

Activity Report

The White Helmets Work Report

May 2024



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Executive summary:

The White Helmets volunteers continued their humanitarian operations and responses to save lives in northwest Syria during May 2024. They provided diverse services in the areas of emergency response, ambulance services, healthcare, and awareness-raising within 503 communities and 624 camps.

The volunteers carried out 39 emergency response operations to military attacks, during which they recovered six dead bodies, including four children, and rescued 17 injured individuals, including three women and 11 children.

Firefighting teams successfully controlled 501 fires, rescuing seven injured individuals, including three children. The fires also claimed the life of a **child**. Additionally, the volunteers responded to 139 traffic accidents in 82 communities, providing assistance to 126 injured individuals, including 15 women and 46 children.

In the healthcare sector, the ambulance system transported 11,824 patients, including 5,032 women and 3,074 children. Moreover, 14,307 individuals, including 9,399 women, 2,170 boys, and 1,760 girls, benefited from healthcare services provided by Women and Family Healthcare Centers. Community health teams also organized 7,753 awareness activities benefiting 10,663 individuals, including 7,089 women, 1,040 boys, and 1,700 girls.

The Protection Program conducted 127 awareness sessions attended by 1,753 individuals, including 1,017 women, 208 boys, and 47 girls.

On the other hand, the White Helmets volunteers conducted 1,432 community resilience activities within 280 communities and 165 camps. Ensuring the delivery of these humanitarian responses to all segments of society, especially vulnerable groups such as women, children, and persons with disabilities, was a priority.





Section One:

Search and Rescue Program



Emergency Response to Military Attacks

The search and rescue teams persisted in delivering quality emergency responses to military attacks targeting northwest Syria during May. The response included life-saving first aid for the wounded both at the site of injury and during their immediate transport to medical facilities. This also included retrieving the deceased and conducting technical interventions for victims trapped under the rubble. Moreover, our firefighters extinguished fires caused by bombardments or explosions, ensuring the safety of the sites.

The White Helmets teams conduct their life-saving operations with strict compliance with the International Humanitarian Law, and full respect for neutrality as a core value, ensuring that all victims receive assistance based only on their humanitarian needs, without any discrimination.

The White Helmets volunteers responded to 39 military attacks, bringing the total number of emergency response operations to military attacks during the year to 376. The attacks killed six civilians, including four children. The volunteers rescued 17 injured persons, including three women and 11 children.

Figure 1: Civilian casualties during responses to military attacks



Syrian regime forces were responsible for most of the attacks, 27 attacks. Russian forces carried out four attacks, and Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) carried out two attacks. Additionally, four attacks originated from areas controlled by the Syrian regime and SDF, along with two anonymous attacks.

The largest number of attacks were carried out using artillery shells (22 attacks), with four attacks conducted by warplanes, three attacks by drones, and five attacks with guided missiles.

May witnessed a rise in guided missile attacks, which cause a high number of casualties and are concentrated in areas near the frontlines. This diminishes the chances of life and stability for thousands of families who are systematically subjected to life-threatening attacks. These attacks also restrict movement, preventing farmers from reaching their fields to harvest crops and exacerbating food insecurity.

Noteworthy Operations

Syrian regime forces targeted residential neighborhoods in the town of al-Abzemo in Aleppo western countryside with artillery shells on May 5, resulting in the death of a child and serious injuries to his mother.



