

Damascus Governorate, December 2017

Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria (HSOS)

REACH Informing more effective humanitarian action

OVERALL FINDINGS¹

Syria's capital Damascus is located in the southwest of the country, close to the border with Lebanon. The situation in the governorate is relatively stable compared to other assessed governorates across Syria. In December 2017, **none** of the assessed neighbourhoods in Damascus reported departures of members of their pre-conflict population. Formerly contested Qaboun, Yarmuk, and Tadamon and currently contested Joubar Sharqi all reported that only **1-25%** of their original population remained present in December. **One** neighbourhood, Rawda, witnessed spontaneous refugee returns², reporting that approximately **15 - 18** refugees returned from Lebanon and Turkey in order to protect or reclaim their assets as well as due to a lack of economic opportunities in both host countries. IDPs were present in **all but three** of the assessed neighbourhoods: Al Hurriya Ish Al Werwer, Al Arin and Joubar Sharqi. Of these neighbourhoods, **45%** reported hosting over 1,000 IDPs while **two** neighbourhoods, Masakin Barza and Mazze 86, reported the presence of **35,000 - 40,000** and **10,000 - 10,100** IDPs, respectively. KIs in both neighbourhoods cited access to employment, income and shelter as one of the main reasons why IDPs chose to remain.

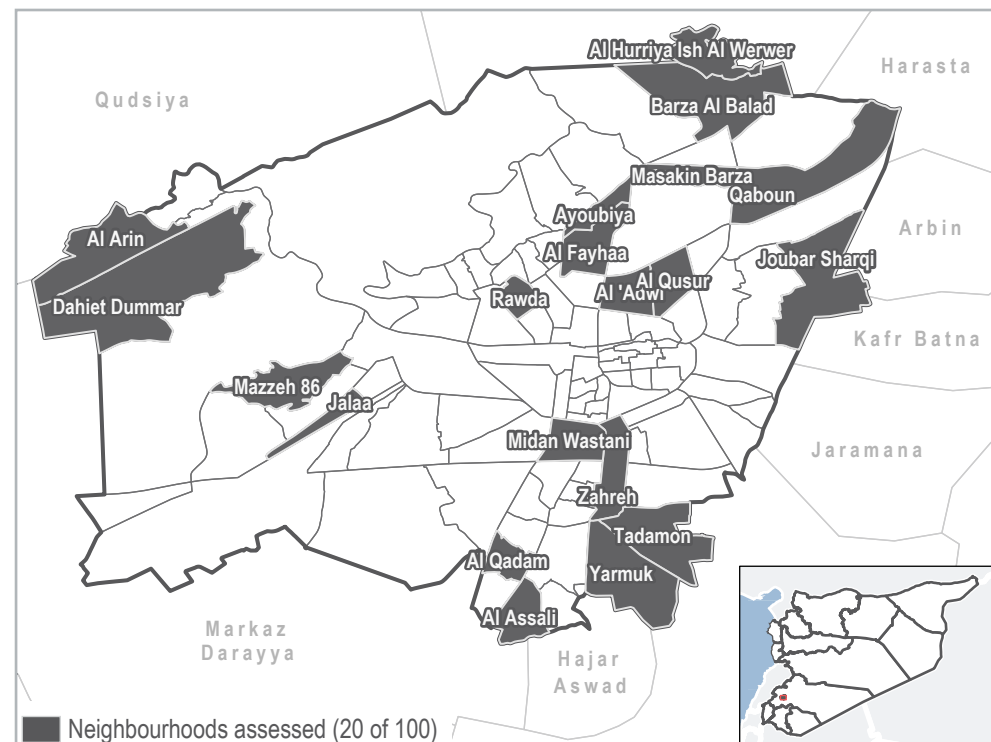
Pre-conflict, returnee and IDP populations reportedly lived in independent apartments or houses across assessed neighbourhoods, with the exception of Joubar Sharqi. While pre-conflict and returnee populations most commonly owned the property they lived in, the majority of IDPs in assessed neighbourhoods were reportedly renting property or being hosted without rent. Formerly contested Qaboun and currently contested Joubar Sharqi, reported that **76-100%** of buildings in their neighbourhood were damaged; while residents of Joubar Sharqi predominantly lived in caves, residents of Qaboun most commonly lived in independent apartments or houses. **All but three** of the assessed neighbourhoods reported that the network was their main source of water and electricity: Tadamon, Yarmuk and Joubar Sharqi. Tadamon also reported that no health facilities were available in the neighbourhood, while in Joubar Sharqi health facilities were available, but security concerns to enter and remain in facilities posed a barrier to accessing healthcare. Tadamon, Joubar Sharqi and Qaboun reported not having functioning educational facilities at all levels, but children in Qaboun and Tadamon were able to attend schools in neighbouring areas³. For more information on [Tadamon](#), [Yarmuk](#) and [Qaboun](#), please visit the [REACH Resource Centre](#).

