¹ [DISABILITY PREVALENCE AND IMPACT - IDP Report Series Fall 2020.pdf](#)

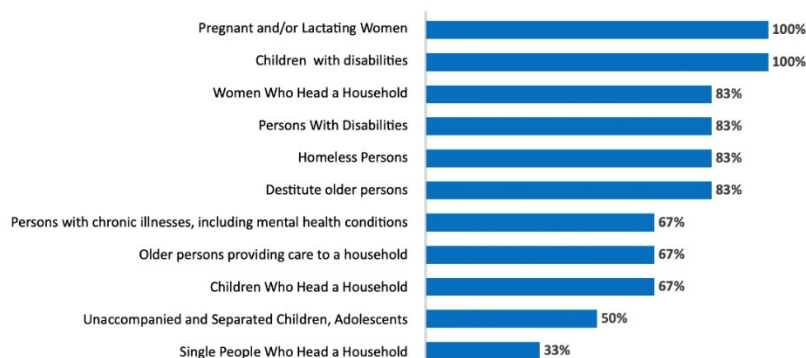
Destitute older persons are found to be one of the groups facing multiple protection risks after the earthquake. They were amongst those separated from their families and caregivers and are reported to face challenges in accessing assistance, basic services, and adequate accommodation. They are at high risk of being neglected and abused if not provided with targeted support.

The presence of **destitute older persons** in the community was reported by 69% of the respondents, and 61% reported that this group is facing specific challenges. In the Janudiyeh community, 83% of the respondents reported destitute older persons with no services available for this group. Only 35 communities reported available services for the elderly.



Are there specific challenges in this community facing specific groups? - Janudiyeh community

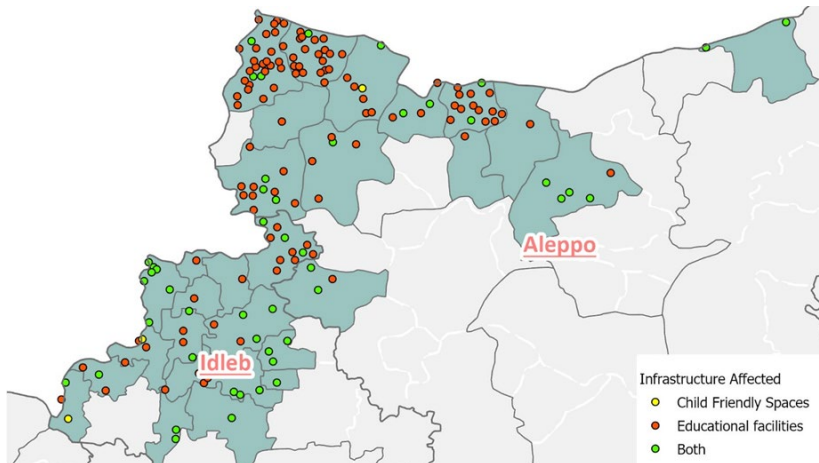
Homeless persons. There are displaced persons who have lost their homes and remain homeless with limited access to resources and services. Issues such as access to civil documentation and HLP documents and/or lack of awareness of the legal procedures, and limited access to information are some of the reasons why they face this situation. If particular attention and support is not provided to this group there is a high risk that those identified as homeless will be neglected and deprived of assistance, also in the longer term therefore exposed to risks of recruitment, trafficking, and exploitation.



33% of the respondents report homeless persons in their communities. In the community Al-sheik Rih 83% of the respondents reported homeless persons facing challenges and that there were no signs of humanitarian assistance in their community.

Are there challenges in this community facing specific groups? - Sheikh Rih community

Children were severely affected by the earthquake and suffer behavioral and psychological problems. Many are separated from the parents, families and other caregivers and deprived of any educational or recreational opportunities. In 162 communities, it was indicated that educational facilities were damaged. In some communities, both the educational facilities and child-friendly spaces were damaged, leaving the children more vulnerable to protection risks. 77% of respondents report children with disabilities in their communities, 42% of children heading households and 20% of unaccompanied and separated children and adolescents, suggesting that there are children with multiple vulnerabilities and at heightened risks.

