

SYRIA

Humanitarian Situation Overview: Northern Hama

Multi-Sectoral Trends Analysis
(June - November 2017)

January 2018



Cover Image: IDP camp in Syria, 2013. © REACH

About this report

This report presents both trends for key Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria (HSOS) data, and also draws on available IDP Situation Monitoring Initiative (ISMI) data to contextualise displacement data collected using the HSOS tool. ISMI is an initiative of the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster, implemented by REACH and supported by cluster members. Following a baseline assessment conducted at the end of 2016, weekly/bi-weekly data collection cycles were initiated. ISMI monitoring coverage varies over time depending on access. HSOS is a monthly, multi-sectoral needs assessment conducted by REACH providing information about the humanitarian situation across Syria since August 2013. Due to access and security constraints rendering direct data collection unfeasible in Hama governorate, key informant (KI) interviews were conducted indirectly through participants identified in camps and settlements in neighbouring countries using an Area of Origin (AoO) Methodology.

SUMMARY

In the seventh year of Syrian crisis, the country's population faces increasing humanitarian challenges with continued conflict affecting civilian movement, access to shelter, food and non-food items (NFIs), basic services and other essential necessities. The humanitarian situation varies significantly across the country, depending on the intensity of conflict, displacement patterns and access to basic services, markets, and aid. Despite an escalation in conflict and a reported decline in humanitarian conditions in Hama in 2017, the governorate has received less international media attention than other governorates experiencing mass displacement in Syria. The 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) for Syria estimates that of the approximately 875,000 people in need in the governorate, over 100,000 are in acute need.¹ In order to provide humanitarian actors with information on developments and changes in humanitarian needs, this report offers a longer-term, multi-sectoral analysis of the humanitarian situation in northern Hama. It analyses data collected as part of the Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria (HSOS)² project on displacement, shelter and NFIs, food security, health and water security.

Relevant HSOS indicators were analysed on a sub-district level for six sub-districts in northern Hama (Hama, Hamra, Kafr Zeita, Madiq Castle, Suran and Ziyara), covering the period from June through November 2017. The selection of the time period and area covered was informed by conflict dynamics and the humanitarian situation on the ground. The analysis focuses on northern Hama as this area (Hamra and Suran sub-districts in particular) was most affected by conflict in the second half of 2017. The assessed time frame was selected to provide an overview of trends over a longer period of time, capturing both times of relative stability in the governorate as well as the latest waves of conflict and displacement that began in late August 2017. The analysis aims to inform humanitarian programming by identifying population needs at the time of data collection, which can be used to forecast potential needs and gaps in assistance beyond the data collection period.

Overall, the analysis points to a deteriorating humanitarian situation in northern Hama between June and November 2017, mostly due to conflict in the governorate. This development was particularly noticeable in Hamra and Suran sub-districts, which were most severely affected by the increase in violent clashes since the end of August. The volatile security situation led to waves of displacement and tighter access restrictions, which negatively affected the humanitarian situation in all assessed sub-districts. However, deteriorations in the humanitarian conditions were not limited only to areas experiencing heightened conflict and insecurity, but were also influenced by local political dynamics and shifts in control over roads, electricity and water stations restricting access to shelter, food, NFIs and basic services.

Main findings

The report findings indicate a link between heightened insecurity and a deterioration of the humanitarian situation in terms of displacement, shelter, fuel, health, and food and water security. Vulnerabilities progressively increased in northern Hama governorate during periods of increased violent clashes between June and November 2017, for many of the assessed indicators.

Where trends showed an observable decrease in humanitarian conditions, the decline over time tended to coincide with conflict dynamics. **Suran and Hamra sub-districts, both of which experienced a significant increase in conflict and insecurity late August through September, tended to show the most pronounced negative trends and worst deterioration in humanitarian conditions.**

All assessed sub-districts saw **significant pre-conflict population declines** during the assessment period, as well as an **overall decline in spontaneous returns**. This trend was most pronounced in **Hamra and Suran sub-districts, where less than a quarter of the pre-conflict population remained in most of the assessed communities after the intensification of violent clashes in these sub-districts from late August through September**. Simultaneously, overall **access to shelter declined** as the proportion of assessed communities reporting a lack of available rooms for rent, as a result of shelter damage, increased. **Hamra and Suran sub-**

¹ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, [2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic](#), December 2017.

² The full dataset is available upon request. The Hama governorate profile for November is available on the REACH Resource Centre: <http://bit.ly/2FzokIH>.

districts, which experienced increased displacement and conflict, reported **significantly higher proportions of assessed communities without available rooms in most months of the reporting period**. On average, 69% of assessed communities in Suran and Hamra reported no availability of rooms, compared to 48% in other sub-districts.

The link between increased conflict and displacement and a deterioration of the humanitarian situation is perhaps most notably visible in the food security and livelihoods sector in **conflict-affected sub-districts**, where the proportion of assessed communities reporting the use of **severe coping strategies, such as spending days without eating, child labour and begging**, rose from an average of 0% to roughly 40% between July and November 2017. **Decreases in local food production and increases in food item prices in Hamra and Suran sub-districts** coincided with the escalation of conflict in these areas.

In conflict-affected areas, vulnerabilities also increased in the health sector, particularly visible in the declining proportion of assessed communities where women were reportedly able to access maternal health services in formal health facilities. Moreover, reports of **unavailability of medical items closely associated with conflict-related traumatic injuries, such as blood transfusion bags and clean bandages**, increased from an average of 4% to 40% and 30% to 60% of assessed communities, respectively, between August through October. This coincided with the escalation of violent clashes and a peak in the proportion of assessed communities reporting **injuries as a top three most common health problem in August and October**. This was **mostly concentrated in assessed communities in Hamra, Suran, and Ziyara sub-districts**, where an average of 60% of assessed communities in August reported injuries as a top three health concern compared to 45% in other assessed sub-districts.

Changes regarding the humanitarian situation in assessed communities did not always follow clear patterns and deteriorations were not limited to sub-districts with heightened levels of conflict and insecurity only. Some selected indicators fluctuated from month-to-month, indicating **rapidly changing, volatile conditions** for populations in all assessed sub-districts. This volatility was particularly observable regarding **fuel and food prices**, as well as **access to water**, and could be attributed to local political dynamics and shifts in control over power and water stations. Volatility in access to fuel was particularly pronounced in Madiq Castle, Kafr Zeita and Ziyara sub-districts.

However, the analysis also indicated **elements of resilience for some indicators in November**. For example, shelter conditions improved slightly with a higher proportion of assessed communities reporting independent houses or apartments as the main shelter type. Similarly, the proportion of assessed communities reporting fuel shortages in Suran and Hamra sub-districts decreased slightly, as did the proportion of communities reporting residents sustaining injuries and suspected cases of malnutrition as main health issues, while the proportion of communities reporting having access to bread from bakeries every day increased. Despite these observed changes, **the level of vulnerabilities remained high in all assessed sub-districts, and continued monitoring of the dynamics of conflict and displacement and how they link to the humanitarian situation in northern Hama will be required** to provide humanitarian actors with crucial analysis to support the effective assistance of populations in need.

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List of Acronyms

AOG	Armed Opposition Groups
AoO	Area of Origin
HSOS	Humanitarian Situation Overview of Syria
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISMI	IDP Situation Monitoring Initiative
KI	Key Informant
NFIs	Non-Food Items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Geographical Classifications

Governorate	Administrative unit below the country level
District	Administrative unit below the governorate level
Sub-district	Administrative unit below the district level
Community	Lowest administrative boundary

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INTRODUCTION

In the seventh year of Syrian crisis, the country's population faces increasing humanitarian challenges with continued conflict affecting civilian movement, access to shelter, food and non-food items (NFI), basic services and other essential necessities. Since the beginning of the conflict, the population in Hama governorate has been continuously affected by a volatile security situation and waves of displacement, as well as by restrictions on access to basic goods and services. Local political dynamics and in-fighting between various actors has caused additional strains on the remaining population, particularly regarding the availability of – and access to – basic services such as electricity and water, as well as food and fuel supplies.

In 2017, the government-led military operation to expel armed opposition groups (AOGs) and the group known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) from Hama governorate led to large waves of displacement and resulted in widespread humanitarian needs of both the displaced and those remaining in conflict affected areas. The Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Whole of Syria Task Force observed that 228,641 individuals were displaced from Hama between January and November 2017, 61,868 of whom were displaced within the governorate.³ Following a first wave of violent clashes and displacement in the first half of the year (in particular in Hamra, Kafr Zeita and Suran sub-districts in March and April), a brief period of reduced clashes witnessed a large number of spontaneous returns of previously displaced populations to communities in northern Hama. However, the intensification of clashes in Hamra and Suran sub-districts since the end of August led to a second wave of displacement from communities in these sub-districts, with many IDPs and former returnees being displaced once again.

The combination of heavy fighting and large-scale displacement posed significant challenges to communities in northern Hama in terms of shelter, NFI and food availability, health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Due to the volatile security situation and the complex dynamics within the governorate, the provision of information on the population's humanitarian situation and needs remains challenging, and information gaps persist across sectors. In order to fill this information gap and to provide humanitarian actors with a regular source of data on the humanitarian situation of people in need, REACH has been providing a monthly overview of needs across Syria since 2013. Building upon this data, this report focuses on long-term trends across a selection of sectors, in order to identify links between conflict and population movement, access to shelter, food, basic services and other essential needs.

Given the steady decline in humanitarian conditions in Hama governorate, this report aims to provide an analysis of trends regarding the humanitarian situation in northern Hama governorate, comparing sub-districts that have experienced severe conflict and large waves of displacement (Hama, Hamra and Suran) with those which have experienced relatively less conflict and displacement in 2017 (Kafr Zeita, Madiq Castle and Ziyara) to highlight relevant differences at the sub-district level. The multi-sectoral analysis in this report assesses selected indicators to identify major humanitarian needs and trends in terms of displacement, shelter, NFI, food security, health and water security. The analysis focuses on data from June to November, to examine trends over a longer time, capturing the latest waves of conflict and displacement. Moreover, this analysis intends to inform future humanitarian programming by providing a longer term analysis of the humanitarian situation in the assessed sub-districts, and by identifying populations' needs.

³ Humanitarian Response, IDP Movements (2017) <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/stima/idps-tracking>.

