

Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment

Kobani Crisis Response

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جمعية بهار الإغاثة
Bihar Relief Organisation

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1. Introduction & Methodology

This assessment is an independent effort by Bihar Relief Organisation to provide an operational picture of the collective response to the humanitarian and refugee crisis, following large civilian displacement from the Syrian-Kurdish region of Kobani close to the Turkish border. Informed by the standard framework of the MIRA (Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment), it seeks to ‘identify strategic humanitarian priorities during the first weeks following [the] emergency.’

We are grateful to the Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA) for providing financial and capacity support to the Information Management team responsible for data collection and dissemination of relevant updates to humanitarian actors involved in the Kobani response. It is hoped that this report may inform and contribute to more coordinated and strategic implementation and assessment processes.

Appreciating that the Kobani crisis has emerged within the context of a larger and pre-existing (already L3) emergency, it is noted that many agencies and coordination structures committed to responding to the Syria crisis are unable to dedicate the time and resources necessary for a comprehensive joint assessment to be conducted as per the usual process following a disaster or emergency. Nonetheless, as an operational actor in the response, Bihar Relief Organisation has decided to structure the data collection and reporting of this assessment around the established MIRA framework.

As such, we are grateful to local actors, INGO representatives and members of the host and displaced communities for their cooperation and contributions to this assessment. In addition to collecting information from the field (through beneficiary surveys, focus groups and key informant interviews¹), this report draws on secondary data analysis, in particular through a number of Rapid Assessments conducted during the on-set of the crisis, including that produced by

¹ Such interviews include consultation with local officials, NGO representatives and host – as well as refugee – community leaders.

Bihar's own team as part of an initial scoping exercise.²

Primary data is based on surveys conducted by Bihar's statistics team with 216 households (HHs) from Kobani, encountered during missions across Suruc and Birecik regions. This sample included families who had rented accommodation in Turkey [77], were staying with host families [80], located in public spaces such as mosques or schools [44] and in camps [15]. Additionally, 6 focus group discussions were held, each one with at least 10 individuals from diverse backgrounds, including community figures, such as school-teachers, civil society activists etc. At the same time, key informant consultation is ongoing, with the present report informed by interviews with the *mukhtars*³ of six villages in rural Suruc (Bethe, Baxce, Qinaççe, Ziaret, Tel Antar, Aşme), which have been conducted to date.

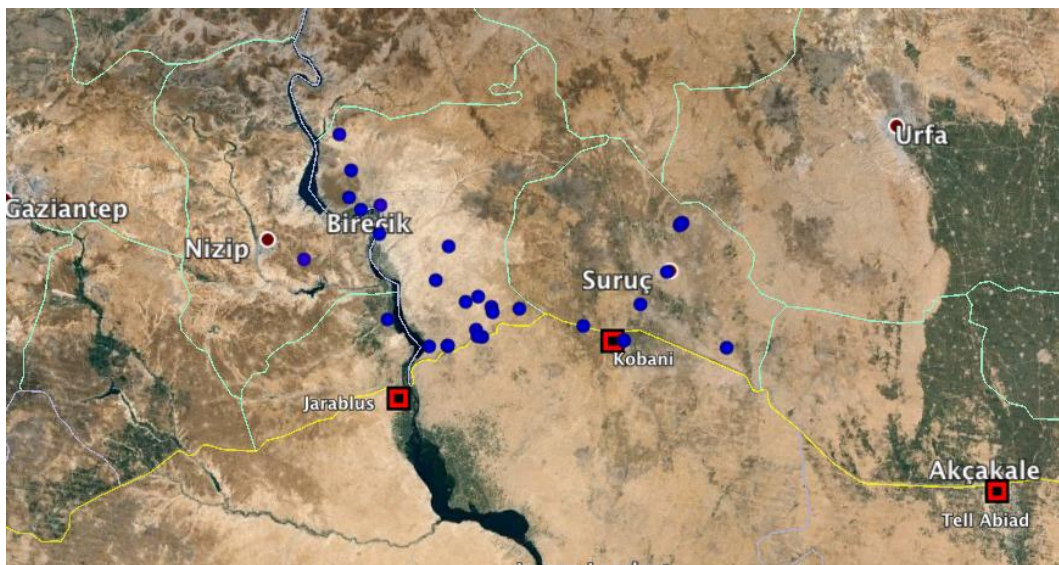


Figure 1: Bihar's Food & NFI distributions to people in need following the Kobani crisis

² A copy of the 'Preliminary Situation Report on Kobani' can be made available upon request. The organization's contact details are provided on the back cover of this report.

