

Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB)

The SMEB is a tool designed by the Cash-based responses Technical Working Group (CBR-TWG) for Northern Syria. The [first version of the SMEB](#) was developed in 2014 and formed the basis of the northern Syria joint market monitoring a partnership between CBR-TWG member NGOs & REACH. The current SMEB is based on the [2017 Revision](#). The SMEB is designed as an indicator of the cost of the minimum, culturally-appropriate items that a family of 6 needs to survive for one month, while meeting basic standards for nutritious food, water use and hygiene in Northern Syria. The cost of the SMEB can be used as a proxy for the financial burdens facing households in different locations.

Exchange rate trends

Between March and April 2024, the regional The median informal USD/SYP exchange rate slightly decreased in October, which follows several months of relative exchange rate stability, especially compared to 2023 when the SYP recorded its largest loss of value in the currencies history. While this stabilization trend has provided households and vendors some respite vis-à-vis declines in purchasing power, it should be noted that the underlying financial and economic dynamic in Syria remains dire and further rapid and largescale depreciations in the SYP's value remain a very real possibility.

Regional median SMEB prices, SYP and USD*



SMEB Contents

Food

Bread	37 kg
Bulgur	15 kg
Chicken	6 kg
Eggs	6 kg
Ghee (kg) / Vegetable oil (L)	7kg / L
Red Lentils	15 kg
Rice	19 kg
Salt	1 kg
Sugar	5 kg
Tomato paste	6 kg
Vegetables	12 kg

Hygiene (NFI)

Bathing soap	12 bars
Laundry / dish soap	3 kg
Toothpaste	200 kg
Sanitary pads	4 packs of 10

Other items

Cooking fuel	15 L
Water trucking	4500 L
Phone data	1 GB
Float (other costs)	7.5 % of total

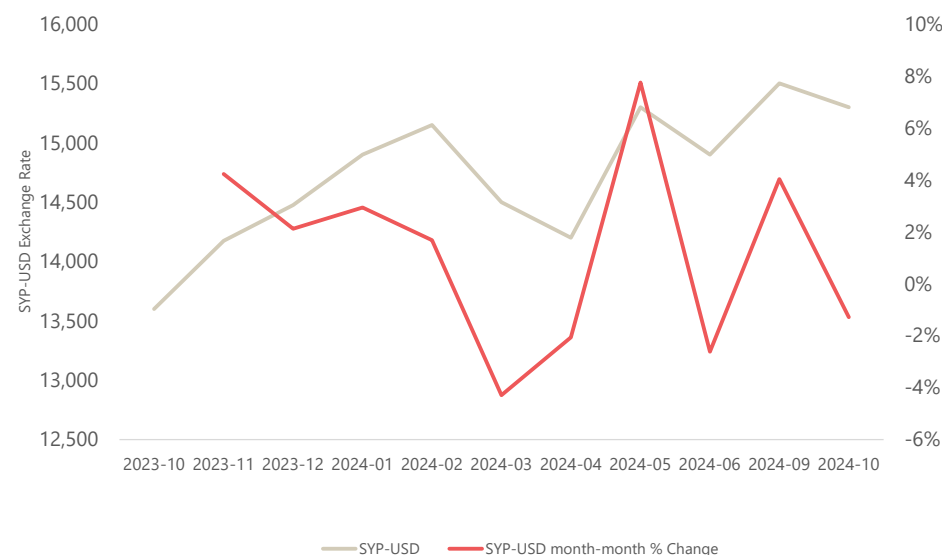
13% ▼

The value of the SYP has depreciated by 13% in the past year.

