Food Security and Livelihoods Assessment

Southern Syria

RFSAN

1,212 Interviews

Key informants 63

Focus Group Discussions 25

Internally Displaced Persons 21 %

Female headed households 12 %

Average HH size 6.5

Remittances

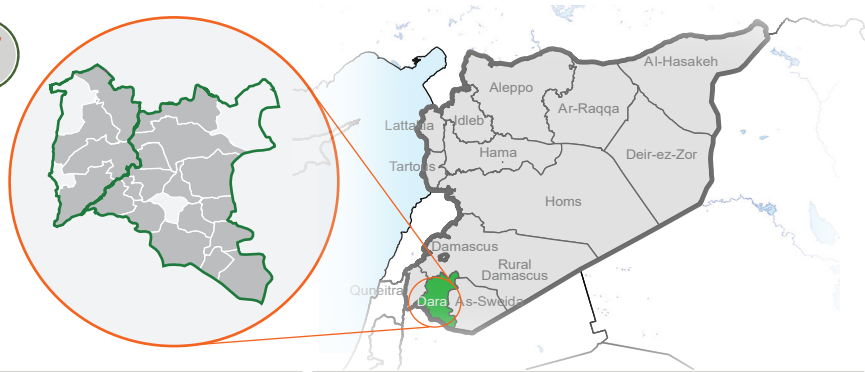
Military

Livestock

Main incomes

Receive food aid 87 %

Subdistricts covered 19/22



Introduction

In August 2015, FAO, CARE, NRC and their local partners inside Syria ran an assessment in order to collect information on the food security and livelihood situation in the opposition-held areas of the Governorates of Dar'a and Quneitra (southern Syria). The survey objective was to assess the food security and livelihood situation in order to better understand the impact of the crisis, and subsequent needs.

The survey focused on data collection at the household level with additional qualitative information focused on farmers, livestock herders and small business owners.

The survey area primarily covered the two agro-ecological zones with the highest rainfall levels. These zones were used for the sample targeting in order to respect the climatic differences within the target area. Though effort was made to ensure a statistically relevant sample, access issues related to ongoing conflict played a significant role in identifying cluster locations for the surveys.

In the following pages you will find the main findings of this assessment.

Highlights

- Local economy has collapsed or suffered heavily in all surveyed areas.
- Livelihoods in many areas have been destroyed or damaged.
- People are heavily reliant on food aid and coping strategies.
- The food security situation may not appear critical at this stage but this is due to dependency on food aid.

Recommendations

- Research alternative modalities that can help support the local economy such as vouchers or cash.
- Improve access to agricultural inputs, processing facilities and markets to improve the economy and stimulate growth.
- Invest in alternative sources of energy (wind) and consider alternative agricultural farming systems such as conservation farming.

Agriculture engagement 10.4 %

Livestock engagement 23 %

Education

University	18.2%
Secondary	27.3%
Primary	39.6%
Vocational	3.1%
Informal	0.9%
None	10.8%

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Situation Overview

Zone A — West

More rainfall

20.1% Urban — 79.9% Rural

Zone A is surrounded by occupied parts of Quneitra in the West, Jordan in the South and government-controlled areas in the North and East. The main urban centre is Nawa, which had a population of 60'000 people before the start of the crisis.

- Traditionally more focused on agriculture and livestock due to higher precipitation levels
- Income substantially lower
- Households are larger
- Main contested areas are in the North around As Sanamayn and Kafr-Shams.
- Low population density

