



World Food Programme

## Bulletin 14 – January 2016

# IRAQ

**January 2016: Household food security begins to show signs of improvement. High food prices ensue in parts of Anbar directly affected by most recent wave of conflict and displacement.**

## Highlights

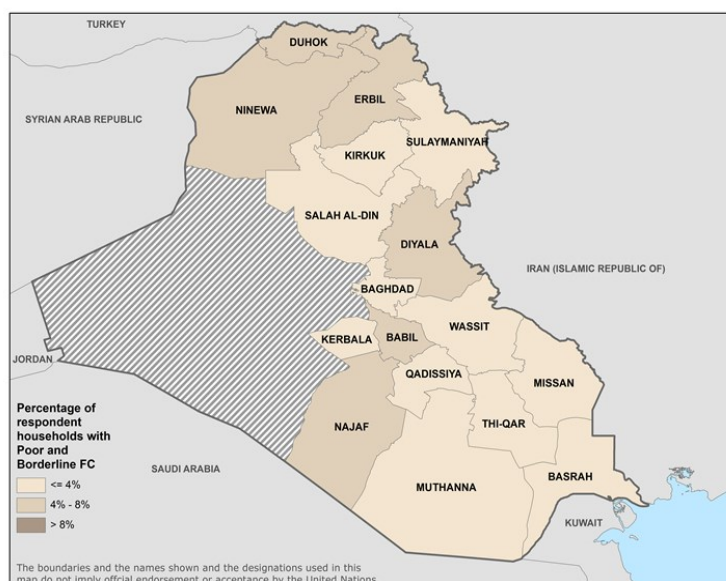
- **Household food consumption and dietary diversity improved in December compared with November, particularly among internally displaced people (IDPs) – but still one IDP household in every four reported relying on negative food-related coping.**
- **Above-average use of coping strategies continued in Ninewa - where nearly a quarter of all households reported not having enough food or money to buy food, but declined in Duhok and Kerbala.**
- **December mVAM market data indicates that the average cost of a standard food basket increased by 12 percent in Salah Al-Din. Meanwhile in Anbar, following several months of steadily increasing food prices, the trend finally showed a decline; however, in conflict-affected Ramadi, Khalidiyah and Fallujah districts, the cost of a food basket was 24, 41 and 38 percent higher than the governorate average respectively.**
- **Household access to the government's Public Distribution System (PDS) decreased in December with only 2 percent of the respondents reporting receiving a full ration.**
- **Respondents identify the need for more regular assistance; insufficient work opportunities; concerns about the delayed payment of salaries and the payment of the rent; and difficulties related to the cold weather as the main issues related to food insecurity.**

## Household food security indicators showed a slight improvement in December

National level food security slightly improved in December, with 3 percent of all respondents reporting having inadequate ('poor' or 'borderline') food consumption by comparison with the 4 percent observed in November 2015. The highest prevalence of inadequate consumption during this month was reported by respondents in Duhok and Ninewa governorates for the third consecutive time, at 5 and 6 percent of all surveyed households respectively (Figure 1).

December data also shows a decrease in the proportion of IDP households consuming an inadequate diet - particularly those living outside camps, for whom the prevalence of inadequate consumption fell from 15.6 percent in November to 7.6 percent in December\*\*\*.

**Map 1. Iraq - Percentage of respondent households with 'poor' and 'borderline' Food Consumption Score (FCS) - December 2015**



