



Monthly Bulletin for Consumer Price Index and Inflation in Syria

Issue (10) – October 2023



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 Center for Policy Research (SCPR) since October 2020. The SCPR had developed a methodology for building a price index based on components of the consumer basket, weighting, and market selection (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) for **October 2023** (with 2021 as the base year) broken down by region and the major consumption groups. Based on the CPI changes, the bulletin provides an estimate of the cost of living and poverty lines at the local level in all Syrian regions.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AA	Autonomous Administration
CPI	Consumer Price Index
GoS	Government of Syria
M-o-M	Month on month
SCPR	Syrian Center for Policy Research
SIG	Syrian Interim Government
SSG	Syrian Salvation Government
SYP	Syrian Pound
TL	Turkish Lira
USD	United States Dollar
Y-o-Y	Year on year

1. Inflation in Syria, October 2023

In October 2023, the general CPI achieved annual inflation (Y-o-Y) of 148.5 per cent and monthly inflation (M-o-M) of 3.9 per cent.

The Education group recorded the highest monthly inflation level in October 2023 at 23.9 per cent, with public and private universities raising registration fees for the new academic season (2023-2024), as the Ministry of Higher Education issued three decisions to raise public university fees for regular and parallel education in GoS areas.¹ Registration fees for a new university student (for applied colleges) rose to SYP 39000 instead of SYP 15000 in the previous academic season.² Registration fees in private universities also increased, bringing the credit hour price³ in universities located in GoS areas to SYP 130000 instead of SYP 75000 in the previous academic season (Faculty of Business Administration). Registration fees in universities affiliated with the SIG in the Aleppo countryside increased by 150 per cent, bringing the fees for registering a new student at the "Aintep University Branch" in Aleppo to TL 500 instead of TL 200. Registration fees in universities affiliated with the SSG in Idlib increased by 33 per cent, reaching the registration fee for a new student at the University of Idlib increased to USD 200 annually instead of USD 150 in the previous season.⁴

The Clothes and shoes group recorded a high monthly inflation rate in October 2023, at 12 per cent. The average price of men's wool sweaters reached SYP 146000 within Syria, local jeans reached SYP 145000, and imported jeans reached SYP 239000. The set of cotton underwear prices (two pieces) reached SYP 60000, and a cotton scarf (one piece) reached SYP 40000. It is worth noting that the Syrian government allowed industrial establishments operating in the production of cotton yarn to import ginned cotton for six months, starting from May 2023. In mid-September, it also set the purchase price of a kilogram of cotton beloved by farmers (continued to the ginned land) for the 2023 season at SYP 10000. Instead of SYP 4000.⁵ The AA set the price of a ton of beloved cotton at USD 800.⁶

¹ They are Resolution No. 55 for students of bachelor's degree, qualification studies, specialization, and postgraduate studies. Resolution No. 56 includes amendments to parallel fees for old and new students. Resolution No. 61 includes adjustments to yearly fees for old and new students.

² Registration fees for new students include the following: registration fee SYP 8000, annual fee SYP 4000, university services fee SYP 25000, student fee SYP 2000.

³ According to the credit hour system, the academic year consists of three semesters: 1) the fall semester (first), 2) the spring semester (second), and 3) the summer semester (optional and not obligatory for students). The first and second semesters each consist of 16 weeks, while the summer semester consists of 8 weeks.

⁴ Note: University registration fees in the SIG areas are priced in Turkish lira and the SSG areas in US dollars.

⁵ The marketed quantities of popular cotton in GoS areas for the current season (2023) are very small, amounted to only 11000 tons. In 2011, the local production of beloved cotton exceeded the one million tons barrier, decreased in 2015 to 100 thousand tons, and deteriorated to 20 thousand tons in 2021. This is due to the decline in cultivated areas from 250 thousand hectares to less than 35 thousand hectares, during the war years, the decline in the level of the Euphrates River, the increase in electrical rationing hours, and the scarcity of fuel.

⁶ The AA did not announce its intention to purchase the cotton crop from farmers in its areas because the stores of the Agricultural Development Company in Deir-Ezzor were filled with cotton last year due to the lack of sufficient drainage channels and the lack of gins in its areas. It allowed the export of cotton to areas outside its control. However, farmers find it difficult to export their beloved cotton to the GoS areas, which requires receiving the cotton in Hama due to high transportation costs and royalties at checkpoints on both sides.

