

Libya Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI)

28 March-12 April 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.

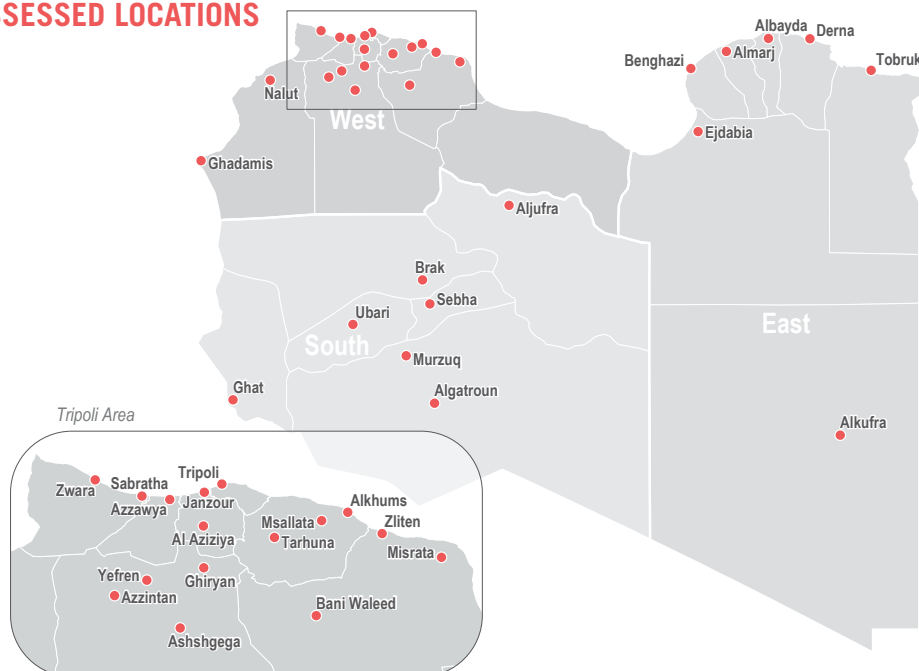
Markets in key urban areas across Libya are assessed on a monthly basis. In each location, field teams record prices and availability of basic food and non-food items (NFI) sold in local shops and markets.

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).

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 an MEB in each assessed market.
- More details are available in the Methodology section of the Appendix.

ASSESSED LOCATIONS



KEY FINDINGS

- April was marked by severe clashes in Tripoli.** While the median cost of the MEB in the city increased by 4.2% since March, findings should be considered as only representative of the first half of April. According to Mercy Corps, the median prices of vegetables, such as peppers (+141.4%), onions (+91.6%), or potatoes (+60.0%) continued to sharply increase in mid-April¹, as a result of **heavy fightings in agricultural areas near the capital**, especially in Swani and Wadi Rabia.
- Following a five-months decrease, the median cost of the **Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) started to increase again between March and April 2019, reaching a median cost of 785.74 LYD** in April, slightly above its cost in May 2018² (+0.4%).
- Yet, between March and April, **the Libyan dinar continued to appreciate against the US dollar and the Euro on the parallel market**, by +0.9% and 2.3% respectively
- While the South of Libya remained the most expensive part of the country, **the median cost of the MEB increased in all three regions, especially in the East (+7.5%)** where Derna recorded the greatest monthly change (+19.2%). Following the end of active conflict in mid-February 2019 in **Derna's Old City**, some food and hygiene items had been reported unavailable (rice, flour) and unaffordable (meat, fruit, vegetables).³ Between March and April, **the price of all assessed food items in the city either remained unchanged or increased in price**, notably sugar (+100.0%), rice (+60.0%), potatoes (+50.0%), tomatoes (+50.0%), and canned tuna (+40.0%).
- Across Libya, contrary to the previous month, **the median price of food and hygiene items increased by 2.8% and 1.9% respectively**, while the median price of cooking fuel (LPG) decreased by 3.0%.

