

# Libya Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI)

8 - 20 August 2020

Libya Cash Working Group

**REACH** Informing  
more effective  
humanitarian action

## INTRODUCTION

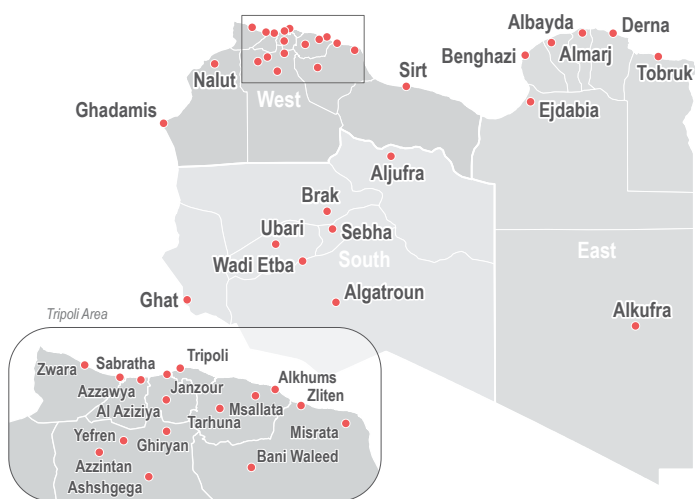
In an effort to inform cash-based interventions and better understand market dynamics in Libya, the Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI) was created by the Libya Cash & Markets Working Group (CMWG) in June 2017. The initiative is led by REACH and supported by the CMWG members. It is funded by the 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 (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). A detailed breakdown of the MEB can be found on [page 2](#).

## 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. Qualitative information is also gathered from local informants and economic experts through key informant (KI) interviews.

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

## COVERAGE



## KEY FINDINGS

- Despite overall food prices decreasing across Libya, the cost of the MEB increased by 3.0% from July - August 2020, due to price increases for fuel and hygiene items. **Prices have failed to fall back to pre-COVID-19 levels, as the August MEB is still 19.2% more expensive than March 2020.**
- Between July and August 2020, the south of Libya saw considerable price changes for essential items. **The price of chickpeas and beans increased by 66.7% and bottled water by 58.3%. The prices of salt, pasta, couscous have increased by 50%.** However, the overall price of the MEB in the south decreased as a result of the 36% drop in cooking fuel prices, which detracts 90 Libyan Dinar (LYD) from the southern MEB. According to KIs, the rising food prices in the south may be attributed to diesel fuel shortages, as vendors are increasingly dependent on fuel-powered generators to operate their businesses. **KIs reported that in the first week of September, the Federation of Bakery Owners organized a sit-in to close bakeries for 3 days.** Bakeries have since reopened and reportedly resumed business as usual.

- From July - August 2020, likely driven by price changes in west Libya, **there was a spike in unofficial gasoline (+68.7%) and cooking fuel prices (+66.7%).** According to KIs, widespread electricity cuts have driven an increased demand for fuel to power generators, in turn resulting in fuel price spikes and shortages. To mitigate the impacts of the power crisis, the eastern authorities have announced that they will partially lift the oil blockade to dispose of fuel and gas in storage facilities that will allow power stations to receive sufficient fuel and operate with a greater capacity.<sup>1</sup>
- **The LYD continued to depreciate against the U.S. Dollar (USD) and has lost 33.3% of its value from March - September 2020.** This is likely to be attributed to a demise in crude oil exports, restricted foreign currency sales and a decline in global oil prices.<sup>2</sup>
- **By August 2020, the food and hygiene proportion of the MEB in the east was 13.3% more expensive than in the west.** The cost difference is unusual, as the MEB is ordinarily cheaper in the east. This may be due to a recent decree allowing imports across the Libyan/ Tunisian land border without letters of credit (LoC). The intention of the decree is to keep the price of essential goods low, by allowing supplies to easily enter the country.<sup>3</sup>

## COVID-19

- The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases has risen from 182 on 4th June to 15,773 on 4th September and may have had implications on the price of key medicines and hygiene items.<sup>4</sup> From June - August 2020, over-the-counter pharmaceutical items prices increased, such as paracetamol (8.3%) and ibuprofen (17.5%). **Furthermore, within the same time period, the price of hand sanitiser has increased by 54.7% and bleach by 23.3%.** In south Libya, the epicentre of the COVID-19 crisis in Libya, **prices for paracetamol and bleach increased by 140% and 79.5%, respectively.**
- According to the preliminary analysis of the 2020 Libya Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA), **20% of Libyan households (HHs) reported that their main place of work had closed down as a result of COVID-19 measures.** MSNA findings indicated regional differences, especially in the south, where the loss of livelihood opportunities was particularly commonly reported by HHs in Murzuq (78%), Sebha (74%), and Ubari (80%).<sup>5</sup>

## JMMI KEY FIGURES

Data collection from **8 - 20 August 2020**

**3** participating agencies  
(DRC, REACH, WFP)  
**33** assessed cities  
**45** assessed items  
**673** 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

