

Libya Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI)

1 - 10 June 2020

Libya Cash Working Group

REACH Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

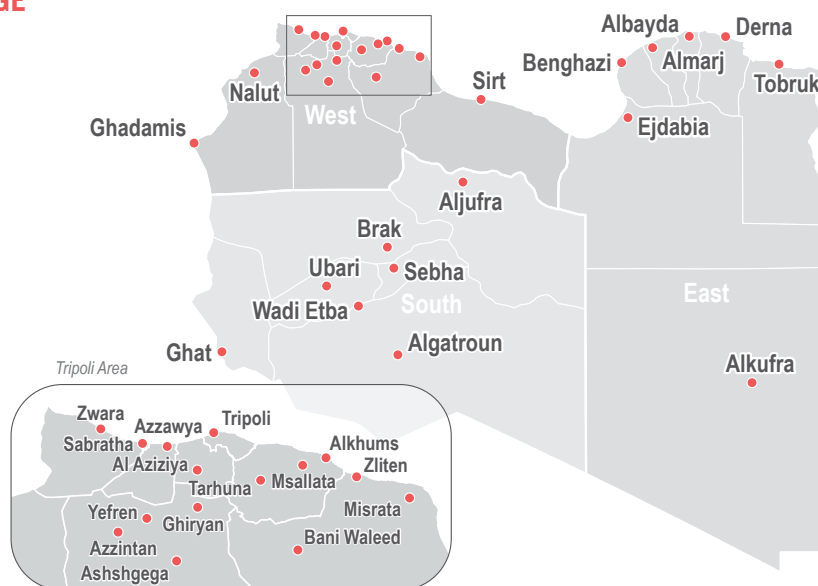
INTRODUCTION

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. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) 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 (NFIs) 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](#).

COVERAGE



METHODOLOGY

- Field staff familiar with the local market conditions identified shops representative of the general price level in their respective locations.
- At least **three** 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.
- REACH has extracted prices on a daily basis from the website, "Open Souq" and conducted key informant interviews (KIIs) to better understand the rental market in Libya
- More details are available in the Methodology section of the [Appendix](#).

KEY FINDINGS

- The cost of the MEB fell between May 2020 - June 2020 across Libya overall (-6.7%), due to decreases in the price of staple items, such as unofficial cooking fuel, eggs and peppers. However, the MEB is still 15.6% higher than before COVID-19 related movement restrictions were implemented in March 2020. Despite price decreases across Libya, the cost of the **MEB increased in the east (6.5%)**, driven by large increases in the **hygiene (9.0%) and fuel (61.5%) items**. According to DTM, between the 4th - 10th June, 23,950 individuals were displaced due to intensified security incidents.¹ Half of all the recent IDPs arrived in Ejdabia, Benghazi and Albayda, which may have contributed to the recent price increases in the east.²
- Unofficial cooking fuel prices decreased by 40% overall in Libya from May to June 2020.** According to local KIIs, this may be explained by less domestic demand and an increased availability, due to a crack down on smuggling and parallel fuel markets. Exceptional price increases were noted in more remote cities, such as **Ghat and Ubari**, where changes to prices are typically observed later than overall country-wide trends. The median price for an **11-kg LPG cylinder in these two cities is over 280 LYD** (the average Libyan household normally consumes two LPG cylinders a month). As the oil blockade negotiations begin, the National Oil Company, announced that that for a temporary period the refinery in Zawiya became operational and reports claimed that the Sarir refinery was receiving crude oil again since January 2019.^{3,4} If the refineries continue to receive crude oil, it may have significant effects in decreasing the price of fuel in the country.
- Due to large shifts in political authority in west Libya during the beginning of June, Bani Walid and Tarhuna no longer face logistical barriers for fuel supply.⁵ Therefore, populations living in these cities may no longer need to travel long distances to purchase fuel.
- Hand sanitiser was found to be 284% more expensive in the south (63 LYD) compared to Libya overall (22 LYD).** According to KIIs, hospitals in Sebha generally have insufficient amounts of hand sanitiser for patient use.⁶ Since Sebha is the city with the largest amount of active COVID-19 cases in Libya, the inflated price and the scarcity of hand sanitiser may create additional health risks for the population.⁷

JMMI KEY FIGURES

Data collection from **1 - 10 June 2020**

3 participating agencies
(DRC, REACH, WFP)
33 assessed cities
31 assessed items
439 assessed shops

EXCHANGE RATES⁸

1.418 USD/LYD official ▲ +0.4%	6.020 USD/LYD parallel market ▲ +21.6%	6.600 EUR/LYD parallel market ▲ +23.4%
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KEY MONTHLY CHANGES IN MEB

Median cost of overall MEB

707.04 LYD ▼ 51.17 LYD ▼ -6.7%

Food items ▼ -2.9%	Hygiene items ▼ -5.0%	Cooking fuel.⁹ ▼ -37.5%
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MEDIAN COST OF MEB BY REGION

West	685.2 LYD	▼ -3.9%
East	710.9 LYD	▲ +6.5%
South	890.6 LYD	▼ -13.8%

MARKET SHORTAGES

- In south Libya, LPG is only available on parallel markets
- In west Libya, LPG not available in Ghatamis, Bani Waleed, Tarhuna

