

Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI)

June, 2023

Northeast Syria

KEY MESSAGES

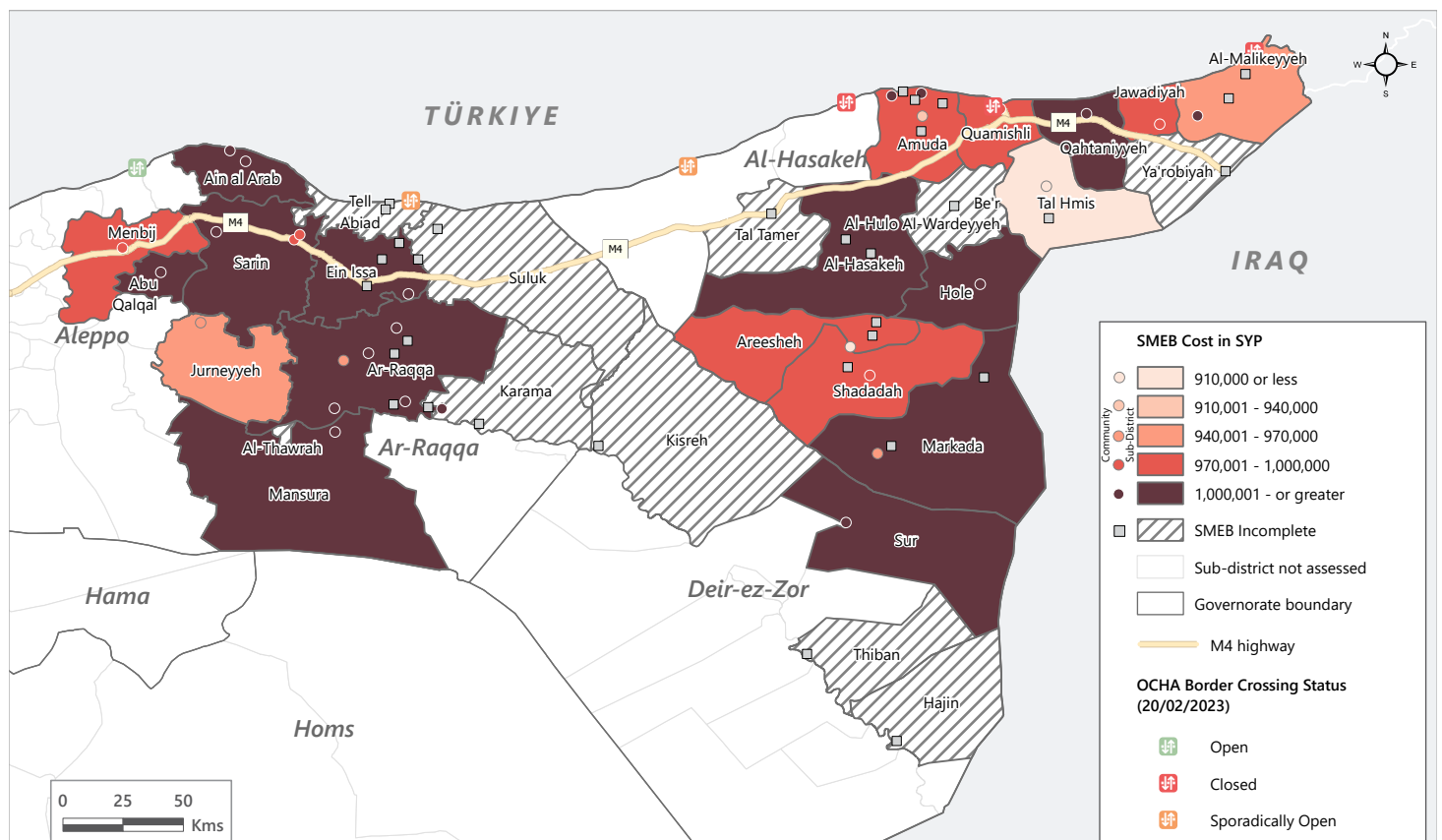
Note that this factsheet is based on data collected from 5th-12th June 2023 following the re-opening of the Fishkhabour/Semalka which had been closed from 11th of May to 5th of June 2023¹.

- Some effect of the border closure was observed in the June 2023 JMMI data. Prices on some imported goods had increased and a higher percentage of vendors reported challenges with supply due to border closure in June compared to May 2023.
- The price of monitored fresh vegetables continued to decline in June 2023 related to the onset of the harvest season. Similarly, the price of flour declined.
- The SMEB price in USD declined by 7% compared to a 1% decline in May. This was mostly caused by depreciation; the SYP increased 6.4% against the USD.
- Monitored indicators of market functionality, including price inflation and supply unable to meet demand, declined in Deir-ez-Zor, related to a worsening security context.

