

Libya Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI)

6 - 15 September 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).

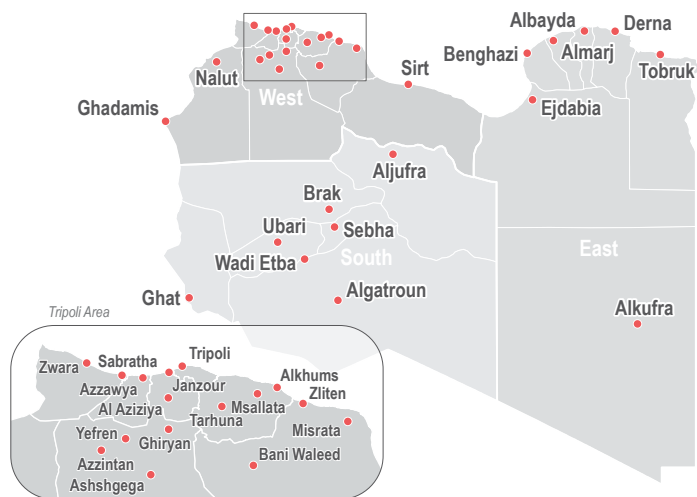
Markets in key urban areas across Libya are assessed on a monthly basis. In each location, field teams record prices and availability of basic food and non-food items (NFIs) sold in local shops and markets. This factsheet presents an overview of price ranges and medians for key food items and NFIs in 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](#).

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 to better understand the rental market in Libya.
- More details are available in the Methodology section of the [Appendix](#).

COVERAGE



KEY FINDINGS

- In September 2020, the cost of the overall MEB decreased by 1.6%. **The incremental price changes had not reversed the COVID-19/ oil blockade related price spikes, as the MEB is still 21.3% more expensive in September compared to March 2020.**
- On the 8th September, protestors in Tunisia blocked the route leading to the Libyan/ Tunisian border for approximately two weeks.¹ The protests erupted due to a COVID-19 related ban on the cross border movement of passengers and small scale trade. The protests have also disrupted formal Libyan land imports of Tunisian agricultural goods and led to shipments being sent by sea.² The import disruptions may explain why **the largest increases in the food portion of the MEB were found in cities close to the Tunisian border, such as Sabratha (6.9%), Azzawya (5.6%) and Zwara (4.1%).**
- After the lifting of the oil blockade, Libya's oil refineries have begun receiving crude oil.³ At the beginning of October 2020, refineries begun working at full capacity, which may lead to the decrease of fuel prices in the coming weeks.⁴ Functioning oil refineries may provide relief for southern and remote western cities that have witnessed the price of fuel tripling from January - April 2020. In September 2020, an 11kg cooking fuel cylinder costed; Ghat - 183 LYD, Ubari - 175 LYD, Sebha - 85 LYD, and Azzintan - 60 LYD, compared to 5 LYD on official markets. **The average Libyan household uses two cylinders a month to cook their meals and is likely to pay up to 350 LYD every month, which is 41% of the median south Libyan income (850 LYD)⁵.**
- The rising cost of living, unemployment and sweeping power cuts lead to **protests erupting across the country**. Libyan authorities have responded to the social unrest in part with economic policies, such as a promise to allocate 2bn LYD to municipalities to tackle the 14% unemployment rate.⁶

COVID-19

- As of the 5th of October 2020, there were 36,809 confirmed COVID-19 cases, compared to 15,733 on the 4th of September. The continuing increase of COVID-19 cases may have created additional demand for hygiene items. **For example, hand sanitiser prices increased by 69.0% from June - September 2020 and bleach prices rose by 27.6% from July - September 2020.**

JMMI KEY FIGURES

Data collection from **6 - 15 September 2020**

3 participating agencies
(DRC, REACH, WFP)
33 assessed cities
45 assessed items
720 assessed shops

EXCHANGE RATES⁷

1.406 USD/LYD official ▼ -0.5%	5.590 USD/LYD parallel market ▼ -9.7%	6.150 EUR/LYD parallel market ▼ -7.5%
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KEY MONTHLY CHANGES IN MEB

Median cost of overall MEB

690.12 LYD ▼ 11.16 LYD ▼ -1.6%

Food items	Hygiene items	Cooking fuel. ⁹
▲ +0.5%	▼ -3.2%	▼ -26.3%

MEDIAN COST OF MEB BY REGION

West	657.0 LYD	▼ -2.2%
East	712.2 LYD	▼ -1.5%
South	919.6 LYD	▼ -7.0%

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 Elements¹⁰

Water (drinking use only)	458 L
Median rent for 3-rm flat	1 month
Float ¹¹	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

690.12 LYD

Change since
September 2020

▼ **-11.16 LYD**
(-1.6%)

Change since
March 2019

▲ **+60.66 LYD**
(+3.1%)

