

NORTHEAST SYRIA MARKET MONITORING EXERCISE

Snapshot: 12 - 17 December 2019

Cash-Based Responses
Technical Working Group

REACH Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

INTRODUCTION

To inform humanitarian cash programming, REACH, in partnership with the Cash-Based Responses Technical Working Group (CBR-TWG) and Northeast Syria (NES) Cash Working Group (CWG), conducts monthly Market Monitoring Exercises in northern Syria to assess the availability and prices of 36 basic commodities that are typically sold in markets and consumed by average Syrian households, including food and non-food items, water, fuel, and cellphone data.

Of these, 18 items comprise the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB; see below), which represents the minimum, culturally adjusted items required to support a 6-person household for a month.

Data was collected this month (between 12-17 December 2019) by ACTED, CARE Shafak, GOAL, People In Need (PIN), Solidarités International, Violet, and Watan.

The accompanying [data from the month of December](#) is disseminated monthly and is distributed through partners across the humanitarian community.

SURVIVAL MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET (SMEB) CONTENTS

	Item	Quantity	
Food Items	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	
	Tomato paste	6 kg	
	Hygiene items	Bathing soap	12 bars
		Laundry/dish soap	3 kg
		Sanitary pads	4 packs of 10
Toothpaste		200 g	
Fuel	Cooking fuel*	25 L	
	Water trucking	4500 L	
Telecom	Smartphone data	1 GB	
Other	Float (other costs)**	7.5% total value	

* Kerosene in northern Syria

** Float only applied to observations where prices of all SMEB contents could be collected

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Coverage

Although limited, NES CWG partners were able to support data collection in the month of December in Northeast Syria (NES). Assessed sub-districts this month were Menbij, Ain Al Arab (Kobane), Al-Hasakeh, Be'r Al-Hulo Al-Wardeyyeh, Qamishli, Amuda, Qahtaniyyeh, Al-Malikeyyeh, Jawadiyah, Ya'robiyah and Ar-Raqqa. Due to limited coverage this month, findings and price comparisons will be presented at the community level throughout this output. Dotted lines in the graphs indicate lack of data for the months of October and November.

SMEB cost increased across assessed communities

The regional median SMEB cost was recorded at 95,467 SYP. At the community level, the SMEB cost increased between 16%-33% compared to the last

Market Monitoring Exercise for NES in September. However, the SMEB cost decreased in US Dollars (USD) and was recorded at 111 USD in December, compared to 131 USD in September. This was mainly explained by the rapid depreciation of the SYP against foreign currencies.

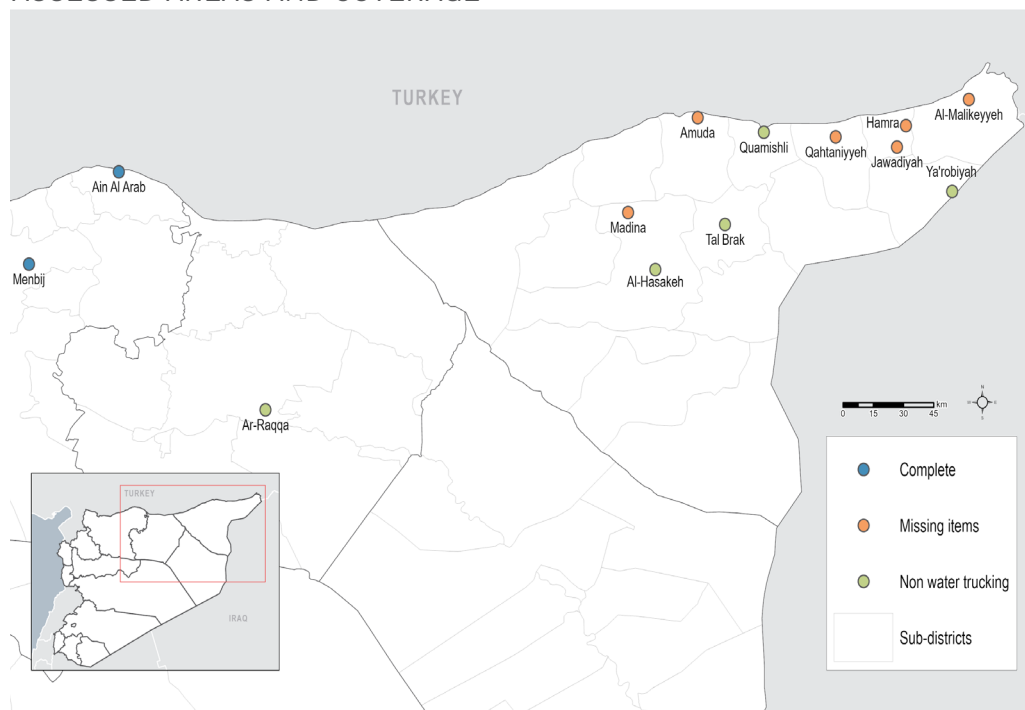
Low purchasing power and insecurity affect access to markets

Key informants (KIs) reported multiple barriers to accessing markets across all assessed communities. The most commonly reported barriers were the high volatility in prices coupled with low purchasing power. Insecure roads and transportation difficulties were also reported this month, as well as general obstacles to restocking. These challenges reportedly led to many items being unavailable.

Increase in USD/SYP exchange rate

The Syrian pound plummeted in December. The informal exchange rate was recorded at 844 SYP to the US Dollar, the highest ever recorded by the Market Monitoring Exercise. This amounted to a 37% increase compared to September 2019, where the exchange rate was 615 SYP to the US Dollar. The current rate marked the inflation of the Syrian Pound by 100% over the past 12 months. This increasing trend in the informal exchange rate has been recorded across Syria. Reasons behind the continued devaluation of the USD/SYP exchange rate are manifold; however, they are primarily related to the [low USD reserves in the country coupled with increased international sanctions against Syria, leading to volatility and uncertainty on the country's financial market.](#)

ASSESSED AREAS AND COVERAGE

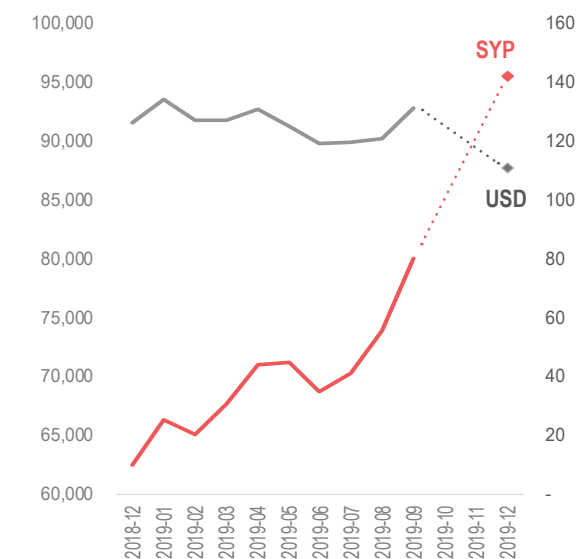


MEDIAN SMEB COST IN SYP (USD), BY REGION

95,467 SYP (111 USD)
NORTHEAST SYRIA - AL-HASAKEH, AL-RAQQA, EASTERN ALEPPO GOVERNORATES

MEDIAN SMEB COSTS, BY MONTH

Thousand Syrian Pounds and US Dollars



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

95,467 SYP
(111 USD)

