



Bulletin 3 – October 2015

Yemen



October 2015: More frequent use of negative coping strategies in Yemen

Key messages

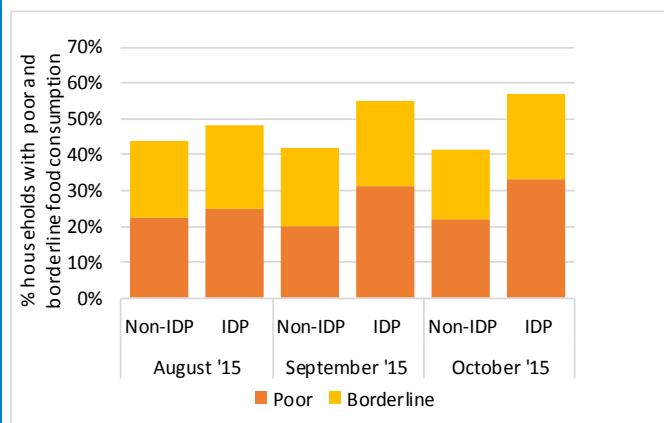
- In October respondent households in Yemen are using more frequently food related negative coping strategies. Both food consumption and coping indicators are worse in Al Baydah and Al Hudaydah.
- Food security indicators are the poorest in conflict-affected governorates of the north-west (Hajjah, Al Jawf) and the centre-south (Dhamar, Ibb, Raymah).
- Perceptions of food insecurity have escalated, in tandem with concerns over shortages of cooking gas, which continue to be reported in the conflict-affected governorates of Marib, Al Baydah, Sana'a and Al Hudaydah.
- Insecurity and high production costs are expected to impact the October sorghum harvest.

Households are using negative coping strategies more frequently

Data collected in October shows that respondent households seem to be using food-related coping strategies more frequently than in the previous month. Above 60 percent of all surveyed respondents are eating less preferred foods and limiting portion sizes. In October, the national average reduced coping strategies index (rCSI) increased from 17.5 in September to 18.8 in October (p-value=0.04).

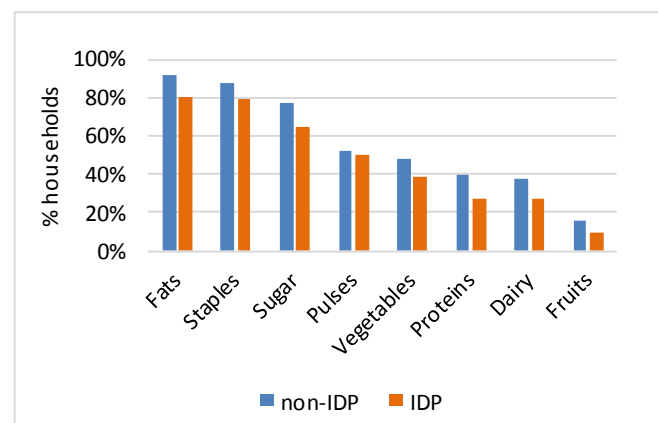
October data suggests that 22.6 percent of households have poor food consumption, and a further 19.7 percent borderline, broadly similar to the previous month. IDPs continue to be worse off than non-displaced households, consuming poorer diets and using negative coping strategies more frequently.

Figure 1: Percentage of 'poor' and 'borderline' for IDP and non-IDP households, comparison of August, September and October 2015



Source: WFP mVAM, October 2015

Figure 2: Percentage of IDP and non-IDP households consuming a food item at least three times a week, comparison of August, September and October 2015



Source: WFP mVAM, October 2015

Armed clashes persisted in Taiz and Lahj, as well as in Al Jawf, Marib and Sana'a. Currently, there are 2.3 million IDPs¹ – four times more than when the conflict intensified in March. Markets and livelihoods continue to be disrupted by conflict; according to the [FAO](#), the agriculture sector that employs nearly 50 percent of the population has been severely affected by the crisis – contributing to further food shortages. [Fewsnets](#) reports that insecurity and higher transportation costs may lead to a reduced harvest in October.