26% ▲

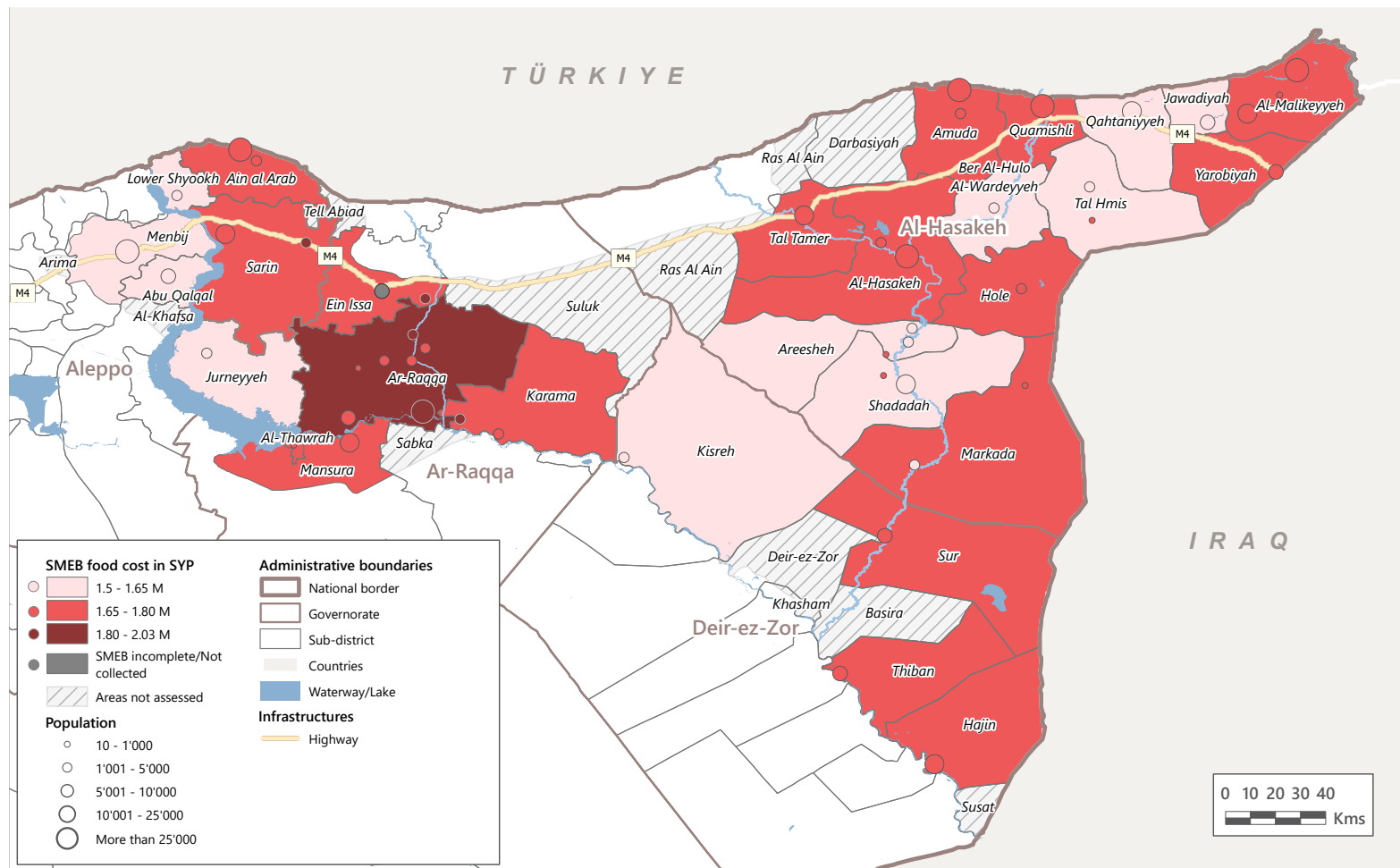
The cost of the SMEB in SYP has increased by 26% in the past year.

Regional median USD/SYP informal exchange rate trends*

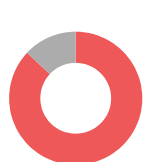


SMEB food prices, SYP

Price of SMEB Food, sub-district, SYP



Location	Median Price SYP	Change since Sep 2024	Median Price USD
Al Aleppo governorate			
Abu Qalqal	1,629,425	+3%▲	106.5
Ain al Arab	1,707,883	-1%▼	111.6
Lower Shyookh	1,551,750	-6%▼	101.4
Menbij	1,502,796	-18.4%▼	113.5
Sarin	1,739,304	+1%▲	112.7
Al-Hasakeh governorate			
Al-Hasakeh	1,736,464	+2.6%▲	113.0
Al-Malikeyyeh	1,723,857	+0.2%▲	102.2
Amuda	1,728,750	-3%▼	102.4
Areeshah	1,563,650	+5%▲	115.2
Be'r Al-Hulo Al-Hole	1,567,250	-11.4%▼	106.7
Hole	1,763,167	+3.6%▲	117.2
Jawadiyah	1,631,750	-6.3%▼	105.3
Markada	1,739,125	+1.5%▲	117.5
Qahtaniyyeh	1,542,500	-9%▼	117.7
Quamishli	1,749,935	-7%▼	114.2
Shadadah	1,566,300	+1.6%▲	98.2
Tal Hmis	1,649,250	+2.6%▲	113.7
Tal Tamer	1,653,500	-1.2%▼	113.7
Ya'robayah	1,704,315	-4.5%▼	100.8
Deir Ez-Zor			
Hajin	1,793,667	-3.7%▼	114.4
Kisreh	1,611,000	+0.3%▲	102.4
Sur	1,685,946	-3.3%▼	107.8
Thiban	1,717,100	-3.3%▼	108.1
Ar-Raqqa			
Al-Thawrah	1,797,556	-2%▼	111.4
Ar-Raqqa	1,800,125	+0.1%▲	110.2
Ein Issa	1,746,750	+2.6%▲	112.2
Jurneyyeh	1,567,125	-7.7%▼	102.4
Karama	1,748,000	+1%▲	114.2
Mansura	1,683,500	-1%▼	110.0



