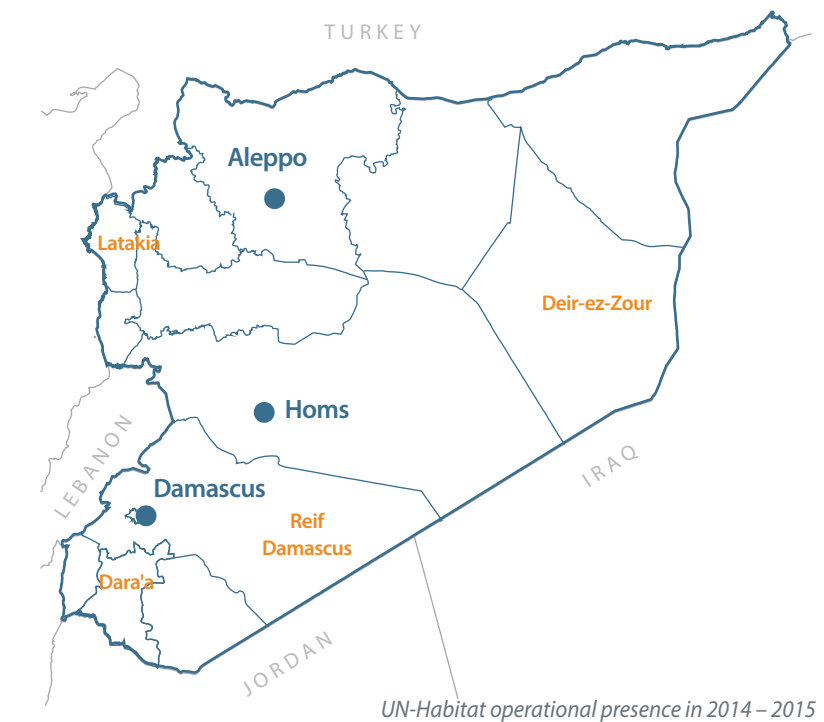# UN-Habitat Syria Programme Update

MARCH 2015

Deir Ez-Zour Ali Bek neighbourhood 2014

UN-Habitat operational presence in 2014 – 2015

Urban Facts

• Urbanisation has increased from 51% in 2010, to 76% by the end of 2014.

• 40% of IDPs in Syria are being hosted in cities, some 3.2 million people

• Aleppo, Lattakia, Tartous and several cities in Reif Damascus are the main IDP hosting cities in Syria

• Around 35% of urban schools are not operating due to damage or to occupation

• More than 50% of hospitals in cities are not operational

• Around 760,000 housing units in Syrian cities were damaged

• Historic and traditional urban centres were massively destroyed (Aleppo, Homs, Deir ez-Zor, Dara'a, Douma, and Daraya)

* the information in this fact box has been compiled by UN-Habitat from various sources

#WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO SUPPORT PEACE IN SYRIA?

As the Syria conflict enters its fifth year, the "What does it take to end the crisis?" campaign is gaining momentum. The hash tag #WhatDoesItTake has already been tweeted 26,000 times and the campaign has the potential to reach 60 million people.

The campaign, however, is born out of frustration. Frustration with the human cost of the Syrian conflict. Frustration with the fact that humanitarian assistance was never meant to be a solution.

Everyone agrees, the solution to the Syria crisis is political. As such, the current stalemate can continue for many years. Or, the situation can change overnight. The question is, if the Syria crisis ends tomorrow, is the international community ready to support peace in Syria?

If it comes, peace in Syria will be a "patchwork peace". In some areas, the fighting will continue. In others, people will start returning, rebuilding their homes, looking for jobs, wanting to send their children to school.

Many people will return to cities, believing that security will be better and that health care, schools and job opportunities will be more accessible. Do we know which cities and which neighbourhoods are more likely to support returns? How will we address the complicated issue of land and property rights? In addition to physical reconstruction, what will we do to help rebuild divided societies?

If it comes, peace in Syria will bring a surge of private investment, again much of it in cities. Are we engaging with business leaders to understand the opportunities and challenges from their perspective? Do we have a prioritised plan for the critical infrastructure investments necessary to support economic recovery? How will we create the kinds of jobs that can convince youth to stop fighting and begin rebuilding their lives and communities?

In fact, we do not need to wait for peace in Syria. We can start now to promote stabilization and recovery.

The reality is that Syria today is a patchwork. True, some areas are devastated and will require massive investment to re-build. But there are many others where small investments can make a huge difference. Many cities and neighbourhoods have been free from conflict for more than a year. These areas require a different approach – one with a stabilization, recovery and even peace-building agenda.

