



World Food Programme

Bulletin 6 – January 2016

# Yemen



January 2016: IDPs continue using more coping strategies

## Key messages

- **Internally displaced households continue to employ more frequent and severe negative coping strategies than non-displaced households –a disturbing trend observed since August 2015.**
- **The food security situation remains stressed in most conflict-affected governorates. In Al Jawf, Taizz, Al Bayda and Raymah one in every three households reported having 'poor' food consumption in January.**
- **Negative food-related coping remains high at the national level. Nearly 60 percent of respondents reported limiting portion sizes and consuming less expensive foods.**
- **The overall perception of food security across the country remains negative; the need for food assistance was one of the main concerns among respondents in January.**

### Box 1: January situation overview

According to the December [Task Force on Population Movement](#), 2.5 million people continue to be displaced in Yemen. The security situation continues to be fluid and appears, according to security analysts, to be worsening. There has been a clear intensification of airstrikes as well as ground fighting and shelling. Aden continues to witness high levels of insecurity. [IOM](#) reports that as of early January, heavy airstrikes continue in Al Hudaydah, Sana'a, and Taizz governorates, while ground fighting has intensified in Hajjah, Lajh, Marib and Taizz.

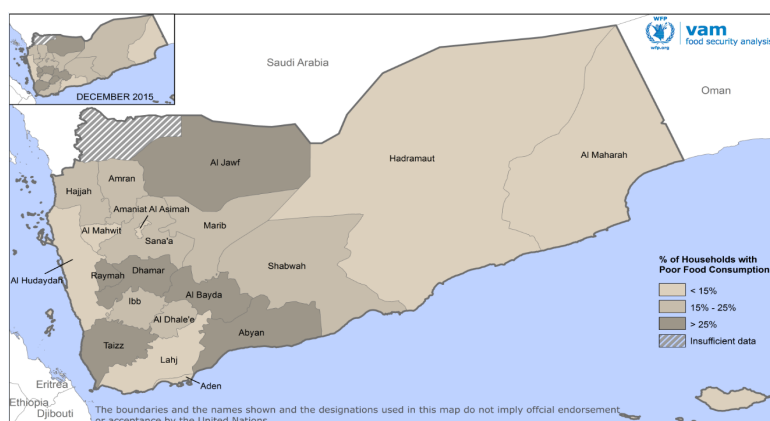
### Food security situation improves in Dhamar and Al Maharah, but remains stressed in the most conflict-affected governorates

January data indicates only a marginal change in household consumption and dietary diversity at the national level, as the mean food consumption score (FCS) rose from 48.6 in December to 49 in January. However, an improvement was observed in Dhamar, where the mean FCS increased by 12 percent (from 41.9% in December to 47% in January), perhaps reflecting the effect of the October-January harvest season given the high dependence on subsistence agricultural production in the governorate. Still, over a quarter (25.7%) of all surveyed households in Dhamar reported having 'poor' consumption during this month.

As map 1 shows, the conflict-affected governorates of Al Jawf, Taizz, Al Bayda and Raymah have the highest proportion of households - one in three - reporting 'poor' food consumption in January.

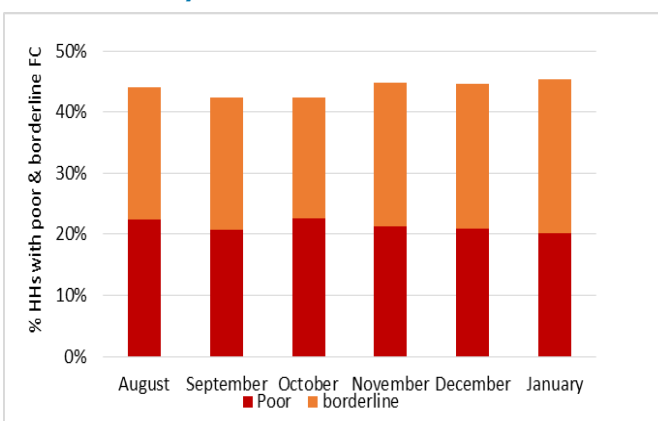
In the two governorates hit by landfall cyclones in November 2015 - Al Maharah and Abyan - the food security situation appeared variable. In Al Maharah, mVAM data shows a positive change in household food consumption from November to January, with the mean FCS increasing from 55.8 to 66.6 and the proportion of people consuming an 'inadequate' (poor or borderline) diet falling from 35.6 to 19.8 percent. Meanwhile in Abyan governorate, where the proportion of households with 'poor' consumption peaked at 22.5 percent following the cyclone in November, and then dropped to 13.6 percent in December - possibly due to increased assistance in the immediate aftermath of the disaster - the proportion rebounded in January, to 25.5 percent.

