

Activity Report

The White Helmets Work Report

September 2024



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Executive summary:

The White Helmets volunteers continued their humanitarian operations and responses to save lives in northwest Syria during September. They provided diverse services in the areas of emergency response, ambulance services, healthcare, and awareness-raising within 541 communities and 645 camps.

The volunteers carried out 77 emergency response operations to military attacks, during which they recovered 13 dead bodies, including two women and three children, and rescued 58 injured individuals, including seven women and 31 children.

Firefighting teams successfully controlled 283 fires, rescuing eight injured individuals, including a woman and two children. Additionally, the volunteers responded to 148 traffic accidents, providing assistance to 133 injured individuals, including 21 women and 26 children. Traffic accidents also caused the death of four men and a child.

In the healthcare sector, the ambulance system transported 13,323 patients, including 5,441 women and 3,387 children. Moreover, 12,484 individuals, including 7,835 women, 2,110 boys, and 1,505 girls, benefited from healthcare services provided by Women and Family Healthcare Centers. Community health teams also organized 6,499 awareness activities benefiting 8,838 individuals, including 5,829 women, 799 boys, and 1,444 girls.

On the other hand, the White Helmets volunteers conducted 1,894 community resilience activities. 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.

The Protection program conducted 129 awareness sessions attended by 1,701 individuals, including 1,018 women, 237 boys, and 33 girls.



A person wearing a white t-shirt with a circular logo on the back, a backpack, and a hat is walking away from the camera on a dirt path. In the background, there is a modern building with large glass windows and a balcony. The entire image has a blue tint and a textured, slightly grainy appearance.

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. 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 77 military attacks, bringing the total number of emergency response operations to military attacks during the year to 698. The volunteers recovered 13 deceased individuals, including two women and three children, and rescued 58 injured persons, including seven women and 31 children.

Figure 1: Civilian casualties during responses to military attacks



Syrian regime forces were responsible for most of the attacks, 68 attacks. Additionally, five attacks originated from areas controlled by the Syrian regime and SDF, along with four anonymous attacks.

The largest number of attacks were carried out using artillery shells (46 attacks), with 22 attacks conducted by suicide drones, three attacks by small arms and light weapons (SALW), and two attacks with rocket launchers.

Noteworthy Operations

Syrian regime forces targeted with a suicide drone Kafr Noran village in Idlib countryside on the 2nd of September, killing a man and injuring 12 other civilians, including five children.



Syrian regime forces targeted with artillery shells residential neighborhoods in Jisr al-Shughur city in Idlib western countryside on the 3rd of September, injuring four civilians, including a child and a woman.

