

## Highlights



4,898

Households surveyed



12%

Female Headed Households



18%

Stay as guest



30%

Displaced Households

## Situation Overview

- On 17 June, additional sanctions were introduced on Syria. The intensification of unilateral coercive measures on Syria coincided with the Syrian pound deprecation which has led to unprecedented increases in food prices. In June 2020, food prices skyrocketed, increasing by 48 percent compared to May 2020 and were a staggering 240 percent higher year-on-year. Even though in July food prices stabilized and only increased by three percent compared to June, this nonetheless was still the highest recorded national average WFP reference food basket price in Syria since monitoring started (2013). Furthermore, the Lebanese financial crisis that intensified in October 2019 as well as the COVID-19 outbreak and its related governmental mitigation measures have also impacted the price of food in Syria. In July 2020, the national average food basket price had increased by 251 percent compared to July 2019 and by 117 percent compared to February 2020 (pre-COVID-19 outbreak) average prices.
- The monthly average informal exchange rate depreciated by 57 percent in June 2020 compared to May 2020 reaching SYP 2,500/USD. However, between June and July 2020, the Syrian pound strengthened by 10 percent on the informal exchange market reaching SYP 2,262/USD. Moreover, on 16 June 2020, the Syrian Central Bank officially devalued the Syrian pound to SYP 1,250/USD from SYP 700/USD. The UN rate was also increased to SYP 1,250/USD. This was the third devaluation of the Syrian pound since early November when the rate was SYP 434/USD. Spurred by the heavy devaluation and the decision of Syrian Central Bank to no longer provide USD to food traders for importing commodities from July 2020 onwards, trade from Lebanon and Jordan has been reduced and food prices as a result have risen, especially imported commodities. Moreover, due to the wide fluctuations on the informal SYP/USD exchange rate in June 2020, the Turkish Lira became an official currency in the opposition held cities of Syria. Additionally, the Kurdish Self Administration banned the sale of wheat grain to other actors across the country.
- As of 30 July 2020, around 738 cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in Syria, including 41 fatalities, with the first positive result recorded in Bab Al-Hawa (opposition-held area) on 9 July. This was 165 percent higher compared to the rate of COVID-19 cases in Syria at the end of June 2020. Southern Syria remains the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in June 2020 Syrian authorities announced that two towns (Jadidat Al-Fadl in Quneitra and Ras Al Ma'ara in Rural Damascus) were put under full lockdown.
- Increased hostilities in Idleb and northern Aleppo were reported in July, including shelling, airstrikes and IEDs (improvised explosive devices), resulting in population displacement from Jabel el-Zawiya (around 6,000 civilians reportedly fled the Jabel al-Zawiya area).
- Ahead of the 10 July expiration of the Security Council resolution authorizing the cross-border delivery of aid, WFP completed pre-positioning of more than two months worth of food stocks. Under the June general food assistance distribution cycle, WFP delivered food for 890,000 people across the northeastern governorates, one million people across the southern governorates and reached 1.3 million people in north-western Syria.

Sources: [WFP Syria Situation Report Issue 6 | June2020](#), [Market Price Watch Bulletin Issue 67 | June2020](#), [WFP Global Hunger map](#), [Syrian Arab Republic Recent Developments Report No. 18 | July 2020](#)



## Key Points

- Over the past three months, the national level of poor food consumption has more than doubled. In May 2020, around five percent of interviewed households reported poor food consumption, which increased to nine percent in June and 13 percent in July 2020.
- From May to July 2020, the national average reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) increased from 15.1 to 17.8. Al-Hasakeh recorded the highest use of consumption-based coping strategies (rCSI 21) highlighting the persistence of a perilous situation.
- As a result of the preventive measures and movement restrictions across the country due to the current COVID-19 outbreak, in July 2020, around 25.6 percent of interviewed households reported to not have regular access to markets and 15 percent reported not have access to medical facilities.
- The working sector has been particularly impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak due to the closure of many shops, imposed curfew by the government and reduced working hours. Between May and July 2020, around 65 percent of the interviewed households reported to have lost one or more sources of income because of COVID-19 related restrictions.

