



Monthly Bulletin for Consumer Price Index and Inflation in Syria

Issue (9) – September 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 **September 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, September 2023

In September 2023, the general CPI achieved annual inflation (Y-o-Y) of 153 per cent and monthly inflation (M-o-M) of 6.7 per cent. The Education group recorded the highest monthly inflation level in September 2023 at 22.3 per cent, with the start of the new school academic season (2023-2024), so the annual fees for private schools (secondary certificate) rose to SYP 4 million, compared to SYP 2.57 million in the previous academic season. Stationery prices increased, bringing the average writing notebook price (100 sheets) across Syria to SYP 9500.

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

#	Group	August 2023 index	September 2023 index	Monthly Inflation (M-o-M)
	All commodities	478.6	510.7	6.7%
1	Food and non-alcoholic beverages	493.5	529.7	7.33%
2	Tobacco	425.6	425.4	0.0%
3	Clothes and shoes	482.0	503.2	4.4%
4	Housing, water, electricity, and other fuel oils	500.7	544.8	8.79%
5	Household equipment, supplies and maintenance	507.9	537.5	5.84%
6	Health	453.8	469.0	3.4%
7	Transportation	579.3	591.7	2.1%
8	Communications	213.9	215.7	0.8%
9	Entertainment and culture	499.9	506.9	1.4%
10	Education	313.6	383.7	22.3%
11+12	Various commodities and services	465.0	490.3	5.5%

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

The Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuel oils group recorded monthly inflation of 8.79 per cent during September 2023 compared to the previous month. At the level of its subgroups, the prices of the Water supply and various services related to dwelling group increased by 11.8 per cent, as the Syrian Ministry of Water Resources issued a decision to raise the drinking water tariff for the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth segments¹ while keeping the prices of the segments with low consumption the same, which brings price of a cubic meter (m³) of water through the public network for the consumption category (36-50) cubic meters per cycle (two months) to SYP 150 instead of SYP 30 per m³ in the previous cycle.

The Autonomous Administration (AA) also raised the value of the monthly subscription for drinking water to SYP 5000 in September 2023, after it was SYP 1000 in the previous month due to the rise in fuel prices in the AA areas. It is worth noting that a water crisis has occurred in Al-Hasakah Governorate because of the continuous cutting off of water coming from the "Alouk station", which is under Turkish control in the Ras al-Ayn district.²

This increased the price of water purchased through tankers to SYP 33 per m³ in September 2023.

¹ The decision raised the consumption cost for the quantity exceeding 50 cubic meters m³ to SYP 400, the quantity exceeding 80 m³ to SYP 1500, and the quantity exceeding 120 m³ to SYP 3000. The bracket system will be canceled starting from the sixth bracket, meaning that the consumer pays SYP 400 for every m³, regardless of the brackets, if his consumption is more than 50 m³ and less than 80 m³ during one cycle (two months). For details see: <http://www.dawssa.gov.sy/site/arabic/index.php?node=551&cat=14761>

² Note: Last July, the Autonomous Administration Water Directorate declared the city of Al-Hasakah, its villages, and its camps for the displaced a disaster area, cutting off its water.

The Electricity, water, gas, and other fuel oils group recorded monthly inflation of 11.1 per cent, as the Syrian Ministry of Electricity issued a decision to raise electricity prices for the category of consumption that exceeds 1500 kilowatt-hour (kWh) to SYP 200 instead of SYP 90, and at SYP 450 instead of SYP 150 for the category of consumption that exceeds 2500 kWh. It also sets the electricity price for public and private sector subscribers, who are exempt, fully or partially, from rationing for domestic energy consumption to SYP 800.³

The cost of importing electricity from other sources (amperes) also increased due to the rise in fuel prices, bringing the average price of a kWh in GoS areas to SYP 6500, after it was about SYP 5000. On September 27, 2023, the Ministry of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection also raised the cylinder of domestic gas (10 kg) price for households excluded from social support to SYP 75000 and the price of industrial gas (16 kg) to SYP 150000 instead of SYP 75000.

