



# Monthly Bulletin for Consumer Price Index and Inflation in Syria

Issue (12) – December 2023



## Preface

The bulletin provides an independent assessment of consumer prices and inflation rates 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 **December 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, December 2023

In December 2023, the general CPI achieved annual inflation (Y-o-Y) of 139.6 per cent and monthly inflation (M-o-M) of 7 per cent.

The Health group recorded the highest monthly inflation level in December 2023 at 25.7 per cent, with the Syrian Ministry of Health at the beginning of December 2023 raising drug prices by rates ranging between 70 and 110 per cent. A package of paracetamol (10 tablets) reached SYP 5700, and a package of anti-inflammatory drugs (500 mg) reached SYP 14200.

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

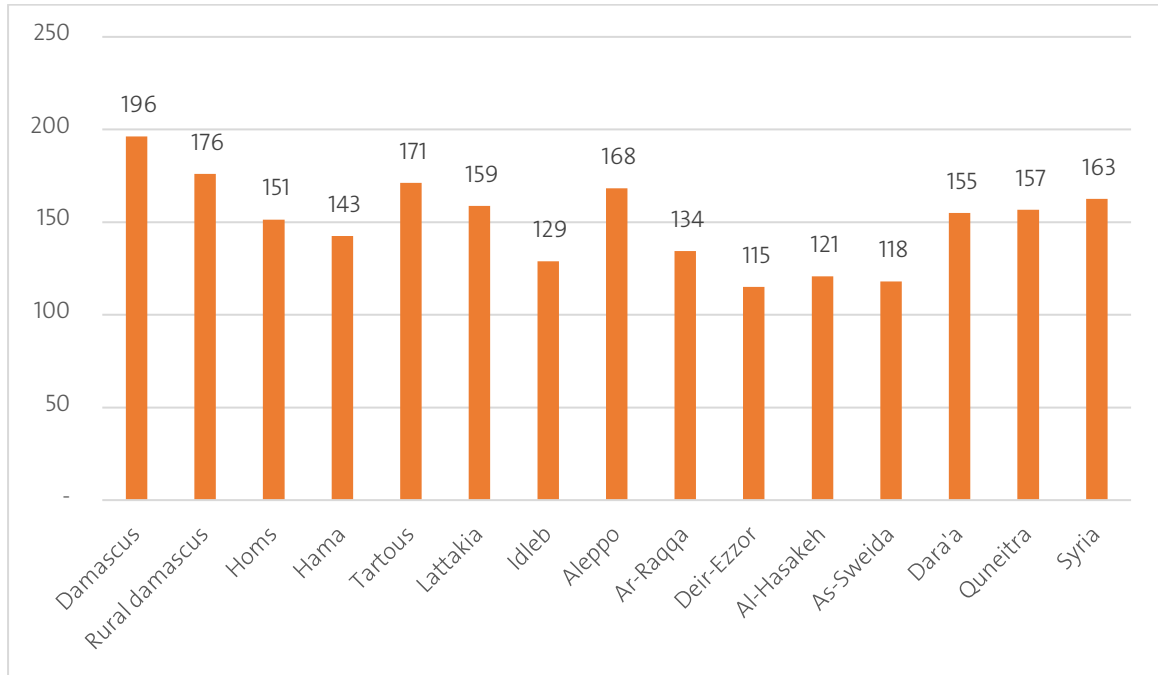
#	Group	November 2023 index	December 2023 index	Monthly Inflation (M-o-M)
	<b>All commodities</b>	<b>543.8</b>	<b>581.7</b>	<b>7.0%</b>
1	Food and non-alcoholic beverages	551.7	585.7	6.2%
2	Tobacco	435.9	452.8	3.9%
3	Clothes and shoes	605.6	657.6	8.6%
4	Housing, water, electricity, and other fuel oils	587.4	631.3	7.5%
5	Household equipment, supplies, and maintenance	567.6	588.5	3.7%
6	Health	507.9	638.6	25.7%
7	Transportation	602.9	639.2	6.0%
8	Communications	267.2	268.8	0.6%
9	Entertainment and culture	547.7	585.3	6.9%
10	Education	494.1	508.1	2.8%
11+12	Various commodities and services	523.9	549.1	4.8%

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

The Clothes and shoes group recorded a high monthly inflation of 8.6 per cent during December 2023, coinciding with the advent of Christmas and New Year, so the average price of a wool sweater across Syria reached SYP 181000, local jeans 167000, and imported ones 264000. The official shirt price for men is 168000, and a mixed cotton shirt for women is 151000.

