FACTSHEET

Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI)

April, 2023
Northeast Syria

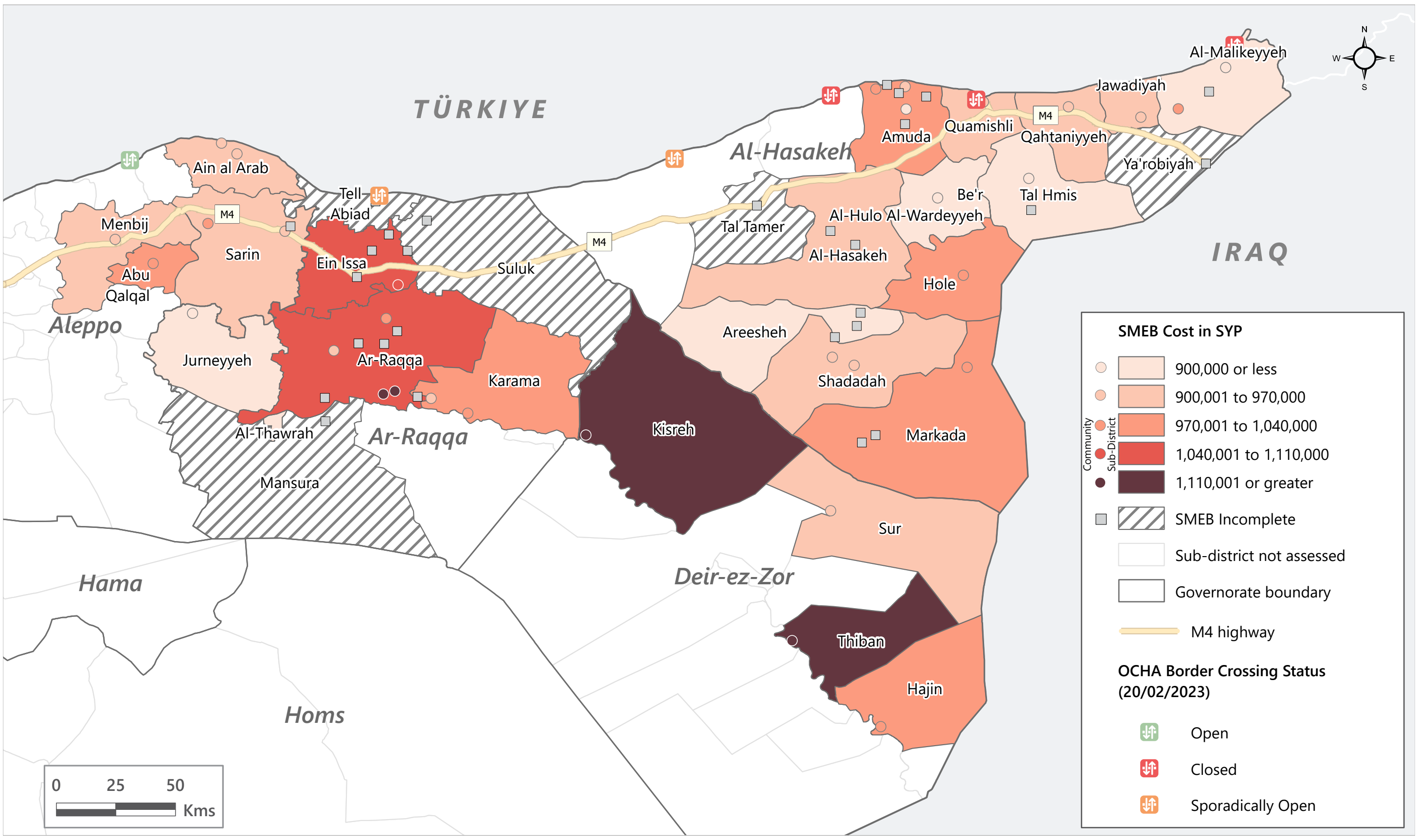
KEY MESSAGES

- **Currency depreciation** combined with **price hikes during the month of Ramadan** increased the unaffordability of many basic commodities across Northeast Syria (NES).
- The price of monitored **fresh vegetables continued to climb at unprecedented rates** between March and April. Since vegetables are largely imported in the winter months, such increases are likely impacted by depreciation of the Syrian Pound (SYP) increasing the cost of importing from abroad, worsening economic conditions in areas of the Government of Syria (GoS), poor precipitation levels in the 2022 planting season, and the increasing cost of agricultural inputs.
- In April, surveyed vendors reported facing a **greater number of supply challenges in Deir ez-Zor governorate compared to previous months** likely linked to increasing insecurity[1] which has reportedly made transport roads insecure and impacted the authorized movement of suppliers.