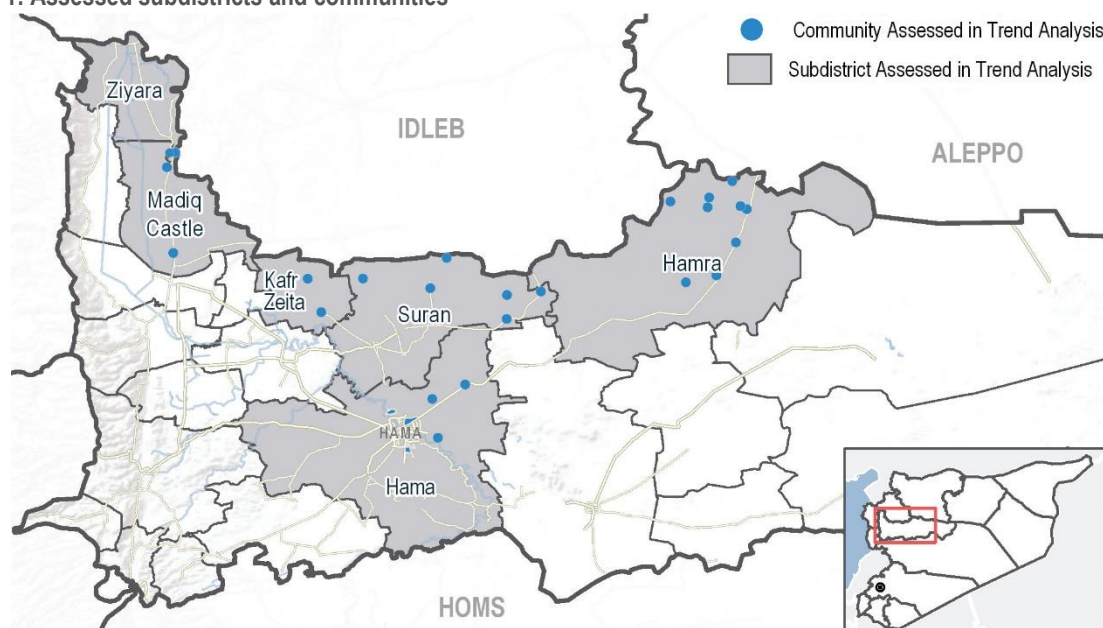
METHODOLOGY

This assessment examines trends in six sub-districts across northern Hama governorate utilising existing Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria (HSOS) data collected between July and December 2017 (covering June - November 2017). HSOS is a monthly, multi-sectoral needs assessment, providing information about the humanitarian situation across Syria since 2013. Due to access and security constraints rendering direct data collection unfeasible in Hama governorate, key informant (KI) interviews were conducted indirectly through participants identified in camps and settlements in neighbouring countries using an Area of Origin (AoO) Methodology. Participants contact KIs in their community in Syria to collect information about the community, who report data at the community level. A minimum of three KIs were interviewed per community to enhance data accuracy. KIs are generally comprised of local council members, Syrian non-governmental organisation (NGO) workers, nurses, teachers, shop owners and farmers, among others, and are chosen based on their community-level or sector specific knowledge. For each question asked, confidence levels are assigned based on KI area of expertise and knowledge of the sector-specific situation.

This report presents trends for key HSOS indicators, selected based on observable developments in the humanitarian situation within Hama governorate across the period assessed. This analysis also drew on available IDP Situation Monitoring Initiative (ISMI) 1.0 data⁴ to contextualise displacement data collected using the HSOS tool. The IDP Situation Monitoring Initiative (ISMI) is an initiative of the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster, implemented by REACH and supported by cluster members. Findings were triangulated through secondary sources, including news and humanitarian reports. Where necessary, participants were asked to conduct follow-up with Key Informants (KIs) to provide context to the trends observed. All findings are indicative rather than representative and should not be generalised across the governorate or sub-districts assessed.

For the purposes of this report, data was aggregated to the sub-district- and governorate-level to give an indication of trends affecting the northern part of the governorate, while highlighting geographical and chronological discrepancies where relevant. Data was aggregated by taking the average from all assessed communities at the level of aggregation (i.e. sub-districts or governorate). As northern Hama (Suran and Hamra sub-districts in particular), was heavily affected by ongoing conflict dynamics within the governorate⁵, this area was selected due to its relevance for humanitarian actors. Community level coverage was largely consistent for the six northern Hama sub-districts selected for this analysis. The situation in other governorates assessed through HSOS in Hama is, however, not necessarily less critical. Please refer to the map below for more information on the assessed area.

Map 1: Assessed subdistricts and communities



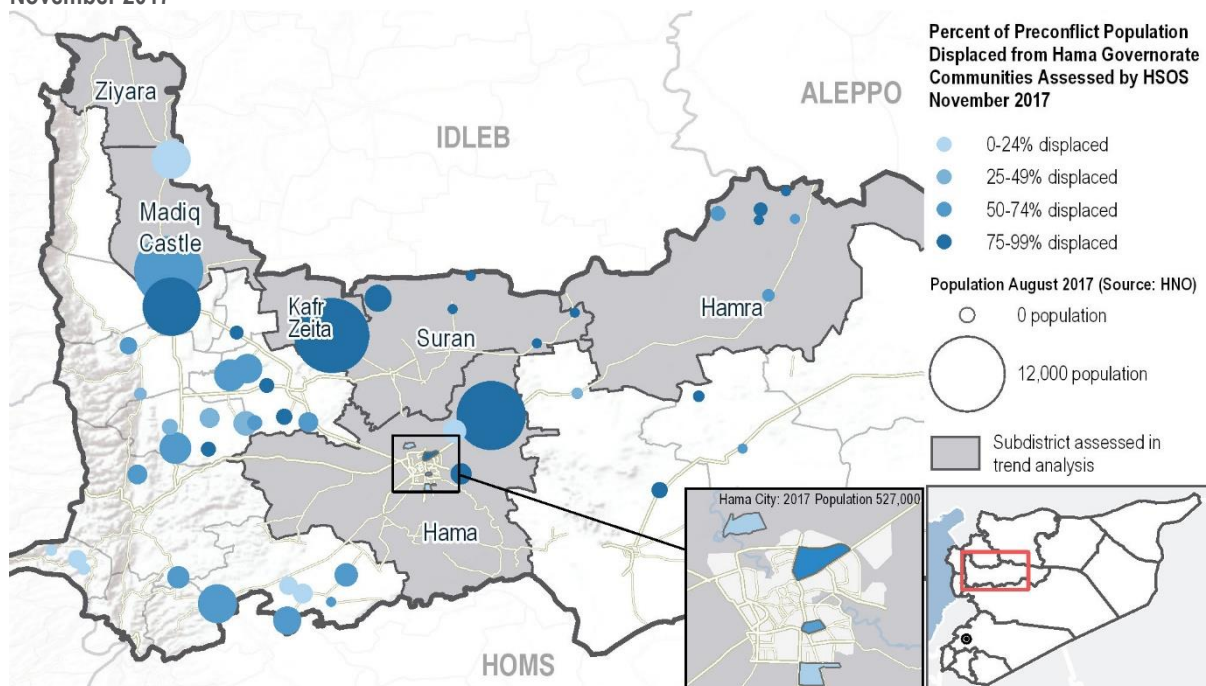
⁴The data used for this product was collected, triangulated and verified based on submissions from ISMI's network and select CCCM cluster members following the ISMI methodology. Due to differences in methodology and coverage, figures presented in this output may differ from official CCCM Cluster or UNHCR data. All data is for humanitarian use only.

⁵ <http://syriadirect.org/news/bombardment-returns-to-rebel-held-northwest-as-hts-derails-ceasefire-deal/>

FINDINGS

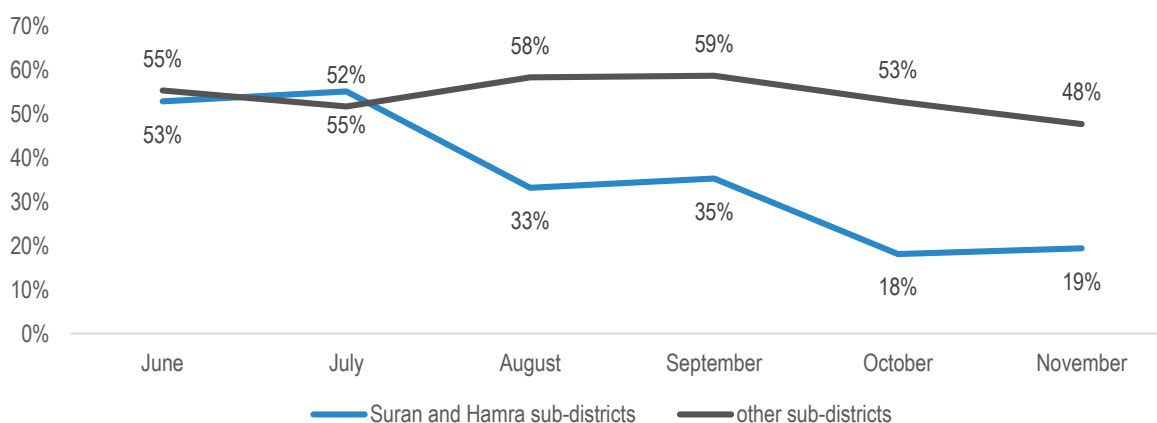
Displacement

Map 2: Estimated percentage of Pre-conflict Population Displaced from all HSOS-assessed communities in Hama in November 2017



As a result of heightened conflict and insecurity in Hamra and Suran sub-districts since the end of August, the average percentage of pre-conflict population remaining in assessed communities in these sub-districts declined significantly during the coverage period. The map above highlights the estimated percent of pre-conflict population displaced at the end of the observation period (November 2017). While all sub-districts witnessed a decrease in pre-conflict population remaining, the decrease was considerably larger in Suran and Hamra, where **less than a quarter of the pre-conflict population remained in most of the assessed communities after the intensification of violent clashes in these sub-districts from late August through September.**

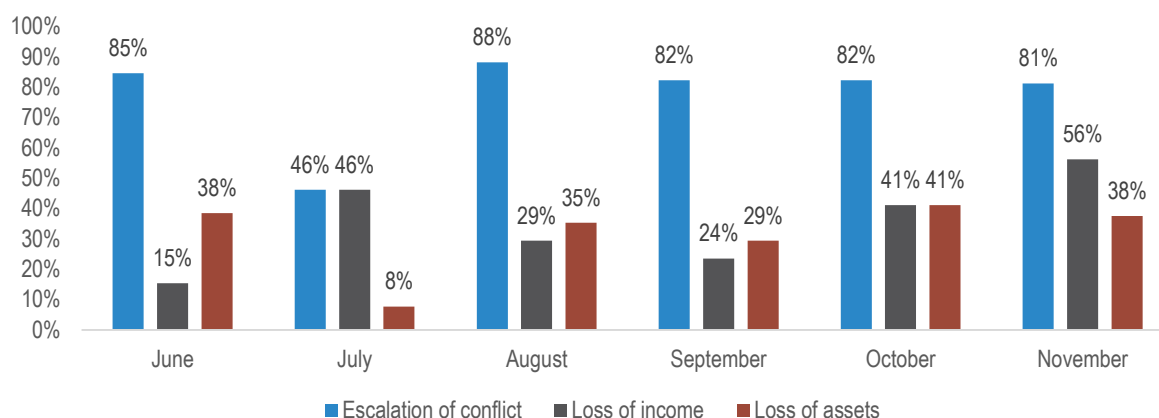
Figure 1: Average percentage of pre-conflict population remaining in assessed communities



