

# Monthly Factsheet: CWG Iraq - Joint Price Monitoring Initiative

February 2017

**CWG**

**CASH  
WORKING  
GROUP**

**REACH** Informing  
more effective  
humanitarian action

## 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 and stock levels 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

<b>ACF</b>	<b>ACTED</b>
<b>DRC</b>	<b>IRC</b>
<b>Mercy Corps</b>	<b>NRC</b>
<b>Oxfam GB</b>	<b>REACH Iraq</b>
<b>Relief Int</b>	<b>Tearfund</b>
<b>TdH</b>	<b>Triangle GH</b>
<b>WHH</b>	<b>World Vision</b>

## METHODOLOGY

Data collection for the JPMI occurs on a monthly basis, with associated factsheets and datasets published after every round. Data collection for the fourth round of the JPMI was conducted between 23 February - 6 March, during which enumerators from 14 participating partner agencies (ACF, ACTED, DRC, IRC, Mercy Corps, NRC, Oxfam GB, REACH Iraq, Relief International, TdH, Tearfund, Triangle GH, WHH, and World Vision) gathered price data from 413 shops in 103 markets in 17 districts across Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Dohuk, Erbil, 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).<sup>1</sup> Secondary markets are defined similarly, but not large enough to host a wholesaler. Within each assessed district, at least three central markets and three secondary markets were selected for data collection.<sup>2</sup> Markets were selected by partner agency field staff, in order to ensure that localised knowledge was utilized. 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 of the 14 food, NFI, and fuel goods.

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.

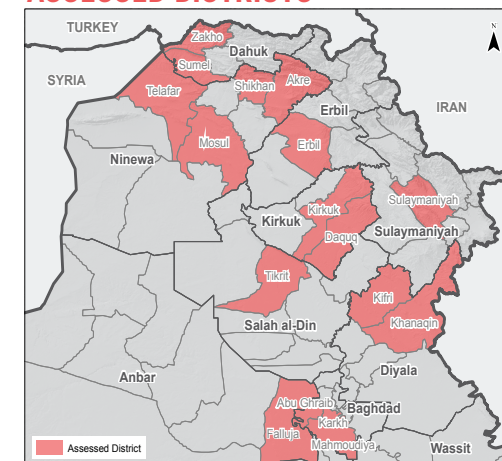
## CHALLENGES & LIMITATIONS

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 governorate – particularly in Mosul, Telafar and Tikrit districts. As in the third round of data collection, security concerns again prevented data collection from one previously assessed market in Khanaqin governorate for the fourth round.

## JPMI KEY FIGURES

- 14** Participating Partner Agencies
- 9** Assessed Governorates
- 17** Assessed Districts
- 103** Markets Assessed
- 413** Shops Assessed

## ASSESSED DISTRICTS



**TABLE 1: SURVIVAL MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET (SMEB)**

	Item	Quantity
<b>Food Items</b>	Lentils	10.8 kg
	Rice	40.5 kg
	Sugar	5.94 kg
	Vegetable Oil	5.94 kg
	Wheat Flour	40.5 kg
<b>Non-Food Items</b>	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
<b>Other</b>	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

Some items proved 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. As this is only the fourth factsheet output, there remains limited harmonized historical data to provide for long-term comparative analysis. However, the JPMI dataset will increasingly allow for the identification of longer-term price trends across all assessed districts.

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 and Akre 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

As in January, the average prices of assessed consumer goods<sup>3</sup> again saw a slight increase in February, rising approximately 3.1% across all assessed goods. The overall average rise in

3. The districts included in this section are the 13 for which there is comparative price data from previous months.

prices was primarily driven by increases in Akre (13.2%), Mosul (8.8%), Sumel (8.6%), and Daquq (7.6%) districts. Across previously assessed districts, 12 saw their average consumer good prices rise, with only four districts seeing decreases in overall average consumer goods prices – the largest of which was in Mahmoudiya district (11.6%). While in January 8 of 13 districts recorded average consumer good prices within 5% of their averages from December 2016, in February that figure was lower – 8 of 16 – indicating less price stability than in the previous round.

## PRICES OF FOOD ITEMS

When compared to January data, overall prices for the five SMEB food items increased in 11 of 16 districts. The largest increases in overall average food prices were recorded in Mosul (12.3%), Akre (10.6%) and Daquq (7.2%) districts. In Mosul, the increase was primarily due to changes in the localized prices of wheat flour and rice, which saw respective price increases of 39% and 18%. In Akre, the change was driven by increases in the prices of wheat flour and rice, which experienced respective price increases of 18% and 17% from January.

