



World Food Programme

Bulletin 10 – September 2015

IRAQ

September 2015: End of Ramadan-related improvements in food security. Price increases resume in Anbar

Highlights

- The improvements in food security witnessed during the month of Ramadan ended in August. A slight increase in the share of the population consuming an 'inadequate' diet was observed throughout Iraq. This was particularly true for the internally displaced (IDP) respondents as well as in Anbar governorate, where it appears that approximately one in five households are consuming an inadequate diet.
- Wheat prices were 30-50 percent higher in the conflict affected governorates of the north compared to Baghdad due to reduced PDS deliveries and supply disruptions.
- The average cost of a basic food basket in Anbar Governorate increased by 12 percent after declining for four consecutive months, while in besieged Haditha district, the cost was four times higher than that recorded for all of Anbar.

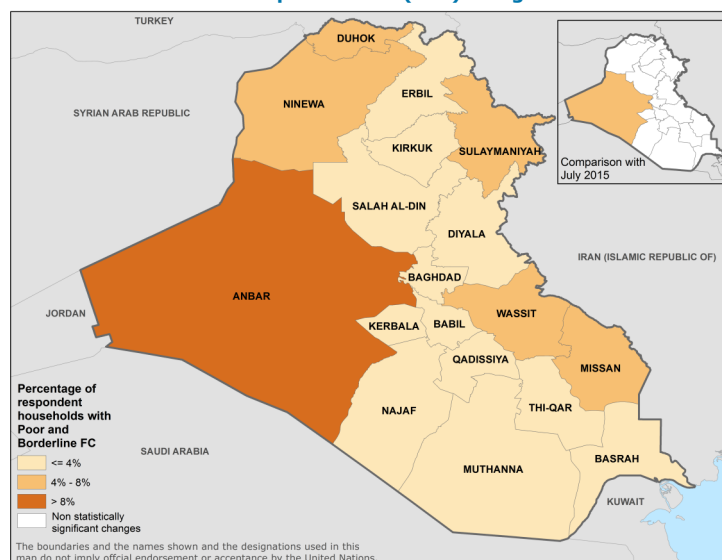
Food consumption patterns in Iraq

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 food insecure.

Data collected in August shows a slight regression from the improved food consumption observed during July, which was largely attributed to the holy month of Ramadan. At the national level, 4.3 percent of all surveyed households reported having inadequate ('poor' or 'borderline') food consumption in August, compared with 2.8 percent in July** (Figure 1). Anbar governorate, in particular, seemingly saw a sharp rise in food insecurity where approximately one in five of all surveyed households reported consuming an inadequate diet. However, owing to the highly unstable situation in Anbar, there was significant attrition and the desired sample was not reached; hence, it is not possible to fully disambiguate if the change in consumption is due to differences in respondent selection or actual changes in environmental factors related to food security.

A similar trend was observed for IDP respondents: having reached 21 percent in June, food insecurity amongst IDPs fell to just 8 percent in July*** and then more than doubled to 17 percent in August (Figure 2). These findings confirm that the temporary improvement in consumption reported by both non-displaced and IDP households in July was directly related to the observance of Ramadan.