The Household Equipment and Supplies and Ordinary Maintenance Works group recorded monthly inflation of 5.8 per cent during September 2023, so the prices of the Furniture, equipment, carpets and other floor covers group increased by 12.5 per cent, with the approach of the winter season, bringing the average price of carpet to SYP 165000, compared to SYP 34000 in September 2022.

The Food and non-alcoholic beverages group recorded monthly inflation of 7.3 per cent at the level of its subgroups. The Dry legumes and vegetables group topped the monthly inflation during September 2023 at a rate of 17.3 per cent, so the average price of a kilogram of tomatoes rose to SYP 5000 within Syria, potatoes to SYP 5150, and garlic to SYP 29000. The significant increase in vegetable prices is due to the rise in fuel prices, transportation costs, and road royalties, on the one hand, and to the export of a large portion of local vegetables to the markets of Iraq and the Gulf countries, on the other hand. The prices of the Yogurt, cheese, and eggs group increased by 12.5 per cent, so a plate of eggs (2 kg) reached SYP 49500 within Syria, and a kilogram of cow's milk reached SYP 6600 on average.

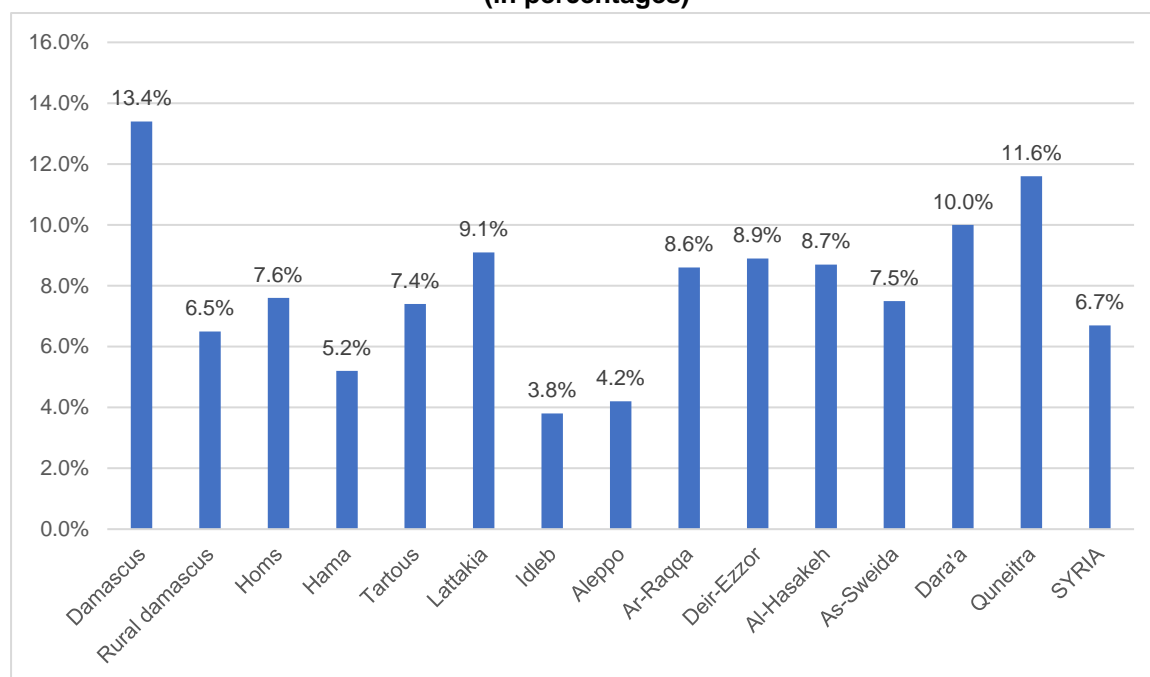
³ SANA Agency. (2023, September). [The Ministry of Electricity adjusts tariff prices for consumption above 1,500 kilowatts](#)

2. Inflation by Governorate

In September 2023, the governorate of Damascus marked the highest monthly inflation rate, at 13.4 per cent. The governorates of Idleb and Aleppo recorded the lowest monthly inflation rate of between 3.8 and 4.2 per cent.

