



World Food Programme

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Bulletin 15 – February 2016

IRAQ

February 2016: Conflict-disrupted supply lines are resulting in shortages of basic food commodities and high food prices in parts of Anbar

Highlights

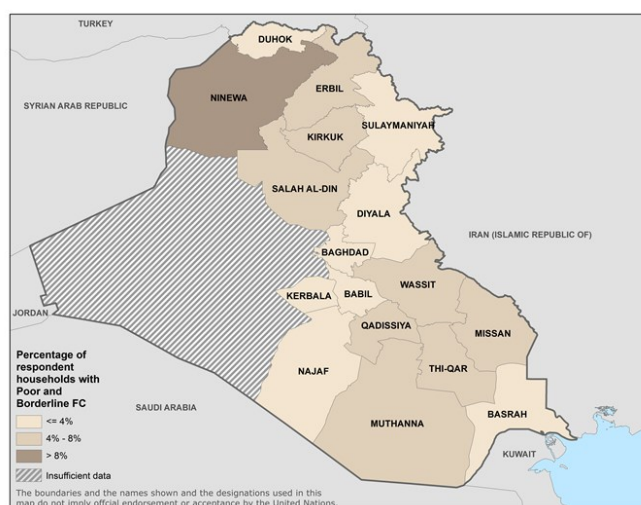
- Household food consumption remained stable in January compared with December but continued to rise in Ninewa. Food consumption of internally displaced people (IDPs) further deteriorated with nearly a quarter of IDPs living in camps reporting having inadequate consumption.
- Above-average use of coping strategies was noted in Salah Al-Din and have persisted in Duhok and Ninewa since July.
- January mVAM market data indicates that the average cost of a standard food basket decreased in all monitored governorates between December and January with the exception of Diyala. However in Anbar's Ramadi and Khalidiyah districts, the cost of a food basket was 43 and 35 percent higher than the governorate average while severe food shortages and high prices were reported in Falluja district.
- Public Distribution System (PDS) supplies could have supported the decrease of the food prices in conflict zones. While PDS distribution of rice improved in January, overall household access to the PDS decrease by comparison with December in several governorates.
- Prospects for 2016 wheat crops are favourable, but ongoing conflict might impact access to agricultural inputs, and affect harvest and post-harvest cereal activities in Salah Al-Din and Ninewa governorates.

Food consumption indicators remain poor in Ninewa and deteriorate for IDPs living in camps

In January, national-level food security remained stable by comparison with December 2015, with 3 percent of all respondents reporting having inadequate ('poor' or 'borderline') food consumption (Map 1). Ninewa reported the highest household prevalence of inadequate consumption (9%), a 3 percent rise since December when it also had the highest levels of food insecurity. A slight increase of the percentage of households with inadequate consumption was noted in Kirkuk between December and January (Figure 1).

January data also indicates that IDPs continued to have considerably worse consumption than non-displaced households (9.7% vs. 3%). As figure 2 shows food consumption of IDPs living in camps deteriorated for the third consecutive month: poor consumption among these households (35 observations) increased from 5.2 percent in December to some 20.2 percent* in January. Food consumption for displaced households living outside camps remained fairly stable with poor consumption falling slightly and borderline consumption rising from 4.3 percent in December to 7.3 percent* in January.

Map 1. Iraq - Percentage of respondent households with 'poor' and 'borderline' Food Consumption Score (FCS) - January 2016



Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016



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food security analysis

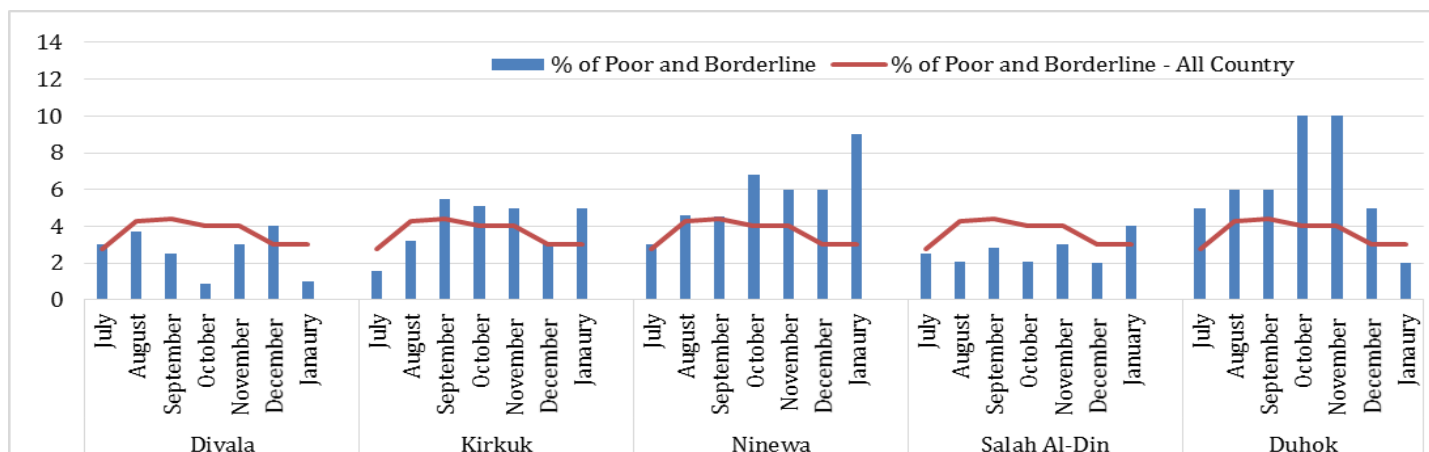
Box 1. Situation update (January 2016)

Multiple bombings took place in Iraq in January, leaving the highest death toll in recent months and raising concerns over renewed sectarian violence especially in eastern Iraq. In Anbar, although the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) gained control of Ramadi city over the final week of 2015, armed opposition groups have continued to carry out counterattacks on the edges of Ramadi and the security situation remains volatile.

The ISF have surrounded the ISIL-held city of Fallujah in Anbar Governorate, but civilians are reportedly trapped inside under deteriorating humanitarian conditions. The military siege, which has tightened in the past two months, is preventing food and medical supplies from reaching the city. Between 30,000 and 60,000 people are estimated to remain in the city, which has been under armed opposition groups' control for more than two years. Insecurity and poor communications inside the city make any assessment difficult to conduct.

