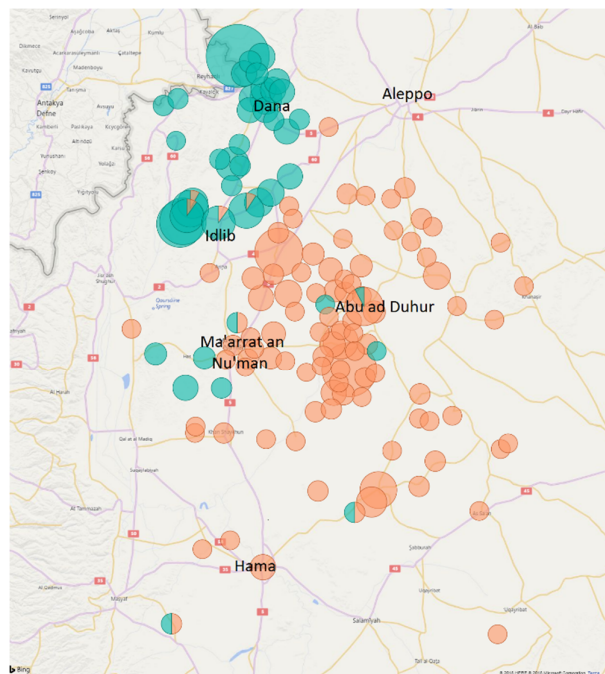




## Rapid Protection Monitoring Update

### Protection Monitoring Task Force

Displacement to Idlib and Aleppo Governorates, Syria  
February 2018



Orange circle: Location from which KIs were displaced  
Teal circle: Location in which KIs were interviewed

### Key Findings

- Severe shelling and airstrikes and the advance of GoS forces were main reasons for displacement.
- Shelling/clashes, lack of transport and explosive hazards were primary risks during flight.

<sup>1</sup> (These findings are consistent with findings of the CCCM sub-cluster during the same period. These findings note that around 30,000 displacements to Idlib took place between 28 January and

- Increased rates of loss of civil status documents due to flight, increased risk of child labour for boys, and increased risk of early marriage for girls have emerged post-displacement.

### Recommendations

- Ensure that IDPs' immediate needs, especially safe and reliable shelter and WASH facilities, are met.
- Ensure IDPs have access to basic humanitarian assistance, including IDPs who lack civil status documentation.

### Background Information

In May 2017, an agreement was signed between Iran, Russia and Turkey creating four de-escalation zones: Zone 1 composed of Idlib governorate, as well as parts of Latakia, Aleppo and Hama; Zone 2 composed of parts of Homs province; Zone 3 composed of Eastern Ghouta in Rural Damascus; and Zone 4 composed of Syrian-Jordanian border areas. However, these zones have not been respected and many of these zones have experienced an increase in clashes between the Government of Syria (GoS) and Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs). The increase in incidents has resulted in large displacements, particularly towards Idlib governorate, which is already hosting a large number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from many areas of Syria since the beginning of the conflict. The Protection Monitoring Task Force (PMTF) of the Syria Protection Cluster (Turkey) conducted a rapid survey to assess the impact of these recent IDP displacements, including emerging protection risks and needs.

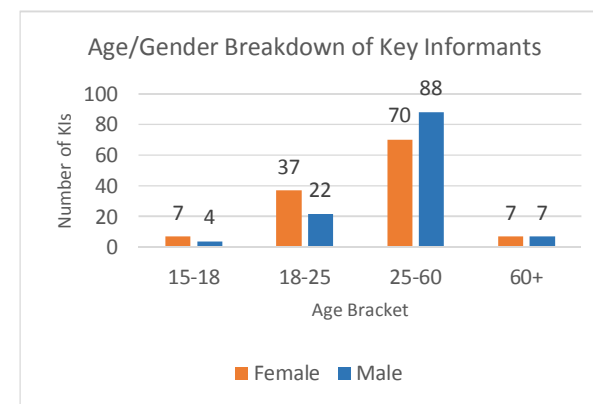
### Methodology

This update is based on findings from 242 Key Informant (KI) surveys conducted by five members of the Protection Cluster, between 4 and 8 February 2018. Participant KIs were IDPs from 44 communities in five districts (Al Ma'ra, Harim, Idlib, Jebel Saman, and Hama) in three governorates

3 February 2018, the majority having been displaced from other communities within Idlib governorate. Respondents preferred these locations due to their distance from conflict lines and the

(Idlib, Aleppo, Hama). KI sub-district locations are primarily Dana, Idlib, Bennsh, Maaret Tamsrin, Teftnaz, Kafr Nobol in Idlib, and Atareb sub-district in Aleppo. The vast majority of the interviews – 95% (231) – were conducted in Idlib governorate.