All neighbourhoods, with the exception of Joubar Sharqi, reported that food was available for purchase in December, yet **seven** reported challenges in accessing sufficient amounts of food. In these neighbourhoods, the most commonly reported barrier was the high cost of some food items. Although residents in communities reporting challenges in accessing food predominantly relied on business or trade, unstable employment was cited as a common source of income in **four** out of the seven neighbourhoods and **two**, Rawda and Yarmuk, reported that high risk, illegal work was a common source of income. **All but two** neighbourhoods reported that household incomes were insufficient to cover needs and that residents were most commonly coping by skipping meals, in **72%** of neighbourhoods, and reducing the size of meals, in **56%** of neighbourhoods.

KEY EVENTS

Qaboun and Barza Al Balad classified as besieged by the UN.	Evacuations from the besieged districts of Burza and Qaboun towards Idlib begin ⁴ .	Interagency convoy delivers humanitarian aid to residents of the besieged Yarmuk camp ⁵ .	First inter-agency aid convoy enters Qaboun since it was classified as besieged in April ⁶ .	Violent clashes in Yarmuk despite ceasefire agreement between rival Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs) ⁷ .	Babila checkpoint reopens, allowing commercial goods to enter Babila, Yalda, Beit Sahem and Yarmuk ⁸ .
April	May	7 September	15 October	Late October	23 November

Coverage



Top 3 reported priority needs

1. Protection
2. Healthcare
3. Food security

Demographics*

1,925,387 people in need

1,028,157 **897,230**

* Figures based on HNO 2018 population data for the entire governorate.

Damascus Governorate, December 2017

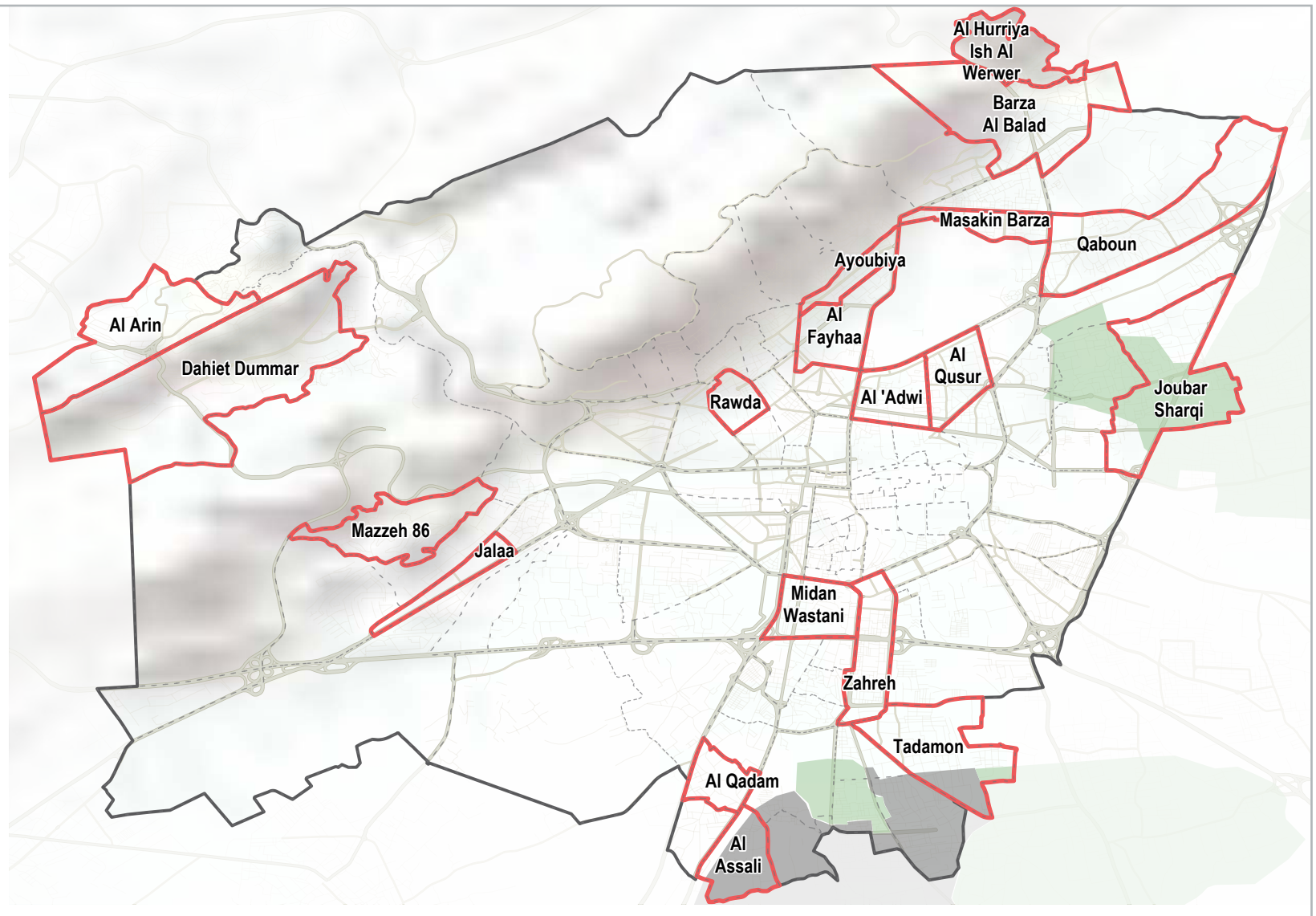
Governorate areas of influence:

Area of influence*

- Opposition - Free Syrian Army (FSA)
- Opposition - Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS)
- Opposition - Free Syrian Army (Euphrates/Idleb Shield)
- Democratic Federation of Northern Syria - Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)
- Democratic Federation of Northern Syria - Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF-coalition)
- ISIL - affiliated groups

*Sourced from Live UA Map, 31 December 2017

Assessed Neighbourhood



Damascus Governorate, December 2017

DISPLACEMENT

20 - 25 Estimated number of IDP arrivals in assessed neighbourhoods in December.