Source: WFP mVAM, December 2015



**vam**  
food security analysis

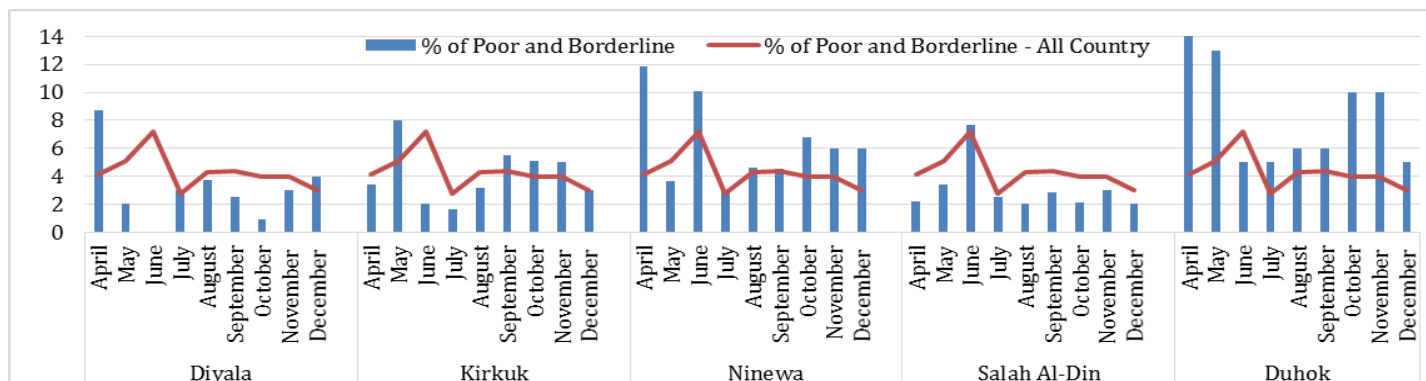
## Box 1. Situation update (December 2015)

Intensified armed clashes in and around Ramadi have been ongoing since the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) launched a large-scale attack against armed opposition groups' positions on 22 December, supported by a series of coalition airstrikes. Unconfirmed reports indicate that approximately 2,500 families remain blocked in Ramadi, with no access to humanitarian assistance. On 27 December, the ISF declared that it had regained control of the city after 18 months. However, clashes are still ongoing in the Governmental complex area in the city centre and it will take time to clear the urban area of residual booby traps, IEDs and unexploded ordnances prior to any large-scale returns.

Families have reportedly fled Ramadi eastwards towards Khalidiya and Habaniya Tourist City (30-40km east of Ramadi), where humanitarian actors are able to access and provide assistance. Due to safety concerns, ISF have not yet granted the humanitarian community access to Ramadi city to assess the situation and the people remaining there have been denied lifesaving humanitarian aid; WFP has not had access to the city centre of Ramadi since April 2015.

Sources: WFP, OCHA and IOM

**Figure 1. Percentage of 'all country' and respondent households from key conflict and displacement-affected governorates with 'poor' and 'borderline' food consumption, April–December 2015**



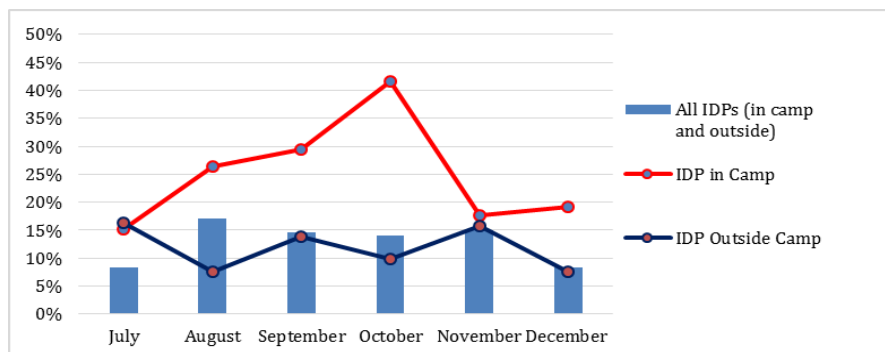
Source: WFP mVAM, December 2015

Despite this improvement, consumption amongst IDPs remained significantly more restricted than that of non-displaced households and moreover, the proportion of IDPs living in camps (55 observations) consuming an inadequate diet increased slightly between November and December (Figure 2).

Although IDPs also remained generally worse off in terms of their dietary diversity than non-displaced households (Figures 3.a and 3.b), their dietary diversity, like their food consumption, improved between November and December.