The respondents were 50% male and 50% female. The most commonly mentioned occupations for men were day labourer (36% of men), or farmer/shepherd (24% of men). Women most often mentioned that they were housewives (56% of women).



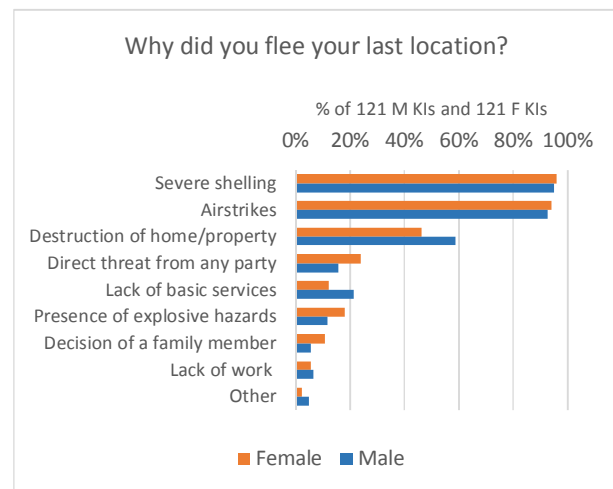
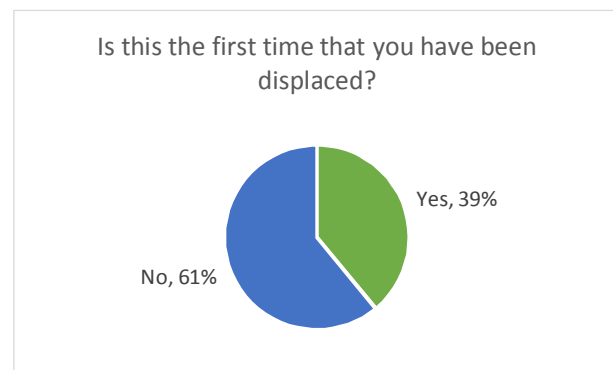
### Previous Location and Reason for Displacement

KIs arrived at their current location from 99 different communities in five districts. 69% of KIs were displaced from one community in Idlib to another. 19% were displaced from Hama to Idlib and 9% were displaced from Aleppo to Idlib governorate. Interviewed IDPs had fled primarily from Sanjar, Saraqeb, Abul Thohur, and Ma'arat an Nu'man sub-districts of Idlib governorate, Tall Ed-daman sub-district of Aleppo governorate, and Hamra and Hama sub-districts of Hama governorate.<sup>1</sup>

55% of KIs stated that they arrived at their present location less than one month ago. 41% arrived on to two months ago, and 4% arrived more than two months ago. 61% of KIs

availability of humanitarian assistance (CCCM ISMI Rapid Assessment of IDP Movements in Idlib Governorate, 21 January - 3 February 2018)).

stated that this was the first time they were displaced, while 39% stated that they have been displaced on multiple occasions.

