

# Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI)

August, 2023  
Northeast Syria

## KEY Findings\*

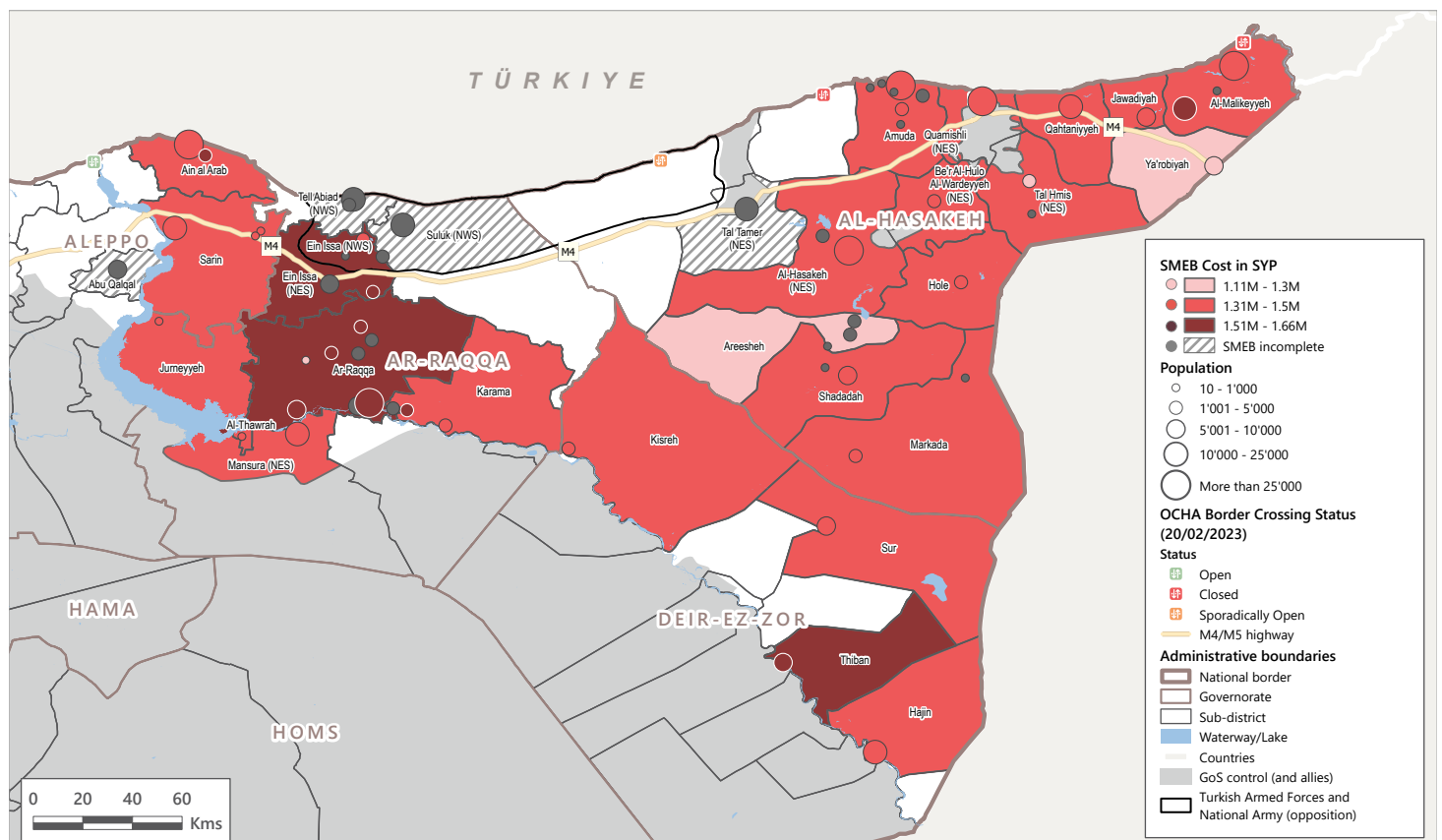
- The SYP-USD exchange rate increased by 40% from 9,400 SYP per USD to 13,125 SYP per USD. This is the largest USD-SYP Exchange Rate change seen this year.
- The price of the SMEB total increased by 26% from 1,131,983 SYP to 1,430,091 SYP.
- Most SMEB items increased considerably related to the sharp SYP-USD exchange rate increase in August. Particularly, bulk foods (+40%), vegetables (+48%), and cooking oils (40%) experienced sharp price increases.
- More vendors reported challenges associated with supply in August compared to July. Vendors in Deir-Ez-Zor continue to report challenges associated with the unfolding security situation.

## ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

To inform humanitarian cash programming, the Northeast of Syria (NES) Cash Working Group (CWG), in partnership with local and international NGOs, conducts a monthly Joint Market Monitoring Initiative in Northern Syria. The exercise assesses the availability and prices of 36 basic commodities that are typically sold in markets and consumed by the average Syrian household, including food, water and non-food items e.g., fuel, and cell phone data. Of these, 18 items comprise the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), which represents the minimum, culturally adjusted items required to support a 6-person household for a month.

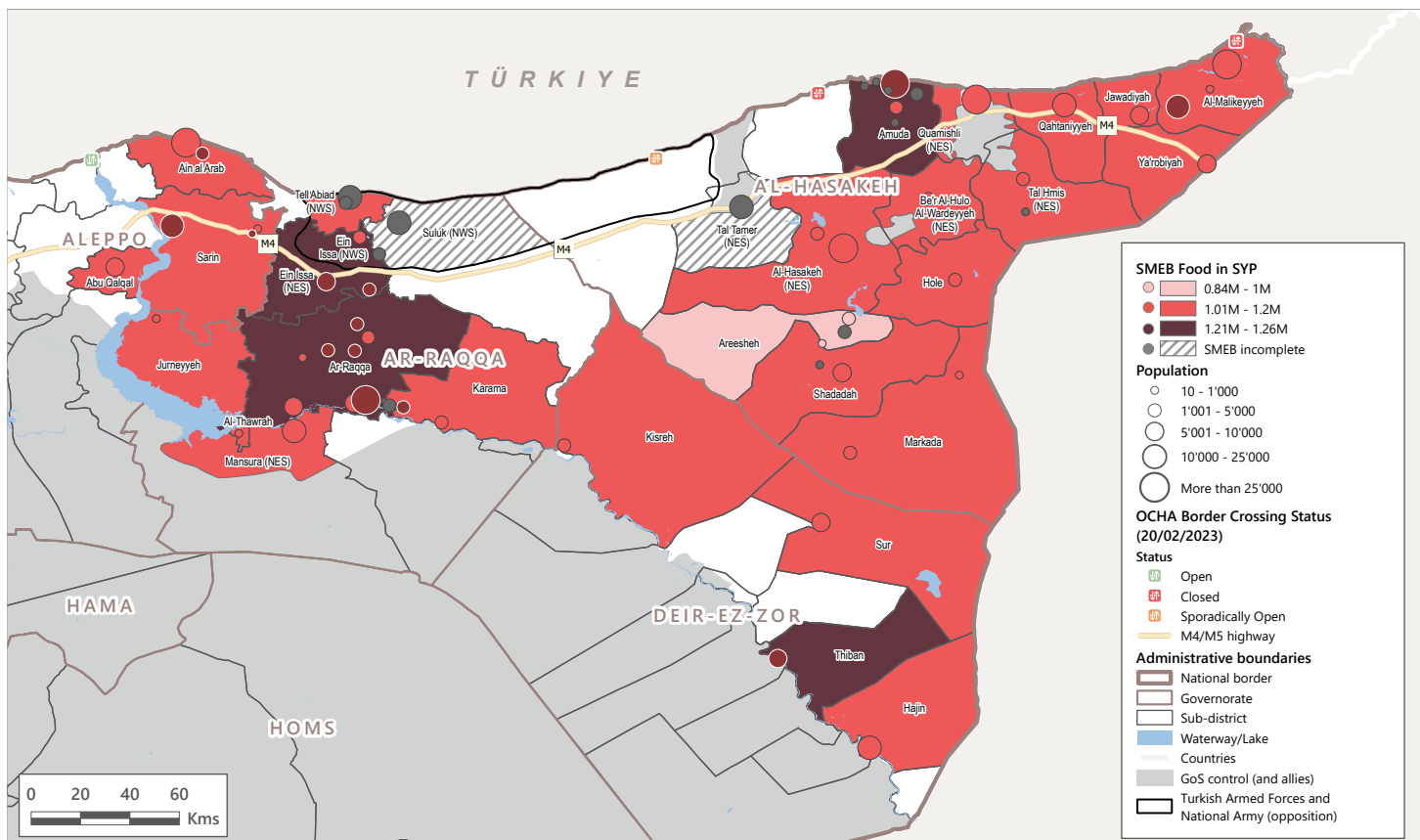
\*Note that fewer vendors as well as locations were assessed in August 2023 due to capacity limitations.

## Median SMEB price per sub-district, SYP



See [Annex 1](#) for SMEB values as well as one and six month price trends per sub-district.

