

Libya Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI)

1 - 6 November 2019

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 Working Group (CWG) in June 2017. The initiative is guided by the CWG Markets Taskforce, led by REACH and supported by the CWG members. It is funded by OFDA and UNHCR.

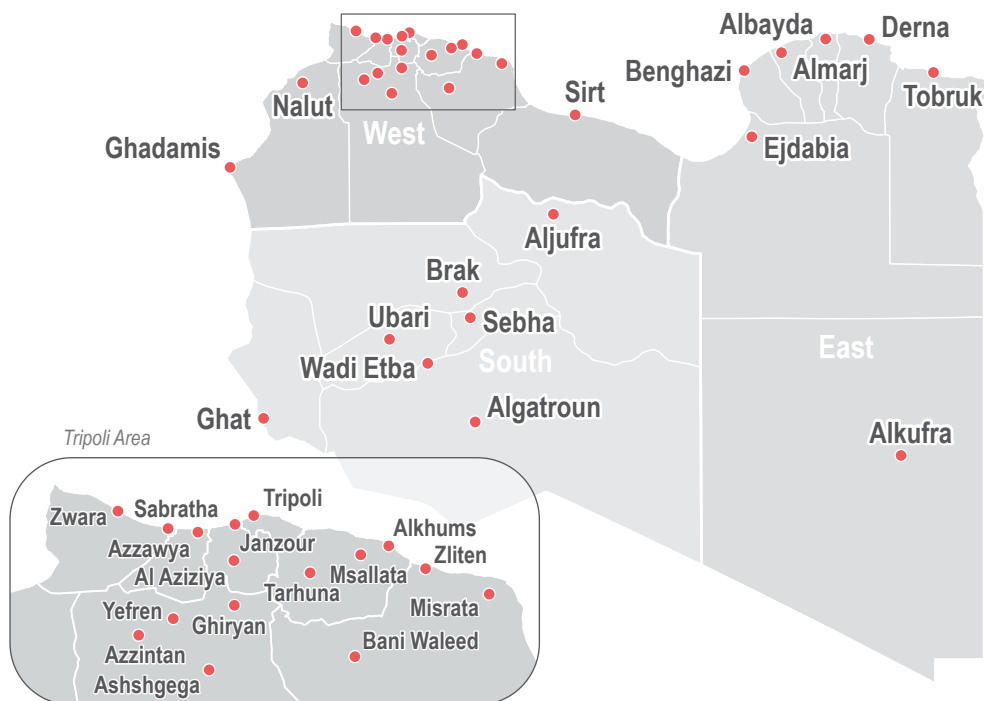
Markets in key urban areas across Libya are assessed on a monthly basis. In each location, field teams record prices and availability of basic food and non-food items (NFIs) sold in local shops and markets.

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).

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.
- More details are available in the Methodology section of the [Appendix](#).

ASSESSED LOCATIONS



KEY FINDINGS

- The cost of the MEB in Al Swani has risen by 20%. The rise comes after a month of intensified fighting, an increased number of IDPs and blocked supply routes in the area**, as Al Swani is located in close proximity to an active area of conflict. According to KIs, the recent conflict has destroyed a significant proportion of farmland situated in Al Aziziya and Al Swani, further risking rising food prices in the future.
- Unofficial fuel prices dropped 13.3% in Libya overall**, despite the Libyan authorities' decision to cut kerosene subsidies for industrial and commercial purposes. The price was raised to 0.85 LYD from 0.15 LYD.¹
- The prices of domestically produced vegetables (excluding potatoes) affected by the Tripoli conflict have stabilised.** From June - November 2019, the cost of onions dropped by 12.3%, peppers by 43.7% and tomatoes by 62.8%.
- This does not rule out the potential for the influence of the ongoing conflict to harm domestic production, with recent reports of burned farmland from an increased number of airstrikes and shelling.² **Most items that increased in price from October to November were agricultural products partially produced in Libya such as eggs, chicken, lamb, onions, and potatoes.**
- The price of **potatoes** is still rallying and is now **twice the value that it was in December last year**. After the Tripoli conflict's initial disruption, a lack of frozen potatoes and the vegetable's seasonality did not enable the price to drop back to previous levels.
- The price of flour is at its cheapest price since March 2018.** Libya has taken measures to import a steady supply of wheat into the country, **recently signing an agreement with Russia to import one million tonnes of wheat annually** (approximately a third of Libya's annual wheat import requirements).^{3, 4}
- Especially in Tripoli, the cost of living is also being affected by high rents due to a greater number of IDPs displaced by an intensifying conflict. According to Reuters, **the rent of a two-bedroom apartment in Tripoli has more than doubled**, from 1,500 LYD to 3,000 to 4,000 LYD.⁵

