Syria mVAM (February 2020) Issue no. 43

Highlights	Food Consumption	Coping Strategies	In the words of respondents

| **1,817** Households surveyed	**11%** Female headed households	**18%** Stay as guest	**28%** Displaced Households

Situation Overview

- Since December 2019, the humanitarian conditions continued deteriorating in north-western Syria and population displacement accelerated, with 375,000 people newly displaced in February 2020 and 961,000 people displaced in total from December 2019 to March 2020.
- In February, WFP dispatched assistance to approximately 4.5 million people in Syria. This included general food assistance for 3.9 million people across all 14 Syrian governorates. Of the 3.9 million around 1.2 million people were reached with general food assistance in north-west Syria. WFP also assisted 509,000 newly displaced people with ready to-eat rations in north-west Syria in February.
- WFP also provided cash-based transfers to 124,900 people at a total value of USD 2.4 million.
- In southern Syria, clashes erupted in Dar'a governorate between government forces and non-state armed groups in the city of As-Sanamayn; the first such incident since 2018.
- While the official exchange rate remained at SYP 434 per USD, the national average informal exchange rate reached SYP 1,033 per USD in February 2020. This represents a depreciation of the Syrian Pound by one percent month-on-month and by 99 percent year-on-year.

WFP Syria Situation Report #2, February 2020   WFP Syria Country Office Market Price Watch Bulletin, Issue 62, January 2020

mVAM coverage (February 2020)

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Number of Records
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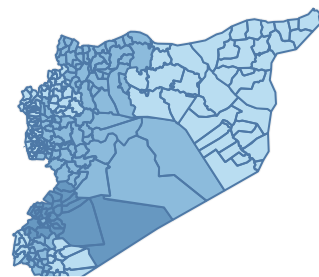
Key Points

- In February 2020, the highest average proportion of households with poor or borderline food consumption was recorded in the governorate of **Ar-Raqqa** (43 percent), followed by **Aleppo** (40 percent) and **Homs** (38 percent).

- The highest rCSI was recorded in **Deir-ez-Zor** (19.8), **Ar-Raqqa** (19.2) and **Al-Hasakeh** (18.8) in February 2020.

- In February 2020, households resorted to more negative coping strategies as a result of rising food prices.

- The main problem cited by households was unemployment, followed by high prices in general and fuel prices in particular.

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Highlights	**Food Consumption**	Coping Strategies	In the words of respondents

- Between January and February 2020, the overall levels of inadequate food consumption slightly decreased from 37 to 31 percent of households reporting poor or borderline food consumption.
- The level of poor food consumption decreased from a national average of 11 to four percent, while the proportion of households with borderline food consumption slightly increased from 25 to 27 percent between January and February 2020.
- The average proportion of households with poor or borderline food consumption was highest in Ar-Raqqa (43 percent) and Aleppo (40 percent), while the lowest average was reported in As-Sweida (22 percent) and Tartous (25 percent).
- Since January 2020, the proportion of households with inadequate food consumption increased the most in Dar'a (+5 percent) and Hama (+3 percent).
- In February 2020, displaced households had the largest proportion of inadequate food consumption, with 39 percent of poor or borderline food consumption.
- 64 percent of female headed households had inadequate food consumption, compared to 26 percent for male headed households, thus showing a greater vulnerability level.
- Animal protein intake remained generally low, with a national average consumption of three days per week.

