

## 1. Crisis overview

- As we enter the 13th year of the Syrian crisis, the situation not only remains unresolved but increasingly dire. The prolonged conflict, economic downturns, health crises such as COVID-19 and cholera, combined with the [recent seismic disaster](#), have pushed Syrian families and children to the brink as they fight to survive with [90% of the Syrian population currently living below the poverty line](#).
- The need for humanitarian assistance in Syria has reached an all-time high, with [16.7 million people](#) requiring support in 2024, marking the largest figure since the crisis began in 2011.
- Funding shortages have impacted all sectors, with the Humanitarian Response Plan for Syria remaining significantly underfunded at [only 21%](#).
- Syria ranks among the top ten nations globally for the highest number of people facing hunger. The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that over half of the population, [12.9 million Syrians](#), are currently experiencing hunger in 2024, while another [2.6 million](#) are on the brink of food insecurity.
- The country continues to endure a protection crisis as loss of essential [documentation](#) and [family separations](#) following the earthquake have led to an increase in [child-headed households, child labor, and early marriages](#). In addition, Syria hosts the world's second-largest number of internally displaced persons, [totalling 7.2 million](#), many of whom reside in overcrowded camps.
- The [earthquakes](#) have worsened Syria's dire situation, causing nearly [6,000 deaths and over 12,800 injuries](#), with many families losing their primary earners. This disaster has pushed millions more into inability to meet their very basic needs, highlighting the urgent need for long-term recovery funding and enhanced emergency preparedness.
- Host countries like Jordan and Türkiye are facing [unprecedented levels of need](#) since the crisis began, as they are dealing with increased vulnerabilities, rising poverty, and unemployment. Despite their own economic struggles and limited resources, these governments continue to provide essential public services such as housing, healthcare, legal systems, education, waste management, and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene). They have been under significant strain, bearing the costs of hosting millions of displaced Syrians for years while also contending with new conflicts and economic challenges in the region.



School in North Central Syria before rehabilitation work by World Vision Syria Response. © World Vision Syria Response partner, Action For Humanity.



Displacement camp in Northcentral Syria being provided with water tanks.  
© World Vision Syria Response partner, Action For Humanity

## 2. Area overview

North Central Syria, or RAATA, gained significant attention due to the military initiative known as 'Operation Peace Spring,' which took place in 2019. This operation was launched by Türkiye on October 9 of 2019, with the stated aim of creating a 'safe zone' free of Kurdish fighters, whom Ankara considers as terrorists. The operation followed Türkiye's strategic shift and led to the withdrawal of US forces from the area which had been controlled by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

NCS is home to a population exceeding 217,911 individuals. According to local authority statistics, the demographic composition is predominantly made up of host communities - accounting for approximately 85% of the population - with the remaining 15% being IDPs. Geographically, RAATA is an extended territory situated along the northern borders of the Syrian cities of Raqqa and Hasakeh. It is encircled by the SDF on all sides except the northern side, which borders Türkiye.

World Vision is currently the only INGO working in the area. The minimal presence of active humanitarian service providers in NCS, coupled with the exclusion of the area from the current humanitarian coordination mechanism (HRP), means that humanitarian needs in Ras Al Ain and Tel Abyad are largely overlooked thus leaving significant gaps in almost all sectors. According to the 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), an estimated 182,327 individuals (84% of the population) are in need of humanitarian assistance in Tel Abyad and Ras Al Ain, and the intersectoral severity of needs in both districts is classified as extreme.

### Key challenges and needs specific to the country

- The region faces significant political and geographical challenges, leading to a worsening humanitarian crisis exacerbated by the absence of UN agencies. These agencies are constrained by

cross-border resolutions that lack a legal mandate, preventing them from meeting the growing needs or effectively advocating for the community to donors. This situation is further complicated by the diverted funding due to other regional crises.

- Economically, North Central Syria is isolated, which impacts market dynamics and limits trade. Poverty and low demand have stifled commercial opportunities, and the scarcity of humanitarian initiatives has further hindered the creation of new employment prospects.



A mother in an isolated area in Northcentral Syria seeking medical help. © World Vision Syria Response partner, Syrian American Medical Society.

- Socially, the predominantly agricultural community is plagued by severe poverty, forcing many families to send their children to work, consider illegal migration, or push them towards military affiliations in exchange for financial support.
- Environmentally, erratic and insufficient rainfall coupled with above-average temperatures has led to drought conditions. This has severely impacted crop and livestock production, undermining the resilience of local communities.

### 3. Country interventions

**Main sectors:** WASH, Health, and Protection

**Beneficiary numbers reached per sector during FY24 in this country:**



**WASH:** 69,000 beneficiaries, including 37,000 children



**Health:** 36,000 beneficiaries, including 14,000 children



**Protection:** 8,000 beneficiaries, including 4,000 children

#### Key WVSR interventions:



Support the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI).



Strengthen health systems to detect epidemiological trends and potential outbreaks of COVID-19 through an early warning, alert, and response network.



