

Deir-ez-Zour City Profile

APRIL 2015



Executive Summary

Key Findings











The city has a current ¹ estimated population of 247,000 . Over 228,000 persons are “besieged” in the western neighbourhoods, while some 18,800 people are living in the eastern neighbourhoods. The number of people in the east is reported to be growing as the intra-city frontline has become more stable, and the east is still enjoying free access to neighbouring suburbs.

- 1. 164,000 people have been displaced by the conflict. Of these, 132,000 have been displaced from eastern to western neighbourhoods.
- 2. Almost the entire city population is in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, specifically in the besieged neighbourhoods, where approximately 228,000 persons are currently living. The data collected indicate that
 - 196,000 people are in need of food assistance
 - 66,800 people have insufficient access to health services
 - 97,000 people do not have access to adequate shelter or NFIs
 - 71,000 people are lacking sufficient access to water
- 3. 14,500 school-aged children are not attending schools
- 4. The City Profile identified the following affected groups requiring immediate assistance, in descending order of priority:
 - i. Elderly, lactating women and infants living in the city’s western neighbourhoods;

- ii. IDPs living in vacated buildings and temporary shelters;
- iii. IDPs living in financial insecurity. Often unable to access income or their own resources due to the siege;
- iv. Families hosting IDPs who are stretching their resources;
- v. Non-displaced persons/ returnees living in partially damaged shelters.

Analysis show that the mostly populated neighbourhoods are also the besieged ones, making them a top priority for immediate interventions. These neighbourhoods are Al Thawra, Al Muhajireen, Al Qusour, and the western part of Al Ba’a’jeen. On the other hand, Al Hamidia is the most populated neighbourhood in the eastern side controlled by ISIL, and it’s to a less extent in-need of humanitarian support (Figure 1). The following priority sectors and neighbourhoods were identified in order of priority:

Table 1: Priority Neighbourhoods

 Food	 Critical	Al Thawra, Al Muhajireen, Al Qusour, Al Hamidia
 Health	 Severe	Al Ba’a’jeen, Al Sheikh Yassin, Al Rushdia, Al Thawra, Al Hamidia
 Water	 Major concern	Al Hamidia, Al Ba’a’jeen, Al Rushdia, Ali Bek and Abdul Aziz, Al Muhajireen
 Shelter	 Concern	Al Muhajireen, Al Hamidia, Al Rushdia, Al Ba’a’jeen
 Education	 Concern	Al Thawra, Al Muhajireen, Al Hamidia, Al Bougaillia

Recommendations

In addition to the sector priorities identified in this report, the following general recommendations emerge:

- 1. Consider officially recognizing Deir Ez-Zor as a besieged area. The legal and operational implications of such a determination need to be independently assessed by relevant actors.
- 2. Improve access to “besieged” areas: Despite the siege on the western Government-held neighbourhoods, reports indicate that there are several viable options to access the area through local brokers. These could be explored informally. Meanwhile, airborne access using the military airbase south of the city has proven inefficient, except for limited amounts of medical supplies.

¹ Reports at the end of April indicate that the number of households fell from 49,000 to 35,000 in one month.

3. There are life-threatening gaps in the medical conditions in both sides of the city. Medicine and vaccines are amongst the top priorities, including the needed medications for chronic diseases, communicable diseases, and kidney care equipment.

4. Food is increasingly becoming a critical issue as many people are already dying due to lack of food. Key informants identified food as their highest priority need overall. In addition, the risk factors for malnutrition are in place, such as poor feeding practices, skipping of meals and a high number of children with diarrhea. Nutrition support is urgently needed for critical vulnerable groups.

5. The need to support the restoration of telecommunications:

ISIL have completely interrupted the telecommunication system which links the western neighbourhoods with the rest of the country. This has caused diverse implications on the humanitarian condition, including the inaccessibility to information and banking. There are reports that the GoS is preparing to contract satellite internet connection, which will provide communication lines over the next few weeks through one of the cell-phone companies operating in Syria.