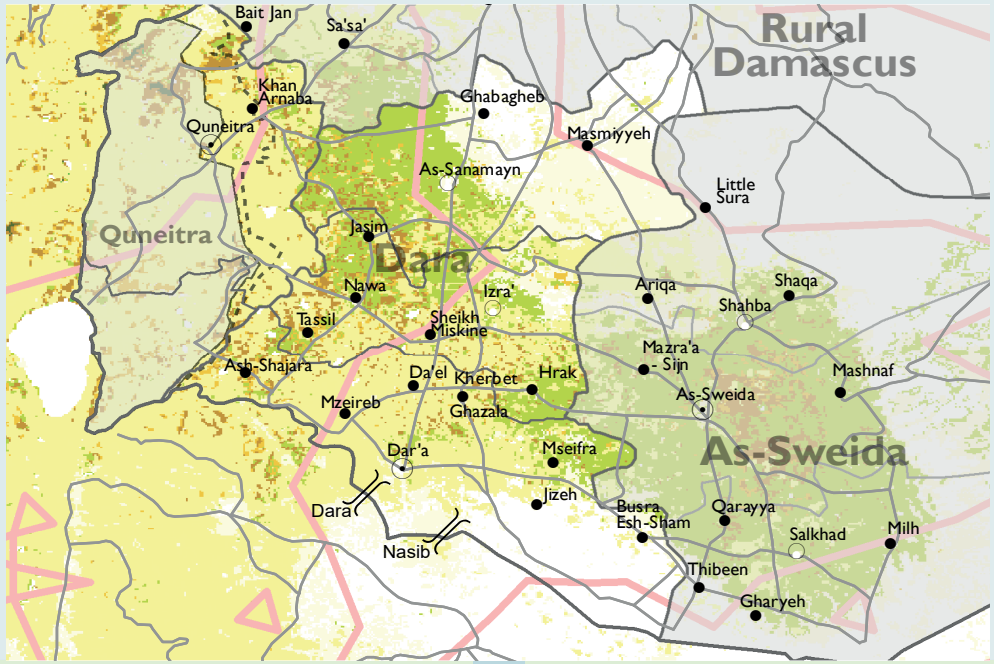
Zone B — East

Less rainfall

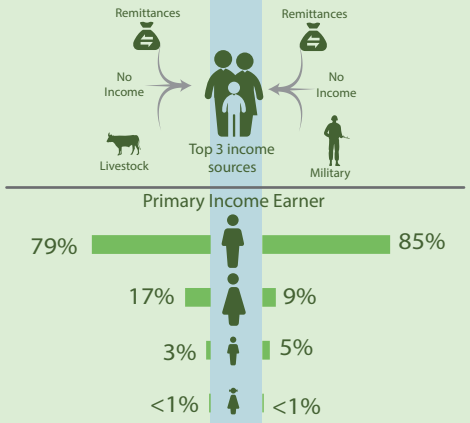
70 % Urban — 30% Rural

Zone B is wedged between government-controlled parts of Dar'a in the West and Swayda in the East. The Southern border to Jordan closed in mid-2015, leaving the only official border crossing at Ramtha for purley humanitarian convoys relating to UN Resolution 2191. The main urban center is Dar'a city, which had a population of over 100,000 prior to the crisis. This is where the first uprising in 2011 took place against the regime in Syria.

- Less reliant on agriculture
- Higher incomes
- Includes Dar'a city, the main urban centre of both governorates
- Ongoing conflict around Dar'a city between Opposition and Government forces
- Higher population density



Zone A		Zone B
Av. Size of farms: 1,324 dn (1 dunum = 0.1 hectare)		Av. Size of farms: 6,963 dn (1 dunum = 0.1 hectare)
84% Rainfed Areas		79% Rainfed Areas
16% Irrigated Areas		31% Irrigated Areas
Average HH size: 7.1		Average HH size: 5.8
Average income: 29,000 SYP		Average income: 55,000 SYP
Internally Displaced Persons: 22 %		Internally Displaced Persons: 20 %
Head of HH with disability: 20 %		Head of HH with disability: 10 %
Female headed households: 21 %		Female headed households: 13 %
Livestock Engagement: 35 %		Livestock Engagement: 24 %
University Degree: 17 %		University Degree: 5 %
Agriculture Engagement: 15 %		Agriculture Engagement: 5 %



