Population Monitoring Initiative: Southern Syria

Services
Field Operations, Research and Analysis, and Data Systems and Visualization

Objective
The southern Syria Population Monitoring Initiative (PMI) monitored new displacement and return movements in areas covered by the cross-border response in Dar’a and Quneitra in southern Syria. The situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and residents was assessed through regular household surveys at village-level, allowing a comparative needs analysis across different population groups. Data was collected through primary data collection methods.

Background
The southern Syria Population Monitoring Initiative (PMI) assessed approximately 120 communities per month in the opposition-controlled areas of Dar’a and Quneitra governorates for population figures, movements, and conditions.

PMI focused on collecting data across four population groups: 1) Residents: persons originating from and/or permanently residing in the surveyed community prior to the conflict; 2) IDPs: persons not originating from, nor permanently residing in, the surveyed community prior to the conflict; 3) Refugee returnees: (sub-group of residents) persons who fled Syria but have returned to their community of origin since the July 2017 ceasefire; and 4) IDP returnees: the same as refugee returnees but never left Syria.

The target population was guided by the information needs of the humanitarian community and refined based on definitions provided by local councils via a key informant (KI) capacity survey conducted in July 2017 and multiple HH surveys.

The thematic scope of the data collected was grounded in an assessment of iMMAP’s internal capacity and that of individuals and community leaders in Dar’a and Quneitra to provide accurate information, and prioritized based on a secondary data review identifying information gaps and Protection and Shelter NFI Working Group partner requests. Key indicators were stock figures for each population group, volume and drivers of population movements, and durable solution-related community conditions (i.e. shelter, protection, and access to justice).

Better Data, Better Decisions, Better Outcomes
Achievements

Monthly PMI Context Reports

The PMI context report was a monthly deliverable divided into two sections. The first section contextualized displacement datasets of host community residents and IDP populations across 123 villages in southern Syria. The second section of the report outlined the major findings of village-level assessments and was based on population data collected at the household (HH) level.

Sub-Regional Profiles (Dar’a)

PMI-focused sub-regional profiling covered 5 key sub-regions in Dar’a. The sub-regions (Jaydour, Horan, Dar’a Al Balad, SE Dar’a, and Lajat) are the natural divisions as defined by residents in the region. These organic divisions influence or determine the majority of markets, governance structures, tribal structures, livelihood divisions and conflict lines.

Southern Syria Emergency Flash Updates

In June 2018, escalated violence in Dar’a bore witness to heavy displacement, with 270k – 330k IDPs fleeing from their homes. Amidst the unrelenting hostility, PMI project staff continued to deliver population movement information, along with relevant and timely analysis related to context changes.

Monthly PMI Datasets, Maps and Dashboards

Maps and infographics sought to showcase population density, movements and areas of control, as well as key findings, while interactive Power BI dashboards included population stock figures and movement, local council (LC) inner workings and humanitarian conditions.

Population Monitoring Initiative Toolkit

The toolkit outlines best practices in the Population Monitoring Initiative for mapping population numbers and the needs of IDPs. The toolkit is intended for joint use by iMMAP and UNHCR in future population monitoring initiatives.