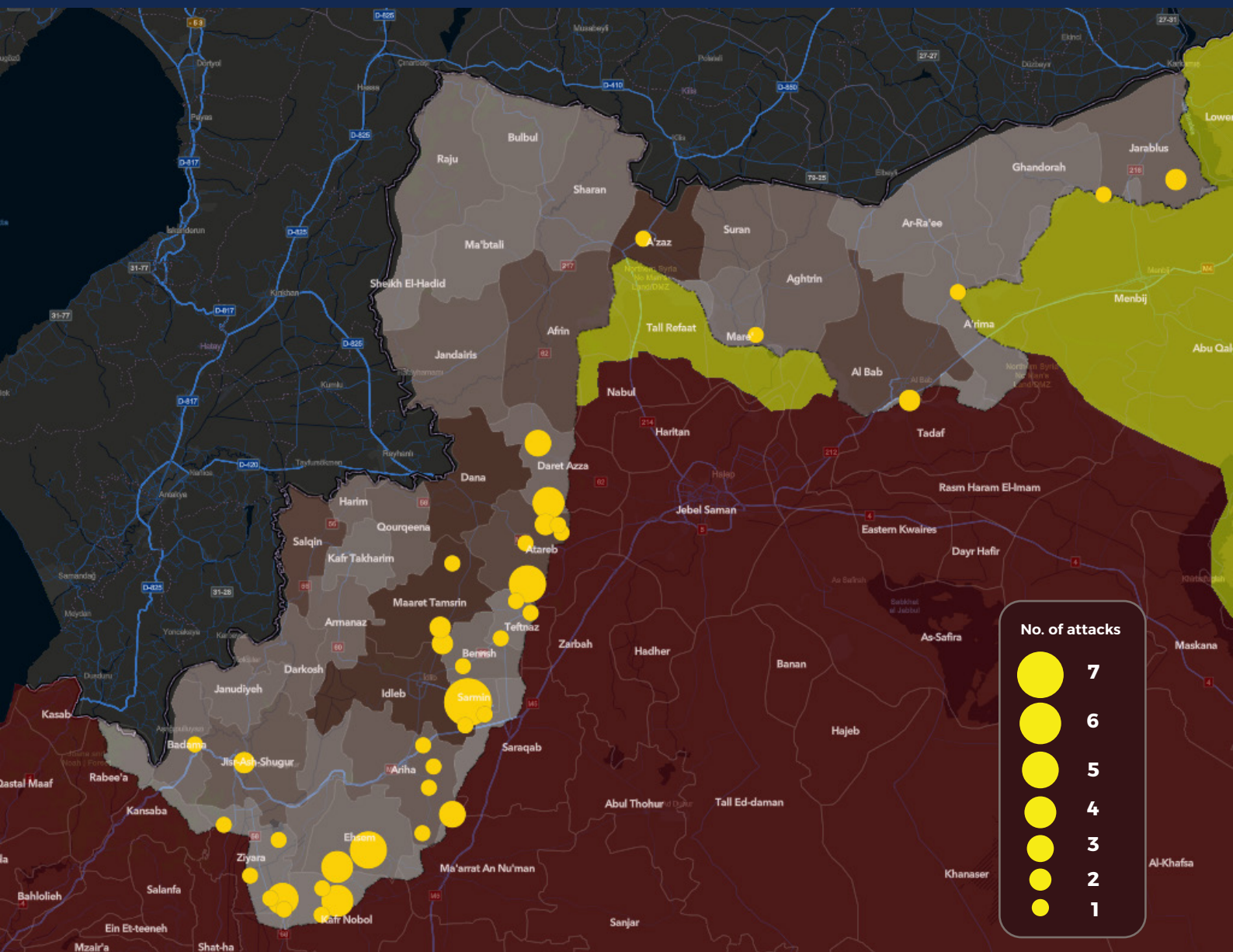


Syrian regime forces launched artillery and missile attacks on the town of Kafraya in the eastern Idlib countryside on September 23, killing six civilians, including two women and a child and injuring 13 others, including a woman and six children.



Search and rescue operations in response to the military attacks covered 41 communities spanning cities, towns and villages with Sarmin experiencing the largest number of attacks (seven), followed by each of Al-Bara and Kafr Nouran (five attacks).

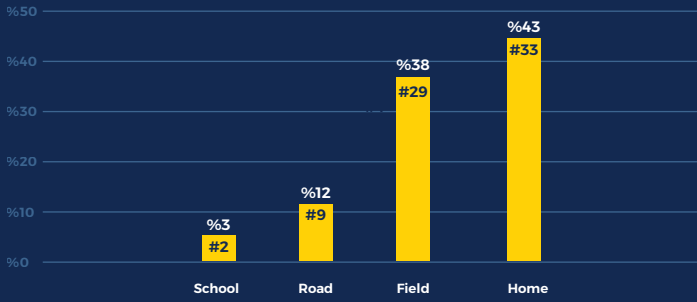
Map: Military attacks during September



The vast majority of the targets were civilian homes, with 33 attacks, followed by agricultural lands and fields with 29 attacks, and nine attacks on roads. The attacks also included two schools and a mosque in the Idlib countryside (Al-Hikma School in Kafriya, Hussein Haj About School in the city of Sarmin, and Othman bin Affan Mosque in the town of Maarat al-Naasan). Additionally, a popular market, a shop, and a forest were also hit.

