

## Highlights

## Food Consumption

## Coping Strategies

## In the words of respondents



**1,685**  
Households surveyed



**12%**  
Female headed households



**19%**  
Stay as guest



**26%**  
Displaced Households



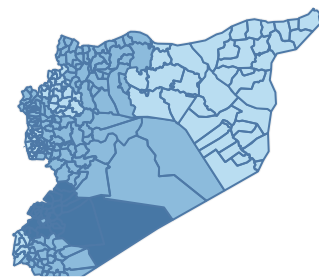
## Situation Overview

On 6 March, a ceasefire agreement was announced by Turkish and Russian authorities in north-western Syria, leading to a halt to airstrikes and a reduction of population displacement. Some accusations of ceasefire violations erupted on both sides afterward the agreed ceasefire and over 939,000 people remain displaced since December 2019. In the North-East, clashes were reported between Kurdish-led and Turkish-backed forces in several areas of Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa governorates. In March, WFP assisted 83,100 newly displaced people with emergency ready-to-eat rations in north-western Syria and reached 1.8 million people through General food Assistance. The Ministry of Health announced the first confirmed COVID-19 case in Syria on 22 March. By the end of the month, ten cases and two deaths had been reported. To prevent the spread of the virus, the Syrian government ordered the closure of all schools, universities, public parks, etc. and closed airports and suspended inter-governmental public travel by bus or taxi. On 25 March, a nationwide curfew came into effect, restricting movement between 18:00 and 06:00. The currency continued plunging on the informal market, with the informal exchange rate reaching a historic low of SYP 1,325 per USD. The price of the WFP national average food basket increased by 21 percent from the first to the fourth week of March, and by 18 percent over the second half of the month after the announcement of COVID-19 lockdown regulations which sparked some panic buying and increased price volatility. By the end of March 2020, food prices had increased by 84 percent year-on-year.

WFP Syria Situation Report #3, March 2020

WFP Syria Country Office Market Price Watch Bulletin, Issue 63, February 2020

## mVAM coverage (March 2020)



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## Key Points

- In March 2020, the national average proportion of households with poor or borderline food consumption was 33 percent, compared to 31 percent the previous month. The highest rate was recorded in **Homs** (40 percent) **Aleppo** (36 percent), **Rural Damascus** (34 percent).
- The national average rCSI reached 17.5 in March 2020, compared to 13.9 in February. The highest rCSI was recorded in **Al-Hasakeh** (20.8), Quneitra (18.0), **Ar-Raqqa** (17.5) and **Lattakia** (16.6).
- Unemployment was the main problem cited by around of half the households, followed by high prices for over one quarter of all households.



## For Further Information

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## Coping Strategies

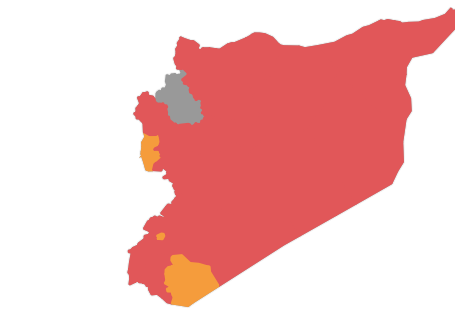
## In the words of respondents

- From February to March 2020, the national average proportion of households with poor or borderline food consumption increased from 31 to 33 percent.
- The level of poor food consumption increased from a national average of four to nine percent and the proportion of households with borderline food consumption decreased from 27 to 24 percent.
- The highest proportion of households reporting poor or borderline food consumption was recorded in Homs (40 percent) Aleppo (36 percent), Rural Damascus (34 percent).
- The lowest average proportion of households with poor or borderline food consumption was reported in As-Sweida (18 percent), Damascus (19 percent) and Tartous (22 percent).
- Since February 2020, the proportion of households with inadequate food consumption increased the most in Homs and Lattakia, with +2 percent each, while it decreased the most in Ar-Raqqa (-10 percent).
- Returnee households reported the largest proportion of inadequate food consumption, with 38 percent of poor or borderline food consumption.
- 64 percent of female headed households reported inadequate food consumption, compared to 26 percent for male headed households.