MEDIAN MEB COST BY LOCATION

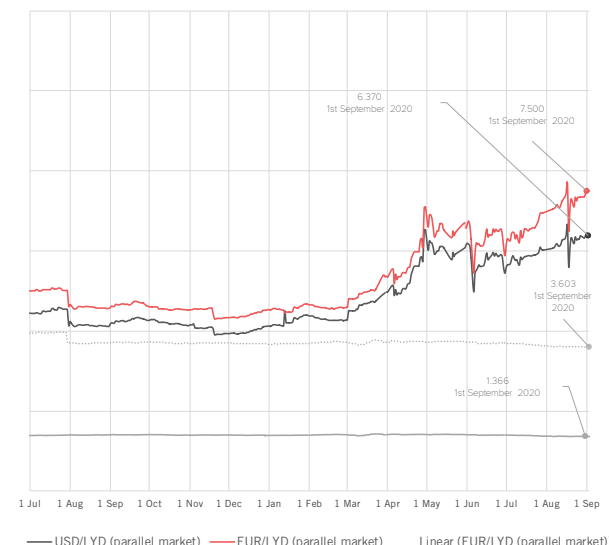
Location	Cost of MEB (LYD)	Since Aug 2020	Since March 2019
Azzintan	845.7	6.9%	25.6%
Ghiryen	805.2	11.5%	15.1%
Nalut	790.2	-0.8%	11.8%
Ashshgega	741.8	2.8%	13.9%
Msallata	735.0	9.8%	24.6%
Yefren	705.6	7.7%	3.7%
Zwara	663.8	-2.0%	0.1%
Tripoli	652.7	2.3%	1.1%
Sabratha	652.6	1.5%	2.0%
Azzawya	645.4	2.8%	-0.3%
Zliten	632.3	-1.9%	-3.5%
Ghadamis	626.6	-19.1%	-9.3%
Al Aziziya	619.4	-3.2%	-2.0%
Sirt	613.9	1.4%	5.3%
Misrata	580.3	-5.7%	-6.9%
Alkhums	577.9	-7.7%	-9.3%
Tarhuna	574.7	-9.2%	-9.8%
Janzour	565.4	2.4%	-2.7%
Bani Waleed	551.4	-3.8%	-12.1%
Median West	642.6	-2.2%	-0.3%
Albayda	859.8	-0.7%	40.6%
Benghazi	731.2	-3.9%	20.8%
Ejdabia	723.6	3.5%	16.4%
Alkufra	708.6	-0.9%	7.2%
Derna	651.9	-0.2%	5.8%
Tobruk	651.3	1.3%	5.3%
Almarj	593.8	-4.8%	-0.9%
Median East	701.6	-1.5%	14.3%
Ghat	1301.4	-0.6%	23.6%
Ubari	1187.1	-2.4%	20.3%
Algatroun	1102.7	-8.4%	4.4%
Wadi Etba	956.5	-3.2%	No data
Sebha	856.6	6.0%	24.5%
Aljufra	800.9	0.9%	6.8%
Brak	724.1	-9.1%	3.1%
Median South	855.0	-7.0%	0.2%
Median Overall	690.1	-1.6%	3.1%