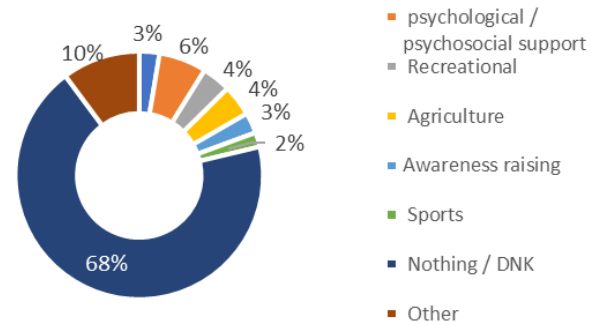


Education facilities and Child Friendly Spaces affected.

In this context there is a high need for child protection services. Services that are critical to put in place include psychological first aid (PFA) and MHPSS, specialized child protection services, family reunification, support to unaccompanied and separated children, including shelter, provision of alternative care and safety measures.

Services for youth and adolescents are also limited in the area. Only 23 communities indicated that services for youth are available. 68% of the respondents reported that adolescent boys and girls have no activities to engage in.

Activities adolescent boys and girls engage in ■ Protection activities

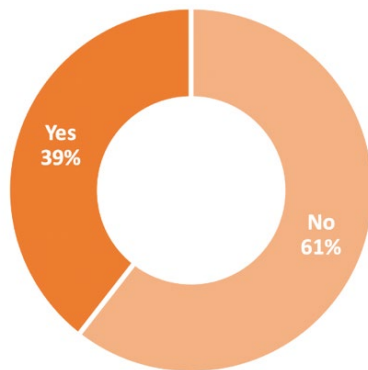


6. Risk of GBV

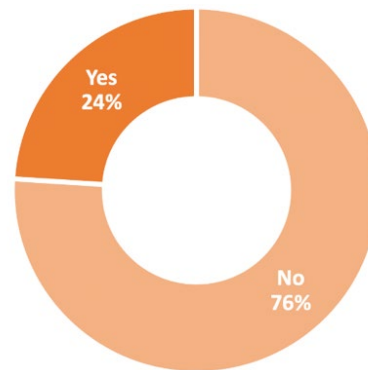
The overall safety and security situation of women and children has deteriorated in the aftermath of the earthquake, with a heightened risk of GBV. Women and children are exposed to threats in settlements, many stay in shared accommodations, social safety nets are disrupted, and there is a lack of safe reporting and referral systems. Women also face challenges in accessing civil documentation and HLP.

GBV has been a pervasive feature of the conflict in NWS since it began in 2011. Sexual violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, has been regularly reported. Other forms of GBV in NWS include targeted physical, psychological and emotional abuse, family and intimate partner violence, child and forced marriages, femicide and “honour” crimes.

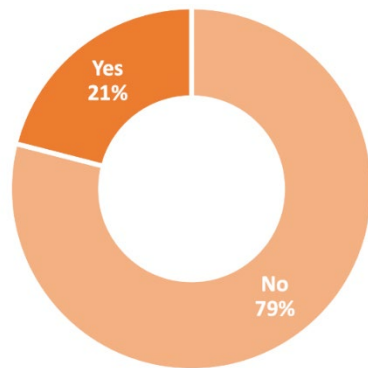
23% of the respondents reported that the setting they are living in is not safe for women, boys, and girls. In communities such as Ariha and Jandairis, the analysis indicates that more people consider the situation unsafe for women and children. In Ariha, 61% of the respondents reported that it was unsafe for women, boys, and girls and in Jandairis 76%. In both communities, respondents also indicated that there are no separate bathrooms and WASH facilities for males and females.



