

# Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI)

May, 2023

Northeast Syria

## KEY MESSAGES

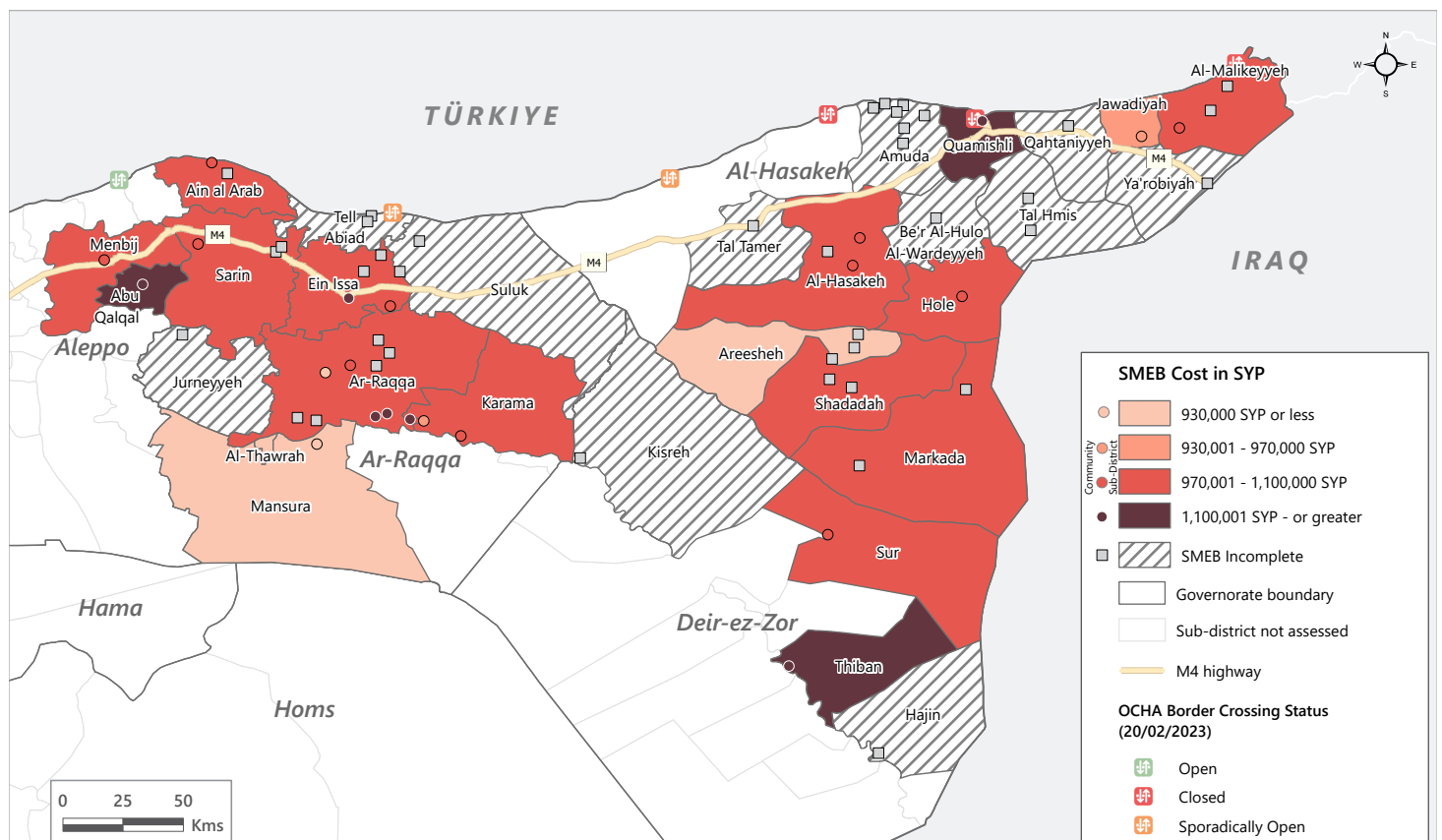
Note that this factsheet is based on data collected in May 2023 before the border closure of the Fishkhabour/Semalka crossing on 20 May 2023.