Respond to the cholera outbreak in North Central Syria.



Implement an Integrated Emergency Health, Protection, and WASH Response to address immediate humanitarian needs in North Central Syria.



Enhance WASH infrastructure and services which includes conducting emergency water trucking and rehabilitating water and sanitation systems, and the installation of solar-powered water pumping stations.



Support solid waste systems by distributing community garbage bins and providing medical waste incinerators to health facilities.



Distribute gender-responsive hygiene kits and conduct awareness-raising activities to promote proper hygiene practices.



Establish Safe Spaces for children and caregivers, and support community-based child protection committees to lead local initiatives.



Samples getting tested by partner Syrian American Medical Society in Northcentral Syria. © World Vision Syria Response partner, Syrian American Medical Society.






Water trucking by partner, Action For Humanity in Northcentral Syria. © World Vision Syria Response partner, Action For Humanity.



Waste collection efforts in Northcentral Syria. © World Vision Syria Response partner, Action For Humanity.

## Key activities being implemented:

Sector	Activity	Locations	
	WASH	Conduct emergency lifesaving water trucking to targeted communities.	Taiba Villages, Dwerah
	Distribute water tanks at household level.	Taiba Villages	
	Ensure maintenance and operational support of water pumping stations, including the installation of solar systems, to replace or reduce water-trucking.	Suluk Taiba Tel Halaf Dwerah	
	Rehabilitate the water network.	Taiba Villages, Dwerah	
	Support solid waste systems and distribute community garbage bins.	Nasryieh, Ain Alrous, Suluk	
	Provide medical waste incinerators and garbage bins to the supported health facilities.	Ali Bajleh	
	Rehabilitate and upgrade existing sewer networks of targeted communities.	Ras Alain Ain Alrous Tel Abiad	
	Rehabilitate WASH facilities in schools and health facilities.	Ras Alain, Tel Abiad	
Conduct gender-responsive awareness raising.	Ras Alain, Tel Abiad		
	Health	Provide logistical support for COVID-19 surveillance and testing.	NCS area
	Support laboratories for testing of samples.	NCS Area	
	Provide essential support to one primary health care (PHC) and one mobile medical unit (MMU) with staff salaries.	Mekhtele	
	Provide integrated essential Primary Health Care.	Mekhtele	
	Capacitate health facilities' staff.	Mekhtele, Ali Bajleh	
	Conduct a health service mapping and develop a referral matrix.	NCS Area	
	Raise community awareness on health and nutrition-related issues.	Ras Alain	
Conduct integrated health and nutritional services.	Ras Alain		
	Protection	Establish a Safe Space for children, adolescents and caregivers.	Ali Bajleh, Tel Abiad
	Provide awareness raising sessions for girls, boys, women, and men in regard to protection including child protection, GBV, mine risk education, and/or safeguarding.	Tel Abiad Mekhtele	
	Establish and support a community-based child protection committee.	Tel Abiad	
	Conduct 20 community-level initiatives by the community-based child protection committee focusing on identified needs.	Tel Abiad	
	Provide non-specialized, focused psychosocial support.	Mekhtele Tel Abiad	
	Deliver psychosocial support, life skills, and parenting activities for girls, boys, women, and men.	Tel Abiad	

### Successes in this area:

- Established the first Safe Space for children (CFS) and Protection Centre in this area.
- Supported three water stations with sustainable solutions by installing solar systems, providing drinking water to more than 20 villages.
- Reduced environmental health risks by rehabilitating over 9 kilometres of sewage networks.
- Installed the first medical waste incinerator in the area to treat waste from health centres.

## 4. Security overview

The security situation in North Central Syria remains highly unstable and fraught with numerous risks. This region has been a focal point of conflict, primarily involving Turkish military operations and their allied Syrian factions against the PKK. Various armed groups, including remnants of ISIS and other extremist factions, operate within the region. Their presence adds another

layer of complexity to the security environment, as they engage in sporadic attacks and exploit the chaos to further their agendas. Control of different areas frequently shifts between factions, leading to inconsistent governance and law enforcement. This lack of stable authority creates opportunities for criminal activities, including smuggling and kidnapping, which further endanger the local population.



Child participant during an Eid celebration in Northcentral Syria. © World Vision Syria Response partner, Action For Humanity.

## 5. Main advocacy messages :

- Calling for urgent international action to overcome the absence of humanitarian workers in the area, to ensure consistent humanitarian access to North Central Syria, and to prioritize funding for this region despite competing global crises in order to prevent further deterioration of the humanitarian situation.
- Invest in creating livelihood opportunities with a specific focus on sustainable agricultural practices and climate adaptation measures. This will stimulate local markets, create sustainable employment opportunities, and help families ensure that their children are not pulled out of school to secure financial support. It will also help communities withstand humanitarian challenges and to secure their livelihoods.

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## 6. Appendix:

Reports and publications:

Advocacy brief: [“Spotlight on Nutrition, Food Security and Climate Change in Syria and The Host Countries of Lebanon, Türkiye, Jordan and Iraq”](#)