

# Syria Community Profile Update: Hajar Aswad, Tadamon & Yarmuk

## Damascus - October 2017



**REACH** Informing more effective humanitarian action

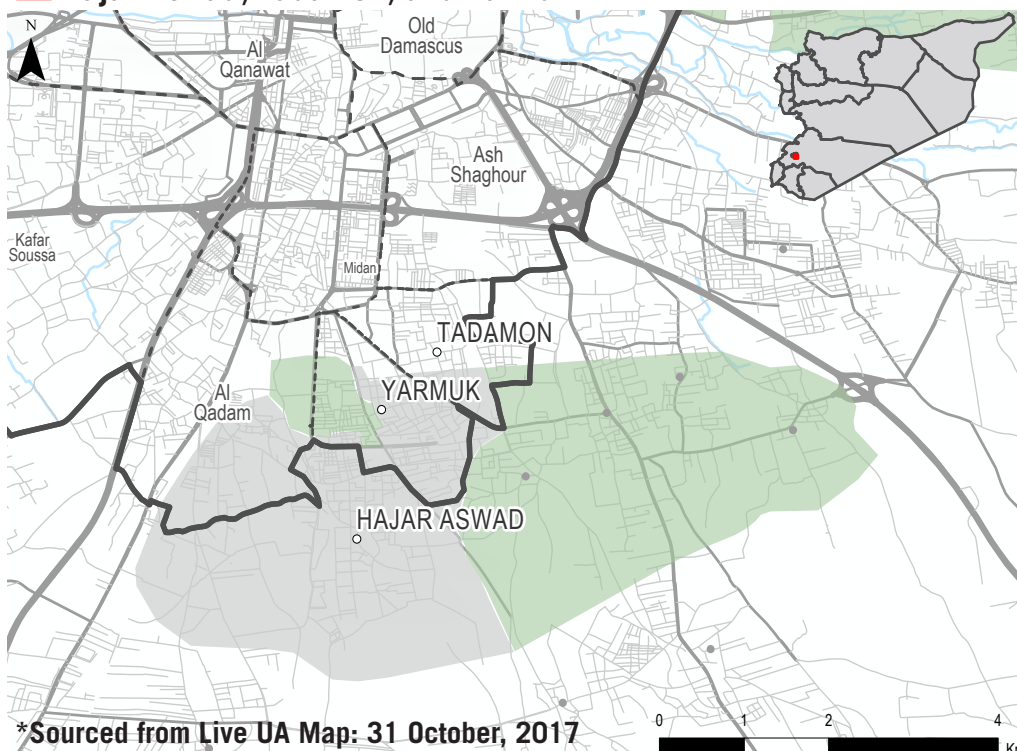
### CONTEXT

The communities of Hajar Aswad, Yarmuk, and Tadamon are all located in southern Damascus city / Rural Damascus governorate. Assessments of all three areas, which have faced access restrictions since early to mid-2013, began in June 2016. In Hajar Aswad, situated south of Damascus city, the security situation had been stable since assessments began. However, in October 2017, conflict reportedly led to increased access restrictions on civilians.

The situation has remained stable, but critical, since assessments began in Tadamon, a neighbourhood located in the southeastern part of Damascus governorate, northeast of Hajar Aswad and Yarmuk.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian community of Yarmuk, located in the southern suburbs of Damascus, has been classified as besieged since 2014. Periodic fighting between parties to the conflict has characterised the assessment period, including during October 2017.

### Hajar Aswad, Tadamon, and Yarmuk\*



\*Sourced from Live UA Map: 31 October, 2017

- Community Covered in Profile
- Community Not Covered in Profile
- ▭ Damascus City Boundary
- ▭ Areas of Damascus
- ▭ Opposition Area of Influence
- ▭ ISIL-affiliated groups



### DEMOGRAPHICS

	HAJAR ASWAD	TADAMON	YARMUK
UN classification:	Hard-to-reach	Hard-to-reach	Besieged
Estimated Population <sup>1</sup>	4500	1200-1500	6500-7500
Of which estimated IDPs <sup>1</sup>	320	250	500-700
% of pre-conflict population	1-25%	1-25%	1-25%
% of female-headed households	1-25%	1-25%	1-25%

### SUMMARY

**In October, the humanitarian situation in Hajar Aswad and Yarmuk deteriorated, as the severity of the siege in these communities increased. In Tadamon, the situation remained stable yet critical.**

The community of Hajar Aswad faced air strikes and internal clashes in October. In response, approximately 300 people relocated to nearby villages. Additionally, the clashes resulted in the 12-day closure of a road that had served as an informal access point. As a result, residents were less able to bring in food from other communities, which led to an increase in the use of negative strategies to cope with a lack of food. Additionally, access to medical care and education in other communities was reduced during this period.

