



World Food Programme

Bulletin 12 – November 2015

IRAQ

November 2015: Food insecurity persists among internally displaced. Food prices on the rise in Anbar

Highlights

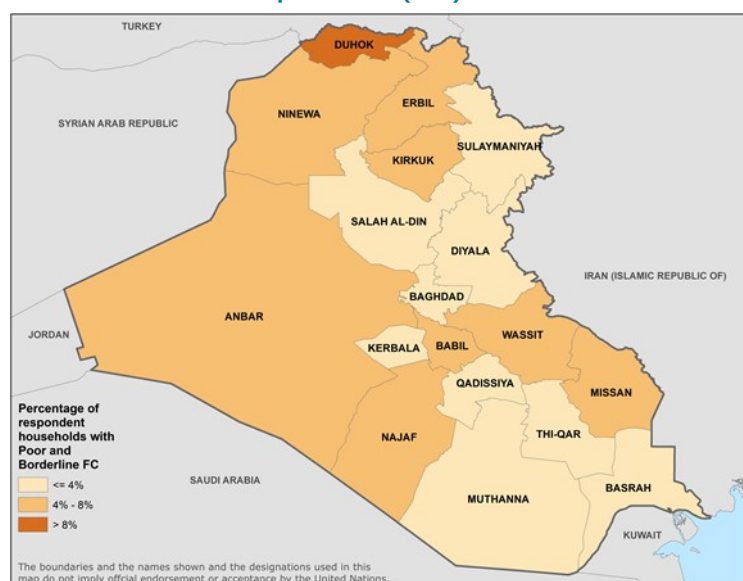
- **Heightened food insecurity among internally displaced (IDP) households continues to persist: the dietary diversity has worsened since September; food consumption of those living in camps has further deteriorated; and nearly one third of all IDPs reported resorting to negative food-based coping strategies.**
- **In October, food security indicators for households in Duhok were worse than the national average: one out of every ten households reported facing inadequate consumption and 17 percent resorted to using negative food-based coping. As the governorate hosts the third highest number of IDPs (13%), the situation will have to be closely monitored in the coming winter months.**
- **The use of negative food-based coping remained above-average in Ninewa, a trend seen since March.**
- **In Anbar, mVAM market data shows an overall trend of increasing food prices. In October, the average cost of a standard food basket increased by 10 percent from September, and was notably high in conflict-affected districts of Alkhaliydyah, Falluja, Haditha and Ramadi.**
- **Heavy rains in late October caused flooding in central governorates, likely damaging some of the recently harvested wheat crop supplies and disrupting autumn fieldwork and wheat-planting activities.**

Poor food consumption among IDPs persists and further deteriorates for those living in camps

In October, national-level food security remained stable for the third consecutive month, with 4 percent of all respondents reporting having inadequate ('poor' or 'borderline') consumption (Figure 1). However, as shown in Map 1, inadequate consumption during this time peaked at 10 percent for surveyed households in the governorate of Duhok followed by 6.8 percent of respondents in Ninewa.

Displaced households continued to report a considerably higher rate of inadequate consumption than non-displaced households in October (14% vs. 3%). As shown in Figure 2, IDPs living in camps have become increasingly worse-off than those living outside camps since July. Inadequate consumption among IDPs in camps (63 observations in October) increased from 29 percent in September to 42 percent in

Map 1. Iraq - Percentage of respondent households with 'poor' and 'borderline' Food Consumption Score (FCS) - October 2015