## Methodology

This mVAM bulletin is based on data collected via live telephone interviews in May, June and July 2020 from households in locations across Syria. The telephone numbers called were generated using random-digit dialing. Starting from February 2020, data is collected from a sample of around 2000 respondents per month across 14 governorates. As per standard survey procedures, respondents' consent was obtained prior to the interviews. For security and safety measures, all respondents were identified with an anonymous ID.

### For Further Information

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## COVID-19 Situation Overview I

- AS a result of the preventive measures associated with COVID-19 outbreak, socio-economic hardships notably in ensuring food security and livelihoods continue to further exacerbate the existing humanitarian needs in Syria. The total food insecure in Syria has reached around 9.3 million people, around 46 percent of the population, with an increase of 1.4 million since September 2019.
- Most of the interviewed households continue taking precautions and preventive measures against the COVID-19. In July 2020, around 93 percent of interviewed households reported staying at home, with the highest recorded in Damascus and Lattakia, where 95 percent of respondents reported avoiding crowded places and the lowest recorded in Ar-Raqqa (85 percent) and Dar'a (89 percent).
- Since the beginning of the COVID-19 spread in March 2020, Syrian households have been facing challenges reaching markets and shops regularly with a peak in April 2020 when around 29 percent of respondents reported not being able to access a market. This trend though has decreased over the months reaching 25.6 percent in July 2020. At the governorate level, 38 percent of respondents in Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa reported not being able to access markets in July 2020. The main impediments cited by the respondents were travel restrictions (10 percent) followed by the pandemic outbreak (four percent).
- Access to health care facilities during the pandemic was still a problem for many households across Syria. Around 15 percent of respondents in July 2020 were not able to receive medical care and protection services either at home or at health centers, with Al-Hasakeh being the governorate with the highest percentage (26 percent). The main reasons reported included the lack of financial resources and movement restrictions. Moreover, the proportion of female-headed households who had difficulty accessing medical services, has almost doubled over the past three months reaching 20 percent in July 2020. Additionally, in terms of displacement status, returnees have reported slight improvement in access to hospitals in July 2020, while the proportion of displaced people who reported a problem in accessing medical facilities has increased to 16.2 percent.

Fig2: Percent of households facing challenges to access market in the last four months by governorate