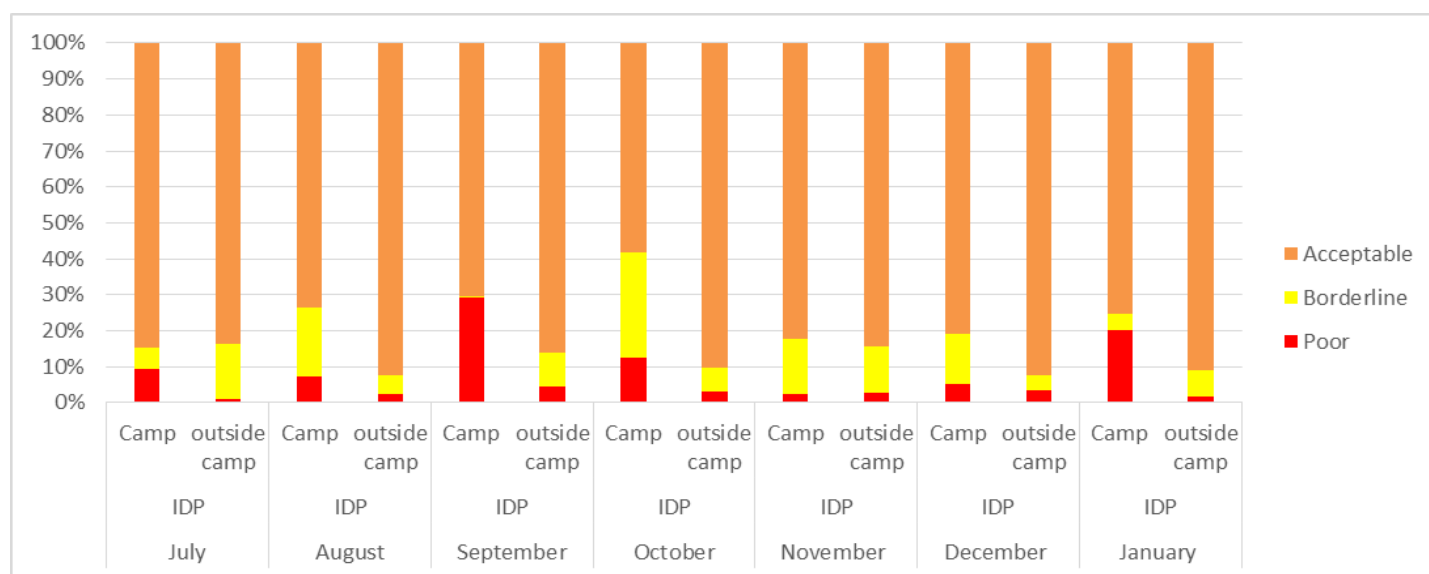
Sources: WFP, OCHA and IOM

Figure 1. Percentage of 'all country' and respondent households from key conflict and displacement-affected governorates with 'poor' and 'borderline' food consumption, July 2015 –January 2016



Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016

Figure 2. Percentage of IDP respondent households living in and outside camps with 'poor' and 'borderline' food consumption, July 2015 –January 2016



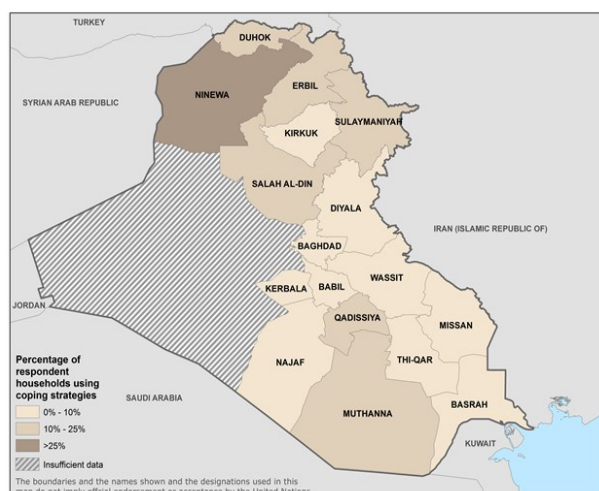
Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016

Prevalence of negative consumption-based coping remains high in Ninewa and among IDPs

In January, the overall prevalence of negative food-related coping slightly decreased from 10 percent in December to 9 percent in January (Figure 4), the lowest average level recorded since April. At governorate level, households in Salah Al-Din, Duhok and Ninewa reported above-average usage of coping, at 11, 13 and 26 percent respectively. In some governorates there have been increases since December in various specific food related coping mechanisms: the percentage of households relying on less expensive food jumped from 7 to 17 percent** in Erbil and from 0 to 5 percent in Kerbala, the percentage limiting portion sizes was up from 13 to 24 percent in Ninewa** and the percentage reducing the number of meals eaten in a day rose from 0 to 5 percent in Kerbala***.