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

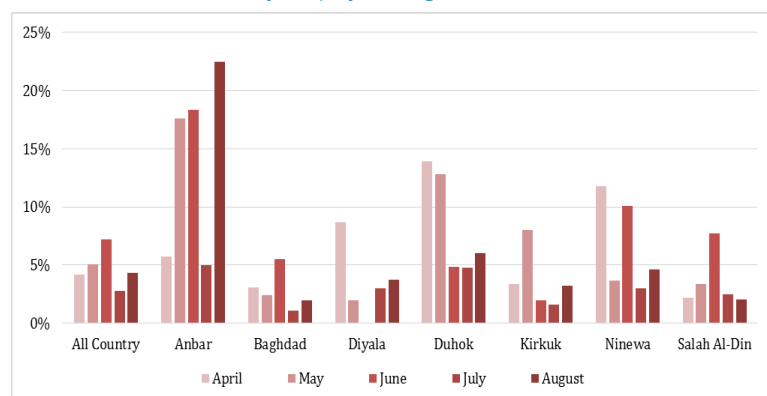


Source: WFP mVAM, August 2015



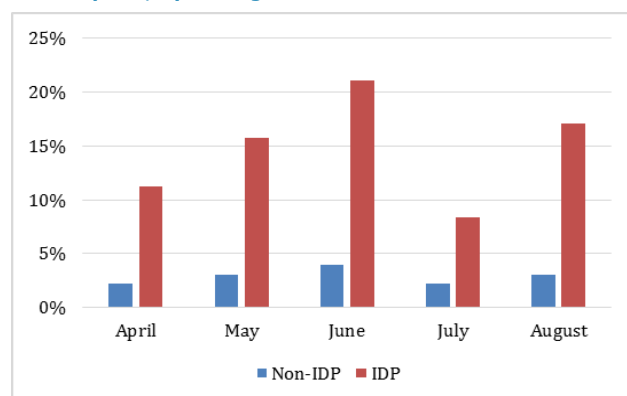
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Figure 1: Percentage of 'all country' and respondent households from key conflict and displacement-affected governorates with 'poor' and 'borderline food consumption, April–August 2015



Source: WFP mVAM, August 2015

Figure 2: Percentage of non-IDP and IDP respondent households with 'poor' and 'borderline food consumption, April–August 2015

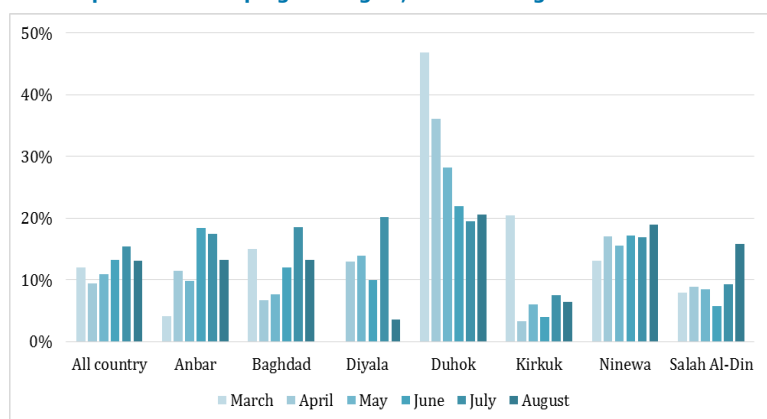


Source: WFP mVAM, August 2015

Prevalence of consumption-based coping slightly decreases

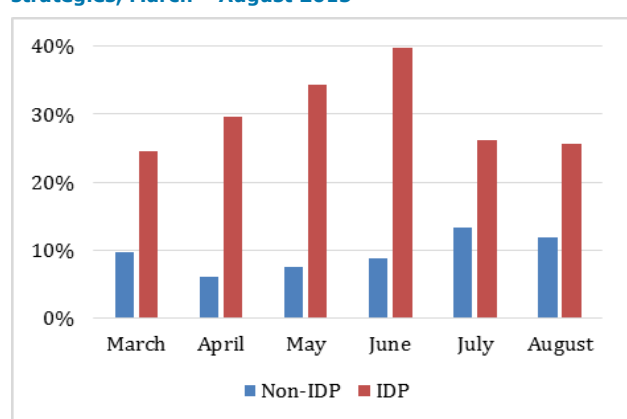
Despite the reversed trends in food consumption, negative consumption-based coping strategies declined from the record high of 15.5 percent observed in July to 13.1 percent nationally (Figure 3). These declines were most significant in Diyala, where the prevalence of negative coping strategies fell from 20 percent in July to 4 percent in August, and in Sulaymaniyah, where prevalence decreased from 10 percent in July to 4 percent in August.

Figure 3: Percentage of 'all country' and respondent households from key conflict and displacement-affected governorates using consumption based coping strategies, March – August 2015



Source: WFP mVAM, August 2015

Figure 4: Percentage of all non-IDP and IDP respondent households using food related negative coping strategies, March – August 2015