Accordingly, escalation of conflict was consistently reported as the main reason for members of the pre-conflict population to leave assessed communities, particularly in Hamra and Suran sub-districts. While the situation was more stable in July, increased insecurity due to conflict was a major reason for displacement from late August to November. Over 80% of assessed communities witnessing displacement reported conflict escalation

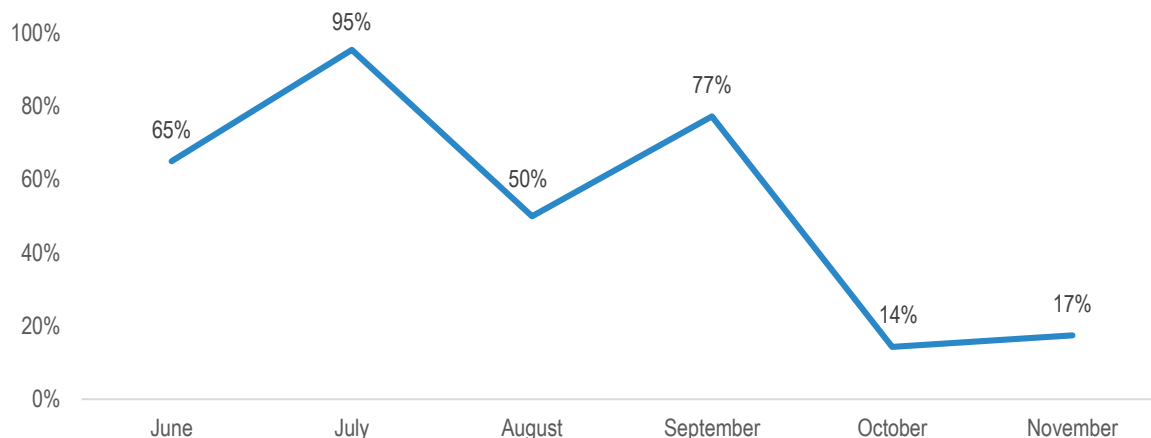
as a reason for displacement in all months of the coverage period except July. Other common reasons for displacement included a loss of income and a loss of assets. Loss of assets was more commonly reported as a reason for displacement in Hamra and Suran sub-districts and is likely attributable to the clashes witnessed in these sub-districts.

Figure 2: Proportion of assessed communities reporting main reasons for pre-conflict population to leave the community, out of those who reported departures (more than one answer possible).



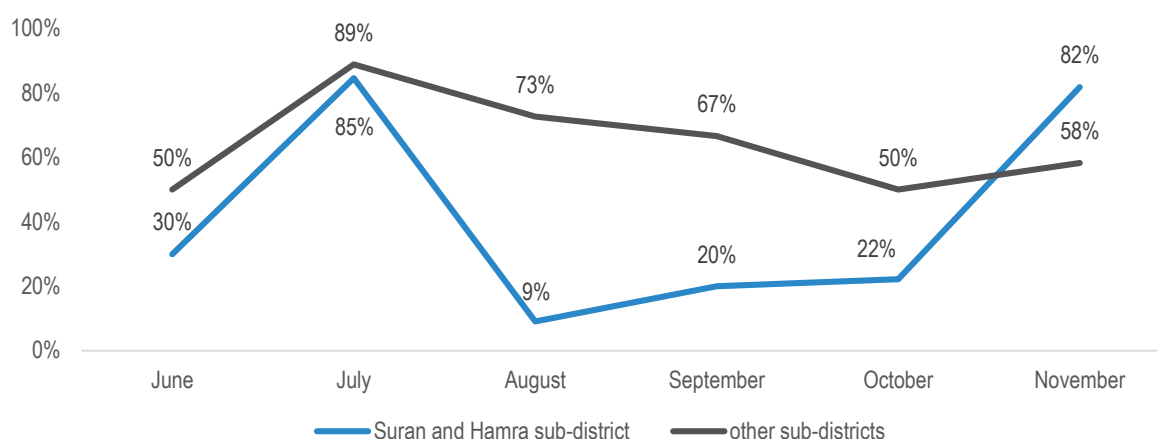
A majority of assessed communities witnessed spontaneous population returns in July and September, with 95% of assessed communities reporting the arrival of returnees in July. **However, the proportion of communities reporting such returns decreased noticeably in October and November, when only some communities in Suran and Hama sub-district - less than a fifth of all assessed communities - reported the arrival of returnees.** The decline in reports of pre-conflict population returning to assessed communities in Hama governorate coincided with the increase in violent clashes in northern Hama governorate since August. This was particularly the case in Hamra and Suran sub-districts, where, in August, the percentage of assessed communities reporting returns was significantly lower than in other assessed sub-districts.

Figure 3: Proportion of assessed communities witnessing returns of previously displaced population



Across the coverage period, July witnessed the highest proportion of assessed communities reporting a presence of IDPs. The percentage of communities reporting an IDP presence declined overall in the following three months and increased again in November. **Suran and Hamra sub-districts experienced a larger departure of IDPs compared to other assessed sub-districts. Less than a quarter of the assessed communities in Suran and Hamra reported a presence of IDPs in their communities from August to November,** as a result of continued violent clashes and insecurity in these sub-districts during this period. The majority of IDPs were displaced within the governorate or to communities in southern Idlib governorate. However, the presence of IDPs increased significantly in November, mostly due to displacements from As-Saan and Oqairbat sub-districts (where violent clashes increased during this period) as well as from other communities in Suran and Hamra sub-districts.

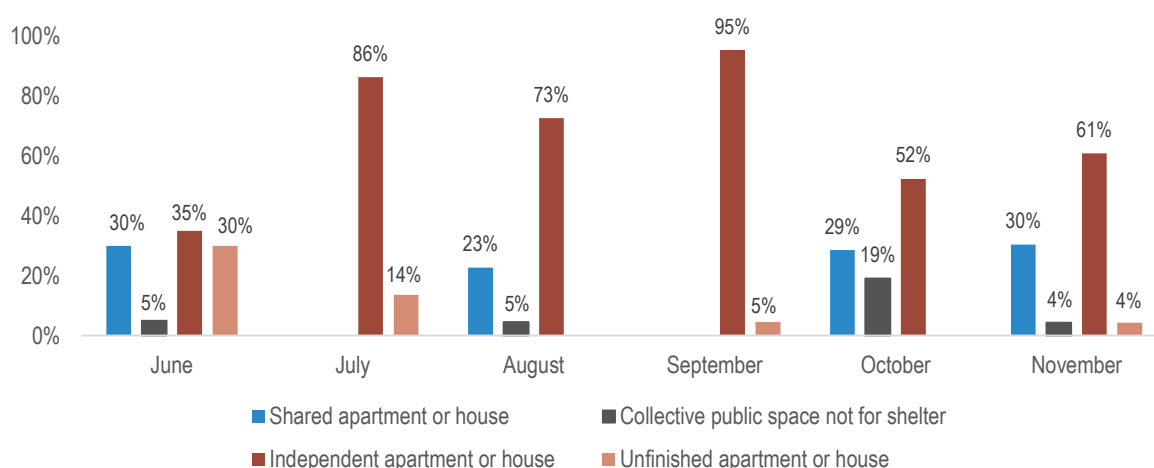
Figure 4: Proportion of assessed Hama communities reporting a presence of IDPs



Shelter

During the period of observation, on average, **two thirds of assessed communities reported that independent apartments or houses were the most common types of shelter lived in by members of the pre-conflict population**. Moreover, increases in the proportion of communities reporting independent apartments or houses as the most common shelter type coincided with increases in the number of assessed communities witnessing returns of pre-conflict population, in particular in July and September (Figure 5). **This indicates that returning pre-conflict populations were able to return to independent apartments or houses in many cases.** Other common shelter types of pre-conflict population were shared houses (on average, more than one fifth of assessed communities reported this as the most common type of shelter), and unfinished buildings (30% of assessed communities in June reported this shelter type as most common). Furthermore, more than a third of assessed communities in Hamra, Kafr Zeita and Suran sub-districts reported collective spaces not intended for shelter as the most common shelter type in October. **On average, the percentage of pre-conflict population living in unfinished apartments or houses, or in collective public spaces was higher in Hamra and Suran sub-districts (21% compared to 8% in other sub-districts),** as a result of continued conflict and displacement in these sub-districts. However, the percentage of communities reporting independent apartments or houses as the most common shelter type increased in both sub-districts in November.

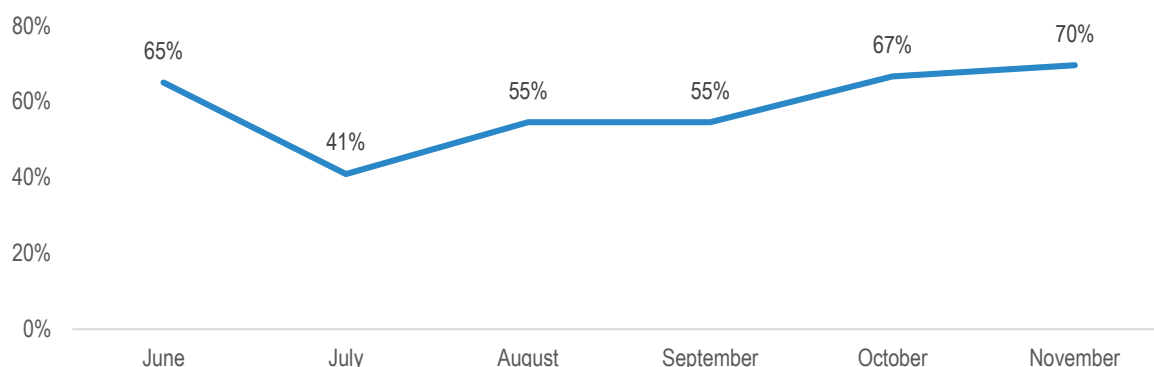
Figure 5: Most common shelter types lived in by pre-conflict population by proportion of assessed communities



During the assessment period, an average of 58% of the assessed communities reported that no rooms were available for rent in their community. While rooms were available for rent in more than half of the assessed communities in July, the lack of available rooms for rent increased until the end of the assessment period (Figure 6), with **more than two thirds of communities reporting no available rooms in October and November.**

Furthermore, **Hamra and Suran sub-districts, which experienced increased displacement and conflict, reported significantly higher proportions of communities without available rooms in most months of the reporting period.** On average, 69% of assessed communities in Suran and Hamra reported no availability of rooms during the observation period, compared to 48% in other sub-districts. KIs have indicated that this is mainly due to increased damage to buildings.

