



World Food Programme

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Bulletin 16 – March 2016

IRAQ

March 2016: Although PDS access has improved, IDPs are using more negative coping strategies

Highlights

- Household food consumption remained stable across January and February 2016. However, the food consumption of internally displaced people (IDPs) deteriorated: over a quarter of IDPs living in camps reported inadequate consumption.
- A much higher proportion of IDP respondents living in camps reported resorting to negative coping in February (64%) compared with January (22.5%).
- February mVAM market data indicates that the average cost of a standard food basket continues to fall in all monitored governorates, except in Anbar and Kirkuk. However, in the conflict-affected governorates of Anbar and Ninewa, food markets are highly volatile with soaring food prices. Food stocks are rapidly depleting in besieged locations such as Falluja and Al Sharqat.
- For the second consecutive month, respondents from Hay Alwahda sub-district in Falluja reported that shops and markets had run out of all food supplies and that people were mainly depending on food such as potatoes, lettuce and eggplants that they collected from farms in rural areas close to the city.
- Household access to Public Distribution System (PDS) deliveries showed signs of improvement as more respondents reported receiving a full or partial ration in February than in January. However, most people reported receiving poor quality food and partial rations only.

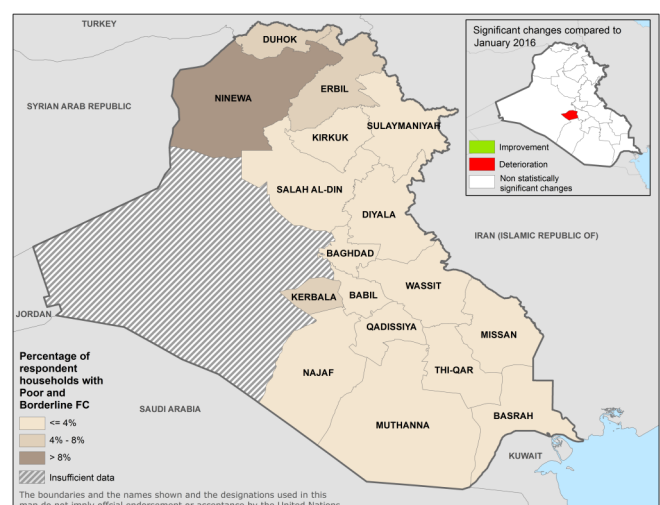
Fighting hunger worldwide

Food consumption indicators remain poor in Ninewa and deteriorate in Kerbala

In February, national food security remained stable for the third consecutive month, with 3 percent of all respondents having inadequate ('poor' or 'borderline') food consumption. However, inadequate consumption increased from 0 to 7 percent for households surveyed in the governorate of Kerbala (Map 1). In Ninewa, 9 percent of households reported inadequate consumption, placing the governorate above the national average in a trend that has been observed since August (Figure 1).

February data also indicates that IDPs continue to fare considerably worse than non-displaced households: 8 percent of IDPs have poor or borderline food consumption compared with 2.8 percent of non-IDP households. The food consumption of IDPs living in camps has continued to deteriorate, but IDPs outside camps have had fairly stable consumption over the past three months (Figure 2).

Map 1. Iraq - Percentage of respondent households with 'poor' and 'borderline' Food Consumption Score (FCS) - February 2016



