# Monthly Factsheet: CWG Iraq - Joint Price Monitoring Initiative

March 2017

CWG CASH WORKING GROUP

REACH An initiative of IMPACT Initiatives ACTED and UNOSAT

## INTRODUCTION

The Joint Price Monitoring Initiative (JPMI) was developed by the Cash Working Group in Iraq (CWG) and REACH Initiative (REACH) to conduct harmonized monthly price monitoring activities among all cash actors in Iraq. In each assessed market, JPMI field teams recorded the prices and stock levels of selected food and non-food items (NFIs) sold by local retailers. Monitored commodities have been identified by the CWG based on what is typically available, sold and used by an average Iraqi household. All assessable commodities of the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), as defined in Table 1, were included. The SMEB represents the minimum culturally adjusted group of items required to support a six-person Iraqi household for one month, as defined by the CWG.

This factsheet provides an overview of price ranges and medians for key foods, NFIs and types of fuel across the areas assessed. In order to illustrate variation in prices and availability, REACH utilized the collected data to map the price of an SMEB in each district. Cleaned data sets are distributed to CWG partners, clusters and key stakeholders.

### PARTICIPATING PARTNERS

| | |
|---|---|
| ACF | ACTED |
| DRC | IRC |
| Mercy Corps | NRC |
| Oxfam GB | REACH Iraq |
| Relief Int | Tearfund |
| TdH | Triangle GH |
| WHH | World Vision |

## METHODOLOGY

Data collection for the JPMI occurs on a monthly basis, with associated factsheets and datasets published after every round. Data collection for the fifth round of the JPMI was conducted between 26 March – 4 April, during which enumerators from 14 participating partner agencies (ACF, ACTED, DRC, IRC, Mercy Corps, NRC, Oxam GB, REACH Iraq, Relief International, TdH, Tearfund, Triangle GH, WHH, and World Vision) gathered price data in 101 markets in 17 districts across Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Dohuk, Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Sulaymaniyah governorates. In addition, to calculate average monthly rent, transportation and communications costs, the CWG compiled post-distribution monitoring data provided by partner agencies and UNHCR.

Eligible markets are divided into central and secondary markets. Central markets are defined as permanent areas of commerce large enough to host at least three wholesalers providing bulk goods to retailers, and diverse enough to provide access to a variety of food and non-food items (NFIs).[1] Secondary markets are defined similarly, but are not large enough to host wholesalers. Within each assessed district, at least three central markets and three secondary markets were selected for data collection.[2] Markets were selected by partner agency field staff, in order to ensure that localized knowledge was taken into consideration. Partner staff were instructed to select the primary central and secondary markets within their selected districts, to ensure relevant price data was collected. In each of the identified markets, partner enumerators were trained to collect three prices from distinct retailers for each of the 14 food, NFI and fuel goods.

1. In districts with limited market capacity, some markets with 1-2 wholesalers were categorized as Central Markets.
2. Some exceptions were made based on partner feedback

In line with the purpose of the SMEB, only the lowest available prices were recorded for each item. All data collection was conducted through a KoBo-based mobile data collection tool. Following data collection, REACH compiled and cleaned all partner data, normalising prices and cross-checking outliers. The cleaned data was then analysed by commodity and by district. In addition, REACH calculated and mapped the average cost of a SMEB in each district. Prices were also gathered for an additional set of Food and NFI goods not included in the SMEB, but which are stable components of the Iraqi consumer economy.