Map 1 : Percentage of households (Feb 2020) by governorate with

Poor and Borderline Food Consumption

National Average

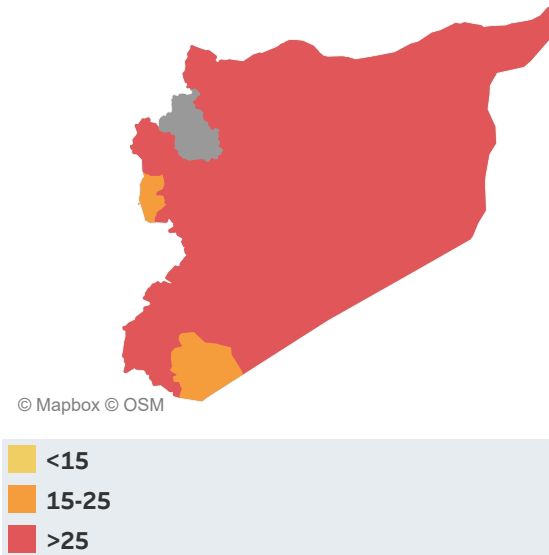|	
Sep	27%
Oct	26%
Nov	27%
Dec	32%
Jan	37%
Feb	31%

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- <15
- 15-25
- >25

Figure 2 : Percentage of households with poor and borderline FC according to

Displacement Status

Displaced	Returnee	Resident

- Poor Food Consumption
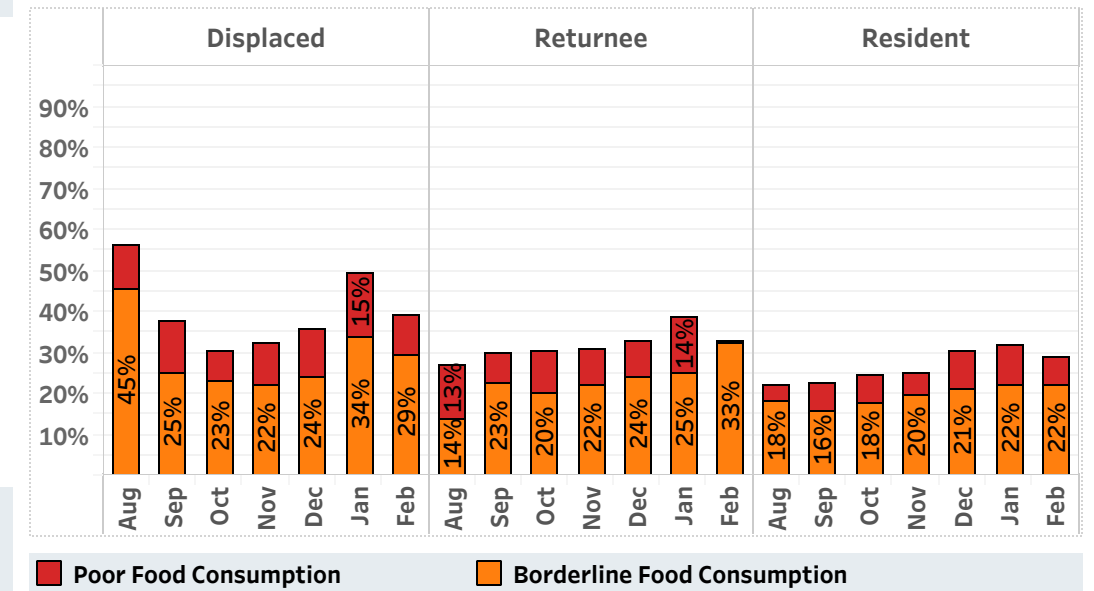- Borderline Food Consumption

Figure 1: Percentage of households with inadequate food consumption per governorate in the last six months

