



1,026

Households surveyed



12%

Female Headed Households



16%

Stay as guest



28%

Displaced Households

Situation Overview

- COVID-19 cases are still on the rise across Syria, a trend likely to further worsen during the colder winter months. As of 30 November 2020, 7,887 cases of COVID-19 were officially confirmed by the Minister of Health in government-held areas in Syria, including 417 fatalities, marking a 39 percent increase compared to the national rate of COVID-19 cases at the end of October. In addition, a partial lockdown has been imposed on all Kurdish-controlled areas in northeast Syria following the recent surge of COVID-19 cases in November, including a full lockdown on the town of Al-Malikia in Al-Hasakeh governorate. Furthermore, the COVID-19 outbreak continued spreading rapidly in opposition-held areas in northwest Syria, reaching around 15,502 cases of COVID-19 by the end of November. Representing a three-fold increase compared to the announced rate of COVID-19 cases in northwest Syria at the end of October. The recent increase in COVID-19 cases has fueled increased concern across the country, given that most of announced cases have not been linked to exposure with a suspected source, pointing to large-scale community transmission.
- The value of the Syrian pound continued to weaken in the informal exchange rate market and reached a monthly average of SYP 2,638/USD in November 2020, depreciating by 11 percent month-on-month. This is the first time the Syrian pound has reached this monthly national average level in 2020, outpacing the peak recorded in June (SYP 2,505/USD), suggesting an upward pressure on prices, including food.
- Intensified hostilities were reported in northwest Syria in November, especially south of the M4 highway and around the M5 highway, including artillery shelling across Ariha and Idleb districts. Such incidents of violence are impacting aid workers and temporary suspending humanitarian operations in northwest Syria, leaving the vulnerable population without food assistance. Additionally, rainfall during November caused widespread damage to IDP sites across northwest Syria, resulting in flooding and destruction of tents, which has affected more than 334 households in IDP sites across Idleb and western Aleppo. Also, the Islamic State continued to mount suicide attacks in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor, highlighting a volatile security situation across northeast Syria.
- After more than nine years of conflict in Syria, which has caused extensive casualties, destruction of infrastructure and population displacement (more than half of its pre-war Syrian population has been forced to flee their homes, including more than 5.5 million have become refugees as estimated by the United Nations), the Syrian government hosted an international Russia-backed conference in Damascus in November 2020, aimed at finding ways to facilitate Syrian refugee returns to the country, despite reservations by the international community on safe return conditions.
- Meanwhile, to address the pressing needs which flared-up from the dire humanitarian situation in Syria, WFP continued dispatching general food assistance, reaching around 4.7 million people in November across the country. WFP has sufficient stocks of ready-to-eat rations in place to respond should the situation further deteriorate. Furthermore, on 25 November, WFP finalized the delivery and installation of two generator sets in public bakeries in Dar'a. This was under WFP's Farm-to-Bread-concept to restore the bread supply chain to food insecure population and contribute to social cohesion in vulnerable areas.

Sources: [Syrian Arab Republic: Recent Development Report No.21 | November 2020, COVID-19 Response Tracking Dashboard | Northwest Syria](#)



Key Points

- Close to half of surveyed households in Syria (46 percent) reported poor and borderline food consumption in November 2020, with almost double the level recorded in November 2019.
- According to mVAM data, among those households that were interviewed in the previous rounds of the survey and reported borderline food consumption since June 2020, around 12 percent had poor food consumption in November 2020.
- In November 2020, around one out of two of the surveyed households (52 percent) with no regular access to markets have poor and borderline food consumption. Marking a one quarter increase of the levels recorded in June 2020.
- More than a third of Syrian interviewed households (36 percent) reported not being able to purchase the necessary medicines in November, primarily due to lack of financial resources (71 percent) and shortage of medicines in pharmacies (21 percent).

Methodology

This mVAM bulletin is based on data collected via live telephone interviews in November 2020 from households in locations across Syria. The phone numbers were generated using random-digit dialing. In November 2020, data was collected from a sample of 1,026 respondents across 13 governorates. Note that, from October 2020, the recall period of COVID-19 questions has been changed to be over the past 30 days instead of start of pandemic (24 March 2020). As per standard survey procedures, respondents' consent was obtained prior to the interviews. For security and safety measures, all respondents were identified with an anonymous ID.

