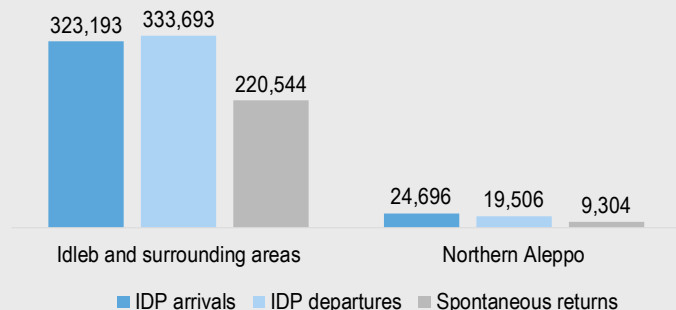


IDP Situation Monitoring Initiative (ISMI)

Quarterly Trends Analysis of Displacement and Spontaneous Returns in Northern Syria, January - March 2018

Key Findings¹

Communities Assessed:	619 ²
Total IDP Departures:	353,199 ³
Total IDP Arrivals: ⁴	347,889 ⁵
Total Spontaneous Returns (SRs): ⁶	229,848



Summary of Findings⁷

Idleb and Surrounding Areas

Assessed communities in Idleb governorate and surrounding areas witnessed a total of 323,193 IDP arrivals between 1 January and 31 March 2018, almost half (48%) of which occurred in January due to sustained levels of conflict, predominantly in south-east Idleb, north-east Hama and south-west Aleppo. IDP movements were reported from south-eastern parts of the region to sub-districts in the north that were further away from conflict lines. After a decrease in violence, large return movements (220,554 SRs) were reported in February and March in assessed communities in south-eastern sub-districts that had previously seen large IDP departures. Cross-line displacements in March from Eastern Ghouta, Rural Damascus governorate, also contributed to substantial arrivals to the region.

Northern Aleppo Region⁸

Assessed communities in northern Aleppo witnessed 24,696 IDP arrivals, 51% of which occurred in March after escalation of conflict in Afrin district. In addition, 9,304 SRs were reported to the region between January and March. A majority (86%) of these were former refugees.

Major Developments

- Despite the declaration categorising Idleb governorate and surrounding areas as a “de-escalation zone”,⁹ the region has seen an escalation in conflict since November 2017. Clashes between armed opposition groups (AOGs) and Government of Syria (GoS) forces intensified in south-east Idleb, north-east Hama and south-west Aleppo and continued into February 2018, before decreasing in intensity after 10 February. On 20 February, levels of violence briefly increased again after the outbreak of hostilities between different AOGs in Idleb governorate.
- On 20 January 2018, a military operation was launched in Afrin district, leading to sustained levels of violence throughout the coverage period. Due to these clashes, Bab El Hawa and Bab Al Salam border crossings were temporarily closed on 20 January. The UN resumed cross-border deliveries from Bab El Hawa on 1 February.¹⁰ In early March, conflict further escalated in Afrin district, leading to large IDP departures, including to northern Aleppo.
- Due to local agreements in Eastern Ghouta, large numbers of cross-line displacements were tracked starting from February, mostly to Idleb and surrounding areas.¹¹

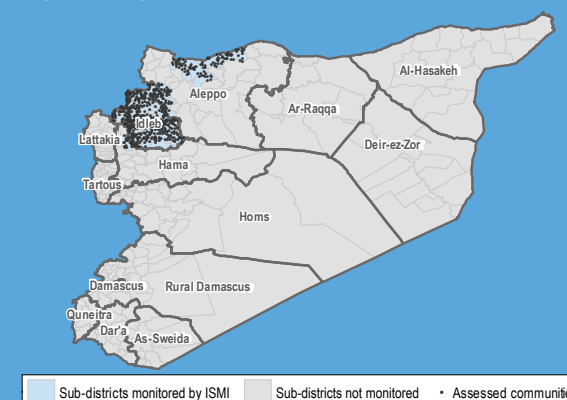
About ISMI & This Report

The IDP Situation Monitoring Initiative (ISMI) is an initiative of the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster, implemented by REACH and supported by cluster members.

Following a baseline assessment conducted at the end of 2016, weekly/biweekly data collection cycles were initiated. This factsheet presents an overview of reported inward and outward movements of IDPs from 1 January to 31 March 2018. Such displacements were reported in 619 communities in sub-districts monitored by ISMI. ISMI monitoring coverage varies over time depending on access. Displacements are identified through an extensive key informant (KI) network, either from alerts initiated by KIs or from follow-up by enumerators. At least two KIs are interviewed in each assessed community, and collected information is further triangulated through other sources, including CCCM member data and humanitarian updates. This approach allows for regular updates on IDP movements at the community level across sub-districts monitored by ISMI in north Syria.

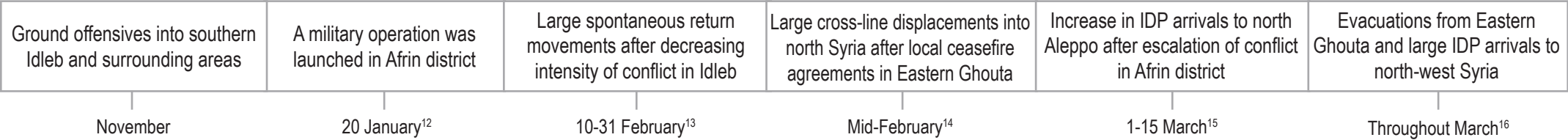
The data used for this product was collected, triangulated and verified based on submissions from ISMI's network and select CCCM cluster members following the ISMI methodology. Due to differences in methodology and coverage, figures presented in this output may differ from official CCCM Cluster or UNHCR data. All data is for humanitarian use only.

Coverage, January - March 2018



OVERVIEW

Figure 1: Timeline of key events, January - March 2018



Maps 1-3: IDP arrivals to assessed communities in sub-districts monitored by ISMI, January - March 2018