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



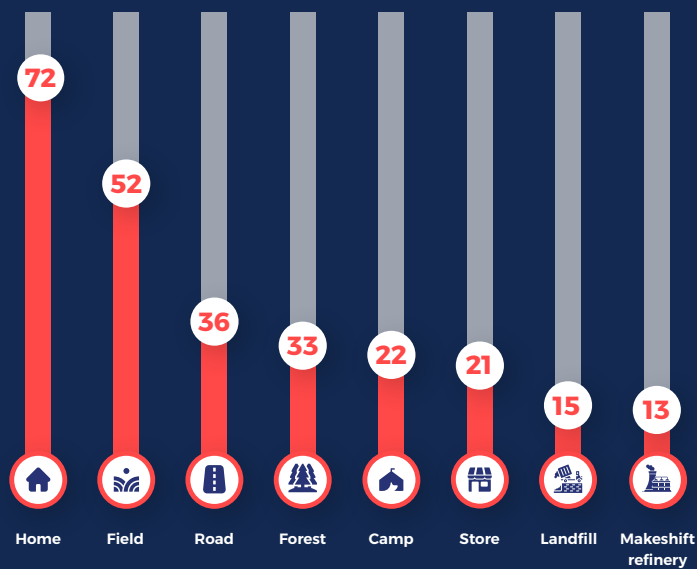
The White Helmets mourned the volunteer Firas Mohammed Khair Makhlot, who passed away on September 24th after illness, bringing the total number of martyrs and deceased White Helmets volunteers to 311.



Firefighting operations:

WH volunteers extinguished 283 fires in 123 communities and 20 camps. Of these, Idlib city experienced the highest number of fires (18), followed by Al-Bab (14), and Azaz (11). The volunteers extinguished 72 fires in civilian homes, 52 fires in agricultural fields, 36 fires on roads, 33 fires in forests, 22 fires in camps, and 21 fires in shops.

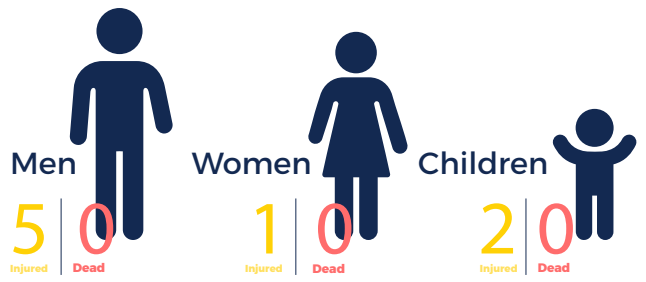
Figure 3: Firefighting operations by location of the fire



During these operations, eight injured people were rescued, including a woman and two children.

The majority of the fires, %78 were caused by unknown causes, %12 by electrical short circuits, %6 by fuel leaks, and %4 by gas leaks.

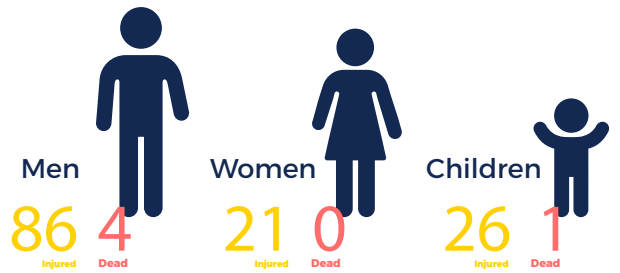
Figure 4: No. of people rescued during firefighting operations



Response to traffic accidents

The White Helmets teams responded to 148 traffic accidents in 91 communities, during which they aided 133 injured persons, including 21 women and 26 children. Accidents also caused the deaths of four men and one child. Notably, the highest number of traffic accidents occurred in Al-Mastouma (eight accidents), while six accidents occurred in Termanin and five accidents in Orem Al-Jawz.

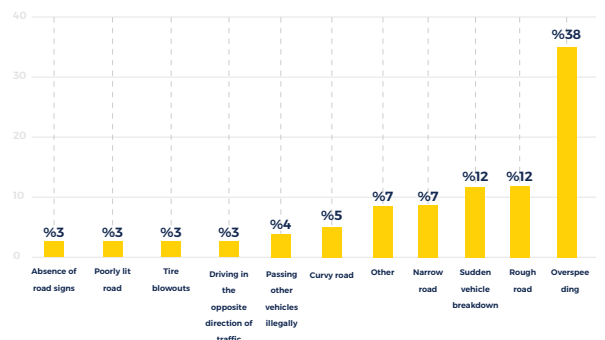
Figure 5: No. of people rescued during traffic accident response operations



Motorcycle accidents accounted for the highest percentage of accidents, %49, followed by car accidents, %37, while truck and heavy machinery accidents accounted for %13.

