

Highlights



1,772

Households surveyed



12%

Female Headed Households



18%

Stay as guest



30%

Displaced Households

Situation Overview

- On 4 August, a massive explosion at a warehouse in Beirut Port ripped through the city causing widespread casualties and material damage. The deadly blast devastated the main grain silos, where 120,000 metric tons of the country food stocks, including wheat, soy and other staples, were stored and reportedly destroyed. Beirut functions as a key strategic corridor for commodities bound for Syria, and Beirut Port accounts for 30 percent of incoming shipments bound for WFP's operation in Syria. Even though a small portion of the Syrian inbound WFP shipments has since been diverted to Lebanon's Tripoli Port after the explosion, the container terminal at Beirut port remains operational, and WFP Syria is still able to use Beirut for shipments with no significant delays on the provision of food assistance into Syria.
- A threefold increase in the COVID-19 cases has been recorded across Syria during August 2020. As of 31 August, 2,765 COVID-19 cases were officially confirmed, including 112 fatalities. An increase of close to 265 percent compared to the national rate of COVID-19 cases at the end of July. On 10 August, the first COVID-19 case was also confirmed among the population of the Al-Hol IDP camp in Al-Hasakeh governorate. At the governorate level, the highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases by the end of August 2020 was reported in Damascus (1,024 cases) and Aleppo (466 cases). As a result of this spike in COVID-19 cases in Syria, on 13 August, Jordanian authorities announced that they would close Jaber crossing, the land trade border with Syria.
- The Alouk water station in Al-Hasakeh governorate, the main water source for north-eastern Syria, stopped pumping water more than a dozen times since January 2020. Despite the ongoing repairs, water did not reach Al-Hasakeh for around two weeks in August 2020, highlighting a particular concern given the spread of COVID-19 cases in northeastern Syria and the regular need to access clean water to safeguard against further spread of the pandemic. On 27 August, the Governor of Al-Hasakeh announced that water had started to reach several neighborhoods of the city.
- Increased hostilities were observed in northwest Syria (where an estimated 76 percent of the population are women and children), particularly in eastern Idleb, northern Aleppo, and the vicinity of the frontlines by the M4 highway in northern Lattakia, with more frequent shelling reported since early July 2020.
- Meanwhile, to address growing needs resulting from persistent incidents of violence, the deteriorating socio-economic situation and the COVID-19 outbreak in August, WFP dispatched food rations sufficient for 4.8 million people across all governorates of Syria, including commodities for 989,400 people across the northeastern governorates and 1.3 million people in southern Syria, in addition to delivering food to 1.4 million people via the cross-border crossing from Turkey to areas in northwest Syria.

Sources: [OCHA Syria Situation - Alouk Water Station](#), [Syrian Arab Republic: COVID-19 | August 2020](#), [Syrian Arab Republic: Recent Development Report No.19 | August 2020](#), [WFP Global Hunger map](#)



Key Points

- In August 2020, around 43 percent of surveyed households reported poor and borderline food consumption. The highest levels were recorded among female-headed households (54 percent) and returnees (49 percent).
- Between July and August 2020, the national average reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) slightly decreased from 17.8 to 16.8. However, Deir-ez-Zor recorded the highest rCSI in August, where 88 percent of respondents have reportedly to adopt food coping strategies to afford their essential food needs.
- The proportion of interviewed households who reported having difficulty accessing medical services in Quneitra has almost doubled compared to July 2020, reaching 24 percent in August.
- Around 46 percent of households who reported losing one or more sources of income, have poor or borderline food consumption in August, representing an increase of 15 percent from July and by 48 percent from April 2020.

Methodology

This mVAM bulletin is based on data collected via live telephone interviews in August 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 2,000 respondents per month across 13 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.