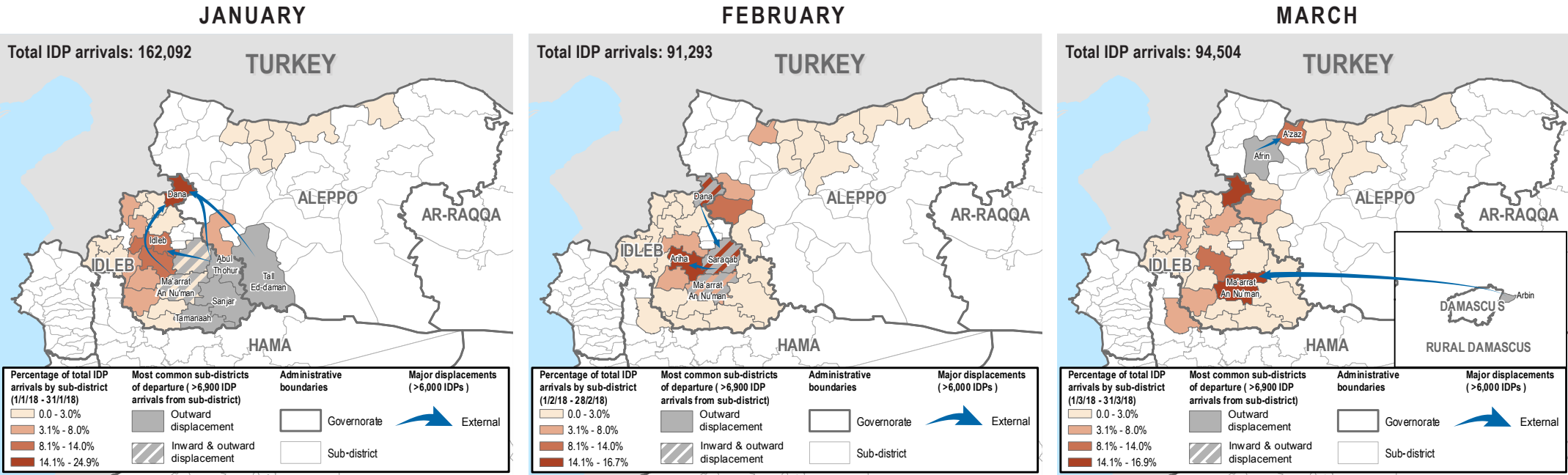
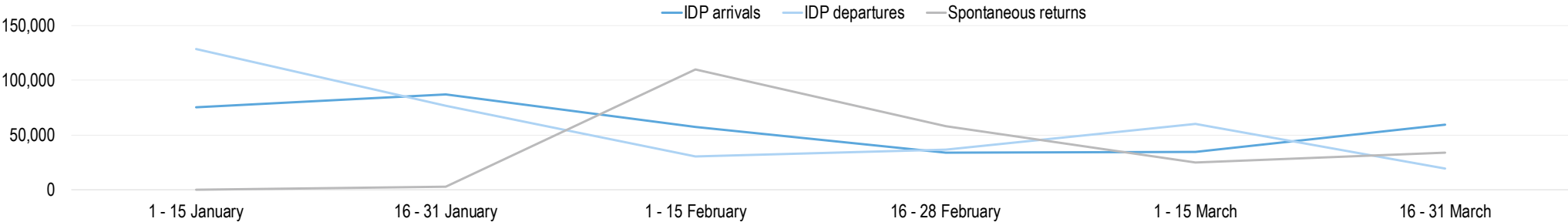
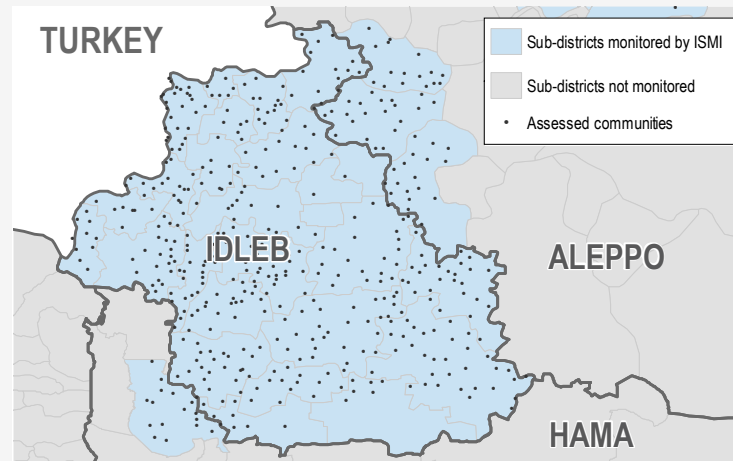


Figure 2: Timeline of new arrivals, departures and spontaneous returns to communities assessed by ISMI, January - March 2018



IDLEB & SURROUNDING AREAS

Map 4: Coverage in Idleb and surrounding areas, January - March 2018



Communities Assessed:
504

IDP Arrivals:
323,193

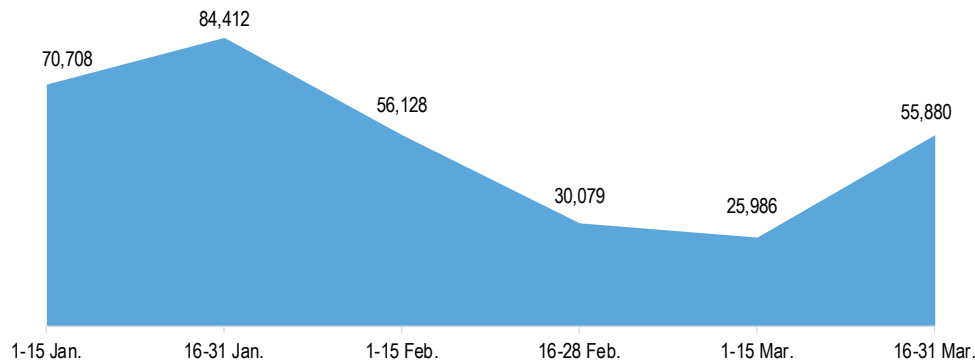
IDP Departures:
333,693

SRs:
220,544

IDP Arrivals

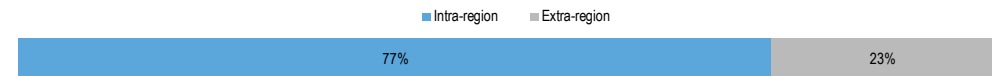
Between January and March 2018, assessed communities in Idleb governorate and surrounding areas¹⁷ witnessed a total of 323,193 IDP arrivals, accounting for 93% of reported arrivals in north-west Syria in this time period. A total of 155,120 of these took place in January and were driven by sustained levels of conflict in south-east Idleb, north-east Hama and south-west Aleppo following a GoS-allied forces' ground offensive into the region from November 2017.

Figure 3: Timeline of IDP arrivals to assessed communities in Idleb and surrounding areas, January - March 2018



In February, IDP arrivals to assessed communities in Idleb and surrounding areas decreased significantly (-44%) in comparison to the previous month to 86,207. This decline concurred with overall decreasing levels of conflict within the area as of 10 February, when three ceasefire observation posts along the frontlines in southern Aleppo, as well as eastern and southern Idleb were fully established.¹⁸ After notable decreases in the first half of March (25,986), reported IDP arrivals increased again in the second half of March (55,880), which was likely due to cross-line displacements most commonly from Eastern Ghouta and the wider Rural Damascus governorate.

Figure 4: Intra- vs. extra-region arrivals to assessed communities in Idleb and surrounding areas, January - March 2018



Of 323,193 IDP arrivals to assessed communities in Idleb and surrounding areas throughout the first quarter of 2018, a total of 234,830 IDPs (73%) reportedly arrived from elsewhere within the region. The number was highest in January (133,835), representing 84% of overall IDP arrivals to the region in January. In addition, 68,849 IDP arrivals were reported to Idleb and surrounding areas from outside the region throughout the coverage period. The highest number of IDP arrivals from outside the region occurred in the second half of March, accounting for 73% of overall IDP arrivals in this time period. An estimated 48% (33,166 IDPs) of these had departed from communities in Arbin sub-district, Rural Damascus governorate, which can be linked to cross-line displacements from previously besieged areas in Eastern Ghouta.

Figure 5: Main sub-district level IDP movements in Idleb and surrounding areas, January - March 2018

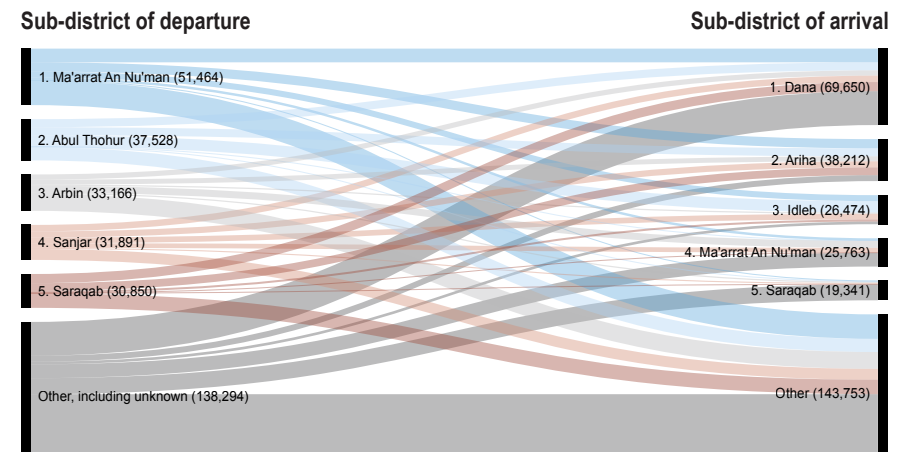
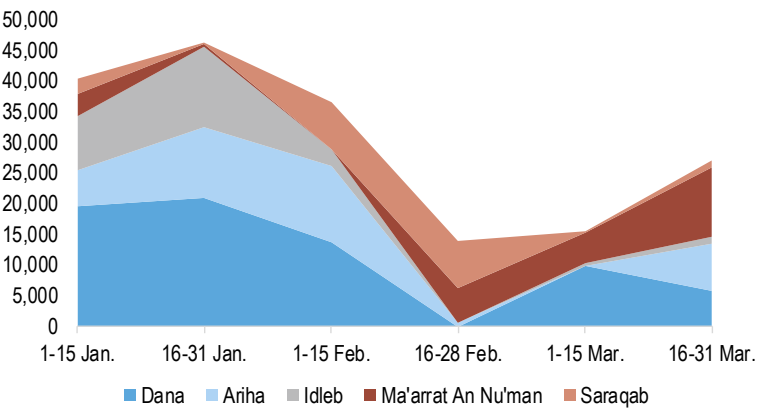


Figure 5 shows all IDP arrivals to assessed communities in Idleb and surrounding areas throughout the coverage period along with their last places of departure.¹⁹ As shown, this reporting period has seen significant **IDP movements from south-eastern parts of Idleb governorate**, including Ma'arrat An Nu'man, Abul Thohur, Sanjar and Saraqab sub-districts, **to sub-districts in the north further away from conflict lines**. Dana sub-district, for example, received 22% of all assessed IDP arrivals in the region during the coverage period. An estimated 18% of IDPs arriving to Dana came from Ma'arrat An Nu'man. Arbin sub-district was also a common last place of departure for arrivals, mostly due to evacuations between 15 and 31 March.