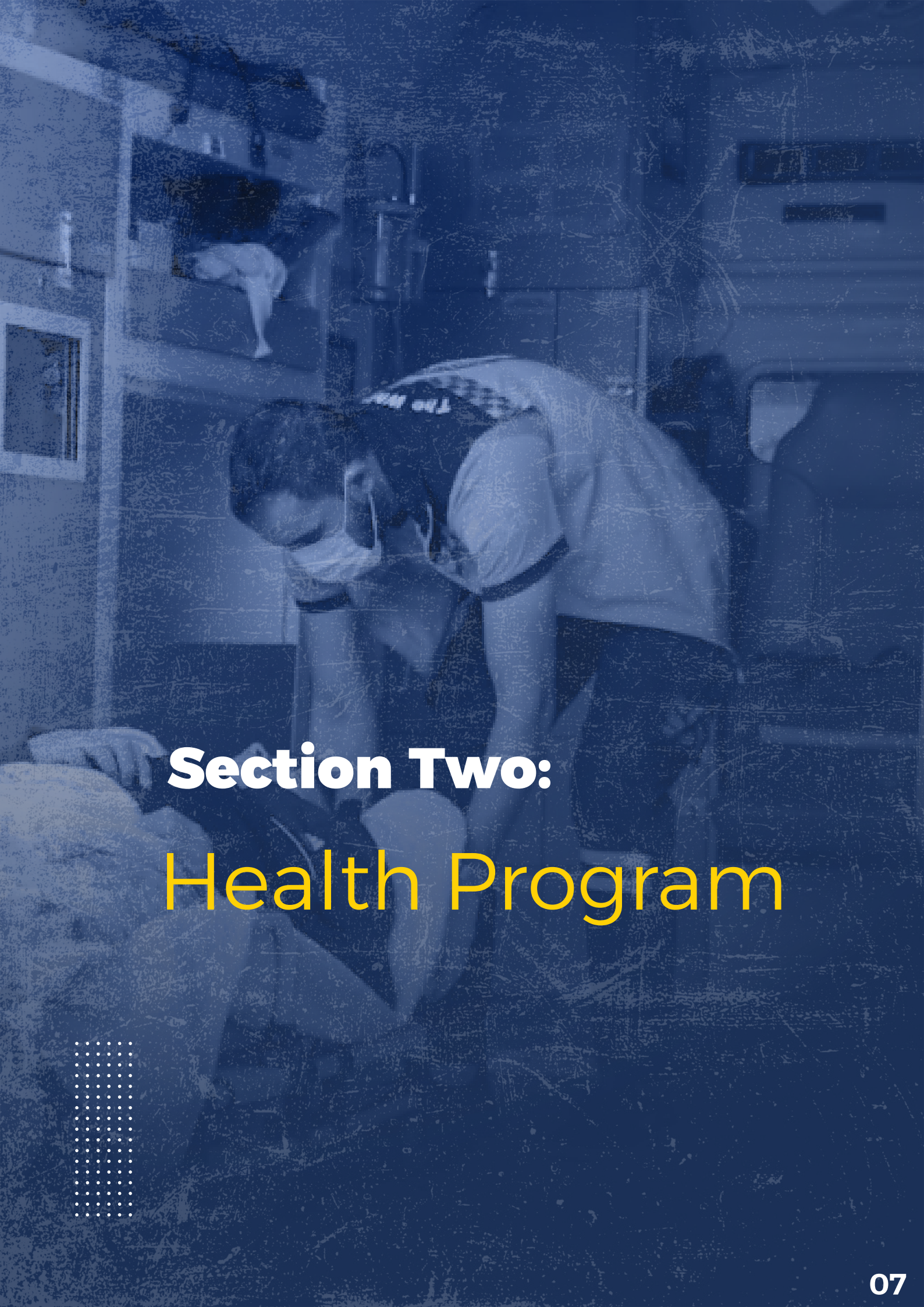
The causes of traffic accidents varied. Overspeeding topped the list, accounting for %38, followed by sudden vehicle breakdowns and rough roads, accounting for %12 each.

Figure 6: Causes of traffic accidents



Response to Drowning Incidents:

The White Helmets water rescue teams rescued a child and retrieved the body of a drowned man.