EXCHANGE RATES OVER TIME⁹

January 2016-July 2019

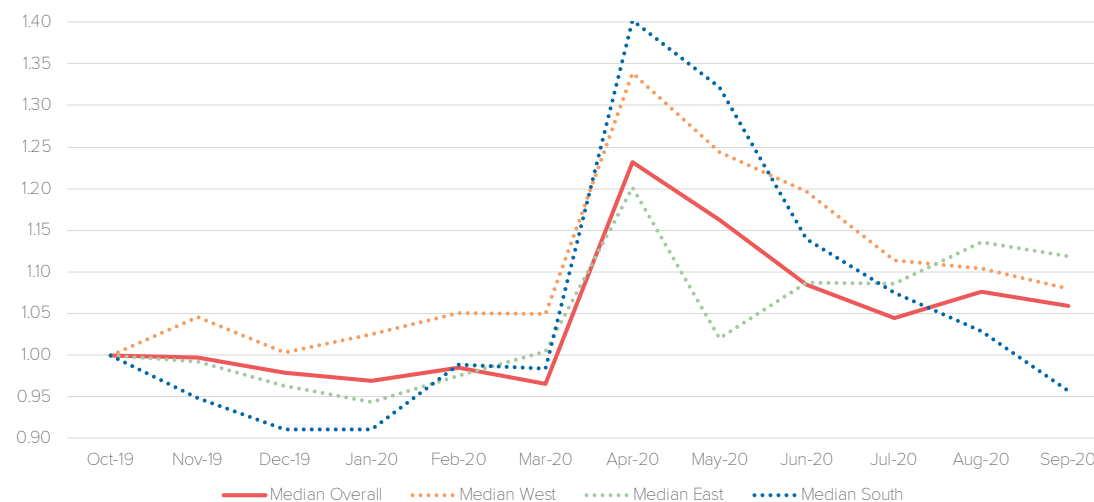


Since July 2019

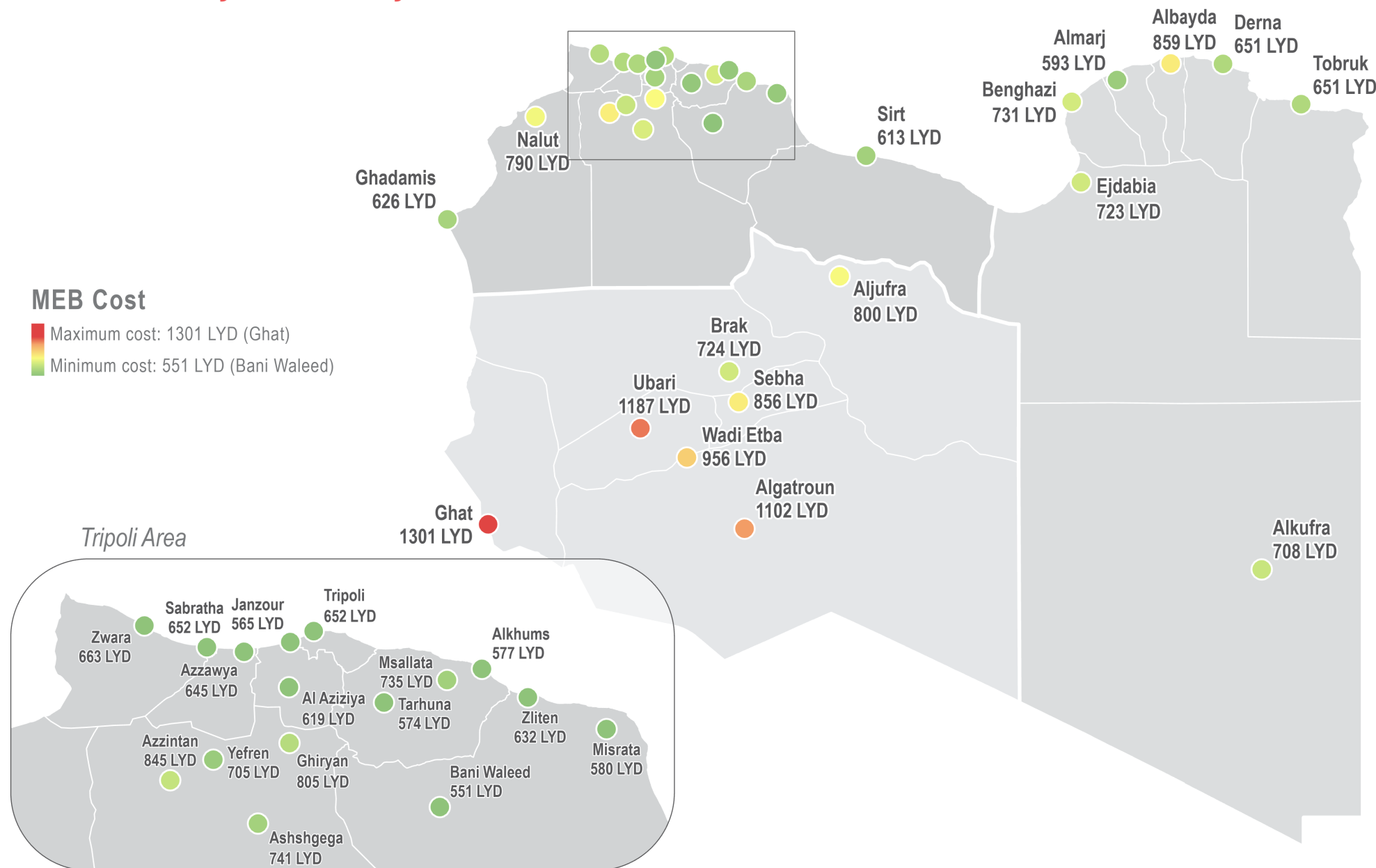


MEB PRICE INDEX

Since October 2019 (normalised, October 2019 = 1.00)¹²



Cost of MEB Key Elements by Location

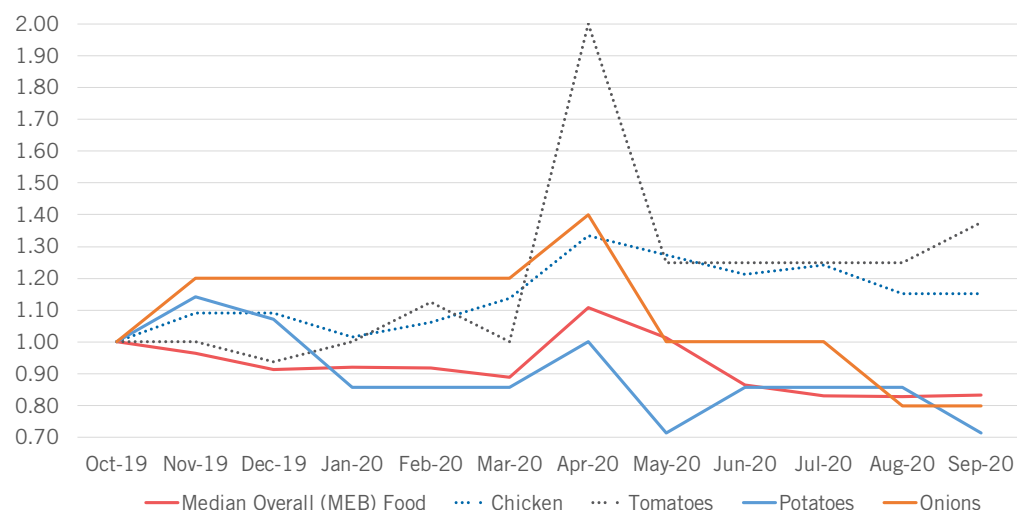


PRICES OF MONITORED ITEMS

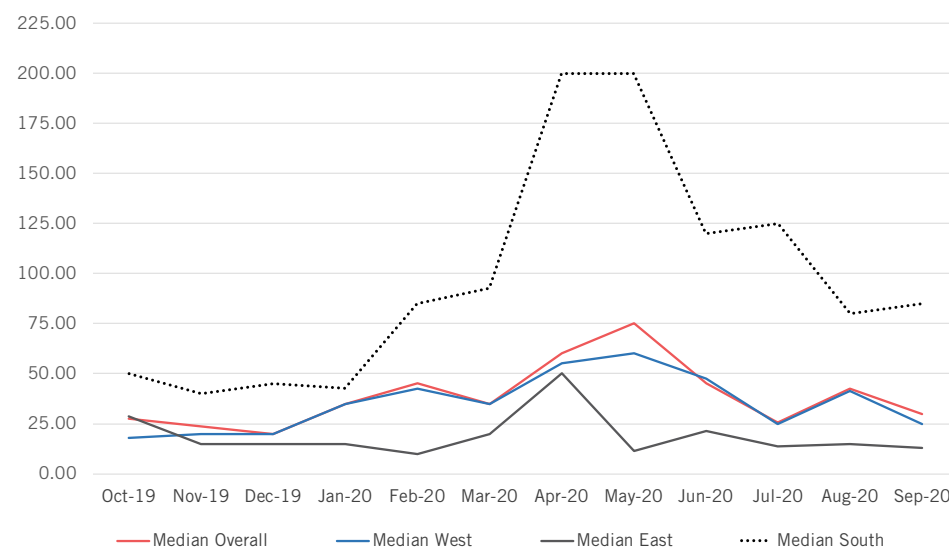
Item	Unit	Median price (LYD)	Change since Aug 2020	Change since March 2019
Food items				
Tomatoes	1 kg	2.75	10.0%	10.0%
Rice	1 kg	3.50	7.7%	-12.5%
Eggs	30 eggs	10.00	5.3%	-4.8%
Tomato paste	400 g	2.50	5.3%	11.1%
Sugar	1 kg	2.63	5.0%	23.5%
Lamb meat	1 kg	39.50	3.9%	27.4%
Beans	400 g	2.00	0.0%	-15.8%
Black tea	250 g	6.00	0.0%	-5.9%
Bread	5 pieces	1.25	0.0%	0.0%
Chicken	1 kg	9.50	0.0%	5.6%
Chickpeas	400 g	2.00	0.0%	-11.1%