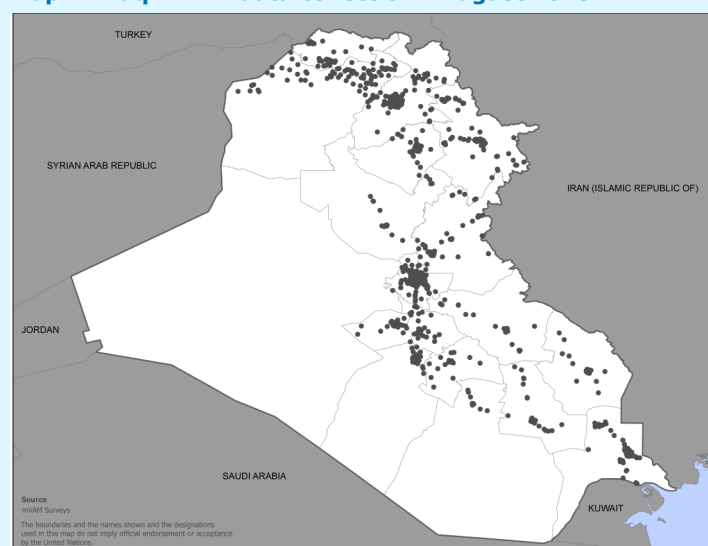
Source: WFP mVAM, August 2015

Methodology - mVAM remote data collection

In August 2015, mVAM conducted the sixth round of household food security monitoring using live telephone interviews throughout Iraq. Data was collected from a sample of 1,613 respondents, through Korek, a major mobile network operator. WFP is monitoring a panel of respondents drawn from Korek's database living in Iraq's 18 governorates. In Anbar governorate, due to restricted network availability and access, only 57 percent of the targeted sample was reached during this reporting period. Map 2 shows the locations of respondents based on the location information received. Further details on survey methodology are available [online](#).

In addition to monitoring household food security, WFP has been collecting market information in central and northern governorates of Iraq, using live telephone interviews. In collaboration with Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, information was obtained from 46 locations in the governorates of Anbar (11), Diyala (8), Kirkuk (10), Ninewa (3), and Salah Al-Din (14) using a simplified market questionnaire.

Map 2. Iraq mVAM data collection - August 2015



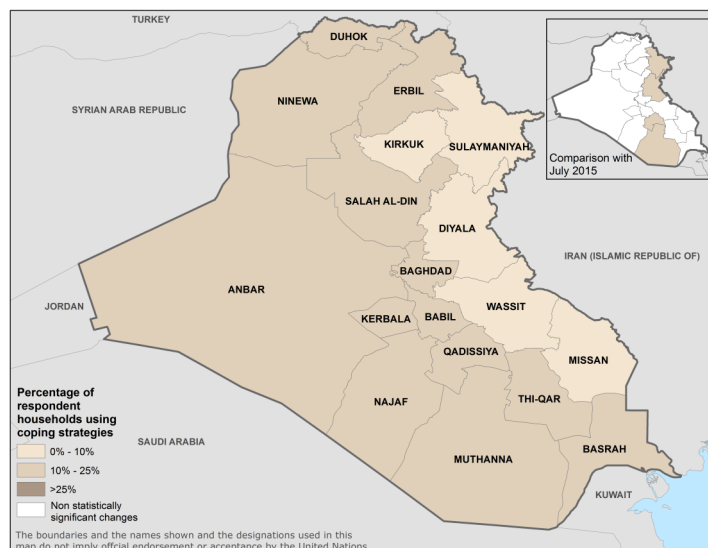
Source: WFP mVAM, August 2015

The prevalence of negative coping strategies amongst the IDPs remained at the same high level as observed in July (Figure 4). About 26 percent of displaced respondents reported not having enough food or money to buy food and therefore resorting to food based coping strategies like receiving help from family and friends, and cutting portion sizes and reducing the number of meals per day.

Markets, food supply and purchasing power

Compared to July, commodity price differentials further increased for sugar, vegetable oil and in particular wheat flour in all monitored governorates when compared to Baghdad (Table 1). This is related to the decrease in the government's Public Distribution System (PDS) distribution of wheat flour from a yearly high of 84 percent of national requirements in July to 43 percent in August. Nearly all monitored governorates reported even lower than the national average deliveries in August: Ninewa reported 0 percent, Salah Al- Din 13 percent, and Diyala 39 percent. The Grain Board reports that no deliveries of wheat flour were made into Anbar during this period, which also explains high wheat prices reported in the governorate. Rice deliveries on the other hand increased across Iraq from 43 of national requirements in July to 56 percent in August.

Map 3: Iraq – reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI) - August 2015



