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4.5.4. Conflict related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

During the escalation of hostilities that began in northwestern Syria on 27 November 2024, OHCHR noted that attacks by both HTS and pro-Assad forces caused destruction and damage to healthcare facilities, educational institutions, food markets and other civilian structures such as houses, shops and a mosque, including in Idlib city.[861] Clashes reported in Idlib governorate on 1 and 2 December 2024 affected four schools, two IDP camps, a water station,[862] several healthcare facilities[863] and residential areas.[864]

After the fall of the Assad government, ongoing hostilities, including in southern Syria as well as Homs, Tartous and Latakia governorates, continued to cause damage to residential houses, healthcare facilities, bridges,[865] markets, businesses[866] /shops, and other civilian infrastructure.[867] Damage inflicted to the Tishreen Dam on 10 December 2024 left the facility non-operational as of late January 2025, depriving some 413 000 people around Manbij and Kobane of water and electricity, according to UNOCHA.[868] There were also reports of destruction of civilian properties in Quneitra governorate,[869] while water stations were damaged by hostilities in Aleppo,[870] Raqqa, Hasaka, Deir Ez-Zor.[871]

Unexploded remnants of war continued to have a deadly impact on civilians.[872] Areas most at risk include former front lines and areas that witnessed intense hostilities, while ongoing fighting in parts of northeastern Syria has added further layers of contamination. The UN noted that deaths and injuries by contamination with explosive remnants were being reported on a weekly [873] /near-daily basis across the country, pointing to more than 430 reported deaths and injuries between December 2024 and mid-February 2025.[874] Based on its monitoring work, the HALO Trust, a UK-based NGO specialised in the disposal of unexploded ordnance, estimated that between 8 December 2024 and 2 March 2025, 640 persons had been killed or injured by landmines and other explosive remnants. However, the source pointed out that this was likely an underestimate given that Syria lacked a central record of accidents occurring across the country.[875] Meanwhile, statistics from the Syrian Civil Defence consulted by Enab Baladi held that 40 people had been killed by war remnants between the launch of ‘Operation Deterrence of Aggression’ and 19 January 2025, while another 65 civilians had been injured.[876]

SOHR reported that explosions of remnants of war (which based on its definition include old landmines and unexploded bombs, IEDs, shells, grenades, and projectiles)[877] had caused 143 deaths and 172 injuries among civilians between 1 January and 7 February 2025. Broken down

by area of control, 106 of these 143 civilian deaths (74 %) occurred in regions controlled by the new transitional administration, while areas controlled by the SDF and by SNA factions accounted for 10 (7 %) and 27 deaths (19 %), respectively.878 While SOHR has published no such data on December 2024, it recorded nine civilian deaths and 23 civilian injuries from unexploded war remnants during November 2024. Seven of these nine fatalities were recorded in areas that were under the control of the Assad government at the time, while the remaining two were recorded in HTS-held areas.879

As UNOCHA reported at the end of January 2025, since November 2024, a total of 136 minefields and points of mine presence have been newly identified across Idlib, Aleppo, Hama, Deir Ez-Zor, and Latakia.880

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