

Northeast Syria | Rapid Market Assessment (RMA)

19 December 2024

MARKET OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

As of December 2024, Syria is undergoing major political and social shifts. These changes create both challenges and opportunities for humanitarian efforts. Multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) remains vital, offering flexibility for crisis-affected populations to address their needs. However, its effectiveness depends on market functionality, which has been severely impacted by years of conflict and infrastructure damage.

In Northeast Syria (NES), the assessment of market functionality has been critical to guiding cash-based interventions. Tools like the Joint Rapid Assessment of Markets (JRAM) and the Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI) have provided valuable insights into the operational challenges and opportunities within local markets. As the country moves into a transitional phase, understanding and addressing market dynamics will remain essential for tailoring effective humanitarian responses that support recovery and resilience.

In response to these developments, REACH carried out a rapid market assessment on 18 December.

4	Assessed governorates
9	Assessed districts
16	Assessed sub-districts
17	Assessed markets
1	Participating organizations
237	Vendors surveyed

KEY INDICATORS

Unsubsidized diesel

5,673 SYP -5.5% ▼
0.44 USD

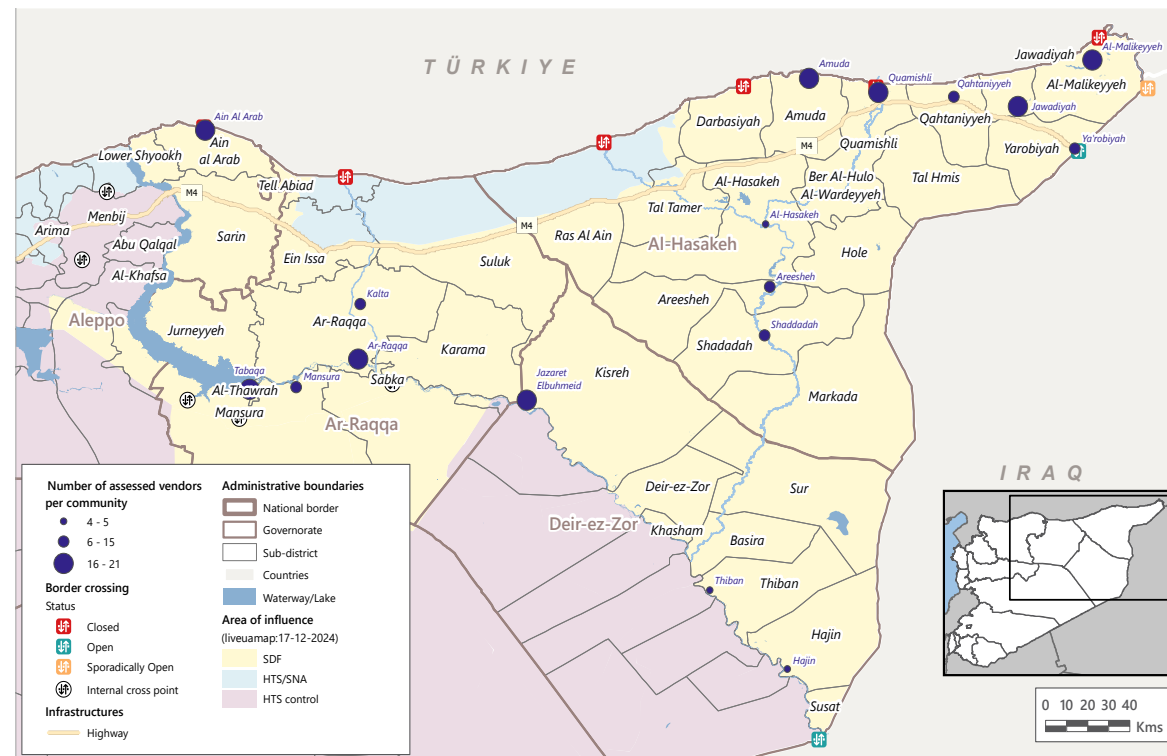
Bread

2,014 SYP -65% ▼
0.16 USD

USD/SYP

informal exchange rate
12,913 SYP -21% ▼

Markets Coverage Map

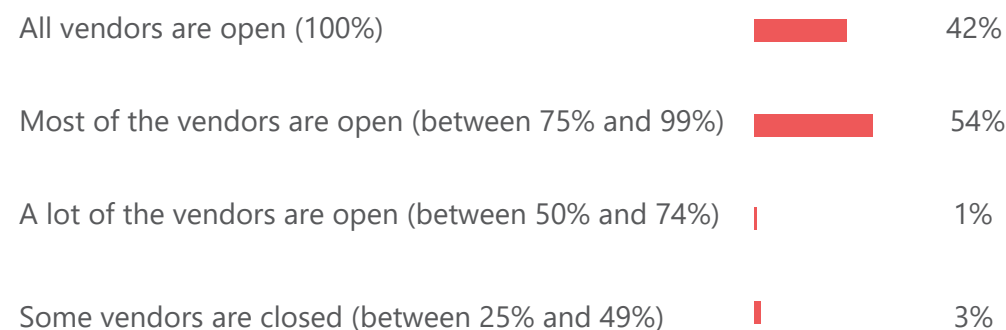


KEY FINDINGS