Table (1): Monthly consumer price inflation in Syria for October 2023 by consumption group (base year 2021 =100) and (inflation in percentages)

#	Group	September 2023 index	October 2023 index	Monthly Inflation (M-o-M)
	All commodities	510.7	530.8	3.9%
1	Food and non-alcoholic beverages	529.7	546.1	3.1%
2	Tobacco	425.4	432.6	1.7%
3	Clothes and shoes	503.2	563.5	12.0%
4	Housing, water, electricity, and other fuel oils	544.8	574.7	5.5%
5	Household equipment, supplies and maintenance	537.5	540.4	0.5%
6	Health	469.0	481.2	2.6%
7	Transportation	591.7	592.0	0.0%
8	Communications	215.7	216.9	0.6%
9	Entertainment and culture	506.9	515.2	1.6%
10	Education	383.7	475.3	23.9%
11+12	Various commodities and services	490.3	508.4	3.7%

Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2023.

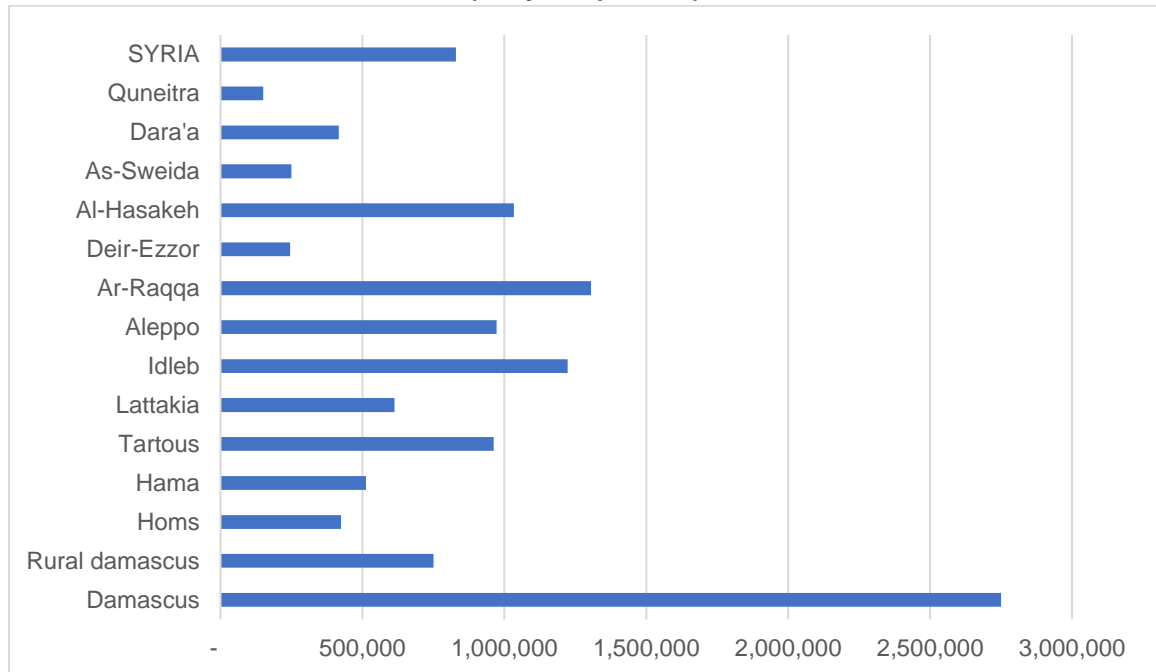
The prices of the Shoe group also increased by 11 per cent during October 2023, bringing the average for a synthetic leather shoe to SYP 14,000 within Syria and an imported sports shoe to SYP 330000.

The housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuel oils group recorded monthly inflation of 5.5 per cent during October 2023 compared to September 2023. At the level of its subgroups, the prices of the Works for maintenance and reparation of the dwelling group increased by 9 per cent. The Ministry of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection issued a decision to raise the price of a packaged Portland cement of 32.5 calibres produced by companies affiliated with the General Cement Corporation rose to SYP 1.76 million per ton instead of SYP 700 thousand in the previous month (an increase of 151 per cent). It also raised the price of a ton of cement produced by private sector companies to SYP 1.77 million.⁷ This is a result of decisions to raise electricity and fuel prices issued in the previous two months, which led to a significant increase in construction and restoration costs in GoS areas.

⁷ Under Resolutions [No. 3219](#) and [No. 3220](#) issued by the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Protection on 10/4/2023.

House rental prices increased during October by 8.6 per cent, so the average house rent (100 square meters) within Syria reached SYP 829 thousand (note that there is a wide disparity between the governorates, as shown in Figure 1). As a result of the decline in the exchange rate of the Syrian pound, in front of the dollar and the inflation that occurred in the last two months, homeowners in GoS areas raised rental prices, demanding payment based on the USD or requiring the receipt of house rent for the whole year on the date of concluding the contract, which reduced the options for tenants who do not have the financial ability to meet. Under these conditions, house rents rose in all areas, including popular neighbourhoods and distant suburbs.