The Food and non-alcoholic beverages group recorded a high monthly inflation rate in December 2023, at 6.2 per cent. At the level of its subgroups, the Dry legumes and vegetables group recorded the highest monthly inflation rate of 25.7 per cent. The average price of local tomatoes rose to SYP 7500 per kilogram, local cucumbers to SYP 9200, and black eggplants to SYP 8400. The price of a kilogram of dry onions also increased to SYP 6850, and local garlic to SYP 42000. The price of a kilogram of dried chickpeas rose to SYP 21000. Prices of the meat group also increased by 7.5 per cent, bringing the average price of a kilogram of Poultry meat to SYP 43000, canned chicken mortadella (200 grams) to SYP 10000, and lamb meat to SYP 150000, noting that there is a disparity in meat prices between markets and governorates, as shown in Figure (1).

**Figure (1): The price of a kilogram of lamb in the Syrian governorates during December 2023 (One thousand Syrian pounds)**



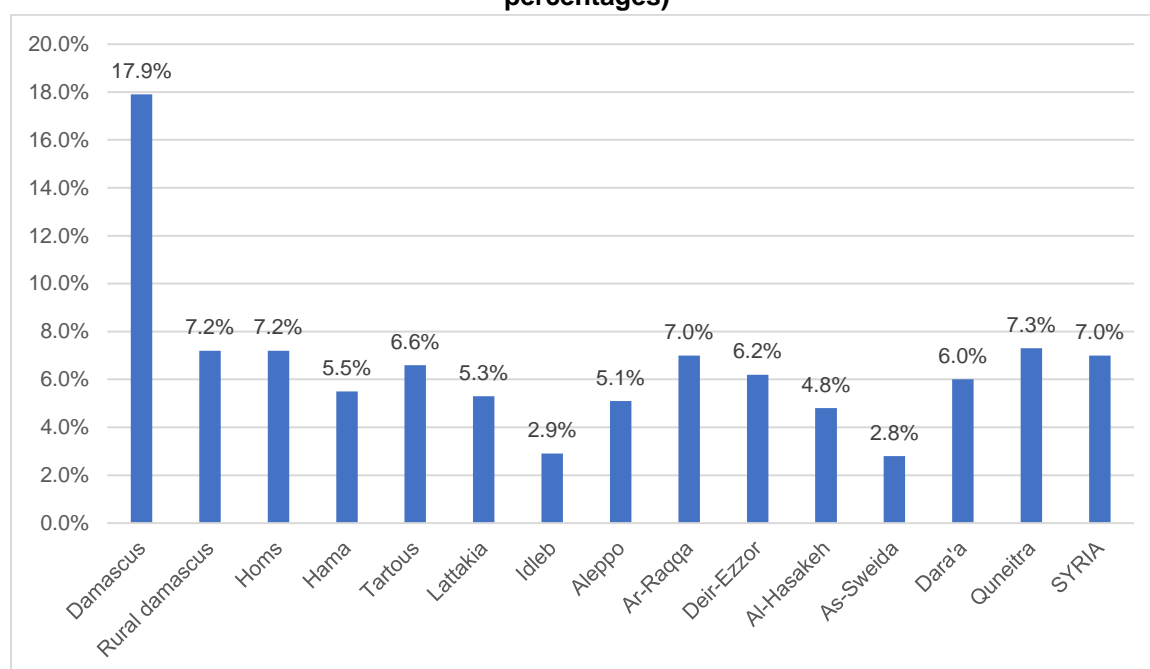
Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2023.

