



# منظمة التنمية المحلية

## Local Development Organization

A Study on the Reality of the Labour Market and  
Employment

Syria - Ma'arrat An Nu'man

2018 - 10 - 07



## The Goal of the Research

This study aims to analyse the reality of the labour market and employment in the city of Ma'arrat An Nu'man and look for the import and export places and their problems in addition to the most important goods and products (with their prices) which the region needs. Also, it helps people who request to establish projects, and raises their awareness of the projects types and investments that can be implemented.

## The Methodology of the Research

The data were collected from the residents of Ma'arat An Nu'man city, who are familiar with the market reality in addition to the retailers and wholesalers, main buyers and importers, business owners and small entrepreneurs. More information was also obtained from key informants (Labour union officials - some members of the local council and others entities), and secondary data were obtained from some sources.

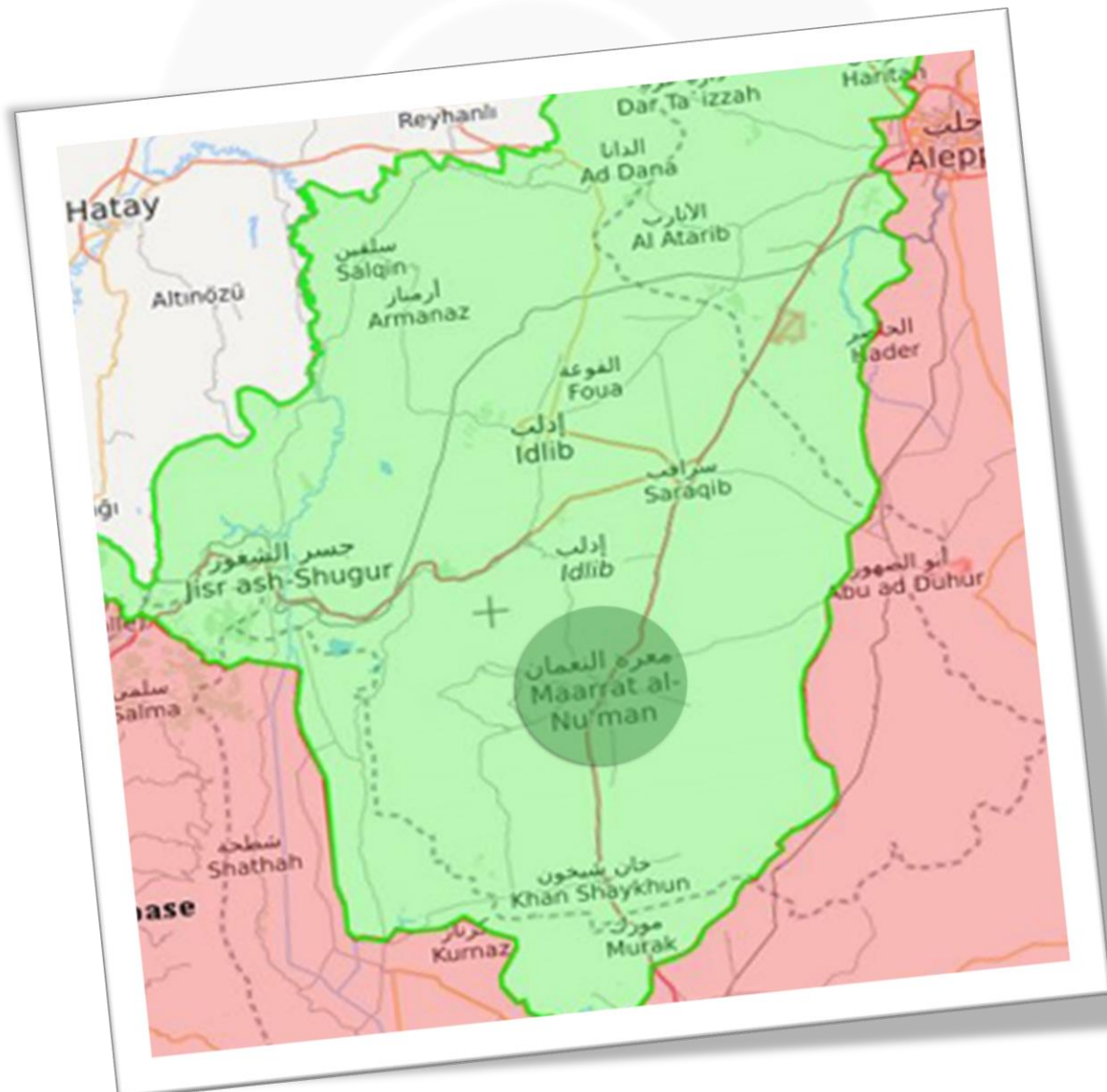
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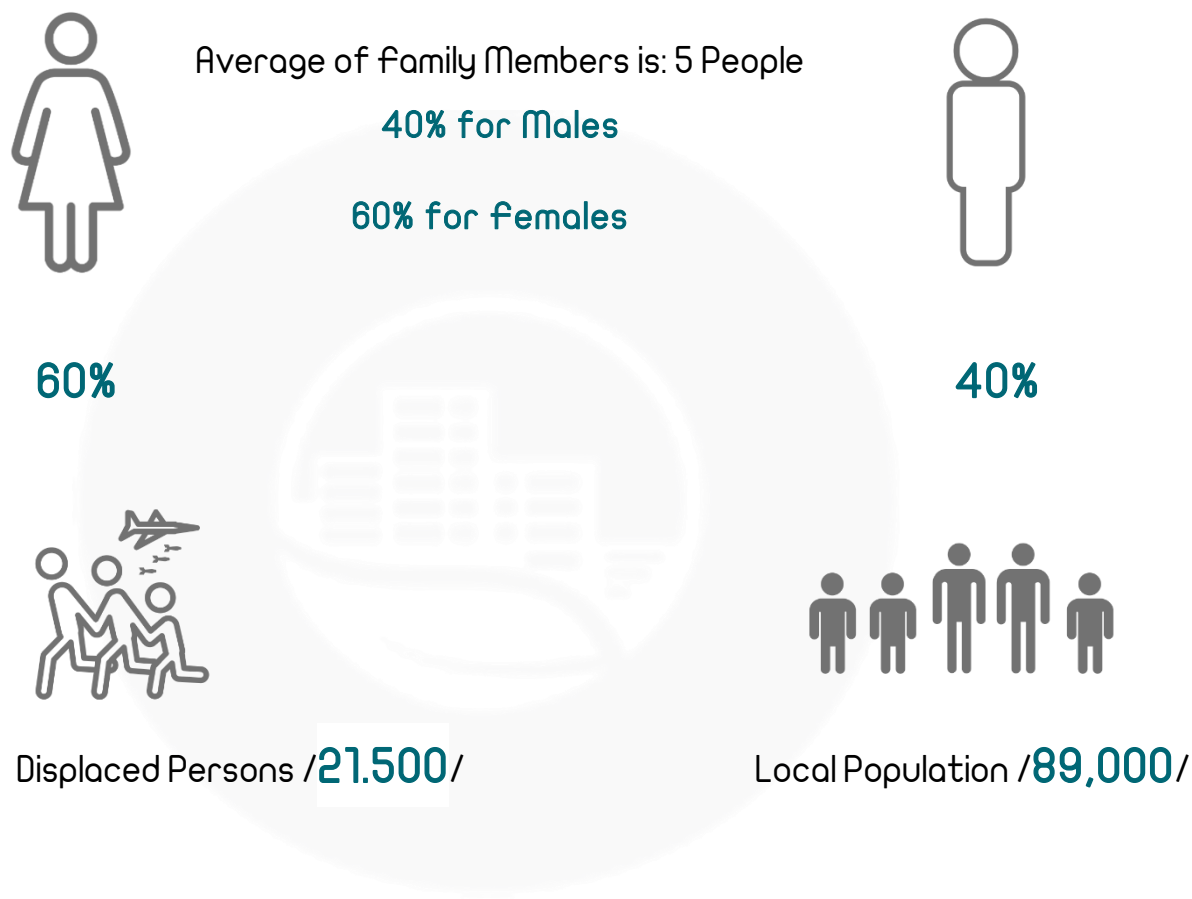
## General Information about the Region

Ma'arrat An Nu'man, also known as Al-Ma'arra, is a city in northwestern Syria, 33 km south of Idlib, 84 km from Aleppo and 60 km north of Hama, and rises 496 m above sea level. Al-Ma'arra has a great importance and a large population because of its gentle climate and strategic location. Especially as it is adjacent to the Kingdom of Abla and is also located between the two important kingdoms are Afamia in the south-west and Chalissis Qansrin in the north. As well as, it has fertile plains and a geological nature.