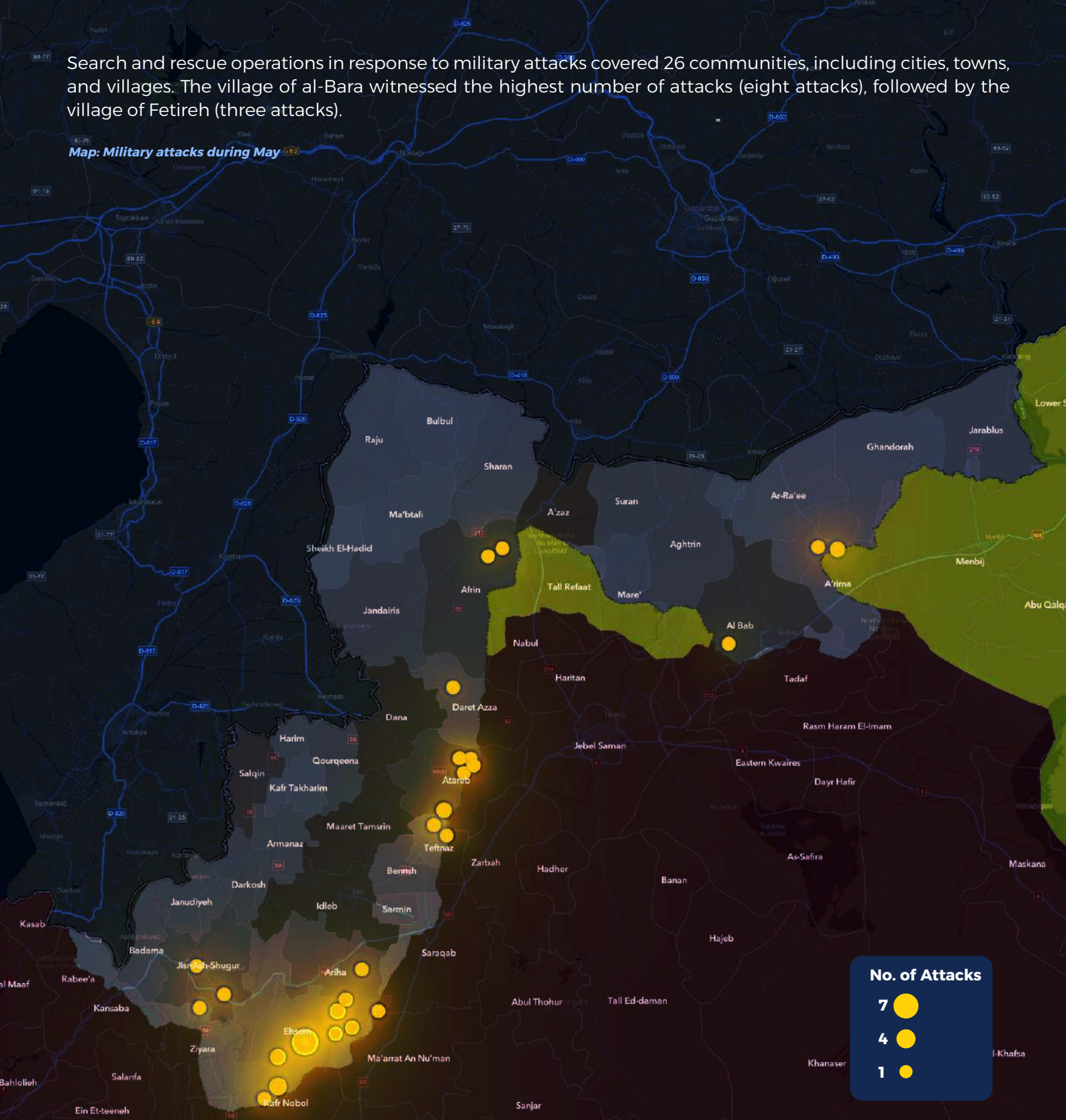
Syrian regime forces targeted a civilian car in the town of Tadil in Aleppo western countryside with a guided missile on May 18, injuring seven civilians from the same family who were inside it (the mother, her brother, her husband, and their four children, one of whom is an infant).

Syrian regime forces targeted a farm vehicle in the village of Kafr Nouran in Aleppo western countryside with a guided missile on May 28, resulting in the death of two children and injuries to an infant.



Search and rescue operations in response to military attacks covered 26 communities, including cities, towns, and villages. The village of al-Bara witnessed the highest number of attacks (eight attacks), followed by the village of Fetireh (three attacks).

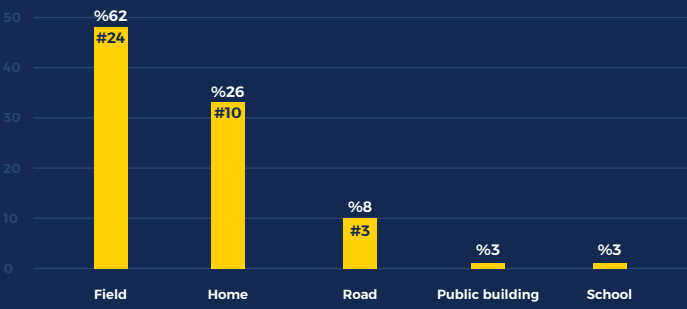
Map: Military attacks during May



Most of the targets were agricultural lands and fields, with 24 attacks, followed by civilian homes with ten attacks, and three attacks on roads. The attacks also included a camp and a public building.

All necessary measures have been taken to respond to the different attacks in these various places by adhering to the established standard work procedures that ensure the provision of timely and professional life-saving responses, taking into account the unique challenges and logistical considerations imposed by different environments.

Figure 2: Military Attacks Response Locations



Firefighting Operations:

In anticipation of rising temperatures, the approaching harvest season, and the renewed threat of agricultural fires, concerns are mounting that the forest and field fire season in Syria may start early. Protecting agricultural crops, especially strategic ones like wheat, has become critical. To prevent an early fire season this year, the White Helmets firefighting teams have developed a comprehensive response plan for agricultural crop fires.

