

# Libya Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI)

1 - 9 July 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 **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.
- 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](#).

## KEY FINDINGS

- The cost of the MEB fell across the country between June - July 2020 (-3.7%), especially in the west (-6.9%) and south (-5.6%). However, the MEB in July was still 8.0% higher than pre-COVID levels in March 2020 - [see page 2 for a detailed price breakdown](#).
- The drop in the MEB for Libya overall was driven by a **43% reduction in unofficial fuel prices** and an increase in official fuel vendors facilitated by the National Oil Company (NOC). **In June 2020, 17/33 cities reported that official fuel was available, compared to 24/33 in July 2020.** This has been attributed to a continuing crackdown on smuggling, particularly in the south; as the Fezzan Libyan Organisation (FLO) reported on 25th July 2020, **"government priced petrol is becoming more available in Sebha after tougher restrictions on smugglers and more petrol is sent to the South"**.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, the JMMI July data collection reveals that southern unofficial prices for cooking fuel (+390%) and gasoline (+100%) are still disproportionately more expensive than in the rest of Libya.
- During JMMI price observation, enumerators reported that authorities in **Bani Walid and Tarhuna were distributing free fuel to its inhabitants**, in order to partially compensate for the 13-month fuel shortages.<sup>2</sup>
- The discussion of lifting the fuel subsidies has been revived by the Economic Salon, a Libyan policy reform think-tank focused on anti-corruption and equality, comprised of the country's administrators, politicians, media professionals, academics, and entrepreneurs. The group believe that ending fuel subsidies will help stifle smuggling, rationalise consumption and liberate resources to create a "deliberate and fair social security umbrella".<sup>3,4</sup> According to KIs, fuel subsidies disproportionately benefit households from higher socio-economic standing, due to larger ownership of fuel powered machinery and motor vehicles. The economic impact of removing fuel subsidies and implementing direct cash transfers will need to be closely monitored.
- The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) announced the finalisation of the international audit process for both the western and eastern central banks.**<sup>5</sup> These are initial steps towards central bank unification, but also a condition from eastern authorities to lift the oil blockade. According to KIs, refineries are not able to operate, due to the ability to open the oil wells being dependent on exports. Functioning refineries may further alleviate the fuel inaccessibility in the country.

## JMMI KEY FIGURES

Data collection from **1 - 9 July 2020**

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

## EXCHANGE RATES<sup>6</sup>

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

### Median cost of overall MEB

681.07 LYD ▼ 25.97 LYD ▼ -3.7%

<b>Food items</b> ▼ -1.1%	<b>Hygiene items</b> ▲ +0.5%	<b>Cooking fuel.<sup>9</sup></b> ▼ -39.0%
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## MEDIAN COST OF MEB BY REGION

<b>West</b>	685.2 LYD	▼ -6.9%
<b>East</b>	710.9 LYD	▼ -0.1%
<b>South</b>	890.6 LYD	▼ -5.6%

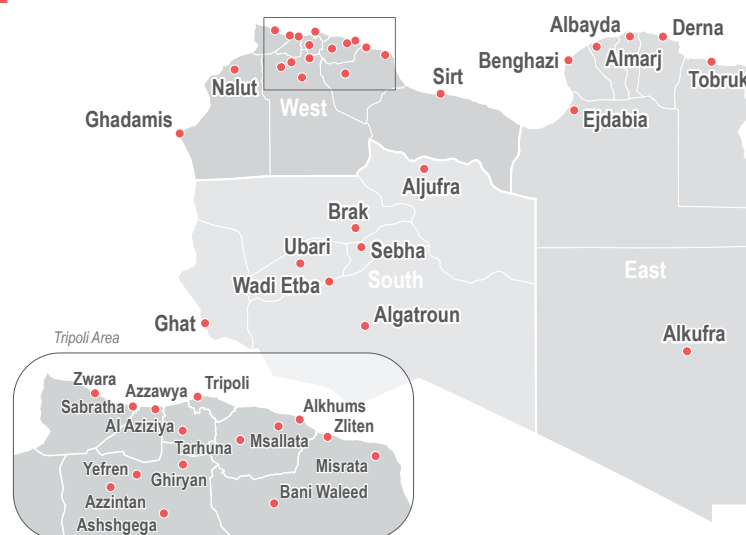
## MARKET SHORTAGES

- None reported

*Reported changes are month-on-month*

**Access the [JMMI online dashboard](#)**

## COVERAGE



## 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<sup>9</sup>

Water (drinking use only)	458 L
Median rent for 3-rm flat	1 month
Float <sup>10</sup>	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

**681.07 LYD**

Change since  
June 2020

▼ -25.97 LYD  
(-3.7%)

Change since  
March 2019

▲ +26.17 LYD  
(+1.7%)