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COVID-19 Situation Overview I

- The COVID-19 crisis remains a grave concern in Syria, especially after the spike in the rate of the confirmed COVID-19 cases during July and August 2020. The pandemic outbreak has led to a significant expansion in multi-sector needs all over the country, notably in densely populated areas, collective shelters, and people living in camps and informal settlements, as well as other areas where hostilities may be ongoing.
- The vast majority of interviewed households (94 percent) reported staying at home in August as a preventive measure against COVID-19; where 97 percent of the respondents in Quneitra and Lattakia, as well as 96 percent in Dar'a and Deir-ez-Zor mentioned avoiding crowded places to curb the spread of the virus. Nevertheless, Syrian authorities announced that schools are set to re-open as of 13 September 2020.
- In August 2020, approximately one out of four households in Syria reported not to have access to markets due in large part to the pandemic outbreak (four percent) and COVID-19 travel-related restrictions (nine percent). According to mVAM data, since the beginning of COVID-19 in Syria, markets are reportedly open in most governorates. Back in April 2020, around 10 percent of the respondents in Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa reported that markets were closed; this trend has decreased for both governorates over the previous months, reaching five percent and 6.6 percent, respectively, in August. However, from July to August 2020, Rural Damascus recorded the highest increase in citing the market being closed (from 0.6 percent to 3.6 percent of interviewed households).
- The proportion of surveyed households facing challenges to access healthcare facilities were hovering at 15 percent in August. Syrian households who had difficulty accessing medical services in Quneitra have almost doubled compared to levels reported in July 2020, reaching 24 percent in August. Additionally, in terms of displacement status, an increasing percentage of returnees have reported deterioration in August in accessing hospitals (increased by 40 percent) compared to July 2020. At the same time, the proportion of displaced households and residents who reported a problem in receiving medical care reached 19 percent and 12 percent in August 2020, respectively.

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

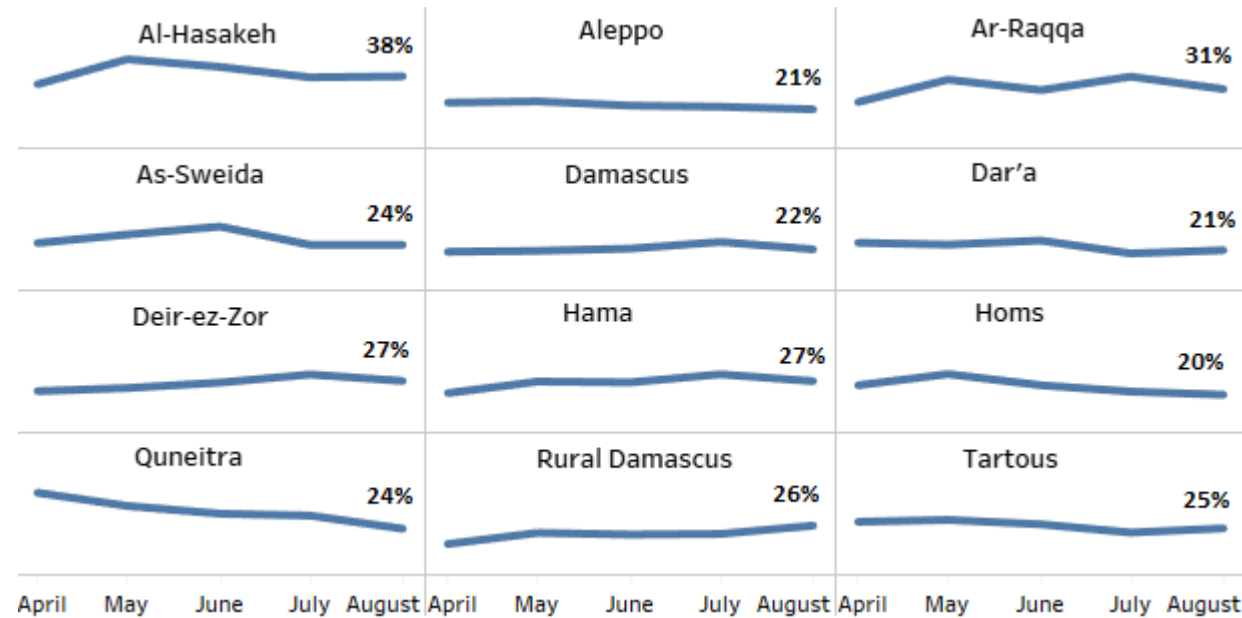
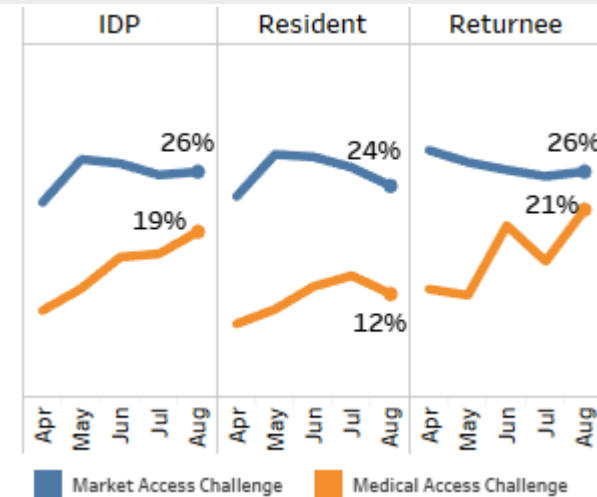