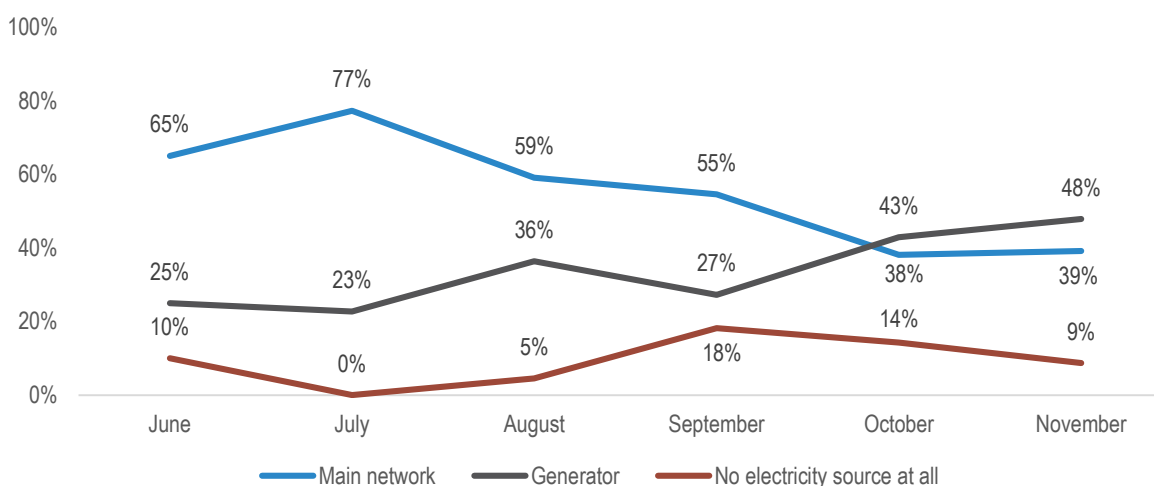
Figure 6: Proportion of assessed communities in Hama reporting no availability of rooms for rent



NFI

During the coverage period, **the percentage of assessed communities able to use the electricity network as their main source of electricity declined, while the reliance on generators as the main source of electricity increased.** In November, almost half of the assessed communities reported that generators were their main source of electricity. Meanwhile, several communities also reported having no electricity at all, including **half of assessed communities in Kafr Zeita, Madiq Castle and Ziyara sub-districts in September.** Moreover, while most of the communities in Hamra and Suran sub-districts reported the electricity network as their main source of electricity in July, access to the main network declined significantly in the following months, when clashes increased in the sub-districts. Access to the main network only increased, to some extent, in November.

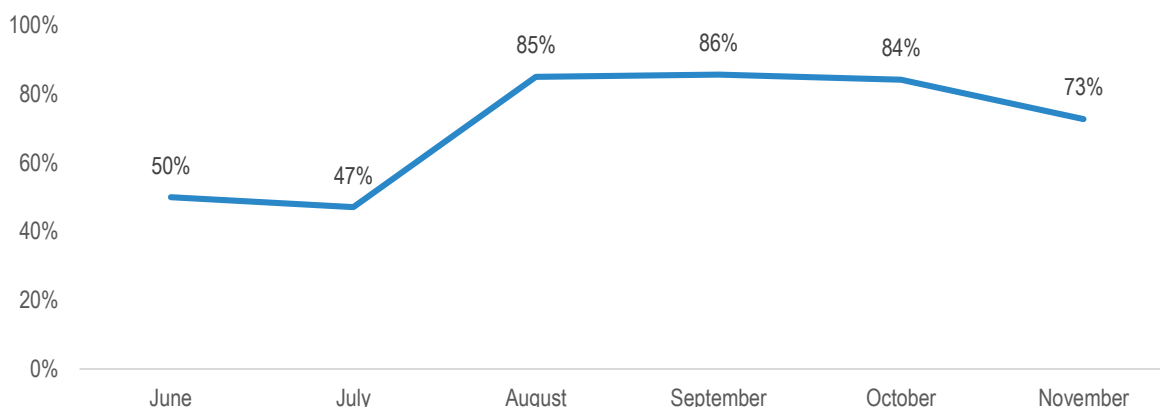
Figure 7: Main reported electricity source by proportion of assessed communities



On average, from June to October, **more than two thirds of assessed communities reported a lack of fuel.** Fuel shortages increased from July to September, before slowly decreasing during the two remaining months of the coverage period (Figure 8). However, all assessed communities in Kafr Zeita, Madiq Castle and Ziyara sub-districts, for which information was available, reported fuel shortages during the entire coverage period due to local political dynamics in terms of control over electricity stations and access routes. Access to fuel increased slightly in

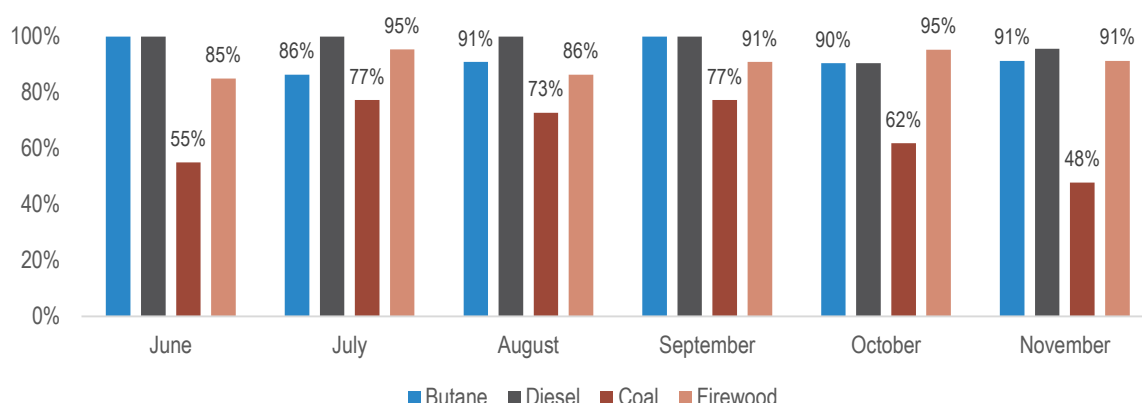
Suran and Hamra sub-districts in October, after all assessed communities in the sub-districts had reported fuel shortages in September. The increase in fuel shortages since July also affected access to electricity in several communities, as the reliance on generators as a main source for electricity increased during the same period. When access to the main network being the main source of electricity declined in Kafr Zeita, Madiq Castle and Ziyara sub-districts from August to October, continued fuel shortages in these sub-districts likely contributed to the rise of communities reporting having no electricity source at all. Common coping strategies to deal with a lack of fuel included burning furniture (both in use and not in use), burning waste and burning plastic or cutting trees. Furthermore, **the proportion of communities reporting that community members were resorting to several coping strategies to compensate for fuel shortages increased during the coverage period.**

Figure 8: Proportion of assessed communities reporting fuel shortages



While butane was available in a large majority of assessed communities during the assessment period, the availability of kerosene declined since the end of August, with almost a third of assessed communities reporting that kerosene was not available in November. While butane and kerosene were still widely available, on average, almost two thirds of assessed communities reported propane not being available during the coverage period, with its availability decreasing since August. Similarly, the availability of coal declined in assessed communities during the coverage period (Figure 9). While coal was available in more than two thirds of communities from July to September, almost half of the assessed communities reported coal not being available in November. **Access to coal was particularly difficult in Suran sub-district, where four fifths of assessed communities reported that coal was unavailable in November.** In contrast, firewood was widely available in assessed communities across the reporting period.

Figure 9: Proportion of assessed communities reporting availability of selected fuel items



Overall, during the assessment period, **average fuel prices were volatile.** The price of butane declined in most sub-districts during the coverage period, while the price of kerosene increased. The price of diesel decreased from June to July but increased from July to October, when fuel shortages were reported in a majority of assessed communities, and then declined again in November. However, **price developments varied in different sub-districts, as prices were mainly affected by geographic location and access restrictions.** Kafr Zeita sub-district, for instance, witnessed significant increases in prices of butane and diesel in October. While the average

price of firewood increased, on average, during the reporting period, the price of coal decreased slightly, although price changes varied across individual sub-districts.

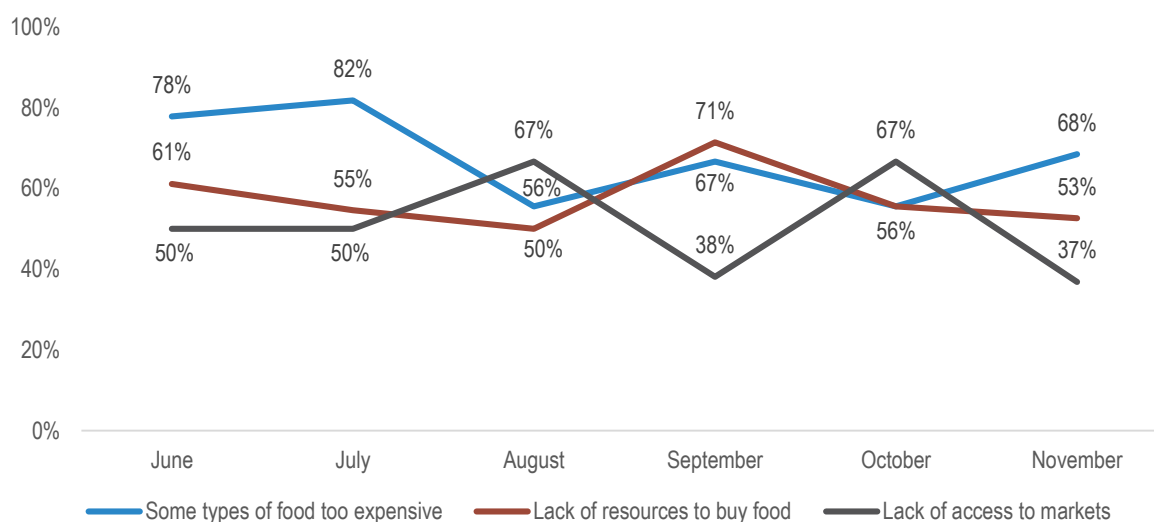
Table 1: Average price change of selected fuel items in assessed sub-districts

Price changes of fuel types since previous month, June to November 2017 (SYP)						
	Average price in June	July	August	September	October	November
Butane gas (1 canister)	6,385	-5% ↓	+10% ↑	-16% ↓	+17% ↑	-20% ↓
Diesel (1 litre)	358	-29% ↓	+36% ↑	◇	+29% ↑	-29% ↓
Coal (1 litre)	357	◇	-7% ↓	◇	◇	-6% ↓
Firewood (1 tonne)	34,286	+29% ↑	-8% ↓	-7% ↓	+8% ↑	+21% ↑

Food Security and Livelihoods

During the coverage period, across assessed communities in Hama governorate, the **three most commonly reported barriers to adequate access to food were, in order of frequency, the high cost of some food items on markets, a lack of resources to buy available food, and a lack of physical access to markets**. The prevalence of all three answers declined over the course of the assessment period, while fluctuating from month to month. As reports of these barriers declined, the number of assessed communities experiencing difficulties in accessing cooking fuel and a decrease in local food production increased. Additionally, a lack of access to markets was frequently reported across the observation period with peaks in August and October. This increase was observed across assessed communities and was not concentrated in any particular area. The lack of access is likely attributed to increased conflict as well as shifts in control impacting trade routes.

