

## Monitoring of the Protection Situation in Besieged East Aleppo City, November 2016



### KEY FINDINGS FOLLOWING CONTINUED BESIEGEMENT

#### Findings from a total of 398 interviews and 127 observation checklists

The interviews and checklists were completed by the staff of Protection cluster members working inside East Aleppo city. This report owes to the great efforts of these frontline workers.

- **Movement intentions:** If there were safe and secure routes for civilians to leave East Aleppo city, 44% of respondents said that people would not leave, while 40% said that they would. 16% did not know and 1% did not answer. Whereas during the rapid protection assessment in late August, the great majority of those wishing to leave was female, the proportion of people expressing that people would leave is now 36% male. Reasons for staying and going varied and are detailed in the findings.
- **Intended destinations in case of safe exit:** Among those who indicated they would leave, 41% of 155 respondents said that they would go to non-government controlled territory. 31% said that they would go to Idleb, with 4 (3% of 155) stating that they wished to continue to Turkey. 31% said that they would go to the Aleppo countryside. 14% said that they would go to government-controlled areas. A small number specified simply that they would go to any safe area

without bombs. Rationale for these choices are elaborated in the detailed findings.

- **Displacement within East Aleppo city:** 49% of 318 respondents noted a significant departure of civilians from their neighborhoods in the last three weeks, while 28% noted significant arrival of civilians to their neighborhood. The continued displacement occurs as people flee bombing and attempt to secure basic needs.
- **Movement restriction:** Of 384 respondents, roughly 300 (78%) reported movement restrictions due to a variety of reasons.
- **The situation for children:** Child labour is a prevalent issue in East Aleppo city with 58% noting children working during school hours. 22% of the respondents out of 329 interviews including children confirmed existence of child recruitment and 35% of the 321 respondents noted the issue of separated and unaccompanied children.
- **Gender-Based Violence:** Domestic violence was identified as a significant protection risk (31%); together with sexual violence and early marriage, it continues to pervade the lives of women and girls in Eastern Aleppo. 21% of respondents report an increase in early marriage as coping mechanism. Sexual favours in exchange for aid and sexual harassment at distribution points are also reportedly affecting women and boys.
- **Explosive hazards:** The percentage of individuals interviewed who are aware of civilian death or injury by explosive hazards in

the last three weeks has increased from 55% (August rapid assessment) to 63%.

- **Concerns related to humanitarian assistance** were reported among 40% of those interviewed, including exploitation and sexual favours.
- **Housing, land, and property:** 82% said that there had been damage to land or property in the last three weeks (including contamination of private property by explosive hazards). 44% cited looting of private property, and 31% cited the unlawful occupation of property.
- **Need for psychosocial support:** 55% of 325 respondents expressed the need for psychosocial support, compared to 20% in late August.
- **Documentation:** Of 396 respondents, 30% said that there had been a loss of civil documents in the last three weeks affecting access to humanitarian assistance etc.
- **Prevalence of multiple protection risks:** Respondents noted the physical threat of aerial bombardment as the most prevalent protection risk, followed by forced displacement within the city, child labour, domestic violence, and tension between host and displaced communities.

*The Syria Protection Cluster (Turkey) is made up of the Protection Cluster as well as three Sub-Clusters: Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence, and Mine Action. For further information, please contact the Protection Cluster Coordinator, Sarah Khan (UNHCR) and NGO Co-Lead Victoria Shepard (IRC) at [khansar@unhcr.org](mailto:khansar@unhcr.org) and [Victoria.Shepard@rescue.org](mailto:Victoria.Shepard@rescue.org).*



### Background and Objectives

This monitoring exercise was conducted from 24 to 26 October 2016 and builds on the first Aleppo Rapid Protection Assessment conducted in August 2016. The monitoring aims to provide a snapshot of the protection environment for the 270,000 civilians living in East Aleppo city. Respondents and observers were asked to focus on the time period of three weeks prior to the data collection.

### Methodology

A total of 398 individual interviews with members of the East Aleppo community (not just key informants), and 127 observation checklists, filled out by humanitarian workers, were used for the data collection.

**Individual interviews:** Interviews were conducted in 29 of the 64 neighborhoods of East Aleppo City, over the course of three days, from October 24 to 26, 2016. It should be noted that a large number of Aleppo's neighborhoods are no longer inhabited, due to the violence and destruction of buildings and civilian infrastructure. A total of 6 NGO partners participated in the collection of data.

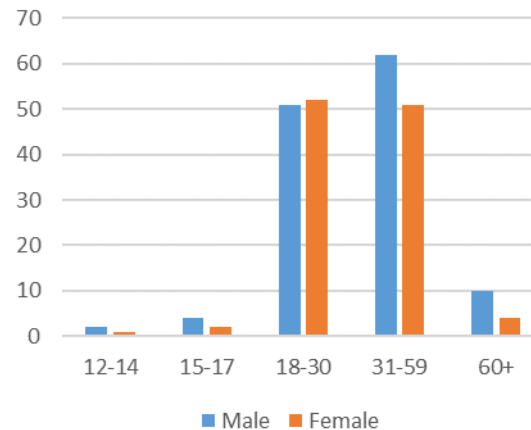
255 of the interviews (64%) were conducted by male interviewers, while 143 (36%) were conducted by female interviewers. Data on the age, gender, and community status of interviewees was recorded for 318 cases. Of this subset of 318 people, 10 (3.1%) are recorded as having disabilities (8 males and 2 females).

Not all six organizations asked all questions. In particular, one actor conducted a total 70 interviews using an abbreviated version due to the organization's capacity and area of specialization. The results of each question are presented in this document as

percentages, with the number of respondents asked referenced in the results of each answer.