Source: WFP mVAM, February 2016



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food security analysis

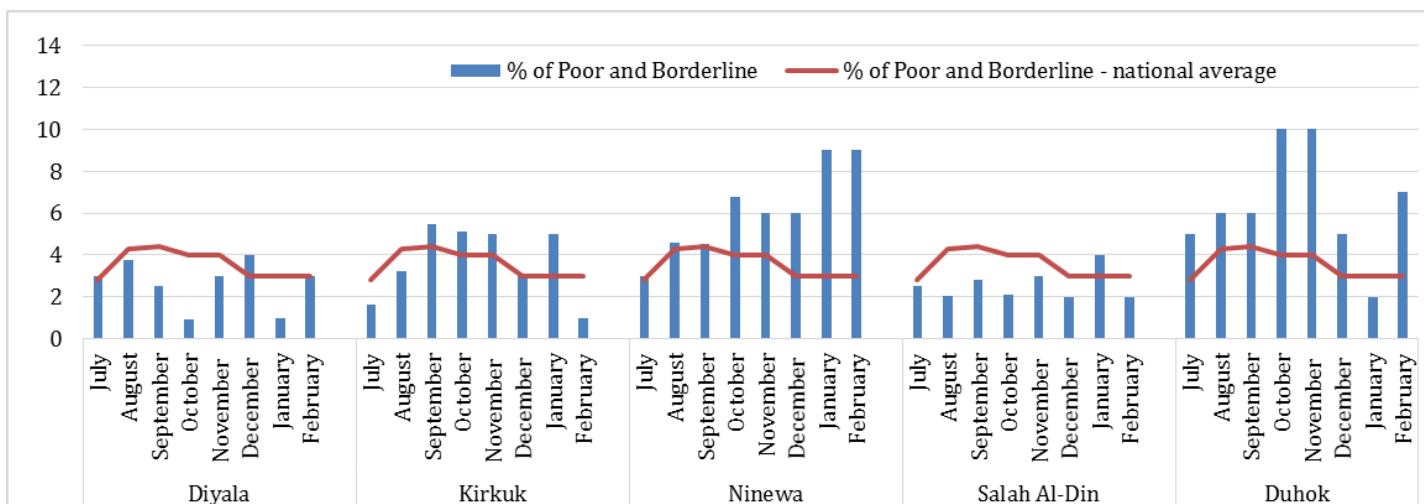
Box 1. Situation update (February 2016)

The Iraqi Security Forces have surrounded the ISIL-held city of Fallujah in Anbar governorate and there is fighting in and around the city between armed opposition groups and local tribes. Between 30,000 and 60,000 people are thought to remain in the city, which has been under the control of armed opposition groups for more than two years. The military siege, which has tightened in the past two months, is preventing food and medical supplies from reaching the city. On 20 February, OCHA warned of rapidly deteriorating humanitarian conditions for thousands of civilians trapped in Fallujah and in Sinjar district.

During the past weeks, Iraqi forces have regained control of a number of areas east of Ramadi and are now focusing on militant-held areas north of the city. Meanwhile, sectarian tensions are increasing in Iraq: a suicide bombing on 29 February reportedly killed 40 people in Muqadiyah, including several Shia militia commanders and on 28 February, 73 people died in a double bombing in Baghdad that targeted Shia.

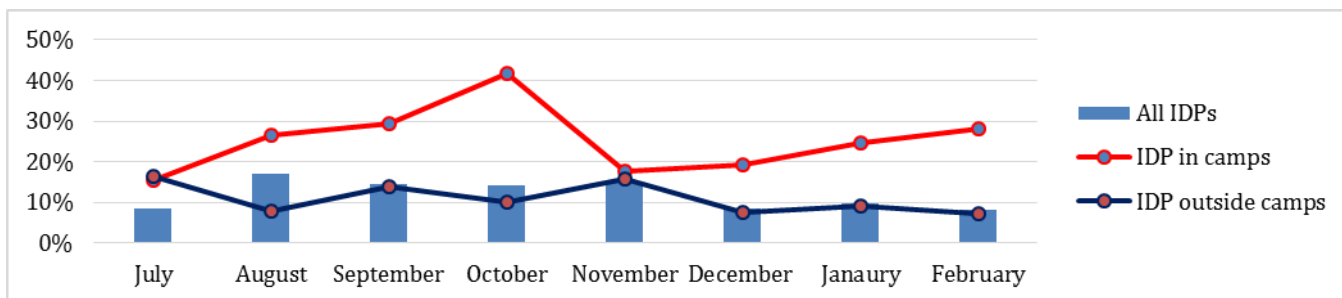
Sources: WFP, OCHA and IOM

Figure 1. Percentage of respondent households from key conflict and displacement-affected governorates with 'poor' and 'borderline' FCS, compared to national average. April 2015 – February 2016



