



Al-Hol Situation Report

Update Number 1, 13 March 2019

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Al-Hol Camp, Al-Hasakah Governorate, North-East Syria

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Picture credit: UNFPA, Syria

Situation:

There is an unfolding humanitarian crisis in Al-Hol, a town located in Al-Hasakah Governorate, North-East Syria. Since December 4, 2018, approximately 67,000 people have arrived in Al-Hol camp, 90% of whom are women and children fleeing hostilities from Al Bagoz in the Deir-e-Zor countryside. The conditions within Al-Hol camp are over-crowded, uninhabitable and threaten human dignity and life, with people forced to sleep on the ground during harsh weather conditions such as rain and low temperatures. Most families spend days walking to the camp and stay without food until they reach the camp. While the demographic composition has not changed, it was noticed that most of the children are not older than 12-13 years, with a notable absence of adolescent boys. During consultations in the camp, women approached the protection team reporting about the separation from their husbands and adolescent boys at checkpoints while walking to the camp, increasing their feelings of insecurity and trauma. On March 5, several violent protests by approximately 200 people were reported and, due to security concerns, implementing partners (IPs) have restricted their services.

General figurers:

- All newly-arriving IDPs to the camp are situated in the reception area, where there is overcrowding due to security screening and registration procedures.
- There is an indication that there will be an increase in the number of people who are fleeing to the camp over the coming days. It is estimated that the camp will receive some 7,000 additional arrivals in the next few days.
- 53,400 individuals have arrived since December 4, 2018.
- The total number of people in the camp (including previous inhabitants and new arrivals, is 67,000 individuals, the vast majority of whom are women and children.

Gender Based Violence (GBV):

The needs for GBV services are overwhelming. In order to respond to them, UNFPA has deployed 3 GBV mobile teams to provide services in the camp. However, the gap in services is still significant with the number of teams providing services, identifying cases and referring them to available providers is not sufficient. Only four case managers are currently operating in the camp. There are growing protection concerns with regards to women and girls, who report feeling unsafe and unable to move safely within the camp, often requesting to be escorted by the GBV teams on site. As a preventative measure, women are forced to always walk in pairs or in a small group, especially at night when walking to the wash facilities.

- There have been reports of sexual and verbal harassment, violence, and a general lack of security and privacy in the camp.
- Some phases of the camp are still under construction for expansion and there is a gap in WASH facilities, including lighting and privacy, putting women and girls especially at risk of GBV.
- Female-headed households face difficulties in transporting their tents and non-food items due to lack of financial resources (they are reportedly requested to pay in order to have their items transported to further tents, where they might feel safer). This could put them at additional risk of violence and abuse.
- There is a large gap in responding to the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities, most of whom are women and children. There is also a large number of households with children lacking caregivers. There is a need for adult diapers as a way to ensure dignity to vulnerable people who are disabled, injured and/or elderly.

UNFPA's implementing partners are overwhelmed by the needs and are not able to access all areas of the camp either because of lack of resources or due to restriction of movement and safety issues.

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Reproductive Health (RH):

Among the camp's residents, there is a notable number of pregnant women. Unfortunately, the UN is currently unable to provide the exact number. However, it is evident that a number of them are under 18, hence a need for awareness efforts on early marriage and the health risks of early pregnancy. There is also a need for counselling for new mothers on basic parental skills, including breastfeeding. The UN will continue working with partners to determine the number of pregnant women in the camp. Many are women of reproductive age and require sustained maternal health services, including emergency obstetric care.

UNFPA's response is through ante-natal care, deliveries, prenatal care, family planning, referrals, trauma services and pediatrics. There are 3 mobile teams, each team consisting of a general practitioner, a gynaecologist, a midwife, a nurse and a psychosocial support (PSS) counselor as well as a facilitator.

There is case of a woman who has just given birth, however, she is unable to breastfeed due to low breast milk supply, likely due to poor nutrition. Her arm is fractured and she is already a mother of three. There is currently no availability of formula milk to provide to the newborn. This is not the first reported case and the GBV mobile team referred her to the RH clinic. UNFPA foresees this remaining a challenge in the future.

UNFPA GBV and RH Response:

UNFPA provided **20** tents  **8,200** Female Dignity Kits  **1,500** Adolescent Dignity Kits 
30,363 Sanitary napkins  **3** GBV mobile teams  **3** RH mobile teams 
1 RH static clinic 

UNFPA reached **1041** beneficiaries with **RH** services including **252** pregnant women 

Humanitarian Interventions Needed:

- Even with these joint efforts by UN agencies and partners, the gaps are wide and the needs are dire.
- There is an urgent need for reproductive health and GBV services delivered through mobile teams.
- There is a high need for dignity kits for women, including lactating women, adolescent girls and boys.
- There is an immediate need for tents for shelter, WASH facilities in line with the GBV risk mitigation 2015 guidelines ensuring adequate lighting, facilities disaggregated by gender and locks adapted for children, solar lamps for the provision of light to improve protection within the camp, and heaters to provide warmth during the harsh weather conditions, adult diapers for IDPs living with disabilities, the injured and the elderly.
- Through the Syria Humanitarian Fund (SHF), UNFPA has received approximately 784,000 USD in this month of March, to provide integrated GBV services in Al Hol camp. Yet, urgent need for funding to support the expansion of GBV and RH services and respond to the critical and increasing needs of the population remains.

