



# **Needs Assessment of the Humanitarian Situation in Kobani after the Islamic State's Withdrawal**

**July 7, 2015**

## **Acknowledgements**

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Max Marder, Melike Karlidag, Daniel Seckman and Matt Trevithick authored this report.

### **About Global Communities**

Global Communities is an international non-profit organization that works closely with communities worldwide to bring about sustainable changes that improve the lives and livelihoods of the vulnerable. Global Communities believes that development is not something done for people; it is something done with them.

Global Communities has existed for 60 years. Most recently they have been known as CHF International and, before that, the Cooperative Housing Foundation. Global Communities currently works in more than 20 countries around the world in Africa, Asia, Europe & the Caucasus, Latin America & the Caribbean and the Middle East.

### **About SREO**

SREO is an independent, non-partisan research center based in Gaziantep, Turkey. SREO's team of researchers includes Syrians, Turks, Europeans, and Americans who have all spent significant time in Syria and the Middle East. Its researchers speak local languages and are dedicated to providing objective analysis of what is transpiring inside of Syria as well as in the host communities of neighboring countries.

SREO provides monitoring and evaluation services along with needs assessments and feasibility studies. Together, the SREO team has more than two decades of experience working in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria and Turkey.

SREO takes full responsibility for all omissions and errors.

Contact: [communications@sreo.org](mailto:communications@sreo.org)

## List of Abbreviations

FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HH	Household
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
PYD	The Democratic Union Party
UXO	Unexploded Ordinance
YPG	People's Protection Units

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## Executive Summary

Between September 2014 and January 2015, the Islamic State sought to capture the Syrian-Kurdish town of Kobani, located on the Turkish-Syrian border. This led to the displacement of approximately 200,000 refugees, who largely fled into neighboring Turkey. By late January 2015, the YPG declared that the Islamic State had been expelled from the city of Kobani; however, its residents still fear the return of the Islamic State fighters. At the time of writing this report, half the city was in ruins and efforts to rebuild or provide assistance were minimal.

This needs assessment sought to obtain insight on the humanitarian situation in Kobani in the months following the Islamic State's retreat from the canton. It offers a pre-and post conflict situational analysis of Kobani, comparing the environment before September 2014 with conditions since late-January 2015, which will inform Global Communities in its planning of potential interventions in the area. The research was based on 250 household surveys and eight focus group discussions, which was conducted over the course of seven days between June 3<sup>rd</sup> and June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The research tools were designed and translated by SREO with valuable input from Global Communities. This report includes multi-sectoral information regarding the housing, food security and livelihoods, local markets, health, water and sanitation, border crossing and mobility and the security situations in Kobani and its immediate surroundings.

With regard to the housing situation, many of the buildings in the city are in ruins and lack electricity. At least one third of the buildings are seriously damaged. The average monthly household income has fallen dramatically, as the economy and livelihood opportunities of the population have been seriously disrupted. Before the conflict, the most common income sources were agriculture and small businesses. At present, the farmers in Kobani are facing difficulties accessing agricultural inputs including crop seeds, pesticides, fertilizer and farming equipment. After the conflict, unemployment and the dependence on humanitarian assistance have increased significantly and most households have reduced their daily meals, mainly due to challenges related to access, scarcity and unaffordability of essential food products.

Health facilities are still functioning in Kobani, though there is a lack of skilled medical personnel, equipment and medical supplies. Ailments such as diarrhea, especially among children, influenza and allergies are common. The people of Kobani face significant health risks due to infectious diseases, particularly from contaminated water and poor sanitation practices, which contaminates drinking water.

Cross border travel to Turkey has become more challenging for the residents of Kobani. At present, more than 80 percent of the Kobani residents feel that they are no longer able to travel to Turkey. Similarly, their ability to travel to villages surrounding Kobani has also become more limited. Many families in Kobani have experienced immeasurable loss, losing their homes, livelihoods and family members.

## Introduction

In September 2014, the Islamic State made its most concerted attempt to date to capture the Syrian-Kurdish town of Kobani, located mere kilometers from the Turkish-Syrian border. The Islamic State's assault was bolstered by its use of American-made vehicles and weaponry seized from the Iraqi Army. Kobani represented a strategic prize: the Islamic State sought to unify the area under its control in north-central Syria, linking Kobani with Jarablus to the west, Tel Abyad in the east and Ar-Raqqa in the south. Following initial attacks by the Islamic State, more than 190,000 refugees ultimately fled into Turkey from Kobani.<sup>1</sup>

The battle for Kobani took on added importance when the United States-led coalition began airstrikes on October 6, 2014, in support of the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), the main fighting force defending the city from the Islamic State.<sup>2</sup> Despite initial hesitation about becoming involved in the fight for Kobani, the coalition launched 428 airstrikes around Kobani against the Islamic State—more than three-quarters of the total firepower it used in Syria in 2014.<sup>3</sup> The airstrikes, in concert with the Kurdish People's Protection Forces (YPG) on the ground, and Kurdish reinforcements from Iraq, stemmed the advance of the Islamic State in November 2014, and the combined Kurdish forces began pushing Islamic State fighters from the city the following month.

In late January 2015, after a four-month long siege of the town, the YPG declared that the Islamic State had been expelled from Kobani.<sup>4</sup> By late February, the Islamic State was at least 30 kilometers from Kobane.<sup>5</sup> However, the battle for the future Kobani is not over. Previous research commissioned by SREO found that 77% of returning Kobani residents feared that the Islamic State would return to contest their defeat in the city.<sup>6</sup> In the meantime, half of the city was destroyed and efforts to rebuild or provide assistance were found to be minimal.<sup>7</sup> According to a report issued by the Kobane Reconstruction Board in April 2015, one quarter of the city's schools, 47 percent of its pharmacies, half of its hospitals and 80 percent of its agricultural sector were destroyed.<sup>8</sup> The city's electrical and water supply infrastructure were found to have suffered

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<sup>1</sup> George, Susannah, "Kobani refugees encouraged to move into Turkey's newest and largest camp," *UNHCR*, February 16, 2015, <http://www.unhcr.org/54e1efe39.html>

<sup>2</sup> Wright, Robin, "Why Kobani Matters," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 7, 2014, <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2014/10/07/why-kobani-matters/>

<sup>3</sup> Peterson, Scott, "In Kobane, site of key defeat of Islamic State, rebuilding is a Kurdish affair," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 18, 2015, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2015/0518/In-Kobane-site-of-key-defeat-of-Islamic-State-rebuilding-is-a-Kurdish-affair>

<sup>4</sup> Westall, Sylvia and Ayla Jean Yackley, "Kurds push Islamic State out of Kobani after four-month battle," *Reuters*, January 26, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/01/26/us-mideast-crisis-syria-kobani-idUSKBN0KZ1F920150126?irpc=932>

<sup>5</sup> "Humanitarian Bulletin Syria: Issue 2." Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, June 2, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> "Kobani: Rapid Perceptions Assessment," *SREO Research*, March 2015, <http://sreo.org/portfolio/kobani-rapid-perceptions-assessment/>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> "Humanitarian Bulletin Syria: Issue 2." Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, June 2, 2015.

significant damage and both were in need of rehabilitation.<sup>9</sup> Residents indicated that they were suffering from shortages in food, clean water and electricity. Retreating Islamic State forces sowed the city and its surroundings with mines and booby-traps.<sup>10</sup> According to UNOCHA, large areas of agricultural land were reported to be “contaminated with anti-personnel mines or Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) placed by ISIL” preventing returning farmers from harvesting their fields.<sup>11</sup> As more residents return to Kobani, the humanitarian community’s “initial priorities are to ensure that UXO clearance and mine risk awareness activities take place.”<sup>12</sup>

As of mid-May 2015, it was estimated that only one in eight of the city’s pre-conflict residents had returned.<sup>13</sup> By late May, the Turkish government reported that 62,500 people had returned, while unofficial records placed the number of returnees at 80,000.<sup>14</sup>

## Objectives

This needs assessment sought to obtain insight on the humanitarian situation in Kobani in the months following the Islamic State’s retreat from the canton. A particular emphasis was placed on comparative analysis and differentiation in the situation in Kobani both before the conflict with the Islamic State began in earnest in September 2014 and after its retreat in late January 2015. The results of this needs assessment seeks to inform Global Communities in its planning of potential interventions in Kobani.

This needs assessment sought to acquire information in a variety of different sectors, including shelter, food security and livelihoods, markets, agriculture, health, water and sanitation. Respondents were also asked about their freedom of movement before and after the conflict with the Islamic State.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Peterson, Scott, “In Kobane, site of key defeat of Islamic State, rebuilding is a Kurdish affair,” *Christian Science Monitor*, May 18, 2015, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2015/0518/In-Kobane-site-of-key-defeat-of-Islamic-State-rebuilding-is-a-Kurdish-affair>

<sup>11</sup> “Humanitarian Bulletin Syria: Issue 2.” Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, June 2, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Peterson, Scott, “In Kobane, site of key defeat of Islamic State, rebuilding is a Kurdish affair,” *Christian Science Monitor*, May 18, 2015, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2015/0518/In-Kobane-site-of-key-defeat-of-Islamic-State-rebuilding-is-a-Kurdish-affair>

<sup>14</sup> “Humanitarian Bulletin Syria: Issue 2.” Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, June 2, 2015.

## Research Methodology

### Sampling

This assessment was based on 250 household surveys and eight focus group discussions (FGDs), which involved a total of 63 adult participants between the ages 18-41. See Map 1 for neighborhood locations.

Three field researchers hired by SREO, two males and one female, conducted the data collection. Each field researcher worked individually. Field researchers facilitated FGDs in pairs, with one facilitator and one note taker. The majority of the surveys were conducted in homes with household heads, which were randomly selected in neighborhoods throughout the city. However, in some cases, individuals in public locations, such as clinics and cafés, were also included in the sample

Research was conducted in the following locations: Karie Kaneah, 48 Street, Maktla, Kumrruk / “Customs Area”, Kustan Al-Haj Rasheed, Sedan, and Julayek, with the views from several respondents from Kawrak and Kufi, two villages neighboring Kobani, who were living in Kobani included as well.

**Map 1: Surveyed locations**



## **Data Collection Tools**

This assessment was completed by using household surveys and FGDs. Household surveys were designed by SREO with input from Global Communities and translated by SREO's evaluation team in Gaziantep, Turkey. SREO's evaluation team uploaded the Arabic-language questionnaire onto QuickTap Survey, software that allows researchers to conduct questionnaires on tablets offline. Once field researchers had a reliable Internet connection, they were able to upload survey data onto QuickTap's servers, allowing SREO's evaluation team to begin analysis in Gaziantep. A total of 250 household surveys and eight FGDs were conducted over the course of seven days between June 3<sup>rd</sup> and June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

The FGD questions were developed and translated into Arabic by SREO, in consultation with Global Communities. SREO's field researchers conducted eight FGDs, seven with men and one with women, in the city of Kobani. Each discussion lasted between one hour and 90 minutes. FGD participants were selected using a two-pronged approach that targeted known intellectuals and local governance officials while balancing their views with respondents selected randomly from three locations: the city's largest park, the cultural center, and a well-established teahouse.

In the case of both the household surveys and the FGDs, field researchers explained the objective of this assessment and ensured respondents' anonymity before obtaining verbal consent for their participation. In the case of FGD participants, field researchers also asked for participants' consent to have their voices recorded.

## **Limitations**

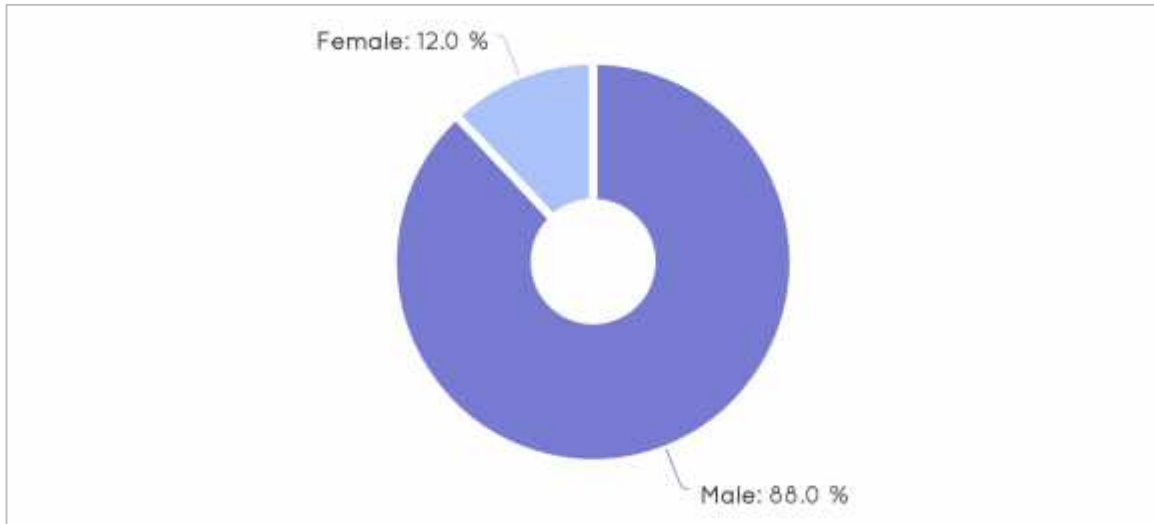
This assessment was potentially limited by several factors. It was difficult for field researchers to obtain the desired sample of 50 percent women due to the gender of the field researchers, the higher visibility of men, and prevailing insecurity in Kobani, which for cultural reasons can limit female mobility. Women's mobility in public is more restricted than men's, mainly because it is considered as culturally more appropriate for women to stay home. Women's presence in public space seems to be even more limited after the most recent conflict and siege that took place in late 2014. For the most part, the respondents were happy to participate in the survey. However, in several cases, they refused to take part, likely for fear of sharing sensitive information with strangers.

Furthermore, the survey is limited to the perceptions and views of the Kobani residents alone. All the needs that were identified in the recommendations section are based on information provided by Kobani residents that participated in this research. The scope of the study did not include key informant interviews or spot-checks to confirm the statements of the participants. More in-depth research to verify the findings and recommendations of this report is therefore recommended.

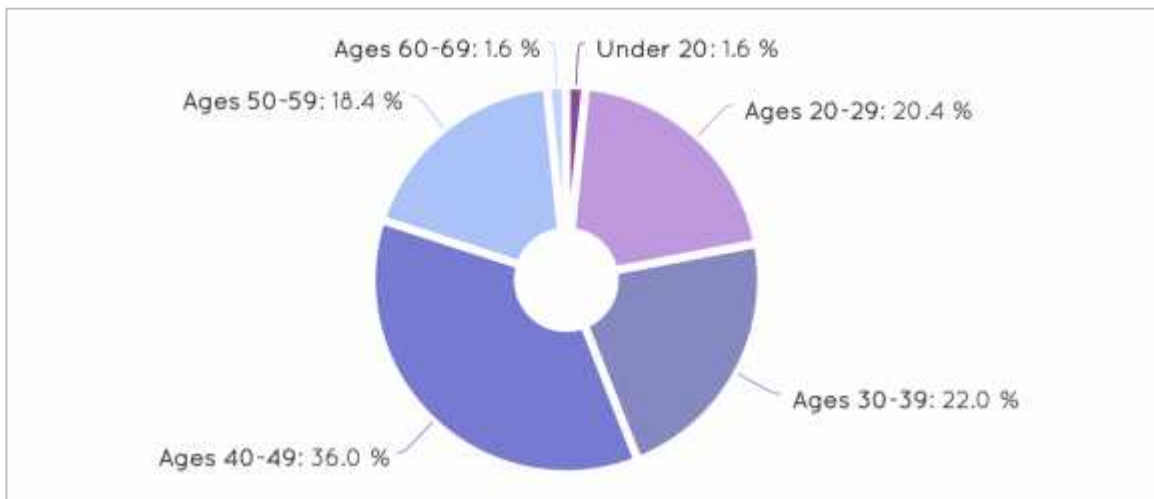
## Survey Demographics

Out of a sample of 250 respondents, 220 were men while 30 were women. Field researchers attempted to obtain gender parity in the sample. However, given the recent conflict, men were much more visible in the streets of Kobani than females. Often, males would speak for their female relatives when field researchers attempted interviews. Ultimately, the goals of interviewing household heads and obtaining gender parity were contradictory, since the vast majority of household heads are male (Figure 3).

**Figure 1: Gender of respondents**



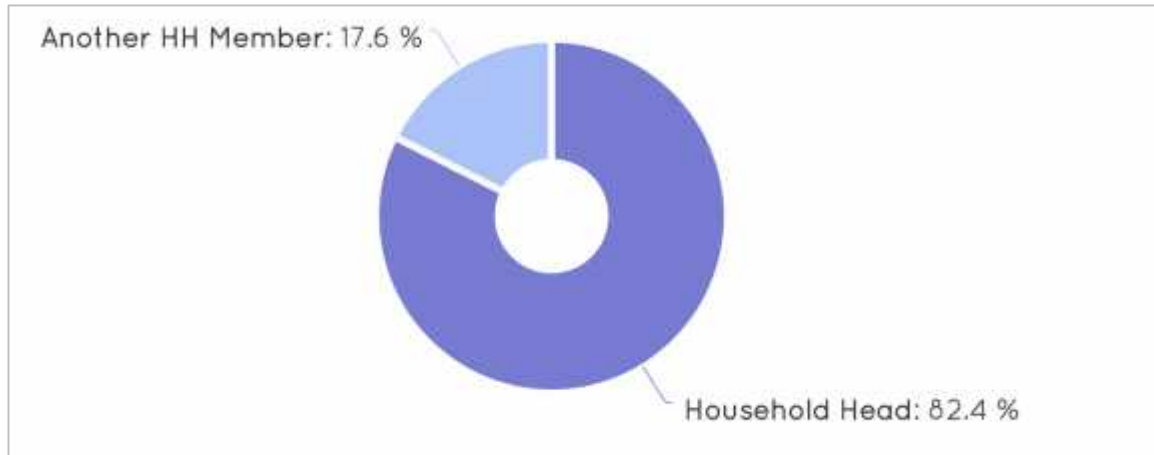
**Figure 2: Age groups of respondents**



The average age of participants was 39.5 years old, and the median age was 40 years old. The sample had a relatively common age distribution, with just four respondents under 20 or over 60. Respondents aged between 20 and 50 years represented 78.4 percent of the sample.