Source: WFP mVAM, August 2015

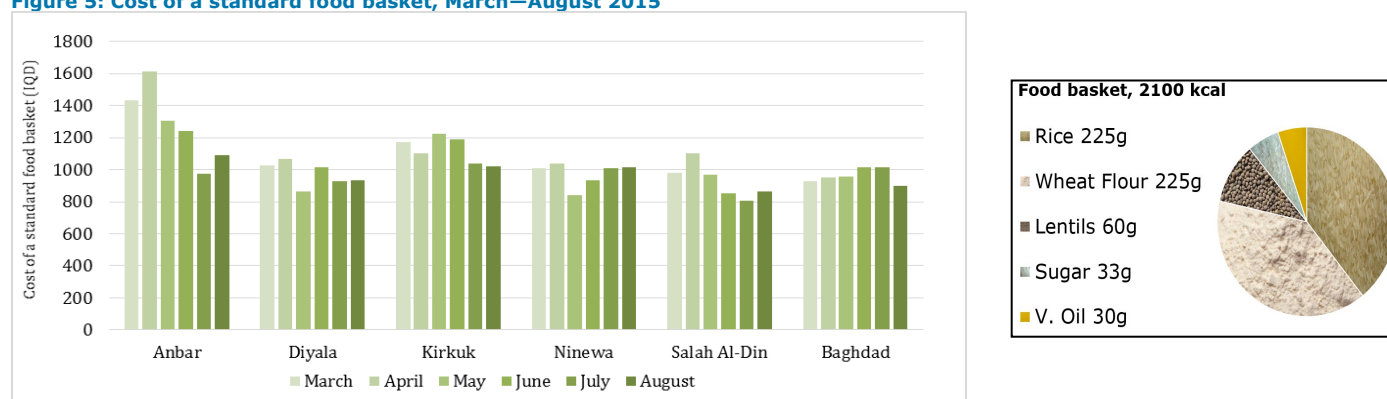
Table 1. Commodity price differentials with Baghdad, August 2015 (IQD)

Commodity	Anbar	Diyala	Kirkuk	Ninewa
Rice	11%	-3%	5%	9%
Wheat flour	48%	41%	51%	32%
Lentils	-4%	-26%	-16%	-6%
Sugar	69%	-1%	38%	19%
Vegetable oil	38%	6%	8%	18%
TOTAL	21%	4%	13%	12%

Source: WFP mVAM, August 2015

The overall cost of a basic food basket saw varying trends across monitored governorates, as shown in Figure 5. The average cost remained unchanged from July in Ninewa, Kirkuk and Diyala; an increase of 12 percent was reported in Anbar and 7 percent in Salah Al-Din and Sulaymaniyah; while in Baghdad the cost decreased by 11 percent.

Figure 5: Cost of a standard food basket, March–August 2015

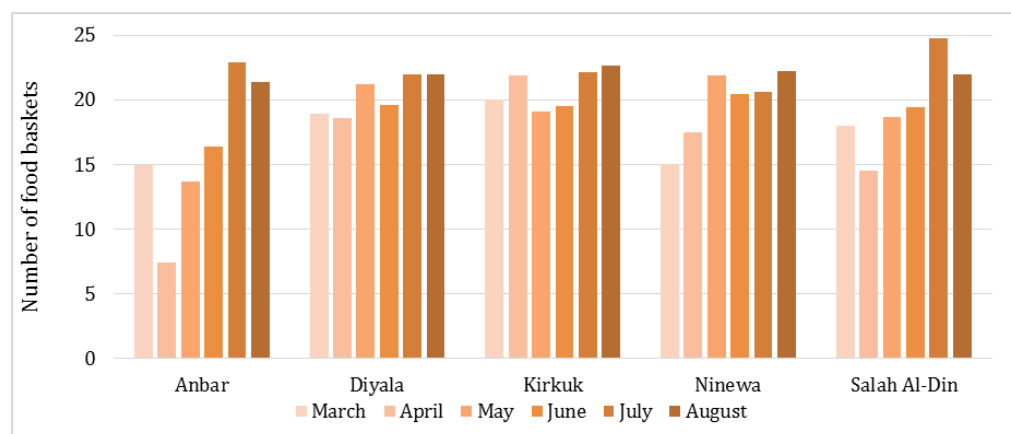


Source: WFP mVAM, August 2015

Food prices in Haditha district remained intractably high. The average cost of a basic food basket in Haditha (IQD 4512) was four times higher than that recorded for all of Anbar. Moreover, respondents from the district reported scarce availability of employment opportunities were, no incoming PDS deliveries, and an extreme shortage of food and non-food items including flour, bread, rice, vegetable oil, lentils, milk, electricity, water and fuel.

Household purchasing power remained mostly in line with the improved levels reported in July in all monitored locations. However, in Anbar and Salah Al-Din governorates, while average daily wage rate rates remained largely unchanged from the previous month, a slight decrease in purchasing power was observed due to the increase in the cost of a standard food basket. In Anbar, notwithstanding the increase in the average reported daily wage for unskilled labour from IQD 22262 to 23281, wage-to-food terms of trade reduced from 23 food baskets in July to 21 in August. However, purchasing power in both governorates still remained higher than what was reported for April to June.

Figure 6: Wage-to-food terms of trade March–August 2015



Source: WFP mVAM, August 2015

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