

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION OVERVIEW OF SYRIA (HSOS)

AR-RAQQA CITY

Winter 2024| Urban household assessment

INTRODUCTION

The HSOS¹ Urban Household Assessment is a quarterly review of the humanitarian situation inside cities in Northeast Syria (NES). The assessment collects multi-sectoral information from host community and internally displaced households in Ar-Raqqa city. This situation overview presents findings on the access to services, living conditions, economic conditions, and priority needs across accessible areas in the city.

With a significant proportion of the humanitarian response that targets out of camp and host communities in NES located in urban areas,² the assessment addresses the need for comprehensive and regular information on the humanitarian conditions in cities where the impact of an increasingly complex crisis has hit hundreds of thousands.

Sustained economic deterioration and climate shocks resulting in unstable markets and worsening food and water access compound the pre-existing vulnerabilities of urban populations who face persistent insecurity, damaged infrastructure, and complex population dynamics.

To support sustainable interventions, a durable solutions lens was integrated during the design of the HSOS Urban Household Assessment, and indicators from the Syria Analytical Framework³ were included in the questionnaire. Given the low number of internally displaced persons (IDPs)⁴ in Ar-Raqqa city, this assessment provides representative data on all households residing in Ar-Raqqa city, without making a distinction between IDP and host community⁵ households.

The HSOS Urban Household Assessment is conducted in cooperation with the NES Forum. The complete multi-sectoral descriptive analysis can be accessed [online](#) or can be downloaded as an [excel file](#). All HSOS products remain accessible on the [REACH Resource Centre](#).

SYMBOLLOGY

- The indicator refers to the current situation at the time of data collection
- The indicator refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection
- ▼ Findings are not representative
- The indicator aligns with the Syria analytical framework from the Durable Solutions Platform

KEY MESSAGES

- ⚡ Amid the recent [conflict escalation](#) which resulted in damage to power plants and oil fields across Northeast Syria, **most households (99%) continued to experience issues with accessing electricity** in Raqqa city. **Widespread rationing of electricity and rising prices remained the main barriers to accessing power.** Additionally, 38% of households pointed out that community generators needed repairs; an increase compared to the [Autumn round](#) (26%,).
- 💰 All households faced challenges to access healthcare in Raqqa. Aligned with the context of economic hardship, most barriers were related to the unaffordability of medicines and treatments. **All households reporting unmet health needs had to resort to coping strategies, such as going to a pharmacy instead of a clinic or substituting prescribed medication for herbal medicine.**
- 🚰 **Households experienced less issues with drinking water**, compared to the Autumn round (50% of households compared to 80%). Likewise, a reduced number of households perceived water as making people sick. [Water quality is likely to improve during winter](#) months, as pollutants present in rivers are further diluted due to increased water flows.
- 🏠 **Most households in Raqqa (93%) mentioned that the wages were not sufficient to align with the rising prices.** To cover this gap, **households widely resorted to borrowing money and purchasing items on credit.** It is worth adding that the percentage of indebted households in Raqqa kept increasing over the last year, rising from 86% in the Autumn round to 96% this round.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION OVERVIEW OF SYRIA (HSOS)