Source: [Wikipedia](#)



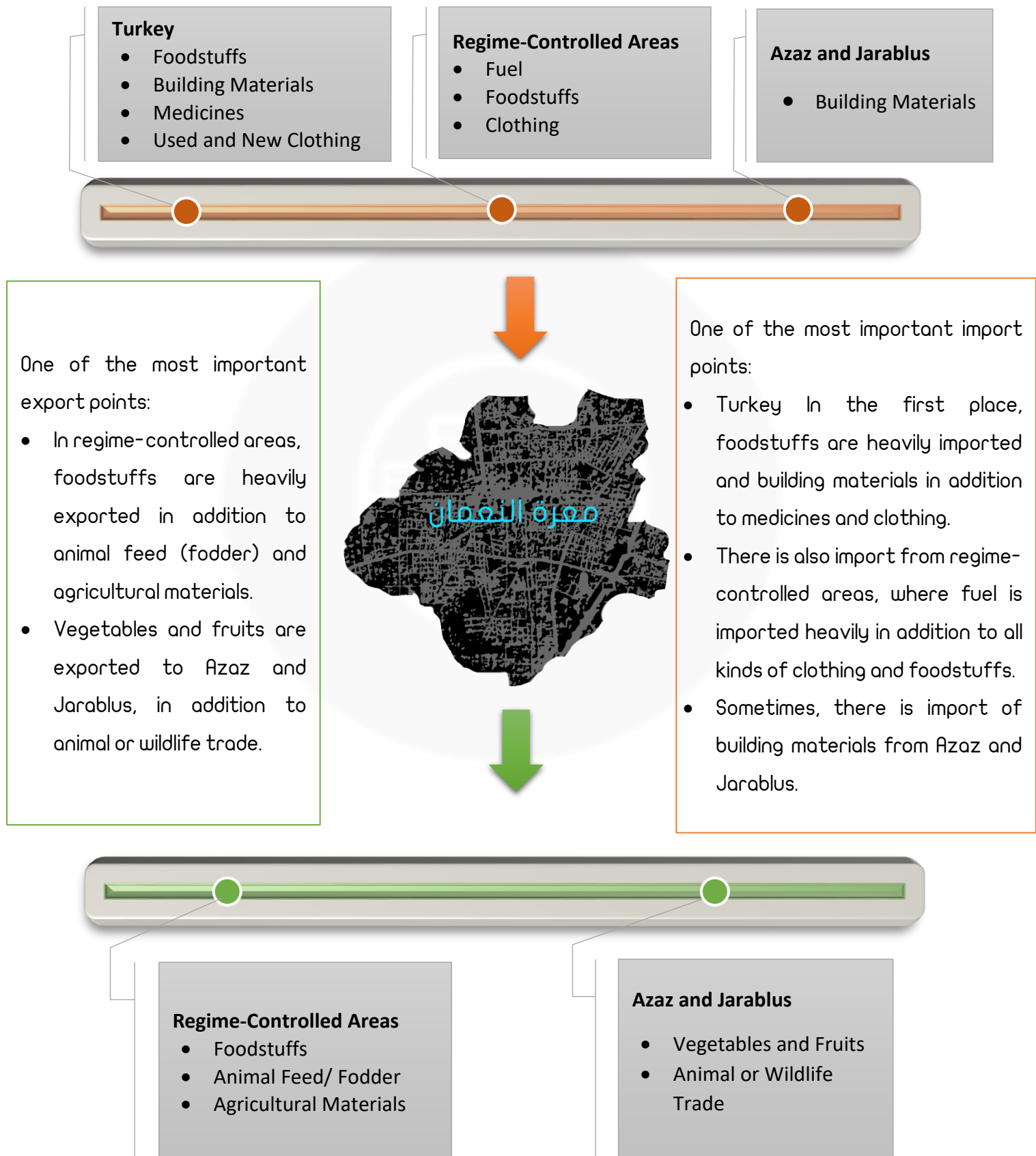
## Current Demographics



The unemployment rate is 80% for the local population and 90% for the displaced persons.

