

Major Developments in North-West Syria

Over 2.8 million IDPs are living in north-west Syria, including 960,000 people who have been newly displaced since December as a consequence of the latest escalation in conflict.

Shelter options are extremely limited and many IDPs resort to inadequate types of shelter. According to HNAP, 44% of IDPs use tents as shelter, around 9% are staying in substandard shelter, most of which are unfinished buildings; and 3% of IDPs have found public buildings, like schools, to be the only shelter option, thereby disrupting the provision of public services.

Response

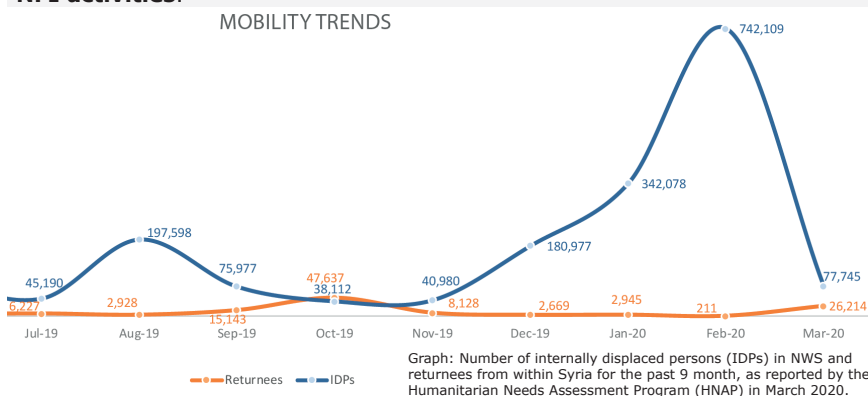
Shelter/Non-Food Item (SNFI) Cluster members continue to actively respond to the needs of the newly displaced population as well as protracted IDPs in north-west Syria. **Around 355,000 individuals, both IDPs and host community members, were assisted with NFI and/or shelter in March.** In coordination with the Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster, SNFI Cluster members are trying to identify more land to extend the perimeter of existing camps.

In March, almost 200,000 individuals received NFI kits, which contain kitchen sets, mattresses and blankets, as well as winter items. Shelter needs of around 159,000 people were addressed with activities including emergency and/or seasonal shelter assistance and shelter rehabilitation. Of those, more than 86,000 individuals were assisted with the provision of emergency shelter, which includes family tents or shelter kits.

Between October 2019 and March 2020, the SNFI Cluster reached close to **818,000 IDPs with winterization activities**, almost two months earlier than last year.

The SNFI Cluster is actively coordinating with the Health and WASH Clusters to **respond to the needs of the IDP population in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic**. Hygiene measures, in line with recommended WASH practices specific for COVID-19, are promoted during assistance distributions to reduce the risk of transmission. The SNFI Cluster has encouraged its members to provide hygiene kits together with NFI kits and has recommended to add soap. In addition, the SNFI Cluster identified tents to be used as isolation units.

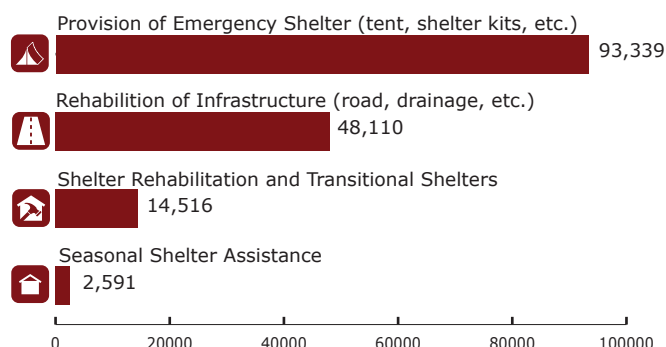
The SNFI Cluster has also developed and widely shared its **recommendations to mitigate the risks related to the COVID-19 outbreak for shelter and NFI activities**.