Figure 6: Timeline of IDP arrivals to assessed communities in the five monitored sub-districts in Idleb and surrounding areas with highest IDP arrivals, January - March 2018



From January to March, an estimated 27% of all IDP arrivals to the region were to assessed communities in Dana, Ariha, Idleb, Ma'arrat An Nu'man and Saraqab sub-districts (86,650). Of these sub-districts, Dana reportedly received most IDP arrivals, particularly in January (40,423).

The decline in IDP arrivals from January to March can also explain why **Ma'arrat An Nu'man and Saraqab sub-districts**, both in closer proximity to conflict lines, **witnessed more IDP arrivals in February and March than in January**, as IDPs moved to the sub-district along with returning residents. Indeed, 20,867 IDPs arrived to Ma'arrat An Nu'man and Saraqab sub-districts in February and March from other locations within the region. **Separately, cross-line displacements from Rural Damascus governorate contributed to high IDP arrivals in March in both Ma'arrat An Nu'man and Saraqab sub-districts.**

On a community level (Figure 7), 6 of the 10 assessed communities with the largest IDP arrivals throughout the assessment period were in Dana, two in Idleb and one each in Ma'arrat An Nu'man and Ariha sub-districts. Among these, the community of Qah, Dana sub-district, had the largest total IDP arrivals, with significant arrival numbers in January (7,279 IDPs), February (5,483 IDPs) and March (3,278 IDPs). Arrival numbers to Qah in January reflect the general trend of IDPs moving to communities and sites further

away from conflict lines, including also Sarmada, Ariha and Atmeh communities.

Figure 7: Assessed communities in Idleb and surrounding areas with most IDP arrivals, January - March 2018

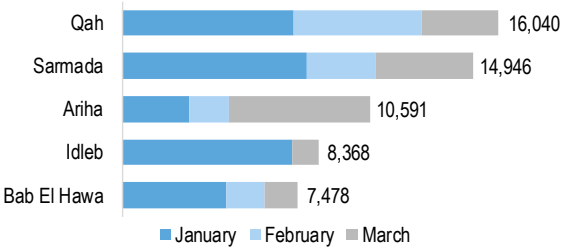


Figure 8 shows the largest community-to-community displacements tracked by ISMI throughout the assessment period. The movements, particularly in the second half of March, reflect the **cross-line displacements from previously besieged opposition-held enclaves in Rural Damascus**. Large IDP arrivals were reported from Arbin community to various destinations in Idleb and surrounding areas.

Figure 8: Largest displacements to assessed communities in Idleb and surrounding areas, January - March 2018

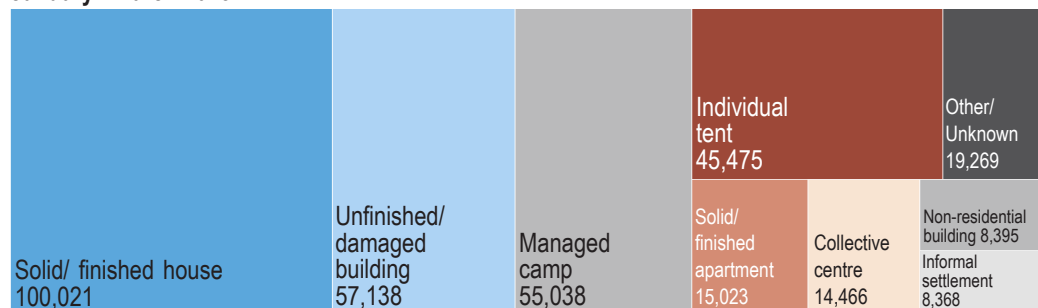
Departure community (governorate):	Total IDPs:	Arrival community (sub-district)	Coverage period:
Arbin (Rural Damascus)	4,571	Ma'arrat An Nu'man (Ma'arrat An Nu'man)	16 - 31 Mar.
Abul Thohur (Idleb)	3,420	Idleb (Idleb)	16 - 31 Jan.
Arbin (Rural Damascus)	3,306	Ariha (Ariha)	16 - 31 Mar.
Arbin (Rural Damascus)	2,274	Atareb (Atareb)	16 - 31 Mar.
Daret Azza (Daret Azza)	1,853	Sarmada (Dana)	1 - 15 Mar.
Ma'arrat An Nu'man (Aleppo)	1,853	Qah (Dana)	1 - 15 Feb.
Arbin (Rural Damascus)	1,710	Betiya (Salqin)	16 - 31 Mar.
Tall Ed-Daman (Aleppo)	1,710	Sarmada (Dana)	16 - 31 Jan.

Figure 9: Percentage of communities reporting priority needs of arriving IDPs, January - March 2018

	Shelter	Food	NFIs	Winterisation or equivalent	Safety and security	Health	Water	Hygiene	Education
1st	28%	27%	19%	12%	7%	5%	1%	0%	0%
2nd	8%	33%	32%	15%	1%	5%	5%	1%	1%
3rd	7%	24%	28%	18%	1%	13%	3%	3%	2%

The most commonly reported top priority needs of new arrivals to assessed communities in Idleb and surrounding areas were shelter, food and NFI support. Food and NFI support were also among the top three secondary and tertiary priority needs, alongside winterisation or equivalent.

Figure 10: Shelter types of IDP arrivals to assessed communities in Idleb and surrounding areas, January - March 2018



One third of all IDP arrivals (100,021 IDPs) were estimated to reside in solid/finished houses. The next most common shelter types were unfinished/damaged buildings (57,138 IDPs), managed camps (55,038 IDPs) and individual tents (45,475 IDPs).

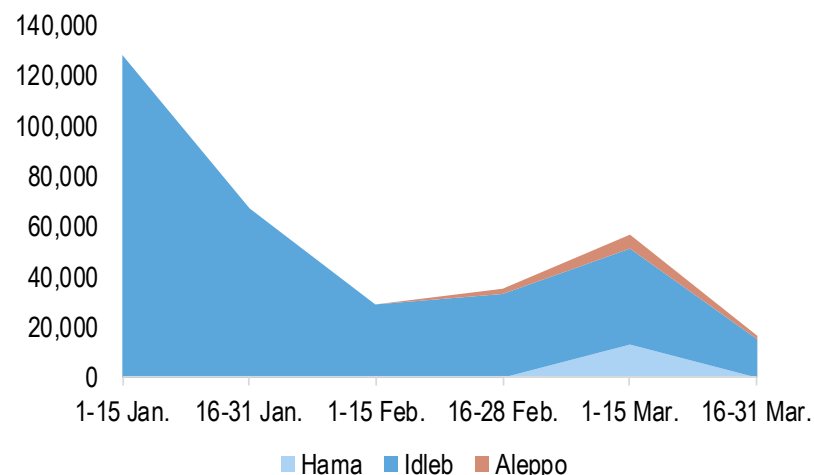
More than half (51%) of reported IDP arrivals in Idleb governorate and surrounding areas were **hosted without rent (138,171 IDPs)**. In addition, a significant number of people (73,800 IDPs) were reportedly paying rent, while an estimated 44,780 IDPs were reported to own their shelter.