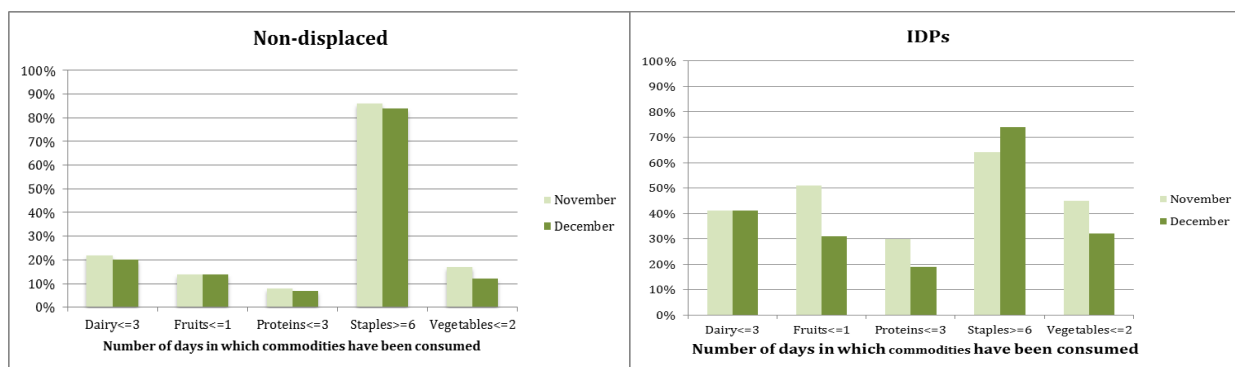
Several statistically significant changes were observed in the overall dietary diversity of IDP respondents consuming specific food groups: the proportion of households consuming fruit less than once a week decreased from 51 percent in November to 31 percent in December\*\*\*; those consuming proteins less than three times a week dropped from 30 to 19 percent \*\*\*, those consuming vegetables less than twice a week fell from 45 to 32 percent \*\*\*, and those that consumed staples more than six times a week increased from 64 to 74 percent \*\*\*.

**Figure 2. Percentage of IDP respondent households living in and outside camps with 'poor' and 'borderline' food consumption, July–December 2015**



Source: WFP mVAM, December 2015

**Figures 3.a (Percentage of non-displaced respondent households) and 3.b (Percentage of IDP respondent households) consuming five key food groups, November vs. December 2015**

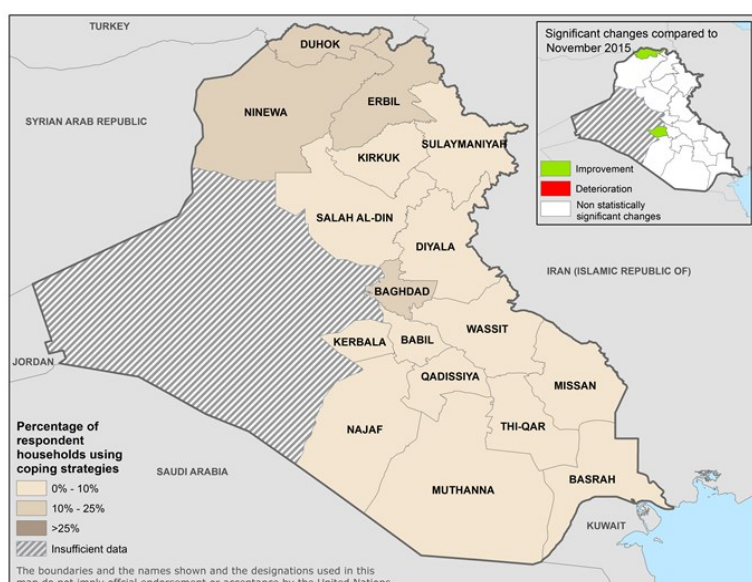


## Prevalence of negative consumption-based coping remains stable

In December, the overall proportion of respondents reporting using negative food-based coping strategies because they did not have enough food or money to buy food remained stable at 10 percent (Figure 4). At governorate level, households in Ninewa continued to report well above-average usage of coping, at 24 percent. Conversely, as shown in Map 2, in Duhok and Kerbala governorates, the prevalence of respondents using food-related negative coping strategies decreased, from 21 to 10 percent\*\*\* in Duhok and from 11 to 3 percent in Kerbala\*\*\* between November and December (Table 1).

