

## Returnees to Telafar liberated areas face rising food insecurity

### Key points:



As the Mosul operation has intensified, food security has deteriorated for IDPs, returnees and resident households in surveyed sub-districts.



Over 40 percent of households in Telafar had poor or borderline food consumption and used negative coping strategies in December. Most of the households interviewed were recent returnees.



Access to the Public Distribution System remains very poor in conflict-affected areas and among displaced families.



### Situation Update

As the Mosul offensive continues, IOM reports that an estimated 132,000 people have been displaced by the ongoing military operations, which began on 17 October. More than 1 million people are thought to remain cut off from humanitarian assistance in Mosul city. Around 114,000 people are sheltering in camps and emergency sites to the south and east of Mosul city but these facilities have almost reached their maximum capacity. Government and humanitarian actors are responding urgently to increase camp capacity and humanitarian assistance.

Military encirclement and the destruction of bridges connecting the east and west banks of the Tigris river are of growing concern as they affect access and supply routes to the western side of the city, where an estimated 750,000 people reside. UNHCR reports that in the west of Mosul supply routes have been cut off and the prices of basic necessities have surged, particularly for fuel and food. However, it is extremely difficult to obtain reliable information from Mosul city. WFP has increased the coverage of mVAM to include the city, which will be reported on in the January mVAM bulletin.

**900**

**Households surveyed**

**34**

**Average age of respondents**



**50% IDPs**

**32% Returnees**

**18% Non IDPs**



**37% Own Home**

**37% Rental**

**9% Guest**

**13% Camp**

**4% Unfinished building**



**95% Male**

**5% Female**



## Poor food consumption in Telafar

In December, the mVAM survey covered nine conflict-affected sub-districts in Ninewa, Erbil and Kirkuk governorates. The sub-districts host large numbers of IDPs from Mosul and surrounding areas, as well as returnees.

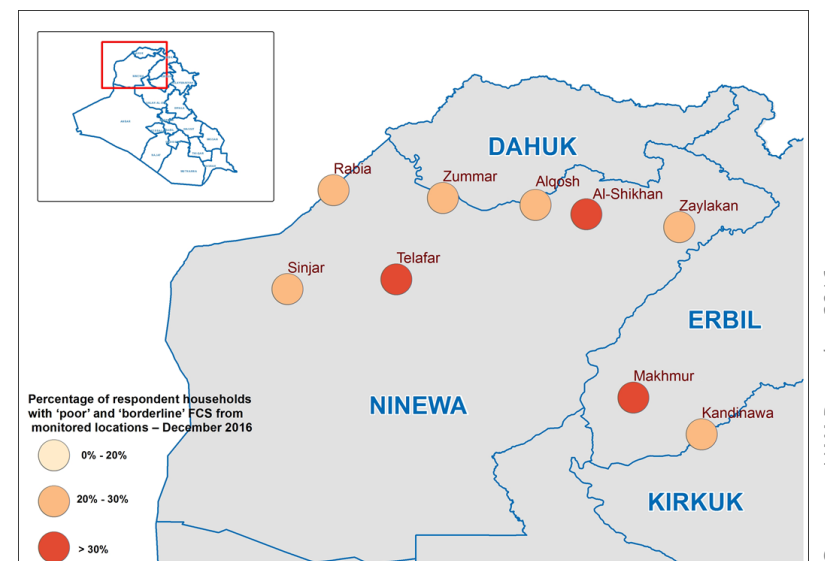
December mVAM data showed that more than a third of surveyed households in Al-Shikhan, Makhmur and Telafar reported poor or borderline food consumption (Map 1). Rabia reported the highest percentage of households with poor food consumption (14 percent).

In Telafar, battles continue for control this strategic city between Mosul and the Syrian border. In December, several villages outside Telafar were liberated and households started to return to their homes. There are serious concerns regarding the humanitarian situation in the Tel Afar corridor, which remains under armed groups control and is encircled by the military. Citizens residing in these areas cannot be accessed by humanitarian organisations. Due to the ongoing conflict, lifesaving humanitarian efforts are being scaled up and focus on the most vulnerable populations trapped in active conflict areas, civilians in newly liberated areas still affected by fighting, as well as the increasing number of people forcibly displaced by the conflict.

Looking at the displacement status of respondents, significant differences were found in the food consumption of displaced, returnee and resident households. Figure 1 shows that the proportion of households with poor or borderline consumption is higher for IDPs (32 percent) and returnees (31 percent) than for resident households (20 percent). IDP and returnee households consumed protein-rich food and fruit less than twice a week, and pulses and vegetables only three times a week.

