

Situation Overview

- COVID-19 continued to spread across Syria. As of 30 November 2021, a total of 48,170 COVID-19 cases, including 2,749 fatalities, were confirmed by the Minister of Health in government-controlled areas. The monthly increase in COVID-19 cases in November (5,024 cases) signals a downward trend compared to October 2021 (8,941 cases); it however represents the third highest monthly case-load since the beginning of the pandemic. As a result, the occupancy rate of intensive care units in hospitals was high in most governorates, with COVID-19 centers reportedly at full capacity in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Tartous and As-Sweida. In opposition-held areas in northwest Syria, approximately 92,229 COVID-19 cases were reported by the end of November, an increase of 3,806 new cases compared to the previous month. The COVID-19 related mortality rate in opposition-held areas in northwest Syria has witnessed an increase of 409 fatalities compared to a month earlier, reaching a total of 2,253 COVID-19 fatalities as of November. This represents the third highest COVID-19 related mortality rate since the beginning of the pandemic. In northeast Syria, the lack of COVID-19 testing materials has pushed the central laboratory to be out of service since 10 of November. However, COVID-19 cases reportedly continued to surge across northeast Syria and the Kurdish authorities extended the imposed lockdown in Kurdish-controlled areas throughout most of November. Simultaneously, as of 28 November 2021, a total of 739,210 people were reportedly fully vaccinated nationwide, representing around 3.4 percent of Syria's total population (21.7 million people) and an increase of 235,816 vaccinated people compared to a month earlier.
- The fuel shortage crisis continued to worsen across Syria. On 1 November, the Ministry of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection (MoITCP) increased the price of domestic gas cylinders sold through the electronic card from SYP 4,200/10 kg to SYP 9,700/10 kg. The new price reportedly represents one-third of the cost incurred by the government. Also, the MoITCP increased the price of industrial butane gas cylinders distributed through the electronic card to SYP 40,000/16 kg. At the same time, electricity costs have been doubled for domestic use and nearly quadrupled for the agricultural sector. On 13 November, the MoITCP set the price of diesel and 90-octane gasoline which is distributed outside the allocations and through the electronic card, at SYP 1,700/L and SYP 2,500/L, respectively. Moreover, the crippling fuel shortage has had a negative knock-on effect on farmers, particularly on land preparation and irrigation, which will likely result in a spike of the overall agricultural production costs and increase of the selling price for most food commodities (FAO 2021).
- The general security situation remained volatile in November. Intensified hostilities were reported in northwest Syria, with shelling largely concentrated in southern Idlib and western Aleppo. In Dar'a governorate, the security situation has been stable since the 6th September 2021 ceasefire and the majority of the 38,000 displaced people have reportedly returned to their homes, while an estimated 3,700 people continued to live with friends or family due to severe damage to their homes. In Dar'a Al-Balad, nearly 1,198 residential buildings have been reportedly damaged or destroyed, affecting approximately 18,000 people. On the other hand, on 15 November, the Syrian government launched the second round of the international Russian-backed conference talks in Damascus, aimed at finding ways to facilitate Syrian refugee returns to the country.
- In November 2021, WFP delivered general food assistance to approximately 5.5 million people across Syria in order to meet the growing humanitarian needs nationwide. Furthermore, on 29 November, Damascus hosted the fourth conference of the Arab Union of Arab cities and industrial zones, which was the first pan Arab economic conference to be held in Damascus since 2011. The conference aimed at encouraging Arab and foreign investors to invest in different economic projects in Arab cities.

Sources: [OCHA | Dar'a Governorate November 2021](#), [COAR | Syria Update November 2021](#), [SANA | COVID-19 Update November 2021](#)



Key Points

- Close to half of the interviewed households (49 percent) reported poor or borderline food consumption in November 2021, an increase of seven percent year-on-year and representing the third highest food insecurity level recorded since November 2020.
- In order to deal with insufficient food stocks, 46 percent of surveyed households reported reducing food consumption by adult members to prioritize their children's food consumption needs, marking a 12 percent increase compared to November 2020.
- In November 2021, nearly two out of five interviewed households (38 percent) reported facing difficulties in reaching markets, an increase of 17 percentage points year-on-year and marking the highest level recorded since April 2020.
- During the reporting period, 25 percent of surveyed households in Syria reported that they had lost one or more sources of income over the past month, with a peak recorded in Dar'a (28 percent).