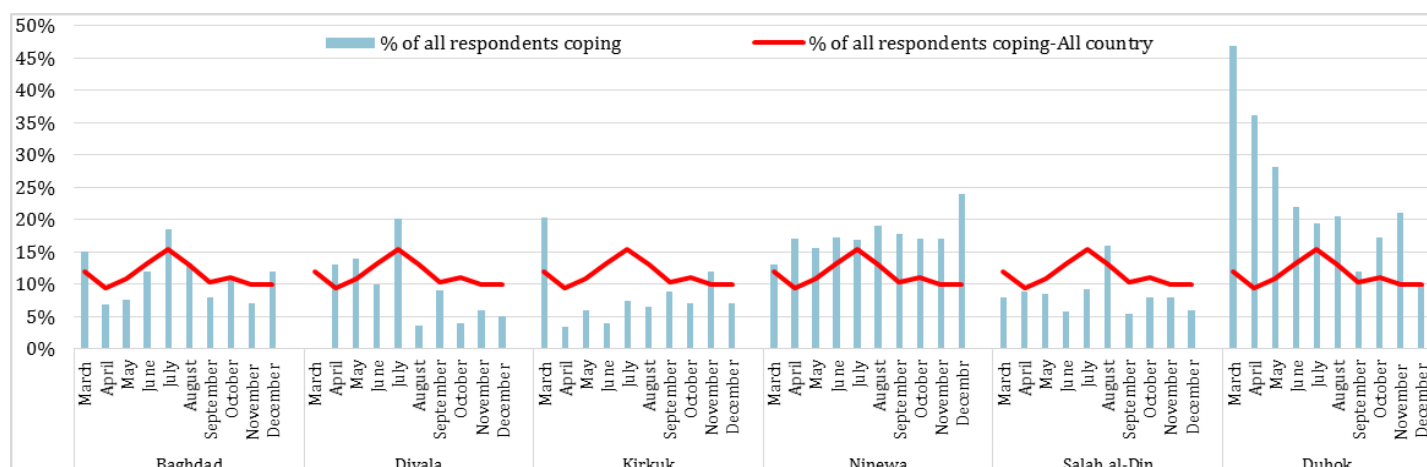
In Baghdad governorate the percentage of households that relied on less expensive food increased from 6 percent in November to 12 percent in December\*\*.

Map 2. Iraq – reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI), December 2015



Source: WFP mVAM December 2015

Figure 4. Percentage of 'all country' and respondent households from key conflict and displacement-affected governorates using consumption based coping strategies, March – December 2015



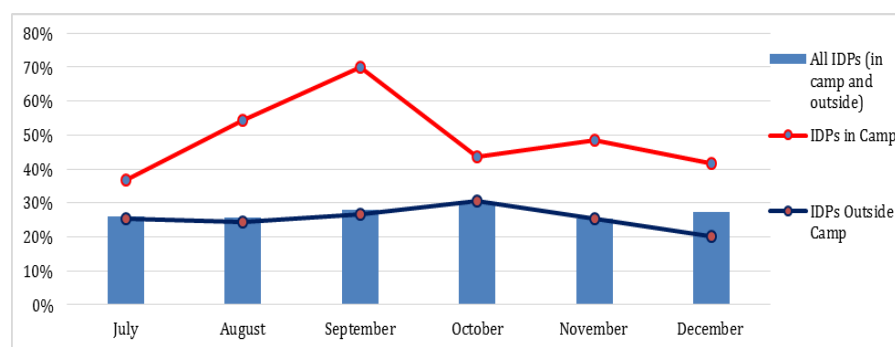
Source: WFP mVAM, December 2015

Table 1: Decrease in percentage of HHs using a coping strategy from November to December in Duhok and Kerbala

Governorate	Coping Strategies			
	Reducing meals	Restricting adult consumption	Limiting portion sizes	Relying on less expensive food
Duhok	-12%	-7%	-10%	-11%
Kerbala	-9%	-8%	-9%	-9%

Source: WFP mVAM, December 2015

Figure 5. Percentage of IDP respondent households using food-related negative coping strategies, IDPs in camps vs. all IDPs, July – December 2015