Source: Local Council

## Basic Import and Export Lines

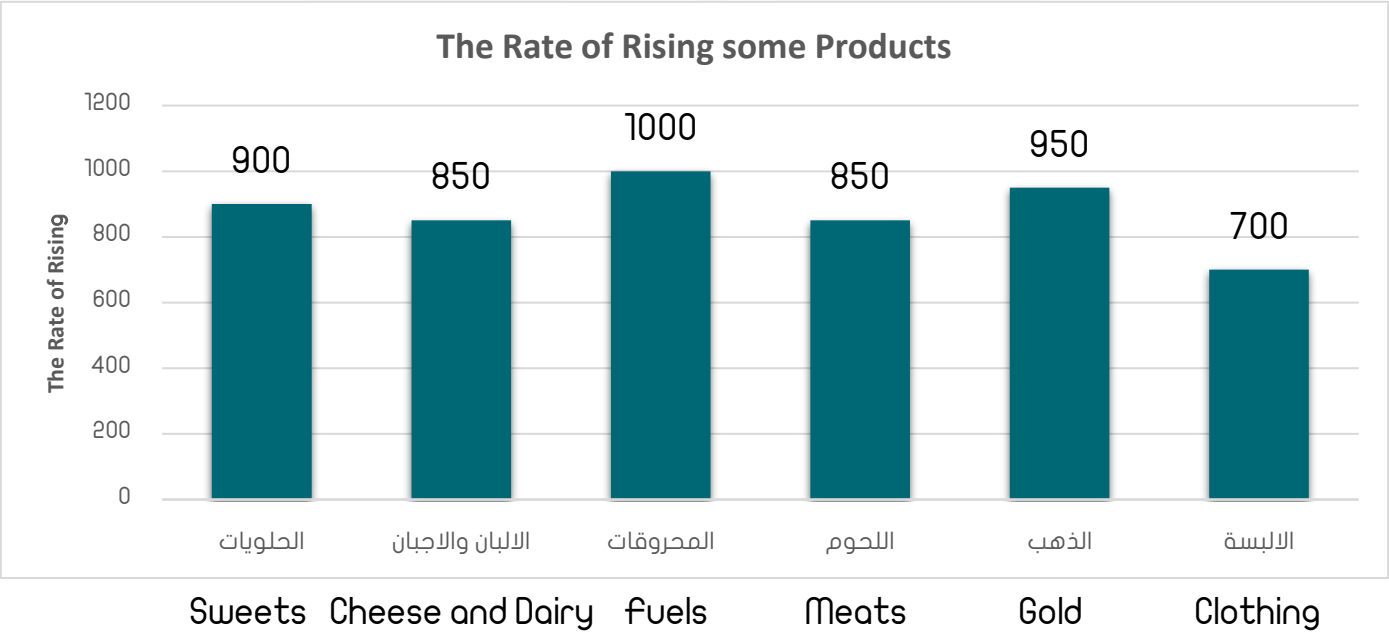


### The Most Expensive Goods and Products in the Region

- The amount which the family needs to cover all their monthly needs is:  
  
**138,000** Syrian Pounds, equivalent to **300** US dollars  
  
 The amount ranges from 65,000 to 200,000 per family, whether they are displaced or indigenous, and depending on the status of the house if it is rented or owned.
- The most expensive goods in the region are foodstuffs, meats, vegetables and all kinds of clothing.

