



# Monthly Bulletin for Consumer Price Index and Inflation in Syria

Issue (3) – March 2024



## 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 **March 2024** (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 the Syrian regime
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, March 2024

In March 2024, the general CPI achieved an annual inflation (Y-o-Y) of 123.7 per cent and a monthly inflation (M-o-M) of 2 per cent.

The Clothes and shoes group recorded the highest monthly inflation rate in March 2024 at 3.7 per cent, as the average price of local jeans within Syria reached SYP 191, imported pants reached SYP 300 thousand, women's cotton shirts reached SYP 178 thousand, cotton scarves reached SYP 50 thousand, and natural leather shoes reached SYP 347 thousand.

**Table (1): Monthly consumer price inflation in Syria for March 2024 by consumption group (base year 2021 =100) and (inflation in percentages)**

#	Group	CPI in February 2024	CPI in March 2024	Monthly Inflation (M-o-M)
	<b>All commodities</b>	<b>619.9</b>	<b>632.6</b>	<b>%2.1</b>
1	Food and non-alcoholic beverages	618.6	628.7	%1.6
2	Tobacco	459.6	462.6	%0.7
3	Clothes and shoes	711.8	738.3	%3.7
4	Housing, water, electricity, and other fuel oils	681.5	703.0	%3.1
5	Household equipment, supplies, and maintenance	626.7	626.1	%0.1-
6	Health	691.5	700.4	%1.3
7	Transportation	730.8	747.4	%2.3
8	Communications	231.9	235.6	%1.6
9	Entertainment and culture	611.6	614.4	%0.5
10	Education	530.1	537.6	%1.4
11+12	Various commodities and services	593.8	604.6	%1.8

Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2024.

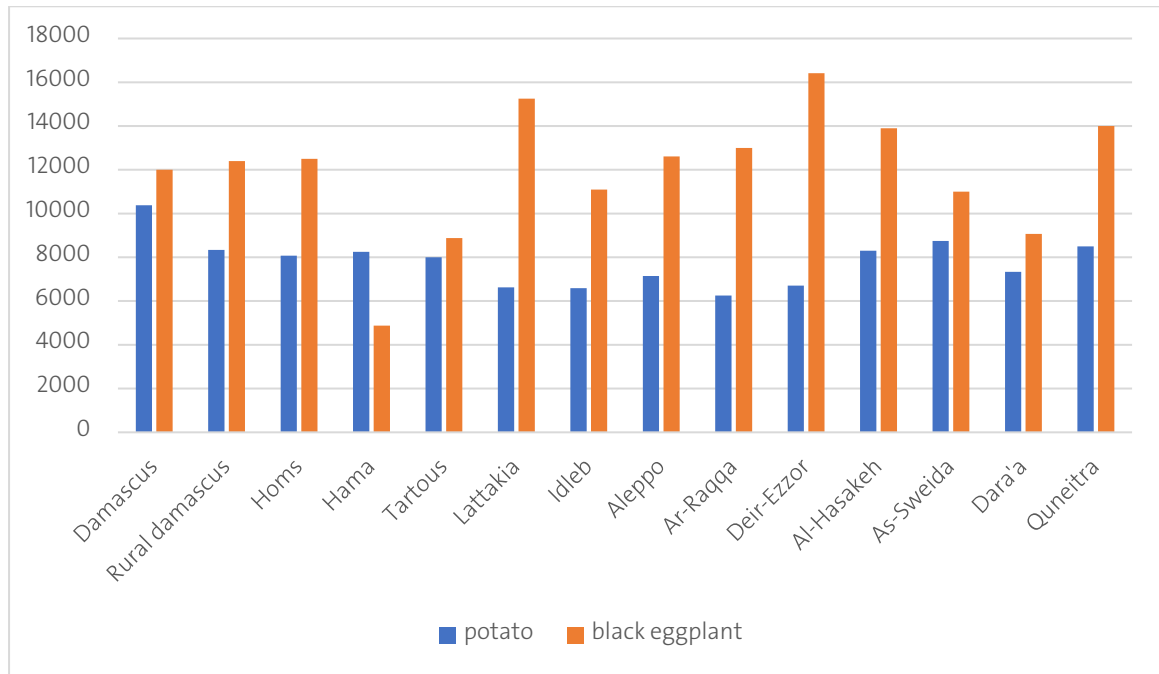
The Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuel oils group recorded a monthly inflation of 3.1 per cent with the rise in electricity prices in the GoS areas, as the Ministry of Electricity issued a decision at the end of January 2024 to raise electricity prices for the second cycle of 2024 (March and April 2024 cycle) by 176 per cent for household consumption, and by 276 per cent for commercial consumption.<sup>1</sup>