## MEDIAN MEB COST BY LOCATION

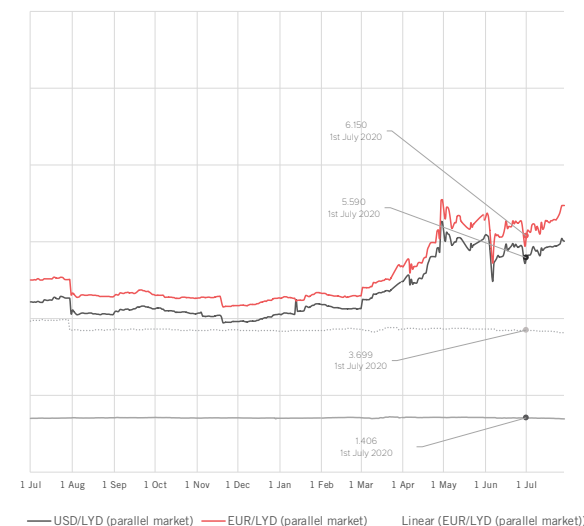
Location	Cost of MEB (LYD)	Since May 2020	Since March 2019
Ghadamis	834.6	7.3%	20.8%
Azzintan	822.6	1.8%	22.2%
Ghiryen	808.1	-1.0%	15.5%
Ashshgega	721.5	-13.2%	10.8%
Nalut	712.3	5.8%	0.8%
Yefren	688.2	-7.4%	1.1%
Azzawya	673.4	7.1%	4.0%
Tarhuna	670.1	-20.2%	5.2%
Msallata	669.8	-5.3%	13.6%
Zwara	665.4	-7.1%	0.3%
Zliten	656.7	5.1%	0.3%
Sabratha	655.0	-2.8%	2.4%
Sirt	648.8	-4.6%	11.3%
Misrata	640.5	-1.1%	2.8%
Tripoli	632.1	-7.5%	-2.1%
Bani Waleed	615.0	-22.9%	-1.9%
Al Aziziya	584.0	-16.5%	-7.6%
Alkhums	578.0	0.3%	-9.3%
<b>Median West</b>	<b>663.2</b>	<b>-6.9%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>
Benghazi	701.7	-6.0%	15.9%
Alkufra	697.6	3.6%	5.5%
Ejdabia	696.6	3.0%	12.0%
Almarj	686.2	-1.7%	14.5%
Tobruk	682.4	-3.0%	10.3%
Albayda	673.0	-0.9%	10.0%
Derna	590.2	-12.3%	-4.2%
<b>Median East</b>	<b>680.9</b>	<b>-0.1%</b>	<b>11.0%</b>
Ubari	1411.3	-1.9%	43.0%
Ghat	1406.6	-3.6%	33.6%
Algatroun	1246.6	-0.7%	18.1%
Wadi Etba	1067.6	-8.8%	No data
Sebha	892.1	4.6%	29.7%
Brak	879.6	2.3%	25.2%
Aljufra	762.6	-0.7%	1.7%
<b>Median South</b>	<b>961.1</b>	<b>-5.6%</b>	<b>12.7%</b>
<b>Median Overall</b>	<b>681.1</b>	<b>-3.7%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>

