

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION OVERVIEW OF SYRIA (HSOS)

AR-RAQQA CITY

Spring 2023| Urban household assessment

INTRODUCTION

The HSOS¹ Urban Household Assessment is a quarterly review of the humanitarian situation inside cities in Northeast Syria (NES). The assessment collects multi-sectoral information from host community and internally displaced households in Ar-Raqqa city. This situation overview presents findings on the access to services, living conditions, economic conditions, and priority needs across accessible areas in the city.

With a significant proportion of the humanitarian response that targets out of camp and host communities in NES located in urban areas,² the assessment addresses the need for comprehensive and regular information on the humanitarian conditions in cities where the impact of an increasingly complex crisis has hit hundreds of thousands.

Sustained economic deterioration and climate shocks resulting in unstable markets and worsening food and water access compound the pre-existing vulnerabilities of urban populations who face persistent insecurity, damaged infrastructure, and complex population dynamics.

To support sustainable interventions, a durable solutions lens was integrated during the design of the HSOS Urban Household Assessment, and indicators from the Syria Analytical Framework³ were included in the questionnaire. Given the low number of internally displaced persons (IDPs⁴ in Ar-Raqqa city, this assessment provides representative data on all households residing in Ar-Raqqa city, without making a distinction between IDP and host community⁵ households.

The HSOS Urban Household Assessment is conducted in cooperation with the NES Forum. The complete multi-sectoral descriptive analysis can be accessed [online](#) or can be downloaded as an [excel file](#). All HSOS products remain accessible on the [REACH Resource Centre](#).

SYMBOLOLOGY

- The indicator refers to the current situation at the time of data collection
- The indicator refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection
- ▼ Findings are not representative
- ▶ The indicator aligns with the Syria analytical framework from the Durable Solutions Platform

KEY MESSAGES

-  **Within the space of a year, households saw their access to electricity reducing from an average of 9.7 hours per day in spring 2022 to 8.1 hours per day in spring 2023.** The main network was the most common primary source of electricity in Raqqa, used by 86% of households. However, the electricity distributed by the network is subject to frequent rationing,^a reflected by the 84% of households citing rationing as a main barrier to access electricity in Ar-Raqqa.
-  **The percentage of households experiencing issues with drinking water decreased** from 69% to 50% between winter and spring 2023. However, households frequently reported severe issues such as water being perceived as making people sick (reported by 11% of households facing water issues in winter against 23% in spring). Additionally, 70% of households experienced sanitation issues. Among them, 60% cited infrequent waste collection (compared to 56% in winter) and 50% reported waste in the street (25% in winter), indicating a rising waste management problem in the city.
-  **Households increasingly relied on non-productive income sources to access livelihoods.** For instance, the percentage of households relying on loans as their primary source of income increased from 2% in winter 2023 to 13% in spring. In addition, precarious work types prevailed in Ar-Raqqa. Indeed, informal day-to-day work was the most common employment type for 36% of households having employment as a source of income in the city. Such works do not allow laborers to access rights and social security, and its short-term nature may hinder households from securing a future.
-  **Ar-Raqqa witnessed a decrease in the school attendance between winter and spring 2023.** The percentage of households where all children were going to school decreased from 34% to 26% between the two reporting periods. It is worth noting that the February earthquakes damaged five schools in Raqqa city,^b therefore perturbing attendance. In addition, the current economic hardship may force families to send children to work. In spring, 38% of households in which not all children attended school indicated that it was because their children had to work (compared to 31% in the winter round).

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION OVERVIEW OF SYRIA (HSOS)

