

Libya mVAM bulletin #4 (April - May 2020)

Highlights

COVID-19 Overview

Food Consumption

Coping Strategies



Key Figures



521
Completed Surveys



11 %
Displaced Households



70%
Staying Home Permanently After COVID-19
Pandemic



48%
Have No Access to Markets After the
Pandemic

Situation Update

As reported in the [Libya Situation Report](#) produced by OCHA, the 4th of April 2020 marked one year since forces of Libyan National Army (LNA) launched their offensive to seize Tripoli, Libya's capital. According to the [mobility tracking report](#), the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) identified in Libya increased from 373,709 to 401,836 in March and April 2020, mainly due to the increase of the armed conflict in western Libya. Ongoing clashes continued to be reported in densely populated areas, particularly in Southern parts of Tripoli, with significant impact on peoples' livelihoods and access to essential goods and services. The conflict has had a significant impact on infrastructure as well, and many homes, hospitals and schools have been damaged or destroyed.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted Libya with the first case reported in March 2020. Libyan authorities subsequently implemented public health measures, which included restricting travel and internal movements to curb the spread of COVID-19. As of 9th June 2020, the Libyan National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) reported 802 confirmed cases, including 23 COVID-related deaths.

[OCHA- Libya Situation Report, 29th April 2020](#)

[Libya IDP and Returnee Report, March - April 2020](#)



Key Points

- Despite the onset of COVID-19, the second round of data collection largely mirrors the results from the first round. All key food security and welfare indicators are nearly identical between the two rounds, there are consistent regional patterns where food security indicators are worst in **Murzuq** and best in **Tobruk**, and disadvantaged groups continue to have worse food security indicators and other welfare outcomes.

- Although households were able to maintain their access to food and other basic services in the second round of data collection, there have been significant changes noted in response to the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. There was an increase in the cost of the Minimum Expenditures Basket in April in comparison with March 2020, with the highest increase being reported in the South (+43 percent); and movement restrictions have made it more difficult for people to reach their jobs and food markets.

- The situation in the country could significantly worsen as the pandemic becomes worse. Many of the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis- inability to reach jobs, food markets, and the degree to which households are practicing social distancing- were progressively getting worse over the course of data collection.



vam
food security analysis



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From the survey, the respondents are taking care to socially distance and limit their in-person interactions. Over 60 percent of respondents report that household members always practice social distancing, nearly 30 percent report that they usually practice social distancing, and less than 10 percent of respondents report to less strict social distancing. These limits on movement and in-person interactions are having a bigger impact on the labor market than on access to key services. Figure 1 demonstrates that over 60 percent of households have a member that was unable to reach their job after the start of the pandemic. However, much fewer respondents had trouble accessing food markets, and the vast majority of households did not report travel restrictions being their primary difficulty in getting medical care.

As demonstrated by the lack of a significant change to food consumption or other welfare outcomes relative to the previous survey round in 2019, households have thus far been able to effectively cope with the impact COVID-19 has had on the labor market and on the ability of households to reach food markets. Furthermore, the pandemic is still in its early months and the number of infections in Libya appears to be limited. As time passes and the number of new infections in Libya could increase, it is possible that household welfare could significantly suffer.

Further demonstrating how the situation might become worse over time, this survey round demonstrates that a number of COVID-19 sensitive questions changed significantly over the course of the survey. Surveys were conducted between April 1 and May 9, 2020, and Figure 4 break up the responses to COVID-19 sensitive questions for the nearly one-third of the households surveyed prior to April 14, the slightly more than one-third of households surveyed between April 14'th and April 21' st, and the one-third of households surveyed after April 21' st. Both access to jobs and access to food markets was significantly worse for households surveyed later in the survey period. Additionally, there was a slight increase in the share of households that reported to always practice social distancing.