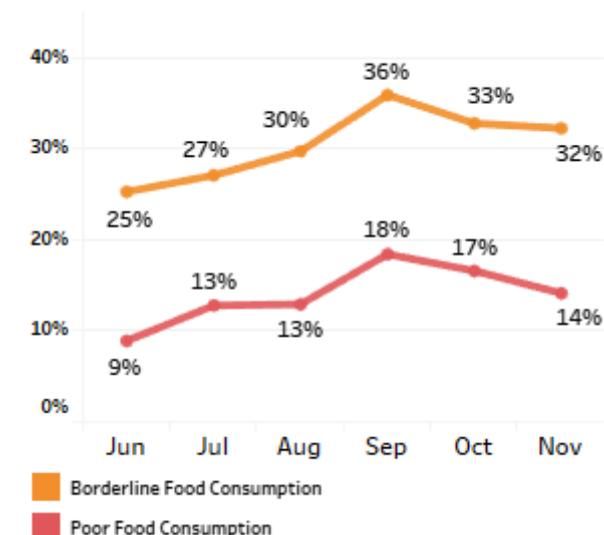


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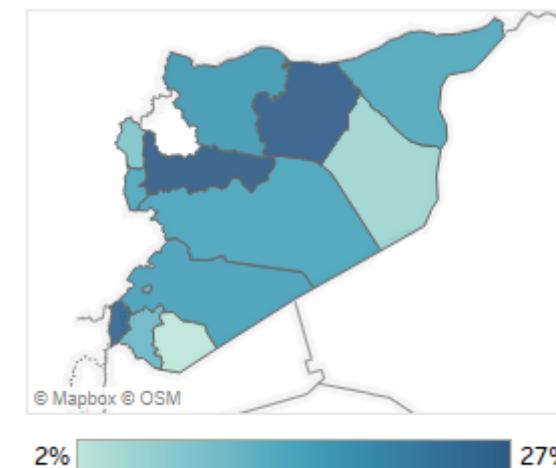
Food Consumption

- The national average rate of inadequate food consumption (poor and borderline combined) remained steady at the same critical level reached in October 2020, with close to half of the surveyed households (46 percent) reporting poor and borderline food consumption in November, albeit at a much higher rate compared to June 2020 (up by 35 percent) and almost double the level recorded in November 2019. Such deterioration in food security across Syria is believed to be ascribed to the ongoing economic meltdown, fueled by conflict-related hyperinflation, unilateral coercive measures and the plummeting of Syrian currency, as well as, the spillover effects of the financial crisis in Lebanon.
- At the governorate level, in November 2020, the average proportion of households with inadequate food consumption was highest in Ar-Raqqa (58 percent), followed by Aleppo and Deir-ez-Zor (55 percent). While the greatest decrease in poor and borderline food consumption rate was recorded in Lattakia (down by 15 percent) compared to October 2020, it remains eight percent above levels in June 2020, reaching 41 percent in November.
- In November 2020, 14 percent of Syrian interviewed households had reported poor food consumption, representing around a two-thirds increase of those households since June 2020. According to mVAM data, among those households that were interviewed in the previous rounds of the survey and reported borderline food consumption since June 2020, around 12 percent had poor food consumption in November 2020. Suggesting a continued unfolding deterioration in the food security situation over the past six months.
- In terms of displacement status, the prevalence of inadequate food consumption was much higher among returnees and IDPs (53 percent) compared to residents (42 percent). Nonetheless, returnee households with poor and borderline food consumption, have reported an improvement in their food consumption score compared to October 2020 (decreased by 15 percent).
- Moreover, insufficient consumption level of protein rich food items was still reported across the country. Overall 60 percent of interviewed households mentioned consuming animal-source protein less than two times a week. The situation is even worse among households with poor and borderline food consumption, as they reported consuming animal-source protein less than one time a week in November 2020, which is half of the reported consumption rate for those households in June 2020. Highlighting concerns on a likely increasing trend in macronutrient deficiencies across the Syrian population.