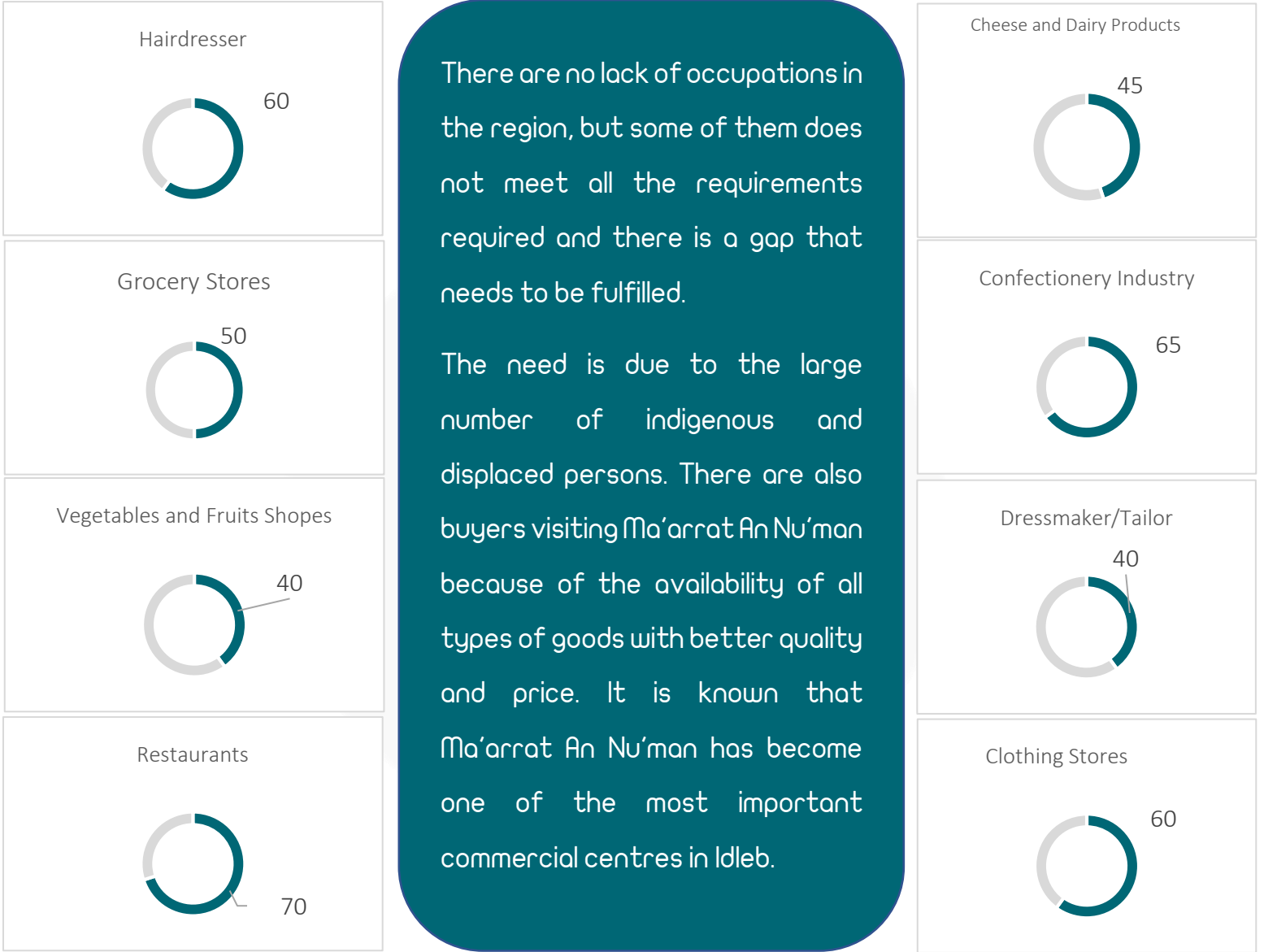
### The Rate of Inflation during the 7 Years Ago

The price of fuel has increased by 1000% for seven years now; in addition to gold and sweets. Whereas, the price of clothing has increased by 700% due to the large number of used clothing stores and the ease of importing them from other regions.



## Occupations and Projects in the Region

The Types of Occupations and How They Cover the Needs of the Region:



There are also occupations that meet the regin needs, such as the sale of used clothes, gold shops, the sale of meat and housewares. Nowadays, one of the most prevalent occpation is foreign currency exchange since the U.S. dollar has become easily most traded currency in addition to other currencies.