AIN AL ARAB, AL-HASAKEH, AL MALIKEYYEH, AMUDA, AR-RAQQA, HAMRA, JAWADIYAH, MADINA, MENBIJ, QAHTANIYYEH, QUAMISHLI, TAL BRAK, YA'ROBIYAH COMMUNITIES

Increase in SMEB food component

In communities where price comparisons between September and December's Market Monitoring were possible, the price of the SMEB food component increased between 16% and 49% in SYP. The highest increase was recorded in Al-Malikeyyeh community (Al-Malikeyyeh sub-district), where the SMEB food component increased from 54,770 SYP (65 USD) to 81,772 SYP (97 USD) between September and December.

SMEB hygiene component increased

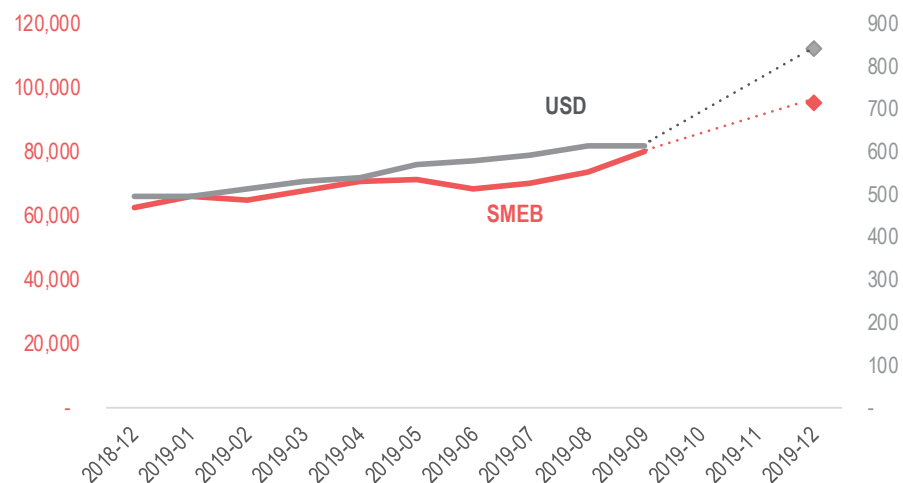
The SMEB hygiene component increased among almost all assessed communities, except for Al-Malikeyyeh where it decreased by 9% from 5,702 SYP

to 5,190. In the remaining communities, the hygiene component increased between 13% and 59%, with the highest increase in the community of Tal Brak (Tal Brak sub-district).

Price of cell phone data increased

The price of 1 GB data increased across communities in December. In communities where price comparisons were possible, the price of 1 GB data increased between 29% and 250%, with the highest increase recorded in Amuda (Amuda sub-district) where the price was found to have increased from 1,000 SYP to 3,500 SYP between September and December.

SMEB COST AND EXCHANGE RATE (USD/SYP), BY MONTH



MEDIAN SMEB COSTS & CHANGES*

Syrian Pounds

Sub-district	Community	SMEB December 2019	SMEB September 2019	Three month change
Northeast Syria		95,467	79,950	19%
Ain al Arab	Ain Al Arab	87,976	66,002	33%
Al-Hasakeh	Al-Hasakeh**	92,251	NA	NA
Al-Malikeyyeh	Al-Malikeyyeh	NA	70,853	NA
Amuda	Amuda	NA	80,608	NA
Ar-Raqqa	Ar-Raqqa**	83,554	73,312	14%
Jawadiyah	Hamra	NA	NA	NA
Jawadiyah	Jawadiyah	NA	66,865	NA
Al-Hasakeh	Madina	NA	NA	NA
Menbij	Menbij	102,958	NA	NA
Qahtaniyyeh	Qahtaniyyeh	NA	71,691	NA
Quamishli	Quamishli**	93,227	75,763	23%
Be'r Al-Hulo Al-Wardeyyeh	Tal Brak**	87,957	64,518	36%
Ya'robiah	Ya'robiah**	89,634	72,100	24%

* For price and change calculations, only the communities within a sub-district with consistent coverage across months are included.

** Denotes sub-districts where water trucking is not common, and therefore does not have water trucking prices in the SMEB cost

COMMUNITIES WITH INCOMPLETE SMEB IN DECEMBER

COMMUNITY	MISSING ITEMS
Amuda	Vegetables, kerosene, fuel items, green peas, flour & baby formula
Al-Malikeyyeh	Phone data & liquified petroleum (LP GAS)
Hamra	Insufficient data across most items
Jawadiyah	Phone data, fuel items, flour & green peas
Madina	Insufficient data across most items
Qahtaniyyeh	Insufficient data across most items

Note: Lack of data (NA) for a SMEB item does not necessarily imply a shortage.

