

Libya Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI)

1 - 8 December 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.

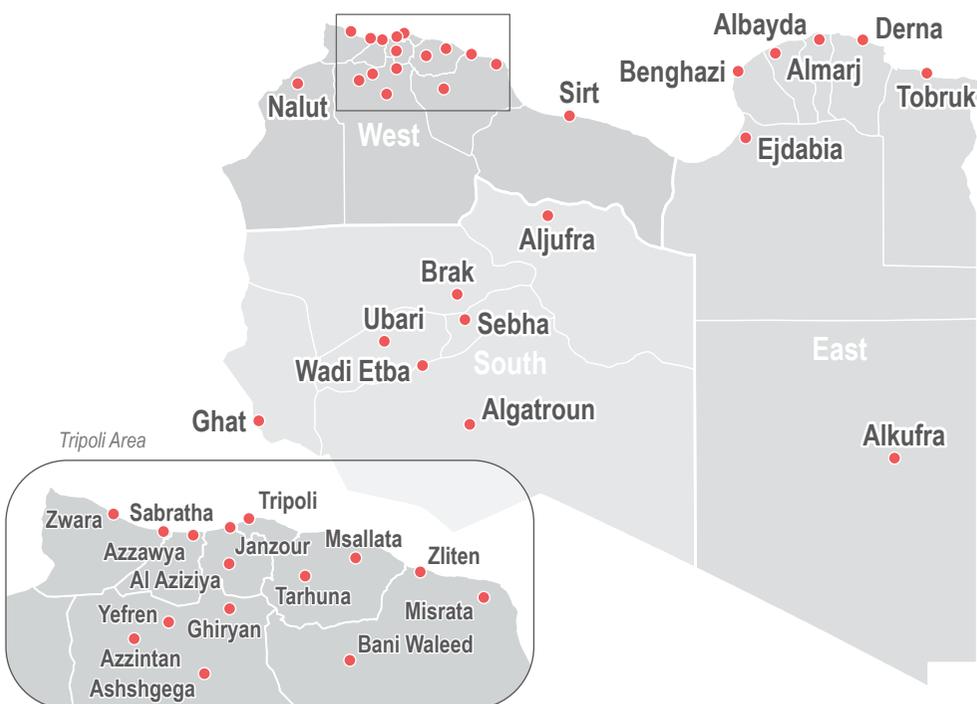
Markets in key urban areas across Libya are assessed on a monthly basis. In each location, field teams record prices and availability of basic food and non-food items (NFIs) sold in local shops and markets.

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 parallel market USD/LYD exchange rate dropped by 5.3%** from November to December 2019. It was the **lowest rate since June 2016**. The appreciation of the LYD against the dollar may explain the drop in the cost of the MEB.
- Consequently, **the largest price changes in December were for imported goods**, such as chickpeas (-14.3%), beans (-13.3%) and green tea (-11.1%).
- Comparing data from the past 12 months, the cost of the MEB was found to be cheaper in most cities**, possibly as a result of the September 2018 economic reforms.
- Misrata witnessed the largest drop in prices since January 2019 compared to any other market, with the price of the MEB decreasing by 24%**. The coastal city is also the main port for importing food/ NFI products, thus the changes in exchange rates may have had a more direct influence on prices in the city. Conflict related logistical disruptions are less likely to affect pricing in this region, since goods arrive by container ships, which are not directly affected by the conflict.
- 100% of cities in the **east and the south** have a cheaper overall MEB than in January 2019. **The only cities that have a more expensive MEB are Azzintan (+7%), Ghiryan (+8%) and the sub-district in Tripoli, Abusliem (+5%)**. The first two cities are located in the southern parts of west Libya, where the supply routes run close to the logistically disruptive conflict and check points that often require fines to cross over.¹
- According to an IOM/ WFP study, **over 52% of migrants in Libya voiced their concern about not having enough food to eat, compared to 25% of Libyan residents**. Further analysis shows that **19% of migrants find food prices to be too high, compared to 6% of Libyan residents**.² These results suggest that migrants could be facing higher risks of food insecurity as a result of high food prices compared to non-migrant population.