This plan encompasses all areas of northwest Syria, aligned with the distribution of White Helmets centers and the cultivated regions in each area. It designates 21 advanced firefighting response points across Idlib countryside, the Al-Ghab Plain, and Aleppo countryside, covering more than 265,000 dunams of grain fields. These points are bolstered by 28 main fire response centers, which cover approximately 985,000 dunams of cultivated land. Furthermore, the teams have formulated support plans involving 43 White Helmets centers to ensure rapid response and effective coordination, aiming to minimize the losses caused by crop fires. The plan emphasizes both practical measures and awareness campaigns to reduce fire outbreaks and enable swift intervention.

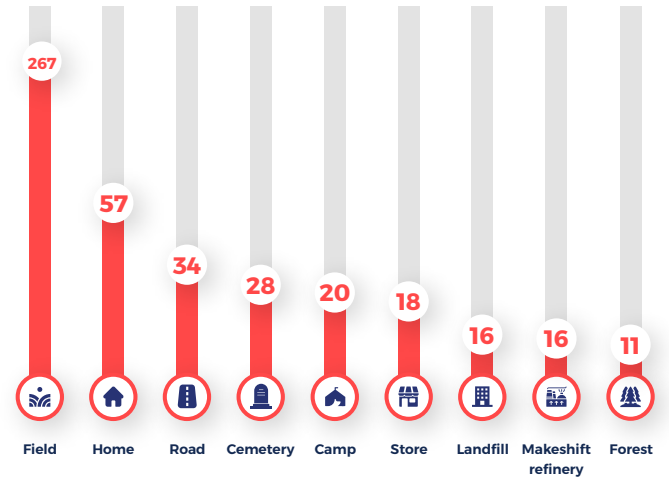
WH volunteers extinguished 501 fires in 177 communities and 20 camps during May, marking a significant increase compared to the first four months of the year, which saw a total of 522 fires. This also represents a substantial increase compared to May 2023 (294 fires) and May 2022 (213 fires).

No. of firefighting operations



The city of Idlib witnessed the highest number of fires, with 24 fires, followed by the city of al-Bab with 21 fires, and the village of Tarhin with 18 fires. The towns of Suran, Azaz, and Qabasin each experienced 17 fires. The volunteers extinguished 267 fires in agricultural fields, 57 fires in civilian homes, 34 fires on roads, 28 fires in cemeteries, 20 fires in camps, and 18 fires in shops. They also put out 16 fires at both waste dumps and makeshift refineries.

Figure 3: Firefighting operations by location of the fire



During these operations, seven injured people were rescued, including three children. The fires also claimed the life of a child.

Eighty-four percent of the fires were caused by unknown reasons, 9% were due to electrical short circuits, 4% resulted from fuel leaks, and 3% were caused by gas leaks.



Figure 4: No. of people rescued during firefighting operations

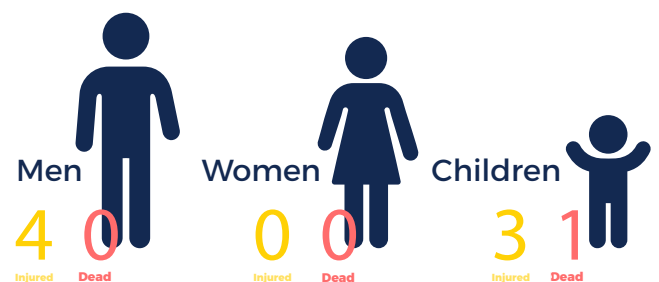
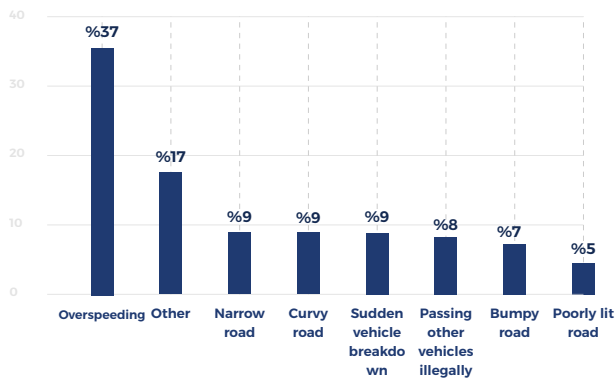


Figure 6: Causes of traffic accidents



Response to Drowning Incidents:

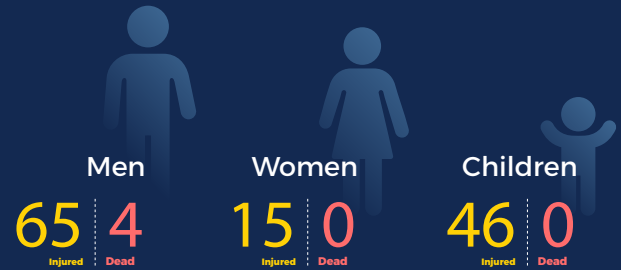
The White Helmets water rescue teams rescued two men from drowning and recovered the bodies of four drowning victims, including a child.