AR-RAQQA CITY

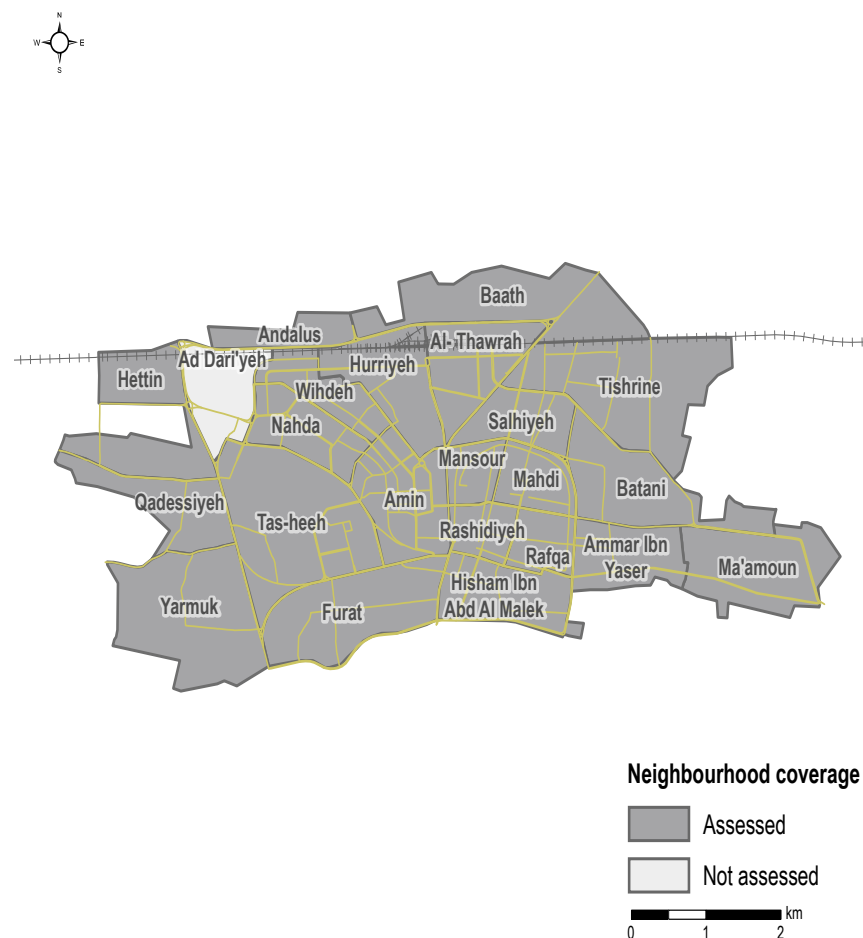
Winter 2024| Urban household assessment

METHODOLOGY

- The HSOS urban household assessment is conducted using a **household methodology at city level**.
- Face-to-face data collection was carried out by REACH enumerators between **4 and 11 January 2024** covering **100 households** in Ar-Raqqa city.
- Findings can be generalised to **the Syrian population at city level**, with a 95% confidence level and 10% margin of error. The representative sample of the population was calculated according to the population estimates collected by the Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP) in September 2022.
- Stratified simple random household selection** was conducted through random spatial sampling using geographic information systems. The selection considered population estimates by neighbourhood and distributed the random samples according to population density.
- The random spatial sampling was conducted across residential areas** of the city, as classified by OpenStreetMap. Areas unsafe for data collection were not covered.⁶
- Due to data collection protocols, **the sample excludes households whose members are all below 18**.
- Due to logistical limitations, the sample is biased towards households where at least one adult member is at home during the time of data collection, and towards cooperative, readily available households.

COVERAGE

Ar-Raqqa city neighbourhoods covered in the sample



PRIORITY NEEDS

Most commonly reported **overall** priority needs for host community households (by % of assessed communities)⁷

1	 Livelihoods	91%
2	 Food	88%
3	 Winterisation	28%

Households' movement intentions

100%

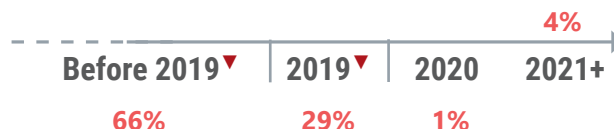
of households did not plan to leave

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Average # of household members	Average # of children (0-5)	Average # of children (6-17)	Average # of adults (18+)	Average # of older people (60+)
7.6	1.4	2.6	3.6	0.4

RETURNNEES

Date of return
(by % of households that returned in each period)



2

average number of displacements for returnee households

100%

of host community households are returnees

IDPs%

Date of arrival
(count of IDP households that arrived in each period, on a total of 23 IDP households surveyed)



4

average number of displacements for IDP households

Most common governorates of origin for IDP households (count of IDP households)

1	Ar-Raqqa	7
2	Deir-ez-Zor	6
3	Aleppo	5

Most common sub-districts of origin for IDP households (count of IDP households)

1	Ras Al Ain	3
1	Tell Abiad	3
2	Abu Kamal	2

34% of households with newborns (0-1)


68% of households with young children (0-5)

85% of households with school-aged children (6-17)

93% of households with children (0-17)


SAFETY AND PROTECTION



33% of households with members who lacked civil documents and needed them 

Most common civil documents that household members lacked and needed (as % of households where at least one member lacked and needed a document [33%])▼

- 1** Syrian identity card issued by the Government of Syria **58%**
- 2** Birth certificate issued by the Government of Syria **42%**
- 3** Family booklet issued by the Government of Syria **15%**

