



# SCPR'S Annual Bulletin

## for Consumer Price Index and Inflation in Syria 2022



Issue 1: 2022

## Preface

The bulletin provides an independent assessment of consumer prices and the rate of inflation in all Syrian regions, based on a monthly survey of consumer prices carried out by the Syrian Centre for Policy Research (SCPR) since October 2020. The SCPR had developed a methodology for building a price index based on the contents of consumption baskets, weights, and market choices. (See [SCPR's Consumer Price Index in Syria](#))

This bulletin presents the findings of the monthly consumer price survey and the changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in 2022 (with 2021 as the base year) broken down by region and types of main goods and services. Based on the CPI changes, the bulletin provides an estimate of the cost of living and poverty lines across every region of Syria.

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

AA	Autonomous Administration
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics in Syria
CPI	Consumer Price Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoS	Government of Syria
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
ILO	International Labour Organization
M-o-M	Month on month
SCPR	Syrian Centre for Policy Research
SIG	Syrian Interim Government
SYP	Syrian Pound
SSG	The Syrian Salvation Government
TL	Turkish Lira
USD	United States Dollar
Y-o-Y	Year on year

## Introduction

Despite the decline in military activity since April 2020, Syria continues to experience a significant economic deterioration, as well as a reduction in the levels of public services alongside an increase in levels of poverty, deprivation, food insecurity, unemployment, increasing prices and the cost of living. The root of this economic deterioration lies in the fact that those in control on the ground continue to perpetuate the conflict economy, funnelling both material and human resources towards the conflict's top-level actors, as well as the fact that security and military forces continue to control the majority of available resources. To make matters worse, there is also the widespread adoption of policies of destruction, looting, confiscation and seizure of economic resources, and the inappropriate use of humanitarian aid.

These policies have resulted in an economic collapse, such that in 2022 Syrian GDP totalled USD 17.9 billion compared to USD 56.5 billion in 2010. The economy has contracted by approximately 20 per cent and 1 per cent in both 2021 and 2022. In addition, the economy has become largely dependent on foreign aid, the value of which has reached approximately 30 per cent of GDP, while the trade deficit stands at approximately 70 per cent of GDP, with continued reliance on foreign imports whose value is six-times greater than the total value of exports. The budget deficit is now greater than 50 per cent of GDP. These deficits have been exacerbated by the fact that the Syrian economy is largely at the mercy of external forces, such that the public debt in 2022 was worth 250 per cent of GDP.<sup>(1)</sup> The continuous budget deficits, which are covered by domestic loans from the Central Bank of Syria, have accelerated the decline in the value of the currency, such that the average value of the Syrian Pound against the US dollar was SYP 1,935 in 2020, SYP 3,393 in 2021, and SYP 4,392 in 2022.

The factors behind the deterioration, namely the decline in production, weak local demand, the collapse in both public and private spending, the worsening trade and fiscal deficits, and the collapse in the value of the Syrian Pound, have all been compounded by the institutionalisation of the conflict economy. This trend has been accompanied by the political and economic fragmentation of the country, with the forces in charge of the four different regions each having their own different economic policies. The Autonomous Administration (AA) uses the Syrian Pound, but it has its own independent budget which mostly relies on revenues from oil sales and agricultural exports. Regions under the control of the Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) and the Syrian Interim Government (SIG) have adopted the Turkish Lira, which has rendered those areas entirely separate from the economic policies of the Syrian government, and brought those regions into the orbit of

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(1) According to SCPR calculations.

Turkish fiscal policy. Furthermore, prices in Syria have been significantly impacted by global inflation, including a rise in the cost of energy and food driven in part by the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

These factors have combined to produce both hyperinflation and an increase in inflationary pressures to record levels in recent years, which reflects the extent of the economic decline: in 2021 the rate of inflation rose to 110 per cent, and in 2022 the rate was 84.9 per cent. By way of comparison, the average rate of inflation in other Arab countries was 3.1 per cent in 2021 and 5.1 per cent in 2022, while globally inflation stood at 3.5 per cent and 8.5 per cent across the same period.<sup>(2)</sup>

Such persistently high prices destroy any chance of economic recovery and lead to a collapse in GDP and aggregate demand and employment, as well as wreak havoc to monetary and fiscal indicators. Furthermore, they have undermined human development status by limiting the amount that Syrian households can spend on health, education, food, and to meet their essential needs. These price increases lead to unprecedented levels of poverty and deprivation.

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(2) According to World Bank data.

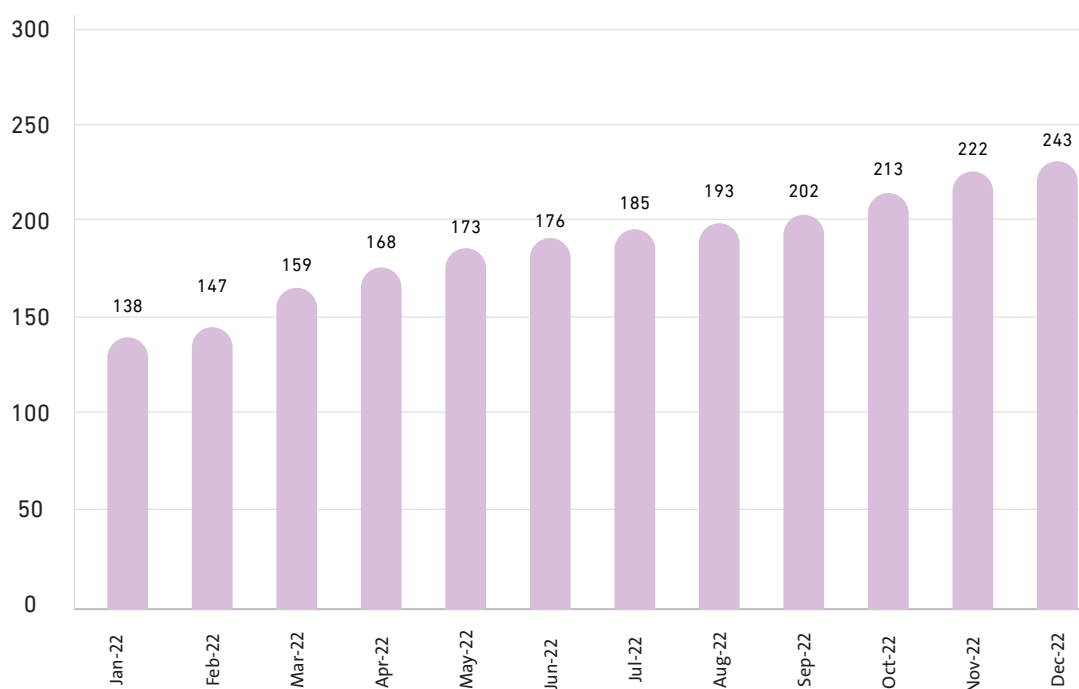
# 1. Syrian Consumer Price Index in 2022

Consumer prices have risen spectacularly since 2019. The consumer price index (CPI) produced by SCPR (with the base year 2021) has been recorded as 22, 47, 100, and 185 in the years 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 respectively. This means that prices have doubled approximately once per year, such that prices in 2022 are 800 per cent greater than they were in 2019. These figures show the extent of the hyperinflation, as well as the economic collapse accompanied by increasing instability and uncertainty, an acceleration of the deterioration in purchasing power, increasing production costs, and a collapse in the value of the Syrian currency.