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

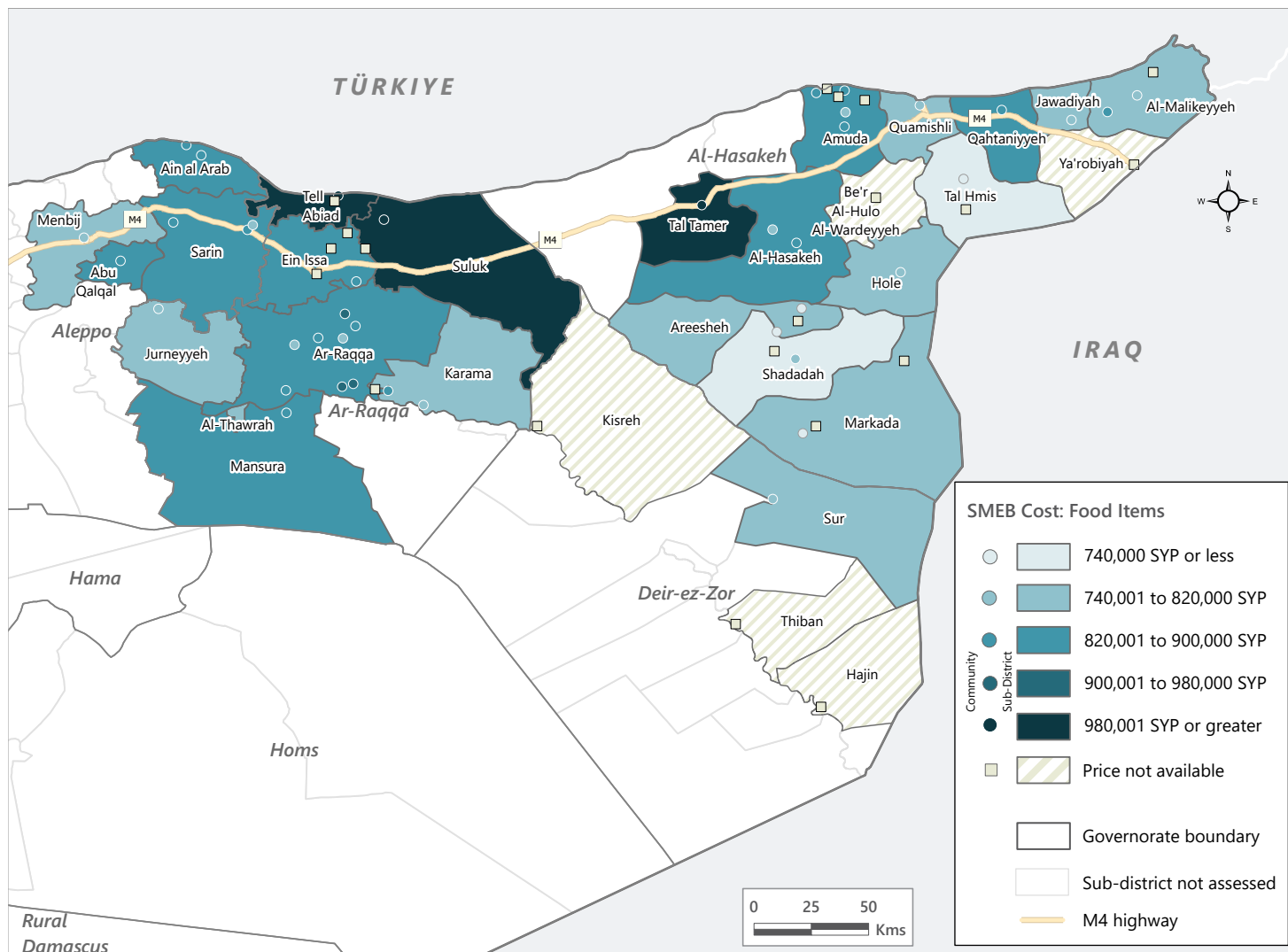
To inform humanitarian cash programming, the Northeast of Syria (NES) Cash Working Group (CWG), in partnership with local and international NGOs, conducts a monthly Joint Market Monitoring Initiative in Northern Syria. The exercise assesses the availability and prices of 36 basic commodities that are typically sold in markets and consumed by the average Syrian household, including food, water and non-food items e.g., fuel, and cell phone data. Of these, 18 items comprise the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), which represents the minimum, culturally adjusted items required to support a 6-person household for a month.

Median SMEB price per sub-district, SYP*



*See [Annex 1](#) for SMEB values as well as one and six month price trends per sub-district.