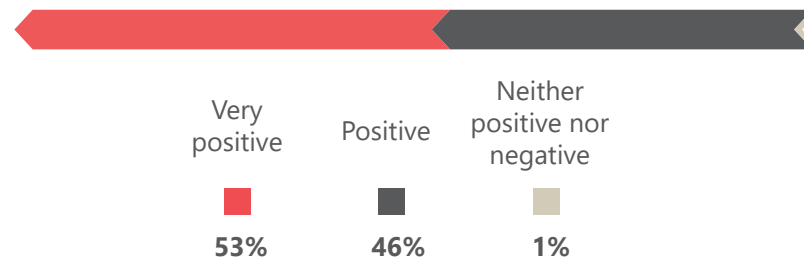
67% of households who reported theft as a security concern 


Freedom of movement for all household member within the location



Yes **95%**
No **5%**

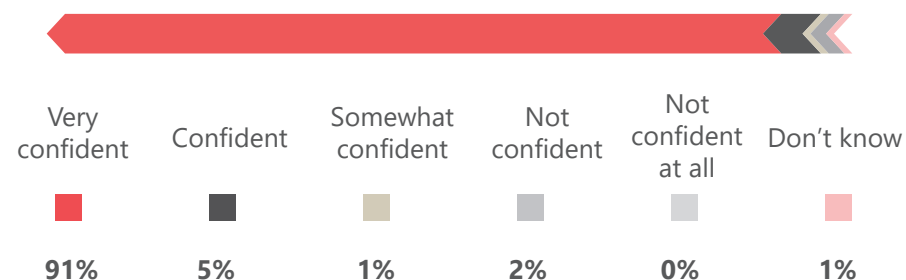
Household's relationship with other community members



34% of households reported housing, land and property concerns 

→ **Rental problems (landlord/tenant issues)** was the most commonly reported housing, land and property concern (reported by 71% of households facing concerns)▼

Confidence of being able to reside in the current place of residence for 3 more months



HOUSING SITUATION

Most common shelter types

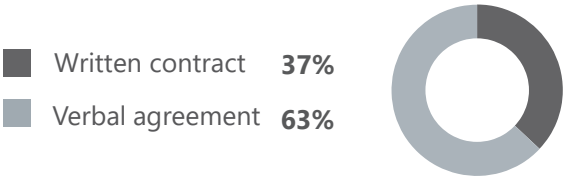
1	Solid/finished house	71%
2	Solid/finished apartment	20%
3	Damaged residential building	5%

Average % of monthly income spent on rent
16%
Average expenditure on rent as a % of total household expenditure ⁹
16%

Most common occupancy arrangements

1	Owning	66%
2	Renting	27%
3	Hosted	7%

Rental contract type (by % of households who are renting [27%])



89%

of households renting a property who faced challenges in finding a place to rent

Most common challenges in finding a place to rent for households (by % of households who faced challenges [89%])

Difficult to find an affordable accommodation	83%
Landlord requesting large first instalment or deposit	54%
Difficult to find accommodation near to basic services or livelihood opportunities	21%

SHELTER CONDITIONS

73% of households whose shelter had inadequacies



Shelter inadequacies (by % of households who experienced issues)⁸

Leakage from roof/ceiling during rain	60%
Windows/doors not sealed	59%
Poor sanitation	51%
Unable to lock home securely	47%
Lack of space/overcrowding	40%
Lack of insulation from cold	36%
Lack of privacy	33%
Lack of water (fixtures, associated connections)	30%
Lack of electricity	29%
Lack of lighting inside shelter	27%
Lack of heating	14%
Lack of lighting around shelter	10%
Lack of ventilation: stuffy, bad smells	3%
Shelter prone to flooding	3%


Aligns with the Syria analytical framework from the Durable Solutions Platform
Refers to the current situation at the time of data collection



Findings are not representative


ACCESS TO WATER

100% of households reported **piped water network** as the primary source of drinking and non-drinking water  




100% of households who **did not use a secondary source** of drinking water  

1% of households who had **insufficient access to water** to fulfill their needs 


50% of households who experienced issues with drinking water  

Most common problems with drinking water (as % of households that had problems with drinking water)   

- | | | |
|----------|------------------------|------------|
| 1 | Water has a bad colour | 86% |
| 2 | Water tastes bad | 40% |
| 3 | Water smells bad | 36% |