³ A *mukhtar* is an administrator responsible for a town, village or neighbourhood in Turkey and some Arab countries.

2. Summary of Findings

- Military situation in Kobani has become worse with ISIS advances towards the town.
- The situation around the border is tense, and conflict has spilt onto the Turkish side on a number of occasions.
- Almost the entire civilian population of Kobani region has crossed the border into Turkey.
- Many of the displaced have moved to other cities (Urfa, Gaziantep, Birecik etc.), though a large population remain in the border-town of Suruc.
- Needs remain considerable in Suruc, and burden upon host community is increasingly difficult to manage.
- Local authorities (Suruc/Urfa Health Department, and municipalities of Suruc, Urfa, Diyabekir etc.) are active and contributing significantly to the response.
- Both the host and displaced communities are experiencing assessment fatigue.
- Almost the entire displaced population are in need of food assistance.
- Many displaced families have few possessions and means of support; as winter approaches NFI are becoming increasingly urgent.
- As yet, there are few interventions focusing on protection, education or more long-term livelihood support.

3. Impact of the crisis

Drivers of the crisis and underlying factors

Prior to the recent crisis, which has resulted in almost the entire civilian population being forced to leave to neighbouring Turkey, the predominantly Kurdish regions of Kobani (or Ayn al-Arab by its Arabic name) had received scarce public attention for the already severe humanitarian situation that its people had been experiencing for more than a year.

Since August 2013, the city and surrounding villages have experienced an intermittent siege situation by the Islamic State (IS)⁴, forcing inhabitants to rely increasingly on local resources, as well as those smuggled from Turkey. In December of the same year, the siege intensified, with almost 90% of all commodities having to be brought into the region illegally from Turkey.

For approximately 9 months, the water supply to Kobani had been cut by ISIS's presence at the station in Shaioukh district to the south, forcing the people of Kobani to rely on extracting untreated drinking water from local dug wells. The lack of chlorination resulted in the spread of water-borne diseases within the besieged region. As summer approached, 75% of the wells in the rural areas has begun to dry up, and in response, the local authorities in Kobani had worked on a project to establish a deeper drilled well, which was completed two months prior to the mass displacement. Concerning electricity, power from the national network had been cut completely for some 11 months due to ISIS's presence in Sarin.

As conflict between IS and the Kurdish YPG⁵ forces intensified in the region, the former began to commit crimes against locals. Notably on 18 February 2014, 165 citizens of Kobani (on 13 service buses) were kidnapped at a checkpoint on the way to the Iraqi border. Some 150 students were similarly held for several months after being detained by ISIS on 29 May 2014 while returning to Kobani after sitting exams in Aleppo.

⁴ IS was previously known as ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Sham), or alternatively ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant).

⁵ YPG (Yekîneyên Parastîna Gel/People's Protection Units) is the armed wing of the Kurdish administration in Syria, related predominantly to the PYD (Democratic Union Party).

Most recently, from 16 September the Islamic State intensified its offensive on all three fronts (east, west and south) around Kobani. Heavy shelling and capture of almost all villages in the areas as IS advanced towards the city resulted in over 130,000 crossing into Turkey between 19-22 September (according to figures provided by the sub-governor of Suruc).

While other areas in Syria previously taken over by IS have been predominantly Sunni-Arab, the ethnic dimension of Kobani having a majority Kurdish population has contributed to the magnitude of the crisis. Many families fled the area fearing targeted persecution as a result of their ethnic-sectarian identity as Kurds. Moreover, there are reports of IS beheading a number of local civilians who remained in some of the villages they took over around Kobani.

Fearful that if they remain their fate could be similar to that of the Kurdish Yazidi communities who were massacred and otherwise violated by IS in the Shengal region of Iraq, many people from Kobani acted early to bring family members out to safety in Turkey. Initially, many young males accompanied their families across the border before returning back to Kobani in order to tie up loose ends, protect property from looting and/or defend the region from IS. This led to many families being divided and many (temporarily) female-headed households struggling to adapt to unfamiliar surroundings in Turkey.