701.28 LYD ▲ 11.69 LYD ▲ +3.0%

<b>Food items</b> ▼ -0.2%	<b>Hygiene items</b> ▲ +8.3%	<b>Cooking fuel.<sup>9</sup></b> ▲ +55.7%
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## MEDIAN COST OF MEB BY REGION

<b>West</b>	657.0 LYD	▼ -0.9%
<b>East</b>	712.2 LYD	▲ +4.6%
<b>South</b>	919.6 LYD	▼ -4.3%

## 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<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

**701.07 LYD**

Change since  
July 2020

▲ **+11.69 LYD**  
(+3.0%)

Change since  
March 2019

▲ **+13.65 LYD**  
(+4.7%)

## MEDIAN MEB COST BY LOCATION

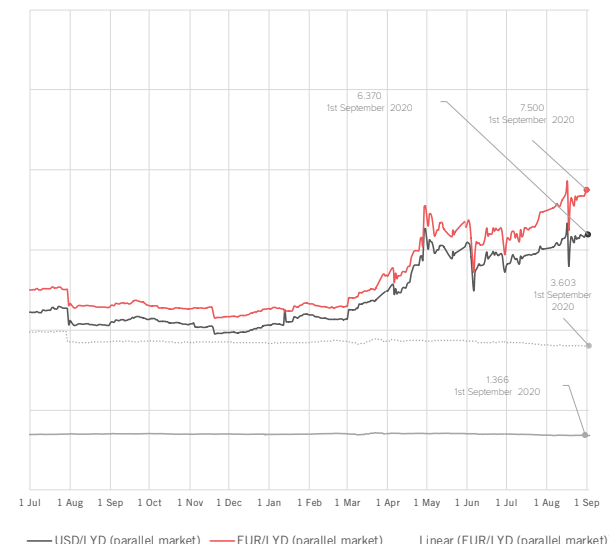
Location	Cost of MEB (LYD)	Since July 2020	Since March 2019
Nalut	796.9	11.9%	12.8%
Azzintan	791.2	-3.8%	17.5%
Ghadamis	774.1	-7.3%	12.1%
Ghiryani	722.2	-10.6%	3.2%
Ashshgega	721.8	0.0%	10.9%
Zwara	677.1	1.8%	2.1%
Msallata	669.4	-0.1%	13.5%
Yefren	655.1	-4.8%	-3.7%
Zliten	644.8	-1.8%	-1.5%
Sabratha	642.7	-1.9%	0.5%
Al Aziziya	640.1	9.6%	1.3%
Tripoli	637.8	0.9%	-1.2%
Tarhuna	632.7	-5.6%	-0.7%
Azzawya	628.0	-6.7%	-3.0%
Alkhums	626.3	8.4%	-1.7%
Misrata	615.5	-3.9%	-1.3%
Sirt	605.5	-6.7%	3.8%
Bani Waleed	573.4	-6.8%	-8.6%
Janzour	552.1	No data	-5.0%
<b>Median West</b>	<b>657.0</b>	<b>-0.9%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>
Albayda	865.6	28.6%	41.5%
Benghazi	760.9	8.4%	25.7%
Alkufra	714.9	2.5%	8.1%
Ejdabia	698.8	0.3%	12.4%
Derna	652.9	10.6%	6.0%
Tobruk	642.8	-5.8%	3.9%
Almarj	623.9	-9.1%	4.1%
<b>Median East</b>	<b>712.2</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>16.0%</b>
Ghat	1309.5	-6.9%	24.4%
Ubari	1215.7	-13.9%	23.2%
Algatroun	1204.4	-3.4%	14.0%
Wadi Etba	988.1	-7.4%	No data
Sebha	808.2	-9.4%	17.5%
Brak	796.9	-9.4%	13.5%
Aljufra	793.6	4.1%	5.8%
<b>Median South</b>	<b>919.6</b>	<b>-4.3%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>
<b>Median Overall</b>	<b>701.3</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>

