

Libya Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI)

28 February - 7 March 2021

Libya Cash Working Group

REACH Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

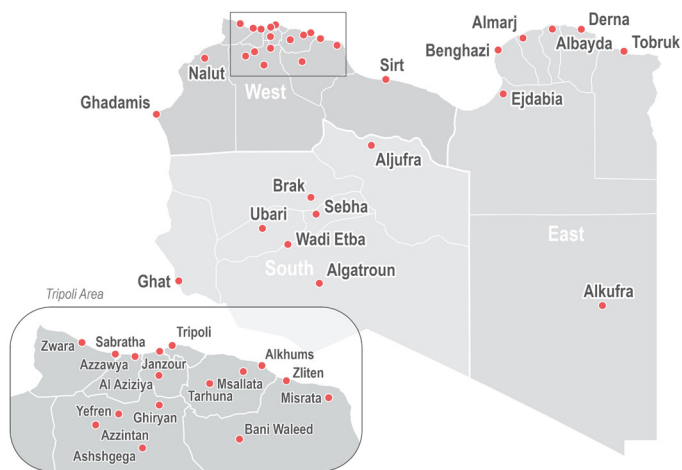
INTRODUCTION

- In an effort to inform cash-based interventions and better understand market dynamics in Libya, the Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI) was created by the Libya Cash & Markets Working Group (CMWG) in June 2017. The initiative is led by REACH and supported by the CMWG members. It is funded by the Office of U.S. Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
- Markets in key urban areas across Libya are assessed on a monthly basis. In each location, field teams record prices and availability of basic food and non-food items (NFI) sold in local shops and markets. This factsheet presents an overview of price ranges and medians for key food items and NFIs in the assessed areas, as well as the costs associated with key elements of the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB).
- REACH has also conducted analysis highlighting economic vulnerability for at-risk population groups that can be accessed through an [interactive dashboard](#).

METHODOLOGY

- Field staff familiar with the local market conditions identified shops representative of the general price level in their respective locations.
- At least **four** prices per assessed item were collected within each location. In line with the purpose of the JMMI, only the price of the cheapest available brand was recorded for each item.
- Enumerators were trained on methodology and tools by REACH. Data collection was conducted through the KoBoCollect mobile application.
- Following data collection, REACH compiled and cleaned all partner data, normalising prices, cross-checking outliers and calculating the median cost of the MEB in each assessed market.
- Qualitative information is also gathered from local sources and economic experts through key informant (KI) interviews.
- REACH has extracted prices on a daily basis from the website, "Open Souq" and conducted KI interviews with property market professionals to better understand the rental market in Libya.
- More details are available in the Methodology section of the Appendix.

COVERAGE



JMMI KEY FINDINGS & CONTEXT

- The cost of the MEB across Libya decreased by an overall of 4.1% between February and March 2021 (see page 2). This overall decrease can be attributed to a drop in the cost of the food portion of the MEB (-4.1%) and cooking fuel (-20%). The cost of the MEB in March 2021 was 12.8% higher than pre-COVID-19 levels in March 2020. The largest decrease in the cost of the MEB were observed in the western coastal city Misrata (-22.8%) and other cities in the south. However, some cities such as Ejdabia (+6.2%) and Alkhums (+4.3%) still witnessed an increasing cost of MEB.
- Compared to February 2021, unofficial gasoline prices increased (+16.7%) whereas cooking fuel decreased (-25.0%) (see page 4). In March 2020, the Libyan overall cost of an 11-kg cooking fuel cylinder was 15 LYD, the lowest price for Libya overall since April 2019, when the Tripoli conflict began.
- From February to March 2021, a number of pharmaceutical item prices spiked, such as metoclopramide (+18.5%), paracetamol (+18.3%) and amoxicillin (+11.3%). Since November 2020, vitamin B and amoxicillin have increased by 36.4% and 30.1% respectively.
- The Libyan Dinar (LYD) fell under 5 USD/LYD for the first time in 12 months. This presents a positive economic outlook, as a strong LYD against USD will keep prices low for certain goods, due to some importers relying on the parallel market to buy foreign currency (see page 2).
- On the 15th of March 2021, the government announced that the exchange rate used to calculate customs tariffs will be set at 2.12 LYD/ USD². This will prevent the unified exchange rate from creating large import tariffs, of which the cost would be transferred to Libyan consumers.
- The Libyan embassy in Madrid agreed with Spanish authorities to continue exporting livestock to Libyan ports with the purpose of reducing prices of livestock and meeting the demand especially during Ramadan (13th April - 12th May 2021).³
- Authorities are preparing to reopen trade at the Libyan-Algerian border crossing.⁴ This could potentially lower the prices of numerous imported Algerian-produced goods since they are not subject to customs duties. Prior to the revolution in 2011, Libya had imported a large quantity of goods from Algeria, such as washing powder.⁵
- On the 28th March 2021, three decrees were signed on the 28th of March to create a fuel subsidy reform, begin the disbursement of family grants (150 LYD for mothers and 100 LYD per child) and raise pensions.⁶ According to the World Bank, an individual from the upper socio-economic quintile in Libya benefits 2.7 times more from subsidies on LPG than an individual in the bottom quintile.⁷

JMMI KEY FIGURES

Data collection from 28 February - 7 March 2021

3 participating agencies
(REACH, WFP, DRC)
35 assessed cities
45 assessed items
662 assessed shops

EXCHANGE RATES¹

4.468 USD/LYD official ▲ +0.1%	5.140 USD/LYD parallel market ▼ -0.6%	6.180 EUR/LYD parallel market ▼ -0.3%
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KEY MONTHLY CHANGES IN MEB