Fig 1: Impact of COVID-19 On Access to Basic Services

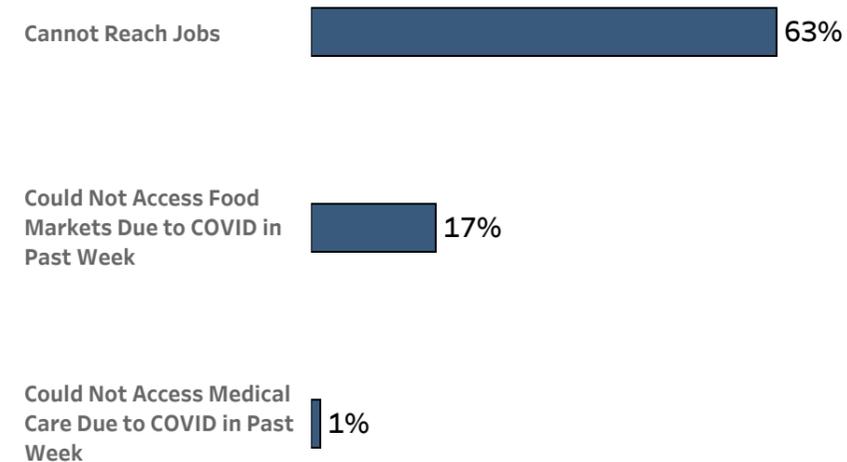


Fig 2 : Share of Households Adopting Staying Home As a Precautionary Measure Against COVID-19

