

# Syria Market Monitoring Exercise

Snapshot: 14-21 August 2017

Cash-Based Responses  
Technical Working Group

**REACH** Informing  
more effective  
humanitarian action

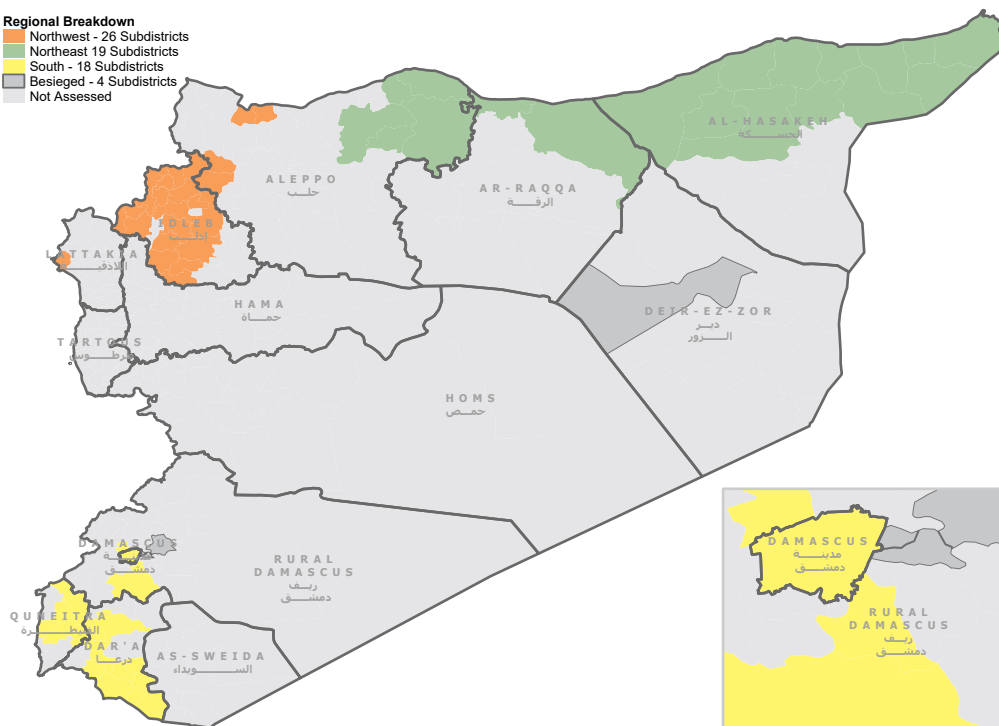
## KEY FINDINGS

- The most significant trend across Syria in August was the rise in vegetable prices across most sub-districts. These prices previously had been in decline since peaking in April, due to seasonal trends.
- The median cheapest price of manually-refined diesel prices increased by 40% in the south, with prices doubling in Quneitra and Jasim subdistricts. Notable price swings for specific fuel items were observed in Tell Abiad, Suluk, Darbasiyeh and Amuda.
- No significant or systematic change in median SMEB costs was observed in the 54 subdistricts with comparable data between July and August.
- No notable change was observed in the median prices of half of assessed food items, including oil, ghee, sugar, tea and most grains, in any of the three regions.
- The median exchange rates for USD/SYP, JOD/SYP and TRY/SYP across assessed subdistricts decreased by approximately 1.3% in August.

## ASSESSED AREAS

**Regional Breakdown**

- Northwest - 26 Subdistricts
- Northeast 19 Subdistricts
- South - 18 Subdistricts
- Besieged - 4 Subdistricts
- Not Assessed



\* Subdistrict classified as besieged if containing a UNOCHA defined besieged community

## OVERVIEW

- To inform humanitarian actors' cash and voucher programming, REACH and the Cash-Based Responses Technical Working Group (CBR-TWG) conduct monthly monitoring of key markets throughout Syria to assess the availability and affordability of key commodities.
- Monitored commodities reflect those that are typically available, sold in markets and consumed by an average Syrian household, including food items, non-food items, fuel, water and smartphone data.
- Many are components of the **Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB)**, detailed below, which represents the minimum culturally adjusted

group of items required to support a six-person Syrian household for one month.

- Between **14 and 21 August 2017**, a network of **10 NGOs** involved in cash-based responses in Syria (ACTED, CARE/Shafak, Concern, GOAL, IRC, Mercy Corps, People in Need, REACH, Solidarités International and Violet) contributed data from **67 subdistricts spanning 11 governorates**. For coverage, see map on the left.
- [Situation overviews](#) and cleaned [data sets](#) from all months of the Market Monitoring Exercise are available on the REACH Resource Centre and are distributed to the broader humanitarian community.
- For additional details on methodology and shifts in coverage, please consult the appendix at the end of this document.

## SURVIVAL MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET (SMEB) CONTENTS

	Item	Quantity
<b>Food Items</b>	Bread	37 kg
	Bulgur	15 kg
	Chicken	6 kg
	Eggs	6 kg
	Fresh vegetables	12 kg
	Ghee/vegetable oil	7 kg/L
	Red lentils	15 kg
	Rice	19 kg
	Salt	1 kg
	Sugar	5 kg
<b>Non-Food Items</b>	Tomato paste	6 kg
	Bathing soap	12 bars
	Laundry/dish soap	3 kg
	Sanitary pads	4 packs of 10
<b>Fuel</b>	Toothpaste	2 pieces
	Cooking fuel*	25 L
<b>Water</b>	Water	4500 L
<b>Telecom</b>	Smartphone data	1 GB
<b>Other</b>	Float (other costs)**	7.5% total value

\* Kerosene in northern Syria; LPG in southern Syria.

\*\* Float was excluded from SMEB calculations due to the commonality of incomplete baskets.

## CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

- As the Syria Market Monitoring Exercise currently includes 10 partners based in 3 hubs, achieving a consistent approach is inherently challenging. Participating organisations are therefore requested to adopt harmonised data collection methodologies and tools to ensure that the data uploaded are as accurate as possible.
- Confirming commodity shortages in certain communities was difficult due to a lack of information about general market availability. When follow-ups were unable to confirm these shortages, this is stated in the text.
- Given security and access constraints in the divided cities of Deir-ez-Zor, al-Hasakeh and Qamishli, markets on only one side of the frontline could be surveyed.

## CURRENCY

### Median cheapest exchange rates

**523** SYP/USD  
▼12

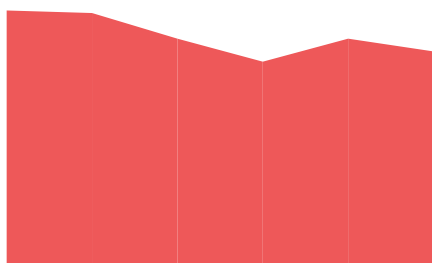
**148** SYP/TRY  
▼2

**735** SYP/JOD\*  
▼17

\* Lattakia was the only community to report this exchange rate in July and August.

### Median cheapest SYP/USD exchange rate

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
552	551	535	522	534	528



Note: Visualizations of monthly trends in this report do not account for monthly variations in subdistrict coverage.