## EXCHANGE RATES OVER TIME<sup>8</sup>

### January 2016-August 2019

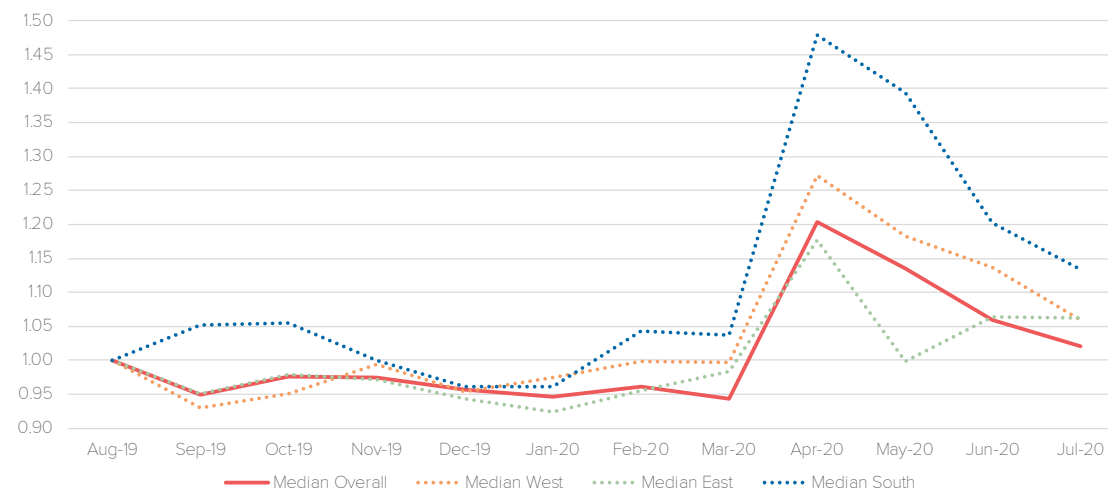


### Since August 2019

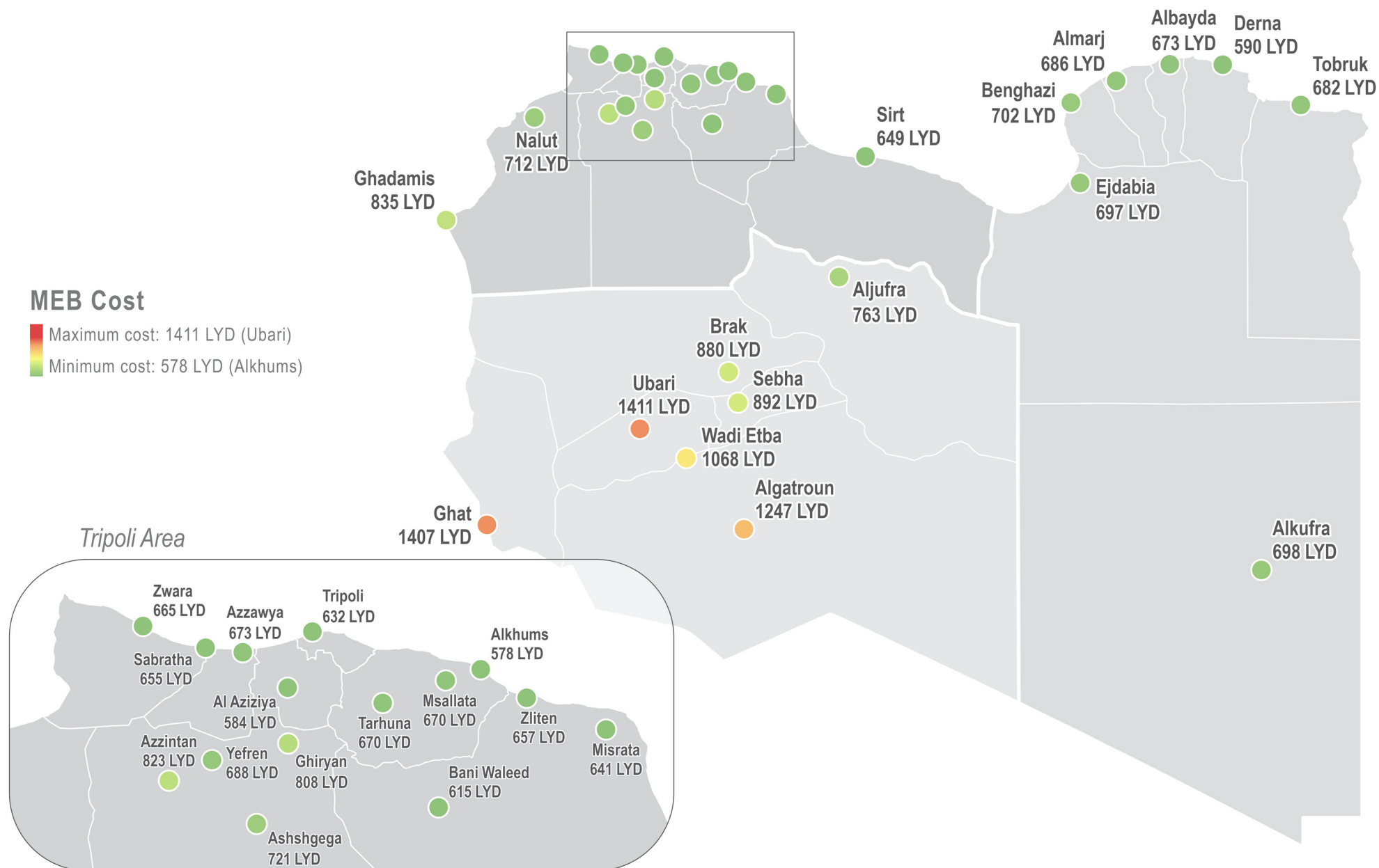


## MEB PRICE INDEX

Since August 2019 (normalised, August 2019 = 1.00)<sup>11</sup>



## Cost of MEB Key Elements by Location

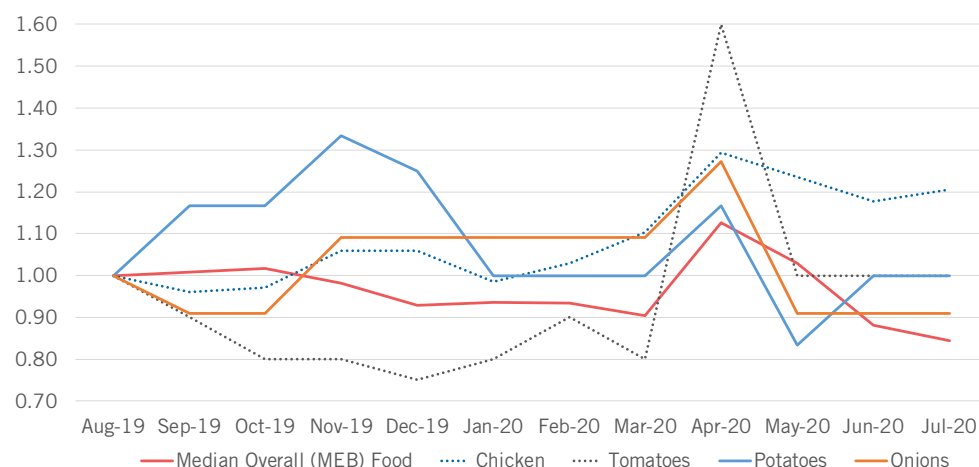


## PRICES OF MONITORED ITEMS

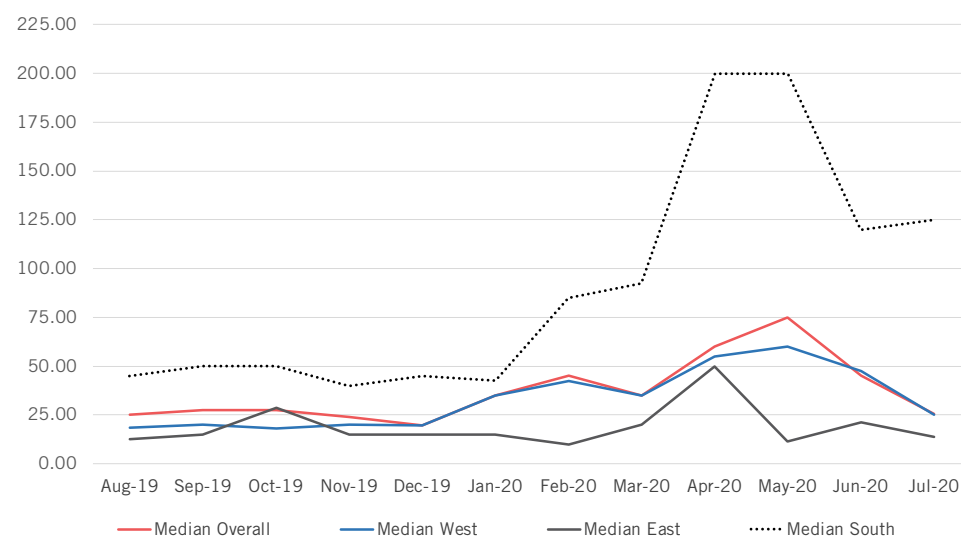
Item	Unit	Median price (LYD)	Change since May 2020	Change since March 2019
<b>Food items</b>				
Green tea	250 g	4.00	3.2%	14.3%
Chicken	1 kg	10.25	2.5%	13.9%
Black tea	250 g	6.06	1.0%	-4.9%
Bread	5 pieces	1.25	0.0%	0.0%
Condensed milk	200 ml	2.50	0.0%	12.4%
Couscous	1 kg	4.00	0.0%	28.0%
Eggs	30 eggs	10.25	0.0%	-2.4%
Flour	1 kg	3.00	0.0%	33.3%
Lamb meat	1 kg	40.00	0.0%	29.0%
Onions	1 kg	2.50	0.0%	11.1%