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 average Syrian households, including food and non-food items, water, 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.

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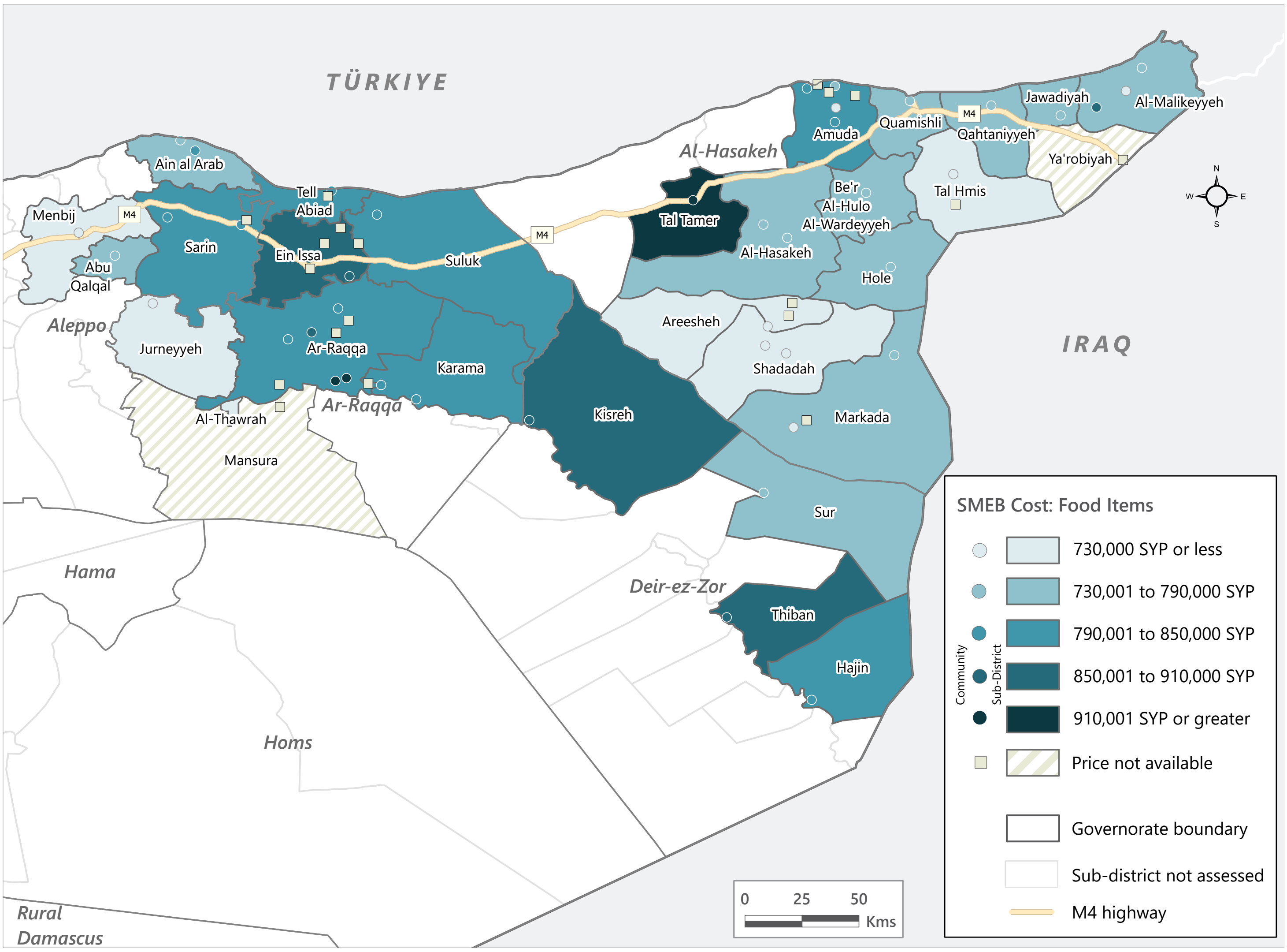
Cost of SMEB food component by sub-districts and communities