The subset of 318 individuals for which such

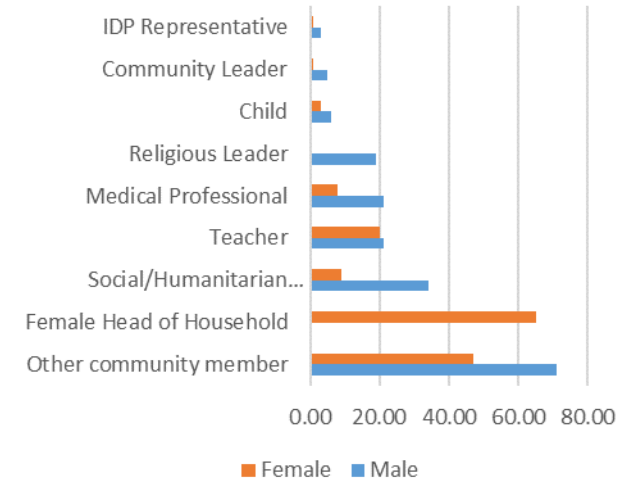
### Age/Gender Breakdown of Interviewees



The age-gender breakdown is based on 322 of 397 interviews for which this information was recorded. 142 (45%) female and 176 (55%) male.

information was recorded included 65 female heads of household, 41 teachers (21 male / 20 female), 28 social or humanitarian workers (34 male / 9 female), 21 medical professionals (17 male / 8 female), 19 religious leaders (male), 6 community leaders (5 male / 1 female), 4 IDP representatives (3 male / 1 female), and 118 other members of the community.

### Types of Interviewees



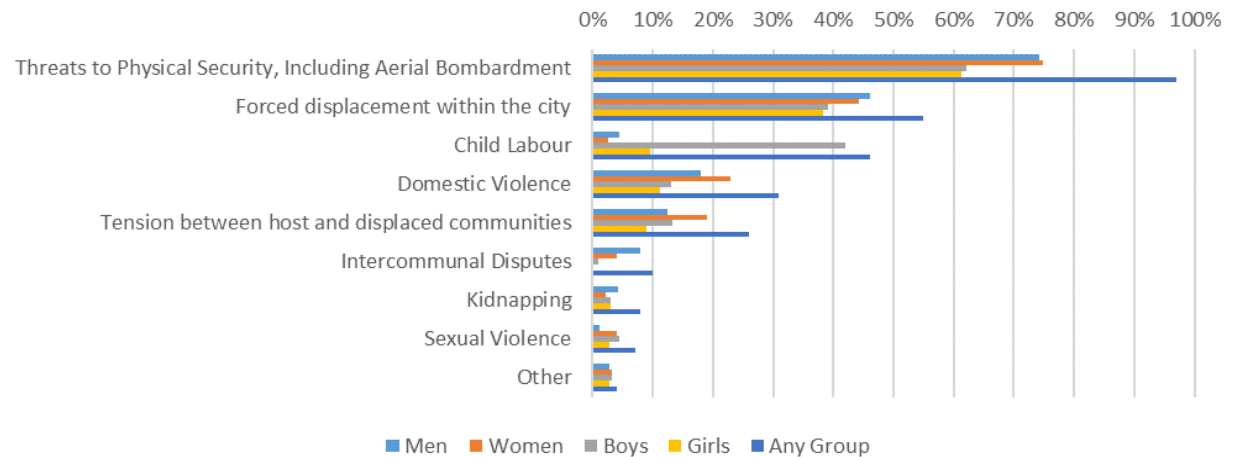
**Observation checklists:** A total of 127 observation checklists in 27 neighborhoods were completed. 18 checklists were completed by female observers and 109 were completed by male observers.



### 1. Prevalence of Protection Risks

Respondents noted the physical threat of aerial bombardment as the most prevalent protection risk, followed by forced displacement within the city, child labour, domestic violence, and tension between host and displaced communities; each affecting men, women, boys, and girls, according to the accompanying graph. Forced displacement due to aerial bombardment is common. Interviewees explained that sometimes men remain to protect the property, while women and children flee. In addition to the concerns in the graph on the right, respondents mentioned the psychological pressure and fear for the future that result from the increasingly frequent bombardment and the forced blockade.