The majority of respondents interviewed for this assessment, 206 out of 250 (82.4 percent), were the heads of their household. Of the heads of household, only eight (3.9 percent) were women.

**Figure 3: Percentage of household heads**



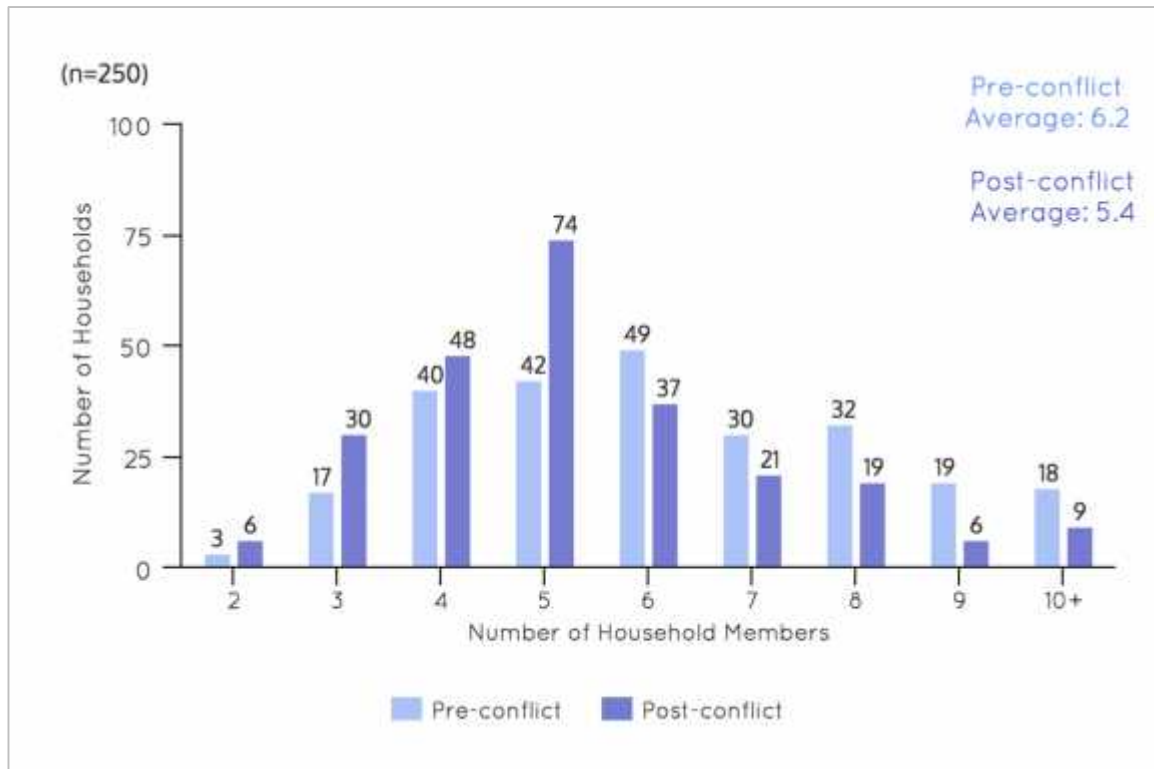
Overall, eight focus groups discussions were held with 63 participants in total. All of the FGDs had eight participants except for one, which had only seven participants. One of the FGDs was held with female participants. Just 28.6 percent of the FGD participants were employed, most frequently in the agricultural sector. See Appendix A for more information on the profiles of focus group discussion participants.

## Findings

### Housing

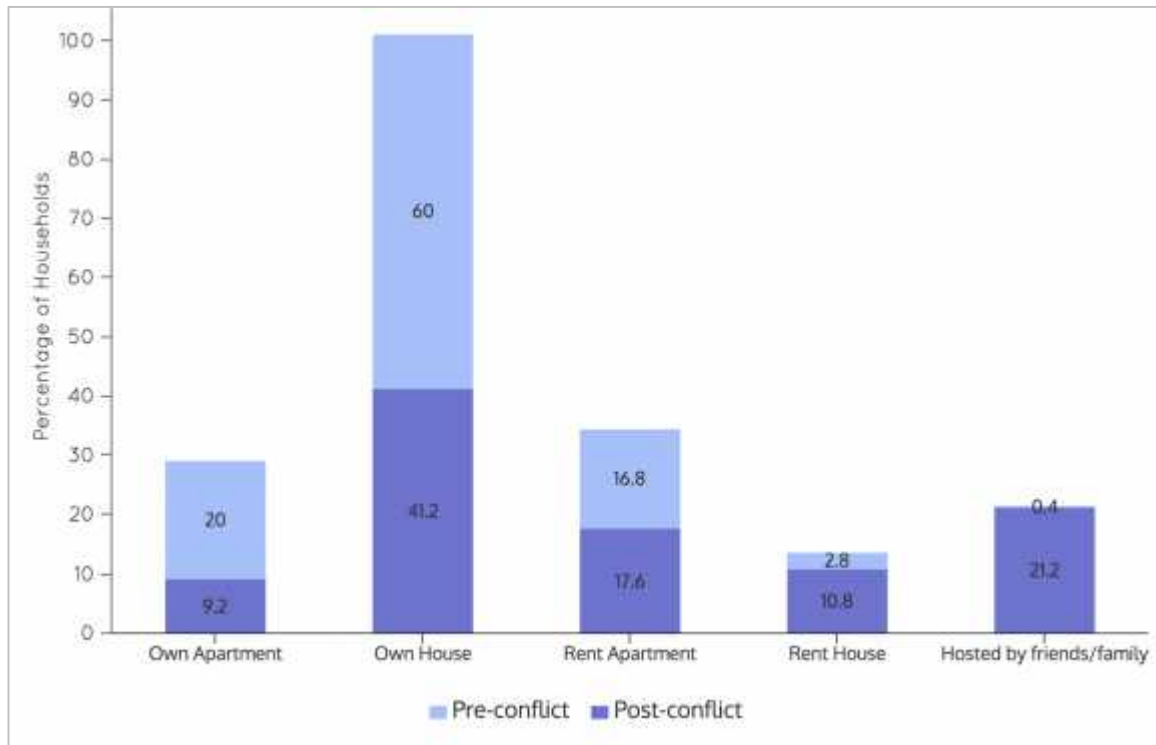
Average household sizes decreased over the course of the conflict with the Islamic State. Before the conflict, households surveyed contained a mean of 6.2 people and a median of six people. After the conflict, the number of household members dropped to a mean of 5.4 people and a median of five people. Presumably, average household size dropped primarily because some residents fled from the conflict and have not returned. A secondary cause could be death—ten percent of respondents surveyed reported that a family member was killed during the conflict, though the change in household size was not completely unidirectional—several households grew in size, presumably from accepting guests from other families who had lost their homes (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Number of household members**

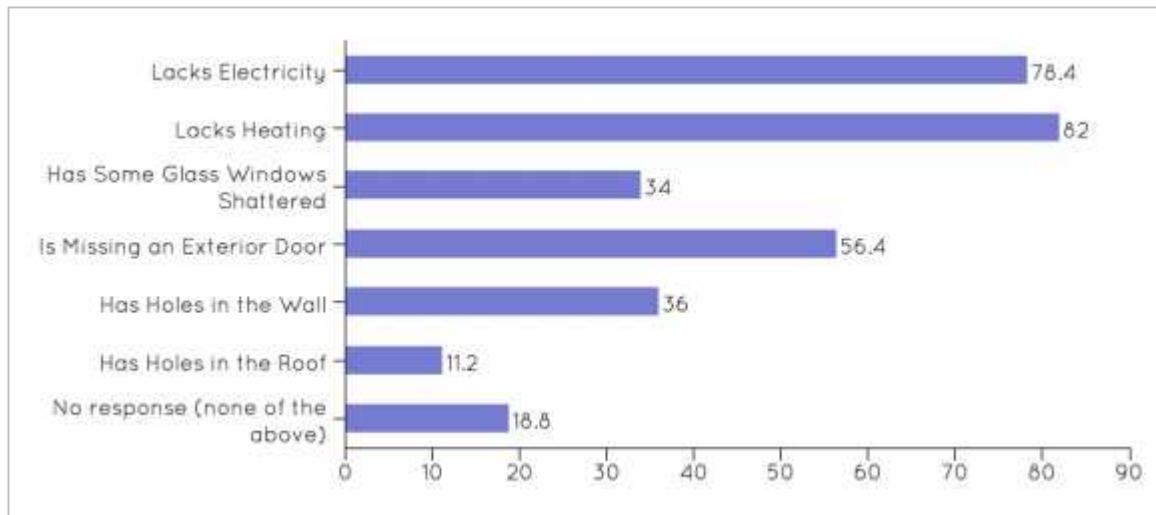


The housing situation of respondents' surveyed changed dramatically as a result of the conflict. Before the Islamic State began its siege of Kobani in September 2014, 80 percent of respondents self-reported ownership of either a house or an apartment. After the conflict, this was true of only 50.4 percent of the sample. Of the 29.6 percent of respondents who owned a living space before the conflict but did not afterwards, most likely because their property was destroyed, approximately one-third started renting and two-thirds became guests of their friends or family (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Types of housing – in percentage**

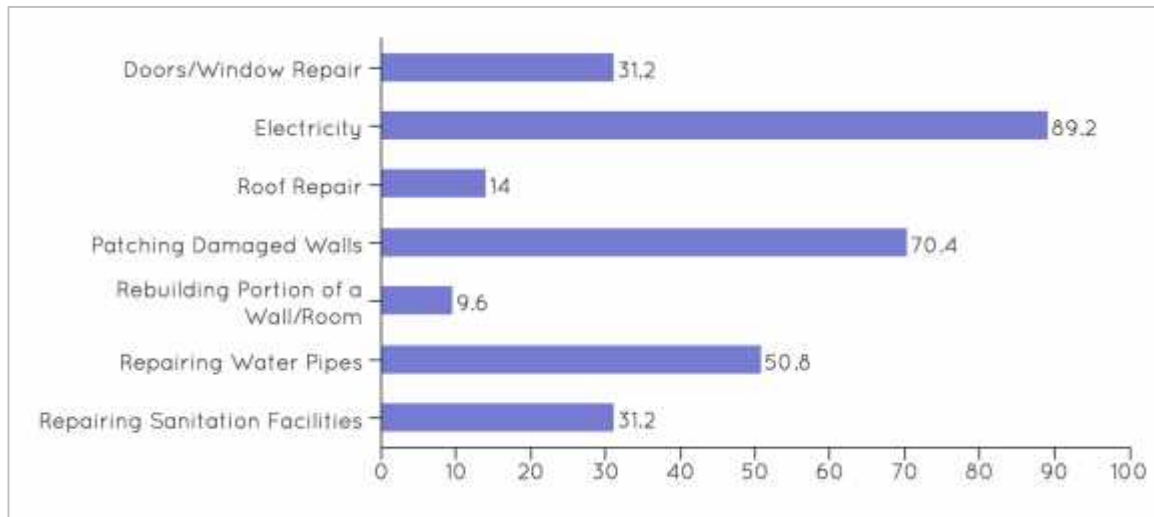


**Figure 6: Housing conditions – in percentage**



Respondents indicated that there were a variety of problems with their current housing situation. Roughly 78 percent of the households lack electricity in their residence while 82 percent do not have means to heat their homes. Thirty six percent of the respondents said that there were holes in the walls of their residency and 10.4 percent reported holes in their roofs. More than half of the respondents stated that their homes are missing an exterior door, while 34 percent reported that at least some of their window glass is missing (Figure 6).

**Figure 7: Urgent repair needs (multiple choice) – in percentage**



When asked to select the three most urgent housing improvements they required, 89.2 percent of respondents said they needed repairs to their electricity supply (Figure 7). The second most common need was for the patching of damaged walls, which 70.4 percent of respondents named in their top three needs. Just more than half of respondents named water pipe repair as one of their three most urgent needs. About one-third (31.2 percent) of respondents said respectively that doors/windows and sanitation facilities required repair. Respondents indicated less urgency in the case of roof repair (14 percent) and rebuilding a portion of a wall or room (9.6 percent).

FGD participants largely agreed that their housing situation has changed significantly since the conflict with the Islamic State. Some residents who fled Kobani during the conflict returned to find their homes destroyed, their furniture burned, and their possessions stolen. One FGD participant returned to his home only to find that it was full of animals; the Islamic State had occupied the home and used it as a stable. Another FGD participant was an IDP who had moved to Kobani from Aleppo, only to flee a second time to Turkey, before she returned to find her home destroyed. Another participant also suffered from “double damage,” fleeing from Ar-Raqqa to Kobani only to flee once again.<sup>15</sup> Many of the homes that were not destroyed were looted. Several FGD participants said they were staying with their families in their original homes, even though only one or two rooms remained intact. Several FGD participants were sleeping under “open roofs” because of damage to their homes.<sup>16</sup> Others “brought mattresses from Turkey” because their homes and furniture were gone.<sup>17</sup> While the majority of FGD participants’ homes were destroyed, many returned to their original residences to make the best of their situation.

Many of the FGD participants whose homes were destroyed are now living as guests in the homes of neighbors or relatives. Participants’ entire families have been squeezed into one room, and

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<sup>15</sup> FGD #7

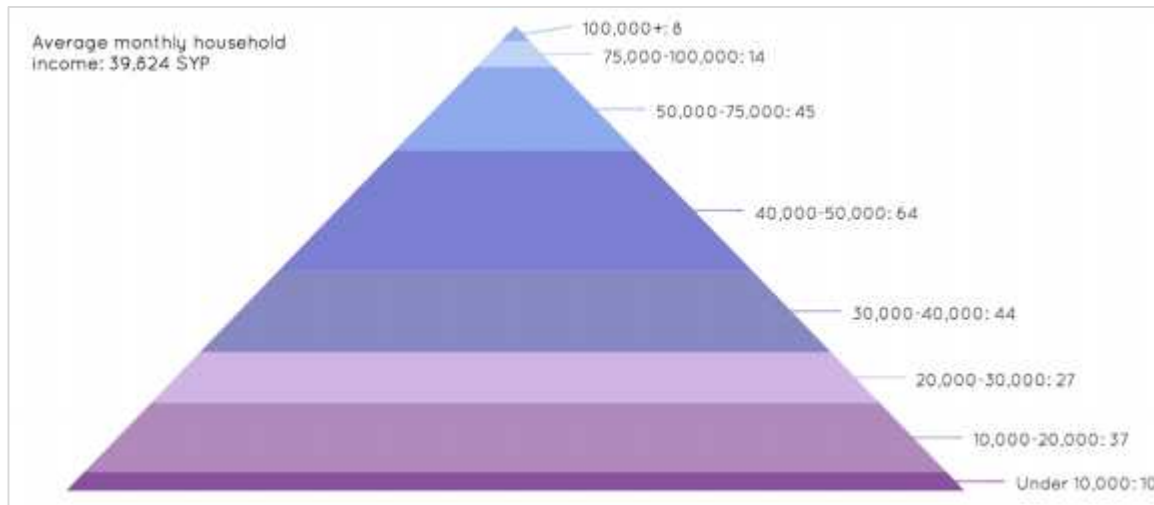
<sup>16</sup> FGD#5

<sup>17</sup> FGD #8

they only “sleep when [they] are able to sleep.”<sup>18</sup> Sometimes they’ve had to pay a fee to stay in others’ homes. Others without homes have rented apartments or houses. Reportedly the PYD helped returning Kobani residents to secure furniture.<sup>19</sup> Those without accommodating neighbors and relatives, or the ability to rent, have been living in the streets.

## Livelihoods

**Figure 8: Pre-conflict monthly household income in Syrian Pounds**



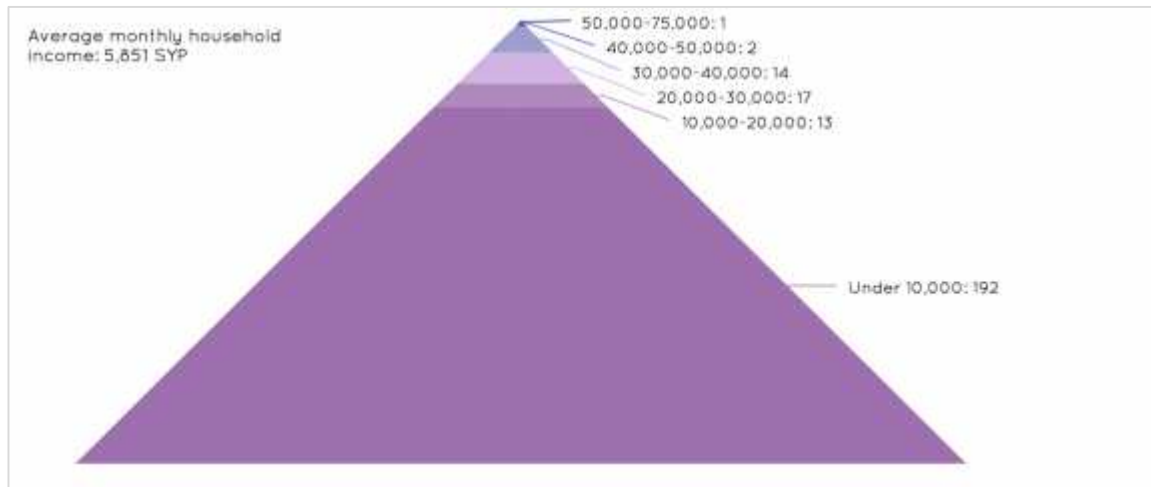
Respondents’ average monthly household income before the conflict with the Islamic State was 39,824 SYP, with a median income of 40,000 SYP. The majority of respondents (61.2 percent) reported a pre-conflict monthly household income of 30,000-75,000 SYP (Figure 8).

