**KUNDUZ PROVINCE — CONFLICT RAPID ASSESSMENT**

**mVAM AFGHANISTAN - EMERGENCY FLASH UPDATE #1**

**KEY MESSAGES**

**Security** remains a concern in Kunduz Center and Qala-e-Zal districts, with households and traders still facing security constraints when accessing the market. Several respondents in Kunduz Center were concerned that the situation would soon deteriorate again. Security conditions were back to normal in the province’s remaining five districts.

**Food shortages** were only reported in Qala-e-Zal district (vegetables and fruit). However, prices have increased in all districts except Imam Saheb and Kunduz Center, since last month.

**ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND**

Kunduz province was hit by increased fighting between Afghan government and Taliban forces in the beginning of October. As WFP field staff and third party monitors were unable to carry out in-person field assessment due to security constraints, WFP piloted a phone survey of community informants living in Kunduz, to obtain information remotely. Calls were made on 19 and 20 October, 2016.

**HOUSEHOLD ABILITY TO BUY FOOD**

Prices have increased in all districts except Kunduz Center and Imam Saheb. This increase is of particular concern in Qala-e-Zal, Dasht-e-Archi and Khan Abad districts, where respondents also reported that households buy most of their food on credit from shopkeepers. This suggests that even when households are able to physically access the market and food is available, they may not be able to buy enough food to meet their needs. If the situation deteriorates again and prices continue to increase, this could affect both household food security and traders’ ability to stay in business. As more households default on their credit, traders could become unable to replenish their stocks or reimburse their own debts to their suppliers.

**FOOD AVAILABILITY AND ACCESS TO MARKETS**

Qala-e-Zal: Households and traders face constraints when accessing the market due to insecurity and poor road conditions, but most people are now able to go to work. Shortages of vegetables and fruit were reported.

Kunduz Center: Households face security concerns when accessing the market, but no food shortages reported.

All other districts: No security concerns or food shortages.

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**All 7 districts in Kunduz province surveyed**

- **38 key Informants called, of which 10 were women**
- **3-5 informants per district—all but one CDC members**
- **Calls done over 2 days**
- **Calls done by 1 operator in WFP Kabul Office**
- **10 minutes per call**
The operator had two sets of key informant phone numbers: one “generic” set of numbers which had been collected several months ago as part of the standard Seasonal Food Security Assessment (SFSA) questionnaire; and another smaller set which has been collected a few days before the mVAM survey by WFP PAT monitors. The monitors had specifically informed the informants that they would be called by WFP in the coming days to ask questions about the market and security conditions in Kunduz.

None of the SFSA contacts were willing to respond to the mVAM survey, saying that they did not know who the operator was (even though the latter clearly identified himself as being from WFP and explained the purpose of the survey). On the other hand, all of the contacts who had been informed about the call in advance agreed to take this survey—as well as future ones.

This suggests that it is essential to establish a reliable network of key informants who trust WFP and know in advance roughly when we will call them, and what type of questions we will be asking them. WFP PAT monitors and field staff play an essential role in establishing this network.

**Maintaining this network**—making sure that numbers are up-to-date and that informants stay engaged for multiple survey rounds—will depend on the quality of the operators. WFP is also providing a small airtime credit incentive (50 AFG) to respondents who complete the entire survey, to encourage participation and show respondents that their time is valued.

The Kunduz mVAM pilot will inform how WFP expands the use of mobile data collection in Afghanistan. One key objective will be to institutionalize remote rapid assessments such as this one within WFP Afghanistan’s standard emergency assessment procedures. In the future, once the system is fully established, mVAM emergency assessments will be carried out and published much faster—within 72hrs or less of the onset of the emergency.

In addition to future emergency assessments, WFP will be testing mVAM to monitor market and security conditions in areas where WFP provides assistance (particularly cash or vouchers), and to monitor beneficiaries in terms of food security status and protection concerns.

Moving forward, it will be critical to coordinate efforts around mobile data collection with other humanitarian partners and the Government of Afghanistan. Several UN agencies and Ministries in Afghanistan have recently started piloting phone or SMS-based surveys on a small scale, and are interested in systematizing and scaling-up these efforts. To prevent duplication of effort and ensure the most efficient use of resources, it will important to share lessons learned and identify promising areas of collaboration—both technical and programmatic.