In October the humanitarian situation in Tadamon remained stable, although access to key goods and services such as medical care, education, water and food remained insufficient. Additionally, movement to and from the community continued to be limited.

In Yarmuk, a road into the community that had served as an important formal access point was closed in October, which caused various aspects of the humanitarian situation in the community to deteriorate. Firstly, the road closure forced those who wished to travel to surrounding areas to use informal routes, which exposed them to security risks. Secondly, as the ability of residents to bring goods into the area decreased, food prices increased.

At the time of writing, in November 2017, the severity of the siege on Yarmuk has expanded, to the extent where all formal and informal access points to the area are closed to residents. The humanitarian impacts of this development will not be covered in this report, as it focuses on the month of October, but will be included in future outputs.

1. Hajar Aswad: figures based on HNO 2018 population data (September 2017). Figures based on population estimates by local actors within the community assessed were reportedly 4,900-5,000 individuals, including 700-1,000 IDPs. Tadamon and Yarmuk: figures based on estimates by local actors within assessed neighbourhoods. The last HNO 2018 population data (September 2017) provides the following population estimates: 275 (Tadamon), 12,520, including 1,245 IDPs (Yarmuk).

# 1. ACCESS & MOVEMENT

Communities that are classified as besieged or hard-to-reach are characterised by unique access restrictions that impact civilian movement in and out of the community, commercial and humanitarian vehicle access, entry of goods, supply chains, power and control dynamics, and protection issues. The economy is unable to function normally due to the inability to use usual trade routes or foster competition. Prices soar and supplies dwindle, leading to an unsustainable and ultimately precarious situation that hits the most vulnerable the hardest. Furthermore, in areas of conflict or contested control, the average resident faces increased protection concerns. These can include risks such as conflict-related violence, physical, psychological, or gender-based violence, increased surveillance, harassment, detention, and conscription. Risks associated with crossing checkpoints can also limit or decrease mobility and create constraints for certain residents to access services in other areas. For this reason, this profile first considers access restrictions and their impact on other sectors.



## MOVEMENT OF CIVILIANS

In October, the ability of residents to move in and out of Hajar Aswad and Yarmuk was significantly reduced. In Tadamon, there was no observed change in movement of residents, after an increase in access was reported in September.

Following air strikes in Hajar Aswad, approximately 300 residents relocated to nearby villages such as Yalda, Babella and Beit Sahn. Additionally, a key informal access point to the community was closed for 10 to 12 days because of clashes between armed groups. Lastly, the proportion of the population that was permitted to use formal access routes into the community was reduced to include only women, children and elderly people who lived in the community but were not born there, which amounted to 1-10% of the total population. In previous months, this figure had been 11-25%. Using formal routes reportedly continued to be associated with risks of detention, which deterred men, sexual harassment (for women) and verbal harassment. Informal access routes<sup>2</sup> reportedly also remained in use by 76-100% of the population, when they were not affected by the road closure. However, residents using informal access routes faced risks of gunfire and shelling.

In Tadamon, formal access routes were open to 26-50% of the population for the second consecutive month – mostly to women, children and the elderly, who were reportedly permitted to cross once a week upon presenting identification. Men reportedly remained unable to use formal access routes. Residents accessing formal checkpoints continued to face the risk of verbal harassment. Due to the risk of shelling, the majority of informal access routes to Tadamon reportedly remained out of use, as they have been since August 2017. However, new information has been acquired from community representatives, which confirms that one informal route has remained open since August. This route has been used by residents to seek medical care in neighbouring Hajar Aswad.

In Yarmuk, for the first time since assessments began, no one was permitted to enter and exit the

community via formal access routes in October. Those using informal routes (76-100% of residents), continued to face the risk of sniper fire and other gunfire, as has been the case since August 2016.