When dividing respondents’ reported monthly household income by the members of their households, pre-conflict income on average was 6,761 SYP per person per month.

<sup>18</sup> FGD #6

<sup>19</sup> During the focus group discussions in Kobani, the participants generally referred to the PYD as “the party.”

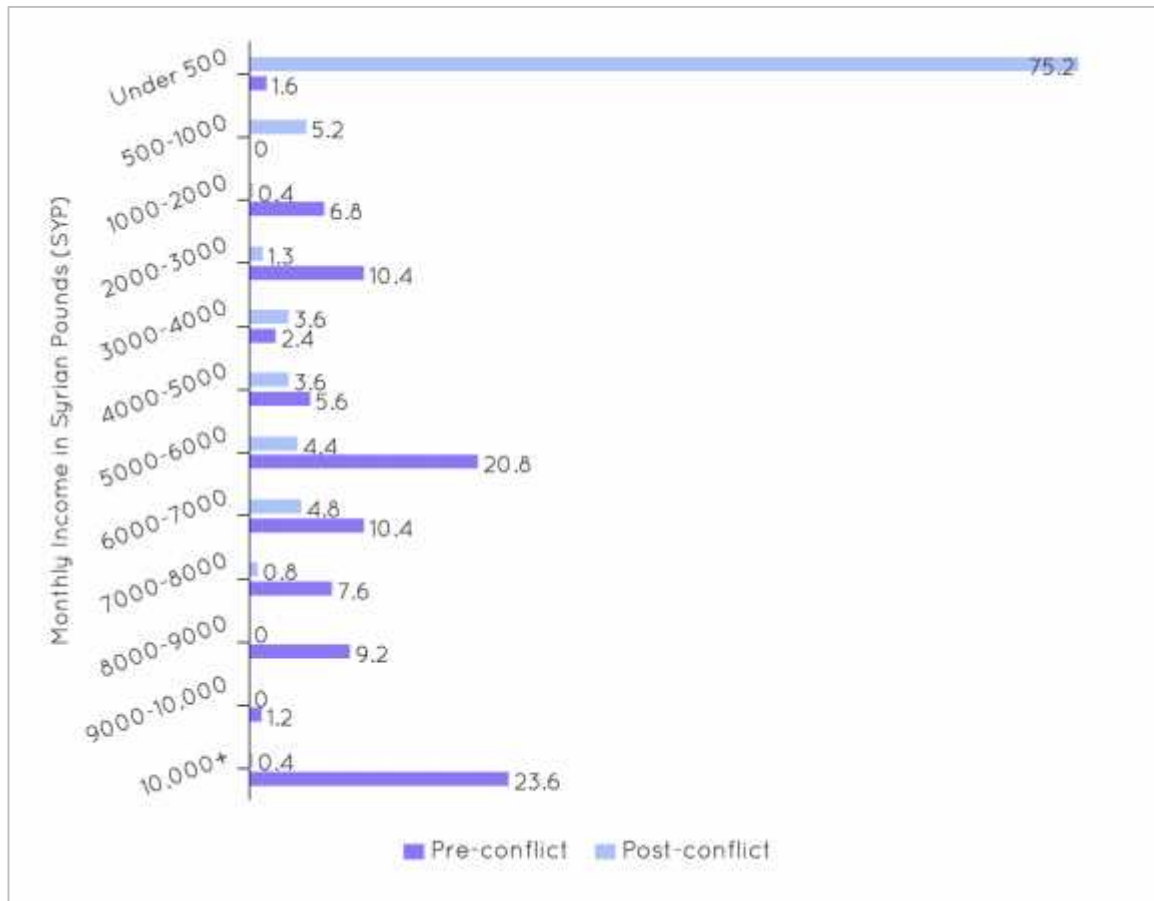
**Figure 9: Post-conflict monthly household income in Syrian Pounds**



Monthly household income plummeted dramatically after the conflict with the Islamic State. Average post-conflict monthly household income dropped to 5,851 SYP, a drop of 680% less than the monthly income *per person* before the conflict (Figure 9). Over three-quarters of respondents (76.8 percent) reported a monthly household income below 10,000 SYP, as opposed to four percent of respondents before the conflict. Just 6.8% of respondents reported a monthly household income of 30,000-75,000 SYP post-conflict, compared with 61.2% before the conflict.

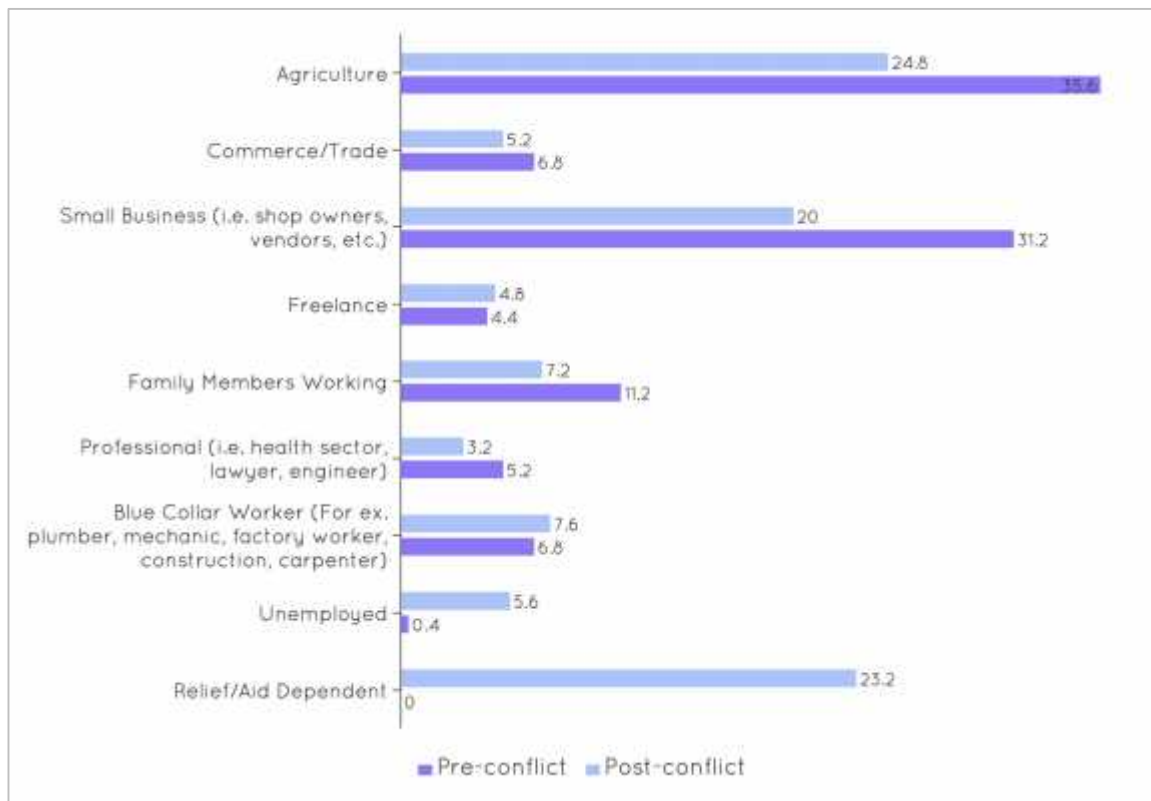
When dividing respondents' reported monthly household income by the members of their households after the conflict, post-conflict income per person per month had dropped 593%, to 1,140 SYP on average.

**Figure 10: Respondent's monthly income in Syrian Pounds – pre-and post-conflict – in percentage**



The primary source of income among respondents also changed dramatically after the conflict (Figure 11). Before September 2014, the most common income sources among respondents were agriculture (35.6 percent) and small businesses (31.2 percent). Smaller proportions generated income from the work of family members (11.2 percent); non-skilled workers such as plumbing, construction, carpentry, mechanics and factory labor (6.8 percent); and commerce and trade (6.8 percent).

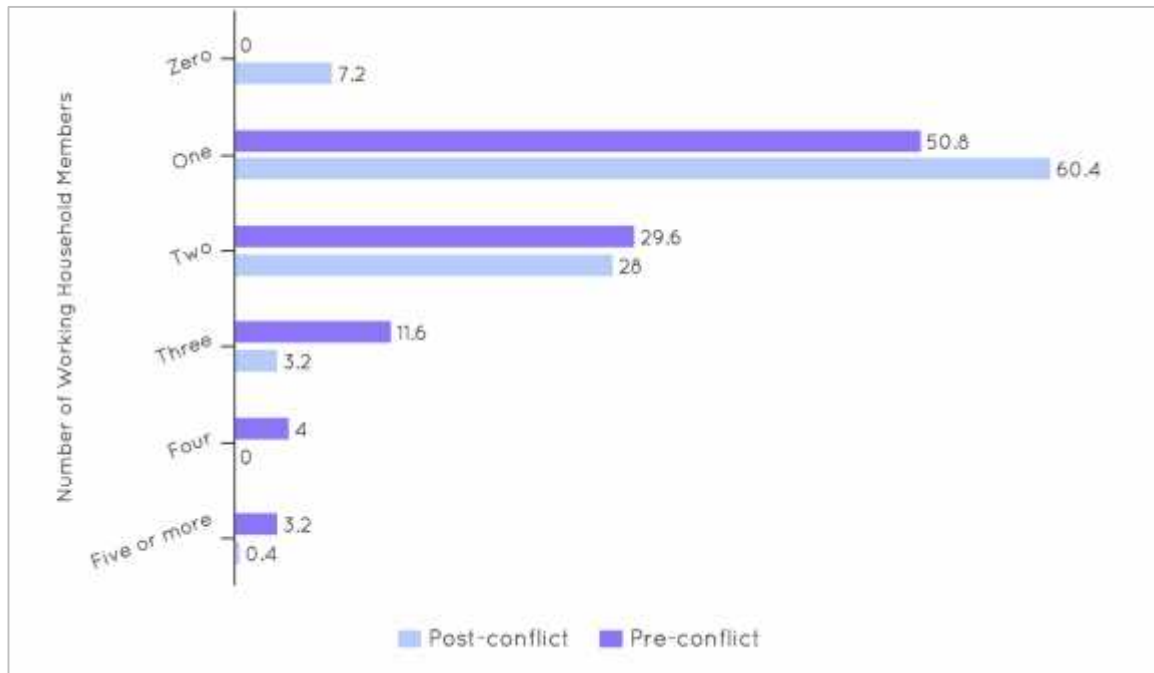
**Figure 11: Primary source of income – pre and post-conflict – in percentage**



After the conflict, agriculture remained the primary source of income for respondents. However, the number of respondents generating income from agriculture dropped over ten percent to 24.8 percent. The second-most common post-conflict income source was from relief/humanitarian aid (23.2 percent). Small business ownership as an income generation source declined over ten percent as well, down to 20 percent. The pre-conflict unemployment rate, not counting those depending on relief or family members, jumped from 0.4 percent to 5.6 percent.

The number of household members generating income dropped from an average of 1.8 before the conflict to 1.3 post-conflict. All respondents reported that at least one household member was generating an income before the conflict with the Islamic State. However, 7.2 percent of the respondents stated that, after the conflict, their household was without an income. Before September 2014, nearly half of the households surveyed (48.4 percent) contained two or more people generating an income while after the conflict, only 31.6 percent of households had two or more income generators (Figure 12).

**Figure 12: Household income generation**



While the majority of FGD participants had livelihoods before the conflict, and worked in a wide variety of occupations, many have had their livelihoods threatened since the conflict with the Islamic State. FGD participants worked as street vendors, shop owners, teachers, clothing salespeople, truck drivers, factory workers, bakers, and grocers. Others worked in the spice market, restaurants as well as furniture and upholstery businesses.

For some, their place of work was destroyed during the conflict. The factory worker found himself out of a job when the factory he worked at was irreparably damaged by shelling. Damage to the bakery, restaurant, market and the grocery left FGD participants unemployed. The truck driver's truck was also damaged in the conflict. One FGD participant supported her family through her clothing store before the conflict. When her store was destroyed by the fighting she had no way to support her family without assistance. Another FGD participant's taxi was stolen by the Islamic State.<sup>20</sup> The teachers all expressed that the schools in Kobani were ruined due to the conflict. Several FGD participants now depended on remittances from relatives living in Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan. One FGD participant hoped his "son could help him survive."<sup>21</sup> Another participant said that "with no money and no work, [he] is only getting by with the assistance of the party (PYD)."<sup>22</sup>

Several FGD participants worked in the agriculture sector before the conflict, and have faced challenges since the Islamic State attacked the city. For many, their land was destroyed during the conflict. For others, mines litter their property.

<sup>20</sup> FGD #7

<sup>21</sup> FGD #5

<sup>22</sup> FGD #5

Some FGD participants now depend on family members, even their children, to support them. Most participants depend on vouchers, subsidies and food baskets from humanitarian organizations, or assistance from the PYD, to support their families.

### **Food Consumption**

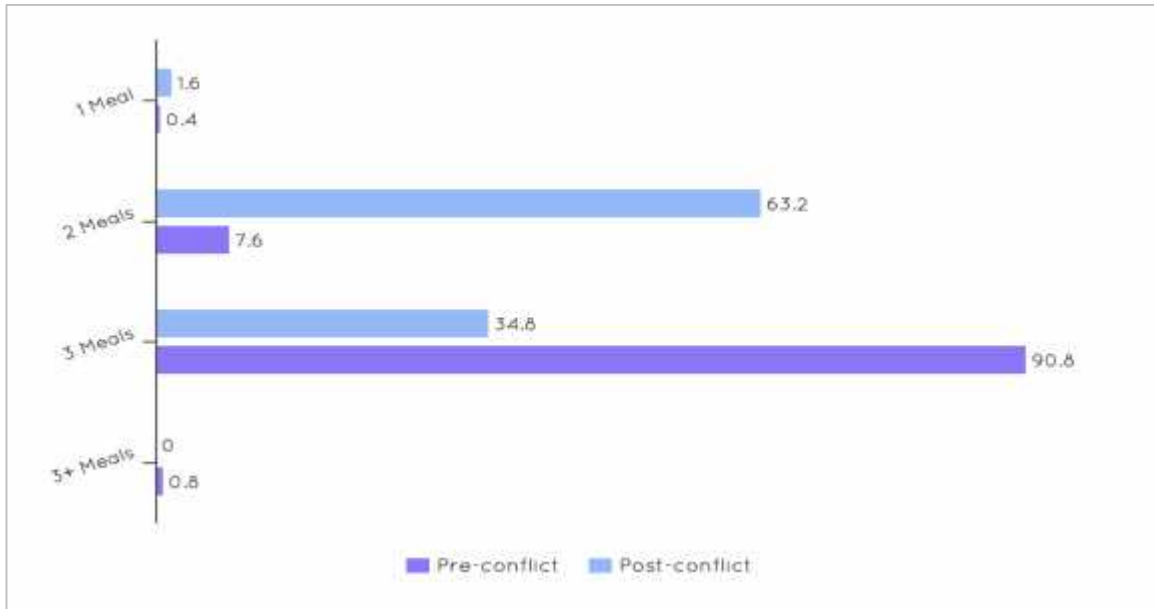
Kobani residents have been consuming meals less frequently since the conflict. Before the Islamic State entered Kobani, 90.8 percent of households were eating three meals per day—a figure that dropped to 34.8 percent after the conflict. Today, 64.8 percent of respondents' households consume less than three meals per day, up from just eight percent before the conflict (Figure 13).

Kobani residents were having difficulty accessing essential food products, either because of scarcity or low purchasing power. Vegetables are currently the most frequently consumed essential food product—80.4 percent of respondents said their households consumed vegetables several times per week or more. Meat was the most infrequently consumed food product, as 26.8 percent of households consumed meat almost never and 80 percent consumed meat once per week or less.