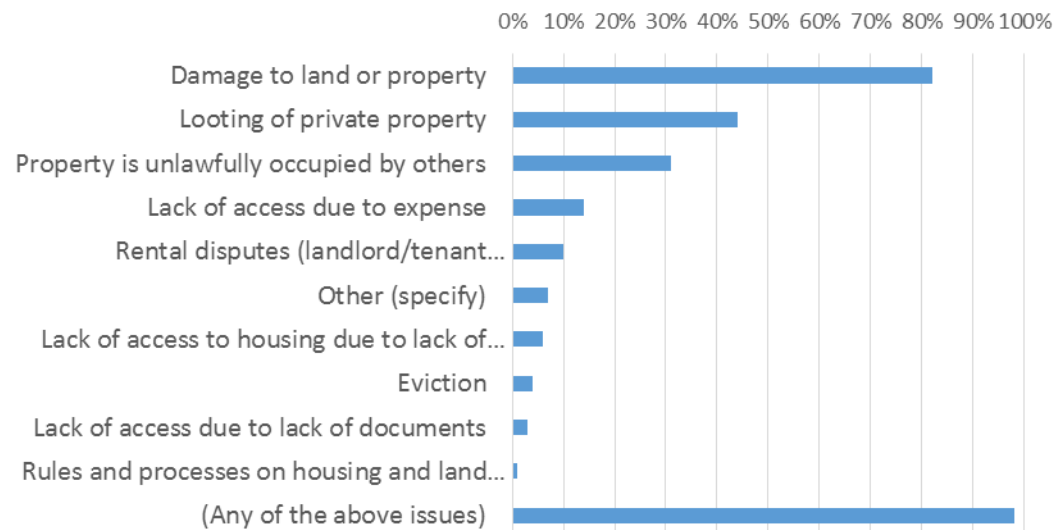
Prevalence of Protection Risks



### 2. Issues affecting use of housing, land, and property (HLP)

When asked to name the top 3 HLP issues noticed in the last three weeks, 98% of 325 respondents named at least one concern. 82% said that there had been damage to land or property in the last three weeks (including contamination by explosive hazards to private property). 44% cited looting of private property, and 31% cited the unlawful occupation of property. 14% noted the lack of access to housing because of lack of means to afford it. 10% noted landlord/tenant disputes and 4% noted eviction. 6% noted that lack of access to housing due to lack of availability. 3% noted lack of housing due to loss of documents and 1% cited lack of clarity in the rules and processes for housing and land. Within homes, it was noted that some people are destroying household furniture in order to start fires for cooking.

Housing, Land, and Property Concerns

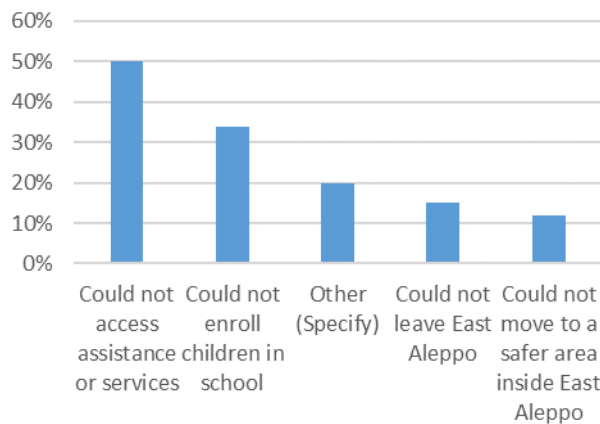




### 3. Impact of loss of documentation

Of 396 respondents, 30% said that there had been a loss of civil documents in the last three weeks, while 43% said no. 26% did not know, while 4% did not answer. 50% of those who had lost documents said that it prevented them from accessing assistance or services; 34% said that they could not enroll children in school; 15% said it prevented them from leaving East Aleppo city, and 12% said that they could not move to a safer area inside East Aleppo city.

Impact of loss of civil documentation



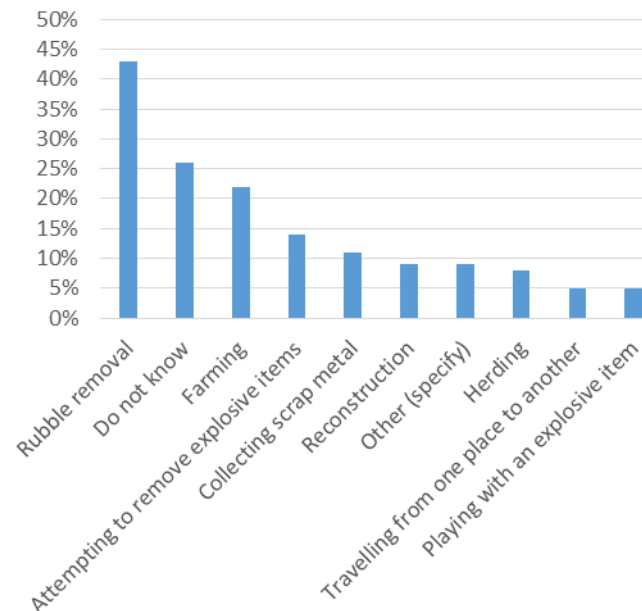
### 4. Explosive Hazards

The percentage of key informants who are aware of civilian death or injury by explosive hazards in the last three weeks has increased from 55% to 63% from the rapid assessment in August.

Of 242 respondents who knew of such casualties, 58% cited rubble removal as the victim's main activity at the time of the incident. 29% cited farming, 19% the

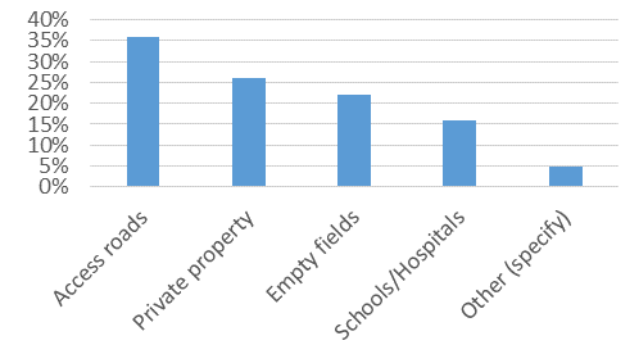
attempt to remove explosive items, 14% the collection of scrap metal, 12% rebuilding, 11% herding, 6% traveling from one place to another, and 6% playing with an explosive item, for example children who played football with cluster munitions. Some cited the injuries of the civil defense or persons specialized in search and rescue. Civilians are engaging in some dangerous activities in order to meet their basic needs; for example, scavenging, or looking for civil or financial documents inside the rubble of their home. 16 cases commented that the accident happened during daily life, as a person was walking in the street or on the way to work. One respondent noted the use of an explosive item to start a fire due to lack of fuel.

Activities at time of accident



59% of 389 interviewees named at least one type of area in their neighborhood contaminated by explosive hazards, according to the graph below. 4% cited 'other', including roofs of houses, gardens around targeted or partially destroyed buildings, and partially destroyed homes.

