

SYRIA

Food prices drop following first humanitarian access to Darayya since 2012



vam
food security analysis

Fighting Hunger Worldwide

KEY MESSAGES:



Forty two percent of households in Aleppo city are food insecure, with poor or borderline food consumption.



The Food Consumption Score (FCS) in hard-to-reach areas of Rural Damascus (RD) improved slightly from May 2016.



The reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI) improved slightly for internally displaced households, compared to May 2016.



Despite drop in food prices since May 2016, Darayya continues to record the most expensive food basket, at SYP550,600 (USD 1135).



Compared to May 2016, the price of the standard food basket was 78 percent cheaper in Madamiyet Elsham (RD) and 65 percent cheaper in Deir-ez-Zor city, probably due to food assistance.



WFP/Hussam Al Saleh

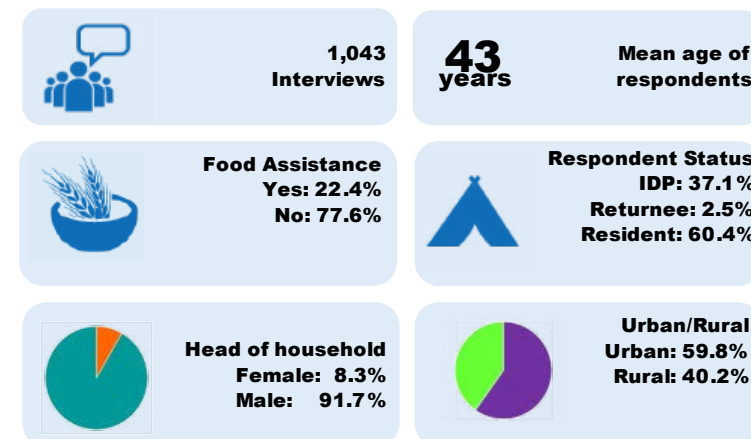
SITUATION UPDATE

Conflict: As fighting continues in Menbij, Aleppo, 3,570 newly displaced people have moved to settlements for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in A'zaz. A further 3,100 newly displaced people have moved from Ar-Raqqa to A'zaz. An estimated 19,300 individuals were displaced between 27 May and 8 June in the northern Aleppo countryside near A'zaz. An escalation in violence in Idleb city – with attacks on the vegetable market and the only bakery in the city – led to the displacement of over 15,000 people within the city.

Humanitarian assistance: An estimated 592,700 people are currently living under siege in Syria. In June, humanitarian access was granted to 18 besieged areas in the country, including Darayya, Duma and Madamiyet Elsham, which are all in RD. In fact, Darayya, Zamalka and Arbin, also in RD, received assistance for the first time since 2012. However, in Darayya the distribution of food assistance was delayed by bombings that occurred soon after the convoy entered the city.

Source: UNHCR, OCHA and WFP

Figure 1. Sample Household characteristics



Source: WFP mVAM, June 2016



POOR FOOD CONSUMPTION RIFE IN ALEPPO CITY

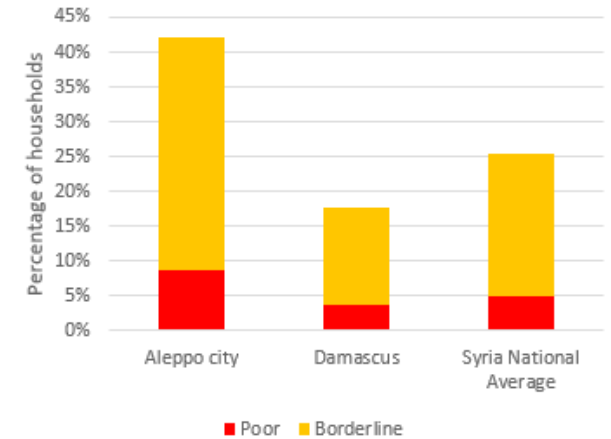


Source: WFP/Dina El-Kassaby

Aleppo city had a high proportion of households that reported being severely food insecure, with 9 percent of respondent households reporting 'poor' food consumption. A further 33 percent of respondent households in Aleppo city are moderately food insecure (reported having borderline food consumption).

The intensified conflict for the past two months in Aleppo city contributed to this high prevalence of food insecurity. In comparison, 4 percent of households in Damascus reported poor food consumption, and 14 percent reported borderline food consumption. In Syria, on average, 5 percent of households reported poor food consumption whereas 21 percent reported borderline consumption.