- Two weeks after the major political and social shifts, assessed markets were generally reported as operational, with 54% of surveyed vendors noting a significant increase in the number of shops reopening in the past 7 days.
- Although most markets are operational, shortages of supplies and their high costs hinder vendors' ability to purchase stock, making it challenging to supply essential goods to consumers.
- The majority of vendors in NES reported concerns about security-related issues in or near the marketplace, including curfews and incidents of violence and robbery, which could significantly disrupt market activities.
- Most surveyed vendors showed resilience to fluctuations in supply and demand following recent events. However, some vendors highlighted challenges such as insufficient stock, limited resources for purchasing additional supplies, and insecurity in certain areas, which could impede their ability to meet customer demand.
- Compared to the JMMI data* collected in December, the prices of basic items have remained relatively stable. However, vendors expressed concerns that the security situation and border closures in certain areas could result in price increases and shortages, making key items harder to find in the marketplace.

* JMMI December round data.

% of shops open in market as reported by surveyed vendors



Changes in the number of shops open in past 7 days as reported by surveyed vendors*

Significantly more vendors are open	54%
The situation is the same	23%
Somewhat more vendors are open	16%
Significantly more vendors are closed	4%
Somewhat more vendors are closed	4%

Percentage of vendors reporting curfews as a security-related issue that has impacted their business over the past 7 days