- **Currency depreciation** continued to increase the costs of most basic commodities across Northeast Syria (NES). The rate of increase slowed for most basic commodities, except for sugar, bread, kerosene and bathing soap which underwent considerable increases.
- The price of monitored **fresh vegetables declined following months of unprecedented increases** related to the onset of the harvest season.
- Sugar prices underwent considerable increases related to increased unavailability and increases in the price of imported sugar.
- In May, surveyed vendors continued to report that price inflation was the greatest supply challenge.
- Price inflation in general remained largely driven by the depreciation of the SYP (10% increase and 8% depreciation). The SMEB price in USD decreased slightly.

## ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

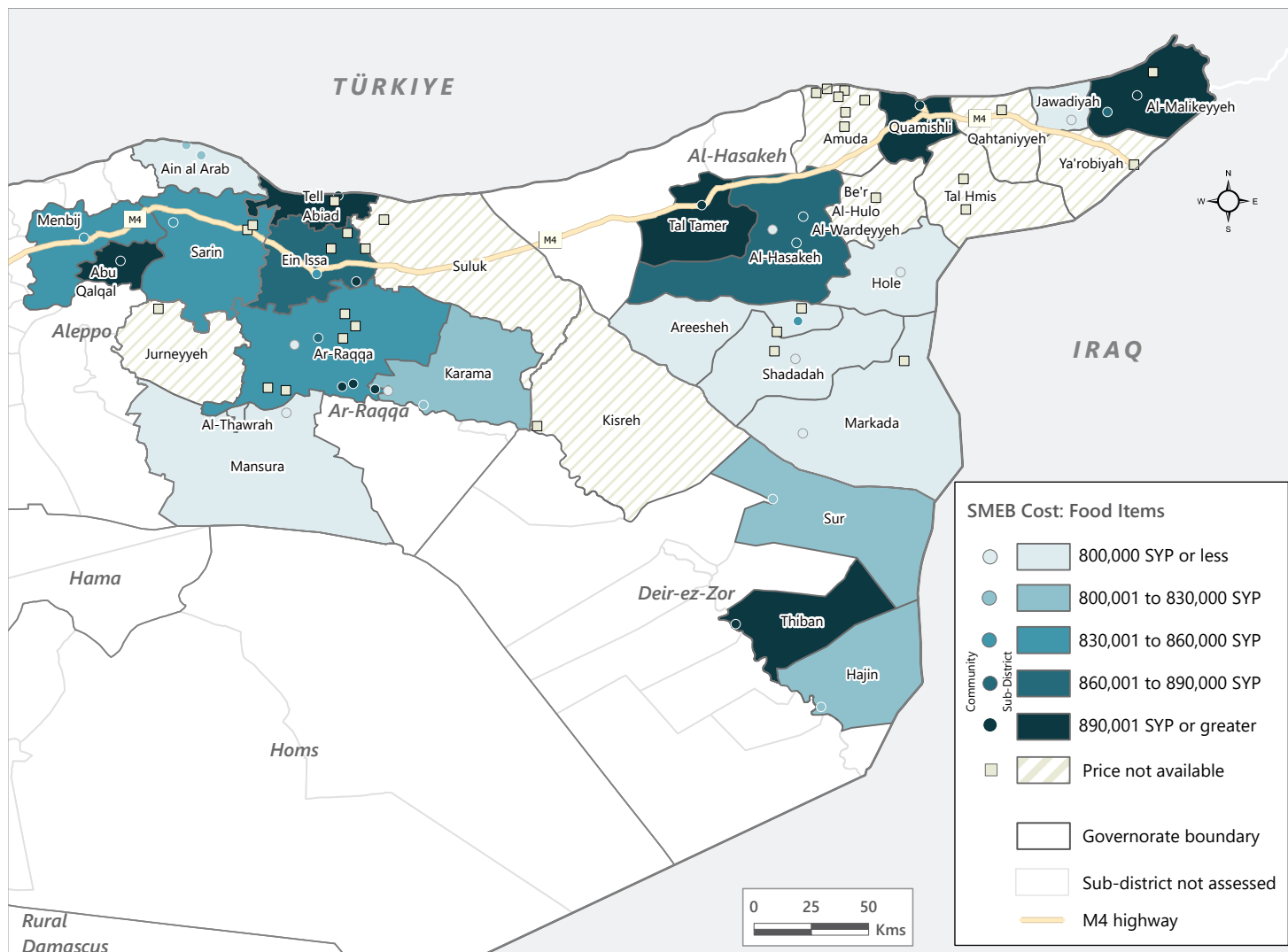
To inform humanitarian cash programming, the Northeast of Syria (NES) Cash Working Group (CWG), in partnership with local and international NGOs, conducts a monthly Joint Market Monitoring Initiative in northern Syria. The exercise assesses the availability and prices of 36 basic commodities that are 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.

