

No Covering, No Protection



The Hidden Aspect of
Women's Lives in Camps

2022

No Covering, No Protection

The Hidden Aspect of Women's Lives in Camps

Author:

Kenda Shaherhwasli

Translation:

Malek Diraneyya

External Reviewers:

Dr Bassem Hatahet

Dr Husam Alsaad

Issued by:

Syrian Dialogue Center

www.sydialogue.org

The English version is sponsored by:

Organisation Alamman

Justice and sustainable Development organization

www.jsd-sy.org

January 2022

To all those who emigrated or were displaced for standing out against injustice

To those who have paid and continue to pay the highest price for their honourable stances

With all love, respect and appreciation

No Covering, No Protection

The Hidden Aspect of Women's Lives in Camps



The Reality of Camps



of the total population in the liberated areas live in camps



in Unsupervised camps



in supervised camps



of the camp residents are female



of the camp population are adult women

Shortcomings in Current Response Patterns



Mismanagement of the sanitation operations



Corruption and negligence



Absence of the role of women's and feminist organizations



Identification with the supporter Policy



Contributing to changing societal values and perceptions



Lack of privacy inside and outside the tent



Shared service facilities (toilets and showers)



Bad health reality



Immoral Aspects



Cheap labor

The Daily Life Suffering in the Camps for Women

The Consequences of Camp Problems on Society

increase rates of

Childbearing rates

Domestic violence

School dropout

Poverty

Moral depravity

Suicide

minor marriage

Families without breadwinners

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Introduction	6
Section 1: The Reality of Camps in the North of Syria	9
Section 2: Invisible Suffering of Women in Camps	15
2-1 Intrusion of Privacy	15
2-2 Inadequacy of Shared Public Service Facilities	18
2-3 Unhealthy Environment and Weak Care System for Women	24
2-4 Immoral Scenes on the Rise	28
2-5 Cheap Labour and Dangerous Works	31
Section 3: Patterns and Shortcomings of Humanitarian Intervention in Camps.....	33
3-1 Poor Sanitation Management.....	34
3-2 Corruption, Neglect and Exploitation of Women.....	36
3-3 Supporting Women-oriented and Feminist Organisations Do Not Play an Active Role	37
3-4 Missing the Concern for Women's Issues and Submitting to Donors' Policies.....	40
Section 4: Repercussions of the Current Issues in Camps on Women and Society	44
4-1 Rise in Poverty Rates, Fragility and Exploitation of Women	44
4-2 Raising Numbers of Large Families without Breadwinners	45
4-3 High Childbirth Rates with Poor Parenting and Neglect.....	46
4-4 High Rates of Domestic Violence	47
4-5 High Rates of "Underage Marriage"	48
4-6 Increase in School Dropout and Child Labour	49
4-7 Rise in Moral Corruption, High Crime Rates	50
4-8 High Suicide Rates	51
Section 5: Conclusions and Recommendations	53

Executive Summary

The population of the areas under the control of the opposition and revolutionary forces is roughly estimated at 6.7 million. Camp residents make up 23% of the population, with almost 68-70% residing in regular camps under the supervision of humanitarian organizations. The rest, who make up nearly 30-32%, live in informal camps.

Females comprise roughly 53% of the camps' total population, and adult women comprise 27-32% of the camps' population. The Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch camps host more women and children than other regions. At the same time, the number of males there is half their proportion in Idlib and rural Aleppo camps.

In addition to the suffering that casts a shadow on the entire population of the camps due to poverty, need, and harsh weather conditions, women suffer doubly from factors that may be considered invisible or downplayed. Camps almost have a new social and administrative order with special characteristics. Residents have assumed specific roles and had societal power relations whereby various groups have emerged as vulnerable categories, including women. This extreme environment and new social order and roles have thus made life harder for women. One should note sociocultural considerations that translate into responsibility for family care and children's upbringing at a time when the fundamentals of such duties are nearly non-existent.

One of the significant issues women face is perhaps the intrusion of privacy inside and outside tents. The large number of family members residing in the same tent makes preserving privacy, even the slightest degree of privacy, almost impossible, particularly for women, adults or adolescents; children to a lesser extent. Moreover, whether canvas tents or tents made of blocks with a canvas roof, tents are by nature not soundproof and do not provide the protection required for families in general and women in particular.

On the other hand, most women in camps have to use shared service facilities such as toilets and bathrooms. Apart from being inadequate in numbers, these facilities lack several minimum standards and indispensable specifications that are required for women's privacy. Furthermore, they are unequipped to secure women's needs to look out for themselves or their families, meet hygiene or purification standards, or wash.

Concerning the hygiene aspect, the camp environment is not healthy or habitable in the long run. Effects on women are more evident due to the frequent use of shared sanitation facilities, shortages of safe drinking and cleaning water, the absence of healthy and balanced nutrients, and the constant exposure to places that are considered habitats of

bacteria and parasites. Such places are loci for the spread of diseases and bites of insects, mosquitoes, rodents, scorpions, and snakes.

In addition, 37% of mothers in camps suffer from malnutrition. The apparent increase in childbirth rates in camps and the frequent and closely spaced pregnancies affect women's health, especially with no medical or gynaecological care in camps and the inability of medical centres to provide services as required.

Immoral behaviours are emerging and unmistakably increasing in some regular and informal camps, whether in Idleb and rural Aleppo or the areas under Turkish control. They vary from cases of women harassment, such as visual harassment, verbal harassment, physical harassment and sexual harassment in some instances, to child abuse cases, predominantly sexual abuse. Taking drugs, especially pills, is widespread in some camps. Men and women of different ages are victims, initially as drug-takers and later as dealers and vendors. They find in drugs an alternative space to escape the awful reality and past traumas.

With the increase in unemployment rates in the north of Syria and the limited employment opportunities, many women are pushed to work irregularly due to poverty. For instance, women work in harvesting corps for minimal wages or in rubbish dumps, exposing themselves to health risks that might be fatal or make them vulnerable to exploitation.

Regarding the types of humanitarian intervention organizations carry out in regular and informal camps, most organizations work in food security, shelter, health, water, sanitation, education, and protection. They try to secure basic needs, despite the annual decline in the volume of external grants and the increase in the deficit rate in covering services required for the different sectors.

Despite these efforts, one can observe that all other sectors and needs have been disregarded, besides the failures of local and international organisations in some aspects. For example, one can highlight the poor management of sanitation, as workings in this sector are still inconsistent with the minimum standards for humanitarian response set by the United Nations. No changes, modifications, developments, or maintenance works have been made in spite of the increase in population and the surge in displacement. Health standards, environmental standards, and mandatory standards for designated groups are also not respected.

Furthermore, humanitarian workers, especially the executive staff, are accused of corruption and exploitation, especially of families with no breadwinner or widowers. No

projects put residents' experiences and capacities to use to empower them, particularly women in dire need.

The impact of feminist, women-oriented organisations or organisations concerned with empowering women is not visible. One expects that such organisations would prioritise women in camps, the poorest and most vulnerable segment among targeted segments, especially with the support and attention given by western actors. Nonetheless, organisations have directed their efforts towards topics of less priority, targeting more empowered and stable segments.

The policies integrated into most humanitarian organisations' proposed projects comply with the sponsoring parties' vision. Sponsors have imposed restrictions on funding shelter projects. These organisations have not made good use of the interest of western sponsors in women-related issues. Women in camps have not been portrayed as a vulnerable segment that needs to be empowered in daily life, supported, and given better living conditions. The attention of Arab sponsors has not been directed to issues that affect Muslim and Arab women, violate their privacy, and influence their values and their children's, to encourage them to fund projects geared towards mitigating negative effects on women.

The current pattern of humanitarian response in the north of Syria has partially consolidated a new order of values and social perceptions, especially in camp communities. This phenomenon appears to be more pronounced among women. A large swath of women has become accustomed to a poor lifestyle and yielded to the conditions they live under without resisting, attempting to change, or seizing opportunities that might help them rise.

These issues and obstacles emerging from camp life bear social effects that will materialise and affect Syrian society in general and women in particular, especially without anticipating any rapid intervention that addresses current social problems.

Due to the situation in camps, poverty rates, vulnerability and exploitation of women are expected to escalate. Numbers of large families without breadwinners are also likely to increase, in addition to the rise in childbirth rates with poor parenting and neglect. These harsh conditions may lead to an increase in domestic violence, whether spousal violence on the wife, father-to-children violence, or mother-to-children violence, along with the rise in "underage marriage" among boys and girls, the increase in school dropout, child labour, moral corruption and crime rates, such as drug trafficking and "honour crimes", and the rise in numbers of children of unknown parentage in the north of Syria.

It should be noted that women's suffering in camps is not unforeseen. Furthermore, life experience in camps is neither temporary nor about to end. Living conditions do not appear to have changed or improved in previous years; on the contrary, the situation has worsened and created negative implications, new problems and complexities, which clearly indicates that past approaches to deal with the problem have proved futile and need to be reviewed and developed.

This paper puts forward a host of recommendations to address emerging problems or mitigate their effects. Other segments should not be overlooked, although some recommendations are devoted to women-related aspects. Should the situation in camps remain the same, this will bring about significant negative effects. There is an urgent need to implement well-thought-out interventions that could contain problems and make the most out of the inhabitants' abilities.

Introduction

Camps are associated in our minds with necessity, poverty, coldness, winter, bare feet in the mud, and photos of food aid distribution. Talking about camps invokes images of harsh weather conditions, such as extreme cold, rain, snow, and flooded tents.

Nevertheless, tackling the subject of camps has other dimensions that are rarely addressed properly. Camps relate to daily life's little details, difficulties and problems. The camps of the north of Syria, which host a quarter of the population of the areas controlled by the opposition and revolutionary forces, have had a new social and administrative order, with varying roles and power dynamics influenced by new relational patterns. Thus, certain segments emerge, in camps, as vulnerable and marginalised, calling for more attention and support.

After years in place, the camp environment has created many issues that stand out and bear upon all inhabitants. What calls for attention is the impact of these issues on women, which is doubled due to the cultural particularity of the Syrian society and the centrality of families and female roles, whether mothers, wives, daughters or sisters. Consequently, social, religious, and cultural considerations shape social relations between this segment, namely women, and the rest of the society. Hence, the future effects of these issues and their repercussions on women as a whole will be particularly bad if not addressed and dealt with early.

This paper attempts to shed light on a new perspective of life in camps by focusing on the daily life that residents experience, specifically female residents, and their unsatisfied humanitarian needs. Furthermore, it highlights conditions that affect women's lives, as women represent a vulnerable category on the one hand and a category that has a significant social impact on the other hand.

The purpose of this study is to answer the following questions:

- What issues caused by the new social order do women suffer from in camps?
- Does the humanitarian response process consider women's distinctive needs and particularities?
- What future repercussions on society are expected because of the conditions women currently live in?

The importance of this paper is that it monitors emerging living conditions in camps and their implications on women in particular and the whole society in general. It also explores patterns of negative social change that might appear in Syrian society in the

future, alerting organisations, associations, stakeholders, and community leaders to these changes and the need for immediate action through programmes and plans.

The paper adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, examining and analysing secondary data that entail, on the one hand, articles and reports published by media outlets and, on the other hand, specialised reports and statistics released by humanitarian response monitoring and evaluation entities.

It relies in its primary data on the analysis and synthesis of views of individuals who lived and interacted with the study sample over varied periods. These views were collected through in-depth interviews with several male and female workers in the field inside regular and informal camps¹ within the numerous sectors of humanitarian response. Some of these workers lived in these camps. This method is known as "Participant Observation²". This is an attempt to assess and monitor workers' observations and fair assessment of the situation on the ground³.

Instead of interviewing camp women residents, male and female workers in the humanitarian sector were interviewed for many reasons, among which:

1 The study focuses on general camps that host families.

2 The 'Participant Observation' methodology is a research methodology adopted in sociological research, especially in studying sensitive issues. It is expected that the study sample would typically change their normal conduct or make statements that do not reflect reality since they would be aware of being subject to the observation of others.

See Participant Observation – A Technique in Anthropological Research, Aranthropos website, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3yHfiQp>

3 The research team carried out ten in-depth interviews in November 2021 with the following individuals:

1. Director of a humanitarian volunteer team in the shelter sector in Idleb and rural Aleppo areas.
2. Director of a camp in Idleb and rural Aleppo areas.
3. Member of a field team of a humanitarian organisation operating in Idleb and rural Aleppo areas.
4. Female administrative officer in a humanitarian organisation who periodically visits camps in Idleb and rural Aleppo areas.
5. Female volunteer who works with humanitarian organisations on a non-permanent basis and periodically visits informal camps in Turkish-controlled areas to carry out awareness-raising campaigns.
6. Female volunteer who works with humanitarian organisations on a non-permanent basis and periodically visits regular camps in Turkish-controlled areas to carry out awareness-raising campaigns.
7. Female resident in a regular camp in Turkish-controlled area who currently works as a volunteer with humanitarian organisations.
8. Female volunteer who resides in a regular camp in Idleb and rural Aleppo area and undertakes activities on the memorising of the holy Quran for children.
9. Female case director who works with a humanitarian organisation and follows up on critical cases involving women and children.
10. Expert familiar with humanitarian work in Syria who periodically visits Syria and camps.

- The exposure of humanitarian workers and volunteers⁴ to diverse types of camps (regular, informal, and widow camps).
- Some of those volunteers or humanitarian workers dwell in some of these camps.
- The familiarity of workers and volunteers with the humanitarian response scene and their ability to be objective and to make accurate evaluations of the effectiveness of responses.
- The personal contact between female volunteers and women in camps. Volunteers listen to their personal problems, especially sensitive ones, during health, protection, and awareness-raising activities.

Interviewees were selected for providing regular services, engaging in activities in various camps, and being aware of shifts, response types and efforts made. Female volunteers who reside inside these camps were also selected. Interviews offer information that covers the situation in camps of all kinds, whether regular or informal, across all locations, whether Idleb, rural Aleppo or the Turkish-controlled areas.

The first section of this paper will examine the situation in the camps of Idleb, rural Aleppo and Turkish-controlled areas (Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch) according to working organisations' statistics and open data. Section two addresses women's suffering, focusing on their camp daily life and what they should cope with daily.

Section three tackles the types of humanitarian intervention of local and foreign organisations in the areas under the control of the opposition and revolutionary forces, reviewing imbalances and shortcomings in such interventions. The fourth section investigates the future implications of these problems on women in particular and society in general. The study concludes with recommendations to address societal issues in these camps and mitigate their effects.