The significant amount of IDP arrivals from areas outside the region between 15 and 31 March reported specific shelter and tenancy needs. In the case of IDP arrivals to Ma'arrat An Nu'man sub-district from Arbin community, Rural Damascus governorate, priority needs were food, followed by safety and security as well as shelter. In Dana sub-district, reported priority needs were shelter, followed by healthcare. The difference in needs might be explained by the different shelter settings across the two sub-districts. In Ma'arrat An Nu'man, almost half of new IDPs found shelter in solid/finished houses. In Dana, on the contrary, 77% of arrivals were to managed camps, suggesting a significant strain on shelter response in the sub-district.

IDP Departures

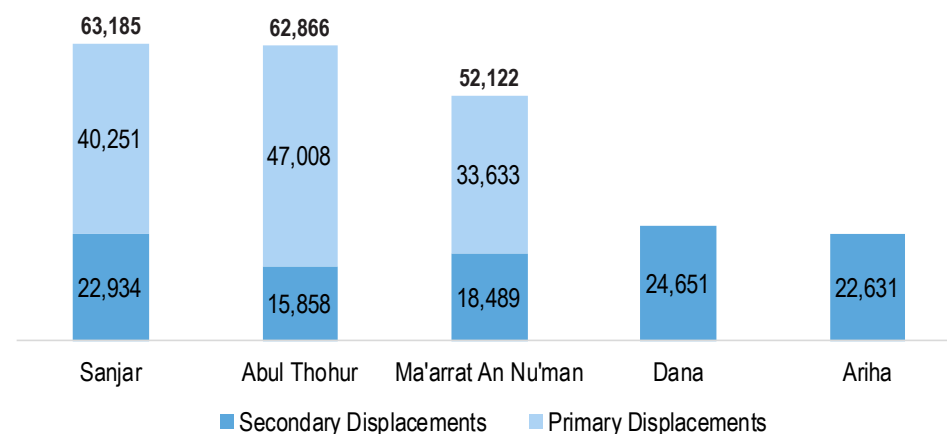
Out of a total of **333,693 IDP departures from assessed communities** in Idleb governorate and surrounding areas between January and March, **93% of IDPs departed from within Idleb governorate itself.** A vast majority of these left in January (59%, representing 195,789 IDPs), particularly in the first half of the month (Figure 11). This is in line with high IDP arrivals to assessed communities in Idleb governorate and surrounding areas in the same period, as a majority of IDPs arrived from communities within the region. In addition, ongoing hostilities in south-eastern Idleb governorate likely contributed to high IDP departures during the same time and a relative stabilisation of IDP departures after 10 February, when levels of violence decreased.

Figure 11: IDP departures from assessed communities in Idleb and surrounding areas by governorate, January - March 2018



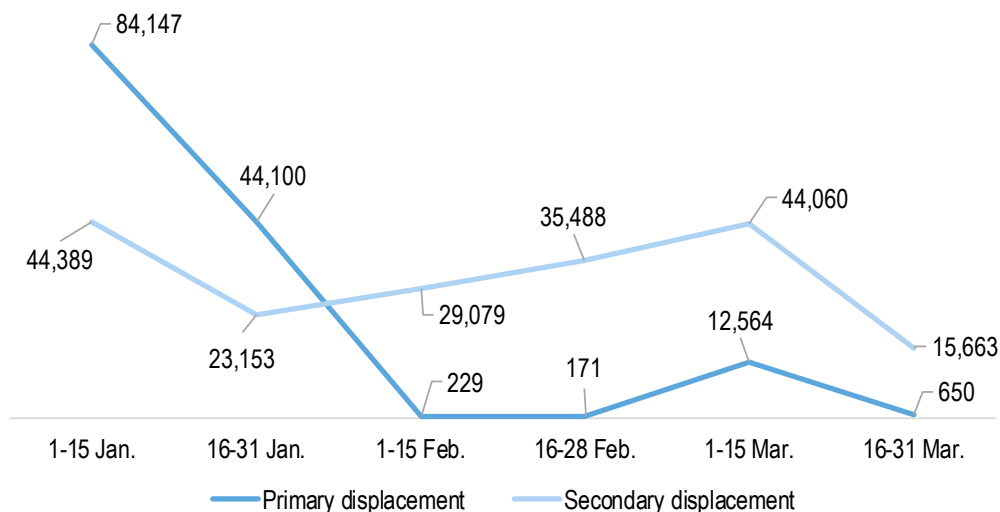
Of the 333,693 IDP departures, 43% were primary and 57% secondary displacements.²⁰ In Idleb governorate, 58% of departures between January and March were secondary displacements, while 66% of all reported IDP departures in January were primary displacements, which is attributable to high levels of conflict during that month. The overall high number of secondary displacements is likely due to generally high proportions of IDP populations in assessed communities in Idleb governorate that moved on to communities further away from conflict lines. Indeed, more than a third of Idleb's population is comprised of IDPs, who are present in approximately 96% of populated communities in the governorate.²¹

Figure 12: Top 5 sub-districts of departures in Idleb and surrounding areas, January - March 2018



Sanjar, Abul Thohur and Ma'arrat An Nu'man sub-districts witnessed the highest number of departures, a majority of which were primary displacements. The close proximity of these three sub-districts to conflict lines likely affected both IDP and host community populations, thereby explaining high primary displacement. KIs in Dana and Ariha sub-districts, on the contrary, did not report any primary displacement. This is likely because Dana and Ariha sub-districts were further removed from conflict lines in the north of the region and host large IDP populations.

Figure 13: Primary displacement from sub-districts with most IDP departures in Idlib and surrounding areas, January - March 2018

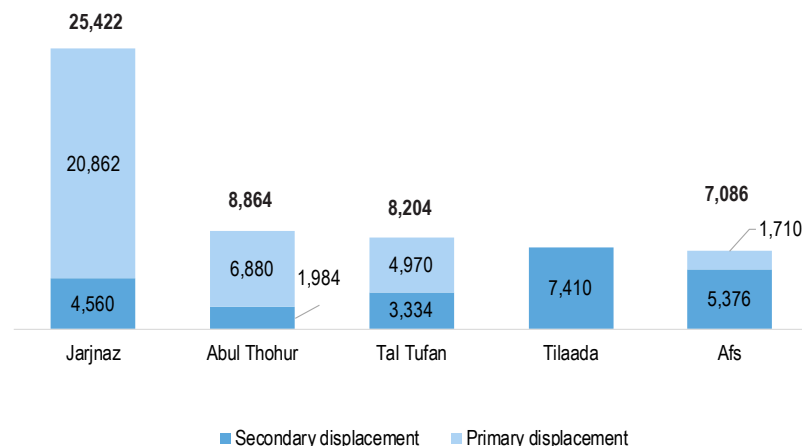


All primary displacements from sub-districts with most IDP departures were in January. The same three sub-districts, Sanjar, Abul Thohur and Ma'arrat An Nu'man, broadly followed similar displacement patterns in terms of secondary displacements, which suggests that **levels of violence until 10 February equally affected primary and secondary displacement from these sub-districts**. Secondary displacement from Dana and Ariha sub-districts began to increase significantly in February. A majority of IDPs from Dana reportedly intended to go to Ma'arrat An Nu'man (32%), Saraqab (29%) and Abul Thohur sub-districts (19%). This suggests that IDPs from southern Idlib governorate most likely moved to Dana and Ariha sub-districts in the north of the region in January before starting to move back to southern Idlib sub-districts after levels of conflict decreased starting on 10 February.

Of the five communities (Figure 14) that witnessed the largest departure numbers, four are in south-eastern sub-districts with only Afs community being in the north of the region (Dana sub-district). Reflecting

the situation at sub-district level, **most departures from south-eastern communities were primary displacements**. While 33% of all departing residents reportedly intended to go to Dana sub-district (out of which 12% reportedly intended to go to Atma community), a significant number intended to leave to sub-districts and communities in the south-east of the region. Ma'arrat An Nu'man (8%) and Idlib (5%) sub-districts as well as Ma'arrat An Nu'man (6%) and Idlib communities (5%) - both major urban sites - were reported as common intended destinations for departing residents.

