

Monthly Factsheet: CWG Iraq - Joint Price Monitoring Initiative

August 2017

CWG

**CASH
WORKING
GROUP**

REACH An initiative of
IMPACT Initiatives
ACTED and UNOSAT

INTRODUCTION

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

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

PARTICIPATING PARTNERS

DRC	ACTED
IRC	GRC/IRCS
NRC	Mercy Corps
REACH Iraq	Oxfam GB
Relief Int	TdH
Tearfund	WHH
Triangle GH	
World Vision	

METHODOLOGY

Data collection for the JPMI occurs on a monthly basis, with associated factsheets and datasets published after every round. Data collection for the tenth round of the JPMI was conducted between 22 and 31 August, during which time enumerators from 14 participating partner agencies (ACTED, DRC, GRC/IRCS, IRC, Mercy Corps, NRC, Oxfam GB, REACH Iraq, Relief International, TdH, Tearfund, Triangle GH, WHH and World Vision) gathered price data in 298 shops from 70 markets in 15 districts across Anbar, Baghdad, Dohuk, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah al-Din governorates. In addition, to calculate average monthly rent, transportation and communication costs, the CWG compiled post-distribution monitoring data provided by partner agencies and UNHCR.

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

1. In districts with limited market capacity, some markets with 1-2 wholesalers were categorized as Central Markets.

2. Some exceptions were made based on partner feedback.

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

CHALLENGES & LIMITATIONS

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

JPMI KEY FIGURES

- 14** Participating Partner Agencies
- 6** Assessed Governorates
- 15** Assessed Districts
- 70** Markets Assessed
- 298** Shops Assessed

ASSESSED DISTRICTS

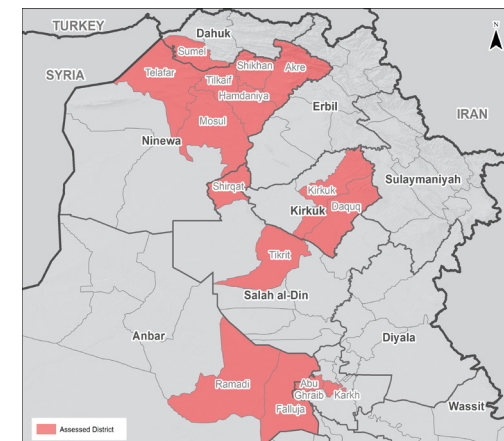


TABLE 1: SURVIVAL MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET (SMEB)

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

** Health values are not included in the total calculation of the SMEB within this factsheet

assessed markets in Mosul district.

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

Collected price data is representative at the district level. In addition, all data is gathered by partner agencies of the JPMI - as such, the geographic coverage of the JPMI was determined by partner capacity and interest, and can shift over time. For this round of data collection, two previously assessed districts – Khanaqin and Erbil – became inactive due to shifting partner programming priorities or partner availability during the data collection period. While these districts will not be included in the comparative analysis for this round, they will likely be included in future rounds as partner operations expand.

For this round of the JPMI, only 14 of 15 districts have comparable price data for July as Shirqat district has not been covered by the JPMI before. Thus, this district is not included in the sections of the analysis below that concern percentage change from last month, however the district is included in the sections of the analysis that concern the highest and lowest prices for food and NFIs.

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

In reporting on percentage changes in price data, it is important to note that while the reported changes

are representative of the assessed markets, it is possible for particularly small changes in percentage to fall within the margin of error of the assessment.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Across all assessed items prices remained similar to July, with a small decrease of -1.1%. Across the 14 assessed districts with comparable data for July, 8 of 14 saw overall prices decrease, while 6 of 14 reported increases. Of those experiencing decreases, the largest were reported in Telafar (-15.5%), Daquq (-10.5%) and Tilkaif (-9.5%). Of those districts reporting increases, the largest were seen in Mosul (+12.2%) and Tilkaif (+5.4%). For Mosul, over the past three months the district has shown relatively high monthly variations in prices when compared to other districts. Last month, for example, the district saw the largest change, with a -18.6% decrease in overall prices.

PRICES OF FOOD ITEMS

Overall, prices for the five assessed SMEB food items (lentils, sugar, rice, vegetable oil and wheat flour) decreased in 8 of 14 districts for which there is comparable data from July. This amounted to a -1.0% net decrease. The most notable decrease in average food prices was in Daquq (-13.2%), followed by Hamdaniya (-6.2%) and Shikhan (-4.1%). Daquq saw a -23.7% fall in the price of lentils and a -13.6% drop in the price of rice, Hamdaniya saw a -25.2% drop in the price of rice and Shikhan saw a -12.5% fall in the price of wheat flour. Out of the six assessed districts that saw food prices increase, the largest were seen in Mosul (+7.2%), Tikrit (+7.1%) and Tilkaif (+4.6%). Mosul reported a +27.7% increase in the price of wheat flour and a +16.7% increase in the price of rice. Tikrit also saw a significant increase in the price of wheat flour by +29.2%, while Tilkaif saw a +19.0% increase in the price of rice. The trend seen since April - of average food prices dropping in the majority of districts - continued in August.