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**Figure (1): Change to the monthly CPI in Syria, 2022 (The base year 2021)**



Source: Syrian Centre for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey, 2022.

The year 2022 saw a continuing increase in prices, with the CPI surging from 138 in January to 243 by December. The annual average rose to 185, compared to 100 in 2021 (the base year).

The CPI increases in 2022 are a consequence of the decline in economic activity, the downturn in production, and the government’s economic policy during that period. Price indexes rose in each of the following groups: transport, housing, water, electricity, gas and other



fuels, household equipment, and maintenance costs. Between January and December, the transport index rose from 131 to 301. This was a result of a confluence of factors, most importantly large interruptions in imports of oil derivatives to Syria during 2022, alongside a policy of reducing subsidies on gasoline and fuel oil in areas controlled by GoS, at the same time as the removal of a large number of people from the subsidy system (382,000 vehicle running on gasoline, and 73,000 vehicle running on fuel oil).<sup>(3)</sup> In Northwest Syria, fuel prices rose due to price increases in Turkey, while the cost of replacement parts also increased, as did the cost of royalties paid by drivers for both their passengers and the goods they transport.

The index for housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels also increased from 154 at the beginning of 2022 to 276 by the end of the year. These increases are multi-factorial:

**Firstly**, rental prices across the whole of Syria have risen in addition to an increase in the cost of living.

**Secondly**, the cost of electricity in all controlled areas has risen, while increased rationing of electricity in areas under the GoS or the Autonomous Administration (AA) control has led to more than eighteen-hour cuts per day, forcing residents to increase their reliance on expensive methods of accessing electricity such as communal generators or solar panels. In parts of Northwest Syria, Turkish electricity providers began charging for kilowatt hours in US dollars at the beginning of 2022, a move which increased the cost of electricity due to the weakness of the Turkish Lira against the US dollar.

**Thirdly**, the cost of accessing water from outside the water network (via wells and water tanks) increased due to a rise in transportation costs.

**Lastly**, there was a large increase in the cost of domestic fuel in areas under GoS control due to interruptions in the supply, which left households obliged to purchase fuel on the black market at inflated prices.<sup>(4)</sup> In addition, the government's policy to reduce subsidies from almost 600,000 households and to sell gas and fuel oil to them at market prices further increased the price of fuel.<sup>(5)</sup>

The index for household equipment and maintenance rose from 125 in early 2022 to 239 by the end of the year, which is mostly due to the collapse in the value of the Syrian Pound, which led manufacturers to update their costs on a regular (weekly or monthly) basis to reflect the frequent changes in the value of the currency (for more details, see Appendix 1).

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(3) According to the Syrian Petrol Supply and Distribution Corporation, February 2022

(4) Syrian Center for Policy Research (2022). *Socio-economic assessment surveys in Syria from 2020 to 2022*.

(5) According to the Ministry of Culture and Communications, February 2022.

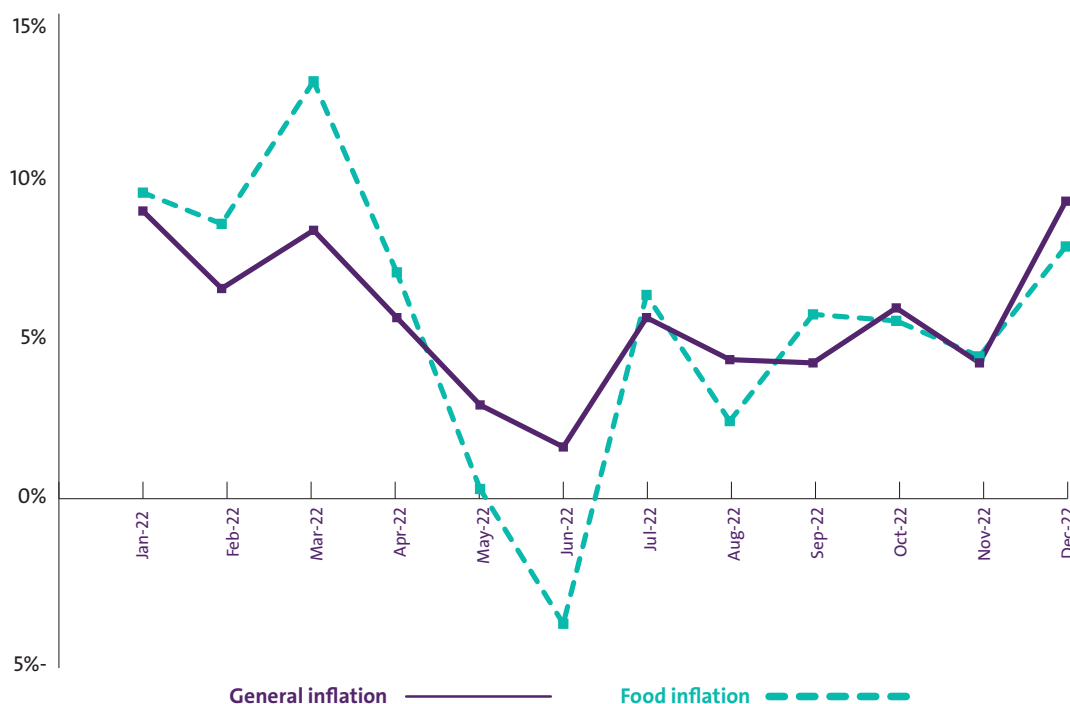
## 2. Analysis of inflation in 2022

### 2.1 Inflation Rate

The rate of annual inflation (Y-o-Y) in 2022 reached 84.9 per cent compared to 2021, 289 per cent compared to 2020, and 729 per cent compared to 2019 – a set of figures which reflect a state of hyperinflation.

