

## INTRODUCTION

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. See SMEB contents text box on the right of this page for more details.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Highlights and key findings	1
SMEB prices and map	2
Key price trends	3
SMEB food component	4
Market functionality and SMEB food component map	5
Market functionality	6
Methodology and limitations	7

### IN THIS FACTSHEET



As the JMMI generates a large amount of data, this factsheet is limited to a snapshot of key trends. For more detailed data, consult the [dataset](#) and [online dashboard](#). The dashboard is designed to allow users to navigate more easily and draw geographical and temporal comparisons across different currencies.

### March data collection

- 8 supporting partners
- 4 governorates
- 10 districts
- 28 sub-districts
- 61 communities
- 1,929 shops (vendor key informants)

### SMEB CONTENTS

<b>Food</b>			
Bread	37 kg	Rice	19 kg
Bulgur	15 kg	Salt	1 kg
Chicken	6 kg	Sugar	5 kg
Eggs	6 kg	Tomato paste	6 kg
Ghee/veg. oil	7 kg/L	Vegetables (fresh)	12 kg
Red lentils	15 kg		
<b>Hygiene (NFI)</b>			
Bathing soap	12 bars	Toothpaste	200 g
Laundry/dish soap	3 kg	Sanitary pads	4 packs of 10
<b>Other</b>			
Cooking fuel	25 L	Phone data	1 GB
Water trucking	4500 L	"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.

### Key findings

- The SMEB value increased by 22% since January. Due to the continuous rise in the exchange rate and transport fuel prices, it is likely that the value of SMEB in NES will reach one million Syrian pounds within a few months.
- Vegetables prices showed a significant increase in March (+36%), fueled by increased demand, seasonal trends, and increases in the cost of transportation.
- NES witnessed a significant increase in prices overall. The high exchange rate continues to increase the price of basic commodities. The closure of the the main border crossings in the region due to the Nowruz holiday and bad weather conditions, which reduced the production of basic key food items, are additional contributing factors to the increasing prices.
- 96% of key food items were widely available in NES.
- A significant increase in price of high quality petrol led to increases in the price of transportation fuel overall. The price of manually refined (low quality) fuels remained stable.

The accompanying data is disseminated monthly and is distributed through partners across the humanitarian community. See here for the [March 2023 dataset](#).

The data shown in this factsheet were compared with the data for January since no data were collected for the JMMI project for February after the earthquake that hit northern Syria and Türkiye. Data collection was resumed in March.