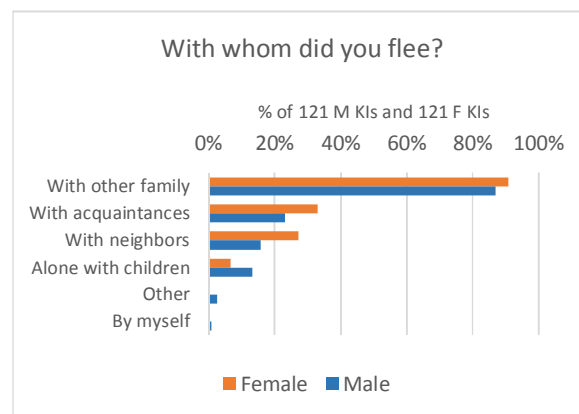


KIs most commonly mentioned severe shelling (95% of all KIs) and airstrikes (93%), as well as destruction of home or property (52%) as the primary reasons why they fled their homes. Respondents explained that prior to their flight, the security situation in their communities deteriorated and their neighbourhoods experienced bombardments and airstrikes. Respondents describe that families experienced debilitating fear and that the psychological state of children was severely affected by the security situation. One KI explained that his children suffered from involuntary

urination due to fear caused by the airstrikes (Male KII, displaced from Saraqab sub-district, Idlib to Dana sub-district, Idlib). Furthermore, families who were already living in a poor financial situation experienced even greater challenges in accessing basic resources and livelihoods (Male KII, displaced from Saraqab sub-district, Idlib to Idlib sub-district, Idlib). For example, herders were forced to sell their animals in order to cover basic expenses such as rent (Male KII, displaced from Saraqab sub-district, Idlib to Dana sub-district, Idlib). Additionally, communities experienced cuts in electricity and water, shortage of bread, and loss of access to health services (Male KII, displaced from Abul Thohur sub-district, Idlib to Dana sub-district, Idlib). Community members also experienced fear due to advancement or arrival of the Syrian Armed Forces (SAF) to their communities. One respondent explained that he fled along with his six daughters due to fear of the arrival of SAF (Male KII, displaced from Saraqab sub-district, Idlib to Dana sub-district, Idlib).

The majority of KIs stated that they fled with other family members.

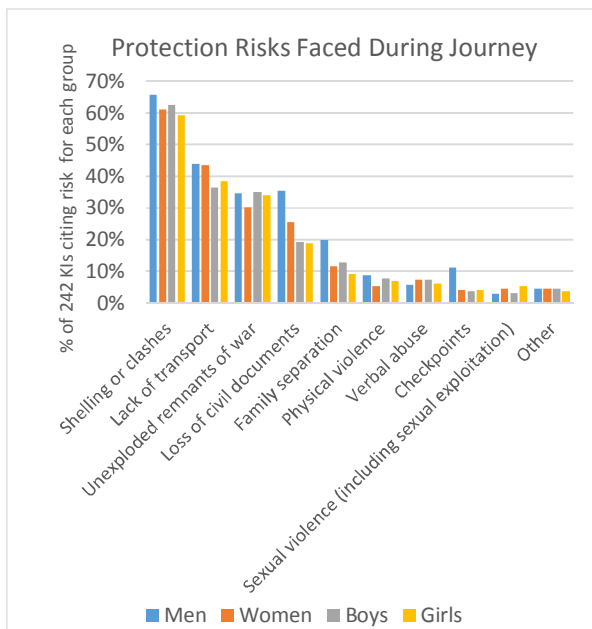
Respondents stated that physical safety was the primary factor when choosing their present location.



#### Protection Risks Faced During Flight

Most families reported being displaced due to conflict activity in their previous location (airstrikes, bombings,