JMMI KEY FIGURES

Data collection from **1 - 6 November 2019**

4 participating agencies
(ACTED, DRC, REACH, WFP)
33 assessed cities
34 assessed items
523 assessed shops

EXCHANGE RATES⁶

1.400 USD/LYD official ▼ -1.4%	4.150 USD/LYD parallel market ▼ -2.6%	4.530 EUR/LYD parallel market ▼ -1.5%
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KEY MONTHLY CHANGES IN MEB

Median cost of overall MEB

728.68 LYD ▲ 1.50 ▲ 0.2%

Food items ▲ +1.4%	Hygiene items ▼ -8.6%	Cooking fuel.⁷ ▼ -11.3%
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MEDIAN COST OF MEB BY REGION

West	668.20 LYD	+4.5% ▲
East	696.88 LYD	+0.7% ▲
South	960.34 LYD	-4.1% ▼

MARKET SHORTAGES

No shortages reported

Reported changes are month-on-month

MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET (MEB)

Key Elements: Food Items

Bread	38 kg	Tomatoes	12 kg
Rice	12.5 kg	Potatoes	14 kg
Pasta	11 kg	Onions	8 kg
Couscous	6.5 kg	Peppers	5 kg
Beans	7 kg	Tomato paste	7 kg
Chicken	9 kg	Black tea	2 kg
Tuna	4.5 kg	Vegetable oil	6 L
Eggs	4.5 kg	Sugar	2 kg
Milk	10 L	Salt	1 kg

Key Elements: Non-Food Items

Bathing soap	1.5 kg (10 150-g bars)
Toothpaste	0.6 kg (6 100-g tubes)
Laundry detergent	1.5 L
Dishwashing liquid	1.5 L
Sanitary pads	4 packs of 10
Cooking fuel (LPG)	22 kg (2 11-kg refills)

Optional Elements⁹

Water (drinking and domestic use)	2,790 L
Median rent for 3-rm flat	1 month
Float ¹⁰	20% of key elements

The **Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB)** represents the minimum culturally adjusted group of items required to support a six-person Libyan household 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 CWG 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

728.63 LYD

Change since
October 2019

▲ 1.50 LYD
(+0.2%)

Change since
May 2018

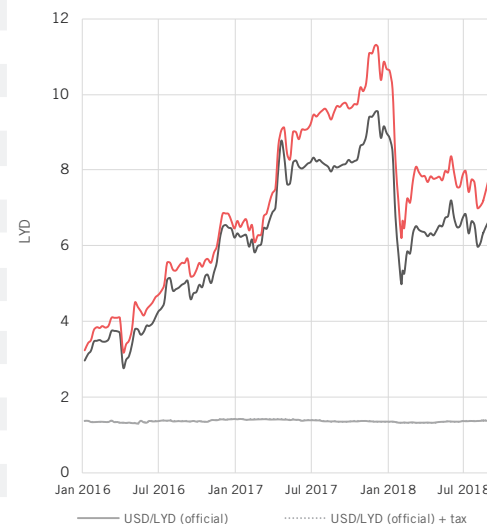
▼ 46.50 LYD
(-6.2%)