The Autonomous Administration (AA) areas led in monthly inflation (M-o-M) across all commodities and services in September, recording a rate of 8.8 per cent. Following closely, the Government of Syria (GoS) areas recorded an 8.7 per cent inflation, while the Syrian Interim Government (SIG) and the Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) recorded a 4.5 per cent inflation.

Figure (1): Monthly inflation (M-o-M) of consumer prices in Syria during September 2023 (in percentages)



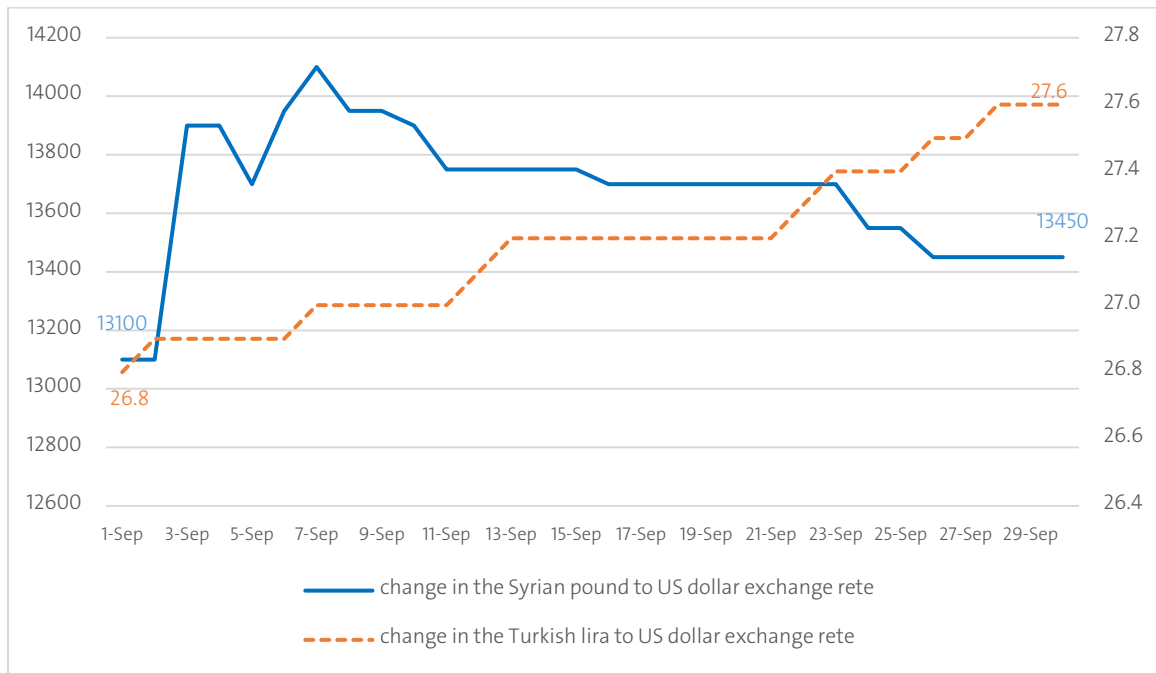
Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2023.

There was a slight change in the exchange rates of the Syrian pound and the Turkish lira against the US dollar in September 2023. The monthly average exchange rate of the Syrian pound against the US dollar decreased by 1 per cent, and the monthly average exchange rate of the Turkish lira against the US dollar increased by 0.24 per cent. The value of the Turkish lira reached TL 27.6 per USD at the end of September 2023, compared to TL 26.8 per USD at the beginning of the month.⁴

The value of the Syrian pound reached SYP 13450 per USD at the end of September 2023, compared to SYP 13100 per USD at the beginning of this month.

⁴ The Turkish Central Bank issued a decision raising the interest rate from 25 to 30 per cent on September 21, 2023.

