



World Food Programme

Bulletin 13 – December 2015

IRAQ

December 2015: Food security indicators continue to be poor in Ninewa and Duhok

Highlights

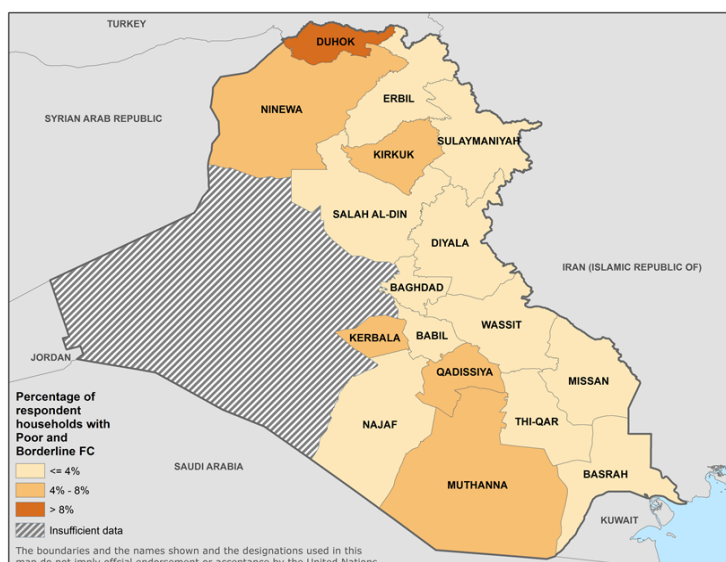
- The highest levels of inadequate consumption and use of negative food-based coping strategies were again noted by households in the conflict-affected governorates of Duhok and Ninewa.
- Increased coping was reported by internally displaced (IDPs) households living in camps, and households residing in Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah.
- Urgent food assistance finally reached Haditha district of Anbar where the price of wheat and rice decreased for the first time in seven months.
- Household access to the government's Public Distribution System (PDS) remained low in November in Erbil, Kirkuk, Salah Al-Din, Diyala, Baghdad and Basrah governorates. Restricted PDS access seems to be closely linked with displacement.
- Prospects for 2016 barley and wheat crops remain uncertain due to ongoing conflict in the main producing governorates - Salah Al-Din and Ninewa; crop failure would have serious implications for the food security of the population.

Food security indicators continued to deteriorate for IDPs living in conflict-affected governorates

National level food security remained stable in November, with 4 percent of all respondents reporting having inadequate ('poor' or 'borderline') food consumption, a prevalence observed since August 2015. The highest rate of inadequate consumption during this month was once again reported by respondents in Duhok and Ninewa governorates, at 10 and 5 percent of all surveyed households respectively, confirming the trend noted in October (Figure 1).

IDPs continued to be considerably worse off in terms of food consumption and dietary diversity than non-displaced households according to November mVAM data. However, unlike in previous months, the proportion of IDPs consuming inadequate diet was similar for the IDPs living in camps and those living outside (17.6 and 15.6 percent). In November, inadequate consumption among IDPs in camps (57 observations) decreased from 42 percent in October to 17.6 percent in November***. Conversely, for those living outside camps the prevalence increased from 10 percent in October to 15.6 percent in November*** (Figure 2).

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



Source: WFP mVAM, November 2015

Box 1. Situation update

Iraq faces a complex and growing humanitarian crisis with at least 8.7 million Iraqis requiring humanitarian assistance.