Of the five districts that saw their overall food prices fall, Mahmoudiya recorded the largest decrease of 12.2% - largely due to drops in the prices of wheat flour (21%), sugar (21%), and rice (19%). The remaining four districts that saw their overall food prices fall – Karkh, Kirkuk, Shikhan, and Telafar – all saw decreases of less than 3.5%.

As in previous rounds, the highest food prices were found in two assessed districts in Baghdad governorate: Abu Ghraib and Karkh. Abu Ghraib recorded the highest average prices for lentils (1,262 IQD), rice (1,575 IQD) and sugar (1,371 IQD). Though posting the second highest average food prices, Karkh did not record the highest prices for any goods, only entering the top three for sugar and vegetable oil. Notably, Mahmoudiya dropped

## KEY AVERAGE PRICE CHANGES OF ASSESSED GOODS BY DISTRICT

AKRE	13.3%	↑
MAHMOUDIYA	11.6%	↓
MOSUL	8.9%	↑

from being the district with the third highest food prices, to the sixth highest. As in January, two of the three lowest overall average food prices were recorded in Shikhan and Mosul districts, with Shikhan recording the lowest prices overall. For the third consecutive month, Shikhan recorded the lowest prices for wheat flour (590 IQD), as well as the lowest prices for lentils (1,420 IQD), sugar (930 IQD), and vegetable oil (1,432 IQD). As in all previous rounds, the food item with the most significant variation in price between districts was wheat flour, with a 423.49 IQD (72%) difference between the highest price (1,013.9 IQD in Kifri) and the lowest price (590.4 IQD in Shikhan).

## PRICES OF NFI ITEMS

Similar to the prices of SMEB food items, the NFI component of the SMEB saw prices rise in 9 of 17 districts – with a 4% overall net increase in the prices of NFI goods. The largest increase in NFI prices was a 29% rise in Mosul district (1,455 IQD), largely due to a 43% (542 IQD) increase in plastic garbage bag prices. The most significant NFI prices reductions were seen in Karkh and Shikhan, recording declines of 9% (552 IQD) and 8% (519 IQD) respectively. In Shikhan, the decline was primarily due to a 26% (374 IQD) drop in the average prices of plastic garbage bags.

Of the seven assessed NFI items, three recorded price increases (bath soap, toothpaste and plastic garbage bags), three recorded price decreases (toothbrush, shampoo and sanitary napkins) and one recorded no change (disinfectant solution).

However, of these, only two of the overall price increases, and one of the overall decreases, were greater than 1%. The largest price shift occurred for bath soap, with a recorded average price increase of 7% across all districts. This change was primarily driven by price spikes in Erbil (48%), Abu Gharib (48%), and Sulaymaniyah (42%) districts.

As in December and January, Erbil and Zakho presented the two highest NFI prices overall. Zakho reported the highest prices for toothbrushes (1,050 IQD) and plastic garbage bags (2,000 IQD), while Erbil reported the highest prices for disinfectant solution (1,859 IQD). Tikrit district had the third highest overall prices, and the highest prices for both toothpaste (1,679 IQD) and shampoo (2,187). The lowest prices for NFIs were logged in Akre and Daquq districts – though neither posted the lowest overall price for any of the seven assessed NFI goods. The NFI good with the most significant price variation was sanitary napkins, with a 693 IQD (194%) difference between the most expensive (1,050 IQD in Zakho) and the least expensive (357 IQD in Mosul). Overall, NFI goods saw more significant variations in price than food items – with five of seven items reporting a 100% or greater difference between the most expensive and least expensive average prices recorded across all assessed districts. This variation was primarily due to differences in the available quality of items stocked, as well as the available quantities in which they were sold.

## OVERALL CHANGES IN AVERAGE PRICES OF GOODS

NFI	4.0%	↑
FOOD	1.4%	↑
FUEL	0.0%	—

## PRICES OF FUEL ITEMS

Butane prices remained relatively consistent between January and February, with an effective 1% (100 IQD) change in the overall average price. The largest increase in butane prices occurred in Abu Gharib, which saw prices rise by 7% (500 IQD). Mosul district saw the largest decrease in average butane prices (27%), though it maintained the highest average butane prices overall (9,074 IQD). Overall kerosene prices increased by 4% (27 IQD), with significant price increases seen in the three assessed districts in Baghdad governorate: Mahmoudiya (67%), Karkh (49%) and Abu Gharib (47%). The largest decrease in kerosene price was recorded in Khanaqin, with an effective 11% (82 IQD) drop.