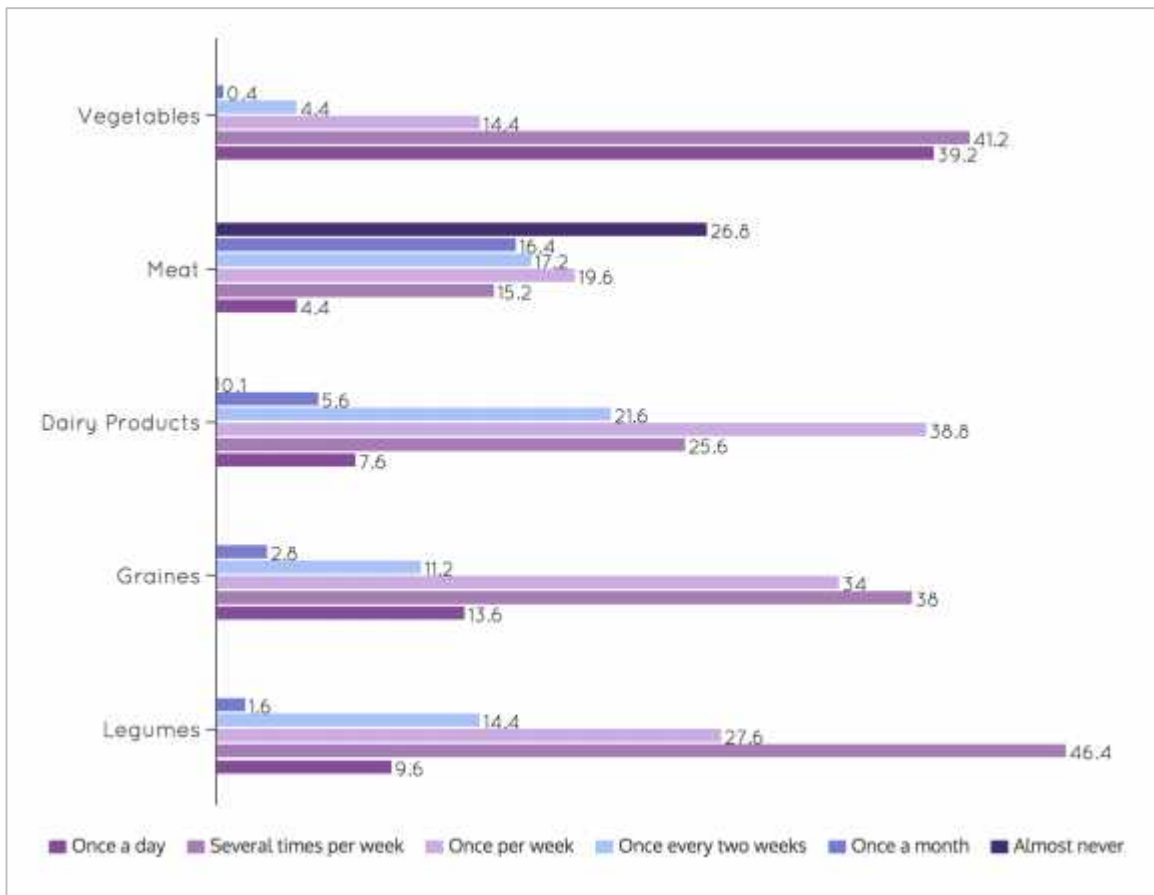
Dairy products were also consumed relatively infrequently—66.1 percent of respondents reported that their households consumed dairy once per week or less frequently.

Grains and legumes were consumed more frequently. Over half of participants said their households consumed grains (51.6 percent) and legumes (56 percent) several times per week or more (Figure 14).

**Figure 13: Frequency of daily meals – percentage of households**



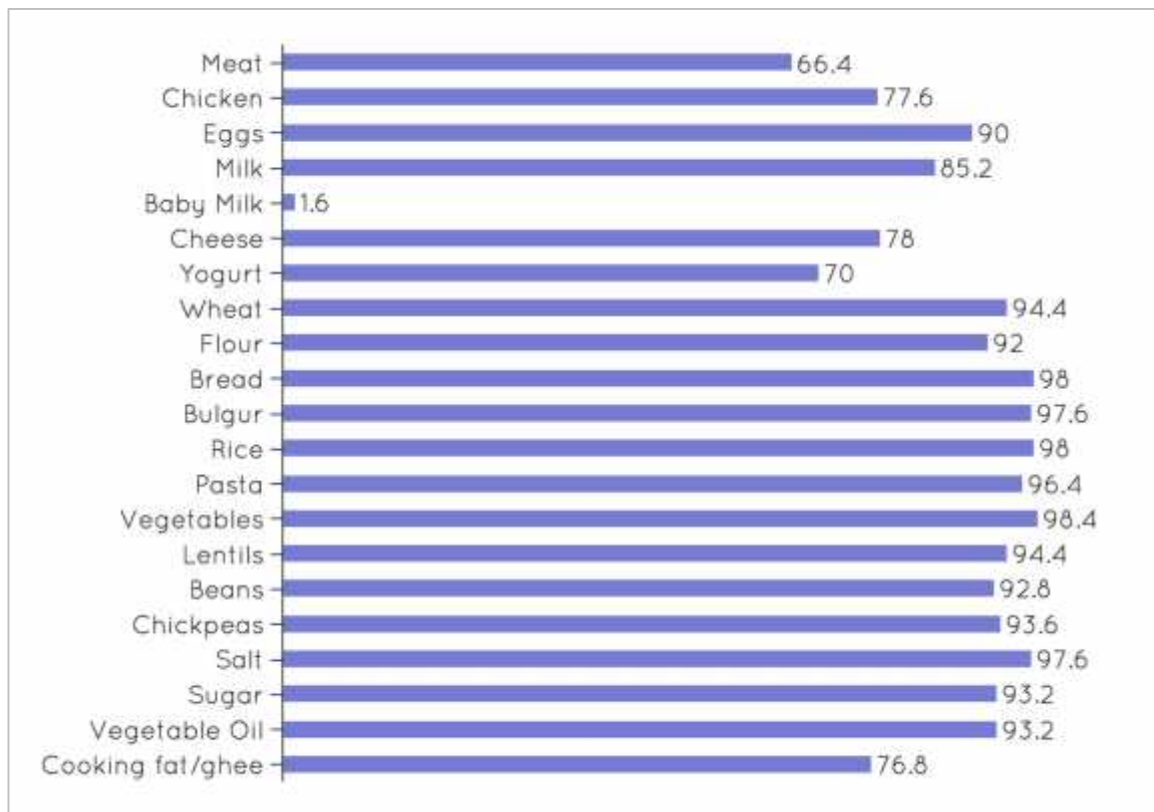
**Figure 14: Consumption frequency of essential food products post-conflict – percentage of households**



Even though households consumed certain food groups infrequently, respondents reported that they were able to access and consume most types of food from time to time. Well over 90 percent of respondents reported that their households were able to consume grains and starches, such as bread (98 percent), rice (98 percent), bulgur (97.6 percent), pasta (96.4 percent), wheat (94.4 percent) and flour (92 percent). 98.4 percent of respondents reporting that they were able to consume vegetables, which were found to be relatively common and affordable. Between 92 and 95 percent of respondents reported an ability to consume lentils, chickpeas and beans. Salt (97.6 percent) and sugar (93.2 percent) and vegetable oil (93.2 percent) were also widely accessible.

Respondents had more trouble accessing high-protein foods like eggs (90 percent), milk (85.2), cheese (78 percent), chicken (77.6 percent) and yogurt (70 percent). Only about three-quarters of residents (76.8) were able to consume cooking fat/*ghee*. Meat was a significant exception to the high-availability levels of most foods, as only two-thirds (66.4 percent) of respondents said they were able to consume meat. Infant formula was rare, with only 1.6% of respondents reporting access (Figure 15).

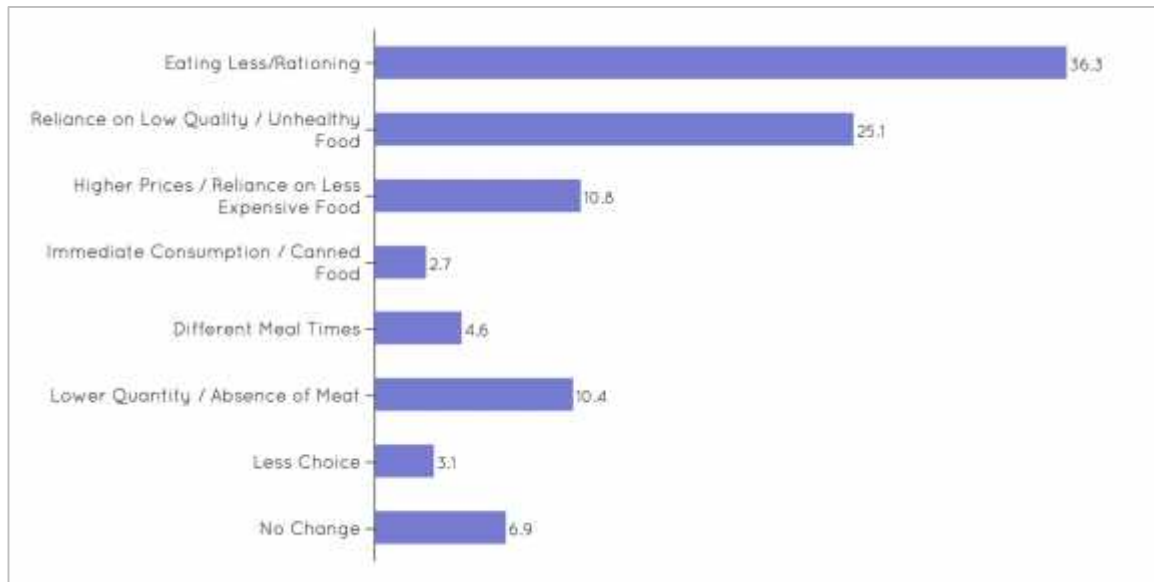
**Figure 15: Household ability to consume essential food products – percentage of households**



Respondents have adopted a variety of coping mechanisms in response to reduced food access and especially reduced purchasing power (Figure 16). A plurality of respondents (36.3 percent) indicated that the biggest change to the household’s eating habits was to eat less and ration. One quarter of respondents have coped by relying on low quality or unhealthy food while 10.8 percent

of respondents have changed their habits to rely on less expensive food. A similar percentage had given up on eating meat regularly. Because of a lack of fresh food or mechanisms for preserving food, 2.7 percent of respondents coped by eating food that could be stored without spoiling quickly, such as canned food. Respondents also changed their meal times (4.6 percent) and coped by having less choice (3.1 percent).

**Figure 16: Biggest Change to Eating Habits**



The food security situation in Kobani has reportedly deteriorated significantly since the conflict, according to FGD participants. When asked if Kobani residents were able to eat the same kind and amount of food as they did before the conflict, one female FGD participant responded: “no, one thousand times no.”<sup>23</sup>

While vegetables are still available, FGD participants estimated that the quantity available today was 10% of pre-conflict levels. The shortage in supply has pushed prices up at the same time that many residents have lost their livelihoods, and therefore, their purchasing power. Many cannot afford to buy the goods that are still available. Some FGD participants spoke of bribing traders at the border for food.

One FGD participant said that the people in Kobani were not used to sending their families to bed without food—or only with bulgur— before the conflict with the Islamic State. “Every day, bulgur, bulgur,” he said.<sup>24</sup>

### Availability of Food and Non-food Items in Local Markets

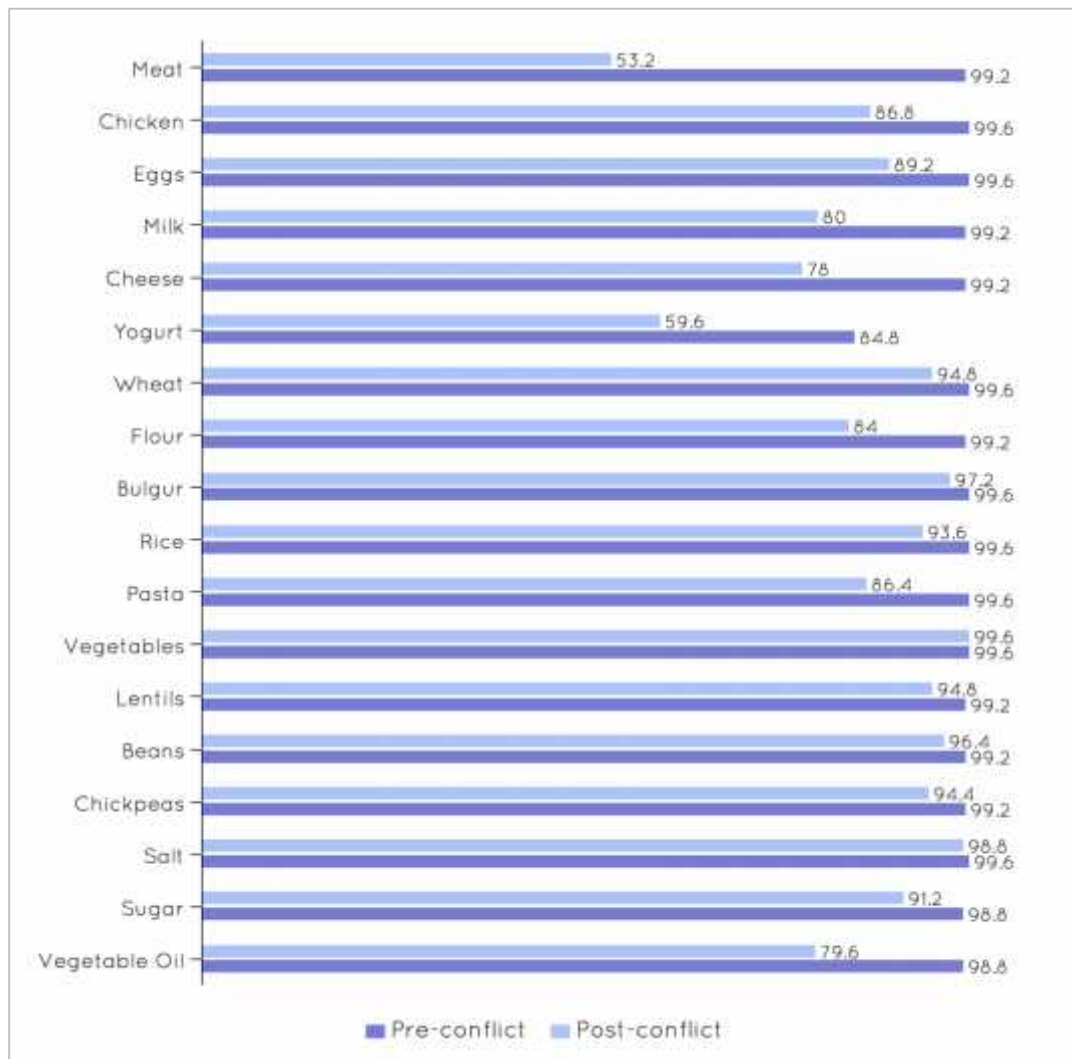
<sup>23</sup> FGD #3

<sup>24</sup> FGD #2

Food items are significantly less available in markets today than they were before the conflict with the Islamic State. At least 98.8 percent of respondents reported that all food products included in this assessment were available before September 2014. The lone exception was yogurt, which only 84.8 percent of respondents reported as available before the conflict (Figure 17).

Availability of food products in local markets was significantly worse after the conflict. The largest change in availability was with meat, which only 53.2 percent of respondents reported as available today. The next largest changes in availability were reported for milk, vegetable oil, cheese and yogurt, which were all 18-25 percent less available than before the conflict. Goods that were also reported as significantly less available after the conflict included flour (84 percent), pasta (86.4 percent), chicken (86.8 percent), and eggs (89.2 percent).

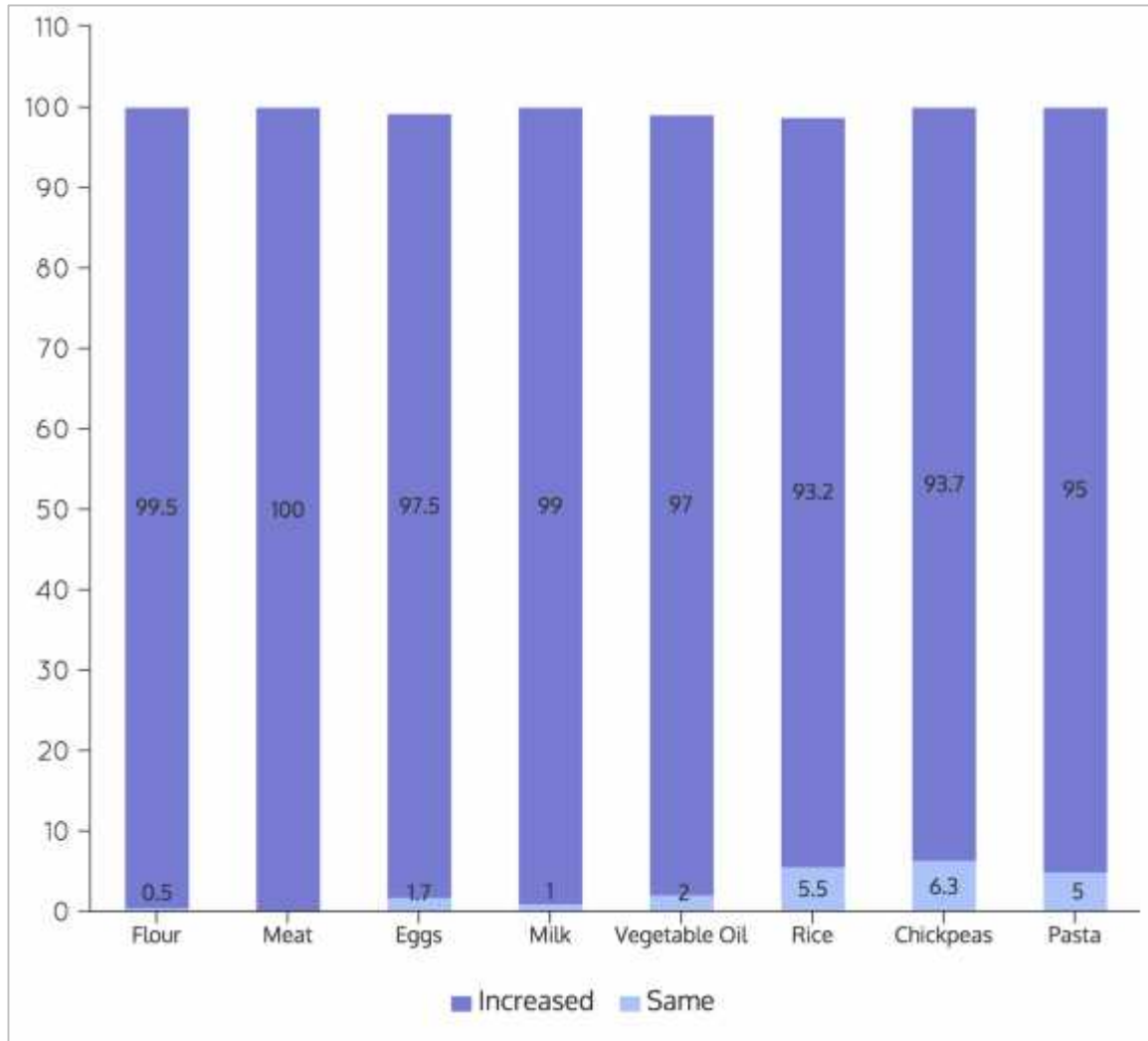
**Figure 17: Percentage of respondents that confirm food product availability in markets**



Wheat, bulgur, rice, vegetables, lentils, beans, chickpeas, salt, and sugar were all reported to be available in local markets by over 90 percent of respondents. None of the food items included in

this assessment were found to be less expensive after the conflict. Respondents rarely indicated that the prices for any food items remained constant (Figure 18).