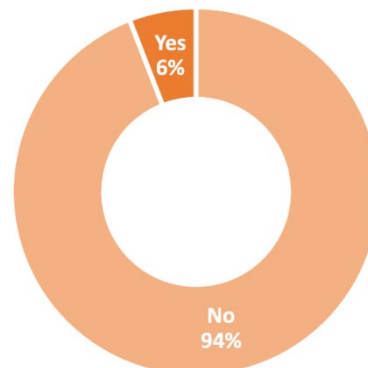
Is this setting safe for women, boys and girls or other groups? - Ariha community



Is this setting safe for women, boys and girls or other groups? - Jandairis community



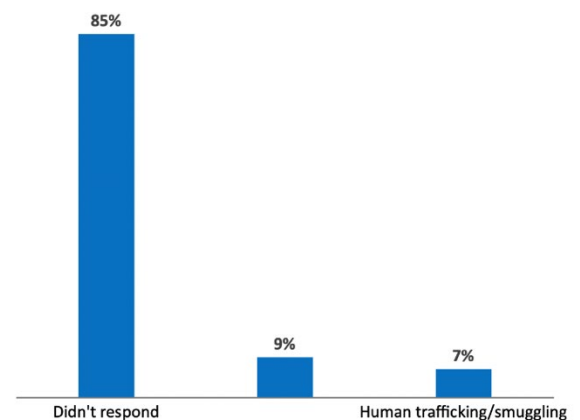
Are there separate bathrooms and WASH facilities for males and females - Ariha community



Is this setting safe for women, boys and girls or other groups? - Jandairis community

7. Population groups affected by force recruitment.

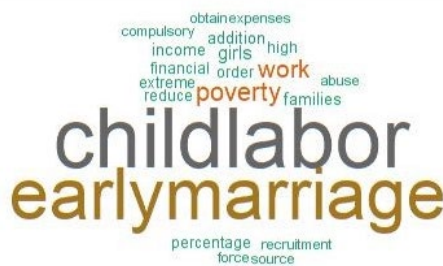
Due to family separations, lack of shelter and livelihoods, children have become more vulnerable and at greater risk of exploitation and abuse. Situations of trafficking and smuggling have been identified and are considered emergent protection risks that will require continued and close monitoring. In communities where the respondents indicated that there were signs of forced recruitment, 63% responded that children are included and 29% that other population groups besides children are included. In the Afrin community, 67% of respondents reported that children were included. Signs of human trafficking were reported in 41 communities.



Are there signs of forced recruitment/human trafficking?

8. Forced marriage and child labor as negative coping strategies.

Child marriage is a harmful practice that might be socially accepted and practiced or used as a coping mechanism under difficult economic and living conditions, as well as the absence of adequate education opportunities, particularly for girls. The rates of child marriage, as with other forms of Gender-Based Violence, are likely to increase due to safety concerns, situational factors and poor living conditions that result in the adaptation of negative coping mechanisms. Child labour often occurs when families are faced with financial challenges and uncertainties and used as a coping mechanism. When children are forced into labour it can involve bodily and mental harm, and children are deprived of education and health care, restricting their fundamental rights.



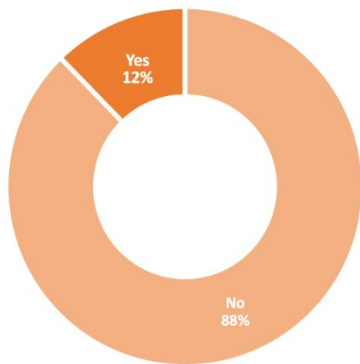
31% of the respondents reported that people are forced to engage in negative coping mechanisms. 25% identified *child labour* and 18% *early marriage* as the top two negative coping strategies. The figure (right) shows the frequency of words used by respondents to the question: Are people forced to engage in negative coping strategies, such as child labour, child marriage, drug and/or alcohol abuse?

