Northeast Syria | Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI)

1-8 December 2024

MARKET OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

To facilitate humanitarian cash programming, **the Northeast of Syria Cash Working Group** (NES CWG), in collaboration with **local and international NGOs**, carries out a monthly Joint Market Monitoring Initiative in Northern Syria. This initiative (JMMI) assesses **the availability and prices of basic commodities** typically sold in markets and consumed by the average Syrian household. These include food, water, and non-food items such as fuel, shelter and clothing.

Among these, 18 components (measured by 24 items) form **the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB),** which signifies the minimum culturally adjusted **items necessary to sustain a household of 6 individuals for a month.**

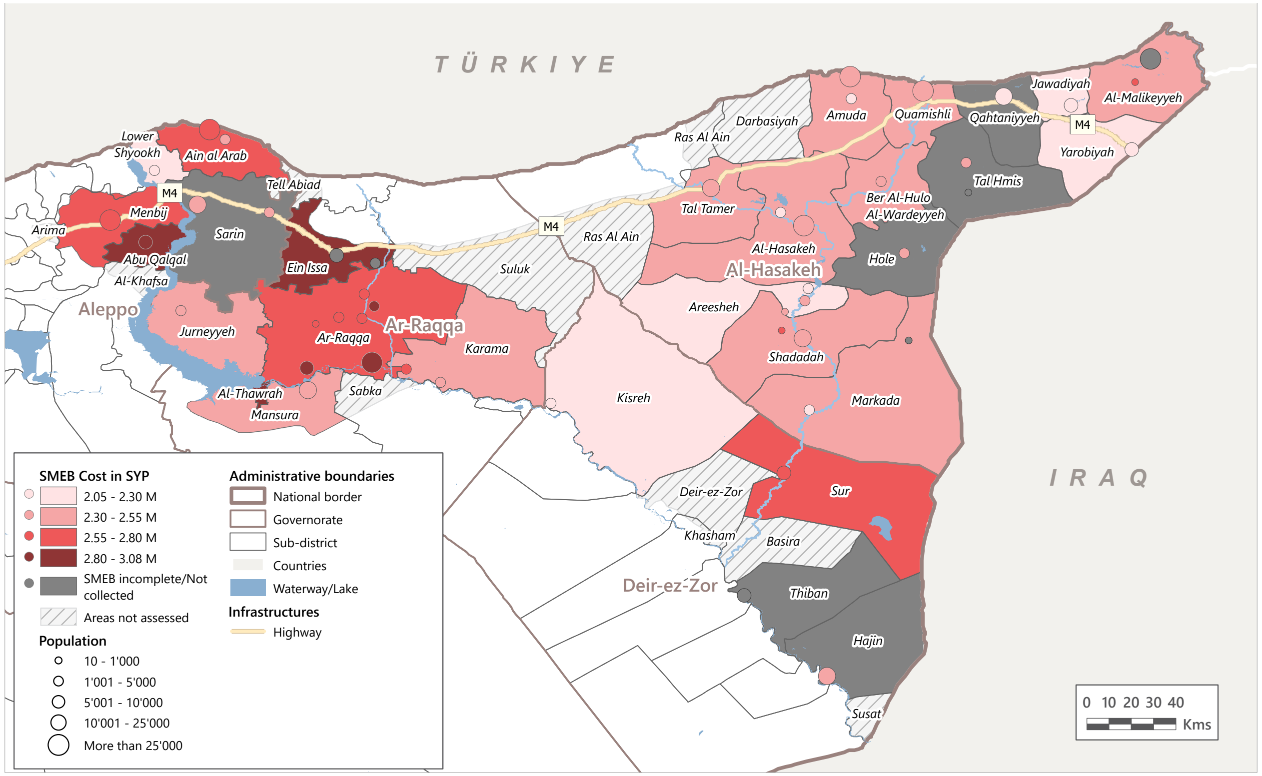
Coverage

4	Assessed governorates
11	Assessed Districts
29	Assessed sub-districts
48	Assessed communities
1970	Shops surveyed

KEY INDICATORS

Cost of SMEB	Cost of SMEB Food	SYP/USD
2,415,998 SYP +8% ▲	1,776,417 SYP +4% ▲	informal exchange rate
108USD -26% ▼	108 USD -3% ▼	16,400 SYP +7% ▲

Cost of the SMEB, Sub-districts in Northeast Syria, SYP



KEY FINDINGS

- While the **informal regional median SYP/USD exchange rate recorded a 7% increase** compared to October 2024 JMMI data*, REACH field teams and partners reported **extreme, localized fluctuations in the exchange rate** in response to political and conflict related developments, which reportedly impacted businesses ability to operate.
- **SMEB food item prices** continued to **increase** between October and December, placing further financial strain on households. **These increases of 4%** were most pronounced in areas that experienced higher levels of political unrest and conflict events such as Raqqa and Menbij.
- The **ongoing fuel crisis in NES**, which has worsened since the conflict escalation in late October, remains **a key driver of price increases for various essential goods and services, including water trucking.** According to the December JMMI data, subsidized diesel, unsubsidised diesel, and diesel on the parallel market increased in price by 100%, 28%, and 48% since October.
- A significant percentage of interviewed **vendors (56%) reported price inflation as a common supply challenge**, as high supplier costs reduce vendors capacity to maintain their current level of operation. operations.