For the past 18 months, UN-Habitat has been experimenting with just this kind of approach, through pilot projects in Aleppo, Homs and Rural Damascus. The results have been encouraging. Syrians are eager to be consulted on their priorities. They contribute their own time and money to initiatives that support their coping strategies. And they protect the investments that have been made.

The message is clear: after four years of conflict, we need a new approach to peace in Syria, one that begins with Syrians themselves. While local initiatives will not bring peace in Syria, they can help create practical local alternatives to continued conflict.

UN-Habitat's "Neighbourhood Approach"

UN-Habitat's Syria programme is being built upon a "Neighbourhood Approach". This approach is illustrated using the example of Salah Ad-Deen on page 3 and 4. The four components are described below.

First, City Profiles provide an overview of the impact of the crisis on the city as a whole. They help identify the neighbourhoods where humanitarian needs are concentrated, but also areas where recovery is possible. Community-based approaches help identify the most vulnerable households .

Second, UN-Habitat uses a system of block grants to implement projects that respond directly to priorities identified by communities and local authorities. Specific areas include project management, community audit of NGO-implemented projects, recovery planning, local economic development and skills training with a specific focus on youth.

Third, the Neighbourhood Approach provides capacity-building support to communities and local authorities. Specific areas include project management, community audit of NGO-implemented projects, recovery planning, local economic development and skills training with a specific focus on youth.

Finally, the approach aims to link communities and local authorities to other organizations to address priorities that are outside UN-Habitat's mandate or expertise. The neighbourhood plan is shared with other actors who may be in a position to support the community.
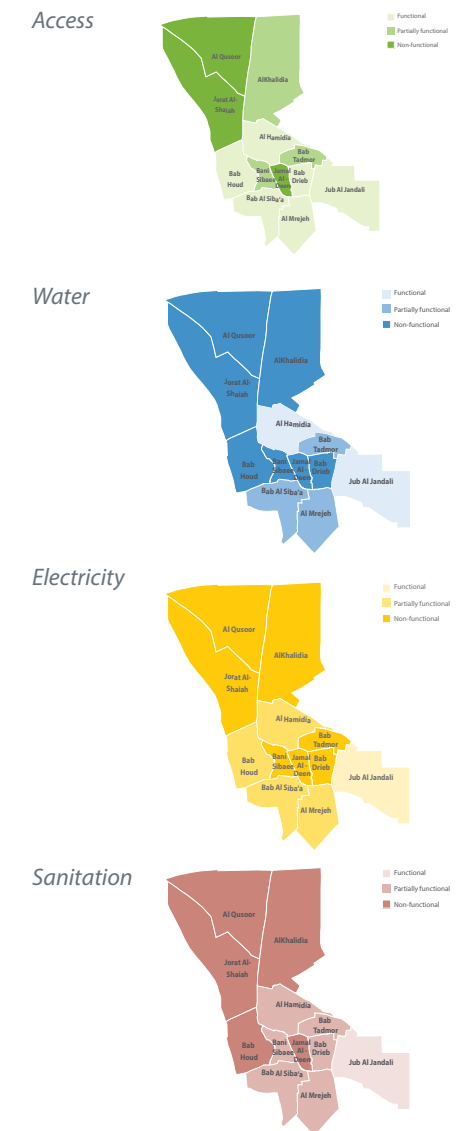
Urban Functionality in the Old City of Homs

Following the agreement on the Old City of Homs in May 2014, UN-Habitat conducted an **"urban functionality"** analysis at the neighbourhood level in different sectors. Examples from accessibilty, water, sanitation and electricity are illustrated here.

Three categories were used. **"Not functional"** means that the sector or service has suffered severe damage and is not operational. **"Partially functional"** means that the sector or service may have suffered damage in specific areas of the neighbourhood, while other areas may be less damaged or receiving some limited service. **"Affected functionality"** means that the sector or service has not been significantly damaged, but is coping with the strain due to an influx of IDPs.
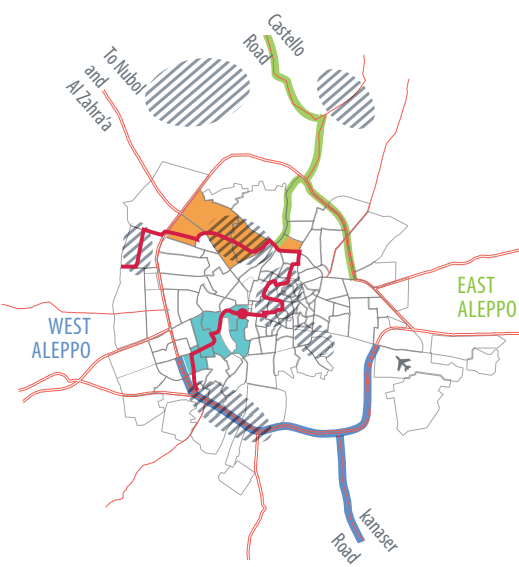
More generally, UN-Habitat is also applying the concept of **"urban functionality"** as an aggregate indicator of the quality of life in neighbourhoods. When applied at the neighbourhood level, urban functionality is determined by assessing conditions in four key areas: housing, infrastructure, services and local markets.