Figure 2. Inadequate food consumption



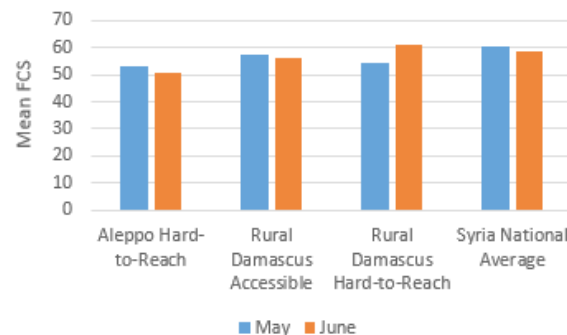
Source: WFP mVAM, June 2016



SLIGHT IMPROVEMENT IN FOOD SECURITY IN HARD-TO-REACH RURAL DAMASCUS AND ALEPPO

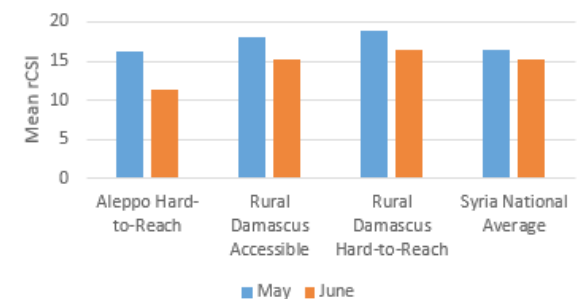
As seen in Figure 3a, households in hard-to-reach areas in Rural Damascus saw their mean food consumption score (FCS) rise from 54 points in May to 61 points in June. In hard-to-reach Aleppo, the FCS did not improve; however, there was a reduction in the use of negative food-related coping strategies – the reduced coping strategies index (rCSI) fell 5 points from 16.2 in May to 11.4 in June, indicating a decrease in the use of food-related coping strategies (Figure 3b). It is possible that this slight improvement in food security is seen in part due to the changes in food consumption patterns typically observed during the month of Ramadan. In the past, it has been observed that during Ramadan, households tend to improve their food consumption and dietary diversity; as people are more willing to share their resources, to spend more on food, and to eat more diversified foods. For instance, in hard-to-reach Rural Damascus it was observed that 46 percent of households were consuming vegetables almost every day of the week in June compared with only 34 percent in May.

Figure 3a: Food consumption score by governorate accessibility



Source: WFP mVAM, June 2016

Figure 3b. Mean rCSI by governorate accessibility



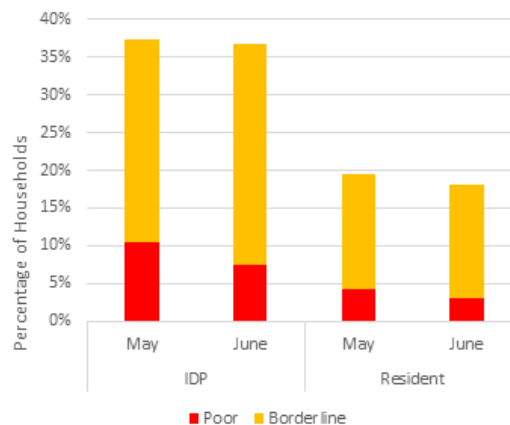
Source: WFP mVAM, June 2016

IDPs RESORTING SLIGHTLY LESS TO NEGATIVE COPING STRATEGIES

Similar to the situation in May, over 35 percent of IDP households continue to report inadequate food consumption, compared to 18 percent of resident households (Figure 4a). Furthermore, IDP households continue to report a higher use of extreme negative coping strategies compared to residents: 42 percent of IDP households reported eating fewer meals a day on most days of the week, compared to 29 percent of resident respondent households.

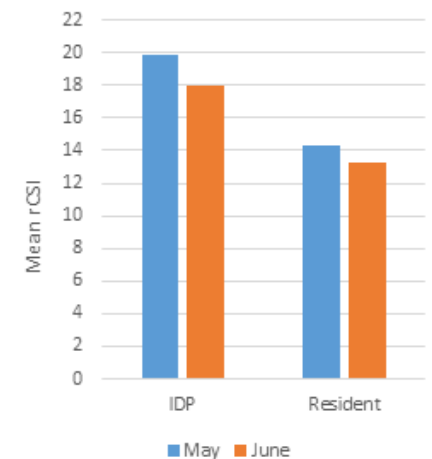
Moreover, 29 percent of IDP households restricted adult food consumption to provide for children, compared to 19 percent of residents. In all, 88 percent of IDP households reported using negative food-related coping strategies. However, mVAM data suggest a slight decrease in the frequency and severity of coping among IDPs as the mean rCSI for IDP respondent households fell almost 2 points from 19.9 in May to 18 in June (Figure 4b).