Cost of SMEB food component by sub-districts and communities



SMEB Contents

Food	
Bread	37 kg
Bulgur	15 kg
Chicken	6 kg
Eggs	6 kg
Ghee (kg) / veg. oil (L)	7 kg/L
Red lentils	15 kg
Rice	19 kg
Salt	1 kg
Sugar	5 kg
Tomato paste	6 kg
Vegetables	12 kg

Hygiene (NFI)

Bathing soap	12 bars
Laundry/dish soap	3 kg
Toothpaste	200 g
Sanitary pads	4 packs of 10

Other

Cooking fuel	25 L
Water trucking	4500 L
Phone data	1 GB
"Float"/other costs	7.5% of total

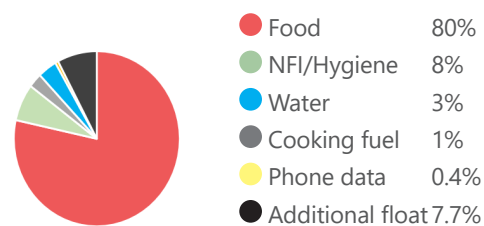
The SMEB Total is the median cost of the minimum, culturally adjusted items required to support a 6-person household for a month.

IN THIS FACTSHEET

As the JMMI generates a large amount of data, this factsheet is limited to a snapshot of key trends. [Annex 1 and 2](#) show prices and percentage changes in SMEB values across assessed sub-districts as well as for individual monitored item prices.

For more detailed data, consult the [dataset](#) and online [dashboard](#). The dashboard allows users to navigate more easily and draw geographical and temporal comparisons across currencies.

NES SMEB Composition*



June 2023 Data Collection

- 8 Supporting partners
- 4 Governorates
- 10 Districts
- 24 Sub-districts
- 54 Communities
- 1,540 Shops (vendor KIs)

* Due to rounding figures may not total 100%

Border Closure May-June 2023

The Semalka border crossing closed for all movement (humanitarian staff and supplies) from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) on 11th of May and for movements of staff from NES to KRI on 17th of May 2023. The border was re-opened on 5th of June 2023².

Millions of people depend on humanitarian assistance, medicines and goods including sugar and cement imported from Iraq across the crossing. Vegetables are also imported from Iraq outside of harvest seasons.³ Furthermore, it is a crucial crossing for people living in NES requiring life-saving medical treatment unavailable in NES. Finally, the “hawalas” – a traditional money transfer system functioning as NES’ money exchange and transfer system – are dependent on sufficient volumes of USD imported from Iraq.⁴

JMMI & Border Closure Effects on Markets

The actual effect of the border closure of the Fishkhabour/Semalka crossing may not have been captured by the JMMI. This is because the crossing was closed from KRI to NES on 11th of May and completely closed in both directions on the 17th of May until the 5th of June 2023. The JMMI data collection took place 8-15th of May, whilst the June data collection was from the 5-12th of June.

Please note, that REACH is preparing a more in-depth output on the effects of border closures on markets in NES.

Some of the effects captured in the JMMI are summarised here:

- 1. May 2023 Price and Availability effects** - Some imported goods appeared to show price and unavailability increases in May 2023, particularly sugar. Following discussions with JMMI partners, we have learned that it is likely that vendors already were experiencing supply challenges and price increases immediately after the border closure from KRI to NES.⁵
- 2. Construction materials** - These are typically imported from Iraq and therefore affected by a closure of the Semalka border crossing. The JMMI identified some price increases between April (before the closure) and June 2023. The price of concrete bricks increased by 13%, steel bars by 11%, nails by 25%, and wooden doors by 20%. Similarly, the percentage of vendors reporting unavailability of some construction items, including ropes, iron bars, and nails increased.
- 3. NFIs** – Some NFIs experienced price increases, including laundry soap and toothpaste. The Pharmacists Union had raised concerns on 1st of June that stocks of infant formula were running out in the next 10 days.⁶ However, the border was re-opened shortly after and no effect was observed in the JMMI.
- 4. Market Functionality** - More vendors reported that border closures were a challenge to functioning than in May 2023, particularly in Al-Hasakeh (20% compared to 8% in May) and Ar-Raqqa (17% compared to 7% in May). The vendors’ supplies were less affected by the border closure in Aleppo and Deir-Ez-Zor according to the JMMI. Furthermore, the REACH team noted that most vendors were able to sell alternatives if imported goods were not available.
- 5. Unavailability of goods** – The percentage of vendors reporting that some imported goods were unavailable also increased, including some construction materials, manually refined kerosene and LP gas.
- 6. Time until out of stock** - More vendors reported that their stock would run out in 1-7 days in June (62%) compared to May (54%), likely reflecting the effects of the border closure.