The average rate of monthly inflation (M-o-M) in the overall price index was 5.63 per cent and 5.58 per cent for food prices in 2022. Monthly inflation reached its peak in January and December, with both months seeing a rate of 9.2 per cent. Monthly inflation in the cost of food reached its peak in March, with a rate of 13.6 per cent (Figure 2). Food price inflation was volatile due to an increase in global food prices as a result of the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Inflation in transportation was also volatile, reflecting the energy crisis, the frequent shortages of fuel, and rapidly changing costs, while education costs rose due to the large hike in fees charged by private schools and universities. Communications costs rose in response to a rise in the cost of landline and mobile phone calls in mid-2022.

**Figure (2): Monthly general and food inflation (M-o-M) in Syria during 2022**



Source: Syrian Centre for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey 2022.

## 2.2 Exchange Rate

The value of the Syrian Pound against the US dollar fell by 75 per cent in December 2022 compared to December of the previous year. It stood at SYP 3,567 per US dollar at the end of 2021, and fell to SYP 6,244 by the end of 2022. The exchange rate against the US dollar was on the increase throughout the year. The results of our analysis show that the direction of inflation in the CPI in all controlled areas was also increasing throughout the same period, with a discrepancy between changes in the exchange rate and inflation.

**Figure (3): Monthly changes in consumer prices and the value of the Syrian Pound compared to the US dollar, (per cent)**

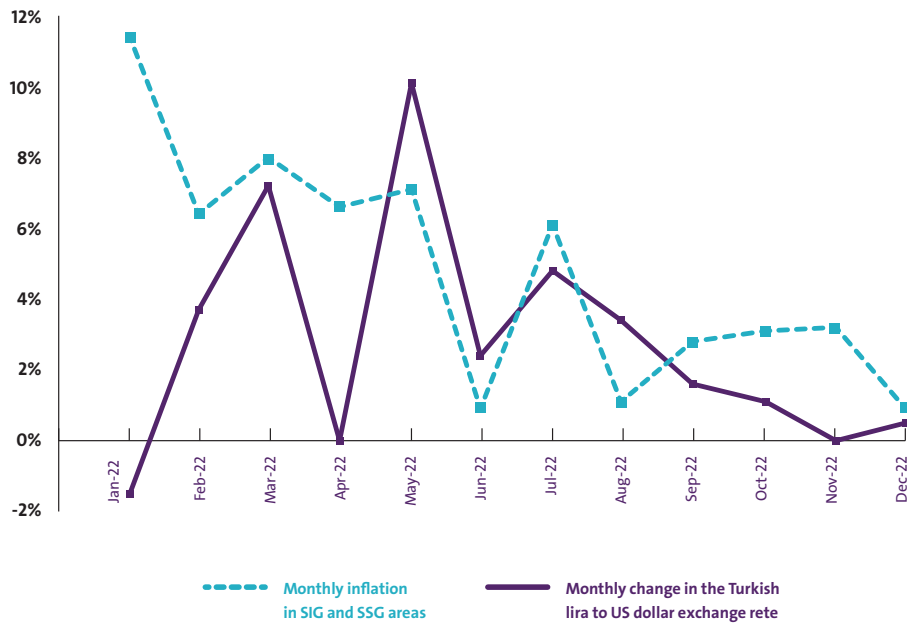


Source: Syrian Centre for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey 2022

In addition to the negative effects of the declining value of the Syrian Pound, the Syrian economy is adversely affected by the value of the Turkish Lira, with one of the most significant consequences of the Syrian conflict being the widespread adoption of the Turkish Lira as the main currency in Northwest Syria since 2020 (in areas controlled by the Syrian Salvation Government and the Interim Government). The fall in the value of the Turkish Lira had a huge impact on those parts of Northwest Syria due to their overwhelming reliance on the Turkish economy for most goods and services. The Turkish Lira fell by 28 per cent against the US dollar in 2022, from TL 13.6 at the end of 2022 to TL 18.8 by the end of the year.

“The fall in the value of the Turkish Lira had a huge impact on those parts of Northwest Syria due to their overwhelming reliance on the Turkish economy for most goods and services”

**Figure (4): Monthly changes in consumer prices and the value of the Turkish Lira compared to the US dollar, (per cent)**



Source: Syrian Centre for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey 2022

The most important factors behind inflation on the local level in Syria in 2022 were as follows: the continuing conflict, the ongoing deterioration, a reduction in industrial and agricultural production and services, the lack of investment and job opportunities, and growing budget deficit, trade deficit, and foreign debt. On the global level, the major contributors were the fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic which restricted global economic growth and hugely increased shipping costs in 2021 and 2022, an increase in food prices on global markets,<sup>(6)</sup> and the Russian invasion of Ukraine which led to an increase in the global price of oil.<sup>(7)</sup>

(6) According to data from the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, food prices rose by 14 per cent globally in 2022, meat rose by 10.3 per cent, dairy products by 19.8 per cent, oil rose by 13.9 per cent, and sugar rose by 4.8 per cent.

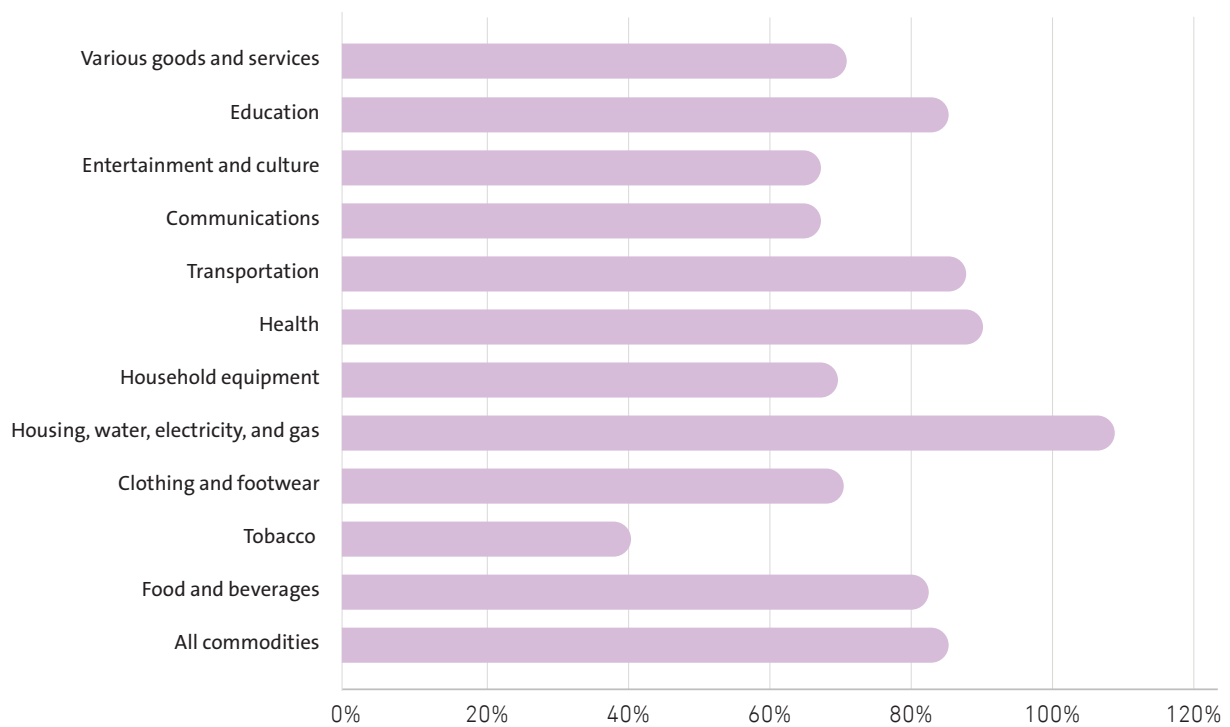
(7) Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the global price of a barrel of oil exceeded USD 120. Thereafter the price fell and by July 2022 it had settled at USD 80. The average price of a barrel of oil reached USD 103 in 2022, the highest it has been since 2013.