Figure 4a.
Inadequate food consumption by respondent status



Source: WFP mVAM, June 2016

Figure 4b.
Mean rCSI by respondent status



Source: WFP mVAM, June 2016

MAJORITY OF IDP HOUSEHOLDS BUYING FOOD ON CREDIT

Figure 5.
Prevalence of livelihood coping strategies by respondent status



Source: WFP mVAM, June 2016

Data collected in June indicate that both IDP and resident households are adopting livelihood coping strategies which could have a long term negative impact. While the majority of both IDP and resident households are buying food on credit, a much larger proportion of IDP households (68 percent) is using this coping strategy compared to resident households (52 percent). In addition, a higher proportion of IDP households, compared to resident households, has already exhausted their productive assets, thus cannot sell them to buy food.



POOR FOOD AVAILABILITY BUT CHEAPER PRICES IN BESIEGED AREAS

The cost of the standard food basket in most besieged locations fell significantly as continuous humanitarian assistance to these areas in June started exerting downward pressure on food prices (Figure 6a). Although prices continued to rise in Duma, Zamalka and Saqba, the increases were much smaller than those of previous months (Figure 6b).

In June, humanitarian access was granted to Darayya for the first time since November 2012. This had a huge impact on prices in Madamiyet Elsham, the main corridor for smuggling food into Darayya. The cost of the food basket fell by 78 percent (from SYP480,750 in May to SYP105,300 in June); the price of rice dropped from SYP5700/kg to SYP1200/kg; and the price of bread more than halved from SYP2250/kg to SYP1000/kg. Even though Darayya continued to record the most expensive food basket (SYP550,600), it was 4.4 percent cheaper than in May. Food assistance was delivered to Madaya and Foah on 30 April which resulted in a very small increase in food prices in May, whereas in June the cost of the standard food basket in these towns fell by 51 percent and 48 percent, respectively.

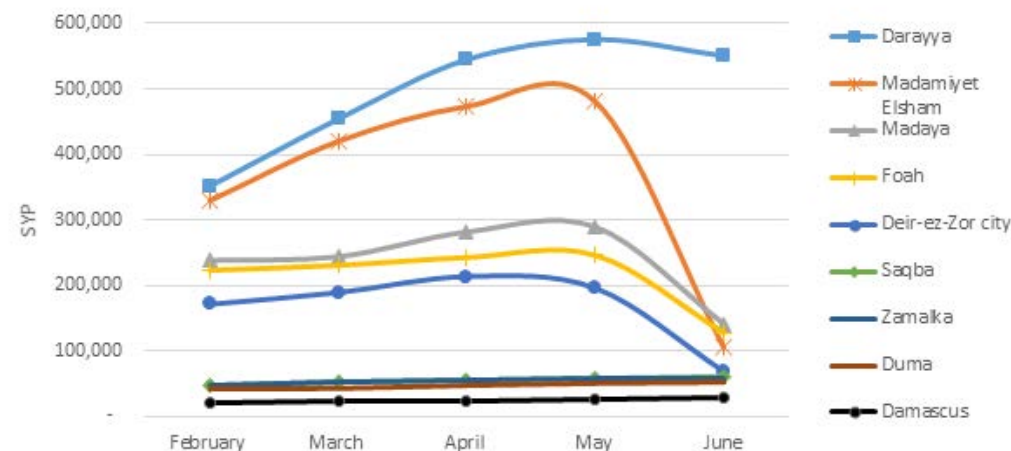
The continuing WFP airdrops in Deir-ez-Zor city have led to a fall in food prices: the price of rice (SYP1000/kg) is 60 percent lower than in May, while the price of bread remains SYP150/kg. The standard food basket costs 64.8 percent less than it did in May.

However, the availability of food in the markets remains poor as stocks are exhausted, particularly those of staple foods. As these areas remain under siege, it is very difficult to replenish food supplies in the markets. Food assistance has therefore had an immediate but short-term effect on prices. It is expected that prices will increase substantially if food assistance is stopped.

¹ The standard basket used in the analysis provides 1,930 kcal a day for a family of five during a month. It includes 37 kg of bread, 19 kg of rice, 19 kg of lentils, 5 kg of sugar, and 7 kg of vegetable oil.