The Transportation group recorded a monthly inflation of 2.3 per cent within Syria during March 2024. The increase in transportation group prices was noticeable in the AA areas, with the Autonomous Administration raising the price of a liter of "European" gasoline to SYP 4600 after it was SYP 1700 in the previous period (170 percent) in light of the shortage in the supply of fuel after the oil wells were exposed to Turkish bombing at the Mid of December 2023

<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to the decision of the Ministry of Electricity and Electrical Energy No. 111 dated 01/31/2024, which set the price of the first bracket: from (1 - 600) Kwh at SYP 10 per cycle, and the second bracket: from (601 - 1,000) Kwh at SYP 25 liras per cycle. The third bracket: from (1,001 - 1,500) Kwh at SYP 135 per cycle. The fourth bracket: from (1,501 - 2,500) Kwh at SYP 600 liras per cycle. The fifth bracket: exceeding 2,500 Kwh at SYP 1,350 per cycle.

The Food and non-alcoholic beverages group recorded a monthly inflation rate of 1.6 per cent in March 2024, and at the level of its sub-groups, the Legumes and vegetables group recorded a high monthly inflation rate of 6.2 per cent before Ramadan. The average price of salted potatoes within Syria reached SYP 7800 per kg, black eggplant reached SYP 12000, local cucumbers reached SYP 11000, onions reached SYP 8500, and garlic reached SYP 60000. Prices varied between governorates and control areas. The increase in vegetable prices was directly linked to the rise in production costs and transportation costs in all Syrian regions, in addition to the decline in the exchange rate of the Turkish lira against the USD in the SIG & SSG areas, and the reliance on Northwestern Syria on imported vegetables in light of the decline in local production and the payment of high customs on them from the Turkish side in addition to the high transportation and unloading fees.

**Figure (1): The price of potato and black eggplant between the Syrian governorates during March 2024 (Syrian pounds per kg)**



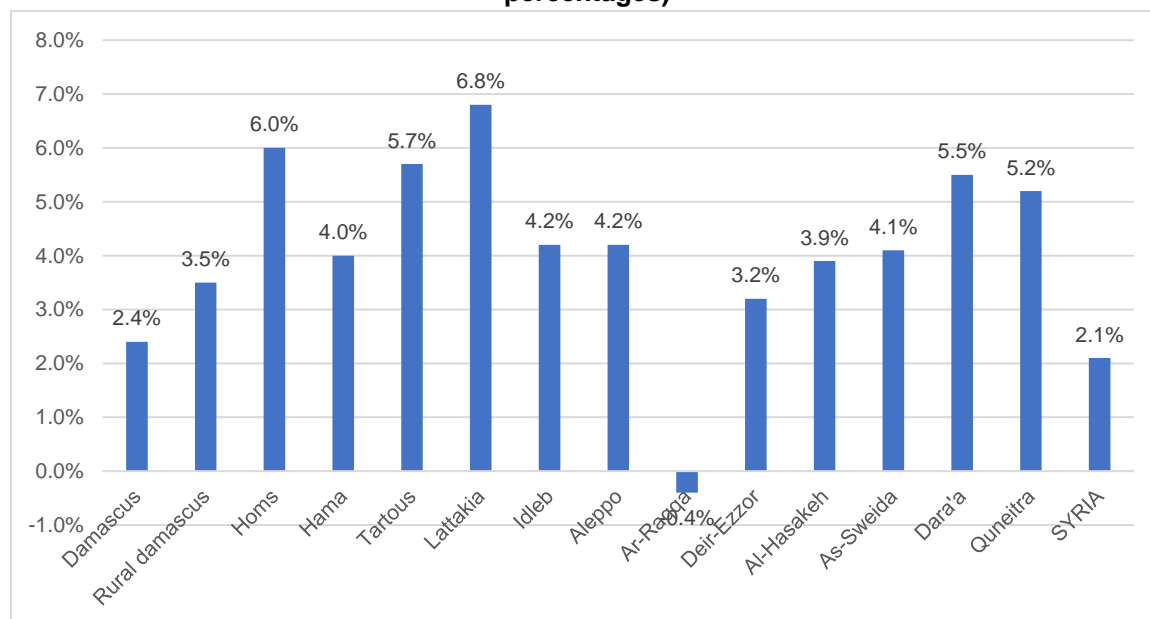
Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2024.