Aleppo 40% · **Damascus 26%** · **Ar-Raqqa 43%** · **Lattakia 28%**

Al-Hasakeh 36% · **Dar'a 29%** · **Hama 35%** · **Rural Damascus 36%**

As-Sweida 22% · **Deir-ez-Zor 33%** · **Homs 38%** · **Tartous 25%**
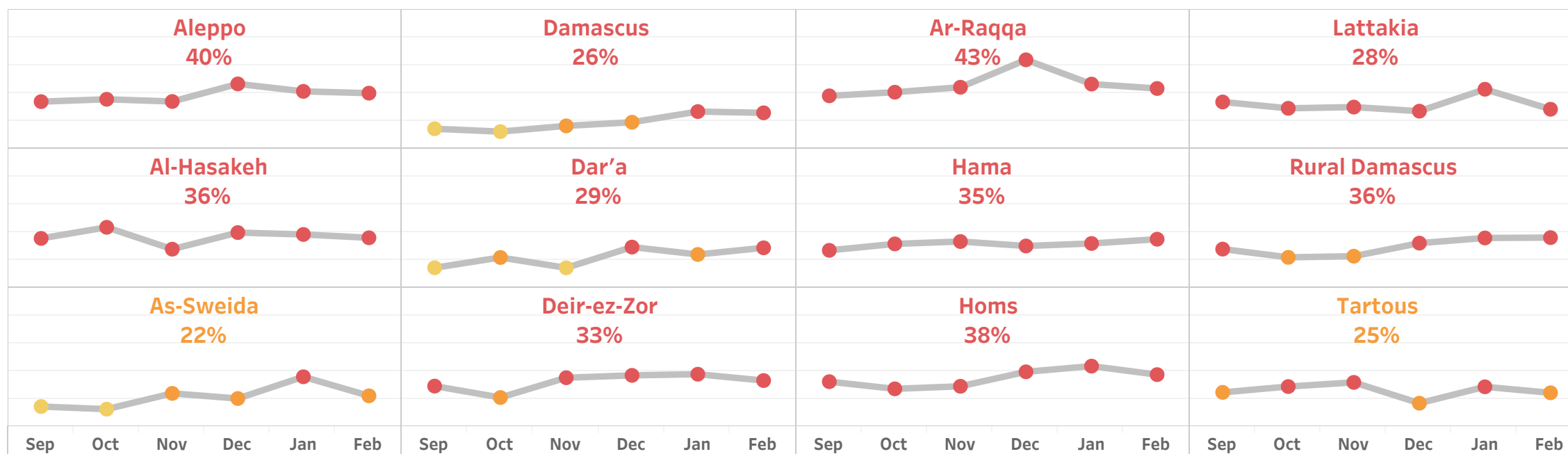
Map 2 : Average weekly consumption (Feb 2020) by governorate for

Proteins

National Average

Sep	3
Oct	3
Nov	3
Dec	3
Jan	3
Feb	3

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- 2 days
- 3 days
- 4 days

| Highlights | Food Consumption | Coping Strategies | In the words of respondents |
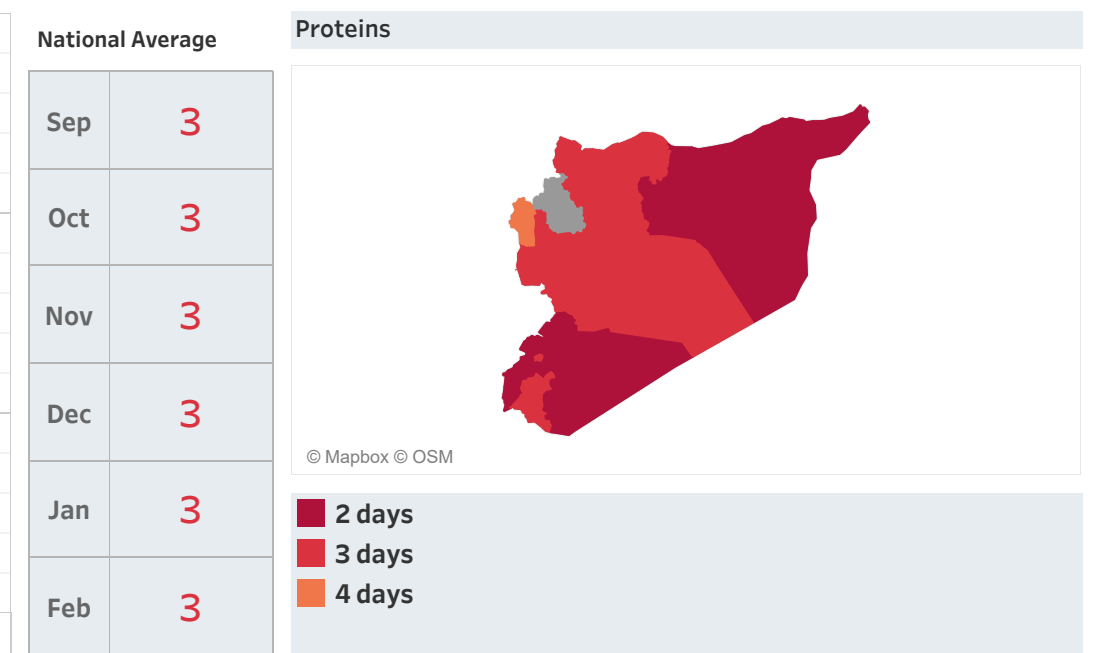
- The national average reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)* decreased from 16.0 in January to 13.9 in February 2020. The most broadly used coping strategy remained the consumption of less expensive food.
- In February 2020, the highest rCSI was recorded in Deir-ez-Zor (19.8) and Ar-Raqqa (19.2), while the lowest rCSI was found in Damascus (13.8).
- The biggest decrease in rCSI since January 2020 was recorded in Al-Hasakeh (-2.8) and the biggest increase was found in Dar'a (+ 2.2).
- In February 2020, displaced households had an average rCSI of 17.9, compared to 13.7 for returnee and resident households.
- Female-headed households borrowed more food or money from friends and relatives (96 percent compared to 58 percent for male-headed households).
- Returnee households adopted more negative coping strategies in February 2020 compared to the previous month, highlighting their vulnerability to food price increases.