87%

KIs in 89% of communities assessed in the Humanitarian Situation Overview of Syria during October round reported that food markets were functioning.²



87%

Unaffordability was the most commonly reported barrier reported by KIs in 87% of HSOS assessed communities in October.³

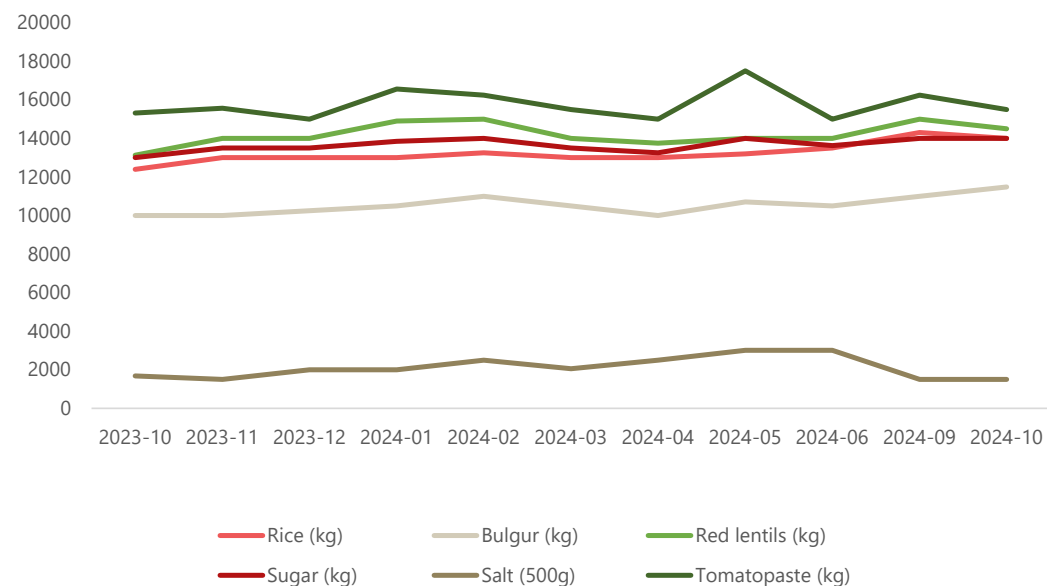
Food price trends

While most basic food items are reportedly available and markets broadly functional across NES, unaffordability is the main barrier households face in securing their basic food needs. The regional median SMEB food cost has increased by more than 20% over the past year, placing immense strain on households already struggling to meet their basic food needs.

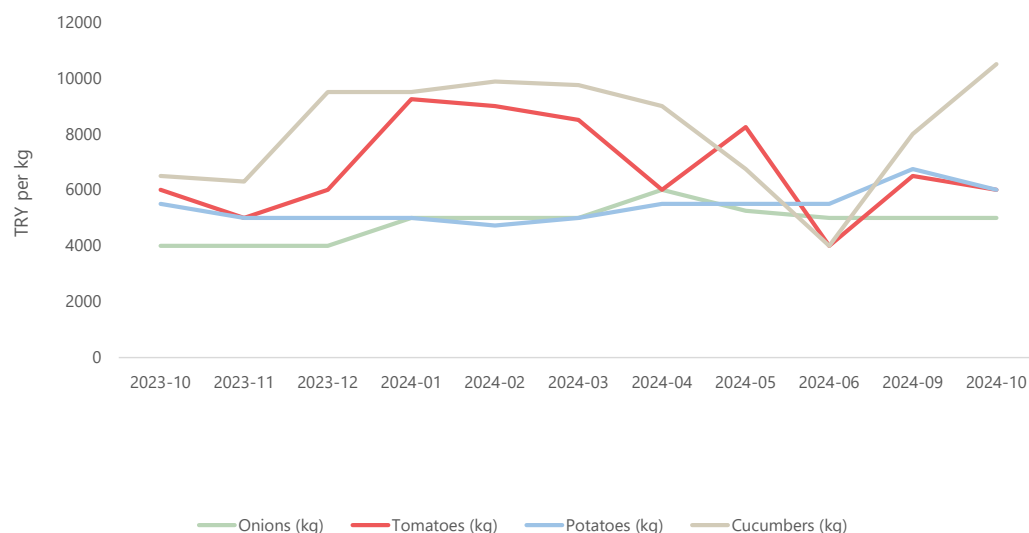
Compared to the September JMMI data, the regional median SMEB decreased by just under 1% in October. Monitored bulk food items (e.g. rice, lentils, ghee, salt, sugar etc.) either registered no change in price or a slight decrease since September, with the exception of bulgur, which increased by 4%. In general, this highlights the effect of a more stable USD/SYP exchange rates and well-functioning internal and cross-border supply chains. However, given the volatile and unpredictable political context, communities in NES remain highly vulnerable to sudden supply chain disruptions which can lead to significant increases in the price of basic food items as well as shortages.