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

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

NES SMEB

117 USD ▼-7%
1,037,364 SYP ▼-0.8%

NES SMEB FOOD ITEMS

91 USD ▼ 8.7%
806,939 SYP ▼ -2.8%

NES EXCHANGE RATE

USD/SYP
8,888 SYP▲ +6%

Bulk Food

Flour prices declined by 15% regionally, with particular declines in Deir-Ez-Zor (21%). This is related to the onset of the wheat harvest season. In parallel, the prices of bread declined across governorates (29%), particularly in Deir-Ez-Zor (80%) and Aleppo (70%). Bread prices are, however, also influenced by the availability of subsidised bread. Flour prices are expected to decline/remains subdued for the next months due to the ongoing local and global harvest which are expected to be more fruitful than in 2022 as well as the extension of the Black Grain Initiative that aimed to ensure continued provision of agricultural products from Ukraine amidst the Russia-Ukraine Conflict.⁷

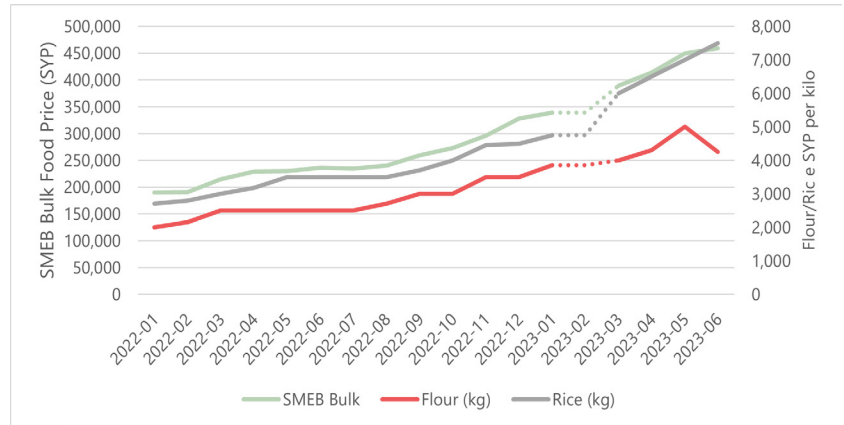
The price of rice increased in Al-Hasakeh (11%) and Aleppo (5%), whilst it declined in Deir-Ez-Zor (-8%) and Ar-Raqqa (-11%). The price increases have been linked to the border closure, whilst Deir-Ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa price declines are related to the availability of lower-quality rice products.

Fresh Produce

The price of eggs increased by 11% across governorates, although the price of chicken declined slightly (-8%). The REACH field team linked the increase in the price of eggs to the increase in the prices of chicken feed. Furthermore, there are reports of a viral poultry disease, called Newcastle, spreading in Northern Syria which is likely to influence poultry and egg prices.⁸

The price of milk increased by 16% from May to June. Furthermore, the percentage of vendors reporting unavailability of milk increased from 19% to 24% from May to June 2023. A decline in milk prices was expected this summer due to a more fruitful harvest which led farmers to expect lower prices of livestock fodder. Some farmers attributed the milk unavailability and price increase to higher temperatures causing decreased amounts of milk as well as years of drought and lack of fodder influencing the farmers' herd sizes.⁹

SMEB Bulk food prices, 2022-2023, SYP*



SMEB Chicken & Egg prices, 2022-23, SYP*



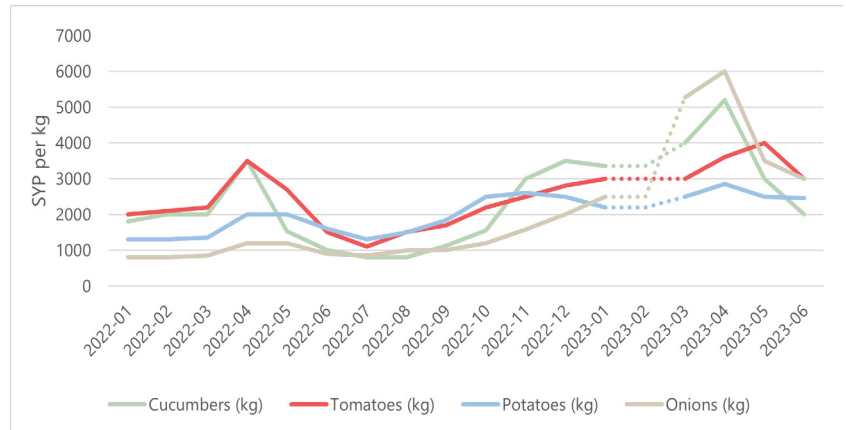
* The dotted line represents the month of February when no data was collected due to the earthquake.

Fruits and Vegetables

The prices of monitored vegetables continued to decline for the second month in a row. Tomatoes experienced a price decline for the first time this year related to a delayed tomato harvest this year. This also influenced the local production of tomato paste which also underwent the first price decline this year (-5%).