MEDIAN SMEB COST RANGES (SYP), BY ASSESSED COMMUNITY



SMEB COST: THREE MONTH TREND, BY ASSESSED COMMUNITY

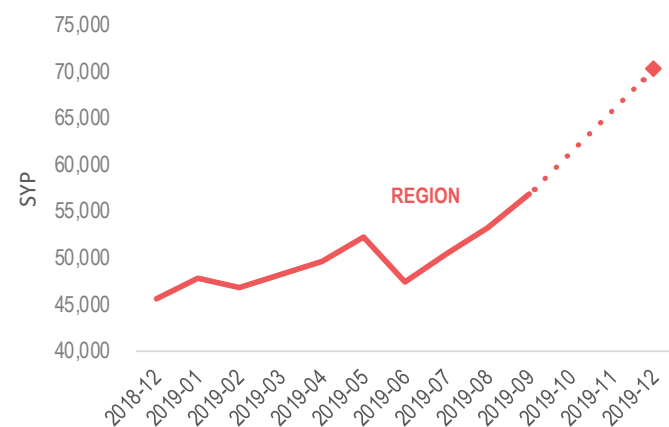


SMEB FOOD ITEMS' PRICE See Page 1, Syrian Pounds

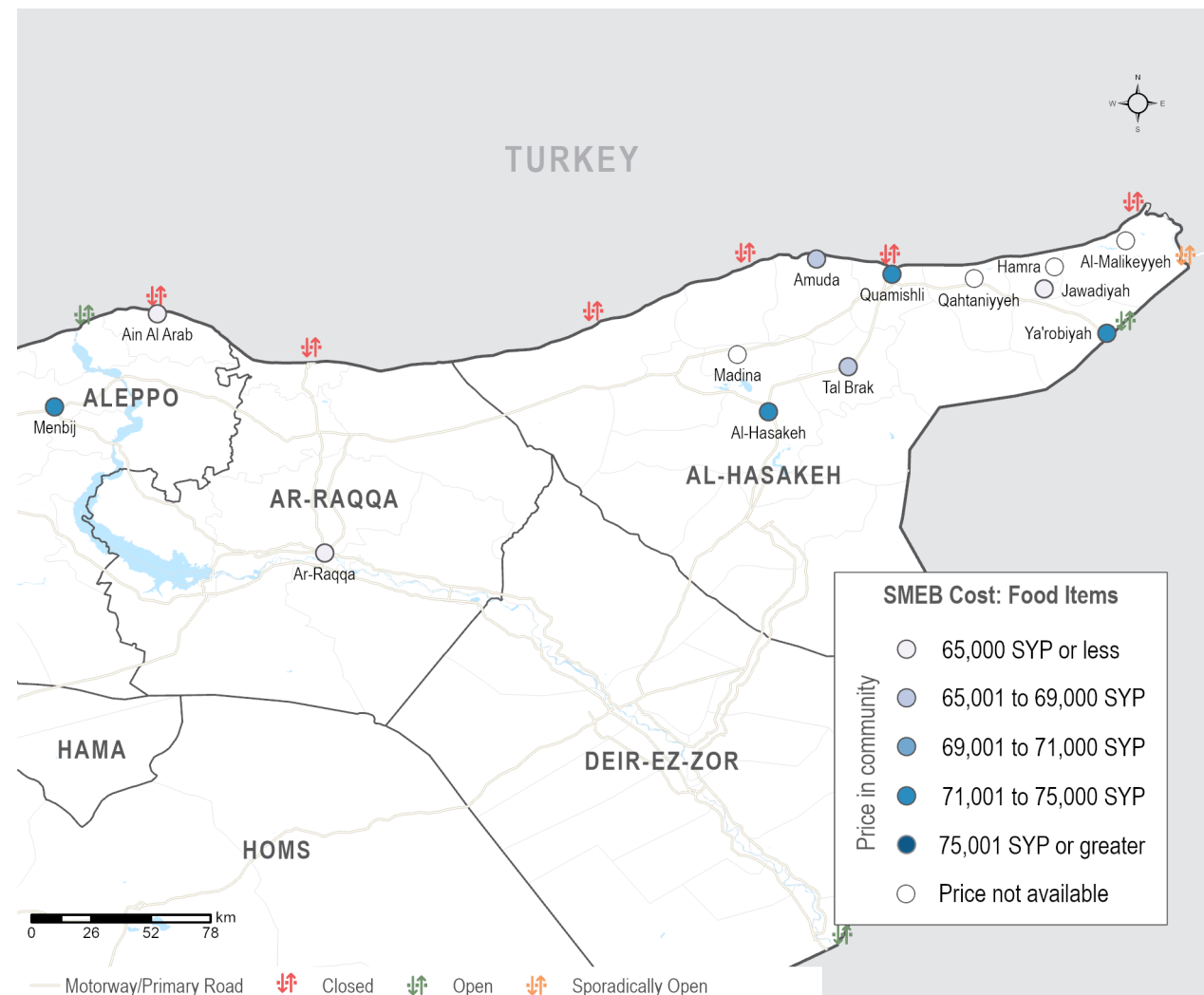
Sub-district	Community	SMEB Food December 2019	SMEB Food September 2019	Three month change
Northeast Syria		70,281	56,783	24%
Ain al Arab	Ain Al Arab	64,450	47,262	36%
Al-Hasakeh	Al-Hasakeh	72,175	NA	NA
Al-Malikeyyeh	Al-Malikeyyeh	81,772	54,770	49%
Amuda	Amuda	67,339	62,500	8%
Ar-Raqqa	Ar-Raqqa	64,135	55,464	16%
Jawadiyah	Hamra	NA	NA	NA
Jawadiyah	Jawadiyah	64,035	52,525	22%
Al-Hasakeh	Madina	NA	NA	NA
Menbij	Menbij	72,475	NA	NA
Qahtaniyyeh	Qahtaniyyeh	NA	55,720	NA
Quamishli	Quamishli	73,712	68,850	7%
Be'r Al-Hulo Al-Wardeyyeh	Tal Brak	68,762	54,980	25%
Ya'robiyah	Ya'robiyah	71,800	62,125	16%