Source: WFP mVAM, October 2015

Box 1. Situation update

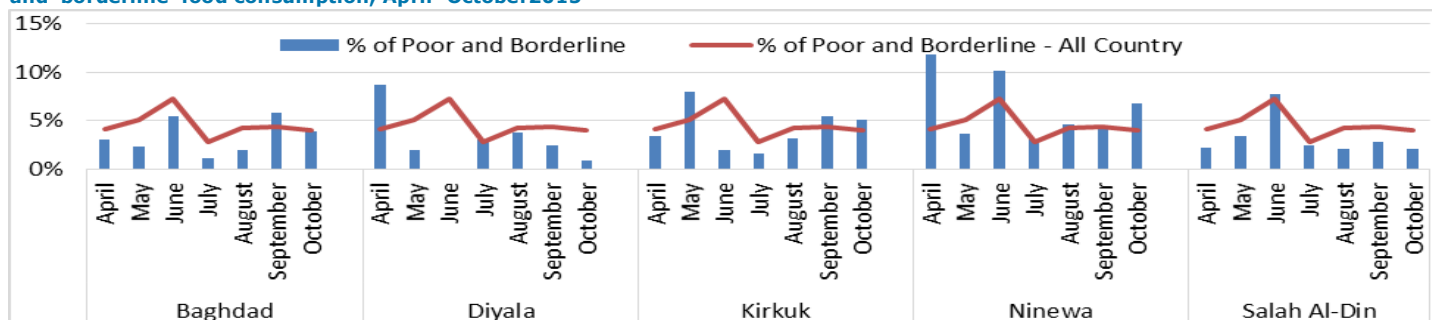
Humanitarian conditions in Iraq have worsened with ongoing insecurity, new displacement, a cholera outbreak and flooding affecting several governorates. There was a sharp increase in airstrikes and military operations in armed opposition-held areas in October. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), about 2,500 people were displaced in Baiji district in Salah al Din due to military operations between 20 and 27 October 2015. In Ninewa, Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and allied militia forces reportedly advanced towards Mosul after making key gains against armed opposition forces near Baiji. It is not clear when Iraqi forces will be ready to mount an offensive in the city. However a future operation to retake Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, may trigger another wave of displacement within the country with caseloads rising most in Anbar, Ninewa and Salah Al-Din governorates. That will intensify the already dire humanitarian crisis in Iraq, where the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has reached 3.2 million.

Fighting continues in Ramadi and around Falluja in Anbar governorate. The Bzeibiz bridge checkpoint connecting Anbar and Baghdad has been intermittently closed, preventing people from leaving conflict areas and supplies from entering Anbar. Haditha district remains particularly difficult to access.

Heavy rains in late October caused flooding in central governorates of Baghdad, Anbar, Salah al-Din, Diyala and Sulaymaniyah. Humanitarian partners estimate that the floods have affected at least 84,000 displaced people staying in more than 40 sites and camps, mostly in Baghdad and Anbar governorates. The current floods may lead to an increase in cholera cases in the central governorates and especially in the IDPs and refugees camps that are considered high-risk areas for cholera transmission. Unlike previous outbreaks in Iraq, the epicentre of the current cholera outbreak is in the southern and central governorates. The epidemic has spread largely along the banks of the Euphrates River, where people are using unsafe water directly from the river because of lack of appropriate infrastructure.

Sources: WFP, OCHA and IOM

Figure 1. Percentage of 'all country' and respondent households from key conflict and displacement-affected governorates with 'poor' and 'borderline' food consumption, April–October 2015

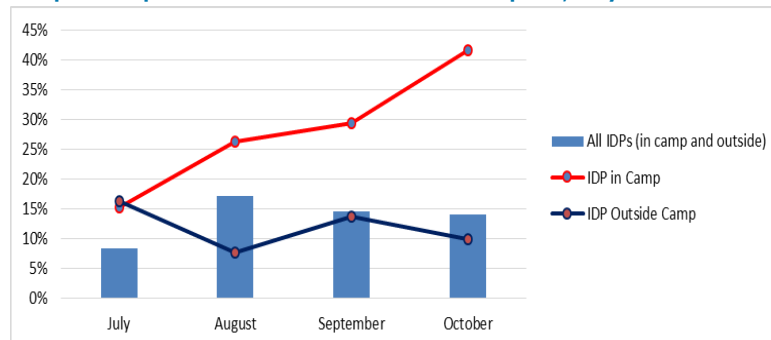


Source: WFP mVAM, October 2015

October. However, among IDPs living outside of camps the prevalence fell slightly from 14 percent in September to 10 percent in October*.

