

Al-Hasakeh

City Profile

February 2020



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Acronyms

AFID	Air Force Intelligence Directorate	NNGO	National Non-Governmental Organisation
AOG	Armed Opposition Group	NFI	Non-Food Items
BOD	Biochemical Oxygen Demand	NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics	PKK	Kurdish Worker's Party
CCC	Central Coordination Committee	PSD	Political Security Directorate
COD	Chemical Oxygen Demand	PYD	Democratic Union Party
CSO	Civil Society Organisation	RPBA	Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment
DFNS	Democratic Federation of Northern Syria	SANES	The Self-Administration of Northeast Syria
DRD	Dan Association for Relief and Development	SAA	Syrian Arab Army
EC-JRC	European Commission's-Joint Research Centre	SA	Self Administration
ERL	Early Recovery & Livelihoods	SARC	Syrian Arab Red Crescent
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War	SDC	Syrian Democratic Council
FSA	Free Syrian Army	SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	SS	Sediments and Suspended Solids
GID	General Intelligence Directorate	SSSD	Syrian Society for Social Development
GIS	Geographic Information Systems	SVESTs	Suicide vests
GoS	Government of Syria	SYP	Syrian Pounds
HAO	Humanitarian Affairs Office	UFI	Urban Functionality Index
HLP	Housing, Land, and Property	UN	United Nations
HOBOOB	Government's General Establishment for Cereal Processing and Trade	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
IED	Improvised Explosive Device	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross	UNHABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
IDP	Internally Displaced Person	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant	UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
KNC	Kurdish National Council	UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
KRG	Kurdish Regional Government	UrbAN-S	Urban Analysis Network for Syria
KRI	Kurdish Region of Iraq	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
KSA	Kurdish Self Administration	USD	United States Dollar
LD	Legislative Decree	UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
MID	Military Intelligence Directorate	VBEID	Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device
MoE	Ministry of Education	WASH	Water, Sanitation & Hygiene
MoH	Ministry of Health	WFP	World Food Programme
MoLAE	Ministry of Local Administration and Environment	WHO	World Health Organisation
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières	YPG	People's Protection Units
NDVI	Normalised Difference Vegetation Index		
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation		

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Disclaimer

The information and views set out in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Neither the European Union institutions and bodies nor any person acting on their behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein.

The content of this report serves to feed in preparations for the post-agreement phase, thereby creating assessments and analytical building blocks that could enrich a possible future Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment (RPBA). Where feasible, the content of this study could be used to inform current humanitarian and resilience programming in line with the guidance of the EU Council Conclusions on Syria. The EU will be ready to assist in the reconstruction of Syria only when a comprehensive, genuine and inclusive political transition, negotiated by the Syrian parties in the conflict on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015) and the 2012 Geneva Communiqué, is firmly under way.

Front cover photo by wikimedia, Berkaysnklf, January 2011.

Urban Analysis Network for Syria

The Urban Analysis Network for Syria (UrbAN-S) approaches the analysis of urban areas as an adaptive exercise to understand how cities are (or are not) functioning, and how the people living in them cope during, and in transition, from conflict. UrbAN-S brings a combination of expertise in urban analysis and information management, along with a collaborative and inclusive approach to better understand needs on the ground. This results in information which is more relevant and more accessible, building the capacity of Syria actors to use that information.

Objectives of UrbAN-S are framed within global efforts to enhance responses in urban areas, and the call for a paradigm shift in humanitarian assistance in urban areas to be community based.

UrbAN-S urban profiling provides an integrated snapshot of the current physical and social conditions from a conflict and displacement context. This includes identifying gaps between the population needs and the capacity of the city to provide for those needs. Analysis will support the identification of priority areas of intervention and contribute to inclusive, responsible and sustainable urban recovery in view of the post-agreement phase.

The Urban-S analytical framework serves as a roadmap for answering three main questions:

One: How have conflict dynamics affected or continue to affect the city?

Two: How have population movements affected, or continue to affect, the city?

Three: How and to what extent does the city provide an adequate standard of living for all residents?

1. Executive summary

Al-Hasakeh City is the capital city of the Al-Hasakeh Governorate. Al-Hasakeh, which is the largest city in its governorate, is also among the largest cities in Syria by population. The ethnic composition of the city is diverse and multicultural, with Arabs the largest constituent group, followed by Kurds and smaller numbers of Assyrians and Armenians.

Since 2013 the Self-Administration of Northeast Syria (SANES) and the Government of Syria (GoS) control different parts of the city and its administrative and economic structures. Currently, most of the city is controlled by the Self-Administration of Northeast Syria. The Government of Syria's presence is limited to downtown of Al-Hasakeh City, at the so-called Security Square. Accordingly, parallel structures of governance is one of the major issues faced by the residents of Al-Hasakeh City. These have exacerbated already existing social and ethnic tensions within the city. Both the GoS and the SANES are highly centralized. A dual governance structure is in place at the local level. Each body is responsible for specific administrative functions. Coordination occurs in areas such as health and education. In many respects, natural resources produced by SANES affiliates are exchanged with the GoS for more specialized public services. Thereby, a co-dependency has been created between the two parallel administrative systems.

The Governorate is rich in natural resources. It is known for its oil fields as well as for its agricultural lands. The region is considered to be the country's breadbasket, traditionally producing most of Syria's wheat. Unfavorable weather conditions and man-made massive fires in the summer of 2019 resulted in unprecedented harm to agricultural lands and wheat industry.

Unlike other Syrian cities, Al-Hasakeh City did not witness extensive damage to its buildings and infrastructure. Intermittent fighting limited most damage to southern neighbourhoods. However, the influx of IDPs has placed pressures on the city's accommodative capacities and housing stock. Due to increasing poverty rates and limited livelihood opportunities affordable housing is a challenge for most of the city's population.

The Governorate is one of the most affected as far as the electricity services are concerned. Access to water sources is limited and cuts to the existing supply are frequent, especially in the southern neighbourhoods. Conflict dynamics have also affected water provision. The main source of drinking water in Al-Hasakeh, the Al-Alouk water station, was severely damaged during Operation Peace Spring launched by Turkey in October 2019. Substantial drinking water shortages occurred as a result.

Al-Hasakeh's parallel administration structures intensify ethnic tensions within the city. Prior to the conflict, education followed the national GoS officially accredited mandates. However, following the expansion of its influence and political control over Al-Hasakeh, SANES introduced its own curriculum in 2016. To date, this curriculum lacks formal accreditation domestically and internationally. GoS maintains control of the education apparatus in the Security Square. The Self-Administration controls the remaining and the largest part of the city. As the GoS and the SA refuse to accept each other's certificates, social tensions among Kurdish and non-Kurdish residents are on the rise. Schools are reportedly overcrowded, lacking necessary school supplies, services and adequate educational supplies.

Likewise, dual administration structures affect city's health services. Disputes occur between the GoS and the Self-Administration over the ownership of the city's public health assets. Residents lack sufficient health services and adequate number of medical care staff.

The ethnically and culturally diverse City of Al-Hasakeh is located in a natural resource rich region. Yet, the city witnesses increased poverty rates, limited livelihood opportunities and a general decline in public service provision. Water and electrical systems are currently underperforming. Parallel and/or overlapping governance structures constitute one of the major challenges in the city resulting in lack of accountability, fragmentation and constant disputes between the GoS and the Self-Administration.

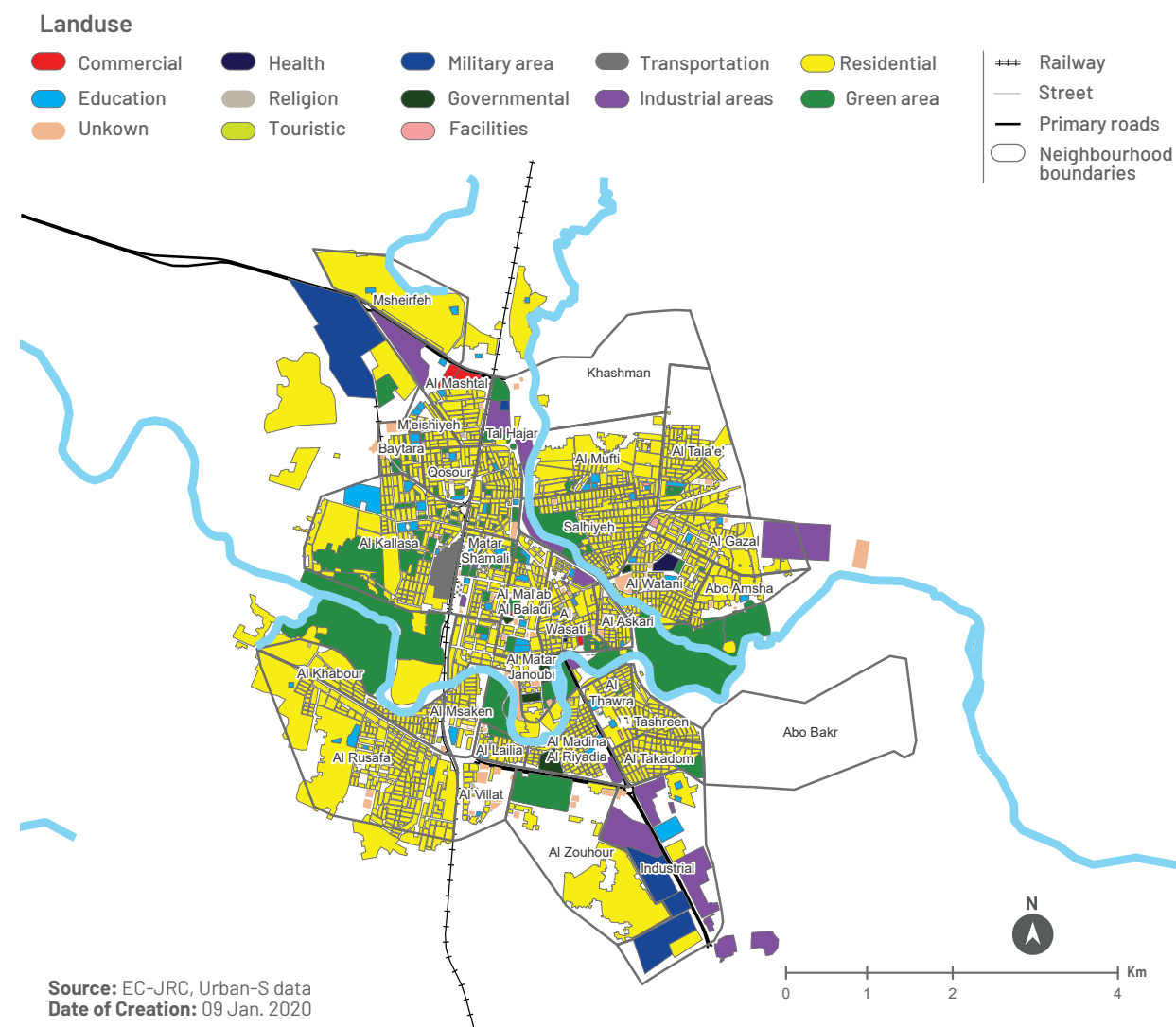
Key findings

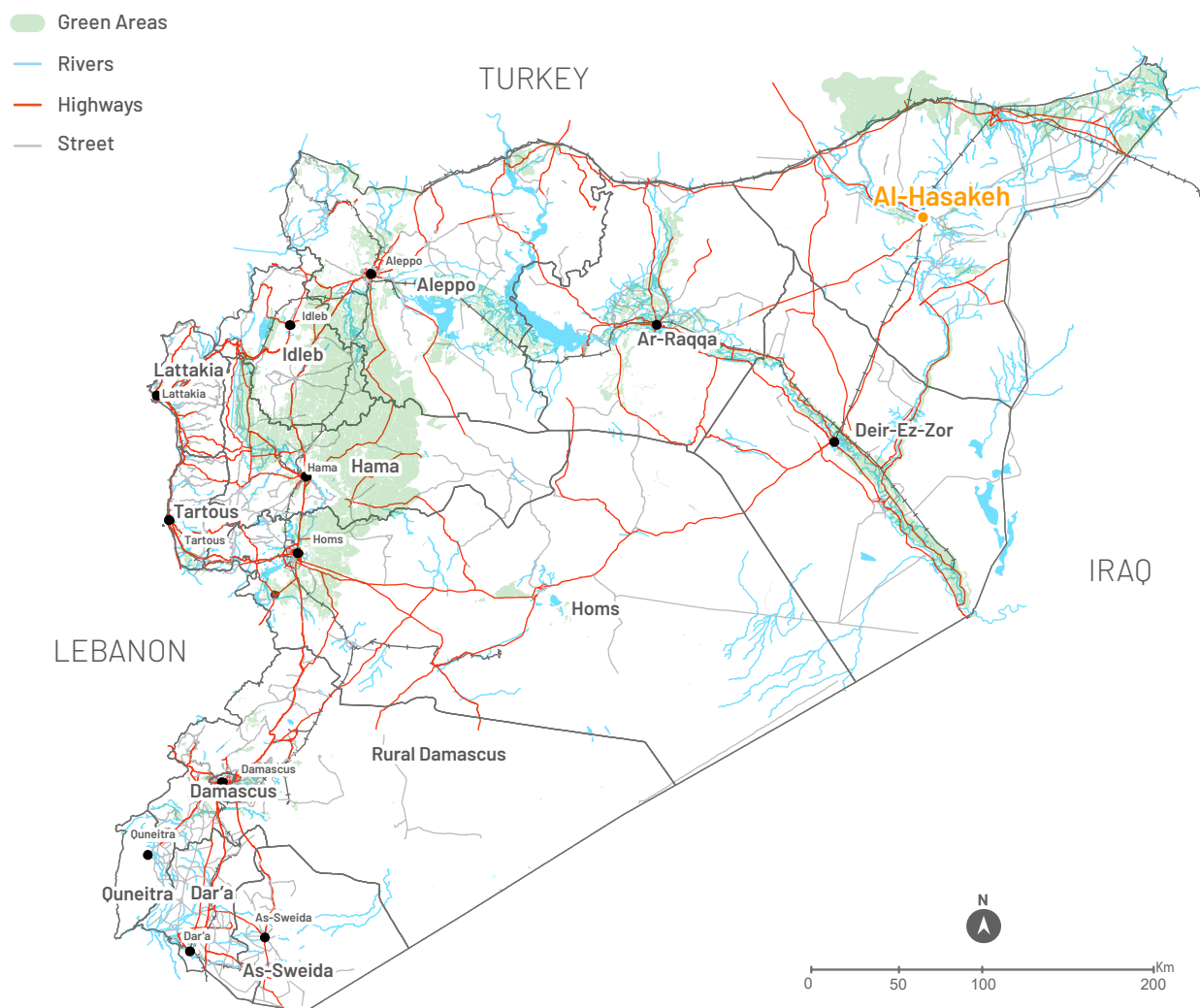
- The city's parallel administrative structures affect the provision of services. Parallel or overlapping governance structures present challenges to administering quality services. Inherent risks include fragmentation and redundancies, higher transaction costs (for both service providers and residents), and a lack of accountability.
- Kurdish NGOs and staff members enjoy better access to the City of Al-Hasakeh by the local authorities.
- Damage is mainly concentrated in southern neighbourhoods. Although the city was spared major damage to its housing and infrastructure, service provision has declined, especially in the city's southern parts. Abu Bakr and Al Villat neighbourhoods are amongst the most affected in terms of declined services provisions.
- Social inequalities are apparent when looking at Arab-majority neighbourhoods in the city's south. These neighbourhoods are under served because of a widely-held perception of Arabs as sympathizers of the GoS regime.
- Local authorities are systematically excluding the rural areas where a vast number of IDPs reside from humanitarian and developing interventions. The Jazira Humanitarian Affairs Office is regularly rejecting programming in rural areas outside of IDPs camps in Al-Hasakeh governorate. This systematic exclusion not only exacerbates the existing urban-rural divide, but also leaves IDPs residing in camps outside of the city at high risk of being under served.
- Restricted access to highways as well as low quality of roads and transportation networks have resulted in a decline in regional commerce.

Key considerations

- Programming should account for improved coordination between the GoS and the Self-Administration. Interventions that take into account the necessity of coordination will have an increased likelihood of benefitting services and the infrastructure.
- NGO staffing should be representative of the city's many ethno-sectarian groups, and not limited to Kurdish staff members. Diversity among NGO staff members may help in securing access and equal service provision to all neighbourhoods. NGOs should employ ethnically diverse teams as well as consider partnering with non-Kurdish NGOs when possible.
- Ensure equal services in all neighbourhoods and all parts of the city. This includes Arab majority neighbourhoods in particular.
- IDPs residing in the camps outside of the city should be prioritized for humanitarian assistance. Donors and NGOs should collectively insist on equal and unrestricted humanitarian access to rural and urban locations.
- Programing should advocate for unrestricted access to major highways and invest in transportation networks inside the city itself as well as in the regional road networks connecting Al-Hasakeh City to the surrounding cities.
- Ensure project implementation of water, energy and other infrastructure upgrades throughout the city. Priority needs for funding and sectoral expertise include: 1) Maintaining the 230 kilovolt power line between Ar-Raqqa and Al-Hasakeh Governorates (the city's main power line), 2) Ensure ongoing pump operations at Al-Alouk water station (the city's main water source), and 3) Improving Al-Hama water treatment plant as a replacement for the damaged and partially operational Al-Alouk water treatment facility.

Map 1.1: Al-Hasakeh Land use



Map 1.2: Regional location of Al-Hasakeh

2. Methodology

The methodology for city profiles is regularly refined in line with improving the analysis process. Moreover, updates are made with the introduction of new data collection tools, changes in a specific city's context, as well as data availability affecting the methodology. The following briefly describes the methodologies adopted and utilized in the development of Al-Hasakeh City Profile. Further description of these methodologies are available upon request.

Coverage

Official counts of puts the number of neighbourhoods in Al-Hasakeh at 31.¹ Neighbourhood boundary delineations were utilized in the course of further investigation of the city. All neighbourhoods were covered in the course of primary data collection efforts.

Data compilation

The methodology for the data collection followed a "mixed-methods" approach. Therefore, the profile represents a synthesized area-based analysis utilizing the following methods:

Secondary data review

Information was derived by review of existing reports focusing broadly on Syria and specifically on Al-Hasakeh City and Governorate. These reports provided historical and contextual information on pre-conflict trends and baselines needed for the triangulation and contextualization of results from primary data collection.

Primary data collection

Asset survey

The survey's primary objective focused on information gathering for a variety of public assets. This information was used to understand the damage and operational status of public infrastructure, municipal and community facilities. Combined with population, survey data is also used to support capacity analysis and needs of existing community members. Asset classes inventoried include governance, health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), solid waste management, energy, and transportation. The asset survey took place in February, 2019.

Sector expert interviews

A series of interviews with specialists and knowledgeable people from a variety of sectors. Interviews were conducted in person or over the phone with local practitioners or government officials with local experts knowledge in the city and the region. They may also include local stakeholders, response actors or community leaders including the secretary of the local council. Sectoral expert interviews also include those aware of the security situation. All interviews took place in March, 2019.

Local area experts

Interviews with two neighbourhood representatives, or "Local area experts" per neighbourhood. The survey was designed to investigate community perceptions on a variety of sectors at the neighbourhood level. Responses were close ended, permitting only a singular answer. They addressed all studied sectors, providing insight into the needs of local residents. Interviews took place in February, 2019.

Remote sensing

Satellite imagery was utilized by the European Commission Joint Research Centre (EC-JRC) for determining the land-use/land-cover analysis and the assessment of damage in Al-Hasakeh City, as part of regular monitoring of damage performed since September 2015, in the context of post-conflict urban analysis for Syria. Utilizing remote sensing, the EC-JRC produced a digitized layer of land-use information and designated land-use classes. Determinations were then triangulated through available secondary data. Satellite imagery was then visually evaluated to obtain the level of damage of buildings and infrastructure. Definitions for damage categories have been defined by the EC-JRC.²

Morphological visual data

Visual data including pictures, videos and base-maps (produced through a compilation of open-source materials) were analysed to understand changes which have occurred in the city. The data was then validated from multiple local sources.

Damage assessment analysis

An in-depth analysis of the damage assessment was conducted to aggregate the assessment of damage at the neighbourhood level by the EC-JRC. GIS tools were employed to carry out the analysis. Land use classifications, average floor numbers and building typology were factored in order to calculate the number of buildings and living units.

The result is compared to the damage points and estimations of affected buildings according to every damage level in each neighbourhood.³

The neighbourhoods were subsequently categorized according to the percentage of the affected buildings. The classification of damage is as follows:

- **Not damaged** – neighbourhoods with less than one percent of the area damaged.
- **Lightly damaged** – neighbourhoods with area damage between 1-9.9 percent.
- **Moderately damaged** – neighbourhoods with area damage between 10-24.9 percent.
- **Severely damaged or destroyed** – neighbourhoods with area damage more than 25 percent.

Population estimates

Population estimates conducted for the profile are taken from a variety of sources.

- 2004 estimates come from the Syrian Central Bureau of Statistics.
- 2010 estimates are based on UrbAN-S analysis and application of Syrian national growth rates to the 2004 census by the Central Bureau of Statistics.
- 2011 – 2015 is unavailable.
- 2016 – 2019 estimates are provided by operational partners and Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO).
- Population on the neighbourhood level is provided by our operational partners.

Infrastructure and Services Functionality Analysis

Access to Health

Accessibility to healthcare services is estimated by measuring associations one or more of the following key indicators:

1. Location and catchment area of operational facilities; in other words, distance to the nearest operational facility.
2. Presence of medical staff.
3. Operational bed capacity (for hospitals only)
4. Access challenges such as checkpoints

The above indicators are quantified using three and four-point scales to reflect the degree of their impact on accessibility. All figures are contextualized comparing pre-conflict and most recent population figures with special focus on the vulnerable groups.⁴

Access to education

A nominal estimation of the number of students per each neighbourhood is calculated using pre-conflict population as a reference for the actual population of the city. This number is then compared to the total functional student capacity of the schools in each neighbourhood. This gives a nominal deficit of (number of students unserved) per each neighbourhood.

Access to functional education facilities has also been calculated based on the number functional schools in each neighbourhood.

Access to electricity

Accessibility to energy presents information based on reporting of available grid power supply. It considers the connection, power provided, as well as the private service providers. Interventions undertaken by government and non-government actors are surveyed, in order to understand the electricity infrastructure capacity outlook for the city.

Access to water

Several indicators are utilized as a proxy for access to water. The list of below indicators focusing mainly on the demand side over the supply. One or more have been used in assessing access to water:

1. Number of supply hours per day.
2. Reported water quality.
3. Reported damage and operability .

- 1 Al-Hasakeh city map. *OCHA* (2018)
- 2 The original damage data points were provided by the *EC-JRC* and classified in four categories of damage (slight damage, moderate damage, destroyed, razed to the ground). To comply with damage needs assessment, this layer was in some instances grouped into two categories. See publication: C. Louvrier, I. Caravaggi, M. Halkia (2019), *Methodology for damage assessment in built-up environments in conflict scenarios based on the analysis of remotely sensed data*, Joint Research Centre, Ispra. Internal reference number: JRC118870.
- 3 For more on methodology, see “Methodology for urban profiling” (2019), *Urban Analysis Network for Syria*, available at: <https://api.urban-syria.org/uploads/5fa0ebae5d20451088d0b899278490f6.pdf>.
- 4 Vulnerable groups include: lactating women (calculated as 70 percent of children aged below one), population below 5 and above 65 years of age, and people with chronic disease (calculated as 5-10 percent of the population)

3. Demographics and population movement

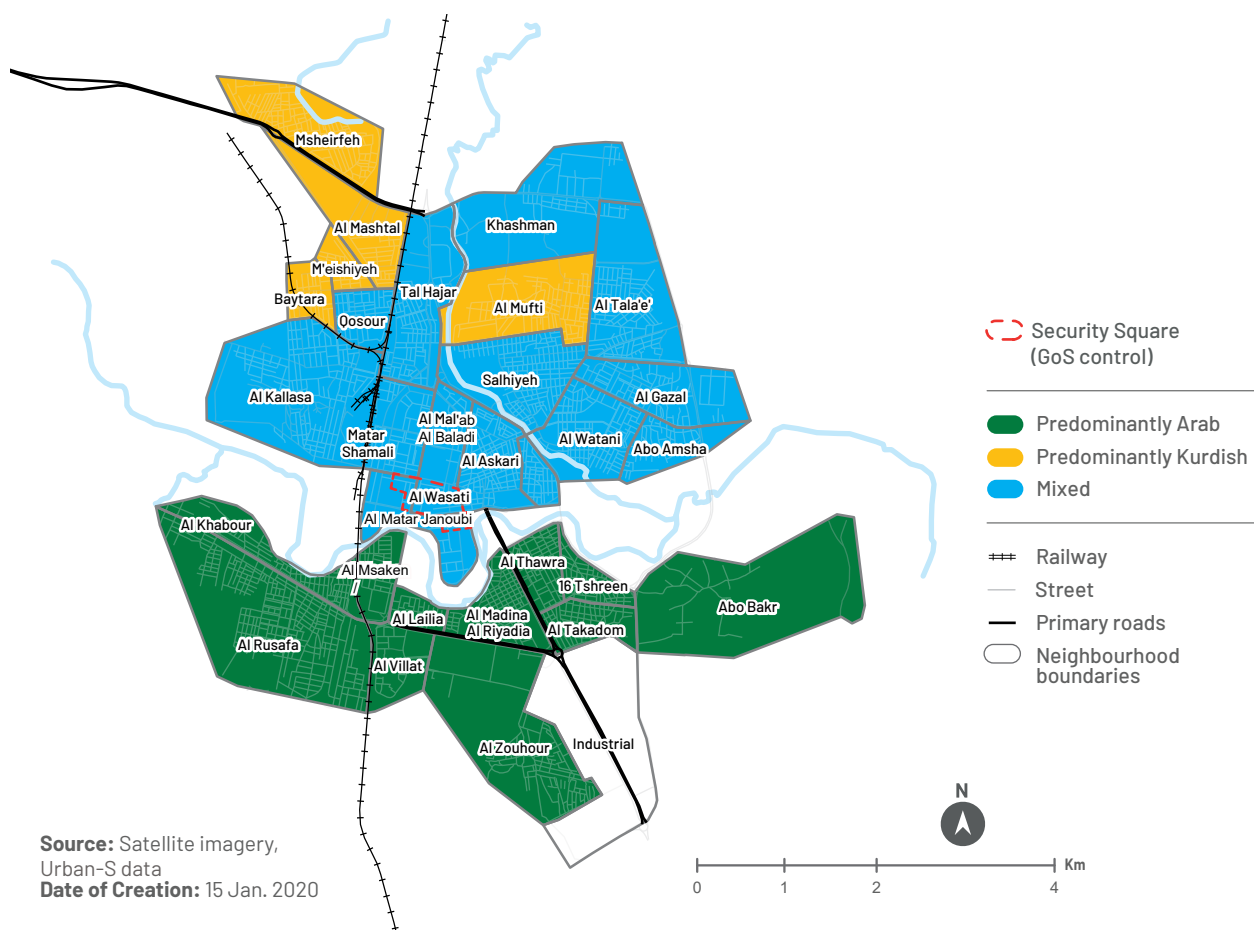
Pre-conflict population trends

In the early 1940s, Al-Hasakeh was a small rural town of about 8,000 people. Irrigation improvements initiated in the 1960s increased agricultural production and, together with the establishment of the oil extraction industry in the 1970's, transformed the economic landscape of the region.

The national census of 2004 recorded a population of 188,160 inhabitants. A drawn-out period of drought in the mid-2000s together with poor policy in the agricultural sector led to a series of massive crop failures and a decline in the livelihoods of many rural dwellers. This prompted a trend of urbanisation in the region which added to the natural growth of the larger cities across Syria, including Al-Hasakeh. By 2010 the city's population had increased to an estimated 216,622.

Al-Hasakeh's geographic location and significance within the Jazira canton of Syria's north east has influenced the city's own multi-ethnic character. Forty-two percent of the population is Kurdish (mostly Sunni), living predominantly in the northern neighbourhoods of the city. The remaining 58 percent of the city's population are Arab (both Sunni and Christian) and a small number of Assyrian Christians. The Sunni Arab population predominantly occupies the southern neighbourhoods, while the central neighbourhoods have mixed populations.

Map 3.1: Distribution of Al-Hasakeh's ethno-sectarian groups within the city's neighbourhoods



Kurdish community dynamics

Although Kurdish communities have inhabited the Jazira region (now Al-Hasakeh Governorate) in small numbers since before the 20th century, the population increased substantially beginning in the 1920s. Kurdish nationalist sentiment in Turkey led to a nationalist uprising against the nascent Turkish national government of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Brutal suppression of this uprising by Turkish authorities forced an estimated 25,000 Kurds into then French-controlled Syria.⁵ At this time, the Kurdish population was still quite small (about 20 percent of the total population of the region). In Al-Hasakeh City, for instance, according to a 1939 census of the city, the Kurdish community comprised only three percent of the population.⁶ Swelled by the new arrivals, however, this small population grew rapidly. According to estimates at the time, by 1953 the Kurds had become the largest ethnic group in the region, constituting some 41 percent of the region's total population.⁷

Since Syria's independence in 1946, Kurdish communities and their political parties have stood for the recognition of Kurdish cultural rights which have largely been suppressed by the Syrian state. In 1962 a census was carried out in the Jazira province which resulted in 120,000 (almost 20 percent) of the country's Kurdish population being rendered stateless, losing their civil rights, including property rights; access to education and employment; and even the right to get married.⁸

Expressions of Kurdish nationalism continued to be seen as a threat by the Syrian Government throughout the late 20th century. This led to an official policy seeking to Arabise the region in an effort to stem the rise of Kurdish nationalism and demands for autonomy. Discriminatory policies enacted by the Government of Syria included economic marginalisation of the Kurdish population, along with the denial of other social and cultural rights.⁹

As the Syrian Government faced mass protest across the country in 2011, it began to grant disenfranchised and stateless Kurds Syrian a path to citizenship, through the ratification of Legislative Decree 49/2011.¹⁰ This was in an effort to placate and contain Kurdish community grievances at a time when the government was under pressure from protests by other groups.¹¹ However, this legislation did not apply to all stateless Kurds, and many remained disenfranchised. In 2013, these Kurdish individuals who were not considered under allowances made by LD 49/2011, and remained unable to obtain Syrian identification documentation, were given recognition under the nascent Kurdish Self-Administration and its newly enacted inclusive policies. In Self-Administration controlled areas, at least, Kurds were granted equal civil, political and economic rights on par with other Syrians.¹²

Arab community dynamics

The Arab population of Al-Hasakeh descends largely from the nomadic and semi-sedentary tribes that have been historically present in the region. In the 1939 census, Arab communities made up 53 percent, and thus the majority of the city's population. Kurdish mid-20th Century migrations, however, soon nullified this Arab majority in Al-Hasakeh (refer to sub-section: Kurdish community dynamics, above).

Between 1973 and 1976, the Ba'ath Party, which had recently come to power, instituted policies to increase the Arab population in the region. The 'Arabic Belt' project sought to establish Arab families in areas along the Turkish border, and 41 new Arab villages were established in the region during this time. The population included approximately 4,000 families displaced by the building of the Tabqah Dam in 1973.¹³

Arab communities continue to retain strong tribal connections, many of which transcend Syrian state borders. Several prominent tribes in both Al-Hasakeh subdistrict and the wider governorate not only have tribal lineage that originated in Iraq, but also strongly identify with western Iraqi populations, socially, and the Iraqi Ba'ath Party, politically.¹⁴ In addition, they also maintain extensive cross-border smuggling networks between Iraq and Syria. Moreover, tribal networks extend as far as the Gulf region and are reinforced by important family and marriage links between powerful families. These are vital since they also provide economic benefits in the form of remittances from Syrian guest workers in the Gulf states.¹⁵

Christian community dynamics

Christian communities in Al-Hasakeh City include Assyrian and Arab sub-communities. Like the Kurds, the Assyrian and other Syriac¹⁶ communities have made efforts to preserve their identities within Syrian society, often under oppressive conditions felt through the late 20th century.¹⁷ Political entities such as the Syriac Union Party have emerged and allied with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in order to protect their minority rights. Nevertheless there is a large portion of the various Christian communities in Al-Hasakeh that denounces the Kurdish Self Administration in the north-east of Syria and supports the Syrian Government.¹⁸

Throughout the Syrian conflict, Christian communities have come under threat by ISIL which has targeted Christian minority groups with kidnappings and other violence.¹⁹ In response, Christian communities throughout the governorate have adopted a defensive posture focused primarily on their protection through localised security forces, such as Sotoro in Al-Hasakeh City, and various other smaller militias under the banner of the Syriac Military Council. An umbrella organization made up of several self-defense militias, the Syriac Military Council protects Assyrian communities in rural Al-Hasakeh governorate. These security forces have largely aligned with the YPG. (see section 5: 'Governance' for further details).

Combined with vast agricultural lands under Christian ownership, Christians in Al-Hasakeh City are considered wealthy. They have played a significant role in pre-conflict trade.²⁰ They maintain strong connections with the Syrian Christian diaspora in Europe (mainly Germany and Sweden) and North America. This diaspora is known to provide investments and charitable donations to local Christian communities, and reportedly finances Christian-affiliated militias.²¹

Conflict period population dynamics

The historically tense relationships between Arab tribal and Kurdish communities in Al-Hasakeh City have frequently been manipulated by the Government of Syria. This mirrors the deep divisions between Kurdish and Arab communities across Al-Hasakeh Governorate. Despite superficial displays of unity in the early stages of the Syrian conflict and under the present Self-Administration, these divisions are deeply rooted in real and perceived historical differences, and have been exacerbated by a longstanding lack of inclusive governance.

With the exception of small-scale protests in the Kurdish-majority Mufti neighbourhood, and the Arab-majority Ghuwayran district neighbourhoods, residents in Al-Hasakeh City generally abstained from demonstrating against the Government of Syria in 2011. Although demonstrations in Mufti and Ghuwayran neighbourhoods briefly converged, ethnic tensions prevented the formation of a broad-based collective opposition movement. On the one hand, the Kurdish community viewed the potential destabilisation as an opportunity for the Government of Syria to control or coordinate with Arab tribal communities against the Kurds. On the other hand, the Arab community was primarily concerned that the Kurds would attempt to broaden their control over north-east Syria by mobilizing politically and militarily against a weakened Government.

The longstanding ethno-sectarian tensions which have been brought to the surface as the conflict has unfolded have been exacerbated by displacement-related demographic changes to Al-Hasakeh City's population.²² These tensions have influenced the inter-communal relationships of Al-Hasakeh City in two ways:

Ethnic differences: Inter-ethnic tensions between Kurdish communities on the one hand, and Arab and Christian communities on the other, were stirred as the Syrian Government lost control of the region and was replaced by the SDF and Kurdish-led Self-Administration of North and East Syria (SANES). While efforts to create more inclusive governance structure were made by the incumbent Kurdish-led administration, there has reportedly been the strong perception of discrimination against other community groups, through implementation of Kurdish oriented policies and barriers to leadership positions for non-Kurds.

Sectarian differences: Sectarian differences are most noticeable between Christians and members of other religions. Together with the targeting of Christian communities by ISIL throughout the region, Christian populations in Al-Hasakeh Governorate have been subjected to marginalization, discrimination, property damage and HLP abuses, looting, kidnappings, and assassinations.²³ Despite tacit alignment between Christian groups and SANES, particularly with regard to security measures, there has also been strong opposition to the Kurdish policies regarding property laws and military conscription. Opposition to these policies together with the continued political restrictions on the Christian community have prompted an increase in external displacement and migration over the course of the conflict, primarily to Europe via Turkey or Lebanon.^{24, 25}

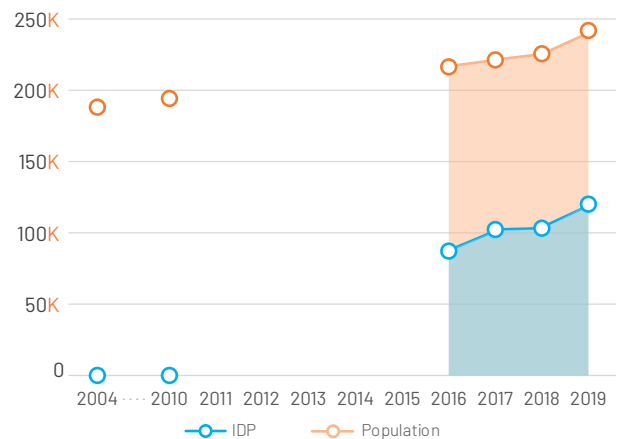
As the security situation worsened in Al-Hasakeh City in 2014, services deteriorated, including electricity and water, and local markets became increasingly inactive. Service provision gaps in Al-Hasakeh City and surrounding areas reflected the area's ethno-sectarian divide, with Arab communities and IDPs in southern rural Al-Hasakeh sub-district both underserved and neglected by the Self Administration. This situation has been exacerbated by the Self Administration's increasing control over service provision which, with the exception of some hospital and school facilities, has been under SANES jurisdiction since 2016.

Population Movement

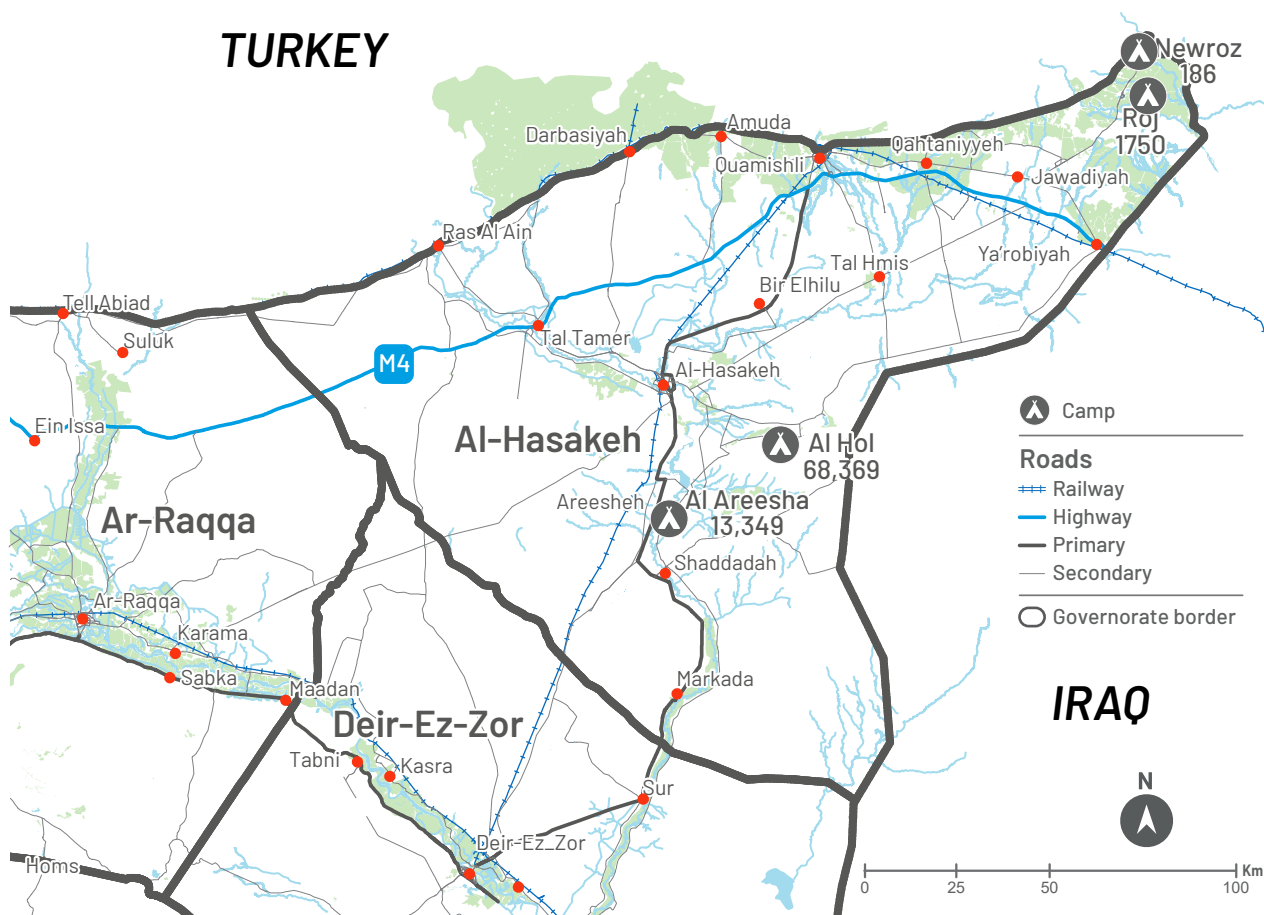
Advances by ISIL in Al-Hasakeh Governorate in 2015 culminated in a direct attempt to capture Al-Hasakeh City in August of that year. The onset of this incursion prompted significant displacement from Al-Hasakeh City to nearby rural areas.²⁶

The city remained stable after the 2015 ISIL incursion and no further outward displacement was observed. Later, a large influx of IDPs from Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor governorates arrived in Al-Hasakeh Governorate in 2017. This occurred as efforts to reverse ISIL gains in these areas by both the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and Government of Syria forces led to significant displacement. Other IDPs also arrived from Aleppo Governorate.

Figure 3.1: Population and IDP Estimates (2004-2019)



IDPs from outside Al-Hasakeh were immediately viewed as a security risk by the Self Administration authorities, due to perceived connections to ISIL. While a portion of these IDPs found shelter within the city, most were sent to camps outside of the city and subjected to stringent security measures, including restrictions on their freedom of movement.²⁷ The major IDP camps in Al-Hasakeh Governorate include Al-Hol Camp, Mabrouka Camp, Al-Shadadi Camp, and the Al-Arishah Camp, an informal camp near the Rujm Al-Sulaybi checkpoint, located south of Al-Hol.

Map 3.2: Location of IDP camps in Al-Hasakeh sub-district

Between 2017 and October 2019, IDP numbers in Al-Hasakeh City remained stable at around 103,000 (approximately 46 percent of the total population). At the same time, the city's resident population also remained firm around 120,000, as most IDPs that left the city during the earlier years of the conflict have remained displaced.²⁸

The US withdrawal of troops from north-east Syria in October 2019 precipitated a military operation in the region by Turkish Armed Forces and allied non-state groups. Clashes in Tel Abiad (in Ar-Raqqa Governorate) and Ras Al Ain (in Al-Hasakeh Governorate) resulted in the displacement of more than 200,000 people from these two cities and adjacent areas near the Turkish border, many towards Al-Hasakeh Governorate.²⁹ While more than 129,000 of those displaced had returned by mid-December 2019, approximately 70,600 people remained displaced, with 53 percent sheltered in Al-Hasakeh Governorate.³⁰ During this time approximately 60,000 IDPs arrived in Al-Hasakeh City, and as of November 2019 18,497 of these additional IDPs remained in the city.

The total number of IDPs in the city as of November 2019 was 121,799, representing 50.3 percent of the city's total population of 241,925.³¹ The city has seen a net growth of approximately 12 percent in the city's total population from pre-conflict levels.

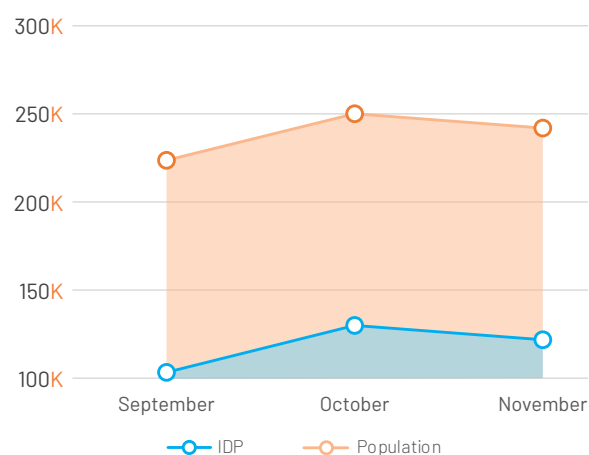
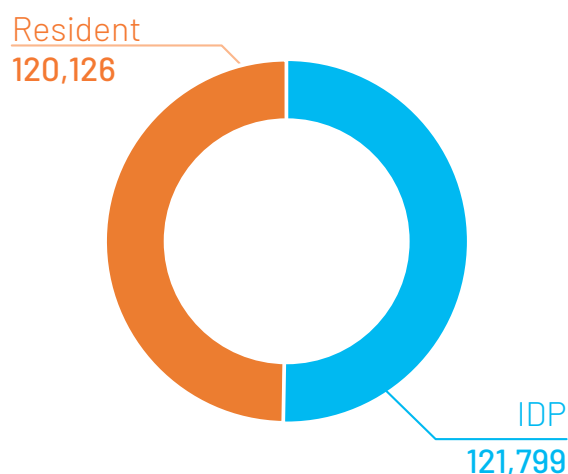
Figure 3.2: Population and IDP Estimates (September 2019 - November 2019)

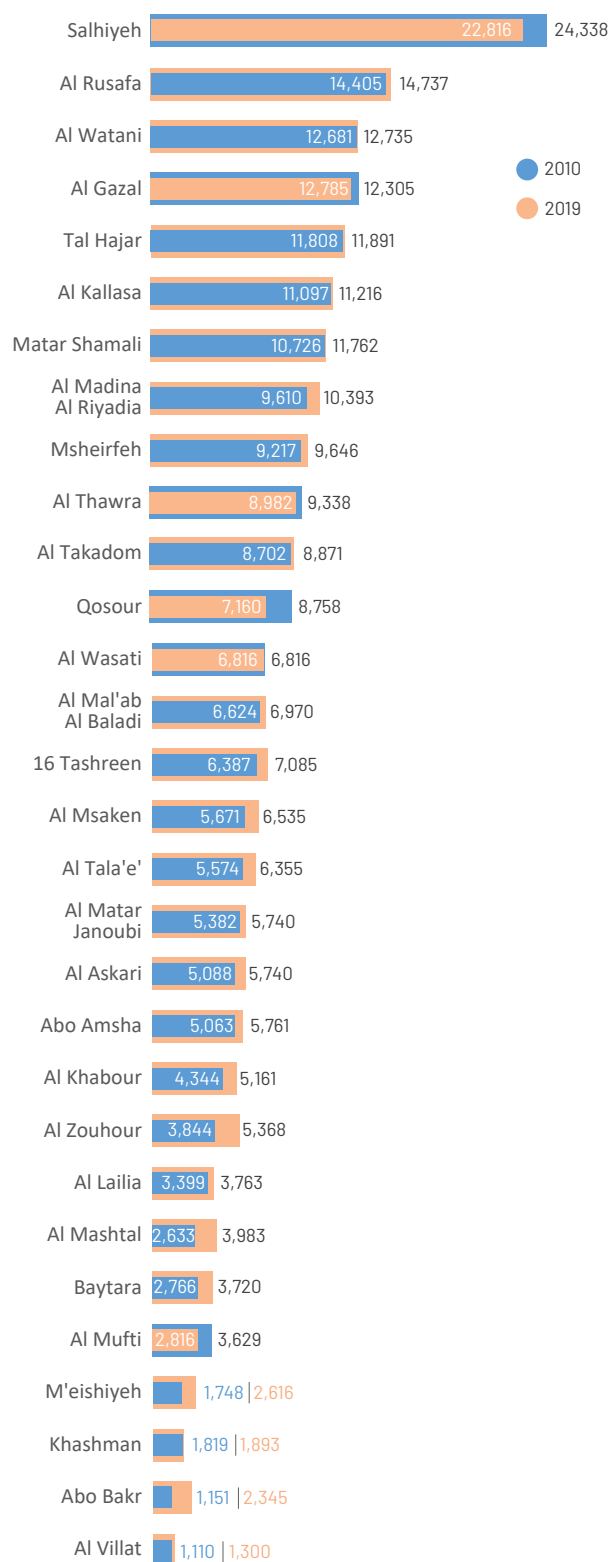
Figure 3.3: Resident to IDP ratio (November 2019)

IDP camp dynamics in Al-Hasakeh Sub-district

Presently, there is a large IDP population (predominantly Arab from Ar-Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zor) residing outside of Al-Hasakeh City, in southwestern Al-Hasakeh sub-district. These IDPs are only allowed to enter the city if they have a local sponsor as they are perceived as having potential connections with ISIL. Increasingly strict policies limiting freedom of movement outside SANES-administered IDP camps have led to the marginalisation of the IDP communities. This has also resulted in significant service shortfalls in IDP camps (especially health, WASH, food, and commodities).³²

IDP response

Although many humanitarian actors—especially international organisations—focus on Al-Hasakeh IDP camps outside the city, humanitarian operations are also present in Al-Hasakeh City catering to IDPs residing in private apartments. These are primarily Kurds originating from surrounding rural areas who fled attacks by ISIL. (See section 15: '4W Analysis' for more information)

Figure 3.4: Change in population, by neighbourhood (2010–March 2019)

- 5 David McDowell: (2005). "A Modern History of the Kurds (3. revised and upd. ed., repr. ed.)," (Tauris, London [u.a.], 2005). p.198 and p.469.
- 6 S Altug: "Sectarianism in the Syrian Jazira: community, land and violence in the memories of World War I and the French mandate (1915- 1939)," (*Utrecht University Repository*, 2011), <https://dspace.library.uu.nl/handle/1874/205821>
- 7 Maurice Fevret and André Gibert: "La Djezireh syrienne et son réveil économique". *Revue de géographie de Lyon* (in French)(28): 1-15, 1953, https://www.persee.fr/doc/geoca_0035-113x_1953_num_28_1_1294
- 8 Philip G. Kreyenbroek: "The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview," (), p. 118, https://www.academia.edu/7658467/The_Kurds_A_Con-temporary_Overview
- 9 Fabrice Balanche: "Sectarianism in Syria's Civil War," (*The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, 2018)
- 10 Legislative Decree 49/2011: Granting Syrian Arab citizenship to those registered in the records of Hasakah's 'foreigners'.
- 11 "Shadow of a human': Syria's stateless Kurds navigate shifting authorities decades after losing citizenship," (*Syria Direct*, October 18, 2018), <https://syriadirect.org/news/%e2%80%98shadow-of-a-human%E2%80%99-syria%E2%80%99s-stateless-kurds-navigate-shifting-authorities-decades-after-losing-citizenship/>
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 "Group Denial: Repression of Kurdish Political and Cultural Rights in Syria," (*Human Rights Watch*, 2009), https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/syria1109webwcover_0.pdf
- 14 Historically, much of the eastern tribal regions of Syria have been seen to share a common history, lineage, dialect, and religious background to those in western Iraq. Government of Syria officials reportedly label Arab communities as 'Saddamists' and 'Iraqi Ba'athist'.
- 15 "Context Assessment: Al-Hasakeh," *UrbAN-S*, December 2018.
- 16 Assyrian is an ethnic term that describes a group of people from northern Mesopotamia (present day northern Iraq, north-eastern Syria, south-eastern Turkey and north-western Iran). Syriac is an umbrella term used to describe a larger group of Christian peoples in the Middle East region, including the Assyrian, the Chaldeans and the Arameans and is often used interchangeably with these any of these more specific ethnicities. Syriac also refers to the language used to describe the religious denomination and liturgical language to which many of these groups ascribe.
- 17 "The Syriac Christian Renaissance," (*National Review*, August 8, 2019), <https://www.nationalreview.com/magazine/2019/08/26/the-syriac-christian-renaissance/>
- 18 "Discontent Among Assyrians in Syria's North East," (*Atlantic Council*, October 10, 2018), <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/syriasource/discontent-among-assyrians-in-syria-s-northeast/>
- 19 "The Syriac Christian Renaissance," (*National Review*, August 8, 2019), <https://www.nationalreview.com/magazine/2019/08/26/the-syriac-christian-renaissance/>
- 20 "Context Assessment: Al-Hasakeh," *UrbAN-S*, December 2018.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 This is evidenced by the three major armed actor groupings that currently contest the area: Kurdish-affiliated armed actors, Government of Syria-affiliated armed actors, and Arab-tribal armed opposition groups. In addition to these three groupings, Christian armed actors in Al-Hasakeh Governorate are broadly (but not entirely) affiliated with Kurdish armed actors, and are predominantly focused on protecting Christian-majority communities.
- 23 "Discontent Among Assyrians in Syria's North East," (*Atlantic Council*, October 10, 2018), <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/syriasource/discontent-among-assyrians-in-syria-s-northeast/>
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Population data collected by *UN partners*, 2019.
- 26 Precise figures remain unavailable.
- 27 "Picking up the Pieces: realities of return and reintegration in North-East Syria," (*IMPACT Initiative*, November 2018), https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/impact_initiatives_picking_up_the_pieces_-_realities_of_return_and_reintegration_in_north-east_syria_normal_0.pdf
- 28 Population figures from *UN operational partners*, November 2019.
- 29 "North East Syria Displacement: 18 December 2019," (*OCHA*, 25 December 2019), https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/syrian_arab_republic_nes_displacementreturns_251219f.pdf
- 30 "Syria: Displacement in the northeast," *ACAPS*, October 21, 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/acaps-briefing-note-syria-displacement-northeast-21-october-2019>.
- 31 Population figures from *UN operational partners*, November 2019.
- 32 "Context Assessment: Al-Hasakeh," *UrbAN-S*, December 2018.