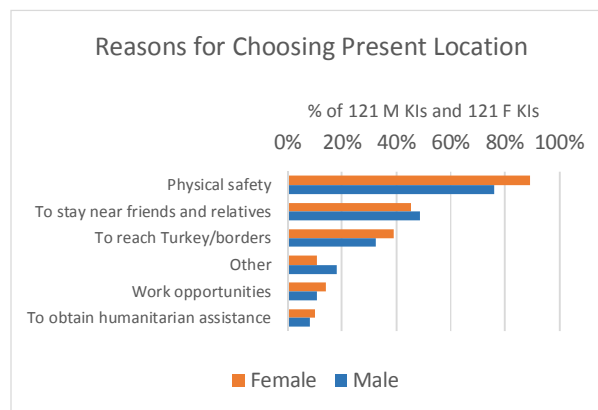
shelling) and made the journey under very difficult conditions and circumstances. They often left with few or no belongings and experienced great fear and uncertainty during the journey. As they fled their communities, they continued to be subjected to airstrikes and bombardments during the journey. Respondents describe that the roads used by IDPs were very crowded (Male KII, displaced from Tall Ed-daman sub-district, Aleppo to Dana sub-district, Idlib) and the roads were insecure, with respondents reporting continuous shelling and gunfire during their flight (Male KII, displaced from Abul Thohur sub-district, Idlib to Maaret Tamsrin sub-district, Idlib). IDPs experienced difficulty in maneuvering the journey because of these threats, and the impact resulted in damage and destruction of vehicles carrying IDPs, as well as traffic accidents resulting in injuries varying from minor to life-threatening (Male KII, displaced from Sanjar sub-district, Idlib to Dana sub-district, Idlib). Sometimes due to gunfire, buses carrying IDPs stopped and IDPs hid in areas along the route until it was safe to return to buses and continue the journey (Female KII, displaced from Saraqab sub-district, Idlib to Dana sub-district, Idlib). A 34-year-old woman was injured by shrapnel during the journey and was forced to borrow money to pay for her treatment (Female KII, displaced from Sanjar sub-district, Idlib to Dana sub-district, Idlib). Many children caught colds during their journey and required medical care immediately upon arrival to their final destination. They had difficulty finding transportation and available transport was at extremely high cost. A family reported having paid 60,000 SYP (279 USD) for access to a car which they could secure only because of they knew the driver (Male KII, displaced from Sanjar sub-district, Idlib to Dana sub-district, Idlib). Due to challenges in finding transportation, some families were forced to split up and use different modes of transportation to flee from their areas. For example, one family was forced to travel separately – the parents traveled by bus and their children traveled by car. The car was bombed during the journey, resulting in the children's death (Male KII, displaced from Sanjar sub-district, Idlib to Dana sub-district, Idlib).



Girls, boys, women and men were all found to be impacted by every protection risk assessed in this survey—both during the journey and at the present time in their current location. While IDP communities are in need of assistance and protection in all areas, certain risks were identified to be slightly greater for some demographics than others, which is detailed in the accompanying graph.

Shelling or clashes, lack of transport and explosive remnants of war (ERWs) contamination were identified as the major risks faced by IDPs during the journey. Men and boys were perceived to be at greater risk of shelling or clashes, ERWs, family separation and checkpoints during the journey, while women and girls were perceived to be at greater risk of sexual violence. Men in particular were perceived to be at greater risk of harm than other demographics for risks of shelling or clashes, lack of transportation, loss of civil documentation, family separation and checkpoints. Children (boys and girls) were

perceived to be at equal or greater risk of ERW contamination, physical violence, verbal abuse and sexual violence than men and women.



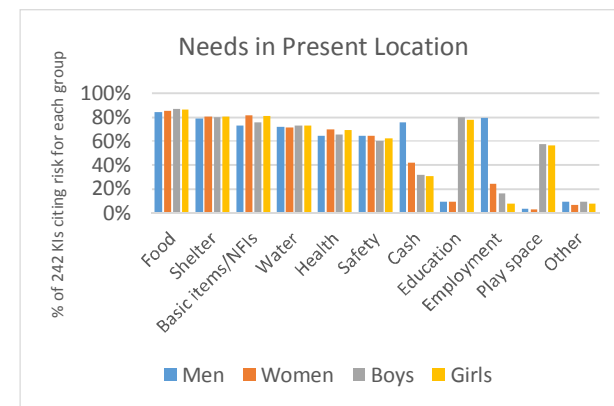
KIs chose their present location (95% Idlib, 4% Aleppo, 1% Hama) for physical safety (83%), to stay near friends and relatives (47%), to reach Turkey or the borders (36%), to obtain humanitarian assistance (12%) or for work opportunities (9%). Among the 14% who cited “other” reasons, 4 KIs explained that some community members arrived with their livestock and chose their present community (Atareb, Aleppo; Atma, Idlib; Termanin, Idlib) for the maintenance of their livestock.