This study has considered camps as social organisations with unique characteristics and a specific administrative and social order, whereby individuals have particular roles and are situated within a societal hierarchy. According to this order, some categories have emerged as vulnerable, such as the category of women. Therefore, the study attempts to shed light on new roles while focusing more on the daily life of women and their issues, giving them more attention because of the centrality of the family in Syrian society and the centrality of women within families.

4 Several humanitarian organisations hire volunteer teams to carry out tasks and temporary projects on an ad hoc basis, avoiding recruiting whole teams that might not be needed at total capacity. Teams receive training from these organisations or others in the implementation mechanism of these projects and the standards to be observed.

Section 1: The Reality of Camps in the North of Syria

There are no accurate statistics on the situation in the areas under the control of the revolutionary and opposition forces, especially areas under Turkish control, such as the Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch.

Meanwhile, the statistical teams of the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU)⁵ make remarkable efforts to submit periodic reports that help to assess needs accurately. The population of the areas under the Syrian opposition's control is estimated at approximately 6.7 million. Roughly 4.2 million among them live in Idleb and rural Aleppo under the administrative authority of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)⁶, amounting to 63% of the total population of opposition-controlled areas. 2 million reside in the Euphrates Shield region⁷, equivalent to 30%. Lastly, half a million live in the Olive Branch region, equal to 7%, according to Turkish estimates⁸ (Figure 1).

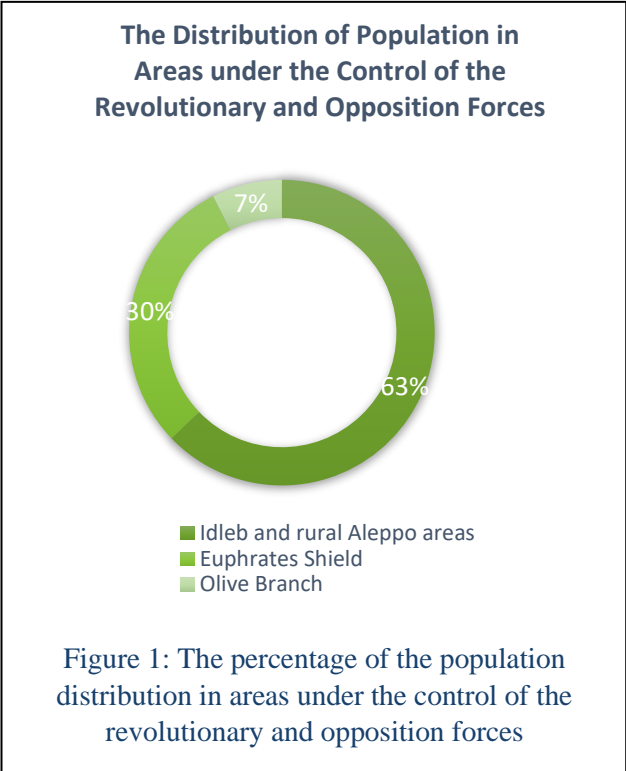


Figure 1: The percentage of the population distribution in areas under the control of the revolutionary and opposition forces

Camp residents constitute 23% of the total population in all areas under the control of the Syrian revolutionary and opposition forces (Figure 2). An estimated 1.5 million people, according to recent statistics produced by the ACU's Emergency Response Team⁹.

These camps are divided into two types:

5 A Syrian non-governmental entity that produces needs assessment, monitoring, emergency, case study, and mapping reports, evaluates the performance of humanitarian, stabilisation support and development projects, and acts as a broker with donors. See <https://www.acu-sy.org>

6 The report of the ACU's 'Emergency Response Coordinators' Team, published on 28/12/2020 (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3Drwevw>

7 Turkey Provides Health Services in the Operation Euphrates Shield's Area in Syria (Report), Anadolu Agency, publication date 24/8/2021, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3FmXzzF>

8 Two Years After the 'Olive Branch' Has Started... How is Life Going in Liberated Areas?, TRT Arabi, publication date 20/1/2020, <https://bit.ly/3qJhDbt>

9 The report of the ACU's 'Emergency Response Coordinators', publication date 3/8/2021, <https://bit.ly/3DwHuHi>

- Regular Camps: camps established by humanitarian agencies or organisations and built in an orderly manner. Regular camps are supervised by their establishing bodies or other parties associated with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Turkey. Supervising bodies follow up on camp needs, while each camp is managed by a resident who is charged with fulfilling the assigned responsibilities¹⁰. Furthermore, organisations provide food baskets, healthcare parcels, and drinking water and supervise the constant removal of rubbish and human waste. Tents are either canvas tents or block rooms with canvas roofs, thin metal sheet roofs known as "zinc", armed cement roofs or roofs made of prefabricated materials¹¹.



Photo showing a regular camp in Atme area

- Informal camps: camps set up by displaced persons, often on agricultural land and in inappropriate locations¹². They consist of canvas tents arbitrarily distributed within the

10 The camp manager is chosen according to the results of a competition held by the supervising body, which selects the best applicants to follow up on problems within the camp, coordinate humanitarian response operations, and work on solving issues in exchange for a monthly salary set by the organisation.

11 During his meeting with the research team, a humanitarian worker referred to a third type where the situation is like that of camps, known as 'accommodation centres'. However, accommodation centres are not included in camps statistics, although living conditions are similar to camps, as they are constructions without facing, walls, or services. Families share floor spaces, separated by cloth partitions. Such centres might be temporary or permanent.

12 Informal camps are often inhabited by a group of families with kinship or clan ties. Such families would not want their members to be dispersed across various camps. Hence, they would lease the camp land -often agricultural land- from its owners. The landowners allow them to set up tents without permitting them to build any constructions for fear of future ownership of the land. They are sometimes allowed to stay in the land free of charge under preconditions imposed on them.

camp, with no supervisory body. Organisations address the needs of such camps only in emergencies and in an unsustainable manner.



Photo capturing an informal camp

The Geographical Distribution of Population in Opposition Areas

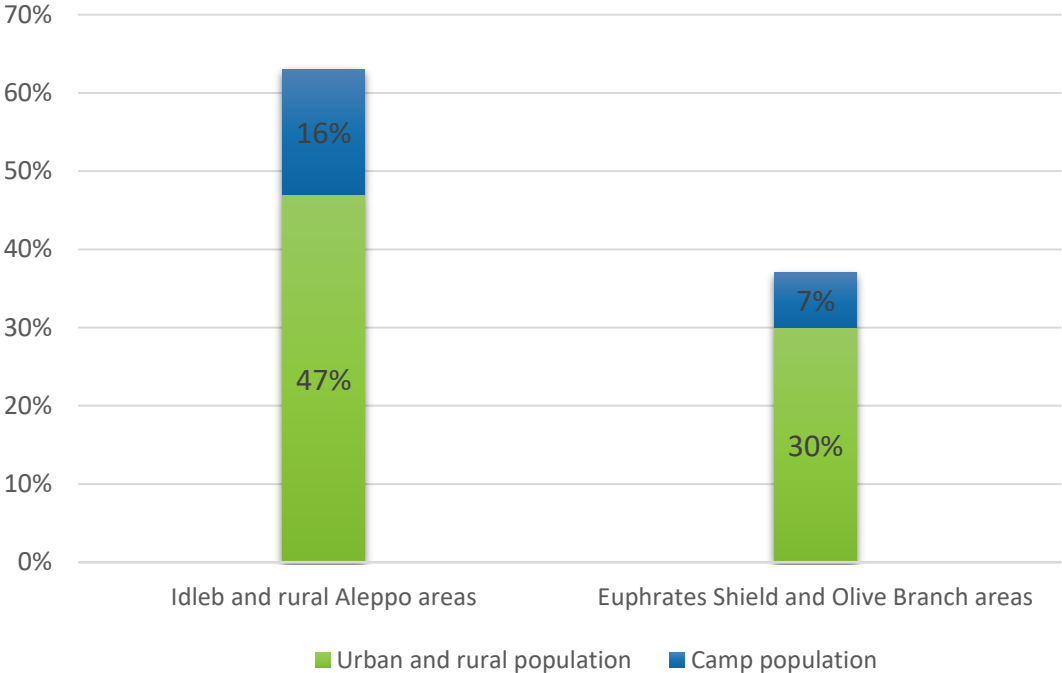


Figure 2: The population distribution in opposition-controlled areas by place of residence

There are 1489 Syrian camps in all areas under the control of the revolutionary and opposition forces, 1304 camps are distributed across the areas of Idlib and rural Aleppo, and 185 camps are in the areas of Turkish control¹³ (Figure 3). Camps of Idlib and rural Aleppo accommodate 69% of the total population of the camps, while the camps in the Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch areas accommodate 31% (Figure 4).

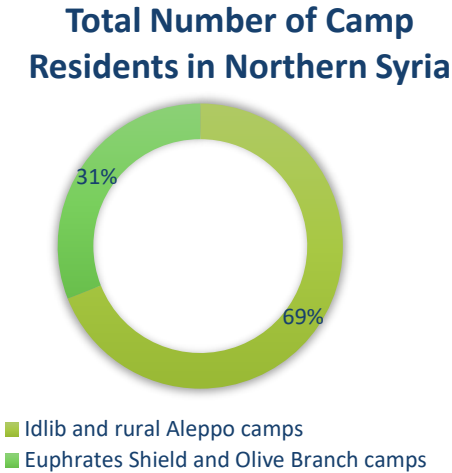


Figure 4: The percentage of camp residents by region

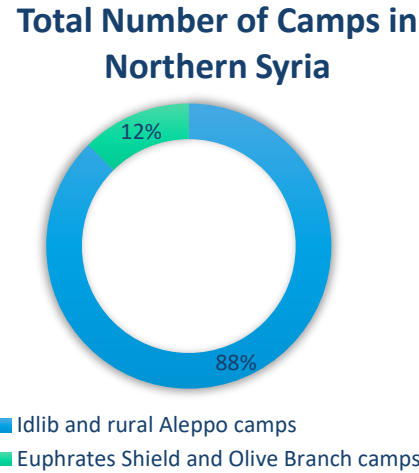


Figure 3: The percentage of camps by region

Informal camps constitute approximately 30% of the total number of camps in Idlib and rural Aleppo (Figure 5). In comparison, they constitute approximately 32% of the total number of camps in the Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch areas (Figure 6).

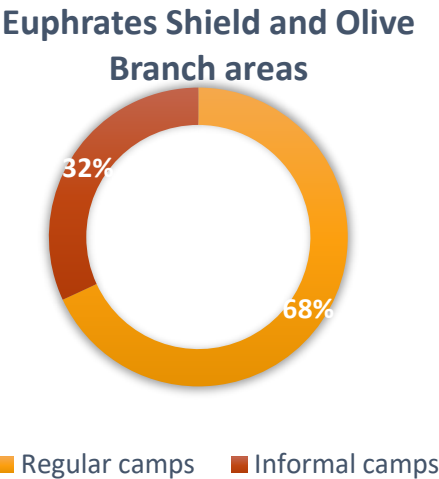


Figure 6: The percentage of camps in Turkish-controlled areas by type

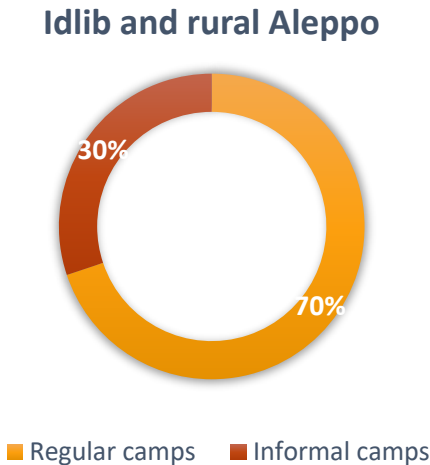


Figure 5: The percentage of camps in Idlib and rural Aleppo by type

¹³ The report of the ACU's 'Emergency Response Coordinators', August 2021, op. cit.

Although camps in Turkish-controlled areas are fewer than camps in Idlib and rural Aleppo, Turkish camps still host larger numbers¹⁴ and provide faster services and improved experience, with approximately 19% of the total population in Turkish-controlled areas residing in camps. In contrast, camps in Idlib and rural Aleppo house 25% of the total population.

These camps generally accommodate fragile groups, such as persons with special needs who constitute 2% and widows who comprise approximately 1% of the camps' total population. Vulnerable groups are more common in Idlib and rural Aleppo camps (Table 1).

	Idlib and rural Aleppo camps ¹⁵	Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch camps ¹⁶	Total camps ¹⁷
Total number of camps	1304	185	1489
Number of regular camps	911	126	1037
Number of informal camps	393	59	452
Number of individuals in all camps	1043689	469075	1512764
Number of males	307829	70362	378191
Number of females	328292	125537	453829
Number of children	408568	272176	680744
Number of residents in regular camps	855925	423166	1279091
Number of residents in informal camps	187764	45909	233671
Persons with special needs	19102	4685	23787
Widows without a breadwinner	10146	2972	13119

Table 1: Statistics on camps located in the areas under the control of the revolutionary and opposition forces according to the data of the Emergency Response Coordinators

According to the latest report by the Assistance Coordination Unit in September 2021, adult women constitute between 27% -32% of the camps' total population. The Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch camps have a higher proportion of women and children, while men there are half their numbers in Idlib and rural Aleppo camps (Figure 7). The share of females in camps, including female adults and children, is approximately 53%; 94% are

14 The average population of a camp in the Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch areas is approximately 2,500 people, while the average population in a camp in Idlib and rural Aleppo areas is around 800 people.

15 The reports of the ACU's 'Emergency Response Coordinators', published on 28/12/2020, <https://bit.ly/3Drwevw>, and on 3/8/2021, <https://bit.ly/3CmfpkI>

16 All figures displayed in blue were obtained through calculations.

17 The report of the ACU's 'Emergency Response Coordinators', publishing date 3/8/2021, <https://bit.ly/3DwHuHi>

under 50 years old, 16% are adolescents between 13 and 17, and 41% are still children¹⁸ (Figure 8).