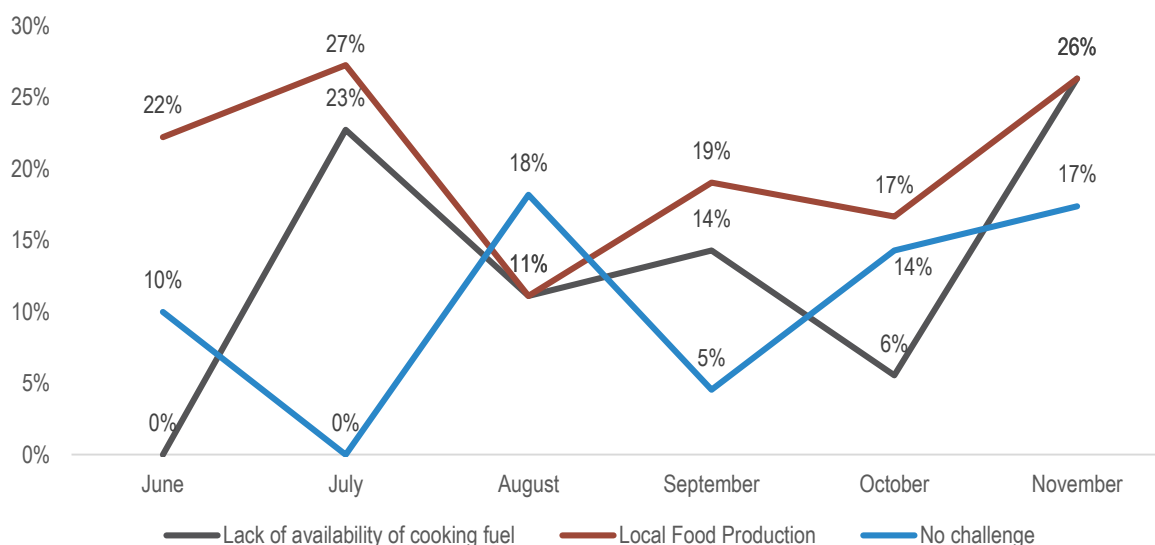
Figure 10: Most reported barriers to accessing food by proportion of assessed communities



The rising number of communities reporting a decrease in local food production was mostly from among the assessed communities in Suran sub-district. The overall proportion of communities reporting issues in local production was highest in Hamra sub-district. These results may be related to the ongoing conflicts in northern Hama, which were particularly severe in Hamra and Suran sub-districts. Simultaneously, the proportion of assessed communities reporting no challenges to accessing food increased over the assessment period. This trend was particularly distinguishable in Madiq Castle sub-district, where 33% of assessed communities reported 'no challenges' in accessing food. Overall, Madiq Castle sub-district reported less access restrictions and better links

to trade routes and other governorates in Syria, although local political dynamics affected the supplies of certain items such as fuel.

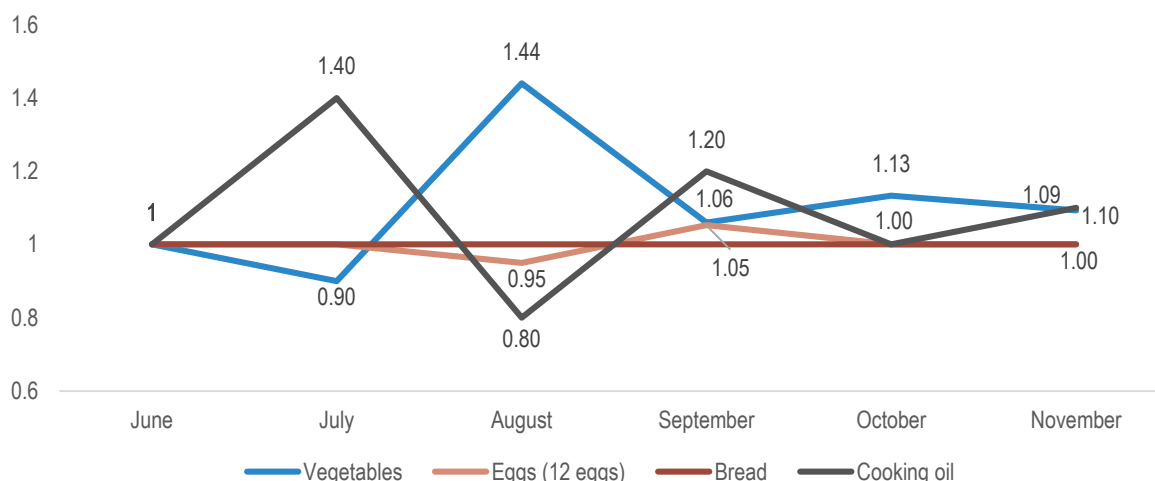
Figure 11: Other reported barriers to accessing food by proportion of assessed communities



As **high food prices were among the most commonly reported barriers to accessing sufficient amounts of food**, it is important to note the major trends in food prices. The average price of cooking oil in assessed communities spiked 40% higher in August compared to prices at the beginning of the observation period. The price of a dozen eggs increased to a lesser degree in September. Meanwhile, the price of bread from shops remained unchanged between June and November. **The increase in the average price of vegetables (potatoes, tomatoes, cucumbers, and onions) was concentrated in assessed communities in Hamra and Suran sub-districts and coincided with the escalation of conflict in these areas.** In August, KIs in assessed communities in these sub-districts reported a 72% average increase in vegetable prices from 172 SYP/kg to 296 SYP/kg, whereas assessed communities outside of these sub-districts reported a 12% increase, on average. Reports of the increase in cooking oil prices observed in July were concentrated in assessed communities in Kafr Zeita and Ziyara, where an average 80% increase was observed; these same sub-districts saw cooking oil prices fall again in August.

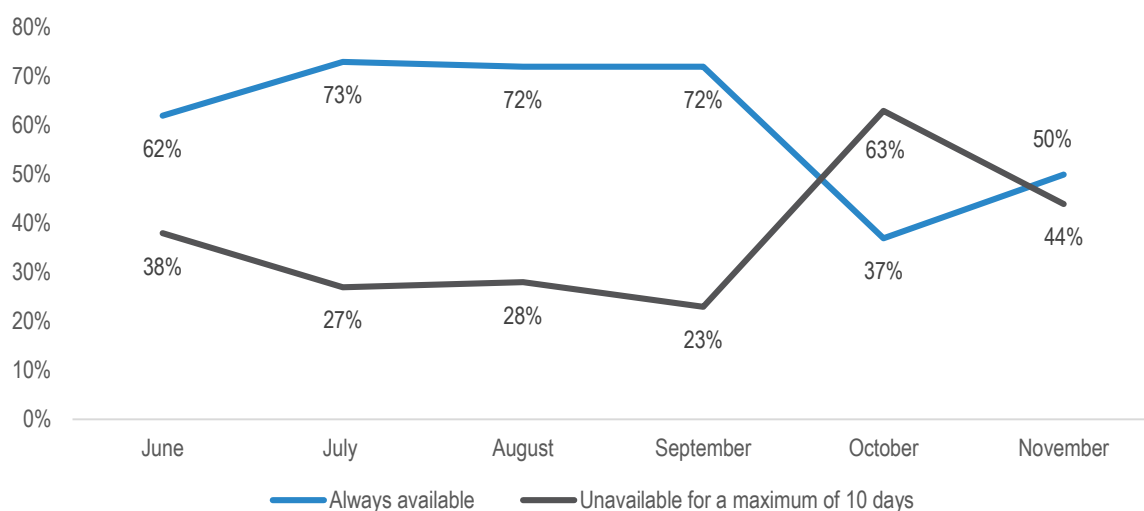
Table 2: Average food prices by food category

Average prices of food categories and items, June to November 2017 (SYP)						
	Average price in June	July	August	September	October	November
Vegetables (1kg)	188	169 ↓	270 ↑	199 ↓	213 ↑	205 ↓
Eggs (12 eggs)	50	50 ↔	47 ↓	50 ↑	50 ↔	50 ↔
Bread (1 packet)	200	200 ↔	200 ↔	200 ↔	200 ↔	200 ↔
Cooking oil (1L)	500	700 ↑	400 ↓	600 ↑	500 ↓	550 ↑

Figure 12: Price index by food item categories⁶

During the observation period, over 90% of assessed communities reported that bread was always available or was unavailable for up to a maximum of 10 days in a month. Throughout the entire period, only one sub-district - Suran - had assessed communities that reported that bread was unavailable for more than 11 days in any month. The proportion of communities reporting that bread was always available decreased in October. **Almost all assessed communities that reported a decrease in availability of bread also reported the unavailability or unaffordability of flour and/or fuel.** Across the assessment period, the average reported price of bread in communities that reported difficulties in accessing bread was on average 10 SYP higher than those communities that reported having had access to bread every day.