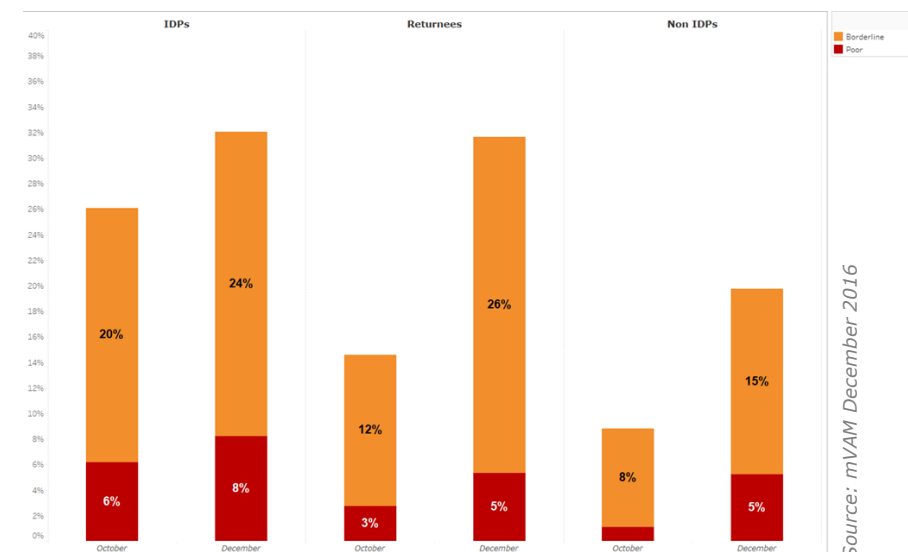
An increase in the proportion of households with inadequate food consumption has been observed since October in all three population groups (Figure 1). As military operations to retake Mosul continue, IDP and resident households continue to face harsh conditions. Returnees face considerable risks as numerous homes and neighbourhoods have been damaged or still contain explosive remnants of war.

Map 1. Percentage of respondent households with 'poor' or 'borderline' food consumption score (FCS) in monitored locations – December 2016



Source: mVAM December 2016

Figure 1. Households with inadequate consumption by respondent status, October–December 2016



Source: mVAM December 2016



## More negative coping as military operations continue

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, the percentage of households reporting using food-based negative coping strategies was very high in Makhmur (51 percent), Telafar (40 percent) and Zummar (35 percent) in comparison with the other surveyed sub-districts (Map 2).

Nearly all respondents reported relying on less preferred and less expensive food and eating fewer meals a day as their main food-related coping strategies in the week before the survey. In addition, more than 80 percent said they had also resorted to more severe strategies such as borrowing food (Figure 2).

Significantly more households adopted negative coping strategies in December than in October, especially among IDP and resident households (Figure 3). However, negative coping continues to be more prevalent among IDPs and returnees.

