

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION OVERVIEW OF SYRIA (HSOS)

AR-RAQQA CITY

Autumn 2023| 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](#).

SYMBOLOLOGY

- 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



While nearly all households experienced barriers in meeting their basic needs, **a higher percentage resorted to credit** (76% in autumn compared to 54% in summer) or **received remittances** (11% in autumn compared to 2% in summer) as a source of income.



The average daily electricity hours remained relatively stable at 9.6 hours per day, despite damage to power infrastructure in early October and subsequent fuel prices increases. The most common barrier to electricity access was the perceived rationing of electricity



The percentage of households with poor food consumption rose from 17% in summer round to 28% in autumn round. About 86% of households indicated **not having enough money to access sufficient quantity and quality of food.**



Although most households (97%) accessed enough water to fulfill their needs, **the water quality reportedly declined compared to summer round.** The percentage of households experiencing issues with drinking water increased (from 59% to 80%), along with those perceiving water as making people sick (from 25% to 34%).



Throughout the three months preceding data collection, 44% of households could not fulfill the health needs of at least one household member. The inability to afford treatments and medicines was the most common barrier to accessing healthcare.



Education services resumed after the summer break, but in 55% of households with school-aged children, at least one child did not regularly attend school. Among them, 47% indicated that **children did not attend school regularly because they had to work.** Households with children attending schools commonly cited (47%) the low quality of education services as a challenge faced by children.

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AR-RAQQA CITY

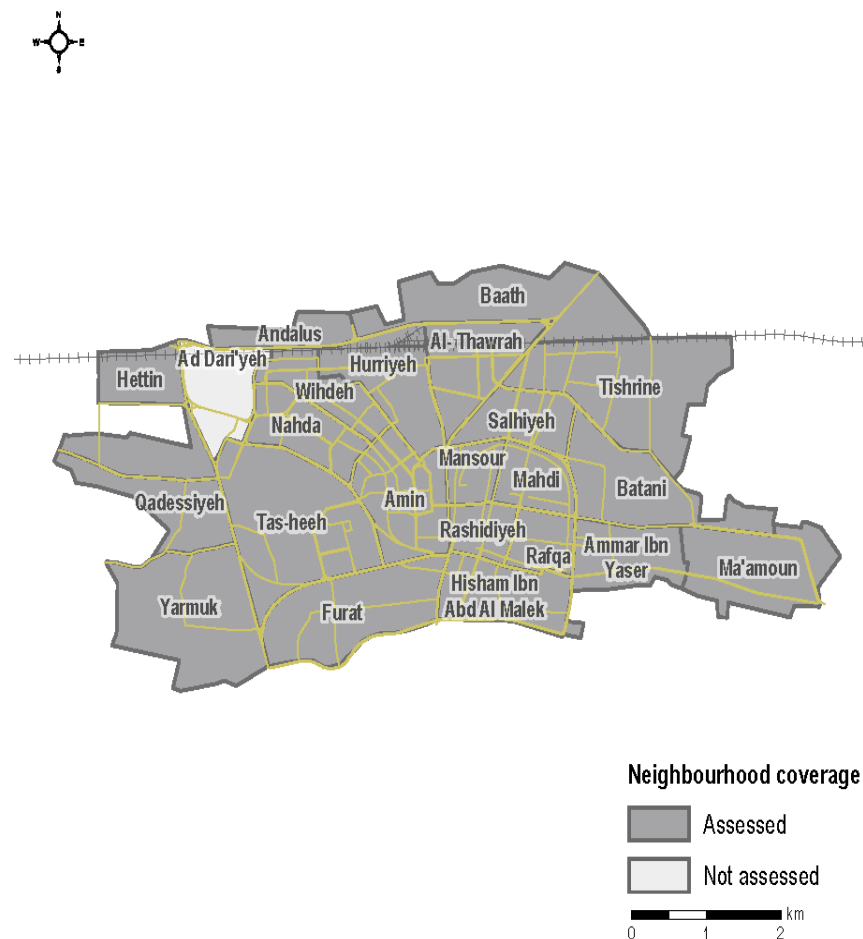
Autumn 2023| Urban household assessment

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 **9 and 19 October 2023** covering **106 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	80%
2	 Food	73%
3	 Health	37%