## 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

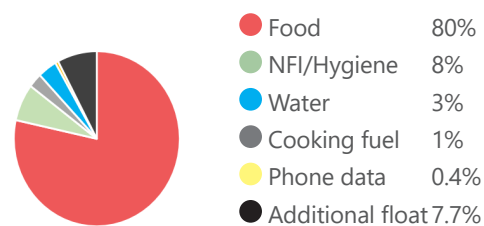
The SMEB Total is the median cost of the minimum, culturally adjusted items required to support a 6-person household for a month.

### 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\*



### May 2023 Data Collection

- 8 Supporting partners
- 4 Governorates
- 11 Districts
- 30 Sub-districts
- 63 Communities
- 1,865 Shops (vendor KIs)

\* Due to rounding figures may not total 100%

**NES SMEB<sup>B</sup>**

124.5 USD ▼ 1.2%  
1,070,346 SYP ▲ 10%

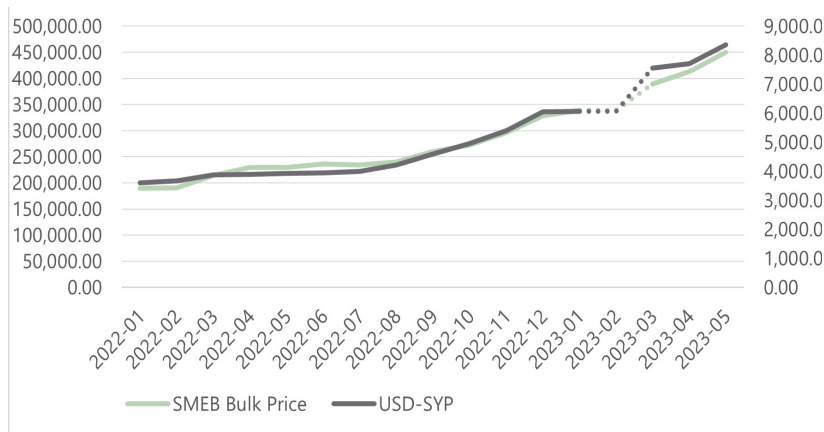
**NES SMEB FOOD ITEMS<sup>B</sup>**

99 USD ▼ 0.3%  
830,360 SYP ▲ +8%

**NES EXCHANGE RATE<sup>B</sup>**

USD/SYP  
8,350 SYP ▲ +8%

**SMEB Bulk food prices, 2022-2023, SYP\***



**Bulk Food**

Bulk food prices underwent similar increases to the exchange rate increases (~8%), except sugar (+31%) and bread (+33%). The increases in sugar were most significant in Deir-ez-Zor (+45%) and Al-Hasakeh (+35%).