AR-RAQQA CITY

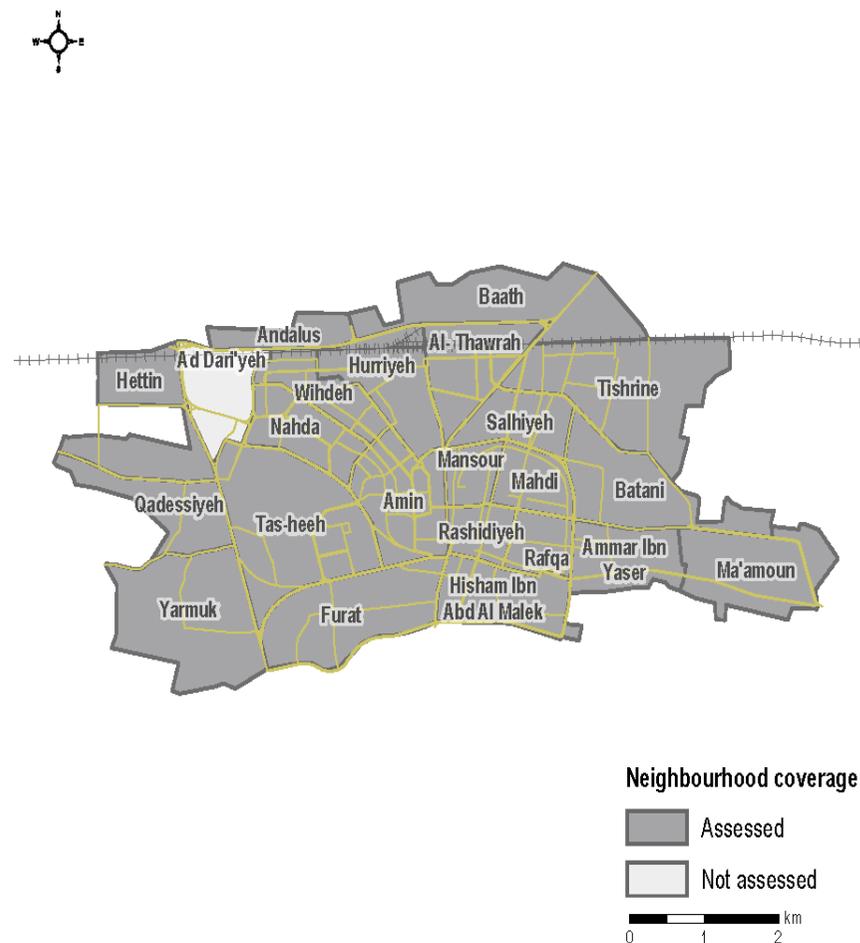
Spring 2023 | Urban household assessment

METHODOLOGY

- The HSOS urban household assessment is conducted using a **household methodology at city level**.
- Face-to-face data collection was carried out by REACH enumerators between **3 and 9 May 2023** covering **103 households** in Ar-Raqqa city.
- Findings can be generalised to **the Syrian population at city level**, with a 95% confidence level and 10% margin of error. The representative sample of the population was calculated according to the population estimates collected by the Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP) in September 2022.
- Stratified simple random household selection** was conducted through random spatial sampling using geographic information systems. The selection considered population estimates by neighbourhood and distributed the random samples according to population density.
- The random spatial sampling was conducted across residential areas of the city, as classified by OpenStreetMap. Areas unsafe for data collection were not covered.⁶
- Due to data collection protocols, the sample excludes households whose members are all below 18.
- Due to logistical limitations, the sample is biased towards households where at least one adult member is at home during the time of data collection, and towards cooperative, readily available households.

COVERAGE

Ar-Raqqa city neighbourhoods covered in the sample



PRIORITY NEEDS

Most commonly reported **overall** priority needs for host community households (by % of assessed communities)⁷

1	 Food	76%
2	 Livelihoods	72%
3	 Health	42%

Households' movement intentions



Most common reasons for leaving (by % of households who intend to leave)^{8, ▼}

Access to health services is not sufficient	20%
Cost of living is too high	20%
Facing eviction	20%

RETURNEEES

Date of return (by % of households that returned in each period)



100%

of host community households who are returnees

2.3

average number of displacements for returnee households

IDPs

Date of arrival (by % of households that arrived in each period)



2.9

average number of displacements for IDP households

Most common governorates of origin for IDP households ▼

1	Ar-Raqqa	35%
1	Deir-ez-Zor	35%
2	Aleppo	26%

Most common sub-districts of origin for IDP households ▼

1	Al Mayadin	13%
2	As-Safira	9%
2	Tabni	9%

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Average # of household members	Average # of children (0-5)	Average # of children (6-17)	Average # of adults (18+)	Average # of elderly (60+)
7.5	1.5	2.5	3.5	0.4

44% of households with newborns (0-1)

77% of households with school-aged children (6-17)

72% of households with young children (0-5)

89% of households with children (0-17)

▼ Findings are not representative

SAFETY AND PROTECTION

 **44%** of households with members who lacked civil documents and needed them  

Most common civil documents that household members lacked and needed (as % of households where at least one member lacked and needed a document [44%])[▼]

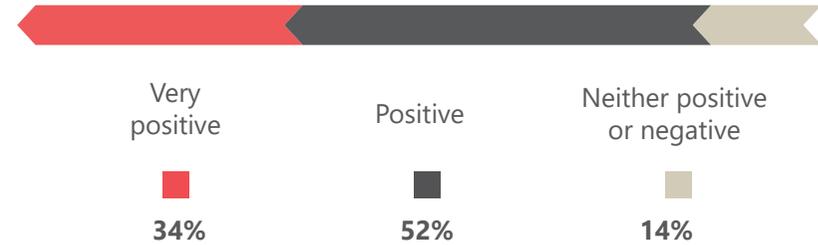
- 1** Syrian identity card issued by the Government of Syria **58%**
- 2** Birth certificate issued by the Government of Syria **49%**
- 3** Birth certificate issued by local entities (non-GoS) **11%**