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

### January 2016-July 2019

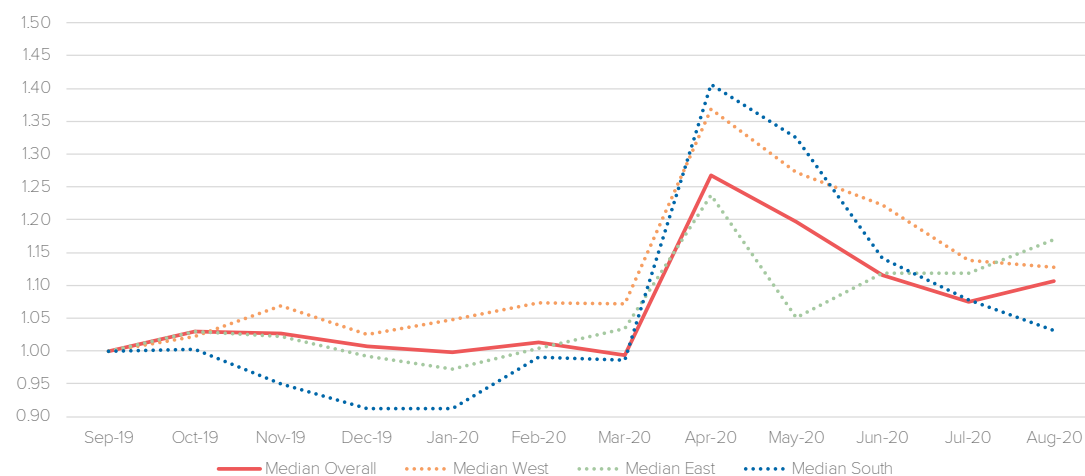


### Since July 2019

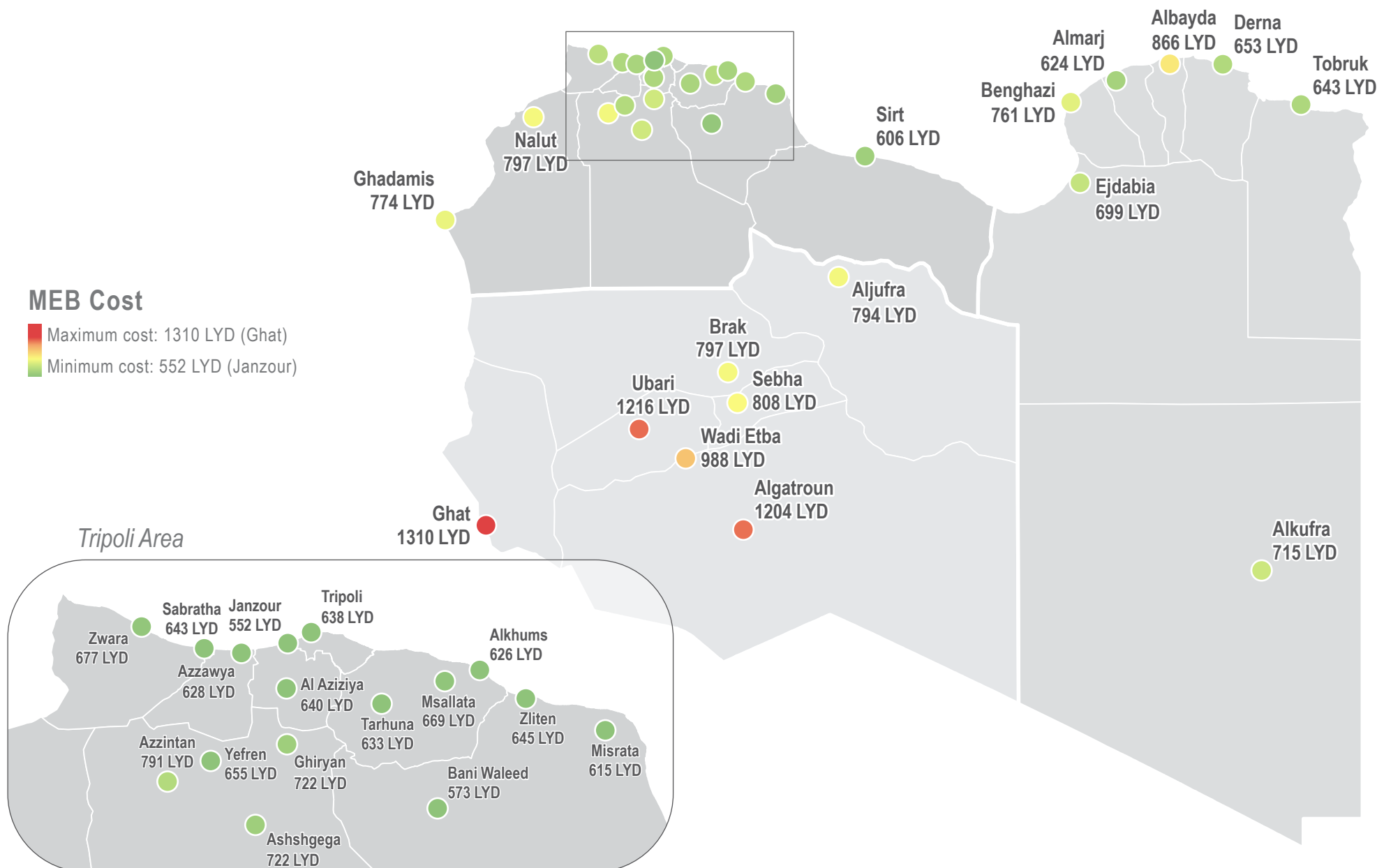


## MEB PRICE INDEX

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



## Cost of MEB Key Elements by Location

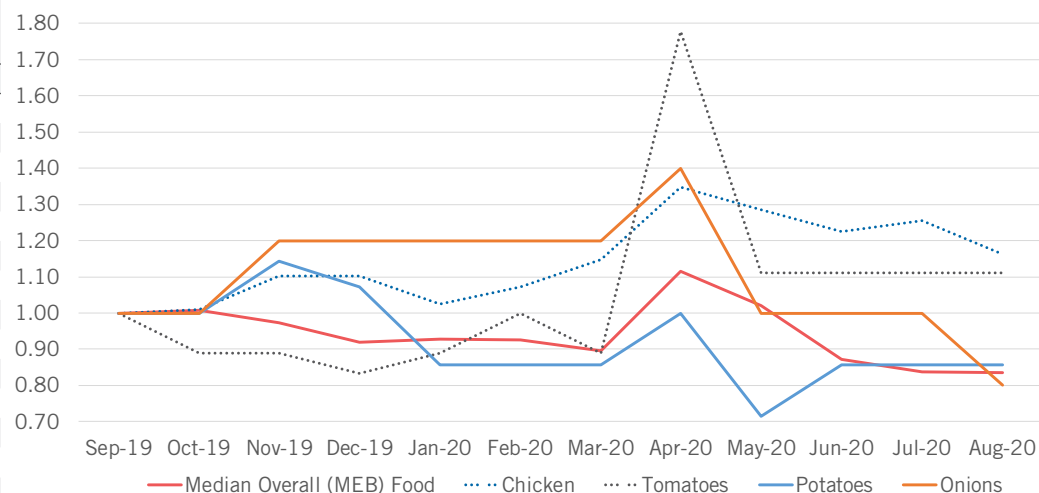


## PRICES OF MONITORED ITEMS

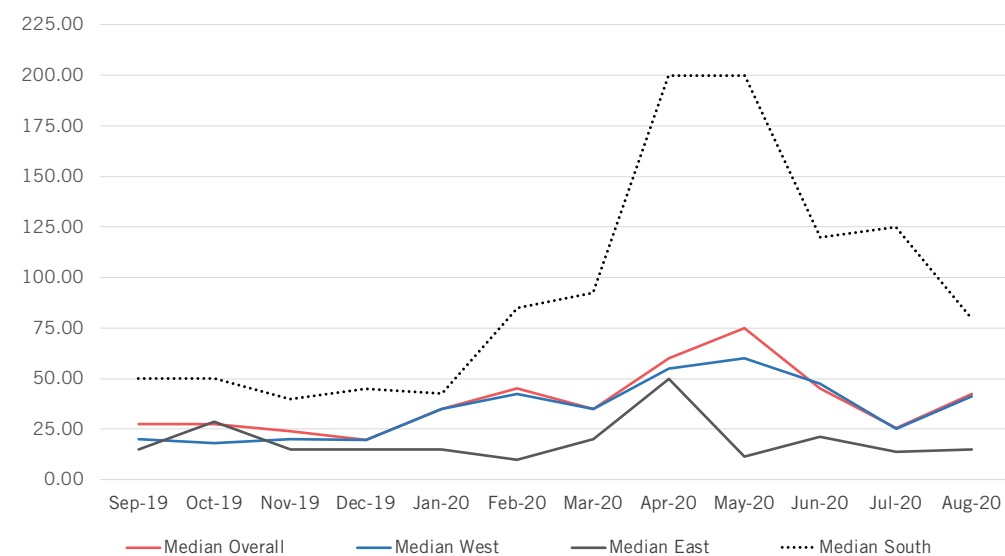
Item	Unit	Median price (LYD)	Change since July 2020	Change since March 2019
<b>Food items</b>				
Couscous	1 kg	6.00	50.0%	92.0%
Chickpeas	400 g	2.00	33.3%	-11.1%
Salt	1 kg	1.50	33.3%	50.0%
Beans	400 g	2.00	18.5%	-15.8%
Pasta	500 g	1.88	3.7%	25.3%
Bread	5 pieces	1.25	0.0%	0.0%
Condensed milk	200 ml	2.50	0.0%	12.4%
Green tea	250 g	4.00	0.0%	14.3%
Milk	1 L	4.00	0.0%	23.1%
Peppers	1 kg	4.00	0.0%	-11.1%
Potatoes	1 kg	3.00	0.0%	20.0%