The sugar price increases are related to greater unavailability (27% of surveyed vendors reported unavailability compared to ~0% the last months) caused by delay in its entry from Symalka crossing.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, traders continue to have a monopoly on sugar enabling them to raise prices. The Syrian government also increased the price of sugar in May and the global FAO Sugar Price Index recorded a steep increase in sugar prices in April due to below-expected sugar production globally.<sup>2</sup> Given sugar is imported (~80% in NES), these factors influence prices. Sugar unavailability and unaffordability are likely to be worsened by the recent border closure as sugar is primarily imported.<sup>3</sup>



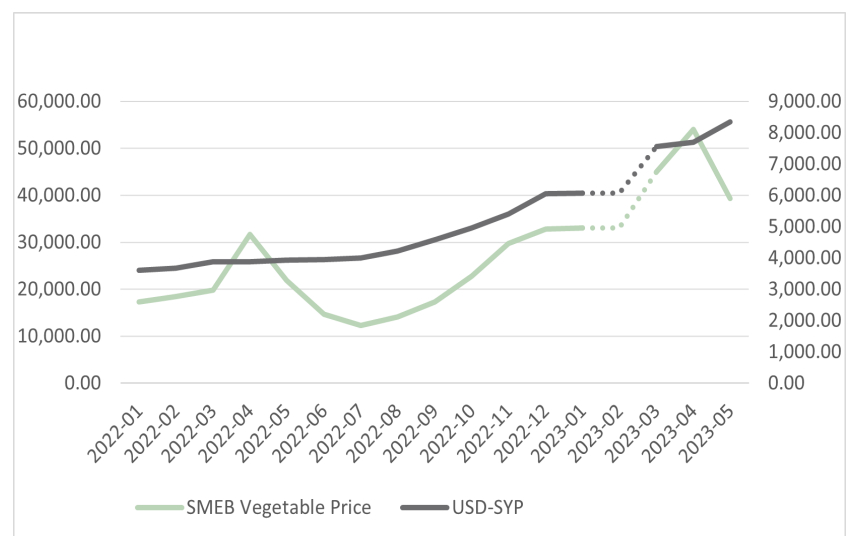
See [Annex 2](#) for the median price of individual SMEB items in SYP and USD as well as one month and six month percentage changes.

**Vegetables**

The prices of monitored vegetables - except tomatoes - declined following months of unprecedented increases related to the onset of the harvest season. Due to delayed tomato harvest in NES caused by heavy rains, NES continued to rely mostly on imported tomatoes from GoS areas in May 2023, explaining the continued higher prices.

Despite the expected seasonal declines, the prices of monitored vegetables have increased from May last year. Particularly, onions (+192%) and cucumbers (+97%) have experienced unprecedented price increases. This is related to years of poorer agricultural outputs due to droughts, increased depreciation of the SYP increasing import costs of agricultural inputs and imported vegetables during winter. Furthermore, the Autonomous Administration has introduced fees on goods imported from GoS contributing to higher prices, especially during winter.<sup>4</sup>

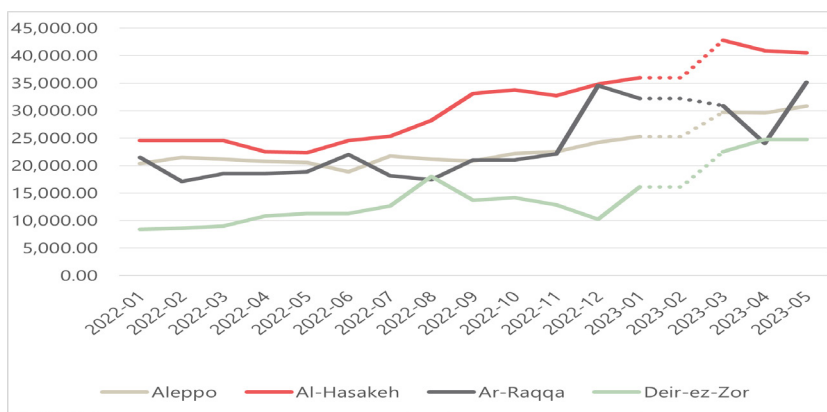
**SMEB Vegetable prices, 2022-2023, SYP\***