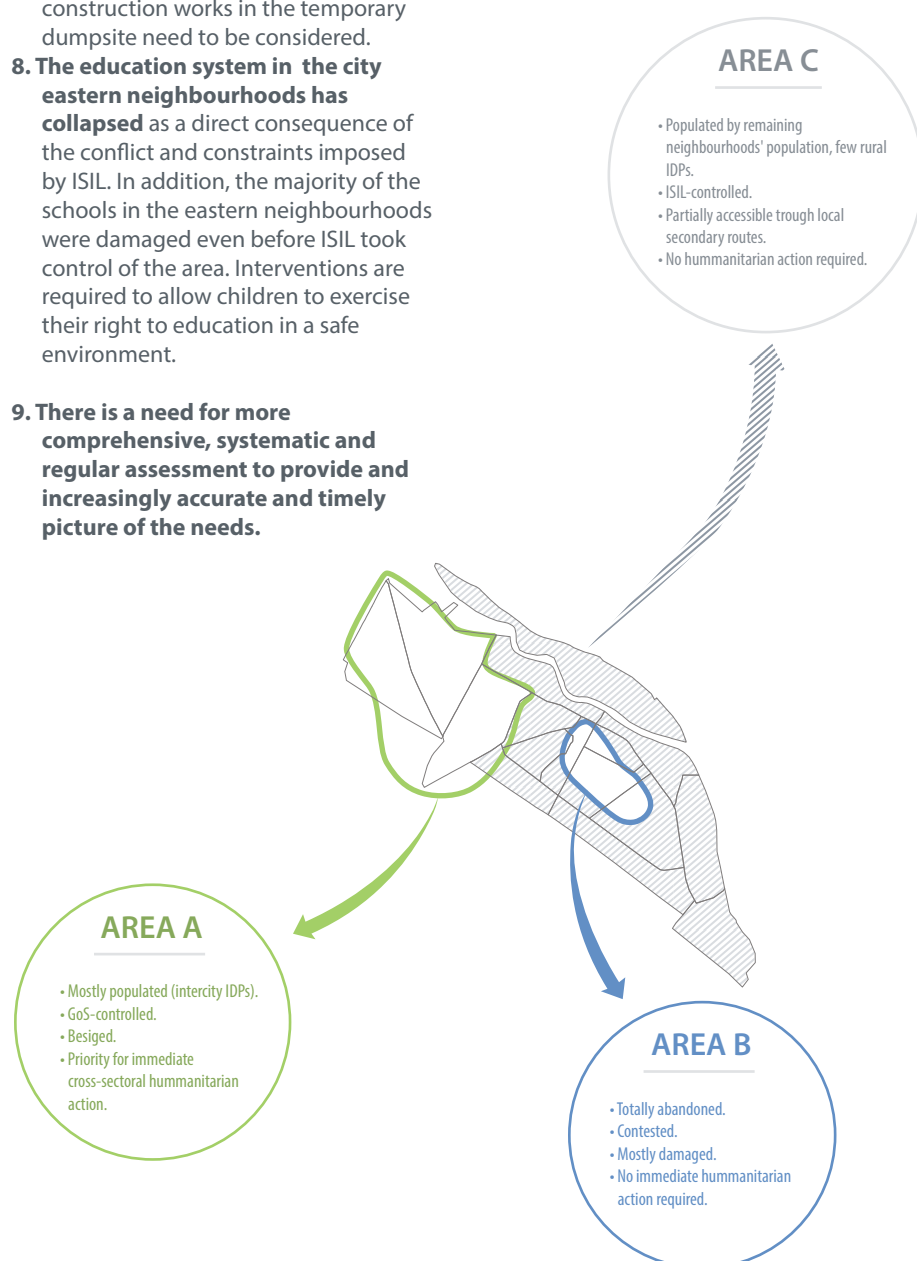
6. The conflict caused widespread damage to infrastructure and houses in Deir Ez-Zour City: Shelter kits are needed to improve living conditions, especially for IDPs in vacated buildings and other hazardous shelter.

7. Support to solid waste management and garbage collection is needed before the warmer weather starts in order to control vermin and disease vectors, and to minimize public health hazards. Support to the current construction works in the temporary dumpsite need to be considered.