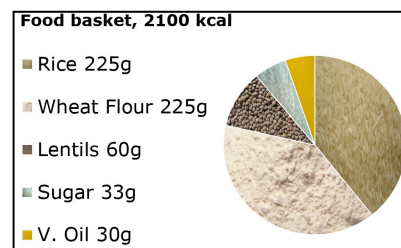


Source: WFP mVAM, December 2015

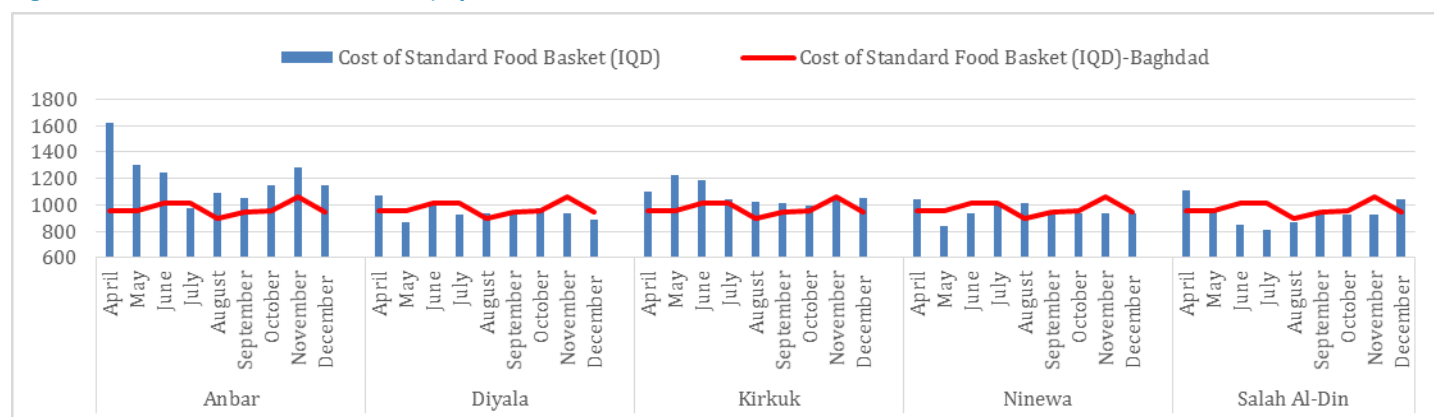
Over a quarter of all surveyed IDP households (27.4%) reported using at least one coping strategy, while only 8 percent of non-displaced households used coping strategies in the same period. However, the percentage of IDPs living outside camps who used coping strategies decreased from 25.4 percent in November to 20.3 percent\*\* in December (Figure 5).

## Markets, food supply and purchasing power

In December, compared with [November](#), the average cost of the standard food basket varied in monitored governorates: there was a decrease in Anbar (-10%) and Diyala (-6%), while in Salah Al-Din the prices increased by 12 percent, and prices remained the same in Ninewa and Kirkuk (Figure 6). It is worth noting that the average cost of the standard food basket in Baghdad decreased noticeably from 1056 IQD in November to 942 IQD in December (-11%). In Anbar, the average cost of a basic food basket decreased slightly from 1281 IQD in November to 1151 IDQ in December. However, there was a more notable variation in costs at district and sub-district level. The average cost was considerably higher than the governorate average in conflict-affected Ramadi and in Khalidiyah and Fallujah (both of which have incurred an influx of those displaced from Ramadi). Khalidiya district reported the highest average cost of a food basket (1611 IQD). In these districts, the reported price of all basic food basket commodities was significantly higher than prices reported in all other monitored locations in December. In Fallujah district, the average cost of a food basket increased by 8 percent in comparison with November. In Haditha, there was a steep decrease in the average cost for the second consecutive month, following the delivery of food assistance. However, the situation will likely be impacted by the new wave of conflict starting in early January and should be monitored.