### COST OF NES SMEB<sup>1</sup>

953,544 SYP ▲ +22%

127 USD ▼ -2%

### COST OF NES FOOD BASKET<sup>1</sup>

749,600 SYP ▲ +18%

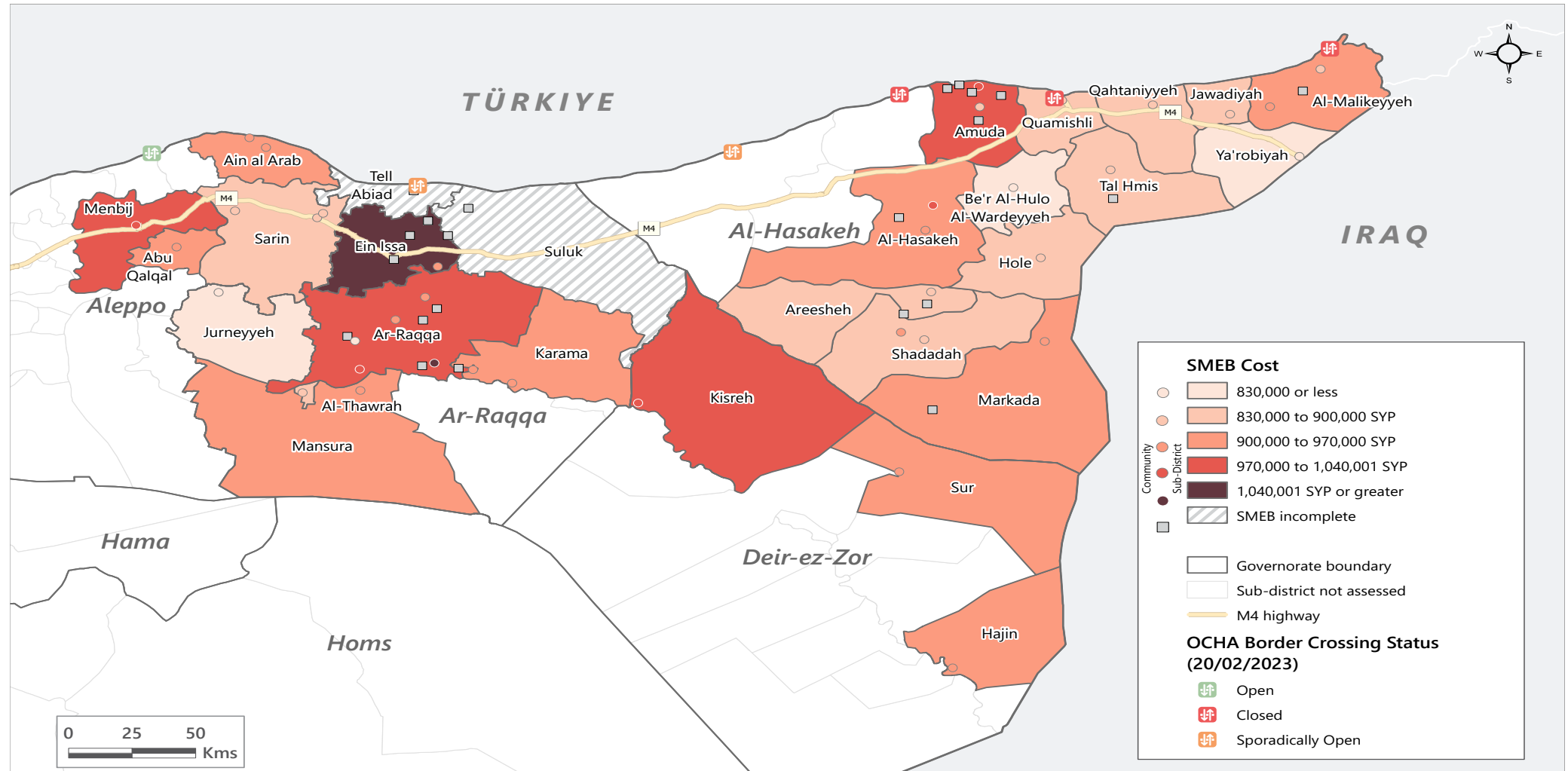
99 USD ▼ -5%

### NES EXCHANGE RATE<sup>1</sup>

USD/SYP

7,550 SYP ▲ +22%

## Median SMEB price per sub-district (SYP)

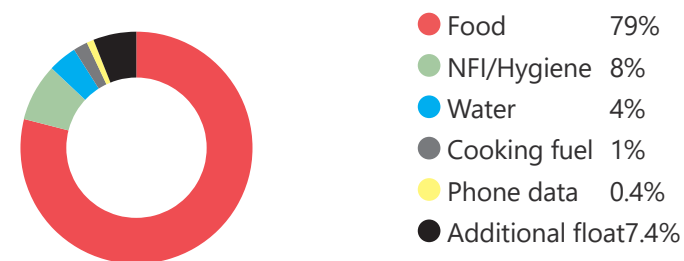


1. For price and change % calculations, only the communities within a sub-district with consistent coverage across months are included. The % change for March was calculated in comparison to January 2023 data (2 months change), as data for February was not available. This also applies to the following tables.