69% Aleppo **61%** Al-Hasakeh **37%** Ar-Raqqa

Shop operational status

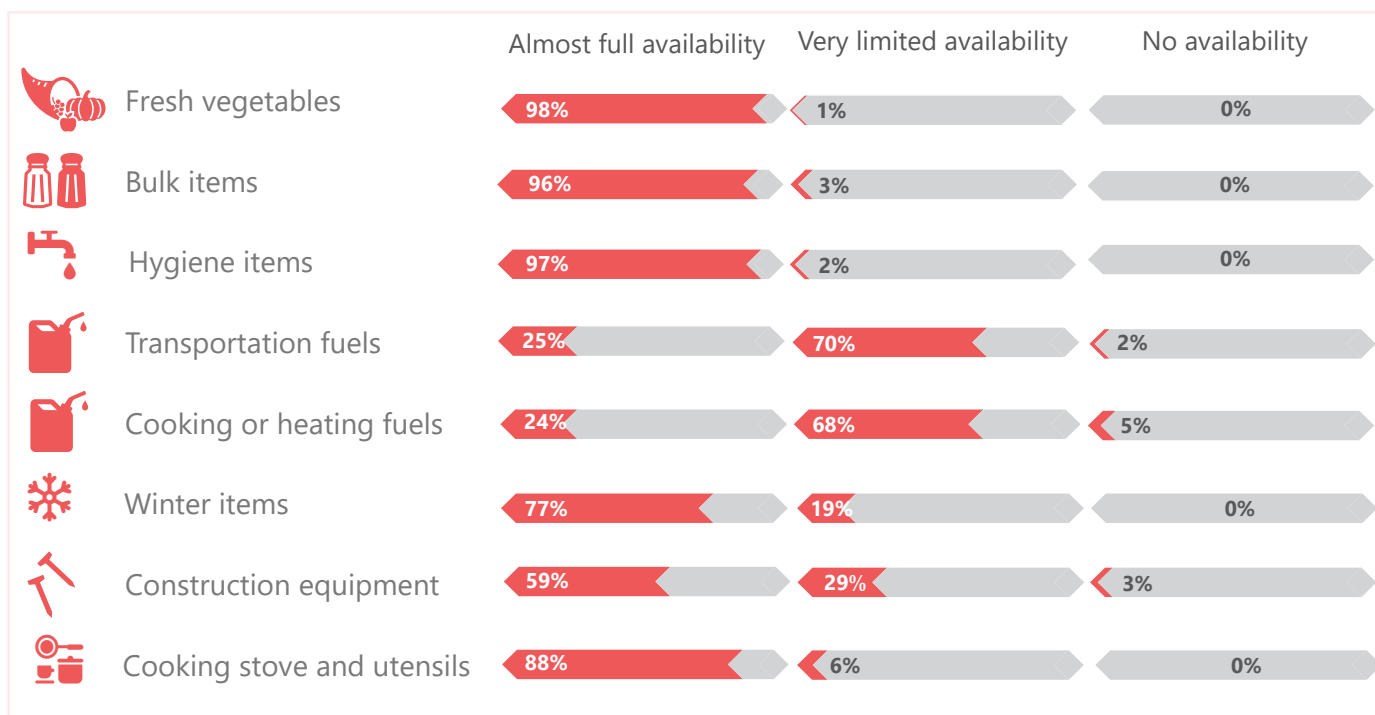
The vast majority of vendor KIs reported that most or all of the shops in the assessed marketplace were open, highlighting that markets are broadly functional across NES. 56% of vendors also reported that significantly more shops were open in their area compared to 7 days ago, meaning that most disruptions to markets in recent days were largely temporary in nature. When asked about challenges in maintaining business operations, 81% of vendors identified at least one difficulty, highlighting that while markets have demonstrated resilience, vendors face several, often interrelated, issues that threaten their functionality. Price increases, a lack of funds, shortages of key goods, and barriers to cross border trade were all commonly mentioned difficulties faced by vendors in maintaining business operations. Vendors in Aleppo reported physically dangerous conditions as a difficulty impacting business operations at a much higher rate than interviewed vendors in other governorates.

Top 5 challenges to maintaining business operations, as reported by surveyed vendors *

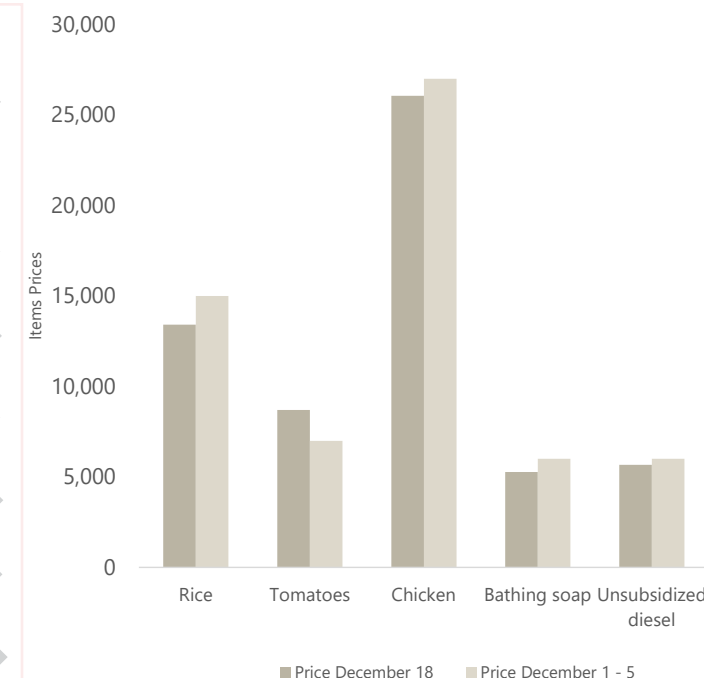
	Deir-ez-Zor	Ar-Raqqa	Al-Hasakeh	Aleppo
Price increases/high prices from suppliers impacts ability to buy stocks	88%	47%	52%	0%
Lack of funds	69%	29%	30%	0%
Large retailers/wholesalers face difficulties with importing goods/crossborder supplies	23%	11%	12%	70%
Difficulties with availability of core goods	0%	16%	31%	5%
Difficulties related to physically dangerous conditions in this area	4%	0%	3%	65%

*Multiple responses permitted.