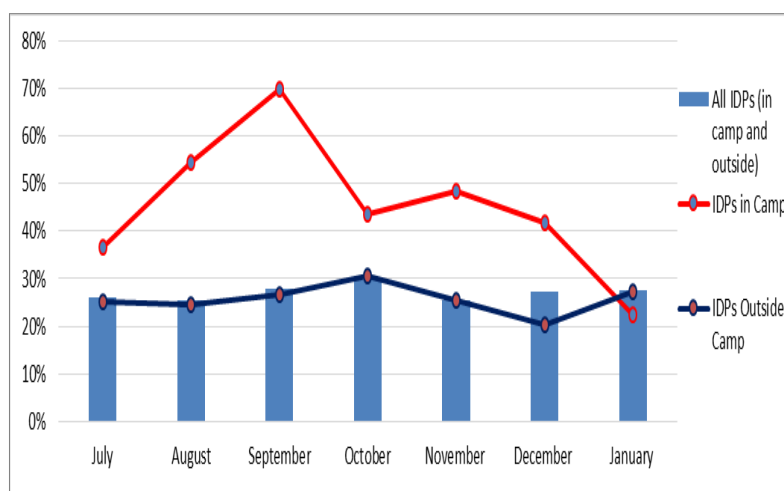
The prevalence of coping among all IDPs (inside and outside camps) remained in line with levels reported in December and November (27.7%). While IDPs living outside camps were more likely to use coping strategies in January than in December - up from 20.3 percent in December to 27.4 percent*** in January - IDPs living inside the camps were less likely to use coping strategies, falling from 41.8 percent in December to 22.5 percent in January, below the prevalence of those residing outside for the first time since July (Figure 3).

Map 2. Iraq – reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI), January 2016



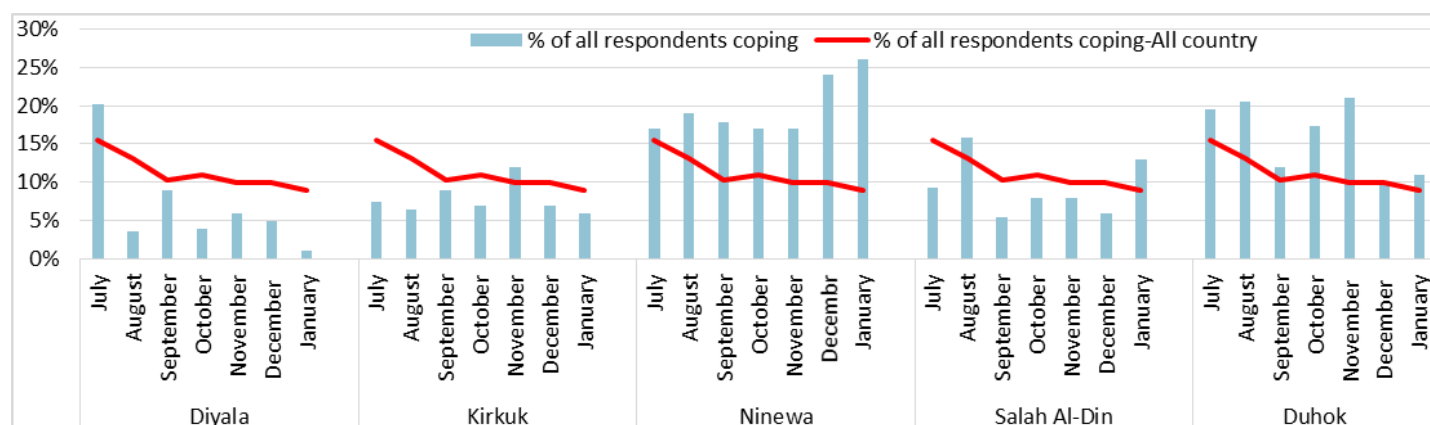
Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016

Figure 3. Percentage of IDP respondent households using food-related negative coping strategies, IDPs in camps vs. all IDPs, July 2015 – January 2016



Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016

Figure 4. Percentage of 'all country' and respondent households from key conflict and displacement-affected governorates using consumption based coping strategies, July 2015 – January 2016



Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016

Markets, food supply and purchasing power

The average cost of the standard food basket decreased in all monitored governorates between December and January with the exception of Diyala where the prices slightly increased (1%). In the conflict-affected governorates of Ninewa, Salah Al-Din and Anbar the cost of the standard food basket decreased by 2, 12 and 13 percent respectively. However in Anbar, variation in the cost of a standard food basket was recorded at district level. In Ramadi and Khalidiyah districts the average cost was 43 and 35 percent higher than the governorate average although it fell by 15 percent in the latter between December and January (Table 1).