JMMI KEY FIGURES

Data collection from **1 - 8 December 2019**

- 3** participating agencies (ACTED, REACH, WFP)
- 33** assessed cities
- 32** assessed items
- 441** assessed shops

EXCHANGE RATES³

1.407 USD/LYD official ▲ +0.5%	3.930 USD/LYD parallel market ▼ -5.3%	4.330 EUR/LYD parallel market ▼ -4.4%
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KEY MONTHLY CHANGES IN MEB

Median cost of overall MEB 717.30 LYD ▼ -11.33 LYD ▼ -1.6%	Food items ▼ -2.3%	Hygiene items ▲ +9.5%	Cooking fuel.⁴ ▼ -13.9%
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MEDIAN COST OF MEB BY REGION

West	668.15 LYD	-4.3% ▼
East	679.81 LYD	-3.1% ▼
South	876.96 LYD	-4.7% ▼

MARKET SHORTAGES

No shortages 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 Elements⁶

Water (drinking and domestic use)	2,790 L
Median rent for 3-rm flat	1 month
Float ⁷	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

717.30 LYD

Change since
November 2019

▼ 11.33 LYD
(-1.6%)

Change since
January 2019

▼ 50.80 LYD
(-6.9%)

MEDIAN MEB COST BY LOCATION

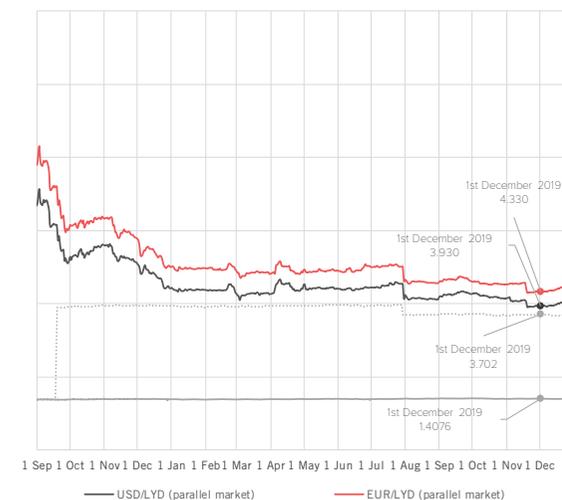
Location	Cost of MEB (LYD)	Since Nov 2019	Since Jan 2019
Nalut	806.6	-1.0%	0.1%
Azzintan	800.3	0.6%	6.8%
Ghiryán	798.5	2.2%	8.3%
Ashshgega	710.7	-1.1%	no data
Yefren	706.8	1.1%	no data
Zliten	697.9	-5.2%	-1.6%
Tripoli	693.8	-4.7%	-8.5%
Msallata	669.7	-0.8%	no data
Azzawya	650.4	2.8%	-13.2%
Tarhuna	646.6	-5.8%	-9.6%
Misrata	642.2	-16.6%	-24.1%
Janzour	639.5	-6.7%	no data
Sabratha	626.7	-3.4%	-18.0%
Al Aziziya	626.0	-12.0%	-13.6%
Bani Waleed	623.6	-5.3%	-12.3%
Sirt	620.6	1.3%	-11.5%
Zwara	607.6	-6.7%	-17.6%
Median West	668.1	-4.3%	-10.3%
Alkufra	739.9	-1.1%	-25.9%
Almarj	690.8	-4.8%	-4.2%
Ejdabia	686.5	-2.4%	-10.9%
Tobruk	684.8	-2.4%	-11.9%
Albayda	679.6	-2.0%	-14.7%
Derna	677.5	-0.6%	-6.6%
Benghazi	677.5	-0.5%	-7.2%
Median East	679.8	-3.1%	-12.7%
Algatroun	1096.2	-4.6%	-7.3%
Ghat	984.5	-7.1%	-10.2%
Wadi Etba	959.5	-1.1%	no data
Ubari	951.1	-15.5%	-9.2%
Aljufra	818.4	0.3%	-10.2%
Brak	789.9	0.9%	-5.9%
Sebha	760.0	-2.9%	-9.3%
Median South	877.0	-4.7%	-12.1%
Median Overall	717.3	-1.6%	-6.9%