Tomatoes	1 kg	2.50	0.0%	0.0%
Canned tuna	200 g	3.50	0.0%	-18.4%
Black tea	250 g	6.00	-1.0%	-5.9%
Vegetable oil	1 L	5.00	-4.8%	5.3%
Lamb meat	1 kg	38.00	-5.0%	22.6%
Tomato paste	400 g	2.38	-5.0%	5.6%
Rice	1 kg	3.25	-5.5%	-18.8%
Chicken	1 kg	9.50	-7.3%	5.6%
Eggs	30 eggs	9.50	-7.3%	-9.5%
Flour	1 kg	2.50	-16.7%	11.1%
Sugar	1 kg	2.50	-16.7%	17.6%
Onions	1 kg	2.00	-20.0%	-11.1%
<b>Hygiene items</b>				
Hand Sanitiser	1 L	35.00	45.0%	No data
Bleach	1 L	11.50	23.3%	No data
Shampoo	250 ml	6.00	20.0%	0.0%
Toothpaste	100 ml	4.59	14.6%	-8.3%
Sanitary pads	10 pads	4.00	14.3%	33.3%
Toothbrush	1 brush	2.50	11.1%	0.0%
Handwashing soap	1 bar	1.63	8.3%	-18.8%
Baby diapers	30	16.50	7.3%	3.1%
Laundry powder	1 kg	5.31	6.2%	-24.1%
Dishwashing liquid	1 L	3.00	0.0%	100.0%
Laundry detergent	1 L	1.63	-40.9%	25.0%
<b>Other items</b>				
Bottled water	1 L	0.29	0.0%	0.0%