## FOOD ITEMS

### Noteworthy price changes since July:

- Eggs (+39%)
- Potatoes (+25%)
- Cucumbers (-27%)
- Chicken (-7%)
- The median cheapest price of eggs increased by 39% to 1050 SYP per kilo in the Northwest, similar to prices from April and May. Previously, the reported price of eggs had declined almost continuously since December 2016.
- The median cheapest price of potatoes increased to 150 SYP per kilo in the Northwest, up by 25% since July. The median cheapest price for cucumbers decreased by 25% to 100 SYP per kilo in the Northwest; the same as had been reported in June.
- The median cheapest price of chicken decreased by 7%, or approximately 57 SYP in the region. However, price variation between subdistricts was such that no systematic trend was observed.
- The remaining assessed food items reported little-to-no change from July.

## WATER

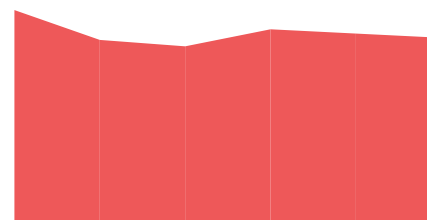
- The median cheapest price for private water trucking services across subdistricts in the northwest was 0.62 SYP per litre of water in August, with no significant change from July.

## MOBILE DATA

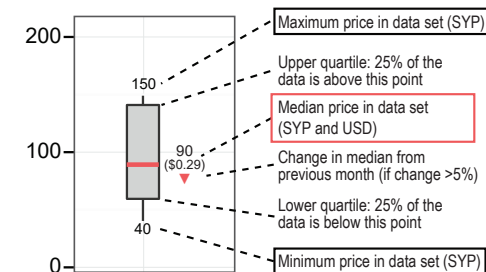
- The median cheapest price for a gigabyte of data in August was reported at 600 SYP, an 8% decrease from July.

### Median cheapest bread prices (SYP)

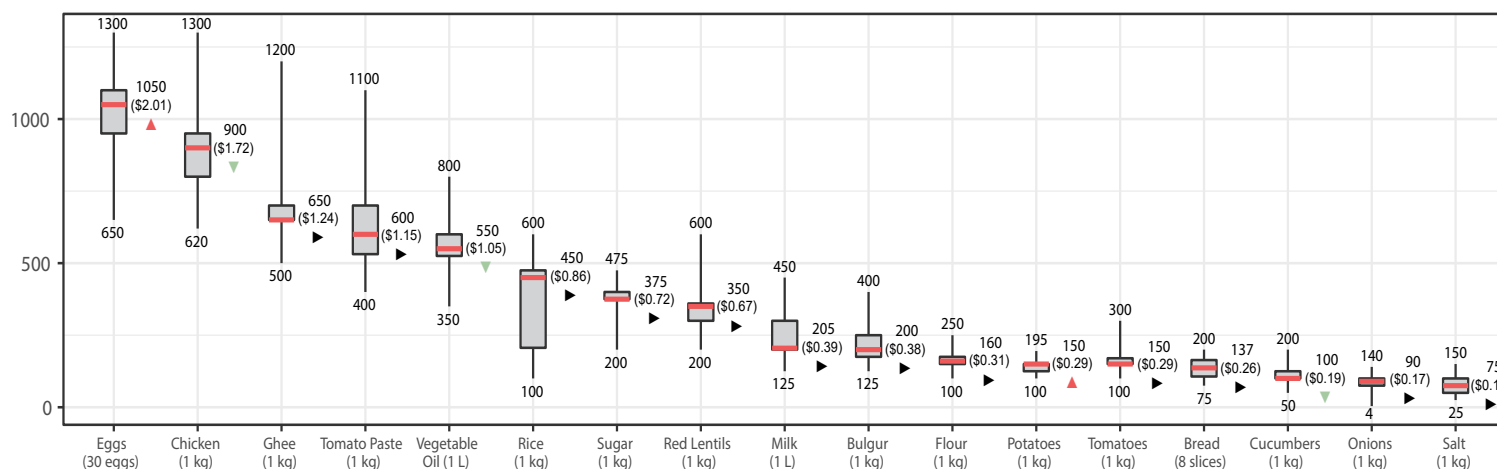
Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
150	129	125	137	134	130



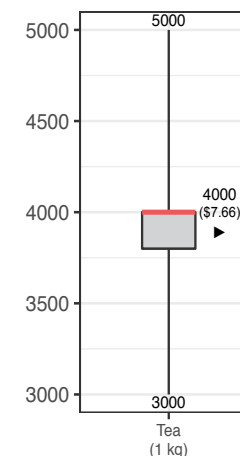
### How to read a box plot



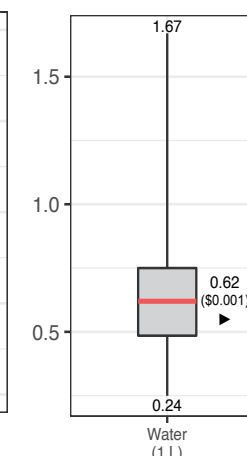
## Food item prices



## Tea prices



## Water trucking prices



## Median cheapest kerosene prices (SYP)

Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug
310	300	300	300	300	300



## FUEL

- The median cheapest price for liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in Idlib governorate appeared to stabilize at 325 SYP per litre in August. A decline has been observed since prices peaked in the northwest in April.
- The median cheapest price of GoS (Government of Syria) petrol increased by 11% to approximately 500 SYP per litre in the Northwest.

- The median cheapest price for the remaining four fuel items did not change notably from the previous month in the Northwest.

## HYGIENE AND SANITATION ITEMS

- The median cheapest price of dish soap increased by 21% in August, while the median cheapest price of laundry soap decreased by 5%. However, due to the large variation in trends between subdistricts no systematic regional trend could be observed. The price of individual bars of soap remained stable in the northwest.
- The median cheapest price of toothpaste increased by 7% in August. However, no systematic trend could be observed across subdistricts.
- The median cheapest price of sanitary pads remained stable in August, after previously increasing by 18% in July.

## AVAILABILITY ISSUES

None confirmed

## SMEB (SURVIVAL MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET)

- The median cost of a complete SMEB in northwest Syria was 59,981 SYP (114.68 USD).
- Complete SMEBs could be assembled for 24 of the 26 assessed subdistricts in northwest Syria in August.
- There was no major systematic change in SMEB costs between July and August among the 17 subdistricts with comparable coverage for both months.

## Selected subdistrict SMEBs in August

### Most expensive

Lattakia (77,698 SYP, 148.56 USD)

Badama (68,437 SYP, 130.85 USD)

Jisr-Ash-Shugur (65,929 SYP, 126.06 USD)

### Least expensive

Kafr Takharim (53,573 SYP, 102.43 USD)

Atareb (49,505 SYP, 94.65 USD)

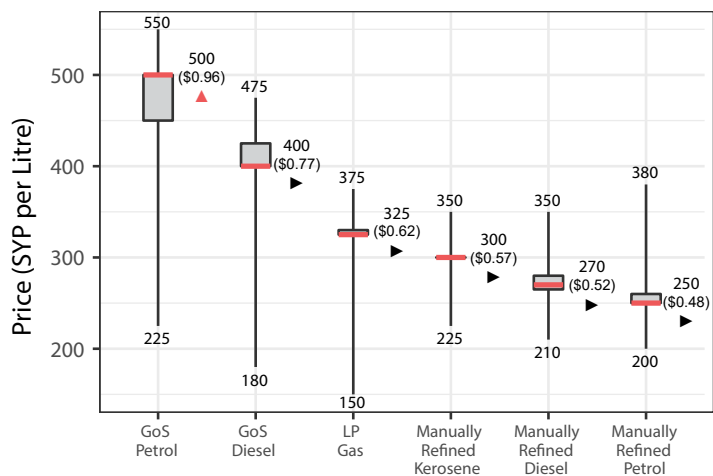
Ariha (45,690 SYP, 87.36 USD)