Source: WFP mVAM, February 2016

Figure 2. Percentage of respondents IDP households with 'poor' and 'borderline' food consumption, July 2015 – February 2016



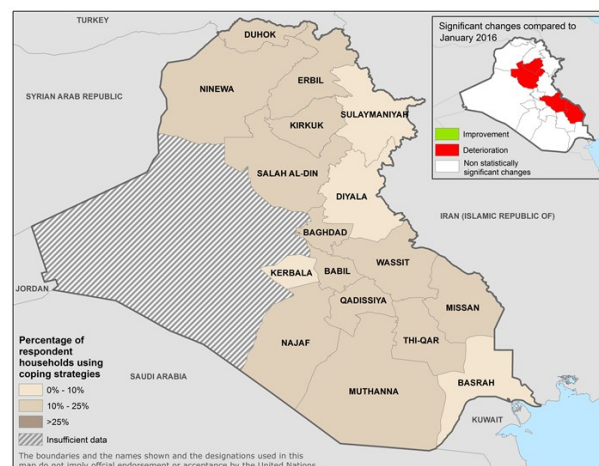
Source: WFP mVAM, February 2016

More households are using negative coping strategies

The overall prevalence of negative food-related coping increased from 9.5 percent in January to 12.7 percent of households in February reporting not having enough food or enough money to buy food (Map 2). This is the highest average level of negative coping recorded since August. Coping levels increased significantly between January and February in the governorates of Salah Al-Din (+8%), Kirkuk (+10%) and Missan-Wassit (+12%) (Figure 3).

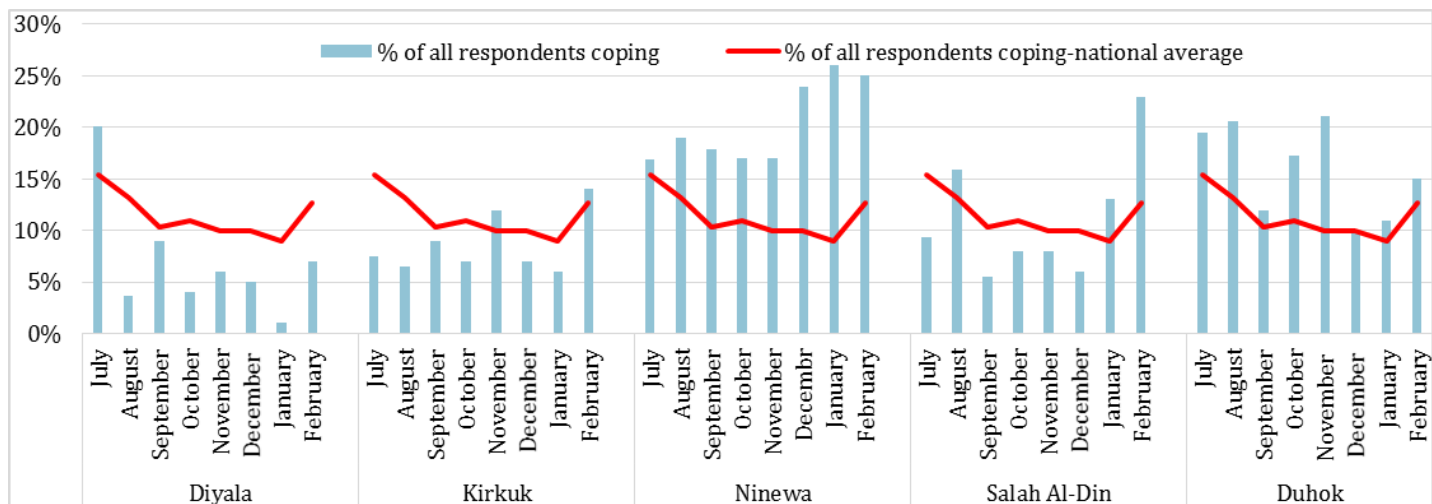
In February, several governorates saw a rise in the proportion of households eating fewer meals a day (Diyala +6%, Kirkuk +8% and Missan-Wassit +11%). In Sulaymaniyah, 4 percent more households restricted consumption by adults so that children could eat. In Missan-Wassit, 11 percent more households received help from family and friends, and 9 percent more relied on less expensive food. Respondents who are not living in their own homes are relying much more on food-based coping than other households. In February, households living in unfinished buildings were the most vulnerable group with almost 60 percent of households resorting to negative coping strategies (Figure 4).