In Falluja district, respondents from Hay Alwahda sub-district reported that shops and markets had exhausted all food supplies including wheat, sugar, rice, vegetable oil and lentils and that people were mainly depending on food such as potatoes that they collected from farms in rural areas close to the city. Armed opposition groups are reportedly controlling these areas and preventing essential food, water, fuel and medical supplies from entering.

Food basket, 2100 kcal

- Rice 225g
- Wheat Flour 225g
- Lentils 60g
- Sugar 33g
- V. Oil 30g



Respondents from Hay Alwahda claimed the cost of food was extremely high by comparison with December.

In Anbar, the price of wheat flour and sugar continued to be considerably higher than in Baghdad (41 percent and 20 percent more expensive respectively). The cost of a food basket was 10 percent higher in Anbar and 5 percent higher in Kirkuk than in Baghdad. Despite this, the overall purchasing power of the sampled households increased by two food baskets in Anbar, Kirkuk and Salah Al-Din and by one food basket in Ninewa in January (Figure 5).

Table 1. Average cost of a standard food basket in monitored locations of Anbar governorate, November 2015 – January 2016

Locations	November 2015 (IQD)	December 2015 (IQD)	January 2016 (IQD)	% change between December & January
Anbar governorate	1227	1143	1013	-13%
Ramadi district	1419	1419	1447	2%
Al Khalidiyah	1611	1611	1363	-15%
Haditha	1692	932	837	-10%

Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016

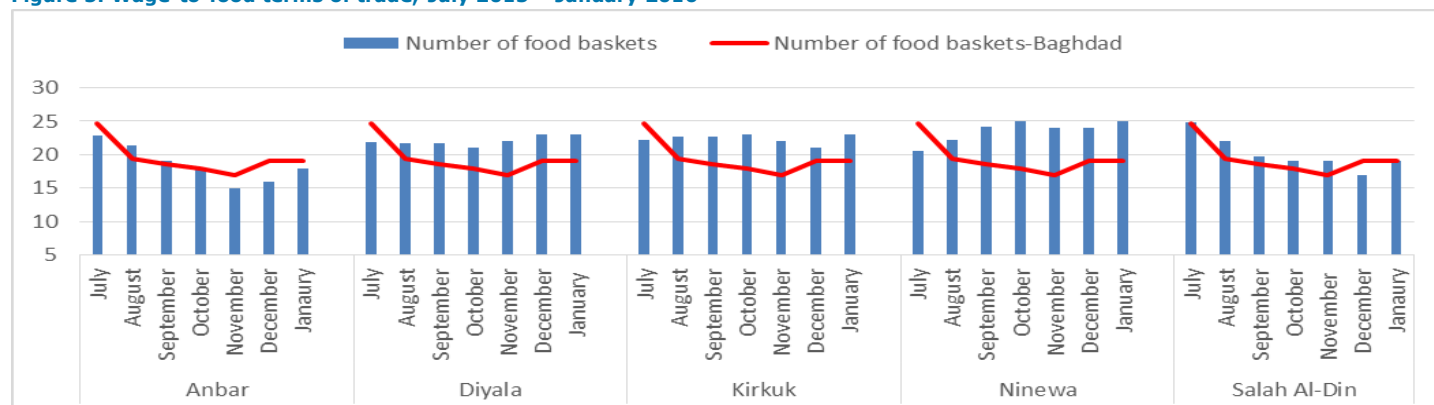
Table 2: Cost of a standard food basket

Governorate	January-16	Price changes 1 month	Price changes 3 month	Price changes 6 months
Baghdad	IQD 923	-2%	-3%	-9%
Anbar	IQD 1,013	-12%	-12%	4%
Diyala	IQD 889	1%	-8%	-4%
Kirkuk	IQD 974	-8%	-2%	-6%
Ninewa	IQD 920	-2%	-2%	-9%
Salah Al-Din	IQD 913	-12%	-1%	13%

Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016

The increase in purchasing power in Anbar (13%) and Salah Al-Din (12%) between December and January is likely attributable to the decrease in food prices, especially for rice which was down by 90 IQD in Anbar and by 130 IQD in Salah Al-Din by comparison with December. The decrease in the prices of rice might be linked to the deliveries of PDS rice rations in January. However, as current PDS rice and wheat flour stocks are depleting, the prices of these two commodities should be regularly monitored, especially in the conflict-affected governorates.