For Further Information

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Key Characteristics



1,299
Households Surveyed



11%
Female Headed Households



18%
Stay as Guests



25%
Displaced Households

Methodology

This mVAM bulletin is based on data collected via live telephone interviews in November 2021 from households in locations across Syria. The phone numbers were generated using random-digit dialing. In November 2021, data was collected from a sample of 1,299 respondents across 13 governorates (Idlib is not covered). 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.

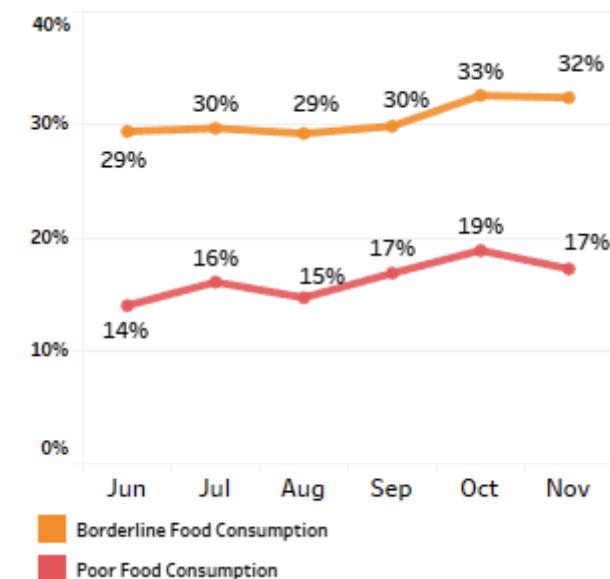




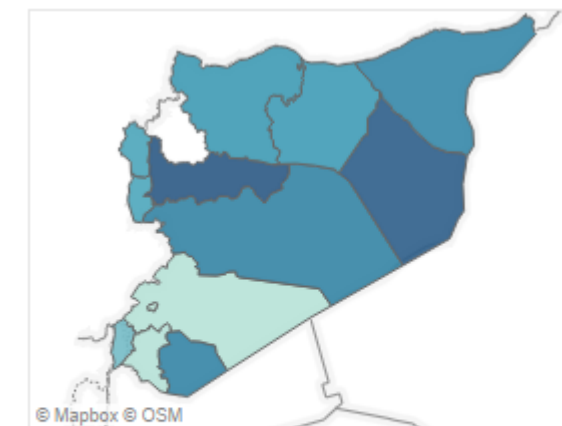
Food Consumption

- In November 2021, close to half of the surveyed households (49 percent) reported poor or borderline food consumption in Syria, representing the third highest food insecurity level recorded since November 2020. The first and the second highest food insecurity levels throughout the past year were recorded in October 2021 (52 percent) and March 2021 (51 percent), respectively. The national average rate of inadequate food consumption (poor and borderline combined) decreased by three percentage points from October 2021, while it increased by seven percent since November 2020.
- Broken down by governorate, in November 2021, the highest proportion of households with poor or borderline food consumption was recorded in Hama, with more than three out of five interviewed households (64 percent) reporting inadequate food consumption, representing a 12 percentage points increase year-on-year, followed by Aleppo (63 percent). On the other hand, Damascus (31 percent) recorded the lowest level of inadequate food consumption this month. Moreover, insecurity continued to have a negative ripple effect on the food security situation in Dar'a governorate. In November, 49 percent of the surveyed households in Dar'a indicated poor or borderline food consumption, marking an increase of nine percentage points from a month earlier.
- During the reporting period, 17 percent of surveyed households in Syria reported poor food consumption, representing a three percentage points increase from the level recorded in November 2020. This trend was more pronounced in Hama (27 percent). The highest monthly increase of interviewed households reporting poor food consumption was recorded in Deir-ez-Zor (up by eight percentage points) and As-Sweida (up by five percentage points), reaching 27 percent and 22 percent, respectively, in November 2021.
- In November 2021, 57 percent of female-headed households indicated poor or borderline food consumption compared to 49 percent of male-headed households. In terms of residency status, 54 percent of returnees and 52 percent of IDPs reported inadequate food consumption in November, compared to 47 percent of residents.
- Moreover, insufficient consumption of protein-rich food items continued to be reported across Syria. In November 2021, the national average consumption rate of animal-source protein was less than twice a week (average of 1.6 times per week), representing the third lowest level recorded since November 2020. The first and the second lowest national levels during the past year were recorded in October 2021 (average of 1.4 times per week) and March 2021 (average of 1.5 times per week), respectively.