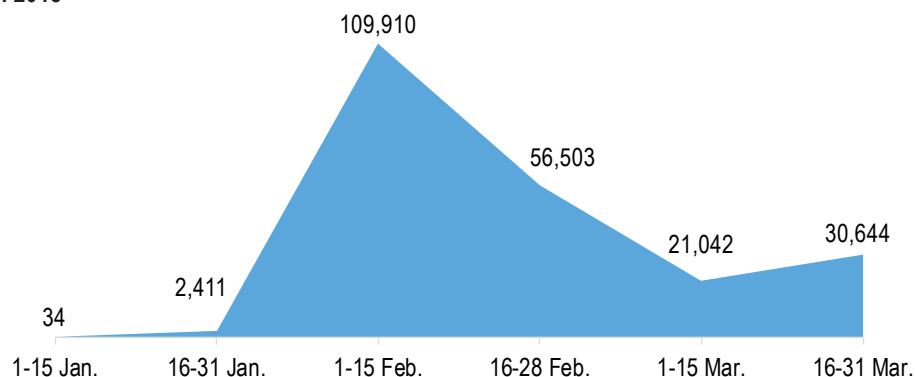
Figure 14: Assessed communities with highest IDP departures in Idlib and surrounding areas, January - March 2018



Spontaneous Returns

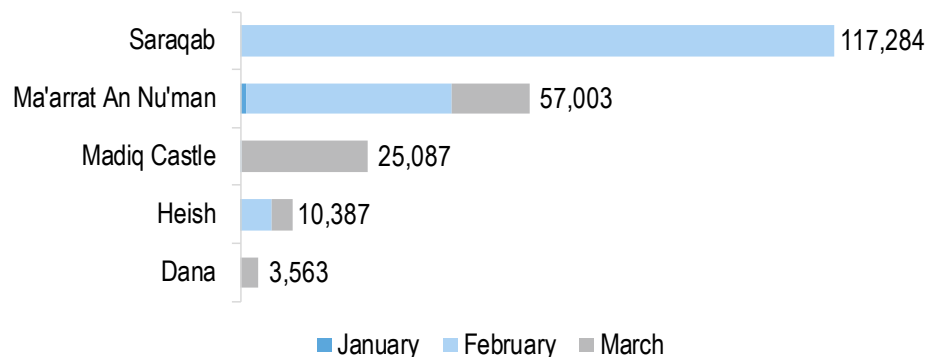
Between January and March, assessed communities in Idlib governorate and surrounding areas alone witnessed **220,544 SRs**. This is a significant increase compared to the 12,084 SRs that were reported to all sub-districts monitored by ISMI from October to December 2017.²² **The vast majority of SRs occurred in February (166,413 SRs), with 109,910 SRs arriving to their communities of origin between 1 and 15 February.** Based on available information, a vast majority (96%) of SRs were from other communities in Idlib governorate and surrounding areas.²³ Both of these findings suggest that the majority of **SRs in February returned shortly after the decline in violent clashes from 10 February**. An explanatory factor for the relative decrease in SRs from 16-28 February (56,503 SRs) might be the outbreak of hostilities between different AOGs in Idlib governorate on 20 February, which led to increased levels of violence.²⁴ Overall, however, SRs to communities of origin in Idlib governorate remained high throughout February.

Figure 15: SRs to assessed communities in Idleb and surrounding areas by governorate, January - March 2018



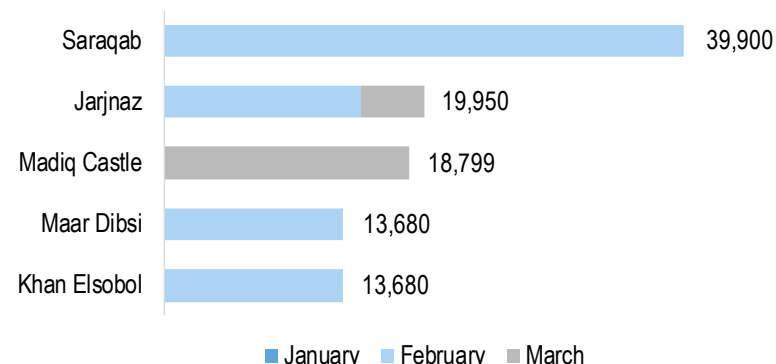
Saraqab sub-district witnessed the highest number of SRs (117,284), receiving more than half of overall returns in the region, followed by Ma'arrat An Nu'man (57,003). Spontaneous returns movements were mostly concentrated in Saraqab in the first half of February, while they shifted towards Ma'arrat An Nu'man in the second half of the month.

Figure 16: Sub-districts with highest SRs in Idleb and surrounding areas, January - March 2018



While most SRs to other sub-districts took place in February, the vast majority (98%) of SRs to Madiq Castle, in north-west Hama governorate, occurred in the second half of March. Between 1 and 15 March, 9,633 primary displacements were reported from Madiq Castle sub-district. Following a perceived reduction in hostilities, **assessed communities in Madiq Castle sub-district witnessed 24,710 SRs in the second half of March, with 76% to Madiq Castle community.** A vast majority of SRs (99%) to the sub-district reportedly returned to their former homes.

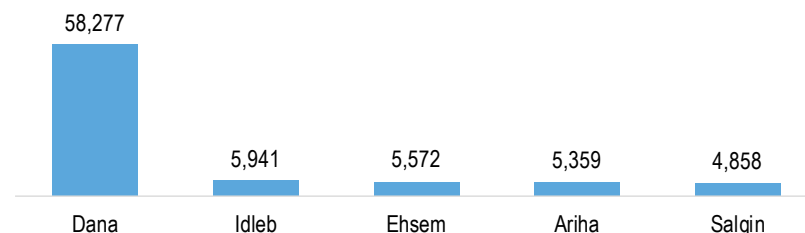
Figure 17: Assessed communities with highest number of SRs in Idleb and surrounding areas, January - March 2018



On a community level, most SRs were reported in Saraqab (39,900), followed by Jarjnaz (19,950) and Madiq Castle (18,799). Apart from Madiq Castle, the four other communities that received most SRs are located in south-eastern sub-districts of Saraqab (Saraqab, Maar Dibsi and Khan Elsobol) and Ma'arrat An Nu'man (Jarjnaz). **The majority of SRs to these communities occurred in February, thereby following the main displacement wave that occurred in January.**

Out of a total of 220,544 SRs, 58,277 arrived from Dana sub-district, most commonly from Atma (12,560), Qah (8,820) and Sarmada (8,579) communities, as well as likely from camps and sites in the sub-district. **A vast majority of all SRs to assessed communities in Idleb and surrounding areas returned to their former homes (99%).**

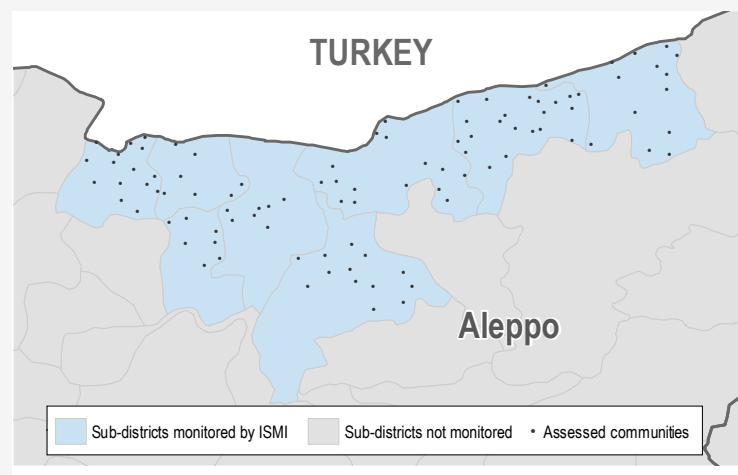
Figure 18: Most commonly reported last sub-districts of departure of SRs to Idleb and surrounding areas, January - March 2018



The most commonly reported **priority needs of SRs were safety and security, health and winterisation or equivalent.** Secondary and tertiary priority needs were reported to be food, NFIs and education. **This indicates that SRs might be returning to unsafe conditions and continue to be reliant on humanitarian assistance.**