The number of vendors reporting unavailability of fruits and vegetables also went down reflecting the harvest season. Despite the price declines over the past two months, monitored vegetables remain much more costly than during the harvest season last year (see textbox). Furthermore, although the current harvest season is suspected to be more productive than the previous, actors have raised concerns that farmers will face financial losses nevertheless due to high production costs and increased transportation fees, currency depreciation, supply challenges and import restrictions.¹⁰

SMEB Vegetables per kilo, 2022-23, SYP*



% Increase since June 2022

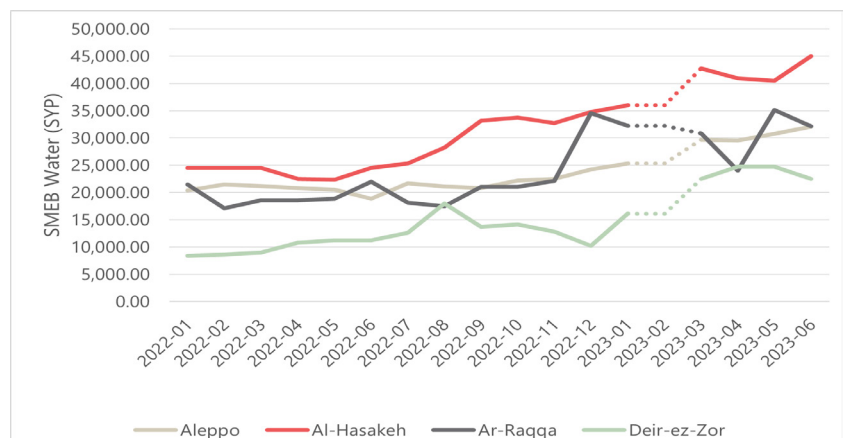
- **Onions** – 70% increase
- **Potatoes** – 35% increase
- **Cucumbers** – 50% increase
- **Tomatoes** – 50% increase

Water

Water trucking prices increased regionally by 3% between May and June 2023, with price increases in Al-Hasakeh (+10%) and Aleppo (+4%) and price reductions in Ar-Raqqa (-8%) and Deir-Ez-Zor (-9%). Price increases are expected during summers due to high temperatures, and thus, lower water levels.¹¹ Furthermore, fuel prices continued to increase which affected the costs of trucked water.

The slight price decline in Deir-Ez-Zor in June is likely related to improvements in the water network in June. According to REACH HSOS¹², KIs in more communities reported reliance on the piped network in June 2023 (21% compared to 4% in May) and KIs in more communities reported water in the piped network nearly every day (5-7 days a week) in June than May (21% compared to 11% in May 2023).¹³

SMEB Water Trucking prices, 2021-2023, SYP*



Fuel

The price of LP gas did not change regionally, however, underwent a 55% price decline in Deir-Ez-Zor. According to the REACH field team, this is linked to a local distribution that took place there.

The unavailability of manually refined kerosene increased from 32% to 44% of surveyed vendors. This is related to the local authorities controlling the amount flowing to licensed stations. The price of kerosene has increased in Ar-Raqqa (185%), Aleppo (313%), and Deir-ez-Zor (36%) since April. In Hasakeh, a 20% price increase was recorded from May to June, following a price decline from April to May. It is important to note that some price changes may also reflect a shift in the availability of subsidised vs unsubsidised kerosene.

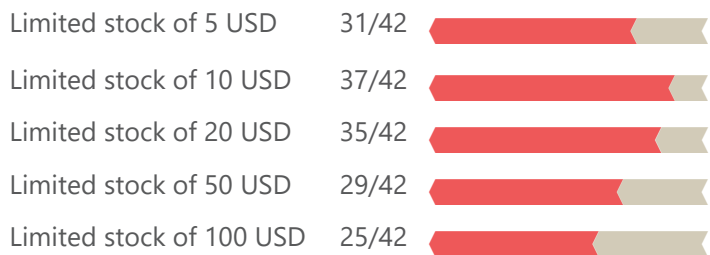
* The dotted line represents the month of February when no data was collected due to the earthquake.

LIQUIDITY ISSUES

Availability of USD denominations remained a challenge across NES. Limited stock of at least 1 USD denomination has throughout the past months been close to 100% of surveyed vendors. Thus, even if the border closure worsened this situation, it was not captured in the data, as close to 100% of vendors continued to report limited stock of at least 1 USD denomination. The limited availability of USD denominations is of concern as it can impact MPCA cash distributions as well as the ability of households to receive cash in remittances from abroad.

Number of informal exchange vendors reporting limited stock of USD notes

Al-Hasakeh (42 vendors)



Aleppo (25 vendors)



Ar-Raqqa (32 vendors)



Deir-Ez Zor (3 vendors)



SUPPLY CHALLENGES

Price inflation remained the most commonly reported challenge by vendors (71%) followed by **border closure** (14%) and **supply that cannot meet demand** (13%).