Map 1 : Percentage of households (Feb 2020) by governorate with Poor and Borderline Food Consumption

### National Average

Oct	26%
Nov	27%
Dec	32%
Jan	37%
Feb	31%
Mar	33%



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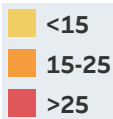


Figure 2 : Percentage of households with poor and borderline FC according to Displacement Status

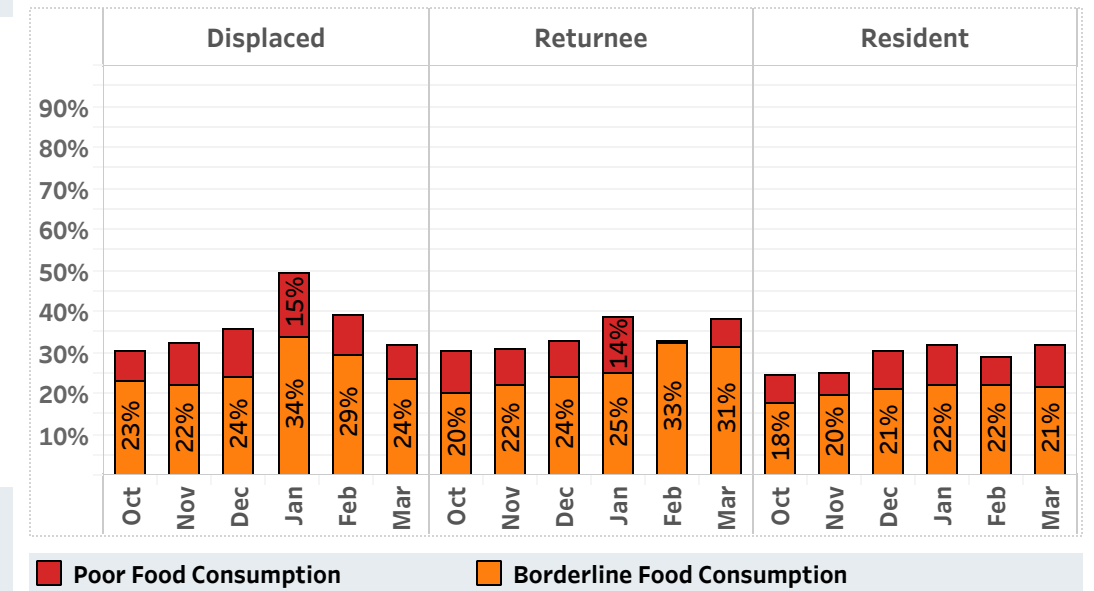
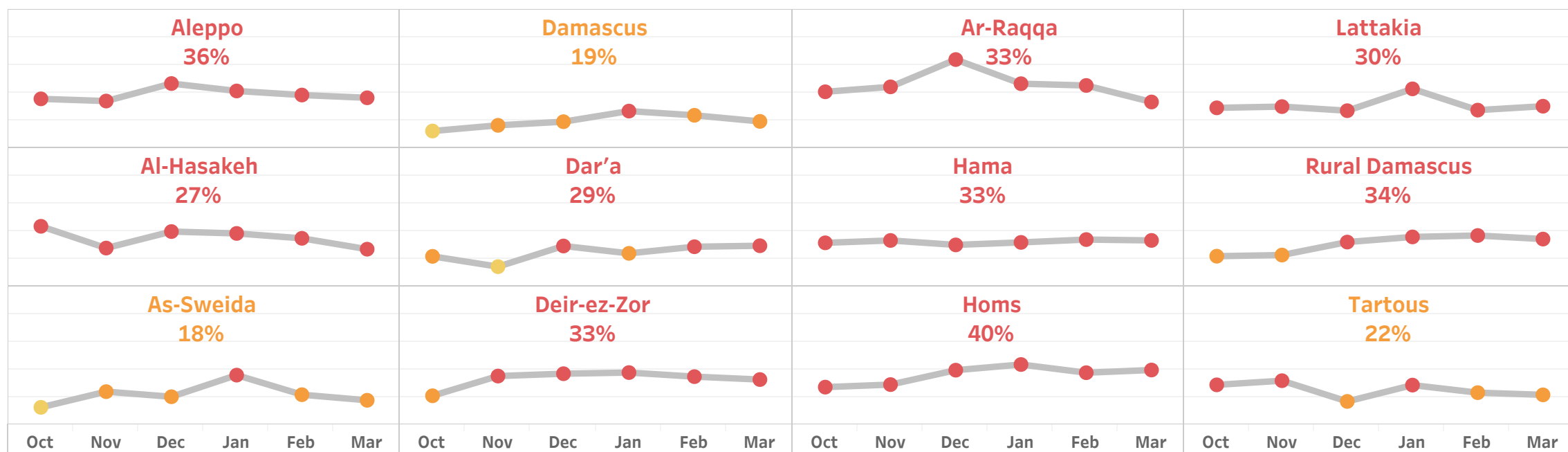
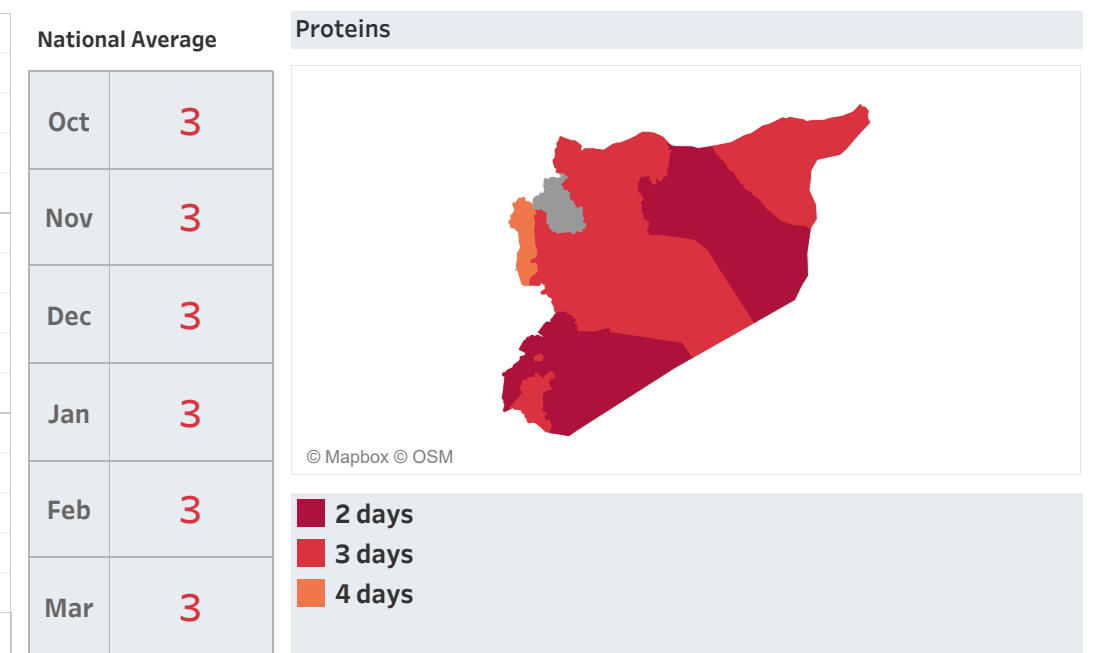