Map 2. Iraq – reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI), February 2016



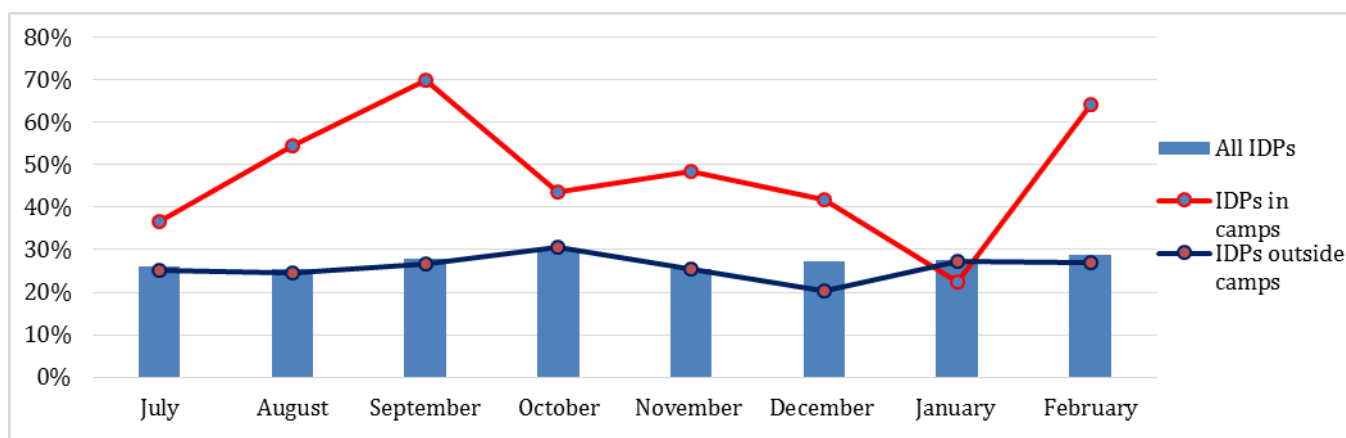
Source: WFP mVAM, February 2016

Figure 3. Percentage of respondent households from key conflict and displacement-affected governorates using food-related negative coping strategies, compared to national average. July 2015 – February 2016



Source: WFP mVAM, February 2016

Figure 4. Percentage of IDP respondent households using food-related negative coping strategies, July 2015 – February 2016



Source: WFP mVAM, February 2016

Markets, food supply and purchasing power

The average cost of the standard food basket continued to fall in all monitored governorates between January and February, except in Anbar where prices slightly increased (3%) and in Kirkuk, where prices remained stable. The food basket became cheaper in the conflict-affected governorates of Ninewa (-10%), Salah Al-Din (-4%) and Diyala (-7%).

In Anbar, variations in the cost of a standard food basket were recorded at district level. In the district of Ramadi, the average cost was 16 percent higher than the governorate average. In Al Ruttba, it was 19 percent higher, although the price here fell by 20 percent between January and February (Table 1).

In Hay Alwaha sub-district in Falluja, for the second consecutive month respondents reported that shops and markets had exhausted all food supplies including wheat, sugar, rice, vegetable oil and lentils. They also said that people were mainly depending on food such as potatoes, lettuce and eggplants that they collected from farms in rural areas close to the city. Armed opposition groups are reportedly still controlling these areas, and bombings and shelling are preventing the movement of people. Respondents from Hay Al Moalmin said that food is not easily available and that the price of wheat, rice, sugar and vegetable oil is extremely high. In addition, respondents in January and February reported no availability of cooking gas and fuel in Falluja. A similar situation was observed in Al Sharqat district in Ninewa governorate, where rice, vegetable oil and fuel were reported missing from the markets.