In 2015, UN-Habitat will be reviewing the concept of urban functionality to further improve the targeting of humanitarian and recovery interventions.

Access

Water

Electricity

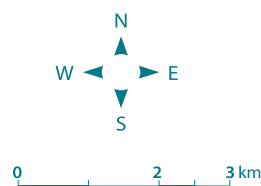*Sanitation*

Graph 1: Access Overview

Legend (Graph 1):
- Access/east
- Access/west
- Front-Line
- Bustan Al-Qaser crossing
- Neighbourhoods at the northern front-line
- Neighbourhoods at the southern front-line
- Aleppo International airport
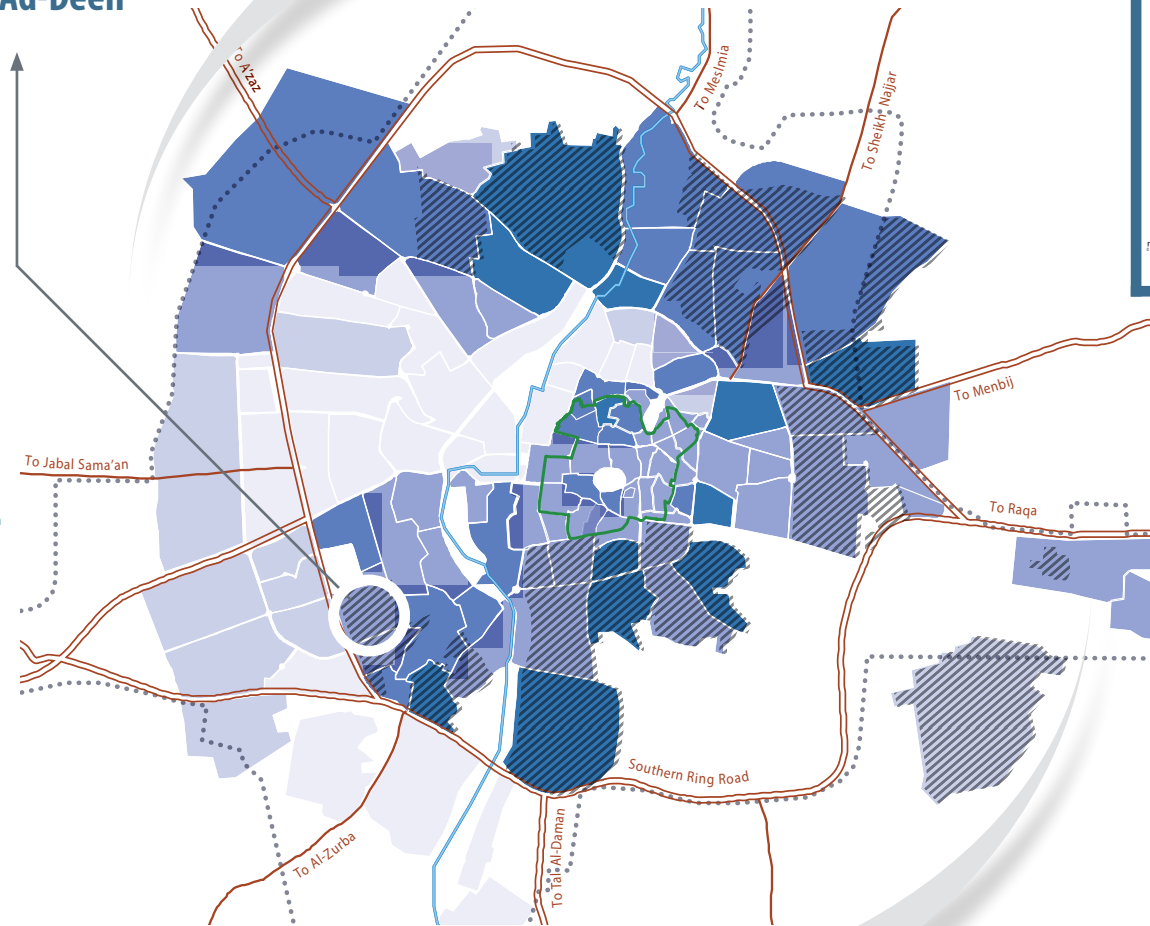- Areas of severe fighting

To Nubol and Al Zahra'a

Castello Road

WEST ALEPPO

EAST ALEPPO

kanaser Road

NEIGHBOURHOOD APPROACH
SALAH AD-DEEN ALEPPO

① **City Profile**
Analysing displacement, damage and services, the neighbourhood of Salah ad Deen was prioritized.