4. Context timeline

Local causes and triggers of the conflict

In late March 2011, demonstrations spread to Al-Hasakeh City as Kurdish and Arab residents march together to demand freedom, equality, and the fall of the government.³³ From early April onwards, the Government of Syria initiated several nationwide reforms and granted several concessions to Syrian Kurds in an attempt to minimise their participation in the protests. These included lifting the state of emergency, promulgating decentralisation measures, releasing several Kurdish political prisoners, and granting citizenship to thousands of stateless Kurds across Al-Hasakeh Governorate. Concomitantly, prominent Kurdish political parties – such as the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and the Kurdish National Council (KNC) – discouraged Kurdish residents from taking part in anti-government demonstrations. The armed branch of the PYD, the People's Protection Units (YPG), actively suppressed anti-government protests in Al-Hasakeh City and other Kurdish-majority cities in the northeast.³⁴ The abstention of prominent Kurdish parties in anti-government protests, combined with the GoS' concessions, meant an anti-government insurgency did not emerge in Al-Hasakeh City. Periodic clashes erupted between the SA and GoS-affiliated forces, however, they usually lasted a few days at most, due to a mutual desire to avoid open conflict. Rather than launching an insurgency, the PYD/YPG maintained a strategic relationship with the GoS and adopted a more gradual approach in its quest for autonomy. This enabled the PYD/YPG to safeguard the city from violence and continue to benefit from GoS-funded services and staff. It also allowed for the YPG to maintain room for negotiation with the GoS, if the latter emerged victorious during the war. For the GoS, the truce with YPG enabled it avoid opening another front and allowed it to concentrate its forces in other parts of Syria controlled by the armed opposition. In addition, it enabled the GoS to present itself as the protector of minorities and frame the conflict as a Sunni Arab revolt.

Conflict effects on existing social, tribal, and political cleavages

Al-Hasakeh City has been spared the large-scale violence and destruction experienced by other cities. As a result, the city became a safe haven for former residents, IDPs, and refugees from neighbouring Iraq. This contributed to changing the city's pre-conflict demographics. During the early years of the conflict, many Kurds left Damascus and returned to their areas of origin in northeast Syria that were able to offer stability. Other non-Kurdish groups were also drawn by the relative stability of the region. Beginning in 2015, the parallel SDF and GoS offensives against ISIL generated massive displacement from Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor Governorates to Kurdish-majority areas of the northeast. The ensuing influx of Sunni Arab IDPs into Al-Hasakeh City and its outskirts generated tensions with Kurdish residents, who feared permanent demographic changes.³⁵ In

addition, many residents – including many Kurdish and Christian residents – emigrated abroad. This also altered the pre-conflict demographic breakdown.

The conflict also gave rise to conditions that dramatically altered the city's social, economic, and political landscape. The war generated a political and security vacuum that enabled the Kurdish-dominated PYD/YPG to assume power in the northeast and extend its control over most of Al-Hasakeh City. This occurred at the expense of Arab armed opposition groups and other groups at odds with the PYD. The expansion and consolidation of PYD rule over the city inflamed tensions between Kurdish and non-Kurdish residents, as well as between Kurds themselves. Non-PYD aligned political parties and civil society organisations, such as the Kurdish National Council (KNC), have been persecuted and excluded from participation in the Self-Administration, thereby entrenching intra-Kurdish political divisions. With the establishment of the Self-Administration, many Arab residents lost the privileges they previously enjoyed under the GoS. Consequently, many harbor resentment against the PYD and Kurds more generally. Kurdish residents were placed in high-ranking positions in the Self-Administration previously held by Arab residents under the GoS. In addition, stark ideological differences between the PYD and many residents have further aggravated tensions. The secular, Marxist, and socially liberal ideology of the PYD has often clashed with the beliefs and practices of many socially and religiously conservative residents. PYD attempts to outlaw polygamy and underage marriage in 2016 was met with backlash from most Sunni Arab residents, as well as from conservative Kurdish residents.³⁶ The PYD's education curriculum, which is deeply imbued with Kurdish nationalism and PYD ideology, has alienated many Arab, Assyrian, and Syriac residents. In 2018, the PYD closure of non-conforming private schools and detention of teachers was deeply unpopular.³⁷ Other PYD policies, such as mandatory military service, are deeply opposed by most Arab residents, as well as by many Kurdish residents.

Risks of conflict relapse

Intermittent clashes between the GoS and SANES-affiliated forces may and do occur. Large-scale violence, however, is unlikely over the short-term. Yet, this may soon change if the SA and GoS prove unable to reach a meaningful settlement over the status of the northeast. In such a case, Russia and the GoS may leverage the threat of a renewed Turkish offensive or threaten an offensive of their own to reinstate GoS control. In addition, ISIL sleeper cells remain a persistent threat in northeast Syria. The announced US withdrawal from Syria in October 2019 led to a pause in US military operations against ISIL for nearly two months.³⁸ In January 2020, escalation between the US and Iran led to another suspension in Coalition military operations.³⁹ These suspensions could give the group the time and space to regroup and organise.

Phase 1: From Demonstrations to Militarisation (January 2011–October 2012)

In early 2011, protests spread from the southern city of Dar'a north to Al-Hasakeh City.⁴⁰ Protesters gathered in Al Mufti neighbourhood and marched through the city demanding social, political, and economic reforms. Kurdish and Arab residents marched together, despite efforts by Kurdish political parties to dissuade their supporters from participating. The GoS made several concessions to the Kurdish community in an attempt to deter them from participating in the protests. These concessions included granting citizenship to thousands of Kurdish residents and releasing several Kurdish political prisoners.

In July 2012, the Syrian Arab Army withdrew from Al-Hasakeh City and other major cities across the northeast to combat the armed insurgency in Aleppo and other parts of the country. This generated a security vacuum that was soon filled by armed groups erected along ethno-sectarian lines to defend their communities. Soon, thereafter, armed opposition groups (AOGs) took control of strategic locations, checkpoints, and security infrastructure across Al-Hasakeh Governorate. These armed groups included Jabhat Ghuraba Al-Sham and Liwa' Shuhada Ghuiran. Led by Sheikh Ragheb Al-Bashir, and consist primarily of Arab residents, nominally supported by the Government of Turkey. Eventually, these armed groups banded together under the 'Revolutionary Military Council of Al-Hasakeh Governorate' to coordinate military efforts. With Turkish backing, the primary purpose of the Revolutionary Military Council was to prevent Kurdish actors, such as the YPG/J, the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK) and the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), from coordinating and consolidating military and political control over the Al-Hasakeh Governorate.⁴¹

Population impact: Little displacement occurred as conflict levels remained low in Al-Hasakeh City during the early years of the conflict.⁴²

- 16 January 2011**
 The PYD establishes TEV-DEM, a network of political parties and civil society organisations.⁴³
- 23 January 2011**
 Hassan Ali Aqleh, an Arab resident of Al-Hasakeh City, dies after setting himself on fire to protest unemployment, dire economic circumstances, and low standards of living.⁴⁴
- April 2011**
 First organised protests take place in the city.⁴⁵
- 4 April 2011**
 President Assad enacts a decree granting citizenship to thousands of stateless Syrian-born Kurds across Al-Hasakeh Governorate.⁴⁶
- 21 April 2011**
 President Assad lifts the state of emergency in place since 1963.⁴⁷
- 23 AUGUST 2011**
 President Assad promulgated the Law of Local Administration (Law 107), a decentralisation measure to take effect on 1 October 2011.⁴⁸
- OCTOBER 2011**
 President Assad releases several Kurdish political prisoners.⁴⁹
- JULY 2012**
 SAA troops withdraw from Al-Hasakeh City and redeploy to Aleppo, allowing the YPG to expand its control in the city.
- AUGUST 2012**
 SAA defectors establish the Revolutionary Military Council of Al-Hasakeh Governorate.⁵⁰
- SEPTEMBER 2012**
 PYD/YPG suppress protests in Kurdish majority areas of the city, including the neighbourhoods of Al Mufti and Salhiyeh.⁵¹

Phase 2: Escalation of Conflict (November 2012–December 2014)

In November 2012, the agreement between the YPG and the Revolutionary Military Council to avoid hostilities broke down. This marked the first instance of violence between Kurdish and Arab armed actors during the conflict.⁵² Meanwhile, Jabhat Al-Nusra gained popularity among Arab communities in Al-Hasakeh Governorate throughout 2012. Of note, Jabhat Al-Nusra refused to coordinate with the Revolutionary Military Council, leading to a divide within the Arab armed opposition.⁵³

Throughout 2013, the situation in Al-Hasakeh City rapidly destabilised, largely due to provocations between armed opposition groups and GoS forces. Armed clashes became commonplace and GoS officials were increasingly targeted in IED attacks and kidnappings. The majority of these incidents were attributed to Arab AOGs. Meanwhile, Christian residents became increasingly subject to property destruction, targeted kidnappings, and assassinations, notably by ISIL. This prompted an increase in external displacement and migration, primarily to Europe via Turkey and Lebanon. As the security situation continued to worsen into 2014, basic services (e.g. electricity and water) deteriorated and many local markets closed down. As a result, the PYD assumed a growing role over governance and service provision to offset the widespread shutdown of GoS institutions across Al-Hasakeh City and Governorate.⁵⁴ This culminated notably in the establishment of an Interim Administration, the PYD's first major step towards formalising its heretofore de facto autonomy.

Population impact: The first major wave of displacement took place in November 2012 when AOGs launched an offensive on Ras Al-Ain. This resulted in the displacement of the city's residents to Al-Hasakeh City, Al-Quamishli, and the surrounding areas. Some of the IDPs returned to Ras Al-Ain after the fighting subsided. However, in January 2013, when a second wave of displacement occurred due to clashes between FSA-affiliated AOGs and the YPG in Ras Al-Ain. This was followed by a third wave of displacement in July 2013 when the YPG gained control of Ras Al-Ain and the surrounding communities, including, Tal Hmis, Tal-Khanzir, and Khajiyeh. IDPs left for Turkey, Al-Hasakeh City, Al-Quamishli, and other cities south of the Syrian-Turkish border.⁵⁵

NOVEMBER 2012

Clashes occur between the YPG and the Revolutionary Military Council in Al-Hasakeh City.

NOVEMBER 2012

A Brigadier-General is assassinated in neighbouring Ras-Al Ain in a spate of attacks against GoS officials across Al-Hasakeh Governorate.⁵⁶

JANUARY 2013

The Sotoro, a Christian paramilitary group, is established under the command of the Syriac Military Council (SMC) and in partnership with the Yekineyen Parastina Gel (YPG), amidst a wave of kidnappings of Christians by ISIL.⁵⁷

12 NOVEMBER 2013

The PYD establishes an Interim Administration to preside over three administrative regions (cantons): Jazira, Kobane, and Afrin.⁵⁸

17 OCTOBER 2014

The US Department of Defence formally establishes the Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) in order to formalise military operations against the rising threat posed by ISIL in Iraq and Syria.

Phase 3: Expansion of YPG Control (January 2015–August 2016)

Throughout 2015, GoS forces gradually withdrew from rural areas of Al-Hasakeh Governorate. The YPG increasingly acquired control over petrol stations, fuel depots, bakeries, and other public and private assets. The YPG's territorial gains generated friction with AOGs affiliated with the Revolutionary Military Council and Jabhat Al-Nusra. By mid-2015, the YPG had secured rural areas of Al-Hasakeh Governorate from these groups, reportedly in coordination with the GoS. By summer of 2015, YPG-controlled areas of Al-Hasakeh Governorate included northern and northeastern rural areas, such as the cities of Amuda and Al-Malikeyyeh (Derik). By late 2016, GoS control in the Governorate was confined to a foothold in Al-Hasakeh City and Al-Quamishli, as well as Al-Quamishli International Airport and several military installations, such as the Kawkab Military Base northeast of Al-Hasakeh City.⁵⁹

Advances by ISIL forces in Al-Hasakeh Governorate throughout 2015 culminated in a direct attempt to capture Al-Hasakeh City in June. GoS forces were soon overwhelmed, leading to the ISIL's capture of a handful of Arab-majority neighbourhoods in southeastern and southwestern Al-Hasakeh City. The onset of these clashes prompted significant displacement from Al-Hasakeh City to the nearby rural areas. Combatants from the GoS-affiliated National Defense Forces (NDF) also reportedly began to flee the city with their families at this time. Initially, the YPG refused to intervene in clashes between ISIL and GoS forces. However, this changed in June 2015, when ISIL came within 500 metres of the city's southern entrance. In exchange for the YPG's military support, the GoS granted near to full control over Al-Hasakeh City. After forcing the withdrawal of ISIL from Al-Hasakeh City in November 2015, the YPG secured all entrances to the city and expanded its control over the majority of the city's checkpoints, fuel production facilities, and water infrastructure. Meanwhile, the southeastern and southwestern neighbourhoods captured by ISIL returned to GoS forces and GoS services resumed in these areas.⁶⁰

Soon thereafter, the SDF was formed in collaboration with the US-led Coalition to lead the ground offensive against ISIL in other parts of northeast Syria. At this time, the SDF was primarily comprised of YPG fighters, but also included a minority of Christian and Arab fighters belonging to the Syriac Military Council and Al-Sanadid Forces, respectively. With logistical and aerial support provided by the Coalition, the SDF ousted ISIL from the southern outskirts of the city and the southern half of the governorate. By the spring of 2016, ISIL had been almost completely ousted from Al-Hasakeh Governorate. Throughout 2016, the U.S.-led Coalition pressed the SDF to be more inclusive of Arab and Christian populations, leading to a gradual increase in the proportion of Arab and Christian combatants fighting under the SDF umbrella. Despite this change, however, the SDF's leadership remained dominated by the YPG and its ranks decidedly Kurdish.⁶¹

In the summer of 2016, tensions mounted between the YPG and GoS-affiliated forces in Al-Hasakeh City, erupting in frequent clashes. The number of YPG and GoS checkpoints proliferated and became increasingly close in proximity, provoking tensions and occasional clashes. The newly-appointed leader of the NDF, Abdel Kader Hamo, reportedly permitted the kidnapping and extortion of Kurdish residents passing through NDF-controlled checkpoints. As a result, the YPG began detaining GoS-affiliated combatants. Most clashes between the YPG and GoS were limited to two to three day periods and often concluded in the exchange of detainees and/or abductees.⁶² However, intensive clashes in August 2016 lasted six days. The GoS responded by targeting YPG positions in Al-Hasakeh Governorate with airstrikes, marking the first instance of GoS aerial bombardment against the YPG.⁶³ The US-led Coalition subsequently imposed a de facto no fly-zone to prevent further airstrikes against the YPG, their ally in the fight against ISIL. The YPG subsequently wrested the Arab-majority southeastern and southwestern neighbourhoods from GoS control⁶⁴ and besieged GoS forces in Security Square.⁶⁵ The YPG subsequently agreed to a ceasefire in exchange for several concessions laid out in the Hmeimim Agreement, resulting in a de facto recognition of PYD control over the Al-Hasakeh City by the GoS and Russia.⁶⁶

By late 2016, the GoS had largely withdrawn from the northeast, leaving only an administrative footprint and a handful of security forces in Al-Hasakeh City and Al-Quamishli. This gave the PYD the space to expand and develop its governance project, leading notably to the establishment of the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria (DFNS) and the promulgation of a constitution.

Population impact: As of late June 2015, the UN estimated that ISIL has displaced 60,000 people from Al-Hasakeh City.⁶⁷ By early July 2015, the UN estimated that 120,000 people have been displaced from Al-Hasakeh City and the surrounding villages.⁶⁸ In late August 2019, an estimated 70,000 people were displaced from Al-Hasakeh City due to clashes between the YPG and GoS-aligned forces. The largest displacement reportedly occurred from the neighbourhoods of Salhiyeh, Al Mufti, Al Tala'e, Al Watani, Tal Hajar, and Al Kallasa. The majority of IDPs (an estimated 40,000) fled to the outer neighbourhoods of the city and the surrounding villages in the hopes of returning to their homes when the violence subsided. The remainder fled to other cities and villages in Al-Hasakeh Governorate, such as Amuda, Ras al-Ain, Darbasiyah, Tal Brak, Al-Quamishli, and Tal Tamer. Most stayed with family and friends, while others stayed in collective shelters.⁶⁹

JANUARY 2015

Intensive clashes erupt between GoS-aligned militias and the YPG in Al-Hasakeh City, generating large-scale displacement.⁷⁰

15 FEBRUARY 2015

Christians are kidnapped from al-Hasakeh City and its environs.

MARCH 2015

IDPs arrive in al-Hasakeh city from the vicinity of Tal Hamis, northeast of Hasakeh city and south of Qamishli, fleeing the parallel YPG and GoS offensives against the Islamic State.⁷¹

20 MARCH 2015

On the eve of Newroz festival, ISIL stages a double bombing in the Kurdish-majority neighbourhood of al-Mufti, killing an estimated 45 civilians.⁷²

30 MAY 2015

ISIL launches a counteroffensive on Al-Hasakeh City from Shaddadah.⁷³

4 JUNE 2015

ISIL reaches 500 metres of the city's southern entrance.⁷⁴

5 JUNE 2015

YPG and aligned forces join GoS forces at Mount Kawkab to repel ISIL from the city and its environs.⁷⁵

24-25 JULY 2015

ISIL launches a renewed offensive on Al-Hasakeh City and captures the southwestern neighbourhoods from GoS forces using VBEIDs and SVESTs.⁷⁶

28 JULY 2015

The YPG and GoS oust ISIL from Al Zouhour, the last remaining neighbourhood of the city under its control.⁷⁷

12 OCTOBER 2015

The establishment of the Syrian Democratic Forces is formally announced by a spokesperson in Al-Hasakeh City.⁷⁸

17 MARCH 2016

The Democratic Federation of Northern Syria is established.⁷⁹

MAY 2016

Clashes erupt between the Asayish and GoS security forces over monitoring of nationwide high school exams.

28 JUNE 2016

The Social Contract is approved and comes into force as the de facto constitution of the DFNS.⁸⁰

18 AUGUST 2016

The GoS targets Al-Hasakeh city with airstrikes as the NDF and YPG battle for control of the city.

19 AUGUST 2016

GoS fighter jets heading in the direction of Al-Hasakeh City are met by two F-22 Raptor jets that belong to the US Air Force.

21 AUGUST 2016

The GoS and YPG reach an agreement to cease hostilities following Russian mediation and GoS airstrikes come to a halt.⁸¹

23 AUGUST 2016

In spite of the ceasefire, the YPG continues to advance on the GoS-controlled areas of Al-Hasakeh City and gains control over several of the city's southeastern and southwestern neighbourhoods, gaining control of 90 percent of the city.⁸²

23 AUGUST 2016

With GoS forces confined to the Security Square and surrounded by the YPG, Russia and the YPG reach an agreement at Hmeimim Airbase that brings hostilities to a halt.⁸³

16 OCTOBER 2016

Jayez al-Musa is appointed Governor of Al-Hasakeh Governorate Council to oversee the implementation of the Hmeimim Agreement.⁸⁴

Phase 4: Consolidation of PYD control (2017)

Throughout 2017 and 2018, Al-Hasakeh City remained relatively stable, with no major clashes or other incidents of violence reported. The DFNS strove to consolidate its political authority in Al-Hasakeh City, often in a contentious fashion. The PYD systematically closed down KNC offices and arrested affiliated members due to the party's continued opposition to – and refusal to recognise – the DFNS. Many of the Self-Administration's policies with respect to conscription, education, polygamy, and taxation proved unpopular and exacerbated ethno-sectarian tensions. Residents occasionally organised small-scale protests to which the authorities responded with arrest campaigns. In 2017, the DFNS held komin, municipal, and regional elections, which were boycotted by several political parties and organisations opposed to the PYD. This elucidated the PYD's dominance over the political system as well as continued division within the Kurdish community.

Population impact: Beginning in spring 2017, a large influx of IDPs arrived in Al-Hasakeh Governorate, displaced by the parallel SDF and GoS offensives against ISIL in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor Governorates. These Arab IDPs were immediately viewed as a security risk by the Self-Administration. Most were subsequently sent to camps outside the city, such as Al-Hol and Areesha, and subjected to stringent security measures, including restrictions on their freedom of movement.⁸⁷

JANUARY 2017

Kurdish and Christian co-heads are appointed to lead the executive body of the federal system and draft electoral laws for forthcoming elections.⁸⁵

JULY 2017

The Syrian Democratic Council meets in Rimilan to set the dates for the forthcoming elections and renames the three 'cantons' to 'regions'.⁸⁶

22 SEPTEMBER 2017

Komin elections are held in Al-Hasakeh City and across the DFNS.⁸⁸

1 DECEMBER 2017

A second round of elections are held to elect municipal and regional representatives.⁸⁹

Towards a Decline of YPG Control (January 2018–Present)

From 2018 onwards, northeast Syria was marked by rising instability as the US and Turkey proved unable to reach an enduring solution surrounding the presence of the YPG along the Turkish border.⁹² In June 2018, the US and Turkey announced they reached an agreement on Menbij. The Menbij Roadmap stipulated that the YPG had to withdraw from the city and joint US-Turkish patrols had to start within 90 days.⁹³ However, three months later, the agreement had not been implemented. Turkey subsequently accused the US of stonewalling the agreement and escalated its rhetoric against the YPG. In October 2018, Turkish President Erdogan issued a “final warning” to those endangering Turkey’s borders, in reference to the YPG, and announced a shift in focus from Menbij to areas east of the Euphrates River. Two days later, Turkey shelled YPG positions east of the Euphrates River. Several days later, the US and Turkey began joint patrols on the outskirts of Menbij.

In December 2018, US President Trump announced that the US would be withdrawing from Syria within 30 days as ISIL has been defeated. The announcement elicited staunch domestic opposition across the political spectrum and from within the Trump administration itself – resulting notably in the resignation of the US Defence Secretary US envoy and the US Envoy to the Coalition to Defeat ISIS. Opponents deemed ISIL to be an ongoing threat, the withdrawal premature, and the sudden and unilateral decision to be a betrayal of US allies – such as the SDF and other allies that comprise the anti-ISIL Coalition.⁹⁴ Others considered the SDF to be a bulwark against Iran and other regional players, as well as ISIL’s revival. As a result, President Trump opted for a more gradual withdrawal. In the months that followed, the US military presence in Syria was reduced by half to approximately 2,000 troops. Throughout 2019, there was a noticeable increase in IED attacks by actors affiliated with Turkey, the GoS, and ISIL – including several high-profile attacks on US and SDF forces.⁹⁵ Meanwhile, Turkey continued to threaten military action east of the Euphrates River if the YPG did not withdraw from the Syrian-Turkish border. In May 2019, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that efforts were underway to establish a safe zone in northern Syria along the lines of the Menbij Roadmap. In August 2019, the US and Turkey met to discuss the “safe zone” and agreed to the creation of a joint operations centre in Turkey to coordinate its establishment. However, negotiations between the US and Turkey to establish a safe zone along the border failed to yield results due to multiple disagreements, including the size of the buffer zone and the status of Kurdish-majority cities along the border.⁹⁶

In October 2019, a bilateral agreement between Trump and Erdogan led to the sudden withdrawal of US troops from the proposed safe zone. The withdrawal of US troops gave Turkey the green light to launch an offensive against the YPG and impose the safe zone militarily. Three

days after Trump’s announcement of a US withdrawal, Turkey launched Operation Peace Spring against YPG forces throughout the northeast. Using cross-border artillery shelling and airstrikes, Turkey carved out the region from Tell Abiad in northern Ar-Raqqa Governorate to Ras Al Ein in northern Al-Hasakeh Governorate. This generated mass displacement towards Al-Hasakeh City and its environs. The US subsequently mediated a five-day ceasefire with Turkey, during which time the YPG was expected to withdraw from the 32-kilometre designated buffer zone. Hours before the ceasefire was set to elapse, Russia and Turkey reached an agreement on the contours and conditions of the “safe zone.”⁹⁷ In the Memorandum of Understanding, the two countries agreed to the establishment of a 30-kilometre deep and 440-kilometre along the Syrian-Turkish border. The SAA and Russian Military Police were to facilitate the withdrawal of the YPG from the zone, which would then be jointly patrolled by Russia and Turkey to a depth of 10 kilometres. Al-Quamishli City and the area carved out by the Turkish offensive were exempted from the patrols.⁹⁸

Following the implementation of the agreement, the Self-Administration incurred significant territorial losses. Of note, the territorial contiguity between Al-Quamishli – the de facto capital of the Self-Administration – and the other areas under its control was interrupted. Al-Hasakeh City remained under SA control, however, the very existence of the Self-Administration was put into doubt by these developments. With Russia now its sole guarantor against Turkey, the Self-Administration was forced to negotiate with the GoS. In December 2019, representatives of the GoS and the SA met in Al-Quamishli to negotiate the return of SA areas under GoS control (see city profile section 5, ‘Governance and stakeholder analysis’). As of January 2020, a settlement had not yet been reached and negotiations were ongoing.

Population impact: Operation Peace Spring generated mass displacement towards Al-Hasakeh City, with over 26,000 persons arriving in the city in October 2019.⁹⁹ Other sources reported that the number of IDPs reaches as high as 60,000 IDPs.¹⁰⁰ IDPs were hosted in the city by friends and family members, or in schools, mosques, and unfinished buildings converted into collective shelters.¹⁰¹ After military clashes subsided and the Russian-Turkish agreement was concluded, over 5,000 IDPs left Al-Hasakeh City to return to their areas of origin over the course of November 2019. However, the remaining 21,000 of IDPs displaced by the offensive remained in the city (see city profile section 3, ‘Demographics and population movement’).¹⁰²

CONTEXT TIMELINE

4 JUNE 2018

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu announce that a roadmap has been reached for Menbij.¹⁰³

3 SEPTEMBER 2018

Turkish President Erdogan states that the Menbij roadmap is being delayed and not properly implemented, implying the US is at fault.¹⁰⁴

6 SEPTEMBER 2018

The DFNS is renamed the Self-Administration of North and East Syria (SANES).¹⁰⁵

26 OCTOBER 2018

Turkish President Erdogan issues a "final warning" to those endangering Turkey's borders and announces a shift in focus from Menbij to areas east of the Euphrates River.¹⁰⁶

28 OCTOBER 2018

Turkey shells YPG positions east of the Euphrates River.¹⁰⁷

1 NOVEMBER 2018

Joint Turkish-American patrols begin on the outskirts of Menbij.¹⁰⁸

19 DECEMBER 2018

US President Trump declares the defeat of ISIL and the withdrawal of US troops from northeast Syria within 30 days.¹⁰⁹

20 DECEMBER 2018

US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis resigns in rebuke of Trump's decision to withdraw from Syria.¹¹⁰

21 DECEMBER 2018

Ilham Ahmed, the Kurdish co-chair of the SDC, warns that the SA may not be able to retain ISIL detainees amidst the dual threats of a Turkish invasion and ISIL resurgence.¹¹¹

23 DECEMBER 2018

The US envoy to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS Brett McGurk resigns, calling it "reckless" to consider ISIL defeated and withdraw US troops.¹¹²

31 MAY 2019

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announces that efforts are underway to create a "buffer zone" in northeast Syria.¹¹³

5-7 AUGUST 2019

US and Turkey meet in Ankara to discuss the "safe zone" in northeast Syria and agree to establish a joint operations centre in Turkey.¹¹⁴

6 OCTOBER 2019

US President Trump announces the withdrawal of US troops from the proposed "safe zone" along the Turkish-Syrian border.

9 OCTOBER 2019

Turkey launches 'Operation Peace Spring' to establish a "safe zone" using military means.¹¹⁵

13 OCTOBER 2019

US Defense Secretary Esper announces that President Trump has ordered the full withdrawal of US troops from Syria.¹¹⁶

17 OCTOBER 2019

US Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo meet with Turkish President Erdogan in Ankara to negotiate a 120-hour ceasefire.¹¹⁷

18 OCTOBER 2019

Shelling continues along the Turkish-Syrian border in spite of the shelling and President Erdogan threatens to resume the full-fledged offensive if the YPG has not withdrawn from the safe zone by the time the ceasefire lapses.¹¹⁸

21 OCTOBER 2019

US forces start to withdraw from military bases in Al-Hasakeh Governorate and relocate to northern Iraq.¹¹⁹

22 OCTOBER 2019

The ceasefire elapses and the Turkish Defence Ministry states there is "no need" for a renewed offensive.¹²⁰

31 OCTOBER 2019

A VBIED attack in the Salhiyeh neighborhood against the SDF injures one SDF fighter and two civilians.¹²¹

31 OCTOBER 2019

The spokesperson for the U.S. Operation Inherent Resolve, Colonel Miles Coggins, states that the Coalition is relocating its forces to Deir-ez-Zor Governorate as part of its continued partnership with the SDF "to defeat ISIS remnants, protect critical infrastructure, and deny ISIS access to revenue sources."¹²²

1 NOVEMBER 2019

Joint Turkish-Russian patrols begin in Al-Hasakeh Governorate along the Syrian-Turkish border near Darbassiyeh.¹²³

18 NOVEMBER 2019

Turkish President Erdogan declares that Turkey is ready to launch a new operation in the northeast as the terms of both the U.S. ceasefire and the October 22 MoU have not fully implemented, namely that the YPG has yet to fully withdraw 30 km south of the Turkish border.¹²⁴

7 DECEMBER 2019

Officials from the SANES and GoS meet to discuss the return of northeast Syria under the former's control.¹²⁵

9 JANUARY 2020

Following Iranian missile attacks on US bases in Iraq, American forces evacuate two military bases in Al-Hasakeh Governorate: one in Kharab Al-Jir and another near Shaddadi, east of Al-Hasakeh City.¹²⁶

19 JANUARY 2020

The Co-President of the Syrian Democratic Council (SA), Riyad Drar, announces that the Self-Administration is seeking to resume negotiations with the GoS.¹²⁷

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5. Governance and stakeholder analysis

Pre-conflict governance dynamics (pre-2011)

Prior to the conflict, Syria's Kurds were politically, culturally, and economically marginalised by the central government. The Kurdish language was forbidden in public spaces and Kurdish festivities, such as Nowruz, were banned.¹²⁸ Kurds were not appointed to high-level positions in the central government and confined to low-ranking administrative positions at the local-level. In 1962, the Syrian government revoked the citizenship of tens of thousands of Kurds in northeast Syria using the pretext that they were illegal immigrants from Turkey (ajaneb). This resulted in the political and economic disenfranchisement of these residents and their descendants. No longer citizens, they were unable to participate in elections, hold office, benefit from many services (such as food subsidies) or legally entitled to own land.¹²⁹ In the early 1970s, the state expropriated Kurdish lands under the guise of establishing "model state farms" in northeast Syria. In reality, the project was designed to create an "Arab belt" along the Turkish-Syrian border, a project first envisaged by the government in 1965.¹³⁰ Land was expropriated from their Kurdish owners on the pretext of land reform or for not being legal residents (for those whose citizenship had been revoked) without any compensation. Arab settlers from neighbouring governorates were then granted permission to farm these lands in an effort to alter the areas demographics and build patronage ties.¹³¹

In the late 1980s and 1990s, Hafez al-Assad undertook a series of reforms aimed at partially liberalising the economy in an attempt to address the state's fiscal crisis. Social welfare spending was cut and tax incentives for private enterprises were created, and state support for the agricultural sector shifted to other economic sectors. Agricultural subsidies decreased, land ownership was reconfigured, and "strategic crops" undermined diversification. When Bashar al-Assad came to power in 2000, urban economies continued to be prioritised over rural economies, and economic reforms were accelerated. Government subsidies and price ceilings on basic goods, housing, and other sectors were eliminated. However, wages did not keep pace with the rising costs of living, leading to a deterioration in living standards. As a result of these reforms, the Ba'ath Party's historic ties with rural, agriculture areas, such as Al-Hasakeh Governorate, were eroded, and socioeconomic decline accelerated.¹³² In 2006, Turkey launched the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) to construct dams, hydropower plants, and irrigation networks using water from the Euphrates and Tigris to boost domestic agricultural production. The subsequent depletion of water tables upstream in Turkey coincided with the 2008 drought¹³³ and the application of the free-trade agreement with Turkey.¹³⁴

This caused severe damage to the agricultural industry in Al-Hasakeh Governorate.¹³⁵ Several months later, Presidential Decree no. 49 led to a further reduction in agricultural production. The law restricted the purchase or sale of lands along the border areas, however in practice, the restrictions were extended to all of Al-Hasakeh Governorate. These restrictions reportedly only applied to Kurdish residents as part of a continued effort to increase Arab migration to the area.¹³⁶ In addition, the government forbade hundreds of Kurdish peasants from farming their lands along the border areas. These policies generated deep resentment against the central government among Kurds and non-Kurds alike. Moreover, revenues generated from the area's vast gas and oil reserves were transferred directly to Damascus, rather than being spent to counter economic decline and repair ailing local infrastructure, thereby adding to their indignation.¹³⁷

Against the backdrop of political, cultural, and economic disenfranchisement of Kurds, the Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat Party (PYD) was founded in 2003 by Saleh Muslim, a Syrian Kurd from Kobane.¹³⁸ Although affiliated with the militant political organisation, the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (PKK), the PYD's activities were limited to civil society activities prior to 2011. In 2007, the PYD first embraced the political model of 'democratic autonomy' that would constitute the foundation of the future Self-Administration. However, implementation was limited to highly organising community events given the highly centralised and restrictive political environment imposed by the GoS. An 11-member governing body, the Central Coordination Committee (CCC), was responsible for different thematic areas, including political, cultural, youth, and women's departments. The CCC centralised and coordinated the work of People's Local Committees, which organised events and initiatives in their respective communities.¹³⁹ These included organising Nowruz celebrations, commemorations of Abdullah Öcalan's arrest, and fundraising activities to support exiled PYD and PKK members in the Qandil mountains.¹⁴⁰ In 2009, the Government of Syria outlawed the PYD and passed a law sentencing members to six years in prison on the basis of "attempting to cut off part of Syrian territory to attach it to a foreign country."¹⁴¹ The organisation's founder and leader, Saleh Muslim, was sentenced to life imprisonment and the PYD's leadership went into exile in the Qandil mountains with the PKK.

Conflict governance dynamics (2011–2018)

As protests gained momentum throughout Syria, the government promulgated Law 107 or the 'Law of Local Administration' in August 2011 as a decentralisation measure designed to appease the protestors.¹⁴² The law gave local councils and municipalities greater financial and administrative independence. Of particular note, it devolved decision-making from the central government to elected local councils pertaining to service provision, education, healthcare, revenue management, and private investments.¹⁴³ The government also granted citizenship to stateless Kurdish citizens across Al-Hasakeh Governorate in an attempt to placate Kurdish protesters in Al-Hasakeh City and other Kurdish-majority areas of the governorate. Concomitantly, Kurdish political parties – such as the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and the Kurdish National Council (KNC) – discouraged their followers from taking part in demonstrations. The YPG went so far as to suppress anti-government protests in the Kurdish majority neighbourhoods of Al Mufti and Salhiyeh.¹⁴⁴ Later demonstrations organised by the PYD and KNC were pro-Kurdish rather than anti-government and focused on boosting the social and political standing of their respective parties, rather than displaying solidarity with protesters in other parts of the country.¹⁴⁵

As the GoS attempted to contain the growing insurgency elsewhere in Syria, its oversight over social and political mobilisation in NES decreased significantly from 2012 onwards. This enabled the exiled PYD leadership to return to Syria and for the PYD to expand its influence, notably through TEV-DEM, a network of political parties and civil society organisations aligned with the PYD.¹⁴⁶ Members of the KDP-aligned Syrian Kurdish National Council (KNC) and other political parties opposed to the PYD were excluded from the coalition.¹⁴⁷ In July 2012, the Syrian Arab Army and the security forces largely withdrew from Al-Hasakeh City and other areas across northeast Syria to combat the armed insurgency in Aleppo. The security and political vacuum generated by their withdrawal enabled the PYD to expand its control over security and governance in the city. The YPG further consolidated its control by disbanding other armed groups, while the PYD systematically detained political opponents.

The Interim Administration

In November 2013, the PYD announced the establishment of an 'Interim Administration' to preside over three administrative regions or cantons – Jazira, Kobane, and Afrin – in Rojava or western Kurdistan.¹⁴⁸ Al-Hasakeh City fell under the administrative control of the Jazira canton.¹⁴⁹ While each canton was to be governed by an elected Legislative Council, elections never took place at the canton-level. Instead, members of TEV-DEM were assigned a number of seats proportionate to the demographic that they represented within each canton.¹⁵⁰ The new system drew criticism from many political opponents of the PYD, such as the KNC. The KNC and the KRI criticised the PYD's domination of decision-making and its unilateral declaration of autonomy, in spite of the lack of consensus amongst Kurdish political parties.¹⁵¹ This system of loosely affiliated cantons continued under various names and iterations for several years.

The Democratic Federation of Northern Syria

On 17 March 2016, the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria (DFNS) was declared and the reference to Rojava was removed. The impetus behind a non-ethnic federal system was the PYD's exclusion from peace talks amidst Turkish opposition, the need to integrate the growing number of non-Kurdish majority areas, and its desire to maintain US military support to the SDF. Many overt references to Kurdish nationalism were removed and the dominant role of the PKK-affiliated YPG/PYD obscured through the development of an elaborate governance structure, in an attempt to appear representative of non-Kurdish groups and distance itself from the PKK, a designated terrorist group according to Turkey, the US, and the EU. The Syrian Democratic Council (SDC), the political wing of the SDF, played a leading role in the reform and redesign of governance structures. Comprised of Kurdish, Christian, and Arab representatives, the SDC offered the guise of multi-ethnic inclusivity and representativity, even as the PYD/YPG continued to dominate decision-making in the realms of governance and security. The DFNS' Founding Council subsequently elected a 31-member committee to draft a new social contract and design the structure of the new federal system. In June 2016, the final draft of the Social Contract was approved by the Constituent Assembly and came into force as the de facto constitution of the DFNS.¹⁵² One month later, intensive clashes between the GoS and the YPG culminated in the expansion of the latter's control over the city and major concessions from the GoS embodied by the Hmeimim Agreement. The agreement prescribed a ceasefire and the withdrawal of all military forces from the city.¹⁵³ The YPG was replaced by the Asayish, while the SAA was replaced by the NDF, police, and Intelligence Directorates. This resulted in a de facto recognition of PYD control over the Al-Hasakeh City by the GoS and Russia, as well as a truce that allowed for continued collaboration between the PYD and GoS around service provision in the city.

In the period that followed, the PYD continued to develop and expand its governance project in Al-Hasakeh City and the rest of the DFNS. In January 2017, Kurdish and Christian co-heads were appointed to lead the executive body of the federal system and draft electoral laws for forthcoming elections.¹⁵⁴ In July 2017, the SDC met in Rimilan to set the dates for the forthcoming elections and changed the three 'cantons' to 'regions' - the Jazira Region, the Afrin Region, and the Euphrates Region - to remove remaining administrative references to Abdullah Ocalan's ideology and incorporate the newly acquired territories of Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor. On 22 September 2017, komins elections were held across the DFNS, except in Menbij and Ar-Raqqa. In Al-Hasakeh City, komins (neighbourhood councils) were formed throughout the city, with the exception of the GoS-controlled Security Square. On 1 December 2017, a second round of elections took place to elect municipal and regional members. Federal elections to elect the Peoples' Congress and Peoples' Parliament scheduled for 19 January 2018 were postponed indefinitely.¹⁵⁵ Elected officials were drawn from PYD-aligned political parties and organisations, and the PYD and TEV-DEM continued to dominate decision-making at all levels of the government.

The Self-Administration of North and East Syria

In September 2018, the SDC met in Ain Issa and established the Self-Administration of North and East Syria (SANES), replacing the DFNS.¹⁵⁶ Based in Ain Issa, the SANES was established with the goal of integrating the recently captured areas of Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor into the federal administrative and legal structure.¹⁵⁷ Executive councils were established in Jazira, Kobani, Manbij, Raqqa, and Tabqa. In addition, a General Council, comprised of elected and appointed representatives from the seven administrative regions - Jazira, Kobani, Manbij, Raqqa, Tabqa, Tel Abyad, and Ain Eissa - was established with the aim of coordinating between them.¹⁵⁸

However, the General Council largely plays an administrative role focused on coordination and synchronisation and does not hold decision-making powers.¹⁵⁹ Consequently, these reforms have been structural, rather than political, leaving the dominance of the PYD over decision-making untouched. Multi-ethnic administrative bodies are a facade insofar as the political participation of Kurds and non-Kurds alike remains contingent on their adherence or acceptance of the PYD and the PYD continues to dominate decision-making at all levels.

Figure 5.1: Official emblem of the Self-Administration in its four official languages - Arabic, Kurdish, Syriac, and Turkmen.



Current governance dynamics (2019–Present)

Decision-making continues to be highly centralised in both SANES and GoS-controlled areas of the city, in spite of recent decentralisation measures enacted by both authorities. In spite of Law 107 (2011), urban planning, revenue management, and budgetary allocations continue to be determined by Damascus, rather than the local administration. In SANES areas, komins are promoted as the foundation of bottom-up, direct democracy, however they possess no budgetary powers, are subordinate to the Municipality and People's Council, and are unable to influence higher-level decision-making beyond the neighbourhood-level. Furthermore, political participation in both areas of the city remains heavily restricted. In GoS areas, many members of the local administration are appointed, such as the Governor, while “elected” officials continue to be subject to screening by the government, the Ba'th Party, and the security apparatus. In the most recent local council elections in September 2018, candidates were subject to screening and had to be nominated by the government to participate.¹⁶⁰ Twenty-five voting centres were set up in GoS-controlled areas of the city.¹⁶¹ However, voter turnout was extremely low as election results were widely perceived as having been predetermined.¹⁶² Voter turnout was extremely low as election results were widely perceived as having been predetermined.¹⁶³ Moreover, only residents registered on the civil registry were allowed to vote in Al-Hasakeh City elections, thereby excluding IDPs and other unregistered residents from participating. Thus, Al-Hasakeh City Local Council and Al-Hasakeh Governorate Council are comprised entirely of government and Ba'th Party loyalists.

Similarly, in SANES areas, officials within the regional and local administrations are appointed or elected from a handful of PYD-aligned political parties. Constituents with divergent political views from the PYD are excluded from participation in the administration. Political parties and civil society organisations must be vetted and approved by the Self-Administration. Those that operate without authorisation are subject to imprisonment. For example, in 2017 the PYD systematically closed down KNC offices and arrested affiliated members due to the party's continued opposition and refusal to recognise the DFNS. Consequently, many critics call the PYD the “Kurdish Ba'th Party” and argue that the Self-Administration is a mirror image of the Government of Syria. In addition, the PYD's policies, particularly with regards to education, conscription, and marriage, have elicited intense criticism and opposition to the Self-Administration (see ‘Conflict effects on existing social, tribal, and political cleavages’ under Context Timeline).

Fluctuating international support for the Self-Administration

Western military, humanitarian, and stabilisation assistance have helped the Self-Administration consolidate its state-like powers, gain local legitimacy, and garner international recognition. Since 2015, the US-led Coalition against ISIL has provided vital logistical and financial support to the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The SDF's demonstrated capacity to assure security has increased local support for the Self-Administration.¹⁶⁴ However, recent changes in US policy have culminated in rising instability in northeast Syria and placed the very existence of the Self-Administration at risk. In December 2018, President Trump's announced the US withdrawal from Syria, and subsequent reduction in the number of US troops by half, emboldened local and regional players that pose a threat to it – including Turkey, ISIL, and the GoS. Following the announcement, there was a noticeable increase in IED attacks by actors affiliated with Turkey, the GoS, and ISIL, including several high-profile attacks on US and SDF forces.¹⁶⁵ In addition, Turkey escalated its rhetoric threatening an offensive on SANES-controlled areas. On 6 October 2019, President Trump announced the withdrawal of US troops from the proposed “safe zone” along the Turkish-Syrian border, paving the way for a Turkish offensive days later. The Turkish ground and aerial offensive (‘Operation Peace Spring’) culminated in the SANES' loss of territory from Ras al-Ain to Tel Abyad, along the Syrian-Turkish border. In the ensuing chaos, hundreds of detainees affiliated with ISIL escaped from various prisons and detention camps across northeast Syria, and ISIL managed to carry out several bombings – including in Al-Hasakeh city.¹⁶⁶ On 12 October, ISIL claimed credit for a VBEID attack outside of a prison hosting ISIL detainees in southeast Al-Hasakeh City¹⁶⁷ and on 31 October, another VBEID attack occurred in the neighbourhood of Salhiyeh.¹⁶⁸

On 13 October, the US Defense Secretary announced that US troops would fully withdraw from Syria, leaving the SANES without a guarantor.¹⁶⁹ Consequently, Self-Administration officials turned to Russia and the GoS for protection against Turkey. On 15 October, the Russian Military Police and the Syrian Arab Army were deployed to SANES areas along the Turkish border and control lines with Turkish-backed forces. On 22 October, Russia and Turkey reached an agreement on a 30-kilometre deep and 440-kilometre wide “safe zone” along the border to be jointly patrolled by Turkey and Russia.¹⁷⁰ Although Al-Hasakeh City is excluded from the proposed buffer zone, the city will be influenced by the reconfiguration of power dynamics in the region, particularly in the case of an expanded GoS presence in the city. Rising local dissent, coupled with the existential threat posed by Turkey and its proxy forces, have cast increasing doubt over the sustainability of the PYD's governance project and increased the prospect of the GoS regaining control over the entirety of Al-Hasakeh City and other SANES-controlled areas (see ‘Reintegration of the Self-Administration’ below).

Substantial humanitarian and stabilisation funding to SANES-controlled areas have helped the Self-Administration improve service provision and strengthen their claim to governance (see *city profile section 15, '4W Analysis'*). However, in Al-Hasakeh City funding is relatively limited compared to other areas of NES, and the Self-Administration continues to depend on the Government of Syria for many essential services. This has boosted the GoS' claim to legitimacy as the sole

actor capable of providing services and has undermined the SANES' state-like authority. With the announced US withdrawal and political uncertainty surrounding the fate of the SA, international funding for development and humanitarian programming in northeast Syria is increasingly uncertain. A reduction in international funding would further increase the dependence of the Self-Administration on the GoS for service provision.