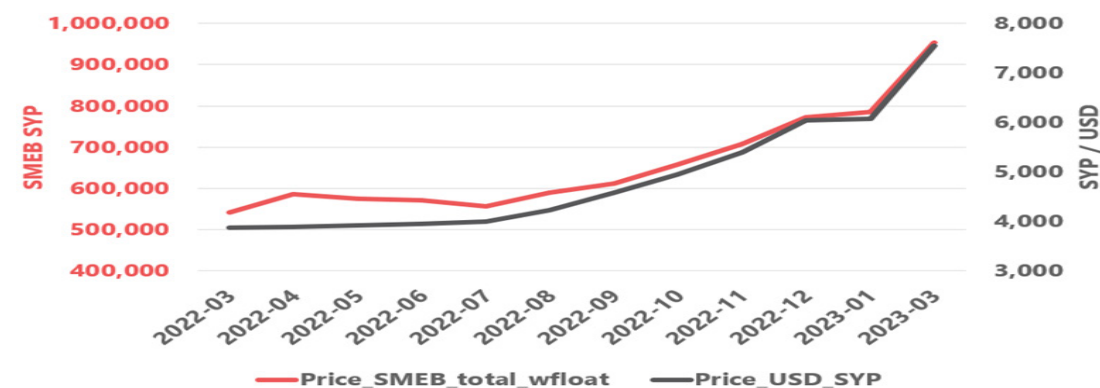
## Median SMEB price per sub-district

	SMEB SYP	2 month change	6 month change	SMEB USD <sup>2</sup>
<b>Northeast Syria (NES) SMEB<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>953,544</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>127</b>
Northeast Aleppo Governorate	934,283	20%	62%	126
Abu Qalqal	959,632	26%	64%	129
Ain al Arab	908,934	16%	57%	123
Menbij	985,077	15%	71%	133
Sarin	880,795	13%	53%	119
Al-Hasakeh Governorate	898,203	17%	47%	118
Al-Hasakeh	962,503	15%	50%	127
Al-Malikeyyeh*	912,155	13%	46%	121
Amuda*	972,875	25%	50%	128
Areeshah	879,244	29%	55%	116
Be'r Al-Hulo Al-Wardeyyeh*	797,489	NA	41%	NA
Hole	879,888	14%	45%	117
Jawadiyah*	878,060	15%	66%	118
Markada	922,240	20%	49%	126
Qahtaniyyeh*	846,128	NA	60%	111
Quamishli	899,874	17%	47%	118
Shadadah	896,532	21%	22%	117
Tal Hmis*	849,674	15%	58%	113
Ya'robriyah*	760,809	13%	47%	101
Ar-Raqqa Governorate	1,005,151	16%	49%	139
Al-Thawrah*	885,892	5%	40%	118
Ar-Raqqa	1,005,151	16%	61%	135
Ein Issa	1,093,435	18%	52%	144
Jurneyyeh*	782,354	NA	32%	NA
Karama	947,828	13%	NA	NA
Mansura*	934,625	23%	70%	125
Deir-ez-Zor Governorate	963,935	19%	57%	130
Hajin	959,261	18%	NA	130
Kisreh	991,347	22%	48%	130
Sur	963,935	32%	57%	127

## NES SMEB composition<sup>4</sup>



## USD and SYP SMEB prices vs informal exchange rate



## PRICE TRENDS

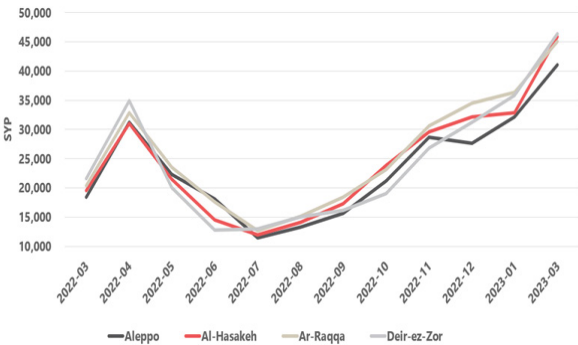
- The value of the SMEB in SYP increased by 22% in March after a stable increase since August 2022.
- The ongoing depreciation of the Syrian pound and related rise in food prices continues to fuel the populations' declining purchasing power.
- In the last six months, the exchange rate has increased by over 65%, representing the major driver of price inflation.

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

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

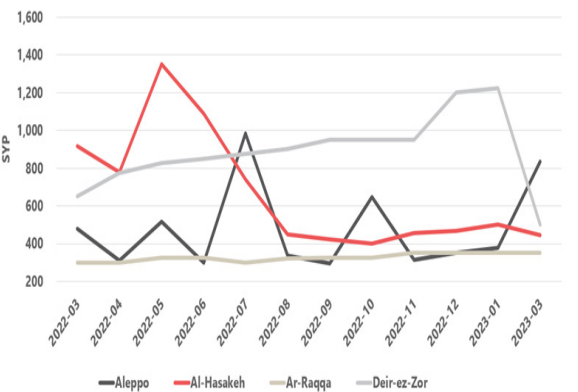
4. Due to rounding figures may not total 100%