② **Neighbourhood Profile**
Provided more granular analysis of humanitarian and recovery needs, as well as existing coping mechanisms.

③ **Community Action Plan**
A series of meetings were held with different stakeholders, including women, to identify and agree on priorities.

④ **Priority projects**
included clearing the only entrance to the neighbourhood, improving water supply, and house repair for vulnerable families.

Salah Ad-Deen

Functionality Legend:
- Not Functional
- Partially Functional
- Partially Functional +
- Functional
- Functional +
- City master plan boundary
- Old City boundary
- Informal Areas
- City ring road and major motorways
- Carriageways
- River (Kuaik)

0   2   3 km

To Azaz
To Mesimia
To Sheikh Najjar
To Menbij
To Raqa
To Jabal Sama'an
To Al-Zurba
To Tal-Al-Qaman
Southern Ring Road

Neighbourhood Approach Base map for Salah Ad-Deen, City of Aleppo

Base map of Salah Ad-Deen neighbourhood (Aleppo) is prepared using city current land-uses, Open source information, KI overview on current conditions, and UN-Habitat City Profile dataset. Damage assessment was independently prepared by JRC, using VHR imagery dating November 2014. Current Population in the neighbourhood was reported to be around 35,000, with the majority of them living in the part held by GoS.

For A3 printing Scale : 1:5000

Land use by sector (%)

People prioritizing their needs during a community meeting

Before and After Photos of shelter rehabilitation in Salah Ad-Deen, Aleppo

Before and After Photos of work to enhance the entrance of the residential area in Salah Ad-Deen neighbourhood in Aleppo
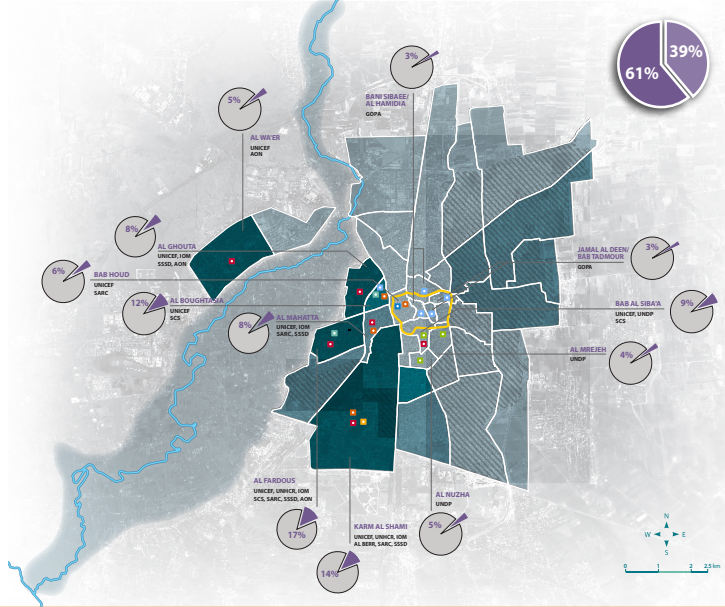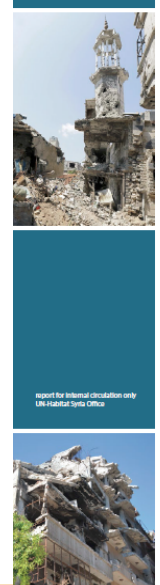
Cover of Aleppo City Profile