## Cost of SMEB food component by sub-districts and communities



### SMEB Contents

Food	
Bread	37 kg
Bulgur	15 kg
Chicken	6 kg
Eggs	6 kg
Ghee (kg) / veg. oil (L)	7 kg/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 g
Sanitary pads	4 packs of 10

### Other

Cooking fuel	25 L
Water trucking	4500 L
Phone data	1 GB
"Float"/other costs	7.5% of total

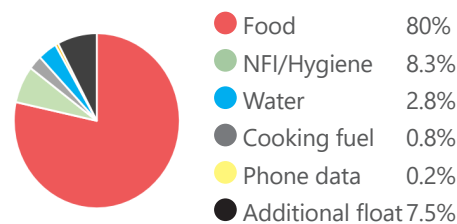
The SMEB Total is the median cost of the minimum, culturally adjusted items required to support a 6-person household for a month.

### IN THIS FACTSHEET

As the JMMI generates a large amount of data, this factsheet is limited to a snapshot of key trends. [Annex 1 and 2](#) show prices and percentage changes in SMEB values across assessed sub-districts as well as for individual monitored item prices.

For more detailed data, consult the [dataset](#) and online [dashboard](#). The dashboard allows users to navigate more easily and draw geographical and temporal comparisons across currencies-

### NES SMEB Composition\*



### August 2023 Data Collection

7	Supporting partners
4	Governorates
11	Districts
28	Sub-districts
58	Communities
1,791	Shops (vendor KIs)

\*Due to rounding figures may not total 100%

### NES SMEB

108 USD ▼-10%  
1,430,091 SYP▲ +26%

### NES SMEB FOOD ITEMS

87 USD ▼-7%  
1,147,792 SYP▲ +30%

### NES EXCHANGE RATE

USD/SYP  
13,125 SYP▲ +40%

## General

The SMEB total price increased by 26% compared to 10% in July and a -4% price decline in June 2023. A similar trend was seen across governorates (Figure 1).

All SMEB components underwent a price increase from July to August, except water (Figure 2). The most considerable price increases were observed in the SMEB Vegetable Price (+48%) and Bulk Food Price (+40%). The price increases observed across SMEB items (except water) were driven by a sharp increase in the SYP-USD exchange rate as well as increased vegetable prices related to the end of the harvest season.

## Exchange Rate

In August, the SYP-USD exchange rate increased by 39% from 9,400 SYP per USD to 13,125 SYP per USD. Similar trends were seen across governorates. This is the largest USD-SYP Exchange Rate change seen this year. The USD-SYP exchange rate has gradually increased month-on-month, however as Figure 3 shows, typically less than 10% per month.

The sharp increases observed from July to August are likely related to the devaluation of the SYP by the Central Bank of Syria (CBS). CBS devalued the SYP for the third time in 2023 during the fourth week of July to trade SYP 8,542 to a dollar from SYP 6,532. This was an attempt to reduce the difference between the exchange rates in the parallel and official markets; before the July devaluation, the spread between the official and parallel exchange rates was more than 80%.<sup>1</sup>

The depreciation has triggered a panic in local markets and there have been reports of economic actors increasing prices to maintain profits as well as shopkeepers and importers being forced to suspend their activities.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 1 - SMEB prices, 2022-2023, SYP\*