## 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% imported – while butane and kerosene were overwhelmingly produced domestically – an average of 89% domestically produced. For most assessed items, prices for imported and domestic items were similar. The most significant difference was recorded for wheat flour, with the prices of domestically produced items approximately 43% lower than for imported items. However, the sample of domestic prices for wheat flour came from only 13 items.

### PERCENT OF GOODS IMPORTED

<b>FOOD</b>	<b>95.6%</b>
<b>NFI</b>	<b>95.6%</b>
<b>FUEL</b>	<b>10.6%</b>

## CENTRAL VS. SECONDARY MARKETS

Following with the trend identified in January, 10 of 17 assessed districts reported higher prices in secondary markets than in central markets – with an average of 75% of items in those districts reporting higher secondary market prices. The trend was the strongest in the three assessed Baghdad districts, as well as Fallujah. Of the 14 assessed items, vegetable oil and toothpaste reported higher secondary market prices in 12 of 17 assessed districts. For the remaining items, only sanitary napkins recorded higher prices in central markets.

## SHORTAGES

For every surveyed item, retailers were also asked whether there had been a shortage of that item within the past 30 days. Overall, 10 of 102 assessed markets – in Talafar, Diyala, Daquq, Sumel, Akre, and Mosul districts – reported significant (50% or more of shops) shortages of at least one food, non-food or fuel item. The majority (seven of ten markets) reported shortages for only one item. However, there were key exceptions, particularly in Telafar districts, where more significant shortages were reported. Telafar hosted 50% of the markets with shortages, with five of six assessed markets reporting shortages of at least one item. As in previous months, the shortages remained the most severe in Bardiya market, with 9 of 14 assessed items reporting shortages. Of these, all assessed retailers reported shortages of rice, sugar, vegetable oil, toothpaste, shampoo, disinfectant solution and sanitary napkins, with a further 75% reporting shortages of lentils and wheat flour.

Overall, the most commonly reported shortage was sugar, though all of these shortages were reported in Telafar markets. Across the districts with markets recording shortages, kerosene was the most common shortage reported, with markets in Telafar, Diyala, Akre and Mosul reporting kerosene shortages.

## KEY REPORTED SHORTAGES

### Sugar, Kerosene, Wheat Flour

## NEWLY ASSESSED DISTRICTS

For the fourth round of data collection, the JPMI expanded into Fallujah district. While this district does not yet have comparable data, the collected price data offers valuable insights into the consumer price trends. Fallujah posted some of the lowest overall average prices for food and the lowest price for rice (941 IQD). However, overall average NFI prices were higher in Fallujah and the district reported the highest average prices for sanitary napkins (274 IQD). Fallujah also posted relatively high fuel prices, with the fourth highest price for butane (8,300 IQD).

## 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), and include PDM data for rent, communication and transportation.

As in November, two of the three districts with the highest average SMEB values – Karkh and Abu Ghraib – were in Baghdad governorate. However, the highest average SMEB value overall was found in the newly assessed Fallujah district. The third assessed Baghdad district, Mahmoudiya, which had the third highest average SMEB value in January, dropped to fifth, while Erbil district remained the fourth highest value. As in January, districts in Ninewa and Diyala posted some of the lowest SMEB values – comprising 5 of the 6 lowest values