Response to Traffic Accidents

The White Helmets teams responded to 139 traffic accidents in 82 communities, during which they aided 126 civilians, including 15 women and 46 children. Notably, the highest number of traffic accidents occurred in Tarhin (eight incidents), followed by six incidents in Idlib city center, and five incidents in al-Mastoumeh.

Figure 5: No. of people rescued during traffic accident response operations



Motorcycle accidents accounted for the highest percentage of incidents at 50%, and they also resulted in the most injuries, with 85 people injured. Car accidents followed at 39%, while truck and heavy machinery accidents accounted for 11%.

The causes of traffic accidents varied, with speeding being the leading cause at 37%, followed by sudden vehicle malfunctions, narrow roads, and road curves, each at 9%.





Section Two:
Health Program



Ambulance Services

The White Helmets ambulance service reached 11,824 patients, including 5,032 women and 3,074 children in 394 communities.

Figure 7: No. of ambulance service beneficiaries by gender and age

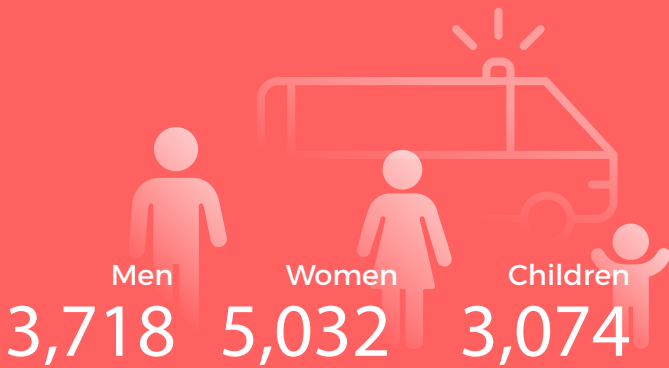
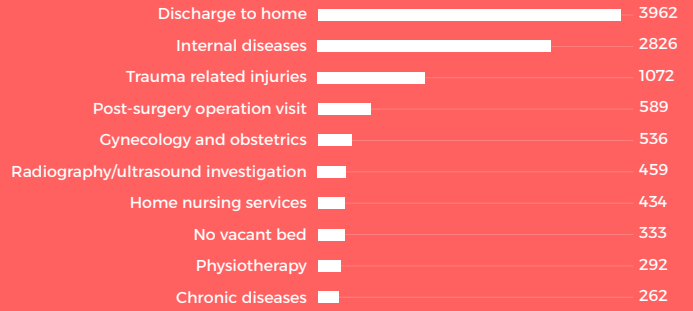


Figure 8: No. of ambulance operations by type of ailment



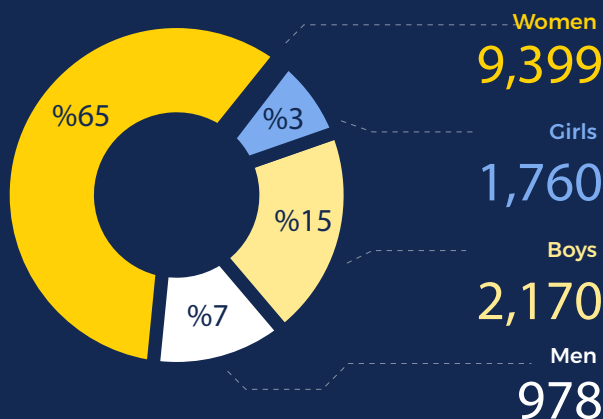
The volunteers also conducted 4,162 hemodialysis patient transfer operations, and 3,879 operations of discharging hemodialysis patients to their homes after treatment. It is worth noting that most kidney dialysis patients require dialysis several times a week. In some cases, the volunteers transfer more than one dialysis patient within the same operation.

From a diagnostic perspective, the number of beneficiaries who received discharge home services after treatment was 3,962 patients. Additionally, the number of beneficiaries with internal diseases was 2,826 patients, and those with injuries and trauma numbered 1,072 patients.

