

### Food security indicators deteriorate across governorates and among IDP households

#### Key points



Overall share of households with poor food consumption increased, especially among displaced households



The national average rCSI reached the highest level since the last six months



In October, displaced and resident households are resorting more to negative coping strategies compared to September



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#### Situation update

Following the Russia and Turkey agreement to create a 15-20 km demilitarized buffer zone to separate government troops from rebel forces, reports indicate that localised conflict along the Idlib-Lattakia border intensified in the last week of October. On 23 October, clashes erupted between Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and the National Liberation Front in Idlib, as well Kafr Hama in Aleppo.

In October, Deir-ez-Zor governorate has witnessed a period of volatility and instability following conflict to drive out the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), leading to the displacement of some 13,500 people. On 12 October, the security situation rapidly deteriorated as an ISIL-led attack on the Hajin IDP camp forced WFP to suspend operations when fighters captured the camp for two hours and transported IDPs to ISIL-held areas in Hajin town. As of 27 October, WFP was able to resume distributions in Hajin Camp, completing the overall October plan to reach 27,500 people in these areas. On the same day, utilizing the adverse weather conditions, ISIL launched a major counterattack operation regaining control of Baghuz Fawqani and As Susah villages in the Abu Kamal district of Deir-ez-Zor.

WFP continued to respond to persistent needs in southern Syria's As-Sweida, Dar'a and Quneitra governorates following the escalated violence in June and July 2018, WFP now supports these areas entirely from inside Syria.

Figure 1: Sample household characteristics



**1,585**  
interviews



**Male: 90%**  
**Female: 10%**



**41 years**  
mean age  
of respondent



**IDP: 33%**  
**Resident: 57%**  
**Returnee: 10%**



**12%**  
received food  
assistance



**Rural: 36%**  
**Urban: 64%**



Poor food consumption significantly increased among displaced households

In October 2018, the overall share of households with inadequate food consumption has increased from 26 percent in September to 29 percent in October, driven by a significant increase in the share of households with poor food consumption from 7 percent in September 9 percent.

Poor food consumption rose significantly in hard-to-reach-areas of Homs and Hama (from 11 percent in September to 18 percent in October) and hard-to-reach areas of Aleppo (from 4 percent in September to 10 percent in October). In Tartous, the share of households with borderline food consumption saw a sharp increase of 25 percentage points reaching the highest percentage of households with borderline food consumption among the surveyed governorates (Figure 2).

In relation to residency status, the share of households with poor food consumption increased among displaced households reaching the highest level since May 2018, while the percent of households with borderline food consumption decreased going back to August level of 21 percent. Among resident households, levels of inadequate food consumption continue to steadily increase in the past three months driven mainly by an increase in the share of households with borderline food consumption which increased from 16 percent in September to 19 percent in October (Figure 3).

Figure 2: Percent of households with inadequate food consumption in aggregated governorates, May to October 2018