65% of households who faced theft as a security concern 

Movement freedom for all household member within the location

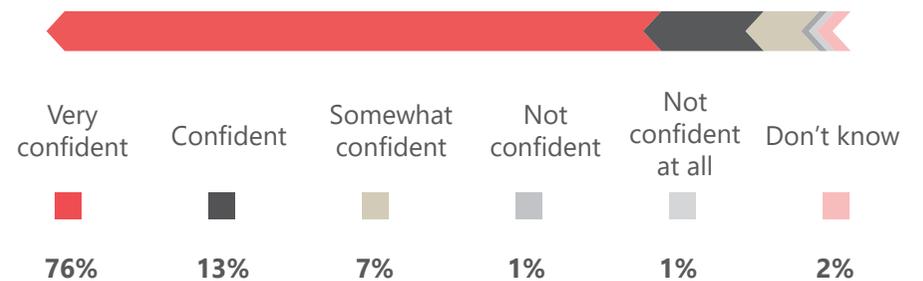


Household's relationship with other community members



 **34%** of households reported housing, land and property concerns 
 ↳ **Rental problems (landlord/tenant issues)** was the most commonly reported housing, land and property concern (reported by 83% of households facing concerns)[▼]

Confidence of being able to reside in the current place of residence for 3 more months



 Aligns with the Syria analytical framework from the Durable Solutions Platform
 Refers to the current situation at the time of data collection

 Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection
 Findings are not representative

HOUSING SITUATION

Most common shelter types ▶ ■

1	Solid/finished house	85%
2	Solid/finished apartment	9%
3	Damaged residential building	5%

Most common occupancy arrangements ▶ ■

1	Owning	63%
2	Renting	33%
3	Hosted	4%

Average % of monthly income spent on rent
31%
Average expenditure on rent as a % of total household expenditure⁹
17%

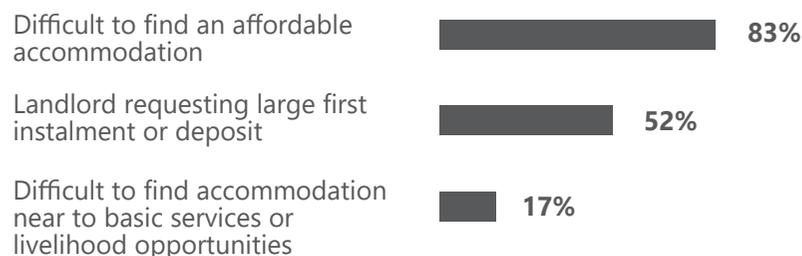
Rental contract type (by % of households who are renting [33%]) ■



Most common challenges in finding a place to rent for households (by % of households who faced challenges [85%])⁸ ▼ ■

85%

of households renting a property who faced challenges in finding a place to rent ▼ ■



SHELTER CONDITIONS

79% of households whose shelter had inadequacies ▶ ■

Shelter inadequacies (by % of households who experienced issues)⁸ ▼ ■

Leakage from roof/ceiling during rain	57%
Poor sanitation	46%
Windows/doors not sealed	42%
Unable to lock home securely	38%
Lack of lighting inside shelter	33%
Lack of electricity (fixtures, associated connections)	26%
Lack of space/overcrowding	23%
Lack of water (fixtures, associated connections)	20%
Lack of lighting around shelter	14%
Lack of privacy (space/partitions, doors)	11%
Lack of insulation from cold	5%
High temperatures inside shelters	1%
Lack of ventilation: stuffy, bad smells	1%
Poor facilities for persons with specific needs (PwSN)	1%

ACCESS TO WATER

100% of households reported **piped water network** as the primary source of drinking and non-drinking water  

99% of households who **did not use a secondary source** of drinking water  

16% of households who had **insufficient access to water** to fulfill their needs 

Average % of monthly income spent on water⁹
0,3%
Average expenditure on water as a % of total household expenditure⁹
0,2%

Most common water needs for which households had to reduce consumption because of not having access to sufficient water (as % of households who reduced water consumption [16%])^{8, ●, ▼}

-  Cleaning (inside house) **81%**
-  Doing laundry **56%**
-  Cleaning (outside house) **38%**

50% of households who experienced issues with drinking water  

Most common problems with drinking water (as % of households that had problems with drinking water)^{8, ●, ▼}

- 1** Water has a bad colour **81%**
- 2** Water tastes bad **42%**
- 3** Water smells bad **21%**

Common barriers to accessing water for households (as % of households who had insufficient water access [16%])^{8, ●, ▼}

- 1** Not enough water tanks or water tanks not big enough to store sufficient water **81%**
- 2** Storage containers are too expensive **50%**
- 3** Household skipped in schedule of refilling tanks **12%**