In addition, all monitored vegetables decreased in price with the exception of cucumbers, reflecting seasonal dynamics. Given the increasing financial challenges facing farmers in NES, the epicenter of Syria’s agricultural sector, it is possible that markets will become increasingly dependent on imported varieties and, driving up prices in the process.

Regional median price of bulk food items, SYP*



Regional median price of vegetables, SYP*



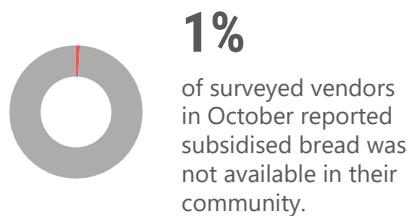
Food price changes

Item	Unit	Median Price SYP	1-month change (SYP)	Median Price USD**
Bulk food items				
Bulgur	1kg	11,475	+4.3%▲	0.75
Red lentils	1kg	14,500	-3.3%▼	0.95
Rice	1kg	14,000	-2%▼	0.92
Salt	500g	1,500	0 %	0.1
Sugar	1kg	14,000	0 %	0.92
Tomato Paste	1kg	15,500	-4.6%▼	1.01
Vegetables				
Tomatoes	1kg	6,000	-7.7%▼	0.4
Potatoes	1kg	6,000	-11%▼	0.4
Cucumbers	1kg	10,500	+31%▲	0.7
Onions	1kg	5,000	0 %	0.32

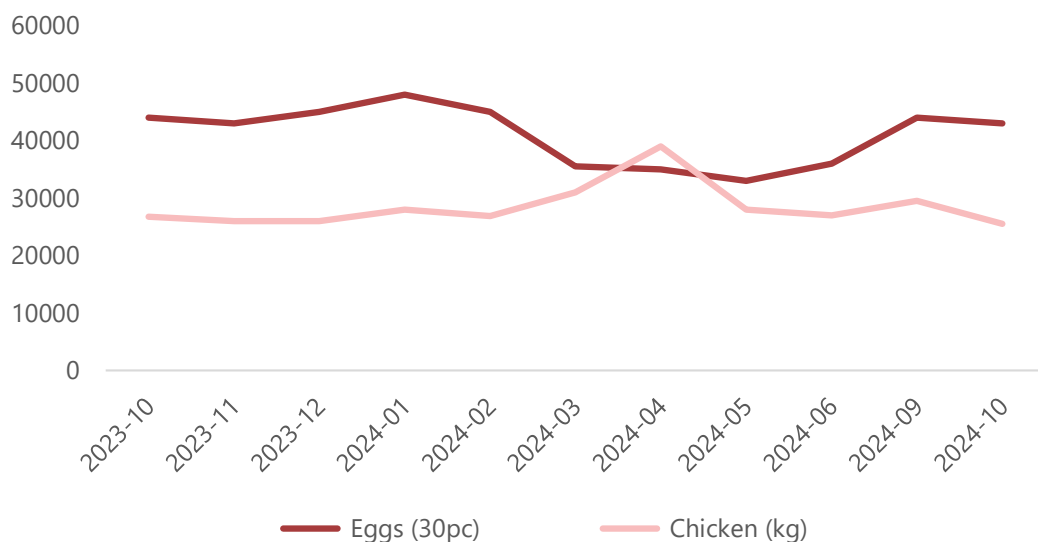
* No data was collected in July and August 2024.