## 2. Inflation by Governorate

In December 2023, Damascus Governorate marked the highest monthly inflation rate (M-o-M), at 17.9 per cent in light of the significant increase in the prices of housing rents and housing-related services, followed by Quneitra at 7.3 per cent, then the Rural Damascus and Homs at 7.2 per cent each. The governorate of As-Sweida recorded the lowest monthly inflation rate in December 2023, at 2.8 per cent, followed by Idleb at 2.9 per cent.

The Government of Syria (GoS) areas have led in monthly inflation (M-o-M) across all commodities and services in December, recording a rate of 7.7 per cent. Following closely, the Autonomous Administration (AA) areas recorded a 6.5 per cent inflation, while the Syrian Interim Government (SIG) and the Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) recorded a 2.9 per cent inflation.

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



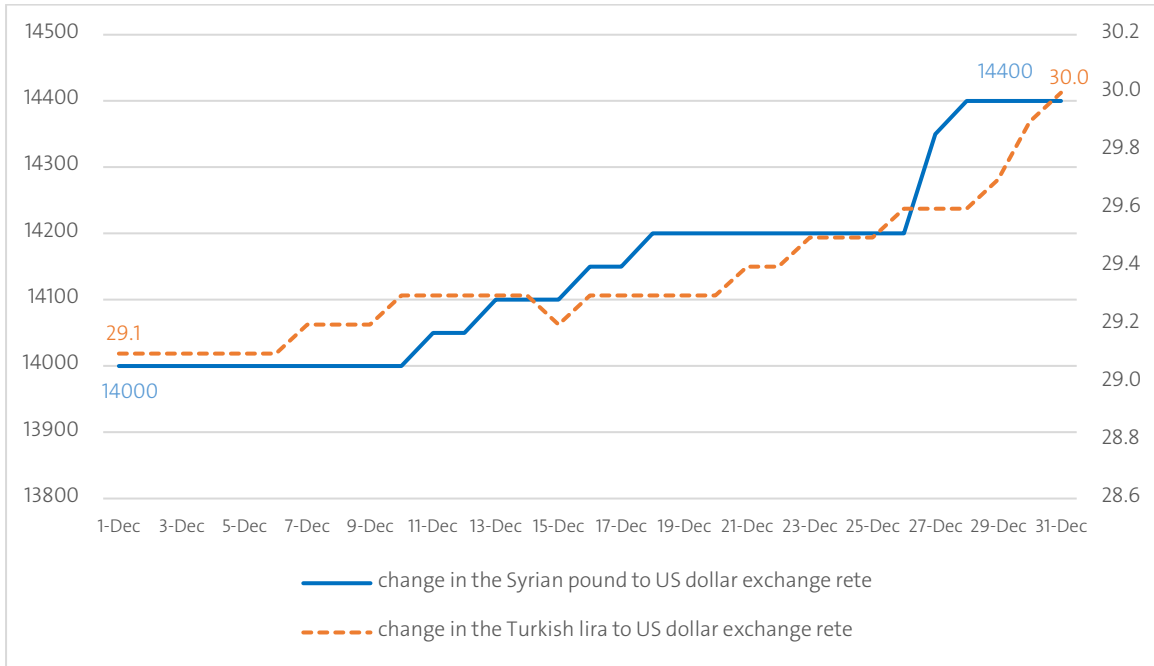
Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2023.

There was a decline in the exchange rate of the Syrian pound against the US dollar during December 2023 by 1.67 per cent (monthly average), as the exchange rate of the Syrian pound against the US dollar declined from SYP 14000 per USD at the beginning of December 2023, to SYP 14400 per USD at 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 1.53 per cent during December 2023 compared to November (monthly average), so the value of the Turkish lira reached TL 30 per USD at the end of the month compared to TL 29.1 per USD at its beginning of the month.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Turkish Central Bank issued a decision raising the interest rate from 40 to 42.5 per cent on December 21, 2023.