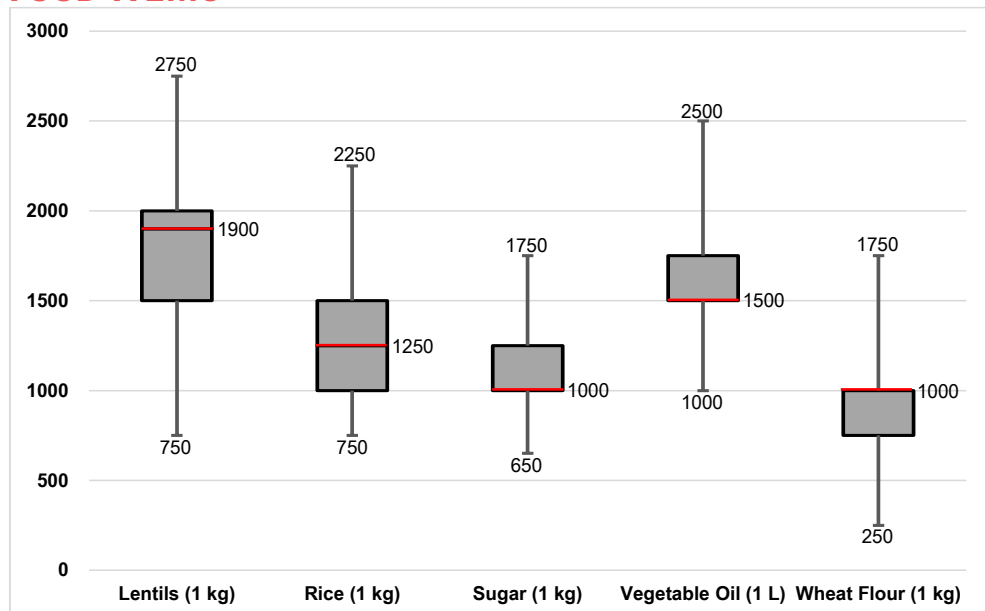
TABLE 2: AVERAGE SMEB VALUES

District	IQD	USD <sup>4</sup>
Fallujah	733,323.01	\$623.76
Karkh	641,372.30	\$545.54
Abu Ghraib	533,273.50	\$453.60
Erbil	495,117.12	\$421.14
Mahmoudiyah	474,209.82	\$403.36
Kirkuk	437,366.63	\$372.02
Sulaymaniyah	436,277.83	\$371.09
Akre <sup>5</sup>	431,349.46	\$366.90
Sumel	422,051.54	\$358.99
Zakho	410,978.94	\$349.57
Tikrit	409,744.16	\$348.52
Khanaqin <sup>5</sup>	397,982.09	\$338.52
Daquq	394,412.01	\$335.48
Shikhan	389,173.22	\$331.03
Kifri	383,188.80	\$325.94
Talafar	366,206.82	\$311.49
Mosul	337,484.83	\$287.06

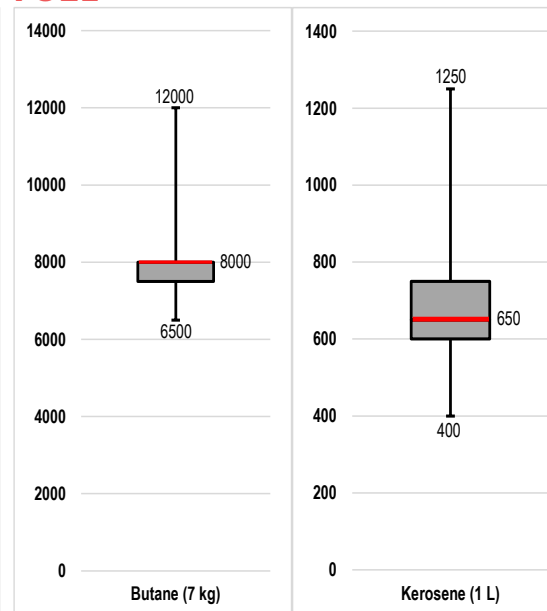
4. Exchange rate of 1 USD 1,175.65 IQD retrieved from [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com) on Mar. 20, 2017.