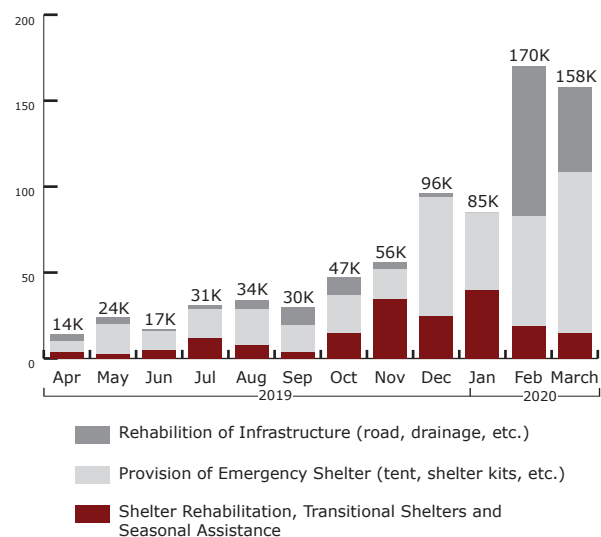
Shelter Response



People reached in March by sub-activity



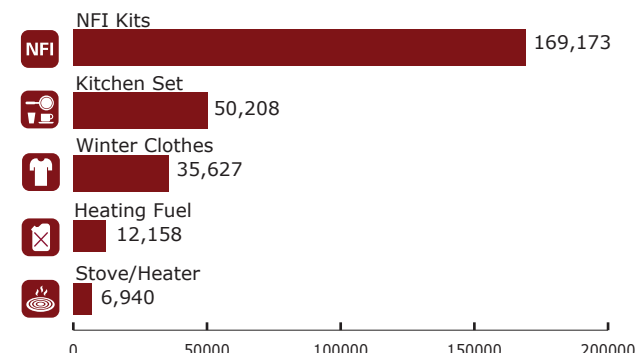
People reached in the past 12 months by activity



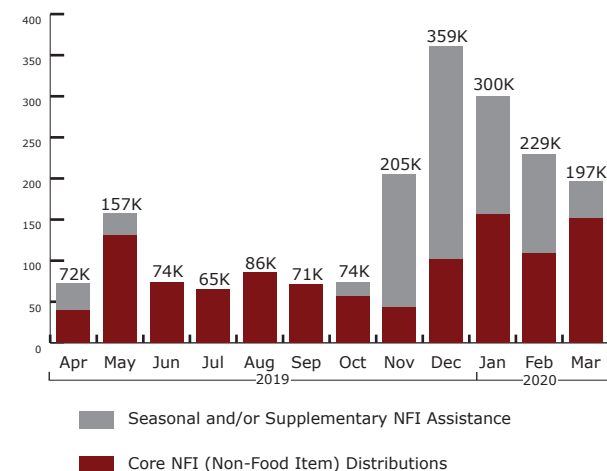
NFI Response



People reached in March by modality (top 5 modalities)



People reached in the past 12 months by activity



Cash, Vouchers or In-Kind?

The SNFI Cluster has scaled up the cash and voucher response in the last six months. IOM and the Cash Working Group published an interesting study, *Cash Feasibility Assessment 2020 - North-West Syria*, that shows that **cash is not inherently riskier than other modalities of assistance**. However, risk perception is a major inhibitor to cash-based programming in north-west Syria. Cash assistance, in particular, continues to be disproportionately perceived as more subject to reputational risks than in-kind distributions. In practice, residual risks of diversion in cash and voucher assistance are arguably lower than for in-kind assistance, due to the closer scrutiny and higher implementation standards placed on cash-based programming by agencies and donors.

Importantly, **cash assistance is by far the modality preferred by the recipients** as it respects their dignity and increases their autonomy. Cash-based programming, and in particular unrestricted cash assistance, gives the appropriate flexibility and adaptability to meet diverse needs, especially for IDP populations that have high levels of mobility. **The impact of cash, and to a lesser extent voucher programmes, is also likely to be higher than in-kind**, since there are fewer concerns about the sale of assistance.

The vast majority of assistance in north-west Syria is still distributed in-kind. Yet, over the past few years, all sorts of cash and voucher programmes have been successfully implemented both in non-government-controlled areas and in Turkish-administered areas.

Yet, cash and voucher assistance may need to be scaled up more rapidly and sooner than anticipated, given the level of needs as well as the uncertainty about the future of the Cross-Border humanitarian response and the recent evolutions of the situation in north-west Syria in general.

Winter Distributions

March 2020 marks the end of the winterization period for the SNFI cluster in North-West Syria during 2019/2020. One of the main activities was in-kind distributions or provision of cash/vouchers specifically for winter clothes. The picture below shows a door to door, in-kind distribution modality. During this winterization response, approximately 494,209 individuals have been reached with winter clothes, 380,772 with stoves, 314,262 with winterized core NFI Kits, 162,122 with fuel and 226,660 with cash or voucher assistance that aims to cover winter needs.



Image Credit: Mercy Without Limit

Activities in Progress, Stock and Gaps as of March 2020



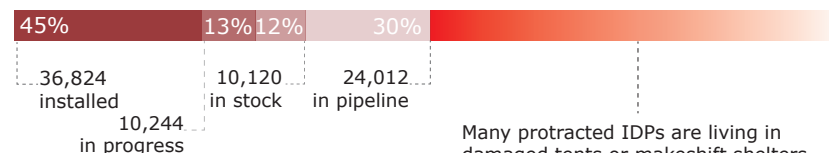
Tents



434,866
people targeted



81,200
tents planned for



Many protracted IDPs are living in damaged tents or makeshift shelters. Funding is required to replace or upgrade them. The SNFI Cluster is coordinating with HNAP to estimate the number of protracted IDPs who need shelter support in camps.