Figure 1: Percentage of households with inadequate food consumption per governorate in the last six months



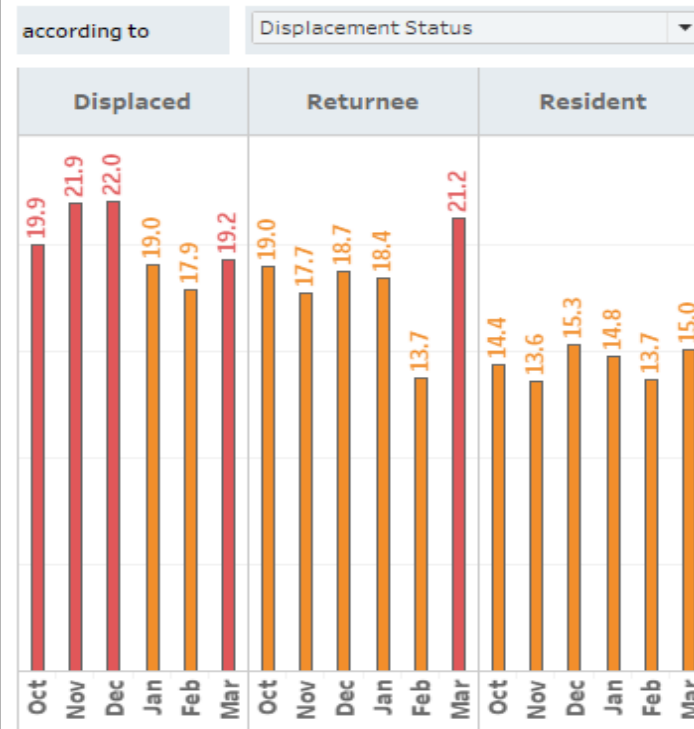
Map 2 : Average weekly consumption (Feb 2020) by governorate for Proteins