Condensed milk	200 ml	2.50	0.0%	12.4%
Couscous	1 kg	6.00	0.0%	92.0%
Milk	1 L	4.00	0.0%	23.1%
Onions	1 kg	2.00	0.0%	-11.1%
Pasta	500 g	1.88	0.0%	25.3%
Peppers	1 kg	4.00	0.0%	-11.1%
Salt	1 kg	1.50	0.0%	50.0%
Canned tuna	200 g	3.50	0.0%	-18.4%
Vegetable oil	1 L	5.00	0.0%	5.3%
Flour	1 kg	2.38	-5.0%	5.6%
Green tea	250 g	3.50	-12.5%	0.0%
Potatoes	1 kg	2.50	-16.7%	0.0%
Hygiene items				
Laundry detergent	1 L	2.50	53.8%	92.3%
Laundry powder	1 kg	6.50	22.4%	-7.1%
Hand Sanitiser	1 L	40.00	14.3%	No data
Sanitary pads	10 pads	4.25	6.3%	41.7%
Bleach	1 L	12.00	4.3%	No data
Baby diapers	30	16.50	0.0%	3.1%
Dishwashing liquid	1 L	3.00	0.0%	100.0%
Handwashing soap	1 bar	1.50	-7.7%	-25.0%
Toothpaste	100 ml	4.00	-12.8%	-20.0%
Shampoo	250 ml	5.00	-16.7%	-16.7%
Toothbrush	1 brush	2.00	-20.0%	-20.0%
Other items				
Bottled water	1 L	0.29	0.0%	0.0%