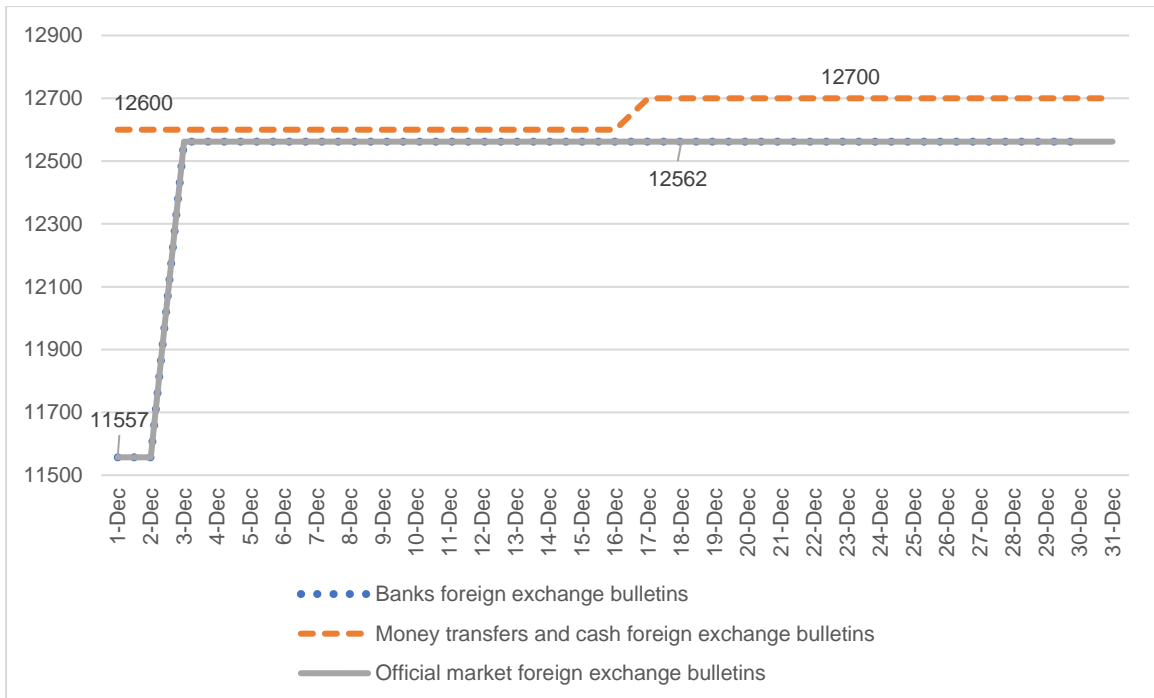
**Figure (3): Change in the unofficial exchange rate of the SYP and the TL against the USD during December 2023**



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

The Central Bank of Syria raised the price of the bank's foreign exchange bulletins and the official bulletin price from SYP 11557 per USD to SYP 12562 per USD on December 3, 2023, and fixed this price throughout the other days of December 2023.