NORTHERN ALEPPO REGION

Map 5: Coverage in northern Aleppo region, January - March 2018



Communities Assessed:
115

IDP Arrivals:
24,696

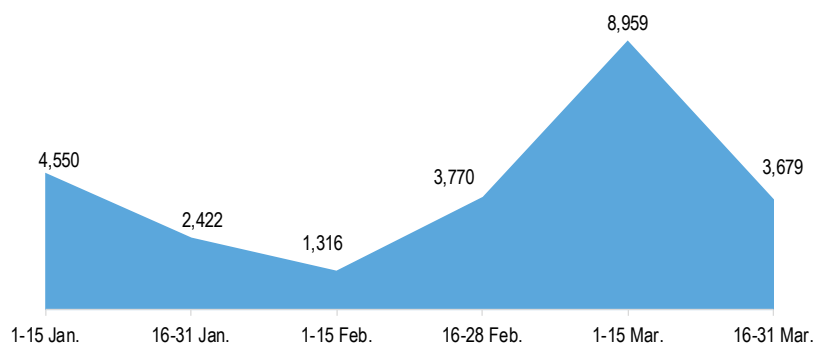
IDP Departures:
19,506

SRs:
9,304

IDP Arrivals

Between January and March 2018, assessed communities in northern Aleppo witnessed an estimated **24,696 IDP arrivals**. A total of 8,959 IDPs reportedly arrived to assessed communities in northern Aleppo in the first half of March, representing 36% of total arrivals to assessed communities in the region. This can likely be attributed to **escalation of conflict in Afrin district** from 1 to 15 March.²⁵ In addition, **evacuations from Eastern Ghouta**, particularly from Duma, likely increased overall IDP arrivals to assessed communities in northern Aleppo. Cross-line displacements increased in March and were reported to have continued in April.²⁶

Figure 19: Timeline of IDP arrivals to assessed communities in northern Aleppo, January - March 2018



Over the entire assessment period, **21% of IDPs arrived from within the region, while 79% arrived from communities outside northern Aleppo**. Of these, the vast majority (84%) arrived from communities that are located in other sub-districts in Aleppo governorate.

Figure 20: Intra-region vs. extra-region arrivals to assessed communities in northern Aleppo, January - March 2018



Of a total of 10,977 IDPs arriving from other sub-districts in Aleppo governorate, the majority came from **Afrin sub-district (63%) in the first half of March** and arrived to neighbouring A'zaz sub-district. The vast majority of IDPs (91%) reportedly came from Kawkabeh community. This indicates that many people reacted to escalation of conflict in Afrin in the first half of March by moving away from conflict lines.

Figure 21: Main sub-district level IDP movements in northern Aleppo, January - March 2018

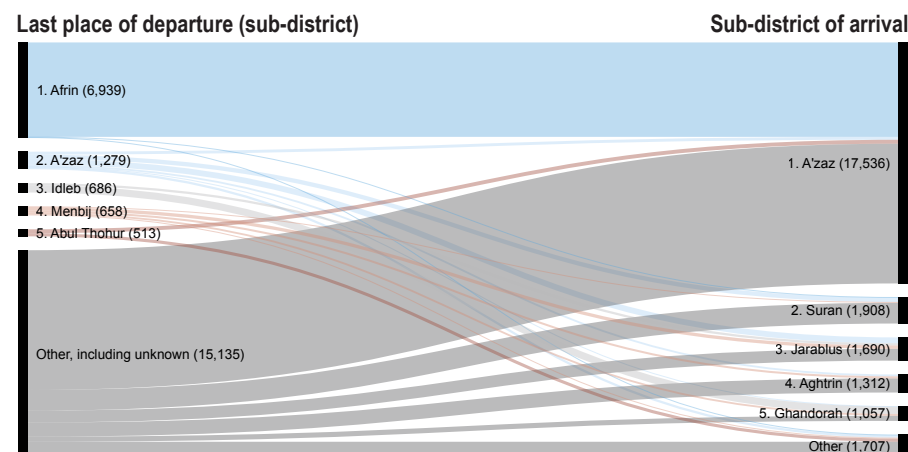
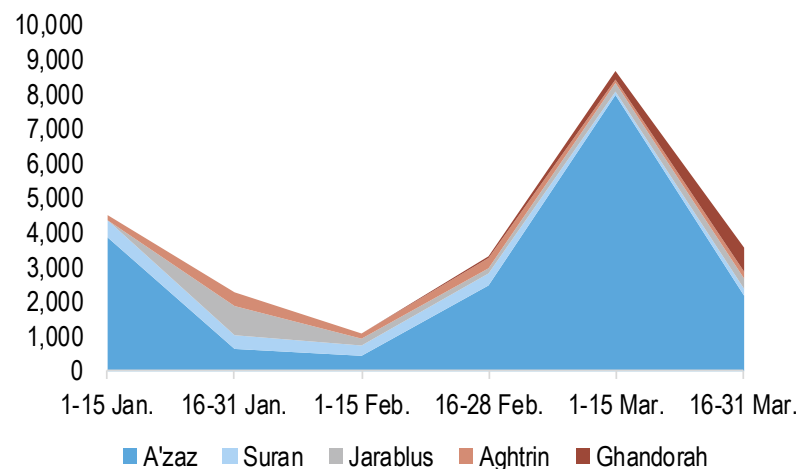


Figure 21 shows all IDP arrivals to assessed communities in northern Aleppo throughout the coverage period along with their last places of departure. The five sub-districts with the largest IDP arrivals, also shown in Figure 23 below, accounted for 95% (23,503 IDPs) of overall arrivals to northern Aleppo. **A'zaz sub-district was the most common destination for IDPs**, with 71% of IDPs (17,536) arriving to communities in the sub-district, likely driven by pull factors of relative safety and availability of safe passage.

More than a third of IDPs (37%, representing 8,674 IDPs) arriving to the five sub-districts receiving most new IDPs in northern Aleppo came between 1 and 15 March. For A'zaz sub-district, nearly half of all IDPs (45%) arrived in the same period. In addition, 103 IDPs reportedly came to A'zaz from outside of Syria.

Figure 22: Timeline of IDP arrivals to top five arrival sub-districts in northern Aleppo, January - March 2018



Among assessed communities with most IDP arrivals, Azaz community witnessed by far the most, with a majority arriving in the first half of March. The only community not located in A'zaz sub-district out of those reporting most IDP arrivals, was Jarablus (see Figure 23 below). According to KIs, Kawkabeh community in Afrin sub-district was the most commonly reported (76%) last place of departure of IDPs arriving to Azaz. However, large IDP arrivals to Azaz might partially be explained by IDPs arriving there before continuing to other destinations. For example, more than half of IDPs (54%) arriving to Jarablus community reportedly came from Azaz community. Furthermore, 114 IDPs arrived to Salama community in March, having reportedly come from Azaz community. This movement from Azaz to a community further north in the sub-district, could indicate secondary displacement.

Figure 23: Assessed communities in northern Aleppo with most IDP arrivals, January - March 2018

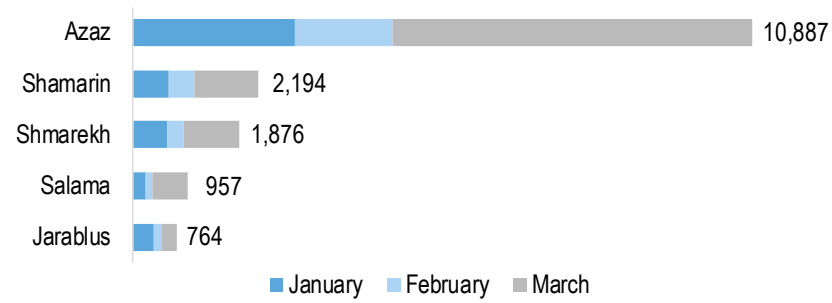
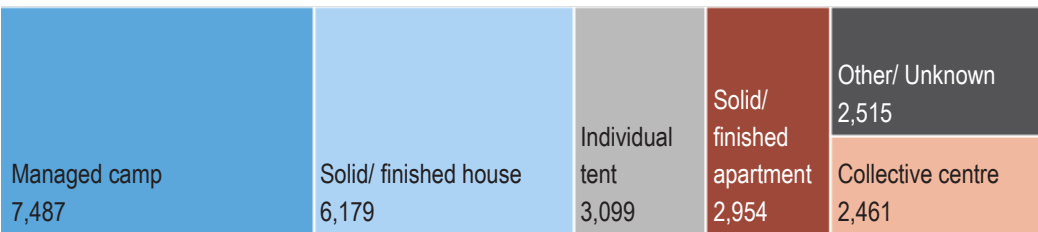