Map 2. Percentage of households using negative coping strategies, December 2016

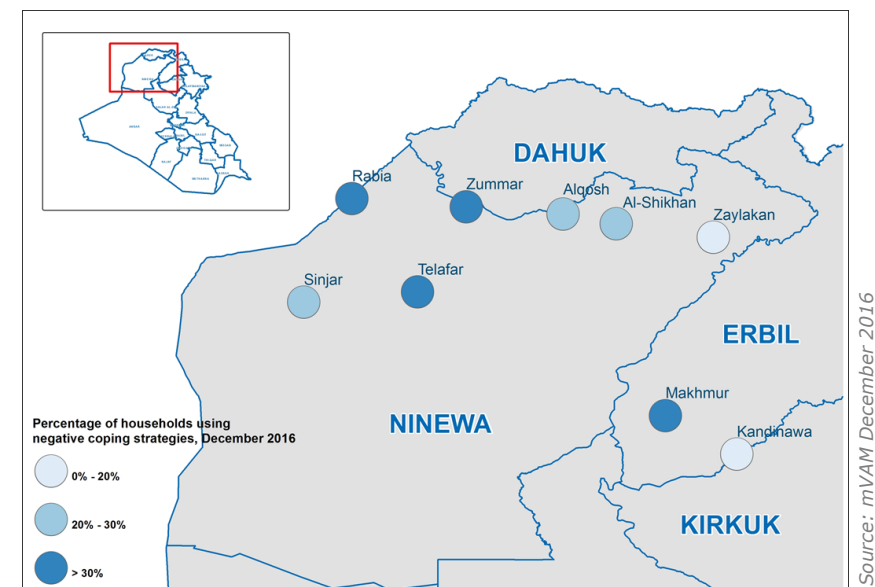
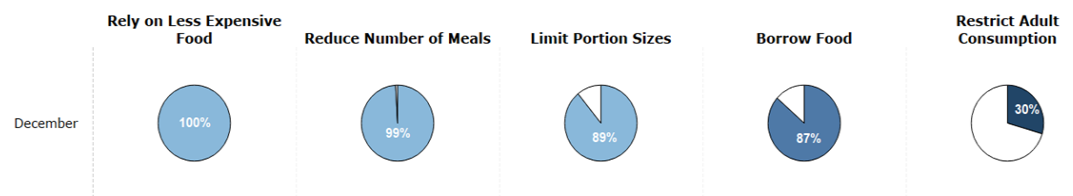
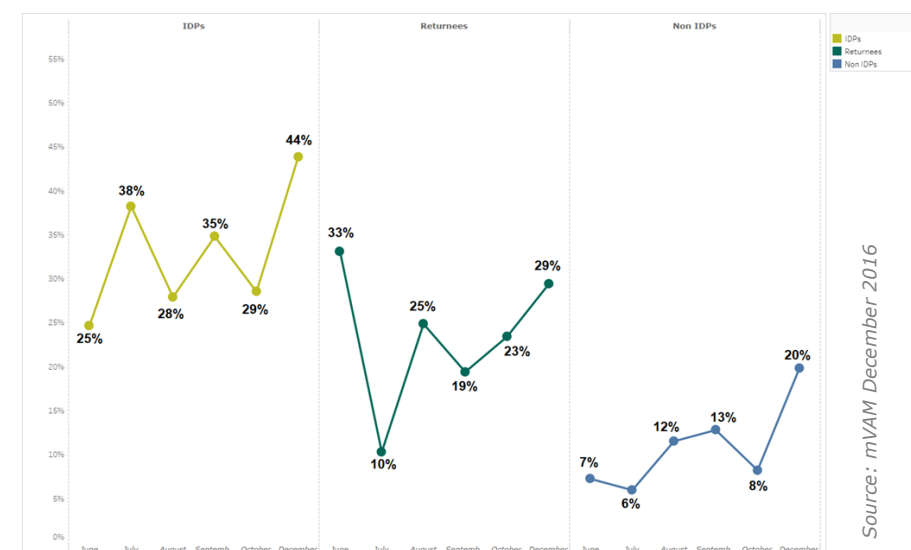


Figure 2. Proportion of households employing food-based coping strategies, December 2016



Source: mVAM December 2016

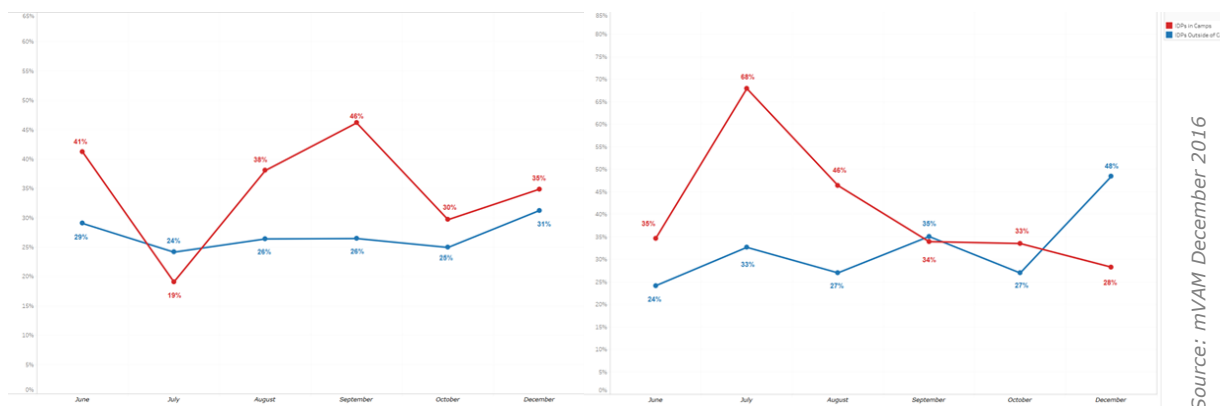
Figure 3. Percentage of households using food-based negative coping strategies by respondent status, June–December 2016



Source: mVAM December 2016

IDPs living in camps (n=117) continued to show higher levels of unacceptable food consumption in December. At the same time, IDPs living outside the camps reported an increased use of negative coping strategies compared with those in camps (Figure 4). This difference might be related to the better access IDPs have to assistance in camps, where most of the humanitarian assistance is directed. Almost 70 percent of the IDPs in camps reported receiving food assistance, while only a third of the IDPs residing outside of camps said that they got some kind of food assistance.