Fig1: The national average level of poor and borderline food consumption in the last six months

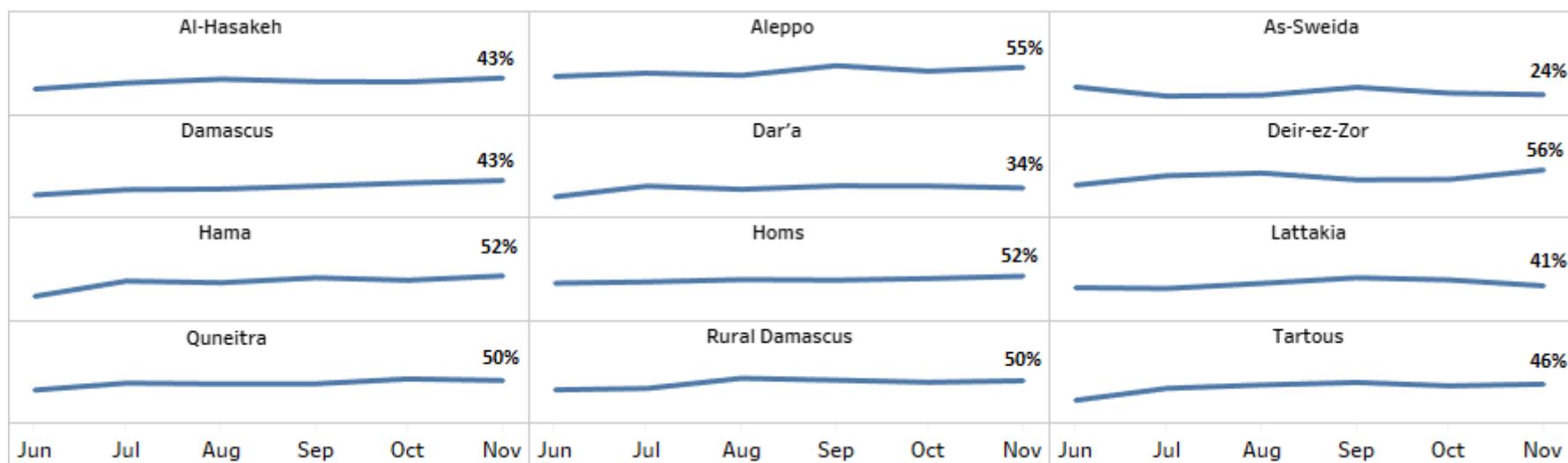


Map1: Percent of households by governorate reporting poor food consumption in November 2020

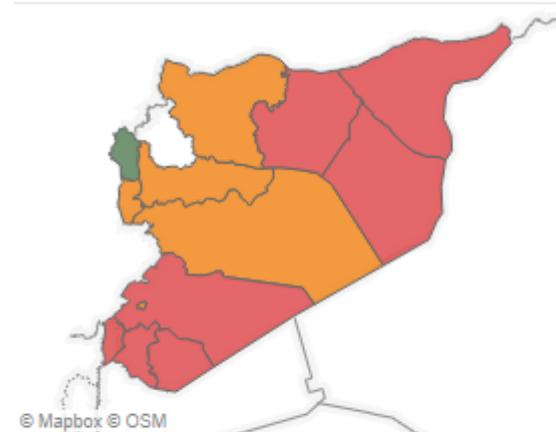


Data from Idleb is not available

Fig2: Percent of households with inadequate food consumption in the last six months by governorate



Map2: Average weekly consumption by governorate for animal-source protein in November 2020



Data from Idleb is not available

Coping Strategies

- Between October and November 2020, the national average reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) slightly decreased from 18.4 to 17.9, however around 87 percent of the interviewed households reported to still apply at least one food-based coping strategy in November due to the worsening economic situation, marking a 13 percent increase compared to the level recorded in November 2019. This trend was more pronounced among female-headed households (94 percent) compared to their male counterparts (86 percent). Highlighting a concern given people had exhausted their capacities to cope (almost 82 percent of Syrian interviewed households reported having already depleted their savings in November) while food insecurity levels rose.
- In November 2020, the most widely adopted negative food coping strategies reported by surveyed households across Syria were consuming less expensive food (65 percent), with peaks recorded in Quneitra (88 percent) and Al-Hasakeh (74 percent), followed by a reduction in the number of meals consumed per day (56 percent). Also, reducing consumption of adult household members to let their children eat was also broadly implemented (41 percent), with half of interviewed IDP households mentioning to rely more frequently on this coping strategy compared to returnees (41 percent) and residents (37 percent). Hereby, highlighting eroding resilience of the population and thus curbing access to adequate diets. Additionally, mVAM November data revealed that more than two-thirds of Syrian interviewed households at national level reported they bought food on credit, with a wide share recorded in As-Sweida (81 percent). A practice which is indicating the worsened household purchasing power and rising of peoples' debt across Syria.
- According to displacement status, the rCSI average was much higher among IDPs and returnees. Nine out of ten of the interviewed households for both groups (IDPs and returnees) reported relying on at least one food-based coping mechanism as a result of the worsening economic conditions to cover their essential food needs, compared to 83 percent from resident households in November 2020.