The effects of the closure were reported in Ar-Raqqa and Al-Hasakeh, where an increased number of vendors reported that border closures were a challenge to functioning. No vendors reported border closures as a challenge to functioning in Deir-Ez-Zor and only 2% of surveyed vendors reported it in Aleppo. This may be explained by Aleppo and Deir-Ez-Zor governorates not relying on imported goods from Iraq to the same extent as Ar-Raqqa and Al-Hasakeh.

Fewer vendors reported that **supply could not meet demand** in June 2023 (13% compared to 17% in May 2023). This is linked to the increased availability of local products (vegetables and fruits due to the harvest season) as well as the re-opening of the Semalka border crossing.¹⁴

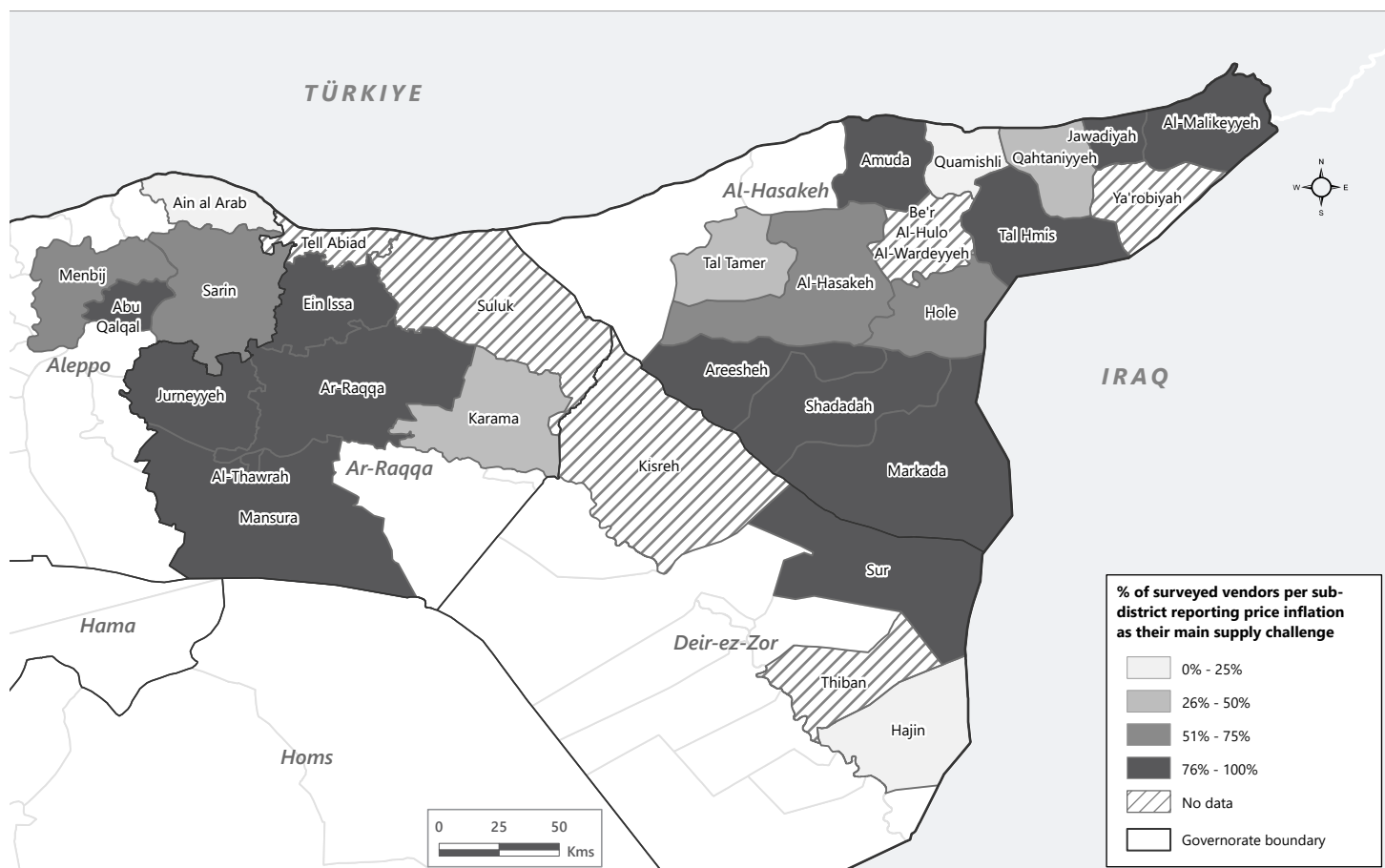
Aleppo did not report any notable changes in the type of challenges reported by vendors. However, Deir-Ez-Zor recorded a worsening market functionality, reflected in more vendors reporting at least 1 issue (94% compared to 76% in May). Particularly, an increase in price inflation (73% in May, 94% in June) and supply unable to meet demand (24% to 94% increase). The worsening market functionality in Deir-Ez-Zor in June 2023 has been linked to a worsening security situation affecting the transport of goods into Deir-Ez-Zor¹⁵. Similarly, Deir-Ez-Zor relies on goods from other governorates which causes the prices of goods to be heavily influenced by fuel prices.

