

Libya Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI)

1 - 13 April 2021

Libya Cash Working Group

REACH Informing
more effective
humanitarian action

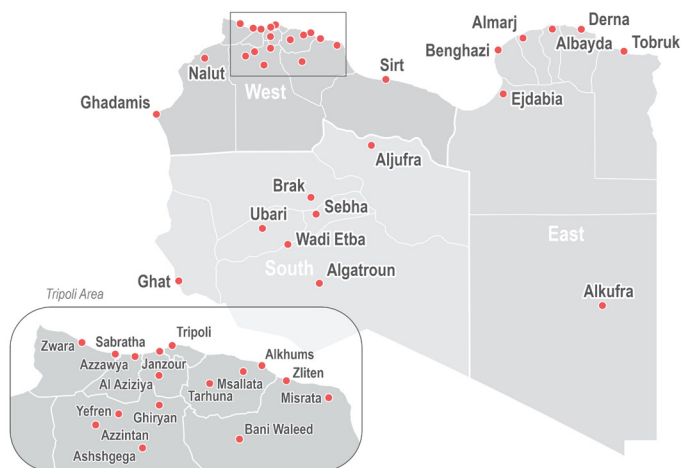
INTRODUCTION

- 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. Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) 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).
- 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 **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.
- 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 with property market professionals to better understand the rental market in Libya.
- More details are available in the Methodology section of the Appendix.

COVERAGE



JMMI KEY FINDINGS & CONTEXT

- **The cost of the MEB decreased by 0.9% across Libya between March and April 2021 (see page 2).** The MEB is 11.8% higher than pre-COVID-19 levels in March 2020. **The cost of the MEB in Benghazi, Al Khums and Al Aziziya are all over 36% more expensive in April 2021 than March 2020.**
- Since the last price hike in February 2021, the prices of a number of imported goods began to fall towards pre-devaluation levels. **From February - April 2021, milk prices have fallen by 10.2% and flour by 12.9%.** This may be attributed to a large amount of letters of credit (LCs) being issued by the Central Bank of Libya since the 3rd of January and the parallel market USD/LYD exchange rate remaining low.² Consequently, importers are more likely to access foreign currency officially through LCs. The increased access to foreign currency has likely contributed to the decrease in its demand on the parallel market, keeping the parallel market USD/LYD exchange rate low. This may also contribute to lower prices of imported goods, as many importers do not have access to LCs and must resort to buying foreign currency on the parallel market.
- **Nonetheless, April 2021 vegetable oil prices remained to be 52.5% higher than pre-devaluation levels in December 2020.** This may be attributed to global vegetable oil prices doubling in the past 12 months, due to global production deficit, low stocks and increased biofuel consumption.³ Low production may be due to COVID-19 restrictions affecting foreign workforce recruitment.⁴ All the while, the rise in biofuel consumption developed following the presidential election in the US, triggering fossil fuel refineries to switch to biofuel, consuming edible oil supplies.⁵
- From February - April 2021, **paracetamol prices have increased by 34%, following a spike in COVID-19 cases in mid-March and early April (during the April JMMI data collection).**⁶
- From 19th - 26th of April, authorities imposed a force majeure on Hariga oil field, reducing Libya's output by 280,000 barrels per day (bpd).⁷ This may have an effect on parallel market fuel prices, as it could inhibit oil refineries from receiving crude oil to produce fuel.

JMMI KEY FIGURES

Data collection from 1 - 13 April 2021

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

EXCHANGE RATES¹

4.468 USD/LYD official ▲ +0.1%	5.140 USD/LYD parallel market ▼ -0.6%	6.180 EUR/LYD parallel market ▼ -0.3%
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KEY MONTHLY CHANGES IN MEB

Median cost of overall MEB

704 LYD ▼ -6.27 LYD ▼ -0.9%

Food items ▼ -1.3%	Hygiene items ▼ -1.5%	Cooking fuel.⁹ ▲ +12.5%
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MEDIAN COST OF MEB BY REGION

West	694.1 LYD	▼ -2.9%
East	688.3 LYD	▼ -0.2%
South	822.6 LYD	▼ -0.7%

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

Water (drinking use only)	458 L
Median rent for 3-rm flat	1 month
Floot	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

704 LYD

Change since
March 2021

▼ -6.27 LYD
(-0.9%)

Change since
March 2020

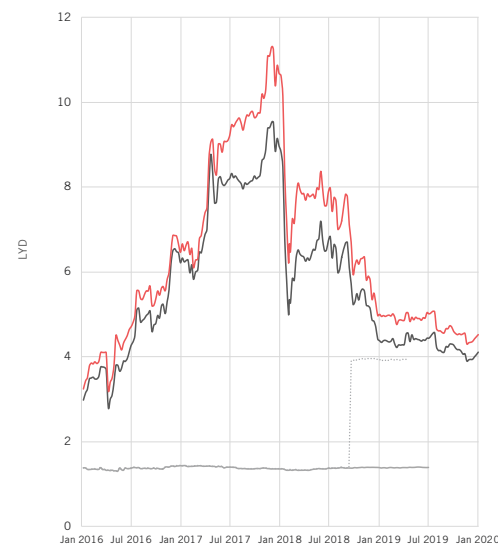
▲ +74.56 LYD
(+11.8%)