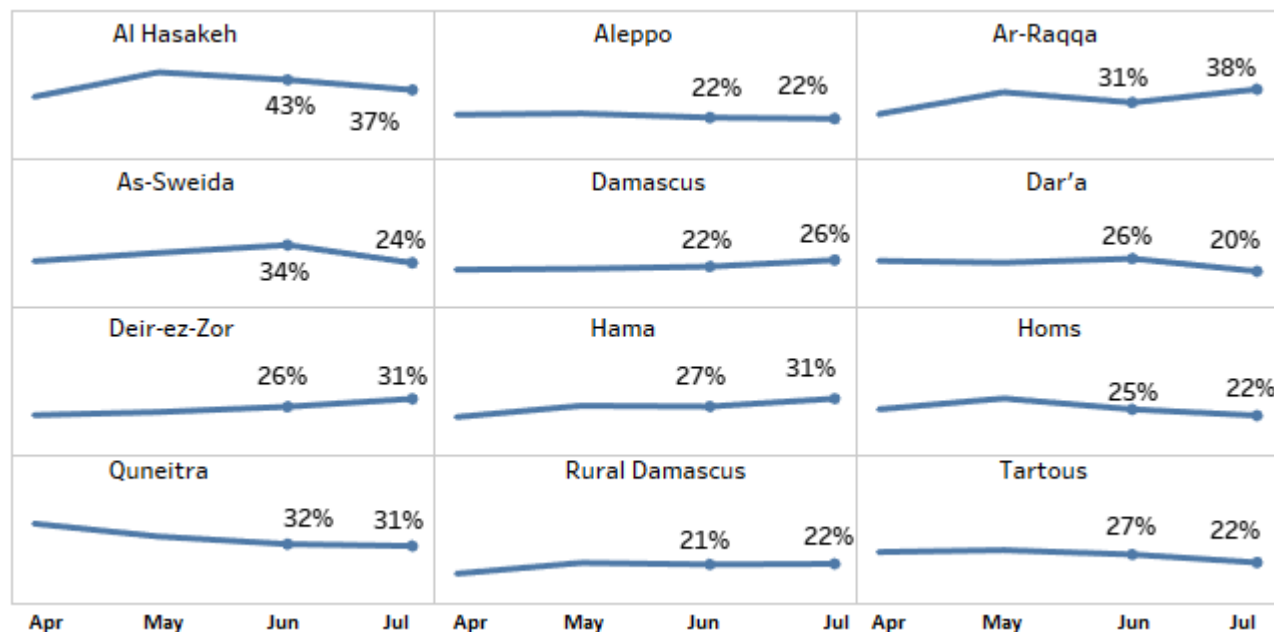
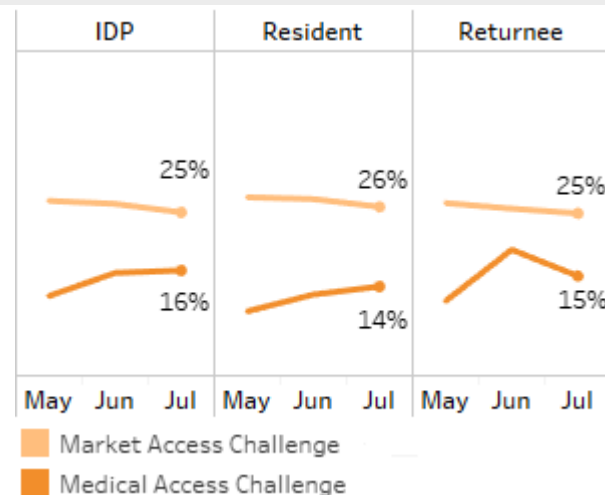


Fig1: Percent of households facing challenges to access market and medical services in past three months according to displacement status



Map1: Percent of households facing challenges to access market by governorate in July 2020

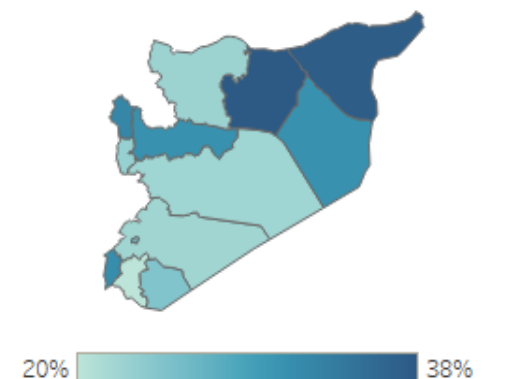
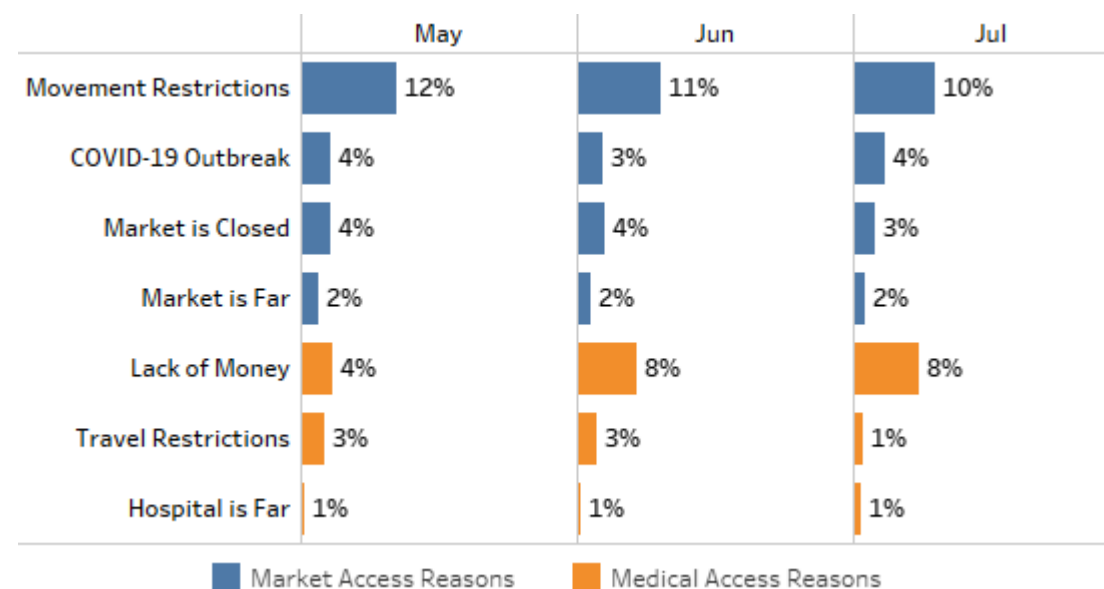