Item availability, as reported by surveyed vendors



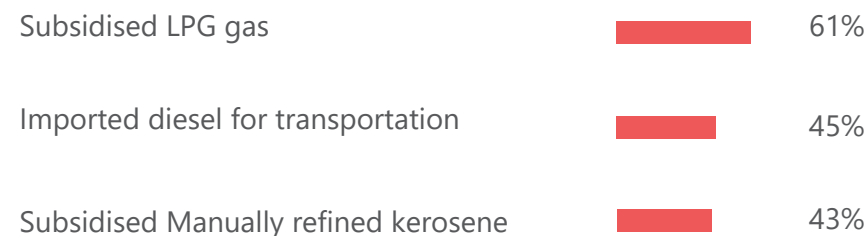
Change in prices of basic items (SYP)**



Basic items prices trend

Compared to the JMMI data collected during the first week of December, there has been a slight decrease in the prices of basic items, likely due to changes in the SYP/USD exchange rate. Core goods across the different item categories remained broadly available over the past 7 days according to vendors, with the notable exception of transportation and cooking/heating fuels. Reflecting this, monitored fuels were most consistently reported to be experiencing shortages by vendors.

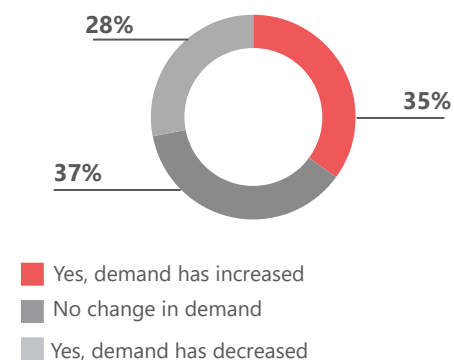
Most commonly reported items facing shortages according to surveyed vendors*



**Comparasion is based on [JMMI December](#) round data.

* This indicator reflects the circumstances over the last 7 days.