FOOD PRICES OVER TIME

Selected items (normalised, October 2019 = 1.00)¹³



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



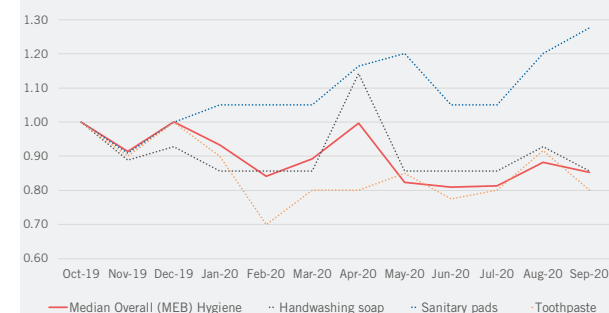
PRICES OF FUEL AND HEALTH ITEMS

Item	Unit	Median price (LYD)	Change since Aug 2020	Change since March 2019
Fuel items				
Unofficial Gasoline	1 Litre	2.00	14.3%	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	30.00	-29.4%	100.0%
Pharmaceutical items				
Metoclopramide*	10mg (40 pack)	12.00	9.1%	20.0%
Vitamin B*	(40 pack)	12.75	6.3%	24.4%
Amoxicillin*	500mg (21 Pack)	10.50	5.0%	16.7%
Ibuprofen *	400mg (20 pack)	6.71	3.2%	22.0%
Paracetamol	500mg (12 pack)	6.13	-5.8%	-11.7%

* Due to a lack of data, the comparison month is March 2020, instead of March 2019

HYGIENE ITEM PRICES OVER TIME

Selected items (normalised, October 2019 = 1.00)¹⁴

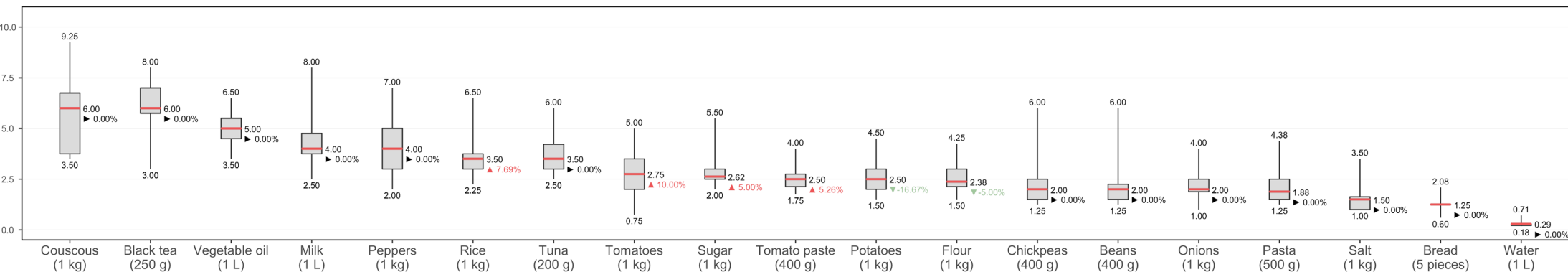


NOTABLE MONTH-ON-MONTH CHANGES

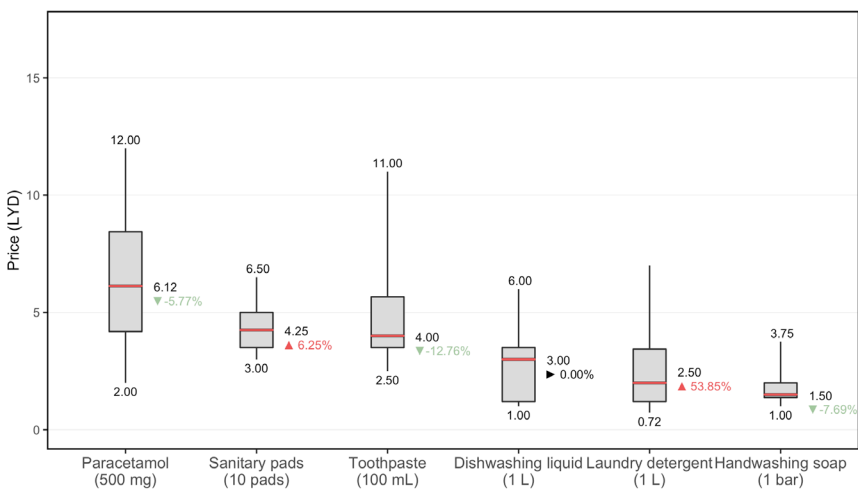
Laundry Detergent	▲ +53.8%
Laundry Powder	▲ +22.4%
Toothbrush	▼ -20.0%
Potatoes	▼ -16.7%
Shampoo	▼ -16.7%