Fig1: The national average level of poor and borderline food consumption in the last six months



Map1: Percent of households by governorate reporting poor food consumption in November 2021



Data from Idleb is not available

Fig2: Percent of households with inadequate food consumption in the last six months by governorate

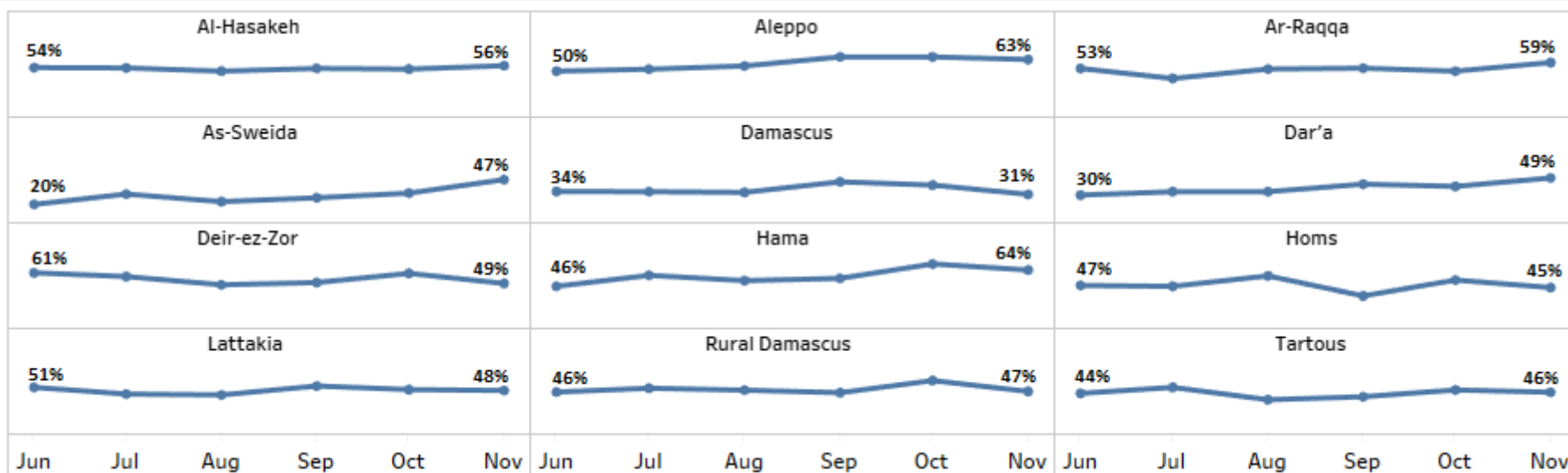
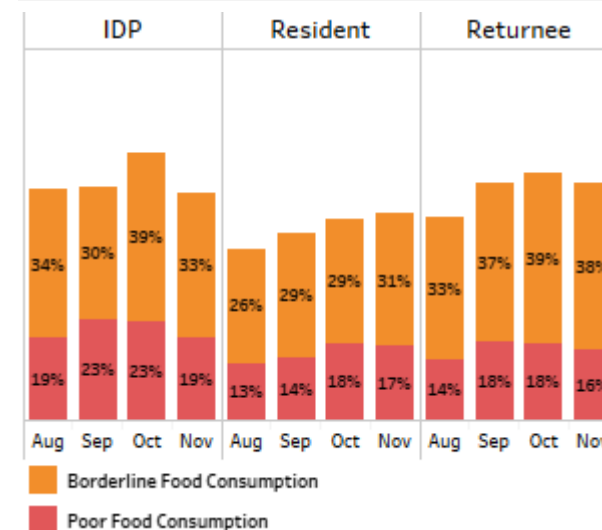


Fig3: Percent of households reporting poor and borderline food consumption according to displacement status