Health Services at Women and Family Healthcare Centers

The Women and Family Healthcare Centers continued providing primary health services, catering to general community health and specialized maternal and childcare. These centers provided health checks and consultations for 14,307 beneficiaries, including 9,399 women, 2,170 boys, and 1,760 girls.

Figure 9: No. of beneficiaries at Women and Family Healthcare Centers by age and gender



Reproductive health services were the most frequently provided, benefiting 6,729 women, including 300 under the age of 18. This was followed by nursing services, which were provided to 3,905 patients, including 1,937 women, 882 boys, and 838 girls. Additionally, wound dressing and follow-up treatment were provided to 3,728 patients, including 1,074 women, 1,295 boys, and 626 girls.



The majority of the health examinations, 96 % were conducted in Women and Family Healthcare Centers, while %1 were conducted in camps as part of regular visits by our female volunteers to check on cases that are unable to reach the centers. In the same context, %3 of the services were provided in the homes of patients, including the elderly and those with mobility difficulties due to their health condition, including dialysis patients.

2,892 people, including 1,362 women, 396 boys, and 1,131 girls, benefited from psychological support sessions, through individual and group sessions that

included psychological first aid, individual psychological education, awareness sessions, PSS structured sessions for children, and various activities and events. Moreover, 280 people also benefited from physical rehabilitation, including 158 women, 54 boys, and 67 girls.

The Women and Family Healthcare Centers surveyed their beneficiaries to measure satisfaction with the health services provided, aiming to continually improve their service delivery mechanisms.

The findings revealed that the main factor influencing the choice of these centers was the high standard of services offered at a rate of %45, followed by the positive interactions experienced by beneficiaries with the female staff at these facilities at %28. Other factors included the availability of free services and the fact that the center serves as the sole medical facility in the area.

Figure 10: Survey results illustrating the reasons for beneficiaries choosing Women and Family Healthcare Centers



Community Health

Community health teams organized 7,753 awareness activities that benefited 10,663 people, including 7,089 women, 1,040 boys, and 1,700 girls. These awareness-raising activities aim to strengthen the role of the centers within the community. The centers utilize their effective reach to community members, especially women and children, to deliver awareness messages in the areas of preventive health care. This is done through specialized training kits that are constantly updated.

The centers continued to monitor the most important issues on the ground and select topics based on priorities. The awareness topics included, among the most prominent, non-communicable diseases, family health, healthy lifestyle, nutrition guide, and personal hygiene.

School Health Activity

White Helmets volunteers continue providing healthcare services in schools. The program involves deploying mobile health teams equipped with first aid and hygiene supplies, in addition to conducting thorough medical examinations for students. The aim is to promote a culture of health within the school community and create a safe and healthy learning environment for students and staff alike.

433 female students and teachers and 372 male students and teachers within 33 schools benefited from the healthcare services in schools during May. Respiratory diseases were the most common diagnoses, followed by skin diseases and digestive diseases.





Section Three:

Community Resilience Program

This section includes the White Helmets' operations executed as part of the humanitarian response projects in the WASH sector and early recovery, aimed at bolstering local community resilience. It also covers other logistical activities supporting public facilities. In this context, the volunteers conducted 1,432 community resilience activity across 280 communities and 165 camps in northwest Syria.



The White Helmets volunteers conducted

ground leveling and graveling operations, covering an area of 57,000 square meters in 118 communities and 57 camps.

 **295**

Rehabilitation operations of schools, centers, and facilities in 31 communities.

 **143**

road opening operations spanning 56,000 meters in 95 communities and 10 camps.

 **169**

sewage network excavation operations covering 4,600 meters within 61 communities and 23 camps.