Fig1: Percent of households facing challenges to access market and medical services in past five months according to displacement status



Map1: Percent of households facing challenges to access medical services by governorate in August 2020

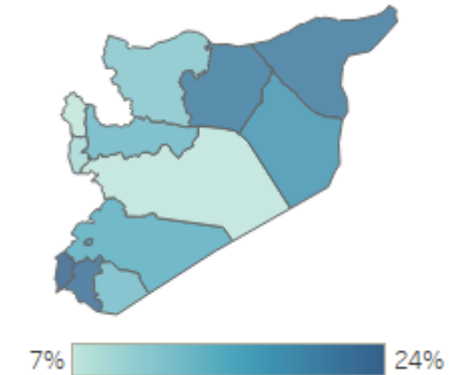
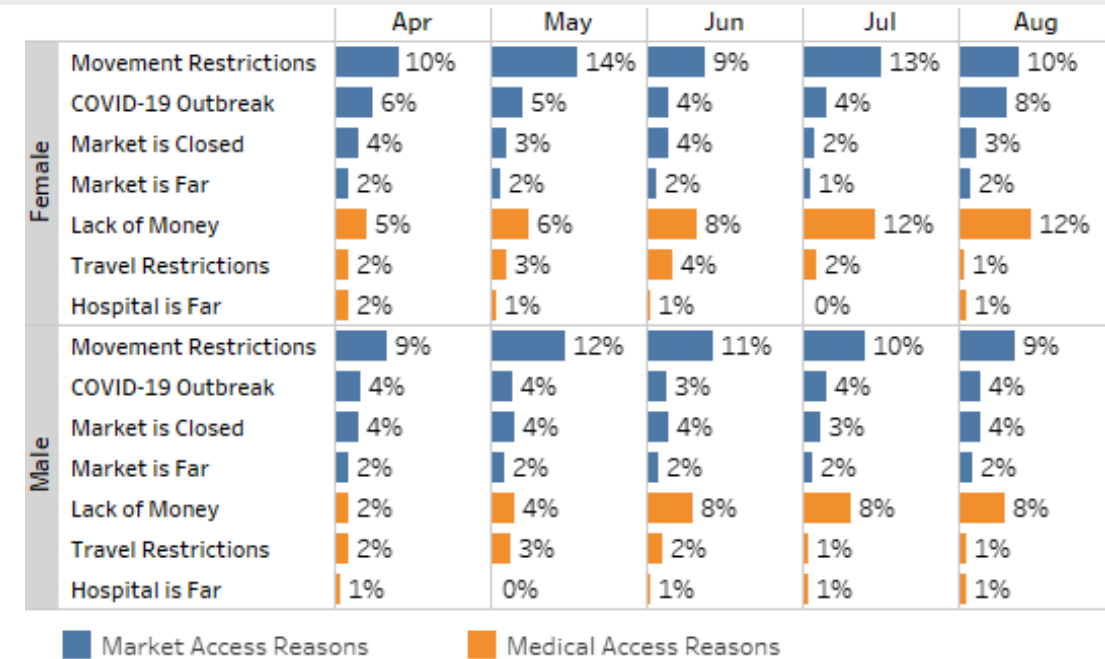


