



Protection Monitoring Quarterly Report
October - December 2017

Protection Monitoring Task Force

**SYRIA PROTECTION
CLUSTER (TURKEY)**



About the PMTF

The Protection Monitoring Task Force (PMTF), an initiative of the Syria Protection Cluster (Turkey), is composed of Syrian NGOs as well as international NGOs. It aims to develop the capacity of humanitarian actors to assess, analyze, and respond to protection needs in Syria.

23 NGOs, INGOs and clusters have been involved in the formation of the PMTF, which is co-led by the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC). As of the time of this reporting, 12 members actively contribute to monthly protection monitoring, which began in March 2017. For additional details on monitoring data assessed in this report, please refer to the 2017 Online Interactive Dashboard¹. All PMTF products, including quarterly reports and rapid monitoring reports, can be accessed at the Protection Cluster website².

¹ Protection Monitoring 2017 Online Interactive Dashboard: <http://tiny.cc/6dhcsy>

² Website of the Syria Protection Cluster (Turkey):
<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/stima/protection>



Contents

About the PMTF	2
Recommendations for Humanitarian Actors	4
Contextual Developments	7
Data Collection Methodology	9
Overview	9
Findings	12
3.1 Rights.....	12
3.1.1 Civil Documentation.....	12
3.1.2 Access to Justice.....	16
3.1.3 Social Cohesion	18
3.2 Basic Services	22
3.2.1 Access to Education	24
3.2.2 Access to Health.....	26
3.2.3 Specialized Services.....	30
3.2.4 Access to Water	31
3.2.5 Humanitarian Assistance	35
3.2.6 Access to Markets	37
3.2.7 Access to Electricity.....	40
3.2.8 Access to Housing and Shelter.....	40
3.3 Vulnerability.....	44
3.3.1 Children	45
3.3.2 Child Separation	47
3.3.3 Child Labor	48
3.3.4 Violence/Exploitation of Child Labor	49
3.3.5 Early Marriage.....	49
3.3.6 Impact of Conflict on Child Behavior	49
3.4 Demographic Groups	49
3.4.1 Freedom of Movement / Movement Restrictions.....	49
3.4.2 IDP Movement	53
3.5 Explosive Hazards and Security Incidents	56
3.5.1 Explosive Hazards.....	56
3.5.2 Security Incidents.....	57
3.5.3 Community Structures	59
Conclusion.....	63
Acronyms	65



Recommendations for Humanitarian Actors

The Protection Monitoring Task Force makes the following recommendations for consideration by humanitarian actors, taking into account the protection concerns highlighted in October-December 2017 reporting period. In considering and applying these recommendations, humanitarian actors are reminded to ensure and prioritize the security and safety of their staff and beneficiaries in every activity, and to formulate flexible and alternative approaches to programming that will allow for the continuation of efforts taking into account the unpredictability and volatility of the security situation.

- **Streamline distribution and information-sharing processes to ensure that assistance provision processes are clear to communities.** Improve public information about aid distribution by identifying and resolving gaps in information sharing and access. Ensure clear information about access to services (including through service mapping and referrals) is available to the population in multiple forms. Raise awareness of existing feedback and complaint mechanisms. Ensure that all demographic groups of the community have equitable access to information on assistance provision, as well as equitable access to distributions.
- **Ensure that lack of civil status documentation is not a barrier to accessing basic services and humanitarian assistance.** Lack of civil status documentation is a widespread phenomenon among communities and should not be an impediment to receiving humanitarian assistance. There is a need to map and improve awareness among humanitarian actors about the impact of missing documentation and legal counseling initiatives. This challenge should be taken into consideration by donors when monitoring and evaluating the impacts of their projects.
- **Support communities' access to functional, safe WASH facilities. Ensure access to sufficient and clean water.** Ensure communities have access to functional and safe WASH facilities. Improve access to clean, affordable water in underserved and remote locations. NGOs providing water to communities must ensure that the water is both sufficient in quantity and clean and unpolluted.
- **Improve access to low cost, quality health services** – Increase availability of and access to health facilities and services in affected communities, paying particular attention to the cost of transportation as well as secondary and tertiary health services. Improve women's access to NGO clinics and mobile services by ensuring the presence of female medical staff.
- **Approach community-based solutions with an understanding of traditional local structures and preferred means of dispute resolution in communities.** Due to different and varying approaches to dispute resolution in Syrian communities, ensure that provision of humanitarian assistance and legal services in communities is designed with a comprehensive understanding of local dynamics and the possible implications for humanitarian actors. In communities where NGOs coordinate humanitarian activities with local councils, advocate for equal gender representation, equal access and equal programming to sensitize local community structures to issues affecting women and girls in the community.
- **Support autonomy of unaccompanied and single women through women-focused protection programming.** Initiate awareness-raising and income-generation activities for unaccompanied women, such as widows, divorcees and single unaccompanied women, to



foster greater socio-economic support for their survival and autonomy.

- **Where possible, encourage positive social interaction by making programming inclusive of both IDPs and host communities.** Make programming inclusive, particularly for IDPs residing in camps who may be isolated and located physically far from host communities. Where possible and secure, facilitate access to towns and city centers for basic services available in those locations (particularly markets) by providing transportation support to residents of isolated camps and communities. Focus initiatives to build social interaction between women IDPs and women in host communities who have fewer opportunities to interact due to greater restrictions in women's freedom of movement, while continuing initiatives for interaction of men and boys in the community. In cases where local NGOs are the primary source of employment in the community, ensure that equal employment opportunities are offered to host community and IDPs and mitigate perceptions of discrimination or inequality.
- **Mitigate factors that prevent school attendance.** If possible, provide support to overcrowded and underserved community schools that struggle to meet demand. In cases where lack of transportation prevents attendance, provide transportation support. Provide support to communities in their efforts to restore damaged schools, particularly in cases where a damaged school is the only school available in the village/community. Provide PSS support to children who struggle to return to schools due to having witnessed school damage.
- **Mitigate threat of explosive hazards** – Continue and expand risk education and increase awareness on remaining safe from mines and explosive hazards in areas where these risks are most commonly found.



1

Overview

Contextual Developments

The Syrian conflict, now in its seventh year, has caused continued and staggering suffering of civilians. In the context of armed conflict, besiegement, displacement, increasing poverty and a reliance on harmful coping mechanisms, civilians face numerous and overlapping protection risks. Despite the challenging security environment, humanitarian actors continue to respond to the humanitarian and protection needs occurring on an overwhelming scale in Syria.

During this reporting period, October - December 2017, the following key developments took place in the context of the Syrian conflict:

- In October, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) was driven from Ar-Raqqa, and conflict in Deir-ez-Zor governorate intensified, leading to large displacements towards the north and northwest. These developments led to significant IDP movements in Al-Hasakeh governorate. 67% of all recorded IDP departures (322,124) in the month of October were from communities in Deir-ez-Zor governorate, and 47% of IDP arrivals (227,519) were to Al-Hasakeh governorate. Idleb, Ar-Raqqa and Aleppo governorates all continued to experience significant IDP movement (both arrivals and departures) during this period. 35,271 IDPs arrived in Idleb governorate in October, nearly half arriving from outside of the governorate (CCCM ISMI, October 2017).
- In November, ISIS was driven out entirely from Deir-ez-Zor, resulting in continued displacement from the governorate. Due to an increase in clashes and insecurity in Hama and Aleppo governorates, large displacements also took place from these locations to Idleb governorate. 55% of all IDP arrivals in November (78,800) were to communities in Idleb governorate, while 79% of all departures (89,575) were from communities in Al-Hasakeh governorate due to intensified fighting in the area. Secondary movements between different communities within Idleb governorate were also observed during this period (CCCM ISMI, November 2017).
- In December, Government of Syria (GoS) and allied forces clashed with Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs) in south and east Idleb, resulting in both mass IDP displacement within the governorate and disruptions to humanitarian service provision in affected communities. 90% of all IDP departures in December (157,783) were from communities in Idleb governorate and 70% of arrivals (178,134) were to communities in Idleb governorate, indicating that IDPs were displaced to different communities inside the governorate to avoid harm from armed clashes. Additionally, some displacement also took place from Idleb to Aleppo governorate – 40,642 IDPs arrived to Aleppo during December.



2

Methodology and Overview

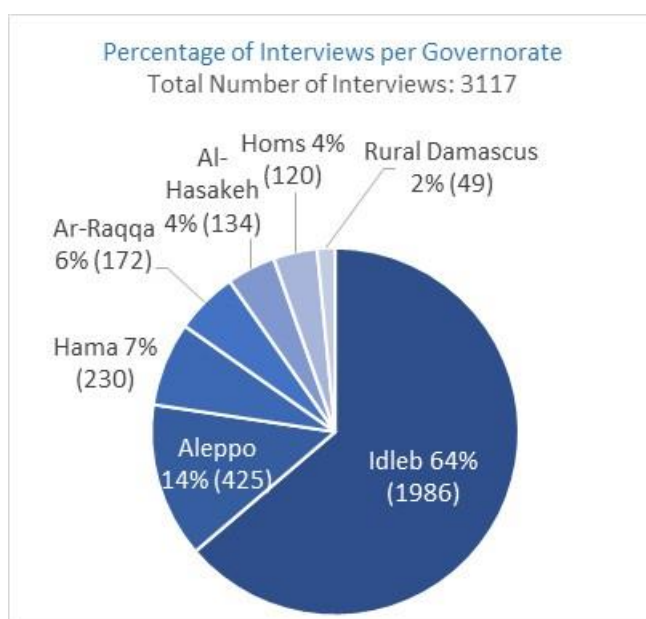
Data Collection Methodology

PMTF members conducted key informant interviews on a monthly basis. The interview questions measure protection risks in the areas of rights, basic needs, vulnerability, demographics, and security incidents. The protection indicators were decided in consultation with protection actors and other cluster coordinators.

In order to achieve statistically significant results, members were encouraged to conduct at least five to ten interviews per community per month. Locations were selected depending on factors such as member presence and accessibility.

The majority of the data available in this report is from Idleb governorate. Due to the limited nature of data from Rural Damascus and Al-Hasakeh governorates, significant comparisons between all governorates are not possible. Due to the variety of data collectors and agencies participating in this protection monitoring exercise, the type of responses can also vary. In addition, conclusions of data from the governorates cannot be generalized to represent the population as a whole. The results reported can only be considered the opinions and perceptions of the survey participants. Finally, comparisons between findings in this and earlier reports should take into account the difference in locations of interviews between the two periods, due to changes in access.

Overview



Protection Monitoring Interactive Dashboard.⁴

This report is based on data provided by eight PMTF members between October and December 2017. It is the third quarterly report of the PMTF. All quarterly reports are available on the Humanitarian Response Website³.

This report is based on community-level Key Informant (KI) interviews. Through KI interviews, members collect data from active and aware members of the community who are able to assess various protection risks and concerns of all demographic groups. This report reflects data from 3,117 KI interviews conducted in eight governorates, in north and southwest Syria. For more specific location based analysis of the data, please refer to the 2017

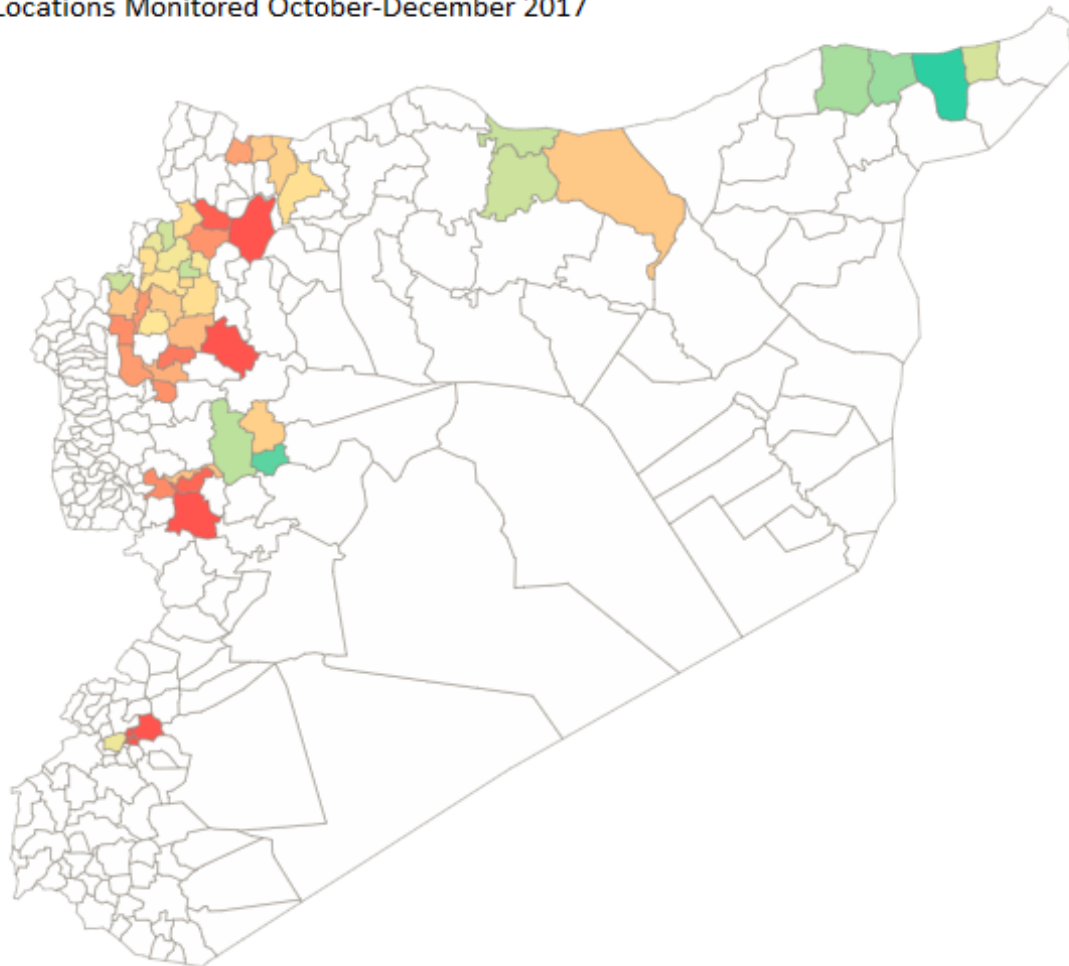
³ <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/stima/protection>

⁴ <https://tinyurl.com/mfqnrff>



The below map visualizes locations monitored during the reporting period and the severity of protection risks in which green indicates low risk, yellow medium risk and red, high risk. These outcomes are best considered at a community level and in consideration of the number of communities monitored per district. Please refer to the 2017 Online Interactive Dashboard for details.

Locations Monitored October-December 2017



3

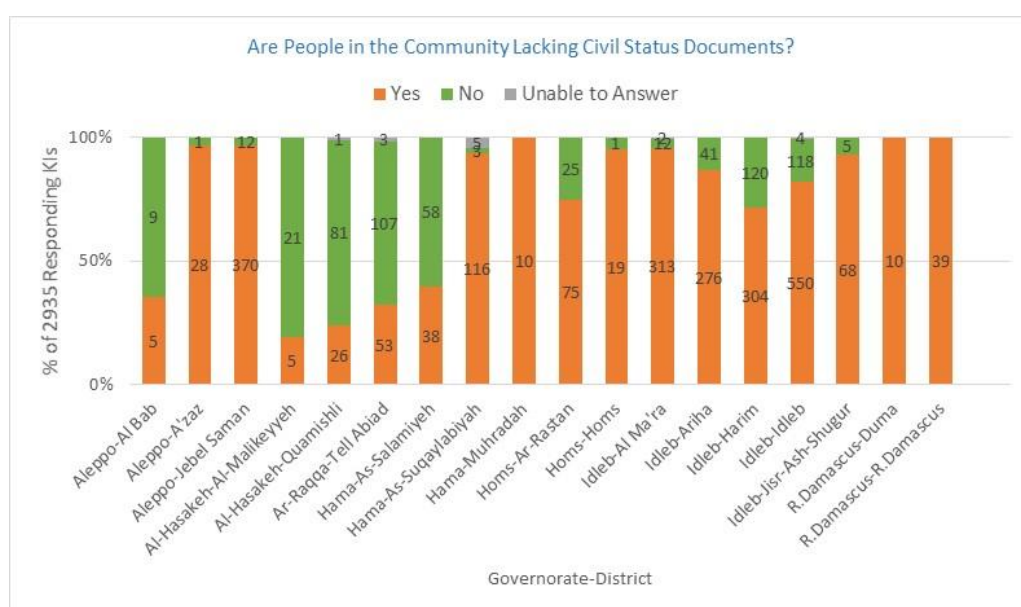
Findings

Findings

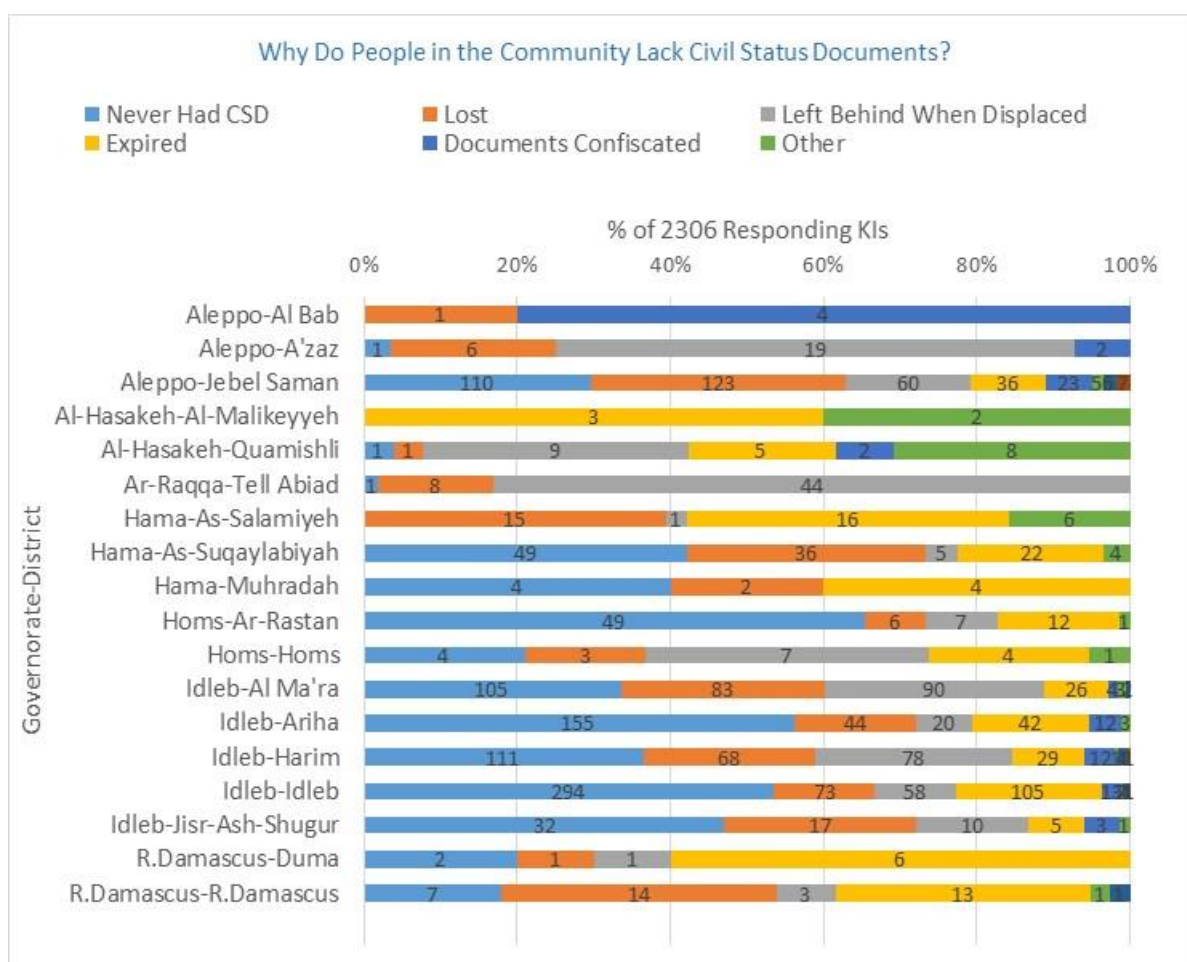
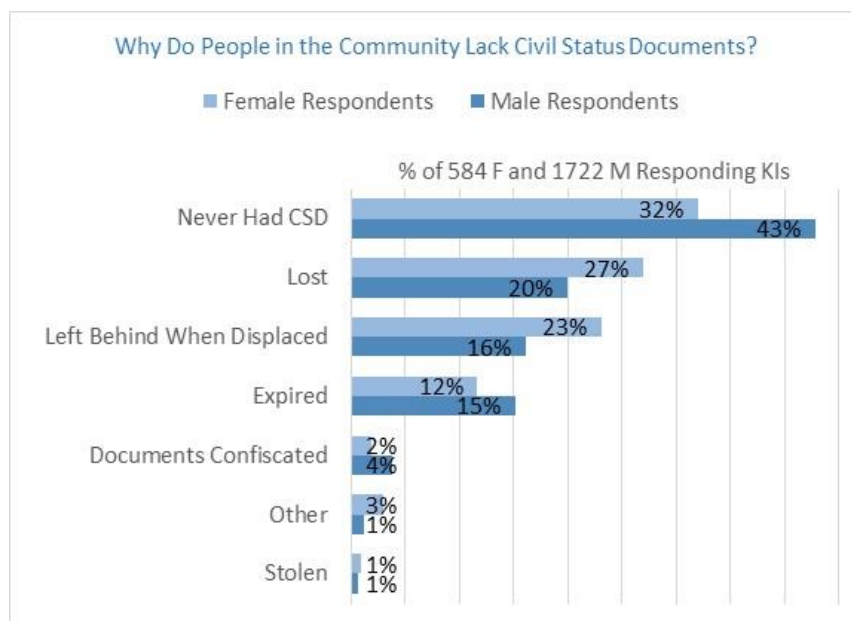
3.1 Rights

The results of protection monitoring on rights-related risks illuminate impediments to civilians' enjoyment of stable and secure lives within their communities. For example, lack or loss of civil documentation places community members at risk of not being able to enjoy their rights and access services. Civilians also experience challenges in securing adequate shelter and achieving dispute resolution. However, factors such as high social cohesion can counteract these risks. Humanitarian actors should focus on maintaining and reinforcing positive social interaction between IDPs and the host community, while reducing protection risks caused by lack of identity documents, unreliable shelter arrangements, and limited interaction with NGOs.

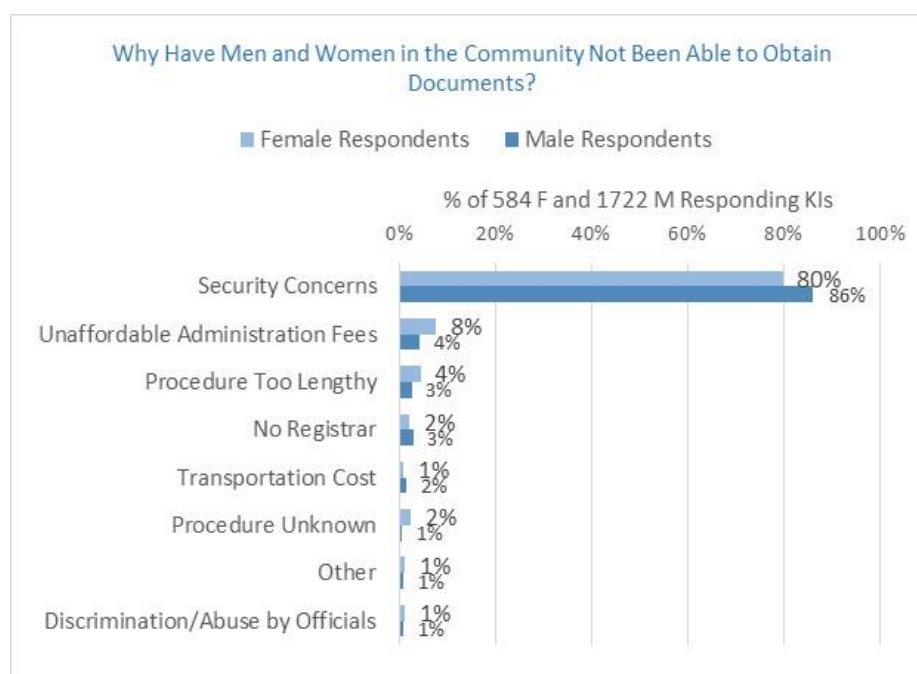
3.1.1 Civil Documentation



79% of 2,935 responding KIs reported that people in their community lack civil documentation, such as national ID, family booklet, or passport. Community members lack documentation for a number of reasons, including that they never had documents in the first place, documents were lost or left behind when they were displaced, and documents had expired and were not re-issued. Male KIs were more likely than female KIs to state expiration and confiscation as the reason of lacking documentation.



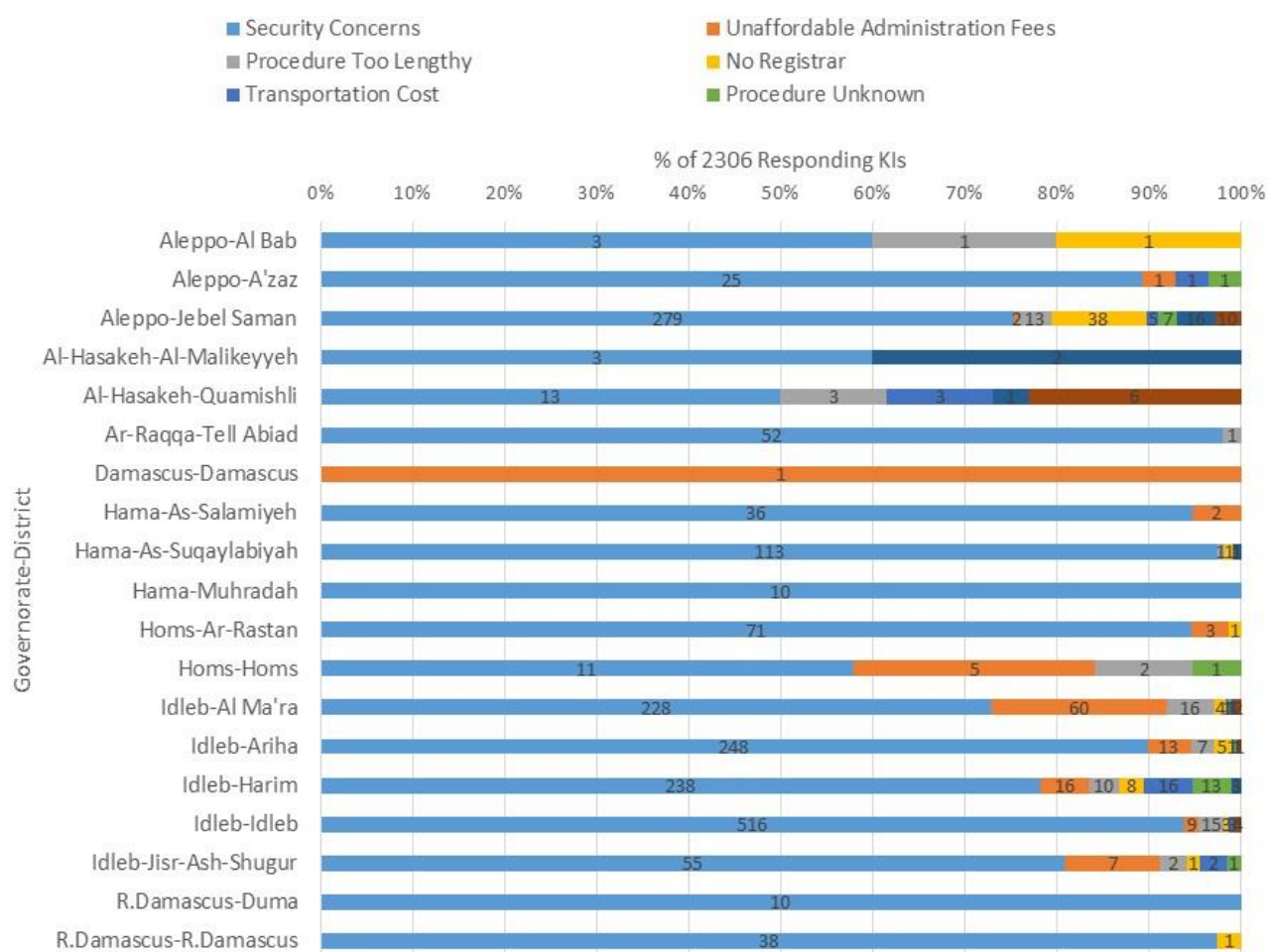
Some KIs (187F and 738M) stated that members of the community never obtained documents in the first place. It is noted that this question inquires about all documents, including passports, and does not necessarily imply that community members never obtained any documents. It is generally observed that except for children under the age of 14 at the onset of the conflict, most adults held civil status documentation. Nearly all, 56% of KIs in Homs governorate, 46% Idleb governorate, 32% Hama, 28% in Aleppo, 18% in Rural Damascus, 3% in Al-Hasakeh, 2% in Ar-Raqqa stated that members of their community never had civil status documentation.