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

## SMEB Water Trucking prices, 2021-2023, SYP\*

Water trucking prices increased regionally by 3% between April and May 2023, largely attributed to a rebound in water trucking prices in Ar-Raqqa following declines in March 2023. Improved rainfall in the past months may have contributed to some recovery of water trucking prices in NES. The cost of water trucking remains the highest in Al-Hasakeh governorate linked to ongoing disruptions to Alouk water station. Water trucking prices have increased the most in Deir-Ez-Zor over the 6 month prior to data collection (+92%). Almost all communities rely exclusively or partly on water trucking in Deir-Ez-Zor.<sup>5</sup> This is of concern because Deir-Ez-Zor has seen the highest prevalence of cholera in NES and the increased prices are likely to predispose vulnerable households to use at-risk water coping



## Kerosene and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)

The price of kerosene increased by 21% from April to May 2023. This is mostly explained by increases in Ar-Raqqa (+83%) and Deir Ez-Zor (+31%). Kerosene and gas prices tend to fluctuate given the availability of subsidised gas and kerosene also fluctuate. The price of LP gas declined regionally (-3%), however, it increased in sDeir-ez-Zor. LP gas is about 10x more expensive in Deir-ez-Zor and its price has increased over 140% in the last 6 months compared to less than 15% in Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, and Ar-Raqqa. The higher costs of cooking and transport fuel in Deir-Ez-Zor are

## LIQUIDITY ISSUES

Availability of USD denominations remains a challenge across NES which can impact MPCA cash distributions as well as the ability of households to receive cash in remittances from abroad. Restrictions on Iraqi banks as a result of sanctions in March 2023 as well as increased transfers of USD to NWS following the earthquakes may have temporarily impacted USD liquidity in NES. The situation is expected to worsen in May following the closure of the Semalka border crossing, a critical transfer point for USD notes into NES.<sup>3</sup>

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

### Al-Hasakeh

Limited stock of 5 USD	40/53	<div style="width: 75%; background-color: red;"></div>
Limited stock of 10 USD	45/53	<div style="width: 85%; background-color: red;"></div>
Limited stock of 20 USD	43/53	<div style="width: 81%; background-color: red;"></div>
Limited stock of 50 USD	38/52	<div style="width: 73%; background-color: red;"></div>
Limited stock of 100 USD	32/53	<div style="width: 60%; background-color: red;"></div>

### Aleppo

Limited stock of 5 USD	5/25	<div style="width: 20%; background-color: red;"></div>
Limited stock of 10 USD	12/25	<div style="width: 48%; background-color: red;"></div>
Limited stock of 20 USD	16/25	<div style="width: 64%; background-color: red;"></div>
Limited stock of 50 USD	21/25	<div style="width: 84%; background-color: red;"></div>
Limited stock of 100 USD	25/25	<div style="width: 100%; background-color: red;"></div>

### Ar-Raqqa

Limited stock of 5 USD	23/33	<div style="width: 70%; background-color: red;"></div>
Limited stock of 10 USD	23/33	<div style="width: 70%; background-color: red;"></div>
Limited stock of 20 USD	29/33	<div style="width: 88%; background-color: red;"></div>
Limited stock of 50 USD	33/33	<div style="width: 100%; background-color: red;"></div>
Limited stock of 100 USD	33/33	<div style="width: 100%; background-color: red;"></div>