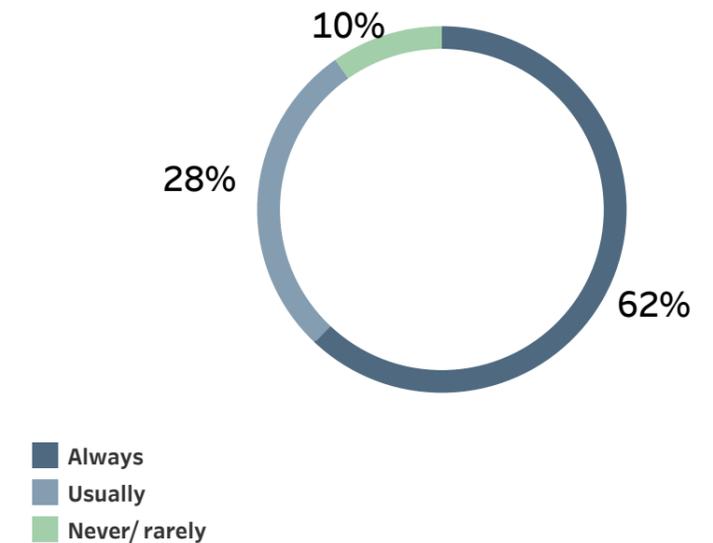


Fig 3: Summary of Key Welfare Indicators in Each Round of Data Collection

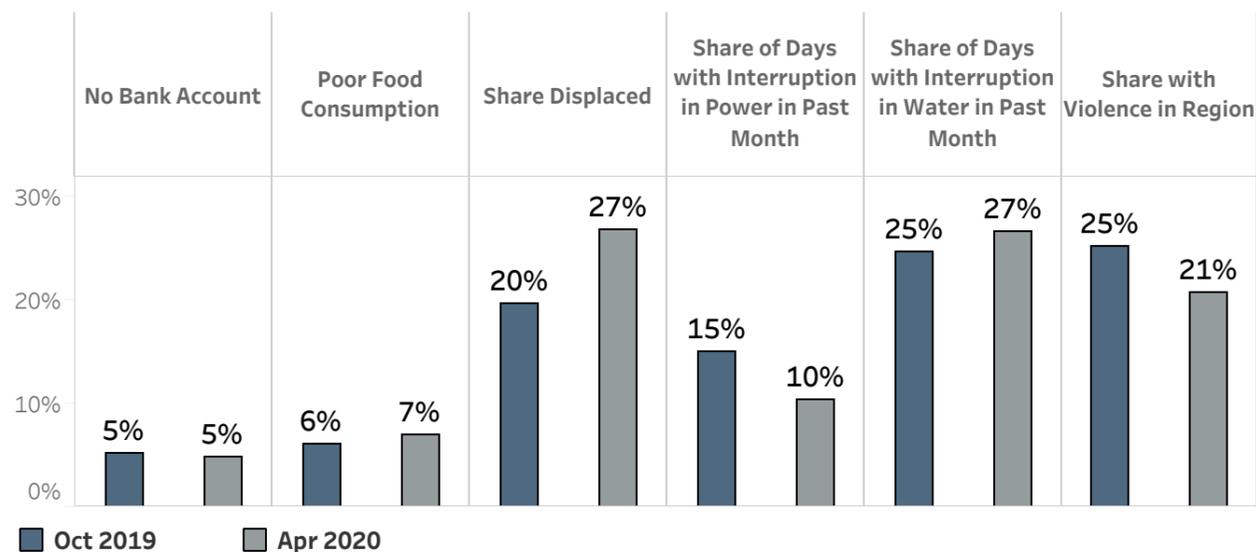


Fig 4: Share of Households Reporting Difficulty Reaching Jobs and Having Access to Key Services Due to COVID-19 Over the Course of the Survey

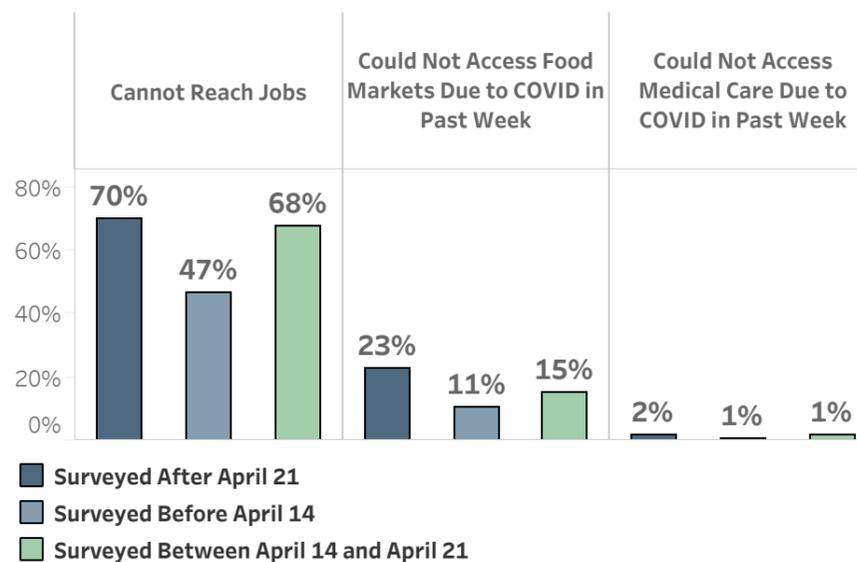
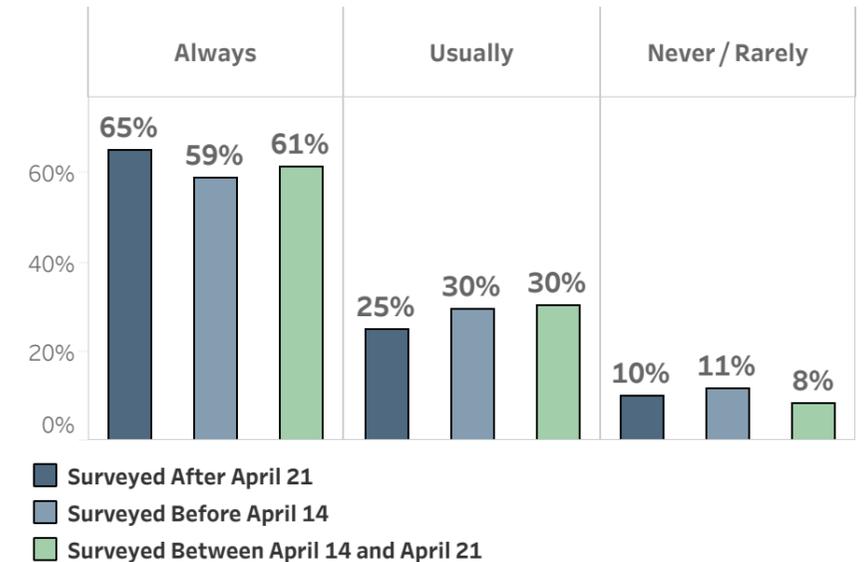