15 - 18 Estimated number of spontaneous returns in assessed neighbourhoods in December².

Neighbourhoods with the largest estimated number of IDP arrivals:

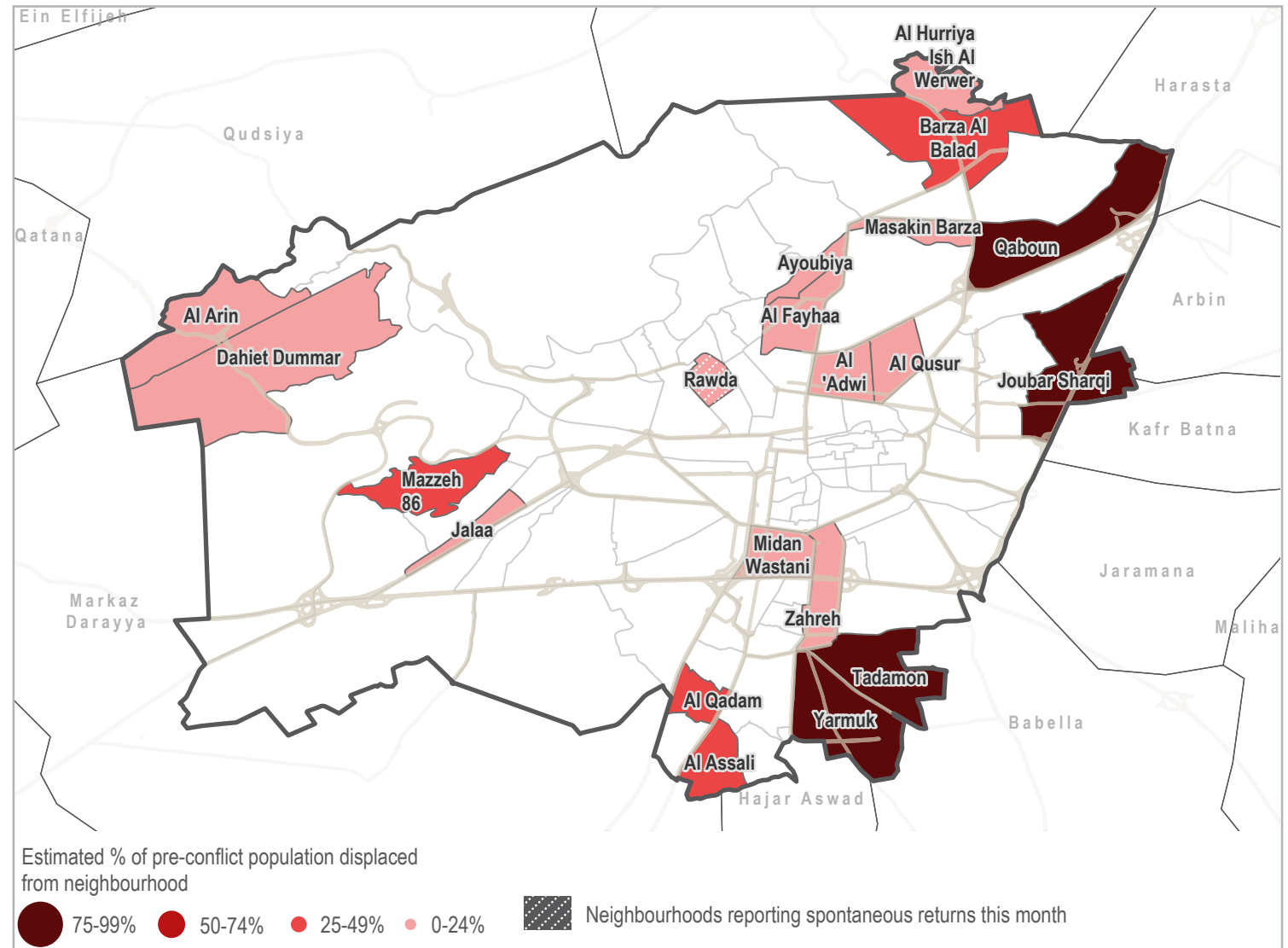
Rawda **20 - 25**
No further IDP arrivals reported

Top 3 sub-districts of origin of most IDPs arrivals^{3,4}:

Bait Jan (Rural Damascus) 100%
No further IDP arrivals reported

20 neighbourhoods reported no PCP departures^{3,4}.