## 2. Inflation by Governorate

Lattakia and Homs governorates recorded the highest monthly inflation rate (M-o-M) in March 2024, at 6.8 per cent and 6 per cent for each, respectively, followed by Daraa at 5.5 per cent, while Ar-Raqqa recorded the lowest monthly inflation rate at 0.4 per cent.

The SIG & SSG areas recorded the highest monthly inflation rate (M-o-M) for all goods and services during March 2024 at 5.4 per cent, followed by the AA areas at 2.2 per cent, then the GoS areas at 1.9 per cent.

**Figure (2): Monthly inflation (M-o-M) of consumer prices in Syria during March 2024 (in percentages)**



Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2024.

## 3. Exchange rate

There was an improvement in the value of the Syrian pound against USD by 4 per cent on March 2024 compared to the previous month, as the monthly average exchange rate of the Syrian pound against the US dollar reached SYP 14161 in March 2024 compared to SYP 14747 in February 2024. The exchange rate of Syrian pound closed at a price of SYP 14057 per USD at the end of March 2024. On the other hand, the Turkish lira witnessed a significant decline in its value in the Northwestern regions of Syria by 5.86 per cent during March 2024 compared to the previous month, as the average exchange rate of the Turkish lira against the USD reached TL 32.7 per USD in March 2024 after it was around TL 30.89 in February 2024. The exchange rate of Turkish lira closed at the price of TL 33.23 per USD at the end of March 2024. It is worth noting that the Turkish Central Bank raised the interest rate from 45 per cent to 50 per cent on March 2024.<sup>2</sup>

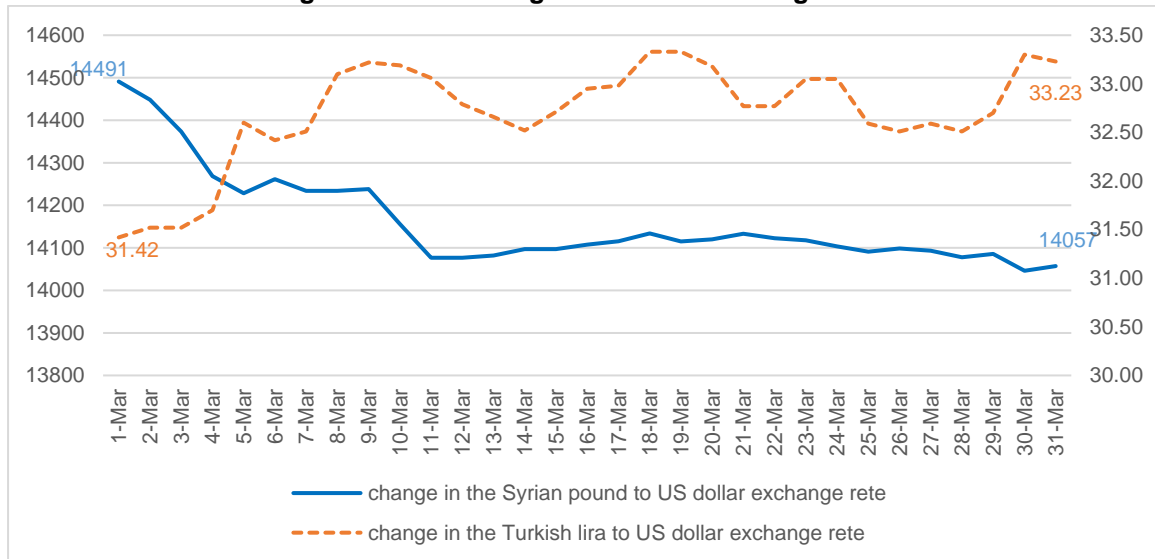
The Central Bank of Syria reduced the price of the Money transfers and cash foreign exchange bulletin on the third day of March 2024 to become SYP 13400 per USD instead of SYP 13500, the price of the bulletin was fixed at SYP 13400 per USD throughout the