Coping Strategies

- Between October and November 2021, the national average reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) decreased from 20.5 to 18.5. In November 2021, nearly nine out of ten interviewed households (88 percent) reported applying at least one food-based coping mechanism to deal with insufficient food stocks, with a higher proportion recorded among female-headed households (90 percent) compared to male-headed households (88 percent).
- As a result of the ongoing economic downturn and the continued degradation of household coping capacity, more than four out of five interviewed households nationwide (82 percent) reported having already depleted their savings, with a higher proportion recorded in Deir-ez-Zor (88 percent). The continued erosion of purchasing power pushed most of Syrian households to buy food on credit. In November 2021, 72 percent of surveyed households across Syria reported that they bought food on credit, an increase of four percent year-on-year, with a wider share recorded among female-headed households (78 percent). The reported adoption of this strategy was most common among IDPs (75 percent) and returnees (72 percent), while it remained very high among residents (70 percent), signaling a general worsening in economic living conditions for all population groups in Syria. Moreover, child labour and early school dropouts were reported among the coping strategies adopted by the interviewed households for lack of food. Approximately 14 percent of surveyed households in Syria reported taking children of the mandatory education age out of school and having them work instead to earn additional income for the household.
- Similar to deteriorating food consumption trends, the adoption of food-based coping strategies remained frequent among the most vulnerable groups in Syria. The average rCSI was highest among returnees (19.2) and IDPs (18.6), compared to residents (18.2). In November 2021, 89 percent of IDPs and 88 percent of returnees and residents reported adopting at least one food-based coping strategy to cover their essential food needs amid the consistent economic hardships.
- The continued increase in food prices and the limited livelihood opportunities in Syria have led many families to adopt further food-based coping strategies. In November 2021, consuming less preferred or less expensive food was the most widely adopted negative food coping strategy by surveyed households (68 percent). The reported adoption of this strategy was highest in Rural Damascus (76 percent), Hama (73 percent) and Dar'a (73 percent). In addition, close to half of the interviewed households in Syria (49 percent) indicated limiting the size of consumed meals, an increase of 13 percent year-on-year, with a higher proportion recorded among female-headed households (58 percent) compared to male-headed households (48 percent). Also, 46 percent of surveyed households reported reducing food consumption by adult members to prioritize their children's food consumption needs, representing an increase of 12 percent compared to the level recorded in November 2020.

Fig5: rCSI average by governorate over the last six months

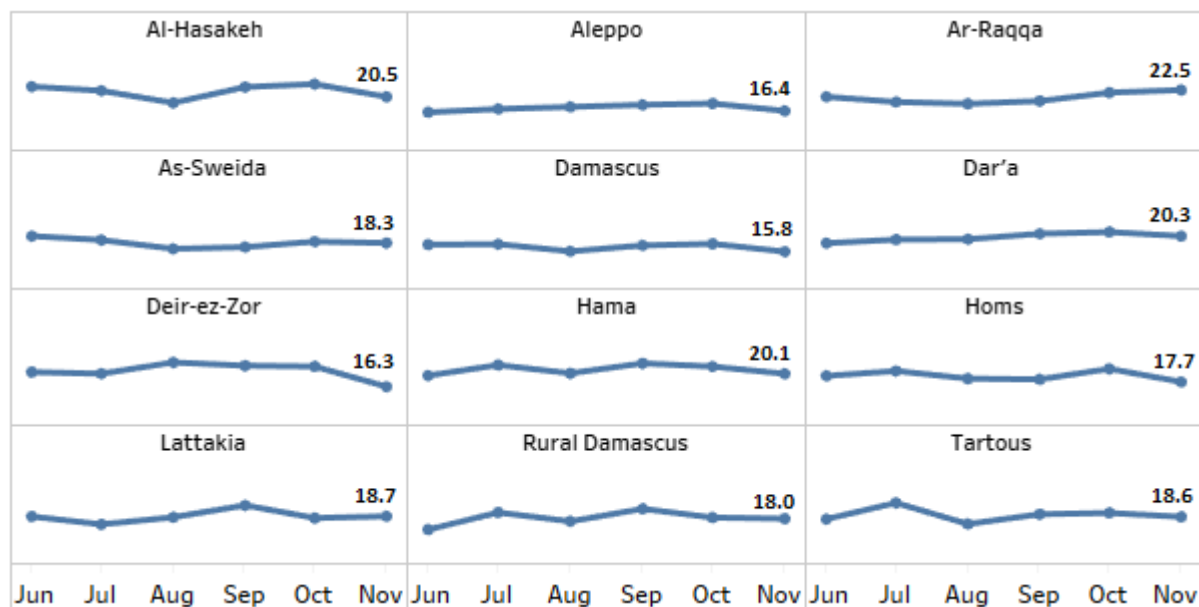
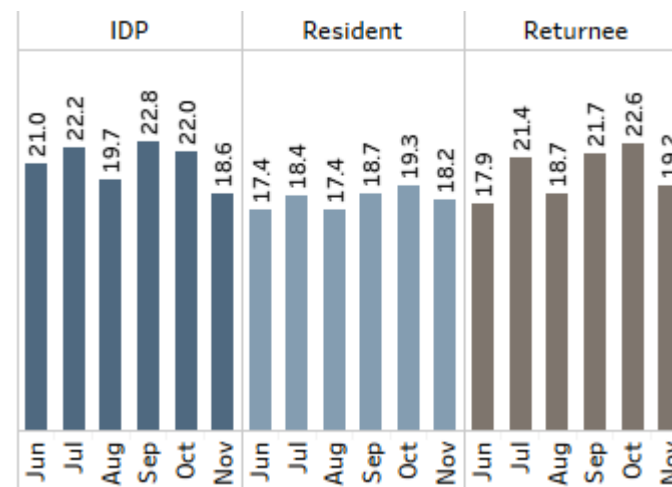