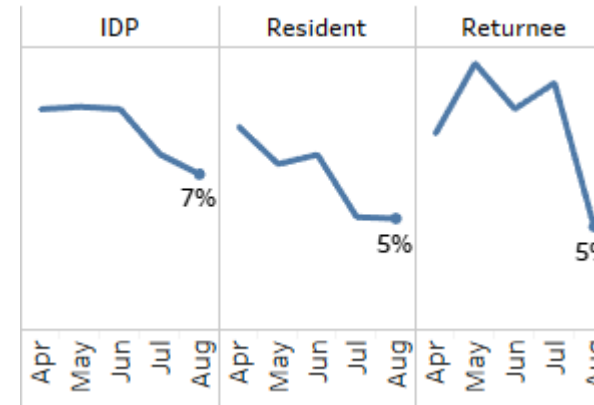
Fig3: Respondent reported reasons why accessing market and medical services was challenging



COVID-19 Situation Overview II

- According to August mVAM data, around 55 percent of households with no regular access to medical healthcare have poor and borderline food consumption, increasing 17 percent compared to July 2020. Moreover, due to COVID-19 movement restrictions, 5.7 percent of surveyed households in August reported difficulties obtaining remittances and food assistance, with the highest observations recorded in Deir-ez-Zor (12 percent). This trend has decreased across Syria between July to August 2020, especially among returnees (from 11 percent to 5 percent), though almost double the interviewed households in Lattakia, Quneitra, and Al-Hasakeh reported that movement restrictions made it difficult to receive food assistance compared to July 2020.
- The pandemic outbreak has added new challenges for Syrian households, resulting in difficulties in sustaining sources of income. In August, approximately 61 percent of the surveyed households reported that they had lost one or more sources of income because of COVID-19 related restrictions, with almost one out of four households reporting to have lost more than 75 percent of their income. Around 46 percent of those households who reported losses of income have poor or borderline food consumption in August, representing an increase of 15 percent from July and by 48 percent from April 2020. In addition, 89 percent of these households reported having relied on at least one coping strategy in August.
- Broken down by governorate, Quneitra recorded the highest percent of interviewed households to have lost one or more sources of income due to the pandemic (76 percent), with 32 percent of them having lost almost entirely their income in August 2020, followed by Lattakia (65 percent) and Homs (62 percent). Furthermore, this trend has slightly decreased in August for Syrian residents and returnees down by nine percent and by 10 percent, respectively, compared to July 2020. In addition, the main problems faced by surveyed households in August were unemployment (42 percent), followed by the high price of commodities (26 percent).

Fig4: Percent of households facing difficulties receiving humanitarian assistance due to COVID-19 related restrictions, in the past five months according to displacement status



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

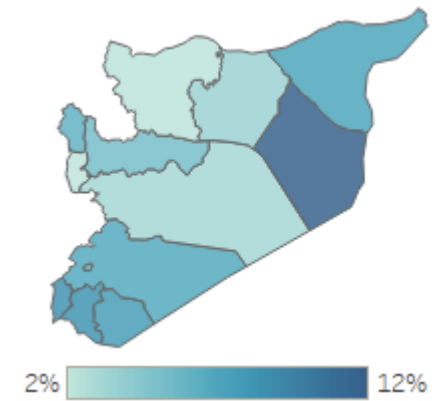


Fig5: Percent of households losing one or more source of income after pandemic in the last five months by governorate