US and international coalition airstrikes targeting IS locations in Kobani region have slowed the advances of the latter on Kobani city. Several unknowns currently complicate assessments of the present and future situation on both sides of the border. Firstly, the extent of direct and indirect international (including Turkish) involvement in the conflict remains unclear. Secondly, and connected, is the question of how effectively Kurds from Turkey can support those fighting in Kobani, not to mention the possibility of collaboration from Kurdish *peshmerga* fighting forces from Iraq. In all cases, however, it appears unlikely that there will be a possibility of return for significant numbers of people to Kobani in the near future.



Figure 2 People from Kobani at the Syrian-Turkish border

Scope of the crisis and humanitarian profile: SYRIA

Kobani by its Kurdish name (known in Arabic as Ayn al-Arab), refers to both the sub-district and principal town of the most north-western part of Aleppo governorate in Syria. While population estimates have been difficult due to the fact that the area was essentially besieged for most of the last year, the official Syrian government statistics from 2006 indicate a population of some 460,000. Given the relative stability enjoyed during 2011-12, the area came to host a large number of IDPs from more severely war-affected regions.

Recent large-scale displacement from the Kobani region into Turkey has been accompanied and preceded by localized displacement on the Syrian side, as residents fled their villages in response to ISIS advances. Many had also moved into Kobani city, before later crossing into Turkey. As a result of both ISIS advances and coalition airstrikes typically taking place at night, for a period of time, sections of the population would ‘ping-pong’ between their settlements in the day, and the border-regions, where they went to sleep in relative safety at night.

In general, locals from Kobani region crossed into Turkey via 9 main points, which were previously known to smugglers as safe from mines. Naturally these

areas served as gathering points on either side of the border. While most refugee arrivals have transferred to Suruç and other inland Turkish towns, it is presently estimated that about 4-5,000 civilians remain on the Syrian side of the border, mostly congregated in pockets at such points along the border. There are some 400 individuals close to areas known to have unexploded landmines on the Syrian side of the border across from Göktepe village in Birecik district [20km west of Kobani], and a further approximately 3000 individuals (including 800 women and 400 children) in an enclave at Tel Shair [3km west of the city]. In both cases, these clusters of IDPs have chosen not to cross the border, usually because they are reluctant to abandon their livelihoods, having brought with them to the border livestock and/or vehicles (cars or tractors). While difficult to determine the exact figure, it is believed that a few hundred civilians remain in Kobani city.





Figure 3 Distribution to IDPs at Tel Shair

Scope of the crisis and humanitarian profile: TURKEY

According to official figures provided by AFAD (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency) based on data up to 13 October 2014, almost 188,000 Syrians had crossed from Kobani region into Turkey as a result of the recent crisis. Based on consultation with local *mukhtars*, it is estimated that the actual number of people to have entered Turkey from Kobani may be in the region of 200-250,000.

Following entry into Turkey, most new-arrivals would move from the border to Suruc, which is generally considered to be the corresponding settlement to Kobani on the Turkish side. Trans-border family relations have facilitated the local Suruc community's efforts to accommodate those coming from the Syrian side. However, this dynamic has also made it difficult to determine the numbers of newly settled families, partially because their presence is sometimes concealed in the host society, and also due to a reluctance of behalf of the community from

each side of the border to consider those coming from Kobani as ‘refugees.’ Nonetheless, estimates provided by community leaders as well as the sub-governor’s office (from the central Turkish authorities) state that the population in Suruc city is in the range of 50,000. Suruc Municipality (local authorities) report a similar figure, adding that there are some 80,000 in the entire Suruc district.

While many of those in Suruc city are being hosted by local families, others are presently accommodated in public institutions and collective centres such as schools, mosques, a wedding hall and cultural centre. Two temporary shelters have also been set-up by the Kurdish-run municipality (Rojava and Kobani camps), with 100 and 200 tents respectively, the latter currently housing 3500 individuals. The Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) has also established a 3,500 individual capacity camp at Ali Gör to the north of Suruc, as well as a number of temporary shelters accommodating refugees in the town. The already established camp at YIBO school has also received new arrivals from Kobani, while those who had settled at the Suleyman Shah transit centre have been relocated for security reasons.⁶

In the rural areas of Suruc, families have similarly settled in public buildings and bare concrete structures, as well as abandoned building. According to *mukhtars* consulted from the region, in some villages those from Kobani now outnumber the original population.