Fig3: Respondent reported reasons why accessing market and medical services was challenging



## COVID-19 Situation Overview II

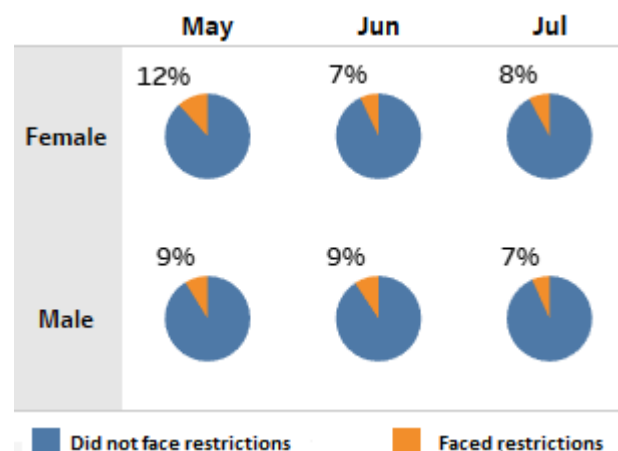
- According to July mVAM data, 49 percent of households with no regular access to markets and 47 percent of those not being able to access medical healthcare also have poor and borderline food consumption. In July 2020, around 6.8 percent of the surveyed households reported difficulties receiving remittances and/or food assistance due to movement restrictions with the highest recorded in Dar'a (14 percent) and Ar-Raqqa (11 percent). Between June and July 2020, this percentage has decreased significantly in Al-Hasakeh from 18 percent to three percent and in As-Sweida from 12 percent to four percent.

- The working sector has also been particularly impacted due to the closure of many shops and workshops, imposed government curfew and reduced working hours which took effect from March to June 2020. Between May and July 2020, around 65 percent of the interviewed households reported that they had lost one or more sources of income because of COVID-19 related restrictions, with 33 percent of them reporting to have lost almost all of their May and June 2020 income. At governorate level, the highest proportions in July 2020 were recorded in As-Sweida (75 percent) and Quneitra (72 percent) including 37 percent and 22 percent of them, respectively have lost between 75-100 percent of their financial resources due to COVID-19.

- Returnee and IDP population groups were mostly affected by the loss of one or more sources of income. With 63 percent of returnees in May and June and 68 percent in July reporting to have lost one or more sources of income. Around 67 percent of IDPs and 63 percent of residents reported to have lost one or more sources of income over the three months. Furthermore, around 30 percent and 23 percent of IDPs and returnees, respectively, reported to have lost almost completely their income in July 2020.