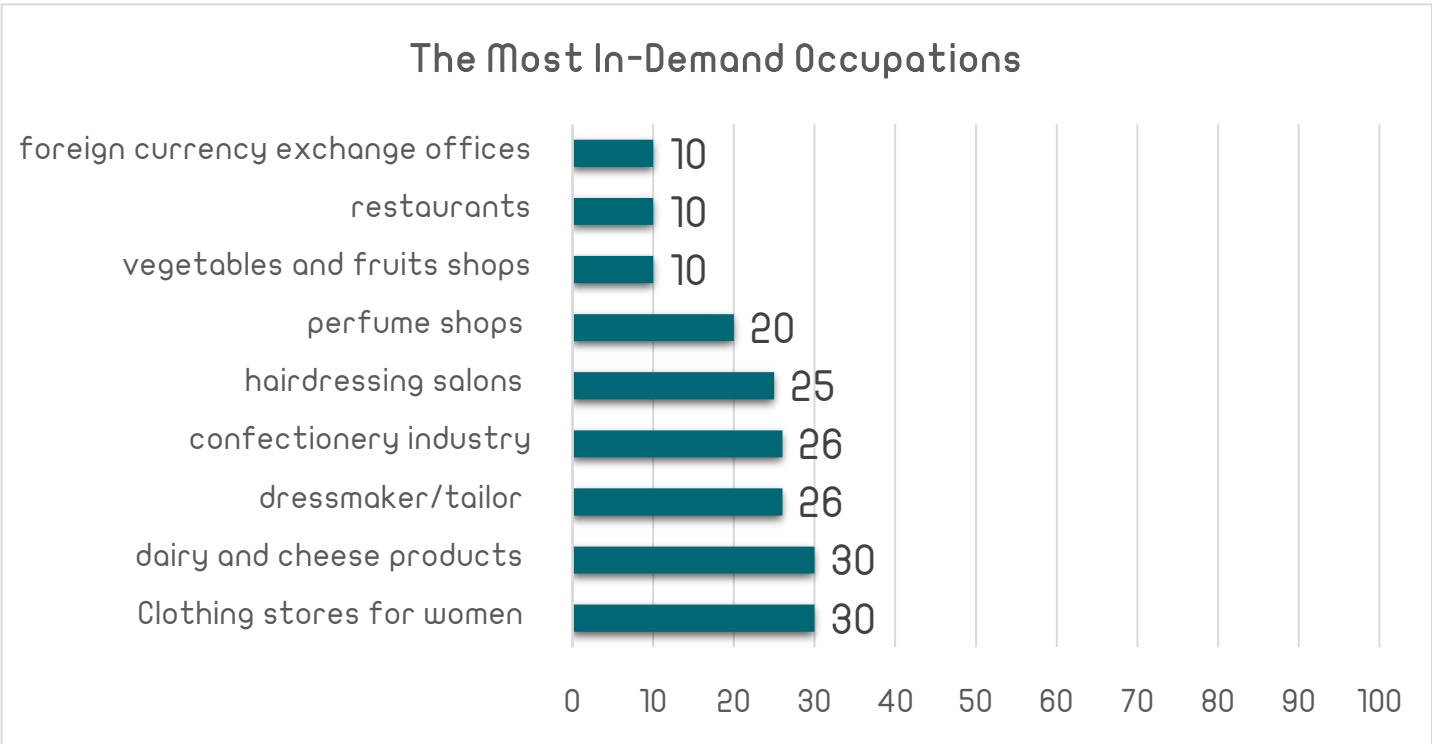
The occupations that the city needs are:

|   |                                 |                                      |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Software maintenance   | 2. food industry                | 3. Dressmaking                       |
| 4. solar panels   | 5. Making accessories for women | 6. Knitting and weaving for women    |
| 7. Maintenance and installation of satellite internet equipment | 8. Maintenance of generators    | 9. Manufacture of Aleppo "Ghar" soap |



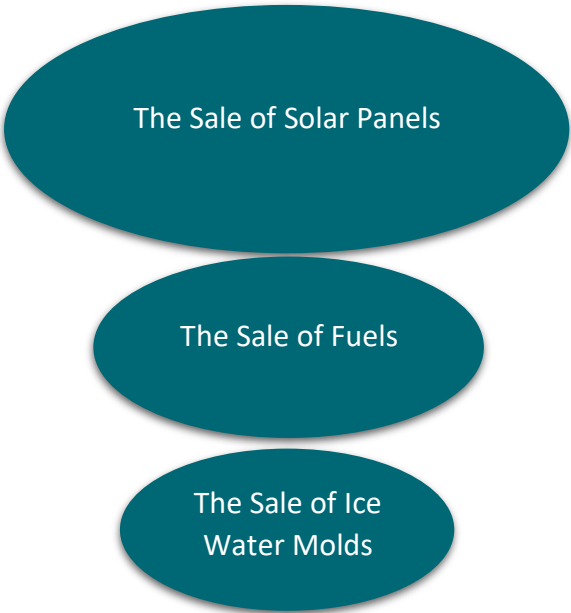
### The Most In-Demand Occupations

The most occupations are clothing stores for women, dairy and cheese shops, men’s and women’s tailor shops, confectionery stores and women’s and men’s hairdressing salons. Whereas, the least occupations are vegetables and fruits shops, restaurants and foreign currency exchange offices