Fig 5: Share of Households Reporting Staying Home After COVID-19 Over the Course of the Survey



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Fig 6: Average number of bread pieces can be bought with one Libyan Dinar (LYD) by Mantika



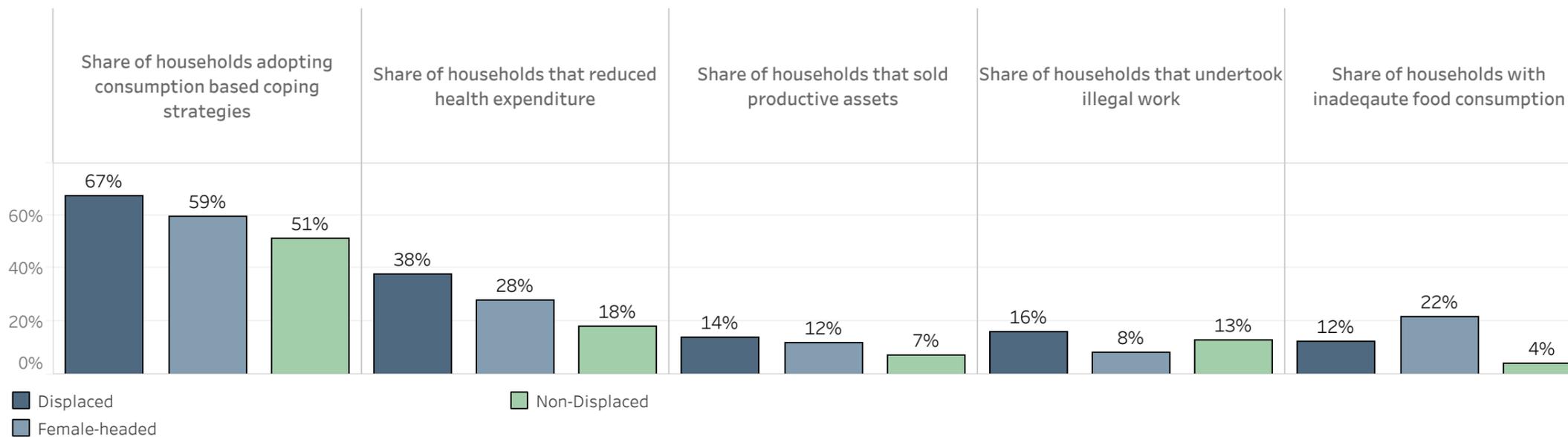
Part of these regional differences in food security indicators are due to significant differences in prices and access to government-subsidized food markets across regions. Household were asked about how many pieces of bread they could buy from local bakeries with one Libyan Dinar.

Figure 6 demonstrates that households in **Murzuq** reported that they could only purchase three pieces of bread with one Libyan Dinar, while households in **Alkufra** and **Tobruk** could buy six pieces of bread with the same amount.