Figure (1): Monthly housing rent at the Syrian governorate level during October 2023, (in Syrian pounds)



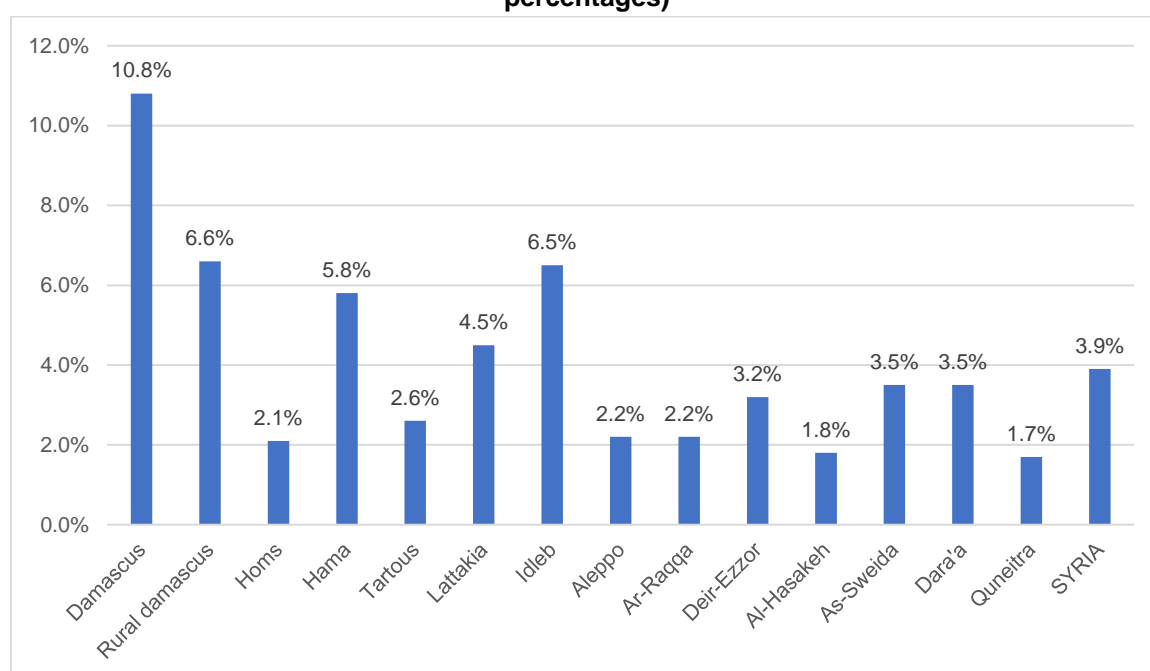
Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2023.

2. Inflation by Governorate

In October 2023, the governorate of Damascus marked the highest monthly inflation rate, at 10.8 per cent, followed by Rural Damascus and Idlib Governorates, at 6.6 per cent and 6.5 per cent each. The governorates of Quneitra, Al-Hasakeh, Homs, Aleppo, and Ar-Raqqa recorded the lowest monthly inflation rate between 1.7 and 2.2 per cent.

The Syrian Interim Government (SIG) and the Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) led in monthly inflation (M-o-M) across all commodities and services in October, recording a rate of 5.3 per cent. Following closely, the Government of Syria (GoS) areas recorded a 4.7 per cent inflation, while the Autonomous Administration (AA) areas recorded a 1.7 per cent inflation.

Figure (2): Monthly inflation (M-o-M) of consumer prices in Syria during October 2023 (in percentages)



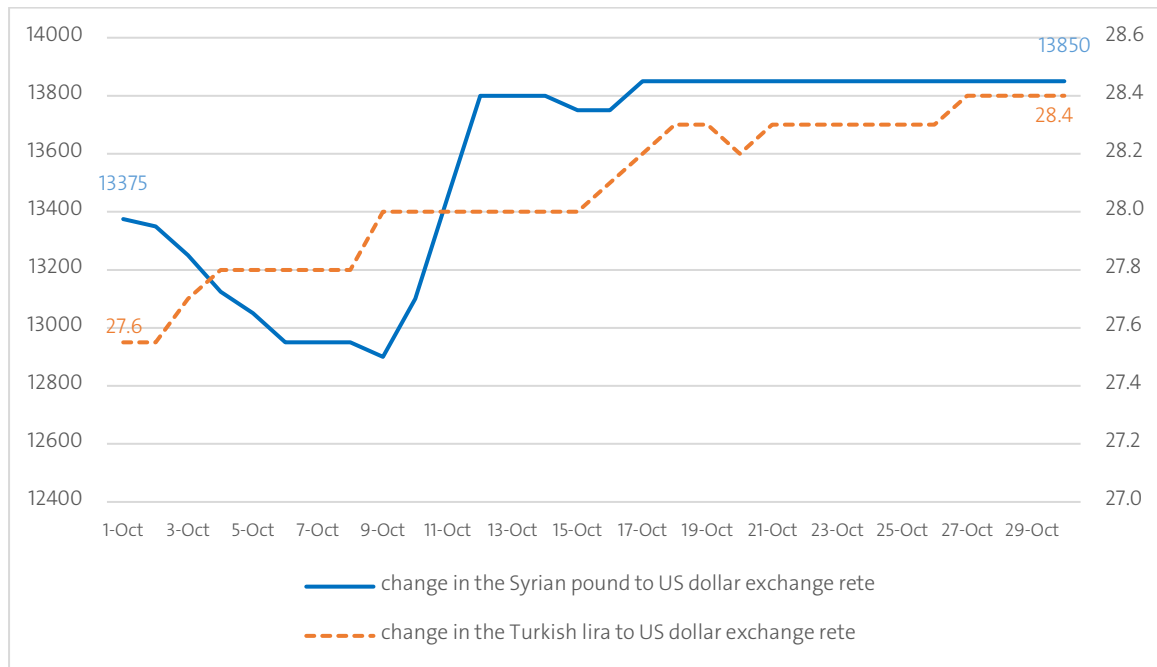
Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2023.