### The Emergence of New Occupations

- There are many occupations that have emerged as a result of people's needs.
- The most prevalent occupations are the sale of solar panels because of a lack of electricity.
- As well as, the sale of fuel on the roads, which is imported from regime-controlled areas because of a lack of fuel stations.
- There is also a high prevalence of selling ice water molds in the summer season.
- One of the less common new occupations is the sale of satellite internet equipment and fast food.



## The Increased Prevalence of Occupations

The most prevalent occupations in the region are:

- The sale of solar panels because of a lack of electricity and high prices of fuels
- The sale of used clothing because of its cheap and its being European clothing
- The sale of fuel, which is imported from regime-controlled areas due to a lack of fuel stations. Also, the sale of fuel is increasing since Ma'arrat An Nu'man has become a major commercial center in the region.

There are also occupations such as foreign currency exchange offices, gold shops, clothing stores for women, used housewares stores, car repair shops and restaurants.



## Percentage of Women’s Participation in some Projects and Occupations

In a previous study conducted by the Local Development Organization on the labour participation of women in these regions, it was found that there is an increase in the percentage of women who were involved in labour during the revolution. Unlike previous years, the labour participation of women was limited by customs and traditions.

The most common occupations in which women are involved, are women’s clothing and accessories stores, sewing, confectionery industry, hairdressing salons for women, dairy and cheese shops and housewares stores.

There are other occupations in which women are involved, such as vegetable and fruit shops, grocery stores and restaurants.



## Systems and Labour Market Monitoring

- There is no trading system issued by any party.
- There is no monitoring of the local market by any official body in the region.
- Shop owners do not pay any taxes to anyone or party.

One of the problems faced by consumers is the different prices for the same products.

## General Information

- The presence of commercial centres: there are sufficient commercial centres in the region.
- There is a large number of traders are selling their products within the region.
- There is a large number of consumers are shopping in the region market.
- The possibility of securing raw materials for project owners: there are no problems in securing raw materials because the border between Turkey and Syria (regime-controlled areas) is almost open for importation.
- The possibility of small business owners to market their products: since the market in Ma'arrat An Nu'man's is available to all consumers, there are no obstacles to marketing their products.
- Problems faced by suppliers and importers: there is no difficulty for suppliers in providing materials, but their biggest problem is the fluctuation in the currency exchange rate (the Turkish lira and the US dollar), and they have some security difficulty.
- 75% of products are sold in the same region as they are produced, and 25% are sold outside the region.

## The Reasons Why Traders Are Selling Their Products in the City

The ability of the market to absorb significant quantities of products and the increasing population; especially after the arrival of displaced people, has led to an enormous increase in market requirements and an increase of purchasing power. Furthermore, there are many large malls and commercial centers.

## The Reasons Why Consumers Are Shopping in the City

The diversification of high quality products, the presence of all what the consumer needs, the lower prices compared to neighboring areas and the good treatment by traders and shop owners, has led consumers to shopping in the city.

## Problems Encountered by Consumers in the Local Market

- Exchange rate fluctuation, which negatively affects the prices of products.
- High prices and lack of disagreement on one price even in one region
- Non-distribution of shops in proportion to the need
- High prices of products and goods, especially vegetables and meats
- Prices are high compared to labor wages in addition to the disparity of prices between the seller and the other.

### Suggestions:

- Developing a plan to monitor prices in the market
- Holding a commercial law
- Distribution of grocery stores and other shops so that they are not gathered in one place.

## Business Movement Between Past (7 Years Ago) and Present

In previous years, business was much better and more profitable. Nowadays, business movement is more constrained by the security situation imposed on traders. Moreover, previously there was greater stability in the exchange rates contrary to the current situation and the raw materials were cheap compared to their current prices.

Currently, the return is not commensurate with the effort of the trader, and because of the diversity of products, the consumer has become lost among the product types. As a result, some products are sometimes depressed.



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