### SMEB vegetable prices



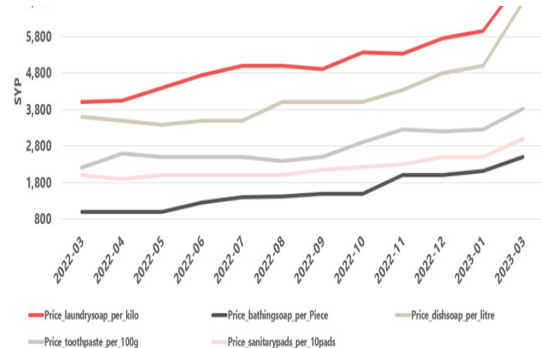
The price of vegetables increased by 36% in March compared to January. This increase coincides with the end of winter and before the ripening of summer vegetables.

### Cooking fuel prices per litre



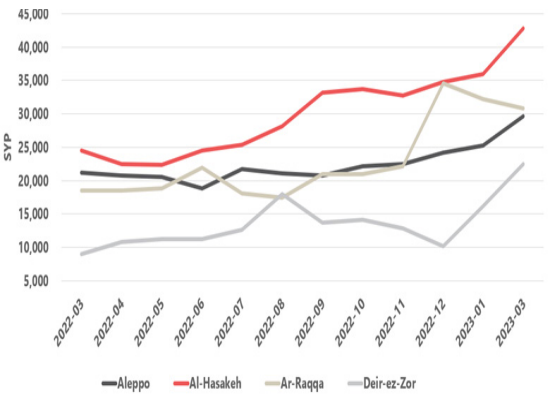
The price of SMEB cooking fuel prices decreased for the second consecutive month since September 2022, most notably in **Aleppo and Al-Hasakeh governorate** due to the reliance on distributions by the local authorities, where prices are fixed. Gas in Deir ez-Zor remained widely unavailable.

### Non-food item (NFI) prices



Currency depreciation impacts key imported items. March recorded the highest rate of increase in the prices of non-food items in a year. The most notable increase in price was observed in dish soap and laundry powder.

### SMEB water trucking prices



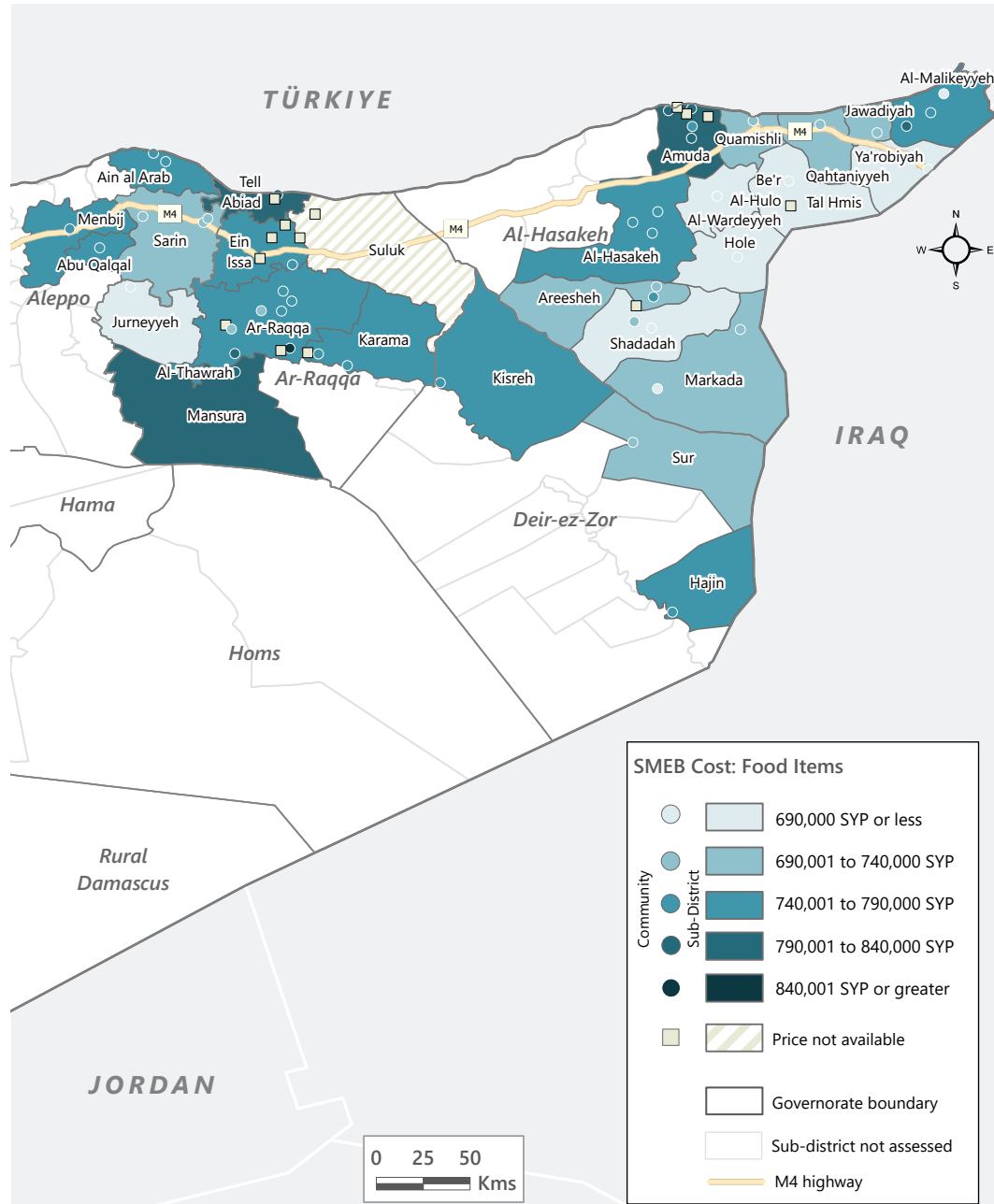
The price of water trucking witnessed a noticeable increase in March, especially in Al-Hasakeh Governorate. The decrease in surface well water levels resulting from lack of rainfall and reduced supply of water from the Khabour River, was a key reason for the increase in price.