There was a slight improvement in the exchange rate of the Syrian pound against the US dollar during October 2023 by 0.7 per cent (monthly average) due to the improvement in the exchange rate of the Syrian pound against the dollar during the first ten days of October 2023, as the exchange rate decreased from SYP 13375 per US dollar at the beginning of the month to SYP 12900 per USD on the 10th of the month. However, it rose again to settle at SYP 13850 per USD for the end of the month.

On the other hand, there was a decline in the exchange rate of the Turkish lira against the US dollar by 3.3 per cent during October 2023 compared to September (monthly average). The value of the Turkish lira reached TL 28.5 per dollar at the end of the month compared to TL 27.6 per dollar at its beginning.⁸

⁸ The Turkish Central Bank raised the interest rate from 30 to 35 per cent on October 25, 2023.

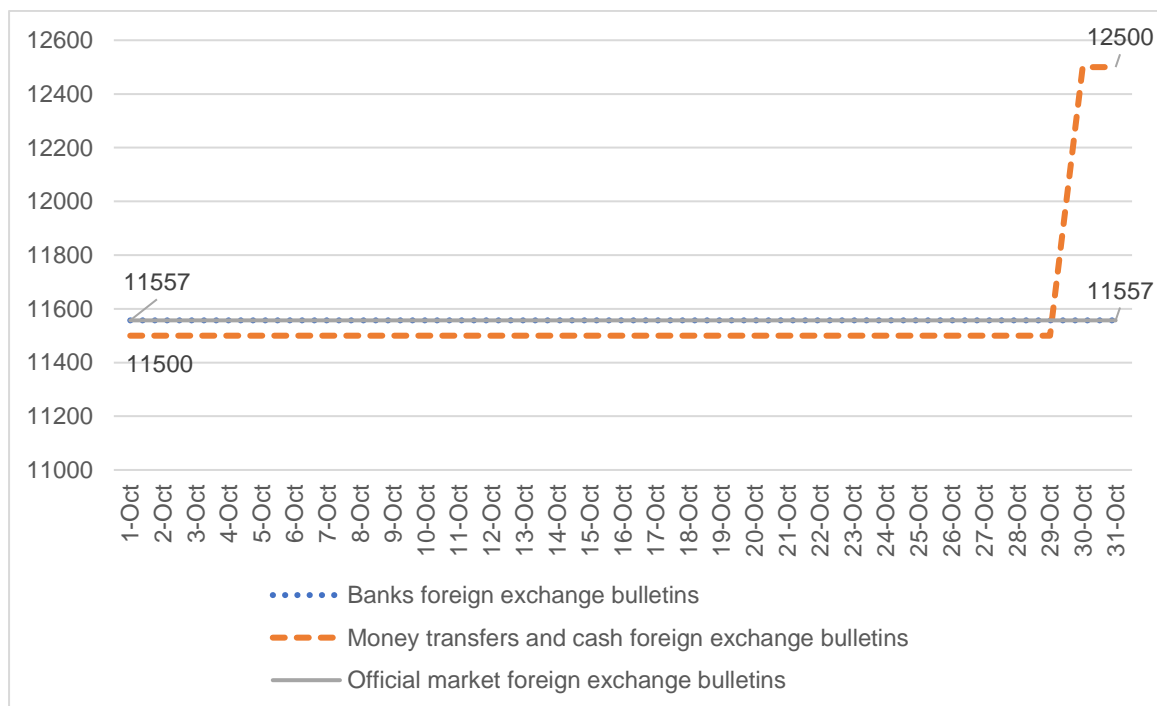
Figure (3): Change in the unofficial exchange rate of the SYP and the TL against the USD during October 2023



Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2023.