MEDIAN SMEB FOOD COSTS, BY MONTH

Thousand Syrian Pounds



SMEB FOOD ITEMS' COST Communities, Syrian Pounds



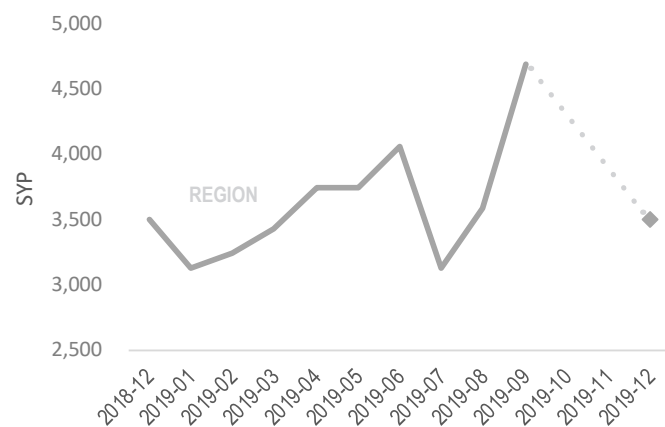
MEDIAN SMEB COOKING FUEL COST

25 L Kerosene, Syrian Pounds

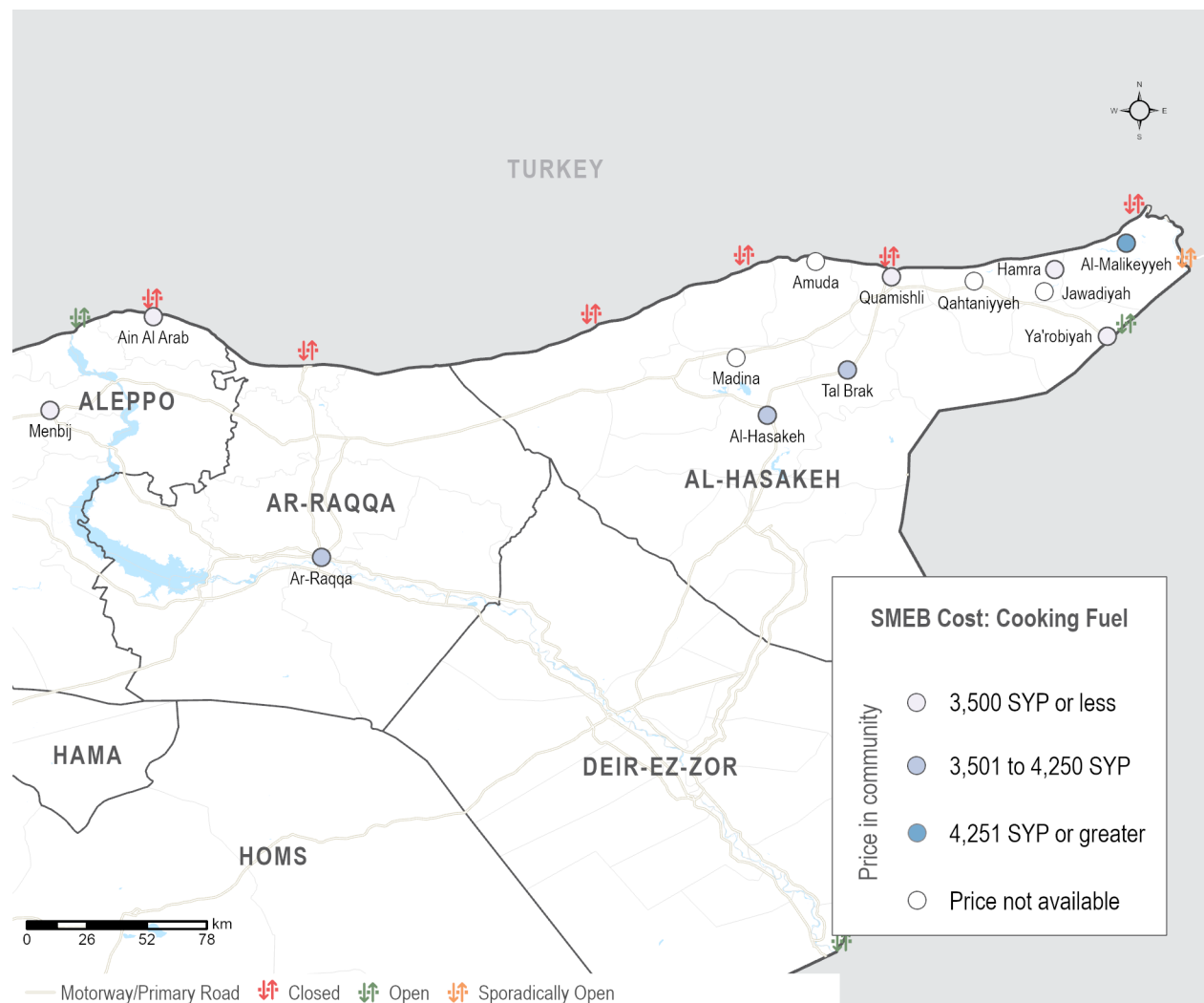
Sub-district	Community	SMEB Cooking Fuel December 2019	SMEB Cooking Fuel September 2019	Three month change
Northeast Syria		3,500	4,688	-25%
Ain al Arab	Ain Al Arab	3,000	2,500	20%
Al-Hasakeh	Al-Hasakeh	3,750	NA	NA
Al-Malikeyyeh	Al-Malikeyyeh	5,000	4,688	7%
Amuda	Amuda	NA	6,250	NA
Ar-Raqqa	Ar-Raqqa	3,750	5,000	-25%
Jawadiyah	Hamra	3,125	NA	NA
Jawadiyah	Jawadiyah	NA	3,750	NA
Al-Hasakeh	Madina	NA	NA	NA
Menbij	Menbij	3,125	NA	NA
Qahtaniyyeh	Qahtaniyyeh	NA	5,000	NA
Quamishli	Quamishli	3,500	NA	NA
Be'r Al-Hulo Al-Wardeyyeh	Tal Brak	3,750	4,062	-8%
Ya'robiyah	Ya'robiyah	2,500	2,875	-13%