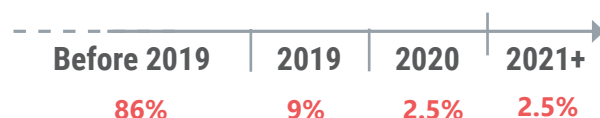
Households' movement intentions



	No plans to leave	98%
	Yes within longer timeframe (in over 6 months)	1%
	Don't know	1%

RETURNEES

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



100%

of host community households who are returnees

3

average number of displacements for returnee households

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+)
7.2	1.4	2.1	3.7	0.5

IDPs%

Date of arrival
(count of IDP households that arrived in each period, on a total of 20 IDP households surveyed)



4

average number of displacements for IDP households

Most common governorates of origin for IDP households

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

Most common sub-districts of origin for IDP households

1	Abu Kamal	3
2	Ras Al Ain	3
2	Al Bab	2

52% of households with newborns (0-1)

77% of households with school-aged children (6-17)

76% of households with young children (0-5)

92% of households with children (0-17)

SAFETY AND PROTECTION



42% 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 [42%]) ▼

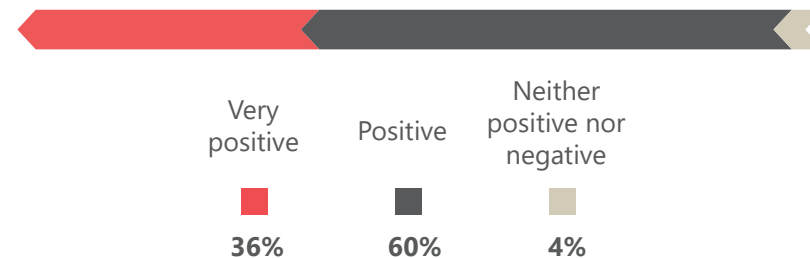
- 1** Birth certificate issued by the Government of Syria **61%**
- 2** Syrian identity card issued by the Government of Syria **48%**
- 3** Birth certificate issued by local entities (non-GoS) **7%**

79% of households who reported theft as a security concern ●

Movement freedom for all household member within the location



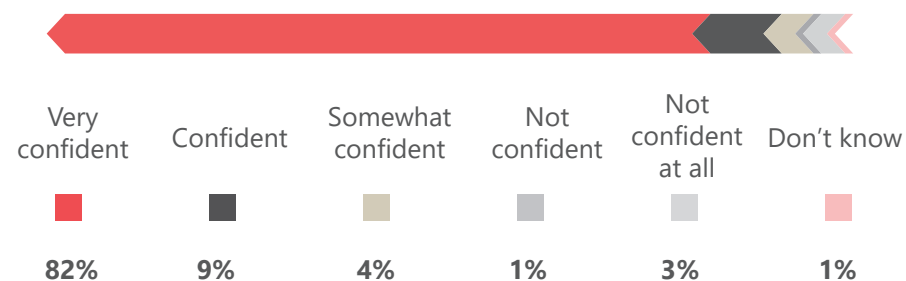
Household's relationship with other community members



28% 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 83% 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	82%
2	Solid/finished apartment	9%
3	Unfinished or abandoned residential building	6%

Average % of monthly income spent on rent
26%
Average expenditure on rent as a % of total household expenditure ⁹
26%

Most common occupancy arrangements

1	Owning	65%
2	Renting	25%
3	Hosted	9%

Rental contract type (by % of households who are renting [25%])

Written contract	30%
Verbal agreement	70%



93%

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 [93%])

Difficult to find an affordable accommodation	88%
Landlord requesting large first instalment or deposit	32%
Difficult to find a big enough shelter for all family members	28%

SHELTER CONDITIONS

87% of households whose shelter had inadequacies



Shelter inadequacies (by % of households who experienced issues)



Windows/doors not sealed	49%
Leakage from roof/ceiling during rain	43%
Unable to lock home securely	43%
Poor sanitation	42%
Lack of space/overcrowding	40%
Lack of lighting around shelter	37%
Lack of electricity	30%
Lack of water (fixtures, associated connections)	27%
Lack of privacy (space/partitions, doors)	17%
High temperatures inside shelters	14%
Lack of insulation from cold	14%
Lack of lighting inside shelter	7%
Poor facilities for persons with specific needs	3%
Shelter prone to flooding	2%