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

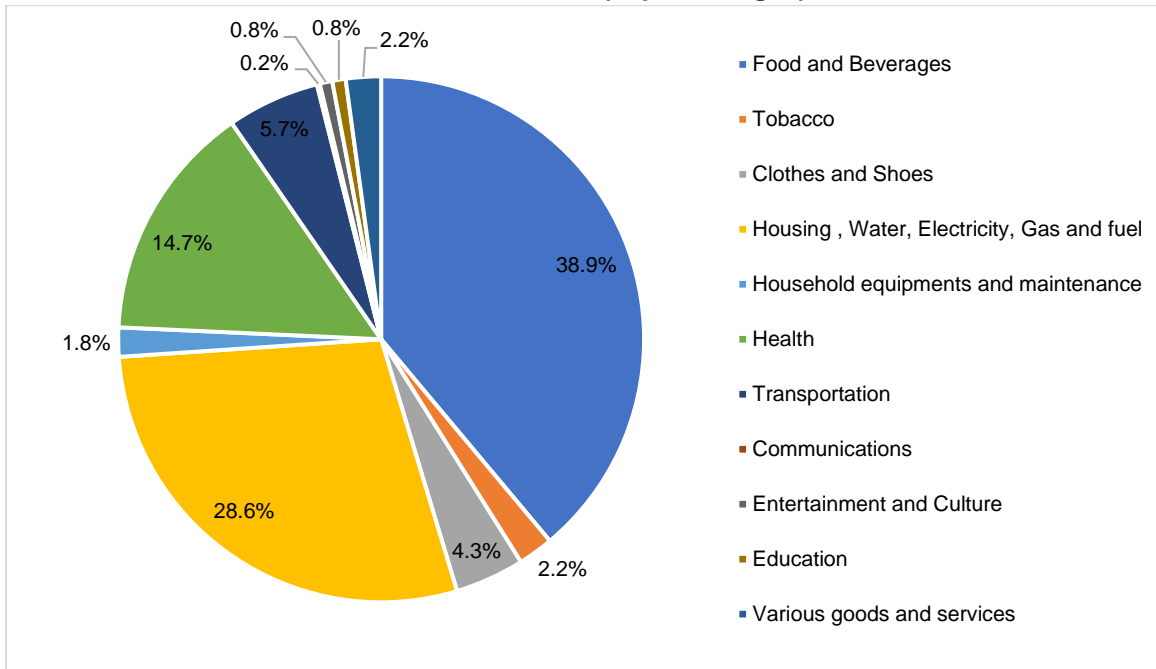


Source: Central Bank of Syria, daily bulletins of banks foreign exchange rates, money transfers and cash foreign exchange.

### 3. Contributors to Inflation

In December 2023, the Food and non-alcoholic beverages group<sup>2</sup> contributed significantly to the monthly inflation (M-o-M) with 7 per cent, making up 38.9 per cent of the total, followed by the Housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuel oils group with a contribution of 28.6 per cent, trailed by the Health group at 14.7 per cent.

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



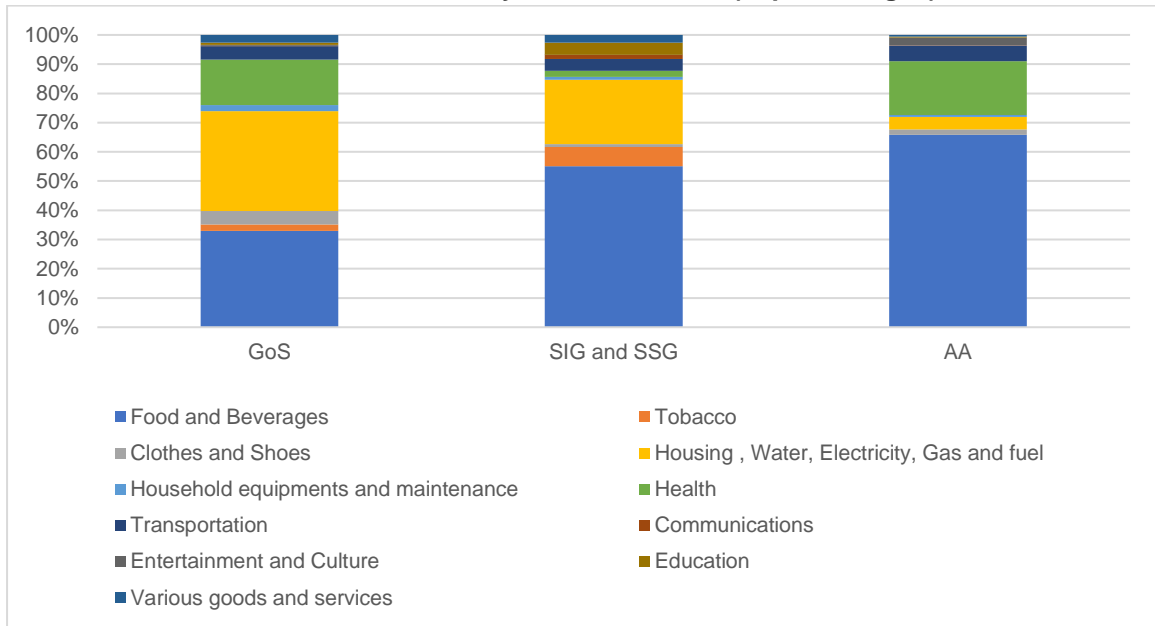
Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2023.