### Deir-Ez Zor

Limited stock of 5 USD	6/12	<div style="width: 50%; background-color: red;"></div>
Limited stock of 10 USD	8/12	<div style="width: 67%; background-color: red;"></div>
Limited stock of 20 USD	9/12	<div style="width: 75%; background-color: red;"></div>
Limited stock of 50 USD	9/12	<div style="width: 75%; background-color: red;"></div>
Limited stock of 100 USD	9/12	<div style="width: 75%; background-color: red;"></div>

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

## SUPPLY CHALLENGES

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

	AREA	REPORTED %
	<b>NES</b>	<b>78%</b>
<b>PRICE INFLATION</b>	NE Aleppo	48%
	Al-Hasakeh	84%
	Ar-Raqqa	88%
	Deir-Ez-Zor	73%
	<b>NES</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>SUPPLY CANT MEET DEMAND</b>	NE Aleppo	6%
	Al-Hasakeh	24%
	Ar-Raqqa	14%
	Deir-Ez-Zor	22%
	<b>NES</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>NO ISSUES</b>	NE Aleppo	46%
	Al-Hasakeh	6%
	Ar-Raqqa	11%
	Deir-Ez-Zor	24%
	<b>NES</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>SUPPLIER LIMITED SUPPLY</b>	NE Aleppo	9%
	Al-Hasakeh	20%
	Ar-Raqqa	5%
	Deir-Ez-Zor	26%

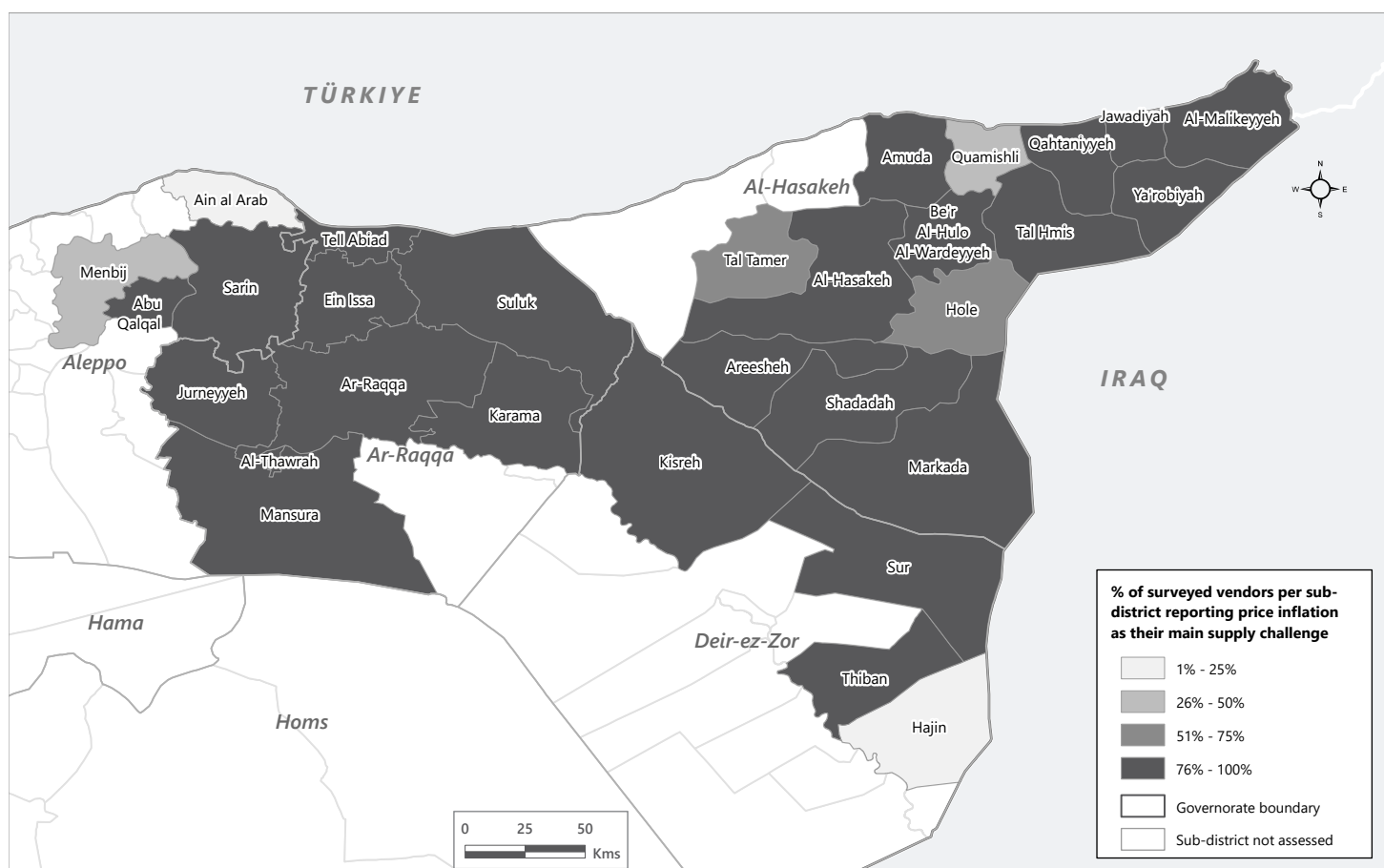
The three most commonly reported supply challenges continued to be price inflation, supply can't meet demand and supplier has limited supply.