MEDIAN SMEB COOKING FUEL COSTS, BY MONTH

Thousand Syrian Pounds



SMEB COOKING FUEL COST Communities, Syrian Pounds



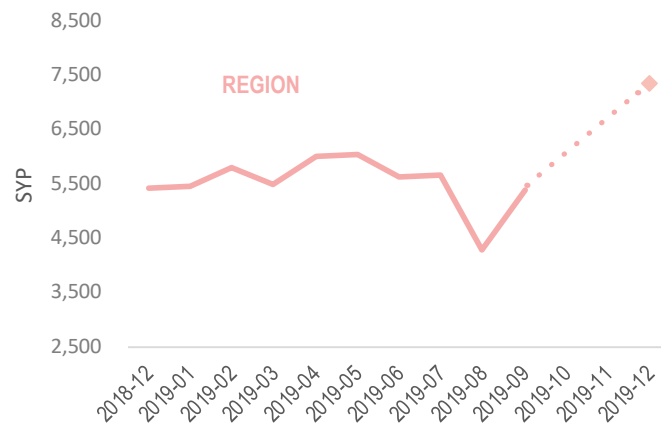
MEDIAN HYGIENE ITEMS' PRICE

12 bars of soap, 4 packs of 10 sanitary pads, 200g of toothpaste, Syrian Pounds

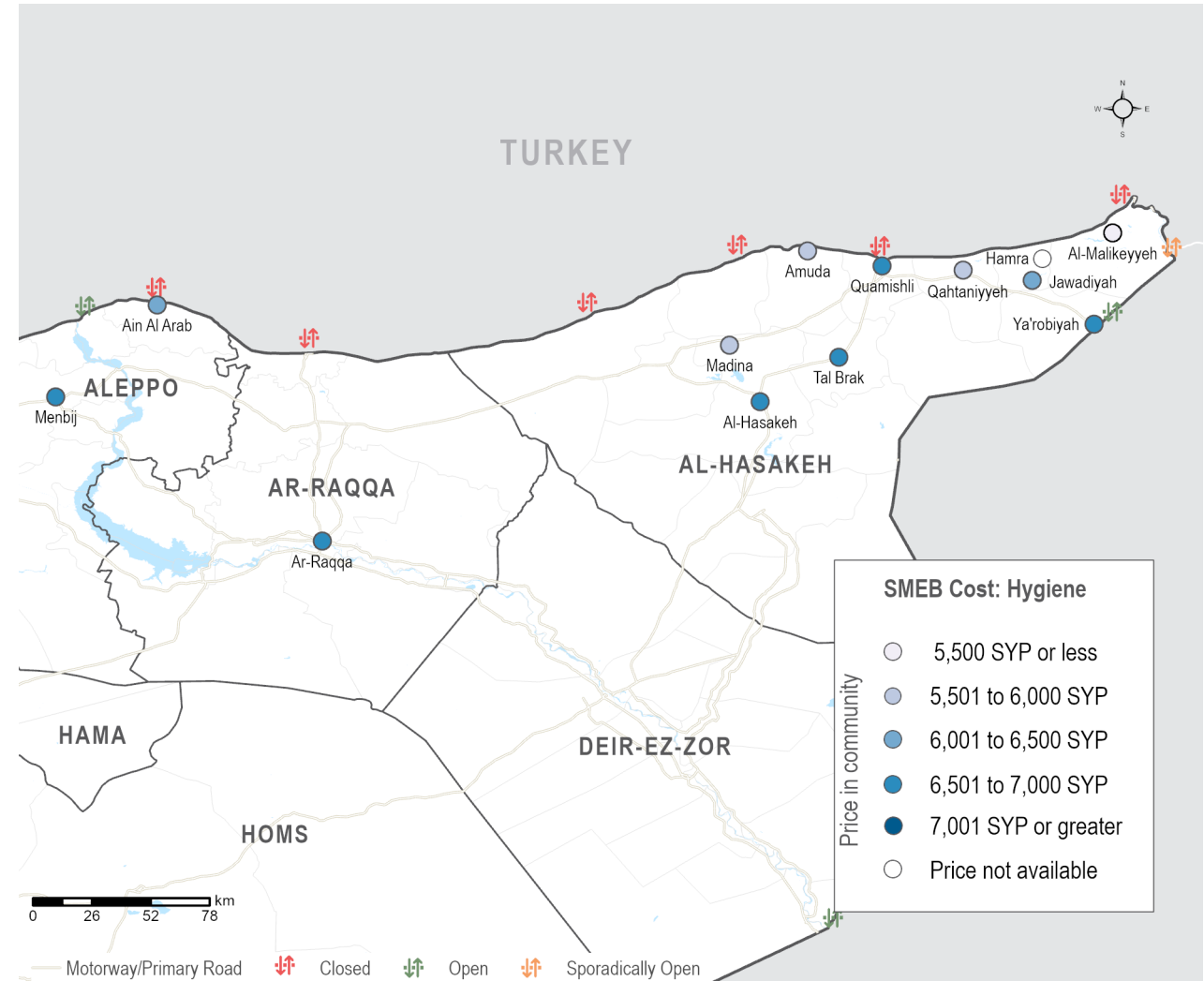
Sub-district	Community	SMEB Hygiene December 2019	SMEB Hygiene September 2019	Three month change
Northeast Syria		7,340	5,392	36%
Ain al Arab	Ain Al Arab	6,221	5,300	17%
Al-Hasakeh	Al-Hasakeh	7,390	NA	NA
Al-Malikeyyeh	Al-Malikeyyeh	5,190	5,702	-9%
Amuda	Amuda	5,890	5,234	13%
Ar-Raqqa	Ar-Raqqa	7,340	6,300	17%
Jawadiyah	Hamra	NA	NA	NA
Jawadiyah	Jawadiyah	6,288	5,175	22%
Al-Hasakeh	Madina	5,650	NA	NA
Menbij	Menbij	7,550	NA	NA
Qahtaniyyeh	Qahtaniyyeh	5,920	5,169	15%
Quamishli	Quamishli	8,010	6,912	16%
Be'r Al-Hulo Al-Wardeyyeh	Tal Brak	7,508	4,725	59%
Ya'robiyah	Ya'robiyah	7,580	6,200	22%

MEDIAN SMEB HYGIENE COSTS, BY MONTH

Thousand Syrian Pounds



SMEB HYGIENE ITEMS' COST Communities, Syrian Pounds



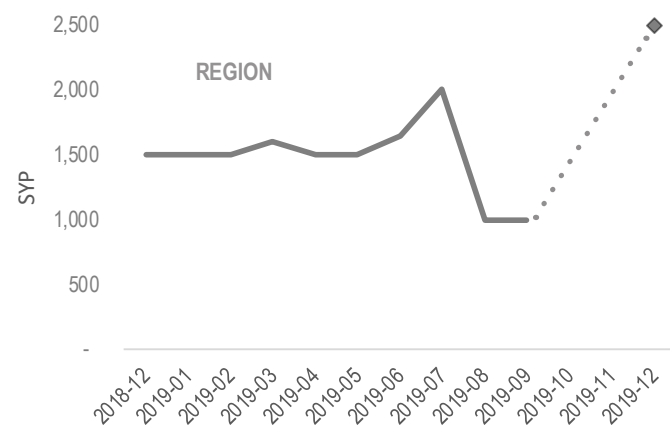
MEDIAN CELLPHONE DATA PRICE

1 gigabyte (GB)