EXCHANGE RATES OVER TIME⁵

January 2016-September 2018

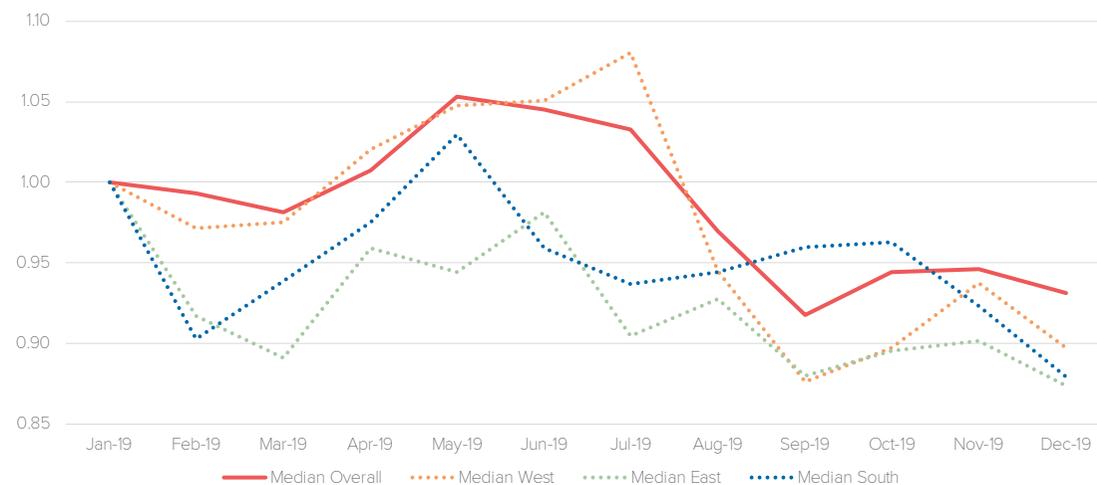


Since September 2018

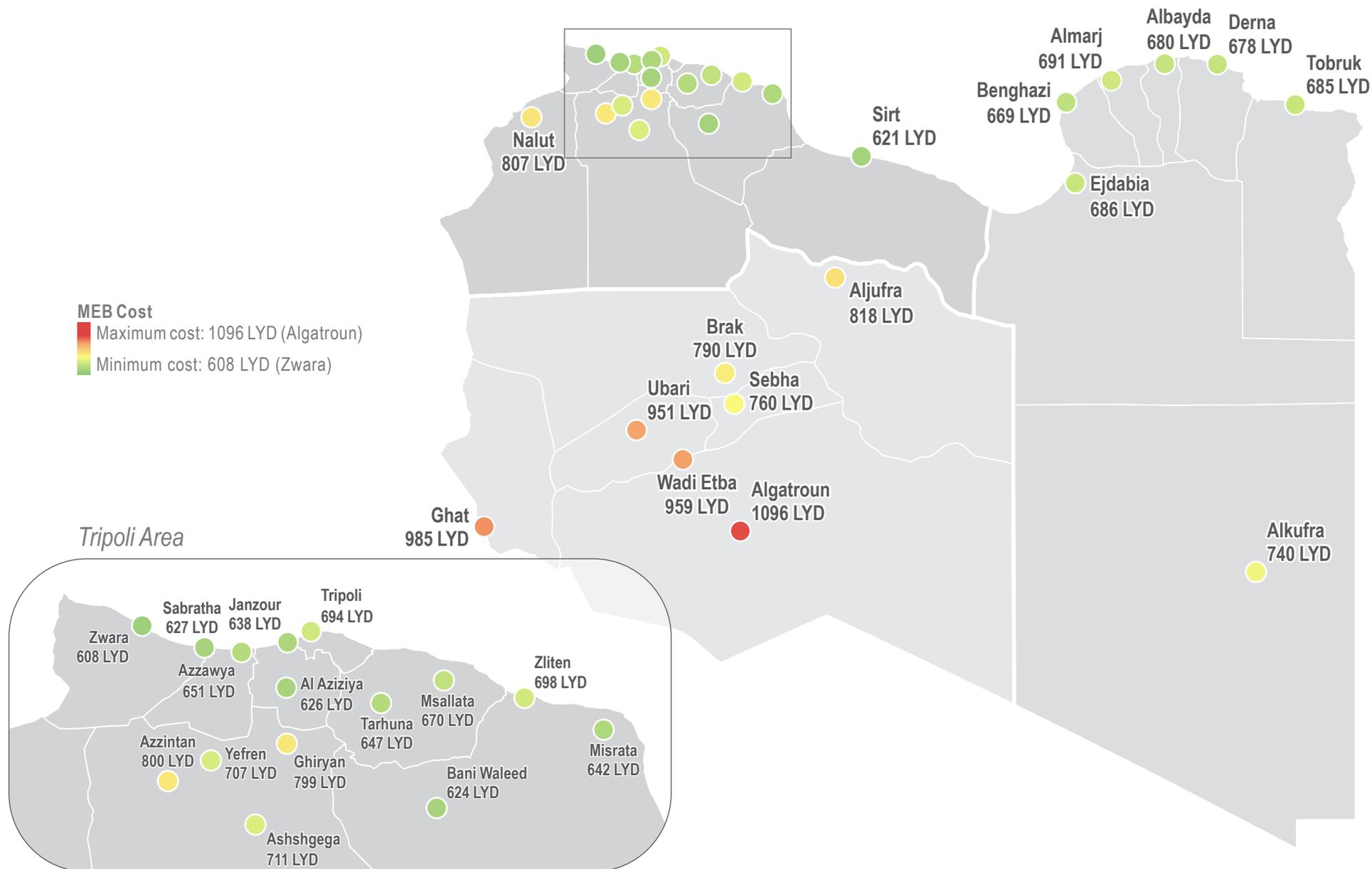


MEB PRICE INDEX

Since January 2019 (normalised, January 2019 = 1.00)⁸



Cost of MEB Key Elements by Location

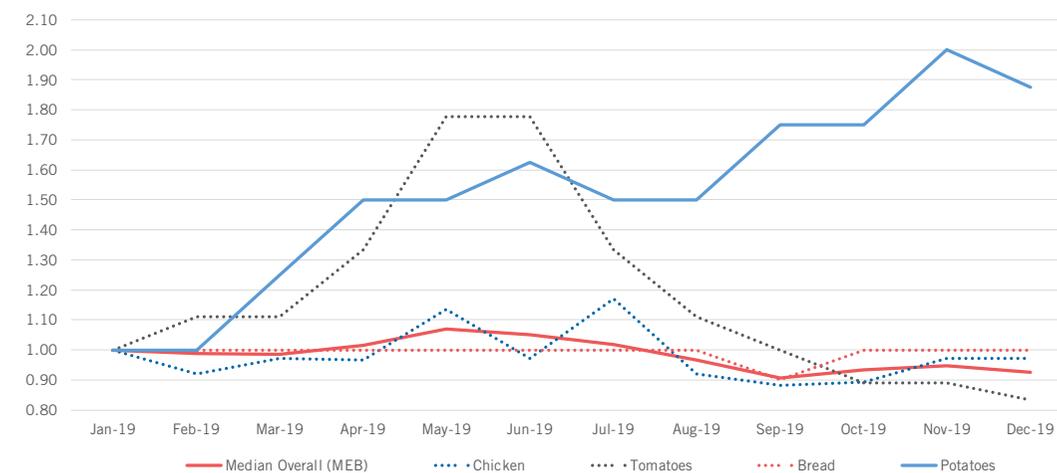


PRICES OF MONITORED ITEMS

Item	Unit	Median price (LYD)	Change since Nov 2019	Change since Jan 2019
Food items				
Peppers	1 kg	4.00	6.7%	0.0%
Lamb meat	1 kg	37.00	2.8%	5.7%
Bread	5 pieces	1.25	0.0%	0.0%
Chicken	1 kg	9.00	0.0%	-2.7%
