



Bulletin 2 – September 2015

Yemen



September 2015: IDP food consumption deteriorates

Key messages

- More than 40 percent of the population has inadequate food consumption. Needs remain significantly high but the most affected are the 1.4 million IDPs.
- The worst food security indicators are observed in a cluster of highly conflict-affected governorates in the north-west and centre-south of the country. Food consumption has sharply deteriorated in the conflict-affected governorates of Al Mahwit, Ibb and Dhamar when compared to August.
- Respondents mentioned that high prices and limited availability of food, low levels of assistance and increasing unemployment are the main barriers to food access.
- September data suggests that IDP food consumption has significantly deteriorated. By contrast, coping and food consumption indicators have showed relative improvement in Lahj and Shabwah compared with August, but still at a pressing food security level requiring immediate humanitarian assistance.

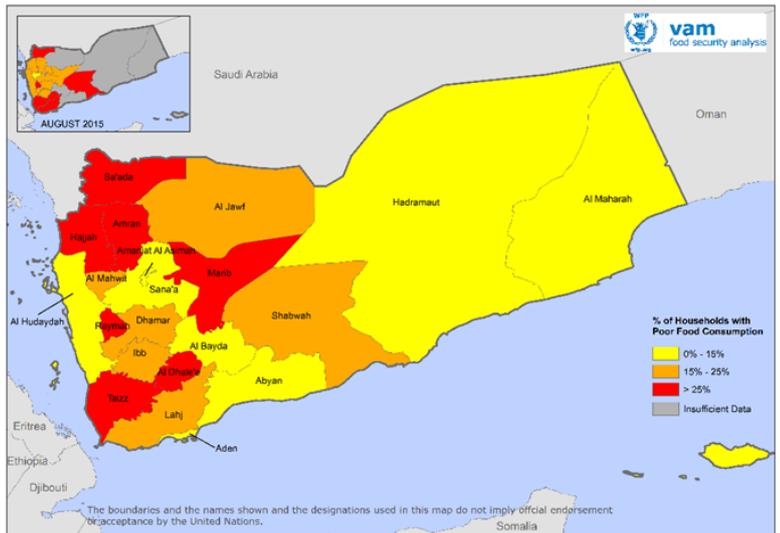
Fighting hunger worldwide

More than 40% of the population has poor or borderline food consumption; IDP food consumption deteriorates

September data shows that 20.7 percent of the population having poor food consumption and a further 21.8 percent borderline. This is likely an underestimate because the survey was carried out by phone, and cell phone access is lower for poorer, more vulnerable households. Indicators are especially bad for internally displaced households. Nearly 55 percent of IDPs are food insecure (31.1 percent poor and 23.8 percent borderline). [OCHA](#) estimates that some 1.4 million Yemenis were displaced as of September 2015.

Overall, the worst food security indicators are observed in a cluster of highly conflict-affected governorates in the north-west (Sa'ada, Amran) and the centre-south (Marib, Taizz, Raymah) where more than 25 percent of households have poor food consumption. Needs remain high elsewhere too. In particular, September data shows that Hajjah and Al Dhale have more than 30 percent of households with poor food consumption, and a mean rCSI above 20 – indicating high household food insecurity. Indicators for other governorates are relatively better but still at levels requiring a humanitarian response.

Map 1: Percentage of households with 'poor' food consumption

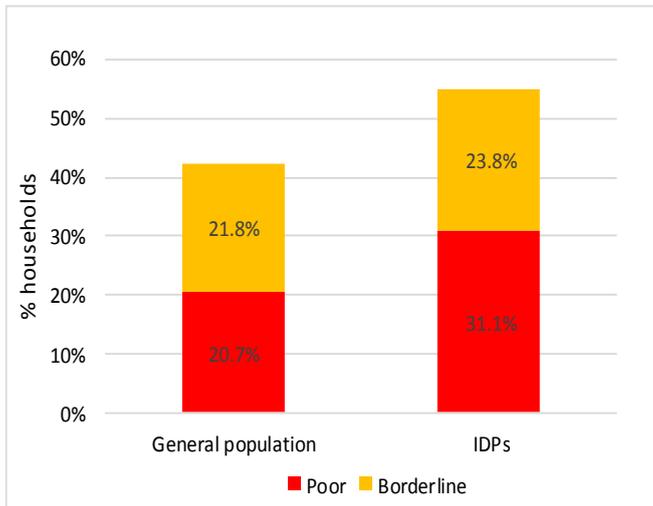


Source: WFP mVAM, September 2015



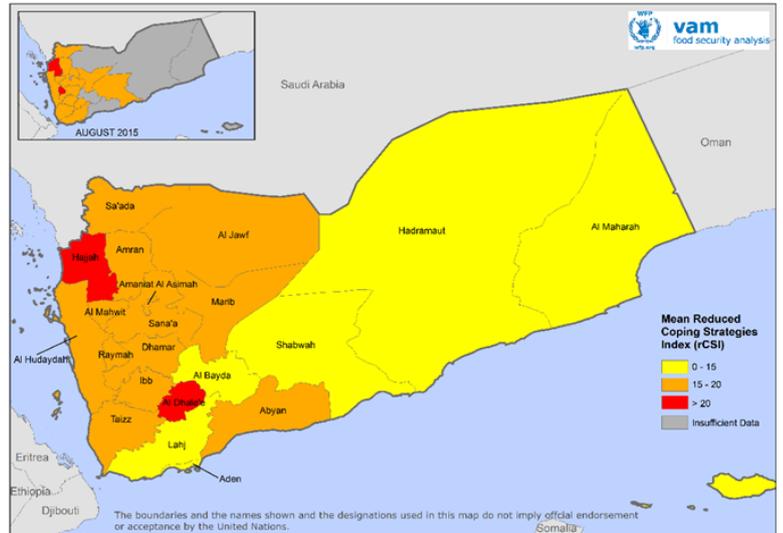
vam food security analysis

Figure 1: Percentage of household with poor and borderline food consumption.