Reintegration of the Self-Administration:

In November 2019, the General Commander of the SDF Mazlum Abdi, announced two conditions for a settlement with the GoS: (1) the Self-Administration not be dissolved but integrated into the public administration and (2) the SDF maintain independence under the umbrella of the Syrian military.¹⁷¹ Both demands appear to have a degree of support from Russia, which is now the primary powerbroker between the GoS and SA. With regards to the first demand, it is noteworthy that Russian officials have expressed their openness to federalism in the past.¹⁷² The second demand also has support from Russia, which has repeatedly advocated for the integration of the SDF into the SAA.¹⁷³ Moreover, there is precedent for this: the Fifth Division in Dar'a Governorate. (The Fifth Division is comprised of former armed opposition groups that were incorporated under the SAA after the GoS regained control of southwest Syria in 2018. It reports directly to Russia and operates independently of the SAA's central command structure.¹⁷⁴) However, the GoS has actively sought to undermine the SDF, either to gain leverage in negotiations or to induce its dissolution. On 5 December, two days ahead of negotiations with the SA, the head of the National Security Office (GoS), Ali Mamlouk, met with Arab tribal leaders in Al-Quamshli. He discussed reconciliation and requested they "withdraw their sons from the ranks of the SDF" in exchange for the "necessary support" against the Self-Administration.¹⁷⁵ In addition, Russia reportedly began recruitment campaigns in December 2019 to establish a local military force in northeast Syria. In the first phase of its establishment, 400 soldiers will reportedly be recruited from the 'safe zone' in northern Al-Hasakeh Governorate. The force will reportedly guard Russian military bases and accompany Russian patrols in the 'safe zone'.¹⁷⁶ However, the size and role of the force could expand over time. The force could become a contender to the SDF and attract soldiers currently serving the SA. Indeed, recruits reportedly receive a monthly salary of 150,000 SYP,¹⁷⁷ which is significantly higher than what members of the SDF and other branches of the SA security forces earn.

While representatives of the SA and GoS have met in the past, the former are now in a position of relative disadvantage that requires them to negotiate with the latter. This is due to the fact that the SA has essentially lost the US as a guarantor and is now forced to rely on Russia to mediate a settlement with the GoS. On 7 December 2019, officials from the SA and GoS met to discuss the return of northeast Syria under the former's control. While no tangible outcomes were reached, the two parties reportedly agreed to reconvene in the future to prepare a proposal for reintegration to Damascus. Future meetings will reportedly focus on finding commonalities between the two governance structures. Decentralisation measures enshrined in the Local Administration Law (Law 107) will reportedly serve as a basis for discussion.¹⁷⁸ On 19 January 2020, the Co-President of the Syrian Democratic Council (SA), Riyad Drar, announced that the Self-Administration was seeking to resume negotiations with the GoS.¹⁷⁹ Amidst the continued stall in negotiations, Mazlum A'bdi announced his readiness to enter into negotiations with Turkey, adding that "gestures of goodwill" and "confidence-building [measures]" had been made vis-a-vis Ankara.¹⁸⁰ It is unclear whether this statement was genuine or merely a means of pressuring the GoS and Russia into resuming negotiations. However, as of January 2020, there were no indications that negotiations were underway with either Turkey or the GoS.

Sources and redistribution of revenue**Government of Syria**

In government-controlled areas, the budgets for Local Councils/Municipalities, Governorate Councils, and Ministries are determined in the government's Annual Fiscal Plan. The Annual Fiscal Plan is designed by the Planning and International Cooperation Commission,¹⁸¹ in coordination with Ministries. The budget is then assembled by the Ministry of Finance and submitted to the People's Council (parliament) and the President for approval. The entire process is highly centralised and takes place in Damascus, without the involvement of local governance entities, such as the Governorate Councils or the Local Councils/Municipalities.

Taxes and utility bills are collected by the Local Councils/Municipalities and then transferred to the national treasury, which is managed by the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Finance then redistributes these revenues, along with other state revenues, according to the budget for each government entity allocated under the Annual Fiscal Plan. For Local Councils/Municipalities, budgets are based on the number of residents according to the civil registry. However, it is unclear whether the budget allocation process is the same for Al-Hasakeh City given that only a small area of the city is under GoS control.

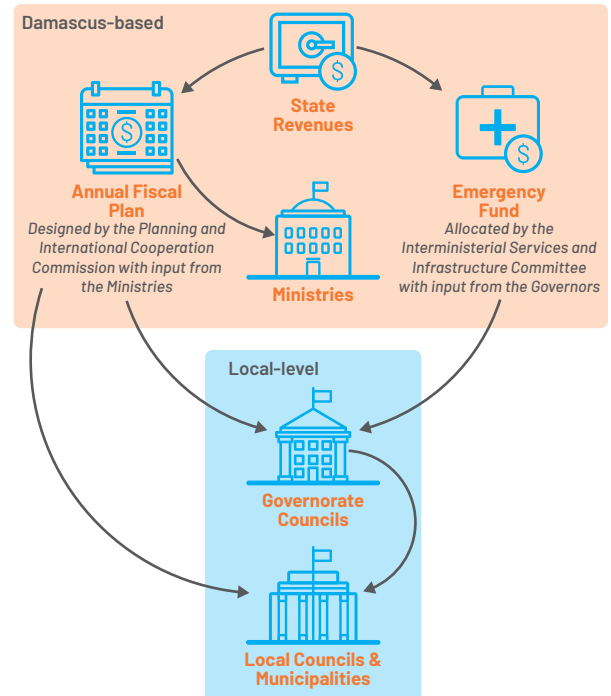
An additional source of potential funding – the Emergency Budget – is managed by the Prime Minister via the Damascus-based Interministerial Committees, which include the Services and Infrastructure Committee, the Resources and Energy Committee, the Economic Committee, and the Human Development Committee.¹⁸² The Services and Infrastructure Committee identifies gaps in service provision and allocates funds to the Ministries on a project-by-project basis. The Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (MoLAE) then directs those funds to the relevant Governorate Council and/or Local Council. While the Committee often consults with the Governors, Local Council officials are entirely excluded from the consultation and decision-making process. Consequently, allocations that are made from the Emergency Budget, like the Annual Fiscal Plan, are made based on highly centralised and politically-motivated decisions in Damascus. It is unclear to what extent Al-Hasakeh City is prioritised for funding, if at all.

Self-Administration

In SANES-controlled areas, taxes and revenues are collected and transferred from the local-level to the regional-level to the federal-level. At the local-level, municipal fines, fees, and taxes are collected by the People's Municipalities. These reportedly include taxes on small businesses and farmers. At the regional-level, the Financial Authority collects oil and gas revenues, customs tariffs on goods entering from the KRI, and profit taxes on large companies and traders, as well as taxes collected by the Municipalities.¹⁸³ The Financial Authority then transfers these revenues to the Agricultural and Economy Authority, which operates at both the federal and regional levels.¹⁸⁴

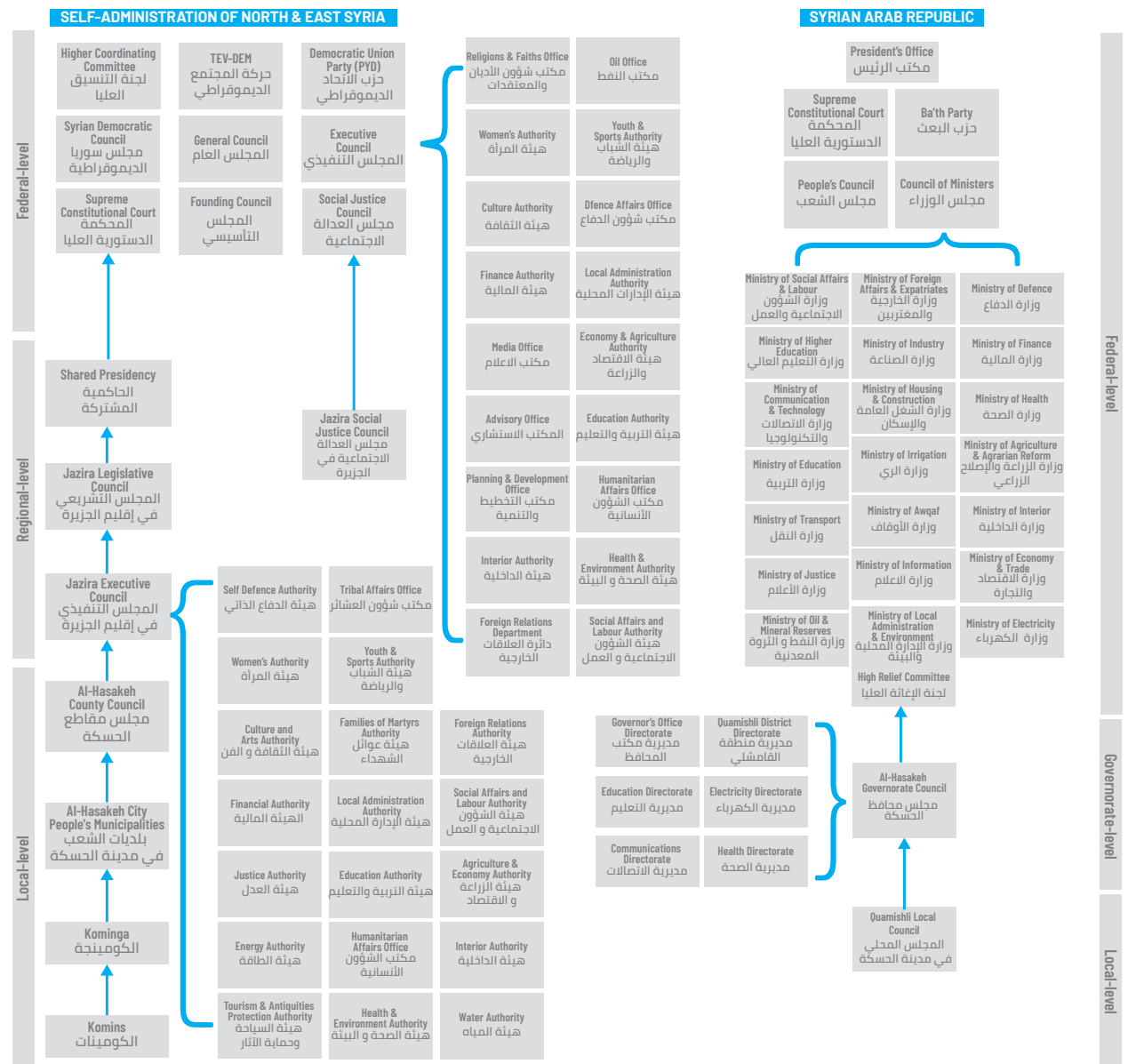
These revenues are subsequently redistributed based on the annual budget. The People's Municipalities draft a budget based on proposed projects for the year. The proposed budget(s) is then reviewed by the Executive Council and formally approved by the Legislative Council. In the case of unplanned spending, the Executive and Legislative Councils can allocate funding on a project-by-project basis. For example, in 2019, funding was allocated to support farmers who were affected by the fires.¹⁸⁵

Figure 5.2: Damascus-driven budget allocation process



Local and regional stakeholders

Figure 5.3: Governance Interface in al-Hasakeh City



GoS local governance actors

GoS governance institutions are concentrated in the Security Square and provide basic services to all residents living in GoS-controlled neighbourhoods across all ethno-sectarian affiliations, as well as to many residents from SANES-controlled areas of the city who come to the Security Square seeking specific services. These services include civil registration, schools, and telecommunications, among others.¹⁸⁶ The GoS has also continued to pay the salaries of many public servants and operate many government agencies responsible for service provision that are located in SANES-controlled neighbourhoods. The local administration is subject to the influence of state security and military actors, which has at times generated tensions between them.¹⁸⁷

Al-Hasakeh Governorate Council (HGC): The HGC is based in Al-Hasakeh City and is comprised of nine members, including the Governor.¹⁸⁸ Four of them are reportedly from Al-Hasakeh City, while the rest are from other areas of the governorate, with the exception of the Governor, who is originally from Hama. The Governor is appointed directly by the President and serves as the mouthpiece for Damascus. The HGC oversees municipal departments and ensures that measures taken by Al-Hasakeh Municipality fall in line with the national strategy set by Damascus.¹⁸⁹ In terms of programming, the HGC facilitates project approvals, conducts assessments, and coordinates with other government agencies, including the intelligence directorates.¹⁹⁰ Jayez al-Musa has been the Governor since October 2016.¹⁹¹

As a retired General, the Governor has strong ties to the Syrian Arab Army and coordinates closely with the security apparatus.¹⁹² However, competing crony networks between the Governor and the NDF have led to heightened tensions between them, culminating in his arrest by the NDF in Quamishli in June 2019. In addition to his functions as Governor, he coordinates with the Russia-controlled Hmeimim Air Base in Lattakia.¹⁹³ He was reportedly appointed upon Russia's request to oversee the implementation of the Hmeimim Agreement between the GoS and the PYD.¹⁹⁴ Indeed, his appointment in October 2016 came shortly after the agreement was reached in August 2016.

Al-Hasakeh City Local Council: The Local Council is comprised of 12 members, including the Mayor, Basem al-Afin.¹⁹⁵ It is responsible for civil registration and service provision in Al-Hasakeh City.¹⁹⁶ The council is a key interlocutor for humanitarian and development actors in the city as it approves, monitors, and implements projects.

Mukhtars: Mukhtars are appointed by the GoS to represent their neighbourhoods. They serve as the interface between residents and the local administration. For example, many documents, such as birth certificates, must be certified and stamped by the mukhtar. Although they are appointed by the GoS, mukhtars are not government employees. As they do not receive a government salary, they charge residents fees for their services.¹⁹⁷

SANES local governance actors

SANES governance bodies are present in SANES-controlled neighbourhoods of the city. While many governance entities exist at the local-level, decision-making remains highly centralised and officials are partisans of TEV-DEM. Moreover, the SANES is partially reliant on the GoS for service provision, both indirectly as the GoS pays public servant salaries and directly for certain services. For example, the SANES' Energy and Water Authorities have offices in the city for the sole purpose of coordinating with the GoS. Despite extensive coordination between the SANES and the GoS, several neighbourhoods bordering control lines have been neglected due to lack of clarity surrounding administrative boundaries. The GoS and SANES have attributed responsibility to each other, leading to unresolved issues in service provision.¹⁹⁸

TEV-DEM: TEV-DEM or 'the Movement for a Democratic Society' is a network of political parties and civil society organisations aligned with the PYD. Political parties included the PYD, the Syriac Union Party, the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Peace Party, and the Kurdistan Liberal Union Party. TEV-DEM officials are represented at all levels of the government.¹⁹⁹

Shared Presidency: Based in Rimlan, the Shared Presidency is currently held by Haifa al-Arbo (Kurdish) and Hamidi al-Jarba (Arab). However, their role is largely symbolic as the Executive Council holds de facto decision-making powers in the Jazira region.²⁰⁰

Jazira Social Justice Council: Based in Quamishli, the Jazira Social Justice Council reports to the federal-level Social Justice Council. It is subdivided into three main entities: the Justice, the Women's House, and the Lawyer's Union. The Justice oversees the legality of laws enacted by the Legislative Council and the application of federal laws at the regional-level. The Women's House oversees that laws are upheld pertaining to women and their participation in the political system. The Lawyer's Union issues licenses for lawyers and manages other aspects of the legal profession.²⁰¹

Jazira Legislative Council: Based in Amuda, the Legislative Council is comprised of 101 members from all cities and ethno-sectarian groups within the Jazira region drawn from political parties and civil society organisations.²⁰² While the Social Contract states that the Legislative Councils are to be elected, elections at the regional-level have yet to take place. Instead, PYD-aligned parties put forth candidates and are allocated a certain number of seats according to the demographic that they represent within the region.²⁰³ The Legislative Council theoretically oversees the Executive Council as the budget holder and issues formal approval for projects. However, in reality the Executive Council is the most powerful body at the regional-level. The Legislative Council appoints members of non-elected bodies, such as the Executive Council and County Council.²⁰⁴

Jazira Executive Council: Based in Quamishli, the Executive Council is responsible for policy implementation and service provision in the Jazira region via various 'authorities.' These authorities are the equivalent of directorates at the governorate-level for the Government of Syria. Many of these authorities – such as the Local Administration Authority, Education Authority, Health & Environment Authority, Agriculture & Economy Authority, and Energy Authority – report to both the Jazira Executive Council and the Founding Council, alternating between Quamishli – where Jazira Executive Council is based – and Ein Aissa – the administrative capital of the Self-Administration. This reflects a blurring of administrative and reporting lines between the federal and regional levels. The Executive Council also has an office in Al-Hasakeh City that is responsible for coordination and communication.²⁰⁵

Al-Hasakeh City People's Municipalities: The People's Municipalities are responsible for service provision and facilitating the distribution of fuel and other forms of assistance in SANES-controlled neighbourhoods of the city. The Municipalities are required to obtain approval from the Legislative Council on most matters, including taking loans, modifying taxes, implementing fees on services, and undertaking any projects funded by international actors.²⁰⁶ The Municipalities report that they facilitate local participation by holding public consultations every 5-10 days about municipal activities and every month about city planning, as well as organising town hall meetings with shop owners and entrepreneurs.²⁰⁷ Each Municipality has multiple departments, including: the Diwan Office, Financial Office, Technical Office, Police Office, Generators and Fuel Office, Monitoring Office, Health Office, Parks Office, Communications Office, and Cleanliness Office.²⁰⁸ In Al-Hasakeh City, there are three People's Municipalities. Each one is responsible for a different sub-district: the western sub-district, the eastern sub-district, and the southern sub-district. The co-presidents of the People's Municipality of the Southern Sub-district are Khaled Khalif (an Arab male) and Noura Musiqli (a Syrian Christian female). The co-presidents of the People's Municipality of the Western Sub-district are Fayan Shirwan (a Kurdish female) and Bashar Ahmad (an Arab male). The president of the People's Municipality of the Eastern Sub-district is Ma'moun al-Hassan.²⁰⁹

Komins: The lowest and most localised level of governance within the SANES, komins are present in every SANES-controlled neighbourhood of the city. They are comprised of 8 to 14 members depending on the neighbourhood's population size. These members are divided into six main committees: Security, Reconciliation, Finance, Women, Economy, Health. Some Komins also have a Sports Committee and a Culture and Art Committee, however, these are secondary. Komins are responsible for the coordination and distribution of basic services, supplies and other forms of aid. Komins compile and submit beneficiary lists to Al-Hasakeh City Municipality²¹⁰ and organise the distribution of certificates for subsidised bread and fuel to approved beneficiaries.²¹¹ They also reportedly exercise a degree of decision-making over local infrastructure projects and economic activities.²¹² Komins hold meetings that are open to all the neighbourhood's residents. However, they are perceived by many residents to be ineffective and partisan, and marked by low participation rates.²¹³ While the SANES has labeled the komins as the foundation of bottom-up direct democracy, in reality komins possess no budgetary powers, are subordinate to the Municipality, and are unable to influence higher-level decision-making past the neighbourhood-level.

GoS military & security actors

GoS military/security actors and aligned militias are responsible for providing security in the GoS-controlled Security Square. Currently, militias jointly provide security for GoS institutions located in the Security Square. These militias operate with a large degree of autonomy and are able to freely engage in rent-seeking behaviour, which has generated competition between them (as well as between them and government officials) and at times culminated in open clashes. GoS security/military forces are majority Arab.²¹⁴

Military Intelligence Directorate (MID): Although officially under the purview of the Syrian Ministry of Defence, the MID reports directly to the National Security Bureau and President Assad's Chief Security Advisor. While the MID's role historically was confined to intelligence-gathering on military entities, it has expanded to include a direct military role via the establishment of paramilitary forces.²¹⁵ In Al-Hasakeh City, the MID controls several checkpoints and conducts patrols within the Security Square. It also oversees several NDF militias in the city.²¹⁶

Air Force Intelligence Directorate (AFID): Like the MID, the AFID reports directly to the National Security Bureau and President Assad's Chief Security Advisor, even though it is officially under the purview of the Syrian Ministry of Defence. While the AFID's role historically was confined to protecting Syrian military assets, it now plays a direct military role via the establishment of paramilitary forces. In Al-Hasakeh City, the AFID is represented by NDF militias in the city.²¹⁷

General Intelligence Directorate (GID): While officially under the purview of the Syrian Ministry of Interior, the GID reports directly to the National Security Bureau and President Assad's Chief Security Advisor. The GID conducts intelligence-gathering on domestic and foreign actors. At the onset of the conflict, it was instrumental in suppressing demonstrations and arresting protestors. Currently, the GID is the primary interlocutor with the SA with regards to security and other areas of coordination.²¹⁸

Political Security Directorate (PSD): Like the GID, the AFID reports directly to the National Security Bureau and President Assad's Chief Security Advisor, even though it is officially under the purview of the Syrian Ministry of Interior. The PSD's role includes monitoring government institutions, political parties, universities, hotels, and mass; as a result, its intelligence network is the most extensive in Syria. The PSD was also instrumental in suppressing demonstrations at the onset of the conflict. However, due to the small territory it is restricted to within the city, its activities are reportedly limited.²¹⁹

National Defence Forces: Founded in 2012, the NDF is a constellation of pro-government militias across government-controlled areas of the country.²²⁰ In Al-Hasakeh City, the NDF is comprised of multiple militias that report to different branches of the security forces, including the MID and the AFID.²²¹ The NDF have repeatedly engaged in clashes with the YPG, and currently serve as the primary GoS force in the city.

Ba'th Brigades: The Ba'th Brigades is a pro-GoS militia that is affiliated with the Ba'th Party and operates alongside the NDF.

Nabhan al-Nabhan Militia: Led by Nabhan al-Nabhan, the militia falls under the umbrella of the NDF. It is comprised of approximately 100 fighters drawn from the Arab Jabour tribe, who reportedly receive an average salary of 25,000 SYP per month.²²² At the beginning of the uprising, the militia was involved in suppressing protests in the Ghweiran neighbourhood.²²³

Mosallat al-Barak Militia: Led by Mosallat al-Barak, the former commander of the Nabhan al-Nabhan Militia and a member of the Mahshoush family, the militia is comprised of approximately 50 fighters from the Arab Jabour tribe.²²⁴ The fighters' salaries are reportedly funded by al-Barak's pre-conflict smuggling operations, which involved smuggling tobacco and livestock from Iraq into Syria.²²⁵ The militia falls under the umbrella of the NDF.

Sotero: The GoS-affiliated Sotero is a Christian militia founded by the Syrian Union Party. It came into existence several months after the establishment of the SANES-affiliated Sotero in 2013. It was reportedly created to appease Christians aligned with the GoS and protect those residing in government-controlled areas of the city, although it claims neutrality.²²⁶ It reportedly receives training from the NDF and financial support from the GoS, and reportedly operates independently of the SANES-affiliated Sotero.²²⁷

SANES military & security actors

The ability of the SANES to assure the security of the areas it controls, notably vis-a-vis ISIL, are central to its domestic and international legitimacy and to securing the minimum conditions for its governance project to grow. Unlike security/military forces in GoS areas, its forces are centralised and disciplined.²²⁸ SANES military/security forces are majority Kurdish, but include a growing number of Arabs and other minority groups.²²⁹

People's Protection Units (YPG): The YPG is the armed branch of the PYD and was established in 2011 to defend Kurdish majority-neighbourhoods and regions of Syria. From 2012 onwards, the YPG became an offensive military force as it began to wrest territory from armed opposition groups, the GoS, and eventually ISIL. Following the establishment of the Asayish in 2013, the YPG ceased to be a defensive force and ceded control of major cities to the former, and concentrated their forces along the borders of SANES-controlled areas and frontlines (with ISIL at the time). While they maintain offices in Al-Hasakeh City, the YPG only intervene in the case of armed clashes with GoS-aligned forces. While most of its commanders are cadre members – professional soldiers trained in PKK camps in the Qandil Mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan – the majority of its soldiers are Syrian Kurdish trained within Syria, with a growing number of Arab recruits. The YPJ or the 'Women's Protection Units' is the female version of the YPG. As of 2017, YPG members with a family support reportedly received a monthly stipend of 4,000-5,000 SYP.²³⁰

Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF): In 2016, the SDF was institutionalised as the SANES' central military force in place of the YPG, although the YPG remained the dominant force within it. As of January 2017, the SDF counted 50,000 fighters, including 23,000 Arab fighters.²³¹

Self-Defence Duty Forces (HXP): The HXP were established in July 2014 to defend their neighbourhoods, following the introduction of mandatory self-defence duty. According to the Duty of Self-Defence Law, all males aged between 18 and 30 are required to serve for one year under the HXP or the YPG. Exceptions are made for those who have family members in the YPG, SDF, or Asayish, or whose family members had been killed serving the PKK. While HXP conscripts are supposed to serve in their communities, unless they voluntarily decide to join the YPG, there are accounts of them being sent to the front lines during the campaign against ISIL.²³² As of 2017, HXP conscripts reportedly received 25,000 SYP per month. The HXP report to the Self-Defence Authority.²³³

Asayish: Established in July 2013 by the PYD, the Asayish are the SANES' police force and responsible for security within major cities, although they have served as backup troops for the YPG, most recently during Operation Peace Spring.²³⁴ The Asayish also upholds conscription laws and arrests evaders at checkpoints or in house raids, which has made it unpopular amongst Kurdish and Arab communities alike.²³⁵ The Asayish are reportedly divided into 26 subdivisions – including the Checkpoints Administration, the Anti-Terror Forces (HAT), Intelligence Directorate, Organized Crime Directorate, and Traffic Directorate – and report to the Interior Authority. As of early 2017, the Asayish counted 15,000 members, however, this number is likely significantly higher due to the SANES' significant territorial expansion into Ar-Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor governorates that has since taken place. In the Jazira region, half of the Asayish forces are reportedly Arab.²³⁶ The Asayish forces in Al-Hasakeh City include members of all ethno-sectarian groups and genders.²³⁷ The Asayish has been accused of PYD partisanship due its establishment by the PYD, policing of demonstrations, and arrests of opposition activists. As of 2017, Asayish members received 40,000 SYP.²³⁸

Sotero: The Sotero is a Christian militia established by the Syriac Union Party to defend Christians against the growing number of attacks by ISIL and other extremist groups. First established in Qahtaniya, the Sotero established a branch in Al-Hasakeh City to protect Christian residents. While the militia has the same name as its counterpart in GoS-controlled areas of the city, it is a different militia with a separate command structure.²³⁹ It coordinates with the Asayish in SANES-controlled areas of the city. While the militia has the same name as its counterpart in GoS-controlled areas of the city, it is a different militia with a separate command structure.²⁴⁰

Civil Defence Forces (HPC): The HPC are armed civilian guards established in 2014 to defend their neighbourhoods following the introduction of mandatory 'self-defence duty.' While the HPC coordinate with the HXP, they fall under the command of the Asayish.²⁴¹ The HPC regularly man checkpoints when the Asayish are needed elsewhere.²⁴² Members of the HPC do not receive a salary or other type of financial support.

Civil society actors

Across the city, civil society organisations are required to obtain registration and are subject to the surveillance of the SA and/or GoS. Others are directly affiliated with political parties or governmental entities. Public protests and gathering are required to obtain permission from the local authorities beforehand. Despite these challenges, there exists an array of civil society organisations in Al-Hasakeh City. Many of them have helped to bridge the gap in service delivery within the city.

Prominent families, clans, and tribes: Kurds occupy the highest ranks of the Self-Administration's governance entities and security forces. Nonetheless, several Arab tribes enjoy considerable political and economic influence within SANES-controlled areas of the city by virtue of their political or military connections to the Self Administration. The Arab Shammar tribe is particularly prominent as many of its members hold high-ranking positions within the city's administration and the Jazira region more broadly. The head of the tribe, Hamidi al-Jarba, is one of the co-presidents of Jazira region's Shared Presidency.²⁴³ Many members of the Arab esh-Sharabiya tribe are part of the SDF and the Asayish, and several members of the Arab al-Akidat tribe are represented in the local administration. By contrast, members of the al-Jabour tribe are among the strongest opponents of the SANES and have close connections to the Government of Syria.

Media: In SANES-controlled areas, media organisations are monitored and regulated by a press council.²⁴⁴ Media organisations are required to obtain permission to report from within the SANES and reporting from the front lines requires an agreement from the YPG or SDF. Regulations are particularly stringent in the Jazira region, where the local authorities are authorised to issue fines and revoke licenses of media organisations that do not comply. In 2015, the opposition-affiliated Orient TV and KDP-affiliated Rudaw were temporarily banned and their reporters physically expelled from Syria. Most media organisations are affiliated with the PYD, such as the PYD-aligned Rohani and Rojava TV, although a handful of independent media organisations do exist. Welat FM is an independent radio station that broadcasts in Al-Hasakeh Governorate and Buyerpress is an independent newspaper that operates across northern Syria. Other independent media organisations include ARA News and ARTA FM, which are funded by Western donors. Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites represent important platforms for sharing and disseminating news, especially given that the SANES or GoS are unable to regulate content.









Syndicates: There are a host of syndicates with offices in the city that are reportedly active, including for engineers, lawyers, teachers, writers, labourers, artisans, and doctors.²⁴⁵ Most if not all are reportedly associated with the GoS.²⁴⁶

Youth organisations: Many youth organisations active in the city are affiliated with political parties. The Ba'th Youth Organisation is connected to the Ba'th Party. The Revolution's Youth Union is affiliated with the PYD. The Democratic Syria Youth Council is affiliated with the Syrian Democratic Forces.²⁴⁷



UN, INGOs, NNGOs, and CSOs: International and national NGOs must register with the governmental authority in control of the neighbourhood in question. To operate in SANES-controlled neighbourhoods, NGOs must register with the Jazira Executive Council's Humanitarian Affairs Office. To operate in GoS-controlled neighbourhoods, NGOs must register with the Damascus-based Ministry of Local Administration & Environment (MoLAE). There are a variety of UN agencies, INGOs, and NNGOs active in the city in both the GoS and SANES-controlled areas of the city. There are also a host of faith-based organisations active in the city. These include the Assyrian Women's Association, the Centre of the Patriarch Saint Ignatius Zakka I Ayas, which is associated with the Syriac Orthodox Church, and the Centre of Saint Assia al-Hakim, which is associated with the Assyrian Church of the East. The latter provides humanitarian assistance with funding from UNFPA.²⁴⁸ (See '4W Analysis' section for more information).

Map 5.1: Operational status of government assets















SANES**Governance assets**









-  Electricity Institution
-  Financial Authority
-  Jazira Executive Council Office
-  People's Municipality of the Eastern Sub-district
-  People's Municipality of the Southern Sub-district
-  People's Municipality of the Western Sub-district
-  Seeds Centre
-  Seeds Institution

Security assets





-  Asayish Station
-  Syrian Democratic Forces Centre

GoS**Governance assets**

-  Agriculture Institution
-  Agriculture and Agrarian Reform Directorate
-  Al-Hasakeh City Local Council
-  Al-Hasakeh District Directorate
-  Al-Hasakeh Governorate Council
-  Awqaf Directorate
-  Ba'th Arab Socialist Party
-  Ba'th Youth Organisation
-  Chamber of Agriculture
-  Chamber of Commerce and Industry
-  Civil Records Administration
-  Communications Directorates
-  Customs Directorate
-  Education Directorate

-  Examinations Department
-  Finance Directorate
-  Health Directorates
-  Immigration and Passport Department
-  Oil Fields Directorate
-  Palace of Justice
-  Real Estate Directorate
-  SADCOP

Security assets

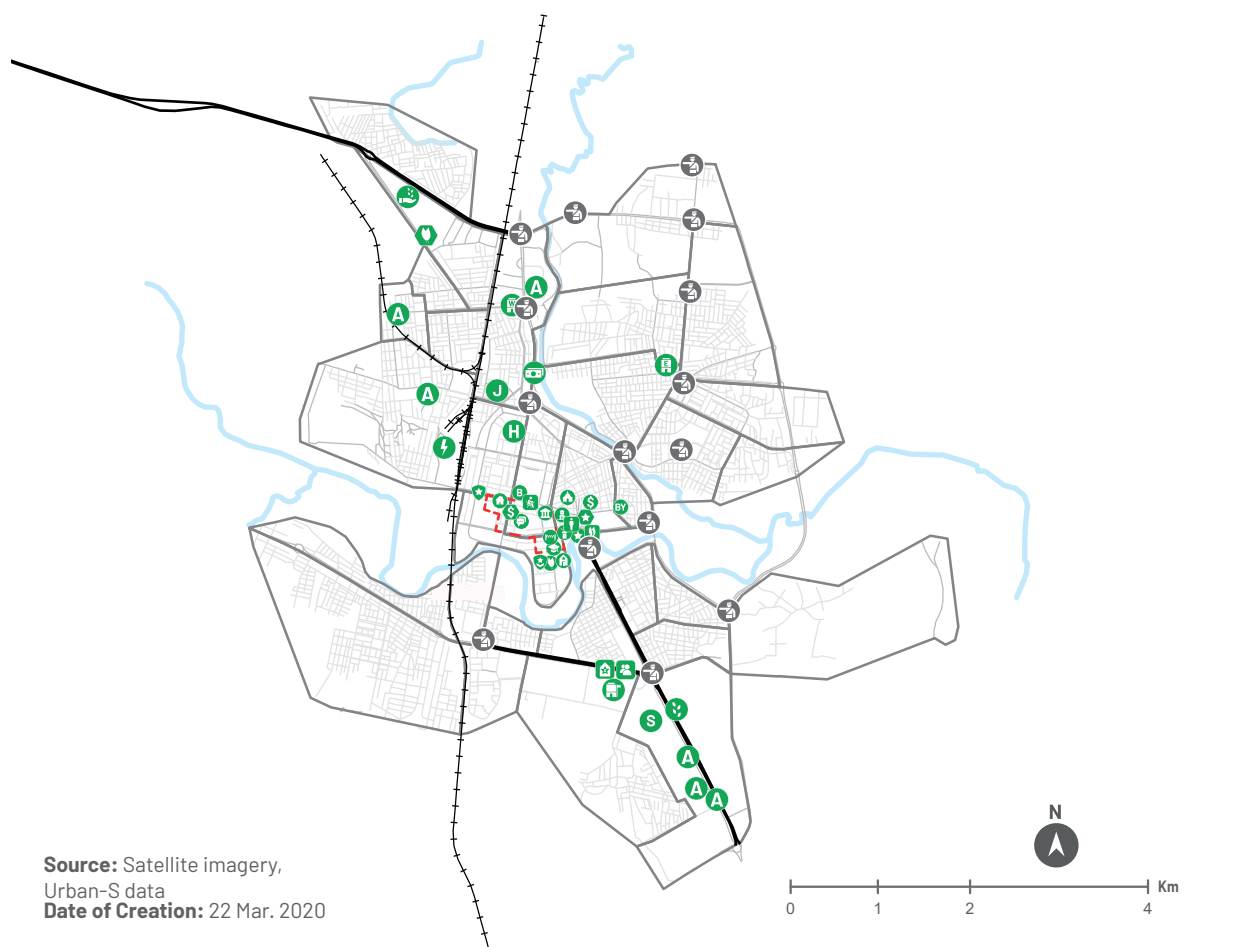
-  Criminal Security Branch
-  National Defence Forces
-  Police station
-  Checkpoints

Operational Status

-  Operational
-  Non Operational

Security Square (GoS control)

-  Railway
-  Street
-  Primary roads
-  Neighbourhood boundaries



Regional actors

Al-Hasakeh City holds strategic importance due to its proximity to the Turkish and Iraqi borders. The city and the governorate as a whole have been at the intersection of a multitude of competing interests throughout the duration of the conflict. With the majority of Syrian territory now under GoS control, regional players have increasingly set their sights on northeast Syria.

GoS (Damascus): Over the course of the war, the GoS maintained a relationship with the SANES to maintain a foothold in northern Syria, rather than lose further territory. Al-Hasakeh City holds particular importance for the GoS since it is the administrative capital of the governorate. Over the short-term, the GoS seeks to retain an administrative presence in Al-Hasakeh City to remind residents of their continued dependence on the Syrian state for basic services and undermine the legitimacy of the Kurdish experiment in governance. It also seeks to maintain a symbiotic relationship with the SANES to continue benefiting from cross-line trade and resource-sharing. To note, the GoS depends on the procurement of wheat, barley, and other essential crops grown in SANES-administered areas of northeast Syria. Gas and oil reserves (as well as water resources) are predominantly located in SANES-administered areas, while refineries are concentrated in GoS areas. Over the long-term, the GoS seeks to bring Al-Hasakeh City and the rest of the northeast under Damascus' full control, via negotiations if possible or an outright offensive if necessary. It is unlikely the GoS will concede federal autonomy to the SANES – particularly since the latter has lost significant bargaining power with its loss of its US guarantor. Instead, the GoS is likely to make minor concessions. For example, Damascus may decentralise and concede certain localised governance functions, such as local security and service provision, in alignment with Decree 107.²⁴⁹ SANES governance and military structures would likely be dissolved or co-opted. For example, the YPG could be integrated into the NDF or SAA and the PYD co-opted into a closed party system. Damascus' negotiations with the SANES could also be leveraged against Turkey to extract territorial concessions in the northwest and curb Turkish funding for opposition groups.

Russia: Russia aims to mediate a political settlement between the GoS and the SANES with the ultimate goal of restoring the latter's control across northeast Syria and gaining access to its lucrative gas and oil resources. Russia will likely leverage the threat of a renewed Turkish offensive to induce the SA into accepting a settlement with the GoS.

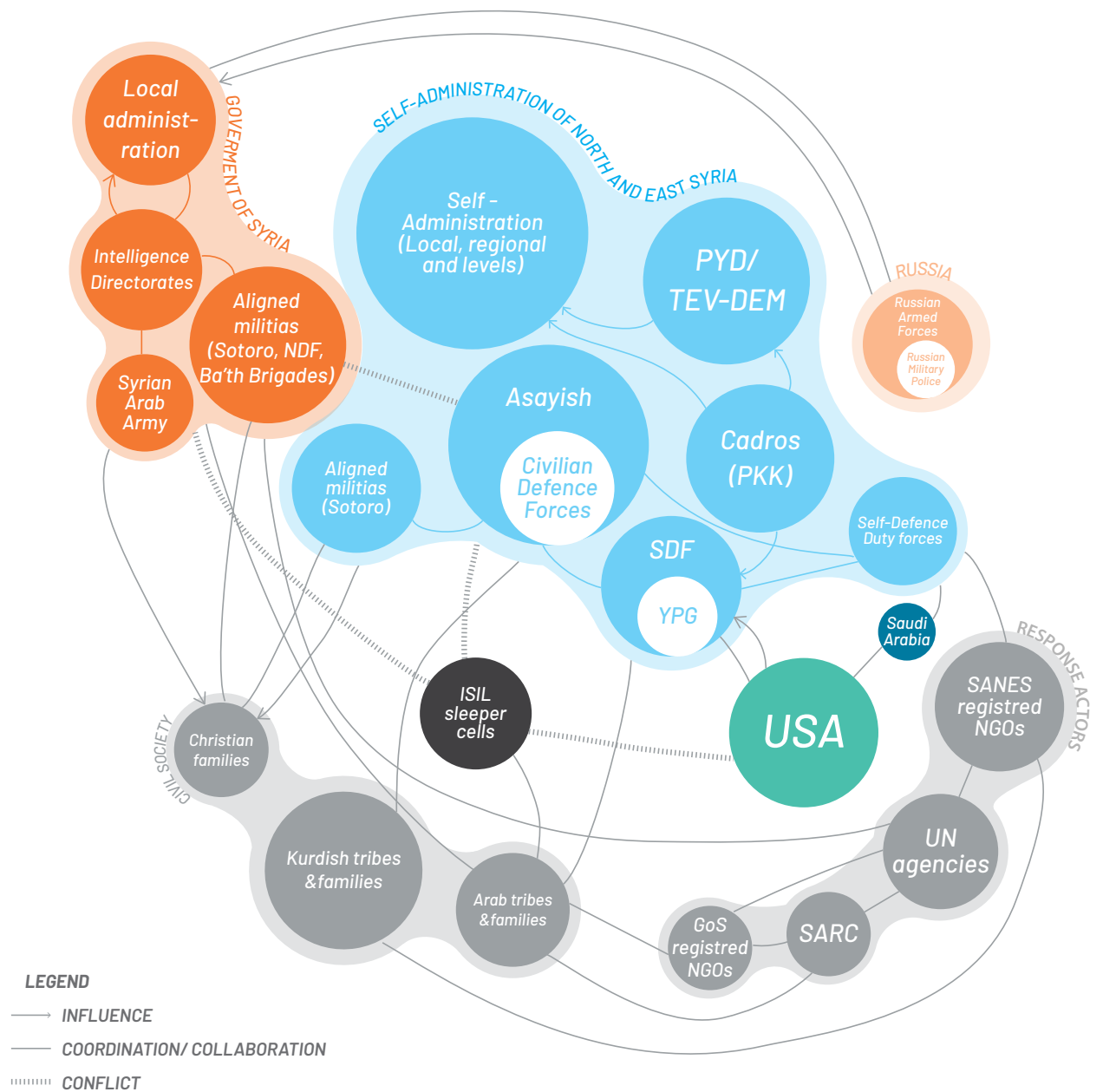
Iran: Iran seeks to curb Turkish territorial expansion, facilitate a return of GoS control over northeast Syria, and extinguish the autonomy enjoyed by Syrian Kurds as it has strengthened the separatist aspirations of Iranian Kurds. As a result, Iran welcomed the Russian-Turkish agreement that reaffirmed the Adana Agreement, prevented unilateral Turkish control over the buffer zone area, and curtailed the SANES' territorial control. To note, Turkey's renewed commitment to the Adana Agreement represents a de facto recognition of the Syrian government and an important step towards restoring formal diplomatic relations between the two countries.²⁵⁰ In addition, Iran seeks to deny Saudi Arabia from securing a foothold in northeast Syria at its expense, and consolidate its control over the Syrian-Iraqi border. Were GoS control restored in northeast Syria, Iran could expand its control over the border and secure the land corridor it controls spanning from Iraq to Lebanon. This land corridor serves as a vital military supply route for the proxies it backs in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, and represents a threat to Israel.

Turkey: Turkey fears that the SANES could strengthen the PKK insurgency in Turkey both ideologically and militarily. Turkey fears that the Kurdish autonomy project in Syria will embolden the Kurdish separatist movement in Turkey and eventually become a springboard for cross-border attacks.²⁵¹ Most of all, it fears that the emergence of a Kurdish state in Syria (or elsewhere) could facilitate the emergence of a Greater Kurdistan that includes southeast Turkey. As a result, Turkey has sought to undermine social, political, economic, and military ties between Turkish and Syrian Kurds first by constructing a border wall and then through the creation of a buffer zone. Specifically, it seeks to interrupt supply and communication lines between the PKK in Turkey and the PKK-affiliated YPG in Syria, and reduce the total amount of territory controlled by the SANES with the ultimate goal of eliminating the Kurdish autonomy project in northeast Syria.

USA: US foreign policy in Syria and the northeast more specifically has been in constant flux due to competing views within the US government. In December 2018, President Trump ordered a complete withdrawal of the approximately 2,000 US troops in Syria. However, amidst vocal opposition from within his own administration, the defence establishment, and the international community, President Trump settled for a partial withdrawal of 1,000 troops. Continued opposition to a full withdrawal in October 2019 led to a partial reduction in the number of troops. As of November 2019, 500 US troops remained in Syria “only for the oil [fields]” under the control of the SANES and prevent them from falling into the hands of ISIL and other regional players.²⁵² US troops are also present at at-Tanf, in eastern rural Homs, to counter ISIL and Iranian influence.²⁵³ To note, in late November, the US military resumed military operations against ISIL in Syria.²⁵⁴

Saudi Arabia: In recent years, Saudi Arabia has provided significant military and stabilisation assistance to the Self-Administration.²⁵⁵ Saudi Arabia’s support is motivated by its efforts to stem Iranian and Turkish influence in Syria and undermine them domestically. To note, both Turkey and Iran host Kurdish populations and the autonomy enjoyed by Syrian Kurds has emboldened them to make political claims of their own.²⁵⁶

ISIL: Under ISIL, Al-Hasakeh Governorate connected the territories under its control in northern Syria and northern Iraq, thereby serving as an important passageway for fighters, arms, and goods. In June 2015, ISIL reached the outskirts of Al-Hasakeh City, but was subsequently repelled by a joint counteroffensive launched by the GoS and YPG. The YPG and the SDF, established shortly thereafter, played a leading role in ISIL’s territorial defeat. As a result, ISIL has sought to destabilize SANES areas through a combination of military and economic tactics. It has repeatedly launched asymmetrical attacks on military and civilian targets with the aim of undermining KSA’s legitimacy, which depends on providing security and services. These include sowing VBIEDs and landmines along roads, as well as mass casualty attacks using suicide bombings. These are often followed by secondary attacks against first-hand responders and reinforcements, using light to medium firearms. In the summer of 2019, arson attacks were employed across Al-Hasakeh Governorate to punish farmers who refused to pay taxes to ISIL and undermine food security across the northeast. During and after Operation Peace Spring, ISIL has exploited the ensuing chaos to liberate many of its detained fighters and escalate attacks across the northeast, including Al-Hasakeh City.

Figure 5.4: Relationships between stakeholders in Al-Hasakeh City

- 128 "Group Denial: Repression of Kurdish Political and Cultural Rights in Syria," *Human Rights Watch*, November 26, 2009, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/11/26/group-denial/repression-kurdish-political-and-cultural-rights-syria>.
- 129 Harriet Allsopp and Wladimir van Wilgenburg, *The Kurds of Northern Syria* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2019).
- 130 The "Arab belt" project envisaged the creation of a 15 kilometre deep and 280 kilometre long zone along the Syrian-Turkish border and the forced displacement of Kurds living within the zone. In 1976, the project was suspended, however, the lands were never restored to their former owners. (Source: "Group Denial: Repression of Kurdish Political and Cultural Rights in Syria," *Human Rights Watch*, November 26, 2009, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/11/26/group-denial/repression-kurdish-political-and-cultural-rights-syria>.)
- 131 Contextual research conducted by *UrbAN-S*, February 2020; "Group Denial: Repression of Kurdish Political and Cultural Rights in Syria," *Human Rights Watch*, November 26, 2009, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/11/26/group-denial/repression-kurdish-political-and-cultural-rights-syria>.
- 132 Ibid
- 133 "Drought in Syria," *The Aleppo Project*, October 10, 2015, <https://www.thealeppoproject.com/drought-blog-entry/>.
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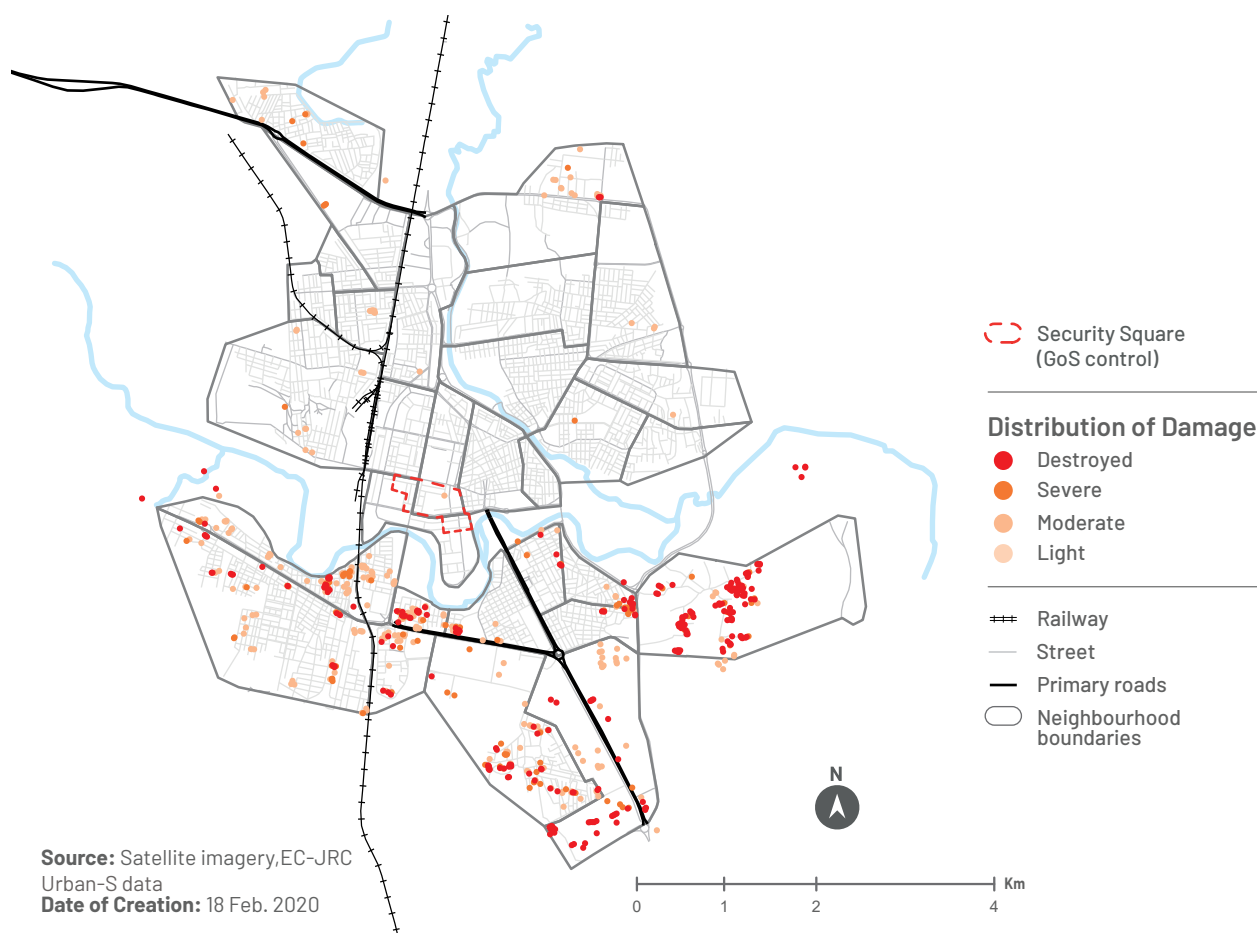
6. Housing

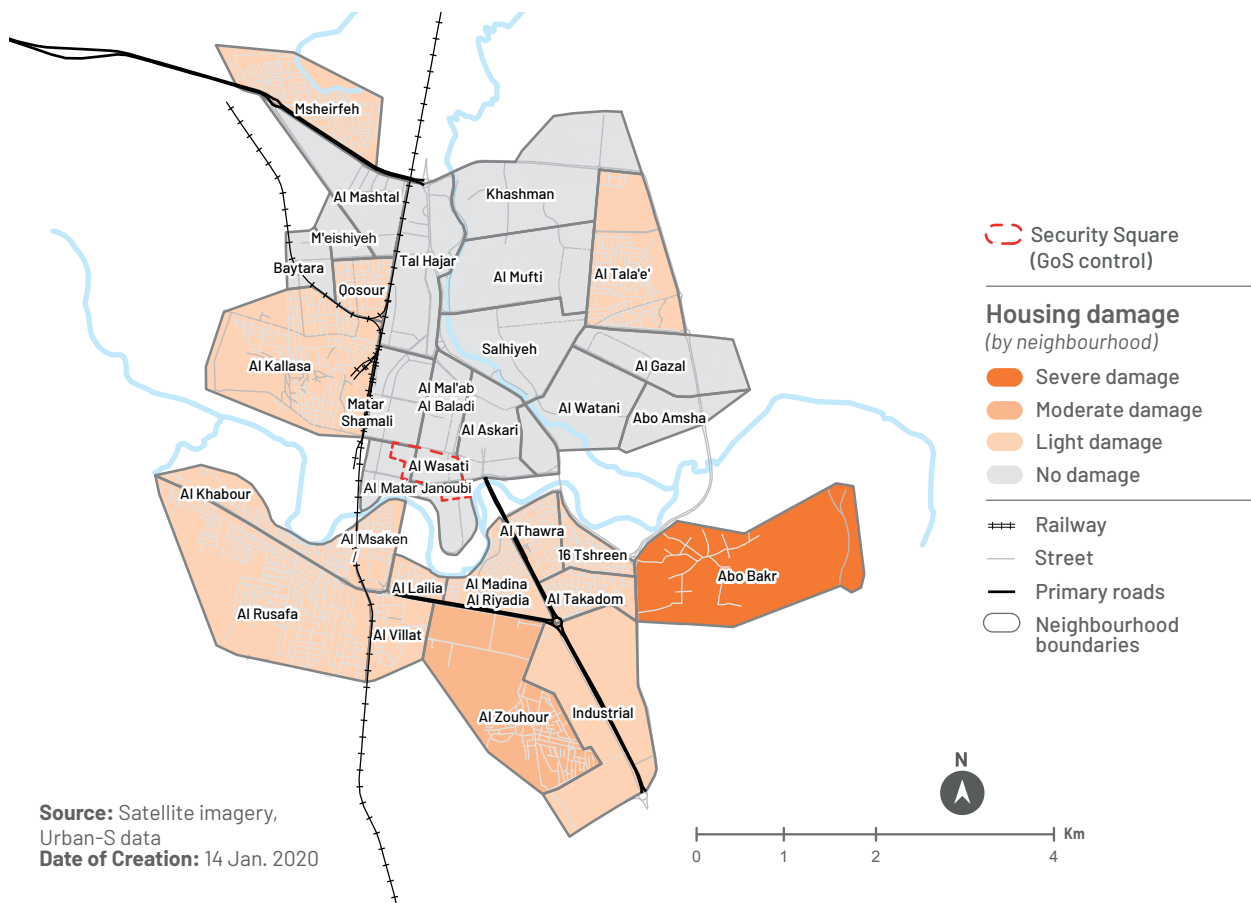
Damage overview

Al-Hasakeh City has generally been spared the intense damage to the urban environment experienced in other Syrian cities during the course of the present conflict. However, isolated periods of fighting that were seen in the city's southern neighbourhoods have led to low levels of damage south of the Nahr Al-Khabour River.