Peppers	1 kg	4.00	0.0%	-11.1%
Potatoes	1 kg	3.00	0.0%	20.0%
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%
Canned tuna	200 g	3.50	0.0%	-18.4%
Pasta	500 g	1.81	-0.1%	20.8%
Rice	1 kg	3.44	-1.8%	-14.1%
Vegetable oil	1 L	5.25	-4.5%	10.5%
Beans	400 g	1.69	-10.0%	-28.9%
Salt	1 kg	1.13	-10.0%	12.5%
Milk	1 L	4.00	-11.1%	23.1%
Chickpeas	400 g	1.50	-25.0%	-33.3%
<b>Hygiene items</b>				
Hand Sanitiser	1 L	24.13	9.7%	No data
Toothpaste	100 ml	4.00	3.2%	-20.0%
Dishwashing liquid	1 L	3.00	0.0%	100.0%
Handwashing soap	1 bar	1.50	0.0%	-25.0%
Sanitary pads	10 pads	3.50	0.0%	16.7%
Baby diapers	30	15.38	-3.9%	-3.9%
Laundry detergent	1 L	2.75	-8.3%	111.5%
Toothbrush	1 brush	2.25	-10.0%	-10.0%
Bleach	1 L	9.33	-12.6%	No data
Shampoo	250 ml	5.00	-16.7%	-16.7%
Laundry powder	1 kg	5.00	-33.3%	-28.6%
<b>Other items</b>				
Water	1 L	0.29	0.0%	0.0%