* The rCSI is a subset of the context-specific reduced consumption-based Coping Strategy Index (CSI). While the CSI captures the nature of the behavioural response to food insecurity in a specific context, the rCSI is calculated using a standard set of five individual coping behaviours with a universal set of severity weightings. These behaviours are: eating less-preferred foods, borrowing food/money from friends and relatives, limiting portions at mealtime, limiting adult intake, and reducing the number of meals per day.

Figure 3: rCSI average in the last six months

according to: Displacement Status

	Displaced		Returnee		Resident	
Sep	19.7		18.5		15.2	
Oct	19.9		19.0		14.4	
Nov	21.9		17.7		13.6	
Dec	22.0		18.7		15.3	
Jan	19.0		18.4		14.8	
Feb	17.9		13.7		13.7	
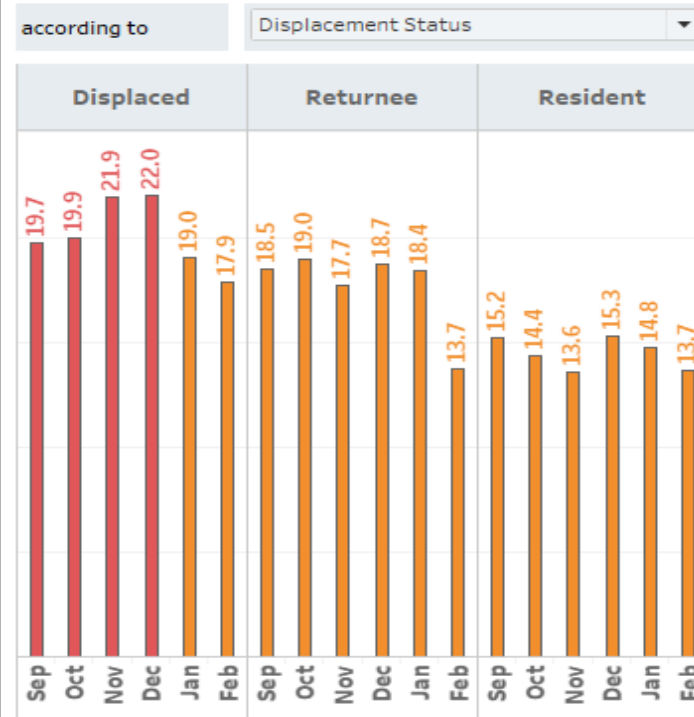
Map3 : Mean rCSI by governorate (February 2020)