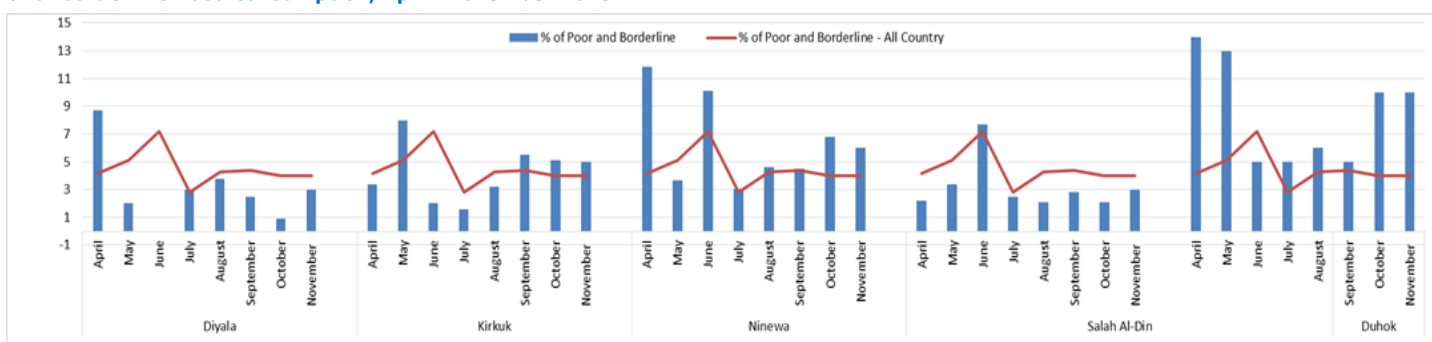
On 12 November, Kurdish Peshmerga forces launched an offensive and recaptured Sinjar in Ninewa governorate from ISIL. Sinjar is a strategic town on the main axis linking Mosul and Raqqa in Syria. No major displacements have been reported so far in Sinjar, though this may be partially attributable to the fact that very few civilians are reportedly still residing in the area. In Anbar governorate, the Iraqi Security Forces continued to make slow progress in the operation to re-take Ramadi, hindered by limited forces and dogged resistance from armed opposition groups.

According to IOM, a slight decrease in the number of IDPs was observed during the month of November. As of 19 November, 3,190,170 IDPs dispersed across 103 districts and 3,542 locations in Iraq have been identified. A significant decrease in IDPs has been reported in the governorates of Salah al-Din and Diyala mainly due to ongoing return movements in both governorates. However, displacement is still ongoing in some areas due to conflict; an additional 10,848 individuals were displaced in Ninewa between 12 and 18 November.

Compounding the situation is the ongoing cholera outbreak. Additional new cases of cholera were confirmed in November, bringing the total to 2,810 confirmed cases in 17 governorates as of 22 November.