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

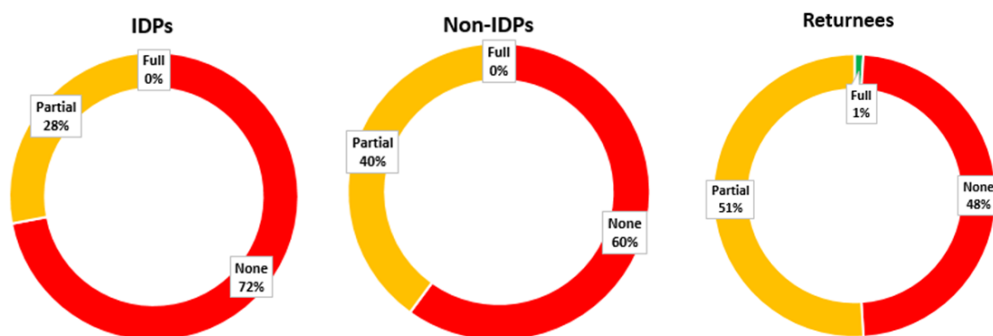


### Very poor access to the Public Distribution System (PDS) in Sinjar

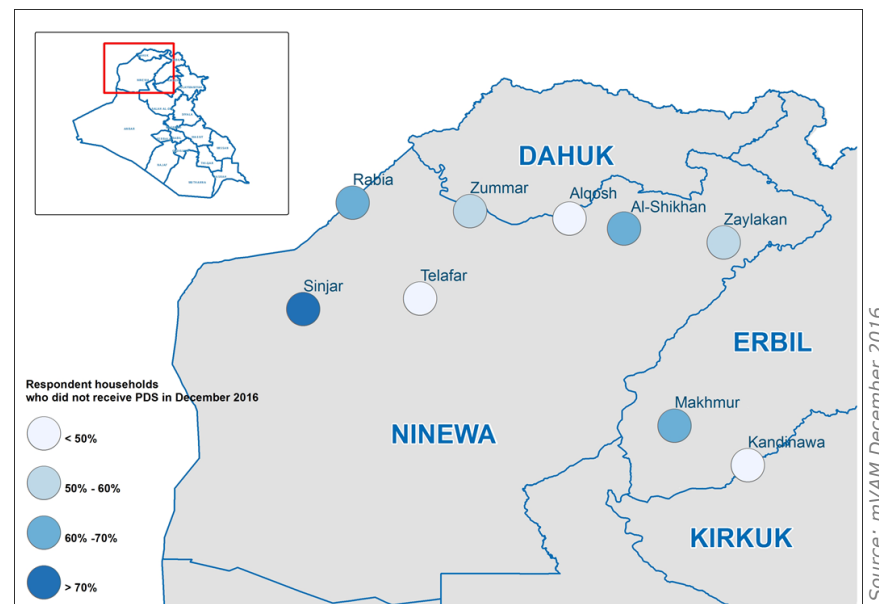
December data show that access to PDS rations remained very low, especially in Sinjar where around 80 percent of respondents reported not receiving PDS. Around 70 percent of respondents in Rabia and Al-Shikhan did not receive any food items from the PDS in December.

PDS access in conflict-affected locations has been extremely intermittent, especially for IDP households. As shown in Figure 5, only 28 percent of displaced households received partial rations; 40 percent of non-IDP households received partial rations.

Figure 5. Percentage of households receiving PDS by resident status, December 2016



Map 3. Respondent households who did not receive PDS in December 2016





### In the words of the respondents

The most frequently cited concern for households in December continued to be the irregularity of PDS distributions. Several IDPs complained about the lack of access to the monthly food rations provided by the government as they had lost their PDS card while moving from one place to another or had not been registered in their new area. Respondents also said that the lack of income and job opportunities is making it difficult for them to pay for medical treatment and to access basic services such as healthcare.

Unemployment was one of the main challenges highlighted by non-displaced respondents. Several households mentioned the urgent need for more assistance as this is becoming their main source of sustenance, and some of them reported the need for thick blankets to protect them from the cold winter.

### Methodology – mVAM remote data collection

In December 2016, mVAM conducted household food security monitoring using telephone interviews. Data was collected from a sample of 900 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 sub-districts were covered by the survey: Telafar, Al-Shikhan, Sinjar, Kandinawa, Makhmur, Alqosh, Rabia, Zaylakan and Zummar. The data was weighted by the number of mobile phones owned by the household.



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### mVAM Resources:

**Website:** [http://vam.wfp.org/sites/mvam\\_monitoring/](http://vam.wfp.org/sites/mvam_monitoring/)  
**Blog:** [mvam.org](http://mvam.org)  
**Toolkit:** <http://resources.vam.wfp.org/mvam>



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