HUMANITARIAN SITUATION OVERVIEW OF SYRIA (HSOS)
AR-RAQQA CITY

Spring 2024| Urban household assessment

INTRODUCTION

The HSOS[1] 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.

Given the low number of internally displaced persons (IDPs)[3] 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 community[4] households.

The HSOS Urban Household Assessment is conducted in cooperation with the NES NGO 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.

SYMBOLOGY

■ 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

KEY MESSAGES

🍚 **Financial constraints remained a significant barrier to access food in Raqqa city**, with 96% of households reporting insufficient funds to buy sufficient quantity and quality of food. To cope, most households relied on less preferred or less expensive food, while about 34% resorted to reducing portion size of meals.

💵 **Nearly all households (97%) encountered challenges in meeting basic needs especially due to insufficient wages** that failed to keep pace with rising prices and lack of employment opportunities. Consequently, 86% of households resorted to borrowing money, while 72% cut down on non-food expenses.

🔌 The majority of households (63%) had access to over 12 hours of electricity per day in Raqqa city, where the main network remained the most common source of domestic power. However, **83% of households indicated that the rationing of electricity was a challenge to access sufficient power**. Households also widely reported the high costs of alternative power sources such as solar panels or generators as a challenge.

Other HSOS products

REACH also conducts a regular HSOS assessment using a Key Informant (KI) methodology in over 1,000 communities accross NES and over 600 communities in Northwest Syria (NWS). The HSOS KI products are the following:

• HSOS KI Situation Overviews and Datasets
• HSOS KI Sectoral dashboard
• HSOS KI Trends analysis dashboard
• HSOS KI NES Water and electricity dashboard

# HUMANITARIAN SITUATION OVERVIEW OF SYRIA (HSOS)
AR-RAQQA CITY

Spring 2024| 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 06 and 13 May 2024 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.[5]

- 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

Neighbourhood coverage

- Assessed
- Not assessed

km
0   1   2
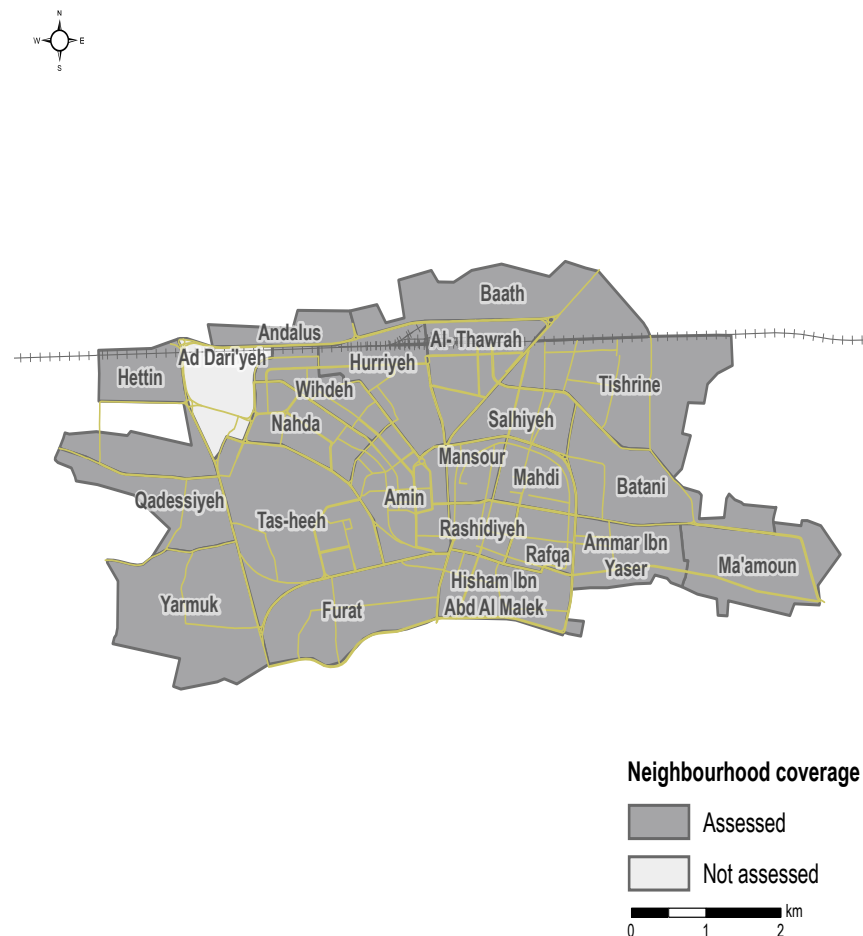
PRIORITY NEEDS

Most commonly reported overall priority needs for host community households (by % of assessed communities)[6]