## CHALLENGES & LIMITATIONS

The geographic coverage for data collection was limited by the security context in several governorates. This affected market selection within districts, as certain identified central and secondary markets remained inaccessible to partner enumerator teams due to security concerns. In Kirkuk governorate, for example, the only central markets accessible to partner enumerators are those in the district capitals of Kirkuk City and Daquq City. Similarly, ongoing military operations restricted partner access to areas of Ninewa governorate – particularly in Mosul, Telafar and Tikrit districts. As in the fourth round of data

### JPMI KEY FIGURES

**14** Participating Partner Agencies

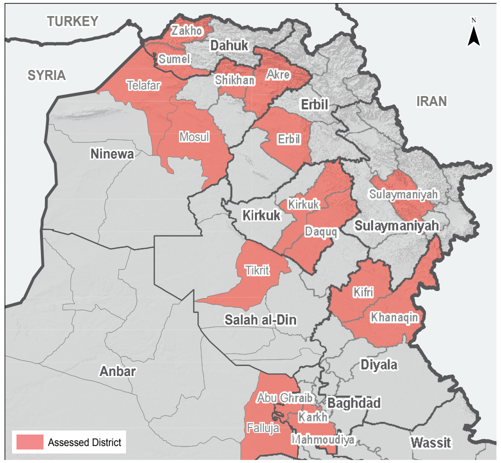
**9** Assessed Governorates

**17** Assessed Districts

**101** Markets Assessed

**389** Shops Assessed

## ASSESSED DISTRICTS




### TABLE 1: SURVIVAL MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET (SMEB)

| | Item | Quantity |
|---|---|---|
| Food Items | Lentils | 10.8 kg |
| | Rice | 40.5 kg |
| | Sugar | 5.94 kg |
| | Vegetable Oil | 5.94 kg |
| | Wheat Flour | 40.5 kg |
| Non-Food Items | Bath Soap | 8 x 125 g |
| | Toothbrush | 4 units |
| | Toothpaste | 2 x 75 ml |
| | Shampoo | 2 x 500 ml |
| | Disinfectant Solution | 1 L |
| | Sanitary Napkins | 1 pack (20) |
| | Garbage Bags | 1 pack (20) |
| Fuel | Butane | 10.5 kg |
| | Kerosene | 16.67 L |
| Other | Sub-standard Rent | Family of 6 (avg.) |
| | Transportation | Family of 6 (avg.) |
| | Communication | Family of 6 (avg.) |
| | Health* | 7% of 70% of total |

** Health values are not included in the total calculation of the SMEB within this factsheet collection, security concerns again prevented data collection from several previously assessed markets: two in Khanaqin district and one in Mosul district.

Some items proved difficult for partner enumerators to find – especially butane and kerosene. To supplement incomplete price data for these goods, partner enumerators were instructed to survey retailers in assessed markets to determine the local prices for both items. As both butane and kerosene prices are relatively stable within the localized context, this methodology returned results consistent with prices collected from butane and kerosene vendors.

Collected price data is representative at the district level. In addition, all data is gathered by partner agencies of the JPMI - as such, the geographic coverage of the JPMI was determined by partner capacity and interest, and can shift over time. As this is the fifth factsheet output, there remains limited harmonized historical data to provide for long-term comparative analysis. However, the JPMI dataset will increasingly allow for the identification of longer-term price trends across all assessed districts.

Non-consumable SMEB components such as rent, transportation and communication costs are based on Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) data provided by partners. Due to data gaps for Khanaqin and Akre districts, data from neighbouring districts was used to supplement.

In reporting on percentage changes in price data, it is important to note that while the reported changes are representative of the assessed markets, it is possible for particularly small changes in percentage to fall within the margin of error of the assessment.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

As in February, the average prices of assessed consumer goods again saw a slight increase in March, rising approximately 1.2% across all assessed goods; this percentage increase was 1.9% less than the previous month revealing slightly less fluctuation in prices. The average rise in prices was primarily driven by increases in Kifri (8.7%), Karkh (6.5%) and Mosul (6.5%) districts. Across the 17 assessed districts, 12 saw their average consumer good prices rise and five districts witnessed decreases – the largest of which was in Sumel district at 8.3%.

