

Monthly Factsheet: CWG Iraq - Joint Price Monitoring Initiative

May 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 an SMEB in each district. Cleaned data sets are distributed to CWG partners, clusters and key stakeholders.

PARTICIPATING PARTNERS

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| ACF | ACTED |
| DRC | GRC/IRCS |
| IRC | Mercy Corps |
| NRC | Oxfam GB |
| REACH Iraq | Relief Int |
| Tearfund | TdH |
| Triangle GH | WHH |
| 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 seventh round of the JPMI was conducted between 21 May – 29 May, during which enumerators from 15 participating partner agencies (ACF, 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 302 shops from 81 markets in 14 districts across Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Dohuk, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Sulaymaniyah governorates. In addition, to calculate average monthly rent, transportation and communications 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 was 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 was 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 stable 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 and Anbar governorates – especially Telafar, Ramadi and Mosul districts. As in the last round of data

JPMI KEY FIGURES

- 15** Participating Partner Agencies
- 8** Assessed Governorates
- 14** Assessed Districts
- 81** Markets Assessed
- 302** Shops Assessed

ASSESSED DISTRICTS

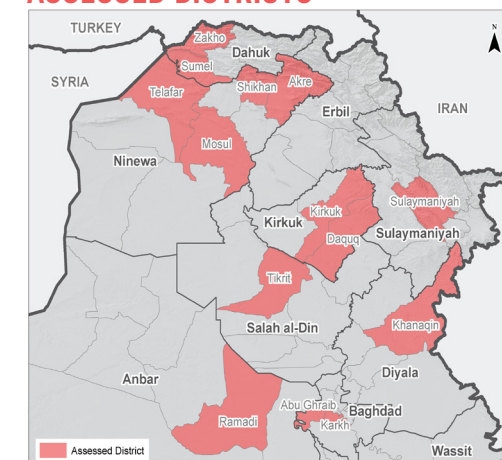


TABLE 1: SURVIVAL MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET (SMEB)

| | Item | Quantity |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Food Items | Lentils | 10.8 kg |
| | Rice | 40.5 kg |
| | Sugar | 5.94 kg |
| | Vegetable Oil | 5.94 kg |
| | 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

collection, security concerns prevented data collection from one previously assessed markets in Khanaqin 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 – Kifri and Erbil – became inactive due to shifting partner programming priorities. While these districts will therefore not be included in the comparative analysis for this round, they will likely be included in future rounds as partner operations expand.

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 Khanaqin, Akre and Ramadi 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 approximately the same as April, with a negligible decrease (-0.2%). However, across the 14 assessed districts, there was large variation in terms of the average price change per district, with eight seeing their average consumer-goods price increase and six reporting decreases. Of those experiencing increases, the largest were seen in Ramadi (+19.6%) and Zakho (+12.7%). For those districts that saw decreases, the greatest were reported in Akre (-20.7%) and Abu Ghraib (-12.1%).

PRICES OF FOOD ITEMS

Overall, prices for the five assessed SMEB food items (lentils, sugar, rice, vegetable oil and wheat flour) decreased in 10 out of 14 districts. The largest decreases in average food prices were in Abu Ghraib (-12.0%) and Tikrit (-4.6%). In Abu Ghraib, price decreases were driven by a fall in the price of wheat flour (-20.4%), lentils (-16.9%) and sugar (-14.6%), while Tikrit saw a decrease in the price of rice (-19.1%) and lentils (-6.6%). Out of the four districts that saw their overall food prices increase, Ramadi reported the largest at +16.1% and Sulaymaniyah the second largest at +4.2%. In Ramadi, price increases were seen for rice (+63.0%) and lentils (+14.2%), with Sulaymaniyah also reporting an increase in the price of rice (+15.8%). Compared to April, in May a greater proportion of districts saw food prices fall: more than two thirds of districts reported price decreases, compared to just over half in April; however, in 9 out of 10 of the districts that reported a fall in food prices, the decrease was by -5% or less.

