Highlights

- Following the conclusion of President Erdogan and President Putin’s meeting in the Russian city of Sochi on 22 October, a 10-point agreement was reached. Under the new Sochi deal, Turkey and Russia will jointly facilitate the return of refugees in a "safe and voluntary" manner. The Turkish presidential spokesperson earlier on announced that Turkey has no intention to make any demographical changes in Syria. According to the Kremlin, president Assad pledged his full support for the agreement on north east Syria.
- Turkey announced on 23 October that there is no further need at this stage to conduct a new operation in northern Syria outside its present area of operations. This is further confirmed by the Russian Foreign Minister stating that operation ‘Peace Spring” is over.

Humanitarian Situation

- The ceasefire that ended on 22 October was holding in most areas. By the end of the agreement, local sources reported that the Kurdish YPG had fully withdrawn all forces, including injured troops, out of Ras Al-Ain.
- According to OCHA, as of 21 October, the movement of a total of 195,011 people have been recorded across Al Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa and Aleppo governorates since military operations began on 9 October, according to updates from OCHA dated 22 October. Of these:
  - 152,011 people have been displaced from Al Hasakeh (96,088), Ar-Raqqa (39,463) & Aleppo governorates (16,460)
  - 43,000 people have returned to their places of origin – 18,000 to Al Hasakeh (8,500 to Qamishli & 9,500 to Al Malikeyyeh sub-districts) and 25,000 to Ar-Raqqa (18,000 to Tal Abyad and 7000 to Suluk sub-districts). Partners are providing services to displaced and host communities (including those returned).
• In Eastern Aleppo there is significantly reduced capacity to operate by cross border partners; staff departure or displacement has been the key factor disrupting activities.

• In Iraq, as of 23 October 2019, 8,428 Syrian refugees (including approximately 4,000 children) fleeing the most recent military operation in Northern Syria have entered Dohuk, in north-western Iraq. The new arrivals are coming from cities and villages throughout the north of Syria and are mainly women, children, adolescents and young males.

• The majority of refugees arriving are in immediate need of food, water, basic services and supplies, including clothes and blankets, as most have arrived with no personal items. Many refugees, especially children, are in need of psychological and psychosocial support as many have witnessed shelling, fighting and explosions in their home communities back in Syria.

• If the refugee influx continues at its current rate, Baradash camp is likely to be completely full in the final days October, thus other camps (Domiz 2, Garmawa, Gawilan and Zelikan) have been identified in Dohuk for consideration for additional arrivals. The Darashakran camp in Erbil governorate is being assessed to determine its suitability for additional refugees also. Newly arrived refugees who have relatives in northern Iraq, have been given the approval to leave the camp and join their families in KRI.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

WASH

The water and sanitation response aims at targeting both IDPs and host communities in Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqq and Aleppo governorates through a two-fold approach: 1) Provision of WASH services in IDP camps and collective shelters and 2) Support the repair and operation and maintenance (O&M) of water supply and sewage systems in communities that have received IDPs, most notably in the main urban centres and the rural communities with a high IDP caseload.

To that respect, in UNICEF’s combined approach as SCO and XB has to date distributed 7,155 hygiene kits in Hasakeh, Ar Raqqa and Tel Tamar benefiting 36,491 IDPs in shelters and the surrounding host communities. A partner has finalised the procurement of water tanks for 1,110 IDPs in 5 collective centres, and a second partner of garbage bins for 2900 IDPs in 15 collective centres in Hasakeh. Material will be installed on 24 October. In addition, UNICEF provided 400m$^3$ of water, through water tucking and installation of water tanks, to 9000 people in the collective shelters and surrounding locations in Hasakeh city and Tal Tamer. In terms of support to O & M, a total of 16,000 litres of fuel were provided to the Alouk station backup generators and will be used in case the power supply is interrupted again. Of note, the Alouk station is in operation and is providing water to Al Hasakeh town, Tel Tamar and through water tucking, to several IDP camps, for a combined population of approximately 450,000 people. Alouk is operating at 50 per cent of its pre-crisis capacity as 15 production boreholes are yet to be reconnected to the power grid as they are currently inaccessible.

