

Overall inadequate food consumption reached the highest level of 2018

Key points



Share of households with inadequate food consumption continue to increase among displaced and returnee households



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



Unemployment and rent continue to be reported as the main concerns among displaced households



Households received WFP assistance in Rukban Camp © WFP/Syria

Situation update

The situation in the north-west of Syria, where an estimated three million people remain dependent on humanitarian cross-border operations, remains very challenging. Clashes between the government and non-state armed groups continued in November in this area, including along the Idleb-Lattakia border, in southern and eastern Idleb, and in northern Hama, despite the Russian-Turkish agreement on the Idleb demilitarised zone. Population displacement has been reported in southern Idleb following insecurity and clashes around the demilitarised zone.

Humanitarian organizations estimate that up to 6,000 people remain trapped in areas under the control of ISIL east of the Euphrates in the Deir-ez-Zor governorate. In November, growing tensions following the resumption of the Syrian Defence Forces (SDF) and coalition-supported anti-ISIL military operation in Hajin sub-district on 11 November resulted in small-scale displacement of civilians to areas inside and outside Deir-ez-Zor governorate.

A UN inter-agency convoy was deployed in early November, to support the more than 40,000 people residing in Rukban camp, a difficult to reach area in south-east Syria bordering Jordan, where humanitarian actors continue to receive reports of civilians suffering from acute malnutrition and death. This was the first convoy deployed from inside Syria and it assisted the people residing in this area with food, nutrition support, water, hygiene, sanitation and medical items as well as blankets, mattresses and other essential non-food items to help protect people during winter.

Figure 1: Sample household characteristics



1,394
interviews



Male: 90%
Female: 10%



42 years
mean age
of respondent



IDP: 33%
Resident: 56%
Returnee: 11%



13%
received food
assistance



Rural: 38%
Urban: 62%



Inadequate food consumption significantly increased among returnee households

In November 2018, the overall share of households with borderline food consumption has remained unchanged since October, with a slight increase in the share of households with poor food consumption from 9 percent in October to 11 percent in November (Figure 2). The percent of households with poor food consumption has continued to increase especially in Al-Hasakeh (from 16 percent in October to 22 percent in November), Rural Damascus (from 3 percent in October to 10 percent in November) and hard to reach areas of Dar'a (from 8 percent in October to 20 percent in November). On the contrary, in hard-to-reach areas of Homs and Hama the share of households reporting poor food consumption decreased significantly by 10 percentage points compared to October and the share of households with borderline food consumption increased by the same percentage. Hard-to-reach areas of Aleppo reported the highest percent of households with inadequate food consumption, reaching 42 percent in November (Figure 2).

In relation to residency status, the share of households with inadequate food consumption continued to increase among displaced and returnee households. Poor food consumption increased significantly for returnee households compared to October, reaching the highest level in the past six months and the highest level among three surveyed population groups (Figure 3).