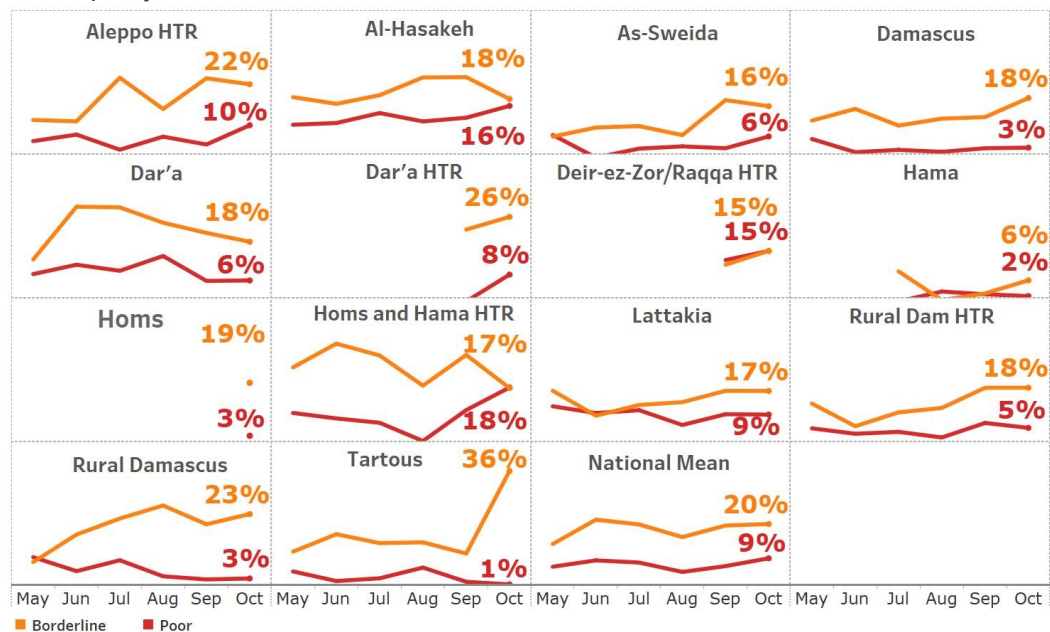
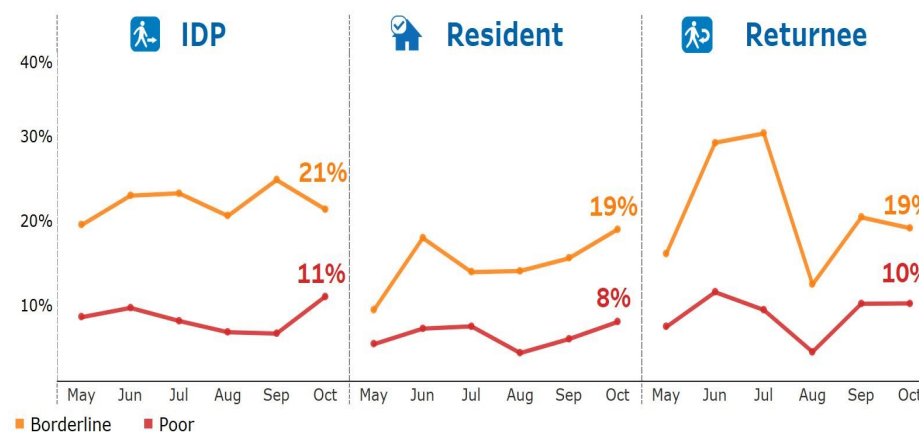
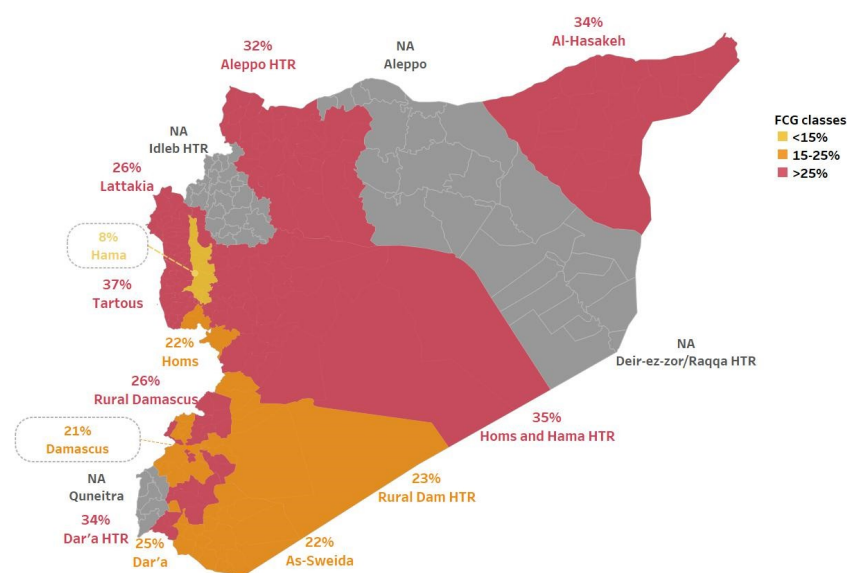


Figure 3: Percent of households with inadequate food consumption by displacement status, May to October 2018



Map 1: Percent of households with inadequate food consumption by aggregated governorates, October 2018



In relation to the gender of head of household, female-headed households reported a significant worse diet (40 percent inadequate food consumption) and higher use of food based coping strategies (mean rCSI 21.1) compared to households headed by male (Figure 4 and 5). Compared to the previous month, while food consumption levels remain similar, the mean rCSI increased from 17.5 in September to 21.1 in October for female head of households and from 12.7 in September to 16.7 in October for male head of households.