JMMI KEY FIGURES

Data collection from **28 March-12 April 2019**

4 participating agencies
(ACTED, DRC, REACH, WFP)
32 assessed cities
34 assessed items
532 assessed shops

EXCHANGE RATES⁴

1.392 USD/LYD official ▲ +0.6%	4.260 USD/LYD parallel market ▼ -0.9%	4.820 EUR/LYD parallel market ▼ -2.2%
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KEY MONTHLY CHANGES IN MEB

Median cost of overall MEB

785.74 LYD ▲ 19.64 LYD +2.6%

Food items ▲ +2.8%	Hygiene items ▲ +1.9%	Cooking fuel ▼ -3.0%
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MEDIAN COST OF MEB BY REGION

West	766.79 LYD	+3.5% ▲
East	758.78 LYD	+7.5% ▲
South	1036.48 LYD	+2.3% ▲

MARKET SHORTAGES

None reported

Reported changes are month-on-month

Access the **JMMI online dashboard**

MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET (MEB)

Key Elements: Food Items

Bread	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 Elements⁴

Water (drinking and domestic use)	2,790 L
Median rent for 3-rm flat	1 month
Float ⁶	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

785.74 LYD

Change since
March 2019

▲ 19.64 LYD
(+2.6%)

Change since
May 2018

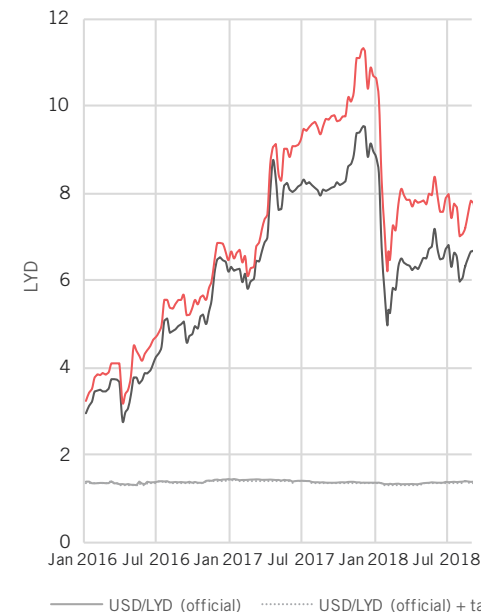
▲ 3.28 LYD
(+0.4%)

MEDIAN MEB COST BY LOCATION

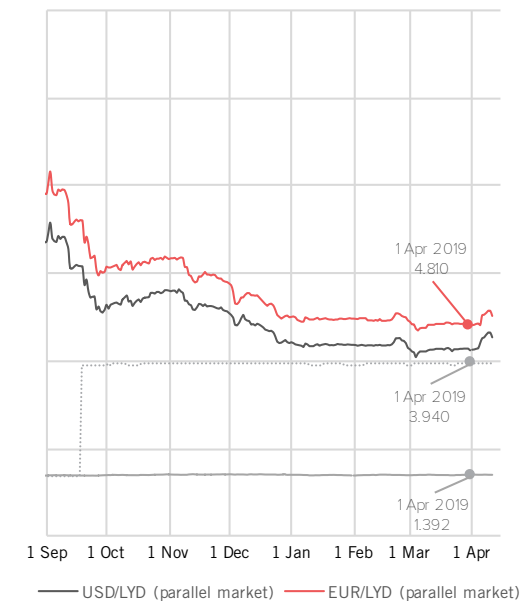
Location	Cost of MEB (LYD)	Since Mar 2019	Since May 2018
Ghadamis	867.25	+10.0%	+8.8%
Nalut	819.58	+2.2%	-5.2%
Janzour	814.63	+22.8%	No data
Ghiryani	805.70	+0.2%	+8.5%
Zwara	795.02	+4.5%	-3.9%
Tarhuna	793.38	+7.5%	No data
Zliten	789.51	+5.1%	+5.4%
Azzintan	780.43	+1.0%	+6.9%
Al Aziziya	775.14	+5.9%	-0.5%
Sabratha	770.89	+4.8%	-0.6%
Tripoli	770.64	+4.2%	+7.9%
Bani Waleed	770.06	+7.6%	No data
Azzawya	763.24	+3.0%	-2.9%
Yefren	742.79	-3.8%	No data
Alkhums	725.12	-2.5%	+1.8%
Ashshgega	708.13	-5.4%	No data
Misrata	701.09	+0.1%	+3.7%
Msallata	696.88	+3.9%	No data
Median West	766.79	+3.5%	+3.1%
Derna	832.00	+19.2%	-16.7%
Tobruk	786.80	+11.4%	-0.9%
Albayda	775.80	+11.2%	-5.7%
Alkufra	772.89	+2.2%	-20.2%
Ejdabia	771.67	+7.7%	+12.6%
Almarj	740.46	+8.1%	-5.5%
Benghazi	725.65	+4.9%	-3.7%
Median East	758.78	+7.5%	-3.8%
Ghat	1214.67	+2.8%	+19.2%
Algatroun	1185.61	-0.7%	+5.2%
Murzuq	1161.04	+1.6%	+8.7%
Ubari	1102.20	-1.3%	-0.1%
Sebha	910.48	+15.7%	-4.9%
Aljufra	893.57	+4.1%	+1.3%
Brak	765.70	-3.9%	-10.7%
Median Overall	1036.48	+2.3%	+4.6%
Median Overall	785.74	+2.6%	+0.4%