* JMMI October 2024 data

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Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB)

The SMEB is a tool designed by the Cash-based responses Technical Working Group (CBR-TWG) for Northern Syria. The first version of the SMEB was developed in 2014 and formed the basis of the northern Syria joint market monitoring, a partnership between CBR-TWG member NGOs & REACH. The current SMEB is based on the 2017 Revision. The SMEB is designed as an indicator of the cost of the minimum, culturally-appropriate items that a family of 6 needs to survive for one month, while meeting basic standards for nutritious food, water use and hygiene in Northern Syria. The cost of the SMEB can be used as a proxy for understanding the financial burdens that households face in different locations.

SMEB Contents

Food	
Bread	37 kg
Bulgur	15 kg
Chicken	6 kg
Eggs	6 kg
Ghee (kg) / Vegetable oil (L)	7kg / L
Red Lentils	15 kg
Rice	19 kg
Salt	1 kg
Sugar	5 kg
Tomato paste	6 kg
Vegetables	12 kg
Hygiene (NFI)	
Bathing soap	12 bars
Laundry / dish soap	3 kg
Sanitary pads	4 packs of 10
Toothpaste	200 kg
Other items	
Cooking fuel	
Water trucking	15 L
Phone data	4500 L
Float (other costs)	1 GB

Exchange rate trends

After experiencing a period of relative stability for several months, the regional median informal exchange rate increased by 7.2% between the October and December JMMI rounds, from 15,300 SYP/1 USD to 16,400 SYP/1 USD. However, while not reflected in the December data due to the specific days data collection took place, reports from REACH field staff and NGO partners indicate extreme, localized fluctuations in the exchange rate towards the end of the first week of December as events rapidly unfolded across Syria. For example, REACH field staff reported that the exchange rate temporarily reaching 25,000/1 USD in Raqqa and almost 50,000 SYP/1 USD in Menbij before quickly decreasing again. This volatility appears to be highly localized and based on tensions, conflict events, and political instability related to ongoing developments in Syria. Field reports also indicate this volatility had major a major ability on vendors' ability to operate for short periods of time. Furthermore, as of mid-December, the SYP has reportedly strengthened, with REACH Rapid Market Monitoring data (collected on December 18) showing a regional median exchange rate of 13000 SYP/1 USD.

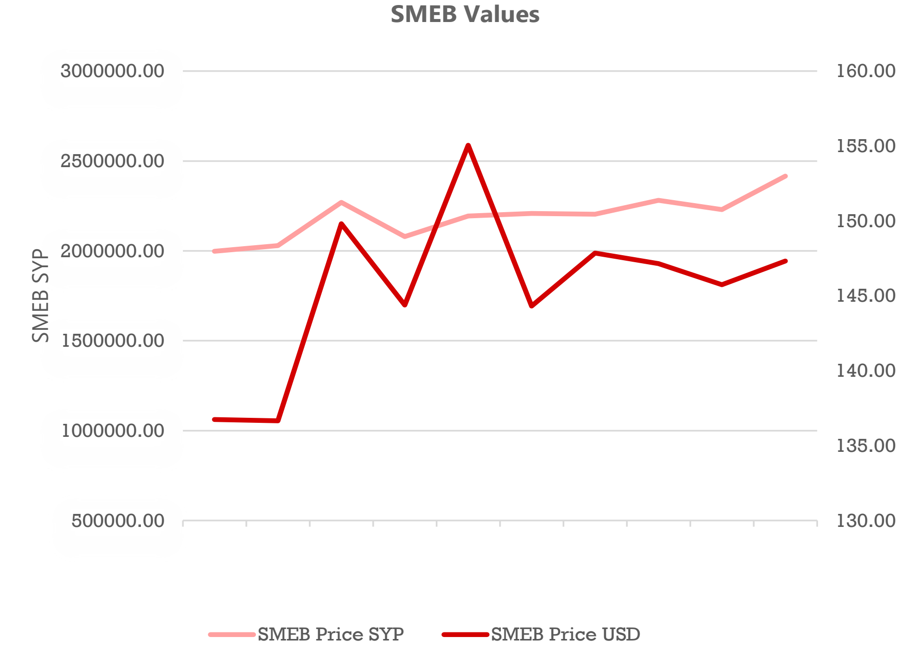
13%▼

The value of the SYP has depreciated by 13% in the past year.