### PRICES OF FOOD ITEMS

Overall prices for the five SMEB food items increased in 9 of 17 districts. The largest increases in overall average food prices were recorded in Kifri (6.5%), Sulaymaniyah (5.5%) and Mahmoudiyah (4.7%) districts. In Kifri there were price increases for wheat flour (20.5%) and rice (8.5%), while in Sulaymaniyah this was driven by an increase in the price of rice (11.3%) and lentils (7.5%). In general, these increases were smaller than in February, the largest overall price increase for food items being 6.0% compared to February's 12.3%, recorded in Mosul.

Of the eight districts that saw their overall food prices fall, Sumel recorded the largest decrease of 7.1% - largely due to a drop in the price of rice by 21.2%. Other relatively significant decreases in overall food prices were reported in Akre (5.9%), Tikrit (3.7%) and Erbil (3.7%). As with the increases in food prices, the overall price decreases were less than those in March, indicating improved price stability.

As in previous rounds, the highest food prices were found in two assessed districts in Baghdad governorate: Abu Ghraib and Karkh. Abu Ghraib recorded the highest average prices for lentils (2,191.67 IQD), sugar (1,416.67 IQD) and vegetable oil (1,866.67 IQD). Though posting the second highest average food prices, Karkh did not record the highest prices for any particular item; however the district did have the second highest lentil price (2,144.44 IQD). Reversing the change seen last month, in which Mahmoudiya dropped three places, the district went back to being the third highest in terms of food prices. This means that the three most expensive food prices were all found in assessed districts of Baghdad governorate, which returns to the price trend identified in the November, December and January rounds of the JPMI. As in February, Shikhan recorded the lowest food prices overall, with Sumel at second and Kirkuk at third lowest. For this round, Mosul climbed to the fourth lowest. Shikhan maintained the lowest prices for lentils (1370.00 IQD), sugar (974.00 IQD) and vegetable oil (1,324.00 IQD), but – unlike in the previous three rounds – the district did not have the lowest price for wheat flour, which was recorded in Fallujah. As in all previous rounds, the food item with the most significant variation in price between districts was wheat flour, with a 512.45 IQD difference between the highest price (1,222.00 in Kifri) and the lowest price (710.77 IQD in Fallujah).

### KEY AVERAGE PRICE CHANGES OF ASSESSED GOODS BY DISTRICT

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| KIFRI | 8.7% | ↑ |
| SUMEL | 8.3% | ↓ |
| AKRE | 8.0% | ↓ |

### PRICES OF NFI ITEMS

Unlike for food items, NFI items prices only increased in 7 of 17 districts – with a 2.3% overall net decrease in the prices of NFI goods, compared to last month's 4.0% increase. The largest overall price reductions in NFI items was in Zakho (13.4%), followed by Mosul (10.6%) and Tikrit (9.8%). For Zakho, the decrease prices was largely due to a fall in prices for bath soap (17.0%), toothbrushes (19.3%) and toothpaste (22.2%). For the seven districts in which NFI item prices increased, Daquq saw the largest price rise at 10.6%, which was caused by an increase in the prices for toothbrushes (38.7%) and disinfectant (25.3%).

Of the seven assessed NFI items, six recorded price decreases (bath soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, sanitary napkins and garbage bags) and one recorded a price increase (disinfectant). The greatest average changes were recorded for decreases in the prices of toothpaste (7.3%), sanitary napkins (6.4%) and bath soap (4.3%).

Unlike in previous months, Sulaymaniyah was the most expensive district for NFI items compared to the sixth most expensive in February. Zakho was the second most expensive and Tikrit the third for NFI items. Sulaymaniyah recorded the highest prices for toothpaste (1,555.56 IQD), with Tikrit recording the highest prices for shampoo (2113.65 IQD). Zakho did not record any of the highest prices for any single item. The lowest prices for NFIs were logged in Shikhan, Mosul and

### OVERALL CHANGES IN AVERAGE PRICES OF GOODS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| NFI | 2.3% | ↓ |
| FUEL | 1.3% | ↓ |
| FOOD | 0.7% | ↑ |

Khanaqin. Mosul recorded the lowest prices for toothbrushes (330.83 IQD) and toothpaste (818.18 IQD), Shikhan for sanitary napkins (109.68 IQD), and Khanaqin for garbage bags (894.23 IQD). As has been the case in previous rounds, NFI goods saw more significant variations in price than food items – with five of seven items reporting a 90.0% or greater difference between the most expensive and least expensive average prices recorded across all assessed districts.