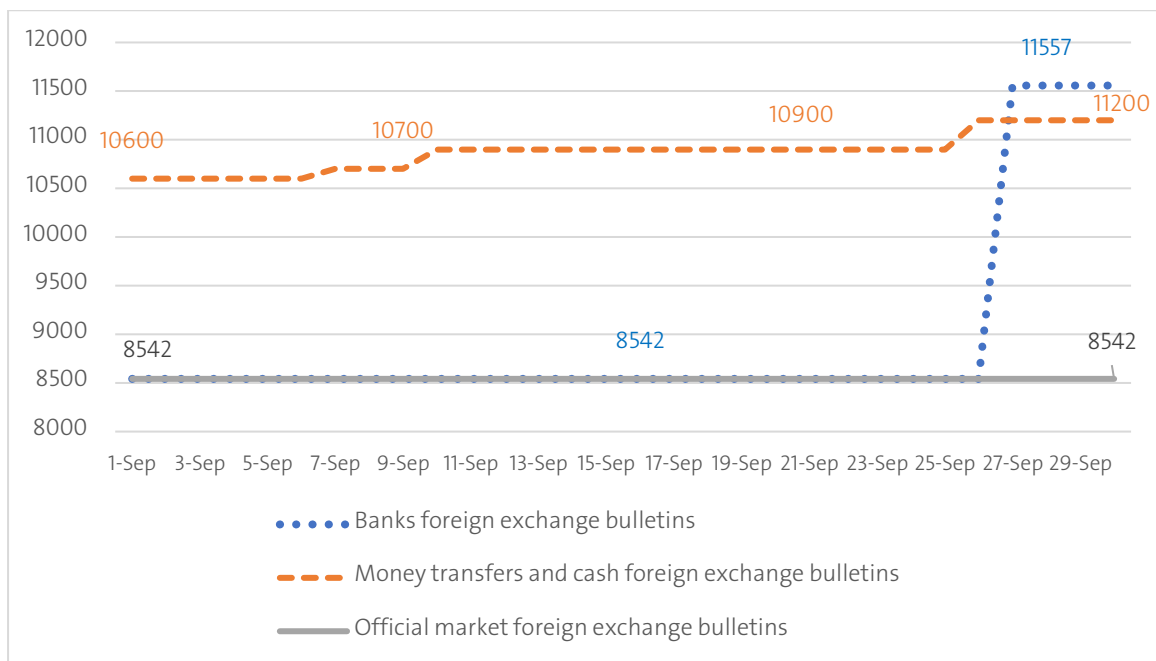
Figure (2): Change in the unofficial exchange rate of the SYP and the TL against the USD during September 2023



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 (3): Change in the official exchange rate of the SYP against the USD during September 2023

