

Displaced communities in North-West Syria are at the forefront of the climate emergency

More than ten years after the start of the Syrian conflict, over 1.7 million people continue to live in temporary and unplanned sites, and camps for internally displaced people (IDPs).

83% of residents in such camps live in over-crowded conditions, with high population densities and insufficient infrastructure.

In this context, **climate change has become a stress multiplier**, exacerbating the effects of conflict, and increasing the humanitarian needs of those most vulnerable.

Syria is projected to be one of the countries most impacted by the climate emergency, with prolonged droughts coupled with periods of flash flooding already becoming the norm.

The Euphrates River, a lifeline for millions, is at historic lows, meanwhile the prevalence of flash flooding has increased.

In North-West Syria, 35% of households have faced disasters exacerbated by climate change.

Those living in IDP camps and temporary settlements are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. In the winter months, poor infrastructure and heavy rain lead to widespread flooding, while in summer, prolonged drought causes frequent shortages of drinking water, leading to increases in health issues, and further

FLOODING

Climate change has resulted in an increase in heavy seasonal downpours, yet **76% of IDP sites have no rainwater drainage infrastructure.**

As a result, more than half a million IDPs were affected by flooding in the last year alone.

Poor shelter conditions combine with climate change to exacerbate the vulnerabilities of people displaced by conflict.

DROUGHT

In summer, IDPs are potentially displaced again due to shortage of water and drought. The same sites that are prone to flooding face chronic shortages of fresh drinking water, with severe implications for public health and sanitation.

In overcrowded IDP sites, water and sanitation are essential to prevent the spread of disease. Yet, in the last year, there has been a near 20% rise in cases of diarrhoea – a consequence of insufficient access to clean water. The intersection of climate change and poor shelter conditions once again compounds existing vulnerabilities.

In North-West Syria, conflict-induced mass displacement and climate change increasingly intersect, exposing hundreds of thousands of people to the risk of disasters. With large numbers of people living in densely-populated unplanned sites, often in tents and temporary structures, with little or no drainage or freshwater infrastructure, shelter is at the centre of this challenge, but also a key part of the solution. Recognising the centrality of considered sustainable and resilient shelter solutions is critical safeguarding the lives of millions.

Key figures



2.6 million people were identified to be in need of shelter and Non-food items (NFI) assistance.

- **33% of IDPs** are living in sites that were flooded in the past year. Sites that hosted 554,662 people.
- **76% of IDPs** living in sites with no drainage for stormwater.
- **20,259 shelters units** reported to be located in flood-prone areas.
- **Over 400 IDP sites** were affected by floods at the beginning of 2021 (CCCCM incident reports).



Photo: Shafak Organization