### PRICES OF FUEL ITEMS

For fuel items, butane prices remained relatively consistent between February and March, with an effective 1.3% (97 IQD) change in the overall average price. The largest increases in butane prices occurred in Fallujah, which saw prices rise by 3.3% (271.43 IQD). Mosul district saw the largest decrease in average butane prices, at 9.5% (859.79 IQD). Overall kerosene prices increased by 1.5% (10.27 IQD), with no significant price increases seen across all assessed districts. The largest decrease in kerosene price was recorded in Kirkuk, at 10.1% (65.38).

### DOMESTIC VS. IMPORTED GOODS

For all assessed goods, enumerators recorded whether the item was imported or domestically produced. The majority of both food and NFI goods were imported – an average of 95.6% imported – while butane and kerosene were overwhelmingly produced domestically, with an average of 89.4% domestically produced. For most assessed items, prices for imported and domestic items were similar, although for the majority of items domestic items were slightly cheaper.

**PERCENT OF GOODS IMPORTED**

| | |
|---|---|
| FOOD | 95.6% |
| NFI | 95.6% |
| FUEL | 10.6% |

### CENTRAL VS. SECONDARY MARKETS

With a slight increase from February, 11 of 17 assessed districts reported higher prices in secondary markets than in central markets – with an average of 69.1% of items in those districts reporting higher secondary market prices. The trend was the strongest in the three assessed Baghdad districts, as well as Fallujah and Zakho. Of the 14 assessed items, kerosene was the only item that reported higher prices in central rather than secondary markets.

### SHORTAGES

For every surveyed item, retailers were also asked whether there had been a shortage of that item within the past 30 days. Overall, 11 of 101 assessed markets – in Sulaymaniyah, Daquq, Khanaqin, and Telafar – reported significant (50.0% or more of surveyed shops) shortages of at least one food, non-food or fuel item. The majority (10 out of 11 markets) reported shortages for only one item – with one notable exception. As in previous months, shortages remained the most severe in one market in Telafar district – Bardiya – which in this round reported that there were shortages of 10 out of 14 items, including every food item.

A new development for March was a sugar shortage reported by all shops in all six of Sulaymaniyah district's markets. As in February, the most commonly reported shortage overall was sugar: with 10 of 11 markets with shortages reporting a shortage of this item.

**KEY REPORTED SHORTAGES**

**Sugar**

### SMEB CALCULATION

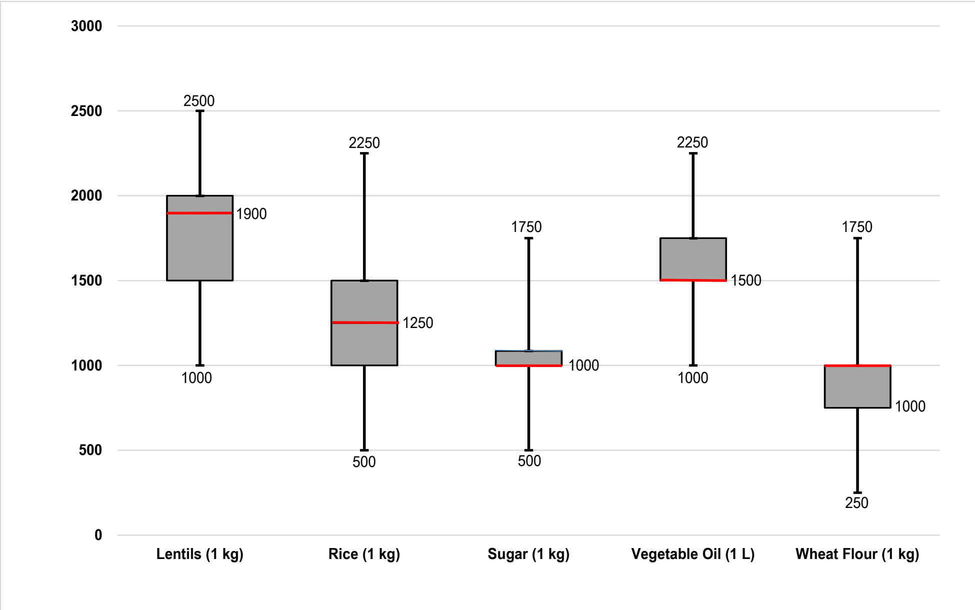
The total SMEB values were calculated using the quantities defined by the CWG (as shown in Table 1). These values were calculated per district (see Table 2).

