IDPs use more severe coping strategies

Key points:

- In October, food security in the surveyed locations remained largely unchanged compared to September.
- In October, there was a drop in the percentage of households consuming an inadequate amount of food compared to September. This drop was recorded for IDPs, returnees and residents.
- Access to the Public Distribution System has generally improved, but households continue to report delays and poor quality rations.

Situation Update

On 16 October, the Iraqi Prime Minister announced the beginning of the offensive to retake Mosul city from ISIL. He stated that teams had been created to deal with humanitarian issues and other teams formed to deal with rebuilding efforts. On the same day, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O’Brien issued a statement expressing concern for the safety of up to 1.5 million people living in Mosul who may be impacted by military operations. He also called on all parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians and ensure they have access to the assistance they are entitled to.

Iraqi and Kurdish forces advanced towards Mosul securing around 20 villages on the outskirts of the city. IOM started monitoring displacement and recorded the first arrivals of displaced families to the south-east of Mosul district in Ninewa governorate. Since the beginning of military operations, over 10,500 people have been displaced. Displacements are becoming increasingly complex, as people flee the fighting in multiple directions. Some are moving to displacement sites, and formal camps are currently housing 34 percent of the displaced population.

On 24 October, Kurdish Peshmerga forces taking part in the Mosul offensive besieged the town of Bashiqa, located on a crucial supply route 12 km from Mosul, where they are preparing to launch a full assault.

Sources: WFP, OCHA, IOM

Source: mVAM October 2016
Food consumption deteriorates in Bardarash

In October, food security in the surveyed locations remained largely unchanged compared with September. One exception was Bardarash (Ninewa), where the share of households reporting poor or borderline food consumption increased from 15 percent in September to 26 percent in October. Around 74 percent of the households interviewed in Bardarash are displaced from Ninewa, and 30 percent of them are living in camps.

By contrast, the share of households with inadequate food consumption fell from 46 percent to 19 percent in Sinjar (Ninewa), from 30 percent to 23 percent in Makhmur (Erbil), and from 17 percent to 8 percent in Dibis (Kirkuk) from September to October (Map 1).

In October, there was a significant drop in the percentage of IDP households eating an inadequate amount of food (n=874) from 31 percent in September to 26 percent in October. The same trend was observed for resident and the returnee households (Figure 1).

Methodology – mVAM remote data collection

In October 2016, mVAM conducted household food security monitoring using 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 following locations were covered by the survey: Telafar, Akre, Tikrit, Al-Shikhan, Daquq, Sinjar, Bardarash, Kandinawa, Khabat, Makhmur, Dibis, Alqosh, Rabia, Zaylakan, Zummar and Al-Alam. The data was weighted by the number of mobile phones owned by the household.
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 Bardarash (Nineawa), Makhmur (Erbil) and Daquq (Kirkuk), while it decreased in Al-Shikhan, Telafar, Sinjar and Khabat (Nineawa) (Map 2). 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. However, IDP households tend to recur to more severe coping strategies—such as restricting adult consumption so children can eat—compared with resident households (Figure 2).

Significantly fewer IDP households and residents adopted negative coping strategies in October (Figure 3). However, negative coping continues to be more prevalent among IDP and returnee households. In particular, the percentage of IDP households who had to reduce the number of meals and restrict adult consumption so that children could eat rose to 45 percent in October.
IDPs living in camps have higher levels of unacceptable food consumption and an increased use of negative coping strategies compared with IDPs living outside the camps (Figure 4).

Access to the Public Distribution System (PDS) improves

In October, data show a general improvement in household access to PDS rations. The percentage of households receiving a partial PDS ration increased from 38 percent to 45 percent in October (Figure 5). However, household access to PDS rations deteriorated in Daquq and Dibis (Kirkuk), and in Tilkaif (Ninewa), where more households said they did not receive PDS rations at all (Map 3).

Figure 4 Percentage of IDP households with poor borderline food consumption and using food-related negative coping strategies, IDPs in camps vs. IDPs outside the camps, July – October 2016

Figure 5. Percentage of households receiving full, partial and zero rations, September and October 2016

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

Source: mVAM October 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 poor quality of the PDS items. They also said 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 the lack of medical care.