


Escalation of Violence in Aleppo, Syria



Children in a shelter in Ashrafiyah, Aleppo. 12 January 2026 ©WeWorld

This Flash Update was prepared by WeWorld.

“The recent escalation in Aleppo was severe, with heavy artillery targeting forces and frontlines in Ashrafiyah and Sheikh Maqsoud, while mortars struck multiple neighborhoods across Aleppo. We were also affected as humanitarian workers. We were not only forced to suspend regular operations during this critical period, but it also made our response efforts extremely challenging”

Rami Razzouk, WeWorld Area Manager, Aleppo

SITUATION UPDATE

Hostilities between the Government General Security forces and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have escalated starting from January 6th. Fighting initially centered on the Ash-Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyah neighbourhoods, but **expanded to rural areas**, including Dayr Hafir, Maskana, and Al-Khafsa. While hostilities within Aleppo City have de-escalated following the January 11th ceasefire and the reported withdrawal of Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) from urban neighbourhoods, **tensions have significantly shifted to rural frontlines**. On January 13th, sporadic clashes and cross-shelling between SDF and government forces were reported near Deir Hafir (east rural Aleppo) and the Tishreen Dam (northeast), as well as the southern governorate of Raqqa, accompanied by substantial military reinforcements from both sides. As of January 10th, the Aleppo Health Directorate reported **23 deaths** and **104 injuries**. The conflict triggered massive displacement, peaking at

approximately 148,000 people, of which 50,000 are children. As of January 12th, the dynamic has shifted toward **limited returns**. Approximately 119,000 people remain displaced, while roughly 29,000 have returned home. **The vast majority of IDPs fled to Afrin District**, where over 100,000 arrived, largely staying with host communities or in collective shelters. In Aleppo city, 1,181 people remain in temporary shelters, while the Ministry of Education announced that **schools will continue to be suspended for 15 days**. Returns to Ashrafiyah have slowly begun, while returns to Ash-Sheikh Maqsoud are slower and conditional on the clearance of unexploded ordnance and official authorization. **Essential infrastructure and services suffered damage**, but key services are being slowly restored. **Critical gaps remain in non-food items and winterization support**, particularly for the high concentration of displaced families in Afrin.

WEWORLD INTERVENTION

WeWorld operates in Syria **since 2011**. Its current operational capacities consist of **over 60 staff**, offices situated in **Damascus, Aleppo and Deir-Ez-Zor**, and **programs in over 60 communities in Aleppo, Raqqa, Deir-Ez-Zor, and Daraa Governorates** either directly or through local partners. WeWorld works in **rural most underserved areas**, and applies an integrated area-based approach, coordinating different components and sectors: **Emergency Response, Education, WASH, Livelihoods**, integrating Child Protection, community engagement, as well as the inclusion of children and people with disabilities within the overall programming.

The recent escalation in Aleppo has triggered urgent humanitarian needs, particularly among newly displaced populations. WeWorld continues to monitor the situation of the displaced population in Aleppo, and their intention to return after the confrontation is slowly receding. In parallel, WeWorld developed a multi-phased response plan that includes the following:

-Immediate Term:

Provision of emergency in-kind assistance to the displaced population in collective shelters where there is a gap (ready to eat meals, hygiene kits, baby and elderly diapers, etc..)

-Short Term:

Improve organization's preparedness and support access to basic needs during the return process upon continued cessation of violence, including:

- Provision of a One-off Emergency Cash Assistance (ECA) to the affected displaced and returnee families.
- Support with the repair of damaged water infrastructure where and if identified.
- Improve organization's preparedness for potential re-escalation and/or expansion of violence to other areas of the country, for example East rural Aleppo and Deir Ez Zor.

-Medium to Long Term:

Improving access to basic services in the affected neighborhoods of Aleppo post-return focusing on access to water, education, and livelihoods.

PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

WeWorld team in Aleppo is fully operative to coordinate the response and to continue monitoring the developing context focusing on the security and political situation, assessing needs, and covering gaps on daily basis in coordination with the Local Authorities. Interventions will prioritize children and other most vulnerable groups.



WeWorld staff carrying out an assessment with displaced families in a shelter in Ashrafieh, Aleppo. 12 January 2026 ©WeWorld

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