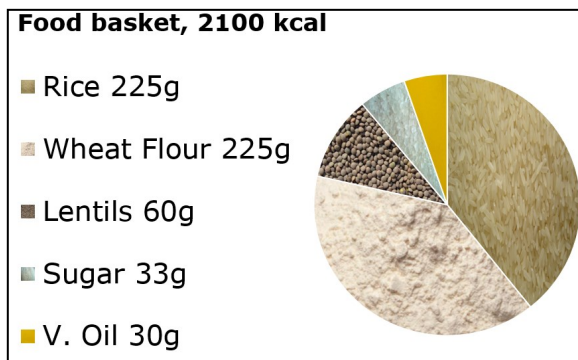


Table 1. Average cost of a standard food basket in monitored locations of Anbar governorate, November 2015 – February 2016

Locations	December 2015(IQD)	January 2016 (IQD)	February 2016 (IQD)	% change between January & February
Anbar governorate	1143	1013	1042	3%
Ramadi district	1419	1447	1240	-14%
Al Khalidiyah district	1611	1363	1184	-13%
Haditha district	932	837	995	19%
Al Rutba district	915	1064	1280	20%

Source: WFP mVAM, February 2016

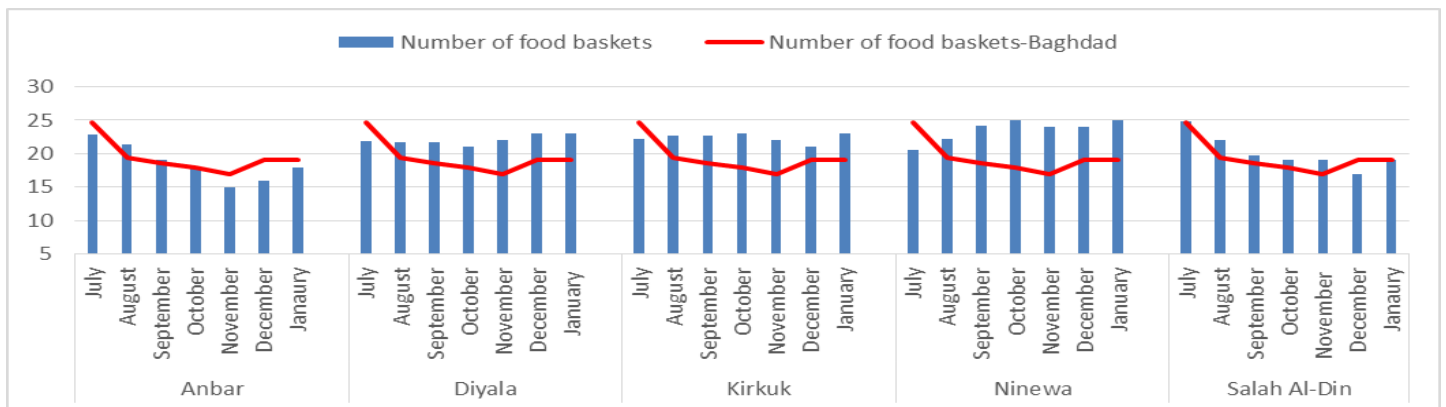
The overall purchasing power of the sampled households increased by two food baskets in Diyala and Kirkuk and decreased by one food basket in Ninewa in January. However, purchasing power remained the same in Anbar and Salah Al-Din (Figure 5). The 9 percent increase in purchasing power in Diyala and Kirkuk between January and February corresponds with a fall in food prices and a 14 percent increase in daily manual labour income in Kirkuk. In Ninewa, although prices were lower, income from daily manual labour fell by 13 percent in February, lowering the purchasing power of the households in this governorate.