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

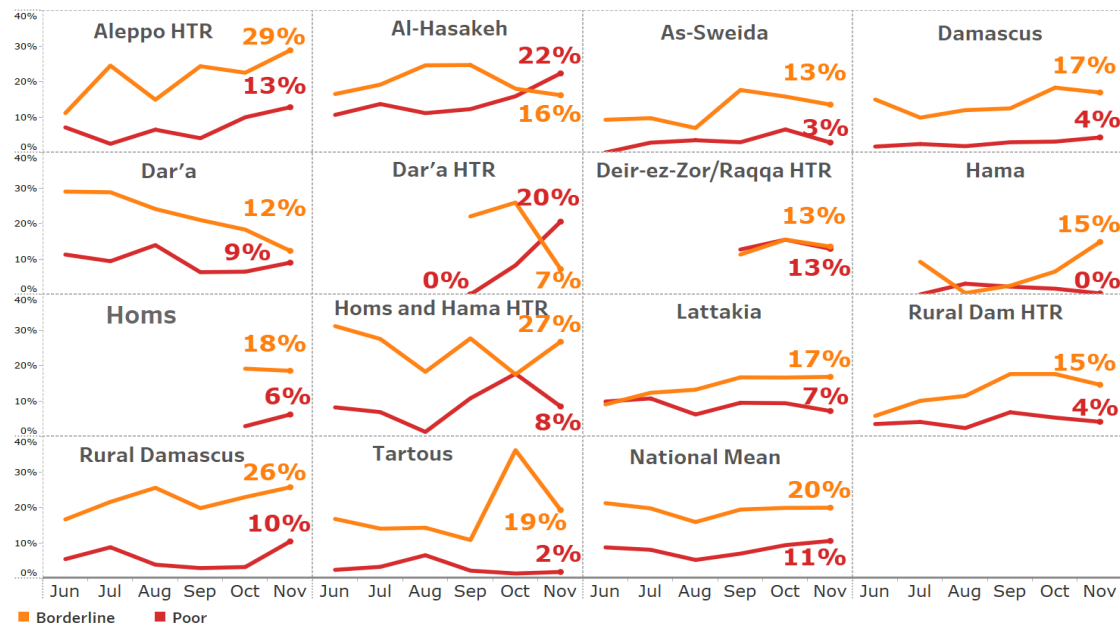
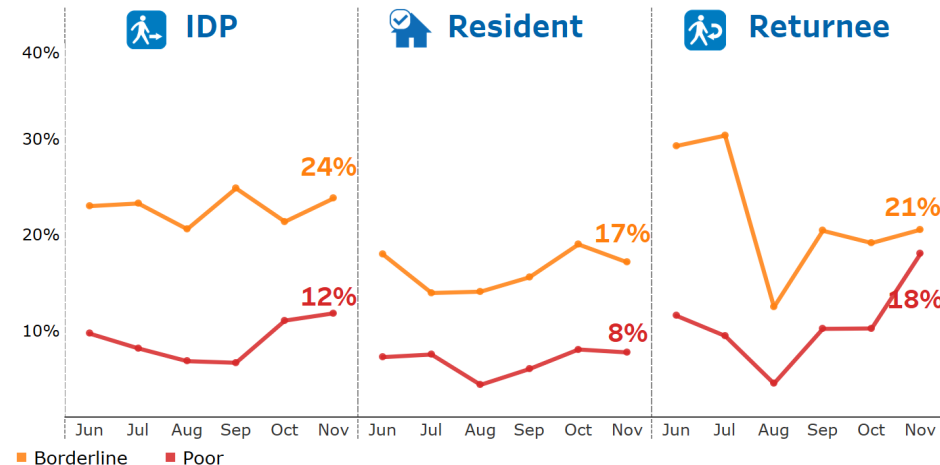
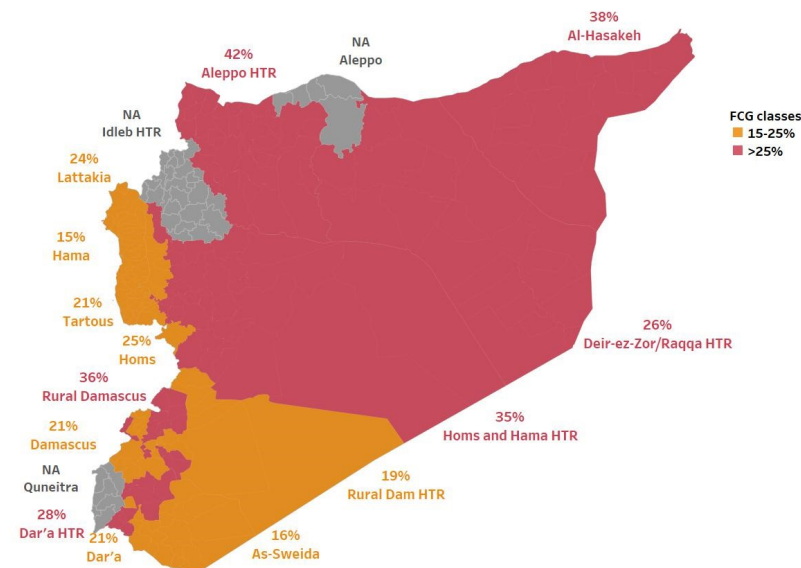


Figure 3: Percent of households with inadequate food consumption by residency status, June to November 2018



Map 1: Percent of households with inadequate food consumption aggregated at governorate level, November 2018



Overall, percent of households with inadequate food consumption declined in 2018 compared to 2017. There was an observed improvement during the first, second and third quarters of 2018, while starting from the last quarter of 2018 the percent of households with poor and borderline food consumption increased again approaching similar levels to those recorded in 2017. Throughout 2018, the highest percent of families with inadequate food consumption was recorded in June and November, where levels reached 30 percent (Figure 4).