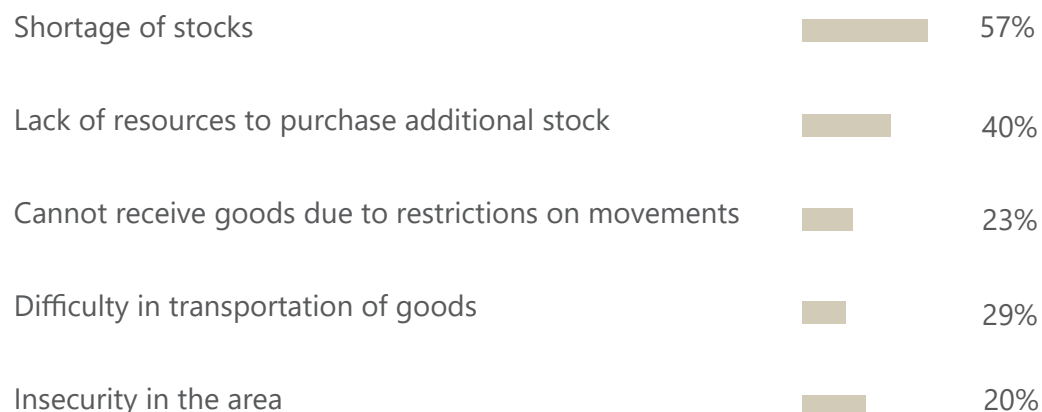
Change in customer demand



Customer demand

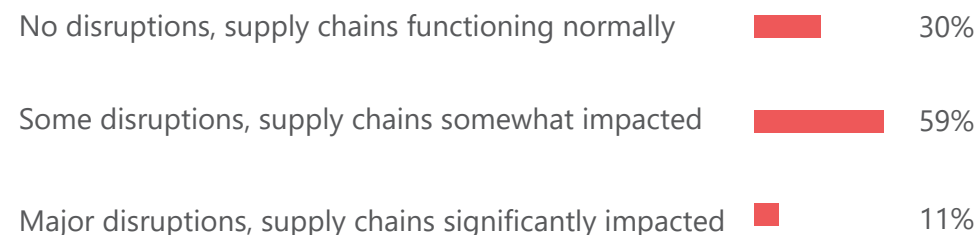
When asked if they had experienced an increase in customer demand in the previous seven days, vendor responses were fairly evenly spread across no change (37%), increase in demand (35%), and decrease in demand (29%), reflecting variations in demand based on location and shop type. Of those vendors who reported seeing an increase in demand, 43% stated that they faced barriers to meeting the increase in demand with lack of resources, stock shortages, difficulty with transportation of goods and movement restrictions being the primary reasons given. Regarding customer demand to purchase goods on credit over the previous 7 days, 53% of vendors reported no change, while 25% stated that it had increased with the remaining 18% reporting a decrease in demand. Furthermore, of those vendors reporting an increase in demand, 59% reported that their capacity to allow purchase on credit had decreased.

Most commonly reported barriers to meeting increased customer demand as reported by surveyed vendors*



*Multiple responses permitted.

% of surveyed vendors in the marketplace reporting disruptions in supply chains



Stock and restock capacity

Seventy per cent (70%) of vendors reported that supply chains have faced some level of disruption, which is likely having an impact on vendors' ability to maintain their stock levels. The median reported number of days of stock remaining by vendors across all assessed market hubs was 10. In addition, 56% of vendors indicated they have encountered challenges in restocking over the 7 days before data collection, with issues ranging from lack of resources to shortages of specific goods. Looking ahead, 51% of vendors anticipate facing similar difficulties in the next 7 days, raising concerns about their ability to meet consumer demand and keep their businesses fully operational.

Financial service provider and money exchange functionality

Only 47% of vendors reported that money transfer and hawala services, a key aspect of market functionality, are fully operational in the marketplace with a further 41% stating that these services were somewhat functional. 12% of vendors reported that money transfers and hawala services were either not operating or operating with limited functionality. Furthermore, 56% and 38% of vendors reported that currency exchange services were fully or somewhat operational in their area respectively, with 6% reporting either limited or no functionality in their area. The availability of these services plays a crucial role in supporting the local economy, allowing businesses to continue operations and facilitating financial exchanges despite the ongoing changes in the region.

Methodology

The Rapid Market Assessment aims to inform market-based programming in Northern Syria.

Coverage

Coverage was determined through identifying key market hubs using REACH's 2023 Market Network Analysis research, which highlights the number of surrounding communities that depend on market hubs to access key commodities and services.

Data Collection

Primary data collection was conducted in-person and remotely by REACH enumerators. Using a quantitative tool, the structured KI interviews with vendors aims to collect data at community-level in identified market hubs on the key indicators of market functionality (e.g. shop closures, item availability, price changes, supply chain resilience etc.). Enumerators interviewed 10-12 vendor KIs per assessed community, targeting vendors previous engaged with market monitoring where possible. Vendors were targeted as a priority that sell basic commodities falling within the following categories:

- Basic food items
- Basic (non-food items including hygiene items)
- Shelter items (plastic sheets, tents, tools and materials)
- Water
- Fuel
- Winter items (blankets, jerry cans, winter clothes)

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 assessment, at partner request. Additionally, field teams are equipped with a Standardised Operational Procedure (SOP) offering guidance on market identification, trader assessment, and pricing. The REACH team manages the integration of partner feedback on the 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 collected 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.

Challenges and limitations

- Price data is only indicative for the time frame within which it was collected. Prices may vary between data collection rounds.
- With current coverage, data is mostly collected from main markets, which may not be representative of rural areas.
- As the assessment 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.

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).