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 Elements¹¹

Water (drinking use only)	458 L
Median rent for 3-rm flat	1 month
Float ¹²	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

707.04 LYD

Change since
May 2020

▼ -51.17 LYD
(-6.7%)

Change since
March 2019

▼ -37.04 LYD
(-5.6%)

MEDIAN MEB COST BY LOCATION

Location	Cost of MEB (LYD)	Since May 2020	Since March 2019
Tarhuna	839.7	-1.4%	31.8%
Ashshgega	831.0	-1.9%	27.6%
Ghiryan	816.3	-4.1%	16.7%
Azzintan	808.2	-3.1%	20.0%
Bani Waleed	798.0	-6.0%	27.2%
Ghadamis	777.7	2.2%	12.6%
Yefren	743.3	-5.8%	9.2%
Zwara	716.2	-2.3%	8.0%
Msallata	707.5	-5.2%	20.0%
Al Aziziya	699.5	3.2%	10.7%
Tripoli	683.2	-12.1%	5.8%
Sirt	680.0	5.3%	16.6%
Sabratha	674.0	-3.0%	5.4%
Nalut	673.2	-12.5%	-4.7%
Misrata	647.8	-5.7%	3.9%
Azzawya	628.9	-4.7%	-2.9%
Zliten	624.7	1.3%	-4.6%
Alkhums	576.4	-14.5%	-9.6%
Median West	712.1	-3.9%	10.5%
Benghazi	746.8	-2.6%	23.3%
Tobruk	703.3	8.3%	13.7%
Almarj	698.0	12.0%	16.5%
Albayda	679.1	5.8%	11.0%
Ejdabia	676.3	6.4%	8.8%
Alkufra	673.6	0.7%	1.9%
Derna	672.6	-4.1%	9.1%
Median East	681.6	6.5%	11.1%
Ghat	1459.6	7.7%	38.7%
Ubari	1438.5	12.1%	45.7%
Algatroun	1256.0	-13.2%	18.9%
Wadi Etba	1171.1	-0.2%	No data
Brak	859.6	1.4%	22.4%
Sebha	852.7	-17.7%	24.0%
Aljufra	768.4	-12.0%	2.5%
Median South	1018.2	-13.8%	19.4%
Median Overall	707.0	-6.7%	5.6%