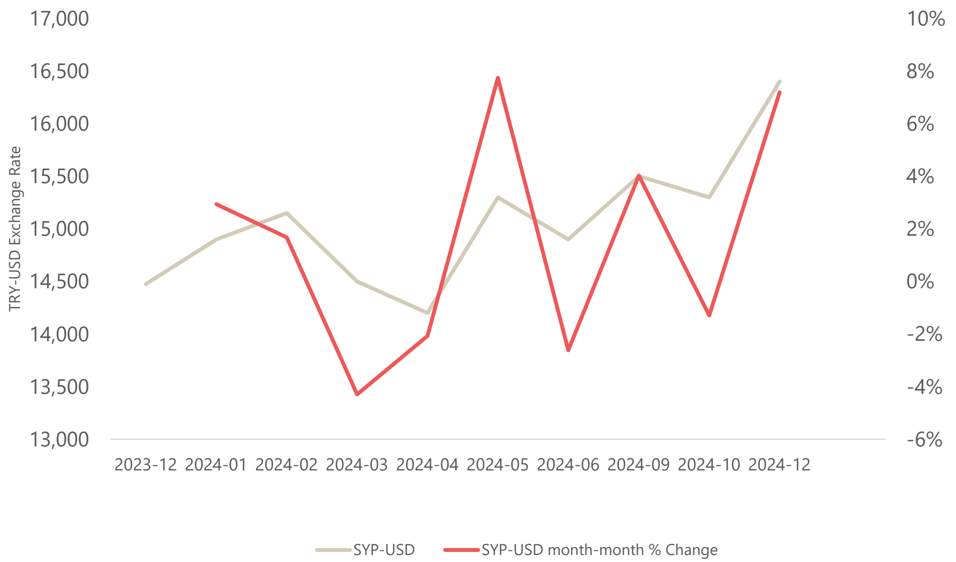
21%▲

The cost of the SMEB in SYP has increased by 21% in the past year.

Regional median SMEB prices, SYP and USD*

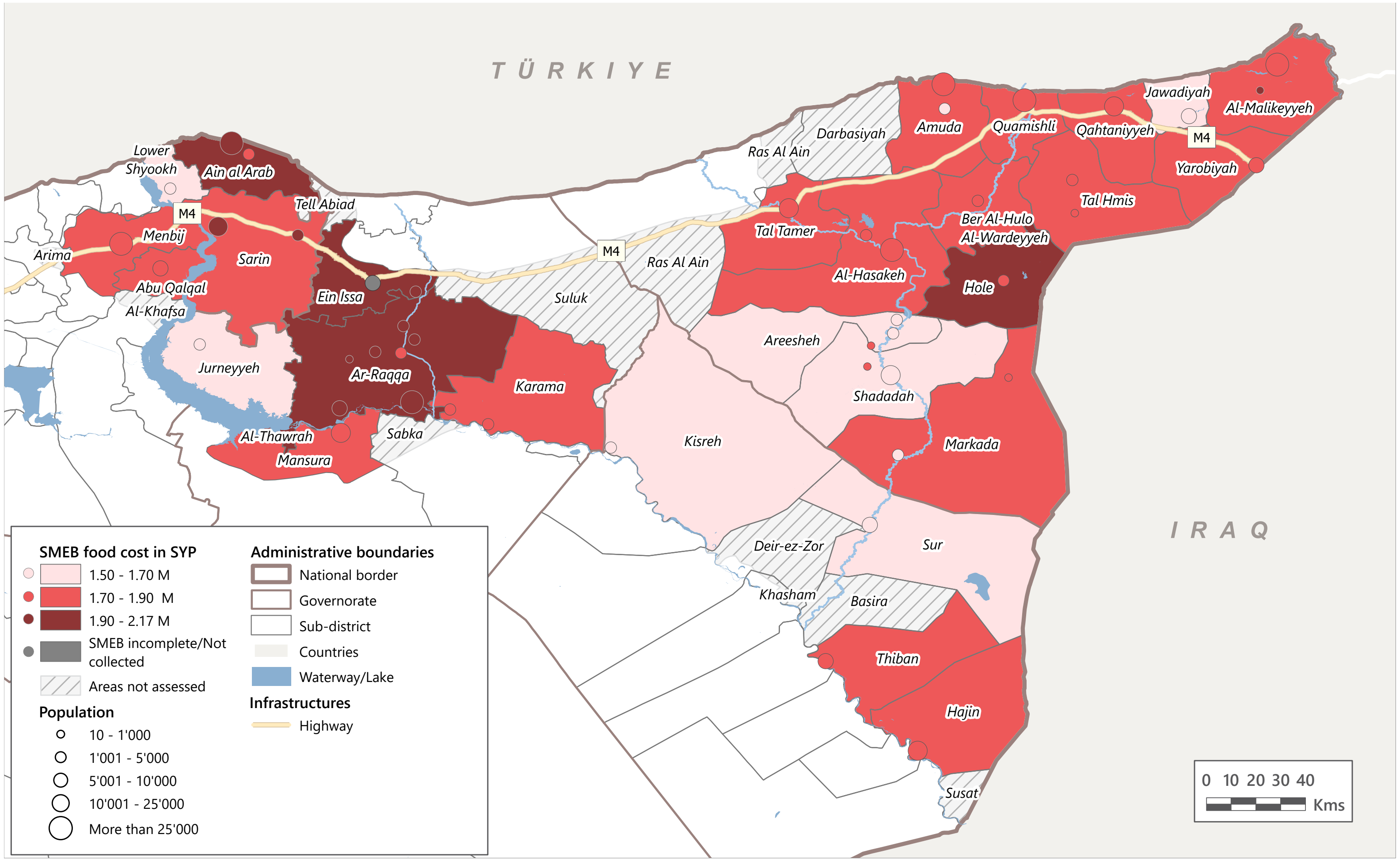


Regional median USD/SYP informal exchange rate trends*



* No data was collected in July, August and November 2024.