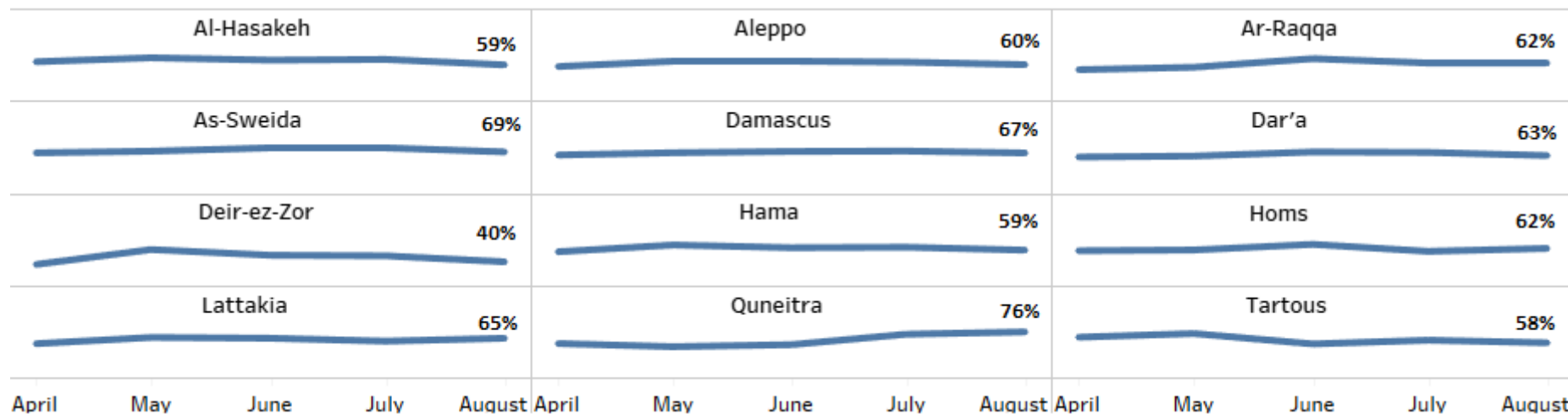
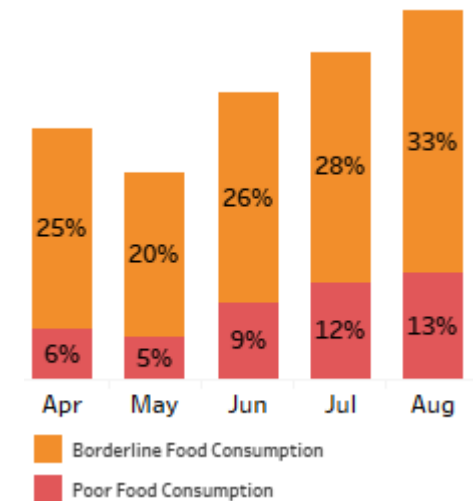


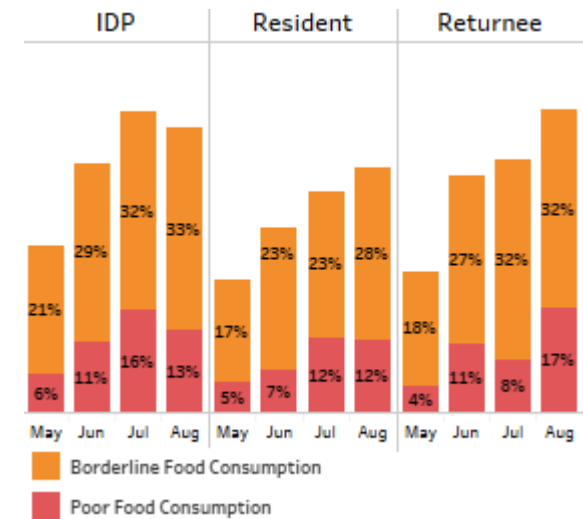
Fig6: Percent of households losing their income sources after the pandemic and with inadequate food consumption