The analysis suggests that Afrin district is most affected by negative coping strategies, including child labour and early marriage, where 55% and 50% of respondents identified these strategies, respectively. In the Harim district, 22% and 14% of respondents identified early marriage and child labour as the most prevalent negative coping strategies people are forced to engage in. The analysis further suggests that children are being forced into marriage or to work due to poverty and the poor financial conditions of the families.

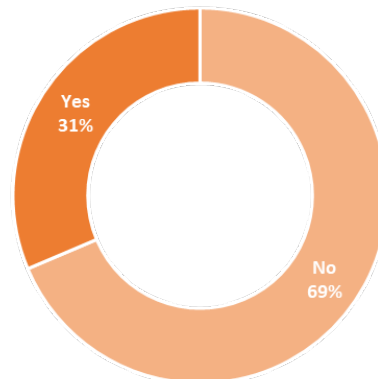
9. Freedom of movement/forced displacement.

People have been forced to flee and leave their homes because of the earthquake. The situation of displacement, when not safe and when barriers are preventing people from moving freely, exposes people to protection risks. The presence of landmines and unexploded ordnance, restricted access to identity documents, lack of adequate infrastructure, including damaged roads and bridges, physical conditions preventing a person's ability to move freely, and targeted movement restrictions, e.g., in and out of camps or settlements for displaced persons are some of the factors and barriers to consider. Prior to the earthquake, there were already 2.58 million IDPs in NWS due to the conflict. People's freedom of movement was impacted due to hostilities, risks posed by explosive ordnances and inability to secure access to civil documentation as well as restrictions imposed by armed actors.

Overall, 12% of respondents reported that access to freedom of movement in their location is limited for community members if they want to enter or leave. The analysis suggests that the restrictions on persons and/or groups' movement vary across communities. For example, in the Al Bab community, 31% of the respondents indicated that access to freedom of movement in their location is limited for community members if they want to enter or leave.



Is access to freedom of movement of persons and/or groups in the location limited for community members if they want to enter or leave?

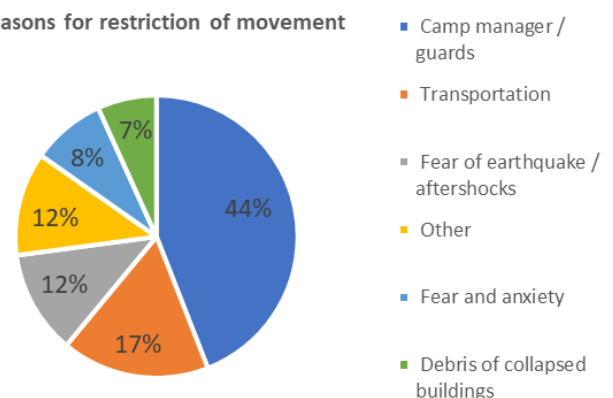


Is access to freedom of movement of persons and/or groups in the location limited for community members if they want to enter or leave? - Al Bab community

The respondents who indicated that there are restrictions to movement, shared the specific restrictions faced by the affected population. These included restrictions imposed by camp managers /guards, debris of collapsed buildings/camp locations close to the affected buildings, lack of transportation/high cost of transport, fear of another earthquake or aftershocks, and fear of losing tents and the land they rent.

In Ariha district, the main factor identified was transportation, while in Harim, the majority of respondents (78%) indicated restrictions imposed by the camp manager/guards as the main reason.

Reasons for restriction of movement

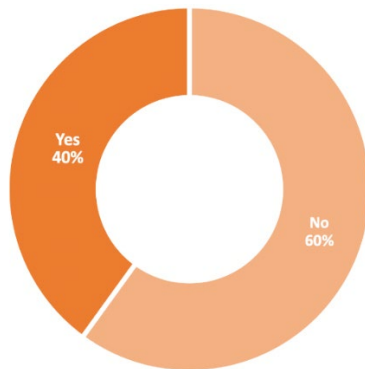


The analysis suggests that, in general, people are abiding by the camp manager's restriction of movement during nighttime as they understand it's for their own safety. However, women are finding these restrictions more uncomfortable. From the interviews in the districts Al-Bab, Azaz, Jebel Saman, Ariha, Idleb, and Dana, women were mentioned as the group most impacted by restrictions on freedom of movement and pregnant and lactating women were highlighted as a particular group facing challenges due to the restriction.