## FOOD PRICES OVER TIME

Selected items (normalised, August 2019 = 1.00)<sup>12</sup>



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



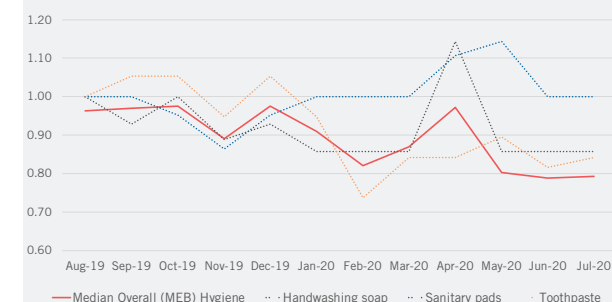
## PRICES OF FUEL AND HEALTH ITEMS

Item	Unit	Median price (LYD)	Change since May 2020	Change since March 2019
<b>Fuel items</b>				
Official LPG	11 kg	5.00	0.0%	0.0%
Unofficial LPG	11 kg	25.50	-43.3%	70.0%
Official Gasoline	1 Litre	0.15	No data	No data
Unofficial Gasoline	1 Litre	1.04	No data	No data
<b>Pharmaceutical items</b>				
Paracetamol	500mg (12 pack)	6.00	0.0%	-11.1%
Ibuprofen	400mg (20 pack)	6.13	11.4%*	No data
Vitamin B	(40 pack)	12.00	17.1%*	No data
Amoxicillin	500mg (21 Pack)	9.63	6.9%*	No data
Metoclopramide	10mg (40 pack)	11.42	14.2%*	No data

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

## HYGIENE ITEM PRICES OVER TIME

Selected items (normalised, August 2019 = 1.00)<sup>13</sup>

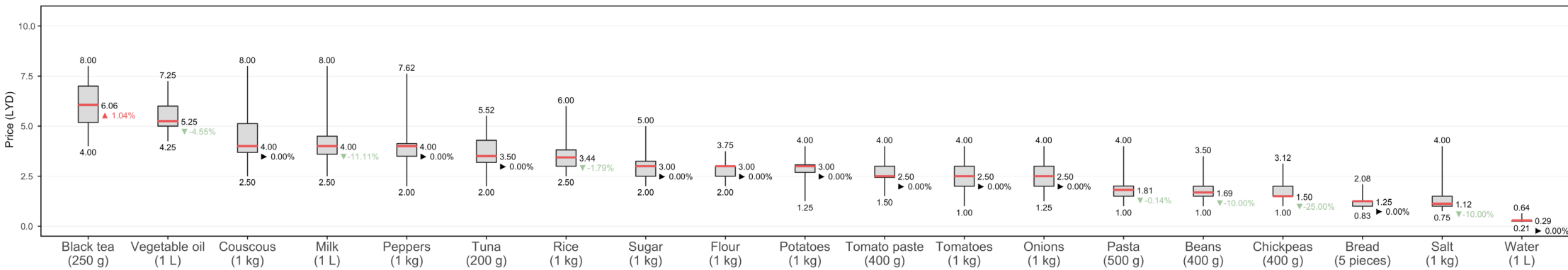


## NOTABLE MONTH-ON-MONTH CHANGES

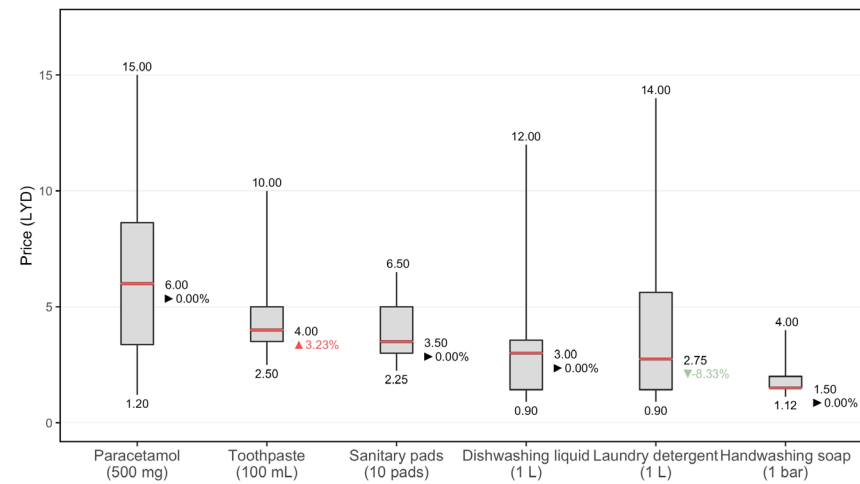
Unofficial LPG	▼ -43.3%
Laundry Powder	▼ -33.3%
Chickpeas	▼ -25.0%
Shampoo	▼ -16.7%
Bleach	▼ -12.6%