Areas in the neighborhood contaminated by explosive hazards



Effects of aerial bombardment: The effects of aerial bombardment include displacement and lack of habitable houses, due to the destruction, when fleeing, as well as civilian casualties. Destruction of infrastructure (water, electricity, health centers, mosques, markets, and communication networks) as well as destruction of parks and places of recreation was noted. Access roads and property were reported to have been made inaccessible by remnants of bombing, including rubble. Damage to empty land due to aerial bombardment was also noted.



**5. Access to humanitarian assistance and access to services**

Frequency of distributions: 369 respondents were asked when people in the neighborhood had last received distributions of humanitarian assistance. 33% said that there had been no distributions in more than 3 weeks. 24% said that the last distribution was 2-3 weeks ago, 21% said 1-2 weeks ago, and 19% said less than one week ago. Bread, or subsidized bread, was the most commonly cited type of humanitarian assistance (73%), followed by food (59%), water (13%), and hygiene kits (1%). Six surveys noted that half rations of food had been distributed.

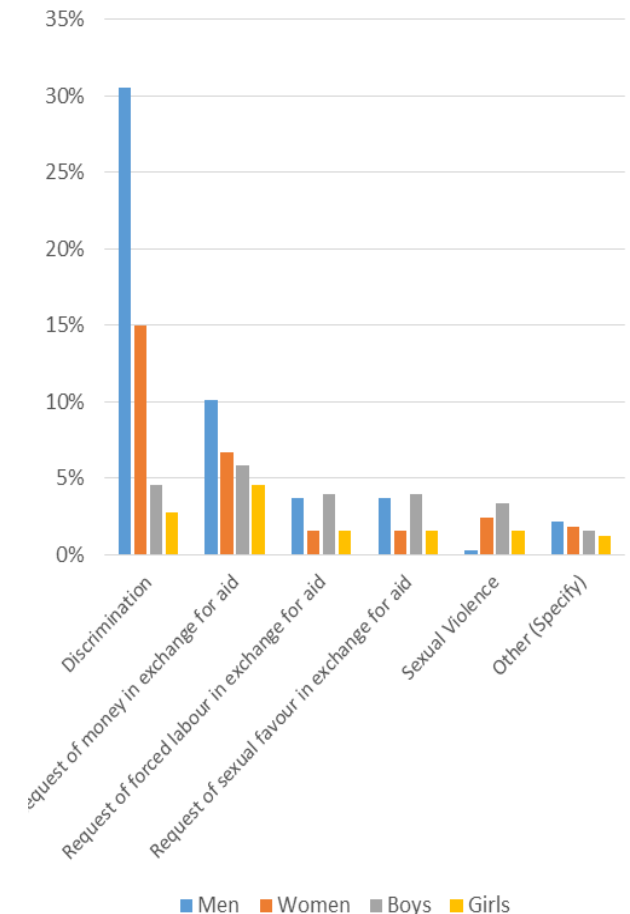
Time of last humanitarian distribution in neighborhood



- More than three weeks ago
- 2-3 weeks ago
- 1-2 weeks ago
- Less than 1 week ago
- Do not know

Concerns with distribution of aid: Of 327 respondents, 55% reported that there was no issue in the delivery of humanitarian aid. However, others noted the following issues affecting men, women, boys, and girls. On the issue of discrimination, 30% of respondents (of whom 36% were men and 64% were women) noted discrimination against men. 3 respondents noted the prioritization of widows and divorced women in the distributions. This points out a need for strengthened communication and community engagement strategies for understanding criteria for assistance, as well as the need for more aid to cover everyone. 3 noted insufficient quantity of aid, including water. 4 noted issues around corruption of the local council, patronage systems, and the distribution of aid to acquaintances and relatives, while many families do not receive. Problems in the neighborhood councils, regarding the organization of food and water distributions, was mentioned. The exploitation of some groups by others, including sexual exploitation for assistance, was mentioned. 2 noted that the distributions go largely to armed groups. Some of the 41 who responded affirmatively to “request of money in exchange for aid” may have been referring to the price of bread, which they cite as fixed at a subsidized amount of 100 SYP per pack of six loaves. The price of goods continues to increase exorbitantly, and goods are scarce, making it difficult for people to ensure basic needs and go about a normal life. The entry of humanitarian assistance is also blocked. People state that children are hungry.

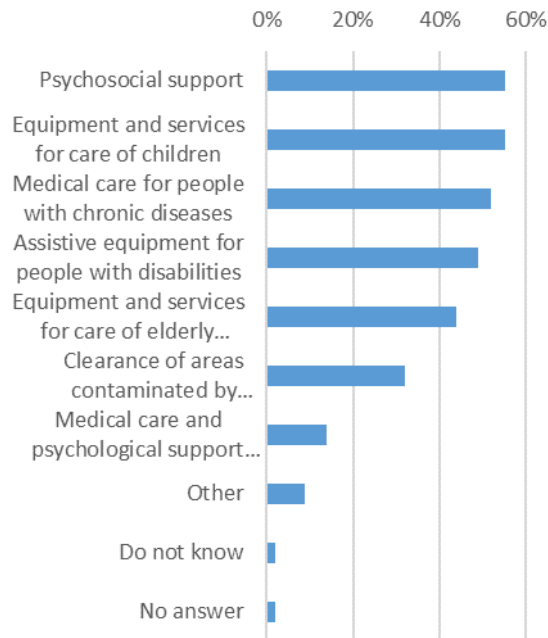
Concerns with Humanitarian Distributions





**Specialized services:** Among 325 respondents, needs for specialized services were expressed according to the accompanying chart, below. The need for

### Specialized Services Needed



psychosocial support was expressed by 55% of respondents, compared to 20% two months earlier in the rapid protection assessment.