## TABLE 2: AVERAGE SMEB VALUES

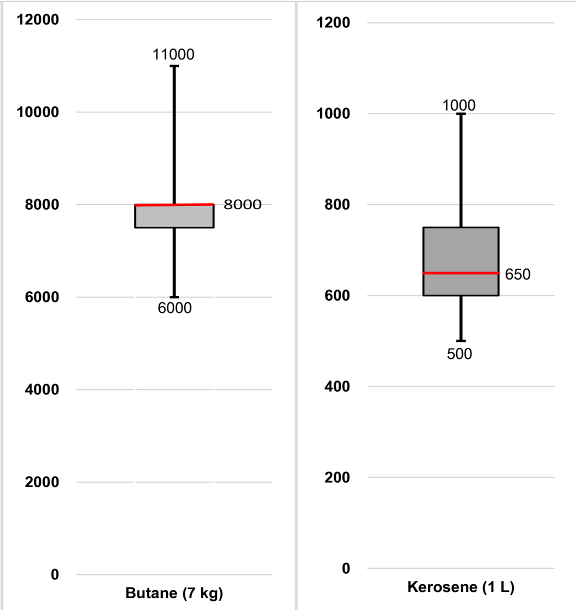
| District | IQD | USD[3] |
|---|---|---|
| Fallujah | 696,601.54 | $593.92 |
| Karkh | 652,295.18 | $556.15 |
| Abu Ghraib | 533,930.95 | $455.23 |
| Erbil | 486,381.87 | $414.69 |
| Mahmoudiyah | 479,820.09 | $409.09 |
| Sulaymaniyah | 444,976.67 | $379.39 |
| Kirkuk | 434,219.87 | $370.22 |
| Akre[4] | 417,690.31 | $356.12 |
| Tikrit | 411,290.33 | $350.67 |
| Sumel | 408,433.37 | $348.23 |
| Khanaqin[4] | 406,797.61 | $346.84 |
| Zakho | 403,229.37 | $343.79 |
| Kifri | 396,943.67 | $338.43 |
| Shikhan | 396,883.68 | $338.38 |
| Daquq | 394,622.47 | $336.46 |
| Talafar | 367,036.47 | $312.94 |
| Mosul | 347,364.76 | $296.16 |

3. Exchange rate of 1 USD 1,172.88 IQD retrieved from www.xe.com on Apr 17, 2017.
4. Average PDM data from neighbouring districts used to supplement.