Median cost of overall MEB

710.3 LYD ▼ -33.1 LYD ▼ -4.5%

Food items ▼ -4.1%	Hygiene items ▼ -1.7%	Cooking fuel. ⁹ ▼ -20%
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MEDIAN COST OF MEB BY REGION

West	715.2 LYD	▲ +0.3%
East	689.6 LYD	▼ -2.4%
South	828.4 LYD	▼ -7.2%

MARKET SHORTAGES

- None reported

Reported changes are month-on-month

Access the JMMI online dashboard

MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET (MEB)

Key Elements: Food Items

Bread	32 kg	Tomatoes	10 kg
Rice	10.5 kg	Potatoes	12 kg
Pasta	9.5 kg	Onions	7 kg
Couscous	5.5 kg	Peppers	4.5 kg
Beans	6 kg	Tomato paste	6 kg
Chicken	7.5 kg	Black tea	2 kg
Tuna	4 kg	Vegetable oil	5 L
Eggs	4 kg	Sugar	2 kg
Milk	8.5 L	Salt	1 kg

Key Elements: Non-Food Items

Bathing soap	1.4 kg (9 150-g bars)
Toothpaste	0.5 kg (5 100-g tubes)
Laundry detergent	1.3 L
Dishwashing liquid	1.3 L
Sanitary pads	4 packs of 10
Cooking fuel (LPG)	22 kg (2 11-kg refills)

Optional Elements

Water (drinking use only)	458 L
Median rent for 3-rm flat	1 month
Float	20% of key elements

The **Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB)** represents the minimum culturally adjusted group of items required to support a five-person Libyan household (HH) for one month. The cost of the MEB can be used as a proxy for the financial burdens facing households in different locations. The MEB's contents were defined by the CMWG in consultation with relevant sector leads.

Only the MEB's key elements (food and non-food items) were incorporated into the calculations in this factsheet.

COST OF MEDIAN OVERALL MEB

710.3 LYD

Change since
February 2021

▼ **-33.1 LYD**
(-4.5%)

Change since
March 2020

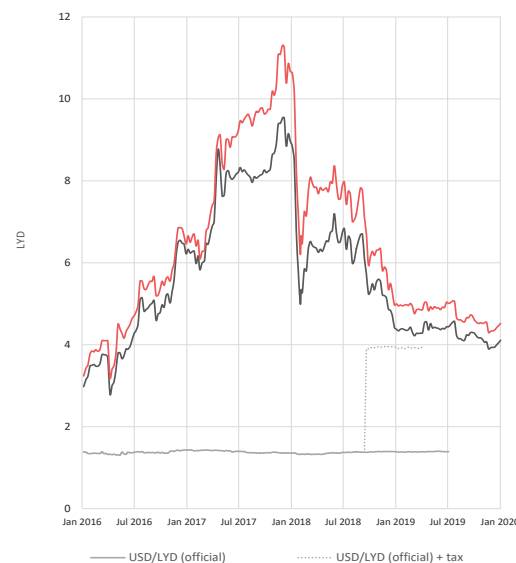
▲ **+80.8 LYD**
(+12.8%)

MEDIAN MEB COST BY LOCATION

Location	Cost of MEB (LYD)	Since Feb 2021	Since March 2020
Ghadamis	814.6	1.5%	19.2%
Nalut	800.3	-1.4%	9.3%
Ghiryani	770.1	0.5%	10.4%
Azzintan	758.1	-4.1%	11.4%
Zwara	755.3	-3.8%	38.1%
Azzawya	748.7	2.6%	37.1%
Al Aziziya	746.6	3.2%	36.4%
Sabratha	738.4	-6.1%	32.5%
Tripoli	738.1	0.5%	12.7%
AlKhums	732.9	4.3%	35.7%
Ashshgega	700.3	-4.7%	8.4%
Zliten	694.6	-1.2%	12.9%
Yefren	693.5	-2.1%	5.8%
Msallata	687.4	0.4%	15.3%
Bani Waleed	680	-0.2%	13.9%
Tarhuna	675.4	-2.1%	14.8%
Sirt	668.5	-3.9%	10.4%
Janjour	630.7	-5.6%	6.4%
Misrata	594.3	-22.8%	6.0%
Median West	715.2	0.3%	14.5%
Benghazi	798.7	0.4%	30.5%
Ejdabia	780.8	6.2%	20.3%
AlMarj	740.4	0.3%	15.7%
AlKufra	720.6	-8.4%	10.4%
AlBayda	691.2	-1.8%	7.1%
Tobruk	638.2	-5.5%	1.5%
Derna	616.9	-0.2%	1.3%
Median East	689.6	-2.4%	9.4%
Ghat	1067.4	-0.2%	-6.7%
Algatroun	1044.4	3.8%	-7.7%
Ubari	1034.3	2.9%	-5.2%
Wadi Etba	812.5	-9.1%	-3.3%
AlJufra	746.8	-9.5%	-3.2%
Sebha	734.9	-12.2%	-2.7%
Brak	728.4	-12.4%	-0.1%
Median South	828.4	-7.2%	-5.8%
Median Overall	710.3	-4.5%	12.8%