Most common strategies applied by households to avoid running out of water (as % of households who applied some coping strategy [32%])   

- | | | |
|----------|--|------------|
| 1 | Relying on drinking water stored previously | 97% |
| 2 | Collecting water from a source that is further away than the usual one | 3% |
| 3 | Reducing non-drinking water consumption | 3% |

49% of households who did not use any methods to make drinking water safer 




Most common methods to make water safer (by % of households) 

- | | | |
|----------|---------------------------|------------|
| 1 | Storage and sedimentation | 44% |
| 2 | Boiling | 9% |
| 3 | Household filters | 8% |

Average % of monthly income spent on water ⁹
<1%
Average expenditure on water as a % of total household expenditure ⁹
<1%

ACCESS TO SANITATION

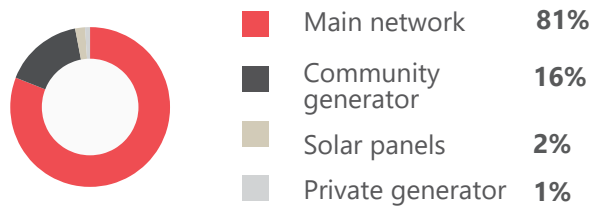
 **68%** of households who experienced sanitation issues 

Common sanitation issues for households (as % of households who experienced sanitation issues [68%])   

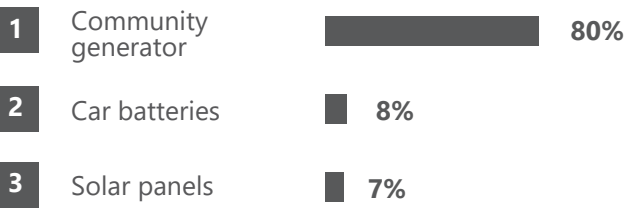
- | | | |
|----------|--|------------|
| 1 | Sewage system needs cleaning | 46% |
| 2 | Waste (solid waste/trash) in street | 46% |
| 3 | Waste collection services too infrequent | 44% |
| 4 | Sewage system needs repair | 37% |
| 5 | No connection to sewage network | 18% |

ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY

Primary source of electricity



Secondary source of electricity (by % of households who had a secondary source [87%])



Average % of monthly income spent on electricity
3%
Average expenditure on electricity as a % of total household expenditure
3%



of households who did not have access to a secondary source of electricity



of households who experienced issues with accessing electricity

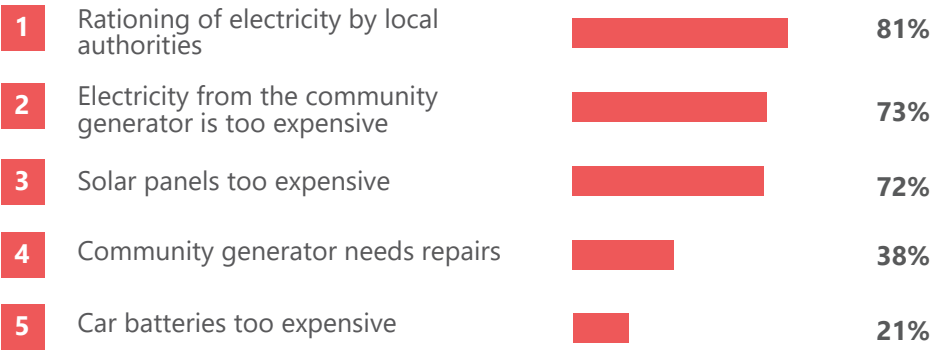
Average number of hours of electricity per day



Average hours of electricity per day available to households

13 or more	12-11	10-9	8-7	6-5	4-3	2-1	0
15%	28%	21%	29%	4%	3%	0%	0%

Most common barriers to accessing electricity



Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection

INCOME SOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT

Sources of income in the month prior to data collection^{8, >}

Employment (including self-employment/entrepreneurship)	<div></div>	97%
Borrowing/loans	<div></div>	90%
Gifts from family members or friends in Syria (cash)	<div></div>	5%
Retirement/pension/martyr's salary	<div></div>	4%
Remittances	<div></div>	3%
Selling assets	<div></div>	2%

Most common employment sectors (by % of households where employment is a source of income [97%])^{8, >, ■}