The Food and non-alcoholic beverages group achieved the highest contribution to the monthly inflation in the AA areas, at 66 per cent, while it contributed 55 per cent to the monthly inflation in the SIG and SSG areas and 33 per cent to the monthly inflation in the GoS areas.

The Housing, water, electricity, gas, and Other Fuel Oils group achieved the highest contribution to the monthly inflation of the GoS areas during December 2023, at 24 per cent. The group contributed 22 per cent of the monthly inflation in SIG and SSG areas and 4.3 per cent in AA areas.

<sup>2</sup> The contribution rate to inflation means the percentage of the contribution of each consumption group to annual inflation out of 100%.

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



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

In December 2023, the contribution of the Health group to the monthly inflation of the GoS areas and the AA areas was significantly high, reaching 15.6 per cent of the monthly inflation of the GoS areas and 18.5 per cent of the monthly inflation of the AA areas, coinciding with the decision of the Syrian Ministry of Health to raise medicine prices significantly at the beginning of the month. Simultaneously, the AA areas bought medicine from GoS areas while paying additional costs, including transportation and royalties on the road.

#### 4. Wages in Syria, December 2023

In December 2023, the wages at current prices increased slightly within Syria. The average monthly salary stood at approximately SYP 522 thousand for a university-educated employee in the public sector at the start of their appointment. The wages in the private sector reached around SYP 737 thousand, while it counted in the civil sector at SYP 2 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 25 per cent in the civil one within Syria.<sup>3</sup>

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

	GoS areas	SIG and SSG areas	AA areas	Whole of Syria
<b>A- Public sector workers</b>				
Staff wages (professor)	726,696	6,364,617	3,090,000	<b>1,778,034</b>
Staff wages (university-educated)	207,667	1,524,435	1,060,000	<b>522,277</b>
Staff wages (4th band)	190,692	1,066,068	1,040,000	<b>448,583</b>
<b>B- Private sector workers</b>				
Company director salary	1,722,652	4,711,584	1,729,333	<b>2,086,877</b>
Shop worker salary	568,084	1,598,621	781,278	<b>736,697</b>
<b>C- Civil sector workers</b>				
Staff wages (university-educated)	1,017,522	5,781,194	4,096,333	<b>2,099,054</b>

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 that occurred in December 2023 led to a decrease in the real wages<sup>4</sup> of workers in the public sector in GoS areas by 9 per cent compared to the previous month of November, for employees in SIG and SSG departments by 1.5 per cent, and for employees in AA departments by 6.1 per cent, in light of the stability of wages at current prices during the month.

As a result of wage increases at current prices for private sector employees in GoS areas and SIG and SSG areas during December 2023, there was an improvement in the value of real wages for workers in the private sector in GoS areas by 1.6 per cent and workers in the private sector in SIG and SSG areas by 0.9 per cent, compared to the previous month, the real wage of private sector employees in the AA areas decreased by 2.7 per cent during the same month.

<sup>3</sup> Although the wages of civil sector workers in the GoS areas are relatively high compared to public and private sector wages, they are low compared to the rest. It equates to 25 per cent of the civil sector worker wage in the AA areas and 18 per cent in the SSG and SIG areas in September 2023.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

The real wages for civil sector employees in the SIG and SSG areas improved by 2.2 per cent, while they decreased by 2.4 per cent and 1.8 per cent in the GoS and the AA areas during December 2023 compared to November 2023.