## MOVEMENT OF GOODS AND ASSISTANCE

None of the three communities received humanitarian vehicle or commercial vehicle deliveries in October. However, 1-25% of Hajar Aswad residents were reportedly able to receive aid at distributions in nearby Yalda, Babella and Beit Sahn. No humanitarian or commercial vehicles have entered Hajar Aswad or Tadamon directly since assessments began, apart from a single aid delivery of bread to Tadamon in May 2017. Yarmuk had previously received a humanitarian aid delivery in September but it was reportedly insufficient to meet population needs.

The closure of access routes into Hajar Aswad and Yarmuk led to a decrease in the amount of goods that residents were able to transport from neighbouring communities. In Tadamon, the amount of goods that entered remained stable, yet limited.

# 2. FOOD & MARKETS



## ACCESS TO FOOD

In all three communities, residents continued to use negative coping strategies to deal with a lack of food in October. In Hajar Aswad, the road closure resulted in residents reducing their meal sizes, as well as skipping meals altogether for the first time since June 2016. In Tadamon, food availability remained relatively stable, but residents reportedly employed the same coping mechanisms as in Hajar Aswad. In Yarmuk, residents also had to resume reducing their meal sizes, after a humanitarian food delivery had temporarily made that unnecessary in September.

In all three communities, purchasing from shops and markets continued to be the most common method of obtaining food and bread, as none of the three communities had functioning bakeries.

### COMMONLY REPORTED STRATEGIES

#### TO COPE WITH A LACK OF FOOD




	HAJAR ASWAD	TADAMON	YARMUK
Reducing meal size	✓	✓	✓
Skipping meals	✓	✓	✗
Days without eating	✗	✗	✗
Eating non-edible plants	✗	✗	✗
Eating food waste	✗	✗	✗

#### CHANGE SINCE SEPTEMBER

↓ ↓ ↓

2. The fact that some informal points exist does not mean that they are safe or free to use.

## CORE FOOD ITEM/NFI PRICE AND AVAILABILITY INDEX<sup>3</sup>

	Item	Hajar Aswad	Price change since September <sup>4</sup>	Tadamon	Price change since September <sup>4</sup>	Yarmuk	Price change since September <sup>4</sup>	Nearby non-hard-to-reach areas <sup>5</sup>
 <b>Food Items</b>	Bread private bakery (pack)	Not available	◆ No info	Not available	◆ No info	Not available	◆ No info	181
	Bread public bakery (pack)	Not available	◆ No info	Not available	◆ No info	Not available	◆ No info	53
	Rice (1kg)	400 <sup>6</sup>	▼ -11%	600 <sup>7</sup>	◆	600 <sup>7</sup>	◆	500
	Bulgur (1kg)	300 <sup>6</sup>	◆	250 <sup>7</sup>	◆	250 <sup>7</sup>	◆	1042
	Lentils (1kg)	300 <sup>6</sup>	◆	250 <sup>7</sup>	◆	250 <sup>7</sup>	◆	588
	Chicken (1kg)	1150 <sup>6</sup>	▲ +15%	Not available	◆ No info	1350 <sup>7</sup>	◆	1256
	Mutton (1kg)	5000 <sup>6</sup>	◆	Not available	◆ No info	5500 <sup>7</sup>	▲ +22%	4256
	Tomatoes (1kg)	150 <sup>6</sup>	◆	150 <sup>7</sup>	▼ -14%	175 <sup>7</sup>	◆	247
	Cucumbers (1kg)	175 <sup>6</sup>	▼ -13%	250 <sup>7</sup>	▼ -17%	300 <sup>7</sup>	◆	275
	Milk (1L)	250 <sup>6</sup>	◆	250 <sup>7</sup>	◆	250 <sup>7</sup>	◆	256
	Flour (1kg)	300 <sup>6</sup>	◆	300 <sup>7</sup>	▲ +20%	300 <sup>7</sup>	▲ +20%	301
	Eggs (1 unit)	60 <sup>6</sup>	◆	60 <sup>7</sup>	▲ +9%	65 <sup>7</sup>	▲ +8%	58
	Iodised salt (500g)	100 <sup>6</sup>	◆	150 <sup>7</sup>	◆	150 <sup>7</sup>	◆	140
	Sugar (1kg)	375 <sup>6</sup>	◆	400 <sup>7</sup>	◆	400 <sup>7</sup>	◆	444
	Cooking oil (1L)	700 <sup>6</sup>	◆	750 <sup>7</sup>	◆	750 <sup>7</sup>	◆	850
 <b>WASH Items</b>	Soap (1 bar)	150 <sup>7</sup>	◆	125 <sup>7</sup>	◆	125 <sup>7</sup>	◆	146
	Laundry powder (1kg)	1000 <sup>7</sup>	◆	650 <sup>7</sup>	◆	750 <sup>7</sup>	▲ +15%	888
	Sanitary pads (9 pack)	400 <sup>7</sup>	▼ -20%	300 <sup>7</sup>	◆	400 <sup>7</sup>	▲ +33%	438
	Toothpaste (125ml)	350 <sup>7</sup>	◆	450 <sup>7</sup>	◆	450 <sup>7</sup>	◆	245
	Disposable diapers (24 pack)	1500 <sup>7</sup>	▼ -6%	1650 <sup>7</sup>	◆	1750 <sup>7</sup>	▲ +9%	2188
 <b>Fuel Items</b>	Butane (cannister)	3200 <sup>6</sup>	◆	3900 <sup>7</sup>	◆	4000 <sup>7</sup>	◆	2960
	Diesel (1L)	400 <sup>6</sup>	◆	500 <sup>7</sup>	◆	500 <sup>7</sup>	◆	290
	Propane (cannister)	2100 <sup>6</sup>	▼ -16%	2300 <sup>7</sup>	◆	2200 <sup>7</sup>	▲ +10%	4500
	Kerosene (1L)	Not available	◆ No info	Not available	◆ No info	Not available	◆ No info	350
	Coal (1kg)	450 <sup>6</sup>	◆ No info	450 <sup>7</sup>	◆	550 <sup>7</sup>	▲ +10%	350
	Firewood (1T)	95000 <sup>6</sup>	▼ -21%	Not available	◆ No info	125000 <sup>7</sup>	◆ No info	50000