<sup>2</sup> Sky News Arabia. (2024, 21 March). [Contrary to expectations.. The Turkish Central Bank raises interest rates to 50 per cent.](#) (in Arabic)



days of the month, while the price of the Official market foreign exchange bulletin remained fixed at SYP 12562 per USD throughout the month.<sup>3</sup>

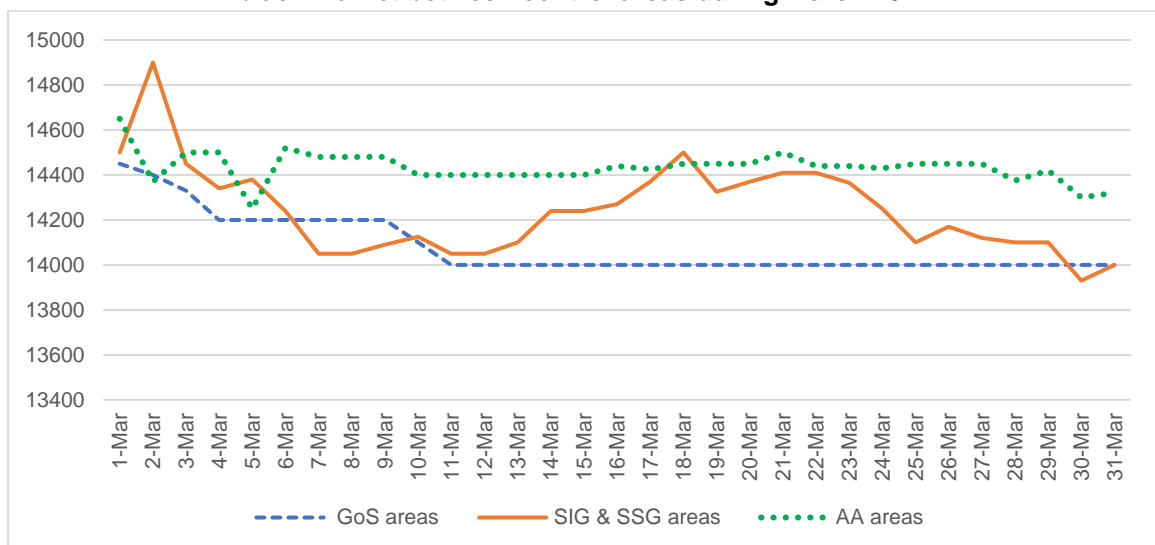
**Figure (3): Changes in the exchange rate of the SYP in the unofficial market and the exchange rate of the TL against the USD during March 2024**



Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2024.

There is a noticeable discrepancy in the exchange rate of the Syrian pound against USD in the black market between the control areas in Syria, as the value of the Syrian pound against the USD decreases in the AA areas, and the SIG & SSG areas compared to the GoS areas. This is due to the government pressure on dealing with US dollar in the black market, tightening sanctions, and restricting imports in the GoS areas. The average exchange rate of the Syrian pound against the US dollar reached SYP 14080 per USD in the GOS areas during March 2024, while it reached SYP 14433 per USD in the AA areas, and SYP 14245 per USD in the SIG & SSG areas.