Plans are currently underway to improve WASH conditions in both Mahmoudli and Areesha camps to cover the additional IDP case load. In addition, alternative water sources for Al Hasakeh town are currently being rehabilitated as a contingency measure in case Alok station becomes un-operational again.

Iraq: UNICEF and Department of Water are providing WASH services at the border transit centres. Installation of new latrines and upgrading of water tap stands at the border points are underway. Over the past week UNICEF has provided hygiene items (soap and hygiene kits) to the border points of Sahel and Al-Walid and distributed 2,000 family and 200 baby hygiene kits to refugees in Bardarash camp. UNICEF’s team is working in Bardarash camp to re-establish WASH services, which include the renovation/installation of latrines and showers (500 provided to date, a further 780 latrines and showers to install/repair to cover the entire camp with full WASH services).
Health and Nutrition
UNICEF health and nutrition teams are continuing the delivery of services through local NGOs to provide curative and preventive health and nutrition services through fixed centres and mobile medical teams. Awareness raising on maternal and child health, including immunization, hygiene promotion and Integrated Young Child Feeding (IYCF) are also going on in Hasakeh city where IDPs are concentrated.

In the shelters, Hasakeh city, and surrounding rural areas, UNICEF and partners have reached a total of 1,331 children under 5 years with mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) screening. Of these, three cases of moderate and acute malnutrition (MAM) were identified to date. In the same location, 1,922 medical consultations were conducted for women and children, indicating the top causes of morbidity in under 5s being common cold, diarrhoea and skin diseases. An additional 2,341 women and children have received multiple nutritional supplements and supplies in the same locations.

UNICEF is also supporting the directorate of health to reach communities that were previously unreachable. In Ain Alarab in Aleppo, 5,133 children under 5 years have been reached through a polio campaign, and 40 children under one year reached through routine immunizations from between October 13 and 16. The vaccination process was then stopped, after the KSA informed Department of Health that they could not resume routine immunization activities. Further negotiations are being conducted. In Manbij, during October a polio campaign reached 32,447 children under 5 out of the 38,561 children targeted. The children reached are from both Manbij and its IDPs reception areas. The routine immunization is ongoing without any interruptions, targeting 675 children under one year, per month.

Iraq: The Directorate of Health in Dohuk, through UNICEF support, is providing Vitamin A supplementation, as well as polio and measles vaccinations for children at Sahela and Al-Walid border points as refugees enter the country, as well as in Bardarash camps for those who were missed at the border. Over the past week, 2,790 children were reached with polio vaccination while 2,595 children were provided with measles vaccination.

Nutrition assessment teams from Bardarash district are undertaking rapid nutritional assessments in Bardarash camp, and to date, 1 case of MAM was identified and referred for treatment, while no cases of SAM have been reported among the new refugee population.

Child Protection
UNICEF and child protection partners continue provision of needed services targeting IDPs, the most vulnerable groups and affected populations in the collective shelters and surrounding host communities in Al Hasakeh and Al Raqqa Governorates. Child Protection (CP) services provided through fixed CFS and by mobile teams continued to support the pre-existing case load in the NES region including the children in the camps. A bottleneck in the programme relates to pending approvals by Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour for one CP partner who has the capacity to programme with extensive coverage in Ar-Raqqa and Al Hasakeh cities in addition to four camps.

Iraq: UNICEF is supporting a mobile child protection team, through partner SOSD, at the Sahel and Al-Walid border, providing psychological first aid, emergency psychosocial support services, emergency case management, documentation and referral of cases of GBV, monitoring of child rights, identifying and following up on cases of unaccompanied and separated children (including family tracing and reunification services). To date, 11 unaccompanied children have been recorded at the Sahel and Al-Walid borders with eight of these cases already reunified with their families and 3 cases are still being followed up on for family tracing services. Within Bardarash camp, assessments have been completed and a site is currently being prepared for the establishment of a Child Protection centre which will be run by Directorate of Labour and Social Affairs.