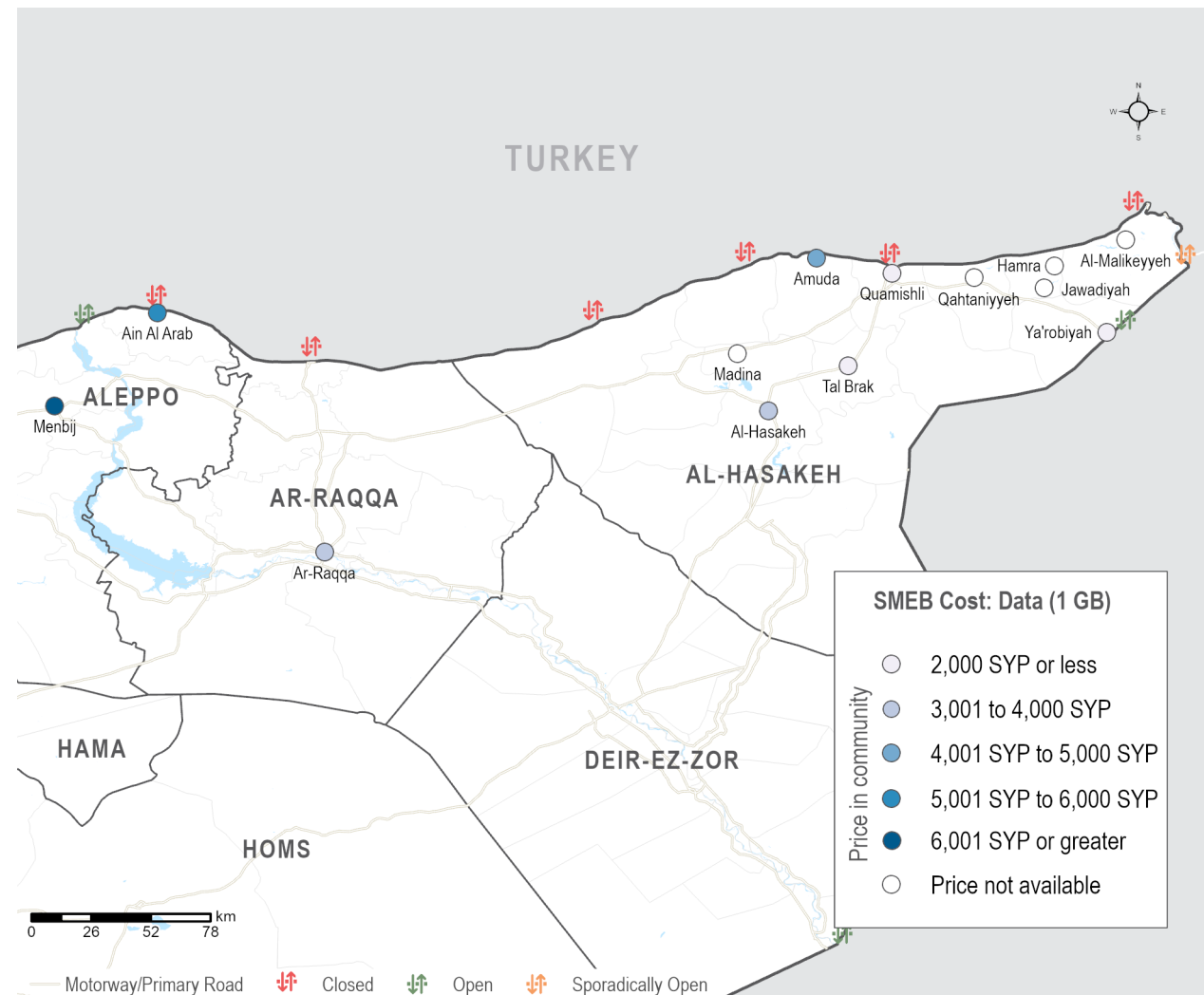
Sub-district	Community	SMEB Data December 2019	SMEB Data September 2019	Three month change
Northeast Syria		2,500	1,000	150%
Ain al Arab	Ain Al Arab	4,500	3,500	29%
Al-Hasakeh	Al-Hasakeh	2,500	NA	NA
Al-Malikeyyeh	Al-Malikeyyeh	NA	750	NA
Amuda	Amuda	3,500	1,000	250%
Ar-Raqqa	Ar-Raqqa	2,500	1,432	75%
Jawadiyah	Hamra	NA	NA	NA
Jawadiyah	Jawadiyah	NA	750	NA
Al-Hasakeh	Madina	NA	NA	NA
Menbij	Menbij	7,000	NA	NA
Qahtaniyyeh	Qahtaniyyeh	NA	800	NA
Quamishli	Quamishli	1,500	NA	NA
Be'r Al-Hulo	Tal Brak	1,800	750	140%
Al-Wardeyyeh	Tal Brak	1,800	750	140%
Ya'robiyah	Ya'robiyah	1,500	900	67%

MEDIAN SMEB CELLPHONE DATA PRICE, BY MONTH

Thousand Syrian Pounds



SMEB CELLPHONE DATA COST Communities, Syrian Pounds



MEDIAN TRANSPORT FUEL PRICE*

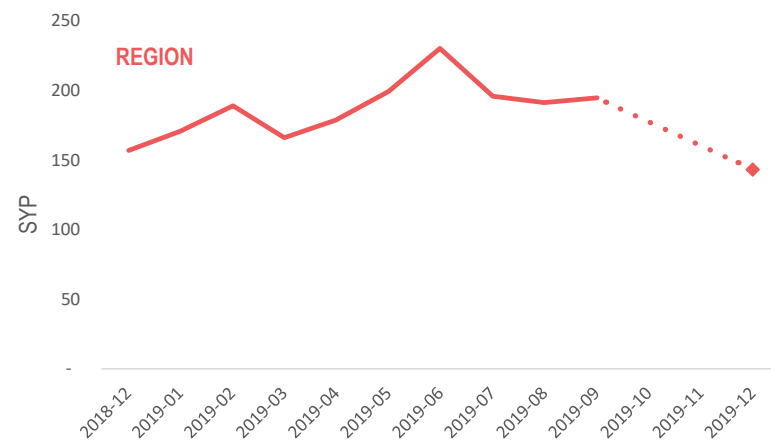
Diesel and Petrol, 1L (High Quality and Manually Refined), Syrian Pounds

Sub-district	Community	SMEB Fuel December 2019	SMEB Fuel September 2019	Three month change
Northeast Syria		144	195	-26%
Ain al Arab	Ain Al Arab	175	195	-10%
Al-Hasakeh	Al-Hasakeh	150	NA	NA
Al-Malikeyyeh	Al-Malikeyyeh	214	195	10%
Amuda	Amuda	NA	190	NA
Ar-Raqqa	Ar-Raqqa	165	413	-60%
Jawadiyah	Hamra	NA	NA	NA
Jawadiyah	Jawadiyah	NA	195	NA
Al-Hasakeh	Madina	NA	NA	NA
Menbij	Menbij	78	NA	NA
Qahtaniyyeh	Qahtaniyyeh	NA	195	NA
Quamishli	Quamishli	138	192	-28%
Be'r Al-Hulo Al-Wardeyyeh	Tal Brak	138	195	-29%
Ya'robiyah	Ya'robiyah	138	192	-28%