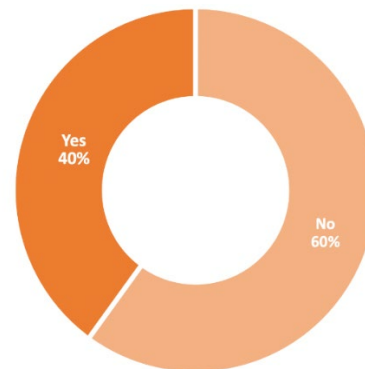
10. Presence of mines and other explosive ordnance

The conflict in NWS has been characterized by the widespread use of indiscriminate weapons, namely explosive ordnances, airstrikes, heavy weapon fires, and IEDs. Ongoing active hostilities are further expanding the scale of explosive hazard contamination, compounding the risk and impact on civilians and their communities. 13 % of the respondents indicated that mines and ERWs have been found in their communities. In Al-Swagheih community, 40 % reported that mines and ERWs are present. An additional 7% of respondents indicated that there are suspicions of mines or ERW within 5 km of the site. There are

42 communities where contamination was reported. A population of 730,000 people lives in these communities and is at risk of explosive ordnance accidents.



*Have mines or ERWs been found here?
- Al Swagheih community*



*Are there suspicions of mines or ERW within 5 km
of the site? - Al-Swagheih community*

V. Groups at heightened risk

The analysis shows that there are specific population groups facing disproportionate impacts of the disaster. Persons and children with disabilities, women and children heads of households, and destitute older persons are among the most affected. Other emergent groups that require tailored services include homeless persons, youth, and persons with chronic diseases, including mental health-related issues.

When analyzing the data from the survey, special attention was paid to identifying the population groups that are or could be at higher risk. For example, when respondents referred to “children at risk”, it was found that they frequently also mentioned separated and unaccompanied children, homeless children, and children with disabilities, suggesting that the approach to address the protection risks that children face needs to be adapted accordingly. Similarly, when respondents mentioned girls as a vulnerable group, adolescents were specifically mentioned. When describing women at risk, 50% of respondents referred to pregnant and lactating women, 40% to young women and 30% to female-headed households, indicating that there are additional layers of vulnerability and exposure within the group “women at risk”.



Due to the limitations of a rapid assessment, more information and consultations at the community level will be required to fully understand the protection risks that certain vulnerable groups face. For example, understanding the capacities of community networks and coping mechanisms to support groups such as lactating women, the homeless and children with disabilities, is critical when designing the response. It was also noted that the protection risks facing ethnic groups did not emerge in this assessment due to limited access to these groups and despite the challenges known. The figure (left) shows the frequency of words used by respondents to the question: Are there vulnerable persons/groups at heightened risk?

VI. Issues that require further consultation, monitoring, and deeper understanding

Even though some of the identified risks existed prior to the earthquake, the current conditions of overcrowding, separated families, homelessness, and lack of service provision and documentation have exacerbated these risks. In the case of child and family separation, a much larger part of the population is now exposed, with specific groups being at heightened risk. Additional information and understanding of what happens to persons that are separated, what capacities exist within communities to deal with the risk, and what is potentially preventing people from accessing services of family reunification and alternative care, is needed to ensure tailored and adequate support.

Forced recruitment, trafficking and exploitation is another emergent risk. The findings from the survey show that 9% of the respondents mentioned that there are signs of forced recruitment in their community and 7% trafficking. 85% did not respond to this question, probably due to sensitivities related to this issue. In view of both the severity of these protection risks and concerns that people may have about raising attention to this issue in their community, it will require closer follow-up and consultations.