- Between February and March 2020, the national average reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)\* increased from 13.9 to 17.5.
- The most broadly used coping strategy was the consumption of less expensive food, followed by borrowing food or asking for help.
- In March 2020, the highest rCSI was recorded in Al-Hasakeh (20.8), Quneitra (18.0), Ar-Raqqa (17.5) and Lattakia (16.6).
- The lowest rCSI were recorded in Damascus (14.1) and Aleppo (13.5).
- The biggest decrease in rCSI since February 2020 was recorded in Deir-ez-Zor (-4.1) and the biggest increase was found in Al-Hasakeh (+1.8).
- Returnee households were found to have the highest rCSI (21.2), followed by displaced households (19.2) and well above residents (15.0).
- Female-headed households had a sensibly higher rCSI (19.0), compared to male-headed households (17.3).
- Finally, households staying as guests (19.6) and renting homes (19.2) recoded a higher rCSI than those owning a home (15.4).

\* 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



Map3 : Mean rCSI by governorate (February 2020)

rCSI National Average

Oct	16.2
Nov	16.2
Dec	17.4
Jan	16.0
Feb	13.9
Mar	17.5

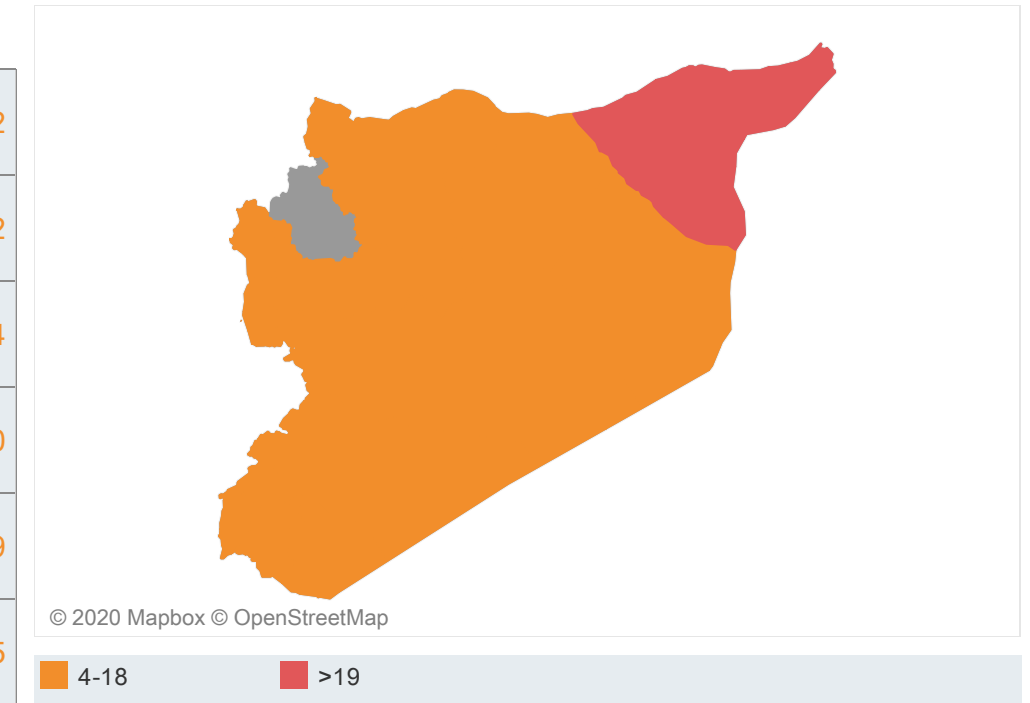


Figure 4: rCSI average per governorate in the last six months

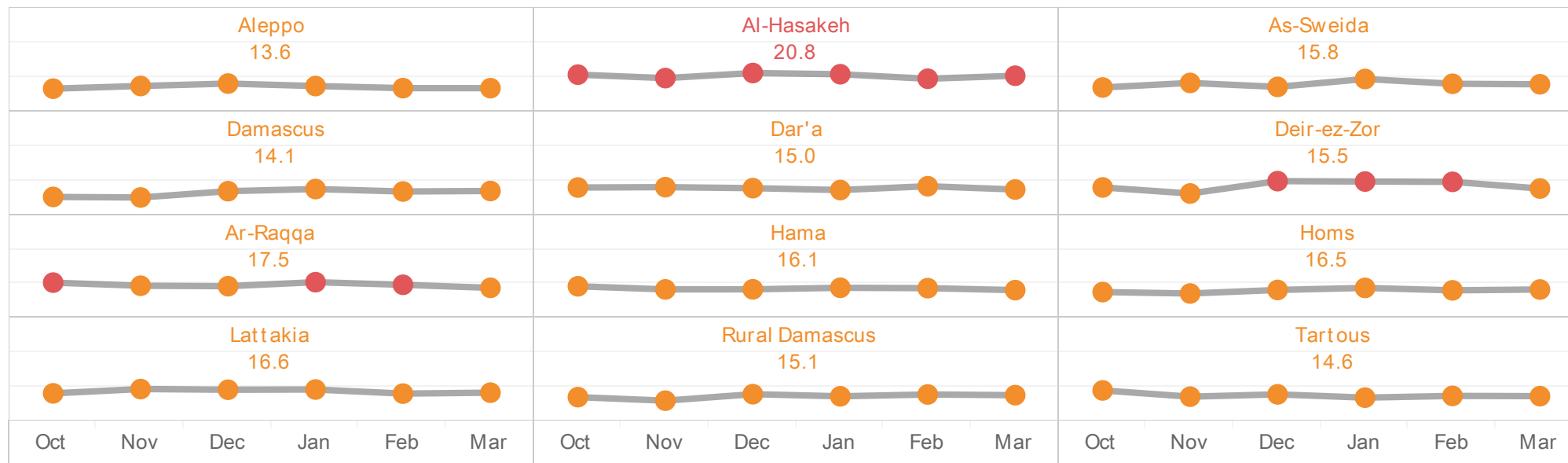


Figure 5: Percentage of households who adopted each coping strategy on national level

Displacement Status	Coping Strategy	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
		Less Expensive Food	73%	74%	69%	73%	72%
Displaced	Reduce Number of Meals	55%	58%	58%	56%	56%	59%
	Borrow Or Help	45%	59%	68%	61%	57%	55%
	Limit portion Size	57%	54%	54%	50%	48%	47%
	Restrict Consumption	52%	58%	61%	49%	47%	48%
	Returnee	Less Expensive Food	70%	65%	79%	83%	99%
Reduce Number of Meals		55%	49%	50%	54%	58%	52%
Borrow Or Help		64%	66%	58%	56%	64%	67%
Limit portion Size		57%	51%	49%	56%	49%	48%
Restrict Consumption		52%	52%	55%	52%	33%	59%