#### Needs at Present Location

Food was the most oft-cited need, then shelter, NFIs, water, health, and safety. Cash and employment were noted by 76% and 79% respectively as needed for men, while around 80% noted the need for education for children<sup>2</sup> and around 58% noted the need for play space for children. Additionally, KIs have indicated needs for a wide range of humanitarian assistance and basic services -- shelter (tents), food, water, heating/insulation and heating fuel, WASH facilities (latrines), NFIs, especially clothing, cooking materials, dignity kits, infant formula and baby diapers, and medication for chronic health disorders and cash assistance.

governorate, but in some cases, newly arrived IDPs do not yet feel prepared to send children to school.

KIs reported an urgent need for separate toilet facilities for men and women to ensure privacy and safety.



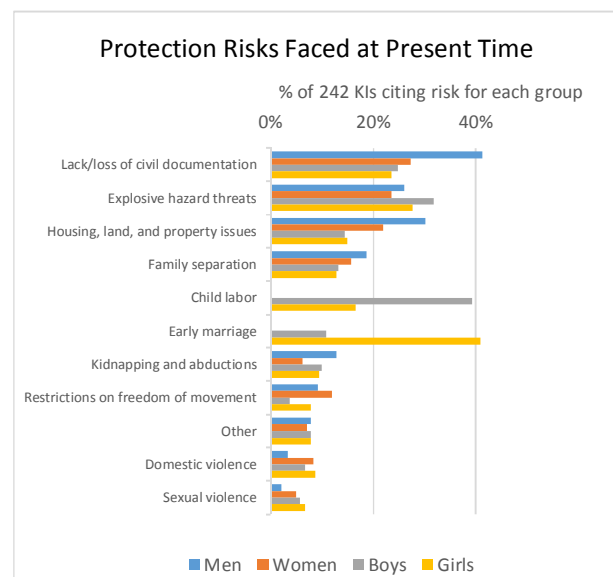
KIs noted both insufficient quantity and quality of tents, and the need for tents that are weather resistant. Respondents emphasized that many IDPs are currently situated in open land and improvised camps which lack basic infrastructure such as WASH facilities. IDPs rely upon tents for shelter which are insufficient in number and therefore must house multiple families (Female KII, displaced from Sanjar sub-district to Dana sub-district, Idlib). Some tents have been made from materials such as blankets, and they do not protect IDPs from bad weather (Male KII, displaced from Abul Thohur sub-district, Idlib to Maaret Tamsrin sub-district, Idlib).

It is noted that among the recently arrived IDP populations, there are demographics experiencing heightened vulnerability to protection risks, such as single female-headed households. Findings indicate that these groups experience greater challenges from lack of humanitarian assistance and basic services, such as the absence of shelter and WASH facilities. One KI who lost her family explained that even though she does not feel comfortable doing so, she was forced to reside with her nephew due to lack of shelter and lack of financial resources needed to secure shelter for herself (Female KII, displaced from Ma'arrat An

<sup>2</sup> It has been noted by a member of the Protection Cluster that there is access to school in communities of Harim district, Idlib

Nu'man sub-district, Idlib to Dana sub-district, Idlib). In another case, an extended family living in a makeshift shelter has no access to water or toilets, causing great hardship to female members of the household (Female KII, displaced from Hamra sub-district, Hama to Atareb sub-district, Aleppo). In many improvised camps, women and girls are forced to use areas between trees for their bathroom needs and due to embarrassment, they wait for night-time (Female KII displaced from Al Ma'ra sub-district, Idlib to Dana sub-district, Idlib). This causes great discomfort and poses risks of sexual and physical abuse. A widowed KI also described how she and her daughters are temporarily using a neighbour's home for their bathroom needs, and stated that she accompanies her daughters during bathroom trips as she fears for their safety (Female KII, displaced from Hamra sub-district, Hama to Dana sub-district, Idlib).