As in previous months Abu Ghraib had the highest food prices overall, with Sulaymaniyah the second highest and Karkh the third highest. Abu Ghraib recorded the highest average price for sugar (1,174.09 IQD); Sulaymaniyah, the highest price for rice (1,736.56 IQD) and wheat

KEY AVERAGE PRICE CHANGES OF ASSESSED GOODS BY DISTRICT

| | | |
|--------|--------|---|
| AKRE | -20.7% | ↓ |
| RAMADI | +19.6% | ↑ |
| ZAKHO | +12.7% | ↑ |

flour (972.22 IQD); and Karkh the highest price for lentils (2086.67 IQD) and vegetable oil (1706.69 IQD). Overall, Akre recorded the lowest food prices, followed by Shikhan and Mosul. Akre had the lowest prices for rice (798.33 IQD), Shikhan reported the lowest prices for lentils (1,312.00 IQD) and Mosul, although having the third lowest food prices overall, did not have the lowest price for any particular food item. As in all previous rounds, the food item with the most significant variation in price between districts was wheat flour, with a 505.96 IQD difference between the highest price (972.00 in Sulaymaniyah) and the lowest price (466.67 IQD in Ramadi).

PRICES OF NFI ITEMS

As with food items, NFI prices decreased in the majority of districts, with 11 out of 14 reporting a fall in overall prices. This amounted to a -5.4% net decrease, which roughly served as a counterbalance to the +6.0% net increase seen in April. The largest overall decreases were reported in Sumel (-20.0%), followed by Tikrit (-18.2%), Abu Ghraib (-17.0%) and Mosul (-16.7%). In Sumel, the decrease was largely due to a -32.0% fall in the prices of both shampoo and disinfectant solution, continuing the trend seen in March and April of large fluctuations for the prices of NFIs in this district. Out of the other districts that reported decreases, Tikrit saw a -31.7% in the price of toothpaste, Abu Ghraib saw a -31.8% fall in the price of toothbrushes and Mosul saw a -32.0% decline in the price of garbage bags.

For the three districts which saw NFI prices increase, the largest were recorded in Shikhan (+11.8%) and Kirkuk (+5.7%): the former saw a +25.4% increase in the price of garbage bags, while the latter saw a +23.3% increase in the price of toothbrushes.

In May, the most expensive overall prices for NFIs were found in Ramadi district, followed by Shikhan and Zakho. Ramadi recorded the highest price for shampoo (3,666.67 IQD), Shikhan for sanitary napkins (245.16 IQD) and Zakho for disinfectant solution (1,553.57 IQD). The least expensive overall prices for NFIs were found in Tikrit, Mosul and Abu Ghraib. Tikrit recorded the lowest price for no particular item, Mosul had the lowest price for toothbrushes (337.50 IQD) and toothpaste (787.50 IQD), and Abu Ghraib reported the lowest price for sanitary napkins (118.13 IQD).

As has been the case in previous months, NFI goods saw more significant variation in price than food items – with three of seven items reporting a 100% or greater difference between the most expensive and least expensive average prices recorded across all assessed districts.

PRICES OF FUEL ITEMS

For fuel items, butane prices remained relatively consistent between March and April, with a +0.2% increase (28.48 IQD) in the overall average price. However, the only significant increase was seen in Daquq with a +29.3% (7,333.33 IQD) increase,

OVERALL CHANGES IN AVERAGE PRICES OF GOODS

| | | |
|------|--------|---|
| NFI | - 5.4% | ↓ |
| FUEL | - 0.6% | ↓ |
| FOOD | - 0.5% | ↓ |

returning to similar price that was recorded in March. Kerosene prices showed more significant change, decreasing by -7.6% (56.48 IQD), which was primarily driven by price decreases in Tikrit (-37.5%, 321.36 IQD) and Mosul (-24.5%, 186.69 IQD).

DOMESTIC VS. IMPORTED GOODS

For all assessed goods, enumerators recorded whether the item was imported or domestically produced. The majority of both food and NFI goods were imported – an average of 95% –, while butane and kerosene were overwhelmingly domestic, with an average of 89% 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. These findings are identical to those of the previous two months.

CENTRAL VS. SECONDARY MARKETS

Nine districts reporting higher prices in secondary markets and five districts reporting higher prices in central markets. Both Ramadi and Zakho reported that 13 out of 14 goods were more expensive in secondary markets, while Mosul and Tel Afar both reported that 10 out of 14 goods were more expensive in central markets. Items that were generally more expensive at secondary markets were lentils, vegetable oil, toothpaste, shampoo and disinfectant solution; no item was reported to be generally more expensive

at central markets, unlike in previous rounds.