85% of all responding KIs (80% of female KI and 86% of male KIs) identified security concerns as the major reason for why community members are unable to obtain documents. Other identified barriers by all responding KIs were unaffordable administration fees (5%), procedures being too lengthy (5%), registrar being destroyed (3%). Transportation costs, not knowing the procedure, other, and discrimination or abuse by officials were each stated by 1% of responding KIs. Female KIs were slightly more likely than men to note barriers such as unaffordable administration fees, lengthy procedures and unknown procedures.

In late 2017, civil status registration centers in Idleb governorate were unified under one umbrella administration, the Idleb Registration Center in Idleb City, which issues civil status documentation. While the general perception of communities is that it is better to obtain government-issued documentation, the inability to enter government-controlled areas in order access government civil registries due to various associated risks (such as arbitrary detention) is a barrier in most cases. Although communities in non-GoS areas have concerns about obtaining non-GoS documents from administrations like the Idleb Registration Center, risk analyses by humanitarian actors working on improving access to documentation indicate that holding non-GoS documents is considered preferable to holding no documents in terms of access to basic services and assistance, despite the potential risks that non-GoS documents bring of imputed association with the issuing groups. As factors such as unaffordable cost and security concerns continue to be barriers to obtaining non-GoS documentation, it is important that the humanitarian community ensures that lack of documentation does not present a barrier to accessing humanitarian assistance and services.

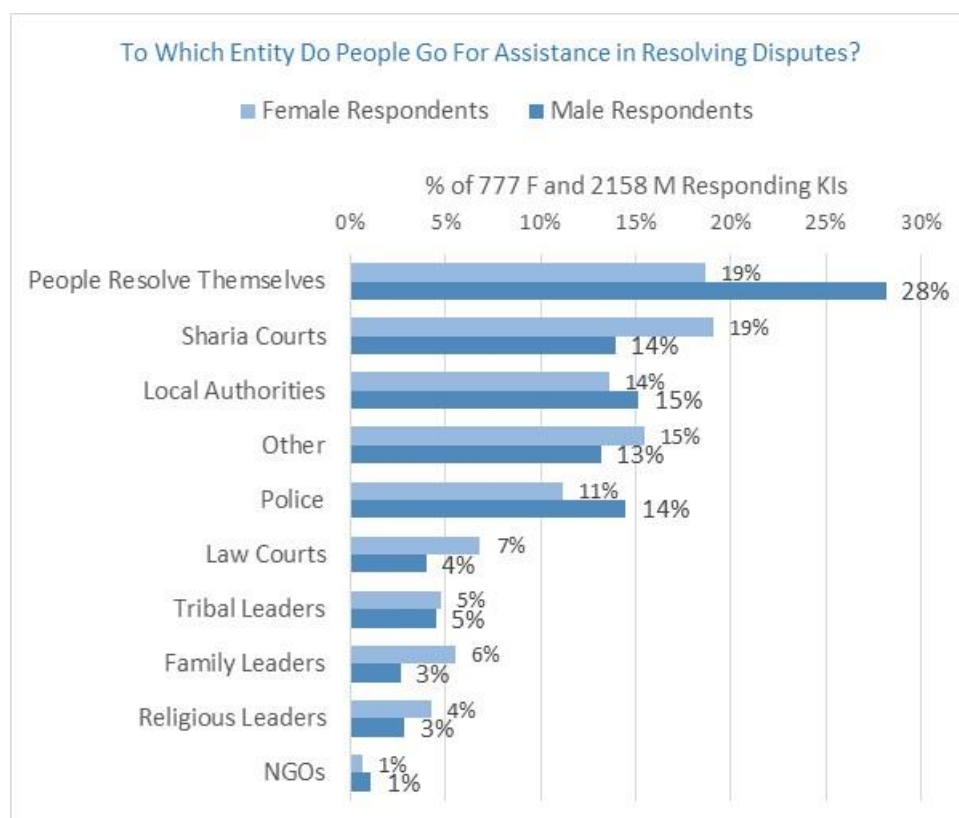
Why Are Community Members Unable to Obtain Documents?



3.1.2 Access to Justice

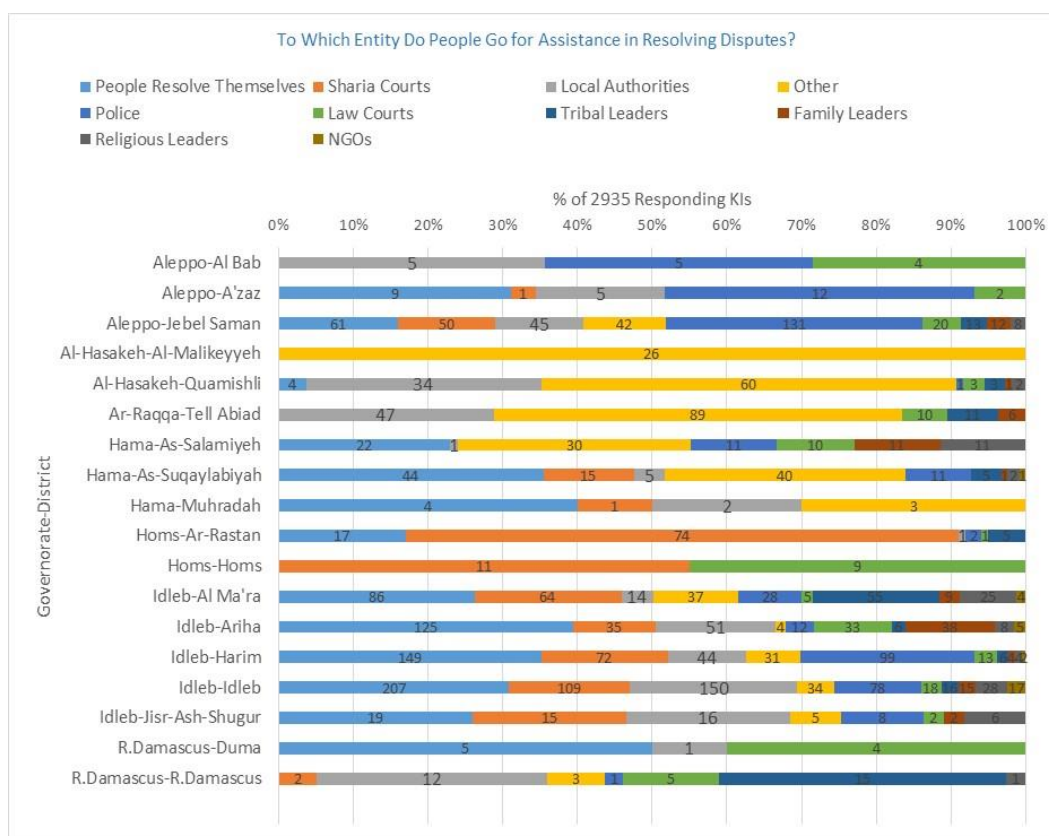
During the October-December 2017 reporting period, 26% of all responding KIs stated that people in their community first attempt to resolve disputes themselves, followed by sharia courts, local authorities, other, and police.

Male KIs were more likely than female KIs to state that people resolve dispute resolves themselves, while female KIs were more likely to state that community members approach sharia courts for dispute resolution.



KIs who stated “other” explained that community members approach different entities depending on the nature of the problem, and which entity is best suited for its resolution. In some cases, community members prefer to approach some entities first, and will proceed to others if the first one is unable to resolve the problem.

[The means of dispute resolution] varies according to the nature of the problem. Most problems are resolved either by agreement of the people between themselves or by the intervention of the notables and religious figures. For the most complex problems, people sometimes resort to the Sharia courts. (Male KI, Off-Camp, As-Suqaylabiyah District, Hama Governorate).



In conflict-affected Syria, non-GoS territories no longer host state justice systems and are under the control of different armed groups. These areas are not ruled under a single system of justice. Armed opposition groups have formed separate administrative and judicial bodies in the areas which they control, and show variation in the implementation of administrative and justice-related processes (ILAC Rule of Law Assessment Report: Syria 2017).

Since implementation varies considerably across Syria and is non-systematic, there are challenges to understanding how these networks function. However, the findings described in this report put forward several indications as to the role local bodies play in access to justice, and how community members interact with them.

It is observed that with some exception, individuals in most communities covered in this report often resolve issues themselves or apply to Sharia courts. This is the case for communities in Idleb governorate that fall under the control of Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs) such as Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS) and others. Administrative and legal procedures in these areas are handled by the Syrian Interim Government which coordinates with local councils and police stations in opposition-controlled areas of Northwest Syria.

It is noted that communities that primarily appeal to local authorities for the resolution of disputes are communities under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa and Euphrates Shield in Aleppo.

In areas controlled by AOGs in Northwest Syria, i.e. Idleb, Sharia courts fulfill the functions of local authorities and courts found in other areas of Syria. According to the findings, in areas where Sharia courts are present, a larger proportion of community members state that they resolve issues themselves. This is reported less in areas with presence of local authorities and courts such as Aleppo, Homs and Rural Damascus.

Findings also indicate that tradition also plays a significant role in community members' choice of entity for dispute resolution. For example, Kurdish communities are historically organized by clans or tribes. The same is true of Arab communities in Ar-Raqqa governorate. Despite the presence of local authorities and courts in these communities, community members continue to apply to their traditional clan/tribe leaders for guidance and dispute resolution.

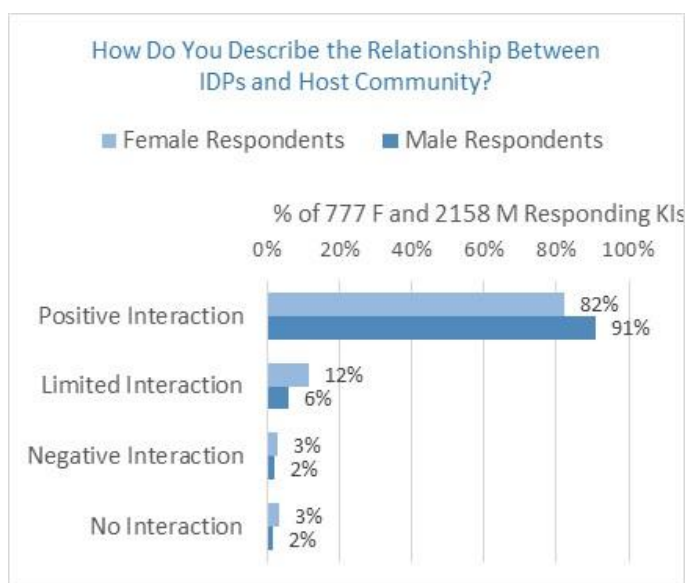
3.1.3 Social Cohesion

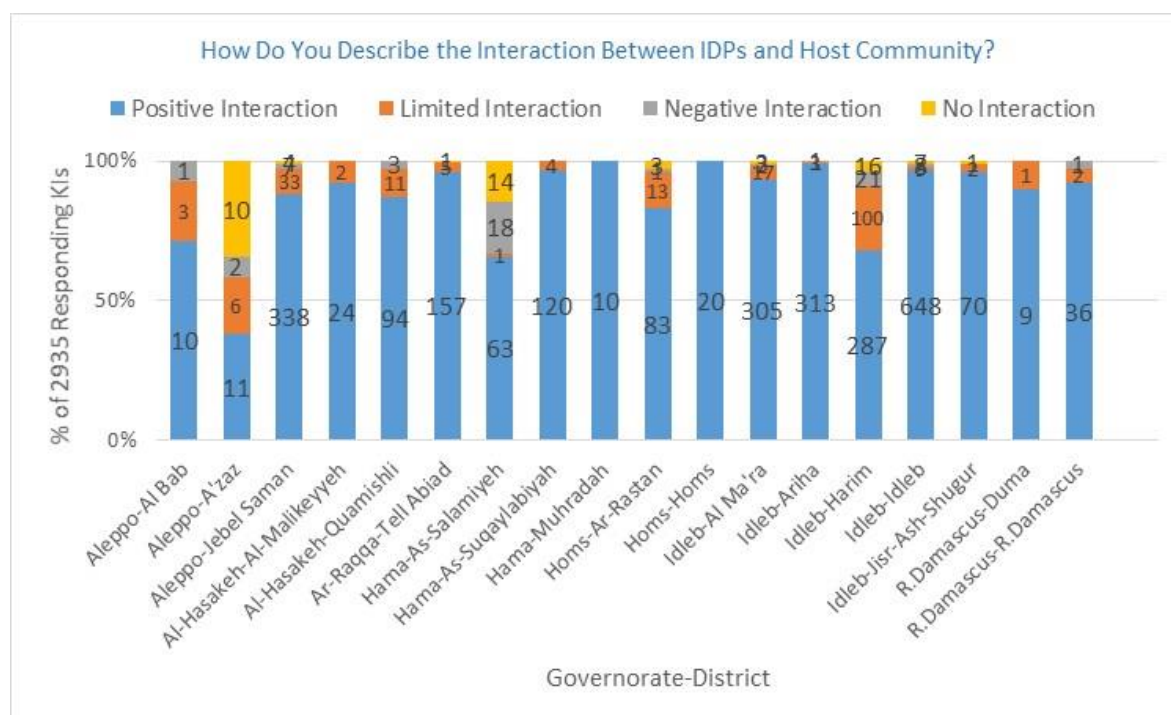
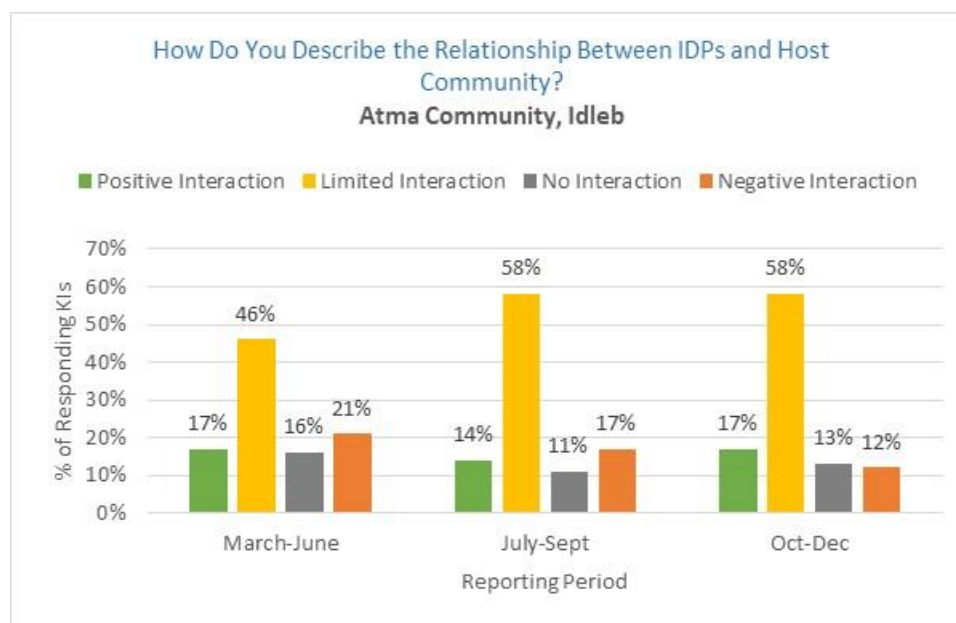
Consistent with data from previous reporting periods, the relationship between IDPs and host community continues to be predominantly a positive one. Male KIs were slightly more likely to state that the interaction is positive, while female KIs were more likely to state that the interaction is limited, negative or nonexistent, which may be related to restrictions on freedom of movement experience by women and girls.

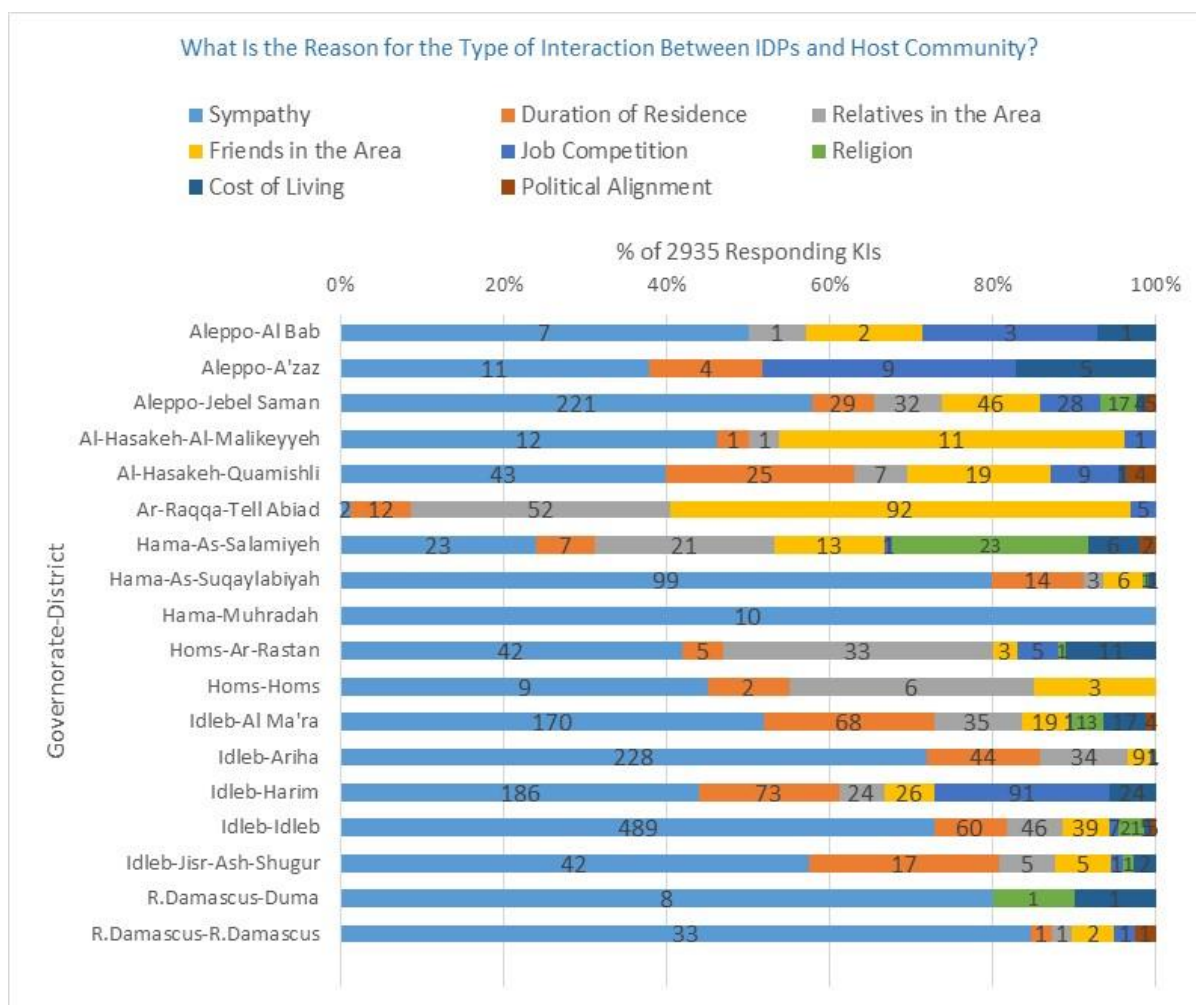
The top reasons cited for the positive interaction between IDPs and the host community is consistent with the findings of earlier quarterly reports. KIs described the reasons for the type of interaction

between IDPs and the host community as: 56%- the host community being sympathetic to IDPs, 12%- IDPs having lived in the area for several years, 10%- IDPs having relatives in the area, 10%- IDPs having friends in the area, 6%- job competition resulting in a strain on infrastructure, 3%- religious reasons, 3%- increased cost of living, and 1%- political alignment.

In Atma community of Idleb governorate, which has hosted a high number of IDPs since the beginning of the conflict, the percentage of KIs stating that there is no interaction or a negative interaction has decreased between March and December 2017. As indicated in the below graph, however, at least half of respondents continue to indicate that the relationship is limited.







KIs were asked to explain the variety of factors affecting the relationship between IDPs and host residents in their communities. Findings indicate that the relationship is complex, affected by many different factors, and depends on the local circumstances of each geographic location.

According to KIs, the main factors contributing to a positive relationship are the presence of kinship ties, relatives and friends in the area, the length of time that the IDPs have remained at the location, and the sympathy of the host community towards IDPs. IDPs emphasize that the presence of relatives in the communities is a great source of support for them in to establish their lives in that location; IDPs therefore strive to reach such communities. KIs also frequently mention that host communities feel a great amount of sympathy for IDPs' situation and assist them for this reason. Some key informants explain that some host community members have themselves been displaced in the past, which helps them to relate to the suffering of incoming IDPs.

Before a displaced person comes to the area, he has friends with whom he can communicate, and who will help him find shelter at their houses. (Female KII, Off-Camp, Jebel Saman District, Aleppo Governorate)



The people are generous and kind. They have also been displaced several times and know the hardships of the displaced, so they sympathize with them as much as they can. (Female KII, Off-Camp, Muhradah District, Hama Governorate)

KIs from the host community indicate that IDPs who have been in the community for a long time have largely assimilated, and the community often no longer distinguishes between IDPs and host community members. In such cases, KIs have frequently mentioned business partnerships as well as marriages between IDPs and host community. 3% of 709 responding KIs mentioned marriage between IDPs and the host community, and some KIs explained that this was a result of the positive relations between them.

There is no difference between the displaced and the resident (host), the term 'displaced' is not used by anyone. They are guests and lately [some] even became owners of property, [though this is] very rare.) (Female KII, Off-Camp, Harim District, Idleb Governorate).

[There is a] good relationship between the two parties; people don't distinguish between the displaced and the townspeople, as a result of the long period of displacement. There are also strong social relations interspersed with marriage and work relations between the parties. (Male KII, Off-Camp, Harim District, Idleb Governorate).

There are strong social relations between the two parties; such as through evening visits, marriage and kinship; because they stayed for a long period of time. There is no difference between the displaced and resident. (Male KII, Off-Camp, Harim District, Idleb Governorate).

KIs who are host-community members also indicate that in the case where IDPs have newly arrived to the community or have moved onward after a short stay in the community, there was not sufficient time to interact with them, demonstrating how duration of stay is relevant to the relationship.

IDPs in the region have not spent enough time to create a positive interaction between themselves and the host community (Female KII, Off-Camp, Ariha District, Idleb Governorate).

Because of the lack of employment opportunities and the few organizations working in the area, the displaced have to leave this town for another town. (Male KII, Off-Camp, A'zaz District, Idleb Governorate).



Similarly, several KIs explained that in cases where the host community and the incoming IDP community have a shared history of coexistence, a positive relationship between them is more likely. This was indicated, for example, for Khan Shaykun community of Idlib governorate.

Numerous factors were also identified by KIs as causes of negative, limited, or nonexistent relationships between IDPs and the host community. The factors that were most often mentioned revolved around economic hardship, job opportunities, housing opportunities, and the competition for these and other limited resources. In Harim, Idlib where 24% of respondents said that the interaction is limited, job competition and the cost of living were identified as causes. In A'zaz, where more than half of the respondents indicated that the relationship between IDPs and host communities is limited, negative or nonexistent, job competition and the cost of living were identified as causes.

It is interesting to note that while in some communities IDPs perceived themselves to be discriminated against or financially exploited by the host community in job opportunities, prices of goods and rent, in other communities, it was the host community who felt disadvantaged in their access to job opportunities due to perceived discrimination against them by IDP-run workplaces.

[The negative or limited interaction is] mostly a result of the employment of people of the host region, the neglect of displaced persons, and unequal opportunities. (Female KII, In-Camp, Harim District, Idlib Governorate)

[The interactions are limited or negative] because IDPs control most organizations and do not allow non-displaced people to get jobs. (Female KII, Off-Camp, Harim District, Idlib Governorate)

These findings suggest that perceived disproportionate employment rates between IDPs and host communities have a significant negative impact on relations. Local humanitarian actors can help reduce this perception by offering and ensuring equal employment opportunities to both IDP and host residents in communities where they work.

Some host communities also state and express concern about the number of IDPs in their communities, which they find disproportionate or excessive:

Because the town is commercial, the relationship is based on interests and work. There are some tensions between the displaced and the residents. There is concern about the length of the displacement, as the number of displaced is greater than the population of the town. (Male KII, Off-Camp, Harim District, Idlib Governorate).

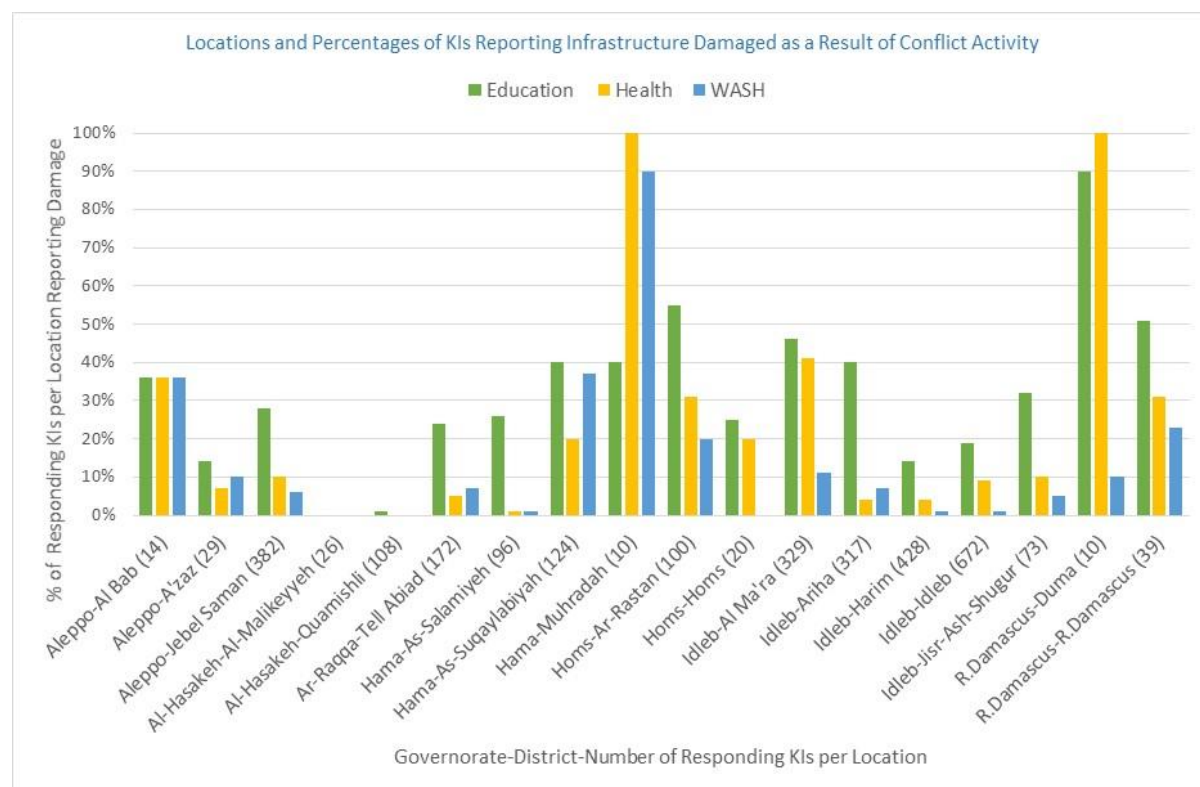
Since 2014 or 2015, the number of IDPs have been the same as the city's original population. (Male KII, Off-Camp, As-Salamiyeh District, Hama Governorate)

3.2 Basic Services

The following chart visualizes damage reported to essential infrastructure as a result of conflict activity during the reporting period. Monitoring shows that community members continue to

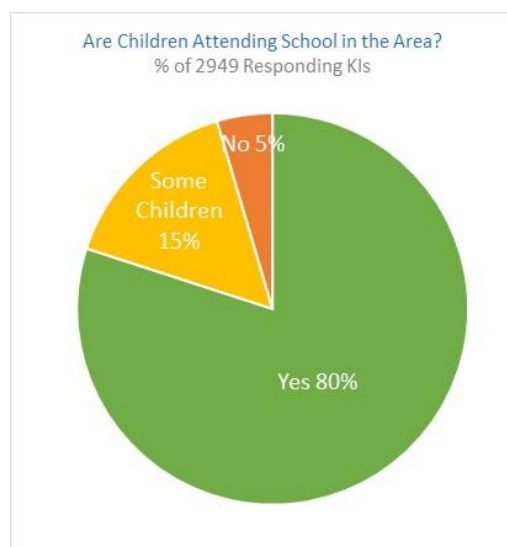


experience challenges in accessing basic commodities and services. With regards to damage to basic infrastructure, it is noted that the monthly community-level interviews ask key informants about damage to basic infrastructure in their communities within the three weeks prior to each interview, and the data reflects the situation of these communities relevant to the specific reporting period.

