**Key points:**

- The share of households with poor or borderline food consumption is falling in Ninewa, Diyala, Erbil and Kirkuk.

- One in three households in Ninewa is relying on food-based coping strategies.

- Surveyed foods are widely available in Mosul and prices are lower than just after the city was retaken.

**Situation Update**

By 28 February 2018, the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix had identified 3,511,603 people returning to their areas of origin and 2,317,698 internally displaced people (IDPs) across Iraq since January 2014.

Damage to infrastructure and shelters was reported following the heavy rains in mid-February in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. This affected 130,240 IDPs in camps in Anbar, Baghdad, Salah Aldin, Diyala, Suleimaniya, Erbil, Ninewa and Kirkuk. Assessments of other camps are still underway.

In coordination with the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster, the REACH Initiative conducted a national returns intention survey to inform the camp closure and consolidation initiatives of the humanitarian community and the Government of Iraq. The majority of surveyed IDPs said they had no intention of returning, for fear of a lack of safety in their areas of origin. Relief agencies remain concerned by continued reports of forced evictions and premature camp consolidations, and they continue to advocate for safe, dignified and voluntary returns.

**Source:** WFP, CCCM and IOM
In February, mVAM interviewed IDPs, returnees and resident households affected by the conflict in Erbil and Kirkuk, as well as in selected districts of Ninewa (Telafar, Sinjar, Mosul, Tilkaif and Hamdaniya) and Diyala (Muqdadiya).

The results show an improvement in food consumption among surveyed households in all the surveyed governorates, especially in Ninewa, Erbil and Kirkuk where the percentage of households with poor and borderline food consumption fell between January and February (Figure 1).

In Ninewa, the share of households with inadequate food consumption dropped from 30 percent to 22 percent in February. Inadequate food consumption decreased in all surveyed districts apart from Mosul city, where it has been stable since January. In Sinjar, the share of households with poor food consumption dropped from 12 percent in January to 4 percent in February (Figure 2).

Poor food consumption is also falling among displaced and returnee households in Ninewa. Among returnees, borderline food consumption rates improved from 23 percent in January to 18 percent (Figure 3).

**Figure 1. Households with inadequate consumption in surveyed governorates, November 2017 to February 2018**

**Figure 2. Households with inadequate consumption in districts of Ninewa, November 2017 to February 2018**

**Figure 3. Households with inadequate consumption in districts of Ninewa by respondent status, November 2017 to February 2018**

*Data not collected in Erbil and Kirkuk for November and December 2017

*Data not collected in Tilkaif and Hamdaniya for November and December 2017

Source: mVAM, February 2018
Surveyed households were asked if there were times in the seven days before the survey when they did not have enough food or money to buy food.

The percentage of households who reported using food-related coping strategies fell from 28 percent to 9 percent in Erbil and from 39 percent to 18 percent in Kirkuk. In Kirkuk, 38 percent of surveyed households reported having received food assistance in the month before the survey. However, it rose from 26 percent to 33 percent in Nineva in February (Figure 4).

The increase was particularly marked in the district of Telafar, where the share of households relying on food-related coping strategies went up from 28 percent to 39 percent (Figure 5).

The use of negative coping strategies also rose among IDPs and returnees in Nineva (Figure 6). In February, more of these households borrowed money or relied on help from friends and family, limited portion sizes and/or ate fewer meals per day.

*Data not collected in Erbil and Kirkuk for November and December 2017
*Data not collected in Tiksai and Hamdaniya for November and December 2017
In February, household access to the public distribution system (PDS) was similar in all surveyed governorates. Although PDS access improved in February in Erbil, 70 percent of households reported not receiving rations in February (Figure 7).

Despite improvements in Erbil, access to the public distribution system remains very low

Figure 7. Percentage of households receiving PDS in surveyed governorates, November 2017 to February 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governorate</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diyala</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninewa</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erbil</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkuk</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data not collected in Erbil and Kirkuk for November and December 2017

Methodology – mVAM remote data collection

In February 2017, mVAM conducted household food security monitoring using telephone interviews. Data were collected from 1327 respondents via Korek, a major mobile network operator, between 11 February and 5 March. WFP monitored respondents living in several locations in the governorates of Ninewa, Diyala, Erbil (in IDP camps) and Kirkuk (in IDP camps). Respondents were drawn from Korek's database. The data were weighted by the number of mobile phones owned by the household.

In addition, in collaboration with Islamic Relief Worldwide, key informant interviews were conducted, covering 12 locations in eastern Mosul and 7 locations in western Mosul.
In February, food prices continued on a slow but steady downward trend in Mosul. All monitored food prices were lower in Mosul than in the rest of Ninevah (Figure 8), making the food basket 10 percent cheaper in the city. In particular, fresh milk was 34 percent cheaper and wheat flour was 26 percent cheaper than elsewhere in the governorate.

Prices are generally behaving similarly in the east and the west of Mosul (Figure 9). The only two foods that continue to be cheaper in the west are meat (16 percent cheaper) and fresh milk (12 percent cheaper). Overall, the food basket is cheaper in eastern Mosul (IQD678) than in western Mosul (IQD741) and cheaper than in the rest of Ninevah (IQD781).

Figure 8. Main food prices in Mosul vs. Ninevah governorate, February 2018

Figure 9. Main food prices in eastern and western Mosul, February 2018
Unskilled labour wages lower in Mosul than in rest of Ninewa

In February, unskilled labour wages were 16 percent lower in Mosul than in the rest of Ninewa. However, wages are gradually increasing in Mosul, rising 6 percent between December and February. Wage rates are 39 percent lower in the west than in the east of the city; consequently, the daily wages of an unskilled labourer could buy fewer food baskets in western Mosul (16) than in the eastern part of the city (24.7) (Figure 10).

Food availability was stable in February in both western and eastern Mosul except in Hay-Nablus in the west, where all monitored foods were widely available in January but mostly unavailable in February.

Table 1. Food availability analysis – Mosul district, February 2018

Figure 10. Wage-to-food terms of trade (in food baskets) in Mosul and in Ninewa governorate, February 2018

Source: mVAM, IMST February 2018