**Map 1: Percentage of households with 'poor' food consumption by governorate, January 2016**



Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016

**Figure 1: National proportion of households with 'poor' and 'borderline' food consumption, August 2015 – January 2016**



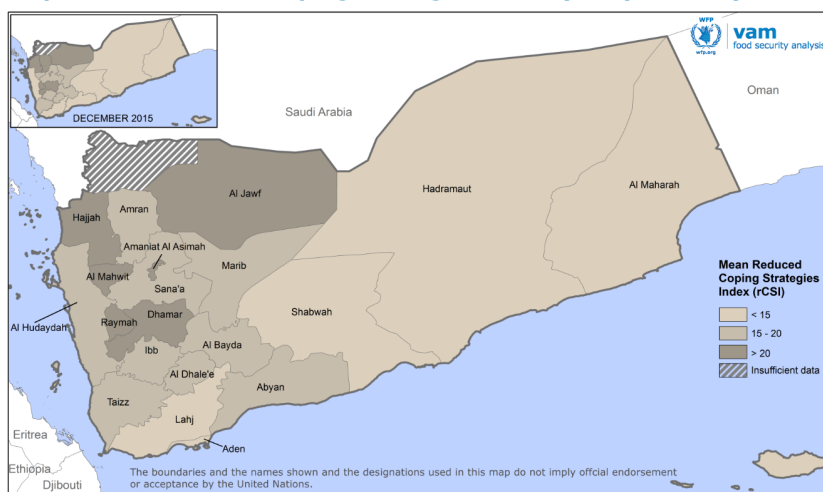
Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016

## Coping levels remain high

Overall, negative food-related coping remained high at the national level, with a mean reduced coping strategies index (rCSI) of 18.7 recorded in January and 17.8 in the previous month. Nearly 60 percent of respondents reported limiting portion sizes and consuming less expensive foods.

However, households living in the governorates of Al Maharah and Abyan, reported engaging in fewer negative food-related coping behaviours than in November following the cyclones. The mean rCSI declined between November and January from 12.7 to 8.2 in Al Maharah and from 16.8 to 15.5 in Abyan. From a combined analysis of the two food security indicators (FCS and rCSI) it is evident that Al Maharah governorate is recovering more quickly from the effects of the cyclone than Abyan, most likely because Abyan is worse affected by ongoing conflict.

**Map 2: Mean reduced coping strategies index (rCSI), January 2016**



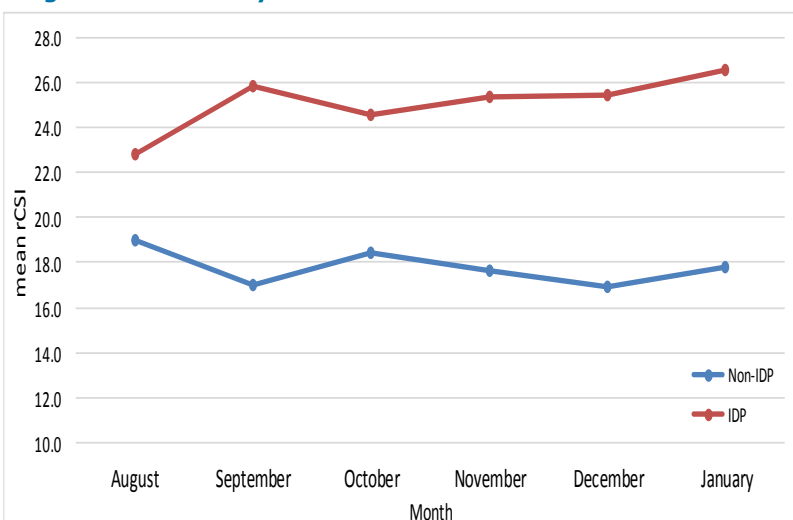
Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016

## IDPs continue engaging in negative coping strategies more frequently than non-displaced households

As figure 2 shows, internally displaced (IDP) households have remained more vulnerable, employing negative food-related coping strategies more frequently than non-displaced households since August. While the mean rCSI for non-displaced households (17.8) has remained relatively stable since October, for IDPs the upward trend in the mean rCSI that started in October continued, rising from 25.5 in December to 26.6 in January. This is due to IDPs continuing to face greater difficulties in accessing food. Indeed, a higher proportion of IDPs are using one of the most severe strategies – 'borrowing food or relying on help from a friend or relative' more frequently (57.1% in December versus 63.7% in January).