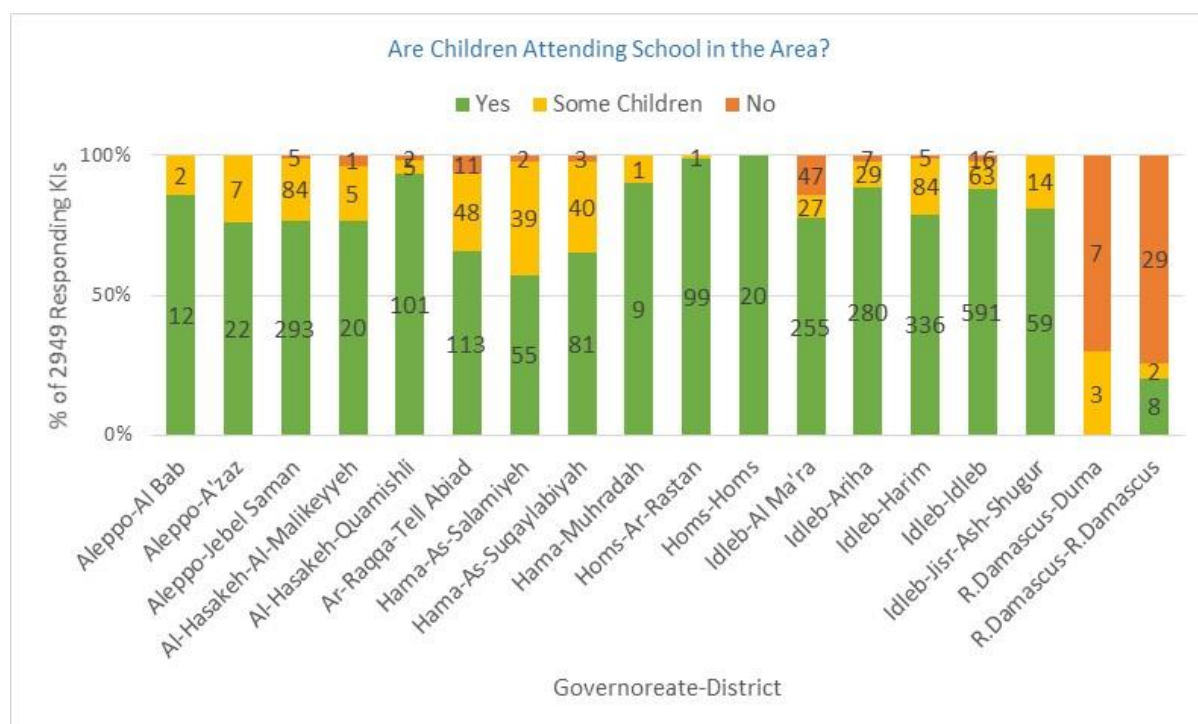


Of 2,949 responding KIs, 28% reported damage to education infrastructure, 13% reported damage to health infrastructure and 7% reported damage to WASH infrastructure as a result of conflict activity. This information is not representative of all affected/damaged infrastructure in Syria and does not imply any specific geographical location within the governorates. Damaged or destroyed infrastructure limits and prevents community members' access to basic services.

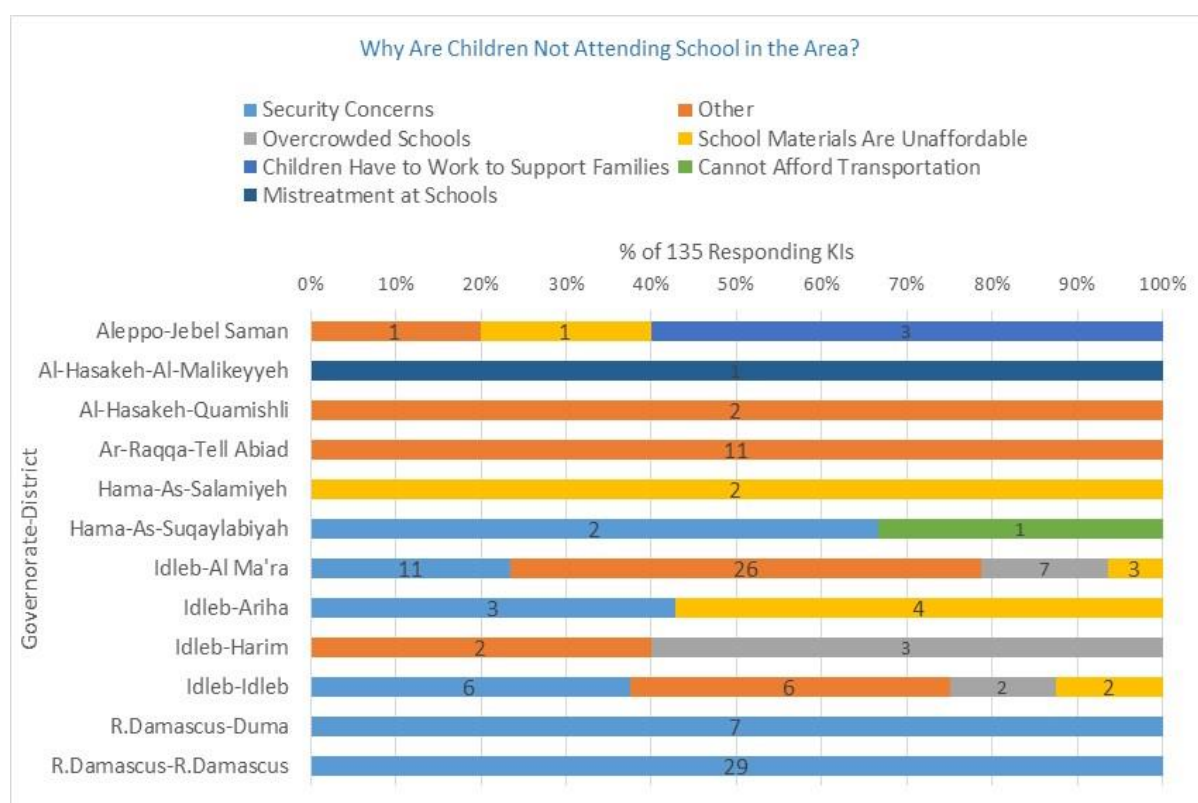
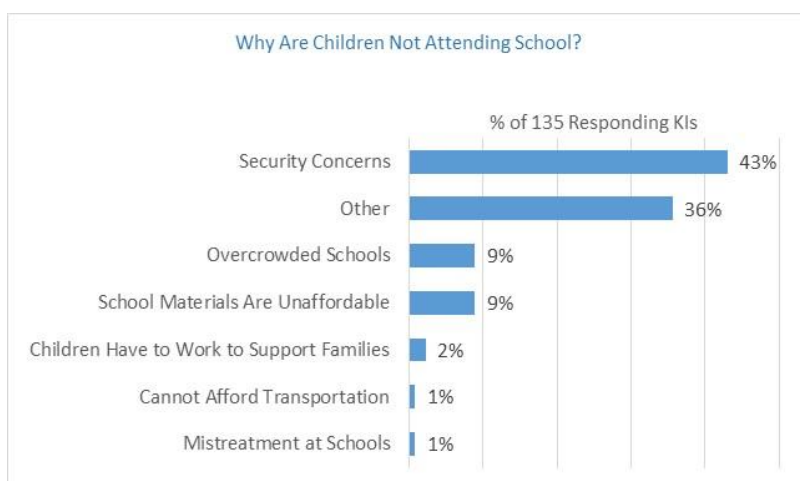
3.2.1 Access to Education



In the October-December reporting period, of 2,949 responding KIs, 80% stated that children are attending school in the area. 15% stated that some children are attending school and 5% stated that children are not attending school. It is noted that KIs in some locations, such as Duma and Rural Damascus districts of Rural Damascus governorate, locations which experienced a significant uptick in conflict activity during the reporting period, predominantly stated that children are not attending school.



The main reason cited by KIs for children's lack of school attendance continues to be security concerns, mentioned by 43% (58) responding KIs. Additional reasons are "other," overcrowded schools, school materials being unaffordable, children having to work to support families, inability to afford transportation to school and mistreatment at schools.



In Harim district of Idleb governorate, a location which has experienced repeated periods of IDP arrivals and holds a large number of IDPs, overcrowding of schools was identified as a significant reason for why children do not attend school in the area. All KIs from Duma and Rural Damascus districts of Rural Damascus governorate identified security concerns as the only and major reason for children not attending school. Similarly, security concerns were identified as a significant reason in Idleb, Ariha and Al Ma'ra districts of Idleb governorate and As-Suqaylabiyah district of Hama governorate. The inability of families to afford school materials due to high cost was predominantly identified in Ariha district of Idleb, As-Salamiyeh district of Hama and Jebel Saman district of Aleppo. The inability to afford transportation was identified in Suqaylabiyah district of Hama, and mistreatment of children at schools was identified in Al-Malikeyeh district of Al-Hasakeh governorate.

In this reporting period, 28% of responding KIs stated that education infrastructure has been damaged due to conflict activity in their communities. When compared to the percentage of KIs from each district who responded to this question, it is noted that over 50% of the key informants in the



following besieged or hard-to-reach areas stated that education infrastructure has been damaged: Ar-Rastan district of Homs governorate, Duma and Rural Damascus districts of Rural Damascus governorate.

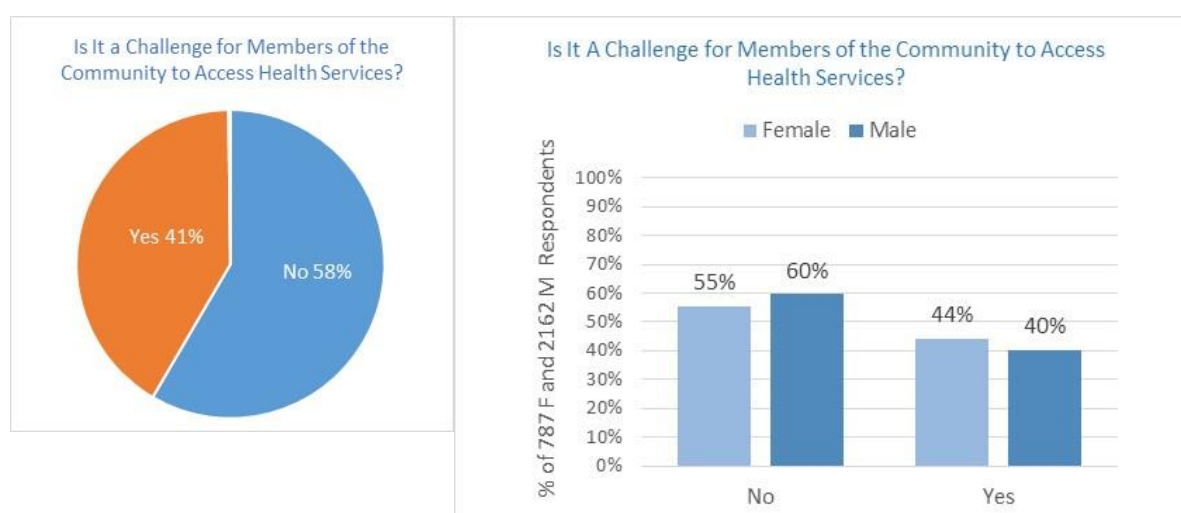
Findings indicate that schools have experienced partial to severe damage in these communities, ranging from kindergartens and primary schools to vocational high schools. Communities try to restore partially damaged education infrastructure to return them to service. In the meantime, other in-service schools in the area try to respond to need by accepting more students. However, in some communities, the damaged or destroyed schools were the only ones available, which prevents children's access to education in these locations. Some KI also note that even when schools return to service, some children do not return to the classroom due to fear that the school will be impacted by aerial attacks or other conflict activity.

The only school in the village was destroyed from shelling (Male KII, Off-Camp, Eastern Sarja Community, Al Ma'ra District, Idleb Governorate).

Some schools were shelled, and some of them went out-of-service, putting pressure on other schools (Female KII, Off-Camp, Al Ma'ra District, Idleb Governorate).

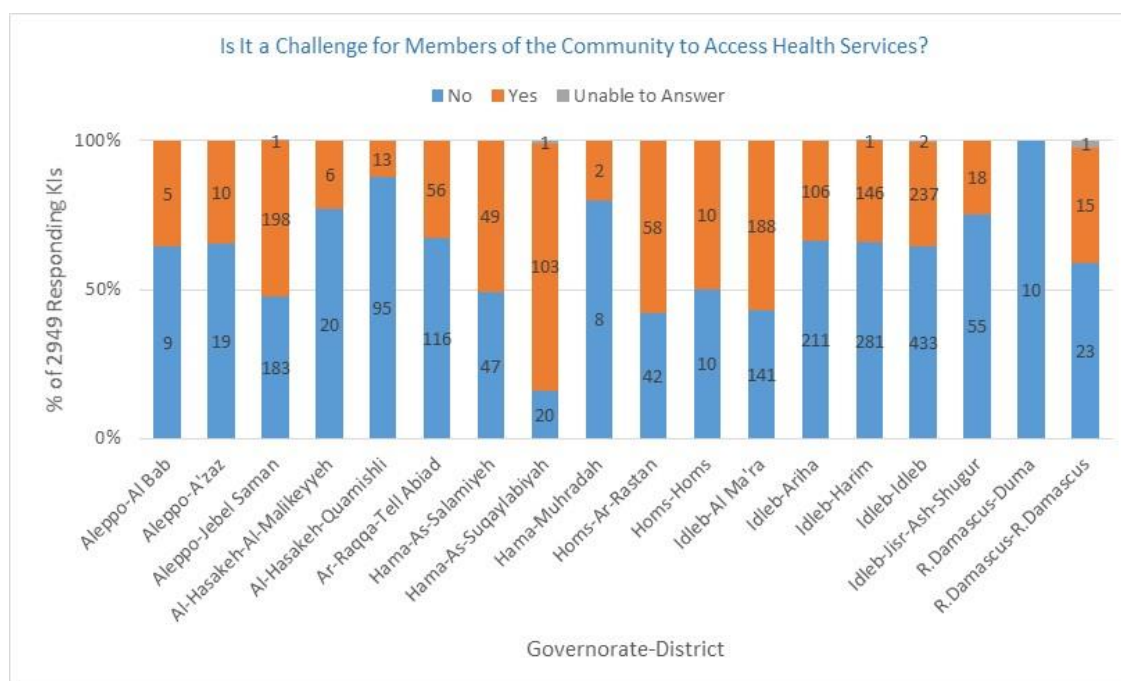
The Duma Fourth School was partially destroyed. Education was negatively affected because the students are afraid (Male KII, Off-Camp, Duma District, Rural Damascus Governorate).

3.2.2 Access to Health



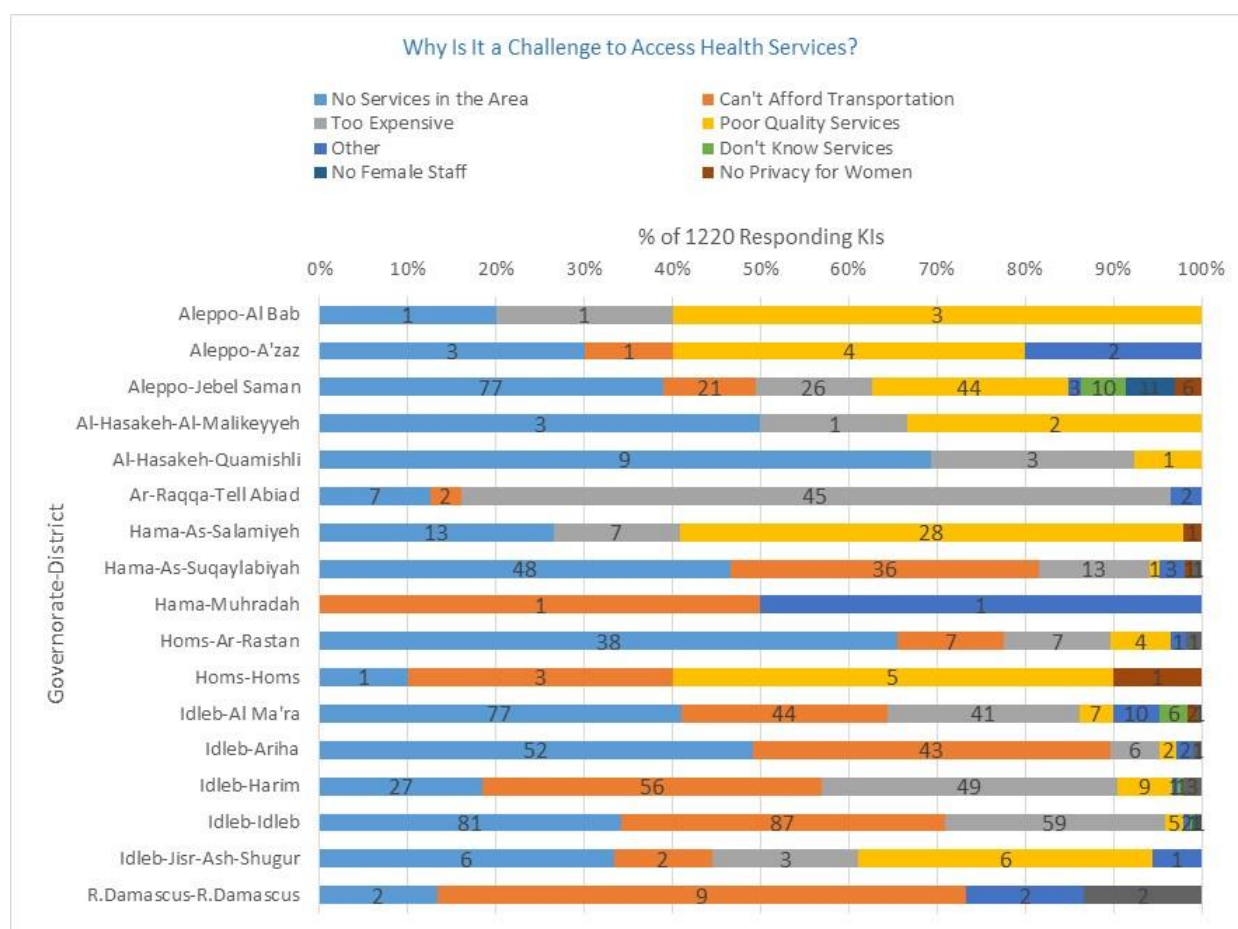
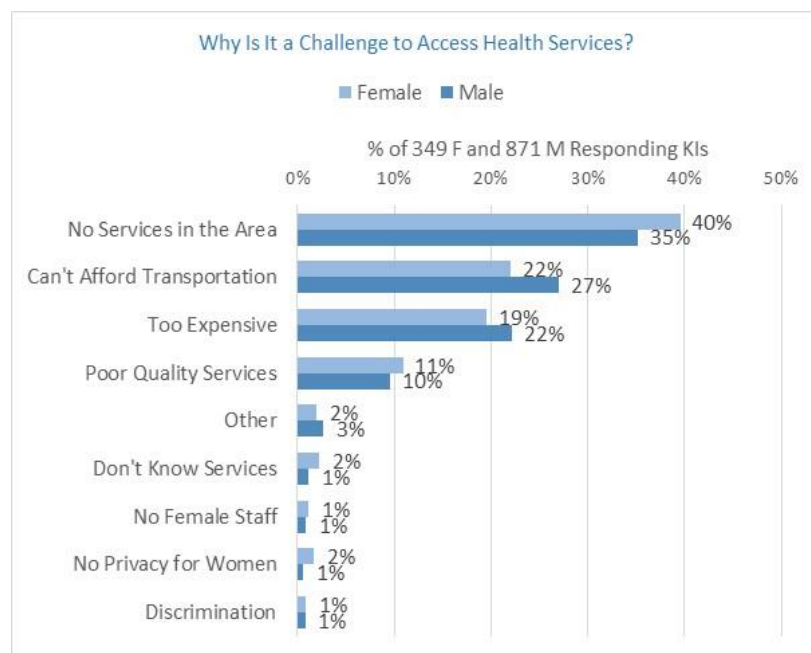
41% of 2,949 responding KIs stated that it is a challenge for members of the community to access health services. Female key informants were slightly more likely to state that members of the community experience challenges.

More than half of KIs in the districts of Jebel Saman of Aleppo, As-Suqaylabiyah and Ar-Rastan of Homs governorate, and Al Ma'ra of Idleb governorate stated that community members face challenges accessing health services.



KIs continue to identify lack of services, transportation costs, and the cost and quality of health services to be barriers to receiving health care. Female KIs were more likely to state that there are no services in the area or that they are not aware of the services in the area, that the services are poor quality, and that there is no privacy for women. Male KIs were more likely to state that they cannot afford transportation required to access health care and that health services are too expensive. In the following districts, 50% or more of responding KIs stated that there are no health care services available in their area: Al Malikeyyeh and

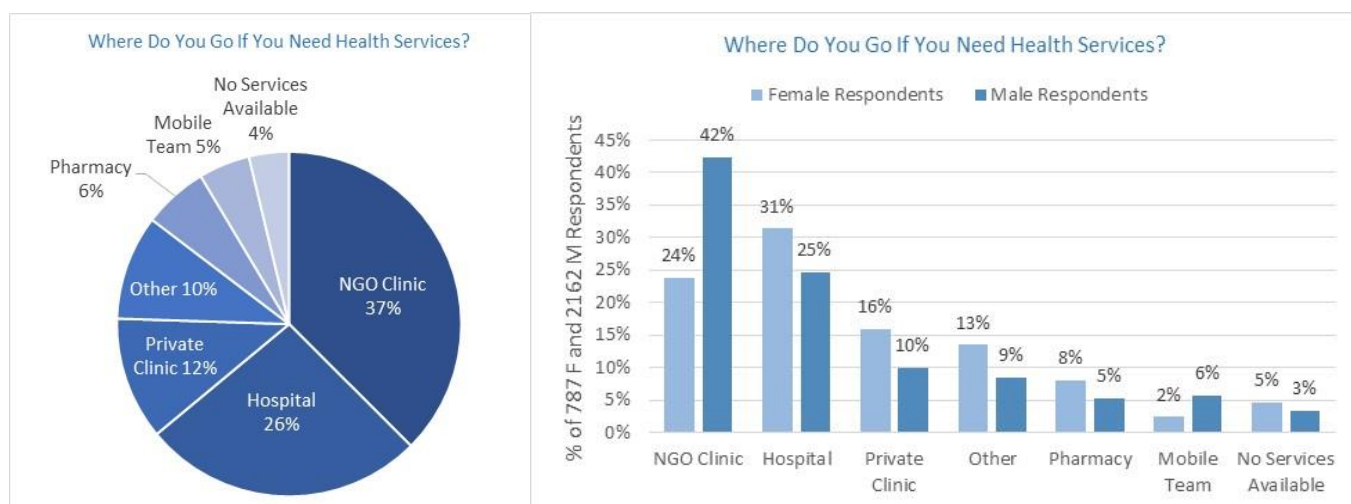
Quamishli districts of Al Hasakeh governorate, Ar-Rastan district of Homs governorate.



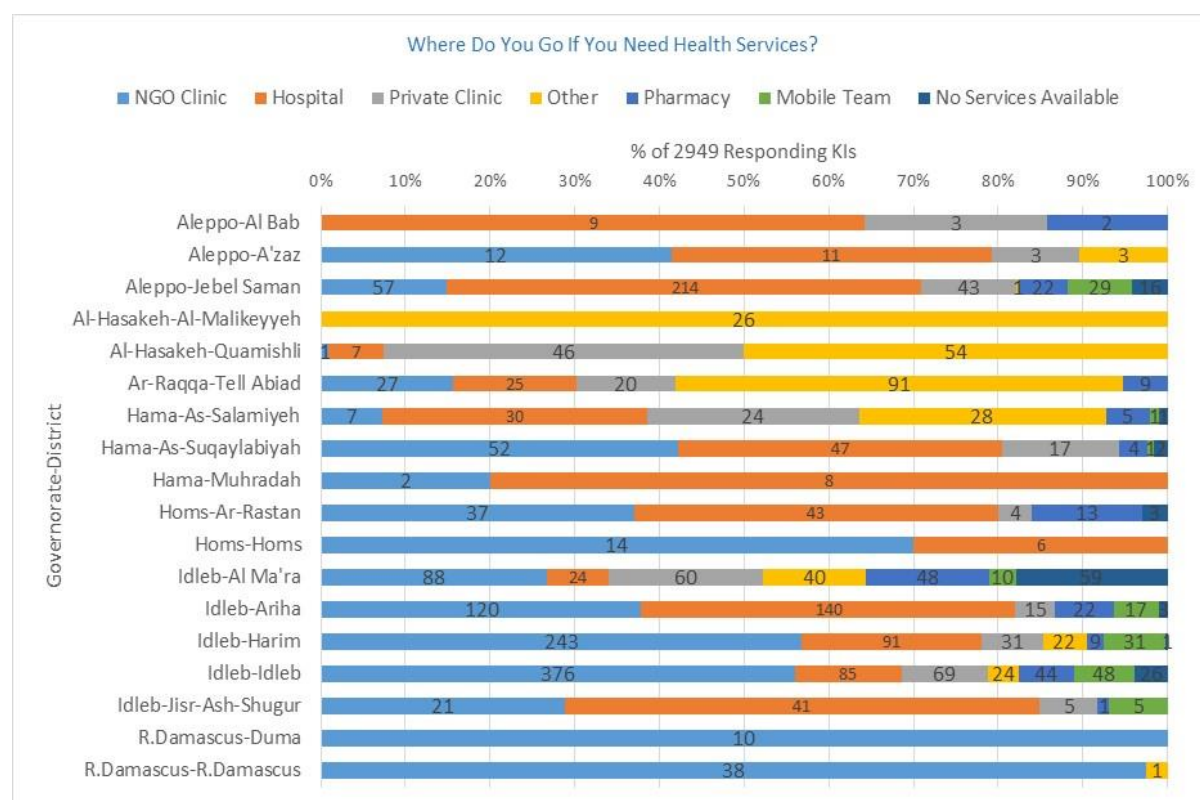
13% of 2,949 responding KIs stated that health infrastructure has been recently damaged by conflict activity. With the exception of Al-Malikeyyeh and Quamishli districts of Al-Hasakeh governorate, where no damage was noted by responding KIs, damage to health infrastructure was noted for all districts covered in this reporting period.



All responding KIs in Duma district of Rural Damascus and Muhradah district of Hama governorate stated that health infrastructure had been damaged. 30% or more of responding KIs in Al Bab district of Aleppo, Al Ma'ra district of Idlib, Ar-Rastan district of Homs, and Rural Damascus district of Rural Damascus stated that health infrastructure has been damaged. 20% of responding KIs in As-Suqaylabiyah district of Hama and Homs district of Homs reported damaged health infrastructure.