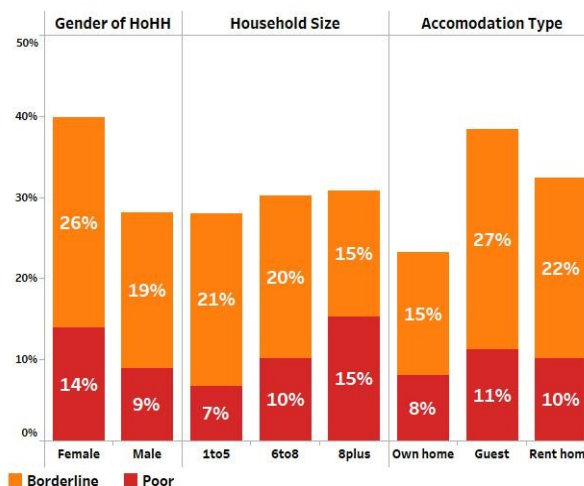
mVAM data found that typically bigger households, with more than eight members, are resorting to food based coping strategies more frequently than smaller (one to six members) or medium size (six to eight) households. Overall, bigger households are using all the five food based coping strategies (buy less expensive or preferred food, limit the portion size, borrow food, reduce the number of meals eaten per day and restrict consumption of adult so children can eat) on average three times a week while smaller households are resorting to the same strategies twice a week. There is however, no noticeable difference in the percent of households with poor and borderline food consumption by household size.

In October, households staying as guests (around 15 percent of all surveyed households) reported the highest percent of inadequate food consumption (38 percent), which is an increase of 4 percentage points compared to September. Households who are renting (around 35 percent from all surveyed households) reported the highest average levels of rCSI (21.1) compared with those residing as a guest or owning a home, with an average rCSI increase of 6.4 compared to last month.

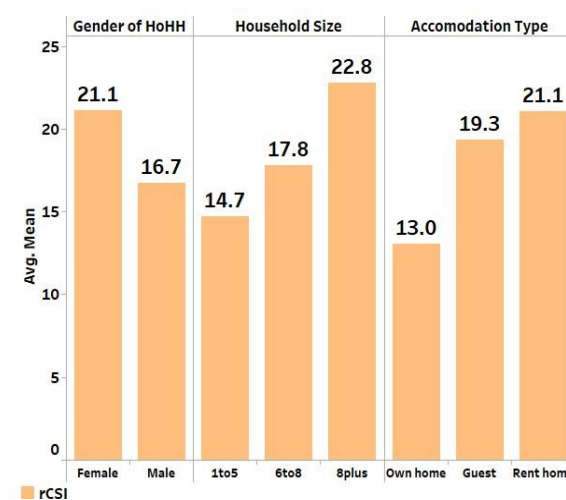
Looking at the consumption patterns of the three food groups, the diet of households with poor food consumption consists mainly of fats, sugar, staples and vegetables. This poorly diversified diet is directly affecting the micronutrient intake of these households.

As shown in Figure 7, more than half of the households with poor food consumption did not eat proteins and 96 percent did not consume haem iron rich food in the week before the survey. In addition, the consumption of Vitamin A rich food items is also particularly low among households with poor food consumption, which are eaten on average less than three times a week.

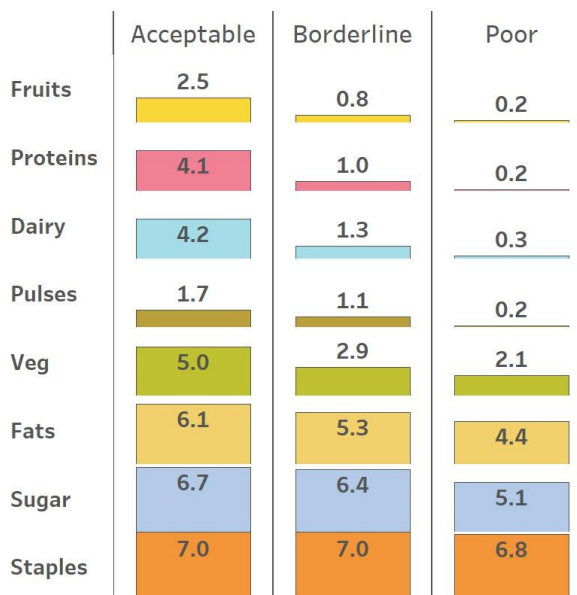
**Figure 4: Inadequate food consumption by gender of head of household, household size and type of accommodation, October 2018**