## Subdistricts with incomplete SMEB data in August

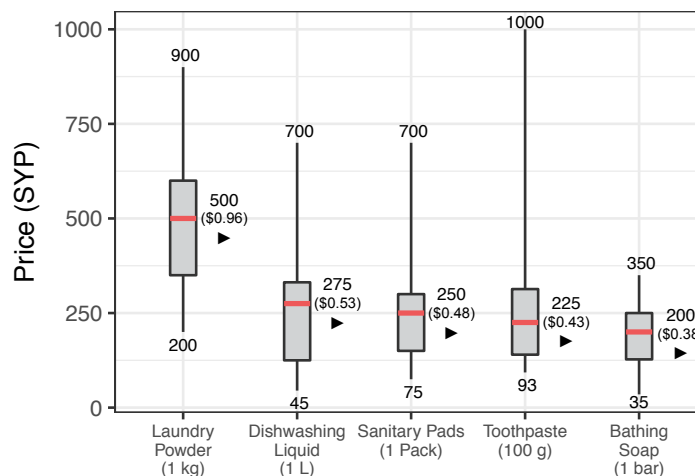
Subdistrict	Missing items
Jisr-Ash-Shugur	Smartphone Data
Lattakia	Water

Note: A lack of data for a SMEB item does not necessarily imply a shortage of that item.

## Fuel prices



## Sanitation and hygiene item prices



## Largest changes in monthly SMEB costs\*

Ariha (▼ -16%)

Armanaz (▼ -11%)

Heish (▲ +10%)

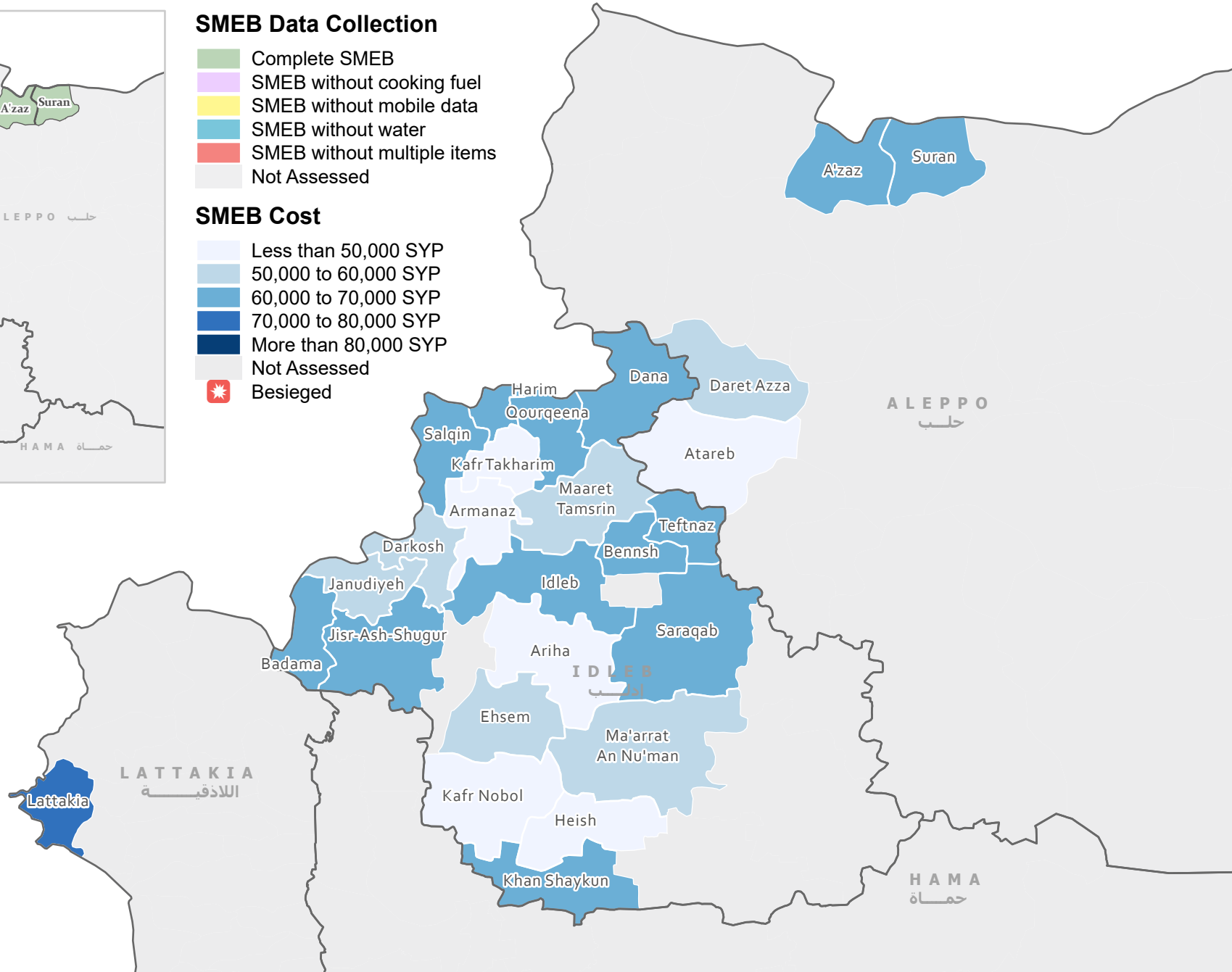
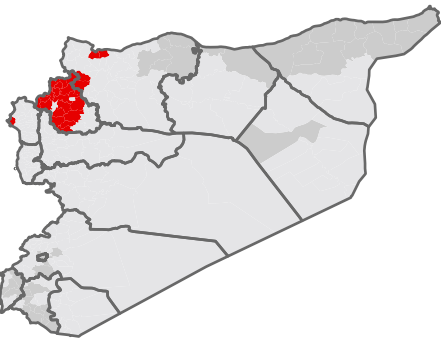
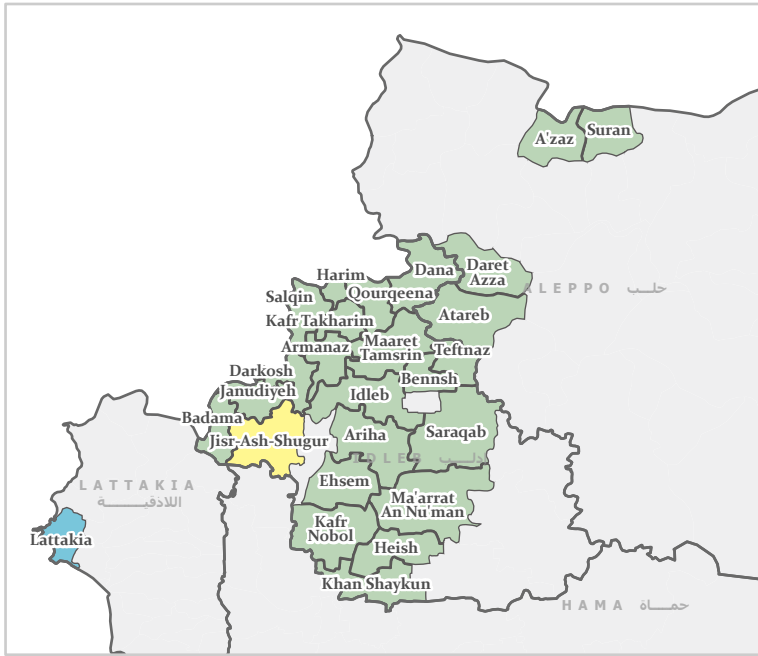
\*Only for subdistricts with no change in SMEB composition in the previous round of data collection.