**Figure 18: Perceived price change of food products compared to pre-conflict prices – in percentage**



Note: A perception of food price decrease was nearly nonexistent, and therefore not included in the figure.

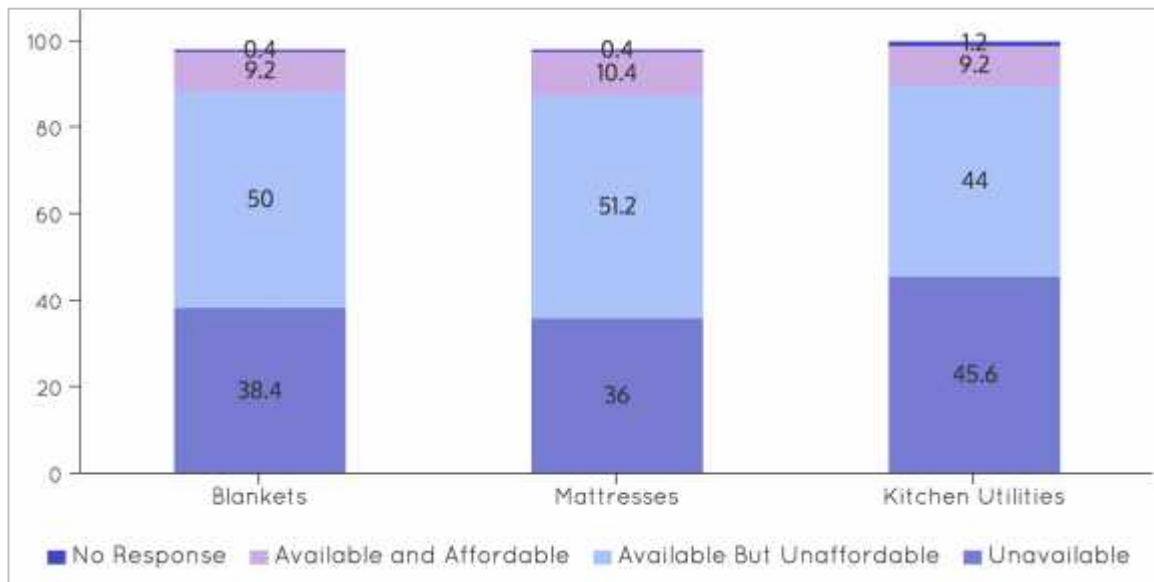
A large number of respondents found that clothing for adults and children were unavailable in local markets. Children’s clothes and adult clothes were reported to be unavailable by 41.6 and 44.8 percent of respondents respectively. However, many respondents who indicated that clothing was available also reported that it was unaffordable. A minority of respondents found children’s clothes (29.6 percent) and adult clothes (12.8 percent) to be both available and affordable (Figure 19).

**Figure 19: Availability and affordability of clothes – in percentage**



Generally speaking, blankets, mattresses and kitchen utilities were reported to be more available in local markets than clothing. However, well over 80% of the respondents who indicated that these non-food items (NFIs) were available, said that they were unaffordable. In practice, only about ten percent of respondents could access blankets, mattresses or kitchen utilities (Figure 20).

**Figure 20: Availability and affordability of blankets, mattresses and kitchen utilities – in percentage**



FGD participants were not able to purchase the goods necessary for everyday life in the local markets in Kobani. Since the conflict, availability has been limited and prices have skyrocketed. Reportedly, food products sold in Kobani markets originate from Turkey, presumably because

Kobani is still largely surrounded by land held by the Islamic State. Meat, milk and fruit were stated as particularly difficult to access for FGD participants.

While prices have risen, the quality of food available in the markets has diminished. Given the siege, many of the products available in the markets are rotten. Products often did not arrive in Kobani until several days after its expiration date. Because the inability to access fresh food, Kobani residents have increased their consumption of canned foods, according to FGD participants. Because the majority of the food available is coming from outside of Syria, residents are receiving and purchasing goods with labels in languages they do not understand (participants offered the example of frozen chicken labeled in Turkish), complicating FGD participants' efforts to eat healthy or unexpired food. FGD participants agreed that meat was unavailable, unaffordable or inedible.

Even when products were available, residents could not buy them "if there isn't any money."<sup>25</sup> FGD participants reported that food vendors have exploited residents by raising prices.<sup>26</sup> Despite the reduced quantity and quality of food, purchasing power rather than availability represented the largest challenge to FGD participants' food security.

One FGD participant said: "I would not leave Kobani even if I had to eat its soil."<sup>27</sup>

### **Agricultural Production**

A large cross-section of the sample (34 percent) worked in the agriculture sector before the conflict (Figure 21). However, because of difficulties faced due to the conflict—like damaged land, a lack of access to inputs, and UXOs—41.2 percent of those working in agriculture before the conflict have stopped working as farmers (Figure 22). Therefore, only 19.2 percent of households sampled worked in agriculture before the conflict and continued to do so post-conflict. Among respondents, 14.8 percent were involved in agriculture pre-conflict, but have since stopped farming.

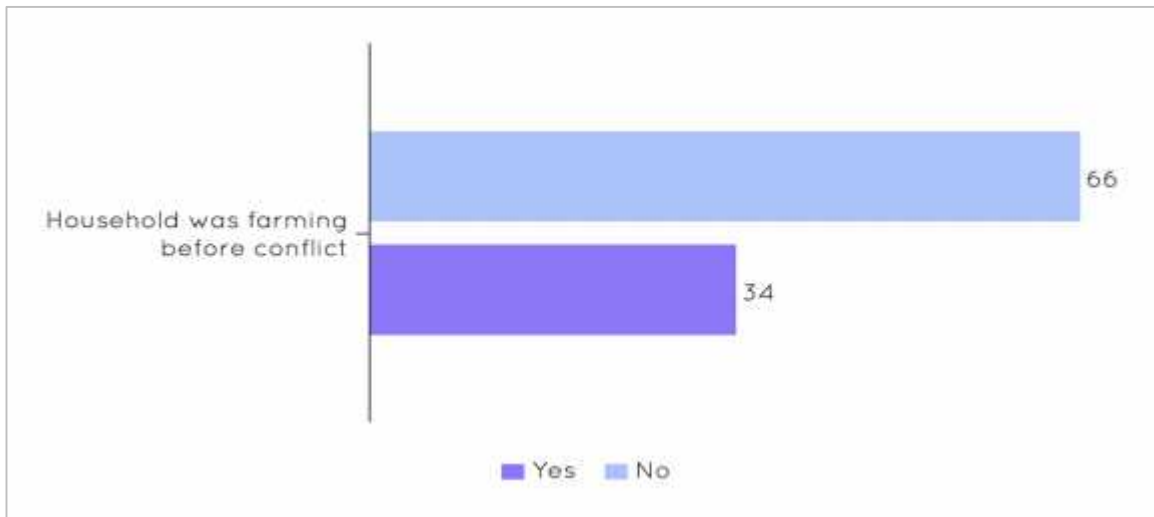
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<sup>25</sup> FGD #2

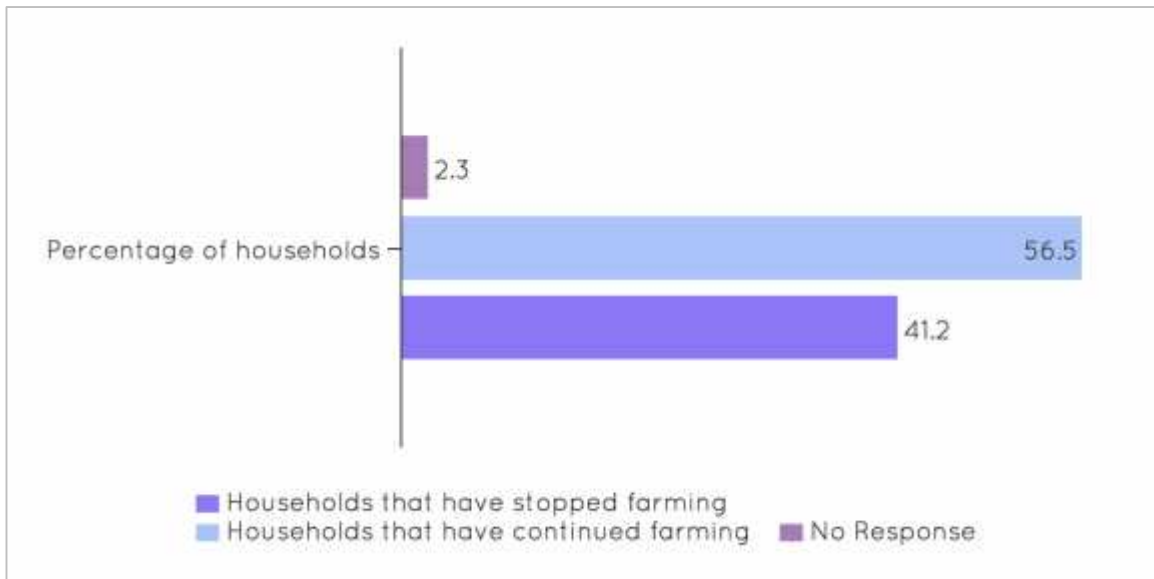
<sup>26</sup> FGD #5

<sup>27</sup> FGD #3

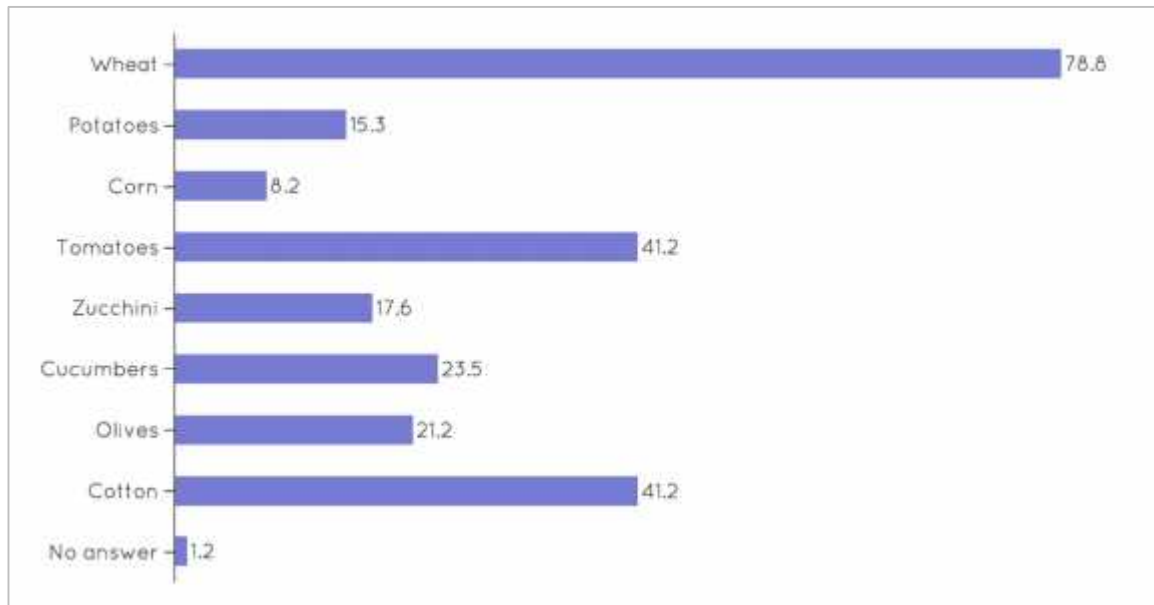
**Figure 21: Pre-conflict household involvement in farming - in percentage**



**Figure 22: Post-conflict household disengagement from farming activity – percentage of households that replied 'yes' in figure 21**



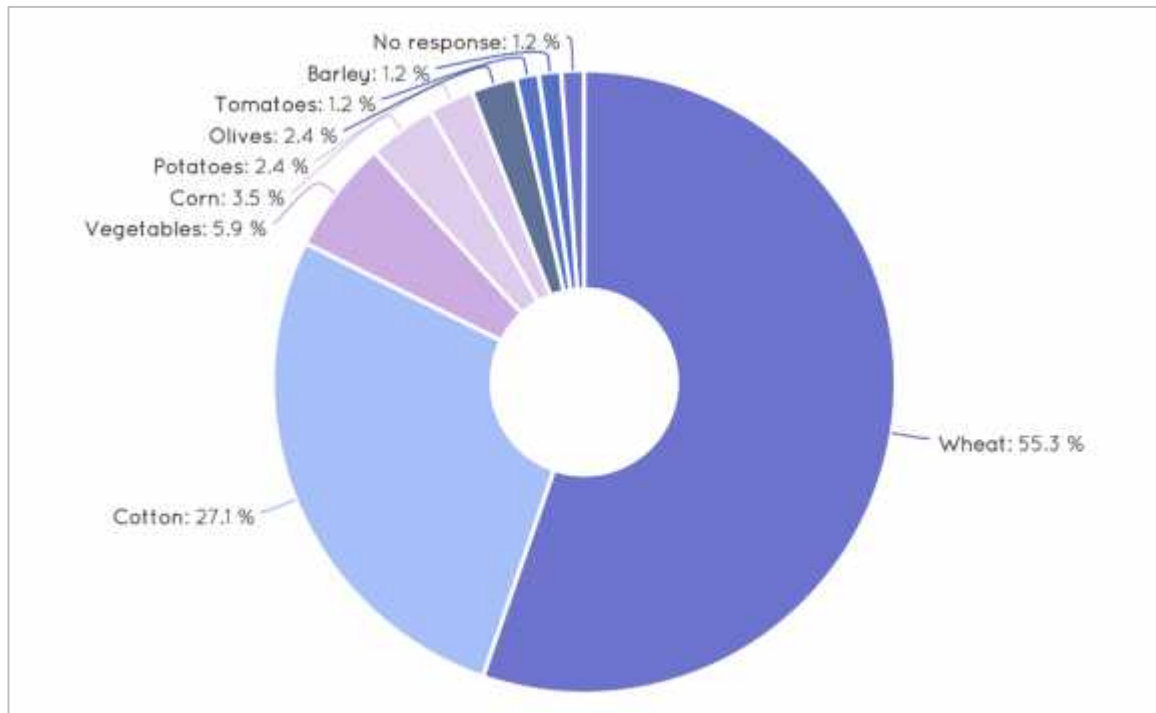
**Figure 23: Pre-conflict grown crops – in percentage (multiple choice)**



The most common crop grown by farmers in Kobani before the conflict was wheat (78.8 percent). Cotton and tomatoes were the next most popular crops grown, at 41.2 percent of farmers apiece. Other crops, such as cucumbers, olives, zucchini, potatoes and corn were grown by less than a quarter of farmers participating in the assessment before the conflict (Figure 23).

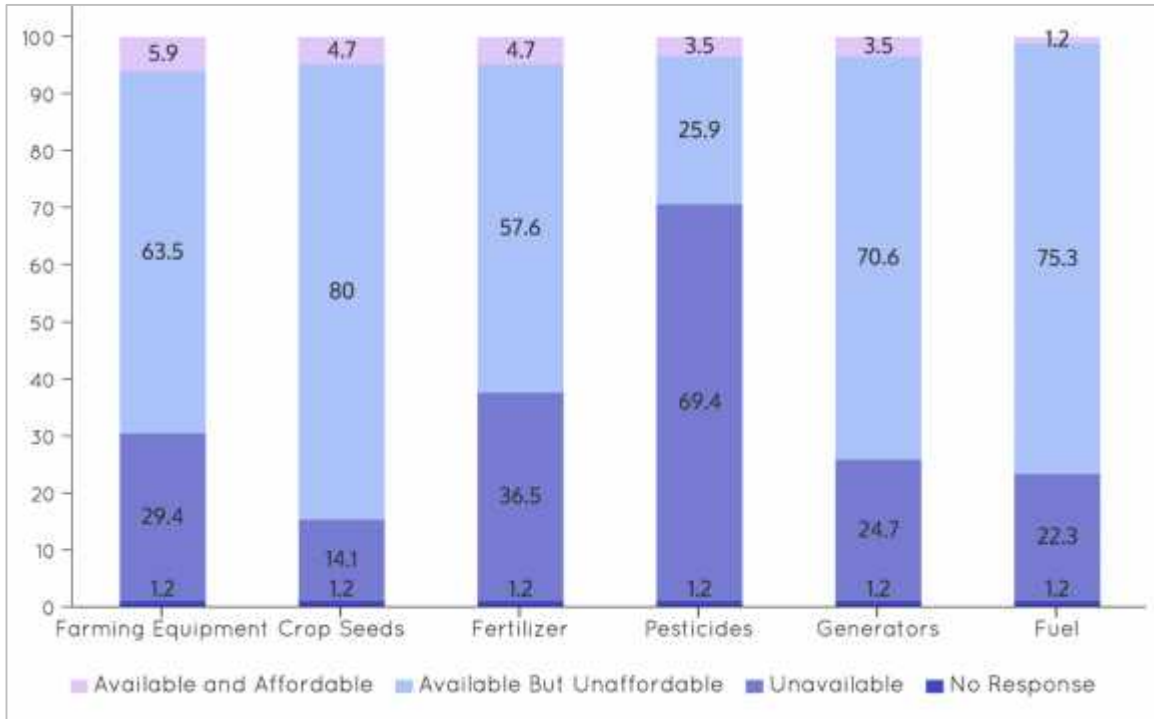
Wheat (55.3 percent) and cotton (27.1 percent) were by far the most common primary crop grown by Kobani farmers before the conflict. Small minorities of farmers principally depended on corn, potatoes, olives, tomatoes and barley (Figure 24).