The Central Bank of Syria fixed the exchange rate of the Syrian pound against the dollar, according to the bank's foreign exchange bulletins, from the beginning of September until the twenty-fifth day of the month at an exchange rate of SYP 8542 per USD, after which it raised the exchange rate by 25 per cent to become SYP 11557 per USD.

Figure (4): Change in the official exchange rate of the SYP against the USD during October 2023



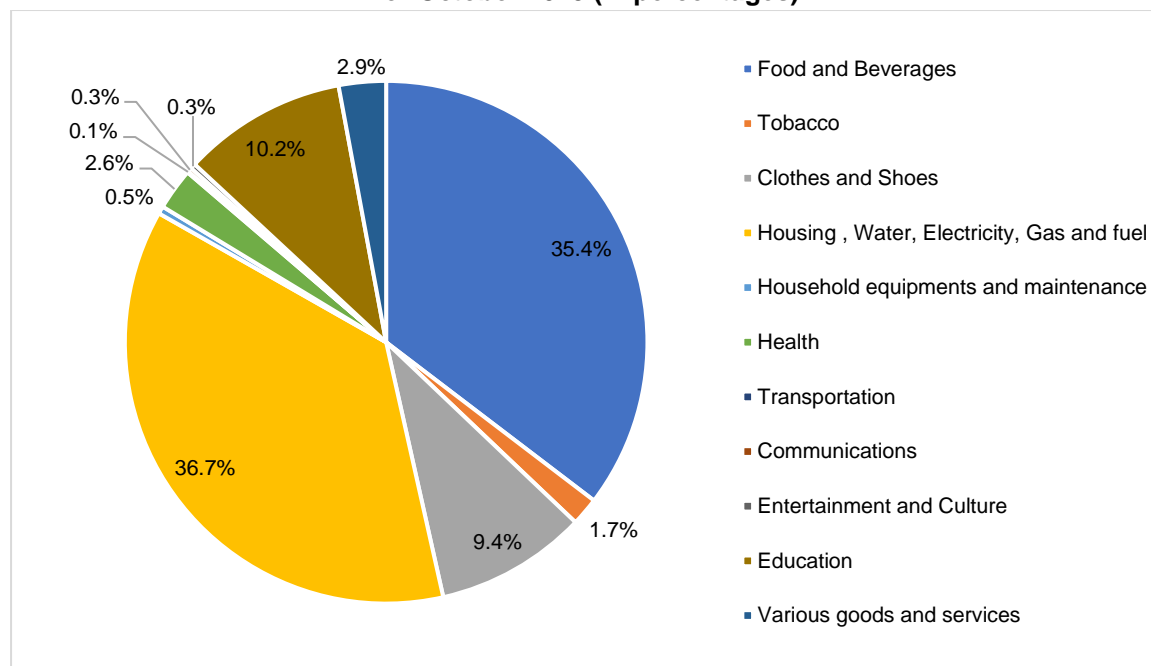
Source: Central Bank of Syria, daily bulletins of banks foreign exchange rates and money transfers and cash foreign exchange.

The Central Bank of Syria fixed the exchange rate of the Syrian pound against the dollar according to the mmoney transfers and cash foreign exchange bulletins from the beginning of October until the twenty-ninth day of the month at SYP 11557 per USD, after which it issued a decision to raise the exchange rate of mmoney transfers by 8.7 per cent to become SYP 12500 per dollar, while the exchange rate of the bank's foreign exchange bulletins remained at SYP 11557 per USD throughout the month. The Central Bank also set the dollar exchange rate in the official market bulletin, which is used for public sector operations, evaluating bank data, and the mandatory service allowance, at the beginning of October 2023 at SYP 11557 after it was SYP 8542 per dollar in the previous month. Thus, the bank's foreign exchange bulletins and the money transfers and cash foreign exchange bulletins converge, intending to reduce the price gap between the official exchange rate bulletins, according to a statement issued by the Central Bank in this regard.

3. Contributors to Inflation

In October 2023, the Housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuel oils group⁹ contributed significantly to the monthly inflation (M-o-M) with 3.9 per cent, making up 36.7 per cent of the total, followed by the Food and non-alcoholic beverages group with a contribution of 35.4 per cent, trailed by the Education group at 10.2 per cent, then by the Clothes and Shoes group at 9.3 per cent.