Distribution of Prices in Libya

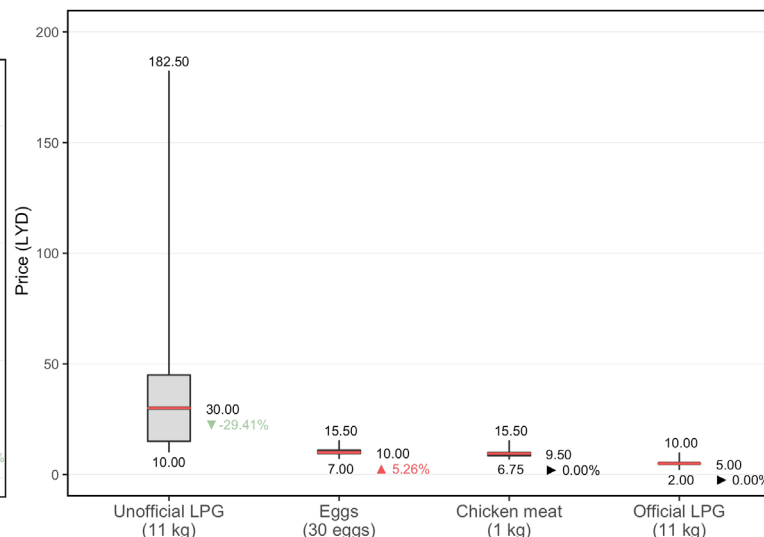
FOOD ITEMS



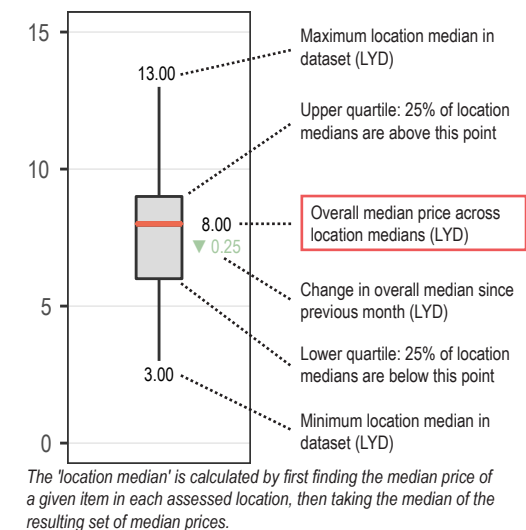
HYGIENE ITEMS



ITEMS WITH HIGHEST PRICES



How to read a boxplot



Rent Monitoring

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.¹⁵
- When entering Tripoli, IDPs typically seek to enter the rental market – with 60% of IDPs reporting to live in rented accommodation as of April 2020.¹⁶
- On the 5th June, a shift in power political control in Tarhuna and Bani Walid lead to large numbers of IDPs to move to eastern cities, especially Benghazi.
- REACH is therefore exploring rent monitoring as part of the JMMI, in order to provide humanitarian actors with a more accurate overview of key expenditures facing IDPs in Tripoli and Benghazi.