Much of the Kobani population has also migrated (possibly temporarily) to towns of Gaziantep, Nizib, Urfa and Birecik, where there were already significant Syrian refugee populations. In Birecik, for example, there were already some 4,000 Syrians according to statistics shared by the municipality and Turkish Red Crescent (TRC). According to data generated by Bihar’s survey team, there are now an additional 11,771 people in rural Birecik, as well as more than 10,000 in the city itself.

Decisions to leave Suruc for other destinations were often motivated by the locations of family members and friends already in other cities. Those who moved further afield (e.g. to Mersin and Gaziantep) more often had the financial resources to rent their own accommodation, at least initially. Some 200 families have re-entered Syria and settled in the Efrin region, while others have been recorded around Derik in Syria close to the Iraqi border.

⁶ Further details on AFAD-administered camps are provided in UNHCR External Updates.

Based on interview data collected about 1275 individuals in rural Suruc, 52% of the settled population were found to be female. It should be noted that official registration statistics collected by AFAD/UNHCR likely underrepresent the actual male proportion, given that many males originally resisted registration on entry into Turkey in order to be able to preserve mobility should there be occasion to return to Syria. Of the total population, 19% are under 5 years of age, 35% children between 5-18, and 4% above 60. The most vulnerable groups within the population include the elderly and physically frail, as well as those with disabilities, especially when accommodated in precariously situations (such as camps or public spaces). Secondly, there are few facilities catering to maternal health needs, and a number of births have been reported without any kind of medical provision on hand.

4. Status of populations living in affected areas

There are significant protection concerns over the safety of those individuals 'stranded' in clusters on the Syrian side of the border. These populations are located in enclaves of non-man's land within ISIS-controlled territory, and are reliant upon cross-border deliveries of food and other essential assistance. Many in these *ad hoc* communities sleep outdoors at night, and have little by way of shelter in the eventuality of harsh weather conditions. Heavy rain hit the region of Suruc and Kobani on 27 September, followed by a number of subsequent storms at night between then and the present moment. This creates serious concerns for the welfare of those who remain without suitable shelter, a situation that is particularly worrying as winter approaches.

Within the general displaced and war-affected population on the Turkish side, shelter is a pressing need. Many of the public spaces housing populations from Kobani in Suruc and Birecik regions lack basic WASH infrastructure. At the same time, bathing and sanitation facilities offer little privacy, which creates particular protection concerns for women. This also impacts women's ability to comfortably breast-feed, causing infant formula to be desired as an urgent alternative. In Suruc, few child-friendly spaces exist, while public health services are greatly overwhelmed. Since a large proportion of assistance, especially that seeking to fulfill daily food needs, is administered through public distribution points (as opposed to house-to-house dissemination), many of the most vulnerable are

missing out.

The majority of families have had to leave behind their livelihoods, and have little resources with which to support themselves through the coming winter. Those who had relied on farming often had to abandon crops, livestock, vehicles and agricultural infrastructure. Due to lack of economic resources, families in Suruc (both those coming from Kobani, and those from the local host community) are increasingly exhibiting signs of fatigue – a situation that, for most, is only expected to get worse.

Self-Assessment Needs Survey

Based on the household surveys conducted in Suruc region, the average family size was determined to be 6 persons. In terms of needs, almost all families requested support in the form of ready-to-eat meals [214 of the total 216 families surveyed], hygiene kits [210], winter clothing [209] and food items to be used in cooking [207]. On average, families highlighting the above stated that they were in need of such items for at least 4 members of the family. A significant number [199] of families also highlighted the need for sanitary towels to be provided to an average of 2 women/girls within the family.

The table below displays the results of HH surveys, and is followed by sector-specific observations:

Item	No. Families Requesting the Item	% of Families Requesting the Item
Ready Meals	214	99
Hygiene Kits	210	97
Winter Clothing	209	97
Cooking Items (Food)	207	96
Sanitary Towels	199	92
Matrasses	186	86
Blankets	162	75
Children's Diapers	117	54
Drinking Water	106	49
Infant Formula	97	44

Food Security

The fact that so many families are asking for cooking items suggests that, however difficult their circumstances, they are trying to preserve a sense of self-dependence and maintain pre-displacement practices of food preparation. Similarly, focus group discussions confirmed that families living in unfurnished spaces often collect food items and bring them to relatives and friends with cooking facilities. Several times, it was stated that food preparation and consumption is an essential part of communal life. Such activities present an opportunity for community resilience, as well as allowing individuals to retain the dignity of choice. As such, one family mentioned, ‘when we cook together, our spirits return.’ Moreover, some of those staying with host families said that cooking and providing basic ingredients is a chance for them to ‘contribute to the daily life of the family’ and ‘to give something, even if only symbolic, back to [our] hosts.’ It was noted that very few of those displaced from Kobani who were consulted consider themselves to be able to depend upon their own means to cover daily food expenses for the coming weeks.