Fig4: rCSI average over the last six months according to displacement status



Map2: Percent of households restricting adult food consumption in November 2021

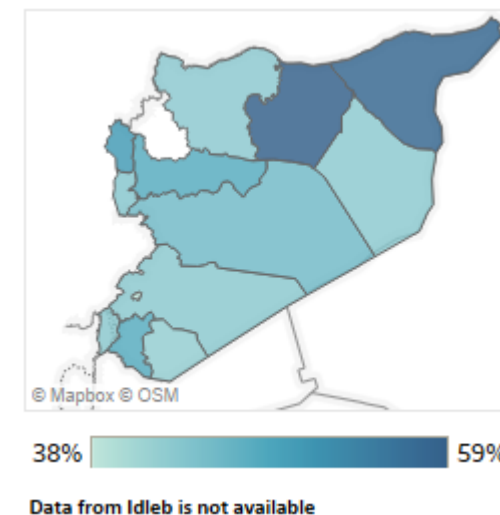
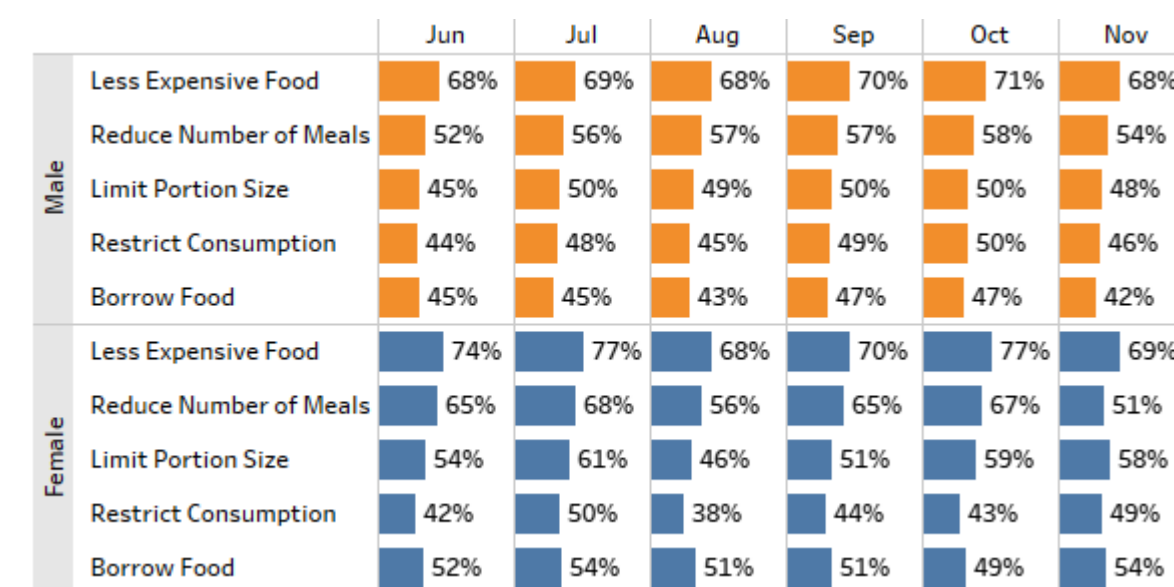


Fig6: Overall percent of households by adopted coping strategy over the past six months