Source: WFP mVAM, September 2015

Map 2 : reduced Coping Strategies Index



Source: WFP mVAM, September 2015

Degradation of the food consumption score in Al Mahwit, Ibb and Dhamar, while indicators have showed relative improvement in Lahj and Shabwah.

The food consumption score deteriorated in Al Mahwit, Ibb and Dhamar, a cluster of conflict-affected governorates in the West. September data also suggests that IDP food consumption has deteriorated compared with August. In September, IDPs were eating substantially fewer proteins and fewer fats than in August. For IDP households, the share of households consuming a 'poor' diet increased from 25 percent in August to 31 percent in September (p-value=0.02).

By contrast, coping and food consumption indicators have showed relative improvement in Lahj and Shabwah since August, but still at a pressing food security level requiring immediate humanitarian assistance. The mean reduced coping strategy index dropped from 15.5 to 11.2 in Lahj (p-value=0.01), and from 18.2 to 12.7 in Shabwah (p-value=0.02). At the same time, the mean food consumption score rose from 45.1 to 52 (p-value=0.05) and from 42 to 53.7 in Lahj and Shabwah respectively. Coping levels moderated slightly in Hajjah, but remained over 20, which is indicative of a very strained food security situation in the governorate ¹. The data suggests that non-displaced households used negative coping strategies relatively less often than in the previous month.

High food prices, low assistance and unemployment continue to hamper food access.

Respondents reported that the food situation was very difficult and was deteriorating. The most commonly reported problem was increasing prices of water and food items, particularly for vegetables, fruits and proteins. In addition to the surge in food prices, shortages of basic food items and water have been reported. Other factors include unemployment, lack of food aid, blockaded routes and market monopolies for food commodities. Unreliable electricity and water supplies, as well as poor security were also mentioned. September responses show that concerns over the food security situation were similar to August.

Figure 3: Word cloud



Reports of high prices and shortage of basic food commodities echo [WFP market monitoring in September](#). The national average cost of food basket in September was over 30 percent more than the pre-crisis level which has strained people's ability to buy food. The scarcity of food commodities were reported in the governorates highly affected by conflict such as Sana'a, Taiz, Al Hudaydah, Marib, Hajjah, Al Jawf, Lahej, Al Baydah and Abyan. Lack of fuel continues to restrict food transportation and water pumping.

Sentiment about food is negative throughout the country. Sentiment was poorest in the

¹ Figures presented might be underestimated, as responses are likely to be biased towards better-off households who own mobile phones.

governorates in the north central areas that are the most affected by the conflict, especially by people in Sa'ada, Raymah, Marib, Hajjah and Al Jawf. Mean sentiment dropped significantly in Sa'ada and Raymah in September, signaling they were more negative in those governorates, but improved in Al Dhale.

In the words of the respondents:

- "The food situation is bad. There is high increase in prices and no sources of income". (Male respondent from Ibb)
- "There is no electricity and no water – very high increase in prices and food assistance doesn't reach the area." (Female respondent from Sana'a)
- "There is a severe shortage of food and very high increase in prices". (Female respondent from Aden)
- "The food situation is completely instable. And there are large numbers of displaced people who suffer from lack of food". (Male respondent from Hajjah)
- "The food situation is difficult –there is a shortage of proteins and basic materials and food is limited to starches". (Male respondent from Hadramaut)

Conclusion

Food security conditions are largely impacted by the ongoing conflict and are expected to deteriorate as violence persists. Continuing displacement implies continued pressure on food security for IDPs. Respondents indicated that access to food is a continuing concern not just because of the poor security situation and disrupted supply routes but also because of unemployment and high food price increases. Humanitarian assistance was also reported insufficient. Continued conflict and low humanitarian access could also lead to prolonged disruption of food, cash crop and livestock markets with a serious impact on livelihoods.

Methodology – mVAM remote mobile data collection

High levels of insecurity in Yemen currently prevent the implementation of traditional face-to-face surveys. In order to monitor the impact of the conflict on food security, WFP is using mobile VAM, its remote mobile data collection tool. In September, WFP concluded its second survey round. Calls targeted all mobile operators in Yemen and used random-digit dialing. The data presented here was collected from a sample of 2400 respondents from 21 governorates. One third of respondents were internally displaced.

We measure the food consumption score, the reduced coping strategies index – a measure of food-based coping - and analyse answers to an open question. Aggregate data tables are available on the [mVAM Yemen page](#).

Owing to the partial nature of mobile phone access in Yemen (68 subscriptions/100 people in 2014 according to the World Bank) and the low electricity access rate, data collection by mobile phone involves biases. Responses are likely to be biased towards younger, somewhat better-off men who live in urban areas and have better access to electricity and phone charging services. According to data from the Yemen Comprehensive Food Security Survey 2014, 72 percent of the population in the poorest quintile do not own a mobile phone, which indicates that mobile phone surveys would be biased towards better-off households. We account for such biases as we interpret our results. Details on methodology are available [online](#)



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