MEDIAN MEB COST BY LOCATION

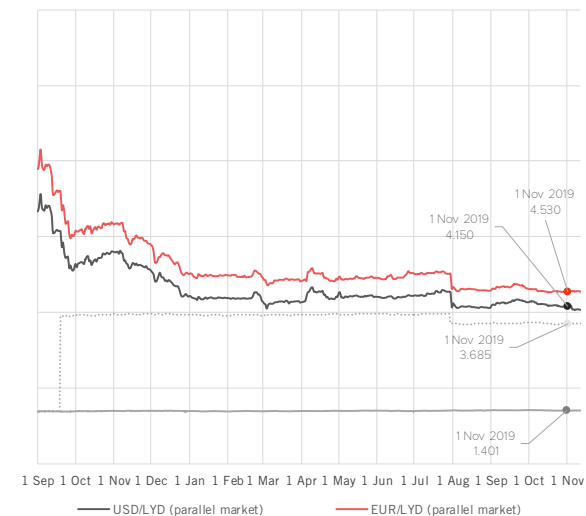
Location	Cost of MEB (LYD)	Since October 2019	Since May 2018
Nalut	814.4	-1.2%	-3.6%
Alkhums	797.8	9.6%	12.3%
Azzintan	795.3	3.2%	9.7%
Ghiryen	781.5	-0.8%	5.8%
Misrata	770.3	12.1%	14.2%
Ghadamis	768.9	-6.2%	-2.3%
Zliten	736.2	6.2%	-1.3%
Tripoli	727.9	0.2%	2.6%
Ashshhega	718.6	9.8%	no data
Al Swani	711.7	20.2%	-8.0%
Yefren	699.1	2.1%	no data
Tarhuna	686.6	8.3%	no data
Janזור	685.8	4.1%	no data
Msallata	675.2	-2.2%	no data
Bani Waleed	658.2	10.0%	no data
Zwara	651.1	6.8%	-19.2%
Sabratha	648.9	-8.5%	-15.1%
Azzawya	632.8	7.8%	-18.9%
Sirt	612.7	-24.4%	-11.5%
Median West	698.1	4.5%	-5.5%
Alkufra	748.4	-8.8%	-22.0%
Almarj	725.4	5.5%	-7.0%
Ejdabia	703.1	7.7%	3.2%
Tobruk	701.8	-1.7%	-11.4%
Albayda	693.8	-1.0%	-15.3%
Derna	681.9	-5.0%	-26.7%
Benghazi	681.2	4.9%	-8.7%
Median East	701.7	0.7%	-10.6%
Algatroun	1149.5	-0.1%	7.7%
Ubari	1126.1	2.6%	6.6%
Ghat	1059.9	0.8%	8.8%
Wadi Etba	970.2	-3.2%	no data
Aljufra	816.3	-3.5%	-5.9%
Brak	782.7	7.5%	-5.4%
Sebha	782.6	3.8%	-14.1%
Median South	920.6	-4.1%	-2.6%
Median Overall	728.6	0.2%	-6.0%