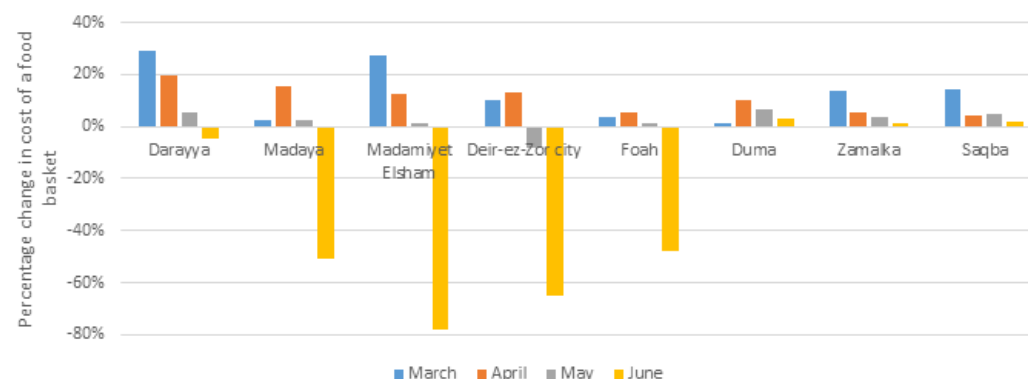
² Darayya, Madaya, Madamiyet Elsham, Deir-ez-Zor city and Foah

Figure 6a. Cost of a standard food basket in besieged locations



Source: WFP mVAM June 2016

Figure 6b. Monthly changes in the cost of a standard food basket



Source: WFP mVAM June 2016



RISING PRICE OF BASIC COMMODITIES ARE A CONCERN

Figure 7. Word Cloud



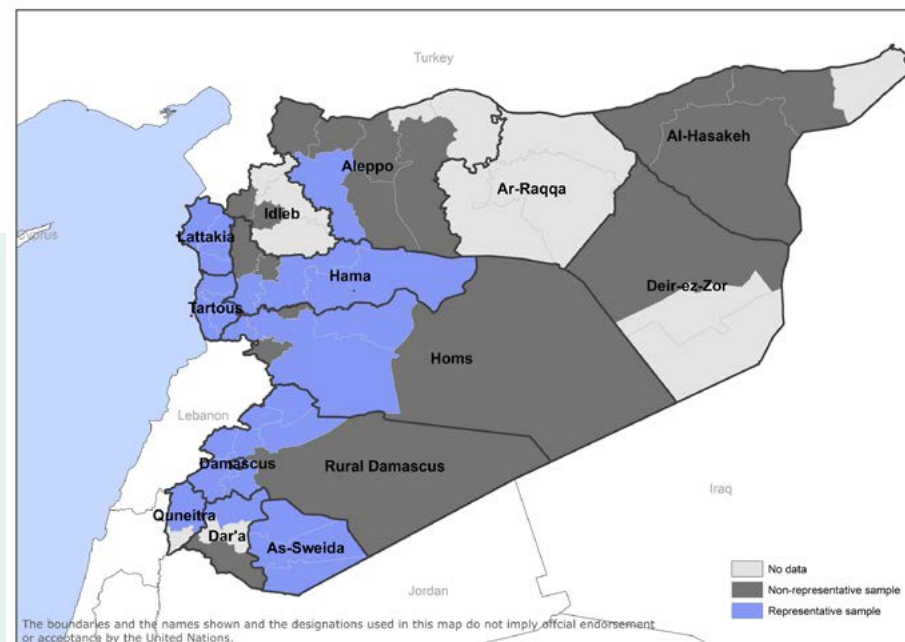
Source: WFP mVAM

METHODOLOGY

This mVAM bulletin is based on data collected in June 2016 through key sources and telephone interviews. The telephone numbers called were generated using random-digit dialling, yielding 1043 respondents. The questionnaire contained questions on demographics, income sources, food assistance, household food consumption, coping strategies and primary food sources. A final open-ended question gave respondents the chance to share additional information on the food situation in their communities. The data was weighted by the number of mobile phones owned by the household. Information collected through mobile phone interviews may be biased towards younger, somewhat better off households who live in urban areas and have better access to electricity and phone-charging services.

Respondents were worried about inflation and the high prices for essentials such as food, water, medicines and clothing. Most respondents reported a very high cost of living, especially considering low incomes and the lack of economic opportunities. This also affected households' ability to pay rent. Many of them face challenges in accessing medical care for sick family members. Respondents reported that water cuts and blackouts were also among their main concerns. Dairy products were reported to be very expensive and often unavailable in Aleppo; while in Hama, households reported rising prices for fruits and vegetables.

Map: Syria mVAM data collection – June 2016



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mVAM resources:

Website http://vam.wfp.org/sites/mvam_monitoring/
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