Table 2: Cost of a standard food basket

Governorate	February-16	Price changes 1 month	Price changes 3 month	Price changes 6 months
Baghdad	IQD 912	-1%	-14%	1%
Anbar	IQD 1,042	3%	-19%	-4%
Diyala	IQD 825	-7%	-12%	-12%
Kirkuk	IQD 971	0%	-8%	-5%
Ninewa	IQD 828	-10%	-12%	-18%
Salah Al-Din	IQD 880	-4%	-5%	2%

Source: WFP mVAM, February 2016

Figure 5: Wage-to-food terms of trade, July 2015 – January 2016



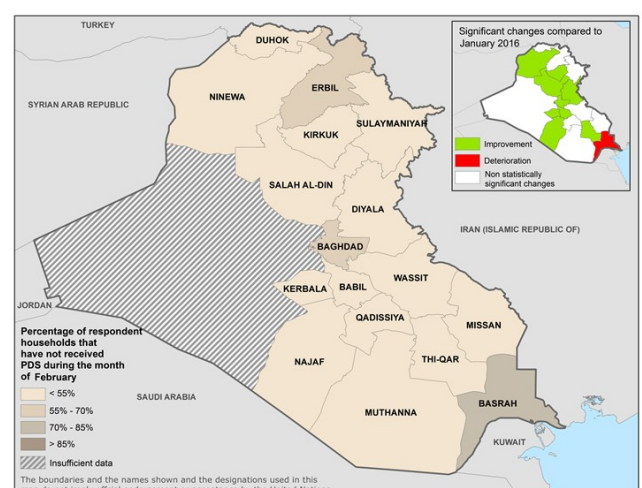
Source: WFP mVAM, February 2016

Household access to the Public Distribution System (PDS)

February data indicates an improvement in household access to PDS rations, with 49 percent of all respondents saying they did not receive PDS rations in February by comparison with January (61%). In particular, respondents in Babil, Najaf, Baghdad, Diyala, Kerbala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salah Al-Din and Thi-Qar reported a significant increase in PDS distributions. However PDS access deteriorated in Basrah: 72 percent of respondents here did not receive PDS ration, compared with 49 percent in January (Map 3).

Despite improvements, the percentage of households receiving a full ration (3kg rice, 2kg sugar, 1 litre of vegetable oil and 9kg wheat flour per person per month) remains very low both at national (3%) and at governorate level, with none of the respondents in Basrah, Kerbala, Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah receiving a full ration in February.

Map 3. Respondent households who did not receive PDS in February 2016



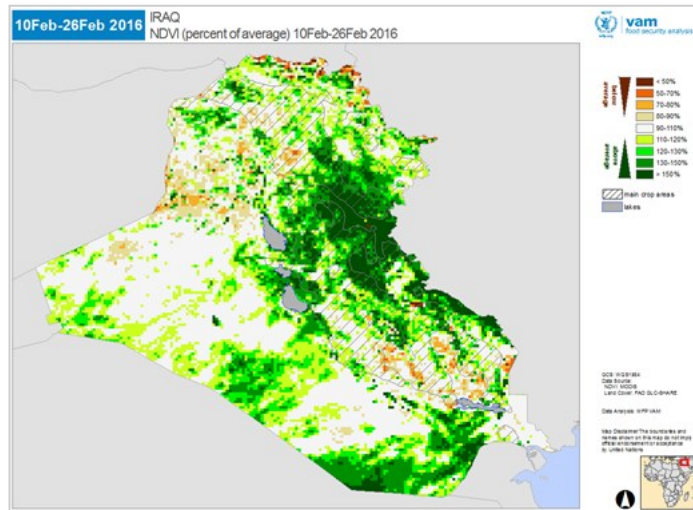
Source: WFP mVAM, February 2016

In addition, many respondents complained about the low quality of the food delivered via PDS and delays in distributions. 73 percent to 59 percent between January and February. Accordingly to what mentioned above, IDPs access to PDS improved in February: the percentage of IDPs receiving partial PDS rations increased from percent to 38 percent and the percentage not receiving PDS rations fell from 73 percent to 59 percent between January and February.