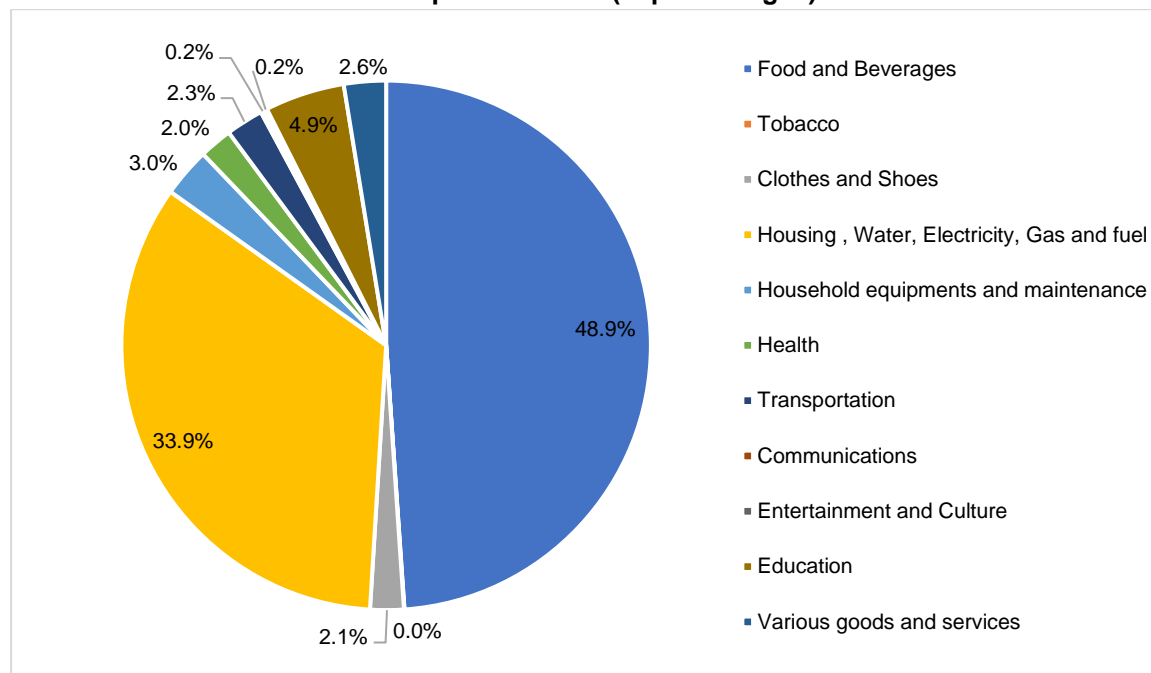


Source: Central Bank of Syria, daily bulletins of banks foreign exchange rates and money transfers and cash foreign exchange.

3. Contributors to Inflation

In September 2023, the Food and non-alcoholic beverages group⁵ contributed significantly to the monthly inflation (M-o-M) with 6.7 per cent, making up 48.9 per cent of the total, followed by the Housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuel oils group with a contribution of 33.9 per cent, trailed by the Education group at 4.9 per cent.

Figure (4): Contribution of major consumption groups to the monthly inflation rate (M-o-M) for September 2023 (in percentages)



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

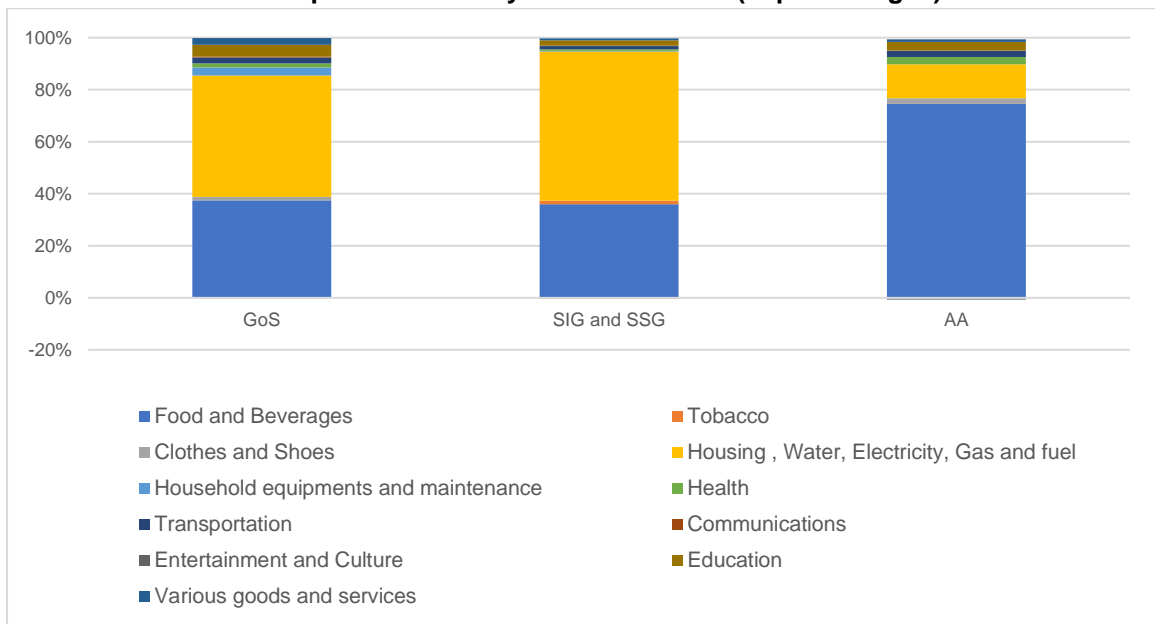
⁵ The contribution rate to inflation means the percentage of the contribution of each consumption group to annual inflation out of 100%.