## FOOD ITEMS

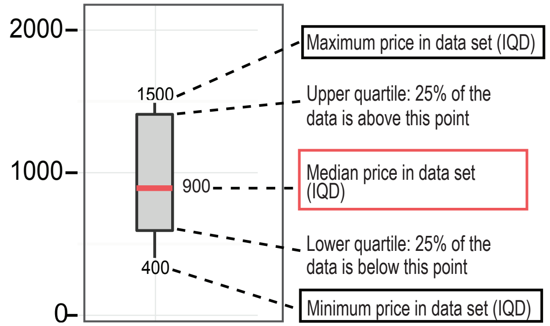



## FUEL

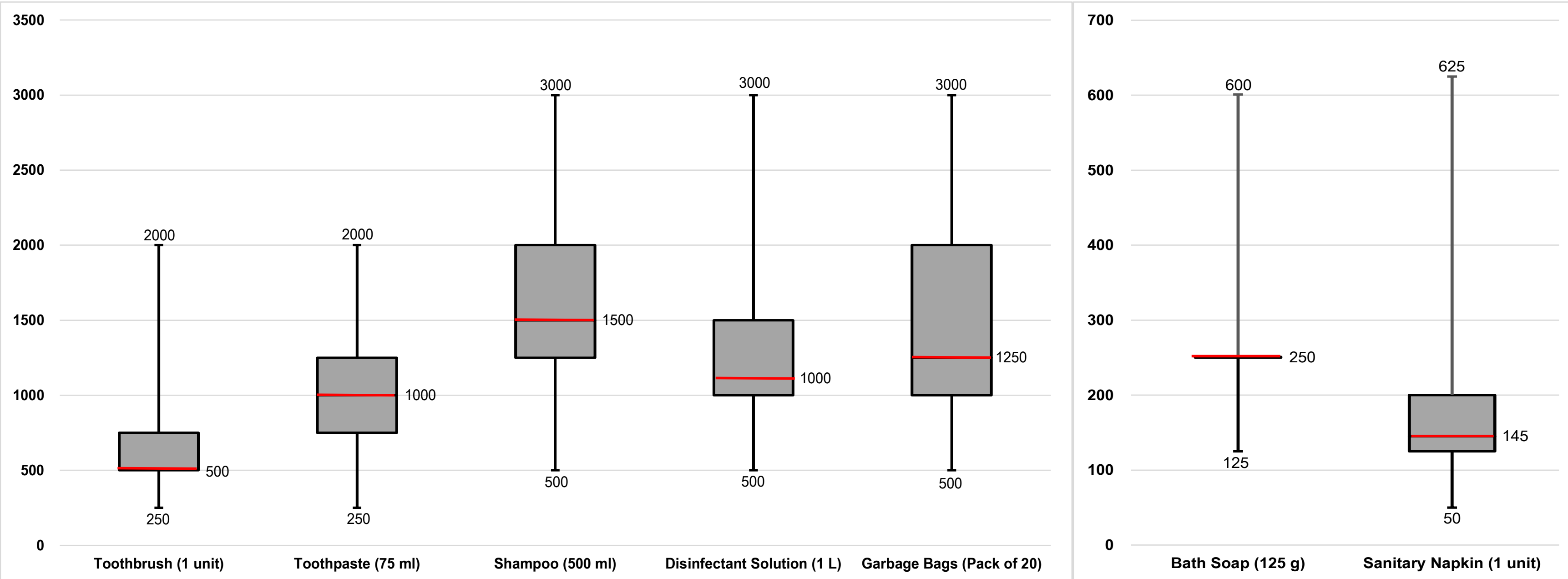



## How to Read a Boxplot

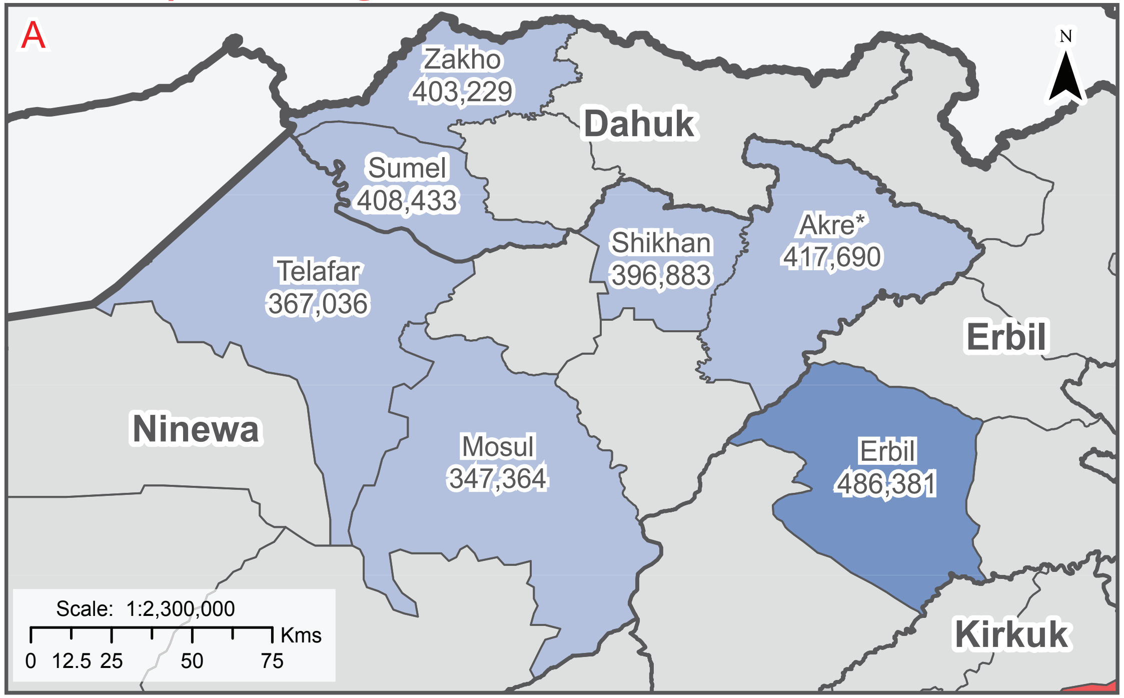
Boxplots provide a variety of data to aid in understanding the distribution of the dataset. All prices are in IQD unless otherwise specified.