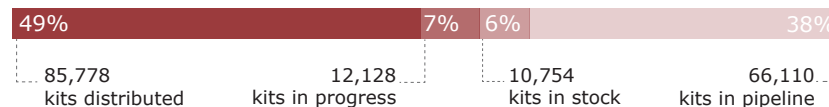
NFI Kits



873,850
people targeted



174,770
household NFI kits required



Winterization



955,000
people targeted (with secured funding)



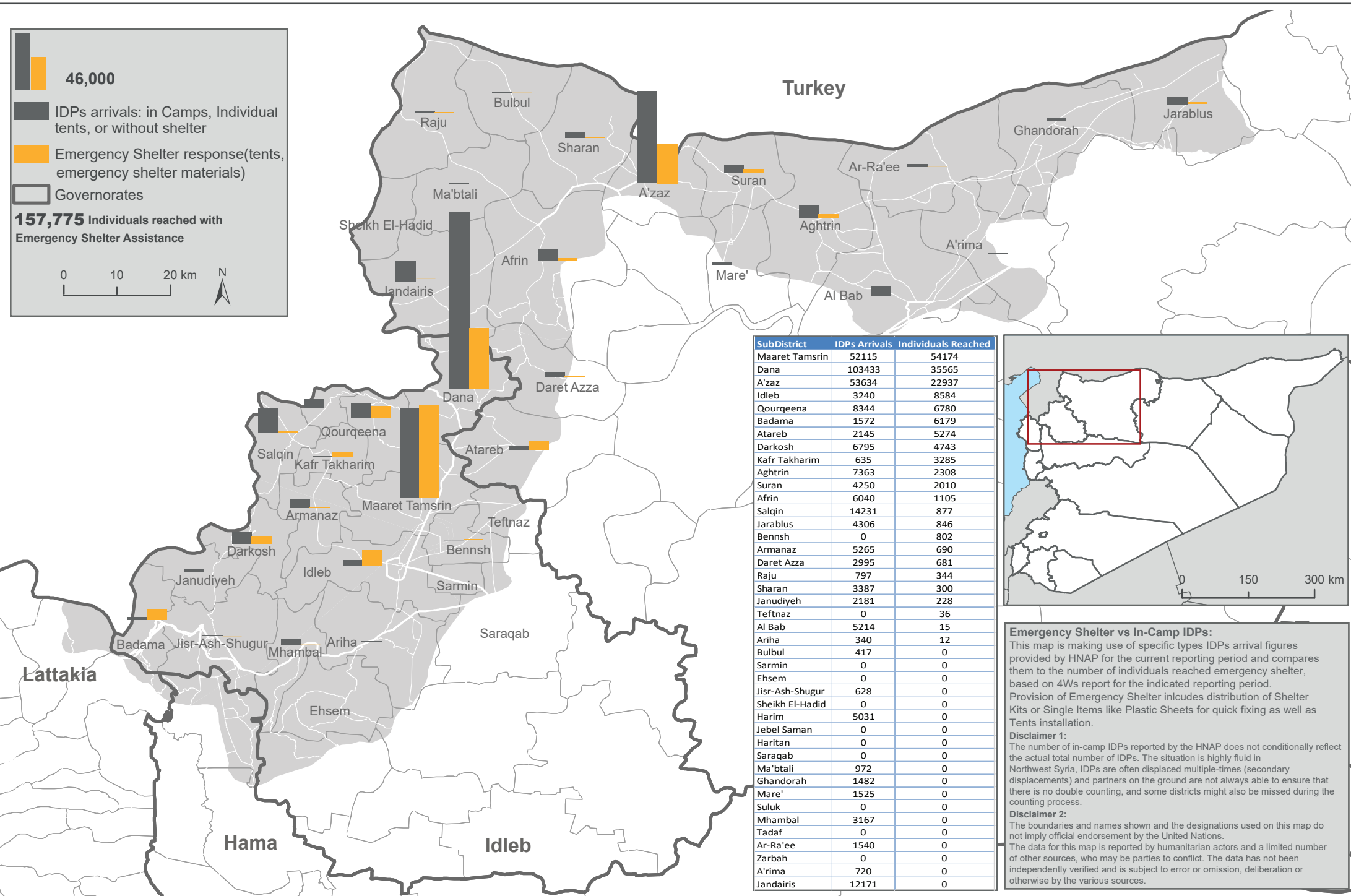
Contact: im.turkey@sheltercluster.org
Data source: Shelter/NFI Cluster 4Ws, CCCM Cluster, HNAP
Creation date: 24 April 2020