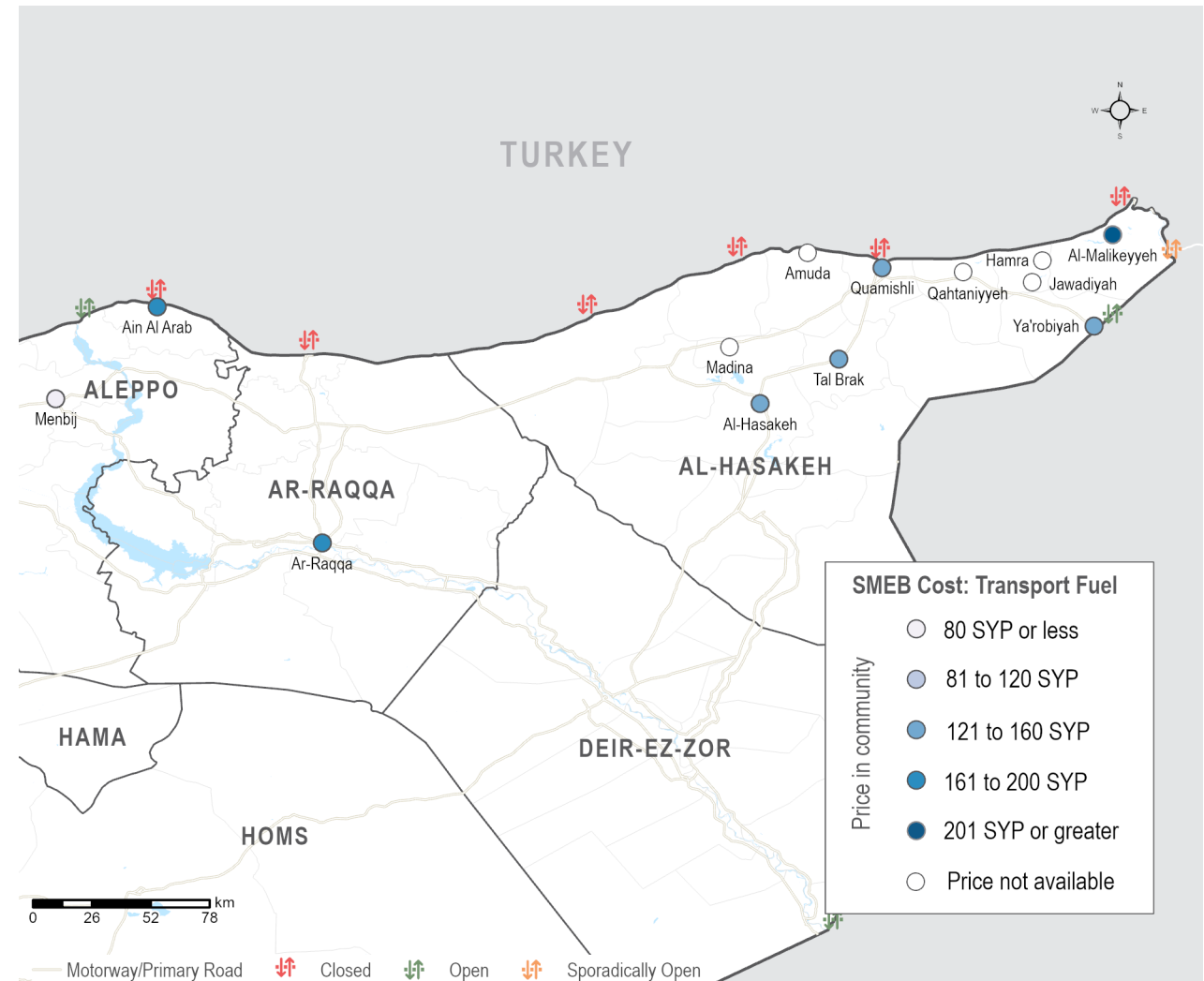
*Due to lack of data coupled with low availability of high quality fuel, these prices are calculated based on manually refined and subsidized fuel products.