Most common strategies applied by households to avoid running out of water (as % of households who applied some coping strategy [46%])^{8, ●, ▼}

- 1** Relying on drinking water stored previously **83%**
- 2** Reducing non-drinking water consumption (of water for all purposes) **34%**
- 3** Collecting water from a source that is further away than the usual one **2%**

34% of households who did not use any methods to make drinking water safer 

Most common methods to make water safer (by % of households)⁸

- 1** Storage and sedimentation **54%**
- 2** Boiling **12%**
- 3** Household filters **10%**

ACCESS TO SANITATION

 **70%** of households who experienced sanitation issues 

Common sanitation issues for households (as % of households who experienced sanitation issues [70%])^{8, ●, ▼}

- 1** Waste collection services too infrequent **60%**
- 2** Waste (solid waste/trash) in street **50%**
- 3** Sewage system needs cleaning **32%**
- 4** Issues with soak pit **17%**
- 5** Sewage system needs repair **15%**

 Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection
 Aligns with the Syria analytical framework from the Durable Solutions Platform

 Findings are not representative

ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY

Primary source of electricity



■	Main network	86%
■	Community generator	14%

Secondary source of electricity (by % of households who had a secondary source [93%])^{8,•}

1	Community generator		82%
2	Car batteries		15%
3	Other batteries		6%

Average % of monthly income spent on electricity⁹
3%
Average expenditure on electricity as a % of total household expenditure⁹
3%



7%

of households who did not have access to a secondary source of electricity



100%

of households who experienced issues with accessing electricity

Average number of hours of electricity per day



8.1

Average hours of electricity per day available to households

13 or more	12-11	10-9	8-7	6-5	4-3	2-1	0
1%	14%	26%	42%	6%	11%	0%	0%

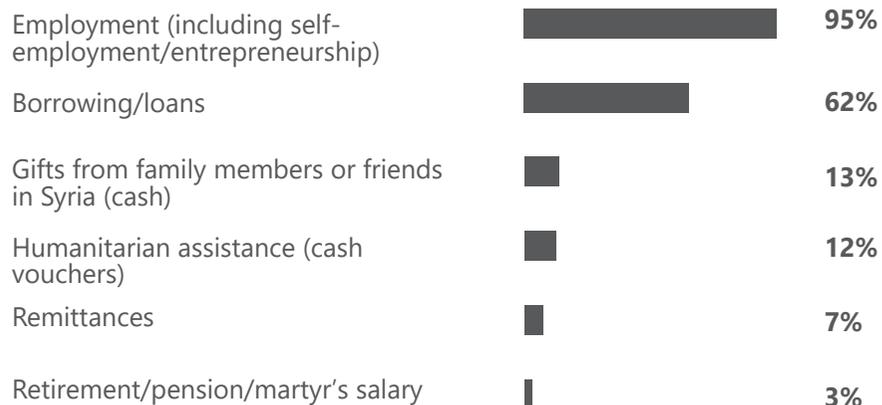
Most common barriers to accessing electricity^{8,•}

1	Rationing of electricity by local authorities		84%
2	Solar panels too expensive		83%
3	Electricity from the community generator is too expensive		69%
4	Car batteries too expensive		57%
5	Private generators too expensive		46%

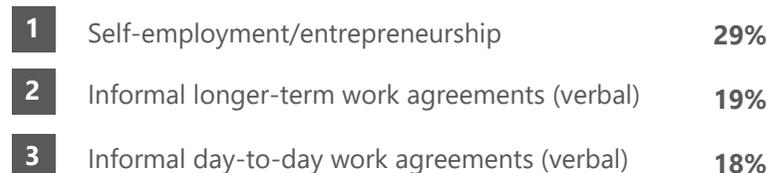
[•] Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection

INCOME SOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT

Sources of income in the month prior to data collection^{8, >}

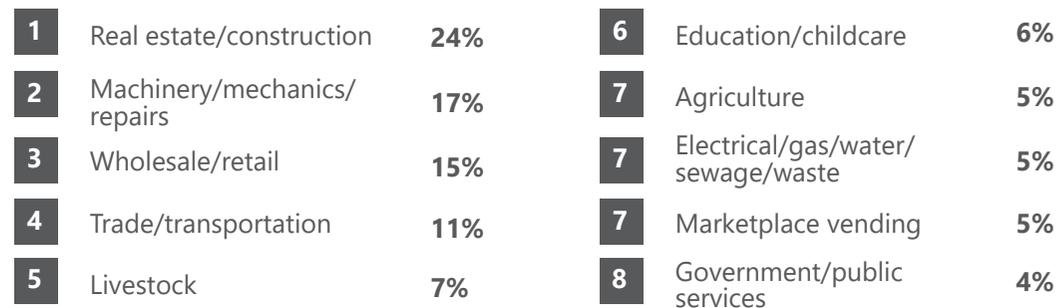


Most common primary source of income for households^{10, >, ■}



Average number of adults per households who are:	
Employed	1.4
Not in employment	2.2
Not employed and looking for a job (unemployed) ¹¹	0.4