1	Real estate/construction	30%	5	Agriculture	8%
2	Wholesale/retail	18%	6	Machinery/mechanics/repairs	7%
3	Trade/transportation	14%	7	Health care services	5%
4	Education/childcare	10%	7	Other domestic work/manual labour	5%
4	Marketplace vending	10%	8	Government/public services	4%

Most common primary source of income for households^{10, >, ■}

1	Self-employment/entrepreneurship	39%
2	Informal day-to-day work agreements (verbal)	34%
3	Longer-term formal employment agreement (written, 1 month+)	11%

50% of households reported self-employment/entrepreneurship as a source of income[■]

5% of households where informal day-to-day work was the only income source[■]

Average number of adults per households who are:	
Employed	1.5
Not in employment	2.1
Not employed and looking for a job (unemployed) ¹¹	0.3

INCOME AND EXPENSES[>]

Average monthly income for a family of 6 members ¹²	Average monthly expense for a family of 6 members ¹³	Average monthly deficit for a family of 6 members
2,686,893 SYP	2,594,218 SYP	92,675 SYP

> Aligns with the Syria analytical framework from the Durable Solutions Platform
■ Refers to the current situation at the time of data collection

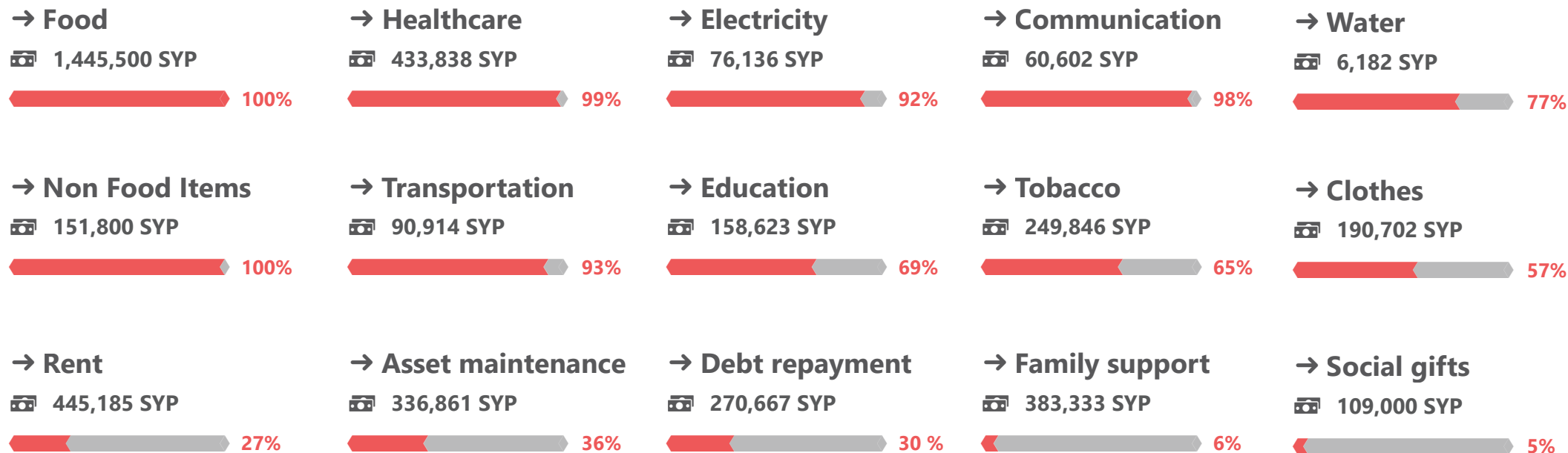
INCOME AND EXPENSES



Average monthly expense for households who had expenses in the following categories