Fig4: rCSI average by governorate over the last six months

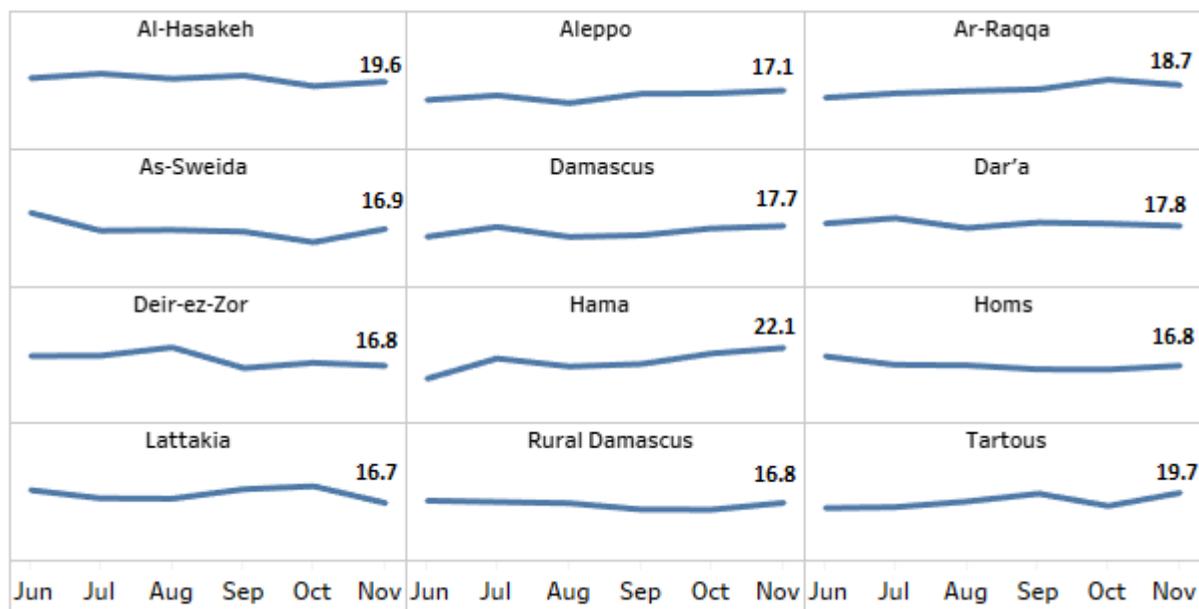
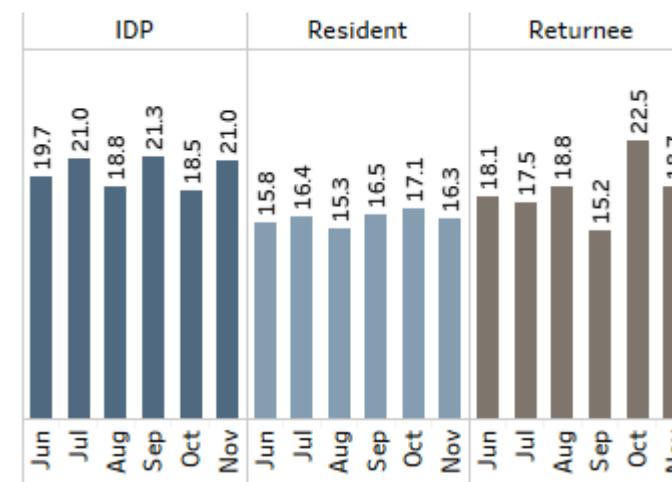