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

## FOOD ITEMS

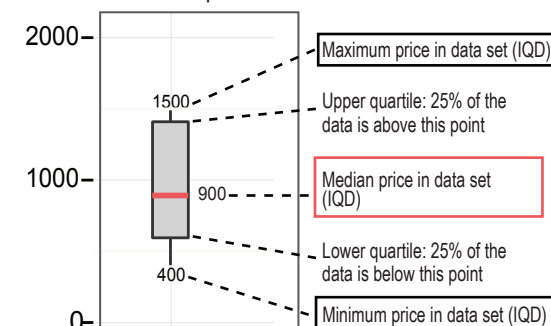


## FUEL

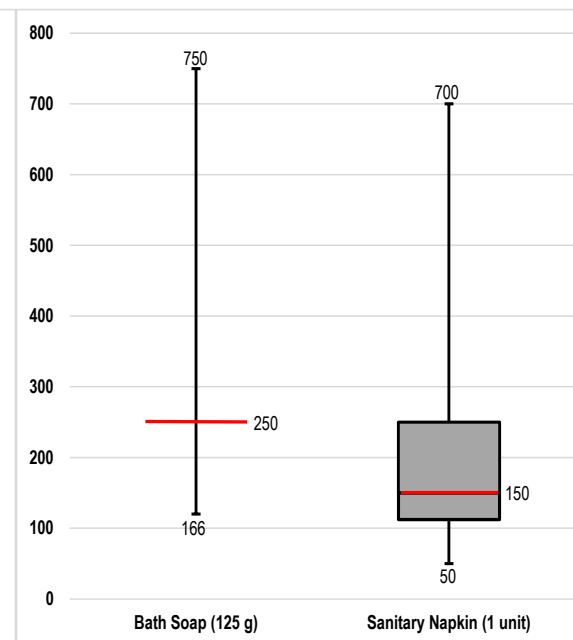
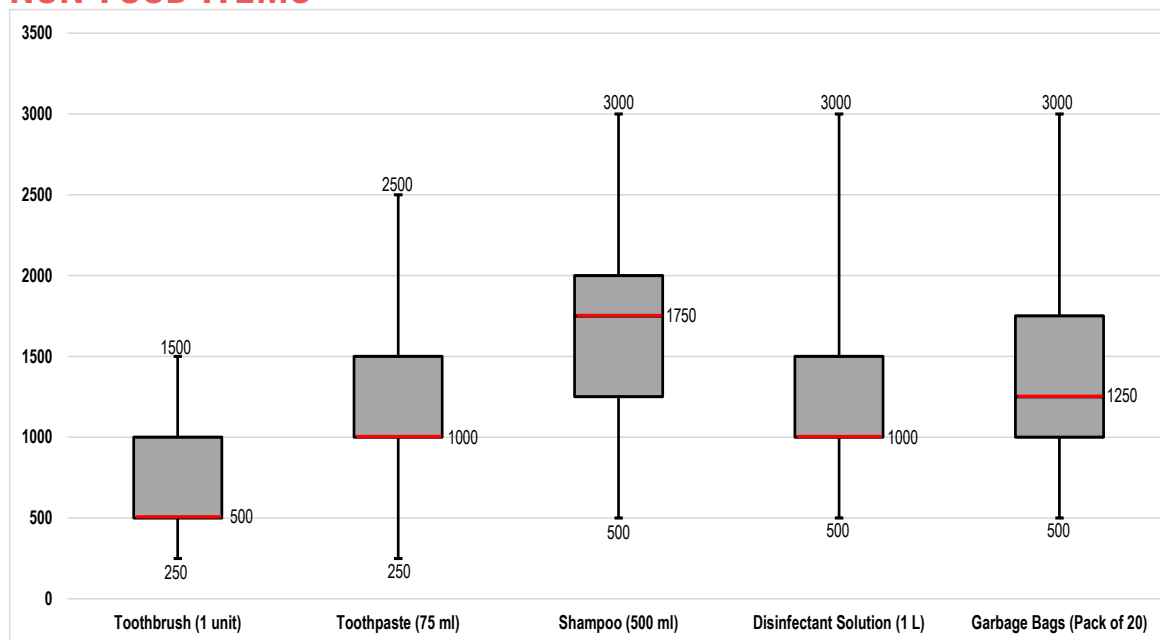