SMEB food prices, SYP



Price of SMEB Food, sub-district, SYP

Location	Median Price SYP	Change since Oct 2024	Median Price USD
Aleppo governorate			
Menbij	1,809,241	+20.4% ▲	110.3
Abu Qalqal	1,717,609	+5.4% ▲	104.7
Ain al Arab	1,964,342	+15% ▲	119.8
Lower Shyookh	1,572,750	+1.4% ▲	95.9
Sarin	1,841,054	+6% ▲	112.3
Al-Hasakeh governorate			
Al-Hasakeh	1,857,750	+7% ▲	113
Al-Malikeyyeh	1,756,554	+2% ▲	107
Amuda	1,776,417	+3% ▲	108
Areesheh	1,605,000	+2.6% ▲	98
Be'r Al-Hulo Al-	1,789,500	+14% ▲	109
Hole	1,925,750	+9% ▲	117
Jawadiyah	1,622,125	-0.6% ▼	99
Markada	1,752,500	+1% ▲	107
Qahtaniyyeh	1,702,000	+10.3% ▲	104
Quamishli	1,865,083	+6.6% ▲	114
Shadadah	1,682,000	+7.4% ▲	103
Tal Hmis	1,709,750	+3.7% ▲	104
Tal Tamer	1,834,839	+11% ▲	112
Ya'robiyah	1,720,607	+1% ▲	105
Deir Ez-Zor			
Hajin	1,840,550	+2.6% ▲	112
Kisreh	1,657,000	+3% ▲	101
Sur	1,659,786	-1.5% ▼	101
Thiban	1,754,829	+2% ▲	107
Ar-Raqqa			
Al-Thawrah	2,099,500	+17% ▲	128
Ar-Raqqa	2,007,757	+11.5% ▲	122
Ein Issa	2,027,915	+16% ▲	124
Jurneyyeh	1,690,250	+8% ▲	103
Karama	1,787,368	+2.3% ▲	109
Mansura	1,778,000	+5.6% ▲	108

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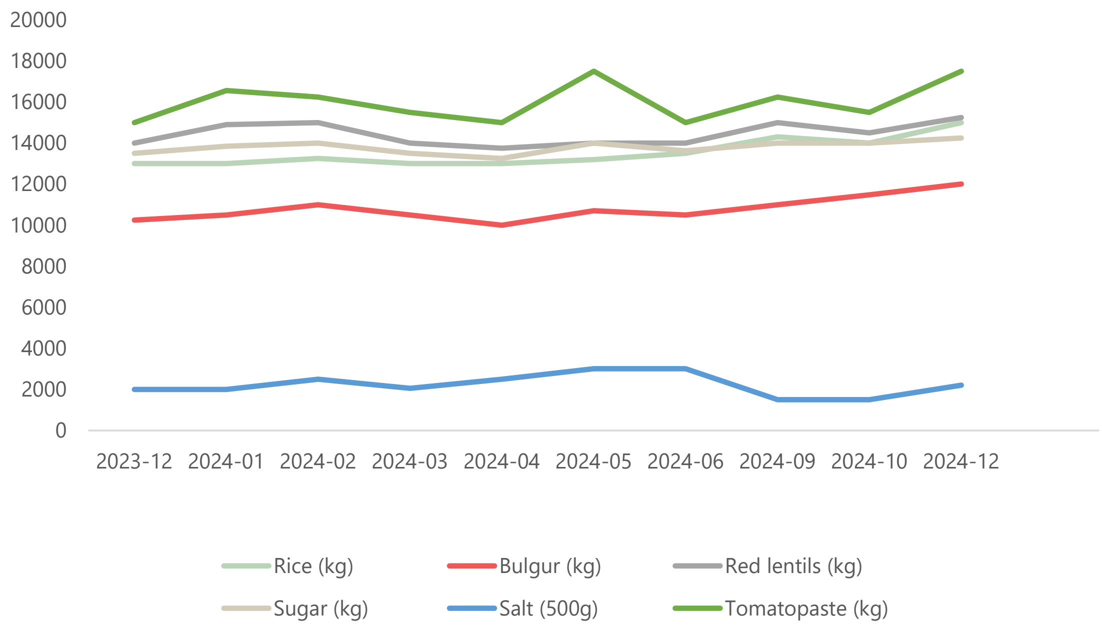
Food price trends

During the winter months, many households in Northeast Syria face greater challenges in securing their basic food needs as winter-related expenditures, e.g. heating and clothing, create additional financial burdens on households' already very limited resources, meaning any increase in the cost of basic food items can have a significant humanitarian impact. The usual pressures associated with the winter months have been further compounded this year due to the combined impact of the conflict escalation in late October that saw oil and gas related critical infrastructure targeted by airstrikes, further aggravating the pre-existing fuel crisis, and more recently, the market volatility associated with the opposition forces taking control of the Syrian Government.