EXCHANGE RATES OVER TIME⁸

January 2016-September 2018

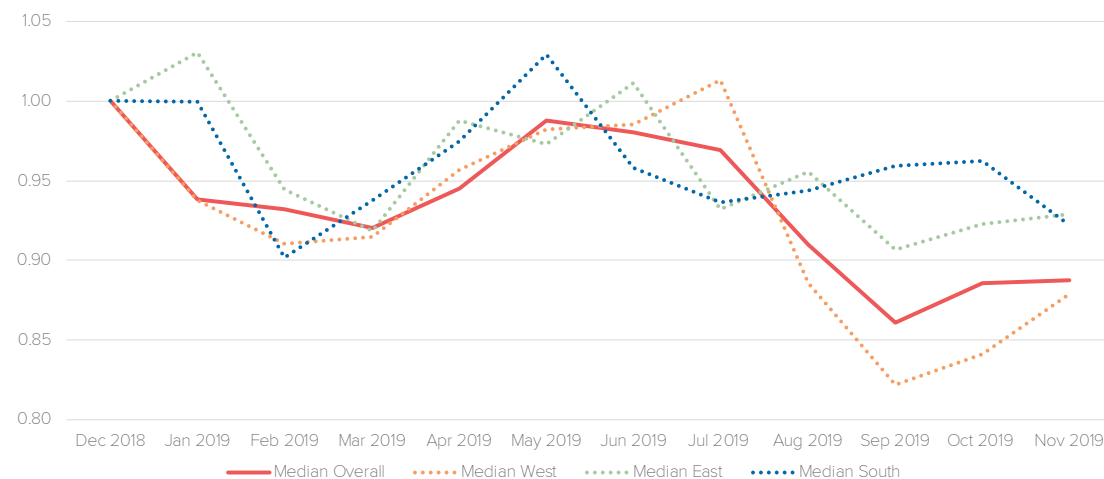


Since September 2018

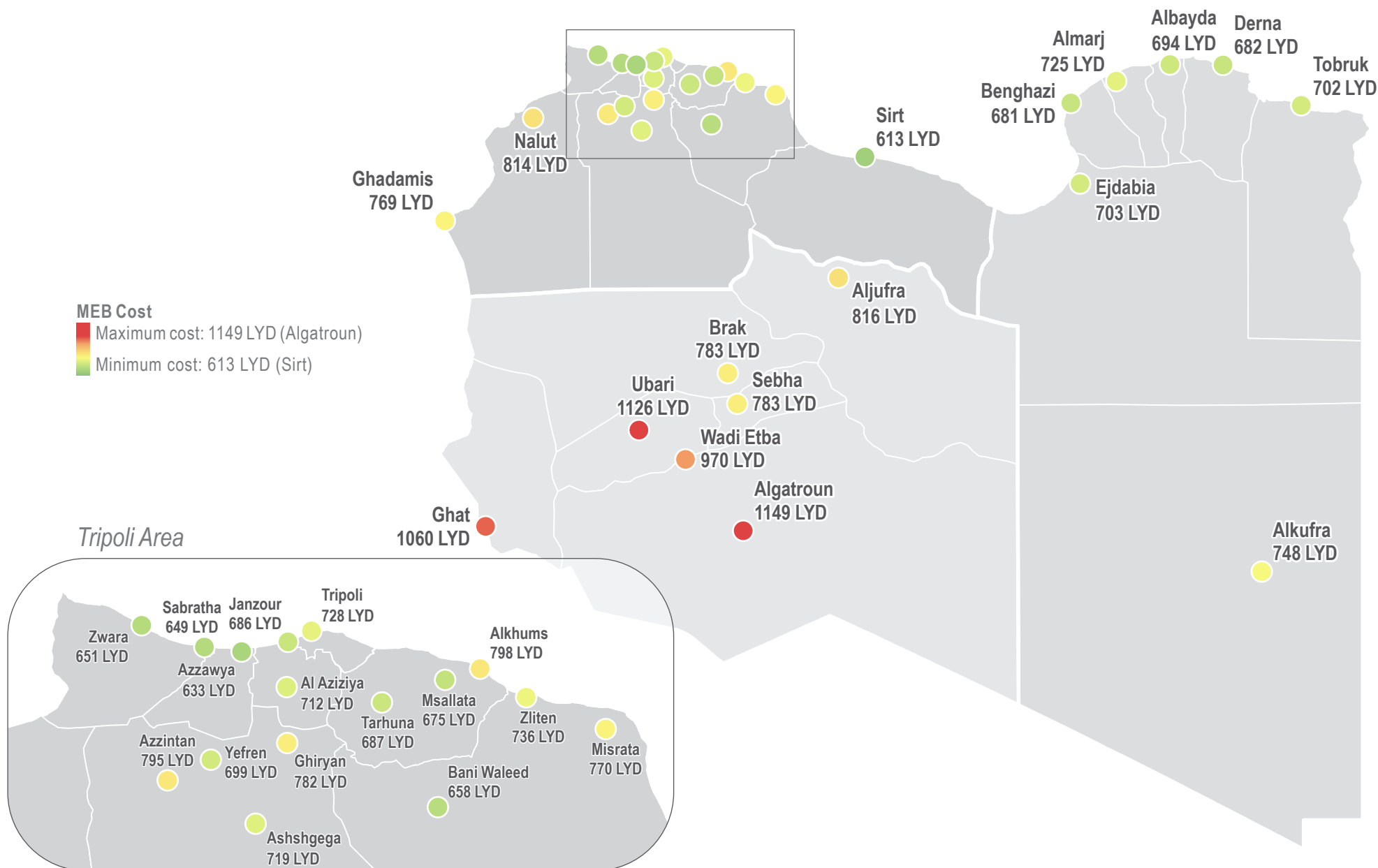


MEB PRICE INDEX

Since December 2018 (normalised, December 2018 = 1.00)¹¹



Cost of MEB Key Elements by Location

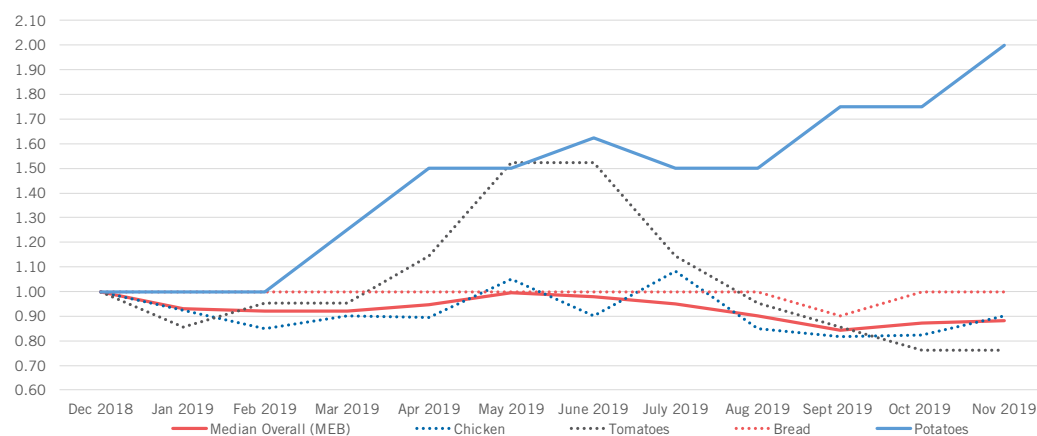


PRICES OF MONITORED ITEMS

Item	Unit	Median price (LYD)	Change since Oct 2019	Change since May 2018
Food items				
Onions	1 kg	3.00	20.0%	25.0%
Potatoes	1 kg	4.00	14.3%	75.0%
Green tea	250 g	3.38	12.5%	-40.0%
Eggs	30 eggs	10.00	11.1%	-25.0%
Sugar	1 kg	2.50	11.1%	-42.3%
Chicken	1 kg	9.00	9.1%	-35.3%