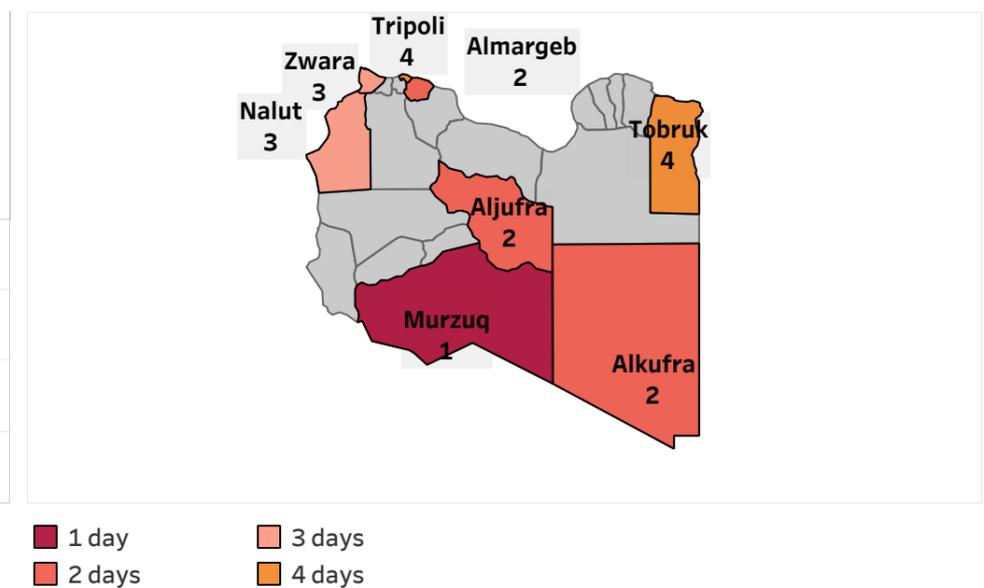
Additionally, only in **Alkufra** and **Tobruk** were government subsidized food markets reported to be open.

Furthermore, although nearly the entire sample of households had sacrificed the quality of their diet and engaged in negative coping strategies to maintain food consumption, the suffering of disadvantaged households was significantly worse. Figure 7 demonstrates that all food security indicators and reliance on negative coping strategies was worse for both IDP's and for women-headed households. Some of these differences are large. For example, the share of women-headed households that had poor food consumption was approximately 4 times the share of non-displaced households with a male head, and the share of IDP households that had poor food consumption was over twice as large.

Fig 7: Proportion of households with adequate food consumption (poor and borderline) by residence status



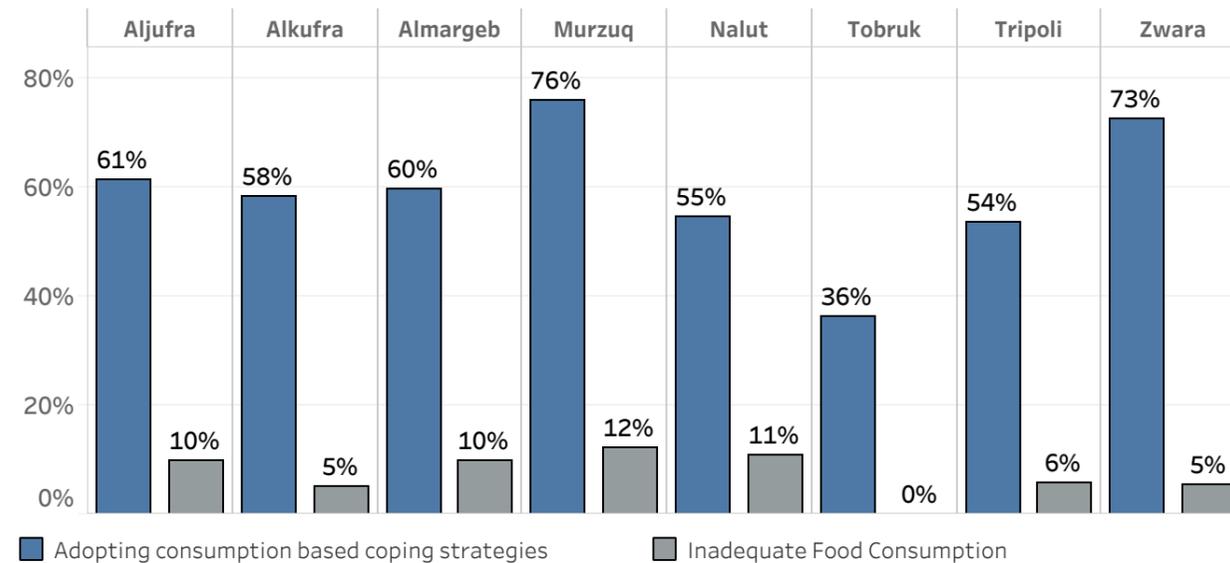
Map 2: Average number of days per week households consumed