## SMEB Data Collection

- Complete SMEB
- SMEB without cooking fuel
- SMEB without mobile data
- SMEB without water
- SMEB without multiple items
- Not Assessed

## SMEB Cost

- Less than 50,000 SYP
- 50,000 to 60,000 SYP
- 60,000 to 70,000 SYP
- 70,000 to 80,000 SYP
- More than 80,000 SYP
- Not Assessed
- Besieged



## CURRENCY

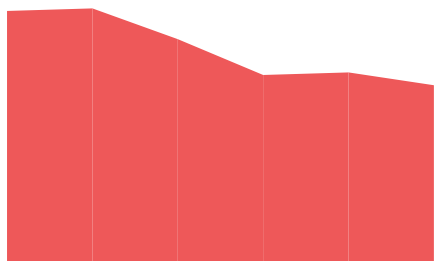
### Median cheapest exchange rates

<b>528</b> SYP/USD ▼4	<b>149</b> SYP/TRY ▼1	<b>725</b> SYP/JOD* ▼5
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	------------------------------

\* Abu Qalqal was the only community to report this exchange rate in both July and August.

### Median cheapest SYP/USD exchange rate

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
550	551	540	531	532	530



Note: Visualizations of monthly trends in this report do not account for monthly variations in subdistrict coverage.

## FOOD ITEMS

### Noteworthy price changes since July:

- Eggs (+13%)
- Cucumbers (-13%)
- Chicken (-9%)
- Tomatoes (+24%)
- Potatoes (+32%)
- **The median cheapest price for tomatoes and potatoes increased by 32% and 24% in the Northeast, respectively.** This ended a near-continuous decline in the price of potatoes that had occurred since April.
- **The median cheapest price of chicken continued to decline in August to 881 SYP per kilo, down from the 1300 SYP per kilo peak that was observed in June.**
- **The median cheapest price of cucumbers continued to decrease by 13% in the Northeast.** However, this decline appeared to slow in August, with some subdistricts reporting price increases from July.
- Changes to the median cheapest prices for the remaining food items were under 5% in August.

## WATER

- No water trucking price data was recorded for Al-Hasakeh governorate.
- Price data for water trucking services in August is only available for five communities. The median cheapest price in these communities was 0.63 SYP per litre of water, a 0.04 SYP decrease from July.

### Median cheapest bread prices (SYP)

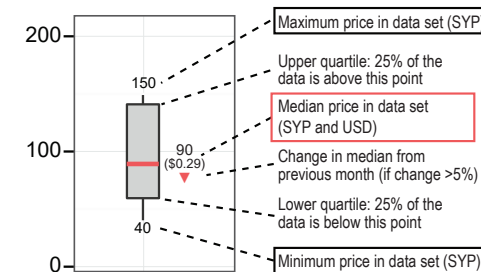
Mar	May	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
100	80	100	100	80	90



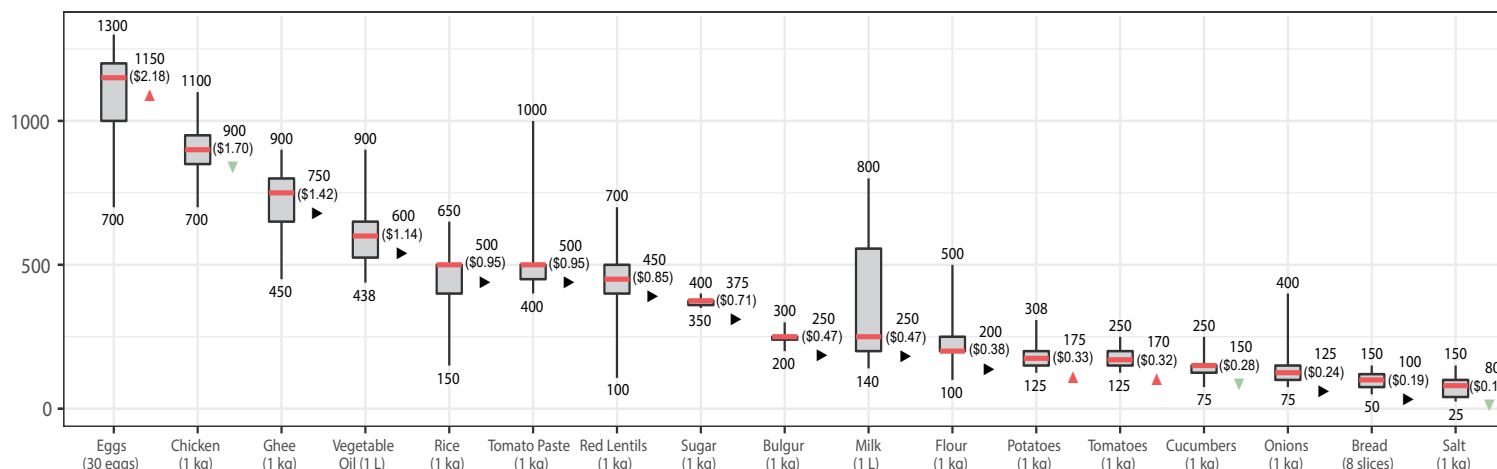
## MOBILE DATA

- The median cheapest rate for a gigabyte of data returned to 1,600 SYP in August, after it had increased by 250 SYP in July.

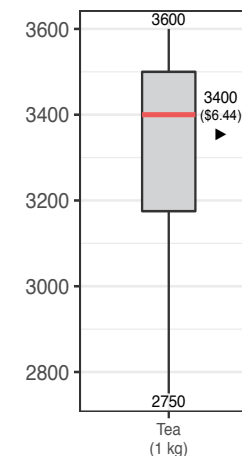
### How to read a box plot



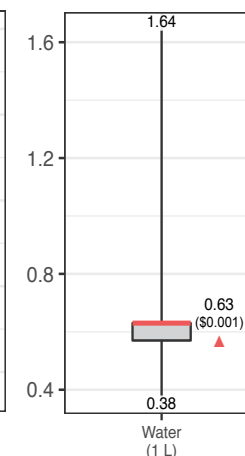
## Food item prices



## Tea prices



## Water trucking prices



## Median cheapest kerosene prices (SYP)

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
125	100	100	125	150	150

items were reported, falling in line with the minimum prices reported in the rest of the northeast. The largest changes were in Tell Abiad, where the median cheapest price of GoS petrol declined from 500 SYP to 85 SYP, and the median cheapest price of GoS diesel declined from 240 SYP to 45 SYP in August.