Fig3: rCSI average over the last six months according to displacement status



Map3: rCSI average by governorate in November 2020

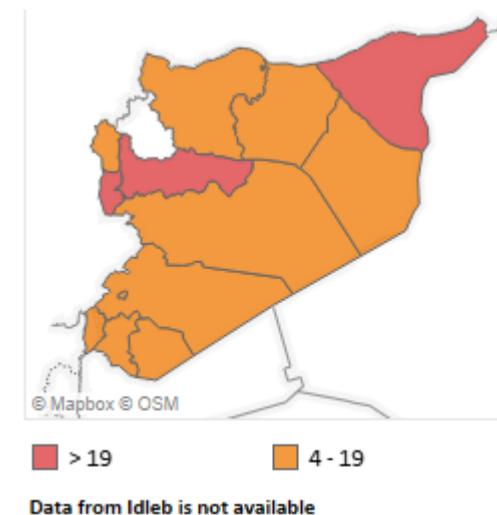


Fig5: Overall percent of households by adopted coping strategy over the past six months

Coping Strategy	Month						
	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	
Female	Less Expensive Food	74%	78%	61%	59%	67%	70%
	Reduce Number of Meals	55%	57%	50%	56%	57%	66%
	Borrow or help	64%	53%	51%	53%	48%	61%
	Limit Portion Size	45%	54%	43%	38%	40%	51%
	Restrict Consumption	38%	48%	37%	41%	41%	43%
Male	Less Expensive Food	71%	69%	61%	67%	63%	64%
	Reduce Number of Meals	53%	52%	46%	54%	54%	55%
	Borrow or help	53%	50%	40%	46%	45%	43%
	Limit Portion Size	46%	45%	39%	40%	42%	43%
	Restrict Consumption	43%	44%	39%	49%	46%	41%

COVID-19 Situation Overview I

- Syrian livelihoods are further being undermined by the COVID-19 outbreak amid debilitating socio-economic hardships and the dire food security consequences across the country.
- The share of households reporting staying permanently indoors as a precautionary measure against COVID-19 has increased by six percent compared to October 2020, reaching 89 percent in November. The observed rise was mainly driven by the increase of levels recorded among IDPs (up by 12 percent) and resident households (up by six percent) who reported avoiding crowded places to mitigate the pandemic outbreak. Nonetheless, the prevention of COVID-19 transmission continued to prove challenging nationwide, notably for people living in densely populated areas as well as people living in camps and informal settlements.
- The COVID-19 outbreak continued disrupting access to markets. In November 2020, more than one out of five households in Syria (21 percent) reported not to have access to markets, with peaks recorded among female-headed households (26 percent). This trend was more pronounced in Hama, where 29 percent of respondents reported difficulties in reaching markets in November. As well as, one out of four households in Al-Hasakeh, Aleppo and Ar-Raqqa reported inability to access markets this month. Although the main impediment cited by surveyed households in November was COVID-19 travel-related restrictions across Syria, with the highest level recorded in Ar-Raqqa (16 percent), approximately 13 percent of respondents in Quneitra reported markets to be far away from the homestead, in addition to five percent of households in Al-Hasakeh reported that markets were closed.
- The proportion of households facing challenges to receive medical care services were 14 percent in November, with a peak recorded in As-Sweida (26 percent). This trend was observably higher among female-headed households (19 percent), foremostly due to lack of financial resources (12 percent). Healthcare centers were reportedly open in most governorates, however, around five percent of respondents in Ar-Raqqa mentioned that hospitals were closed. Furthermore, approximately a third of interviewed households (36 percent) reported not being able to purchase the necessary medicines in November, primarily due to lack of financial resources (71 percent) and shortage of medicines in pharmacies (21 percent).