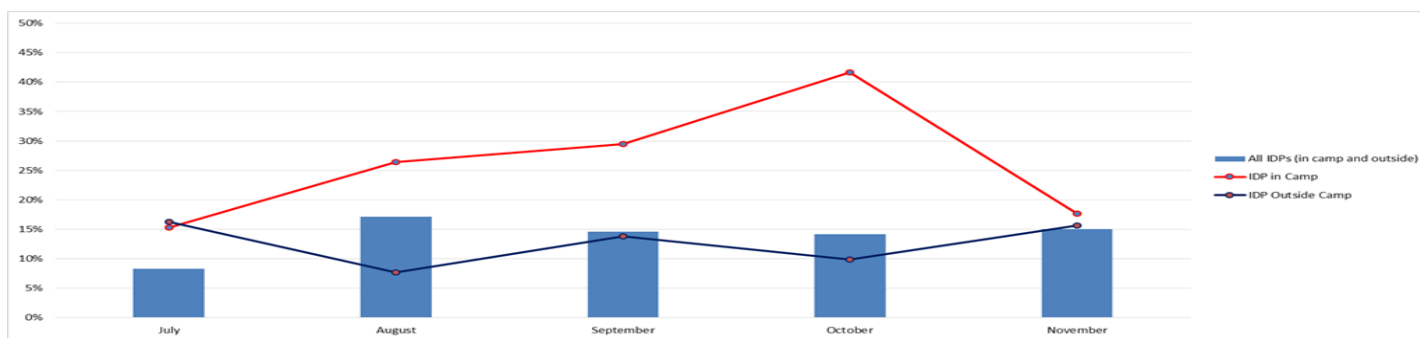
Sources: WFP, OCHA and IOM

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



Source: WFP mVAM, November 2015

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



Source: WFP mVAM, November 2015

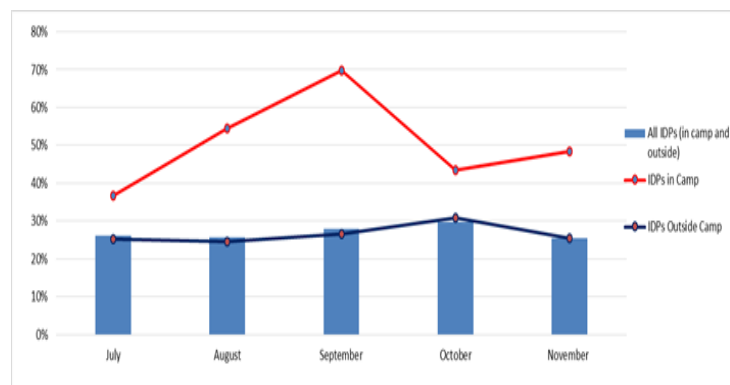
Prevalence of negative consumption-based coping increased for IDPs living in camps

In November, the overall proportion of respondents reporting using negative food-based coping strategies because they did not have enough food or money to buy food (10%) remained similar to the that recorded in October (11%) (Figure 4). As in October, households in Duhok and Ninewa continued to report above-average usage of coping, at 21 percent and 17 percent respectively. In addition, households in Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah** governorates were more likely to use coping strategies in November than October (rising from 7 percent and 4 percent respectively to 12 percent). Conversely in Najaf and Babil governorates, the prevalence of respondents using food-related negative coping strategies decreased from 14 percent in June to 7 percent in July* (Map 2).

In several governorates, there were increases since October in the percentage of households that reduce the number of meals eaten in a day (Dohuk from 14 to 21 percent* and Sulaymaniyah from 3 to 11 percent ***); limited their portion sizes (Kerbala from 3 to 9 percent* and Ninewa from 4 to 11 percent**); received help from friends and family (Sulaymaniyah from 4 to 12 percent**) and relied on less expensive food (Sulaymaniya from 3 to 9 percent*).

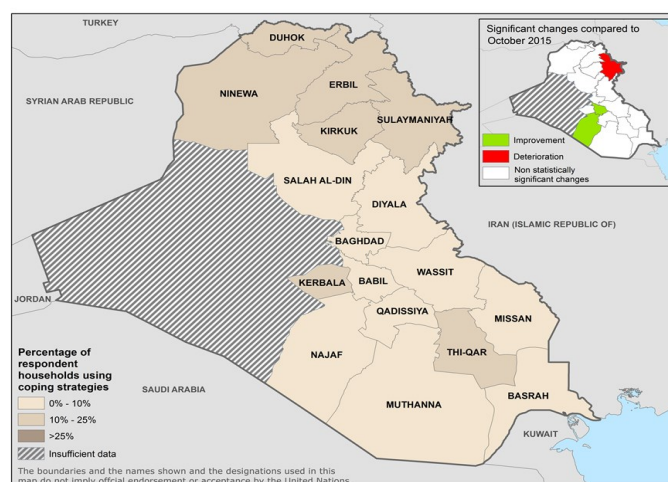
The percentage of IDPs living in camps who use coping strategies rose from 43.5 percent in October to 48.4 percent in November (Figure 3). This might be associated with the improved food consumption of some of these households (as shown in Figure 2), implying that they may have resorted to the use of negative food-based coping in order to improve their consumption and dietary diversity.