 **116**

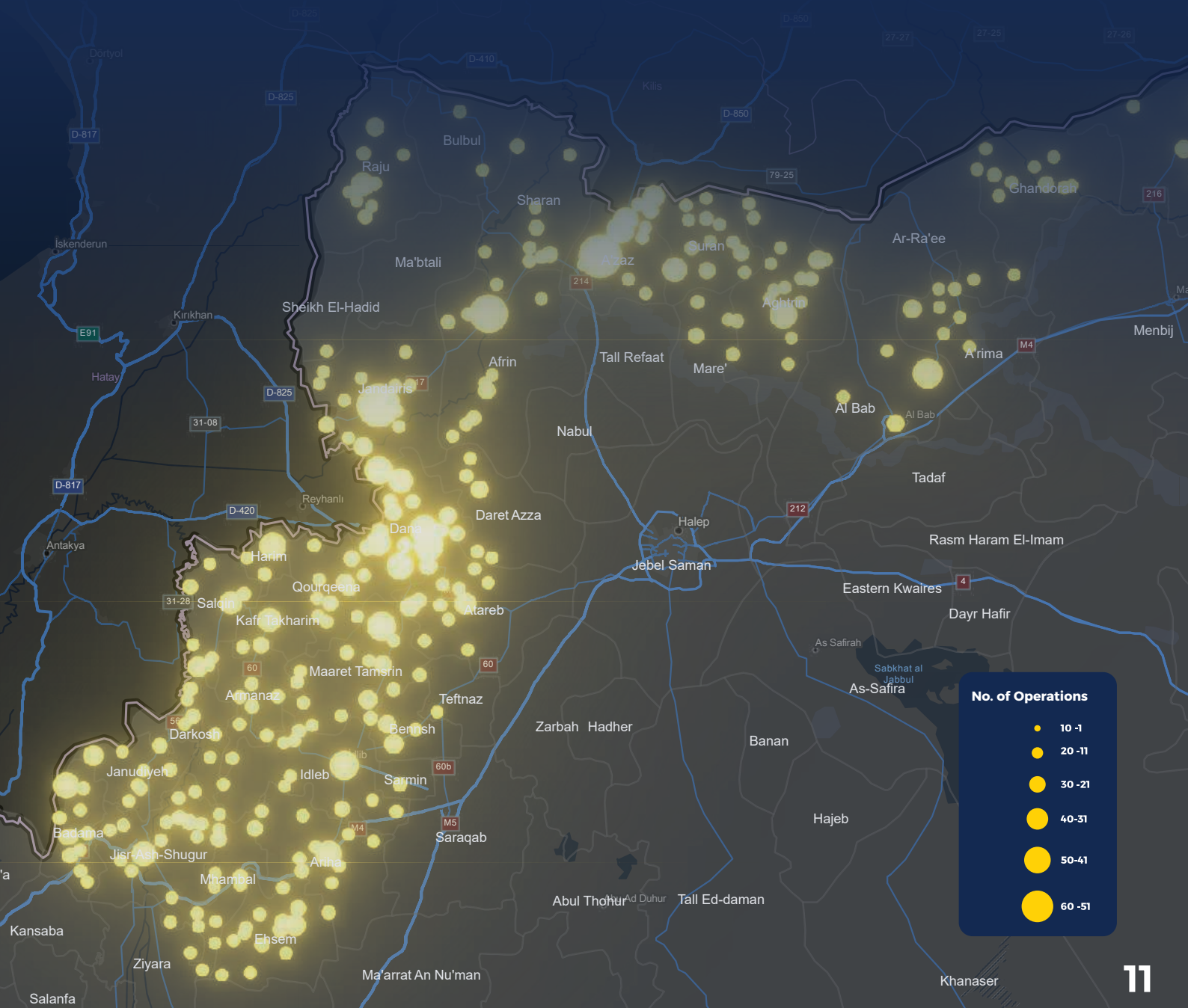
diverse excavation operations, including digging technical pits and foundations in 64 communities and 38 camps.

 **150**

diverse logistical community services in 67 communities and 10 camps.

 **111**

Map 2: Community resilience activities in May



The White Helmets volunteers have successfully completed the following projects:



Rehabilitating the water barrier on the Afrin River in collaboration with the Afrin Agriculture Chamber. The project's stages included dredging and removing silt that had accumulated for more than 14 years. An estimated 20,000 cubic meters of silt and sediments were removed from the dam basin. This will help increase the water storage capacity and raise its level to provide irrigation water for about 45,000 dunums of agricultural land near the barrier. This revitalizes the agricultural sector in the area, supports food security, and ensures the sustainability of livelihoods for the population, in addition to increasing the cultivated areas and diversifying agricultural products.



Rehabilitation of 14 medical facilities (hospitals, primary care centers, and Women and Family Healthcare Centers) damaged by the earthquake.

The volunteers also continue working on the following projects:



Construction of the Khalid bin Al-Walid School in Jandairis.



The rehabilitation of sewage networks in Azaz city.



Rehabilitation of the 8.5-kilometer-long Ain al-Beida-Qandaria road.



Construction of a cancer treatment center in Afrin city.