Couscous	1 kg	3.25	0.0%	-7.1%
Eggs	30 eggs	10.00	0.0%	-9.1%
Flour	1 kg	2.00	0.0%	-20.0%
Onions	1 kg	3.00	0.0%	50.0%
Pasta	500 g	1.50	0.0%	0.0%
Rice	1 kg	3.50	0.0%	-22.2%
Salt	1 kg	1.00	0.0%	0.0%
Sugar	1 kg	2.50	0.0%	0.0%
Tomato paste	400 g	2.13	0.0%	-15.0%
Black tea	250 g	5.25	-2.3%	-22.2%
Vegetable oil	1 L	4.50	-2.7%	-7.7%
Canned tuna	200 g	3.50	-3.4%	-20.1%
Condensed milk	200 ml	1.91	-4.5%	-30.5%
Potatoes	1 kg	3.75	-6.3%	87.5%
Tomatoes	1 kg	1.88	-6.3%	-16.7%
Milk	1 L	2.75	-8.3%	-8.3%
Green tea	250 g	3.00	-11.1%	-22.6%
Beans	400 g	1.63	-13.3%	-35.0%
Chickpeas	400 g	1.50	-14.3%	-40.0%
Hygiene items				
Laundry detergent	1 L	2.38	18.8%	97.9%
Toothpaste	100 ml	5.00	11.1%	-16.7%
Sanitary pads	10 pads	3.33	10.1%	-4.9%
Dishwashing liquid	1 L	3.00	9.1%	100.0%
Handwashing soap	1 bar	1.63	4.5%	-18.8%
Shampoo	250 ml	5.00	0.0%	-32.8%
Toothbrush	1 brush	2.00	0.0%	0.0%
Baby diapers	30	14.63	-2.5%	-8.6%
Laundry powder	1 kg	6.75	-3.6%	-10.0%
Other items				
Bottled water	1 L	0.29	0.0%	0.0%
Official LPG	11 kg	5.00	0.0%	0.0%
Unofficial LPG	11 kg	19.84	-16.8%	98.4%

