



KEY FINDINGS

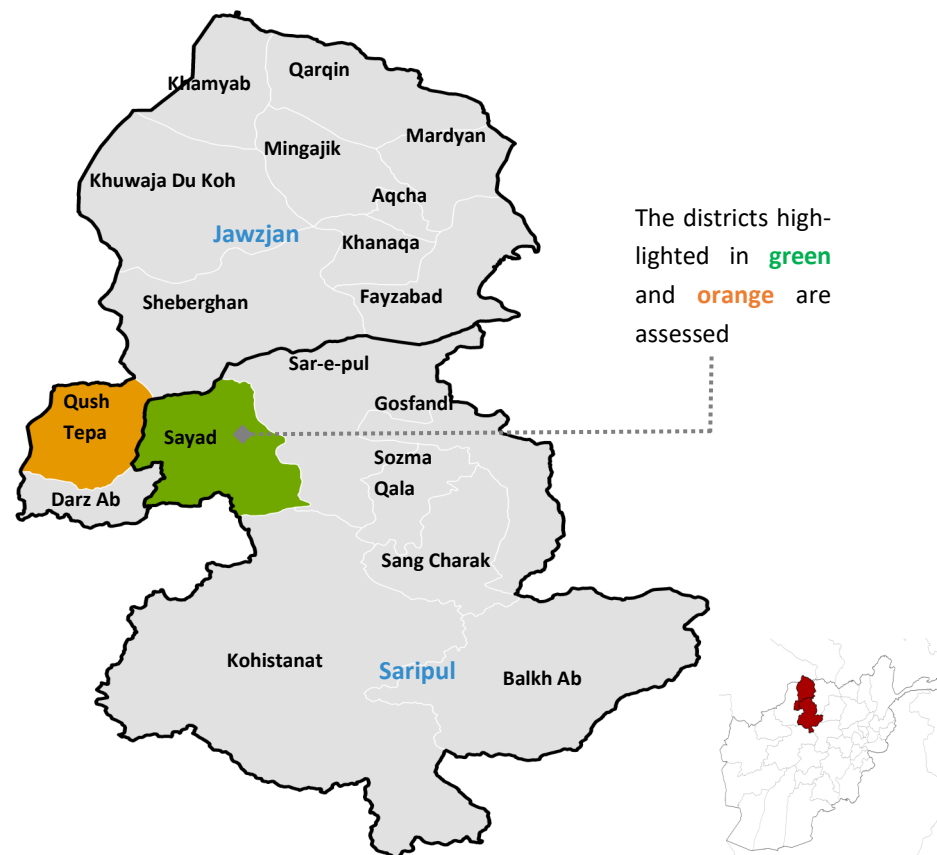
- Access in Sayad district of Saripul province and Qush Tepa district of Jawzjan province have been severely constrained for the past few weeks due to insecurity and conflict. As a result, a limited number of households have been displaced from the insecure communities to the district centres of Sayed and Qush Tepa. The food prices have also increased as a result of the conflict which has limited the supply to the markets due to lack of access to the markets by the traders. The majority of people in the assessed districts are unable to go to work or to access the markets, or to find new income opportunities.
- Supply of food commodities to Sayad is mainly from Mazar and Saripul centres while for Qush Tepa, is mainly from Mazar and Jawzjan centres. Supply of food commodities from Jawzjan main (Shiberghan) market and from Saripul centre has been limited for the past month due to insecurity along the connecting roads which has resulted in price increases.
- Household access to food and livelihood opportunities in Sayed and Qush Tepa districts is constrained both physically and economically. The security situation in Mirzawlang area, which is close to Sayad district, is worse compare to the situation in Sayad and Qush Tepa districts.

ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

In response to reports of a deteriorating situation due to armed clashes between Government and anti-government elements (AGEs) which has limited access by humanitarian and governmental agencies to assess the impact on the populations and markets, WFP launched a phone (mVAM) emergency market survey on 28 – 29 August to better understand the situation on the ground. A total of 20 interviews (10 per district) were conducted with key Informants (Community Development Councils, *Shura* leaders and traders) in order to get a snapshot of how these conflict events are impacting the market function and the food security situation of the affected households. The findings in this report will help the Government and humanitarian agencies to determine the best way to respond to the crisis.