Resident	Less Expensive Food	59%	57%	62%	62%	61%	62%
	Reduce Number of Meals	45%	41%	48%	45%	39%	45%
	Borrow Or Help	45%	53%	54%	51%	48%	51%
	Limit portion Size	43%	38%	39%	39%	35%	39%
	Restrict Consumption	42%	40%	43%	40%	35%	41%



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 March 2020, based on their displacement status across the country as well as per aggregated governorates.

Unemployment is the main problem faced by over half of displaced and returnee households, with respectively 57 and 56 percent, and 45 percent of resident households.

Concerns over high prices are on the rise and were cited as the main problem faced by nearly one third of resident households (31 percent) and one quarter of displaced and returnee households (24 percent each). Concerns over electricity and fuel prices are also increasing and were each cited as a main problem by eight percent of resident households and five percent of returnee households. Rent is a main problem for seven percent of displaced households, but for only two percent of resident and returnee households. Three percent of returnee households also cite access to water as an issue, compared to respectively one and two percent for displaced and resident households.



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

	Unemployment		High Prices		Rent		Electricity		Medicines		Water		Fuel Prices		Lack of assist.	
	Feb	Mar	Feb	Mar	Feb	Mar	Feb	Mar	Feb	Mar	Feb	Mar	Feb	Mar	Feb	Mar
<b>Resident</b>	49%	45%	30%	31%	1%	2%	7%	8%	1%	2%	1%	2%	8%	8%	2%	2%
<b>Displaced</b>	55%	57%	21%	24%	7%	7%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	1%	7%	4%	4%	2%
<b>Returnee</b>	55%	56%	19%	24%	1%	2%	8%	5%	1%	2%	3%	3%	9%	5%	4%	1%

**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 1,685 completed surveys through 13 governorates in March 2020, of which 12 percent with female-headed households. The sample 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.