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

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

	AREA	REPORTED %
PRICE INFLATION	NES	71%
	NE Aleppo	49%
	Al-Hasakeh	74%
	Ar-Raqqa	79%
	Deir-Ez-Zor	94%
BORDER CROSSING CLOSED	NES	14%
	NE Aleppo	2%
	Al-Hasakeh	20%
	Ar-Raqqa	17%
	Deir-Ez-Zor	0%
SUPPLY COULD NOT MEET DEMAND	NES	13%
	NE Aleppo	3%
	Al-Hasakeh	18%
	Ar-Raqqa	9%
	Deir-Ez-Zor	94%
SUPPLIER LIMITED SUPPLY	NES	10%
	NE Aleppo	10%
	Al-Hasakeh	14%
	Ar-Raqqa	5%
	Deir-Ez-Zor	6%

Vendors reporting price inflation as their main supply challenge



* Multiple choice question and therefore percentages may not equal 100%. See the summary page of the [dataset](#) for percentages of all reported supply challenges per governorate.

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

In order to be included in the JMMI, markets must be permanent in nature, large enough to support at least two wholesalers, and diverse enough to provide a sufficient variety of goods and commodities. Additionally, the shops surveyed within each market must be housed in permanent structures and must sell certain items to be eligible for inclusion. Median prices at each higher administrative level of aggregation (district, governorate, region) are calculated by taking the medians from sub-district level prices. Community and sub-district level prices are both drawn from the median prices collected from vendors.

LIMITATIONS

All JMMI data is only indicative of the specific time frame within which it was collected, and trend lines in graphs may not be continuous where data is missing. Usually, data is collected during the first Monday-to-Monday of each month.

The JMMI data collection tool requires enumerators to record the cheapest available price for each item, but does not require a specific brand, as brand availability may vary. Therefore, price comparisons across regions may be based on slight variants of the same product. Non-food items (NFIs) are particularly challenging to standardise 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 organisations work together to collect market data. Participating organisations train their enumerators on the JMMI methodology and data collection tools using standard training materials developed by REACH, who is then responsible for processing the data.

REACH

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts.

The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis. All activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms.

For more information about REACH, please contact the REACH JMMI focal point, Cecilia Hoegfeldt, at cecilia.hoegfeldt@impact-initiatives.org or visit the [REACH Syria Resource Centre](http://REACH_Syria_Resource_Centre).



Annex 1: Median SMEB price per sub-district

	SMEB SYP*	1 month change	6 month change	SMEB USD*
Northeast Syria SMEB				
Aleppo	1,018,702	-3%	37%	115
Abu Qalqal	1,046,559	-6%	41%	119
Ain al Arab	1,015,137	4%	39%	115
Menbij	972,025	-9%	NA	109
Sarin	1,022,266	0%	38%	116
Al-Hasakeh	1,009,264	0%	31%	114
Al-Hasakeh	1,058,072	-3%	34%	119
Areesheh	971,917	7%	46%	110
Hole	1,028,169	2%	45%	116
Markada	1,047,494	5%	29%	118
Quamishli	990,359	-12%	28%	111
Shadadah	976,154	0%	27%	108
Al-Malikeyyeh**	942,378	-11%	18%	106
Amuda**	984,724	NA	32%	111
Jawadiyah**	982,859	3%	41%	110
Qahtaniyyeh**	1,068,583	NA	51%	119
Tal Hmis**	906,527	NA	27%	102
Tal Tamer**	NA	NA	NA	NA
Ar-Raqqa	1,099,557	1%	36%	124
Ar-Raqqa	1,150,774	5%	42%	130
Ein Issa	1,231,257	12%	36%	138
Mansura	1,048,340	NA	NA	118
Al-Thawrah**	NA	NA	NA	NA
Jurneyyeh**	942,025	NA	57%	106
Deir-ez-Zor	1,065,952	-7%	37%	120
Sur	1,065,952	-3%	38%	120
Hajin**	NA	NA	NA	NA

* USD values are calculated as per the informal exchange rate recorded in the same geographical area.