## HYGIENE AND SANITATION ITEMS

- The median cheapest prices of dish soap and individual bars of soap decreased by 9% and 6% in the Northeast, respectively. The median price of dishwashing liquid had already increased by 7% in July, but large amounts of variation between subdistricts means that no systematic regional trend could be observed.
- The median cheapest prices of all other hygiene and sanitation items remained stable in August in the Northeast, as they had been since May 2017.

## AVAILABILITY ISSUES

None confirmed

## SMEB (SURVIVAL MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET)

- The median cost of a complete SMEB in northwest Syria was 59,590 (112.86 USD); the median cost of a SMEB without water trucking data was 58,915 (111.58 USD).
- Complete SMEBs could be assembled for 4 of 19 assessed subdistricts in northeast Syria in August. An additional 13 subdistricts reported all price information except water trucking, and the partner reported that this method of water access is rare due to availability of piped water in these communities.
- There was no major systematic change in SMEB costs between July and August among the 12 subdistricts with comparable coverage for both months.

## Selected subdistrict SMEBs in August

### Most expensive

- Tell Abiad (68,250 SYP, 129.26 USD)
- Quamishli (62,831 SYP, 119.00 USD)
- Tal Hmis (61,841 SYP, 117.12 USD)

### Least expensive

- Abu Qalqal (51,355 SYP, 97.26 USD)
- Lower Shyookh (47,942 SYP, 90.80 USD)
- Al-Darbasiyah (47,421 SYP, 89.81 USD)

## Subdistricts with incomplete SMEBs in August\*

Subdistrict	Missing items
Lower Shyookh	Chicken, vegetables, toothpaste
Menbij	Smartphone Data, kerosene

\*Note: No water data was collected in any assessed subdistrict in Al-Hasakeh.

Note: A lack of data for a SMEB item does not necessarily imply a shortage of that item.

## Largest changes in monthly SMEB costs\*

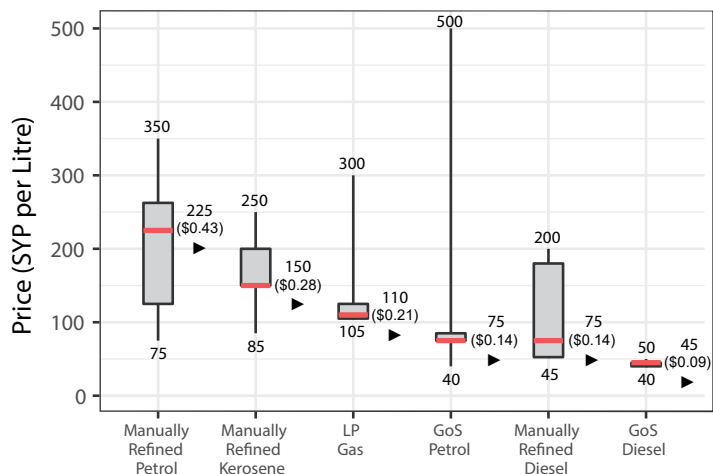
- Quamishli (▲+23%)
- Tal Tamer (▲+19%)
- Be'r Al-Hulo Al-Wardeyyeh (▲+19%)

\*Only for subdistricts with no change in SMEB composition in the previous round of data collection.

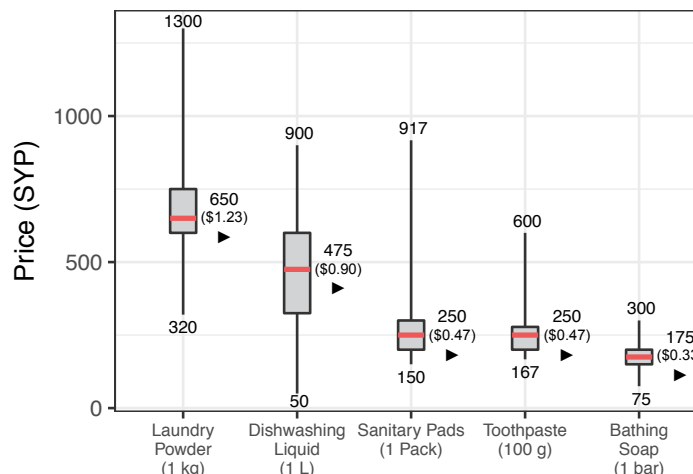
## FUEL

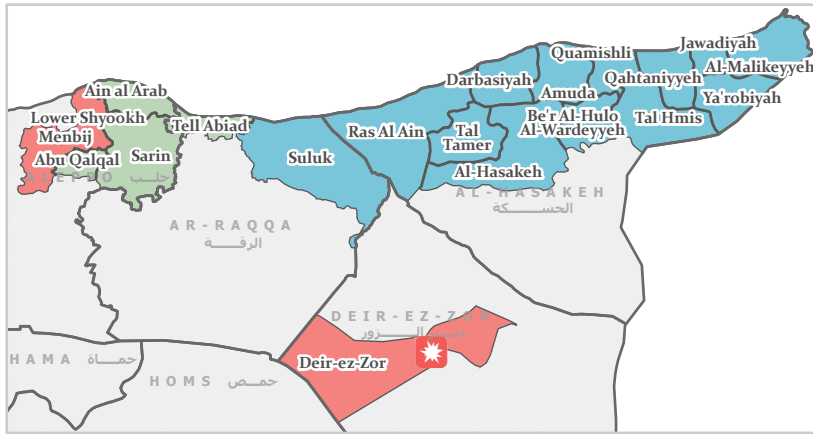
- The overall region saw no major change in the median cheapest price for fuel items.
- However, notable price increases for manually-refined petrol were observed in Amuda and Darbasiyah subdistricts, where the minimum-reported price for one litre increased from 75 SYP to 300 SYP and from 40 SYP to 125 SYP, respectively. GoS petrol and diesel prices did not significantly change in August.
- In Tell Abiad and Suluk subdistricts, significant price decreases across all fuel