### 6. Coping mechanisms

Among 395 respondents, the attempt to access aid (49%) was the most common coping mechanism in which respondents had noticed an increase in their neighborhoods. 38% reported an increase in staying home, 36% an increase in begging, 28% in school drop-outs. 24% noted an increase in moving to other neighborhoods, 22% the restriction of movement of

women and girls, 21% an increase in early marriage, 4% an increase in visits to community or women's centers. 2% noted an increase in engagement in illegal activities.

### 7. Gender-based violence

GBV continues to pervade the lives of women and girls in East Aleppo city. Those findings, corroborated by focus-group discussions conducted in 43 sub-districts covered by the cross-border operation from the Turkey hub in July 2016, confirm that domestic violence, sexual violence and early marriage are ever-present risks for women and girls. 21% respondents report an increase in early marriage as a coping mechanism. 31% of respondents report domestic violence as concern, 23% reporting that women are affected, 18% men, 13% boys, and 11% girls. Sexual violence was reported by 7% of respondents: 5% reporting that boys are affected, 4% women, 3% girls, and 1% men. Request of sexual favours in exchange for aid was reported by 8%, with men (4%) and boys (4%) most affected, followed by women (2%) and girls (2). Sexual violence at distribution points was reported by 5% of respondents, mostly as affecting women and girls (3% each). This illustrates the GBV risks associated with distributions.

Movement restrictions are affecting all, mainly because of security risks related to shelling. 78% of respondents reported limited movements but the restrictions affect women and men, boys and girls differently. 34% reported that women without accompaniment are affected by movement restrictions, while 17% reported that women with male accompaniment are affected.

**Services for Women and Girls** - Of 325 respondents, the numbers below noted the availability of the following services in their neighborhood in the past

three weeks, specifically for women and girls, while 23% stated that no such services have been available. Medical care and psychological support for survivors of domestic and sexual violence was identified as services needed. The difficulty to reach the services, due to the aerial bombardment, was noted by one respondent.

Services Available for Women and Girls in the Neighborhood	% of respondents
Educational Institutions	53%
Health Services	41%
Psychosocial Support	26%
Community Centers/ Women Centers	25%
Sharia/Religious Courts	8%
Do Not Know	6%
No Answer	6%
Other	2%

### 8. Situation of children

Of 321 respondents, 62% noted that children in the neighborhood had been involved in begging in the last three weeks. 58% reported that children had been working during school hours, 31% that children had been scavenging, 21% that children had been engaged or recruited by armed groups, 8% that children were engaged in illicit activities, 5% that children were smuggling. Other activities noted including loitering or playing in the street, carrying water to their houses, working at small stalls in the neighborhood or selling used things, or gathering plastic.

**Separated and unaccompanied minors** - Of 321 respondents, 35% noted that children under 18 were separated from their parents or usual caregivers or were living without any adults as a result of the current



situation in the last three weeks. 33% did not know and 26% said there were not any such children.

Of the 111 respondents who did cite the existence of such children, 81% cited the death of the caregiver as the reason. 14% said that the separation had occurred while the caregiver(s) had sent the children to live with extended family or in a safer location. 14% cited the separation from caregiver while moving to a safer location. 13% cited the detention or disappearance of the child or caregiver, 9% the medical evacuation of the caregiver.

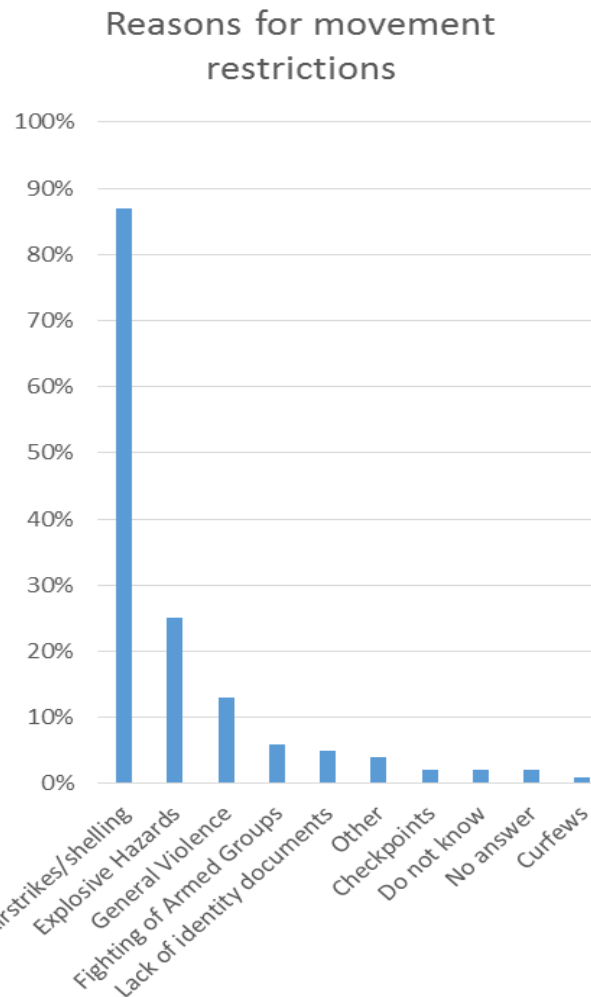
**Forced Recruitment** - 22% of 329 respondents said that children under 18 in the neighborhood were participating in armed conflict in the last three weeks. 14% answered 'maybe', 23% did not know or did not answer, and 41% said that this was not occurring. 44% of women ages 31-60 reported that forced recruitment of children was occurring.