rCSI National Average

Sep	16.4
Oct	16.2
Nov	16.2
Dec	17.4
Jan	16.0
Feb	13.9

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■ 4-18   ■ >19
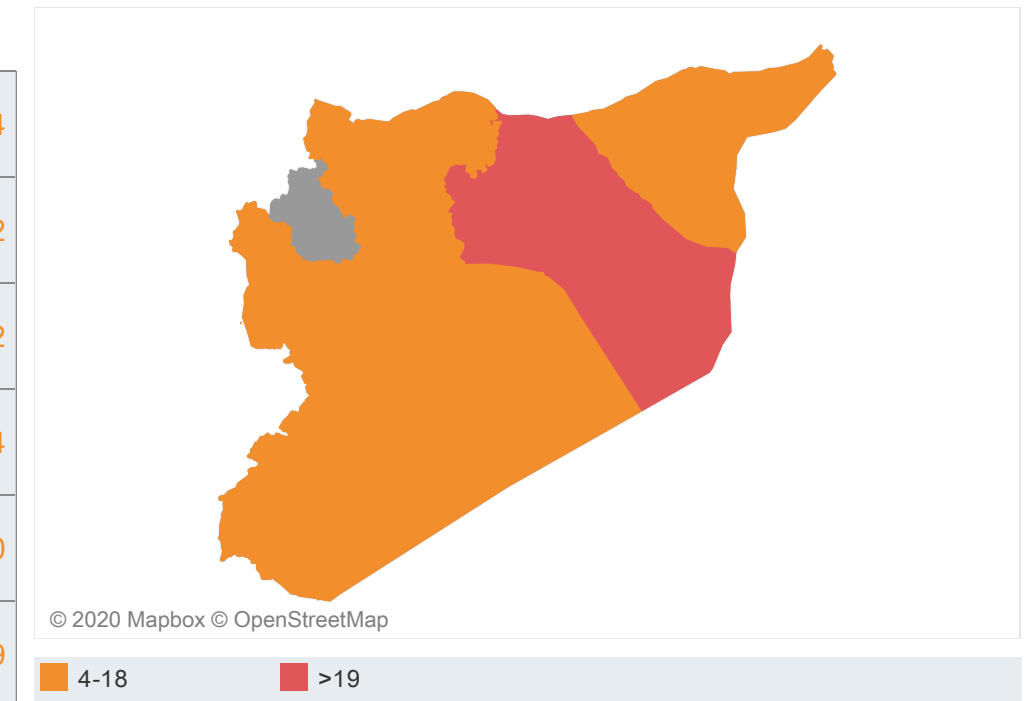
Figure 4: rCSI average per governorate in the last six months

Aleppo 14.1	Al-Hasakeh 18.8	As-Sweida 16.9
Damascus 13.8	Dar'a 16.9	Deir-ez-Zor 19.8
Ar-Raqqa 19.2	Hama 17.7	Homs 16.2
Lattakia 16.4	Rural Damascus 15.8	Tartous 14.8

Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb
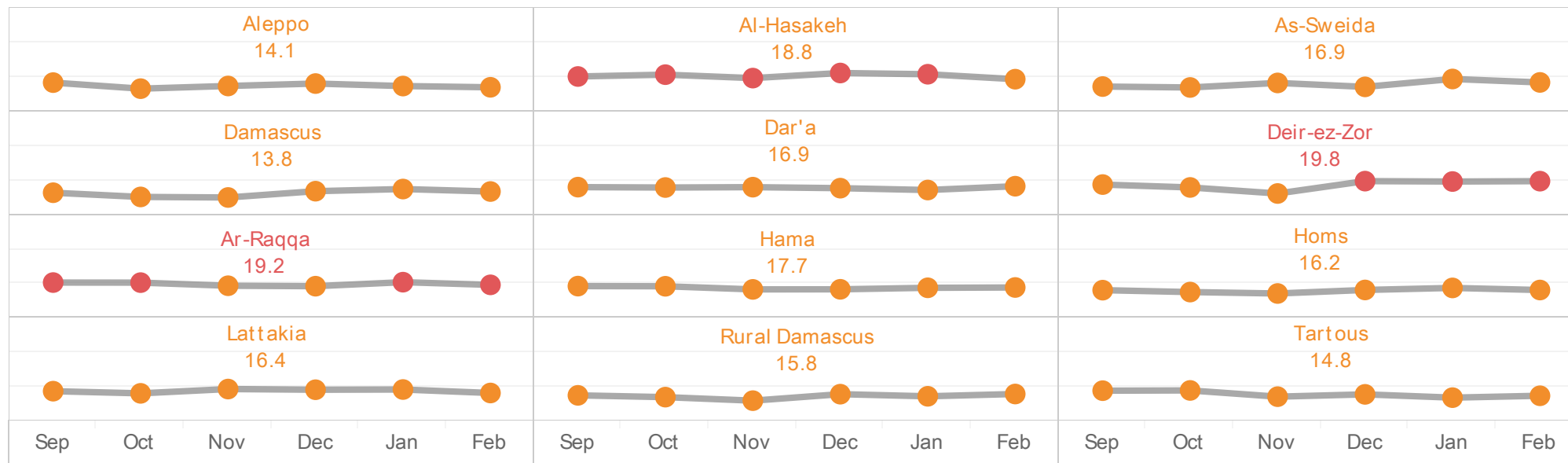
Figure 5: Overall percentage of households who adopted each coping strategy

		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Displaced	Less Expensive Food	68%	73%	74%	69%	73%	72%
	Reduce Number of Meals	60%	55%	58%	58%	56%	57%
	Borrow Or Help	61%	45%	59%	68%	61%	56%
	Limit portion Size	53%	57%	54%	54%	50%	49%
	Restrict Consumption	51%	52%	58%	61%	49%	48%
Returnee	Less Expensive Food	71%	70%	65%	79%	83%	94%
	Reduce Number of Meals	51%	55%	49%	50%	54%	98%
	Borrow Or Help	65%	64%	66%	58%	56%	79%
	Limit portion Size	49%	57%	51%	49%	56%	60%
	Restrict Consumption	46%	52%	52%	55%	52%	40%
Resident	Less Expensive Food	62%	59%	57%	62%	62%	62%
	Reduce Number of Meals	49%	45%	41%	48%	45%	41%
	Borrow Or Help	51%	45%	53%	54%	51%	49%
	Limit portion Size	42%	43%	38%	39%	39%	36%
	Restrict Consumption	42%	42%	40%	43%	40%	37%

Highlights	Food Consumption	Coping Strategies	**In the words of respondents**

Each month, respondents are asked to identify the main problems their households are facing. Below is an overview of the main problems reported by households in February 2020, based on their displacement status across the country as well as per aggregated governorates.

Unemployment remains a major problem faced by around half of the households, regardless of their status. Concerns over high prices are the second main problem faced by one third of resident households and one fourth of displaced and returnee households.

Concerns over fuel prices are on the rise and were cited by seven to nine percent of households in February 2020, compared to three to six percent of households during the previous month. Access to electricity is a concern for seven to eight percent of households. Rent is a main problem for seven percent of displaced households but for only one percent of resident and returnee households. Finally, the lack of assistance is cited as a problem by four percent of displaced and returnee households, while access to medicines and water is cited by few households as a main problem.

Figure 6: Main problems faced by surveyed households according to displacement status

Please select an aggregated governorate

All

	Unemployment	High Prices	Rent	Electricity	Medicines	Water	Fuel Prices	Lack of assist.
	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb
Resident	49%	30%	1%	7%	1%	1%	8%	2%
Displaced	55%	21%	7%	3%	2%	1%	7%	4%
Returnee	55%	19%	1%	8%	1%	3%	9%	4%

Methodology

This mVAM bulletin is based on data collected via live telephone interviews from households in locations across Syria. The telephone numbers called were generated using random-digit dialling, yielding 1,817 completed surveys through 13 governorates in February 2020. The sampling frame ensured for a large enough sample size to make statistically significant comparisons.

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. 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.