Food Consumption

- In August 2020, around 43 percent of surveyed households reported poor and borderline food consumption, with the highest levels recorded among female-headed households (54 percent). Although the national average rate of inadequate food consumption (poor and borderline combined) slightly increased by three percentage points in August compared to July 2020, it is more than double the level recorded in August 2019.
- Broken down by governorate, in August 2020, the average proportion of households with poor and borderline food consumption was highest in Rural Damascus and Deir-ez-Zor (52 percent), Ar-Raqqa (49 percent), and Homs (48 percent), while the lowest was recorded in As-Sweida (23 percent). Between August and July 2020, the highest increase of inadequate food consumption was detected in Rural Damascus (up by 29 percent).
- The share of households reporting poor food consumption was highest in Deir-ez-Zor (22 percent) and Al-Hasakeh (17 percent) in August. While the significant change in the proportion of surveyed households with poor food consumption from July to August 2020 was recorded in Homs (increased up by 60 percent) and Dar'a (decreased down by almost half).
- According to residency status, in August 2020, the prevalence of inadequate food consumption was much higher among returnees (49 percent). The observed spike was driven by the increased number of interviewed returnees' households reporting poor food consumption: almost double from July to August 2020. Also, the proportion of displaced households and residents with poor and borderline food consumption increased, reaching 46 and 39 percent, respectively.
- Despite the Eid El-Adha celebrations at the start of August, which typically leads to increases in the national consumption level of protein intake, around 55 percent of interviewed households reported that they only ate protein fewer than two times a week in August 2020. This was the lowest national average consumption level of protein over the past six months.

Fig7: Percent of households reporting poor and borderline food consumption according to displacement status



Map3: Percent of households by governorate reporting poor food consumption in August 2020

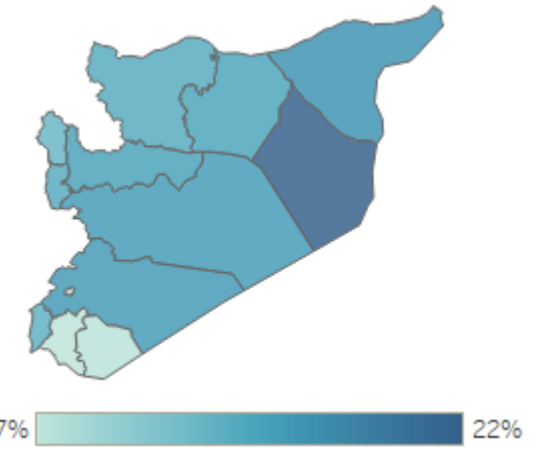
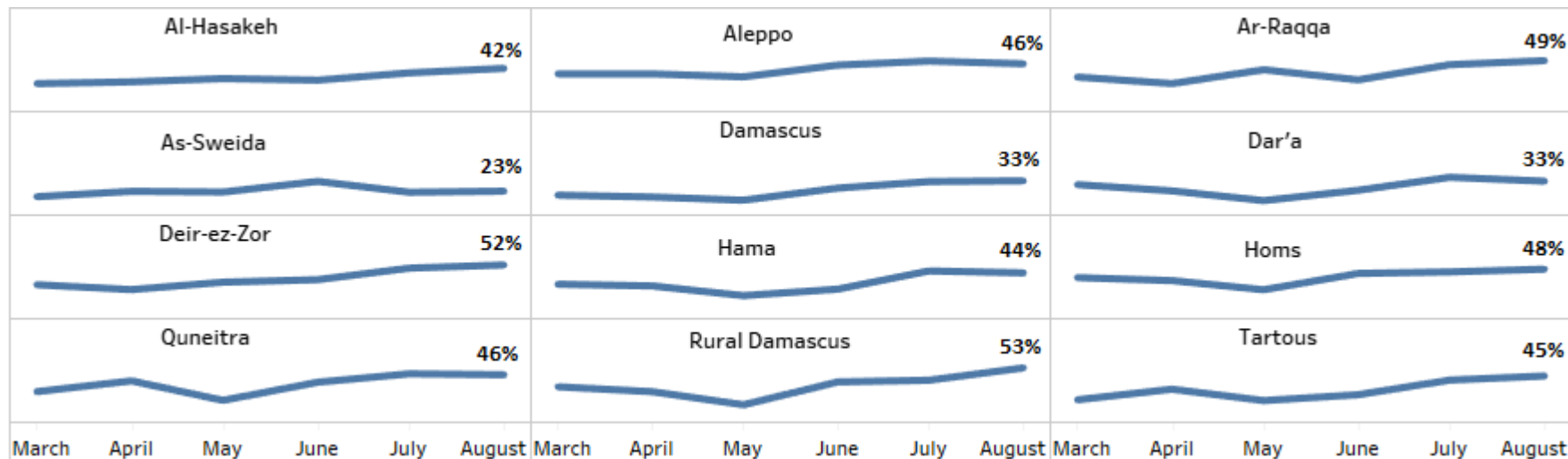
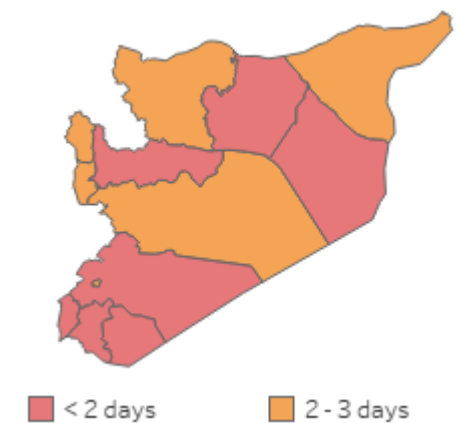