Education
UNICEF is assessing the situation of children displaced in the major towns and looking at options to improve and or re-establish their access to learning in collaboration with partners.

From assessments, some 3,200 school-age children are living in 56 schools that are being used as collective shelters. It is estimated that 30,000 learners who were enrolled in these schools before the crisis have potentially lost access to learning opportunities. However, some of these students have opted to move to the nearby accessible and
operational schools under the self-administration management. There are 196 schools managed by the Directorate of Education (DoE) that are currently operational in Hasakeh city running on double shift to accommodate all the children. These schools are mostly located inside the GOS control area of Hasakeh City, called the ‘security square’ and thus transportation is required for children to reach the area. As a result of the huge demand, teachers are focusing on core subject delivery and have removed recreational activities. Among the displaced communities in collective shelters, some teachers from Ras el Ein have been identified and hired by some schools managed by the self-administration. Education committees operating in the shelters are exploring how displaced teachers can be of support in shelters.

The majority of children affected by displacement are living in host communities in locations under SDF control. These children are trying to join the available schools, managed by the self-administration. These schools are also likely to be overloaded and unable to meet the demand.

UNICEF is conducting assessment to integrate 530 school-age children who were already receiving Self Learning Programme in Mabrouka Camp and have been relocated to Areesha Camp. Assessment conducted by NGO partner to identify these children and encourage them to enrol at the existing UNICEF supported learning centre in Areesha. As of 22 October, approximately 60 students of Mabrouka Camp attended the learning centre in Areesha. The number is expected to increase within few days. UNICEF is working on expanding the learning centre capacity through installing eight tents in Areesha to accommodate the 850 students from Mabrouka, whose education activities were suspended.

500 school age children who were already participating in the Self Learning Programme (SLP) in Ein Issa Camp have been relocated to Mahmoudli camp. Currently, UNICEF partners will provide non-formal learning programme (SLP) to 500 children whose learning was disrupted in Ein Issa Camp out of the 1100 children affected. Efforts are underway to provide learning facilities for the rest of the children.

As the provider of last resort, UNICEF is also assessing how to respond to the children affected by the closure of INGOs learning centres in Hole, Areesha and Mahmoudli Camps. Approximately there are 4,000 children affected in the 3 camps.

Iraq: Approximately 2,800 school-aged refugees in Bardarash camp are now out of school due to their displacement. UNICEF’s education team has conducted assessments in Bardarash Camp and is preparing to open schools in the camp through coordination with the Ministry and Directorate of Education in Dohuk. It has been noted that the children in the camp have previously been educated through a mix of languages (Arabic & Kurdish) and different curriculums, which may pose challenges when deciding on the language of instruction that will be used in the camp when schools open.

NFI / Children winter clothing packages
UNICEF partners in Hasakeh city are continuing the distribution of winter kits to children. To date, 4,542 children in 46 collective shelters have been reached. Distribution will continue in the coming days to other locations in Rural Hasakeh.

Supply and Logistics
In addition to the initial support in the delivery of supplies undertaken from Damascus and Qamishli to front-line national NGO partners through pre-positioned supplies and direct delivery modalities using different Long-Term Agreements (LTAs) in place for both goods and services, focus has been given to sourcing of additional NFIs (purchase orders placed for over 44,000 kits such as winter children clothes and new born baby kits). In addition, assistance was provided to programme sections to prepare and consolidate the next distribution plans delivery of which will take place by end of the week. Some education items (55,000 Self Learning Materials) were also sent from Damascus through direct delivery modality. Those items are in the pipeline en route to the IP location in Hasakeh.

Delays in getting required approvals from Government in relation to movement of trucks operating from UN warehouses continues to cause setbacks to the response. Some portions of the alternative routes are in poor conditions (not paved) leading to lengthy travel time. This is also exacerbated by the navigation of check points, staffed by GoS and SDF personnel which remains difficult.

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