MEDIAN MEB COST BY LOCATION

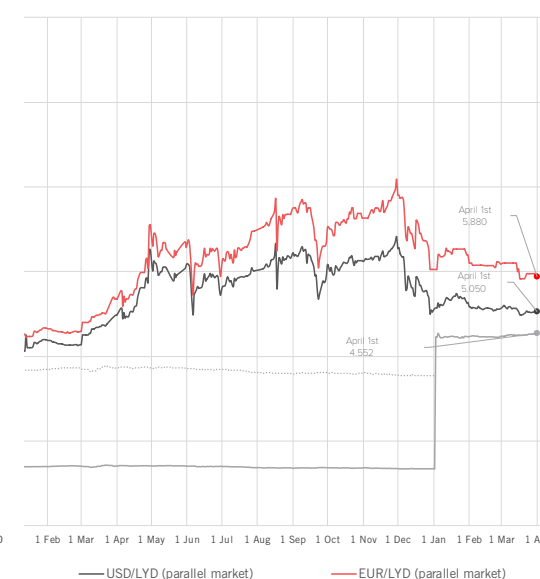
Location	Cost of MEB (LYD)	Since March 2021	Since March 2020
Ghadamis	793.6	-2.6%	16.2%
Nalut	770.3	-3.7%	5.2%
Azzintan	769.6	1.5%	13.1%
Tripoli	749	1.5%	14.4%
Al Aziziya	745.3	-0.2%	36.2%
AlKhums	738.9	0.8%	36.8%
Ghiryen	736.4	-4.4%	5.6%
Ashshgega	699.3	-0.1%	8.3%
Sabratha	698.6	-5.4%	25.3%
Azzawya	690.9	-7.7%	26.5%
Zwara	684.2	-9.4%	25.1%
Yefren	673.6	-2.9%	2.8%
Msallata	670.8	-2.4%	12.5%
Zliten	670	-3.5%	8.9%
Bani Waleed	663.4	-2.4%	11.1%
Tarhuna	649	-3.9%	10.3%
Janzour	638.6	1.2%	7.7%
Sirt	611	-8.6%	0.9%
Misrata	549.8	-7.5%	-1.9%
Median West	694.1	-2.9%	11.1%
Benghazi	837.5	4.9%	36.8%
AlMarj	755.2	2.0%	18.1%
Ejdabia	696.1	-10.8%	7.2%
AlKufra	690.9	-4.1%	5.9%
AlBayda	682.6	-1.3%	5.8%
Tobruk	678.8	6.3%	7.9%
Derna	656.4	6.4%	7.8%
Median East	688.3	-0.2%	9.2%
Ghat	1042.6	-2.3%	-8.9%
Algatroun	1031.7	-1.2%	-8.8%
Ubari	1010.5	-2.3%	-7.4%
Wadi Etba	823.1	1.3%	-2.0%
AlJufra	720.3	-3.5%	-6.6%
Brak	711.8	-2.3%	-2.4%
Sebha	701.8	-4.5%	-7.1%
Median South	822.6	-0.7%	-6.4%
Median Overall	704	-0.9%	11.8%