- Unemployment was cited as the main problem faced by 36 percent of the respondents in July 2020 with the following breakdown by IDPs (44 percent), returnees (41 percent) and residents (34 percent).

Fig4: Percent of households facing difficulties receiving humanitarian assistance due to COVID-19 related restrictions, in the past three months according to head of household



Map2: Percent of households facing difficulties receiving assistance after the pandemic in July 2020

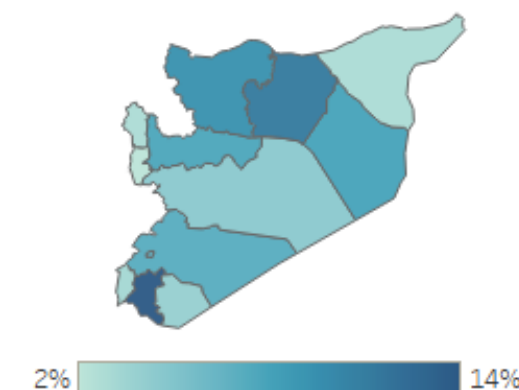
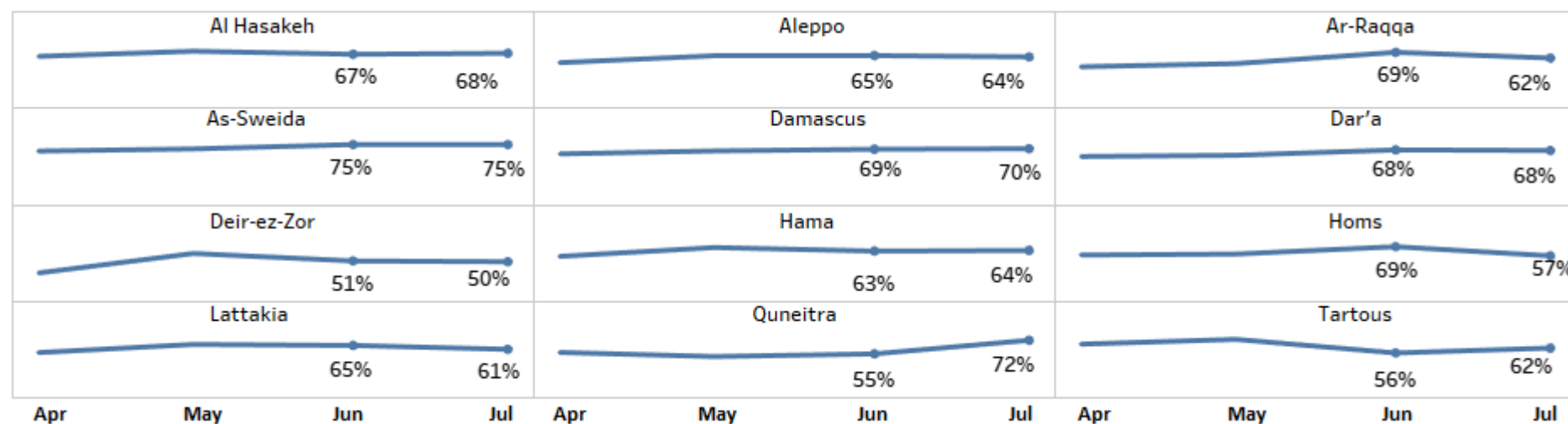
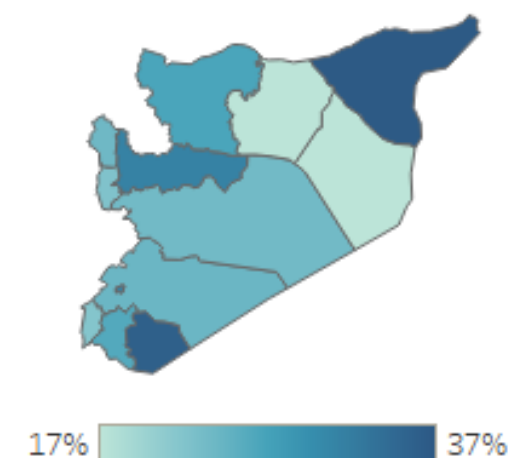