**Figure (4): Comparison of changes in the exchange rate of the SYP against the USD in the black market between control areas during March 2024**



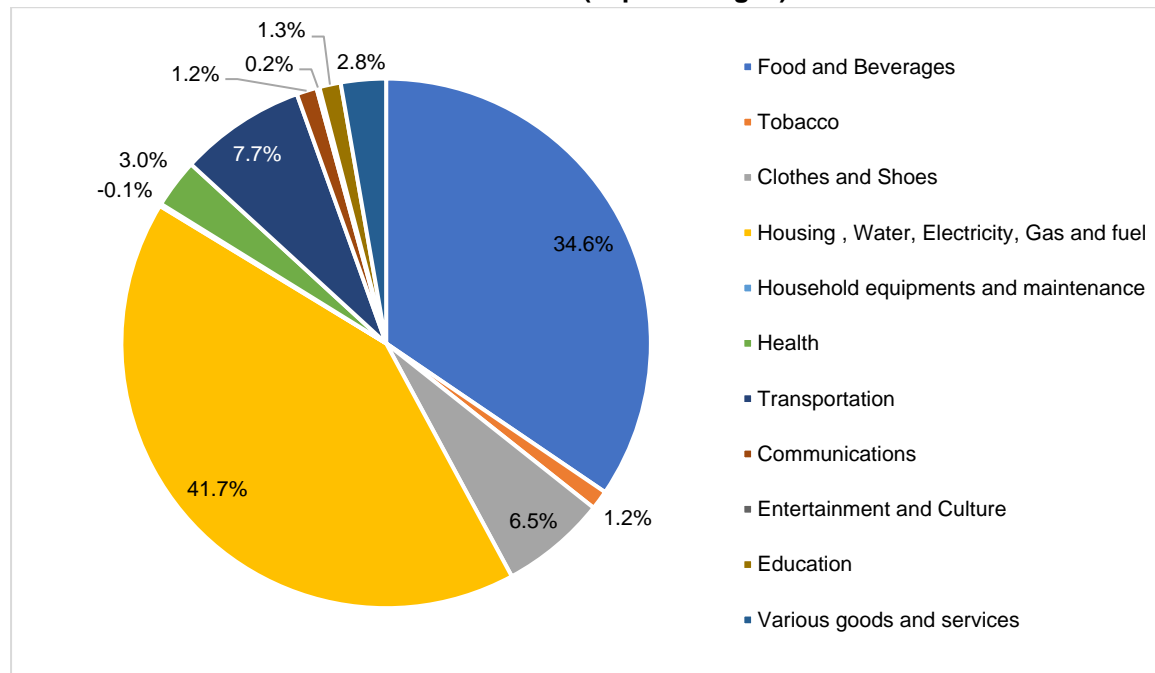
Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2024.

<sup>3</sup> The Central Bank of Syria. [Exchange rate bulletin](#).

### 4. Contributors to Inflation

In March 2024, the Housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuel oils group<sup>4</sup> contributed significantly to the monthly inflation (M-o-M) with 2 per cent, making up 41.7 per cent of the total, followed by the group of Food and non-alcoholic beverages with a contribution of 34.6 per cent, trailed by the Transportation group at 7.7 per cent.

**Figure (5): Contribution of major consumption groups to the monthly inflation rate (M-o-M) for March 2024 (in percentages)**



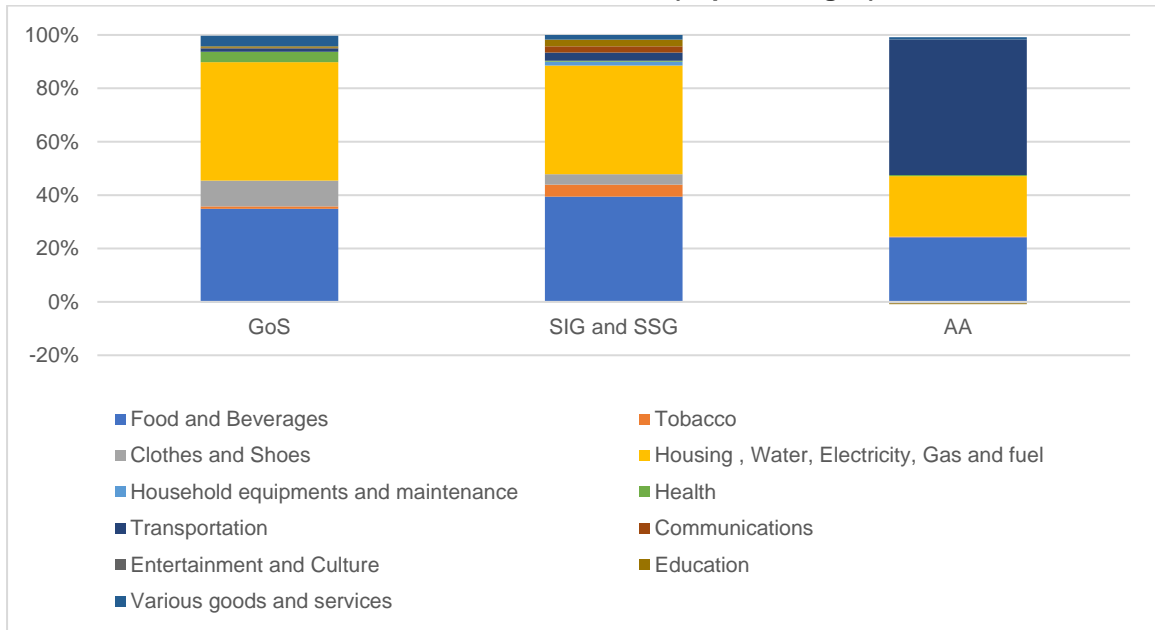
Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2024.

The Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels group made the largest contribution to the monthly inflation in the GoS areas at 44.6 per cent, the SIG & SSG areas at 40.7 per cent, and the AA areas at 23.1 per cent. The Food and non-alcoholic beverages group contributed by 39.4 per cent of the monthly inflation in the SIG & SSG areas, 35 per cent in the GoS areas, and 24.6 per cent in the AA areas.

The contribution of the Transportation group to the monthly inflation of the AA areas was high this month, as it contributed by 51.6 per cent of the inflation of March 2024, as a result of the official price of European gasoline increase by 170 per cent and the increase on the black market price in light of the decrease in supply.

<sup>4</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 March 2024 control areas (in percentages)**



Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2024.

## 5. Wages in Syria, March 2024

In March 2024, the wages at current prices increased slightly within Syria. The average monthly salary stood at approximately SYP 660 thousand for a university-educated employee newly appointed in the public sector. The wages in the private sector reached around SYP 896 thousand, while it counted in the civil sector at SYP 2.5 million.

Upon comparing wage levels between control areas in Syria, it is evident that wages in both the public and private sectors in the SIG & SSG areas are the highest, followed by wages in AA areas. And lastly comes the wages in 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 36 and 26 per cent in the civil one within Syria.<sup>5</sup>

**Table (2): Average monthly wages in Syria during March 2024 (SYP)**

	GoS areas	SIG and SSG areas	AA areas	Whole of Syria
<b>A- Public sector workers</b>				
Staff wages (professor)	1090044	7180053	3090000	<b>2140169</b>
Staff wages (university-educated)	311501	2064280	1060000	<b>660457</b>
Staff wages (4th band)	286038	1251627	1040000	<b>537463</b>
<b>B- Private sector workers</b>				
Company director salary	2301515	5082722	2775000	<b>2764300</b>
Shop worker salary	748496	1672514	980638	<b>896221</b>
<b>C- Civil sector workers</b>				
Staff wages (university-educated)	1453842	6367574	4453136	<b>2514094</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 2024.

In February 2024, two decrees were issued to increase the wages of public sector employees in the GoS areas by 50 per cent, to be applied to the wages of March 2024.<sup>6</sup> As a result of this decree, the real wages of public sector employees in the GoS areas increased by 47 per cent compared to the previous month.

The real wages of employees in the private and civil sectors in the GoS areas increased by 3 per cent and 3.3 per cent, respectively. Real wages for employees in SIG & SSG institutions decreased by 5.7 per cent, and decreased by 8.2 per cent for employees in the private sector and 7 per cent for employees in the civil sector. In contrast, real wages for employees in AA institutions decreased by 2 per cent, for employees in the private sector by 1 per cent, and for employees in the civil sector by 0.8 per cent.