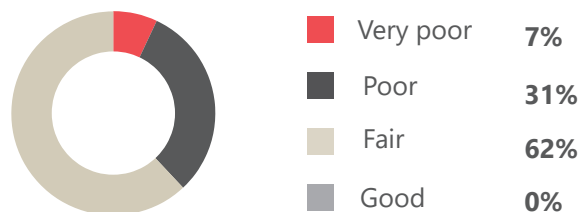


Share of households who spent money on the expense category

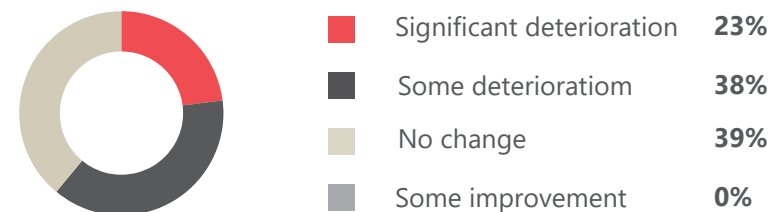


ABILITY TO MEET BASIC NEEDS

Households' perceived ability to meet basic needs

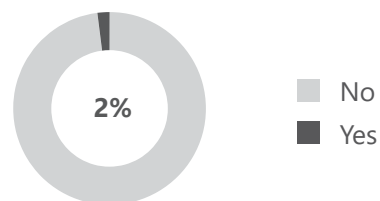


Change in the households' ability to meet basic needs over the last three months

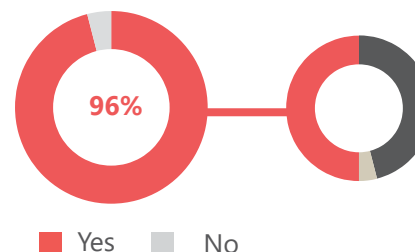


ABILITY TO MEET BASIC NEEDS

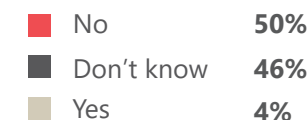
% of households with savings ■



% of households in debt ■



% of households able to repay their debt in 6 months ▼



Most common barriers to meeting basic needs (as % of households who experienced barriers [100%]) ► ■

- 1 The wage is not commensurate with the rising prices **93%**
- 2 Lack of employment opportunities **79%**
- 3 Lack of skills for a better paying job **40%**

Average % of monthly income spent on debt repayment ⁹
12%
Average expenditure on debt repayment as a % of total household expenditure ⁹
12%

Most common coping strategies adopted to meet basic needs (as % of households who applied coping strategies [99%]) ► ●

- 1 Borrowing money **94%**
- 2 Purchasing items on credit **65%**
- 3 Decreasing non-food expenditures (health, education, etc.) **44%**
- 4 Selling household assets/goods (furniture, TV, jewellery etc.) **10%**
- 5 Sending children below 15 to work **8%**

44% of households whose monthly income was lower than their estimated monthly expenses ►

0% of households whose monthly income would not cover minimum expenses (as estimated by the SMEB)¹⁴ ►










► Aligns with the Syria analytical framework from the Durable Solutions Platform

■ Refers to the current situation at the time of data collection

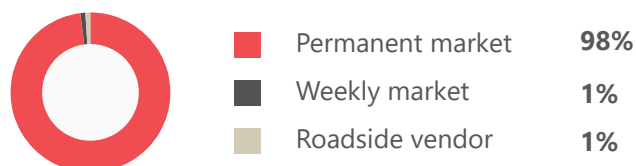
● Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection

FOOD ACCESS AND CONSUMPTION

Average number of days food groups were consumed by households in the 7 days prior to data collection

	Fish/Meat/Eggs	1.1
	Fruit	0.8
	Pulses, nuts, and seeds	1.5
	Tubers/roots	1.7
	Vegetables and leaves	2
	Milk, and dairy	3.2
	Bread and cereals	4.5
	Sweets	2.8
	Oils and fats	5.6

Most common source of food



98% % of households who experienced issues with accessing sufficient quantities and quality of food

Barriers to accessing sufficient quantities and quality of food (by % of households who experienced barriers [98%])⁸



3% of households reporting perceiving that at least one member had lost weight in the last 3 month due to insufficient food access

Average % of monthly income spent on food ⁹
53%
Average expenditure on food as a % of total household expenditure ⁹
51%
Average monthly food expenditure per person in a household
204,902 SYP
% of households whose monthly food expenditure is more than 50% of their total expenditure
53%

34%

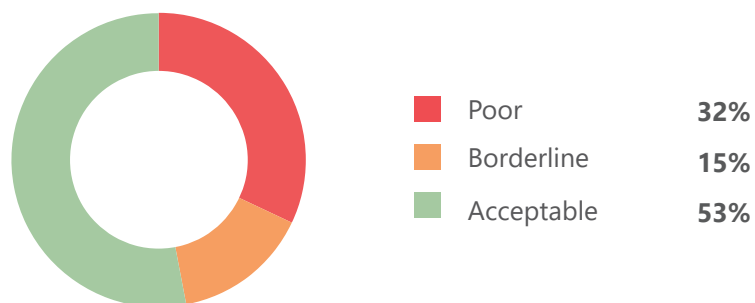
of households who did not consume any eggs, meat or fish in the 7 days prior to data collection

50%

of households who did not consume any fruit in the 7 days prior to data collection

FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE (FCS)¹⁵

Food Consumption Score (by % of households)



48% of households with children with **poor** or **borderline** food consumption ▼

FCS Interpretation¹⁵

Poor food consumption (score between 0-28): This category includes households that are not consuming staples and vegetables every day and never or very seldom consume protein-rich food such as meat and dairy.