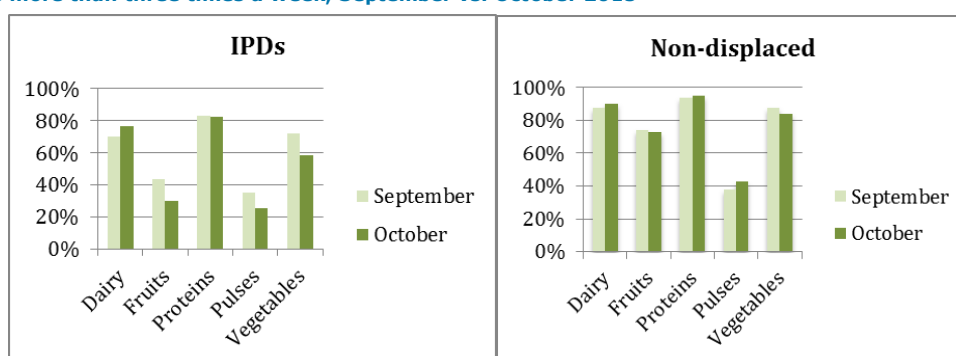
IDP households also remained generally worse off in terms of their dietary diversity when compared to non-displaced households (Figures 3.a and 3.b). The proportion of IDP households consuming three key food groups - fruits, pulses and vegetables - more than three times during the week before the survey fell between September and October. For fruits it decreased from 43 percent to 30 percent; for pulses from 35 to 25 percent and for vegetables from 72 to 59 percent (Figure 3.a)***. The decrease in consumption frequency of fruits and vegetables, noted by both IDP and non-displaced households, may also be linked to seasonality.

Figure 2. Percentage of IDP respondent households living in and outside camps with 'poor' and 'borderline' food consumption, July–October 2015



Source: WFP mVAM, October 2015

Figures 3.a (Percentage of IDP respondent households) and 3.b (Percentage of non-displaced respondent households) consuming five key food groups more than three times a week, September vs. October 2015



The prevalence of negative consumption-based coping remains high in Ninewa and among IDPs

In October, 11 percent of all respondents reported using negative food-based coping strategies because they did not have enough food or money to buy food, which is similar to the prevalence recorded in September (Map 2). Households in Ninewa continued to report above-average use of coping, at 17 percent of all respondents surveyed in October, which is a trend that has persisted since the start of mVAM monthly monitoring in March (Figure 4). Also, households in Duhok noted a relatively high prevalence of coping in October, at 17 percent of all respondents.

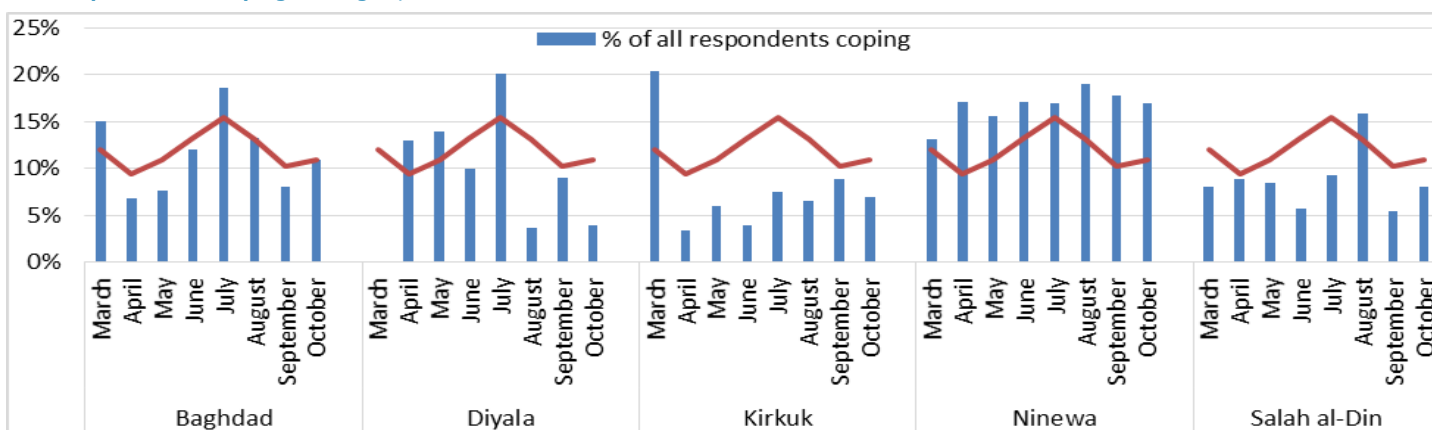
Respondents living in their own homes relied much less on food-based coping (4%) than respondents living in other types of housing accommodation, including those renting (15%), those living in unfinished buildings (23%) and those staying as guests (23%). In October, IDP households continued to be more dependent on negative food-based coping mechanisms than non-displaced (30 percent vs. 9 percent). Moreover, coping was more widespread among IDPs living in camps (Figure 5).