Lamb meat	1 kg	36.00	2.9%	-7.9%
Rice	1 kg	3.50	0.0%	0.0%
Milk	1 L	3.00	0.0%	-36.8%
Tomato paste	400 g	2.13	0.0%	70.0%
Condensed milk	200 ml	2.00	0.0%	-27.3%
Flour	1 kg	2.00	0.0%	-9.1%
Tomatoes	1 kg	2.00	0.0%	-11.1%
Chickpeas	400 g	1.75	0.0%	-41.7%
Pasta	500 g	1.50	0.0%	0.0%
Bread	5 pieces	1.25	0.0%	11.1%
Salt	1 kg	1.00	0.0%	-11.1%
Vegetable oil	1 L	4.63	-2.6%	26.7%
Canned tuna	200 g	3.63	-3.3%	-3.2%
Peppers	1 kg	3.75	-6.3%	-11.1%
Beans	400 g	1.88	-6.3%	-20.0%
Couscous	1 kg	3.25	-7.1%	3.7%
Black tea	250 g	5.38	-10.4%	-11.1%
Hygiene items				
Dishwashing liquid	1 L	2.75	10.0%	0.0%
Laundry powder	1 kg	7.00	7.7%	-9.7%
Baby diapers	30	15.00	0.0%	-31.8%