Although the coping strategies index remained stable among non-displaced households between December and January, the FCS slightly increased from 49.6 to 49.9. In line with the trend noted in December, non-displaced households are continuing to increase their

**Figure 2: Mean rCSI among IDP and non-displaced households, August 2015-January 2016**



Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016

\*Data for August is partial, collected between 18 to 27 August. More details on methodology are available [online](#).

consumption of staples, vegetables and sugars.

A slight increase in the consumption of pulses was observed among IDPs. In fact, the proportion of IDPs who reported not consuming any pulses in the week before the survey, decreased from 41.3 percent in December to 36.9 percent in January, approaching a similar rate reported by non-displaced households (30.5%).

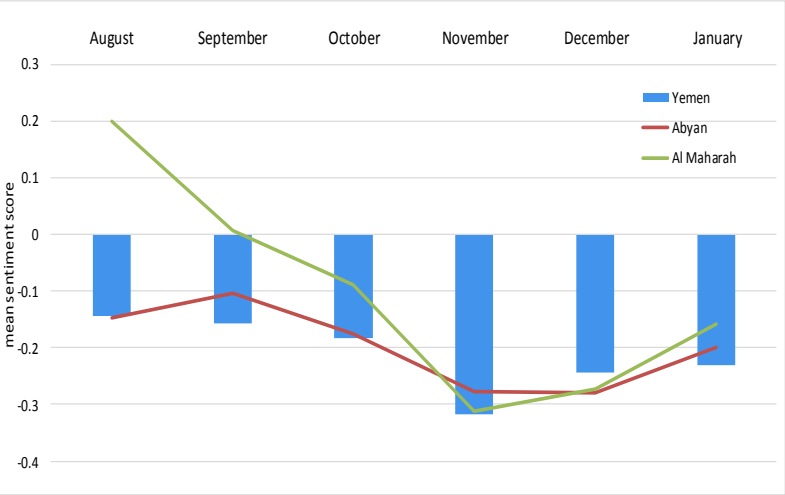
It is important to note that over half of both IDP and non-displaced households (59.4% and 53% respectively) reported not consuming any dairy in the week before the survey.

### Perceptions of the food security situation remain negative

In January, the overall reported perception of food security across the country remained negative – to a similar extent as the previous month (figure 3). However, there was a significant improvement in the mean sentiment score in Shabwah, Taizz, Lahj, Sana’a and Al Dhale’e, and the biggest significant improvements were observed in Marib and Raymah governorates, where the mean score increased by 30 and 25 percent, respectively. On the contrary, the perception of food security deteriorated in Amran governorate, where the mean sentiment score dropped by 47 percent since last month. The most common themes mentioned were high prices, lack of water and no access to food.

The frequency of the most mentioned words in January compared with December reflects the slight improvement in sentiment. Words such as bad/difficult remained the most mentioned by respondents, even though 12 percent fewer respondents used those words to describe the food security situation in their community compared with December. The need for food assistance remained a source of concern for 11 percent of respondents, similar to December (13%). In January, respondents mentioned the word ‘prices’ 50 percent less frequently than in December.

Figure 3: Average sentiment score in Yemen and in the two cyclone affected governorates, August 2015 - January 2016



Source:WFP mVAM, January 2016

Figure 4: Word cloud for Yemen



Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016

Map 3: Main concern by governorate – January 2016



Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016

### In the words of the respondents:

- "The food situation is very bad. Prices are very high. There are a lot of displaced people in the region" (Male respondent from Al Hudaydah).
- "Prices are generally high, especially for oil and gas derivatives, like domestic gas" (Male respondent from Shabwah).
- "There is a bad situation and malnutrition for children" (Male respondent from Al Bayda).
- "The food situation is very bad. The food situation is continuing to deteriorate" (Female respondent from Sana'a City).

## 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 January 2016, WFP concluded its sixth survey round. Calls targeted all mobile operators in Yemen and used random-digit dialing. The data presented here was collected from a sample of 2433 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	<a href="mailto:purnima.kashyap@wfp.org">purnima.kashyap@wfp.org</a>
Arif Husain	<a href="mailto:arif.husain@wfp.org">arif.husain@wfp.org</a>
Jean-Martin Bauer	<a href="mailto:jean-martin.bauer@wfp.org">jean-martin.bauer@wfp.org</a>
Endalkachew Alamnew	<a href="mailto:endalkachew.alamnew@wfp.org">endalkachew.alamnew@wfp.org</a>
Adham Musallam	<a href="mailto:adham.musallam@wfp.org">adham.musallam@wfp.org</a>