Figure 5: Wage-to-food terms of trade, July 2015 – January 2016



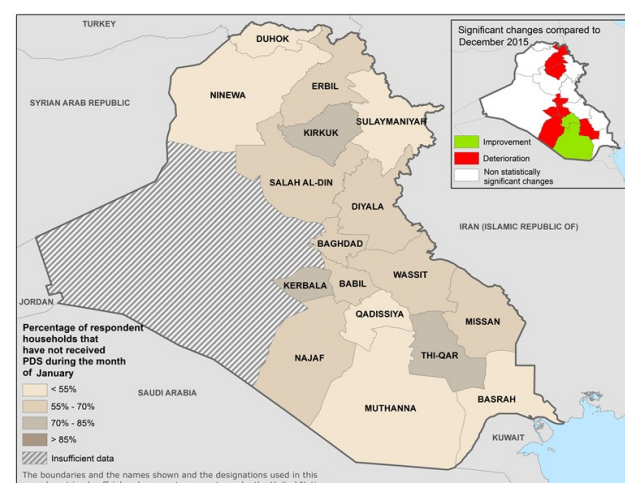
Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016

Household access to the Public Distribution System (PDS)

January data indicates a deterioration in household access to PDS rations, with 61 percent of all respondents saying they did not receive PDS rations in January by comparison with December (52%) ***. In particular, respondents in Babil, Najaf, Baghdad, Erbil, Kerbala, Kirkuk, Thi-Qar, Muthanna and Qadisiya reported a significant decrease in PDS distribution in January (Map 3).

In addition, between December and January the percentage of IDPs receiving partial PDS rations fell from 31 percent to 25 percent** and the percentage not receiving PDS rations increased from 66 percent to 73 percent**. The PDS is reported to be understocked, which might hit food prices in the coming months.

Map 3. Percentage of respondent households that did not receive PDS during January 2016



Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016

Table 3: Change in percentage of HHs receiving partial or no PDS ration from December 2015 to January 2016

Governorate	Babil-Najaf	Baghdad	Erbil	Kerbala	Kirkuk	Thi-Qar	Muthanna-Qadissiya
Partial ration	-27%	-12%	-29%	-18%	-13%	-22%	33%
No ration	40%	14%	28%	26%	19%	24%	-39%

Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016

2016 Wheat crop outlook

The general condition of the 2016 wheat crop is good to very good. Assuming a continuation of favourable weather, Iraq will experience an average to above average wheat crop of between 3.2-4.2 million mt.

The wheat crop is entering its crucial growth period: while the non-irrigated areas of northern Iraq have sufficient moisture for current crop needs, additional rains will be needed to ensure average to above average yields. The outlook for summer crops is also good to very good based on average to above average winter precipitation across key watersheds that supply irrigation water to Iraq. However, a large part of the cereal production belt is now directly under the control of armed opposition groups, preventing access to agricultural inputs and impacting cereal harvest and post-harvesting activities. According to FAO, delays in, or lack of, timely seed distribution during the planting period, normally carried out by the Government, also impacted the planting season both in terms of areas farmed and quality. As Ninewa residents depend upon local wheat for their food supply the situation will have to be monitored closely.