October data indicates a statistically significant deterioration in coping and food consumption indicators for households in Al Baydah and Al Hudaydah since September. The mean rCSI increased from 13.4 to 17 in Al Baydah ($p=0.06$) and from 17.3 to 19.7 in Al Hudaydah ($p=0.04$). Correspondingly, the mean food consumption score (FCS) dropped from 56.4 to 49.6 ($p=0.03$) and from 56.6 to 50.7 ($p=0.00$) respectively. Coping levels declined in Al Dhale.

As the maps on the right show, the food security indicators as measured by the FCS and rCSI, are worst in governorates largely affected by conflict and displacement, i.e., in the north-west (Hajjah, Al Jawf) and the centre-south (Dhamar, Ibb, Raymah) where more than 25 percent of households have poor food consumption, and a mean rCSI above 20.

Anxiety about food security remains high across the country. The mean sentiment score has dropped from -0.15 to -0.18 between September and October – indicating a deteriorating perception of food security among respondents. Sentiment has dropped significantly in Al Hudaydah, Dhamar, Sana’a and Shabwah since September, but improved in Al Jawf and Raymah.

The words “bad/difficult” and “deteriorated” were the most common words used by respondents to describe food security in their community. The use of these negative terms increased by 15 percent in October. Water and electricity remain a source of concern for both months. Cooking gas is mentioned three times more often in October than in September, confirming concerns about domestic fuel supply.

Source: WFP mVAM, October 2015

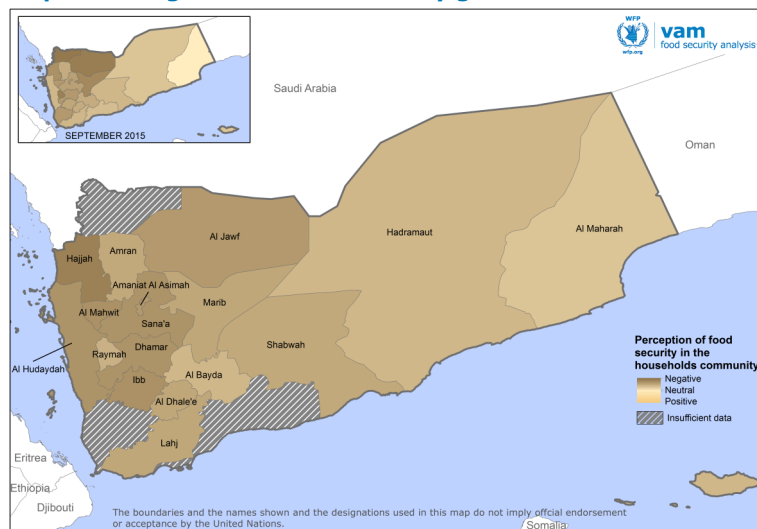
Source: WFP mVAM, October 2015

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Source: WFP mVAM, October 2015

¹ Task Force on Population Movements, Yemen Protection Cluster, 5th Report, 14 October 2015.

Map 3: Average Sentiment Scores by governorates



Source: WFP mVAM, October 2015

In the words of the respondents:

- “The food situation is very tragic and the most affected areas are rural areas” (Male respondent from Raymah).
- “The food situation is very bad. There is a lack of basic food commodities in the area and a high presence of displaced people” (Female respondent from Dhamar).
- “Very high food prices, especially for fruits, vegetables and fish – as well as fuel” (Male respondent from Al Mahwit).
- “The food situation is very bad. There is a severe lack of electricity and water. And very high prices” (Female respondent from Lahj).

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 uses mobile VAM, its remote mobile data collection tool. In October, WFP concluded its third 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. More than one third of respondents were internally displaced.

mVAM surveys in Yemen collect two food insecurity indicators: the food consumption score and the reduced coping strategies index – a measure of food-based coping – and analyse answers to an open-ended question on the food security situation in the respondent’s community. To analyse these responses, we calculate the “polarity” of each response through computer algorithm scores that measure how positive/negative the statement is on a scale of -1.0 (very negative) to +1.0 (very positive). Aggregate data tables are available on the [mVAM page](#).

Limitations: owing to the partial nature of mobile phone access in Yemen (68 subscriptions per 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 households 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 does 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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