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  


98% of households who **did not use a secondary source** of drinking water  

3% of households who had **insufficient access to water** to fulfill their needs 


80% 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 **68%**
- 2 Water tastes bad **40%**
- 3 Water was perceived to be making people sick **34%**

Most common strategies applied by households to avoid running out of water (as % of households who applied some coping strategy [51%]) ⁸ 

- 1 Relying on drinking water stored previously **96%**
- 2 Reducing non-drinking water consumption (of water for all purposes) **6%**
- 3 Collecting water from a source that is further away than the usual one **2%**

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 **46%**
- 2 Boiling **5%**
- 3 Household filters **5%**

Average % of monthly income spent on water⁹

1%



Average expenditure on water as a % of total household expenditure⁹

1%

ACCESS TO SANITATION



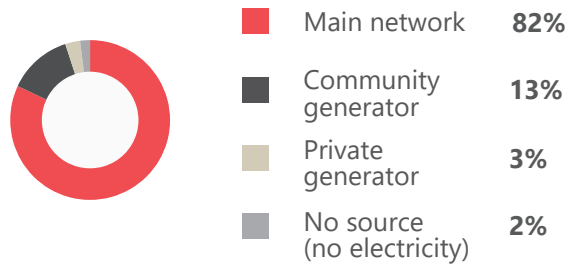
77% of households who experienced sanitation issues 

Common sanitation issues for households (as % of households who experienced sanitation issues [77%]) ⁸  

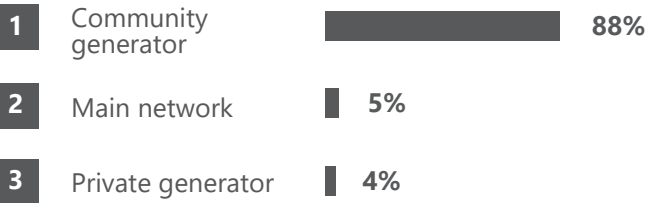
- 1 Waste (solid waste/trash) in street **45%**
- 2 Sewage system needs repair **43%**
- 3 Sewage system needs cleaning **37%**
- 4 Waste collection services too infrequent **33%**
- 5 No waste collection available **20%**

ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY

Primary source of electricity



Secondary source of electricity (by % of households who had a secondary source [79%])



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

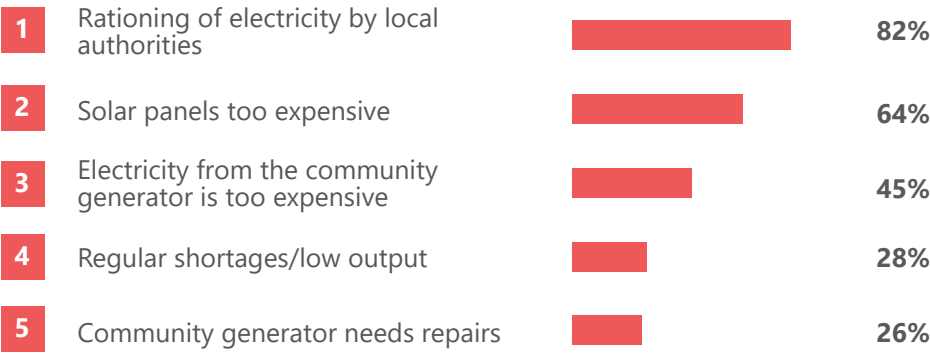
Average number of hours of electricity per day



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
4%	18%	14%	13%	1%	2%	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)	91%
Borrowing/loans	75%
Gifts from family members or friends in Syria (cash)	12%
Remittances	11%
Retirement/pension/martyr's salary	5%
No source of income	2%

Most common employment sectors (by % of households where employment is a source of income [^{8, ▶, ■}91%])

1	Real estate/construction	21%	6	Education/childcare	7%
2	Wholesale/retail	19%	7	Electrical/gas/water/sewage/waste	7%
3	Machinery/mechanics/repairs	10%	8	Marketplace vending	6%
4	Trade/transportation	9%	9	Manufacturing/processing/factories	5%
5	Agriculture	7%	10	Armed forces (security/police/military forces)	4%

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

1	Self-employment/entrepreneurship	38%
2	Informal day-to-day work agreements (verbal)	24%
3	Longer-term formal employment agreement (written, 1 month+)	14%

43% of households reported self-employment/entrepreneurship as a source of income[■]