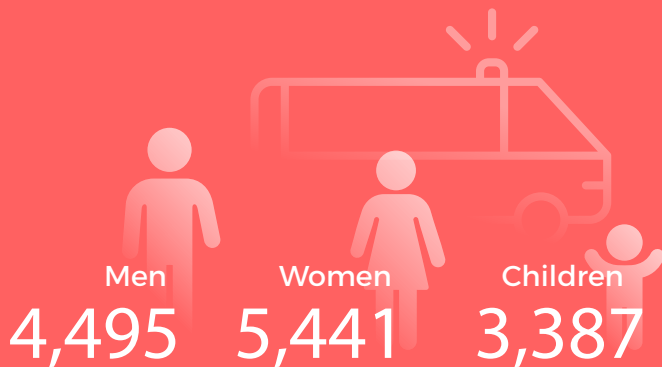
Section Two:
Health Program



Ambulance Services

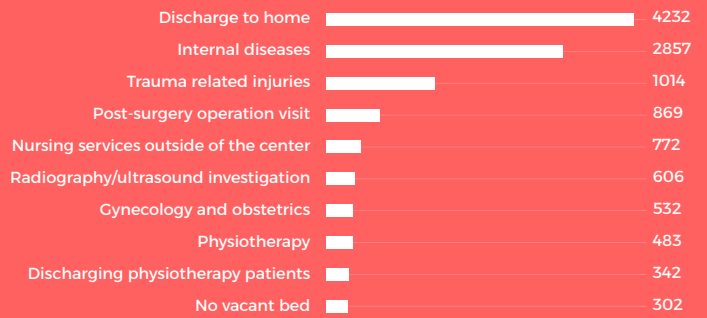
The White Helmets ambulance service reached 13,323 patients, including 5,441 women and 3,387 children in 389 communities.

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



In terms of diagnosis, 4,232 patients benefited from the service of being discharged to their homes after treatment. The number of internal medicine patients reached 2,857, while 1,014 patients with trauma related injuries received care.

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

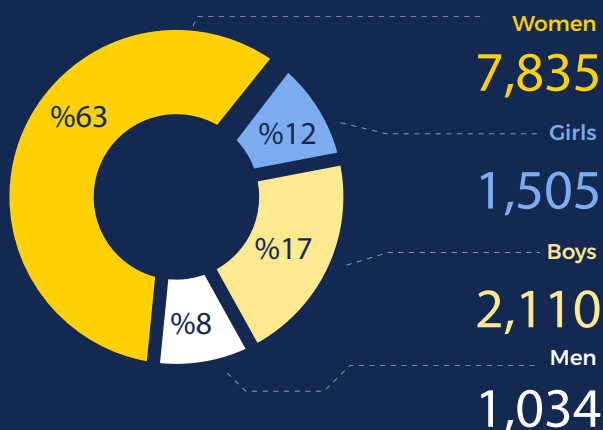


The volunteers continued to transport patients requiring ongoing medical care, such as kidney failure patients needing dialysis, and return them to their homes. In this context, the volunteers transferred 4,585 dialysis patient and discharged 4,475 dialysis patients to their homes after treatment. It 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.

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 child care. These centers provided health checks and consultations for 12,484 beneficiaries, including 7,835 women, 2,110 boys, and 1,505 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 5,296 women, including 308 under the age of 18. This was followed by dressing and follow-up treatment, which were provided to 4,273 patients, including 1,183 women, 1,592 boys, and 701 girls.



Nursing services

2,986



Dressing and follow-up treatment

4,273



Reproductive Health

5,296

Most of the health examinations, %93 were conducted in Women and Family Healthcare Centers, while %7 were conducted in camps as part of regular visits by our female volunteers to check on cases that are unable to reach the centers and in the homes of patients, including the elderly and those with mobility difficulties due to their health condition, including dialysis patients.

2,834 people, including 1,564 women, 427 boys, and 819 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, 326 people also benefited from physical rehabilitation, including 188 women, 78 boys, and 60 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 %49, followed by the positive interactions experienced by beneficiaries with the female staff at these facilities at 26 %. 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

%49 The quality of services

%26 Good treatment

%11 Because the center is the only medical center in the area

%10 Free services

%4 Its proximity to the place of residence

Community health

Community health teams organized 6,499 awareness activities that benefited 8,838 people, including 5,829 women, 799 boys, and 1,444 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 awareness-raising activities included individual awareness, group awareness, household visits, and school awareness. The awareness topics included communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases, healthy lifestyle, family health, and a nutrition guide.

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.