3. \$1 = 515 SYP (UN operational rate of exchange as of 1 October 2017).

4. Price fluctuations of 5% or less were not reported.

5. Nearby communities in Damascus which are not considered besieged/hard-to-reach: Jalaa, Midan Wastani, Ayoubiyah and Zahreh. Due to different data collection cycles in these areas, price data from nearby communities is from the month prior to the month featured in this profile and is only meant to serve as a reference point.

6. Sometimes available in markets (7-20 days per month).

7. Generally available in markets (21+ days per month).



## ACCESS TO MARKETS

**Hajar Aswad:** The price of a standard food basket decreased by 7% in October, which made it 27% lower than in nearby areas not considered besieged or hard-to-reach.

**Tadamon:** The price of a food basket decreased by 19%. This change is attributable to a decrease in the price of bread. Furthermore, the price of a food basket was 22% lower in Tadamon than in nearby areas not considered besieged or hard-to-reach in Damascus.

**Yarmuk:** The food basket price remained stable in October, although prices of a number of foods not included in the standard basket increased. There was no significant difference in the food basket price compared to neighbouring areas not considered besieged or hard-to-reach.

AVERAGE PRICE OF A STANDARD FOOD BASKET <sup>5</sup>	HAJAR ASWAD	TADAMON	YARMUK	NEARBY AREAS
Average price (SYP) <sup>3</sup>	23432	34833	31126	31951

CHANGE SINCE SEPTEMBER



## FOOD ITEM AVAILABILITY & PRICES

Food prices in Hajar Aswad, and Tadamon remained stable in October, despite fluctuations in the price of some individual items. In Yarmuk, a number of food items became significantly more expensive. Food availability remained unchanged in Hajar Aswad and Yarmuk, whereas it decreased in Tadamon.

**Hajar Aswad:** The price of food in Hajar Aswad remained 11% higher than in neighbouring communities. While the price of chicken increased by 15%, rice and cucumbers decreased in price by 11% and 13% respectively. Despite the closure of an informal access road to the area for part of the month, all assessed items remained sometimes available in October.

**Tadamon:** Chicken and mutton became unavailable in October, which is likely attributable to shortages in the communities that these items had previously been brought in from. Similarly, milk and flour were in shorter supply in October despite remaining generally available, which led to price increases. All other assessed food items remained generally available. Prices of cucumber and tomatoes decreased by 14% and 17% respectively, which was attributed to the end of the agricultural season, as farmers wanted to sell all picked produce before it spoiled and use the money to settle debts from the harvest season.