Freedom of movement, and exploitation, particularly linked to disaggregated information on boys' and girls' hazardous child labour activities are also areas that need to be analyzed in depth to be able to adjust and secure effective risk mitigation strategies.

HLP-related impacts after the earthquake, overlapping affectations to property considering the situation of previous multiple forced displacements is another issue that requires additional analysis.

VII. Next steps

In terms of the next steps, the NWS Protection Cluster has designed a strategy for the earthquake response based on the assessment findings. A deeper analysis of the protection risks will be carried out within the next few weeks to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the risks, to further inform the response, and to develop a protection analysis update to support advocacy on protection. As part of this process, actions required by cluster partners will be identified and how they can contribute to the implementation of protection risk mitigation strategies.

Concrete measures to scale up the response from the protection cluster have been made, increasing protection analysis to adjust existing response strategies as well as future allocation of resources to cover the identified gaps. Improved coordination to cover gaps and increase technical capacity has also been initiated, particularly regarding the MHPSS response. The protection cluster has also developed a legal strategy to increase response capacity and provide specific services to address the identified needs.

Advocacy efforts with the findings of the RPA have been initiated with donors for resources mobilization as well as awareness on existing protection gaps and particularly on the most affected population groups trying to guarantee visibility to more specific population groups identified and usually forgotten when addressing broader categories (particularly pregnant and lactating women, youngsters, boys, ethnic groups, and homeless persons).

VIII. Recommendations

- **Strengthen Family Tracing and Reunification Services:** Establish and support programs that focus on identifying and reuniting separated children with their parents or appropriate caregivers. This includes investing in resources and personnel to conduct thorough assessments, locate family members, and facilitate safe reunification.
- **Ensure Access to Civil Documentation:** Collaborate with local authorities and relevant stakeholders to facilitate access to civil documentation for affected populations. This includes providing assistance in obtaining or replacing lost identification documents, birth certificates, and other necessary paperwork. It is crucial to address barriers and simplify administrative processes.
- **Improve Humanitarian Assistance Delivery:** Enhance efforts to ensure equitable access to humanitarian assistance, especially in areas with limited access or higher vulnerability. This includes strengthening coordination mechanisms among humanitarian actors to optimize resource allocation and avoid exclusion based on strict eligibility criteria.
- **Prioritize Essential Services:** Ensure that essential services such as Protection, health, food, nutrition, shelter, education, and mental health and psycho-social support are available and accessible to all affected populations, with a focus on vulnerable groups like persons with disabilities, older persons, and pregnant and lactating women.
- **Strengthen Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA):** Establish and promote safe and confidential reporting channels for SEA incidents. Conduct awareness campaigns to educate the affected population and humanitarian workers about the risks of SEA and the available support services. Implement robust monitoring and accountability mechanisms to prevent and respond to incidents of SEA.
- **Increase the provision of MHPSS services** and ensure functional referral systems to address the urgent mental health needs of the affected population, including trauma management and psychiatric support. Strengthen the capacity to provide specialized mental health services, including training and deploying additional mental health professionals.
- **Strengthen GBV prevention and response mechanisms,** including safe reporting and referral systems, in order to mitigate the heightened risk of GBV faced by women and children. Ensure the availability of separate bathrooms and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities for males and females to ensure privacy, dignity, and safety. Address the underlying causes of GBV, including gender inequality, through community engagement, awareness campaigns, and support for women's empowerment initiatives.
- **Prevention of Negative Coping Strategies:** Provide alternative livelihood opportunities and financial support to mitigate the need for negative coping mechanisms such as child labour and early marriage. Promote access to education, to prevent child labour and enable better prospects for children. Strengthen child protection mechanisms to identify and respond to cases of child labour and early marriage, ensuring the enforcement of legal protections for children.