## FOOD PRICES OVER TIME

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



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



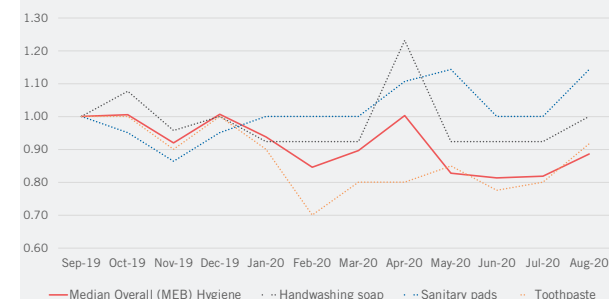
## PRICES OF FUEL AND HEALTH ITEMS

Item	Unit	Median price (LYD)	Change since July 2020	Change since March 2019
<b>Fuel items</b>				
Unofficial Gasoline	1 Litre	1.75	68.7%	No data
Unofficial LPG	11 kg	42.50	66.7%	183.3%
Official LPG	11 kg	5.00	0.0%	0.0%
Official Gasoline	1 Litre	0.15	0.0%	No data
<b>Pharmaceutical items</b>				
Paracetamol	500mg (12 pack)	6.50	8.3%	-6.3%*
Ibuprofen	400mg (20 pack)	6.50	6.1%	18.2%*
Amoxicillin	500mg (21 Pack)	10.00	3.9%	11.1%*
Vitamin B	(40 pack)	12.00	0.0%	17.1%*
Metoclopramide	10mg (40 pack)	11.00	-3.7%	10.0%

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

## HYGIENE ITEM PRICES OVER TIME

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

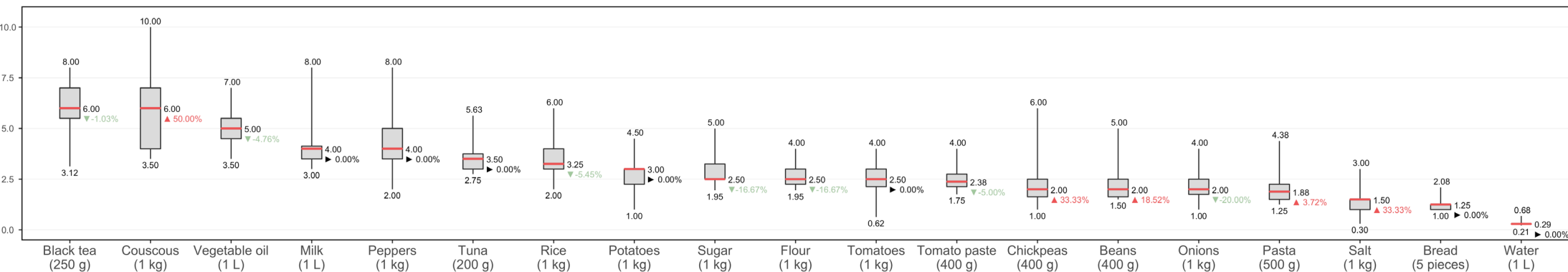


## NOTABLE MONTH-ON-MONTH CHANGES

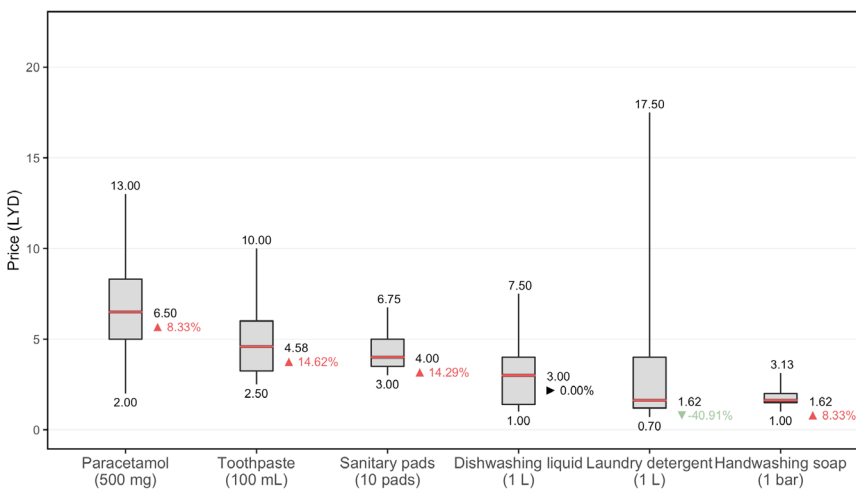
Unofficial Gasoline	▲ +68.7%
Unofficial LPG	▲ +66.7%
Couscous	▲ +50.0%
Hand Sanitiser	▲ +45.0%
Laundry Detergent	▼ -40.9%