Estimated percent of pre-conflict population (PCP) displaced from neighbourhood:



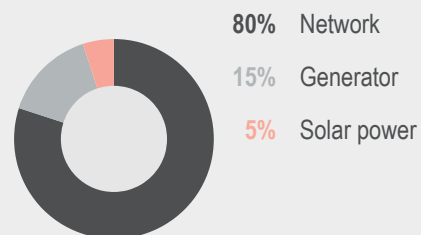
³ Multiple choices allowed.

⁴ By percent of neighbourhoods reporting.

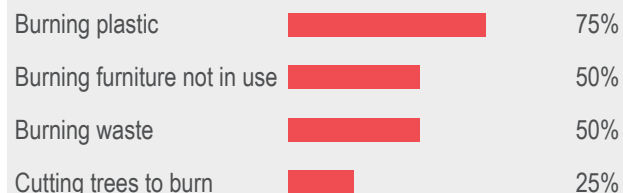
Damascus Governorate, December 2017

SHELTER AND NFI

Primary source of electricity reported:⁴



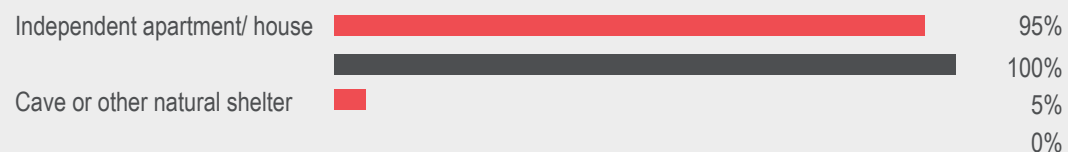
16 neighbourhoods reported no lack of fuel. Most common strategies to cope with insufficient fuel in the remaining **4** assessed neighbourhoods^{3,4}:



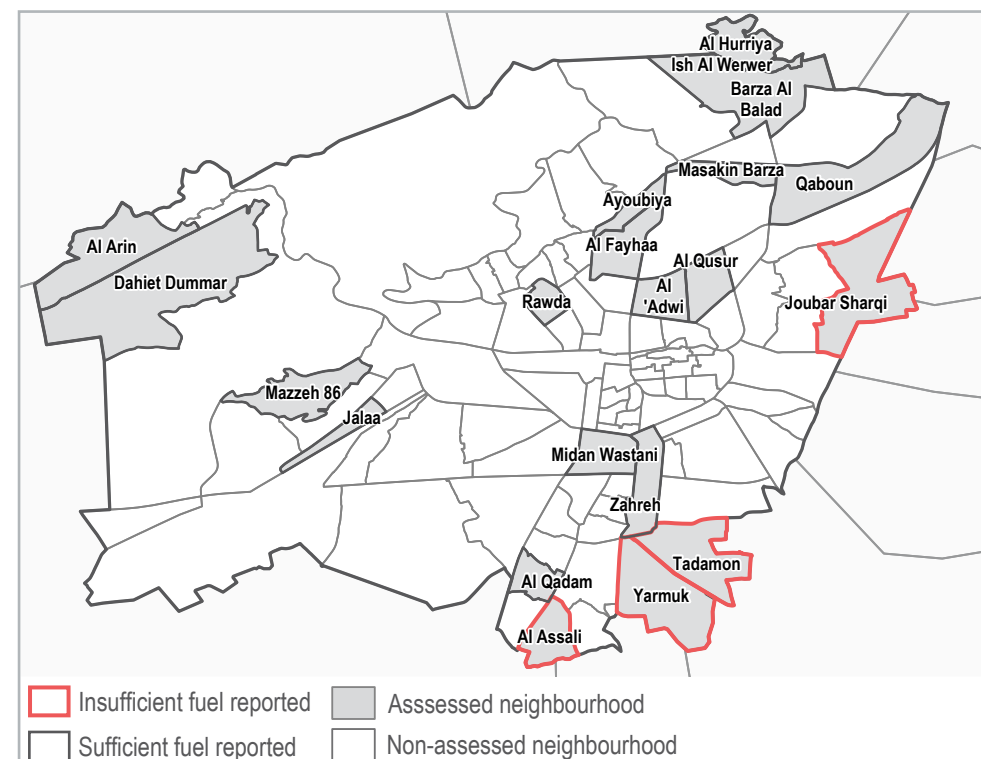
18,906 SYP Governorate average reported rent price in Syrian Pounds (SYP) across assessed neighbourhoods.⁵

6,882 SYP Syrian average reported rent price in SYP across assessed neighbourhoods.⁵

Most commonly reported shelter type for PCP (in red) and IDP (in grey) households⁴:



Fuel sufficiency:



Reported fuel prices (in SYP)⁵:

Fuel type:	Governorate average price in December:	Governorate average price in November:	Syrian average price in December:
Coal (1 kilogram)	393	395	337
Diesel (1 litre)	317	303	472
Butane (1 canister)	2,942	2,913	6,125
Firewood (1 tonne)	60,000	57,500	84,744

³ Multiple choices allowed.

⁴ By percent of neighbourhoods reporting.