EXCHANGE RATES OVER TIME¹⁰

January 2016-July 2019

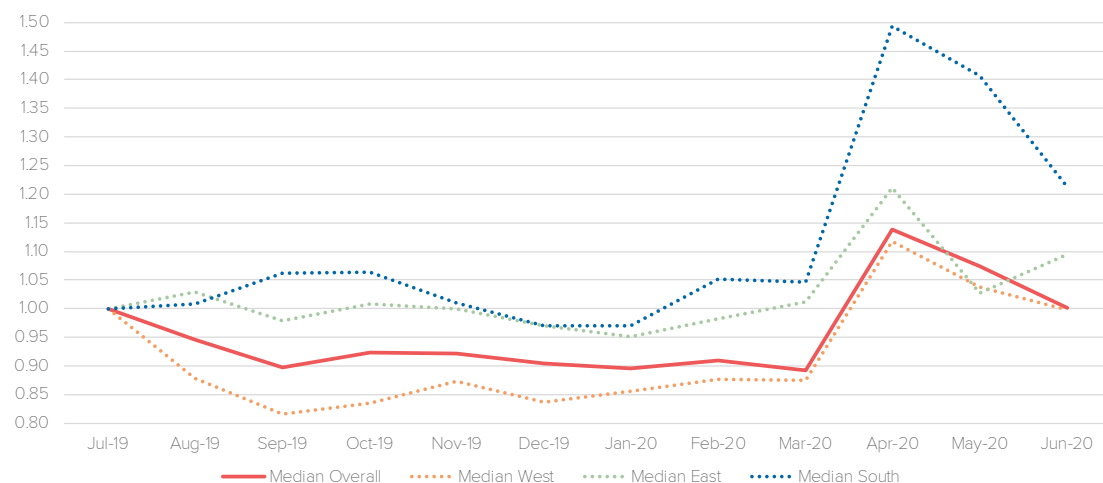


Since July 2019

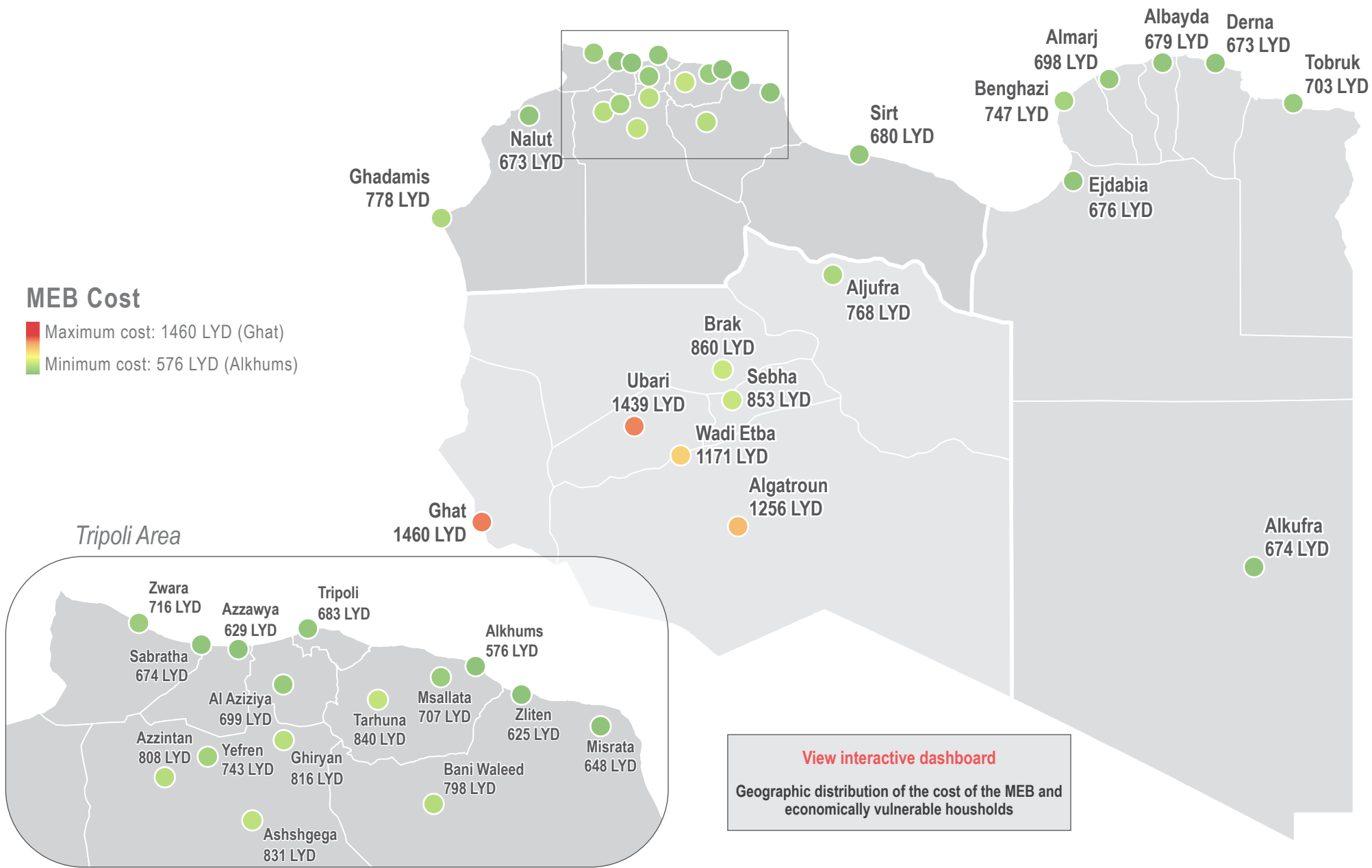


MEB PRICE INDEX

Since July 2019 (normalised, July 2019 = 1.00)¹³



Cost of MEB Key Elements by Location

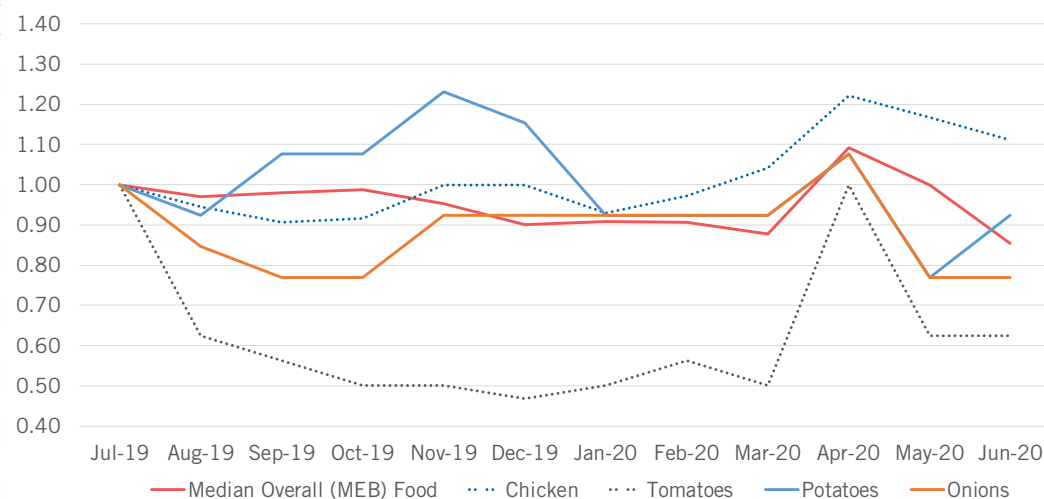


PRICES OF MONITORED ITEMS

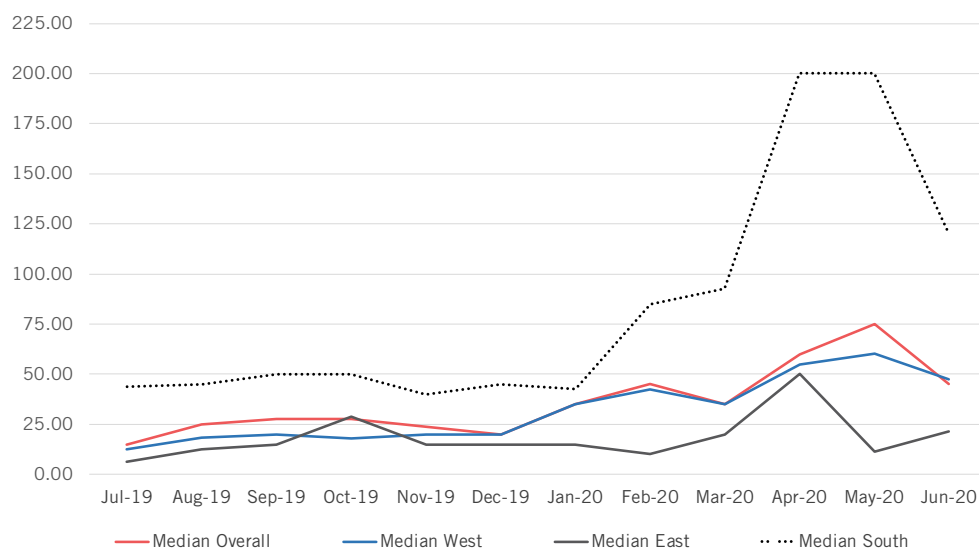
Item	Unit	Median price (LYD)	Change since May 2020	Change since March 2019
Food items				
Potatoes	1 kg	3.00	20.0%	20.0%
Condensed Milk	200 mL	2.50	5.3%	12.4%
Pasta	500 g	1.82	3.7%	21.0%
Black tea	250 g	6.00	0.0%	-5.9%
Bread	5 pieces	1.25	0.0%	0.0%
Chickpeas	400 g	2.00	0.0%	-11.1%
Couscous	1 kg	4.00	0.0%	28.0%
Flour	1 kg	3.00	0.0%	33.3%
Onions	1 kg	2.50	0.0%	11.1%
Rice	1 kg	3.50	0.0%	-12.5%
Sugar	1 kg	3.00	0.0%	41.2%
Tomato paste	400 g	2.50	0.0%	11.1%
Tomatoes	1 kg	2.50	0.0%	0.0%
Tuna	200 g	3.50	0.0%	-18.4%
Vegetable oil	1 L	5.50	0.0%	15.8%
Lamb meat	1 kg	40.00	0.0%	29.0%
Green tea	250 g	3.88	-3.1%	10.7%
