Over the course of the last ten years, attacks on humanitarian aid convoys and individual humanitarian workers have increased across the globe. In 2016, 158 major attacks against aid operations occurred globally, with the majority being concentrated in Syria. Since the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War in 2011, attacks on aid convoys have repeatedly and increasingly placed humanitarian workers at risk, and prevented vulnerable communities from receiving aid. Even more condemningly, the attacks on aid convoys have been combined with repeated delays and blockades. Under International Law, the United Nations, who are responsible for the vast majority of the aid delivered in Syria, along with any other international organization, must be granted permission by the Syrian Government to enter the country and deliver aid. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) is responsible for this. On repeated occasions, the Syrian Government has imposed blockades or significant delays on the vast majority of aid deliveries. Ongoing fighting has also impacted the ability of humanitarian convoys to reach their destinations. In 2016 and 2017, over 80% of aid convoys in Syria were blocked or delayed by the Government. This resulted in instances such as December 2016, where less than 1% of the Syrian population the UN requested to deliver aid to were served. Some observers of the situation have claimed that these blockades have been enforced as part of an ongoing strategy by the Government to force certain parts of the rebellion into submission, which is illegal under international humanitarian law. It is estimated that there are currently 2.98 million people living in hard-to-reach areas in Syria, with 419,000 of those in UN-declared besieged areas. This project seeks to explore the concentration of attacks, blockades and delays on aid convoys and facilities receiving aid in Syria, and subsequently the population of persons of humanitarian concern that health sites receiving aid are able to serve, and those that they are not.

To determine the areas experiencing the highest concentration of attacks on aid facilities and convoys, Physicians for Human Rights maintain an excellent database of the number of attacks on different hospitals and convoys (which are normally the final delivery points for UNOCHA deliveries). However, this data did not exist in excel format, so I created an excel table with the number of attacks, perpetrators, and incident rate of attacks on various hospitals. I then used a table join to connect the relevant data to its corresponding attacks, perpetrators, and incident rate of attacks on various hospitals. This project seeks to explore the concentration of attacks, blockades and delays on aid convoys and facilities receiving aid in Syria, and subsequently the population of persons of humanitarian concern that health sites receiving aid are able to serve, and those that they are not.

To determine the number of aid worker fatalities, I was not able to determine aid worker fatalities by location given the data available, so instead I joined the number of fatalities by Governate to the administrative level, using gradient colors to demonstrate the level of severity. I then used the point data on the number of incidents to create proportional symbols demonstrating the zones where these attacks were most concentrated. A closer analysis at this data, shown in the map of Aleppo, revealed that the majority of these attacks were undertaken by the Syrian Government and Russian airstrikes. The overwhelming cause of death was by shelling. The second was shooting, and third execution and torture. As these attacks were concentrated in areas of non-government control, or along besiegement lines, this indicates that the blocking of humanitarian aid is a deliberate tactic by the Syrian Government.