The overall average rCSI, increased significantly in October 2018 reaching the annual peak (17.1) and rising above the average in 2017 for the same month, before falling to 15.1 in November. In-line with 2017, there was a general improved trend in rCSI between June and September months of 2018 while October and November rCSI levels tend to register higher rCSI levels.

In relation to the duration of displacement, displaced and returnee households who have been displaced for more than one year reported a significant worse diet (34 percent inadequate food consumption) and higher use of food based coping strategies (mean rCSI 17.3) compared to those who have been more recently displaced (Figure 5 and 6). Coping levels remained similar in November compared to October among households that have been displaced for more than 12 months. While the share of poor food consumption increased from 10 percent in October to 13 percent in November and the share of borderline food consumption increased from 19 in October to 21 in November for the same group.

In November, households staying as guests (around 15 percent from all surveyed households) reported the highest percent of inadequate food consumption (43 percent), which is an increase of 4 percentage points compared to October, while households who are renting accommodation (around 35 percent all surveyed households) reported the highest average rCSI (17.9) compared to those residing as guest or owning a home.

mVAM data found that households living in urban and rural areas are showing similar levels of poor food consumption while households living in rural areas reported a higher percent of borderline food consumption, 23 percent vs. 15 percent for households in urban areas. Households in rural and urban areas are exhibiting the same level of coping strategies (15 in urban areas vs 15.3 in rural areas).

Figure 4: Inadequate food consumption and rCSI¹ average, 2017 vs. 2018

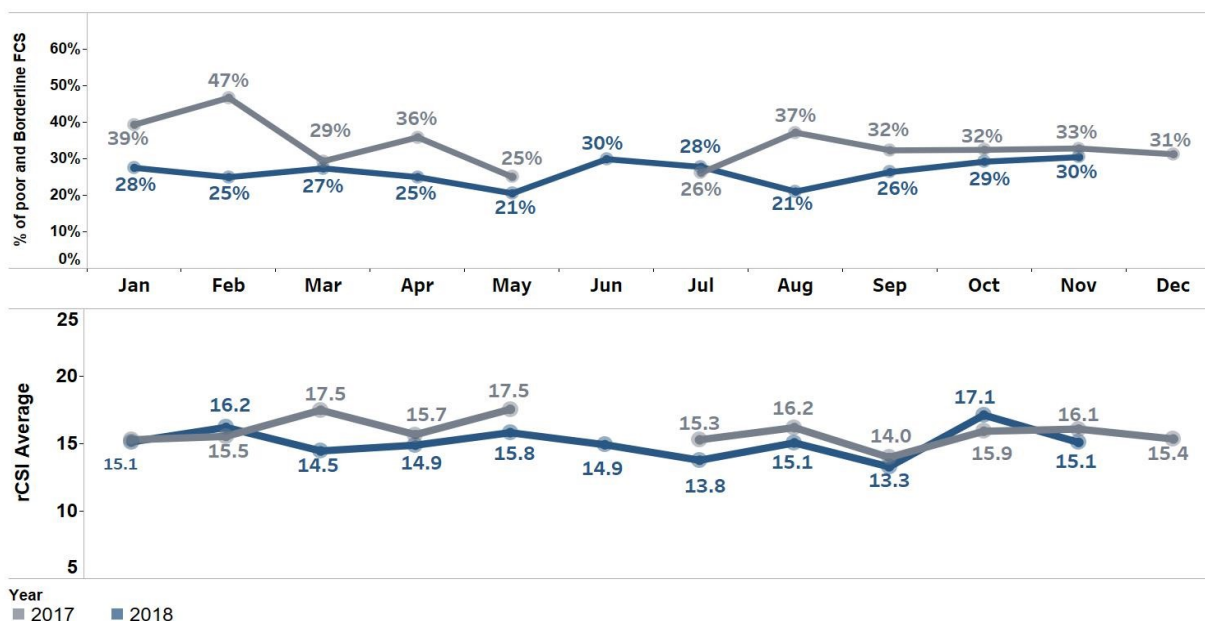


Figure 5: Inadequate food consumption by duration of displacement, type of accommodation and urban and rural areas, November 2018