**Figure 24: Pre-conflict primary crop – percentage of households**



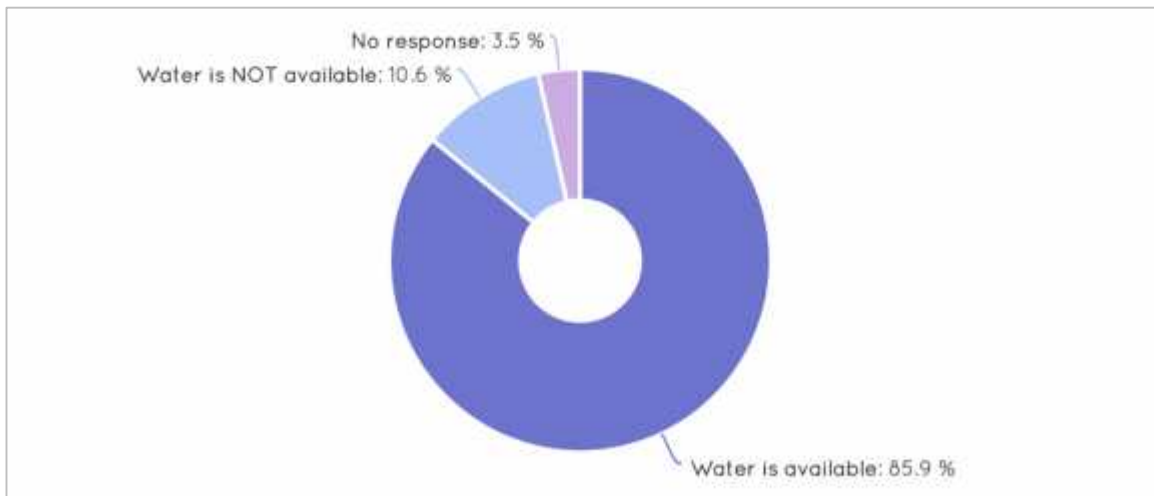
Farmers in Kobani have had significant difficulty accessing agricultural inputs since the conflict with the Islamic State. With the lone exception of pesticides, which 69.4 percent of farmers reported as unavailable, affordability was a larger obstacle than availability. Less than six percent of farmers participating in this assessment reported that any of the agricultural inputs below were both available and affordable (Figure 25).

**Figure 25: Availability and affordability of agricultural inputs and assets**



Despite the significant obstacles faced by farmers in Kobani, access to water did not appear to be one of them. Over 85 percent of respondents in the agricultural sector reported that water was available for farming, even after the conflict (Figure 26).

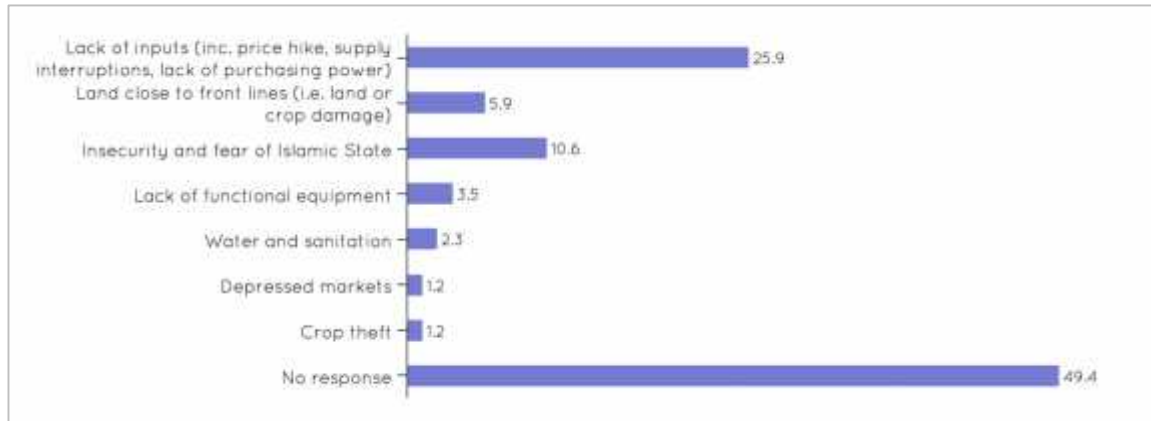
**Figure 26: Availability of water for farming**



The primary obstacle to Kobani farmers since the conflict has been access to inputs, such as equipment, seeds, fertilizer, fuel, pesticides and generators. Fear of additional Islamic State offensives and damage to land and crops as a result of the conflict and UXOs littering the

agricultural lands, were the second and third most frequently mentioned challenges respectively (Figure 27).

**Figure 27: Primary obstacle to farming – in percentage**

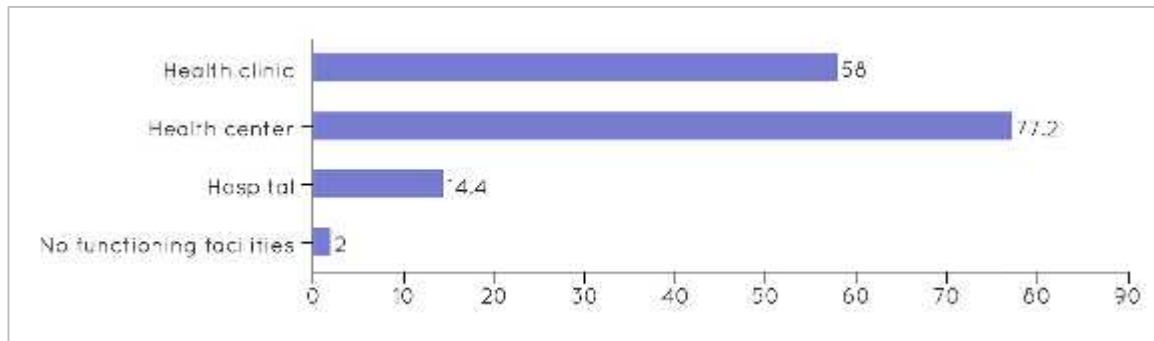


FGD participants said that Kobani is traditionally an agricultural area. However, due to the siege by the Islamic State, agricultural inputs and supplies were not available in the area for several months. Furthermore, the fighting damaged the land and crops, most likely from artillery fire and intentional burning, as fighters from the Islamic State reportedly burned down farmers' trees. Moreover, the Islamic State reportedly killed or stole livestock during the conflict, imperiling the dairy-farming sector. FGD participants reported that farmers were unable to produce the same quantity or quality of goods as they did before the conflict. They have been unable to replant in their fields because of a lack of functioning agricultural equipment and other inputs, like fertilizer, seeds and pesticides. In addition to scorched land, the presence of mines on Kobani's farmland, a shortage of seeds and the lack of affordable fuel represented other significant challenge regarding access to food for FGD participants.

### General Health Situation

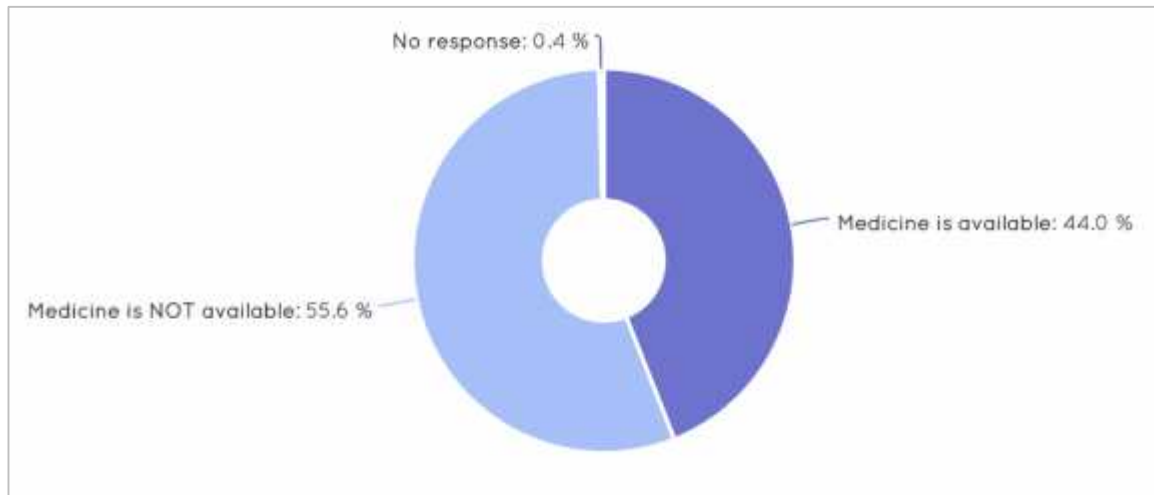
Respondents largely reported that health facilities are still functioning in Kobani. Only two percent of participants said that there were no functioning health facilities in the town. Over three-quarters (77.2 percent) expressed that there was a functional health center and over half (58 percent) said that there was a functional health clinic serving Kobani residents. However, data indicated that these centers are either free, unstaffed and undersupplied, or prohibitively expensive (Figure 28).

**Figure 28: Percentage of respondents confirming the functioning of health facilities (multiple choice)**



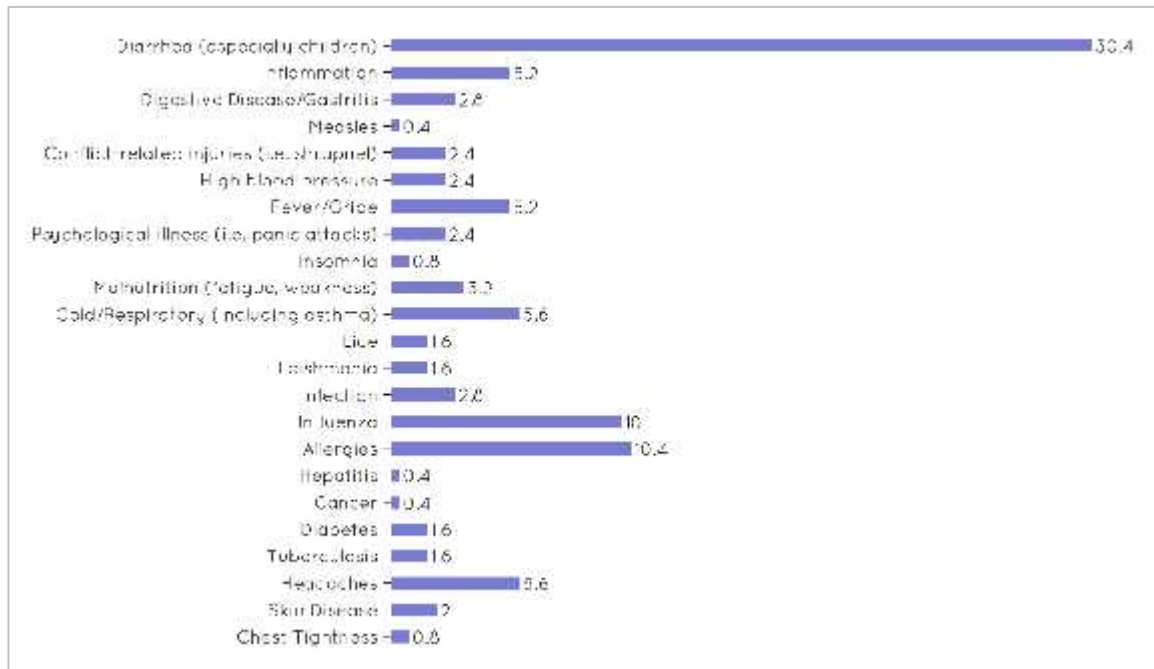
Over half of respondents (55.6 percent) reported that they could not currently access the medicine that they were routinely prescribed before the conflict (Figure 29).

**Figure 29: Availability of normal pre-conflict medical supplies**



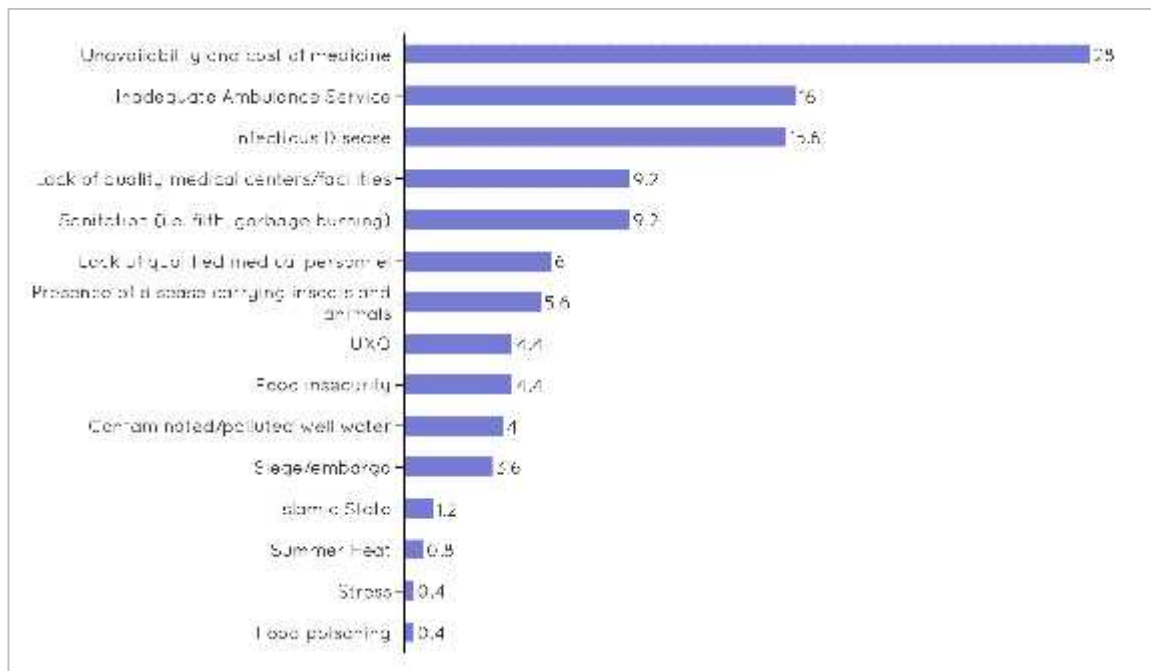
A wide range of diseases were reported by participants as common. By far the most frequently mentioned disease that respondents found to be common in Kobani since the conflict was diarrhea, which was often mentioned in the context of children. Influenza and allergies were also found to be common (Figure 30).

**Figure 30: Most common diseases according to respondents (multiple choice) – in percentage**



Respondents expressed that they face a variety of significant health risks in post-conflict Kobani. The most commonly mentioned threat (28 percent) was found to be the unavailability and unaffordability of medicine. Importantly, the second-most commonly cited risk was the lack of adequate ambulance service in Kobani. Infectious disease, particularly from contaminated water and poor sanitation practices; a lack of quality medical centers; and garbage burning were also mentioned by a significant proportion of respondents as health risks (Figure 31).

**Figure 31: Primary risks to health**



FGD participants reported that they could receive free services from the Red Crescent if a member of their family fell ill.<sup>28</sup> However, the Red Crescent was reportedly short of both doctors and medicines.

Kobani residents in need of a specialist must go to see a private doctor. In these cases, services are not free and are often out of the price range of participants, particularly since the conflict. Private clinics were also reported to be prohibitively expensive.

According to participants, before the conflict, Kobani only had a military hospital, and that there were no civilian or general hospitals in the city. The hospital was still functioning, and providing free services, but it lacked basic medical equipment, like labs or X-Ray machines, and was short-staffed. For any type of serious treatment, residents would travel to Turkey. One participant reported that he took his child, who had a head injury, to the hospital, but that there were no doctors or paramedics present, forcing them to cross the border to Turkey seeking urgent care.<sup>29</sup>

A shortage of both medicine and qualified medical personnel remain significant obstacles to providing quality healthcare to Kobani residents. “All of the doctors left,” during the conflict, according to one participant and have not returned.<sup>30</sup> Other participants reported that doctors at private clinics only spend every other week in Kobani (the rest of the time they are in Turkey).

<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, FGD participants did not specify if they were referring to the Kurdish or the Syrian Red Crescent.

<sup>29</sup> FGD #2

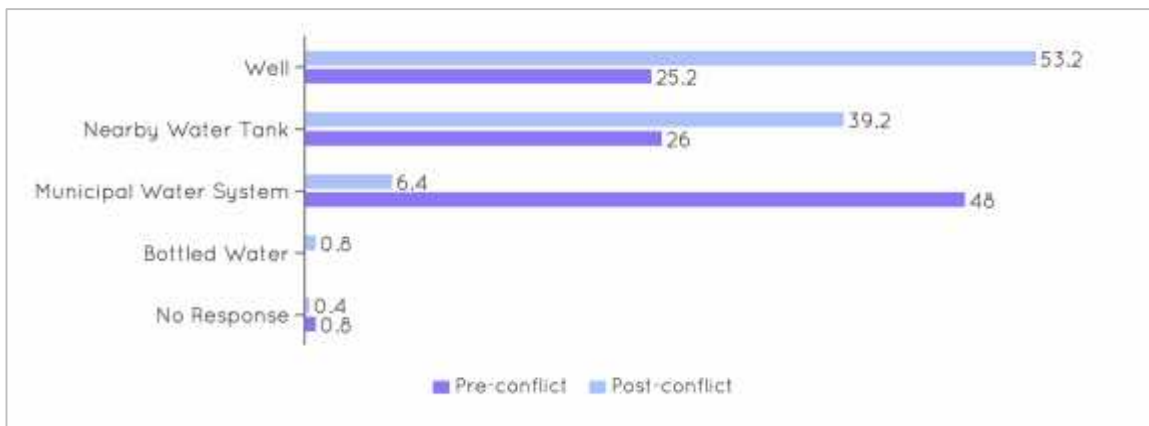
<sup>30</sup> FGD #2

Given the Islamic State’s siege, medicine is largely unavailable up until now in the city, with the exception of a small supply of painkillers. Medicine that can be found is often expired.