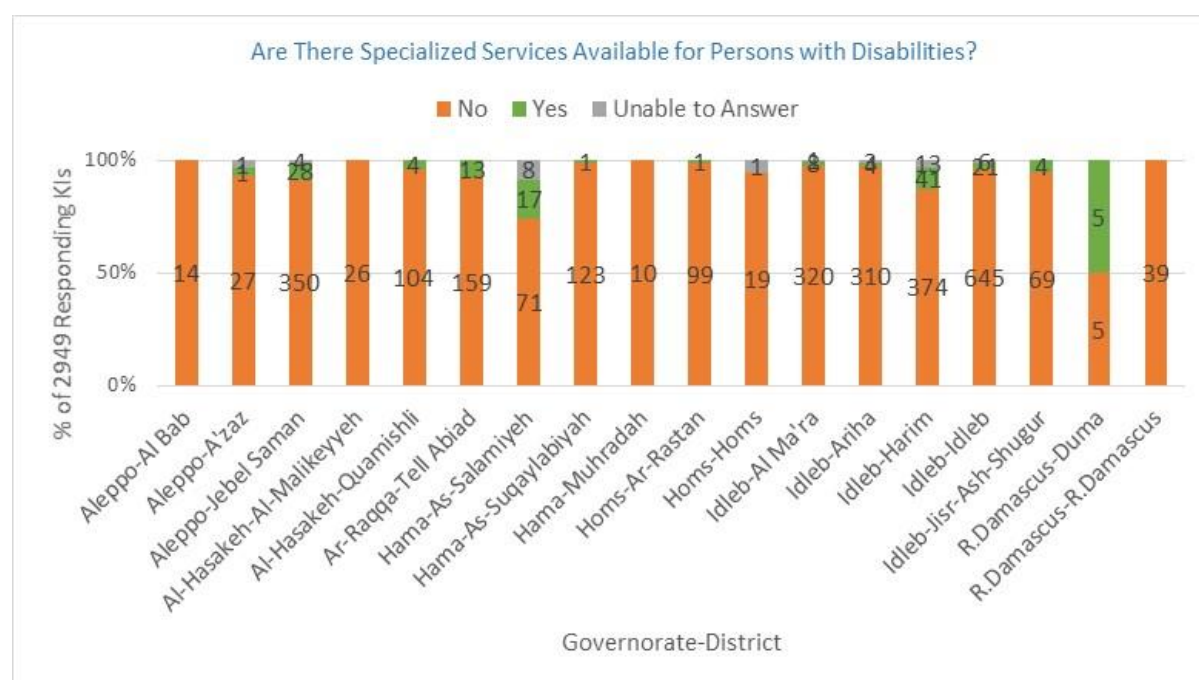
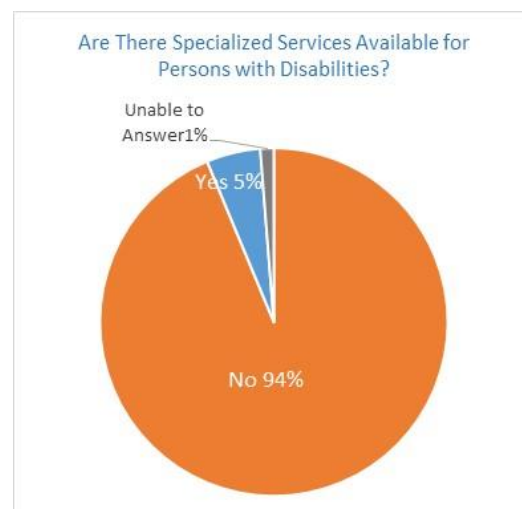


With regards to where community members go for health services, male KIs were more likely to identify NGO clinics and mobile teams, while female KIs were more likely to report visiting hospitals, private clinics, and pharmacies.



3.2.3 Specialized Services

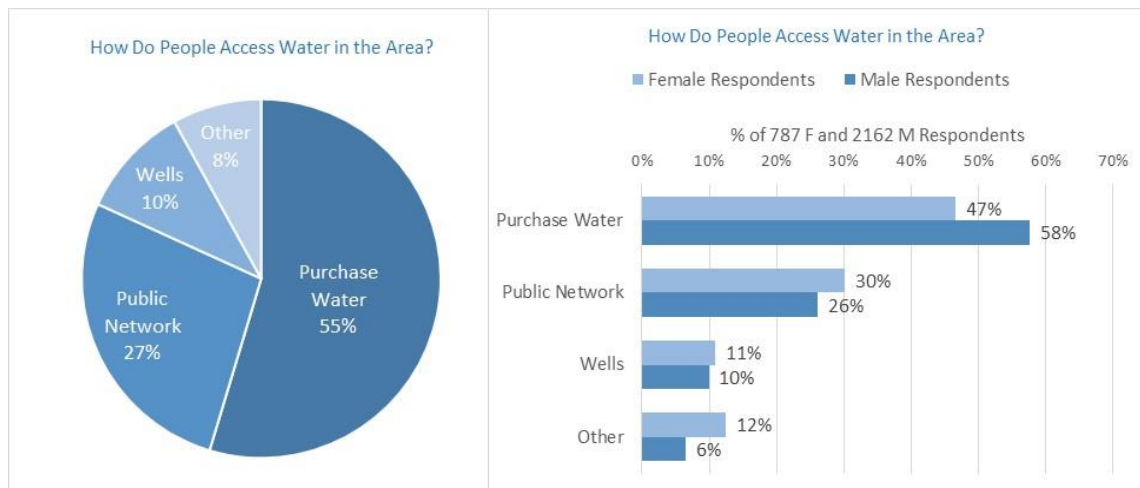
In this reporting period, KIs continue to indicate a significant need for specialized services for persons with disabilities and older persons. 94% of 2,949 responding KIs stated that there are no specialized services available for persons with disabilities in their area. Considering the continued movement of IDPs into Northwest Syria during the monitoring period, as well as external reports that indicate a growing number of physically impaired and disabled civilians and the insufficiency of the services and support available to them (AAR Japan, 2017), there is a significant need to scale up and expand dedicated and specialized services. Disabilities that result in lack of or reduction in mobility may in turn result in additional challenges in accessing food, water, non-food items, and other vital humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian actors responsible for providing basic humanitarian assistance must specifically plan logistics, transportation, and access to ensure that persons with specialized needs—the sick and persons with disability as well as the elderly—have equal and sufficient access to these resources.



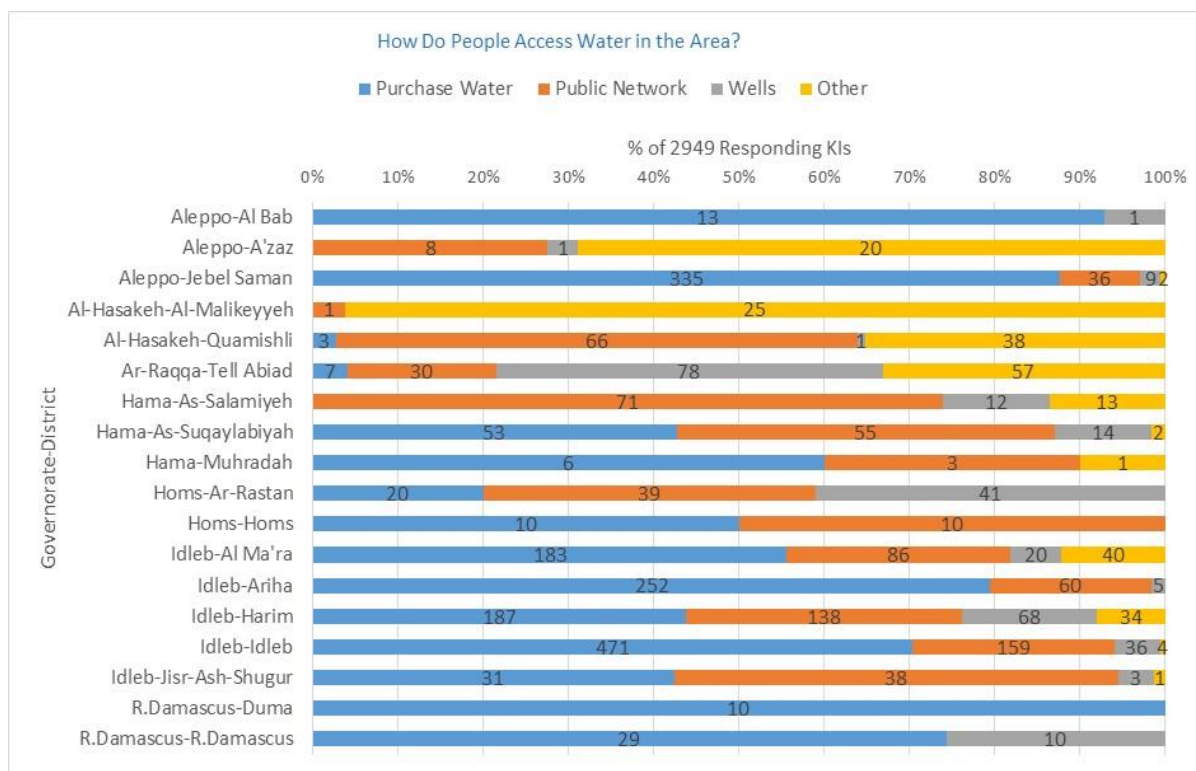
94% of 1,734 responding KIs stated that there are no dedicated services for people with special needs in their community. 99% of 1,734 responding KIs stated that there are no dedicated services for elderly persons.

3.2.4 Access to Water

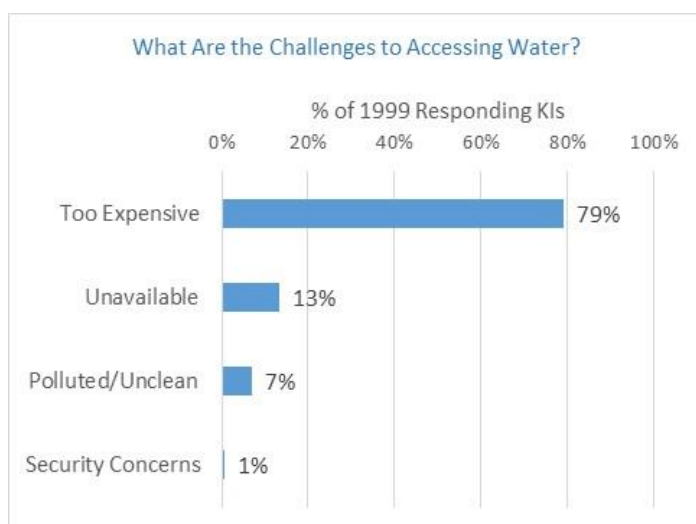
2,949 KIs responded to question on how people in the area access water: 55% said that people purchase water, 27% said that people use the public network, 10% said that they use wells, 8% said that they use other sources and 0% (3KIs) said that they use natural water.



Male KIs were more likely to state that people in the area purchase water, while female key informants were more likely to state that people in the area use the public network, wells, or other source of water. Of 235 KIs who stated “other,” 53 KIs explained that they are provided free water through water tanks by local humanitarian organizations. Remaining key informants stating “other” specified that community members rely upon more than one source of water depending on availability. For example, they may use the public network when it is functioning, as well as purchase water or rely on wells.



68% of 2,949 responding KIs stated that there have been challenges to accessing water in their area, while 31% stated that there have been no challenges and 1% were unable to answer. Over 40% of responding KIs in the following districts stated that there have not been any challenges to accessing water in their area: Al-Malikeyyeh and Quamishli districts of Al-Hasakeh governorate, As-Salamiyeh district of Hama governorate, A'zaz district of Aleppo, Harim and Jisr-Ash-Shugur districts of Idleb governorate.

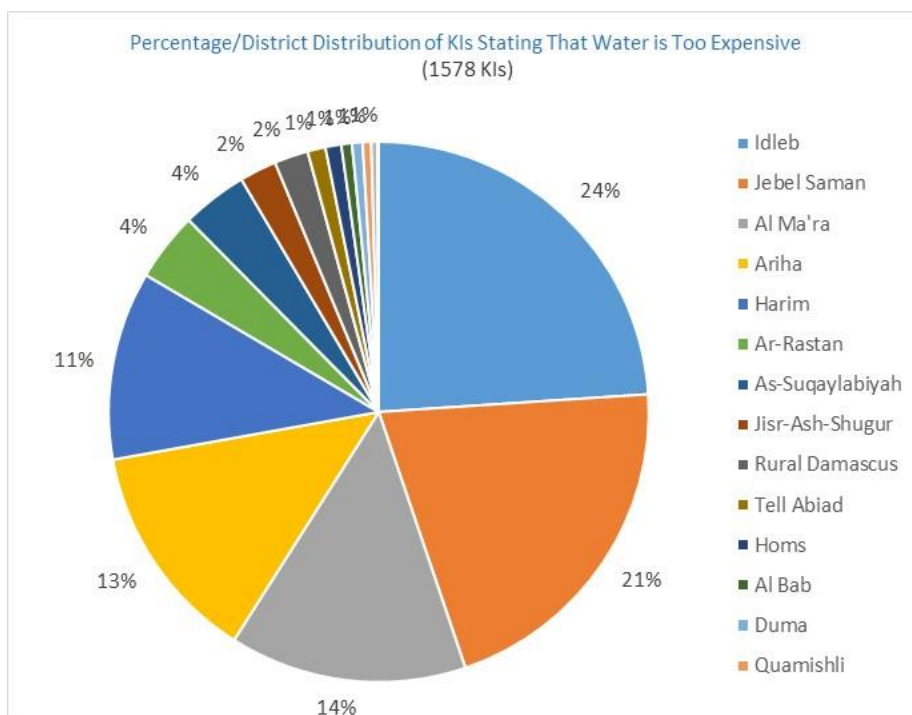


KIs continue to identify cost as a primary challenge in accessing water, followed by unavailability and water pollution. 98% of KIs who stated that water is too expensive are located in off-camp locations.

51% of 41 KIs who specified their water source as water tanks said that water is unavailable and 17% stated that water is polluted/unclean.

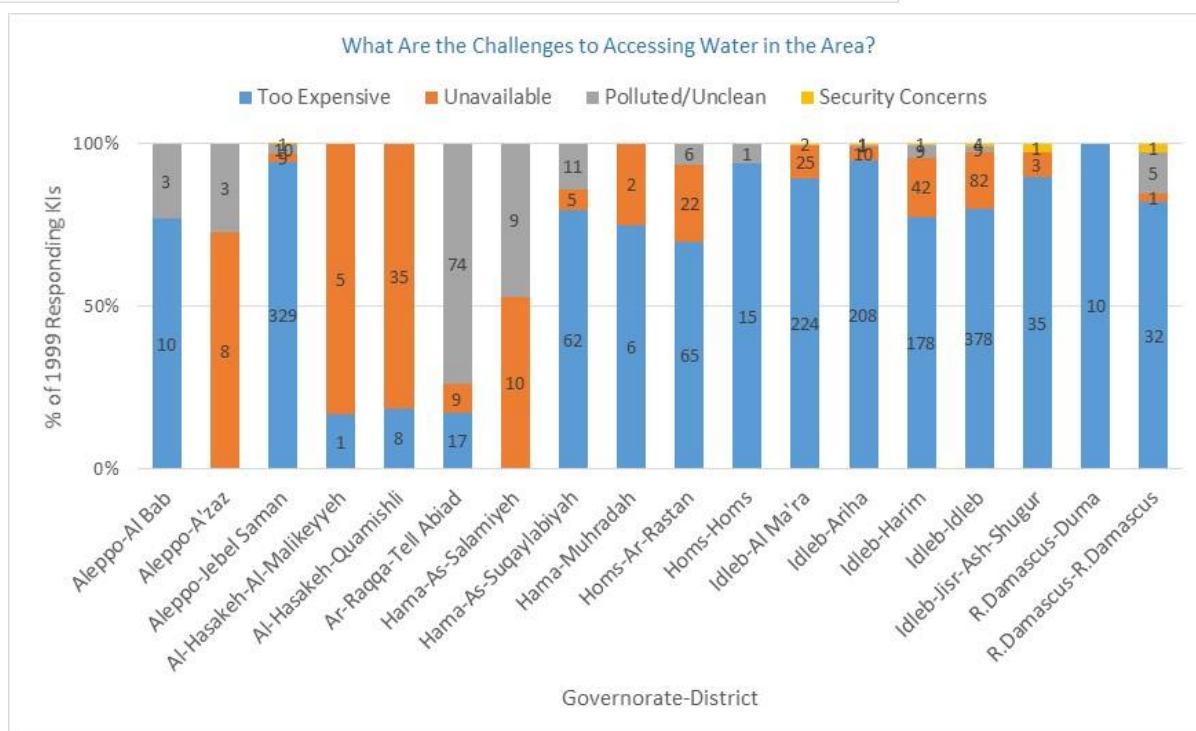
Water was reported to be unavailable by more than 50% if KIs in Al-Malikeyyeh and Quamishli districts of Quamishli governorate. As-Salamiyeh district of Hama governorate and A'zaz district of Aleppo governorate.





Water was reported to be polluted and unclean by 47% of KIs in As-Salamiyeh district of Hama governorate and 74% of KIs in Tell Abiad district of Raqqa governorate.

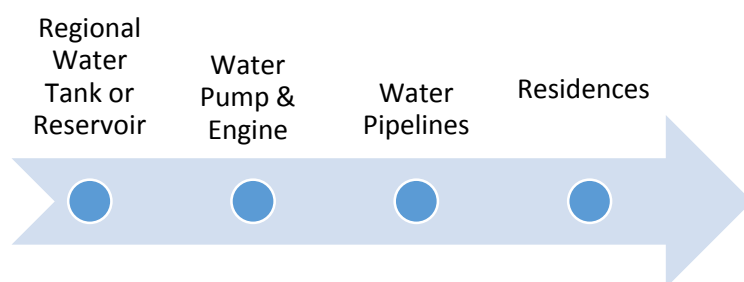
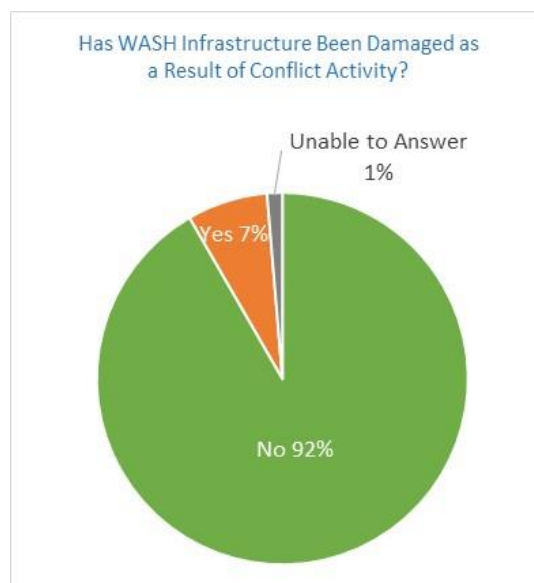
Security concerns were identified by 1% of responding KIs in Al Ma'ra and Idleb districts of Idleb governorate and 3% of responding KIs in Jisr-Ash-Shugur of Idleb governorate and Rural Damascus district of Rural Damascus governorate.



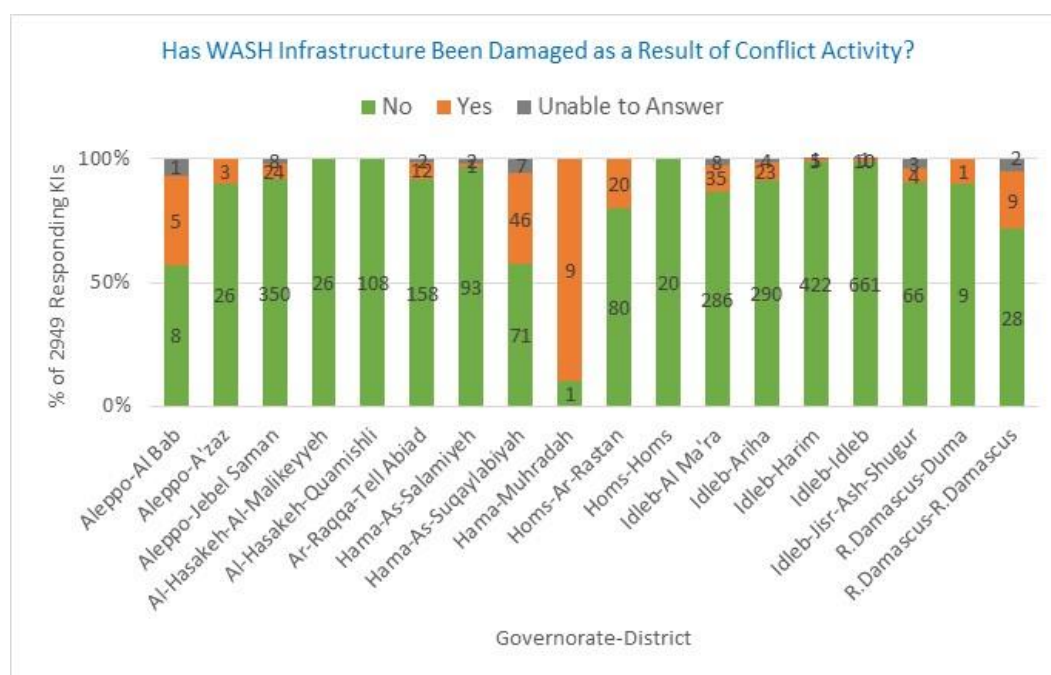
Water Networks

7% of 2,949 responding KIs stated that during the last three weeks, WASH infrastructure had been damaged by conflict activity. More than 10% of responding KIs indicated damage to WASH infrastructure in the following locations: Al Bab and A'zaz districts of Aleppo governorate, Al Ma'ra district of Idleb governorate, Ar-Rastan district of Homs governorate, As-Suqaylabiyah and Muhradah districts of Hama governorate, and Duma and Rural Damascus districts of Rural Damascus governorate. Nine out of 10 responding KIs from Muhradah district of Hama governorate stated that WASH infrastructure had been damaged from conflict activity.

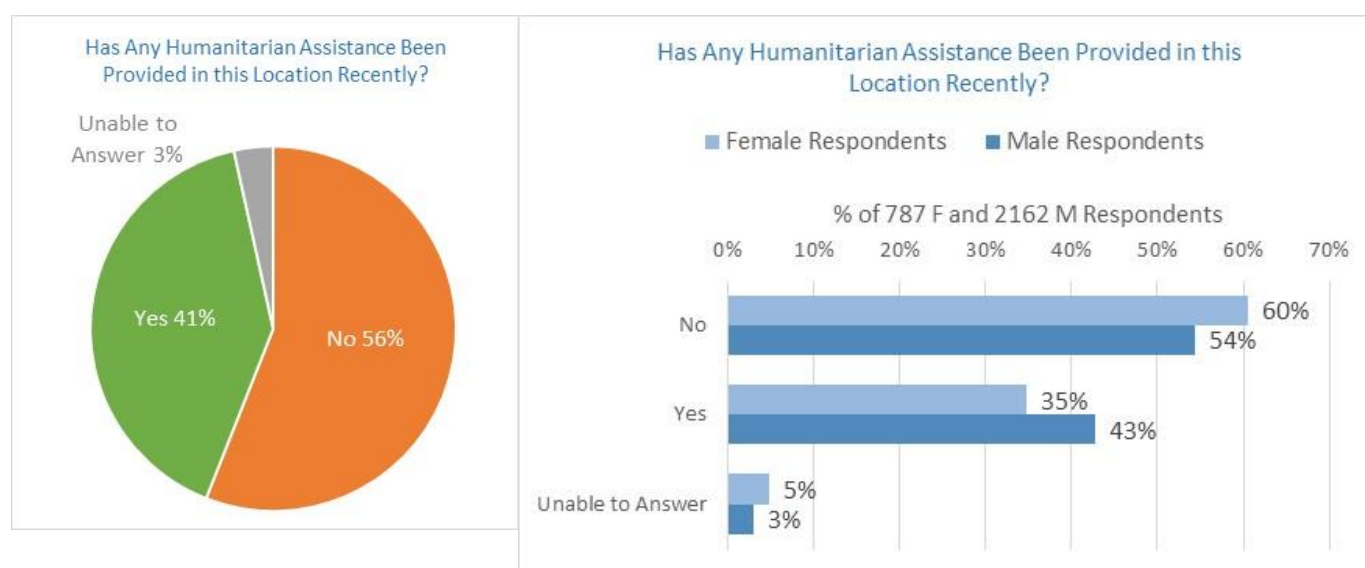
In describing affected facilities and the impact on the community, key informants mention damage to water networks at one or more points of the network, which results in lack of access to water through the public system.



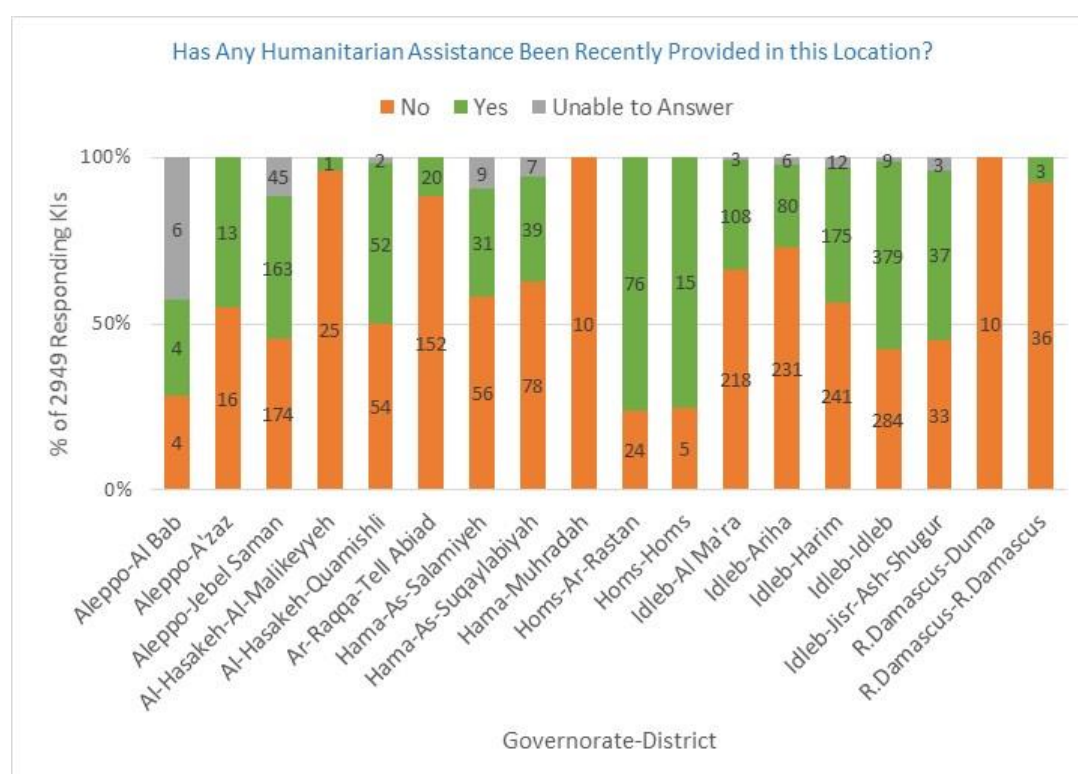
Although damage is not limited to these locations, KIs emphasized that damage at one or more points of the public water network in the following marked districts due to armed conflict presents a barrier for community members to access water:

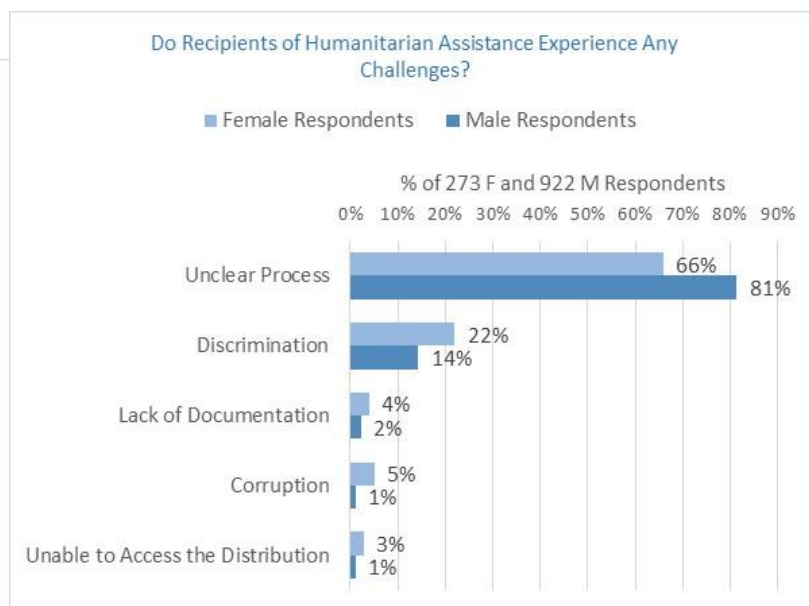
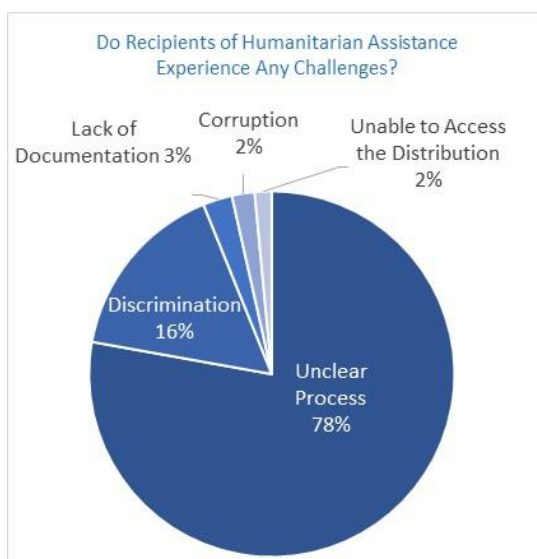


