



World Food Programme

Bulletin 5 – December 2015

Yemen



December 2015: Food security further deteriorates for IDPs

Key messages

- **Food security continues to deteriorate for IDP households. A significant drop in the mean FCS and a rise in negative coping levels since the previous month.**
- **Households living in camps and staying with someone for free have higher negative coping levels than those living in their own homes or renting.**
- **Respondents appear to have a slightly improved perception of the food situation than the previous month, which is most likely linked to increased food and fuel imports offering greater availability of food on the market.**

IDPs' food security continues to deteriorate

Food security indicators, measured through the food consumption score (FCS) and the reduced coping strategies index (rCSI), have significantly deteriorated for the internally displaced persons (IDPs). The mean FCS has significantly dropped from 41.9 in November to 40.5 in December while the mean rCSI has slightly increased from 25.3 to 25.5.

Data collected since October indicates a continued deterioration in IDPs' food insecurity. Both mean FCS and rCSI show a worsening trend for IDP households. The mean FCS for IDPs has decreased from 42.4 in October to 41.9 and 40.5 in November and December respectively. The proportion of IDP households with poor and borderline food consumption increased the most during November, reaching 59.2 percent and also remaining high in December at 58.3 percent. Similarly, the mean rCSI has increased from 24.6 in October to 25.3 and 25.5 in November and December, signaling an increasing use of negative coping strategies for IDP households.

December data suggests that both displaced and non-displaced households consumed significantly more staples and vegetables than during the previous month (though well below normal requirements); while a slight decrease in the consumption of sugars has been noticed amongst displaced households, an increase in the consumption of fruits has been noticed amongst non-displaced households. However, IDPs' diets continue to be far inferior: for example, only 15, 22, 25 and 23 percent of non-displaced households consume proteins, dairy, pulses and vegetables respectively, at least six days per week versus only 7, 14, 20 and 17 percent of IDP households. This trend is taking place at a time when food prices are easing yet remain above the pre-crisis level.

Coping levels improve in Al Mahwit and Marib

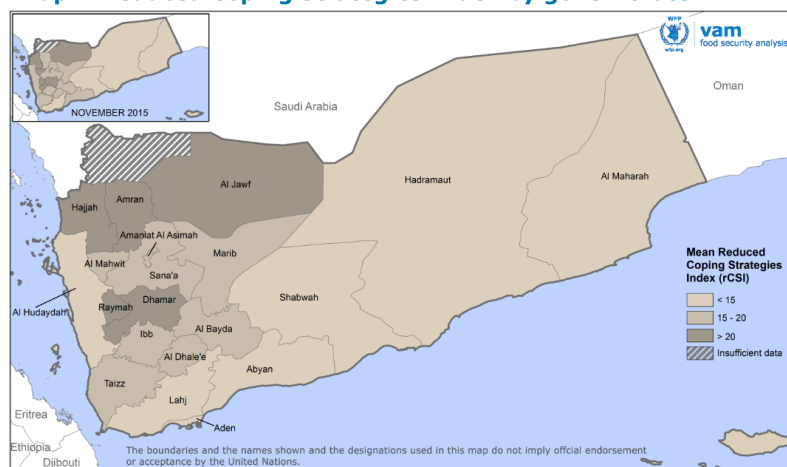
Households in the governorates of Al Mahwit and Marib, seem to be employing fewer negative food-related coping behaviours than in November. The mean rCSI dropped significantly from 21.8 to 18.9 in Al Mahwit and from 18.5 to 15.1 in Marib (see Map 1).

As Figure 1 shows, data collected in December suggests that the national mean rCSI has slightly improved from 18.3 to 17.8 since November, a statistically significant trend that was seen for households that have not been displaced. However, the improvement in the national mean rCSI since October is probably temporary and linked to the harvest season (October – January) which offers higher availability of food on the markets and/or money to make food purchases, realised from crop sales. In addition, December data shows that the overall percentage of households relying on less expensive food has significantly declined from 65.7 percent to 59.7 percent.

December situation overview:

The humanitarian situation has sharply deteriorated with about 2.5 million people being internally displaced due to the conflict. Of those, more than half (51 percent) are from the five conflict affected governorates: Taizz, Amran, Hajjah, Sanaa and Abyan. Taizz is the governorate currently hosting the highest number of IDPs (392,429 individuals), followed by Amran (288,437) and Hajjah (228,453)¹.