8. The education system in the city eastern neighbourhoods has collapsed as a direct consequence of the conflict and constraints imposed by ISIL. In addition, the majority of the schools in the eastern neighbourhoods were damaged even before ISIL took control of the area. Interventions are required to allow children to exercise their right to education in a safe environment.

9. There is a need for more comprehensive, systematic and regular assessment to provide and increasingly accurate and timely picture of the needs.

Figure 1: Deir Ez-Zour 3 areas of intervention



Methodology

Deir Ez-Zor City Profile covered 19 neighbourhoods that are within the 2006 municipal boundary, including four peri-urban areas which have structural differences from the city's central and traditional neighbourhoods but are within the municipal area of management. The profile was developed during February and March 2015, thus some changes in the assessed humanitarian conditions and needs may have occurred.

The methodology included: a rapid survey, direct observation, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and a secondary data review. Two facilitators and 6 enumerators covered the two sides of the divided city (4 in the eastern/ ISIL-held area, and 2 in the western/ Government-held area). Qualitative and quantitative data was gathered using a simple survey instrument, key informant interviews and direct observation. Three focus groups meetings were arranged in the western side, whereas only one meeting was arranged in the eastern side. Public schools, hospitals and markets were also visited to complement interviews with direct observation.

Field data were triangulated with baseline information (demographics, health, price trends, etc.) and with independent secondary data (partners report and datasets). Data that were considered inconsistent, incomplete or contradictory were discarded.

The City Profile uses the following severity levels definitions in each of the key humanitarian sectors:

1. Situation of minor concern:



few people are facing problems or shortages in the sector, but they are not life threatening. Affected population is feeling the strain of the situation, but can cope with the current situation with local resources. Conditions require close monitoring.

2. Situation of concern:



many people are facing problems or shortages in the sector, causing significant suffering, but they are not life threatening. Affected population is feeling the strain of the situation, but can cope with the current situation with local resources.

3. Situation of major concern:



majority of the people are facing problems or shortages in the sector, causing discomfort and suffering which can result in irreversible damages to health, but they are not life threatening. Affected population will not be able to cope with the current conditions if the situation persists and no humanitarian assistance is being provided.

4. Severe situation:



affected population faces life-threatening conditions, causing high levels of suffering and may result in significant deaths if no humanitarian assistance is provided.

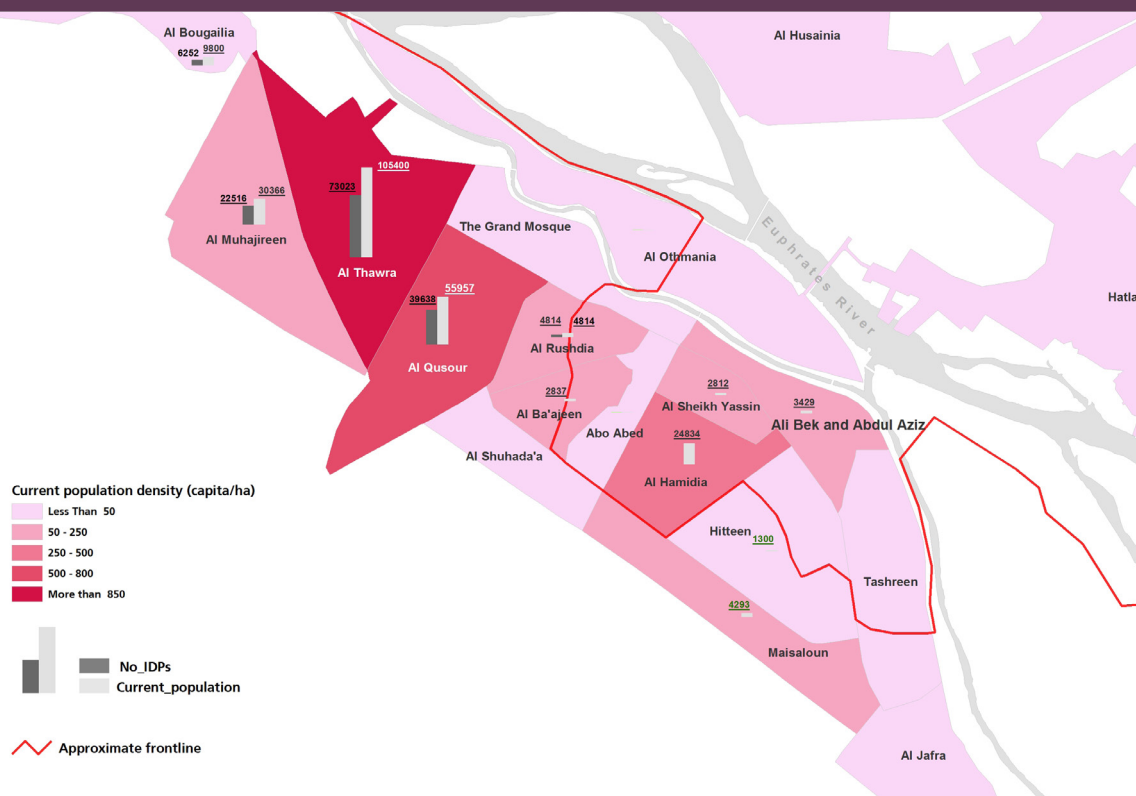
5. Critical situation:



affected population faces life-threatening conditions, causing high levels of suffering and deaths. Deaths are already reported, directly caused by the sector conditions, and more deaths are expected if no immediate assistance is provided in the sector.

Demographics

MAP 1



Pre-conflict population:
267,000

Current population:
247,000

East:

18,800

West:

228,000

Current no. of families:
44,500

Pop. living in severe conflict area:
18,600

No. of IDPs:
145,000

The pre-crisis estimated population of Deir Ez Zour is 267,000.² 2010 population figures were interpolated at the neighbourhood level based on 2004 census information (Syrian Central Bureau of Statistics).

The number of IDPs currently living in the city³ is estimated to be 145,000, of which 94% are intra-city IDPs. Current population and IDP estimates provided in this profile are considered based on registration lists, key informant estimates, and beneficiary distribution lists. School attendance, solid waste production and bread consumption figures were also used to further verify the estimates. (Figure 1)

Map 1 shows the breakdown of population and IDPs at the neighbourhood level and the current population density, which indicates the most heavily populated parts of Deir Ez-Zor and the neighbourhoods that are subsequently strained in terms of services and infrastructure. Results show that Al Thawra, Al Qusour, Al Muhajireen (west), and Al Hamidia (east) have the highest population numbers and densities, which broadly indicates the concentration of humanitarian needs in these four locations.

² While pre-conflict population figures are considered to be fairly reliable, an unaccounted population increase might have happened between 2005 and 2010, as Al Muhajireen neighbourhood (informal housing area initiated by rural migrants) was added to the municipal jurisdiction in 2006, and was not included in the 2004 neighbourhood census database. This would have added another 14,000 inhabitants to 2010 estimated population.

³ The number of displaced persons corresponds to the actual number of Deir Ez-Zour 2010 residents who left their neighbourhoods to seek refuge whether inside or outside the city.

Displacement trends and timeline

Nearly 81% of the persons who were displaced from Deir Ez-Zour neighbourhoods have been displaced inside the city. Others fled the city to other destinations inside Syria (mostly to Damascus, Al Hasaka and Raqqa), or outside Syria (mostly to Turkey and the Arab Gulf). A recent increase in rural IDPs arriving to Deir Ez-Zor is reported, especially from Ayyash (10 km east) after an ISIL offensive on the town in January (**Figure 3**). During the month of April, reports indicated that the number of households fell from 49,000 to 35,000. Reports also suggest, that the following neighbourhoods were completely abandoned: Maisaloun, Hitteen (Al Sina'a area), Al Sheikh Yassin.