A question that divides responders to the crisis is the provision of infant formula. Several of the key informants cited infant formula as the number one most pressing need within the displaced population, and 44% of all families surveyed stated that they are ‘in need’ of supplies. It is acknowledged that statements about shortages of ‘baby milk’ can sometimes be used in order to send an emotive message – i.e. ‘even our children are deprived of milk’ – irrespective of the mother’s ability to breast-feed. Nonetheless, infant formula was one of the most consistent requests from families with small children, many of whom complained about the absence of such products in the market in Kobani prior to the recent crisis. Also, it is worth noting the relatively high demand (72%) for infant formula among those residing in public spaces; a phenomenon perhaps explained by the inability and/or reluctance of women to breast-feed there.

In general, families were in need of food assistance irrespective of whether they were self-accommodated, hosted or living in public spaces/camps.

NFI/Shelter

While blankets and mattresses were still requested by more than three quarters of the surveyed population, other families seem to have fulfilled this need, either through bringing/retrieving such items from their homes in Kobani, or through receiving them as part of emergency response distributions to date. This is a notable contrast to responses during the Rapid Assessment conducted shortly after the onset of the crisis on 23 September 2014. However, those whose family requirements had not been met in this respect, most often were in need of both blankets and mattresses for 4 members of the family.

Significant differences in NFI needs were recorded according to the location of the individuals in question: camp-based refugees reported lesser need of blankets (47%) and mattresses (73%). In comparison, 81% of those housed in public spaces expressed a need for blankets, and 94% for mattresses; greater need still was recorded among the population in rented accommodation, with figures registered at 95% and 99% respectively.

5. Response capacity

National capacities and response

Prior to the September-October 2014 displacement of population, there were few relief/humanitarian actors able to conduct cross-border operations to besieged Kobani. A number of small political independent associations had been involved in *ad hoc* relief work among other civil society activities, but following the January 2014 announcement of the PYD-led 'democratic self-administration' in Kobani canton, relief efforts were mostly limited to PYD-affiliated groups like Heyva Sor a Kurd (the Kurdish Red Crescent), coordinated by Desteya Destekdayê ya Kobani (the Kobani Relief Committee of the self-administration). As IS tightened its control on the routes into Kobani from within Syria, attempts were made to open a channel of aid across the Turkish border, with Turkish NGO IHH achieving greatest success in this respect. In-country mechanisms for distribution, however, remained quite basic and unstructured.

Following the recent displacement crisis, many of the organisations from Kobani were themselves conflict-affected and their members were forced to flee with few

possessions. This has demobilized institutional architecture and dramatically reduced the capacities of community-actors to play the role of first responders to the emergency. Nonetheless, a number of young activists have worked together informally to attempt to mobilise rapid responses and provide a safety net to particularly urgent cases.

The local response to the Kobani crisis is composed of Turkish and Syria (including especially Kurdish) actors. The host community, particularly in Suruc, has provided generous support to those fleeing Kobani. The authorities in the town – both the local municipality and the sub-governor’s office representing the central Turkish government – have encouraged families to temporarily accommodate families in need of shelter. Indeed the local authorities have generally played a significant role in the Kobani crisis response. While the Suruc baladiyya (municipality) has been the main actor to have, when still feasible, sent assistance cross-border, it – along with that of Urfa, Diyarbakir and Van – is providing daily distributed cooked meals as well as providing NFIs (mostly blankets and mattresses). The relief actions of these elected municipalities, which are administered by the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), are highly visible around the centre of Suruc.