1	🍲	Food	82%
2		Livelihoods	77%
3	🏠	Shelter	33%

RETURNEES

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

Before 2019	2019	2020	2021+
77%	15%	6%	1%

**100%** of host community households are returnees

2 average number of displacements for returnee households

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Average # of houshold members	Average # of children (0-5)	Average # of children (6-17)	Average # of adults (18+)	Average # of older people (60+)
7.8	1.4	2.7	3.7	0.4

Households' movement intentions

No plans to leave	Yes within 1 month	Yes within longer timeframe	Don't know
94%	<1%	<1%	4%
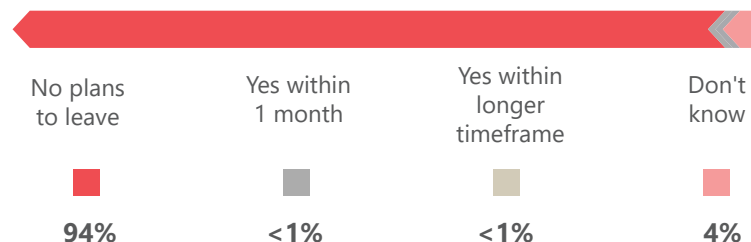
IDPs%

Date of arrival (count of IDP households that arrived in each period, on a total of 22 IDP households surveyed)

Before 2019	2019	2020	2021+
4	9	3	6

4 average number of displacements for IDP households

Most common governorates of origin for IDP households

1	Deir-ez-Zor	8
1	Ar-Raqqa	6
2	Aleppo	5

Most common sub-districts of origin for IDP households

1	Abu Kamal	5
2	Tell Abiad	5
2	Al Mayadin	2

39% of households with newborns (0-1)

72% of households with young children (0-5)

85% of households with school-aged children (6-17)

92% of households with children (0-17)

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SAFETY AND PROTECTION

28% 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 [28%])▼

1	Birth certificate issued by the Government of Syria	63%
2	Syrian identity card issued by the Government of Syria	57%
3	Family booklet issued by the Government of Syria	20%

72% of households who reported theft as a security concern ●

Freedom of movement for all household member within the location
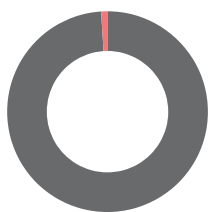
■	Yes	**99%**
■	No	**1%**

Household's relationship with other community members

Very positive	Positive	Neither positive nor negative
■	■	■
36%	**59%**	**5%**

30% 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 84% of households facing concerns)▼

Confidence of being able to reside in the current place of residence for 3 more months

Very confident	Confident	Somewhat confident	Not confident	Don't know
■	■	■	■	■
81%	**11%**	**3%**	**4%**	**1%**

● Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection
■ Refers to the current situation at the time of data collection

▼ Findings are not representative

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HOUSING SITUATION

Most common shelter types ■

1	Solid/finished house	**84%**
2	Solid/finished apartment	**11%**
3	Unfinished or abandoned residential building	**3%**

Average % of monthly income spent on rent
5%
Average expenditure on rent as a % of total household expenditure[8]
5%

Most common occupancy arrangements ■

1	Owning	**62%**
2	Renting	**26%**
3	Hosted	**11%**

Rental contract type (by % of households who are renting [26%]) ■

- ■ Written contract **46%**
- ■ Verbal agreement **54%**
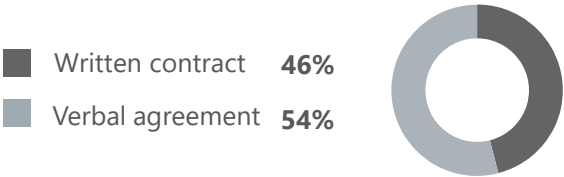
93%

of households renting a property who faced difficulties in finding a place to rent ■