The Food and non-alcoholic beverages group achieved the highest contribution to the monthly inflation in the AA areas, at 75.6 per cent. However, it contributed 37.5 per cent in the GoS areas and 36.1 per cent in the SSG and SIG areas. It is worth noting that the AA raised the price of 1100 grams of subsidized bread from 350 to 1000 Syrian pounds in September 2023 (by 185 per cent) and 600 grams of white bread from 2500 to 3500 Syrian pounds (by 40 per cent). Institutions affiliated with the Syrian Ministry of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection stopped distributing subsidized sugar and rice to citizens. They started selling a kilo of sugar at SYP 13000 and a kilo of Egyptian rice at SYP 12500, with a limit of 1 kg for each family eligible for monthly support. It is worth mentioning that the price was around SYP 1000 for both before that at a rate of 1 kg of rice/sugar per person monthly.

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 September 2023, at 57.7 per cent, attributed to the sustained surge in housing demand and the rising costs of building materials, eight months after the earthquake that struck areas of northern Syria in February 2023. It is worth noting that the electricity company in the SIG areas did not respond to residents' demands to reduce the price of electricity in the Aleppo countryside, which is under its control after it raised it last August from TL 3.2 per kWh to TL 4.5.

The Housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuel oils group contributed 46.8 per cent of the monthly inflation in GoS areas caused by recent decisions that significantly raised the prices of diesel, gas, electricity, and water.

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



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

4. Wages in Syria, September 2023

In September 2023, the average monthly wage in Syria stood at approximately SYP 519 thousand for a university-educated employee in the public sector at the start of their appointment and reached around SYP 664 thousand in the private sector, while it counted in the civil sector at SYP 1.88 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 28 per cent in the civil one within Syria.⁶

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

	GoS areas	SIG and SSG areas	AA areas	Whole of Syria
A- Public sector workers				
Staff wages (professor)	726,696	6,153,783	3,090,000	1,754,608
Staff wages (university-educated)	207,667	1,509,893	1,060,000	518,728
Staff wages (4th band)	190,692	1,058,586	1,040,000	446,376
B- Private sector workers				
Company director salary	1,407,500	4,487,135	1,580,000	1,785,684
Shop worker salary	485,173	1,569,074	764,444	663,534
C- Civil sector workers				
Staff wages (university-educated)	882,727	5,384,560	3,751,000	1,884,329

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.

On August 16, 2023, the government issued two decrees to increase the total wages of civilian and military workers and retirees in GoS areas by 100 per cent applied to wages for September.⁷ The monthly wage of a university-educated employee in government departments (year of starting appointment) rose to SYP 207667 and who holds a basic education certificate (4th band) to SYP 190692. The monthly salary of a university professor also increased from SYP 112116 to SYP 242232. Before the decree, the university professor received a full-time allowance of 100 per cent of their lump-sum salary. However, on August 24, 2023, a new decree was issued raising the full-time allowance to 200 per cent of the lump sum,⁸ bringing the monthly salary of the university professor in September 2023 to SYP 726696 instead of SYP 224232 in the previous month (an increase of 224 per cent).

The increase in wages at current prices led to an improvement in the real wages⁹ of public sector employees in GoS areas during September by 84 per cent for all workers in the public sector and by 198 per cent for university professors compared to August, while real wages for workers in AA departments decreased by 8 per cent and in SIG and SSG 4.5

⁶ 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 16 per cent of the wages of civil sector workers in the SSG and SIG areas in September 2023.

⁷ [Legislative Decree No. 11 of 2023 and Legislative Decree No. 12 of 2023.](#)

⁸ [Legislative Decree No. 20 of 2023.](#)

⁹ 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.](#)

per cent for the same period. In September 2023, the real wages in SSG and SIG areas decreased by 3.3 per cent compared to July 2023. The private sector experienced a 2.4 per cent decrease while the civil 3.2 per cent.