SMEB Contents

Food

Bread	37 kg
Bulgur	15 kg
Chicken	6 kg
Eggs	6 kg
Ghee/veg. oil	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. Annexes 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*

April data collection

8	supporting partners
4	governorates
11	districts
30	sub-districts
62	communities
1,874	shops - vendor key informants (KIs)

* Due to rounding figures may not total 100%

NES SMEB[2]

126 USD ▼-0.3%
974,659 SYP ▲ 2%

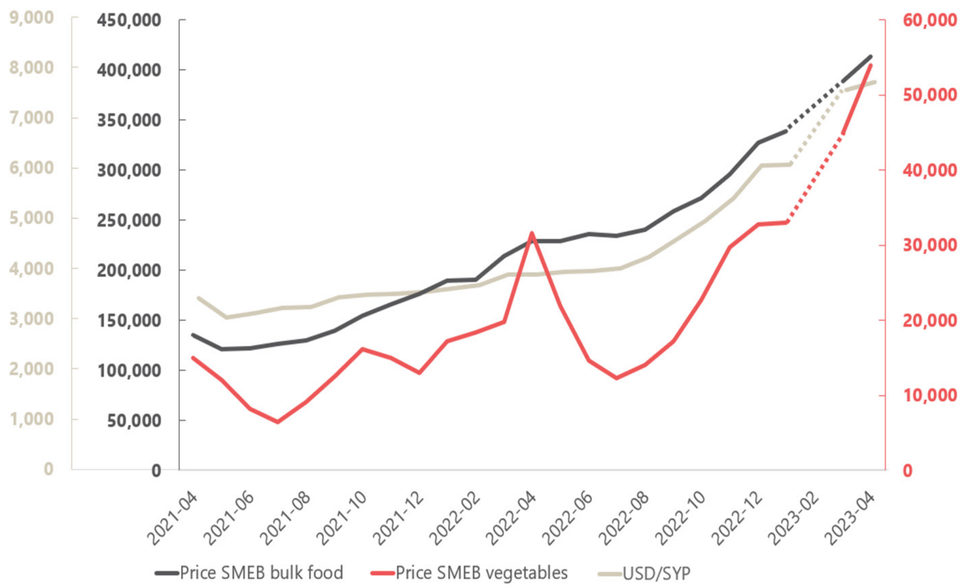
NES SMEB FOOD ITEMS[2]

100 USD ▲ +0.5%
768,275 ▲ +2%

NES EXCHANGE RATE[2]