EXCHANGE RATES OVER TIME⁴

January 2016-July 2018

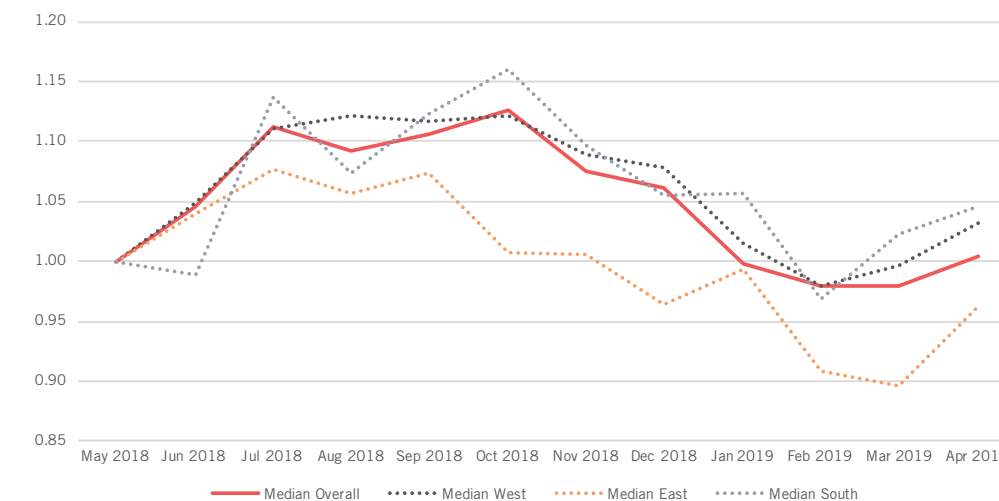


Since September 2018

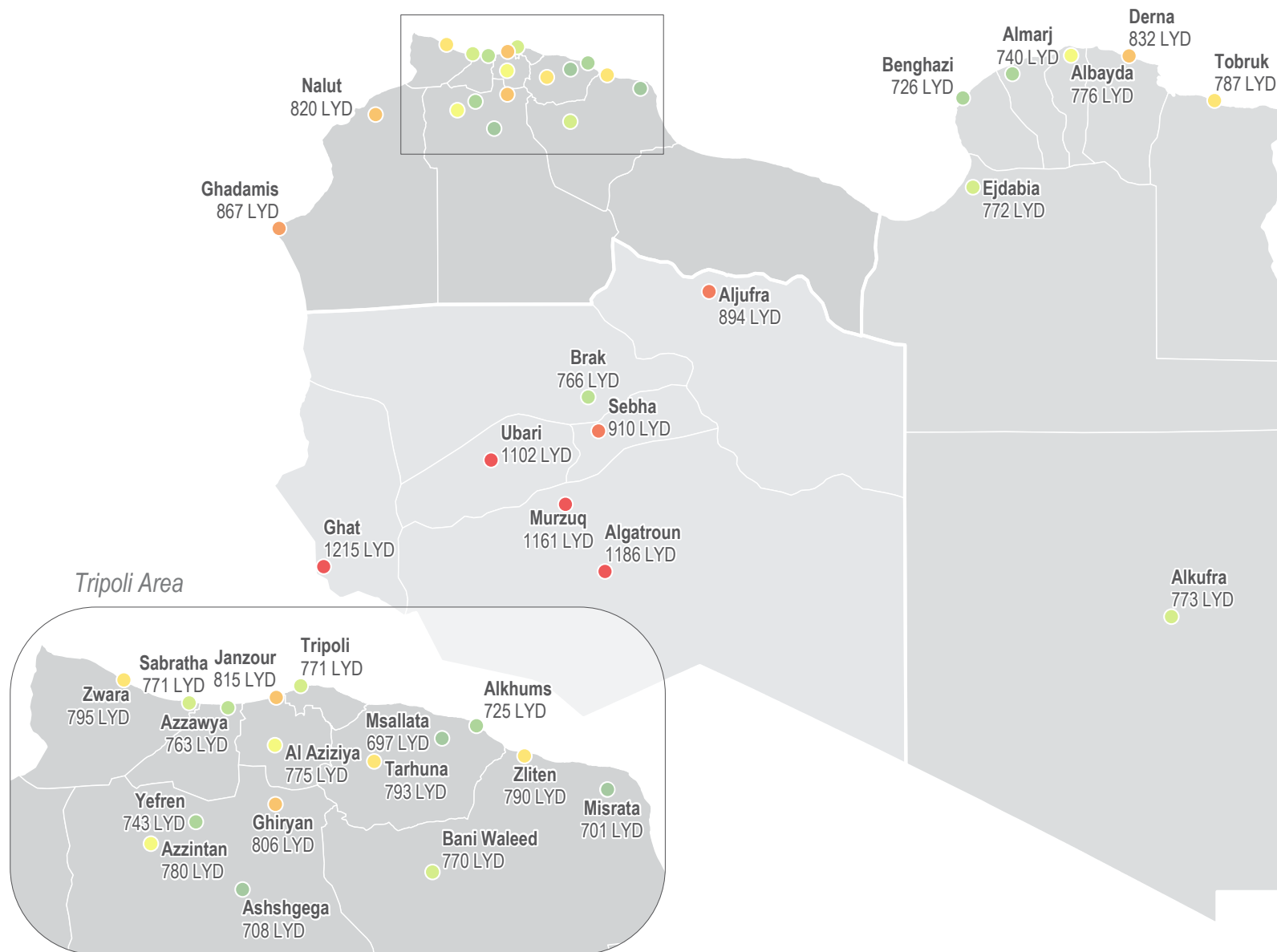


MEB PRICE INDEX

Since May 2018 (normalised, May 2018 = 1.00)⁷



Cost of MEB Key Elements by Location

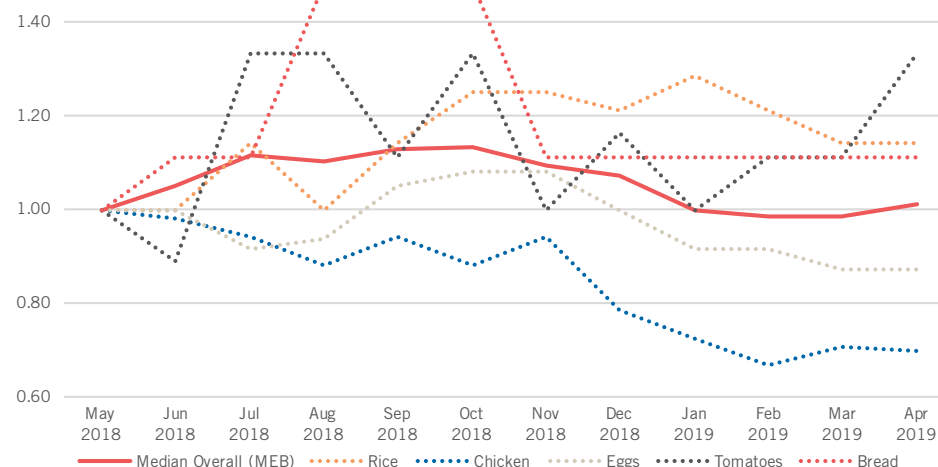


PRICES OF MONITORED ITEMS

Item	Unit	Median price (LYD)	Change since Mar 2019	Change since Apr 2018
Food items				
Onions	1 kg	3.00	+33.3%	+50.0%
Potatoes	1 kg	3.00	+20.0%	+71.4%
Tomatoes	1 kg	3.00	+20.0%	+9.1%
Lamb meat	1 kg	35.00	+12.9%	-6.7%