⁵ 1 USD = 434 SYP (UN operational rates of exchange as of 1 December 2017)

Damascus Governorate, December 2017



- 1 Neighbourhood reported that no medical items were available in the neighbourhood.
- 1 Neighbourhood reported that the majority of women did not have access to formal health facilities to give birth.

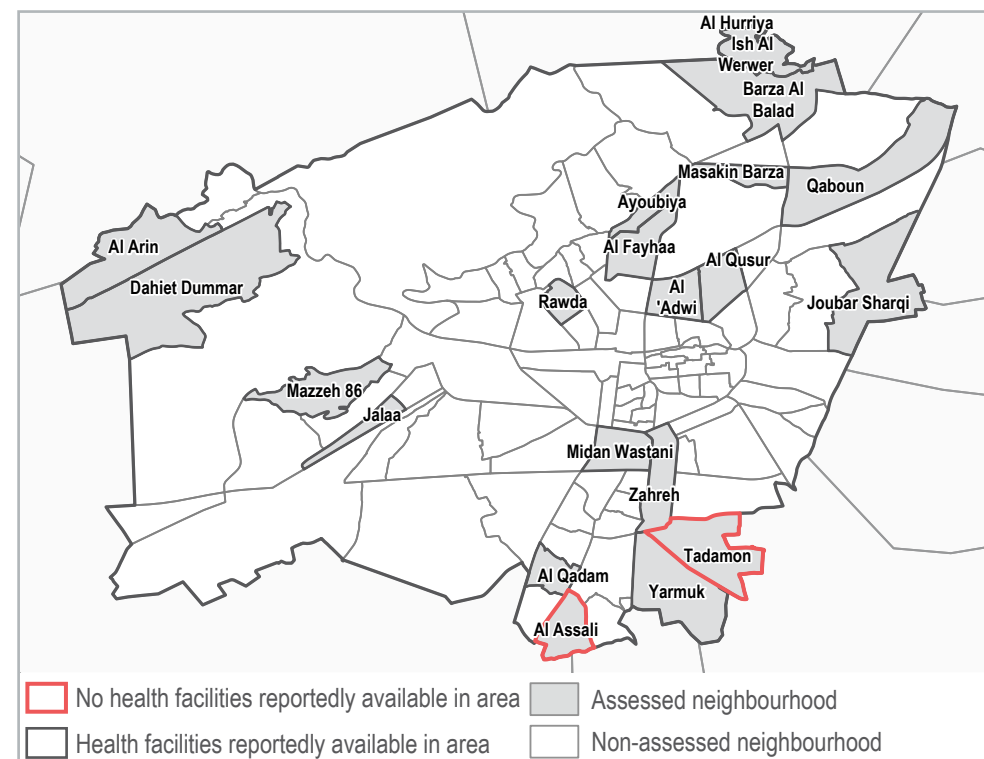
13 neighbourhoods reported that residents experienced no barriers to accessing healthcare services. The barriers in the remaining **7** neighbourhoods were^{3,4}:

Security concerns when traveling to facilities	43%
Old age	29%
No health facilities available in the area	29%
Security concerns to enter/remain in facilities	29%
Disability/injuries/illness preventing travel	29%
Not permitted to enter facilities	14%
High cost of transportation to facilities	14%
Healthcare services too expensive	14%

19 neighbourhoods reported that residents were not using coping strategies to deal with a lack of medical supplies. The coping strategies used in the remaining **1** neighbourhood were^{3,4}:

Recycling medical items	100%
-------------------------	------

Presence of health facilities in assessed communities:



Top 3 most needed healthcare services reported^{3,4}:

Psychosocial support	65%
Surgical care	25%
Medicine	20%

Top 3 most common health problems reported^{3,4}:

Acute respiratory infections	80%
Severe diseases affecting those younger than 5	60%
Chronic diseases	15%

³ Multiple choices allowed.

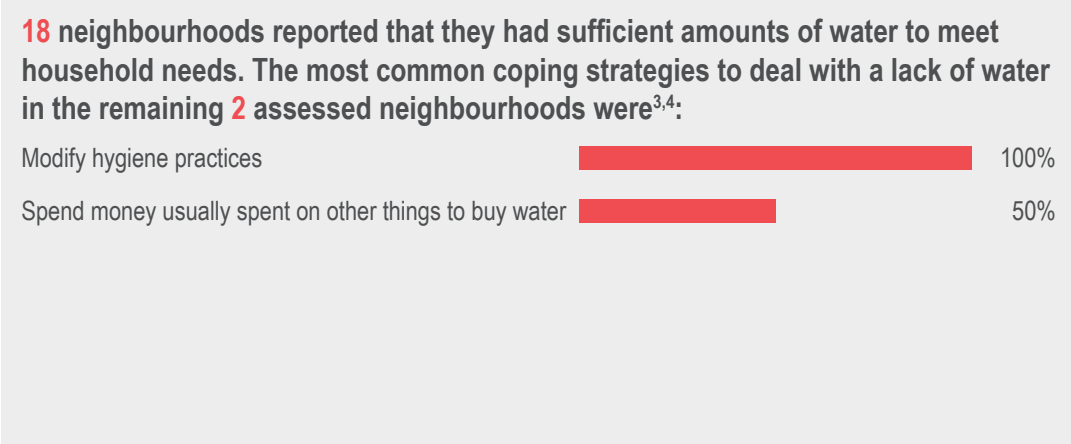
⁴ By percent of neighbourhoods reporting.