# Distribution of Prices in Libya

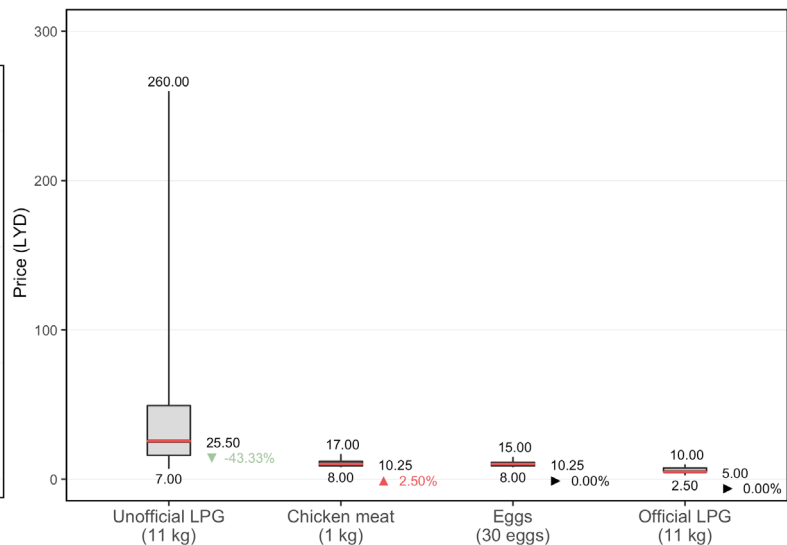
## FOOD ITEMS



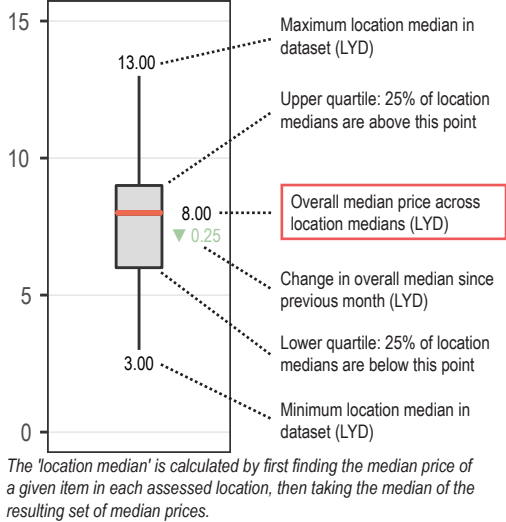
## HYGIENE ITEMS



## ITEMS WITH HIGHEST PRICES



## How to read a boxplot





# Rent Monitoring - Tripoli District

## Introduction

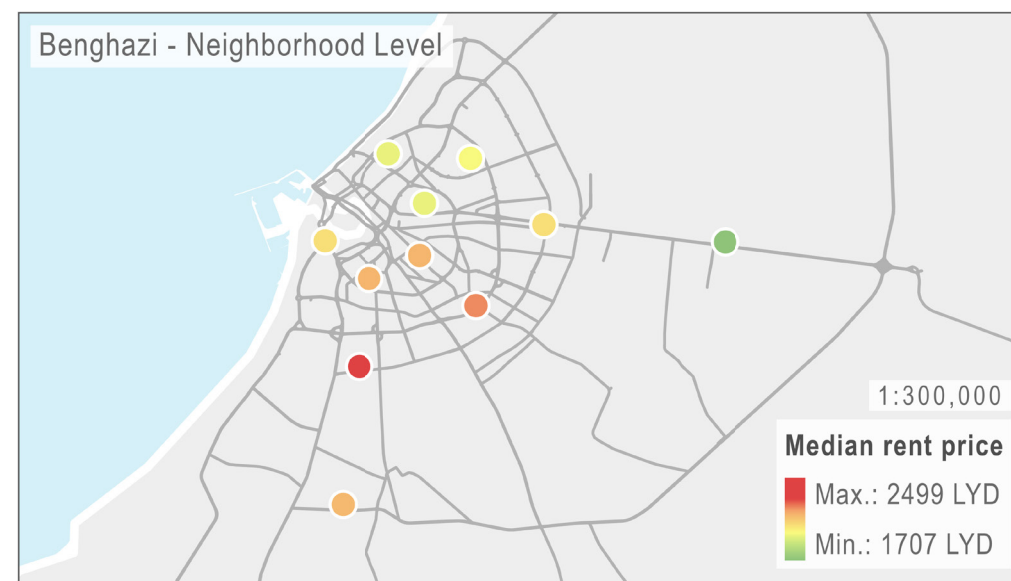
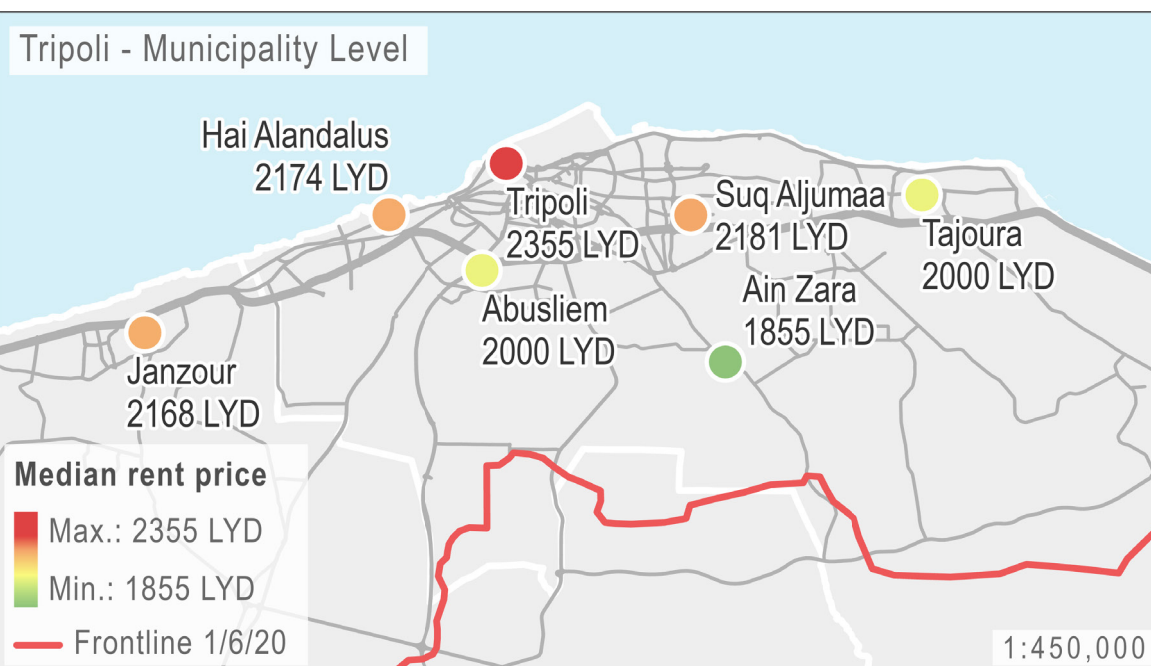
Ever since the onset of the conflict in and around Tripoli and Murzuq in April 2019, Tripoli has been a key displacement destination for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), with the municipalities of Suq Aljuma, Hai Andalus, and Tajoura particularly hosting an estimated 71% of the approximate 108,003 IDPs in the region.<sup>14</sup> When arriving in Tripoli, IDPs typically seek to enter the rental market – with 60% of IDPs reporting to live in rented accommodation as of April 2020.<sup>15</sup> 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. **For more information please refer to the JMMI June 2020.**

## Methodology

From May 2020, REACH extracted prices on a daily basis from the website 'Open Souq'. **In July 2020, 1958 rental prices were collected in Tripoli and Benghazi.** 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 and Benghazi. The average apartment for typical households 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 were grouped together to 11 areas in the city.