EXCHANGE RATES OVER TIME⁸

January 2016-January 2020

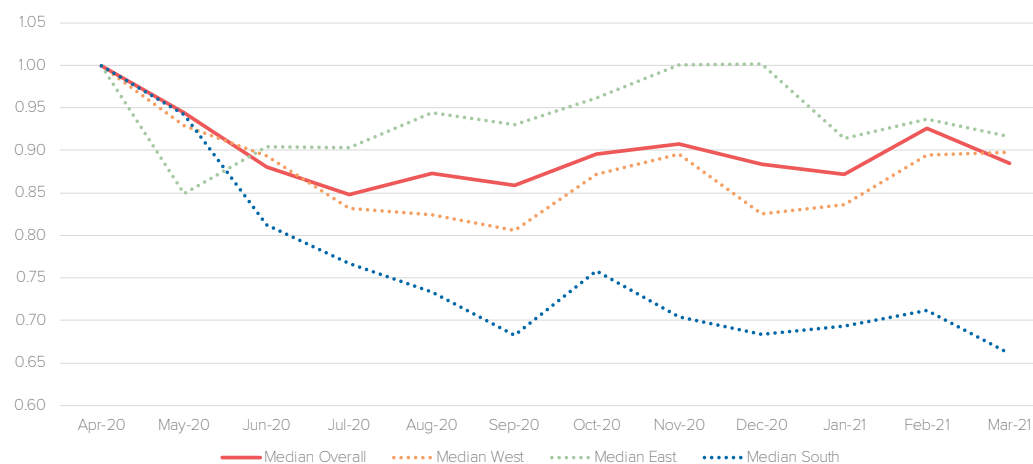


Since February 2020

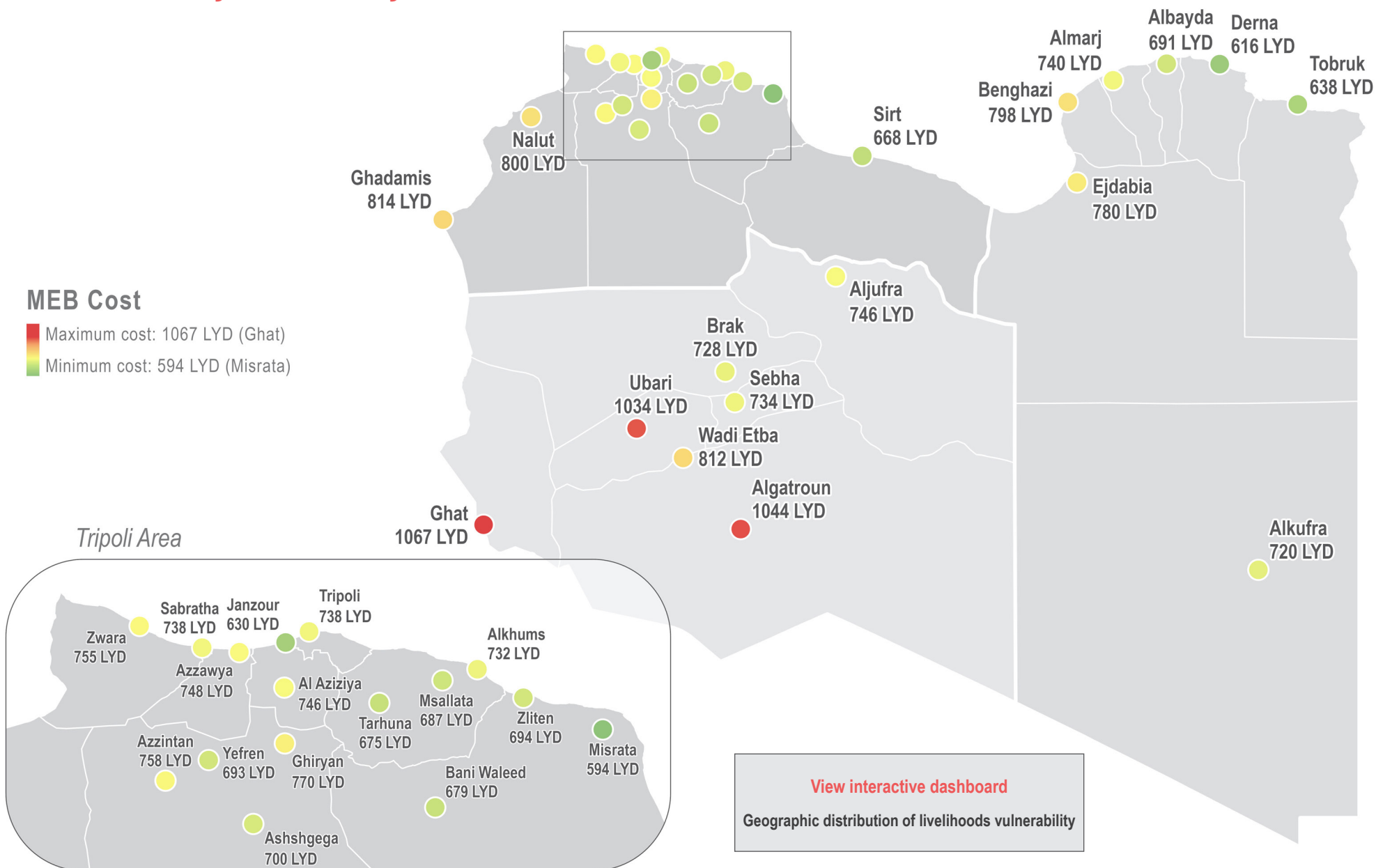


MEB PRICE INDEX

Since April 2020 (normalised, April 2020 = 1.00)⁹



Cost of MEB Key Elements by Location

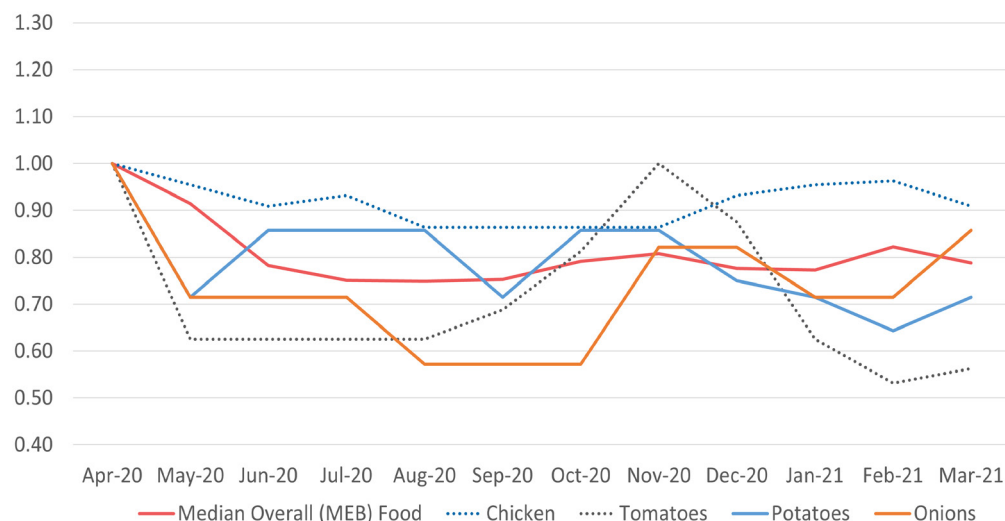


PRICES OF MONITORED ITEMS

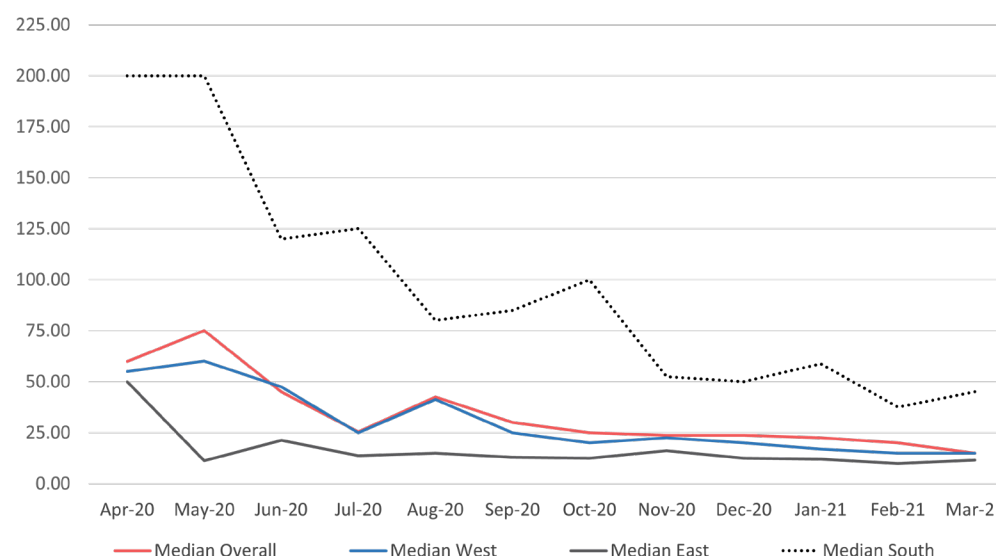
Item	Unit	Median price (LYD)	Change since Feb 2021	Change since March 2020
Food items				
Onions	1 kg	3.00	20.0%	0.0%
Potatoes	1 kg	2.50	11.1%	-16.7%
Chickpeas	400 g	2.25	5.9%	50.0%
Tomatoes	1 kg	2.25	5.9%	12.5%
Lamb meat	1 kg	40.00	1.9%	12.7%
Bread	5 pieces	1.25	0.0%	11.1%
Pasta	500 g	2.00	0.0%	33.3%
Peppers	1 kg	4.00	0.0%	0.0%
Sugar	1 kg	3.00	0.0%	26.3%
Black tea	250 g	6.25	-1.0%	25.0%
Eggs	30 eggs	14.12	-2.6%	41.2%
Couscous	1 kg	3.75	-4.8%	7.1%
Chicken meat	1 kg	10.00	-5.5%	6.7%
Beans	400 g	2.12	-5.6%	30.8%