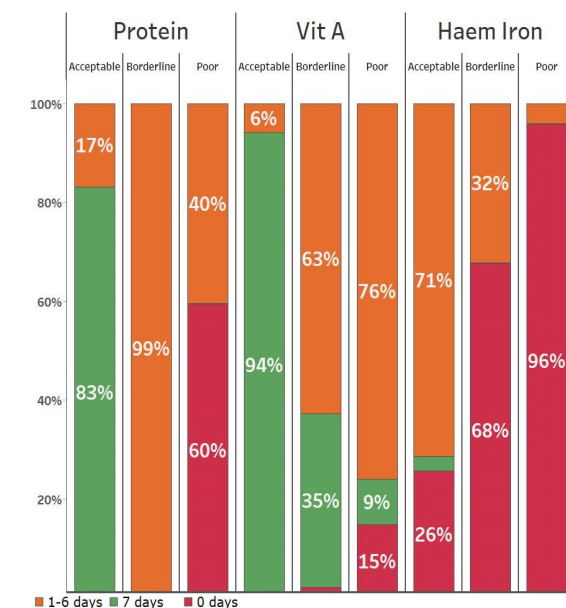
**Figure 5: Mean rCSI<sup>1</sup> by gender of head of household, household size and type of accommodation, October 2018**



**Figure 6: Number of days food groups consumed by food consumption group, October 2018**



**Figure 7: Consumption of nutrient-rich food by food consumption group, October 2018**



1. The reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) is an indicator used to inform household food security. It is based on a series of responses to the question: "What do you do when you do not have adequate food or money to buy food?" and is captured monthly. An increase in rCSI refers to a worsening in the household's coping capacity, negatively affecting the food security situation, while a reduction in rCSI refers to an improvement.





Overall rCSI reached the highest score in the last six months

In October, the national mean rCSI increased from 13.3 to 17.1 reaching the highest level in the past six months. This trend was recorded in all the surveyed governorates and it was specifically significant in hard-to-reach areas of Dar'a, Homs, Hama and Aleppo and in accessible areas of Hama. The highest rCSI was reported in accessible areas of Hama at 21.5 followed by accessible areas of Dar'a and hard to reach areas of Homs and Hama at 19.3 (Figure 8). The share of households that applied at least one coping mechanism in October vis-a-vis September increased from 75 percent to 80 percent. An overall 9 percent increase has been observed in the share of households that resorted to limiting the size of meal portions, reducing the number of meals eaten per day and restricting the adult consumption so that children could eat.

In October, the coping levels of both displaced and non-displaced households deteriorated with mean rCSI increasing significantly from 15 in September to 21 in October for displaced households and from 12 in September to 16 in October for non-displaced households. More households among these two groups reported borrowing food, reducing the number of meals eaten per day and restricting consumption by adults so children can eat (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Coping by displacement status, May to October 2018