KEY AVERAGE PRICE CHANGES OF ASSESSED GOODS BY DISTRICT

TELAJAR	-15.5%	↓
MOSUL	+12.2%	↑
DAQUQ	-10.5%	↓

However, as in previous months, decreases were generally small, by less than 10% in seven of the eight districts that reported a fall in overall food prices for August.

In August, Karkh recorded the highest food prices, followed by Abu Ghraib and Falluja. This finding continues the trend observed since the start of the JPMI, of the two assessed Baghdad districts recording among the highest overall food item prices. Karkh reported the highest price for wheat flour (1,017.50 IQD/kg) and Fallujah the highest price for rice (1,435.00 IQD/kg). Although recording the second highest food prices overall, Abu Ghraib district did not record the highest price for any particular item. Out of the 15 districts covered in August, the new district – Shirqat – recorded the lowest price for food, followed by Hamdaniya and Shikhan. Shirqat recorded the second lowest price for rice (755.00 IQD/kg) and wheat flour (506.45 IQD/kg), while Hamdaniya had the lowest price for rice (898.57 IQD/kg) and Shikhan recorded the lowest price for lentils (1267.65 IQD/kg). As in all previous rounds, the food item with the most significant variation in price between the districts was wheat flour, with a 525.83 IQD difference between the highest price (1017.50 IQD/kg) in Karkh and the lowest price (491.67 IQD/kg) in Mosul.

PRICES OF NFI ITEMS

Out of the 14 districts for which there is comparable data from July, exactly half saw overall NFI prices increase and half saw NFI prices decrease. For the

seven districts that saw increases, the largest were seen in Tilkaif (+8.2%), Karkh (+7.9%) and Shikhan (+4.8%). Tilkaif saw a +29.0% increase in the price of bath soap, Karkh saw a +11.7% increase in the price of toothbrushes and Shikhan saw +8.5% increase in the price of toothpaste. For those districts that saw overall NFI prices fall, the largest decreases were recorded for Kirkuk (-15.7%), Mosul (-11.8%) and Hamdaniya (-8.3%). The drop in NFI prices was driven by a -34.4% decrease in the price of shampoo for Kirkuk, while Mosul reported a -43.9% fall in the price of garbage bags. For Hamdaniya, the fall in overall NFI prices was driven by a -17.5% fall in the price of disinfectant solution. Although seven districts reported price increases and seven districts reported price decreases for NFIs, the price decreases were notably larger than the increases.

As in July, in August the highest prices for NFIs were reported in Ramadi and Telafar districts. Tilkaif district recorded the third highest prices for NFIs. As in all previous months in which the district was included, Ramadi reported the highest price for shampoo (3,312.00 IQD/500ml) and Telafar recorded the highest price for garbage bags (2,105.15 IQD/pack) for the second month running. Tilkaif recorded the highest prices for bath soap (395.13 IQD/125g) and disinfectant solution (1,900 IQD/1L).

The lowest overall prices for NFIs were found in Mosul, Hadamiya and Shikhan. All three districts

OVERALL CHANGES IN AVERAGE PRICES OF GOODS

NFI	- 1.8%	↓
FOOD	-1.0%	↓
FUEL	+ 0.6%	↑

recorded very similar overall prices, within 233 IQD of each other. Mosul recorded the lowest overall price for sanitary napkins (116.67 IQD/unit), while Hamdaniya recorded the lowest price for bath soap (220.50 IQD/125g) and toothbrushes (350.91 IQD/unit). Despite recording the third lowest overall prices, Shikhan did not record the lowest price for any particular item.

As has been the case in all previous months, NFIs saw more significant variation in price than food items, with four of seven items reporting a 140% or greater difference between the most expensive and least expensive average prices recorded across all assessed districts.

PRICES OF FUEL ITEMS

Fuel prices remained very similar to July, with a negligible increase of +0.6%. Butane prices stayed consistent, with a +0.6% increase in overall average price. The most significant price changes were seen in Ramadi, with a -13.4% decrease in price, and in Daquq, with a -5.6% decrease. Unlike butane, kerosene saw a slight decrease in price, amounting to -0.8%. The most significant changes were seen in Tikrit – with a -23.8% decrease – and in Hamdaniya, with a +20.4% increase.