Effects of the Crisis

Zone A — West

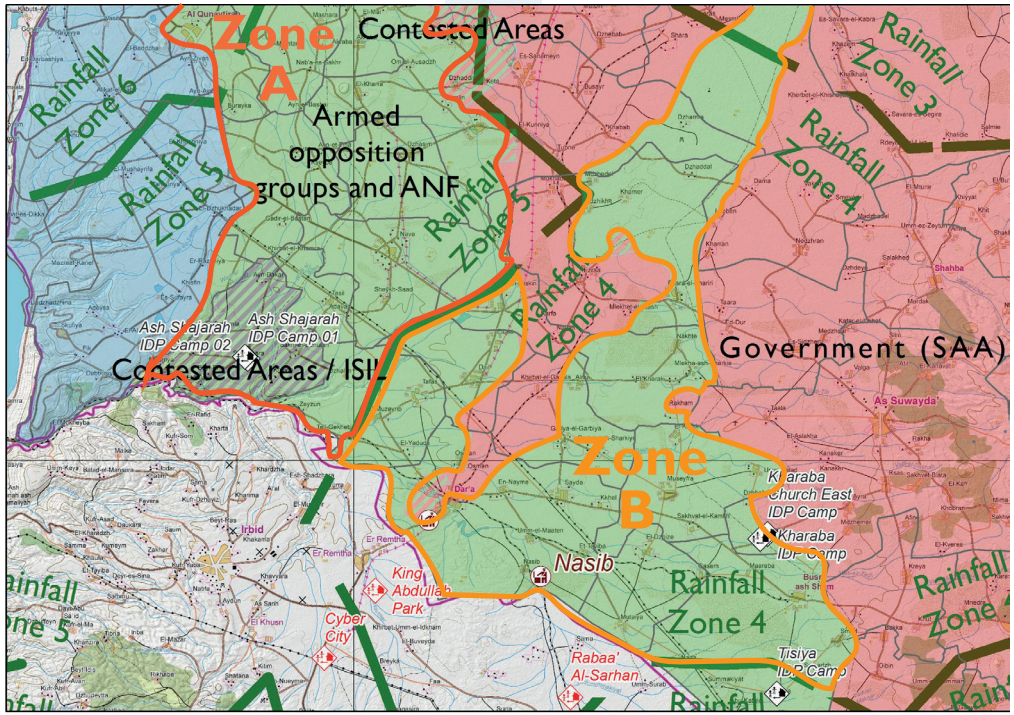
Zone B — East

Average FCS: 75 (West) — 60 (East)

Average CSI: 14 (West) — 6 (East)

West: 20.1% Urban — 79.9% Rural

East: 70 % Urban — 30% Rural



Higher food consumption scores and less dependent on emergency coping strategies

Boys in militias

Herd Sizes

	West	East
Cattle	2.8	1.6
Sheep	26	33.7
Poultry	20	13.5
Goats	4	7

General Crisis Effects for the two zones

General needs

- Energy/Fuel
- Food
- Water

Main livelihood Coping Strategies

- Spent Savings
- Borrowing money
- Food on Credit

Crop challenges

- Fuel unavailable /expensive
- Inputs unavailable /expensive
- Lack of water /irrigation

Livestock challenges

- Vet services are too expensive
- Feed is too expensive
- No water for livestock

Main Findings

- People rely much on food aid (90 percent!) and coping strategies
- Food security situation not critical when looking at key food security indicators
- Vulnerable households are more affected by the crisis
- Households are more than twice as often engaged in livestock than growing food crops
- Local economy has collapsed or suffered heavily in all surveyed areas
- Livelihoods in many areas have been destroyed or lost

NOTE:

A complimentary EMMA - Emergency Market Mapping Analysis was conducted in Dar'a and Quneitra that investigates food and input markets throughout the various chains. A summary of the EMMA findings should be read together with this brochure.

Recommendations

Focus on livelihood interventions

Support services and better governance

Agriculture and small businesses have been heavily affected resulting in a number of people shifting occupations. It is important to focus on developing capacities and supporting local initiatives to help stimulate the local economy and build resilience.

Promote local economic cycles

By facilitating improved access to agricultural inputs, processing facilities and markets, the heavily affected rural economy can be improved and growth can be generated. Alternative energy and input sources can assist in addressing high fuel and input prices, along with limited access. Voucher programs should also be considered as a potential alternative to over-depenence on food aid and could also assist in further stimulating the local economy.

Keep monitoring changes

On-site and remote monitoring needs to be considered. The situation is fragile as the conflict and its borders are dynamic. There are regular major movements of IDPs that need support. Seasonal changes have a strong effect on the people's situation.

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