The Distribution of Camp Residents

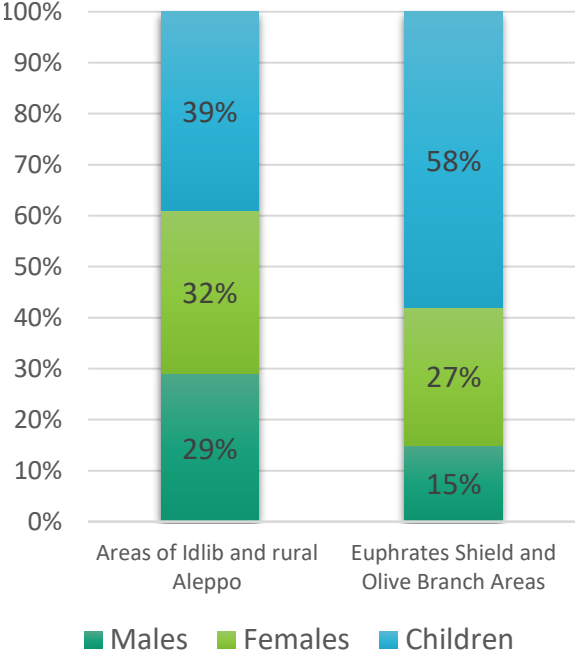


Figure 7: Distribution of camp residents

The Distribution of Females by Age Group

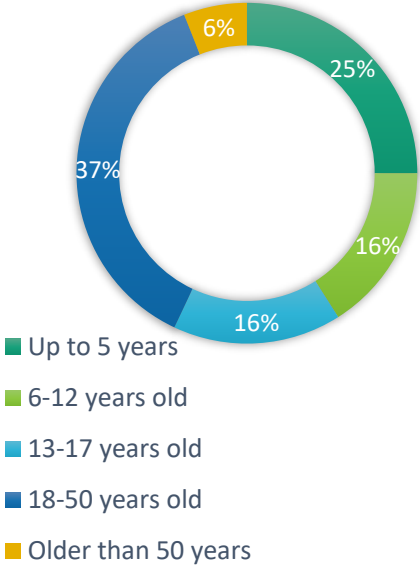


Figure 8: Female distribution by age group

According to the previous report, 1906 families are provided for by caretakers who are under 18 years old, making up 1.3% of the total number of families under study, and 11921 families are provided for by women, making up 8% of the total number of families¹⁹.

18 A recent report by the Assistance Coordination Unit, which covers 565 camps that house half of the camps' population, 143 thousand families, indicates that women in camps constitute 53%, while males, whether adults or minors, make up 47%. See Interactive Camp Monitoring Report in Aleppo and Idlib Governorates, September 2021, ACU, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3HGu127>

19 Ibid.

Section 2: Invisible Suffering of Women in Camps

Camps' environment is extreme. Residents of all ages and sexes barely stand it, and inhabitants of all segments are directly affected by such an environment. Consequently, new social roles and uneven positions of power are established, having disparate implications for inhabitants.

However, with its problems and difficulties, this environment becomes even harsher for women who must shoulder family care burdens in challenging settings, let alone the responsibility to raise and educate children in extreme conditions and an open environment. Most mothers do not have the awareness, means or tools to achieve this.

In the coming subsections, we will set out the most prominent forms of suffering women face in camps that go unnoticed.

2-1 Intrusion of Privacy

Families in general and women in particular lack privacy²⁰ as the tiny space of one tent accommodates a large family or several families. This means that a single canvas or cement tent may house between 12-20 people of different age groups and more than one wife. Hence, changing clothes or even relaxing become highly complex, and maintaining the lowest degree of privacy becomes almost impossible for adults, adolescents or children.

20 The term 'privacy' originally refers to private life. Defining the 'right to privacy' is difficult, debatable, and controversial. Some researchers have even suggested that it would be better to leave it undetermined so that to consider its application and determine its nature according to time and place, especially as societies disagree on values they place privacy on.

The 'right to privacy' can be defined as the right to be solely informed of and act on one's own affairs and information. It encompasses preventing others from intrusive access, spying, and dissemination of private information and prohibiting public exposure to private life. It also includes the right to be alone in the conduct of one's own affairs and the right to one's own residence or private property. We should not forget, however, that this or other definitions remain qualified by societies' customs, values and cultures.

See 'The Right to Privacy in Islamic Jurisprudence', research submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Master's Degree in Comparative Islamic Jurisprudence, Imam Muhammad Bin Saud Islamic University, Ibrahim bin Suleiman bin Abdullah Al-Shayeh, 2006.

The size of a canvas tent or a hard-wall tent ranges from 10 to 15 square metres at most. That is to say, each person will have 1 to 1.5 square metres. The distance between two tents ranges from 0.5 to 2 metres in most cases. Therefore, pedestrians who pass through side streets inside the camp can easily find out what is happening inside the tents.

Member of a field team in a humanitarian organisation operating in Idlib and rural Aleppo

A family may share the small tent and marry one of its members in a corner that is curtained off the rest of the tent and its residents. Since the curtain is made of thin cloth, everything that happens in the tent day and night is witnessed by all family members, old and young. This occasionally leads to the exposure of private parts and situations that no one should see.

At the same time, these families, in general, and women, in particular, lack privacy as a family because canvas tents are not soundproof, and their doors are made of cloth, hence rippable. Doors do not effectively protect inhabitants and do not adequately cover them up. On the contrary, wind may sweep through doors, revealing the tents' inside. Despite being better, tents with block walls and canvas roofs are also not enough since their rooms lie next to each other without surrounding spaces to preserve privacy.

The camp is gradually becoming one large family where members are exposed to each other. There are no privacy, social controls or even boundaries. All conversations and gossip can be listened to and circulated, even if personal. Voices become clearer at night. It is easy to recognise what is happening inside a tent with attention to private and precise details as soon as one approaches the tent. Families' daily events get circulated amongst the camp's residents, whether men or women.

Director of a humanitarian team working in camps

Furthermore, women feel embarrassed when washing their clothes. They often have to hang out laundry inside the tent, especially underwear. Women can also encounter embarrassing situations. For example, some men, boys or even children may be seen relieving themselves in the open. Such scenes are so frequent as to become a familiar sight.

As a result of this situation, most women are forced to wear thick modest clothes all the time, be careful about exposing their bodies while walking and moving, and wear hijabs throughout the day and even at night in summer and winter. They often avoid talking or whisper when necessary, considering that many of the camp's problems arise from the deliberate or unintentional circulation of information²¹.

When a wedding takes place in the camp, all camp residents rush to celebrate the newlyweds. Still, when the wedding is over, talks begin, especially among teenagers, as they fantasise or try to peek at the newlyweds' tent.

Department Officer of a humanitarian organisation who frequently visits camps

Widows or women living without a breadwinner face the lack of privacy twice. They are surrounded by the eyes of all camp residents who observe their movements. Many rumours may spread about them, especially with most of the camp's inhabitants being jobless. Some - women or men - may interfere with these families' privacy and impose some restrictions, whether or not they are family relatives²².

Moreover, students in general and female students, in particular, lack academic privacy. In the overcrowded tents, students cannot create a study environment, which they particularly need at middle and secondary school levels. While male students can study outside the tent or in the garden, female students miss any similar opportunity, especially with no public libraries providing students with an alternative learning environment that helps them pursue their education. Many female students must assume home care responsibilities alongside their mothers. Thus, female adolescents and young girls lose a vital opportunity to improve their lot or change their futures.

21 Afaf says, 'We are used to keeping silent to avoid making noise or letting others intrude into our private conversations. We are used to staying all day on standby without allowing our bodies to rest or stretch'. Women remain in this condition until night. With the first hours of dawn, they return to their daily routine.

Umm Abdullah says, 'No secret can be kept in the camp whatever you try. Words that come out are circulated by all its residents', describing the life of camps as 'intertwined and complex'. She adds, many 'divorces were sparked by a word circulating on the tongues in camps!'

See 'Baths and Medical Care' tops the list of the most neglected in the northern Syria's camps, Focus Aleppo Magazine, publication date 1/10/2019, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3DvWi8O>

22 Neighbours force themselves upon widows sometimes regarding how they should dress or raise their children. They might even check why women go out or talk to someone, which may develop into parental control.

2-2 Inadequacy of Shared Public Service Facilities

A basic form of women's suffering is public service facilities such as toilets and bathrooms that serve large numbers of tents and individuals. While this means a lack of privacy, it includes other issues, such as the shortage in numbers of facilities and ineffective health and social protection²³. Using shared facilities could be acceptable during the emergency response process in the first years of displacement. However, persisting with such a standard is difficult to bear, especially because facilities established during displacement have not changed ever since. They have not been maintained, renovated, or expanded except in a few instances.

One can recognise three types of service facilities (toilets and bathrooms) in camps²⁴:

- 1- Prefabricated shared service blocks that were built with the camp and have not changed. They are either entirely separate shared blocks, some for males and some for females, or shared blocks with a single entrance, divided in the middle by a barrier separating the men's and women's sections. On other occasions, all tents are served by one toilet for women and another for men or by one bathroom for the entire camp, males and females²⁵.
- 2- A private toilet for each family, mainly found in tents built from blocks (fully or partially) or added as an extension by residents at their own expense. Private toilets are often seen in organised camps or where a sewage system is provided for each tent.
- 3- An ad hoc toilet found in informal camps, created by residents. It is a hole in the ground surrounded by canvas or brick walls in the shape of a roofless room. Waste is poured into a larger cesspool next to the toilet.

23 Shared facilities create additional problems for women. In addition to the inadequacy of these facilities to serve beneficiaries, they lack privacy. Furthermore, the implications of their use for women are more profound due to women's greater contact with toilets since children accompany their moms. Women also do periodic cleaning. This frequent exposure affects their health and makes them more susceptible to disease as a result of the lack of hygiene. Women are also more susceptible to snake bites and scorpions. They are victims of harassment without having alternative options, let alone being unable to ensure their personal hygiene and that of their family. Ablution, showering or even washing as required are impracticable, while they have higher significance for women.

24 The inadequacy of sanitation facilities is not the whole story. The problem might be rooted in the types of these facilities on the one hand and the way they are constructed on the other. Furthermore, the condition of these facilities represents a fundamental shortcoming in the humanitarian response process and its supposed adherence to global standards. The types provided in camps, even pre-fabricated blocks, have many negatives that have lasted for years without anyone turning to tackle them. Toilets used in informal camps are unacceptable in cases of emergency displacement. Hence, it is more difficult to accept them after years of displacement. Still, no one has raised a finger even though they serve dozens of tents.

25 Many interviews indicate that a single toilet can usually serve between 10-20 families with an average of 6 members per family. One toilet sometimes serves an entire camp of at least 50 tents.

These service blocks discharge waste into a sewage network, sometimes connected to public networks, or into a nearby cesspool, which some authorities empty regularly. Cesspools vary in the method and conditions of construction and the effectiveness in isolating odours and protecting against pollution and disease.

I visited an informal camp in the Turkish-controlled area. The only toilet serving the camp was a hole in the ground surrounded by three mud walls built by the camp's residents. The height of the walls did not exceed one metre, without any covering that preserved the privacy of the male and female displaced people, leaving them exposed to the eyes of passers-by while relieving themselves (attached photo).

Volunteer with a volunteer team who periodically visits camps



A toilet in an informal camp, made of a hole in the ground surrounded by three clay walls, one metre high, without any covering (private image)

To shed light on the condition of public service facilities in regular camps under the supervision and follow-up of organisations, the Interactive Camp Monitoring Report²⁶ indicates that 117,37 toilets serve approximately 147 thousand families, and 2170 shared rooms-cabins are used for bathing. One should note that these blocks were built to serve the entire families in the camp. However, these facilities do not comply with the standards of the "Sphere Handbook", the humanitarian charter governing minimum standards in

26 The report assesses the needs of 565 camps in Idlib and rural Aleppo areas, which constitute 43% of the total number of camps, with approximately 792,814 people residing in the camps, accounting for 76% of the total population of the camps.

See The Interactive Camp Monitoring Report, ACU, publication date September 2021, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3HGGu127>

emergency humanitarian response, nor do they comply with the conditions specifically mentioned by the handbook to consider women's specificity in this response²⁷.

The "Sphere Handbook" standard for healthcare facilities is that the minimum number of shared toilets accessible by inhabitants must not be less than one toilet per 20 people. The distance between the dwelling and the nearest toilet should not exceed 50 metres. Toilets should have internal locks, adequate lighting, and sufficient water for personal hygiene. Locations should not pose security threats to users, preserve their privacy, especially women and girls²⁸, and have all necessary materials for users' needs, especially those with disabilities.



A toilet in an informal camp, a soak pit covered with canvas weighted down with rocks appears at the back where human waste is collected (source NoonPost)

27 The Sphere Handbook, Humanitarian Charter Governing the Minimum Standards in Emergency Humanitarian Response, 2018 Edition, <https://bit.ly/2PBu1jI>

28 The 'Sphere Handbook' states that collective toilets may be an immediate solution with a ratio of 2 toilets per 50 people, but must be increased later to reach a minimum ratio of 1 per 20 persons, **with a ratio of 3 for women to 1 for men**. Ibid.

Referring back to the statistics included in the recent assessment of the camps' needs²⁹, we note that the existing and serviceable toilets are insufficient to meet the needs of the residents of regular camps. One toilet serves at least six tents, approximately 36 people at the very least, excluding families with private toilets. A shared bathroom serves approximately 22 tents, about 120 persons (Figure 9).

Toilets		Shower Cabins	
Number of private toilets	85156	Number of private bathrooms	100079
Number of public toilets (cabins)	11737	Number of public bathrooms (cabins)	2170
Number of public toilets in service (cabins)	10242 (87%)	Number of public bathrooms in service (cabins)	1330 (61%)
Number of blocks and caravans	2885	Number of blocks and caravans	876
Number of Toilets without water supply	5164 (44%)	Number of bathrooms without water supply	857 (39%)
Number of female toilets	4003 (34%)	Number of female bathrooms	862 (40%)

Table 2: Statistics on shared service facilities in camps according to the Assistance Coordination Unit, September 2021

I visited an informal camp. Accessing the only toilet in the centre, located at the end of the camp, took at least a 10 minutes walk. In winter, it takes longer because of the mud. The route is not lit at all. It is possible that camp residents get bitten by insects, snakes and scorpions or get attacked by some animals as they go to this toilet in the dark.

Volunteer with a volunteer team who periodically visits camps

On the other hand, most shared facilities are neither maintained nor provided with needs. 13% of the toilets and 39% of the shower cabins are out of service. 44% of the toilets and 39% of the shower cabins lack the water needed for personal hygiene. 88% of the bathrooms lack lighting. A water heating system in public bathrooms is only available in 1.4% of the camps (Figure 9).