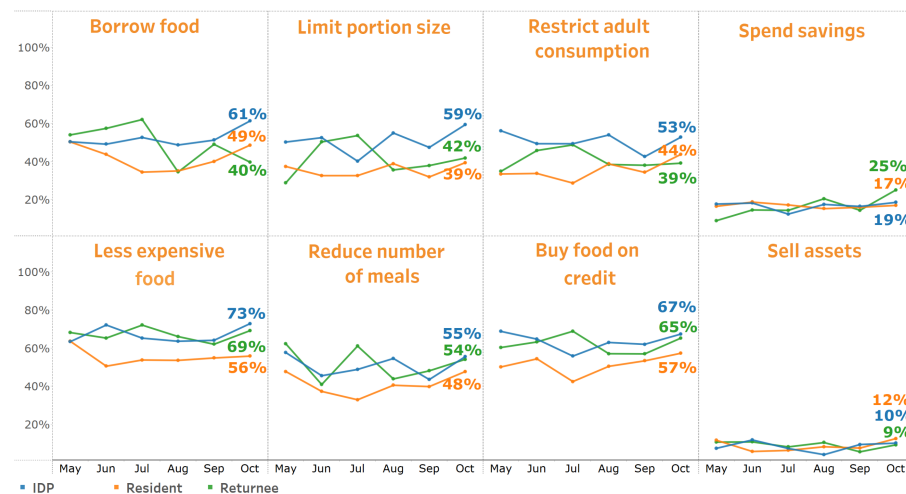
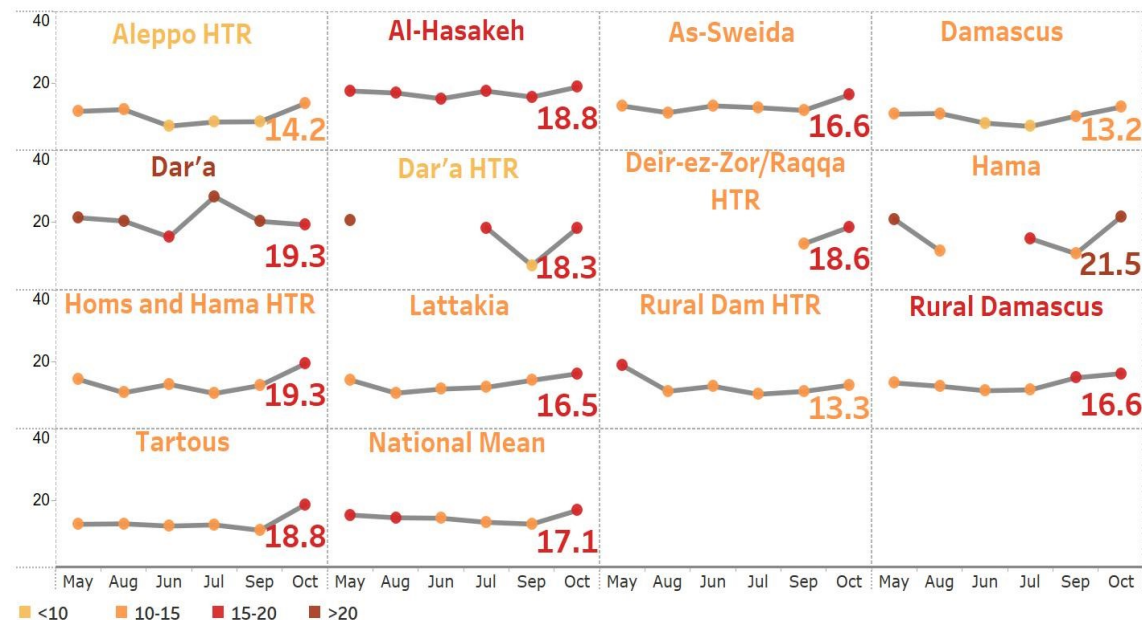
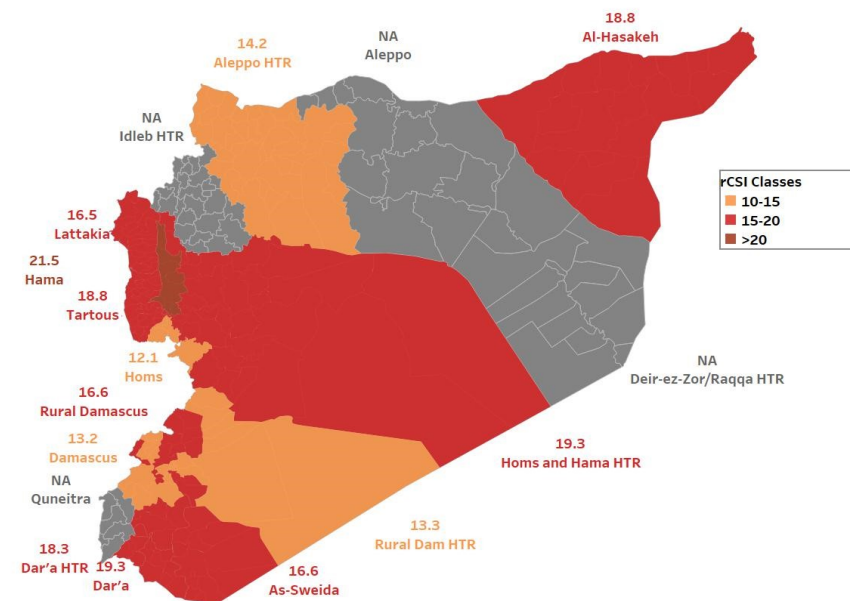