EXCHANGE RATES OVER TIME⁸

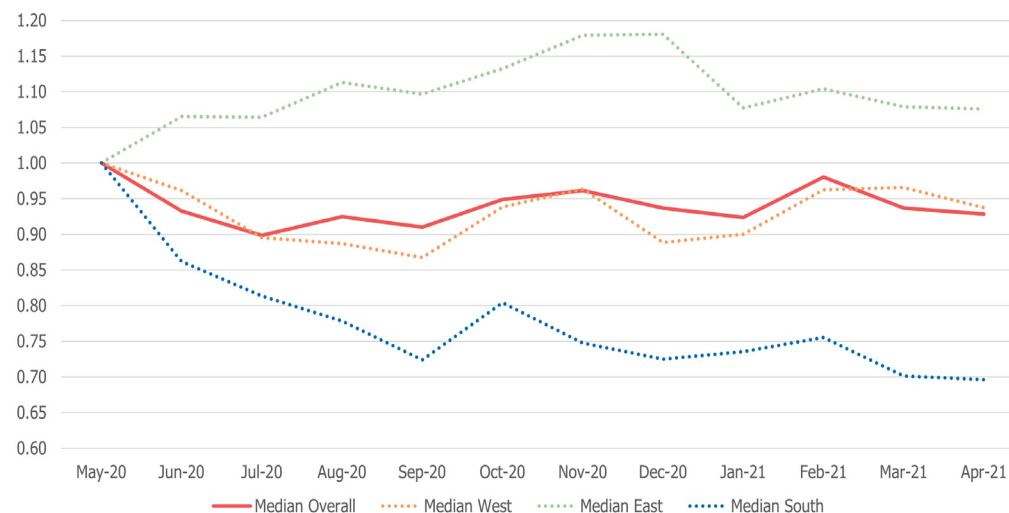
January 2016-January 2020



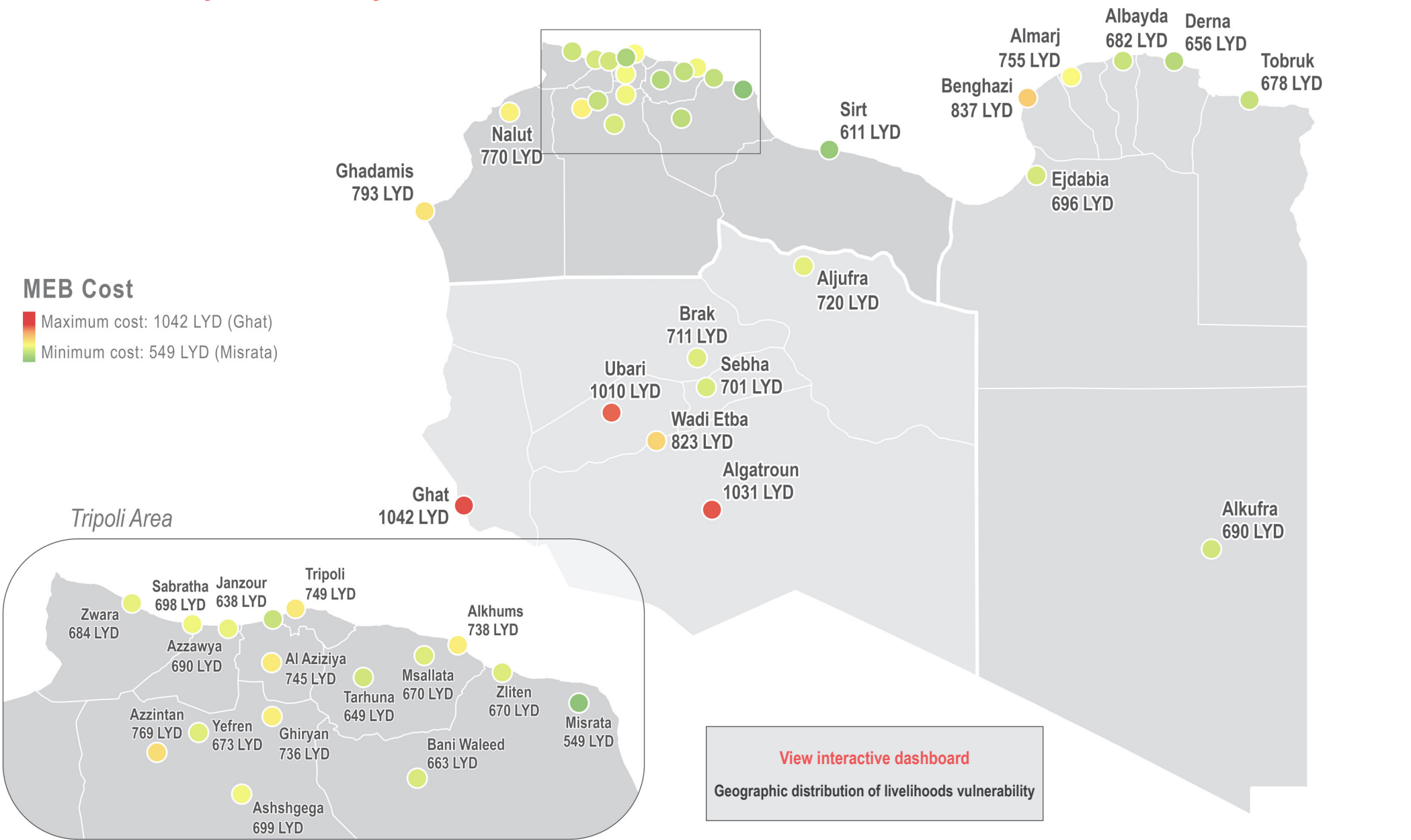
Since February 2020



Since May 2020 (normalised, May 2020 = 1.00)⁹



Cost of MEB Key Elements by Location

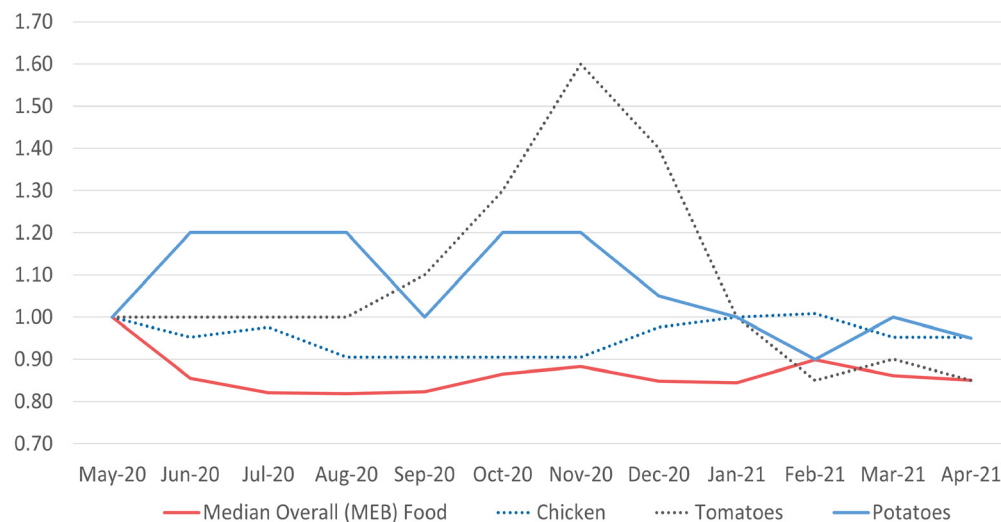


PRICES OF MONITORED ITEMS

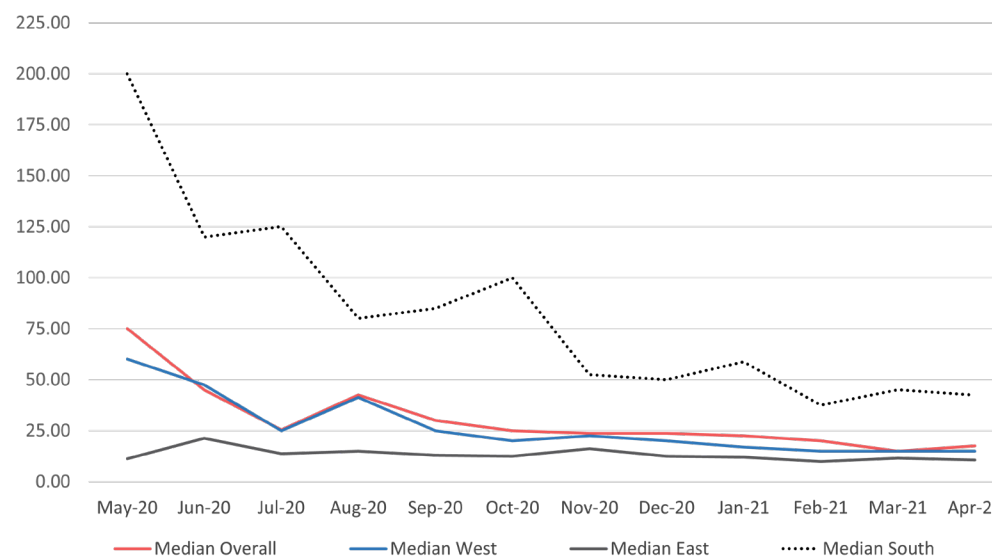
Item	Unit	Median price (LYD)	Change since Mar 2021	Change since March 2020
Food items				
Beans	400 g	2.38	11.8%	46.2%
Vegetable oil	1 L	7.62	8.9%	69.4%
Lamb meat	1 kg	42.00	5.0%	18.3%
Bread	5 pieces	1.25	0.0%	11.1%
Chickpeas	400 g	2.25	0.0%	50.0%
Condensed Milk	200 mL	2.50	0.0%	25.0%
Pasta	500 g	2.00	0.0%	33.3%
Peppers	1 kg	4.00	0.0%	0.0%
Salt	1 kg	1.25	0.0%	25.0%
Tomato paste	400 g	2.50	0.0%	25.0%
Tuna	200 g	3.50	0.0%	16.7%