Chicken meat	1 kg	10.00	-4.8%	11.1%
Beans	400 g	1.88	-6.2%	-21.1%
Salt	1 kg	1.25	-9.1%	25.0%
Milk	1 L	4.50	-10.0%	38.5%
Peppers	1 kg	4.00	-20.0%	-11.1%
Eggs	30 eggs	10.25	-21.2%	-2.4%
Hygiene items				
Laundry detergent	1 L	3.00	9.1%	130.8%
Baby diapers	30	16.00	6.7%	0.0%
Dishwashing liquid	1 L	3.00	0.0%	100.0%
Handwashing soap	1 bar	1.50	0.0%	-25.0%
Paracetamol	500 mg	6.00	-4.0%	No data
Bleach	1 L	10.67	-5.2%	No data
Toothpaste	100 mL	3.88	-8.8%	-22.5%
Sanitary pads	10 pads	3.50	-12.5%	16.7%
Shampoo	250 mL	6.00	-14.3%	No data
Hand Sanitiser	1 L	22.00	-18.5%	No data
Handwashing soap	1 bar	1.50	-25.0%	-25.0%
Other items				
Water	1 L	0.29	0.0%	0.0%
Official LPG	11 kg	5.00	0.0%	0.0%
Paracetamol	12 pack	6.00	-8.4%	No data
Unofficial LPG	11 kg	45.00	-40.0%	200.0%

FOOD PRICES OVER TIME

Selected items (normalised, July 2019 = 1.00)¹⁴

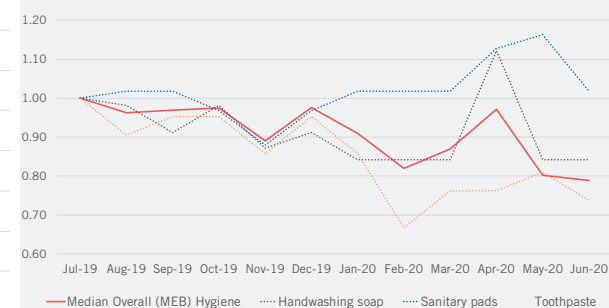


PRICES FROM UNOFFICIAL COOKING FUEL VENDORS (11 KG LPG CYLINDER) (since July 2019, non-normalised)