3.2.5 Humanitarian Assistance

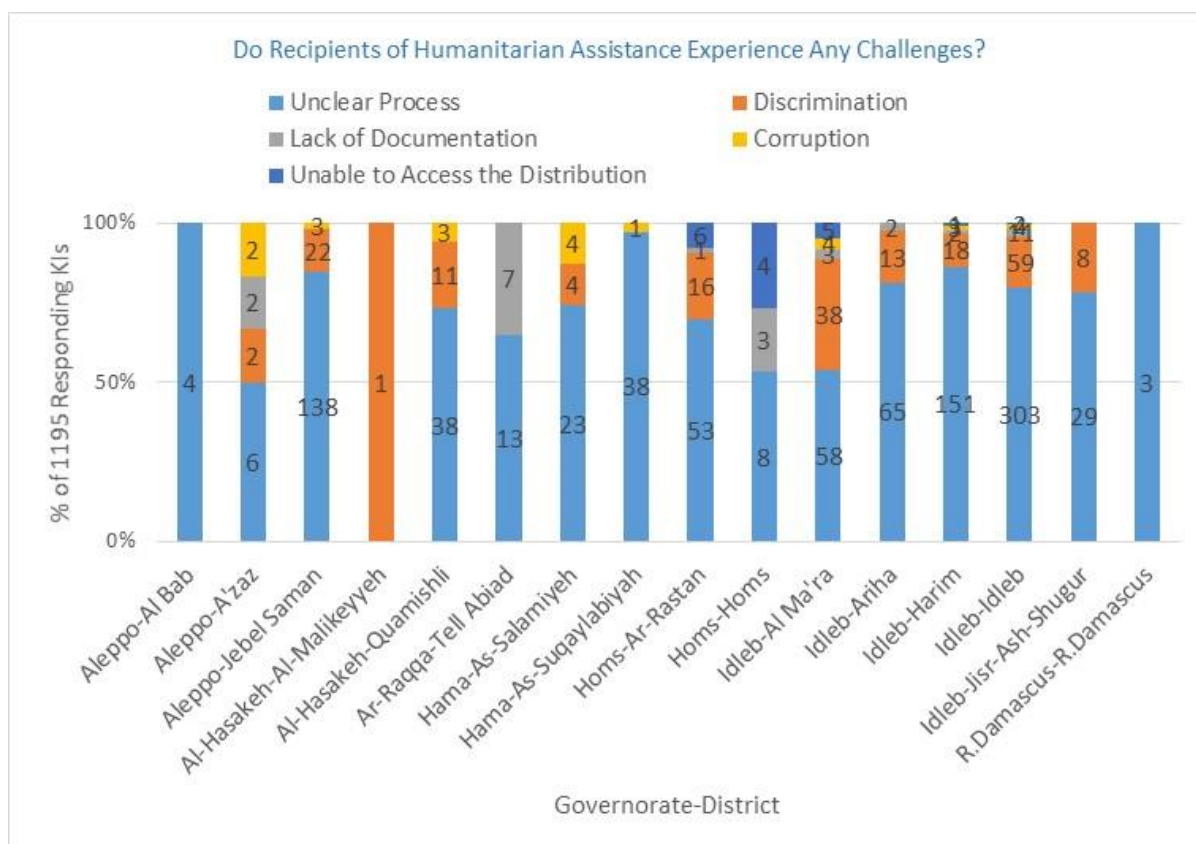


41% of 2,949 responding KIs stated that humanitarian assistance has been provided in their community recently while 56% stated that it was not. 3% were unable to answer. Female KIs were more likely to state that humanitarian assistance has not been provided in their location. 50% or more of the KIs in the following districts stated that humanitarian assistance has not been provided recently: Al Ma'ra, Ariha and Harim districts of Idleb governorate, As-Salamiyeh, Muhradah and As-Suqaylabiyah districts of Hama governorate, A'zaz district of Aleppo, Duma and Rural Damascus districts of Rural Damascus governorate, Al Malikeyyeh and Quamishli districts of Al-Hasakeh governorate and Tell Abiad district of Ar-Raqqa governorate. It is noted that locations in Hama such as Muhradah and As-Suqaylabiyah, locations in Aleppo such as A'zaz, and some locations in Rural Damascus, Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa are designated hard-to-reach areas, which prevents or limits access for humanitarian assistance provision (OCHA Overview of Hard-to-Reach and Besieged Locations, December 2017).





Of 1195 responding KIs, lack of clarity in the process remains the number one challenge to accessing humanitarian assistance (78%), followed by discrimination (16%), lack of documentation (3%), corruption (2%) and inability to access the distribution (1%). Male KIs were more likely to mention the challenge of an unclear process, while female KIs were more likely to mention the challenges of discrimination, corruption and the inability to access the distribution.



The chart above demonstrates the types of challenges experienced by recipients of humanitarian assistance in each district. It is noted that nearly all districts have cited unclear processes as a

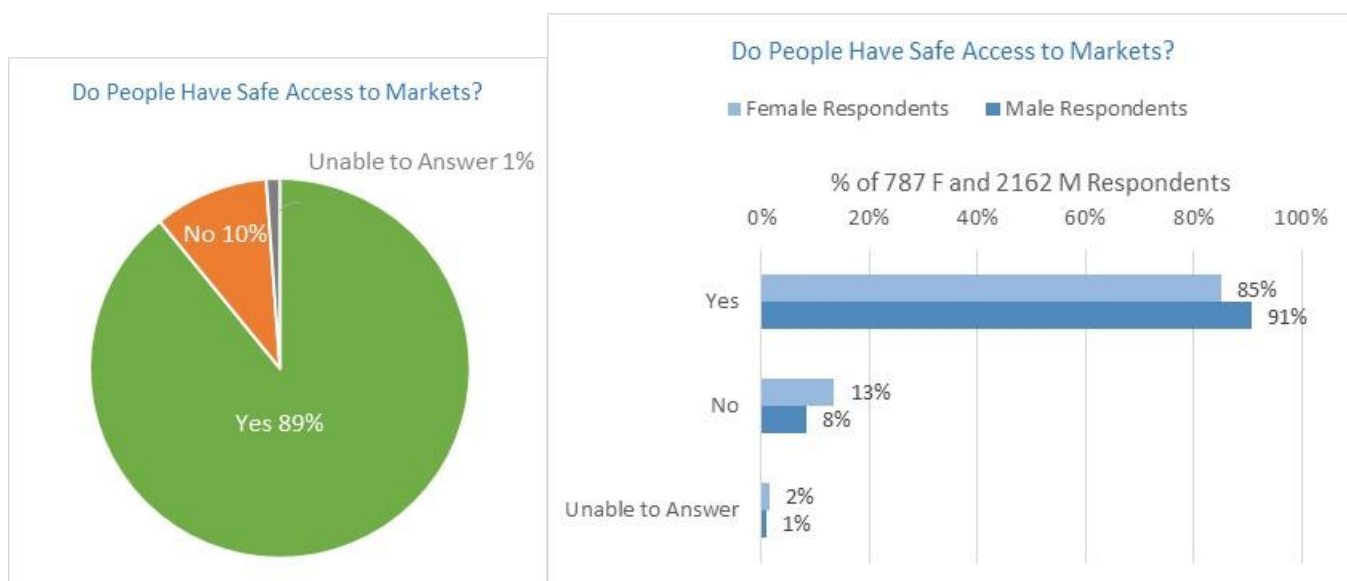


challenge. Some degree of discrimination in the distribution process was also mentioned for most of the districts covered. In a few districts, lack of civil status documentation continues to be a barrier in accessing humanitarian assistance. Key informants in some locations also mentioned corruption and the inability to access the distribution site.

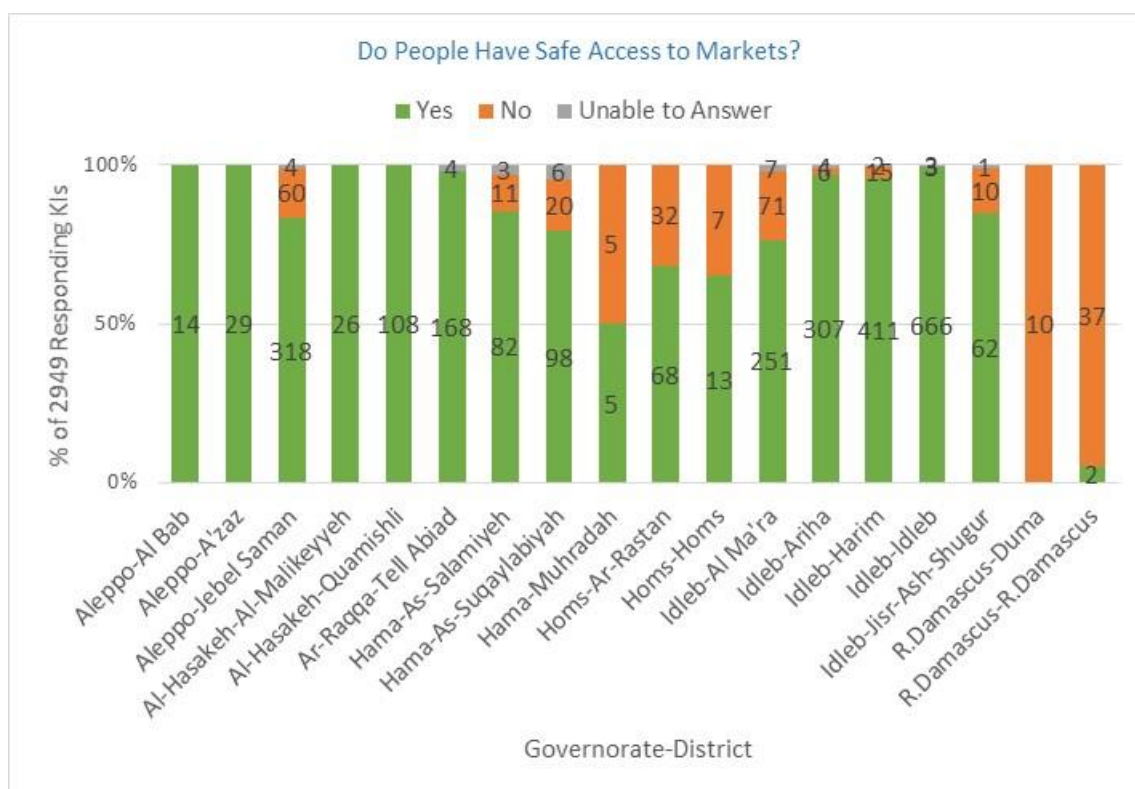
In light of these findings, humanitarian actors are recommended to ensure equitable access to humanitarian assistance, paying attention to gender equity in these efforts, and ensuring that both men and women have equal access to information and assistance. Ensuring access for highly vulnerable demographic groups, such as female-headed and child-headed households, people with special needs, and older persons is encouraged. In certain locations, lack of civil status documentation remains a barrier in accessing humanitarian assistance. Loss, expiration and inability to renew civil status documentation occur widely in these communities due to displacement circumstances and conditions; therefore, organizations should ensure that lack of documentation is not a barrier to receiving essential and life-saving humanitarian assistance.

Considering that conflict-affected communities in Syria continue to rely heavily on humanitarian assistance for their survival (HNO 2018), there is not only a need to streamline distribution and information-sharing processes to reduce challenges and barriers, but also a longer-term need to direct focus on livelihood generation.

3.2.6 Access to Markets



89% of 2,949 responding KIs stated that people in the community have safe access to markets. Male KIs were more like to state they safe access than female KIs. In terms of social cohesion, KIs identified location and access to markets as a factor influencing relations between IDPs and the host community. Markets provide opportunities for IDPs and host communities to interact with each other. In communities where either or both are unable to access markets, their interaction is non-existent or limited.



100% of KIs in Duma district and 95% of key informants in Rural Damascus district of Rural Damascus governorate stated that people do not have safe access to markets due to the ongoing besiegement at the time of the data collection. Other KIs indicating that people do not have safe access to markets in Aleppo, Hama, Homs and Idlib described numerous factors. Majority explained that fear of bombardment and shelling causes community members to avoid markets. Some KIs also stated that since bombardments generally take place at night time, markets are accessible during the day, but not at night. 86% of 286 KIs who stated that community members do not have safe access to markets identified fear of bombardments and shelling as the primary reason. Key informants described that gathering places in communities, like markets, are at risk of bombardment.

Fear of harm due to generalized violence is not the only barrier to safe market access. In some locations, there is no market, or the market was closed due to security concerns. In some communities, the closest markets are far away, and there is either no transportation available to reach the market, or it is available but too costly for community members to afford.

Markets in the region were blocked due to security concerns (Male KII, Off-Camp, Ariha District, Idlib Governorate).

The area has no markets and the nearest market of the region is more than 8 kilometers away from the area (Male KII, Off-Camp, Ar-Rastan District, Homs Governorate).

[There is no safe access] because the area is far from the markets and the means of transport are not available. If they are available, they are expensive (Male KII, Off-Camp, Ar-Rastan District, Homs Governorate).



Additionally, some KIs stated that while markets are available, the roads to them are in poor condition or are unsafe. Some community members cannot access markets due to fear of crime such as kidnapping, theft and harassment either during the journey or at the markets. The long distances between camps/residences and markets, and the risk of harassment during the journey may be creating additional challenges and barriers to women who wish to access markets.

The distance to the market is far and the roads are not secure (Male KI, Off-Camp, Al Ma'ra District, Idleb Governorate).

The markets are far away and there is a risk of harassment (Female KI, In-Camp, Harim District, Idleb Governorate).

There are transport difficulties, women are harassed and vehicles are robbed (Female KI, In-Camp, Harim District, Idleb Governorate).

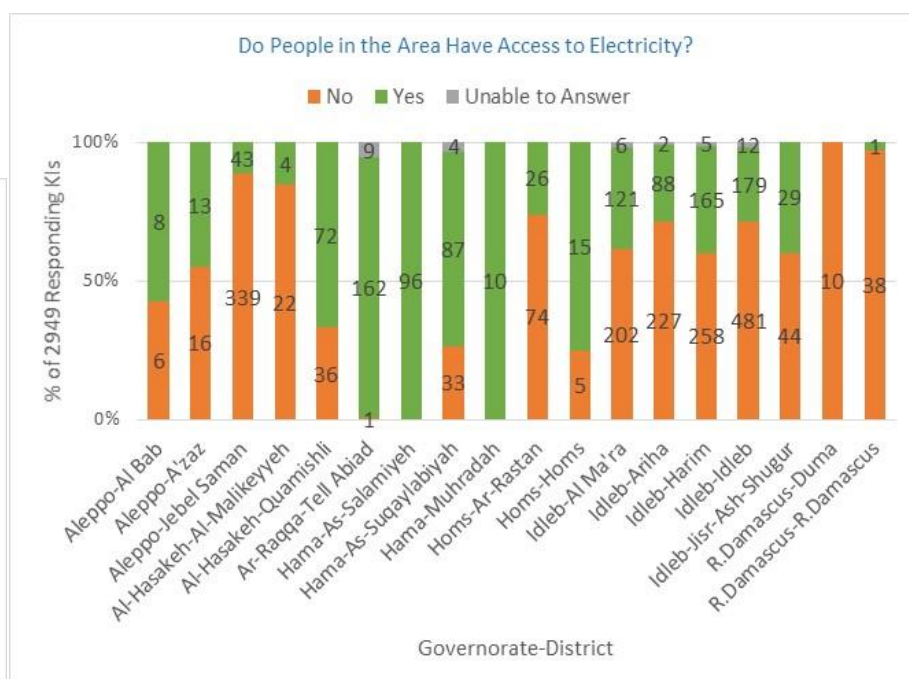
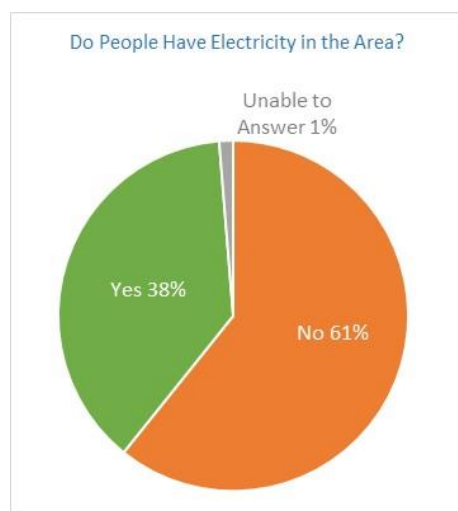
An additional explanation offered by some KIs is simply that the cost of goods in the market are very high and community members cannot afford to purchase them.

Security and [price] inflation (Male KI, Off-Camp, Jebel Saman District, Aleppo Governorate).

The markets are far away from the region and the prices are high (Female KI, Off-Camp, Ar-Rastan District, Homs Governorate).

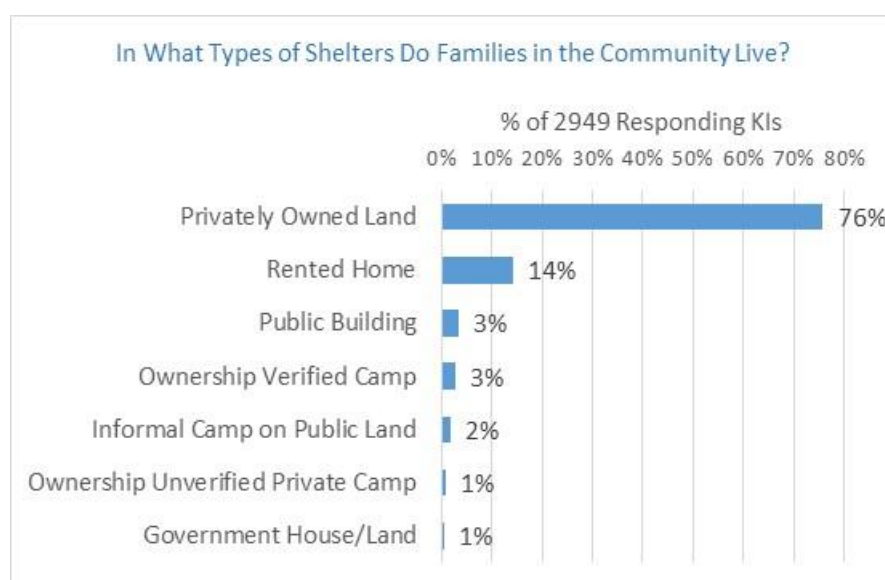


3.2.7 Access to Electricity



In this reporting period of October-December, 61% of KIs stated that there is no electricity. In nearly all districts covered in this report, more than half of respondents indicated lack of access to electricity.

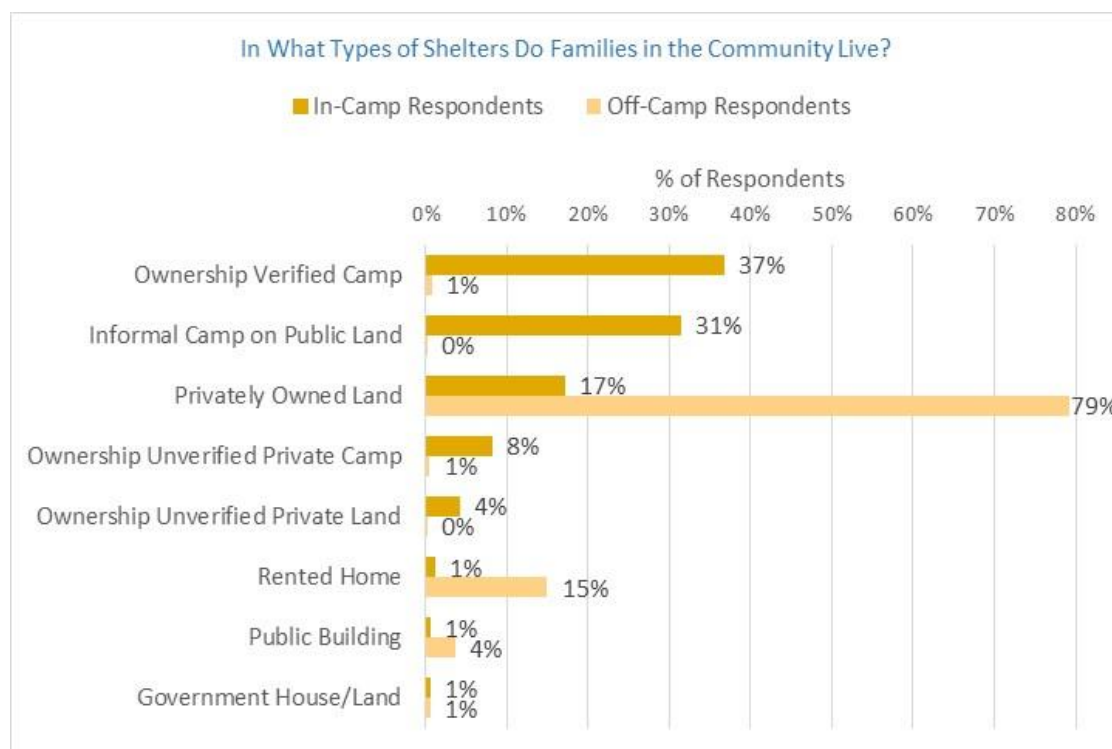
3.2.8 Access to Housing and Shelter



KIs continue to identify privately owned land as the most common type of shelter of families in the community. 76% of 2,949 responding KIs identified privately owned land. This was followed by rented homes at 14%.

Ownership Status

KIs in camps stated that families mostly live in ownership-verified camps and informal camps on public land, followed by privately owned land and private camps whose ownership is unverified. The majority of KIs in off-camp communities stated that families live on privately owned land.



Shelter Conditions

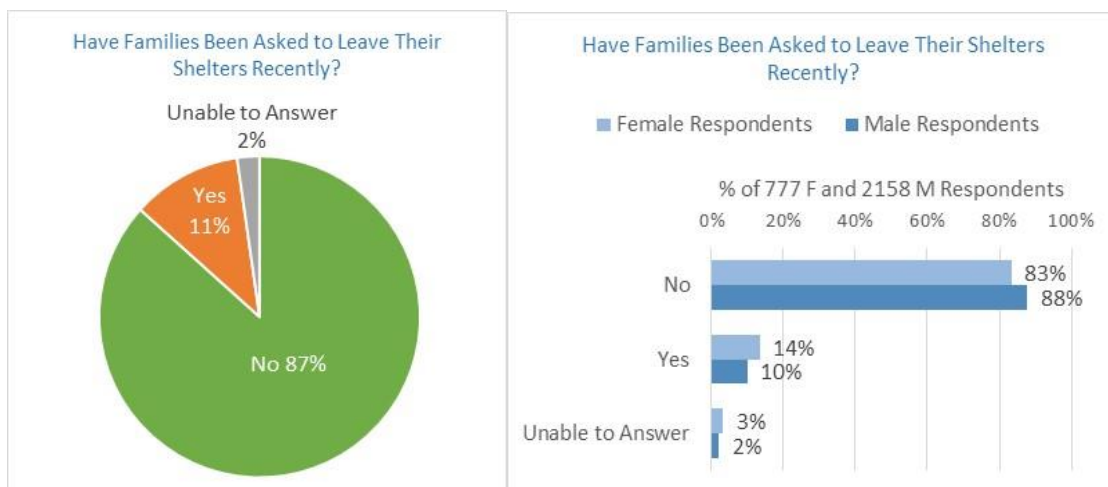
15% of 2,949 KIs mentioned that shelters in their community had recently either been partially damaged or completely destroyed due to shelling and bombardment. While some damage is minimum, leaving shelters habitable and without significant problems, in other cases, the extent of the damage poses great problems to community members. These include the risk of the building crumbling, or its residents being exposed to the elements, including cold and rain. In cases where some restoration has been possible, for example through replacement of broken windows and doors, residents have tried to restore buildings to a habitable state. In many cases, however, the extent of the damage is too severe and costly for community members to restore.

Aside from the fact that nearly every community covered in this reporting period described some extent of shelter damage in the community from bombardment and shelling, the other primary issue mentioned was the lack of WASH facilities, and more specifically, the lack of sewage networks and toilet facilities in these shelters.

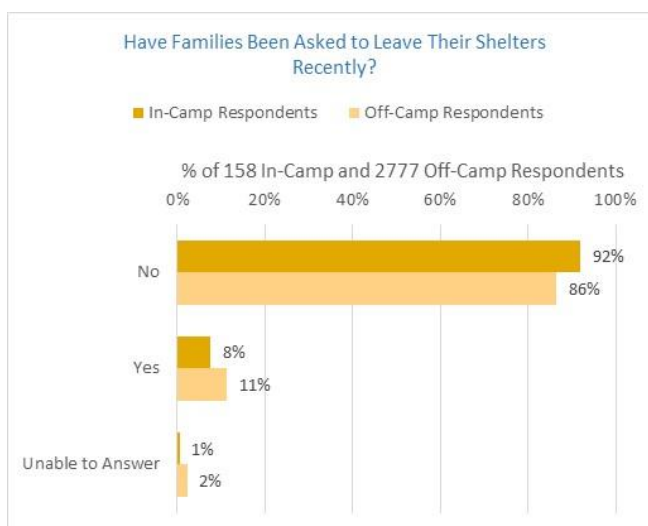
Humanitarian programming is needed to increase shelter stock and to reduce factors that place affected communities at risk of eviction and insecure tenure. Humanitarian actors should ensure that land used for camp and shelter establishment is verified, reliable, and sustainable for IDPs and affected communities, and have basic and essential amenities (*Refer to Shelter/NFI Cluster Due Diligence Guidelines*⁵).