These challenges were reported by slightly more vendors in May compared to April, whilst fewer vendors reported no challenges (16% compared to 20% in April).

Price inflation worsened particularly in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor where more vendors reported price inflation as a supply challenge (77% to 88% and 64% to 73% in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor respectively). The number of vendors reporting that the supplier has limited supply increased in Al-Hasakeh.

More vendors continue to report that they do not experience supply challenges in Aleppo compared to other governorates as Aleppo is located next to effective border crossings.

### 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 standardize 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)

## 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.

## 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](http://REACH_Syria_Resource_Centre).



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

	SMEB SYP*	1 month change	6 month change	SMEB USD*
<b>Northeast Syria SMEB</b>	<b>1,070,346</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>125</b>
Aleppo	1,045,946	9%	53%	126
Abu Qalqal	1,113,274	12%	65%	134
Ain al Arab	980,683	3%	43%	117
Menbij	1,070,346	17%	40%	123
Sarin	1,021,545	5%	50%	123
Al-Hasakeh	1,005,379	6%	45%	123
Al-Hasakeh	1,087,314	14%	51%	131
Al-Malikeyyeh**	NA	NA	NA	NA
Amuda**	NA	NA	NA	NA
Areesheh	908,456	2%	33%	109
Be'r Al-Hulo Al-Wardeyyeh**	NA	NA	NA	NA
Hole	1,011,673	4%	55%	116
Jawadiyah**	NA	NA	NA	NA
Markada	999,085	2%	38%	120
Qahtaniyyeh**	NA	NA	NA	NA
Quamishli	1,121,052	18%	72%	137
Shadadah	974,810	7%	38%	111
Tal Hmis**	NA	NA	NA	NA
Ar-Raqqa	1,092,776	5%	44%	139
Ya'robayah	NA	NA	NA	NA
Al-Thawrah**	NA	NA	NA	NA
Ar-Raqqa	1,092,776	0%	44%	133
Ein Issa	1,096,142	5%	49%	126
Jurneyyeh**	NA	NA	NA	NA
Karama	1,009,384	4%	28%	NA
Deir-ez-Zor	1,146,801	7%	61%	139
Hajin	NA	NA	NA	NA
Kisreh	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sur	1,099,546	15%	55%	128
Thiban	1,194,055	3%	70%	142