**Yarmuk:** Food prices in Yarmuk were on average 16% higher than in nearby areas not considered besieged or hard-to-reach. Mutton and flour increased in price by 22% and 20% respectively. Despite the decrease in the entry of items in October, all assessed food items other than bread from bakeries remained generally available in markets, because of pre-existing stockpiles.



## WASH ITEM AVAILABILITY & PRICES

**Hajar Aswad:** The price of hygiene items changed little in October, the only notable exception being the price of sanitary pads, which decreased by 20%. However, hygiene item prices remained 54% higher than in neighbouring communities. Regardless of the road closure, NFI availability remained stable, with all assessed items remaining sometimes available<sup>6</sup> in October.

**Tadamon:** No significant changes in the price of hygiene items were reported in October. All assessed items remained generally available<sup>7</sup>, as they have been since September 2016.

**Yarmuk:** Hygiene item prices increased by an average of 12% in October. The most significant price increases were those recorded for sanitary pads and laundry powder, which were 33% and 15%, respectively. Prices of hygiene items in Yarmuk were, on average, 15% higher than in nearby areas not considered besieged or hard-to-reach. All assessed hygiene items reportedly remained generally available in October, as has been the case since assessments began, as stocks of these items reportedly existed in the area before the road closure went into effect.



## FUEL ITEM AVAILABILITY & PRICES

Access to fuel is critical for the transport of goods via commercial vehicles, the provision of medical services such as ambulances, the functionality of bakeries, and to power well pumps and electric generators in the absence of functioning water and electricity networks.

**Hajar Aswad:** The prices of firewood and propane decreased by 21% and 16%, respectively, in October, as a result of decreased demand. Kerosene became unavailable, also due to a decrease in demand, whereas all other fuel types remained sometimes available. Residents continued to cope with a lack of fuel by burning furniture that was not in use and by burning plastics, as has been reported since this indicator was first assessed in November 2016.

**Tadamon:** There was no change in the price or availability of fuel in October, which may be explained by the moderate weather in this month, which resulted in relatively low demand for heating. Butane, diesel, propane, and coal remained generally available, albeit at an increased price in comparison to nearby areas not considered besieged or hard-to-reach that were not considered hard-to-reach. Firewood and kerosene, however, have been unavailable since June 2017 and since assessments began, respectively. Negative coping strategies of burning plastics and burning waste were reported in the community.

**Yarmuk:** Overall, fuel prices remained stable in Yarmuk, although propane and coal both increased in price by 10%. Despite this relative stability, fuel remained 68% more expensive in Yarmuk than in nearby communities not considered besieged or hard-to-reach. Despite access restrictions, all assessed fuel items except kerosene were generally available in October, because of pre-existing stocks in the community. Kerosene has reportedly been unavailable since assessments began. Residents reportedly coped with a lack of fuel by burning furniture not in use and by burning plastics, as was the case in September.

8. Calculation of the average price of a food basket is based on the World Food Programme's standard basket of dry goods (link here). 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. In communities where bread from bakeries is not available, the price of bread from shops is used to calculate the food basket price.

### 3. LIVELIHOODS



#### ACCESS TO LIVELIHOODS

In Tadamon and Yarmuk, cash assistance issued by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which totalled 20,000 SYP per month was used to cover essential needs. In addition, in the case of Tadamon, the receipt of money from friends and family outside the communities was also reported. Finally, In the case of Hajar Aswad, the use of savings and remittances from outside Syria, and the selling of humanitarian aid delivered by truck from Yalda, Babila and Beit Sahm were stated.

### 4. ACCESS TO SERVICES

Access to healthcare, education, electricity, and water is critical for residents of besieged and hard-to-reach areas. These services are often affected by access restrictions on civilian movement, limitations on the entry of goods and vehicles, as well as rationing of the main water and electricity networks.



#### HEALTHCARE

AVAILABLE MEDICAL SERVICES	HAJAR ASWAD	TADAMON	YARMUK
Child immunisation <sup>9</sup>	✗	✗	✗
Diarrhoea management	✓	✗	✓
Emergency care	✓	✗	✓
Skilled childbirth care	✗	✗	✓
Surgery <sup>10</sup>	✗	✗	✓
Diabetes care	✓	✗	✗
<b>CHANGE SINCE SEPTEMBER</b>	◊	◊	◊

In Hajar Aswad and Yarmuk the healthcare situation further deteriorated in October, whereas in Tadamon it did not change significantly but remained inadequate. In all three communities, antibiotics and blood transfusion bags were named among the most needed<sup>11</sup> medical items. In Hajar Aswad and Yarmuk, antibiotics were also among the most needed, whereas residents of Tadamon reportedly needed anti-anxiety medication.