# Distribution of Prices in Libya

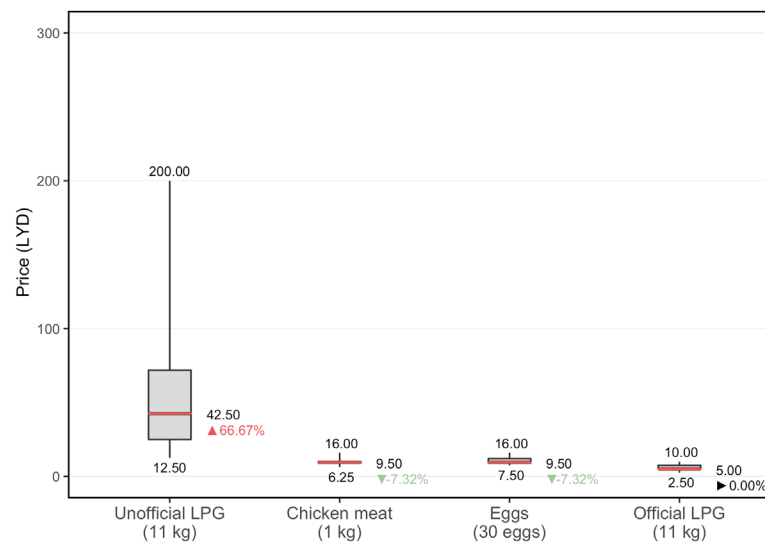
## FOOD ITEMS



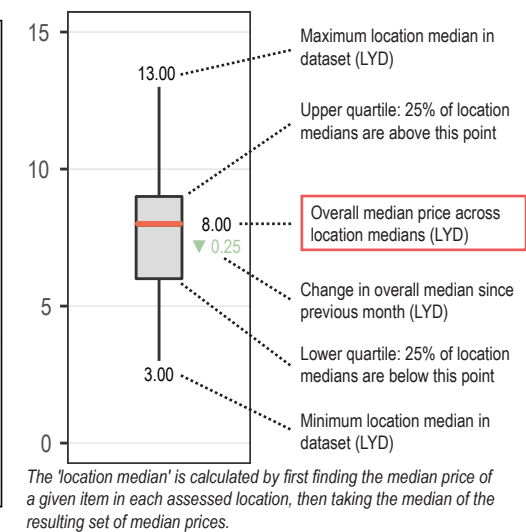
## HYGIENE ITEMS



## 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 entering 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 JMIMI, in order to provide humanitarian actors with a more accurate overview of key expenditures facing IDPs in Tripoli.