Figure 24: Most commonly reported shelter types for IDPs arriving to assessed communities in northern Aleppo, January - March 2018

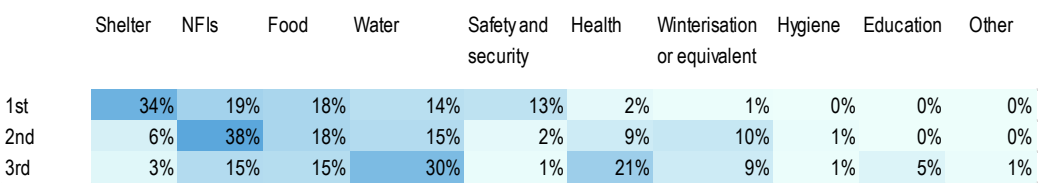


IDPs coming to assessed communities in northern Aleppo were reported to most commonly reside in managed camps (30% of overall IDP arrivals), followed by solid/finished houses (25% of overall IDP arrivals) and individual tents (13% of overall IDP arrivals). In addition, a total of 301 IDPs were reported to reside in informal settlements, 91 IDPs in unfinished/damaged buildings and 60 IDPs in open areas.

An estimated 4,408 out of 8,959 IDPs arriving between 1 and 15 March were reported to live either in solid/finished apartments (26%, representing 2,354 IDPs) or in solid/finished houses (23%, representing 2,054 IDPs). An additional 1,102 IDPs (12%) arrived to managed camps and 1,886 IDPs (21%) to collective centres in the same coverage period. During this period, KIs reported 79% of IDPs to have arrived from Afrin sub-district. In the second half of March, however, IDP movements from Afrin sub-district stopped and a significant increase (from 12% to 48% of IDPs arriving in the respective period) of arrivals was registered to managed camps.

The most common tenancy type for new IDPs was being hosted without rent (9,637 IDPs, representing 39% of overall IDP arrivals). However, a significant number of IDPs were reported to pay rent for their shelter (5,802 IDPs, representing 24% of overall IDP arrivals).

Figure 25: Percentage of communities reporting priority needs of arriving IDPs, January - March 2018

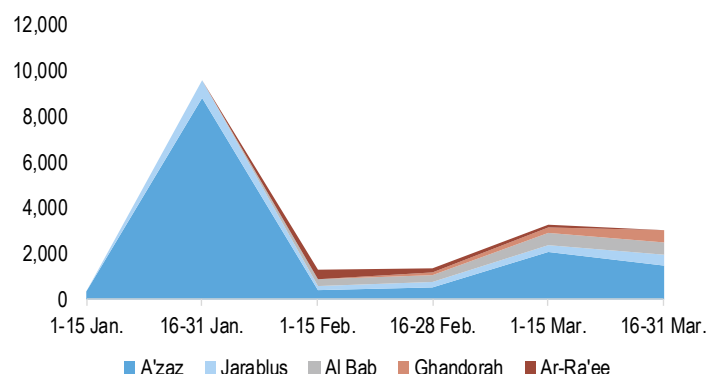


The most commonly reported top three priority needs of new arrivals to assessed communities in northern Aleppo throughout the assessment period were shelter, NFI and food support. KIs further reported secondary priority needs to include water (27 mentions) while tertiary priority needs were reported to include health-related issues (37 mentions).

IDP Departures

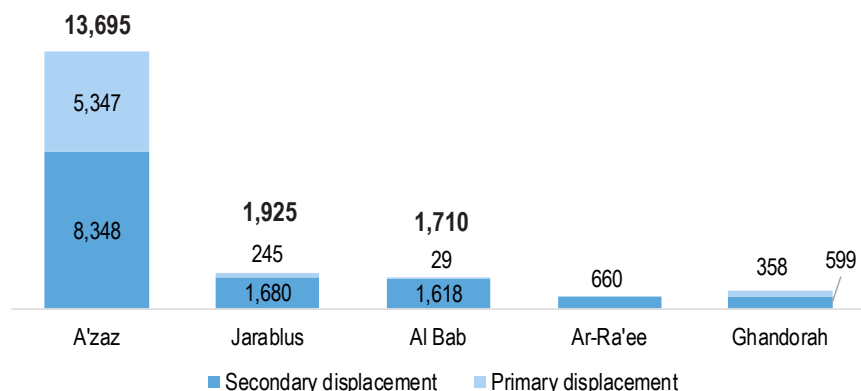
Between January and March 2018, assessed communities in northern Aleppo witnessed a total of 19,506 IDP departures. A vast majority of these (70%, representing 13,695 IDPs) left A'zaz sub-district.

Figure 26: Largest IDP departures from northern Aleppo by sub-districts, January - March 2018



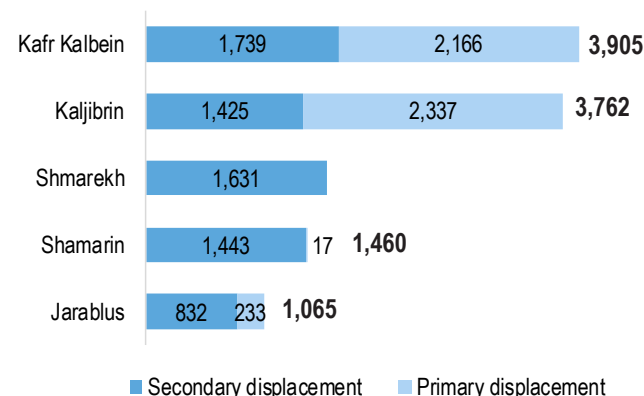
A total of 69% of IDP departures from assessed communities in northern Aleppo throughout the coverage period were secondary departures, most of which departed from A'zaz sub-district (62% of overall IDP departures, representing 8,348 IDPs). Figure 27 below shows the five sub-districts in northern Aleppo with the largest IDP departures throughout the entire coverage period, disaggregated by primary and secondary displacements. Across all five sub-districts, primary departures represent a significant amount of overall departures. In conjunction with rapid IDP influxes, particularly to A'zaz sub-district, this indicates substantial onward movement of previously displaced persons.

Figure 27: Sub-districts in northern Aleppo with largest IDP departures, January - March 2018



Furthermore, a large majority of departees (78%) intended to leave northern Aleppo to go to other regions in Syria. An estimated 1,718 people intending to leave the governorate (41%) reportedly intended to go to communities in Deir-ez-Zor governorate, while 879 IDPs reportedly planned on going to Ar-Raqqa governorate. This can be explained by pull factors of relative safety in both governorates as levels of conflict have significantly decreased over the past months. In 2017, high displacements were reported from both governorates.²⁷ Meanwhile, KIs reported that approximately 1,558 IDPs (37%) intended to move to other communities in Aleppo governorate, most commonly to Afrin (228) and Menbij (102) sub-districts.

Figure 28: Assessed communities in northern Aleppo with highest IDP departures, January - March 2018



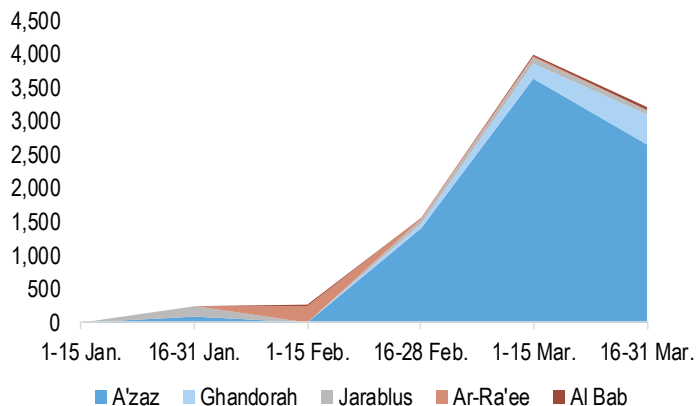
On a community level, Kafr Kalbein and Kaljibrin communities in A'zaz sub-district witnessed the largest IDP departures, mostly because both communities saw large departures of host communities as well as large secondary displacements of previously displaced people. Large numbers of primary displacements suggest that residents moved away from conflict lines.