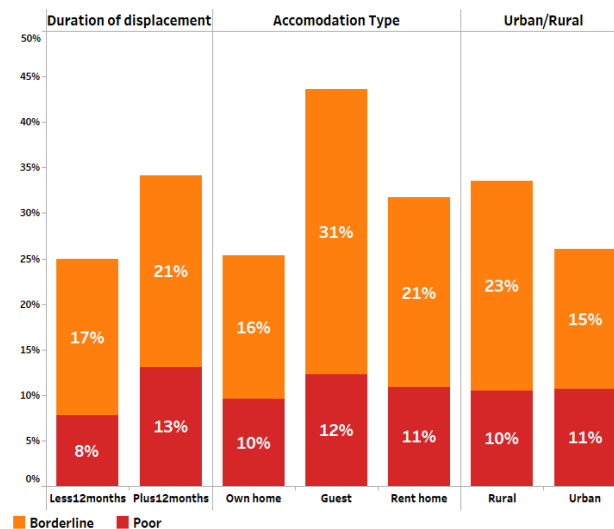
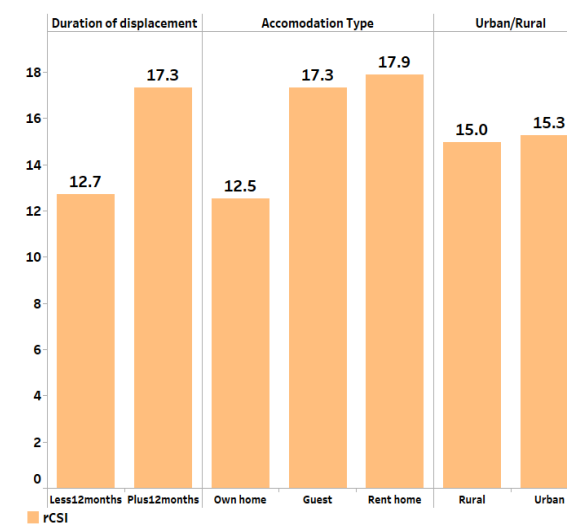


Figure 6: Mean rCSI by duration of displacement, type of accommodation and urban and rural areas, November 2018



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.



Highest levels of coping registered in Hama

In November, the national mean rCSI decreased from 17.1 in October to 15.1 in November. This decreasing trend was recorded in most of the surveyed governorates and was specifically significant in hard-to-reach areas of Homs and Hama and in Tartous. On the other hand, mean rCSI increased significantly in accessible areas of Homs reaching 18.3 in November (Figure 7). Highest rCSI levels continue to be reported in accessible areas of Hama (21.2) followed by accessible areas of Homs (18.3) and hard to reach areas of Dar'a (18.2). An overall six percentage point decrease has been observed in the share of households that resorted to limiting portion size of meals and reducing the number of meals eaten per day in November compared to October, and a five percentage point decrease was also observed over the same period in the overall share of households that restricted adult consumption so that children could eat.

In November, the food related coping levels of non-displaced households improved with mean rCSI decreasing significantly from 15.6 in October to 12.7 in November. Overall coping levels among displaced and returnee households remained at similar levels to October, while more returnee households reported borrowing food and limiting the portion size of meals and more displaced households were reducing the number of meals eaten per day and restricting consumption of adults so that children can eat (Figure 8).