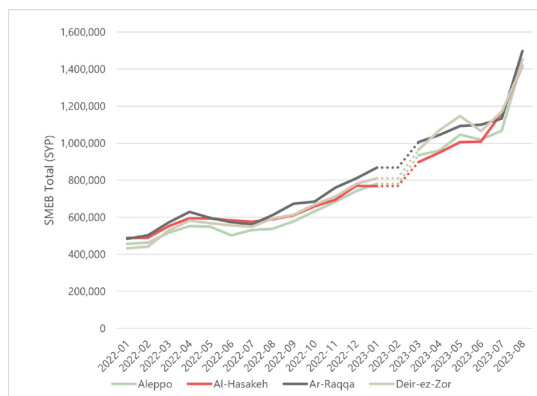


Figure 2 - SMEB Components, 2022-2023, SYP\*

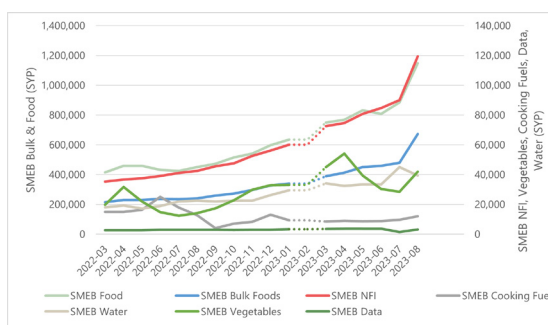
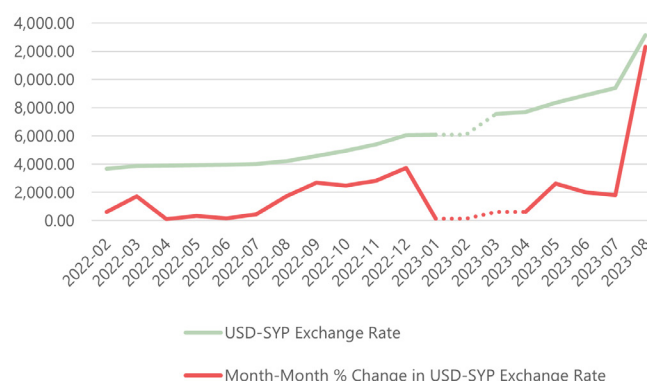


Figure 3 - SYP-USD Exchange Rate, 2022-23, SYP\*



\* The dotted line represents the month of February when no data was collected due to the earthquake.

## Bulk Foods

The price of SMEB bulk foods increased by 40% from July to August compared to a 4% increase last month. Of the core SMEB bulk food items, the price of red lentils increased the most (50%), followed by rice (42%), sugar (39%), and bulgur (35%). These goods are typically imported and, thus, highly influenced by the exchange rate. Sugar prices have been reported to have been particularly affected by the Fish-khabur-Semalka border closure and remained high following the reopening.<sup>3</sup>

Similar increases were observed across governorates, with some products undergoing slightly higher price increases in some governorates than others. For example, the price of bulgur increased by 58% in Deir-Ez-Zor and only 29% in Aleppo. In contrast, the price of rice increased by 49% in Aleppo and declined by 14% in Deir-Ez-Zor. This is likely shaped by local variations in availability and supply chains.

## Vegetables

The price of SMEB vegetables increased by 48% following months of harvest-related declines in the overall SMEB Vegetable price. In August, all SMEB vegetable prices underwent price increases reflecting the end of the harvest season. Historical JMMI data suggests that prices of SMEB vegetables typically decline in May and June and start to increase in July and August as the harvest season ends. Similar trends were seen across the governorates.

The 2023 harvest season in Syria has been considered to be more fruitful than the harvest in 2022. Yet, prices remained higher in August 2023 compared to August 2022 (see Figure 5).

## Trucked Water

The price of trucked water declined by -13% on a regional level. This may be explained by a large price increase from June to July (+35%). On a governorate level, however, the price of trucked water increased in Al-Hasakeh (+46%) and Aleppo (+40%), whilst the price declined in Deir-Ez-Zor (-28%) and Ar-Raqqa (-30%). This may reflect a stabilisation of the prices of water across governorates, as price increases were sharpest from June to July in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-Ez-Zor.

The cost of water is highest in Al-Hasakeh where the Alouk water station most recently was suspended on 23 June 2023. This has been linked to a lack of electricity, maintenance, and attacks on power supplies. The suspension affects over 1 million people.<sup>4</sup>

Figure 4 - Bulk Foods, 2022-23, SYP\*

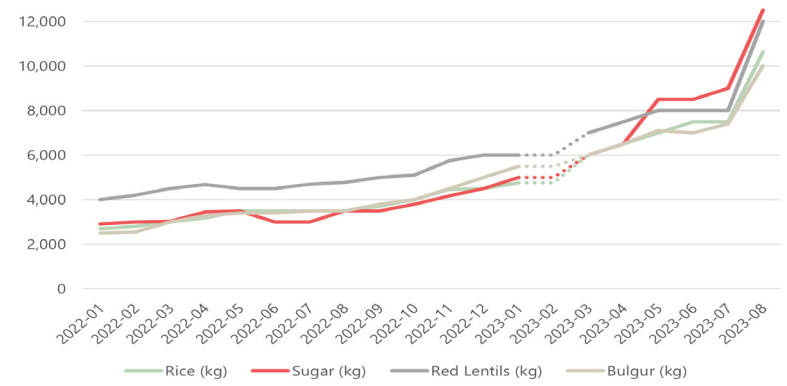


Table - % Increase in price of bulk food items from July to August 2023

Item	Aleppo (%)	Al-Hasakeh (%)	Ar-Raqqa (%)	Deir-ez-Zor (%)
Bulgur	29	32	29	58
Rice	49	40	65	-14
Sugar	49	37	40	37
Lentils	53	46	33	19