29 The Interactive Camp Monitoring Report, op. cit.

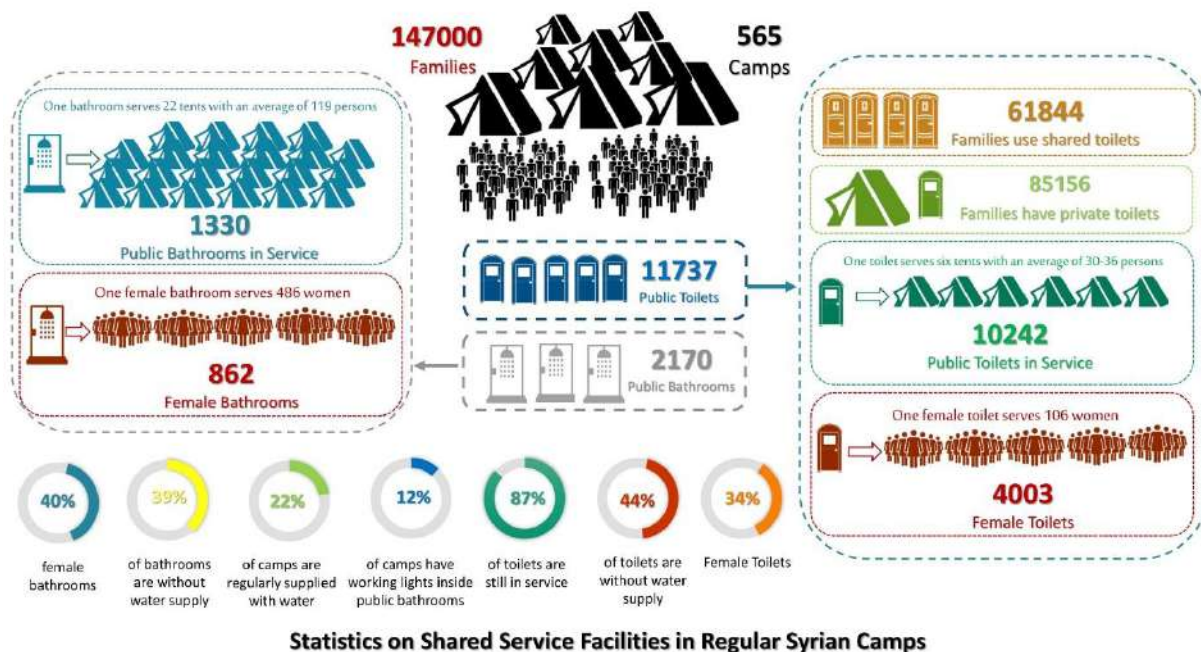


Figure 9: Statistics on shared service facilities in regular camps according to the data of the ACU, September 2021

It is evident that the facilities of regular camps should be better than those of informal camps as they are under regular supervision and evaluation. Nevertheless, current facilities in regular camps do not meet the required distance requirement. In fact, sanitation facility blocks are often located far away on the camp's periphery. This proves a hindrance at night and in winter, especially for women. There are no paved routes to such facilities, and there is no lighting in the camp or even inside the bathrooms, forcing residents - especially women - to use torches, mobile phone lights or lighters.

Women and girls can be subjected to continual harassment on their way to service facilities. This may vary from fixed staring to verbal harassment to even physical harassment, let alone privacy violation, especially with many unemployed men and adolescents who have nothing to do but watch others³⁰.

Moreover, these toilets do not meet minimum standards of protection. Most of the locks supplied were broken, so cabins could be easily broken into. This has discouraged many families from letting their family members go to public toilets at night, especially women and children. Some men accompany their women at night in emergencies, or it is women who arrange to go in groups³¹.

30 Many interviews with female volunteers, some of them stay in the camp, agree that these cases are very common.

31 From an interview conducted by the research team with a volunteer working in regular camps in the Euphrates Shield area.

Camp inhabitants, especially women, are also forced -by necessity- to carry personal-hygiene water with them to such toilets where water is not supplied at all. On other occasions, the water supply may be intermittent due to vandalism, theft or carelessness of some children who may leave water taps open, hence empty storage containers and deprive the rest of the population of shared water.

Many women are afraid of visiting public toilets at night. Husbands may often refuse to accompany their wives and children. Instead, they ask them to handle this on their own. Many divorces resulted from women waking up their husbands at night to accompany them or their children to the toilet. As a result, some women relieve themselves or their children in the open near the tent when necessary.

Volunteer with a volunteer team who periodically visits camps

As for shower cabins, they are not helpful in most camps. Residential tents have often been turned into bathing places, as the family empty the tent for women to shower one at a time³², with minimal water running out of the tent. Women may have to do without bathing in the bitterly cold winter months as it is challenging to drive the family out of the tent under the cold and rain.

I met a group of young women in a camp. Most of them dreamt about having a clean private bathroom where they could comfortably take a hot shower.

Official in a humanitarian organisation who periodically visits camps

When mentioning camps, topics such as ablution, washing and maintaining purity become secondary. It is difficult for these people who lack the basic necessities for a decent life to think of these aspects. Men or women may sometimes wait their turn to shower for several days. Many camp residents have failed to perform their prayers on time for this reason.

Director of a volunteer team who periodically visits camps

32 Bathing becomes more special for women in Arab and Muslim societies than for men, given the notion of al-'awrah and the need for women to shower at least monthly under the teachings of the Islamic doctrine.

The minimum standards of humanitarian response dictated by the 'Sphere Handbook' are not reached; In terms of numbers, service provided, or protection. It is the case even in the best regular camps under supervision, evaluation and follow-up. Therefore, how can we imagine the ordinary minutes of everyday life, considering a society with a unique Islamic culture that stresses the need for purity, ablution and washing, and related obligations to cover the body and wear hijab? All these aspects are fundamental human rights that must not be underestimated.

2-3 Unhealthy Environment and Weak Care System for Women

The camp environment is unhealthy in the long term. Canvas tents do not protect from heat and cold, with little drinking and cleaning water, poor access to healthy and balanced food, and the possibility of mass and rapid spread of diseases and infections³³.

Besides, shared bathrooms remain significantly dirty. The large numbers of users and the presence of a large proportion of children make it almost impossible to maintain them clean, especially with the limited amount of water. However, there are regular camps that have hired people to perform routine cleaning of these toilets, but this is still inadequate, especially in winter.

It is hard to imagine how filthy shared facilities are due to the large number of users and the presence of children. Body waste often covers the floor of the sanitation block, spreading everywhere. There are no baskets for children's nappies. In many cases, toilets stop working. Although the camp administration has hired two women to clean these blocks, they have left work despite the need. The situation is unbearable.

Shared shower cabins are no better. Showers are with toilets in the same place, as some toilets are provided with overhead showers. In addition, the walls of these cabins are filled with stains, mould and weird insects. There is no clean place to hang clothes.

Resident in a regular camp

67% of camps were built on agricultural land. Since women are more in contact with the elements of their surrounding environment while cleaning, preparing food or looking after

33 The 'Sphere Handbook' warns that 36 diseases and infections can be transmitted to humans through drinking water, especially if water does not meet standard requirements. There are also 30 diseases and bacterial or worm-induced infections that can be transmitted to humans through toilets and waste collection places.

children. Hence, looking back on reality, women become more susceptible to disease as a category of their own, especially if this coincides with malnutrition and lack of health care.

The spread of infection and disease has become very common, and it is easy to develop into an infection affecting most camp residents. Shared service facilities such as toilets and shower cabins, residents and children relieving themselves in the open, and soak pits that hold human waste are among the reasons for this spread. Soak pits³⁴, in particular, may cause groundwater contamination and lead to the pollution of wells on which some camps depend.

Insects, mosquitoes, rodents, scorpions and snakes are common in this environment. Therefore, they can threaten residents, especially when people go out to the toilets without adequate lighting in the evening. The effects of some toxic bites can last for about a month and can be deadly³⁵.

I live in a regular camp, where many families have built, at their own expense, block walls in the tent place. They have also added to the tent a private toilet that discharges waste into a nearby soak pit. Although this solution was convenient for these families and preserved their privacy, it has created a new problem. Families build these deep soak pits without technical knowledge and do not meet safety standards. Hence, these pits have become a threat to children as they often fall into them accidentally and die. Moreover, bad smells float around tents and excrement flows out when the owners do not empty the pits on time or when heavy rainstorms hit the camp.

Resident in a camp in the Euphrates Shield area

A survey by the Response Coordinators suggests that the situation in most camps is similar in terms of hygiene measures and sanitation services. It indicates that 85% of the respondents consider hygiene levels unacceptable, and 77% believe the level of water and sewage disposal services is unsatisfactory. 59% have never had access to hygiene baskets,

34 These soak pits, also known as cesspools, often become foci of dirt and disease. Waste may overflow and sweep through the campground after heavy rain. The pits may also become a children's playground where they throw stones inside, especially since many cesspools were not built according to the technical rules and were not well covered.

From an interview conducted by the research team with a humanitarian worker who periodically visits camps.

35 See Snakes and Scorpions Invade Displaced Persons' Camps in Idlib (Photos), Syria TV, publication date 4/7/2020, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3CzZL54>. Syria: Warnings of Insect Bites... Snakes are More Dangerous Than Scorpions, SnackSyrian, 12/7/2021, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3nyvAXy>

20% have not had access to them for a long time, 74% have felt that toilets were inadequate, and 77% have felt that organisations underreacted to providing hygiene services³⁶.

Dignity Baskets –which are baskets dedicated to women's personal needs– are not available in most camps and are rarely distributed, so many women turn to rags and other alternatives despite being unhealthy.

Volunteer in a volunteer team who

On the other hand, reproduction rates in camps are on the rise despite the poor living conditions. A report by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the Food Security Group in December 2020 sheds light on the humanitarian situation in northwest Syria. 42% of the families have at least one pregnant or breastfeeding woman, 17% have children under six months of age, and 30% have children aged between one year and 23 months³⁷. The annual birth rate is 21.19 births per 1,000 people in the north of Syria³⁸.

Frequent and closely spaced pregnancies affect women's health, especially if medical or gynaecological care is unavailable. In fact, 95% of the camps do not have a medical point, according to the report of the Assistance Coordination Unit. Women are forced to travel long distances to reach the nearest medical point or midwife and wait for hours in a long queue because these points serve large numbers of beneficiaries with modest resources.

36 Survey on the Water and Sanitation Conditions in the North of Syria, Emergency Response Coordinators, publication date 1/4/2020, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/30lmmzy>

37 The gynaecologist notes an increase in births in camps. She attributes the growth to the fact that 'intimate relationships become a means for killing time and feeling loved and safe after harsh experiences. Such intimacy gives people fresh hope of having new children. Moreover, the lack of contraceptives and lack of health awareness among displaced persons make pregnancy a more widespread phenomenon.

See 'Pregnancy and Childbirth in Camps in Northwestern Syria: Increased Births and Deaths, and a Lack of Space for Pregnant Women', Ayn Al-Madina, publication date 30/4/2021, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/32l0mLx>

38 Emergency Response Coordinators Team Statistics, publication date 28/12/2020, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3oMtpPN>

The first thing you will not miss in camps, especially informal ones, is the high number of pregnant women. I have met mothers under 18 with 4-5 children, all in early childhood age. Some mothers suffer, with their children, from malnutrition and anaemia. They sometimes cannot breastfeed, secure infant milk, or even treat sick children.

Official in a humanitarian organisation who periodically visits camps

Midwives are active in camps, with some setting up a tent to examine pregnant women therein. However, these midwives cannot follow up on complex cases, many of which are referred to hospitals when labour is difficult. As a result of this poor medical care, puerperal and neonatal mortality rates have increased³⁹.

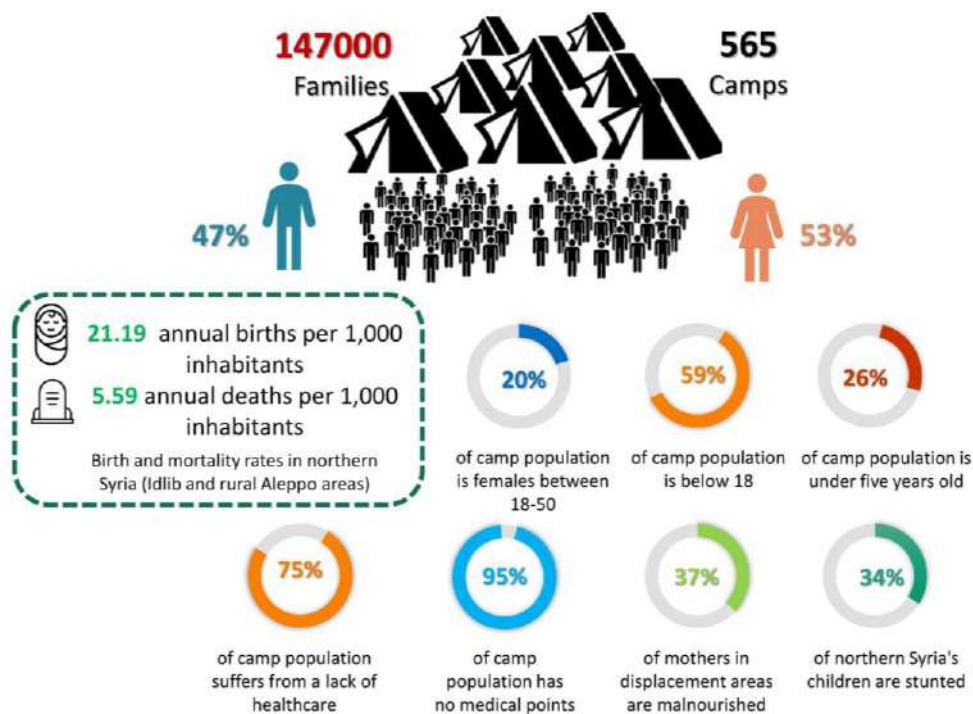


Figure 10: Overview of the health situation in camps according to the ACU's data

Acquiring drinking water or water for cooking and cleaning is not easy. It takes, on average, several hours of queuing due to overcrowding. Some families may opt to buy water at their own expense.

Resident in a regular camp

39 Ibid.

In a briefing to the Security Council at the end of 2020, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs noted that more than one in three children under five years old in northwestern Syria suffered from stunting. Child stunting has increased by 5% in the last year. Therefore, 34% of Syria's northwest children -males and females- suffer from stunting due to malnutrition, while 37% of mothers in areas of displacement suffer from malnutrition⁴⁰.