Fig7: Percent of households facing challenges to access market in the last six months by governorate

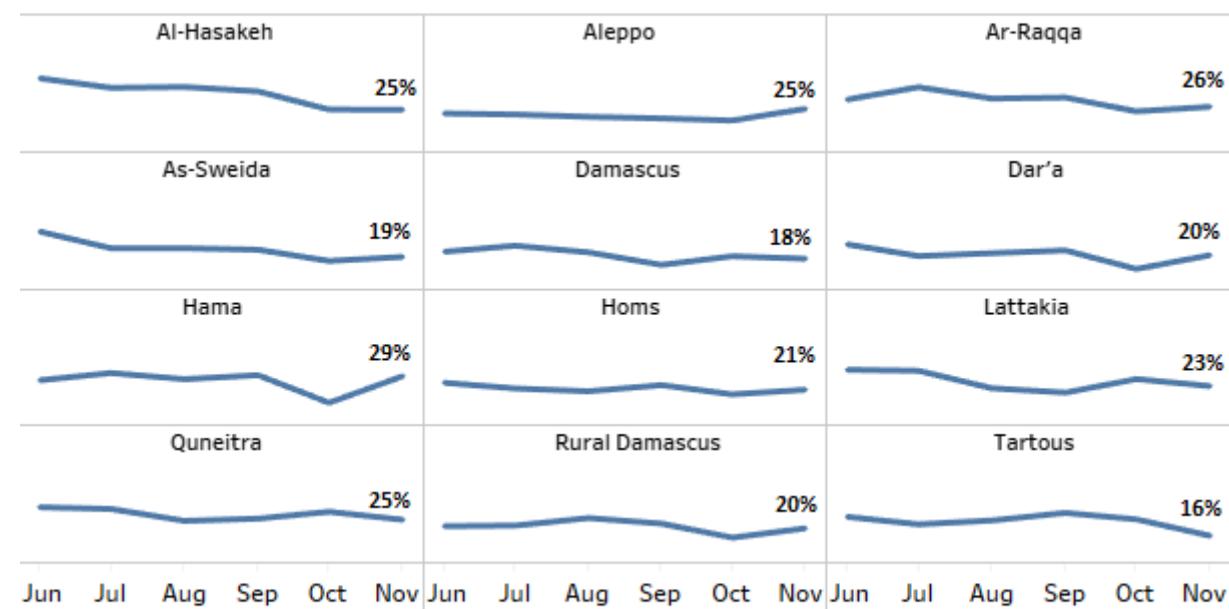
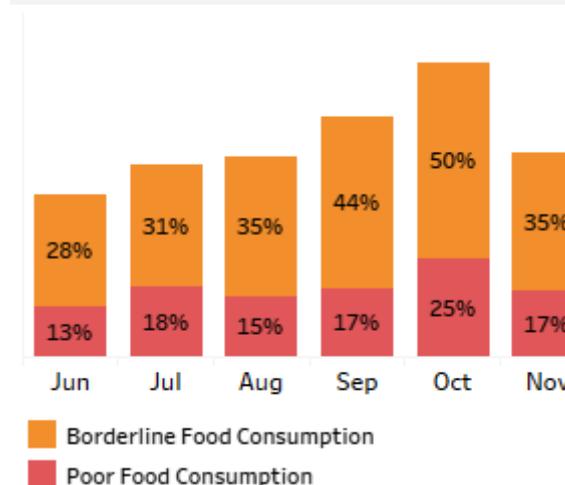


Fig6: Share of households with inadequate food consumption facing difficulties in accessing markets



Map4: Percent of households facing challenges to access medical services by governorate in November 2020