Fig5: Percent of households losing one or more source of income after pandemic in the last four months by governorate



Map3: Percent of households losing more than 75% of their income sources in July 2020



## Food Consumption

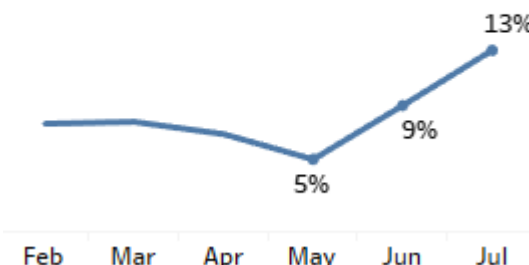
- The national average rate of inadequate food consumption (poor and borderline combined) increased significantly in July by 17 percentage points compared to May 2020. Almost 40 percent of the surveyed households reported poor and borderline food consumption in July 2020. This increase is largely believed to be related to the heavy depreciation of the Syrian pound and its impact on increasing the price of commodities.

- Broken down by governorate, in July 2020, the average proportion of households with poor and borderline food consumption was highest in Aleppo and Deir-ez-Zor (49 percent), Quneitra (47 percent) and Homs (45 percent). Between June and July 2020, the highest increase of inadequate food consumption was reported in Hama (up by 59 percent) and Ar-Raqqa (up by 45 percent), while the greatest decrease was recorded in As-Sweida (down by 33 percent).

- Between May and July 2020, the national level of poor food consumption has more than doubled. Around five percent of interviewed households had reportedly poor food consumption in May, which increased to nine percent in June and reached 13 percent in July 2020. This includes a significant increase in poor food consumption levels in Dar'a (from three to 14 percent), Tartous (from seven to 17 percent), Al-Hasakeh (from seven to 15 percent), Aleppo (from five to 14 percent) and Damascus (from four to 11 percent). Highlighting, a serious deterioration in people's ability to procure their food needs.

- Food consumption of displaced households continued showing a deterioration compared to previous months. In July 2020, the prevalence of inadequate food consumption was much higher especially among displaced households (48 percent), which is 21 percentage points higher than in May 2020. Also, the proportion of returnees and residents with poor and borderline food consumption reached 40 and 35 percent, respectively in July 2020.

Fig6: The national average level of poor food consumption in the last six months



Map4: Percent of households by governorate reporting poor food consumption in July 2020

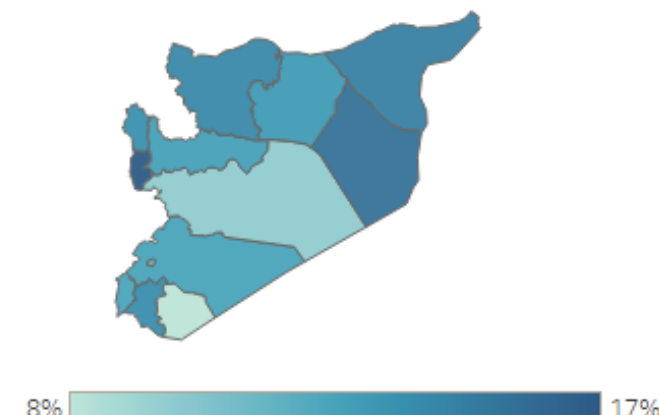


Fig7: Percent of households with inadequate food consumption in the last six months by governorate