Milk	1 L	4.62	-7.5%	32.1%
Flour	1 kg	2.75	-8.3%	37.5%
Rice	1 kg	3.12	-9.1%	-3.8%
Tomato paste	400 g	2.50	-9.1%	25.0%
Green tea	250 g	3.50	-12.5%	16.7%
Tuna	200 g	3.50	-12.5%	16.7%
Vegetable oil	1 L	7.00	-12.5%	55.6%
Salt	1 kg	1.25	-13.0%	25.0%
Condensed Milk	200 mL	2.50	-16.7%	25.0%
Hygiene items				
Toothbrush	1 brush	2.75	10.0%	37.5%
Sanitary pads	10 pads	4.50	9.1%	28.6%
Bleach	1 L	7.50	3.4%	No data
Laundry powder	1 kg	6.50	0.0%	0.0%
Toothpaste	100 mL	5.00	0.0%	25.0%
Baby diapers	30	17.00	0.0%	13.3%
Dishwashing liquid	1 L	2.75	-6.8%	2.8%
Handwashing soap	1 bar	1.75	-9.7%	16.7%
Shampoo	250 mL	6.12	-15.8%	20.7%
Hand Sanitiser	1 L	16.75	-16.2%	No data
Laundry detergent	1 L	2.00	-21.2%	-11.1%
Other items				
Water	1 L	0.29	0.0%	0.0%

FOOD PRICES OVER TIME

Selected items (normalised, April 2020 = 1.00)¹⁰



PRICES FROM UNOFFICIAL COOKING FUEL VENDORS (11 KG LPG CYLINDER) (since April 2020, non-normalised)