An assessment of the damage patterns indicates that 11 out of the 12 southern neighbourhoods received slight damage, including Al Khabour, Al Msaken, Al Rusafa, Al Villat, Al Laila, Al Madina, Al Thawra, 16 Tishreen, Al Takadom, Al Zouhour, as well as the industrial neighbourhood. Only one of these, Abo Bakr, which lies to the east of the city, received moderate damage. The most serious damage was confined to this neighbourhood's central area (see map 6.1).²⁵⁷ In the northern districts, very slight levels of damage were recorded in Msheirfeh, Khashman, Qosour, and Al Tala'e' neighbourhoods.

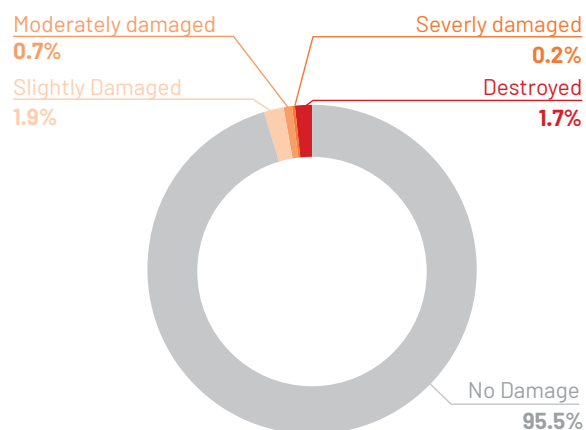
Map 6.1: Distribution of damage



Map 6.2: Housing damage, by level of severity

Impact on community housing stock and damage level, by number of units

Prior to the conflict, the total housing stock of Al-Hasakeh City numbered approximately 35,700. The damage sustained to housing in the southern neighbourhoods was generally low, with 2 percent of the housing stock receiving slight damage, accounting for approximately 573 housing units. Only one percent of the city's housing stock (approximately 244 housing units) sustained moderate or severe levels damage and will require rehabilitation to return to a livable state. An estimated 1.8 percent of all housing stock in the city (approximately 322 housing units) were completely destroyed. A total of 95.5 percent of all housing was left undamaged.

Figure 6.1: Damage to housing, by level of severity.

The city's capacity for return accommodation

While there was a drop in Al-Hasakeh City's resident population between 2010 and 2017, by roughly 45 percent, there has been an influx of IDPs to the city that increased the total population relative to the pre-conflict level. By March 2019, the city's total population had risen to 225,271 from its pre-conflict level of 216,622 (a four percent net increase). At this level of population, the estimated 35,135 pre-conflict number of housing units that received no or slight damage (97.4 percent of the total pre-conflict number) could accommodate the city's March 2019 population of 225,271. At this time, there was a surplus of approximately 1,700 units, allowing for the accommodation an estimated 11,400 additional returns or IDPs people in the city. Be that as it may, the balance of housing occupation in the city is not even and certain neighbourhoods experience a deficit, while others experience a surplus. The neighbourhoods with the highest deficit in accommodative capacity in March 2019 are Abo Bakr (which received the worst damage), Al-Mashtal, and Al-Zouhour. Meanwhile there is a surplus in housing in the neighbourhoods of Qosour, Al-Gazal, Al Mufti, Salhiyeh, Matar Shamali, Al-Watani, Al-Thawra, and Al-Kallasa.

The Turkish operation 'Peace-Spring' in areas of Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa governorates, to the northwest of Al-Hasakeh City, in October 2019 led to the rapid influx of approximately 60,000 additional IDPs to the city. While the majority of that number returned to their places of origin, approximately 18,497 still remained in the city as of November 2019. This seven percent increase in total population from March 2019 caused the accommodative capacity to reach a small overall deficit in accommodation of approximately 780 units.

Although this population increase related to the 'Peace-Spring' operation is not expected to be sustained, it indicates how a sudden increase in the population affects the accommodative capacity of the city. The balance between population and housing units is such that a sustained return trend would lead to a housing deficit and overcrowded conditions. The city's natural real estate market, which has expanded during the course of the conflict, should be supported in its capacity to adequately provide housing supply in the event of further population growth due to IDP returns.

Housing, land and property concerns

Historic discrimination of various groups in Al-Hasakeh Governorate has given rise to long-standing housing, land and property (HLP) concerns and issues. The 1960s era Syrian Government policy of removing Syrian citizenship rights from a large portion of the Kurdish population put limitations of property ownership, including ownership of agricultural land. This included historically Kurdish agricultural lands that were expropriated by the Syrian Government and given to Arab communities that the State moved in to occupy the area during the 1970s. These dynamics led to both curtailed livelihoods (as Kurdish farm workers lost the rights to their lands) and affected housing tenure as properties were stripped from them. Likewise, other minority groups in these areas came under similar, although not as severe, treatment.²⁵⁸

These pre-existing HLP issues underpin many of the social grievances that contributed to the ongoing conflict in this region. (See section 3: 'Demographics and population movement'). While they continue to be important to resolve, new HLP issues directly related to conflict dynamics have subsequently been added to those already existing.

Civil recognition, documentation and services

One of the central challenges hindering improvement of social conditions for many of Al-Hasakeh's population is the official statelessness of a large portion of the Kurdish population. This community lives under legislation connected to the 1962 census that deprived 120,000 Kurds of Syrian citizenship, a number which grew to approximately 500,000 prior to the conflict's start.

Despite the passing of Legislative Decree (LD) 49/2011 in 2011 which allowed for the reinstatement of citizenship to thousands of stateless Kurds in Al-Hasakeh Governorate (roughly 350,00 to date), many remain unable to obtain Syrian citizenship papers due to bureaucratic difficulties. Under the incumbent Kurdish-led Self-Administration in the region the process has improved. However, the uncertainty of the Self-Administration's continued control over Northeast Syria adds to the precariousness of the situation for those who have not yet secured Syrian identification. Notably, the Self-Administration recognises members of the Kurdish community that are still not registered under LD 49/2011 (ie. are still not Syrian citizens). The Self-Administration has allowed for their inclusion in many areas of daily life previously barred to them within areas under Self-Administration control. These include ownership of property and businesses; registration with professional bodies and public employment opportunities; local voting rights; and registration at educational facilities in the region.²⁵⁹

These policy changes regarding undocumented and stateless Kurds have not improved conditions for thousands of Kurdish asylum seekers and refugees that have been displaced beyond Syrian borders and continue to face challenges navigating foreign legal systems with no identification.

When the Self-Administration took control of Al-Hasakeh Governorate in 2013, it established new judicial, legislative, administrative, and police functions parallel to those that were already present under the Government of Syria. These functions now remain operated by both the Government of Syria and the Self-Administration in Al-Hasakeh City and across Self-Administration-controlled parts of Al-Hasakeh sub-district.

The pitfall of such institutional replication is bureaucratic overlap that often requires the local community to conduct administrative transactions, and pay associated fees, twice.

Property transactions and cadastral records

Property transactions were dramatically constrained by the Government of Syria prior to the present conflict. Various pieces of legislation have been used to enforce these constraints. In particular legislation promulgated to ostensibly give greater protection to border areas have specifically been used to limit Kurdish property rights.²⁶⁰ These include LD 49/2009 which restricts transactions of property in border areas; and the subsequent LD 432/2009 which designated border areas under LD 49/2009. Although Al-Hasakeh lies approximately 80km from the border with Turkey, the city was designated under LD 432/2009 as being a 'border area' within which property transfer is restricted. Even before the implementation of LD 49/2009 approvals for property sales typically took years.²⁶¹

The Self-Administration is now responsible for the administration of cadastral records in the areas under its control, including most of Al-Hasakeh City. The Government of Syria still manages areas directly under its control. In April 2018, the Self-Administration established the Union of Real Estate Offices in Al-Hasakeh Governorate. The primary mandate of the union is to administer property transactions in the Self-Administration, while it also offers dispute resolution services in cases between real estate owners and tenants, through mediation processes that prevent disputes from reaching the courts.²⁶²

Real estate and rental markets

The real estate market in Al-Hasakeh is in a period of flux due to conflict related dynamics. Restrictions on the construction industry by the Government of Syria prior to the conflict have been relaxed, as the incumbent Self-Administration views construction licenses as a good source of revenue, while growth in the market has been spurred by capital investment in the form of remittances from Syrian expatriates.²⁶³ In the early stages of the conflict, individuals from Deir Ez-Zor Governorate began buying property in Al-Hasakeh City, particularly those that were sold at a lower than market value by Christian families leaving the sub-district at this time. Kurdish families who have benefited from newly acquired civic status and other conflict-related economic dynamics have also been known to purchase property outside of traditional Kurdish neighbourhoods. These dynamics have led to property prices increasing steeply in Al-Hasakeh and across the north east region.

Owing to the sustained inflow of IDPs from other regions of Syria over the course of the past several years, housing availability in Al-Hasakeh is low while demand has increased. Outside groups have found Al-Hasakeh to be an important hub in the region, as the city has become more stable over the last two years, in comparison to nearby centres such as Deir Ez-Zor and A-Raqqa. Hasakeh has become a base for humanitarian organizations working in the north-east governorates, leading to an increase in humanitarian workers from outside the city willing to pay higher rents,²⁶⁴ while SDF operations based in the city have led members of the coalition and their families to also settle there.

In the wake of clashes in August 2018, many people residing in or near the Security Square left their homes, intending to return once the situation stabilised. Due to the proximity of the houses to the military checkpoints in this area and the fear of sudden clashes and escalations between the regular Syrian forces and the Self-Administration aligned SDF and militias, people are reluctant to buy or rent homes in that area. This has presented a significant challenge for those wishing to sell or rent out their houses within this area.²⁶⁵

In June 2019, the Union of Real Estate Offices together with the local Chamber of Commerce established a committee to control pricing within the real estate and rental market, to increase affordability of accommodation in the city.²⁶⁶ This came after wide public outcry over the unaffordability of accommodations.²⁶⁷ Under the new rules, non-compliant land-lords would face penalties, however local media reports that property owners have not complied with official pricing guidelines due to the lack of capacity to enforce the new regulations by the authority.²⁶⁸

Urban planning dynamics

Under the Self-Administration authority, approaches to planning have remained largely unchanged from the urban plan laid out by the Regional Planning Committee of the Syrian Government Ministry of Public Works and Housing. Procedures for the licensing of new construction are managed by the technical department within the local communes under SANES authority. New projects are inspected regularly to ensure compliance with building codes, planning guidelines, and in order to prevent other illegal building practices.²⁶⁹

Unlike other major cities across Syria, Al-Hasakeh City is not currently under threat from any new urban planning legislation.

Expropriation of property and secondary occupation

In September 2015, the Self-Administration passed a new law, the Protection and Management of Displaced Persons Wealth, that granted it the authority to manage all rights of properties, houses, and lands vacated by those who had been displaced from the Self-Administration region. The intended aim of the new law was to protect properties against harm, looting, seizure, or theft. Property or land covered by the law would produce financial returns to be shared between the Property Protection Committee and the landlord.²⁷⁰

There was considerable public backlash to the law, which, due to media pressure, was then subsequently modified. The amendment allows for relatives still present in the region to assume control over abandoned property, whenever family ties can be adequately established.

However, local experts report that the underlying aim of the legislation was to expropriate property and land belonging to influential persons with ties to the Government of Syria. Indeed, their lands were confiscated, mainly along the border area in the north of Al-Hasakeh Governorate. Meanwhile, following the liberation of southern Al-Hasakeh Governorate from ISIL and Free Syrian Army factions, the law allowed the Self-Administration to gain control over these lands. The law has not been significantly enforced in cities, but rather employed predominantly in rural areas. Nevertheless, the local media has reported a small number of incidents of property seizure by the Asayish in Al-Hasakeh City.²⁷¹

Looting

According to local experts, looting in the Al-Hasakeh area has been largely limited to the villages in rural areas outside of Al-Hasakeh and have not targeted any particular ethnic groups. However, contradicting media reports have highlighted the targeting of the Assyrian population in their rural villages.²⁷² Within Al-Hasakeh City itself, the only reported incidents of systematic looting took place in those southern neighbourhoods where ISIL gained brief control during 2015 and 2016.²⁷³

HLP risk analysis

The risk analysis infographic below provides a summarised outline of the risks to Housing, Land and Property identified in Al-Hasakeh. It is based on the relevant guidance note of the UN Secretary General issued in March 2019.

This guidance note is a reference point for the analysis of risks affecting lands and properties in a conflict situation.

1. Politics of exclusion

- A large portion of the Kurdish population has historically been excluded from civic recognition.
- Policies that denied civic recognition had a heavy impact on HLP rights

2. Damage to property

- Damage to property due to conflict was light, although it affected Arab communities in the city's southern neighbourhoods almost exclusively.

3. Issues related to natural resources

- The region's economy is entirely based on harnessing and extracting natural resources (agriculture and oil). These resources are central to the conflict and control of the region and are often targeted, such as the burning of crops.
- Scarcity of water resources in the region negatively impact agricultural production (a major economic driver).

4. Population pressure

- With the influx of IDPs to Al-Hasakeh, the city's total population has grown, putting pressure on housing stocks as well as other services in the city.

5. Weak land administration

- Weakening control over land administration by the Government of Syria has increased the ability for the Kurdish community to engage in property transactions.
- Administration of land and property transactions is nonetheless carefully controlled.

6. Poverty

- Increasing property and rental prices coupled with limited livelihood opportunities have negatively impacted the affordability of accommodation in the city.

7. Nation-state fragmentation

- Control over Al-Hasakeh is split between the Kurdish-led Self-Administration of North and East Syria, and the Government of Syria. Share of control and future political agreements directly affect people's day-to-day engagement with public functions.
- Both arms of government are known to discriminate against different population groups based on political allegiance.

8. Occupation

- The Self-Administration passed legislation allowing for expropriation of displaced families' property by SDF groups. Although part of the legislation was retracted, this remains a risk.

9. Economic and political competition

- Efforts by the Kurdish-led Self-Administration to assert control in the city and region have been based in a long-standing attempt to win economic and political freedoms within Syria for the Kurdish people. The risk to these freedoms continues to be high, as the political outcome to the conflict in the north-east unfolds.

Risk Level: ■ Very High ■ High ■ Average ■ Low

- 257 Remote sensing analysis conducted by EC JRC, 2019.
- 258 "Shadow of a human': Syria's stateless Kurds navigate shifting authorities decades after losing citizenship," (*Syria Direct*, October 18, 2018), <https://syriadirect.org/news/%e2%80%99shadow-of-a-human%e2%80%99-syria%e2%80%99s-stateless-kurds-navigate-shifting-authorities-decades-after-losing-citizenship/>
- 259 "Stateless Kurds Navigate Shifting Authorities Decades after Losing Citizenship," (*Syria Direct*, October, 18, 2018), <https://syriadirect.org/news/%e2%80%99shadow-of-a-human%e2%80%99-syria%e2%80%99s-stateless-kurds-navigate-shifting-authorities-decades-after-losing-citizenship/>
- 260 "Systematic Housing and Land Rights Violations against Syrian Kurds," (*Housing and Land Right Network*, October 2011), <http://www.hic-gs.org/content/kurds%20status%20in%20Syria.pdf>
- 261 In an effort to expedite lengthy sales processes, a process of filing, so-called 'sham lawsuits,' with the civil court allowed parties to a sale to confirm to get an endorsement of the sale. Although this practise was not seen as a legally binding transaction, it served as a guarantee between buyer and seller. For more information see: <https://www.kurdipedia.org/files/books/2013/92382.PDF>
- 262 Interview with local expert, UrbAN-S, January, 2020.
- 263 Sinan Hatahet: "The Political Economy of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria," (European University Institute Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, November 29, 2019)
- 264 Interview with local expert, UrbAN-S, 2019.
- 265 "Syrian Regular Forces Seized Houses of Civilian in Al Hasakah," *Syrians for Truth and Justice*, 30 december 2017, https://stj-sy.org/en/373/#_ftn2.
- 266 "ما سبب الارتفاع الباهظ لإيجار العقارات في الحسكة," ANHA, 3 June 2019, <https://www.hawarnews.com/ar/haber/d985d8a7-d8b3d8a-8d8a8-d8a7d984d8a7d8b1d8aad981d8a7d8b9-d8a7d984d8a8d8a7d987d8b6-d984d8a5d98ad8acd8a7d8b1-d8a7d984d8b9d-982d8a7d8b1d8a7d8aa-d981d98a-d8a7d984d8add8b3d983d8a9d89f-h19410.html>.
- 267 "شكاوى من ارتفاع أسعار إيجار المنازل وغياب الرقابة عليها في الحسكة," *Smart News Agency*, 14 July 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0C4Zlz-5Amxg>.
- 268 "ما سبب الارتفاع الباهظ لإيجار العقارات في الحسكة," ANHA, 3 June 2019, <https://www.hawarnews.com/ar/haber/d985d8a7-d8b3d8a-8d8a8-d8a7d984d8a7d8b1d8aad981d8a7d8b9-d8a7d984d8a8d8a7d987d8b6-d984d8a5d98ad8acd8a7d8b1-d8a7d984d8b9d-982d8a7d8b1d8a7d8aa-d981d98a-d8a7d984d8add8b3d983d8a9d89f-h19410.htm>
- 269 Sinan Hatahet: "The Political Economy of the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria," (European University Institute Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, November 29, 2019)
- 270 "No going back: Why decentralisation is the future for Syria," (*European Council for Foreign Relations*, September 2016), https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/no_going_back_why_decentralisation_is_the_future_for_syria7107
- 271 "Is the PYD-led self-administration confiscating property in Al-Hasakah?," (*Syria Direct*, 24 February 2016), <https://syriadirect.org/news/is-the-pyd-led-self-administration-confiscating-property-in-al-hasakah/>.
- 272 Silvia Ulloa, "Assyrians under Kurdish Rule: the Situation in Northeastern Syria," (Assyrian Confederation of Europe, January 2017); Gianluca Mezzofiore, "Syria Isis news: Displaced Assyrian Christians' houses 'looted by locals' as sectarian tension rises," *International Business Times*, 12 March
- 273 Interview with local expert, UrbAN-S, 2019.

7. Economy

Overview

Al-Hasakeh's regional economy has historically been tied to its agricultural production. Prior to the Syrian conflict, nearly 40 percent of city workers were employed in the sector. Its location in the country's northeast region and along the fertile Al-Khabour River valley makes it ideal for crop cultivation. These include wheat, barley, lentils, beans, cumin, and coriander.²⁷⁴ In particular, wheat produced in Al-Hasakeh Governorate and throughout Northeast Syria has been vital to the country's sustenance and food security.

The Self Administration of Northeast Syria (SANES) model of self-governance encourages self-reliance among its communities. This includes a system of land cooperatives and locally sourcing of many basic needs.

Economic relations between the SANES and GoS have been mutually beneficial. Despite overlapping administration of public services and other political and legal matters, the two entities are highly integrated. While the SANES assumes primacy over administrative and military control, the GoS retains control of some administrative functions including health and education.²⁷⁵ Coordination also occurs in distribution of regionally produced wheat and petroleum. (See city profile section 5 and below "Key economic sectors")

Despite attempts to improve Al-Hasakeh's economy, internal and external factors continue to hinder the region's development.²⁷⁶ Due to checkpoints and informal taxation, commercial transportation has been diverted to the Tel Abiad route, instead of the M4 highway, which is narrower, longer, and not suitable for trucks, leading to an increase in transportation costs. High unemployment and poverty also threaten to further destabilize the region.

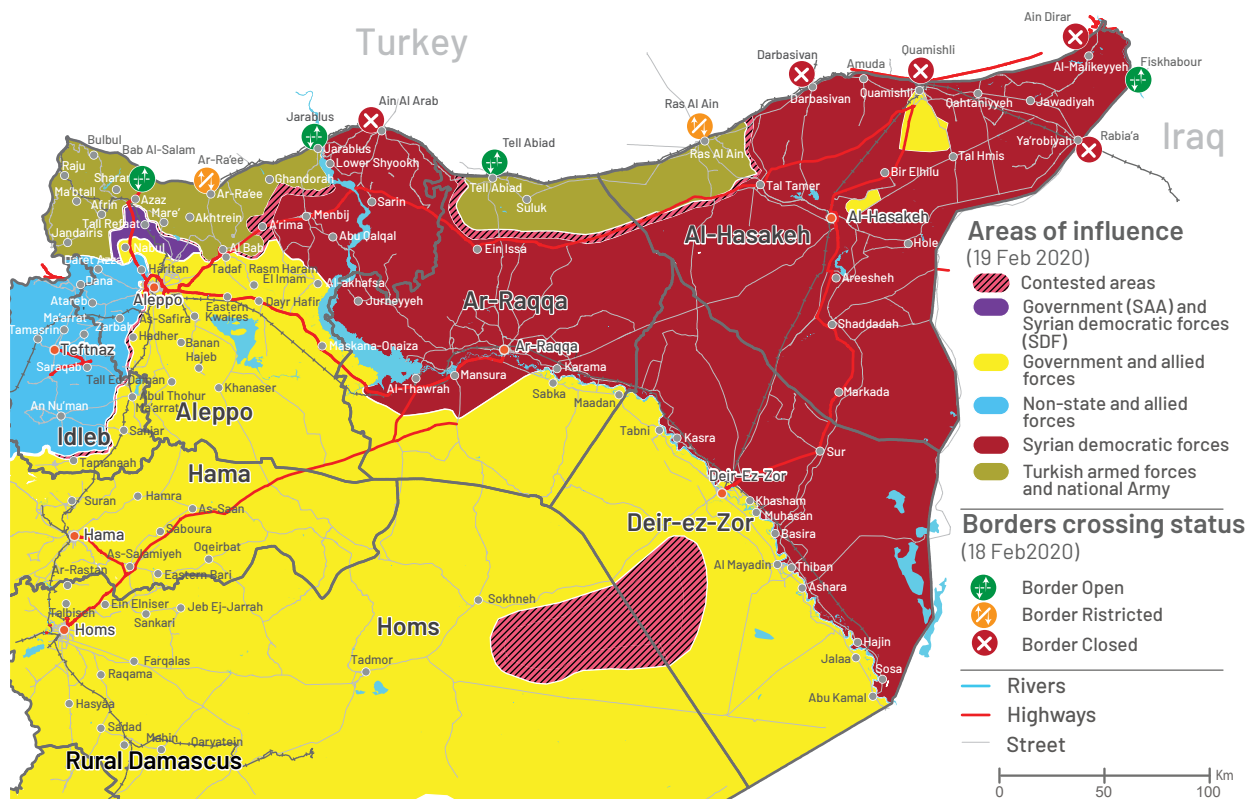
Cross-border trade and economic dynamics

Syria's border with Turkey and Iraq has played a crucial part of the economy of Northeastern Syria. However, in 2014, the Turkish Government closed all official border crossings with PYD-controlled territory. Turkey also began constructing barriers to prevent cross-border smuggling of goods and people. The international border closure between Syria and Turkey resulted in Al-Hasakeh's shifting trade routes, depending on its link to Iraq's Kurdistan region for trade. However, periodic closures of the Iraqi border has limited imports and increased prices.²⁷⁷

Map 7.2: Areas of influence and border crossing status, Northeast Syria

Source: UrbAN-S data

Date of Creation: 19 Feb. 2020



Impact of the conflict on the city's economy

Analysis suggests the economy has contracted by 50 percent since 2011.²⁷⁸ Prior to the conflict, reports indicate that the city had an unemployment rate of 18 percent.²⁷⁹ Private employment has been especially affected. The city lost 3,400 jobs after closures of a bulgur processing facility and a large masonry business.²⁸⁰ By 2011, unemployment had reached 39 percent.²⁸¹

In 2018-2019, as the American commitment to the SANES wavered, uncertainty over continuous American troop presence created insecurity in local markets. The threat of US withdrawal expedited negotiations between the SANES's political leadership and GoS. Ad hoc negotiations between the two administrations, however, have been largely limited to commercial agreements on grain sales and oil-related production and delivery.²⁸²

Economic profile

Al-Hasakeh's economy is predominantly characterized by its regional agricultural crops, livestock, and petroleum industries. Prior to the conflict, agriculture employed nearly 40 percent of the city's labor forces. In 2004, public services and construction sectors made up 27 percent and 13 percent of city employment respectively. In total, these sectors provided for more than three quarters of the city's employment.

Prior to the conflict, 45 percent of the city's jobs were in the public sector. However, the percentage of public sector workers varied throughout the city. In the Arab majority neighbourhoods (including Al-Nashwa and Ghwayran), government-funded employment was estimated at 50 percent. Public employment in the Kurdish majority areas (including Al-Aziziyah and Al-Nasra neighbourhoods) was estimated at 30 percent. Despite low wages, public sector employees reportedly felt a greater sense of security because payments were received on a regular basis.²⁸³

Public administration and security services constitute the main source of employment today. Financial incentives lure residents into joining security forces, where they can receive up to 50,000 SYP per month. These recruits have limited the available labour force for other areas of the economy.²⁸⁴ Migration has also decreased the number of working adults, leading to a shortage of skilled workers and increasing the incidence of child labour.

Figure 7.1: Number and percentage of total employment by economic sector in Al-Hasakeh City (2004 and 2015) ²⁸⁵

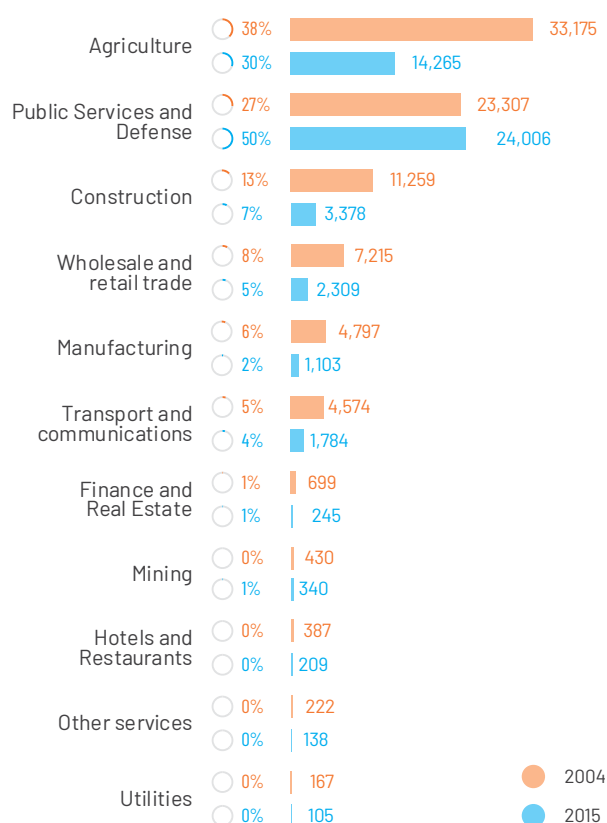
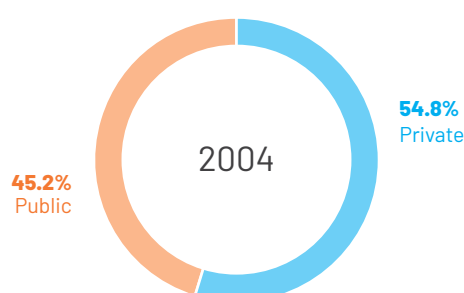


Figure 7.2: Share of employment – public and private (2004) ²⁸⁶



Key economic sectors

Petroleum

Prior to the conflict, the GoS received the lion share of oil extraction benefits. Little-to-no profits from the oil industry returned to the region. Income to local community members was marginal.²⁸⁷ During the last nine years of the Syrian conflict, control of the industry and markets has fluctuated. The industry is now primarily controlled by the self-administration.

Pre-conflict reports suggest that Syria's oil wells produced around 385,000 barrels per day.²⁸⁸ Although conflict and underdevelopment have impacted production, areas with oil reserves have become the "linchpin for political control" in the region.²⁸⁹ Local and international factions continue to vie for dominance of the region's wells. Petroleum revenues are widely considered the primary funding source for the Self-Administration's governance functions.²⁹⁰ This includes capital expenditures, operations, public services, and defense.²⁹¹

Defying international sanctions, the current trade of refined petroleum products hinges on coordination between the SANES and GoS.²⁹² While the SANES performs extraction, crude oil is traded with the GoS in exchange for technical expertise and provision of some

public services (eg. energy, health and education). A portion of extracted crude oil is refined locally for local consumption. GoS allocations are delivered to, and refined in, regime-held refineries in cities of Baniyas and Homs. Refined products from regime-held areas are then sold (or, exchanged) back to the Northeast and the Self Administration.²⁹³ (See also below "War Economy")

Agriculture

Al-Hasakeh in particular, and Northeast Syria in general, has been historically referred to as the breadbasket of Syria. It is capable of producing an estimated 18 million tons of wheat per year. A vast majority of area residents work in the sector with many owning agricultural land themselves.

However, environmental conditions, decreased fuel subsidies, and centralized economic policies have reduced output over the past several decades. Imposed crop selection, poor water management and land allotments have been responsible for repeated crop failures.²⁹⁴ Poor management have undermined the livelihoods of thousands of agriculture workers.²⁹⁵

Figure 7.3: Government controlled wheat silos in the "Industrial" neighbourhood. Operational and non-damaged. Photo by UrbAN-S (Feb. 2019)



Like petroleum, the SANES and GoS coordinate distribution of the region's wheat grain. Transportation to GoS-controlled areas relies on a series of relationships between the administrations and is facilitated by several key intermediaries. These intermediaries trade agricultural products at mutually agreed prices. The GoS's main processing plant is the Qamishli grain center, while the SANES's is the Malikieh grain center located approximately 200 kilometers north east of Al-Hasakeh City.

Details on wheat grain distribution are largely unknown. However, sources report deliveries to the GoS-controlled Qamishli Airport (and by extension to Damascus) are incentivized. GoS-controlled trade routes run west through Tabqa (in the Ar-Raqqa governorate) to Aleppo, Homs, and then south to Rural Damascus Governorate. Trucks carrying wheat (and petroleum) enroute to the GoS-controlled Homs Governorate are reportedly exempted from tariffs, royalties, and other informal taxes.²⁹⁶

"Farmers in Al-Hasakeh Governorate have been particularly impacted (by the Turkish incursion). Most agricultural traders have communicated ... that due to the current situation they will not be able to provide all the inputs required for the planting season. About 441,086 hectares of very productive farmland in the region with highest agricultural potential will likely not be planted in the current season (single season per annum) due to access limitations in buffer zones. This represents a potential production loss of about 763,000 tons of wheat, adequate to feed nearly 4.5 million people for one year in both Northeast Syria and the entire country."

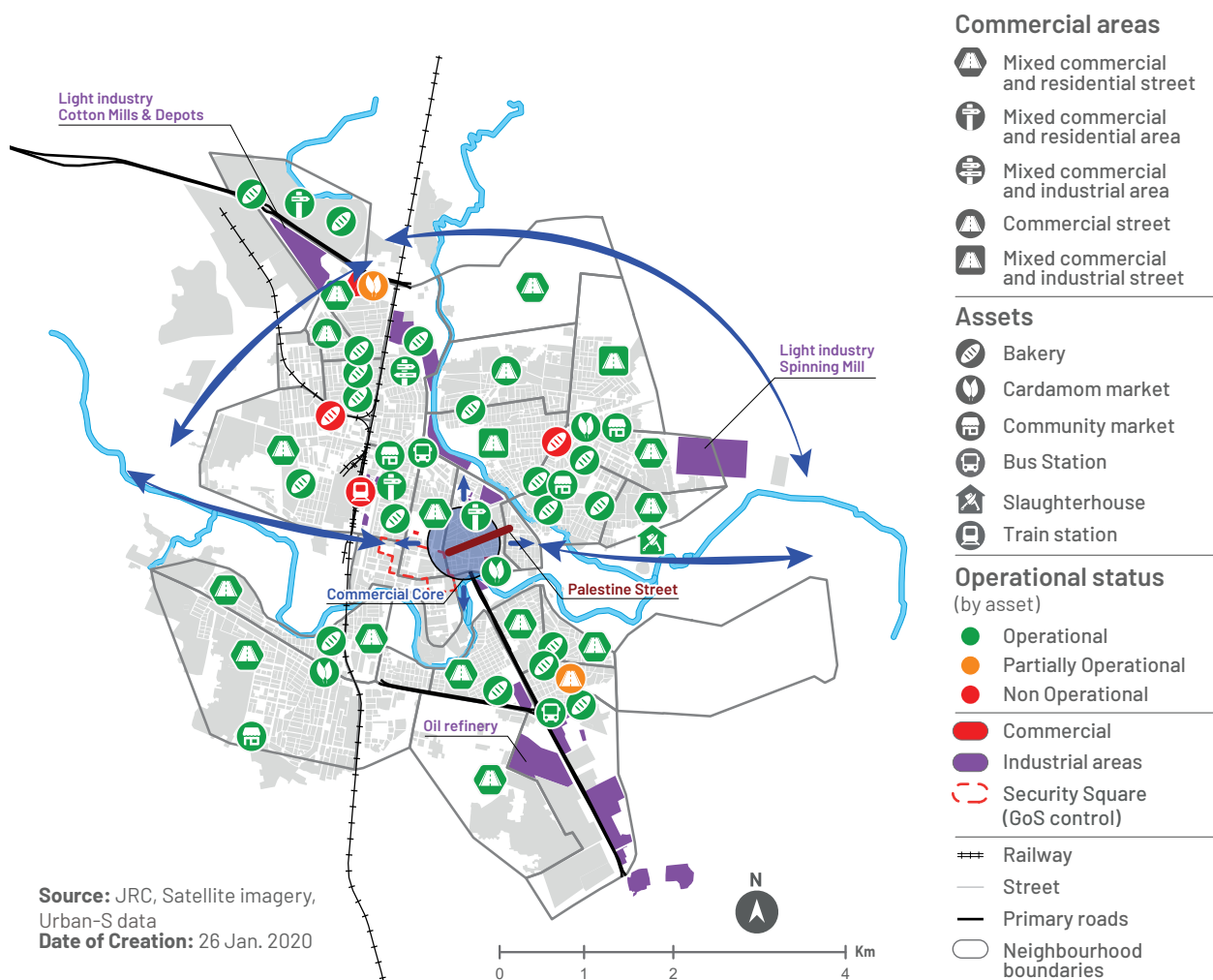
*Reporting by the Northeast Syria NGO Forum in the month of the November, 2019 after the October incursion by Turkish military into Northern Syria*²⁹⁷

Turkish incursion into Northern Syria affecting regional agriculture

Economic impacts of the crisis has amplified the region's suffering. As the price of food and other basic household items steadily increase, currency devaluation and low purchasing power creates further insecurity. The trend was exacerbated in October 2019 as the Turkish military commenced operations in the region. With supply routes disrupted, markets saw a spike in the price of food and other commodities.²⁹⁸ Overall, the price of food items have reportedly increased by 20 percent. According to the Food Security Cluster's November 2019 report, prices of bulgur spiked up by 25 percent, lentils prices by 33 percent and wheat flour by 20 percent. Wholesale prices for wheat flour, bulgur, and rice also increased by three percent, 18 percent, and 8 percent respectively. City markets have remained operational.²⁹⁹

Markets and merchants

Map 7.3: Markets located in Al-Hasakeh's neighbourhoods. Assets and commercial / industrial land use



City markets have experienced lengthy periods of closure over the course of the conflict. In 2015, most city markets shuttered during periods of fighting with ISIL and conflicts between GoS and YPG armed forces, escalating violence and causing displacement among many city residents. However, after ISIL was routed in 2017, the city's markets began to recover.

Boosted by an influx of credit-based, inventory investments, traders filled local shops. As commercial routes with GoS-held areas reopened, traders once again gained access to goods from Aleppo-based wholesalers. The influx of IDPs also increased demand for consumer goods. However, traders lacked working capital and many had trouble sustaining their businesses. With high unemployment, poverty, and waning demand, businesses were forced to liquidate assets at a fraction of the cost or abandon their enterprises altogether.³⁰⁰

Figure 7.4: Local area experts' perceptions of neighbourhood markets. Breakdown by neighbourhood ³⁰¹

Neighbourhood	Markets			
	In general, people can (always) access commodities in a nearby market	Food available in the nearest market with good quality	The nearest market facilities are maintained periodically	The city markets are thriving and creating jobs
16 Tashreen	Agree	Agree	Mixed response	Disagree
Abo Amsha	Mixed response	Disagree	Mixed response	Agree
Abo Bakr	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Al Askari	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree
Al Gazal	Mixed response	Agree	Disagree	Agree
Al Kallasa	Agree	Mixed response	Disagree	Disagree
Al Khabour	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree
Al Lailia	Mixed response	Agree	Mixed response	Disagree
Al Madina Al Riyadia	Mixed response	Agree	Disagree	Mixed response
Al Mal'ab Al Baladi	Agree	Agree	Mixed response	Agree
Al Mashtal	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree
Al Matar Janoubi	Agree	Agree	Mixed response	Mixed response
Al Msaken	Agree	Mixed response	Disagree	Disagree
Al Mufti	Mixed response	Agree	Mixed response	Agree
Al Rusafa	Agree	Mixed response	Mixed response	Mixed response
Al Takadom	Agree	Mixed response	Mixed response	Agree
Al Tala'e'	Mixed response	Mixed response	Mixed response	Disagree
Al Thawra	Agree	Agree	Mixed response	Agree
Al Villat	Mixed response	Mixed response	Disagree	Disagree
Al Wasati	Agree	Agree	Agree	Disagree
Al Watani	Mixed response	Agree	Mixed response	Agree
Al Zouhour	Mixed response	Mixed response	Disagree	Disagree
Baytara	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
Industrial	Mixed response	Agree	Mixed response	Agree
Khashman	Mixed response	Mixed response	Disagree	Disagree
Matar Shamali	Mixed response	Mixed response	Disagree	Disagree
M'eishiyeh	Mixed response	Agree	Mixed response	Disagree
Msheirfeh	Mixed response	Agree	Disagree	Disagree
Qosour	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree
Salhiyeh	Mixed response	Agree	Mixed response	Disagree
Tal Hajar	Mixed response	Agree	Agree	Mixed response

Agree

Disagree

Mixed response



Figure 7.5: Cardamom Market in Al Khabour Neighbourhood (SE Hasakeh). Photo by UrbAN-S (Feb. 2019)

Traditional markets are located in 23 of Al-Hasakeh's 31 neighbourhoods. Recent assessments indicated that nearly all markets remain functional. Only the Al Takadom neighbourhood in the city's south east has been affected, experiencing partial damage to its commercial street.³⁰²

Several specialized markets (such as for livestock) and general markets are situated throughout the city. The city's main market is located on Palestine Street, where produce from the city is sold. Surplus grain and other commodities are stored in large warehouses and silos.

War economy

During the conflict, smuggling across international and control-lines has been a lucrative source of revenue for a variety of actors. When ISIL controlled oil fields in northeast Syria, the GoS, Turkey, Iraq, and SANES all purchased oil originating from ISIL-controlled areas.³⁰³ Oil and gas were smuggled from ISIL-controlled areas to SDF-controlled areas, while cigarettes, food, and medical supplies were smuggled from SDF-controlled areas to ISIL-controlled areas. SDF forces taxed goods entering and exiting SDF-controlled areas from ISIL-controlled areas. These informal taxes constituted a lucrative source of funding for SDF personnel and high-ranking members of the Self-Administration.³⁰⁴

Throughout 2017, the SDF captured several major oil fields from ISIL, sharply decreasing the group's oil revenues. By October 2017, ISIL's oil revenues decreased from \$50 million to \$4 million per month.³⁰⁵ As most of Syria's oil reserves came under SDF control, smugglers began purchasing and transporting oil to GoS-controlled areas and the Kurdish Region of Iraq (KRI). Oil sales in 2017 from SDF areas to the KRI was reported at 10 million USD per month.³⁰⁶ This ceased once Turkey closed the oil pipeline from the KRI to Turkey in retaliation.³⁰⁷ As of January 2020, sales to the KRI had reportedly resumed, making the KRI the largest international buyer of SANES oil.³⁰⁸ Oil is reportedly smuggled by SANES-affiliated traders and sold informally to powerful individuals in the KRI, many of whom are affiliated with political parties. It is then sold on the black market and smuggled to Turkey or to other areas of Iraq.³⁰⁹

Despite western sanctions, crude oil originating from SANES-controlled areas is transported to GoS-controlled areas for refining. Sources suggest oil is allocated to the GoS in exchange for the technical expertise it provides.³¹⁰ Throughout the conflict, Hussam al-Qaterji has been the primary crossline smuggler. A prominent businessman and member of the People's Council (the GoS' national legislative body), al-Qaterji and his company, the Qatirji Group, previously transported crude oil and wheat from ISIL to GoS areas.³¹¹ The company now trucks crude oil from northeast Syria to GoS areas for refining. Due to his previous commercial links to ISIL and current supplying of oil to the GoS, Qatirji has been sanctioned by the US and European Union.³¹² Other traders are also involved in cross-line oil smuggling, however, on a significantly smaller scale.³¹³

In addition, there exists an extensive smuggling network for drugs, including heroin and captagon. They are smuggled across control lines to SANES and GoS-controlled areas, and internationally to the KRI and Turkey. Many of these drugs likely originate from areas along the Lebanese border (e.g. captagon), however, their origin is unclear.³¹⁴

Conflict dynamics have also given rise to the emergence of monopolies. There currently exists a monopoly on several goods in Al-Hasakeh Governorate. This is due to the emergence of multiple areas of control, the reduced size of the market within each of these areas, and limitations on the free movement of goods imposed by armed actors. Murshid al-Sultan reportedly exercises a monopoly on the sugar trade in the governorate with the complicity of both the GoS and the SA. Al-Sultan has reportedly blocked imports from other traders and withheld sugar from the market to induce an artificial increase in price.³¹⁵

Taxation

Taxation by SANES was an uncontroversial issue until early 2017, when taxes and fees both increased in number and value across various sectors. However, newly imposed taxes and fees – including an estimated ‘income tax’ – has contributed to tensions between the SANES and local communities. Arab and Christian communities, who increasingly question the legitimacy of the Self Administration, are especially obstinate.

Remuneration and family expenditures

The economic situation for many of Al-Hasakeh’s families is bleak. The purchasing power for most families has been affected. In 2015, labour market assessments of northeast Syria suggest the average household income in Al-Hasakeh Governorate that year fell between 30,000–42,000 SYP. This was often supplemented by remittances of 5,400–6,000 SYP per month from relatives abroad.³¹⁶ Remittances from Iraqi Kurdistan, Turkey, and Europe represent an important source of income for many families.³¹⁷

In 2016, essential food items (bread, meat, dairies) were reportedly available in various parts of the city with slight price variations. The same applies to fuel (diesel, gasoline). Cooking gas, however, in SANES-controlled areas was reportedly priced 50 percent more than in other areas of the country.³¹⁸

Rapid inflation affecting purchasing power and quality of life for Syrians

The country is facing the worst currency devaluation since its independence. The value of the Syrian Pound has decreased fourteen-fold over the course of the Syrian conflict. Indeed, in March 2011, one US Dollar (USD) was equivalent to 47 Syrian Pounds (SYP). Eight years later, one USD purchased 515 SYP.³¹⁹ By January 2020, the pound has decreased further, with one USD buying over 1,000 SYP. Sources indicate that the current SYP-USD exchange rate in Al-Hasakeh ranged between 975 – 1,150.³²⁰

This drastic decrease in the value of Syria’s currency has not been adequately adjusted in salaries. The average monthly salary for public sector employees remains the equivalent of 60 USD.³²¹ Although salaries have doubled, they are still considered low and inadequate. Rapid inflation has spiked the prices of goods and services, increasing tenfold over the decade. According to a study of select cities, Al-Hasakeh has experienced the largest increase in prices.³²²

The Syrian economy faces further deterioration risks due to international sanctions, high unemployment and a shortage of basic materials.³²³

Agriculture land and environmental concerns

At the Governorate level, more than 60 percent of households rely on agricultural crops and animal husbandry.³²⁴ However, years of drought, conflict, winter flooding and summer fires have had dramatic effects. The country-wide drought, from 2004–2010, led to persistent food insecurity, poor health, impoverished communities and widespread migration from rural to urban areas. As fuel prices also doubled several times over, many farmers were forced to give up altogether.³²⁵

Weather continues to play a key role impacting regional crops.³²⁶ Al-Hasakeh Governorate is especially sensitive to variegated levels of rainfall. Roughly 70 percent of farmland is rain fed making it vulnerable to even slight variations in winter rainfall. The 2017 winter experienced 40 percent less than average rainfall, requiring farmers to rely on underground water and digging new wells.³²⁷ In 2018, Al-Hasakeh farmers witnessed “the worst harvests in almost half a century.”³²⁸ Non-irrigated wheat crops which constitute 55 percent of all wheat sown saw losses of over 90 percent.³²⁹ Bread shortages have resulted in the GoS signing contracts with Russia to purchase wheat.³³⁰

Turkey and Syria have a long-standing dispute over the management of the Euphrates River. Those tensions have worsened over the past several decades as average annual flows in the Euphrates River basin at the Turkish-Syrian border have declined substantially since the 1990s, coinciding with both the completion of the Ataturk Dam and an apparent decrease in precipitation in the region, leaving Al-Hasakeh Governorate with critical shortage of water for irrigation agriculture. Crops are susceptible for several periods to severe ecological and biological stresses such as frost during initial growth stages, or to rainfall retention and high temperatures during the maturity stage. In the northeast Syria region, the heavy dependence of livelihoods on agricultural production means that efforts to improve the productivity of water use to produce higher yields and income with less water will help cut pressure on the shared waters among

communities. Water and its sources are an essential factor in the development of the agricultural sector, as well as for livestock rearing.