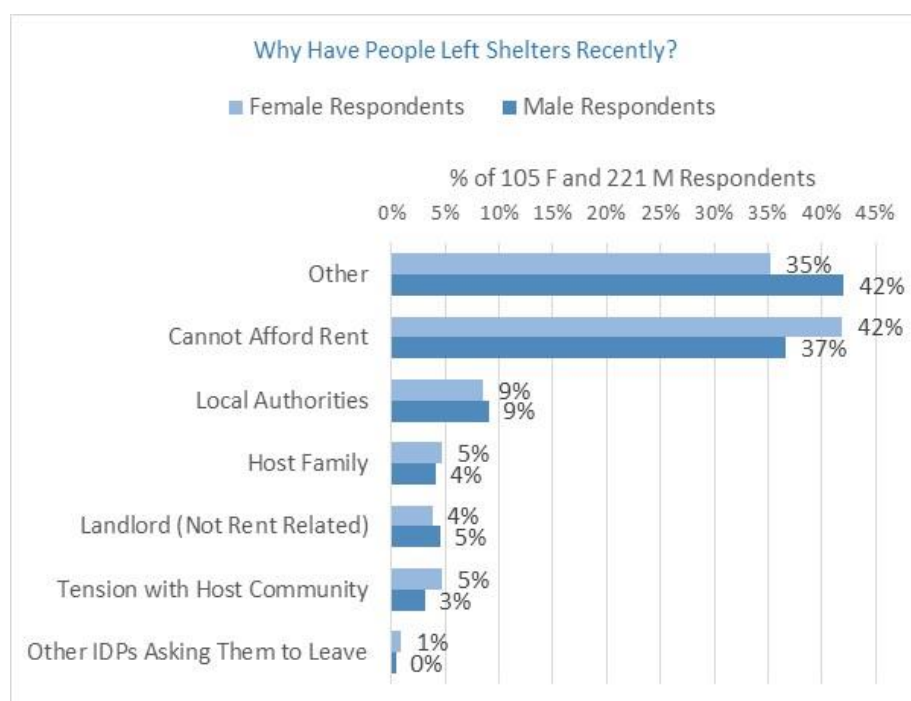
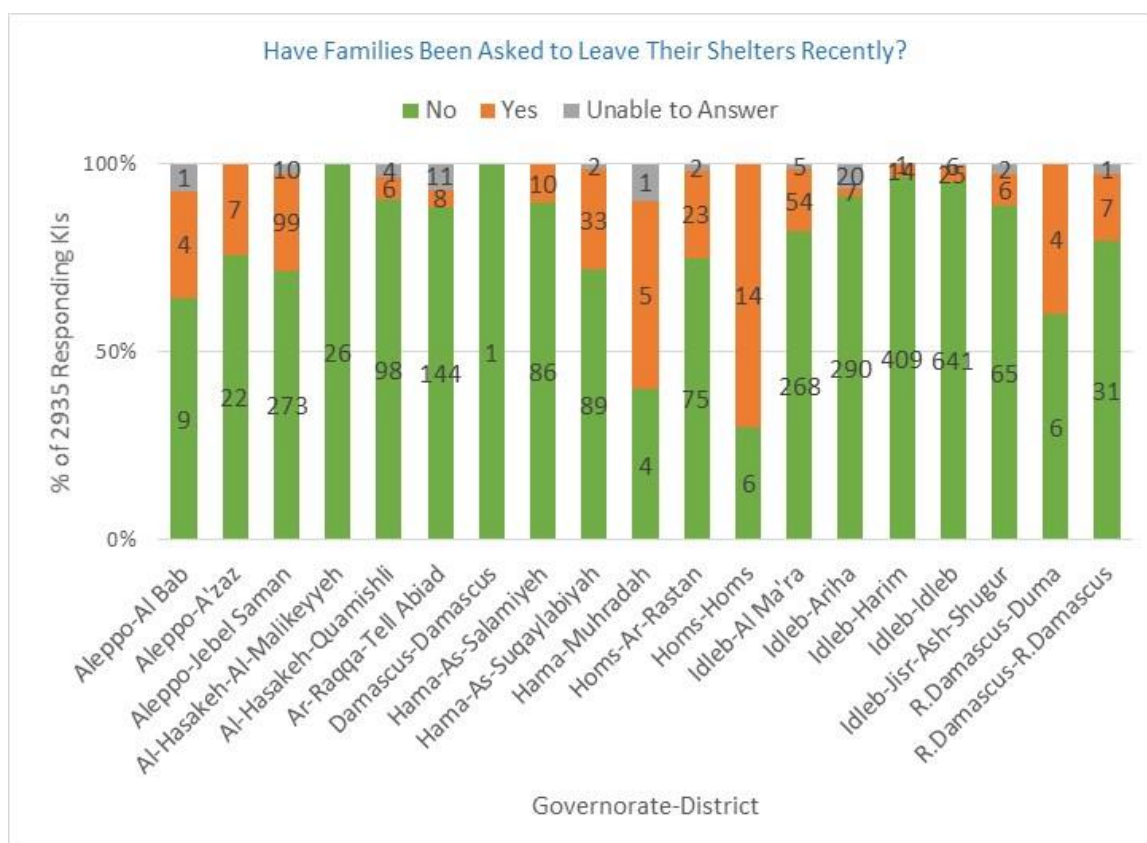
⁵ https://www.sheltercluster.org/sites/default/files/docs/hlp_xb_turkey_due_diligence_guidelines_final.pdf

Eviction



11% of 2,935 KIs stated that families have been asked to leave their shelters recently. Female KIs were slightly more likely than males to state that families have been asked to leave their shelters. 21% of 326 KI who described the number of families who have been asked to leave their shelters recently in the community, mentioned up to ten families. 6% stated that between 10 and 50 families have been asked to leave their shelters. 2% stated that between 50 and 100 families have been asked to leave, 1% stated that more than 100 families have been asked to leave and one KI explained that around 300 families recently left the community. These 300 families left Jisr-Ash-Shugur district of Idleb governorate due to shelling.





In general, KIs identified “other” (including landlord/tenant problems) and the inability to afford rent as the primary reasons why families had to leave their shelters recently. Male KIs were slightly more likely to identify “other” reasons, while female KIs were slightly more likely to identify the cost of rent. KIs who stated “other” explained that families were not evicted or forced to leave their homes, but that some families had to leave because they did not have the financial resources to pay rent or because the landlord wished to move in the house. A few KIs cited disputes among neighbors or concerns about some occupants engaging in criminal or violent activities. Responses demonstrate that community members value security and safety of the community above other factors, and if there is information or indication that a community resident may be engaged in criminal or violent activities, they prefer that the implicated residents leave the community.

[A family was asked to leave because] one member of the family was accused of planting a bomb (Male KII, Off-Camp, Tell Abiad District, Ar-Raqqa Governorate).



KIs also noted that due to the security situation and shelling, community members have no choice but to vacate the community from time to time, but this movement is not permanent, and community members return once the security situation improves.

About a month ago, the city was heavily bombed, displacing most of the families from the city who then returned after the shelling subsided. The people have become accustomed to this; they have been displaced from the city several times for the same reason and have later returned (Male KII, Off-Camp, Muhradah District, Hama Governorate).

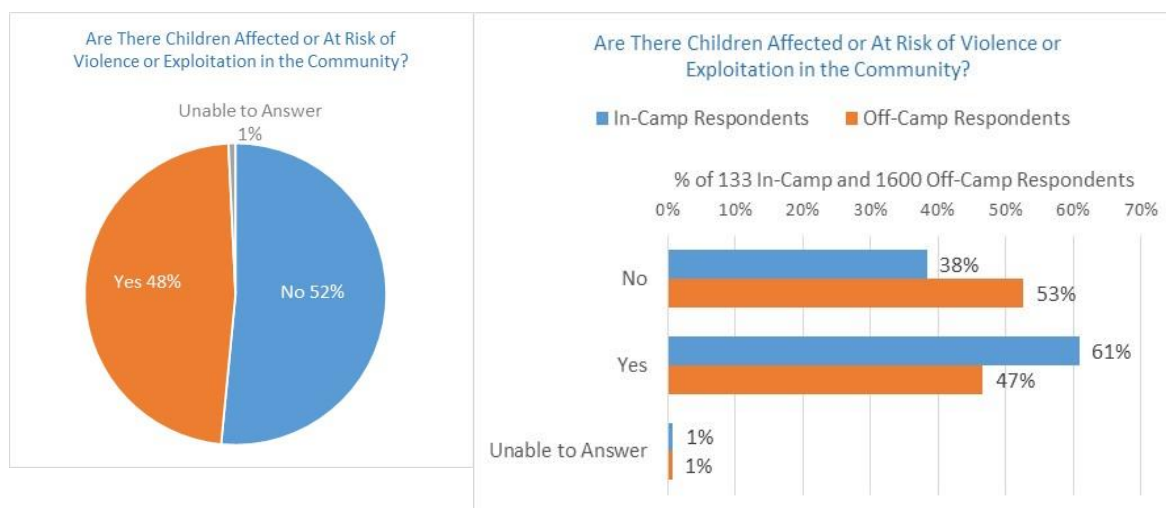
3.3 Vulnerability

Amidst generalized violence and barriers to accessing basic items and services, conflict has placed persons with specific needs at risk of additional harm. Monitoring results indicate that communities fear greater risk of harm for not only women, girls, boys, disabled, and elderly, but also for men.

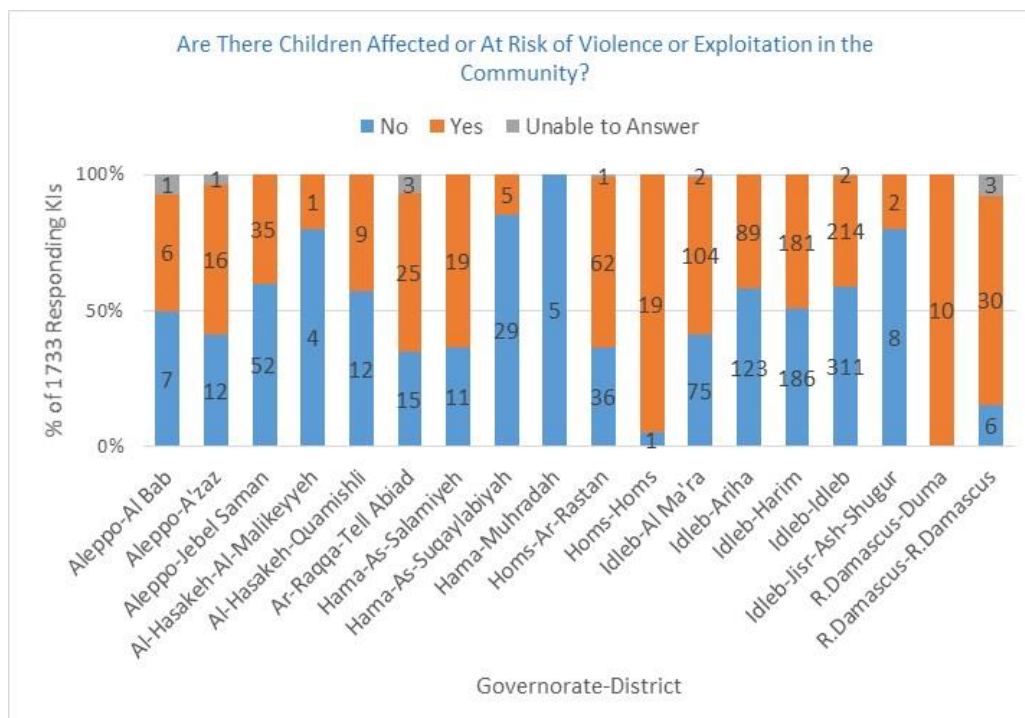


Communities take certain precautions as well as resort to certain negative coping mechanisms in order to reduce these risks for community members.

3.3.1 Children



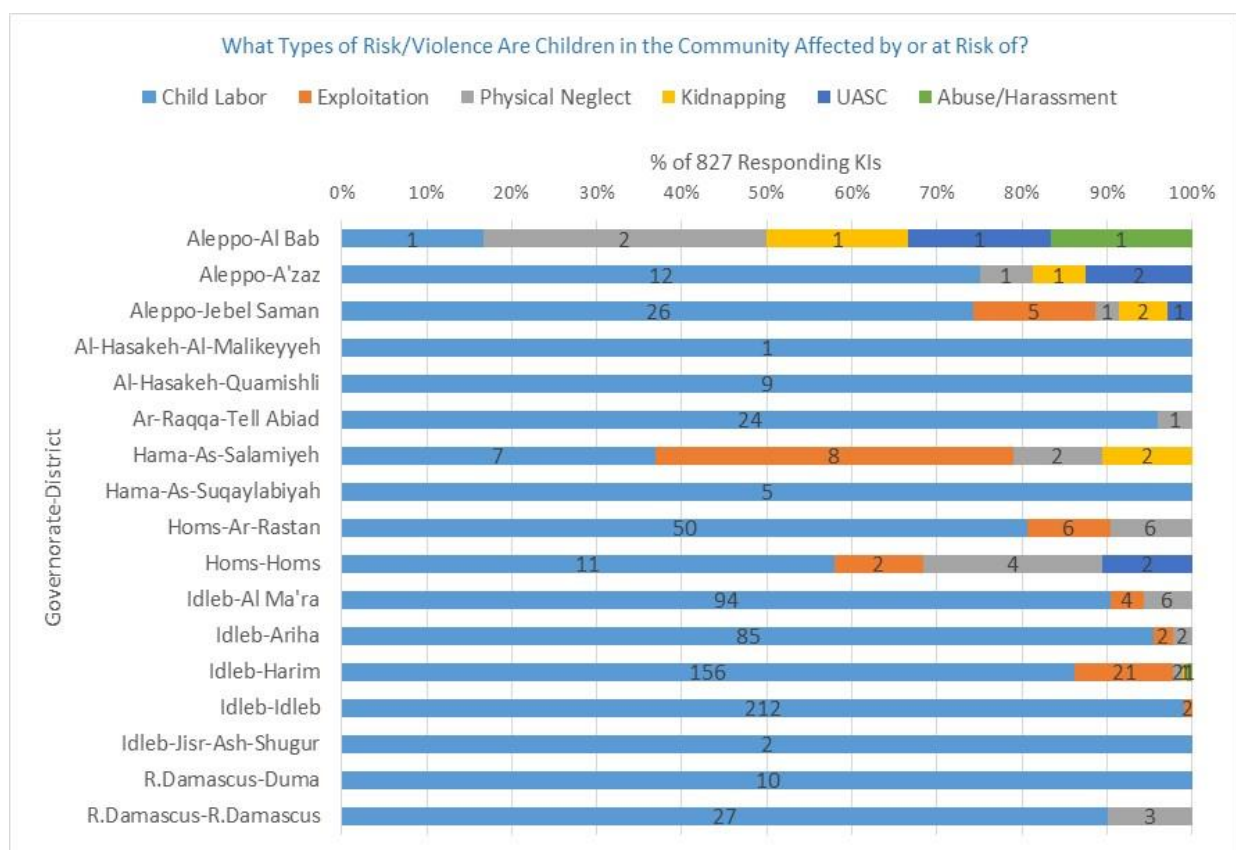
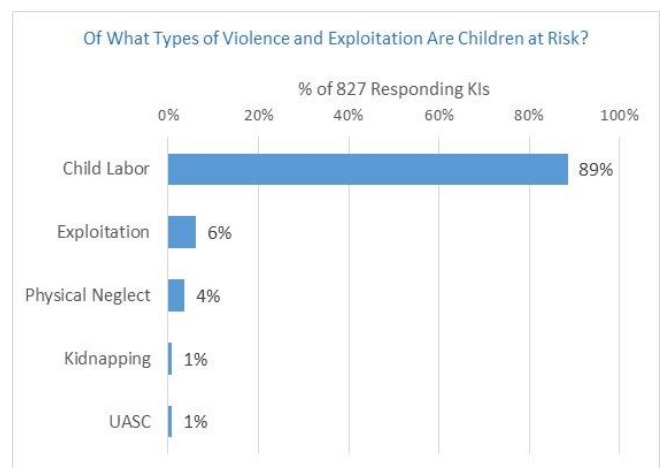
48% of 1733 KIs stated boys and girls in the community are either affected by or at risk of violence or exploitation. Male and female KIs were equally likely to state that children are at risk of violence and exploitation. In-camp KIs were more likely to state that children are at risk of violence and exploitation than off-camp key informants.



More than 50% of KIs in the following locations stated that children are affected by or are at risk of violence or exploitation: Al Ma'ra district of Idlib governorate, Ar-Rastan and Homs districts of Homs governorate, As-Salamiyeh district of Hama governorate, A'zaz district of Aleppo governorate, Duma

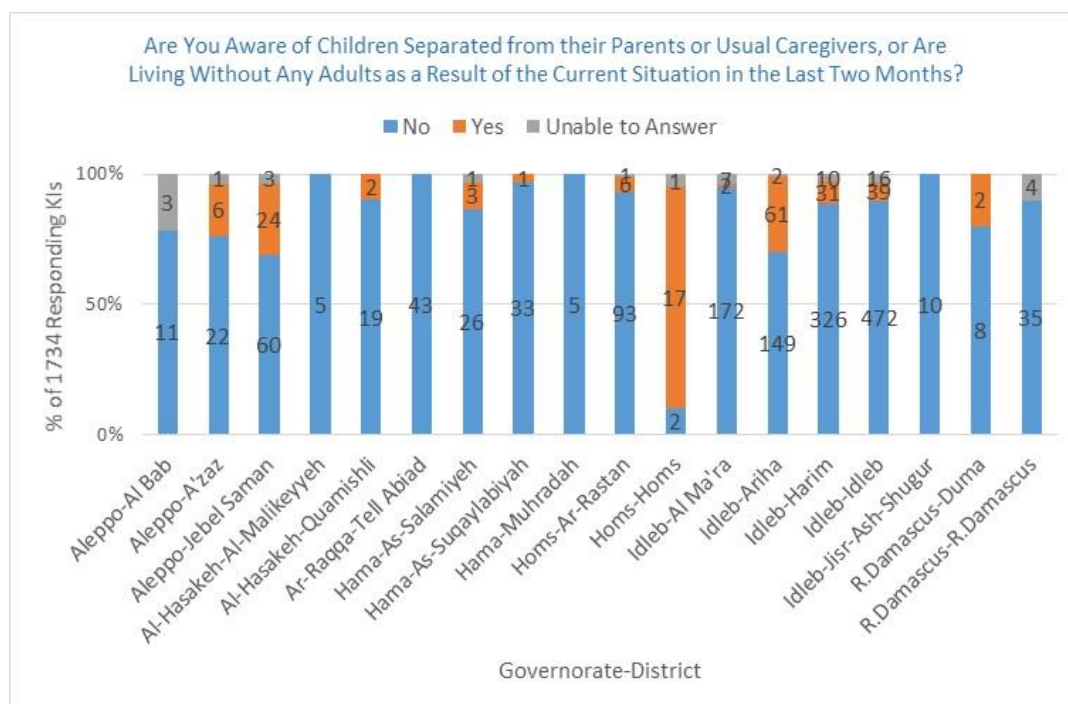
and Rural Damascus districts of Rural Damascus Districts and Tell Abiad district of Ar-Raqqa governorate.

Consistent with earlier reports, KIs identified child labor as the primary risk affecting boys and girls in their communities. Male KIs were slightly more likely than female KIs to identify child labor as a risk. In-camp and off-camp KIs were equally likely to identify the types of violence and exploitation visualized in the graph (right).



3.3.2 Child Separation

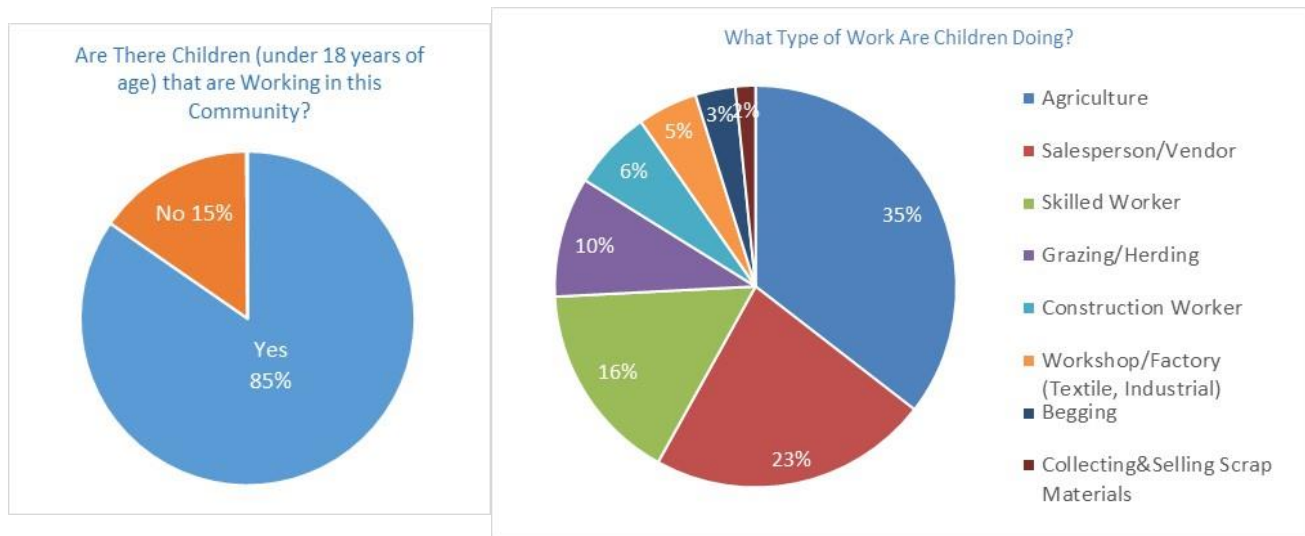
11% of 1,734 KIs were aware of boys and girls in their communities who are separated from their parents or usual caregivers, or are without any adults, as a result of the current situation in the preceding two months.



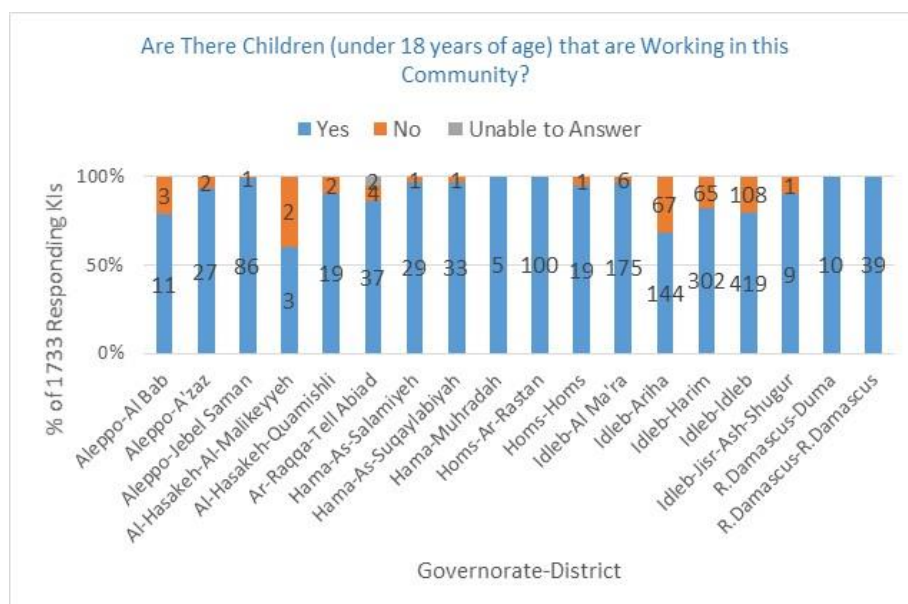
The most notable finding is in Homs district of Homs governorate, where 85% of key informants stated that they are aware of separated and unaccompanied children in their communities.

39% of 195 KIs who described cases of separated and unaccompanied children in their community described cases in which children's father was deceased and their mother had re-married, with the children left in the care of close relatives such as grandparents or uncles. Although findings do not present the exact reasons for re-marriage and family separation, they do indicate that the social and economic challenges experienced by widows in conflict-affected communities and the absence of support and protection mechanisms available to them may be contributing to children's separation from parents. Humanitarian actors are therefore encouraged to implement protection programming, including awareness-raising and income generation activities aimed at unaccompanied women – such as widows, divorcees, and single unaccompanied women – to foster greater socio-economic support for their survival and autonomy, thereby encouraging family unity.

3.3.3 Child Labor



85% of 1733 KIs stated that there are children under the age of 18 working in their community. Female key informants were slightly more likely to state that there is child labor than male KIs. In-camp and off-camp key informants were equally like to state that there is child labor in their communities. Key informants described the types of work that in which children in the community are engaged, visualized in the above pie chart. Children are most commonly involved in agriculture, shops, skilled work, and grazing/herding.



3.3.4 Violence/Exploitation of Child Labor

21% of 1,468 KIs stated that boys and girls are being mistreated at the workplace. Consistent with previous reports, KIs report that children experience mistreatments in the form of long working hours and low pay, labor that is not proportional to their age and physical capacity, verbal and physical violence, humiliation, denial of rest and denial of basic needs like food, which result in exhaustion and malnutrition.

3.3.5 Early Marriage

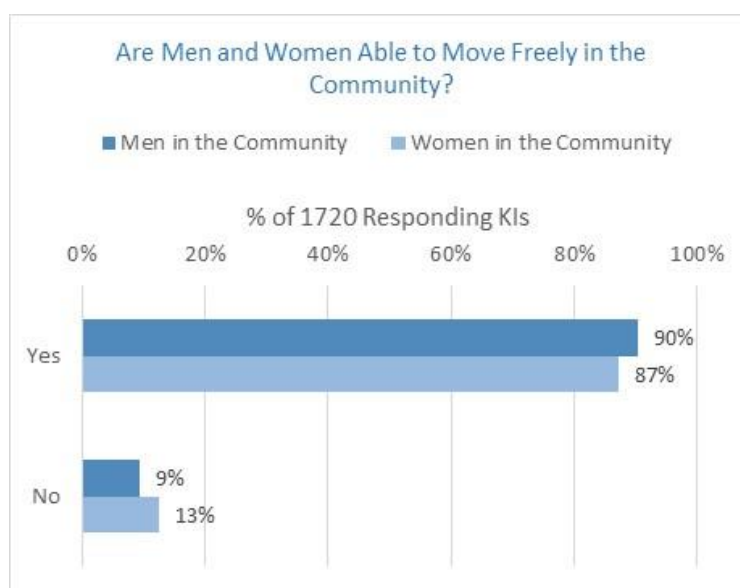
Findings indicate that perceived risk of harm and harassment for girls may contribute to negative coping mechanisms, including early marriage for girls. KIs and observers note that the conflict environment, the high rate of crime and security incidents, and the living conditions of IDPs are perceived to pose greater risks for girls and women. The community undertakes various steps in order to prevent harm and harassment, such as limiting freedom of movement and requiring women and girls to be accompanied by a male relative during movement. These negative coping mechanisms can result in further vulnerability and isolation of women and girls.

3.3.6 Impact of Conflict on Child Behavior

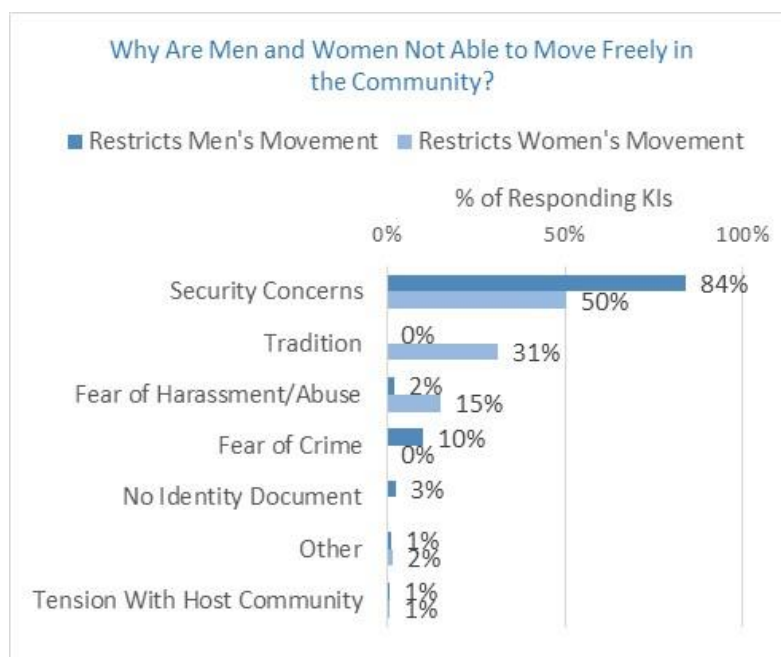
Children in affected communities display a range of behaviors indicative of psychosocial distress. These behaviors are primarily aggression, intense fear, involuntary urination, and disinterest in studies or hobbies, imitation of conflict and use of violence in play. The trauma these children have experienced and their mental health are also perceived to manifest itself in other physical health concerns. Previous findings have indicated that while lack of school access may contribute to psychosocial distress, psychosocial distress may also result in lack of school attendance among children in conflict affected communities.

3.4 Demographic Groups

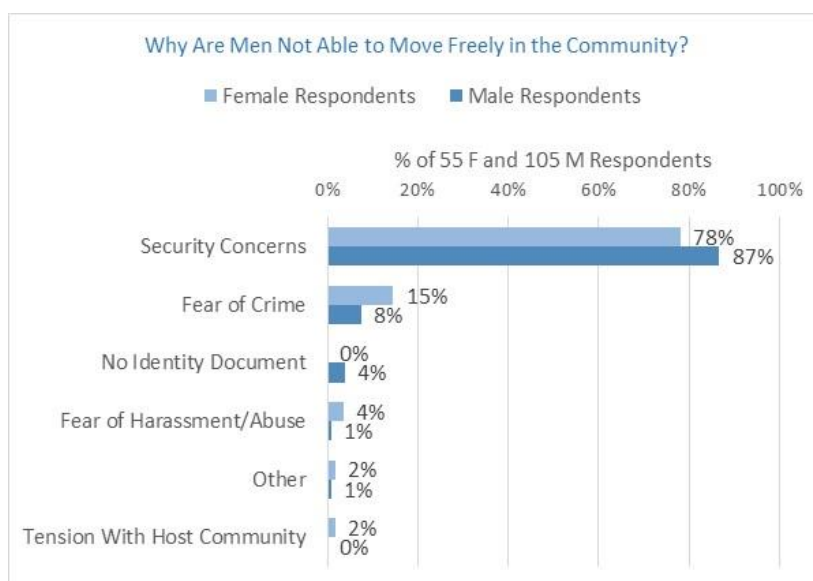
3.4.1 Freedom of Movement / Movement Restrictions



Freedom of movement is restricted for both men and women. Although these findings indicate that women in the community have slightly less freedom of movement than their male counterparts, it is known that women in Syria generally experience less freedom of movement in the public sphere than men.