Methodology

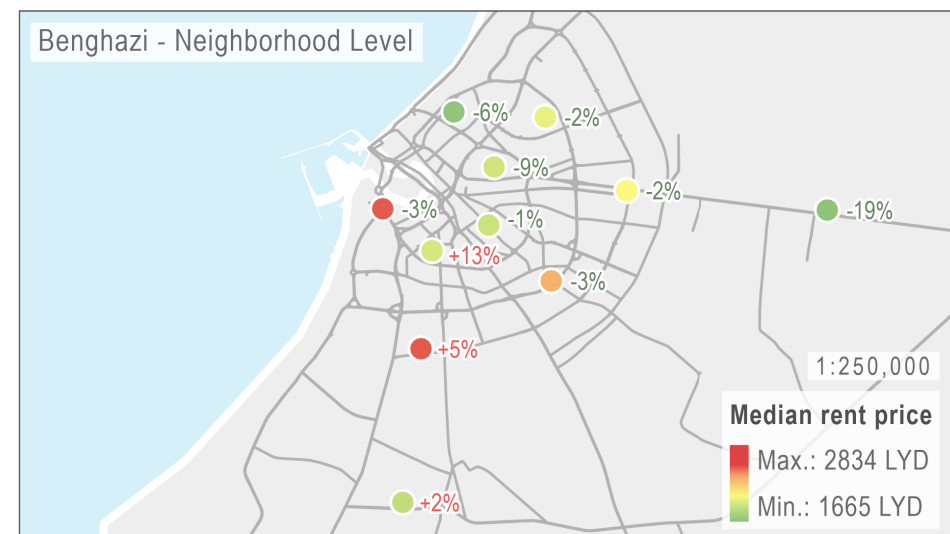
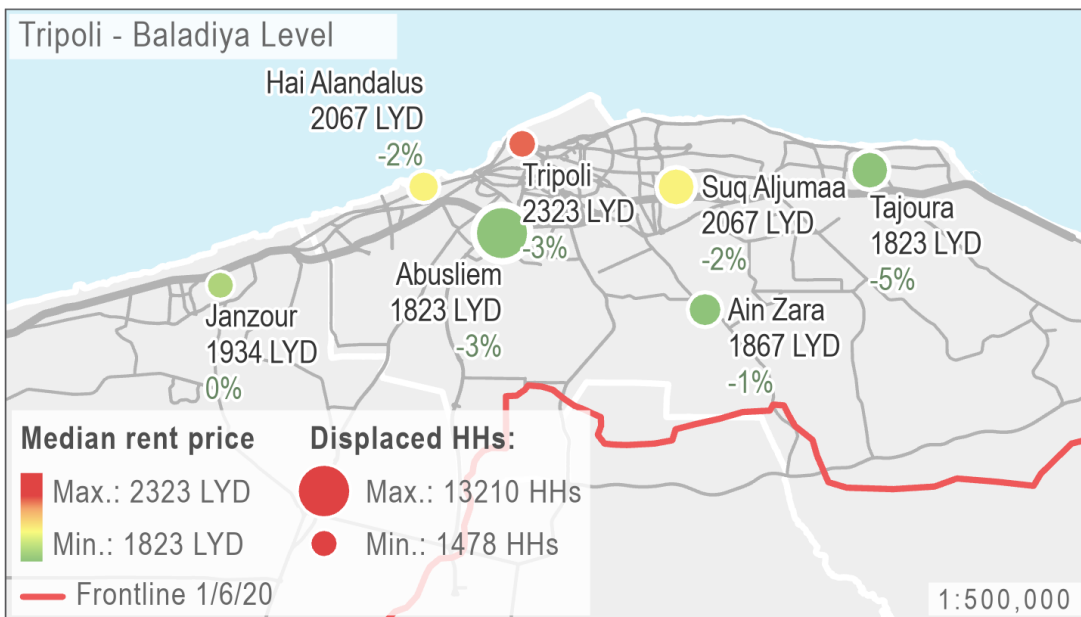
- From May 2020 onwards, in addition to the price monitoring of key items (MEB). REACH commenced analyzing rental prices, which were extracted on a daily basis from the website 'Open Souq'. **In September 2020, 1568 rental prices were collected in Tripoli and Benghazi.**
- More details are available in the Methodology section of the [Appendix](#).

Key findings

- **The monitored Tripoli rental prices dropped 10.6%** from August to September 2020. Tripoli prices in September were 27.9% cheaper than in May 2020.
- From May to August 2020, Tripoli witnessed a considerable decrease in the number of IDPs (-10.6%), but an increase in returnee population (+28.9%). **Over 40% of IDPs left the baladiyas, Abusliem and Janzour from June - August 2020.**¹⁷
- According to the 2020 multi-sectoral needs assessment (MSNA) **40% of IDPs are renting accommodation without a written contract**, thus are in more insecure tenure arrangements. Nationwide, 5% of assessed IDPs had reportedly been threatened with eviction in the 6 months prior to data collection, 60% of whom believed this was mainly due to an inability to pay rent, despite the majority of IDPs living in the cheapest baladiyas (Abusliem, Ain Zara, and Tajoura).