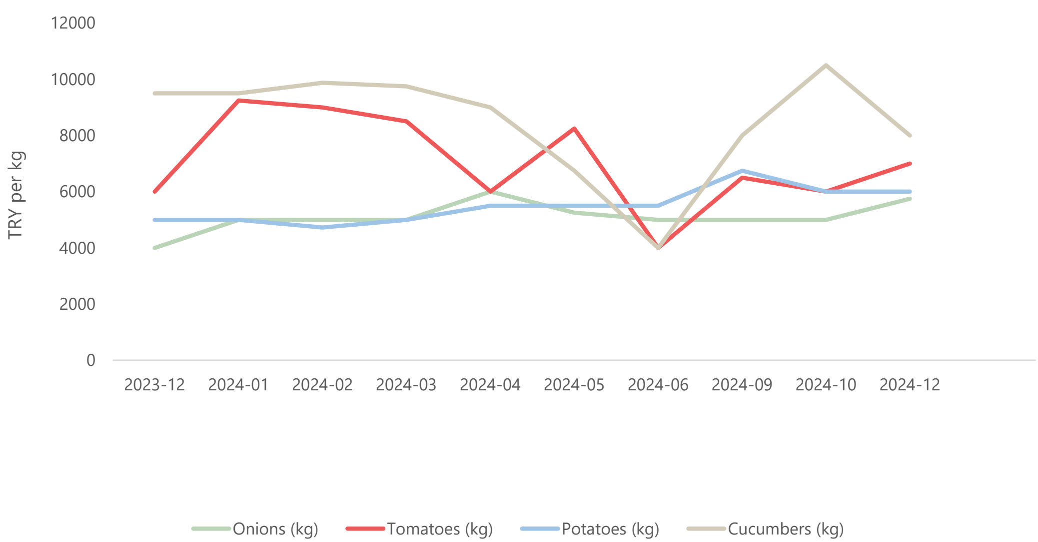
Between October and December 2024, the regional median for monitored food items increased 4.2%, continuing an upwards trend that has seen food prices increase by 15% over the past year. There was significant variation in price increases across different subdistricts, with those more affected by recent conflict events and political instability seeing the highest increases. For example, in Raqqa and Menbij, the SMEB food component increased by 11.5% and 20.5% respectively.

The regional median price of salt saw a notable 47% increase compared to October, potentially reflecting disruptions to supply chains in early December. In terms of monitored fresh foods, tomatoes and onions also saw major increases (15% and 17%). While seasonal price increases for fresh vegetables are typical, recent years have seen these increases become more pronounced due to inflated production costs and farmers' increased vulnerability to weather-related losses.

Regional median price of bulk food items, SYP*



Regional median price of vegetables, SYP*



Food price changes

Item	Unit	Median Price SYP	1-month change (SYP)*	Median Price USD**
Bulk food items				
Bulgur	1kg	12,000	+4.6%▲	0.73
Red lentils	1kg	15,250	+5%▲	0.93
Rice	1kg	15,000	+7%▲	0.91
Salt	500g	2,200	+47%▲	0.13
Sugar	1kg	14,250	+2%▲	0.87
Tomato Paste	1kg	17,500	+13%▲	1.07
Vegetables				
Tomatoes	1kg	7,000	+17%▲	0.43
Potatoes	1kg	6,000	0 %	0.37
Cucumbers	1kg	8,000	-24% ▼	0.49
Onions	1kg	5,750	+15%▲	0.35

* No data was collected in July, August and November 2024.

**USD values are calculated as per the median regional informal exchange rate recorded in this round of JMMI.

Non food items

NES experienced a significant escalation in conflict activity beginning October 2023, including a sharp increase in airstrikes and shelling across Hassakeh, Aleppo, and Raqqa Governorates. Notably, the region's sole gas distributor, the Sweidiyeh gas-powered station was targeted and significant damage has been reported at two refineries and four pumping stations across NES. REACH's field network and partners report that damage to energy infrastructure has increased generator dependency, reduced fuel availability, and driven up prices, impacting essential services such as WASH and healthcare. These impacts are highlighted in the December JMMI data, with subsidized diesel, unsubsidised diesel, and diesel on the parallel market increasing in price by 100%, 28%, and 48% since October. The cost of water trucking, which is closely linked to fuel prices, also rose 20% between October and December.