Figure 3. Percentage of IDP respondent households using food-related negative coping strategies, IDPs in camps vs. all IDPs, July – November 2015



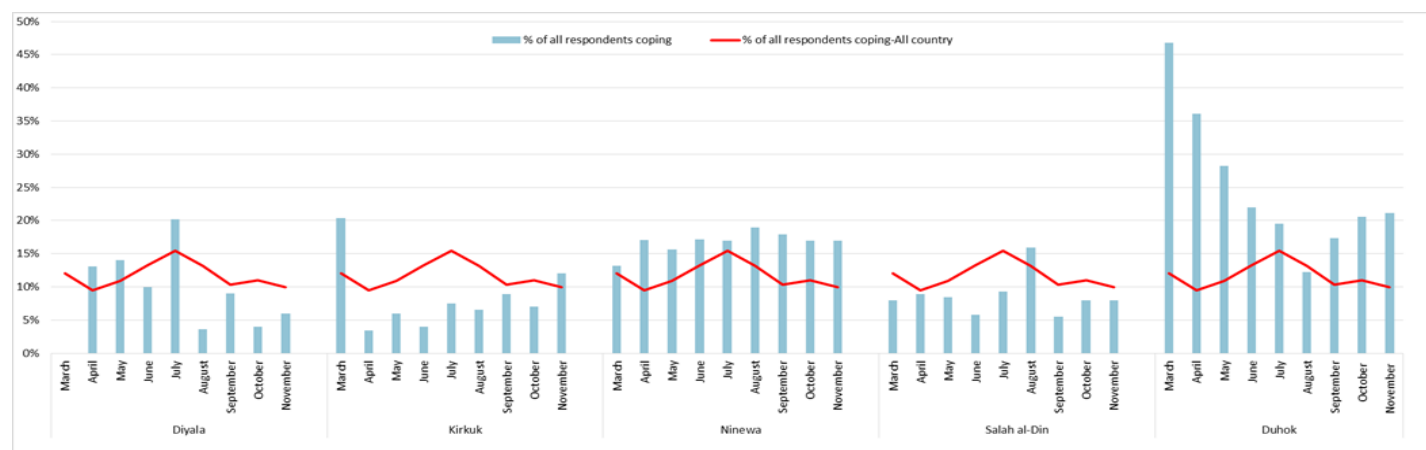
Source: WFP mVAM, November 2015

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



Source: WFP mVAM, November 2015

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



Source: WFP mVAM, November 2015

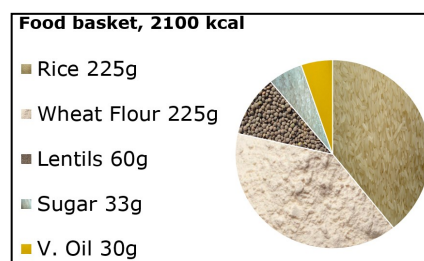
Markets, food supply and purchasing power

This month, a slight increase in the average cost of the standard food basket was observed in all monitored governorates by comparison with October, with the exception of Salah Al-Din where the prices remained the same and Diyalah where the prices decreased (Figure 5). In Baghdad, there was a 10 percent increase in the average cost between October (IQD 956) and November (IQD 1,056). In Anbar, the average cost of a basic food basket (IQD 1227) continued to be higher than in the other monitored governorates with peaks in the district of Haditha (IQD 1,692). However, in November, after more than seven months of restricted access due to an ongoing siege, WFP distributed urgently needed food assistance provided by the Government of Iraq to nearly 70,000 people in the cities of Haditha and Al Baghdadi.