Figure 13: Availability of bread by proportion of assessed communities



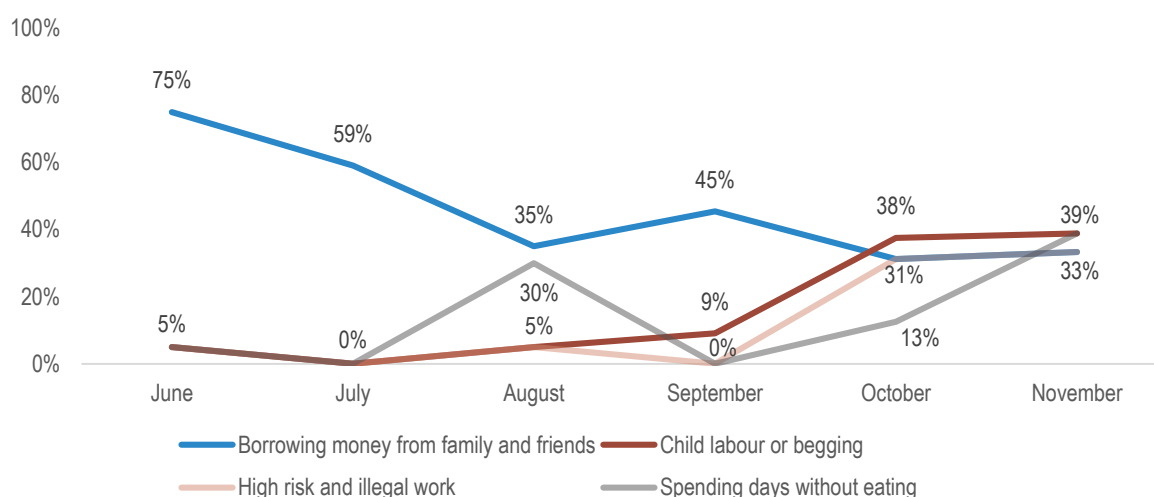
Over the assessment period, there was a notable drop in the proportion of assessed communities reporting borrowing from friends and family as a livelihoods coping strategy, and a coinciding increase in severe coping strategies. This drop was most pronounced in August, when a 24 percentage-point decrease was observed and was concentrated among assessed communities in Hamra, Hama and Suran. Given the increase in violence and displacement in that area at that time, **these trends may be indicative of the degree to which pre-existing family and other social networks, which many reportedly relied upon to access sufficient amounts of food, had become less accessible.** Furthermore, the stagnancy of the proportion of assessed communities reporting

⁶ The price index depicts change over time as percentages in relation to an initial baseline value. In this case it is the observed prices of vegetables, eggs, bread, and cooking oil in June. Therefore, a value of 1.40 in July would indicate that prices were 40% higher compared to the baseline in June, and so forth.

borrowing and the increase in the use of severe and high-risk coping strategies may be explained by the decrease in reports of pre-conflict population returning.

The decrease in the percentage of communities reporting borrowing from family or friends as a strategy used to cope with a lack of sufficient income, was accompanied by a variation in the types of strategies reported. While these included increases in strategies such as taking loans and reducing or skipping meals, there was also a **marked increase in more severe strategies, such as eating food waste, spending days without eating, eating non-edible plants, engaging in illegal or high-risk activities, adult begging, and child labour or begging.** The most dramatic increase was observed in the rising proportion of communities reporting that **children were being sent to work or out to beg** in Hama, Hamra and Madiq Castle sub-districts where, on average, there was a 63 percentage-point increase between September and November. Additionally, **reports of child labour or begging were substantially higher in Suran than in other assessed sub-districts across the assessment period**, where, on average, 22% of assessed communities reported this strategy being used. **Reports of community members spending days without eating also increased notably towards the end of the assessment period, from approximately 0% of assessed communities in September to 39% in November.** This trend was most pronounced in Hamra, Suran, and Ziyara where the average proportion of assessed communities reporting this increased from 0% to 63% compared to 0% to 6% elsewhere. In parallel, the proportion of assessed communities whose residents were reportedly engaging in high risk and illegal work also saw a similarly large increase rising from 0% to almost 33% across assessed sub-districts, with this trend most reflected in conflict-affected Hama, Hamra and Suran sub-districts where the average proportion of assessed communities reporting this increased from 0% to 40% compared to no change from 0% in other assessed sub-districts.

Figure 14: Livelihoods coping strategies by proportion of assessed communities

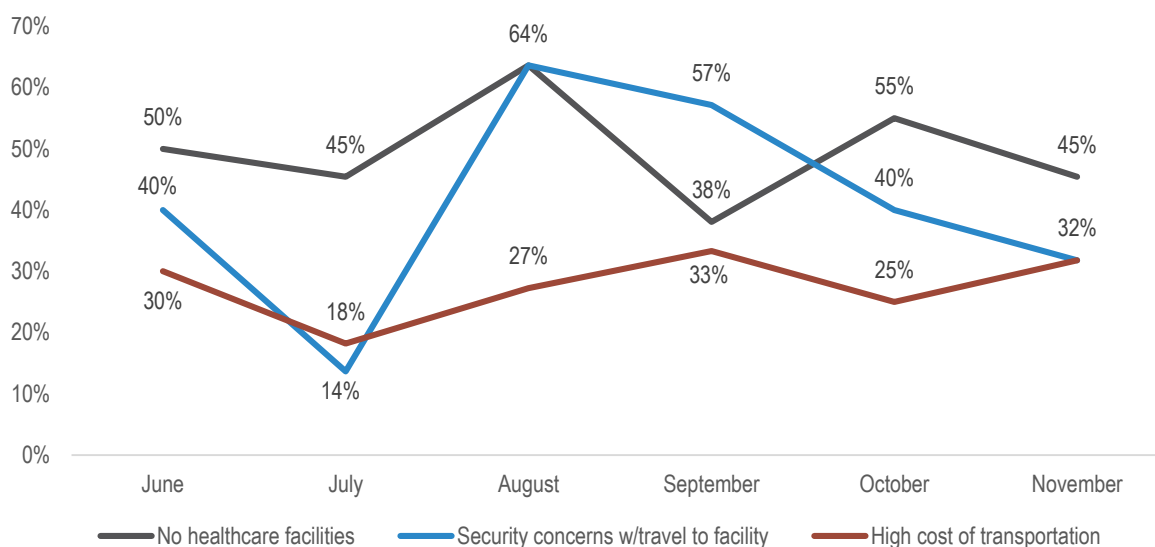


Health

Health trends were broadly related to the conflict in the region, with lack of access to healthcare, coping strategies, and health problems more severe in assessed communities in Hamra and Suran than in other assessed sub-districts; reaching the most severe point in August and early September. During the observation period, the two most commonly reported barriers to accessing healthcare services were the absence of health facilities in assessed areas and security concerns around travel to health facilities (Figure 15). **Concerns around travel to facilities peaked in late August and September, with approximately 64% of assessed communities reporting such concerns.** During that period, Hamra, Kafr Zeita, and Suran sub-districts had the highest percentage of reports, with over 80% of assessed communities noting this response. On average, over the six months, Kafr Zeita, Hamra and Ziyara sub-districts most consistently had assessed communities reporting security concerns as one of three main barriers to accessing healthcare, with 70%, 50% and 50% of assessed communities in these sub-districts noting this barrier, respectively. The high cost of transport to health facilities was also noted as a primary concern in 27% of assessed communities on average, although it dipped to 18% in July. Given that respondents are asked to name up to three responses and given the sharp rise in responses around

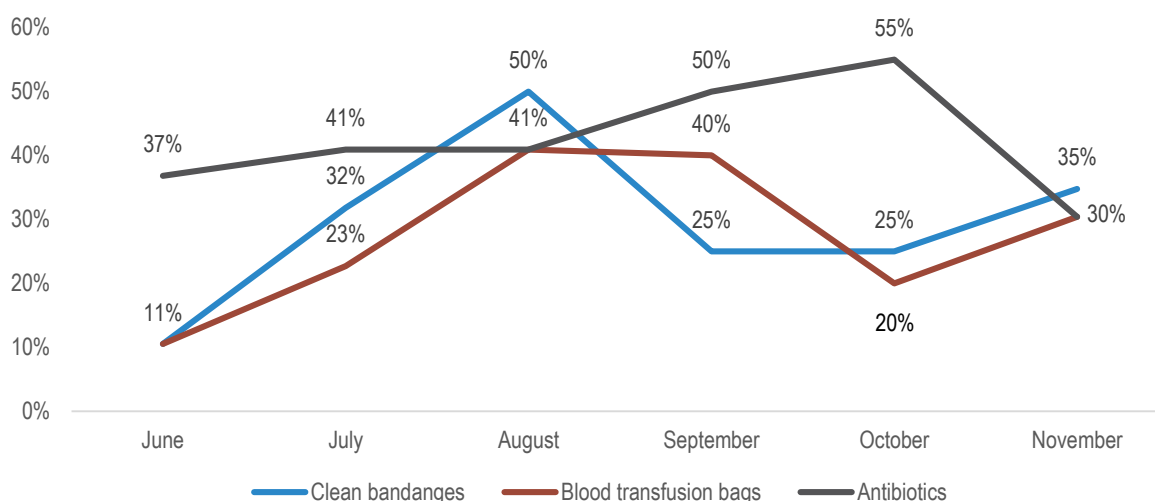
travel safety in the same month, this is likely explained less by a true decline in the cost of transport, but rather by the emergence of problems of greater urgency coming to the forefront, triggered by local political dynamics in central Hama in July.

Figure 15: Reported barriers to accessing healthcare by proportion of assessed communities



Medical item availability was also a concern in July, when 27% of assessed communities in northern Hama reported that none of the assessed medical items⁷ had been available in their community that month. Further into the assessment period, there were notable dynamics in the unavailability of clean bandages and blood transfusion bags that aligned with the escalation in violence. This was concentrated among assessed communities in Hamra, Suran, and Ziyara, which saw increased conflict between August and October.

Figure 16: Unavailability of selected medical items by proportion of assessed communities

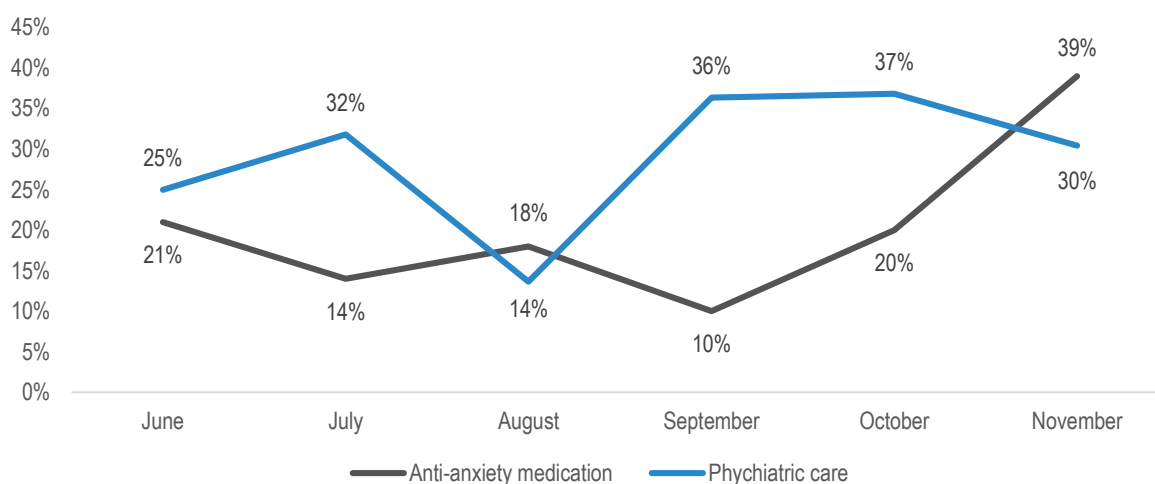


Another notable trend in regard to medical item and service availability across the assessment period was a marked increase in the need for anti-anxiety medication and psychiatric care across all assessed sub-districts (Figure 17), and particularly in Suran, Hamra and Hama, which experienced increased violence and where

⁷ Assessed items include: Anti-anxiety medication, contraception, clean bandages, blood transfusion bags, heart medicine, diabetes medicine, anesthetics, blood pressure medicine, antibiotics and burn treatment.