Most common difficulties in finding a place to rent for households (by % of households who faced difficulties [93%])[7, ▼, ■]
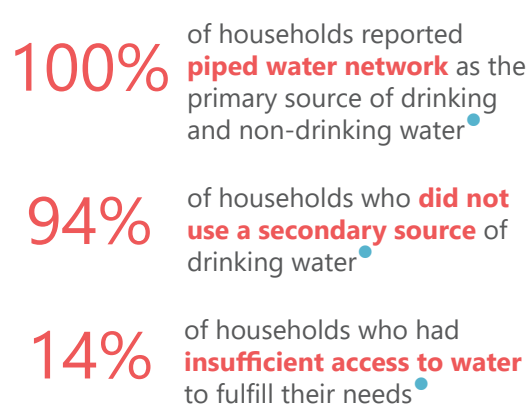
Difficult to find an affordable accommodation	**92%**
Landlord requesting large first instalment or deposit	**46%**
Difficult to find a big enough shelter for all family members	**23%**
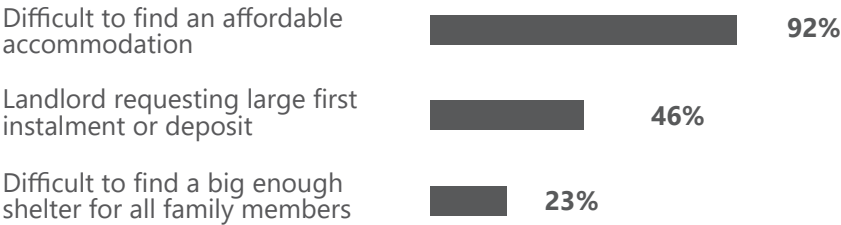
SHELTER CONDITIONS

75% of households whose shelter had inadequacies ■

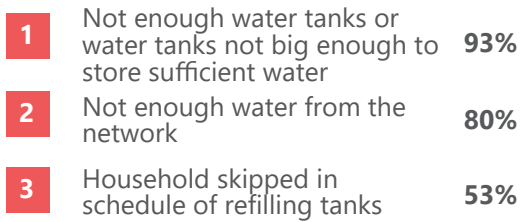**Shelter inadequacies** (by % of households who experienced issues) ■

Poor sanitation	**48%**
Leakage from roof/ceiling during rain	**37%**
Windows/doors not sealed	**33%**
Lack of space/overcrowding	**32%**
Lack of electricity	**26%**
Lack of lighting around shelter	**23%**
Lack of water	**23%**
Lack of privacy	**19%**
Unable to lock home securely	**15%**
Lack of lighting inside shelter	**8%**
High temperatures inside shelters	**5%**
Lack of insulation from cold	**2%**
Lack of ventilation: stuffy, bad smells	**1%**

■ Refers to the current situation at the time of data collection
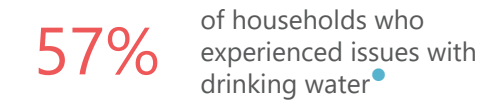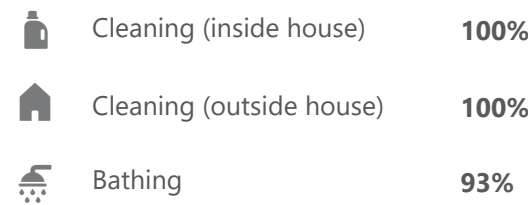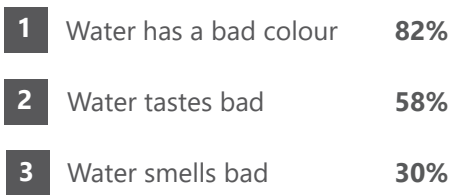▼ Findings are not representative

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ACCESS TO WATER

100% of households reported **piped water network** as the primary source of drinking and non-drinking water•

94% of households who **did not use a secondary source** of drinking water•

14% of households who had **insufficient access to water** to fulfill their needs•

Common barriers to accessing water for households (as % of households who had insufficient water access [14%])[7],•,▼

1	Not enough water tanks or water tanks not big enough to store sufficient water	93%
2	Not enough water from the network	80%
3	Household skipped in schedule of refilling tanks	53%