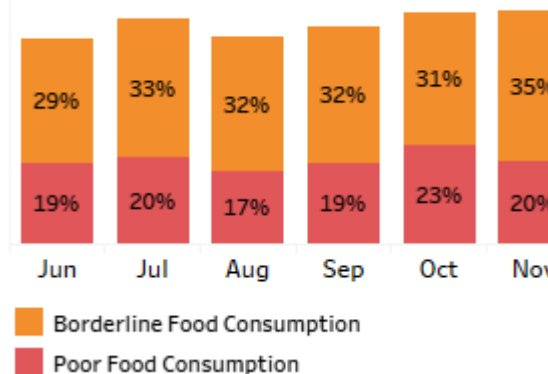




Access to Services and Income Sources I

- The COVID-19 situation continued to worsen across Syria during November. In addition to the deteriorated socio-economic situation, the compounding impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic aggravated the hardships faced by Syrians.
- Syrian households continued to grapple with challenges to access markets. A problem that has been exacerbated by increasing gasoline prices and the ongoing fuel shortages experienced across the country, as well as the surge of COVID-19 cases in October and November. During the reporting period, nearly two out of five interviewed households (38 percent) indicated facing difficulties in reaching markets, an increase of 17 percentage points from November 2020, marking the highest national average level recorded since April 2020. This trend was much higher in Ar-Raqqa (56 percent), where it increased by nine percentage points from a month earlier, followed by Al-Hasakeh (50 percent). The reduced access to markets in Ar-Raqqa and Al-Hasakeh was heavily impacted by the imposed curfew in northeast Syria during most of October and November. From interviews conducted in November 2021, more than half of the surveyed households with no regular access to markets nationwide (55 percent) had poor or borderline food consumption. Furthermore, in November 2021, overall six percent of interviewed households reported difficulties in obtaining remittances and/or food assistance due to movement restrictions or security issues. This trend was more pronounced in Dar'a (nine percent), Al-Hasakeh (nine percent) and Aleppo (eight percent).
- Health needs in Syria are significant and COVID-19 has significantly hindered the capacity of the healthcare system. In November 2021, nearly one out of four interviewed households in Syria (23 percent) indicated facing challenges in accessing medical care facilities, an increase of nine percentage points year-on-year, representing the highest national average level recorded since April 2020. This trend was much higher among returnees (28 percent) and IDPs (27 percent) compared to residents (19 percent). The lack of access to healthcare services is concerning nationwide, given that more than 12.4 million people in Syria were estimated to be in need of health assistance in 2021 and only 53 percent of public healthcare centers were deemed functional (source: WHO). Furthermore, COVID-19 vaccination intentions were relatively high countrywide, with 62 percent of surveyed households indicating their intent to have all household members vaccinated, were the COVID-19 vaccine be provided free of charge. From interviews conducted in November 2021, approximately nine percent of interviewed households reported having already been vaccinated, compared to seven percent in October and four percent in September 2021.

Fig7: Share of households with inadequate food consumption who reported facing difficulties in accessing markets



Map3: Percent of households facing challenges to access markets by governorate in November 2021