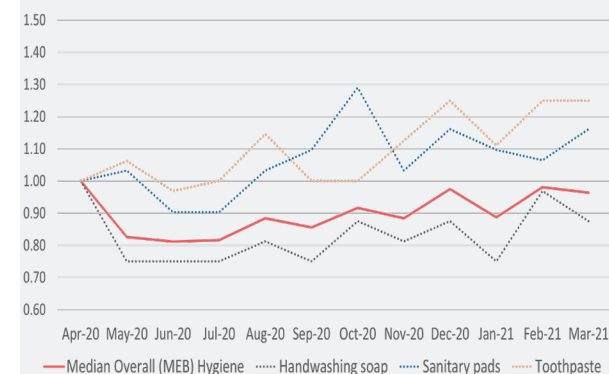


PRICES OF FUEL AND HEALTH ITEMS

Item	Unit	Median price (LYD)	Change since Feb 2021	Change since March 2020
Fuel items				
Unofficial Gasoline	1 Litre	0.88	16.7%	No data
Official LPG	11 kg	5.00	0.0%	0.0%
Official Gasoline	1 Litre	0.15	0.0%	No data
Unofficial LPG	11 kg	15.00	-25.0%	-57.1%
Pharmaceutical items				
Metoclopramide	10mg [40 pack]	16.00	18.5%	60.0%
Paracetamol	400mg [20 pack]	7.10	18.3%	2.3%
Amoxicillin	500mg [21 pack]	11.00	10.0%	22.2%
Ibuprofen	400mg [20 pack]	7.00	0.0%	27.3%
Vitamin B	[40 pack]	15.00	0.0%	46.3%

HYGIENE ITEM PRICES OVER TIME

Selected items (normalised, April 2020 = 1.00)¹¹

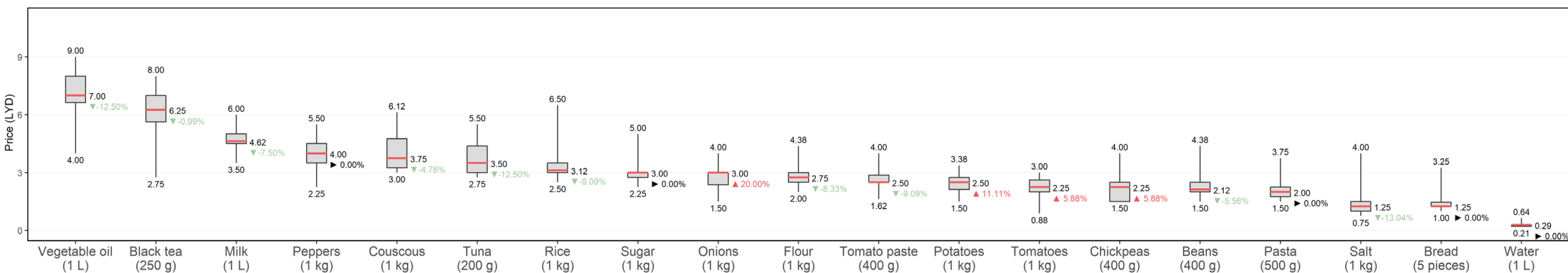


NOTABLE MONTH-ON-MONTH CHANGES

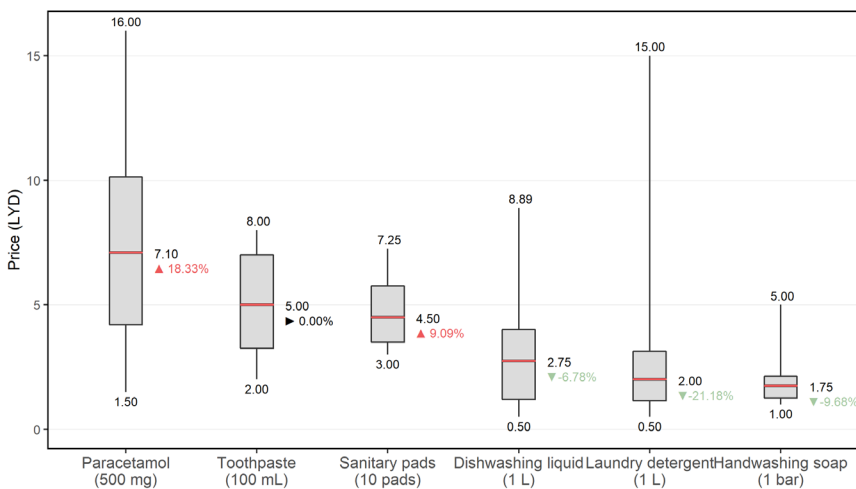
Unofficial LPG	▼ - 25.0%
Onions	▲ +20.0%
Unofficial Gasoline	▲ +16.7%