### Price of SMEB items

Item	Unit <sup>5</sup>	Price SYP	2 month change	6 month change	Price USD <sup>2</sup>
<b>Northeast food Syria SMEB</b>		<b>749,600</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>99</b>
Bulk food items	SMEB	389,300	19%	50%	51.56
Bulgur	1 kg	6,000	9%	58%	0.79
Red lentils	1 kg	7,000	17%	40%	0.93
Rice	1 kg	6,000	26%	62%	0.79
Salt	500 g	1,000	0%	43%	0.13
Sugar	1 kg	6,000	20%	71%	0.79
Tomato paste	1 kg	9,438	18%	51%	1.25
Fresh vegetables	SMEB	45,000	36%	161%	5.96
Tomatoes	1 kg	3,000	0%	76%	0.40
Potatoes	1 kg	2,500	14%	36%	0.33
Cucumbers	1 kg	4,000	19%	256%	0.53
Onions	1 kg	5,275	111%	428%	0.70
Cooking oils	SMEB	80,500	15%	28%	10.66
Ghee	1 kg	11,350	14%	26%	1.50
Vegetable oil	1 L	11,500	13%	28%	1.52
Non-veg perishables					
Bread	8 pc	400	0%	20%	0.05
Chicken	1 kg	13,650	39%	71%	1.81
Eggs	30 pc	17,125	22%	43%	2.27
Non-food items	SMEB	72,518	21%	59%	9.61
Bathing soap	1 pc	2,500	18%	67%	0.33
Sanitary pads	10 pc	3,000	20%	40%	0.40
Toothpaste	100 g	3,834	18%	53%	0.51
Laundry powder	1 kg	7,429	25%	52%	0.98
Dish soap	1 L	6,750	35%	69%	0.89
Cooking fuels	SMEB	8,500	-9%	112%	1.13
Kerosene (manually refined)	1 L	1,750	3%	46%	0.23
LP gas	1 L	400	5%	129%	0.05
Water trucking	SMEB	34,071	16%	55%	4.51
Water trucking (1000 L)	1 m3	7,571	16%	55%	1.00
Other					
Phone data	1 gb	3,500	8%	17%	0.46

5. The SMEB unit refers to the current SMEB allocation of the item, as outlined on [page 1](#).

## Cost of SMEB food component by sub-districts and communities



## MARKET FUNCTIONALITY

- 100% and 85% of informal exchange vendors in Ar-Raqqa governorate reported limited stock of 50 and 20 USD notes respectively.
- Limited stock of USD notes remains a key challenge across NES with 97% surveyed vendors reporting they have shortages of at least one denomination.
- More than half of vendors reported limited stock of 5 and 10 USD denominations.