## Fuel prices



## Sanitation and hygiene item prices



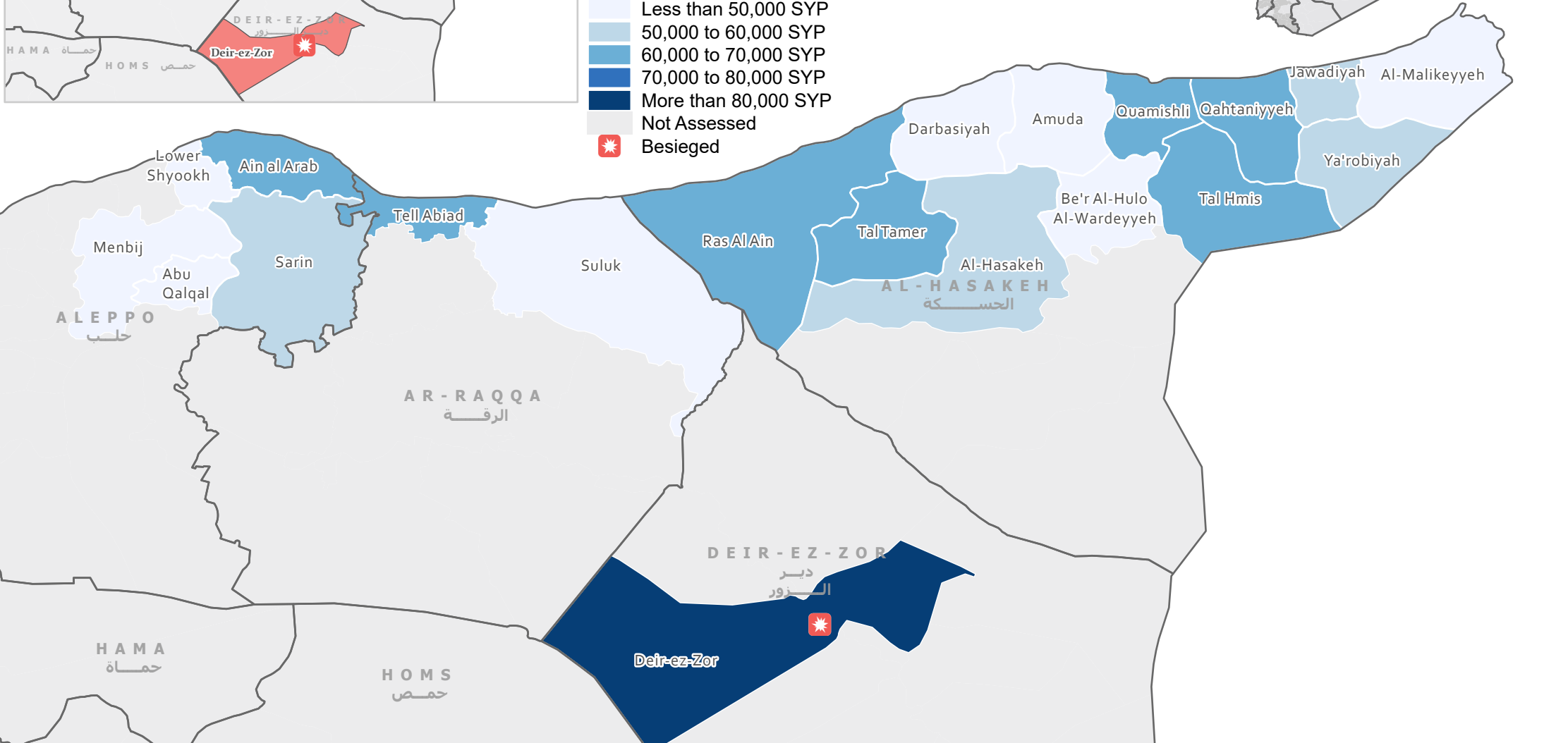


## SMEB Data Collection

- Complete SMEB
- SMEB without cooking fuel
- SMEB without mobile data
- SMEB without water
- SMEB without multiple items
- Not Assessed

## SMEB Cost

- Less than 50,000 SYP
- 50,000 to 60,000 SYP
- 60,000 to 70,000 SYP
- 70,000 to 80,000 SYP
- More than 80,000 SYP
- Not Assessed
- Besieged



## CURRENCY

### Median cheapest exchange rates\*

**522** SYP/USD  
▼7

**N/A** SYP/TRY

**721** SYP/JOD  
▼9

\*No exchange rate data reported from included Rural Damascus communities.

## FOOD ITEMS

### Noteworthy price changes since July:

- Tomatoes (-16%)
- Potatoes (-20%)
- Onions (-8%)
- Cucumbers (-20%)
- Chicken (-18%)
- Eggs (+10%)

• **The median cheapest price for potatoes and cucumbers declined by 20% in the South, continuing a trend that began in April.** However, the regional decline in the price of vegetables has slowed compared to recent months, and price increases were observed in some subdistricts.

• **The median cheapest prices of tomatoes and onions also continued to decrease by 16% and 8% in the South, respectively.** This decline slowed in August, and in some subdistricts price increases were observed.

• **The median cheapest price of chicken decreased by 18% in the South.** Decreasing prices were observed in all subdistricts except Damascus and Babella. The price had decreased by approximately 175 SYP from July. Prior to June and the onset of Ramadan, prices had been stable at around 920 SYP per kilo since February.

• **The median cheapest price of eggs increased by 10% to 1200 SYP per kilo in August in the**

**region.** This appears to break the steady decline of egg prices in the south that has been observed since February of this year, when the median cheapest price for a kilo of eggs was 1,400 SYP.

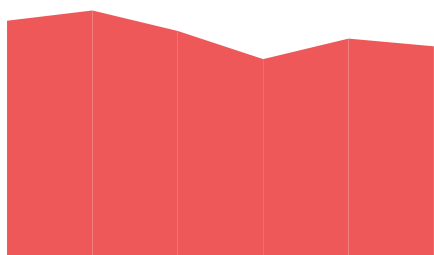
- Changes to the median cheapest prices for the remaining assessed food items were under 5% from last month.

## WATER

- The median cheapest price for private water trucking services across southern subdistricts increased by 12% in August to 0.57 SYP per litre of water, the first significant change in price since coverage began in February 2017.

### Median cheapest SYP/USD exchange rate

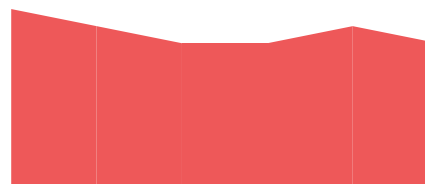
Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
540	546	534	519	529	523



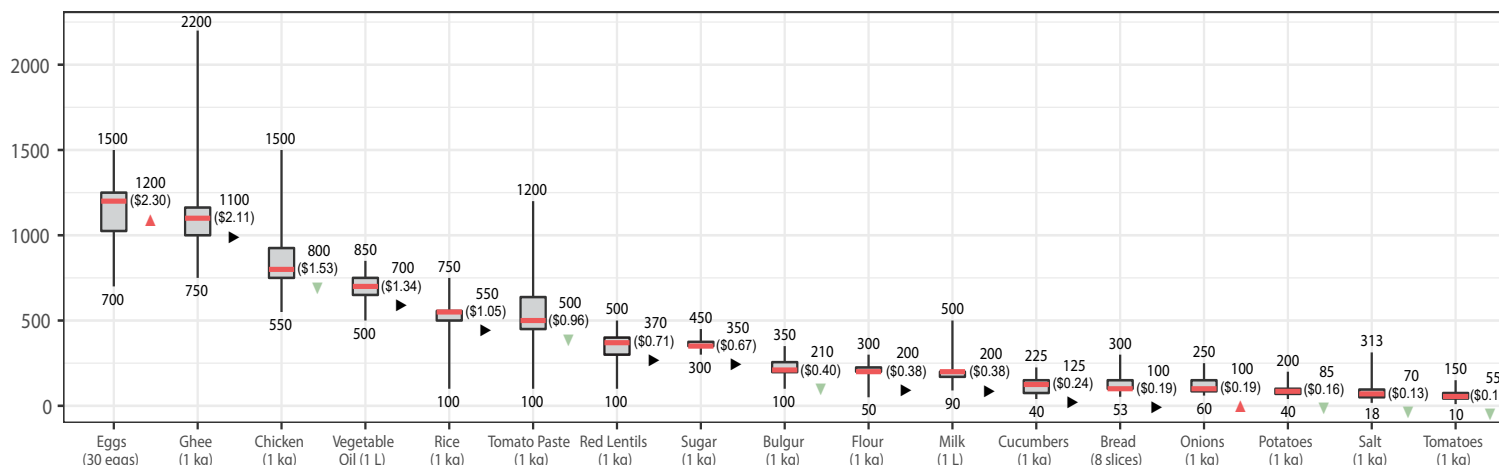
Note: Visualizations of monthly trends in this report do not account for monthly variations in subdistrict coverage.