3% of households where informal day-to-day work was the only income source[■]

Average number of adults per households who are:	
Employed	1.4
Not in employment	2.4
Not employed and looking for a job (unemployed) ¹¹	0.5

INCOME AND EXPENSES[▶]

Average monthly income for a family of 6 members ¹²	Average monthly expense for a family of 6 members ¹³	Difference between average monthly income and expenditures for a family of 6 members
3,682,891 SYP	3,383,405 SYP	299,486 SYP

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

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

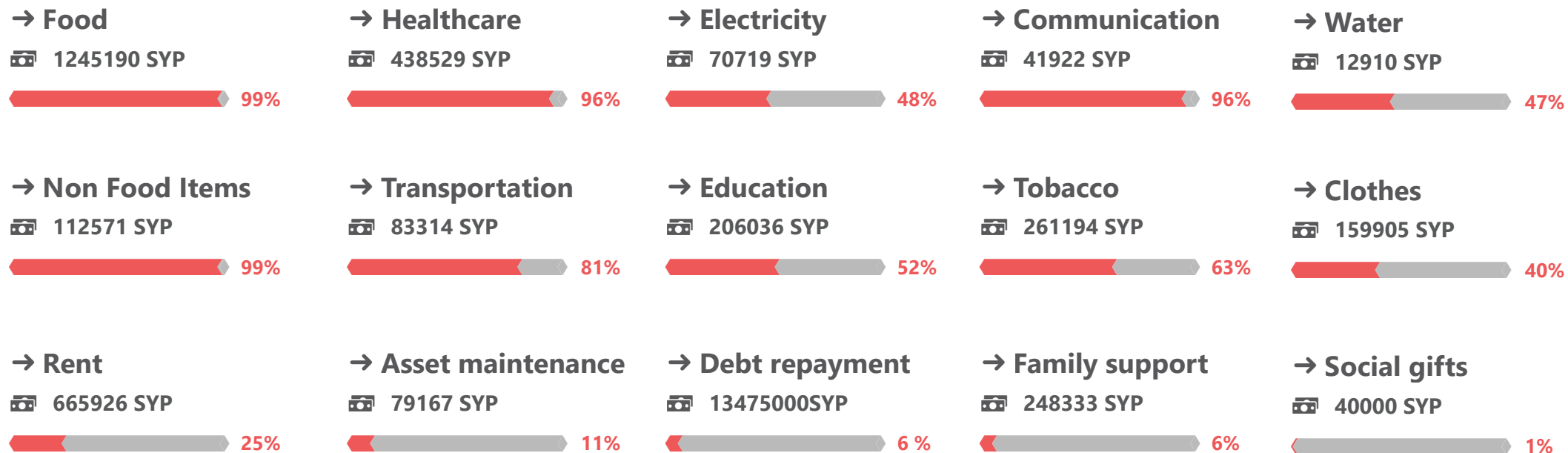
INCOME AND EXPENSES



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

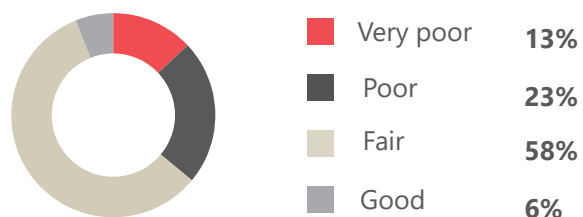


Share of households who spent money on the expense category

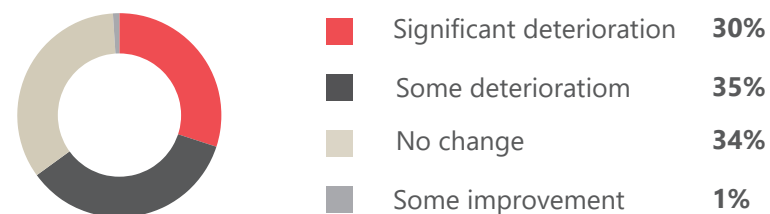


ABILITY TO MEET BASIC NEEDS

Households' perceived ability to meet basic needs

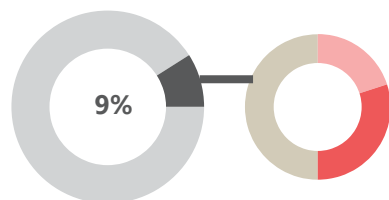


Change in the households' ability to meet basic needs over the last three months



ABILITY TO MEET BASIC NEEDS

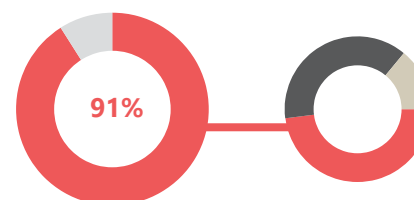
% of households with savings ■



Changes in savings within the last 3 months ●, ▼

Stayed the same	50%
Slightly decreased	20%
Significantly decreased	30%

% of households in debt ■



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

No	48%
Don't know	38%
Yes	14%

Most common barriers to meeting basic needs (as % of households who experienced barriers [99%]) ▶, ■

1	The wage is not commensurate with the rising prices	90%