Most common water needs for which households had to reduce consumption (as % of households who reduced water consumption [14%])[7],•,▼

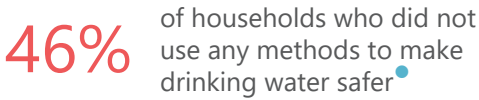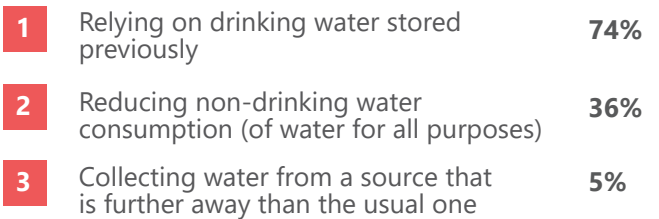| Cleaning (inside house) | 100% |
| Cleaning (outside house) | 100% |
| Bathing | 93% |

57% of households who experienced issues with drinking water•

Most common problems with drinking water (as % of households)•

1	Water has a bad colour	82%
2	Water tastes bad	58%
3	Water smells bad	30%

| **Average % of monthly income spent on water**[8] |
| **<1%** |
| **Average expenditure on water as a % of total household expenditure**[8] |
| **<1%** |

Most common strategies applied by households to avoid running out of water (as % of households who applied some coping strategy [40%])[7],•,▼

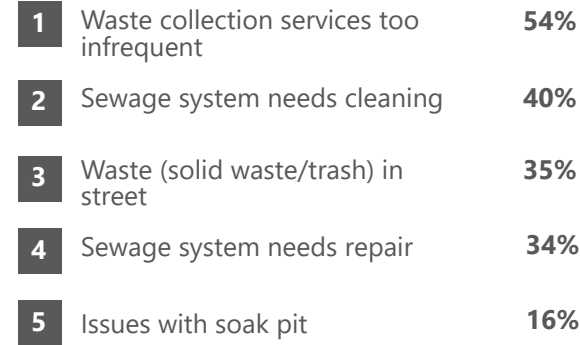| 1 | Relying on drinking water stored previously | 74% |
| 2 | Reducing non-drinking water consumption (of water for all purposes) | 36% |
| 3 | Collecting water from a source that is further away than the usual one | 5% |

46% 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	36%
2	Household filters	13%
3	Boiling	9%

ACCESS TO SANITATION

80% of households who experienced sanitation issues•
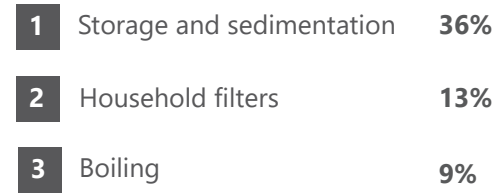
Common sanitation issues for households (as % of households who experienced sanitation issues [80%])[7],•,▼

1	Waste collection services too infrequent	54%
2	Sewage system needs cleaning	40%
3	Waste (solid waste/trash) in street	35%
4	Sewage system needs repair	34%
5	Issues with soak pit	16%

• Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection

▼ Findings are not representative

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ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY

Primary source of electricity[•]

■ Main network	**85%**	
■ Community generator	**12%**	
■ Solar panels	**2%**	
■ Private generators	**1%**	
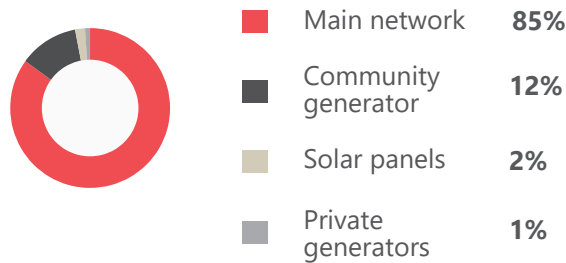
Secondary source of electricity (by % of households who had a secondary source [71%])[7,•]