Map 2. Iraq – reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI), October 2015



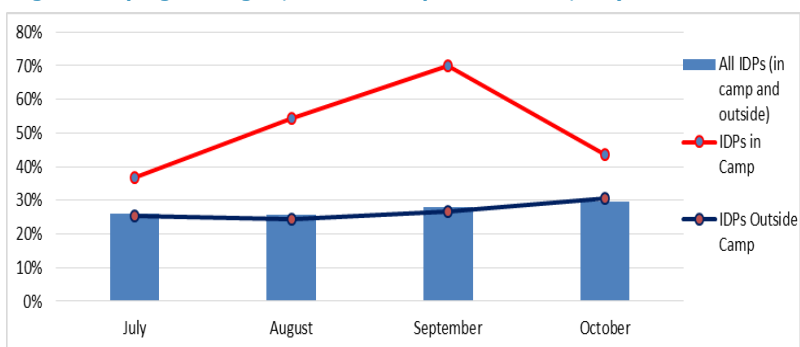
Source: WFP mVAM, October 2015

Figure 4. Percentage of 'all country' and respondent households from key conflict and displacement-affected governorates using consumption based coping strategies, March – October 2015



Source: WFP mVAM, October 2015

Figure 5. Percentage of IDP respondent households using food-related negative coping strategies, IDPs in camps vs. all IDPs, July – October 2015



Source: WFP mVAM, October 2015

Markets, food supply and purchasing power

In October, as shown in Figure 6, the average cost of a standard food basket remained stable, inasmuch as the variation from the average cost reported in [September](#) did not exceed 2 percent across most monitored governorates. One exception was Anbar where there was a 10 percent increase in the average cost from September (IQD 1,048) to October (IQD 1,152), which indicates an overall trend of increasing food prices since July. In Anbar, the cost of a

basic food basket recorded in October was notably higher than the overall governorate average in the districts of Alkhaliydyah (IQD 1,611), Fulluja (IQD 1,441), and Ramadi (IQD 1,419) by 40, 25 and 23 percent, respectively. In besieged Haditha district, even though the average cost dropped by 11 percent (from IQD 4,390 to 3,928 IQD), it was still three times higher than the overall average price in Anbar. As reported by [OCHA](#), the Iraq Ministry of Trade released over 1,000 metric tons of flour to Haditha residents, which reportedly halved the price of flour in the district, but it still remains double that of Baghdad.

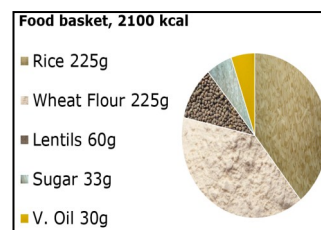
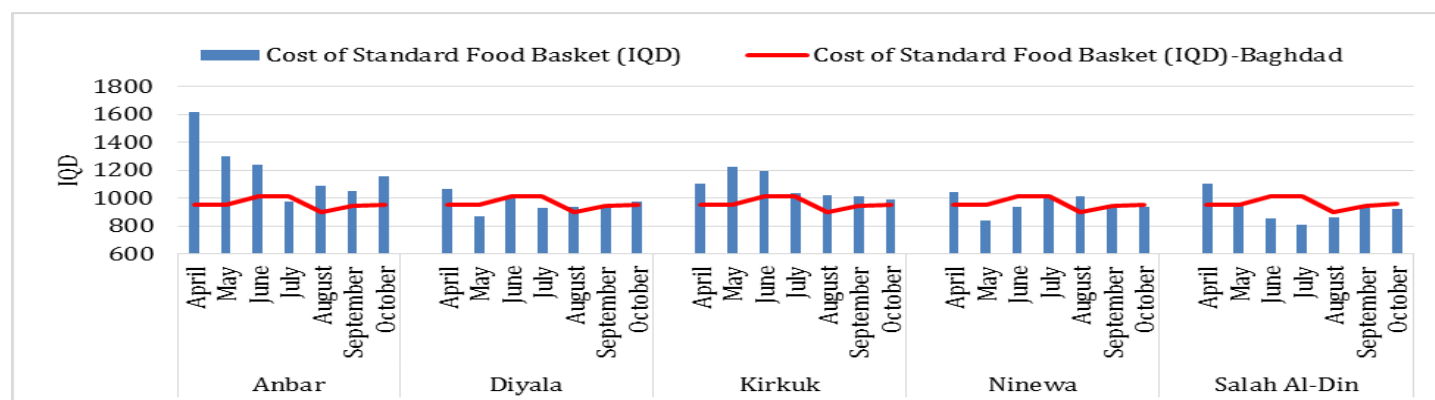