Fig8: Percent of households with inadequate food consumption in the last six months by governorate



Map4: Average weekly consumption by governorate for protein in August 2020



Coping Strategies

- Between July and August 2020, the national average reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) slightly decreased from 17.8 to 16.8, however around 83 percent of the interviewed households reported to still apply at least one food-based coping strategy in August due to the worsening economic situation across Syria. The fall in rCSI was mainly driven by the decrease in Hama and Dar'a, where the number of surveyed households applying food-related coping mechanisms fell in August down by 14 percent and by eight percent, respectively, compared to July 2020. However, Deir-ez-Zor recorded the highest rCSI in August, where 88 percent of respondents reported applying food coping strategies to afford their essential food needs. Though food consumption deteriorated for both male and female-headed households in August, both groups reported having adopted less food-based coping mechanisms, with a slight decrease in rCSI by one and 1.2 points, respectively, compared to July 2020.
- In August 2020, the most widely adopted negative food coping strategies reported by interviewed households across Syria were consuming less expensive food (61 percent) followed by a reduction in the number of meals consumed per day (47 percent). Although reducing consumption of adult household members to let their children eat was also broadly implemented, the proportion of households mentioned relying more frequently on this coping strategy has decreased from 48 percent in July to 39 percent in August.
- According to August mVAM data, almost 66 percent of households mentioned they bought food on credit, with peaks among IDPs (70 percent) and returnees (68 percent). Broken down by governorate, the prevalence of households buying food on credit has increased in August in Quneitra (up by 23 percent) and Lattakia (up by seven percent) compared to July 2020.

