



# VASyR 2016 Food security findings



Photo: WFP/Edward Johnson

## Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees

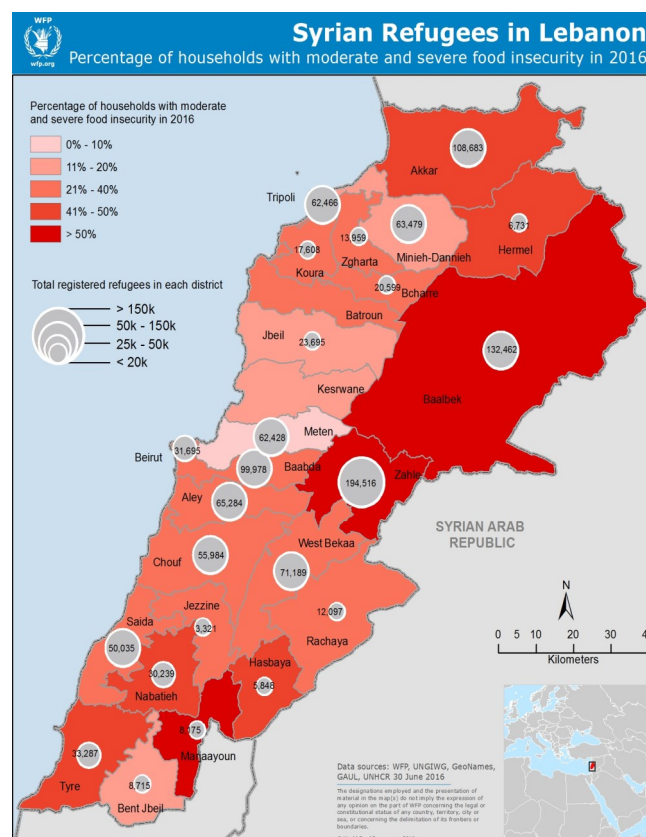
Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) is a joint multi-sectoral assessment of the living conditions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon that UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP have conducted for the past four years. VASyR is the most comprehensive survey of its kind. It focuses on economic vulnerability, education, food security, health, livelihoods, protection, shelter and WASH to help informed decision making and programme design of assistance providers.

## Food security findings

Food security of Syrian refugees worsened over the year. In 2016, 93 percent of refugee households are estimated to have some degree of food insecurity – an increase of 4 percent compared to 2015. The generous donor contributions made in early 2016 allowed a return to the full voucher value provided by WFP, slowing down the pace of deterioration. Food security analyses use a composite indicator that considers food consumption, food expenditure share and coping strategies. Households are categorised in four groups according to severity – food secure, mildly food insecure, moderately food insecure and severely food insecure. The majority of households – 58 percent – fall in the mild food insecurity category, whilst 34 percent are moderately food insecure and 1.6 percent severely food insecure.

Households headed by women were more food insecure (96 percent) than the households headed by men (92 percent).

The most food insecure districts are Akkar, Baalbek, Hermel, Marjaayoun, Nabatieh, Tyre and Zahle. Apart from Hermel, in all of these districts the percentage of households with severe and moderate food insecurity significantly increased in 2016.



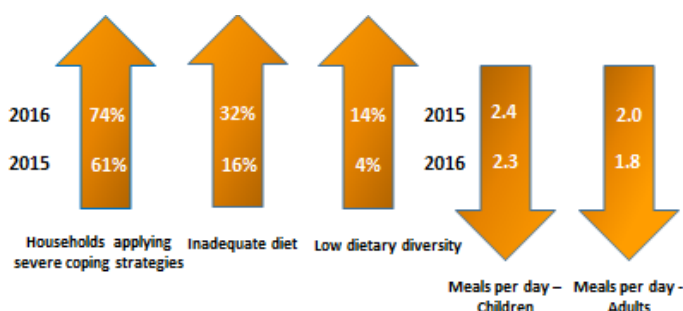
Percentage of households with moderate and severe food insecurity by district. Source: VASyR 2016

## Components of food insecurity

Access to food remains limited for most Syrian refugees. Food insecurity is determined by two main factors. Firstly, 32 percent of refugees have inadequate diets meaning that they are lacking a variety or quantity or both of nutritious food. In addition, 14 percent have low dietary diversity and the number of meals consumed per day were reduced.

Secondly, households adopt more severe strategies to cope with lack of food. Three-fourths of households use crisis and/or emergency coping strategies such as reducing essential non-food expenditure including education and health, selling productive assets, taking children out of school, sending children to work and selling houses or land.

The coping strategies have become more irreversible as households' remaining saving and assets had been already exhausted. Additionally, households are adopting a combination of food and non-food related strategies rather than a single coping strategy.



Main components of food insecurity. Sources: VASyR 2015 and 2016

Households headed by women have more inadequate diet than those headed by men (41 percent vs 30 percent). Also, they adopt severe coping strategies more than men-headed households (77 percent vs 74 percent).

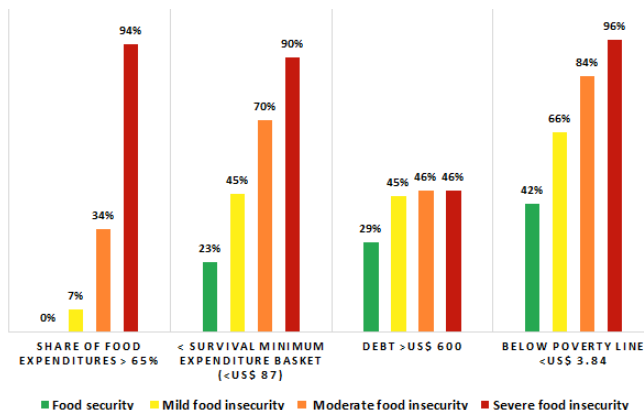
## Characteristics of the food insecure

The VASyR 2016 results confirm WFP's programmatic assumption that food insecure households are poorer than food secure households. They have more debts, allocate the majority of their expenses on food, and the percentage of households living below the survival minimum basket is higher among the food insecure households.

Limited income sources remain one of the main constraints that refugees are facing, limiting their ability to buy food and maintain their livelihoods. Restrictions on employment and consequently

insufficient income make it more difficult for refugees to meet their basic needs without external assistance.

Food insecure households are more likely to lack income sources and depend on less sustainable sources such as informal credits and debts, and food vouchers.



Economic vulnerability indicators by food security categories. Source: VASyR 2016

## VASyR 2016 methodology and report

Between 23 May and 03 June 2016 WFP, UNICEF and UNHCR visited 4,569 UNHCR-registered Syrian refugee households randomly selected from 26 districts across Lebanon.

The population was stratified by districts to allow district and governorate level analysis. The household questionnaire was designed based on the VASyR 2015 questionnaire to ensure comparability. Qualitative information was gathered through focus group discussions conducted in each governorate.

In 2016, WFP continues to play a major role in leading VASyR, overseeing following chapters: coping strategies, economic vulnerability, food consumption, food security, infant and young child feeding practices, and livelihoods, in consultation with key partners.

The VASyR 2016 report will be released in December and available on [wfp.org/countries/lebanon](http://wfp.org/countries/lebanon).

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