### Median cheapest bread prices (SYP)

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
125	113	100	100	113	100



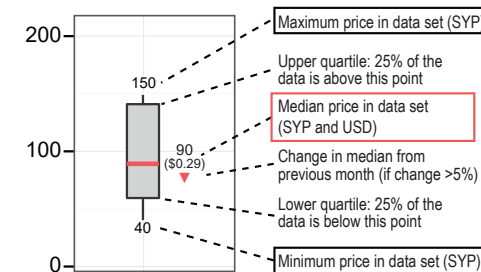
## Food item prices



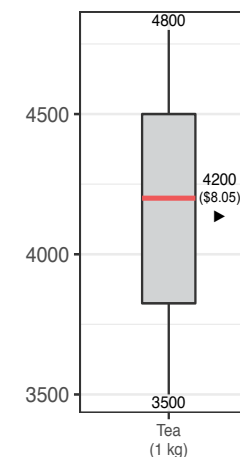
## MOBILE DATA

- The median cheapest price for a gigabyte of data across southern subdistricts decreased to 3,000 SYP in August, after being reported at 3,500 SYP in July.

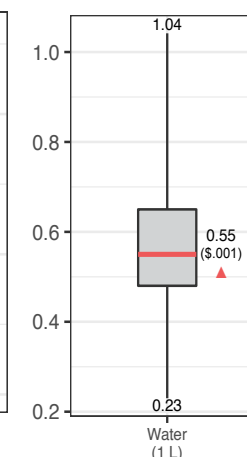
### How to read a box plot



## Tea prices

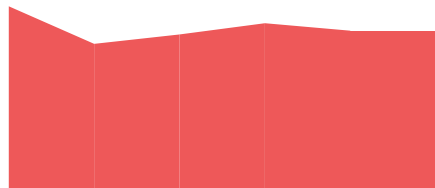


## Water trucking prices



## Median cheapest LP gas prices (SYP)

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
488	388	413	444	425	425



price of petrol rose from 400 SYP to 450 SYP, and diesel from 350 SYP to 450 SYP.

- No community in the south reported having access to manually refined kerosene, as it is reportedly rarely used in the region.

## HYGIENE AND SANITATION ITEMS

- The median cheapest price of toothpaste and liquid soap decreased by 12% and 7% from July. However, this may not be a reliable trend due to a high variation in prices.
- The median cheapest price of sanitary pads increased by 10% from July. However, the trend may be not noteworthy due to high variance of prices.
- No notable change in price was reported for the remaining assessed hygiene and sanitation items from last month.

## AVAILABILITY ISSUES

### Flour in Nabe Elsakher and Rafid communities

In these two communities in Quneitra, bread is available through local distributions and commercial sales in nearby communities. Reportedly, access to flour is therefore not a critical need.

## SMEB (SURVIVAL MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET)

- The median cost of a complete SMEB in southern Syria was 67,873 SYP (130.02 USD).
- Complete SMEBs could be assembled for all 17 assessed subdistricts in southern Syria in August.
- There was no major systematic change in SMEB costs between July and August among the 17 subdistricts with comparable coverage for both months.

## Selected subdistrict SMEBs in August

### Most expensive

Jizeh (86,413 SYP, 165.54 USD)

As-Sanamayn (75,323 SYP, 144.30 USD)

Hrak (72,358 SYP, 138.62 USD)

### Least expensive

Kherbet Ghazala (64,458 SYP, 123.48 USD)

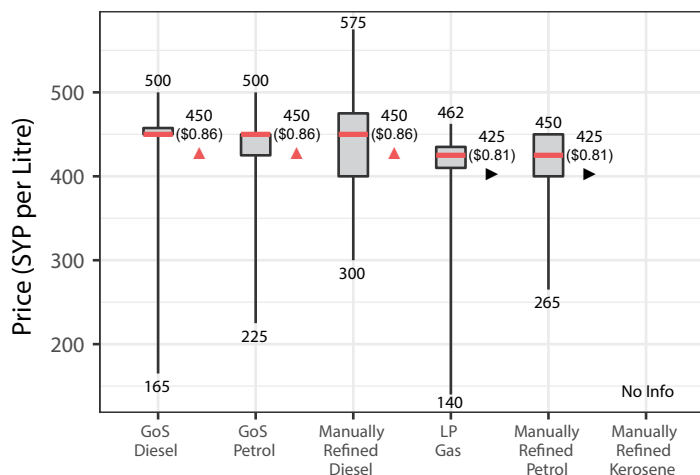
Babella (62,825 SYP, 120.35 USD)

Kisweh (62,417 SYP, 119.57 USD)

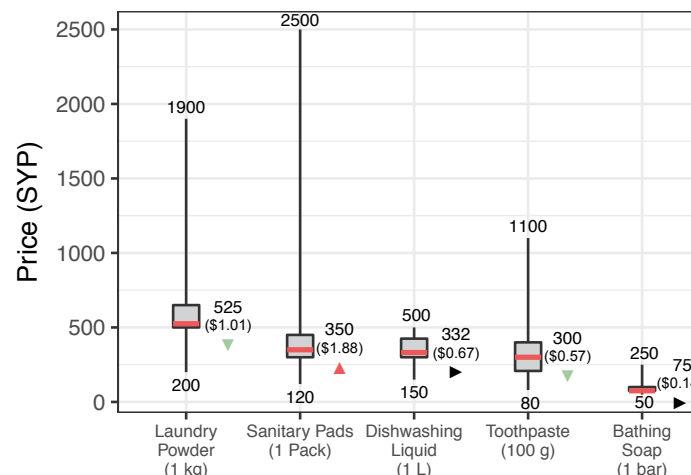
## FUEL

- The median cheapest price for manually-refined diesel increased by approximately 40%, from 300 SYP to 450 SYP in August. In Quneitra subdistrict there was a 134% increase from 235 SYP to 550 SYP and in Jasim a 124% increase from 212.50 SYP to 475 SYP.
- The median cheapest price of GoS petrol and diesel increased at the region-level by 13% and 29%, respectively. The median cheapest

## Fuel prices



## Sanitation and hygiene item prices



## Subdistricts with incomplete SMEBs in August

Subdistrict	Missing items
None	None

## Largest changes in monthly SMEB costs\*

Kisweh (▼ -10%)