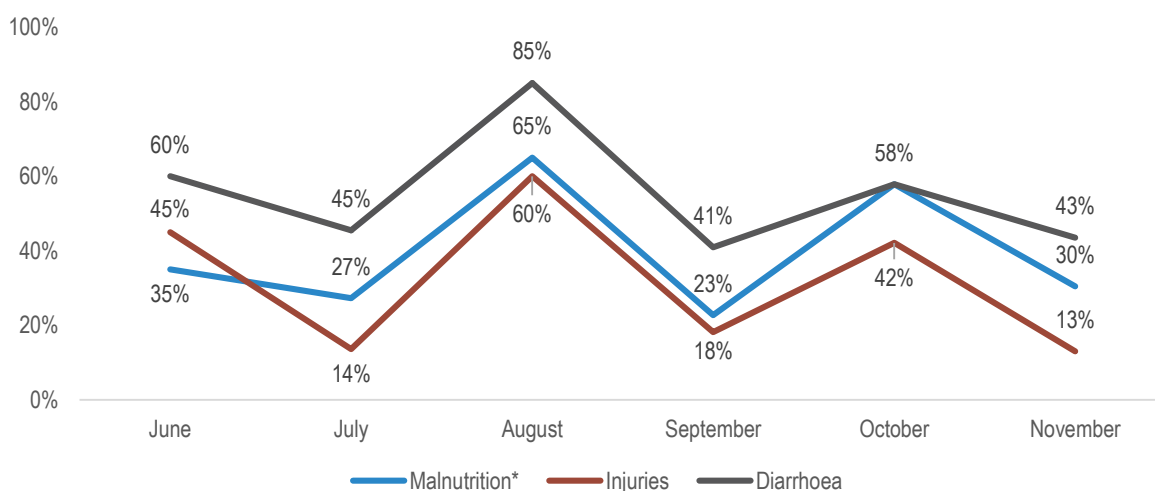
the proportion of assessed communities reporting this need increased from an average of 17% to 35% in the latter half of the assessment period.

Figure 17: Lack of access to anti-anxiety medication and psychiatric care by proportion of assessed communities



In August and early September, the proportion of assessed communities reporting residents suffering from diarrhoea, suspected cases of malnutrition⁸, and injuries peaked with the escalation in conflict in the region (Figure 18). All sub-districts, except Madiq Castle and Ziyara, saw the proportion of assessed communities reporting suspected cases of malnutrition increase by an average of 73 percentage-points. The peak in reports of injuries in August was mostly concentrated in assessed communities in Hamra, Suran and Ziyara sub-districts where on average 60% of assessed communities reported this issue compared to 45% in all other assessed sub-districts. Furthermore, while reports of injuries at the start of the period were highest in assessed communities in Ziyara, Hama and Madiq Castle sub-districts, by August, reports from these communities had decreased. The August peak in the proportion of assessed communities reporting residents suffering from diarrhoea was reflected by all sub-districts except Madiq Castle. **KIs noted that the rise in reports of diarrhoea was particularly concentrated among children, and that weather and poor living conditions had compounded the deleterious effects of conflict and complex internal political dynamics in northern Hama.**

Figure 18: Reported health problems by proportion of assessed communities

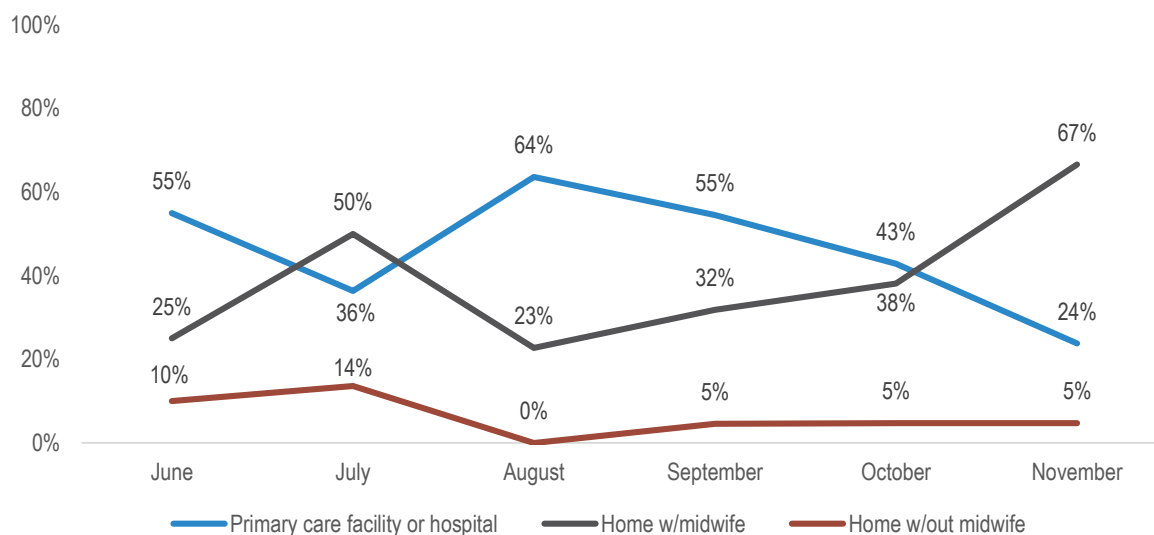


During the period of assessment, the two most commonly reported places where women gave birth were primary care facilities or hospitals and at home with a midwife, meanwhile childbirth at home without a midwife was the second to least commonly reported place (Figure 19). These two most commonly reported variables displayed an inverse relationship, with **midwife support increasing as primary care facilities and hospitals became less**

⁸ Reports of malnutrition in the HSOS data does not necessarily mean malnutrition in the Nutrition Working Group definition.

accessible. Childbirth at home without a midwife was only reported in assessed communities in Hama in September and November, Suran in June, July, and October, and Ziyara in June. Except for Suran in July where 3 out of 6 assessed communities reported childbirth without a midwife, this was only reported by one community in a sub-district in a given month.

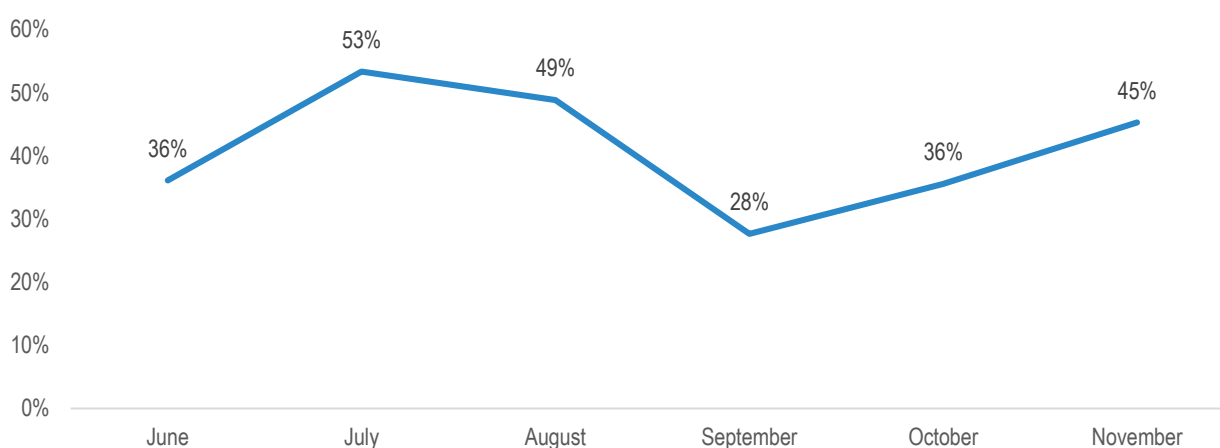
Figure 19: Most frequently reported locations of delivery by proportion of assessed communities



Water Security

Over the assessment period, the proportion of assessed communities reporting water sufficiency ranged between 28% and 53%. Most notably, no assessed communities in Hamra, Kafr Zeita, Madiq Castle, and Ziyara reportedly had enough water to meet household needs. KIs explained that the rise and fall of water sufficiency in the northeast and northwest of Hama could be due to damaged water and electricity stations, in some cases, and shifting control over the operation of electric and water stations in others.

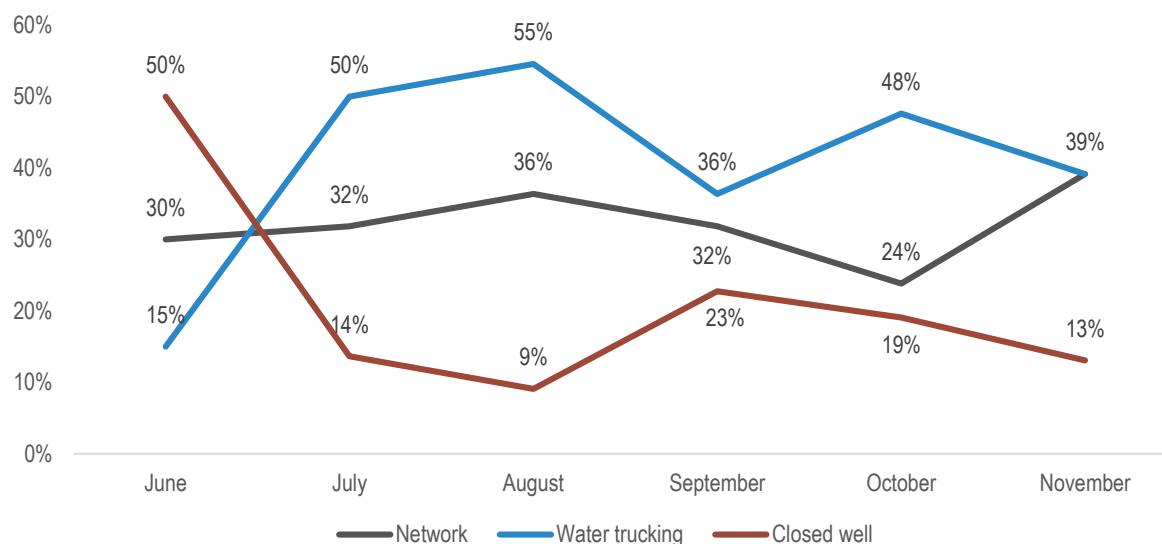
Figure 20: Reported sufficiency of water to meet household needs across assessed communities