Figure 7: Mean rCSI by aggregated governorates, June to November 2018

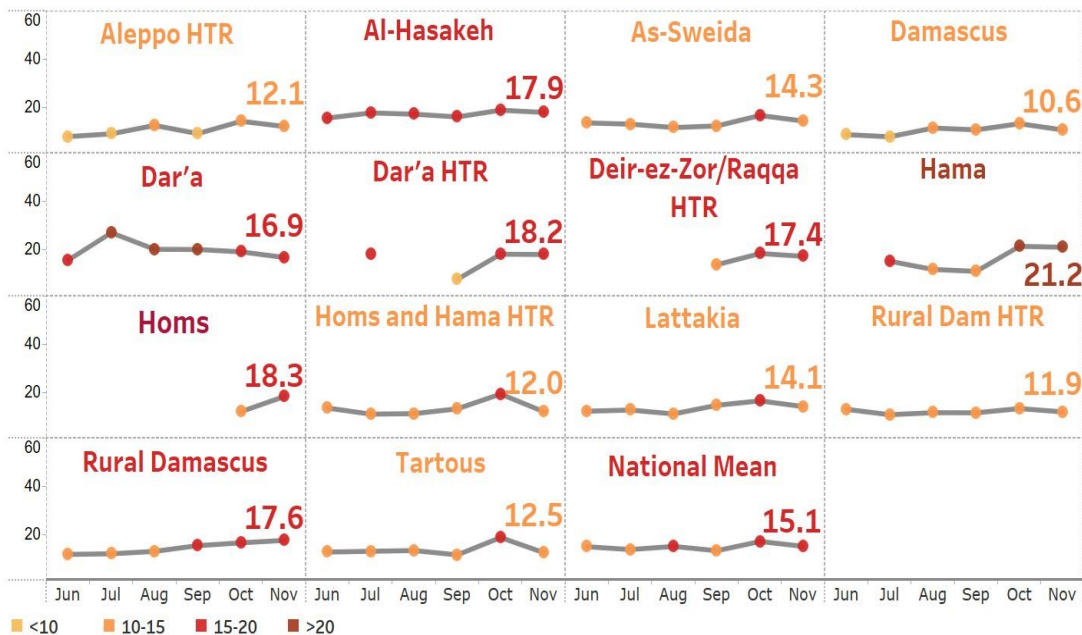
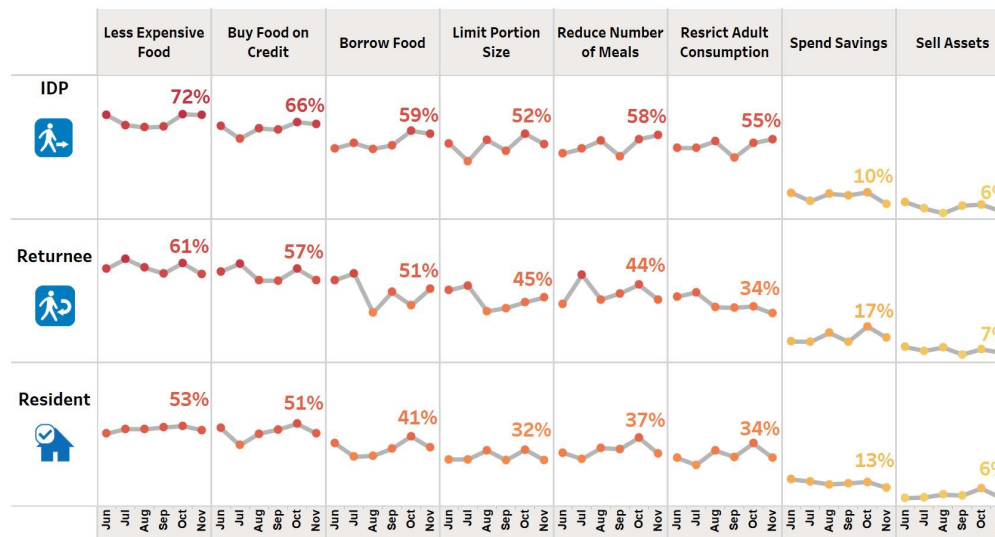
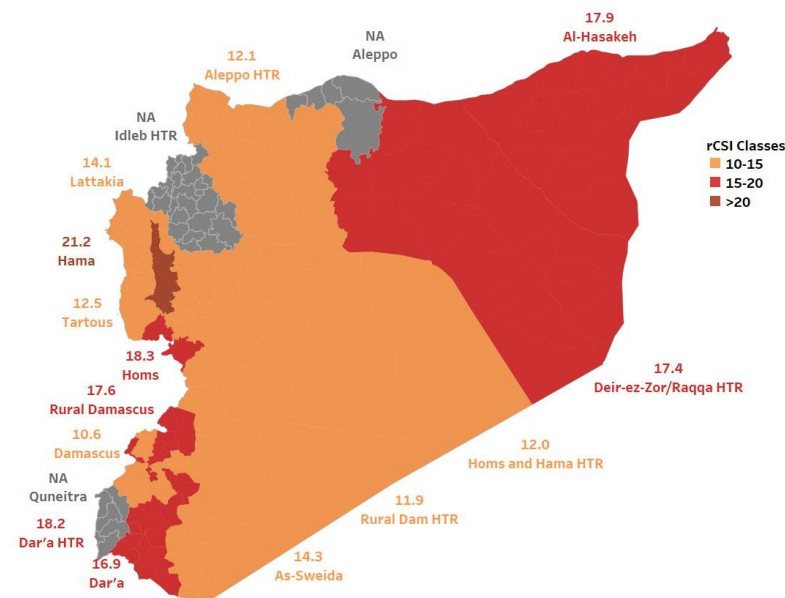