1	Community generator	**64%**
2	Solar panels	**5%**
3	Main network	**2%**
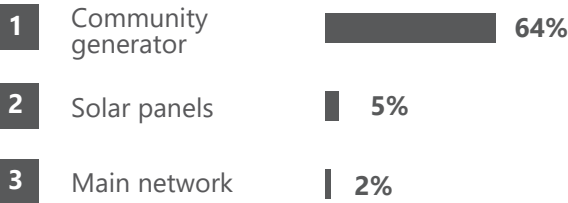
Average % of monthly income spent on electricity[8]
2%
Average expenditure on electricity as a % of total household expenditure[8]
2%

29% of households who did not have access to a secondary source of electricity[•]

96% of households who experienced issues with accessing electricity[•]

Average number of hours of electricity per day[•]

11.5 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
35%	**28%**	**11%**	**23%**	**3%**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**

Most common challenges to accessing electricity[7,•]

1	Rationing of electricity by local authorities	**83%**
2	Solar panels too expensive	**67%**
3	Electricity from the community generator is too expensive	**61%**
4	Private generators too expensive	**19%**
5	Community generator needs repairs	**16%**

[•] Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection

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INCOME SOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT

Sources of income in the month prior to data collection[7]

Employment (including self-employment/entrepreneurship)	98%
Borrowing/loans	87%
Financial support from family members or friends (from inside Syria)	10%
Selling assets	8%
Humanitarian assistance (cash vouchers)	6%
Remittances (from outside Syria)	6%

Most common employment sectors (by % of households where employment is a source of income [98%])[7,]■

1	Real estate/construction	21%	6	Sewing/textiles	8%
2	Wholesale/retail	13%	7	Agriculture	7%
3	Machinery/mechanics/repairs	10%	7	Government/public services	7%
4	Trade/transportation	9%	8	Marketplace vending	6%
5	Education/childcare	8%	9	Health care services	5%

Most common primary source of income for households[9,]■

1	Self-employment/entrepreneurship	38%
2	Informal day-to-day work agreements (verbal)	30%
3	Longer-term formal employment agreement (written, 1 month+)	16%

41% of households reported self-employment/entrepreneurship as a source of income■

Average number of adults per households who are:	
Employed	1.4
Not in employment	2.3
Not employed and looking for a job (unemployed)[10]	0.5

INCOME AND EXPENSES

Average monthly income for a family of 6 members[11]	Average monthly expense for a family of 6 members[12]	Average monthly deficit for a family of 6 members
3,193,056 SYP	2,792,794 SYP	400,262 SYP

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

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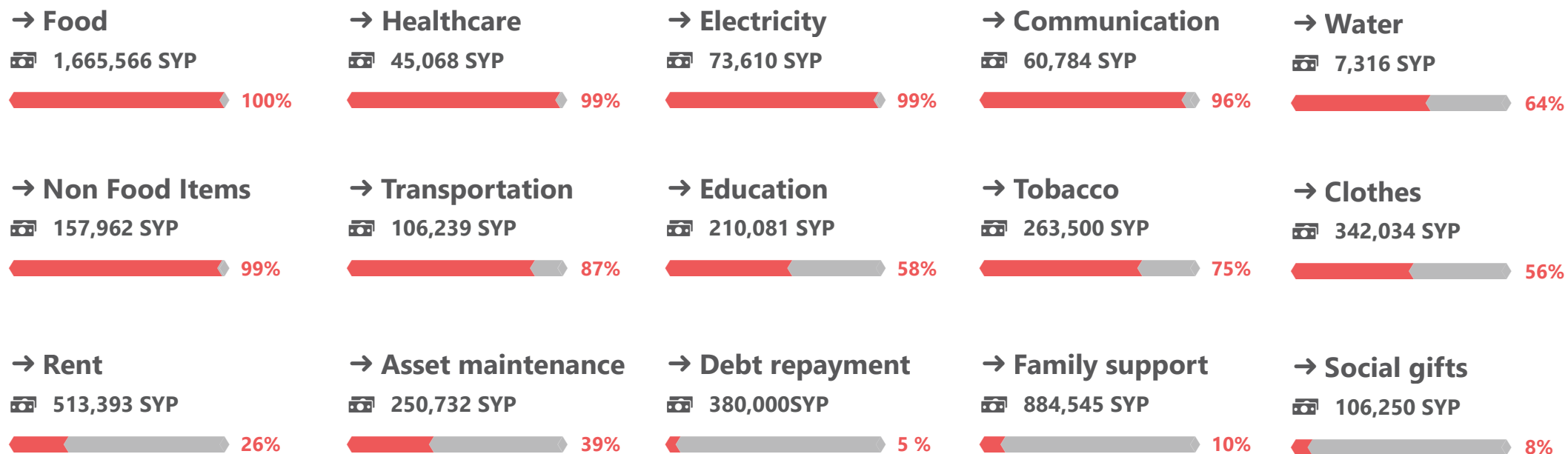# INCOME AND EXPENSES