**USD values are calculated as per the median regional informal exchange rate recorded in this round of JMMI.

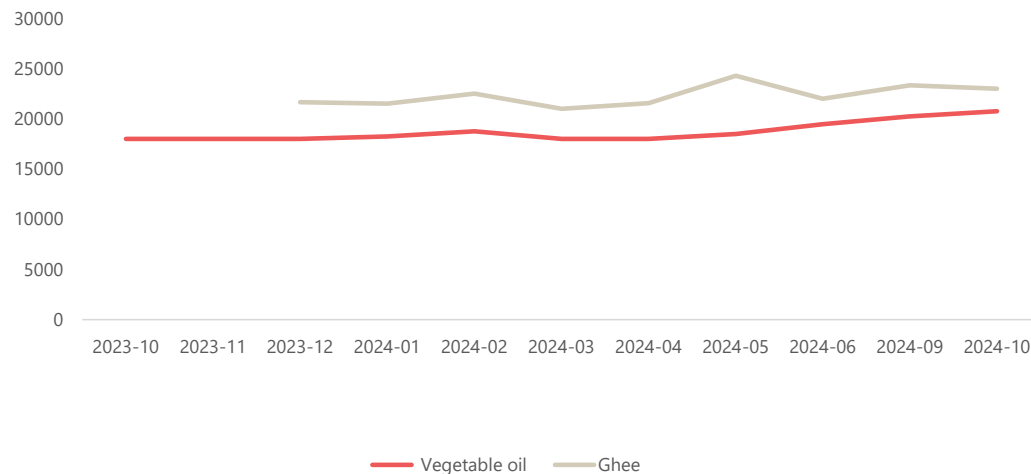
Food availability



Regional median price of poultry items, SYP*



Regional median price of vegetable oil, SYP*



Food price changes

Item	Unit	Median Price	1-month change (SYP)	Median Price USD**
Cooking oils				
Ghee	1kg	23,000	-1.4% ▼	1.5
Vegetable oil	1L	20,750	+3% ▲	1.4
Poultry				
Chicken	1kg	25,500	-14% ▼	1.66
Eggs	1kg	43,000	-2.3% ▼	2.8
Bread				
Subsidised bread	8pc	5,714	-5% ▼	0.37

* No data was collected in July and August 2024.

**USD values are calculated as per the median regional informal exchange rate recorded in this round of JMMI.

Non food items

The protracted, ongoing fuel crisis in NES has far-reaching consequences for humanitarian conditions and the local economy, as challenges related to price increases and shortages impact power generation, supply chains, and the provision of basic services, including water trucking. Challenges related to fuel availability and cost have worsened since successive waves of airstrikes targeted critical oil and gas production infrastructure in October 2023 and February 2024. New waves of attacks remain a constant threat. The increasing unavailability of fuels at stations and delays in distributing subsidized fuels are forcing households, industries, and farmers to increasingly rely on the parallel market, where prices are substantially higher. However, despite these general trends, fuel prices across NES largely remained stable compared to September.

18%

In the past 6 months the price of locally produced kerosene has increased by 18%

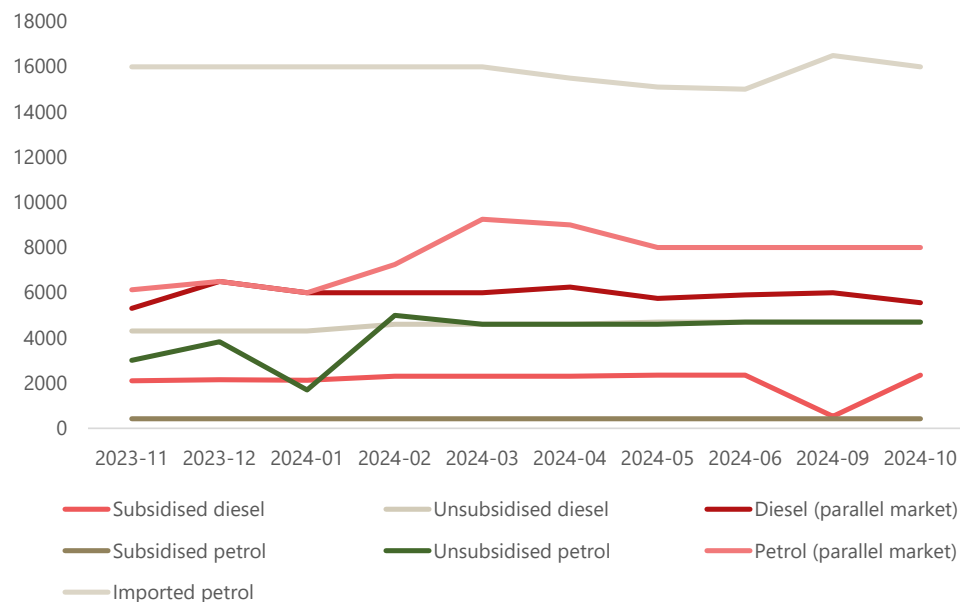
126%

In the past 6 months the price of gas has increased by 126% on average costing households more than \$10 USD for one canister of gas