Non-food items availability

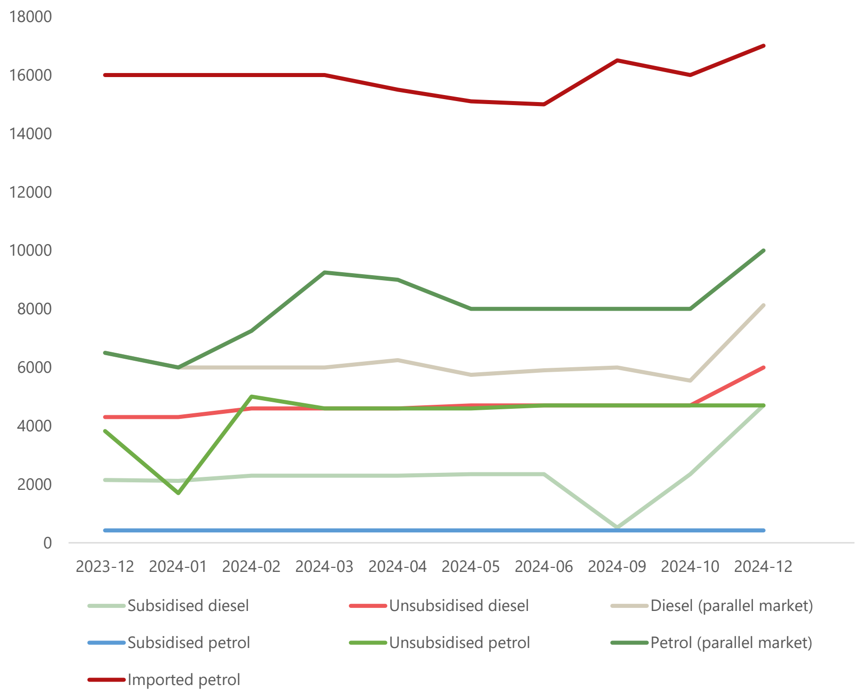
33%

In the past 6 months the price of locally produced kerosene has increased by 33%.

-19%

In the past 6 months the price of locally produced gas has decreased by 19%.

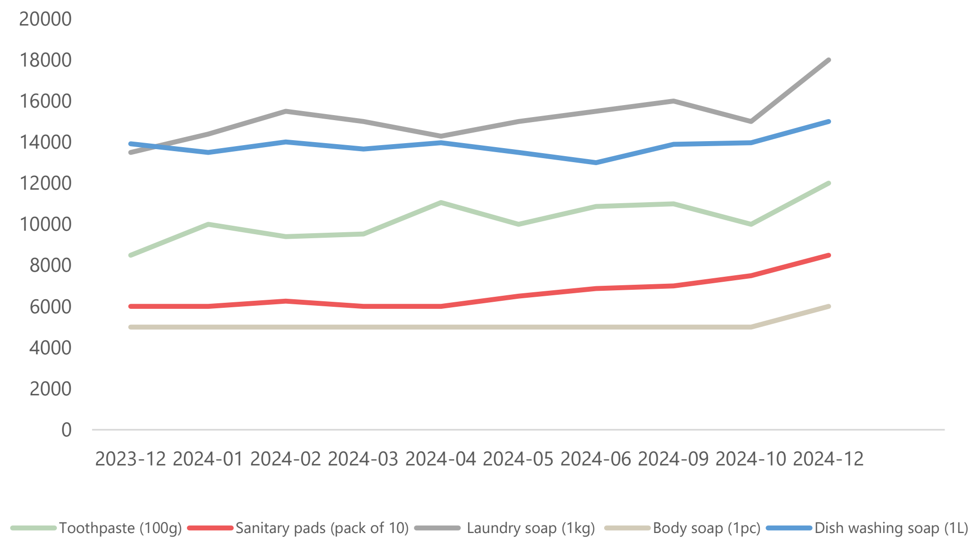
Regional median fuel price, December 2023-December 2024, SYP**



Price changes of monitored non-food items

Item	Unit	Median Price SYP	1-month change (SYP)	Median Price USD*
Non-food items	SMEB			
Bathing soap	1pc	6,000	+20%▲	0.37
Sanitary pads	10pc	8,500	+13.3%▲	0.52
Toothpaste	100g	12,000	+20%▲	0.73
Laundry powder	1kg	18,000	+20%▲	1.10
Dish soap	1L	15,000	+7.4%▲	0.91
Cooking fuels				
Kerosene	1L	8,625	+33%▲	0.53
LPG gas	1L	17,857	+4.2%▲	1.09
Water trucking				
Water trucking	1L	30	+20%▲	0.0018
Internet				
Mobile data	1gb	3,111	0 %	0.19
Transportation fuels				
Subsidised diesel	1L	4,700	+100%▲	0.29
Unsubsidised diesel	1L	6,000	+28%▲	0.37
Diesel (parallel market)	1L	8,125	+48%	0.50
Subsidised petrol	1L	425	0 %	0.03
Unsubsidised petrol	1L	4,700	0 %	0.29
Petrol (parallel market)	1L	10,000	+25%▲	0.61
Imported petrol	1L	17,000	+6.3%▲	1.04