The inflation of September 2023 led to a decrease in the real wages in the private sector in GoS areas by 2 per cent and in the civil sector by 2.9 per cent compared to August 2023 and a decrease in the purchasing power of wages of workers in the private sector in the SIG and SSG areas by 4.5 per cent and 4.7 per cent in the civil sector. In the AA areas, the real wages in the private and civil sectors also decreased by 5.8 and for workers 7.9 per cent for the same period, respectively.

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

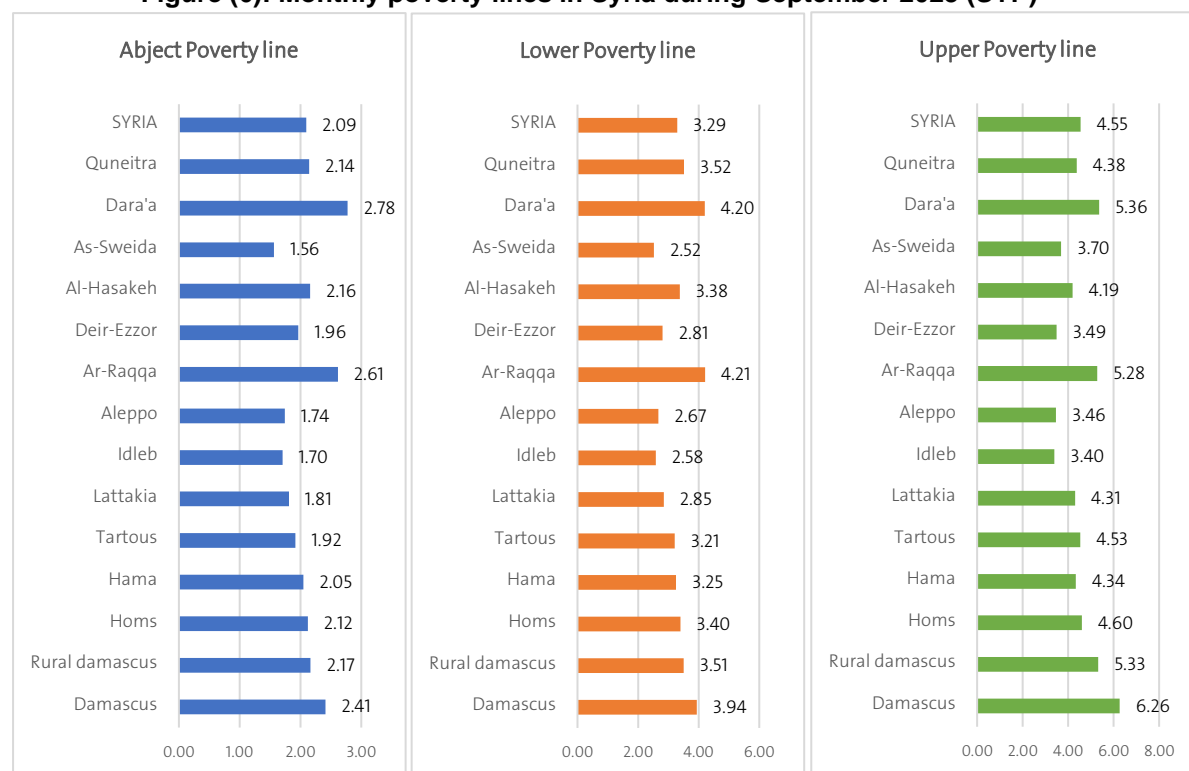
	GoS areas	SIG and SSG areas	AA areas
Public sector workers	84.03%	-4.49%	-7.99%
Private sector workers	-2.06%	-4.52%	-5.82%
Civil sector workers	-2.91%	-4.65%	-7.91%

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

5. Poverty Lines in Syria, September 2023

In September 2023, the abject poverty line for families,¹⁰ serving as an indicator of food insecurity, rose to SYP 2.1 million per month, marking an increase of SYP 126 thousand from August 2023. The lower poverty line increased by SYP 198 thousand from the previous month to reach 3.3 million, while the upper poverty line saw an SYP 276 thousand increase, reaching 4.6 million. The highest values for poverty lines were recorded in the governorates of Ar-Raqqa, Dara'a, Rural Damascus, and Damascus, while As-Sweida, Idleb, Aleppo, and Lattakia recorded the lowest poverty lines in September 2023.