Figure 5. Cost of a standard food basket, April – November 2015



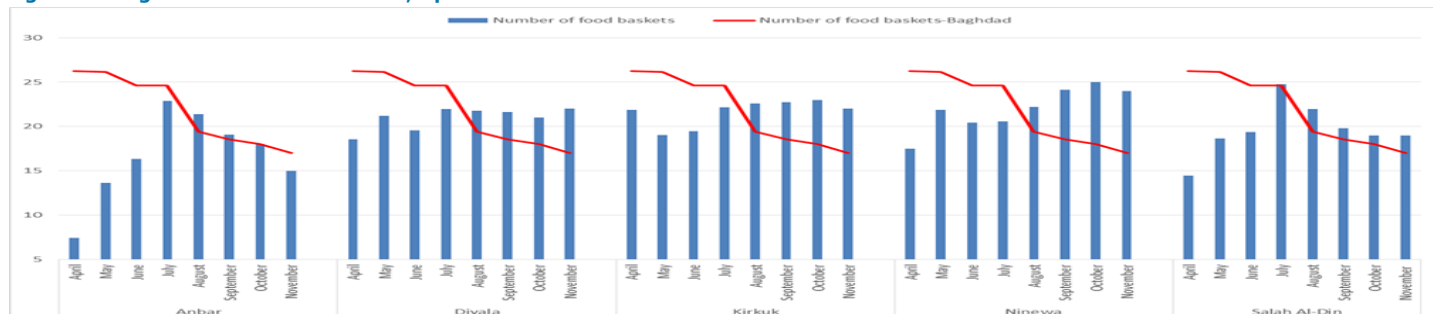
Source: WFP mVAM, November 2015



The Iraqi Ministry of Trade donated 1,050 metric tons of wheat flour, rice, sugar and vegetable oil to help cover the food needs of affected families for one month in Haditha and Al Baghdadi. As a result, a significant decrease in the price of wheat and rice was noted in Haditha from IQD 8,750 in October to IQD 2,000 in November for one kilogram of wheat and from IQD 8,330 in October to IQD 3,660 in November for one kilogram of rice.

The price differential with Baghdad for wheat and sugar in all monitored governorates continued to be higher than in Baghdad. The price differential with Baghdad for rice increased in all the governorates surveyed especially in Anbar (from -7 to 27 percent) and in Kirkuk (from -6 to 6 percent) while the price differential for vegetable oil decreased in Anbar (from 12 to 9 percent) and in Ninewa (from 6 to 0 percent).

Figure 6. Wage-to-food terms of trade, April – November 2015



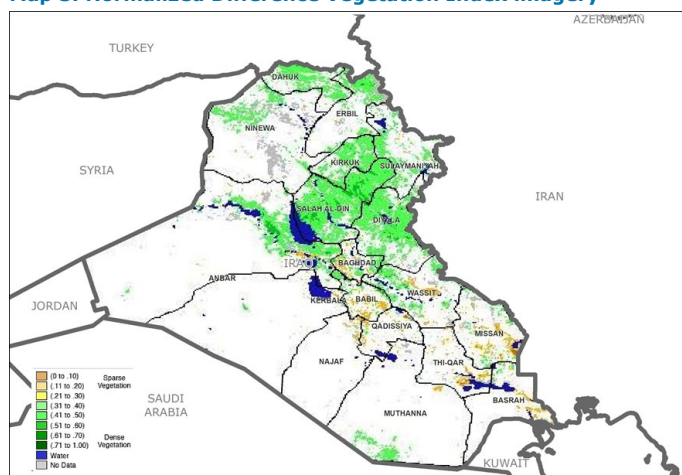
Source: WFP mVAM, November 2015

In November, the overall purchasing power of the sampled households diminished by one food basket in all monitored locations, except in Diyala where due to the 3 percent reduction in food prices, people were able to buy one additional food basket (Figure 6). The 15 percent decrease in purchasing power in Anbar in November is likely attributable to a reduction in the average daily wage for unskilled labour, which fell from IQD 21,042 to IQD 19,800 and the continuous increase in food prices. It is also worth noting the continued fall in purchasing power in Baghdad, a trend that has been observed since July.

Uncertain prospects for 2016 crops mainly due to conflict in parts of the country

Despite favourable weather conditions, preliminary forecasts indicate a grain harvest below the 2014 level. Based on remotely-sensed data, images (Map 3) suggest relatively good vegetation conditions in the winter crop growing areas. However, the agricultural season (from October/November to April/May) was significantly affected by the ongoing conflict, particularly in northern parts of the country, which normally contribute to a large share of wheat and barley production. Salah Al-Din and Ninewa governorates, at the centre of the current conflict, normally contribute together to nearly 30 percent of national wheat production and about 38 percent of the national barley production. The population of Mosul has relied upon the local wheat production from areas controlled by armed opposition groups - a short crop, or crop failure across Ninewa would have very serious implications for the food security situation of the population.