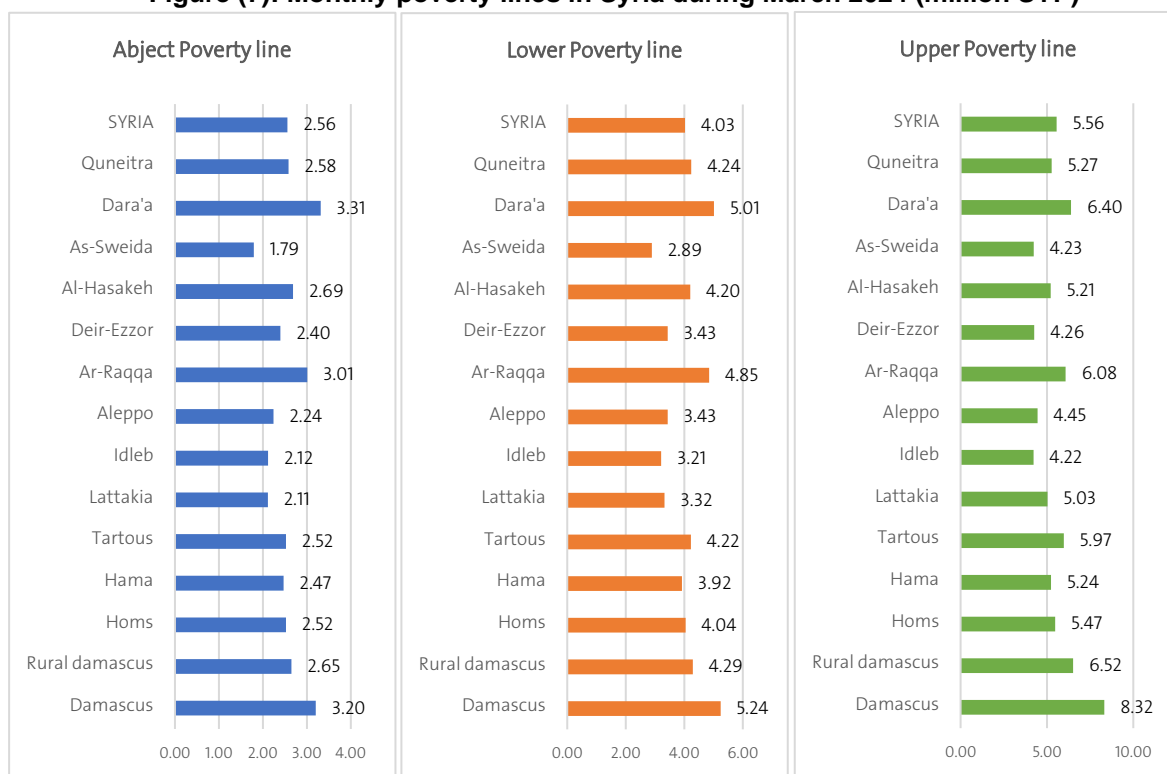
<sup>5</sup> Although the wages of civil sector workers in the GoS areas are relatively high compared to public and private sector wages, they are low compared to the rest. It equates to 32 per cent of the civil sector worker wage in the AA areas and 23 per cent in the SSG and SIG areas in March 2024.

<sup>6</sup> [Pursuant to Legislative Decrees No. 7 and 8 of 2024.](#) (in Arabic)

## 6. Poverty Lines in Syria, March 2024

In March 2024, the abject poverty line for families,<sup>7</sup> serving as an indicator of food insecurity, rose to SYP 2.56 million per month, marking an increase of SYP 51 thousand from February 2024. The lower poverty line increased by SYP 81 thousand from the previous month to reach 4.03 million, while the upper poverty line saw an SYP 112 thousand increase, reaching 5.56 million. The highest values for poverty lines were recorded in the governorates of Dara'a, Damascus and Ar-Raqqa, while As-Sweida, Idleb, Deir-Ezzor, and Aleppo recorded the lowest poverty lines in March 2024.

**Figure (7): Monthly poverty lines in Syria during March 2024 (million SYP)**



Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2024.

Comparing control areas shows that AA areas ranked the highest in abject and lower poverty lines in March 2024, where the abject poverty line reached SYP 2.7 million and the lower poverty line SYP 4.18 million. Following were the GoS areas with an abject poverty line of SYP 2.55 million and a lower poverty line exceeding SYP 4.03 million per month. Lastly, the SIG & SSG areas had an abject poverty line of SYP 1.93 million and a lower poverty line above SYP 2.93 million. The GoS is ranked the highest level of the monthly upper poverty line during March 2024, reaching SYP 5.57 million, followed by the AA areas with an amount of SYP 5.2 million, and finally, the SIG & SSG areas with an amount of SYP 3.83 million.