### 9. Restrictions on freedom of movement

Of 384 respondents, roughly 300 (78%) reported movement restrictions. Movement restrictions most affected internally displaced persons (as reported by 35%), women moving alone (34%), boys (20%), women moving with a male companion (17%), people without civil documentation (16%), men (12%), girls moving alone (11%) or with a male companion (9%).

Reasons given for movement restrictions (by 300 respondents) include aerial bombardment (87%), including the shelling of civilian gathering places and the use of crater bombs and cluster munitions; explosive hazards (25%); general violence (13%); fighting of armed groups (6%); lack of ID documents (5%); checkpoints (2%); and curfews (1%). Some females who lost male relatives in the violence did not have male accompaniment and therefore suffered

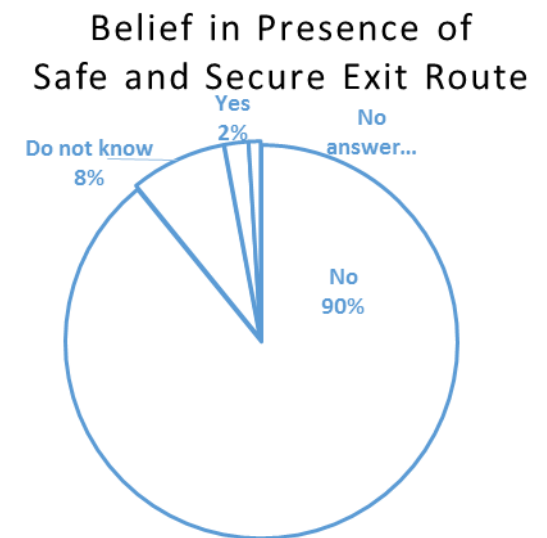
restricted movement. Lack of transport was also mentioned as a factor restricting movement.



### 10. Displacement

**Displacement within East Aleppo city** - 49% of 318 respondents noted a significant departure of civilians from their neighborhoods in the last three weeks, while 28% noted significant arrival of civilians to their

neighborhood. Such movements took place, they explained, in order for people to flee from the bombing and to secure basic needs, and also because of the lack of water and electricity. In some cases the essential members of the family remained in the house to protect the property. 12% noted that there were no such significant movements in their neighborhoods; 14% did not know.



**Possibility of Exit from East Aleppo city** - 90% of 397 respondents did not believe that there are safe and secure routes to leave the city. 2% said that there were, 8% did not know, and 1% did not answer.

Those who did not believe that there are safe and secure routes for exit from East Aleppo city explained that the area is besieged and under a forced blockade. They stated that "GoS checkpoints and snipers control the roads and crossing points" and that "the roads are also bombed by the GoS." The lack of UN supervision for any exit routes, as well as the prevention of



humanitarian access, were also remarked.

Half of the respondents who expressed belief in the presence of safe and secure exit routes conditioned their responses, explaining that a safe route would include the opening of Ramouseh Road by armed opposition groups or through monitoring/supervision of these routes by the UN.

Intentions in case of availability of secure route: If there were safe and secure routes for civilians to leave East Aleppo city, 44% of respondents said that people would not leave, while 40% said that they would. 16% did not know and 1% did not answer. Reasons for leaving included the fear of bombing, the forced blockade, hunger and fear of starvation, and the need for medical treatment. Whereas during the rapid protection assessment in late August, the great majority of those wishing to leave was female, the proportion of people expressing that people would leave is now 36% male.

Desired destination in case of exit from East Aleppo city: 41% of the 155 respondents (44% of 397) who said they would leave if a safe and secure route was available said that they would go to non-government controlled territory. 31% said that they would go to Idleb, with 4 (3%) stating that they wished to continue to Turkey. 31% said that they would go to the Aleppo countryside. 14% said that they would go to government-controlled areas. A small number specified simply that they would go to any safe area without bombs.

In choice of destination, 54% of 309 respondents noted the search for physical safety. 31% indicated that they would go to be with family and friends. 2% noted that they would choose a certain destination in order to be able to access assistance. Other reasons included flight from areas where they were subjected to execution,

arrest, or torture in detention; flight to areas where they had land; and flight to an area with access to food and freedom from besiegement or blockade.

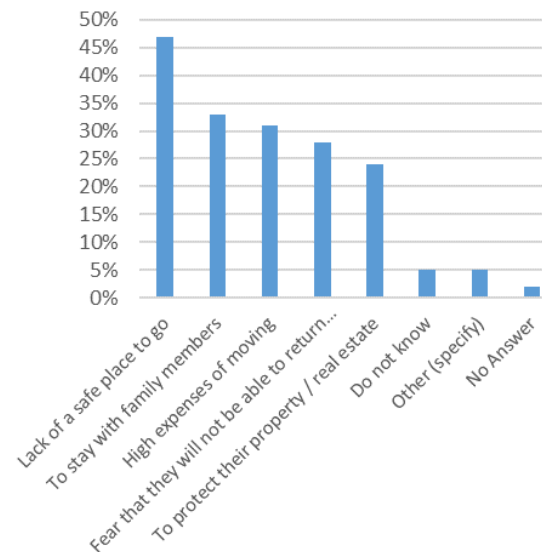
Reasons for Staying in East Aleppo city: Of the 224 respondents who gave reasons for staying, 47% cited the lack of a safe place to go. 33% cited the need to stay with family members, and 31% cited the high expense of moving. 28% cited fear that they would not be able to return to their houses, and 24% cited the need to protect their property. 5% did not know and 2% did not answer. Others noted that they did not want to leave their city or their country, that they had lived there for a long time, that they deserve to live in their houses, that they made up their mind at the beginning of the conflict and still insisted to stay, that their livelihood was inside East Aleppo city, and that they “did not want the Government of Syria to enter

their area,” and that they did not want to meet the same fate as Darayya, another besieged location from which civilians were evacuated in late August after the surrender of armed opposition groups.