Displacement dynamics in Deir Ez-Zor are related to the conditions in the whole eastern region, including the security considerations in Raqqa, and to a less extent in Al Hasaka governorates. The main displacement timeline is summarized in **Figure 4**. Three characteristics are specific to the displacement trend in Deir Ez-Zour, **2**) the low rate of displacement to outside the city as compared to displacement within the city, **3**) the high variation of return between east and west, as most of the 2013 returns were hosted in the western/ Government-held areas, and **4**) the current siege on the city's western neighbourhoods is not allowing people to exit the western area. Currently, over 228,000 persons are besieged in the western neighbourhoods with almost no communications. This displacement trend can be explained by the following factors:

- 1. (a) The tribal nature of society, which made people reluctant to relocate away from their areas of origin, as tribal relationships provide protection and solidarity to related individuals.
- 2. (b) The high proportion of households that are dependent on public employment as the main source of income, and thus must report to their departments and duty stations.
- 3. (c) The economic opportunities that the conflict has provided, including the increase in the informal trade with Turkey and Iraq, and the informal oil industry.

FIGURES:

Figure 2: Demographic Changes (Feb. 2015)

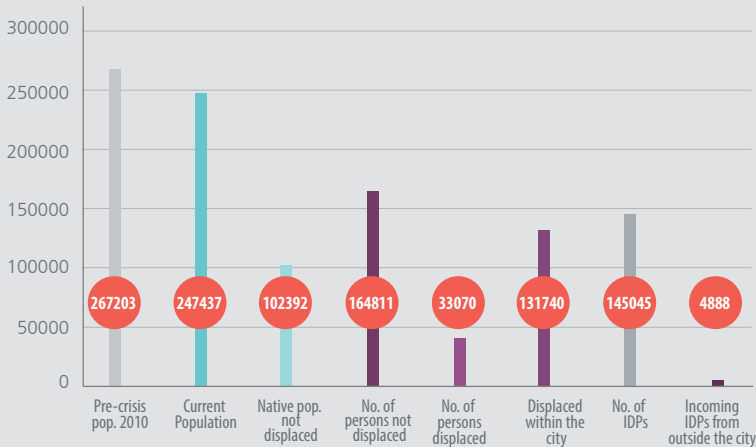


Figure 3: Displacement by Destination

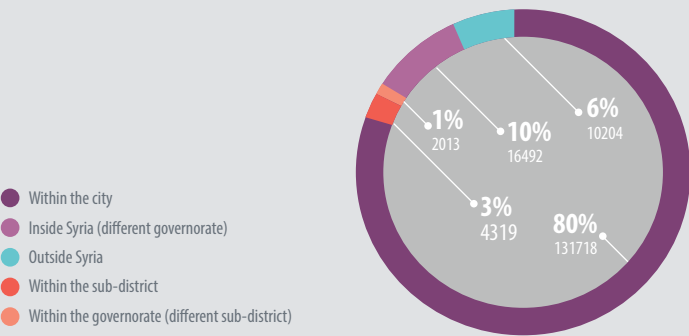
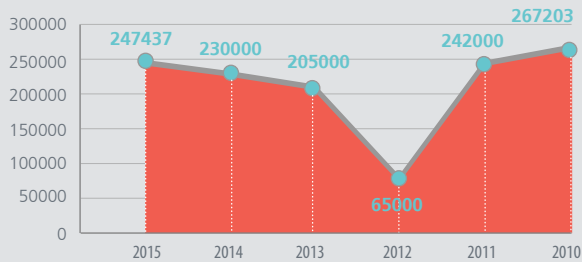