## Methodology

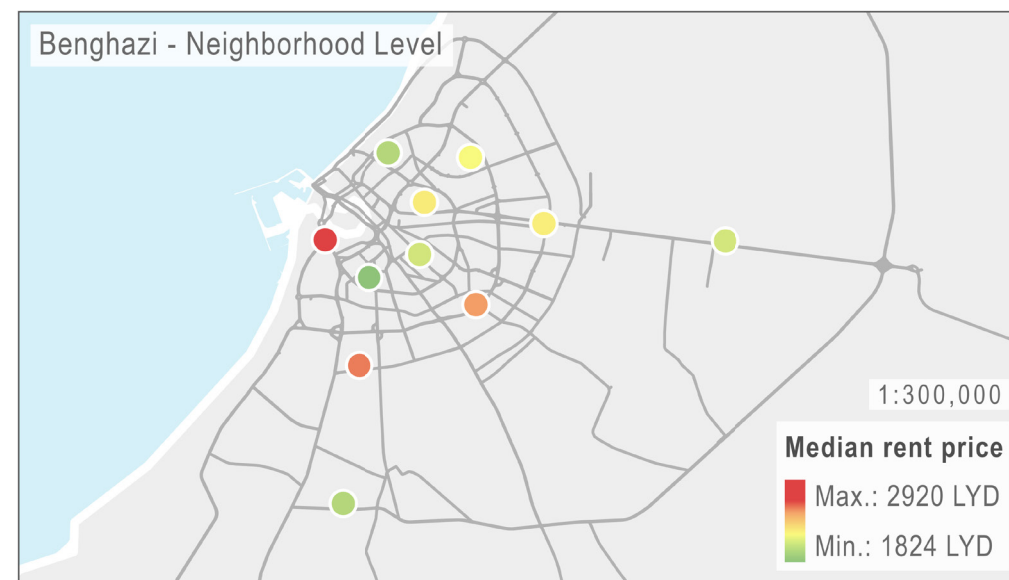
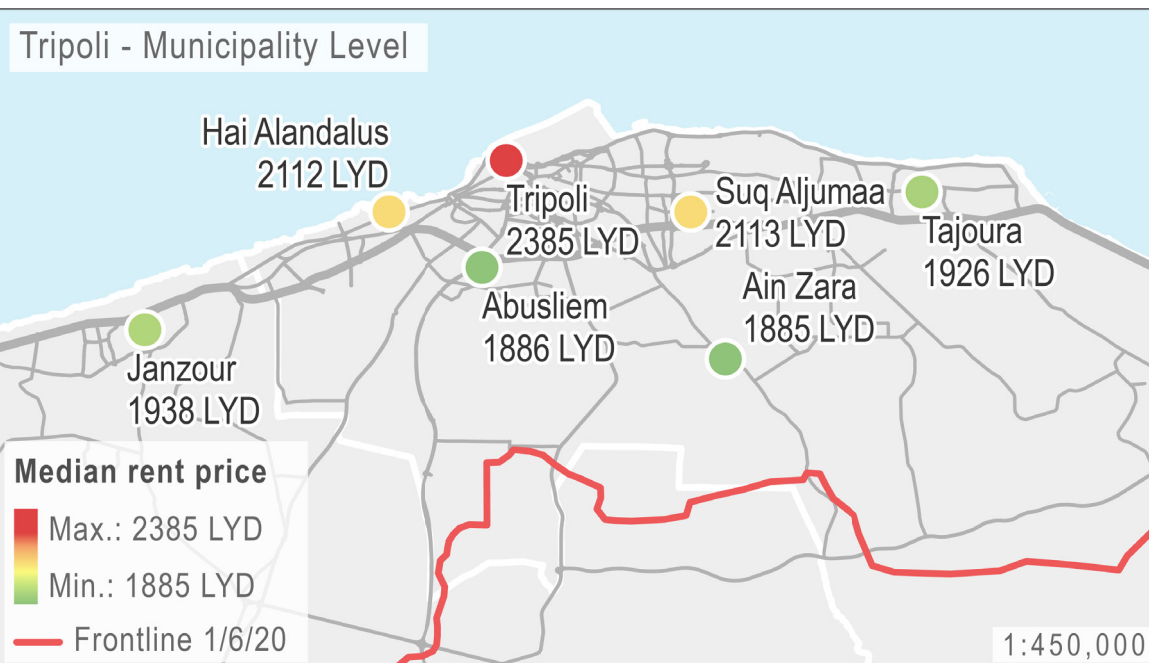
- From May 2020 onwards, in addition to the price monitoring of key items (MEB). REACH commenced analyzing rental prices, which were extracted on a daily basis from the website 'Open Souq'. **In August 2020, 1271 rental prices were collected in Tripoli and Benghazi.**
- In order to standardise property prices, key features were isolated through consultation with KIs to identify the average apartment specification for typical 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 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), as tenants may receive cheaper offer through informal channels.

## Key findings

- **From May to August 2020**, the analysis suggests that Tripoli rental property prices have continually decreased in a number of baladiyas; **Abusliem (-32.9%), Hai Alandalus (-22.7%) Suq Aljumaa (-22.6%) and Tajoura (-19.4%)**. Despite small price increases from July to August 2020, over the past three months, assessed prices also dropped in Ain Zara by 38.6% and Tripoli Center by 20.7%.
- According to the latest figures from International Organization for Migration's Displacement Tracking Matrix (IOM/DTM) and the United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA)/Bureau of Statistics and Census, **IDP/population density for each Tripoli baladiya currently stands at; Abusliem (3.3%), Hai Alandalus (0.4%), Tripoli (0.2%) and Suq Aljumaa (0.1%).**<sup>16,17</sup>
- **In Benghazi**, the median of assessed rental prices increased by 10.0% from July - August 2020. From April to June 2020, there was a 24.0% rise in IDP numbers that increased the **IDP/ population density by 0.9%, from 3.8% to 4.7%.**<sup>18</sup>