Laundry detergent	1 L	2.00	0.0%	14.3%
Shampoo	250 ml	5.00	-9.1%	-1.7%
Sanitary pads	10 pads	3.03	-9.2%	-16.8%
Toothpaste	100 ml	4.50	-10.0%	-16.7%
Toothbrush	1 brush	2.00	-11.1%	-9.1%
Handwashing soap	1 bar	1.56	-11.1%	-12.5%
Other items				
Unofficial LPG		23.84	-13.3%	No data
Official LPG		5.00	0.0%	No data
Bottled water		0.29	0.0%	No data

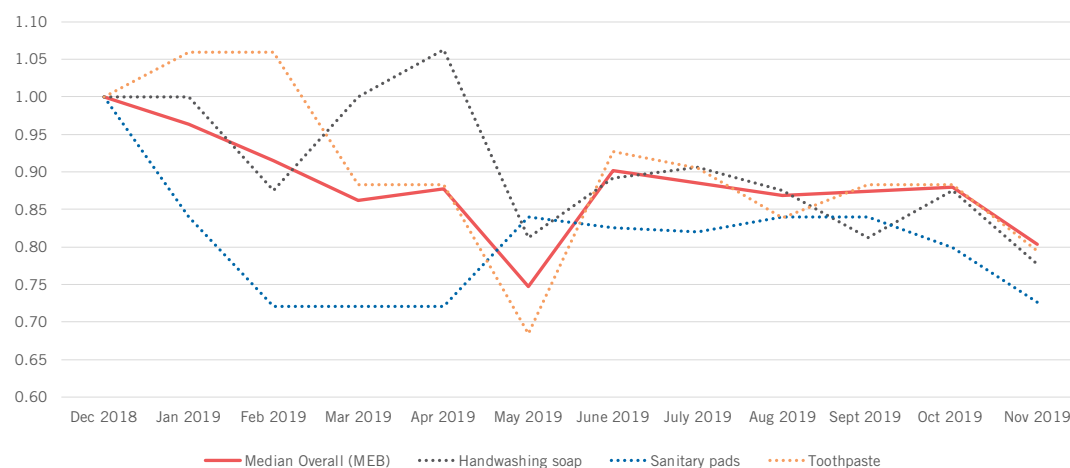
FOOD PRICES OVER TIME

Selected items (normalised, December 2018 = 1.00)¹³

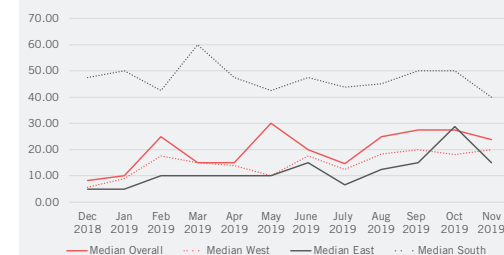


HYGIENE ITEM PRICES OVER TIME

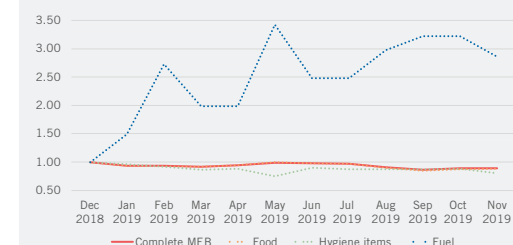
Selected items (normalised, December 2018 = 1.00)¹²