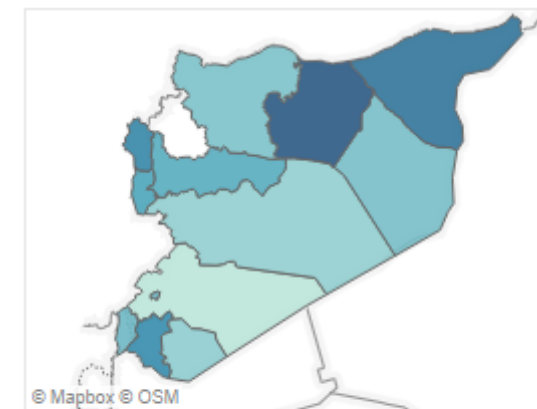
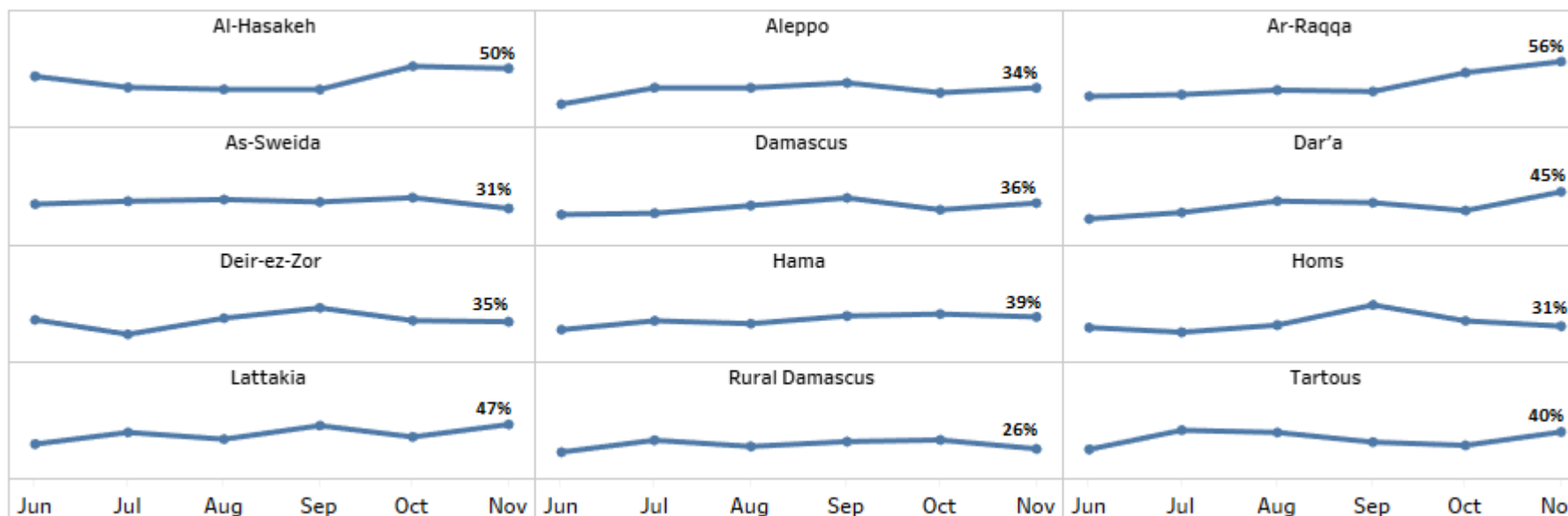
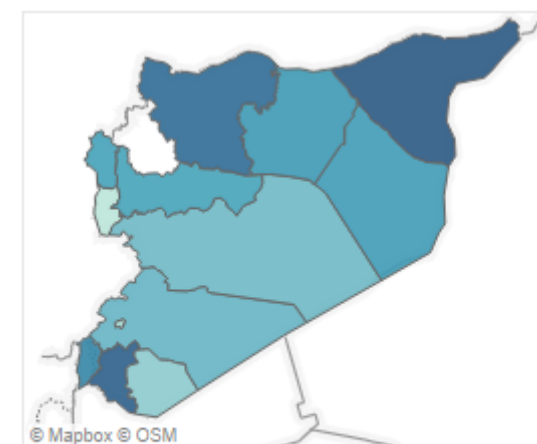


Fig8: Percent of households facing challenges to access markets in the last six months by governorate



Map4: Percent of households facing difficulties in receiving assistance in November 2021





Access to Services and Income Sources II

- Syrian households continued facing difficulties in sustaining income generating activities. In November 2021, one out of four interviewed households in Syria (25 percent) reported that they had lost one or more sources of income over the past month, with a higher proportion recorded among IDPs (28 percent) and returnees (24 percent) compared to residents (23 percent). Even 12 percent of interviewees who had a university degree reported losing one or more sources of income over the past month. Moreover, 17 percent of surveyed households across Syria reported having lost more than half of their monthly income in November 2021, with a wider share recorded in Damascus (22 percent) and Dar'a (22 percent).
- The reported reduction in households' income was caused by different factors. In November 2021, more than two out of five interviewed households in Syria (45 percent) reported having been impacted by a reduction in working hours and thus receiving a partial salary, marking an increase of six percentage points compared to October 2021. This trend was higher among female-headed households (50 percent) compared to male-headed households (44 percent). In addition, 34 percent of surveyed households nationwide reported a reduction of revenues from business activities or agricultural sales, with a wider share recorded in Lattakia (43 percent) and Aleppo (41 percent). Additionally, 15 percent of interviewed households in November indicated job lay-offs, with peaks recorded in Ar-Raqqa (38 percent) and Homs (21 percent).
- At the governorate level, in November 2021, Dar'a (28 percent), Aleppo (27 percent) and Al-Hasakeh (27 percent) recorded the highest proportion of surveyed households having lost one or more sources of income over the past month. Almost 17 percent of interviewed households in Al-Hasakeh and 15 percent of respondents in Aleppo lost more than half of their November income. Furthermore, around 20 percent of interviewed households who claimed one or more income sources between June and October, reported losing one or more sources of income in November 2021.
- The widespread lack of livelihood opportunities and the continued loss of employment have a negative ripple effect on households' food security. In November 2021, more than half of the surveyed households across Syria (53 percent) who reported losses of income also reported inadequate food consumption, representing an increase of eight percent year-on-year. Moreover, 94 percent of these respondents indicated having relied on at least one food-based coping strategy in November.