Damascus Governorate, December 2017

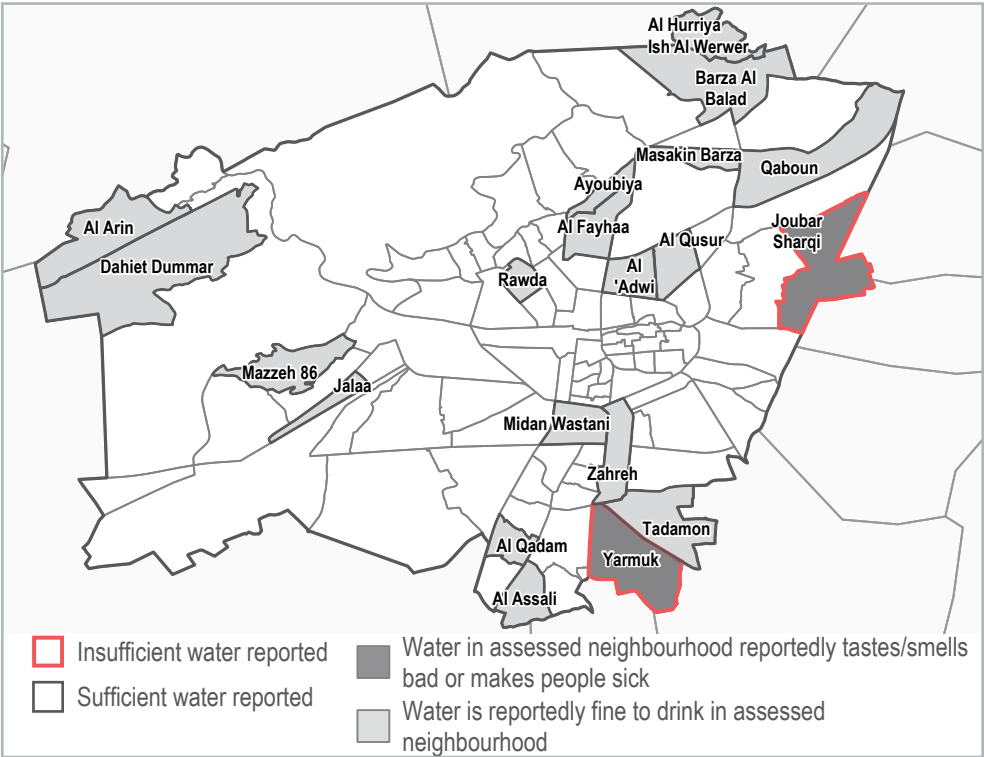


- 0 Neighbourhoods reported that water from their primary source tasted and/or smelled bad.
- 0 Neighbourhoods reported that drinking water from their primary source made people sick.

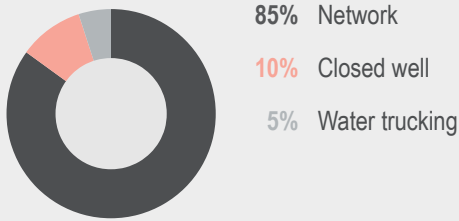
20 neighbourhoods reported that they had no problems with latrines^{3,4}.



Water sufficiency for household needs:



Primary drinking water source reported⁴:



Top 3 reported methods of garbage disposal^{3,4}:

Disposed at designated site	60%
Public free collection	20%
Buried or burned	15%

³ Multiple choices allowed.

⁴ By percent of neighbourhoods reporting.

Damascus Governorate, December 2017

FOOD SECURITY

- 6** Neighbourhoods reported not having received a food distribution in the last 12 months.
- 1** Neighbourhood reported that residents were unable to purchase food at shops and markets.