Figure (5): Contribution of major consumption groups to the monthly inflation rate (M-o-M) for October 2023 (in percentages)



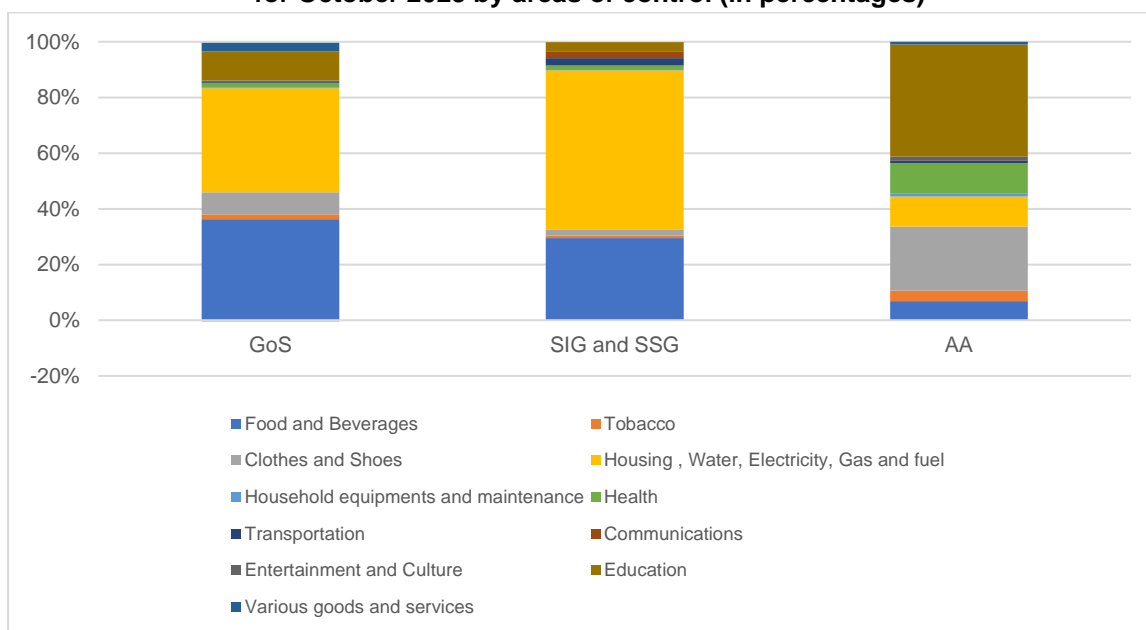
Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2023.

⁹ The contribution rate to inflation means the percentage of the contribution of each consumption group to annual inflation out of 100%.

The Food and non-alcoholic beverages group achieved the highest contribution to the monthly inflation in the GoS areas, at 36.6 per cent, while it contributed 29.6 per cent to the monthly inflation in the SIG and SSG areas and 6.8 per cent in the AA areas.

The Housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuel oils group achieved the highest contribution to the monthly inflation of the SIG and SSG areas during October 2023, at 57.2 per cent. The group contributed 37.6 per cent of the monthly inflation in GoS areas and 10.8 per cent in AA areas. It is worth noting that the electricity company in the SIG areas reduced electricity by 42 per cent, as the price of a kWh became TL 2.75 instead of TL 4.75 in the previous month after protests from residents over the rise in electricity prices.

Figure (6): Contribution of major consumption groups to the monthly inflation rate (M-o-M) for October 2023 by areas of control (in percentages)



Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2023.

The Education group contributed 40.2 per cent of the monthly inflation in the AA areas at a rate of 10.6 per cent for the GoS areas and 3.5 per cent for the SIG and SSG areas during October 2023, knowing that the population in the AA areas depends on education recognized by the Syrian government in secondary schools (preparatory and secondary) and universities due to the lack of international recognition of other schools and universities. Schools and institutes that teach the GoS curriculum are active in the AA areas. However, they charge their fees in US dollars, which have increased significantly in the new academic season compared to the previous academic season in light of the significant decline in the exchange rate of the Syrian pound against the US dollar.

4. Wages in Syria, October 2023

In October 2023, the average monthly wage in Syria stood at approximately SYP 516 thousand for a university-educated employee in the public sector at the start of their appointment and around SYP 675 thousand in the private sector, while it counted in the civil sector at SYP 1.93 million.

Upon comparing wage levels between areas of control in Syria, it is evident that wages in both the public and private sectors in the SIG and the SSG areas are the highest, followed by wages in AA GoS areas. Furthermore, the wages of the public and private sectors were lower than in the civil sector, as wages in the private and public sectors were approximately 35 and 27 per cent in the civil one within Syria.¹⁰

Table (2): Average monthly wages in Syria during October 2023 (SYP)

	GoS areas	SIG and SSG areas	AA areas	Whole of Syria
A- Public sector workers				
Staff wages (professor)	726,696	6,112,819	3,090,000	1,750,056
Staff wages (university-educated)	207,667	1,484,259	1,060,000	516,409
Staff wages (4th band)	190,692	1,039,477	1,040,000	444,686
B- Private sector workers				
Company director salary	1,443,409	4,457,264	1,622,667	1,819,830
Shop worker salary	503,128	1,538,392	765,444	675,217
C- Civil sector workers				
Staff wages (university-educated)	915,455	5,348,718	3,883,000	1,934,509

Note: Employees' wages in the SSG areas are denominated in USD dollars or their equivalent in Turkish lira, and those in the SIG areas are paid in Turkish lira. The wage values in this table have been converted to the Syrian pound for comparison with other areas.

Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2023.

The inflation of October 2023 led to a decrease in the real wages¹¹ of workers in the public sector in GoS areas by 4.51 per cent, 2.3 per cent in the civil sector, and 1.7 per cent in the private sector compared to September 2023. On the other hand, the inflation of October 2023 led to a decrease in the real wages for workers in departments affiliated with the SIG and SSG areas by 2.2 per cent and wages for workers in AA departments by 1.65 per cent compared to the previous September.

Table (3): Real Wages Monthly Growth in Syria in October 2023 (Percentage)

	GoS areas	SIG and SSG areas	AA areas
Public sector workers	-4.51%	-2.18%	-1.65%
Private sector workers	-1.72%	-2.45%	-0.35%
Civil sector workers	-2.29%	-1.62%	2.27%

Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2023.

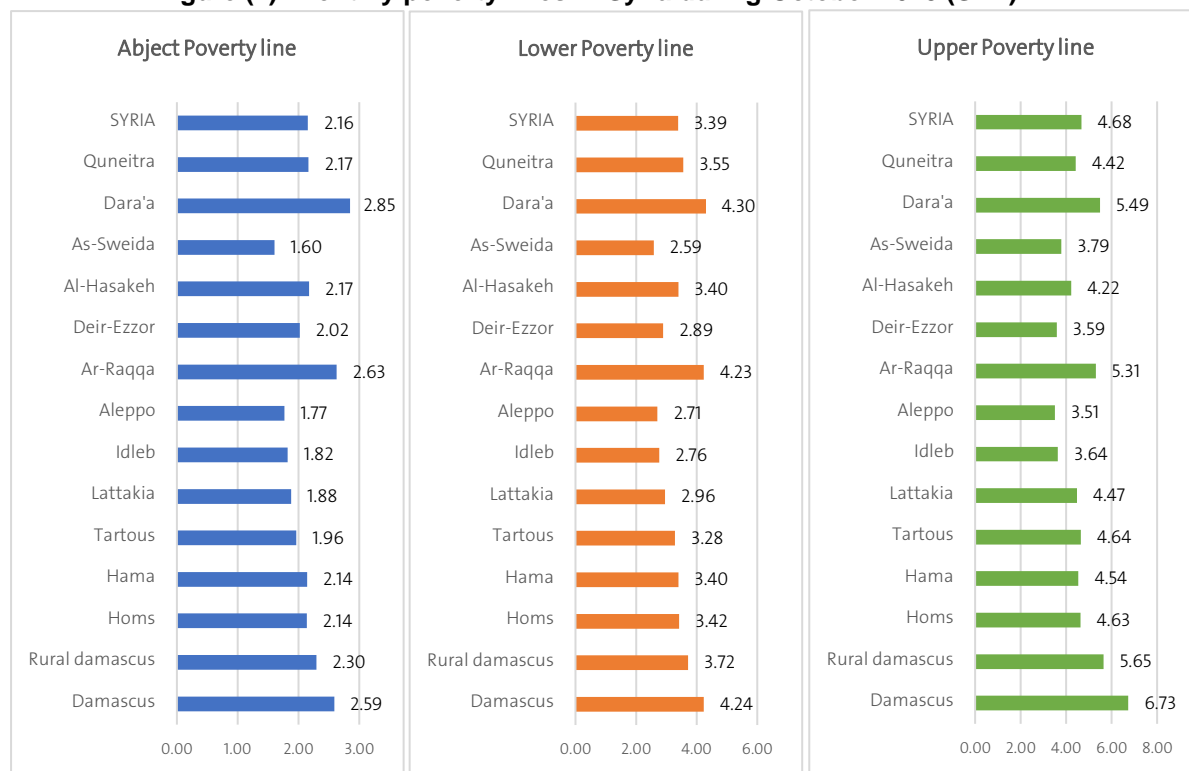
¹⁰ Although the wages of civil sector workers in the GoS areas are relatively high compared to public and private sector wages, they are very low compared to the rest of the areas. It equates to 24 per cent of the wages of civil sector workers in the AA areas, and 17 per cent of the wages of civil sector workers in the SSG and SIG areas in September 2023.

¹¹ Real wages were calculated by dividing nominal wages by the CPI index. For details, see ILO. (2010). Global Wage Report 2010-2011: Wage Policies in Times of Crisis.