## 2.3 Inflation by Consumption Groups and Regions

### 1) Inflation by Consumption Groups

Inflation in four essential types of groups exceeded the average annual rate of inflation of 84.9 per cent in 2022: at the top was inflation in housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels with a rate of 109.5 per cent, followed by inflation in health costs which stood at 89.1 per cent. Third on the list was inflation in transportation costs, which reached 85.7 per cent, and lastly, education, where inflation reached 84.9 per cent. Inflation in the price of food and non-alcoholic beverages reached 81 per cent in 2022. These results portend the collapse on the economic level (transportation, electricity, and fuel), the cost-of-living crisis (housing, water, and electricity), and a shift in the standards of human development (education and health).

**Figure (5): Syria's average annual inflation (Y-o-Y) by consumption groups (per cent)**



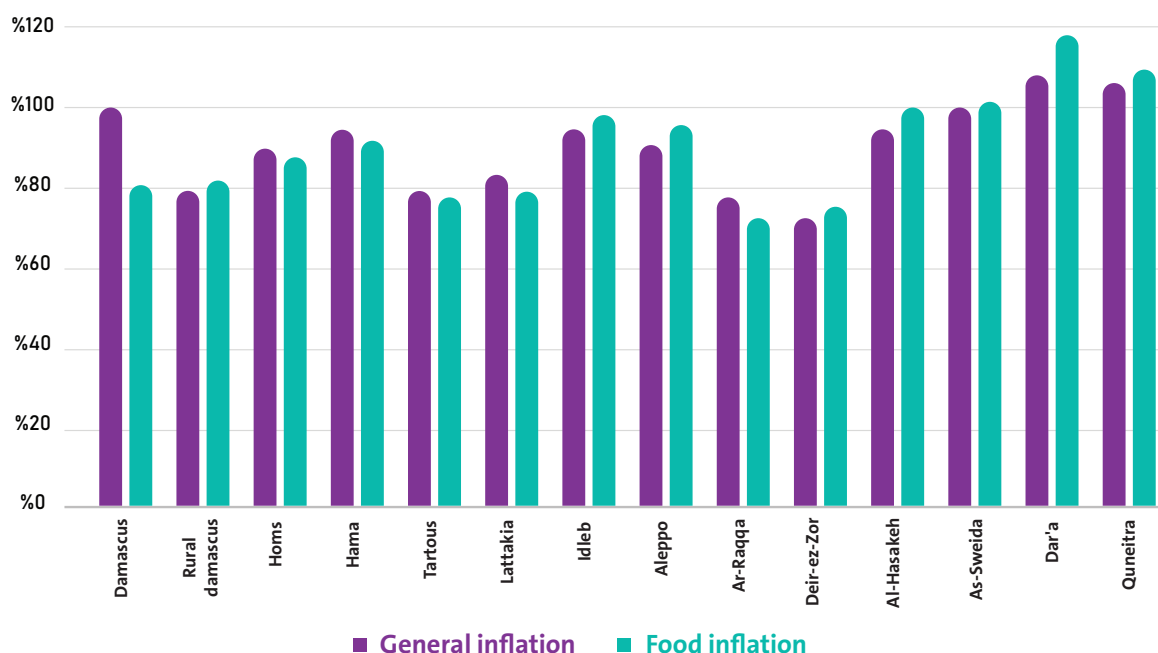
Source: Syrian Centre for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey 2022

### 2) Inflation by Region

Damascus Governorate recorded the highest rate of annual inflation (Y-o-Y) in 2022 at 101 per cent, followed by Idleb Governorate where inflation reached 92 per cent, followed by the governorates of Hama, Homs, and Aleppo where inflation was between 87 and 89 per cent. Deir-ez-Zor Governorate had the lowest rate of inflation at 71 per cent. In terms of food price inflation, Idleb Governorate recorded the highest figure at 97 per cent, followed by Dar'a Governorate where food price inflation reached 96 per cent, and Aleppo Governorate

where the figure was 95 per cent. The lowest rate of food price inflation was in Ar-Raqqa Governorate, where the figure was 71 per cent. Regions controlled by the SSG and SIG recorded the highest rates of food price inflation in 2022, with rates consecutively ranging between 96 per cent and 106 per cent, especially after the drop in the value of the Turkish Lira and the dollarisation of costs related to fuel and electricity. Meanwhile, inflation in areas under Syrian government control ranged between 79 and 82 per cent, with inflation in areas under AA control between 73 and 75 per cent.