2016 Wheat crop outlook

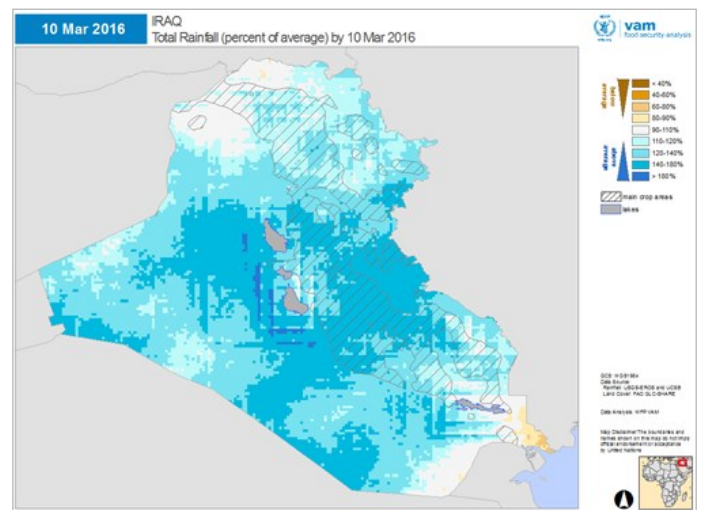
The wheat harvest will begin in five or six weeks' time. A good harvest is expected, but not as large as in 2015. Despite fuel and input shortages, it is estimated that 3.5 million tonnes of wheat will be harvested this year. Weather conditions are favourable but conflict is jeopardizing agricultural production. There is particular concern for Ninewa and for the areas under armed opposition group control that supply wheat and flour to Mosul.

Map 4: Normalized Difference Vegetation Index imagery (percent of average)



Source: NDVI, MODIS

Map 5: Total Rainfall (percent of average)



Source: USGS, EROS and UCSB

When asked about the overall food security situation, most respondents noted: the need for more assistance; problems with the delayed payment of salaries and problems paying rent; insufficient work opportunities; concerns about the partial and low quality of the rations received; and difficulties renewing the displacement card (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Word cloud



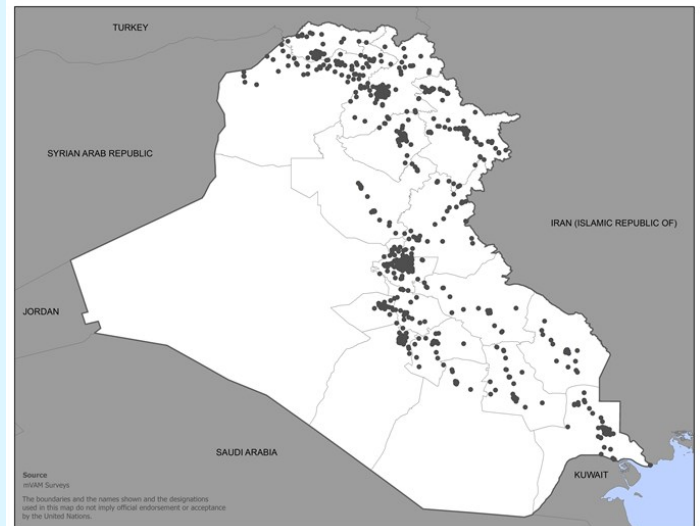
Source: WFP mVAM, February 2016

Methodology - mVAM remote data collection

In February 2016, mVAM conducted the thirteenth round of household food security monitoring using live telephone interviews throughout Iraq. Data was collected from a sample of 1,553 respondents via Korek, a major mobile network operator. WFP monitored a panel of respondents living in Iraq's 18 governorates, drawn from Korek's database. Map 6 shows the cellphone towers from which live telephone interview responses were received. Further details on survey methodology are available [online](#).

In addition to monitoring household food security, WFP collected market information in central and northern governorates of Iraq, using live telephone interviews. In collaboration with Islamic Relief, 218 calls were successfully made in February, obtaining information using a simplified market questionnaire. Responses covered 48 different locations (sub-districts) in six governorates: Anbar (10), Diyala (8), Kirkuk (10), Ninewa (6), Baghdad (7) and Salah Al-Din (7).

Map 6. Iraq mVAM data collection - February 2016



Source: WFP mVAM, February 2016

The [Food Consumption Score](#) (FCS) is a proxy indicator for food security that measures the diversity of household diets, and how frequently food is consumed. The FCS classifies households as having 'poor', 'borderline' or 'acceptable' food consumption. Households with 'poor' or 'borderline' consumption are considered to be consuming an inadequate diet

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