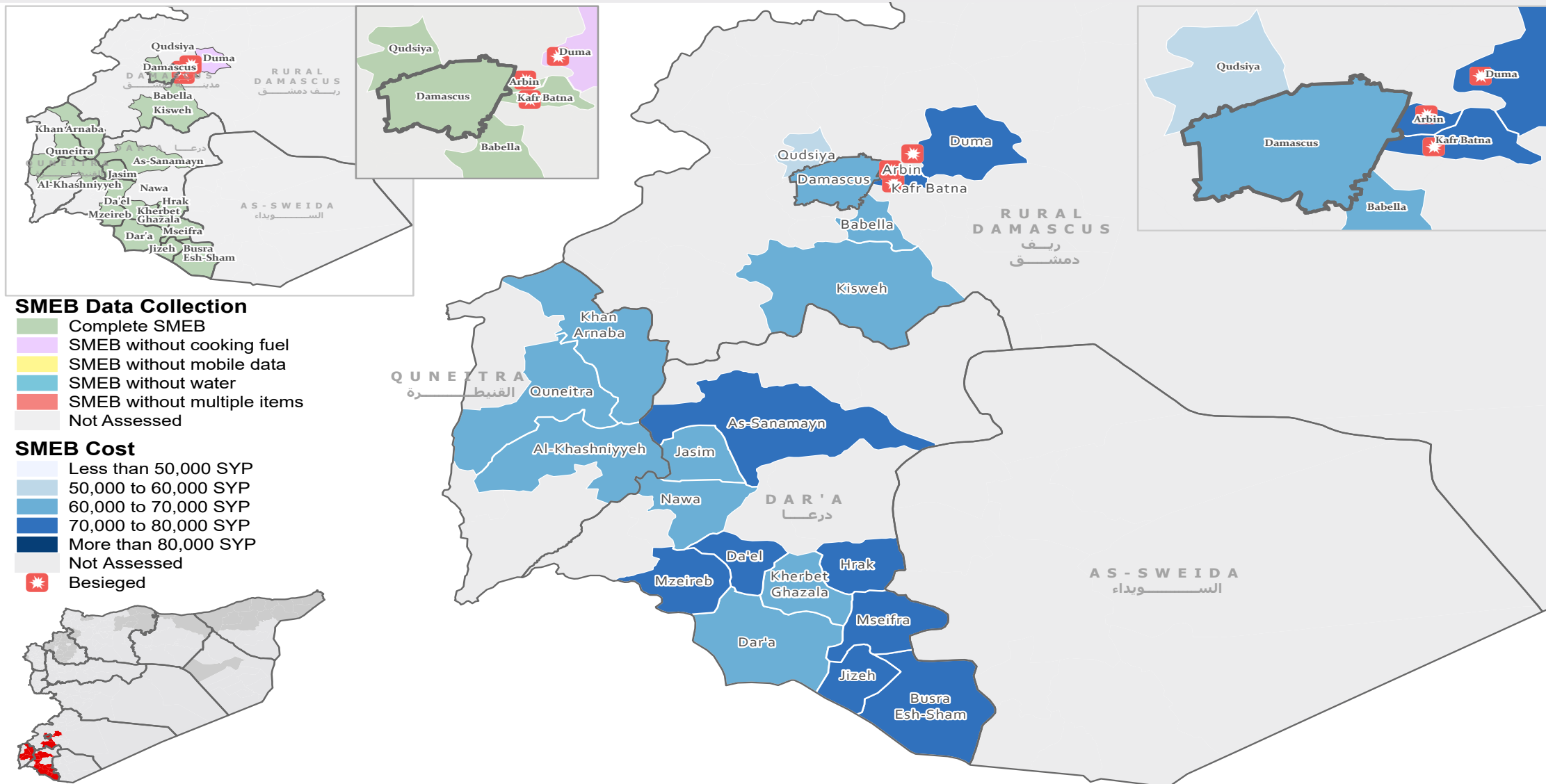
Hrak (▲ +9%)

Kherbet Ghazala (▼ -9%)

\*Only for subdistricts with no change in SMEB composition in the previous round of data collection.

# SOUTH Syria: SMEB Prices

Dar'a, Quneitra, Rural Damascus governorates



## APPENDIX

### WHAT IS THE CASH-BASED RESPONSES TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP?

The Cash-Based Responses Technical Working Group (CBR–TWG) was established in March 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. REACH and the CBR–TWG have been partners on the Syria Market Monitoring Exercise since early 2015. Since February 2017, the exercise expanded coverage into the South, bringing monthly market assessments to communities in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Dar'a and Quneitra governorates.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON METHODOLOGY

To be included in the Syria Market Monitoring Exercise, markets must be permanent in nature, large enough to support at least two wholesalers, and diverse enough to provide a sufficient variety of goods and commodities. The shops surveyed within each market must be housed in permanent structures and must sell certain items to be eligible for inclusion.

Enumerators from participating organisations train their enumerators on the Market Monitoring methodology and data collection tools using standard training materials developed by REACH. Each enumerator aims to assess three to five shops of each type in the main market in their assigned subdistrict, using surveys to collect information about prices, current product inventory and the time needed to replace current stocks. In subdistricts where direct surveying by enumerators is not possible, such as Lattakia and Deir-ez-Zor, data collection is conducted remotely through key informants such as shop owners, suppliers and consumers.

### Overview

Syria Market Monitoring Exercise partners collect data from nine currently besieged communities across four subdistricts.

Subdistrict	Assessed Communities
Deir-ez-Zor	Joura and Qosour
Kafr Batna	Saqba, Ein Terma, Hammura, Jisrein, Beit Sawa, Kafr Batna
Arbin	Arbin
Duma	Duma

Five survey forms are deployed on KoBo each month to capture price and stock information from different types of establishments, including grocery stores, fuel traders, currency exchange shops, water trucking services and mobile phone shops, among others. Nearly all participating partners submit their data to these KoBo forms, using the KoBoCollect Android app to upload data. A small number of partners, by prior permission, collect data using fully harmonised data collection tools deployed on other platforms, then submit their raw data to REACH for standardisation, compilation and cleaning.

Following data collection, REACH compiles and cleans all partners' data, normalising prices and cross-checking outliers. The cleaned data is then analysed by commodity and by subdistrict. Prices are divided into quartiles and boxplots are created to help CBR–TWG members understand the distribution of prices. To illustrate local variations in prices and availability, REACH uses the collected data to map the price of an SMEB in each subdistrict. The cleaned data sets are available on

## BESIEGED COMMUNITIES

### Partial SMEB costs in August

**Deir-ez-Zor**  
(354,840 SYP, 628.04 USD) ▶ 0%

**Duma**  
(165,324 SYP, 322.90 USD) N/A

### Complete SMEB costs in August

**Arbin**  
(227,356 SYP, 454.71 USD) ▼ 9%

**Kafr Batna**  
(260,138 SYP, 509.08 USD) ▼ 2%

### Missing Items

Community	Item
Deir-ez-Zor	SMEB: Chicken, Fresh Vegetables, Red Lentils, Sugar, Toothpaste, Sanitary Pads, Smartphone Data, Water
	Other items: Flour, Milk, Dishwashing Liquid, LP Gas
Duma	SMEB: Cooking Fuel (LP Gas and Kerosene)
Saqba	Other items: Milk

the REACH Resource Centre and are distributed to all participating partners, as well as to interested clusters and the broader humanitarian community.

### CALCULATION OF 'MEDIAN CHEAPEST PRICE'

This figure is calculated by taking the median of the minimum-reported prices of a region's sub-districts. In turn, the minimum-reported prices for each sub-district were based on the median of the minimum-reported prices of the constituent communities.

### CALCULATION OF SURVIVAL MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET (SMEB) COSTS

The cost of a SMEB is calculated for each assessed subdistrict by calculating the median price of each SMEB commodity in that subdistrict, then multiplying these medians by the number of units that an average Syrian household requires to purchase in a month. The composition of the SMEB can be found on page 1.

### ABOUT REACH INITIATIVE

REACH is a joint initiative of two international non-governmental organizations—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 at [www.reach-initiative.org](http://www.reach-initiative.org), contact us directly at [geneva@reach-initiative.org](mailto:geneva@reach-initiative.org) or follow us on Twitter at [@REACH\\_info](https://twitter.com/REACH_info).