Map 3. Normalized Difference Vegetation Index imagery



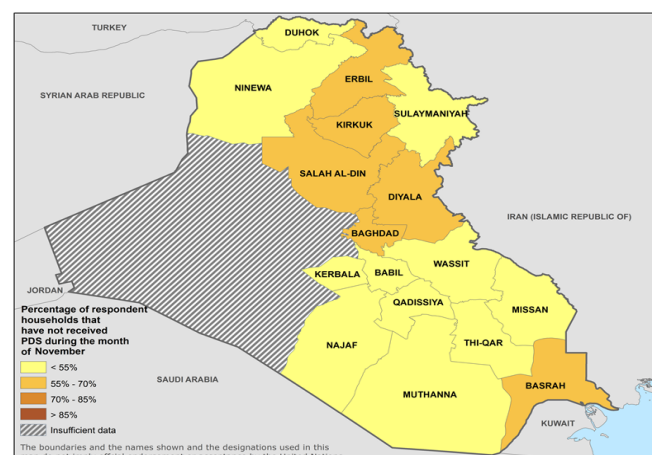
Source: NDVI

Household access to the Public Distribution System (PDS)

In November, access to the PDS remained low in Erbil, Kirkuk, Salah Al-Din, Diyala, Baghdad and Basrah governorates (Map 4). November data indicates that 74 percent of all surveyed IDPs did not receive PDS by comparison with 53 percent of non-displaced respondents.

In addition, the majority of IDPs in Diyala and Kirkuk reported not receiving PDS and only 17 percent and 11 percent of IDP respondents in these governorates reported receiving partial PDS.

Map 4. Percentage of respondent households that did not receive PDS during November 2015



Source: WFP mVAM, November 2015

Figure 7. Word Cloud– November 2015

When asked about the overall food security situation, most respondents noted insufficient work opportunities and concerns about the payment of salaries as the main issues (Figure 7).

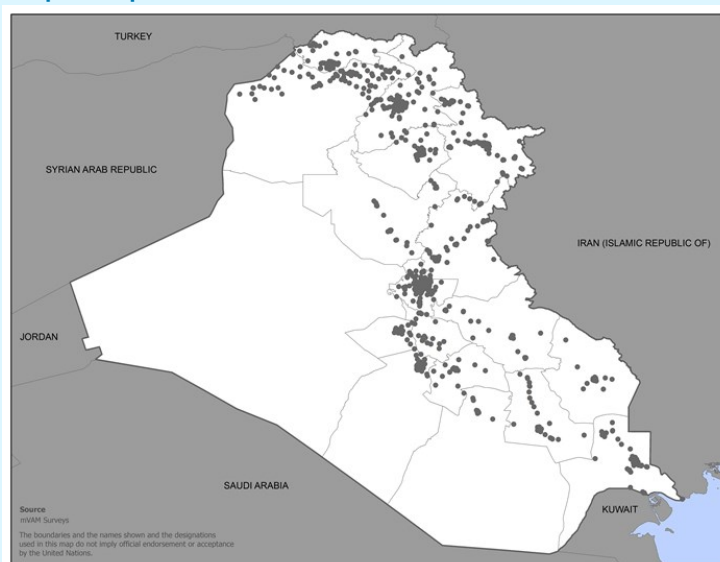


Methodology - mVAM remote data collection

In November 2015, mVAM conducted the ninth round of household food security monitoring using live telephone interviews throughout Iraq. Data was collected from a sample of 1,700 respondents, through Korek, a major mobile network operator. WFP monitored a panel of respondents drawn from Korek's database living in Iraq's 18 governorates. Map 5 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 collected market information in central and northern governorates of Iraq, using live telephone interviews. In collaboration with Islamic Relief, in November 224 calls were successfully operated to obtain information from 36 different locations (sub-districts) in five governorates: Anbar (8), Diyala (7), Kirkuk (10), Ninewa (4), and Salah Al-Din (7) using a simplified market questionnaire.

Map 5. Iraq mVAM data collection - November 2015



Source: WFP mVAM, November 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	***

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