Spontaneous Returns

Throughout the assessment period, KIs reported 9,304 SRs to assessed communities in northern Aleppo. While spontaneous returns took place throughout the reporting period, the vast majority of SRs were reported between 1 and 31 March (77%, representing 7,210 SRs). A total of 9,097 SRs moved into their former homes. In addition, KIs reported most SRs to be former refugees. Out of 9,224 SRs, 7,906 (86%) reportedly returned from different countries in the region following decreased conflict levels in northern Aleppo.

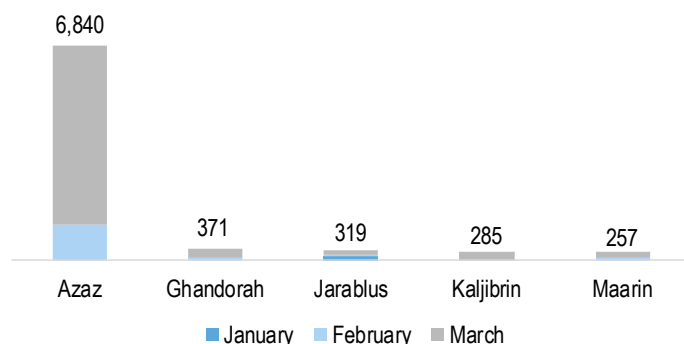
On a sub-district level, A'zaz witnessed 84% of overall SRs (7,771) and saw a significant increase in SRs in the second half of February (1,397 SRs). In the first half of March, the number of reported SRs doubled in comparison to the previous bi-weekly period to 3,637 SRs, representing almost half (47%) of overall SRs during the entire coverage period (Figure 29).

Figure 29: Sub-districts in northern Aleppo with largest SRs, January - March 2018



On a community level, three of the five assessed communities that witnessed the largest return flows were in A'zaz sub-district. **However, the vast majority of SRs were to Azaz community in March, where 6,840 SRs, representing 74% of overall returns, were reported.**

Figure 30: Assessed communities in northern Aleppo with largest SRs, January - March 2018



The most commonly reported **priority needs of new SRs were water, safety and security as well as NFIs**. In terms of secondary priority needs, NFIs and healthcare were additional mentions while tertiary priority needs included education, which might be indicative of families returning with their children in need of particular support.

Endnotes:

¹ Data for this report was collected across six bi-weekly cycles between 1 January and 31 March 2018.

² In total, 1,624 community-level assessments were made throughout the quarter, with movements reported in 619 individual communities. A 'community' is any neighbourhood, village, town, or city listed at the 4th administrative level of the UNOCHA P-Code list, in addition to managed camps, informal settlements and other IDP sites that fall outside of these communities' jurisdiction.

³ IDP departure figures, unless otherwise stated, reflect aggregated departures of IDP and host community populations.

⁴ Household numbers are collected from KIs and then multiplied by an average of 5.7 to provide estimated individual numbers. Based on extensive experience in Syria as well as other displacement contexts, key informants are generally more able or confident to report household figures than individual numbers. This is the case in particular in situations with very large IDP and returning populations.

⁵ Because ISMI assesses total arrivals to and departures from communities across a bi-weekly period, some figures reported may be repeated displacements.

⁶ SR: Spontaneous Returns (to Community of Origin) refers to IDPs or refugees who return to the community that they originated from, but not necessarily to their place of habitual residence and do not enjoy the complete rights they had prior to displacement. SRs intend to remain in the community for an undetermined period.

⁷ Movements reported by ISMI between 16-31 March 2018 in Ziyara sub-district, Hama governorate, are not included in this trends analysis since it was not covered in the preceding coverage periods.

⁸ Figures for the northern Aleppo region include communities in the following sub-districts: Aghtrin, Al Bab, Ar-Ra'ee, A'zaz, Ghandorah, Jarablus, Mare' and Suran. However, ISMI coverage within northern Aleppo was not consistent throughout the coverage period. For example, from 1 to 15 January 2018, ISMI coverage only included communities in Aghtrin, A'zaz, Mare' and Suran sub-districts. Therefore, findings and comparisons between the first half of January and later bi-weekly rounds cannot be accurately made.

⁹ Reuters, [Syrian govt. presses Idlib offensive as people flee homes in the cold](#), 5 January 2018.

¹⁰ UN Department of Public Information, [Syrian Crisis: United Nations Response, No. 233/7 February 2018](#).

¹¹ For more information on evacuations from Eastern Ghouta, see the following documents: REACH, CCCM, IDP Situation Monitoring Initiative (ISMI), [Rapid Assessment of Evacuations from Eastern Ghouta to north-west Syria, 25-31 March 2018](#); REACH, CCCM, [IDP Situation Monitoring Initiative \(ISMI\), IDP Movements in northern Syria, 1-15 March 2018](#); REACH, CCCM, [IDP Situation Monitoring Initiative \(ISMI\), IDP Movements in northern Syria, 16-31 March 2018](#).

¹² UNOCHA, [Turkey | Syria: Recent Developments in Northwestern Syria \(Idlib Governorate and Afrin District\)](#) (as of 23 January 2018).

¹³ UNOCHA, [Turkey | Syria: Recent Developments in North-western Syria](#) (as of 13 March 2018).

- ¹⁴ UNOCHA, [Syria Crisis: East Ghouta. Situation Report No. 4](#) (1 February - 13 March 2018).
- ¹⁵ UNOCHA, [Turkey | Syria: Latest Developments in North-western Syria](#), 13 March 2018.
- ¹⁶ UNHCR, Syria, [Flash Update on Recent Events](#), 22 March 2018; UNOCHA, [Turkey | Syria: Situation in North-western Syria - Situation Report No.1](#) (as of 29 March 2018); Syria Direct, [Thousands of civilians leave East Ghouta in largest exodus from the opposition-held enclave since five-year siege began](#), 15 March 2018.
- ¹⁷ Idleb's surrounding areas include communities in Atareb, Daret Azza and Zarbah sub-districts in western Aleppo, as well as in Madiq Castle sub-district in northern Hama. These sub-districts have been added to the larger Idleb and surrounding areas region as IDPs in these sub-districts demonstrate largely similar displacement patterns and are served by the same cross-border responses.
- ¹⁸ UNOCHA, [Turkey | Syria: Recent Developments in North-western Syria](#) (as of 13 March 2018).
- ¹⁹ For simplicity, only the top five departure and arrival sub-districts are listed, while other departure and arrival sub-districts are aggregated to visualise remaining IDP movements.
- ²⁰ Primary displacements do not necessarily capture the first time an individual or group or persons have been displaced from their community of origin.
- ²¹ REACH, CCCM, [Idleb Governorate Situation Overview: Displacement and Intentions. North Syria](#), January - February 2018.²² REACH, CCCM, [Displacement Trends: October - December 2017](#).
- ²³ KIs reported that the majority of SRs had left their community of origin within the two months following mid-December, when violent clashes and aerial bombardment increased significantly in south-eastern Idleb governorate. Probably due to the large number of SRs within a short amount of time, and the short duration of displacement for many SRs prior to their return, information on last places of departure was limited.
- ²⁴ REACH, CCCM, [Situation Overview: Spontaneous Returns \(SRs\) to Idleb Governorate. North-West Syria](#), February 2018.
- ²⁵ UNOCHA, [Turkey | Syria: Latest Developments in North-western Syria](#), 13 March 2018.
- ²⁶ For more information on arrivals from Duma, see CCCM, ISMI, [IDP Movements in northern Syria](#), 1-15 April 2018; UNOCHA, [Turkey | Syria: Latest Developments in North-western Syria](#), 13 March 2018.
- ²⁷ REACH, CCCM, [Displacement Trends: October - December 2017](#); REACH, CCCM, [Displacement Trends: July - September 2017](#).

Reference Map