SHORTAGES

For every surveyed item, retailers were also asked whether there had been a shortage of that item within the past 30 days. Unlike in previous months no shortages were reported across the accessed districts, including in Bardiya and Domiz districts, which both reported widespread shortages in the April round of the JPML.

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).

Unlike in previous months, Sulaymaniyah recorded the highest prices overall, followed by Zakho and Abu Ghraib. The districts of Akre, Tikrit and Mosul recorded the lowest average of SMEB values.

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 |
|-----------------------|------------|------------------|
| Ramadi ⁴ | 720,720.98 | \$ 609.01 |
| Karkh | 639,103.80 | \$ 540.04 |
| Abu Ghraib | 515,197.51 | \$ 435.34 |
| Sulaymaniyah | 466,527.97 | \$ 394.22 |
| Kirkuk | 433,676.18 | \$ 366.46 |
| Zakho | 432,596.25 | \$ 365.54 |
| Shikhan | 408,466.48 | \$ 345.15 |
| Sumel | 401,560.96 | \$ 339.32 |
| Akre ⁴ | 396,767.87 | \$ 335.27 |
| Khanaqin ⁴ | 394,914.23 | \$ 333.70 |
| Tikrit | 389,138.06 | \$ 328.82 |
| Daquq | 387,605.72 | \$ 327.51 |
| Telafar | 354,503.63 | \$ 299.54 |
| Mosul | 331,634.58 | \$ 280.22 |

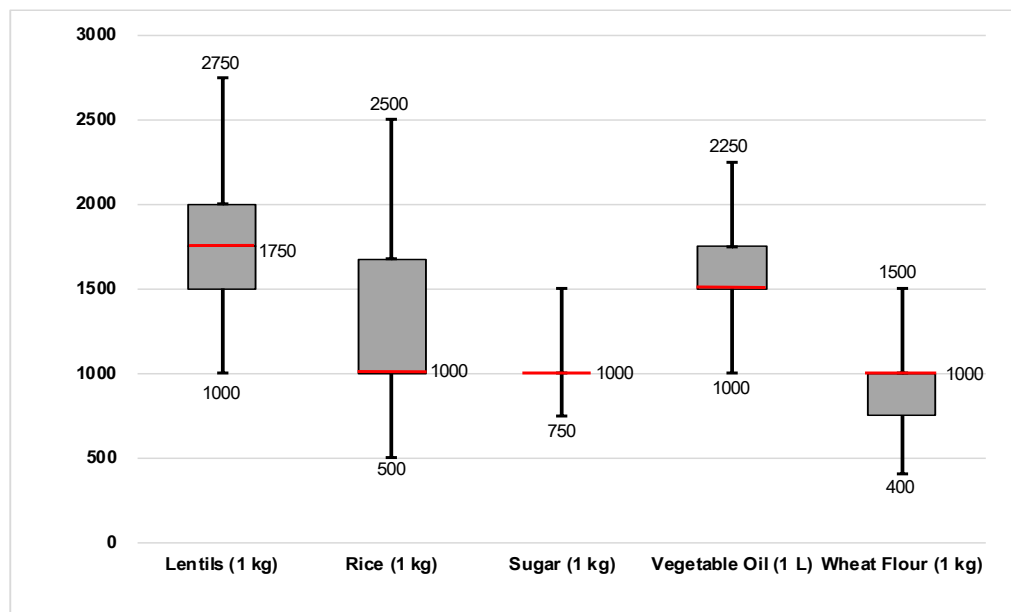
3. Exchange rate of 1 USD 1,183.47 IQD retrieved from www.xe.com on June 11, 2017.