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

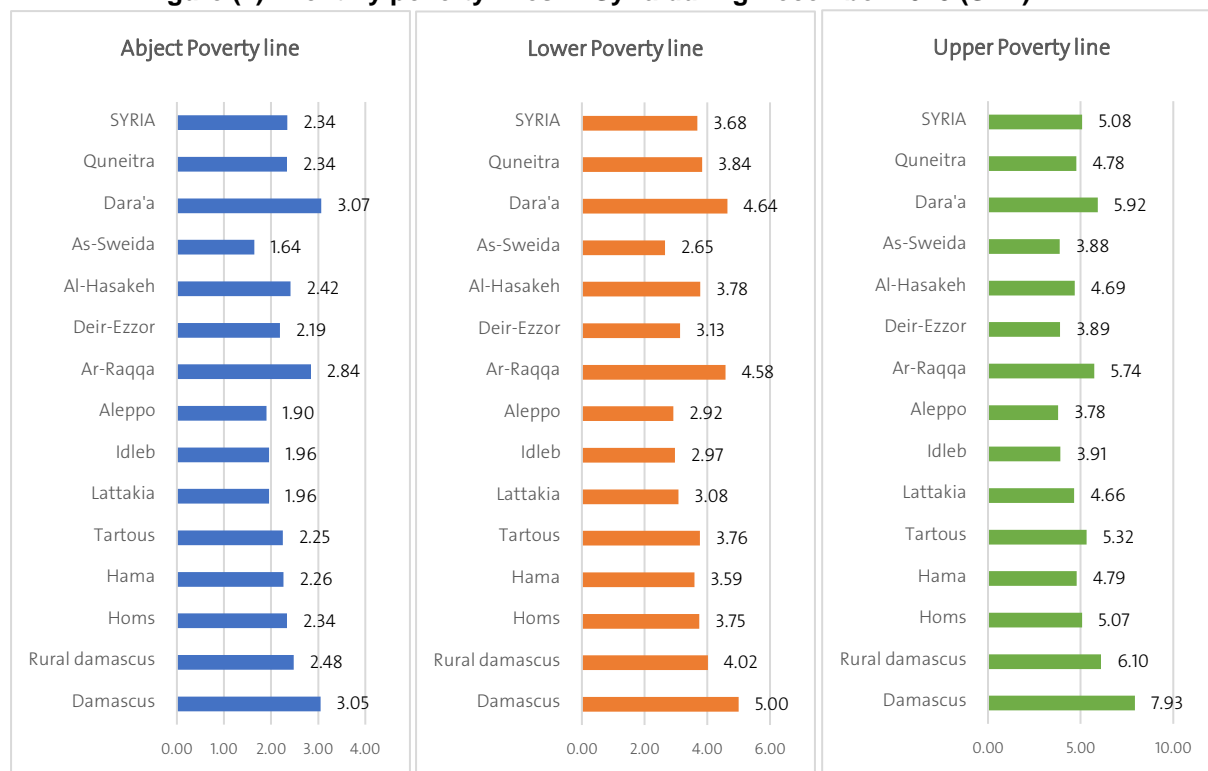
	GoS areas	SIG and SSG areas	AA areas
Public sector workers	-9.03%	-1.51%	-6.10%
Private sector workers	1.61%	0.88%	-2.66%
Civil sector workers	-2.36%	2.20%	-1.76%

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

### 5. Poverty Lines in Syria, December 2023

In December 2023, the abject poverty line for families,<sup>5</sup> serving as an indicator of food insecurity, rose to SYP 2.34 million per month, marking an increase of SYP 150 thousand from November 2023. The lower poverty line increased by SYP 236 thousand from the previous month to reach 3.68 million, while the upper poverty line saw an SYP 326 thousand increase, reaching 5.1 million. The highest values for poverty lines were recorded in the governorates of Damascus, Dara'a, and Ar-Raqqa, while As-Sweida and Deir-Ezzor recorded the lowest poverty lines in December 2023.