Figure 4: City Population Changes Timeline

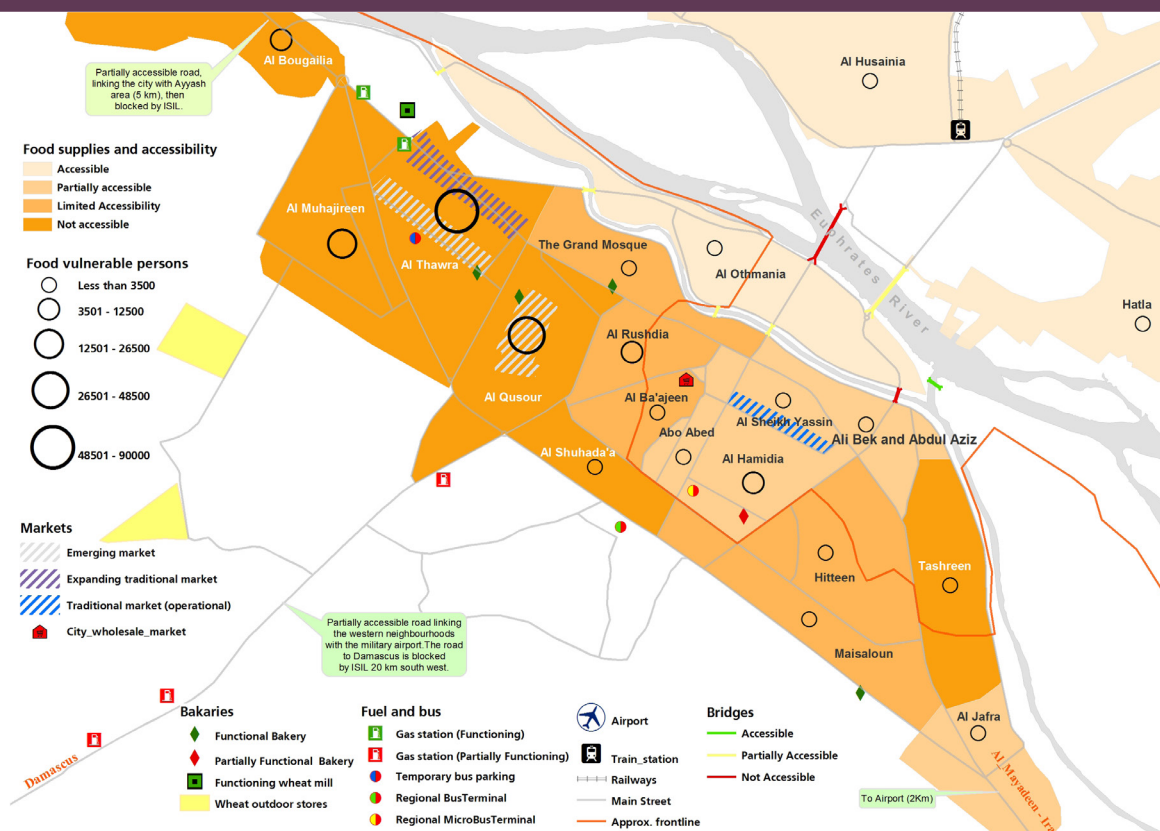


- 2015:** Restrictions on population movement from ISIL to government held western side. Mass displacement from the neighbourhoods overlooking the military airport. West side completely besieged by ISIL.
- 2014:** Decrease in displacement, and increase of return to eastern side of the city. ISIL control of east side of the city in July 2014.
- 2013:** Mass return of population after the opposition offensive on Al Raqqa. 13,000 families returned to Deir Ez-Zor just in 5 days.
- 2012:** Significant increase in displacement, mostly to Al Raqqa city. Total city population became as low as 15,000, and the city was divided to east and west sides.
- 2011:** Minor displacement, mostly upper income persons displaced to other governorates
- 2010:** Pre-crisis population

Food and Access Findings

Severity level: **Critical**

MAP 2



Reports indicate that many people are already dying because of a severe lack of food. 4 out of 5 persons in Deir Ez-Zour are under the threat of severe malnutrition.

- The analysis suggests that at least 79% of the city population is suffering from a lack of access to food supplies, the majority of which are living in the city's western side. Food vulnerable persons include IDPs, infants, elderly, and women headed households. Skipping meals and prioritizing of children is also common across the western neighbourhoods.
- The ISIL siege on the western neighbourhoods has several impacts on food security: markets are unable to restock, fuel supplies have been depleted, and food convoys were not granted access. (Table 2)

- Supply routes to the western neighbourhoods are totally blocked, and unlike eastern neighbourhoods that still have accessible routes to eastern, northern and western destinations and across the Turkish and Iraqi borders, western neighbourhoods are completely cut off from supplies. Restrictions on individual mobility in and out of western neighbourhoods were also reported.

