


REGIONAL ANALYSIS SYRIA


27 February 2013


Overview


 Red flags indicate new information

This Regional Analysis of the Syria Conflict (RAS) is an update of the [January RAS](#). The RAS seeks to bring together information from all sources in the region and provide a coherent analysis of the overall situation in the region as well as in each of the affected countries. While Part I focuses on the situation within Syria, Part II covers the impact of the crisis on the neighbouring countries. The Syria Needs Analysis Project welcomes all information that could complement this report. For additional information, comments or questions, please email SNAP@ACAPS.org.


 In February, the estimated conflict-related death toll since the uprising began in March 2011, has been revised upwards from 60,000 to over 70,000 people. The UN, using information from the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society (SARC), estimate over 4 million people to be affected by the crisis. However, these estimations are considered to be low, particularly as a recent joint rapid assessment indicated 3.4 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance in parts of 6 northern governorates alone.


 The humanitarian situation varies significantly across the country, with a range of factors influencing the daily life of the population including the varying intensity and uncertainty of the conflict, the divergence between the situation in Government and opposition controlled areas, available supply routes and the coping mechanisms of the civil society.


 **Conflict:** The conflict intensified in key areas in February, with anti-Government groups stepping up assaults on Government troops and the Air Force bombing rebel held, populated areas in Dar'a and Aleppo. Hostilities are escalating in Damascus city, which was, until January, relatively untouched by the conflict. The Assad regime continues to focus on maintaining a grip on the key axis from Damascus to Homs, on the coastal Alawite governorates and on controlling the border with Jordan, while large parts of northern and eastern Syria are currently under anti-Government control. High intensity conflict involving the Syrian Army and a multitude of anti-Government groups continues in the following strategic places: Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa, Dar'a, Rural Damascus, Homs, Idleb and on the outskirts of Damascus city. Other areas held by anti-Government forces witness frequent air strikes, reportedly continuing to target medical facilities and bakeries.

 **Displacement:** The official estimate for the number of internally displaced remains at 2 million, although over 2.3 million IDPs have been identified across less than half of the country, still highlighting a discrepancy in the understanding of the displacement dynamic. During February, over 150,000 Syrians registered as refugees in neighbouring countries, resulting in a total figure of over 733,000

registered refugees. A further 174,000 await registration and at least 250,000 are thought to be unregistered.

 **Humanitarian concerns:** While winterisation was consistently mentioned as a priority need between November 2012 and January 2013, the current increase in temperatures results in a shift in humanitarian priorities. Health services and food continue to be reported as urgent needs **within Syria**. The health infrastructure has been severely impacted by the crisis and cannot cope with the increasing needs, especially in areas of on-going high-intensity conflict. Severe increases in bread prices continue fuelled by high fuel prices, reduced cross-border trade as well as a sharp reduction in milling capacity in Aleppo (by about 75%) affecting supply of wheat flour to eastern governorates. Protection concerns remain high, with indiscriminate bombing of populated areas, reports of extrajudicial killings, kidnappings and widespread violence against women and children. With electricity cuts and the widespread destruction of critical infrastructure, access to potable water is becoming an increasingly high concern. The deteriorating WASH situation is compounding an already volatile health situation and waterborne diseases are on the rise. In many places, services such as garbage collection and law and order have completely broken down, although in some anti-Government controlled areas, civil society has been able to substitute Government activities.

 Since the previous report, over 180,000 **refugees** have arrived in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq. The capacity of countries to host these refugees is increasingly strained and, as a result, the situation for refugees continues to deteriorate. Although humanitarian aid is scaling up, it cannot keep pace with the increasing needs. Priority needs vary geographically: in February, 60,000 refugees arrived in Jordan's overcrowded refugee camp, Za'atari, where aid agencies and the Government were already struggling to meet the basic needs of those residing in the camp. Unregistered refugees in Jordan have great difficulties in accessing services and healthcare has been reported as a major concern. In Lebanon, where no camps have been established to date, the refugees are staying with host communities or in rented apartments. With the resources of both refugees and host families being depleted, and a continuing influx of new refugees, the situation is of increasing concern. Both Turkey and Iraq appear to have the capacity to cope with the influx, although those individuals that have not registered with UNHCR or the Government continue to face difficulties in obtaining access to health care, employment and adequate housing.

 **Information gaps:** In February, more information on the situation in Syria became available as the results of several assessments were published, including the results from a Joint Rapid Assessment in northern Syria (J-RANS) and the preliminary findings of a UNICEF WASH survey. However, large information gaps remain.

Government and anti-Government held areas as at February 20, 2013