The Syrian Government has historically played a major role in supporting regional agriculture. The government's General Establishment for Cereal Processing and Trade (HOB00B) provided massive agricultural subsidies to incentivize wheat and barley production throughout the country, including Al-Hasakeh. These included seeds, subsidized fertilizers, insecticides and machinery, as well as financial services and agricultural guidance. In total, until 2011, agricultural subsidies amounted to three percent of GDP.³³¹ At that time, the government was the sole buyer of Al-Hasakeh's wheat and cotton. Although the GoS continues purchasing wheat, its subsidies have markedly decreased.³³²

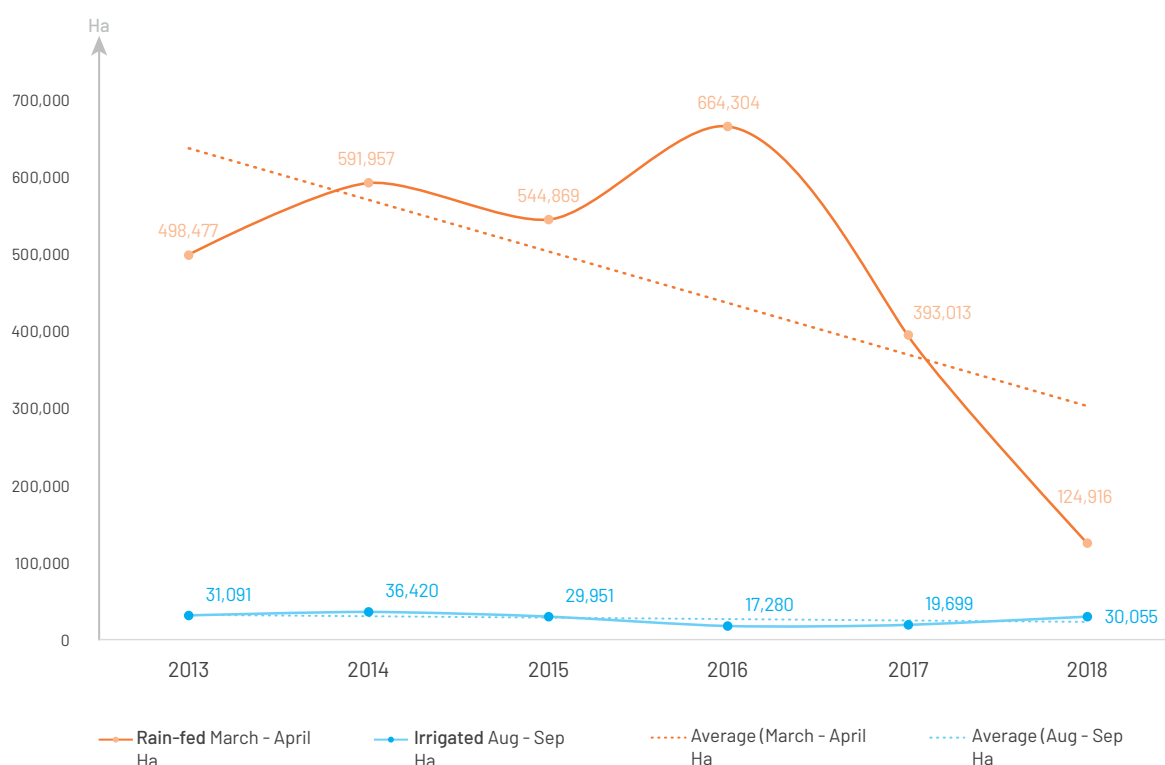
Table 7.1: Agriculture product or crop advantages, challenges and future outlook

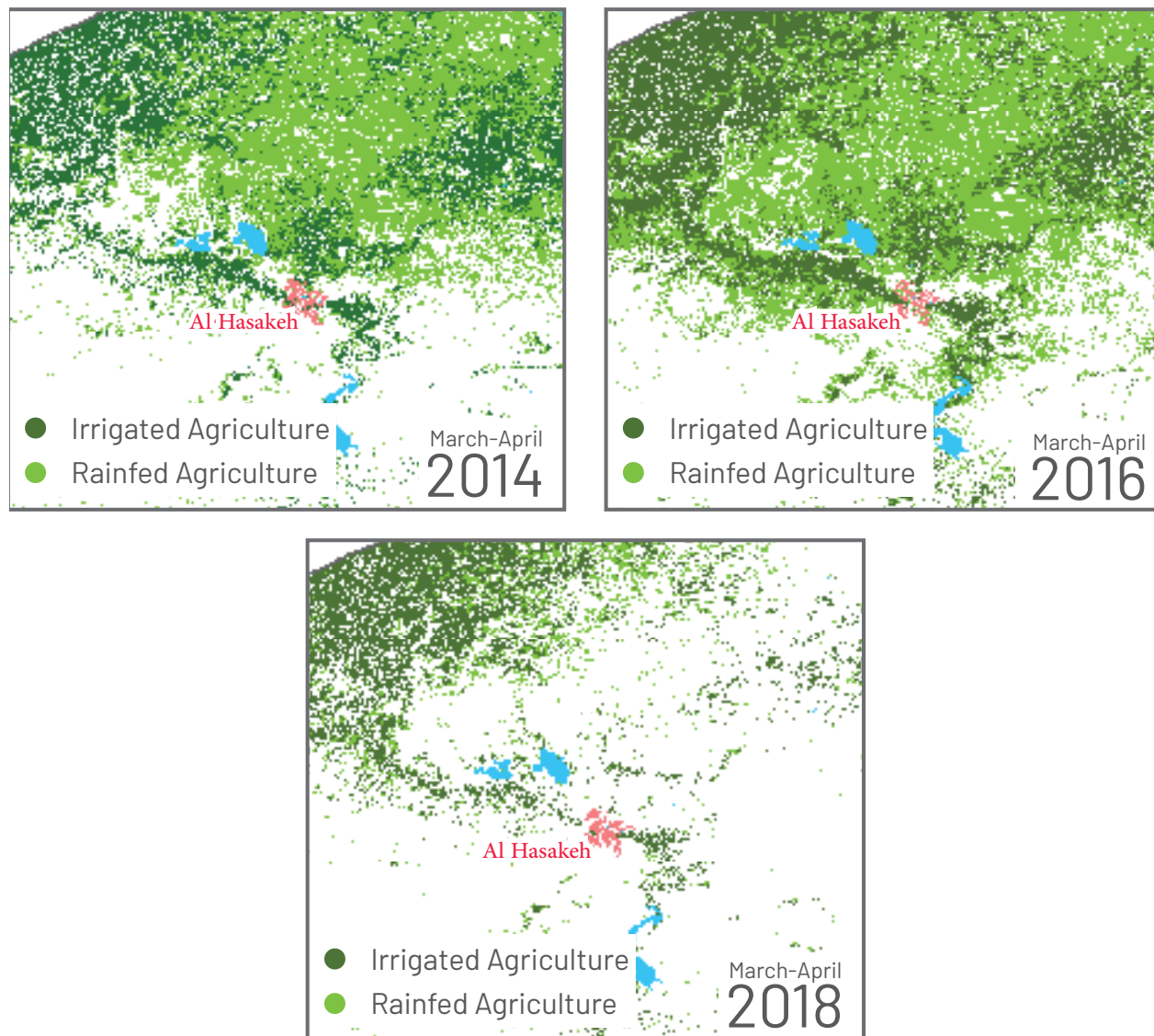
Agriculture product / crop	Advantages	Current challenges	Future outlook
Cotton	Drought tolerant crop	A lack of government's support combined with relatively high cost agricultural inputs needed to grow cotton has resulted in "near-collapse..." ³³³	The industry is seen as unprofitable. ³³⁴
Wheat	Remains profitable throughout the conflict.	Rising agricultural inputs and a lack of government support.	Wheat continues to be grown and diversified. It is grown alongside other crops such as coriander, barely, lentils and cumin as part of a larger dry-land winter crop diversification and crop rotation effort. ³³⁵
Coriander	Cheap to grow and needs minimal inputs. Farmers grow it in order to have direct access to cash as coriander is sold for cash directly to market traders.		Deemed less costly to grow, and especially given the government's lack of support, "coriander production has increased from a reported 0.8% of arable land in Al-Hasakeh to 80% in three years".
Tomato Products		The tomato market has suffered from a lack of affordable inputs and disruption to market access. ³³⁶	Some farmers are adopting greenhouse technology to produce tomatoes off-season, thereby capitalising on produce scarcity to fetch higher market price for profit.
Small livestock	Local market demands on sheep and goats remains stable within the governorate.	Farmers complain about the lack of affordable inputs such as vaccines and medicines. No access to external markets.	Continued concerns over the rising costs of imported feed.
Dairy products		Dairy production has been significantly impacted due to the lack of affordable inputs (feed, fodder, medicines, vaccines, etc.) Access to markets is limited.	Producer opportunities for value addition to dairy products through processing.

Factors that influence agriculture land productivity the greatest are those which affect crop/forage and livestock growth and development. Extreme weather events (drought/floods) are an integral part of northeast Syria's semi-arid climate, with regular cycles of wet and dry years in Al-Hasakeh. Several historical droughts have impacted crop production and livestock in Hasakeh Governorate: a drought in 1961 resulted in the loss of 80% of the camel population and 50% of sheep. In the 1998-2001 drought, 329,000 people (47,000 nomadic households) had to liquidate their livestock assets, suffered food shortages

and required urgent food assistance, which was 'not an exceptional occurrence'.³³⁷ The link between climate change and drought in Al-Hasakeh has been highlighted in a number of assessments based on climate models, predicts that climate change result in frequent and harsher droughts, higher temperatures and lower and more unpredictable precipitation levels.³³⁸ Based on the information available and provided by humanitarian partners in Al-Hasakeh, recent drought events have caused acute water and food shortages and deteriorated health and nutrition.³³⁹

Figure 7.6: NDVI - Representation and impact on the region's agriculture (Al-Hasakeh Governorate)



Map 7.4: Vegetated canopy in Al-Hasakeh Governorate (2014,2016,2018)

The Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) is a remote sensing technique that registers the spectral signature of chlorophyll, and therefore the vegetation canopy, on a satellite sensor using a sequence of images over time. By combining this information with precipitation level, it is possible to make inferences on a conflict's effects on a region's vegetation. The analysis was conducted by the EC-JRC.

Sectoral considerations

- Develop local capacity in the petroleum sector. Introduce value-added industries that diversify Al-Hasakeh's petrol extraction into other (more valuable) refining, additive and other downstream products. This must be accompanied by recovery and further development of primary infrastructure in extraction facilities.
- Amidst continued conscription policies, a strategy is needed for the temporary replacement and eventual reintegration of conscripts into the labour force. A workforce development plan should be prepared and implemented to replace and/or incentivise additional workers. This includes skills development (and other incentives) for extractive and agriculture industries. Training programs should be emphasised to support SMEs, trades and service sectors.
- Formalise the trade and distribution of agricultural and petroleum products. Smuggling operations, informal refining and other unregulated and illicit activities reinforce conflict dynamics in the region. The current status-quo enriches war-profiteers, prevents transparency surrounding oil revenue beneficiaries and undermines the prospects for peace amongst warring factions. International policy should help to formalise trade while enforcing international environmental and commercial law.
- A climate variability response strategy ought to be developed which bridges traditional and scientific knowledge. A strategy can guide innovative practices, and recommend adaptation and mitigation measures. Water and agricultural practices should be guided by agroecology principles and integrated water resource management.

- 274 During the summer months, the region is also known for its irrigated crop production including maize, sorghum, livestock feed/fodder, vegetables, and cotton. Source: "Al-Hasakeh Syria Agricultural Assessment", October, 2015, *Mercy Corps*, <https://tinyurl.com/yajay2hk>
- 275 For an explanation of the SANES / GoS dual governing structure, see City Profile section 5, "Governance and Stakeholder Analysis"
- 276 Al-Hasakeh has seen a partial boost some manufacturing and other businesses as some have relocated from Aleppo to the north-east. The Self-Administration has also established trade companies for the purpose of local economic improvement.
- 277 Harriet Allsopp and Wladimir van Wilgenburg, *The Kurds of Northern Syria*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2019
- 278 Ibid.
- 279 "Central Hasakeh area. Breakdown of employed persons 15 years or older based on nature of activity/work." *Central Bureau of Statistics*. 2004
- 280 "Context Assessment: Al-Hasakeh," *UrbAN-S*, December 2018
- 281 "Al-Hasakah City Profile," *Urban Analysis Network Syria*, 2016
- 282 "Context Assessment: Al-Hasakeh," *UrbAN-S*, December 2018
- 283 "Al-Hasakah City Profile," *Urban Analysis Network Syria*, 2016
- 284 Harriet Allsopp and Wladimir van Wilgenburg, *The Kurds of Northern Syria*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2019
- 285 Breakdown of employed persons 15 years or older based on nature of activity/work, Central Hasakeh area. *Central Bureau of Statistics* (2004); National study of GDP contraction per sector. *IMF Working Paper* (2016)
- 286 Ibid.
- 287 "Al-Hasakah City Profile," *Urban Analysis Network Syria*, 2016.
- 288 Justin Higginbottom, "Why Syria's small oil reserves have become the linchpin for political control in the region," *CNBC*, December 13, 2019, <https://tinyurl.com/w9matzu>
- 289 Ibid.
- 290 Oil sales to the KRG reportedly amounted to \$10 million (USD) per month until 2017 due to Turkish pressure on the KRG to stop purchasing oil by closing the oil pipeline from the KRG to Turkey. Source: Harriet Allsopp and Wladimir van Wilgenburg, *The Kurds of Northern Syria*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2019
- 291 Justin Higginbottom, "Why Syria's small oil reserves have become the linchpin for political control in the region," *CNBC*, December 13, 2019, <https://tinyurl.com/w9matzu>
- 292 The SANES' Ministry of Economy coordinates directly with the Government of Syria's Ministry of Oil to manage the oilfields. Every SDF-held oilfield has Government Oil Ministry staff members working alongside Self Administration officials. Each oil field is managed by a different individual appointed by the Energy Committee, which sits under the Self Administration. Under each of these individual Energy Committee managers, there are two sub-managers: one is appointed by the Self Administration, and one is appointed by the Oil Ministry; this is largely due to the fact that these government employees have the necessary technical expertise to manage the oil fields, whereas SANES officials lack it. Source: "Potential Models of Governance in Northeast Syria," *COAR*, October 20, 2019
- 293 Harriet Allsopp and Wladimir van Wilgenburg, *The Kurds of Northern Syria*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2019
- 294 Lands have often been allocated to communities with limited agricultural experience causing decreased productivity.
- 295 "Context Assessment: Al-Hasakeh," *UrbAN-S*, December 2018
- 296 Ibid.
- 297 "Situation Update # 9, Northeast Syria – November 10," *Whole of Syria Food Security Center*, November 10, 2019.
- 298 "Food supply prices increase in al-Hasakah," *Smart News Agency*, 31 Januray 2019, <https://smartnews-agency.com/en/wires/361439/food-supply-prices-increase-in-alhasakah>
- 299 *Northeast Syria INGO forum*, November, 2019
- 300 "Context Assessment: Al-Hasakeh," *UrbAN-S*, December 2018
- 301 Survey of local area experts in Al-Hasakeh by *UrbAN-S*, February 2019
- 302 Asset inventory of Al-Hasakeh conducted by *UrbAN-S*, February 2019
- 303 Harriet Allsopp and Wladimir van Wilgenburg, *The Kurds of Northern Syria*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2019
- 304 Contextual research conducted by *UrbAN-S*, January 2020.
- 305 The decrease was associated with parallel offensives by the GoS south of the Euphrates River and by the Peshmerga in neighbouring Iraq. Source: Jim Michaels, "U.S. coalition slashes ISIS oil revenue by more than 90%," *USA Today*, October 2, 2017, <https://tinyurl.com/tz8tzeq>

- 306 Harriet Allsopp and Wladimir van Wilgenburg, *The Kurds of Northern Syria*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2019
- 307 Ibid.
- 308 Contextual research conducted by *UrbAN-S*, January 2019
- 309 Ibid.
- 310 The GoS pays the salaries of engineers working in SA-controlled oil fields, as the SA lacks the technical capacity (see *city profile section 7, Economy*)
- 311 Michael Georgy and Maha El Dahan, "How a businessman struck a deal with Islamic State to help Assad feed Syrians," *Reuters*, October 11, 2017, <https://tinyurl.com/tvh9lx3>
- 312 Contextual research conducted by *UrbAN-S*, January 2020; Benoit Faucon and Nazih Osseiran, "U.S.'s Syria Ally Supplies Oil to Assad's Brokers," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 8, 2019, <https://tinyurl.com/y7v5a7en>
- 313 Contextual research conducted by *UrbAN-S*, January 2020
- 314 Ibid.
- 315 "Context Assessment: Al-Hasakeh City," *UrbAN-S*, December 2018
- 316 Harriet Allsopp and Wladimir van Wilgenburg, *The Kurds of Northern Syria*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2019
- 317 Ibid.
- 318 "Al-Hasakah City Profile," *Urban Analysis Network Syria*, 2016.
- 319 Currency exchange as of March 2019
- 320 WFP VAM - Market Assessment for North-East Syria. January 2020
- 321 "Context Assessment: Al-Hasakeh," *UrbAN-S*, December, 2018
- 322 Largest In 2019, increases in average food basket : Al-Hasakeh (30 percent), Lattakia (13 percent), and Hama and Ar-Raqqa (both at 12 percent). Source: Syria Country Office, Market Price Watch Bulletin. WFP-VAM Food Security Analysis, June 2019 ISSUE 55, <https://tinyurl.com/vwnyvpv>
- 323 Sly, Liz, "Despair grows among Syrians as war winds down", *Star Tribune*, 25 March, 2019, <http://www.startribune.com/despair-grows-among-syrians-as-war-winds-down/507648532/>
- 324 "Al-Hasakeh Governorate profile Syria Needs Analysis Project", *Syria Needs Analysis Project*, February 2014
- 325 "Al-Hasakah City Profile," *Urban Analysis Network Syria*, 2016.
- 326 Al-Hasakeh Governorate profile Syria Needs Analysis Project", *Syria Needs Analysis Project*, February 2014
- 327 "Mapping of Wheat and Small Ruminants Market Systems in Al-Hasakeh Governorate," *iMMAP & CARE*, September 2018
- 328 Alaa Nassar and Barrett Limoges, "Grain shortages and financial ruin plague Hasakah farmers as crops fail after devastating drought," *Syria Direct*, 10 July 2018, <https://tinyurl.com/ton4mnh>
- 329 Ibid.
- 330 "Massive Wheat Crop Fires Threaten Syria's Food Security," *Syrians for Truth and Justice*, 22 June 2019, <https://tinyurl.com/w9mkm5x>
- 331 "Counting the Cost: Agriculture in Syria after six years of crisis," *FAO*, April 2017, <https://tinyurl.com/wp7holg>
- 332 "AL-Hasakeh Syria Agricultural Assessment", October 2015, *Mercy Corps*, <https://tinyurl.com/yajay2hk>
- 333 Ibid.
- 334 Ibid.
- 335 Ibid.
- 336 Ibid.
- 337 Francesca de Châtel, 2014. "The Role of Drought and Climate Change in the Syrian Uprising: Untangling the Triggers of the Revolution", *Middle Eastern Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/00263206.2013.850076
- 338 Breisinger C et al., 2011. "Global and Local Economic Impacts of Climate Change in Syria and Options for Adaptation", *International Food Policy Research Institute*, Discussion Paper 01091, p.23.
- 339 Mercy Corps, 2018. Post-harvest monitoring report for North East Syria.

8. Health

Overview

Healthcare in Al-Hasakeh, like other cities throughout Syria, faces enormous challenges as a result of the conflict. Residents have expressed concern over a number of issues. Their main grievances focus on the absence of safe and secure access to healthcare, lack of medical providers and staff and an absence of necessary ambulance services.

Except for partial damage to two public facilities, the city's health infrastructure has suffered relatively little structural impacts.³⁴⁰ The city hosts two public and five private hospitals. Local authorities also provide vaccination campaigns, mobile clinics, limited ambulance, and pediatric psychological programs. Public and non-governmental health centers and clinics are located primarily in the central Al Wasati neighbourhood. Based on an inventory of community facilities, northern neighbourhoods of the city are lacking in healthcare facilities, as are areas south of the Khabour River.³⁴¹

Overlapping government administrative service provision between the Government of Syria (GoS) and the Self Administration of Northeast Syria (SANES) also affects the city's health services. The city is reliant on the GoS for its health services, though disputes continue over the ownership of medical facilities between the SANES and GoS. Private hospitals, on the other hand, are generally immune to ownership disputes.

Although located in the Kurdish-controlled Al-Aziziah neighbourhood, Al-Hasakeh's National Hospital's staffing and administration has been the responsibility of the GoS.³⁴² Reports indicate that disputes over control of the National Hospital has prompted the GoS to establish an additional alternative facility. This facility, namely the Lou'lou'a Hospital, is located in the GoS-controlled "Security Square".³⁴³

Figure 8.1: Al-Hasakeh National Hospital - Photo by radiowelat (Sep. 2017)



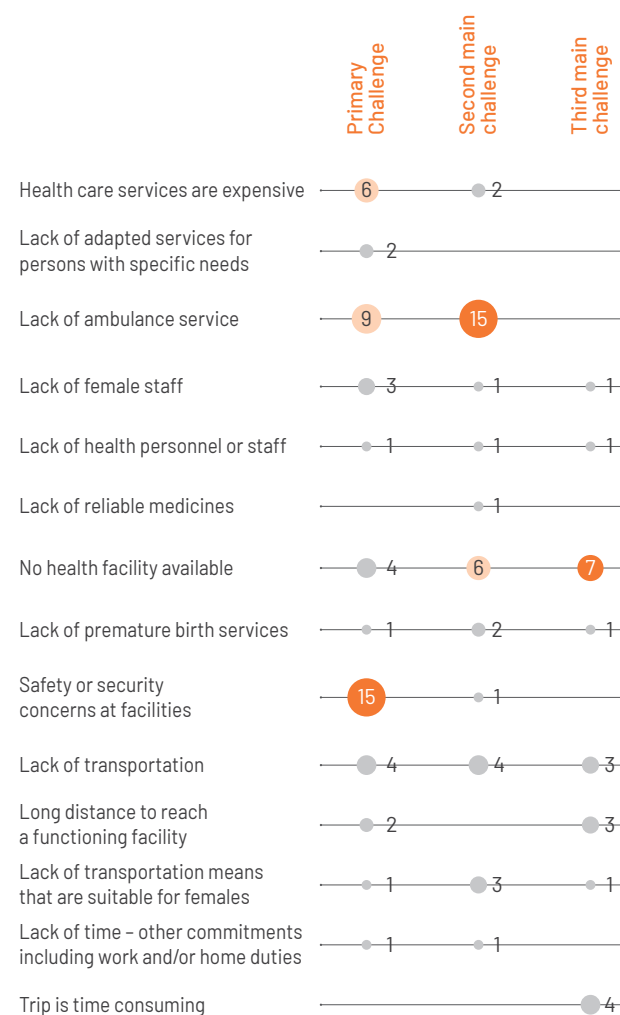
Current health needs in the community

UN estimates for 2019 indicate that 644,819 people are in need of health care services throughout the Al-Hasakeh Governorate.³⁴⁴ Analysis concludes that approximately 40,000 (or 18 percent) city residents are health vulnerable.³⁴⁵ These include children under age five, seniors, those with chronic disorders, and mothers with infants. The Salhiyeh neighbourhood (the city's most populated neighbourhood) contains the highest concentration. Over 4,000 individuals are considered health vulnerable. (See map 8.1, "Distribution of health vulnerable population groups..."). The Turkish incursion into the region has put additional strains on the city's health system and providers, with over 18,000 additional IDPs inhabiting the city.

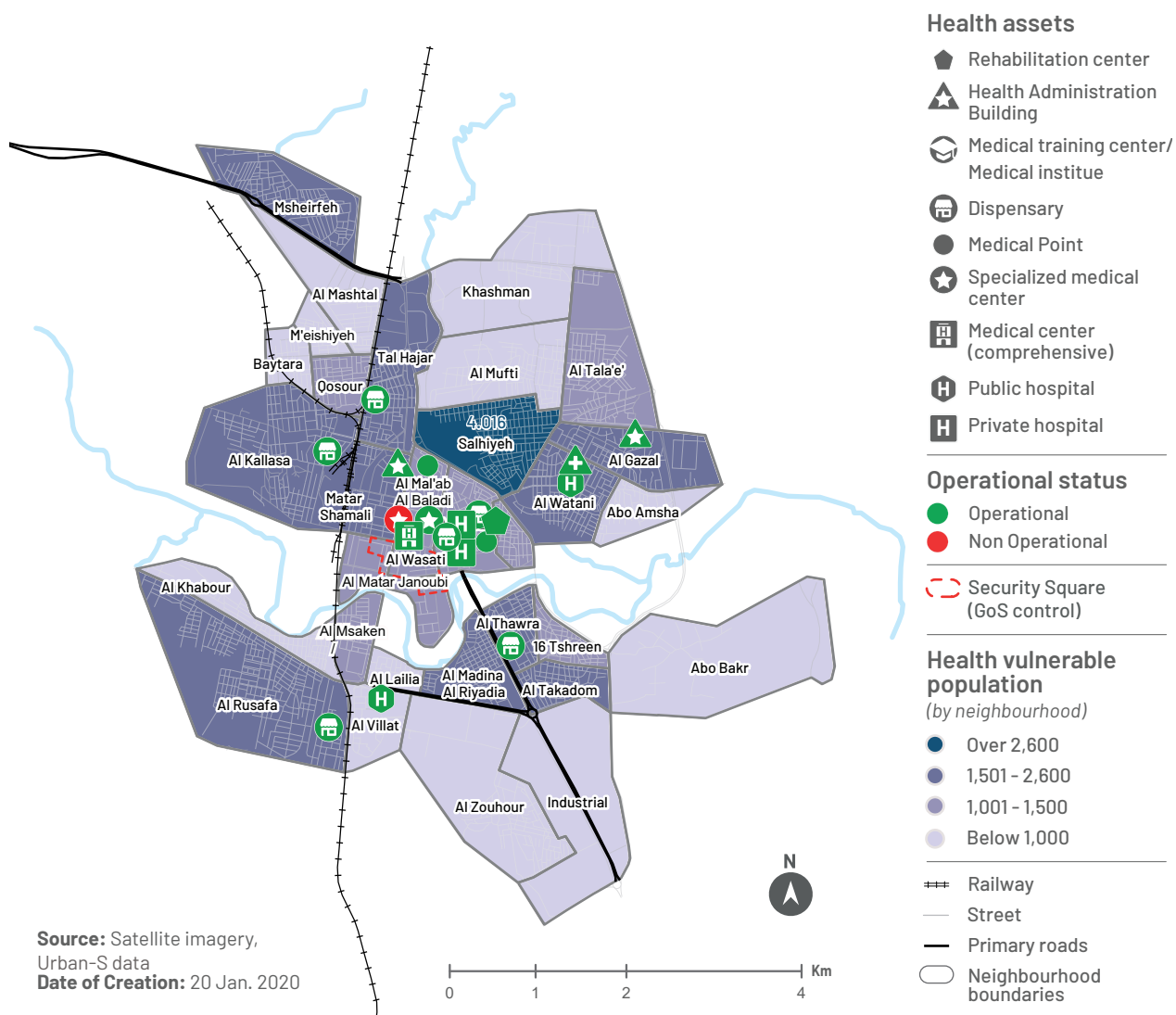
Sources familiar with the health situation in the city identified chickenpox as the most widespread reported communicable disease. This was followed by respiratory diseases such as asthma, measles and infectious hepatitis.³⁴⁶

Public health is also at risk from environmental pollution and contamination. Sources express concerns over air and water quality, informal oil refining, risks of unexploded ordnances (UXOs), and unauthorized rubbish dumping. In addition, improper disposal of medical waste has long been a major issue. With insufficient incinerators available to hospitals and other health facilities, exposure to waste has led to at least one recent fatality.³⁴⁷ However, recent construction of a sanitary landfill in the southwest of the city, the problem of medical waste is currently addressing these shortcomings/deficiencies with the help of international agencies (see city profile section 12, "Solid Waste Management").

Figure 8.2: Healthcare challenges faced by local area experts (Feb., 2019)³⁴⁸



According to local area experts, the primary concern is safely accessing local health facilities. This is followed by the lack of ambulance services.

Map 8.1: Distribution of health vulnerable population groups and the state of health infrastructure ³⁴⁹

The concentration of healthcare facilities in the city's central areas suggests that healthcare is more challenging for those living in outlying neighbourhoods. Two thirds of all local area experts surveyed, suggest that patients of the city's neighbourhoods require less than 30 minutes to travel to the nearest operational health care facility. However, the survey also indicates that in six of the city's 31 neighbourhoods, between 30 and 60 minutes of travel is required. Neighbourhoods required more than 30 minutes of travel include Abo Amsha, Abo Bakr, Al Gazal, Al Thawra, M'eishiyeh, and Msheirfeh. ³⁵⁰

Health infrastructure

Operational capacity

Unlike the extensive damage experienced elsewhere in the country, Al-Hasakeh's health system has been largely spared. An inventory of health facilities conducted in early 2019 concluded that 22 of the city's facilities were operational. Only the education directorate's health building is reported as partially damaged and non-operational. Partial damage was also reported to the public pediatric hospital located in the southern Al

Villat Neighbourhood. The hospital, however, is reported to be operational.³⁵¹ The facility inventory suggests that there are twelve public health facilities, five private hospitals, and at least six NGO-run medical facilities present in the city. These include dispensaries, one rehabilitation center, and a facility run by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC).

Figure 8.3: Health facilities by type and operational status³⁵²

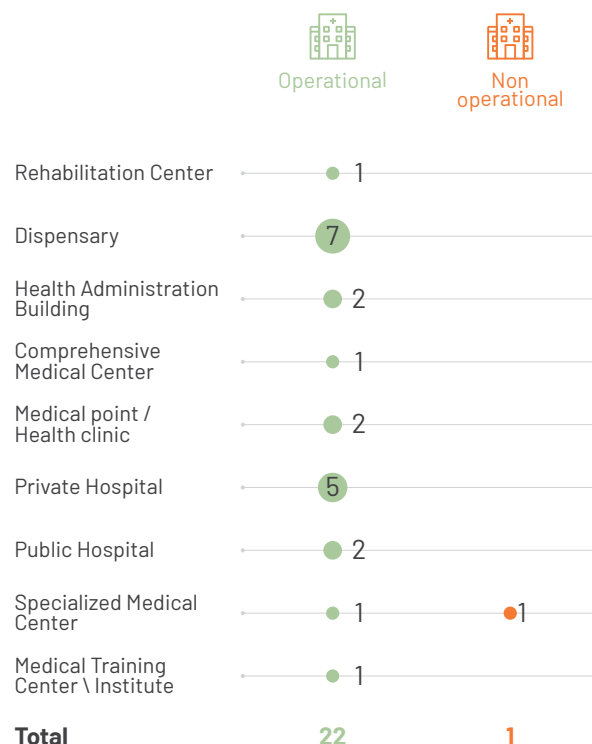


Figure 8.4: Syrian Arab Red Crescent - Medical Point / Centre in the Al Ma'ab Al Baladi Neighbourhood - Photo by UrbAN-S February 2019





Five government hospitals are located throughout the Al-Hasakah Governorate. The city's National Hospital is the largest treatment facility in the city and the surrounding subdistrict and provides services unavailable elsewhere in the city or vicinity. This includes dialysis treatment and computed tomography. According to reports, most hospitals throughout the Governorate, lack proper modern equipment and suffer from frequent electricity cuts.³⁵³

Between 2012 and 2015, many basic services and delivery of medical supplies were frequently interrupted. The variety and availability of services has improved since the SANES took virtual full control of Al-Hasakeh city in 2016. Nonetheless, while services are now regarded as partially adequate, they are considered inconsistent and costly. Improvements can be attributed to the community's adaptation to decreased services, restoration of access between Al-Hasakeh and Aleppo governorates, and increasing cooperation between the Government of Syria and the KSA.

According to local health experts, the number of operational hospital beds have decreased by 77 percent. This can be linked to the decreased capacity at Al-Hasakeh's National in staffing, supplies, and other resources. Reports suggest that the community lacks access to sophisticated medical services, requiring those in need of specialist treatment to travel to Damascus.

Figure 8.5: Operational bed capacity³⁵⁴

	 (2010)	 (2019)
Operational beds	350	80
Hospital beds per 1,000 of city population	1.76	0.40

Medical personnel and equipment

The number of doctors in Al-Hasakeh Governorate fell from more than 1,300 in 2010 to about 1,000 in early 2019.³⁵⁵ Those working in the city decreased from 55 in 2010 to 35. Local sources suggest 25 doctors reside in the city. The number of nurses has increased. A likely result of increased IDP patients and others fleeing areas of ongoing conflict.

"Because of the crisis, we have no doctors left in this area, which was already suffering from a lack of doctors in certain specialties. For example, there is a shortage of doctors in cancer treatment departments, microscopy, microbial diseases and autism, adding to the lack of ophthalmologists and cardiologists. In those cases, we have to travel to Damascus for treatment".

- Ahmad, a 45 year-old patient with eyesight problems³⁵⁶

Al-Hasakeh suffers from a severe loss of its specialized medical staff. The People's Protection Unit (YPG) and the Syrian regime actively pressure doctors into military ranks. According to reports, the YPG recruits newly graduated medical students for its "self-defense duty." Similarly, the Syrian regime obliges doctors to be recruited and to serve in the Syrian Arab Army.³⁵⁷ As a result, many doctors have left Al-Hasakeh governorate altogether, while young medical students have reportedly fled to Sudan and Somalia where they earn significantly less.³⁵⁸ Highly qualified doctors have emigrated to Turkey and Europe.³⁵⁹ As doctors leave the governorate, people are left with fewer choices, especially in specialized fields. In some cases, patients have no other options than to travel to Damascus to seek specialized medical help.

The absence of public medical personnel has increased healthcare costs. The price of regular medical check-up has increased five-fold over the past five years. Basic check ups have increased from 500 SYP to more than 3,000 SYP. Appointments with highly qualified physicians can reach up to 4,000 SYP. This does not include the price of medicines.³⁶⁰

Disputes between SANES and the GoS over health services leading to decreased patient care

Tensions between the Syrian Government and the Self Administration in Al-Hasakeh Governorate has had negative consequences on medical personnel. The Self Administration formed "Al-Jazirah District Doctors Union" require doctors to register in the Union and obtain a physician's license before starting their practice/ practicing their profession. Registering with Al-Jazirah District Doctors Union, however, puts doctors in a vulnerable position and has created risks. In some instances, doctors registering with the Al-Jazirah Union have had their medical licenses withdrawn by the Syrian Government (via the government's doctors union / syndicate).³⁶¹

Access to medicines and equipment is hindered by price gouging. Pharmacies are present across the city, though the prices of medicines are regarded as exorbitant. Most medical supplies must be shipped from Aleppo and Damascus (and other GoS-controlled areas). Local sources suggest the regime has placed virtually unaffordable high tariffs on medical products destined for SANES-controlled areas.³⁶²

The lack of medicines has resulted in a thriving black market. Rising drug prices and scarcity has allowed war profiteers and smugglers to take advantage of the situation. Smugglers import costly foreign medicine (via Turkey) from Europe, China, and India into Northeastern Syria.³⁶³ In many cases, drugs in local markets are reportedly poor quality or beyond their expiration date, leading to increased drug poisonings.³⁶⁴

Figure 8.6: Medical staff and facilities³⁶⁵

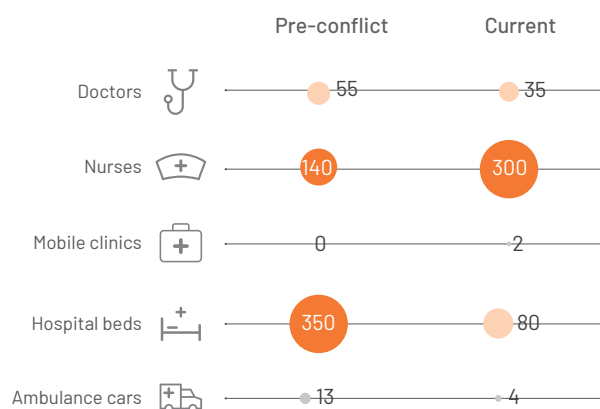


Figure 8.7: Main challenges faced in accessing medication in the past month (Feb., 2019)³⁶⁶

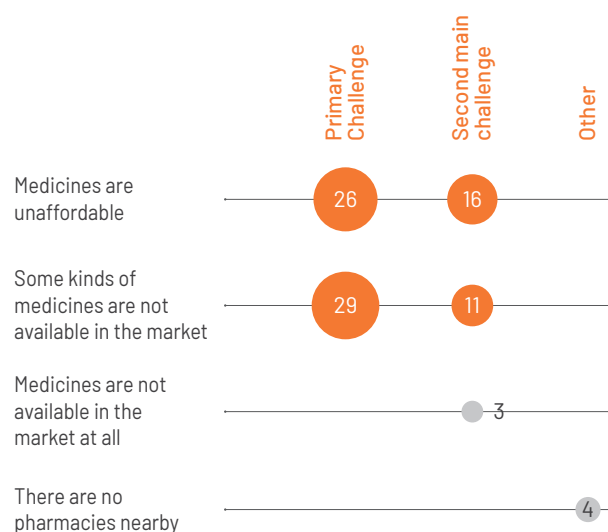
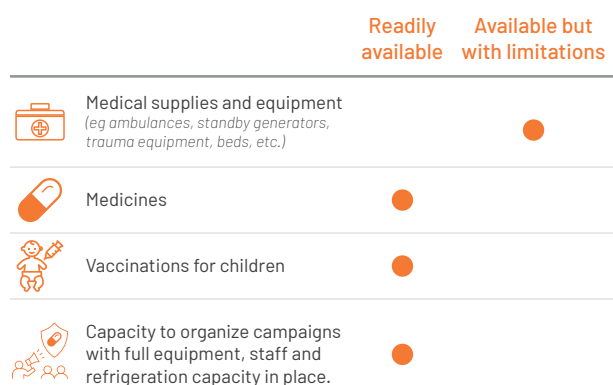


Figure 8.8: Access to medical equipment, medicines and staff³⁶⁷



Current health interventions

In early 2019, no major government-led or initiated infrastructure investments were being reported by local health experts.³⁶⁸

Several local and international NGO's, charities, military / security programmes, and private sector providers are present in the city. The relationship between national and international NGOs with local authorities and/or the central government is reportedly strong. This can also be said of private sector actors, programmes linked to the military, security actors, and community-based organisations. The relationship between local NGO's and charities with local authorities is considered acceptable.³⁶⁹

According to local sources, the involvement of international health providers has resulted in an increase in the health systems service area. The "catchment" area has grown to encompass the entire city, including areas most affected by the conflict. When available, ambulances have been deployed to affected areas.

In contrast, rural areas are almost entirely dependent on Al-Hasakeh city for medical services. Without mobile outreach, these remote locations (some up to 60 km away) lack access to the medical facilities. Without mobile outreach, many of these communities have experienced neglect leading to widespread malnutrition, disease, and early mortality (particularly amongst women and children).

Medical reporting has also evolved over the period of the conflict. Prior to the conflict, medical reports were distributed from one point to the entire city. Medical points are now more widely available. A recent decision has prompted the deployment of administrative staff to medical information points in various areas of the city. In an effort to improve healthcare response, staff are required to provide issue reports to local officials when directed.³⁷⁰

Table 8.1: Health care interventions³⁷¹

Service Type	Location of services	Implementing organization(s)
Pediatric medical treatment	Al Kallasa Neighbourhood	The Armenian Association (NNGO)
Rehabilitation of the National Hospital	Al Watani Neighbourhood	Médecins Sans Frontières (INGO)
Autism awareness project	Al Mufti Neighbourhood	AMARA Center (NNGO)
Psychosocial support to IDP children using music	Unspecified	Al-Hasakeh for Relief and Development (NNGO)

Sectoral considerations

- Humanitarian efforts should be focused on providing services for displaced people residing in nearby camps and remote areas within the Governorate. This should include the introduction of additional mobile health clinics capable of reaching patients in areas without services in near proximity.
- Special attention should be made to serve areas lacking healthcare facilities. This includes the city's northern neighbourhoods facilities as well as areas south of the Khabour River. Access issues (especially in regards to safety and security) should be addressed for specific neighbourhoods, including Abo Amsha, Abo Bakr, Al Gazal, Al Thawra, M'eishiyeh, and Msheirfeh
- Support efforts to improve coordination between local health care providers. Rectify administrative jurisdiction and overlapping by the GoS and SANES. This includes coordination with stakeholders on the ground to ensure joint monitoring and information-gathering.
- Enhance the healthcare systems ability to care for the needs of vulnerable groups. These include health-vulnerable individuals in high(er) density neighbourhoods and IDP's living in Al-Hasakeh city and nearby camps.
- Ensure the proper disposal of medical waste. As a new sanitary landfill has come online, resources should be devoted to monitoring handling and disposal efforts.
- Prioritize access to affordable medical supplies, hospital beds and other necessary medical equipment. Additional capacity development is needed for medical staffing. This includes providing training to medical staff in specialized areas of care.
- Address the high cost of medicines and medical services through a comprehensive approach. This may include addressing supply lines closed due to bans on imports. It may also require expanding systems for free and/or subsidized basic healthcare.

- 340** Partially damaged facilities include Al-Hasakeh's pediatric hospital in the southern Al Villat Neighbourhood and the Directorate of School Health the central Al Ma'ab Al Baladi Neighbourhood
- 341** Asset inventory of Al-Hasakeh conducted by *UrbAN-S*, February 2019
- 342** As part of an agreement negotiated with PYD, where no SANES administrative function exists, the GoS-controlled state institution is the primary service provider. This includes the National Hospital. Source: "Context Assessment: Al-Hasakeh," *UrbAN-S*, December 2018.
- 343** Although the overlap in administrative responsibilities are a source of decreased social cohesion, according to local sources, some governance functions under the two authorities are efficiently coordinated. Source: "Context Assessment: Al-Hasakeh," *UrbAN-S*, December 2018.
- 344** "Humanitarian Needs Overview 2019," *UNOCHA*, March 2019, https://hno-syria.org/data/downloads/en/full_hno_2019.pdf
- 345** *UrbAN-S* Analysis, January 2020
- 346** Interview with local health expert by *UrbAN-S*, March 2019.
- 347** Abbas Ali Moussa, "Death From Human Waste in Syria's Hospitals: an Investigation", *raseef22.net*, September 2, 2019, <https://bit.ly/384PUWg>
- 348** Survey of local area experts in Al-Hasakeh by *UrbAN-S*, February 2019
- 349** Asset inventory of Al-Hasakeh conducted by *UrbAN-S*, February 2019 along with analysis conducted by *UrbAN-S*, October 2019
- 350** Survey of local area experts in Al-Hasakeh by *UrbAN-S*, February 2019
- 351** Asset inventory of Al-Hasakeh conducted by *UrbAN-S*, February 2019
- 352** Ibid.
- 353** Samer Al-Ahmad "Al-Hasakah: The deteriorating health situation exacerbates the suffering of civilians", *Jeroon*, February 8, 2019, <https://geiroon.net/archives/148258>
- 354** Interview with local health expert by *UrbAN-S*, March 2019.
- 355** Bashar Khalil, "A vacuum in the health sector, following the migration of doctors ... and calls for their return" (فراغ في القطاع الصحي إثر هجرة الأطباء.. ودعوات لعودتهم) *ARTA*, March 26, 2019, <http://www.artafm.com/opinion/15736>
- 356** Ibid.
- 357** Samer Al-Ahmad "Al-Hasakah: The deteriorating health situation exacerbates the suffering of civilians" (الحسكة.. تردي الواقع الصحي) (يفاقم معاناة المدنيين), *Jeroon*, February 8, 2019, <https://geiroon.net/archives/148258>
- 358** Ibid.
- 359** Ibid.
- 360** Ibid.
- 361** Ibid.
- 362** Interview with local health expert by *UrbAN-S*, March 2019
- 363** Samer Al-Ahmad "Al-Hasakah: The deteriorating health situation exacerbates the suffering of civilians" (الحسكة.. تردي الواقع الصحي) (يفاقم معاناة المدنيين), *Jeroon*, February 8, 2019, <https://geiroon.net/archives/148258>
- 364** Ibid.
- 365** Interview with local health expert by *UrbAN-S*, March 2019
- 366** Survey of local area experts in Al-Hasakeh by *UrbAN-S*, February 2019
- 367** Interview with local health expert by *UrbAN-S*, March 2019.
- 368** Ibid.
- 369** Ibid.
- 370** Ibid.
- 371** Ibid.

9. Education

Overview

The city's education sector has seen dramatic changes since the onset of the Syrian conflict. The sector has experienced changes in enrollment, resources, and curriculum. Administrators, teachers, students, and residents alike have been affected as the city came under dominant security and administrative authority by the Kurdish-led Self Administration of Northeast Syria (SANES) in 2016.

Based on the city's dual administrative structure, the SANES operates 112 of Al-Hasakeh's 140 education institutions.³⁷² Except for schools under GoS administration (primarily in vicinity of security square), SANES administrators are responsible for the majority of public schools. These include pre-schools, kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, and seven colleges and technical schools. Education services in the city's five central neighbourhoods, or 'Security Square' area, are operated by the Government of Syria.³⁷³ These include 20 schools, five vocational and one university branch.³⁷⁴

Prior to the conflict, the GoS exercised direct administrative control over the education sector through the Ministry of Education. Funding was sourced through the national system. Experts suggest that students regularly attended in all areas of the city. Since the conflict's onset, 13 percent of city schools have been rendered non or partially operational.

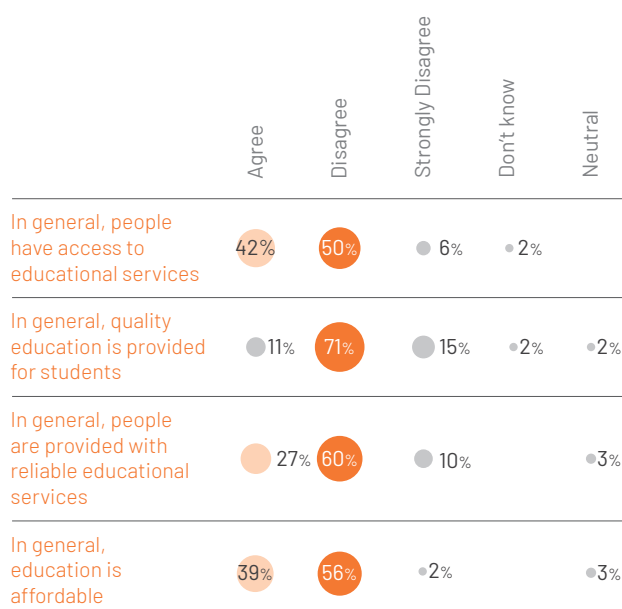
Recent military incursion by Turkey into Kurdish areas of Northeast Syria has put additional pressure on schools. Reports suggest that "Operation Peace Spring" resulted in 18,000 IDPs now residing in the city. Families fleeing violence from northern areas (including Ras Al Ain) have taken shelter in several of Al-Hasakeh's schools. At least one school in the northern Al Mufti neighbourhood is now serving as a shelter.³⁷⁵

Current education needs in the community

In 2018, the United Nations estimated that 68,654 people were in need of education services in the Al-Hasakeh sub-district.³⁷⁶ Local sources suggest major impediments include the closure of some schools, security (and access) concerns, poor quality of maintenance and the lack of utilities and services necessary to operate facilities.³⁷⁷

Local area experts are mixed in their assessment of the city's education system. Nearly 70 percent of local area representatives suggest quality is low and unreliable. (See figure 9.1, "Local area expert perceptions of city education").