** For these sub-districts, water trucking prices were not available and are not included in the SMEB price.

Annex 2: Price of SMEB items in NES

Item	Unit*	Price SYP**	1 month change	6 month change	Price USD**
NWS SMEB food items		806,939	0%	0%	91
SMEB bulk food items	SMEB	459,250	2%	40%	51.67
Bulgur	1 kg	7,000	-1%	40%	0.79
Red lentils	1 kg	8,000	0%	33%	0.90
Rice	1 kg	7,500	7%	67%	0.84
Salt	500 g	1,000	0%	25%	0.11
Sugar	1 kg	8,500	0%	89%	0.96
Tomato paste	1 kg	9,500	-5%	17%	1.07
SMEB vegetables	SMEB	42,000	-2%	20%	4.73
Tomatoes	1 kg	3,000	-25%	7%	0.34
Potatoes	1 kg	2,463	-2%	-2%	0.28
Cucumbers	1 kg	3,000	-14%	50%	0.34
Onions	1 kg	2,000	-33%	-43%	0.23
SMEB cooking oils	SMEB	87,500	4%	25%	9.85
Ghee	1 kg	13,000	8%	30%	1.46
Vegetable oil	1 L	12,000	-2%	20%	1.35
Non-veg perishables					
Bread	8 pc	357	-29%	-11%	0.04
Chicken	1 kg	15,000	-8%	67%	1.69
Eggs	30 pc	20,000	11%	43%	2.25
SMEB non-food items	SMEB	84,705	5%	51%	-
Bathing soap	1 pc	3,000	0%	50%	0.34
Sanitary pads	10 pc	3,000	-10%	20%	0.34
Toothpaste	100 g	5,000	10%	56%	0.56
Laundry powder	1 kg	9,000	19%	57%	1.01
Dish soap	1 L	8,250	10%	72%	0.93
SMEB cooking fuels	SMEB	8,750	-4%	5%	0.98
Kerosene (manually refined)	1 L	1,500	-20%	-17%	0.17
LP gas	1 L	400	0%	0%	0.05
SMEB water trucking	SMEB	33,429	3%	49%	3.76
Water trucking (1000 L)	1 m3	7,429	3%	49%	0.84
Other					
Phone data	1 gb	3,700	0%	24%	0.42

* The SMEB unit refers to the current SMEB allocation of the item, as outlined on [page 2](#).

** USD values are calculated as per the informal exchange rate recorded in the same geographical area. Please see this month's JMMI dataset for informal exchange rates by area.

Endnotes

- 1 Al Monitor. (2023, May). Intra-Kurdish tensions paralyze northeast Syria's main border crossing - Al-Monitor: Independent, trusted coverage of the Middle East. <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2023/05/intra-kurdish-tensions-paralyze-northeast-syrias-main-border-crossing>; Crisis Analysis Syria. (2023). Northwest Syria Series Vol 3. Aid governance in northwest Syria — CA-SYR. <https://ca-syr.org/report/aid-governance-in-northwest-syria>
- 2 NES Forum (June, 2023), Northeast Syria Humanitarian Context and Policy Update.
- 3 Crisis Analysis Syria. (2023). Northwest Syria Series Vol 3. Aid governance in northwest Syria — CA-SYR. <https://ca-syr.org/report/aid-governance-in-northwest-syria>
- 4 Al Monitor. (2023, May). Intra-Kurdish tensions paralyze northeast Syria's main border crossing - Al-Monitor: Independent, trusted coverage of the Middle East. <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2023/05/intra-kurdish-tensions-paralyze-northeast-syrias-main-border-crossing>; Crisis Analysis Syria. (2023).
- 5 North Press Agency (2023, May). "Semalka's closure was unilateral decision by KRG – AANES" <https://npasyria.com/en/97843/>
- 6 Crisis Analysis Syria. (2023). Northwest Syria Series Vol 3. Aid governance in northwest Syria — CA-SYR. <https://ca-syr.org/report/aid-governance-in-northwest-syria>
- 7 World Food Programme (July, 2023) - Syria Market Price Watch Bulletin May 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/wfp-syria-market-price-watch-bulletin-may-2023>
- 8 North Press Agency. (2023b, July). Deadly disease kills 72,000 chickens in north Syria. <https://npasyria.com/en/99759/>
- 9 North Press Agency. (2023a, May). Residents of Raqqa are unable to buy dairy products. What does dehydration have to do with it? - North press agency | North Press Agency. <https://npasyria.com/151802/>
- 10 Crisis Analysis Syria. (2023). Northwest Syria Series Vol 3. Aid governance in northwest Syria — CA-SYR. <https://ca-syr.org/report/aid-governance-in-northwest-syria>
- 11 People in Need (2023, March). "A Harsh Reality: Millions in Northern Syria Lack Access to Water".
- 12 REACH (2023, June). "Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria (HSOS) Trends Dashboard".
- 13 REACH (2023, June). "Humanitarian Situation Overview in Syria (HSOS) Trends Dashboard".
- 14 Syria.tv. (2023, May). Fishkhabur-Simalka crossing between Syria and Iraqi Kurdistan reopens.
- 15 Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (2023, June) "Areas of the "Autonomous Administration" in May: about 30 people killed in violence. The security chaos continues with about 25 tribal fighting, murder and 11 protests against the catastrophic living reality - Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

ABOUT REACH

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).

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