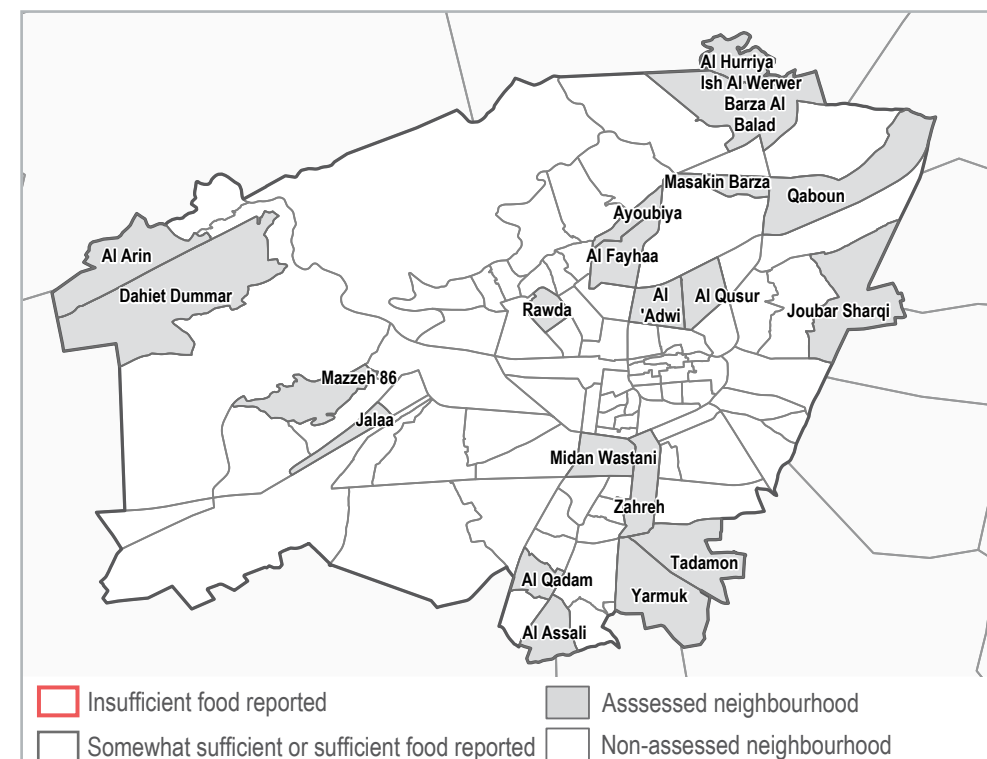
13 neighbourhoods reported that residents experienced no challenges in accessing food. The most common difficulties experienced in the remaining **7** assessed neighbourhoods were^{3,4}:



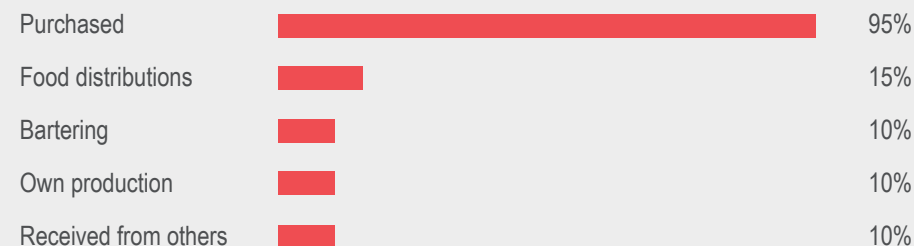
Core food item prices reported (in SYP)⁵:

Food item:	Governorate average price in December:	Governorate average price in November:	Syrian average price in December:
Bread public bakery (1 loaf)	50	54	114
Rice (1 kilogram)	457	469	565
Lentils (1 kilogram)	499	489	472
Sugar (1 kilogram)	318	331	410
Cooking oil (1 litre)	658	642	697

Food sufficiency:



Most common ways of obtaining food reported^{3,4}:



³ Multiple choices allowed.

⁴ By percent of neighbourhoods reporting.

⁵ 1 USD = 434 SYP (UN operational rates of exchange as of 1 December 2017)

Damascus Governorate, December 2017

LIVELIHOODS

50,000 - 100,000 SYP Most commonly reported household income range⁵.

26,350 SYP Governorate average food basket price^{5,6}.

0 Neighbourhoods reported that residents used extreme food-based coping strategies to deal with insufficient income⁷.

2 neighbourhoods reported that residents had enough income to cover household needs. The most commonly reported coping strategies to deal with a lack of income in the remaining **18** assessed neighbourhoods were^{3,4}:

Skip meals	72%
Reduce meal size	56%
Borrow money from family/ friends	22%
Take loans/ buy on credit	17%
Send children to work or beg	6%

Most commonly reported main sources of income^{3,4}:

Business or trade	90%
Stable, salaried employment	75%
Unstable, daily employment	75%
High risk illegal work	15%
Remittances	10%

³ Multiple choices allowed.

⁴ By percent of neighbourhoods reporting.

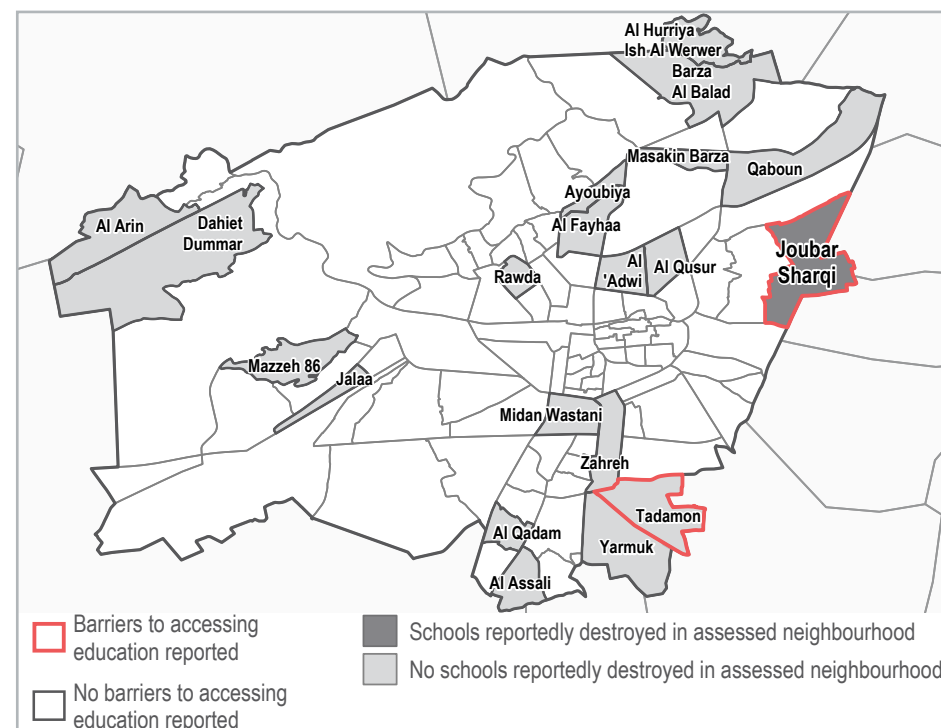
⁵ 1 USD = 434 SYP (UN operational rates of exchange as of 1 December 2017)