Chicken meat	1 kg	10.00	0.0%	6.7%
Eggs	30 eggs	14.00	-0.9%	40.0%
Milk	1 L	4.50	-2.7%	28.6%
Sugar	1 kg	2.90	-3.3%	22.1%
Rice	1 kg	3.00	-4.0%	-7.7%
Flour	1 kg	2.62	-4.5%	31.2%
Potatoes	1 kg	2.38	-5.0%	-20.8%
Tomatoes	1 kg	2.12	-5.6%	6.2%
Couscous	1 kg	3.50	-6.7%	0.0%
Green tea	250 g	3.25	-7.1%	8.3%
Black tea	250 g	5.75	-8.0%	15.0%
Onions	1 kg	2.50	-16.7%	-16.7%
Hygiene items				
Bleach	1 L	9.25	23.3%	No data
Laundry powder	1 kg	7.62	17.3%	17.3%
Shampoo	250 mL	6.75	10.2%	33.0%
Sanitary pads	10 pads	4.50	0.0%	28.6%
Dishwashing liquid	1 L	2.75	0.0%	2.8%
Toothbrush	1 brush	2.75	0.0%	37.5%
Handwashing soap	1 bar	1.75	0.0%	16.7%
Baby diapers	30	17.00	0.0%	13.3%
Toothpaste	100 mL	4.88	-2.5%	21.9%
Hand Sanitiser	1 L	15.50	-7.5%	No data
Laundry detergent	1 L	1.75	-12.5%	-22.2%
Other items				
Water	1 L	0.29	0.0%	0.0%