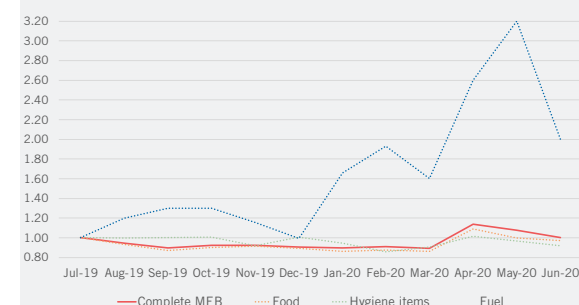


HYGIENE ITEM PRICES OVER TIME

Selected items (normalised, July 2019 = 1.00)¹⁵



FOOD, HYGIENE AND FUEL PRICES OVER TIME (normalised, July 2019 = 1.00)¹⁶

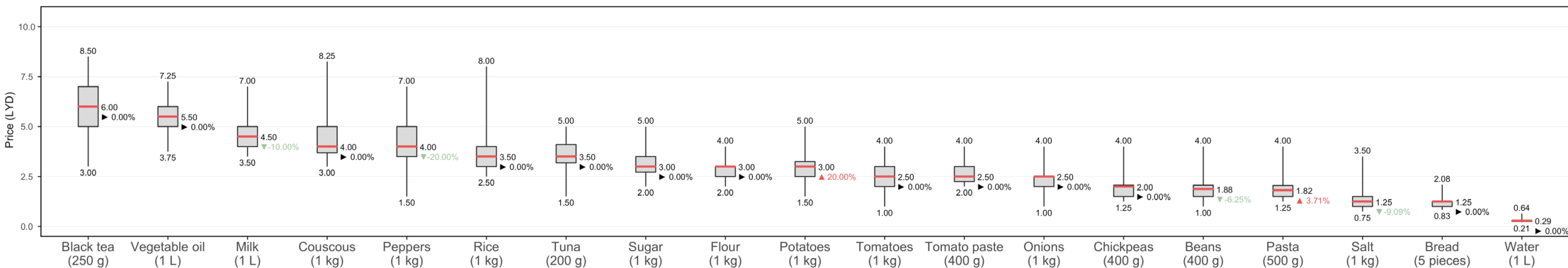


NOTABLE MONTH-ON-MONTH CHANGES

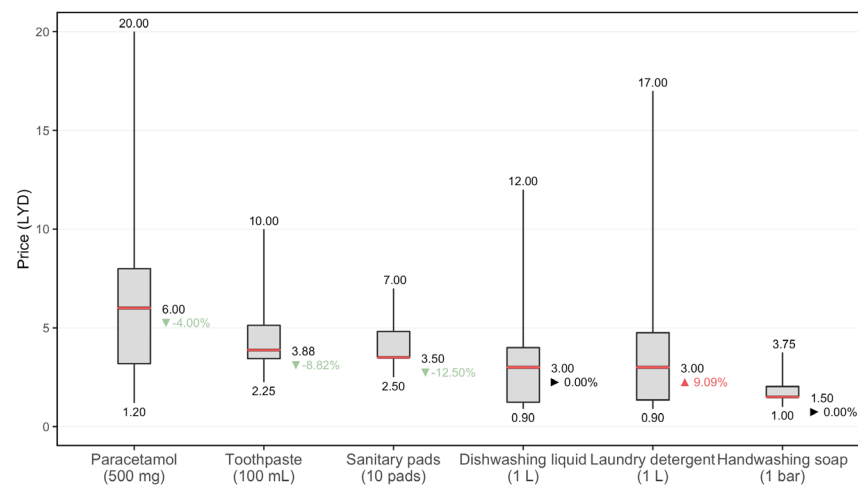
Unofficial LPG	▼ -40.0%
Eggs	▼ -21.2%
Peppers	▼ -20.0%
Potatoes	▲ +20.0%
Hand Sanitiser	▼ -18.5%