### Access to Water and Sanitation

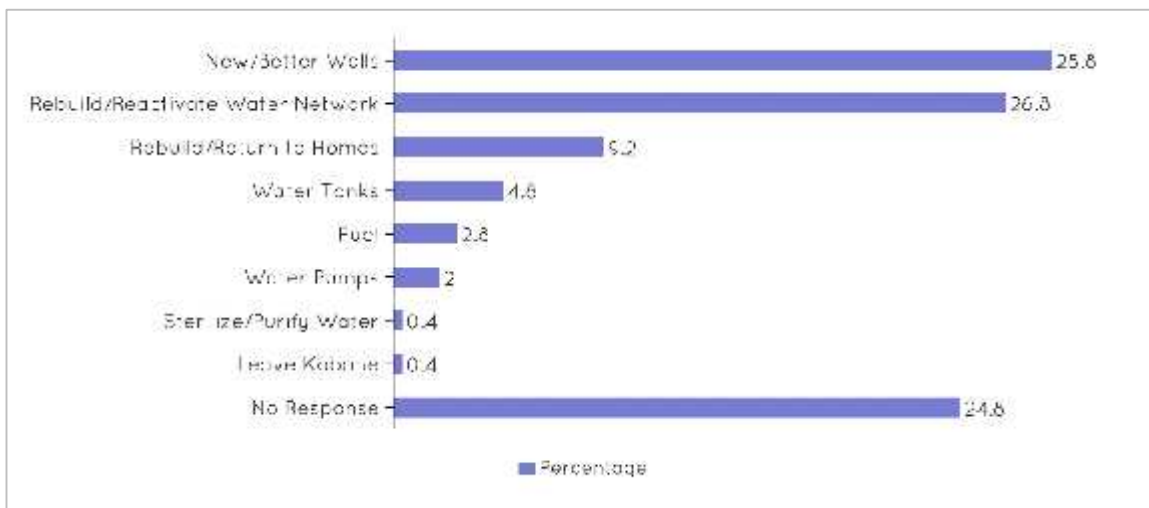
The water habits of respondents have changed significantly since the conflict with the Islamic State. Before the conflict, a plurality of respondents’ primary water source was the municipal water system. Afterwards, the majority of respondents depended on wells, which were largely reported to be contaminated, as the primary water source (Figure 32). Usage of water tanks also rose since the conflict, but they were largely said to be costly.

**Figure 32: Pre-and post-conflict household water source – percentage of households**



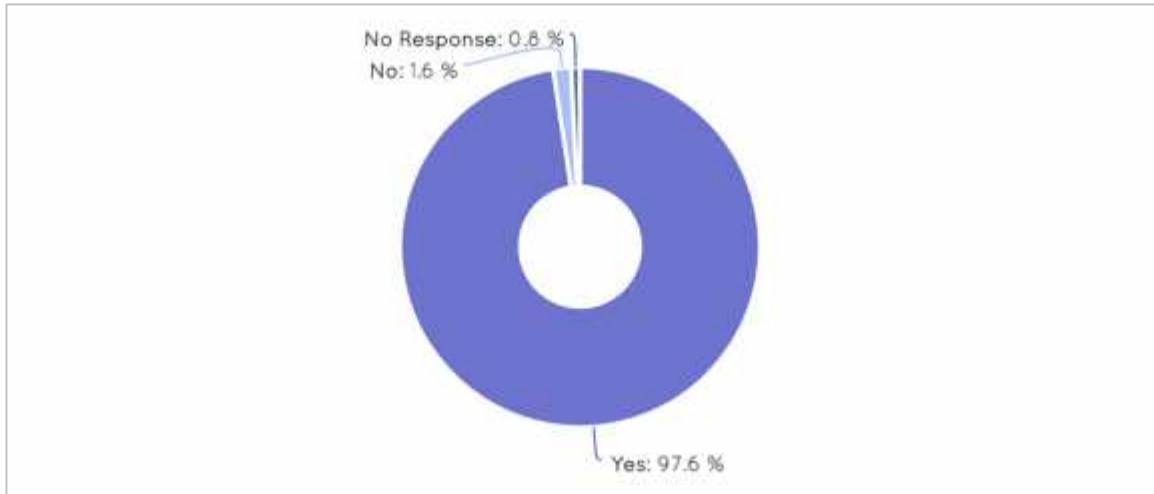
A variety of suggestions were posed by respondents to improve their access to clean water. Most frequently, respondents expressed that having new and better wells or a rebuilt water network would most improve their access to clean water (Figure 33).

**Figure 33: Requirements to restore household access to clean water – identified by respondent**



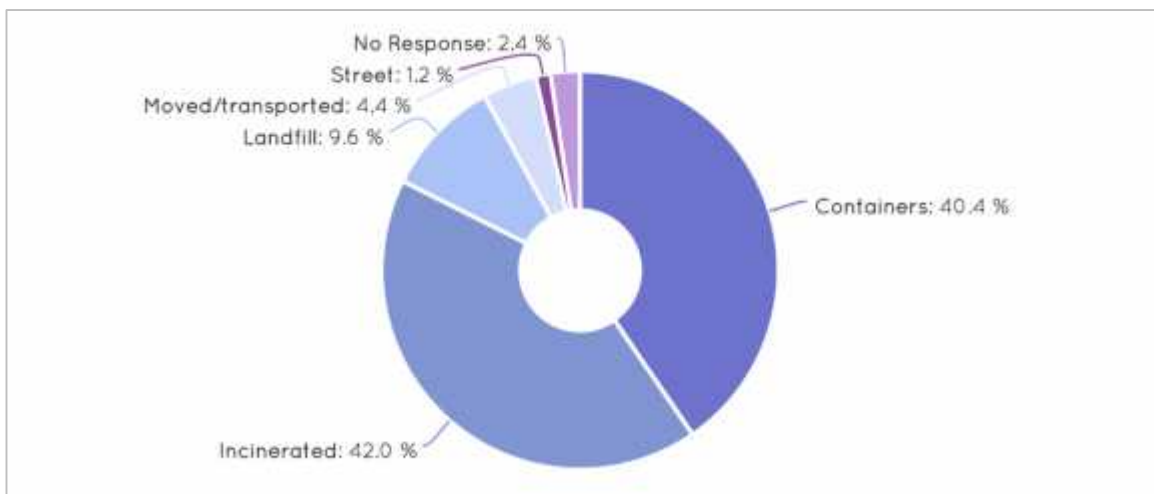
An overwhelming majority of respondents (97.6 percent) expressed that they still had access to clean toilets after the conflict (Figure 34). Notably, FGD participants differed on this point, and largely reported that clean toilets were unavailable.

**Figure 34: Current access to clean toilets – in percentage of households**



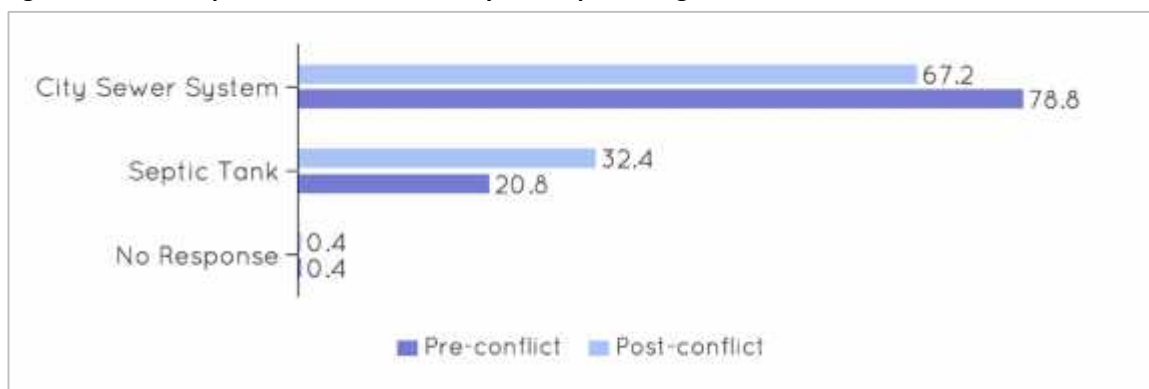
A plurality of respondents reported that their household waste was incinerated, and although in locations outside of the city, this represents a cause for concern. A significant portion of respondents (40.4 percent) reported that household waste was moved to containers, however it is unclear if these containers functioned as a way station before waste was incinerated (Figure 35).

**Figure 35: Destination of waste – percentage of households**



Sanitation practices changed marginally as a result of the conflict, with some respondents reporting that they had transitioned from using the city sewer system to using septic tanks (Figure 36).

**Figure 36: Pre-and post-conflict sanitation system – percentage of households**



The primary water source for Kobani residents has changed since the conflict, according to FGD participants. Before the conflict, residents predominantly drank water that was pumped in from the Euphrates. However, the Islamic State has cut off access.

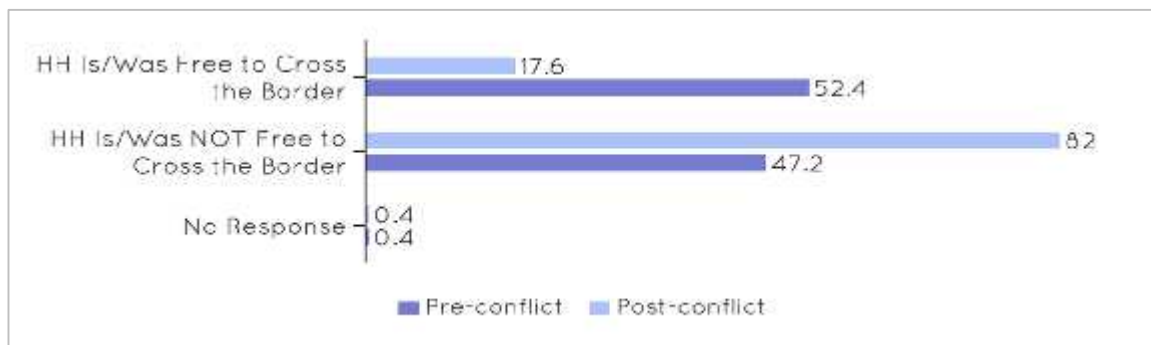
The primary source of water in Kobani since the conflict has been well water. However, FGD participants were suspicious regarding the cleanliness of the water, and suspect it may be polluted or contaminated by sewage. Female FGD participants reported that children in Kobani had been exposed to disease because of the well water. Water tanks are available in Kobani, though most FGD participants reported that they could not afford them. According to FGD participants, water tanks cost 700 Syrian pounds each. Due to the lack of access to the Euphrates' water, the contamination of wells and the high prices of water tanks, respondents did not have regular access to clean water.

The sanitation system in the city has broken down since the conflict. FGD participants reported that residents put their trash in the streets. The municipality does not have the capacity to dispose of the garbage in a timely manner. Garbage is frequently burned. The female focus group participants said that the garbage was another source of infectious disease in post-conflict Kobani.

Furthermore, FGD participants reported that it was difficult for them to access clean toilets because of poor sanitation in the city. While some FGD participants did have clean toilets in their current residence, the majority did not. A couple of FGD participants said that the sewage network in the city was completely shut off.

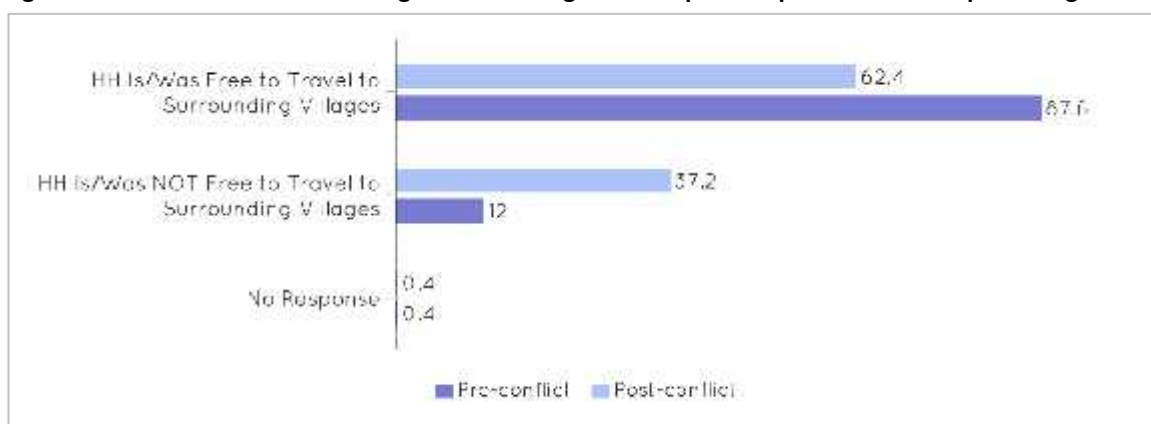
## **Border Crossing and Mobility**

**Figure 37: Freedom to cross the Turkish border - pre-and post conflict – in percentage**



Roughly half of respondents (52.4 percent) reported that, before the conflict, they were free to cross the Turkish border.<sup>31</sup> However, since the conflict, only 17.6 percent of respondents are able to cross into Turkey freely (Figure 37).

**Figure 38: Freedom to travel to villages surrounding Kobani – pre-and post conflict – in percentage**

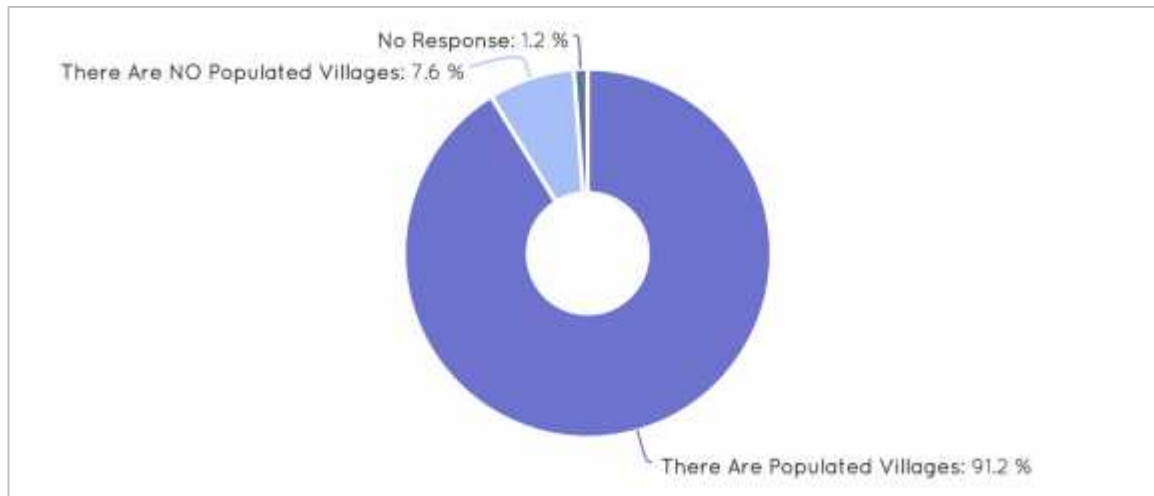


Consistent with previous findings, respondents' ability to travel to villages surrounding Kobani has been more limited since the conflict (Figure 38).

An overwhelming majority (91.2 percent) of respondents expressed that there are still populated villages around Kobani today (Figure 39). Although, as mentioned above, these villages are currently less visited by respondents today than they were before the conflict.

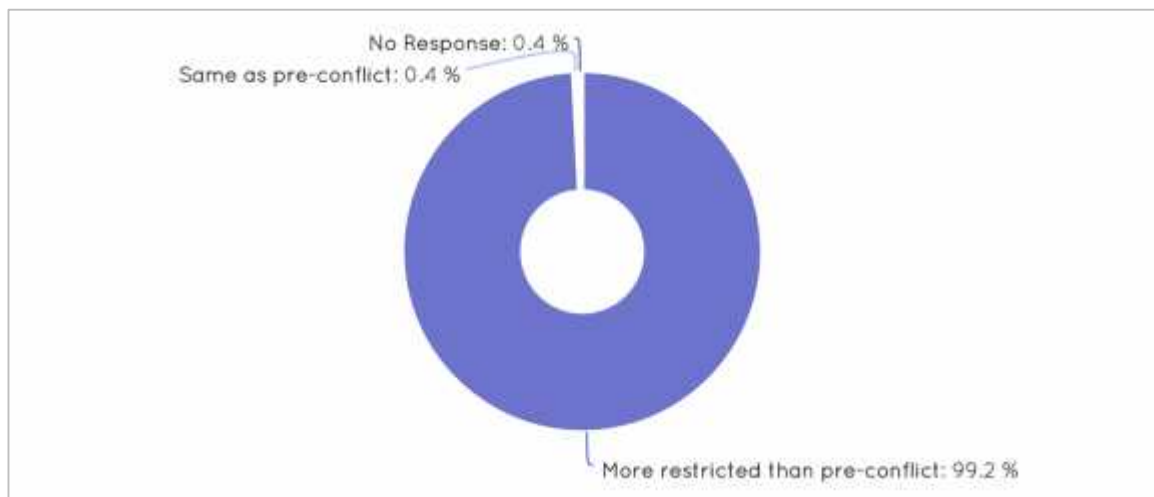
<sup>31</sup> For the purposes of this report, the term 'free to cross' is not limited to authorized border crossings, but all border crossings, including unofficial routes.

**Figure 39: Existence of populated villages in Kobani surroundings**



Respondents were nearly unanimous (99.2) that their freedom of movement is more restricted today than it was before the conflict (Figure 40).