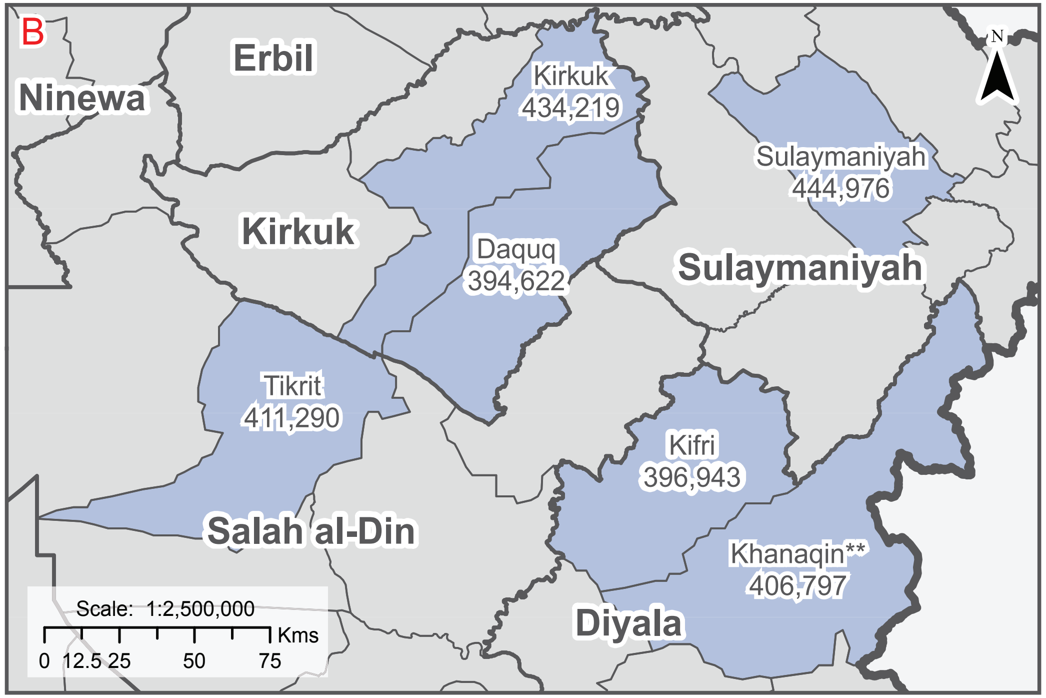


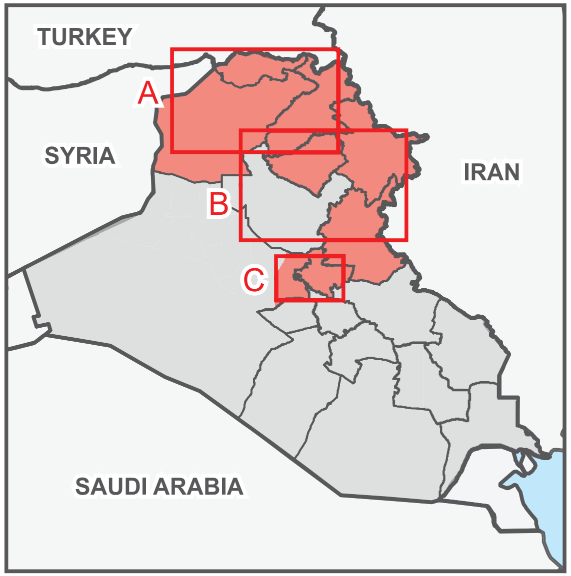

## NON-FOOD ITEMS

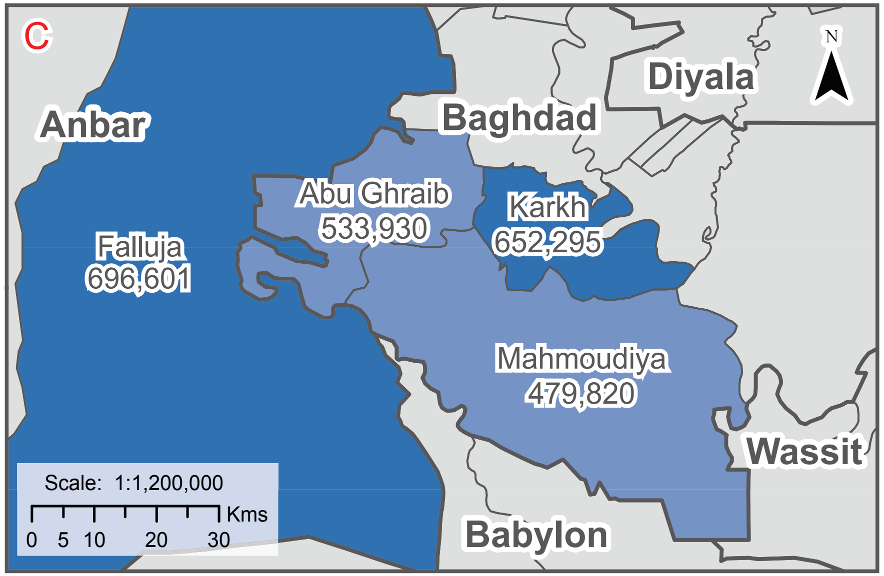


# CWG - Iraq JPMI Average District SMEB Values (March 2017)




**Average SMEB Value per District**

- 580,000 - 700,000 IQD
- 460,000 - 579,999 IQD
- 340,000 - 459,999 IQD
- Unassessed District
- Country Border
- Governorate Border
- District Border

*Due to incomplete data for two non-consumable items in this district, average PDM data from Shikhan and Telafar districts were used.

**Due to incomplete data for two non-consumable items in this district, average PDM data from Kifri district were used.