Fruits

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Fig8: Proportion of households with inadequate food consumption (poor and borderline) and adopting consumption based coping strategies by mantika



Despite the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the start of Ramadan, and the continued violence in the country, there has been little change in food security indicators since the last round in October 2019. The share of respondents with poor food consumption in this most recent round was 7 percent, as compared to 6 percent in the October 2019 round.

Even though the share of households with poor food consumption is relatively low, households have to scarify the quality of their diet in order to maintain an adequate consumption. A high share of households are at risk of worse food security outcomes. Figures 10 and 11 demonstrate that the vast majority of households engage in food-based and other coping strategies to maintain food consumption. Overall, the average reduced coping strategy index (rCSI), which is the sum of days that households relied on negative food coping strategies weighted by the severity of the coping strategy, was 14; and the most adopted food-based coping strategies were consuming less expensive foods (81 percent), reducing the number of meals (73 percent), and reducing meal sizes (71 percent). Additionally, approximately 80 percent of households adopted at least one livelihood coping strategy. Many of the adopted coping strategies were damaging to longer-term household outcomes, including borrowing money, selling productive assets, reducing health and education expenditures, and engaging in illegal or dangerous work.

Even though poor diet quality and reliance on negative coping strategies was common across the entire country, Figure 8 demonstrates that there were significant differences in food security indicators across regions. Both the worst food consumption and the most reliance on food-based coping strategies was in **Murzuq**; and the best food consumption and least reliance on food-based coping strategies was in **Tobruk**. However, even though **Tobruk** had the best food security outcomes, a significant share of households in the municipality were engaged in very serious non-food coping strategies to maintain food consumption.

Map 3: Proportion of Households that Adopted Livelihood Coping Strategies by Mantika

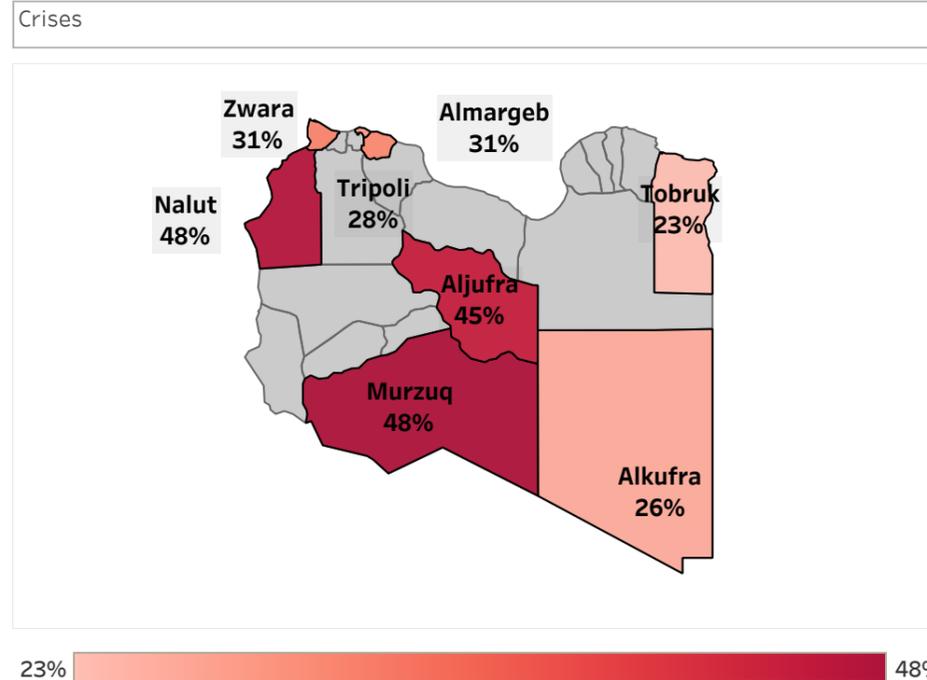


Fig 9: Proportion of Households that Adopted Livelihood Coping Strategies by Displacement Status