(Map 2)

- Government departments have provided an airlift to satellite internet connectors, which became operational one month ago, providing limited cell-phone access to one of the two operating cell-phone companies. However, people are unable to charge their mobiles, as there has been no electricity for the month of April 2015.

Food vulnerable persons:

196,200
(79% of pop.)

East:

21,700

West:

174,500

Monthly amount of children formula required:

7,245 kg

Daily amount of wheat flour required for current pop.:

24.74 tons

Daily amount of standard wheat flour currently produced:

16.1 tons

Food prices:

65% higher than average national prices

Fuel supplies:

Inaccessible

Food assistance convoys:

No access

Airlifts (Mar/Apr):

Six

Wheat stocks:

Partially secure

4

Food vulnerable persons are identified in the context of the City Profile as the city hosted IDPs, in addition to 50% of the non-displaced persons. This definition corresponds to the current conditions emerging from the siege.

Figure 5: Average consumer prices of essential commodities (S.P.)

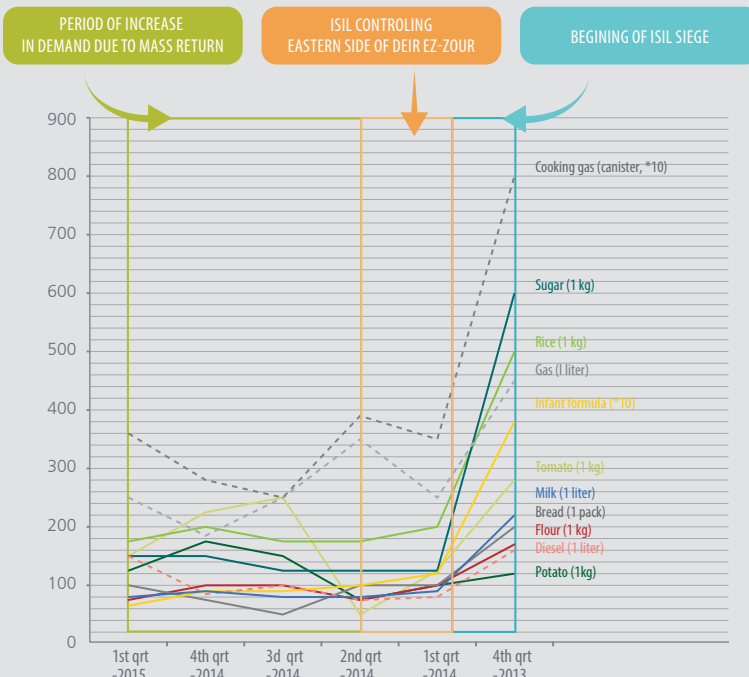


Table 2: Priority food interventions

IMMEDIATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase humanitarian airlift operations• Negotiate access of food supplies through local providers• Cash assistance to people in need
SHORT TERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Secure bakeries' fuel supplies• Secure adequate amounts of children formula• Resume food baskets distribution when conditions allow
RM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess potential contamination risks for outdoor wheat stocks

Market stocks

- There is only one operational market in the east. It has improved its access to food supplies over the past year, and despite the damage in this side of the town, and lack of access to income, the eastern population has better access to food. Accessible supply routes provide the markets with local fresh produce, and the increased access to goods from Iraq has also contributed to this improvement.
- Two markets have emerged in the city's western side since 2013: Al Qusour and Al Wadi markets (Map 2). Western markets were unable to restock since the start of the ISIL siege (January 2015). Households are mostly depending on stored food items, but have no access whatsoever to fresh food. Lack of cooking gas is reported as a major challenge; the price of 1 gas canister (15 kg) is currently 8,000 S.P. (5.3 times the official price), which makes it unaffordable to most households.
- Food and basic commodities prices have increased to unprecedented levels, and they are currently 65% higher than the average prices in other government held locations. (Figure 5)
- The inflation of food prices was exacerbated by the lack of access to income, mainly attributed to the siege and

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