

Despite temporary improvement in food security indicators during Ramadan, overall food insecurity persists

Key points:



Food consumption and coping levels temporarily improve in July-but still the overall food security situation remains persistently poor.



Trends indicate a temporary improvement for displaced and non-displaced households, although IDPs continue to be worse off.



Despite the improvements, humanitarian needs remain high. Respondents continue to report high food prices and shortages of basic items.



Situation Update

The security situation remains critical across Yemen. The population is in need, particularly internally displaced people (IDPs). Currently, nearly 2.8 million people displaced because of the ongoing conflict, according to [the ninth report of the Task Force on Population Movement](#) (May 2016).

2437 Households
Surveyed

38 Average age of
respondents

31% IDP
69% Non-IDP

Residence Type
54% Own home

Gender Head of Household
95% Male 5% Female

36% Rental
6% Guest
4% Other

Box 1. Food prices and access during Ramadan

According to [WFP Yemen Market Watch June 2016](#), food prices remained high in June and at the beginning of July due to festivities for Ramadan and Eid Al-Fitr. For example, the national average price of wheat flour, sugar and vegetable oil was respectively 21, 18 and 3 percent higher than in May. The increase in food prices is driven by the high demand and the depreciation of the rial.

As a way of coping with rising prices, respondents frequently rely on borrowing food and/or charity –among other strategies. July data shows that about 60 percent of all surveyed IDPs access food through borrowing from friends and/or families, compared to 50 percent of surveyed non-displaced households, and that 20 percent of surveyed IDPs access food through food assistance/charity, compared to 15 percent of surveyed non-displaced households.

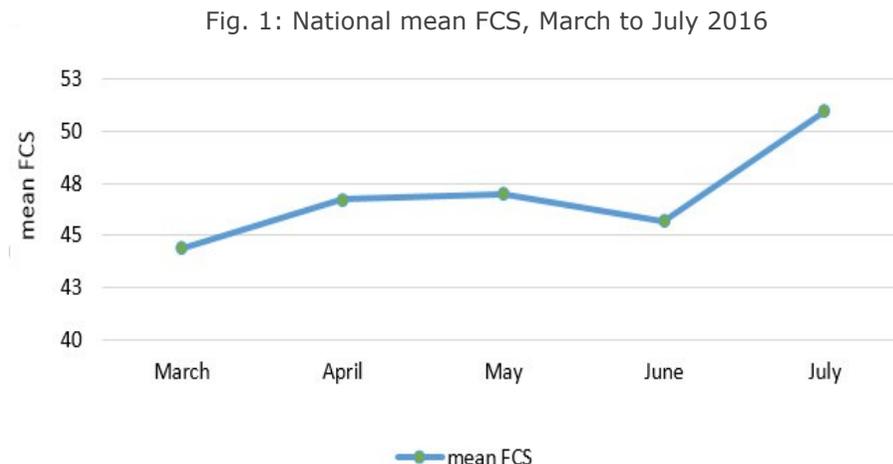


Food consumption and dietary diversity improve temporarily

The July data indicate an improvement in the overall mean Food Consumption Score (FCS) compared to the previous month. Figure 1 shows an increase in the national FCS from 45.6 in June to 50.9 in July. This trend was particularly evident in the governorates of Al Dhale, Amran, Marib, Ibb, Taizz, Shabwah, Sa'ada, Hajjah and Lahj. Overall, the increase can probably be attributed to the holy month of Ramadan, when people tend to donate and share food. Therefore, improvements seen during Ramadan should not be overestimated, but rather considered as a seasonal anomaly.

Concurrently, the dietary diversity improved in July: households appeared to be consuming dairy products, vegetables, fruit and proteins more frequently than in June.

The data also show that the overall proportion of households with poor food consumption dropped from 24 percent in June to 19 percent in July. Despite this temporary improvement, the humanitarian conditions remain very worrying due to the ongoing conflict, and people are facing extreme difficulties in meeting their basic needs. Additionally, the soaring food prices may limit food access and increase the risk of food insecurity in the areas most affected by the conflict.



Source: mVAM 2016



Households are engaging less in negative food-related coping strategies

Figure 2: National mean rCSI, March to July 2016



Source: mVAM 2016

The national mean reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) improved from 22.0 to 21.2 compared to June (see Figure 2). Households are engaging less frequently in the most severe coping strategies – borrowing food or relying on help from friend/family, and restricting adult consumption so children can eat. However, despite this improvement, households appeared to rely more frequently on consuming less expensive or less preferred food in July. As Map 1 shows, negative coping levels continue to be high in conflict-affected governorates.

As mentioned above, the overall improvements in food security observed in July are likely to be temporary and related to the observance of Ramadan, when food donations and beneficences are prevalent.

Temporary improvement was also seen among IDPs in July. However, displaced households continue to be worst off. Their mean FCS (43.9) is considerably poorer than that of non-displaced households (51.8), as is their mean rCSI (27.8 compared to 20.4 for non-displaced households).