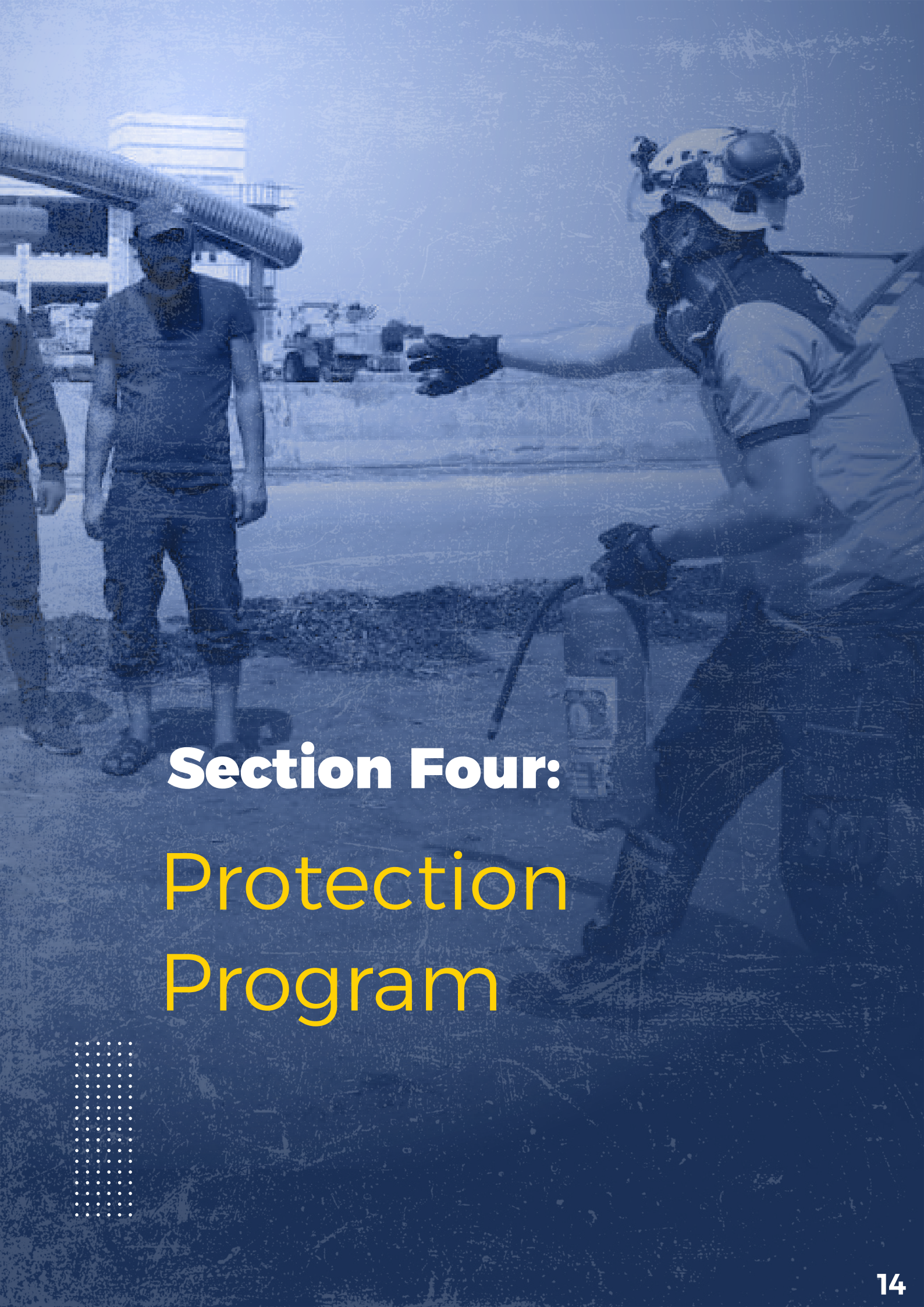
Rehabilitation of the 6-kilometer-long road from Namra intersection to Bal'a.

Response to Rainstorm

The rainstorm, which commenced on 1 May unleashed heavy and continuous rainfall. This rainstorm wreaked havoc on IDP camps, temporary shelters, and civilian homes, disrupting normal traffic flow due to water pooling and muddy conditions.

Our White Helmets volunteers responded proactively to the storm, attending 17 regular and random camps in the flood-affected areas of Idlib and Aleppo countryside. The storm inflicted complete damage to over 300 tents and partial damage to more than 400 others, along with responding to damaged civilian homes.