FOOD PRICES OVER TIME

Selected items (normalised, May 2020 = 1.00)¹⁰



PRICES FROM UNOFFICIAL COOKING FUEL VENDORS (11 KG LPG CYLINDER) (since May 2020, non-normalised)

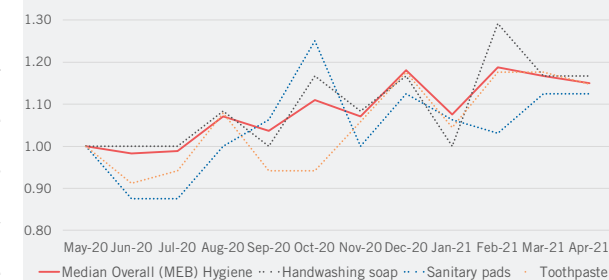


PRICES OF FUEL AND HEALTH ITEMS

Item	Unit	Median price (LYD)	Change since March 2021	Change since March 2020
Fuel items				
Unofficial Gasoline	1 Litre	1.19	35.7%	No data
Unofficial LPG	11 kg	17.50	16.7%	-50.0%
Official LPG	11 kg	5.00	0.0%	0.0%
Official Gasoline	1 Litre	0.15	0.0%	No data
Pharmaceutical items				
Paracetamol	400mg [20 pack]	8.21	15.7%	18.4%
Amoxicillin	500mg [21 pack]	11.38	3.4%	26.4%
Ibuprofen	400mg [20 pack]	7.00	0.0%	27.3%
Metoclopramide	10mg [40 pack]	16.00	0.0%	60.0%
Vitamin B	[40 pack]	15.00	0.0%	46.3%

HYGIENE ITEM PRICES OVER TIME

Selected items (normalised, May 2020 = 1.00)¹¹

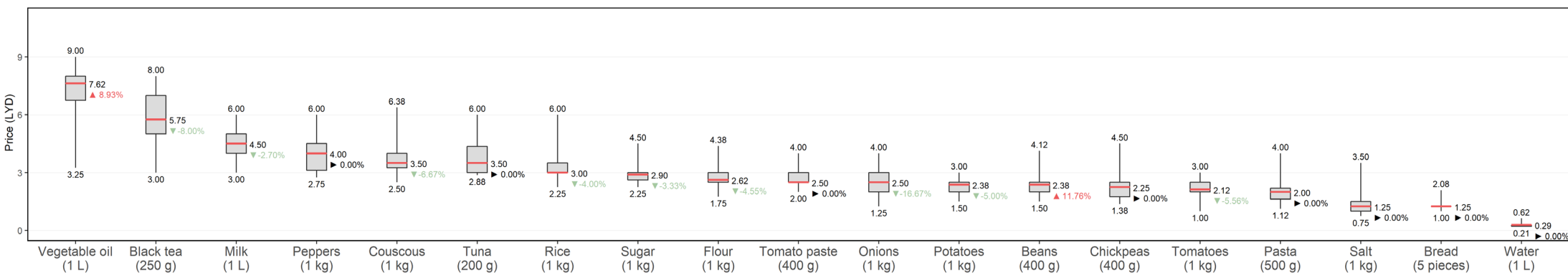


NOTABLE MONTH-ON-MONTH CHANGES

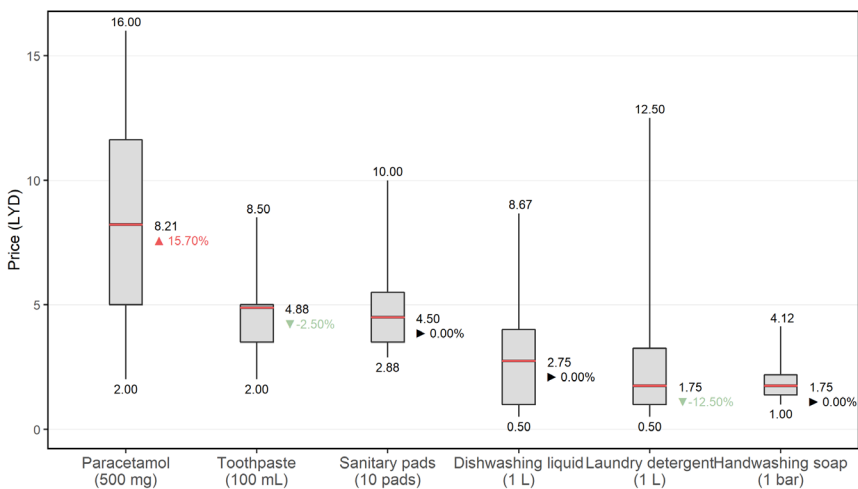
Bleach	▲ +23.3%
Laundry Powder	▲ +17.3%
Onions	▼ -16.7%