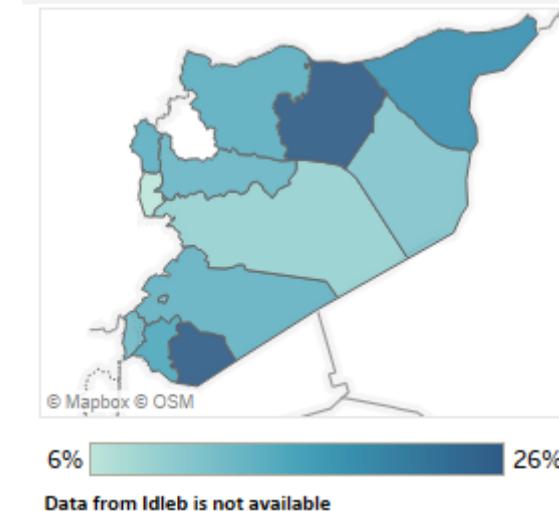
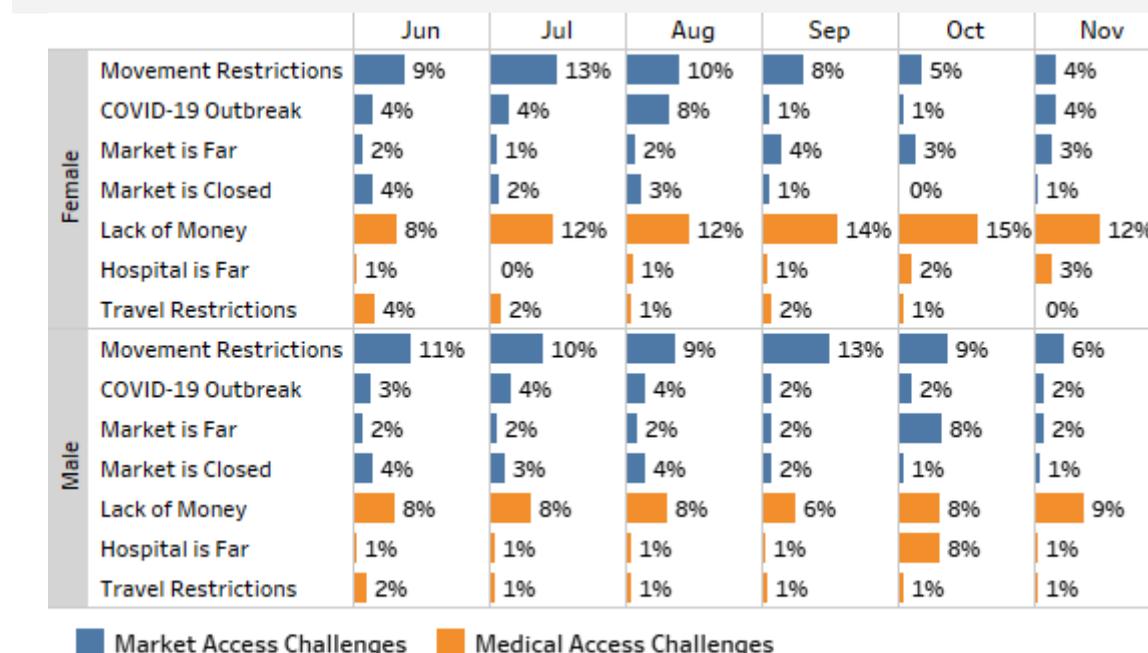


Fig8: Respondent reported reasons why accessing market and medical services was challenging



COVID-19 Situation Overview II

- According to November mVAM data, half of the surveyed households (52 percent) with no regular access to markets have poor and borderline food consumption, representing a one quarter increase of the levels recorded in June 2020. Additionally, 57 percent of respondents who reported medical healthcare inaccessibility in November, have inadequate food consumption. Moreover, overall four percent of interviewed households reported that movement restrictions were the main impediment to obtain remittances and food assistance in November, with a peak recorded in Dar'a (nine percent). A problem that was much observed among female-headed households (10 percent) compared to their male counterparts (four percent).
- The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak has posed new threats on the working sector amid the persistent economic upheaval in Syria, resulting in difficulties in sustaining livelihoods and limiting access to sources of income. In November, around half of the surveyed households (49 percent) reported that they had lost one or more sources of income because of COVID-19 related restrictions, with 40 percent of them reporting to have lost more than half of their monthly salary, suggesting increased socio-economic risks nationwide. This trend was higher among IDPs (57 percent) and returnees (50 percent) compared to residents (46 percent) in November 2020.
- Broken down by governorate, the highest proportion of surveyed households having lost one or more sources of income due to the pandemic was recorded in As-Sweida (69 percent), with around one out of four households having lost almost entirely their November income, followed by Al-Hasakeh and Dar'a (55 percent). Also, mVAM November data outlined that around 15 percent of interviewed households who reported losses of income have poor food consumption (a two-thirds increase above the level recorded in June 2020) and more than nine out of ten of these households mentioned having relied on at least one coping strategy in November 2020. Besides, according to mVAM data, the main problem faced by interviewed households in November was unemployment and job lay-offs (49 percent), which is up 36 percent from reported levels in June 2020.