184 female students and teachers and 179 male students and teachers within 16 schools benefited from the healthcare services in schools. 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 1,894 community resilience activity across 366 communities and 183 camps in northwest Syria.



The White Helmets volunteers conducted

logistical and community services in 47 communities and 12 camps.



131

digging sewage networks operations in 51 communities and 16 camps.



103

road opening operations spanning 23,000 meters in length in 64 communities and eight camps.



100

rehabilitation operations of schools, centers and facilities in 23 communities.



79

internal and external washing operations, including streets, squares, schools and mosques in 279 villages and 21 camps.



573

ground leveling and graveling operations, covering 58,000 square meters across 103 communities and 84 camps.



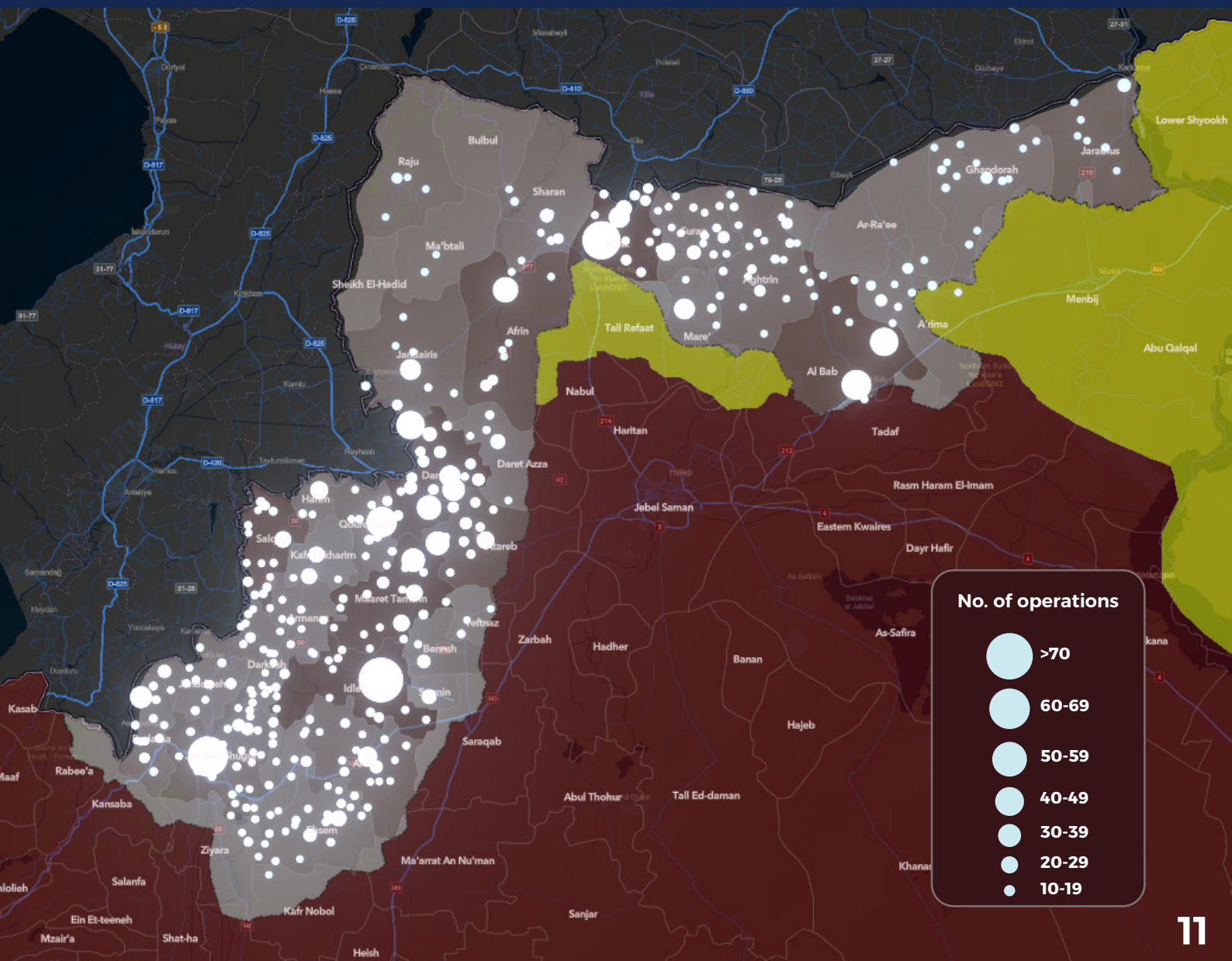
320

various digging operations, including digging technical holes and foundations in 89 communities and 51 camps.