Figure 8: Mean rCSI by aggregated governorates, May to October 2018



Map 2: Mean rCSI by aggregated governorates, October 2018





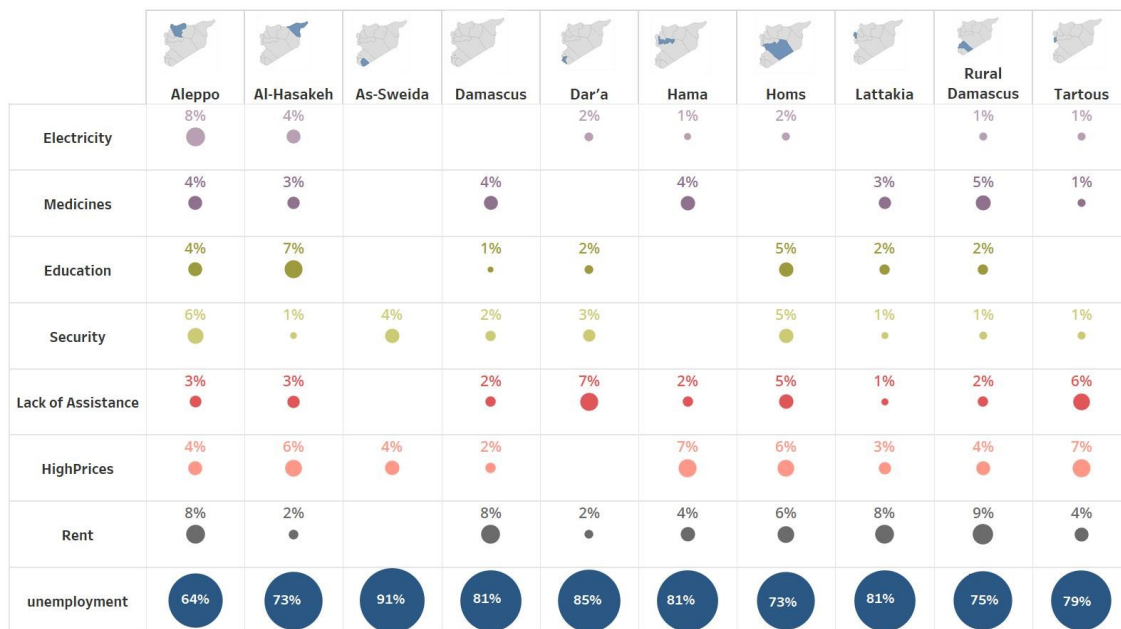
**In the words of respondents**

Each month, respondents are asked to identify the main problems their families are facing. The main issue reported across all governorates continue to be unemployment including insufficient income opportunities. In As-Sweida, Dar'a, Damascus, Hama and Lattakia more than 80 percent of the households reported unemployment as their primary challenge.

The second most reported issue by households across Syria was related to rent. The high cost of rent is increasingly putting pressure on households budget especially in Aleppo, Damascus, Lattakia and Rural Damascus.

The overall share of households reporting high prices as their main issue is decreasing but remains between the second and third most reported issue in most of the governorates.

**Figure 10: main problems faced surveyed households in each governorate (October 2018)**



**Methodology**

This mVAM bulletin is based on data collected via live telephone interviews in October 2018 from households in locations across Syria. The telephone numbers called were generated using random-digit dialling, yielding 1,585 completed surveys.

The questionnaire contained questions on demographics, food assistance, household food consumption and nutrition, coping strategies, and primary food sources. A final open-ended question gave respondents the chance to share additional information about the food situation in their communities.

The data are weighted by the number of mobile phones owned by the household. Information collected through mobile phone interviews may be biased towards younger, somewhat better-off households who live in urban areas and have better access to electricity and phone-charging services.

Starting from May 2017, districts were combined into 18 strata based on their accessibility, in order to obtain more granular food security analysis. The composition of the 18 strata changes following the evolution of the situation in Syria in terms of accessibility.

Since May 2018, the accessible areas are Aleppo, As-Sweida, Al-Hasakeh, Damascus, Dar'a, Hama, Homs, Rural Damascus, Quneitra, Lattakia and Tartous. Hard-to-reach (HTR) areas are Aleppo HTR, Dar'a HTR, Idleb HTR, Deir-ez-Zor, Homs and Hama HTR, Ar-Raqqa and Rural Damascus HTR.

The sampling frame groups together areas with similar geography and accessibility, allowing for a large enough sample size to make statistically significant comparisons. More details on the methodology can be found [here](#).



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**mVAM Resources:**

**Website:** [http://vam.wfp.org/sites/mvam\\_monitoring/](http://vam.wfp.org/sites/mvam_monitoring/)  
**Blog:** [mvam.org](http://mvam.org)  
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