### % of informal exchange vendors reporting limited stock of USD notes<sup>6</sup>

#### Al-Hasakeh

Limited stock of 5 USD	72%	▼-8%	
Limited stock of 10 USD	70%	▼-10%	
Limited stock of 20 USD	66%	▼-12%	

#### Ar-Raqqa

Limited stock of 5 USD	61%	▲+2%	
Limited stock of 10 USD	70%	▲+4%	
Limited stock of 20 USD	85%	▼-9%	

#### Aleppo

Limited stock of 5 USD	36%	0%	
Limited stock of 10 USD	48%	▲+8%	
Limited stock of 20 USD	72%	▲+12%	

#### Deir-Ez Zor

Limited stock of 5 USD	33%	▲+6%	
Limited stock of 10 USD	78%	▼-4%	
Limited stock of 20 USD	56%	▲+1%	

6. % changes represent percentage point changes in from the previous month.

- Market functionality indicators remained consistent from the previous month. Price inflation remained the predominant supply challenge reported by vendors most notably in Al-Hasakeh governorate.
- Only 1% of surveyed shops in NES (21 vendors) reported in March that they are currently unable to re-stock. Most of these vendors were located in Al-Hasakeh governorate with gas vendors being the most common shop type reporting an inability to re-stock (9 vendors).