USD/SYP
7,700 SYP ▲ +2%

SMEB vegetable and bulk food prices, 2021-2023, SYP*

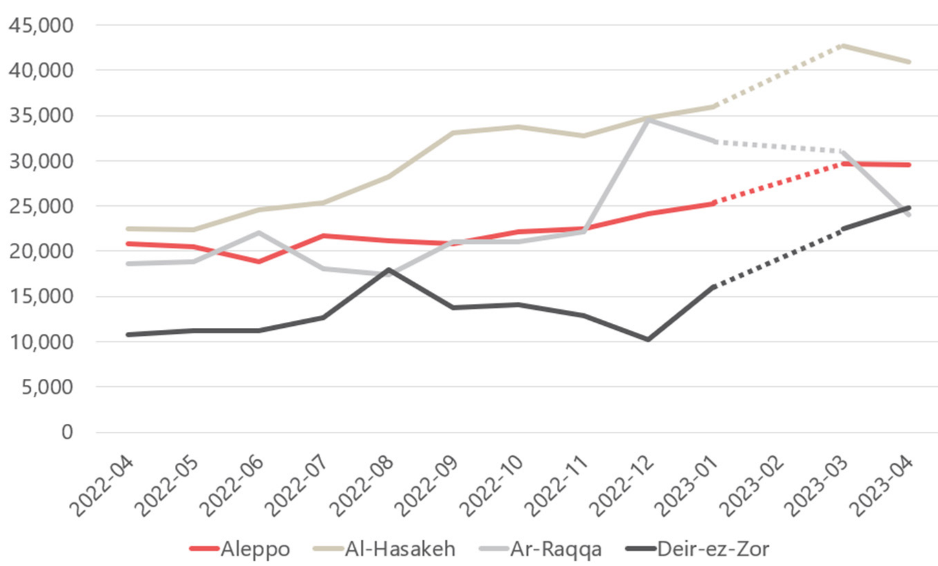


Bulk food and vegetables prices continued to climb in April by 6% and 20% respectively impacted by both depreciation of the SYP and price hikes common during the month of Ramadan. Vegetables, which are largely imported in the winter months with higher associated costs, have been increasing since the end of summer 2022 at unprecedented rates. This is despite some recent attempts by authorities to regulate prices.[3] Trends over the past two years show increasingly high prices in winter, potentially linked to ongoing currency depreciation impacting the cost of importing from abroad, worsening economic conditions in GoS areas, poor precipitation in the 2022 planting season, and inflation of agricultural inputs as a result of the Ukraine crisis. With improved rainfall conditions in the past months and local production season starting, vegetable prices are expected to recover in the coming months.

See Annex 2 for the median price of individual SMEB items in SYP and USD as well as one month and six month percenatge changes.

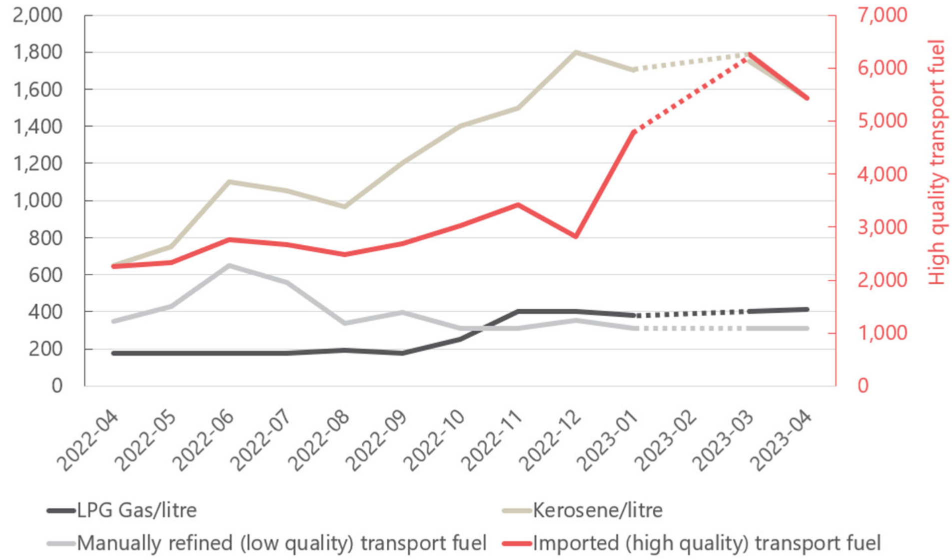
Water trucking prices decreased moderately (-5%) between March and April 2023 laregly attributed to decreases in Ar-Raqqa and Al-Hasakeh governorates. Improved rainfall in the past months may have contributed to some recovery of water trucking prices in NES. The cost of water trucking remains highest in Al-Hasakeh governorate linked to on-going disruptions to Alouk water station which increase community reliance on private water trucking.[4] In addition, water trucking prices have been steadily increasing in Deir ez-Zor governorate where reliance on water trucking is high for communities not connected to a water network.[5]

SMEB water trucking prices, 2022-2023, SYP*



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

NES fuel prices, 2022-2023, SYP*



Gas and low quality (manually refined) transport fuels remained stable in price as they were generally available at subsidised prices. The price of gas and low quality transportation fuels in Deir ez-Zor however remained substantially higher than elsewhere in NES where subsidised fuels are generally not available to communities. In addition, high quality (imported) transport fuel[6] is also largely unavailable across assessed communities in Deir ez-Zor. Overall the price of high quality (imported) transport fuel decreased between March and April by 13% however remained extremely expensive. Field teams reported that demand for such imported fuel is low among communities given the availability and low cost of manually refined fuel.