DOMESTIC VS. IMPORTED GOODS

For all assessed goods, enumerators recorded whether the item was imported or domestically produced. The overwhelming majority of both NFI and food items were imported - 97.2% of NFIs and

PERCENT OF GOODS IMPORTED

NFIs	97.2%
FOOD	94.0%
FUEL	27.6%

94.0% of food items respectively. However, butane and kerosene were mostly domestic, with an average of 71.2% being produced in Iraq. For most assessed items, prices for imported and domestic goods were similar, although for the majority domestic items were slightly cheaper.

CENTRAL VS. SECONDARY MARKETS

Overall, 11 of 15 districts reported higher prices in secondary markets. Two districts reported higher prices in central markets and two districts recorded no difference in overall prices between the two market types. Shikhan reported that all goods were more expensive at secondary markets, while Karkh and Ramadi reported that 11 of 14 goods were more expensive at secondary markets. To the contrary, in Kirkuk and Daquq, 10 of 14 items and 8 of 14 items respectively were reported to be more expensive at central markets. Items that were generally more expensive at secondary markets were lentils, rice, sugar, vegetable oil, wheat flour, butane, bath soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, sanitary napkins and garbage bags. The only item that was reportedly generally cheaper at central markets was kerosene. For disinfectant solution, half of districts reported that it was cheaper at central markets and half reported that it was cheaper at secondary markets.

SHORTAGES

For every surveyed item, retailers were asked whether there had been a shortage of that item within the past 30 days. Only 2 of 70 assessed markets reported significant (50% or more of surveyed shops) shortages. Bardiya market in Telafar district reported a shortage

KEY REPORTED SHORTAGES

Lentils and Toothbrushes

of lentils, while Resala district in Baghdad reported a shortage of lentils and toothbrushes.

New Districts

The August round included one new district – Shirqat. The district recorded the lowest SMEB value of the 15 districts covered in August. It also reported the lowest prices for food items, including the lowest price for rice (755.00 IQD/kg) and wheat flour (506.45 IQD/kg). For NFIs and fuel, the district did not record any notably high or low average prices.

Although not a new district, in August the JPMI expanded coverage to West Mosul for the first time, collecting price data from Al Resala market. The average prices for assessed items were generally higher in this market than elsewhere in Mosul district, but not significantly so. In the future, coverage in West Mosul is set to expand to include more markets.

SMEB CALCULATION

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

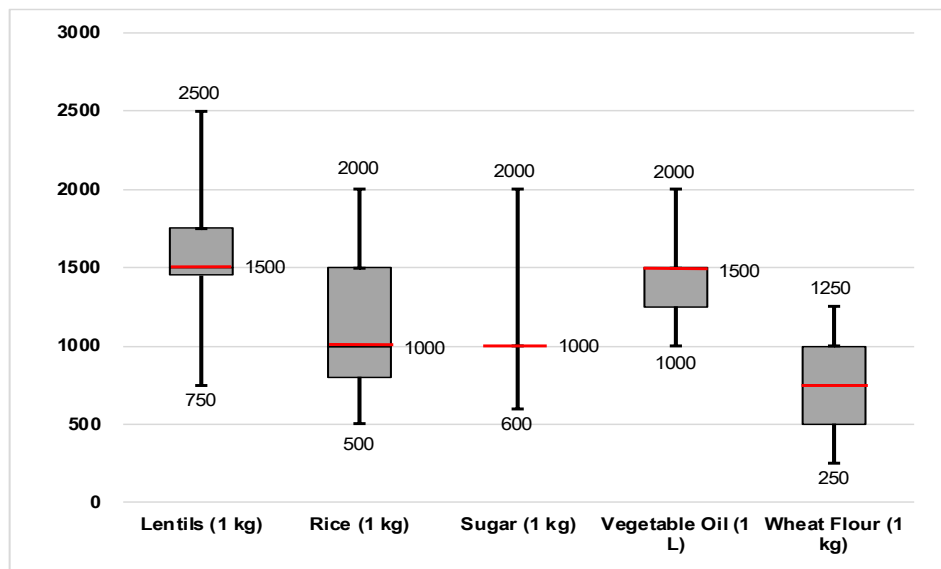
TABLE 2: AVERAGE SMEB VALUES

District	IQD	USD ³
Fallujah	724,980.12	618.28
Ramadi ⁴	707,343.83	603.24
Karkh	632,301.00	539.24
Abu Ghraib	510,702.71	435.54
Kirkuk	435,182.80	371.13
Akre ⁴	393,047.03	335.20
Shikhan	384,786.58	328.15
Sumel	372,428.71	317.61
Tilkaif ⁴	371,484.61	316.81
Daquq	362,950.10	309.53
Talafar	350,125.71	298.59
Tikrit	348,732.01	297.41
Mosul	327,850.01	279.60
Hamdaniya ⁴	305,835.65	260.82
Shirqat	301,688.42	257.29