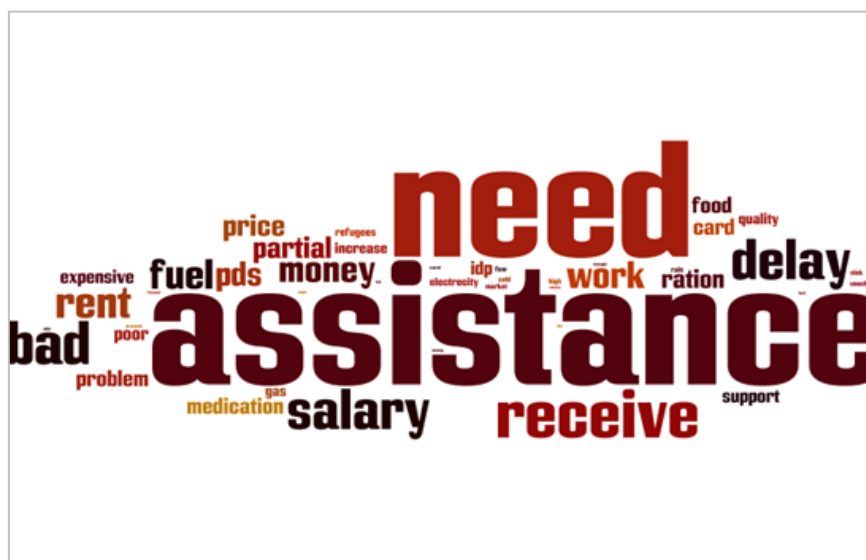
Map 4: Normalized Difference Vegetation Index imagery



Source: Global Agriculture Monitoring (GLAM) Project, January 2016

When asked about the overall food security situation, most respondents noted: the need for more assistance; problems with the delayed payment of salaries and problems paying rent; insufficient work opportunities; concerns about the partial and low quality of the rations received; and difficulties renewing the displacement card (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Word cloud



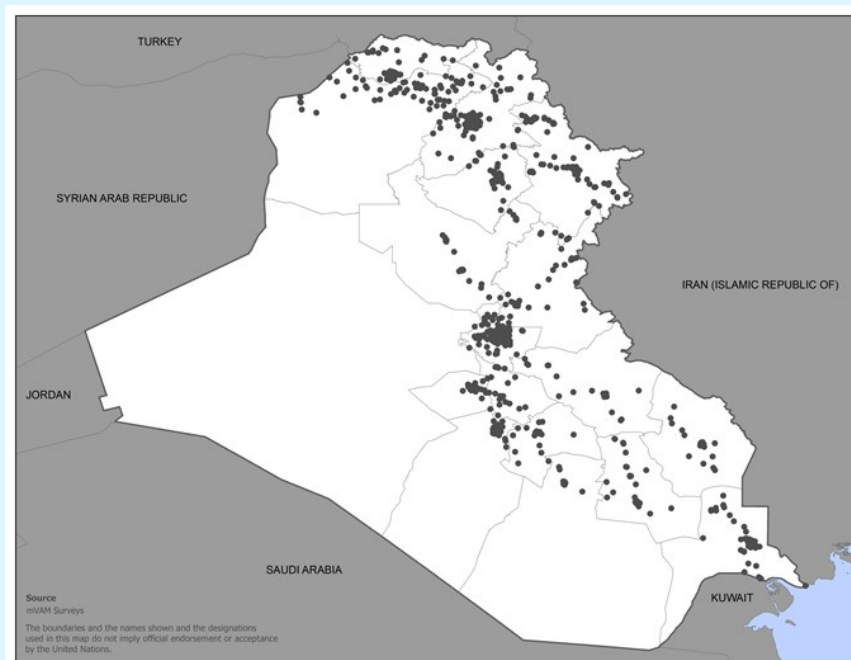
Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016

Methodology - mVAM remote data collection

In January 2016, mVAM conducted the twelfth round of household food security monitoring using live telephone interviews throughout Iraq. Data was collected from a sample of 1,550 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. 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 157 calls were successfully made to obtain information from 44 different locations (sub-districts) in six governorates: Anbar (8), Diyala (7), Kirkuk (10), Ninewa (4), Baghdad (8) and Salah Al-Din (7) using a simplified market questionnaire.

Map 5. Iraq mVAM data collection - January 2016



Source: WFP mVAM, January 2016

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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