### Conclusion

This monitoring exercise demonstrates further deterioration in conditions for the 270,000 civilians living inside besieged East Aleppo City since the rapid protection assessment carried out in late August. In final comments to the interview, respondents called for the international community to intervene immediately to stop the besiegement and bombing and to aid the civilians inside. They reiterated the call for aid in securing their basic needs, including drinking water, medicine, baby formula, food supplements, and fuel for generators. In addition, they called for clearance of rubble and reconstruction of their neighborhoods, including rehabilitation of schools, hospitals, markets, roads and infrastructure, water and electricity. They stated that they just want to live and resume their normal lives.

Reasons for Staying in the Neighborhood

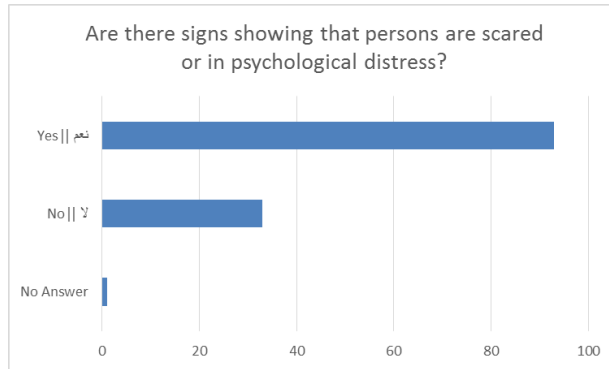




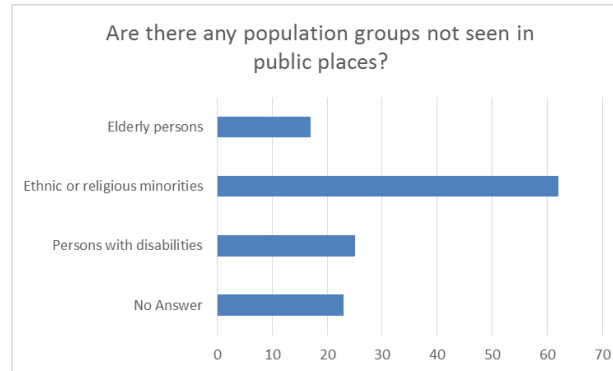


**Observation checklists**

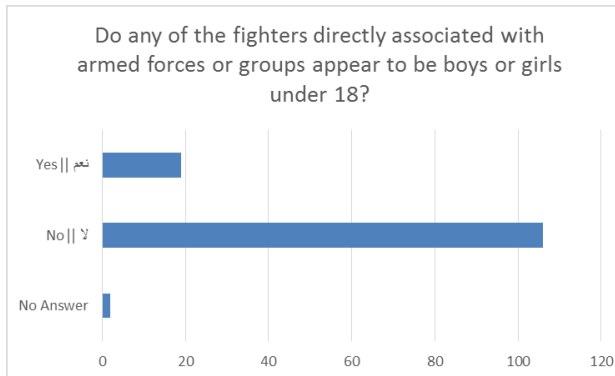
The below are answers submitted by humanitarian actors on using an observation checklist which they completed while visiting 27 different neighborhoods in East Aleppo city. A total of 127 checklists were filled.



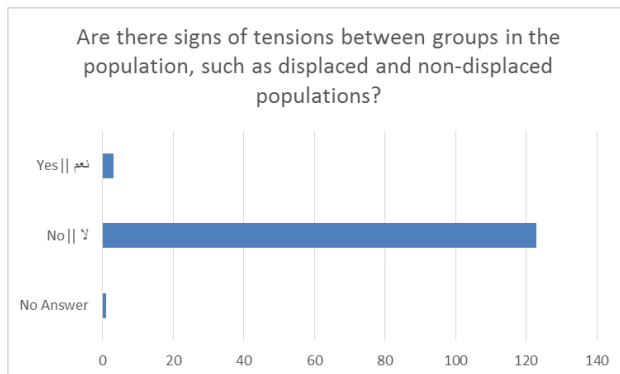
93 of the 127 of the observation checklists noted signs of persons being scared or in psychological distress in the neighborhoods they visited.



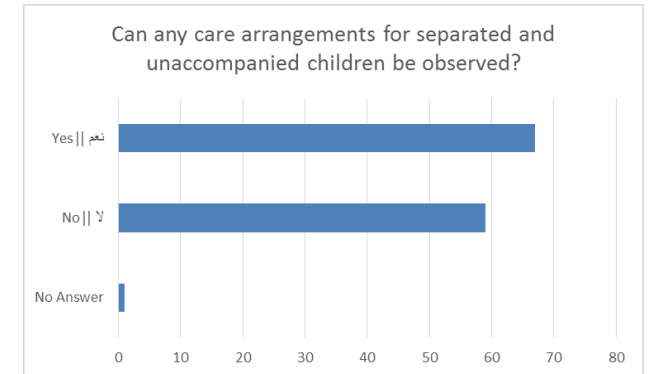
17 answers noted that elderly persons were not seen in public places, while 25 noted persons with disabilities were not seen in public places. A total of 62 answers noted that religious/ethnic minorities are not visible in public places.