Figure 5 - Vegetable prices, 2022-2023, SYP\*

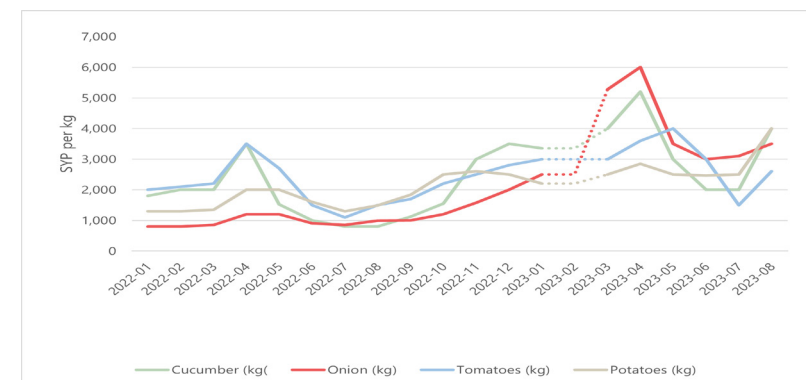
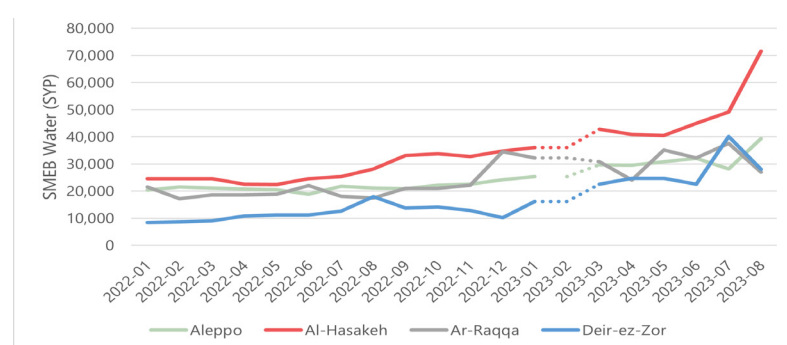


Figure 6 SMEB Water Trucking prices, 2021-2023, SYP\*



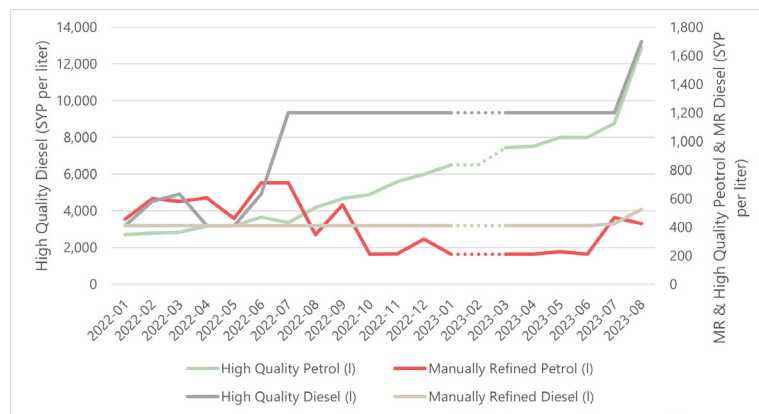
\* The dotted line represents the month of February when no data was collected due to the earthquake.

## Fuel

The price of manually refined kerosene increased by 25% from July to August regionally compared to a 33% price increase in July. All governorates – except Aleppo – experienced price increases to kerosene, particularly Al-Hasakeh (+150%). Kerosene continues to be most expensive in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-Ez-Zor.

The price of LP Gas increased by 24% regionally. The price of LP Gas increased in all governorates, especially Aleppo (+43%).

## Petrol, 2021-2023, SYP\*



All fuel types – except manually refined petrol – experienced price increases on a regional level from July to August. As expected given the high currency depreciation from July to August, particularly imported fuels experienced price increases. The price of high-quality imported petrol increased by 47%, whilst high-quality imported diesel increased by 42%. Particularly, Al-Hasakeh governorate continued to experience price increases to imported fuel; high-quality petrol increased by 75%, whilst high-quality diesel increased by 42%. This may be explained by a recent increase in fuel prices by the self-administration.<sup>5</sup>

## LIQUIDITY ISSUES

Availability of USD denominations remained a challenge across NES. Limited stock of at least 1 USD denomination has throughout the past months been close to 100% of surveyed vendors. Slightly more vendors reported limited 5 USD (60% compared to 54%).