Peppers	1 kg	5.00	+11.1%	0.0%
Tomato paste	400 g	2.50	+11.1%	+100.0%
Couscous	1 kg	3.44	+10.0%	+1.9%
Milk	1 L	3.50	+7.7%	-17.6%
Vegetable oil	1 L	5.00	+5.3%	+42.9%
Flour	1 kg	2.31	+2.8%	+2.8%
Bread	5 pieces	1.25	0.0%	+11.1%
Eggs	30 eggs	10.50	0.0%	-12.5%
Pasta	500 g	1.50	0.0%	0.0%
Rice	1 kg	4.00	0.0%	+14.3%
Salt	1 kg	1.00	0.0%	0.0%
Chicken	1 kg	8.94	-0.7%	-27.0%
Condensed milk	200 ml	2.21	-0.9%	-11.1%
Canned tuna	200 g	4.22	-1.6%	+8.5%
Green tea	250 g	3.38	-3.6%	-32.5%
Sugar	1 kg	2.00	-5.9%	-44.8%
Black tea	250 g	5.88	-7.8%	-16.1%
Beans	400 g	2.00	-15.8%	-23.8%
Chickpeas	400 g	1.88	-16.7%	-37.5%
Hygiene items				
Laundry detergent	1 L	1.40	+7.7%	-13.8%
Handwashing soap	1 bar	2.13	+6.3%	+70.0%
Sanitary pads	10 pads	3.00	0.0%	-25.0%
Toothpaste	100 ml	5.00	0.0%	-9.1%
Baby diapers	30 pieces	15.27	-4.6%	-23.7%
Dishwashing liquid	1 L	1.40	-6.7%	-53.3%
Toothbrush	1 brush	2.25	-10.0%	0.0%
Laundry powder	1 kg	6.25	-10.7%	-13.2%
Shampoo	250 ml	5.00	-16.7%	-23.1%
Other items				
Bottled water	1 L	0.29	0.0%	No data
Official LPG	11 kg	5.00	0.0%	No data
Unofficial LPG	11 kg	15.00	0.0%	No data