Figure 8: Coping by displacement status, June to November 2018



Map 2: Mean rCSI by aggregated governorates, November 2018

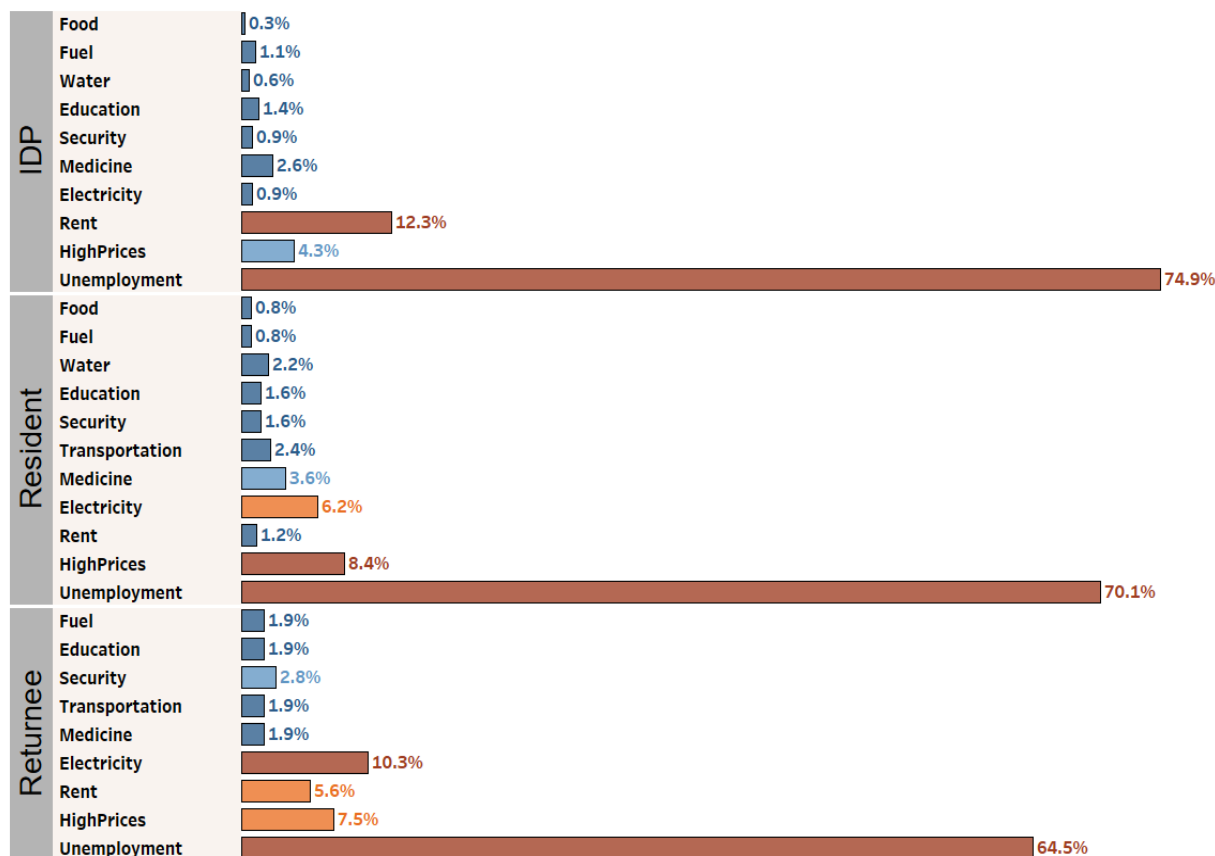




In the words of respondents

Each month, respondents are asked to identify the main problems their families are facing. The below graph displays the results based on respondents' residency status.

Figure 9: Main problems faced surveyed households according to their residency status (November 2018)



Methodology

This mVAM bulletin is based on data collected via live telephone interviews in November 2018 from households in locations across Syria. The telephone numbers were generated using random-digit dialling, yielding 1,394 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 is weighted by the number of mobile phones owned by the household. To note information collected through mobile phone interviews tend to 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 June 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 June 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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