Figure 6: Cost of a standard food basket, April – October 2015



Source: WFP mVAM, October 2015

mVAM data shows that prices of wheat flour and sugar continued to be higher in all monitored governorates compared with prices recorded in Baghdad (Table 1). However, the price differential with Baghdad for wheat flour decreased from September to October in Kirkuk (from 43 to 20 percent), and in Salah Al-Din (from 33 to 11 percent). Conversely, the price differential for rice increased in Anbar (by 20 percent) and in Diyala (by 35 percent), where also the price differential for sugar increased by 28 percent during this time.

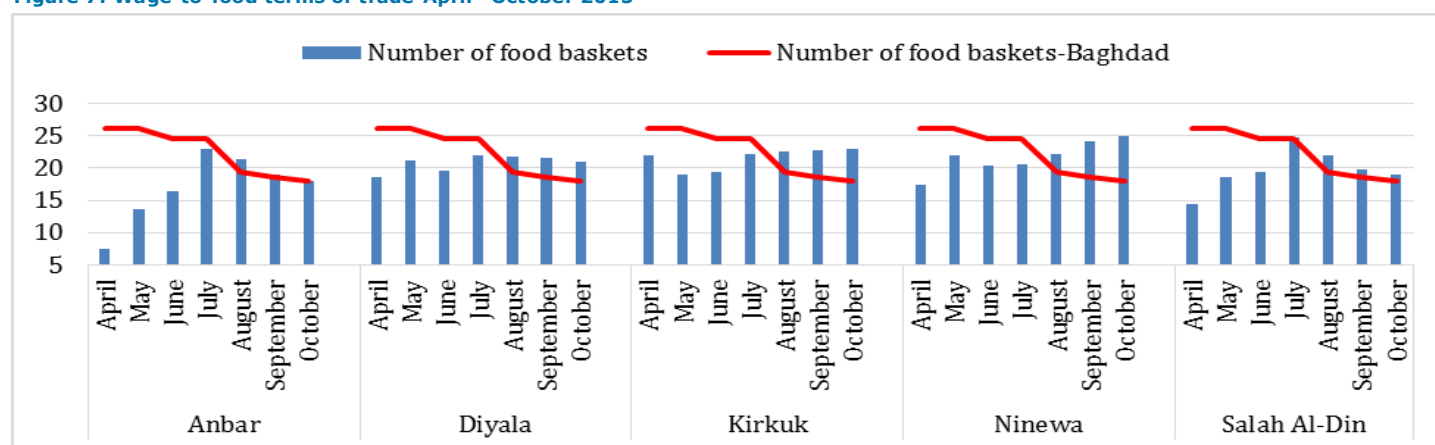
Table 1. Commodity price differentials with Baghdad, October 2015 (IQD)

Commodity	Anbar	Diyala	Kirkuk	Ninewa	Salah Al-Din
Rice	13%	22%	0%	2%	-8%
Wheat flour	55%	40%	20%	22%	11%
Lentils	-11%	18%	-13%	1%	-25%
Sugar	57%	30%	32%	-9%	20%
Vegetable oil	5%	-7%	-9%	-19%	-3%

Source: WFP mVAM, October 2015

In line with food prices, household purchasing power in October was similar to that of September across all monitored governorates; wage-to food terms of trade decreased by one basket in Anbar, Diyala and Salah-Al Din and increased by one basket in Ninewa, while no change was recorded in Kirkuk (Figure 7). The overall stability in household purchasing power is likely linked to the steady rates for food prices and daily wages reported between September and October. However, a lack of employment opportunities was noted in Daquq district of Kirkuk, and in Falluja and Alqaiam districts of Anbar.