Distribution of Prices in Libya

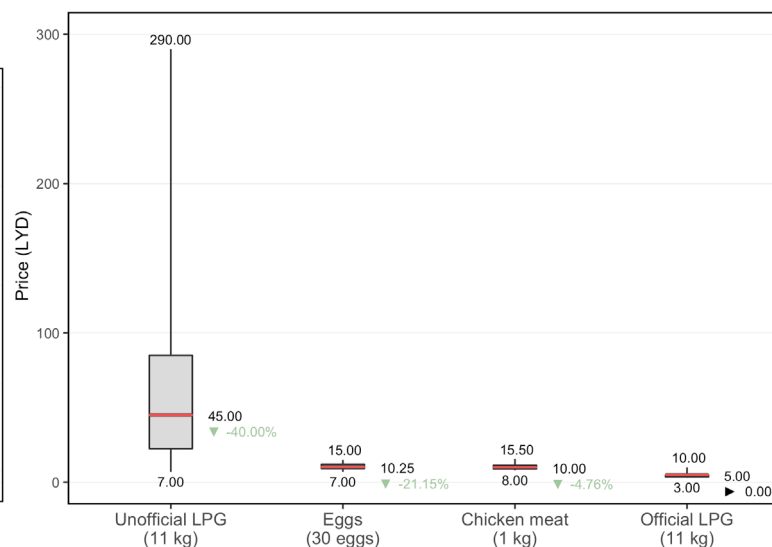
FOOD ITEMS



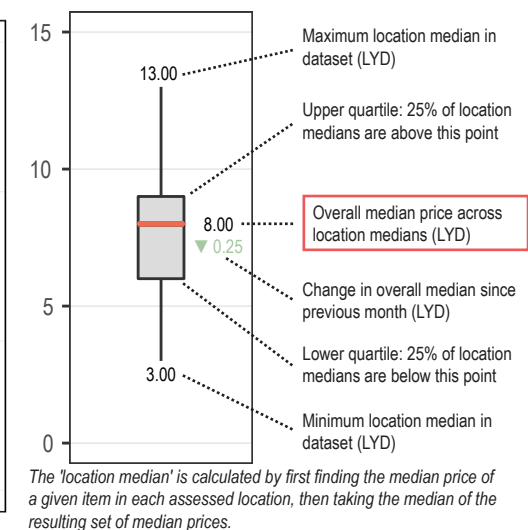
HYGIENE ITEMS



ITEMS WITH HIGHEST PRICES



How to read a boxplot



Rent Monitoring - Tripoli District

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), with the municipalities of Suq Aljuma, Hai Andalus, and Tajoura particularly hosting an estimated 71% of the approximate 108,003 IDPs in the region.¹⁷ When entering Tripoli, IDPs typically seek to enter the rental market – with 60% of IDPs reporting to live in rented accommodation as of April 2020.¹⁸

While the rental market in Tripoli is reported by KIs to fluctuate significantly, data on reported expenditures on rent is limited, with most data sources relying on self-reported figures representative to mantika level.¹⁹

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.

Methodology

REACH consulted KIs in Tripoli to identify the most commonly used source for finding rental accommodation. As a result, REACH identified the website 'Open Souq'. The online platform allows landlords to advertise their rental properties for potential tenants. From May 2020, REACH extracted prices on a daily basis from this website. **In June 2020, 1179 rental prices were collected.** Rent price changes will be presented on a monthly basis.

In order to standardise property prices, key features were isolated through consultation with KIs to identify the average apartment specification for typical households in Tripoli. The average Tripoli apartment for typical households was found to be a furnished, 3-bedroom apartment with 1 bathroom. All rental prices presented in this report have all been standardised to this accommodation type. In addition, qualitative interviews with 6 KIs (landlords and real estate agents in the Tripoli area) were conducted to collect information on dynamics within the rental property market.

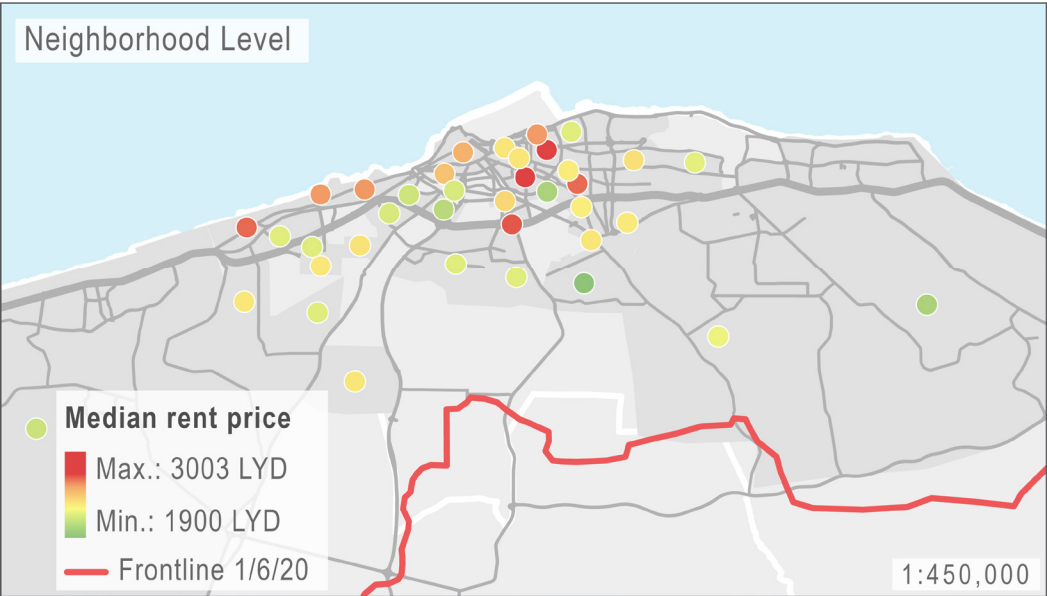
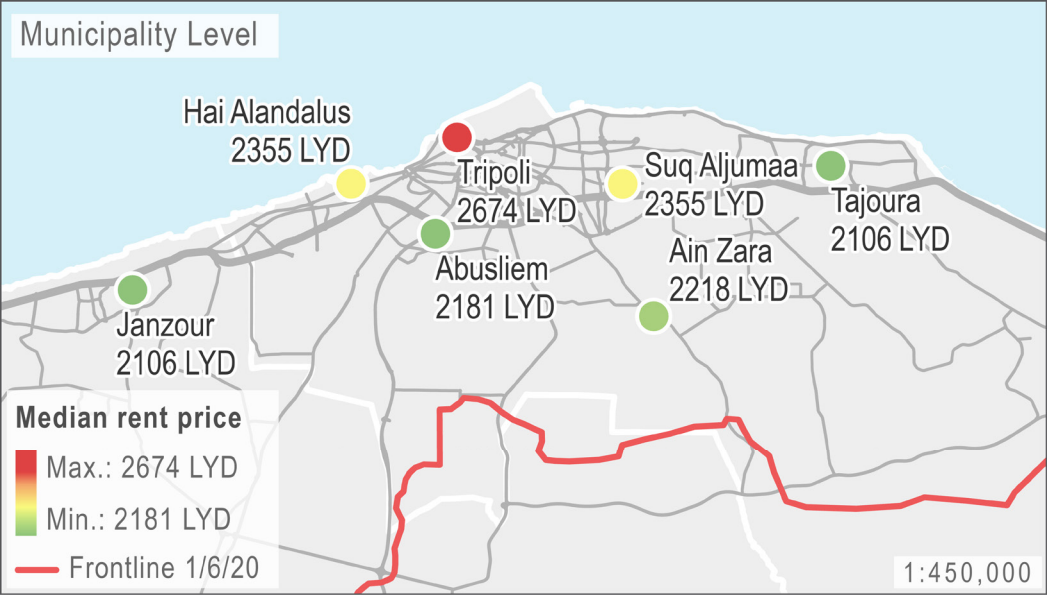
Limitations: The data collected are new offers presented by Open Souq, therefore they may not represent the rental expenses of all IDPs, as tenants may receive cheaper offer through informal channels. The data gathered from KIs is indicative.