2	Lack of employment opportunities	80%
3	Lack of skills for a better paying job	38%

Average % of monthly income spent on debt repayment ⁹
28%
Average expenditure on debt repayment as a % of total household expenditure ⁹
27%

Most common coping strategies adopted to meet basic needs (as % of households who applied coping strategies [97%]) ▶, ●

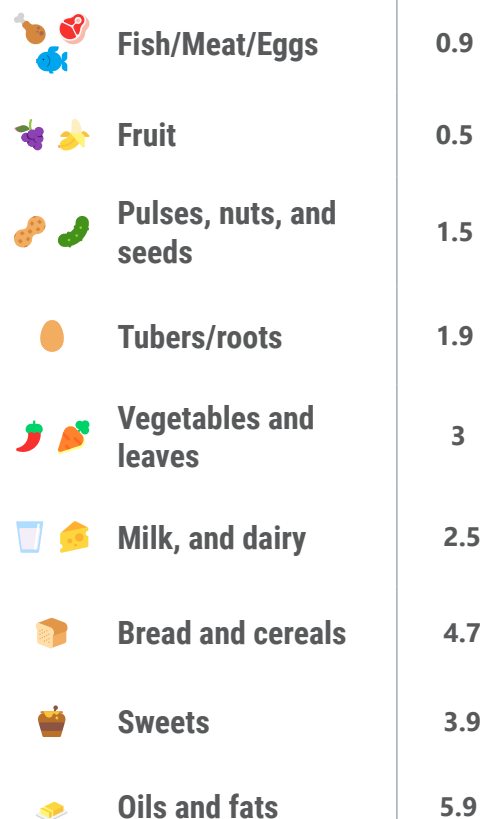
1	Borrowing money	94%
2	Purchasing items on credit	57%
3	Decreasing non-food expenditures (health, education, etc.)	39%
4	Selling household assets/goods	15%
5	Withdrawing children from school	8%

40% of households whose monthly income was lower than their estimated monthly expenses ▶

1% of households whose monthly income would not cover minimum expenses (as estimated by the SMEB)¹⁴, ▶

FOOD ACCESS AND CONSUMPTION

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



Most common source of food



92% % 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 [92%])⁸



5% of households reporting perceiving that at least one member had lost weight in the last 3 months due to insufficient food access

Average % of monthly income spent on food⁹

60%

Average expenditure on food as a % of total household expenditure⁹

52%

Average monthly food expenditure per person in a household

187,008 SYP

% of households whose monthly food expenditure is more than 50% of their total expenditure

63%

49%

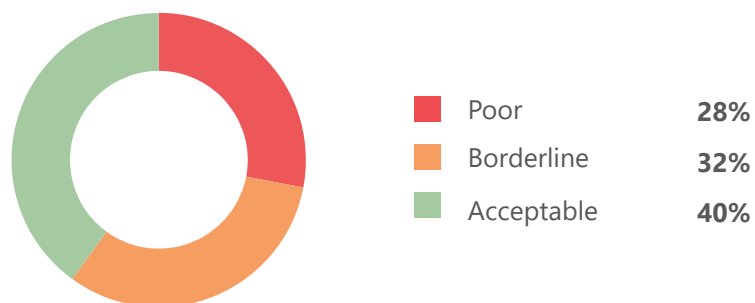
of households who did not consume any eggs, meat or fish in the 7 days prior to data collection

63%

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)