Figure 7: Wage-to-food terms of trade April–October 2015



Source: WFP mVAM, October 2015

October's heavy rains may negatively affect wheat crop supplies into 2016

Heavy rains may have damaged some of Iraq's recently harvested wheat crop supplies. The shortage of adequate grain storage facilities, coupled with the sizeable 2015 wheat crop harvest, resulted in large quantities of grain being

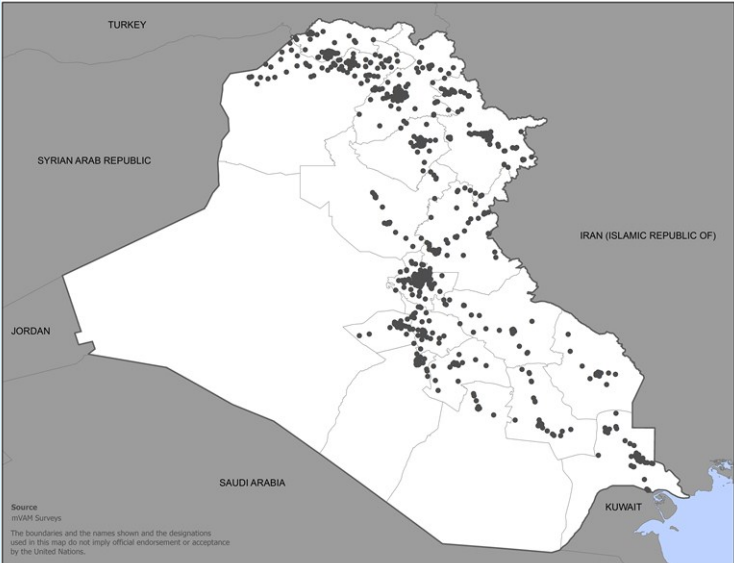
stored on the ground; while this grain was probably stored under tarps, some losses are likely. Both recent rains and continuing fighting around key agricultural areas have also disrupted autumn fieldwork and wheat-planting activities as excess rainfall washed out freshly planted wheat in some areas. Farmers still have adequate time to replant if fields dry out. However, the Iraq Ministry of Agriculture is projecting a significantly lower wheat crop in 2016, based upon diminished irrigation supplies and a lower planted area.

Methodology - mVAM remote data collection

In October 2015, mVAM conducted the eighth round of household food security monitoring using live telephone interviews throughout Iraq. Data was collected from a sample of 1,642 respondents, through Korek, a major mobile network operator. WFP is monitoring a panel of respondents drawn from Korek’s database living in Iraq’s 18 governorates. Map 3 shows the cellphone towers from which live telephone interview responses were received. Further details on survey methodology are available [online](#).

In addition to monitoring household food security, WFP has been collecting market information in central and northern governorates of Iraq, using live telephone interviews. In collaboration with Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, information was obtained in October from 48 locations in five governorates: Anbar (13), Diyala (7), Kirkuk (10), Ninewa (4), and Salah Al-Din (14) using a simplified market questionnaire.

Map 3. Iraq mVAM data collection - October 2015



Source: WFP mVAM, October 2015

The [Food Consumption Score](#) (FCS) is a proxy indicator for food security that measures the diversity of household diets, and how frequently food is consumed. The FCS classifies households as having ‘poor’, ‘borderline’ or ‘acceptable’ food consumption. Households with ‘poor’ or ‘borderline’ consumption are considered to be consuming an inadequate diet and to be food insecure.

To report the level of statistical significance, the following reference is used:

p-value	reported symbol
0.10 to 0.05	*
< 0.05 to 0.01	**
< 0.01	***

For further information please contact:

Jane Pearce
Arif Husain
Jean-Martin Bauer

jane.pearce@wfp.org
arif.husain@wfp.org
jean-martin.bauer@wfp.org



Financial support to mVAM provided by USAID