179

Map 2: Community resilience activities in September



White Helmets volunteers also continue working on the following projects:



Construction of the Cancer Treatment Center in Afrin City.



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



Rehabilitation of 5,050 meters of sewage networks in Al-Bab City.



Rehabilitation of 22 Schools.



Paving and leveling roads in 25 camps.



Rehabilitation of five Women and Family Healthcare Centers and the Blood Bank in Azaz in Aleppo countryside.

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 110 non-technical survey operations in 29 communities, confirming the presence of 63 areas contaminated with UXO. These areas included 40 within agricultural lands. In addition to urban areas (public squares and residential buildings), roads, mountains, a factory, a forest 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 133 disposal operations of unexploded ordnance in 24 communities in northwest Syria, during which they safely and successfully disposed of 135 unexploded ordnances. This count included 34 grenades, as well as 32 mortar rounds, 27 sub-munitions (cluster bombs), 19 projectiles, 11 rockets, 11 fuzes, and a guided missile.

Infographic: Breakdown of the unexploded ordnance removed by type



Breakdown of UXO Removal by Location

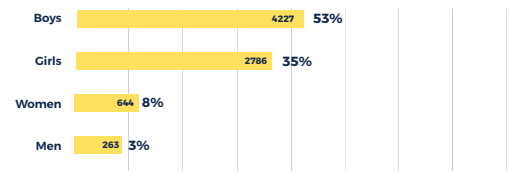
The UXO removal operations included 70 operations on agricultural land, 23 operations in the mountains, 21 operations in homes, and eight operations on roads. The efforts of the survey and clearance teams contributed to enabling hundreds of farmers to safely return to their lands and resume their agricultural activities.

Mine Action Awareness Raising

Awareness-raising teams on the dangers of mines and unexploded ordnance carried out 404 awareness-raising activities to educate the community about the dangers of remnants of war and unexploded ordnance. These sessions, which focused on school students in 198 schools, 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 7,920 people benefited from these awareness-raising activities, including 644 women, 4,227 boys, and 2,786 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.

Figure 12: No. of the beneficiaries of the awareness activities led by the UXO teams





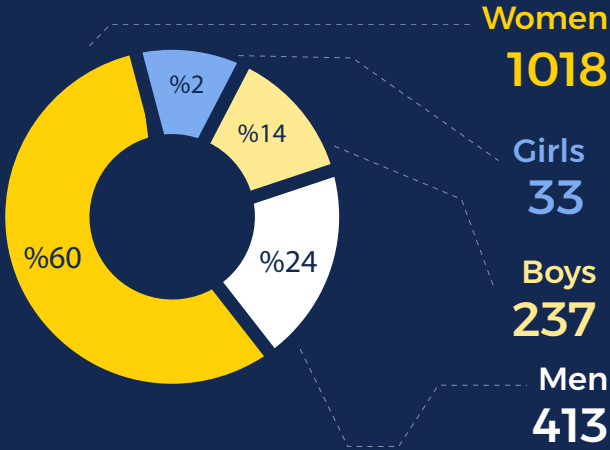
Section Four:
Protection
Program



Awareness Activities

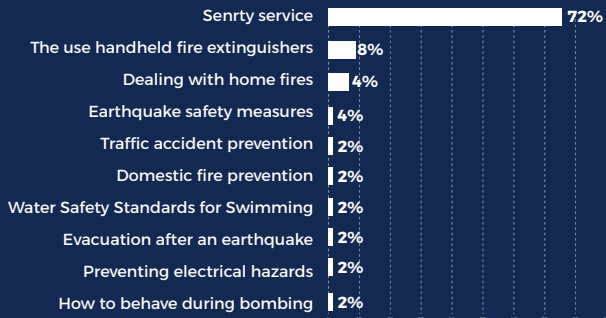
The protection program conducted 129 awareness sessions that were attended by 1,701 people, including 1,018 women, 237 boys, and 33 girls.