The limited availability of USD denominations is of concern as it can impact Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) cash distributions as well as the ability of households to receive cash in remittances from abroad.

## Number of informal exchange vendors reporting limited stock of USD notes

### Al-Hasakeh (54 vendors)

Limited stock of 5 USD	44/54	
Limited stock of 10 USD	46/54	
Limited stock of 20 USD	44/54	
Limited stock of 50 USD	37/54	
Limited stock of 100 USD	30/54	

### Aleppo (20 vendors)

Limited stock of 5 USD	7/20	
Limited stock of 10 USD	8/20	
Limited stock of 20 USD	14/20	
Limited stock of 50 USD	17/20	
Limited stock of 100 USD	20/20	

### Ar-Raqqa (28 vendors)

Limited stock of 5 USD	11/28	
Limited stock of 10 USD	15/28	
Limited stock of 20 USD	22/28	
Limited stock of 50 USD	26/28	
Limited stock of 100 USD	27/28	

### Deir-Ez Zor (12 vendors)

Limited stock of 5 USD	6/12	
Limited stock of 10 USD	7/12	
Limited stock of 20 USD	7/12	
Limited stock of 50 USD	9/12	
Limited stock of 100 USD	9/12	

\* The dotted line represents the month of February when no data was collected due to the earthquake.