PRICES FROM UNOFFICIAL COOKING FUEL (LPG) VENDORS (since December 2018, non-normalised)



FOOD, HYGIENE AND FUEL PRICES OVER TIME (since December 2018, normalised)¹⁴



NOTABLE MONTH-ON-MONTH CHANGES

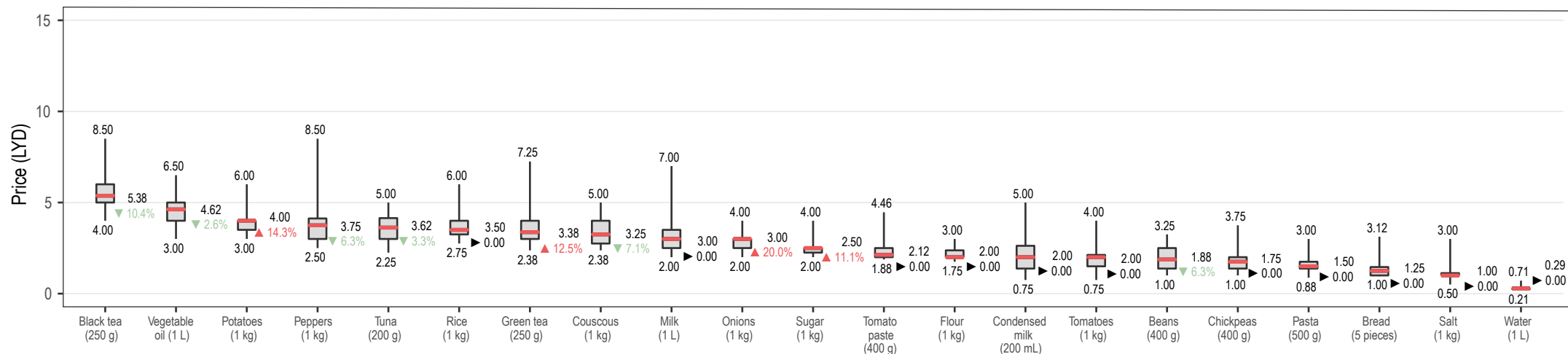
Onions	▲ +20.0%
Potatoes	▲ +14.3%
Green tea	▲ +12.5%
Eggs	▲ +11.1%
Sugar	▲ +11.1%