Figure 9.1: Local area expert perceptions of city education. February, 2019³⁷⁸



Kurdish- imposed curriculum fragmenting families and disrupting Al-Hasakeh's education system

Changes to school curriculum and management from the previous GoS-controlled operating procedures have led to tensions amongst Kurdish and non-Kurdish residents. When introduced in mid-2017, the SANES curriculum introduced PYD political ideology and vision, geography, and history. The curriculum segregated students by language according to Kurdish and Arabic ethnicities. These changes have led to community disputes and nearly a month of protests amongst Arab residents opposing the Kurdish curriculum. In September 2017, the Asayish forces closed several predominantly Arab schools in the Ghuwieran neighbourhood. Reports indicate that teachers refusing to accept the SANES curriculum were detained.³⁷⁹

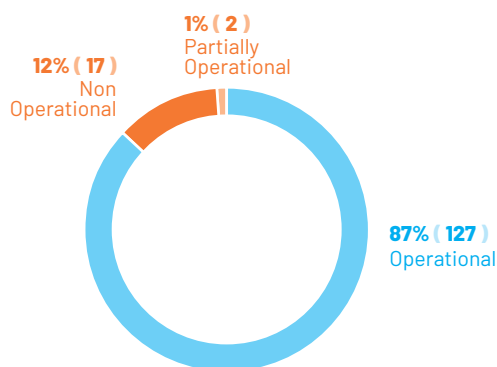
Introduction of the SANES curriculum has led many families to transfer their children to GoS-controlled schools. Residents cite the desire for students to receive instruction in the recognized national curriculum as their primary complaint. This has resulted in higher class sizes in GoS schools, in some cases ballooning up to an estimated 75 students per teacher.³⁸⁰ Of note is the fact that even some Kurdish families send their children to GoS- or privately- run schools that have adopted the government's (approved) curriculum.³⁸¹

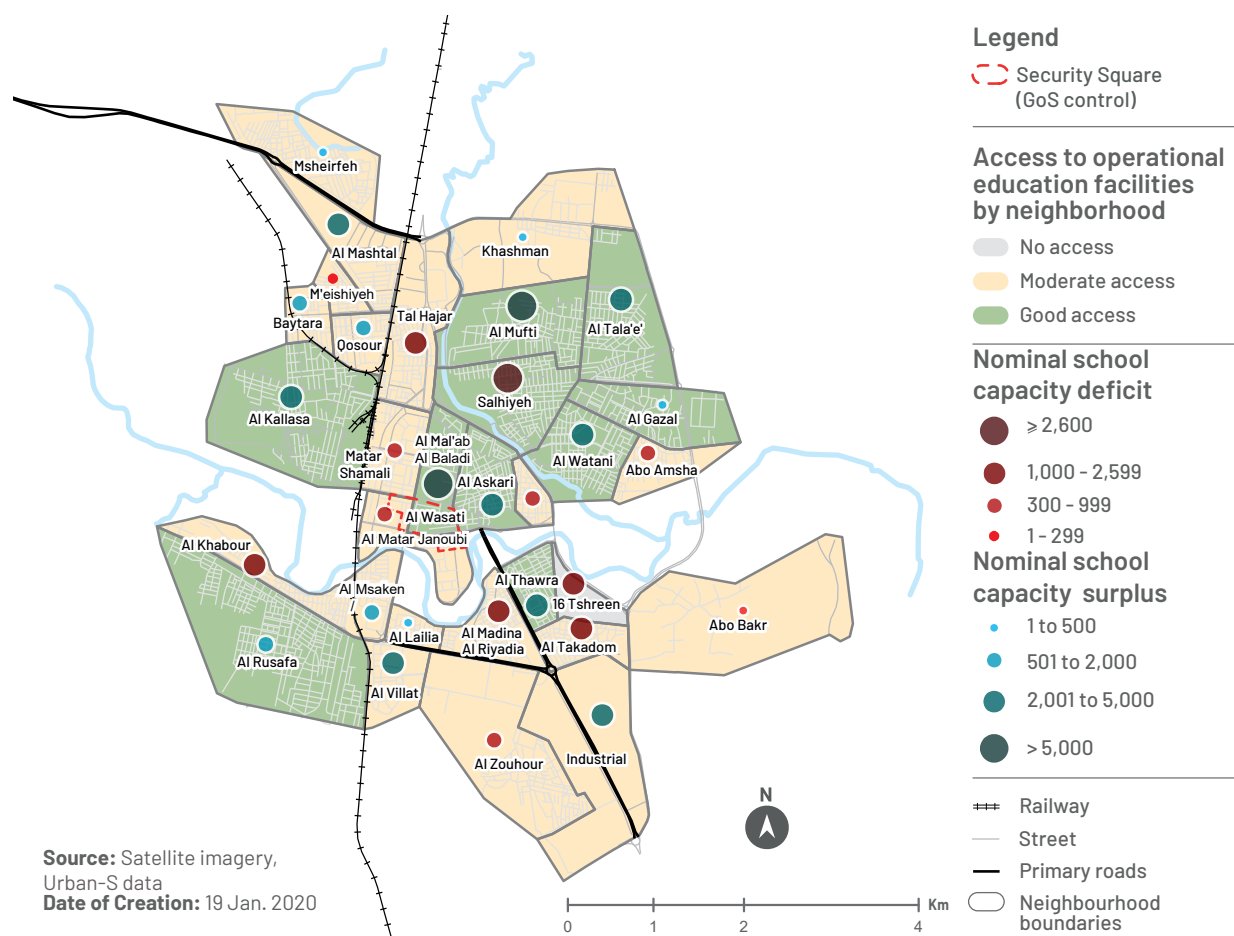
The duality of education systems and their inability to agree on a mutual solution is not only an academic dilemma but can further exacerbate social tensions.³⁸² In response to community concerns, SANES administered schools have introduced policies which obligate primary schools to teach in each students' mother tongue for the first three years (either Kurdish, Arabic, or Syriac). After that, students have the option to complete their education in whichever language they choose.³⁸³

Education infrastructure

Nearly 40 facilities in the city have been damaged. Six percent have been completely destroyed, while 18 percent have been partially damaged. Most damage to facilities has occurred in either the city's southern neighbourhoods or those along the north bank of the Al-Khabour River. Three-quarters of the city's facilities are unharmed. An additional twelve percent, or 17 facilities, are rendered non-operational.

Figure 9.2: Operational status of education institutions February, 2019³⁸⁴



Map 9.1: Operational status of education institutions and school capacity by neighbourhood ³⁸⁵

Capacity of education facilities

Analysis of city schools suggests that there are gaps in education services. Like other city services, access and functionality reflects the area's ethno-sectarian divide. Arab and IDP communities outside of the city in the southern rural Al-Hasakeh subdistrict have been largely neglected and underserved by SANES.

Within the city, schools have adapted in order to accommodate its student's needs. Prior to the conflict, city schools enjoyed a healthy surplus of seats. Based on current analysis, a surplus still exists, though it has been reduced with the decrease of operational facilities. Ten schools currently operate double shifts to serve as many students as possible.

Local experts suggest the city's public schools were designed to meet the needs of approximately 40,000 students. However, there are less than 30,000 students currently registered.³⁸⁶

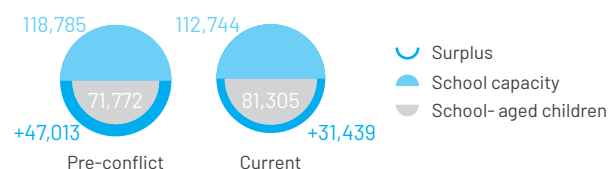
Figure 9.3: School capacity surplus. February, 2019 ³⁸⁷



Figure 9.4: Destroyed and non-operational public elementary school in Al-Msaken Neighbourhood. Photo by UrbAN-S (Feb. 2019)

Figure 9.5: Education facilities by type and operational status. February, 2019 ³⁸⁸

	Operational	Partially operational	Non operational
Elementary School	74	1	15
Secondary School	19	1	1
Pre-K/Kindergarten	9		
Vocational School	9		
Education Office	6		
Primary and Secondary School	6		
College/University	4		
Unknown			1
Grand Total	127	2	17

Education staffing, supplies and materials

Both the city and surrounding countryside suffer from a severe shortage of teaching staff. According to local experts, prior to the conflict around 11,000 teachers were serving in Al-Hasakeh's 140 schools.³⁸⁹ This number has been reduced by less than half, at approximately 5,000 registered teachers. Of those registered, 3,000 are "on duty" and actively teaching. Teacher salaries have also remained static. Salaries are fixed to pay schedules established in 2011 which has not taken into account declining purchasing power of the past nine years.

The most reported concerns include: the lack of available teaching staff for scientific / technical subjects, migration of the most competent teachers as well as a lack of teaching supplies and technical instruments for advanced instruction. Education supplies and materials are available but limited. Administrators complain of insufficient heating fuel, electricity, and distribution of potable water.³⁹⁰ A 2019 study of education in Al-Hasakeh Governorate has reported 54 percent of enrolled students lacked textbooks, the highest of any governorate.³⁹¹



Figure 9.6: Al Ferasat nursery pre-k and kindergarten. Operational school in Al Madina Al Riyadia Neighbourhood. Photo by UrbAN-S (Feb. 2019)

Interventions and restorative works to education infrastructure

In early 2019, non-governmental organizations were not involved in providing education services. However, sources suggest that coordination and consultation is underway for NGO programming to begin.

According to local sources, the Education Authority (SANES) has been active in restoring many city schools. Construction and rehabilitation activities have occurred in two southern and six northern neighbourhoods. (See table 9.1, "Education interventions") In addition, new schools are currently being built within existing residential buildings in the Khirbet Jamous area of Ghazal neighbourhood.

In order to increase the capacity of the education sector, the Education Authority (SANES) has recently enacted programs to support additional teaching staff. The Authority has begun providing summer courses for staff to earn teacher certificates. In addition, the University's Faculty of Education has announced that it will provide free, year-long, courses to its students.³⁹²

Table 9.1: Education interventions ³⁹³

Service Type	Location of services	Implementing organization(s)
Constructing a building for summer student activities (sport music development)	Al Rusafa Neighbourhood	Education Authority (SANES)
Construction of an Academy for Rojava University Graduates	Qosour Nieghbourhood	Education Authority (SANES)
Rehabilitation of Jarir Meshref School	Al Rusafa Neighbourhood	Education Authority (SANES)
Rehabilitation of Omar Ben Alkhatab School	Al Rusafa Neighbourhood	Education Authority (SANES)
Rehabilitation of Haroun Alrasheed School	Al Rusafa Neighbourhood	Education Authority (SANES)
Rehabilitation of Labid Ben Rabee'a School	Baytara Nieghbourhood	Education Authority (SANES)
Rehabilitation of Mahmoud Issa School	Msheirfeh Neighbourhood	Education Authority (SANES)
Rehabilitation of Saif Aldawleh School	Qosour Nieghbourhood	Education Authority (SANES)
Rehabilitation of Nizar Qabani School	Al Mufti Neighbourhood	Education Authority (SANES)
Rehabilitation of Abi Bakr School	Abo Bakr Neighbourhood	Education Authority (SANES)
Rehabilitation of New Khashman School	Al Tala'e' Neighbourhood	Education Authority (SANES)
Rehabilitation of Sa'eed Sa'do School	Al Gazal Neighbourhood	Education Authority (SANES)
Provision of school supplies	Unspecified	GAV Organisation (NNGO)

Sectoral considerations

- Increase access to housing for displaced population currently sheltered in educational facilities. Ensure that educational activities can resume by restoring and upgrading schools to operational use after use as shelters.
- Support and facilitate further mediation over disputes around curriculum and education alternatives. Build on the policy work ensuring culture, values, and language are integral in student learning.
- Offer curriculum which fulfils exit examination requirements of both administrations. This includes assuring tests and qualifications support entry into higher education or vocational training.
- Ensure education facilities are restored and upgraded in areas of higher population and higher need. The current neighbourhood imbalance of available schools relative to existing population may lead to inefficient deployment of resources and recovery investment.
- Ensure that funding is available to sustainably pay teacher salaries. Salaries should adapt to market forces such as the cost of living, the demand for teachers and salary levels in comparable professions (such as health care).

- 372** See city profile section 5, "Governance and Stakeholder Analysis" for an explanation of the dual governance and administrative structure in Al-Hasakeh
- 373** The five neighbourhoods are Al Wasati, Al Matar Janoubi, Al Askari, Matar Shamali, Al Mal'ab (Al Baladi)
- 374** Al-Furat University (Faculty of Law) operates a branch in Al Mal'ab Al Baladi neighbourhood.
- 375** Abd Al Haleem Sleimam, "Turkish military operation ... hundreds of dead, wounded and displaced, traumatized" (العملية العسكرية) *Independent Arabia*, 17 October 2019, <https://bit.ly/31lnS6s>
- 376** "Humanitarian Needs Overview 2018," *UNOCHA*, November 2017, https://hno-syria.org/data/downloads/en/full_hno_2018.pdf
- 377** Interview with local education expert by *UrbAN-S*, March 2019
- 378** Survey of local area experts in Jaramana by *UrbAN-S*, February 2019
- 379** "Context Assessment: Al-Hasakeh," *UrbAN-S*, December 2018
- 380** Ibid.
- 381** Sardar Mlla Drwish, "The Kurdish School Curriculum in Syria: A Step Towards Self-Rule?," 20 December 2017, *Atlantic Council*, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/syriasource/the-kurdish-school-curriculum-in-syria-a-step-towards-self-rule/>.
- 382** Ahmad Hamza, "This is the story of the curriculum in Al Jazeera Canton" (أهالي وُفُدرسون في مناطق الجزيرة.. أهالي وُفُدرسون في مناطق الجزيرة) *Al Souria Net*, 30 May 2019, <https://bit.ly/37P0gXT>.
- 383** Interview with local education expert by *UrbAN-S*, March 2019.
- 384** Asset inventory of Al-Hasakeh conducted by *UrbAN-S*, February 2019
- 385** Asset inventory of Al-Hasakeh conducted by *UrbAN-S*, February 2019 along with analysis conducted by *UrbAN-S* in January 2020
- 386** Interview with local education expert by *UrbAN-S*, March 2019
- 387** *UrbAN-S* Analysis. January 2020
- 388** Asset inventory of Al-Hasakeh conducted by *UrbAN-S*, February 2019
- 389** Interview with local education expert by *UrbAN-S*, March 2019
- 390** Ibid.
- 391** "Schools in Syria 2019 Edition 05 - Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) / Information management Unit (IMU)". December 2019, <https://www.acu-sy.org/imu-reports>
- 392** Interview with local education expert by *UrbAN-S*, March 2019.
- 393** Interview with local education specialist by *UrbAN-S*, March 2019.

10. Water and sanitation

Overview

The Syrian government and the Al-Hasakeh Municipality offer water supply in Al-Hasakeh.³⁹⁴ The Water Authority falls under the supervision of the Self-Administration, which is responsible for maintaining the water network in Al-Hasakeh City and in the governorate.³⁹⁵

Before the conflict, access to drinking water through the public network was always possible in all parts of the city.³⁹⁶ However, the regime has been neglecting most of the areas in the eastern part of the city, including not linking these areas with the sanitation network.³⁹⁷ Throughout the conflict, the frequent blackouts and the distance between water sources and the city were the greatest challenges in restoring the pre-conflict water network capacity.³⁹⁸

The main source of drinking water in Al-Hasakeh is provided by the Al-Alouk water station, about 70 km to the northwest.³⁹⁹ It supplies the city with 175,000 cubic meters of water a day.⁴⁰⁰ The Water Authority directs water through 1,200 pipes to Al-Hama water treatment plant, also located to the northwest of Al-Hasakeh.⁴⁰¹ Then, the station provides water to a number of cities and villages through underground pipelines, starting in the villages of Al-Thiba, Al-Daoudia and Madbabaa in the Tamr City valley and ending in Al-Hasakeh City.⁴⁰²

Al-Alouk station has 30 wells, 12 pumps and a large water tank with a capacity of 25,000 cubic meters. In September 2018, the station was in operation for only 12 hours a day due to intermittent power cuts.⁴⁰³ As of June 2019, Al-Alouk Station had eight pumps ready for operation and four unoperational pumps as a result of the conflict.^{404 405}

Figure 10.1: Al-Alouk water station, Arta, November 2019⁴⁰⁶



Impact of the conflict

Throughout the conflict, the city's residents have maintained limited access to water.⁴⁰⁷ However, water supply was often cut off in some areas with access limited between 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and again from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.⁴⁰⁸

In July 2018, there were overall serious water shortages in northern Syria. As a result, the Self-Administration taxed "excessive water consumption", and it decided to set the price for a barrel (200 liters) of trucked water at rising temperatures in summer in the midst of a water crisis to 150 Syrian pounds.⁴⁰⁹ Two hundred fifty villages and towns in the northeast of Al-Hasakeh were suffering from a severe water crisis and the actors concerned tried looking for solutions.⁴¹⁰

During operation peace spring, on October 9th, 2019, the Turkish army hit Al-Alouk water station and that caused damage to it. The station's water shortage affected 400,000 people.⁴¹¹ Clashes in the area prevented the water supply team from reaching the water station to restore the water supply.⁴¹² During this period when the water station was out of service, the city started getting its water supply from dams, such as Tishreen Dam, 235 kilometers west of the city.⁴¹³

On October 14th 2019, a water maintenance team reached Al-Alouk water station to carry out only the urgent repairs.⁴¹⁴ Between October 15th and November 4th, the Syrian-Arab Red Cross (SARC) and staff from the Water Management Directorate (WRMD) undertook ten repair missions to Al-Alouk. Insecurity in the region and reported explosive remnants of war (ERW) and unexploded ordnance (UXO) led to the failure of six of these missions. As a result, Al-Alouk began pumping water and reached Al-Hasakeh city on November 14th.⁴¹⁵

The water maintenance team carried out a project in which employees from the Directorate of Water Resource Management (WRMD) drilled 24 holes and connected them to the main power supply line at Debraseyah. On November 14th, Al-Alouk station began pumping water into the city.⁴¹⁶

Al-Alouk water station was influenced by the changing power dynamics in northern Syria. The station relies on power supply to operate four of its pumping engines. The lack of safety led to an interruption in the fuel supply.⁴¹⁷ This increases the risk of station failure. Therefore, in November 2019 the Water Authority reported that they are looking for possible alternatives for a secondary water supply, for example by extending the network and incorporating Nafasha wells, 20 kilometers east of the city, or by incorporating Tel Barak wells 40 kilometers northeast of the city.⁴¹⁸

The flooding of Al-Khabour River

In addition to Al-Alouk water station, the Al-Khabour River is one of the city's water resources. In December 2018, water flow reached 130 m³/s which led to widespread flooding and water entering many homes.⁴¹⁹

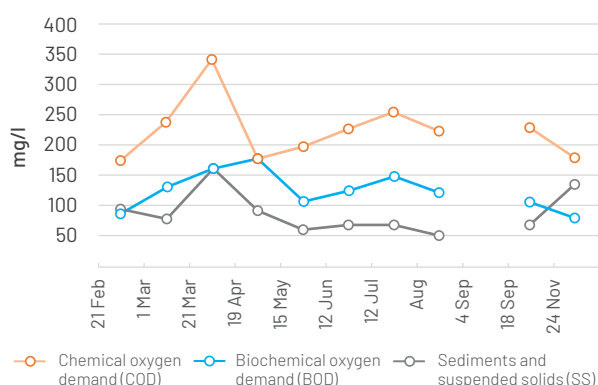
In March 2019, the highest water level of the river in Tal Tamr region was measured with a flow rate of 105 m³/s. While its flow in Al-Hasakeh City was 60 m³/s.⁴²⁰ The Water Directorate instructed people to take precautionary measures in areas near Al-Khabour River as water flow continued to increase.⁴²¹

Wastewater treatment and contamination

From March 2008, there was an existing wastewater treatment plant in Ras Al-Ain with a capacity of 2,130 m³/day.⁴²² Since there is only one wastewater treatment plant, most of the wastewater is channeled to the Al-Khabour river via a triple channel with round pipes.⁴²³

A high concentration of sediments and suspended solids (SS), chemical oxygen demand (COD) and biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) were found in the city's sewage network. When it rains, the amount of pollutants increases and this indicates that some pollutants are deposited in the network pipes (see figure 10.2 Sewage accumulation point pollution level change).⁴²⁴

Figure 10.2: Sewage accumulation point pollution level change (2008)

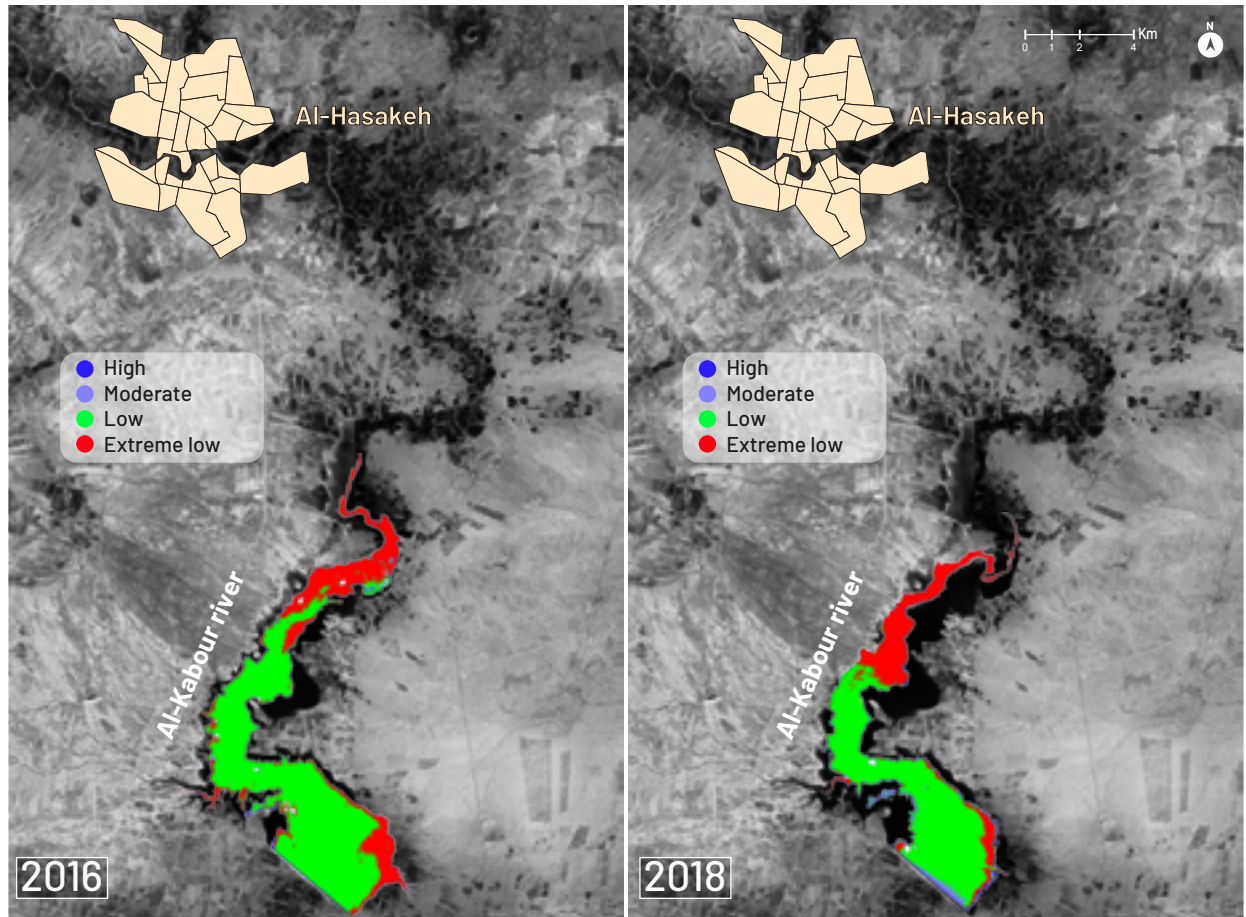


The farmers used the water of Al-Khabour River for irrigation. The wastewater from Ras Al-Ain and from the Turkish side of the border pollutes the river. Even after the wastewater treatment plant came to a standstill,

industrial oil residues continued to contaminate the river.⁴²⁵ JICA contends the main cause of river water pollution is the untreated urban wastewater.⁴²⁶

Water quality of Al-Khabour River

Figure 10.3: Trophic status⁴²⁷ in Al-Kabour River between 2016 and 2018⁴²⁸



Trophic status of Al-Khabour River has been measured by the Sentinel 2A satellite data for the period between 2016 and 2018. Decrease in the trophic status of the river as a result of increased Chlorophyll-a concentration may indicate the presence of external pollutants.⁴²⁹

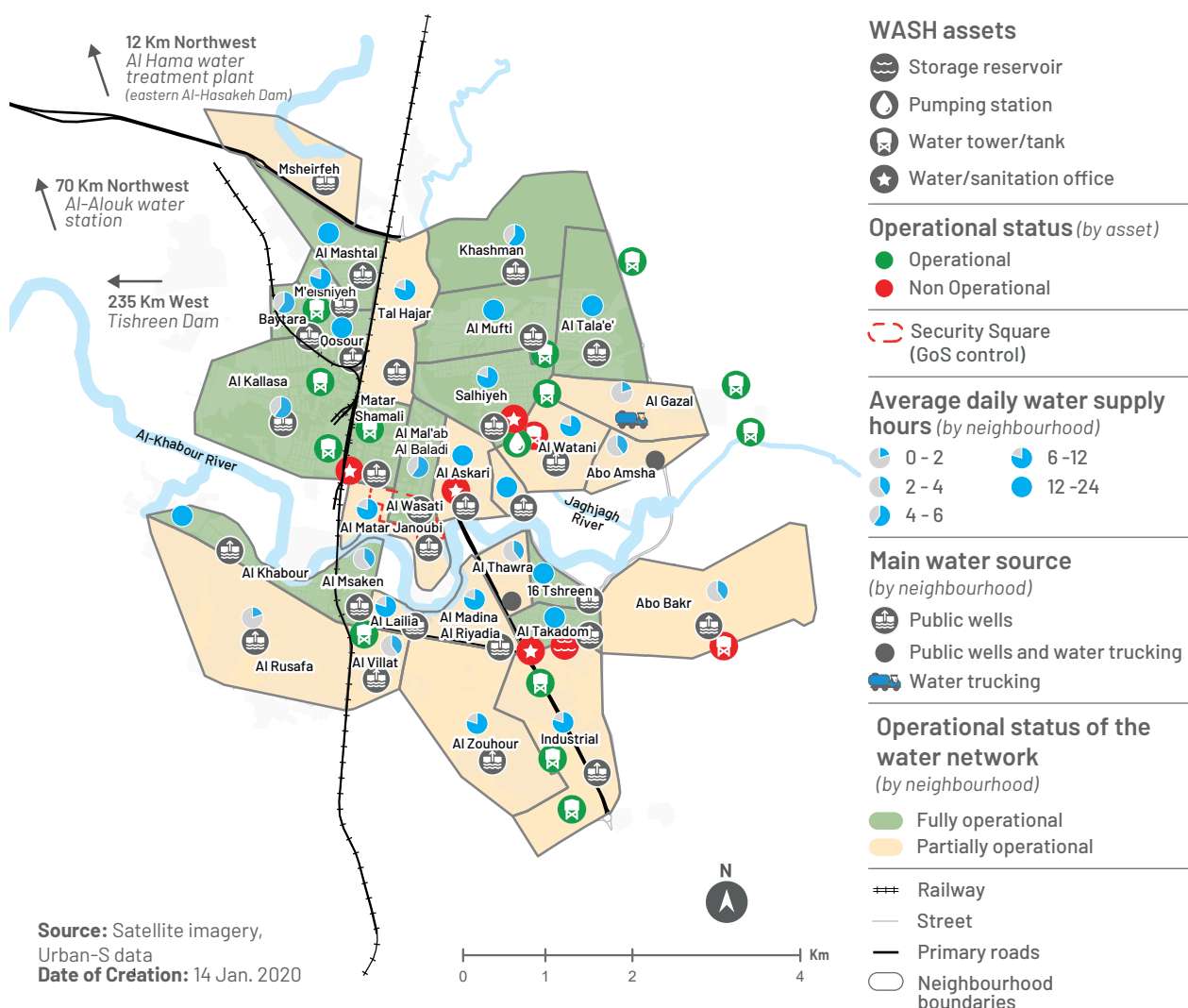
Water quality of Jaghjagh River⁴³⁰

Jaghjagh River is one of the main branches for Al-Khabour River. According to the Syrian standards, the river's water can be used for irrigation purposes.⁴³¹ The untreated introduction of fertilizers, industrial waste and agricultural pesticides into the river increased the values for the chemical oxygen demand (COD) and biochemical oxygen demand (BOD).

The river water showed high ammonium NH_4^+ values at some sampling points, making the water unfit for irrigation for crops for human consumption.

Operational status of water and sanitation infrastructure

Map 10.1: Water network operability. Facilities,⁴³² daily supply, and main source of drinking water⁴³³



The northern parts of Al-Hasakeh offer better services than the southern parts. Arab communities and IDPs are concentrated in the under-served and neglected southern parts of Al-Hasakeh. Gaps in Al-Hasakeh and in the surrounding areas reflected the area's ethno-sectarian divide (see profile section 3, "Demographics and population").

Sixty nine percent of the neighbourhoods received over six hours of tap water supply from the public network daily (see figure 10.4, "Water supply through public network, by neighbourhood"). Therefore, most parts of the city depend on the network as the main source of water (see figure 10.5, "Community's main source of drinking water, by neighbourhood").

Figure 10.4: Daily water supply through public network, by percentage of neighbourhood⁴³⁴

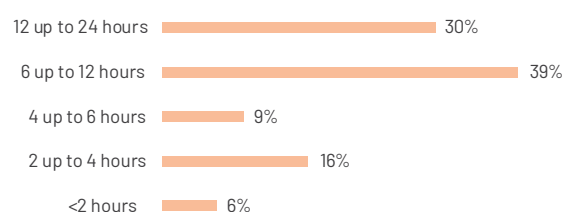
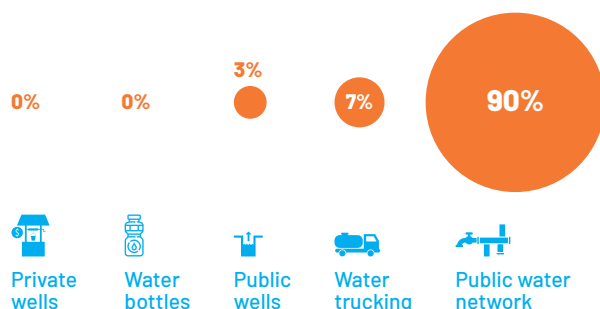


Figure 10.5: Community's main source of drinking water, by percentage of neighbourhood⁴³⁵



Thirty five percent of the city's public water network is partially damaged. While 52 percent of the network is partially operational (see figure 10.6, "Water network damage level and operational status, by neighbourhood").

WASH projects cover all parts of the city, with the exception of Abu Amsha, part of the Rusafa District, and the northern part of the Mufti District. There is an old water network in these parts of the city. However, it requires maintenance, which leads to an insufficient water supply. The sanitary facilities in these parts of the city are weak.⁴³⁶

Recent regulations have affected the water sector. This includes monitoring drinking water for excess use of water. A rationing program has been developed for drinking water (throughout the city) that regulates the drinking water supply and coordinates the water distribution.⁴³⁷

In November 2019, some neighbourhoods relied on water trucking (750,000 litres per day). These neighbourhoods are Khashman Al Talá'e, Abo Amsha, southeastern and southern western neighbourhoods serving an estimated 107,000 people.⁴³⁸

Fifty eight percent of the sanitation network is partially operational, 35.5 percent is operational. The sanitation network in the industrial and Al Gazal neighbourhoods is not operational (see figure 10.7, "Operational status for the sanitation network, by neighbourhood").

Figure 10.6: Operational status of the sanitation network, by percentage of neighbourhoods⁴³⁹

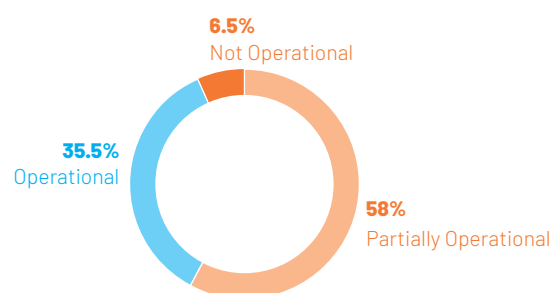
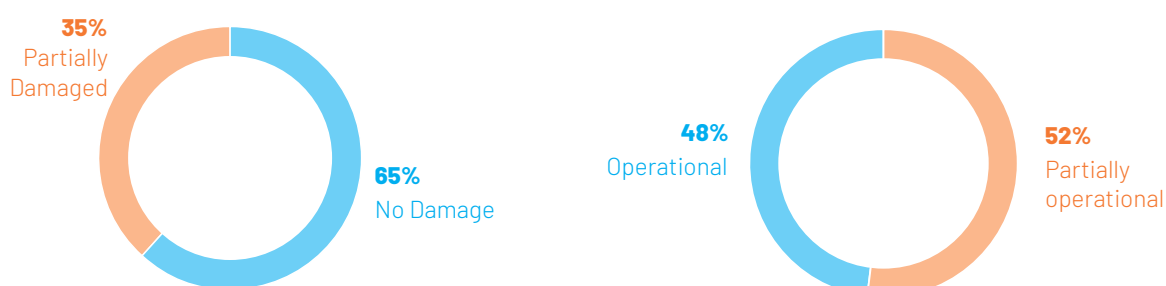


Figure 10.7: Water network damage level and operational status, by percentage of neighbourhoods⁴⁴⁰



Water and sanitation interventions

Table 10.1: Investments in WASH sector

<i>Project type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Actor</i>
Rehabilitation of sewage pipes	This rehabilitation is located south of Al Mufti neighbourhood at a price of 16,495,202 SYP and a length of 1,104 meters	Al-Hasakeh City Council (GoS)
Extension of sewage pipes	This expansion was in the southeastern neighbourhoods. The pipes have a diameter of 40 cm and a length of 886 meters. This expansion costs 12,089,000 SYP	Al-Hasakeh City Council (GoS)
Extension of the sewage pipe	This extension was located in the Al Kallasa neighbourhood and cost 8,174,380 SYP with a length of 946 meters	Al-Hasakeh City Council (GoS)
Main water pipe expansion	This expansion took place in Khashman neighbourhood with a length of 1,700 meters	Al-Hasakeh City Council (GoS)
Expansion of the drinking water supply network	This expansion took place in Al Kallasa neighbourhood with a length of 2,700 meters	Al-Hasakeh City Council (GoS)
Extension and renovation of the Al-Hol line	This expansion took place in the Al Gazal neighbourhood with a length of 1,800 meters	Al-Hasakeh City Council (GoS)
Expansion of the main water network	This expansion took place at Khashman neighbourhood with a length of 600 meters	Action contre la Faim
Installation of a new water network	This new water network installation took place in Rusafa neighbourhood with a length of 570 meters	Action contre la Faim
Installation of a water network	This new water network installation took place in Al Kallasa over a length of 1,000 meters	Action contre la Faim
Supply of polyethylene pipes to the Water Authority (SA) ⁴⁴¹	Four thousand meters of pipes	ICRC
Creation of five wells ⁴⁴²	These wells are located in the eastern part of the city	ICRC
Provision of sodium hypochlorite to the Water Directorate ⁴⁴³	200 tons of sodium hypochlorite to sterilize the water from any contamination	UNICEF
Maintenance for Al-Hama Water Treatment Plant ⁴⁴⁴	Al-Hama Water Treatment Plant is located in the Eastern Al-Hasakeh Dam. The maintenance of the water station aims to keep it ready in case the pumping stops from Al-Alouk station in Ras Al-Ain countryside	Water Authority (SA) and UNICEF

In December 2019, the Self-Administration Water Authority revealed that non-governmental organizations play a major role in supporting and maintaining the water infrastructure in and around Al-Hasakeh. Non-governmental organizations – UNICEF, SARC, the International Committee of the Red Cross and Action contre la Faim (Action Against Hunger) – provided vital support in the area of water and sterilization equipment. They also worked on delivering water to rural communities.⁴⁴⁵

Sectoral considerations

- Preparing and supporting the implementation of a water and security plan to ensure equal services in all parts of the city.
- Provide sustainable funding for the Al-Hasakeh City Municipality. Financial support is required to maintain Al-Alouk water station.
- Supporting the rehabilitation of the city's water network, as 35 percent of it is partially damaged. Water main and minor supply pipes must be rehabilitated to reduce water loss.
- Assistance with the maintenance of the Al-Hasakeh sewage system, as 55 percent of it is partially damaged and three percent is destroyed.
- Supporting the restoration of energy networks to ensure the operation of water treatment and pumping systems.
- Establishment of regulations for the cultivation of vegetables, especially for freshly eaten crops. Because these plants are irrigated directly from the Jaghjagh River, which is considered threatening in some locations.

Figure 10.8: Rehabilitation of the sewage network in Al-Hasakeh City, SDF Press, September 2018 ⁴⁴⁶



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11. Energy and electricity

Overview

Tabqa-Al Bawab and Tishreen-Mabrouka supply lines were the main electricity lines feeding the governorate of Al-Hasakeh. Also, Al-Sweidyah power station is considered as the electricity source for service departments that are excluded from rationing hours.⁴⁴⁷

Before the eruption of the conflict in 2011, the electricity provision in Al-Hasakeh was in a good condition. The capacity of the electricity supply main station was 600 megawatt supplied from the 230 kilovolts line. This supply station was destroyed during the conflict.⁴⁴⁸

Al-Hasakeh electricity provision faced many challenges during the conflict. These challenges were related to (1) the insufficient availability of materials and supplies, (2) the low capacity of power generating stations, (3) destruction of the main power station located three kilometers south of the city, and (4) theft of the main cables by the warring militias.⁴⁴⁹

In March 2019, the capacity of electricity supply was 66 megawatt from the 20 kilovolts electricity transforming stations.⁴⁵⁰ Lack of materials and low financial capacity of the energy authority to rehabilitate the destroyed stations limit the ability to restore higher capacity.⁴⁵¹

Impact of the conflict

The outbreak of the conflict in 2011 caused damage to the electricity grid and electricity provision in Al-Hasakeh governorate. Al-Hasakah Governorate is one of the most affected Syrian governorates in terms of the electricity services, in which the rationing electricity hours reached 22 hours per day.^{452 453} This caused the area to rely on privately-owned generators, saving electricity through batteries, as well as relying on KSA or GOS procured fuel.⁴⁵⁴ In July 2017, electricity generators' owners in the southern neighbourhoods of the city raised the prices from 1,200 Syrian pounds (SYP) to 1,500 pounds.⁴⁵⁵

Electricity prices fluctuated between morning and night. In the morning and evening hours, one Ampere (A) of electricity cost approximately 1,500 SYP (USD 3.20). The electricity prices tend to double during the night. Rising demand and colder nights cause power costs to spike during the winter season.⁴⁵⁶

In 2015, the 230 kilovolt tension line between the two governorates of Ar-Raqqa and Al-Hasakeh was sabotaged by warring militias. This resulted in a cut of service and reduced the electricity access for more than three years.⁴⁵⁷ The General Electricity Company worked on repairing this line and brought it back to service by June 2018 (see figure 11.5, "Night light in Al-Hasakeh City over the years showing a virtual reduction in lightened areas from 2012-2019").⁴⁵⁸

In November 2017, Al-Hasakeh governorate witnessed a remarkable improvement in the electricity provision that increased power supply hours after receiving electricity from the Euphrates Dam. Al-Hasakeh Electricity Company reported that energy coming from the Euphrates Dam is transferred to Tishreen Dam and then on to the Mabrouka Station in Ras Al-Ain countryside, all within the Al-Hasakeh governorate.⁴⁵⁹ The public and private sectors were in debt for the city's electricity company. This debt amounted to nine billion Syrian Pounds (SYP). Two billion and 600 million pounds from the public sector, and 6 billion and 300 million SYP from the private sector.⁴⁶⁰

The privately owned generators in Al-Hasakeh did not meet the needs of city dwellers. Residents criticized private generator owners for the short operating time, and for the delay in generator maintenance.⁴⁶¹ The generator operating system does not change between summer and winter. There is a higher demand for electricity during the winter, due to the heating need.⁴⁶²

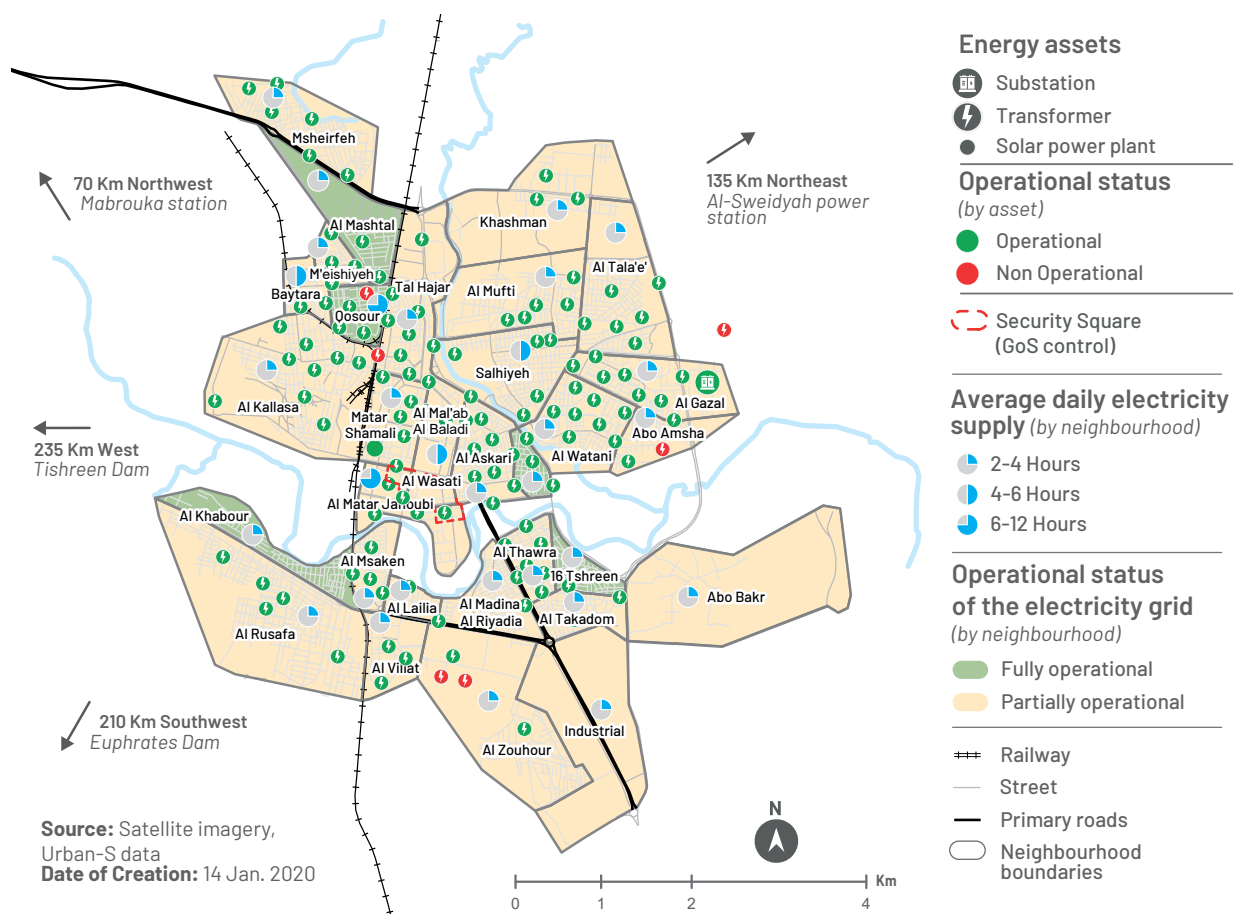
In April 2019, Tishreen and Euphrates dams increased their electricity output. The increase is attributed to increased water levels because of the heavy rain, which led to an increase in the operation hours of the electricity generation turbines.⁴⁶³ Electricity reaches the governorate via 230 kilowatt cables with a capacity of 150 megawatt hours.⁴⁶⁴



Figure 11.1: Al-Hasakeh private electricity generator, Source - Hawar News Agency, July 2018 ⁴⁶⁵

Operational capacity

Map 11.1: Electrical power assets around Al-Hasakeh ⁴⁶⁶ and operational status of the electricity grid ⁴⁶⁷



The main grid is feeding the whole city with electricity supply. Eighty four percent of neighbourhoods receive electricity from two to four hours per day. While only six percent of neighbourhoods report supply lasting from six to twelve hours per day (see figure 11.2, "Electricity daily supply from the grid").

Figure 11.2: Electricity daily supply from the grid, by percentage of neighbourhoods



All the neighbourhoods have a partially operational electricity grid, with the exception of four, 16 Tashreen, Al Khabour, Al Mashtal, and Qosour. These neighbourhoods have a fully operational electricity grid (see figure 11.3, "Operational status and damage of the electricity grid, by neighbourhood").⁴⁶⁸

The electricity grid in most parts of the city is partially damaged. Twenty six percent of city neighbourhoods, however, report no damage to the electricity grid. These include 16 Tashreen, Al Askari, Al Khabour, Al Laila, Al Matar Al Janoubi, Al Mufti, Al Wasati, and Qosour (see figure 11.3, "Operational status and damage of the electricity grid, by neighbourhood").

Sixty eight percent of the city's street lighting has incurred partial damage (see figure 11.4, "Operational status and damage to street lighting infrastructure, by neighbourhood") and 58 percent not operational.⁴⁶⁹ This has made mobility at night more difficult.⁴⁷⁰ Indeed, privately owned generators are seen as one of the alternatives to electricity grid fed street lighting (see figure 11.4, "Operational status and damage to street lighting infrastructure, by neighbourhood").⁴⁷¹

Figure 11.3: Operational status and damage of the electricity grid, by percentage of neighbourhood⁴⁷²

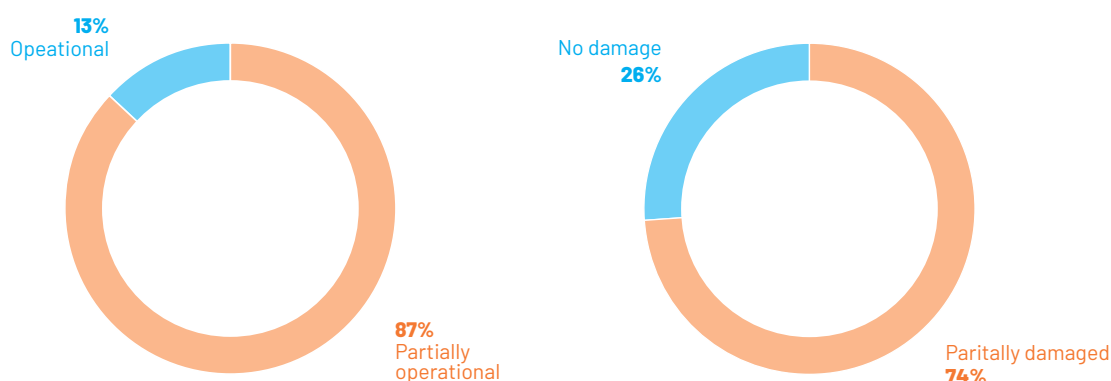


Figure 11.4: Operational status and damage of street lighting infrastructure, by percentage of neighbourhood⁴⁷³

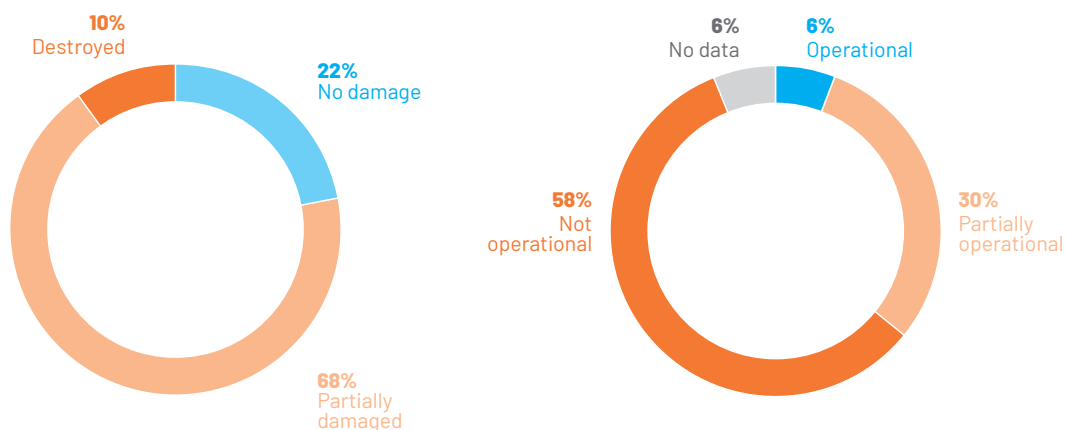
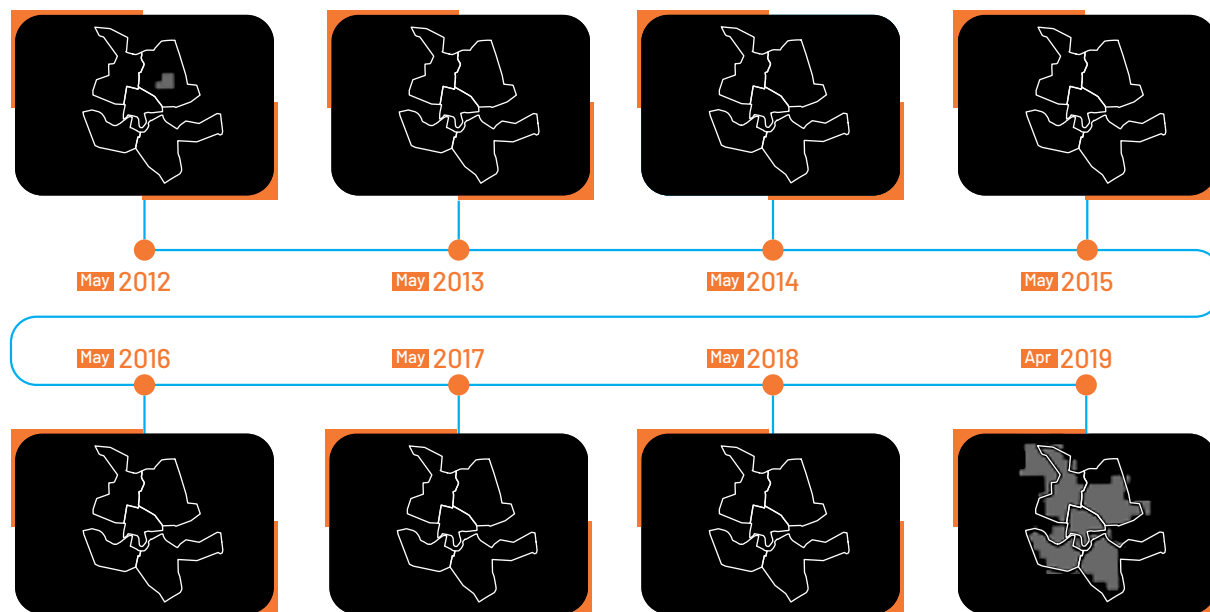


Figure 11.5: Night light in Al-Hasakeh City over the years showing a virtual reduction in lightened areas from 2013-2018 ⁴⁷⁴



The frequent power cuts and the destruction of stations led to large parts of the city being gradually disconnected from the power grid from 2013 to 2017. The situation started to improve in 2018 and 2019 when the Euphrates and Tishreen Dams increased their supply in November 2017. The increase in 2018 is attributed to increased water levels after heavy winter rains in early 2019 (see figure 11.5, "Night light in Al-Hasakeh City over the years showing a virtual reduction in lightened areas from 2012-2019").