## Most commonly reported supply challenges (% of surveyed vendors)\*

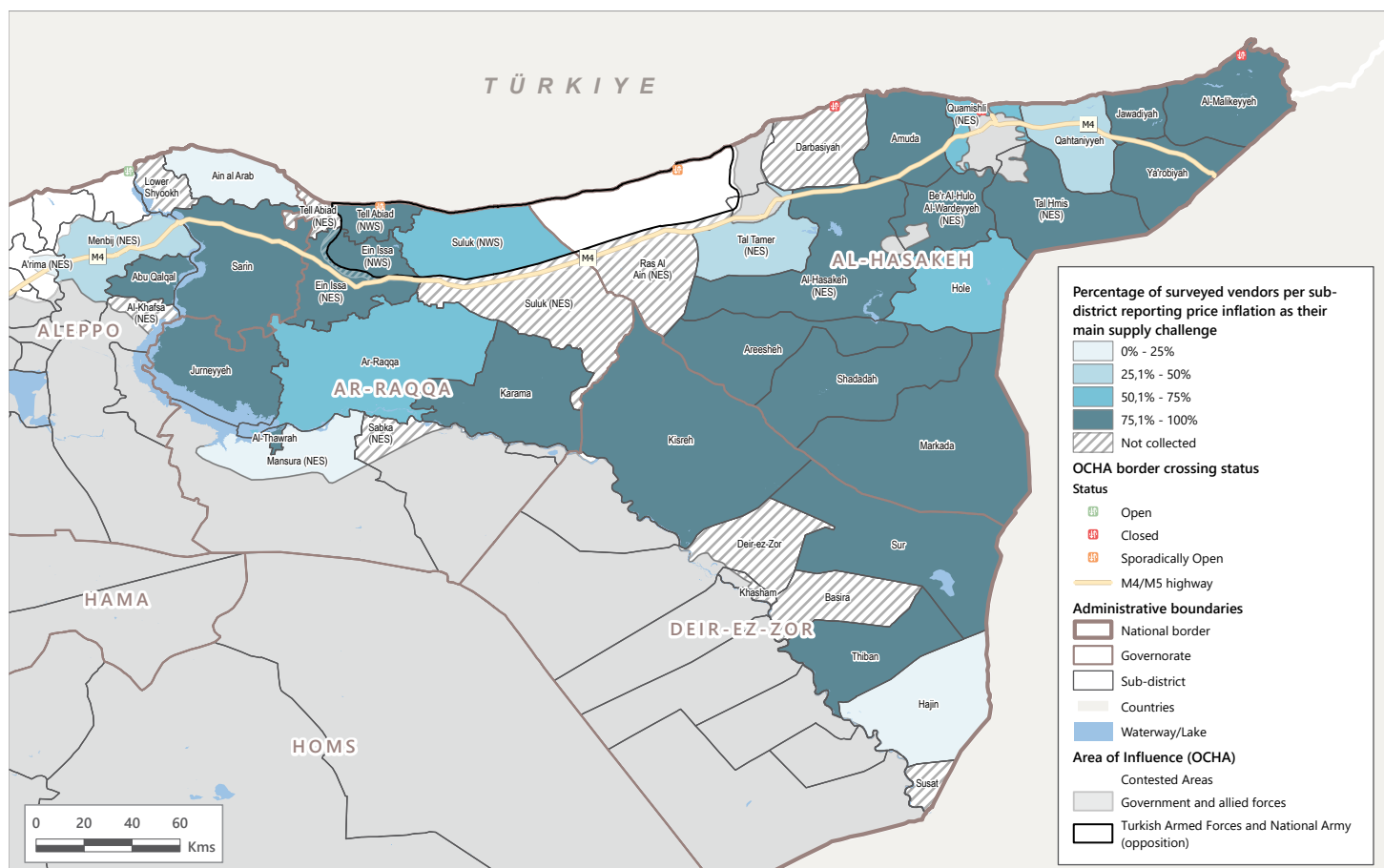
## SUPPLY CHALLENGES

	AREA	REPORTED %
<b>PRICE INFLATION</b>	<b>NES</b>	<b>78%</b>
	Al-Hasakeh	84%
	Aleppo	54%
	Ar-Raqqa	84%
	Deir-ez-Zor	74%
<b>SUPPLY COULD NOT MEET DEMAND</b>	<b>NES</b>	<b>18%</b>
	Al-Hasakeh	22%
	Aleppo	9%
	Ar-Raqqa	8%
	Deir-ez-Zor	47%
<b>SUPPLIER LIMITED SUPPLY</b>	<b>NES</b>	<b>13%</b>
	Al-Hasakeh	16%
	Aleppo	11%
	Ar-Raqqa	5%
	Deir-ez-Zor	29%
<b>SUPPLIER OUT OF STOCK</b>	<b>NES</b>	<b>3%</b>
	Al-Hasakeh	5%
	Aleppo	1%
	Ar-Raqqa	0%
	Deir-ez-Zor	0%

In August 2023, more vendors reported a least one challenge to their supply (85%) compared to July (76%). This is mostly explained by more vendors reporting price inflation as a in August (78%) compared to June (70%). The increased reporting of price inflation as a challenge reflects the increased depreciation of the SYP against the USD in August.<sup>6</sup> Suppliers having limited supply and supply being unable to meet demand continued to be major challenges, however, did not change notably on a governorate level.

Vendors in Deir-Ez-Zor continue to report challenges associated with the unfolding security situation. Whilst less vendors reported that insecure transport roads were a challenge to supply, more vendors report that supply cannot meet demand. This may reflect that supply routes into Deir-Ez-Zor have been compromised due to the security challenges. Since Deir-Ez-Zor is dependent on import of goods from other governorates for most goods, interruptions of supply chains due to the security situation is likely to quickly affect supply.<sup>7</sup>

## Vendors reporting price inflation as their main supply challenge



\* Multiple choice question and therefore percentages may not equal 100%. See the summary page of the [dataset](#) for percentages of all reported supply challenges per governorate.

## METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

In order to be included in the JMMI, 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. Median prices at each higher administrative level of aggregation (district, governorate, region) are calculated by taking the medians from sub-district level prices. Community and sub-district level prices are both drawn from the median prices collected from vendors.

## LIMITATIONS

All JMMI data is only indicative of the specific time frame within which it was collected, and trend lines in graphs may not be continuous where data is missing. Usually, data is collected during the first Monday-to-Monday of each month.

The JMMI data collection tool requires enumerators to record the cheapest available price for each item, but does not require a specific brand, as brand availability may vary. Therefore, price comparisons across regions may be based on slight variants of the same product. Non-food items (NFIs) are particularly challenging to standardise as they vary significantly in terms of types, brands, and specifications. The JMMI methodology aims to balance consistency and comparability considerations with geographical variations in availability.

Due to issues of access, security and partner capacity, the markets included in the JMMI may vary on a monthly basis. As such, the reported changes in the more aggregate levels (governorate, district) may be driven by shifts in coverage rather than actual changes. For this reason, we recommend all users to consider local markets and lower levels of aggregation (sub-district, community) when using JMMI data for more specific trend analyses.

## JMMI AND THE CASH WORKING GROUP

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. In northeast Syria (NES), the CWG was established in 2018, to fulfil a similar purpose in that region.

For more information about the CWG in NES, please contact the cash working group coordinator at [cashcoordnes@gmail.com](mailto:cashcoordnes@gmail.com)

## 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. All activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms.

For more information about REACH, please contact the REACH JMMI focal point, Cecilia Hoegfeldt, at [cecilia.hoegfeldt@impact-initiatives.org](mailto:cecilia.hoegfeldt@impact-initiatives.org) or visit the [REACH Syria Resource Centre](#).