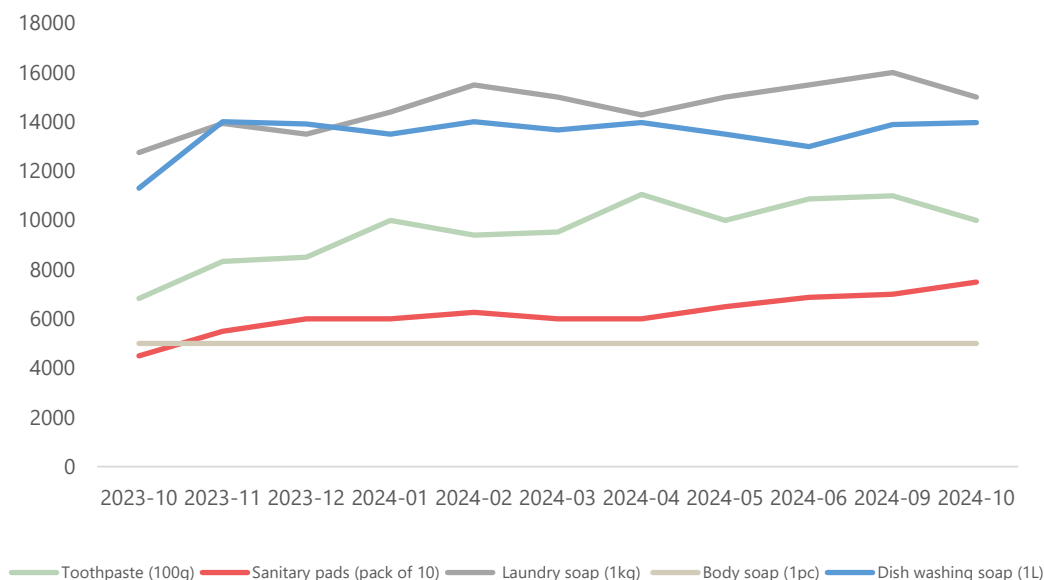
Price changes of monitored non-food items

Item	Unit	Median Price SYP	1-month change (SYP)	Median Price USD*
Non-food items				
SMEB				
Bathing soap	1pc	5,000	0 %	0.32
Sanitary pads	10pc	7,500	+7%▲	0.5
Toothpaste	100g	10,000	-9%▼	0.65
Laundry powder	1kg	15,000	-6.3%▼	0.98
Dish soap	1L	13,972	+0.6%▲	0.91
Cooking fuels				
Kerosene	1L	6,500	0 %	0.42
LPG gas	1L	17,143	+4.3%▲	1.12
Water trucking				
Water trucking	1L	25	0 %	0.002
Internet				
Mobile data	1gb	3,111	0 %	0.2
Transportation fuels				
Subsidised diesel	1L	2,350	0 %	0.15
Unsubsidised diesel	1L	4,700	0 %	0.3
Diesel (parallel market)	1L	5,550	-8%▼	0.36
Subsidised petrol	1L	425	0 %	0.03
Unsubsidised petrol	1L	4,700	0 %	0.3
Petrol (parallel market)	1L	8,000	0 %	0.52
Imported petrol	1L	16,000	-3%▼	1.04