Interventions in the electricity sector

Table 11.1: Investments in the electricity infrastructure ⁴⁷⁵

Project type	Location	Actor
Preparation of a two-story building for the administration of Al-Hasakeh Electricity Corporation	Al Kallasa neighbourhood	Ministry of Electricity (GoS)
Installation of an electricity tower and two electrical voltage columns	Al Mufti neighbourhood	Ministry of Electricity (GoS)
Establishment of an electricity transformation center and the installation of three electrical columns	Southeastern areas	Ministry of Electricity (GoS)
Installation of a power transformer	Southeastern areas	Ministry of Electricity (GoS)
Installation of two power transformers	Msheirfeh neighbourhood	Ministry of Electricity (GoS)
Installation of a power transformer	Baytara neighbourhood	Ministry of Electricity (GoS)
Provision of five tons of electrical supplies for network maintenance ⁴⁷⁶	Whole city	General Electricity Corporation in Damascus for Al-Hasakeh Electricity Company (GoS)
Construction of a new electricity transfer station ⁴⁷⁷	Al-Gibsa gas station	Electricity Directorate (GoS)
Provision of 47 transformers with different outputs between 100 and 400 kV ⁴⁷⁸	Whole city	UNDP
Set up nine electrical transformers ⁴⁷⁹	Southeastern areas and Al-Zouhour neighbourhood	UNDP

Figure 11.6: Electricity transfer station at the Al-Gibsa gas station, south of Al-Hasakeh ⁴⁸⁰



Sectoral Considerations

- Supporting investments related to the use of renewable energy, starting with street lighting services. Invest in projects that reduce the environmental impact of using fossil fuels. This will reduce the control of private generator owners.
- Support local efforts to maintain the grid to ensure a steady and adequate supply of electricity to all parts of the city. Eighty four percent of the city is supplied with electricity for two then four hours daily.
- Address the lack of material and staff. Then support the local council by building capacities for employees and financing projects to maintain the power grid infrastructure. The same number of projects stopped due to a lack of specialist knowledge. ⁴⁸¹

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481 "الإدارة الذاتية تنشأ محطة تحويل كهرباء جديدة بالحسكة وسط صعوبات جمة تواجه المشروع" [Self Administration creates a new electricity transformation station in Hasaka, amidst many difficulties facing the project], *North Press Agency*, September 2019, <https://bit.ly/3a7Nqlb>

12. Solid waste management

Overview

In Al-Hasakeh City, the City Council (GOS) is responsible for waste disposal. Before the conflict, the private and commercial sectors received waste collection services once or twice a day. The public sector received waste collection services three times a week.⁴⁸²

In 2004, the average amount of waste was 75,555 tons per year, or 207 tons per day.⁴⁸³ Prior to the conflict, Al-Hasakeh had a very high proportion of organic waste (see figure 12.1, “Pre-conflict waste type of Al-Hasakeh”). Organic waste makes up 63 percent of the total amount of urban waste.⁴⁸⁴ Eighty percent of the waste comes from the household, 18 percent from the commercial sector and two percent from the public sector.

In 2004 there was a huge shortage of labor, about 0.8 garbage collectors per 1,000 inhabitants. There were many collection restrictions, such as informal landfills in the city (eight small locations) without administrative authority.⁴⁸⁶

Prior to the conflict the main landfill servicing Al-Hasakeh was located 15 km to the east of the city.⁴⁸⁷ Put in operation in 1985, and managed by the municipality. It lacked a waterproof layer under the waste on the landfill, and no leachate or biogas was recovered.⁴⁸⁸ There were no fences that caused access control problems with many scavengers and fire.⁴⁸⁹

Figure 12.1: Pre-conflict waste in Al-Hasakeh by type⁴⁸⁵

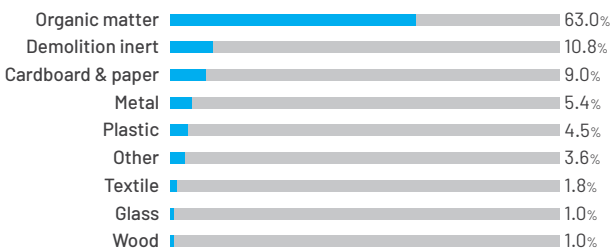


Figure 12.2: Al-Hasakeh landfill, Source Master Plan of Waste Management in Syrian Arab Republic ⁴⁹⁰



Impact of the conflict

Solid waste of various types was the main source of pollution in Al-Hasakah Governorate in 2012. Daily waste generation per capita in the main cities of the governorate was estimated at 0.7 kg per day and in the rest of the governorate at 0.5 kg per day.⁴⁹¹ The amount of medical waste that comes from public and private hospitals in Al-Hasakeh Governorate has been estimated at 100 tons per year. This waste is collected and dumped in landfills with no regard to environmental or health issues. Also, it is disposed of with other types of waste.⁴⁹²

During the conflict, many informal landfills sprang up in the city, causing significant surface and groundwater pollution, thus compounding environmental risks. As a result, the soil of these locations is heavily polluted by waste or leachate, in turn, reducing scarce land available for agriculture.⁴⁹³ There were access control problems with scavengers and animals.⁴⁹⁴

In 2017 the city had problems with its waste management. Waste was collected every three days and not daily. Poor solid waste disposal caused some health problems for residents.⁴⁹⁵

Recently, the landfills have grown too large. In June 2019, residents of the Al Gazal and Al Tala'e' neighbourhoods complained that proximity of the landfills to their homes greatly affects their health and that of their families, forcing them to consider moving to other areas of the city.⁴⁹⁶ The children's playgrounds in these neighbourhoods are located next to the landfill, so that the children can hardly play outdoors.⁴⁹⁷

There are currently many regulations and measures that have a positive impact on the city's waste sector. Among the most important are (1) holding rubbish bins in front of every store, (2) awareness campaigns and distributing brochures to households, and (3) involving municipality employees in cleaning campaigns inside and outside the city in rural areas.⁴⁹⁸

Operational capacity

Table 12.1: Operational capacity of the solid waste sector in Al-Hasakeh

Project type or name	Population ⁴⁹⁹	No. of waste collection workers	Waste collection workers per 1,000 of population
Pre-conflict	216,622	150 ⁵⁰⁰	0.69
Current	225,271	50 ⁵⁰¹	0.22

Before the conflict, the city did not meet the national standard of a garbage collector per 1,000 residents. Due to the slight population growth and the decline in the number of employees, the proportion of waste collectors in the city per 1,000 inhabitants has currently decreased (see table 12.1, "Operational capacity of the solid waste sector in Al-Hasakeh"). This had a direct impact on the frequency of waste collection and transportation and management processes. It also affects the health and well-being of residents. In addition, this affects the perception of the cleanliness level of the residents in Al-Hasakeh (see figure 12.5 "Perception of residents on the cleanliness level in Al-Hasakeh").⁵⁰²

Before the conflict, there were thirty waste collection vehicles, two waste compressors and two compactors. Available resources were increased during the conflict and now there are 65 waste collection vehicles, three waste compressors and three compactors. In contrast, the number of solid waste workers fell from 150 to 50 (see figure 12.3, "Pre-conflict and current solid waste management resources in Al-Hasakeh").

Figure 12.3: Pre-conflict and current solid waste management resources in Al-Hasakeh ⁵⁰³

	Pre-conflict	Current
Waste collection workers	150	50
Waste collection vehicles	30	65
Waste compressors	• 2	• 3
Waste compactors	• 2	• 3

Unenforced medical waste Laws ⁵⁰⁴

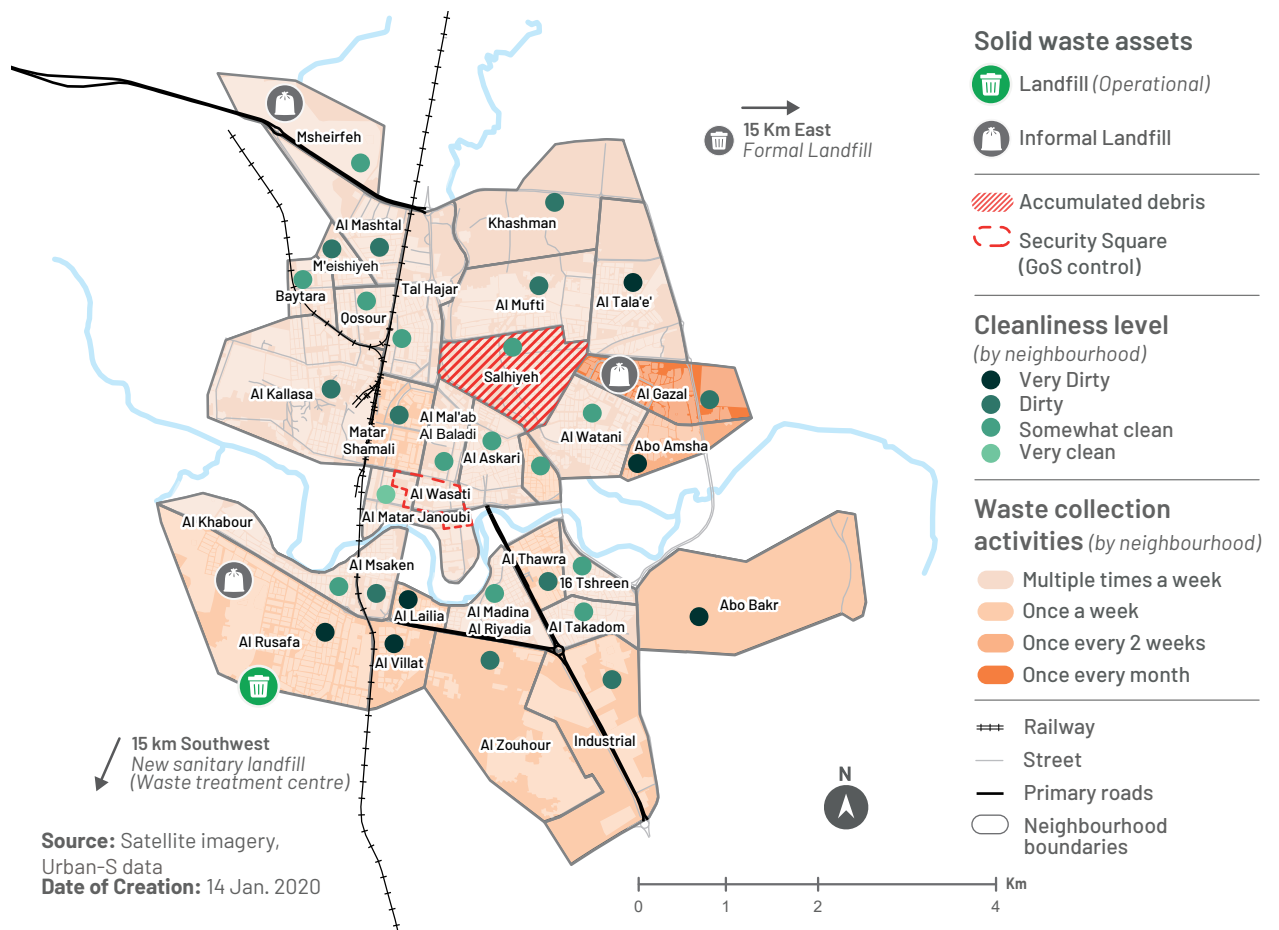
Al-Hasakeh hospitals have no medical waste incinerators. This is due to the fact that the Syrian hygiene law, which prescribes the purchase of these incineration plants, has not been enforced. This has resulted in most hospitals disposing of medical waste in an unsafe manner.

"Medical waste, including blood bags, empty and used syringes, body parts, dirty bandages and scalpels used in surgery, were collected in special containers that were placed in the hospital corridors. Then it is thrown into the waste collection vehicle with the other types of waste." -Hospital cleaner in Al-Hasakeh

The fifth chapter of the Syrian Hygiene Act (No. 49 for 2004) laid down the mechanism for handling medical waste. However, this mechanism is not been enforced in the northeast of the country.

Solid waste activities

Map 12.1: Solid waste collection activities in Al-Hasakeh



The northern parts of Al-Hasakeh offer better services than the southern parts. Arab communities and IDPs are concentrated in the southern rural sub-district of Al-Hasakeh, which is under-served and neglected by the Self-Administration service provision. Gaps in Al-Hasakeh and in the surrounding areas reflected the area's ethno-sectarian divide (see profile section 3, "Demographics and population").

The entire city is currently receiving waste collection services.⁵⁰⁵ Sixty-five percent of the neighbourhoods receive waste collection services several times a week, while 29 percent of the neighbourhoods receive this service once a week (see figure 12.4 "Frequency of waste collection in Al-Hasakeh"). Waste incineration is a common activity⁵⁰⁶ that releases gases (dioxins). This problem of waste accumulation is reflected in the cleanliness perception of the city. In fact, 19.5 percent of the neighbourhoods said that their neighbourhoods were "very dirty" and 39.5 percent said that their neighbourhoods were "dirty" (see figure 12.5 "Perception of residents on the cleanliness level in Al-Hasakeh").⁵⁰⁷

Figure 12.4: Frequency of waste collection in Al-Hasakeh by percentage of neighbourhoods⁵⁰⁸

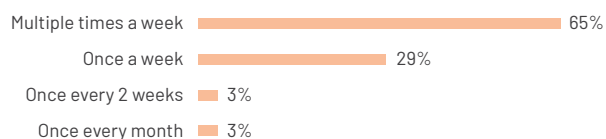
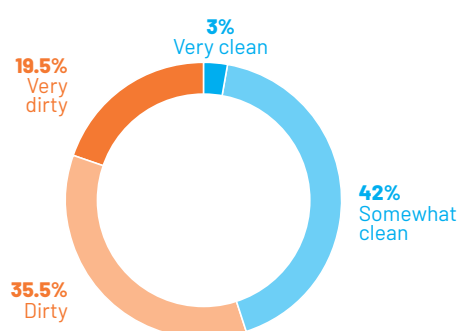


Figure 12.5: Perception of residents on the cleanliness level in Al-Hasakeh, by percentage of neighbourhoods⁵⁰⁹



Interventions in the solid waste sector

Due to the small operational capacity of the waste sector in Al-Hasakeh, many projects have been carried out to support waste activities in the city (see table 12.2, “Solid waste sector interventions”).

There are currently three informal landfills in Al Gazal, Msheirfeh and Al Rusafa neighbourhoods. Al Msherifeh landfill is reported to be a health threat to thousands of people as the landfill is only 100 meters away from the residential area.⁵¹⁰ There is a formal landfill on the southwest of the city on Abyad road. There is also debris accumulated in the Salhiyeh neighbourhood.⁵¹¹

Table 12.2: Solid waste sector interventions⁵¹²

Project type	Actor
Collection and disposal of waste	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Construction of a landfill, a waste treatment center and transfer stations southwest of Al-Hasakah on Abyad road	Al-Hasakeh City Municipality (GOS)
Provide waste collection machines	International Alliance

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in collaboration with the Syrian Catholic Diocese and the Al-Hasakeh City Municipality, has carried out a solid waste project to transfer urban waste to the main landfill.⁵¹³ The number of employees in this project was 160. The daily collection and removal resulting from this project is between 80 and 100 m³.⁵¹⁴ This project provides several services that support the work of the municipality and help improve environmental health and hygiene in a number of cities in the governorate.⁵¹⁵

“The waste workers’ commitment to scheduling the collection activities has organized us better in terms of disposal times, and this has changed our behavior.”

Resident in Al-Hasakeh⁵¹⁶

Figure 12.6: Solid waste UNDP project, Source SANA, August 2019⁵¹⁷



A project to build a waste treatment center was carried out in the city. This center is divided into several sections. The first, a composting section for converting organic waste (household, agricultural and animal waste) into fertilizers.⁵¹⁸ The aim of this section is to convert organic waste into fertilizers with a capacity of 350 tons per day. The second section, treats and sterilizes medical waste generated from various health activities. Next, there is a third section that deals with dirt and debris from the surrounding urban areas. Lastly, there is also a hazardous waste storage building that stores industrial waste from across the province.⁵¹⁹

The project also includes the construction of a sanitary landfill and six transfer stations that are distributed around the governorate.⁵²⁰ This project faced several challenges, including a lack of expertise and skilled craftspeople. Recruiting these skills is also very expensive.⁵²¹

There are currently three solid waste operation bodies in the city. Al-Hasakeh City Municipality, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Branch (see table 12.3, "Solid waste management activities operating bodies").⁵²²

Table 12.3: Solid waste management activities operating bodies

Operating body	Activities
Al-Hasakeh City Council (GoS)	Collects street garbage and transports it to the city landfills. Then transfers the waste to the treatment center in Abyad area.
United Nations Development Program (UNDP)	Transfers waste from the city streets to the waste treatment center in Abyad area.
Syrian Arab Red Crescent	Reports indicate that four trucks transport waste from the city landfill to the treatment center in Abyad area.

Sectoral considerations

- Support the development of new regulations by first developing a waste disposal strategy for Al-Hasakeh that prevents accidental landfills and incineration of waste. It also aims to ensure that all neighbourhoods are receiving equal waste collection services.
- Ensure the sustainability of the current solid waste management projects, including setting up environmentally friendly and sanitary landfills to ease environmental pollution, reportedly responsible for a spike in disease incidence.
- Ensure the provision of equipment to support Al-Hasakeh Municipality. This will support solid waste removal in the city and improve health conditions. Providing waste collection vehicles, trash compressors, and more workers will increase the capacity of the sector.
- Support the municipal staff capacity building to expand their skills and knowledge in the field of waste management.

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- 492 Ibid.
- 493 "Master Plan of Waste Management in Syrian Arab Republic," *MINISTRY OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION AND ENVIRONMENT*, 2004.
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- 497 Ibid.
- 498 Interview with local solid waste expert by *UrbAN-S*, March 2019.
- 499 Context Assessment: Al-Hasakeh," *UrbAN-S*, 2019.
- 500 Personal interview with local solid waste expert, January 2020.
- 501 Interview with local solid waste expert by *UrbAN-S*, March 2019.
- 502 Survey of local area experts in Al-Hasakeh by *UrbAN-S*, January 2019.
- 503 Interview with local solid waste expert by *UrbAN-S*, March 2019.
- 504 "Death From Human Waste in Syria's Hospitals: an Investigation," *Raseef 22*, September 2019, https://raseef22.net/article/1074979-death-from-human-waste-in-syrias-hospitals-an-investigation?utm_content=buffer94944&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer
- 505 Interview with local solid waste expert by *UrbAN-S*, March 2019.
- 506 Aalaf Hussain, "سكان حبيبن في الحسكة يشتكون من قرب مكب النفايات من منازلهم والحلول مؤقتة" [Residents of al-Hasaka complain about the proximity of the landfill to their homes and the solutions are temporary], *ARTA*, 8 June 2019, <http://www.artafm.com/opinion/17105>
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- 514 "ترحيل القمامة من شوارع الحسكة" [Transferring waste from Al-Hasakeh streets of], *Tishreen News*, August 2019, <http://tishreen.news.sy/?p=378419>
- 515 "مشروع إدارة النفايات الصلبة في محافظة الحسكة.. توفير فرص عمل وتحسين واقع النظافة" [Solid waste management project in Al-Hasakah Governorate .. Providing job opportunities and improving hygiene], *SANA*, August 2019, <https://sana.sy/?p=998394>

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- 516 "مشروع إدارة النفايات الصلبة في محافظة الحسكة.. توفير فرص عمل وتحسين واقع النظافة" [Solid waste management project in Al-Hasakah Governorate .. Providing job opportunities and improving hygiene], "SANA, August 2019, <https://sana.sy/?p=998394>
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- 520 Ibid.
- 521 Interview with local solid waste expert by Urban-S, March 2019.
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13. Transportation

Overview

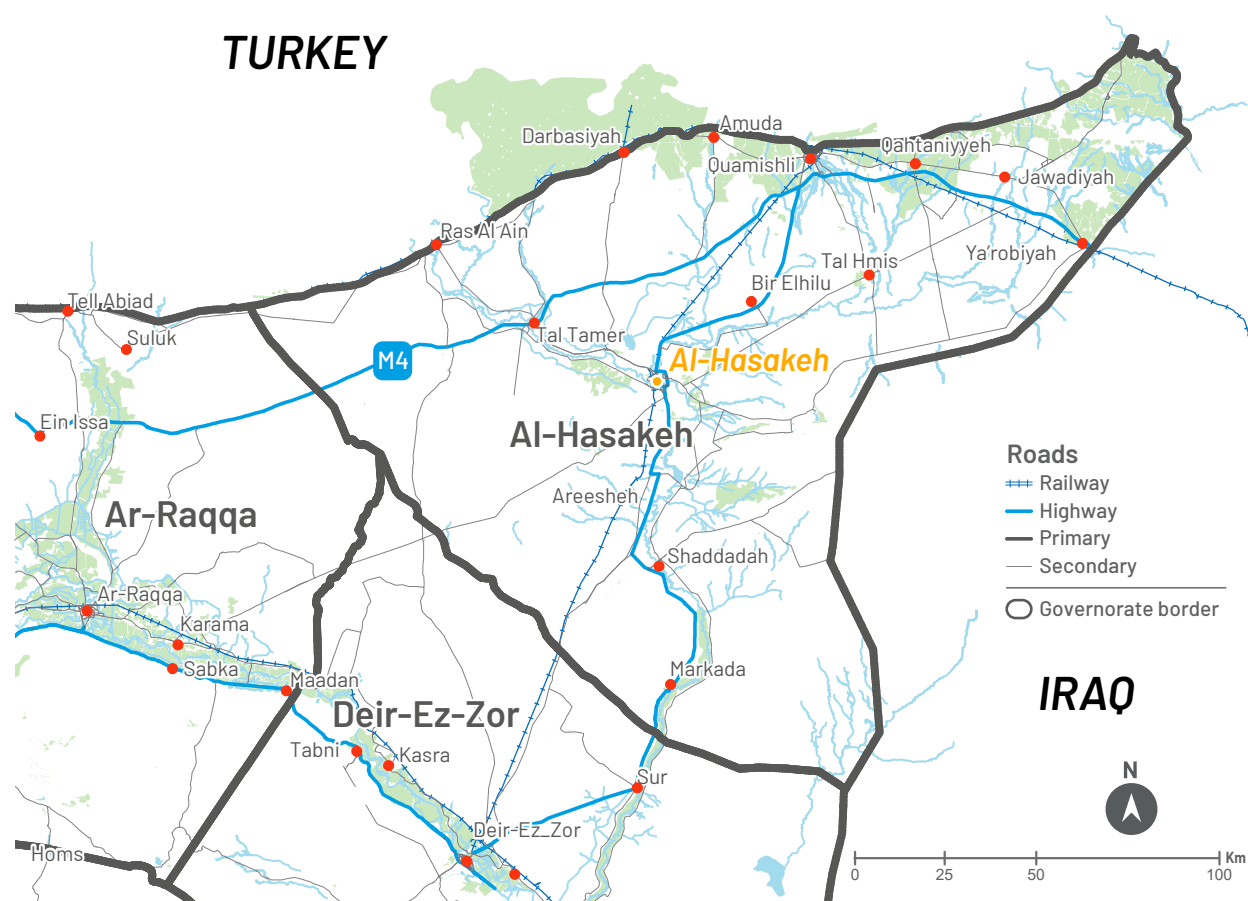
Al-Hasakeh City lies to the south of the M4 highway, the principal road linking Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa governorates with Aleppo and Idlib. A smaller highway links Al-Hasakeh City to the M4 at Tal Tamer, while other routes link the city to the other governorate capital cities of Ar-Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zor. These regional routes, and the M4 in particular, play an integral role in the transportation of Al-Hasakeh governorate's primary commodities; grain, cotton, and oil.

Prior to the conflict, the Syrian Government was in the process of contracting with private international investors to upgrade and maintain regional roads across the country. At the time, this included the road between Al-Hasakeh and Deir Ez-Zor that was constructed by a Kuwaiti company in 2001.⁵²³

Within Al-Hasakeh City itself, the roads were in fairly good condition, although Khashman, Al-Zouhour, and Al-Mufti neighbourhoods were considered by local sources to be in relatively worse condition than average.

Public transportation services were fully operational in and around the city and regulated by the city council and reached all neighbourhoods. A full range of options was available at affordable prices, including service taxis (10 SYP⁵²⁴ per trip), regular taxis (50 SYP per trips) and buses (10 SYP per trip). Public transit to other regional centres was also easy and affordable. Coach tickets between Al-Hasakeh Deir Ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa cost between 200 and 300 SYP.⁵²⁵

Map 13.1: Regional transport infrastructure in Northeast Syria



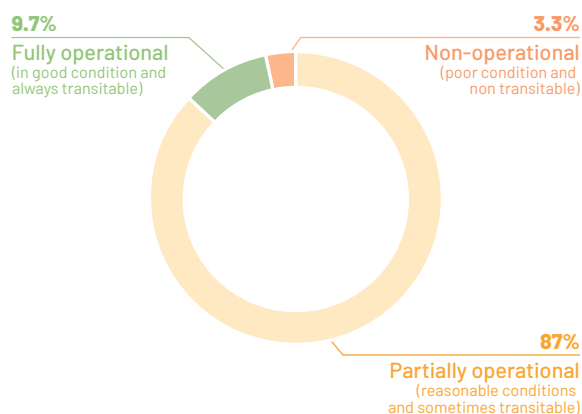
Transportation and mobility during the conflict

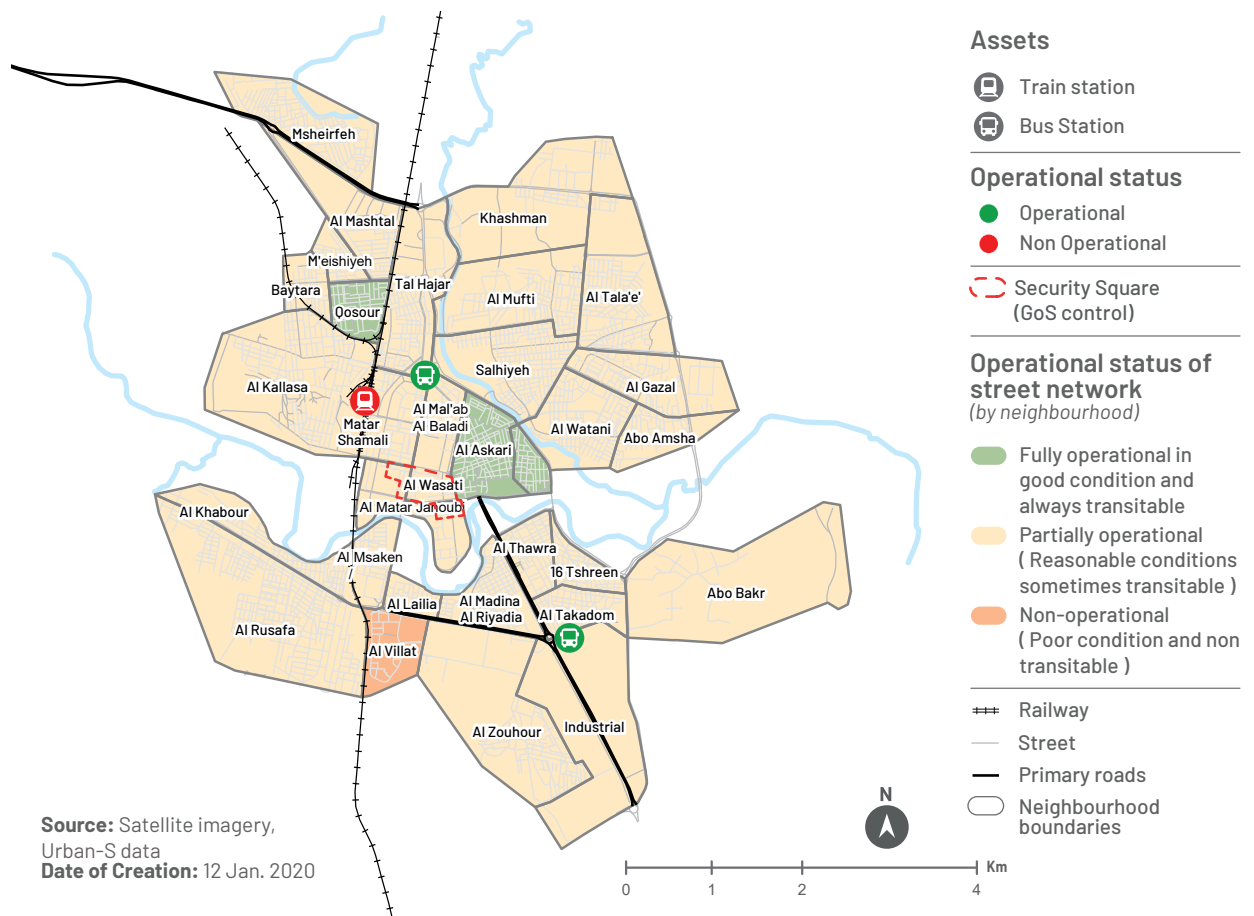
ISIL was able to take control of significant territory surrounding Al-Hasakeh city to the west, south, and east during 2014 and 2015. This severed links to the city, leaving it isolated. During this time regional road infrastructure was affected by damage and lack of maintenance.⁵²⁶ ISIL's military setbacks in 2016 and 2017 led to its withdrawal from the region and the reopening of commercial routes between Al-Hasakeh and Aleppo – an important factor in the recovery of the Al-Hasakeh economy.⁵²⁷ (see section 7: 'Economy' for further details). Nevertheless, Al-Hasakeh residents' mobility was limited due to the poor security conditions in the region and fear of arrest when passing through areas under Government of Syria control.⁵²⁸

Al-Hasakeh City did not sustain the same level of conflict related damage suffered in nearby Ar-Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zor. However, ISIL's 2015 advances into the southern neighbourhoods, and the subsequent clashes with GoS forces led to some light damage to the road network and building infrastructure in this area,⁵²⁹ including the damage and destruction of a number of bridges within the city, over the Al-Khabour River.⁵³⁰

Despite relatively low levels of damage, roads in Al-Hasakeh City have seen significant deterioration due to poor maintenance, lack of funding, and capacity during the eight years of conflict.⁵³¹ Respondents to UrbAN-S surveys in 87 percent of Al-Hasakeh's neighbourhoods report that roads are only partially operational (in reasonable condition and sometimes transitable).⁵³² Road conditions reportedly worsen appreciably during winter months.⁵³³ The lack of maintenance has also affected road networks beyond the city, in the governorate more broadly. The road between Al-Hasakeh and the nearby city of Amouda has become especially bad, with the result that travel times have increased and vehicles suffer worse wear-and-tear, increasing maintenance costs. This has especially affected public transport operators who travel the route frequently.⁵³⁴

Figure 13.1: Operational status of road networks in Al-Hasakeh, by percentage of neighbourhoods



Map 13.2: Transport infrastructure in Al-Hasakeh city

Current transportation sector dynamics

Road infrastructure networks and recent interventions

During 2018 and 2019, the Technical Committee under Al-Hasakeh City People's Municipality has engaged in road rehabilitation throughout the city (in Tal Hajar, Salhiyah, Aziziyah, Al-Zouhour, Al-Nashwa, Gurayran, Musherafa, Al-Mayashi, Nazare, Mufti and Industrial neighbourhoods), as well as roads connecting the city with surrounding rural areas.⁵³⁵ Work focused on filling potholes, resurfacing roads, repairing roundabouts, reinstating street dividers between lanes (undertaken by the Environment and Parks Committee), and repairing street lighting. Local sector experts also report that work done in 2019 rehabilitated the mini-bus garage in Al-Gazal neighbourhood.⁵³⁶

In October 2019, local media reported that the People's Municipality is busy preparing a plan for the rehabilitation of regional roads, particularly between Al-Hasakeh and Amouda. The extent of these repairs remains reliant on the availability of funding.⁵³⁷

Public transportation services continue under the Self-Administration, however these have increased considerably in price and are no longer affordable. Use of motorcycles has increased as this is a more affordable mean of transportation.⁵³⁸



Figure 13.2: Rehabilitation to road infrastructure in Al-Hasakeh

Fuel availability and price

The rising cost of fuel is one of the main challenges faced by the transportation sector in Al-Hasakeh, as elsewhere across Syria. In May 2019, the average price of transportation fuel per litre increased by approximately 12 percent, from 163 SYP to 195 SYP.⁵³⁹ Other recent media reports have reported fuel prices between 45 SYP and 300 SYP per litre.⁵⁴⁰ The primary contributing factor to this rise in cost has been the shortage of fuel experienced across Syria. Accordingly, the rise of fuel prices caused an overall increase in transportation prices in Al-Hasakeh which has been felt most strongly by people who use public transportation services.⁵⁴¹ While the prices in Al-Hasakeh are higher than previous levels, they remain lower than the official fuel prices in Government of Syria controlled areas, where the price is currently set by the Government at 225 SYP (15 percent higher than Al-Hasakeh).

Current checkpoints and traffic control

Local sector experts report that major checkpoints, run by the Asayish, are located at each of the four entrances into the city,⁵⁴² while checkpoints within the city, at the borders of the Government of Syria Security Box, are controlled by the GoS-aligned NDF. (see Map 13.1).⁵⁴³

Traffic control is administered by the traffic police force, a branch of the Asayish, and employs a number of former Government of Syria traffic police employees.⁵⁴⁴

Current access to the M4 highway

The M4 highway between Al-Hasakeh governorate and Aleppo, which was reopened in 2017 following ISIL's retreat from the area, remains a vital transport route for the Northeast Syria economy, as well as a strategic asset in the ongoing conflict in the region. Until October 2019, the M4 throughout the Al-Hasakeh Governorate, and into the Ar-Raqqa Governorate, was controlled by the SDF. Turkey's subsequent incursion forced the SDF south of the M4. While an agreement to end fighting between Turkish forces and the SDF was reached between Russia and Turkey, the road continues to be a target of clashes between various parties to the conflict. The SDF, Turkish Armed Forces, other armed groups allied with Turkey, Government of Syria Forces, and Russian Forces are all vying for control of the road, or parts of it, that would give them strategic military advantage as well as control over trade along the route.⁵⁴⁵ Disruption to the M4 route necessitated the use of alternative routes such as the Abyad road to the south of Al-Hasakeh. These alternative routes are smaller, longer, and not designed for heavy vehicles.⁵⁴⁶ Reliance on alternative routes has raised commercial transport costs and will have a continuing negative effect on the condition of these smaller roads.⁵⁴⁷

Subsequent Syrian State media reports in mid-December 2019 state that control over the road has now come back under Government of Syria military. A buffer zone has been created on each side of the road separating Turkish and SDF forces and the Syrian authorities have reportedly now reopened the route to the general traffic and called on people to use the road.

Sectoral considerations

- Rehabilitation of regional road networks between Al-Hasakeh and its surrounding cities, villages and agricultural area would reduce transport times and costs and increase general mobility for the population.
- Efforts to stabilise and secure the M4 highway will allow the full resumption of traffic along this route, especially commercial transportation. This will have economic benefits for the region and reduce the impact of heavy traffic on smaller regional connections.
- Continued rehabilitation and long term maintenance plans for road infrastructure within Al-Hasakeh city is necessary for the provision of adequate transportation services. Funds and capacity to implement these rehabilitation efforts should be prioritised given the catalytic effect that the transport sector has on the recovery of other sectors.

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14. Urban functionality index

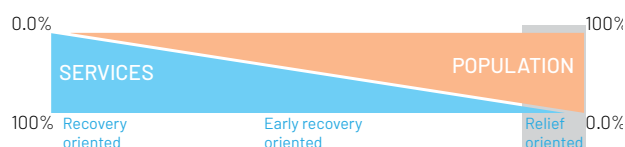
Overview

The Urban Functionality Index is a measure to inform spatial prioritization for short, medium- and long-term interventions⁵⁴⁸. While this tool presents a useful starting point for spatial analysis, it is limited in that it cannot identify specific kinds of interventions. It provides a snapshot of the functionality of essential services coupled with demographic dynamics on a neighbourhood level in order to provide spatial comparisons. The index consists of the following three components:

- **Functionality of essential services index** provides a metric for the cumulative functionality of services essential for the neighbourhoods' livability; namely health, WASH, solid waste management, electricity, markets, education, transportation and safety. The index considers functionality in terms of the community's perceived accessibility, reliability and quality of those services.
- **Population index** provides a metric for the impact of the conflict on neighbourhoods' population. The index factors in all affected people who either stayed in, returned to or moved to cities in conflict. The tool considers neighbourhood population relative to city population, IDPs and returnees population, as well as resident population to neighbourhood population.
- **The response continuum** provides the starting point for short, medium, and long-term interventions. It offers three types of response strategies. It offers three types of response strategies: "Relief", "Early recovery", and "Recovery". The figures below display the proportional combination of services and demographics indicating placement along the continuum.

1.1 Relief-oriented response: emphasizes immediate humanitarian response and basic functions restorations. Interventions target caseloads and aims at alleviating hosting stressors.

Figure 14.1: Relief oriented response



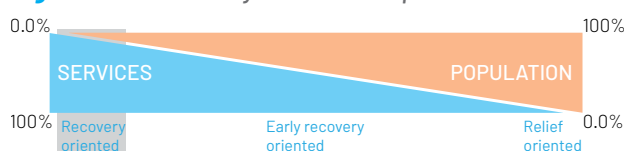
1.2 Early recovery-oriented response: emphasizes medium-term interventions to restore services functionality and infrastructure, with less emphasis on short-term basic needs.

Figure 14.2: Early recovery-oriented response



1.3 Recovery-oriented response: emphasizes long-term spatial interventions aiming at creating a conducive living environment.

Figure 14.3: Recovery-oriented response



The index adopts a three-point scale to weight each component, where (0) reflects the worst-case scenario: poor functionality if at all functional. Hence, the neighbourhood's overall UFI score is derived from the cumulative score of the components; the score interpretation is shown in the table below:

Table 14.1: UFI Score with interpretation / indication

UFI Score	Interpretation/Indication
0.00 – 0.69	Poorly functional (if at all)
0.70 – 1.39	Partially functional
1.40 – 2.00	Functional

Functionality of essential services in Al-Hasakeh

Figure 14.4, "services index" below shows the functionality of urban services by neighbourhood. The services index indicates that the conflict had a comparable impact on service delivery across the city. Based on the community-related perceptions, 25 neighbourhoods are "partially functional", four neighbourhoods are "fully functional" (Qosour, Al Matar Janoubi, Al Wasati, Al Askari) and two neighbourhoods are "poorly functional" (Abo Amsha, Abo Bakr).

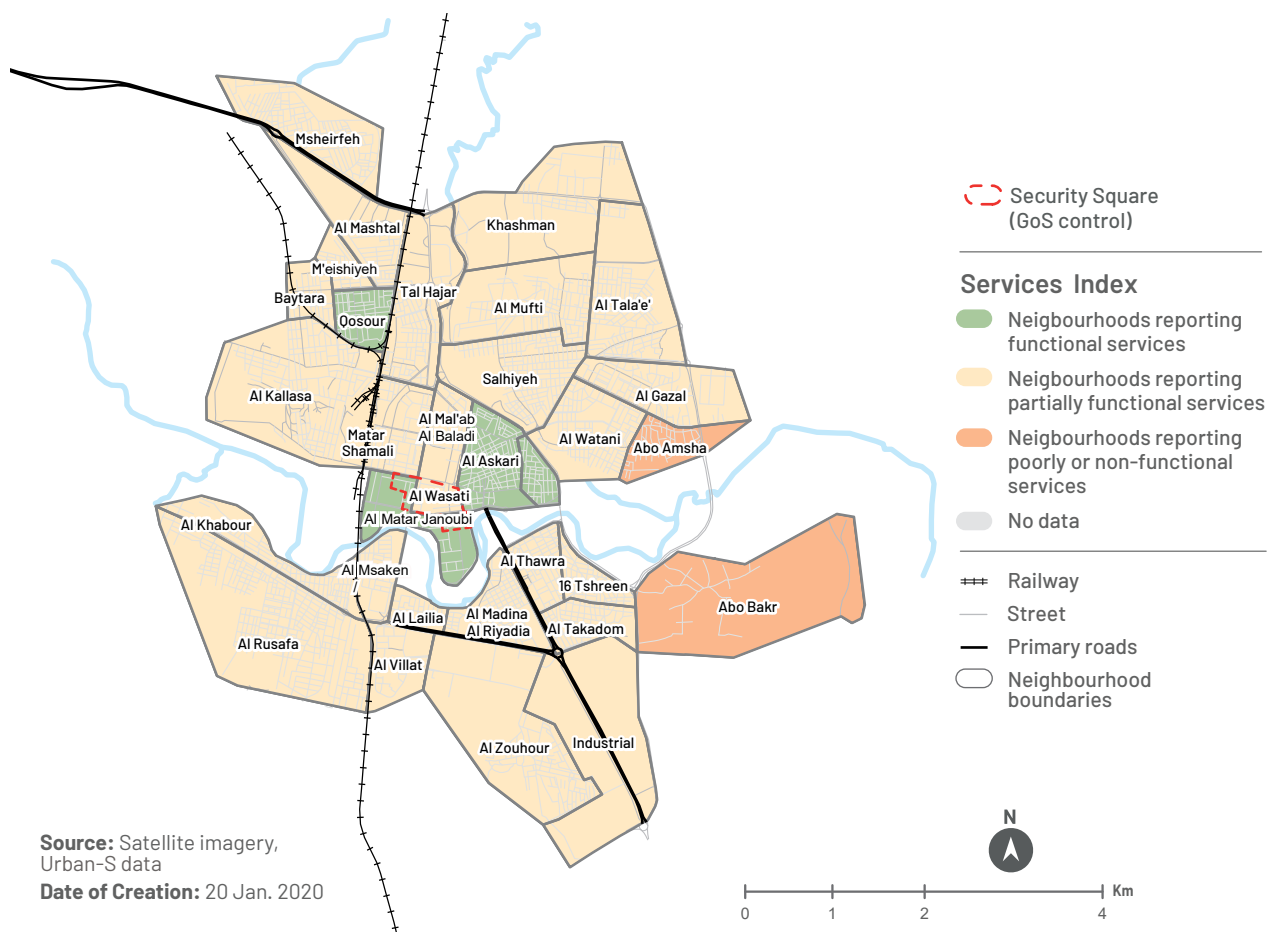
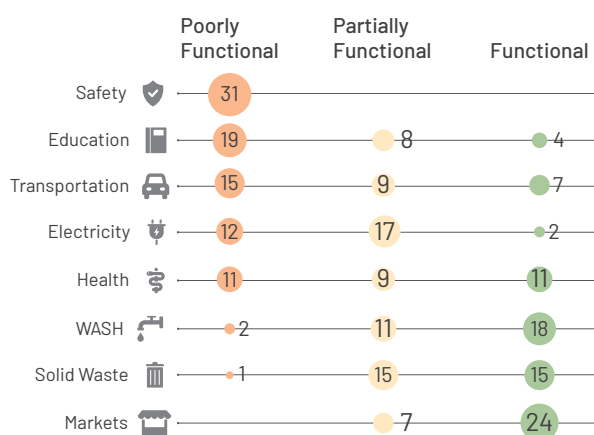
The greatest concern of the community is safety. Local experts suggest that all neighbourhoods in the city are unsafe. Among the most pressing concerns, they cited the absent trust of the community in city officials, whether elected or appointed and a diminishing levels of safety.

A somewhat larger range of functionality is seen between the service sectors themselves. The community's perception of WASH and market services reported a high level of functionality. In contrast, health and solid waste reported a moderate level of functionality, while electricity, transportation and education announced a low level of functionality.

Figure 14.4: Services index

Neighbourhood	Services								Services INDEX
	Health	WASH	Solid Waste	Electricity	Safety	Markets	Education	Transportation	
Qosour	2.00	2.00	1.50	1.50	0.50	2.00	1.33	1.33	1.52
16 Tashreen	1.00	2.00	1.75	1.00	0.56	1.33	0.67	1.00	1.16
Abo Amsha	0.33	0.83	0.50	0.50	0.39	1.42	0.17	0.83	0.62
Abo Bakr	0.33	1.00	1.00	0.50	0.39	2.00	0.00	0.33	0.69
Al Askari	2.00	2.00	1.50	1.00	0.61	1.67	2.00	2.00	1.60
Al Gazal	1.00	0.50	0.75	0.50	0.33	2.00	0.83	0.42	0.79
Al Kallasa	0.67	1.33	1.25	0.50	0.44	1.00	0.67	1.00	0.86
Al Khabour	1.67	2.00	1.50	1.00	0.56	1.25	0.67	1.00	1.20
Al Lailia	1.17	1.67	1.25	1.00	0.56	1.50	0.33	1.50	1.12
Al Madina Al Riyadia	0.83	1.33	1.50	0.50	0.44	1.33	0.33	0.67	0.87
Al Mal'ab Al Baladi	0.50	1.67	1.50	1.25	0.50	1.00	1.67	1.50	1.20
Al Mashtal	0.67	2.00	1.25	0.75	0.61	1.67	0.50	1.00	1.06
Al Matar Janoubi	1.33	1.83	2.00	1.50	0.61	1.75	1.83	1.50	1.55
Al Msaken	1.33	1.50	1.25	0.75	0.50	1.75	0.83	0.67	1.07
Al Mufti	0.67	1.67	1.50	1.00	0.50	1.42	1.00	0.67	1.05
Al Rusafa	1.17	1.50	1.25	0.75	0.44	1.67	1.00	1.00	1.10
Al Takadom	1.67	2.00	1.50	0.75	0.61	1.33	0.33	1.00	1.15
Al Tala'e'	2.00	1.67	1.00	0.50	0.33	2.00	1.00	0.33	1.10
Al Thawra	1.58	0.67	1.25	0.50	0.33	1.50	0.67	0.42	0.86
Al Villat	0.50	1.17	1.00	0.50	0.28	2.00	0.17	0.33	0.74
Al Wasati	2.00	2.00	1.50	1.00	0.61	2.00	2.00	1.67	1.60
Al Watani	1.83	1.33	1.50	0.50	0.44	2.00	0.33	0.67	1.08
Al Zouhour	1.17	1.67	1.25	0.75	0.56	2.00	0.33	1.50	1.15
Baytara	1.50	1.67	1.75	1.00	0.44	2.00	1.25	0.92	1.32
Industrial	0.67	1.17	1.00	0.50	0.44	1.67	0.33	0.33	0.76
Khashman	0.67	1.50	1.25	0.75	0.56	2.00	0.17	0.67	0.94
Matar Shamali	2.00	1.33	1.00	0.75	0.56	1.67	1.33	0.67	1.16
M'eishiyeh	0.33	1.33	1.25	0.50	0.44	1.33	0.33	0.33	0.73
Msheirfeh	0.33	1.33	1.50	0.50	0.44	1.50	0.00	0.33	0.74
Salhiyeh	2.00	1.33	1.50	0.75	0.50	1.67	0.33	0.33	1.05
Tal Hajar	1.33	1.67	1.50	0.75	0.50	2.00	0.50	1.67	1.24

Map 14.1: Functionality of essential services by neighbourhood

Figure 14.5: Functionality of neighbourhoods by sector ⁵⁴⁹

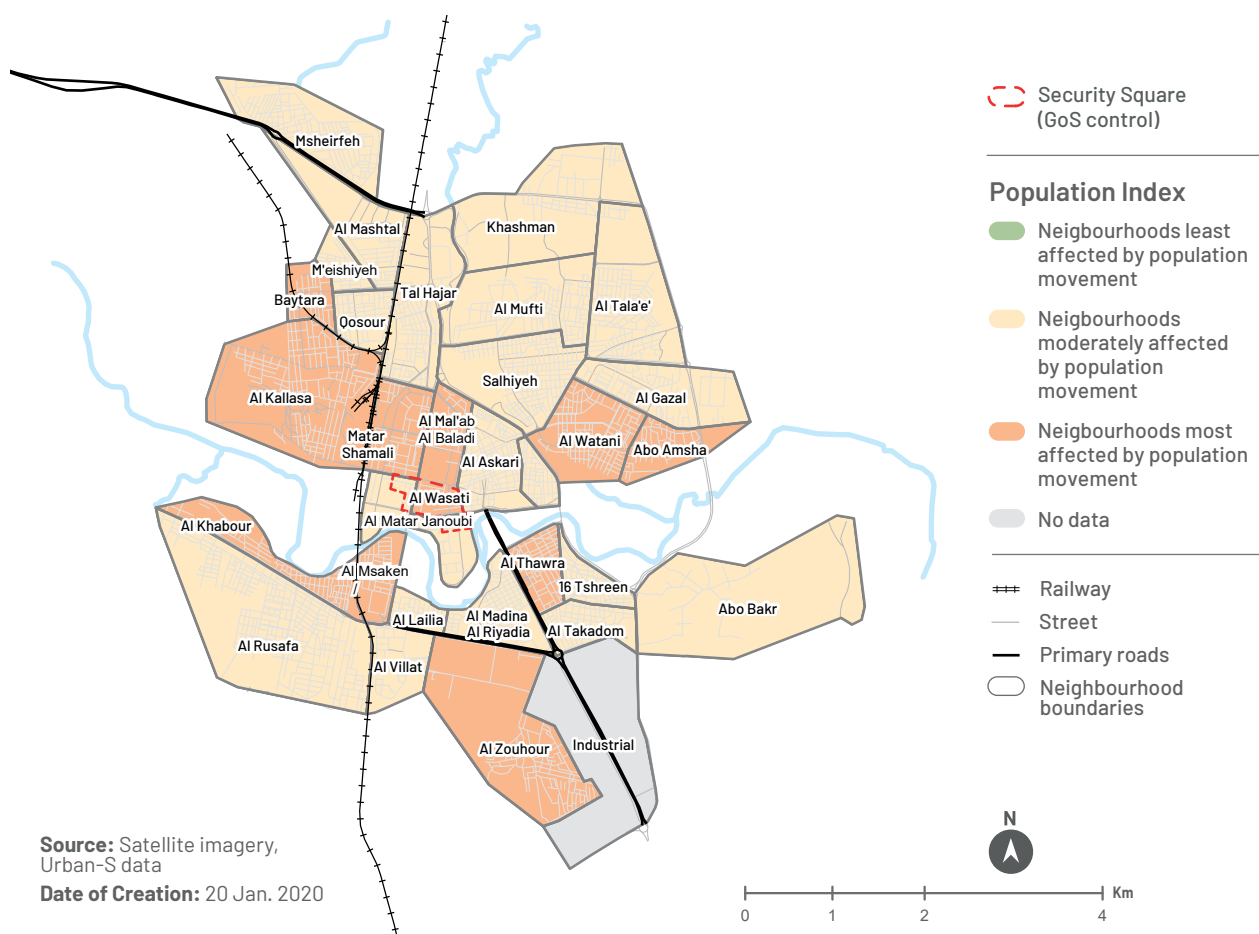
Al-Hasakeh population index

In August 2015, significant displacement occurred from Al-Hasakeh to the surrounding areas. No displacement from the city occurred after 2015, however, in 2017 a large influx of IDPs from these areas came to Al-Hasakeh. (See City Profile section 3, "Population and Demographics Movement")

The index suggests that many neighbourhoods experienced population movements during the conflict. However, these neighbourhoods showed different population dynamics. In fact, most affected

neighbourhoods received a significant number of IDPs. Salhiyeh neighbourhood received the highest number of IDPs, and Khashman's neighbourhood faced the lowest IDP number. The neighbourhoods most affected by the population movement include Al Zouhour, Al Khabour, Al Msaken, Al Thawra 16, Al Kallasa, Baytara, Matar Shamali, Al Mal'ab Al Baladi, Al Watani and Al Askari neighbourhoods. Overall, the total number of people living in Al-Hasakeh has increased by 43,000 to 241,925 since the conflict, of whom 121,799 are internally displaced.