Distribution of Prices in Libya

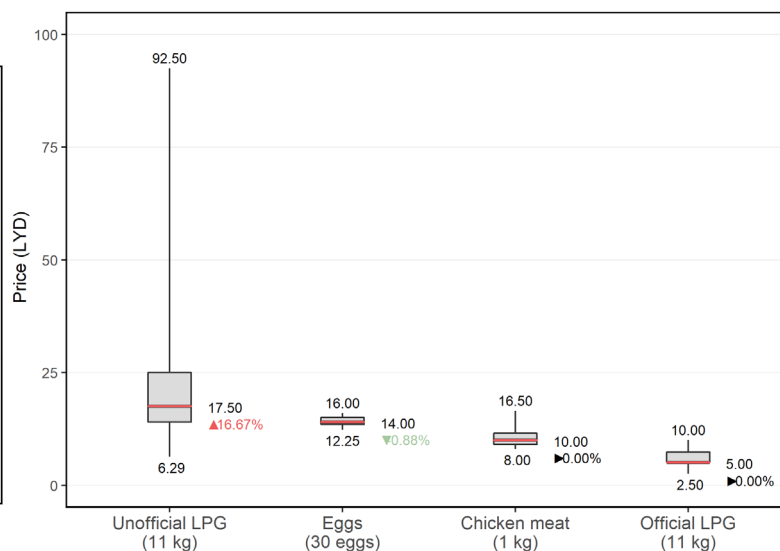
FOOD ITEMS



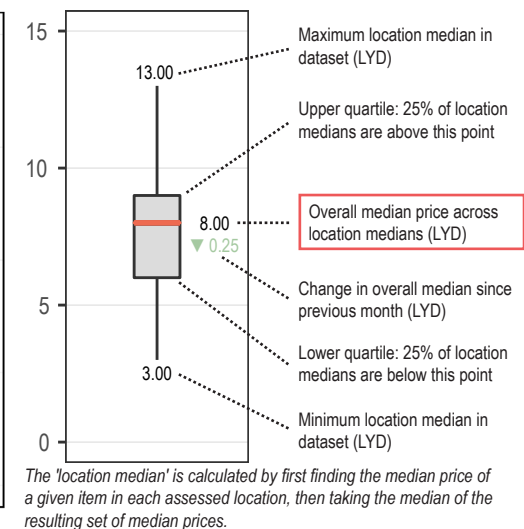
HYGIENE ITEMS



ITEMS WITH HIGHEST PRICES



How to read a boxplot



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)¹² Furthermore, conflict related political tensions in West Libya lead to large numbers of IDPs to move to eastern cities, especially Benghazi.
- 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 and Benghazi.

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 April 2021, 2164 rental prices were collected in Tripoli and Benghazi.** The price change findings are indicative.
- 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.

Key Findings

- From May 2020 - April 2021, rental prices seemed to have decreased in Tripoli overall (-25.1%), whereas, from March 2021 - April 2021, rental costs have decreased by 1.7%. Between April 2020 - February 2021, there has been a 59% decrease in IDP numbers in Tripoli overall.
- Findings indicate that Benghazi has seen a 11.4% overall decrease in rental prices from May 2020 to March 2021. In Benghazi, IDP numbers have not increased since October 2020. **