2-4 Immoral Scenes on the Rise

Immoral behaviours have begun to emerge and are clearly on the rise in some regular and informal camps, both in Idlib and rural Aleppo and in Turkish-controlled areas. Some officials attempt to deny and ignore them and pretend that there are no such issues. In any case, the situation in some camps is better than others, owing to the administration's ability to control the situation and the culture of the inhabitants.

These issues fall into several categories:

- Cases of harassment of women: statistics do not include the prevalence of harassment in camps. Some may deny that there has been harassment against women, especially in small camps of close-knit family groups⁴¹. However, this does not mean cases do not exist, as these incidents are often taboo subjects, and women do not dare to reveal them.

Cases vary from visual harassment to verbal harassment to sometimes physical and sexual harassment. Physical harassment often occurs at night and near shared bathrooms, especially where there are no lights since darkness contributes to the harasser's anonymity and the difficulty of holding him accountable⁴².

40 34% of Northern Syria's Children are Stunted by Malnutrition, Enab Baladi, publication date 18/12/2020, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3CGomVH>

41 Interviews indicate that camps hosting families of relatives or families from the same place or clan could have less verbal and physical harassment, as such kinship may be a protection for women. However, it does not prevent cases of child harassment. On the contrary, cases of child harassment at a young age (10 years or younger) by some relatives are reported in such camps. It also applies to children in their teens. This is because relatives' frequent visits to the tent do not raise suspicion.

42 Most of the female volunteers who were interviewed indicated that these phenomena were widespread in the camps they had visited. Some volunteers pointed out that they had followed situations where such harassment had evolved, especially among adolescent girls, and some had given awareness-raising lectures on the issue, informing women and adolescents about how they could act if they were subjected to harassment.

Divorces in the camp are frequent due to some incidents of harassment, which have evolved into illegitimate relationships. Some women, especially minors, were victims. They could easily be deceived with gifts and sweet talks as perpetrators took advantage of their husbands' long stay at work.

Resident in a regular camp

On the other hand, women in camps may survive being directly harassed. Still, they may witness embarrassing, inappropriate, or unethical scenes in some corners and behind the tents, which may have greater psychological effects on women, especially women in their teens⁴³.

- Cases of child harassment: child harassment is widespread, especially at a young age, and it is mainly sexual. Child harassment is attributed to parents' lack of awareness of such aspects⁴⁴, children's lack of awareness, and the inability to follow up or control children outside tents. Unethical practices among children, whether male-to-male, female-to-female, or among males and females, have spread in some camps, maybe resulting from previous harassment⁴⁵.

43 From an interview conducted by the research team with a female volunteer who lived in a regular camp in the Euphrates Shield area.

44 During an interview, an official in an organisation indicated she had witnessed an incident where a 19-year-old teenager had lured a 14-year-old girl who was a relative into believing that he wanted to get her to the hospital at the request of her mother, who went to the hospital in labour. The young man had assaulted the girl and returned her to the camp. The girl did not disclose what had happened to her. The mother did not pay attention to her until signs of pregnancy appeared on her. She presented her to the doctor, who indicated that the child was six months pregnant. The girl was transferred to the Department of Case Management in an organisation where they looked after her until she gave birth by caesarean section. Surprisingly, a nurse reported an adultery incident to a security agency of HTS. The girl and her child were arrested immediately after birth and imprisoned for punishment.

Several organisations intervened, and a lawyer was hired to defend them, seeking to force the young person to confess to what he had done after denying it. After community pressure, they succeeded in forcing the young perpetrator to admit it. The mother and her child were released after two-week detention.

45 The responses of female volunteers who were interviewed agreed on the prevalence of harassment cases against children, referring to incidents they had witnessed or been following and providing details about.

Adolescents and young people frequently break into tents and try to harass young children or lure them out of the tent while mothers are cooking or washing. The harasser might be a family acquaintance and no stranger.

Volunteer regularly making field trips to camps

- **Drug prevalence:** abuse of drugs, especially pills, is widespread in some camps⁴⁶. Men and women⁴⁷ of different ages are victims. By taking drugs, users find room to escape the bad reality and forget what they have been exposed to. Many of these users later turn into promoters and dealers to meet the costs of using drugs⁴⁸.

The spread of drug abuse in camps is catalysed by the despair of camp residents and by the fact that they remain unoccupied most of the time, as well as by the lack of control, security chaos and unlicensed pharmacies selling types of medication resembling drugs in effect.

Last week, I gave an outreach session to female adolescents aged 12-18 who were on drugs. These girls, who were in a regular camp within the Turkish-controlled area, had used pills to escape reality. As young as 17, one of them told me that these pills had been helping her forget her failed marriage experience, her brother's death, and the adverse circumstances she had been living so far.

Volunteer regularly making field trips to

46 Users of Captagon increased between 2019-2020, with one dealer's sales reaching up to 100 pills per day. Formerly, this amount would take a week to be sold. These narcotic substances, such as the Captagon, Tramadol, Proxamol pills, Baltan, Zolam and Pregabalin, the latter commonly called 'Roche' pills, arrive from regime-controlled areas. People in business transfer them through areas where Hezbollah's military checkpoints are located in coordination with faction soldiers. Afterwards, these substances pass to Idlib and its rural areas, especially Sarmada, al-Dana, Atme, and Deir Hassan, in addition to Idlib City and Azaz in northern Aleppo. They are transferred in cars or buses inside hidden boxes through persons with military authority who receive large sums of money or charge a share of narcotic substances as an alternative to cash.

See Increasing Narcotic Substances in the North of Syria, al-Jumhuriya, publication date 18/11/2020, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3qUKkLR>

47 A volunteer who visits camps periodically indicated that drugs might be offered in exchange for some sexual services. These pills also might spread in schools, where some use the opportunity to lure teenage girls into experimenting with drugs. This is to turn them first into addicts and later into dealers, as checkpoints do not search women, allowing females to transfer such goods more freely.

48 The female volunteers' responses showed a consensus on the prevalence of drugs in the camps they visited. Two volunteers, who reside in regular camps, confirmed that drugs are all over their camps (a camp in Idlib and a camp in the Euphrates Shield). Drugs are becoming popular even among women.

The justification appears to be ready at hand for most women users. Although they recognise the seriousness of drug abuse, they still consider it acceptable. Or rather, a natural consequence of life within camps and the only means for alleviating psychological stress and escaping reality⁴⁹.

2-5 Cheap Labour and Dangerous Works

In these difficult conditions that camp residents live in, with high unemployment rates in the north of Syria and limited employment opportunities, many women are driven by necessity toward temporary and seasonal work, such as olive picking or harvesting crops⁵⁰. Employers often want to use groups of women in these jobs since women's wages are lower and because such women refuse to work with groups including men.

Women's daily wage in agribusiness ranges from 10 to 20 Turkish liras, or approximately \$1-2.5 per day. Women go in groups that include adolescents and mothers who had to leave their children alone in the camp for about 10 hours per day, from early morning to sunset.

Volunteer regularly making field trips to camps

In addition to the seasonal harvesting of crops, some women and children work in rubbish collection. They head to rubbish dumps searching for food, clothing, or waste that might be sold or used for heating purposes. The daily earnings of one individual may reach 30 Turkish liras⁵¹.

In addition to the risks and dirtiness, this environment causes many skin diseases, leishmaniasis and diarrhoea. Workers are also exposed to mosquito and rodent bites and can be accidentally wounded by sharp tools, sharp metal edges and multiple medical instruments such as scalpels and needles. It could also be fatal. Male and female children

49 A volunteer overseeing Quran memorisation workshops indicated they had run awareness-raising sessions for women about drugs. Women were aware of the health consequences and the religious prohibition. However, they justified staying on drugs by saying they reduce pressure, considering the lack of prospects or any opportunity or hope to improve their lives. Most answers revolved around the fact that everything in their lives drove them to death and was not to God's satisfaction, whether it was their suffering or actions.

50 See Syrian Women Working in Harvesting Agricultural Crops to Support Their Families, DW Arabic, publication date 18/10/2021, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3oKSIHj>

51 See Waste is a Source of Livelihood for Some Women in Idlib, Syrian Women's Network, publication date 13/3/2021, (in Arabic), <https://swnsyria.org/?p=13359>

frequently die in rubbish dumps after sliding or when rubbish hills fall on them, especially since many children working in these dumps are of early age⁵².

There is a rubbish dump close to an informal camp in the area of Idlib. Children of all ages, both male and female, stay in this dump site without any supervision. It is difficult to approach the area because of the stench. Moreover, the children who regularly visit the dump are mischievous. They may attack any passer-by if he holds a loaf of bread. They also hurt each other or others as they carry knives and sticks. Inside the dump, everything you can imagine happens.

Official working in an organisation, she periodically makes field trips to camps

52 Recovering the Bodies of Three Children Who Died in a Rubbish Dump in Idlib, Aramme Network, publication date 6/1/2020, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3CPuA65>

Section 3: Patterns and Shortcomings of Humanitarian Intervention in Camps

Most organisations work in the areas of food security, shelter, health, water, sanitation, education and protection. Needs are increasing with a continuing decline of the support given to these sectors and with emergency and exceptional situations, such as renewed displacement, the coronavirus pandemic and the extension of cross-border access for aid under Security Council resolution.

The humanitarian intervention of organisations has decreased in quantity and quality across response sectors because of the annual decline in external support, most of which is overseen by United Nations offices. This has resulted in a considerable service deficit within sectors. The health sector faced the highest deficit over the past year, with 78% - 83%, followed by the water and sanitation (sewage) sector, with a shortage of 69% - 79%, while the protection sector shows a shortfall of 61% - 77%, and the food security sector runs a deficit of 52% - 59% (Figure 11).

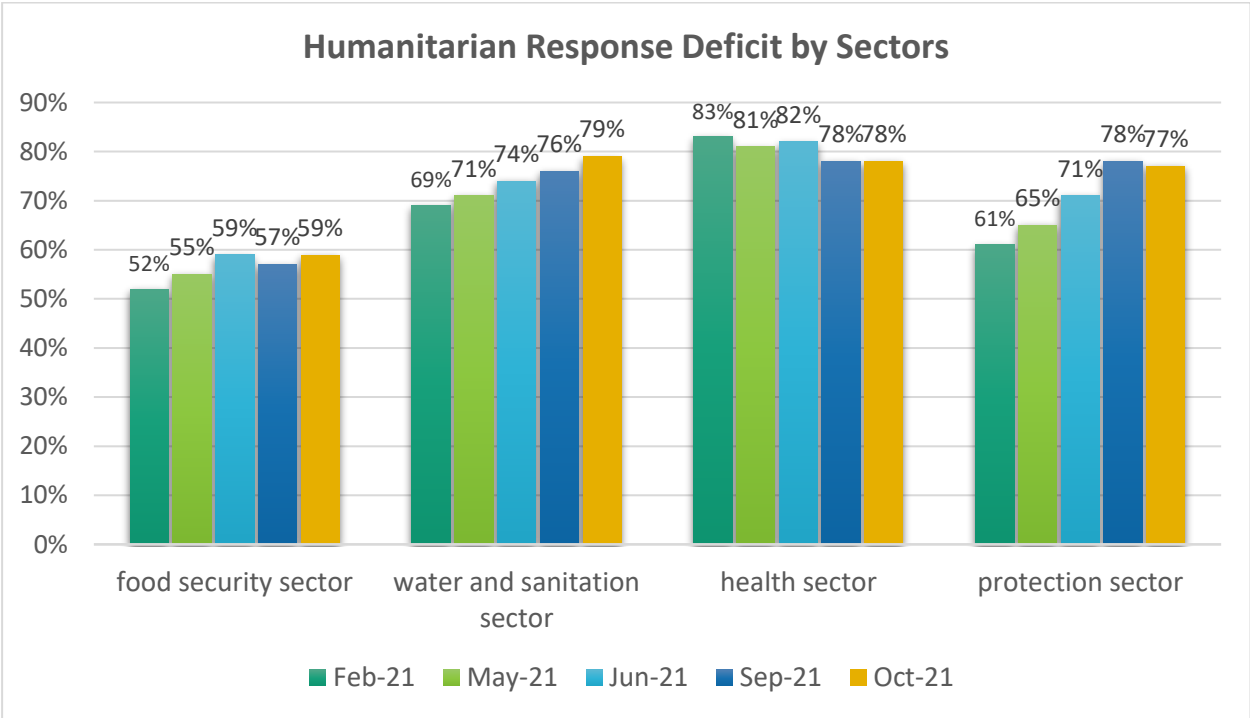


Figure 11: Deficit in humanitarian response by sector ("Emergency Response Coordinators" team data)⁵³

53 The reports of the 'Emergency Response Coordinators', October 2021's Report <https://bit.ly/3x7fffE>, September 2021's Report <https://bit.ly/3HGZqBb>, June 2021's Report <https://bit.ly/3CEMXKP>, May 2021's Report <https://bit.ly/3kVL0Ug> and February 2021's Report <https://bit.ly/3kRQkl8>.

While support levels have fallen, there is an apparent lack of attention among humanitarian organisations to any needs beyond the scope of these five sectors. Organisations also do not pay attention to the emerging negative societal issues, which they should handle since they are the most prominent in the field. They should develop their response types, innovate projects that mitigate the harmful effects of migration and displacement, and focus on women and vulnerable groups. One shall bear in mind that some organisations can reach out to other parties capable of financing, such as some Arab organisations.

There are challenges in managing humanitarian aid in the areas under the control of the revolutionary and opposition forces. One should note that humanitarian organisations are the main and only actors currently working in camps and are responsible for developing their humanitarian response and absorbing some of the negative effects women have fallen victim to. Hence, we shall refer to shortcomings in the work of local organisations and to wasted opportunities that organisations have missed and that have had clear repercussions on women. Among which:

3-1 Poor Sanitation Management

The data and figures of the statistics mentioned earlier indicate that what has been implemented so far in the water and sanitation sector, in particular, falls short of the minimum UN humanitarian response standards. Standards targeting women and girls have not also been met, as facilities for women should be triple the number for men, which is not the case. What was done at the beginning when camps were constructed has been left untouched despite the increase in the population, the surge in displacement and the years that have elapsed since the establishment of camps. One can excuse those who created camps under the pressure of bombardment and displacement emergencies, but what about the following years? Based on past reports, it should have been lobbied for an increase in the support given to this sector for its impact on other sectors, such as health and shelter.