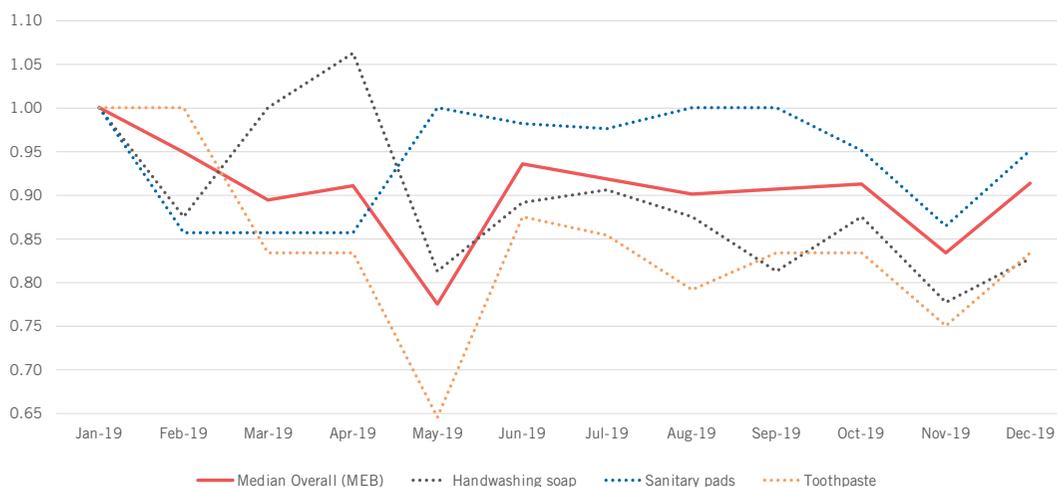
FOOD PRICES OVER TIME

Selected items (normalised, January 2019 = 1.00)⁹

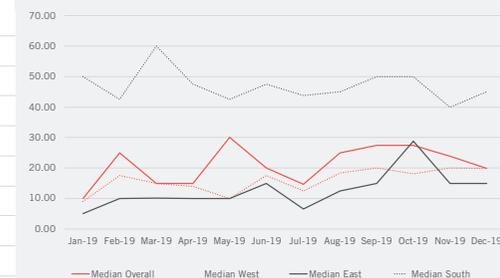


HYGIENE ITEM PRICES OVER TIME

Selected items (normalised, January 2019 = 1.00)¹⁰



PRICES FROM UNOFFICIAL COOKING FUEL (LPG) VENDORS (since January 2019, non-normalised)



FOOD, HYGIENE AND FUEL PRICES OVER TIME (since January 2019, normalised)¹¹



NOTABLE MONTH-ON-MONTH CHANGES

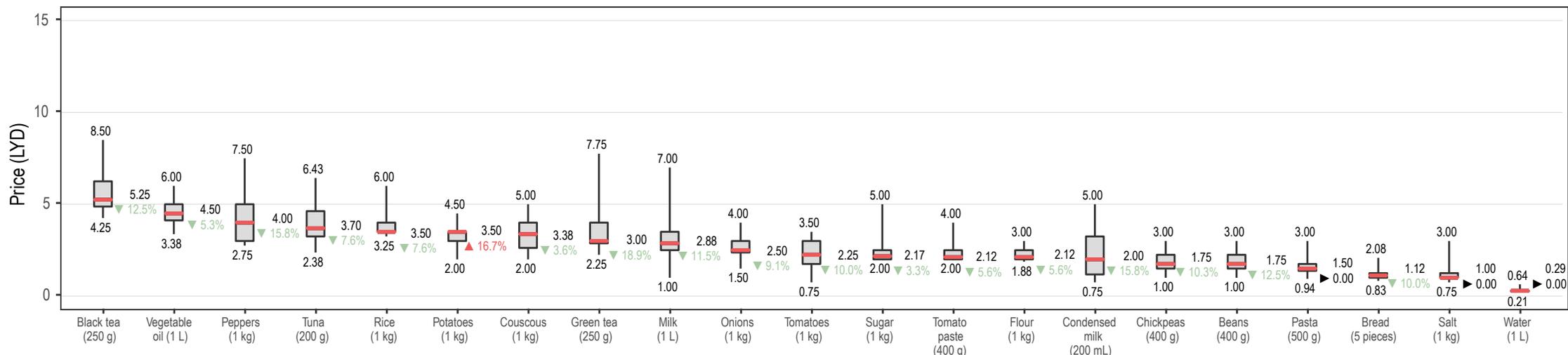
Laundry Detergent	▲ +14.3%
Unofficial LPG	▼ -16.8%
Chickpeas	▼ -14.3%
Beans	▼ -13.3%
Green tea	▼ -11.1%