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

Share of households who spent money on the expense category

→ **Food**
1,665,566 SYP
100%

→ **Healthcare**
45,068 SYP
99%

→ **Electricity**
73,610 SYP
99%

→ **Communication**
60,784 SYP
96%

→ **Water**
7,316 SYP
64%

→ **Non Food Items**
157,962 SYP
99%

→ **Transportation**
106,239 SYP
87%

→ **Education**
210,081 SYP
58%

→ **Tobacco**
263,500 SYP
75%

→ **Clothes**
342,034 SYP
56%

→ **Rent**
513,393 SYP
26%

→ **Asset maintenance**
250,732 SYP
39%

→ **Debt repayment**
380,000SYP
5 %

→ **Family support**
884,545 SYP
10%

→ **Social gifts**
106,250 SYP
8%

ABILITY TO MEET BASIC NEEDS

Households' perceived ability to meet basic needs •

Very poor	**4%**
Poor	**26%**
Fair	**67%**
Very good	**3%**
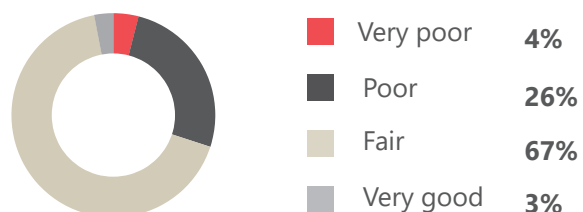
Change in the households' ability to meet basic needs over the last three months

Significant deterioration	**17%**
Some deterioratiom	**41%**
No change	**39%**
Some improvement	**2%**

• Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection

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ABILITY TO MEET BASIC NEEDS

% of households with savings ■

3%

No

Yes
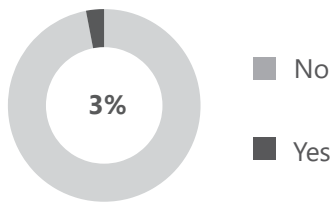
% of households in debt ■

90%
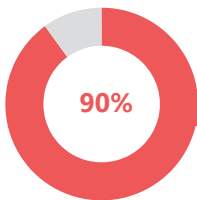
% of households able to repay their debt in 6 months ▼

No	**40%**
Don't know	**51%**
Yes	**9%**

Most common barriers to meeting basic needs (as % of households who experienced barriers [97%]) ■

1	The wage is not commensurate with the rising prices	**95%**
2	Lack of employment opportunities	**83%**
3	Lack of skills for a better paying job	**50%**

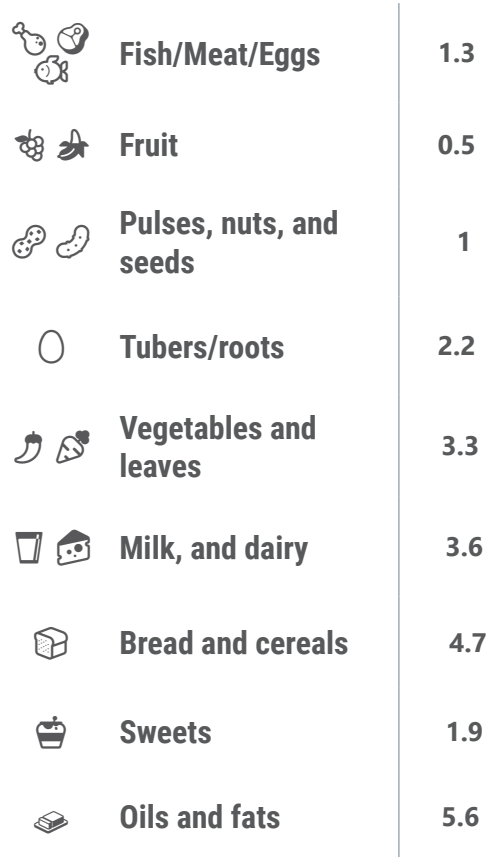| **Average % of monthly income spent on debt repayment**[8] |
|---|
| **1%** |
| **Average expenditure on debt repayment as a % of total household expenditure**[8] |
| **1%** |