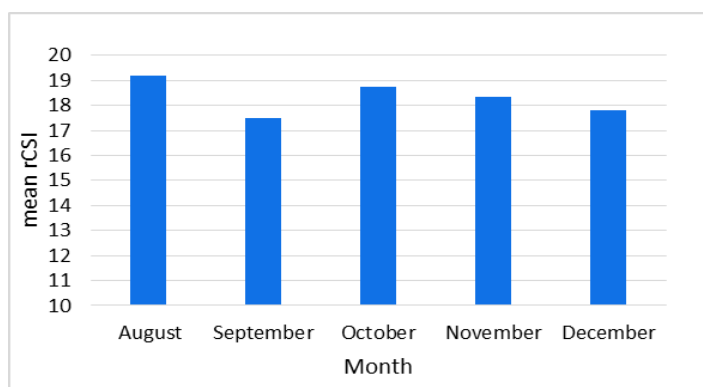
Map 1: reduced Coping Strategies Index by governorate



Source: WFP mVAM, December 2015

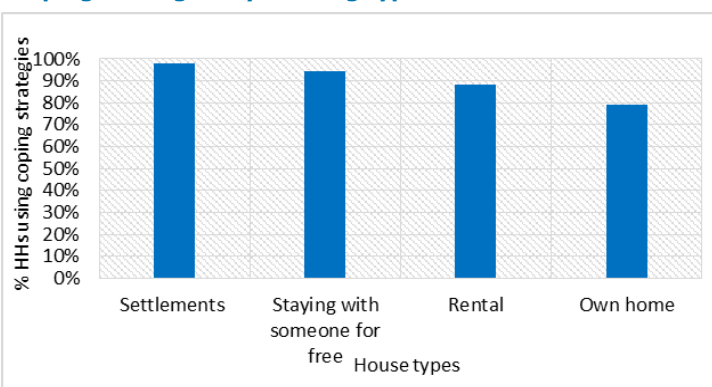
The December data indicates a correlation between respondents' housing situation and the likelihood of engaging in negative food-related coping behaviours. As seen in Figure 2, households living in settlements and staying with someone for free have higher coping levels than those living in their own homes or rented houses. December data also indicates that respondent households living in their own homes or renting appear to be engaging in fewer negative food-related coping strategies than the previous month – the mean rCSI has significantly dropped from 17.2 to 16.7 for those living in their own homes and from 21.4 to 19.1 for those that rent.

Figure 1: National mean rCSI, August – December 2015



Source: WFP mVAM, December 2015

Figure 2: Percentage of households using food-related coping strategies by housing type.



Source: WFP mVAM, December 2015

The food consumption score remains stable at the national level and improves in Ibb

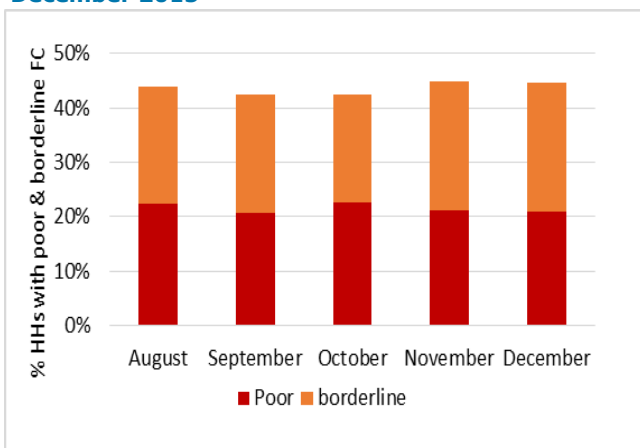
Overall, the national mean FCS has remained stable since November (48.6 in December versus 48.2). As Map 2 shows, more than 25 percent of households in the governorates of Al Jawf, Al Bayda, Al Dhale, Dhamar, Raymah and Taizz had poor food consumption in December. However, there was a significant improvement in the mean FCS for Ibb from 43.6 in November to 48.1.

As Figure 3 shows, the proportion of households with poor and borderline food consumption has remained high since September. The monthly results show an increase in the proportion of poor and borderline households from approximately 42 percent in September and October to 45 percent in November and December.

¹ Task Force on Population Movements, Yemen Protection Cluster, 6th Report, 10 December 2015.

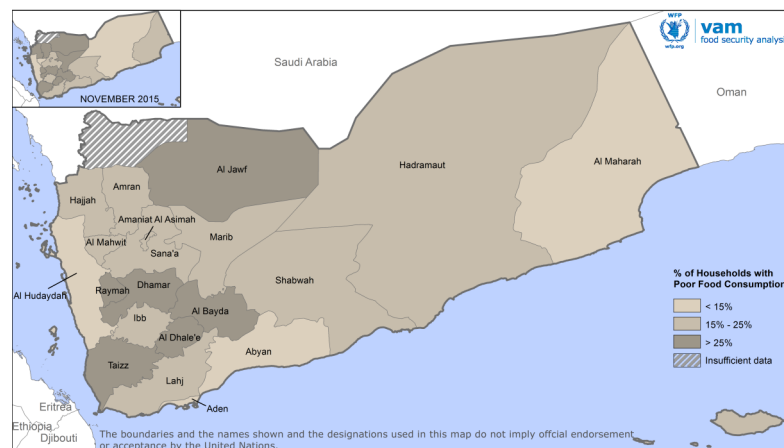
http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/tfpm_6th_report_10_december_2015.pdf