A comparison between wages in current prices and monthly poverty lines reveals that the wage gap<sup>8</sup> from the abject poverty line within Syria level in March 2024 reached about 74 per cent for a university-educated employee in the public sector, 65 per cent for a private sector worker, and 1.8 per cent for a civil sector worker. Notably, wages of civil sector

<sup>7</sup> The poverty lines (abject, lower and upper) were calculated by measuring the impact of inflation on the 2009 poverty lines.

<sup>8</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.

workers in the SIG & SSG areas, and the AA areas surpassed the abject poverty line by 231 per cent and 63 per cent, respectively. Wages in the civil sector in the GoS areas were 43 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 areas, and AA areas.

**Table (3): Monthly wage gap from poverty lines in Syria during March 2024 (in percentages)**

	GoS areas	SIG & SSG areas	AA areas	Whole of Syria
<b>A- Wage gap from the abject poverty line</b>				
University-educated employees in the public sector	-87.8%	7.2%	-61.1%	<b>-74.2%</b>
Private sector worker	-70.6%	-13.2%	-64.0%	<b>-65.0%</b>
Civil sector worker	-42.9%	230.7%	63.4%	<b>-1.8%</b>
<b>B- Wage gap from the lower poverty line</b>				
University-educated employees in the public sector	-92.3%	-29.7%	-74.6%	<b>-83.6%</b>
Private sector worker	-81.4%	-43.0%	-76.5%	<b>-77.7%</b>
Civil sector worker	-63.9%	117.0%	6.6%	<b>-37.5%</b>
<b>C- Wage gap from the upper poverty line</b>				
University-educated employees in the public sector	-94.4%	-46.2%	-79.6%	<b>-88.1%</b>
Private sector worker	-91.73%	-82.80%	-83.89%	<b>-82.19%</b>
Civil sector worker	-73.9%	66.1%	-14.5%	<b>-54.8%</b>

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

Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2024.

The wage gap of public sector employees from the upper poverty line reached 94.4 per cent in the areas of the GoS areas, a decrease of only two points from the previous month, despite a 50 per cent increase in wages, indicating a significant decrease in government wages compared to the upper poverty line. The wage gap of employees in the institutions of the AA administration from the upper poverty line reached 79.6 per cent in March 2024, while it reached 46.2 per cent in the SIG & SSG areas. From this, it is clear that the wages of workers government employees in all areas under control in Syria are unable to cover the basic requirements for a decent life, and the employee in the areas of the GoS areas is considered the most suffering because his monthly wage barely covers 5.6 per cent of the basic needs of the family.

## Appendix

**Appendix (1): Consumer Price Index in Syria by Major Consumption Groups in March 2024, (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>	<b>796</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>633</b>
Food and non-alcoholic beverages	653	657	674	649	676	666	437	612	586	613	731	652	680	670	629
Tobacco	503	475	463	484	505	481	313	394	374	493	488	500	501	491	463
Clothing and footwear	668	767	597	726	1,001	1,067	491	705	835	550	1,106	906	670	610	738
Housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels	1,062	739	712	669	973	734	530	668	981	510	1,050	762	834	876	703
Household equipment and maintenance	873	666	725	758	703	644	297	460	573	569	887	616	813	837	626
Health	693	786	740	654	763	765	412	613	966	604	733	694	902	639	700
Transportation	907	723	719	735	758	758	495	614	622	673	947	835	771	951	747
Communications	324	324	324	321	324	326	122	389	330	325	335	318	320	313	236
Culture and entertainment	523	701	645	577	827	561	310	591	852	506	865	534	695	555	614
Education	560	449	541	467	701	404	652	448	675	464	706	494	585	482	538
Various goods and services	492	604	701	660	749	612	390	616	650	523	525	736	600	625	605

Source: Syrian Center for Policy Research, Monthly consumer price survey in Syria 2024.



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