**Figure (6): Syria's average annual inflation (Y-o-Y) by governorate during 2022 (per cent)**



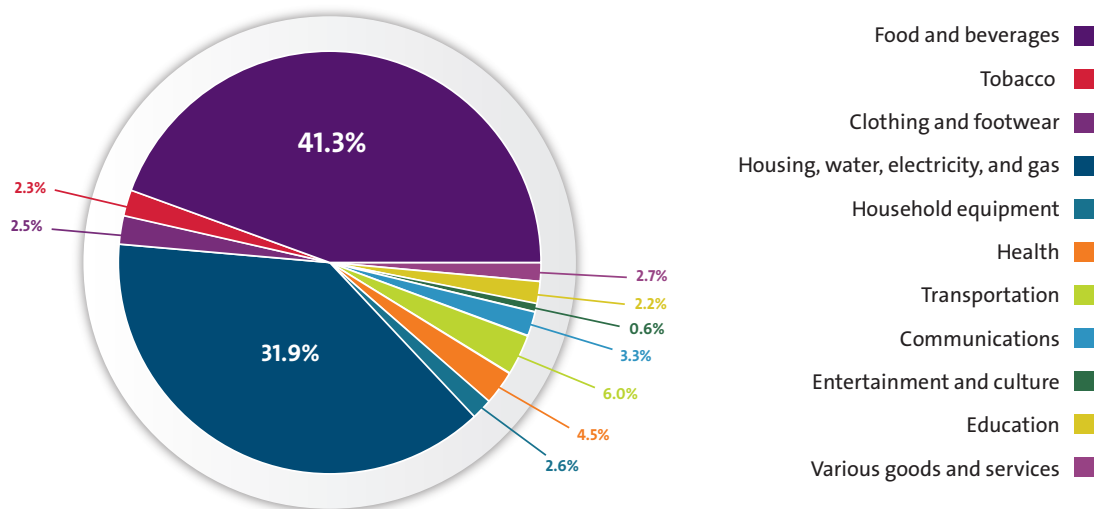
Source: Syrian Centre for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey 2022

## 2.4 Major consumption groups' contribution to Inflation

Food and non-alcoholic beverages retained their position as the largest driver of the 84.9 per cent rate of annual inflation in Syria in 2022.<sup>(8)</sup> Their contribution to inflation reached 41.3 per cent of general inflation in 2022. The next largest contributor was housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuel, which was responsible for 31.9 per cent of general inflation, followed by transportation which was responsible for 6 per cent, and health with 4.5 per cent. The combined contribution to inflation from other goods and services was 16 per cent.

“The food, housing, water, electricity and gas groups play a major role in the price hike, as their contribution to inflation exceeded 73 per cent during 2022. This reflects the sharp deterioration in the food security situation on the one hand, and the decline in access to decent housing and energy sources

Figure (7): Consumption groups' contribution to annual inflation in 2022 (per cent)



Source: Syrian Centre for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey 2022.

(8) Contribution to inflation refers to the contribution of each group of goods and services to the overall annual rate of inflation.

## **Next, we shall review the most important changes to the four largest drivers of inflation in Syria in 2022:**

### **1) Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages**

The increased cost of food and non-alcoholic beverages was the largest contributor to inflation in Syria in 2022. Their contribution to the overall rate of inflation was highest in areas under AA control at 50.5 per cent, compared with 41.3 per cent in areas under the control of the Salvation and Interim Governments, and the same figure in areas under GoS control. In terms of individual groups, the cost of dry legumes and vegetables climbed the most, with inflation reaching 100.4 per cent for those goods, followed by yogurt, cheese and eggs at 90.8 per cent, and sugar and sweet goods climbing by 84.6 per cent.

Comparing prices across the three controlled areas in Syria shows that areas under the control of GoS have the highest prices for food, followed by areas under AA control, and lastly areas under SIG and SSG control. In December 2022 the price of a kilogram of bulgar wheat rose to SYP 6,900 in areas under GoS control, and SYP 5,500 in AA-controlled areas, and SYP 5,000 in SIG and SSG controlled areas. The price of a kilogram of poultry meat rose to SYP 16,700 in GoS-controlled areas, and SYP 11,400 in AA-controlled areas, and SYP 10,700 in SSG and SIG controlled areas. The cost of a kilogram of sugar reached SYP 6,500 in GoS-controlled areas, and SYP 5,700 in AA-controlled areas, and SYP 5,500 in SSG and SIG controlled areas. The price of a kilogram of black tea stood at SYP 55,000 in GoS-controlled areas, and SYP 46,000 in AA-controlled areas, and in SSG/SIG controlled areas.



**Table (1): Average cost of foodstuffs in December 2022 (in SYP)**

#	Commodity	Unit	GoS areas	SSG/SIG areas	AA areas
1	Non-subsidized bread	1 kg	4,757	3,905	3,133
2	Poultry	1 kg	16,658	10,675	11,367
3	Bulgar wheat	1 kg	6,916	5,018	5,494
4	Broad beans	1 kg	6,587	6,256	6,062
5	Milk	1 kg	3,197	3,788	3,302
6	Vegetable oil	1 kg	17,917	10,733	11,908
7	Red apples	1 kg	3,418	3,556	4,416
8	Potatoes	1 kg	2,522	2,260	2,994
9	Sugar	1 kg	6,484	5,516	5,716
10	Black tea	1 kg	55,246	46,067	46,633

Source: Syrian Centre for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey 2022

## 2) Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels

Inflation in costs related to housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuel was the second greatest driver of inflation in Syria in 2022. Their contribution to inflation was slightly higher in GoS-controlled areas at 31.9 per cent, followed by SSG and SIG-controlled areas at 30.9 per cent, and 22.9 per cent in AA-controlled areas.

Monthly rent prices varied across Syria, with the average in GoS-controlled areas reaching SYP 314,000 in December 2022. In SSG and SIG-controlled areas, the same figure stood at SYP 357,000, while in AA-controlled areas held areas it stood at SYP 450,000. Comparing costs related to housing and living across the three controlled areas in Syria reveals that they are highest in SSG and SIG-held areas, followed by government-controlled areas, and lastly AA-controlled areas (see Table 2).

**Table (2): Average cost of certain goods / services related to housing in December 2022 (in SYP)**

#	Good/service	Unit	GoS areas	SSG/SIG areas	AA areas
1	Monthly housing rent	Monthly	314,275	357,091	455,556
2	Water from public water network	1 cubic metre	18	1,899	33
3	Purchased drinking water	1 cubic metre	19,237	12,295	8,133
4	Electricity from the public grid	1 kWh	54	1,141	18
5	Electricity from other sources	1 kWh	2,855	1,994	254
6	Gas cylinder at subsidised price	10 kg	11,534	N/A	7,833
7	Gas cylinder at unsubsidised price	10 kg	150,066	80,858	66,222
8	Domestic fuel oil at subsidised price	1 litre	700	N/A	133
9	Domestic fuel oil at unsubsidised price	1 litre	9,777	3,873	1,722

Source: Syrian Centre for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey 2022

### 3) Transportation

The third-largest driver of inflation in Syria in 2022 was transportation costs. Its contribution to overall inflation was greatest in SSG and SIG-held areas (6.8 per cent), followed by government-controlled areas (5.8 per cent), and then AA-controlled areas (4.9 per cent).