Key Findings

- According to KIs, IDPs typically use the following strategies to find rental accommodation: 1) speaking to contacts in the community about available properties, 2) searching on the website "Open Souk", 3) using a real estate agent. Using a real estate agent comes with additional costs, such as a brokers fee (50% of the month's rent) and an additional 50 LYD for a contract writer.
- KIs reported on the multiple challenges for IDPs renting property: 1) Instead of paying a deposit, usually the tenant must pay at least 3 months rent before being able to move in. **Families displaced within the last 12 months often have financial difficulties in making this payment.** 2) Some KIs explicitly reported only accepting families, which suggest that it might be more difficult for IDPs traveling without a family to find accommodation. 3) A written contract requires the HH head to have an ID. This indicates that IDPs who are not able to provide an ID are likely not able to sign a contract, and consequentially, may be left with more precarious, short term verbal contracts.
- According to KIs, **rental prices increased by 50-75% from April 2019 - March 2020**, due to increased demand from the influx of IDPs into the region. **The standardised price for 3 bedroom and furnished flat in Tripoli decreased again 17.2% from May (2680 LYD) - June 2020 (2218 LYD).** Nonetheless, it is still significantly higher than the prices from April 2019. According to KIs, the recent rental price reductions can be attributed to a decrease in demand, as the increasing demand from IDPs displaced by the Tripoli conflict has subsided.

Location	Stand. price (LYD)	Since May 2020
Municipality		
Abusliem	2181	-18.6%
Ain Zara	2218	-24.1%
Hai Alandalus	2355	-12.1%
Janzour	2106	-8.5%
Suq Aljumaa	2355	-12.1%
Tajoura	2106	-10.6%
Tripoli Center	2674	-10.4%
Tripoli Overall	2276	-17.2%