Regional median price of hygiene items, SYP**



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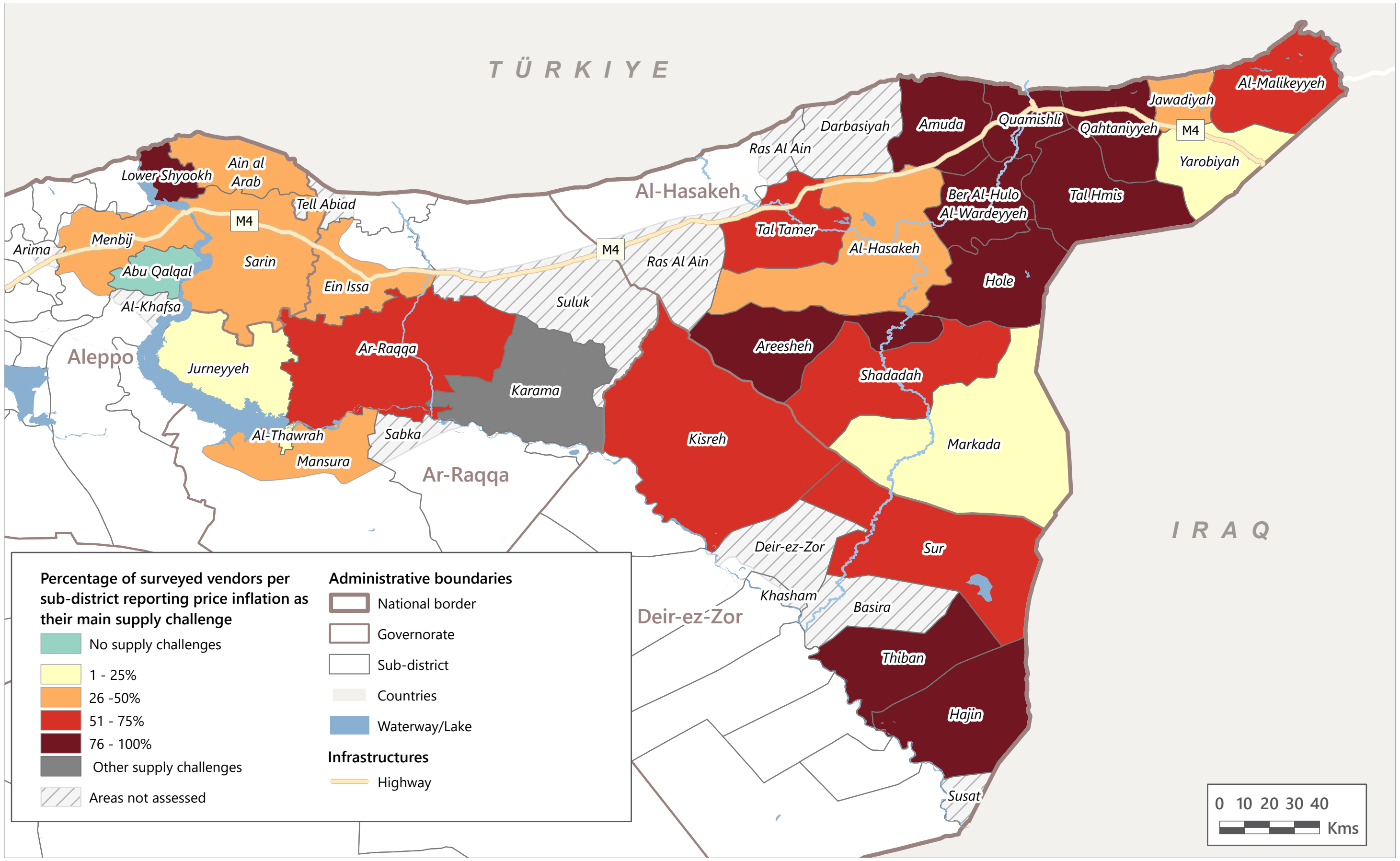
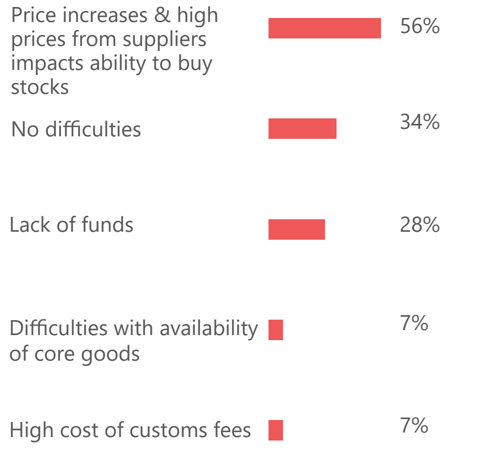
** No data was collected in July, August and November 2024.