Most common employment sectors (by % of households where employment is a source of income [95%])^{8, >, ■}



31% of households reported self-employment/entrepreneurship as a source of income[■]

4% of households where informal day-to-day work was the only income source[■]

INCOME AND EXPENSES >

Average monthly income for a family of 6 members ¹²	Average monthly expense for a family of 6 members ¹³	Average monthly deficit for a family of 6 members
1,044,463 SYP	1,369,131 SYP	-324,668 SYP

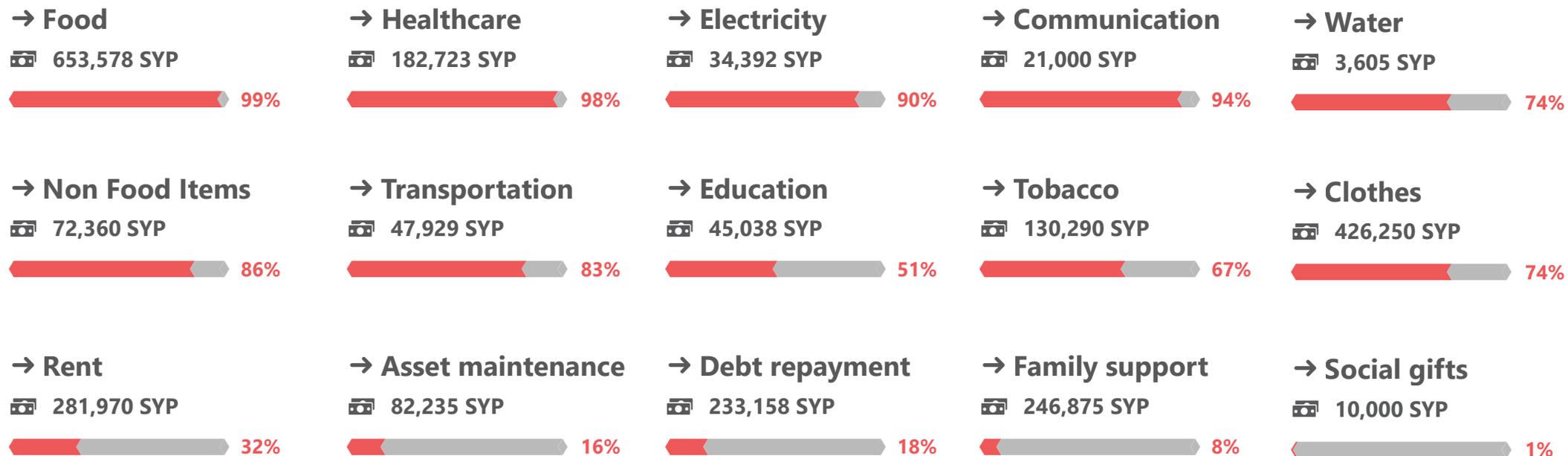
> Aligns with the Syria analytical framework from the Durable Solutions Platform

■ Refers to the current situation at the time of data collection

INCOME AND EXPENSES

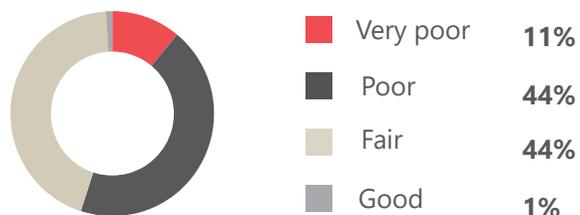
 Average monthly expense for households who had expenses in the following categories

 Share of households who spent money on the expense category



ABILITY TO MEET BASIC NEEDS

Households' perceived ability to meet basic needs  



Change in the households' ability to meet basic needs over the last three months

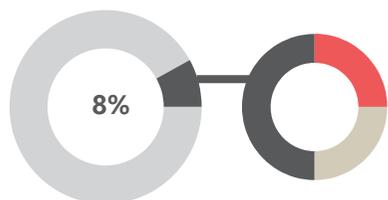


 Aligns with the Syria analytical framework from the Durable Solutions Platform

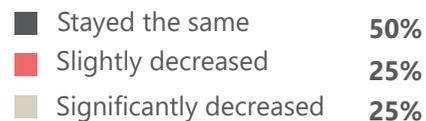
 Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection

ABILITY TO MEET BASIC NEEDS

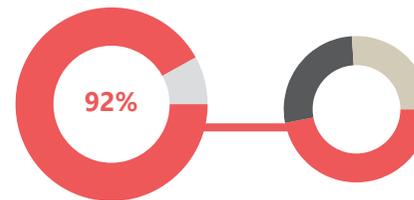
% of households with savings ■



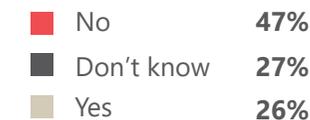
Changes in savings ●, ▼



% of households in debt ■



% of households able to repay their debt in 6 months ▼



Most common barriers to meeting basic needs (as % of households who experienced barriers [99%]) ▶, ■

- 1** The wage is not commensurate with the rising prices **90%**
- 2** Lack of employment opportunities **66%**
- 3** Lack of skills for a better paying job **52%**

Most common coping strategies adopted to meet basic needs (as % of households who applied coping strategies [94%]) ▶, ●

- 1** Borrowing money **78%**
- 2** Decreasing non-food expenditures (health, education, etc.) **57%**
- 3** Purchasing items on credit **45%**
- 4** Selling household assets/goods (furniture, TV, jewellery etc.) **26%**
- 5** Sending children below 15 to work **17%**

Average % of monthly income spent on debt repayment ⁹
24%
Average expenditure on debt repayment as a % of total household expenditure ⁹
11%

81% of households whose monthly income was lower than their estimated monthly expenses ▶

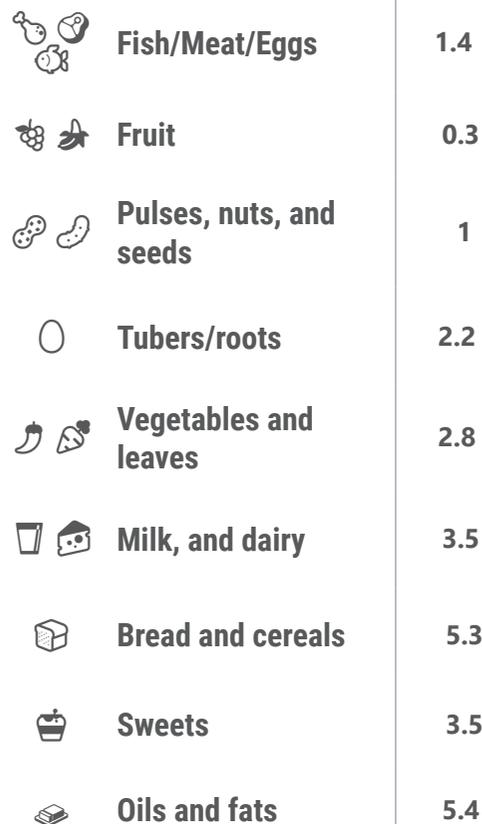
10% of households whose monthly income would not cover minimum expenses (as estimated by the SMEB)¹⁴, ▶

▶ Aligns with the Syria analytical framework from the Durable Solutions Platform
■ Refers to the current situation at the time of data collection

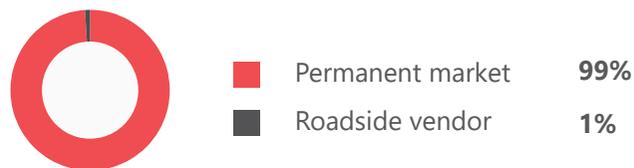
● Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection

FOOD ACCESS AND CONSUMPTION

Average number of days food groups were consumed by households in the 7 days prior to data collection

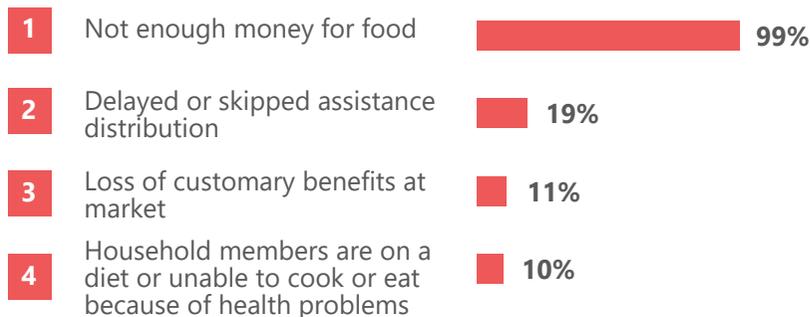


Most common source of food



91% of households who experienced issues with accessing sufficient quantities and quality of food

Barriers to accessing sufficient quantities and quality of food (by % of households who experienced barriers [91%])⁸



11% of households reporting perceiving that at least one member had lost weight due to insufficient food access

Average % of monthly income spent on food ⁹	62%
Average expenditure on food as a % of total household expenditure ⁹	43%
Average monthly food expenditure per person in a household	94,984 SYP
% of households whose monthly food expenditure is more than 50% of their total expenditure	30%