⁶ Calculation of the average price of a food basket is based on the World Food Programme's standard basket of dry goods. The food basket includes 37 kg of bread, 19 kg of rice, 19 kg of lentils, 5 kg of sugar, and 7 kg of vegetable oil, and provides 1,930 kcal a day for a family of five for a month.

⁷ Extreme food-based strategies: Eating food waste; eating non-edible plants and spending days without eating.

EDUCATION

Barriers to accessing education services:



18 neighbourhoods reported that most children were able to access education. The most commonly reported barriers to education in the remaining **2** assessed neighbourhoods were^{3,4}:

Lack of school supplies	50%
Parents disapprove of curriculum	50%
Routes to services unsafe	50%
Destruction of facilities	50%

METHODOLOGY

The HSOS project, formerly known as the AoO (Area of Origin) project, is a monthly assessment that aims to provide comprehensive, multi-sectoral information about the humanitarian situation inside Syria. This factsheet presents information gathered in 20 communities in January 2018, referring to the situation in Damascus Governorate in December 2017. It presents key indicators, rather than the entire range of indicators gathered in the HSOS questionnaire. For community-level data on assessed subdistricts in Al Hasakeh, Dar'a, Idleb, Rural Damascus and Quneitra, please refer to the monthly subdistrict factsheets, available on the [REACH Resource Centre](#). The complete HSOS dataset is disseminated monthly via the REACH Syria mailing list.

Wherever possible, information was collected through an enumerator network. REACH enumerators are based inside Syria and interview Key Informants (KIs) directly in the community they report about. Where access and security constraints rendered direct data collection unfeasible, KI interviews were conducted indirectly through participants identified in camps and settlements in neighbouring countries by REACH field teams. Participants contact KIs in their community in Syria to collect information about their community. KIs were asked to report at the community level.

A minimum of three KIs were interviewed per community to enhance data accuracy. KIs generally included local council members, Syrian NGO workers, medical professionals, teachers, shop owners and farmers, among others, and were chosen based on their community-level or sector specific knowledge. In cases where KIs disagreed on a certain piece of information, enumerators triangulated the data with secondary sources or selected the response provided by the KI with the more relevant sector-specific background. For each question asked, confidence levels were assigned based on the KIs area of expertise and knowledge of the sector-specific situation. The confidence levels associated with each question are presented in the final dataset. The full confidence matrix used to assign confidence levels is available upon request.

Findings were triangulated through secondary sources, including news monitoring and humanitarian reports. Where necessary, follow-up was conducted with enumerators and participants. Findings are indicative rather than representative, and should not be generalised across the governorate.

ENDNOTES

¹ All information and figures reported in HSOS factsheets refer to the situation in assessed neighbourhoods and cannot be generalised to other non-assessed communities of the governorate.

² Returns are not necessarily voluntary, safe, or sustainable.

³ 'Children' includes all persons below the age of 18.

⁴ Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. (9 May 2017). Syrian rebels quit suburb of Damascus as Assad tightens grip. Retrieved from <http://www.syriahr.com>; Al-Khalidi. (14 May 2017). Over 2,000 rebels, families evacuate Damascus district: state media. Reuters. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com>.

⁵ UNHCR. (14 September 2017). Syria: Flash update on recent events - 14 September 2017. Reliefweb. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int>.

⁶ UNHCR. (18 October 2017). Syria: Flash update on recent events - 18 October 2017. Reliefweb. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int>.

⁷ a-Noufal et al. (23 October 2017). De-escalation falls flat in south Damascus as Islamic State, FSA exchange fire. Retrieved from <http://syriadirect.org>.

⁸ Baric. (23 November 2017). Syrian War Daily – 23rd of November 2017. Retrieved from <https://syrianwardaily.wordpress.com>.

About REACH

REACH is a joint initiative of two international non-governmental organisations - ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives - and the UN Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). REACH aims to strengthen evidence-based decision making by aid actors through efficient data collection, management and analysis before, during and after an emergency. By doing so, REACH contributes to ensuring that communities affected by emergencies receive the support they need. All REACH activities are conducted in support to, and within the framework of, inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. For more information, please visit our website: www.reach-initiative.org. You can contact us directly at: geneva@reach-initiative.org and follow us on Twitter: @REACH_info.