Most common coping strategies adopted to meet basic needs (as % of households who applied coping strategies [98%]) ●

1	Borrowing money	**88%**
2	Decreasing non-food expenditures (health, education, etc.)	**73%**
3	Purchasing items on credit	**62%**
4	Withdrawing children from school	**27%**
5	Sending children below 15 to work	**19%**

41% of households whose monthly income was lower than their estimated monthly expenses

■ Refers to the current situation at the time of data collection
● Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection

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FOOD ACCESS AND CONSUMPTION

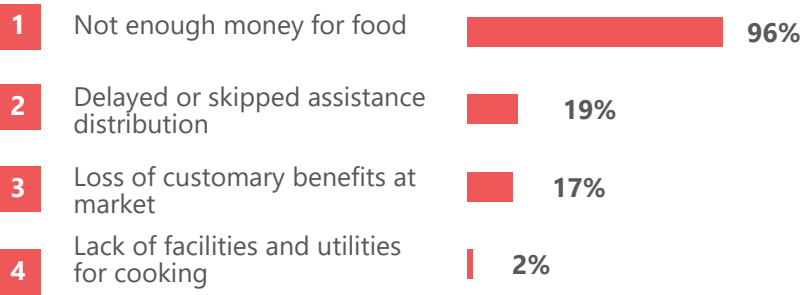**Average number of days food groups were consumed by households in the 7 days prior to data collection**

Food group	Days
Fish/Meat/Eggs	1.3
Fruit	0.5
Pulses, nuts, and seeds	1
Tubers/roots	2.2
Vegetables and leaves	3.3
Milk, and dairy	3.6
Bread and cereals	4.7
Sweets	1.9
Oils and fats	5.6

Most common source of food ■

■ Permanent market	**97%**
■ Other than markets	**3%**

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%])[7] ●

1	Not enough money for food	**96%**
2	Delayed or skipped assistance distribution	**19%**
3	Loss of customary benefits at market	**17%**
4	Lack of facilities and utilities for cooking	**2%**

4% of households reporting perceiving that at least one member had lost weight in the last 3 month due to insufficient food access ●

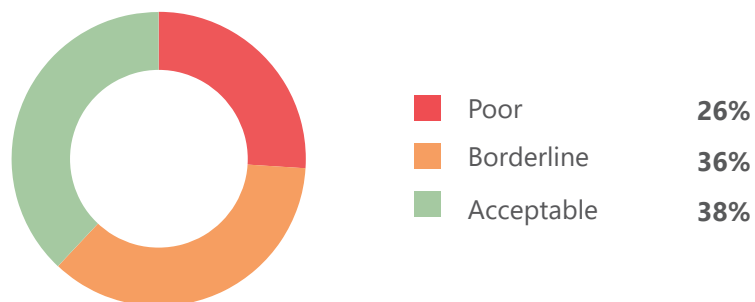|	
Average % of monthly income spent on food[8]	
49%	
Average expenditure on food as a % of total household expenditure[8]	
51%	
Average monthly food expenditure per person in a household	
1,665,566 SYP	
% of households whose monthly food expenditure is more than 50% of their total expenditure	
59%	

28% of households who did not consume any eggs, meat or fish in the 7 days prior to data collection

72% of households who did not consume any fruit in the 7 days prior to data collection

■ Refers to the current situation at the time of data collection
● Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection

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FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE (FCS)[14]

Food Consumption Score (by % of households)

Poor	**26%**
Borderline	**36%**
Acceptable	**38%**

62%   of households with children with **poor** or **borderline** food consumption

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FCS Interpretation[14]

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

4.6   **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 stress rCSI score in Ar-Raqqa city.