Over the assessment period, the two most commonly reported sources of drinking water were water trucking and networks (Figure 21). Prior to July, closed wells were the most common main source of water reported across assessed sub-districts. With the exception of Hama sub-district, the average proportion of assessed communities reporting the use of closed wells as the main source of water across sub-districts decreased by nearly 50% in July. Simultaneously across all six sub-districts in July, the average proportion of assessed communities that reported the use of water trucking as their main source of water increased by 67 percentage points. The

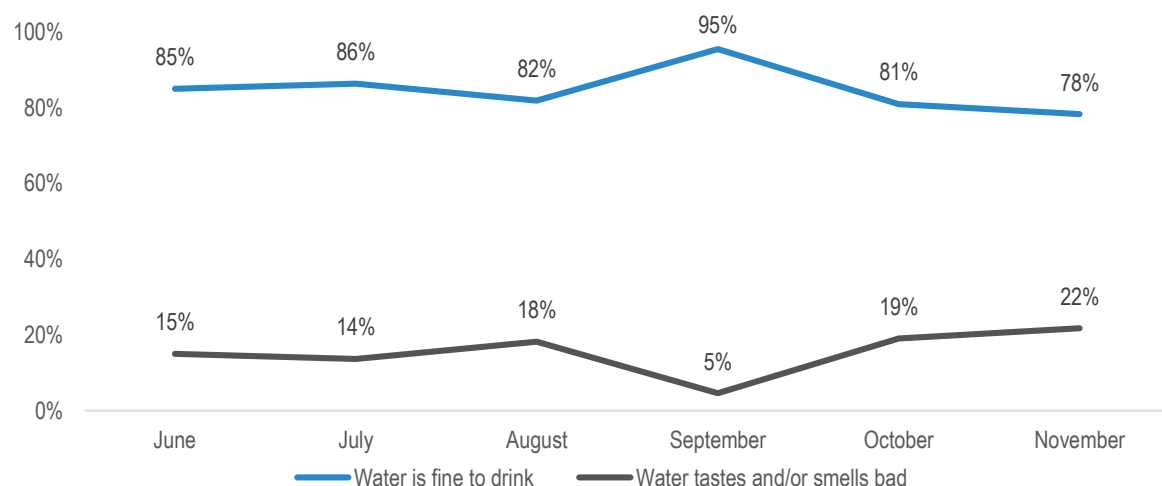
decrease and fluctuations in the proportion of assessed communities primarily relying on water trucking after August could be attributed to conflict and local political dynamics around the operation of water stations. The decline in the use of wells is likely attributable to the political dynamics around the control of electric stations, used to pump water up from closed wells.

Figure 21: Three most commonly reported sources of water by proportion of assessed communities



Between June and November, the proportion of assessed communities reporting that water was fine to drink ranged from 78% to 95% (Figure 22). Four sub-districts had a lower proportion of communities reporting the quality of water to be fine, compared to the average of the assessed sub-districts across the governorate. **These communities were in Kafr Zeita and Suran, where the average proportion of assessed communities reporting that water was fine to drink was only 71% and 60%, respectively.** During the period of assessment, no assessed communities in any of the six sub-districts reported that residents fell sick after drinking the water. **Of the assessed communities reporting that water tasted and/or smelled poorly, 75% sourced their water from water trucking, 18% from closed wells and in 1 community residents sourced their water from a spring.**

Figure 22: Reported water quality across assessed communities



CONCLUSION

This report provided a sub-district-level trend analysis of the humanitarian situation in northern Hama. It analysed changes in major humanitarian needs and trends in terms of displacement, shelter, NFI, food security, health and water security for six sub-districts (Hama, Hamra, Kafr Zeita, Madiq Castle, Suran and Ziyara) over a period of six months from June to November 2017. Relevant indicators for the analysis of displacement patterns and major humanitarian needs were selected from data provided by the HSOS project and examined to identify trends and patterns of vulnerability and resilience across sectors on a sub-district level.

The results of the analysis indicate a link between heightened insecurity and a deterioration of the humanitarian situation in terms of displacement, shelter, food security, health, and basic services. Vulnerabilities progressively increased in northern Hama governorate during periods of increased violent clashes between June and November 2017, for many of the assessed indicators. Where trends showed an observable decrease in humanitarian conditions, the decline over time tended to coincide with conflict dynamics, oftentimes rising/falling in late August through September, when conflict was escalating. Suran and Hamra sub-districts, both of which experienced a significant increase in conflict and insecurity during this period, tended to show the most pronounced negative trends and worst deterioration in humanitarian conditions.

All assessed sub-districts saw significant pre-conflict population declines during the assessment period, as well as an overall decline in spontaneous returns. This trend was most pronounced in Hamra and Suran sub-districts, where violent clashes intensified during this period. Simultaneously, access to shelter declined as the proportion of assessed communities reporting a lack of available rooms for rent, as a result of shelter damage, increased. The link between increased conflict and displacement and a deterioration of the humanitarian situation is perhaps most notably visible in the food security and livelihoods sector in **conflict-affected sub-districts, where the proportion of assessed communities reporting the use of severe coping strategies, such as spending days without eating, child labour and begging, increased.** Vulnerabilities also increased in the health sector, particularly visible in the declining proportion of assessed communities where women were reportedly able to access maternal health services in formal health facilities. Moreover, the availability of medical items closely associated with conflict-related traumatic injuries, such as blood transfusion bags and clean bandages, declined from August through October, when violent clashes in the area intensified, while reports of injuries and suspected cases of malnutrition peaked in August and October.

Changes regarding the humanitarian situation in assessed communities did not always follow clear patterns and deteriorations were not limited only to sub-districts with heightened levels of conflict and insecurity. Some selected indicators fluctuated from month-to-month, indicating rapidly changing, volatile conditions for populations in all assessed sub-districts. This volatility was particularly observable regarding fuel and food prices, as well as access to water, and could be attributed to local political dynamics and shifts in control over power and water stations. Volatility in access to fuel was particularly pronounced in Madiq Castle, Kafr Zeita and Ziyara sub-districts.

However, the analysis also indicated elements of resilience for some indicators in November. For example, shelter conditions improved slightly with a higher proportion of assessed communities reporting independent houses or apartments as the main shelter type. Similarly, the proportion of assessed communities reporting fuel shortages in Suran and Hamra sub-districts decreased slightly, as did the proportion of communities reporting residents sustaining injuries and suspected cases of malnutrition as main health issues, while the proportion of communities reporting having access to bread from bakeries every day increased. Despite these observed changes, the level of vulnerabilities remained high in all assessed sub-districts and conditions in some sectors continued to deteriorate.

Given the level of displacement and conflict in northern Hama governorate during the assessment period, and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation across sectors for many assessed communities, continued analysis will be required to monitor the dynamics of conflict and displacement and how they link to the humanitarian situation in northern Hama. It is important to continue monitoring the functionality of healthcare, basic services and markets in the assessed sub-districts as populations continue to be exposed to a high level of vulnerabilities across sectors. The imperative to provide humanitarian actors with crucial analysis to support the effective assistance of populations in need will be especially pressing as the number of IDPs in northern Hama governorate is increasing and if pre-conflict populations decide to return.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Analysed HSOS Indicators by Sector

	Displacement
QB001	Percent of village pre-conflict population remaining in the community on the last day of previous month
QB005	Factors that trigger pre-conflict population to leave the community
QC001	Returns of pre-conflict population
QN002	Presence of IDPs in the assessed community
	Shelter
QS002	Most common type of housing lived in by pre-conflict population during previous month
QS003	Availability of rooms in assessed communities
	NFI
QD001	Most common source of electricity in previous month
QD002	NFI item availability and prices in previous month
QD003	Reported coping strategies used to cope with lack of fuel in the village during the previous month
	Food Security and Livelihoods
QG001	Food sources used by village population during the previous month
QG002	Food access problems most commonly experienced by village population during the previous month
QG006	Level of regularity of food distributions
QG010	Number of days during previous month when bread was not available to buy from public bakeries in the village
QG011	Number of days during previous month when bread was not available to buy from private bakeries in the village
QG012	Most reported reason for village population not accessing/making enough bread during the previous month
QH004	Food-based coping strategies to deal with a lack of livelihoods (e.g. eating food waste, spending days without eating)
	Health
QE001	Most serious common health problems reported in general in the village during the previous month
QE002	Main difficulties when accessing healthcare services
QE005	Percent of deliveries at home without professional assistance in the village during the previous month
QE006	Availability of medical items in community
QE007	Coping strategies used due to lack of medical services & items
QE008	Cases of severe malnutrition
	Water Security
QF002	Water that could be bought by village population during the previous month - by price and type of water source
QF003	Most common drinking water source accessed by village population during the previous month
QF004	Water quality status of most common drinking water source accessed by village population during the previous month
QF005	Community access to water (water sufficiency)

Annex 2: List of Assessed Communities

Community name	Community P-code	June	July	August	September	October	November	Total assessments
Hama								
Hama Sub-district								
Abi Al Fedaa	N0317	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Al Fayhaa	N0287	1	0	1	1	1	1	5
Dahriyeh	N0283	0	0	0	1	1	1	3
Jajiyeh	C2965	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Jirbeen	C2969	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Maar Shohur	C3003	0	0	0	0		1	1
Sabouniyeh	N0313	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Hamra Sub-district								
Abu Ajwa	C3098	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Dalleh	C3070	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Hnyeh	C6549	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Jeb Elothman	C3074	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Jeb Hanta	C6565	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Jneineh	C3100	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Qasr Bin Wardan	C3105	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Rasm Eldaheriyeh	C3071	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
Western-Jeb Sukkar	C6570	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Kafr Zeita Sub-district								
Kafr Zeita	C3463	0	1	1	1	1	0	4
Latmana	C3458	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Madiq Castle Sub-district								
Hawash	C3195	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Madiq Castle	C3207	1	1	1	1	0	1	5
Suran Sub-district								
Atshan	C3201	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Maan	C3035	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Murak	C3029	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Northern Fan	C3032	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Qasr Abu Samra	C3038	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Western-Jneineh	C6585	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Ziyara Sub-district								
Al Amiqiyah	Al Amiqiyah	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
Lower Amiqqa	C3154	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Upper Amiqqa	Upper Amiqqa	0	0	0	1	1	1	3