Restrictions and impact for men and boys:

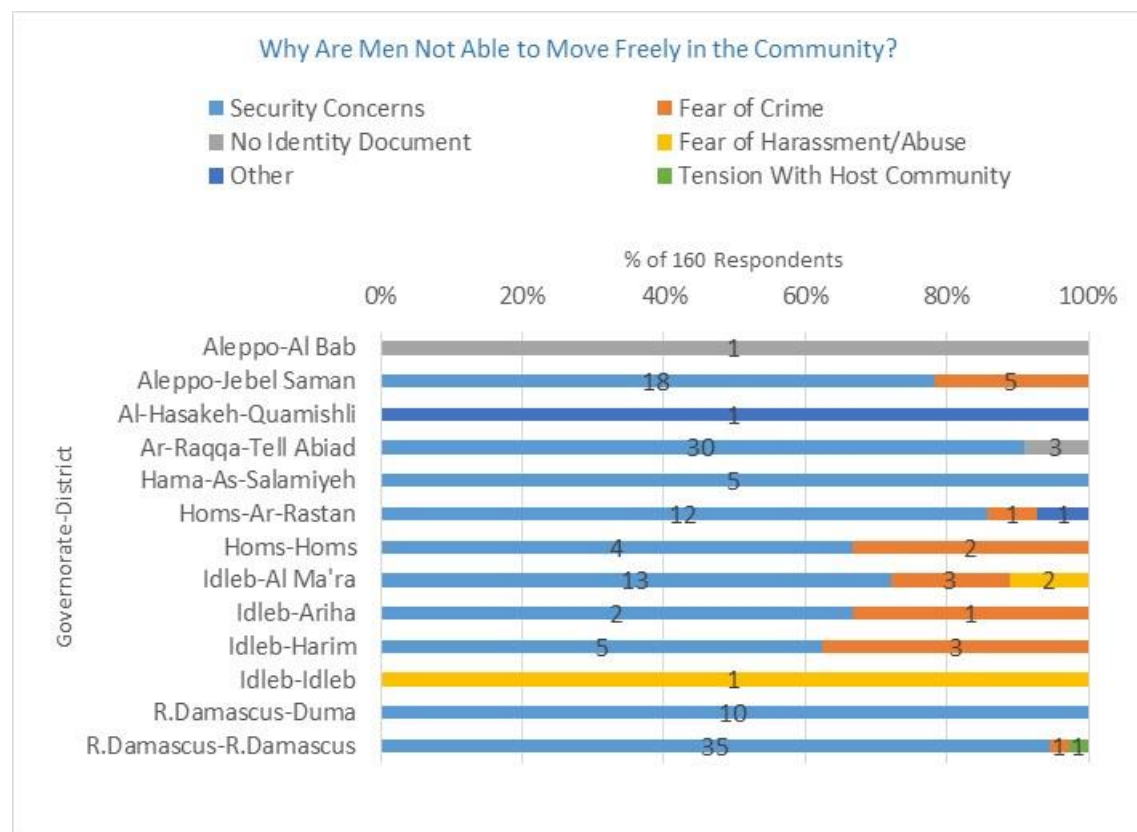


90% of 1,729 KIs stated that men are able to move freely in the community and 9% stated that they are not able to move freely.

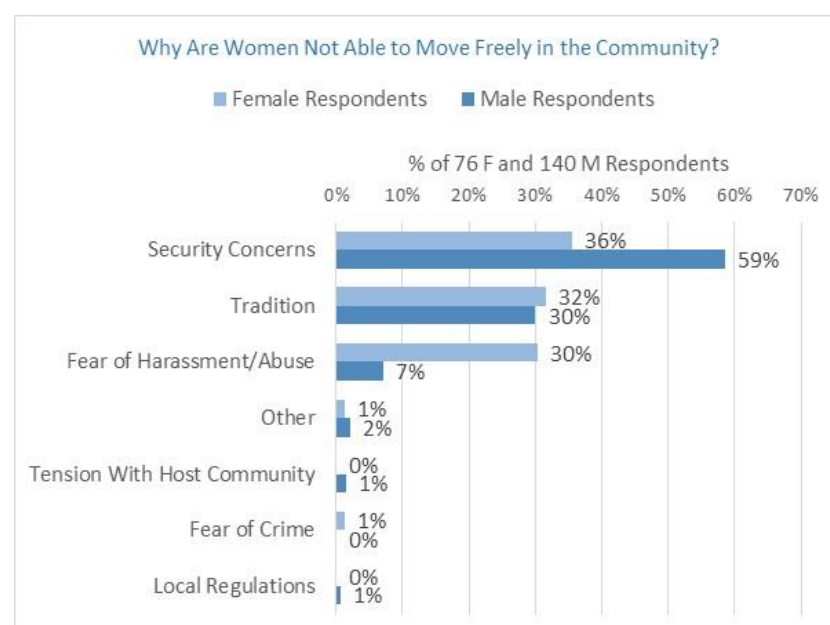
Security concerns are the primary factor preventing men from moving freely, cited by 84%, followed by fear of crime at 10%. Lack of identity document was also indicated as a barrier to men's free movement, while this was not identified as a barrier for women's free movement. In contrast, KIs do not perceive that fear of harassment or abuse presents a barrier to men's movement as much as it does women's.



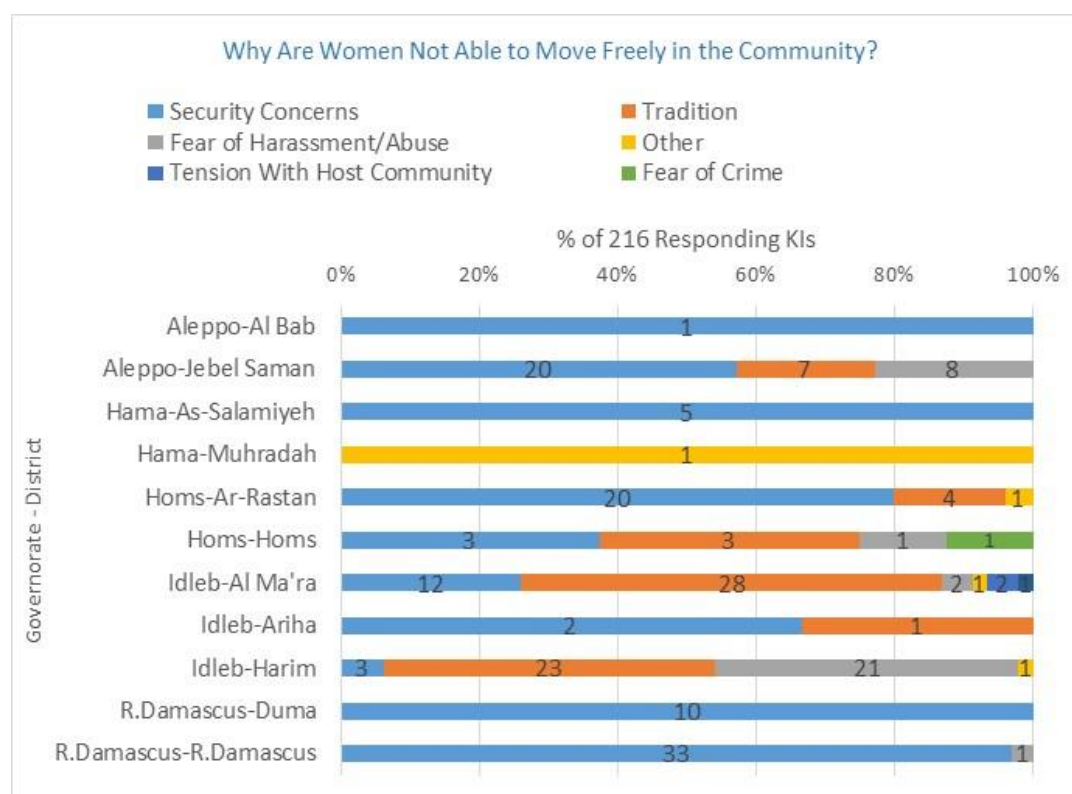
Male KIs were more likely to identify reasons of security concerns and lack of identity documents as limiting men's freedom of movement in the community, while female KIs were more likely to identify reasons of fear of crime, fear of harassment or abuse or tension with the host community as limiting men's freedom of movement.



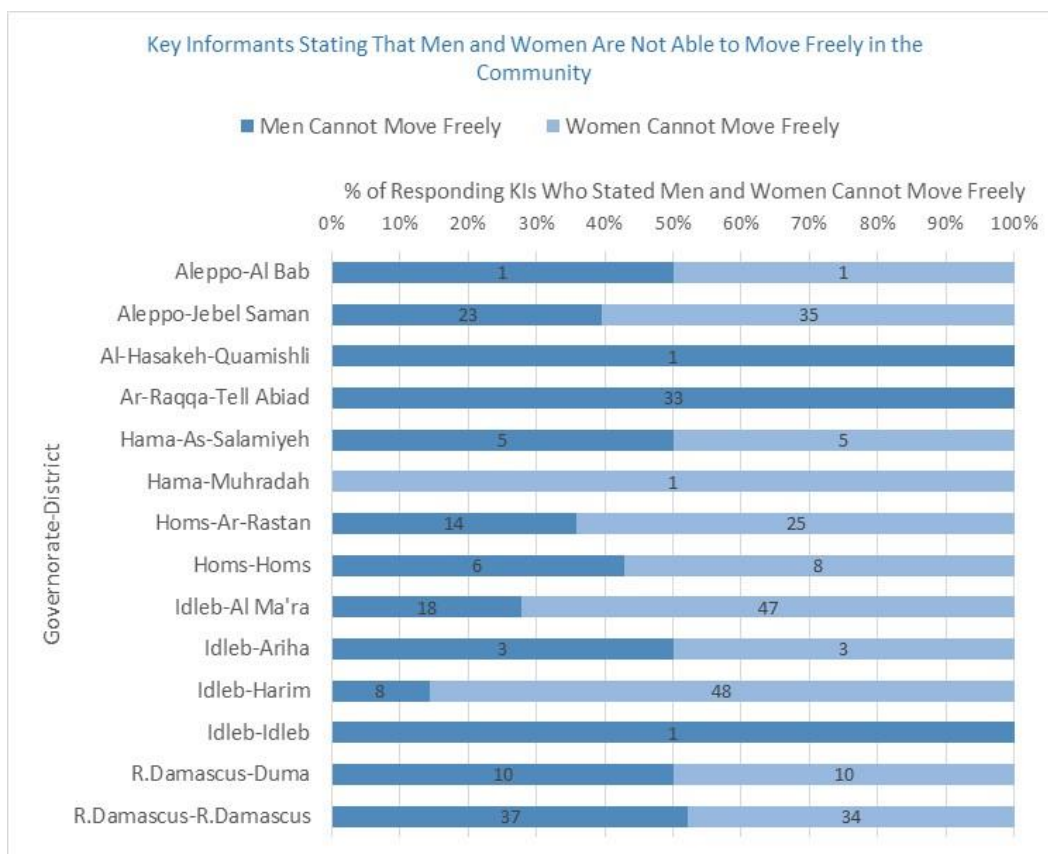
Restrictions and impact for women and girls:



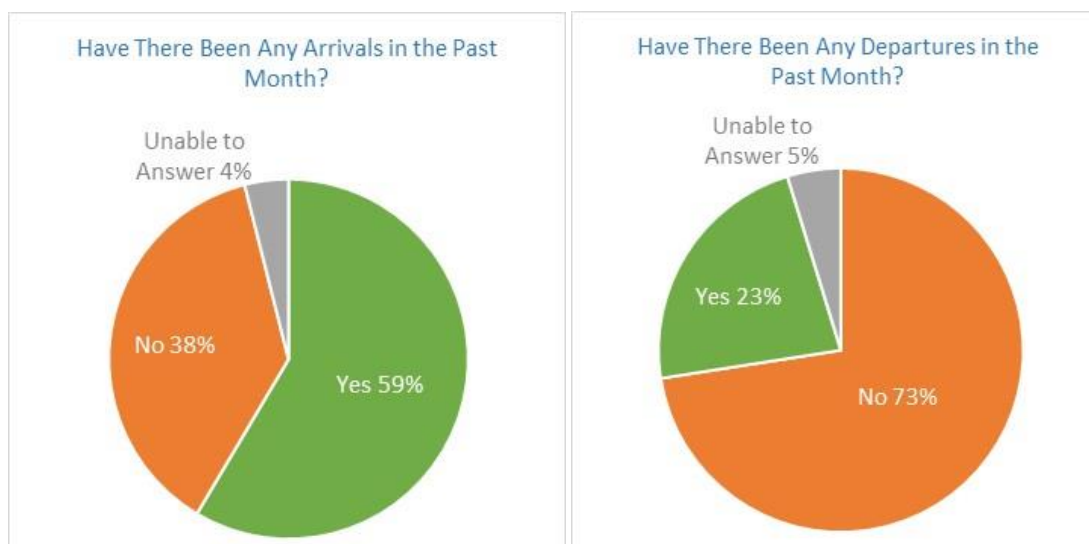
87% of 1,729 KIs stated that women are able to move freely in the community and 13% stated that they are not able to move freely. Security concerns are the primary factor preventing women from moving freely at 50%, followed by tradition at 31% and fear of harassment or abuse at 15%. Tradition is a barrier to freedom of movement that is reported as affecting only women and girls in communities, and was not identified at all for men and boys. Fear of harassment or abuse was mentioned far more as a barrier to women's movement than it was for men's movement. On the other hand, lack of an identity document was cited as restricting men's but not women's movement. This is most likely because men are more likely to be asked for identity documents during movement and when crossing checkpoints.



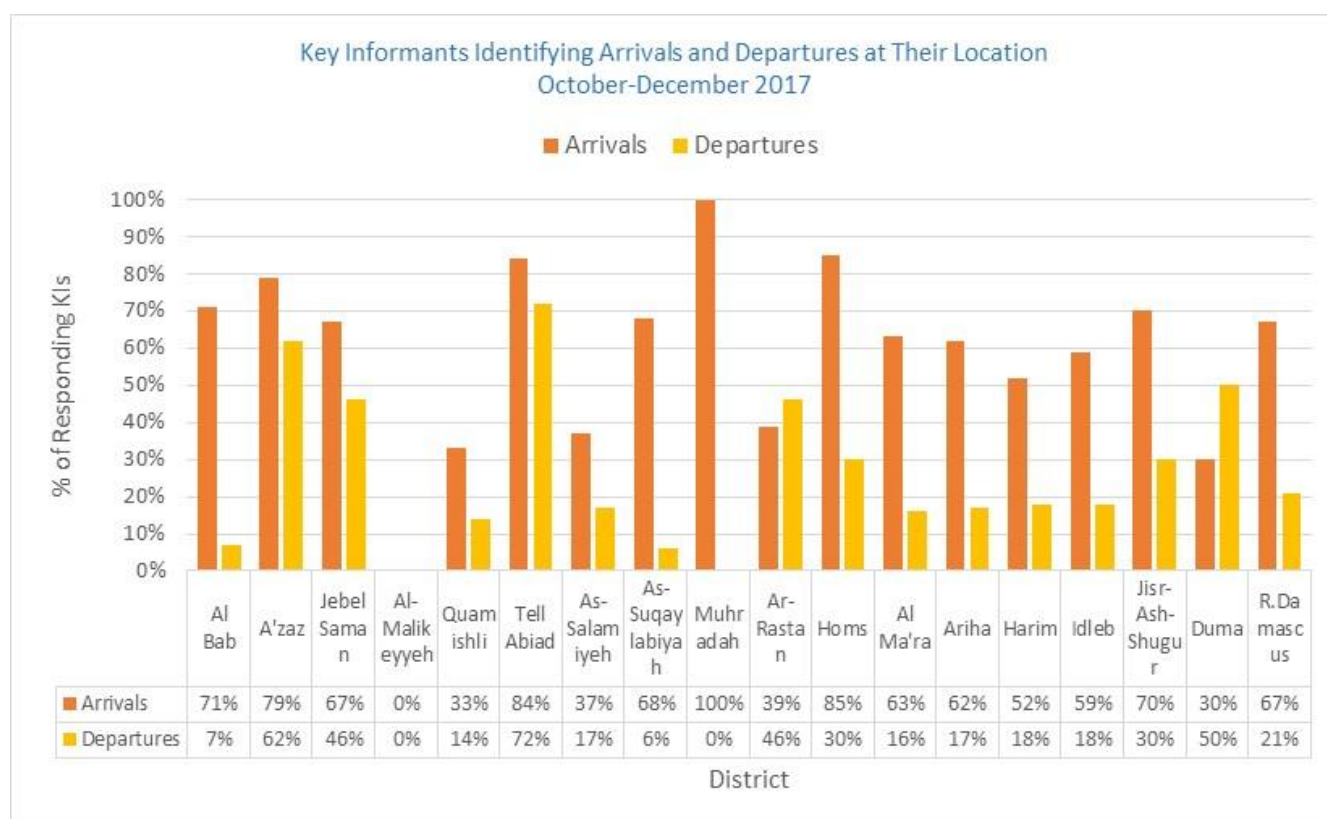
Male KIs were more likely than female KIs to identify security concerns as a barrier to women's movement. Female key informants, on the other hand, were far more likely to state fear of harassment or abuse as a barrier to women's movement. Additionally, one male KI identified local regulations as a barrier, which was not mentioned at all for women's movement. Both male and female KIs were equally likely to mention tradition as a barrier to women and girls' movement in this reporting period. It is noted that restricted freedom of movement for women and girls was identified more in districts such as Jebel Saman district of Aleppo governorate, Ar-Rastan district of Homs, Al Ma'ra and Harim districts of Idleb governorate, communities of IDP influx and in-camp living arrangements.



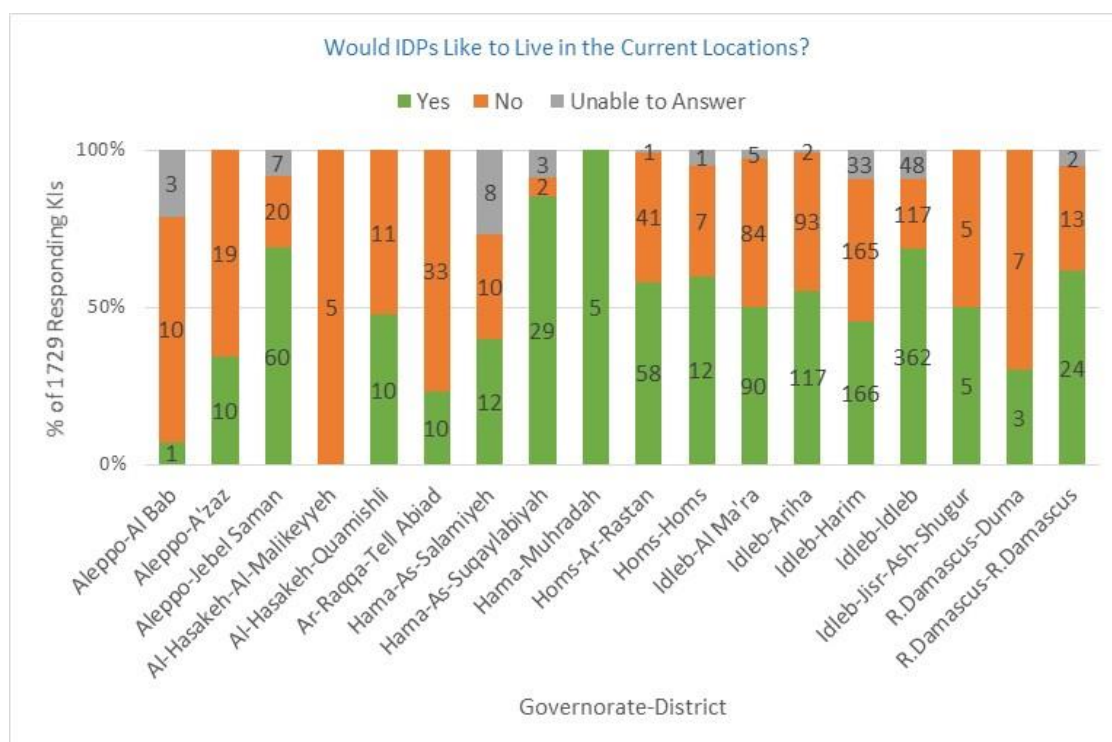
3.4.2 IDP Movement



Overall, 59% of 1729 KIs stated that there have been arrivals to their location in the past month and overall 23% stated that there have been departures from their location in the past month.



KI were asked reasons why newly arrived IDPs had left their previous locations. 73% of 1,012 KIs stated that they left due to security, followed by threats of violence (12%), property loss or damage (6%), to avoid recruitment (2%), economic hardship (2%), lack of services (2%), other (2%), lack of humanitarian assistance (1%), the state of infrastructure (4 KIs).



IDPs left the location for the following reasons: 41% of 393 KIs stated due to lack of access to employment, followed by other (22%), poor living conditions (21%), inability to afford rent (8%), safety reasons (5%), security conditions (3%), and because of eviction by the host community (1%, or 4 KIs).

Overall, 56% of 1,720 KIs indicated that IDPs would like to remain in their current locations, while 37% stated that they would not like to remain in their current locations. The majority of the KI in locations such as Al Bab and Aleppo districts of Aleppo governorate, Al Malikeyyeh district of Al Hasakeh governorate, Tell Abiad district of Ar-Raqqa governorate, and Duma district of Rural Damascus governorate stated that IDPs do not wish to remain in their current communities. Therefore, some IDPs in these communities may plan for onward movement if circumstances affecting their decision to stay or leave do not change.

KIs continue to describe numerous factors affecting IDPs' desire to stay and live in their current locations. Security and safety remain as a primary factor in their decision, followed by economic factors such as the availability of humanitarian assistance, availability of employment, the cost of rent, and basic needs. The availability of housing and basic services also have a significant impact on IDPs decision to stay or leave in a community. Finally, KIs note that social support – the presence of relatives or friends in the area, the relations between IDPs and the host community, and the support received from the host community – also influences IDPs' decision in regards to onward movement. The following summarizes these numerous factors well:

The good treatment by the residents [makes people want to stay]. We have relatively good safety compared to other areas. There is free housing and we have water and electricity. Some displaced people have begun to rent agricultural land in Kafr Nabutha and begun to invest in the area. (Male KI, Off-Camp, As-Suqaylabiyah District, Hama Governorate).

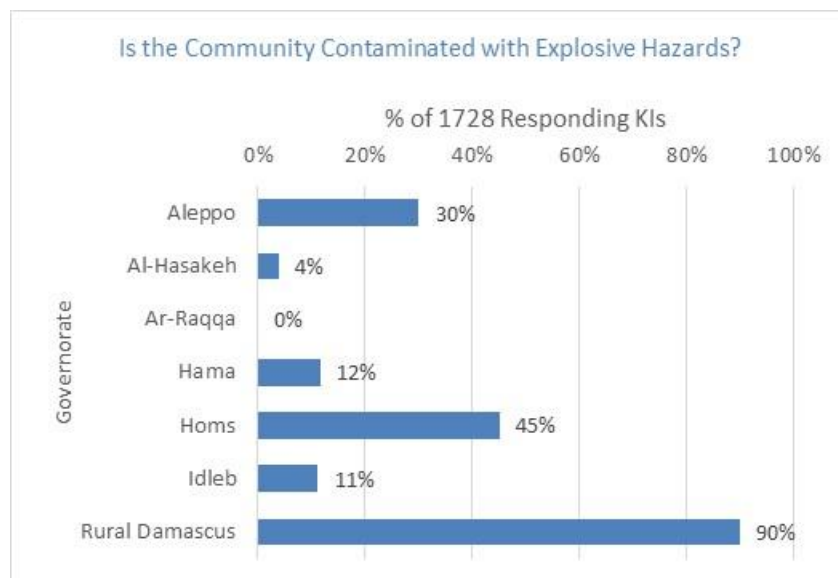
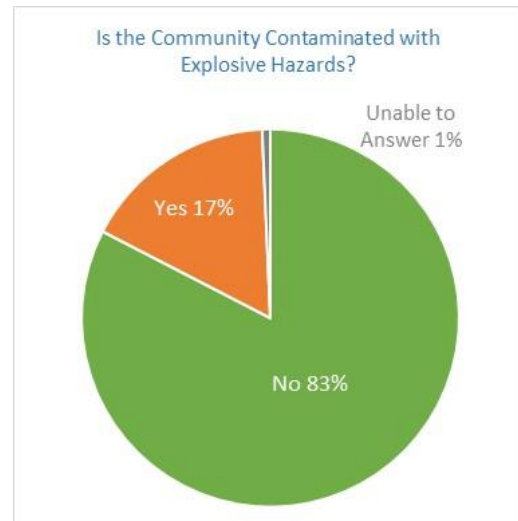


3.5 Explosive Hazards and Security Incidents

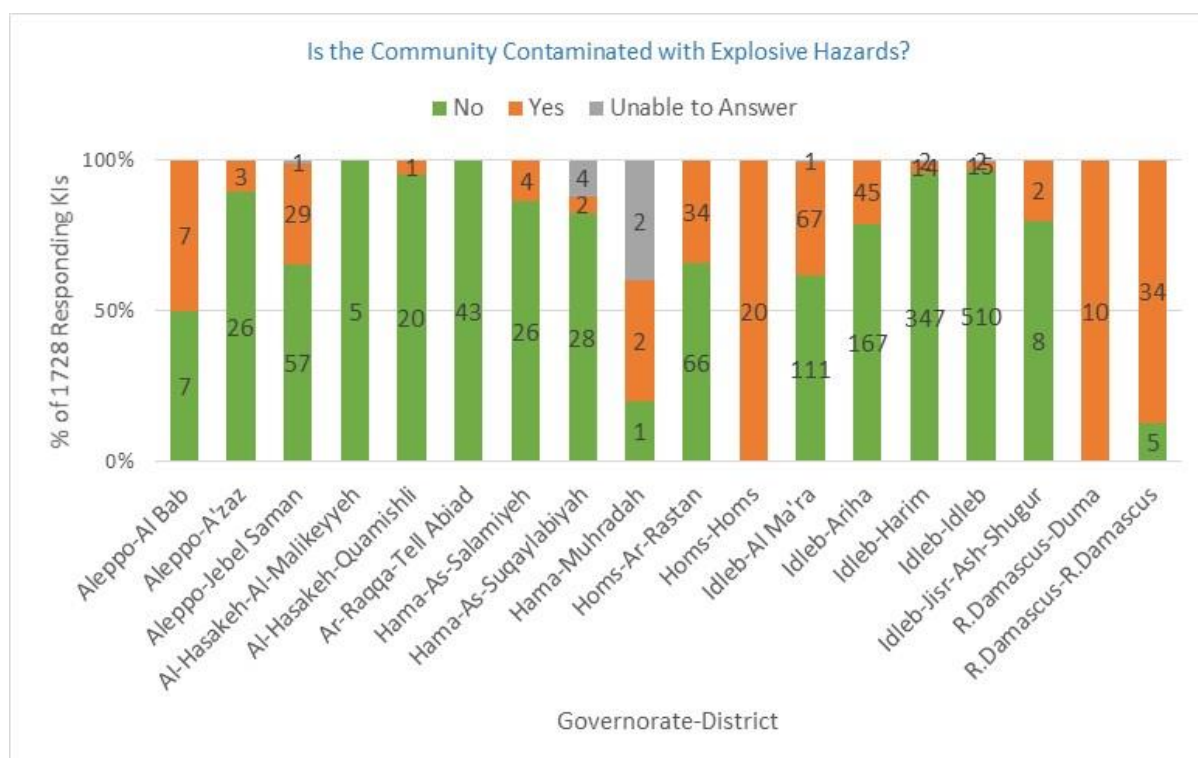
3.5.1 Explosive Hazards

Findings indicate that explosive hazards and security incidents continue to pose protection risks to communities covered in this report. 17% of 1,728 KIs stated that their community is contaminated with explosive hazards.