Borderline food consumption (score between 28.5-42): This category includes households that are consuming staples and vegetables every day, accompanied by oils and pulses a few times a week.

Acceptable food consumption (score >42): This category includes households that are consuming staples and vegetables every day, frequently accompanied by oils and pulses and occasionally meat, fish and dairy.

COPING STRATEGIES

6.1 Average reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI) in ar-Raqqa city

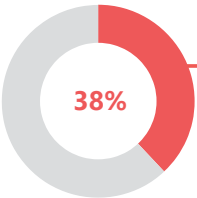
The rCSI is a relative score to measure the frequency and severity of food-related negative coping mechanisms adopted by households to cover their needs. A decrease in score suggests an amelioration in food security. Based on the Syria 2021 Inter-Sector Severity Model, the thresholds for the Reduced Coping Strategies Index are: (1) None/Minimal (rCSI= 0-2), (2) Stress (rCSI = 3-6), (3) Severe (rCSI = 7-11), (4) Extreme (rCSI = 12-19), (5) Catastrophic (rCSI>19). Thus, results indicate a stress level of coping in Ar-Raqqa city.

Coping strategies (CS) in the 7 days prior to data collection (for households who experienced barriers in accessing sufficient food [91%])

	Average #days per week CS was applied	% of households who applied CS
Relied on less preferred/less expensive food	3.2	96%
Borrowed food or relied on help from friends	<1	4%
Reduced the portion size of meals at meal time	1.4	46%
Reduced the number of meals eaten per day	1.4	47%
Restricted the consumption by adults in order for young children to eat	<1	3%
At least one member of the household spent a whole day without eating	<1	1%

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

% of households with unmet health needs¹⁶



Most common inaccessible health treatments (by % of households with unmet health needs [38%])^{8,16}

1	Medicines or other commodities	53%
2	Treatment for chronic diseases	50%
3	Treatment for parasitic infections	42%
4	Paediatric consultations	26%
5	Care for cancer, haemodialysis or other catastrophic illness	21%

Most common inaccessible types of medicine (by % of households with unmet health needs related to medicines and other commodities [53%])^{8,16}

1	Antibiotics	100%
2	Medications for hypertension/heart conditions	55%
3	Diabetes medicines	30%
4	Medication for mental health conditions and/or epilepsy	25%
5	Medication for parasitic infections (such as diarrhoea)	25%

100% of households who experienced issues with accessing healthcare¹⁶

Average % of monthly income spent on healthcare ¹³
11%
Average expenditure on health care as a % of total household expenditure ¹³
11%

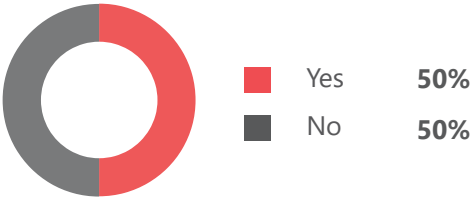
Most common barriers to accessing healthcare (by % of households)^{8,16}

1	Cannot afford price of medicines	98%
2	Cannot afford treatment costs	87%
3	Lack of medicines and/or medical equipment at facilities	53%

Most common coping strategies (by % of host community households with unmet health needs [38%])^{8,16}

1	Going to a pharmacy instead of a clinic	89%
2	Substituting prescribed medication for herbal medicine	71%
3	Seeking non-professional care (such as traditional practitioner)	42%

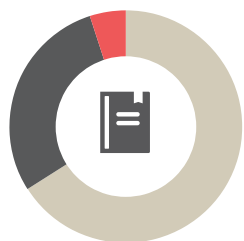
Households with at least one member who showed signs of psychological distress¹⁶



ACCESS TO EDUCATION

School attendance for children aged 6-11

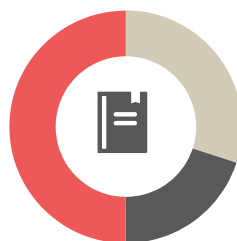
(by % of households with school-aged children (6-11))