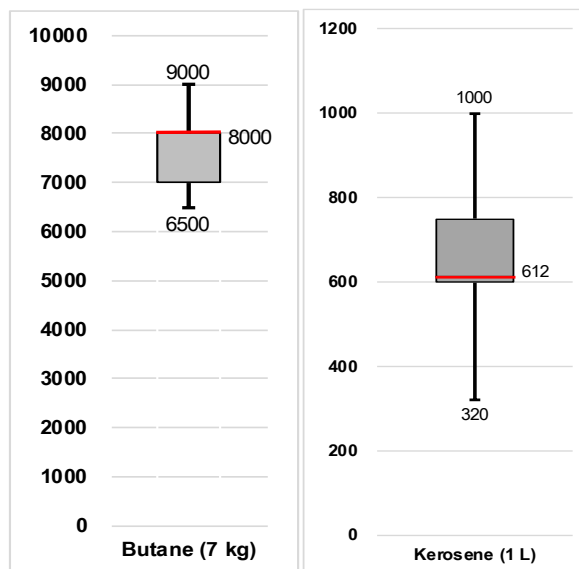
3. Exchange rate of 1 USD 1,170.00 IQD retrieved from www.xe.com on 24 September 2017.

4. Average PDM data from neighbouring districts used to supplement.

FOOD ITEMS

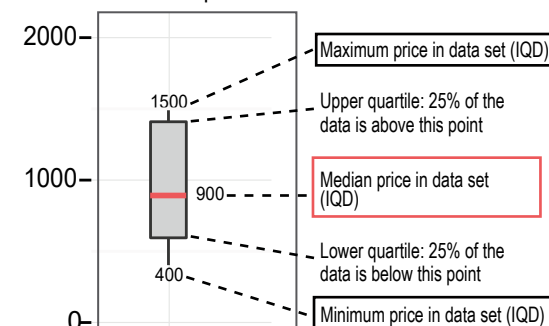


FUEL

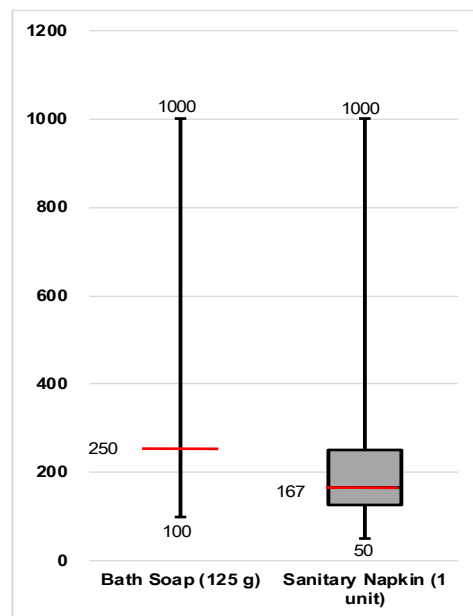
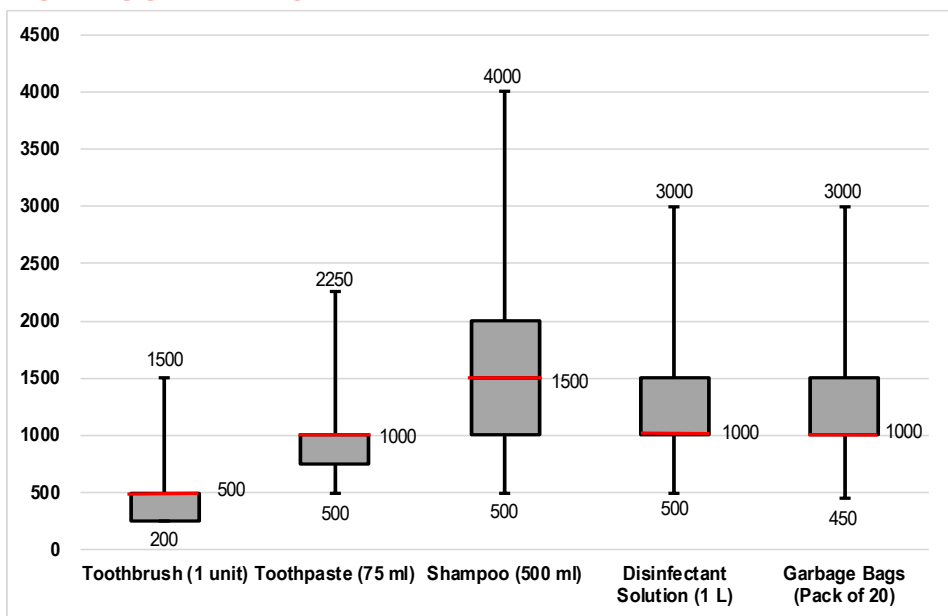


How to Read a Boxplot

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



NON-FOOD ITEMS



CWG - Iraq JPMI Average District SMEB Values (August 2017)