**Figure 40: Restriction on mobility**

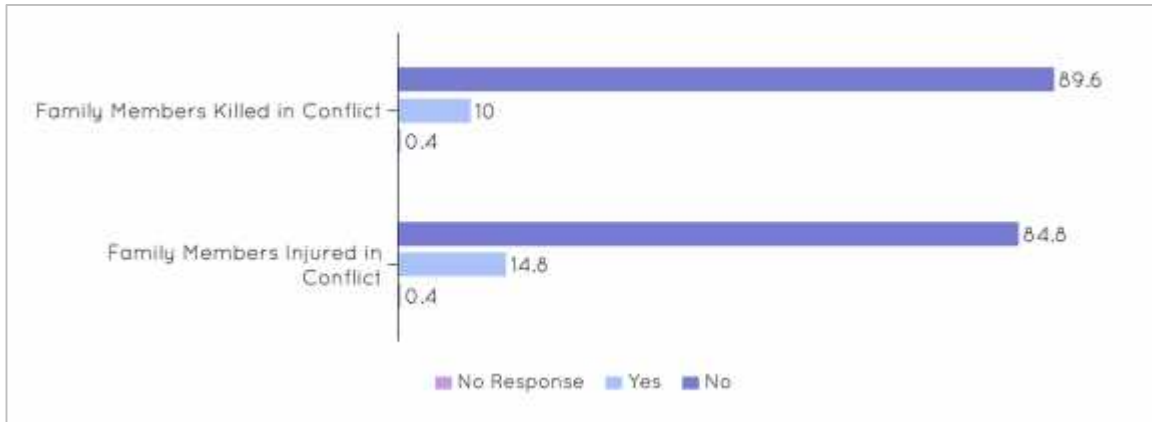


Freedom of movement has been significantly hampered since the onset of the conflict with the Islamic State and afterwards, according to FGD participants. Before the conflict, FGD participants reported having full freedom of movement to surrounding villages to purchase products. However, the largest obstacle to movement was mines and other UXO left by the Islamic State during and immediately after its siege of Kobani. FGD participants also said they felt fearful of traveling too far from the city because Islamic State forces still control territory close to Kobani.

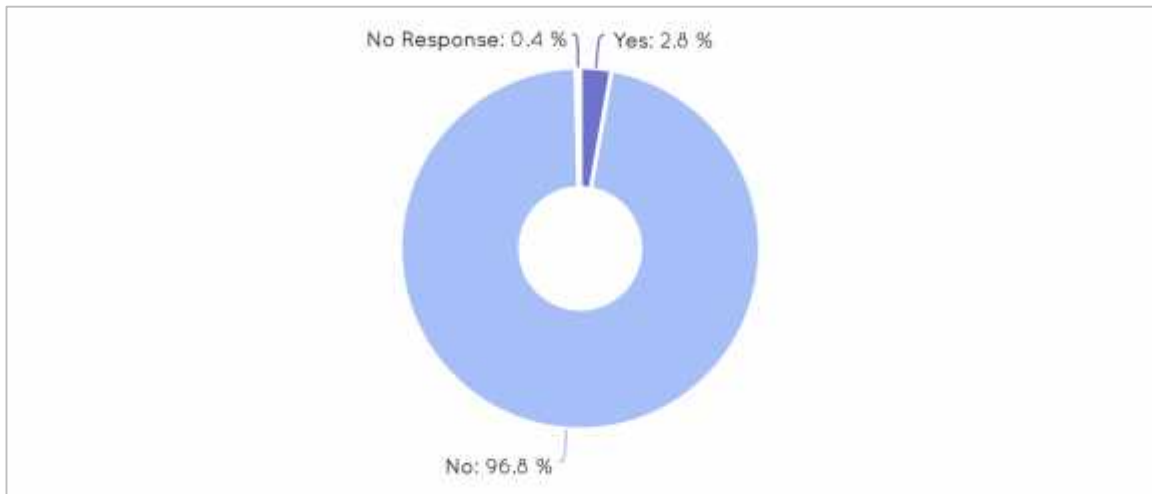
## **Conflict and Security**

Several respondents in the sample were affected by the conflict with the Islamic State in the most significant way. Twenty-five members (10 percent) of the sample had relatives killed in the conflict while 37 (14.8 percent) saw family members injured by the Islamic State (Figure 41). Seven (2.8 percent) respondents had family members killed or injured by UXO after the Islamic State’s withdrawal from Kobani in late January 2015 (Figure 42).

**Figure 41: Family member killer or injured in conflict – percentage of households**

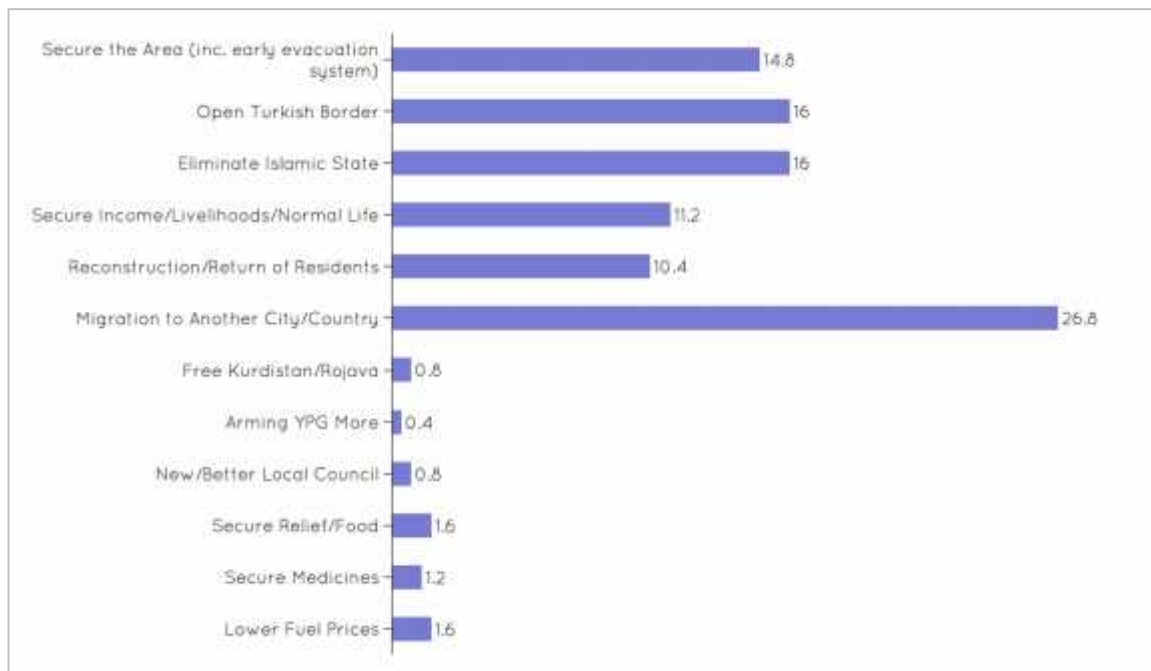


**Figure 42: Family members killed or injured by UXO – percentage of households**



When given free rein to propose a change that would have the greatest positive effect on their security, respondents provided a multitude of answers. A plurality of the sample (26.8 percent) replied that migration from Kobani to another city or country would have the most positive effect on their safety. Opening the Turkish border and eliminating the Islamic State were the two next most popular answers, provided by 16 percent of participants each. Securing the area and an early evacuation system (14.8 percent); securing livelihoods and returning to an everyday life (11.2 percent); and reconstruction of the city and the return of its residents (10.4 percent) represented other common suggestions for changes that could improve the security of Kobani residents (Figure 43).

**Figure 43: Biggest change to improve security (multiple answers) – percentage of respondents**



Despite the Islamic State’s retreat from Kobani in late January 2015, FGD participants reported that they still felt insecure. Mines and other UXO continue to threaten the safety of Kobani residents. One FGD participant said that his son was killed by a mine planted by the Islamic State while another FGD participant said that his niece was also killed in the same manner. Many FGD participants said that they remained fearful of the Islamic State returning to Kobani; others were defiant, declaring that Kobani was an area “of martyrs and heroes” and that the Islamic State’s return to Kobani was “impossible.”<sup>32</sup> Male FGD participants reported that women and children were especially apprehensive. FGD participants talked at length about family members who had been killed in the conflict with the Islamic State.

Theft represented an additional security challenge for FGD participants. Due to rampant poverty, the loss of livelihoods and the lack of municipal control, robbery is common. FGD participants reported that those with close connections to the YPG felt safer.

Additionally, most houses remain open because of damage to walls, doors and windows during the conflict. Stray animal and thieves enter the residences without trouble, according to FGD participants.

<sup>32</sup> FGD #3

With that, other FGD participants said that the Free Syrian Army and YPG protected the people and that residents faced no major security challenges.

## Conclusions

As a result of the siege and conflict in the city of Kobani, which lasted between September 2014 and January 2015, a notable reduction in the average household size is seen, while the housing situation changed dramatically as a result of the conflict. Prior to the conflict, the majority of households owned either a house or an apartment. After the conflict, however, only half the households could claim to be property owners, as many of the buildings in the city are in ruins.

There is a great need for reconstruction work in Kobani. Roughly 80 percent of the households are currently lacking electricity and means to heat their homes. At least one third of the buildings have holes in the walls while another 10 percent have holes in their roofs. More than half houses and apartments are missing an exterior door and more than one third have shattered windows.

The average monthly household income before the conflict with the Islamic State was 39,824 SYP in Kobani, while the post-conflict monthly household income fell dramatically to 5,851 SYP. The primary source of household income also changed after the conflict. Before September 2014, the most common income sources were agriculture and small businesses. After the conflict, income generation from agriculture dropped more than ten percent. Instead, many people now depend on humanitarian assistance for their subsistence. After the conflict, the unemployment rate jumped from 0.4 percent to 5.6 percent.

Since the conflict, most households have reduced their daily meals from three meals per day to fewer meals, mainly due to challenges related to access, scarcity and unaffordability of essential food products. Most frequently consumed food products are grains and legumes, while meat and dairy products are consumed relatively infrequently in Kobani. Although legumes are generally considered as rich on protein, a variety of micronutrients, in particular iron, zinc, riboflavin, vitamin A, vitamin B12 and calcium that are available in meat and dairy products are difficult to obtain through vegetable consumption alone.<sup>33</sup>

The people of Kobani have adopted a variety of coping strategies in response to reduced food access and purchasing power, such as by eating less, rationing and relying on lower quality and less expensive food.

At the time of writing, there is a reported shortage of food items in markets. Food items such as flour, meat and dairy products are especially scarce and food has become unaffordable for many households due to inflation of food prices. Similarly, clothing for adults and children are also unavailable in local markets, and when clothing is found it is unaffordable for most households.

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<sup>33</sup> For more information, see: "Improving Diets and Nutrition", *Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)*, November 2014, [www.fao.org/3/a-i3030e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3030e.pdf) AND Suzanne P. Murphy and Lindsay H. Allen, "Nutritional Importance of Animal Source Foods", *Journal of Nutrition*, November 2013, <http://jn.nutrition.org/content/133/11/3932S.long>

Although non-food items such as blankets, mattresses and kitchen utilities are reported as being more available than clothing, such items are mainly considered unaffordable. In other words, reduced income as a consequence of disrupted livelihoods, along with scarcity of food and non-food items in the market has weakened the purchasing power in Kobani as a whole, making it very difficult for ordinary households to obtain goods for their sustenance and comfort.

More than one third of the Kobani population worked in the agriculture sector before the conflict, however, conflict related consequences, such as damaged land, a lack of access to inputs, and UXOs, a little less than half have stopped working in the sector.

Farmers in Kobani have had significant difficulty accessing agricultural inputs, such as crop seeds, pesticides, fertilizer, farming equipment, generators and fuel. Although generally available, such inputs are generally considered unaffordable. Kobani does not seem to face major difficulties accessing water for agricultural purposes. Over 85 percent of respondents in the agricultural sector reported that water was available for farming.

Health facilities are still functioning in Kobani, albeit facing difficulties related to the lack of medical personnel, equipment and medical supplies. Over half of respondents cannot access the medicine that they were routinely prescribed before the conflict. Ailments such as diarrhea, especially among children, influenza and allergies are common. The people of Kobani face a variety of significant health risks mainly due to infectious disease, particularly from contaminated water and poor sanitation practices, a lack of quality medical centers, the unavailability of ambulance services and the burning of garbage which contaminates the air and ground water, which is currently used for drinking purposes. Prior to the conflict, primary household water source was the municipal water system. Presently, the majority of households depended on wells and some households have transitioned from using the city sewer system to using septic tanks.

Although cross-border travel to Turkey was relatively common before the siege and attack that started in September 2014, after the conflict, it has become considerably more difficult. Presently, more than 80 percent of the Kobani residents feel that they are no longer able to cross over to Turkey. Likewise, the ability to travel to villages surrounding Kobani has also become more limited. Most families in Kobani have been affected very negatively by the conflict. Those with greater loss have not only returned to their city only to find their homes and businesses in ruins, but have also lost family and loved ones.

## Recommendations to Address Needs

### *Housing and Livelihoods*

**Consider implementing reconstruction and infrastructure-oriented programs** in Kobani. This was identified as an urgent priority. Desk research indicated half the city's buildings were destroyed, and field research confirmed that many residents lost their homes. The most urgent repair need for remaining homes was found to be electricity. The destruction of shops, offices, and schools were the biggest driver of detrimental livelihood changes. Respondents' testimony indicates that international organizations are providing subsidies and vouchers. However, the biggest obstacles to livelihood regeneration were found to be damaged buildings, infrastructure and equipment.

### *Food Security and Livelihoods*

**Prioritize livelihoods.** Despite the drop in availability of food products at local markets, this assessment found that low purchasing power was the greatest challenge to food security. Respondents indicated that other organizations have been providing them with food baskets and in-kind aid. However, this is unsustainable when residents' places of pre-conflict employment remain destroyed. Male, non-skilled/manual laborers could be employed in construction projects to rebuild buildings destroyed in the conflict to provide short-term employment.

### *Agriculture*

**Consider providing agricultural inputs** to farmers. This would remove one of the key barriers to agricultural production in Kobani. Price increases, supply interruptions and reduced purchasing power have prevented farmers from accessing functional farming equipment, seeds, pesticides, fertilizer, fuel and generators. This assessment found that even when agricultural inputs were available, less than five percent of respondents reported that they were also affordable.

### *Health*

**Support the medical facilities** in Kobani. While there is a hospital in Kobani, it lacks basic medical equipment, qualified personnel and perhaps most importantly, medicine. This hospital, as well as the Red Crescent, already provides free services to Kobani residents, though improving the quality of the service is essential.

**Provide Kobani with an improved ambulance service.** The lack of quality, timeliness and expertise of the ambulance service in Kobani was frequently mentioned by respondents. Improving the capacity of Kobani's ambulance service by either providing new vehicles, improving the provision of existing vehicles, and training ambulance personnel, would greatly bolster the health system in the city.

### *Water and Sanitation*

**Consider establishing safe water, sanitation and hygiene facilities** in Kobani, as water appears to be polluted and toilets are not connected to a functioning sewage system. Global Communities could, for example, research the possibility of decontaminating the wells residents have become dependent on for water. In the short-term Global Communities, could consider providing bottled water or water tanks for residents.

*Mobility, Conflict and Security*

**Help the residents in Kobani diffuse UXO** left in the area by the Islamic State. Such an initiative would remove the biggest obstacle to the city's agriculture sector and residents' freedom of movement. Several respondents to the household survey and participants in the FGDs reported that family members had been killed by UXO, especially children. Farmers do not replant their fields for fear of mines. Global Communities could explore the possibility of partnering with relevant actors to help clear Kobani of mines and other UXO.

## Appendix A

**Table 1: Focus group discussion participants**

**Note: Participant # is represented by focus group number first and participant number second. For example, “2-3” is the third participant in the second focus group**

Participant #	Age	Gender	Place of Residence	Education Level	Work
1-1	25	M	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
1-2	26	M	Kobani	University	Teacher
1-3	31	M	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
1-4	20	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
1-5	23	M	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
1-6	22	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
1-7	25	M	Kobani	University	Unemployed
1-8	29	M	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
2-1	22	M	Kobani	Primary School	Restaurant
2-2	23	M	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
2-3	25	M	Kobani	University	Unemployed
2-4	24	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
2-5	29	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Café
2-6	28	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
2-7	33	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Clothing Shop
2-8	26	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
3-1	21	F	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
3-2	18	F	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
3-3	22	F	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
3-4	21	F	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
3-5	19	F	Kobani	Primary School	Agriculture
3-6	25	F	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
3-7	24	F	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
3-8	26	F	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
4-1	27	M	Kobani	University	Engineer
4-2	20	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
4-3	21	M	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed

4-4	26	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
4-5	33	M	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
4-6	27	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Agriculture
4-7	22	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
4-8	24	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Agriculture
5-1	20	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Agriculture
5-2	22	M	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
5-3	25	M	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
5-4	31	M	Kobani	University	Unemployed
5-5	37	M	Kobani	University	Teacher
5-6	26	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
5-7	29	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Agriculture
5-8	23	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
6-1	21	M	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
6-2	25	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
6-3	27	M	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
6-4	30	M	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
6-5	41	M	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
6-6	23	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Shop Owner
6-7	25	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
6-8	26	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
7-1	23	M	Kobani	Primary School	Agriculture
7-2	27	M	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
7-3	29	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Agriculture
7-4	39	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
7-5	25	M	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed

7-6	24	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
7-7	20	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Agriculture
8-1	19	M	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
8-2	23	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Trader
8-3	32	M	Kobani	University	Activist; Media
8-4	30	M	Kobani	Primary School	Unemployed
8-5	27	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Shop Owner
8-6	25	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
8-7	23	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed
8-8	28	M	Kobani	Secondary School	Unemployed