Figure 3: National proportion of households with poor and borderline food consumption, August – December 2015



Source: WFP mVAM, December 2015

Map 2: Percentage of households with 'poor' food consumption by governorate

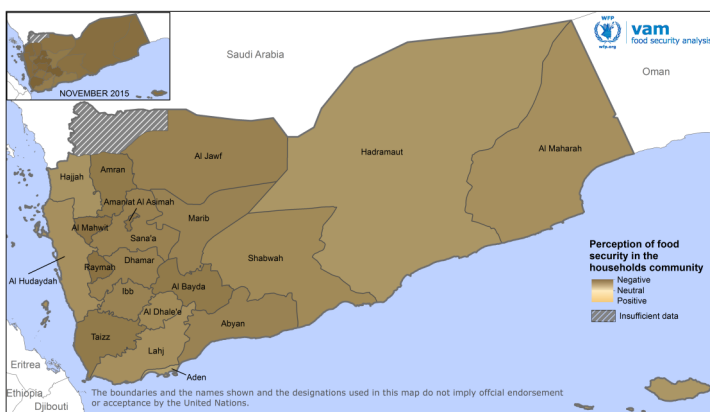


Source: WFP mVAM, December 2015

Slightly improved perceptions of the food situation

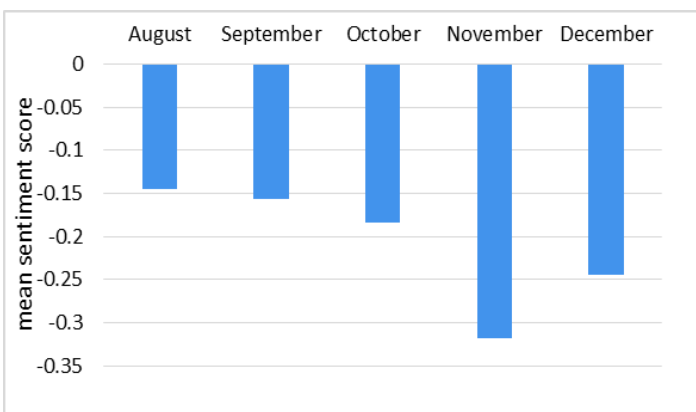
Respondent households seem to have a slightly improved perception of the food situation across Yemen. The national mean sentiment score rose significantly from negative 0.32 to negative 0.24 between November and December. Sentiment increased the most, by approx. 0.1, in the governorates of Sana'a, Al Hudaydah, Hajjah and Hadramaut (see Map 3). According to Figure 4, the lowest national mean sentiment score was observed in November – when households were dealing with a very strained situation triggered by cyclones and increased conflict.

Map 3: Average sentiment scores by governorates



Source: WFP mVAM, December 2015

Figure 4: National mean sentiment score, August – December 2015



Source: WFP mVAM, December 2015

In December respondents were less likely to mention words connoting a worrying situation. For example, the words 'bad/difficult', 'prices' and 'deteriorated' were mentioned less than last month (by 10, 4 and 2 percent respectively). Yet, the need for aid/assistance continued to be frequently mentioned, by 13 percent of surveyed respondents, similar to the previous month (14 percent). These results corroborate with the improved availability of food commodities, owing to the rise in food imports and fuel, as per [WFP market monitoring in December](#). The higher availability of food on the market has pushed down the local average prices of fuel, wheat and other food commodities by 17 and 40 percent respectively since November.

Figure 5: Word cloud for Yemen



In the words of the respondents:

- "There is a lack in electricity and water from a long time" (Male respondent from Al Dhale'e).
- "The food situation is very bad. There are no transportation roads for food aid to arrive" (Male respondent from Taizz).
- "The food situation is very bad. And food aid were very few" (Female respondent from Hajjah).
- "A slight improvement of the food situation" (Female respondent from Marib).

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 December, WFP concluded its fifth survey round. Calls targeted all mobile operators in Yemen and used random-digit dialing. The data presented here was collected from a sample of 2427 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](#).



For further information please contact:

Purnima Kashyap	purnima.kashyap@wfp.org
Arif Husain	arif.husain@wfp.org
Jean-Martin Bauer	jean-martin.bauer@wfp.org
Endalkachew Alamnew	endalkachew.alamnew@wfp.org
Adham Musallam	adham.musallam@wfp.org