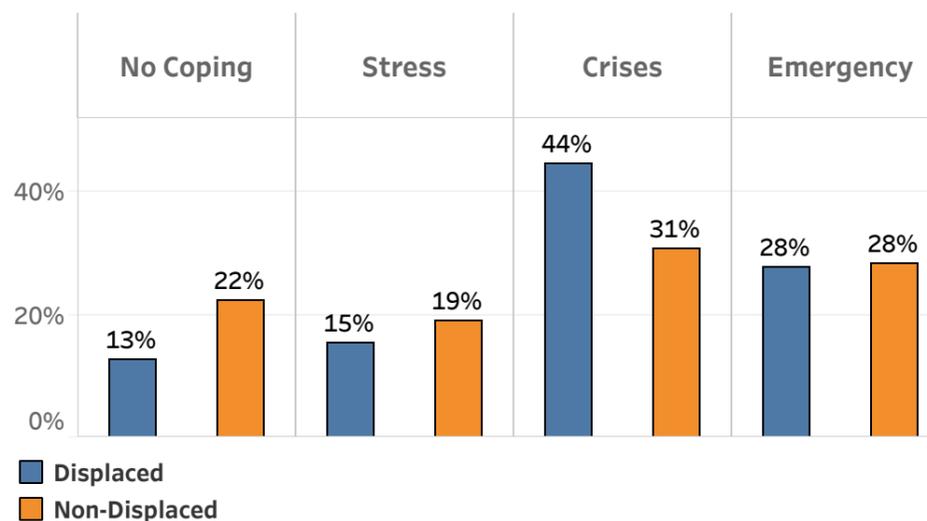


Fig 10: Proportion of Households that Adopted Consumption Based Coping Strategies

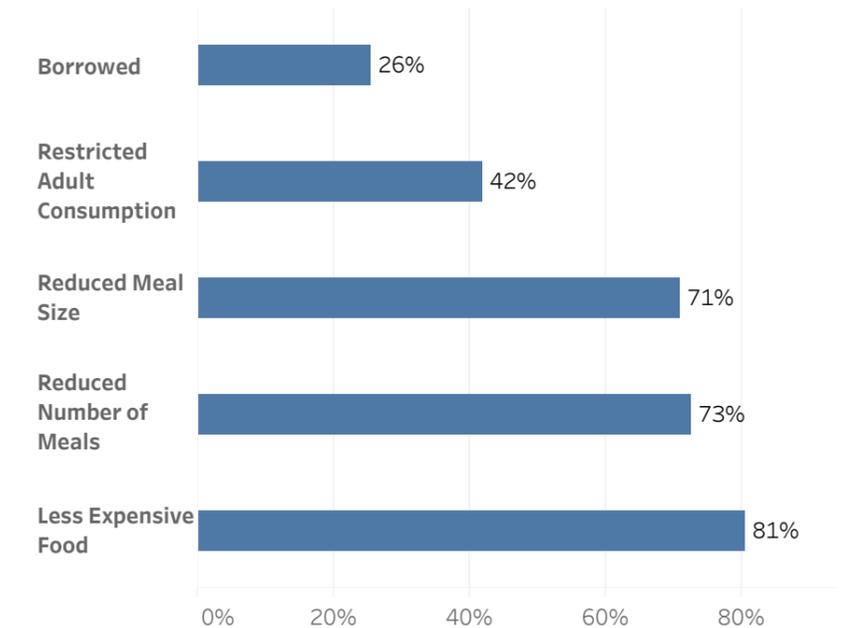


Fig 11: Share of Households Engaging in Coping Strategies in the Past Month to Maintain Food Consumption