#### Protection Risks Faced at Present Location



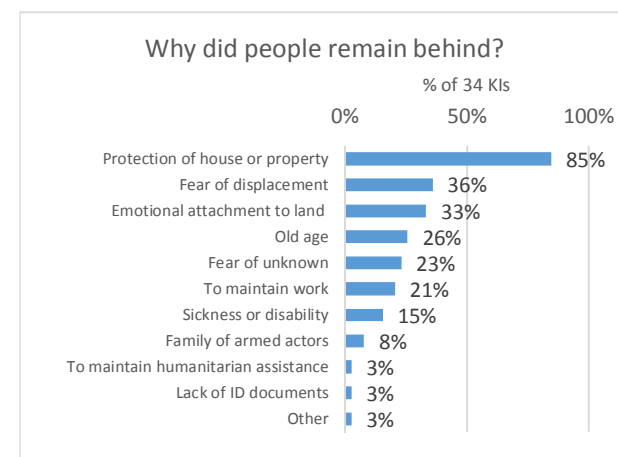
**Lack or Loss of Civil Documentation** was the most oft-cited risk and was reported as affecting men more than any other group. Due to the security situation, many IDPs were forced to flee their communities on short notice. Many IDPs were

simply unable to collect all of their civil status documentation before flight, while others lost documents during the flight itself. One family with a disabled child was forced to flee from their area very quickly and they were unable to take their family booklet from their home before flight, and it is not possible for them to return to obtain it now (Female KII, displaced from Sanjar sub-district, Idlib to Dana sub-district, Idlib).

It is notable that the risk of **child labour** for boys and the risk of **early marriage** for girls was cited almost as often as the risk of loss of civil documentation for men. A respondent indicated that the circumstances of flight and displacement impose severe financial challenges upon families, and many families are looking to early marriage of their daughters in order to reduce financial burden (Female KII, displaced from Al Ma'ra sub-district, Idlib to Dana sub-district, Idlib). **Explosive hazards** were seen as most affecting boys and girls. Men and women were seen to be at risk of **housing, and property issues** as well as **family separation**. 39% of KIs noted the risk of **child labour** for boys and 17% for girls. 41% of KIs noted the risk of **early marriage** for girls and 11% for boys. 13% of KIs noted the risk of **kidnapping** for men, 10% each for boys and girls, and 6% for women. **Restrictions on freedom of movement** were seen as most affecting women (12% of KIs) while girls and women were seen as most at risk of **domestic violence** (9% and 8% of KIs) and girls, boys, and women of **sexual violence** (7%, 6%, and 5%).

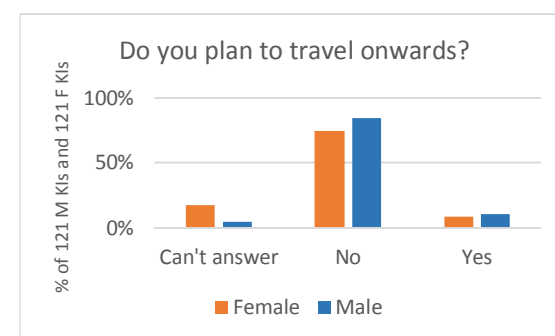
Additionally KIs have noted increased incidence of illness among IDP communities due to the poor living conditions in their current locations. An additional risk is the continued psychosocial distress from bombardment and fear of repeated displacement.

#### People Who Remained Behind



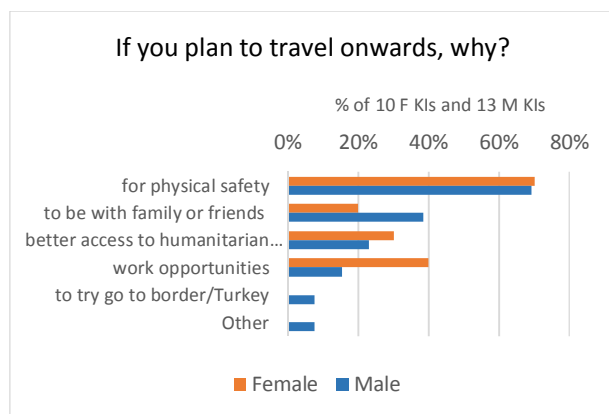
16% of KIs knew of people who stayed behind in their previous community. The reason cited by 85% of KIs was to protect their house or property, while others cited fear of displacement, emotional attachment to their land, old age, fear of the unknown, to keep their work, sickness or disability, or because they were family of armed actors. 3% cited the need to maintain humanitarian assistance, 3% cited lack of identity documents, and 3% cited other reasons.