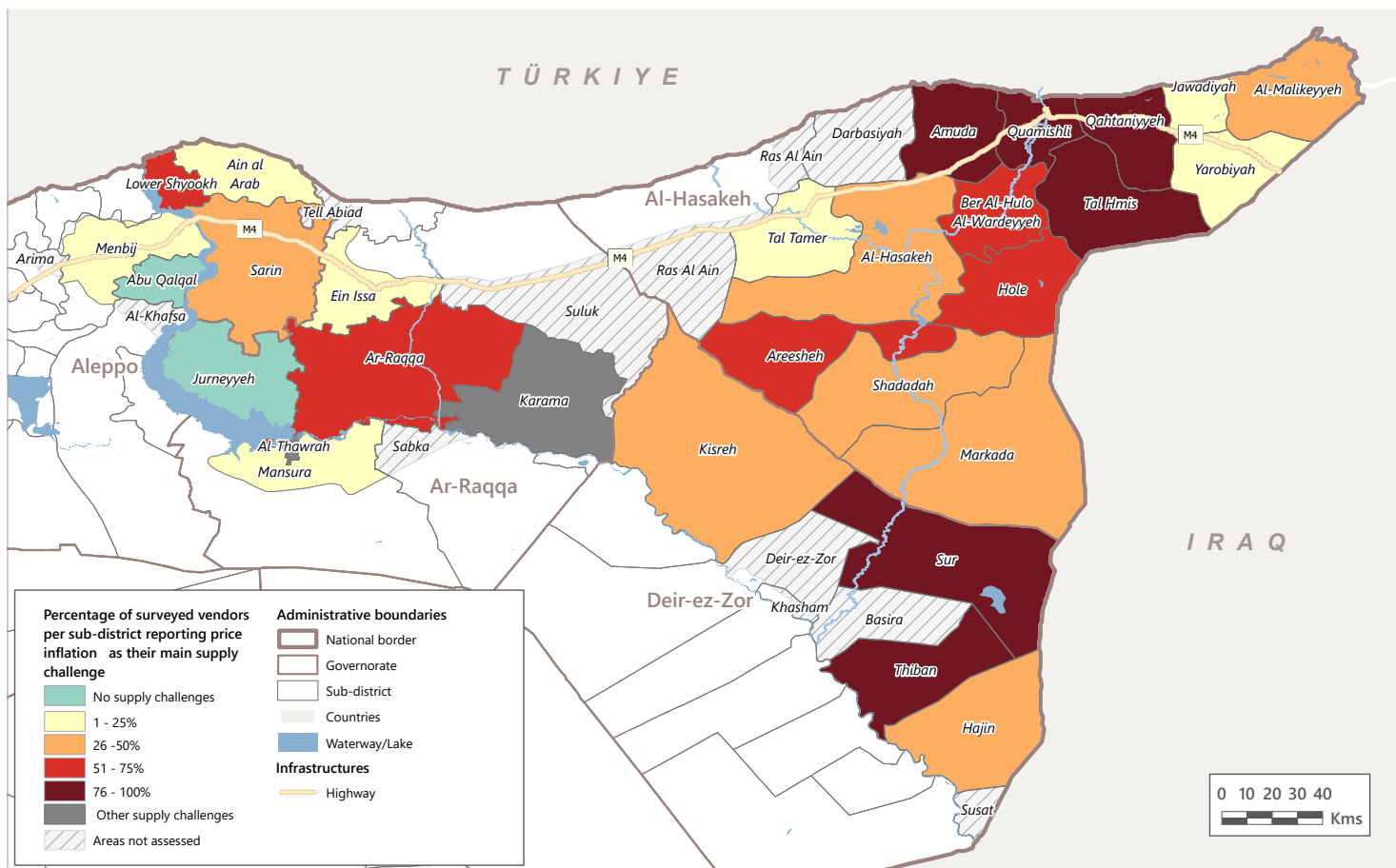
Regional median fuel price, October 2023-October 2024, SYP**



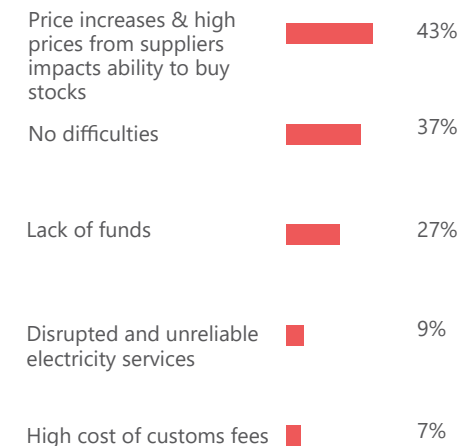
Regional median price of hygiene items, SYP**



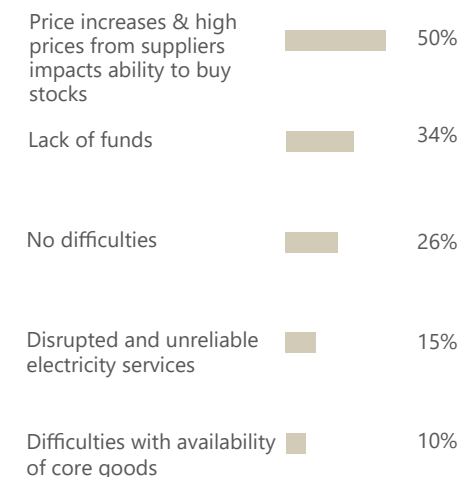
% of surveyed vendors reporting price inflation impacts their capacity to secure stocks