Upon comparison of the separate controlled areas in Syria, it is evident that the rise in transportation costs was most significant in areas controlled by SIG/SSG compared to regions controlled by the government or the AA. For example, the cost of a fare on a microbus in GoS-controlled areas reached approximately SYP 500 in December 2022, but cost SYP 950 in AA areas. However, a microbus journey in SIG and SSG areas cost SYP 1,650. In GoS-controlled and AA areas, gasoline is sold at a subsidised cost: a litre of subsidised gasoline in AA areas costed SYP 1,200 at the end of 2022, while the price in government-controlled areas exceeded the SYP 3,000 mark. The price of unsubsidised gasoline reached SYP 3,600 in AA areas, and SYP 8,000 in areas under SIG/SSG control. In GoS areas, the price exceeded SYP 14,000.

#### 4) Health

Healthcare costs were the fourth largest driver of inflation in Syria in 2022 and their contribution to inflation was greatest in AA areas (6 per cent), followed by GoS-controlled areas (5.1 per cent), and finally SIG and SSG areas, where healthcare costs contributed to 1.6 per cent of total inflation.

These figures are evidence of the varying costs of goods and services related to health in controlled areas. Costs were highest in SIG and SSG areas, followed by GoS-controlled areas, with health costs lowest in AA areas. The rise in health costs reflect the increase in the price of health services, as doctors increased their consultation fees after government subsidies were lifted. In GoS-controlled areas, the cost of an appointment with a specialist reached SYP 20,000 at the end of 2022, while in SIG and SSG areas the cost stood at SYP 19,000, and SYP 18,000 in AA areas. Across all of Syria, hospitals increased their fees, while simultaneously the public health situation deteriorated, and pressure on the healthcare system rose throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. The Ministry of Health in GoS areas also increased the cost of medicine on two occasions in 2022 after a number of local companies ceased production of several medicines due to an increase in production costs.<sup>(9)</sup>

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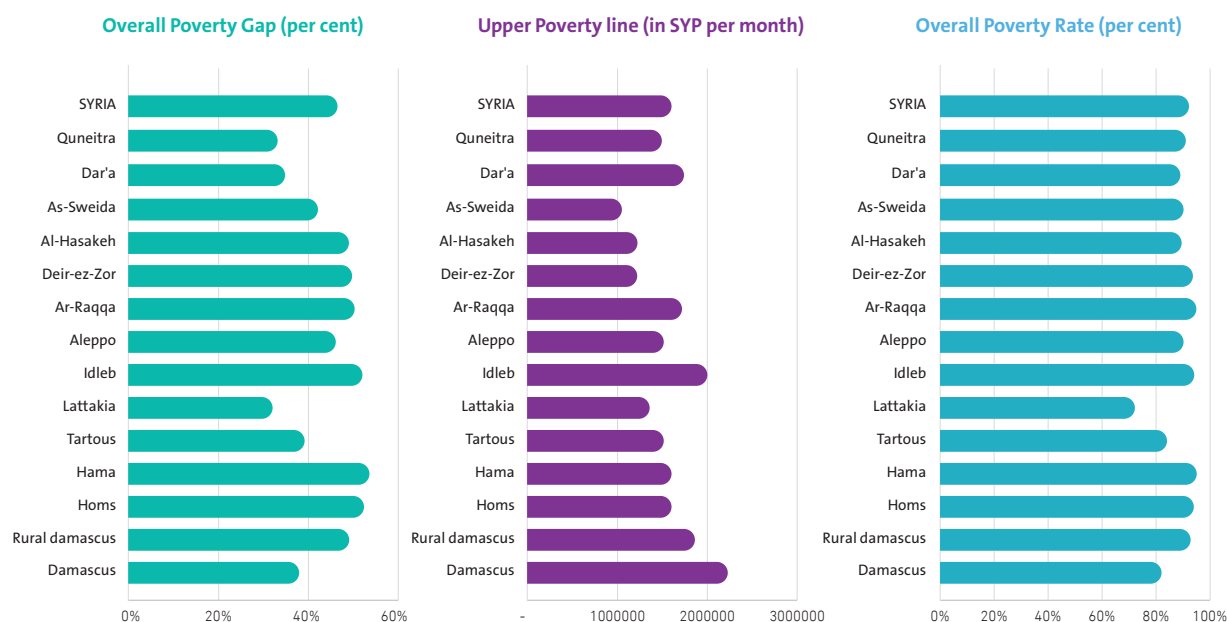
(9) According to the Ministry of Health's Pharmacy Directorate, the Ministry of Health in GoS areas raised the price of medicines by 20-30 per cent in February, and in December it raised the price of 20 types of medication.

# 3. Poverty in Syria

Long term serial analysis of the consumer price (base year 2009) shows that in 2022 the CPI has increased 87-fold compared to 2009, while in the same period, food costs have increased by a factor of 106. Those levels of inflation have led to an increase in the poverty rate by similar amounts.<sup>(10)</sup> (SCPR's Consumer Price Index in Syria).

**Overall poverty:** SCPR estimates show that rates of overall poverty reached their peak at the end of 2022, standing at 90 per cent. The average upper poverty line for a Syrian household stood at SYP 1.6 million per month, compared with SYP 870,000 in 2021. On the regional level, the governorates of Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, Idlib, and Aleppo recorded the highest levels of overall poverty rates. Those governorates had suffered from widespread poverty before the war and became sites of fighting during the conflict. The poverty gap (i.e. the relative difference in average spending by those in poverty and the poverty line) rose dramatically in 2022, reaching 46 per cent (compared to 4 per cent in 2010), meaning that the average monthly expenditure of a Syrian household in 2022 was less than half of the value of the overall poverty line in the same period (Figure 8).