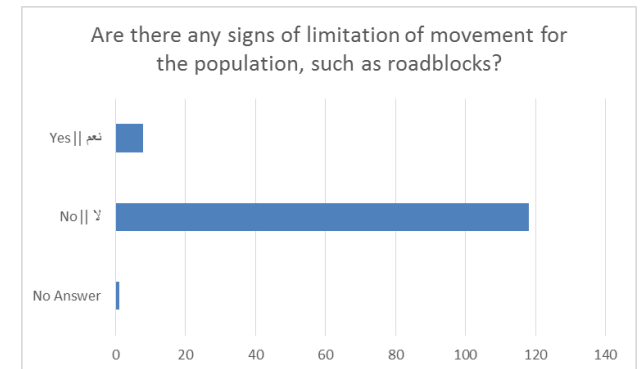
A total of 19 noted that they observed children under 18 who appeared to be associated with armed groups in the neighborhoods they visited.



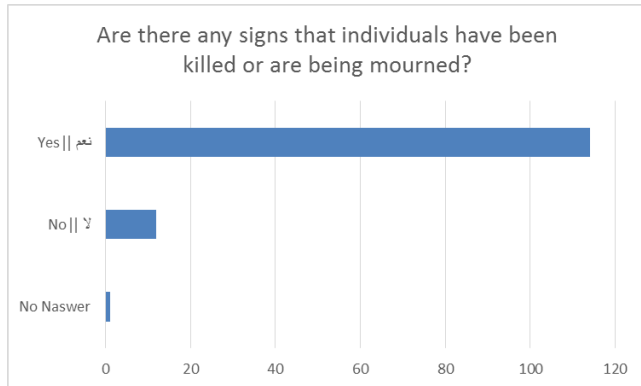
There appeared to be no visible signs observed of tension between displaced and non-displaced populations in the neighborhoods visited. Only 3 of the 127 checklists noted any obvious signs of tension.



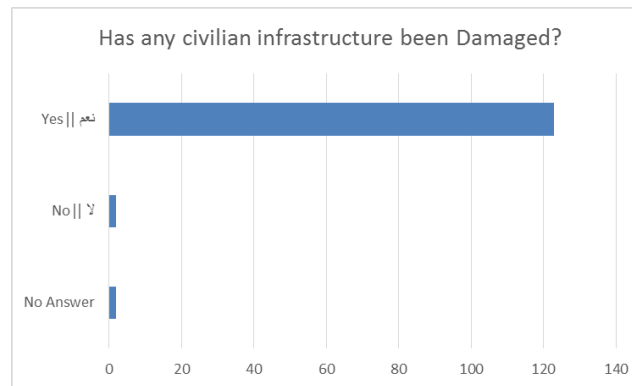
67 checklists indicated care arrangements for separated and unaccompanied minors in neighborhoods visited.



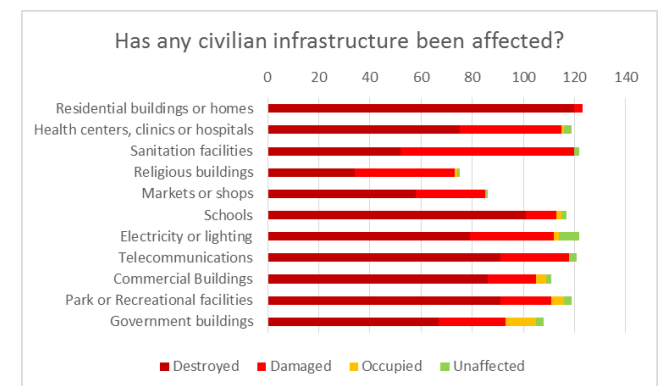
There appeared to be no significant barriers to movement such as checkpoints in the neighborhoods visited.



113 of the answers noted signs of individuals being mourned in the neighborhoods visited.



Significant damage to infrastructure used by civilians has been noted across all neighborhoods visited.



The comments in the observation checklists noted the below information:

Chart 1

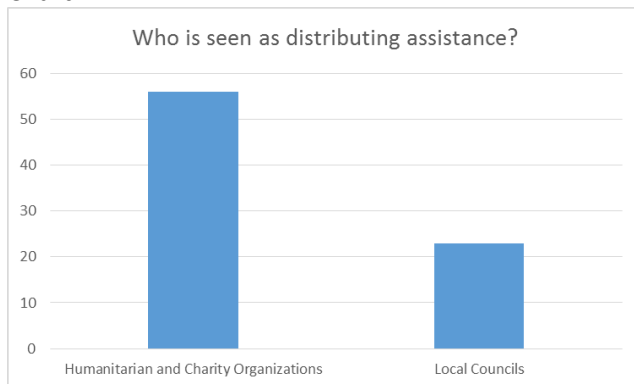


Chart 2

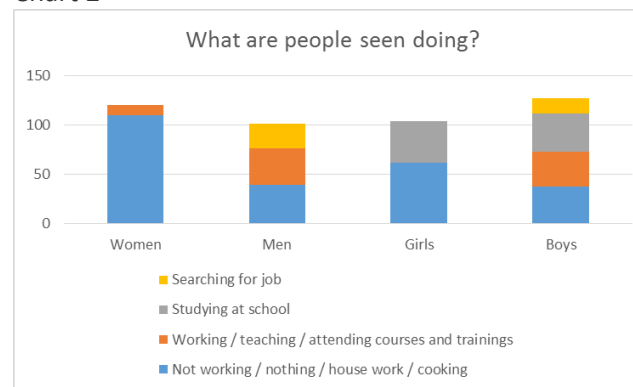


Chart 3