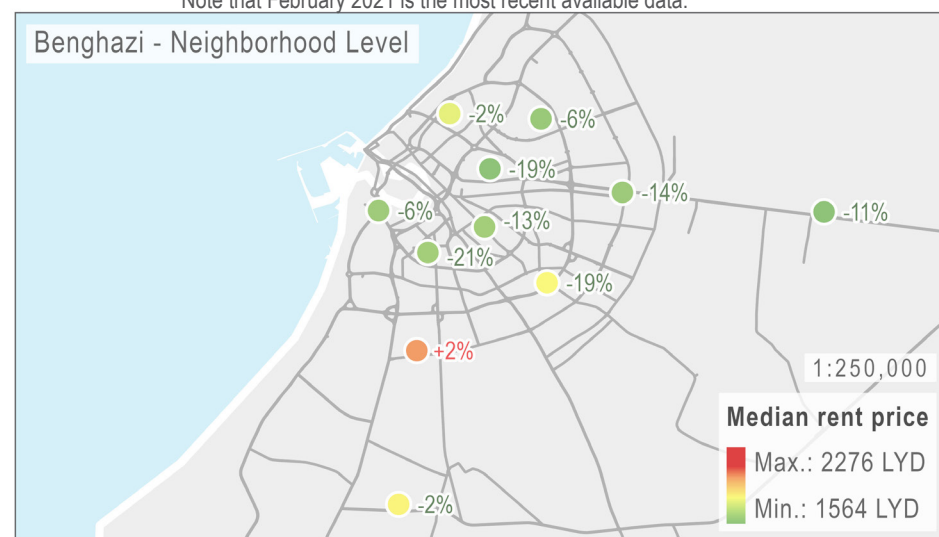
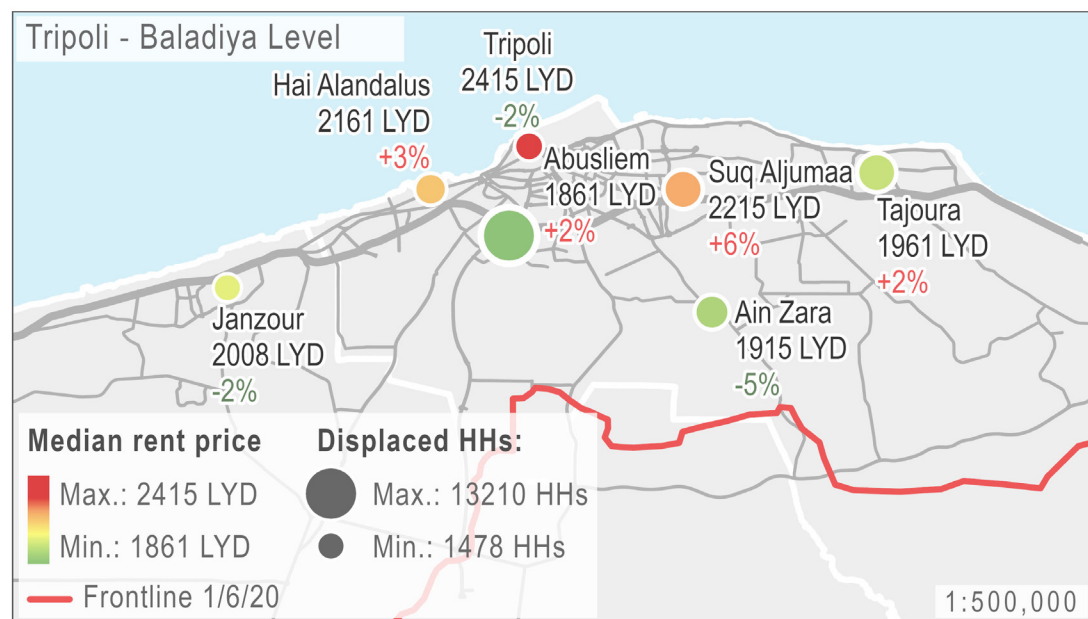
Standardised rental prices April 2021

Location	Standard price (LYD)	Since Mar 2021	Since May 2020	Change in IDPs Dec-Feb	Change in Returnees** Dec-Feb
Municipality					
Abusliem	1861	1.7%	-30.6%	-5.4%	0.7%
Ain Zara	1915	-5.2%	-34.4%	-26.7%	1.1%
Hai Alandalus	2161	2.8%	-19.4%	0.0%	43.7%
Janזור	2008	-1.7%	-12.8%	-2.5%	43.5%
Suq Aljumaa	2215	6.4%	-17.4%	0.5%	6.5%
Tajoura	1961	1.5%	-16.7%	-46.0%	0.0%
Tripoli Center	2415	-1.8%	-19.1%	-3.8%	0.0%
Tripoli Overall	2008	-1.7%	-25.1%	-16.4%	2.2%
Benghazi Overall	1815	-11.4%	-8.4%	-0.1%	0.0%

* Change in the number of IDPs and returnees, is derived from the latest Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) (Rounds 34 and 35) from the IOM.