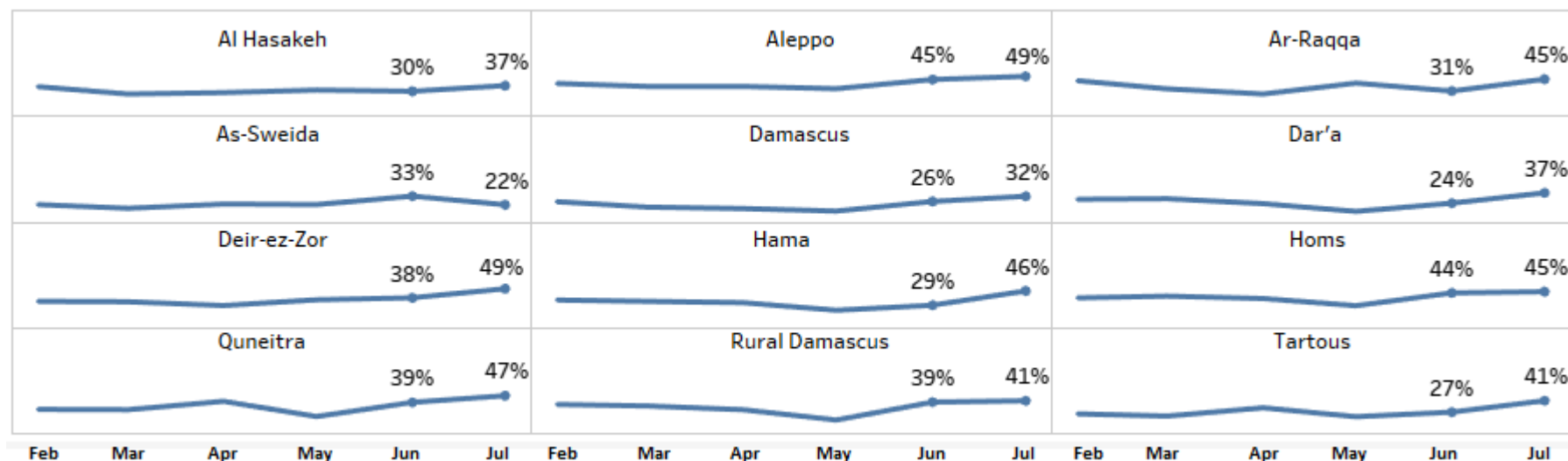


Fig8: Percent of households reporting poor and borderline food consumption according to displacement status

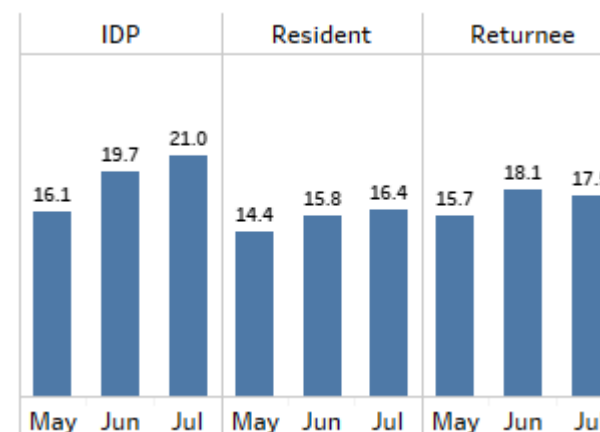


## Coping Strategies

- Between May and July 2020, the national average reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) increased from 15.1 to 17.8. Over these months, the most broadly used coping strategy was consumption of less expensive food: approximately 63 percent of interviewed households in May 2020 compared to 71 percent in June and July 2020 mentioned engaging in this coping strategy. Besides, around 53 percent of respondents have reduced the number of meals per day to cover their essential food needs in the past two months. At the governorate level, Al-Hasakeh recorded the highest use of consumption-based coping strategies between May and July 2020 (average rCSI 21) highlighting the persistence of a perilous situation in the governorate.