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

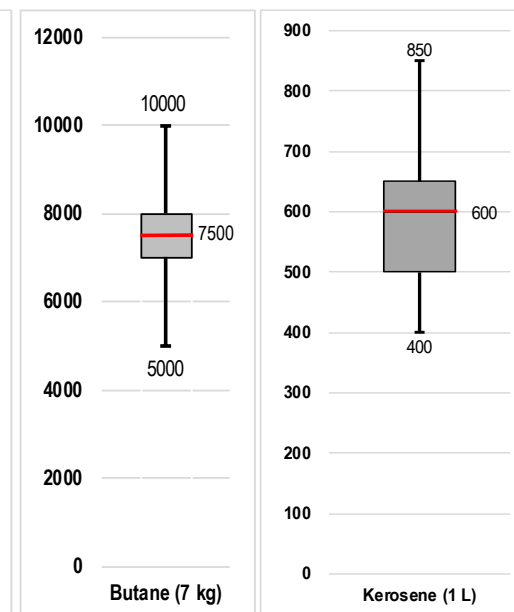
PERCENT OF GOODS IMPORTED

| | |
|------|-------|
| FOOD | 95.6% |
| NFI | 95.6% |
| FUEL | 10.6% |

FOOD ITEMS

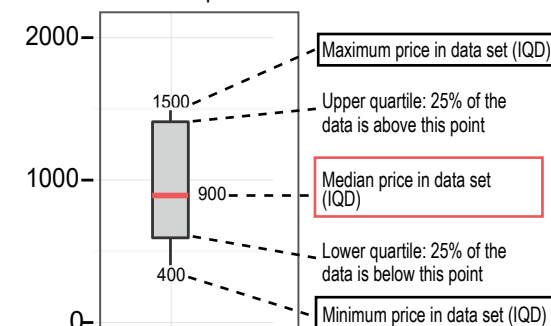


FUEL

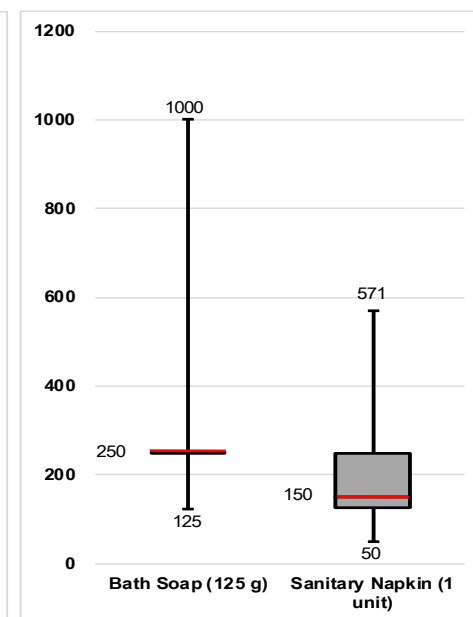
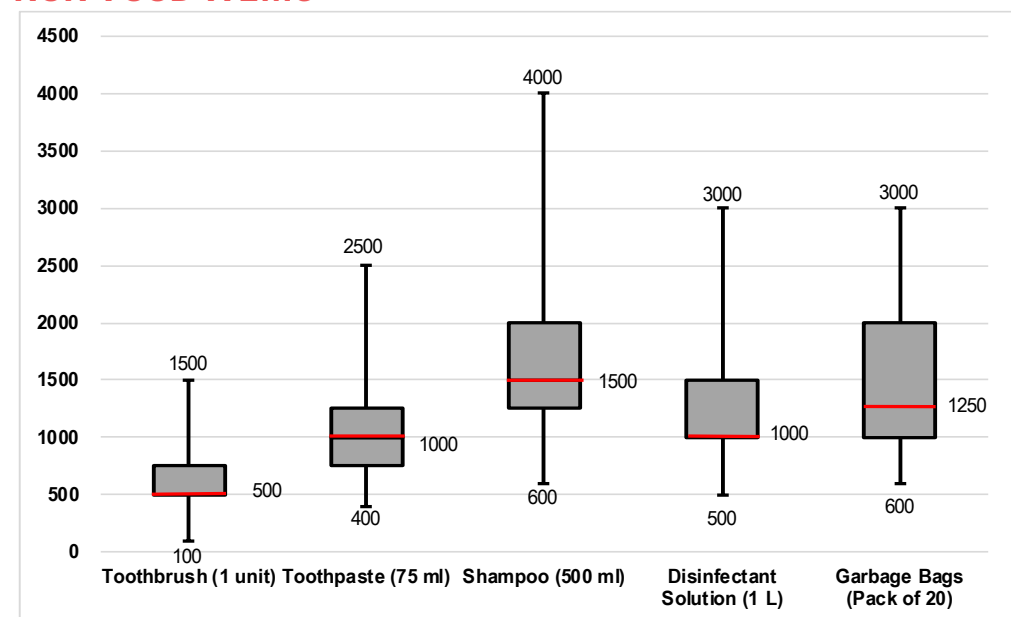


How to Read a Boxplot

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 (April 2017)