## How to Read a Boxplot

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

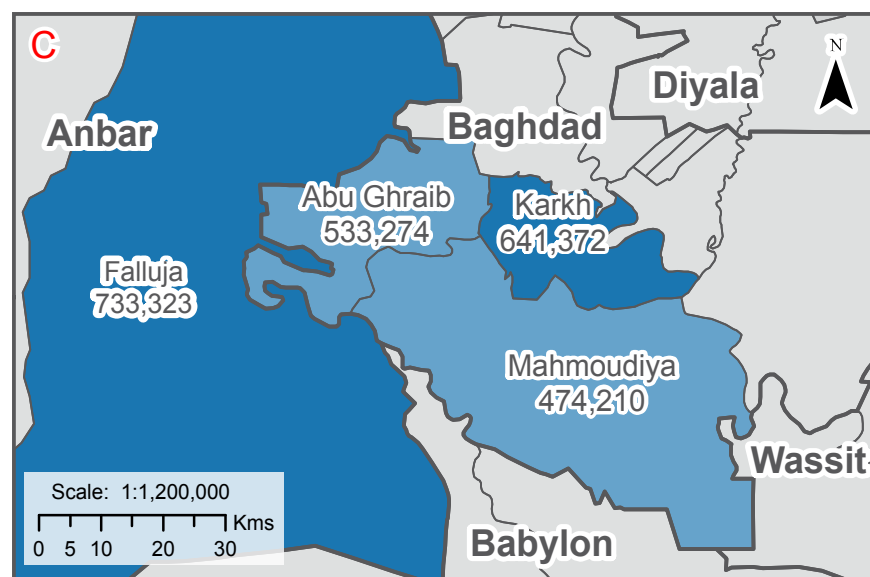
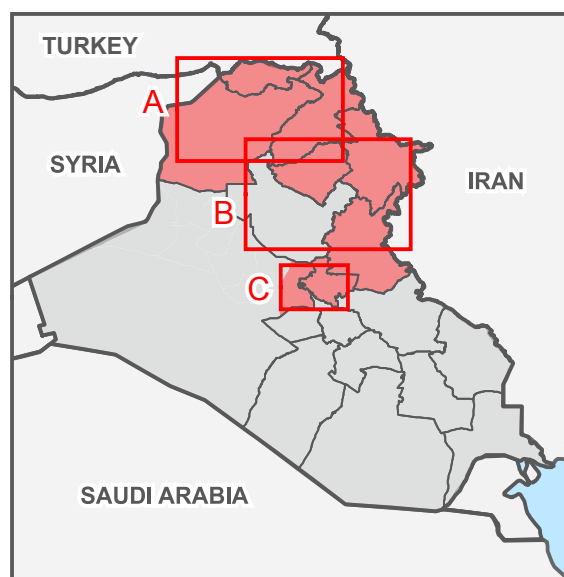
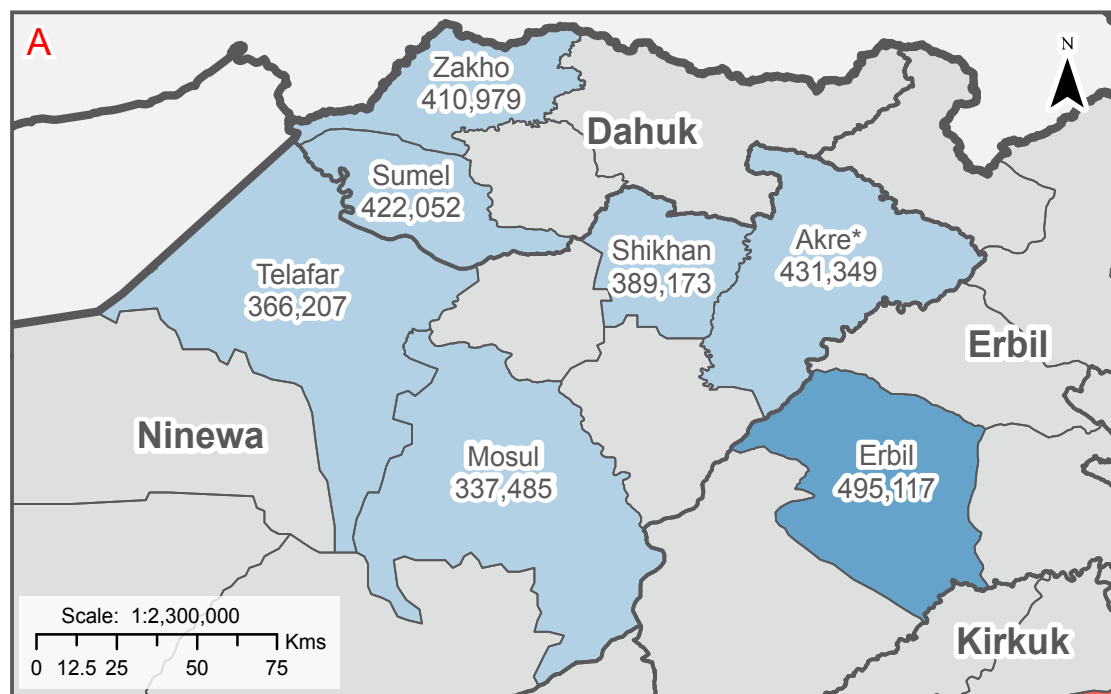


## NON-FOOD ITEMS

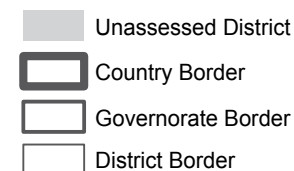
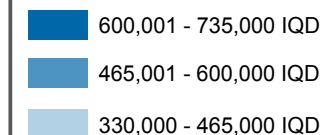




## CWG - Iraq JPMI Average District SMEB Values (February 2017)



### Average SMEB Value per District



\*Due to incomplete data for two non-consumable items in this district, average PDM data from Shikhan and Telafar districts were used.

\*\*Due to incomplete data for two non-consumable items in this district, average PDM data from Kifri district were used.