



KEY FINDINGS

- Access in both **Shirin Tagab** and **Khwaja Sabzposh** districts has been severely constrained for the past 3 months particularly in February, mainly due to insecurity and conflict. As a result, many households are displaced to the surrounding villages of these districts as well as to other neighbouring districts.
- Supply of food commodities to both districts is mainly from the capital of Faryab (Maimana market) with some also coming from Mazar central market. Supply of food commodities to Maimana is mainly from Mazar central market. It is reported by the traders that supply from Mazar to Maimana is challenging due to insecurity, which is also affecting the supply from Maimana to Shirin Tagab, and Khwaja Sabzposh districts. This limited supply has resulted in an increase in the prices of food commodities.
- The respondents reported that due to the ongoing conflict and security threats, access to hospitals, clinics and schools is limited.
- In conclusion, household access to food and livelihood opportunities in both assessed districts is constrained. The insecurity in Shirin Tagab and Khwaja Sabzposh districts also increased in number of IDPs from its capitals to the surrounding safer villages and neighbouring districts, which also resulted in deterioration of the livelihoods of the displaced population.

ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

In response to reports of a deteriorating situation due to conflict insecurity and armed clashes between Government and anti-government elements (AGEs) in Khwaja Sabzposh and Shirin Tagab districts over the past 3 months as well as the establishment of checkpoints by AGEs on the supplying roads in these districts, WFP launched a rapid phone (mVAM) survey on 13 February to better understand the situation on the ground.

A total of 20 interviews (10 per district) were conducted with *Shura leaders, traders and farmers* in order to get a better understanding of how these events are impacting market function and the livelihoods and food security 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.

Insecurity

Most of the respondents in **Khwaja Sabzposh** and **Shirin Tagab** districts indicated that traders are facing security and access issues when supplying food commodities from Maimana and Mazar markets. Additionally, the local people in the capitals and some neighbouring villages of both districts are also facing security concerns, which forced some of the households to flee to the safer neighbouring villages and districts. Due to insecurity, access to health facilities and schools in both assessed districts is constrained.

The recent security situation has resulted in displacement of around 1,000-1,200 households from each districts to Maimana, Mazar, Sheberghan and Andkhoy districts and around 500-600 households from each district to its surrounding villages.



Districts highlighted in **blue** are assessed.



Food Supply and Prices

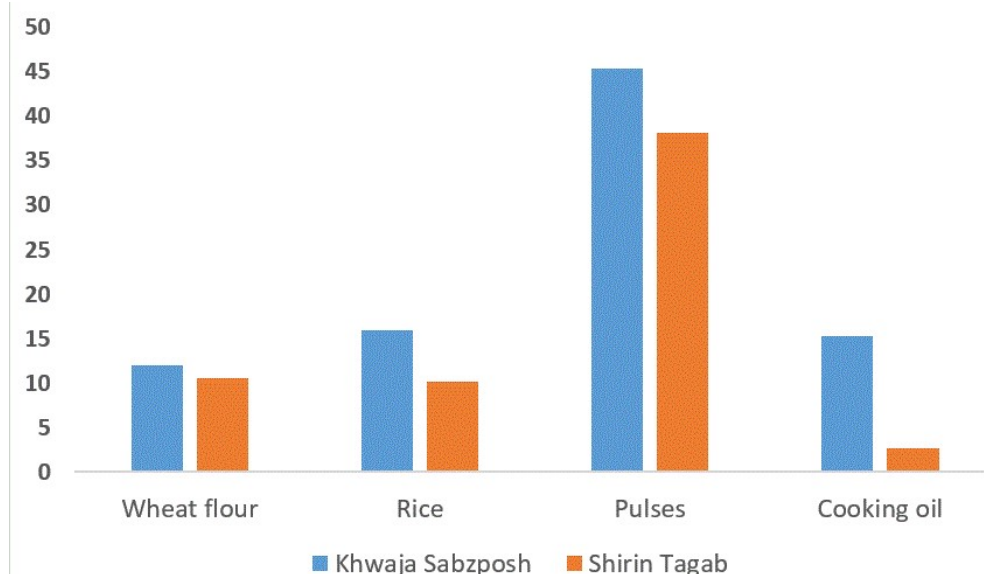
Food prices in both Shirin Tagab and Khwaja Sabzposh districts have increased over the past month due to limited supplies from Maimana and Mazar main city markets as a result of insecurity. Currently food prices in these districts are higher compared to the prices in Mazar and Maimana main city markets.

Prices in Maimana are higher than in Mazar main city market, especially over the last 3 months due to the deteriorating security situation on the supplying road from Mazar to Maimana that has disrupted the movement of food from one market to the other.

The prices for the staple foods (wheat flour, rice, beans, cooking oil) in Khwaja Sabzposh district are higher compared to Shirin Tagab, due to limited supply of food commodities to Khwaja Sabzposh district.

The price for pulses in both Shirin Tagab and Khwaja Sabzposh districts is significantly higher compared to the prices in Maimana market which is mainly due to very limited supply of pulses from Maimana to these districts.