**Figure (8): Overall poverty rate, overall poverty gap, and monthly upper poverty line in 2022**

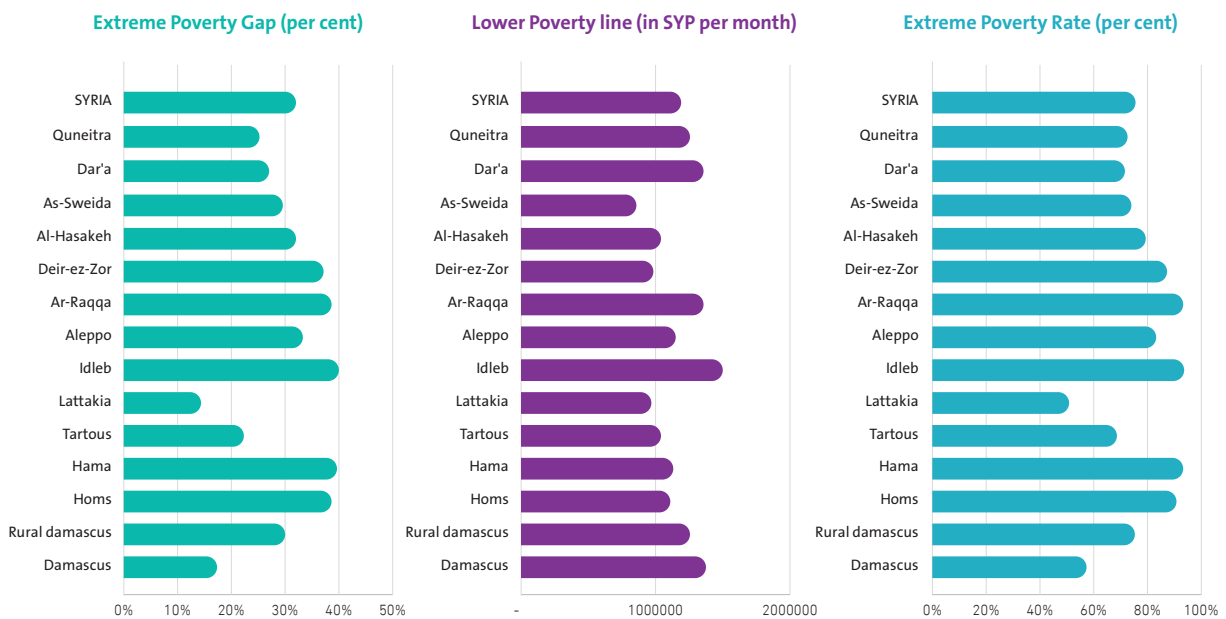


Source: Syrian Centre for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey 2022

(10) For the years 2021 and 2022, the poverty level was calculated by measuring the impact of inflation on the 2009 poverty line.

**Extreme poverty:** the extent of extreme poverty is determined by using the national minimum poverty line as a proxy measure of the inability of a household to meet its basic needs. Our estimates show that by the end of 2022, 78 per cent of the Syrian population were living in extreme poverty. In terms of specific regions, the governorates of Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, Idlib, Hama, and Homs had the highest numbers of people living in extreme poverty. At the end of 2022, the approximate value of the line for extreme poverty stood at SYP 1.16 million per month for a single household, compared to SYP 630,000 at the end of 2021. In the context of an increase in extreme poverty, the poverty gap increased to reach 32 per cent in 2022. The gap was highest in Idleb Governorate and lowest in Lattakia (Figure 9).

**Figure (9): Extreme poverty rate, extreme poverty gap by the lower poverty line by governorate in 2022**



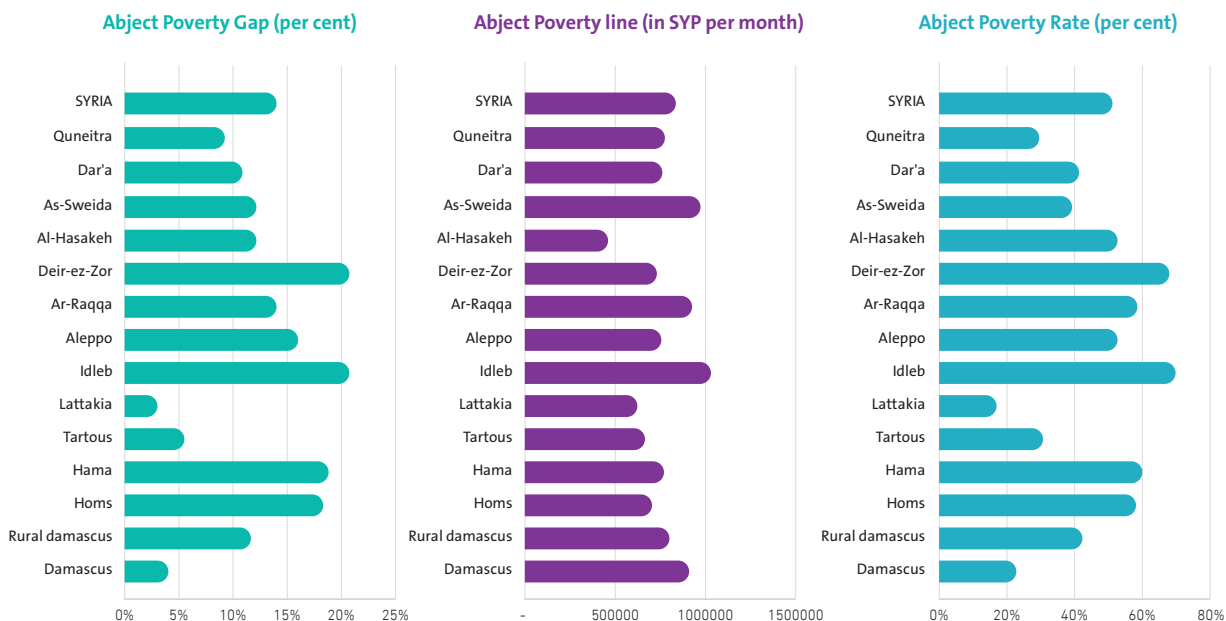
Source: Syrian Centre for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey 2022

**Abject poverty:** As measured by the inability to purchase food, abject poverty in Syria in 2022 stood at 48 per cent. Given that this figure stood at less than 1 per cent in 2010, it shows how widespread abject poverty has become since the outbreak of the conflict. Increased food prices across different areas of Syria have prevented people from being able to access enough food to meet the internationally recommended daily calorie intake.

“The abject poverty line for a family of 5 members in Syria was about SYP 736 thousand per month, and the extreme poverty line was SYP 1.16 million, and the overall poverty line was SYP 1.6 million in 2022”

The governorates of Deir-ez-Zor, Idlib, Hama and Homs have the highest levels of abject poverty as measured in this way. According to this measure, the abject poverty line for a single Syrian household stood at SYP 736,000 in 2022, compared to SYP 400,000 in 2021. The abject poverty gap stood at 14 per cent, and was highest in the governorates of Idleb and Deir-ez-Zor, and was lowest in Damascus and Lattakia governorates (Figure 10).