**Hajar Aswad:** Fewer medical supplies entered the area, reducing the quality of care provided inside the community. Additionally, civilians were unable to seek care in other communities during the road closure. Men with perceived political affiliations continued to be unable to cross formal access points to seek medical care in other communities at any time, due to the risk of detention at these locations. The risk of detention reportedly also caused men to avoid accessing medical facilities inside Hajar Aswad, as was the case in September. The number of accessible healthcare facilities in the community remained stable in October.

**Tadamon:** No medical services were available in the community, as has been the case since assessments began. Furthermore, anti-anxiety medication, clean bandages, transfusion bags, antibiotics, burn treatment and anaesthetics were unavailable.

**Yarmuk:** Clean bandages and transfusion bags became unavailable, after they had been available for a brief period following a humanitarian delivery in September. Surgical care continued to be only sometimes available, depending on the complexity of the operation and the medical items required. This has been the case since April 2017, before which surgery was reported as entirely unavailable. Additionally, due to the closure of formal access points, those wishing to seek medical attention outside the community had to use informal access points and face the associated risks. The availability of medical facilities inside the community reportedly did not change significantly in October.

AVAILABLE MEDICAL FACILITIES	HAJAR ASWAD	TADAMON	YARMUK
Mobile clinics/field hospitals	✓	✗	✗
Informal emergency care points	✗	✗	✓
Pre-conflict hospitals	✗	✗	✓
Primary healthcare facilities	✗	✗	✓
<b>CHANGE SINCE SEPTEMBER</b>	◊	◊	◊



#### AVAILABILITY OF MEDICAL PERSONNEL

**Hajar Aswad:** The area continued to lack professionally trained doctors and surgeons, as has been the case since assessments began. Due to inadequate levels of trained staff, the community relied on small numbers of qualified nurses, midwives, pharmacists and volunteers without formal medical training.

**Tadamon:** No formally-trained medical staff was present in Tadamon in October, as has been the case since assessments began. However, new data acquired from community representatives confirms that volunteers with informal medical training have been providing basic first aid and

9. The absence of child immunisations in a given month does not necessarily indicate a decline in access to medical services, as vaccinations in Syria are commonly administered in rounds and therefore may not be available on a monthly basis.

10. The availability of surgery does not mean that procedures were carried out by formally trained medical personnel or that anaesthetics and appropriate surgical equipment were used.

11. 'Most needed' does not necessarily imply unavailability. Furthermore, this list is not intended to be a comprehensive list of most needed medical items or medicines, but is rather indicative of needs that speak to the trend in the priorities of medical items in the area.

emergency care in the area. Nonetheless, as the available care inside Tadamon remained severely limited in October, those who were able to seek more advanced medical care in neighbouring communities continued to do so via an informal access route to Hajar Aswad.

**Yarmuk:** Availability of medical personnel included professionally trained doctors, nurses, midwives, dentists, pharmacists and volunteers with informal medical training.

## EDUCATION

ACCESS TO EDUCATION	HAJAR ASWAD	TADAMON	YARMUK
Available education facilities	✓	✗	✓
Barriers to education	✓	N/A	✓
<b>CHANGE SINCE SEPTEMBER</b>	↓	↔	↓

Access to education decreased in Hajar Aswad and Yarmuk in October, while it remained stable but limited in Tadamon.

**Hajar Aswad:** Barriers to education included road closures, which affected the movement of students to and from school, as well as the destroyed nature of educational facilities and a lack of teaching staff.

**Tadamon:** Educational facilities have been absent from the community since they were destroyed in 2013. In October, approximately 1-25% of children in Tadamon travelled to other communities, such as Yalda and Babella in order to access education.

**Yarmuk:** Following increased restrictions on movement outside of the community, students became unable to access educational facilities in the surrounding areas. Additionally, some parents did not approve of the curriculum offered inside Yarmuk.