Distribution of Prices in Libya

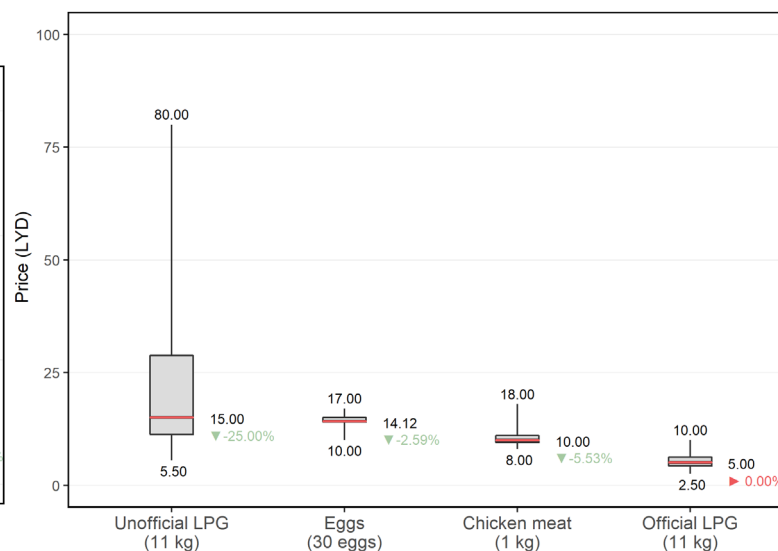
FOOD ITEMS



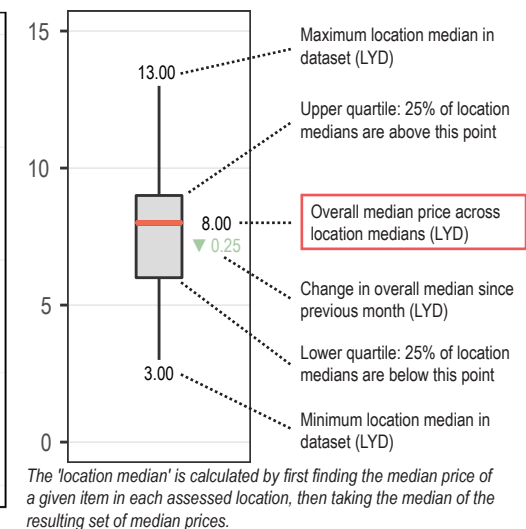
HYGIENE ITEMS



ITEMS WITH HIGHEST PRICES



How to read a boxplot



Introduction

- Ever since the onset of the conflict in and around Tripoli and Murzuq in April 2019, Tripoli has been a key displacement destination for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)¹². Furthermore, conflict related political tensions in West Libya lead to large numbers of IDPs to move to eastern cities, especially Benghazi.
- REACH is therefore exploring rent monitoring as part of the JMIMI, in order to provide humanitarian actors with a more accurate overview of key expenditures facing IDPs in Tripoli and Benghazi.

Methodology

- From May 2020 onwards, in addition to the price monitoring of key items (MEB), REACH commenced analyzing rental prices, which were extracted on a daily basis from the website 'Open Souq'. **In March 2021, 2089 rental prices were collected in Tripoli and Benghazi.** The price change findings are indicative.
- In order to standardise property prices, key features were isolated through consultation with KIs to identify the average apartment specification for typical HHs in Tripoli and Benghazi. The average apartment for typical HHs was found to be a furnished, 3-bedroom apartment with 1 bathroom. All rental prices presented in this report have been standardised to this accommodation type.

Key Findings

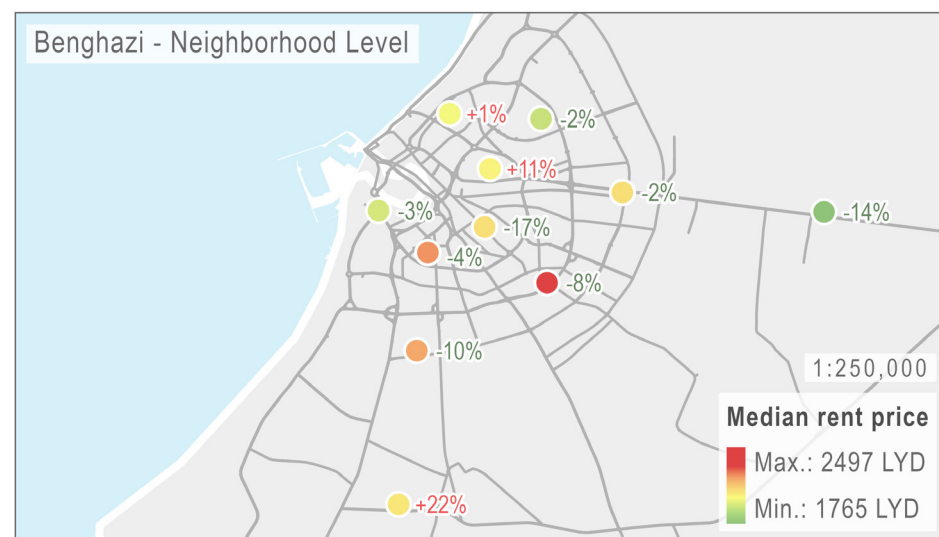
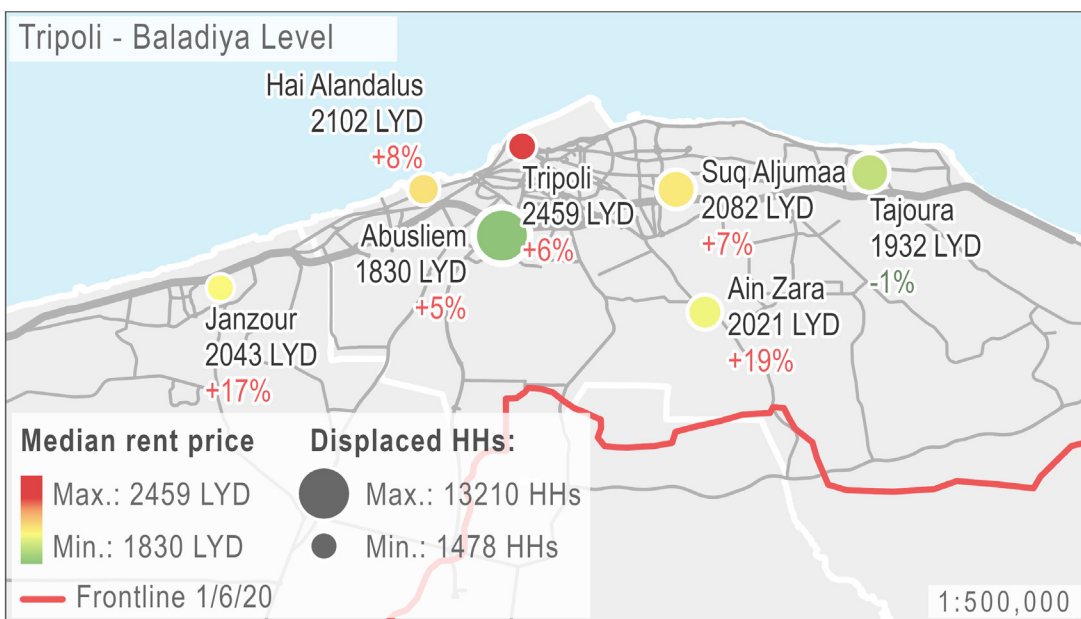
- From May 2020 - March 2021, rental prices seemed to have considerably decreased in Tripoli overall (-23.8%) while rental costs have increased over the past month by 4.9%. Between April and December 2020, there has been a 51% decrease in IDP numbers in Tripoli overall.
- In contrast, the number of IDPs in Benghazi has seemingly increased by 32.9% from April 2020 to December 2020. ** Findings indicate that Benghazi has seen a 3.4% overall increase in rental prices from May 2020 to March 2021.