Access and Security

Most of the respondents in Sayed and Qush Tepa districts indicated that security situation has gotten worse over the past month and therefore households face security concerns while accessing the district markets. This has also affected the supply of food commodities to the markets by the traders. The security situation for the rural communities in Qush Tepa and Sayad districts is worse compared to the centres of these districts. The people in the rural communities are facing security and access concerns when traveling from villages to the district centres to buy food, households and traders both find it difficult to have access to the main district markets.

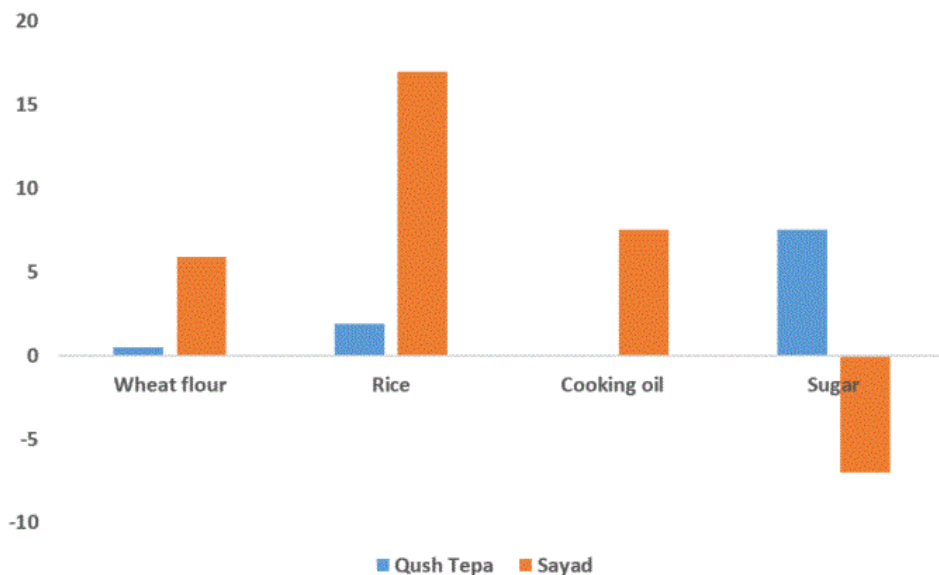


Food prices and Shortage

Food prices in both Sayad and Qush Tapa districts increased since last month because of reduced supply and higher transport costs from Mazar, Jawzjan and Saripul central markets, mainly due to insecurity and bad road conditions. The prices for staple foods (wheat flour, rice, sugar and cooking oil) are reported to be higher in Sayad and Qush Tapa district markets compared to the price in Mazar, Saripul and Jawzjan markets.

Traders also reported that insecurity in Sayad and Qush Tapa districts have caused food shortages of the staple foods, mainly the supply of food from Sayad and Qush Tapa centres to its villages are constrained. To compare the average prices of Qush Tapa with the prices of Jawzjan central market, it shows that the prices for the staple foods are higher in Qush Tapa market, except the price of cooking oil which remained the same. To compare the average prices of Sayad market with the prices of Saripul central market, it shows that the prices for the staple foods (wheat flour, rice and cooking oil) are higher in Sayad market, except the price of sugar which is reported lower than Saripul price.

Chart 1: Percentage changes in food prices



Note: The prices of Qush Tapa is compare with the average prices of Jawzjan. The prices of Sayad is compared with the prices of Saripul

Chart 2: Average prices of food commodities in AFN/Kg-Lit

District/Province	Wheat flour	Rice	Cooking oil	Sugar
Qush Tapa district	25	83	80	54
Sayad district	27	82	81	80
Average price - Balkh	24	84	80	55
Average price - Jawzjan	25	82	80	50
Average price - Saripul	26	70	75	86

Note: All prices are in AFN/kg-lit. The prices for wheat flour and rice is collected for the high quality. The prices for Balkh, Jawzjan and Saripul is for the month of July 2017.

Terms of Trade (ToT)

The **Terms of Trade (ToT)** between wheat flour and casual labour is a proxy indicator for household purchasing power, which shows the quantity of wheat flour that can be purchased with the wage earned from one day of casual (unskilled) labour.