## PARTNERS

Each month, around 20 different organisations work together to collect market data. Participating organisations train their enumerators on the JMMI methodology and data collection tools using standard training materials developed by REACH, who is then responsible for processing the data.

**Annex 1: Median SMEB price per sub-district**

	SMEB SYP*	1 month change %	6 month change %
<b>Northeast Syria SMEB</b>	<b>1,430,091</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>Aleppo</b>			
Ain al Arab	1,445,215	39%	84%
Sarin	1,460,663	37%	88%
<b>Al-Hasakeh</b>			
Al-Hasakeh	1,489,120	21%	78%
Areeshah	1,113,683	9%	64%
Hole	1,494,348	29%	94%
Markada	1,426,623	35%	85%
Quamishli	1,407,311	6%	83%
Shadadah	1,372,264	No Data	84%
<b>Ar-Raqqa</b>			
Ein Issa	1,667,289	No Data	79%
Karama	1,344,319	19%	60%
Mansura	1,399,226	35%	No Data
<b>Deir-ez-Zor</b>			
Hajin	1,433,560	33%	77%
Kisreh	1,405,688	25%	73%
Sur	1,387,090	10%	89%
Thiban	1,572,281	29%	87%

\* USD values are calculated as per the informal exchange rate recorded in the same geographical area.

\*\* For these sub-districts, water trucking prices were not available and are not included in the SMEB price.



**Annex 2: Price of SMEB items in NES**

Item	Unit*	Price SYP**	1 month change	6 month change	Price USD**
<b>NES SMEB food items</b>		<b>1,147,792</b>	<b>884,600</b>	<b>634,272</b>	<b>87</b>
SMEB bulk food items	SMEB	672,821	40%	99%	51.26
Bulgur	1 kg	10,000	35%	82%	0.76
Red lentils	1 kg	12,000	50%	100%	0.91
Rice	1 kg	10,625	42%	124%	0.81
Salt	500 g	1,500	0%	50%	0.11
Sugar	1 kg	12,500	39%	150%	0.95
Tomato paste	1 kg	13,875	28%	73%	1.06
SMEB vegetables	SMEB	42,000	48%	27%	3.20
Tomatoes	1 kg	2,600	73%	-13%	0.20
Potatoes	1 kg	4,000	60%	82%	0.30
Cucumbers	1 kg	3,500	13%	40%	0.27
Onions	1 kg	4,000	100%	19%	0.30
SMEB cooking oils	SMEB	126,438	40%	81%	9.63
Ghee	1 kg	18,625	38%	86%	1.42
Vegetable oil	1 L	18,000	50%	77%	1.37
Non-veg perishables					
Bread	8 pc	444	-3%	11%	0.03
Chicken	1 kg	21,000	31%	114%	1.60
Eggs	30 pc	27,500	28%	96%	2.10
SMEB non-food items	SMEB	84,705	33%	51%	9.09
Bathing soap	1 pc	4,500	44%	112%	0.34
Sanitary pads	10 pc	4,750	36%	90%	0.36
Toothpaste	100 g	7,071	35%	118%	0.54
Laundry powder	1 kg	12,000	35%	102%	0.91
Dish soap	1 L	10,500	8%	110%	0.80
SMEB cooking fuels	SMEB	12,000	25%	5%	0.91
Kerosene (manually refined)	1 L	2,500	25%	47%	0.19
LP gas	1 L	525	24%	38%	0.04
SMEB water trucking	SMEB	39,375	-13%	49%	3.00
Water trucking (1000 L)	1 m3	8,750	-13%	49%	0.67
Other					
Phone data	1 gb	2,782	94%	24%	0.21

\* The SMEB unit refers to the current SMEB allocation of the item, as outlined on [page 2](#).

\*\* USD values are calculated as per the informal exchange rate recorded in the same geographical area. Please see this month's JMMI dataset for informal exchange rates by area.

## Endnotes

- 1 [World Food Programme. \(2023, August 7\). WFP Syria Market Price Watch Bulletin, June 2023 - Syrian Arab Republic | ReliefWeb.](#)
- 2 Daher, J. (2023, August 15). [Syria is on the verge of economic collapse.](#)
- 3 NPA Syria. (2023, May 31). [Closure of Semalka crossing impacts prices in Syria's Raqqa.](#)
- 4 Almayadeen.net (2023, August 26) [For the fifth year in a row, Turkey continues to cut off water to Al-Hasakah](#)
- 5 Daher, J. (2023, August 15). [Syria is on the verge of economic collapse.](#)
- 6 REACH (2023, September). [Rapid needs assessment in response to the conflict escalation in Deir-ez-Zor governorate.](#)

## 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).

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