Shelter NFI Cluster website
<http://sheltercluster.org/response/x-border-operation-turkey-hub>

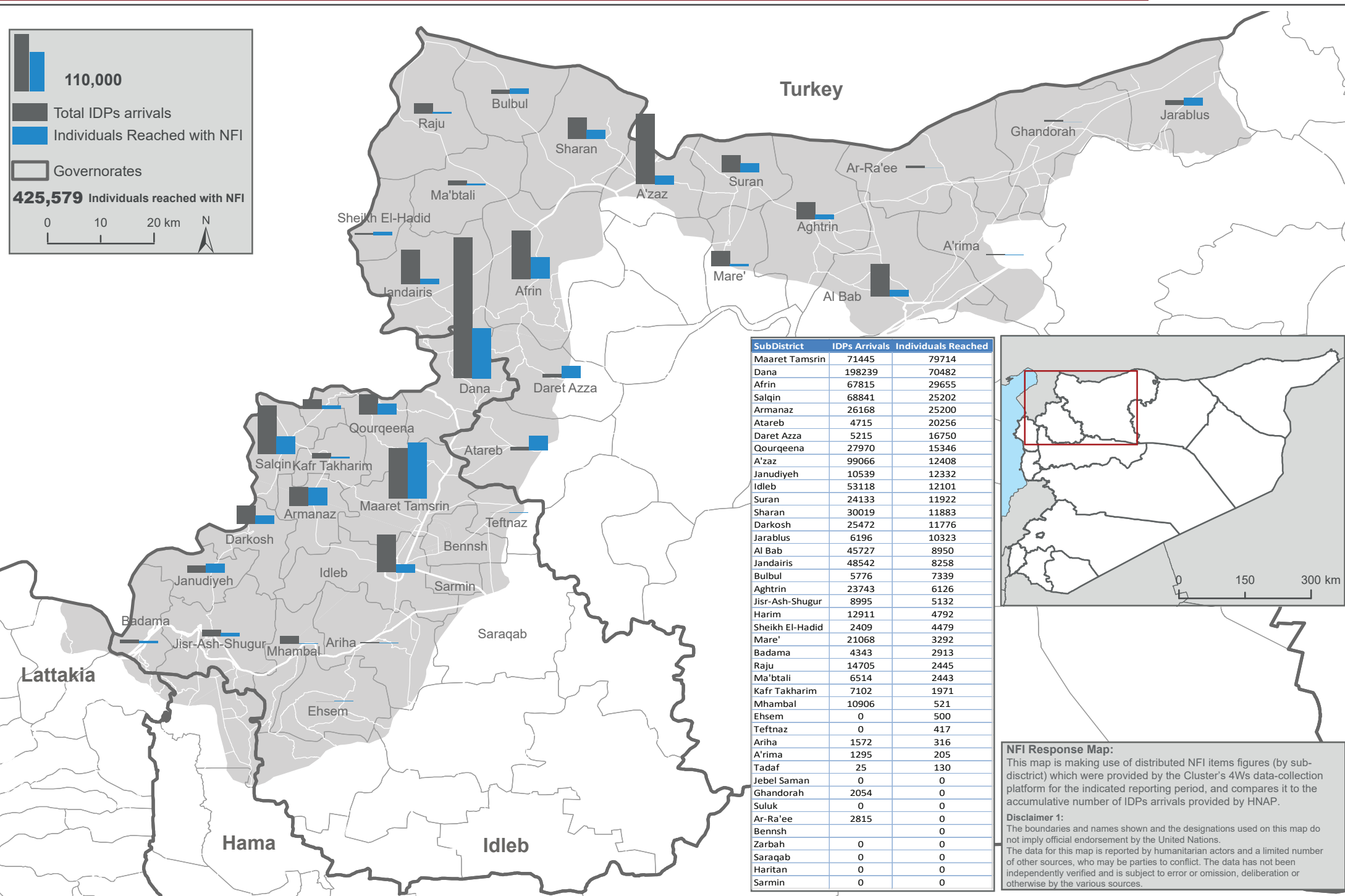
Shelter NFI Whole of Syria page:
<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/whole-of-syria/shelternfi>

SNFI Cluster Interactive Dashboard:
<https://bit.ly/2Zqmv8L>

North-West Syria: Provision of Emergency Shelter vs New IDPs Arrivals (February-March 2020)



North-West Syria: NFI Response vs New IDPs Arrivals (February-March 2020)



North-West Syria: Shelter Rehabilitation Response (February-March 2020)