Fig10: rCSI average by governorate over the last six months

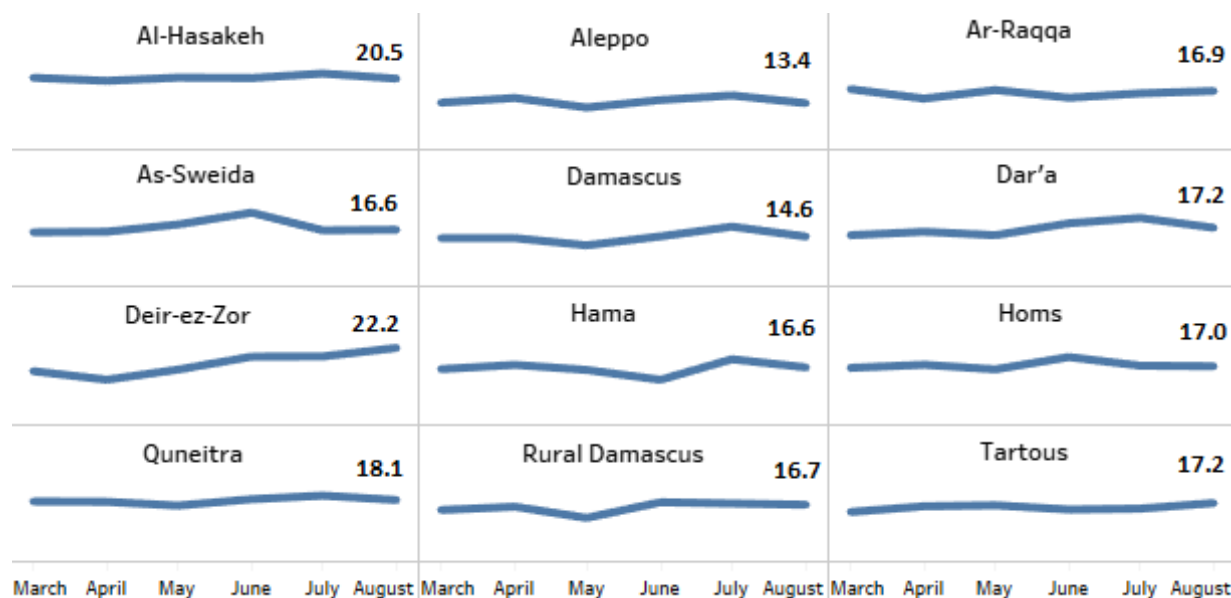
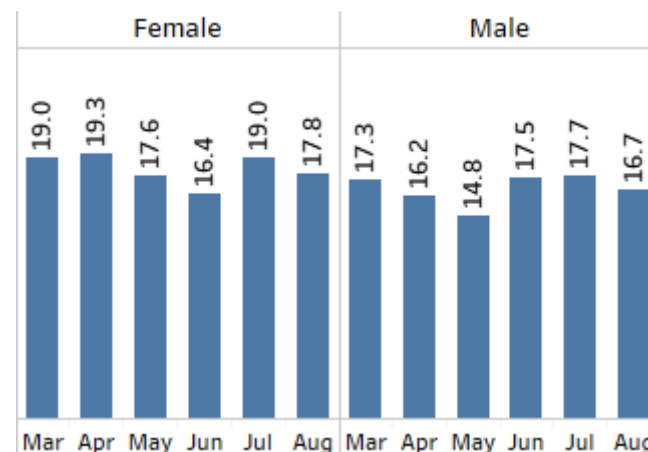


Fig9: rCSI average over the last six months according to head of household



Map5: rCSI average by governorate in August 2020

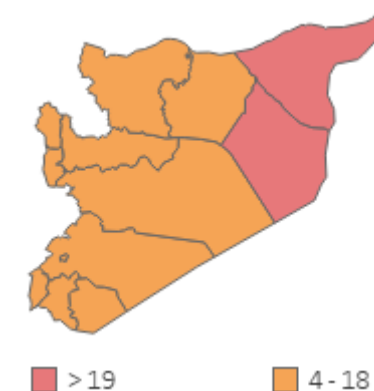


Fig11: Overall percent of households by adopted coping strategy over the past six months

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	
Female	Borrow or help	63%	66%	67%	64%	53%	51%
	Less Expensive Food	73%	69%	69%	74%	78%	61%
	Limit Portion Size	43%	42%	44%	45%	54%	43%
	Reduce Number of Meals	56%	60%	46%	55%	57%	50%
	Restrict Consumption	45%	44%	41%	38%	48%	37%
Male	Borrow or help	55%	48%	53%	53%	50%	40%
	Less Expensive Food	67%	69%	63%	71%	69%	61%
	Limit Portion Size	43%	37%	36%	46%	45%	39%
	Reduce Number of Meals	49%	47%	33%	53%	52%	46%
	Restrict Consumption	47%	47%	39%	43%	44%	39%