**Figure 6: Cost of a standard food basket, April – December 2015**

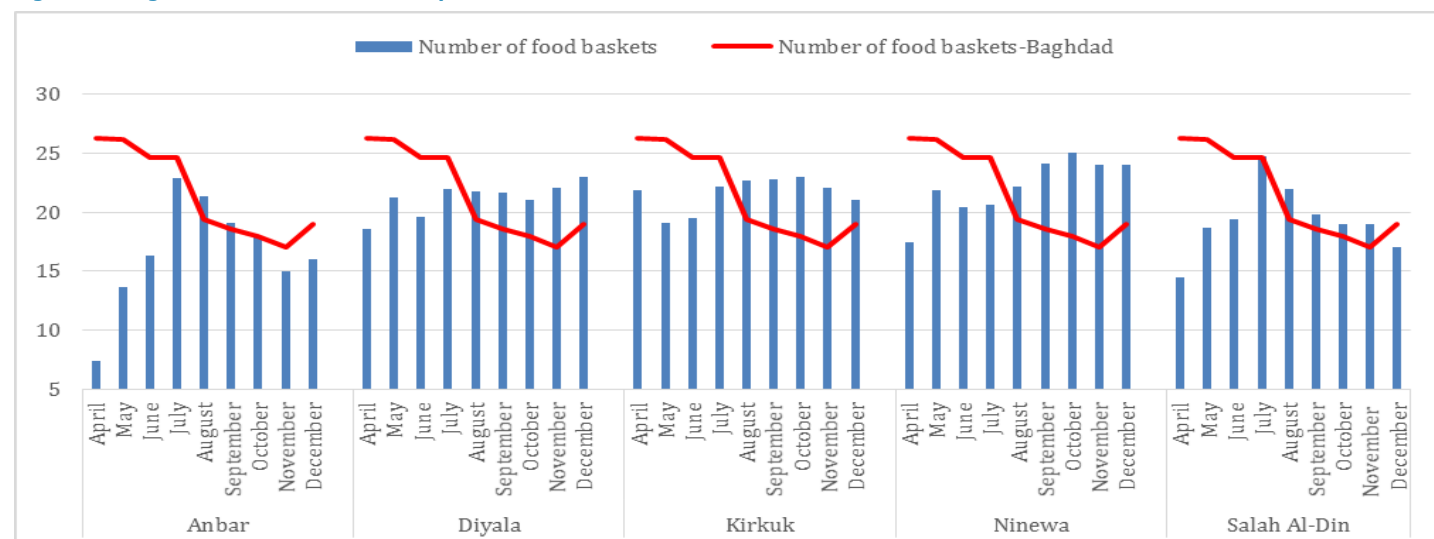


Source: WFP mVAM, December 2015

In Anbar, the price of wheat flour and sugar continued to be considerably higher than in Baghdad (51 percent and 34 percent more expensive respectively). Moreover, the price differential with Baghdad of the overall prices of a food basket was up by 12 percent in Kirkuk and by 10 percent in Salah Al-Din.

In December, the overall purchasing power of the sampled households increased by one food basket in Anbar and Diyala and diminished by one food basket in Kirkuk. Wage-to-food terms of trade in Salah Al-Din decreased by two food baskets (Figure 7). The 11 percent decrease in purchasing power in Salah Al-Din in December is likely attributable to an increase in food prices, especially for rice which was up by almost 100 IQD since November. It is also worth noting that for the first time since April an increase in purchasing power in Baghdad was observed in December.

**Figure 7: Wage-to-food terms of trade April–December 2015**



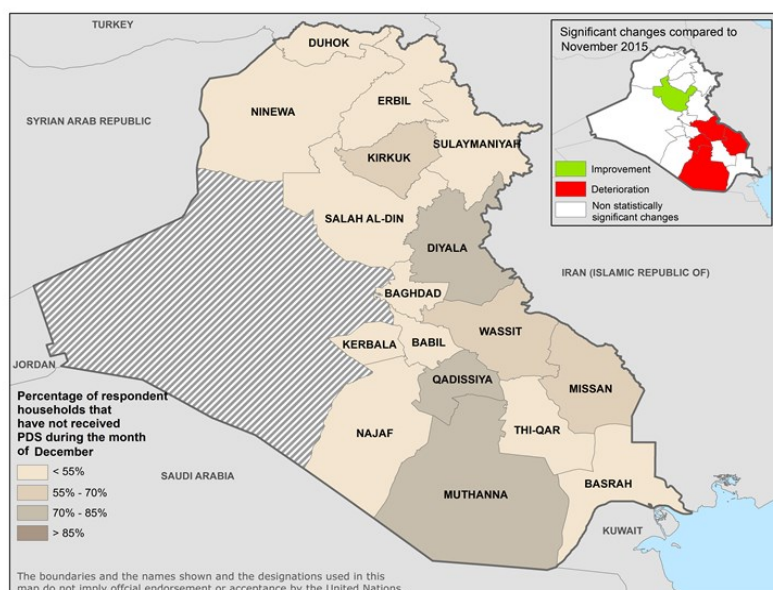
Source: WFP mVAM, December 2015

## Household access to the Public Distribution System (PDS)

December data indicates a deterioration in household access to PDS rations, particularly noted by respondents in southern governorates (Map 3). Only 2 percent of all respondents said they received a full PDS ration in December by comparison with November (6%) \*\*\*.