Observations of camps in many areas confirm that the concept of shared service facilities is no longer efficient. Shared facilities do not reach any of the health or environmental standards, nor do they maintain beneficiaries' dignity. On the contrary, they have brought problems that affect all segments, particularly the most vulnerable groups such as women, children and persons with special needs. On top of that, preserving the status quo implies outright dismissal of the "Sphere Charter" provisions. These provisions require community engagement in developing the supply and sanitation process in order to

improve public health and promote hygiene. The charter also requires checking key indicators that help identify and establish minimum needs, especially for women⁵⁴.

Strangely enough, some humanitarian actors have been able to secure funds for solving certain issues in camps. However, such initiatives are only tinkering with the problems, and they do not consider the beneficiaries' interests and priorities⁵⁵.

In the "Mountain Camp" in the Euphrates Shield area, the sewage network passes at the edge of the tents, as shown in the photo. This network is made of an open watercourse through which wastewater and toilet waste travel down to the soak pit, spreading stench and disease and attracting insects.

Volunteer who makes regular field trips to camps



A photo from an informal camp in the Euphrates Shield area showing how the open sewer that serves the camp passes next to the tents (private photo)

54 The 'Sphere Charter', in its following text, explicitly refers to the reasons that motivate the interest in this topic as an element of international law, stating:

'International law specifically protects the right to water and sanitation. The right includes access to a sufficient, safe and affordable water supply for personal and domestic use, and private, safe and clean sanitation facilities. States are obliged to ensure this right during crises.

Safe water and appropriate sanitation facilities are essential to:

- sustain life, health and dignity
- prevent death from dehydration
- reduce the risk of water-, sanitation- and hygiene-related diseases; and
- allow for adequate consumption, cooking, and personal and domestic hygienic requirements.

The right to water and sanitation is part of the universal rights essential for human survival and dignity, and state and non-state actors have responsibilities to fulfil the right'.

55 For example, a humanitarian organisation started building an outdoor cement kitchen for each canvas tent with sanitary installation to protect canvas tents against burning incidents. The area of this kitchen does not exceed one square metre.

3-2 Corruption, Neglect and Exploitation of Women

Accusations of corruption are levelled against some humanitarian workers of organisations, especially the executive staff, as there is no fair distribution of aid. Some workers or administrators overseeing camps may exploit their positions for personal gain⁵⁶. For example, they may manipulate female-headed families or widows' families⁵⁷ or privilege some relatives and acquaintances by giving them greater aid shares⁵⁸.

A widow whose case I have followed had been previously exploited by a camp's administrator (the camp was not a widow camp), and she had engaged in immoral acts. When the relationship was revealed, the camp administration, which was affiliated with the party that had exploited her, intervened. As a result, the widow was held fully responsible, and the exploiter was acquitted. Witnesses who testified in her favour were threatened. Afterwards, she was expelled from the camp, prevented from entering and removed from her young children, who were left alone in the tent without caretakers.

Case manager working with a humanitarian organisation

Interviews indicate that a segment of women in camps possess qualifications that help them improve their situation and that of their families if they receive minor support, get trained or are empowered through projects that build on their past experiences. However, there were no deliberate efforts to unlock these potentials. The organisations' periodic needs assessment processes revolve around counting the number of individuals and listing

56 Regardless of their validity, these accusations and other factors have contributed to the public's negative perception of organisations. For more information on this subject, *see* a previous paper by the Syrian Dialogue Centre, *Perceptions of Humanitarian Work in Syria after 2011: The Challenges of Need and Lack of Resources*, which was published in January 2021, <https://bit.ly/3LGqClW>

57 *See* Camps in Northern Syria.. Two Stories of 'Sexual Harassment and Blackmail' of 'Widows', Alhurra Channel, publication date 27/4/2021, (in Arabic), <https://arbne.ws/3oMyhEu>

58 A volunteer we met who lived in a regular camp says, 'One of the camp officials sold relief baskets distributed by an organisation. He collected the baskets by providing fictitious names. The police arrested him while selling, but through bribery and with the help of connections, he was able to get out of prison and return to his post'.

In the same camp, one family has a monopoly on working in the only school which teaches primary, middle and secondary levels. All the family works in this school, including the father, mother, children, relatives and cousins, although they do not possess the required qualifications. It is noteworthy that the camp hosts competent people with diplomas and previous experiences who are better and more suited to teaching.

their urgent requirements. There was no proper focus on exploring, developing and benefiting from the experiences and talents of camp residents to lift them out of need⁵⁹.

Many organisations come to assess the needs of the camp. They always ask the same questions and collect the same information. No one cared to know that my neighbour in the camp is an engineer with previous experience, but she does not find work. My other neighbour is a skilled seamstress who needs to buy a sewing machine to improve her lot, and the other is a hairdresser who lacks some tools to do her job.

Resident in one of the Euphrates Shield camps

3-3 Supporting Women-oriented and Feminist Organisations Do Not Play an Active Role

Humanitarian organisations could be overwhelmed by work in humanitarian sectors. However, they have devoted part of their response in the protection sector to awareness-raising campaigns targeting women in camps on remnants of war⁶⁰, health education, school dropout, parental skills, and confronting the epidemic, in addition to psychological support activities for children and women.

Some people have the misperception that inhabitants of informal camps used to be homeless before. However, during my frequent visits to numerous informal camps, I discovered that many of these families had lived in civilised cities and villages, having a good standard of living. These women brag about pictures of their former homes, luxury furniture, and various electrical appliances they had. They lament that they have left that life and fled in search of safety and fear of arrest. They stress that they will stand these hardships only for the family's safety.

Volunteer with a number of organisations who periodically visits camps

59 The research team asked women workers and volunteers who were conducting a needs assessment for some organisations about the information they had collected. There was a consensus that the information collected focused on the family's situation in terms of the number of individuals, the presence of diseases and access to aid. None of the workers had conducted a needs assessment that recorded the competencies and experiences of women in camps.

60 We mean awareness-raising sessions on the dangers of mines and unexploded remnants of missiles, which civilians must not approach or handle but are safely cleared by specialised trained teams.

Nevertheless, observations of camps show a lack of interventions by other organisations, particularly women-oriented, feminist⁶¹ or women's empowerment organisations. These organisations were expected to prioritise the women's category in camps, which is the neediest and most fragile among its target segments, especially as women's situation and empowerment and the improvement of their living conditions are on the agenda of western donors. Still, this western concern for women has not been cultivated through studies and reports that draw attention to the situation and needs of women beyond rapid response. On the contrary, most of their studies and reports -even their projects- have focused on subjects that are in line with the favourable international mood⁶².

Given the concerns of women-oriented or feminist organisations, one notices that their projects range from political awareness, political empowerment, economic empowerment, skill development activities and courses to some educational or religious courses. Meanwhile, the target group in the majority of these training sessions is the wealthiest and most empowered segment that resides outside camps. So, the proposed projects appear to exist in stable environments and well-established societies that have solved women's problems and met their basic needs. They then moved to help them secure their other demands for political empowerment or self-assertion.

61 Women-oriented organisations are organisations that tackle women's issues and target them in general without adopting the feminist agenda. Feminist organisations are organisations that carry out their projects and activities in line with the philosophical grounds of the internationally known feminist movement, which is based on the idea of uniform equality between women and men, establishing its work on the perception that males access greater advantages and roles than females.

62 The Assistance Coordination Unit -the largest monitoring and needs assessment team that holds all statistics and figures on the humanitarian situation- issued a report entitled 'Women's Rights Between Law and Practice in Areas out of the Regime's Control 2021', which coincided with the periodic assessment of the situation in camps. However, the present report did not address women's rights that are practically denied in the humanitarian scene, nor the challenging conditions of a large proportion of women, who constitute 25% of the women in the region. The report merely spoke of women's rights in relation to issues of discrimination between men and women, the right to nationality, the right to education, the right to marry themselves, women's access to community and cultural activities and their right to inherit, without any reference to the humanitarian conditions of women in the north of Syria in general and of women in camps in particular.

See 'Women's Rights Between Law and Practice in Areas out of the Regime's Control 2021', ACU, publication date 6/8/2021, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3BDGUYh>

I classify myself as a 'feminist'. I have listened to, followed and met a lot of influential feminist leaders during meetings. However, I have not seen any of them interested in visiting a camp or talking to women there. During their interventions in the Security Council or while talking with foreign ambassadors, they have not bothered to demand the rights of this group or try to raise funds for projects that help them improve their situation. All their efforts are concentrated on topics of political participation, even if on the ruins of millions of wronged women.

Volunteer with a number of organisations who periodically visits camps

In some people's view, none of these women-related organisations -especially feminist organisations- have been addressing the most vulnerable groups, nor have they launched projects that aim to meet their needs. They have not considered improving women's situation and ensuring they live under humane conditions, although such organisations have a broader space for acting and are directed by women who are on good terms with European donors and even Arab donors. These organisations seem to have considered that women's food baskets and canvas tents are all that they need in camps.

Those involved in humanitarian or feminist organisations voice their discontent when discussing women's situation in camps. The argument is always at hand: the donor is not interested in supporting such activities. Even in women's economic empowerment projects, some organisations occasionally remove some of the observations of the Monitoring and Evaluation Team that were added to the daily reports because they want to show the donor how successful these projects are in order to ensure continued support, even if these projects are failing, and not achieving the expected impact.

Volunteer with a number of organisations who periodically visits camps

On the other hand, despite the spread of da'wah activities and the many institutes and centres in northern Syria, these activities have not properly targeted camp areas. Some modest attempts have existed based on voluntary efforts in some regular camps⁶³, while

63 During her meeting with the research team, a volunteer staying in a regular camp noted that da'wah activities were not organised in all camps. When organised, such activities are limited and unsupported, and they rely on the efforts of volunteers who lack the means and tools to help continue the work. Hence, their impact is limited and unmeasurable. Moreover, these activities are subject to interruption and termination when individual donations are interrupted or due to the lack of appropriately qualified personnel who work according to a straightforward approach or plan.

no relevant efforts have been made in informal camps. Religious and da'wah activities could have had a clear impact on this environment and could have deterred common negative social issues owing to the camp residents' cultural, social and religious backgrounds.

3-4 Missing the Concern for Women's Issues and Submitting to Donors' Policies

When talking about the situation and needs of camps, the decline in donor support and policy orientations are often mentioned, which is generally true. However, organisations still have room for manoeuvre that has not been fully used.

Earlier, through internal advocacy campaigns, organisations have been able to influence donors' orientations, push for implementing projects based on an objective needs assessment that is periodically reviewed on the ground, and impose themselves as powerful humanitarian and even political players⁶⁴.

Regardless of all foreign policies that have restricted the financing of shelter projects which respect the needs and dignity of residents, allegedly because these camps are a temporary solution and people must not be encouraged to settle outside their homes and areas⁶⁵, some organisations were able to early obtain funding for the construction of a number of residential villages that preserve residents' minimum dignity.

However, these organisations have not been active enough to build on the concern of western donors for women's issues. Women in camps have not been highlighted as a fragile segment that needed to be empowered, supported, and given better living conditions. Arab donors' attention has not been drawn to issues affecting Arab and Muslim women, violating their privacy, and influencing their behaviour and those of their children, nor have they been encouraged to finance projects that could have mitigated negative effects on women. These topics are of great concern in Arab and Muslim societies and can motivate many donors from a religious and moral standpoint.

64 For more information, *see* a previous paper by the Syrian Dialogue Centre entitled 'Perceptions of Humanitarian Work in Syria after 2011: The Challenges of Need and Lack of Resources', *op. cit.*

65 A field worker indicated that organisations overseeing camps prevented residents from building toilets at their own expense despite a ready sewage system in the camp for fear that they would violate the donor's policies.

There is complete submission to donors' policies and desires among several organisations while being satisfied with what donors provide. On the contrary, some organisations may compromise on terms, quality and some of the fundamentals of the project in order to keep the donor satisfied and ensure the support will continue. Organisations have not made the efforts needed to improve the camps' situation, nor have they examined future scenarios that handle the situation after cutting the funds. Most organisations have only implemented projects without looking for more sustainable solutions.

Official working in a humanitarian organisation, regularly visiting camps

3-5 Participating in Changing Values and Social Perceptions

Social values and perceptions of a significant proportion of the population in the revolutionary and opposition forces areas have taken new forms that have been consolidated due to the pattern of ongoing humanitarian response in the north of Syria. Several interviews indicate a general shift in perceptions among camp residents and women. Women, in particular, have become accustomed to an inhumane, destructive lifestyle. This category has even sometimes lost its ability to be aware of its bad situation or its desire to correct or improve it, with explicit dependency on others⁶⁶.

This phenomenon is even more evident among women. Many women have yielded to the circumstances without showing any resistance, attempting to change or taking advantage of specific opportunities. On the contrary, a group of women -especially widows- has

66 During his interview with the research team and following lengthy periodic visits in the past months to the Syrian territory - especially the camps- an expert familiar with Syrian humanitarian work noted that he had encountered many cases in which the organisations' attempts to relocate families to better-off villages and residential homes were rejected for various reasons, including the fear of losing free aid that reaches these families on a monthly basis, or because new types of social, economic or moral relations were forged within the camps in such a way that beneficiaries might seek to preserve and capitalise on -although they are relationships with an apparent negative impact on society- for the benefits they provide such as the drug or sexual business. On the other hand, an expert noted that limited experiences of relocating camp residents to failing shelter projects drove people to accept the situation despite being uncomfortable. The 'Syrian Salvation Government' of 'Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)' forced camps in the border areas -one of the oldest- to relocate to block camps, but they were poorly designed, out of the way and out of reach of organisations. Residents demanded to return to the canvas tents where they were because they considered them better than cement and block tents.

clung to their negative situation. Many of them have refused to take up any chance or project that helps them rise in fear of losing the support they receive⁶⁷.

There is a marked shift in women's thinking processes and behaviour in our camp. Nowadays, some women tend to be violent in their actions, whether with their family or their surrounding community. I have noticed the prevalence of moral corruption and lack of respect for controls and customs that once prevailed in the society. During our discussion with these women, the argument was always at hand: we live in a camp. This would not have happened if we were in our homes and under humane conditions.

Female volunteer who stays in a regular camp and runs a Quran memorisation centre for children and women

These signals intellectual changes in social perceptions in which extraneous values to Syrian society have replaced entrenched values. Destitution, unemployment, poverty and dependence on others have become acceptable rather than putting effort, working and trying to change. These emerging perceptions can very well transform into persistent and entrenched perceptions that reshape the community's consciousness system, transforming a previously productive society into a dependent, helpless society that believes others are responsible for fulfilling its needs. Therefore, it will accept living in harsh and inappropriate conditions in exchange for free aid⁶⁸.