Standardised rental prices March 2021

Location	Standard price (LYD)	Since Feb 2021	Since May 2020	Change in IDPs Oct-Dec	Change in Returnees** Oct-Dec
Municipality					
Abusliem	1830	4.6%	-31.8%	-14.3%	3.4%
Ain Zara	2021	19.0%	-30.8%	0.0%	100.8%
Hai Alandalus	2102	7.9%	-21.6%	-5.9%	0.0%
Janזור	2043	16.8%	-11.3%	-9.4%	16.9%
Suq Aljumaa	2082	6.9%	-22.3%	-28.1%	0.0%
Tajoura	1932	-0.8%	-18.0%	-22.3%	No Data
Tripoli Center	2459	5.9%	-17.6%	-64.7%	0.0%
Tripoli Overall	2043	4.9%	-23.8%	-24.1%	28.9%
Benghazi Overall	2048	-0.9%	3.4%	0.3%	0.0%

* Change in the number of IDPs and returnees, is derived from the latest Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) (Rounds 33 and 34) from the IOM.

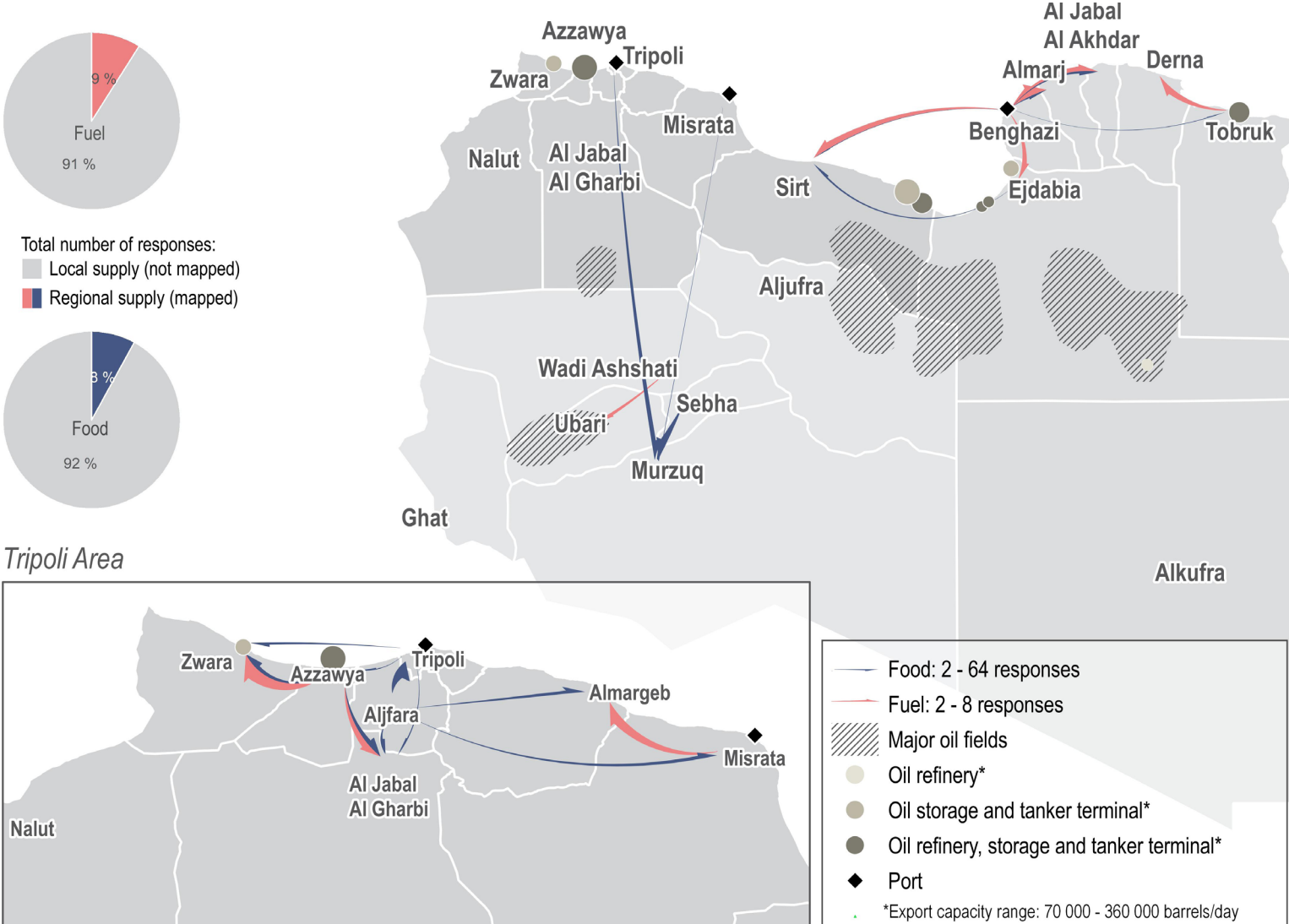
** Numbers based on IOM-DTM numbers as well, comparing December to October 2020. Note that December 2020 is the most recent available data.