**Figure (7): Monthly poverty lines in Syria during December 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 December 2023, where the abject poverty line reached SYP 2.53 million and the lower poverty line SYP 3.87 million. Following were the areas of the GoS with an abject poverty line of SYP 2.3 million and a lower poverty line exceeding SYP 3.7 million per month. Lastly, the SIG and the SSG areas had an abject poverty line of SYP 1.73 million and a lower poverty line above SYP 2.64 million. The GoS is ranked the highest level of the monthly upper poverty line during December 2023, reaching SYP 5.08 million, followed by the AA areas with an amount of SYP 4.82 million, and finally, the SIG and SSG areas with an amount of SYP 3.45 million.

<sup>5</sup> 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 gap<sup>6</sup> from the abject poverty line within Syria level in December 2023 reached about 76 per cent for a university-educated employee in the public sector, 68.5 per cent for a private sector worker, and 10.3 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 233 per cent and 62 per cent, respectively. Wages in the civil sector in the GoS areas were 56 per cent lower than the abject poverty line, highlighting the disparity between regions and the relatively high wages of this sector compared to others in the SIG, SSG, and AA areas.

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

	GoS areas	SIG and SSG areas	AA areas	Whole of Syria
<b>A- Wage gap from the abject poverty line</b>				
University-educated employees in the public sector	-91.1%	-12.1%	-58.0%	<b>-77.7%</b>
Private sector worker	-75.5%	-7.9%	-69.1%	<b>-68.5%</b>
Civil sector worker	-56.2%	+233.3%	+62.2%	<b>-10.3%</b>
<b>B- Wage gap from the lower poverty line</b>				
University-educated employees in the public sector	-94.3%	-42.3%	-72.6%	<b>-85.8%</b>
Private sector worker	-84.5%	-39.5%	-79.8%	<b>-80.0%</b>
Civil sector worker	-72.3%	+118.7%	+5.8%	<b>-43.0%</b>
<b>C- Wage gap from the upper poverty line</b>				
University-educated employees in the public sector	-95.9%	-55.9%	-78.0%	<b>-89.7%</b>
Private sector worker	-66.1%	+36.4%	-64.1%	<b>-58.9%</b>
Civil sector worker	-80.0%	+67.4%	-15.1%	<b>-58.7%</b>

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

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

<sup>6</sup> 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 December 2023, (2021 = 100)

	Damascus	Rural Damascus	Homs	Hama	Tartous	Lattakia	Idleb	Aleppo	Ar-Raqqa	Deir-Ezzor	Al-Hasakeh	As-Sweida	Dara'a	Quneitra	SYRIA
<b>All commodities</b>	749	592	591	576	643	588	394	518	616	519	628	582	646	614	582
Food and non-alcoholic beverages	619	608	629	612	620	622	377	553	560	580	708	587	623	611	586
Tobacco	465	462	465	481	491	473	322	363	374	463	479	515	488	462	453
Clothing and footwear	600	710	594	664	780	866	413	546	891	523	966	813	570	580	658
Housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels	992	614	553	506	728	532	477	527	757	401	543	574	758	630	631
Household equipment and maintenance	801	616	680	741	686	617	281	403	579	555	808	620	736	810	589
Health	644	700	676	590	657	719	369	611	870	552	665	570	865	630	639
Transportation	859	626	652	647	595	715	468	566	557	532	631	733	674	835	639
Communications	321	323	322	321	323	324	200	345	330	326	335	317	320	317	269
Culture and entertainment	506	697	632	545	729	587	293	496	853	497	837	523	699	459	585
Education	572	430	551	469	692	374	506	385	676	430	718	436	559	484	508
Various goods and services	470	558	601	600	722	524	375	547	634	463	523	518	579	625	549

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





[scpr-syria.org](http://scpr-syria.org)  
[info@scpr-syria.org](mailto:info@scpr-syria.org)