MEDIAN SMEB TRANSPORT FUEL, BY MONTH

Thousand Syrian Pounds

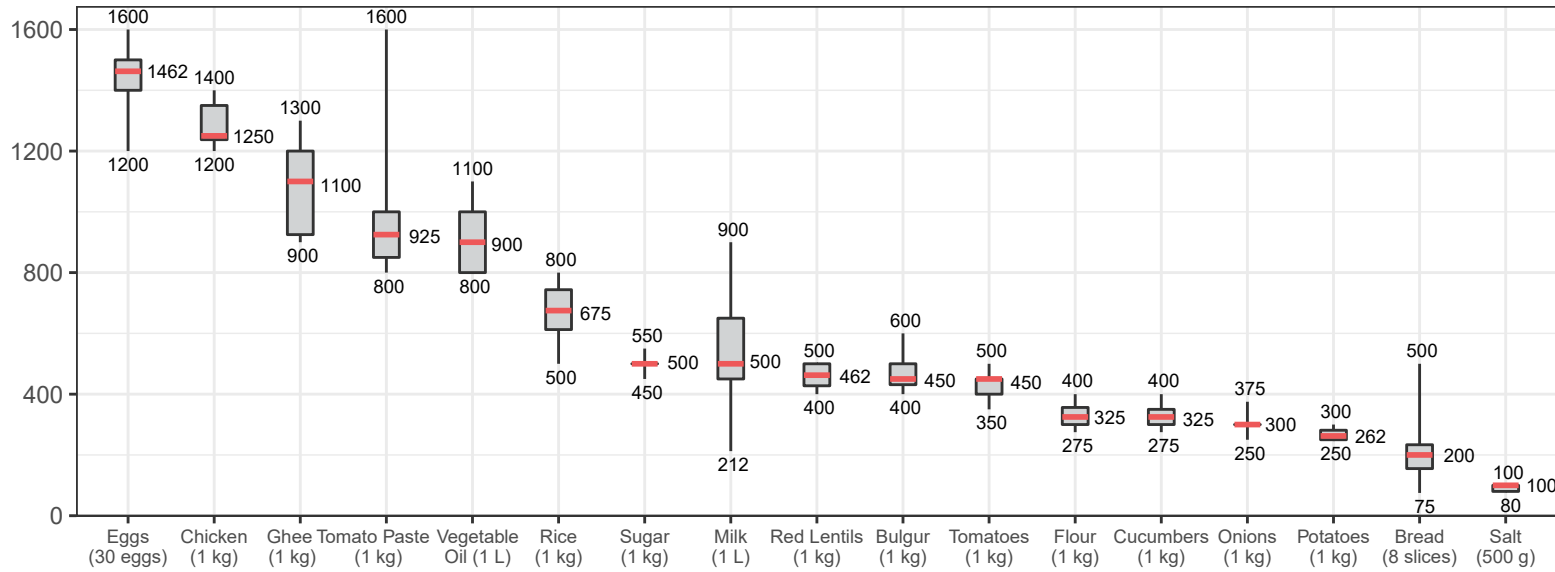


TRANSPORT FUEL COST Communities, Syrian Pounds



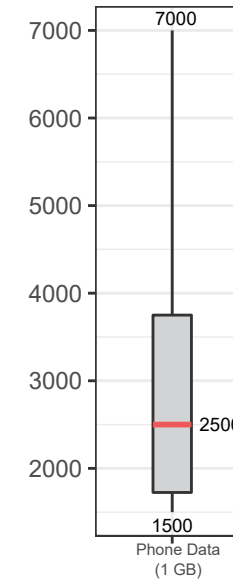
ASSESSED FOOD ITEMS

Syrian Pounds



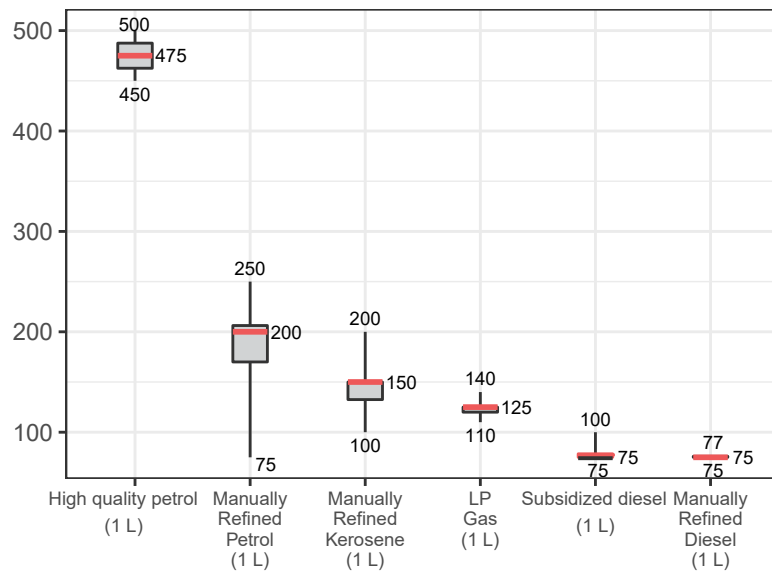
CELLPHONE DATA

Syrian Pounds



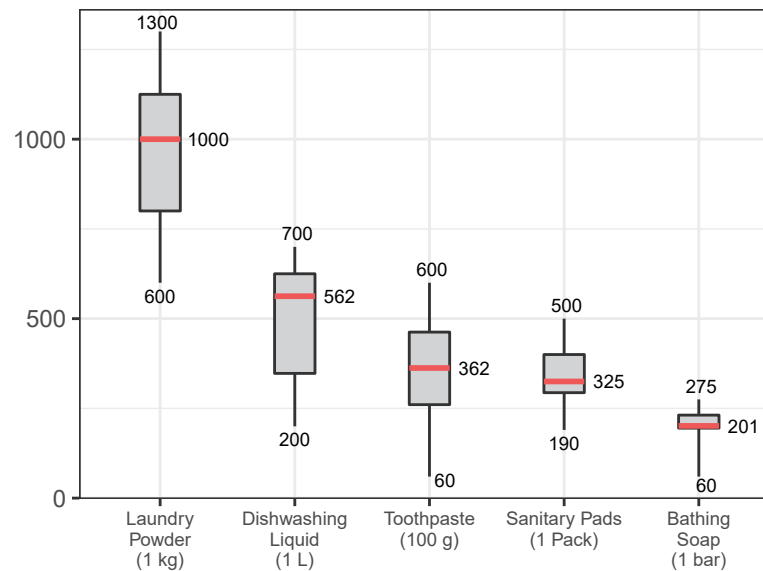
ASSESSED FUEL ITEMS

Syrian Pounds

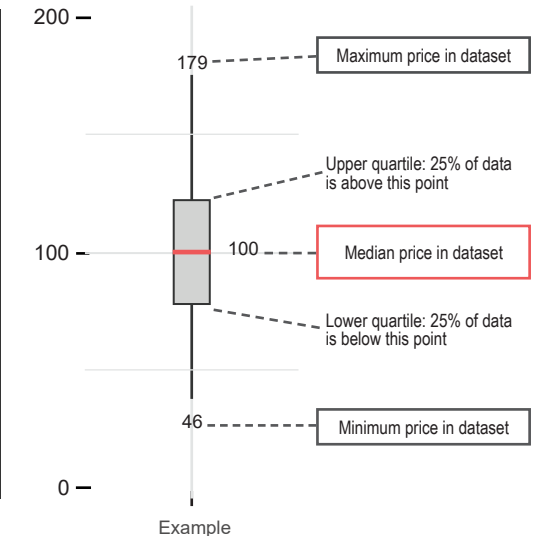


ASSESSED HYGIENE ITEMS

Syrian Pounds



READING BOXPLOTS



METHODOLOGY

In order 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. Additionally, the shops surveyed within each market must be housed in permanent structures and must sell certain items to be eligible for inclusion. 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 sub-district, using surveys to collect information about the cheapest prices of each item and whether there are any barriers in the supply chain. In sub-districts where direct surveying by enumerators is not possible, data collection is conducted remotely through key informants such as shop owners, suppliers and consumers. A survey form is 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 SMEB costs, components of the SMEB, and by commodities. These trends are observed at the sub-district-level and, when possible, at the community-level. Prices are divided into quartiles and boxplots are created to assist CBR-TWG members in understanding the distribution of prices across the northeast and

northwest of Syria. To illustrate local variations in prices and availability, REACH uses the collected data to map the price of the SMEB in each sub-district and adds illustrations of surrounding border crossings, with data sourced from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). In addition, each SMEB component costs and transport fuel prices are graphed to visualize trends over time.

The cleaned datasets are available on the [Humanitarian Data Exchange](#) website and are distributed to all participating partners, as well as to interested clusters and the broader humanitarian community.

Calculating '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 taken from the median of the minimum-reported prices of the constituent towns assessed.

Calculating Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) costs

The cost of a SMEB is calculated for each assessed sub-district by calculating the median cheapest price of each SMEB commodity in that sub-district, 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](#). SMEB vegetables includes potatoes, tomatoes, onions and cucumbers.

Calculating price trends over time

One month and six-month price changes and trends are calculated only with the communities of a sub-district with consistent coverage across months. For the current month's regional SMEB cost, all assessed communities are included in determining medians; thus, prices and percentage changes within the Costs and Changes tables may differ from the current month's regional SMEB cost.

Seasonal items

Winterisation items have been added to the market monitoring exercise and data collection will continue for these items over winter, until February 2020. Whilst other commodities are bought regularly by families, winterisation items are not expected to be bought regularly and may be one-off purchases for each family member.

Changes to coverage

Given security and access constraints in the south of Syria, data collection has been unable to take place since July 2018. Escalation of conflict in October 2019 has resulted in limited coverage in Northeast Syria.

Challenges and limitations

As the Syria Market Monitoring Exercise currently includes 13 partners based in 2 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 is as accurate as possible. Because this exercise collects data directly from vendors and relies on partner organizations for its wide coverage, Market Monitoring may sporadically lose coverage temporarily or for longer periods of time owing to challenges in accessing locations or due to loss in the shared data collection capacity of the project. This impacts the ability to report on trends, as can be seen in the line graphs and 'NA' values in the tables.

December's Situation Overview

Due to limited coverage across Northeast Syria this month, trends and price comparisons were presented at the community-level, rather than at sub-district level. Due to lack of data in October and November, SMEB prices were compared to September's data, which can [be found here](#).

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). For more information please visit our website:

www.reach-initiative.org. You can contact us directly at: geneva@reach-initiative.org and follow us on Twitter [@REACH_info](https://twitter.com/REACH_info)

ABOUT THE CASH-BASED RESPONSES TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

The Cash-Based Responses Technical Working Group (CBR-TWG) 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. REACH and the CBR-TWG have been partners on the Syria Market Monitoring Exercise since early 2015.