4Ws map of Homs

Old City Homs Profile

The damaged Suspension Bridge Deir Ez-Zour

2014 Achievements

Rapid City Profiles

Five Rapid City Profiles (RCP) w ere developed during 2014 for Homs, Aleppo, Dara'a, Latakia and Homs Old City analysing the impacts of the crisis on each city. RCPs provide a comprehensive analysis of displacement trends, housing, water supply, sanitation, road networks, electricity, health, education, food security, mobility. RCPs highlight "hotspots" where the population vulnerability is acute. By overlaying information on population, damage, and sectoral issues, the profiles provide useful insights into how people in different neighbourhoods are coping with the crisis.
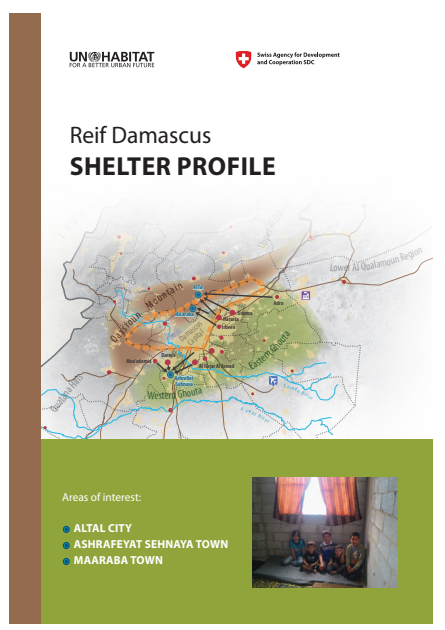
Shelter Support and Needs Assessment

Based on the findings of the City Profiles, a more in-depth neighbourhood level shelter needs assessment was conducted in Al Tal, Ma'raba and Ashrafyat Sahnaya in Rural Damascus as well as in Salah Ad-Deen neighbourhood of Aleppo. Based on the assessment in Aleppo, UN-Habitat piloted an IDP-host families shelter support programme which responded to priority needs including minor repairs, rent support and provision of simple household equipment.

Community Initiatives

UN-Habitat has implemented community level projects to support infrastructure and basic services in Aleppo. Two pilot projects were implemented benefiting 8,000 IDPs and host community members. In cooperation with a national NGO (Al Taalof). Consultation meetings were organised with the community to identify and agree on immediate priorities. The scope of the implemented works was to improve accessibility to safe drinking and domestic water through the construction of a storage tank, provide safer sanitation in the local school and to improve mobility and access by rehabilitating the only remaining entrance which was severely affected by conflict-related damage.

Emergency Urban Information System

A web-based urban information management system has been established to track the changing impact of the crisis. The database structure is designed to capture information on changes in the demography, shelter, infrastructure, public services, markets and prices, and active assistance. The resulting information is mapped to support the prioritisation of interventions by humanitarian and recovery actors. Furthermore, two information management units were established within IDPs hosting community cities (Latakia and Ma'raba in Rif Damascus) and staff has received training on operating and managing the system. A national training validated the database structure.

Reif Damascus **SHELTER PROFILE**

Areas of interest:
- ALTAL CITY
- ASHRAFEYAT SEHNAYA TOWN
- MAARABA TOWN

Cover of Reif Damascus Shelter Profile

Shelter needs assessment

UN-Habitat Syria Priorities for 2015

Scaling up Neighbourhood Plans

Based on the successful experience in local planning, UN-Habitat will scale-up the approach to reach a greater number of local authoriteis. They will be supported to undertake rapid analysis and project prioritization at different planning levels: regional, including linkages to secondary cities; the city level; and the neighbourhood level. Key neighbourhoods will be identified that can have a catalytic effect on the urban economy and for IDP/ host communities.

Support to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, and Solid Waste Management

Since late 2014 and supported by UNICEF, the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration and BMZ, UN-Habitat has expanded its cooperation in the WASH sector to provide technical support on Water, Sanitation, and Solid Waste Management to Syrian cities. The projects focus on three areas (i) producing more detailed GIS-based information on the status of urban WASH assets – water, wastewater, treatment plants, landfills and transfer stations; (ii) quick impact community projects to address local priorities; (iii) health and hygiene awareness and neighbourhood clean-up campaigns. The projects are being implemented in Aleppo, Homs and Rural Damascus.

Shelter Response

In 2015, UN-Habitat is increasing its engagement in the shelter sector. City-wide and neighbourhood shelter assessment will be conducted as a part of the City Profiling process. Additionally, more detailed assessments will be also done at a neighbourhood level to identify the most appropriate forms of shelter support in different neighbourhoods.

Moreover, it will include a capacity assessment of local shelter actors and will mobilise the private sector to become more engaged in shelter activities in order to boost the local economy. Based on the findings of the shelter needs assessment, mobile teams will implement the rehabilitation works including weatherproofing, partitions, services maintenance, building maintenance, feasibility studies for more significant rehabilitation works, provision of advice and training for collective centre management and prepare and oversee agreements between landlords and tenants that provide for security of tenure to vulnerable families. Support to host families will be provided through conditional cash support on a pilot basis.

Remaining population in damaged neighbourhoods suffering from lack of drinking water (Al Midan area east of Al Mahatta neighbourhood, Homs 2013)
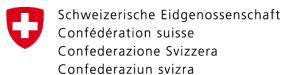

A family crosses a street piled with garbage in Aleppo, Syria

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