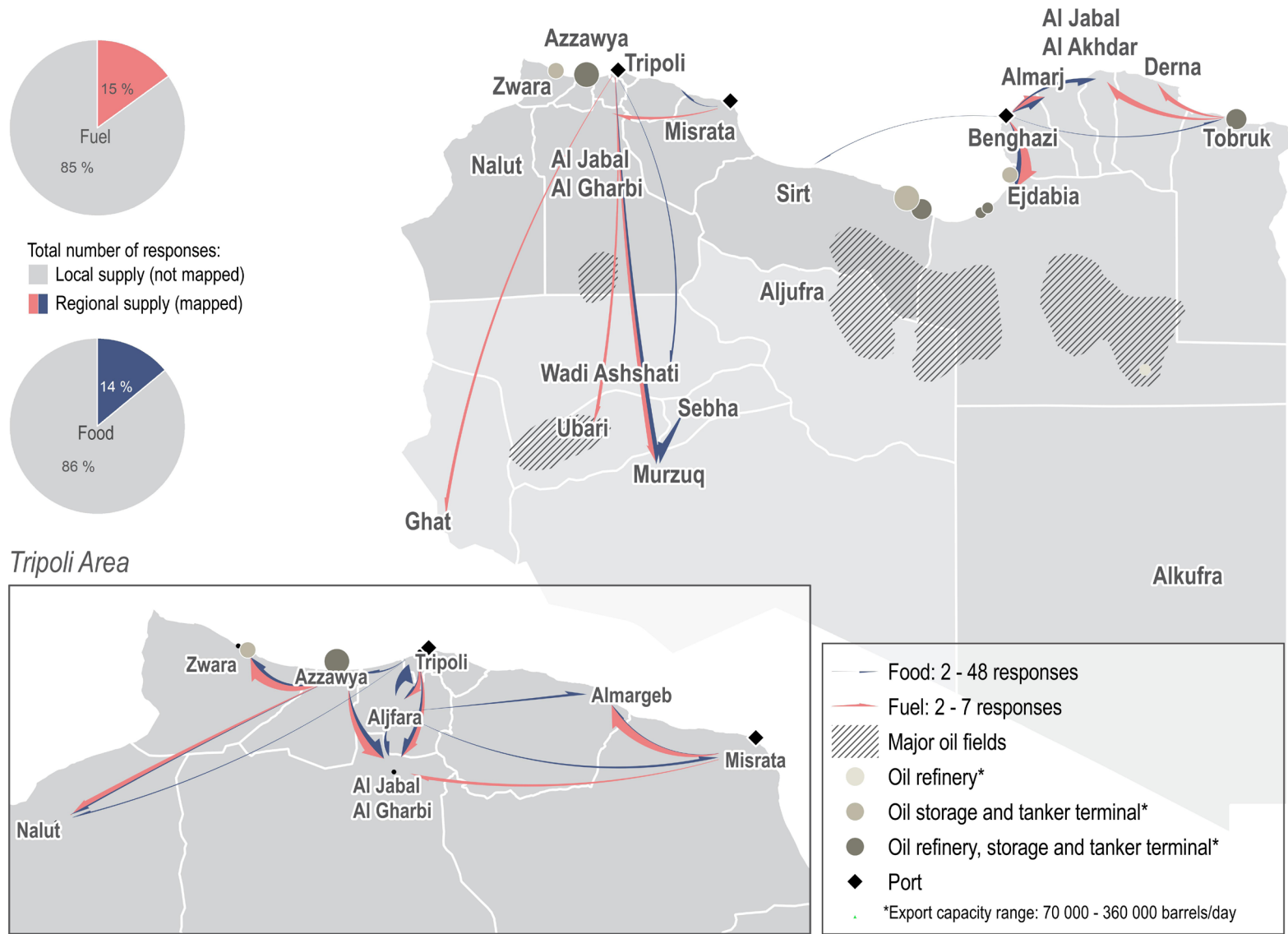
Standardised rental property prices - June 2020



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 supply routes.

The routes show the flow of goods from mantika to mantika, but does not show the proportion of goods that are sourced locally.



PREVIOUS JMMI OUTPUTS

Factsheets Datasets

2020

May	May
April	April
March	March
February	February
January	January

2019

December	December
November	November
October	October
September	September
August	August
July	July
June	June
May	May
April	April
March	March
February	February
January	January

2018

December	December
November	November
October	October
September	September
August	August
July	July
June	June
May	May
April	April
March	March
February	February
January	January

MARK-UPS FOR ALTERNATIVE MODALITIES

E-cards (credit, debit)	NA
Certified cheques	0-30%
Mobile money	0%

What is the CMWG?

The Libya Cash & Markets Working Group (CMWG), established in August 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. Qualitative information is also gathered from local sources with key informant interviews (KIs).

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.

Endnotes

¹ DTM flash update, 10th June 2020

² DTM flash update, 10th June 2020

³ Return of production at El Feel field and lifting of force majeure on Sharara and El Feel exports, NOC, 9th June 2020

⁴ Libya's Messila oil field resumes, Reuters, 30 June 2020

⁵ Libya's Haftar pulls back east as Tripoli offensive crumbles, Reuters, 5th June 2020

⁶ KIs from the Rapid Health Facility Assessment (RaFHA), REACH, June 2020

⁷ COVID-19 Libya Dashboard, NCDC, July 2020

⁸ Official rate: Central Bank of Libya (1 June 2020). Parallel market rates: Ewan Libya (1 June 2020). The rates from 1 March 2020 and 1 June 2020 were used for the calculation of the monthly changes.

⁹ The cooking fuel price is calculated by taking the average of the official LPG median and the unofficial LPG median.

¹⁰ Official rate: Central Bank of Libya (1 June 2020). Parallel market rates: Ewan Libya (1 June 2020). The rates from 1 March 2020 and 1 June 2020 were used for the calculation of the monthly changes.

¹¹ The 'Optional Elements' section of the MEB includes basic expenditures that are incurred by some, but not all, Libyan households, as well as expenditures that extend beyond basic survival and dignity needs. They are not included in the JMMI's MEB calculations.

¹² The 20% float includes expenses on healthcare, medicine, education, utilities, transportation, and communications.

¹³ The MEB price index was normalised by setting July 2019 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in June 2019.

¹⁴ The food prices were normalised by setting July 2019 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in July 2019.

¹⁵ The hygiene prices were normalised by setting July 2019 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in July 2019.

¹⁶ The fuel, food and hygiene prices were normalised by setting July 2019 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in July 2019.

¹⁷ Libya IDP and Returnee March - April 2020, DTM IOM, June 2020

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) 2019, REACH, July 2019

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.