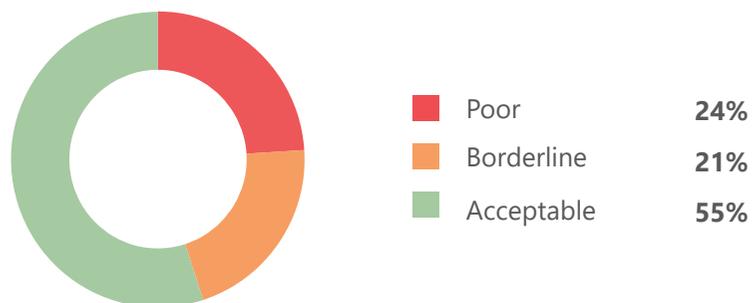
36% of households who did not consume any eggs, meat or fish in the 7 days prior to data collection

80% of households who did not consume any fruit in the 7 days prior to data collection

■ Refers to the current situation at the time of data collection
● Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection

FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE (FCS)¹⁵

Food Consumption Score (by % of households)



50% of households with children with **poor** or **borderline** food consumption ▼

FCS Interpretation¹⁵

Poor food consumption (score between 0-28): This category includes households that are not consuming staples and vegetables every day and never or very seldom consume protein-rich food such as meat and dairy.

Borderline food consumption (score between 28.5-42): This category includes households that are consuming staples and vegetables every day, accompanied by oils and pulses a few times a week.

Acceptable food consumption (score >42): This category includes households that are consuming staples and vegetables every day, frequently accompanied by oils and pulses and occasionally meat, fish and dairy.

COPING STRATEGIES

7.4 Average reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI) in ar-Raqqa city

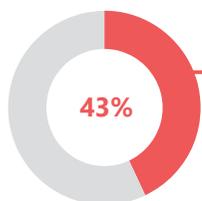
The rCSI is a relative score to measure the frequency and severity of food-related negative coping mechanisms adopted by households to cover their needs. A decrease in score suggests an amelioration in food security. Based on the Syria 2021 Inter-Sector Severity Model, the thresholds for the Reduced Coping Strategies Index are: (1) None/Minimal (rCSI= 0-2), (2) Stress (rCSI = 3-6), (3) Severe (rCSI = 7-11), (4) Extreme (rCSI = 12-19), (5) Catastrophic (rCSI>19).¹⁹ Thus, results indicate a severe level of coping in Ar-Raqqa city.

Coping strategies (CS) in the 7 days prior to data collection (for households who experienced barriers in accessing sufficient food [91%])

	Average #days per week CS was applied	% of households who applied CS
Relied on less preferred/less expensive food	4	98%
Borrowed food or relied on help from friends	0.2	10%
Reduced the portion size of meals at meal time	0.9	38%
Reduced the number of meals eaten per day	1.6	56%
Restricted the consumption by adults in order for young children to eat	0.2	20%
At least one member of the household spent a whole day without eating	0.1	3%

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

% of households with unmet health needs¹⁶



Most common inaccessible health treatments (by % of households with unmet health needs [43%])^{8,16}

1	Medicines or other commodities	73%
2	Treatment for chronic diseases	43%
3	Treatment for parasitic infections	18%
4	Paediatric consultations	16%
5	General and/or specialist surgical services	14%

Most common inaccessible types of medicine (by % of households with unmet health needs related to medicines and other commodities [73%])^{8,16}

1	Painkillers/analgesics	59%
2	Medications for hypertension/heart conditions	44%
3	Antibiotics	41%
4	Medication for parasitic infections (such as diarrhoea)	31%
5	Medication for mental health conditions and/or epilepsy	22%

97% of households who experienced issues with accessing healthcare¹⁶

Most common barriers to accessing healthcare (by % of households)^{8,16}

1	Cannot afford price of medicines	95%
2	Cannot afford treatment costs	89%
3	Health facilities overcrowded and/or long waiting times	21%

Most common coping strategies (by % of host community households with unmet health needs [43%])^{8,16}

1	Going to a pharmacy instead of a clinic	89%
2	Substituting prescribed medication for herbal medicine	36%
3	Foregoing non-essential treatment	30%

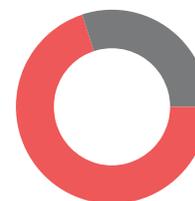
Average % of monthly income spent on healthcare¹³

16%

Average expenditure on health care as a % of total household expenditure¹³

12%

Households with at least one member who showed signs of psychological distress¹⁶



Yes	70%
No	30%

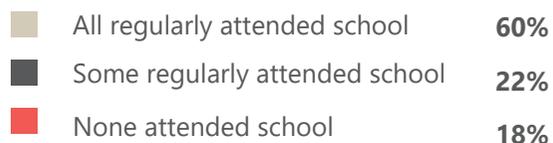
▶ Aligns with the Syria analytical framework from the Durable Solutions Platform
 ● Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection

▼ Findings are not representative

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

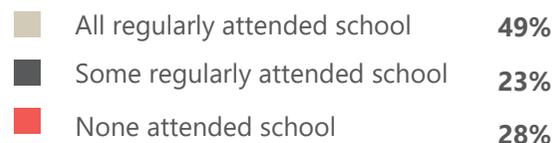
School attendance for children aged 6-11

(by % of households with school-aged children (6-11))[▼]



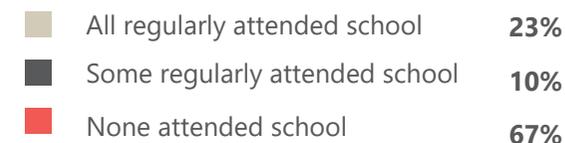
School attendance for children aged 12-14

(by % of households with school-aged children (12-14))[▼]



School attendance for children aged 15-17

(by % of households with school-aged children (15-17))[▼]



Most commonly reported barriers to accessing education in the month prior to data collection (by % of households where at least one of the children did not regularly attend school [74%])^{8,▼}

- 1 Children have to work 38%
- 2 Unable to afford learning material and/or pay for school fees 37%
- 3 Social issues 19%

Most commonly reported challenges faced by school-aged children while attending school (by % of households where at least one of the children attended school [62%])^{8,▼,●}

- 1 Quality of available education is poor/perceived to be poor 52%
- 2 School lacks trained teachers 33%
- 3 Classes are overcrowded 23%

Average % of monthly income spent on education ⁹	5%
Average expenditure on education as a % of total household expenditure ⁹	3%

[▼] Findings are not representative

[●] Refers to the situation in the 3 months prior to data collection

NOTES ON ANALYSIS

For some indicators, a reduced sample of households answered the question as a result of a skip logic in the questionnaire. In some of these cases, the reduced sample of households resulted in findings that are not representative with a 95% confidence level and 10% margin of error, indicated with the symbol above. Indicators which are not representative are indicated throughout the Situation Overview with the icon ▼.

The complete multi-sectoral descriptive analysis can be accessed [online](#) or can be downloaded as an [excel file](#). All HSOS products remain accessible on the [REACH Resource Centre](#).

FOOTNOTES

1. The Humanitarian Situation Overview Syria (HSOS) project comprises regular multi-sectoral assessments reviewing information on humanitarian needs and conditions across accessible areas in northern Syria. The HSOS monthly KI assessments can be found [here](#).

2. Findings from a 4W review in January 2022 indicated that roughly 60% of the out of camp response activities in NES are based in urban locations.

3. The Syria Analytical Framework is a Syria-specific analytical tool developed by the Durable Solutions Platform to guide the incorporation of a durable solutions lens into research and tool design.

4. IDPs are defined as individuals or groups of people who have left their homes or places of habitual residence and have settled in the assessed city after 2011, as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, or violations of human rights.

5. Host populations are defined as individuals or groups of people who currently reside in their community of origin, or community of permanent residence prior to 2011. This includes populations that were never displaced as well as previously displaced populations that have returned to their community of origin (defined as returnees).

6. Areas consistently identified as security concerns, including check points, their surroundings, or military presence, were not covered. Out of the 23 residential neighbourhoods, 1 was not assessed due to security concerns. Consequently, the remaining 22 neighbourhoods were assessed.

7. Households were asked to select a first, second, and third highest priority need. The overall priority need refers to the frequency a need was selected among all three categories (first, second or third highest priority need).

8. Respondents could select multiple answers, thus findings might exceed 100%.

9. Computed for households who had this particular expense in the 30 days prior to data collection.

10. Longer-term informal employment is defined as employment with a verbal agreement whose duration is more than 1 month. Short-term informal employment is defined as employment with a verbal agreement whose duration is less than 1 month.

11. Calculated for households where employment is a source of income.

12. Computed as the mean of (household income/number of household members)*6.

13. Computed as the mean of (household expense/number of household members)*6.

14. Computed by comparing (household income/number of household members) to (1,092,776 SYP/6), where 1,092,776 is the median value of the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) for a family of 6 in Ar-Raqqa governorate, from the May 2023 Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI). In May 2023, the median SMEB value was 1,092,776 SYP in the Governorate of Ar-Raqqa and 1,070,346 SYP in NES.

15. The FCS is a composite score based on dietary, diversity, food frequency, and relative nutritional importance of different food groups consumed by a household throughout 7 days. Refer to: The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). (May 2014). WFP Food Consumption Score - Technical Guidance Sheet. Retrieved from: wfp.org

16. Unmet health needs refer to anyone in the household who needed or wanted to access healthcare (including medicines) but could not access it.

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