Figure 13: Number of beneficiaries of protection sessions by age and gender



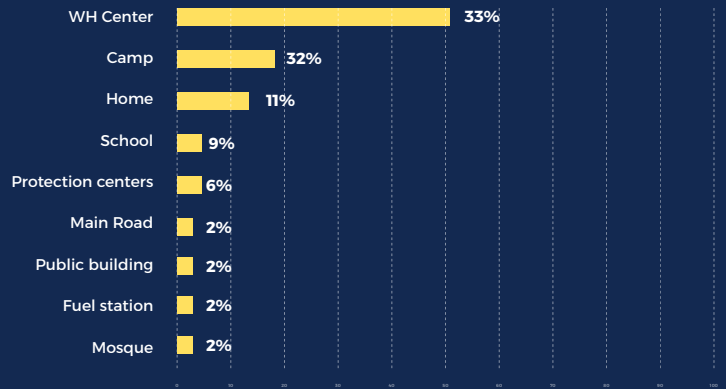
Seventy-two percent of the activities introduced the sentry service. The awareness activities also included several topics, most notably seasonal fires, the use of handheld extinguishers, dealing with home fires, and safety measures in the event of earthquakes.

Figure 12: No. of the beneficiaries of the awareness activities led by the UXO teams



The locations where protection sessions were held varied to ensure the widest possible participation from all segments of society. %33 of the sessions were held within White Helmets centers and Women and Family Healthcare centers, %32 of the activities were directed to the IDPS within their camps, and locations also included civilian homes, schools, and mosques.

Figure 14: Protection activities according to the location of the activity



Section Five:

Advocacy

Activities



Direct advocacy and meetings

We organised 36 meetings this month, the majority of which were in person in the New York, Washington DC, Brussels, Seoul and the Hague. We met with elected and permanent members of the UN Security Council on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly's High Level week, members of Congress and representatives of the US government in Washington DC, European and British Special Envoys, and representatives from the European External Action Service and the Korean development agency KOICA.

Reports

The White Helmets partnered with Child Guardians (formerly known as Hurras) to produce a joint report analysing the increase in attacks on schools in northwest Syria and their impact on children. We have seen an increase in attacks on schools by %200 in 2024-2023 compared to the two previous years. In partnership with the Syrian Legal Development Program, this report has been shared with the Core Group responsible for drafting the resolution on Syria in the Human Rights Council, and the findings of the report were also provided verbally during the informal consultations on the resolution during the proceedings of the Human Rights Council. Analysis of the first Zero Draft of the resolution and later iterations suggest that the report had a substantive impact on the text of the resolution, with a new paragraph added focusing specifically on attacks on educational facilities. We will continue to engage, with the support of SLDP, with the Human Rights Council. A public launch of the report is being planned in partnership with Child Guardians.

The White Helmets' report on the use of suicide drones in northwest Syria was included in an analytical piece in Foreign Policy Magazine

<https://foreignpolicy.com/11/09/2024/suicide-drones-killing-civilians-syria-ukraine-gaza/>

We are in talks with the author and other researchers to participate in a roundtable to discuss how to protect humanitarian workers

Events

Raed al Saleh travelled to Seoul, South Korea, to participate as a speaker at the World Knowledge Forum. Raed spoke alongside Abdulwahab Almohammad Agha (HELPSYRIA, CEO), Emma Campbell (Médecins Sans Frontières Korea, Executive Director), and Yuko Nakajima (Médecins Sans Frontières Japan, President), about the challenges and innovative strategies involved in providing aid to some of the world's most conflict-ridden regions.

While in Korea, Raed also gave lectures at the Public Interest Law Centre, at the Ulsan Office of Education and a public lecture organised by Help Syria. Finally, Raed spoke during a National Assembly Debate on the situation in Syria and the role of Korean society.

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In California, Raed spoke at an event at Berkeley Human Rights Centre about our Justice and Accountability Programme, of which there is a podcast recording.

During UN General Assembly High Level week, Raed also presented at a Ministerial Meeting hosted by Luxembourg and the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect and attended by twelve states.

Raed also provided opening remarks at a reception on refugee inclusion organised by R-SEAT, Refugees International and the US Refugee Advisory Board, highlighting the situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Abdulrahman Alwammas, Archive Manager, presented the White Helmets perspectives on humanitarian action and human rights advocacy at the Humanitarian Studies Centre in the Hague.