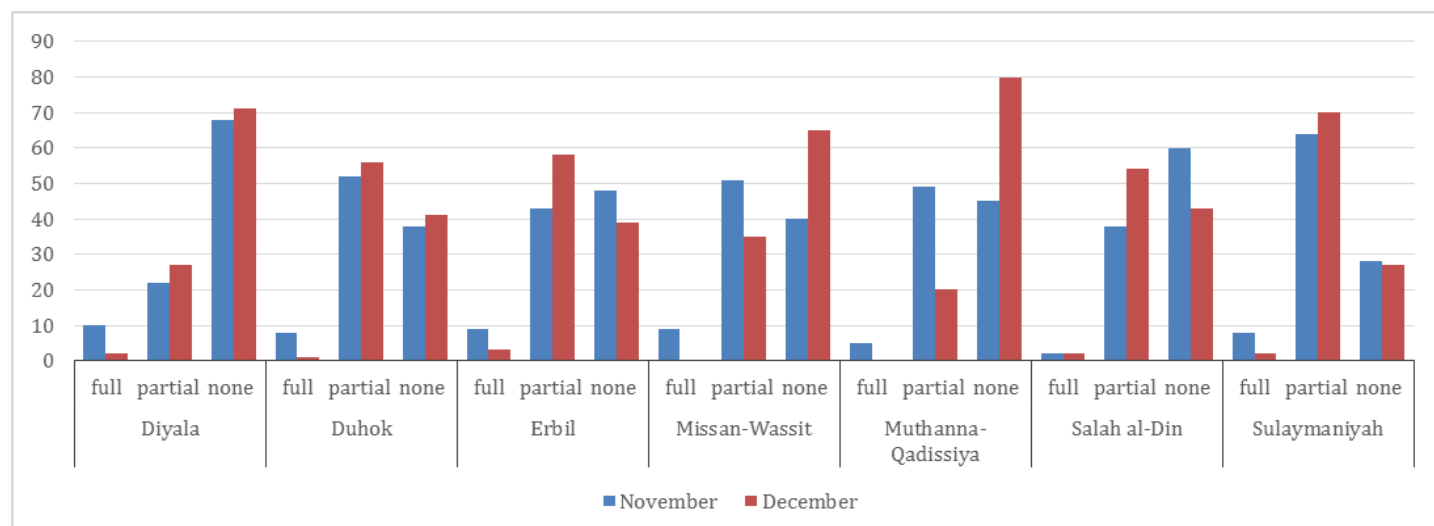
In addition, December data indicates that 66 percent of all surveyed IDPs did not receive PDS by comparison with 51 percent of non-displaced respondents. The percentage of IDPs receiving a full PDS ration fell from 10 percent in November to 2 percent in December\*\*\*. The highest proportion of IDPs not receiving any PDS was reported in Diyala (94%) and Kirkuk (78%).