30-40% of KIs in the following locations stated that their community is contaminated with explosive hazards: Al Ma'ra district of Idleb, Ar-Rastan district of Homs, Jebel Saman district of Aleppo, and Muhradah district of Hama. 50% of KIs in Al Bab district of Aleppo, 87% of KIs in Rural Damascus district of Rural Damascus, and most notably 100% of KIs in Duma district of Rural Damascus and Homs district of Homs stated that their community is contaminated with explosive hazards.



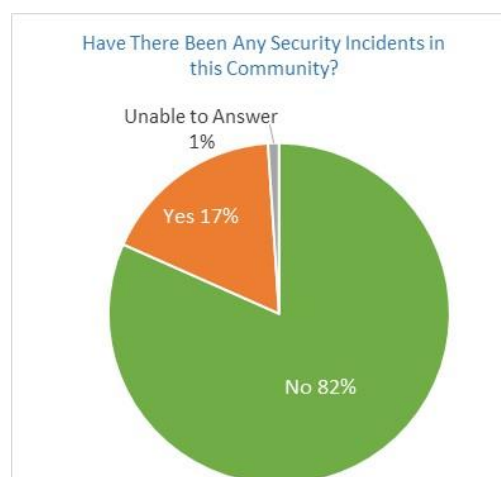
UNMAS findings for the reporting period (October-December 2017) are consistent with PMTF findings. UNMAS findings on the number of incidents involving explosive hazards during the time frame indicates that among the covered governorates, the highest number of incidents took place in Rural Damascus governorate (17,091) followed by, Aleppo governorate (8,816), Homs governorate (8,413), Hama governorate (6,394), Idleb governorate (3,507), Ar-Raqqa governorate (1,582) and Al Hasakeh governorate (1,495).



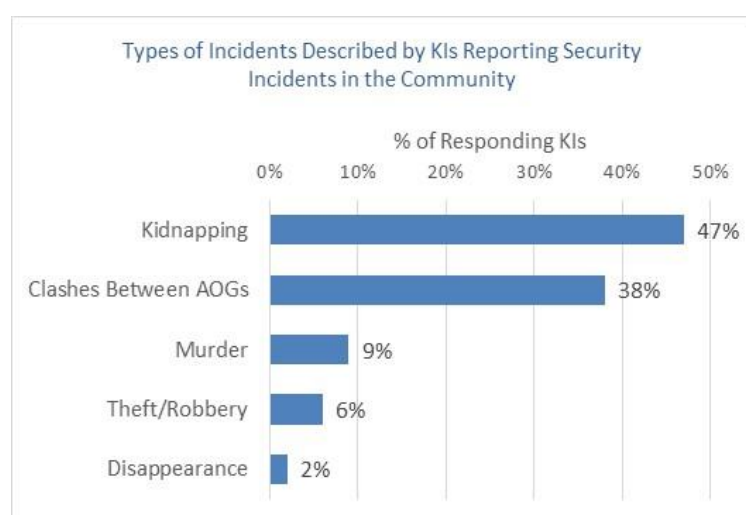
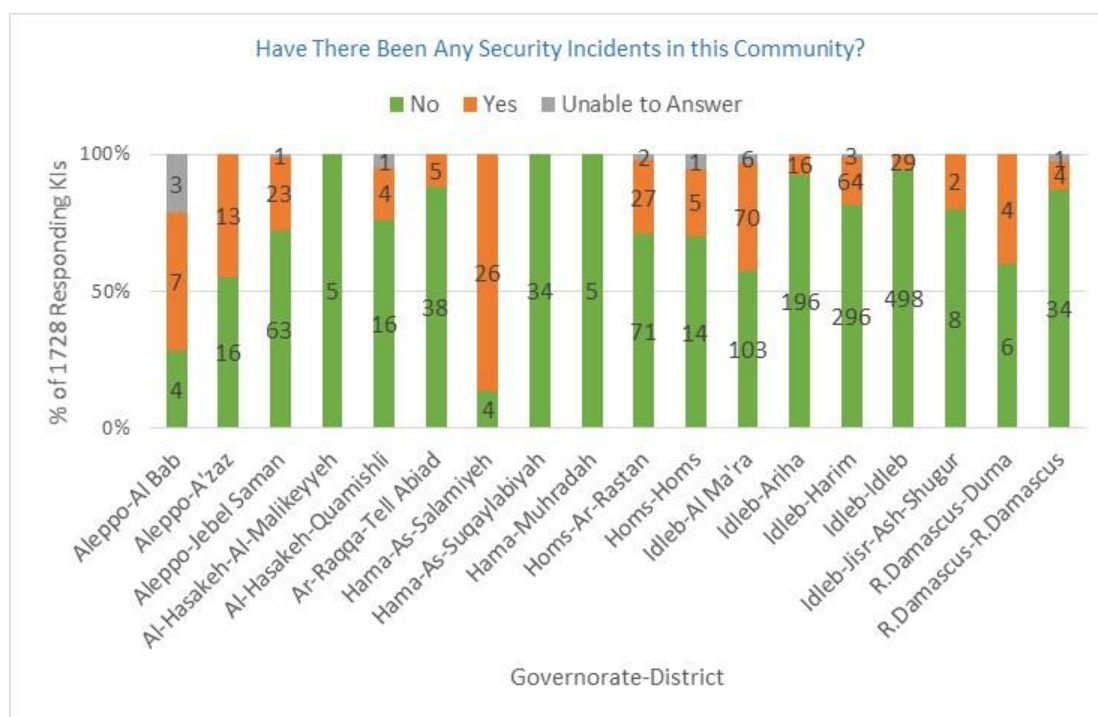
It should be noted, however, that this data does not identify or confirm exact locations contaminated with explosive hazards. It reflects the perceptions of KIs who participated in the survey, and cannot be generalized for the entire governorate, or for governorates not covered by monitoring. Humanitarian actors seeking data on risks in specific locations should contact UNMAS for information.

3.5.2 Security Incidents

The percentage of KIs stating that there had been security incidents in their community (such as clashes, kidnapping and disappearance, or extortion) in the previous three weeks is consistent with the findings of the previous reporting period. 17% of 1,728 KIs in this period stated that there had been security incidents in their community. Despite the Astana agreement signed in May between Iran, Russia and Turkey calling for the cessation of hostilities between the Syrian Armed Forces and armed opposition groups (AOGs) in four de-escalation zones, findings from the reporting period indicate that security incidents related to clashes and fighting continued in some locations. Around 40-45%



of KIs in Al Ma'ra district of Idleb, Al Bab and A'zaz districts of Aleppo, Duma district of Rural Damascus reported security incidents. 87% of KIs in As-Salamiyeh district of Hama reported security incidents in their communities. As emphasized in other findings of this report, the prevalence of security incidents affects numerous aspects of people's lives in conflict-affected communities, ranging from access to basic needs and services, freedom of movement, and decision to remain or leave.



Kidnappings are the most-mentioned security incident in this period, reported by 47% of 287 responding KIs. KIs explain that kidnappings take place for a variety of different reasons in the community, including for financial gain, such as extortion by ransom or robbery; for political retribution; and due to affiliation with an armed group. KIs have also described cases of kidnapped women and children.

Several people were kidnapped in the village and returned to their homes after paying the kidnappers (Male KII, Off-Camp, Idleb District, Idleb Governorate).

There are continuous kidnappings in some sections of the roads by thieves. Two days ago, an attempt was made to kidnap a person from his home. The residents of the neighborhood confronted them and the gang was resisted and expelled



(Male KII, Off-Camp, Harim District, Idlib Governorate).

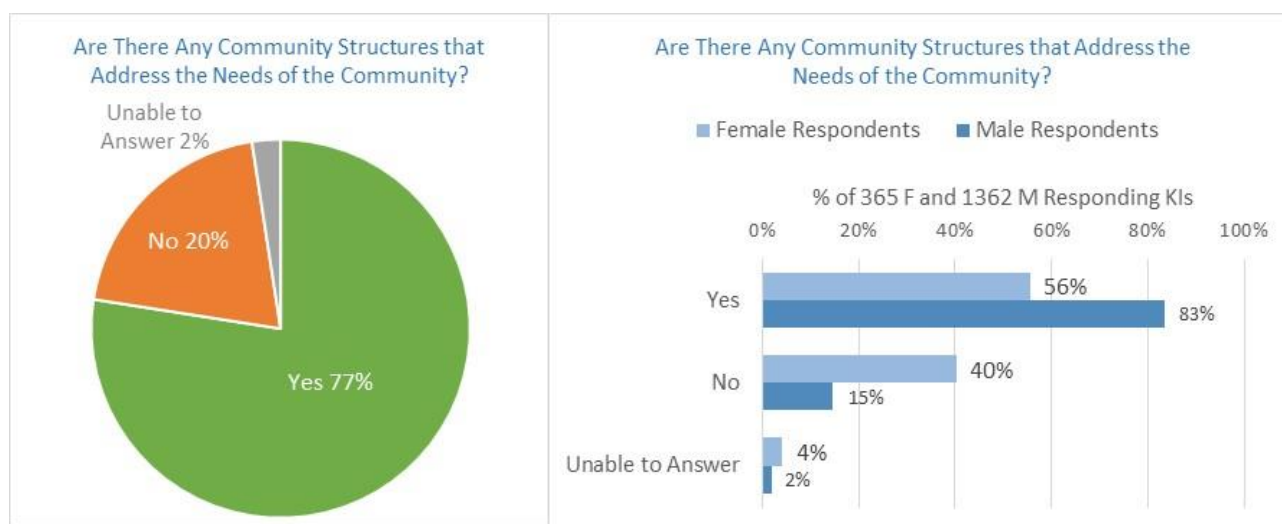
Girls have been kidnapped and taken to unknown places by ISIS (Male KII, Off-Camp, As-Salamiye District, Hama Governorate).

An Imam was kidnapped and killed (Male KII, Off-Camp, Idlib District, Idlib Governorate).

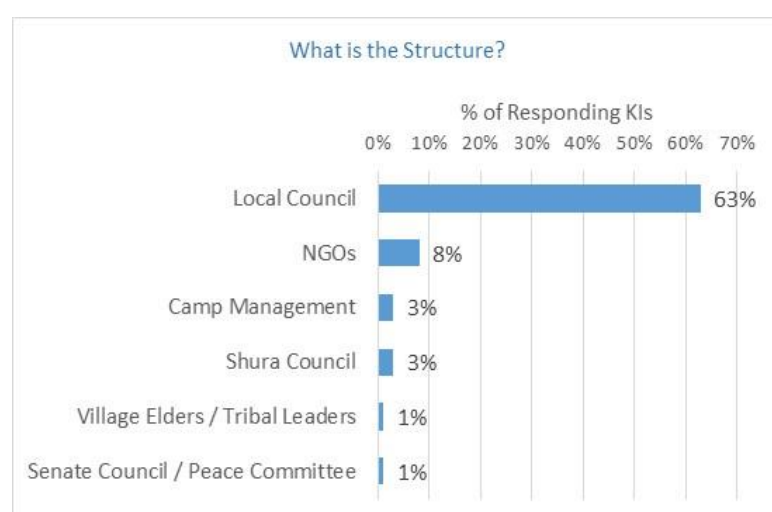
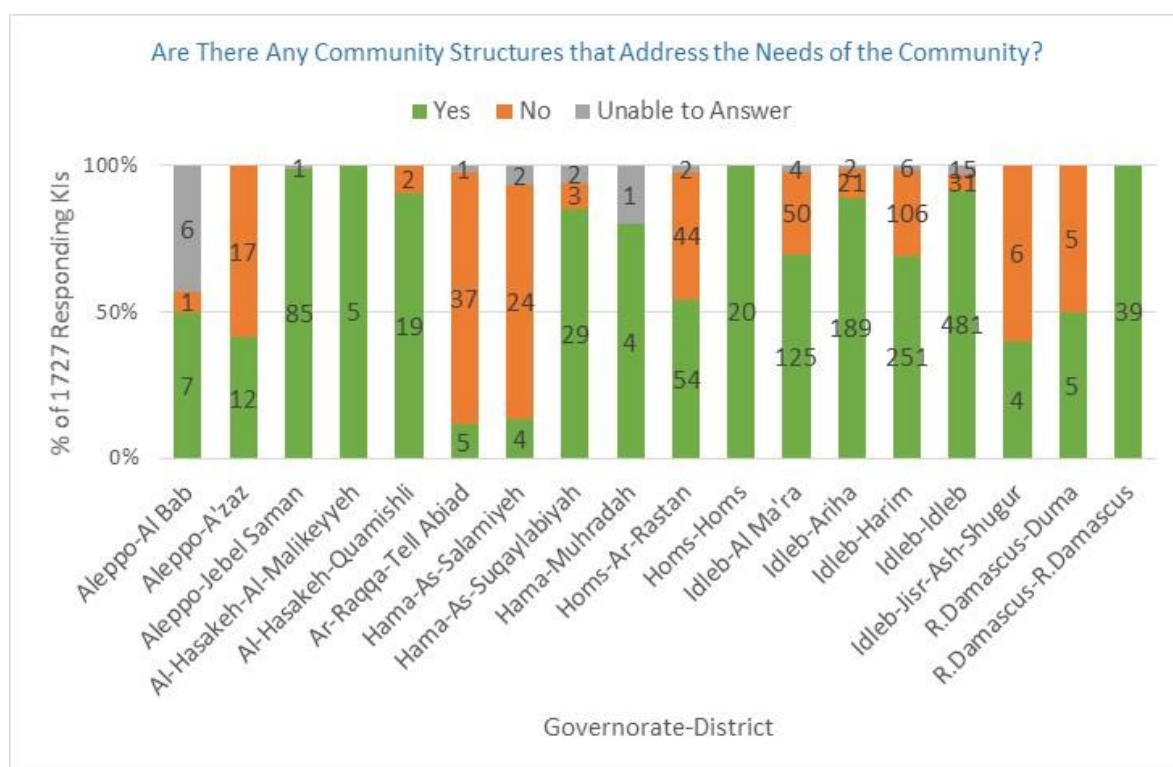
There are interfactional clashes and kidnapping of children (Female KII, Off-Camp, Harim District, Idlib Governorate).

There have been kidnappings of people with the aim of extortion, ransom or for personal ends (Female KII, Off-Camp, Ariha District, Idlib Governorate).

3.5.3 Community Structures

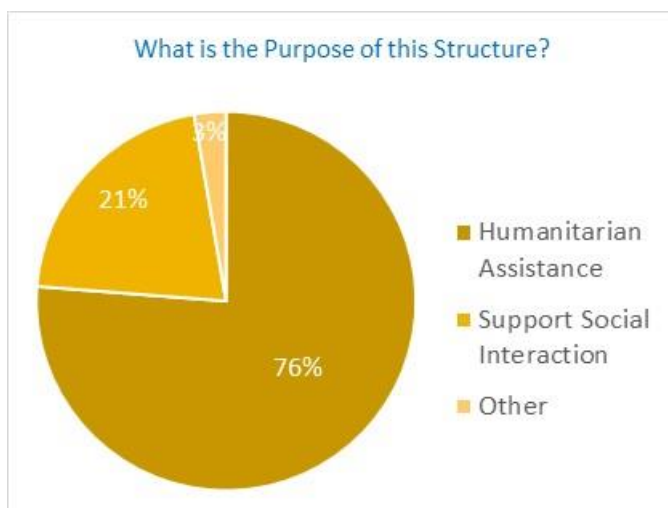


77% of KIs stated that there is a community structure, organization, association or group of leaders that meets or is organized to discuss and address issues and needs of the community. 20% of KIs stated that there is no such structure. Consistent with earlier findings, male KIs were again more likely than female KIs to state that there are community structures that address community issues and needs, once again indicating that women may not be receiving sufficient representation within existing community structures. The majority of KIs in the following locations stated that the community lacks structures that address issues and needs: A'zaz district of Aleppo governorate, As-Salamiyeh district of Hama governorate, and Jisr-Ash-Shugur district of Idleb governorate.



KIs identified humanitarian assistance to be the primary purpose of their community structures; 76% of 1,338 KIs identified this option, followed by support of social interaction at 21%. Male KIs were slightly more likely than female KIs to state humanitarian assistance and female KIs were more likely than male KIs to state that these structures support social interaction. Both in-camp and off-

camp key informants responded similarly to this question.



KIs were asked to describe their community structures and their work. Of 1,264 key informants, the majority mentioned local councils, followed by NGOs, camp management, shura councils, village elders or tribal leaders and senate councils or peace committees. NGOs were described in the context of their coordination with local councils, mainly for the organization and distribution of humanitarian assistance.

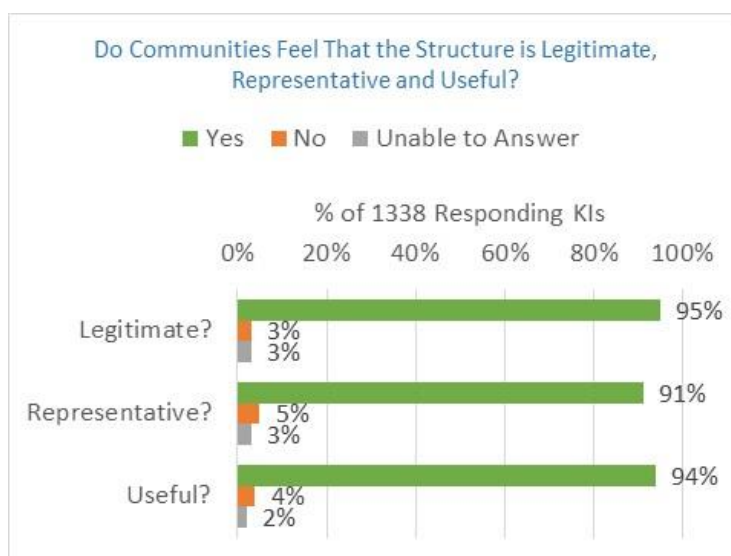
Different communities refer to their local structures in different ways, including as shura councils, senate councils or peace committees. Responses indicate, however,

that despite their different names, these are similar structures composed of community leaders and influential individuals who are highly regarded by community members and who aim to discuss and resolve issues experienced by the community. Findings also indicate that these additional and smaller structures often coordinate with and support the local councils.

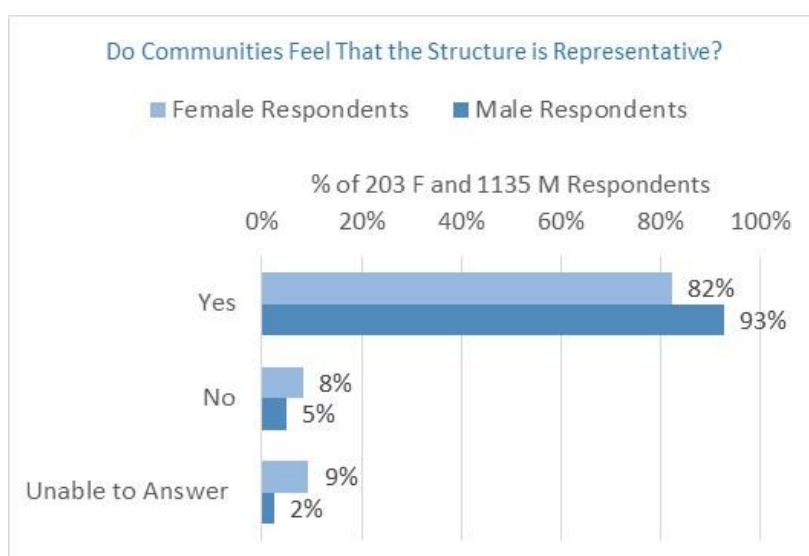
The Shura Council, which is composed of the families of the village, plays an important role in supporting the village's public life (Male KII, Off-Camp, Ariha District, Idleb Governorate).

The Senate council consists of ten people of important and influential personalities in our village. It is based on solving the problems of the village in general and taking care of its affairs. It supervises the formation of local council offices and monitors their work (Male, Off-Camp, As-Suqaylabiyah District, Hama Governorate).

A group of dignitaries working to spread peace, solve problems and conflicts in the village and cooperate with the local council (Female KII, Off-Camp, Jebel Saman District, Aleppo Governorate).



While some KIs stated that local structures are perceived to be legitimate, representative and useful by community members, others did not. In A'zaz district of Aleppo governorate for example, 36% of key informants stated that community members do not feel that their community structures are legitimate, representative or useful. Similar findings are indicated for Al Malikeyyeh district of Al Hasakeh governorate, where 40% of KIs stated that community members do not feel that the structure is legitimate or useful, and 60% of key informants stated that the structure is not perceived to be representative.

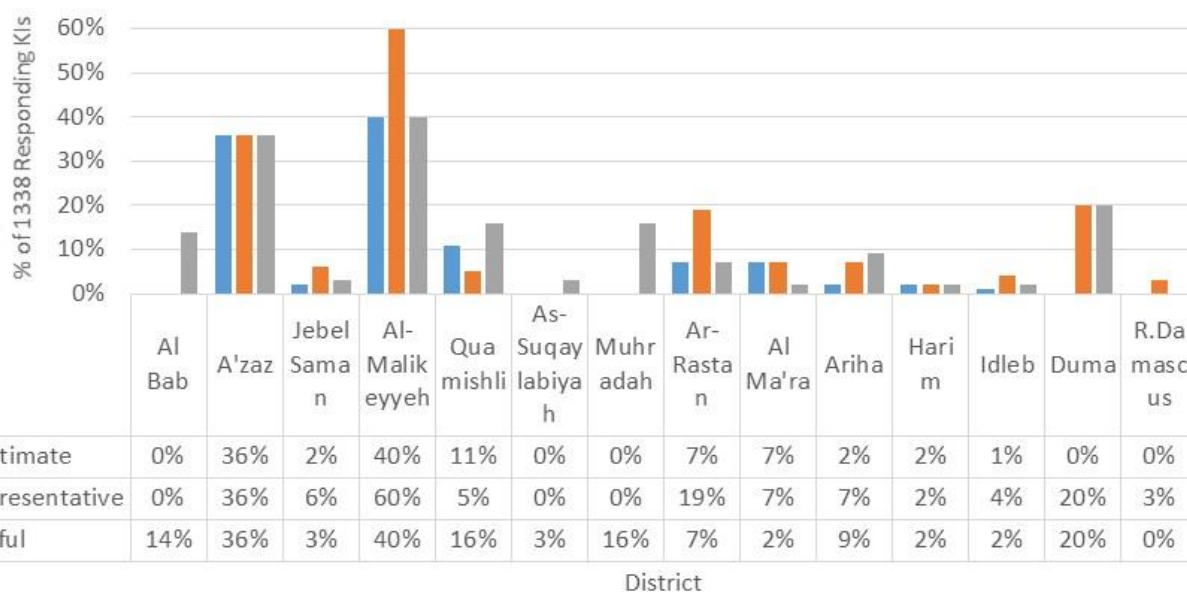


Female KIs were slightly less likely than male KIs to state that community structures are representative. Although it is recognized that humanitarian actors do not and cannot have influence in equal representation of women in local governance structures, they can encourage the participation of women and girls in community-level, social initiatives and projects which will give female community members opportunities to contribute to and be

represented by their communities. Furthermore, considering that some local NGOs coordinate

Percentage of Responding KIs per Location Stating that Community Structures Are Perceived to Be Not Legitimate, Not Representative or Not Useful

■ Not Legitimate ■ Not Representative ■ Not Useful



humanitarian activities with local councils on a systematic and regular basis, advocacy for equal gender representation and access can help sensitize local community structures to issues affecting women and girls.



78% of 1,338 KIs stated that the community structure receives other type of support, 13% stated that it receives material support, 5% stated that it receives financial support and 4% stated that it receives capacity building support.

Conclusion

In terms of political and security-related developments, during the October - December 2017 reporting period, humanitarian actors and persons of concern continued to experience many challenges. Due to the military operations and clashes in Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqah and Idleb and the resulting IDP movement, particularly to Idleb governorate, it has been necessary to incorporate a growing number of people-in-need into humanitarian programming. Conflict-affected communities' reliance on humanitarian assistance for survival continues and requires sustained funding. It is critical to ensure that services are integrated, durable, sustainable, long-term, and community-based. The following new or ongoing protection issues have emerged that require the attention of the humanitarian community during this period.

The lack of civil status documentation continues to be a significant factor for conflict-affected communities. In Northwest Syria-- areas not under the control of the GoS-- the inability to travel to GoS areas for the issuance of official documents remains the primary factor, although the presence of entities/institutions issuing non-GoS documentation in Idleb offers alternative methods of documentation to communities. Dispute resolution mechanisms vary depending on geographical location, existing structures, traditions of the community and preferences based on gender. While the overall relationship between IDPs and host communities continue to be positive, competition for jobs and high cost of living strain this relationship, particularly in locations hosting a large number of IDPs. Both host communities and IDPs in Idleb communities perceive unfairness in job opportunities offered by local humanitarian organizations. Therefore, in cases where NGOs and INGOs are significant sources of employment and income in communities, it is recommended that they offer, to the extent possible, proportionate employment opportunities to both groups and improve their own understanding of how they are perceived by the community in regards to employment practices.

In most of the communities covered in this report, the majority of KIs stated that children are attending school. Access to health remains a significant issue that affects all communities, albeit some communities such as As-Suqaylabiyah, Hama more than others. Lack of services in the area and inability to afford transportation and health services are the primary contributors. Availability of specialized services for persons with disabilities remains an on-going gap. The majority of key informants note that community members purchase water; however, the issue of access due to the high cost of water only applies to communities in off-camp locations, as all camps and some off-camp communities receive free water distribution through NGO water tanks. Humanitarian actors providing water however are requested to ensure that the water quantity is sufficient and that the water is unpolluted and clean. Access to humanitarian assistance also continues to be a relevant issue due to an unclear distribution process. Humanitarian actors are recommended to pursue and continue their information sharing activities in communities for general community awareness of distribution protocols. WASH support, specifically support to communities in building proper and hygienic latrines, as well as health care support to communities experiencing health risks caused by lack of or the existence of improper latrines, is requested.



Most particularly in communities in Idleb governorate, insufficient shelter, crowded shelters and protection risks that emerge from these conditions, particularly for women and girls, represent ongoing gaps. Humanitarian actors are recommended to continue their efforts in increasing shelter stock, and also in improving the quality of shelters and the general shelter conditions in communities hosting large numbers of IDPs.

Communities also continue to implement negative coping mechanisms in their efforts to manage displacement circumstances and survival challenges affecting their families. Nearly half of key informants stated that children in the community are affected by risk of violence and exploitation. Children continue to experience separation from their families. The majority of key informants state that children are engaged in child labor in the community. The negative coping mechanism of early marriage, particularly for girls, continues to be identified as a practice common in many communities.

The majority of key informants note that both men and women are free to move in the community. In cases of restricted freedom of movement, security concerns are the primary factor, reportedly affecting men more than women. Tradition is a factor that impacts women's freedom of movement and has no impact on men's freedom of movement.

Communities covered by this report are locations that experience both influx and departure of IDPs, with significant portions of key informants in each community indicating that IDPs in the community do not wish to live in their current locations. The decision to stay or leave is impacted by different factors, many related to economic conditions and opportunities.

Despite de-escalation initiatives in the areas covered, monitoring indicates that security incidents continue to impact communities, with clashes and incidents taking place in nearly every district covered during the reporting period, and most notably in communities in Aleppo and Hama. Incidents involving explosive hazards take place in considerable numbers, particularly in Rural Damascus governorate. Communities are also affected by non-generalized criminal incidents, such as kidnappings.

Between October and December 2017, except for A'zaz in Aleppo, Tell Abiad in Ar Raqqa, Jisr-Ash-Shugur in Idleb and As-Salamiyyeh in Hama, the majority of key informants noted the presence of a community structure that meets their needs. This structure was mostly often identified as the local council, and its purpose primarily as humanitarian assistance. However, some communities, such as in A'zaz of Aleppo and Al Malikeyye of Al-Hasakeh perceive the community structure as not being legitimate, representative or useful. There continues to be a slight difference between the perceived representations of community structures between genders. Female key informants find community structures less representative, suggesting that greater awareness and efforts on issues impacting women in the community is needed and if possible, must be advocated for with these community structures.



Acronyms

CAAFAG	Children associated with armed forces or armed groups
FGD	Focus group discussions
HLP	Housing, land, and property
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
IDP	Internally displaced people
INGO	International non-governmental organization
KI	Key informant
KII	Key informant interview
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PMTF	Protection Monitoring Task Force
PNO	Protection Needs Overview
UASC	Unaccompanied and separated children
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
WASH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene

