Iraqi forces, backed by air strikes from the US-led coalition, gained complete control of the northern district of Shirqat (Salah al-Din) on 22 September. Iraqi forces advanced swiftly through the area after Prime Minister al-Abadi announced the operation on 20 September. In Baghdad, ISIL claimed responsibility for the two bombings of 27 September, which targeted Shi'a-dominated areas and killed 17 civilians.

Meanwhile, more than 100,000 Iraqis have been displaced since 16 June 2016 by military operations to retake ISIL-occupied areas in the Mosul corridor. IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix showed that the majority of the recently displaced are from Salah al-Din (over 66,600 people from the district of Shirqat, and 9,800 from Baiji), Ninewa (over 16,600 from the sub district of Qayyarah, and 700 from Al-Hathir), and Kirkuk (over 6,800 from Hawija district).

Following the liberation of Shirqat, for the first time in more than two years, WFP distributed urgently needed food for an initial 1,000 people in and around the town. Shirqat had been under siege and cut off from humanitarian access since 2014. Through its local partner Muslim Aid, WFP distributed a one-month supply of food for families in the Khadhariya area of the town.

Sources: WFP, OCHA, IOM

Situation Update

Food insecurity is increasing, particularly among IDP households. Poor and borderline food consumption among IDPs reached a new peak in September.

The food security situation remains stressed in most conflict-affected governorates. In Akre, Shikhan, Sinjar and Telafar (Ninewa), one in three households reported inadequate food consumption.

Household access to the Public Distribution System deteriorated in many surveyed locations. Most households are only receiving partial rations.

Key points:

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Food consumption remains poor in Ninewa and Erbil

In September, the focus of the food security monitoring shifted to the Mosul operation and response. The locations included in the survey were either involved in military operations during the reporting period or hosting large numbers of newly displaced people.

In terms of food consumption, surveyed districts in Ninewa continue to record the highest percentage of food insecurity. Although September data showed an improvement since August, over 30 percent of respondents in Akre, Shikhan, Sinjar and Telafar continued to report poor or borderline food consumption. In Makhmur (Erbil), around a third of households reported inadequate food consumption (Map 1).

Conversely, in Tikrit (Salah al-Din), the percentage of households with inadequate food consumption fell from 34 percent in August to 17 percent in September.

IDPs, returnees and residents continued to exhibit different levels of food security. There was a significant drop in the percentage of returnee households eating an inadequate amount of food (n=200). However, inadequate consumption among IDPs and residents across the surveyed locations increased in September (Figure 1). The situation is particularly bad in Makhmour, where half of the displaced households reported poor or borderline food consumption.

Methodology – mVAM remote data collection

In September 2016, mVAM conducted household food security monitoring using live telephone interviews. Data was collected from a sample of 1,555 respondents via Korek, a major mobile network operator. WFP monitored respondents living in Iraq’s conflict hotspots and in areas recently liberated, drawn from Korek’s database. The data was weighted by the number of mobile phones owned by the household.
Rise in negative consumption-based coping strategies among IDPs

Households were asked if there were times in the week before the survey when they did not have enough food or money to buy food. In line with the other indicators, perceived poor food access increased in Ninewa (Shikhan and Telafar), while it remained stable in the other monitored locations (Map 2). At the sub-district level, 55 percent of households in Rabia and 40 percent of households in Zummar (Telafar) reported resorting to negative coping strategies. Overall, the most common coping strategies used by households were to rely on less preferred and less expensive food, to reduce the number of meals eaten in a day, and to borrow food or rely on help from relatives and friends (Figure 2). This has been observed for both IDPs and resident families.

Moreover, negative coping was most prevalent among IDP and returnee households. Compared to August, a higher proportion of IDPs and residents adopted negative coping strategies in September. However, fewer returnees used coping strategies (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Percentage of households using negative coping by respondent status, June – September 2016
Household access to the Public Distribution System (PDS)

In September, household access to PDS rations deteriorated in most surveyed locations, especially in Ninewa (Akre, Telafar and Sinjar), Salah al-Din (Tikrit) and in Kirkuk (Daquq), where more households than in September said they did not receive PDS rations (Map 3). PDS distributions were extremely limited in Tikrit, where 90 percent of respondents said they did not receive their monthly ration in September.

Map 3: Respondent households who did not receive PDS in September 2016

When asked about the food security situation in their communities, respondents across all governorates said their main concerns were delays in PDS distributions and the partial size of the rations. They also stated that they are no longer able to meet their basic needs because of the lack of salaries and income. Other common concerns were related to unemployment, high rental expenses and lack of medical care.

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