ALEPPO: Six months on from the east Aleppo evacuations, life is slowly restarting. Debris is being removed, streets cleared, schools rehabilitated for the start of the academic year in September, and solar-powered street lights are transforming life in the city after months of darkness. But the road to recovery will be a long one. There is catastrophic damage to infrastructure, homes and shops, and local residents are unsure how to earn a living.

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

- Despite insecurities, the sector was able to extend shelter assistance to the displaced population in Ar Raqqa governorate. In total, UNHCR installed/distributed more than 2,600 tents at different locations including Ein Issa Camp, Mabrouka Camp, Shahid Aziz Transit Center, Karama, and Menbij area. The need for more shelter support remains huge. As of 5 June, around 171,000 people were displaced from Ar Raqqa, since November 2016.

- Sub-national Working Groups in various governorates are functional. In May, Tartous sector partners met and agreed to develop a mapping tool to improve understanding of partner’s operational presence in the governorate. In Homs, the Shelter Sector together with the governorate is setting up a joint committee to coordinate the rehabilitation of damaged houses in Homs among all active actors. The draft ToR was prepared and is being reviewed by the Governorate. In Sweida, a monitoring visit was conducted to Rassas collective shelter where rehabilitation project is taking place. The project reached 98% completion including delivery of family caravans. Distribution of shelter kits is also progressing.

- The sector partners in Damascus met on 16th of May for its regular meeting. The main outcomes include the development of a sector work plan, revision of the Shelter Sector Strategy, review of the Structural Damage Assessment that is planned for Aleppo City, and drafting of a flowchart that illustrates the necessary formal procedures to be assigned to a shelter project.

KEY DIGITS

- **4.0 million** people in need (PiN) of shelter
  - Estimate number of people in need of shelter within Syria hub’s AoR (30% of the estimated 13.5 million total people in need of humanitarian support in 2017)

- **742,000** PiN targeted entire Syria in 2017
  - Estimate number of targeted people in need of shelter in Syria (19% of the estimated 4.0 million people in need of shelter in 2017)

- **303,385** PiN targeted by Syria Hub in 2017
  - Estimated number of targeted people in need of shelter by Syria Hub (41% of the estimated 742K targeted people in need in Syria in 2017)

- **43,353** people assisted
  - Total beneficiaries assisted by shelter projects since January 2017 (15% of 303,385 targeted people in need by Syria Hub)

- **149** shelter projects implemented
  - Total number of shelter projects implemented since January 2017

- **23** shelter sector partners
  - Number of active shelter sector partners with operational presence
CRISIS BACKGROUND: The crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic that started in March 2011 has transformed into a complex emergency that has displaced around 6.3 million people and forced around 4.8 million people out of the country to seek asylum. As per the 2017 Humanitarian Needs Overview, around 13.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance of which around 4.3 million people are desperate to receive adequate shelter support and other multi-sectorial assistance as they continue to struggle in an unsafe and uncertain environment. Due to the protracted nature of the hostilities, many of both displaced and host communities become more vulnerable and their ability to cope and find safe and durable shelter solutions have been greatly affected. The humanitarian community has been challenged to both provide emergency and life-saving shelter solutions while building back community cohesion and resilience through provision of sustainable shelter assistance.

GAPS AND CHALLENGES

- As Raqqa response is becoming more difficult due to continued insecurity, lack of partners, and logistics challenges. Delivery of assistance is difficult as some areas (i.e. Karama) are near to active front-lines.
- Lack of financial resources to pay transportation and rehabilitate damaged houses in places of origin such as Aleppo continue to discourage IDPs in Tartous from returning;
- Due to the recent developments in Dar’a, the continuation of shelter activities were significantly affected. Still some distribution of shelter kits took place in Dar’a as well as ongoing rehabilitation of one collective shelter.
- Limited access to hard-to-reach areas and lack of long-term presence impede the provision of proper shelter support;
- In most cases, available shelters are not enough to accommodate newly displaced persons;
- Insufficient income/unemployment lead to poor living conditions;
- The operational capacity of the sector is insufficient to meet the needs.

GOPA-DERD

GOPA-DERD is a Syrian non-government organization that is affiliated with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East. It was founded in 1994 focusing on development programs. As a result of the Iraqi immigration and sudden displacement in 2003, GOPA-DERD expanded its activities and added relief and early recovery programs to its work, gaining expertise in these fields. At the start of the Syrian crisis in 2011, GOPA-DERD rushed to implement its Emergency and Rapid Response programs and Livelihood and Sustainable Development projects. Team’s efforts focus on meeting the needs of those who are affected, displaced and returnees.

GOPA-DERD is among the active Shelter Sector partners who are providing emergency and durable shelter solutions in Syria. In 2016, through its owner-oriented shelter support, it has rehabiliated 300 apartments benefitting around 1,500 people in Homs governorate. Among the other programs of GOPA-DERD include the provision of small business grants and cash for work, establishment of community-based initiatives / organizations, promotion of health awareness, conduct of psycho-social support and vocational training, WASH, and advocacy on child protection and gender-based violence.

GOPA-DERD has agreements with 15 partners namely, ABAAD, ACT Alliance, CARITAS, FAO, FDCD, ICCO, IOCC, MECC, OXFAM, UNDP, UN HABITAT, UNICEF, UNHCR, and WHO. GOPA-DERD’s main office is located in Damascus City. It operates in 11 governorates with a team composed of more than 1000 individuals, including around 1,000 volunteers.