Figure 1: Percentage changes in prices of Shirin Tagab and Khwaja Sabzposh compared to prices in Maimana main city market



Note: The retail average prices in Khwaja Sabzposh and Shirin Tagab are compared with the retail prices in Maimana.

Figure 2: Average retail prices (per kg-Lit) in Khwaja Sabzposh, Shirin Tagab and Maimana district markets

District Name	Wheat flour*	Rice**	Pulses***	Cooking oil
Khwaja Sabzposh	27	107	109	92
Shirin Tagab	27	101	104	82
Maimana	24	92	75	80

Source: The source for Maimana price data is the WFP-VAM. The price of Maimana is for the 2nd week of February.

* The price of wheat flour is for high quality

** The price of rice is for high quality

*** The prices for pulses is the average price of the main available pulses in the market

Market Functionality

Based on the information from the respondents, among all the districts of Faryab province, **Shirin Tagab and Khwaja Sabzposh** markets are the only ones faced with food shortages due to the deteriorating security situation that has limited the supply from Maimana and Mazar main markets. There are also other districts in Faryab province which are facing some food shortages although not as severe as in Shirin Tagab and Khwaja Sabzposh districts.

The reduced supply has resulted in price increases and thus people in the centre of Shirin Tagab and Khwaja Sabzposh districts are experiencing difficulties in accessing enough food — mainly the people displaced to the surrounding villages of these districts.

In terms of response analysis, the markets of Shirin Tagab and Khwaja Sabzposh districts have the ability to respond to the current demand while the current higher prices and the recent deteriorated security situation are not conducive for cash-based assistance. It is recommended to re-assess the market feasibility in these districts again in a months' time in case there is need for market feasibility information by humanitarian agencies.

It is also recommended to conduct a more detailed assessment of the affected and displaced populations in Mazar, Maimana, Shiberghan and Andkhoy districts to better understand their needs.

Livelihoods and Terms of Trade

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 terms of trade in Shirin Tagab district is reported to be 10 kgs of wheat flour per daily wage which is slightly lower than the terms of trade in Khwaja Sabzposh main city which is 11 kgs of wheat flour per daily wage. The main reason for the lower ToT in Shirin Tagab is that the daily wage rate for the casual labour work is lower. The ToT in Maimana is higher compared to the ToT in Shirin Tagab and Khwaja Sabzposh districts which is due to lower price of wheat flour plus a higher daily wage labour rate.

Based on the information from the traders, it was reported that the ToT in all the districts of Faryab province is lower than the ToT in Maimana, mostly due to the same reasons: higher wheat flour prices and lower average daily wage rate.

In both districts there are security issues for the local people when accessing the markets for livelihood activities and buying food. According to the traders, the majority of the people in Shirin Tagab and Khwaja Sabzposh districts are relying on casual labour and agriculture works, which is very limited (1-2 days in a week) during winter months, and thus they are rarely able to earn enough to meet their needs.

The limited availability of casual labour work is mainly due to remote geographic location. As a result there are few local industries and low levels of agricultural production, which normally provide casual labour opportunities. The average wage for the unskilled labour in Shirin Tagab district is AFN 280 and in Khwaja Sabzposh district is AFN 290 per day. This is compounded by the poor security situation.

Agriculture

There is no staple food cultivation during this time of the year in both Shirin Tagab and Khwaja Sabzposh districts. Based on the information from farmers, there are a limited number of villages in both districts where cultivation of vegetables is ongoing.

These vegetables are mainly used for home consumption with some limited sales to the local markets as an income activity.

The farmers reported that they are faced with several issues to proper agriculture cultivation such as limited access to credit to buy agriculture tools, limited access to agriculture seeds and fertilizers, poor seasonal rainfall and also insecurity. Besides, when farmers cultivate the staple foods and vegetables, there is no market for their staples and usually the production is consumed by the farmers.

When farmers were asked about rainfall performance and availability of irrigation water, most indicated that there is limited rainfall and availability of irrigation water compared to last year which will also have a negative impact on their cultivation this season.

The main priority needs of the farmers is to have timely access to seeds, fertilizers and agriculture tools which will help farmers increase their production and will help improve their income.

Priority needs of the IDPs

The recent insecurity has resulted in displacement of around 1,000-1,200 households from each assessed district to Maimana, Mazar, Sheberghan and Andkhoy districts and around 500 – 600 households from each district to its surrounding villages.

Most of the key informants in Shirin Tagab and Khwaja Sabzposh districts indicated that the main priorities of the IDPs are food, shelter and cash assistance. The top priority need is food, followed by shelter and cash assistance. When asked about cash or food preferences, some of the IDP key informants were giving preference to food compared to cash assistance, mainly due to higher food prices and limited access to the markets in some areas.

It was also reported that some of the IDPs received food and cash assistance in the past 3 months but not all. There are some specific villages in Shirin Tagab and Khwaja Sabzposh districts with a high number of IDPs but had not received any assistance since they were displaced. A similar situation was reported for the displaced people in Maimana and Mazar districts, that the IDPs from Shirin Tagab and Khwaja Sabzposh districts had not received any assistance.