- Using savings to cope with lack of food or lack of money to buy food was still not an option for 84 percent of the Syrian households in July 2020 suggesting that most of the households have already depleted their savings (for example in Ar-Raqqa 96 percent and in Dar'a 90 percent of interviewed households reported having depleted their savings). The worsening economic situation in Syria will make it more difficult for households to keep up with rising prices and be able to cover for their essential food needs. As a result more households will likely be forced to rely more frequently on coping strategies as well as relying on more extreme and severe coping strategies. An indication of the weak household purchasing power is illustrated by household's purchase on credit. According to July 2020 mVAM data, some governorates have recorded peaks in buying food on credit (77 percent in Ar-Raqqa and Dar'a, 74 percent in Al-Hasakeh and 72 percent in Rural Damascus). A practice that was widely used among IDPs (73 percent) and returnees (70 percent).

Fig9: rCSI average over the last three months according to displacement status



Map5: rCSI average by governorate in July 2020

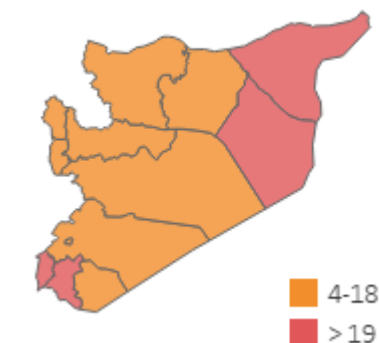


Fig10: rCSI average by governorate over the last six months

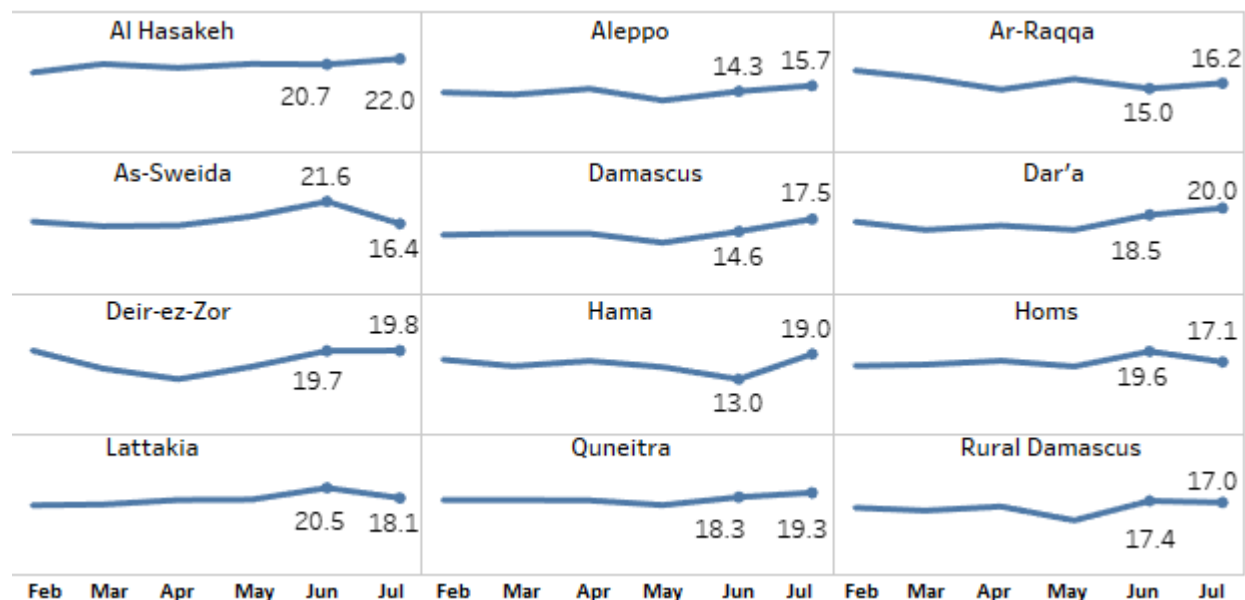


Fig11: Overall percent of households by adopted coping strategy over the past six months