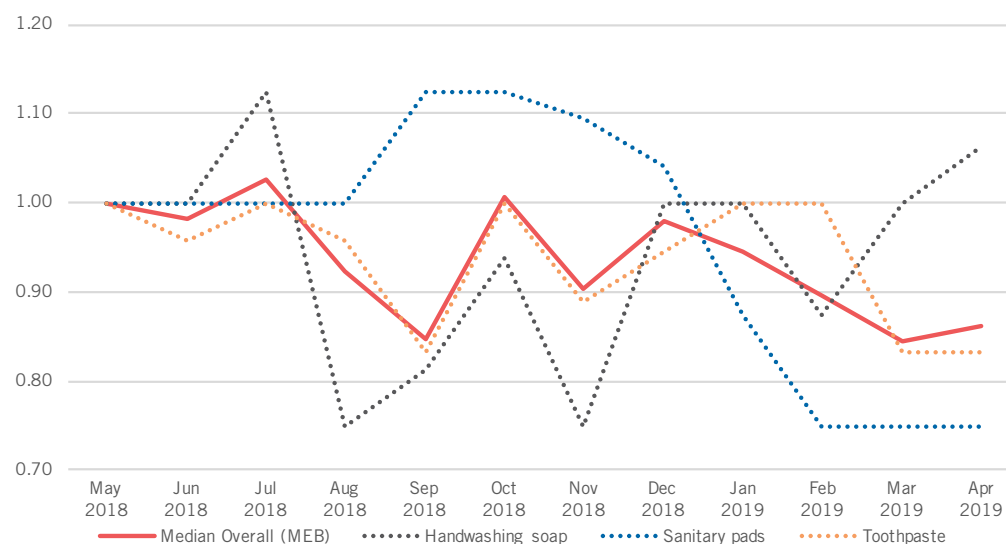
FOOD PRICES OVER TIME

Selected items (normalised, May 2018 = 1.00)⁸



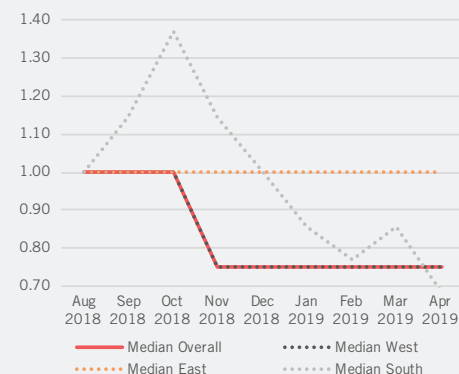
HYGIENE ITEM PRICES OVER TIME

Selected items (normalised, May 2018 = 1.00)⁸



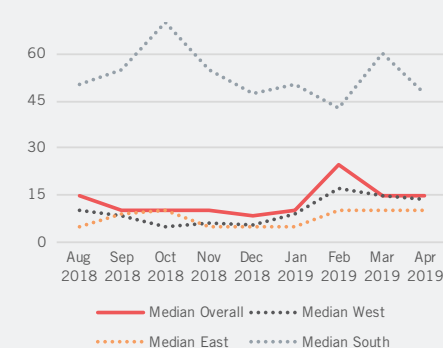
BREAD PRICES OVER TIME⁹

(normalised, August 2018 = 1.00)



PRICES FROM UNOFFICIAL COOKING FUEL VENDORS

(since August 2018, non-normalised)



NOTABLE MONTH-ON-MONTH CHANGES

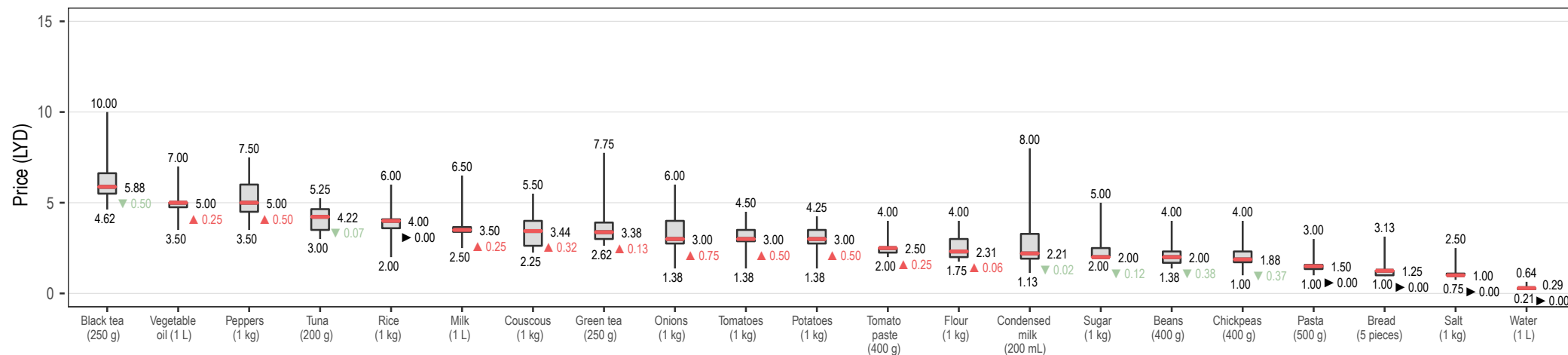
Onions	▲ +33.3%
Potatoes	▲ +20.0%
Tomatoes	▲ +20.0%
Chickpeas	▼ -16.7%
Shampoo	▼ -16.7%