## ELECTRICITY

ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY	HAJAR ASWAD	TADAMON	YARMUK
Access to electricity network	✗	✗	✗
Main source of electricity	Generator	Generator	Generator
Access to main source/day	2-4 hours	2-4 hours	2-4 hours
<b>CHANGE SINCE SEPTEMBER</b>	↔	↔	↔

In Hajar Aswad, Tadamon and Yarmuk access to electricity remained unchanged. All three communities reported that the main source of electricity in October was generators, as none of the communities had access to the electricity network. In Hajar Aswad and Tadamon electricity from generators continued to be available for 2-4 hours per day in October. Meanwhile, in Yarmuk, electricity from generators continued to be available for 4-8 hours per day in October.

## WATER

In all three communities, access to water remained unchanged. In Tadamon and Yarmuk, the main source of drinking water was private water trucks, whereas in Hajar Aswad it was closed wells. In all three communities, water was reportedly safe to drink but insufficient in October, which reportedly led residents to cope by purchasing water with money intended for other things. In Hajar Aswad, residents additionally reported bathing less to cope with lack of water for the first time since April 2017.

ACCESS TO WATER	HAJAR ASWAD	TADAMON	YARMUK
Access to water network	✗	✗	✗
Main source of water	Closed wells	Water trucking	Water trucking
Water safe to drink <sup>12</sup>	✓	✓	✓
Access to water network/week	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable
Sufficiency of water for HH needs	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient
Coping strategies used	✓	✓	✓
<b>CHANGE SINCE SEPTEMBER</b>	↔	↔	↔

## 5. SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE PREVIOUS MONTH

	HAJAR ASWAD	TADAMON	YARMUK		HAJAR ASWAD	TADAMON	YARMUK
Movement of Civilians	↓	↔	↓	Core Food Item Prices	↔	↔	↑
Commercial Vehicle Access	↔	↔	↔	Access to Healthcare	↔	↔	↔
Humanitarian Vehicle Access	↔	↔	↓	Access to Education	↓	↔	↓
Core Food Item Availability	↔	↓	↔	Access to Electricity	↔	↔	↔
Access to Water	↔	↔	↔	Overall Humanitarian Situation	↓	↔	↓

### BACKGROUND

In order to inform a more evidence-based response to address the needs of vulnerable communities across Syria, REACH, in partnership with the Syria INGO Regional Forum (SIRF) and other humanitarian actors, regularly monitors the humanitarian situation within communities facing restrictions on civilian movement and humanitarian access. The Syria Community Profiles, which commenced in June 2016, intend to provide aid actors with an understanding of the humanitarian situation within these communities by assessing availability of and access to food, non-food items, healthcare, water, education and humanitarian assistance, as well as the specific conditions associated with limited freedom of movement. The list of assessed communities is not intended to be exhaustive of all the areas in Syria facing limited freedom of movement and access. With greater partner input and collaboration, the number of assessed communities will be expanded when feasible.

### METHODOLOGY

Data presented in the Community Profiles is collected through contact with community representatives (CRs) residing within assessed communities, who are responsible for gathering sector-specific data on their areas of expertise (e.g. health, education and so forth). Data for this round was gathered during the end of October and early November 2017 and refers to the situation in October 2017. Each community has a minimum of three and up to six CRs. The network continues to expand with ongoing collaboration with SIRF and other partners.

During analysis, data is triangulated through secondary information, including humanitarian reports, news and social media monitoring, and partner verification. Comparisons are made

to findings from previous assessments (where possible) and follow up conducted with CRs to build a thorough understanding of situational developments within communities. In the case of some profiles, multiple communities are presented together; decisions to do so are based on geographical proximity, or on similarities in the access restrictions faced by populations.

Due to the inherent challenges of data collection inside Syria, representative sampling, entailing larger-scale data collection, remains difficult. Consequently, information is to be considered indicative rather than generalisable across the population of each assessed community. Furthermore, an improvement or deterioration in the situation between months may not necessarily indicate a trend, but rather a distinct development specific to the month assessed. The exclusion or inclusion of assessed communities is influenced by the availability of CRs within communities and, therefore, the list of assessed communities should not be considered representative of all areas within Syria facing acute vulnerability. Finally, the level of information presented in each profile varies due to difficulties in obtaining data from certain communities.

#### 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's mission is 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](http://www.reach-initiative.org). You can contact us directly at: [geneva@reach-initiative.org](mailto:geneva@reach-initiative.org) and follow us on Twitter: @REACH\_info.