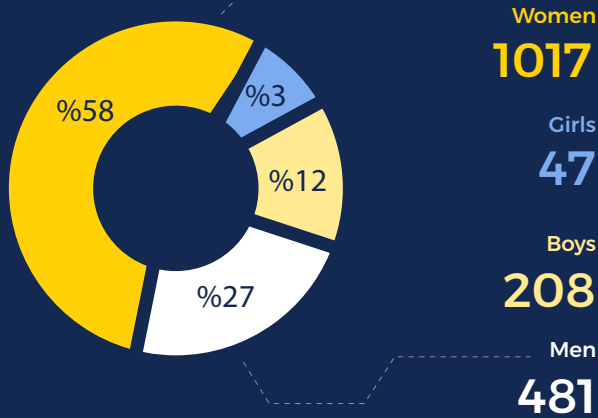
Section Four:
Protection
Program



Awareness Activities

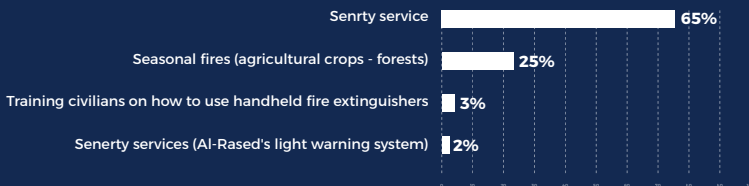
The protection program conducted 127 awareness sessions that were attended by 1,753 people, including 1,017 women, 208 boys, and 47 girls.

Figure 11: Number of beneficiaries of protection sessions by age and gender



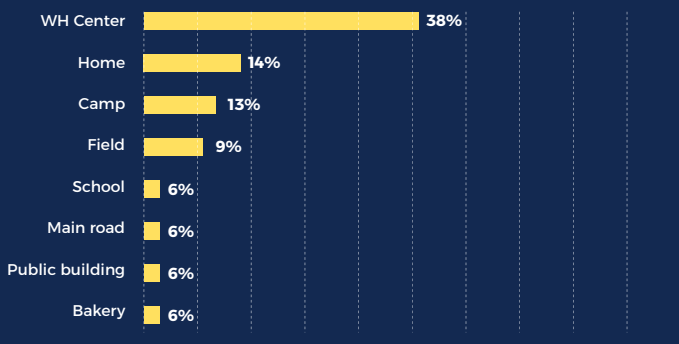
Sixty-five percent of the activities were dedicated to raising awareness about the sentry service, while 25% focused on preventing agricultural and forest fires in response to the significant increase in temperatures.

Figure 12: Topics of awareness activities



The locations where protection sessions were held varied to ensure the broadest participation from all segments of society. Thirty-eight percent of the sessions were conducted in White Helmets centers and Women and Family Healthcare centers, 14% in civilian homes, 13% of the activities were directed to displaced people in their camps, where the focus was on topics that are a priority within those camps, and 9% of the activities were conducted in agricultural fields.

Figure 13: Protection activities according to the location of the activity



Mine Action

Non-technical Survey Operations

Non-technical survey operations contribute to the protection of civilians by identifying areas contaminated with unexploded ordnance. Non-technical survey teams work to identify the locations of ordnance in contaminated areas and inform final disposal teams of their locations, who carry out the final disposal and secure these locations.

UXO clearance teams carried out 109 non-technical survey operations in 105 communities, confirming the presence of 30 areas contaminated with UXO. These areas included 22 within agricultural lands. In addition to urban areas (public squares and residential buildings), a factory, a school and a roadside. This proactive identification and mapping of contaminated areas helps protect civilians and guides UXO removal efforts.

UXO Removal

Based on non-technical survey operations and civilian reports, final disposal ordnance teams carried out 86 disposal operations of unexploded ordnance in 53 communities in northwest Syria, during which they safely and successfully disposed of 86 unexploded ordnances. This count included 21 submunitions (cluster bombs), 19 projectiles, 17 rockets, 14 mortar rounds, 13 grenades, a fuze, and an air-dropped weapon.

Breakdown of the unexploded ordnance removed by type



Breakdown of UXO Removal by Location

Operations to remove unexploded ordnance included 57 operations in agricultural lands, 12 in homes, four in the mountains, and three on roadsides. The efforts of the survey and removal teams enabled hundreds of farmers to safely return to their lands and resume their agricultural activities.

Mine Action Awareness Raising

Awareness-raising teams on the dangers of mines and unexploded ordnance carried out 279 awareness-raising activities to educate the community about the dangers of remnants of war and unexploded ordnance. These sessions, which focused on school students, aim to reduce the number of victims by teaching participants the appropriate procedures for dealing with unexploded ordnance, and providing them with the knowledge they need for the standard procedures for dealing with explosive remnants of war (ERW) to reduce casualties and to be able to report the presence of unexploded ordnance to the UXO teams.

A total of 4,817 people benefited from these awareness-raising activities, including 598 women, 1,764 boys, and 2,056 girls. The awareness-raising sessions targeted children because of the great risks to their lives due to playing with or approaching these objects or unexploded ordnance. The sessions provided included 164 sessions in schools.

Figure 14: No. of the beneficiaries of the awareness activities led by the UXO teams