Fig10: Percent of households losing one or more sources of income in the last six months by governorate

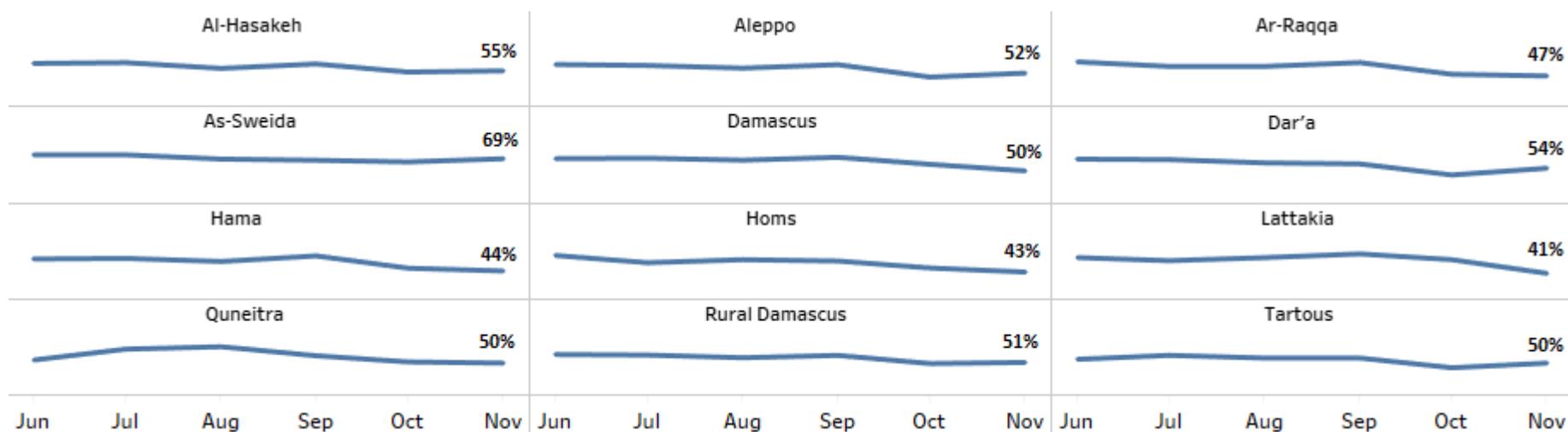
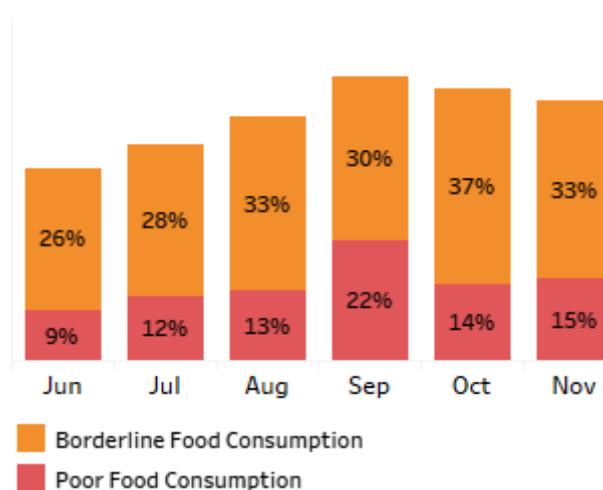
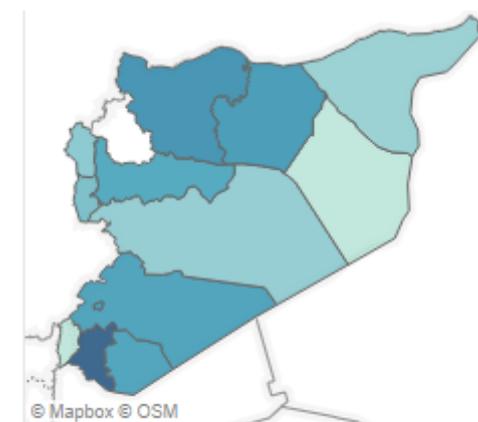


Fig9: Percent of households with inadequate food consumption reporting having lost their main income source



Map5: Percent of households facing difficulties receiving assistance in November 2020



Map6: Percent of households reporting losing more than half of their income sources in November 2020