**Map 3. Percentage of respondent households that did not receive PDS during December 2015**



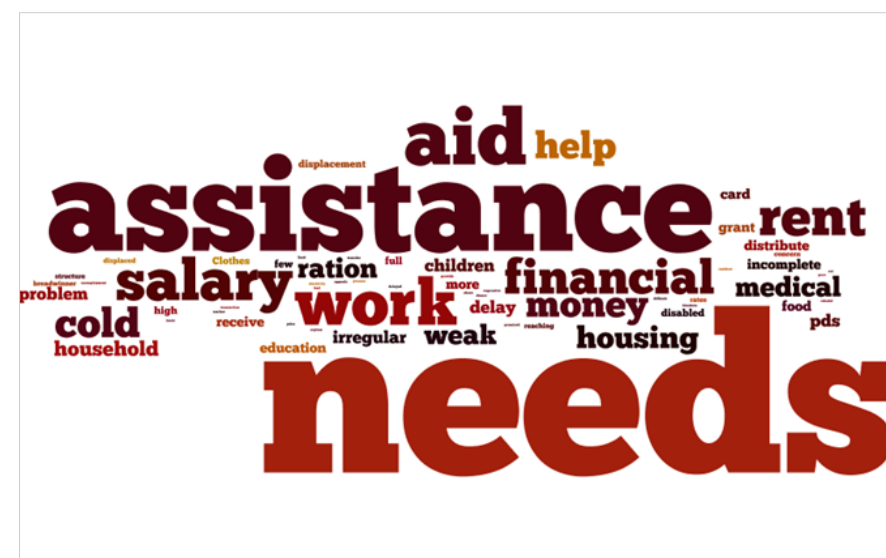
Source: WFP mVAM, December 2015

**Figure 8: Percentage of respondent households that received full, partial or no PDS ration, November vs. December 2015**



Source: WFP mVAM, December 2015

**Figure 9: Word cloud**



Source: WFP mVAM, December 2015

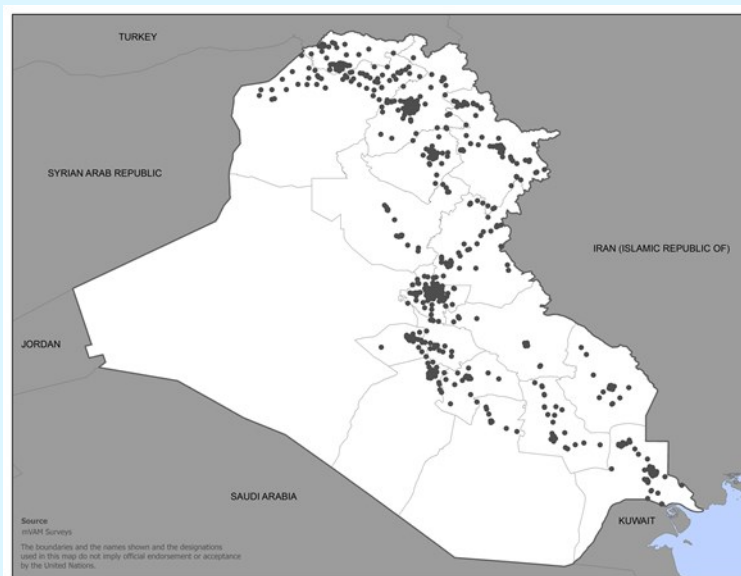
When asked about the overall food security situation, most respondents noted: the need for more regular assistance; insufficient work opportunities; concerns about the delayed payment of salaries and the payment of the rent; and difficulties related to the cold weather and inappropriate accommodation (Figure 9).

## Methodology - mVAM remote data collection

In December 2015, mVAM conducted the tenth round of household food security monitoring using live telephone interviews throughout Iraq. Data was collected from a sample of 1,561 respondents, through Korek, a major mobile network operator. WFP monitored a panel of respondents drawn from Korek's database living in Iraq's 18 governorates. Map 5 shows the cellphone towers from which live telephone interview responses were received. Further details on survey methodology are available [online](#).

In addition to monitoring household food security, WFP collected market information in central and northern governorates of Iraq, using live telephone interviews. In collaboration with Islamic Relief, in December 244 calls were successfully made to obtain information from 45 different locations (sub-districts) in six governorates: Anbar (9), Diyala (7), Kirkuk (10), Ninewa (4), Baghdad (8) and Salah Al-Din (7) using a simplified market questionnaire.

Map 4. Iraq mVAM data collection – December 2015 (cellphone towers from which live telephone interview responses were received)



Source: WFP mVAM, October 2015

The [Food Consumption Score](#) (FCS) is a proxy indicator for food security that measures the diversity of household diets, and how frequently food is consumed. The FCS classifies households as having 'poor', 'borderline' or 'acceptable' food consumption. Households with 'poor' or 'borderline' consumption are considered to be consuming an inadequate diet and to be food insecure.

To report the level of statistical significance, the following reference is used:

p-value	reported symbol
0.10 to 0.05	*
< 0.05 to 0.01	**
< 0.01	***

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