### Time until out of stock, among the 21 vendor reporting they were not able to re-stock

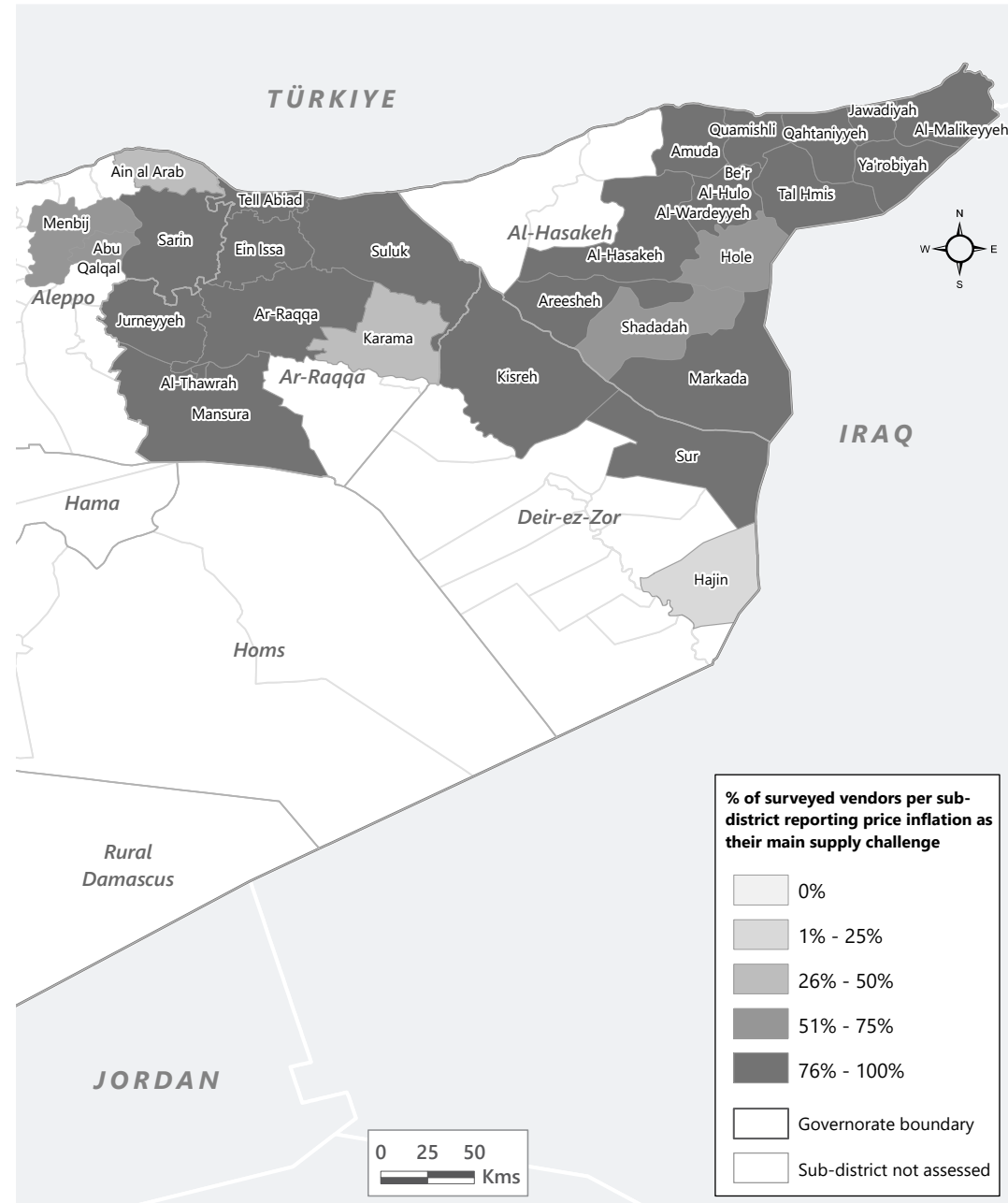


**47%** less than 3 days  
**10%** 3 to 7 days  
**33%** 1 to 3 weeks  
**10%** more than 1 month

### Most commonly reported supply challenges (% of surveyed vendors)<sup>7</sup>

	AREA	REPORTED %
<b>PRICE INFLATION</b>	NES	76%
	NE Aleppo	50%
	Al-Hasakeh	87%
	Ar-Raqqa	80%
	Deir-Ez-Zor	65%
<b>NO ISSUES</b>	NES	18%
	NE Aleppo	45%
	Al-Hasakeh	7%
	Deir-Ez-Zor	30%
<b>SUPPLY CANT MEET DEMAND</b>	NES	17%
	NE Aleppo	5%
	Al-Hasakeh	27%
	Deir-Ez-Zor	32%
<b>SUPPLIER LIMITED SUPPLY</b>	NES	8%
	NE Aleppo	8%
	Al-Hasakeh	11%
	Deir-Ez-Zor	5%

### Vendors reporting price inflation as their main supply challenge



**% of surveyed vendors per sub-district reporting price inflation as their main supply challenge**

- 0%
- 1% - 25%
- 26% - 50%
- 51% - 75%
- 76% - 100%
- Governorate boundary
- Sub-district not assessed

7. Multiple choice responses are not expected to total 100%. Please see this month's JMMI dataset for all supply challenges reported by vendors.



## METHODOLOGY

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.

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. For more details about the methodology, access the online [JMMI dashboard](#).

In light of the fluctuation of the Syrian Pound (SYP)'s value and resulting market disruption, prices should be seen as representative only of the markets and dates where and when information was collected (6 - 13 March 2023).

## 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.

It is important to keep in mind that some vendors might feel more or less inclined to share their actual experiences (fearing that the information shared might be used by competitors or in some way against their business), while others might adjust their answers based on the expected effect that they will have on humanitarian programming. Similarly, even though all enumerators received the same training, some might have more previous experience and might therefore be better able to produce higher quality data.

Part of the data collection takes place remotely using vendor contact information collected in advance by the JMMI partners,

in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Market monitoring can be challenging, especially through remote interviews. At the same time, the JMMI has over seven years of accumulated experience, strong internal coordination and external relation with vendors, and vast longitudinal data, which supports the accuracy of findings.

The data shown in this factsheet were compared with the data for January 2023 since no data were collected for the JMMI project for February 2023 after the earthquake that hit northern Syria and Türkiye. Data collection was resumed in March 2023.

## JMMI AND THE CASH WORKING GROUP

The JMMI exists within the framework of the Cash Working Group (CWG). In northwest Syria (NWS), 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 [cashcoorndes@gmail.com](mailto:cashcoorndes@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, [cecilia.hoegfeldt@impact-initiatives.org](mailto:cecilia.hoegfeldt@impact-initiatives.org), or visit the [REACH Syria Resource Centre](#).