Main Food and Fuel Supply Routes

This map indicates the source and flow of transported fuel and food products according to the shop owner and vendor KIs. The arrow sizes are determined by the quantity of responses and provide an indicative scale of the reported supply routes.

The indicated supply routes only visualize the flow of goods between mantikas (on a regional level), the map does not show the trajectory of goods that are sourced more locally.



PREVIOUS JMMI OUTPUTS

Factsheets

Datasets

2021

February
January

February
January

2020

December
November
October
September
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July
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May
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What is the CMWG?

The Libya Cash & Markets Working Group (CMWG), established in September 2016, is a community of humanitarian actors that support and coordinate cash-based interventions in Libya. The CWG, based jointly in Tripoli and Tunis, is currently led by UNHCR and co-led by Mercy Corps.

Methodology (cont. from page 1)

The methodology for the JMMI is based on purposive sampling. In each assessed market, at least four prices per item need to be collected from different shops to ensure the quality and consistency of collected data. Partner field teams, in coordination with the CWG, identify shops to assess based on the following criteria:

1. Shops need to be large enough to sell all or most assessed items.
2. Prices in these shops need to be good indicators of the general price levels in the assessed area.
3. Shops should be located in different areas within the assessed city or baladiya.

In locations where it is not possible to identify four large markets that fulfil criterion (1), smaller shops, such as grocery shops, vegetable vendors, butchers and bakeries, are added to the shop list, as long as they fit criteria (2) and (3), in order to guarantee at least four prices per item of interest. Each month, price data is collected from the same shops whenever possible to ensure comparability across months.

The CWG primarily targets urban areas throughout Libya, aiming to ensure coverage of markets that serve as commercial hubs for surrounding regions.

Data is collected via the KoBo mobile data collection application. The CWG maintains a joint KoBo account for the JMMI. The data collection tool is published alongside the dataset every month and disseminated to the humanitarian community.

Analyses

The median prices reported in this factsheet are 'location medians', designed to minimise the effects of outliers and differing amounts of data among assessed locations. First, the median prices of all assessed items are calculated within each assessed location (city or mahalla); then, REACH calculates the median of this list of medians. All boxplots, as well as MEB and price index calculations, are created using this method.

The cost of the MEB is calculated by multiplying the median price of each item in the MEB's 'Key Elements' section by the quantity listed in the table on page 2. In cases where no

median price is available for an item in a particular location, the median price for that item across the region (west, east, or south) is substituted.

Challenges and limitations

Price data is only indicative for the time frame within which it was collected. Prices may vary during the weeks between adjacent data collection rounds.

The data is only indicative of the general price levels in each assessed location. Representativeness on the mantika (district) level cannot be claimed. Even on the city level, price data must be interpreted with caution, particularly in larger cities with substantial variation in neighbourhoods' socioeconomic levels.

The JMMI data collection tool requires enumerators to record the cheapest available price for each item, but does not require a specific brand, as brand availability may vary. Therefore, price comparisons across regions may be based on slight variants of the same product.

The JMMI does not intend to measure general inflation levels on Libyan markets. As per JMMI methodology, only the cheapest available price per item is collected, meaning that changes in middle-market and upmarket goods are not captured.

Rent Price Monitoring

Benghazi consists of only one municipality, therefore neighbourhoods across the city were grouped together into 11 area units.

Limitations: the data collected are new offers presented by Open Souq, therefore they may not represent the rental expenses of all IDPs, as tenants may receive cheaper offer through informal channels.

Endnotes

¹ Official rate: Central Bank of Libya (27 January 2021). Parallel market rates: Ewan Libya (27 January 2021). The rates from 1 January 2021 and 1 January 2020 were used for the calculation of the monthly changes.

² The rate of "customs dollar" to be used for calculating customs duties set at LD 2.12 per dollar – applies as of tomorrow, Libya Herald, 13th March 2021.

³ Libya, Spain agree to continue exporting livestock, Libya Observer, 22nd March 2021

⁴ Customs Authority preparing to reopen Libyan-Algerian Ghadames-Debdeb border crossing, Libya Herald, 17th March 2021.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Prime minister Aldabaiba forms Ministerial committee to study reforming fuel subsidies, orders payment of family grant, increases pensions, Libya Herald, 28 March 2021.

⁷ The Quest for Subsidy Reforms in Libya, World Bank, March 2015.

⁸ Official rate: Central Bank of Libya (1 January 2021). Parallel market rates: Ewan Libya (1 January 2021). The rates from 1 January 2021 and 1 January 2021 were used for the calculation of the monthly changes.

⁹ The MEB price index was normalised by setting April 2020 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in April 2020.

¹⁰ The food prices were normalised by setting April 2020 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in April 2020.

¹¹ The hygiene prices were normalised by setting April 2020 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in April 2020.

¹² Libya IDP and Returnee Report November - December 2020, DTM IOM, October 2020

REACH is a program of ACTED. It strengthens evidence based decision-making by humanitarian actors through efficient data collection, management and analysis in contexts of crisis.

ACTED is an international NGO. Independent, private and non-profit, ACTED respects a strict political and religious impartiality, and operates following principles of non-discrimination, and transparency. Since 2011, ACTED has been providing humanitarian aid and has supported civil society and local governance throughout Libya, from its offices in Tripoli, Sebha and Benghazi.