5. Poverty Lines in Syria, October 2023

In October 2023, the abject poverty line for families,¹² serving as an indicator of food insecurity, rose to SYP 2.16 million per month, marking an increase of SYP 62 thousand from September 2023. The lower poverty line increased by SYP 98 thousand from the previous month to reach 3.39 million, while the upper poverty line saw an SYP 135 thousand increase, reaching 4.68 million. The highest values for poverty lines were recorded in the governorates of Dara'a, Ar-Raqqa, and Damascus, while As-Sweida, Idleb, and Aleppo recorded the lowest poverty lines in October 2023.

Figure (7): Monthly poverty lines in Syria during October 2023 (SYP)



Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2023.

Comparing areas of control shows that AA areas ranked the highest in abject and lower poverty lines in October 2023, where the abject poverty line reached SYP 2.28 million and the lower poverty line SYP 3.5 million. Following were the areas of the GoS with an abject poverty line of SYP 2.15 million and a lower poverty line exceeding SYP 3.39 million per month. Lastly, the SIG and the SSG areas had an abject poverty line of SYP 1.62 million and a lower poverty line above SYP 2.47 million. The GoS areas ranked the highest level of the monthly upper poverty line during October 2023, reaching SYP 4.7 million, followed by the AA areas with an amount of SYP 4.36million, and finally the SIG and SSG areas with an amount of SYP 3.23 million.

¹² The poverty lines (abject, lower and upper) were calculated by measuring the impact of inflation on the 2009 poverty lines.

A comparison between wages in current prices and monthly poverty lines reveals that the wage gap¹³ from the abject poverty line within Syria level in October 2023 reached about 76 per cent for a university-educated employee in the public sector, 69 per cent for a private sector worker, and 10 per cent for a civil sector worker. Notably, wages of civil sector workers in the SIG, the SSG and the AA areas surpassed the abject poverty line by 230 per cent and 70 per cent, respectively. On the other hand, wages in the civil sector in the GoS areas were 57 per cent lower than the abject poverty line, highlighting the wide disparity in wages between regions and the relatively high wages of the civil sector compared to the others in the SIG, SSG, and AA areas.

Table (4): Monthly wage gap from poverty lines in Syria during October 2023 (in percentages)

	GoS areas	SIG and SSG areas	AA areas	Whole of Syria
A- Wage gap from the abject poverty line				
University-educated employees in the public sector	-90.3%	-8.4%	-53.5%	-76.1%
Private sector worker	-76.6%	-5.0%	-66.5%	-68.7%
Civil sector worker	-57.4%	+230.2%	+70.2%	-10.3%
B- Wage gap from the lower poverty line				
University-educated employees in the public sector	-93.9%	-39.9%	-69.7%	-84.8%
Private sector worker	-85.2%	-37.7%	-78.1%	-80.1%
Civil sector worker	-73.0%	116.7%	11.0%	-43.0%
C- Wage gap from the upper poverty line				
University-educated employees in the public sector	-95.6%	-54.0%	-75.7%	-89.0%
Private sector worker	-69.3%	38.2%	-62.8%	-61.1%
Civil sector worker	-80.5%	65.8%	-10.9%	-58.7%

Note: Negative (-) indicates a gap and positive (+) indicates excess.

Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research 2023, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria.

¹³ Equals the relative difference between the monthly wage and the poverty line. ILO. For details, see [International Labour Organization. \(2013\). Equal Pay – an introductory guide.](#) Geneva.

Appendix

Appendix (1): Consumer Price Index in Syria by Major Consumption Groups in October 2023, (2021 = 100)

	Damascus	Rural Damascus	Homs	Hama	Tartous	Lattakia	Idleb	Aleppo	Ar-Raqqa	Deir-Ezzor	Al-Hasakeh	As-Sweida	Dara'a	Quneitra	SYRIA
All commodities	607	543	538	534	576	554	370	480	563	481	577	559	592	560	531
Food and non-alcoholic beverages	574	577	584	576	549	603	352	501	523	528	635	572	590	579	546
Tobacco	471	454	417	452	479	446	289	342	374	463	459	466	445	443	433
Clothing and footwear	545	580	453	523	596	713	397	440	828	520	893	717	494	506	564
Housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels	722	575	530	507	691	501	456	504	729	405	540	582	718	540	575
Household equipment and maintenance	715	549	604	644	597	583	263	374	524	555	763	594	688	733	540
Health	471	495	438	472	471	501	334	488	643	408	518	501	619	493	481
Transportation	663	616	634	606	557	725	421	556	476	537	596	665	594	765	592
Communications	236	238	236	235	237	240	192	296	246	240	253	230	231	231	217
Culture and entertainment	479	576	556	518	482	569	293	446	501	495	807	479	639	443	515
Education	525	402	521	454	647	374	432	371	665	423	682	439	539	467	475
Various goods and services	441	473	496	533	626	491	359	497	623	463	485	543	514	619	508

Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2023.

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