All regularly attended school ▼	66%
Some regularly attended school ▼	29%
None attended school	6%

School attendance for children aged 12-14

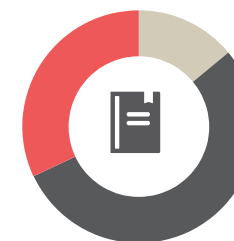
(by % of households with school-aged children (12-14))



All regularly attended school ▼	30%
Some regularly attended school ▼	20%
None attended school ▼	50%

School attendance for children aged 15-17

(by % of households with school-aged children (15-17))



All regularly attended school ▼	14%
Some regularly attended school ▼	54%
None attended school ▼	32%

Average % of monthly income spent on education⁹

5%

Average expenditure on education as a % of total household expenditure⁹

5%

Most commonly reported barriers to accessing education in the month prior to data collection (by % of households where at least one of the children did not regularly attend school [51%])^{8, ▼}

1	Children have to work	37%
2	Social issues (e.g. education not being considered important)	35%
3	There is no school for child's age-group	16%

Most commonly reported challenges faced by school-aged children while attending school (by % of households where at least one of the children attended school [87%])^{8, ▼, ●}

1	School lacks trained teachers	43%
2	Classes are overcrowded	31%
2	School lacks learning and teaching materials	31%

▼ Findings are not representative

● Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection

NOTES ON ANALYSIS

For some indicators, a reduced sample of households answered the question as a result of a skip logic in the questionnaire. In some of these cases, the reduced sample of households resulted in findings that are not representative with a 95% confidence level and 10% margin of error, indicated with the symbol above. Indicators which are not representative are indicated throughout the Situation Overview with the icon ▼.

The complete multi-sectoral descriptive analysis can be accessed [online](#) or can be downloaded as an [excel file](#). All HSOS products remain accessible on the [REACH Resource Centre](#).

FOOTNOTES

1. The Humanitarian Situation Overview Syria (HSOS) project comprises regular multi-sectoral assessments reviewing information on humanitarian needs and conditions across accessible areas in northern Syria. The HSOS monthly KI assessments can be found [here](#).

2. Findings from a 4W review in January 2022 indicated that roughly 60% of the out of camp response activities in NES are based in urban locations.

3. The Syria Analytical Framework is a Syria-specific analytical tool developed by the Durable Solutions Platform to guide the incorporation of a durable solutions lens into research and tool design.

4. IDPs are defined as individuals or groups of people who have left their homes or places of habitual residence and have settled in the assessed city after 2011, as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, or violations of human rights.

5. Host populations are defined as individuals or groups of people who currently reside in their community of origin, or community of permanent residence prior to 2011. This includes populations that were never displaced as well as previously displaced populations that have returned to their community of origin (defined as returnees).

6. Areas consistently identified as security concerns, including check points, their surroundings, or military presence, were not covered. Out of the 23 residential neighbourhoods, 1 was not assessed due to security concerns. Consequently, the remaining 22 neighbourhoods were assessed.

7. Households were asked to select a first, second, and third highest priority need. The overall priority need refers to the frequency a need was selected among all three categories (first, second or third highest priority need).

8. Respondents could select multiple answers, thus findings might exceed 100%.

9. Computed for households who had this particular expense in the 30 days prior to data collection.

10. Longer-term informal employment is defined as employment with a verbal agreement whose duration is more than 1 month. Short-term informal employment is defined as employment with a verbal agreement whose duration is less than 1 month.

11. Calculated for households where employment is a source of income.

12. Computed as the mean of (household income/number of household members)*6.

13. Computed as the mean of (household expense/number of household members)*6.

14. Computed by comparing (household income/number of household members) to (1,957,931 SYP/6), where 1,957,931 is the median value of the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) for a family of 6 in Ar-Raqqa governorate, from the December 2023 Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI).

15. The FCS is a composite score based on dietary, diversity, food frequency, and relative nutritional importance of different food groups consumed by a household throughout 7 days. Refer to: The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). (May 2014). WFP Food Consumption Score - Technical Guidance Sheet. Retrieved from: wfp.org

16. Unmet health needs refer to anyone in the household who needed or wanted to access healthcare (including medicines) but could not access it.

ABOUT REACH

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).