Standardised rental prices September 2020

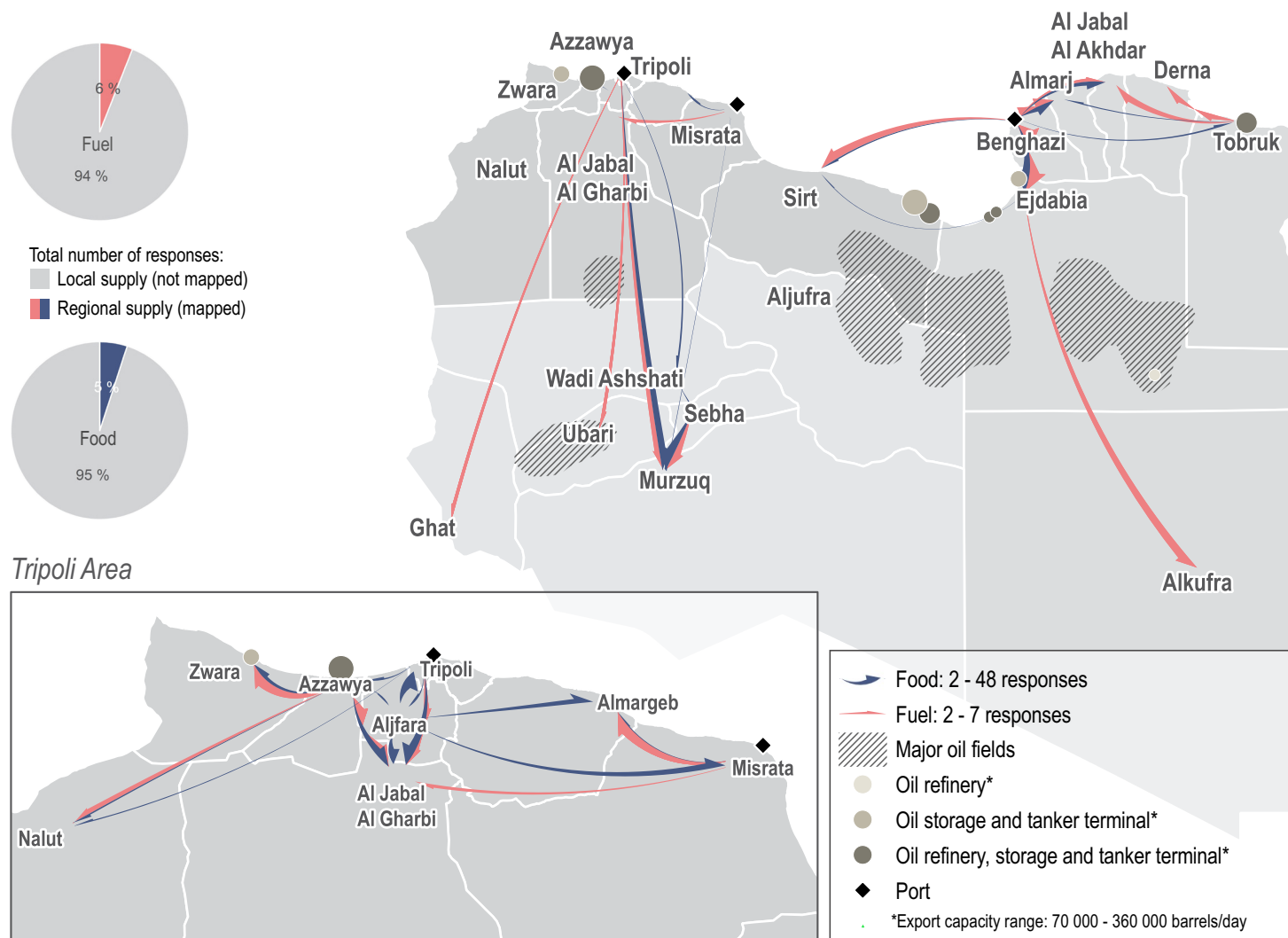
Location	Standard price (LYD)	Since Aug 2020	Since May 2020	IDP monthly change	Returnee monthly change
Municipality					
Abusliem	1886	-5.7%	-32.0%	-43.4%	34.8%
Ain Zara	1885	1.6%	-36.1%	-27.5%	28.4%
Hai Alandalus	2112	-2.9%	-22.9%	-12.0%	0.0%
Janzour	1938	-10.6%	-16.0%	-40.7%	0.0%
Suq Aljumaa	2113	-3.1%	-22.9%	-4.0%	4.9%
Tajoura	1926	-3.7%	-22.6%	8.4%	No data
Tripoli Center	2385	1.3%	-22.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Tripoli Overall	1938	-10.6%	-27.9%	-10.9%	28.9%
Benghazi Overall	2209	-3.7%	5.9%	0.7%	0.0%



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

2020

August	August
July	July
June	June
May	May
April	April
March	March
February	February
January	January

2019

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

2018

December	December
November	November
October	October
September	September
September	September
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 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)

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.

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.

Rental Prices

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.

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.

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 Tunisian goods continue to be prevented from entering Libya by south Tunisia protesters, Libya Herald, 17th September 2020

² Tunisian fruit shipments to Libya continue by sea freight, as land border trade remains blocked, Libya Observer, 25th September 2020

³ Hamada Oil Field begins pumping crude oil to the Zawia Refinery, Libya Observer, 2nd October 2020

⁴ Agoco: Sarir refinery working at full tilt, Libya Observer, 4th October 2020

⁵ Libya MSNA 2020, REACH, September 2020 [forthcoming]

⁶ Inside Libya, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, October 2020

⁷ Official rate: Central Bank of Libya (1 September 2020). Parallel market rates: Ewan Libya (1 September 2020). The rates from 1 October 2020 and 1 September 2020 were used for the calculation of the monthly changes.

⁸ The cooking fuel price is calculated by taking the average of the official LPG median and the unofficial LPG median.

⁹ Official rate: Central Bank of Libya (1 September 2020). Parallel market rates: Ewan Libya (1 September 2020). The rates from 1 October 2020 and 1 September 2020 were used for the calculation of the monthly changes.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ The 20% float includes expenses on healthcare, medicine, education, utilities, transportation, and communications.

¹² The MEB price index was normalised by setting October 2019 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in October 2019.

¹³ The food prices were normalised by setting October 2019 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in October 2019.

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

¹⁵ Libya IDP and Returnee March - April 2020, DTM IOM, June 2020

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Libya IDP and Returnee July - August 2020, DTM IOM, September 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