** Numbers based on IOM-DTM numbers as well, comparing February 2021 to December 2020.

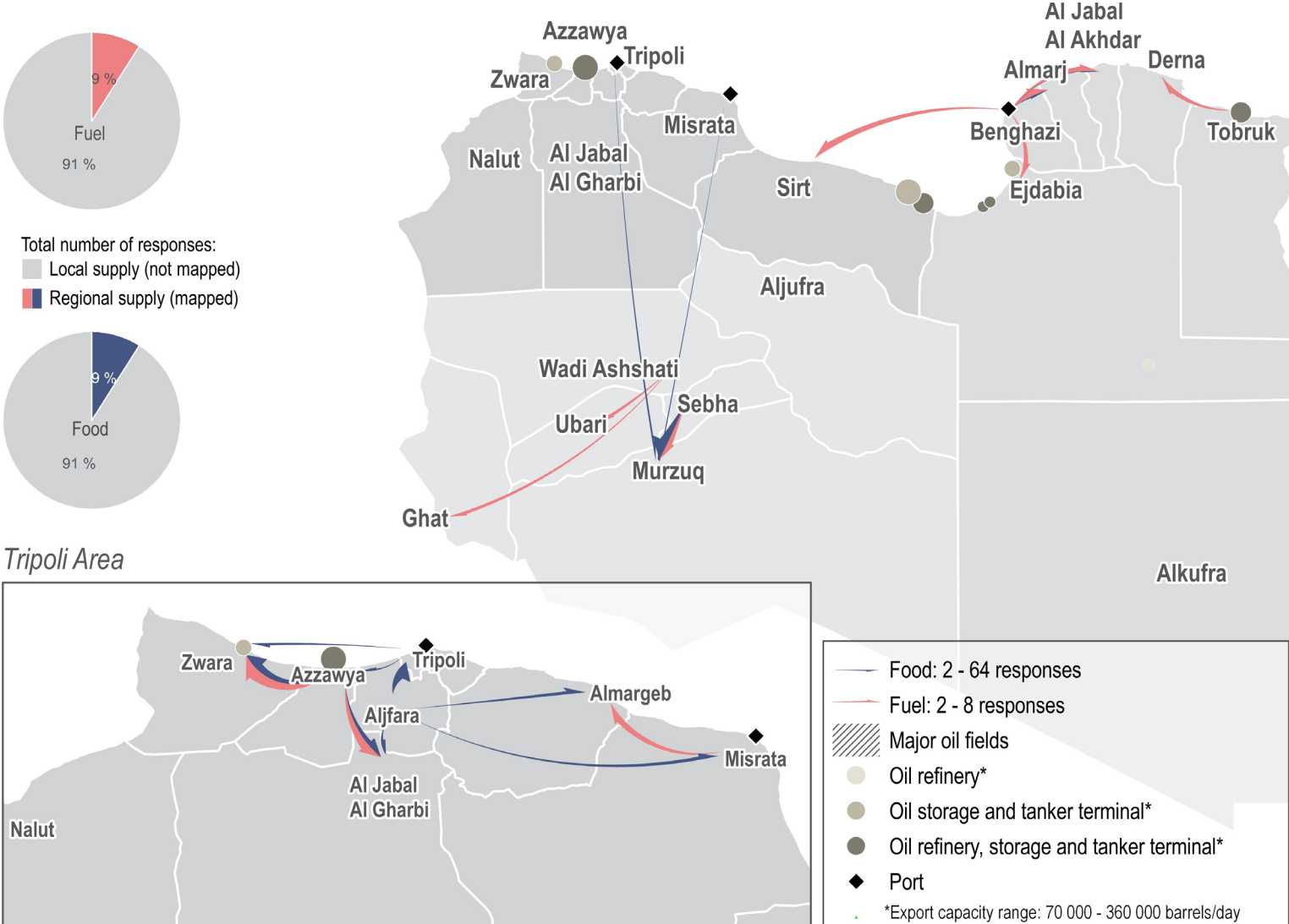
Note that February 2021 is the most recent available data.



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 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

2021

March
February
January

March
February
January

2020

December
November
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August
July
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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)

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.

Rent Price Monitoring

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 IDPs, as tenants may receive cheaper offer through informal channels.

Endnotes

¹ Official rate: Central Bank of Libya (27 January 2021). Parallel market rates: Ewan Libya (27 January 2021). The rates from 1 January 2021 and 1 January 2020 were used for the calculation of the monthly changes.

² Central Bank Publishing Letters of Credit Report, Twitter, 25th February 2021

³ Vegetable oil prices set to fall, Oil Fats International, 25 March 2021

⁴ ibid.

⁵ ibid.

⁶ COVID-19 Libya Dashboard, WHO, 3 May 2021

⁷ NOC lifts force majeure on Hariga after government allocates it LD 1 bn to pay its debts, Libya Herald, 26 April 2021

⁸ Official rate: Central Bank of Libya (1 January 2021). Parallel market rates: Ewan Libya (1 January 2021). The rates from 1 January 2021 and 1 January 2020 were used for the calculation of the monthly changes.

⁹ The MEB price index was normalised by setting May 2020 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in May 2020.

¹⁰ The food prices were normalised by setting May 2020 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in May 2020.

¹¹ The hygiene prices were normalised by setting May 2020 as the baseline and dividing each month's price by the price in May 2020.

¹² Libya IDP and Returnee Report November - December 2020, DTM IOM, October 2020

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.