LIQUIDITY ISSUES

Availability of USD denominations remains a challenge across NES which can impact multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) 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 Northwest Syria following the earthquakes may have temporarily impacted USD liquidity in NES.[7] The situation is expected to worsen in May following closure of the Semalka border crossing, a critical transfer point for USD notes into NES.[8]

Number of informal exchange vendors reporting limited stock of USD notes

Al-Hasakeh		Aleppo	
Limited stock of 5 USD	36/53	Limited stock of 5 USD	9/25
Limited stock of 10 USD	38/53	Limited stock of 10 USD	11/25
Limited stock of 20 USD	41/53	Limited stock of 20 USD	18/25
Limited stock of 50 USD	33/52	Limited stock of 50 USD	24/25
Limited stock of 100 USD	33/52	Limited stock of 100 USD	25/25
Ar-Raqqa		**Deir-Ez Zor**	
Limited stock of 5 USD	20/32	Limited stock of 5 USD	7/12
Limited stock of 10 USD	23/32	Limited stock of 10 USD	8/12
Limited stock of 20 USD	27/32	Limited stock of 20 USD	9/12
Limited stock of 50 USD	32/32	Limited stock of 50 USD	9/12
Limited stock of 100 USD	31/32	Limited stock of 100 USD	9/12

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

SUPPLY CHALLENGES

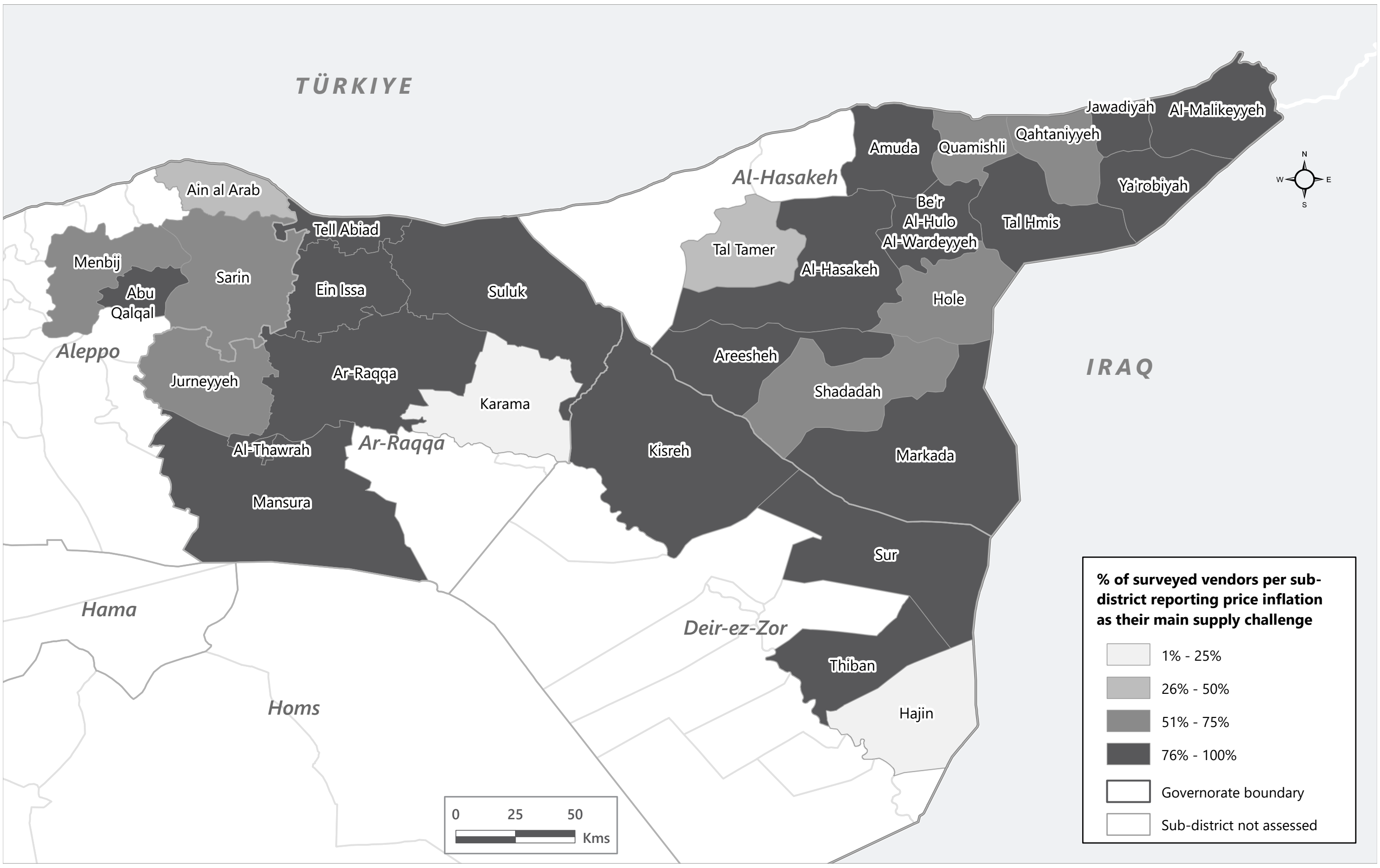
Most commonly reported supply challenges (% of surveyed vendors)*