67 A civil society worker indicated that they had a lot of problems in persuading widows to join a programme aimed at developing competencies. The response rate was very low. This is because of women's fear of losing support if they have the capacity to work on the one hand and because of previous experiences in projects that had not been carefully designed and that had not taken into account the process of preparing widows for the labour market after training. Then, women had learned some skills, had not practised them and had not known how to market or develop their businesses.

68 The Interactive Report of the Assistance Coordination Unit indicates that there are cases in which tents are rented within the camp in order to receive the aid provided. The number of families coming from other camps adjacent to the camp for assistance is 271. The number of families coming from neighbouring towns to camps to receive help is 88 families; of these, 32 families have a tent within the camp, although they live in regular homes in neighbouring towns. The estimated number of displaced persons whose towns are considered safe and have not been bombed in 3 months so they can return to them is 1753 families.

See The Interactive Camps Monitoring Report, ACU, September 2021, op. cit.

We have begun to observe through cases we follow that some women in camps are inclined to violence, particularly towards children. I have followed cases of moderate and severe injuries - caused by women (mothers or stepmothers)- which needed immediate medical intervention, some of which have resulted in permanent and irreparable bodily harm.

Case manager working with a humanitarian organisation

It is clear that the current pattern of humanitarian intervention has begun to encourage some families who are not in need or are better placed to relocate to camps -permanently or intermittently- despite their ability to live outside. Humanitarian organisations lack a mechanism to verify or control the distribution of assistance to deserving persons⁶⁹ (Figure 12).

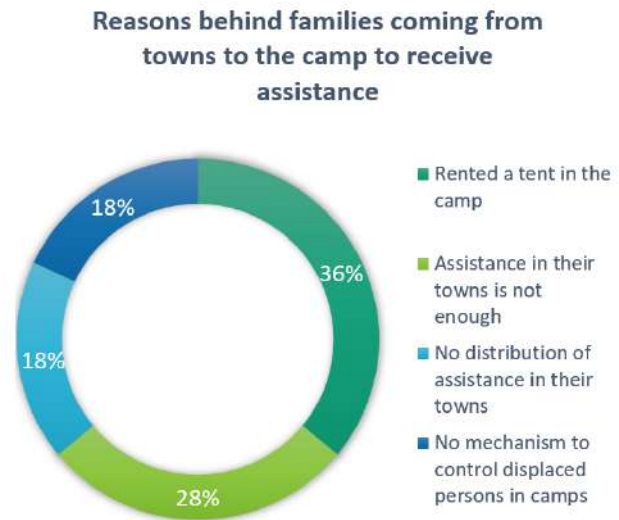


Figure 12: Reasons behind the relocation to camps

69 Ibid.

Section 4: Repercussions of the Current Issues in Camps on Women and Society

The problems discussed in this paper may seem to be secondary problems that are not significant or prioritised in view of the volatile political and field conditions. While 90% of families in Syria live below the poverty line⁷⁰, preserving people's lives could be the desired goal, even if at the lowest standard of living.

However, the persistence of the current response pattern and the disregard for social problems, which are becoming more apparent day by day, will bring about negative social changes that will affect society in general and vulnerable groups and women in particular. Areas under the control of the revolutionary and opposition forces may face such changes as repercussions and aftershocks of the events that unfolded over the past ten years. These problems and changes may be part of the general scene. However, they appear to be more pronounced among camp residents than in villages and towns. Women's experiences in camps indicate that the following problems will become more noticeable in the future⁷¹:

4-1 Rise in Poverty Rates, Fragility and Exploitation of Women

The camp lifestyle that relies on securing assistance encourages slackness and laziness. This affects young people since most of the camp population is youth. Furthermore, organisations' current humanitarian response policy appears to be based on the same past work patterns. There is no concrete plan to contribute to an effective transition to development projects that will help these families move out of need.

Women in some camps live in absolute isolation from the world. Their difficult situation and many responsibilities make them absent from any social activity. Here we may see many women who extensively interact with us during our awareness sessions in camps, and some may even view us as superwomen who are different from them.

Volunteer with humanitarian organisations who periodically visits camps

70 Griffiths to Security Council: 90% of Syrians Live Below Poverty Line, AljazeeraNet, publication date 28/10/2021, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3CHNyeF>

71 This paper attempts to shed light on anticipated problems. Each problem calls for further specialised consultations that will measure the current issue's scale, deepen the knowledge of its causes and propose appropriate solutions. Many of these problems have intertwined social, psychological and economic reasons. Therefore, specialists in each area and those concerned need to tackle them carefully.

Thus, if these families remain in need and in poverty, this will result in increasing the suffering of camp residents in general and the women's segment in particular. Women are greatly affected by the lack of resources and fundamentals and the increased responsibilities and burdens. They may be exploited by an unemployed spouse or an employer who employs women as cheap-paid workers required for seasonal and temporary work. We lack projects geared toward this segment's economic or educational empowerment. This means that women and girls are dragged deep into the muck of want and are unable to bring about a fundamental change in their lives.

4-2 Raising Numbers of Large Families without Breadwinners

Camps are home to families without a breadwinner. There are also other camps devoted to widows and their children⁷². Therefore, the absence of an effective response that aims to empower this segment in line with its needs and capacities means further suffering, especially if support is interrupted or decreased.

On the other hand, with the widespread polygamy in camps⁷³, there has been an increase in the number of large single-breadwinner families that live mainly on aid. Such families are often in poverty and deprivation, especially when the breadwinner has emergency health conditions or economic difficulties, so he loses his ability to earn and support them.

72 There are numerous widows' camps, such as the widows' camps in Azaz and Turmanin in Aleppo and the one in Mashhad Ruhin in Idlib.

73 Most interviews conducted by the research team point out that polygamy is widespread in camps, despite the poor economic conditions and the husband's inability to secure the basic requirements of his family. Still, this has become very common, especially in informal camps, where they consider that a girl's marriage - even if she is a second or third wife - provides her with protection against this open environment.

I visited a tent where the husband, 40 years old, was suffering from an emergency health problem in the spine that led to his inability to move almost entirely. This man was married to three wives all of them gave him children: His first wife, his martyred brother's wife, whom he married to look after her children, and the wife of his neighbour, whom he married after his neighbour had long disappeared and left her alone with children.

This large family of up to 20 people, with such a large number of children, live in one tent, only on assistance and in difficult condition after the man has lost his ability to work and thus lost the small additional income that supported this family.

Official in a humanitarian organisation who periodically visits camps

4-3 High Childbirth Rates with Poor Parenting and Neglect

In some areas within Syria -especially in rural areas- families are known for their high childbirth rates. Despite the poor living conditions, fertility rates have risen even further in camps⁷⁴ compared to the rest of the villages and towns. Most interviews indicate that this rise is due to a range of factors, the most important of which is the despair of camp residents, being mostly unoccupied and their desire to compensate for their loss by having a large family that replaces the family they had to leave behind.

On the other hand, childbirth has become, for some families, a profitable investment. Having more children means having more food and material assistance. Children's work also generates additional income that supports the family⁷⁵.

However, high childbirth rates did not often go with increased awareness, attention, or proper education of children. Instead, one can see neglect, poor health, and weak moral and religious education, especially as children spend most of their time on the streets and outside tents⁷⁶.

74 'Growing Numbers of Births in Syrian Camps: Social Reaction or Weak Birth Control?', Nedaa Post, publication date 17/8/2021, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3pvxxnj>

75 From an interview conducted by the research team with an official in a humanitarian organisation who regularly visits camps.

76 During an interview, a volunteer for a humanitarian team indicated that she visited a family of a man married to four women, from whom he had 31 children. The man pointed out that he had pushed his children on the streets, encouraging them to work and find their means of subsistence all by themselves because he could not provide for them, especially with the scarce assistance received.

Expecting children in camps to have a healthy or balanced upbringing would not be realistic. Parents often lack awareness or are busy at work, caring for the family and securing basic needs, apart from the fact that mothers are usually young and have neither knowledge nor experience.

The open camp environment affects children's education, as they tend to copy and imitate their peers, making it very difficult for the exhausted parents to follow or rectify them.

Official in a humanitarian organisation who periodically visits camps

4-4 High Rates of Domestic Violence

Interviews indicate that cases of domestic violence are common in camps, especially in informal camps, whether violence inflicted by husbands on their wives and children or violence by wives against their children. Life stresses, day-to-day problems and the absence of any prospect of improvement would push families to lose stability and balance⁷⁷.

For example, most men have lost their previous jobs. They used to be productive individuals investing their energy and time to improve their situation, but now they have become unemployed, watching their families dragged into want and need. They stay unoccupied all day and live in despair without any signs of a solution.

The conditions in camps and the absence of privacy within families may be among the reasons. Since many families already suffer from domestic violence, this may prompt other families to imitate the environment, especially when it becomes common for the majority⁷⁸. The theory of social learning establishes that violent behaviours are acquired from the environment, and they vary in degree according to the cultural and social standards of the environment, which can weaken or strengthen factors conducive to aggressive behaviour. Thus, aggression can be learned through observation or tradition⁷⁹.

77 According to five interviews with volunteers making field trips to camps, they encountered many domestic violence cases. Women betrayed being victims of violence at events or in private consultations at awareness sessions. A volunteer staying in a regular camp in Idlib noted that sometimes violence would become transferable. A wife abused by her husband would become a violent mother to her children.

78 A volunteer residing in a camp noted that families who did not have domestic violence problems have recently run into the problem. The volunteer believed the spread of domestic violence in camps has desensitised residents. Therefore, violence was no longer frowned upon.

79 Nirmin Hasan al-Satali, *Psychology of Violence and Its Impact on Socialisation*, 2018 edition, p. 74.

In many awareness-raising sessions, the topic of marital violence appears to be immensely present. It can be observed as having an impact on women and children. Women are asked to remain silent and patient without any support or assistance. Even family witnesses their suffering without taking action.

Many women have asked us to help in this regard and to provide special centres for women victims of violence and programmes for their protection. Unfortunately, we have not been able to help them because no parties are interested in this issue.

Volunteer working with organisations who periodically visits informal camps

4-5 High Rates of "Underage Marriage"⁸⁰

Life in camps causes deep concerns in families about their daughters' safety. On the one hand, an open and uncontrolled environment can expose girls to many risks of various kinds, and on the other hand, a single or widowed girl or woman in the family attracts attention. The eyes of most camp residents will follow her. Nowadays, men in camps are obsessed with marrying more than one wife.

Fears encourage many families to marry their daughters at the first opportunity, whether appropriate or inappropriate⁸¹, to relieve themselves of the girl's material and social

⁸⁰ The UNICEF defines an underage marriage as 'any formal marriage or informal union between a child under the age of 18 and an adult or another child'. It considers a human rights violation.

However, the issue of setting the age of marriage in Islam is a matter of contemporary relevance. For modern and early scholars alike, this topic is disputed. They agree that marriage to young persons is permissible and legitimate in terms of its legitimacy and agree that permissibility may be restricted based on interest. Still, They disagree on setting a certain age for marriage. They can be divided into two schools of thought.

In the view of some scholars, the age of marriage may be set at a certain age, bearing in mind that this varies from country to country. Others consider it permissible to marry young persons but believe this type of marriage should be restricted to a minimal scope when necessary. They also decide that young persons may be married by their parents only according to specific criteria. For example, a girl must be married to an equal without harming her, etc. It is also the view of some that setting the age of marriage may be in the public interest, believing that it averts the evil resulting from marrying minors and helps defend children's rights by prohibiting the trade of girls in exchange for material gain.

See 'Child Marriage', UNICEF website, <https://uni.cf/3C9VyYF>

And Suha Yassin Atta al-Qaysi, ' Child Marriage, in Light of Setting a Marriage Age ', Master's thesis in Comparative Islamic Jurisprudence from the Faculty of Sharia and Law at the Islamic University, 2010, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3FkHOtn>

burden. Many girls wish to marry at an early age because they believe marriage may be the way to lift them out of the bitter reality in which they live.

A young girl as young as 13 escaped from an informal camp in the Euphrates Shield area after her father married her to a friend who was over 45. The girl is still missing.

Volunteer working with organisations who periodically visits informal camps

Consequently, many unequal (age-wise) marriages between spouses -especially in informal camps- have been noted without a solid foundation of affection, acceptance or prior awareness of the spouses' and children's rights. Many end in divorce due to the lack of understanding and the absence of sound foundations for family building. On other occasions, the family is dragged into marital problems that affect all its members.

The growing number of underage marriage cases does not only include females but also males. Many families have resorted to marrying young people immediately for fear of falling into illegitimate relationships. The newlyweds often live with them in the same tent. It has become commonplace to find young people who are under 18, unemployed and fathers to several children.

I visited a tent of a widow where she has lived with her children. It attracted my attention that her eldest son, 17 years old, was married and had two children. This young man told me that he intended to marry a second and third wife to do the Sunnah, knowing that I spent all day with them, and he did not pray at all. He did not even help his mother, who supported the whole family, nor did he provide her with what she needed.

Official in an organisation who periodically visits informal camps

4-6 Increase in School Dropout and Child Labour

In such circumstances where there are no prospects for the future, especially in the case of women, and in a situation that encourages early marriage as the only way to protect women, school dropout rates in camps rise among males and females. Still, in the case of females, this is more evident. Many families stop schooling girls in order to let them help

81 A volunteer who periodically visits informal camps indicates that it is difficult for the community of these camps to accept the idea of a girl staying unmarried, especially if she is over 15-16 years old. So they do not mind that such girls become second and third wives instead of waiting for a better and more equal marriage. In their mindset, having a responsible man is protection for women.

mothers with household chores and learn skills they would lack and need after getting married.

The fact that the educational process in camp schools is weak, lacking resources, tools and qualified personnel, contributes to the increase in school dropout rates. Moreover, due to the absence of female middle or secondary schools close to the camp, many families are hesitant about sending their daughters to distant schools for fear of any possible risk⁸².

On a visit to a regular camp in the Euphrates Shield area, a large camp with an elementary, middle and secondary school that hosts hundreds of families, only six students attended in the 12th grade.

4-7 Rise in Moral Corruption, High Crime Rates

The previous sub-sections that depict life conditions in camps make it clear that the open camp environment can facilitate and spread moral corruption. This is especially true with the absence of supervisory control on the one hand and the lack of self-control that comes from a religious and cultural upbringing on the other. Furthermore, many adolescents, young people, women and men are always unoccupied. They fail to invest their time in productive activities or orient their efforts appropriately.