Top 5 reported supply challenges, % of surveyed vendors



Supply challenges in Al-Hasakeh governorate, % of surveyed vendors



Supply challenges

Based on data from October 2024 in NES the most common supply challenge reported by vendors is price inflation, cited by 43% of respondents. This reflects widespread concern over rising costs, impacting vendors' ability to stabilize prices and meet market demand amidst economic instability. Other challenges reported by vendors include disruptions to electricity supply and high customs fees. These issues underscore the complexities

faced by local businesses in maintaining stable operations and ensuring sufficient access to goods for the community. Such challenges highlight the complexities within the local economy of northeast Syria, where maintaining stable and reliable supply chains remains a critical concern for sustaining economic stability and ensuring access to essential goods for communities.

Methodology

The JMMI aims to inform market-based programming in Northern Syria.

Coverage

Coverage is determined through a combination of identifying key market hubs and partners' field capacity. Firstly, key market hubs are identified using the [Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria](#) (HSOS), classifying all communities that 5 or more other communities report to rely on for markets as a key market hub. Secondly, these "key market hubs" are reviewed by the field teams for validity purposes. In this step, additional important markets in communities are included. These could be communities that either a) have significant markets but were not included in HSOS coverage, or b) communities that have markets that are important for people living in camps. Finally, we compare the ideal coverage with the capacity of partners and aim to ensure that key market hubs are covered. The actual coverage is, therefore, restricted to the capacity of partners.

Data Collection

In each assessed location, at least three prices (ideally 4) per food & non-food item need to be collected from different traders to ensure the quality and consistency of the collected data. In line with the purpose of the JMMI, only the prices of the cheapest, most commonly bought type of item are recorded for each product, except in cases where otherwise indicated. For example, certain NFI items specific products are monitored at the request of the shelter cluster.

SMEB Calculation:

The cost of the SMEB is determined by multiplying the median price of each item in the respective location by the quantity listed in the table on page 2.

Identification of traders

Field teams identify traders to assess based on the following criteria:

- Traders are retailers selling directly to consumers.
- Traders need to be representative of the local price level.
- Traders have knowledge of the shop operations.

To the extent possible, the same traders are revisited in every data collection round.

Enumerators and training

The data are collected by field staff familiar with local market conditions. They undergo training on the methodology and tools provided by REACH. Training sessions occur each time a new partner joins the JMMI, at partner request, and at scheduled intervals throughout the year, such as when the assessment undergoes changes. Additionally, field teams are equipped with a JMMI Standardised Operational Procedure (SOP) offering guidance on market identification, trader assessment, and pricing. The REACH JMMI team manages the integration of partner feedback on the JMMI SOP, sharing updates, and conducting re-training with the field, as needed. Data collection is carried out using the KOBO Collect mobile application.

Data cleaning and analysis

After data collection, REACH compiles and cleans all partner data, standardizing prices, cross-checking outliers, and calculating the median cost of prices in each assessed location. Follow-ups are initiated with field teams to address data queries, including outliers, missing data, and incorrect entries. The median item prices reported in this factsheet are 'location medians,' designed to mitigate the impact of outliers and variations in data quantity among assessed locations.

Aggregation

The published data is presented at the community, sub-district, district, governorate, and regional levels. At each aggregation level, the median of all prices collected within the unit of analysis is calculated. For example, at the regional level, the median of all prices collected for a specific product in the entire region is calculated, while at the governorate level, the median of all prices collected in that governorate is calculated, and so forth. All SMEB and price index calculations utilize this method.

Challenges and limitations

- Price data reflects only the specific timeframe in which it was collected. Variations may occur between data collection rounds, and any comparisons should be regarded as indicative.
- The JMMI data collection tool requests the cheapest, most commonly bought type of each item to be recorded, as availability varies across regions. Therefore, price comparisons across regions may be based on slightly varying products.
- With current coverage, data is mostly collected from main markets, which may not be representative of rural areas.
- As the JMMI continues to expand and is extended to additional locations, the reported changes in the overall median prices may be driven by shifts in coverage rather than actual price changes.

JMMI data is updated monthly through the [Interactive Dashboard](#) where users can filter for SMEB components of interest, currencies, and assessed areas.

About the CWG

The JMMI exists within the framework of the Cash Working Group (CWG). In northeast Syria (NES), the CWG was established in May 2014 to analyse the impact of the ongoing conflict on markets in Syria and guide the implementation of humanitarian cash and voucher programmes within those markets. For more information about the CWG in NES, please contact the cash working group coordinator at cashcoordnes@gmail.com.

About REACH

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).