## Standardised rental prices August 2020

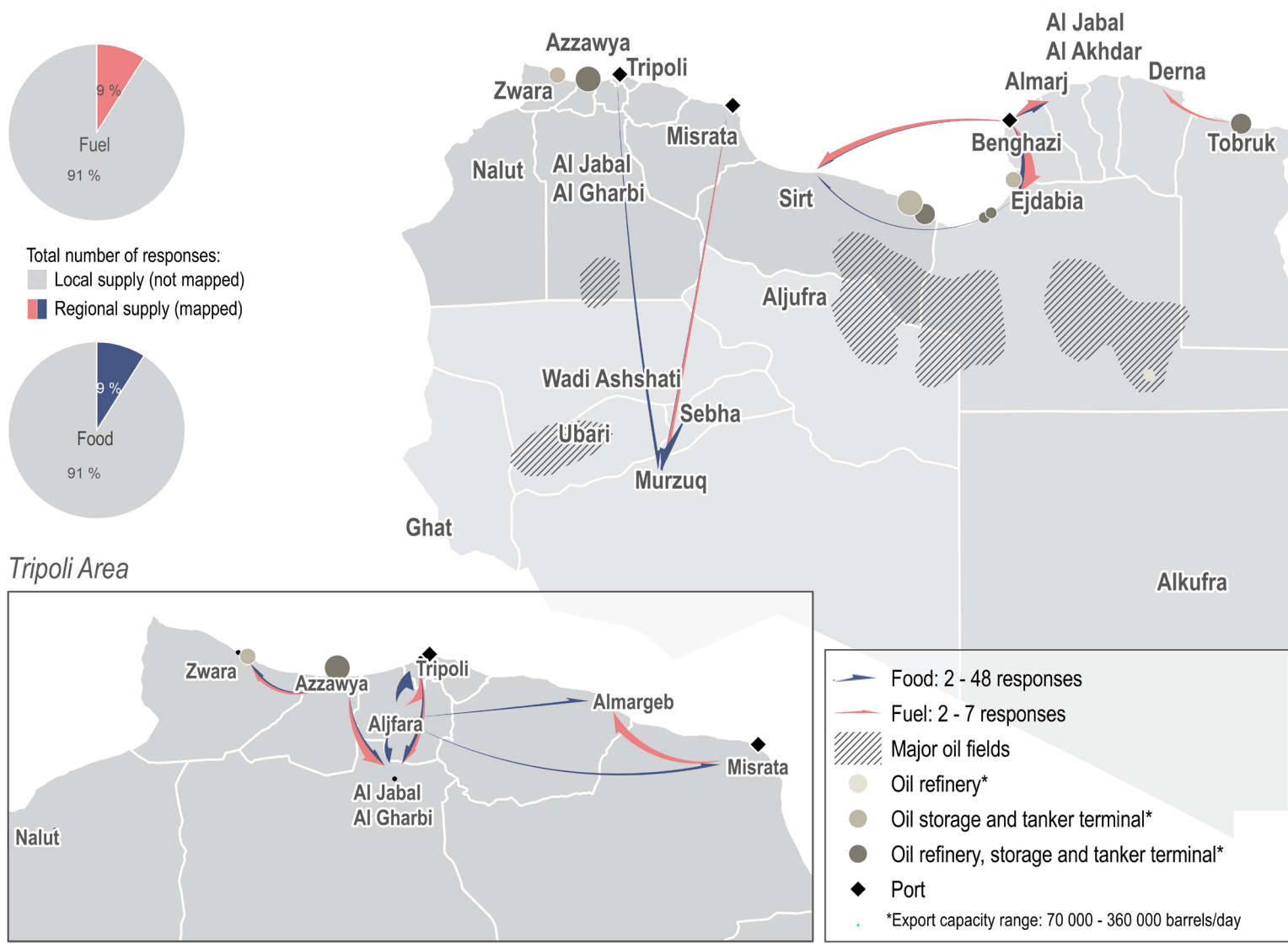
Location	Stand. price (LYD)	Since July 2020
<b>Municipality</b>		
Abusliem	1886	-5.7%
Ain Zara	1885	1.6%
Hai Alandalus	2112	-2.9%
Janzour	1938	-10.6%
Suq Aljumaa	2113	-3.1%
Tajoura	1926	-3.7%
Tripoli Center	2385	1.3%
<b>Tripoli Overall</b>	<b>1938</b>	<b>-10.6%</b>
<b>Benghazi Overall</b>	<b>2209</b>	<b>10.0%</b>



# 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

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.

## 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

- <sup>1</sup> Inside Libya, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, September 2020
- <sup>2</sup> Libya Economic Monitor, World Bank, July 2020
- <sup>3</sup> Libyan imports to continue to be allowed to enter without Letters of Credit payment prerequisite, Libya Herald, 27th August 2020
- <sup>4</sup> COVID-19 Dashboard Libya, WHO
- <sup>5</sup> Libyan MSNA 2020, REACH, September 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 JMMI'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 September 2019 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in September 2019.
- <sup>12</sup> The food prices were normalised by setting September 2019 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in September 2019.
- <sup>13</sup> The hygiene prices were normalised by setting September 2019 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in September 2019.
- <sup>14</sup> Libya IDP and Returnee March - April 2020, DTM IOM, June 2020
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> Common Operation Datasets - Population Figures Libya, UNFPA and the Bureau of Statistics and Census.
- <sup>17</sup> Libya - IDP and Returnees Baseline Assessment Round 31, IOM/DTM, 13 August 2020
- <sup>18</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.

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