MARKET SHORTAGES

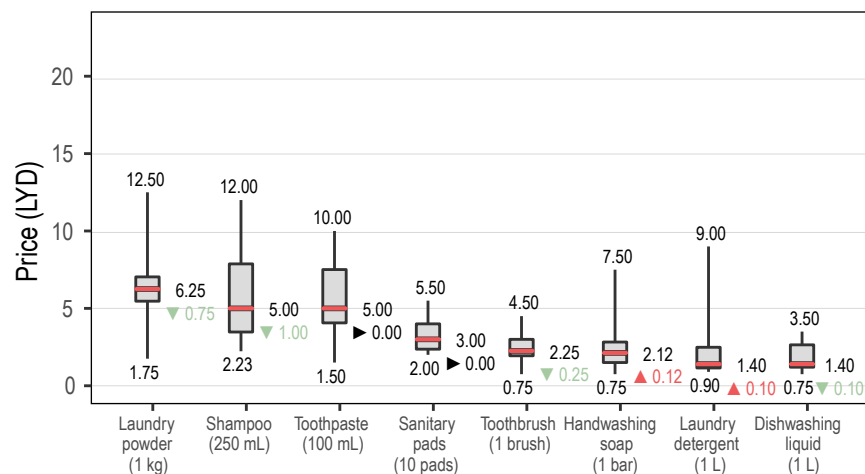
None reported

Distribution of Prices in Libya

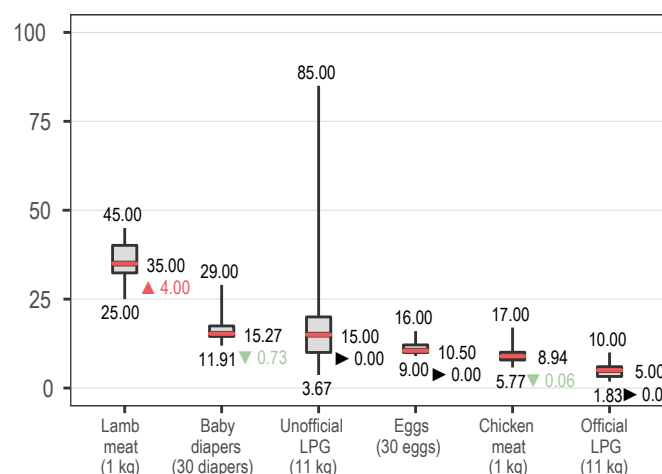
FOOD ITEMS



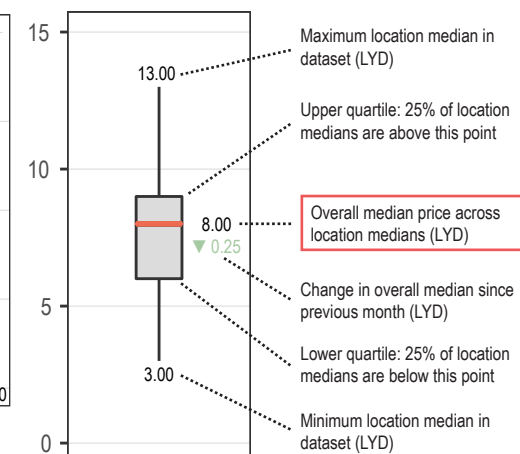
HYGIENE ITEMS



ITEMS WITH HIGHEST PRICES



How to read a boxplot



The 'location median' is calculated by first finding the median price of a given item in each assessed location, then taking the median of the resulting set of median prices.

PREVIOUS JMMI OUTPUTS

Factsheets Datasets

2019

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

2017

December	December
November	November
October	October
September	September
August	August
July	July
June	June

Trends Analyses

January–June 2018
June–December 2017

MARK-UPS FOR ALTERNATIVE MODALITIES

E-cards (credit, debit)	NA
Certified cheques	0-15%
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 The stores assessed on 16 April by Mercy Corps were not the same as the Tripoli stores assessed earlier in the month by other JMMI partners.

² The MEB has been calculated and incorporated in the JMMI since May 2018.

³ For further details, see the [REACH Derna Rapid Overview \(March 2019\)](#).

⁴ *Official rate*: Central Bank of Libya (1 April 2019), retrieved from [www.cbl.gov.ly](#). *Parallel market rates*: Ewan Libya (1 April 2019), retrieved from [www.ewanlibya.ly](#). The rates from 1 March 2019 and 1 April 2019 were used for the calculation of the monthly changes.

⁵ 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.

⁶ The 20% float includes expenses on healthcare, medicine, education, utilities, transportation, and communications.

⁷ The MEB price index was normalised by setting May 2018 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in May.

⁸ The food and hygiene prices were normalised by setting May 2018 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in May.

⁹ The bread prices were normalised by setting August 2018 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in August.