## Standardised rental prices July 2020

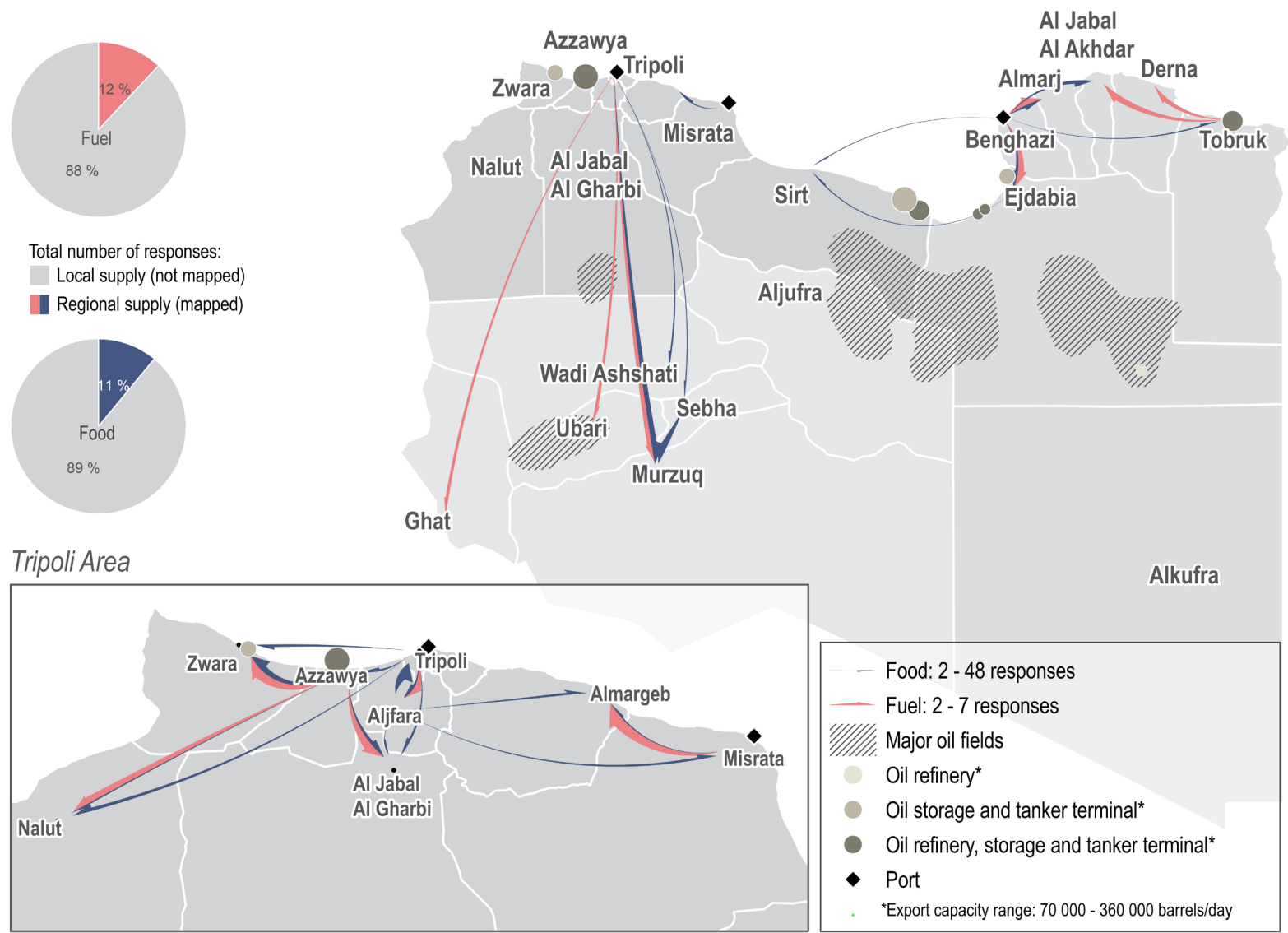
Location	Stand. price (LYD)	Since June 2020
<b>Municipality</b>		
Abusliem	2000	-9.1%
Ain Zara	1855	-19.6%
Hai Alandalus	2174	-8.3%
Janzour	2168	+2.9%
Suq Aljumaa	2181	-12.1%
Tajoura	2000	-5.3%
Tripoli Center	2355	-13.5%
<b>Tripoli Overall</b>	<b>2168</b>	<b>-5.0%</b>
<b>Benghazi Overall</b>	<b>2056</b>	No 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 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 JMIMI OUTPUTS

### Factsheets      Datasets

#### 2020

June	June
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 JMIMI 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 JMIMI. 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 JMIMI 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 JMIMI does not intend to measure general inflation levels on Libyan markets. As per JMIMI

methodology, only the cheapest available price per item is collected, meaning that changes in middle-market and upmarket goods are not captured.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Fezzan Libya Org, Twitter, 25th July 2020

<sup>2</sup> Enumerators collection data for the JMIMI in Bani Walid and Tarhuna

<sup>3</sup> Economic Salon Policy Paper, Economic Salon Facebook Page, 27th July 2020

<sup>4</sup> Libya's Economic Reform Salon proposes reforms for the country's fuel subsidies, Libya Herald, 27th July 2020

<sup>5</sup> Stephanie Williams announces finalization of process to initiate the international audit of Libya Central Bank branches, 28th July 2020

<sup>6</sup> Official rate: Central Bank of Libya (1 July 2020). Parallel market rates: Ewan Libya (1 July 2020). The rates from 1 March 2020 and 1 July 2020 were used for the calculation of the monthly changes.

<sup>7</sup> The cooking fuel price is calculated by taking the average of the official LPG median and the unofficial LPG median.

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

<sup>9</sup> 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 JMIMI's MEB calculations.

<sup>10</sup> The 20% float includes expenses on healthcare, medicine, education, utilities, transportation, and communications.

<sup>11</sup> The MEB price index was normalised by setting August 2019 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in August 2019.

<sup>12</sup> The food prices were normalised by setting August 2019 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in August 2019.

<sup>13</sup> The hygiene prices were normalised by setting August 2019 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in August 2019.

<sup>14</sup> Libya IDP and Returnee March - April 2020, DTM IOM, June 2020

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

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.