Coping strategies (CS) in the 7 days prior to data collection (for households who experienced barriers in accessing sufficient food [92%])

	Average #days per week CS was applied	% of households who applied CS
Relied on less preferred/less expensive food	**2.9**	**92%**
Borrowed food or relied on help from friends	**0.1**	**5%**
Reduced the portion size of meals at meal time	**0.7**	**34%**
Reduced the number of meals eaten per day	**0.9**	**43%**
Restricted the consumption by adults in order for young children to eat	**<1%**	**1%**
At least one member of the household spent a whole day without eating	**<1%**	**1%**

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

% of households with unmet health needs[●,15]

25%
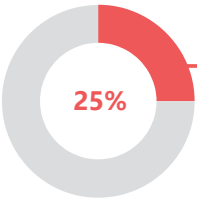
Most common inaccessible health treatments (by % of households with unmet health needs [25%])[7,▼,●]

1	Medicines or other commodities	59%
2	Paediatric consultations	59%
3	Treatment for chronic diseases	44%
4	General and/or specialist surgical services	30%
5	Dental services	11%

Most common inaccessible types of medicine (by % of households with unmet health needs related to medicines and other commodities [59%])[7,▼,●]

1	Antibiotics	100%
2	Painkillers/analgesics	75%
3	Diabetes medicines	38%
4	Medications for hypertension/heart conditions	38%
5	Children medicines, vaccines or malnutrition treatment	19%

96% of households who experienced issues with accessing healthcare[●]

Average % of monthly income spent on healthcare[8]
12%
Average expenditure on health care as a % of total household expenditure[8]
13%

Most common challenges to accessing healthcare (by % of households)[7,●]

1	Cannot afford price of medicines	84%
2	Cannot afford treatment costs	79%
3	Health facilities overcrowded and/or long waiting times	56%

Most common coping strategies (by % of host community households with unmet health needs [25%])[7,▼,●]

1	Going to a pharmacy instead of a clinic	100%
2	Taking lower than the recommended dosage of medication	70%
3	Foregoing non-essential treatment	59%

**Households with at least one member who showed signs of psychological distress**[●]

Yes		51%
No		48%
Don't Know		1%

▼ Findings are not representative
● Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection

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ACCESS TO EDUCATION

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

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

School attendance for children aged 15-17
(by % of households with school-aged children (15-17))▼
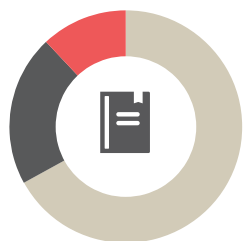
	All regularly attended school	67%
	Some regularly attended school	21%
	None attended school	12%
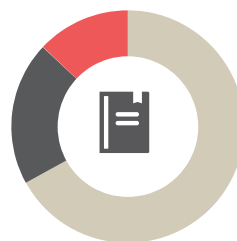
	All regularly attended school	67%
	Some regularly attended school	20%
	None attended school	13%
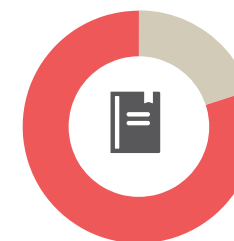
	Some regularly attended school	20%
	All regularly attended school	0%
	None attended school	80%

Average % of monthly income spent on education[8]
3%
Average expenditure on education as a % of total household expenditure[8]
3%

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 [48%])[7],▼

1	Children have to work	55%
2	Unable to afford learning material and/or pay for school fees	53%
3	Challenges specific to girls	18%

Most commonly reported difficulties faced by school-aged children while attending school (by % of households where at least one of the children attended school [71%])[7],▼,●

1	Quality of available education is poor/perceived to be poor	44%
2	School lacks trained teachers	27%
2	Classes are overcrowded	25%

▼ Findings are not representative
● Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection

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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▼.

he 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. 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.

4. 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).

5. 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..

6. 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).

7. Respondents could select multiple answers, thus findings might exceed 100%.

8. Computed for households who had this particular expense in the 30 days prior to data collection.

9. 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.

10. Calculated for households where employment is a source of income.

11. Computed as the mean of (household income/number of household members)*6.

12. Computed as the mean of (household expense/number of household members)*6.

13. Computed by comparing (household income/number of household members) to (2,205,602 SYP/6), where 2,205,602 is the median value of the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) for a family of 6 in Ar-Raqqa governorate, from the April 2024 Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI).

14. 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

15. 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).