62% 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

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

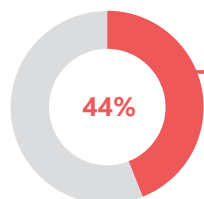
The rCSI is a relative score to measure the frequency and severity of food-related negative coping mechanisms adopted by households to cover their needs. A decrease in score suggests an amelioration in food security. Based on the Syria 2021 Inter-Sector Severity Model, the thresholds for the Reduced 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).¹⁹ Thus, results indicate a severe 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	3.9	94%
Borrowed food or relied on help from friends	<1	3%
Reduced the portion size of meals at meal time	0.8	37%
Reduced the number of meals eaten per day	1	42%
Restricted the consumption by adults in order for young children to eat	0.2	15%
At least one member of the household spent a whole day without eating	0	0%

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

% of households with unmet health needs¹⁶



Most common inaccessible health treatments (by % of households with unmet health needs [44%])^{8,16}

1	Treatment for chronic diseases	60%
2	Medicines or other commodities	55%
3	Treatment for parasitic infections (e.g. diarrhoea, Leishmaniasis, Giardiasis)	28%
4	Laboratory services (e.g. blood test)	21%
5	General and/or specialist surgical services	19%

Most common inaccessible types of medicine (by % of households with unmet health needs related to medicines and other commodities [55%])^{8,16}

1	Antibiotics	92%
2	Medications for hypertension/heart conditions	62%
3	Diabetes medicines	35%
4	Medication for mental health conditions and/or epilepsy	27%
5	Medication for parasitic infections (such as diarrhoea)	23%

93% of households who experienced issues with accessing healthcare¹⁶

Average % of monthly income spent on healthcare ¹³
17%
Average expenditure on health care as a % of total household expenditure ¹³
14%

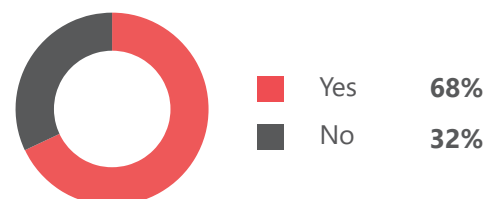
Most common barriers to accessing healthcare (by % of households)^{8,16}

1	Cannot afford price of medicines	91%
2	Cannot afford treatment costs	84%
3	Lack of medicines and/or medical equipment at facilities	46%

Most common coping strategies (by % of host community households with unmet health needs [44%])^{8,16}

1	Going to a pharmacy instead of a clinic	89%
2	Foregoing non-essential treatment	49%
3	Foregoing essential treatment	34%

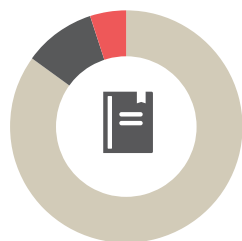
Households with at least one member who showed signs of psychological distress¹⁶



ACCESS TO EDUCATION

School attendance for children aged 6-11

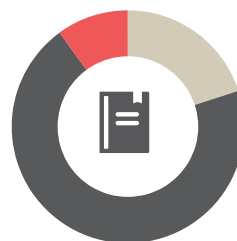
(by % of households with school-aged children (6-11)) ▼



All regularly attended school	85%
Some regularly attended school	10%
None attended school	5%

School attendance for children aged 12-14

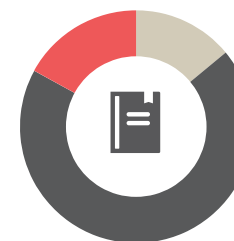
(by % of households with school-aged children (12-14)) ▼



All regularly attended school	20%
Some regularly attended school	70%
None attended school	10%

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	69%
None attended school	17%

Average % of monthly income spent on education⁹

8%

Average expenditure on education as a % of total household expenditure⁹

6%

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 [42%])^{8, ▼}

1	Children have to work	47%
2	Unable to afford learning material and/or pay for school fees	33%
3	Social issues	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 [62%])^{8, ▼, ●}

1	Quality of available education is poor/perceived to be poor	47%
2	School lacks trained teachers	29%
3	Classes are overcrowded	17%

▼ 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 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](#).

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 (1,752,892 SYP/6), where 1,752,892 is the median value of the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) for a family of 6 in Ar-Raqqa governorate, from the October 2023 Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI). In October 2023, the median SMEB value was 1,752,892 SYP in the Governorate of Ar-Raqqa and 1,776,175 SYP in NES.

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).