#### Intentions for Onward Movement



79% of KIs stated that they do not have intentions for onward movement, while 11% stated that they do not know, and 10% stated that they have the intention to move

onward. 18 KIs responded to the question regarding where they would like to go. 7 KIs stated Turkey, 3 KIs stated Sarmada community in Harem district of Idlib, 3 KIs stated that they wish to go to camps which have presence of humanitarian organizations. The remaining respondents stated that they are seeking a safe location, a location with affordable rent, and one respondent indicated a shelter for widows (Female KII, displaced from Al Ma'ra sub-district, Idlib to Dana sub-district, Idlib).

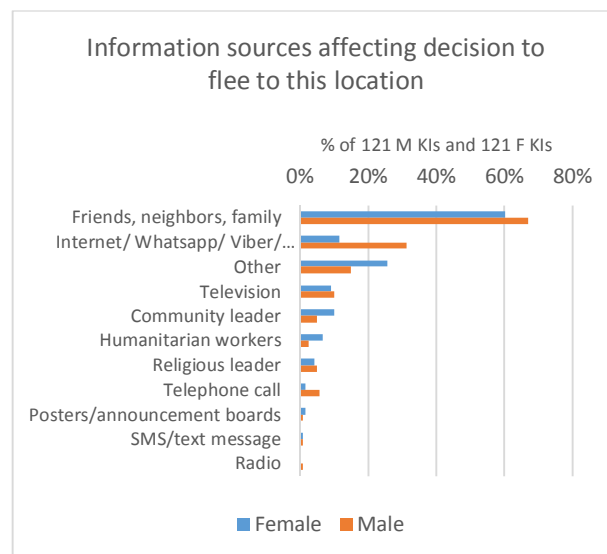


Of 23 KIs (10F, 13M) who stated that they planned to move on, the largest proportion (70%) cited physical safety as the reason for moving onward. Others cited the desire to be close to family and friends, the need to access humanitarian assistance, or work opportunities. One male respondent stated the intention to go to the border or to Turkey.

KIs were also asked about sources that affected their or their family's decision to come to this location. Most (64%) cited friends, neighbours, or family; 21% cited internet communications like Whatsapp, Viber, or Facebook; 20% cited other reasons, such as the poor security situation including bombardments and the advance of the SAF.

## Conclusion

IDP survey participants highlighted that they were forced to flee their homes due to imminent danger to their lives. They arrived at their present locations with very little belongings, and are in need of all types of humanitarian assistance and



basic services. IDPs, some of whom experienced repeated displacements, and some who have been displaced for the very first time, express frustration and fear in light of their current situation, and seek safe, stable and more permanent living arrangements for themselves and their families. They are unable to cope with the challenging circumstances, particularly the high cost of living and high cost of rent that are further exacerbated by the arrival of a large number of IDPs in Idlib governorate. IDPs seek rapid assistance and support from humanitarian actors, in addition to practical solutions such as greater access to medical mobile teams and small-scale, yet quickly implemented livelihood projects that will provide some relief to their present financial needs. This survey underlines recurrent findings that conflict-affected communities rely largely on humanitarian assistance for their survival, and displacement conditions continue to heighten protection risks for already at risk segments of the community.

In addition to the basic humanitarian assistance and service needs highlighted in previous sections, humanitarian actors are encouraged to continue and increase community-level initiatives for the protection of women, girls, boys, elderly, persons with disabilities and those in need of health care. Increased risk of sexual violence towards women and girls,

child labour for boys, and early marriage for girls is noted. Additionally, humanitarian actors are reminded that lack and loss of civil documentation during flight and restricted freedom of movement are common occurrences, and should not negatively impact these communities' access to humanitarian assistance. The delivery of explosive hazards risk education is also considered as a lifesaving activity to increase safety and security of people the most at risk of incidents, such as IDPs and children.

*The Syria Protection Cluster (Turkey) is made up of the Protection Cluster as well as three Sub-Clusters: Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence, and Mine Action. For further information, please contact the Protection Cluster Coordinator, Victoria Shepard at [shepard@unhcr.org](mailto:shepard@unhcr.org).*



# Sub-districts From Which KIs Fled

# Sub-districts in Which KIs Were Interviewed