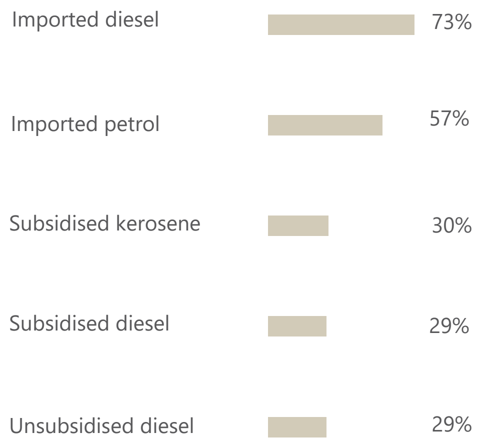
% of surveyed vendors reporting price inflation impacts their capacity to secure stocks



Top 5 reported supply challenges, % of surveyed vendors



Top 5 reported unavailable items, % of surveyed vendors



Supply challenges

Based on December JMMI data, the most common supply challenge reported by vendors is price inflation, cited by 56% of respondents. This reflects widespread concerns over rising costs, impacting vendors' ability to stabilize prices and meet market demand amidst economic instability and uncertainty.

The number of interviewed vendors across all assessed areas in NES reporting that over the past seven days consumers and traders in

their community faced physical access barriers when accessing markets decreased between October and December (14% - 9%). However, the number of vendors reporting that they faced difficulties in maintaining operations and restocking in the prior 7 days marginally increased from 60% – 65%.

A significant portion of surveyed vendors also reported shortages across all USD denominations. The most affected notes were 5 (70%), 10 (70%) and 20 (60%).

Methodology

The JMMI aims to inform market-based programming in Northern Syria.

Coverage

Coverage is determined through a combination of identifying key market hubs and partners' field capacity. Firstly, key market hubs are identified using the Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria (HSOS), classifying all communities that 5 or more other communities report to rely on for markets as a key market hub. Secondly, these "key market hubs" are reviewed by the field teams for validity purposes. In this step, additional important markets in communities are included. These could be communities that either a) have significant markets but were not included in HSOS coverage, or b) communities that have markets that are important for people living in camps. Finally, we compare the ideal coverage with the capacity of partners and aim to ensure that key market hubs are covered. The actual coverage is, therefore, restricted to the capacity of partners.

Data Collection

In each assessed location, at least three prices (ideally 4) per food & non-food item need to be collected from different traders to ensure the quality and consistency of the collected data. In line with the purpose of the JMMI, only the prices of the cheapest, most commonly bought type of item are recorded for each product, except in cases where otherwise indicated. For example, certain NFI items specific products are monitored at the request of the shelter cluster.

SMEB Calculation:

The cost of the SMEB is determined by multiplying the median price of each item in the respective location by the quantity listed in the table on page 2.

Identification of traders

Field teams identify traders to assess based on the following criteria:

- Traders are retailers selling directly to consumers.
- Traders need to be representative of the local price level.
- Traders have knowledge of the shop operations.

To the extent possible, the same traders are revisited in every data collection round.

Enumerators and training

The data are collected by field staff familiar with local market conditions. They undergo training on the methodology and tools provided by REACH. Training sessions occur each time a new partner joins the JMMI, at partner request, and at scheduled intervals throughout the year, such as when the assessment undergoes changes. Additionally, field teams are equipped with a JMMI Standardised Operational Procedure (SOP) offering guidance on market identification, trader assessment, and pricing. The REACH JMMI team manages the integration of partner feedback on the JMMI SOP, sharing updates, and conducting re-training with the field, as needed. Data collection is carried out using the KOBO Collect mobile application.

Data cleaning and analysis

After data collection, REACH compiles and cleans all partner data, standardizing prices, cross-checking outliers, and calculating the median cost of prices in each assessed location. Follow-ups are initiated with field teams to address data queries, including outliers, missing data, and incorrect entries. The median item prices reported in this factsheet are 'location medians,' designed to mitigate the impact of outliers and variations in data quantity among assessed locations.

Aggregation

The published data is presented at the community, sub-district, district, governorate, and regional levels. At each aggregation level, the median of all prices collected within the unit of analysis is calculated. For example, at the regional level, the median of all prices collected for a specific product in the entire region is calculated, while at the governorate level, the median of all prices collected in that governorate is calculated, and so forth. All SMEB and price index calculations utilize this method.

Challenges and limitations

- Price data reflects only the specific timeframe in which it was collected. Variations may occur between data collection rounds, and any comparisons should be regarded as indicative.
- The JMMI data collection tool requests the cheapest, most commonly bought type of each item to be recorded, as availability varies across regions. Therefore, price comparisons across regions may be based on slightly varying products.
- With current coverage, data is mostly collected from main markets, which may not be representative of rural areas.
- As the JMMI continues to expand and is extended to additional locations, the reported changes in the overall median prices may be driven by shifts in coverage rather than actual price changes.

JMMI data is updated monthly through the Interactive Dashboard where users can filter for SMEB components of interest, currencies, and assessed areas.

About the CWG

The JMMI exists within the framework of the Cash Working Group (CWG). In northeast Syria (NES), the CWG was established in May 2014 to analyse the impact of the ongoing conflict on markets in Syria and guide the implementation of humanitarian cash and voucher programmes within those markets. For more information about the CWG in NES, please contact the cash working group coordinator at cashcoordnes@gmail.com.

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).