Figure (6): Monthly poverty lines in Syria during September 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 September 2023, where the abject poverty line reached SYP 2.26 million and the lower poverty line SYP 3.47 million. Following were the areas of the GoS with an abject poverty line of SYP 2.07 million and a lower poverty line exceeding SYP 3.28 million per month. Lastly, the SIG and the SSG areas had an abject poverty line of SYP 1.55 million and a lower poverty line above SYP 2.37 million. The GoS areas ranked the highest level of the monthly upper poverty line during September 2023, reaching SYP 4.55 million, followed by the AA areas with an amount of SYP 4.32 million, and finally the SIG and SSG areas with an amount of SYP 3.09 million.

A comparison between wages in current prices and monthly poverty lines reveals that the wage gap¹¹ from the abject poverty line within Syria level in September 2023 reached about 75.2 per cent for a university-educated employee in the public sector, 68.3 per cent for a private sector worker, and 10 per cent for a civil sector worker. Notably, wages of

¹⁰ The poverty lines (abject, lower and upper) were calculated by measuring the impact of inflation on the 2009 poverty lines.

¹¹ 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.

civil sector workers in the SIG, the SSG and the AA areas surpassed the abject poverty line by 247 per cent and 65.6 per cent, respectively. However, wages in the civil sector in the GoS areas were 57.5 per cent lower than the abject poverty line, highlighting the elevated poverty levels, especially among public sector workers.

Table (4): Monthly wage gap from poverty lines in Syria during September 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	-90.0%	-2.8%	-53.2%	-75.2%
Private sector worker	-76.7%	+1.0%	-66.3%	-68.3%
Civil sector worker	-57.5%	+246.6%	+65.6%	-10.0%
B- Wage gap from the lower poverty line				
University-educated employees in the public sector	-93.7%	-36.2%	-69.5%	-84.3%
Private sector worker	-85.2%	-33.7%	-78.0%	-79.9%
Civil sector worker	-73.1%	+127.5%	+8.0%	-42.8%
C- Wage gap from the upper poverty line				
University-educated employees in the public sector	-95.4%	-51.2%	-75.5%	-88.6%
Private sector worker	-69.0%	+45.1%	-63.5%	-60.7%
Civil sector worker	-80.6%	+74.1%	-13.3%	-58.6%

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

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

Appendix

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

	Damascus	Rural Damascus	Homs	Hama	Tartous	Latakia	Idleb	Aleppo	Ar-Raqqa	Deir-Ezzor	Al-Hasakeh	As-Sweida	Dara'a	Quneitra	SYRIA
All commodities	548	509	527	505	561	530	347	469	551	466	567	540	572	550	511
Food and non-alcoholic beverages	577	537	586	537	523	566	340	484	526	507	631	534	573	566	530
Tobacco	449	464	409	397	509	424	289	335	363	442	459	466	450	433	425
Clothing and footwear	399	486	412	497	541	620	379	417	747	499	788	653	418	505	503
Housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels	579	534	518	491	703	485	403	500	707	402	540	586	700	525	545
Household equipment and maintenance	713	520	576	632	566	595	259	364	521	554	755	675	666	856	538
Health	464	476	435	475	455	497	315	483	628	406	487	484	612	469	469
Transportation	666	624	633	627	554	728	403	560	465	535	605	664	598	791	592
Communications	236	238	236	236	236	265	186	276	246	240	253	230	231	231	216
Culture and entertainment	502	573	528	521	469	548	293	435	497	511	772	467	613	440	507
Education	434	337	394	293	522	313	386	329	367	333	439	269	427	335	384
Various goods and services	445	449	429	485	603	455	360	498	617	463	484	543	474	554	490

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



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