**Figure (10): Abject poverty rate, abject poverty gap by the abject poverty line by governorate in 2022**



Source: Syrian Centre for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey 2022

The fact that most Syrians are living in poverty, along with the prolonged and acute nature of the poverty, are evidence of the disastrous impact of the conflict in all areas of Syria. The collapse in both real-terms income and consumption have not been symmetrical, as levels of inequality in poverty have varied by area, governorate, and sector. Furthermore, wealth and income have become increasingly concentrated among warring elites and the militias allied with them, while poverty and deprivation have become more widespread among the majority of the civilian population in all regions. The relatively luxurious lifestyle enjoyed by the wartime elites stands in stark contrast to the struggle for food experienced by the rest of the Syrian population.

## 4. Wages in Syria

While inflation soared, the value of real wages continued to decline in 2022, making it very difficult for Syrians to meet even their most basic needs. This trend was accompanied by the implementation of varied strategies to approach wages by the conflict parties, although they all share low levels of wages in their areas of control. This is especially evident in the policy of the Syrian government which has failed to raise wages, and in fact contributed to the furthering of financial strain by removing subsidies from 600,000 Syrian families, approximately 15 per cent of all households.<sup>(11)</sup> This policy was enacted on the basis that the public had no need for subsidies, while 90 per cent of the population live in poverty. As for the AA, it raised wages with a one-off raise of SYP 100,000 in October 2022,<sup>(12)</sup> and a 40 per cent rise such that a university-educated worker earns SYP 370,000. In areas under SIG control, wages were also raised following a decree issued by the Turkish government,<sup>(13)</sup> such that the wage of a schoolteacher rose to TL 1,925 (which was worth SYP 515,000 at the time).<sup>(14)</sup> However, the SSG made no changes to employee wages, which are denominated indollars.<sup>(15)</sup>

In 2022, average monthly wages for a graduate employee in the public sector stood at SYP 176,000, while in the private sector wages stood at SYP 252,000, and SYP 675,000 in the civil society sector. Comparing wages in controlled areas in Syria reveals that in the private and public sectors wages are highest in SIG and SSG areas, followed by AA areas, with wages lowest in GoS-controlled areas (Table 3).

(11) Subsidised goods comprise foodstuffs such as bread, sugar, and rice, as well as domestic heating oil, petrol, and cooking gas.

(12) The executive council of the AA in Northwest Syria added a further one-off payment of SYP 100,000 for public sector employees under decree no. 384 on 20 October 2022, thereby increasing public sector wages to SYP 370,000 per month.

(13) On 25 November 2022, the General Security Directorate of the Turkish executive branch issued decree no. 120730 which changed the salaries of public sector workers in areas under Turkish control, i.e. those areas covered by Operation Euphrates Shield, Operation Olive Branch, and Operation Spring.

(14) The salary of a married school teacher rose to TL 1925, with unmarried teachers earning TL 1750

(15) In SSG areas, public sector workers are paid in US dollars, with their wages paid in Turkish Lira at the exchange rate. In SIG areas, salaries are paid in Turkish Lira, while in GoS and AA areas public sector workers are paid in Syrian Pounds.

**Table (3): Average monthly wages in Syria by controlled area in 2022 (in SYP)**

	GoS areas	SSG/SIG areas	AA areas	Syria
<b>A – public sector workers</b>				
Staff wages (professor)	224,232	1,758,607	437,500	426,756
Staff wages (graduate)	103,838	422,130	295,000	175,856
Staff wages (4th grade)	95,346	286,901	295,000	153,846
<b>B – private sector workers</b>				
Company director salary	633,386	1,700,699	972,222	805,617
Shop worker salary	215,317	549,621	208,333	252,055
<b>C – civil society workers</b>				
Staff wages (graduate)	433,348	1,758,607	1,042,306	675,277

Source: Syrian Centre for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey 2022

Comparing wages in Syria with the national poverty line in 2022 reveals that wages are lower than all the poverty lines (overall, extreme, and abject). Wages for a public-sector graduate worker are 89 per cent lower than the maximum poverty line, 84 per cent lower for a private sector worker, and 58 per cent lower for a civil society employee. After adjusting the value of wages to the average exchange rate against the dollar in the same year, the monthly salary of a public sector graduate worker is worth approximately USD 40,<sup>(16)</sup> while the monthly salary of a private sector worker is worth USD 58, and the salary of a civil society employee is worth USD 154.

The massive collapse in the real value of wages in Syria, accompanied by a huge deterioration in employment conditions, has led to a significant decline in the societal value of work and has increased the reliance on humanitarian aid and foreign remittances. These conditions have also forced many people to become involved with the war economy, illegal activity, or emigration.

(16) This comprises public sector workers in all four administrations in Syria and does not only refer to government-controlled areas. graduate staff in GoS areas are the lowest paid public sector workers, receiving USD 23.7 per month in 2022.



## Appendix

### Appendix (1): Consumer Price Index in Syria by Major consumption groups and months during 2022, (2021 = 100)

Type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	2022
All commodities	137.8	146.8	159.0	167.9	172.8	175.5	185.4	193.3	201.5	213.4	222.3	242.7	184.9
Food and non-alcoholic beverages	133.6	144.9	164.7	176.3	176.8	168.8	179.4	183.7	194.2	204.9	214.0	230.7	181.0
Tobacco	121.1	123.6	129.1	127.3	130.9	132.9	134.7	140.4	144.1	154.2	162.0	182.9	140.3
Clothing and footwear	130.5	131.4	136.9	156.0	160.6	163.8	166.6	171.9	177.8	190.7	208.7	234.1	169.1
Housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels	153.9	165.5	171.1	176.8	187.9	201.7	216.9	225.9	232.4	248.6	257.3	276.3	209.5
Household equipment and maintenance	124.6	128.8	136.8	145.4	151.4	158.2	165.5	176.2	185.5	201.5	213.1	238.9	168.8
Health	141.7	153.0	164.2	170.0	178.1	182.5	194.5	201.4	206.7	213.0	225.2	238.7	189.1
Transportation	130.7	133.5	140.5	152.5	160.5	169.1	171.3	205.6	214.3	219.5	230.0	300.9	185.7
Communications	131.8	134.1	138.7	138.9	146.3	179.5	183.5	186.3	187.8	188.9	189.4	190.1	166.3
Culture and entertainment	122.7	126.2	132.6	148.0	148.6	152.8	159.7	175.2	187.9	201.9	207.2	232.8	166.3
Education	150.5	152.6	156.5	161.1	168.7	172.2	177.5	188.2	191.3	231.8	232.1	235.8	184.9
Various goods and services	126.8	132.5	142.7	155.4	158.8	162.8	170.0	177.6	186.7	196.6	203.7	226.0	170.0

Source: Syrian Centre for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey 2022.

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