Additionally, authorities and institutions associated with the central administration of the Turkish state have committed extensive resources to the response efforts. The Turkish Health Department has been conducting polio and measles vaccination protection campaigns, given that Kobani could not be included in the Syrian national polio campaigns as a result of the lack of access for the vaccination task-force. Additionally, the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) is the principal ‘official’ channel of aid distribution. As well as coordinating pre-registration of Syrians entering Turkey, the association also provides hot meals and distributes material aid. Meanwhile, the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC, also known as Kızılay) is distributing high-energy biscuits, hot meals, NFIs and providing drinking water to groups in need.

National and regional actors played an important role in providing cross-border assistance to civilians remaining in Kobani. Turkish NGO Deniz Feneri, as well as the Barzani Charitable Association from the (Iraqi) Kurdistan Region succeeded in sending trucks to the Syrian side. Presently, it is difficult to determine numbers of civilians in need remaining in Kobani.

On the Turkish side, IHH have opened two distribution kitchens in Suruc and,

along with the Qatari Red Crescent, are providing hot meals three times a day in the town square. Within the health sector, besides the vaccinations against communicable diseases mentioned above, most activities are being conducted by Kurdish associations, such as Heyva Sor (Kurdish Red Crescent) and Kurdish Doctors Unions from the diaspora community. They are running emergency clinics in coordination with municipal institutions.

Additionally, the Syrian Opposition Coalition, together with the Syrian Interim Government and the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU), has reportedly allocated funds to be dedicated to the Kobani response. As yet, the mechanisms of implementation are still being studied by the jointly established committee.

International capacities and response

Few international actors were operating cross-border to Kobani prior to the on-set of the recent crisis. As such, and due to bureaucratic complications associated with the release of commodities and funds, collective international action has suffered from a slowness to respond to the emergency. There are several cases of INGOs having conducted Rapid Assessments in the first week of the crisis, and then being unable to effectively implement activities. This observation was highlighted and frustrations were expressed in every one of the focus group discussions held. While many agencies stated that they had contingency stocks available for deployment, a considerable number were unable to gain approval to re-allocate commodities earmarked for cross-border assistance on the Turkish side.

Responding in collaboration with AFAD, UNHCR has also established an *ad hoc* Inter-Agency coordination mechanism in order to promote the exchange of information between relevant operational actors. To date, most INGO interventions are limited to emergency distributions of essential Food and NFI items, and there have been few internationally-supported initiatives looking to support the community in more sustainable ways. As highlighted in the CARE/IMC assessment, there are currently significant gaps in protection-related services.

6. Access and Gaps

Border and Humanitarian Access

The officially recognized border crossing between Kobani on the Syrian side, and Muşipnar in Turkey had been closed for most of the last year, coming into use only for occasional shipments of humanitarian assistance. Prior to the recent crisis, the gate was not normally open for people to cross into Turkey except in exceptional circumstances. Meanwhile, it was possible for locals to return to Kobani from Turkey on foot, at times restricted to particular days of the week (Tuesday and Thursday). During the displacement, most people fled through other border crossing points, some of which were later ‘opened’ by decisions from Turkish authorities. Periodic tensions remain, with clashes between the YPG and ISIS taking place along the border, and ISIS shells sometimes reaching Turkish territory.

Conditions around Suruc’s narrow streets and its crowded central square – as a natural point of tension between desperate displaced people and heavily armed police forces – can at times present challenges for humanitarian actors to access the population in need. It is consequently more difficult to conduct house-to-house distributions in Suruc than it is within the surrounding villages. On a number of occasions demonstrations by the Kurdish population of both Kobani and Suruc have erupted advocating for greater international and regional response to the situation across the border in Syria. As a result, riot police have used tear gas against demonstrators and sometimes restricted road access into Suruc.

This situation is somewhat mirrored by the – sometimes competitive – relation between the local offices of central government and the locally elected authorities themselves. The latter – represented by the Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi, BDP) – is one of the most effective providers of assistance on the ground, operating from a large depot in the centre of town. Given the potential for tensions between the two, at present most international aid providers have opted to coordinate extensively with either the local Suruc **or** the national Ankara authorities.