	AREA	REPORTED %
PRICE INFLATION	NES	74%
	NE Aleppo	50%
	Al-Hasakeh	85%
	Ar-Raqqa	77%
	Deir-Ez-Zor	64%
NO ISSUES	NES	20%
	NE Aleppo	44%
	Al-Hasakeh	7%
	Ar-Raqqa	20%
	Deir-Ez-Zor	25%
SUPPLY CAN'T MEET DEMAND	NES	15%
	NE Aleppo	5%
	Al-Hasakeh	23%
	Ar-Raqqa	11%
	Deir-Ez-Zor	24%
SUPPLIER LIMITED SUPPLY	NES	10%
	NE Aleppo	9%
	Al-Hasakeh	13%
	Ar-Raqqa	4%
	Deir-Ez-Zor	26%

While price inflation remains the predominant supply challenge facing surveyed vendors, **a quarter of surveyed vendors reported on supply shortages** (supply can't meet demand/supplier limited supply), most commonly in Deir ez-Zor and Al Hasakeh governorates. In Al-Hasakeh these barriers were most commonly impacting surveyed fuel vendors, non-food item vendors, and water trucking services while in Deir-ez Zor they were most commonly reported by vendors selling bread, informal exchange vendors, and fuel vendors.

Notably, **27% of surveyed vendors in Deir ez-Zor governorate reported that insecure transport roads** impact their ability to secure supplies (compared to 3% of vendors in Deir ez-Zor reporting this barrier in March). In addition, **13% of vendors in Deir ez-Zor reported that their supplier did not have authorization for movement** (compared to 0% of vendors in the governorate who reported this barrier in March). Such changes in reporting on these barriers reflects the worsening security situation in Deir ez-Zor.[9]

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 for 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

PARTNERS

Each month, around 20 different organizations 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, and 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 or visit the REACH Syria Resource Centre.

ENDNOTES

PAGE 1

[1] SOHR, 'Iran-US conflict heats up in Deir ez-Zor: What is next?', March 27 2023, https://www.syriahr.com/en/293600/

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[2] For price and change % calculations, only the communities with sub-districts with consistent coverage across months are included.

[3] North Press Agency, 'Meat has become a dream that residents in Deir Ezzor strive to achieve', 4 April 2023, https://npasyria.com/147631/;
Syrian Observer for Human Rights (SOHR), 'The crazy rise in prices casts a shadow on the atmosphere of Eid in Hasakeh, and people appeal to the concerned authorities to impose control', https://www.syriahr.com

[4] SOHR, 'After it went out of service for more than a week, Alouk station pumps drtinking water to Hamma reservoirs in Hasaka countryside', 17 April 2023, https://www.syriahr.com

[5] North Press Agency, 'Several villages west of Deir ez-Zor without drinking water', 14 April 2023, https://npasyria.com/148786/

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[6] Taken as the average price per litre between high quality (imported) petrol and deisel.