Fig10: Percent of households losing one or more sources of income in the last six months by governorate

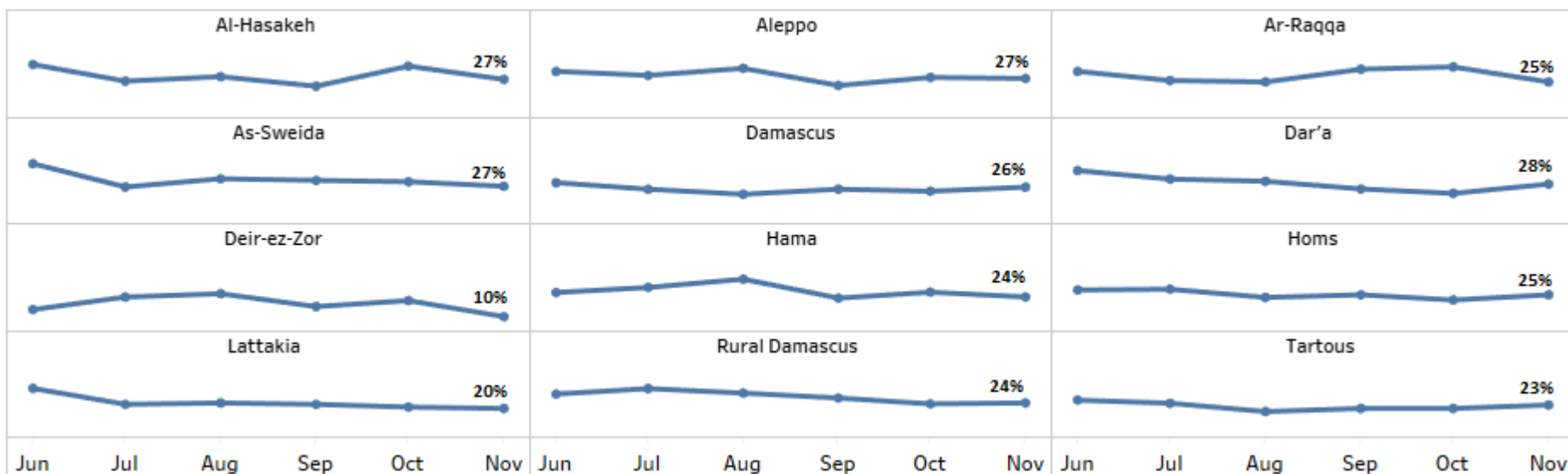
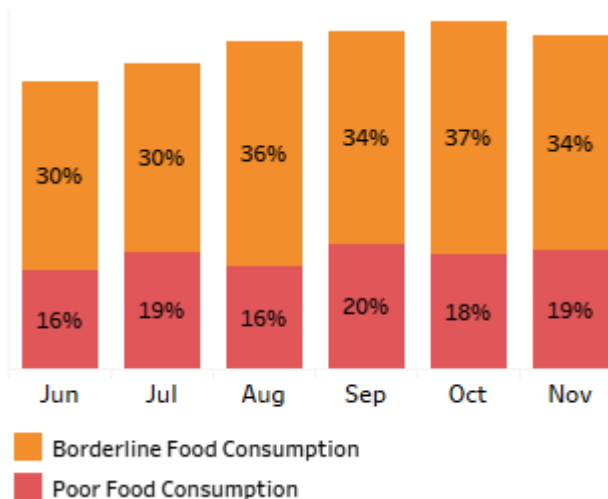
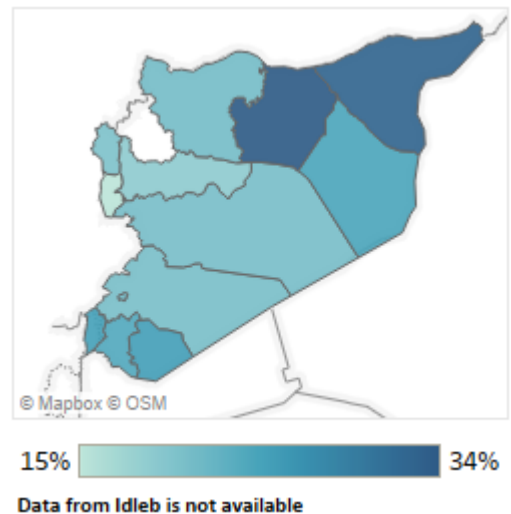


Fig9: Percent of households with inadequate food consumption who reported having lost their main income source



Map5: Percent of households facing challenges to access medical services in November 2021



Map6: Percent of households reporting losing more than half of their income sources in November 2021