It is likely that tensions, demonstrations and public gatherings will continue according to international political developments over the military and humanitarian situation of Kobani. The security situation in Kurdish regions of Turkey where those displaced from Kobani have settled is very closely linked to

the military developments taking place across the border in Syria. There are concerns that some of the aid delivered to those remaining on the Syrian side could end up going to combatants due to the family intersection of civil-military relations. Initially many young males brought other (especially more vulnerable) members of their families out to Turkey, before returning to attempt to recover possessions and/or remain with a view to protecting their property. This dynamic has been further complicated by the mobilization of some Kurds in Turkey, attempting to cross into Kobani region in order to join the operation to defend Kobani. As such, there is increasing interaction between civilians and potential combatants on the Turkish side of the border also. This particularly presents a challenge in reaching those people 'stranded' in a *de facto* no-man's land on the Syrian side of the border.

Finally, for many agencies, access to the population in need is curtailed by insufficient community acceptance due to unfamiliarity of many organisations with the local culture, language and social networks.

Coverage and Gaps

Most humanitarian interventions to date have taken the form of Food Security and NFI sector distributions. There are significant needs for life-sustaining primary health services as well as an increase in life-saving operations, as the efforts of community and diaspora organizations are insufficient to cover the demand. Likewise, there is need for water systems projects in a number of the camps, transit centres and public institutions currently hosting refugees.

Little is currently being effectively implemented in the field of protection. Consistent with the observation of another multi-agency protection assessment (CARE & IMC, 15 October 2014: 3), field staff involved in the present study have noted a protection concern associated with the personal safety of refugees (especially women) being forced to stay in collective centres with others they do not know. Education is as yet an underserved sector, with only a few community initiatives in place to provide mostly semi-structures services to children in communal centres and camps.

7. Strategic humanitarian priorities

Priority interventions should focus firstly on the question of shelter for those still without sustainable mid-term solutions. It has been observed that refugees have been relocated from a number of communal centres in Suruc (including the Avesta wedding salon). Camps are in need of infrastructural development (particularly in water supply, hygiene facilities, sanitation etc.), though it is anticipated that AFAD and the relevant municipalities will lead coordination on such issues in their respectively administered camps.

As the cold weather approaches, winterization campaigns are required to not only provide blankets and mattresses, but also appropriate clothing and mats/rugs to prevent people from sleeping directly on the cold floors. Such programmes are considered especially vital for the many families currently housed in the garages below houses belonging to locals in Suruc. These families have often missed out on distributions taking place in the main square of the town.

Provision of diapers for young children as well as support to non-breastfeeding mothers (be it through dietary fortification or supplementing infant formula) is similarly required. Additionally, though not life-saving, a clear and urgent need was expressed by many families for educational and psycho-social support for children.

8. References

Bihar Relief Organisation (23 September 2014) Preliminary Situation Report on Kobani

CARE International [& Syria Needs Assessment Project (SNAP)] (24 September 2014) Rapid Assessment Report: Kobane Refugee Influx to Turkey

CARE & IMC (15 October 2014) Rapid Gender and Protection Assessment Report: Kobane Refugee Population, Suruç, Turkey

Kader Sheikmous (24 September 2014) Needs Assessment Report of Kobani City, Syria

Meeting Notes (22 September 2014) Ad-hoc Inter-Agency Coordination Meeting for Kobane Refugee Response, Gaziantep (facilitated by UNHCR)

UNHCR (3 October 2014) External Update on Influx of Syrian refugees:
<http://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/external-update-influx-syrian-refugees-03-october-2014>

UNHCR (10 October 2014) External Update on Influx of Syrian refugees:
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/543badb74.html>

9. Glossary of Acronyms

ACU	Assistance Coordination Unit
AFAD	Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı/ Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency)
BDP	Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi/Peace and Democracy Party
HH	Household(s)
IHH	İnsani Yardım Vakfı/Humanitarian Relief Foundation
NFI	Non-Food Item(s)
PYD	Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat/Democratic Union Party
TRC	Turkish Red Crescent/Kızılay
YPG	Yekîneyên Parastina Gel/People's Defense Units

Bihar Relief Organisation was established in 2011 in response to the growing humanitarian needs of the Syrian people in the northern governorate of Aleppo. Since the siege on the district of Efrin in mid-2013, the organisation has increasingly focused its efforts on Aleppo's north-western countryside. Recently, it has committed to providing emergency assistance to those affected by the Kobani crisis.

Bihar Relief Organisation is an independent NGO providing humanitarian aid within a framework complementary to societal and human development. It has programmes in Food Security, Health, WASH and capacity building, and operates according to established humanitarian principles to relieve suffering without distinction of any kind. It is non-political and non-sectarian in attainment of its objectives.

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