[7] Chatham House, 'Are new US financial restrictions on Iraq missing their target?', 28 March 2023, https://www.chathamhouse.org/2023/03/are-new-us-financial-restrictions-iraq-missing-their-target

[8] Al-Monitor, 'Intra-Kurdish tensions paralyze northeast Syria's main border crossing, 21 May 2023, https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2023/05/intra-kurdish-tensions-paralyze-northeast-syrias-main-border-crossing

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[9] SOHR, 'Iran-US conflict heats up in Deir ez-Zor: What is next?', March 27 2023, https://www.syriahr.com/en/293600/

ABOUT REACH

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Feedback on improvements to this product can be given anonymously using the following link

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Annex 1: Median SMEB price per sub-district

	SMEB SYP**	1 month change	6 month change	SMEB USD**
Northeast Syria SMEB	**974,659**	**2%**	**48%**	**126**
Aleppo	960,118	3%	52%	126
Abu Qalqal	995,003	4%	55%	129
Ain al Arab	951,039	5%	52%	124
Menbij	911,603	-7%	35%	120
Sarin	969,197	10%	59%	127
Al-Hasakeh	948,529	6%	44%	123
Al-Hasakeh	950,744	-1%	31%	124
Al-Malikeyyeh*	888,575	-3%	30%	116
Amuda*	982,926	1%	44%	128
Areesheh	887,652	1%	48%	115
Be'r Al-Hulo Al-Wardeyyeh*	880,701	10%	48%	NA
Hole	974,659	11%	45%	126
Jawadiyah*	937,991	7%	47%	122
Markada	982,115	6%	49%	128
Qahtaniyyeh*	909,230	7%	58%	118
Quamishli	946,314	5%	45%	123
Shadadah	908,777	1%	NA	118
Tal Hmis*	875,650	3%	38%	114
Ar-Raqqa	1,044,009	4%	52%	139
Ya'robiyah	NA	NA	NA	NA
Al-Thawrah*	838,823	-5%	NA	109
Ar-Raqqa	1,091,450	9%	67%	142
Ein Issa	1,044,009	-5%	41%	136
Jurneyyeh*	876,081	12%	46%	NA
Karama	974,932	3%	42%	NA
Deir-ez-Zor	1,069,548	11%	60%	139
Hajin	NA	6%	NA	132
Kisreh	1,013,051	14%	64%	146
Sur	1,126,045	-1%	56%	124
Thiban	958,595	NA	73%	152

** 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 is 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**
NES SMEB food items		**768,275**	**2%**	**49%**	**100**
SMEB bulk food items	SMEB	413,125	6%	52%	53.65
Bulgur	1 kg	6,500	8%	63%	0.84
Red lentils	1 kg	7,500	7%	47%	0.97
Rice	1 kg	6,500	8%	63%	0.84
Salt	500 g	1,000	0%	43%	0.13
Sugar	1 kg	6,500	8%	71%	0.84
Tomato paste	1 kg	4,000	4%	38%	0.52
SMEB vegetables	SMEB	54,000	20%	138%	7.01
Tomatoes	1 kg	3,600	20%	64%	0.47
Potatoes	1 kg	2,850	14%	14%	0.37
Cucumbers	1 kg	5,200	30%	235%	0.68
Onions	1 kg	6,000	14%	400%	0.78
SMEB cooking oils	SMEB	80,694	0%	26%	10.48
Ghee	1 kg	11,500	1%	28%	1.49
Vegetable oil	1 L	11,750	2%	31%	1.53
Non-veg perishables					
Bread	8 pc	377	-6%	4%	0.05
Chicken	1 kg	15,650	15%	84%	2.03
Eggs	30 pc	18,000	5%	29%	2.34
SMEB non-food items	SMEB	74,560	3%	57%	9.68
Bathing soap	1 pc	2,500	0%	67%	0.32
Sanitary pads	10 pc	3,000	0%	35%	0.39
Toothpaste	100 g	4,000	4%	38%	0.52
Laundry powder	1 kg	7,250	-2%	35%	0.94
Dish soap	1 L	7,500	11%	88%	0.97
SMEB cooking fuels	SMEB	9,000	6%	29%	1.17
Kerosene (manually refined)	1 L	1,550	-11%	11%	0.20
LP gas	1 L	413	3%	65%	0.05
SMEB water trucking	SMEB	32,368	-5%	44%	4.20
Water trucking (1000 L)	1 m3	7,193	-5%	44%	0.93
Other					
Phone data	1 gb	3,725	6%	35%	0.48

* 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.