MARKET SHORTAGES

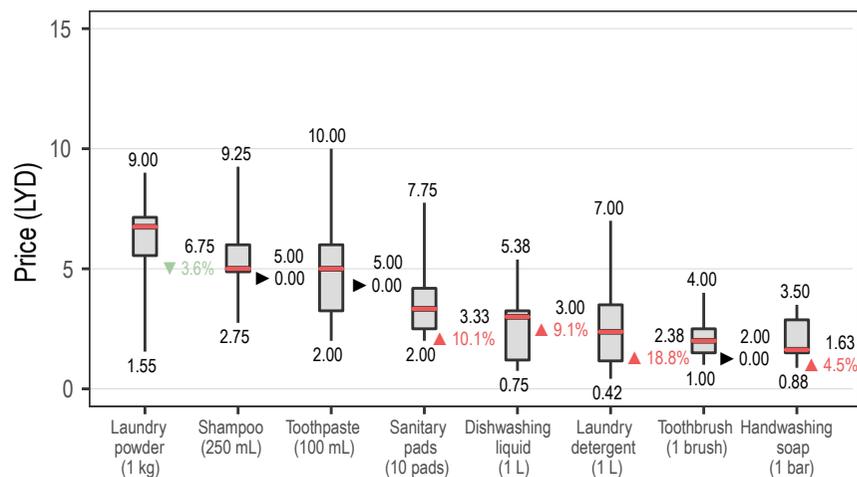
None reported

Distribution of Prices in Libya

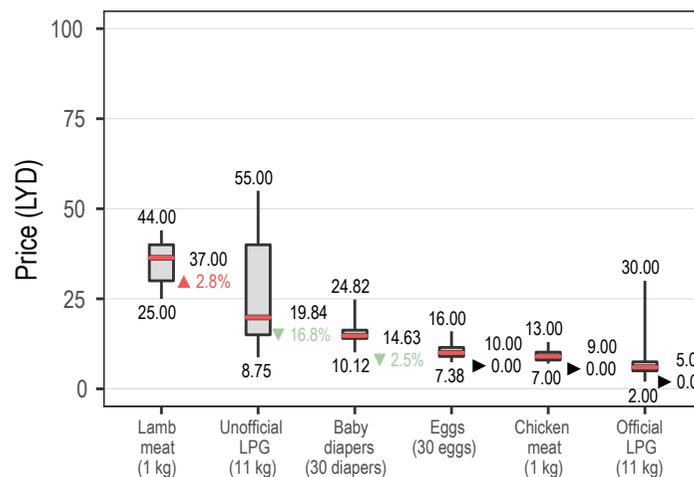
FOOD ITEMS



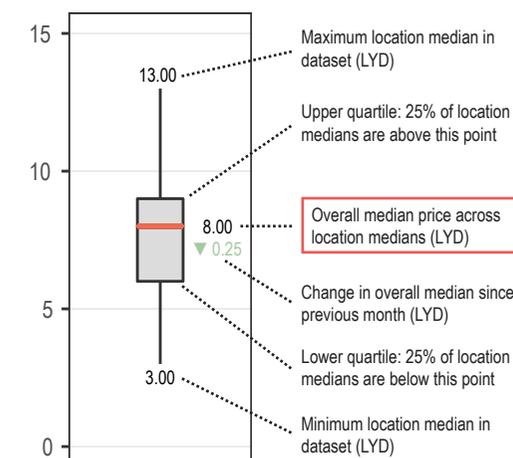
HYGIENE ITEMS



ITEMS WITH HIGHEST PRICES



How to read a boxplot

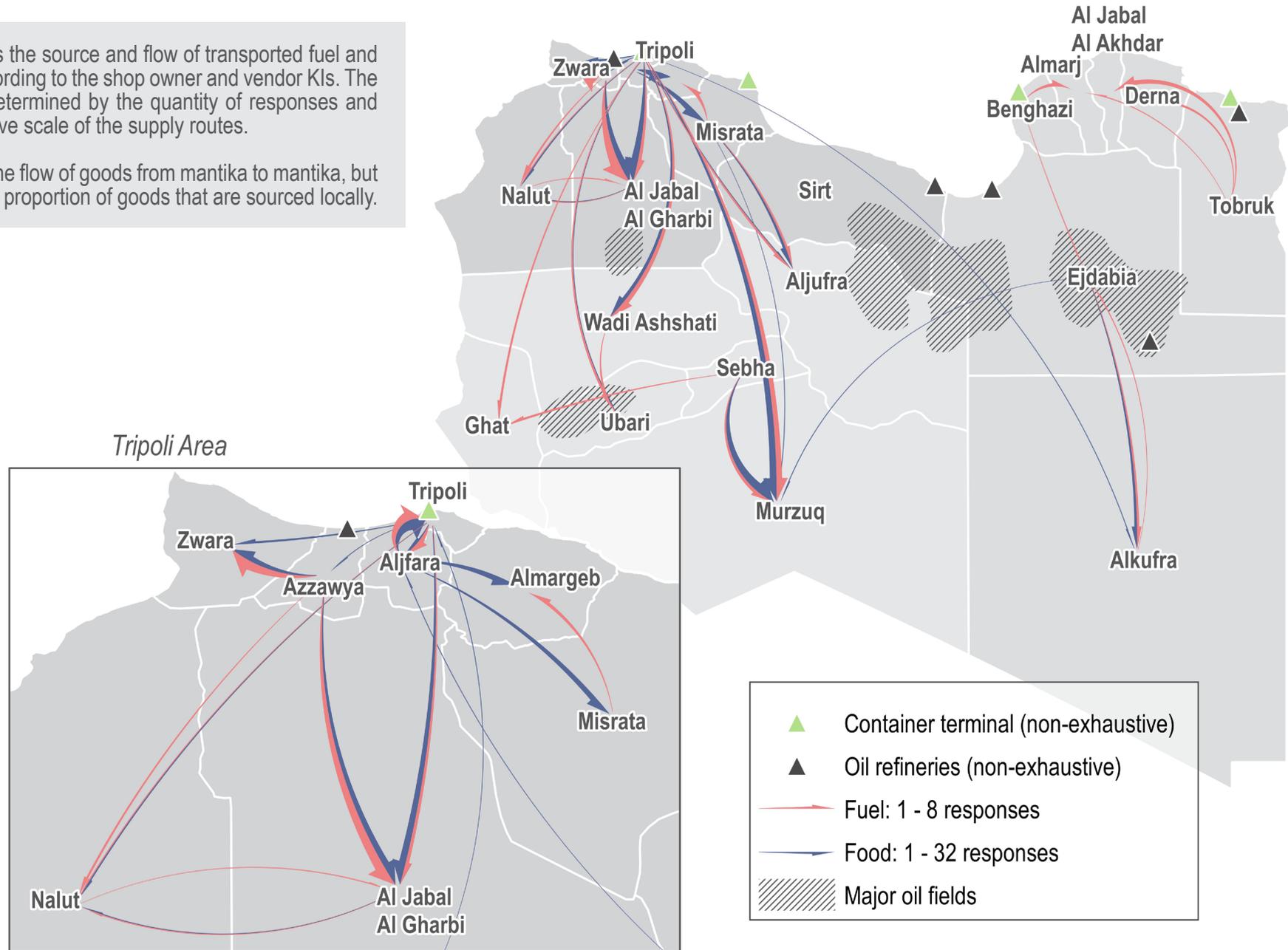


The 'location median' is calculated by first finding the median price of a given item in each assessed location, then taking the median of the resulting set of median prices.

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 JMMI OUTPUTS

Factsheets	Datasets
2019	
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

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 Effects of the Tripoli Conflict on South Libya, REACH, June 2019
- ² Hunger, displacement and migration. A joint innovative approach to assessing needs of migrants in Libya. IOM and WFP, November 2019
- ³ Official rate: Central Bank of Libya (1 December 2019), retrieved from www.cbl.gov.ly. Parallel market rates: Ewan Libya (1 December 2019), retrieved from www.ewanlibya.ly. The rates from 1 November 2019 and 1 December 2019 were used for the calculation of the monthly changes.
- ⁴ The cooking fuel price is calculated by taking the average of the official LPG median and the unofficial LPG median
- ⁵ Official rate: Central Bank of Libya (1 December 2019), retrieved from www.cbl.gov.ly. Parallel market rates: Ewan Libya (1 December 2019), retrieved from www.ewanlibya.ly. The rates from 1 November 2019 and 1 December 2019 were used for the calculation of the monthly changes.
- ⁶ 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.
- ⁷ The 20% float includes expenses on healthcare, medicine, education, utilities, transportation, and communications.
- ⁸ The MEB price index was normalised by setting January 2019 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in January 2019.
- ⁹ Ibid
- ¹⁰ The food and hygiene prices were normalised by setting January 2019 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in January 2019.
- ¹¹ The fuel, food and hygiene prices were normalised by setting January 2019 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in January 2019

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.