MARKET SHORTAGES

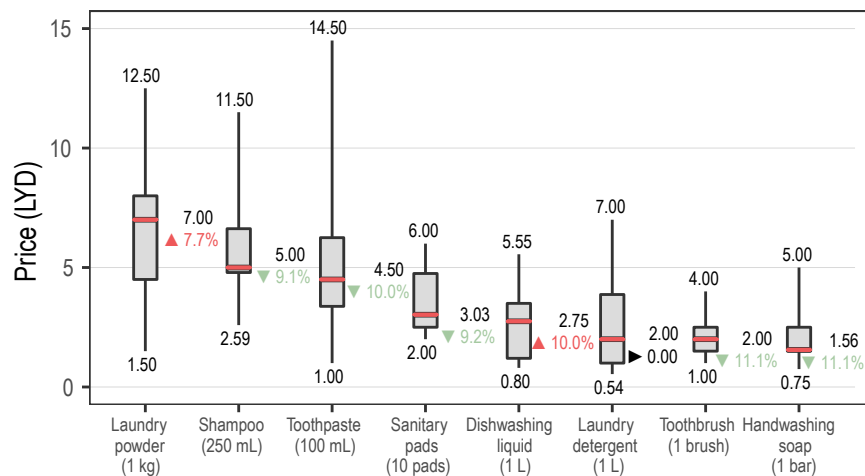
None reported

Distribution of Prices in Libya

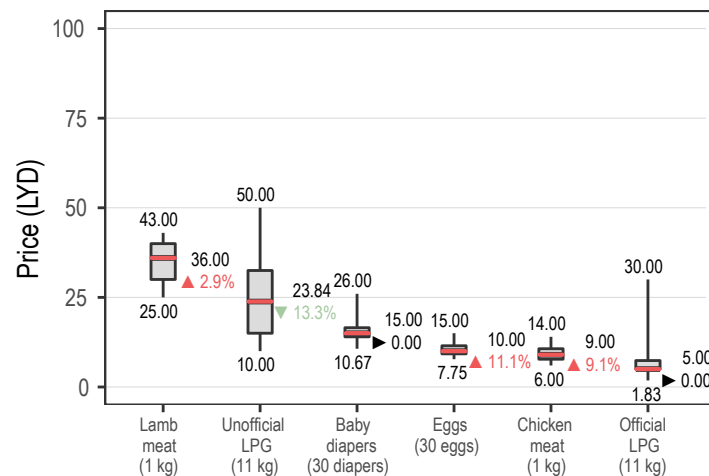
FOOD ITEMS



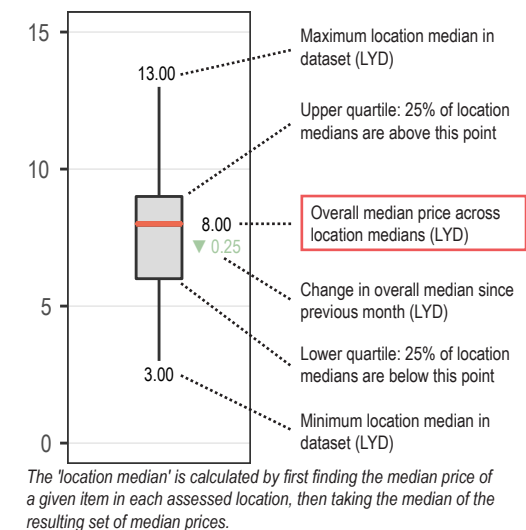
HYGIENE ITEMS



ITEMS WITH HIGHEST PRICES



How to read a boxplot



PREVIOUS JMMI OUTPUTS

Factsheets	Datasets
2019	
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
Trends Analyses	
January–June 2018	
June–December 2017	

MARK-UPS FOR ALTERNATIVE MODALITIES

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

What is the CWG?

The Libya Cash Working Group (CWG), 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.

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 Libyan government raises commercial price for kerosene as first step in reforms, Reuters, 17th October 2019

² Interview with farmer in Jfra region

³ GIEWS Country Brief, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 17th October 2019, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/LBY_7.pdf

⁴ Libya to sign wheat supply agreement with Russia, Libya Observer, 26th October, <https://www.libyaobserver.ly/inbrief/libya-sign-wheat-supply-agreement-russia>

⁵ Property prices soar in Libya's capital as displaced seek housing, Reuters, 13th November, <https://af.reuters.com/article/libyaNews/idAFL8N27R7BV>

⁶ Official rate: Central Bank of Libya (1 November 2019), retrieved from www.cbl.gov.ly, Parallel market rates: Ewan Libya (1 November 2019), retrieved from www.ewanlibya.ly. The rates from 1 October 2019 and 1 November 2019 were used for the calculation of the monthly changes.

⁷ The cooking fuel price is calculated by taking the average of the official LPG median and the unofficial LPG median

⁸ Official rate: Central Bank of Libya (1 November 2019), retrieved from www.cbl.gov.ly, Parallel market rates: Ewan Libya (1 November 2019), retrieved from www.ewanlibya.ly. The rates from 1 October 2019 and 1 November 2019 were used for the calculation of the monthly changes.

⁹ 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.

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

¹¹ The MEB price index was normalised by setting December 2018 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in December 2018 .

¹² The food and hygiene prices were normalised by setting December 2018 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in December 2018 .

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ The fuel, food and hygiene prices were normalised by setting December 2018 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in December 2018

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.