Perhaps the most significant factors that encourage the spread of moral corruption among women are the spread of harassment, lack of privacy, use of shared facilities, the prevalence of drugs, and high crime rates such as theft and drug trafficking, in addition to "honour killings⁸³". Moreover, certain types of child work on streets and in rubbish dumps

82 Many families that wish to educate their children have refrained from sending kids to school with the rise in harassment cases, the prevalence of drugs, the weak school administration, and the inability to control and follow up with students. Families have tried to compensate for that by self-educating their children or receiving grants for schools outside camps, while others have lost their educational opportunities.

From an interview conducted by the team with a resident of a regular camp.

83 The term 'honour crimes' is used to refer to a murder often committed by a male member of the family against a female member of the same family. From the offender's point of view, committing this crime is justified to preserve the honour of the family or 'wash away shame', as depicted in our societies. This is culturally motivated by customs and traditions contrary to Islamic law's teachings. It is based on the legal concept of the 'mitigating excuse' that relies on what is known as 'honest motive'. In a special advisory opinion, the Syrian Islamic Council discussed the legitimacy of honour killings, setting out three cases. It is considered, by consensus, that murder deserves capital punishment if it is for the mere accusation of fornication without evidence or for illegitimate acts that do not amount to explicit fornication.

make children vulnerable to being victims of such crimes⁸⁴. Children might also be used, recruited or involved in future crimes.

A husband, who was high on drugs, shot his new bride, who was three months pregnant. When the first bullet missed her, he reshot at her stomach, causing her immediate death.

Volunteer periodically visiting regular camps

Children of unknown parentage have been recently increasing in the north of Syria⁸⁵, which can be one of the repercussions of moral corruption inside and outside camps or a result of poverty in the north of Syria that drives families to abandon their children. It also happens that some children get lost during movement or leave the family due to family neglect⁸⁶.

4-8 High Suicide Rates

Camp life quality deteriorates due to psychological hardships, pressure on residents, and daily issues that people hopelessly confront. As a result, some people might try to escape these pressures by taking their own lives. Suicide is driven primarily by psychological and societal causes related to the environment, lack of prospects and the absence of signs of upcoming changes. Furthermore, it is motivated by the situation in unstable confused families.

*See Honour Killings.. Between Shariah and Law, Syria's Media Institute, publication date 14/7/2021, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3yF0eT2>
And the Legitimacy of Honour Killings, the Syrian Islamic Council's advisory opinion of 7/3/2019 (in Arabic), <https://sy-sic.com/?p=7472>*

84 In an interview, a female worker indicated that the phenomenon of abducting children from the outskirts of camps had been widespread for some time. Some trucks were seen whose owners tried to lure children with sweets into riding in these trucks. However, parents later became aware of that and warned their children not to speak with strangers.

From an interview conducted by the team with a volunteer who works with humanitarian organisations and periodically visits informal camps.

85 The Director of the 'Syrian Response Coordinators Team' noted that since the beginning of 2021, the rate of having children of unknown parentage has risen to approximately 12 cases per month, with infants often found on the edges of roads, farms and abandoned agricultural land.

See Idlib: Phenomenon of Unknown Parentage on the Rise.. 'the Future is Unknown', al-7al website, publication date 10/11/2021, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3oNwglD>

86 Children of Unknown Parentage.. One Center in Northwest Syria to Look After Them, Syria TV, publication date 12/10/2021, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3czj7N6>

The few statistics on this subject indicate a 38% increase in suicide rates in northwestern Syria between the first and second quarters of 2020, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. A survey conducted by the Technical Mental Health Working Group in Northwest Syria in 2019 recorded 751 unsuccessful suicide attempts and 47 suicide attempts that ended in death. 48% of the attempts, whether successful or unsuccessful, were made by females⁸⁷.

This survey does not reveal where the respondents live. However, one can expect that suicide rates in camps will be higher than elsewhere owing to marital and financial problems and difficult living conditions. Examining many incidents in 2021 shows that most of the victims are camp residents⁸⁸. Suicide is more common among children suffering from severe psychological crises, according to some reports⁸⁹.

87 The results of this survey indicate that 40% of the suicide attempts in the north of Syria are committed by people in the 21-30 age bracket, while children and adolescents (under 20) commit 30% of the suicides and 22% are in the 31-40 age bracket. Marital conflicts are the leading cause of suicide attempts at 26%, followed by financial problems at 18%, issues with parents at 15%, and unemployment at 12%.

For more information, *see* Suicide: the Silent Death That Could Threaten Syria in the Future, Syrian Dialogue Center, publication date 1/4/2021, (in Arabic), <https://sydialogue.org/dhkk>

88 Three suicides were recorded in three days inside two camps in the north of Syria. *See* Suicide in the North of Syria, The New Arab, publication date 20/3/2021, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3dXXBm0>

Two out of three suicides that occurred within 72 hours were recorded in Syria's northern camps. *See* The Last One Was a Child: North Syria Records Three Suicides in Two Days, ALSOURIA NET, publication date 27/7/2021, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3m5tdKM>, and Two Suicides in One Day Northwest of Syria, Syria TV, publication date 9/3/2021, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3E2f9Yu>

89 A report by 'Save the Children' noted that the total number of suicides in the northwestern region of Syria jumped by about 90% by the end of 2020 compared to the first three months of last year. It recorded 246 suicides and 1748 suicide attempts over only the last three months of 2020, noting that of those who attempted suicide, at least 42% were aged 15 and under, while 18% were adolescents and young people between 16 and 20.

A statistical report by 'Syria Response Coordinators' documenting cases of 'suicide' in northwestern Syria since the beginning of the year, al-7al website, publication date 28/7/2021, (in Arabic), <https://bit.ly/3rijkbm>

Section 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Some studies approach women-related themes from a women-only perspective in order to reduce their problems or provide solutions. However, in this paper, we address camps as having a social organisation with unique characteristics and social and administrative order, in which several categories emerge as vulnerable and fragile, including women. The study attempts to shed light on problems that affect everyone, emphasising women's situations and problems and paying more attention to them.

We believe that approaching women's problems in this environment and proposing appropriate solutions cannot be done by focusing on one party and neglecting others, especially since all parties share suffering and share problems. Such issues should not be tackled without a complete understanding of their context and without realising that women's issues are intertwined with those of the segments they interact with.

Thinking of women as a separate segment from the rest of society may lead us to target simple corollaries without finding a radical solution to root causes. In that case, the solutions may not be acceptable or socially effective because they focus only on one side. Hence, improving women's living conditions in camps can only be achieved by enhancing the environment in which they live and solving the problems that touch everyone. Nevertheless, women are still admittedly one of the weakest links in the circle⁹⁰.

It should also be noted that suffering in camps is not a recent development. The problems discussed have existed for years. We try to tackle these issues anew from unique angles since living conditions have not changed. On the contrary, new negative phenomena have begun to emerge, indicating that previous approaches have not been practical and need further analysis.

Camps in areas under the control of the Syrian revolutionary and opposition forces will apparently not close soon. Staying there is no longer a temporary experience. Camps seem to have become places where people settle in and may reside for at least years since

90 For example, one cannot propose a solution to the problem of domestic violence, women's employment, underage marriage, the spread of drugs and moral corruption without realising the causes affecting women and men alike. All lectures, awareness-raising and projects in this context will continue to fall short of finding a real solution for women unless some of the causes that could lead to such problems as unemployment, psychological stress, desperation and frustration are addressed.

In the same vein, increasing cases of addiction among women cannot be solved unless the daily problems and pressure they experience are alleviated, and programmes to combat the drug trade among all groups are offered.

political solutions have ended in deadlock. It is necessary at this stage to examine this new situation and identify problems to mitigate their negative effects on residents and society.

From the above, the current camp environment appears to have begun to create many societal problems that severely hit vulnerable groups such as women and children. Such categories lack the minimum human needs that can preserve one's privacy and dignity and help one to grow properly and be a good member of society.

This environment also entrenches the vulnerability of vulnerable groups such as women and children, allows for ruthless exploitation of them, and contributes to creating negative phenomena that may have profound social implications. All humanitarian response efforts within camps focus on basic needs for survival and overlook making careful assessments, measuring impact, and following up on and responding to negative social phenomena.

It is expected to have negative outcomes in such an environment, with women being the first victims. Women's vulnerability and poverty will increase, especially with the absence of a breadwinner, exploitation, violence, high rates of underage marriage, school dropout, widespread crime and moral corruption.

Humanitarian organisations -the current most influential actor in this environment- lack a short and medium-term strategic vision. They do not envisage or consider scenarios for future changes, especially the possibility of cutting funds. Moreover, organisations manage problems rather than taking on positive roles by trying to dry up the sources of such problems. Although organisations are moving towards more governance, auditing and networking, proposals and future strategic plans remain missing or vague.

Based on its approach to women's issues, the paper highlights the priority of rehabilitating the camp environment and improving its conditions and humanitarian response policies as a fundamental and necessary step to address and mitigate most women's issues. Therefore, the paper recommends the following actions⁹¹:

Recommendations pertinent to the development of Syria's humanitarian situation:

- 1- Establish a strategic planning board for humanitarian action. It will develop medium-term and short-term plans aimed at providing new insights into required humanitarian actions.

⁹¹ The paper will make a set of general recommendations that will improve camp residents' lives in general and women's in particular. The paper will then make special recommendations for improving women's situation.

- 2- Review the education system in the areas under the control of the revolutionary and opposition forces, evaluate it thoroughly and effectively, and propose solutions that will develop and enhance the outcomes of this process to encourage students to stay at school and reduce educational dropout rates.
- 3- Establish a civilian supervisory body comprised of experts, academics, and community leaders to assess humanitarian work, follow up on problems and participate in finding solutions.
- 4- Review the risk management system of humanitarian organisations to prevent rather than manage problems.
- 5- Establish a monitoring unit for emerging societal phenomena inside Syria and collect and analyse quantitative information and statistics from specialised organisations.
- 6- Conduct in-depth specialised studies of complex societal problems and work towards realistic solutions; solutions that consider societal inputs and culture and protect people and certain groups from exploitation and negative effects.
- 7- Carry out studies into the labour market in the revolutionary and opposition forces areas, and plan and propose projects to develop the market on the one hand and link it to the system of higher education in these areas.
- 8- Formulate a phased economic development plan for specific regions north of Syria. Also, conceive development projects financed by Syrians to restore the economy and reduce unemployment.
- 9- Consider a phased response plan that capitalises on the current support to move camp residents from their absolute need to empowerment and help them enter the labour market.
- 10-Develop an impact measurement system and ensure that humanitarian and community projects achieve or approximate objectives.
- 11-Develop a social value system with the aid of projects and activities and the support of humanitarian organisations and community leaders. The value system should consolidate positive social values that society has begun to lose, such as pride, patience, positivity, societal responsibility, holding on to hope, refusing to despair, and seeking to change.
- 12-Design religious programmes to tackle societal issues in camps, such as domestic violence, underage marriage, and exploitation. Also, create da'wah discourse that approaches these problems from a cultural point of view which resonates with camp residents.

Recommendations for improving humanitarian response in camps:

- 13-Launch advocacy campaigns to expose the situation of the water and sanitation sector in camps and propose projects that integrate various solutions to this problem.
- 14-Pressure to build comprehensive infrastructure for sanitation projects that can serve northern Syria regions and camps. This way, a radical solution will be reached.
- 15-Launch donation campaigns to establish health service facilities (toilets) alongside old facilities using the same existing drainage method or provide new facilities with soak pits in new sections of the camps.
- 16-Lobby for decent shelter projects that consider the beneficiaries' dignity. Look also for new donors who can fund these projects, especially if western donors still refuse to support such shelter projects.
- 17-Provide mobile caravans with clean cabins for showering. They can get around and serve numerous camps on a regular basis.
- 18-Make use of mosques in camps as outreach and counselling centres for the population of camps—also, design programmes for adolescents and young people and other programmes for adult women and men. Programmes should aim to raise religious and moral awareness and educate husbands, wives and children about their rights and duties.
- 19-Make camp residents feel responsible for their community and encourage them to elect a problem-solving council that manages the camp. The council should be trained and supported to follow up on the camp's problems and help control the camp. Form also a local authority that can influence camp residents.
- 20-Allocate scholarships to the outstanding male and female students in camps, encourage them to pursue further studies and provide buses to transport them to remote schools.
- 21-Encourage working organisations to develop part of their programmes into roaming programmes, particularly capacity development programmes, and target such programmes at camps.
- 22-Conceive projects to recycle rubbish and wastewater and make economic and environmental use while keeping children and adolescents away.
- 23-Put together independent evaluation teams that monitor the quality of humanitarian and educational projects and ensure that assistance reaches beneficiaries.
- 24-Launch small projects for each camp in line with the skills and expertise of its residents, such as carpentry and small handicraft workshops for men and sewing and cooking workshops for women.

25- Make a comprehensive assessment of camps to familiarise humanitarian workers with the experiences and capacities of camps' inhabitants, which can be exploited in future development projects.

Special recommendations for the advancement of women's situation in camps

26- Encourage women's and children's organisations to work in camps and run targeted projects to empower women effectively based on their needs.

27- Study the needs of women on a per-camp basis and design unique responses that improve women's situations.

28- Launch awareness-raising and literacy projects that target residents of regular and informal camps in general and women in particular.

29- Allocate flexible scholarships to women that consider their situation and help them overcome difficulties.

30- Launch vocational programmes for women in camps in line with the capabilities and interests of this segment, such as training programmes on the basics of sewing, hairdressing and local crafts such as traditional textile, rug and carpet making.

31- Organise intensive health awareness and psychological support activities for women in camps and hold targeted recreational events that help women release pressure and improve their mood.

32- Form an entity that receives public complaints about exploitation, harassment and drug abuse and provides the necessary counselling to victims.

33- Establish study centres that focus on the situation of women in conflict zones and the impact of displacement, loss and life in camps on women. Such centres will also release statistics and regularly updated figures that measure the significance of the problems women are exposed to and the modes of intervention that can mitigate the effects of conflict on them.

34- Build public libraries within camps that allow female students to study and provide a proper study environment and the necessary facilities.

35- Create safe spaces for women to carry out activities in line with their capacities and provide educational, psychological and family guidance that help women who are violence victims or who face family problems to obtain the necessary knowledge and support.

36- Implement addiction recovery programmes that target women and female adolescents, provide them with a plan of action tailored to their needs and help them break the cycle of despair and frustration.