The reported ToT for labour/wheat flour in Sayad district is 11 kgs of wheat flour/day wage. This is 6 percent lower than Saripul (12 kgs/day wage) and 7 percent lower than Mazar (13 kgs/day wage) province. The reported ToT for Qush Tapa is 12 kgs of wheat flour/day wage. This is the same as Saripul and 6 percent lower than Mazar. Moreover, the availability of casual labour in both Sayad and Qush Tapa districts is extremely limited—around 1 to 2 days per week. The increasing negative impacts of the armed conflict on the household income is getting worrisome as working opportunities for local residents have substantially reduced. When compared to previous years, people in Sayad and Qush Tapa districts would have better access to agriculture and casual labour work due to the harvest season. However, this year work opportunities are extremely limited due to increase in insecurity and conflict.

Market Capacity

The markets of Sayad and Qush Tapa districts have fewer shops, lower food stocks and are completely reliant on food supply from Mazar, Jawzjan and Saripul main markets, while both markets have the capacity to respond to the current need of the people in Sayad and Qush Tapa and can respond even if the demand slightly increases in the near future. The markets of Sayad and Qush Tapa markets have the ability to respond to current food demand and to a sudden or slow increase in the future. However, the increase in demand will also increase food prices.

The respondents indicated that supply of food commodities to Mirzawlang area is very limited and the prices seems to be significantly higher compared to the prices in Sayad and Qush Tapa districts. The market of Mirzawlang has not been functional since last month and the people in this area is mainly rely on purchase from neighbouring district markets.

A cash-based intervention to meet the needs of this people would not be appropriate given the fact that Sayad and Qush Tapa markets are insecure, the prices are higher and can increase further if the current security situation get worse, and the supply is too limited to meet an increased demand. In addition, a cash based response to this situation could result in additional price increases, by creating greater demand for already limited food commodities.

Livelihood Related Information

The majority of the respondents in **Sayad and Qush Tapa** districts reported that people were currently unable to go to work, even for casual labour opportunities (1-2 days in a week), mainly due to insecurity. In general, people in these districts have very limited access to livelihood activities compared to the people in Mazar, Jawzjan and Saripul centers, and are mainly relying on loans from friends and support from relatives.

The daily wage rate for unskilled labour is AFN 250 in both Sayad and Qush Tapa districts. This is much lower than the casual labour wage in Mazar, Saripul and Jawzjan provinces (AFN 300-350), and when compounded with the higher price for wheat flour, the ToT further deteriorate. The respondents in Sayad and Qush Tapa districts indicated that most of the households in the villages of the districts have limited access to buy food with cash and some with credit, and have limited food stocks and are mainly relying on credit and borrowing cash to purchase food. Agriculture and livestock are the main livelihood activities to the majority of the people in both assessed districts. Some limited number of people also rely on petty trade, and small scale shops.

People in Sayad and Qush Tapa districts have less access to livelihood/work opportunities than those in Mazar, Jawzjan and Saripul provinces. There are limited casual labour work opportunities available in the centre of Sayad and Qush Tapa districts, and no labour work opportunities are available in the villages of both districts.

Food Security Situation

When asked about the food security situation in the district, the respondents indicated that the majority of the households in both Sayad and Qush Tapa districts have around 1 month of food stock left from the previous year and recent cash purchases. Farmers and households with land have around 2-3 months of food stock from this year's harvest. However, households with no land indicated a lower food reserve that would last less than a month. These households showed a tendency of purchasing food to meet the immediate need of the households and not buying in bulk. Thus the poorer households - those that have no access to land or livestock and rely on casual labour - tend to rely on buying food with credit, with some also relying on their relatives and friends for food.

This complete reliance on casual labour opportunities to purchase food is extremely worrying, as a sudden halt in food supply to the market could drastically impact these households' to access to food in both districts. Given food shortages and high prices in the local market, households are facing double access constraints. These are both physical and economic in nature. There is not enough food supply to the markets of Sayad and Qush Tapa which has impact on the increase in food prices and is un-affordable for most households due to the high price and lack of income generating opportunity.

The food security situation can get worse in the coming months due to the start of the post-harvest time in both districts. However, this may not affect all the households in Sayad and Qush Tapa districts but can affect the people relying on agriculture labour wage.

Protection Concerns

It is reported by the majority of the respondents that people in the villages of Sayad and Qush Tapa districts as well as in Mirzawlang area which is close to Sayad are facing safety and security concerns when travelling to and from the markets or to find livelihood activities. In the centre of Qush Tapa and Sayad districts, a limited number of people are facing with protection and security issues. The protection concerns are mainly related to the increased in fighting between the AGEs and government forces.