Map 14.2: Population index by neighbourhood ⁵⁵⁰

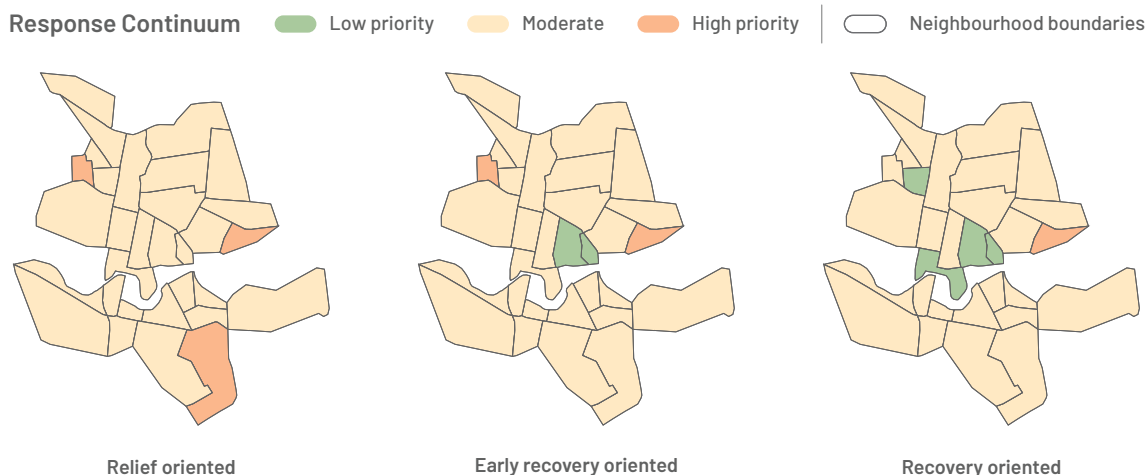


Al-Hasakeh response continuum

The response continuum offers findings to inform joint programming across the relief/ early recovery/ recovery continuum. It supports actors in prioritizing and phasing their interventions while ensuring coordination and complementarity of efforts from a variety of implementers. In addition, it identifies neighbourhoods

most affected in all three stages of the continuum; neighbourhoods with severe humanitarian needs (vulnerable populations), as well as neighbourhoods that require investment in services to restore functionality. Lastly, it provides considerations to guide programming specific to relief, early recovery, and recovery needs.

Map 14.3: UFI Response Continuum



Considerations for programming across the continuum


While little damage to the city infrastructure occurred from major military offensives, basic infrastructure and services appear to have deteriorated throughout the conflict. For the most part, this is an outcome of diminishing capacities in local governance, population increase and a shrinking economy.

The response continuum shows a moderate response priority throughout the relief-oriented, early-recovery, and recover-oriented responses with some neighbourhoods with high response priority.

Relief-oriented response

The index prioritizes neighbourhoods based on the concentration of population groups (residents, IDPs and/or returnees). It suggests that a relief-oriented response is of high priority for the Industrial, Abo Amsha and Baytara neighbourhoods (see figure 14.6, "Response continuum by type and neighbourhood"). It also shows a consistent moderate need for such response in most of the city's neighbourhoods.

Population- and density- analysis were used to support the UFI findings. When density estimates were applied to the Al-Hasakeh neighbourhoods, the analysis showed that the Al-Askari neighbourhood had the highest need associated with high population density (see Figure 14.7, "Neighbourhoods population, density and change"). Salhiyeh neighbourhood has the highest IDPs number, which gives it a priority for interventions. This neighbourhood is in need for electricity, education, transportation and safety services (see figure 14.4, Services index).

Figure 14.6: Neighbourhoods population, density and change


	Population	Population density	Population change	Number of IDPs
	Salhiyeh	Al Askari	Abo Bakr	Salhiyeh
	Al Rusafa	Qosour	Al Villat	Al Kallasa
	Tal Hajar	16 Tashreen	Al Mufti	Al Rusafa
	Al Watani	Al Thawra	M'eishiyeh	Tal Hajar
	Al Kallasa	Salhiyeh	Al Mashtal	Al Watani
	Al Gazal	Al Msaken	Al Msaken	Matar Shamali
	Matar Shamali	Al Takadom	Baytara	Al Gazal
	Al Madina Al Riyadiah	Matar Shamali	Al Askari	Msheirfeh
	Msheirfeh	Al Lailia	Al Tala'e'	Al Madina Al Riyadiah
	Al Thawra	Al Madina Al Riyadiah	Al Kallasa	Al Msaken
	Al Takadom	Al Watani	Tal Hajar	Al Askari
	Qosour	Al Gazal	Al Khabour	Al Tala'e'
	Al Wasati	Tal Hajar	Al Zouhour	Al Mufti
	Al Msaken	Baytara	Al Wasati	Al Takadom
	Al Tala'e'	Abo Amsha	Abo Amsha	Al Wasati
	Al Mal'ab Al Baladi	M'eishiyeh	Al Lailia	Al Thawra
	16 Tashreen	Al Wasati	16 Tashreen	Abo Amsha
	Al Askari	Al Mal'ab Al Baladi	Msheirfeh	16 Tashreen
	Al Mufti	Msheirfeh	Al Watani	Al Mal'ab Al Baladi
	Abo Amsha	Al Matar Janoubi	Al Madina Al Riyadiah	Al Matar Janoubi
	Al Matar Al Janoubi	Al Khabour	Matar Shamali	Al Khabour
	Al Khabour	Al Kallasa	Al Mal'ab Al Baladi	Al Zouhour
	Al Zouhour	Al Rusafa	Al Matar Janoubi	Al Lailia
	Al Mashtal	Al Tala'e'	Al Rusafa	Qosour
	Al Lailia	Al Mufti	Salhiyeh	Al Mashtal
	Baytara	Al Mashtal	Al Takadom	Al Villat
	M'eishiyeh	Al Villat	Khashman	Abo Bakr
	Abo Baker	Al Zouhour	Qosour	M'eishiyeh
	Al Villat	Khashman	Al Gazal	Baytara
	Khashman	Abo Bakr	Al Thawra	Khashman
	Industrial	Industrial	Industrial	Industrial

Early-recovery oriented response

During the early recovery oriented response, the city's services and infrastructure need to be prioritized in order to support the population's ability to initiate its own recovery.

The pattern of index shows that most of the city is in need for moderate priority response except for some neighbourhoods. A high priority response is needed for Baytara and Abo Amsha neighbourhoods, and a low priority response is needed for Al Wasati and Al Askari neighbourhoods which are within the GOS security square.

Recovery-oriented response

This recovery phase should start to prioritize locating public services and rebuilding the city's infrastructure. Based on the response continuum, most of the city will require a recovery-oriented response. Thus, Abo Amsha neighbourhood is considered as a high priority. In contrast, Al Askari, Al Mal'ab Al Baladi, Al Matar Janoubi, and Qosour neighbourhoods are classified low priority for recovery oriented response. These neighbourhoods have relatively high scores in the services index (see figure 14.4, *Services index*).

- 548** A complete explanation of the Urban Functionality Index can be found in a technical note at the *Urban-S web-portal*, <https://urban-syria.org/#toolkit>.
- 549** There is no data for Al-Hay Al-Shamali neighbourhood therefore it has not been included with the functionality of neighbourhoods by sector.
- 550** The population index measures three main indicators: 1.) The number of IDPs and returnee population to total population, 2.) The current remaining resident population to pre-conflict original resident population, and 3.) Each neighbourhood's population relative to average neighbourhood population across the city.

Each neighbourhood's situation is calculated based on the cumulative score of these three indicators. Neighbourhoods most affected by population movement will be those presenting a higher percentage of IDPs and returnees, meaning more caseloads and additional pressure on existing public services and infrastructure. In some cases, this may reflect neighbourhoods which have been depopulated or abandoned, suggesting potential risks relating to housing and tenure. Neighbourhoods least affected by population movement suggest a higher percentage of original residents, hence with less possibilities of risks related to HLP and hosting stressors.

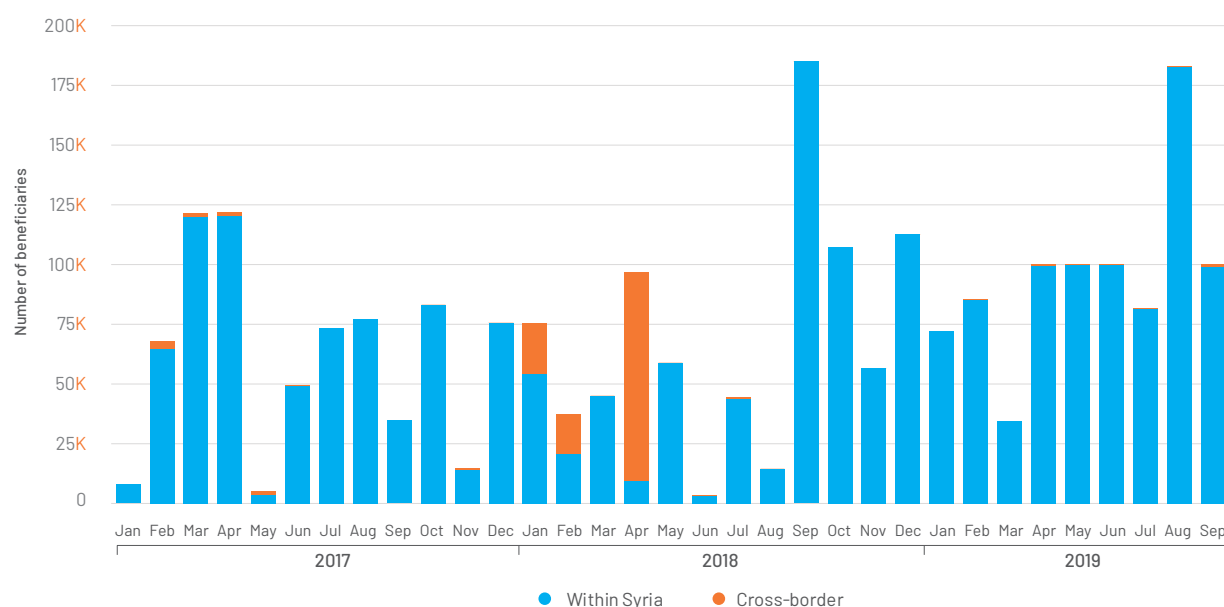
15. 4W Analysis

Scale of programming

Between January 2017 and September 2019, response programming steadily increased in Al-Hasakeh City. In 2017, an average of over 61,000 beneficiaries were reportedly reached per month. In 2018, an average of nearly 70,000 beneficiaries were reportedly reached per month. In 2019, an average of over 95,000 beneficiaries were reportedly reached per month.⁵⁵¹ This increased from October 2019 onwards with the influx of IDPs caused by the Turkish military offensive 'Operation Peace Spring.' However, the scale of programming may be negatively affected in 2020 by the closure of Yarubiyeh border crossing under UN Cross-Border Resolution 2504 under Russian pressure.⁵⁵² The border closure may have an impact on the 10 million USD in UN regional funding allocated for northeast Syria for 2020. Consequently, it may lead to a reduction in programming in Al-Hasakeh City. The closure will also reportedly increase transaction costs for NGOs that relied on the UN to enter supplies via Yarubiyeh. This may have a negative impact on the number of beneficiaries they are able to reach.⁵⁵³

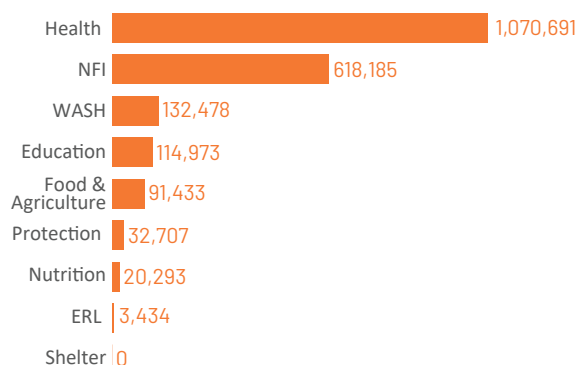
Response programming is limited in the GoS-controlled area of the city. This is due to how small the area is and the GoS' sensitivities surrounding programming in northeast Syria. Few, if any, INGOs are active in GoS-controlled parts of the city, although a number of UN agencies and local NGOs reportedly have programming. Most programming is undertaken in SANES-controlled areas of the city. INGOs active in SANES-controlled areas of the city typically use the Fishkhabour-Semalka border crossing to enter staff and supplies. UN agencies, by contrast, operate from Damascus. Prior to January 2020, UN agencies used Yarubiyah to import medical, nutrition and education supplies. The health sector will be particularly affected as 1.4 million people in the northeast reportedly depended on medical supplies imported via Yarubiyah.⁵⁵⁴ The health sector is likely to be the most impacted, while the nutrition and education sectors will be impacted to a lesser extent.⁵⁵⁵

Figure 15.1: Response programming in Al-Hasakeh City by number of beneficiaries⁵⁵⁶



Types of programming

Figure 15.2: Sectoral reach based on beneficiaries served ⁵⁵⁷



Health

Between January and October 2019, the health sector had the largest reach in Al-Hasakeh City, with over 1 million beneficiaries reached. As of October 2019, health programming in Al-Hasakeh sub-district was funded by WHO, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNFPA, and SARC and implemented by the GoS' Ministry of Health, Al-Birr Association, Al-Mawadda Charity Association, Armenian Catholic Charity, St. Ephrem Patriarchal Development Committee, Al-Yamama Charity Association, Syrian Family Planning Association, SARC, and WHO.⁵⁵⁸ As of March 2019, the Armenian Association was providing medical care to children; Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) was supporting the rehabilitation of the National Hospital; and AMARA Center was raising awareness about autism (see city profile section 8, 'Health.'). In addition, Al-Hasakeh Organisation for Relief and Development was reportedly providing psychosocial support to IDP children in the city as of late 2019.⁵⁵⁹

NFI

The NFI sector had the second largest reach, with over 618,000 beneficiaries reached. As of October 2019, NFI programming in Al-Hasakeh sub-district was funded by UNHCR and UNICEF and implemented by St. Ephrem Patriarchal Development Committee and Syriac Catholic Archbishopric.⁵⁶⁰ In addition, the Dan Association for Relief and Development (DRD) and GAV Organisation were providing assistance to IDPs displaced by the Turkish offensive, including emergency supplies, hygiene kits, and blankets. Xewn (Dream) Association was providing humanitarian assistance to IDP shelters, including diapers and other supplies for babies. Msha'el al-Nour and Al-Hasakeh Organisation for Relief and Development were also providing assistance to IDPs.⁵⁶¹

WASH

The WASH sector had the third largest reach in Al-Hasakeh City, with approximately 132,000 beneficiaries reached. As of October 2019, WASH programming in Al-Hasakeh sub-district was funded by UNICEF and implemented by UNICEF and Al-Yamama Charity Association.⁵⁶² In Al-Hasakeh City, UNICEF has previously provided the Water Directorate (GoS) with sodium hypochlorite to sterilise drinking water and assisted the Water Directorate (GoS) with maintenance of Al-Hama Dam.⁵⁶³ As of March 2019, Al-Hasakeh City Council (GoS) was undertaking garbage collection.⁵⁶⁴ In addition, Wud Charitable Association conducts WASH projects. In October 2019, it received funding from UNDP to construct a well. It operates in close coordination with the GoS-affiliated Al-Hasakeh Governorate Council and Al-Hasakeh City Council. In December 2019, the organisation was awarded with a certificate by the Governor of Al-Hasakeh for its efforts responding to the IDP crisis following the Turkish offensive.⁵⁶⁵ In addition, Al-Hasakeh City Council (GoS) has been involved in the rehabilitation and extension of the sewage and water networks in the city. Action contre la Faim has also been involved in expansion of the water network in several neighbourhoods. ICRC has provided the Water Authority (SA) with pipes to expand the water network and been involved in creating wells (see city profile section 10, 'Water and sanitation' and city profile section 12, 'Solid waste management').⁵⁶⁶

Education

The education sector had the fourth largest reach, with nearly 115,000 beneficiaries reached. As of October 2019, education programming in Al-Hasakeh sub-district was funded by UNICEF and implemented by the GoS' Ministry of Education.⁵⁶⁷ As of March 2019, the SANES' Education Authority, was rehabilitating ten schools and constructing two other educational facilities (see city profile section 9, 'Education'). In addition, the GAV Organisation was providing school supplies as of late 2019.⁵⁶⁸

Food security

The food and agriculture sector had the fifth largest reach, with over 91,000 beneficiaries reached. As of October 2019, food and agriculture programming in Al-Hasakeh sub-district was funded by WFP and undertaken by SARC, Al-Mawwada Charity Association, Saint Vincent de Paul Charity, St. Ephrem Patriarchal Development Committee. Action contre la Faim was also undertaking programming in Al-Hasakeh sub-district as of October 2019.⁵⁶⁹ In addition, Wud Charitable Association was providing food assistance as of November 2019.⁵⁷⁰ DRD was reportedly supporting livestock and has provided approximately 500 tons of seeds to farmers affected by the fires in summer 2019 as of January 2020.⁵⁷¹

Protection

The protection sector had the sixth largest reach, with approximately 32,000 beneficiaries served. As of October 2019, protection programming in Al-Hasakeh sub-district was funded by UNICEF and UNHCR and implemented by the GoS' Ministry of Health, SARC, Al-Birr Association, Syriac Catholic Archbishopric, Syrian Family Planning Association, and Syrian Society for Social Development (SSSD).⁵⁷² As of late 2019, the Syrian Family Planning Association was undertaking awareness campaigns with regards to underage marriage and violence against children at home and in the classroom. In addition, the GAV Organisation was undertaking an anti-hate speech campaign and organising workshops to inform residents how to protect themselves from remnants of war.⁵⁷³

Nutrition

The nutrition sector had the second to smallest reach, with slightly over 20,000 beneficiaries served. As of October 2019, nutrition programming in Al-Hasakeh sub-district was funded by UNICEF, WFP, MEDAIR and implemented by the GoS' Ministry of Health, SARC, Al-Mawadda Charity Association, Armenian Catholic Charity, St. Ephrem Patriarchal Development Committee, and Al-Yamama Charity Association.⁵⁷⁴

ERL

The early recovery and livelihoods (ERL) sector had the smallest largest reach, with less than 4,000 beneficiaries served. As of October 2019, ERL programming in Al-Hasakeh sub-district was funded and implemented by UNDP.⁵⁷⁵ As of December 2019, Mawaddah Charity Association was providing vocational trainings with funding from UNICEF and UNDP.⁵⁷⁶ DRD and Tomorrow is Better Association for Relief and Development were also undertaking livelihoods programming. As of January 2020, Tomorrow is Better Association was offering computer training to youth and sewing training to women.⁵⁷⁷ In addition, as of March 2019, Al-Hasakeh City People's Municipality (SANES) was managing a carpet-weaving project for 125 female beneficiaries, as well as a car wash project, with the aim of providing employment opportunities. As of March 2019, the People's Municipality was also engaged in road rehabilitation (see city profile section 13, *Transportation*).⁵⁷⁸ Moreover, UNDP, the Ministry of Electricity (GoS), and the Electricity Directorate (GoS) have been involved in expanding the electrical grid (see city profile section 11, *'Energy and Electricity'*).

Shelter

The shelter sector reportedly had no programming between January and October 2019.

Other INGOs reportedly active in Al-Hasakeh City include the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), DOZ International, Save the Children, ACTED, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), International Rescue Committee (IRC), and CARE.⁵⁷⁹ DOZ International is an NGO that was founded in Syria during the conflict and has been registered in Germany since 2014. It runs Civil Society Centres across northeast Syria, including in Al-Hasakeh City.⁵⁸⁰

Other NNGOs and civil society organisations reportedly active include Environmental Protection Association, Al-Watan Charity Association, Xunav Association, Hill Card Network for the Exchange of Experiences, Talal Charity Association, Association of Benevolence and Social Services, Haifi Centre for Development, Mar Afram Authority, Mar Asi Authority, and the Syrian Kurdish Red Crescent. These organisations are all reportedly registered with the SANES.⁵⁸¹

Programming challenges

NGOs are required to register with the Self-Administration and/or the GoS depending on where in the city they intend to conduct programming. To operate in GoS areas of the city, NGOs must obtain registration from various government ministries in Damascus. The registration process requires prospective organisations to disclose sensitive information on funding sources, planned projects, and staff. As a result, organisations that receive funding from foreign countries or have programming in non-government areas may encounter difficulties registering. Once registered, organisations must disclose beneficiary lists to the local authorities and are subjected to the scrutiny of the security apparatus. This can facilitate the abuse or detention of individuals wanted by the security/military forces.⁵⁸²

To operate in SANES-controlled areas of the city, humanitarian and development organisations must register with the Humanitarian Affairs Office (HAO) associated with the Jazira Executive Council. Prior to the offensive, the HAO was based in Ein Issa. As the city is now in close proximity to Turkish-backed forces, the Executive Council is now reportedly operating out of Quamishli. After registering, NGOs are also required to submit assessments and projects to the Humanitarian Affairs Office (HAO) for approval. If approved, the HAO provides a “facilitation letter” and recommends the organisation coordinate with the relevant local authorities. If the project is long-term, the local authorities may opt to issue a Memorandum of Understanding. In Al-Hasakeh City, the People’s Municipality is the key focal point for NGOs operating in the city. It is reportedly an important source of information with regards to community needs as it holds regular meetings with komins and tribal leaders.⁵⁸³ However, given the partisan nature of SA governance structures, it should not be the only source of information.

According to operational partners, identifiably Arab NNGOs experience greater difficulties than their Kurdish counterparts to obtain registration with the Jazira Humanitarian Affairs Office (HAO).⁵⁸⁴ Indeed, many have been denied registration and forbidden from operating. In addition, the current HAO focal point systematically rejects projects proposed by both NNGOs and INGOs. Projects designed to serve rural areas of Al-Hasakeh Governorate are particularly difficult to obtain approvals as the focal point has pushed for programming to be focused on Al-Hasakeh City. While this may facilitate access for actors in Al-Hasakeh City, it may exacerbate the existing urban-rural divide, leave IDPs residing in camps outside of the city underserved, and render needs-based programming challenging. Efforts by operational partners to report these and other issues to the Executive Council, which oversees the HAO, have reportedly had limited success.⁵⁸⁵

Other bureaucratic challenges include difficulties and delays entering supplies into northeast Syria via Fishkabour-Semalka from both sides of the border. The KRI has a particularly lengthy approval process. For example, it reportedly takes at least 20 days for medicine to be cleared by the KRI’s customs and can take up to 45 days or more. In addition, NGOs using air shipments incur daily fees while supplies stored in the airport warehouse await clearance.

Other challenges identified by operational partners were related to procurement and logistics. After the Turkish offensive, the Self-Administration imposed a boycott on Turkish goods. This has been a significant obstacle for implementers as most products (particularly manufactured goods) within Syria and from the KRI originate from Turkey. In addition, locally sourced supplies are usually lower in quality, even if they are lower in cost. Moreover, in-country procurement is complicated by international sanctions and donor regulations that prohibit the purchase of supplies that may benefit sanctioned individuals or companies.⁵⁸⁶

Furthermore, the disruption of trade and supply routes by the Turkish offensive have led to an increase in prices. Prior to the offensive, Menbij was a vital transit point for goods flowing from opposition and government-controlled areas of northwest Syria to SANES-controlled areas of northeast Syria. During the offensive, the Syrian Arab Army deployed to Menbij’s outskirts and the area between Ras al-Ein and Tel Abyad was seized by Turkey, thereby interrupting access via the M4 highway. This has complicated access and led to an increase in costs associated with the proliferation of checkpoints and informal taxation, as well as transportation. Humanitarian and commercial actors are now required to use Tel Abiad route, instead of the M4 highway, which is narrower, longer, and not suitable for trucks, leading to an increase in transportation costs. As of October 2019, the price of food items had reportedly increased by approximately 20 percent in Al-Hasakeh City.⁵⁸⁷

In addition, access for international staff into northeast Syria has been curtailed by the Turkish offensive. Most INGOs are sending their international staff into northeast Syria for short missions, others have restricted travel altogether. Following the offensive, INGOs closed their offices in Ain Eissa and Kobane when the GoS took control and reopened them in Derik or in the KRI. Consequently, the operations of many INGOs were disrupted. This highlights the need for greater collaboration with local NGOs given the current access constraints for INGOs and the potential for future disruptions. Nonetheless, NGO capacity is reportedly low, presumably due to the lack of capacity-building that occurred over the years since INGOs benefited from direct access. With the increased scrutiny on cross-border access in NES, there is a risk that INGOs will lose access via Fishkabour-Semalka. Of particular note, Russia reportedly attempted to visit the border crossing after UN Cross-Border Resolution 2504 was passed. This may indicate that Russia intends to curtail humanitarian access via the last remaining border crossing in northeast Syria under SA-control.⁵⁸⁸

Figure 15.3: 4W matrix of programming in Al-Hasakeh city and sub-district ⁵⁸⁹

	Food & Agriculture	Nutrition	Education	Shelter	Health	WASH	ERL	NFIs	Protection
UN agencies									
UNDP									
UNFPA									
UNHCR									
UNICEF									
UNRWA									
WFP									
WHO									
INGOs									
Action contre la Faim (ACF)									
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)									
MEDAIR									
Médecins Sans Frontières									
NGOs									
Al-Birr Association									
Al-Hasakeh Organisation for Relief & Development									
Al-Mawwada Charity Association									
Al-Yammama Charity Association									
AMARA Center									
Armenian Association									
Armenian Catholic Charity									
Dan Association for Relief & Development (DRD)									
GAV Organisation									
Msha'el al-Nour									
Saint Vincent de Paul Charity									
St. Ephrem Patriarchal Development Committee									
Syriac Catholic Archdiocese									
Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)									
Syrian Family Planning Association									
Syrian Society for Social Development (SSSD)									
Tomorrow Is Better Association									
Wud Charitable Association									
Xewn (Dream) Association									
GoS									
Al-Hasakeh City Council (GoS)									
Al-Hasakeh City People's Municipality (SANES)									
Electricity Directorate (GoS)									
Ministry of Education (GoS)									
Ministry of Electricity (GoS)									
Ministry of Health (GoS)									
Water Directorate (GoS)									
Total	8	9	3	0	16	8	9	8	9

- 551 Unpublished data from *UN-OCHA*, January 2020.
- 552 "Avoiding Midnight Deadline, Security Council Extends Authorization of Cross-Border Aid Delivery to Syria, Adopting Resolution 2504 (2020) by Recorded Vote," *United Nations*, January 10, 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/01/1055181>.
- 553 Information provided by *operational partners*, January 2020.
- 554 Medical supplies included emergency health kits (IEHKs), trauma and surgical kits, reproductive health (RH) kits, non-communicable disease (NCD) kits, and hygiene kits. (Source: information provided by operational partners, January 2020; "Avoiding Midnight Deadline, Security Council Extends Authorization of Cross-Border Aid Delivery to Syria, Adopting Resolution 2504 (2020) by Recorded Vote," *United Nations*, January 10, 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/01/1055181>.)
- 555 Information provided by *operational partners*, January 2020.
- 556 Unpublished data from *UN-OCHA*, January 2020.
- 557 "Interactive Humanitarian Dashboard: 4Ws Response (Al-Hasakeh City, January-October 2019)," *UN-OCHA*, accessed 5 January 2019, <http://www.ocha-sy.org/4wsresponse2019.html>.
- 558 "Organizations Implementing Humanitarian Activities Based Within Syria: 4Ws Presence (Al-Hasakeh Sub-District)," *UN-OCHA*, accessed 5 January 2019, <http://www.ocha-sy.org/4wspresence2019.html>.
- 559 Contextual research conducted by *UrbAN-S*, January 2020.
- 560 "Organizations Implementing Humanitarian Activities Based Within Syria: 4Ws Presence (Al-Hasakeh Sub-District)," *UN-OCHA*, accessed 5 January 2019, <http://www.ocha-sy.org/4wspresence2019.html>.
- 561 Ibid.
- 562 Ibid.
- 563 Interview with local governance expert conducted by *UrbAN-S*, March 2019.
- 564 Ibid.
- 565 "جمعية ود الخيرية [Wud Charitable Association]" accessed on 2 January 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/pg/Wadhasaka/posts/>.
- 566 Interview with local WASH expert by *UrbAN-S*, March 2019.
- 567 "Organizations Implementing Humanitarian Activities Based Within Syria: 4Ws Presence (Al-Hasakeh Sub-District)," *UN-OCHA*, accessed 5 January 2019, <http://www.ocha-sy.org/4wspresence2019.html>.
- 568 Contextual research conducted by *UrbAN-S*, January 2020.
- 569 "Organizations Implementing Humanitarian Activities Based Within Syria: 4Ws Presence (Al-Hasakeh Sub-District)," *UN-OCHA*, accessed 5 January 2019, <http://www.ocha-sy.org/4wspresence2019.html>.
- 570 "جمعية ود الخيرية [Wud Charitable Association]" accessed on 2 January 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/pg/Wadhasaka/posts/>.
- 571 Contextual research conducted by *UrbAN-S*, January 2020.
- 572 "Organizations Implementing Humanitarian Activities Based Within Syria: 4Ws Presence (Al-Hasakeh Sub-District)," *UN-OCHA*, accessed 5 January 2019, <http://www.ocha-sy.org/4wspresence2019.html>.
- 573 Contextual research conducted by *UrbAN-S*, January 2020.
- 574 "Organizations Implementing Humanitarian Activities Based Within Syria: 4Ws Presence (Al-Hasakeh Sub-District)," *UN-OCHA*, accessed 5 January 2019, <http://www.ocha-sy.org/4wspresence2019.html>.
- 575 Ibid.
- 576 Contextual research conducted by *UrbAN-S*, January 2020; Facebook page "جمعية المودة الخيرية بالحسكة [Al-Mawadda Charitable Association in Al-Hasakeh]" accessed on 2 January 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/almaoda.alkheria/posts/2622266168010476>.
- 577 Contextual research conducted by *UrbAN-S*, January 2020.
- 578 Interview with local governance expert conducted by *UrbAN-S*, March 2019.
- 579 Contextual research conducted by *UrbAN-S*, September 2019.
- 580 Facebook page "DOZ Syria سوريا - منظمة دوز" accessed on 2 January 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/doz.syria/>.
- 581 In addition, the Syrian Family Planning Association and Al-Mawwada Charity Association are reportedly registered with the SANES. (Source: Contextual research conducted by *UrbAN-S*, September 2019.)
- 582 "Rigging the System: Government Policies Co-Opt Aid and Reconstruction Funding in Syria," *Human Rights Watch*, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/06/28/rigging-system/government-policies-co-opt-aid-and-reconstruction-funding-syria>, June 2019.
- 583 Information provided by *operational partners*, January 2020.
- 584 "Context Assessment: Al-Hasakeh City," *UrbAN-S*, December 2018.
- 585 Ibid.

586 Information provided by operational partners, January 2020.

587 Ibid.

588 Ibid.

589 "Organizations Implementing Humanitarian Activities Based Within Syria (October 2019)," *UN-OCHA*, accessed January 5, 2019, <http://www.ocha-sy.org/4wspresence2019.html>; contextual research conducted by *UrbAN-S*, September 2019.

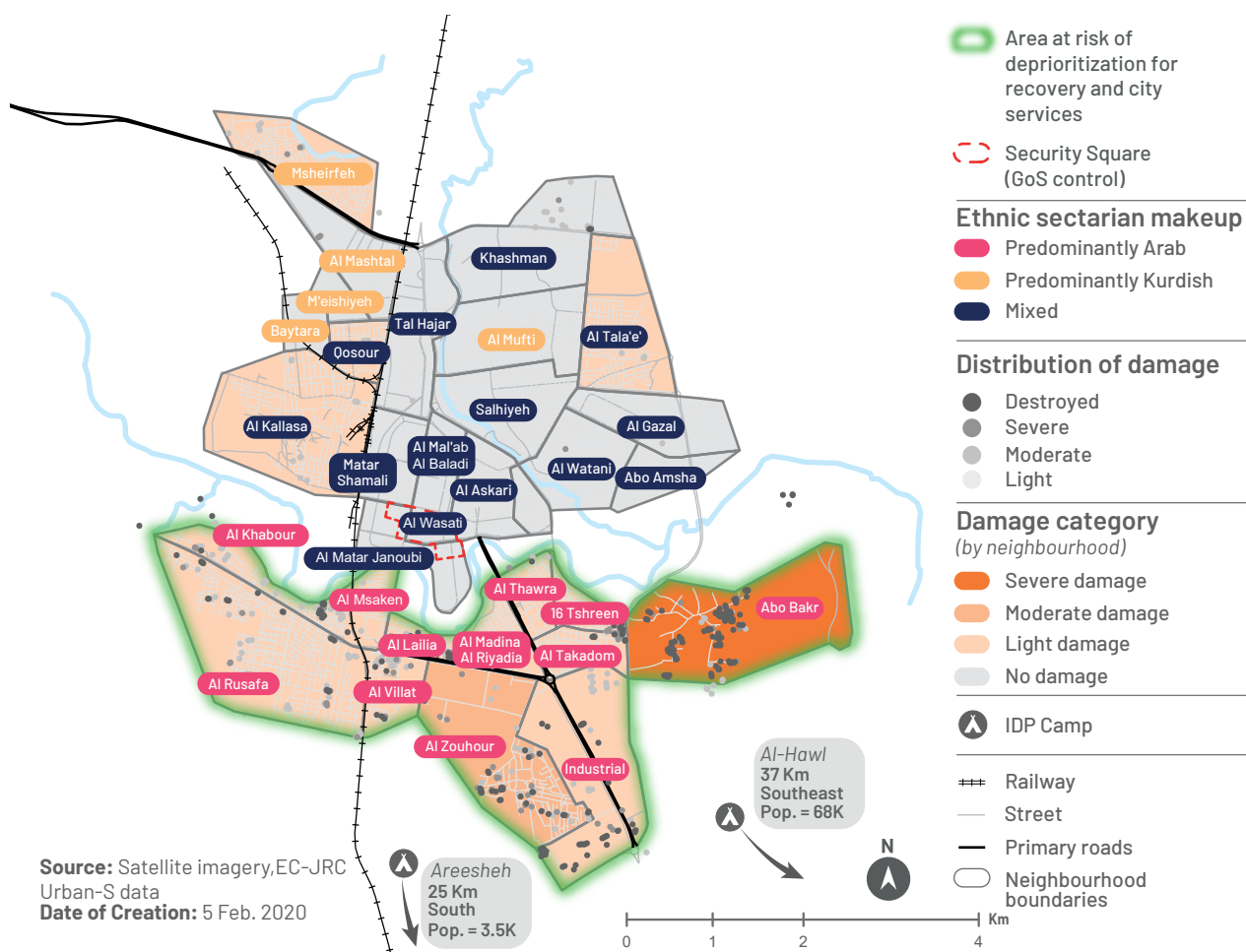
16. Risks, return and response considerations

The city's recovery is predicated on a coordinated response between local government, civil society, the private sector on the one hand, with national and international NGOs, together with their partners, on the other. It is imperative that initiatives developed for recovery response are holistic, inclusive, practical, and embrace an inter-sectoral approach.

The following considerations have been developed based on community-level research, analysis, and interviews with stakeholders and sector experts during the profile's development. Considerations that follow below are meant to inform and assist local organizations and the international community in their policy and programme development

1. Risks and safeguards for programming

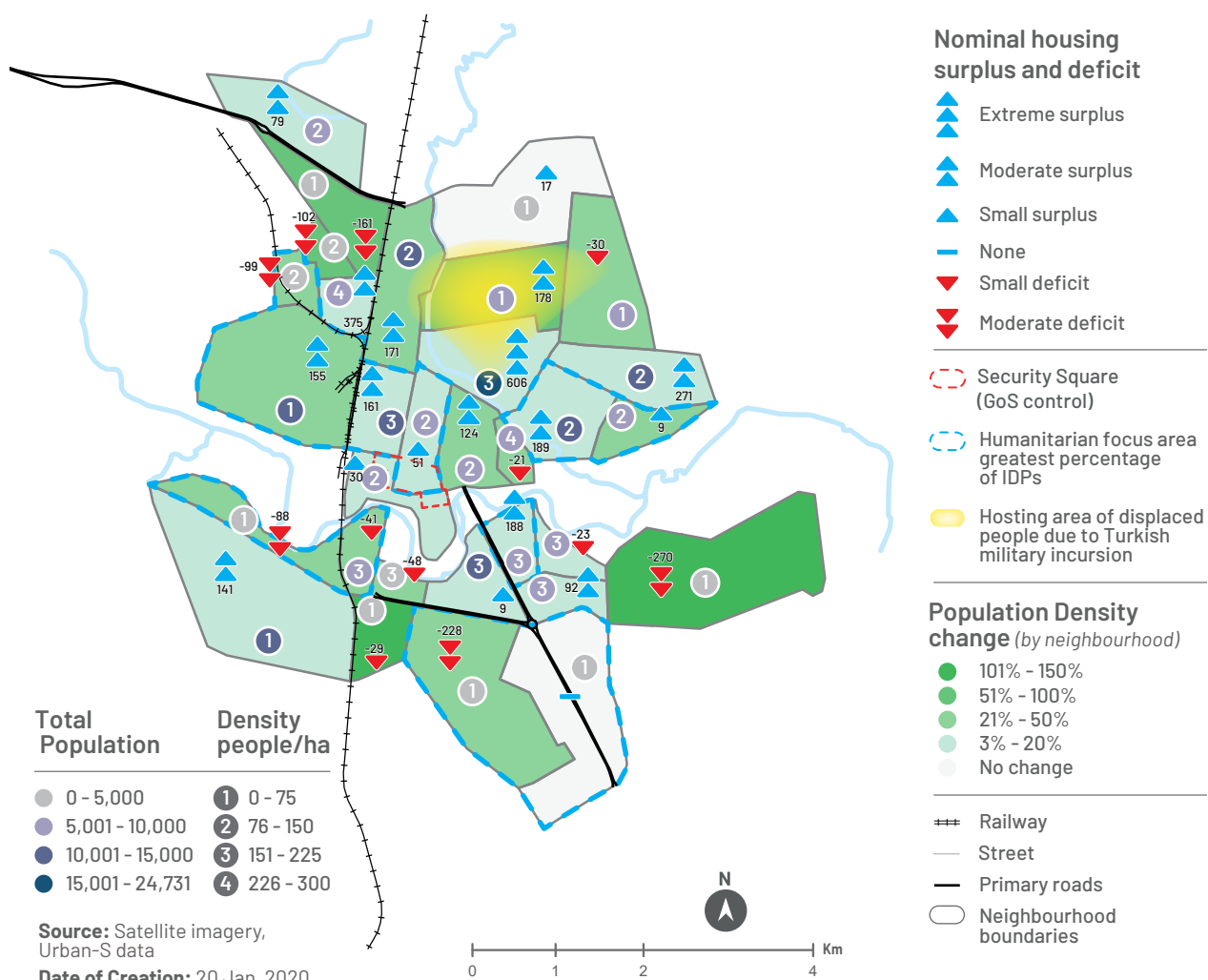
Map 16.1: Risks and safeguards for programming



- 1.1 Both GoS' and SANES' governance structures are highly centralised.** Even the most localised bodies are partisan and thus unrepresentative of many of the city's residents. NGOs should ensure project design and implementation includes residents who are marginalised from formal channels of representation, while policymakers should advocate for greater transparency, representation, and local decision-making.
- 1.2 Access for INGOs has been curtailed by the Turkish offensive.** During Operation Peace Spring, most INGOs stopped their activities and evacuated international staff. As of February 2020, their mobility to and within northeast Syria remains limited. INGOs should consider conducting capacity-building of local NGOs to circumvent current access constraints and minimise disruptions to programming that may arise in the future.
- 1.3 Damage within Al-Hasakeh City is concentrated in the Arab-majority southern half.** The widespread Kurdish perception of local Arab support for the GoS may result in SANES neglecting or delaying recovery in these neighbourhoods. Humanitarian and development actors should advocate for a needs-based approach with the local authorities. (See map Map 16.1, "Risks and safeguards for programming")
- 1.4 The Self-Administration is restricting programming to Kurdish-majority areas at the expense of other areas.** However, NGOs should promote inclusivity. Both staff and leadership should represent the city's many ethnic and sectarian groups. This may help gain buy-ins among beneficiaries and secure unfettered access to all neighbourhoods. NGOs should employ diverse teams and implementers should consider partnering with non-Kurdish NGOs where appropriate. (See map Map 16.1, "Risks and safeguards for programming")
- 1.5 Complex sponsorship requirements restrict IDP access into Al-Hasakeh City.** The Self-Administration requires IDPs to have a guarantor who lives in the city. Consequently, most Arab IDPs are forced to reside in the surrounding rural areas or in IDP camps where shelter arrangements, essential services, and livelihoods opportunities are of lower quality or entirely unavailable. NGOs should advocate for all IDPs to be able to reside within the city or to at least be able to enter for work and basic services.
- 1.6 Complex sponsorship requirements restrict IDP access into Al-Hasakeh City.** The Self-Administration requires IDPs to have a guarantor who lives in the city. Consequently, most Arab IDPs are forced to reside in the surrounding rural areas or in IDP camps where shelter arrangements, essential services, and livelihoods opportunities are of lower quality or entirely unavailable.⁵⁹⁰ NGOs should advocate for all IDPs to be able to reside within the city or to at least be able to enter for work and basic services.

2. Return conditions and limitations

Map 16.2: Return conditions and limitations



2.1 Strained city services and infrastructure from damage in southern neighbourhoods is compounded by population increase.

An influx of IDPs to southern neighbourhoods has exacerbated concerns over the city's accommodative capacity. Additional housing and services are needed to increase availability and affordability. While programming should encompass the entire city, the Abu Bakr and Abo Amsha neighbourhoods require increased attention due to their damage severity (Abu Bakr), poor service provision, and increased IDP population densities as destinations for IDPs. (See Maps 16.2 and 16.3)

2.2 In the aftermath of the Turkish incursion into northern Syria, 18,000 new IDPs arrived in Al-Hasakeh City, where they remain.

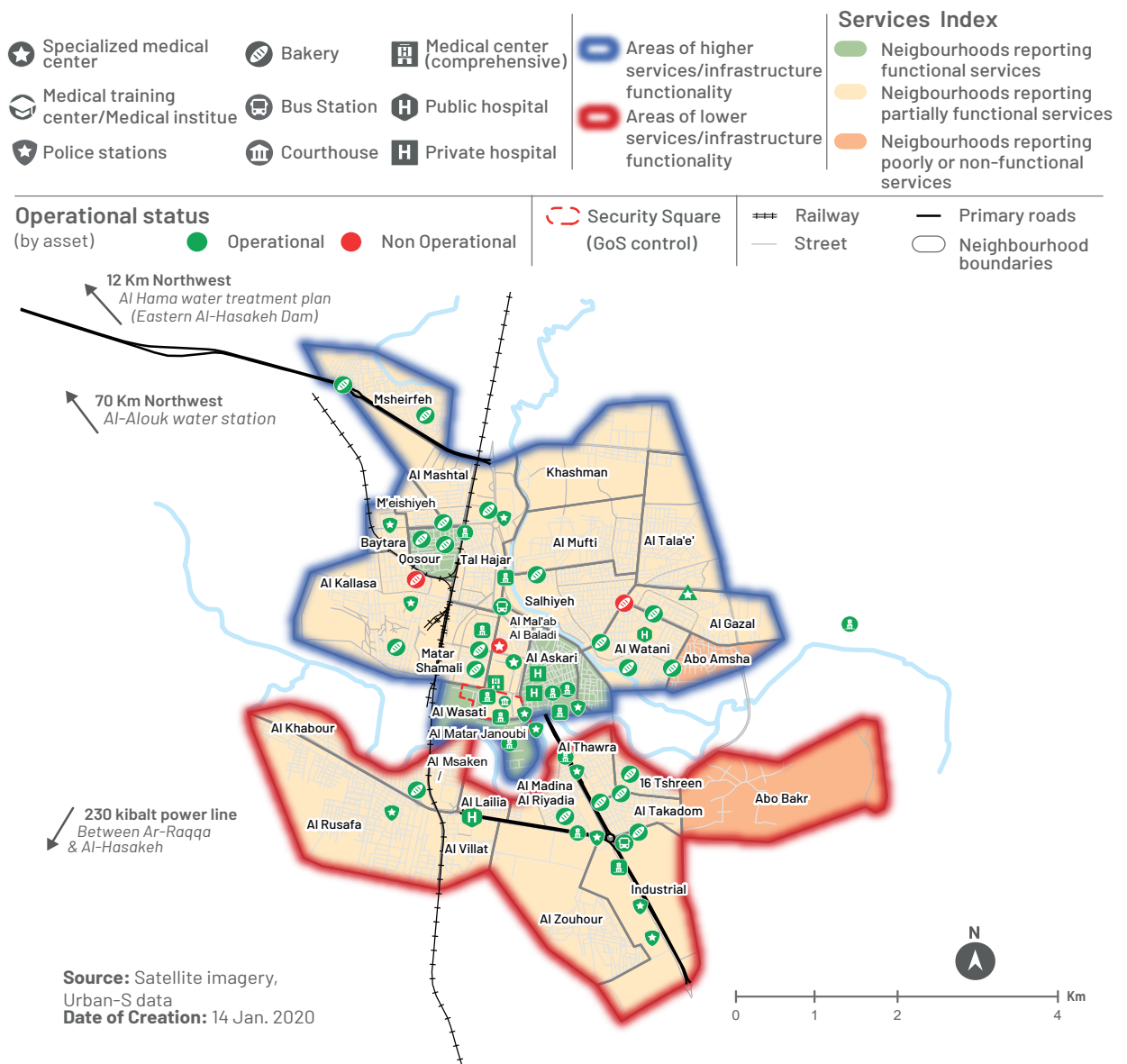
This demographic upsurge places additional pressure on already overwhelmed housing and city services, thus portending further disruptions of the city's urban infrastructure and facilities. Population increase may also impede local authorities, and stabilisation and response actors from pursuing early recovery activities. Short- to medium-term humanitarian programming is necessary to respond to the needs of these new (and vulnerable) IDPs. This may ease the burden on existing city services and avoid compromising recovery gains to date. (See map Map 16.2, "Return conditions and limitations")

2.3 Advocate for the preservation of political and social gains obtained by minority groups since the conflict's start in 2011.⁵⁹¹

In light of the current political uncertainty in the northeast, it is important to protect these gains and guard against a potential reversal. (See city profile section 4, "Governance & Stakeholder Analysis"). Policymakers should continue to support the region's minority groups. This will safeguard (and contribute to) conditions amenable for returns to Al-Hasakeh City and northeast Syria.

3. Guidelines for short and medium-term response

Map 16.3: Guidelines for short and medium-term response



Short-term

3.1 Focus humanitarian efforts on serving areas with high concentration of internally displaced people.

Services should include potable water, food and non-food kits, fuel, and cash handouts. In addition, humanitarian activities should restore impacted/destroyed homes, infrastructure, and open schools and mobile health clinics across the city. (See map Map 16.2, "Return conditions and limitations")

3.2 Ensure that adequate public services are provided equitably throughout the community, without regard to ethnic and sectarian identities or displacement status.

Currently, services in the city's northern neighbourhoods score higher than southern Arab-dominated neighbourhoods on the Urban Functionality Index (UFI) for water, energy, and solid waste. The GoS-controlled "Security Square" scores highest amongst all neighbourhoods. Other neighbourhoods should be improved to similarly acceptable standards (see Map 16.3 and city profile section 14, "Urban Functionality Index").

3.3 Ensure project implementation of water, energy, and other infrastructure upgrades throughout the city.

Water and electrical systems are currently underperforming. Ongoing projects by local authorities aim to improve these system's capacities. Priority needs for funding and sectoral expertise include: 1) Maintaining the 230 kilovolt power line between Ar-Raqqa and Al-Hasakeh Governorates (the city's main power line), 2) ensure ongoing pump operations at Al-Alouk water station (the city's main water source), and 3) improve Al-Hama water treatment plant as a replacement for the damaged and partially operational Al-Alouk water treatment facility. (See Map 16.3, "Guidelines for short and medium-term response")

Medium-term

3.4 Ensure unfettered access to major highways by commercial vehicles in order to encourage regional commerce.

Extensive checkpoints (and informal taxation) along primary highways have rerouted commercial vehicles, increasing traffic volumes on lower capacity regional roads. The results include increased travel times, longer distances to reach markets and high delivery costs. Heavy traffic on rural, two-lane, access roads (especially by large vehicles) adversely affects road conditions, damages surfaces and creates safety concerns thus compounding the problem.

3.5 Promote the delivery of consistent, timely, and effective community services.

Coordination between the GoS and SANES in public service provision (including infrastructure and utilities) has helped to minimise interruptions. However, parallel and/or overlapping governance structures present challenges to administering quality services. Inherent risks include fragmentation and redundancies, higher transaction costs (for both service providers and residents), and a lack of accountability. In addition, both GoS and SANES governance models are neither inclusive nor responsive to community-led goals and objectives. Local and international advocates should encourage resource consolidation and bottom-up decision-making for effective delivery of community services and infrastructure.

590 "Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Needs Overview (2019)," UN-OCHA, March 2019, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2019_Syr_HNO_Full.pdf.

591 "Submission by UNHCR to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Compilation Report, Universal Periodic Review: 2nd Cycle, 26th Session", UNHCR, downloaded January 30, 2020.



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