Shortages of basic items and elevated prices

In July, respondents reported shortages of basic needs such as food, money, clothes and income. Power cuts and a lack of water and cooking gas were also mentioned frequently. Households complained about high food prices and the difficulty of covering their rental housing expenses.

As Figure 3 shows, in July about 15 percent of respondents reported receiving food assistance in the month before the survey; an increase of 6 percent compared to June. This increase is most probably related to the observance of Ramadan when numerous charity programmes are in action.

Methodology: mVAM remote mobile data collection

In July 2016, mVAM conducted the twelfth round of household food security monitoring in Yemen, using live telephone interviews. The data was collected during the first two weeks of July. 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. In March, a question on the number of active mobile phone owners per household was introduced to the questionnaire to adjust for the fact that households with more phones are more likely to be selected. The findings in this report are weighted by the number of SIM cards held by households and the population estimates for IDPs and non-IDPs.

Details on methodology and aggregate data tables are available [online](#).

Map 1: rCSI by governorate

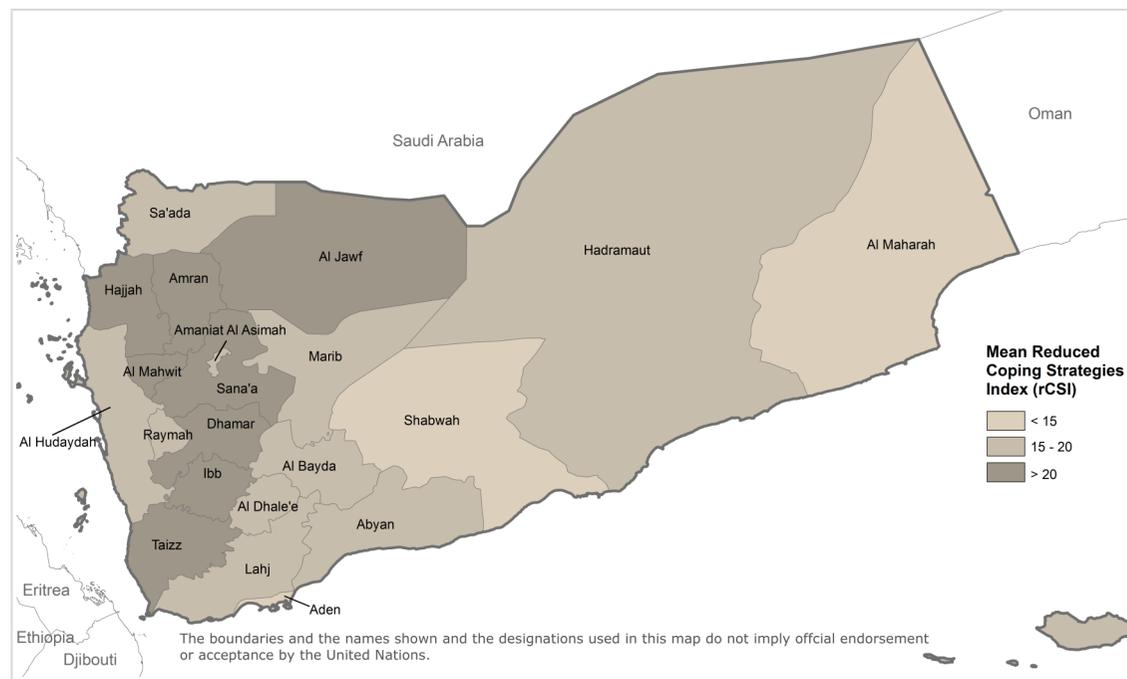
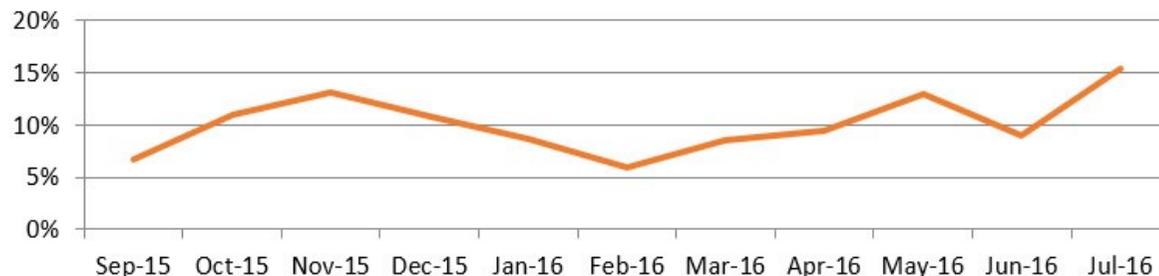


Figure 3: Share of respondents receiving food assistance, September 2015 to July 2016



Source: mVAM 2016



In the words of the respondents



“There is a lack of medical treatment and food commodities.

Prices are very high”

Male respondent from Sa’ada

“There is a lack of food, houses, money, mattresses and blankets”

Male respondent from Al Jawf

“Rental expenses are high. There are constant interruptions in electricity and water”

Female respondent from Dhamar

“There are no housings and there is a shortage in tents, food commodities and aid”

Male respondent from Marib



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