Key points:

- Poor food consumption has increased in Tilkaif
- Negative coping levels have risen in Mosul city and food assistance drops by 50 percent in Shura
- Households in surveyed locations are relying less frequently on negative coping, and the prices of basic commodities continue to fall in retaken parts of Mosul
- Household access to the Public Distribution System improved for the second consecutive month

Situation Update

In April, fighting continued in western Mosul and the number of people fleeing the area surged. Nearly 376,000 people have been displaced since military operations began to retake neighbourhoods in western Mosul in late February. On 23 April alone, 6,500 people were recorded as having arrived at the transit and screening point of Hamam al Alil, south of Mosul. Despite very rapid displacement and pressures on the capacities of camps and emergency sites, space is currently available to accommodate 50,000 more people, and there are ongoing efforts to expand that capacity still further.

Meanwhile, an estimated 400,000 civilians are still trapped inside Mosul. Fighting and airstrikes continue, and civilians are unable to flee the conflict.
April mVAM data show that the mean food consumption score (FCS) remained unchanged from March, except in Shura, where the mean FCS rose from 52.3 in March to 58 in April.

As Figure 1 shows, the proportion of households with inadequate (poor or borderline) food consumption fell in all surveyed locations. However, although fewer households had borderline food consumption in Tilkaif city in April, those with poor food consumption increased by 9 percent. There was a slight decrease in the overall percentage of households reporting inadequate food consumption among residents and IDPs for the third consecutive round (Figure 2). Rapid Response Mechanism partners reported a 180 percent increase in the number of distributions of immediate relief rations and hygiene kits in the last week of April, triggered by the large movement of people.

Figure 1. Households with inadequate consumption, January to April 2017

Figure 2. Households with inadequate consumption by respondent status, January to April 2017

Source: mVAM April 2017
Negative coping falls in surveyed locations but remains high in parts of eastern Mosul

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 FCS, the percentage of households using food-based negative coping strategies fell in April in all surveyed locations, except in Mosul City, where over a third of the respondents are still relying on coping strategies (Figure 3).

Negative coping strategies are still more commonly used by IDP and returnee households than by resident families. However in April, lower proportions of IDPs and returnees said that they did not have enough food or money to buy food (Figure 4) compared with March.

According to key informants in retaken areas of eastern Mosul, people are relying on food assistance provided by humanitarian organizations or on gifts from relatives and friends, and they are buying food in the market on credit. Basic food items are available but prices are high. Given the lack of income sources, it is common for families to enter into debt. The inadequate supply of safe water remains a critical concern in all areas of Mosul City.

In non-liberated areas of Mosul and Telafar, key informants reported that households are living in miserable conditions and that basic food items are missing from the markets. People are surviving with the little that is available in the market and they are eating any kind of vegetables they find close to their homes. Key informants also say that households are stuck in their homes with no food as militia do not allow anyone to go outside. Households are reporting that food has been missing from more than a month and people are having just one meal a day from their stocks.
In terms of food assistance, more than a third of interviewed households in Gogjali and Mosul City reported having received food assistance from organizations in the 30 days before the survey (Figure 5).

In Shura, the percentage of households who received food assistance in April was almost half that of the previous month.

Returnee households reported having received more external food assistance than IDPs and residents. However, the percentage of returnees and IDPs receiving food assistance fell in comparison with the previous rounds (Figure 6).

Methodology – mVAM remote data collection

In April 2017, mVAM conducted household food security monitoring using telephone interviews. Data were collected from a sample of 609 respondents via Korek, a major mobile network operator, between 5 and 19 April. WFP monitored respondents living in several locations in retaken areas in Mosul district (Mosul City – retaken areas, Gogjali and Shura), two non-liberated neighbourhoods on the western bank (Hay Al Najar and Hay Al-Rafaee), and one location in Tilkaif district (Tilkaif city) drawn from Korek’s database. The data was weighted by the number of mobile phones owned by the household.

In addition, in collaboration with Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW), 32 key informant interviews were conducted in Mosul (14 in retaken locations and 7 in non-liberated areas locations in Mosul) and in Telafar.
However, following the improvement in humanitarian access, more households reported receiving a partial PDS ration in retaken areas of Mosul City (29 percent) and in Gogjali (34 percent) in April (Figure 6) – this marks the highest percentage reported in the last four months.

IDPs’ access to partial PDS also improved in April. As shown in Figure 7, 34 percent of IDPs reported receiving a partial ration – a significant increase compared with February when only 8 percent received rations from the government. According to key informants, the partial rations consist of wheat flour, sugar, vegetable oil and sometimes rice.

Figure 7. Percentage of households receiving PDS, January to April 2017

Figure 8. Percentage of households receiving PDS by respondent status, January - April 2017

Source: mVAM April 2017
In retaken parts of Mosul, respondents said that the prices of basic foods continued to decrease compared to previous months, except for meat and lentils. Vegetable oil and sugar were cheaper in Mosul than in the rest of the governorate. However, the average prices of fresh milk, lentils, beef, onions, rice and wheat flour are lower in Ninewa governorate compared to Mosul (Figure 7).

In April, the food basket\(^1\) in Mosul retaken areas (IQD711) was 28 percent more expensive than in the rest of Ninewa (IQD557).\(^2\)

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\(^1\) The minimum food basket monitored by WFP contains five foods: wheat flour, sugar, rice, vegetable oil and onions. The quantities are adjusted against the survival caloric intake needs.

\(^2\) As non-liberated areas are increasingly more difficult to reach, it was not possible to collect price data from key informants in these areas in April 2017.
Food Shortages and Market Functionality

Terms of trade

Wage-to-food terms of trade is a proxy indicator used to measure household purchasing power by showing how many food baskets can be purchased with the wage earned from one day of casual unskilled labour. Findings do not show significant differences in terms of trade between Mosul retaken areas (18 baskets) and Ninewa governorate (20 baskets) (Figure 10). The wage rates in Mosul (IQD14,138) are higher than in Ninewa governorate (IQD10,000).

Figure 11. Wage-to-food terms of trade in Mosul (retaken areas) and Ninewa governorate

Analysis shows that food is available in all the surveyed locations in retaken areas of Mosul.

Figure 12. Availability Analysis – Mosul district

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