\* 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>NWS SMEB food items</b>		<b>830,360</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>99</b>
SMEB bulk food items	SMEB	449,500	9%	52%	53.83
Bulgur	1 kg	7,100	9%	58%	0.85
Red lentils	1 kg	8,000	7%	39%	0.96
Rice	1 kg	7,000	8%	57%	0.84
Salt	500 g	1,000	0%	25%	0.12
Sugar	1 kg	8,500	31%	104%	1.02
Tomato paste	1 kg	60,000	5%	23%	7.19
SMEB vegetables	SMEB	39,375	-27%	32%	4.72
Tomatoes	1 kg	4,000	11%	60%	0.48
Potatoes	1 kg	2,500	-12%	-4%	0.30
Cucumbers	1 kg	3,500	-42%	122%	0.42
Onions	1 kg	3,000	-42%	0%	0.36
SMEB cooking oils	SMEB	84,000	4%	30%	10.06
Ghee	1 kg	12,000	4%	26%	1.44
Vegetable oil	1 L	12,250	4%	36%	1.47
Non-veg perishables					
Bread	8 pc	500	33%	25%	0.06
Chicken	1 kg	16,350	4%	91%	1.96
Eggs	30 pc	18,000	0%	24%	2.16
SMEB non-food items	SMEB	80,750	8%	54%	9.67
Bathing soap	1 pc	3,000	20%	50%	0.36
Sanitary pads	10 pc	3,325	11%	45%	0.40
Toothpaste	100 g	4,545	14%	40%	0.54
Laundry powder	1 kg	7,550	4%	42%	0.90
Dish soap	1 L	7,500	0%	73%	0.90
SMEB cooking fuels	SMEB	8,625	-4%	5%	1.03
Kerosene (manually refined)	1 L	1,875	21%	25%	0.22
LP gas	1 L	400	-3%	0%	0.05
SMEB water trucking	SMEB	32,368	3%	49%	3.88
Water trucking (1000 L)	1 m3	7,433	3%	49%	0.89
Other					
Phone data	1 gb	3,725	0%	24%	0.45

\* 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 Alaraby (2023) Sugar Crisis in Northeastern Syria: Scarcity and High Prices.
- 2 World Food Programme, WFP Syria Market Price Watch Bulletin, March 2023 - Syrian Arab Republic | ReliefWeb. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/wfp-syria-market-price-watch-bulletin-march-2023> (Accessed: 19 June 2023).
- 3 Al-Monitor (no date) Intra-Kurdish tensions paralyze northeast Syria's main border crossing - Al-Monitor: Independent, trusted coverage of the Middle East. Available at: <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2023/05/intra-kurdish-tensions-paralyze-northeast-syrias-main-border-crossing> (Accessed: 19 June 2023).
- 4 Alaraby (2023) Sugar Crisis in Northeastern Syria: Scarcity and High Prices.
- 5 REACH Initiative (2023) Humanitarian Situation Overview of Syria (HSOS) April 2023 - Northwest Syria.
- 6 WHO (2023) Whole of Syria Cholera Outbreak Situation Report no. 15 Issued 03 April 2023 - Syrian Arab Republic | ReliefWeb. Available at: [https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/whole-syria-cholera-outbreak-situation-report-no-15-issued-03-april-2023?gclid=CjwKCAjw-b-kBhB-EiwA4fvKrGANwYsjLGXQYhka2Ph5CgSevN745moWDHyKp6eohCVRQLP3LHRprxoCzagQAvD\\_BwE](https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/whole-syria-cholera-outbreak-situation-report-no-15-issued-03-april-2023?gclid=CjwKCAjw-b-kBhB-EiwA4fvKrGANwYsjLGXQYhka2Ph5CgSevN745moWDHyKp6eohCVRQLP3LHRprxoCzagQAvD_BwE) (Accessed: 19 June 2023).
- 7 BNN Newsroom (May 2023) US Military Base in Deir ez-Zor Hit By Massive Explosions. Available at: <https://bnn.network/breaking-news/us-military-base-in-deir-ez-zor-hit-by-massive-explosions/> (Accessed: 19 June 2023).

## 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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